

## Congressional Closeup by William Jones

### House passes crime bill

The House passed on April 21 a \$28 billion crime bill by a vote of 282-141, upping the Senate spending figure by \$6 billion. The House legislation would put 50,000 more police on the streets (half of what the Senate called for), add \$13.5 billion for building state prisons (three times the Senate proposal), and authorize \$7 billion for crime prevention, which would include funding "night basketball" programs throughout the country. The House bill, attacked by Republicans for not being tough enough, would expand the federal death penalty from 2 to 65 crimes (15 more than the Senate bill) and would impose a life sentence for those convicted of three violent or drug-related crimes.

The Senate bill includes a ban on semi-automatic weapons, which will probably be kept in conference. The House narrowly upheld (217-212) on April 20, a provision that would allow defendants to use statistical evidence to challenge death sentences as racially discriminatory. This provision, together with the \$7 billion for crime prevention, helped to bring a majority of the Congressional Black Caucus behind the bill. Neither of the bills contains a Republican-backed provision which would have shortened the time period for death row appeals.

### Group lobbies for U.N. control of U.S. forces

The United Nations Association of the U.S.A. (UNA-USA) is lobbying for a decision soon by the Clinton administration and Congress, to cement U.S. military forces into the U.N. command structure. The U.N. group, funded by various foundations, hopes to get around widespread suspicion

and hostility against the U.N. by Americans, by implementing a new doctrine of international military integration now being circulated in government ranks as Presidential Decision Document 13.

There is speculation that Morton Halperin, whose nomination to a Department of Defense post was rejected by Congress, and who is now at the National Security Council, wrote PDD-13. Halperin has declined to discuss the matter.

Under PDD-13, the U.S. military "would not have to have their units come under the command of some Turk, say, who didn't care if he sent American troops in to be butchered. U.S. forces would be under American commanders—at the battalion level," a UNA-USA representative recently noted. Of course, overall decisions on the commitment of troops would be in the hands of the U.N. The spokesman did not elaborate on how a dispute might be resolved involving a lower level officer "more protective of his men" than were his superior officers. He said that once the U.N. really controls its own military forces, it would be appropriate for the U.N. to have "shock troops" that could be brought in at an instant's notice to prevent trouble from breaking out anywhere on the globe.

On April 25, the *New York Times* editorialized that the U.S. role in the U.N. could be "strengthened" in several ways. "Although the armed services are updating their doctrine . . . for peacekeeping, they have been reluctant to sign an agreement with the U.N. designating specific American units to be committed to [U.N.-controlled] peacekeeping. [Such] designation would be useful to improve the readiness of the units and allow them to engage in joint training with other nationals." The *Times* added that under the doctrine now being debated,

the President "could withdraw" U.S. troops "from engagements that failed to serve American interests."

### Gonzalez seeks data on Federal Reserve SWAPs

In a letter to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan on April 20, House Banking Committee Chairman Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.) called on Greenspan to "release to me all of the complete transcripts of FOMC [Federal Open Market Committee] meetings in its [the Fed's] possession." Gonzalez particularly targeted a recent move by the Fed to establish a \$6 billion SWAP fund to shore up the Mexican peso.

The Fed set up the SWAP fund together with the Treasury Department, but whereas the Treasury's Exchange Stabilization Fund is scrutinized regularly for Congress by the General Accounting Office, the Fed's exchange operations are not, since the Fed's SWAP fund does not receive its budgetary authority from Congress. Legislation introduced by Gonzalez, the "Federal Reserve System Accountability Act of 1993," would change that.

"What is the basis for your entry into the foreign exchange markets and your ability to grant loans without congressionally authorized funds?" Gonzalez inquired of Greenspan. "What is the legislative basis and the constitutional basis?" He also asked Greenspan if it's "still the practice of the Federal Reserve to use private commercial banks in the United States and in foreign countries in carrying out foreign currency interventions as described in the Federal Reserve literature." If indeed that is the case, Gonzalez asked Greenspan to "describe the nature of these operations and list

the private banks used by the Federal Reserve for these transactions in the last five years." Gonzalez also asked for a listing of the "loans, SWAPs, and extension of credit arrangements that have been made in the last 10 years without Treasury participation."

## **Tougher sanctions sought against Haiti**

In a press conference on April 19, five liberal Democratic senators led by Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on hemispheric affairs, attacked the Clinton administration's Haiti policy, claiming that it had no chance of restoring democracy in Haiti. Instead, they are calling for legislation to impose new sanctions against Haiti's military rulers.

The bill would impose a complete commercial trade ban on Haiti, cut off air links with the United States, deny visas to members of the Haitian Armed Forces and their civilian backers, and freeze any assets they have in the United States. It would also block continuation of current U.S. refugee policy, in which boats with Haitian refugees are turned back at sea to return to Haiti. The bill would accomplish this by barring funds for the return of any boat people who are denied a proper hearing on their claims for political asylum in the United States.

The bill would cut off U.S. aid funds to any country that refuses to cooperate with the embargo. The legislation calls on the United States to move in the United Nations to impose U.N. sanctions against Haiti. The bill is meant to pressure the administration to reinstall ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a person who has advocated "necklacing" against his politi-

cal opponents.

Joining Dodd were Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill.), Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), and Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.). The bill is similar to one introduced in the House by members of the Congressional Black Caucus, which now has 65 co-sponsors.

## **Russian-U.S. space station may not fly**

The attempt by the Clinton administration to transform the space station program into an integral part of Russian-U.S. collaboration, thus making its future dependent on continued stability in Russia, ran into heavy objections in a hearing of the Space Subcommittee of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee on April 20.

James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.), the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, said that such a policy was "like surrendering the U.S. ability to build the station without Russia. . . . This is a deal we wouldn't have agreed to with our strongest allies" during the Cold War period, Sensenbrenner said. The United States would be at a disadvantage by hanging everything on the Russian collaboration, while the Russians on the other hand "can bail out and put Mir II into orbit."

Administration witness James Collins, senior coordinator in the office of the ambassador-at-large for the Community of Independent States, claimed that there was no "substantial possibility" that turmoil between Russia and Ukraine or between Russia and Kazakhstan would disrupt cooperation. Asked how much chance there was that the Russians would experience a total economic collapse during the period of the building of the space station, Collins

responded, "They have as good a chance at making it as not."

## **End arms embargo against Bosnia, says Dole**

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) called for lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia on April 21. Appearing with Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic, who was visiting Washington, Dole said, "We have a moral obligation and if we don't do anything else, we should let the Bosnians defend themselves."

The proposal to lift the arms embargo is gaining momentum, and leading Democrats such as Rep. Frank McCloskey (D-Ind.) and Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) have renewed their calls for similar measures. Appearing on "Nightline" on April 17, McCloskey called for strategic bombing of Serb positions by NATO in order to stop the Serb aggression against Gorazde and other "safe havens." The call was seconded by Biden, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

On April 18, President Clinton indicated that this was his preferred option, but that he was not prepared to act unilaterally.

On April 18 on the CBS "This Morning" show, Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) commented, "What is at stake is the credibility of NATO, the credibility of U.S. foreign policy. And we have some interests there that I think are substantial with regard to stability of Europe, quite apart from humanitarian interests; that ethnic cleansing ought not to stand, that the holocaust situation that we have condemned ought not to occur right before our eyes in this time. . . . But the President . . . has to indicate the leadership that's required. And the American people will come along, at least if they understand our interests."