

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Congress passes drug bill, then adjourns

The 100th Congress adjourned early on the morning of Oct. 22 after enacting a \$2.8 billion anti-drug bill and legislation to correct errors in the Tax Reform Act of 1986. Final approval of the omnibus drug bill came on a voice vote in the Senate at 3:15 shortly after the House had approved the same measure on a 346-11 vote.

The drug bill includes tougher criminal penalties, additional money for federal and local law enforcement and for drug interdiction efforts by the Coast Guard and Customs Service, higher funding levels for education, treatment and rehabilitation programs, and a new federal effort to discourage casual drug users through civil fines and the denial of federal benefits.

The measure also includes a new federal death penalty in cases where killings are committed or ordered by members or leaders of drug rings, or when a police officer is killed during a drug-related felony, and in cases where killings occur during serious drug felonies. As the session drew to a close, many of the congressman had already headed home to try to secure their seats for the next Congress.

ABM Treaty under fire in Senate

In comments on the floor of the Senate on Oct. 18, Sen. Steve Symms (R-Idaho) Helms's (R-N.C.) withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

"Despite the fact we know that the Soviets have a 95% effective system around Moscow and that the Soviets have built a nationwide infrastructure of ABM radars, interceptor rockets,

communications system, and have trained ABM personnel, the United States is still abiding by this violated, worthless document," said Symms.

In a related development on Oct. 14, the Senate Republican Policy Committee, headed up by Sen. William Armstrong (R-Colo.), report entitled "Soviet Violations and the Future of the ABM Treaty."

The report indicates total failure of the treaty in realizing its alleged aims:

- 1) offensive ballistic missile build-up; 2) it has not provided the environment for offensive force reductions; 3) not prevented the Soviet Union from establishing a base for a national or territorial ballistic missile defense; and 4) ity problem of U.S. strategic forces.

"The ABM Treaty has been so ineffectual in preventing the Soviet Union from developing a defensive capability," says the report, "that the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff are said to be against termination of the treaty for fear that the Soviets would be better poised than the United States to deploy a missile defense of their national territory."

The report concludes that even if the Soviets were to dismantle their phased-array radar facilities at Krasnoyarsk, the "future of the ABM Treaty would still be in question due to the extent of other Soviet ABM-related activities."

Southern African 'peacekeeping' plan blocked

The Senate refused to allocate the transfer of \$150 million from a foreign aid account to a special fund for peacekeeping operations in southern Africa to monitor the regional deal between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The senators wanted assurances

that Angolan UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi's future would be included in any package worked out among Angola, South Africa, and Cuba, with the mediation of the United States.

Seeking to alleviate these worries, National Security Adviser Lt. Gen. Colin Powell wrote Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.)

the United States would not abandon Savimbi until the Angolan government includes him in a settlement. But the senators remained unconvinced. State Department spokesman Charles Redman said in response to the Senate's decision, "So naturally we're disappointed. . . . We were hopeful that Congress would have authorized this transfer, given the importance to the United States of ongoing peacekeeping efforts in several regions of the world."

President vetoes Whistleblower bill

On Oct. 26 President Reagan vetoed the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1988, just passed by Congress, which would have given federal workers greater protection from reprisals on the job when they blow the whistle on alleged misdeeds by their supervisors.

In a statement issued by the White House, Reagan said he was not signing the measure, because it was unconstitutional and ineffective. "In withholding my approval of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1988, I regret that the Congress did not present me with constitutional and effective legislation to expand the protections and procedural rights afforded to federal employees who report fraud, waste and abuse they discover in federal programs," said the President.

The legislation was passed in the aftermath of the so-called Pentagon

procurement scandals. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, in a prepared statement, said that while the bill "contains some worthwhile elements" which he would like to see introduced in the next Congress, it also contains elements that are unconstitutional.

Veterans Administration gets a Cabinet-level post

On Oct. 18, Congress completed action on legislation that will transform the Veterans Administration into the 14th Cabinet department of the federal government. The change received little support in a study last year by experts of the National Academy of Public Administration. But each chamber gave the bill overwhelming approval, reflecting the lobbying power of the major veterans' organizations in an election year.

The Senate also voted to give veterans their first limited right ever to take disputes over benefits to court and to engage lawyers to press such appeals.

Woodward book was of 'concern' to the CIA

Classified intelligence reported in Bob Woodward's book *Veil* were of "utmost concern" to the CIA. This prompted a lengthy internal investigation, according to a House Intelligence subcommittee report released Oct. 27. The investigation concluded that present and former CIA officials provided classified information to Woodward, and it highlighted the failure of intelligence agencies to address security problems.

U.S. intelligence officials have said that the Woodward book con-

tained top secret details about U.S. covert operations, including ultra-secret underwater and space-based eavesdropping missions, paramilitary programs, and human agent activities. According to sources close to the Intelligence Committee, the agency's internal probe lasted a year and found the leaks to Woodward extremely damaging to U.S. intelligence operations.

In a separate section of the report, five Republican committee members said that "scores" of intelligence leaks pertaining to CIA work were identified in 1987. "We became convinced that even the CIA has displayed a profound lack of interest in policing its own demonstrated problems, especially when these involve prominent officials," the Republicans stated.

Dreamworld revisited by Senator Proxmire

Soon to depart from his Capitol Hill environs, Sen. William Proxmire, one of those who deems it an honor to be called a liberal, mustered his harangues from the Senate floor at the military-industrial complex and the billions of dollars that it has been splurging on "useless" defense technology.

"The Soviet Union has been militarily inferior to the United States every year since the end of World War II," said Proxmire. "Somehow, our country has been hoodwinked and hypnotized into the notion that the Russians and their Eastern European allies pose a serious military threat to our country or at least to Western Europe. This is the big lie. We have become the victim of what President Eisenhower so prudently warned us about—the military-industrial complex. . . . A Soviet Union that has just retreated in embarrassing defeat from primitive,

little Afghanistan, after eight years of war, is not going to lead its motley, alienated, economically feeble pact alliance successfully against the best armed and trained troops in military history" in Western Europe.

Any attack on Europe, so Proxmire reasons, would be met by French and British nuclear weapons, and the Soviets know it. Therefore, there is no danger of Soviet moves against Western Europe.

The incredible strategic misjudgment of the departed Neville Chamberlain pales in comparison to that of our Wisconsin senator.

Move to deny Wright intelligence access

Thirty-six Republican congressmen asked President Reagan on Oct. 27 to withhold intelligence information from House Speaker Jim Wright until it is determined whether the Democratic leader "jeopardized America's secrets" in a recent comment about alleged CIA activities in Nicaragua. The House Ethics Committee is investigating allegations that Wright improperly divulged classified information.

It is unclear how the President could keep intelligence information from Wright, since as speaker, with membership on the Intelligence Committee, he would have access given to other members of the committee.

The accusations stem from a comment by Wright that he had "received clear testimony from CIA people" about an alleged covert operation to provoke a crackdown by the Sandinista regime against opposition groups. Wright has denied that he acted improperly and said his comments were based on publicly available information.