

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Resolution introduced to block Japan FSX agreement

A bill to stop the U.S. agreement with Japan on building their FSX fighter has been introduced into the U.S. Senate by Sens. Alan Dixon (D-Ill.), Richard Shelby (D-Ala.), Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), and Wendell Ford (D-Ky.).

At a press conference on May 2, Senator Dixon commented, "The FSX deal should never have been negotiated by the previous administration. This FSX agreement should not have been fine-tuned by the present administration. This FSX agreement should be scrapped."

Senator D'Amato urged the Japanese to instead purchase American-made F-16s, which, he said, could meet Japan's defense needs "at one-third the price, in half the time, and without compromising U.S. defense technology that cost taxpayers \$7 billion to develop." He added that "both as good trade partners and as good defense partners, the Japanese flunk."

D'Amato dismissed a question from *EIR* on possible Japanese reprisals, ranting, "We can't be held hostage to the Japanese. We can't allow ourselves to be held in fear. And, besides, I don't think they would do it."

Dixon admitted that he doesn't have the votes to pass the resolution. A similar motion has been introduced in the House by Rep. Mel Levine (D-Calif.).

On May 3, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger testified before a packed House Foreign Affairs Committee against motions to overturn the deal. Mosbacher said he was persuaded that Japan would not buy U.S. planes and wanted to produce its own as a matter of "national pride." Cheney added,

"From both a military and economic point of view it makes sense to manufacture fighter aircraft in your own country in order to be able to provide sustainability of the force as well as to keep aerospace workers employed."

President Bush's chief economist, Michael Boskin, warned that "bashing" trade partners like Japan could lead to a trade war and a recession.

Bills introduced to stop civil RICO suits

Hearings began on May 4 in the House on H.R. 1046, the "RICO Reform Act of 1989," sponsored by Rep. Frederick Boucher (D-Va.) to reform the civil RICO or racketeering statute. Hearings on a similar bill S.438 in the Senate co-sponsored by Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-Ut.), Howell Heflin (D-Ala.), and Steven Symms (R-Id.) are scheduled for June 7.

Boucher commented that RICO "had often enough led to innocent business people being branded as racketeers," destroying their reputations. Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.) added that civil RICO is not primarily being filed against mobsters, but against churches, government officials, and legitimate businesses.

The first witness was Prof. Lynch from Columbia Law School, who questioned whether a "law were justifiable, whose lack of abuse is dependent on the restraint of the Department of Justice." He said that the terms of the RICO statutes were so vague—as was the term fraud itself—that "it leaves to the DoJ to decide which cases are serious and which are not," and that RICO changes its nature depending on against whom it is applied.

Lynch pointed out that this was no longer "government by law," but gov-

ernment "by the men and women in the Department of Justice who decide what the law will mean."

Soviets to testify on U.S. defense budget cuts

In an unprecedented move, the House Armed Services Committee under its chairman Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) has initiated a series of hearings and other indirect contacts with Soviet military officials in order to help the committee decide where to make cutbacks in the U.S. Armed Forces. The committee reportedly feels that the Soviet witnesses would provide reliable first-hand information on their own military plans!

On May 4 committee members met in the House with a group of retired Soviet generals and admirals who were in Washington attending a conference arranged by the left-wing Center for Defense Information.

Later in June, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the personal military adviser to Gorbachov, is due to testify before the committee. In the meantime, the committee expects to visit the Soviet Union, with a possible visit to a Soviet SS-24 rail-mobile intercontinental missile.

Not everybody on the Hill is overjoyed with this arrangement. Sen. James Exon (D-Neb.), said that "seeking official testimony from their military leadership on how we should fund national defense is at best scary. If the Congress cannot make decisions on national security without official public testimony and advice from Soviet military planners, then we are in more peril than I had envisioned. Evidently Gorbomania has struck with vengeance in the Halls of Congress. If we are going that far afield, why not invite Mr. Qaddafi over to give us ex-

pert testimony on stopping terrorism?"

Congress begins debate on 1990 budget

On May 3, the House and Senate opened debate on a compromise \$1.17 trillion budget for fiscal year 1990.

Drafters of the compromise are complaining that the deficit reductions "do not go far enough," while other senators are moving to head off tax increases that could result in more substantial deficit reductions.

NDPC calls for Moon-Mars colonization

National Democratic Policy Committee representative William Jones called for a national commitment to a 40-year National Aeronautics and Space Administration program to colonize the Moon and Mars, in testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD and Independent Agencies on May 2.

Indicating the tremendous technological benefits for the entire economy which such a program would provide, Jones referred to previous witnesses who were seeking funds for a variety of laudable housing, veterans, and other social programs. "It should be more obvious to this subcommittee than to anyone else on the Hill that this country is in a real economic mess," Jones said. "The program I outlined could get us back on the track so that we would have the economic means to resolve all the other problems discussed here today."

Subcommittee chairwoman Lindy Boggs (D-La.) commented in response to Jones's testimony, "In every

epoch of human history, there have been new ideas brought forth which would transform the condition of man. These ideas have often been met by opposition. It is good to know that there are people who want to push those ideas forward in spite of the opposition."

Obey: No foreign aid until Iran-Contra clear

Rep. David Obey (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, is threatening to hold up more than \$700 million in foreign aid funds for Central America until the State Department answers questions about the *quid pro quo* arrangement promising expedited aid to Honduras in exchange for that nation's support for the Contras.

The secret Reagan White House 1985 deal with Honduras was revealed in documents made public during the trial of Oliver North.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is also expected to delay voting on the nomination of John D. Negroponte as U.S. ambassador to Mexico until questions raised by the North trial documents are cleared up.

An official joint House and Senate Intelligence Committee inquiry to determine why several key White House documents never reached the House and Senate Iran-Contra committees, while others reached the committees only in preliminary or incomplete form, has also begun.

Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, told the *Washington Post*, "I believe these documents suggest the involvement of President Reagan and then-Vice President Bush to a greater extent than I, at least, hitherto thought.

I continue to feel we have not heard the full story" from them.

Nunn, Aspin: Negotiate short-range nuclear weapons

The chairmen of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.), endorsed negotiations with Moscow to reduce short-range or battlefield nuclear weapons. The calls came as former Reagan arms negotiator Paul Nitze attacked President Bush for refusing to negotiate.

On May 3, Senator Nunn suggested that the United States agree to negotiations with Moscow on condition that West Germany accept the deployment of modernized short-range nuclear missiles and that the negotiations not result in their elimination.

Adm. William Crowe, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he would "have no problem whatsoever with what you have just described."

Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, in Washington at the time, encouraged President Bush to accede to West German Chancellor Kohl's proposals for such negotiations. Bush said in his meeting with Brundtland that "entering into arms control negotiations on short-range nuclear forces with the Soviet Union would be a mistake."

Representative Aspin joined with Sen. Nunn in criticizing the administration's handling of the dispute with Chancellor Kohl, saying that the West should open talks with the Soviet bloc on a "mandate" for future negotiations on short-range nuclear missiles, but on condition that the West ensure that the weapons were not completely eliminated, and not reduced until conventional arms were cut.