

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

'Armenian' bill put off to 1990

Action on Senate Joint Resolution 212, which memorializes the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923, has been delayed at least temporarily until the next session of Congress. The resolution is threatening to disrupt U.S.-Turkish relations and seriously diminish NATO military preparedness levels.

On Nov. 20, resolution sponsor Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.), announced that he was not seeking floor action on the resolution during this session of Congress, in order to determine if acceptable language can be devised. The resolution will, however, be taken up in some form during the next session of Congress which begins in 1990.

In a hastily called Saturday afternoon press conference at the Turkish Embassy on Nov. 18, Turkish Ambassador Nuzhet Kandemir said that as a result of the recent resolution initiated in the U.S. Senate memorializing the genocide against the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, "our two nations stand poised on the edge of a crisis of perhaps even greater magnitude than that which resulted from the 1975 arms embargo." Ambassador Kandemir said that its passage "will guarantee the opening of wounds in Turkish-American relations of far greater significance than the transient satisfaction it will afford the Armenian groups which have lobbied for it."

The Turkish government responded to the introduction of the resolution by imposing temporary sanctions against U.S. military activity in Turkey. Some fear that the Turkish government would go so far as to abrogate the joint military treaty between Tur-

key and the United States as a result of the resolution. The White House has expressed concern over passage of the resolution.

In response to a question from *EIR*, Ambassador Kandemir said that "instability in our relations is being sought by those pushing this resolution." He also said that the resolution would "lend moral justification to the Armenian terrorism." For the Armenian groups, which lobbied for the resolution, Ambassador Kandemir said, this is only the first step in their goal, "the territorial dismemberment of Turkey," indicating that Armenian groups will use passage of the resolution to demand reparations of the Turkish government for the killings and to make territorial claims.

Keating blames thrift crisis on Congress

Charles B. Keating, head of the insolvent Lincoln Savings and Loan Association, turned the tables on Congress on Nov. 21, blaming the regulators for what may become the largest failure of a savings institution on record.

Keating issued a statement to the House Banking Committee urging Congress to "turn to the unpleasant task of revamping the existing regulatory scheme, replacing inexperienced personnel with professionals and making a sincere attempt at providing a meaningful regulatory environment within which savings associations may profitably and lawfully operate." He added, "I am not sure that Congress is really up to the task."

The Keating case is the focus for the new thrift legislation which attempts to blame the sector's collapse on "corrupt thrift executives." The case of Lincoln Savings has received

much attention, since five U.S. senators who tried to help Lincoln are being scrutinized by the Senate Ethics Committee for possible violation of Senate rules—thus becoming the targets of the very police state measures they helped incorporate in the recent thrift legislation. A Gestapo-like raid was conducted by a small army of FBI agents, local police, private security officers, and regulators at 1:30 a.m. on Nov. 17 against the offices of Keating's Phoenician resort in Phoenix, Arizona. A Keating spokesman called it a "blatant act of terror . . . by our U.S. government."

Congress passes deficit reduction

Working until 4:30 in the morning on Nov. 22, Congress approved a \$14.7 billion deficit-reduction package. But the bill, lauded as an accomplishment given the lack of consensus between a Republican administration and a Democrat-controlled Congress, relied heavily on gimmicks.

"The entire process went from bad numbers to bad policy to worse compromises," commented Carol G. Cox, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a non-partisan group that monitors the budget. The largest chunk of the package, \$4.6 billion, comes from extending for 130 days the automatic spending cuts imposed under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings sequestration. They have been in force since Oct. 1 and will be lifted after the first week of February.

The gimmickry also involves omitting projected Postal Service losses from the deficit numbers, thus saving \$1.8 billion this year. More than three-fifths of the total \$17.8 bil-

lion in deficit cuts claimed by the bill come from a combination of the across-the-board cuts, asset sales, and budgetary devices such as timing shifts. Nevertheless, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) commented, "The way we did it this time is a plus for our ability to govern."

Skelton warns Noriega: 'Next coup will be bloody'

After a closed-door, top-secret briefing from Gen. Maxwell Thurman, chief of the U.S. Southern Command, Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.), a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, warned Panamanian military leader Gen. Manuel Noriega that the "next coup will be bloody."

Skelton claimed that "probably more than 100 officers and troops" were executed since the Oct. 3 coup attempt. "As a result," he said, "there cannot be a chivalrous coup in the future. . . . Noriega has changed the ground rules. . . . Whoever wins lives, and whoever loses will die. That's the game we're in now."

Foreign aid bill passes despite Salvador hysteria

After President Bush vetoed a foreign aid bill on Nov. 19 because it limited military aid to El Salvador and presidential foreign policy-making prerogatives, Congress passed another version of the bill which President Bush signed into law on Nov. 21.

With pressure mounting for the Congress to adjourn, the House voted 215 to 194 to prevent debate on an amendment offered by Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.) which would have

placed restrictions on military aid to El Salvador because of the murders of six Jesuit priests. The Senate tabled a similar amendment offered by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) in a 58-39 vote.

Legislators used the recent guerrilla offensive and the murders of the priests as a pretext for demanding an end to military aid to El Salvador. "I think, Mr. President," said Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) on Nov. 19, "if we do not want to perpetuate a lie in our foreign aid, then let us for once say, no human rights, no aid from the United States, because the bedrock of our country is a belief in the fundamental rights of people and in human dignity." Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) proposed on Nightline on Nov. 21, that the U.S. withdraw all military advisers in El Salvador and discontinue further military aid. Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) agreed, and called for a "plague on both their houses."

The vehemence was just as heated in the House. "There is a newspaper ad that many of my colleagues may have seen," said Rep. Vic Fazio (D-Calif.). "It states that Congress would not have given aid to Adolf Hitler, and asks why, then, are we giving aid to his admirers in El Salvador."

Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) said such proposals "outrageous." Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) asked, "do we want to award their [FMLN] aggression? It would certainly send the wrong signal to our allies and friends in Central America and across the world. We should continue to support the democratically elected government of El Salvador and not cave in to the Communists. This is a signal we should send around the world."

Also eliminated because of White House objections was the amendment calling for economic sanctions against Communist China, which were origi-

nally included in the bill. On Nov. 20 China had accused the U.S. Congress of "a disgusting performance of power politics" for approving the sanctions in protest of the bloody crackdown by the Chinese leadership on the pro-democracy demonstrations.

The \$14.8 billion bill also contains the bulk of the Polish and Hungarian aid package—\$533 million. The controversial \$15 million, earmarked for the United Nations Population Fund, which has supported forced abortions and sterilization in China, were also dropped from the final version of the bill because of presidential objections.

Hollings attacks 'free trade' doctrine

Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) attacked the "political establishment which loves to parrot the mindless phrase 'free trade, free trade, free trade,' as though it were a religion," in comments on the Senate floor on Nov. 16. Hollings called for a return to the "activist, assertive governmental tradition of Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton."

Hollings lamented that "two trends—free trade fanaticism and anti-government demagoguery—have together put the American ox in the ditch."

Hollings recalled the days of the early American republic when Britain tried to "persuade us to accept a flood of their manufactured goods, all in the name of comparative advantage and free trade." In response to this, he said, Hamilton wrote his Report on Manufactures to reject this "British seduction." "In so many words," said the Senator, "he told the British so-called free traders to 'bug off.'"