

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Full House committee kills space station

The House Appropriations Committee voted on June 3 to kill Space Station Freedom, a move which faces a veto threat from President Bush. The full committee action followed a 6-3 vote in the HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee to kill the space station on May 16.

The committee held no separate vote on the space station, but simply omitted the funds from a measure which provided \$80.9 billion for the nation's space, housing, and veterans programs in fiscal 1992, and approved the bill on a voice vote.

But the real fight is expected on June 6 when the bill is scheduled to come before the full House. Concern over the cut in funds prompted hearings with NASA Administrator Richard Truly, which were held on June 3. Support for the space station has been forthcoming from both Democrats and Republicans, and from Europe and Japan.

In comments in the House on June 3, Rep. Mary Rose Oaker (D-Ohio) supported the space station. "Through the years we have seen so many advances," said Oaker. "I think they are advances that the American people and indeed perhaps some people in Congress are not aware of. They are not aware of what space exploration has meant to our country and to the world. There is not one area, I do not think, that we live in, one type of area that relates to our quality of life that does not relate to some spin-off from the space program, from the clothes that we wear, the insulation of our homes."

Oaker listed developments in laser surgery, nuclear medicine, and the purification of medicines and pharmaceuticals in space, which were contingent on the success of the space program.

Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.) noted that the "NASA program would be mortally struck by the ending of the space station" and that the "space station accounts for more than half of our government investments in civilian R&D."

Rep. Bill Lowery (R-Calif.) and Rep. Jim Chapman (D-Tex.) will offer an amendment which would restore most of the \$2 billion for the station.

House Democrats push genocidal population bill

Sen. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.), an anti-nuclear and environmentalism advocate, introduced a bill into the U.S. Senate on May 24 which would, in his words, make the United States the "world leader in terms of population planning and population programs." Praising the work of former Rep. George Bush (R-Tex.), who spent most of his four years in Congress promoting population control, Wirth complained that the world was "backsliding" in its efforts to impose population control and called for "aggressive" population programs.

The measure is cosponsored by Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), Robert Kerrey (D-Neb.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.), and Brock Adams (D-Wash.).

One of the key targets of the bill is Africa, where, the bill complains, "fertility is highest and contraception use lowest." The bill states that it should be the principal objective of U.S. foreign policy to "achieve universal availability of high quality fertility control services" in order to "reduce population growth and stabilize

world population at the lowest level feasible and thereby protect the global environment."

The bill calls for an increase of population control funds targeting especially "countries which account for a substantial proportion of the world's annual population increment," which "have significant unmet needs for fertility control," and "which demonstrate a strong policy commitment to population stabilization through the expansion of reproductive choice."

The bill also calls for a reorganization of the Department of State to better deal with the "increasing importance to United States interests in the post-Cold War era of the interrelated issues of global population growth, environmental degradation, and natural resources management."

Bush banking reform may hit a snag

Although the banking deregulation legislation proposed by the Bush administration was passed by the House Banking Subcommittee on Financial Institutions, it still faces rough going.

House Banking Chairman Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), an opponent of banking deregulation, has expressed grave doubts about the bill. Gonzalez was personally slighted by being excluded from a meeting in early June between eight Democrats on his committee and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady on the bill. "Things are going to get much hotter in the full committee," commented Gonzalez. "They always do."

The bill must also go through the Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. The chairman of Energy and Commerce, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) has been a longstanding oppo-

nent of repealing the Glass-Steagall Act, which prevents investment banks from merging with commercial banks. The Bush-backed bill would in effect nullify Glass-Steagall. Dingell has also complained that the Treasury Department has attempted to keep him out of the legislative process.

MFN status for China faces uphill fight

President Bush's announcement on May 15 that he was proceeding to extend Most Favored Nation status for the People's Republic of China, has met serious opposition in the House and Senate, and Bush may be forced to seek some compromise, such as a temporary six month MFN extension. MFN trading status grants to the recipient country the lowest possible tariffs on the import of their goods.

While opposition to MFN is mainly for domestic political purposes, sizable majorities oppose renewing MFN status until China eases various forms of political and religious repression which followed in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989.

One amendment introduced by Rep. Donald Pease (D-Ohio) would require the President to certify that China accounted for all protesters arrested at Tiananmen Square, released all religious prisoners, expanded freedom of the press, and ceased harassment of Chinese students in the United States. "My intentions," said Pease to the *Washington Times*, "is not to cut off MFN, but rather use leverage to improve human rights conditions."

In hearings on May 29, Chinese dissident astrophysicist Fang Lizhi recommended against MFN status. On May 16, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.) warned that

there would not be any MFN status for China unless and until the President could give the country a seal of approval for China on human rights and arms proliferation, and he has introduced an amendment to this effect. Mitchell feels that he is close to securing a veto-proof majority for the bill in the face of a presidential veto of conditions attached to MFN.

Congressman says NED 'borders on fascist'

Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-Pa.) attacked the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in comments on the House floor on May 15. The NED is the congressionally mandated part of the "Project Democracy" apparatus exposed during the Iran-Contra scandal as a "parallel, secret government."

Kanjorski said that he would like to do away with the NED, but barring support for that in the House, he called for an investigation into its activities. "I have a fundamental disagreement with setting up a private organization, controlled by private people, to carry out the foreign policy of the United States," said Kanjorski. "I think it is fundamentally wrong and that it violates the framers' intent of the Constitution of the United States."

Kanjorski referred to a discussion he had with leaders of an opposition party in Romania who had been promised \$92,000 in aid from the NED, but had never received the money. They had been given a \$400 computer and required to sign for a \$25,000 computer. The Romanians said, Kanjorski reported, "What you are doing is funding the government that is in power. The parties that receive NED money are really not in opposition. They exist in order to destroy the real opposition party that exists in Romania."

Kanjorski said he had filed a Freedom of Information Act request on the NED without getting firm answers. He said he later found out that members of his staff had been identified in an NED internal memo, in which the NED tried to set a part of his constituency against him. "Now, I would suggest," said Kanjorski, "that we have an organization here that not only is not democratic, but in some respects is bordering on being fascist, if that is the approach they take to proper inquiries made by a Representative of the American people."

Bush itching for a fight on civil rights

President Bush repeated his threats on June 2 to veto the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1991, arguing that the bill imposes quotas on employers. Speaking to the National Federation of Independent Business, Bush was so enraged that he began pounding the lectern, accusing the Democrats, who support the bill, of playing a "politics of selective inclusion and exclusion." The administration had earlier intervened to sabotage discussion between civil rights leaders and the Business Roundtable, at which the two groups were about to reach a compromise.

Civil rights leaders charge the President with attempting to inflame white voters by labeling the bill a "quota bill."

Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) labeled an earlier attack made by Bush on the bill during a West Point commencement address at the end of May "the most divisive and demagogic one that any President has made on civil rights in modern times. . . . If this speech is not a reminder of the days of Bull Connor and George Wallace, what is?"