

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Michel retires; scramble is on for minority post

House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-Ill.) announced on Oct. 4 that he would not seek reelection to a 20th term next year, thus triggering a fight for the leadership position.

Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), leader of the "Young Turk" Republicans seeking a more confrontational strategy toward the Clinton administration, has been grooming himself for the post, often criticizing Michel for being too "soft" on the Democrats, and leading the pack against Democrats in the House Bank and Post Office scandals.

Some GOPers are concerned that the "in-your-face" style of the Gingrich wing may create a negative image for Republican candidates. For this reason, Rep. Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.) has also announced his candidacy. Solomon hopes to be able to win over some of the Gingrich supporters for a less radical approach. The odds now favor a Gingrich victory. The new leaders will be elected in December 1994.

Fear grows over U.S. military role in Haiti

The Clinton administration's decision to send 700 lightly armed U.S. soldiers to Haiti to implement a U.N.-brokered agreement has come under heavy fire in Congress. The plan calls for Haiti's military rulers to resign by Oct. 15 and to restore deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In response to a question posed on the ABC News program "Meet the Press" on Oct. 10, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said, "I wouldn't be sending anybody to Haiti. My view is that this probably precludes any participation in Bosnia. . . . We ought to bring what few peo-

ple we have in Haiti back home, and not send any more."

Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, warned, "It could be a very dangerous situation for our military."

In remarks on the House floor on Oct. 8, Peter J. Goss (R-Fla.) compared the much-criticized Somalia operation with the situation in Haiti which has its own "warlord," Lt. Col. Joseph Michel François, the head of the national police. "He is the guy who commands the people who have the guns and he does not want our forces there," he said. Goss pointed out that most of the 600-man U.N. force to be deployed to Haiti are Americans.

Aristide's scheduled return was a "great hope for Haiti," said Rep. John Porter (R-Ill.). But, he noted, there are few "who are confident that is going to be peaceful."

Hate crimes legislation introduced by Feinstein

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) introduced the "Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1993" (S. 1522) on Oct. 6, which provides for sentencing enhancements of "not less than three levels for offenses that the finder of fact at trial determines beyond reasonable doubt are hate crimes." Feinstein said that the bill would result in "hate crime offenders" remaining behind bars one-third longer.

Hate crimes legislation has come under criticism as the kind of "thought policing" that is characteristic of totalitarian states.

Feinstein listed a series of incidents and statistics prepared by the Anti-Defamation League (an organization which itself engages in so-called hate crimes), the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and the

Southern Poverty Law Center to "prove" the need for this act. "I believe the federal government needs to help deter these violent assaults by severely punishing their perpetrators," she said.

Failure to save Bosnia scored

Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), in remarks on the Senate floor Oct. 4, applauded the decision of the Bosnian Parliament not to accept the U.N.-proposed "peace plan" the week before. The plan would obliterate the nation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, partitioning it into ethnic enclaves. DeConcini said that he feared that despite this rejection, "undoubtedly a new, amended plan will be sought as the international community remains wrongly committed to diplomatic negotiations, and pressures the Bosnians to come to terms."

DeConcini said that U.S. involvement is necessary to ensure that any negotiated settlement is implemented. "Given the way the world has abandoned them," he said, "I think we owe it to the Bosnians to protect what they have left, and to help them rebuild."

DeConcini said that "the ones responsible for the dangerous peacekeeping operation we now confront are those who, from the beginning, opposed more decisive action to thwart Serbian aggression." He said that such action became possible in August 1992 after the exposure of the Serbian-run concentration camps, and that a "credible show of force would likely have had sufficient credibility to have caused their retreat." He accused opponents of this option of trotting out "highly skewed or irrelevant historical analyses of centuries-old tribal warfare in the Balkans, Yugoslav resistance to Nazi German occupation, and our own Vietnam experience, ignor-

ing, of course, that violent Balkan disputes have not been resolved by negotiation and good will, and that they, in fact, usually spread."

Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.), in comments on the Senate floor on Oct. 8, warned that Serbian aggression could expand into Kosova, and expressed concern about the deployment of U.S. troops into Macedonia. The United Nations and the United States "have drawn an imaginary line, sort of giving approval to Serbian control of Kosova. . . . By virtue of that, there is a signal that that is the line beyond which the Serbs cannot go. There is a signal that perhaps there is an acceptance in the West that Kosova will belong to Serbia. That is not my interpretation and it should not be our policy." A disturbance in Kosova "could very well bring several other countries into that war, including Greece, Turkey, and others," he warned.

'Peacekeeping' role will hurt Army, says Skelton

The U.S. involvement and deaths of American soldiers in Somalia have led legislators to question the feasibility of U.S. involvement in such "peacekeeping" missions. "Peacekeeping commitments may so degrade the Armed Forces' war-fighting capability that it will be impossible to carry out the national military strategy" (where the military is sized to win two regional wars simultaneously, the so-called "win/win" scenario), Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) said on the House floor on Oct. 4.

Skelton criticized the recent "Bottom-Up" review by the Department of Defense because the resources devoted to the Army will be inadequate "to win the first regional contingency called for in the national strategy, much less the second." Skelton's wor-

ry is that peacekeeping commitments not only draw away combat troops that should be available for regional crises, but also that troops have to be retrained for peacekeeping duty, which differs markedly from combat operations.

He also suggested that the size of the Army needed to handle two regional contingencies is closer to 600,000, rather than the level of less than 500,000 recommended in the Clinton defense plan. "The conclusion that I believe must be drawn is that the Army is being sized to fight one war, not two," he said.

Boxer would put National Guard on Mexican border

Legislation sponsored by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) which would allow the deployment of National Guardsmen on the border with Mexico was included in the \$260 billion Defense Authorization bill. The Boxer proposal could place hundreds of armed troops along the California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas borders to back up the Border Patrol in stemming the flow of illegal immigrants. It would provide at least \$2 billion (and possibly more) to train the guardsmen.

"Under my proposal," said Boxer, "the National Guard will work, under civilian supervision, to provide cost-effective support to our drastically understaffed Border Patrol." Under its guidelines, governors in the border states would be required to submit a detailed plan to outline that state's immigration strategy, goals, and objectives to the Department of Defense for approval.

In the atmosphere of hysteria which is building in the border states against illegal immigrants, even more drastic measures are being proposed.

California Gov. Pete Wilson (R) is calling for a constitutional amendment which would deny citizenship to children born in the U.S. to illegal immigrants.

Space collaboration with Russia meets skepticism

In hearings on Oct. 6, members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology were highly critical of the idea of making Space Station Freedom subsidiary to Russian hardware, and called for a hearing to examine the issue more thoroughly. On Sept. 2, Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed an agreement to recommend specific projects for collaboration between the Russian and American space programs. One of the proposals is to substitute the Russian Mir 2 space station, now under construction, for the U.S.-built module that had been the centerpiece of the Space Station.

Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Hall (D-Tex.) asked whether the White House proposal to pay Russia \$400 million over the next four years for space hardware was not "a way of enforcing Russia's adherence to the Missile Control Technology Regime" (MCTR) trade restrictions, and if the Space Station had now become "a foreign policy tool." White House Science Adviser John Gibbons insisted that nothing had yet been decided.

Marcia Smith from the Congressional Research Service stated that linkage between the MCTR and space collaboration was "not a good idea," considering the non-adherence to treaties by the former Soviet Union. She said that if the goal is to build a Space Station, the current design should be carried out. If it is to be an instrument of foreign policy, then different criteria should be applied.