

## Congressional Closeup by William Jones

### **LaRouche visit to Moscow highlighted in testimony**

The visit to Moscow of economist Lyndon LaRouche was featured in testimony given on May 4 by the Schiller Institute to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, HUD, and Independent Agencies on the economics of space exploration. The testimony outlined LaRouche's article, "A Science-Driven Program to End Russia's Depression" (*EIR*, April 22, p. 22), as the basis for Russian-U.S. space cooperation.

The mention of LaRouche's trip to Moscow to elaborate on these ideas together with Russian space scientists, raised a few eyebrows among those waiting to give testimony and from Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), who was chairing the hearing.

This subcommittee is critical for whether the Space Station will be funded. The chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, George Brown (D-Calif.), has threatened to cancel the Space Station if the subcommittee further reduces funding for NASA.

### **Abortion clinic protests targeted in House vote**

The House on May 5 approved a bill by a vote of 241-174 making it a federal crime to obstruct access to abortion clinics. The measure was a compromise between bills passed last November by the House and Senate. It now goes to the Senate for final action.

The debate was heavily clouded by the murder of a doctor working at an abortion clinic in Florida by an anti-abortion activist who used the cover of the clinic blockade to kill the doctor. (His actions were denounced by the group.)

Under the measure, use of force,

threat of force, or efforts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with abortion clinic patients would be a crime subject to fine or imprisonment or both. Violent offenders could face fines of \$100,000 and one year in prison for a first offense. Non-violent physical obstruction would carry a possible \$10,000 fine and up to six months in prison.

### **Budget of \$1.5 trillion for FY 95 passes House**

The House passed by a vote of 220-183 a compromise version of President Clinton's proposed \$1.5 trillion budget for fiscal year 1995 on May 5, including \$13 billion more in spending cuts over five years. The budget has no new taxes and projects a deficit of \$175 billion for FY 1995, which starts on Oct. 1, the lowest projected deficit in five years. No Republicans voted for the measure.

The budget resolution will now be sent to the Senate, which is expected to act quickly. The resolution sets ceilings on spending that will be considered later in the year, and does not require a presidential signature.

The new cuts, starting with a \$541 million cut for FY 1995, are from programs not yet specified, i.e., the real fight will come later. "My advice to those who are concerned about where these additional cuts will fall is to expect your favorite program to be affected and be pleasantly surprised if it is not," warned Budget Committee Chairman Martin Olav Sabo (D-Minn.), who had opposed the cuts.

Earlier, the Senate approved \$26 billion in cuts over five years, lowering existing discretionary spending caps, while the House had wanted no additional cuts. Sabo said the two sides split the difference.

The deficit is the difference be-

tween the projected income of \$1.338 trillion and projected outlays of \$1.513 trillion for the fiscal year. The cumulative annual deficits are the total debt owed by the government, which is about \$3.5 trillion.

### **Compromise eyed on Clinton health plan**

The Senate Finance Committee considered on May 4 whether to push for a health care reform plan that covers all Americans, or start with one that covers 90% with the option of adding more later.

President Clinton's plan, which would require all employers to help pay for health insurance for their workers and allow the government to set ceilings on increases in insurance premiums, is being attacked by the insurance companies. The President has been able to recruit only a single Republican to cosponsor his bill in the Senate.

Sen. John Chafee (R-R.I.) has introduced a bill that does not require employers to pay for health insurance for their workers, nor does it call for any direct cost controls over private-sector health spending, but it would require individuals to buy health care insurance. It has picked up important endorsements from Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.) and David Boren (D-Okla.). Boren, who sits on the Senate Finance Committee, and Kerrey said they were backing Chafee's bill to help end a stalemate in Congress over health care reform. The Chafee measure is sponsored in the House by Bill Thomas (R-Calif.).

Boren's support for the Chafee bill could upset a delicate balance on the Finance Committee, comprised of 11 Democrats and 9 Republicans. "It is much more likely that that stalemate will be broken if this particular piece

of legislation is used as the markup vehicle," Kerrey said at a news conference. "I think what endangers the chances of passage of meaningful health care reform this year more than anything else is the possibility that we could polarize along party lines," Boren added.

An alternative, introduced by Rep. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) and Sen. John Breaux (D-La.), emphasizes managed care, particularly health maintenance organizations (HMOs), to bring down health care costs and make insurance more affordable and accessible. The plan relies on purchasing cooperatives and offers tax incentives to make insurance more affordable. But millions of Americans would still have to voluntarily buy their own health insurance.

## Haiti policy splits Democrats, Republicans

President Clinton's new policy toward Haiti got a mixed reception in the Senate. Republicans said it would not work and some advised a hands-off policy. Democrats were split on the possible use of force and the utility of stepping up economic sanctions.

Clinton has been under fire from the Congressional Black Caucus and liberal Democrats such as House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-Wisc.), who have been demanding tougher measures against the Haitian military government and that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who advocates "necklacing" opponents, be returned to power. "We have to fashion an intervention," said Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) on the ABC News program "Meet the Press" on May 8. The head of the Transafrica Institute, Randall Robinson, went on a hunger strike protesting Clinton's Haiti policy. On

May 8, Clinton announced a new policy, seeking tighter economic sanctions and threatening use of force. Instead of turning Haitian refugees back when they are apprehended at sea, they will now be processed by immigration officials on U.S. ships to determine if they qualify for asylum. Clinton also appointed Bill Gray, president of the United Negro College Fund and former House majority whip, as a special adviser to the President and to the secretary of state on Haiti.

After being briefed by administration officials, Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), who had previously been critical of Clinton's policy, told reporters he believed the administration was "back on track" in proposing to tighten sanctions. He supported the administration's position on refusing to rule out military force to remove Haiti's military rulers, but said it would be shortsighted to disregard the value of sanctions. Dodd added that any suggestion that Clinton was chafing at the bit to use force "is a foolish remark, in my opinion."

Both senators from Florida, the destination of thousands of Haitians fleeing their homeland, advocated a credible threat of force. "Tightening sanctions is just not going to work," said Connie Mack (R), who questioned whether the embargo would hurt the people intended as its target. "The only way to facilitate change in Haiti is a credible statement of willingness to use force." Bob Graham (D) said restoring Aristide to power would be accomplished only with a credible threat to use military force. Use of force, ideally with the United States acting with other countries, was "appropriate," he said.

But Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), who supported the President's policy, does not favor military action now. Military force "would not be prudent or wise at this

time," he said.

Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said flatly, "We should not intervene in Haiti." He added that stepped-up sanctions would only enrich the military leaders and hurt the poor.

Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), a ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said it would be "a bad idea to put Aristide back in power at the point of the bayonet."

Larry Pressler (R-S.D.) said that Haitians should be left to work out their own problems. "I feel the administration is about to embark on a foreign policy venture driven by domestic politics," he said.

Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who with Dodd had drafted legislation to tighten up sanctions, said, "There may come a point, and it may not be too distant, when American military intervention will be required."

## Dorgan: Curb banks' gambling in derivatives

Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) announced on May 5 that he was preparing legislation which would restrict commercial banks that are heavily engaged in derivatives trading from having the benefit of federal deposit insurance.

"We should not have institutions in this country whose deposits are insured by the federal government, and ultimately the taxpayer, involved in gambling," Dorgan said. "Just as they should not have been involved in buying junk bonds, so now they should not be involved in proprietary trading in derivatives. . . . The principle of safety and soundness and the perception of whether the people think the institution is safe and sound are what determine whether our financial institutions succeed."