

## Congressional Closeup by Carl Osgood

### Africa trade act hinges on IMF, globalization

On March 11, the House passed the "African Growth and Opportunity Act" by a vote of 233-186. The bill would establish a U.S. trade policy toward sub-Saharan Africa which is contingent on African nations accepting globalization policies, including privatization, free trade, and unrestricted foreign investment. Under "additional factors," the bill also requires consideration of "the extent to which such country is in material compliance with its obligations to the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions," as a condition for participation. The IMF has destroyed Africa.

House International Relations Committee Chairman Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.) said the bill "promotes economic reform through free trade initiatives, creation of equity and infrastructure funds, the refocusing of development assistance, and the creation of special advisory committees on sub-Saharan Africa for the Import-Export Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corp."

Supporters of the bill mischaracterized conditions in Africa. Ed Royce (R-Calif.) said that U.S. aid has been a problem, because "it has often sustained what have been proven to be unsustainable economic policies in Africa." He said that Uganda, which is "probably the most aggressive reformer in Africa, has been growing at 10% for several years running. Uganda is now being called the African lion." In fact, the Ugandan economy has disintegrated under British dictator-puppet Yoweri Museveni (see *EIR*, Aug. 8, 1997, "The Ugandan Hell Behind London's Museveni Myth").

Reps. Linda Smith (R-Wash.) and Donald Payne (D-N.J.) added a provision to include "whether or not such

country is cooperating with the United States in efforts to eliminate slavery in Africa," as a criterion for participation. Making clear that the amendment is aimed at Sudan, Smith included for the record an article from the Feb. 22 *Chicago Tribune* based largely on "evidence" provided by the British-run Christian Solidarity International.

The bill was opposed by members worried about the effects of free trade on the U.S. textile industry. One of them, Dan Burton (R-Ind.), claimed that the trade provisions in the bill would benefit China, and should be changed because of human rights concerns. Otherwise, there was no serious discussion of actual conditions in Africa resulting from International Monetary Fund policies and British geopolitics.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) said on March 16 that the bill probably would not be taken up before May, and that it might even languish until the fall.

### GOP runs 'do-nothing' Congress, Dems charge

The Democratic leadership in both houses has continued to voice complaints that the Republicans are running a do-nothing Congress. On March 12, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) said, "We are not really moving on the issues" which constituents are concerned about. He said the current session has gotten off to a slow start, and "what we hear from the Republicans is they have a kind of a strategy this year of no hits, no runs, no errors. They kind of feel like, you're in the lead, you sit in the lead." Gephardt added, when asked about rumors that the House GOP was preparing for a possible impeachment inquiry of President Clin-

ton, that "if you look at what the Republicans have done over the last year, it doesn't give you a lot of confidence that they have much of an agenda other than attacking Democrats."

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) stated that "rather than give us the chance to pass our agenda, which we've tried to make very clear and specific as we can, they'd rather do nothing."

Republicans describe the 105th Congress as "historic," and have preferred to ride the wave of its perceived success, most especially the reported \$8 billion surplus in the FY 1998 budget. Several indicated to the March 16 *Washington Post* that they feel safer doing nothing. Rep. Joe Scarborough (R-Fla.) said, "We've decided to sit on our lead. . . . The leadership has learned its lesson about what happens when this Congress crosses Bill Clinton."

While other Republicans claim they do have an agenda, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) has threatened to delay the Senate debate and vote on the NATO expansion treaty if the Democrats filibuster the Coverdell education savings account bill. He said that the Congress "has a very large agenda," but getting that work done depends on cooperation from the White House.

### Gelbard condemns Milosevic on Kosovo

U.S. Ambassador Robert Gelbard, President Clinton's special representative for the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, testified on Kosovo, the ethnic Albanian region in Serbia, before House International Relations Committee hearings on March 12. He said that the Clinton administration is "focusing intensely on imme-

diate diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and stop the violence. This includes bringing every tool we have to bear to ensure that [Serbian] President [Slobodan] Milosevic understands the consequences of his actions." Gelbard appeared with Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe, to give an update on the Balkans.

Referring to the so-called Kosova Liberation Army (UCK), which evidence indicates is a creation of Serbian and British intelligence, he said, "At the same time, we have and will continue to condemn terrorist actions no matter what form or no matter where else in the world."

Committee Chairman Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.) quoted former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as once having said that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," and asked Gelbard if the actions of the UCK were "more of a defensive measure than offensive measure." Gelbard answered, "I agree it's a symptom of the climate" that has been created in Kosova, but the terrorist acts by the UCK have "provided an excuse for Milosevic. . . . There is no question that the overwhelming brutal, repressive . . . actions . . . committed by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia here, are responsible for the tragedy we have at hand right now."

The day before, the committee adversely reported out a concurrent resolution that would direct the President to pull U.S. troops out of Bosnia, on the basis of the 1973 War Powers Act. The resolution, sponsored by Tom Campbell (R-Calif.), states that it "does not necessarily reflect any disagreement with the purposes or accomplishments of such Armed Forces." The committee opposed the resolution by a vote of 22-16, but was required to report it out, according to House rules. On March 18, the resolution was defeated in the House.

## **N**orth role in cocaine trafficking questioned

Lt. Col. Oliver North (ret.) should be questioned about his role in the trafficking of crack cocaine in U.S. cities in the 1980s, said Norman Dicks (Wash.), the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, during hearings on March 16. CIA Inspector General Frederick Hitz appeared before the committee to answer questions on the CIA Inspector General's report on CIA involvement in drug trafficking, which was part of the Contra operations, a scandal that was ignited by the "Dark Alliance" series in the *San Jose Mercury News* in August 1996.

Dicks asked Hitz if his office had made any attempt to question North. Hitz replied, "No, we confined our interviews to CIA officials. We felt we knew what he would testify to on the basis of his appearances before the [1987] Iran-Contra committee."

Dicks then asked if North had ever been asked about Contra drug trafficking. Hitz admitted that no, North never had been asked to testify on that.

Dicks retorted, "It seems to me like he's one person we really ought to interview." Dicks suggested that North be called before the Intelligence Committee (which is conducting its own investigation), and asked about his knowledge of the Contras' drug-trafficking activities.

As *EIR* has reported, Vice President George Bush, for whom North worked, was in charge of the cocaine trafficking into the United States, not the CIA.

Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), who gave a half-hour statement slamming the IG's report as "not credible" and "fraught with contradictions," dominated the hearing. She carefully avoided any evidence that might lead in the direction of Bush. She even lied

that former Drug Enforcement Administration agent Celerino Castillo, who had been based in El Salvador at the time, had documented that it was the CIA that ran the cocaine into California, when, in fact, he had shown that it had been run out of Bush's office.

## **S**enate completes work on transportation bill

On March 12, the Senate passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA II) by a vote of 96-4. The Senate also agreed with House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bud Shuster (R-Pa.) to increase overall funding authorization in the bill to \$214 billion.

There remain disputes over funding allocation formulas in the bill, especially from so-called "donor" states that pay more funds from fuel tax revenues into Federal coffers than they receive back in Federal highway funds. Supporters of the bill claim that it guarantees to every state at least 91¢ for every \$1 the state contributes to the Federal transportation trust funds. However, Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) said that Pennsylvania is one of two states that lose money compared to the original ISTEA bill, which prompted both him and Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) to vote against it.

In the House, there is also opposition from the budget cutters, such as House Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich (R-Ohio), who complains that the bill busts the 1997 budget deal between Congressional Republicans and the White House. However, the bill has broad bipartisan support, suggesting that Shuster will have no trouble defeating Kasich's opposition.