

## **Congressional Calendar** by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

### **Apollo style fusion bill introduced**

Congressman Mike McCormack (D-Wash) chairman of the subcommittee on research and production of the House Science and Technology committee, introduced H.R. 6370 with 35 co-sponsors on January 28. The legislation entitled "The Fusion Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Act of 1980," establishes as a national goal of the United States the production of fusion energy generated electricity by the year 2000. McCormack estimates that this goal can be met by an expenditure of \$20 billion over the next twenty years. However the legislation mandates whatever expenditure is necessary to meet that goal.

In introducing the legislation, McCormack noted that 35 of the 41 members of the House Science and Technology Committee had co-sponsored the legislation, thus ensuring its passage through that committee. Informed sources report that House Minority Leader John Rhodes (R-Ariz) will also join as a co-sponsor. In a nationally televised response to President Carter's State of the Union address, Rhodes stated on Jan. 28, that the United States could have fusion power by 1995 and that a major effort should be embarked upon to do so.

In remarks on the House floor Jan. 29, McCormack said "When we enter the era of fusion energy, we will enter an era of absolutely unlimited energy supplies for all humankind for all time ... there is no doubt that this accomplishment will be the second most important event in the history of the human race—second only to the controlled

use of fire. Accordingly, the time has come to make a national commitment to an aggressive fusion program."

McCormack's bill mandates several specific steps. First, the immediate construction of a fusion engineering test facility which would allow recent scientific breakthroughs to actually be put to an engineering test; second, steps to ensure that the educational infrastructure at the university level is adequate to produce the scientists and engineers necessary to move in to the fusion era; and third, steps by the U.S. government to embark on a major informational campaign to educate the public on the promise of fusion energy technologies.

### **Final action on windfall profits tax expected within days**

The House-Senate Conference Committee appointed to work out a final version of the windfall profits tax has been meeting continuously since Congress came back from its Christmas recess and is expected to finish its work on the bill within the next two weeks. The Conference committee had already agreed before the recess that the total amount of revenues that would be gotten from the bill's provisions would be \$227.3 billion and since then has been hammering out how the tax would be levied.

The committee has already agreed on the rate at which different types of oil will be taxed, above a per barrel base-rate that the committee is in the process of determining. The tax rate for merged tier 1 and 2 oil will be 70 percent; the rate for strip oil will be 60 percent and

the rate for new, tertiary and heavy oil will be 30 percent.

The conference committee has decided that the first 1,000 barrels of oil produced will *not* be exempt from taxation as provided for in the Senate bill. This will have a tremendously negative effect on the small independent producers, wiping out a great many. The conference committee has established that the first 1,000 barrels will be taxed at a rate only slightly lower than the rest of production—50 percent for tier 1 and 2 oil, 30 percent on strip oil.

The base rates have been tentatively set: \$13.08 per barrel base rate on tier 1 and 2 oil, \$15.30 for strip oil and \$16.55 for new, tertiary and heavy oil. The above tax rates will thus be applied on prices charged above these rates.

There are several other issues that remain to be solved before the final version of the tax bill is voted on, including issues that do not directly relate to oil production. Included is a provision that would exempt the first \$200 of interest on savings accounts from being taxed. The conference committee is scheduled to meet again Jan. 31 to continue its work on the bill.

### **Moves afoot to loosen reins on CIA**

In the wake of Iran and the Afghanistan crises, momentum is growing in the House and Senate to remove some of the restraints that were placed on the CIA during the early 1970s. On Jan. 28 Congressman C. W. Bill Young (R-Fla), a member of the permanent select Committee on Intelligence introduced the Intelligence Reform Act of 1980, H.R. 6316. The bill would

provide that the CIA report covert activities only to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees instead of to the eight congressional committees which receive that information now (this modifies the Hughes-Ryan Act); change the law so that foreign agents would no longer have access to information through the Freedom of Information Act; and make it a federal crime to reveal the identity of CIA agents. This is companion legislation to a bill introduced by Senator Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) in the Senate.

A source noted that this is the "barebones" approach to intelligence reform, and that Senator Huddleston (D-Ky) and the administration would prefer legislation which included the above points but also civil rights guarantees to continue to prevent CIA abuses.

The Senate reportedly favors the Huddleston approach, but the House reportedly favors the "barebones" approach. Senate majority leader Robert Byrd (D-W. Va) declared his support for proposals to "remove unreasonable restraints" on the CIA in late January. Byrd declared that "this will be a security minded Congress." Byrd specifically endorsed the three points raised in the Young bill.

### **Goldwater calls for FCC task force on media access**

In a speech delivered at the end of January, Sen. Barry Goldwater, ranking republican on the communications subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee, called for the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task

force to review the functioning of the reasonable access and equal time provisions of the Federal Communications Act. Specifically, Senator Goldwater is questioning whether the major networks are complying with sections 312 and 315 of the Act in the current presidential race. Several campaign committees, including the Carter-



*Senator Goldwater*

Mondale Committee and Citizens for LaRouche, have lodged complaints with the Commission charging that the networks are refusing to make reasonable offers of time.

Goldwater reportedly requested that subcommittee chairman Ernest Hollings (D-SC) hold oversight hearings on this matter. Hollings reportedly indicated a lack of willingness to do so, and Goldwater decided to go the FCC task force route instead. A spokesman for Citizens for LaRouche noted that this

procedure could become immensely drawn out and that the networks are already playing an important role in shaping the election.

### **Congress endorses resolution urging olympic ban**

The Senate, by a vote of 88 to 4, endorsed a resolution calling on the U.S. Olympic team to boycott the 1980 summer Olympics, or for the relocation or cancelling of the games, unless the Soviet Union withdraws troops from Afghanistan. Last Thursday the House of Representatives passed a similar resolution, which differed from the Senate version in demanding that action be taken on the summer Olympics if the Soviet Union did not remove its troops by Feb. 20. The Senate bill does not set a timetable for withdrawal of Soviet troops. It also calls on the Secretary of State to convince American allies to join in supporting the U.S. policy.

In the Senate, four votes were cast against the measure by Senators Boshwitz (R-Minn), Hatfield (R-Ore) Tsongas (D-Mass) and Stevens (R-Alaska). Stevens is the acting minority leader. Stevens said, "I am saddened that both the executive branch and Congress feel that it is necessary to inject what I consider to be politics and political considerations into a long-standing tradition and to in effect disrupt the games ... I apparently stand alone on this matter but I think that history will show that the action that is being taken by the Senate and the House, and the position that was taken by the president, were wrong."