

Congressional Calendar by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

Senators force Joint Chief split from Carter

Using the renomination hearing of Gen. David C. Jones as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a forum June 16, members of the Senate Armed Services Committee elicited statements from Jones which put him at variance with the Carter administration. Sen. Henry Jackson drilled Jones on whether the current 1980 fiscal budget is adequate to meet U.S. defense needs in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Jones replied that he was not satisfied with the budget and that he and the Joint Chiefs had requested that a supplemental appropriation be put before the Congress, a request that was turned down by Defense Secretary Harold Brown. Ranking Republican John Tower of Texas asked Jones if the administration's decision to cancel the B-1 bomber and slow down production of the MX missile and the Trident missile had left the U.S. strategically worse off today. Jones replied, "Yes, we are worse off today."

Senators attack Israel settlements policy

Sen. Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.) moved to cut \$150 million out of \$2.1 billion in foreign aid earmarked for Israel, as an expression of U.S. disapproval of Israeli West Bank settlements policy. While the Stevenson amendment was swamped by a vote of 85 to 7, the floor debate June 18 drew out strong criticisms of Israel and the amendment by one unusual, and powerful, ally—Senate Majority leader Robert Byrd.

Last year Stevenson offered a similar amendment tied to contin-

ued Israeli bombing of Lebanon, and last week's amendment reiterated and expanded his criticisms of the Begin government's refusal to settle the Palestinian issue and the status of the West Bank except on its own terms of annexation . . . is an obstacle to peace and a cause of continued, if not accelerated Middle East instability and violence." Stevenson stated that his amendment was offered in part in an attempt to bolster the anti-Begin movement in Israel, "[the amendment] joins the United States with the opinion of most Israelis. . . ."

Conferees agree to synfuels bill

The House-Senate conferees reviewing the mammoth synthetic fuels bill, agreed June 16 to a final version of the legislation. The bill creates a U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation that would provide financial assistance to private companies producing synthetic fuels such as coal, gas and biomass. The congressional conferees approved \$20 billion for initial funding for this corporation, in order to meet a goal of 500,000 barrels a day of synthetic fuels produced by 1987. The legislation makes clear that the money is to be used for development of these expensive, inefficient energy programs such as the coal gasification programs developed in Nazi Germany, and not for nuclear energy production. In addition, for the first two years, the synthetic fuels programs will not be run by the corporation, but by the Department of Defense.

The conferees added a section to the bill that ordered President Carter to resume filling the strateg-

ic oil reserves, at a rate of 100,000 barrels a day beginning Oct. 1. The aim is a 750 million barrel reserve. At last week's OPEC meeting, Saudi Oil Minister Sheik Yamani hinted that further filling of the reserve could lead to cuts in his country's production.

The bill is expected to be formally passed by both houses by the end of the month.

Reps attack volunteer army

"This Gawdawful volunteer force is not working. We have more equal opportunity officers, quality of life officers, psychiatrists and retention NCO's than we have officers teaching our men how to drive a tank. We've got to have an army that can move and shoot and we don't have it!"

Mississippi Democrat Sonny Montgomery was joined by a dozen other Democratic and Republican congressmen in an angry attack on the volunteer army in House Armed Services Committee hearings on June 11, convened to examine the manpower crisis in the U.S. military. While the principal witness, Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander repeated, "We do not have an army of incompetents and misfits," data relased by committee members revealed otherwise.

Members charged that 45 percent of incoming recruits currently test in the lowest mental categories, that 37 percent read at a fifth grade level or less, and that less than 50 percent have high school diplomas. As a result, the Army training manuals have recently been downgraded to a simpler writing style. Acute shortages of manpower also exist at the other end of the scale. Manpower Subcommittee Chairman Rich-

ard White (D-Tex.) reported that out of 340,000 first-term enlisted troops, only 276 are college graduates.

The Senate joined the House in an incompetent response to this debacle with passage of President Carter's Draft Registration Proposal on the same day as the House hearings. The Senate Armed Services Committee also passed an amendment to the military procurement bill which would reduce the army by 25,000 soldiers in recognition of the fact that, in reality, at least two full divisions are undermanned or mismanned. Sponsored by Georgia Democrat Senator Sam Nunn, the army could increase its forces only if it increases its percentage of high school graduate recruits.

Byrd did not offer a statement on his vote in favor of Stevenson. The previous day, one of Israel's staunchest supporters, Henry Jackson (D-Wa.) attacked Begin's settlement policy as undercutting American support for Israel. But Jackson also strongly condemned the European Mideast initiative. Jackson voted against the Stevenson amendment.

Senate passes nuclear plant regulations

By a voice vote Monday, June 16, the Senate passed a measure that requires new licenses for nuclear plants to be conditional upon the existence of evacuation and emergency plans. The bill directs the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to improve state safety standards and to review emergency plans in states with existing plants under construction.

The legislation also requires the NRC to site plants farther away from population centers than now required, and raises to \$100,000 the fines for violators of the NRC rules. The bill also speeds up placing full-time inspectors at plants, provides training programs for plant operators and orders the NRC to undertake a systematic safety evaluation of all plants. The floor manager for the bill was Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) who has opposed nuclear energy plant construction without stringent rules. The bill now goes to President Carter for signing, as the House has already passed the bill.

High-energy labs face cutbacks

The current round of congressional budget cuts threaten to seriously damage basic science in this country, according to spokesmen for several of the nation's high energy research labs who met June 18 at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois. The cuts of some \$28 million were suggested by the Department of Energy and approved by the Water Resources and Energy Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. If passed by the full House and Senate, which now appears likely, the cuts will destroy the nation's high-energy research capability and force the laying off of 650 highly skilled workers. The cuts will mean the curtailment of research at some of the nation's leading research centers, including the complete shutdown of major accelerators which accelerate nuclear particles to high energies, the "atom smashers," for several months of the year.

The cuts will be so devastating to U.S. science that, despite the administration's role in engineering the cuts, President Carter's science advisor Dr. Frank Press was forced to comment: "The notion that these accelerators, which have made American science so famous at the cost of huge capital investments, should have to be turned off for lack of operating money is astounding to me."

Armed Services Cttee to probe computer goofs

The Senate Armed Services Committee will investigate false warnings that the NORAD computer issued three separate occasions recently, the last on June 6, indicating that the United States was under missile attack by the Soviet Union, according to a June 20 announcement by Mississippi Democrat John Stennis, committee chairman.

Earlier, John Tower of Texas in a television interview had indicated that he and other committee members wanted to investigate the incidents, which saw all U.S. forces placed on high alert, and afterwards produced strong denunciations from the Soviet Union.

Even as the announcement of investigation came, rumors continued to circulate on Capitol Hill that the false alarms had not been a mistake at all, but simulations, or part of Carter foreign policy—"calculated insanity. General David Jones, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, said that the "mistakes" in the computer had served a "useful function," by showing the Soviet Union that the United States was prepared to mobilize on a moment's notice.