

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Senator D'Amato hits CIA on "Bulgarian connection"

Senator Alphonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) charged the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on Feb. 7 with deliberately discouraging Italian investigations into the Bulgarian, and possible Soviet, "connection" to the May 13, 1981 attempted assassination of the Pope. D'Amato was in Rome as a member of the Helsinki Commission on Human Rights.

D'Amato's charges that the CIA's efforts were "shockingly inept," and that the agency had failed to pursue an investigation into the shooting of Pope John Paul II by the Turkish black terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca, echoed charges made several weeks ago by William Safire of the *New York Times*.

The New York Senator took care to praise Italian Magistrate Ilario Martella, who heads the investigation of the attempted assassination, saying that in his impression, "the Italian investigators are not chasing illusory theories. . . the Bulgarian connection is well grounded in fact, and they have information in their possession which establishes it." Magistrate Martella, however, refused to discuss any of the evidence with D'Amato.

D'Amato complained that the CIA did not reveal any secrets to him either.

TASS, the official Soviet news agency, on Feb. 7 accused the White House of attempting to derail U.S.-Soviet arms talks by "stirring up" allegations that Bulgaria was involved in the shooting of the Pope.

TASS referred to a report on NBC news that Vice-President George Bush had given Italian officials a message from the President encouraging the investigation of Bulgarian involvement in the attempted assassination, even if it led ultimately to the doorstep of Yuri

V. Andropov. Bush and the Italian government have denied that Reagan's message mentioned the shooting.

House re-establishes Select Narcotics Committee

The House of Representatives, amid questions of the effectiveness of the committee's work, voted 290 to 77 Feb. 8 to reauthorize the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control for two additional years. It was proposed that the committee be expanded from 17 to 25 members. The committee was first authorized in 1976 and has been renewed every two years thereafter.

Objections to the reauthorization came from budget-cutting advocates, for the most part conservative Republicans led by House Minority Whip Trent Lott (R-Miss.), but also from a few more liberal members such as Bill Frenzel (R-Minn.). Lott cited the Committee's lack of legislative power.

In the waning days of the 96th Congress, it was recommended that the committee be established as a permanent special oversight committee on drug abuse and control, complete with the authority of the regular committees, but the House has yet to act on this recommendation. Frenzel objected to the reauthorization on the basis that: "If we want to attack the drug problem we ought to add the three-quarters of a billion dollars to the Justice Department appropriation to fight drugs instead of squandering our resources on a powerless committee."

In defending the committee's accomplishments, acting chairman Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) noted that the committee's efforts have included: assisting the standing committees dur-

ing the 98th Congress in changing the Posse Comitatus Act to permit "certain military assistance to civilian drug law enforcement agencies"; supporting the "repeal [of] the Percy Amendment prohibiting the use of U.S. foreign assistance funds to support the herbicidal spraying of paraquat on marijuana crops"; introduction and mobilization of support by committee members for "legislation that would improve criminal forfeiture of drug assets and profits, increase penalties for drug trafficking, and permit the Attorney General to use certain proceeds from narcotics-related forfeitures in drug law enforcement"; and working with foreign countries to help improve the efforts to stem international drug flow.

While many members of the committee have their hearts in the right place, the committee by and large has not made an effort that steps on the toes of the drug lobby. No one on the committee has had the political courage to "name the names" of the major backers of drug traffic, nor has the committee yet held serious hearings on the financial laundering and flow of drug money.

House members balk on IMF quotas

Reflecting constituency pressure that has been mobilized by the National Democratic Policy Committee, Democratic House Banking Committee members showed some resistance to voting up a quota increase for the International Monetary Fund at hearings, continued Feb. 8, on "international finance and the role of the U.S. banks."

Representative Frank Annunzio

(D-Ill.) told witnesses "not to mention Paul Volcker here, because he is an utter failure. . . . Paul Revere had an easy ride compared to what I am going to get, if I vote for [the quota increases]."

The witnesses included some of the nation's largest banks: Chase Manhattan, Citibank, and Bank of America.

Buddy Roemer (D-La.) told the bankers that a "deep, deep resentment hangs heavy over this committee from what you have said here. . . . You want credit overseas when we can't lend at home. . . . You are the oligopolistic masters of interest rates rather than the slaves of interest rates, and you say that high interest rates have helped create the problem. . . . There is resentment because you call this a jobs bill when you resist a drop in interest rates at home. . . . You resist a national banking system yet seem to suggest an international banking system. . . .

"I am not inclined to vote for the IMF increase unless you can give us the economic facts and figures to show that this is a liquidity and not a solvency problem, and until I hear from you the truth that it is a bailout. . . ."

Maryland Democrat Parren Mitchell stated that he "would not support any substantial increase, and will in fact argue against an increase of the magnitude of 50 percent, unless you can produce a document that seriously delineates that this will work." Mitchell, who noted that he had always previously supported these international institutions without question, was one of the committee members who stated that there was a long-term solvency problem for the debtor nations.

Other committee members agreed that they were opposed to the IMF

quota increase unless it could be demonstrated that the debt problem was a short-term liquidity problem rather than a long-term solvency problem. One asked how the Citibank representative had the audacity to call the IMF vote support for a "jobs program" when the IMF was demanding that countries cut their imports, a measure which would force American industry to cut production.

Chase Manhattan's Bill Ogden was ridiculed for first admitting that the world was in the current debt crisis because "no one" predicted the depth and extent of the current collapse, and then claiming that the IMF increase would avoid a crisis. Ogden was forced to admit that "if you project the decade of the 1980s as one of no growth, then we are in a completely different situation. . . . we are in a situation like the 1930s. . . ."

Investigations subcommittee targets mid-Atlantic region

The Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee (SPIS) has announced a series of February hearings on organized crime, which have as their apparent objective an Abscam-like tarring of networks throughout the mid-Atlantic region. While the apparent (and perennial) target of SPIS appears to be the Teamsters union, the Reagan administration itself may come under fire as a result of the hearings, which intend to probe organized crime connections into toxic waste dumping—the issue which has embroiled the Environmental Protection Agency in controversy.

SPIS will conduct hearings on Feb. 15, 23, and 24, and members will broadly focus on an examination of

"what organized crime is today," using the mid-Atlantic region (Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland) as a test area of investigation. The Feb. 15 hearings will become a typical SPIS "dog and pony show," looking at the sensational activities of the Pagans motorcycle gang as an example of "non-traditional" organized crime. However, on Feb. 23 and 24, the subcommittee will hear from the Pennsylvania Crime Commission, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the FBI, among others, to look at "traditional organized crime,"—the mafia. The Gambino family and the Teamsters, particularly in Northern New Jersey, will be targets of the subcommittee.

Organized crime activity in the toxic waste disposal industry in northern New Jersey will cap off the hearings schedule. Committee sources denied that their investigation had any connection to the unfolding controversy in the Environmental Protection Agency, where the administration of the toxic waste "superfund" has resulted in at least one firing, a congressional investigation, and a separation-of-powers controversy.

The administration is being charged with malfeasance in the dispersal of funds in cleaning up toxic wastes, and the sudden emergence of SPIS in investigating organized crime connections to the waste dumping industry suggests a broadening of the controversy.

Committee sources report that the hearings will continue to build a record for Subcommittee ranking Democrat Sam Nunn's (D-Ga.) "labor racketeering" legislation, which would bar union officials from holding union office upon conviction of a crime, rather than upon expiration of the appeals proceeding.