

## Congressional Closeup by William Jones

### 'No fatal flaws' in Space Station: NASA manager

Dr. William Lenoir, former astronaut and NASA manager for Space Station Freedom, had to make his third appearance on March 29 before a House committee to counter much of the "black propaganda" which has been spouted in recent days by the *New York Times* on how Space Station Freedom is "fatally flawed."

Lenoir explained how the space agency does iterative studies to estimate things such as the number of hours of EVAs (extra-vehicular activities) required for station repair and maintenance, starting with very little information, and refining the estimates as the work proceeds.

The preliminary design review for Space Station Freedom is not due until December, when more detailed estimates of factors such as the life expectancy of particular parts and components will be available. Design changes will continue to be made for the next two years.

### Bush-appointed attorney confirmed for top S&L post

Timothy Ryan, Jr., the Bush appointee to head the Office of Thrift Supervision and oversee the cleanup of the nation's ailing savings and loans, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate by a 62-37 vote on April 5. Ryan has little knowledge of savings and loan institutions and had few ideas about how to restore the sector to health, although this is not necessarily a disqualification from handling an important post in the Bush administration.

As Sen. Richard Shelby (D-Ala.) commented, "Half the Cabinet members don't have any experience in their areas." Moreover, Ryan admitted to having smoked cocaine back in the 1970s. The Senate Banking Commit-

tee had rejected the Ryan nomination on Friday, March 30, but the White House claimed that they had no candidates for the job other than the 44-year-old attorney.

Ryan did considerable lobbying for himself on Capitol Hill during the next days and succeeded in garnering the needed votes in the full Senate. The qualities which led to the White House appointment of Ryan were outlined by White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, who said, "We want somebody who can handle the law and is pretty tough, that can go in there and straighten out the problems in this industry." For the White House the problems of the thrift sector are not a question of economics but rather of law enforcement, not "what's to be done about it?" but "who's going to take the rap?"

### Shevardnadze tries to woo Senate leaders

The Soviet foreign minister undoubtedly knew that he would get sympathy from the Bush administration for the plight of Mikhail Gorbachov, although he was by no means unwitting of the outrage generated in the U.S. by the Soviet squeeze on Lithuania. He also knew that that outrage would reflect itself, however dimly, in the U.S. Senate, the body which would have to ratify any trade or arms control treaty. Therefore he took some time to meet with Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) and Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.).

In the one-hour meeting with them at the Soviet Embassy, Shevardnadze also stressed that if the U.S. didn't play ball, Gorbachov might be replaced. It's a "testing time for Gorbachov," said Dole, who had been the point man for the administration in stopping the Helms Amendment, call-

ing for U.S. recognition of Lithuania. Both Mitchell and Dole have been invited to Moscow for more sweet-talk.

### Senator D'Amato refused entry to Lithuania

At a Capitol Hill press conference on April 4 arranged by the Conservative Caucus, Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) had announced that he was going to leave for Lithuania that very evening, armed with a visa from the Lithuanian government (no. 003), flying to Warsaw, and then would try to cross the Polish-Lithuanian border, recently closed by the Soviets.

D'Amato said that the Bush administration was treating the Soviet tanks in Lithuania "like welcome wagons," and that the media acted "like puppy dogs" when Moscow told them to get out of Lithuania. Traveling to Poland, D'Amato was refused entry into Lithuania April 5.

Talking to Associated Press from Poland, D'Amato said, "The sooner the U.S. wakes up to what is taking place and becomes realistic, the better. Gorbachov says one thing and does another. He talks about freedom and yet denies access to a free country. That is wrong," said D'Amato. Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), also speaking at the April 4 press conference, said that if Gorbachov's position was so weak that a negative statement from the White House would bring him down, "then it's not worth staking our claim on him."

### Lithuania resolution wins huge House majority

On April 4, the House of Representatives in an overwhelming 416-3 vote passed House Concurrent Resolution 289 on Lithuania. It calls on the Presi-

dent "to reaffirm his commitment to an independent and democratic Lithuania and to seek ways to actively demonstrate that commitment," and "to plan for and take those steps, at the earliest possible time, that would normalize diplomatic relations between the United States and the new government of Lithuania."

It also urges the President "to seek effective political support among our allies for Lithuanian self-determination." The resolution was voted on the first day of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to the United States.

## **Rep. Savage counters slanders of 'anti-Semitism'**

Rep. Gus Savage (D-Ill.), been accused of "anti-Semitism" for his attempts to expose the powerful American-Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC), counterattack on March 30 by inviting congressional colleagues to review the tapes of the speech in which he allegedly made anti-Semitic remarks. Savage had scored his congressional opponent not because he received support from Jewish organizations, but because he had received 96% of his funding from AIPAC, which is "supportive of a foreign nation." "It's very dangerous," said Savage, "when a foreign nation can pour 96% of the money into a campaign."

"Don't confuse AIPAC with the Jewish community," Savage added. "I'm not convinced AIPAC would have the support of the Jewish community." AIPAC had launched a major campaign to defeat Savage in the congressional elections. In comments on the House floor on March 29, Savage, citing a *Washington Post* article by Charles R. Babcock, had noted that "AIPAC's major goal is maintaining

the level of foreign aid to Israel, now \$3 billion a year and deflecting arms sales to Arab countries." Savage added that AIPAC therefore was working in the interest of a foreign nation interfering in the internal affairs and the elections of this Nation."

## **Director of FBI: Soviet spying on the increase**

In testimony before the House Judiciary subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights on April 6, FBI Director William Sessions said that because of "arms control agreements, business opportunities in both the Soviet Union and the United States, immigration policies and numerous cultural and educational exchanges, Soviet intelligence services have now a much greater opportunity than ever before to exploit the United States and its citizens in an effort to compromise our national security."

Sessions characterized as "inaccurate" the perception that spying is on the decline as a result of improved U.S.-Soviet relations. "We must not drop our guard," said Sessions, "especially when faced with the prevailing uncertainties."

## **Bush reneges on promise to Chinese students**

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), sponsor of the proposed legislation granting asylum to Chinese students persecuted by the Chinese communist regime, said the administration had not fulfilled its promise to protect the students. In a handwritten note Jan. 24 to Rep. Connie Mack (R-Fla.), Pelosi had said he would issue an "executive order" that "does better by the students" than the proposed congressional legislation. President Bush had

vetoed this legislation.

In fact, Bush issued no executive order, but had simply written "instructions to the Justice Department." "It's typical of a syndrome in this administration," said Pelosi, "of 'let's not do anything about it and say we did. . . . Let's say my executive order will protect the Chinese students but not do one.'" Pelosi said that nothing has been published in the *Federal Register* that would provide firm procedures for the INS to follow with regard to the students, many of whom feared to return to China after the Tiananmen Square massacre last June.

## **Biden calls for reinstating coffee accord**

On March 30, Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Md.), Judiciary Committee, presided over hearings on the Andean countries in which he made clear his recognition of the damage being done to the economies of the Andean region due to the collapse of the international coffee pact. Biden criticized the Bush administration, saying that it had "responded very slowly and cautiously to Colombia," referring to the "heroic war of Colombia." The "caution" of the Bush administration, Biden said, was "beyond what is needed."

"Why wait until 1991 to send new aid?" he asked. "We should act now." He noted that the effect of Colombia's war on drugs was to depress the price of coca in Bolivia, which makes them ripe for crop substitution efforts, and stressed that "our response should be swift and dramatic" because there is a better chance to move farmers away from producing coca. Biden was seconded by Sen. Alan Dixon (D-Ill.), who said that he thought the coffee pact should be reinstated at once.