

## Congressional Closeup by William Jones

### Senators call for Balkan intervention

Bipartisan support is building in the Senate and, to a lesser extent, the House, for some form of military intervention in the Balkans to prevent the "ethnic cleansing" by Serbian forces. The Senate group is led by Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), and includes Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.), Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), and Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.).

House members of the group favor lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia and using U.S.-allied aircraft to enforce the no-fly zone, but only a few seem to favor bombing Serbian artillery positions. Generally, opposition to U.S. military involvement is strong in the House, with Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.) expressing strong skepticism.

Lugar and others ignored a plea by U.N. special envoy Cyrus Vance that senators not meet with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic when he visited Washington in early January. They discussed a wide range of military options with Izetbegovic, who did not request ground forces but made a passionate plea for air strikes, the lifting of the arms embargo, and a plan to cope with thousands of starving and freezing refugees.

Simultaneous with the Bosnian President's visit, the Congressional Helsinki Commission held hearings on Jan. 6 further detailing Serbian war crimes. When asked about his opinion of the Vance-Owen "mediation," Senator DeConcini said, "I'm very disappointed in that plan and I feel it's really difficult to justify insisting their [the Bosnians] sitting down with the very people that have been pegged by the U.N. itself as potential war crimi-

nals—to have to negotiate with them in that context." DeConcini opposed dividing Bosnia-Herzegovina, since that would violate U.N., CSCE, and Helsinki agreements on territories taken as a result of military action.

### Black Caucus mobilizes to save Africa subcommittee

After intense lobbying by members of the Congressional Black Caucus, House Speaker Tom Foley (D-Wash.) and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.) agreed to support a special waiver from new House rules in order to ensure the survival of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa.

Under new House rules, each committee is required to reduce the number of its subcommittees to six in order to "streamline" operations.

Black Caucus members threatened sit-ins and demonstrations, and left open the possibility of their 39 members defecting to the Republicans on important votes if the subcommittee were abolished. Foley was forced to concede that it was "important to have a subcommittee which oversees that large a portion of the world." The waiver must, however, be approved by the Committee on Organization, Study, and Review, and then ratified by the full Democratic Caucus.

### McCurdy ousted from committee chair

Rep. Dave McCurdy (D-Okla.) was removed as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee by Speaker Tom Foley (D-Wash.) on Jan. 7.

McCurdy served during the election campaign as military adviser to President-elect Bill Clinton and was

mooted for the post of defense secretary. McCurdy seemed eager for the post, even going so far as to warn that if it were given to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin (D-Wisc.), the Armed Services chair would fall to Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), long an opponent of military spending.

McCurdy had made himself some powerful enemies. During the height of the House Bank scandal last year, McCurdy let it be known that he would be available for the Speaker's post if Foley were forced to resign as a result of the scandal.

Recently, McCurdy supported a Republican-launched rules change which would limit all House committee chairmen to six-year tenures, an idea rejected by Foley. Ironically, McCurdy has himself served as Intelligence Committee chairman for nine years, one of the reasons given by Foley for removing him.

The new chairman will be chosen from among the Democrats now serving on the committee.

### Justice Department probe of Rostenkowski broadens

Federal investigators, led by U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens, have obtained records in Washington and Chicago of Rep. Dan Rostenkowski's (D-Ill.) bank accounts, as well as financial records of his campaign organization, congressional offices, business accounts, and statements filed with financial institutions.

In an interview with the *Washington Post* on Jan. 8, the House Ways and Means Committee chairman complained, "My lawyers tell me I'm not a target and then I see all these leaks. I think I'm being tried in the press. They don't have anything, but it

makes me look guilty.”

The probe goes far beyond the scope of the original probe begun last year, where investigators tried to determine whether Rostenkowski and two other House Democrats tried to convert expense vouchers to cash through transactions made to look like stamp purchases. According to sources cited by the *Post*, the Internal Revenue Service has also been brought into the investigation.

## Committee assignments meted out in new Congress

The composition of the new committees was worked out as the 103rd Congress was sworn in.

In the aftermath of the “sexual harassment” circus during the hearings of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas last year, two of the new women senators were appointed to the all-male Senate Judiciary Committee. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Carol Mosely Braun (D-Ill.) were appointed to the committee by their Democratic colleagues on Jan. 6. In order to add two members onto a committee where there were no vacancies, committee chairman Joseph Biden (D-Del.) lobbied to expand his committee by four seats. To balance out the two new Democratic appointees, two more Republicans will be added.

Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), who won a special election to replace the late Sen. Quentin Burdick, was given a seat on the Finance Committee, where Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) is slated to take over the chair from Lloyd Bentsen, who is Clinton’s nominee for treasury secretary.

Newly appointed to the Appropriations Committee were Feinstein and Herbert Kohl (D-Wisc.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.).

Bob Graham (D-Fla.), Chuck Robb (D-Va.), and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) were appointed to the Armed Services Committee. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) took over as Intelligence Committee chairman, and Max Baucus (D-Mont.) was added to the committee, replacing Moynihan.

On the House side, Rep. William Natcher (D-Ky.) has taken over from Jamie Whitten (D-Miss.) as chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) is the new House Armed Services Committee chair, succeeding Les Aspin, and Martin Sabo (D-Minn.) has been named Budget Committee chairman. Sabo, a liberal, was chosen to succeed Leon Panetta (D-Calif.) instead of the more conservative John Spratt (D-S.C.).

## Clinton nominees face easy confirmation

President-elect Bill Clinton was promised by the Democratic leadership that they would work to put his cabinet in place by the time of the inauguration—a promise which it looks as if they will be able to keep.

The only delay seems to be caused by Clinton himself, who has appointed only a dozen people, despite the initial assertion by the Clinton campaign that there would be as many as 200 appointments in place by Jan. 20.

At one point it looked as if a Republican “truth squad” under Senate Minority Whip Trent Lott (R-Miss.) would seriously begin scrutinizing all the Clinton candidates, digging up whatever dirt they could find on them. But after a week and a half of hearings, the only serious questions which have been raised have been with regard to Clinton’s nominee for secretary of state, Warren Christopher, concerning his knowledge of Army

surveillance of civil rights and anti-war activists in the late 1960s, an accusation which he had denied when he was confirmed as President Carter’s deputy secretary of state in 1977.

In other hearings, Clinton nominees were treated with kid gloves, with treasury secretary nominee Lloyd Bentsen given a unanimous committee endorsement even before they started asking questions.

Although Lott claimed that they couldn’t find a “smoking gun” on any of the candidates, other sources are saying that the GOP strategy is to allow the nominees to take their posts and try to deal with the nation’s crisis, hedging their bets that the Democrats will soon stumble.

## GOP resignations portend more aggressive profile

In a surprise move during the first days of business, two moderate Republicans, Rep. Steve Gunderson (Wisc.), one of the GOP’s two Chief Deputy Whips, and Deputy Whip Rep. Fred Upton (Mich.), resigned from the party’s leadership ranks on Jan. 8.

Capitol Hill sources indicate that the two are distancing themselves from the confrontational tactics being pursued by Whip Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), who is eyeing the post of House Minority Leader Bob Michel (R-Ill.). Michel is considered by some as too weak to play hardball with the Clinton administration, which many feel is the only way to gain seats in the next election.

Gingrich is supported by the other Chief Deputy Whip, Bob Walker (R-Pa.), and by the newly elected Republican Conference chairman Richard Armey (D-Tex.). Gunderson will not be replaced and the other Chief Deputy Whip post will simply be eliminated.