

## Congressional Closeup by William Jones

### Senate keeps ban on HIV-positive immigrants

The Senate voted 72-23 on Feb. 18 to maintain the immigration ban on people who are HIV-positive. The vote is a challenge to President Clinton, who had promised to lift the ban if he were elected. The ban was appended to the \$17.8 billion bill funding the National Institutes of Health for three years. A similar measure has been offered in the House by Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.).

The Senate resolution, sponsored by Don Nickles (R-Okla.), gained the support of 34 Democrats over a milder amendment offered by Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) which would have delayed enforcement of the policy for 90 days.

Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), a supporter of the Nickles amendment, complained that "the public health agenda of America" had been "torn apart by an AIDS lobby which promotes special rights rather than public safety."

The White House may try to overrule the ban through an executive order but, given the support for the Nickles amendment, it doesn't seem eager to do so. As White House spokesman Dee Dee Meyers said, "The vote margin is fairly dramatic."

### Clinton delays stimulus until cuts are approved

After day-long negotiations with House Democratic leaders on Feb. 24, President Clinton requested a delay in consideration of his short-term stimulus proposal until Congress votes on the cuts contained in the package. This followed attempts by House Democrats to get Clinton to postpone any stimulus package until after the House deals with the fiscal 1992 budget resolution.

But while Democrats are under

pressure because of the hysteria over the deficit, Clinton is also meeting resistance to the proposed cuts from Democrats. Although the Clinton program offers "investment incentives," it is clear that it would mean major cuts in many social and economic programs. One question will be which districts will take the bulk of the cuts.

Cabinet members went to Capitol Hill on Feb. 19 to defend the economic program announced by Clinton on Feb. 18 in his State of the Union message before Congress. Office of Management and Budget Director Leon Panetta met a lot of flak from House Republicans who complained that the Clinton program had not gone far enough in its social cuts and that it introduced new taxes.

During the hearings on Sept. 19, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) queried Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen as to what he would offer the laid-off workers in the aerospace industry, which is subject to major cuts in the Clinton program.

### Gonzalez says U.S. under Fed is like Weimar Germany

In comments on the House floor on Feb. 16, House Banking Committee Chairman Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.) compared the rule of the Federal Reserve to the situation in Germany during the Weimar Republic.

Characterizing the Federal Reserve as "a creature of the commercial banking system," Gonzalez noted that "there is not a note or a bill, whatever we want to call it, in our pockets that does not say 'Federal Reserve Note.' . . . It was not always that way. I remember more often than not when it was a U.S. Treasury note," and "that is one of the causes why we are in the mess that we are in."

Gonzalez referred to the situation

in Weimar Germany. "I remember the moratorium. Germany said, 'You just cannot wring blood out of a turnip. We cannot pay the reparations you have imposed on us.' . . . In the old *Liberty* magazine that I sold during the Depression, I remember reading the article and seeing the features of emaciated, pale-looking German mothers with little kids in line and the caption said, 'German mothers waiting for milk.' Then there is a picture . . . it shows a whole row of men with their head on what looks like an iron rail, and it said, 'German homeless men in a railroad station sleeping.' That was in 1932. Then we began to see, like we did in 1982, the so-called homeless [in the United States]. . . .

"We began as a creditor nation in the year 1914, and we did not become a debtor nation again until Sept. 16, 1985. . . . And today, less than seven years after, we are the greatest debtor nation in the world. And we want to delude ourselves into thinking we are the strongest, and the only, what do they call it, unipolar power. It is a delusion."

### Former U.S. officials hit U.S. Bosnia plan

In a hearing before the European Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Feb. 18, former U.S. government officials expressed a wide range of opposition to the plan, a variation of the notorious Vance-Owen plan, advanced by Secretary of State Warren Christopher for former Yugoslavia.

The Vance-Owen plan would "cantonize" the present republics, fragmenting the tiny republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and would legitimize the territorial conquests by the Serbian forces in their policy of "ethnic cleansing" against the Croats and the

Bosnian Muslims. The Christopher proposal, although formally critical of the Vance-Owen plan, accepts the basic premises of "cantonization," introduces the use of U.S. ground forces to implement the new divisions, and would bring the Russians in as "mediators."

Former Reagan U.N. ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, complaining that the Christopher proposal "stops short of an adequate response," suggested that the United States use air strikes against Serbian position in order to stop Serbian aggression. "Unfortunately," Kirkpatrick said, "in this first important action in foreign policy, President Clinton sacrifices the principles invoked by candidate Clinton to a policy of appeasement which will prove no more successful than previous efforts to appease aggressors."

Appearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee also on Feb. 18, former Carter National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski was even more blunt, calling the Christopher plan "toothless and essentially procedural." The Christopher "improvements" to the Vance-Owen plan, Brzezinski indicated, "engage the United States without either amending the plan nor increasing the probability of its successful implementation."

Brzezinski also objected that the Christopher plan made an unnecessary concession, bringing the Russians into the negotiating process. "It is not clear whether the appointment of a U.S. negotiator was made with the intention of precipitating also the appointment of a Russian negotiator," he said, but it was the "predictable consequence" of the Christopher moves. Brzezinski questioned "whether the injection of a pro-Serbian Russian negotiator will in fact facilitate the peace process." Brzezinski proposed "modifying" the existing U.N. arms embargo in order to allow

the Bosnians to defend themselves against the heavily armed Serbs.

## **Bosnian minister asks unilateral U.S. action**

Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic, speaking before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs on Feb. 18, called for a lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia, and requested that the U.S. take such action on its own if Russia or any other member of the U.N. Security Council were to veto the proposal.

"I think the United States should do that regardless of the results because it is the right thing to do," said Silajdzic. "By supporting the arms embargo on Bosnia, the United States of America is violating its own principles on which it stands. . . . We all need a principled United States of America. Now more than ever."

Silajdzic praised the decision of the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo not to accept humanitarian aid until it was delivered to the eastern Bosnian provinces, where the U.N. had decided to halt deliveries. "Those that do not want to help us, the message is clear, just leave us alone. . . . They [the people of Sarajevo] do not want to be humiliated anymore. They do not want their countrymen to die just because they don't have the TV cameras there. They think it's unfair for them to receive the aid and other people die without the aid," said Silajdzic. "It is a noble protest against what the world community is doing to Bosnia and Hercegovina."

## **California city says to fund Space Station**

The city of Garden Grove, California, a district with many aerospace jobs, has passed a resolution to the U.S.

Congress calling for full funding and support for Space Station Freedom.

The resolution, read into the *Congressional Record* by Rep. Robert Dornan (R-Calif.), stresses that "a vibrant space program, especially in the human exploration of space, is one of our most effective tools for spurring students' interest in math, science, and engineering, all fields vital to our global economic competitiveness."

The resolution notes that the program currently employs more than 30,000 people and indirectly affects employment for 75-100,000 people.

## **Black Caucus gets DOJ response on Ford trial**

U.S. District Judge Jerome Turner on Feb. 22 ordered that a new trial of Rep. Harold Ford (D-Tenn.) on charges of bank fraud and conspiracy proceed with a nearly all-white jury. On Feb. 19, following a meeting with a 26-member delegation of the Congressional Black Caucus, acting Attorney General Stuart Gerson overruled prosecutors in charge of the case and threw the Department of Justice's support behind a defense motion asking that the jury be dismissed and a new panel selected.

Ford, a black congressman from Memphis, was tried on the same charges in Memphis in April 1990, the result of a six-year-old indictment. That trial ended in a mistrial after 8 of the 12 jurors agreed on his innocence. The federal judge in the case ruled that the next jury pool should be selected from the largely white area around Jackson, Tennessee, 70 miles east of Memphis, who would be bused in to the proceedings.

Members of the Black Caucus sent a letter to Clinton suggesting that Ford had been "railroaded" by the Justice Department, and demanding that the DOJ begin an investigation.