

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

'Political' constraints put on use of troops

The Senate agreed by a vote of 98-2 on Oct. 20 to a compromise with the Clinton administration over the use of U.S. military forces in Haiti and Bosnia, after Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) backed a proposal which simply urged Clinton to seek congressional approval before sending troops to these nations. Another attempt to place restrictions on the President's power to deploy troops to Haiti was defeated on Oct. 21 when an amendment sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), which would have required congressional approval for anything more than evacuating U.S. citizens from Haiti, was rejected. Over the past month, the Senate quashed amendments to the Defense Appropriations Bill which would have required an early withdrawal of troops from Somalia and limited the President's right to put troops under foreign command overseas.

But despite the Clinton administration's apparent victories, even supporters of the President indicate that the compromise will be "politically" binding. "The President can no more send 25,000 troops to Bosnia without seeking congressional approval than he could fly," said Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Democrats are attempting to revamp the War Powers Act of 1973, which requires the President to seek congressional approval within 90 days of U.S. troops entering hostilities. A Democratic proposal, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), calls for a review of the legislation to make it more effective. The measure would include the establishment of a high-level congressional consultation group to meet with the administration regularly and in times of crisis.

Bonior says Canadian elections may kill NAFTA

At a press conference on Capitol Hill on Oct. 26, House Majority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.) stated that the people of Canada had "sent a clear and a powerful message" in the elections the previous day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) "won't work, it's fatally flawed, and it's time to go back to the drawing board."

Noting that a key element of the victorious Liberal Party's winning platform was a renegotiation of NAFTA, Bonior stated that 58% of Canadians were opposed to NAFTA, while only 29% supported it. At the same time, he said, "the party that negotiated this NAFTA has nearly ceased to exist." Bonior called for a renegotiation of the entire package after the Mexican elections in August, when three new leaders, other than the three who negotiated NAFTA, will have come to power.

Administration officials are frenetically trying to pull together the votes needed to pass the treaty. "It's messy," said one senior Commerce Department official. "But there is positive movement amidst all the messiness."

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor admits that the administration is short of the votes needed to pass NAFTA, although how many he won't say. But he also insists that they are making substantial progress.

Halperin nomination stuck in limbo

The nomination of Morton Halperin to become assistant secretary of defense is coming under heavy fire from Republican legislators because of his liberal views. Halperin is known to

favor greater subordination of U.S. military forces to "multilateral" action, primarily under United Nations command.

Halperin, who in the past was a strong supporter of Philip Agee, a renegade CIA agent who spent his time during the late 1960s and '70s "exposing" CIA operations, has been closely associated with the American Civil Liberties Union. He was the founder of the Center for National Security Studies, which alerted Americans to "the dangers of the CIA's covert action programs."

No hearing on the nomination has yet been set, since Republicans are still waiting for documents from the Pentagon and the CIA. Halperin has also gotten into hot water by trying to set policy before he has been confirmed in his post. He allegedly told Army General Joulwan, then-commander of the U.S. Southern Command, to cancel a combined U.S.-Guatemala military exercise. Joulwan rejected his request.

Until his confirmation, Halperin is at the Pentagon only in a consulting capacity. Some observers attribute the greater involvement of the Clinton administration in U.N. multilateral actions to the influence of Halperin.

Stevens doubts Russian intent on disarmament

Sen. Ted Stevens (D-Alaska) on Oct. 18 proposed an amendment to the 1994 Defense Appropriations Bill which would condition the appropriation of funds allotted for assisting Russia in dismantling its nuclear weapons upon the Russians' ceasing production of new road-mobile or fixed-site, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles armed with multiple nuclear re-entry warheads. The mea-

sure was co-sponsored by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hi.), chairman of the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and adopted by voice vote on the same day.

The amendment would in particular target the \$400 million in the bill earmarked for dismantling Russian nuclear capabilities in accordance with the Nunn-Lugar Amendment. The amendment would require that the President certify that no member of the Community of Independent States receiving these funds is currently engaged in the production of new MIRV-ed intercontinental missiles.

Stevens said that he was motivated by a concern "that U.S. assistance for the destruction of existing weapons may be making available the very resources employed by the Russians to construct new systems to continue the threat against us." Stevens documented his concerns using U.S. intelligence reports and public statements from Russian sources regarding "the use of commercial funds" for "upgrading their military system," and Russia's "shifting the mass of its forces into their strategic force that deals with missiles."

'Democracy' program wins funding fight

The House reversed itself and voted 259-172 on Oct. 20 to restore funding for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Tied to political networks known as the "secret government," the NED interferes in the internal affairs of foreign nations, in particular attacking resistance to the so-called new world order.

The funding for NED had been removed by a vote of 247-171 four

months earlier, led by the efforts of Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-Pa.), who objected to a private organization receiving public funding for carrying out foreign policy initiatives. As Kanjorski commented, "The Founding Fathers in our Constitution directed that the President of the United States through the State Department should carry on the foreign affairs of this country." He objected to the fact that there was no direct accountability for what NED did with the funds and no congressional oversight.

The NED has been very active in countries like Great Britain, France, and New Zealand, nations where, as Kanjorski commented sarcastically, "American taxpayers' money is not necessary to keep them democratic." Kanjorski characterized NED activity in these countries as "an intrusion by one great democracy in the democracies of others."

After the Senate retained the funding, and considerable arm-twisting was brought to bear in the House, the funding was restored in the 1994 budget. Kanjorski commented that he had never seen "a harder lobbying effort by all the former Presidents, by all the leadership on both the Democratic side and the Republican side, by all the people who are anything in this town, and most of all, by the estate of our commentators and our journalists throughout the United States."

Gramm hosts Gorbachov at GOP fundraiser

Sen. Phil "Landfill" Gramm (R-Tex.), a rabid supporter of "free trade" and budget balancing, has invited former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov to speak to a Republican fundraiser in Washington on Nov. 4.

In an invitation to prospective donors, Gramm hailed Gorbachov as "the man who heard the call for freedom."

The invitation, for which Gorbachov will reportedly be paid \$70,000, has come under sharp criticism. Among those outraged at Gramm's move are former Reagan administration officials William Bennett, who says that inviting the head of the "evil empire" is a "terrible idea," and Elliott Abrams, an admirer of Gramm who believes that the Texas senator has "offended many conservatives in the party."

McCloskey to Warren Christopher: 'Resign'

Rep. Frank McCloskey (D-Ind.) called on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to resign, in a sharply worded rebuke of President Clinton's foreign policy in a commentary in the Oct. 24 *New York Times*. McCloskey said his call is intended to help President Clinton, and followed his press conference on Capitol Hill shortly after a visit to Bosnia as part of a 16-member fact-finding international delegation of parliamentarians, in which he also called for Christopher to resign.

McCloskey rejected Clinton's and Christopher's contention that their policy vis-à-vis Russia has been successful. "Given his erratic behavior and his crackdown on his opponents and the press, I gravely doubt that [Yeltsin] is a true democrat," McCloskey wrote. McCloskey echoed the warning of Gen. Paul Albert Scherer and Lyndon LaRouche in saying that "we are encouraging violent ultra-nationalists and secessionists throughout the former Soviet Union, by failing to address Serbian aggression in the Balkans."