

## Congressional Closeup by Carl Osgood

### Motion against Haiti invasion plan fails

The House voted 185-214 on June 27 to reject a motion to strike \$25 million for U.N. peacekeeping operations in Haiti from the State, Commerce, Justice, and Judiciary appropriations bill.

The sponsor of the motion, Jim Lightfoot (R-Iowa), said on the House floor that the Clinton administration hadn't learned the lessons of the U.N. operation in Somalia and that the reason for the failure there was that "Congress did not exercise sufficient oversight."

Robert Livingston (R-La.) added that President Clinton should not be allowed to "risk the life of one single person in uniform for the likes of Jean-Bertrand Aristide" without the authorization of Congress.

On the other side of the aisle, Alan Mollohan (D-W.V.) complained that Lightfoot's amendment would "telegraph" the intentions of the government to countries where the use of U.S. military force is being considered.

### Senate rejects bid to lift Bosnia embargo

By a 50-50 Senate vote, an amendment to lift the U.S. arms embargo against Bosnia was defeated on July 1. The vote followed a visit to Washington by British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd on June 22; he met with 19 congressmen and senators, mainly discussing British opposition to a unilateral U.S. end to the embargo.

According to a British Embassy spokesman, Hurd was invited to a discussion with the Senate Armed Services Committee by its chairman, Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), which was also attended by Sen. John Warner (D-Va.). Hurd met separately with Senate

Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me). Two days later, those three senators co-sponsored legislation to implement Hurd's position.

A counter-amendment suggesting that President Clinton continue to appeal to the U.N. Security Council to lift the embargo passed the Senate on July 1 by a 52-48 vote. A conference committee will "reconcile" this with the McCloskey amendment for unilateral U.S. lifting of the embargo, which was passed overwhelmingly by the House on June 8. Senate sources said it was possible, but not likely, that unilateral action would remain in the final bill.

### Fazio leads ADL charge inside Democratic Party

Rep. Victor Fazio (D-Calif.), head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, delivered a broadside against the Republican Party on June 21, based on the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) tract on the so-called "religious right."

Fazio told a gathering at the National Press Club that the Republican Party "is at a crossroads" and has to answer the question, "should they accept the winning tactics of the radical right at any costs?" He accused GOPers of buckling under to the influence of the religious right because "they are successful—they win." He pointed to the Oliver North campaign as the bellwether race, and demanded that Republicans repudiate the Christian activists who have mobilized behind North.

Fazio said that he and fellow Democrats are frightened of the possibility of major Republican gains in November, and are hoping to create a "backlash" among moderate Republicans which will help embattled Democratic

candidates.

At least one Democrat moved to distance himself from Fazio's remarks. Rep. Scotty Baesler (Ky.) told the *Louisville Courier Journal* on June 28 that "what I'm worried about on Vic's approach is, you're trying to divide the country rather than bring it together." He said he wouldn't be seeking funds for his reelection campaign from the DCCC because "it would look like I'm acquiescing in all their views."

Fazio's remarks provide the perfect foil for the North campaign, Pat Robertson networks, and various conservative "letter-head" organizations to identify Fazio's bigotry as a "Democratic" tactic—never mentioning the ADL.

### House preserves funding for 'democracy' project

An amendment to the State, Commerce, Justice, and Judiciary appropriations bill to zero out funding for the National Endowment for Democracy, was defeated in the House by a vote of 89-317 on June 27. NED opponents attacked the lack of accountability for the program and the use of a publicly funded private group to carry out U.S. foreign policy.

Joel Hefley (R-Colo.), the sponsor of the amendment, argued that the NED has outlived its purpose to combat Soviet imperialism and that without that counterweight, its own activities "smack of the same imperialism the endowment was created to combat."

Despite the fact that the NED has been caught destabilizing governments of U.S. allies, its supporters, in the words of Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.), described it as "a key tool of U.S. foreign policy." Dana Rohrabacher (R-

Calif.), after bragging that he has the highest rating from the National Taxpayers Union for opposing "useless government spending," said that "we are not talking about cutting useless spending. We are talking about a program that bolsters the cause of freedom and democracy."

## **Woolsey warns mafia may steal the bomb**

CIA head James Woolsey told the House International Security, International Organizations, and Human Rights subcommittee on June 27 that Korea and other "hostile states" threaten U.S. national security because they might use organized crime to procure or expand an arsenal of nuclear weapons. "We cannot rule out the possibility that organized crime groups will be able to obtain and sell nuclear weapons or weapons-grade materials as a target of opportunity. We're especially concerned that hostile states such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea may try to accelerate or enhance their own weapons development programs by attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction or weapons grade material through organized crime groups."

Pointing to the case where a janitor smuggled three kilograms of nuclear material out of a Moscow plant, Woolsey warned that the strength of Russian organized crime and the corruption of the Russian government make it difficult to stop the proliferation of bomb materials.

One congressman asked Woolsey to comment on the estimate that "30 to 50% of AID [U.S. Agency for International Development] money for privatization is spent in a way that ultimately benefits criminal interests," and that in "at one briefing last July, a CIA official provided a scathing re-

port on the Russian mafia's infiltration of the privatization program."

Woolsey replied that while there is corruption in the privatization program, there is a big distinction between corruption and organized crime, and that the Department of State, USAID, and the CIA are working together to monitor the program.

Woolsey cited "proliferation, terrorism, international organized crime, [and] anarchy in various parts of the world" as chief among the problems faced by the intelligence community in the post-Cold War era.

## **Gray says Aristide best President for Haiti**

William Gray, President Clinton's special envoy for Haiti, praised ousted Haitian dictator Jean-Bertrand Aristide before a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Western Hemisphere subcommittee on June 28. Aristide's performance while he was President was far superior to "anything that I know that has been there before or since," Gray said.

In response to a question from committee chairman Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), Gray said that people "don't have the right to take guns and turn [an elected official] out of office simply because they don't think you are the best. And when I look at President Aristide, I have not seen anything in my contact with him that would have me question his ability to be a democratically elected President in that country." Neither Pell nor Gray made any reference to the widely circulated reports of Aristide's fondness while he was President for advocating the murder of his political opponents by "necklacing."

When asked about provisional President Emile Jonassaint's announcement that there would be elec-

tions before the end of the year, Gray said that Jonassaint's government is "a puppet government put forth by the coup leaders, and as such we do not recognize its pronouncements or its statements and find they are unconstitutional and illegal."

## **Senate panel okays 'soft trigger' health plan**

The Senate Finance Committee voted 12-8 on June 30 in favor of an amended "soft trigger" health care proposal put forth by committee chairman Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and John Chafee's (R-R.I.) "rump" group of bipartisan committee members, which would set up a National Health Commission to make recommendations to Congress to devise a "universal" health care plan in the event that inducements to employers did not achieve coverage of 95% of the population by the year 2002.

The committee earlier rejected by a vote of 14-6 a proposal that contained a delayed employer mandate known as the "hard trigger" employer mandate.

Moynihan and the rump group have diverged from the Clinton plan for so-called universal coverage and the employer mandate provisions, in favor of a go-slow approach that would expand the number of people covered as the "savings" from reform become available. Both plans would use incentives to induce employers to voluntarily purchase insurance for their employees. If voluntary participation does not provide coverage for 95% of the population by the year 2000 or so, the plan's enforced employer mandate would go into effect.

A third cost-control proposal by Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) would impose a 25% tax on insurance companies for their high-cost health care plans.