

# Republicans obstruct Clinton foreign policy

by William Jones

As President Clinton attempts to revamp U.S. foreign policy, shifting it away from the Anglo-American "special relationship" of the Bush-Thatcher era, the Republican Congress is doing its utmost to tie his hands, even at the cost of seriously damaging the constitutional power of the President to conduct foreign policy.

The most vocal attacks on Clinton's foreign policy have occurred on Bosnia. Since the breakup of Yugoslavia, the British, with the support of the François Mitterrand government in France, have sabotaged every initiative from the U.S. side to put a stop to the Serb genocide. Clinton's initial efforts to lift the U.N. arms embargo against Bosnia-Herzegovina, an embargo inherited from the time Bosnia was part of Yugoslavia, always foundered in the face of British and French objections.

But the election of Jacques Chirac to the French Presidency in May may have changed that equation somewhat, presenting a rift in the Anglo-French entente over Bosnia. When U.N. forces were taken hostage by the Bosnian Serbs after NATO planes had bombed Bosnian Serb ammunition depots in response to the continued Serb bombardment of U.N. safe havens, the French, followed by the British, decided to strengthen their forces on the ground in Bosnia in order to prevent further hostage-taking.

The White House, while still refusing to deploy U.S. troops on the ground in Bosnia, agreed to the use of U.S. ground forces for an emergency evacuation or repositioning of U.N. peacekeeping forces. The President's offer of U.S. emergency assistance at the commencement ceremonies at the U.S. Air Force Academy on May 31, immediately provoked a gaggle of Republicans, some of them Presidential hopefuls, to claim that Clinton was now reversing himself and was going to introduce U.S. ground forces—a move that the President has repeatedly said he would not do.

## The Gilman bill

But it is not only on Bosnia policy that Republicans want to tie the President's hands. The foreign aid bill introduced into the House by Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House International Relations Committee, on May 23 would well-nigh cripple the President on all major foreign policy fronts.

The Gilman bill, an attempt by Congress to micro-manage U.S. foreign policy, would pull the country toward con-

frontation in areas where President Clinton has skillfully steered away from a threatening conflict. The legislation targets the ongoing agreements with the North Koreans, by placing restrictions on how far the negotiators could go in offering the North Koreans various forms of diplomatic recognition, placing stiff requirements on any transfer of light-water nuclear power reactors, a key element in the discussions, and including an array of conditions under which the United States simply might rescind the negotiated agreements.

The Gilman bill similarly restricts the President in his ability to conduct foreign policy with Russia, placing all sorts of requirements, including making the granting of aid dependent on Russian adherence to specific actions in Chechnya, and to strict adherence to implementing a "market economy."

The bill is a virtual declaration of war against the People's Republic of China, requiring the United States to act as the puppet of Tibet's Dalai Lama, a longtime British asset. The legislation calls for the appointment of a "special envoy" to Tibet. In an outrageous statement, the act claims that "the President and the Congress have determined that the promotion of human rights in Tibet and the protection of Tibet's religion and culture are important elements in United States-China relations"! The "special envoy" would "consult with Congress on policies relevant to Tibet and the future and welfare of all Tibetan people," as if the "special envoy" were that of the U.S. Congress and not the U.S. government.

While reducing funding for international organizations and abolishing the U.S. Agency for International Development, the International Development Cooperation Agency, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the bill is a slap in the face to developing sector nations. It would cut the important, but vastly underfunded Development Fund for Africa by 21%, and would reduce funding for debt reduction by 75%, making it nearly impossible for the United States to grant significant debt relief to the poorest countries—a measure that was to be on the agenda at the Group of Seven heads-of-state summit in Halifax, Canada.

President Clinton has vowed to veto the legislation, which he characterized as a "frontal assault on the authority of the President," and has been advised to do so by the secretaries of state, treasury, and defense. The British government, up in arms against the Clinton policy that is in the process of dismantling their numerous crisis "hot-spots"—Northern Ireland, the Middle East, and potentially even Bosnia—is escalating its public attacks on the President and his administration. And the Republican-controlled Congress, anxious to hamstring the President in his conduct of foreign affairs, is developing into a "fifth column" for that British operation. Gilman, Senators Jesse Helms and John McCain, and other Republican leaders may not all be raving Anglophiles, but the obstructionist policies they are presently pursuing all bear the stamp "Made in London."