

Congressional Closeup by Carl Osgood

Hollings: 'protectionist and proud of it'

Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) ripped into the anti-protectionist hysteria coming from Conservative Revolution circles since the success of Presidential candidate Pat Buchanan in the early primaries, in an op-ed in the March 17 *Washington Post*. Hollings used a joke from World War II: "When in danger, when in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout," to describe the reaction to Buchanan's exposure of the disinvestment in America resulting from U.S. trade policies.

"Lincoln," Hollings said, "would have understood today's challenge. To build the transcontinental railroad, his advisers counseled purchasing the steel from England. In essence, Lincoln said, 'No, we will build our own steel mills so that upon completion not only will we have the railroad but the United States will have a steel capacity.' Lincoln wasn't thinking of trade; Lincoln was thinking of building the economy."

Hollings warned that American economic strength is "fractured": "The United States has lost its capacity to produce. At the end of World War II, 50% of our workforce was in manufacturing; today it's only 13%. These were high-paying jobs that permitted a family to own a home, send the kids to college, and still finance a Marshall Plan that helped resurrect Europe after the war."

"At the end of World War II," he continued, "the United States promoted the ideas of free trade to spread capitalism and develop consumers for its overwhelming production. But the Pacific Rim countries refused to follow Adam Smith's free market. Instead, Friedrich List's capitalism based on strengthening one's national economy took hold in Japan, and its success made protectionism the model for the global economy."

We must "disenthrall ourselves from the idea that 'protectionism' is evil. The fundamental duty of government," he wrote, "is to protect," and all of the costs of protection, from the military to health care to safety in the workplace, go into the cost of production which "is the American standard of living. This standard must be protected."

Legal limits stripped from immigration bill

On March 21, an unusual alliance of some House Conservative Revolution Republicans and liberal Democrats stripped a provision out of an immigration "reform" bill which would have put a cap of 500,000 per year on legal immigration for the next five years. The amendment to remove the provision was sponsored by Dick Chrysler (R-Mich.), who argued that the current legal limit of 700,000 is not exorbitant, and that "immigrants who go through all of the legal channels to come to this country should not be lumped into the same category as those who choose to ignore our laws and come into our country illegally."

Chrysler's amendment was opposed by a coalition of Republicans and Malthusian Democrats such as Anthony Beilensen (D-Calif.), who argued that legal and illegal immigration are related because "they both affect the size of our country's population, and we are letting too many people into our country." The Republican argument was exemplified by Lamar Smith (R-Tex.), who bashed immigrants for being poor and uneducated. "This surplus of unskilled immigrants hurts those Americans who can least afford it, those at the lowest end of the economic ladder," he said.

Howard Berman (D-Calif.), who co-sponsored the Chrysler amendment, took on the Malthusianism directly: "I just want to remind everyone," he said, "of the demographer Malthus, who looked at population projections in the early 19th century and concluded that by the end of the 19th century, there is no way in the world there would be enough food in the world to feed the people. I have great faith in the capacity of technology and the economy to grow, and I believe that is going to deal with the particular issue of our future ability to handle population."

Science Committee Dems score GOP 'failings'

Reflecting a new aggressiveness within sections of the Democratic Party, the Democratic members of the House Science Committee released a scathing attack on the Republican leadership of the House on March 20, for subverting the legislative process to promote their own ideological agenda. In their annual View and Estimates report on the FY 1997 budget, the Democrats state that it is impossible to comment on next year's budget, since most of the agencies under the committee's jurisdiction still have no budget for FY 1996.

"The FY 1996 budget and appropriations process was irrevocably crippled by the Contract with America efforts that ate up the energies and focus of the first session of the 104th Congress," they state. "Now foundering upon the shoals of cooler reasoning, the 'Contract' lies in shambles. Time spent on the 'Contract' was time wasted, stolen from the normal business of Congress and its responsibilities to the American public for the orderly conduct of the federal govern-

ment. Now, like profligate celebrants groggily greeting the morning's light, the Republican leadership faces the dawning of another fiscal year, having failed to finish the work of the last one but with no notable 'Contract' results to point to. One result of this hangover is that this committee is crippled in its ability to provide a responsible analysis of the direction and funding of our programs."

Recently, the House Democratic Caucus formed an R&D task force led by George Brown (D-Calif.), the ranking minority member of the Science Committee. Their aim is to bring the issue of the importance of federal funding for science and technology into the upcoming election, exposing the long-lasting destruction which the "slash and burn" budget approach of the Republicans has produced in science, technology, and education.

Senate Republicans would 'enforce' 10th Amendment

On March 20, Senate Republicans, led by Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), introduced legislation to "enforce" the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution. Stevens told the Senate that the bill "will return power to the states and to the people by placing safeguards in the legislative process, by restricting the power of federal agencies, and by instructing the federal courts to enforce the Tenth Amendment."

The Tenth Amendment has become one of the weapons of choice of the British-inspired Conservative Revolution to weaken the federal government, to the point of breaking up the U.S. Republic into impotent, regional entities. The Tenth Amendment Enforcement Act would prohibit Congress from passing any law that "interferes" with state powers or preempts

any state or local law except in narrowly defined circumstances, such as explicit Constitutional authority. The bill would grant state governors and attorneys general veto power over any federal regulation that preempts state law, unless a specific finding can be made by the agency issuing the regulation that it has the constitutional authority to do so.

House passes State Dept. reorganization

On March 12, the House passed the conference report on the State Department Authorization bill that significantly reorganizes foreign policy agencies along Conservative Revolution lines. The bill requires the elimination of either the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the Agency for International Development, or the U.S. Information Agency (the choice is left to the Clinton administration). It also makes U.S.-China relations more confrontational over Taiwan, and conditions U.S.-Vietnam relations on progress on the POW-MIA issue.

House International Relations Committee Chairman Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.) accused President Clinton of "siding with the Chinese Communist government" against Taiwan, and "with the Vietnamese government and against the families of missing Americans," because of threats to veto the bill.

Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) correctly said that the bill "reorganizes and eliminates foreign policy agencies because of political concerns, not because the changes will make operations more efficient." But much Democratic opposition to the bill was flawed by commitments to Malthusian programs.

Albert Wynn (D-Md.), Hastings's

colleague in the Black Caucus, complained of the bill's limitations on population-assistance programs. "One of the biggest problems we will confront," he said, "is the question of an exploding population." He complained that passage of the bill would mean 7 million couples in developing countries would not get family planning assistance.

Dole introduces missile defense bill

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.), with 19 GOP co-sponsors, on March 21 introduced the "Defend America Act," which would mandate the development and deployment of a national missile defense system. The bill is similar to a provision that was stripped out of the FY 96 Defense Authorization bill, in order to forestall a Clinton veto.

The bill requires the development of a system to be deployed by 2003 that would include some combination of ground-based and sea-based interceptors, space-based kinetic energy interceptors, and space-based directed energy systems. The bill also "urges" the President to seek agreement with Russia to amend the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty to allow the deployment of such a system, and, failing that, to consider unilaterally withdrawing from that treaty.

Dole said, "There should be no doubt that we have the technical capability to defend our great nation from the growing threat of ballistic missiles. What we need is the will and the leadership. We have seen no leadership from the White House on this issue. Indeed, we have witnessed a complete denial from the highest levels of the administration that there is even a threat to the United States."