

which *EIR* published in January 1979 under the title “The Pakistan Papers.” Bhutto charged that he had been overthrown because of his conflict with Kissinger, who had signed “a death sentence against his person.” The reason for Kissinger’s threats, according to Bhutto, was that he had refused to accede to Kissinger’s insistence that he stop the development of “uranium-processing plants to satisfy Pakistan’s energy needs.” Pakistan is one of the 13 nations specifically cited in NSSM 200 as a target for Kissinger’s policy of genocide.

The Real Story of Cambodia

Over the past two years, there has been an international clamor for the right of “extra-territoriality” in the case of Cambodia’s plan to put on trial the leaders of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, which slaughtered a huge portion of the nation’s population during its 1975-79 reign of terror.

The United Nations bureaucracy, self-appointed “human rights” non-governmental organizations, and international financial institutions have demanded the right to hold an *international* trial, with foreign judges and prosecutors, and for foreigners to determine who is, and who is not, indicted—despite the fact that the Khmer Rouge were Cambodians, their victims were Cambodians, and their crimes were carried out within the sovereign territory of Cambodia.

The question is: Why are certain political interests so frantic to ensure that any trial of the Khmer Rouge *not* be held within Cambodia, or under the auspices of the Cambodians themselves? Would not the people of Cambodia, who suffered the worst genocide of the last half of the 20th Century, and the political party (the current government party) which fought the Khmer Rouge for 20 years and brought about their demise, be the best situated to judge the crimes committed against them?

EIR addressed this question in “Cambodia Genocide: Kissinger and Brzezinski in the Dock” (*EIR*, Dec. 24, 1999). Under any just criteria of prosecution, Kissinger and his “twin,” Zbigniew Brzezinski, would be indicted as responsible for the Cambodian genocide. Not only was Kissinger responsible for the secret, illegal bombing of Cambodia which, as Hitchens reported, killed several hundred thousand Cambodian peasants, but it was the bombing itself which drove the peasantry into the arms of the Khmer Rouge, leading to the death of millions more. Even more damning is the fact that this was the *intended result*, in a London-designed geopolitical game which used Cambodia as a pawn to prolong the Cold War.

The fact is, the demand for an *international tribunal* rather than a sovereign, national trial, was an attempt to *prevent the most important of the guilty parties from ever being indicted*. Kissinger could, and should, be tried for his crimes in any of those nations that have a *bona fide* extradition treaty with the United States, but the attempt to create an international tribunal can only serve to obfuscate the truth, by moving the trial outside the reach of sovereign, elected governments.

GOP Plans Worse Than ‘Contract on America’

by Carl Osgood

The Bush Administration, aided and abetted by Congressional Republicans, has launched an all-out assault on the general welfare with a combination of initiatives, including the fiscal year 2002 budget plan, George W. Bush’s \$1.6 trillion tax cut, bankruptcy reform, and Medicare and Social Security reform. This assault comes in the context of the onrushing collapse of the global financial system, evidenced in the U.S. economy by the wave of layoffs in manufacturing and the energy price crisis. The Bush Administration, along with the Congressional GOP leadership, is responding by gutting those safety-net programs and other protections, that are absolutely essential to defending the health and welfare of the general public.

The Bush Administration budget plan, submitted the day after Bush’s speech to a joint session of Congress on Feb. 27, is based on the assumption, provided by the Congressional Budget Office, that, absent any change in policy, there will be a budget surplus of \$5.6 trillion between 2002 and 2011. This projection is offered despite a chorus of warnings, including even from the usually incomprehensible Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, that the economy is slowing down. In addition to the tax cut, the budget calls for paying down \$1 trillion of the national debt over the next four years; a \$1.4 trillion reserve fund over ten years, to be available for “additional needs such as defense spending, debt service, unforeseen disasters, and other contingencies”; \$153 billion for Medicare reform; \$310 billion in defense spending, about the same as recommended by President Clinton just before he left office; and an 11.5% boost in education funding.

The budget plan also includes policy recommendations, including partial privatization of Social Security, to allow workers to put some of their payroll tax into “personal retirement accounts” which would be invested in the private equity markets. The increase in defense spending would be put toward a military pay raise, housing, and health-care needs, with national missile defense being the only weapons system to receive a funding boost. The plan also calls for an increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health, but cuts programs for the Departments of Agriculture, Justice, and Transportation. Significantly, Bush has asked for no emergency funds for agriculture, even though Congress

has approved aid packages of several billion dollars each for the last three years, to aid farmers devastated by low commodities prices and natural disasters.

Medicare, the health insurance program for senior citizens, is also under assault by Bush. In his speech to Congress, Bush endorsed the proposal crafted by Sens. John Breaux (D-La.) and Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), which, while including a prescription drug benefit, brings the “free market” to Medicare, by having senior citizens choose from a number of competing health plans, for which Medicare would pay a portion of the premiums. The government-provided insurance would still be available, but it would compete with the private plans. Bush has told Congress that he wants Medicare reform passed this year, but Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) has indicated that that is unlikely.

Tax Cuts Are on a Fast Track

The GOP is moving quickly on the tax cuts, however. On March 2, the House Ways and Means Committee reported out, on a vote of 23-15, a portion of Bush’s tax cut proposal, with floor action expected within about a week. The bill was limited to a reform of the marginal tax rates, cutting the number of brackets from five to four, and reducing the top rate from 39.6% to 33% over five years. The cost of the bill is put at \$958 billion.

Committee Democrats, in dissenting remarks in the report on the bill, denounced the bill as overly optimistic. “If long-term economic growth is one-tenth of 1% lower than currently projected,” they said, “\$245 billion of projected surpluses will immediately disappear.” They warn of a repeat of the early 1980s, when President Ronald Reagan’s 1981 tax cut was followed by years of rising deficits. They also estimate that 43% of the bill’s benefits, including for the estate tax repeal and elimination of the so-called marriage penalty, go to the top 1% of taxpayers, although this is disputed by the Administration. Democrats say that “the sum of the promised tax reductions are far greater than [Bush’s] \$1.6 trillion target.” If the Democrats admitted that the last decade’s “prosperity” was nothing of the kind, they’d realize that Bush’s budget and tax cuts will prevent the government from taking exactly the kind of Roosevelt-style recovery measures that are required.

While the bill is expected to pass the GOP-controlled House on a largely party-line vote, the bill has some hurdles to overcome in the Senate. At least two moderate Republicans, James Jeffords (Vt.) and Lincoln Chaffee (R.I.), have come out in opposition to the Administration’s tax plan, because they think that \$1.6 trillion is too much. With Democrat Zell Miller (Ga.) supporting the plan, it has no more than 49 backers at the present time. Speaking to reporters on Feb. 28, Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) admitted as much, but said, “I believe by the time we have a vote . . . that we will be able to put a very, very good plan together.”

Bankruptcy Protections Threatened

But the assault on the standard of living doesn’t end with the budget, taxes, and entitlement programs. On March 1, the House passed, by a vote of 306-108, a bankruptcy reform bill that is supported by President Bush. The bill rips out the principle that has been enshrined in American bankruptcy law since at least the 1930s, that the repayment of debt cannot come at the expense of the health and welfare of individuals or productive enterprises. The so-called “Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act” gives creditors enormous power over debtors in the name of preventing “abuse” of the bankruptcy system. The central feature of the bill is a means test to determine whether a debtor can repay at least a portion of his debts. “These provisions,” said House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.), “are designed to ensure that debtors repay creditors the maximum they can afford.”

The underlying assumption of the bill is, again, the last decade’s “prosperity.” Because the number of personal bankruptcy filings skyrocketed during the 1990s, the only possible explanation, according to this assumption, is that more deadbeats have been taking advantage of the system in order to avoid paying what they legitimately owe. Opponents of the bill, though badly outnumbered, have been less afraid to speak of the reality, than has been the case on the tax cuts.

John Conyers (D-Mich.), the ranking member on the Judiciary Committee, said that the bill “massively tilts the playing field in favor of creditors and against the interests of ordinary consumers and workers.” He added that the bill gives “massive new rights to creditors to bring threatening court motions against low-income debtors,” and creates new categories of nondischargeable debts that compete directly with collection of child support and alimony. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), who has been outspoken in his opposition to bankruptcy reform over the last three years, said that the bill “does not protect debtors, and that should come as no surprise, because families in bankruptcy cannot make large campaign contributions, cannot buy ads in the paper, cannot hire fancy K Street lobbyists.” He pointed out that an American Bankruptcy Institute study showed that only 3% of Chapter 7 filers actually have the ability to repay their debts, as opposed to the 25% claimed by the credit card firms. Nadler warned that “like the bipartisan Garn-St Germain bill of a decade and a half ago, that caused the savings and loan crisis and cost the taxpayers half a trillion dollars, this bill will come back to haunt every member who votes for it when people lose their jobs, lose their families, and are crushed under mountains of debt.”

The bill is moving slower in the Senate, primarily because Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), who also has been sharply critical of efforts at reform, is insisting on a full debate on the bill, including an open amendment process. While a lengthy floor debate and many amendments are possible, no one is predicting that the bill will fail in the Senate.