

## Congressional Calendar by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

### **N**ATO role in drug enforcement mooted

In testimony before a Senate committee, Joe Biden (D-Del.)—often called the senator from NATO—reported that he has begun initiatives within the NATO alliance “to attempt to develop a multilateral narcotic strategy within the NATO countries.” Biden stated that “in November of last year, I presented a plan to NATO which has been well received and is beginning to bear fruit.”

Biden’s revelation came in the context of a “turf battle going on in the Senate over jurisdiction over narcotics abuse. Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Az.), a former prosecutor in his home state, has introduced S.R.207 to create a select committee on narcotics abuse and control. Similar to the House committee created by Lester Wolfe some years ago, the select committee would not be able to generate or pass actual legislation, and would mainly be used as an information gathering and publicity generating entity. Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee which has embarked on a series of hearings on organized crime, narcotics and labor racketeering, and Biden have strenuously opposed DeConcini’s resolution. Nunn, too, is heavily involved in NATO

Biden’s testimony gives evidence that there is more than ego involved in this turf battle. Biden says that he and Nunn are engaged in a well-thought out strategy to “upgrade” U.S. narcotics intelligence and enforcement capabilities by integrating them into NATO. In fact, the predominantly British oli-

garchic families who run NATO also run the international narcotics trade. Besides Nunn’s chairmanship of the investigations subcommittee, Biden serves on the Foreign Relations Committee, the Intelligence Committee, and chairs the subcommittee on criminal laws. He is using all of his sensitive committee positions to carry out a major investigation of U.S. narcotics capabilities.

### **T**rucking dereg mark-up set in House

After several weeks of delay following Senate passage of legislation which largely deregulates the trucking industry, the House subcommittee on transportation of the public works committee is circulating a draft House version of the bill, pursuant to a May 20 mark-up. Capitol hill sources report that House subcommittee chairman James Howard (D-NH) has been under enormous pressure from both the trucking industry, which opposes deregulation, and the administration, which supports deregulation. The result has been several weeks of vacillation (House mark-up of legislation was expected in early May) and a draft version of the legislation which has succeeded in pleasing nobody.

Trucking industry sources report that the draft essentially deregulates the industry to the same extent as the Senate version. At the same time, sources close to Senator Kennedy who was an initiator of deregulating trucking, are disappointed that the legislation does not go far enough, since at one point Howard had indicated that he

would push for the total removal of regulation over trucking. The Kennedy source was confident that they would be able to push Howard to produce a second draft closer to the Kennedy decision.

The delay created by Howard’s vacillation means that the June 1 deadline which Congress was laboring under will probably pass without final passage. That deadline was the result of a pact reached between Congress and the ICC last fall. The Interstate Commerce Commission had been “deregulating trucking by fiat.” Congress demanded that the ICC stop that practice, at least until June 1, at which time it would have a bill passed which would clarify Congress’s intent on trucking regulation. Sources report that the ICC is prepared “to zing a few deregulating regulations” out after June 1, to shake Congress up.

### **S**enate committee backs down on CIA oversight

The Senate Intelligence Committee, which had earlier jettisoned an omnibus intelligence charter for the CIA, backed down again in a battle with the administration over prior notification of congressional committees in the event of covert special operations.

The original Senate legislation called for the administration to notify the two intelligence committees prior to all significant intelligence activities, including covert operations. In the face of an intransigent administration, the committee finally agreed to codify existing Carter administration practices in hopes of at least maintaining the

status quo with future administrations. In effect, however, the bill gives the president ultimate determination in what he will tell Congress. The major provisions are:

- reduce the number of congressional committees who are notified from eight currently, to the intelligence committees.

- permit the president in "extraordinary circumstances" to limit prior notification to eight congressional leaders.

- call for prior notice of the two intelligence committees of all "significant" intelligence activities except when, under undefined circumstances, the president deems it necessary to withhold prior notification.

A similar presidential discretion exists in terms of after-the-fact information provided to the committees on mission details, intelligence failures and intelligence illegalities.

## **O**pposition to oil import fee mounts

The Congress is mobilizing opposition to the President's oil import tax of 10 cents a gallon, which was proposed by President Carter in early April. The Senate on May 13 voted against the tax in a procedural vote, 75 to 19. The House is also moving to kill the tax, with the House Ways and Means subcommittee planning to vote May 15.

A vote scheduled for May 14 was postponed one day when Treasury Secretary Miller requested that he testify before the subcommittee on why the tax is necessary. Subcommittee chairman Charles Vanik (D-Ohio) said that he was certain a majority of the

subcommittee would vote to roll back the tax no matter what the Treasury Secretary said. "The oil import fee is dead," he told reporters.

Committee sources said that an informal nose-count showed 17 of the subcommittee's members in favor of repealing the tax. House Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-Mass) stated that a resolution opposing the fee would pass the House floor "in a walk." Miller and a team of administration lobbyists spent the time before and after his testimony trying to persuade subcommittee members to back the fee.

Congressional efforts are getting a boost from U.S. District Court Judge Aubrey Robinson who ruled on May 13 that President Carter had overstepped his authority in imposing an oil fee. The judge declared that the President does not have the authority to restrain gasoline consumption by imposition of a fee or tax. The White House plans to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.), the chief sponsor of the Senate's proposal to roll back the import fee, said yesterday that the Judge's decision would give Congress "more time to mobilize forces to kill this ill-advised measure for good."

## **B**udget resolution to be finalized

On May 12 the Senate passed a resolution for the 1981 budget, establishing a balanced budget of \$613.1 billion. The final vote on the resolution was 68 to 28. The House passed their budget resolution May

7 and it is \$1.3 billion less than the Senate version.

The major differences between the two budgets are the spending for defense, income security and education. The Senate bill allocates \$8 billion more for defense than the House bill.

## **D**raft bill on way to final passage

By a voice vote the Senate Appropriations Committee May 13 adopted legislation that appropriates funds for registering males for possible military service. The bill for draft registration now goes to the floor of the Senate where action is expected sometime next week. The bill passed the House of Representatives on April 22 by a vote of 218 to 188.

Senator Mark Hatfield (D-Ore.) who has been the chief opponent of the bill, offered several amendments to it. The primary one was an attempt to cut the \$13.3 million that the administration has requested for the registration down to \$4.7 million, which would have been only enough to prepare for registration after the president ordered a mobilization in an emergency.

This was defeated in committee. A proposal by Hatfield to include a check-off for conscientious objectors on the draft registration cards was accepted by the Committee.

Hatfield is now threatening to filibuster the bill on the floor of the Senate. He told other Senators that he will "Debate on the floor at some length" on the legislation. Whether Hatfield has much support is uncertain.