

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

FBI harassment of Arab-Americans attacked

Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-Calif.) introduced House Concurrent Resolution 56 on Jan. 29 to stave off illegal FBI harassment of Arab-Americans. Many Arab-Americans have been called in for "interviews" by the FBI as an alleged part of their counterterrorism operations, and the Dymally resolution is the first attempt to block moves towards police-state measures being implemented in the U.S. under the pretext of the war in the Gulf.

At a meeting of the Arab-American Institute on Jan. 27, Dymally commented, "These interviews are frightening. This ought not to be taken lightly. We are talking here about Americans, not visitors or foreigners."

The resolution states that "neither the FBI nor any other agency of government shall engage in any investigation or other activities which threaten the civil liberties of citizens and/or other persons of Arab descent, who are legally residing in the U.S."

Noting that Arab-Americans "are the likely victims of hate violence," the resolution encourages agencies "to work with the community leaders in reporting suspicious activities or hate-violence to the FBI."

Earlier in the week, Rep. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.) had warned of the danger of FBI harassment. "By interviewing such a broad range of Arab-American community and business leaders to determine their knowledge of any potential terrorist activities in the United States, the FBI could not but help cast aspersions on all 2½ million Arab-Americans and heighten fears within the Arab-American community of possible reprisals against members of their community.

"I appreciate the difficulty of the FBI's task to fight terrorism in a democracy such as we have here in the

United States," said Kildee. "However, the foundation of our democracy is our respect for and strict enforcement of our civil rights as provided in the American Constitution."

Kuwaitis' hedonism angers congressman

Rep. Romano Mazzoli (D-Ky.) expressed anger at the high-flying lifestyle of Kuwaitis while U.S. troops prepare for an invasion of Kuwait, which was reported in the Jan. 24 *Wall Street Journal*.

When the "allied bombers hit Baghdad last week," Mazzoli said, "Kuwaitis living in splendid exile in Cairo hit the discos. They hit the dance floors, in their hedonistic lifestyle which they have practiced for so many years in their oil-rich sheikhdom which is now called a nation."

Mazzoli noted that many of these Kuwaitis are draft-age young men, "who are boogying their nights away in Cairo, while our Americans and our allied forces are being shot out of the sky and tortured as POWs." The Kuwaiti ambassador, Mazzoli remarked, was trying to get them to "cool it."

Congress seeks sanctions for Baltic crackdown

Both the Senate and the House have voted to restrict credits and other forms of economic assistance to the Soviet Union until they ease their crackdown in the Baltic states.

The House resolution, passed on Jan. 23 by a vote of 417-0, while not calling for immediate sanctions, urges the President to review bilateral relations and to work out a coordinated program of economic sanctions with the Europeans.

The Senate resolution, passed Jan. 24 by a vote of 99-0, called for an immediate suspension of official trade credits to the Soviet Union until the Soviets relinquish control of political institutions in the Baltic states and enter into negotiations with the legitimate governments of those countries.

In a barb at the dirty deals of the Bush administration, Rep. William Lipinski (D-Ill.) said that "the price of Soviet cooperation in liberating Kuwait from the ravages of Saddam Hussein, should not be at the expense of the Baltic republics. . . . If the violence persists, we must take stronger measures to express our rejection of this Soviet behavior."

House GOPer moves to okay assassinations

Rep. Bob McEwen (R-Ohio) introduced a resolution on Jan. 17 to suspend legislation restricting assassinations of political leaders.

McEwen said he wanted to suspend section 2.11 of Executive Order 12333, which forbids such assassinations, "until Iraq has complied fully with all U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the withdrawal of the Iraqi military forces from Kuwait."

McEwen complained that there was "a cocoon of protection that is placed around [Saddam Hussein] because he holds the position that he holds as leader of his country."

Reintroduction of the draft being considered

February hearings on the sufficiency of the All-Volunteer Force in light of an expected escalating casualty rate for American soldiers in the Gulf, have been indefinitely postponed be-

cause of the political sensitivity of the issue.

Sources on Capitol Hill indicate, however, that very little would have to be done to reintroduce the draft. One source indicated that it would only require changing the termination date of earlier draft legislation.

Although many congressmen were calling for the draft during the initial debate on the Gulf, nobody now wants to take up this politically explosive issue. One source indicated that the draft would become necessary if the war continued until June, as many of the troops would have to be rotated out of the Gulf. Other observers believe that it would have to be instituted even earlier.

Hamilton opposes Bush change in war aims

Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), chairman of the House Joint Economic Committee, complained that President Bush had changed the nature of the Gulf deployment without informing Congress, in response to a question following a presentation at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 21.

Hamilton said that both the President and Congress had been in agreement on the imposition of sanctions against Iraq, while at the same time holding out the possibility of the use of force if sanctions didn't succeed in forcing Iraq out of Kuwait. But, he added, "the President changed his position with regard to the use of force—not me." He said that sanctions were having an effect, and that no one had proven otherwise.

Hamilton said that the war powers authorization of the Constitution was put in the hands of Congress by the Founding Fathers since they "believed

that the decision to go to war was so grave that they would not leave it to one man. But I don't know if people worry about the Constitution anymore."

Hamilton said that the Palestinian problem had to be addressed if there were to be any solution to the Mideast crisis.

Moynihan bill would abolish the CIA

Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) introduced a bill on Jan. 17 to abolish the CIA and place all intelligence operations under the Department of State. Under the pretext of eliminating the Cold War "secrecy system," the bill would make the Secretary of State the "official primarily responsible for coordinating and managing the gathering of intelligence."

Although much criticism has been leveled concerning CIA covert operations and the validity of its analysis of intelligence data, the transfer of its intelligence functions to the Department of State risks further subordinating intelligence functions to the momentary foreign policy and diplomatic needs of the administration in power, and further destroying independent intelligence-gathering potential.

Wishful thinking infecting some

Rep. Robert Dornan (R-Calif.) has spent a bit too much time in Washington, since he is beginning to believe that the average citizen will act with the same schlemiel-like behavior as the U.S. Congress.

In floor remarks on Jan. 23, Dornan commented that "a lot of decent

people who have been out on the street demonstrating over the last week are starting to pack it in and go home. They realize, as honorable people, that this debate has ended. After an initial round of protests since the House debate and for about a week thereafter, the wind has gone out of the anti-war protesters' sails. That is it for disagreeing with the President's policy."

On Jan. 26, over 200,000 U.S. citizens participated in the anti-war demonstration held in Washington, D.C., with thousands more protesting in other cities throughout the U.S.

No place for Saddam in Bush's new world order

As the United States continues to drop daily more tons of bombs on Iraq and Kuwait than were dropped on Hiroshima, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution to try Saddam Hussein for war crimes.

A resolution passed unanimously in the House on Jan. 23 and in the Senate on Jan. 24, called on the President to recommend to the U.N. Security Council to establish "an International Criminal Tribunal for the purposes of reviewing and prosecuting charges brought by High Contracting Parties regarding violations of the Geneva Conventions resulting from Iraq's illegal invasion and occupation of Kuwait."

Rep. Bob Clement (D-Tenn.) recommended that allied forces shorten the war "by making Saddam a target, by having him arrested if that is possible, and having him tried for the terrorism, for the crimes that he has committed. . . . As we move toward the new world order," said Clement angrily, "it is clear that Saddam has no place in it."