

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Aid from U.S. helped murderous Khmer Rouge

A report required by Congress last fall as a condition for approving \$20 million in nonlethal aid to two anti-communist resistance groups in Cambodia, showed that the groups had collaborated with the genocidal Khmer Rouge, which, during its term in power in Cambodia in the 1970s, killed off about one-third of the country's population and virtually eliminated the educated strata in that country. The Khmer Rouge is now battling to regain control of Cambodia.

The two groups had used Khmer Rouge supplies and "conducted coordinated attacks with the Khmer Rouge" in their fight with the pro-Vietnamese government, according to the report.

New conditions added to the terms of the aid package last year required President Bush to suspend funds not only when the money might help the Khmer Rouge, but also when a recipient was found to be "cooperating tactically or strategically" with Khmer Rouge military operations. The report could lead to a cutoff of further aid to the U.S.-backed groups.

Congressmen want to 'bill' allies for war

The House Appropriations defense subcommittee voted on Feb. 28 to provide the \$15 billion in funds which the Bush administration wants to finance the war with Iraq. But the panel also decided to limit to \$43 billion, at least for the time being, the total amount the President can spend for the war. The subcommittee decided to limit spending until the actual costs of fighting are known.

The remaining money is to come

from contributions promised by allied countries.

A great outcry is being raised on Capitol Hill against the Japanese and the Europeans, notably Germany, to shell out more for the Gulf massacre. Sen. Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.) urged, in floor comments on Feb. 27, that the United States "bill" the Japanese "while the tears are falling."

Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.) whined that "exactly those countries that we helped to rebuild after the war, are letting the U.S.A. down in one of the biggest crises after the Second World War. The fact that it is all that difficult to have the money passed by the Tokyo parliament is a clear sign that one can't talk about real solidarity." Schroeder also criticized Germany for transferring the money too slowly.

According to a report in the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Feb. 28, senior officials of the Bush administration warned Germany and Japan not to try to pay less than the promised \$20 billion, by using the excuse that the war took less than the projected three months. The Germans and Japanese are to cover also a more substantial part of the estimated \$50-70 billion that the war did cost, the administration thinks. Bonn and Tokyo are to answer the question who, if the Iraqis can't do it, would pay the immense war reparations in the end.

If squeezing the allies doesn't yield enough money, Schroeder proposes that "war bonds" be issued in the U.S. to help cover the \$300 billion budget deficit: "Support in Graham the U.S. population for this war is so big, that a government bond that contributes to the funding of the war should turn into a big favorite."

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) took aim at the Germans: "If Chancel-

lor Kohl is allegedly forced to increase the taxes because of the war, he should also contribute a bigger share."

What does Moynihan know about anything?

Responding to Sen. Daniel Moynihan's (D-N.Y.) threat that the United States was considering cutting off aid, including anti-drug aid, to Thailand in light of last month's military coup, Army Chief Gen. Suchinda Kraprayoon laughed and said it might be a good thing for the U.S. to cut off the aid.

According to the *Bangkok Post* of March 2, the general pointed out that Thailand is an independent country and was unlikely to be hurt by such a cut. "What does the U.S. senator really know outside his home? He does not really know anything," Suchinda said.

Moynihan sees Soviet shift on Zionism

In floor comments on Feb. 28, Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.), a long-time operative of the Zionist lobby, claimed that the Soviets are prepared to abrogate the U.N. General Assembly Resolution of 1975 which labeled Zionism a form of racism and racial discrimination.

Moynihan referred to an article in the Feb. 15 issue of the *Long Island Jewish World*, which reports Soviet U.N. Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov declaring at a recent press conference that "the idea of the Zionism resolution was false. It should be repealed." Moynihan claims that this represented

a "forthright declaration" rather than a "reappraisal" by the Soviets of their position.

Moynihan had asked Secretary of State James Baker if he thought that the Soviets were prepared to rescind the resolution, Baker replied that although he thought such a move would be beneficial, he did not know "whether or not there would be any chance of success" in getting the Soviets on board.

It is highly unlikely, with the enhanced role of Israel in the Mideast in the aftermath of the destruction of Iraq by U.S. and allied forces, that the Soviet Union would want to add further grist to the mill of an Israel anxious to expand its power at the cost of neighboring Arab states.

House freshman Ramstad demands Saddam's head

Rep. Jim Ramstad (D-Minn.) introduced a House resolution on Feb. 28 calling for the United Nations to try Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for war crimes. Ramstad claimed that Iraq was "responsible for turning over Saddam to the other convention signatories," and that the U.S. must insist that he be turned over to allied forces "before Iraq is allowed to rejoin the peace-loving nations of the world community."

Meanwhile, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who was a POW in Vietnam for many years, has introduced a resolution into the Senate to create an international tribunal which would try Saddam Hussein, among other things, for his "hostile use of Environmental Modification Techniques" in allegedly setting fire to the Kuwaiti oil fields. (In fact, most of the fires were caused by bombing raids by the "co-

alition" forces.)

Neither congressman said anything about the murder of some 200,000 Iraqis, most of them civilians, by U.S. "precision" bombing.

AIPAC warns Senate to back Israel, or else

Columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak reported on March 6 that the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is pushing for the Senate to vote for the full \$1 billion that Israel is demanding from the United States for the damage caused by the Gulf war. This is twice the amount President Bush wanted to give. If the money is not forthcoming, senators will find themselves without campaign financing.

One high administration official told Evans and Novak: "I have been told that [Senate Minority Leader Robert] Dole was warned not to fight this billion-dollar figure if he wants a Republican-controlled Senate after the 1992 election."

On March 1, AIPAC issued an "action alert," urging its members to start working on Congress to vote for the \$1 billion figure. Especially targeted, according to Evans and Novak, are Senate Republicans.

The House Appropriations Committee panel voted on March 5 to approve \$650 million in aid for Israel at the request of the Bush administration. Secretary of State Baker had sought to pare the Israeli request for \$1 billion in aid to \$400 million in cash plus a gift, valued at \$400-500 million, of the four Patriot missile batteries the U.S. sent there as protection against Iraqi Scud missiles. Israel had countered the Baker proposal by asking for \$750 million in cash and two

Patriot batteries. The March 5 vote did not address the matter of the Patriots, although Appropriations Committee chairman David Obey (D-Wisc.) felt that Israel would ultimately get these.

Resolution Trust Corp. is losing money fast

Citing a report on the work of the Resolution Trust Corp., the institution set up by Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady to deal with the savings and loan crisis, Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.) noted in floor comments on Feb. 27 that from July 1990 to November 1990, the RTC had increased the amount it held in receivership by \$16 billion, thereby increasing its obligations.

One of the big problems has been the real estate assets, which, according to the report, represent only 10.4% of the conservatorship assets. Although noting that the real estate assets were only a small percentage of the overall conservatorship assets, Graham noted that carrying the \$17 billion per month of the real estate assets was costing the taxpayers \$80 million per month in the cost and depreciation of value.

The RTC has been slow in selling assets so as not to collapse real estate values and drive even more S&Ls and commercial banks into the arms of the RTC.

Graham also noted the enormous bureaucracy needed to maintain this administrative structure. The General Accounting Office, said Graham, "indicated that RTC now has 5,000 employees to manage these assets. They estimate that, under the current pace of activities, those 5,000 people could be employed as long as 10 years disposing of these assets."