

## Congressional Closeup by Carl Osgood

### Republicans in disarray over immigration bill

On Sept. 17, Congressional Republicans cancelled the conference committee meeting scheduled on the Immigration in the National Interest Act. The move was not universally well received within GOP ranks.

The day before, Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) complained on the Senate floor that the bill had become a political football, despite strong commitments from both Houses to pass it. He complained that Presidential candidate Bob Dole was lobbying behind the scenes to let the bill die so that "the President will not have a Rose Garden ceremony with regard to illegal immigration," because "somehow this then cripples the effort of my friend Bob Dole." He excoriated the "cynical politics" of the Republican Party for conspiring to let die "the singular issue that is reflected in polls all across the country for years, and that is do something about illegal immigration."

The primary issue holding up the bill, and the reason President Clinton is threatening to veto it, is a House amendment sponsored by Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.) which would allow states to decide whether they will educate the children of illegal immigrants. Democrats are threatening a filibuster over the amendment.

Simpson urged some sort of compromise, because assuredly "there are 10 to 12 Republicans in this body who do not like the Gallegly amendment in any form and who will assist in the filibuster."

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) insisted in a press conference on Sept. 18 that the Gallegly amendment should be in the bill, but that a compromise, perhaps even dropping the amendment, was being considered in order to pass the bill. He denied that Dole is "calling up and saying, 'Do this, do that,'" but that

"we're conscious of what he is saying and what's right and then what should be done."

### Waters speaks on CIA cocaine-running

Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), joined by Major Owens (D-N.Y.) and Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-Tex.), spoke on the House floor on Sept. 20, on the Aug. 18-21 *San Jose Mercury News* series that reported on CIA involvement in cocaine-running into the ghettos of south-central Los Angeles.

Owens discussed the historical victimization of blacks in the United States. He called the financing of the Nicaraguan Contras by drug-running, "victimization, probably by conspiracy."

Jackson-Lee complained about how "national security" has been used to cover up these kinds of operations. "Certainly, anyone who would argue," she said, "and come before Congressional hearings and talk about the need for clandestine operations to protect the sanctity of this nation, would cause individuals in Congress and others to try to be sensitive to that, to try to understand what the needs were to protect this nation, why we need to be in Nicaragua and why we needed to be doing clandestine operations; but behind those words by the likes of an Oliver North, behind the White House of the 1980s, controlled by the Republicans, we now find a devastating and decided and directed effort to poison the lives of young African-Americans, inner-city youths in this nation."

Randy Cunningham (R-Calif.) made a feeble attempt to turn the scandal around onto the Clinton administration. He said that "many of us support the investigation" called for by the Congressional Black Caucus, but

that "90% of [the drugs] were purported to go out of Mena, Arkansas when President Clinton was governor." He further claimed that 18 people who were going to testify against then-Governor Clinton in a grand jury investigation, had been murdered to protect him. Cunningham did not address the fact that over a half-dozen federal probes into activities in Mena were quashed, which no governor has the power to do.

### Gingrich ethics report demanded by Democrats

House Democrats escalated their demands for the release of the special counsel report on ethics violations by House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), leading to a vote on a privileged resolution on the matter on Sept. 19. The Democratic strategy is to make an issue of the report and Gingrich's ethics on every day remaining in the session.

During the preceding two days, John Lewis (D-Ga.), the sponsor of the resolution called on the ethics panel to "stop the stonewalling." Both times he was gagged by rulings from the Speaker Pro Tem. Lewis was joined at different times by other Democrats, including Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.), who called the ethics panel "the admonishment committee," because they've sent Gingrich six letters of admonishment for violating House rules, but have not punished him.

Vic Fazio (D-Calif.) accused Republicans of having done "tremendous damage to an already fragile process," because of long delays in responding to complaints against the Speaker. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) and Harold Volkmer (D-Mo.), like Lewis, also spoke until they were gagged by unfavorable rulings from the chair.

The resolution was tabled without debate on a motion by Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Tex.), which was upheld by a vote of 225-179. However, unlike several previous votes on similar resolutions, four Republicans, Tim Hutchinson (Ark.), Scott Klug (Wisc.), Jack Quinn (N.Y.), and James Walsh (N.Y.), voted to release the report.

## **T**errorism is undeclared war, general tells panel

Gen. Wayne Downing (ret.), the author of the report which analyzed the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, said that the most important lesson to learn is that terrorism is undeclared war, and must be treated as such if future attacks are to be adequately planned for, in hearings before the House National Security Committee and Senate Armed Services Committee on Sept. 18.

While the Downing report is candidly critical of the failure of the command structure to assimilate these lessons, even after clear warnings following the Riyadh, Saudi Arabia bombing in November 1995, the general refused to engage in partisan finger-pointing in assessing blame for the general problem.

Rep. James Saxton (R-N.J.) emphasized this point in remarks which challenged the "political infrastructure" of the nation for failing to address the nature of the threat in the region—a failure which ultimately constrained the commanders on the scene. "All of us have to share responsibility for that," he said, "because we refused to recognize, collectively, the threat."

Other Republicans, however, engaged in partisan bashing of the Clinton administration. Senate Armed Ser-

vices Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) said that he was "astounded" at the administration's failure to support Congress' recommendation on the fiscal 1997 defense budget, because the administration budget "did not contain adequate funding for counterterrorism."

Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) accused Defense Secretary William Perry of a "major failure in basic judgment," in allowing a situation where a truck carrying a bomb could park within 80 feet of the living quarters of the U.S. base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

## **H**ouse gushes over drug kingpin George Bush

More than a dozen members of the House fell all over themselves to praise George Bush on Sept. 18, during debate on a bill to authorize a grant of \$3 million to assist in establishing the "George Bush Fellowship Program" at the "George Bush School of Government and Public Service" at Texas A&M University. Bush has been identified at the top of the chain of command of a Contra cocaine-running ring which flooded U.S. cities with drugs, in an *EIR Special Report*, "Would a President Bob Dole Prosecute Drug Super-Kingpin George Bush?" The report has been delivered to House offices.

Bill Goodling (R-Pa.) said the bill "pays tribute to a great President." Joe Barton (R-Tex.) called it a "living memorial . . . to a former President." Sonny Montgomery (D-Miss.) claimed that "in almost 30 years of public service George Bush has never embarrassed this country, and he has tried in every way to help and not hurt President Clinton in his foreign policies, especially in Iraq and Bosnia."

Bill Clinger (R-Pa.) said, "What a wonderful way to recognize a wonderful man and an outstanding President and his wife."

Opponents of the bill were also effusive in their praise of Bush. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.) said, "I join my colleagues to honor former President George Bush, but I choose to do so in a very different way, by limiting the federal government and working toward a balanced budget, not by creating a new fellowship program." Hoekstra was echoed by Mark Neumann (R-Wisc.) and Bill Luther (D-Minn.). The bill passed by a vote of 279-116.

## **S**enate fails to agree on wrapping up business

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) attempted, on Sept. 20, to get agreement to put the four remaining appropriations bills (Commerce; Interior; Labor, Health and Human Services; and Treasury) into a continuing resolution in order to wrap up the appropriations process by Sept. 25. Lott sought to have the Senate consider a continuing resolution from the House on Sept. 24 and 25, without amendments.

Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) objected that the resolution was still unwritten. "We have no interest in delaying the business of the Senate. By the same token, we have no interest in agreeing to a process that will not allow an opportunity to amend circumstances in this piece of legislation that may well cry out for amendment," he said.

Earlier in the week, House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Tex.) said that the goal of the Republican leadership was to get Congress adjourned by Sept. 27, but that members should expect to stay in session on Sept. 28 and 29.