



NEW SOLIDARITY International Press Service

U.S. POLITICAL NEWSLETTER

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Rockefeller Pushes War Policy as Washington Sits Paralyzed

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 10 (IPS) — The failure of the hegemonic Wall Street forces linked Democratic Party patriarch Averell Harriman and investment banker George Ball to take decisive initiatives in the ongoing international economic crisis has produced a policy vacuum at all levels of the U.S. Government. This has manifested itself in the collapse of the institutions of that government into chaos and factional bickering.

The Executive branch is in a state of total paralysis. Contradictory foreign policy directives are issued daily from the Ford White House and within the State Department itself. As several columnists have already commented, this confusion has already reached the point where no one can really tell what the foreign policy of the U.S. is on any given subject. Similar internal feuding has paralyzed the other departments of the executive branch.

The Congress meanwhile, is either deadlocked or moving at a snail's pace on all critical policy issues. This deadlock is most dramatically evidenced by its inability to design and implement the comprehensive legislative package to enforce the austerity measures that Wall Street — in principle — agrees must eventually be implemented.

This policy vacuum, has given the "invisible government" apparatus controlled by Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the political maneuvering room it requires to take its own policy initiatives. The Rockefeller apparatus, which bypasses the "official" constitutional governmental machinery is again seeking to make its policy of thermonuclear confrontation and war at the earliest possible date the effective policy of a paralyzed U.S. government.

Retreat from Confrontation with Labor

Fear of triggering a mass political strike forced a tactical retreat from a confrontation by Wall Street and significant concession to settle the Teamster strike last weekend. This retreat followed by a parallel settlement with striking members of the International Association of Machinists in 11 western states and indecisiveness about what to do with a spreading general strike in San Francisco.

Today's Baltimore Sun reports that the Ford Administration is already backing off from a confrontation with the postal unions and is rethinking its opposition to increased postal subsidies.

Throughout the week, White House spokesmen staunchly argued that this pattern of retreat was "insignificant" and that the Administration plans to deal with upcoming contract negotiations on a case-by-case basis. In the midst of the Teamsters strike, IPS learned this week, the labor-management director for the Department of Labor resigned without notice. An aide to presidential economic advisor

William Feidman began stuttering when briefed April 6 on the repercussions of the Teamsters' settlement throughout the U.S. labor movement. Meanwhile, White House aides emphatically disclaimed Ford's responsibility for the Teamsters and IAM settlements. According to these aides full responsibility lies with the Department of Labor. Ford himself at a meeting with disgruntled Michigan industrialists stated "Do you know what the implications of a prolonged nation-wide trucking shutdown on the economy would be?"

Meanwhile, the Assistant Secretary of Labor told the House Education and Labor Committee that labor's expectations are too high. The only way to drive down expectations, he continued, is to maintain a large pool of unemployed workers willing to work for less on standby. Wall Street spokesmen admitted that they had suffered a tactical defeat and were retreating to better strategic position. All were agreed that a confrontation with labor as unavoidable — as opposed to the weeks prior to the Teamsters strike when Wall Street boasted of how it would crush the working class at the earliest moment, this week the bankers would not venture to say when the confrontation would take place.

Congressional Confusion

Bewildered Congressmen were found wandering through the corridors of the Capitol this week and in one case confessed to "confusion" inability to think. In this state of mind Congress made minimum efforts to forestall ecological holocaust but joined them with outright slave labor measures which will make such a holocaust inevitable. An irrational defense appropriation was enacted, while health and welfare expenditures were indefinitely postponed.

To Ford's \$135 million flu vaccination legislation, the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Labor, Health, Education and Welfare attached a rider for a \$1.8 billion public service jobs program. The rider, which stipulates \$1.2 billion for 310,000 CITA, Title II and VI, jobs and \$500 million for 800,000 summer youth employment jobs, passed the Senate yesterday 61 to 7 along with the vaccination program. At the same time, the Senate voted 53 to 21 to indefinitely table a motion boosting health-care and welfare programs.

The House, meanwhile, overwhelmingly voted up a \$33.3 billion defense authorization for ships, tanks, planes and missiles, which exceeded Ford's already unprecedented peacetime request by more than \$528 million. The authorization, which passed by a vote of 298 to 52, exceeded by \$8.4 billion the amount for fiscal '76. The veto followed an intensive psychological set-up of anti-war liberals in Congress. Senator John Culver (D-IA), formerly a vocal advocate of limiting defense spending, was induced to order a study of U.S. defense capabilities and national security from the Library of Congress. The incentive was provided by a barrage of At-

lanticist propaganda purporting that the Soviet Union was outspending the U.S. on defense by 40 per cent. Culver's report was prepared by a staffer for the American Security Council rightwing think tank, and concluded that the decline in U.S. defense capability vis-a-vis the USSR was reaching crisis proportions. Culver, though he does not concur in the conclusions of the report, will now enter it under his name in the Congression Record — because he commissioned the report!

Exactly the same procedure is being followed around the hated Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, with Capitol Hill offices engaged in a debate controlled by Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn) and the Brookings Institution about whether unemployment levels should be 3 per cent, six per cent or somewhere in between, to keep down wages and control inflation.

Labor Party Acts Decisively

Representatives of the U.S. Labor Party have intruded upon the paralyzed Congress with a growing mandate from their constituencies to enact the Emergency Employment Act and debt moratorium legislation before the accelerating disintegration of the economy and the U.S. political institutions become irreversible.

The congressional response revealed several immediate points of vulnerability, the most intense being congressional fears of growing isolation from their base, particularly in areas where mass strike ferment has broken into the open. The office of Rep. John Burton (D-Calif.) broke into pandemonium when a USLP organizer appeared to brief his staff on the near-general strike in San Francisco. Two aides frantically began searching first for the Congressman then for a labor aide while a secretary slumped into her chair and groaned, "I have a stomach ache." Other congressional offices in the orbit of the Black Congressional Caucus and the

Kennedy liberal grouping repeatedly requested this week's updates on Labor Party organizing strength.

Reports from one source close to the Black Caucus also confirmed that the office to which he is associated and others inside the Black Caucus would back the Labor debt moratorium legislation now under review by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif). The effect of such a move would create serious repercussion in the Black Caucus and contiguous congressional layers.

These potential fissures in the Black caucus are also widened by their complete vulnerability on Rockefeller's present war mongering policy toward Peru and Latin America as a whole. Rep. Harkin's (D-Iowa) office reported that Ted Kennedy (D-Mass) and Don Frazier (D-Minn) are in limited way to an extent aware of the potential activation of the Rockefellers war plans for South America. Harkin and Reps. Miller (D-Calif) and Moffet (D-Conn) recently concluded a trip to Chile in which they warned that the U.S., not send arms to Chilean dictator Pinochet.

These impotent gestures aimed at defusing the Rockefeller designed Peruvian-Chile "War of the Pacific" scenario however, cannot work unless the question of debt moratorium for Peru is also addressed by the Congress. On this question, the entire Kennedy-linked wing of the Congress will act only if pressured by their working class constituencies.

Reps. Hamilton (D-Ind), Bonkers (D-Wash), and Bingham (D-NY) hinted at concrete action on the "War of the Pacific" issue, volunteered that their constituencies were concerned with the precarious Latin American situation and these Congressmen each reported that they were considering undertaking investigations of the Peruvian operation. In one case, a Congressman personally returned the Labor Party a call to get a full briefing on Rockefellers activities in the Southern hemisphere.