

Congress Defeats Efforts To Kill Clinch River Breeder Program

In a major defeat for the Carter Administration, two key Senate committees last week voted to fund \$150 million for the Clinch River nuclear breeder program, despite massive White House pressure to kill the project. Eliminating the breeder has been a cornerstone for the entire Carter energy austerity program and the Administration has made the breeder project fight a test of its credibility. The vote of no confidence in the Administration's policy promises to have major international repercussions, as President Carter's demands that Europe scrap its own breeder programs to avoid the danger of nuclear proliferation hinge on his ability to prevent its development in the U.S. The way is now cleared for the full Congress to pass the breeder funding and legislate a complete energy growth program, and for Japan, Germany and France to go ahead with their own breeder programs.

On June 22 the Senate Appropriations Committee voted 13 to 7 to fund \$150 million for the breeder; two days later the Senate Energy Committee did the same, in a 9 to 9 vote. The committee was evenly split on the issue all day and defeated by tie votes an Administration proposal to fund \$33 million to close down the breeder program and a compromise proposal by Senator Church to fund only \$75 million for the breeder.

Committee chairman Senator Scoop Jackson (D-Wash) a strong breeder proponent broke the stalemate by invoking a rule stating that unless a majority voted against the breeder, the Energy Committee could not overrule the Senate Appropriations Committee vote. The way is now cleared for floor votes in both the House and Senate, which are expected after the July 4 recess.

Strong labor union mobilization, especially from the Building Trades, Teamsters and the AFL-CIO, along with stout support from conservative, pro-growth Senators was responsible for the Administration's defeat. Senator McClure (R-Idaho) explicitly warned that the breeder was necessary to prevent war. "It is absolutely essential that we develop new energy sources like the breeder because if we don't, we have condemned this country to an inevitable war. Nations fight wars because of lack of essential raw materials. If we fail to develop new energy sources we will have set this world on an inevitable course toward war."

The U.S. Labor Party was instrumental in mobilizing support for the breeder, especially trade union support. Two weeks ago the *Washington Post* led its front page article on the breeder by listing first among pro-breeder lobbyists, "the U.S. Labor Party, united with the AFL-CIO." The Labor Party initiated the mobilization for the

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The following interview with Jessica Tuchman, head of the Global Issues section of the National Security Council was provided to EIR

Q: Today's *Washington Post* says that the only real opposition to the Clinch River Breeder Reactor has come from within the Administration and references you as a key person who has influenced President Carter to oppose the project. The *Post* reports that the reasons that you and others have given to the President for opposing Clinch River Breeder are based on false information. This seems to be an attack on you by the *Post*. How do you account for this?

A: You didn't read the article very carefully. It was not an attack on me. It only said that some members of the Administration were only lukewarm in their attitude toward the breeder. It was the President's decision, no one else's.

Q: From the numerous articles appearing in the

press playing up Henry Kissinger and his "style" versus Brzezinski's and strong attacks on Carter's push for human rights, it appears that there is a drive to replace Brzezinski with Kissinger. We have heard that Kissinger is waiting to be called by the White House. James Reston's recent column which said that West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and other European leaders are extremely upset by Carter's human rights campaign seems to be an attack on Brzezinski, the person behind that campaign. Do you think what I've said is true?

A: I really can't help you on Kissinger, but on the Reston column, I think Reston swallowed a line. First of all, the President went way out of his way to avoid any conflict on human rights. The CSCE report which he issued, was required by law, he didn't even attach a policy statement to it, because he wanted to avoid this problem. Secondly, Reston exaggerates the response of Schmidt and others. We have found no indication of anywhere near that kind of dismay.