

## In Congress

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# A revolt against the President

One-and-a-half months before the opening of the Democratic Party National Convention in New York City, an anti-Carter revolt is sweeping the Democrat-controlled Congress. The revolt stepped up after the trouncing accorded Carter at the recent Venice summit. As one leading Capitol Hill source declared "Let's face it, Venice was the turning point. Carter was humiliated, he was smashed at Venice. People are no longer resigned to accepting certain defeat in November by renominating Carter."

On Thursday, while Carter was en route back to the United States, Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) joined by 21 Democratic senators, convened a press conference to announce that Senate Democrats have begun working on a tax cut package, scheduled to be ready by September. The move came as a complete surprise to the White House.

Senator Byrd announced that he had commissioned Texas Democrat Lloyd Bentsen to head up a newly formed Senate Task Force on Economic Policy, which includes the 21 senators, to draft a new economic program. Finance chairman Russell Long of Louisiana then declared that he would convene hearings after the July 4 recess on the tax cut measure, which would be between \$20-30 billion. In a calculated rebuff to the White House, Long declared that he would "seek advice from the best experts in the country" in fashioning the tax package.

On July 1 the House Ways and Means Committee announced that they too would be holding hearings on proposals for a tax cut shortly after the holiday recess. The House had previously refused to discuss the issue out of loyalty to the White House. "I have to deal with a world of reality," declared Senator Byrd in explaining the tax cut plan.

The White House has been scurrying about in a desperate effort to control the revolt. While White House economic policy advisors meeting on Friday June 27 decided the administration should propose a tax cut plan this year, another high level spokesman said on national television two days later that such a plan was not in the

cards. Treasury Secretary Miller on "Issues and Answers" June 29 said, "our preference would be that it be studied next year outside of the heat of an election year."

On July 1 Jody Powell told reporters that the White House had "no plans to submit a tax cut plan." Yet on the same day President Carter met with Congressional leaders saying that he had not ruled out support for a Congressional tax cut in 1981 and agreed to set up a joint committee of the administration and Congress to consider the cut.

However Congressional sources would only say that Carter had "not ruled out" a tax cut this year, and they are in no mood to compromise with him on this. "We'll work with them, but we're not going to wait for them" declared Bentsen. The Senate plans hearings after the recess and to go ahead with their own bill by Labor Day.

## Congress moves against Democratic National Committee

The revolt has surfaced on other issues. Ten Democratic senators led by Robert Byrd and Scoop Jackson on June 27 also blasted the leadership of the Democratic National Committee for the DNC's moves to launch court cases to prevent John Anderson from gaining ballot status in a number of states. It is a well-known secret in Democratic leadership layers that the DNC's campaign, camouflaged as "anti-Anderson," was consciously designed to aid Anderson by giving him enormous publicity and national media attention. Jackson called the DNC's moves "foolish and counterproductive," and Missouri Senator Eagleton warned that "the operation will backfire."

As these developments demonstrate, the anti-Carter campaign is being led by Senate leaders Byrd and Jackson who represent the party's largest national current—the moderate-conservative mainstream of the party with a powerful labor-ethnic and entrepreneurial businessman base. Byrd, as majority leader, and Jackson as chairman of the Senate Energy Committee and second-ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, are two of the most prestigious Democrats in Congress. Additional jolts recently included the bipartisan drive to repeal Carter's grain embargo, launched a week ago by GOP Senator Dole of Kansas, that recruited 20 cosponsors, with the Democratic farm-belt representatives and senators in open revolt against Carter.

The House, by the whopping margin 232-131, defeated Carter's Energy Mobilization Board (EMB), which would be able to waive federal and state laws to push the construction of coal gasification and related regressive energy 'technologies' associated with Carter's energy program. A majority of the House Democratic delegation voted against Carter or abstained in the floor vote.