

Congressional Calendar by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

Senate passes weapons procurement bill

Just before its July 4 recess, the Senate approved a \$51.9 billion weapons procurement bill by a vote of 84 to 3. The bill is the largest procurement bill ever passed by the Senate. The measure now goes to a conference committee to be reconciled with a \$54 billion House defense authorization bill. Sens. Mark Hatfield (D-Ore.), William Proxmire (D-Wisc.), and Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.) were the only members voting against the measure.

The bill included an 11.7 percent pay raise for military personnel, nearly double the 6.2 percent pay raise Carter has proposed in his budget. Other measures incorporated in the Senate bill included:

- \$1.5 billion to start production of the MX missile;
- \$8.4 billion for an increased shipbuilding program;
- \$50 million for development of a new transport craft, dubbed the CX, to move heavy equipment for the Rapid Deployment Force;
- \$91 million to begin research on a new strategic bomber;
- \$16.5 billion for 525 new aircraft.

Senate ratifies treaties

The Senate ratified a number of treaties that have been pending for up to six years. On July 2 the Senate unanimously agreed to a 1976 nuclear safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is linked to the 1970 nuclear weapons non-proliferation treaty. The agreement requires inspection of nuclear facilities by the

IAEA on the grounds that non-nuclear nations may divert their nuclear energy materiel to war production. The treaty has been regarded by many nations as an infringement of their sovereignty and a method of keeping them from developing nuclear energy.

The other treaties ratified were the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Lives at Sea, the 1978 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, and amendments to the 1948 Convention on the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization.

Senators propose change in Presidential system

A bipartisan group of 21 Senators is calling for the creation of a commission to recommend changes in the Presidential nominating process. The measure, Jt. Resolution S.189, is sponsored by Sen. Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.).

The proposal calls for a 20-member commission to study the nomination and delegate selection process, Presidential campaign financing, and the nomination of Vice-Presidential candidates, as well as determining how election laws "promote or retard" independent candidacies. The commission would also review the relation of the media to the election process.

According to Stevenson's proposal, the commission would be bipartisan, composed of members appointed by the President, and the leadership of the House and Senate. The chairmen of both parties would

be ex officio members. Congressman Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) has a similar bill in the House.

Stevenson's legislation is now in the Rules Committee, which may hold hearings on the Presidential selection process this fall.

House restores funds to energy research

On June 24, the House restored major cuts in the appropriations bill in the area of energy research made by the House Appropriations Committee. Congressman Don Fuqua (D-Fla.) proposed that the House restore \$107.4 million of the cuts that had been proposed for the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill.

The restored funds were in the following categories: Energy Supply Research and Development—\$18.1 million for basic engineering science, including nuclear science, material and chemical science, engineering, mathematics and geoscience, advanced energy projects and biological energy research. Under the Energy Supply category, magnetic fusion received \$18 million and solar energy received \$49 million. The General Science and Research section of the appropriations received \$19.5 million for high energy physics and for nuclear physics. Magnetic fusion was granted an additional \$2.8 million.

The Carter administration had warned the Congress that the Appropriations Committee cuts were also "devastating" but they only proposed that \$89.3 million be restored.

The Senate has not acted on this and Water Development Subcom-

mittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee will take up the House bill when they return from their July 4 recess. According to subcommittee sources, the earliest the committee can act on the bill is the last week in July.

Subcommittee issues report on Three Mile Island

On July 2 Senators Hart (D-Colo.) and Simpson (R-Wyo.) released the report of the special investigation of the Three Mile Island nuclear incident conducted during the past year by the subcommittee on nuclear regulation for the Committee on Environment and Public Works. According to Sen. Simpson, the report found that "the actions of plant operators and managers was the 'immediate cause of the uncovering of and severe damage to, the reactor core.' We find that utility personnel 'proved unable to diagnose the accident correctly in time to prevent a serious situation' and 'took incorrect actions, aggravating what began as a minor problem.' At the same time we emphasize that these actions were due to deficiencies with respect to this set of accident conditions, in training, in control from design, in instrumentation, and equipment, in plant design and in emergency procedures."

Sen. Hart told reporters that the report suggested no specific reforms because his staff took pains not to duplicate the work of the Kemeny and Rogovin Commissions and because the Senate already had imposed changes in the NRC authorization bill.

Both Simpson and Hart declared that nuclear energy was def-

initely needed in America. "We have no choice but to use nuclear power at least the plants now in operation and under construction to get us through our present energy dilemma."

Sen. Jim McClure (R-Idaho) praised the report, calling it "well-balanced" in its conclusions about the ability of the industry to deal with a critical problem and in its recognition that "nuclear power is an absolutely essential element in meeting the energy needs of the future of this country."

Congress debates fuel sales to India

A fight is shaping up in Congress over the issue of shipments of nuclear fuel to India for the Tarapur nuclear facility in India.

Several weeks ago President Carter issued an executive order allowing the sale of the fuel, overriding the opposition of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which argued that India refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. India would have had to give the U.S. inspection rights on its nuclear energy plants and their use of spent fuels, without reciprocal rights. Under the Percy-Glenn Act, the President can issue an executive order that overrides the NRC. Congress then has 60 days to overrule the order, or until September 26.

The House is expected at this time to block the fuel shipment. A resolution of disapproval at the sale has been introduced by Rep. Jonathan Bingham (D-N.Y.), with hearings expected on July 23 in the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

A similar resolution has been

introduced into the Senate by Harry Byrd (I-Va.), and another is expected soon by Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio). The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will hold hearings on the resolution shortly after Congress reconvenes on July 21. What action the full Senate will take is uncertain, but opponents of the fuel sale are being helped by environmentalists like the Friends of the Earth.

Support builds to reverse grain embargo

Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kans.), who introduced legislation (S.2855) to reverse the embargo imposed by President Carter on grain sales to the Soviet Union, has gained the support of several Presidential candidates for his bill. On July 3 Sen. Dole announced that Ronald Reagan has endorsed the plan to end the grain embargo. The day before the announcement of Reagan's support, Ted Kennedy signed on as a cosponsor of the bill. Sen. Dole already has 21 bipartisan Senate cosponsors.

Dole has argued that American farmers are suffering more than the Soviet Union from the grain embargo. Unless Congress acts rapidly, the administration has made clear that it intends to keep the embargo in effect. However, under the terms of a binding U.S.-Soviet grain agreement negotiated in 1975, the U.S. must export up to 8 million tons of corn and wheat to the U.S.S.R. Anything in excess of that requires government approval. Dole's legislation is before the banking committee and hearings are expected shortly.