

Traitors in Congress mutiny over SALT

by Nicholas F. Benton

"Either the Congress will stand with the administration, or the Congress will stand with the Soviets," a Pentagon official told the House Armed Services Committee June 5, blasting the speed with which 222 congressmen denounced President Reagan's landmark decision to abandon unilateral compliance with the SALT II treaty of 1979.

No sooner had Soviet Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev denounced Reagan's move, than these congressmen were in motion. On their first day back after Memorial Day recess, the congressmen attached their names to a letter circulated by House Foreign Relations chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) demanding that President Reagan rescind his decision.

Within two more days, over 120 congressmen had signed on as official co-sponsors of a bill authored by Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) to force compliance with SALT. Dicks's bill, HR 4919, would restrict funding for any program that would take the United States over the SALT launcher or warhead limits, thus undermining the President's decision.

Indifferent to the fact that Reagan's decision was taken because of massive Soviet violations of the SALT and Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaties, these congressmen threatened to blackmail Reagan with further defense cuts if he does not capitulate. "If Reagan is going to sack arms control, then it will cost him the SDI [the Strategic Defense Initiative]," Dicks threatened. Dicks called the President's decision "the most absurd I've ever seen," and designed his bill to be amended onto the Defense Department authorization bill, with the specification that "no funds may be obligated or expended" for the deployment or maintenance of weapons that exceed the limits of the SALT treaty, and requiring prior approval of both houses of Congress before the President could seek a waiver of this limit under national security crisis conditions.

Representative Thomas Downey (D-N.Y.) put in his two cents: "There's a new leadership in Moscow, but the Reagan administration thinks Joseph Stalin is still alive."

On the Senate side, a bi-partisan committee consisting of John Chafee (R-R.I.), John Heinz (R-Pa.), Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.), and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) shot off a letter to President Reagan demanding that he expedite delivery of a report Congress requested Feb. 1, outlining the potential Soviet buildup in missiles and warheads without the constraints of SALT. The letter is clearly a ruse, since the President has made it clear, and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger has re-stated this point repeatedly, that the Soviets have been undeterred by the SALT and ABM treaties in maximizing their abilities to launch a first strike and win a thermonuclear war.

This reality, which led to the historic Reagan decision announced May 27, was further underscored in an eight-page letter to Congress from the President, delivered June 3, stressing the critical importance of key components of the U.S. strategic modernization programs, especially the SDI. In response to a letter signed by 46 senators, including many Republicans, requesting that the administration cut back its \$4.9 billion request for the SDI in the FY 1987 budget, Reagan's letter emphasized that the Soviets have been working for 17 years on their own version of the SDI, and are significantly ahead in key areas of laser and directed energy beam research. "Budget cuts that would slow our program would be the worst way to respond to the continuing pattern of Soviet activities," the President said, adding the ominous warning, "Congress is on the verge of imperiling the nation's security, as well as undercutting American negotiating efforts at the Geneva arms control talks." The President listed the SDI, the Stealth bomber, advanced cruise missiles, the Trident 2 submarine, 50 additional MX missiles, and a small-

er, mobile intercontinental ballistic missile as among the modernization programs essential to the nation's security which the Congress must not cut.

However, for congressmen worried only about what Moscow says, this is only more ammunition to throw back at the President. Among the Republican turncoats, in addition to Heinz and Chafee, were Sen. David Durenberger (R-Minn.), Lowell Weiker (R-Conn.), and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.). But most of the opposition was Democratic, led by House Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-Mass.) and Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.). O'Neill as much as conceded that party unity—not strategic reality—was the key issue. For him, this is the opportunity to score some partisan points in an election year.

Ignoring Soviet treaty violations, O'Neill said in a commencement address at New York University on June 5 that Reagan's action "means the administration has taken its foot off the brakes of nuclear arms deployment and is about to press down on the accelerator of nuclear arms production."

O'Neill and his cronies are irresponsibly tossing around the notion that the Soviets will crank out 8,000 new nuclear weapons without the constraints of SALT, whereas under the constraints, as Fascell put it on the House floor June 3, admitted Soviet noncompliance with the SALT treaties "has not had any serious military significance"! In his remarks which introduced the letter signed by the 222 congressmen, Fascell admitted that the Soviets have violated the SALT treaties, while still demanding that the United States comply.

Trying to outdo Marshal Akhromeyev himself by waving the threat of what the Soviets might do, Fascell warned, "But just look at the serious military significance of a Soviet Union free to no longer adhere to SALT. The Soviets could: Deploy any quantity of mobile missiles versus the current limit of one; quickly add 8,000 new nuclear weapons, and replace over 500 single warhead missiles with multiple warheads."

As Reagan and Weinberger have stressed, the Soviets are already exceeding the "current limit of one" mobile missile system with the deployment of 72 SS-25 missiles, and are now bringing even another system, the SS-24, on line. They are moving as fast as their overall warplan for global domination calls for—which has begun with the low-intensity insurrectionary actions already underway in West Germany.

But these KGB Democrats get most of their figures of the potential Soviet buildup from Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who fabricated them in a 17-page report released March 31, called "If You Undercut SALT, You Uppercut Security." The basic argument is that a U.S. "break out" from SALT would lead to an unprecedented Soviet military build-up, which we, especially under pressures of Gramm-Rudman, could never keep up with. It was Lou Finch of Aspin's Armed Services Committee staff who coordinated the collection of the 222 names on the letter to the President.

NBC-TV's Leslie Stahl tried to thrust the Aspin argument at Weinberger on "Meet the Press" on June 1—but Weinber-

ger just insisted that the Soviet military build-up was already underway, and that's why the decision not to remain unilaterally tied to a bad treaty, which was never ratified, was made in the first place.

The roster of Moscow's friends in Congress

If the American population ever needed a "hit list" of congressional targets to defeat in the 1986 elections, the 222 names on the June 3 letter to the President provide it:

Ackerman, Andrews, Annunzio, Atkins, Barnes, Bedell, Bennett, Biaggi, Boggs, Bonior, Borski, Boucher, Akaka, Alexander, Aspin, AuCoin, Bates, Beilenson, Berman, Boehlert, Boland, Bonker, Bosco, Boxer, Brown, Bryant, Bustamante, Carper, Chandler, Coelho, Collins, Conte, Coughlin, Crockett, Dellums, Dicks, Donnelly, Dowdy, Durbin, Dynamally, Eckart, Edwards, Evans, Fauntroy, Fazio, Fish, Foglietta, Ford, Fowler, Bruce, S. Burton, Byron, Carr, Clay, Coleman, Conyers, Cooper, Coyne, Daschle, DioGuardi, Dixon, Dorgan, Downey, Dwyer, Early, Edgar, Erdreich, Fascell, Fawell, Feighan, Fiorio, Foley, Ford, Frank, Frenzel, Garcia, Gephardt, Glickman, Goodling, Gray, Green, Gunderson, Hamilton, Hertel, Howard, Hughes, Jeffords, Jones, Kanjorski, Kastenmeier, Kildee, Kolter, LaFalce, Leach, Lehman, Levin, Long, Luken, Frost, Gejdenson, Gibbons, Gilman, Gonzalez, Gordon, Gray, Guarini, T. Hall, Hawkins, Hayes, Horton, Hoyer, Jacobs, Johnson, Jones, Kaptur, Kennelly, Kleczka, Kostmayer, Lantos, Lehman, Laland, Levine, Lowry, Lundine, McCloskey, McDade, McHugh, MacKay, Markey, Matsui, Mica, Miller, Mineta, Moakley, Moody, Mrazek, Neal, Oaker, Obey, Ortiz, Panetta, Penny, Perkins, Porter, Rangel, Richardson, Rodino, Rose, Roukema, McCurdy, McKernan, McKinney, Manton, Martinez, Mavroules, Mikulski, Miller, Mitchell, Mollohan, Morrison, Murphy, Nowak, Oberstar, Olin, Owens, Pease, Pepper, Pickle, Rahall, Reid, Ridge, Rose, Rostenkowski, Roybal, Russo, St. Germain, Scheuer, Schroeder, Seiberling, Sikorski, Smith, Snowe, Spratt, Stark, Studds, Synar, Torres, Towns, Traxler, Valentine, Visclosky, Waxman, Weiss, Whitley, Wirth, Wolpe, Wyden, Yatron, Sabo, Savage, Schneider, Schumer, Sharp, Slattery, N. Smith, Solarz, Staggers, Stokes, Swift, Tallon, Torricelli, Traficant, Udall, Vento, Walgren, Weaver, Wheat, Williams, Wise, Wright, Yates.