

Congressional Closeup by Kathleen Klenetsky

Congress moves to eliminate SALT-free diet

A key congressional committee approved a resolution June 12 calling on President Reagan to change his mind about abandoning SALT II. By a vote of 29-11, the House Foreign Affairs Committee endorsed the non-binding resolution, which is expected to go to the full House next week.

Committee chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla.), who recently met with Mikhail Gorbachov and other top Soviet officials in Moscow, motivated the measure on the ridiculous grounds that U.S. abandonment of the unratified treaty will "open the door" to a Soviet military build-up.

The committee vote came the day after the President's senior arms control adviser, Paul Nitze, warned another House panel that congressional attempts to "seek through legislation to determine the negotiating policy and tactics" of the United States would be a "serious mistake." Nitze said that passage of any of the various measures introduced into Congress recently, aimed at getting Reagan to backtrack on his no-SALT decision "would be inimical to our foreign policy and defense programs in general, and unhelpful to our arms control negotiating objectives in particular."

One of the House resolution's chief sponsors is Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.), who has also recruited 121 co-sponsors for a measure that would prohibit funding for any weapons that would take the United States above the limits of the unratified SALT II Treaty.

A similar bill was introduced on the Senate side June 11 by Sens. Joe Biden (D-Del.) and William Cohen (R-Maine). "We face the functional equivalent of a national emergency in the conduct of our strategic policy,"

said Biden, who appears to be trying to ride Soviet coattails to the Democratic presidential nomination. Biden charged that the administration harbors a "small group of right-wing advisers who have sought for years to topple the entire structure of arms control," and have now taken "control over the arms control policy of the United States."

Saying this group wants to terminate the SALT process and the ABM Treaty, he accused them of "seeking to use militarily insignificant treaty violations as an excuse to destroy the entire strategic framework with which they never agreed in the first place."

Will the United States survive Congress?

American defense capabilities are being ripped to shreds in the U.S. Congress—assisted by White House Chief of Staff Don Regan.

House and Senate conferees opened negotiations June 9 on fiscal year 1987 military funding levels, and after just two days of negotiations, it became abundantly clear that the defense budget was in for a wallop.

Senator Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, declared June 12 that "defense is going to have to suffer rather dramatically," if the White House persists in refusing to agree to new taxes.

The only question is, by how much? The Reagan administration had requested \$320 billion for the Pentagon—a real increase of only 3% over last year's budget. The Senate slashed that figure to \$301 billion, and the House to \$285 billion.

The most likely scenario is that

Congress will agree to about \$290 billion, roughly halfway between the Senate and House figures.

The "get defense" mood on Capitol Hill was underscored when nearly 200 House Democrats wrote to House Budget Committee chairman Bill Gray (D-Pa.), just as negotiations opened, reaffirming their "strong opposition to any significant increase in the defense funding level over that adopted by the House."

Until now, the administration, especially President Reagan and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, have insisted they will fight tooth and nail against any reductions in the Pentagon budget.

Weinberger delivered a strong warning June 9 about the effects of the cuts contemplated by the Congress. "I am concerned at how frequently the threats to our freedom and world peace are ignored when considering the President's defense budget requests," he told a meeting of the American Stock Exchange. "Unfortunately, political expediencies seem to blind Congress to the very real threats faced by this nation."

But Don Regan, as he did last year, has thrust himself into the role of chief administration negotiator on defense, and is now trying to orchestrate a presidential capitulation. On June 11, Regan telephoned Domenici to inform him that the White House is willing to accept the Senate defense figure—\$19 billion less than the administration request.

According to *EIR's* sources, Regan is holding up the spectre of the Gramm-Rudman bill to convince Reagan he has no choice but to accept a significantly lower Pentagon budget. The former Wall Street banker is reportedly warning the President that should he refuse to accept deep de-

fense spending cuts, a budget deadlock will ensue. That will, in turn, trigger Gramm-Rudman's automatic-cuts provision, and lead to defense cuts in the range of \$60-70 billion.

Unfortunately, this scenario happens to be true—and serves to highlight Regan's treachery, since it was he who personally helped conceptualize Gramm-Rudman and then pawned it off on Reagan as the only way to crack the budget deficit.

Hart's new ideas have old sources

Senator Gary Hart (D-Colo.) offered a whole slew of "new" ideas—all of them thoroughly rotten from the standpoint of American national security—in a series of highly publicized speeches at Georgetown University in mid-June.

Written under the watchful eye of such prominent liberal Establishmentarians as Sol Linowitz, Paul Warnke, and Jimmy Carter's CIA director Stansfield Turner, Hart's speeches propose that the United States adopt a policy of "enlightened engagement."

The main elements of this policy fit to a tee the "New Yalta" prescriptions of his patrons at CSIS and the Aspen Institute.

On NATO, Hart said the alliance should move toward having the United States assume more responsibility for air and sea defense of Western Europe, leaving land defense to the Europeans. An interesting way of saying the United States should pull out its troops—all 330,000 of them—out of Western Europe.

Hart cloaked his proposal for

handing Europe to the Soviets by babbling about the need for European "independence." Recognizing the alliance "as a real partnership, rather than an aggregation of subservient states, can only result in a stronger, reinvigorated alliance," he said. But the bottom line was clear: "We must make it clear we are not the Romans. We do not intend to stay in Germany for 300 years, or until we are driven out."

On arms control questions, Hart advocated a nuclear test ban and deep cuts in weapons of surprise attack. He also proposed that the Soviets and United States agree "to set limits on the testing and deployment of defensive systems."

Hart also came out strongly for economic sanctions against South Africa, another country high on the Soviet "hit list" for destabilization and takeover.

Committee votes tough South Africa sanctions

A bill that would require the United States to impose tough new sanctions against South Africa sailed through the House Foreign Affairs Committee June 10, intersecting a massive new insurgency by the Soviet-backed African National Congress against the Pretoria government.

By a 25-13 vote, the committee approved the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act, which mandates sweeping new punitive measures against South Africa.

The measure, which the full House is scheduled to vote on within a week, would immediately end all new U.S. investments in South Africa, prohibit all commercial bank loans, withdraw

landing rights from the South African airlines, and prohibit imports of South African coal, steel, and uranium.

Specter: cut off aid to Peru, Mexico

Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) fired off a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz June 6, warning that he may introduce an amendment to cut off U.S. economic aid to five nations, charging they have failed to stem domestic narcotics production. The targeted countries include Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Pakistan, and Peru.

"I believe it is time to demonstrate our seriousness by reducing or eliminating foreign aid to, and perhaps even trade with, nations that have failed to adequately alleviate this deadly export," Specter pontificated.

A spokesman for Specter told *EIR* the Senator will "wait and see how the State Department responds" to the letter, which requested a status report on the five countries in question, before introducing legislation.

Last year, a delegation of U.S. congressmen, which traveled through Ibero-America to study the drug problem, concluded that lack of financial resources was the biggest obstacle to effective anti-drug operations in these nations.

With that in mind, one wonders exactly what Specter hopes to accomplish by moving to terminate what little U.S. aid goes to these countries, or why, if he's so serious about fighting drugs, he doesn't take after the major U.S. money-laundering banks, without which the drug trade could not exist?

Well, Senator?