

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Sour grapes from KGB Democrats

NASA and Pentagon officials responsible for the Sept. 5 launching of a Delta vehicle carrying two Strategic Defense Initiative test satellites, called it "picture perfect" and a "classic textbook success." But from the better-red-than-dead crowd on Capitol Hill, this stunningly successful demonstration of American scientific progress brought nothing but nastiness.

The most vociferous belly-aching came from Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.) and Rep. Larry Coughlin (R-Pa.). That should hardly come as a shock, given that the two men (we use the term very loosely) have frequently joined forces to back legislation to halt the U.S. anti-satellite program and to slash SDI funding. They both belong to the Space Policy Working Group, an informal Capitol Hill caucus with a direct line to the Soviet embassy in Washington.

Brown and Coughlin railed violently against the Delta launch, charging that it had violated the "spirit"—whatever the heck that is—of the 1972 ABM Treaty. The two conceded that while the Air Force may have been technically correct in maintaining that the test did not violate the Treaty, it should not have been conducted.

Brown insisted that it "should not be the Pentagon's policy, or practice, to come as close as it possibly can to violating international treaties and the law of the land."

Charging that the Pentagon had evaded the law by conducting the test, Brown asserted: "I urge my colleagues to realize the mischief that the Pentagon is up to when it conducts such actions. It is acting in defiance of those who have negotiated arms-control agreements in the past, and it is

jeopardizing the opportunities for those who seek arms-control agreements in the future. Friday's test was a definite setback for those of us who seek arms-control agreements in the future. It was a clear indication that we must be even more diligent if we are to create a legal regime that can harness the dangerous technologies that humanity has created over the past four decades."

Pass sanctions package against South Africa

Congress gave final approval Sept. 12 to a package of economic sanctions against South Africa.

The way was cleared for passage of a sanctions bill the day before, when the House Democratic leadership agreed to accept the Senate's package of measures, rather than insisting on its own, radical measures.

"In light of the shortness of time remaining in this session, we decided to accept it [the Senate bill] and send this important policy initiative to the President," House Africa subcommittee chairman Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.) declared Sept. 11.

The bill, which now goes to President Reagan, would bar any new U.S. investment and trade with South Africa; ban imports from South Africa of coal, textiles, uranium, iron, steel, ammunition, and agricultural products; and ban U.S. exports of computers and petroleum products to Pretoria.

Although the Senate bill, crafted by Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) is more moderate than the House version—which calls for a total cut-off of U.S. economic relations with South

Africa—it is tough enough to bring about some exceedingly unpleasant consequences. As Wolpe put it, the measure "is not as strong as the House version, but it has real bite."

Not least of these effects is the prospect that Pretoria may retaliate by declaring a debt moratorium—an action which could collapse the teetering international monetary system overnight.

Moreover, as numerous black South African leaders, including M. G. Buthelezi, chief minister of KwaZulu, have warned, sanctions will mean further economic misery for South African blacks.

President Reagan, who has spoken out forcefully against sanctions in the past, is expected to veto the bill. But House and Senate leaders claim to have more than the two-thirds vote required for an override.

Liberals object to death penalty for drug dealers

While sentiment on Capitol Hill in favor of tough action against illegal drugs has increased by leaps and bounds ever since President Reagan declared a nationwide war on drugs, some liberals are complaining that some of the measures contemplated just go too far.

In a House floor debate on anti-drug legislation Sept. 10, Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), a former FBI agent who currently chairs the Constitutional and Civil Rights subcommittee, complained bitterly about several amendments, including one that would allow the death penalty for drug dealers, and another that would permit the military to be mobilized in fighting the drug traffic.

"There are many people who are very upset," said Edwards, claiming that there had been "a commitment" from Democratic leaders "that these useless, provocative and politically explosive amendments . . . would not be permitted" to come to a vote on the floor.

House members who oppose the amendments as a matter of "conscience" will go to the November election being tagged as "soft on drugs," Edwards warned. He said the drug issue was "today's moment of hysteria," just as the fear of communism was in the 1950s.

Edwards' attempt to underplay the threat which the spread of drugs poses to U.S. national security by comparing it to an implicitly needless alarm about communists, is quite ironic. Could it be that Edwards isn't aware that Moscow has been using drugs as a central part of its low-intensity operations against the West since at least 1967? Or is he actually trying to help Moscow along by trying to stall the war on drugs?

Hatch visits Savimbi's camp in Angola

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who helped persuade the Reagan administration to send Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to Jonas Savimbi, became the first senator to visit Savimbi's secret headquarters in Jamba.

Accompanied by Michael Pillsbury, who was fired from the Defense Department last spring after being accused by senior White House officials of leaking to the media President Reagan's classified decision to supply Savimbi's forces with Stingers, Hatch

journeyed to Savimbi's encampment during the August recess.

Hatch gave a press conference in Washington Sept. 9 to show videotapes of burned-out Soviet aircraft that Savimbi's forces shot down during battles with the Luanda government this year. He stopped just short of confirming reports that the rebels are using the Stingers, asserting: "There's no question that they have effective weapons and are using them to shoot down Soviet-built helicopters."

But Hatch also charged that the Reagan administration hasn't yet delivered the heavy weaponry it had promised to Savimbi, including anti-tank and anti-armor weapons.

Biden attacks national security. . . again

Loudmouth Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.), who made a fool of himself this summer by throwing a nationally televised temper tantrum over U.S. policy towards South Africa, in the context of an appearance by Secretary of State George Shultz before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has apparently brainwashed himself into believing he can get elected President by regularly attacking U.S. national security interests.

Walter Mondale tried that tack in 1984.

In the latest proof that he is marching to a very different drummer than the vast majority of the American electorate, Biden delivered a raving attack on President Reagan's strategic policies at the National Press Club Sept. 11.

Biden opened his diatribe by charging that the Reagan administra-

tion is not only guilty of an "ominous failure . . . to do anything to abate that [nuclear arms] race," but has spent the last six years in a "deliberate effort to dismantle the entire arms control framework."

Biden was particularly splenetic about the Strategic Defense Initiative. "Star Wars," he charged, "represents a fundamental assault on the concepts, alliances, and arms-control agreements that have buttressed American security for several decades. And the President's continued adherence to it constitutes one of the most reckless and irresponsible acts in the history of modern state-craft."

After mouthing off in this vein for about half an hour, Biden finally got around to his prescriptions for arms control. They include reaffirmation of the ABM Treaty, adherence to SALT II limits, and pursuit of a nuclear test ban. In other words, Mikhail Gorbachev's program.

Weicker probes charges of CDC's AIDS cover-up

Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) dispatched an aide to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta Sept. 4 to investigate media reports of an interne-cine conflict at CDC over AIDS, and charges that the CDC leadership was deliberately suppressing AIDS research.

Weicker, chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on health, sent aide Maureen Burns down to Atlanta to conduct an on-the-spot inquiry. So far, Burns has refused to comment to the press on the results of her investigation, saying only that Weicker will discuss the issue when he's ready.