

# The Battle To Enact A Competent U.S. Energy Program

Over the past two weeks, the U.S. Congress has begun to revolt against the negative growth economic program scripted for the Carter Administration by David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission. In rapid succession, Congress has restored the President's proposed cuts in federal funds for 19 water projects, stalled his \$4 billion public works employment boondoggle, and is now threatening to block his scheme to save the New York banks via a Treasury Department-IMF bailout. The wretchedly incompetent "two chickens in every pot" \$50 tax rebate plan has run into potentially fatal opposition. No doubt about it, Carter's honeymoon with Congress — if indeed it ever really existed — is turning into an acrimonious divorce battle.

Whether Congress will carry through on its rebellion against White House "government by Trilateral emission" will likely be determined during the next 60 days on the keystone issue of a national energy policy. Since last winter's natural gas crisis, Carter and his would be energy czar James Schlesinger have made it clear that the basis of the energy blueprint they will officially unveil April 20 is a commitment to "belt-tightening" massive reductions in U.S. energy consumption for industry and consumers alike, and outright sabotage of vital energy sources, particularly nuclear power. Reports from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation spelling out such programs in detail have been acknowledged by Administration spokesmen as accurately reflecting the White House point of view. Their impending savage impact on the U.S. economy's productive forces is widely perceived, feared and resisted in Congress.

Not surprisingly, the strongest opposition to the Carter program has come so far from Congressional representatives of constituencies where the highest concentration of technologically-advanced, energy-intensive industries (aerospace, defense, electronics, etc.) exist. Many Congressmen understand, however, that the appeal of

crash energy development program is general — "The American people support nuclear power 2-1," as one spokesman put it.

Yet to emerge, however, is a competent Congressional alternative energy program under bipartisan sponsorship — the key weapon needed to defeat the Administration's planned onslaught of deindustrialization. The Congressional power centers of resistance to Carter have decided to "wait till after April 20" before taking significant action on energy, passing up the opportunity to take the offensive and giving the Administration more time for its "conservation" crusade.

Whether sufficient Congressional votes are assembled in time to kill the Carter program and enact competent legislation now depends largely on forces outside Washington, D.C., emphatically including forces outside the USA itself. With respect to the United States, it demands on how fast popular sentiment for expanded energy development can be transformed into institutional support from business and industry, the trade unions, state and local governments, community organizations, consumer groups, the press, and so forth. A broad, centrally directed alliance for industrial progress — not a loose coalition — is required.

The role the U.S. Labor Party and the Fusion Energy Foundation have played so far in bringing this alliance into being was expressed by a spokesman for a top Congressional leader recently: he told USLP representatives, "Without you, the resistance to Carter's fusion cuts wouldn't have happened."

Should this privately acknowledged, de facto leadership role become public through an open Labor Party alliance with national, political, industrial, and labor leaders, the American political geometry would be radically transformed, to the point that defeat of the Carter energy package would be extremely likely.

The following category-by-category assessment of the state of the energy fight in the USA was compiled with the assistance of the U.S. Labor Party.

## The Potential For A Congressional Offensive

The way in which the Congressional energy battle has developed so far clearly demonstrates that the immediate potential exists for shaping it into an all-out fight for a fusion-based energy policy in the context of a general reorientation of U.S. policy toward worldwide industrialization. Three developments in particular underscore this potential: 1) Several key Congressional groupings,

especially the House Science and Technology subcommittee on Fossil Fuels and Nuclear Energy, have sought to establish that fusion power, given appropriate funding, is realizable within the decade; 2) Congressional spokesmen including Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) and Senator Harrison Schmitt (R-NM) have publicly stated that the fate of the Third World and of world peace

depends on whether the U.S. embarks on a technologically advanced energy policy; 3) Offices of sixteen members of Congress sent representatives to a Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF) briefing on fusion power given on Capitol Hill March 22 enhancing the possibility that competent energy legislation based on the FEF's program will be introduced into Congress.

At this point, the fight against Carter is being waged on several primary fronts:

First and foremost is the battle to restore Carter's proposed cuts in the FY 1978 allocation to the Energy Research and Development's (ERDA) fusion R and D program which is being carried primarily through the pro-development members of the House Science and Technology subcommittee on Fossil Fuels and Nuclear Energy. The pro-fusion members of this subcommittee include Chairman Walter Flowers, a Democrat whose home state of Alabama houses a NASA installation, part of the pro-nuclear Tennessee Valley Authority, and the huge steel mills of Birmingham; Gary Myers, (R-Penn), former production foreman in a Pittsburgh steel factory, and one of the first Congressmen to note for the public record that the development of the Third World depends on the U.S. adopting a nuclear-based energy program; Rep. Barry Goldwater, Jr. (R-Ariz), whose pro-fusion stance directly reflects his father's long-standing concern with the military applications of scientific and technological breakthroughs; Manuel Lujan (R-NM), who has direct links into the Los Alamos, New Mexico, scientific community; and Mike McCormack (D-Wash), a former research scientist, who at subcommittee hearings March 31 on the recently-released Ford Foundation-MITRE report denouncing nuclear energy exposed the report as scientifically incompetent.

In a series of carefully-staged hearings in February and March this subcommittee heard a stream of witnesses from the scientific community, ERDA, the nuclear industry, the Fusion Energy Foundation and the U.S. Labor Party testify that with a sufficiently funded and staffed effort, fusion power was realizable by the early to mid-1980s, and, furthermore, that Carter's proposed cuts in an already badly underfunded program would permanently sabotage the attainment of this cheap, non-polluting and unlimited energy source.

With this unimpeachable scientific evidence at hand, the subcommittee moved to restore the Carter fusion cuts — only to have the President personally intervene to prevent this offering to restore some of the water projects monies if his fusion cuts were upheld. In response, the subcommittee has postponed its final decision on the fusion budget. Sources close to the subcommittee are currently predicting that the Carter fusion cutbacks will in all probability be restored and that both the Senate and House Appropriations subcommittees with final authority over the fusion budget stand overwhelmingly in favor of rejecting Carter's recommended cuts.

Other pro-fusion Congressmen view that Flowers subcommittee as the key line of defense against Carter's attacks on fusion development. Congressional support for the subcommittee escalated last week when Rep. Matthew Rinaldo (R-NJ) initiated an Open Letter to Flowers urging him and his subcommittee to fully

restore the fusion power program's budget. Commenting on Carter's proposed cuts, Rinaldo writes, "Ironically, this massive budget cut has been recommended at a time when the prospects for fusion power have never been more promising." The letter has been signed by 13 other Congressmen so far, many of them Democrats from the Northern industrial states. Several of these signatories sent representatives to the FEF Capitol Hill briefing.

The second key front is the fight for the Liquid Fast Metal Breeder Reactor (LFMBR): Carter has proposed for a lethal \$200 million reduction in the FY 1978 budget allocation for this vitally necessary component of a sound fission-fusion program, Schlesinger explicitly repudiated the program in a speech to the National Wildlife Association March 26. Congressional opposition to Carter on this question is much shakier, since the breeder has been the chief target of Rockefeller environmentalists who claim it is dangerous and vulnerable to nuclear terrorism. There are indications that the Administration may attempt to garner Congressional support for its attack on the LFMBR in exchange for slight concessions on the fusion funding question.

The potential for a strong fight to save the breeder does exist. Rep. Marilyn Lloyd (D-Tenn), a member of the Flowers' subcommittee, is initiating a letter similar to Rinaldo's calling on her fellow Congressmen to defend the breeder program. An aide to Lloyd, who is in regular contact with the ardently pro-nuclear scientific and industrial nexus linked to the Tennessee Valley Authority, specifically the Clinch River breeder demonstration project, recently predicted that Carter's energy program "would go over like a lead balloon," since the U.S. population was "two to one in favor of nuclear energy."

A third issue on which the Congress is hotly contesting the Carter Administration is the proposed creation of an all-encompassing Department of Energy with James Schlesinger as its first head. Opposition to this proposal is coming even from anti-nuclear layers who fear the dictatorial powers that such a department would wield. Conservatives and certain liberals are also adamantly opposed to the prospect of giving nuclear war game terrorist Schlesinger such a powerful position. Congressional sentiment against the proposal is so strong that following USLP testimony on it at Senate Government Operations Committee hearings last week, Senator John Glenn telephoned Schlesinger requesting him that he respond to the Labor Party charges against him within ten days.

A fourth line of attack against Carter is shaping up around the ramifications of energy policy for national security. This angle is being pushed by those Congressional layers linked to the traditional military-intelligence-scientific community, including Senators Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz), Strom Thurmond (R-SC), and Harrison Schmitt (R-NM), who see all too clearly that the Carter energy program, coupled with his proposed defense cuts, will wipe out precisely those areas of advanced research development (such as laser fusion) most essential to closing the marginal technological gap now existing between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In a statement to the Senate March 3, entitled "Nuclear Swords into Nuclear Plowshares," Thurmond touched directly on the war implications of the Carter program.

Urging emphatically that nuclear power be put in its rightful place as the cornerstone of U.S. expanded energy policy, Thurmond noted that "technological advancement brings the high standard living which, in the long run, is the only sure remedy for human discord."

A fifth source of disagreement — one which has temporarily subsided but which is bound to resurface after

April 20 comes from the Congressional bloc representing independent oil and gas producing states. Rightly fearing that Carter intends to liquidate all independent energy producers into the Rockefeller cartel, representatives of these states, such as Rep. Waggoner (D-La), Pickle (D-Texas) and many others, will probably line up against at least part of the Carter package.

## Fusion Memorialization in Legislatures Shapes Energy Fight Across The Nation

By an overwhelming vote of 108-3 on March 29, the Maryland House of Delegates passed legislation calling on the President and Congress of the United States to vigorously promote the development of fusion power and upgrade scientific research in the U.S. The lopsided vote, despite the fact that the bill had no sponsor, demonstrates the strong support for industrial growth throughout this highly industrialized state.

The Maryland legislation is the first fusion bill to reach the floor in the eight state legislatures where it is now introduced: Michigan, Washington State, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Connecticut. Legislation calling on Congress to commit the U.S. to the development of fusion power is now being drafted in Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Colorado, and Vermont to be introduced after the Easter recess.

The Maryland fusion legislation now goes to the legislature's Economic Affairs Committee and then to the Senate floor, where it is expected to be approved. The fact is that once the legislation actually becomes public, even the most dyed-in-the-wool backers of President Carter's "conservation"-oriented energy policies can't justify voting against it.

In the Democratic-dominated Maryland state legislature, under heavy Carter influence, it was initially impossible to obtain a sponsor for the bill. Finally Rep. George Price (R-Baltimore County) introduced it at the request of the U.S. Labor Party. The well-attended and highly publicized Fusion Energy Foundation Conference in Baltimore on March 2 built a climate of support for the legislation. The conference, co-sponsored by the Maryland-based engineering-architectural firm Harrison Associates, was attended by representatives of the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), Baltimore Mayor Schaeffer's office, and numerous corporations and local business groups. The conference received prominent coverage in the *Baltimore Sun* and the city's financial *Daily Record*. The legislation simultaneously gathered support from local Chambers of Commerce and was under consideration by 11 leading union locals in the Baltimore area, a well-known union city.

At open hearings held on March 17, Maryland State Labor Party chairman Larry Freeman, Fusion Energy Foundation spokesman Charles Stevens as well as Labor Party members from plants around the city advocated immediate passage. Fred Hittman, president of Hittman Associates, wrote the Environmental Affairs Committee

a letter in support of the bill, HJM No. 80, and the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce voted to back it. In the face of this support even a walkout during the testimony led by pro-Carter Environmental Matters Committee head John Arnick (D-Dundalk) could not stall the bill. It was unanimously passed by the Committee and a full mobilization of calls of support into the legislature from around the state forced the Carter Democrats to back down and support the bill in the floor vote.

### Northwest

In the Northwest, fusion power legislation has been sponsored in two states by a coalition of pro-development Democratic and Republican legislators.

*Washington State:* The Senate Energy committee has unanimously voted up a memorial calling on the Congress to "undertake the measures necessary to accelerate and broaden the research and development of controlled fusion reactions" and "enact complementary enabling measures to develop fossil fuels usage and nuclear energy expansion under existing technologies to bridge the period between now and the target period of the mid-1980's when controlled fusion energy can 'come on line.'"

This fusion resolution caused a complete re-alignment of the legislature and the political factions in the state. Old-line Democrats such as former Senate Majority leader August Mardesich and Senate Energy Committee Chairman Max Benitz supported the resolution, which was also sponsored by leading Republican Senators Kent Pullen and Bob Lewis.

The battle lines were drawn clearly when Fusion Energy Foundation Director Dr. Morris Levitt testified before the Senate Committee on Energy and Utilities on Feb. 17. There, angry Naderite legislators demanded that the resolution's references to the historical U.S. commitment to progress and the disavowal of zero-growth be deleted. Senator Lewis acknowledged the basis of the dispute but declared "It's an important issue which must be addressed." The legislation, SJM No. 102, is expected to reach the Senate floor soon.

The Washington state AFL-CIO leadership and the state's strong Building Trades lobby have also split over whether to support the bill.

The U.S. Labor Party's extensive lobbying in the state has injected the fight for energy development as a major issue in the upcoming special congressional election for Seattle's 7th C.D., vacated by Transportation Secretary