

# Schlesinger's WEEP Underway; Gov't Intervention In Coal Strike Hinted

Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger's Winter Energy Emergency Plan (WEEP), which outlines a four-phase federal intervention policy for energy crises, moved into phase three this week.

During an appearance on the Jan. 29 ABC-TV news program "Issues and Answers," Schlesinger mooted the possibility that the federal government would invoke the Taft-Hartley Act to force striking United Mineworkers back to work. Schlesinger's threat of federal intervention in the two-month long coal strike — an intervention which spokesmen from both the Energy and Labor departments say could lead to a bloodbath in Appalachia — was followed by the Secretary's announcement on Feb. 1 that the department would force reductions in electric power to uranium enrichment plants of up to 60 percent on the excuse of reduced coal supplies which Schlesinger's federal intervention would further exacerbate.

WEEP is Schlesinger's weapon against congressmen who have refused to pass his "no-energy" policy. Schlesinger threatened on "Issues and Answers" that if there is no energy bill by Feb. 12, the nation will be hit with chaos and the possible use of executive powers, such as gasoline rationing, to force conservation. Said Schlesinger without a blush, if Congress could not pass a National Energy Act by Feb. 12 and the public doesn't change its ways on the "wasteful use of energy," then the Administration "may have to intervene more directly to force a compromise."

## *The WEEP Policy*

WEEP outlines federal intervention in each of four phases of energy shortages, from "prior to shortage" up through "severe shortage." For each degree of shortage in oil and natural gas, WEEP includes stages of federally directed reallocation, conservation, and alternate fuels use.

In the case of coal shortages in strike, only two possible federal programs are outlined: cutting back on the Energy Department's uranium enrichment facilities and using the Taft-Hartley Act to bust the strike. President Carter has himself suggested, during a Jan. 30 press conference, that the Taft-Hartley Act might be invoked to end the coal strike. Schlesinger is reportedly putting "enormous pressure" on the rest of the Carter Administration to use the federal injunction and implement an energy dictatorship.

Ohio Governor Rhodes appears to be the only official of government to urge President Carter to intervene to effect a peaceful negotiated contract settlement — without the use of Taft-Hartley — between the coal operators and the UMW. According to reports, a settlement could be reached very soon between the two sides.

The UMW has historically refused to work without a contract, and if the National Guard were called out to

physically force miners into the mines, violence would be the only result. The Institute for Policy Studies networks in the union, who have already warned state officials that there will be wildcats no matter what the economic settlement is, would be given a free hand to create the maximum chaos within the union and the coal region if Schlesinger is allowed to invoke Taft-Hartley in lieu of the economic agreement that is close at hand.

—Marsha Freeman

## WEEP Will Go Into Effect Says DOE Assistant

*Jim Bishop, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of Energy gave this telephone interview to a reporter this week.*

**Q:** Will Secretary Schlesinger recommend to the President that the Taft-Hartley Act be used in the current UMW strike?

**A:** That recommendation can only come from Labor Secretary Marshall, and only the President can invoke it.

**Q:** But will Schlesinger advise the President that it is necessary?

**A:** I can't say anything more than the Secretary said on TV yesterday.

**Q:** The Administration put a lot of time into developing the Winter Energy Emergency Plan. Is it going to be used?

**A:** Sure. It's there to be used.

**Q:** Well, Taft-Hartley is what the WEEP program outlines for federal intervention in the "severe crisis" stage.

**A:** We are not in the danger phase yet. We will cut down the gaseous diffusion plants which will save thousands of megawatts.

**Q:** Don't you see the situation developing where the entire WEEP program could be needed?

**A:** If the weather continues in the right direction, all of WEEP will go into effect. Do you still have the WEEP document? Re-read it and you will know what the government is going to do. (click)

## Energy Department Spokesman Says Taft-Hartley Won't Have Any Effect on Coal Strike

*The interview below was given by a spokesman for the Economic Regulatory Administration of the Department of Energy and clearly indicates that the Energy*

*Department is not solidly behind Secretary Schlesinger's threat to impose Taft-Hartley on the ongoing coal strike.*

**Q:** How have you been trying to deal with the Midwest coal crisis?

**A:** We are in daily touch with the East Central Area Reliability Council and are following the state of coal reserves.

**Q:** Representatives from Ohio have indicated that the supply situation is becoming serious.

**A:** They've reported to us that starting Feb. 1 they will ask for voluntary conservation and that after that reductions will become mandatory. The situation is serious, but the President has asked that cut-backs be made in the Portsmouth, Ohio uranium enrichment plant.

**Q:** Do you think Schlesinger will advise Carter to invoke Taft-Hartley to end the strike?

**A:** Don't quote me, but Taft-Hartley wouldn't have any effect. There is a history to this kind of thing and it just wouldn't have any real effect.

## WEEP Isn't Much of a Program Says Ohio Utilities Spokesman

*The following interview was given by a spokesman for the Ohio Public Utilities Commission on Feb. 2.*

**Q:** It is reported in today's *New York Times* that you have said that within the next couple of weeks, 500,000 layoffs could take place in Ohio due to the coal shortage. Is this an accurate statement?

**A:** Yes. That's accurate. There have been a lot of

misquotes in the press. Governor Rhodes was misquoted in the *Washington Post* yesterday. The governor has never called for Taft-Hartley to be used in the strike. We have called for the President to intervene in the negotiations to help a settlement.

**Q:** It looks from WEEP that there is no federal policy beside Taft-Hartley outlined.

**A:** The September (WEEP) program only calls for conservation. We are already doing that. It isn't much of a program. The Department of Energy didn't appreciate the suggestion from Gov. Rhodes at all. I don't know why Carter isn't intervening in the negotiations to settle the strike as quickly as possible.

## Jay Rockefeller Aide:

### Miller Will Have Trouble Selling Contract In W. Va.

*The following is excerpted from an interview with an aide to Jay Rockefeller, the Governor of West Virginia.*

...We have been talking to a lot of people down here about the coal negotiations.... We think that (United Mineworkers President Arnold) Miller is going to have a lot of trouble selling any contract that doesn't have the local right to strike clause in it. The boys down here are damn angry — they wildcatted for two months over the summer, they have stayed out for two months now ... if (UMW) District 17 rejects the settlement, there will be wildcats and they won't move coal out of West Virginia. If they try, there will be bloodshed.... I'm afraid it would be the end of the UMW, if that happened ... if there is no settlement some damn fool uses Taft-Hartley, well then, the hills will flow with blood.... Either way, this state is in for a rough time....

## Schlesinger Out to Wreck Settlement Says Labor Department Spokesman

*A spokesman for the Department of Labor (DOL) had the following to say on the role of the Department of Energy (DOE) in the current coal strike negotiations.*

I can't figure out what the hell (Energy Secretary James) Schlesinger and his people over at the DOE are up to. Anyone with half a brain would know that the threat of using Taft-Hartley on the coal strike won't help anything.

For the last month Schlesinger has been calling for Taft-Hartley as soon as it would become politically feasible. He did it again on TV last weekend. He and his scenario writers could wind up creating a real violent mess out of this strike.

It is going to be hard enough for (UMW President) Miller to sell a compromise settlement, if and when they reach one. With all this talk of Taft-Hartley, it is going to look like he (Miller-ed.) backed down to the government pressure, and the miners aren't

going to like it...

My people tell me that they (the negotiators-ed.) are near a settlement...it's down to just money and that can always be negotiated...Besides everyone knows that Taft-Hartley can't work on a coal strike...it never has and never will...all it would produce is violence. It wouldn't get any more coal into the Midwest.

The problem with Schlesinger is that he thinks he is some kind of goddamn general. He says do this and everyone snaps to and does it. Well, labor negotiations don't work like that. No scenario writer over at DOE is going to tell me to recommend Taft-Hartley. I don't care if it is called for in their Winter Energy Emergency Plan....

But Schlesinger may get his way...You have local people (in Ohio) screaming that the government must do something. If the negotiations break down again or if Miller can't sell the settlement, there is going to be all sorts of panic. Then Schlesinger will go to Carter with all his figures and with his scenario and say, "Now is the time we must use Taft-Hartley." And if Carter says yes, you are going to have one hell of a mess in this country...