

Congressional Closeup by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

Subcommittee hears water policy proposal

Undersecretary of the Interior Don Hodel appeared before the Senate Environment and Public Works subcommittee on Water Resources on April 21 to explain Interior Secretary Watt's proposed Office of Water Policy. Subcommittee Chairman James Abdnor (R-S.D.) along with Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) who has been very active in water issues for many years, initially greeted Watt's proposal with some skepticism.

The interior secretary is proposing that the existing inter-agency Water Resources Council and Interior's Office of Water Research and Technology (OWRTC) be abolished. The Water Resources Council has been viewed by many as a no-growth stronghold. In their place, Secretary Watt has proposed that the Office of Water Policy be established under the Interior Department. Undersecretary Hodel explained that the office would provide a coordinating and staff function for all of the departments (especially Agriculture and Army) who are engaged in water policy.

Senator Domenici asked Hodel why the Interior Department should be the locus of this office when other departments, especially the Army, with its Corps of Engineers, have "more experience, more resources and more jurisdiction than the Department of Interior." Hodel responded that Interior was not seeking to usurp the jurisdiction of departments such as Agriculture and Army, but was trying to provide a staff and coordinating function for all the departments. Conflicts, Hodel said, that could not be resolved at the appropriate assistant secretary or

secretary level should go to the President.

"What we are trying to avoid is a situation in which a conflict results in the deferral of a decision through inaction or through the assignment of another study." The full committee is still on record supporting the temporary continuation of the Water Resources Council and the OWRTC.

Confirmation hearings held on Mexico ambassador

The Reagan administration's nominee for Ambassador to Mexico, John Gavin, appeared at confirmation hearings held by Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 22 and elaborated for the first time some of the Reagan administration's views toward Mexico. Gavin made a particular point of underscoring the intention of the Reagan administration to work very closely with Mexico in dealing with the rest of Central and Latin America. He said, "Reagan has been in very close touch with President López Portillo whenever making any moves on Central America. They have not always agreed, but they have agreed to be agreeable."

Gavin responded curtly to Sen. Jesse Helms's (R-N.C.) attempts to portray Mexico as potentially unstable and subject to "Marxist insurgencies." Gavin declared, "We need not fear for the security of the Mexican republic. . . . The most sacrosanct tenet of foreign policy of the Mexican republic is that of no foreign intervention."

In addition, Gavin, while admitting there has been some interest in the administration in a North

American Accord, said his own view is that "the most important thing is to continue our bilateral approach on bilateral issues. . . . As for the North American Accord, I think we can study it and keep studying it until such time as all are agreed that it is something that we want to do."

On other issues, Gavin stated that Mexico will continue to be a major market for United States grain. While at first he did not want to discuss the administration's views on the question of immigration policy and Mexico pending the administration's public statements on the issue expected on May 4, he later commented, "I do think that the open border needs to be studied and seriously considered, perhaps with regulations on both sides."

Moderate Democrats targeted by NCPAC

John Dolan, chairman of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, announced April 13 that his organization has targeted the House Majority Leader, Jim Wright (D-Tex.), House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Jones (D-Okla.), and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) for defeat in 1982. Dolan attacked them as the "three most obstructionist" House Democrats standing in the way of enactment of the President's economic program. In fact, these moderate Democrats have served as a bridge between the liberal Democrats and conservatives in both parties.

NCPAC, it has been learned,

has also sent letters to several members of the Democratic Conservative Forum, warning them that they will be targeted also if they do not fully support the Kemp-Roth tax bill. Interestingly, NCPAC is not now targeting any of the House liberal Democrats, but in the case of the Conservative Forum, they are targeting some of the Democrats most amenable to the White House proposals.

Democratic Conservative Forum leaders back the Gramm-Latta budget proposal now endorsed by the White House, and many Forum members, while preferring a more targeted tax cut than the Kemp-Roth bill, are willing to compromise on the tax issue.

Representative Charles Stenholm (D-Tex.), the head of the Democratic Conservative Forum, told *EIR* in regard to NCPAC's activities, "I have to say that threats and intimidation would seem to be trademarks of this particular group and they just don't play well with me. I'd say to NCPAC and any other group that uses these types of tactics, come ahead. I serve the people of the 17th District of Texas, and I've always said that the voters gave me a two-year contract renewable every two years at the ballot box. I don't think the people of the 17th District can be bought and I know that I can't."

Lyndon LaRouche, chairman of the Advisory Board of the National Democratic Policy Committee, has also issued a statement on the NCPAC threats, especially in regard to House leader Jim Wright. "Anyone who attacks Jim Wright is doing a disservice to the nation and the Democratic Party. Jim Wright is a positive leading figure

of the Democratic Party who is seriously grappling with trying to solve the problems of the nation. Although I, Lyndon LaRouche, happen to differ with Jim Wright on several policies, I absolutely defend Jim against these scurrilous attacks. In short, anyone who attacks Jim Wright is an enemy of Lyndon LaRouche."

Propose Department of International Trade

Legislation to establish a Department of International Trade and Investment was introduced by a bipartisan group of senators April 9: William Roth (R-Del.), Heinz (R-Pa.), and Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.). The bill, S. 970 would, in the words of Senator Roth, "consolidate all nonagricultural trade and investment analysis, policy-making, negotiation and implementation functions into one agency." The Special Trade Negotiator would be combined under the bill with the Commerce Department functions of trade law administration, trade development, trade and investment policy-making, industry analysis, productivity, and technological innovation. Other Commerce Department functions such as the Economic Development Administration, the Bureau of the Census and the Maritime Administration would go elsewhere.

The new department would also take control of the international trade functions of other departments. In particular, the Treasury Department's responsibility for trade financing, East-West trade, international direct in-

vestment, energy-related trade matters, and the U.S. Customs would shift to the Department of Trade. So would the State Department's authority over international communications, investment protection and nonagricultural commodities. The Agriculture Secretary would maintain responsibility for all agricultural trade matters.

The head of the department would be a cabinet official with the title of secretary. At the same time, he would be a White House coordinator for trade matters, and would also serve as a member of the board of the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

"The United States continues to be the only major economic power without a government department or ministry with primary responsibility for foreign trade," declared Senator Roth, motivating the need for the new department. "Our successful trading partners have shown us that if we are going to compete—and compete effectively—in today's rapidly changing and increasingly interdependent world, we must become properly organized."

Roth is chairman of the Government Operations Committee, which has jurisdiction over the bill. He stated that "to ensure quick action" on the legislation, he has already scheduled hearings for May 19 to discuss the proposal in the context of "government trade policy-making."

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige and Special Trade Negotiator Bill Brock indicated at an impromptu press conference earlier this month that the administration is not now interested in such a proposal.