

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Soft position on pipeline covers for new controls

The 22-to-12 decision by the House Foreign Affairs Committee to rescind the export controls that President Reagan has imposed on the Soviet gas pipeline deal, coupled with hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, may be the opening shots of a "re-evaluation" of East-West economic relations whose purpose is to impose harsher long-range economic controls. The House vote, taken on Aug. 11, was widely presented as a rebuff by the "soft-liners" to the stand taken by President Reagan. Paul Tsongas is readying similar legislation in the Senate.

But, as Aug. 12 and 13 hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee revealed, there is a longer-range strategy on the agenda. Former Ambassador to NATO Robert Ellsworth testified on Aug. 13 that current U.S. efforts to halt the pipeline would be fruitless, but that the debate must move from the pipeline issue, to the larger one of Western credits to the East bloc: "The ability of the West to provide large-scale credits to the East is a strategic commodity of the highest value. And it could be used to shift the dynamics of the dialogue with the Soviets." He went on to call for the West to declare Poland in default, after taking necessary steps to protect Western banks, and then force the Soviets to underwrite the economies of Eastern Europe in exchange for political stability and further Western credits.

Both Myer Rashish and Richard Cooper, the former a State Department official in the Reagan administration until recently, and the latter a Carter administration official, agreed with Ellsworth that the President's decision on the pipeline would be ineffective. While also disagreeing with the original European decision to go ahead with the pipeline deal, Rashish

insisted on the need for a coherent Western structure to "manage" East-West economic relations, much as NATO "manages" East-West military and strategic relations. Cooper testified that the long-term economic and military-strategic evolution of the Soviet Union can be influenced if economic relations or sanctions are approached from a broad and coherent standpoint.

Former Secretary of State Haig recently urged that the Western nations adopt a series of guidelines to govern their economic relations with the Soviet Union and East bloc.

Where was the Senate when it counted?

The Senate passed the "Symms Amendment" Aug. 11, "reaffirming" the Monroe Doctrine with respect to stopping Soviet, Cuban, and other communist influence in the Western Hemisphere. Senators who during the Malvinas war had no problem walking on the grave of President Monroe's Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, who insisted there was no "community of principle" between the sovereign republic of the United States and the British colonialist system, also had no problem jumping on board that great principle of statecraft called attacking "godless communists."

The Symms amendment, named after its sponsor, Sen. Steven Symms (R-Idaho), failed by two votes last April, after a State Department "screw-up" withdrew administration support for the measure. Jesse Helms, the lone opponent of U.S. support for the British in the Malvinas War, in a statement for the Congressional Record the same day, indicated that the State Department "screw-up" was cover for the "decision by Secretary of State Haig to grant Britain all the

aid it needed to triumph over the Argentines. . . ." "As we now reflect upon the so-called mediation which followed, is not the intention of the State Department to take sides in this dispute all too clear?" Helms asked. "Is it not now equally clear that the United States should have demanded that both sides back up and cool off?"

In testimony before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, Rep. Eldon Rudd (R-Ariz.) unintentionally underscored the absurdity of the Symms Amendment as he outlined how even strong allies of the United States like Venezuela were likely to orient more toward Cuba and the Non-Aligned movement, while others would be strengthening their trade and other ties with the Soviet Union.

As practical steps, Rudd suggested that the United States "remove all remaining embargos and restrictions" on trade with Argentina, "inform the British of our clear interest in a final negotiated settlement" of the Malvinas issue and "in no way . . . support financially continued British military presence on the islands."

Schmitt, Heckler launch science and technology act

At an Aug. 5 press conference, Sen. Harrison Schmitt (R-N.M.) and Rep. Margaret Heckler (R-Mass.) announced the introduction of the National Science and Technology Improvement Act, which would, in Schmitt's words, "strengthen the research capabilities of academic institutions and encourage men and women to assume careers in science, engineering and technology." Working with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (whose "free-market" ideology has severely damaged the necessary federal role in

research and development), Schmitt and Heckler have tried to construct a "limited-scope" bill which will have administration support. With that White House backing, they hope that the legislation can move quickly.

In their remarks accompanying introduction of the bill, the sponsors point to the 77 percent decrease in pre-college mathematics teachers over the decade of the 1970s. They also note the related collapse of interest by students in these areas, citing one study which showed that by the end of the third grade, almost one-half of elementary school students have decided that they do not want to study science.

The legislation includes: 1) a grant program directed at young, non-tenured college instructors in an effort to provide them with research money and stem the exodus to more lucrative industry jobs; and 2) a National Science Foundation mathematics and science improvement program to enable pre-college math and science teachers to keep pace with new developments in their fields at NSF-sponsored summer seminars.

If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right

After months of nearly solitary attacks on the Federal Reserve Board's policies, House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.) has signed on to sponsor the "Balanced Monetary Policy Act" introduced earlier by the ring-leader of the "Paul Volcker Protection Squad," Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.). The legislation, introduced in early August by Byrd and 30 other Senate Democrats, mandates the Federal Reserve Board to target both monetary aggregates (as they do now) and interest rates, as they did prior to the October 1979 monetarist shift at the Fed. The legislation, as one Capitol Hill veteran put it, is

"mouthwash," since it leaves Fed control over monetary policy intact.

The importance of the legislation is political, not economic. The entire House Democratic leadership is co-sponsoring the bill along with Wright, and Wright is receiving advice from, among others, Bank for International Settlements agent Rep. Henry Reuss (D-Wis.). The intent of Robert Byrd and Tip O'Neill, who have done nothing but protect Volcker for the past two years, is to lay the blame for the interest-rate-led depression in the lap of the hapless President Reagan. It is significant that there is behind-the-scenes speculation that Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) and his crowd will jump onto the legislation in their continuing efforts to discredit the administration.

Wright, along with a few mavericks like Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.), had tried to make stopping Volcker's usurious policies a facet of a bipartisan approach to the White House over the past 18 months. More recently, Wright called for Volcker's resignation. In a press conference Aug. 12, shortly before introducing the legislation, Wright outlined his own genuine commitment to "bring interest rates back down to a reasonable level. . . . The Fed has demonstrated its unwillingness to act unless mandated by Congress to do so," Wright said, and it's "time for Congress to resume its historic responsibilities to the American people." Pointing out that interest rates averaged 6.5 percent for the 20 years up to the October 1979 change in Fed policy, and 16.4 percent for the two years following Volcker's change, Wright blasted this Fed policy as "deliberate, not accidental" and an "economic disaster for the country."

But, by throwing in his lot with O'Neill and Byrd, Wright has been effectively neutralized and compromised.

Henry Reuss, who seems to have

bamboozled Wright, is chairman of the Joint Economic Committee.

Gore introduces Harrimanite arms-control

Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) introduced the outlines of a new arms-control proposal for the START talks, focusing on ending first-strike capability through elimination of multiple warhead capacities. Gore incorporated President Reagan's guidelines on the ceiling for numbers of warheads, a move which his aides say is specifically designed to make his proposal acceptable to the administration.

The Gore proposal was first made earlier this year, and was the subject of meetings in Moscow held by an American delegation led by a close Averell Harriman associate, Bishop Paul Moore of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Moore reported favorable responses from ranking Soviet officials and from Georgii Arbatov of the U.S.-Canada Institute.

Since that time, Gore has been in discussion with Averell Harriman, who advised him to revise the proposal to make it more acceptable to the Reagan administration.

The latest version of the proposal—incorporating the Reagan warhead guidelines—was presented by Gore to a meeting of "arms control experts" at the Aspen Institute in Colorado this month.

An aide to Gore said that it is thought that it will be possible for Secretary of State George Shultz to help change the administration's negotiating policy on START. "The problem has been that arms control was viewed as a factional issue inside the administration," he stated. "Now with Haig gone and Shultz in, we can take some of the heat out of the discussion and begin to change things."