

## Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

### Democrats call for reemphasis on space

Overshadowed by President Reagan's call for a scientific and technological mobilization to develop new strategic defensive weapons, a group of Democratic senators on the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee introduced legislation on March 24 to re-evaluate and re-emphasize America's effort in space. Led by ranking Democrat Ernest Hollings, the co-sponsors include Howell Heflin (Ala.), Daniel Inouye (Hawaii), Wendell Ford (Ky.), Don Riegle (Mich.), Frank Lautenberg (N.J.), and Republican Sen. Slade Gorton (Wash.). Gorton and Heflin are, respectively, chairman and ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Space and Science.

In introducing the National Commission on Space Act (S.955), Hollings points out that 25 years have passed since NASA was established, and new questions about the U.S. role in space involving the Shuttle, commercialization, and military purposes now present themselves. He added, "No matter how one chooses to characterize the coming era, it should be one of national opportunity. To realize those opportunities, however, will require a revitalization of this country's commitment," and calls for a year-long study, under the auspices of a National Commission on Space, to assess these questions.

Although the time frame set in the legislation may mean its proposals are eclipsed by the President's commitment to space-based directed energy weapons systems, the spirit manifest by the legislation's sponsors indicates that a strong bipartisan base of support should develop as the President further elaborates his program. Hollings stated, "We need to mobilize our national spirit and resolve the way Pres-

ident Kennedy did almost two decades ago. It is time again to support our creative and talented people." Heflin, a critical supporter of advanced laser research added, "NASA, since its establishment in 1958, has had phenomenal success in its programs of research, technology development, and space utilization for the benefit of all mankind."

### EPA attacked again, for environmentalism

Amidst all the congressional attacks on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in an attempt to Watergate the Reagan administration, Rep. Samuel Stratton (D-N.Y.) has finally attacked them for a good reason. "For some strange reason EPA appears bent on eliminating all technologically related sources of radiation exposure," Stratton charged, "even when that radiation is below the radiation we get from the Earth. . . ."

Stratton said that EPA's "little-noticed regulatory emphasis" is of particular concern because of its effect on "very important activities related to defense and to our all-important nuclear deterrent."

EPA has made 25 millirems the acceptable limit on doses to any organ of the maximally exposed person from uranium fuel cycle activities, and is planning to impose a 10-millirem limit for other activities, including those related to national security activities. Average natural background exposure in the United States from the Earth, flying in planes, and so forth, is 100 to 200 millirems.

The National Council on Radiation Protection, the International Council on Radiation Protection, and the International Atomic Energy Agency all support the traditional ex-

posure limit of 500 millirems. Further, as Stratton pointed out, "there are no epidemiological studies . . . linking exposure to radiation at levels less than 1,000 to 2,000 millirem per year to any ill health effects."

"President Reagan has expressed support for a policy that would encourage atomic energy technology in this country," Stratton said. "But that policy is clearly under concerted attack at EPA, or at least EPA's Office of Radiation programs, headed by Mr. Glen Sjoblom. The Nation is well on its way to losing its leadership . . . in atomic energy technology."

Stratton warned that EPA's endeavor to prevent exposure of any person to an incremental increase in radiation without that person's consent, "must be recognized for what it is: a repudiation of representative government." The EPA regulations come from a "general fear of radiation . . . based on public—and media—misconceptions and misinformation. . . . It amounts to espousing anarchy. . . . It is certainly clear that we could not have a technological society—and a high standard of living—if this were pursued across the board. Simply put, there is no technology without some risks. . . . To require such consents is equivalent to foregoing technology. The necessary conclusion of adopting such a policy would be for us all to return to caves and trees. It certainly would lower standards of living and shorten life expectancies," he concluded.

### Levin wants to legislate national sacrifice

Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and leading corporatist Rep. Stanley Lundine (D-N.Y.) introduced the Nation-

al Industrial Development Act (S.965) on March 24. While the legislation alleges to be an effort to provide a strategy to renew the American industrial base, a critical provision in the motivating language shows it to be another Felix Rohatyn-style vehicle for imposing austerity on both American workers and industry.

The legislation would establish a National Industrial Board composed of labor, industry, members of Congress, cabinet officers, and representatives of groups "challenging the status quo" such as environmentalists, consumerists, and minorities. The purpose of the board would be to develop a "consensus" on a national industrial strategy. But in the findings and purpose section, Levin states that "such a strategy will succeed only if it has the common support of the principal sectors of the economy, including business, labor, government, and the public; and each sector is willing to make sacrifices to ensure mutual recovery."

While less far-reaching than the Felix Rohatyn-proposed Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which would make credit available to industry and labor that have met austerity conditions, the National Industrial Development Act falls within the same category of neo-fascist strategies disguised as an "industrial strategy."

## **O**pposition to IMF weakened by populism

During the last week of March a number of congressmen stated their opposition to the International Monetary Fund quota increase, or attacked the IMF. But the attacks have been utterly inadequate to stop the quota increase, and in almost all cases the criticisms have been made on economically or

politically incorrect premises.

Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), the only one to vote against the IMF quota increase in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, argued that all the economic problems cited by the administration as reasons to bolster its quota increase request had been solved. "We have almost eliminated inflation," said Helms. "The oil shock we are now experiencing is a massive reduction in the price of oil, interest rates have fallen almost 80 percent in two years, the recession is over [sic], and no amount of American largess will help a nation 'adjust to a rapidly changing world economic environment.'" Helms advocates the Mont Pelerin Society-backed plan that the IMF sell off its gold as the means for raising funds to attempt to sustain world debt refinancing.

In the House, Rep. Dan Glickman (D-Kan.) introduced legislation March 23, "to require our U.S. director of the IMF to cast our vote against any use of any resources of the Fund by members of the IMF which fail to take steps to eliminate all import restrictions and unfair export subsidies which serve to effectively restrict exports from the United States"—a measure that fails to deal with the inability of debt-burdened nations to import U.S. produce.

Rep. Frank Annunzio (D-Ill.), a member of the House Banking Committee, complained that the IMF quota means a bailout of the banks. "I hope that the Congress will do everything in its power to help those Americans who really need its help, before even considering coming to the rescue of imprudent bankers and debt-ridden developing countries. . . ." Annunzio said. "It is quite obvious to me that this is nothing more than a disguised ploy to save the banks. . . . Quite frankly, I wonder why the administration wants to go to the trouble of giv-

ing the money to the IMF to give to the countries to give to the banks. It seems to me that it would be far simpler to cut out all the middlemen and just take the money from the U.S. Treasury and hand it over to the large banks."

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) put articles into the *Congressional Record* from the *New York Times* on how the IMF money is "exporting" U.S. jobs by enabling developing-sector nations to develop their own industries.

Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.) charged in the *Record* March 24 that the "proponents of big government policies . . . are seeing to it that the wealthy big bankers get their bailout. The budget resolution passed yesterday contains \$8.4 billion for further IMF funding," Paul said. "I realize the budget resolution was directed toward the benefit of welfare recipients, but I really do not think the bankers who made unwise foreign loans are all that deserving."

As an alternative, Paul pointed to his Monetary Freedom Act (H.R. 878), which he introduced on Jan. 25. "Since I first introduced this bill in 1980, our monetary situation has worsened," Paul stated. "Real interest rates continue at extremely high levels, the Federal Reserve is increasing the money supply at annual rates of 16 to 18 percent, and a major debt crisis threatens to collapse our international house of cards." Paul states that a "complete reform of our monetary system is imperative." As a monetarist of the Mt. Pelerin Society school, however, Paul is proposing an even more severe contraction of credit that the Fed's high interest rates have brought about, by tying credit directly to the United States's undervalued gold supply, rather than revaluing gold in relation to national requirements for productive industrial expansion.