

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Budget deadlock shuts down U.S. government

The U.S. federal government shut down on Oct. 4, as the Senate failed to pass the continuing resolution needed to keep the government functioning. All federal government institutions were closed and employees were sent home without pay, although emergency staffs were maintained at government offices.

As has happened with increasing frequency since the imposition of the "budget process," Congress failed to pass most of the funding bills needed to keep the government going into the new fiscal year which began on Oct. 1. Congress was working on an omnibus "continuing resolution" which will fund the government temporarily until Congress returns for a lame duck session or reconvenes in January. It was this continuing resolution which the Senate could not complete in time and which caused the U.S. government to close its doors for the second time during the Reagan administration.

Although the budget impasse was resolved the next day and the government did resume functioning, the current situation is being orchestrated to feed into the growing sentiment to "reform" the executive and legislative branches. A number of studies are currently ongoing under the aegis of Henry Kissinger's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to reform the two branches of government as they relate to defense and national security. All the reforms point in the direction of the "parliamentarization" of the U.S. government and the dissolution of separation of powers.

Trilateral Commission member Sen. William Roth (R-Del.) has been holding hearings on national security policy reform before his Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. On Sept. 26, Dr. Amos Jordan, the direc-

tor of Georgetown's Center for Security and International Studies, and Helmut Sonnenfeld, a long-time Kissinger intimate, testified before the committee, stressing that the current conflicts between the executive and legislature were becoming irreconcilable.

Grain cartels stack Farm Export Commission

The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tem of the Senate have announced their appointments to the newly created Agricultural Export Commission, another in a line of government-sanctioned and privately-run commissions. The Agricultural Export Commission was established by Congress in September at the urging of "private sector" agricultural interests—a polite term for the international grain cartels. The primary sponsor of the commission idea in the U.S. Congress was Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.).

Some members of the commission will come from the administration and relevant congressional agriculture committees, while the House and Senate each appointed 10 private-sector members to the commission. The grain cartel influence is evident in those appointments.

Bernard Steinweg, senior vice president of Continental Grain Co. and also the chairman of the International Trade Committee of the National Grain Feed Association, represents the grain cartels directly. Francis B. Gwin is the chairman of the board of Farmland Industries—a nesting place, until recently, of Jimmy Carter's Malthusian Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland. The W.R. Grace Company, whose chairman ran the infamous Grace Commission which called for dismantling U.S. defenses as a "cost-cutting"

measure, is represented by its executive Vice President L. L. Jaquier.

Congress readies new attacks on 'Star Wars'

Although the opponents of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) failed in their efforts to make major cuts in the already too-meager budget, they took to the floor of the Congress in the last days of the session to prepare their attack for next year. Thus far, the President has kept the SDI in the research and development phase, asking for \$1.77 billion for FY 1985. The House wanted to cut over \$400 million from the request, but bowed to the Senate cut of \$150 million instead.

However, on Oct. 2, Rep. Fortney Stark (D-Calif.) led an hour-long colloquy on the House floor, stressing the importance of keeping intact the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and of preventing the actual implementation of a strategic defense program. Echoing the arguments of the Committee to Save the ABM Treaty, led by arms-control aficionados such as Cyrus Vance, McGeorge Bundy, and Robert McNamara, Stark and his colleagues warn that administration officials such as Defense Secretary Weinberger have suggested abrogating the treaty in order to deploy beam-weapon defense systems. Pointing to the pivotal role of the ABM Treaty in maintaining the McNamara-Kissinger strategy of "balance of terror," Stark correctly notes that "the future of the ABM Treaty will determine the future of arms control."

On the Senate side, Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.) decried the failure of his proposed cut of another \$140 million from the SDI program. Bumpers had put forward an amendment, which was withdrawn for time considerations,

which would have taken the money out of the SDI and put it into housing relocation for military personnel and the purchase of military trucks! In a Sept. 28 floor speech, Bumpers asked: "Are we to embark on a \$500 billion to \$1 trillion escalation of the arms race, which is going to be the most destabilizing thing we have ever done, with no more debate and discussion than we have had? Well so far as I am concerned, we are not." Bumpers pledged to continue the fight next year.

Finally, Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.), denounced the SDI in a floor speech on Oct. 1. Referring to the recently repeated statement of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger that the United States would be willing to share beam-weapon defense technology with the Soviets in the interests of ending the thermonuclear balance of terror, Proxmire raved: "Our Secretary of Defense has stated on national television that he and the President have agreed to hand over to the Soviet Union, our principal military adversary in the world, a technology that will cost our taxpayers tens of billions of dollars." Proxmire continued: "On every vote we cast from now on to support the Defense Department's antimissile or Star Wars program, we know that we are voting billions for the Soviet Union."

Congress passes free trade with Israel

The House passed H.R. 5377 by a vote of 416 to 6 on Oct. 3, thus joining the Senate which had acted earlier, authorizing the President to enter into a "reciprocal and mutually advantageous" free trade area between Israel and the United States. Differences between the House and Senate versions of this U.S.-Israel free trade zone are

expected to be resolved and the bill resubmitted to both Houses and passed before Congress adjourns for the rest of this session.

Under the rubric of "free trade," the main purpose of the agreement seems to be to force Israel to abandon its remaining dirigist or nation-building economic measures. Israel submitted to demands that it sign the subsidy code of GATT in exchange for the free trade zone. Both Ways and Means Committee chairman Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) and Ways and Means Trade subcommittee chairman Rep. Sam Gibbons (D-Fla.) assured the committee that "the U.S. Trade Representative has assured the committee that an Israeli commitment to phase out its subsidies will be a precondition of any agreement."

Rep. Thomas Downey (D-N.Y.) was cited by several House members as the key man pulling the legislation together. Downey claimed during floor debate that "the idea [for the free trade zone] was Israel's" but made it clear that Israel was desperate. "The Israeli economy, ladies and gentlemen," Downey intoned, "is something that is in very desperate shape. There is a joke that goes around in Israel, 'What is the difference between a dollar and a shekel?' and the answer to that query is, 'A dollar.' . . . While it is funny, it points up the fact that the Israeli economy is in desperate trouble." Downey claimed that U.S. exports to Israel would increase, as well as Israeli exports to the U.S. which would "help Israel to service its debt."

The House version would require the President to submit only non-tariff barrier changes for congressional approval while the Senate version requires both tariff reductions and non-tariff changes to get congressional approval. Provisions are also in the legislation to stop third countries from using Israel to circumvent U.S. tariffs

with a provision that at least 35% of the value of a product has to be added in Israel.

House condemns Bulgarian drug- and gun-running

By a voice vote on Oct. 1, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Concurrent Resolution 337 condemning Bulgaria's role in facilitating narcotics trafficking and terrorism. Sponsored by Rep. Edward Feighan (D-Ohio), H. Con. Res. 337 calls on the Secretary of State to request a reconvening of the Customs Convention. That conference would discuss steps that could be taken to prevent future abuses of the treaty of the kind that Bulgaria has been charged with. Feighan, who is chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Task Force on International Narcotics, conducted extensive hearings on Bulgarian abuses of the customs convention.

In his floor statement, Feighan reported: "According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Kintex—an official Bulgarian import-export agency—has been trading in guns and drugs for at least 14 years. Typically, Kintex buys arms from sanctioned European dealers. These weapons are then traded to Middle East terrorist and trafficking groups in exchange for heroin. The heroin, in turn, is sold by Kintex to European narcotics smugglers. DEA officials estimate that at least 10% of the heroin that enters the United States each year comes from Bulgaria, and they added that narcotics sales are a key source of hard Western currency for the Bulgarians. Bulgaria also uses the drugs-for-guns network to gather intelligence and arm terrorist groups throughout Europe and the Middle East."