

## Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

### The attack on defense continues

No sooner had Congress agreed to cut roughly \$27 billion from the defense budget before leaving for the August recess, than Rep. Bill Gray (D-Pa.), chairman of the House Budget Committee, announced to a nationwide television audience that he and other liberals would attempt to cut another \$15 to \$17 billion from the defense budget.

The House will act on the Defense Authorization conference report when it returns, amidst much noise from the appeasement crowd led by Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and George Brown (D-Calif.) that still more must be cut from defense. Frank and Miller were meeting with the House Democratic leadership on Sept. 5 to decide whether they will move to reject the conference report in total. O'Neill has promised that they will have ample opportunity to cut more from the defense appropriations bill. And, on Sept. 6, O'Neill met with the House leadership, and agreed to hold a separate vote on reducing the House authorization bill by \$10 billion.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger noted recently with chagrin that the Reagan defense budget is below the projected defense budget of the departing Carter administration, and said that the country could not live with another year of zero increase in the defense budget. Yet Weinberger was forced to give more ground in a letter to Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, promising not to ask for more MX missiles in the FY 87 defense budget. Weinberger did this

as a means of undercutting the attempt to reject the conference report.

Already, the issue of proceeding with a binary chemical weapons program has been split from the conference report and will come up for a separate vote. If rejected, the House-Senate conference will be reopened to drop the program, even though the Soviets have massive capabilities in the areas of chemical and bacteriological warfare.

### Hearings set against SDI, for decoupling

Several series of hearings will be held by various House and Senate committees to try to force President Reagan to offer the Strategic Defense Initiative as a bargaining chip, and to decouple Europe from the United States. Much of the press publicity favorable to the Soviet propaganda offensive is currently focused on the Senate delegation that traveled to Moscow to meet with Gorbachov.

The delegation, headed by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.V.), included Nunn (D-Ga.), Warner (R-Va.), Thurmond (R-S.C.), DeConcini (D-Ariz.), Pell (D-R.I.), and others.

Hearings held by Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.) in the Senate Foreign Relations European Subcommittee will feature prominent advocates of decoupling, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, James Schlesinger, Lawrence Eagleburger, and André Pierre from the New York Council on Foreign Relations. Jeanne Kirkpatrick will also testify. This set of hearings will begin on Sept. 12, covering SDI, NATO restructuring, and U.S. troop pullouts. Hearing titles include, "Soviet Imper-

atives for the 1990s," "Soviet Active Measures," "Crisis of Will in the NATO Alliance," "NATO Strategy for the 1990s," "NATO as a Priority in U.S. Policy," and, incredibly, "Crisis of Will in the Warsaw Pact."

The House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Security and Science will chime in on this theme with hearings on the anti-satellite issue, to ban ASAT systems and tests, of course, and on arms-control technology. They will likely add several other hearings to their schedule.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Sen. David Durenberger (R-Minn.), plans a series of closed-door briefings for its committee members to review recommendations made by Durenberger's good friend, Zbigniew Brzezinski, for decoupling Europe from NATO.

Durenberger's Intelligence Committee staff director, Brian McMahon, a former assistant to Carter CIA director Stansfield Turner, said that Durenberger is considering putting some of Brzezinski's recommendations into legislation, especially in the area of European cultural integration. Durenberger was recently in Poland.

The Committee is also planning a comprehensive review of U.S.-Soviet relations "so that the members can have the information they need to make crucial decisions" about various aspects of the relationship, including Soviet "scientific advances."

Trilateral Commission member and co-sponsor of the Nunn troop pullout amendment, Sen. William Roth (R-Del.), also intends to raise a stink

over NATO "burden-sharing" at the October Atlantic Assembly meeting in San Francisco. According to a staffer there will be "a real bullfight" at the meeting over "the same issues raised in the Nunn-Roth" decoupling amendment, including "whether Europe is doing its fair share for the alliance" and "medium and long range NATO strategy." The staffer also indicated that new decoupling legislation will likely be introduced over the next few months.

## **Congress is back and up to no good**

The House of Representatives returned from its August recess on Sept. 4, and the Senate returns Monday, Sept. 9, ready to do more damage to the nation's defenses.

The appeasers in the Congress will be, in addition, trying as best they can to force President Reagan to put the Strategic Defense Initiative up as a bargaining chip at Geneva and in his summit meeting with Gorbachov. The same group will renew its effort to force the United States to "decouple" (read: desert) Europe and split the NATO alliance.

But like the dog chasing his tail, Congress will mainly be involved in tying itself in knots in fruitless approaches to reducing the budget deficit—approaches focused on budget cuts which do nothing to reduce the deficit, but are quite effective in reducing what remains of the U.S. economy to ashes.

No senator or congressman, meanwhile, has shown the slightest indication of taking on the real cause of the deficit—Paul Volcker at the

Federal Reserve and the affects of his usury domestically and worldwide.

A second budget resolution has not yet been passed, and during the recess, the \$55 billion in deficit reduction the Congress thought it had achieved in the first budget resolution, is proving illusory, as the Office of Management and Budget and the Congressional Budget Office revise their assumptions on how well the economy will perform.

Congress has not reached final passage on any of the 13 appropriations bills. Since the fiscal year 1985 ends on Sept. 30, a stopgap continuing resolution will have to be passed to fund these programs, a procedure which has been followed every year since 1975.

While the President is holding a spending-bill veto threat over the Congress, they will be struggling to get different programs within their own budget resolution. The farm bill, for example, is now roughly \$8 billion over the first budget resolution. Cuts will therefore be the focus of activity, while over 200,000 farmers face imminent bankruptcy. Anti-parity forces will also be working against the clock on the farm bill, as current law expires on Sept. 30, and absent new legislation, policy would revert to earlier parity legislation.

Compounding the usual insanity around the lack of solutions to the deficit problem, is the debt ceiling. The ceiling is now \$1.824 trillion, and unless it is raised past the \$2 trillion level, the government will not be able to borrow to continue to finance programs in the budget. While the House has already passed its debt ceiling increase as part of the budget resolution,

the Senate will have a separate vote on the issue.

The Democrats are planning to withhold a vote on the issue until such time as all Republicans have gone on record for increasing the ceiling. Since many Republicans do not want to, and will not, go on record on the issue, a stalemate is in the works that will leave the federal government unfunded.

The President's tax reform proposals will not come to the floor before October, and many members, including Republicans, would rather not deal with the issue. Among other issues that may come to the floor are the genocide treaty, immigration reform, civil rights legislation, and a water-projects authorization bill.

An issue which seems to be increasingly looked upon, especially by Democrats, as politically useful, is protectionist trade legislation. On Sept. 4, House Speaker Tip O'Neill said Congress is likely to pass "some kind of trade bill," and said people don't believe Reagan "gives a damn" about loss of jobs.

The first major foreign-policy issue the Congress will act on directly is the sanctions against the Republic of South Africa, H.R. 1460, a bill that will further destabilize the region and aid in Soviet penetration of the area. The sanctions include bans on new loans, the export of computers or software, the export of nuclear technology, and the import of Krugerrand gold coins. The House has passed H.R. 1460 and a move to end a threatened filibuster in the Senate is expected shortly after its return. The administration, faced with an override if it vetoes the legislation, is seeking some means to avoid a veto or veto override.