

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Aspin backs Gorbachov's nuclear test ban scheme

House Armed Services Committee chairman Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) has attacked the Reagan administration for its failure to embrace a recent Soviet proposal for a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing, a proposal which would prove fatal to the U.S. x-ray laser program.

On March 31, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov had called for a near-term superpower summit to work out an end to testing, and, for the last eight months, has imposed a unilateral moratorium on the Soviet Union itself. Aspin chastised the administration for its abrupt dismissal of the proposal. The target of both the Soviets and of Aspin is the x-ray laser program, which depends on underground nuclear testing to proceed.

According to recent Senate testimony by Lt.-Gen. James Abrahamson, head of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative program, the Soviets could be as much as five years ahead of the United States in the testing of x-ray lasers. Abrahamson told the Senate Armed Services Committee, on March 25 that the Soviets conducted an x-ray laser test in 1982 and that the United States "will not be able to do so until 1987."

Aspin, however, assumes that it is the Soviets who have to catch up to the United States. Therefore, it is to their benefit to resume testing so that they can catch up with the U.S. on x-ray lasers, and on the modernization of Soviet nuclear warheads. By rejecting the proposal, Aspin argues, President Reagan allows the Soviets to end their eight-month moratorium and resume testing, thus expanding their knowledge of the x-ray laser.

Aspin is one of the leaders of a group of Democrats, including Sens. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Gary Hart (D-Colo.), who want to prove that they do not have a "knee jerk," liberal bias against a strong defense. Instead, they engage in tortuous and byzantine logic—to end up in the same place as Ted Kennedy.

Senator Moynihan wants to abolish elections

New York State's senior senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, continued to lead the pack in the race for the "National Democratic Geek Act of the Year" award, with the entry of an op-ed in the April 1 (!) *New York Times*, entitled "The Links Between LaRouche and New York Corruption." In Moynihan's view, the link is the fact that the voters in Illinois and New York are allowed to vote in primaries. Moynihan says that these should be replaced with conventions, in which the country club and KGB liberals should be allowed to pick candidates in smoke-filled rooms, unimpeded by elections.

Moynihan claims that the "rise of primary elections has weakened the Democratic Party," as witnessed by the recent LaRouche upset in Illinois, and by the fact that Moynihan had to run against LaRouche Democrat Mel Klenetsky in 1982. Moynihan charges that the primary system gives a "discernable advantage . . . to fanatic, single-minded, single-issue campaigns," and also "makes money the primary arbiter of political outcomes." Moynihan neglected to mention that the LaRouche victors in Illinois spent \$200 on their campaigns!

Moynihan says that he hopes it is

"possible . . . that election laws can be changed to give party conventions more of a say in the effective choice of candidates, and to give parties powers to resist intrusion by elements wholly at odds with their own principles."

The rejection of constituency-influence in party and government affairs, coupled with the imposition of top-down party discipline, is the hallmark of the British parliamentary system, which Moynihan seems to prefer. Individuals associated with the Trilateral Commission and the Brookings Institution have called for U.S. constitutional "reform," along these parliamentary lines.

The strangest bedfellows of all may be their wives

Peace Links, the organization of congressional wives which is promoting peace through appeasement, is busy preparing for a 1987 trip to Moscow. Led by Betty Bumpers, Teresa Heinz, Jeanne Simon, Nina Solarz, and Debra Leach, the wives of Sens. Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.), John Heinz (R-Pa.), Paul Simon (D-Ill.), and Reps. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) and James Leach (R-Iowa), the organization is "laying the ground for the trip, raising funds, brushing up on our Soviet studies, and continuing communication with the Soviet Women's Committee members." This will be the second phase of the U.S./U.S.S.R. Women's Exchange.

The first phase was last October's visit of 13 Soviet women to the United States, sponsored by Peace Links. That this was no housewife-to-housewife coffee clatch, was made evident at the formal opening event, on Oct. 16, in

Washington, D.C. The conference was opened by, among others, Irina Dobrynin, wife of Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, and William McSweeney, president of Occidental International—the company of Armand Hammer, agent of the Soviets' foreign intelligence capability, the Trust.

Within minutes of arriving in Washington, the Soviet delegation had their hosts singing the "Soviet Peace Song." At Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., several hundred people joined in an ode to Mother Russia, "Let there always be sunshine, let there always be blue skies . . . let there always be Mama, let there always be me."

Simultaneous with the Soviet delegations' visit to Washington, Peace Links dispatched one of its staff members to Geneva, to make sure the superpower summit was adequately monitored. Staff member Karen Sherman was part of a delegation of 34 women representing "Women for a Meaningful Summit."

Among the organizations affiliated with Peace Links are several known Soviet front groups. Without exception, the congressional husbands of the women who are most active in Peace Links, are implacable foes of the Strategic Defense Initiative and a U.S. defense buildup.

If it's Wednesday, we must be overthrowing Bovia

Saudi Arabia returns as the focus of congressional efforts to destabilize key U.S. allies.

Despite the decision of a major pro-Israel group not to lobby against the U.S. sale of missiles to Saudi Arabia,

Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) and Rep. Mel Levine (D-Calif.) will not be deterred in their effort to halt the sale, and further undermine U.S.-Saudi relations.

The decision by the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) to oppose the \$354 million sale, but to refrain from carrying out their typical, aggressive lobbying campaign, boosts the administration's chances of completing the sale. Cranston and Levine, however, will go ahead with their opposition to the deal, and introduce a resolution blocking it. According to the *Congressional Quarterly*, an aide to Cranston declared, "Senators don't take orders from lobbyists," referring to the AIPAC pullback.

Quiet battles over the American System

Some congressmen are apparently not satisfied with the pace of collapse of the U.S. economy, and would like to hurry it along. The nuclear industry, the trucking industry, and water infrastructure have come under various forms of attack.

• An effort by Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) to make Energy Department contractors liable for nuclear accidents was beaten back by the Senate Energy Committee on March 26. The Committee was debating the reauthorization of the Price-Anderson Act, the 30-year-old law which necessarily limits the liability of the nuclear industry. Since nuclear construction in the private sector has collapsed, the contractors are more and more reliant on Energy Department contracts, and the Metzenbaum amendment would have meant pro-

hibitive insurance costs on that remaining business. The Metzenbaum amendment was defeated by a vote of 13 to 3. The opposition was led by Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-La.), the ranking Democrat on the committee, who argued that further harm to the nuclear industry was "like reconquering Grenada . . . I mean the nuclear industry is already down—why kick it again?"

• Senate Finance Committee chairman Bob Packwood (R-Ore.) has introduced legislation to finish off the trucking industry. On March 26, he introduced S. 2240, the Trucking Competititon Act of 1986. While conceding that the U.S. trucking industry was decimated by the combined impact of partial deregulation in 1980 and the increase in interest rates, Packwood announced, "The time has come to totally deregulate the trucking industry."

• The Garrison Diversion Project in North Dakota, the Tennessee Tombigbee waterway, and the Tennessee Valley Authority were all the subjects of congressional attack recently. Rep. Berkley Bedell (D-Iowa) announced that he will introduce an amendment to ensure that the project does "not subsidize surplus agricultural production." Despite the loss of 500,000 family farms in the United States, Bedell thinks there is surplus agricultural production and that farmers should not get subsidized water.

Senators Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.) attacked the Tennessee Tombigbee water project and the Tennessee Valley Authority, because both projects used projections of economic growth, rather than predictions of depression. As a result, each project is "overbuilt," they said.