

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Aspin-Kissinger link revealed in Journal

The man the *Wall Street Journal* in its April 9 edition described as "taking the crucial role in shaping Pentagon budget cuts," is noted for his close ties to Henry Kissinger. Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.),

Armed Services Committee, is adamant that the restrictions of Gramm-Rudman be met to the letter (\$144 billion in cuts in the FY 87 budget), and he's willing to tell anyone that a lot of that is going to come out of the defense budget—more than the \$49 billion predicted by the Congressional Budget Office.

Aspin himself will have a lot to do with that because of his position. Last month, he pushed through a major re-vamping of the military pension system, but more importantly, he is now moving "aggressively," in the words of the *Journal*, to slash the President's funding request for the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Aspin has the character and career of a close associate of Henry Kissinger, for whom he worked during the latter's tenure as secretary of state. Another "old buddy," his former boss Robert McNamara, says: "It is a genuine opportunity for someone with his talents to take charge and lead."

Aspin worked under McNamara at the Pentagon before getting elected to Congress in 1970. There he was the archetypical McNamara "whiz kid," a real pro at McNamara's "cost-benefit analysis" approach to running the military, which included the "body count" approach to the Vietnam war. Lawrence Eagleburger, head of Kissinger Associates, said Aspin was part of the military's version of the "best and the brightest . . . a classy bunch" in those days.

Aspin now skulks around Washington, divorced with no children, as the "consummate insider," in the *Journal's* words, who is on a "different agenda" than everyone else in Congress, which has led to distrust from all quarters. "He's so involved in deal making that he doesn't know how to deal with people. You're always worried there's something unsaid," an associate remarked. One thing's for sure: Whatever Aspin's hidden agenda may be, it doesn't place the best interests of his nation at the top.

Gramm joins Rudman in call for defense cuts

When Warren Rudman (R-N.H.), co-sponsor of the budget-balancing Gramm-Rudman bill, started screaming about all the money the military is wasting in Europe before the monthly breakfast of the American Defense Preparedness Association in March, it was understood that, even though this guy is a Republican, he is from New England, and his raving anti-defense diatribe fits with the Eastern Establishment blueblood line.

But now comes that good ol' boy from Texas, the other co-sponsor, that Democrat turned Republican who is supposed to be twice as Republican as a Republican because that's what converts are supposed to be. Tough-talking, rock-ribbed Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) spoke out plainly to the American Society of Newspaper Publishers April 9, admitting, in response to a question from *EIR*, that President Reagan's defense budget request for FY 87 is going to be deeply cut due to Gramm-Rudman.

He noted that the Senate Budget

Committee voted 13-9 to cut \$25 billion from the President's defense request—and that included the votes of a half dozen Republicans. "It's an election year, after all," he shrugged. He predicted that the final Senate cut would not be that deep—but that the House cut would be, and the compromise would come out somewhere in between.

Gramm shared the podium with Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), a liberal on the House Budget Committee who replaced Rep. Bill Gray (D-Pa.)

that although many Democrats voted against Gramm-Rudman, they are now doing more to see that its provisions are adhered to than the Republicans. Reagan, he bleated, is sabotaging the "spirit of Gramm-Rudman" by demanding an increase in defense spending with no tax increase.

Schumer explained Gramm-Rudman this way, using "ballpark figures." The budget is \$1 trillion, the deficit is \$200 billion, meaning 20% has to be cut. Of that \$1 trillion, however, \$700 billion is exempted from cuts under Gramm-Rudman, including debt service, Social Security, the procurement end of defense, the "safety net" programs, and fulfillment of existing contracts. This means that the \$200 billion is going to have to come out of the remaining \$300 billion in the budget that is not exempted—which is going to hit hardest on infrastructure, transport, the Coast Guard, IRS, air-traffic controllers, and aid to states and cities.

He equated the situation to the German Communists' early 1930s decision to vote for Hitler because it would make things so bad, people would realize the mistake and change it. "That is not a way to legislate,"

Schumer said. He then turned around and agreed with Gramm that Congress must meet Gramm-Rudman targets, whether or not the courts declare the bill unconstitutional.

Democrats squabble over foreign policy

A cosmetic squabble broke out during the meeting of the Democratic Policy Commission in Washington in April. Representatives of the mock-conservative Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM) criticized the draft Democratic Party foreign policy document presented by Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.). In a transparent attempt to show some life and to reclaim the electoral base of the party back from the growing momentum of Lyndon LaRouche, the CDM staged a tantrum over Solarz's policy of "weakness and retreat."

It wasn't a very credible fuss. Their leader, Peter R. Rosenblatt, conceded that he and Solarz, who leads the 33-member task force that drafted the document, "will work out an accommodation" without, as Solarz said, "any major changes."

The CDM issued an alternative policy paper which had little but anti-Soviet rhetoric in it. One CDM spokesman, Rep. Dave McCurdy (D-Okla.), expressed the concern of those smart enough not to ignore LaRouche. "America has shifted to the right, and the activists and some of the leaders of our party have not responded to the shift," he said. He thus thinks along lines of the same "public perception" games as the Solarz crowd, while LaRouche cares little for "perception shifts," much for strategic reality.

Solarz's document blasts Rea-

gan's "too little, too late" policy of "watered down" economic sanctions against South Africa, defense spending that Aspin called "the most expensive bluff in history," and procurement scandals, mismanagement of military personnel, and "disastrous" naval strategies. It blasts the administration's support for Jonas Savimbi in Angola, and in the area of arms control, it calls for not undercutting SALT II "as long as the Soviets observe the same policy"(!), ratification of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty, and negotiations to ban anti-satellite weapons.

This draft document will be finalized this summer, and presumably become part of the new "loyalty test" for Democrats advocated by the party leadership. This is what Solarz means by "growing consensus," and is more evidence that this ideology-bound clique has learned nothing from the results in Illinois last month.

Senate complaining Reagan 'making it impossible'

Forced by Gramm-Rudman to chop \$144 billion from the FY 87 budget in an election year, the Republican-controlled Senate is breaking away from the administration in a desperate scramble for self-preservation. "If we're going to walk off this plank, I'd like to have some company," Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) said, expressing his frustration at Reagan's insistence upon pushing through a tax overhaul plan before coming to grips with the impossible cuts Gramm-Rudman is demanding from the budget.

The Senate voted 72-24 April 10 to oppose consideration of tax reform before consideration of the budget, directly defying the President's insistence, during his nationally televised press conference the night before, that Congress buckle under on tax reform by the same April 15 deadline for the American people to pay its taxes.

The non-binding resolution, sponsored by Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.) and Sen. Steve Symms (R-Idaho), was, they said, "aimed at breaking the budget out of its stall." However, it would mean, according to Senate Finance Committee chairman Bob Packwood (R-Oreg.), who opposed the measure, postponing action on other legislation until the budget is settled, "which will lead to a whale of a September," he said. Congress has vowed to finish up its work by then in order to leave a few weeks to campaign before the November elections.

Dole and House Minority leader Robert Michel (R-Ill.) also pushed for immediate action on the budget, sending a letter across the aisle of both houses to that effect. Dole, however, has been the main obstacle to starting the budget debate rolling. He has blocked the Senate Budget Committee's draft calling for \$25 billion in cuts from the President's defense request, rejecting many of Reagan's cutbacks in domestic programs.

Dole's reference to "walking off the plank" referred to the need for Congress to face up to its fears of massive budget cuts, or burdening the public with tax increases, or both, to cope with Gramm-Rudman during an election year. As he nervously contemplates taking the first step, he says he wants some company. Misery loves it, you know.