

Congressional Closeup by Kathleen Klenetsky

Dole proposes to starve Third World

Sen. Bob Dole's "conservative" credentials are becoming ever more tarnished—and not only because of his fence-sitting on the INF Treaty ratification issue.

On Nov. 30, the Senate minority leader teamed up with one of the Republican Party's most rabid environmentalists, Sen. Dan Evans of Washington, to introduce a bill that incorporates the malthusian Club of Rome's prescriptions for eliminating the last prospects of technological and economic development in the Third World.

Billed as legislation to increase the U.S. commitment to multilateral banks and investment funds, S. 1899 explicitly calls upon the United States to force various of these institutions to impose stringent restrictions on development and food production to borrower countries—all in the name of protecting the environment.

Dole's proposals for the Third World are of the same piece as his presidential campaign theme, demanding economic sacrifice at home.

In statements on the floor of the Senate Nov. 30, Evans said the legislation would require the World Bank, the International Development Association, and various regional development banks to "seek to manage the world's environmental resources to ensure . . . sustainable human progress. . . ." That means driving down population growth and living standards in the Third World, by preventing any large-scale infrastructure development.

The bill specifically states that U.S. participants in the multilateral institutions in question must "analyze the environmental impacts of multilateral development loans . . . to determine

whether the proposals will contribute to the sustainable development of the borrowing country." Such reviews "shall address the economic viability of the project, and adverse impacts on the environment, natural resources, public health, and indigenous people." If a proposal violates any of these provisions, the United States should ensure that it is rejected.

The bill also requires the United States to prevent "excessive agriculture and commodity production" in borrower nations. Evans explained that this provision is designed to "address the concerns" of some members of Congress "that the multilateral banks are lending to uneconomic, non-sustainable projects that aggravate existing world surpluses in a particular commodity or to projects subsidized by the host government."

For Dole and Evans to argue that the developing sector is producing too much food or too many commodities is criminal insanity. Such a provision will not only mean that many more people in the developing sector starve; it will also prevent Third World countries from garnering the foreign exchange necessary to fund any economic development programs of their own.

For political purposes, Dole has repeatedly stressed that he is "pro-life." Indeed.

Gorbachov lines up Congress behind INF

Mikhail Gorbachov doesn't fool around. Faced with the prospect that the anti-appeasement faction in the Senate might succeed in preventing ratification of the INF Treaty, the Soviet dictator called top House and Senate leaders to the Soviet embassy Dec.

9 to get them into line behind the pact.

Gorbachov had the legislators' profile down pat. He opened the meeting by appealing to their not inconsiderable egos. "Congress is indeed a most important element in the political process," he said, and "nothing can happen in this country without its participation."

That was just what the attendees—who have been complaining for years that President Reagan ignores them when it comes to strategic policy—wanted to hear.

Gorbachov followed that up by declaring, "We will try to send you the necessary vibrations. We hope to get good vibes from you."

The meeting had the intended effect. Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) told reporters afterwards he was confident that the Senate will ratify the treaty without any killer amendments—an estimate with which Gorbachov concurred.

The congressional participants sounded like a bunch of school-girls at a rock star's concert. House Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.) gushed that Gorbachov is "quite trustworthy." Rep. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) professed himself "stunned" by the Soviet leader's candor. Rep. Tony Coelho (D-Calif.) declared: "He's one of us—a political animal." But it was Republican Senate whip Alan Simpson (Wyo.), the treaty, who took the cake, calling Gorbachov "fascinating, extraordinary" and—without any irony apparent—"very disarming."

The only half-way sensible comment came from Senate Majority Leader Bob Byrd (D.-W.Va.), who seemed to have been a trifle alarmed that such congressional groveling might not play too well with the American people. "We have to be very care-

ful and not be swept off our feet," he warned.

Senate beefs up AIDS testing in VA hospitals

Despite bitter opposition from liberal quarters, the Senate approved legislation Dec. 3 that would require the Veterans Administration to offer AIDS testing to all of its 280,000 hospital-ized patients under the age of 40.

The provision, added to an omnibus bill providing new benefits to veterans, was sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who has offered other AIDS testing measures in the past.

The amendment radically modifies the original legislation, which had specifically prohibited any widespread HIV testing program in VA hospitals. Helms's proposal struck down this provision, and replaced it with one requiring the VA to make the AIDS test available on the basis described above.

Most of the opposition came from the usual suspects—people like Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), who adamantly opposes widespread AIDS testing, especially any program that has the faintest whiff of not being strictly voluntary. In statements on the Senate floor, Cranston decried what he called a "disconcerting trend—the rush to test as some sort of mystical cure for two of our nation's major health problems, AIDS and drug abuse."

But several veterans organizations, including the Disabled American Veterans, also opposed the measure, partly on grounds that money to finance the testing program would come out of the VA's already restricted budget, and not from additional appropriations.

Senate panel bars Stinger sales to Bahrain

The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved two amendments to the FY1988 foreign aid bill that are certain to sour relations between the United States and two strategically important nations: Bahrain and India.

The panel voted Dec. 3 to bar the sale of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to any nation in the Persian Gulf for the next year, a decision which would block a planned sale to Bahrain. In doing so, the committee ignored pleas from Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci and Joint Chiefs chairman Adm. William Crowe, who met with committee members for more than an hour to urge them not to enact the ban.

The administration representatives reportedly stressed that Bahrain has quietly supported American interests in the Mideast for four decades, and that the country had been particularly helpful to the current Persian Gulf escort deployment. Bahrain has requested the Stingers on the grounds that it needs them to protect its oil installations from Iranian attack.

But the committee voted in favor of the prohibition, sponsored by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.)

In the case of India, the panel approved a measure the same day, to prohibit the sale of U.S. high-tech items to India, unless India curtails its nuclear weapons development.

The Indian government scored the move. A senior official told the *New York Times* that the action was "completely unacceptable," and, if enacted into law, relations with the United States would "suffer across the board."

The official also warned that the panel's action had already bolstered Indian political factions who oppose improved relations with the U.S.

"There is no dearth of critics of our policy," the official said. "Now people will be saying that we're back to square one with the United States."

Science chairman decides to shelve SDI

The Soviet Union has won an important ally to its campaign to destroy the Strategic Defense Initiative, under the guise of American-Soviet collaboration in the "peaceful uses of space."

House Science, Space, and Technology Committee chairman Rep. Robert Roe (D-N.J.), clambered on board the bandwagon, after a Dec. 3 meeting with Roald Sagdeyev, who, in addition to heading the Soviet Space Research Institute, has been among the principal Soviet lobbyists against the SDI.

At a joint press conference the same day, Roe declared that he wants to shelve the SDI and instead join hands with the Soviets on a joint Mars mission. A common effort to explore Mars, he said, could shift the focus on space away from "Star Wars" to a mutual "Star Trek."

"The rewards and benefits to mankind in space are 10,000 times better than the destruction of mankind in space," Roe said, as Sagdeyev stood by smiling. The committee chairman also disclosed that he had urged President Reagan to discuss the prospects of a joint mission to Mars with Mikhail Gorbachov at the summit.

The Soviets, along with their sympathizers in the United States, notably "nuclear winter" pseudo-scientist Carl Sagan, have been carefully promoting the joint Mars mission as an alternative to the "militarization of space" through the SDI program.