

# Senator Grassley: a profile in treason

by Kathleen Klenetsky

If "Pentagate" succeeds in its objective—destroying the American defense establishment—it will be thanks in large part to the efforts of Sen. Charles Grassley—rightly designated by the *Wall Street Journal's* June 24 lead editorial as "Congress's biggest defense basher."

The second-term Republican senator from Iowa has been a key player in efforts to whip up a mountainous scandal against the Pentagon through the molehill of alleged malfeasance in the military procurement process.

Indeed, it was Grassley who elicited from William Weld, at the latter's August 1986 confirmation hearings for a top Justice Department post, a pledge to launch an all-out assault against the Defense Department, once he took over as head of the DoJ's Criminal Division. Within days of his confirmation, Weld initiated the "investigation" which led to the Pentagon raid.

During his stint on Capitol Hill, Grassley has done yeoman work to create the circumstances in which the Justice Department could propose to dismantle the country's national defense institutions. Starting in the early 1980s, he began a campaign to focus attention on alleged waste and fraud in Pentagon procurement, which earned him national media attention. In this process, he reportedly collaborated with such groups as Businessmen for National Security, a gaggle of peacenik corporate types founded by liberal philanthropist Stanley Weiss, and the Defense Budget Project.

More recently, he clambered on board the "Pentagon restructuring" bandwagon. He backed the Packard Commission and worked to ensure passage of the Nunn-Goldwater defense reorganization bill, over the protest of all the service chiefs, including Marine Commandant P.X. Kelley, who warned that it would cause "significant degradation in the efficiency and effectiveness of the defense establishment—to the point where I would have deep concerns for the future security of the United States."

Like other leading lights in the Pentagon scandal-mongering network, Grassley has attempted to cloak his vendetta against the Pentagon with professed concern about saving taxpayers money and restraining the ballooning federal deficit. In 1983, he sponsored legislation that would have imposed an across-the-board freeze on the federal budget, including the defense component. The measure earned the appropriate sobriquet, the KGB freeze, after its key sponsors, Senators Kassebaum, Grassley, and Biden. That measure

failed, but Grassley achieved much the same goal through the Gramm-Rudman amendment, which he supported and which has led to a negative real growth in the Pentagon budget.

## Defense budget is 'manure'

Grassley's yakking about fiscal responsibility hides an attitude toward national defense bordering on the treasonous. He revealed what he really thinks at a June 1985 American Stock Exchange conference. The U.S. defense budget is "a five-pound bag of manure in a four-pound pile," ranted Grassley, who went on to castigate then-Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger for "hyping up" the Soviet threat.

Grassley has been a longtime member of the Military Reform Caucus, founded by former Sen. Gary Hart, whose program calls for getting rid of high-technology weapons, and whose members generally favor reducing U.S. military commitments abroad, including to Western Europe.

He opposes the MX missile, and while claiming to support the Strategic Defense Initiative, he voted for Sen. Bennett Johnston's (D-La.) initiative to keep SDI funding increases below 3%, which would effectively kill the program. He also supports Sen. Sam Nunn's (D-Ga.) proposal to turn the SDI into a limited, low-tech system to protect against an accidental nuclear launch, which would deprive the United States and its allies of the same degree of protection against atomic weapons which the Soviets are expected to deploy shortly.

Grassley's determination to turn the United States into a third-rate power carries over into other areas as well. For example, he supported Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd's move last year to curtail the Reagan administration's decision to protect merchant shipping in the Persian Gulf, and he has been a vocal supporter of Washington's efforts to unseat Panama's defense chief, Gen. Manuel Noriega. Grassley also voted for a Senate resolution which charged Mexico with failing to curb drugs.

Where does a supposedly conservative Republican get such un-American politics? In Grassley's case, the obvious source is his home state. As *EIR* documented in its Sept. 11, 1987 issue, Iowa has been a hotbed of Soviet penetration going back to FDR's Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace, due primarily to the dominant influence of the international grain companies.

Grassley has worked closely with many of Iowa's numerous "peace" organizations, including Beyond War and Business for Peace, the latter founded by Des Moines banker John Chrystal. Business for Peace's head, Fred Weitz, praises Grassley for "clearly accepting the need to work out solutions with the East bloc."

Chuck Day, the director of the more openly pro-Soviet Starpac (Stop the Arms Race Political Action Committee), believes that "we should take off our hats" to Grassley for his crackdown on "military overexpenditures."