

# Restoring American power: McCormack's fusion bill

by Vin Berg

On Jan. 28, Congressman Mike McCormack (D-Wash) introduced a bill that would authorize as much as \$20 billion over two decades for the "Apollo-style" crash development of fusion power under U.S. government auspices. Mr. McCormack, himself a seasoned nuclear engineer, is not simply going "on record" with an energy-policy recommendation directly contrary to the Malthusian policy of the White House. He intends to fight for the bill, and he intends to win.

McCormack personally has been outspoken on the need and feasibility of not only fusion power development, but parallel development of the whole array of nuclear technologies. In addition, from the point that McCormack some months ago directed Dr. Robert Hirsch to lead a panel in a thorough review of the sad, underfunded state of the U.S. fusion program, he and his committee have been increasingly perceived as a rallying point for virtually the entire scientific community (see box).

The bill itself is the first sign of sanity on the energy question to be seen on Capitol Hill in years. But it is not simply that. In a world wracked by strategic crises threatening world war, any program that would revitalize U.S. industrial capabilities, as would this project for fusion in two decades, would also transform U.S. strategic posture in the world to the effect of removing the root-causes threatening peace. As it points to the correct high-technology solution to world energy problems, McCormack's bill is also to be perceived as a war-avoidance measure.

The root-cause of threatened world war is a U.S. strategic posture based on the Carter administration's commitment to "controlled disintegration" of the industrial economies of the U.S.A., Europe and Japan, with the goal of a "new world order based on environmentalism" (Secretary Vance). That policy, by massively weakening the U.S. dollar, and denying the possibility of

development to the so-called developing sector nations, both preserves the southern hemisphere as a zone of "hot spots" and instability, and pits a depression against Western capability to pull Third World nations up and out of such chaotic misery: the source of a constant threat, in general, of East-West confrontation.

In addition, the success of Carter deindustrialization has prompted Soviet leaders to perceive a "final capitalist breakdown crisis" in the West, and to perceive U.S. foreign policy adventurism in terms of "objective necessities" confronting capitalism, rather than the willful lunacy of a faction in the West. Soviet adventurism is the outcome.

On both counts, McCormack's fusion bill is to be categorized as a significant contribution to restoring war-avoidance and detente. The fusion project defined by H.R. 6370 of itself would reverse the "controlled disintegration" affecting U.S. industry, and restore the strength of the U.S. dollar. The development of fusion will require the development of several new types of industries, and presuppose an immediate revitalization of existing industrial capabilities in the advanced sector. It would place the U.S.A. in a posture conducive to an agreement with the European Monetary System nations' plans for Third World development projects. The Soviet Union, for its part, has made clear through various spokesmen that such a set of economic-development policies, it is prepared to accept.

In a recent speech, McCormack pledged himself to an indepth program of nuclear energy development—to the point that he would not support any presidential candidate of his own party that did not advocate "acceleration of our nuclear implementation policy across the board." In that commitment, he is pointing to a solution to the energy problem and, in not so many words demanding a U.S. economic policy that effectively aligns this nation with the peace policies of America's allies.