

National News

Transition team seeks cuts in fusion program

President Reagan's transition team, in one of its final recommendations, called for a \$50 million cut in the nation's fusion energy development budget for fiscal 1982. According to fusion scientists in the Department of Energy, the original \$525 million budget is the minimal amount necessary to keep the fusion energy development program on schedule as mandated in the Magnetic Fusion Engineering Act of 1980, passed by Congress late last year.

Under that bill, 1981 is the first year of a crash program to develop fusion energy by the year 2000. However, incoming Energy Secretary James Edwards, in contrast to the transition team recommendations, has assured Republican senators of his personal commitment to carrying forward the fusion program, according to informed sources.

Transition team recommendations are not binding, and will be reviewed by the new administration.

Schmitt to Stockman: don't cut NASA budget

Senator Harrison Schmitt (R-N.M.) sent a letter to incoming OMB Director David Stockman outlining his proposals for cuts in U.S. energy programs, *EIR* has learned. In his letter, Schmitt warned, "Your program to rectify the nation's economic emergency cannot ignore the danger posed by the erosion of our research and technological base . . . the basis of our economic strength, national security, and which is crucial to the motivation of our young."

Schmitt recommended that budget cuts should be made in the areas of solar energy marketing, ocean energy systems research, biomass and coal conversion energy research, and the synfuels program, "which will waste billions."

Schmitt emphasized that cuts should not be made in NASA, basic R&D in the Department of Energy, and certain activ-

ities of the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Health, and the Agriculture Department.

Instead, Schmitt called for an energy department geared toward R&D, not regulation, with a separate nuclear power administration that combines all non-nuclear regulatory agencies into one. In addition, Schmitt called for opening up federal lands to increased minerals exploration, scrapping the strategic petroleum reserve, and the United States to develop its own fleet of oil tankers.

On Jan. 22, Stockman's office announced that he is planning no cuts in NASA's budget, but proposes the elimination of the entire synfuels program.

Conservative elected as RNC head

Richard Richards, a lawyer from Ogden, Utah who headed Ronald Reagan's election campaign in the West, was unanimously elected Jan. 17 to replace Bill Brock as head of the Republican National Committee.

While Richards, who is a devout Latter-Day Saint, is widely viewed as a long-time conservative, he devoted special attention in his inaugural address to asserting that he would not let right-wing splinter groups take over the party. Instead of adopting a sectarian approach, Richards said, the GOP must devote itself to grassroots organizing to transform itself into a new majority party.

"The right-wing organizations consider me to be friendly and one of them," Richards said. "But I honestly believe they have overstated their case. They helped us, sure. But Reagan was elected by the people."

"My emphasis will be on continued grassroots efforts. While the election was to a large extent a personal victory for Ronald Reagan, at the same time the party had a victory, the kind that comes from hard work at the precinct level, for senators, governors, congressmen, state legislators. Too many times and too many places, as Republicans we have not

only failed to reach out and bring people into our party, we have hung out the 'No Help Wanted' sign."

Emphasizing the systematic nature of building organization and political coalitions around key issues, Richards added, "Winning is not an art; it is a science."

Senator Biden demands action against drug traffic

Joseph Biden, Democratic senator from Delaware, has called for greater coordination between the Justice Department, the State Department, and law-enforcement agencies to attack the growing problem of drug trafficking. Biden's call came during confirmation hearings for incoming Attorney General William French Smith.

According to Biden, improved international coordination between law-enforcement agencies is crucial to halting the flow of drugs in the United States, including the need for action against the flow of "hot money" drug revenues.

Unionists express support for Donovan

Trade union officials and Democrats from New Jersey have sent a telegram to President Reagan urging the speedy appointment of Raymond Donovan as Labor Secretary.

The telegram states in part: "It is ironic that at the very time the truth about the Justice Department's Abscam witchhunt is beginning to publicly surface . . . Walter Sheridan should launch a similar attack on [Labor nominee] Raymond Donovan. . . . Your choice for Labor Secretary is a man who clearly represents the labor-industry partnership that is essential to make this nation's economy work. It is this combination which gave you your Nov. 4 mandate, and will be the one necessary to 'put America back to work.'"

Briefly

The signers included Jim Kostibus, secretary-treasurer, Locomotive Engineers Division 135, Hoboken; Henry Helstoski, former U.S. congressman, 9th District; Phil Koster, former executive director, Democrats for Reagan, Middlesex County; Quint Casciani, president, Paperworkers Local 657, Trenton; Sam Naples, president emeritus, Italian-American Democratic League of New Jersey; Alice Riley, Democratic National Platform Committee, 1980, Trenton; Jesse Mayers, president, Steelworkers Local 4526, Elizabeth; Jack Ackerson, business agent, Laborers Local 509, Mahwah; D. Ryan, Steelworkers president, North Bergen; Tom White, business agent, Ironworkers Local 545, Orange; Leo Miller, business agent, Laborers 221, Plainfield; and John Sullivan, business agent, Laborers Local 112, Kearny.

Anti-Volcker resolutions in California, Texas

Texas State Rep. Gene Green introduced a resolution, H.R. 19, into the Texas state legislature Jan. 15 calling for the resignation of Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker. According to Green, his initiative is designed to force the Fed to ensure cheap credit for productive enterprise. Even though Texas has so far been insulated from the worst effects of Volcker's high interest-rate policy, the collapse of the housing industry and auto dealerships in Houston signals the end of that city's growth if the Fed's policies are not reversed.

Green's resolution, which has 16 cosponsors from urban labor and west Texas farm layers, calls for 1) Volcker's resignation from the Fed; 2) stable, low interest rates geared for productive industry; 3) elimination of obstructions to energy development; 4) 90 percent parity for farmers; and 5) tax abatement for productive industry, while taxing speculative nonproductive capital flows.

Green has endorsed the National Democratic Policy Committee's national

drive to oust Paul Volcker.

In California as well, NDPC spokesmen and State Rep. Chester Wray announced at a press conference in Sacramento the introduction of a resolution sponsored by Representative Wray and four others of a similar anti-Volcker resolution into the state legislature.

NDPC spokesmen report that a resolution will soon be introduced into the Washington state legislature, as well.

Philadelphia rejects '80s Agenda

Within hours after the president of Philadelphia's Chamber of Commerce endorsed the report of former President Carter's President's Commission for a National Agenda for the '80s, the Philadelphia City Council called him on the carpet to explain his support for the destruction of the cities.

By a 10-5 vote in the City Council Jan. 8, blueblood Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce President Thatcher Longstreth was reprimanded for his endorsement of the '80s Commission report calling for phasing out America's cities to move into the "postindustrial age."

The council charged Longstreth with making "statements which demean the people of Philadelphia and the entire Northeast region of the United States." The council then passed a second resolution calling upon President Reagan to reject the '80s Commission policies:

"Whereas Philadelphia is a great city with a proud heritage;

". . . And federal incentives have driven industry from the Northeast to the Sunbelt resulting in the loss of jobs and intensifying urban problems;

"And whereas the President's Commission . . . condemns the older cities like Philadelphia to wither and die;

"Therefore, be it resolved by the council of the city of Philadelphia that we memorialize . . . President Ronald Reagan to reject this report as detrimental to the best interests of our nation."

● **ARTHUR FELLWOCK**, national commander-in-chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, has issued a statement calling on President Reagan to "renounce every part of the [Iran] deal not clearly in our national interest" as "extortion under duress," and demanding a full congressional investigation of the events leading to the Nov. 4, 1979 embassy seizure. Fellwock adds pointed questions about the role of then-deputy NATO commander Robert Huyser and State Department Iranian desk officer Henry Precht.

● **VIRGINIA** has become the fourth state with actions pending to demand that the Federal Reserve lower interest rates. HJR 156, a joint Senate-Assembly resolution introduced Jan. 22, has four cosponsors including Assemblyman Owen Pickett, the state Democratic Party chairman.

● **ELIZABETH CUMMINS**, a writer for the Flint, Michigan *Journal*, has received three threats on her life since her commentary on rock musician John Lennon appeared in the *Journal* Jan. 1. Cummins charged that as a "despicable" spokesman for the drug counterculture, Lennon "hoodwinked a generation." The January issue of the prodrug monthly *Flint Voice*, linked to Michigan contacts of Philip Agee, strongly attacked her and her husband, Max Dean, an official of the Genesee County Democratic Party.

● **JESSE HELMS** (R-N.C.) and several other conservative senators have written a letter to Alexander Haig vowing to block some of his key prospective appointees, including Lawrence Eagleburger, slated to become assistant secretary for European affairs; John Holdridge, in line for the assistant secretary for Asian affairs post; and Paul Wolfowitz, Haig's choice for director of policy planning.