

Congressional Closeup by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

Is NCPAC involved in bribery attempt?

Representative Stephen Neal (D-N.C.) has accused the National Conservative Political Action Committee, a PAC put together by close associates of Mont Pelerin Society member William Buckley and drug mafia lawyer Roy Cohn, of attempted bribery.

Neal made his charge based on a letter he received from NCPAC dated July 24 which declared, "If you will make a public statement in support of the President's tax-cut package and state that you intend to vote for it, we will withdraw all radio and newspaper ads planned in your district. In addition we will be glad to run radio and newspaper ads applauding you for your vote to lower taxes."

Neal said he has asked the Justice Department to investigate. Although no official decision to investigate has been taken, a senior federal prosecutor said July 29 that the wording in the letter was "very very close to the line" dividing acceptable behavior from an illegal attempted bribe.

Drawing up measures to cope with oil crisis

At hearings before the Senate Energy Committee on July 30, a high official at the Department of Energy revealed that the administration and liberal New Jersey Democrat Sen. Bill Bradley have nearly identical approaches to coping with an oil cutoff.

Testifying for the administration, the DOE spokesman, Kenneth Davis, said the administration was examining ways to redistribute the windfall profits that would accrue to the major oil companies, either through income-transfer payments to low-income individuals and/or as block grants to governors in states hard hit by shortages.

Bradley commended the administration approach and pointed out that it was almost identical to his bill, S. 1354, the Emergency Preparedness Act of 1981. However, Davis averred that the administration is not ready to take a position on the Bradley bill.

But committee chairman Jim McClure (R-Ida.) and farm-state Republicans Mark Andress (N.D.) and David Durenberger (Minn.) have introduced two other pieces of legislation that would continue to give the administration pricing and allocation powers in the event of an emergency.

While correcting serious defects in the Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act (EPAA) which expires Sept. 30 of this year, the two bills maintain that the federal government must ensure that there are no serious regional or sectoral inequities that would ensue from an oil disruption.

Senator Wendell Ford (D-Ky.), at the July 30 hearing, concurred in this philosophy, noting that hard-to-reach areas of the country, particularly the vital farm areas, are likely to be cut off by the "free market" in a crisis, since greater profit can be had by selling oil in

the more accessible, populated areas. Said Ford, "It would be a lot easier to call you down at the Energy Department and ask you to get crude to refineries near farm states who have crops to bring in than to try to call Exxon and be told, no thanks, we can make more money selling it in New Jersey."

Exxon Corporation headed up a subcommittee of the National Petroleum Council which recommended an approach similar to Bradley's and the administration's.

Bradley demands report on East-West trade plans

In July 28 hearings in the Senate Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) an emergency-planning buff, demanded that witness Alexander Haig or an appropriate administration official provide the committee with details on its plans for dealing with the financial disasters that would result from the trade war measures contemplated by the United States against the East bloc.

Haig had just told the subcommittee that the Western alliance was "in intensive, continuous discussions . . . to put together responses" to Soviet acts of aggression in Poland or elsewhere and that the coordinated Western response to such developments would include a "trade aspect."

Asked by Bradley if the extent of U.S. investments in the East bloc exposed the United States to financial danger in such a situa-

tion, Haig replied that since control over such investments had been "largely turned over to the private sector," the administration could not adequately monitor or limit it, but that it totaled about \$70 billion.

As a result, Haig said, "as things get tense, the knuckles of our private institutional officials get quite white on this issue. . . . The consequences of a Soviet invasion of Poland would be dramatic and long lasting."

Bradley then demanded of Haig, "What are you doing to ensure that the whole house of cards doesn't fall down?" Haig lamely replied, "Contingency solutions have to be considered. . . ." "Who is making the plans?" Bradley asked. The secretary of State could only say, "The secretary of the Treasury is very much aware of the vulnerabilities. I'm not sure that all has been done that might be done."

At this point, Bradley demanded a full contingency-planning report from the administration, before a closed committee session if necessary.

Fund Clinch River reactor, Tenn-Tom Waterway

The House has voted, by extremely narrow margins, to approve funding for the completion of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway (208-198) and the Clinch River breeder reactor (206-186). Both industrial development projects have been used as political footballs by envi-

ronmentalists since the beginning of the Carter era.

The Tenn-Tom Waterway had at last seemed on its way to completion, enabling a linkage of the port of Mobile, Alabama (via the Tombigbee River) with the Tennessee River that would ensure greater industrial development of the area due to increased ease of transportation of raw materials and finished industrial goods, when the prodevelopment Reagan administration came into power.

Instead, Republicans suffering from Stockman's budget-cutting fever joined with the environmentalists and railroad interests to block funding.

The most recent vote to fund the project showed diverse support from Republicans, Democrats, the Black Caucus, conservatives, and liberals, who split their votes pro and con.

Tenn-Tom is 95 percent complete, yet awaits the filing of still another court-ordered environmental impact statement before work can again proceed.

The Clinch River Breeder Reactor (CRBR) has suffered a similar fate. Opponents of the CRBR have argued that a recent study shows the project suffering from incredible management delays and cost overruns.

Proponents have countered that delays have not resulted from mismanagement, but from politically motivated delays.

Representative Robert Roe (D-N.J.), speaking in favor of the Clinch River breeder warned his colleagues to "worry about the

sovereignty of the United States" if projects like CRBR are halted.

Representative Richard White (D-Tex.) noted that "in view of recent political developments in certain Western countries, notably France, the CRBR may become the only reliable technological undertaking of its kind in the Free World."

Chiles introduces tougher marijuana seizure laws

Florida Democratic Senator Lawton Chiles has introduced S. 1522, a bill to combat the importation of large amounts of marijuana, on July 27, 1981. In a Senate floor statement, Chiles pointed out that when the High Seas Seizures Act (PL-96-350) was passed last year, Congress inadvertently left in an older and softer version of the penalty provisions for illegal marijuana importation.

At the time of the passage of the High Seas Seizures Act, new legislation was in effect for land seizures which significantly stiffened the penalty for large marijuana traffickers from a maximum of 5 years in prison to a maximum of 15 years, and from a fine of up to \$15,000 to a fine of up to \$125,000. Chiles's S. 1522 would institute those tougher provisions for drug seizure on the seas as well as land seizures.

In his floor statement, Chiles also pointed out that most marijuana coming into the United States comes from Colombia, and most of that by sea.