

will listen.

Senate Democrats quickly convened a caucus March 16 and endorsed an open letter to Reagan, over the signature of Minority Leader Robert Byrd (W.Va.), calling the currently projected deficit unacceptable, and demanding that Reagan submit a new budget, including a deferral of the 1983 tax cut and a commitment to balance the budget by 1985. Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), immediately embraced the Democrats' call for a balanced budget, calling it "the most significant development we've had in trying to reach a consensus" and predicting "it should be a tremendous driving force" for reaching a bipartisan "solution."

This "bipartisan" assault on President Reagan has been put forward under the fraudulent claim that the ballooning federal deficit is the cause of continuing high interest rates—a hoax that even Volcker repudiated under sharp questioning at a recent congressional hearing. Carrying the absurdity further, congressional leaders are now proposing to implement Volcker's program for greater austerity as the means of satisfying constituency demands that depression-enforcing high interest rates come down. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Robert Dole (R-Kan.), warning that Republicans face defeats in the November elections and possible loss of control of the Senate, chimed in the day the Byrd letter was announced, "If the President has good political antennae, he'll give in some."

Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) and House Minority Leader Bob Michel (R-Ill.) joined Laxalt in delivering a warning to Reagan that "unless these budget numbers are improved and interest rates are brought down, there will be serious political as well as economic problems."

As Advisory Board Chairman Lyndon LaRouche of the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) warned in a March 8 release which has saturated Capitol Hill, the threat of irreversible depression makes all this haggling over budget cuts and tax increases "sheer idiocy." Urging immediate passage of President Reagan's proposals, LaRouche emphasized, "It is worse than a waste of time to improve the submitted budget now, an absolutely worthless exercise in legislative theatrics as long as the issue of Paul Volcker and Volcker's economy-wrecking policies is not resolved."

In a clear response to growing pressure from the NDPC, which has made Volcker its main issue for two years and has organized over 250 chapters nationwide in the last six weeks, Byrd's letter to Reagan concluded with some further hokum about the need for "a more moderate monetary policy" in order to reduce interest rates and permit economic recovery. Byrd urged Reagan to strike a deal with the Fed to adopt "a less restrictive monetary policy," *in return* for the same "fiscal tightening" Volcker has been demanding.

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## Science & Technology

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### NASA chief: 'space station next step'

by Marsha Freeman,  
Science & Technology Editor

In an interview with the *EIR* on March 4, James Beggs, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, reaffirmed his commitment to the idea of a permanent presence in space as the "next logical step" in the manned space program. In the recent period this concept has been under attack from spokesmen from the office of the President's Science Adviser, Dr. George Keyworth, and from Keyworth himself.

"We are still studying the permanent manned presence in space because we think that it's the next logical step, for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is to figure out how to have engineers and scientists working in space," Beggs stated. "I think space is no different than anything that we've done on Earth. We've got to try things out and then fix them and change them and it is better if you can do that in orbit than bring things back to Earth each time."

"You should be able to work in space and work the problems out and proceed to bring things, step by step, to commercial reality." Beggs stressed that this experience and uninterrupted access to space is what will make industrial processing in space a commercial concern.

"To do this you are going to have to have some kind of space station. The station also will enable us to get information and develop techniques for operating in space which will make possible moving men into geosynchronous orbit [22,300 miles above the Earth], then back to the Moon, and then maybe back to Mars. . . . I think eventually there will be a move toward that, starting with robotic stations on the Moon, and maybe Mars and then expanding from that.

"We still feel strongly [at NASA] that that's the case, but in the launching of a space station program I would not want to give up any of the other parts of NASA's programs."

Earlier, Beggs had stressed the importance of the often-threatened space science programs. During the

deliberations for the FY83 NASA budget Dr. Keyworth and other representatives from the White House were noncommittal toward continuing the crucial planetary exploration programs. Answering a question about the next 20 years for the space program, Beggs stated that NASA wants to continue "what we like to describe around here, as a 'balanced' program. We have always felt that the strong program that has existed for over the past 20 years in space science is the heart of our program.

"It enables us to understand our environment and it also enables us to project into the future, things that might be useful fallout activities which have benefits for the country, and the world. The planetary exploration program—the exploration of the universe in general—has been important in three ways: first, it helps us understand both our origins and where we are going; second, it stimulates the entry into science and engineering of young people, because nothing is more exciting than that exploration activity; and third, it has very important economic fallout.

### **NASA and the military**

One of the key questions raised in the budget process itself and in the congressional deliberations on the administration's request for NASA funding has been the appropriate relationship between the civilian space program and the military. In a number of cases, technology development programs that have been under civilian development by NASA have shifted over to Air Force funding. This includes advanced communications technology which will be used by both the military and commercial sector.

Beggs firmly indicated his judgment that the best place for advanced R&D development is in the civilian sector.

"Our research at NASA supports the development of military aircraft and space applications. We've always done that in the agency, and I hope we always will.

"It's been a very good program. It's benefitted the military and it's benefitted the civil industry because when you start a piece of research you don't necessarily know what the outcome will be. I think it's important that that research be done in an open agency like NASA because the results of that research can be made available to both the civil and military side. I would argue that that's the most efficient way of doing it."

Responding to complaints from Senator Harrison Schmitt (R-N.M.) and others that the military is not paying for its share of space technology development, particularly in the Space Shuttle program, Beggs indicated that there are advantages in keeping as much of the programs funded by NASA as possible.

"I do not believe that just because some of our work has military applications, that the military should pay for it. Quite the contrary, I think it ought to be funded

as a separate item so we are not constrained by having to very strictly work on only what the military might want us to work on. There's a political problem because you have the case of restrictions that Congress has put on military research, like the Mansfield amendment [which in the 1960s restricted government funds for military research at universities], which are inhibiting in their effect on a good part of broad, forward-looking research programs.

One of the most controversial programs shared by NASA and the Air Force has been the development of a high-energy upper stage which would be used to launch spacecraft from the Shuttle while in low-Earth orbit [300 miles above the surface of the Earth] with commercial, scientific, and military uses. Many have claimed that the Air Force has dictated the major design for the upper stage to the detriment of the NASA effort.

"The question of a high energy stage in the Shuttle is an issue of national policy which effects a lot of different things," Beggs explained. "It would be nice to have the military join with us in a joint program of that type, but my hope would be that we could design an upper stage in such a way that it would serve *all* of the market—not only the military, not only NASA's planetary programs like Galileo and the International Solar Polar Mission, but also the commercial programs which will also eventually require higher lift to geosynchronous orbit. . . . If we build one that is not flexible and not priced so that it can handle all of those markets, we'll be in trouble. The importance there is that NASA lead the effort, or that whoever leads the effort in industry, be very sensitive to the fact that it has multiple uses."

### **Making a policy fight**

Beggs had stiff opposition in his fight for the FY83 NASA budget over the past year and the FY84 budget cycle will be no better. NASA requested \$7 billion, which the Office of Management and Budget trimmed to \$6.6 billion, but the OMB had wanted the space programs cut to \$5 billion. No support has come from Dr. Keyworth.

On the space station initiative, Beggs stated, "We still have a lot of people to convince." When queried as to whether this included the Science Adviser, Beggs responded that Keyworth "is sticking a needle in us and saying, 'I don't see a hard requirement for the station,' and he's right. . . . The hard requirement for the Apollo program was not to go to the Moon, but to out-distance the Soviets. I don't think that that's a compelling reason any more. So we've got to sharpen our thought processes and decide exactly what that requirement is when we look at that 20-year planning cycle. I think one of the things that this country may have been lacking in the last ten years is clearly defined programs as we did in the 1960s."