

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Senate panel sets funeral for steel

The Senate Labor Subcommittee on Employment, chaired by Sen. Dan Quayle (R-Ind.) held hearings on "The Future of Steel" on March 22. The subcommittee concluded that steel had no future.

The key point of agreement among steel state senators Quayle, his fellow Republicans John Heinz, and Arlen Specter, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, and others was the need for "restructuring" the industry in a world of diminished demand. Baldrige stated flatly that U.S. production could not be expected to return to 1970 levels. And Assistant Attorney General J. Paul McGrath complained bitterly that certain companies were "unwilling to divest one ounce of capacity," although the giants were "making great strides in closing plants . . . and getting their wage and work rules under control."

Pennsylvania's senior senator, John Heinz, whined that "failure to develop a comprehensive steel policy could mean 40,000 to 50,000 jobs unnecessarily and tragically lost forever," and that improvements in productivity do not result simply from closing down old plants on an ad hoc basis. . . . Heinz would apparently prefer to see the jobs lost in a less ad hoc way; he called for easier mergers to allow for more efficient restructuring, protectionism for the restructured industry, and a return to "free-market-level" steel prices. He declared that "the most cost-effective course may well be plant closures."

The junior senator from Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, traveled deep into the irrelevancies of protectionism, demanding that the U.S. foster a policy of "self-help" for the compa-

nies and unions that would give them easier access to the federal courts to pursue anti-dumping and quota regulations.

Quayle criticized the U.S. Eximbank for financing the major development of steel production in the Third World.

ICBM protectors attack beam program

Led by Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.), 14 Democrats and 3 Republicans took to the floor of the House on March 21 to attack the effort to develop directed-energy weapons for strategic defense. Brown said he will introduce a House joint resolution at the end of the month which "calls on the United States to maintain its commitment to the ABM treaty and to refrain from activities which could undermine the treaty."

The "Soviet ICBM protection squad" explicitly stated its desire to maintain the current strategic doctrine of assured vulnerability of the U.S. population to thermonuclear annihilation. "'Star Wars' would fundamentally challenge the concept of avoidance of nuclear war by threat of retaliation," Brown said. "I see no credible or compelling reasons to feel confident with changing this strategy."

Brown admitted that "the thought of an orbiting security blanket of laser and particle-beam weapons intercepting incoming missiles is comforting." He concluded, however, that "the abrogation of the ABM Treaty for the pipe-dream of people defense is not worth the risk." He acknowledged the Soviets' own directed energy program and their ABM treaty violations, indicating that he feared a first strike "when they get their own ballistic-

missile defense."

Brown quoted former negotiator Gerard Smith that the "tilt toward a defensive strategy is inconsistent with arms control." Other opponents of the Strategic Defense Initiative thumped on the issue of cost.

Colombia praised on anti-drug efforts

The international fight against narcotics trafficking was the focus of attention on several fronts on Capitol Hill during the week of March 19.

Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) to the floor of the Senate on March 21 to congratulate the government of Colombia for its seizure of \$1.2 billion of cocaine, the biggest drug bust in history. Helms, the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, said: "Colombia has an aggressive enforcement program, despite the difficulties of a small budget and an ongoing war with the Communist guerrillas. In 1982, Colombia destroyed more marijuana in its enforcement program than the United States did." In an open rebuff to the reported contention by Henry Kissinger that the Colombian government is soft on communists, Helms continues, "Colombia is one of the best examples of a democratic government in South America . . . it has gone to extraordinary lengths to reach conciliation with the communist guerrillas. Yet here we have proof positive of the guerrillas' response: . . . They want to overthrow a freely elected government, and they are doing it by undermining the United States with drug shipments."

Another hearing on Treasury Secretary Donald Regan's effort to divert funds to be used in drug interdiction efforts into his own office's operating

budget was held on March 21 before the Treasury subcommittee of the House Government Affairs Committee.

Subcommittee chairman Glenn English (D-Okla.) rejected out of hand a new Treasury proposal to force the Department of Defense to pick up the part of the air surveillance drug interdiction program which Treasury was to be responsible for. English pointed out that the DOD is already flying all the drug surveillance hours permitted by law, and that the Treasury position was jeopardizing a program put together over a two-year period as a cooperative effort of the Treasury, the DOD, the Office of the Vice-President, and the Congress.

Republicans override Reagan's water veto

The administration's attempt to veto a water-research bill was overturned by an overwhelming vote in the Republican-controlled Senate on March 21.

The administration's budget-cutting mania had reached such extremes that President Reagan had vetoed a relatively small authorization (S. 684) which provided federal matching grants for states to carry out water research. Committee chairmen such as Energy's James McClure (Idaho), Banking's Jake Garn (Utah), Labor's Orrin Hatch (Utah), and Appropriations' Mark Hatfield (Ore.), along with other senior Republicans and long-time Reagan supporters, overrode the veto by a vote of 86-12.

Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) in supporting the override said: "I do not think the President was well advised on this veto. He is a Westerner; he understands the value of water. I hope that we can override the veto and, at

the same time, inform our President that, while we highly respect him and his judgments, he should remember that his early bringing up was on federal water."

Population control debated on Hill

Late in March, the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs heard from witnesses on March 20 who accused the population-control mafia in the State Department of causing the turmoil in Central America.

Dr. Jacqueline R. Kasun, an economics professor at Humboldt State University in California, said that much of the unrest and economic crisis in the region "now so skillfully exploited by Cuba and the Soviet Union" results from the Agency for International Development's policies.

She argued that AID's genocidal policy of achieving more than 20,000 sterilizations a year—some without witting consent—had provoked real hatred of the United States among the population, and that "one of the first acts of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua was to close the despised AID birth-control clinics and to declare that birth control was to be the private business of citizens." AID is under the State Department.

Kasun singled out the role of the IMF in pushing the genocidal population programs: "It is reported in Mexico that the price which the Mexican government had to pay for IMF assistance. . . was to agree to a vigorous drive for population control.

"The Mexican government is now committed to reducing population growth to 1% per year by the year 2000; . . . AID has stated that the

'sensitivity of the population programs' is so great that it is desirable to use the 'multilateral agencies'—in Mexico's as surrogates for AID itself in many cases."

Meanwhile, on March 20, anti-life Rep. James Scheuer (D-N.Y.) held hearings before his Joint Economics Committee Subcommittee on International Trade, Finance and Security Economics on "population and growth."

A panoply of population controllers representing the Population Crisis Committee, the Population Council, AID, and others put forward the time-worn Malthusian argument that excessive population growth is hobbling the economies of Third World nations.

House members push decoupling from Europe

The House Foreign Affairs Committee's subcommittee on Europe and the Mideast held hearings on H. C. R. 172, a resolution demanding that Europe and Japan live up to their defense commitments, introduced by Oxford graduate Rep. Donald Pease (D-Ohio). Pease accused the United States of "acting like patsies" before the Europeans.

Undersecretary of State for European Affairs Richard Burt announced that while "we do not support the proposals [for decoupling blackmail] put forward by Dr. Kissinger [in a March 5 *Time* magazine essay], we do not want to pick a fight." Burt, who had earlier characterized the Kissinger article as "bizarre," meekly declared that "we agree with the general point that Dr. Kissinger was trying to make; his intention is to revitalize the alliance by giving the allies a greater role."