

## **Congressional Closeup** by Kathleen Klenetsky

### **F**arm issue being exploited to gut defense budget

The desperate situation of American farmers is being cynically used to justify attacks on U.S. military spending. On March 14, a group of farm-belt Congressmen and agricultural leaders held a press conference in Washington to announce the formation of the "Silo Coalition." Its

by Congress into funnelling funds away from defense programs, particularly the MX, into emergency farm credit. Participants in the press conference included Reps. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), John Melcher (D-Mont.),

ter of the American Agricultural Movement, and a National Farmers Union representative. Both Dorgan and Daschle figure among the foremost proponents of slashing the defense budget, claiming that such cuts are required to bolster domestic services. Both are also tied into the extensive operation being run by the Benedictine order to channel farm ferment away from the real source of the problem—the Swiss-based grain cartels and their financial interlocks—into futile and self-destructive activities, emphatically including demanding defense reductions. Dorgan is currently involved in a scheme to facilitate foreign buy-ups of U.S. farm land which originated with a group called Communicating for Agriculture. This nasty operation is being sold as a "farm debt restructuring" plan, and falsely touted as bailing out debt-strapped farmers.

At the Silo Coalition's founding press conference, Daschle said he hoped the group would "build the kind of support to draw votes away from the MX until Reagan is ready to deal with the farm crisis" and to "see ag-

riculture as a national security issue." And Dorgan threw in his two cents, stating that the MX "is not necessary and is dangerous and destabilizing."

Although the Coalition's immediate target is the 21 MX missiles up for a vote in late March, an aide to Daschle told this news service that the group plans to stick around. "We're definitely going to go after defense spending," said the aide. "Tom [Daschle] mittee and I can assure you that he will be focussing on the Pentagon budget when the 1985 farm bill comes up. He feels there's far too much being spent on weapons, especially when farmers are suffering so." Daschle is "absolutely" opposed to both the MX and the Strategic Defense Initiative, aide added.

### **H**ouse panel vetoes military aid to Jordan

A House subcommittee threw a monkey wrench into the Reagan administration's Mideast policy March 21 when it voted to ban major military sales to Jordan until that country promises to recognize Israel.

The measure, approved by the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Europe and the Mideast, was pressed by a group of pro-Israel by Rep. Larry Smith (D-Fla.) after meeting with Jordanian

ister Taher Masri. The Democrats claimed that the measure—identical to one which Congress approved last year, but subsequently dropped after President Reagan threatened to veto it—would serve to encourage Jordan and Israel to resolve their differences, especially since it

amendment that upped U.S. economic aid to Jordan by \$10 million. "If there's a desire to understand, then Jordan will understand," said Rep. Robert G. Torricelli (D-N.J.).

According to the *Washington Post*, Masri said his understanding of the subcommittee's move was quite different.

pointing and ill-timed . . . not helpful at all. . . . The movement that Jordan has started should be encouraged."

Subcommittee chairman Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.) observations concerning the measure. The Mideast peace process is "alive but at a very delicate stage," he noted, and the amendment "would have the effect of damaging his [Jordan's King Hussein's] credibility." The provision will be "most ia," Hamilton added.

### **C**ongressmen urge use of military in drug crackdown

A bipartisan group of Congressmen have called on the Reagan Administration to utilize the U.S. military more frequently against international narcotics traffickers—but the remainder of their proposals, including eliminating U.S. foreign aid to countries which are deemed lax in pursuing their internal drug mafias—calls their motives into question.

At hearings of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control March 19, chairman Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) was joined by Reps. Lawrence Smith (D-Fla.), Michael DeWine (D-Ohio), (R-Ill.)

on a larger role in the war on drugs. Rangel complained that the Joint of Staff have "been resisting because

this is not considered a part of the mandate relating to national security," but notably failed to mention that more than a month ago, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger had pledged the Pentagon's full involvement in the war on drugs.

One of the major themes that emerged at the committee hearings (which featured Jon R. Thomas, head of the State Department's Bureau of Narcotics, as chief witness) was the ostensible need to reduce U.S. aid to supplier countries.

Rangel declared himself "shocked" that the Justice Department has said "it is not inclined to use the law" that authorizes cutting foreign aid to nations that supply illegal drugs to the United States. He demanded that Congress and the Administration "take another look" at aid requests for Jamaica, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Colombia, Thailand, and Pakistan.

The State Department's Thomas argued against Rangel's proposal, maintaining that "there is not at this time a single source country where our narcotics objectives would be enhanced by suspending assistance," and noting that "the single relevant question is whether more crop control would occur if aid were suspended." Those who think aid cuts will stop drug traders "fails to understand that these traffickers are governed only by the boundaries of their own greed and violence."

Rangel's proposal is by no means a new one: foreign-aid cut-offs formed the core of the laughable "anti-drug" plan offered by Walter Mondale during the presidential campaign, and Rangel just happened to have held an honorary post in Fritz's national electoral apparatus.

## **Moynihan, Tribble propose 'privatizing' U.S. loans**

Sens. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and Paul Tribble (R-Va.) unveiling closely-related plans under which U.S. government loans would be sold off to private investors. According to an aide in Tribble's office, Wynn Hambly, the idea came from Congressional Budget Office director Rudolph Penner, and has been discussed privately with major financial institutions, including Salomon Brothers, Citicorp, and Drexel Burnham.

Moynihan, who has long championed "privatization" of government services, is proposing that the United States peddle its entire \$280 billion loan portfolio to the private sector.

Under the Moynihan scheme, the loans would be sold substantially below their face values. The one-time sale would allegedly generate more than \$150 billion which, says the Senator, could be applied to next year's federal deficit.

"We should privatize our loan portfolio, and get some real money," Moynihan told the *New York Times*, claiming his latest scam is "the only alternative to unilateral disarmament" or to "ripping ourselves apart. . . . Even if you had no deficit, you would still want to privatize this. The United States is a lousy manager of the largest loan portfolio in the world. We're losing money every day." Moynihan will soon introduce a bill to authorize the sale of government-held loans.

The Tribble proposal differs in particulars from Moynihan's, but resembles it in both intent and effect. It proposes auctioning off all new U.S. government loans as they are made (estimated to be \$41 billion in new loans

this year)

According to Tribble aide Hambly, "What we're talking about is in the case of direct loans to borrowers, that the ownership over the loans would change to someone else. It would be sold to the highest bidder. . . . Foreigners, whether Europeans or Japanese, could buy in. After all, it's not much different than what is happening now: the government itself borrows, creates a deficit, and then sells the notes to the private sector. . . . The proceeds from Treasury notes are used to make subsidized loans; this is a little bit more direct."

The loans which would be sold off include government loans to farmers, small businesses, etc., and to local and state governments.

## **McClure exposes new Soviet missile deployment**

Sen. James McClure (R-Idaho) took to the floor of the U.S. Senate March 21 to reveal new data on the deployment of Soviet long-range missiles, including the powerful SS-25 and mobile SS-24.

According to the new information, the SS-24s are being housed in trains that are externally identical to standard Soviet freight trains. This makes them "deceptively concealed," said McClure, and extremely difficult to detect.

The railroad cars attached to the SS-24 launchers will house additional missiles, support equipment, security forces, and command and control facilities. Recently, 21 lawmakers signed a letter to the Kremlin warning that compliance with previous arms control agreements is essential for the success of the current Geneva talks.