

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Defense reorganization —more harm than good?

The Senate Armed Services Committee began hearings Nov. 14 on improving the "organization and decision-making procedures of the Department of Defense and the Congress," its chairman Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) announced. Goldwater said he hoped to have legislation prepared for introduction into Congress by January. But chances are, Senate action will do more harm than good.

The hearings follow the Oct. 16 release of a committee staff study 30 months in the making, which proposes sweeping changes in the Pentagon, including the abolition of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the reorganization of the Defense Department from a "functional" to a "mission" orientation. The perspective of much of the staff study, shaped in an atmosphere of a years-long press campaign on the theme of Pentagon overspending, fat-cat defense contractors, and budget deficit frenzy, is to undercut the Strategic Defense Initiative and the notion of Mutually Assured Survival. This is clearly the intent of Senators Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), Bill Cohen (R-Maine), Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), and John Glenn (D-Ohio).

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, the lead witness, told the committee that at least half the recommendations in the staff study would be implemented. But Weinberger flatly rejected the proposal to abolish the JCS, saying he had always received "timely, accurate, and competent advice" from the Joint Chiefs. Senators Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), John East (R-N.C.), and Pete Wilson (R-Calif.), agreed. Wilson pointed out that the

expertise and dissents of individual services are often just as important as receiving a consensus viewpoint from the Joint Chiefs. Wilson said he "strongly disagrees with the recommendations of the study that we should have some priesthood" to replace the JCS.

Weinberger also criticized proposals to organize the Pentagon on the basis of a "mission" orientation, advocated by Goldwater, Glenn, and others. You "can't push into four or five little boxes all the missions that can arise," he said.

Nunn, Kennedy, and Goldwater were especially hostile to Weinberger. "You better go back and read this report of ours," Goldwater said.

Gramm-Rudman threatens meat-axe defense cuts

The House and Senate approved an \$80 billion increase in the national debt limit Nov. 14, enough to allow the U.S. government to continue to borrow to meet its obligations until roughly mid-December. The temporary extension allowed President Reagan to go to the Geneva summit without the U.S. government being in default.

But a further increase remains hostage to the Gramm-Rudman "deficit reduction" nonsense, which in its present form, would automatically impose across-the-board cuts in U.S. defenses.

Appearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Nov. 14, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger said he is "opposed to Gramm-Rudman" as passed by the Senate, and said he knew of no differences between himself and the admin-

istration on this point. Asked if he would recommend to President Reagan that he veto the bill, Weinberger said that "it doesn't take a great deal of cryptographic work" to determine what advice he will give the President. Reagan, however, has supported the Gramm-Rudman principle of a fixed deficit-reduction package.

At a press conference on Nov. 15, House Armed Services Committee chairman Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) said there is "no way" the President can get a real 3% increase in defense spending, and Gramm-Rudman, too. Aspin forecast cuts of up to 6% in all programs, and said he would prefer that any cuts in defense come from procurement and R&D, rather than readiness or personnel costs.

House and Senate conferees are expected to decide that defense will suffer half of any automatic deficit reduction cuts that go into effect as a result of Gramm-Rudman.

AIDS lobby howls for help

The AIDS lobby is beginning to feel the heat of public outrage over their resistance to any action on the deadly AIDS epidemic. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), a regular columnist for the ADL's *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, is now shrieking to "end the politicking about AIDS and AIDS scares," after he endorsed the incompetent guidelines of the Atlanta Centers for Disease Control as "the best advice of the world's experts."

The new CDC guidelines recommend against any regular mandatory screening of health care, personal service, or food service workers. Rejecting the evidence of some of the world's

most distinguished scientists, Waxman insisted that "Anyone now trying to stir up more restrictive actions is not interested in science or public health, but just in politics."

Waxman was echoed in a Capitol Hill press conference by Dr. Mathilde Krim, co-chair of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, who said that any proposals for more rigid measures than those advocated by the CDC have "no other purpose than to carry out a witchhunt." The Swiss-born Krim is married to Arthur Krim, an intimate of Soviet asset Armand Hammer and a board member of Occidental Petroleum. Krim's AIDS foundation is funded by Soviet asset Hammer.

Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Cal.) meanwhile denounced the CDC guidelines as "totally irresponsible," and vowed to redouble his efforts to win congressional approval of his five-point legislative program for stringent public health measures to deal with the AIDS epidemic.

New attacks on Philippines

With the full backing of the Reagan administration, the House passed H. Con. Res 232 by a vote of 407 to 0 on Nov. 14, aimed at "bringing about a restoration of democracy in the Philippines," according to its chief sponsor, Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.). A similar bill sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) was also passed, 15 to 0, on the same day by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The resolutions call for "free and fair elections in the Philippines."

Although the Solarz bill claims to "take no stand for or against Marcos

or any opposition figure," its implication is that President Marcos cannot win a fair election. The resolution demands an impartial Commission on Elections be appointed and staffed by politically independent commissioners; that a "citizens election monitoring organization" be accredited, have access to all polling places and phases of the electoral process, and can fully report its findings; that opposition candidates have full access to the media; and that the military remain neutral.

Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) meanwhile continued his attacks on the State Department handling of Philippines policy on the floor of the Senate Nov. 12. Melcher noted that the insurgency is growing in the Philippines because of the bad economic situation, attacked the State Department for "bungling or ineffective meddling with the government, business, and structure" of the Philippines, and urged "prompt economic and food aid to the Philippines."

Hearings expected on SDI and Europe

Information gathered by a Congressional delegation which visited Europe to promote the Strategic Defense Initiative "will be the basis for hearings" to be conducted in a few weeks by the House Armed Services Committee according to the delegation leader, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.). The hearings will "explore the relationship of SDI to the defense of Europe."

The delegation, which also included Republican Reps. DeLay (Tex.), Dorman (Calif.), Dreier (Calif.), Hansen (Utah), Hendon (N.C.),

and Oxley (Ohio), visited with officials in the defense and foreign affairs ministries, and legislators in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, and France, and focused on Soviet arms-control treaty violations as well as the SDI. "There is an urgent need for toughness on arms-control violations and the necessity for Europeans to explore anti-tactical ballistic missiles," Hunter said.

At the initiative of Rep. David Dreier, members of a number of European parliaments joined with the delegation in drafting a letter to Gorbachov criticizing Soviet violations and challenging him to "live within the spirit as well as the letter of arms control commitments." The letter, the first initiative of this type signed by Americans and Europeans, is now being circulated for signatures in Europe. It is expected to be sent to Gorbachov and made public while the Geneva Summit is in progress.

The delegation reported a positive response to the SDI in all meetings in Europe. In Germany, Dr. Lothar Ruehl, State Secretary of the Defense Ministry, "sympathized with our point of view that the arms-control process has become a very clever way to expand Soviet forces throughout the world. Dr. Ruehl said that we must address the threat of shorter-range systems and the problems they pose." In other meetings, "the German side was frank in urging the administration to be more open and forthcoming with evidence of Soviet violations."

In France the delegation they reported "a terrifically productive meeting" with Isabel Renouard, deputy political director of the French foreign ministry. The delegation praised "the seriousness with which the French are approaching defensive technologies."