

## Congressional Closeup by Kathleen Klenetsky

### House passes trade bill opposed by administration

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a major trade "reform" bill May 22, despite concerted opposition from the administration.

The Democratic bill was voted up 295-115, more than enough votes needed to override President Reagan's threatened veto.

The measure's principal provisions would mandate the following:

- Require the President to retaliate against foreign governments like Japan by subsidizing or favoring certain export industries;
- Require the President to take actions against foreign trade violations, removing his current discretionary authority, and set specific time limits for investigations and retaliatory actions;
- Require the President to retaliate in an amount equivalent in value to completely offset the effects of the foreign trade action;
- Require mandatory negotiation with any major U.S. trading partner that has an "excessive trade surplus" with the United States. Aimed at Japan, West Germany and Taiwan, this provision would require those nations to reduce their trade surpluses by 10% a year or face the consequences of import quotas or tariffs;
- Authorize punitive action against foreign governments that subsidize the prices of natural resources such as Canadian timber and Mexican natural gas.

Responding to the bill's passage, President Reagan charged that the Democratic leadership "has put together an anti-trade bill that is openly

and rankly political" which could "plunge the world into a trade war, eroding our relations with our allies and free-world trading partners."

The day before the vote, the Pentagon's top trade official denounced the legislation as a "Gorbachov-Qaddafi Relief Bill."

Pointing to a little-known amendment to the bill that would loosen the export control laws to make it easier to sell high-technology goods to the Soviet bloc, Deputy Defense Undersecretary Stephen Bryant stated that the measure "is the most irresponsible proposal that I've ever seen in the export arena." The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Don Bonker (D-Wash.), "would mean that thousands and thousands of U.S. goods could be shipped anywhere. Our controls would be eviscerated by this proposal. It would make a joke of the President's economic sanctions against Libya."

### Aspin seeks U.S. troop cutback in Europe

Claiming that \$25 billion can be cut from the FY87 defense budget "without significantly altering military priorities," House Armed Services Committee chairman Rep. Les Aspin has produced a list of 14 options for gouging the additional \$10 billion called for by the budget proposal passed by the House. Among them: slashing U.S. armed forces stationed in Western Europe by 10-30%.

"I estimate we can get around \$25 billion out with cuts like those Congress has been using for years to reduce the defense budget," Aspin an-

nounced May 20. "That would involve stretching out weapon programs, deferring much construction, stripping out inflationary padding, and reestimating costs."

While acknowledging that these aren't "freebie cuts . . . many of them do impinge on military capability," the Wisconsin Democrat asserted that "they don't threaten to alter whatever philosophy underpins the administration program—assuming one does."

But to come up with the \$35 billion in military spending cuts mandated by the House, he said, Congress will "have to produce the kinds of cuts that many members will find unattractive."

In addition to reducing the American troop presence in Europe, Aspin's suggested options include abandoning both the Persian Gulf commitment, and northeast Asia.

Aspin had announced a few days earlier that meeting the House budget requirements "would require firing on the order of 100,000 people, after freezing all pay and promotions and cutting non-pay elements of the personnel accounts to the bone."

Although Aspin publicly claims not to favor the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe, his private thoughts, as revealed by top aide Warren Nelson, tell a different tale.

Nelson told a journalist that the number of troops which the U.S. has committed to the defense of Western Europe is "assinine," and insisted that withdrawing a substantial number of such troops would not represent a decrease in the U.S. commitment to NATO. "Speaking militarily, as opposed to politically, the number of troops the U.S. has stationed in Europe is assinine," Nelson said. "It's a ridiculous setup where you have plans

that call for bringing in U.S. reinforcements to Europe from the United States, when there are millions of Europeans who could serve as reinforcements."

Nelson also criticized "West German demands that we have troops stationed way up by the border. But you can't talk politically" about this, he said, because it implies "being willing to sacrifice half of Germany." Nelson confirmed that U.S. troop cutbacks in Europe and the Pacific are definite options being considered in Congress.

## Senators demand huge cut in SDI budget

Citing recent congressional testimony by former defense secretaries Harold Brown and James Schlesinger claiming that budget increases for the Strategic Defense Initiative in excess of 25% would be a waste of money and would damage the program, a group of senators is demanding that SDI spending be cut by nearly \$2 billion.

Forty-six senators, nine of them Republicans, sent a letter to Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and Democrat Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) asking that any 1987 increases for the program be held to 3% real growth.

Signators include Rep. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), Appropriations Committee, and Lawton Chiles of Florida, senior Democrat on the Budget Committee.

The administration has asked for \$4.8 billion for the program, which Congress cut by nearly one-third in 1986. A 3% increase for FY87 would give the program a budget of about \$3 billion.

"Our concern is that the Strategic

Defense Initiative has received excessive and inappropriate emphasis," said the senators. They also claimed that the SDI "is being rushed to a premature development decision in the early 1990s in order to meet an unrealistic schedule. We feel that a more evenly paced and broadbased SDI program is warranted at this time."

The Pentagon, in an assessment of the impact of congressional budget cuts on the 1986 research and development program released in mid-May, pointedly noted that cuts in the SDI, "the highest priority defense program," is "forcing the premature cancellation or curtailment of investigations in several promising SDI technologies with the adverse consequences of probable failure to pursue the optimum combination of subsystems. . . ."

"The collective effect of such a large funding cut," said the report, "is the necessity to rely on the 'mutual assured destruction' philosophy of more powerful and survivable offensive nuclear weapons with their attendant destabilizing effect on international relationships."

## Colorado rep demands probe of Chuck Manatt

Rep. Hank Brown (R-Colo.) is ringing up trouble for former Democratic National Committee chairman Chuck Manatt. Brown charged on May 22 that Manatt, now a Washington lobbyist, may be guilty of conflict of interest.

Manatt is a board member of the National Endowment for Democracy, a government-funded institute that's supposed to promote democracy abroad. Manatt is also a registered foreign agent of Jamaica—which hap-

pens to have been the site of various NED-funded activities.

Brown wants Attorney General Edwin Meese to determine to what extent Manatt took part in NED decisions concerning his client. It is "outrageous" that an individual "entrusted with federal funds for use in foreign countries could lobby for governments of those countries," he declared.

## Tales from the dark side

New Right activist Paul Weyrich's latest project—packaging presidential hopeful Gary Hart (D-Colo.) as the defender of "conservative cultural values"—faces some rough going.

The *National Journal's* congressional voting analysis has just rated Hart as the Senate's Number 1 liberal—a label which will hardly help him win votes from the blue-collar workers Weyrich claims are Hart's natural constituency. Hart didn't even make the top 10 in 1983. Explains Hart's press spokesman Kevin Sweeney: "The fact is that others are shifting to the center and Hart is maintaining positions he has held for years."

Another New Right darling, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), has been buzzing around the U.S. Catholic Conference recently talking about his favorite topic: the LaRouche "threat." Moynihan hasn't been able to shut up about the issue since he was forced to spend over \$1.3 million to beat back a challenge by a LaRouche Democrat in 1982. . . . Sources who should know told *EIR* that the be-paunched and besotted Patsy is in regular contact with the bishops' organization on how to "stop LaRouche."