

## 'Now two governments in Washington'

by Nicholas F. Benton

"There are now two governments in Washington: a legislative government and an executive government." charged Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in speeches before two groups in Washington on Oct. 9, the day after U.S. military forces knocked out three Iranian gunboats in the Persian Gulf.

The latest incident in the successful allied effort to maintain freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf brought on another manic effort by liberals the Senate to invoke the unconstitutional War Powers Act of 1973, in order to overrule President Reagan and pull U.S. forces out of the region. The Senate voted 52-37 in favor of keeping the resolution alive, but was unable to bring a final vote before the start of the Columbus Day weekend.

As *EIR* reported last week, the ferocity of the battle over filling the vacant, ninth seat on the U.S. Supreme Court is directly related to efforts by those in Congress and the media seeking to deal a death blow to U.S. national security interests. The President's role as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces will require him to reject any effort by the Congress to invoke the War Powers Act, whose provisions, among other things, set a specific date for a withdrawal of U.S. forces. The President is also confronted with the necessity of taking extraordinary action to prevent Congress from tearing apart, root and branch, the core of the national defense in the budget authorization fight leading up to Nov. 20.

If the President acts to do this, it will fall to the Supreme Court to arbitrate the irreconcilable differences between a Democratic Party-controlled Congress committed to ravaging the national defense, and an administration struggling to carry out its constitutional mandate to provide for "the national defense and general welfare" of the nation. For this reason, liberals in Congress and the media have been partic-

ularly vicious in their opposition to President Reagan's Supreme Court nominee, Robert Bork, and they will not rest until they have a Supreme Court majority that will side with the legislative branch, over the executive branch, as the gravest constitutional crisis since the Civil War unfolds.

The clash of the "two governments" in Washington, as Weinberger termed it, is on a number of fronts:

### 1. The Persian Gulf

Secretary Weinberger told the Defense Orientation Conference Association Oct. 9 that he was "particularly rankled" at leading U.S. media who were treating with equal credibility the Iranian assertion that U.S. helicopters fired first in the incident in which one Iranian gunboat was sunk and two were captured Oct. 8. Like the earlier defensive action taken by U.S. forces in the Gulf that caught Iran red-handed laying mines in international waters, this one involved U.S. helicopters firing in self-defense while in international territory. Last time, the Iranian foreign minister raved to the United Nations that the Iranians' mine-laying boat was carrying only foodstuffs, and was exposed as a shameless liar when network videotapes transmitted from the region showed a half-dozen mines on board.

Nonetheless, that first incident caused Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) to lead a charge in the U.S. Senate to invoke the War Powers Act. Failing this, Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) called for an end to the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers in the Gulf, and other efforts were made to call for a direct withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Even greater convulsions occurred in the Senate following the Oct. 8 incident, despite the overwhelming success of the U.S. Persian Gulf operation, especially in eliciting the support of its allies.

As Weinberger reported Oct. 9, there are now more ships of NATO ally countries (37) in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman than there are U.S. ships (29). In addition, the West Germans just deployed three ships into the Mediterranean to spell out other NATO ships there, and the Japanese have agreed to supply direct military aid, in the form of sophisticated navigation equipment, as well as economic aid to those states friendly to the U.S. effort in the region.

In addition to giving the enemy the exact time of withdrawal of U.S. forces, the War Powers Act, if invoked, would have the effect of undermining the cohesion of allied efforts against the Soviet threat everywhere in the world, Weinberger said. "The main question our friends have when they commit themselves to supporting an effort of ours is whether or not they can rely on us to keep our own commitments. To suddenly reverse our course would have an irreparable effects among our allies."

## 2. Compliance with non-existent treaties

President Reagan has said that he will veto the Defense Authorization bill if it contains provisos, already voted up in both the House and Senate, ordering him to comply with the never-ratified SALT II treaty, and constraining Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) research within a fraudulent, so-called narrow interpretation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty.

The Soviets themselves have never complied with either treaty, and flaunted major violations of SALT II in two tests of upgraded SS-18 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), known as TT-09s, Sept. 29-30. The upgrades, which were fired into the Pacific Ocean within 200 miles of the Hawaiian Islands, are capable of carrying more independently targeted warheads than the original SS-18, in clear violation of the treaty. In fact, experts say that the new SS-18s can carry up to three dozen tiny, but highly accurate, nuclear warheads. Despite this, some in the Congress are in an uproar because the Pentagon now has plans to test a Trident submarine-launched missile with 12 warheads, arguing that an increase in the number of warheads on the missile from 8 to 12 violates SALT II.

The Soviets also showed off a product of their years of total disdain for compliance with the ABM treaty in the SS-18 test over the Pacific, utilizing a battleship application of laser technology to temporarily blind a U.S. pilot trying to monitor the test. The laser is an outgrowth of the Soviets' aggressive, 17-year research and development program in the military application of lasers, which includes the deployment of the world's only operational anti-satellite system.

## 3. Ratification of the zero option deal

In an uncommon departure from his public, if muted, support for the administration's zeal to reach a zero option agreement with the Soviets, eliminating intermediate nuclear force (INF) weapons, Secretary Weinberger warned on Oct. 9 that the accord will only work if it is accompanied by a

massive build-up of conventional forces to redress the overwhelming imbalance that will result from removing all INF missiles from Europe.

"Contrary to many people's expectations," Weinberger said, "a nuclear arms reduction treaty will not cheapen the cost of defense. It is sad, but true, to say that nuclear weapons are cheaper than conventional weapons. The most important question to ask of any treaty is, 'Is what's left enough to defend ourselves?' In the case of the INF treaty, the answer is, 'Yes . . . but.' It is conditional on a conventional force build-up, and that is going to cost much more money."

But Congress has slashed \$125 billion out of the President's defense budget requests since 1982 and has no plans to stop now. Last year, it cut the defense budget by 7% in real terms, and for fiscal year 1988 it is presenting Reagan with the "Hobson's choice" between cutting \$18 billion in defense if he increases taxes by \$60 billion over the next three years, or cutting the defense budget by \$23 billion if he won't.

## 4. The Gramm-Rudman sequester

In addition to the already-promised cuts, Congress is also threatening to retaliate against any presidential veto by allowing the new Gramm-Rudman-Hollings balanced-budget law's so-called "automatic sequester" mechanism to go into effect if no agreement is reached by Nov. 20. This will cut \$23 billion from the overall budget automatically, 50% of which will come from defense.

Weinberger told the Defense Orientation Conference Association that should this take effect, the results will be horrific for national security. He said the result could be the loss of 400,000, or 20%, of the nation's 2.1 million uniformed military forces, unless the President invokes the option of exempting troops from the automatic cuts. But Weinberger called such an exemption "illusory." He said that current budget levels have already determined that 100,000 civilian personnel are going to lose their jobs this year, whether the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings sequester is implemented or not.

Should the President decide to exempt military personnel in the event of the "automatic sequester," it would be at the expense of a 10.5% cut in the entire Pentagon "non-personnel" account. This would result in eliminating military exercises, grounding aircraft for lack of maintenance, cutting back training, and delaying the purchase of, according to a Pentagon analysis, at least eight helicopters, four F-18 and two F-15 fighter planes, 400 tactical missiles, three MX missiles, one Trident-2 submarine, 36 M-1 tanks, and 31 Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Ammunition purchases would be reduced by \$200 million, and spare parts by \$300 million.

Any President tolerating such losses, without a single shot being fired, will have abrogated the solemn oath of office he took when he assumed the U.S. presidency and leadership of the free world. Reagan's only option is to end the "two government" chaos in Washington, even if it requires the use of extraordinary emergency powers.