
Congress

Fixation on the deficit threatens defense

by Susan Kokinda

As the second session of the 98th Congress opens, the issue of the budget deficit threatens to endanger U.S. national security. An alliance of Neville Chamberlain liberals and budget-cutting conservatives has a serious chance of reducing the administration's requested FY85 defense budget.

As *EIR* has documented, the projected administration increase is too small to deter Soviet war preparations, and any effort to reduce that already insufficient budget will be a disaster for U.S. strategic capabilities. Behind this alliance to slash the defense budget stands the Soviet KGB, which has activated its assets in "right-wing" institutions such as the free-enterprise-espousing Heritage Foundation and "left-wing" institutions such as the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), in a domestic version of the "Nazi-communist" alliance which has surfaced in Europe, Mexico, and the Mideast to undercut U.S. interests.

February and March have become months during which the Congress engages in a numerological exercise otherwise known as passage of the "first concurrent budget resolution." The House and Senate Budget Committees and the authorizing and appropriating committees will conduct endless hearings throughout the coming weeks documenting the danger of the "budget deficit." The national security or economic merits of vitally needed defense or R&D programs will be ignored.

With the deficit threatening to top \$200 billion this year, as a result of the high interest costs and tax-revenue shrinkage effected by the Federal Reserve Board and its chairman Paul Volcker, the budget ritual promises to become a dangerous psychosis, manipulated by enemies of the United States.

Already President Reagan has fallen prey to the deficit hysteria by calling in his State of the Union message for a "bipartisan effort" to reduce the deficit—which will demand crippling cuts in defense.

The suggestion to create a bipartisan forum to resolve the deficit problem surfaced in 1983 from quarters such as the Democratic Study Group (DSG), a group of liberal congressmen formed in early 1963 by the KGB-linked IPS and embraced de facto by the House Democratic leadership. On the morning of the Jan. 25 State of the Union message, Senate

Minority Leader Robert Byrd, who distinguished himself in 1981 by defending Paul Volcker and thereby contributing to the industrial depression and the resultant out-of-control deficit, called on Reagan to "mobilize the country to act on these deficits," and pledged his support to Reagan if the President presented a "fair and comprehensive package of deficit reduction measures." Byrd is urging the President into a trap whose only route of escape will be to cut the defense budget or raise taxes.

Lest the ultimate goal of these Democratic deficit-reduction demands remained unclear, KGB-liberal Senator Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) took the floor immediately after Byrd to recall his own 1983 call for an "economic summit" to reduce the deficit. Tsongas has an unmitigated anti-defense record and is one of the country's leading opponents of anti-missile defensive systems.

The Republican saboteurs

But the real danger comes when Republicans add their voices to the chorus to cut the budget by cutting defense. The Kissinger Republicans who dominate the Senate leadership, such as Majority leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), Finance Committee Chairman Bob Dole (R-Kans.) and Budget Committee Chairman Pete Dominici (R-N.M.) last year ensured that the defense budget increase was held to a mere 5 percent, and are intent on repeating that performance this year. On the House side, a gaggle of Republicans, primarily from Reagan's home base of California, took to the House floor immediately after the State of the Union message to proselytize for a balanced budget, obviously thinking they were helping the President.

But this kind of budget-reduction mania can only hurt the defense budget. Already some Republicans have been pushed over the edge by it. Iowa Republican Sen. Charles Grassley, an arch-conservative elected in the Reagan landslide of 1980, has called for an across-the-board freeze in spending—including defense. Even Walter Mondale has conceded the need for a 5 per cent increase!

This is the same right-left alliance which killed the Clinch River Breeder Reactor in 1983. Under the guise of budget-cutting, Republicans were drawn into a coalition with rabid environmentalists; they did what Ralph Nader had been unable to do alone for over a decade. Now that alliance is being directed against the Pentagon, under the rubric of "military reform" and "procurement reform." Indeed, the Heritage Foundation-linked individual who directed the assault against Clinch River on behalf of Soviet-penetrated Pugwash Conference circles is now the chief military legislative aide to Dan Quayle of Indiana, a Republican member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Henry Sikolski and his allies on the Democratic side of the committee will undoubtedly use a recent Heritage Foundation backgrounder on "military reform" about which one Capitol Hill source remarked, "It reads like it was written by IPS."