

Backlash To Carter's Energy Package Spurs Senate Action

The actions on Carter's energy package taken in the U.S. Senate on Sept. 9 indicate that the pressures brought by U.S. industrial interests are having a strong effect. The Senate voted down Sen. Kennedy's (D, Mass.) bill demanding that oil companies divest themselves of their interests in coal and uranium. At the same time, the Senate voted up a coal conversion amendment that effectively prevents any ban on industrial plants burning oil and gas. Without those parts there can be no forced conversion of industrial plants to coal burning — one of the key elements of Carter's anti-energy program.

Two conservative Senators' offices have expressed optimism that the Administration's energy plan will not get through the Senate, and a major fight is expected when Congress tries to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the package.

Industrial interests are beginning their most intensive mobilization in recent history to lobby Congress on behalf of energy development, revival of the steel industry and industrial expansion. The Independent Petroleum Association of America plans a major lobbying effort during the second and third weeks in September, and numerous power companies and steel-town mayors are already in Washington, as are Oklahoma's Gov. David Boren and three other governors who bypassed the Governors' Conference in Detroit to make the trip.

Simultaneously the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has been lobbying at the White House against the Labor policy correlate to President Carter's energy program, the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill.

The actions taken in the Senate on the first part of Carter's energy program to be considered there reflect this national groundswell of opposition and indicate development of the kind of political climate which would make possible the establishment of real solutions to the nation's energy needs.

The Senate unfortunately passed the Administration's bill for coal conversion sponsored by Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), which is a softer version than the one that passed in the House. The Senate rejected aspects of compulsory conversion that would have made the bill vastly more stringent.

The Senate rejected, 71 to 14, a proposal by Sen. J. John Heinz (R, Pa.) that would have forced the estimated 500 power plants in the U.S. that are capable of burning coal but presently do not do so to stop burning oil and natural gas. The Senate also voted down, 71 to 12, another Heinz amendment that would have prohibited any utilities company from using natural gas after 1985. An amendment sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) that would have prohibited large oil and gas companies from purchasing coal and uranium reserves was killed by a vote of 62 to 30.

The Jackson bill, which was voted up 74-8 on Sept. 8, prohibits all new power plants and new major fuel

burning installations from burning oil and natural gas, and prohibits existing facilities from using oil and natural gas as their primary fuel after 1990.

The bill says that any new plant using over 300 million BTUs per hour will have to use energy sources other than gas or oil. The *Baltimore Sun* claims that all but the largest industrial users will be unaffected by this restriction. An amendment to the bill sponsored by Sen. Jacob Javits (R, N.Y.) which will create a \$10 billion loan and loan guarantee system for financing conversion and air pollution devices was also passed.

Despite the passage of this unfavorable bill, Capitol Hill sources informed EIR that major points in Carter's energy package are in "deep trouble." For example, the sources said, the utility rate reform section will not even make it out of committee. Sources close to Sen. Russell Long (D, La.), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee said that Long privately hopes to cut the wellhead crude oil tax from Carter's package and is pushing to postpone a Senate vote on major portions of the package until next year.

While the way is becoming clear for implementing a program for industrial and economic expansion, some Whig forces in the Senate are pouring their efforts into natural gas deregulation, a dangerous side-track, and a policy which will collapse the living standards of American citizens.

Backlash Press Grid

Milwaukee Sentinel, Sept. 7 editorial, "The Breeder Reactor a Power Priority":

And while wrangling over details of the complex project (President Carter's energy package — ed.) and public agonizing over the dangers of delay will get much attention, the key to the nation's energy security in the future obviously seems to be in a related matter involving the breeder reactor.

The breeder reactor — an atomic energy plant that can produce more fuel than it consumes — has the potential of providing energy insurance for the nation for centuries or until such sophisticated power sources as solar power and fusion can be developed for economic and wide-spread use...

...As for making a bomb from weapons grade materials produced by a breeder, this is potentially so dangerous even assuming knowledge of how to make a bomb, that it might be easier to steal an existing nuclear explosive device...

...And it is nonsense to say that we can show the way in restraint in breeder use if we are less advanced than other countries in developing the breeder...

...The case of the necessity of the breeder reactor within the context of projected energy requirements is almost undeniable. Coal, our most abundant fossil fuel, is now being counted on to bear the brunt of our energy

needs, but even if the industry meets its production target by the year 2000, it will still take care of less than half of our total energy demand and only 40 percent of our electricity...

The issue does not involve a simple matter of shutting down and then starting up the Clinch River Project if we need it, as the Administration suggests. Time is critical if the breeder is to be kept open as a true energy option.

Under the present schedule, the Clinch River Project would lead to construction and operation of commercial reactors until the late 1990s. Shutting down the Clinch River Project for as little as 5 years could delay this timetable by a dozen years.

Congress should challenge the Presidential position on the breeder...

Pittsburgh Post Gazette, Sept. 7 letter to the editor from the Three Rivers Coalition for Science and Industry, "Key to Full Employment is Not Makework":

There is no necessity for the virtual shut-down of the steel industry which in turn would trigger 45,000 layoffs in the Pennsylvania and Ohio area alone. Instead, the Three Rivers Coalition for Science and Industry recommends the following program to insure utilizing the full productive capacity of this nation: replacement not rationalization. Instead of scrapping American industry, particularly steel, and selling plants and equipment at bargain basement rates to pay off back debts, outstanding debts of the industry have got to be frozen and credit made available for replacement of outmoded plants and equipment...

Carter's energy program, Naderism, and conservatism all do not meet the needs of the 19th century much less the needs of an expanding economy. The demonstration fast breeder project at Clinch River must be expanded. Fusion power, the energy resource of the future, must be developed. Three Rivers Coalition for Science and Industry is right now organizing to insure that industrialists, trade unionists, scientists, engineers, and politicians can join ranks around a program designed to put this country back on its feet as the scientific and economic powerhouse that the Founding Fathers intended.

Fortune Magazine, Sept. issue, "Why the Breeder Reactor is Inevitable," by Tom Alexander.

Unfortunately, President Carter's bugle call to the "moral equivalent of war" comes out in wavering bleats. Not only has the Administration failed to make very clear what it intends to do with any time it gets, it seems bent on squandering some of the time it has. Everybody knows that you don't begin *real* wars by defusing the most effective weapons in your arsenal, yet that is what the new government policy on nuclear energy amounts to.

From all the evidence we have — and that evidence only gets stronger year by year — the energy source that is simultaneously the cheapest, safest, and most environmentally benign of all is the nuclear-fission reaction.

...Many utility executives are disenchanted with Clinch River. But even though they may get all their money back if the government decides to scrub it entirely,

utility-industry spokesmen say they'd like to see Clinch River go ahead to completion. They reason that since fast breeders are inevitable, carrying on with Clinch River would at least prevent any further erosion and dispersion of this country's painfully and expensively accumulated array of talent and techniques. Already, much of the money being spent in the fast breeder programs goes into reinventing solutions to problems that were worked out — and then forgotten — years ago...

The fast breeder program obviously calls for a long-range commitment on the part of the U.S. Our present policy, which assumes we will need the breeder eventually, has the effect of making "the long run" longer still...

Can Cucumbers Explode?

The following excerpts are taken from an interview with Professor Peter Beckmann, professor of electrical engineering at the University of Colorado, and Dr. Bernard L. Cohen, professor of physics and chemical and petroleum engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, which was printed in the Washington Post as an advertisement for Dresser Industries on September 7. Dresser Industries, Inc. is a leading supplier of engineered products and technical services to energy and natural resource industries around the world.

Q: Gentlemen, Ralph Nader claims that nuclear power is not safe. He says it is also unnecessary if Americans will cut their energy demand enough. Just how safe is nuclear power?

Beckmann: Compared to other forms of large scale energy conversion, nuclear power is the safest. It is the safest not just in *some* aspects but in *all* aspects, including terrorism and sabotage, and certainly including power plant operations, accidents and waste disposal...We have 66 nuclear reactors now licensed to operate in the U.S. Last year they generated almost 10 percent of our electricity. There has not been a single reactor-related fatality in the generation of commercial power anywhere in the United States. On the other hand, between 20 and 100 lives are lost each year for every 1000 megawatts of electricity generated by burning fossil fuels.

Q: What are the chances that a nuclear plant will blow up?

Beckmann: The idea that a nuclear plant can blow up like an atomic bomb is just preposterous. It is physically impossible. Not highly improbable, but utterly impossible. An explosive nuclear chain reaction is no more likely with the type of uranium used as power plant fuel than would be with pickled cucumbers...

Q: The fact that plutonium is used to make bombs seems to be the whole point of President Carter's non-proliferation program.

Cohen: Banning the use of plutonium for producing electricity will not rid the world of nuclear weapons. Nuclear bombs are already in the arsenals of six nations, and may soon be available to others, whether we have nuclear power plants or not. In fact, nuclear power plants are a very poor source of plutonium for weapons. The important thing is the *prevent* an all-out nuclear

war. Who is more likely to start such a war — a dictator of a small country dropping a hurriedly constructed, poor quality nuclear weapon on one of its neighbors, or major nations in an energy-hungry world fighting over the few remaining petroleum resources?

Q: What about terrorists' use of plutonium?

Bechmann: Many people may have read that a student designed a nuclear bomb with information obtained from the library. But designing one and making one that works

are two different things. It's extremely difficult, and would be more so for terrorists, even if they were well organized and financed. France, India and China had none of the problems a subversive group would have, and yet it took them thousands of man-years and cost them millions of dollars to produce a workable weapon. Besides, I can think of more ominous ways terrorists can intimidate a population without risking their lives stealing or handling plutonium. It would be much easier to steal a ready-made weapon. So far, this has been prevented without making America a police state.

LaRouche: Distinguished Soldier Leads New Fight

The following statement was issued on Sept. 6 by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., U.S. Labor Party chairman and presidential candidate.

This week, a distinguished soldier, Colonel Thomas McCrary, will begin a tour of selected locations in the nation. The principal objective of this tour, which will be co-sponsored by the Labor Party, will be to bring together forces of labor and other concerned citizens for the purpose of launching an effective fight against the deepening depression and the evils accompanying this present economic catastrophe.

The past weekend's pathetically small turnout for Labor Day rallies called to support Humphrey-Hawkins-type slave-labor legislation illustrates the deep resentment of the Carter-Mondale "energy" and pick-and-shovel packages throughout the labor movement. Similar moods prevail among farmers, industrialists and dedicated professionals. Despite the attempt of media such as the Washington Post and New York Times to steamroller support for the presidential ambitions of Vice-President Walter F. Mondale, the overwhelming majority of the population is manifestly waiting for a sign of adequately supported alternative leadership to move in the directions Colonel McCrary will be proposing.

Despite the fearful vacillation in the top ranks of major parties, trade unions and other established institutions, the majority of the nation's citizens have a deeply-engrained moral commitment to the principles of technological progress on which the United States was founded and through which its peculiar achievements as a world economic power were effected. The panic-stricken attack on the U.S. Labor Party in the Washington Post of Aug. 6, and the desperate off-the-script remarks of the aging George Meany in his Labor Day address reflect a fearful recognition among Vice-President Mondale's admirers of the growing influence of the idea of a pro-technology labor-industry-farmer alliance.

The overwhelming potential for reactivating the American System as the solution to the present depression exists. That potential wants to be activated by evidence of forward motion from among the ranks of the presently ill-represented majority. The objective of this tour is to begin that essential catalyzing political motion in several key centers.

Colonel McCrary's Role

The fact that, since leaving active duty, Colonel McCrary has been an active, recognized conservative leader is of special importance in his present efforts. For too long, the humanist forces in the United States have been self-defeated by the widespread tendency of each fragment of those humanist forces to allow itself to be driven into hiding in this or that defensive ideological foxhole of the "right" or "left." It is urgent that humanist leaders representing the forces formerly hiding in each of these foxholes call their close associates forth, and thus bring together the forces wanted to win.

The United States has been too long corrupted by the unprincipled doctrine of the "political consensus," a consensus which has too often proven itself to be a distasteful mixture of democratic-republican perceptions stirred into the same pot with assorted nonsense and downright evil.

Our nation was founded by the collaborators of Benjamin Franklin, humanists who organized and fought the American Revolution and established the republic to bring forth on this continent a nation dedicated to technological progress against the oppressive backwardness which the British monarchy attempted to impose upon us. That fight was staged for technological progress, not merely out of desire for increased material wealth, but because a society which cultivates and employs the creative powers of the individual human mind is the only kind of society in which the citizen is given the right and power to distinguish himself from the lower beasts.

Within that principle of the American System, there can be differences of proposed policy concerning the best approach to the tasks of human progress, but there can be no tolerable consensus between that principle and the forces of zero growth and similar doctrines, who would drive mankind back toward the beast-like primitive condition of our earliest ancestors. There can be no consensus between the principles appropriate to human society and those "environmentalist" and slave-labor doctrines better suited to a troop of baboons.

The collaboration between Colonel McCrary and the U.S. Labor Party is a signal to a majority of Americans to come out of the divisive ideological foxholes into which we have divided our forces to the advantage of our common enemies.