

## **Congressional Calendar** by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

### **C**ontroversy continues over DIDC

The Depository Institutions Deregulation Committee established earlier this year by the Depository Institutions Deregulation Act continues to come under strong attack from Congressmen and Senators over its impact on thrift institutions and the housing industry.

In the Senate Robert Morgan (D-N.C.) has introduced S. 2927 which would more clearly define the steps which the DIDC can take. More radical legislation, H.R. 7891, has been introduced by Rep. Frank Annunzio (D-Ill.) to abolish the DIDC entirely.

In a letter to colleagues on Aug. 1 Morgan explained, "The Depository Institutions Deregulation Act provided for the gradual elimination of all percent differentials paid by banks and Savings and Loans. Most of us assumed that the directives of the law for a gradual phase-out in order to allow Savings and Loans to become skilled in the use of new tools provided them by the Act would be carried out. Instead the Deregulation Committee has acted to phase out the differential totally in some areas while leaving it intact in others."

Morgan, Annunzio, representatives of Savings and Loans and the housing industry have charged that the arbitrary and abrupt actions have severely hurt Savings and Loans and damaged the home-building industry, which depends on mortgage money from S&Ls.

The Senate held Aug. 5 hearings on Morgan's bill, which has nine co-sponsors. The House held full committee oversight hearings Aug. 25, when it heard from Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker.

### **C**ongressmen oppose new nuclear war doctrine

Twenty-seven congressmen belonging to Members of Congress for Peace Through Law have signed a letter sent on Aug. 27 to President Carter, demanding that the President halt implementation of Presidential Directive 59 until Congress conducts a full debate on this new nuclear war strategy. PD 59 reshapes U.S. military activity around a policy of "limited nuclear war."

In their letter the bipartisan group of congressmen told the President, "We request a full accounting of PD 59 at the earliest possible time and ask that its effective date be deferred until Congress, the State Department, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency have had ample opportunity to consider and debate its implications. . . . Many serious questions and uncertainties arise as a consequence of this shift in strategic policy. We are deeply distressed that this policy seems based on the assumption that nuclear war is limitable. As we understand the doctrine, its purpose is to allow for nuclear options short of a total strike, thereby enhancing our credi-

bility in the use of nuclear war. We believe however that since it is extremely unlikely that nuclear war can be limited, this policy has precisely the opposite effect than intended; it creates the illusion of flexible response when in reality any decision to use nuclear weapons will have the same cataclysmic consequences as a total nuclear strike."

### **S**enate majority wins first battle in strip mining fight

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.) won his effort in the Senate to weaken the laws governing strip mining, but House opponents of his effort hope to triumph over the Senate leader when the issue comes before them.

The Senate passed by a vote of 54 to 31 on Friday, Aug. 22, an amendment that frees the states from following in detail the federal guidelines for reclamation of abandoned strip mines. The amendment does require the states to comply with the standards set out in the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, but provides flexibility on how they do this.

Byrd attached his amendment to a completely unrelated bill from the House Merchant Marine Committee. The bill has to be approved by the House. It could go straight to the House floor, where it would need a unanimous consent to be accepted as is. The bill could also

be sent to a House-Senate conference committee to work out the Byrd amendment, or it could just die without further House action.

The Senate approved a similar amendment last year, but when it went to the House it was referred to the Interior Committee, where Congressman Udall (D-Ariz.), an opponent of the measure, effectively killed it. Although his committee will not be involved this year, Udall hopes to help kill the measure. "We have talked to the Speaker and he will cooperate with us," declared Udall.

## **F**usion passage called historic moment

In what physicist Hans Bethe proclaimed an "historic moment" the House overwhelmingly voted up a sweeping mandate to the President to develop a science and technology program that will ensure a commercial fusion reactor by the year 2000.

By a vote of 365 to 7, the House passed the Fusion Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Act of 1980 on Aug. 25. The bill calls on the administration to develop a plan for demonstrating the engineering feasibility of fusion by 1987 and a commercial demonstration plant by the year 2000.

It authorizes \$20 billion to achieve this goal, although for the 1981 fiscal year adequate funding has not been appropriated.

The bill is now being considered

by the Senate, where Massachusetts Democrat Paul Tsongas has introduced companion legislation. The Tsongas bill however calls for the commercial facility to be readied by 2005.

In backing the bill, House Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.) declared, "It is a great day in the history of the human race when we make yet another commitment to express our faith in the future and in man's capacity intelligently to pursue those infinite secrets of the universe which God has seen fit to reveal to us at this moment in man's history, when the growing population of a hungry world may be eating our way through the old resources of power such as oil and coal and, without new sources, might face famine. By this action we express our belief as well that perhaps in His infinite wisdom the Almighty may have divined in our increasing awareness a capacity to apply the laws of moral social behavior which are corollary to the physical laws of the universe in such a way as to make the atom finally man's servant and not his destroyer."

Asked for comment on the passage of the bill, Assistant Secretary of Energy Edward Freeman told *EIR*, "In general, I think the bill is coming out roughly where we were tending toward. The major thrust is that magnetic fusion is ready to move from the research stage to the engineering development phase. Everyone is in agreement with this. It is the overall view that the fusion

program is ready to move in a major way."

## **S**ubcommittee resumes Teamster investigation

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), launched two days of hearings Aug. 25 into the Department of Labor's handling of the case involving the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Central States Pension Fund. Ostensibly centered on the release of a Government Accounting Office report commissioned by Nunn in 1978, which charged that the Labor Department and the IRS failed to adequately investigate the Central States Fund, the hearings clearly focused on the activities of the union, rather than the government agencies.

The most dramatic moment in the hearings came when Teamster Vice President and Pension Fund trustee Roy Williams took the Fifth Amendment when called to testify.

scored that the intent of the subcommittee was to focus on the union.

A source close to the investigation reported: "The subcommittee had to get Scoop Jackson (former subcommittee chairman) and his people out of the way. They were roadblocking any serious investigation. Now Nunn's staff is fully in place and in control."