

## **Congressional Closeup** by Kathleen Klenetsky

### **S**oviet accident fuels anti-nuclear campaign

Nuclear power opponents have seized upon the disaster at the Soviet Chernobyl nuclear reactor plant to demand even more stringent controls over the American domestic nuclear industry, which has already been brought to a standstill by more than a decade of attack from the lavishly financed ecology movement.

The Soviet incident went a long way to forestalling—and probably defeating—an amendment to the Price-Anderson Act which was supported by the nuclear industry. Sponsored by Rep. Ron Marlenee (R-Wyo.), the amendment to the act providing federal insurance for nuclear accidents, would have set a liability limit at \$2 billion. Liberal Democrats on the House Interior Committee, who had voted to raise the current \$650 million to \$8.2 billion, adjourned the committee April 30, and put off a vote for two weeks when the Marlenee proposal was nearing a showdown.

An angry Marlenee asserted that backers of his proposal would have won, if the vote had been forced. "We had everyone lined up on our side," he said.

An opponent of the \$2 billion figure, senior Democrat Rep. John Sieberling (Ohio), cited the Soviet accident as justification for postponing the vote. "I don't see how, in light of events in the Soviet Union the last three days, members can face their constituents and tell them they voted in committee . . . in the event of a similar accident in this country" to reduce the liability limit.

He said he wanted the higher figure to put "maximum pressure on the industry to support itself."

But Rep. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), a backer of the \$2 billion figure, count-

ered: "I don't know what else we can do to make a safe industry safer. Simply upping the limit does not necessarily ensure safety."

Meanwhile, resolutions were introduced in both the House and the Senate criticizing the Soviet Union for failing to fully inform other nations about the disaster, and calling for tighter international controls over nuclear power.

The Senate resolution, S. Res. 390, sponsored chiefly by Sen. William Roth (R-Del.), calls for the International Atomic Energy Agency to "initiate a thorough investigation of the Soviet civilian nuclear program, with a view to determining whether that program, as currently constituted, poses a continuing threat to the health and safety of the citizens of the Soviet Union and the international community at large."

### **G**ang that overthrew Marcos targets S. Korea

Some of the key congressional participants in the coup which toppled the government of Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos, have set their sights on another long-time American ally, the Republic of Korea.

On April 30, Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Dennis Deconcini (D-Ariz.) introduced legislation calling on President Reagan to name a special envoy to South Korea, ostensibly to "expedite a peaceful solution" to the civil unrest whipped up by South Korean "dissidents" and their international network of supporters.

Presumably, the envoy would serve the same function as did Philip Habib, whom President Reagan appointed special emissary to the Philippines in February, and who pro-

ceeded to direct the destabilization of Marcos.

The resolution specifically calls on President Chun Doo Hwan to allow the people of South Korea to petition for a constitutional amendment to hold direct presidential elections. This has been the key agitational issue of the anti-government revolt.

Kerry, a Boston Brahmin of the first order (his mother is a member of the patrician Forbes family, although he uses his last name as currency among Massachusetts' large Irish-Catholic electorate), made no bones about the parallels he wishes to exist between the Philippines and South Korea. "While there are many differences between the Philippines and the Republic of Korea," he said, "there is one important similarity . . . an intense drive for democratic societies in both countries."

Kerry said the United States should take an important lesson from the Philippine experience, namely the need for a "strong identification of the United States with democratic movements abroad."

Co-sponsor Deconcini criticized the Reagan administration for taking "the path of silent diplomacy with the Chun government."

The resolution will probably be referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Kerry is a member.

### **G**ore votes 'no' on space-agency nominee

Senator Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) cast the one dissenting vote, when the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation voted April 30 to approve Dr. James Fletcher's nomination to head the National Aero-

nautics and Space Administration (NASA).

A nay vote from Gore came as no surprise to those familiar with his background as a superliberal on military and strategic policy issues; Gore's father, a former U.S. senator, is a business partner of Soviet agent-of-influence Armand Hammer.

In explaining why he voted against Fletcher, who served as NASA administrator once already, Gore cited a two-part exposé of NASA in the *New York Times*, which just happened to begin the day Fletcher's confirmation hearings took place. Allegedly based on federal audits 2 to 15 years old, the articles claimed that NASA was guilty of abuses, mismanagement, fraud, and cost overruns in the development of the Space Shuttle.

"I do not believe there is any question of integrity here, or personal fitness," Gore said, adding quickly: "I do not have confidence in Dr. Fletcher's judgment."

But what really seems to bother Gore is that Fletcher is a strong proponent of the Strategic Defense Initiative—a program which Gore despises. Gore complained that Fletcher, who headed an administration-appointed panel which confirmed the viability of strategic defense, had told him during a private meeting that "he thought there was a 50-50 chance" that the United States could develop a leakproof antimissile shield by the year 2000, a prediction Gore said he found "incredible."

## Study warns of short-range missile threat

The Congressional Research Service has issued a report warning that significant numbers of short-range ballis-

tic missiles could be deployed "in most regions of the world in the not too distant future," and that this "new-found capability can alter a regional balance of power."

Prepared by CRS at the request of Sen. Dan Quayle (R-Ind.), the report also maintains that one method of meeting this threat would be development of anti-missile defense systems.

On April 24, the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces held hearings at Quayle's behest on defense against short-range missiles.

Lieutenant-General James Abrahamson, director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO), was joined by Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé in telling the panel that increasing emphasis should be placed on investigation of methods to counter shorter-range missiles, particularly for use in Europe.

"Soviet doctrine seems to be evolving along lines that place ever greater value on tactical ballistic missiles and the havoc they would wreak on NATO forces," Abrahamson said. He added that the SDIO "plans to sponsor architecture studies which will examine in detail the shorter-range missile threat confronting our allies."

Iklé and Abrahamson called on Congress to establish a special fund to finance research on a defense system to protect Europe from attack by conventional and nuclear Soviet missiles. Such a fund would "get us in a mode of sharing and matching money" with West European allies, Iklé said.

Both he and Abrahamson testified that such systems would not violate the 1972 ABM treaty "so long as they could not knock down strategic missiles." Until now, "Soviet military planners have had a free ride" on their threat to use ballistic missiles in Eu-

rope, Abrahamson said. "Even a modest defense . . . would have a major effect on the situation."

Quayle announced he would offer an amendment to next year's defense authorization bill asking \$50 million "for cooperative development" of a defensive system against tactical ballistic missiles.

## Simon says Soviets are unfairly accused

Senator Paul Simon, a liberal Democrat from Illinois, has leveled the charge that the Reagan administration is using the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC)—a U.S.-Soviet organization which monitors treaty compliance—to unfairly attack the Soviet Union.

"Since 1981, with one exception, the SCC has been sorely hampered by an administration ill-disposed toward arms control," Simon said. "The SCC," he said, "has now become a forum for the United States to recite our grievances, demand Soviet action to remove our concerns, and reject out of hand Soviet concerns. By all accounts it has become a monologue. Our ambassador to the SCC, retired Gen. Richard Ellis, is in a tough spot. . . . [He] is no pushover, but the United States representation to the SCC must answer to an interagency working group dominated by the Defense Department hardliners. Much greater progress can occur if we give Ambassador Ellis the leeway he needs to negotiate."

The SCC has been criticized by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and others somewhat more skeptical of Soviet intentions than simple Simon, as a do-nothing organization that covers for Moscow's violations of treaty agreements.