

Restoring military aid to dictatorships

By Philip Brenner

WASHINGTON, D.C. In a stunning rejection of previous stands, the Congress last week moved towards restoration of military aid programs in Latin American countries governed by right-wing dictatorships.

The House and the Senate are expected to pass this week the International Security Assistance Act of 1977. The Act would allow six military advisors in the U.S. embassies of any country receiving equipment under the Security Assistance Program. The Senate Foreign Relations committee approved the provision two weeks ago, and both houses are taking it up this week.

Last year the Congress ended all military assistance to Chile, largely because of alleged human rights violations there. However, it permitted Foreign Military Sales obligations that had been contracted before June 30, 1976, the date on which the law took effect, to be fulfilled.

On the enactment date the U.S. had nearly \$120 million in Foreign Military Sales credits still obligated to Chile, including almost \$10 million contracted in a flurry of activity between the time of the law's passage and its effective date. Chile still has \$100 million in equipment being delivered or available for purchase with FMS credits.

The Department of Defense has used the aid tied up in this so-called "pipeline" to justify the placement of advisors in the American embassy in Chile. Publicly the department claims that the group of advisors—which it calls an Office of Defense Cooperation—is necessary to provide technical advice on the use of American military hardware. It main-

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tains that the ODC is different from a military advisory group and will not participate in military planning and guidance.

However, privately the department is telling the Congress a different story. One congressional aide reported that a high Defense department spokesman said "the administration wants the Chileans to realize that they are close friends and allies of the United States. The administration wants to preclude a Peruvian situation, where countries buy arms from the Russians."

Foreign military sales credits are principally American government guarantees, used by recipient countries to secure loans for the purchase of military equipment from the U.S. The purchases also usually include training in the use of the equipment. A less common form of FMS credit is a direct loan from the Defense department for the purchase of equipment. The \$120 million FMS credits to Chile are for the purchase of F-5 and A-37 fighter planes and spare parts.

In a related move the House reinstated the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) program in ten countries. The Senate version of the International Security Act would authorize MAAGs in 17 countries.

The Congress ended the MAAG pro-

gram overall last year because of growing concern that MAAGs had come to supplant American ambassadors in countries governed by military regimes, and that they often acted as lobbyists for increased military assistance to these countries.

However, last year's act included a provision that would permit the administration to request the restoration of MAAG programs on a country-by-country basis. This year the administration asked to continue MAAGs in 25 countries. The full House has already approved 130 advisors in South Korea, 60 in Turkey, and 30 in Spain, with smaller contingents slated for Greece, Indonesia, Jordan, Panama, the Philippines, Portugal and Thailand. The Senate's list will undoubtedly be longer.

Both the House and Senate scrapped an administration request for a MAAG program in Argentina, but left open the possibility of six advisors for Argentina as a ODC group. Despite Argentina's rejection of all direct American military assistance—after the administration cut its aid request in half due to alleged human rights violations in Argentina—it continues to receive FMS credits and so is eligible for ODC advisors. Likewise, ODCs are planned for El Salvador, Hon-

duras, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

The Defense department has changed the name of the MAAG program to Defense Field Offices (DEFOs). But in its official presentation to Congress the department indicated that DEFOs would function in the same manner as MAAGs, with the traditional "emphasis on fostering and strengthening inter-service ties and closer relations between the host country military and the U.S."

The House International Relations committee also defeated a move by Rep. Helen Meyner (D-NJ) that would have stricken from the bill authority to train military officers in Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador and Guatemala. These are the four countries President Carter had cited recently for human rights violations. In the Senate no member of the Foreign Relations committee proposed a similar cut-off to these countries.

In the case of Argentina, for example, the training program will include the enrollment at the Canal Zone School of the Americas of four Army personnel for courses in "jungle operations," of three Army "distinguished visitors" in seminars on "intelligence" and "civic action," and of four Army personnel in courses on "military intelligence/counter-intelligence."

Between 1970 and 1975 the Canal Zone School trained more than 600 Argentine military officers in 13 courses on jungle operations, eleven on counter-insurgency operations, and seven on urban counter-insurgency, as well as in six other categories of courses.

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Israeli right scores election upset

Photo by UPI



Menachem Begin, leader of the Likud party and Israel's next prime minister, gets a blessing from a rabbi after his election victory in front of his party's Tel Aviv headquarters.

Like India's Congress party, Israel's Labor party had never lost an election, and in spite of widespread disaffection with its rule and splits within the party itself, few observers expected it to lose last week's election. But lose it did—to the right-wing Likud party.

Likud captured 41 seats in the 120-seat Knesset, the Israeli parliament, to Labor's 33, making it the largest party and giving it and its 63-year-old leader Mehaheh Begin, the right to form a coalition government.

Likud, which stands for "unity," was formed in 1967 to oppose the Labor party from the right. It favors permanent annexation of Jordan's West Bank, which was captured in the 1967 war. It sees the Palestinian Liberation Organization as a pawn of the Soviet Union, and generally tends to equate Palestinian nationalism with communism.

The party favors increasing the role of private enterprise in Israel's economy, which has hitherto been dominated by the Histadrut, the Israeli labor federation that owns much of Israel's industry. It also favors compulsory arbitration for strikes.

Likud's victory is largely seen as Labor's defeat. Likud's percentage of the Israeli vote did not increase markedly from 1973, when it won 39 seats, but Labor went down from 51 to 33 seats. Many of Labor's votes seem to have gone to Yigdal Yadin's Movement for Democratic Change, an anti-corruption splinter from the Labor party, which gained 14 seats to become the third largest party.

In the wake of Watergate-type scandals that rocked the Labor party this year, implicating several ministers, and finally forcing the resignation of Labor prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, the MDC was able to attract widespread support.

Labor was also blamed for Israel's growing unemployment, which now stands at 5 percent, and galloping inflation, which has gone as high as 40 percent.

Carter's recent call for a "Palestinian homeland" in exchange for Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist was

seen as a final blow to the Labor party, which had rested its fortunes on its close ties to the U.S.

The Israeli left did not do as well as it expected. The Communist party coalition, Hadash, which had expected to win as many as ten seats, won only six, while the other left coalition Sheli won two seats.

Arab response.

The response from PLO and from Arab capitals has been sharp and pessimistic. Radio Damascus described Likud as the most "terrorist, extremist, and pig-headed bloc in Israel."

Palestinians who live on the West Bank, the area hitherto designated as the site of a Palestinian mini-state, fear harsher military rule and a step-up in Israeli settlements in the occupied land.

The PLO sees an increased risk of war, and all parties expect that the Likud victory will delay the reopening of the Geneva talks.

But one Cairo official was quoted by the *New York Times* as saying: "They are all hawks. Only some sound more hawkish than others. It's a difference in shade, not in substance."

The Egyptian official went on to say that the U.S., upon which Israel is dependent for its survival, holds the key to peace in the Middle East: "The United States is capable of putting pressure on any Israeli government regardless of its color."

In his post-election statements, Likud leader Begin has attempted to move toward a more moderate position. He has called for a "national unity" cabinet in which he has invited the Labor party to participate. He has expressed his willingness to meet with Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian leaders as soon as possible.

But on the critical issue of the West Bank, Begin has remained adamant. In his first news conference, when asked about the "occupied territories," he responded, "What occupied territories? If you mean Judea and Samaria [on the West Bank] you mean liberated territories."

—John Judis

NUCLEAR POWER

Congress bucks Carter on breeder

By Jon Stewart
Pacific News Service

WASHINGTON—While attention has focused on foreign criticism of President Carter's efforts to halt nuclear proliferation, recent events under the Capital Dome may be even more threatening to the administration's nuclear policy.

Powerful forces in Congress—abetted by a marked lack of support for the President in his own administration—have mounted a campaign to reverse Carter's decision to delay the nation's breeder reactor and nuclear fuel reprocessing programs.

Both programs produce plutonium, the prime ingredient of nuclear weapons. The administration fears that commercialization and export of such facilities will provide non-nuclear nations an irresistible capacity to develop their own nuclear arsenals. Carter's commitment to foreclose the plutonium programs was also intended as a tangible example to other nuclear nations.

Trouble in Congress.

But by a resounding 38-0 vote the House Science and Technology Committee elected May 11 to restore some \$117 million for continued development of the plutonium breeder reactor project at Clinch River, Tenn. Without congressional support the President's foreign policy initiative on non-proliferation may strike a hollow note among the other nuclear supplier nations.

Meanwhile, a similar revolt is brewing in the Senate Energy Committee, where the nuclear lobby believes the breeder has even greater support. Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) declared in a recent speech that "the administration's nuclear energy policy is a formula for nuclear isolationism," expressing his support for both the breeder and the fuel reprocessing programs.

The Senate committee is expected to hold hearings soon on the breeder authorization. Congressional sources expect Church to block any administration effort to introduce an amendment representing the President's position.

Several staff sources close to the debate claim the administration itself is chiefly to blame for the House committee vote.

Said one congressional staff member,



"The administration never came up and said why they were doing what they were doing." He added that the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) "is acting in a manner that's counter-productive to the administration's policy."

Leftovers from Ford/Nixon.

The view that forces within ERDA—which is to say, within the administration—are not supporting the administration's position is reinforced by other sources.

According to an aide to Rep. Tom Harkins, who carried the President's amendment in the House committee, "ERDA was definitely not there to push the President's position, either in a lobbying stance or in a public stance... Whether by commission or omission, ERDA by its absence has hurt the President."

All current ERDA appointees, including the chief congressional liaison and lobbyist, Hollister Cantus, date from the

Ford and Nixon administrations.

Beyond ERDA's failure to drum up support on deferment of the breeder, the White House itself is blamed by some for "not having learned to lobby on the hill yet."

Supporters of the President's anti-breeder position are already looking for other avenues to derail the revitalized actor. If the House amendment to restore breeder funding can't be reversed in the Science and Technology Committee, many of whose members represent districts with high-level research and development programs, the next target may be the House International Relations Committee, which has requested the ERDA bill be referred to it before coming to the House floor. The committee is concerned with its foreign policy aspects.

According to a source on that committee, "There's no way that money is going to stay in the budget. The Science and Technology Committee was undermining U.S. foreign policy when they worked this mischief [on breeder funding]."

"We can beat them on the floor and we can beat them in the International Relations Committee and there's a good chance we can beat them in their own committee on a revote" following new hearings, scheduled for the next few weeks, he predicted.

The International Relations Committee will also hold hearings on Rep. Jonathan Bingham's (D-N.Y.) bill to ban nuclear exports—a measure that goes well beyond the President's position.

Bingham has also introduced another measure that would prevent the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from licensing any plutonium-handling facility aside from military, medical or experimental programs. The bill would effectively ban all breeder or reprocessing programs involving plutonium.

West German cutbacks.

Ironically, on the very day the breeder funds were restored by the House committee, West Germany—a leading advocate of the plutonium economy and breeder development—announced a \$51.7 million cutback on breeder funding.

The West German decision, coming just days after Chancellor Helmut Schmidt promised to make nuclear exports the nation's top foreign exchange earner, was apparently not a reaction to Carter's non-proliferation initiative. Rather, it was a response to domestic critics of West Germany's nuclear program, who now represent a significant political force.

Similar domestic opposition to the plutonium breeder is growing in France and Britain, where fragile coalition governments are equally vulnerable to political pressure.

The news from West Germany buoyed administration officials just as it saddened the nuclear industry lobby. Said the Atomic Industrial Forum's Tom Hunt, an active congressional lobbyist, "The West German decision is certainly not going to be a great help, but Helmut Schmidt is not going to stop the breeder. It looks like [the freeze] may have been a token gesture, but it doesn't make us happy."

Still, said Hunt, any effort to halt weapons proliferation through a halt on the breeder reactor "is specious."

"Nobody is going to contain the breeder," he said.

REPRESSION

FBI conspired against Republic of New Afrika

Despite past FBI denials new documents reveal a concerted attack to discredit and destroy the RNA.

JACKSON, MISS.—The FBI conducted secret COINTELPRO (disruptive "counter intelligence" operations) operations against Imari Obadele, President of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA), in 1968 and 1969, recently released documents have revealed. They show that the FBI circulated letters intended to disrupt and discredit activities of Obadele and the RNA, including one letter on RNA letterhead with Obadele's signature forged by the FBI.

Obadele is currently serving a 12-year sentence in federal prison on conspiracy charges stemming from a shootout here in August 1971. The new documents tend to confirm charges by Obadele and his supporters that they were victims of a conspiracy on the part of the FBI and government.

As recently as last Dec. 15 FBI director Clarence Kelley denied that Obadele and the RNA were COINTELPRO targets. But on March 30 Kelley reversed himself and released ten pages of FBI communications about the letters, including copies.

The documents also appear to contradict a sworn statement submitted to U.S. District Judge Walter Nixon Jr. in 1973 prior to Obadele's trial. Defense attorneys had asked the government to produce any documents of actions against Obadele and the RNA that could be "arguably illegal." The Justice department responded with a sworn affidavit to the court

stating that a search of the files disclosed no illegal activity by the government.

False rumor of misused funds.

The new documents describe how in November 1968 the special agent in charge of the Detroit FBI office asked FBI director J. Edgar Hoover for permission to circulate an anonymous letter "to various members of the Republic of New Afrika" suggesting that then-information minister Obadele was misusing RNA funds.

The plan was approved by Hoover's assistant, who noted, "Since this is an anonymous letter, there is no possibility of embarrassment to the Bureau."

The Detroit office reported the letters "did create a favorable response" and requested authority to mail a similar letter to RNA officials in other states. The

same rumor was circulated among civil rights lawyers in Mississippi between 1971 and 1974 to disrupt RNA legal defense efforts.

The FBI also wanted to "develop the best possible means of counterintelligence action against the newly-formed Black Panther party" of Detroit. So a letter was prepared and circulated "on RNA stationery and signed by Brother Imari, to prospective members of BPP and certain BPP officials."

The fake letter said, "In the past the Black Panther party has not helped black people but has bled the black community of respect and has organized prostitution and crime. It threatens with violence black businesses who do not wish to support them and through acts of terror bring the wrath of the white cop on the inno-

cent black community."

In explaining this letter to Hoover the agent wrote, "Detroit believes this letter will be effective in creating dissension between the RNA and the BPP."

The signature on the letter is an excellent copy of Obadele's handwriting.

Mississippi attack.

In 1971 the FBI directed an armed attack on RNA headquarters in Jackson, aided by local police. One police officer was killed and others wounded.

Three RNA members were subsequently convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment and a fourth was given a ten-year sentence.

Dismayed that they had failed to ensnare Obadele, who had spent the night at a different house five blocks away, the FBI charged that there had been an RNA conspiracy to attack federal officers, that Obadele had given the orders to shoot.

While the FBI concealed its own actions against the RNA, a paid informer, Thomas "Snoopy" Spells, testified to the FBI version of the facts. Even though some of his testimony was discredited (for example, he testified that Tamu Sana Ana was at a meeting in Mississippi at a time when she could prove she was in Ghana), the court convicted Obadele and the other RNA defendants.

Despite FBI claims to the contrary, COINTELPRO has not ended for these men and women.

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