

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Dellums leads Congressional debate on military budget

The Congressional debate on the military budget brings mixed news—some good and some bad. We can be very proud of Congressman Ron Dellums who almost single-handedly attempted to bring sanity back to the national budget. Repeatedly charging that an ever-growing military budget is madness that will lead the world to a nuclear holocaust and an end to mankind, he spent hours on the House floor debating, challenging the administration's philosophy, refuting the opposition's figures, and challenging them to demonstrate a need to spend more money on weapons while the American people are unemployed, hungry, in need of housing and medical care, and full of frustration. Nearly alone—with his firm supporters including Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Rep. Jim Weaver (D-Ore.)—he kept his end of the debate at a high level of intellect and integrity. Sharp, articulate, informed, he was clearly the leader on the floor, if not the winner.

• A Dellums amendment to eliminate nuclear powered aircraft carriers from the budget was defeated. Dellums charged that building aircraft carriers is trying to fight a World War II operation in the '80s. He alleged that these carriers are not planned to fight off a "Soviet threat," but to threaten Third World nations. He said the projected use of these ships to "keep the shipping lanes open" in the Indian Ocean will lead to nuclear war.

• Dellums' amendment to eliminate the MX missile, which he called obsolete, was also defeated. Dellums argued that using manned bombers is preparing for conventional war. He said that the MX missile is a deceit—an attempt to convince people that a nuclear war is inevitable. The government's policies and operations are aimed at expanding relations with the Soviets.

Black families

The twin effects of inflation and a depressed economy resulted in a decline in black family median income in 1981, and an increase in the number of blacks below the poverty level, according to a report from the Commerce Department Bureau.

This marks the second consecutive year in which a recession coupled with a recovery in the economy resulted in significant declines in real family income and increases in the poverty population.

Median family income for black families was \$13,270 compared to \$23,520 for white families and \$16,400 for Spanish-origin families. After adjusting for inflation, black families experienced a 5 percent decline in their real median income. Real median income for white and Spanish-origin families remained the same.

The poverty threshold for a family of four was \$8,414 in 1980 and \$8,414 in 1981.

The report shows that the largest percentage of black families live in the West and South. Overall, real median income for all families fell in three of the four regions of the Nation. The Northeast was the only region that did not show a decline in real income.

Changes in "real" median family income refer to comparisons after adjustment for inflation, as measured by the change in the annual

• Rep. John Conyers presented an amendment to delay all nuclear weapons for one year—an action he called "not a freeze, but a delay." This delay would provide an opportunity for the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to engage in talks without an accompanying U.S. escalation. This amendment also was defeated.

• The House voted to delete funds for production of nerve gas for chemical weapons. The House removed \$54 million for the production of nerve gas bombs and skills from the administration request. If the appropriation is reinstated in the House-Senate Conference (the Senate had already approved the expenditure) it will be the first time the U.S. has openly manufactured chemical weapons since Nixon banned production 13 years ago. Reagan wants to spend \$2 billion over the next five years to replenish stockpiles. The bill also specifically bans using other funds on the production of binary chemical munitions.

• The House vote to fund the MX missile was close, indicating some attention to the growing peace movement. The House approved the bill to fund the missiles but put a hold on \$260 million in basing and deployment funds. The MX missile was first requested by Jimmy Carter, who wanted them spread out through the desert to avoid a Soviet attack. That idea has been rejected and everyone admits to not knowing where to put them.

The Senate cut all MX funding from its au-

South Africa and Reaganism: Axis partners

by Dr. Manning Marable
"From The Grassroots"

While the attention of the world has been on the Falkland/Malvinas Islands and the Mideast during the past four months, racial unrest has been escalating in apartheid South Africa.

On July 6, two thousand black miners northwest of Johannesburg went on strike in a platinum mine. Their demand was quite simple: a decent wage. Blacks who work exactly as white miners do, receive about one-fifth (20 per cent) of whites' wages.

The racist regime's response was brutal. Fifty Africans were reported injured when police used tear gas. In nearby Venterspot gold mine, another 80 black miners were beaten and arrested for striking. Almost 500 miles away, at the Indian Ocean port city of Durban, black coal miners drove a tractor through one building, and set scores of other buildings on fire.

Why is black labor, and especially miners, on the offensive? First, keep in mind that South Africa's economy, which depends primarily on the world price of gold, is at the brink of disaster. Two years ago, gold prices exceeded \$600 an ounce. Assuming that the price would remain that high, the government and private sector launched a series of grandiose plans for mining and construction. One mine shaft system

near Johannesburg worth \$304 million has now been curtailed. General Mining Union Corporation, the country's second largest mining finance house, has trimmed its capital expenditures this year by 12 per cent. The reason: gold prices have declined to about \$300 per ounce. If the price of gold drops as low as \$250 an ounce, a general panic will set in; the number of South African mines that close will be catastrophic.

White laborers are also restless. At the height of early July's black miners' strikes, the trade unions representing 22,000 white miners asked for a 15 per cent raise. The miners and companies agreed to a 12 per cent settlement on July 6. Yet annual inflation in South Africa exceeds 16 per cent, so the white miners may continue to pressure management.

More than ever before, racist South Africa, the modern fascist state, needs the U.S. to provide critical support at its moment of turmoil. Once again, apartheid has found a genuine friend in Ronald Reagan.

According to Jean Sindab, the Executive Director of the Washington Office on Africa, Reagan and his advisors are encouraging the repressive posture of South Africa.

"Furthermore," she states, "the administration seeks to reassure South Africa of its desire for a closer alliance by strengthening bilateral ties in many areas."

The administration gave permission for the opening of honorary consulates in three U.S. cities: Seattle, Denver and Cleveland. Reagan has asked for \$2.3 million from Congress to train black South African inside South Africa, thereby reinforcing the segregated educational system. Export control regulations on such critical items as air ambulances, computers and helicopters have been weakened to help apartheid.

South Africa is the greatest moral question confronting black and progressive people of our time. If we stand silent as the Reagan South-Africa axis builds, we must be condemned as involuntary partners in the destruction of black mine workers in Durban and Johannesburg. We must demonstrate in front of all apartheid consulates in the U.S., demanding an end to all official U.S.-apartheid relations. No U.S. businesses in South Africa, and freedom for our sisters and brothers.

Editor's note: Dr. Manning Marable is Director of the Race Relations Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, TN.



Washington Hot Line

by Congressman Ron Wyden

Thursday the House gave the go-ahead to production of the MX missile. How do you feel about this?

I have always questioned the wisdom of building the MX. The missile is cumbersome, costly and vulnerable, and thus of little value to our national defense.

I am especially outraged that the House voted to spend \$1.14 billion on production of nine MX missiles. This mode has not yet been tested.

In the face of a shortage of criminal funds, I set aside this kind of expenditure as a questionable project. I am asking senior citizens and other vulnerable groups to give up programs they have worked hard to survive.

The excusable use of tax money—and one which I oppose.

Efforts to save himself from a bright future for the next generation.

Julie Jessie

Congratulate Al McGilberry on his fine awards banquet. There were many comments on the success of that event.

Al's speech was truly exceptional. It was informative and frightening. Certainly it was heard and should be a wake-up call for each of us to work even harder to prevent a nuclear freeze.

Congratulations on a very event and thanks for acknowledging some very talented, effective and committed persons.

Kay Dean Toran
Director,
Affirmative Action Office,
Governor's Office

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