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Allen-Scott Report

Bomb Makers Will Holler

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Mr. Allen

A far-reaching legislative sleeper to watch for during the final days of this session of Congress is a bill establishing a National Economic Conversion Commission.

This carefully camouflaged disarmament proposal, requiring all defense contractors to prepare plans for an eventual change-over to non-arms production, is going to get the full endorsement of the Johnson Administration.

Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance will lead a parade of administration witnesses testifying this week before the Senate Interstate & Commerce Committee in support of the commission plan and hailing it as an integral part of the President's program for building the "Great Society."

Vance will stress that the commission, which will institute studies on the economic impact of large cutbacks in defense spending, is needed to meet the new challenges presented by revolutionary changes in U. S. defense expenditures and future U.S.-Soviet disarmament agreements.

Drafted by the Pentagon's "Whiz Kids" to pave the way for Secretary McNamara's military base shutdowns and unilateral disarmament moves, the commission plan is being vigorously pushed in Congress by a group of 20 senators headed by Senator George McGovern, D-S. C., and 35 members of the House led by Representative Brad Morse, R-Mass.

It provides for the establishment of a nine-member commission to be headed by the Secretary of Commerce and to include the Secretaries of Defense, Agriculture, Labor and Interior; the Atomic Energy Commission chairman; Disarmament Agency Director; the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers; and the National Aeronautics & Space administrator.

The commission would be empowered to report on the various programs needed for a gradual conversion of U. S. military spending into other areas of the economy. It would also supervise the convening of a National Conference on Industrial Conversion and Growth to consider the problems arising from the change in defense spending.

Until the Johnson administration decided to endorse the commission this week, its major support came from the controversial Council for a Liveable World, which is causing a mild sensation in political circles with its sizable contributions to legislators supporting the peace lobby's disarmament objectives.

For example, the council had quietly contributed funds to the campaigns of Senator McGovern (\$22,000); Senator Quentin Burdick, D-N.D., (\$14,000); Senator Gale McGee, D-Wyo., (\$8,000), and Senator J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., (\$2,500) — all backing the legislation to establish a National Economic Convention Commission.

The senators seeking passage of the commission plan before Congress recesses for the political conventions are warning of new reductions in military spending this year in their efforts to win support.

Significantly, Senator McGovern is circulating an unpublished report, supplied by the Defense Department, revealing that 50 major defense contractors in 20 states will have their contracts terminated by Secretary McNamara's new economy moves.

Since Senator Warren Magnuson, D-Wash., chairman of the Commerce Committee, has privately endorsed the commission, the odds now favor swift approval by his committee and the Senate unless the public strongly protests the legislation.

At present, only three members of the Commerce Committee — Senators Frank Lausche, D-O., Strom Thurmond, D-S.C., and Thruston Morton, R-Ky., — have indicated they will oppose the measure.

"Behind the scenes — The Capitol was under heavy guard against possible violence by Puerto Rican demonstrators at the climax of the Senate civil rights filibuster.

Although it didn't leak out, all off-duty police were summoned secretly to reinforce the regular guard after the FBI flashed a warning that four Puerto Ricans, known to be violently anti-American and trained in the use of incendiary bombs, had arrived in Washington.

According to FBI spotters, the four men left San Juan and flew to Baltimore, gathering in a hotel near the Capitol on June 10. The names and detailed descriptions of the men, all with records of past participation in bomb-throwing episodes, were turned over to Capitol Hill police.

However, instead of going to the Capitol, the Puerto Ricans changed their plans, checked out of their hotel and flew to New York. Indications were that they were tipped off about the police alert.