

helped make the United States the foremost nation in the world in science and technology.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this approach to the conduct and support of science and technology is the best course to follow. It has proven effective and flexible and it permits all sides of a particular problem to be examined thoroughly.

At the hearings on 19 July, Baker gave a rationale for the reorganization

plan which also seemed to support giving more responsibility for making science policy to federal operating agencies. Baker was also asked about the Scientists and Engineers Council formed of Nixon supporters before the election and cast in an advisory role. He said its members still confer, but never have formalized procedures.

The committee hearings, to date, are

probably less important for what has been revealed than for the fact that Stever and Baker accepted the invitation and engaged in a fairly open dialogue with the committee. If this dialogue continues, Congress and the public may very well gain real insight into how and where, and—even in some cases—if, federal science policy is made.—JOHN WALSH

Congressman Les Aspin: Bee in the Brass's Bonnet

If you read the curriculum vitae of Wisconsin's 34-year-old Democratic Representative Les Aspin, he sounds more like a scholar than a politician. But Aspin proves that even a Ph.D. economist can find happiness in the bustle of the U.S. Congress.

Aspin got a taste for politics the year after his 1960 graduation from Yale, when he worked in the office of Senator William Proxmire (D-Wis.), his political mentor. He went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar in 1961, where he majored in politics, philosophy, and economics. Then, after a summer on the staff of the Council of Economic Advisers in Washington, he went off to Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a Ph.D. in economics. Then he did his Army stint as one of "McNamara's whiz kids," serving as an economic adviser in the Pentagon's Office of Systems Analysis. After that he taught economics for a year at Marquette University, lying in wait for the opportunity to spring onto the national political scene.

Now, less than half way through his second term, Aspin is making quite a reputation for himself as a highly visible and persistent critic of his old boss, the Department of Defense (DOD).

Aspin serves on two committees—the committee on the District of Columbia, which he tries to ignore, and the House Armed Services Committee, on which he is building his career. As 20th in seniority among the 24 Democrats on the 41-member committee, Aspin has chosen to advance his views by appealing to the public rather than

working from within. This means he could be about the most prolific utilizer of the press release to be found on Capitol Hill.

He concentrates his attention on two major areas: the military and the oil industry—the biggest game around. "You have to realize that when you take those on you are not going to win very much," says Aspin. Nonetheless, Aspin is generally credited with being not only outspoken but effective. "The object of publicity is to achieve outside what you can't achieve on the inside . . . it's a publicize-and-embarrass kind of approach—nobody wants to look like an idiot." A number of colleagues, particularly some committee members who disagree with him, believe he is getting more attention than he deserves. His recent appearance on the NBC's "Today Show," an upcoming interview with *Playboy* on oil policy, and an hour-long all-Aspin television show now being planned for "Bill Moyers' Journal" will probably not change their minds. But Aspin's legislative assistant Bill Broydrick says it's all happening because the Aspin outfit knows the secret of good publicity: be consistently right, and whenever you make a public statement say something new. And, says another congressional aide, "He knows how to penetrate the shield [of official Pentagon information] that effectively keeps 95 percent of the Congress away."

Finding something new to complain about in the Pentagon seems to be no problem. The staff is continually uncovering questionable but long-unquestioned relationships between the Penta-

gon and its contractors, misleading financial practices, overruns, special privileges for the brass, and so on.

"It's like shooting fish in a barrel," says Aspin, or, as he is fond of putting it, "You pick up a rock and there's always something crawling around under it." In the early days the staff picked up a good deal of material from random scrutiny of reports from the General Accounting Office. Now they are getting so they can smell a rat from 20 paces; they are also getting increasing numbers of tips, Jack Anderson style, from sources both within and outside the Pentagon.

A sampling of the past year's press releases shows that Aspin has criticized the Pentagon for demoralizing its civilian employees, calls a Navy contract for the Talos missile "illegal," says Litton Industries should be defaulted for bungling a contract on helicopter assault ships, says the Pentagon ought to switch to a cheaper telephone system, and alleges the Army is juggling its books to conceal expenditures exceeding appropriations.

One of Aspin's biggest accomplishments was the uncovering last year of a United Service Organization (USO) scandal in Vietnam which involved black market operations, kickbacks, and phony mail-order deals. A secretary who had witnessed the goings-on came down to Washington and sang all day into a tape recorder in Aspin's office. The revelations triggered a lengthy investigation by the Pentagon and the Internal Revenue Service. One result was the recent firing of USO's worldwide director, Sam Anderson. Aspin says he can never tell what reforms he spurred and what would have happened anyway. At any rate, the DOD never thanked him.

Aspin seems prouder of a recent achievement on the House floor. He and fellow committee member Otis Pike (D-N.Y.) fought a provision in the dependents' assistance act which

would have permitted officers who weren't doing any flying to collect flight pay. The committee voted by a narrow margin to keep the provision, but it was defeated on the House floor. This was the first time in living memory a recommendation by the Armed Services Committee has been defeated by the full House. Aspin says the strenuous protests by military men against cutting flight pay (one said he wouldn't be able to keep up on his mortgage payments) have "opened up the eyes of a lot of congressmen . . . there have been more howls of rage at the cutting of flight pay than there would be for cutting out the B-1 bomber. It makes them look like money-grubbing guys instead of public servants."

Another money-grubber the staff homed in on recently is White House aide Alexander Haig, whom they accused of postponing his retirement from the Army until 1 August so he could collect the extra \$3300 per year in retirement pay that his recent promotion to four-star general will entitle him to.

Naturally, this type of nit-picking does not set well with the House Armed Services Committee. Chaired by F. Edward Hébert (D-La.), 33-year veteran of the House, there are few members who are anything but staunch supporters of the military point of view. As Aspin explains, most have a built-in commitment—they are there in the first place because they have defense installations or contractors in their districts. Aspin does not. And, he says, other House members are not very eager to challenge the military because they don't know enough about this complex area and would rather defer to the committee. Here again, because of his knowledge and firsthand experience at the DOD, Aspin does not have to rely on "experts" to tell him what to think.

Aspin thinks the climate is changing now that concern over the rising national budget is eroding the sacredness of the military's demands. The committee minority known as the "fearless four" in the last years of the reign of the late Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) as committee chairman has grown to about six.*

Republican members of the committee declined to give *Science* their personal assessments of Aspin, but his friends hold him in high regard both

as a person and an effective politician. Fellow Wisconsin Democrat Richard Reuss says: "For one who is as active and conscious of public relations as he is, he is remarkably unscathed by congressional jealousies and animosities." He spares his colleagues windy pronouncements on the floor and is generally nice to have around because of his "joyous personality and pleasant ways." Representative Ed Koch (D-N.Y.) points out that it is no longer unique for a junior congressman to start making waves—"What's unique is he does it so effectively."

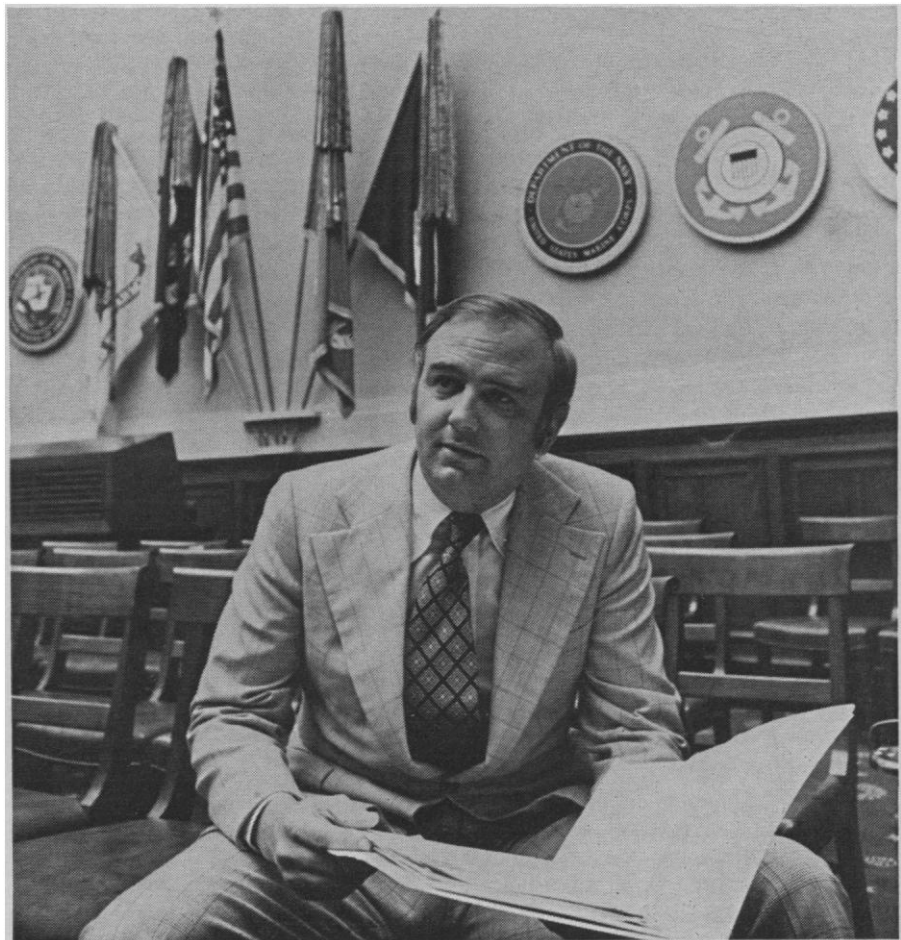
Aspin seems to take to politics with great ease. He enjoys campaigning, and with his friendly manner, energetic presence, and bright eyes he does not lack for charisma. He has an infectious laugh, as spontaneous and delighted as the burbling of a 2-year-old.

He also knows his stuff. "He's the smartest son of a bitch I ever met," says his staff man Broydrick. "It's a joy to work for him." An air of busy purpose wafts around his crowded four-room office which houses ten staff members, including two military specialists, one of whom is a retired Air

Force lieutenant colonel. The latter is invaluable, says Aspin, because of his knowledge of such inscrutabilities as military pay provisions, contract letting, and methods of obtaining information from the Pentagon (someone who doesn't know the ropes can spend a lifetime being shunted back and forth to informationless public information officers).

No military faux pas is too small to escape attention. One day recently, for example, the staff was found gloating over the fact they had caught the Navy sending promotional material for Milwaukee stock car races with their Wisconsin recruiting material. A quick check of the Navy code showed that inclusion of nonofficial literature is against the rules. The staff routinely forwarded it to the Navy and got a routine response (one of the racers is also a very good Navy recruiter, it said). Then someone found out where the enquiry originated, and an embarrassed officer came running over to explain that this was an "isolated" incident.

Aspin's constituents seem happy with him: he is the only Democrat from



Aspin in the armed services committee room.

* Aspin, Robert Leggett (D-Calif.), Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.), Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), Otis Pike (D-N.Y.), and sometimes Lucien Nedzi (D-Mich.).

his district to have been elected to two consecutive terms. When Aspin last year criticized automobile manufacturers for foot-dragging on emission controls, he got a wounded and angry letter from one constituent, the president of American Motors Corp. in Kenosha. But his stand does not seem to have wounded him politically.

Aspin keeps in touch with home through an ombudsman whom he has instructed to go around to post offices in the district for several days a week. This approach has generated an enormous amount of casework, and other congressmen are reported to be interested in doing the same thing.

A top Aspin target this year is Litton Industries, which has been plagued with delays and cost overruns on a Navy contract to construct nine landing helicopter assault ships at its new shipyards in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The costs and delays became so extreme that the Navy canceled orders for four of the ships. Litton now wants some \$400 million for cost overruns and cancellation fees. Aspin calls them "bailout" fees for inexcusable incompetence and warns that Litton may become "the Lockheed of shipbuilding." The Navy is pretty unhappy with Litton anyway, and Aspin hopes to stiffen its back against Litton's demands. But the political situation is complicated by the power of Mississippi's Senator John Stennis (D) and the fact that Litton's former president Roy Ash now runs the Office of Management and Budget.

Aspin is also after Roy Ash. In an article in the *Nation* early this year, he alleges Ash has engaged in questionable business dealings and had manipulated the ledgers when he was at Hughes Aircraft to cover up the fact that the company was making excessive profits on government contracts. Needless to say, Aspin thinks Ash's current position puts him in a blatant conflict of interest.

Aspin appears to be thoroughly un-intimidated by his targets of criticism. He has a way of reducing things to digestible chunks, as when he recently described the "games the Pentagon plays." Such games include using the facts in any way that is self-serving, in "heads I win, tails you lose" fashion; making quantitative rather than qualitative comparisons with what the Russians have got (or vice versa); mutual backscratching between the services—"I'll support your questionable weapons

if you'll support mine"—and of course, wheeling in the national security threat.

Aspin says his other monolithic target, Big Oil, is also versed in these techniques. For example, when it's profitable to do so, they will argue they're a free enterprise business just like anyone else, and "if the market is better abroad we'll export oil." At other times oil becomes a vital national resource deserving of special treatment, and anyone who wants to reduce depletion allowances or eliminate import quotas is accused of threatening the country's security. Aspin and Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.) recently introduced bills aimed at breaking up integrated oil companies. A subsequent announcement by the Federal Trade Commission that it was filing a complaint charging monopolistic practices by eight major oil companies was regarded as vindication of this controversial move.

Aspin and his staff sometimes appear to be knocking their heads against a stone wall, but they seem to be getting a kick out of it. They were amused and appalled the other day when it was confirmed that retiring General John D. Ryan was in the middle of a round-the-world goodbye trip with his wife on his private Army jet (the Army wouldn't say where the general was, so a female staff member obtained the information by calling and identifying herself as a friend of Mrs. Ryan). Another staff member found that merely chartering a 707 (the jet's civilian equivalent) to Thailand would cost \$135,000. Such junkets are routine for the military. Nonetheless, another press release rolled out.

Aspin says there are two ways to be a good congressman: a junior person concentrates his energy and influence on one or two areas he has staked out, and then proceeds to try to win others over to his position. A senior person, especially a committee chairman, develops his power by being a good legislator. He develops a bill and then figures out where the potential support is. Instead of trying to talk people into it, he fights from common ground, through artful compromises continually broadening his base of support. "Those types of guys never put out press releases," says Aspin.

Aspin presently plans to stay where he is, his constituency willing. He considers himself lucky that he got on the committee at such a young age, for this means he has a good chance of

becoming not just a public figure but a powerful one within the House—the kind of guy who doesn't have to put out press releases.—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

APPOINTMENTS

Herbert J. C. Kouts, head, physics division, Brookhaven National Laboratory, to director, reactor safety research division, Atomic Energy Commission. . . . **David P. Gardner**, vice president of extended academic and public service programs, University of California, to president, University of Utah. . . . **James H. Mullen**, president, Jersey City State College, to president, Northeastern Illinois University. . . . **Glenn W. Ferguson**, president, Clark University, to president, University of Connecticut. . . . **Robert J. Kegerreis**, vice president, Wright State University, to president of the university. . . . **Gardner Lindzey**, chairman, psychology department, Harvard University, to vice president and dean of graduate studies, University of Texas, Austin. . . . **Werner A. Baum**, president, University of Rhode Island, to chancellor, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. . . . **John A. Simpson**, professor of physics, Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, to director of the institute. . . . **John H. Moxley III**, dean, School of Medicine, University of Maryland, to vice chancellor for health sciences and dean, School of Medicine, University of California, San Diego. . . . **Ronald W. Estabrook**, chairman, basic science review committee, Veterans Administration, to dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Texas, Dallas. . . . **Henry G. Cramblett**, chairman, medical microbiology department, College of Medicine, Ohio State University, to dean, College of Medicine at the university. . . . **Ernest B. Brown, Jr.**, chairman, physiology department, University of Kansas Medical Center, to dean of faculties and academic affairs at the medical center. . . . **Richardson J. Mathewson**, associate professor of pedodontics, University of Oregon, to chairman, pedodontics department, University of Oklahoma. . . . **Paul E. Kifer**, director, research organization, Ralston Purina Company, to head, food science and technology department, Oregon State University. . . . **Roy Patterson**, associate chairman, medicine department, Northwestern University Medical School, to