

Idaho congressmen back department demise

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Both of Idaho's congressmen generally favor the proposed abolishment of the Department of Energy and the Department of Education, AWACS sale and the Reagan economic policies.

The two Republicans, Reps. George V. Hansen and Larry Craig, said in Post-Register telephone interviews from Washington, they have ideas of their own on what directions should be taken in all of these issues.

Both Hansen and Craig hastened to add that although they back demise of the two departments, they want to see essential programs administered by the two departments to continue, suggesting an independent agency below department level and without the costly price tag.

Hansen said Reagan had pledged to eradicate the Department of Education during the campaign, giving the current secretary, Terrell Bell, the task of coming up with proposals.

"Bell will have several options and I want to see what they are before making a commitment," Hansen said.

Hansen said he would favor an agency that would make certain "that every dollar going to education would go for

education of students and not expensive overhead."

He said, "I would like to see the federal circumstances taken out of education and let the money come under local control."

He said in the past the federal education allocation had many federal strings attached, often placing the small state of Idaho at a disadvantage by not getting funds to which it was entitled.

About the same views were expressed by Craig, who said that while education money makes up only 8 percent of the national appropriation, 65 percent of the regulations apply to education.

Both asserted the elimination of the two departments with their high overhead could bring significant savings, without impairing the effectiveness of essential educational programs.

Craig also proposed an independent agency but said all education programs should be kept intact; for example, keeping vocational education, in the education agency, and not returning it to the Department of Labor where it was previously.

He also suggested the educational programs could be returned to the present Department of Health and Human Ser-

vice, but that in any event it be retained as a single entity.

Hansen, who has Idaho National Engineering Laboratory in his district, said he would also support an independent energy agency below cabinet status but that it should be able to maintain the necessary energy programs, particularly nuclear energy.

"I want to wait and see what is proposed before I commit myself," he said.

Craig is less hesitant, warmly backing the erasure of the Department of Energy. He said many of the programs could be returned to the Department of Interior where they were originally.

"In a large part the Department of Energy served to confuse energy problems, rather than solve them," said Craig, a former state senator from Midvale. He also proposed that other programs could be returned to their original departments but offered no objection to a possible independent agency.

Both Hansen and Craig said they support the sale of AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia but Hansen offered some reservation to make certain relations with the Saudis are not seriously impaired.

"The Saudis have been friendly and I hope Israel understands it can't have it

all its way," said Hansen. "This is one matter that may take some fine tuning to get an even balance between Saudi Arabia and Israel."

Hansen and Craig reaffirmed their strong support for the Reagan economic policies, pointing out the program actually will not get underway before start the new fiscal year budget Oct. 1. They asserted Reagan needs more time under the new budget to cope with the present high interest rates, inflation, unemployment and government spending.

Hansen said he is solidly in support of the Social Security System but he wants to see it operate on a proper actuarial basis, such as is done by insurance companies. Hansen is a former insurance agent.

"We must come up with a balanced budget and reduced deficits," Hansen said.

Craig said, "I'm still in strong support of the Reagan economic program."

He said if Carter had handled the 1981 budget the way Reagan is considering for 1982, inflation would be down to about 7 percent and interests "probably in the neighborhood of 14 percent."

Instead of an \$80 billion deficit, it would have cut them to \$42 billion, Craig said.