

## Congressional Closeup by Kathleen Klenetsky

### 'Pro-defense' Sam Nunn guts SDI

Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) has come up with a compromise on the Strategic Defense Initiative. It purports to move the United States closer to deployment of an anti-ballistic missile system. In fact, it would prevent or delay development of the kind of technologically advanced strategic defense system essential for deterring a Soviet nuclear assault.

Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, proposed in a January speech to the Arms Control Association, that the focus of the SDI program be strictly limited to development of a ground-based, point-defense system designed to ward off an accidental nuclear launch. Nunn's Accidental Launch Protective System (ALPS) would utilize only off-the-shelf technologies, and be capable only of warding off an errant nuclear missile.

Nunn's proposal borrows heavily from a Rand Corp. study, which Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci has reportedly embraced. The study suggested that the United States continue to abide by the "narrow reading" of the 1972 ABM treaty, as per Soviet demands.

According to defense community sources, adoption of Nunn's proposal would hammer the final nail into the SDI's coffin. "Nunn's idea is a sick joke," one defense analyst commented. "An accidental launch is the least of our worries. What we have to be most concerned about is either an all-out nuclear attack from Moscow, or the *threat* of such an attack. To build an ABM system that can only deal with a few missiles is ridiculous from the standpoints of strategy and economics. If we go with the Nunn proposal, you can bet your bottom dollar Congress won't cough up a red cent

for more advanced or comprehensive technologies, like the x-ray laser."

The same source stressed that the SDI program has already been so distorted through budget cuts and other forms of congressional micro-management, that it is barely functional.

A number of self-styled SDI proponents in Congress and the think tank circuit have grabbed on to Nunn's ALPS. A group of legislators and ex-government officials sent a letter to President Reagan recently, urging him to endorse ALPS: "The moment is ripe for you to proceed with an historic decision: to initiate the development and deployment of this limited but critical first layer of SDI defense within your administration."

Tellingly, the letter was signed by some of the leading critics of Reagan's original vision of the SDI as a multi-tiered, population defense, notably, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Gregory Fossedal of the Hoover Institution, along with Eugene Rostow, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Sen. Howell Heflin (D-Ala.), who just endorsed SDI foe Al Gore's presidential campaign.

The administration has yet to respond formally to the letter, but, given Carlucci's increasingly insidious role, and the fact that the administration has just cut its own SDI funding request for FY 1989 by nearly one-third, it would not come as a big surprise if Reagan were to bury the SDI as part of his arms-control "legacy."

### Taking aim at U.S.-Soviet cultural 'symmetry'

The vast majority of official Washington may have been going ga-ga over Soviet "culture" during the last few months, but there have been a few dissenting voices raised against USIA head Charles Wick's attempt to estab-

lish an equivalence between Western culture and Mother Russia's pagan idolatries.

One such is Rep. Don Ritter (R-Pa.), who has criticized the proliferation of cultural exchanges for giving "the illusion of symmetry" between the two countries.

"I am concerned," Ritter is quoted in an article in the Feb. 17 *New York Times*, which otherwise hails the "remarkable number of cultural exchanges bursting out in the two nations," "that just before he became culture minister, Vasiliy Zakharov was first deputy chief of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department, and before that, chief of the Leningrad party's Propaganda Department—jobs closely associated with the KGB." It would be "unthinkable in the U.S.A.," Ritter pointed out, "to have a CIA disinformation expert made head of the nation's cultural life. All this makes one wonder about the intent of the Soviets in cultural exchange—is it to share ideas or to propagandize Western public opinion?"

May we suggest that Representative Ritter open an investigation into just that question—with Wick, and his good friend, Armand Hammer, as chief targets?

### Bills requiring notice on covert ops draw fire

CIA head William Webster gave notice to Congress Feb. 24 that the administration intends to oppose legislation which would require the President to notify Congress in advance of U.S.-run covert operations. Under current law, the President is permitted under certain circumstances to delay informing Congress of such operations, as long as he issues notification in "timely fashion."

In testimony to a House Intelligence subcommittee, Webster asserted that a proposal put forward by both the House and Senate Intelligence panels to make such notification mandatory was unacceptable, since it would tie a President's hands, and would "promote tension" between Congress and the executive "for years to come."

"A bill which fails to preserve the flexibility and authority the President needs to conduct intelligence activities will not be acceptable to the President," he said.

The house bill is one of several measures designed to assert greater congressional say-so over covert operations which have emerged in response to the Iran-Contra fiasco. Despite administration unhappiness, and threats of a filibuster, the measures are moving steadily ahead.

The Senate Intelligence Committee already adopted one such measure, S. 1721, by a lopsided 13-2 vote Jan. 27, and sent it to the Senate floor.

Sponsored primarily by Sen. William Cohen (R-Me.), this bill not only requires the President to give advance notification to Congress of all covert operations; it also places full responsibility for all such actions directly on his doorstep.

For instance, it mandates the President to put all "findings"—the justification for covert operations—in writing, and prohibits the use of findings to justify a covert action after the fact. In addition, the bill also requires the President to approve any "significant" involvement in covert operations by third parties not under the direct control of the U.S. government, such as private contractors, and bars the President from using covert operations to authorize any action that would violate U.S. law.

Senator Cohen predicts that the full

Senate will pass his bill "overwhelmingly," despite the fact that several of his colleagues, among them Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Chic Hecht (R-Nev.), have vowed to filibuster the measure to death.

## **H**elms holds up Burns appointment to ACDA

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) has thrown a monkey wrench into the confirmation of Maj. Gen. William F. Burns as head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA).

Burns received unanimous approval from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Feb. 17. But shortly thereafter, Helms, ranking Republican on the committee, requested that a full Senate vote be delayed until ACDA completes several reports on arms-control issues, and also explains a recent incident of apparent "document shredding."

According to congressional sources cited by the Feb. 25 *Washington Post*, the document shredding occurred in the office of ACDA General Counsel Thomas Graham, who is reportedly being investigated by the FBI for his handling of an alleged security violation at the agency last year.

Helms's move against Burns is part and parcel of his attack on the INF treaty. The arms-control reports Helms is demanding include those dealing with Soviet compliance with past arms-control agreements, and the ability of the United States to verify the INF treaty. Helms also wants ACDA to produce a report on a U.S.-Soviet conference to review compliance with the ABM treaty.

When Burns was named last December to succeed Kenneth Adelman, Helms let it be known that he opposed

the appointment because Burns, who at the time was the number-two man at the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, had been instrumental in negotiating the INF agreement.

Exactly what Helms hopes to accomplish by holding up the Burns appointment is not clear, but some congressional sources believe he is simply trying to throw as many obstacles as possible into the path of the INF's ratification.

## **P**anel endorses Kennedy health insurance plan

Sen. Ted Kennedy's controversial legislation to require employers to provide health insurance for their workers got thumbs up from the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee Feb. 17. The plan cleared the panel, which Kennedy chairs, by a 10-6 vote.

The legislation would require employers to provide workers employed 17.5 hours weekly or more, with a package of benefits that would include hospitalization, physician care, and diagnostic and screening tests. Nearly 23 million workers not now insured would be covered by the bill.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that employers would have to purchase \$27.1 billion in new health-insurance coverage. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), a member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, denounced the plan as "socialism, pure and simple," while numerous business lobbying groups, charging that the measure will bankrupt many small businesses, have mapped out a campaign to stop it before it proceeds further. Kennedy says he's determined to push for Senate floor passage this year.