

## Congressional Closeup by William Jones

### Wolf talks with top Soviet prosecutor

Congressmen Frank Wolf (R-Va.) and Chris Smith (R-N.J.) were on tour in the Soviet Union during the second week in August, and met with Soviet Procurator General Aleksandr Sukharov and Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin. As we go to press, they also expected to meet with KGB chief Gen. Vladimir Kryuchkov.

The two congressmen were there on behalf of the congressional contingent of the Helsinki Commission, which is supposed to monitor human rights violations in countries participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. On Aug. 9 they were scheduled to visit Perm Camp 35 in the Urals, a Soviet prison camp notorious for its treatments of dissidents.

The visit was the result of an invitation extended to Wolf last July by Sukharov, during Wolf's last visit to the Soviet Union.

Running against Wolf in next year's congressional elections is political prisoner Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. Earlier this year, Helsinki Commission member Wolf refused to even meet with LaRouche's legal representatives to discuss the judicial violations at the Alexandria, Virginia trial at which LaRouche was sentenced to 15 years in jail.

### Abortion funds approved in House

The House of Representatives, ignoring President Bush's threat of a veto, passed a District of Columbia appropriations bill on Aug. 2 that allows, for the first time in eight years, District tax dollars to be applied to performing

abortions. Considered a victory for the "pro-choice" lobby, the 219-206 vote is a direct outcome of the recent Supreme Court decision that shifts the responsibility of structuring abortion laws and restrictions to the states.

In all, 22 representatives who had voted for an identical measure last year switched sides on the D.C. vote. Rep. Jim Slattery (D-Kan.), one of those 22, defended his switch, saying, "Any suggestion that this was a dramatic sea change in the House's attitude about abortion is dead wrong." Rep. Robert Dornan (R-Calif.), as in years past, led the fight to ban District abortion funds, but this year's bill dropped the usual exception allowing abortion funding only for women whose lives are otherwise in danger.

The Senate, which is generally more supportive of eased restrictions than the House, will take up the measure in September.

### Congressmen see sham of 'perestroika'

The House Armed Services Committee traveled to East Germany in the first week of August for talks on conventional arms control issues and related matters. They had been invited by the defense commission of the East German Chamber of Deputies.

According to a report in the *Washington Post*, the delegation was dismayed when it found out that some soldiers and equipment from disbanded Soviet units were being redeployed to other units in the region, rather than being demobilized. Members of the delegation said that Soviet military capabilities as a result may not drop as much as foreseen by U.S. intelligence analysts.

"This is not exactly what we thought was happening," said House Armed Services Committee chairman Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) in a meeting on Aug. 8 with a new defense committee of the revamped Supreme Soviet. "What does it mean, and why didn't everybody say this in the beginning?"

Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the top military adviser to Mikhail Gorbachov, said that the shuffling of troops and equipment is part of a restructuring effort to make Soviet forces in the region more "defensive" rather than "offensive."

According to ADN, the official East German news agency, the 14-member delegation will get a first-hand view of East Germany's "efforts to contribute to a conventional arms build-down in Europe."

### Congress slashes fusion budget

On July 28 the full Senate passed its version of the energy appropriations bill, allocating a mere \$330 million for research into magnetic fusion, one of the most promising future sources of cheap and abundant energy. A month earlier, the House passed its own version, which includes \$330 million for the program. In September the two bills will be reconciled in conference.

Although both figures are woefully inadequate, they are actually higher than the ones recommended on June 14 by Department of Energy Director of Energy Research Robert Hunter. In testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, he said that although the DoE had requested \$349 million for the 1990 fusion program, he planned to reduce the magnetic fusion request to \$299 million.

As former DoE fusion manager Steve Dean remarked in his July newsletter, "it was the first time in memory that a program manager came before Congress proposing to cut his own budget."

Hunter stated that he planned to keep the magnetic fusion budget at "about \$300 million" through the 1990s. This would require further cuts in the baseline fusion experiments if the next-step Compact Ignition Tokamak (CIT) is ever to be built.

According to Dean, the change in policy, which has been hinted at since last summer, was cemented in a June 15 letter from Energy Secretary James Watkins to the chairmen of the appropriate congressional committees. The letter stated: "Due to lack of resolution of key scientific unknowns, the Department is no longer proposing to begin actual construction of this device in FY 1990."

The CIT could and should have been started five years ago, as a follow-on machine to the large tokamak reactor at Princeton. Due to previous budget cutbacks, experiments at Princeton to demonstrate fusion energy "breakeven" (net production of energy) have been delayed, and workers have been laid off.

## Traficant seeks probe of Justice Department

In remarks on the House floor, Ohio Rep. James Traficant (D-Ohio) charged that the Justice Department might have deliberately withheld information demonstrating that a key witness against retired Cleveland autoworker John Demjanjuk, who was convicted in an Israeli court in April 1988 of having been a Nazi criminal, had lied in court.

Two internal Justice Department memoranda from November 1979 state that witness Otto Horn had trouble identifying Demjanjuk from photos shown him. Yet during denaturalization proceedings against Demjanjuk in 1981, Horn said he identified Demjanjuk in two sets of photos as the guard "Ivan the Terrible" of the Treblinka concentration camp. Demjanjuk was illegally deported to Israel, where he has been sentenced to death.

The memoranda only came to light after an unidentified person found them in a DoJ trash can and handed them over to Demjanjuk's son-in-law.

Traficant has officially requested a congressional investigation into the actions of the Office of Special Investigations—the DoJ office responsible for investigating "war criminals"—and has asked for a DoJ in-house review of the OSI by their own Office of Professional Responsibility.

## More congressional ethics probes

The House Ethics Committee has voted to open investigations into sex-related and other charges leveled against Gus Savage (D-Ill.), Jim Bates (D-Calif.), and Donald Lukens (D-Ohio). Savage, whose alleged conduct on his foreign trips has been made an issue by the *Washington Post*, is accused of the crime of having fondled a Peace Corps worker in Africa. Bates is accused of "harassing" women in his office. Spokesmen for the all the accused congressmen called the charges baseless, and welcomed the investigations.

Lukens, a conservative Democrat from Ohio, has indicated that he was set up and blackmailed by a prostitute and a local news station, in an incident

which led to his conviction on charges that he had sexual relations with a minor.

On the Senate side, Sen. Intelligence Committee member David Durenburger (R-Minn.) is accused of illegal funding practices in speaking fee and book royalty arrangements he had been involved in. The charges originated with supporters of his Democratic opponent in Minnesota, and have been taken up by the Senate Select Committee on Ethics. Durenburger says that the financial practices in question had been approved by the Federal Election Commission.

## Jim Wright under grand jury investigation

A federal grand jury in Washington, D.C. is conducting an investigation of former House Speaker Jim Wright, according to lawyers for several organizations that have received subpoenas. Lawyers for Southwest Texas State University and the National Association of Realtors said on Aug. 8 that they had been asked to produce records related to their purchases of Jim Wright's book *Reflections of a Public Man*.

The Justice Department had previously confirmed that it was investigating the former Democratic leader, but the Aug. 8 comments about the issue of subpoenas were the first indication that a grand jury had been convened.

Justice Department spokesman David Runkel declined to comment on the subpoenas, but did say that his department has an ongoing investigation. Runkel noted that the department had closely monitored the 11-month inquiry by the ethics committee into Wright's financial dealings.