

Congressional Closeup by William C. Jones

Nunn proposes two-tier arms control talks

Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), delivering the annual Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London on Sept. 4, put forward, according to a report in the London *Financial Times*, a two-tier plan which would provide for the preparation of future arms control agreements while present negotiations were being completed.

According to the Nunn plan, simultaneous to the finalizing of negotiations which are presently ongoing with Moscow (the Vienna talks on conventional forces, the strategic arms talks, and the chemical weapons negotiations), a U.S.-Soviet group of experts should be set up to explore future options without attempting to negotiate specific agreements. When the experts reach agreement on a basic conceptual approach and decide that there is a genuine opportunity for achieving accords on specific issues, the talks could be transferred to a formal negotiating forum.

In his speech, Nunn suggested that the agenda for such "second tier" talks should include exploratory discussions of a ban on all land-based multiple warhead missiles, a ban or limitations on nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles, limitations on anti-satellite systems and nuclear tests, and even deeper cuts in conventional forces than those being discussed at present.

His most sensational proposal, however, was to "defuse" discussions within the NATO countries by holding exploratory talks with Moscow on the subject. Nunn claimed that recent developments in the Soviet Union presented opportunities for "revolutionary advances" on arms control. Nunn also said that the United States and its European allies needed to rethink alliance strategy if the Soviet empire re-

mains internally besieged and externally benign, and called for a policy of "specialization through build-down."

Nunn also exercised the popular congressional pastime of Europe-bashing, by warning that if the Europeans cut their forces, the U.S. would cut its own proportionally.

Baucus calls for waiving Jackson-Vanik

Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee's International Trade subcommittee, proposed waiving the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in a commentary in the Aug. 30 *Journal of Commerce*. Jackson-Vanik prohibits granting the Soviet Union Most Favored Nation tariff treatment and access to government credit programs, until it liberalizes its emigration policy.

Noting that President Bush had announced in a speech on May 12 that he was willing to consider waiving Jackson-Vanik, if there were signs of such a liberalization, Baucus claims that the Soviets now "seem to be obliging." Baucus pointed to a proposed radical reform of the Soviet emigration law this fall.

Baucus, a representative of a major farm state, points out that the Soviet Union is already a major customer for U.S. agricultural exports, and notes that in 1988 it was the American farmer's largest export market for wheat, a market which, he says, could expand considerably. Baucus proposes that, on the basis of the token measures the Soviets have taken to allow greater emigration, the "Jackson-Vanik Amendment should be declared a success and waived," arguing that "eco-

nomics cooperation will do more to speed reform in the Soviet Union than geopolitical confrontation."

Male prostitutes get congressional privileges

While Congress was away for the August recess, a scandal blew up involving homosexual Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank (D). It became public that Frank had hired as an aide a male prostitute whom he had earlier paid to have sex with. The aide claims that he had used the congressman's Washington apartment for operating his "escort" business.

According to the Sept. 7 *Washington Times*, the aide, Stephen Gobie, also used the congressman's car to keep appointments for sexual rendezvous. Several times between 1985 and 1987, Frank wrote to the sergeant-at-arms of the House of Representatives to cancel parking tickets incurred by Gobie.

Frank has asked for a House Ethics Committee investigation, hoping to clear his name. Gobie said that Frank would often ask him about his sexual forays. "It was a vicarious thrill for him," Gobie told the *Times*.

Although the scandals around Frank probably have not affected his chances for reelection, given his liberal constituency, there are many on Capitol Hill who warn that Frank's standing as a legislator has taken a serious fall. As chairman of the Judiciary subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, Frank has been the guiding force behind legislation limiting lobbying activities of former congressmen and staffers. The loss of credibility caused by the affair could limit Frank's ability to push legislation through Congress.

Massachusetts GOP officials are

calling for Frank's resignation and House Republicans are demanding a full Ethics Committee probe. According to *Roll Call*, the Capitol Hill newspaper, John Banzhaf, a George Washington University law professor, has asked U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens to conduct a criminal investigation into Frank's activities. Banzhaf is seeking prosecution of Frank on charges of sodomy as a result of his hiring a prostitute. In Washington, sodomy is a felony offense which carries a penalty of up to 10 years in prison.

House votes MFN status for Hungary

The House of Representatives on Sept. 7 passed a resolution 221 to 169 extending Most Favored Nation status to Hungary. Such status would eliminate trade restrictions, a move which some see as an effort by the United States to ease the situation in an East bloc country that has apparently been able to chart an independent policy.

Many congressmen, however, have expressed concern that increased trade with Hungary could lead to a transfer of sensitive technology to the Soviet Union, with which Hungary still conducts the major portion of its trade.

House urges support for Iranian resistance

At least 186 members of the House of Representatives have urged Secretary of State James A. Baker III to end the administration's flirtation with the "moderate" leadership in Iran and instead to recognize Iranian resistance groups seeking to topple the government.

In a letter initiated by Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-Calif.), the con-

gressmen also called on the administration to work with its allies to impose an arms embargo and oil boycott against Iran. The letter warns the administration against "continuing to speculate and hope for the miraculous emergence of moderates from within the present ruling clique." The letter notes that those identified as moderates, including President Ali Akhbar Rafsanjani, "have continued the repressive policies of Khomeini." The letter was signed by 121 Democrats and 65 Republicans.

Democrats ponder funds for Bush war on drugs

"What we need is another D-Day, not another Vietnam, not a limited war, fought on the cheap and destined for stalemate and human tragedy," commented Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) in the official Democratic response to President Bush's drug war proposal of Sept. 5.

While praising Bush's initiative, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) commented that "substantially more federal resources are needed . . . to make our national strategy more credible."

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics, called the Bush initiative a "nickel and dime" approach to the drug war.

Democrats are calling on Bush to raise taxes in order to mobilize the resources to make good on his promises, rather than to gut other important programs to put money into the drug war. In many instances, programs which are on the chopping block are themselves essential in any overall strategy for a war on drugs, such as a program which is attempting to sepa-

rate juvenile and adult offenders in the prison system.

Democratic Party in search of a message

U.S. friends abroad have noted the present dilemma of the Democratic Party, that the current policies it champions are not serving its constituency.

Lionel Barber, a correspondent for the London *Financial Times*, related in an article published Sept. 6 the ironic situation of House Ways and Means Committee chairman Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), who found himself in his home district in Chicago in August, surrounded by an angry mob of senior citizens, protesting increased premiums they were to pay for catastrophic health care insurance. Barber attributes the "weak-kneed performance" of the Democrats generally to several factors: the miserable showing in the presidential election last year; the scandals around former Speaker of the House Jim Wright (Tex.) and Rep. Tony Coelho (Calif.); a new and relatively inexperienced Majority Leader; and budget cuts that mean Democratic constituents are less willing to give money by which the party has traditionally maintained its voter support.

Barber relates how some of the Democratic House members were willing to back, in some form, President Bush's proposal for a cut in the tax rate of capital gains, an issue which was supposed to be an opportunity to force Bush to renege on his no-tax promise. Barber notes that there is not much optimism on Capitol Hill that the new House leadership, together with Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), can deliver a clear message to voters.