

missions were often mounted by the ag organizations and the other non-profits, chambers of commerce, the manufacturing associations. The Agribusiness Council was a leader in these early activities, and also in the identification of investment opportunities in developing countries.

EIR: In recent months, we've seen some dramatic and hopeful policy shifts by Russia, and other governments, taking actions in the interests of their national economies. In November and December, the Primakov government announced that they want to rebuild their agriculture sector, which was taken down drastically in the 1990s during the so-called shock-therapy reform, and import-dependence period, that began at the insistence of Margaret Thatcher and George Bush.

The Chinese government has been moving on agriculture development going back to 1978—livestock, infrastructure, input ratios, etc. In December 1998, President Jiang Zemin of China visited Russia, stressing mutual development. And elsewhere, there are other national-interest protective measures being taken, in line with what you have been promoting. What do you think about the prospects for this?

Hollis: Let a thousand flowers bloom! We were involved in outreach to China in the 1980s. We took a mission to the Soviet Union in 1990, and the follow-up series of activities led to the creation of a Polish Agribusiness Council in 1994.

Our meetings in Moscow in 1990 were aimed at trying to get some of the different republics to show interest in setting up these types of self-help, people-to-people initiatives, to begin to get their agriculture better understood and organized, and even to encourage in some areas the private enterprise themes. These initiatives—that took so well in Poland as many Polish farmers own their own land, it didn't take in Russia where land ownership is problematic.

The alternate approach that was pushed at that time—with Dwayne Andreas again in the vanguard, and his sidekick Bob Strauss, who was confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Moscow in the last months of the Gorbachov era—created a framework for selling more grain into Russia, and at the same time, sending legions of consultants to, basically, recycle the money that had been pledged to the Russians to help them get their economy in a free-market model. Just recycling consultants, and at the same time, pumping large amounts of com-

Jennings Randolph: in the FDR tradition

Jennings Randolph (1902-98), from West Virginia, served in the U.S. Congress for a period spanning more than five decades: in the House of Representatives from 1933 to 1947, and the U.S. Senate from 1958 to 1985, when he retired. Sworn into office with the New Deal landslide and Franklin Delano Roosevelt



in 1933, Randolph championed the disabled and “the man and woman at the wayside in the road,” as he put it, as well as many of the “FDR Democrat” policy priorities, including infrastructure development (Tennessee Valley Authority, aviation, highways) and social programs (such as medical care for the aged on Social Security).

During his Senate career, he turned his attention to international affairs. Rejecting the “bushel for a barrel” rhetoric popular in the 1970s, one initiative he launched was the founding of the Agri-Energy Roundtable (AER); another was the U.S. Institute of Peace. The AER model reflected his own complex interests from high technology

to alleviating hunger and malnutrition. AER's efforts intersected the debate on food and energy security issues, and Randolph's leadership underscored his fervent desire to build bridges between energy-surplus and agricultural-exporting nations. The diplomatic “dialogue” approach with member-nations of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries embodied in AER activities, enabled him to advance cooperative agricultural and energy projects with key Third World leaders.

AER's work spawned affiliated agribusiness associations around the world, for example, in Africa, India, the Philippines, Poland, and throughout the United States. In 1985, after retiring from the Senate, he assumed leadership of the Agribusiness Council (ABC). Randolph's views on how to expand a nation's economic base are relevant to our strategic situation today. Agribusiness Council president Nicholas Hollis, who worked with Randolph for more than a decade, described him in the following way, in the Dec. 10 interview with *EIR*:

A ‘balance’ for national self-sufficiency

“Jennings Randolph was a great humanitarian, and during his last term in the Senate, he took a great interest in these [Agribusiness Council] programs. When he became the chairman of ABC, he helped develop a dialogue between food and energy countries. It was a unique program of exchanges on the *balanced* nature of developing self-sufficiency in energy and food. He used those themes to build an international roundtable, of which the Agribusiness Council is the U.S. component, but which has

modities into them, has resulted, I think, in a situation which is truly tragic, where the Russians really don't have much of a clue at this point, how to get their agricultural act together.

We've pumped a lot of materials in—commodities sold on various programs that have been sponsored by USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture], and financed by U.S. taxpayers, and the money has benefitted companies like ADM. This is one reason ADM's continuing ability to do business with the government (i.e., USDA), after price-fixing convictions is so questionable. The result is that the Russians are more dependent than ever on outside food which contributed to great humiliation and serious political unrest. While at the same time the solutions and the ideas have never really been given a chance—some of the most effective programs are people-to-people, on-the-ground teaching exercises, that are designed to help the Russians understand the use of appropriate technologies and ways in which they can actually build up yields—few of those programs are being given any attention or support.

EIR: In the early period, were you involved in the farm ex-

spawned a whole series of international conferences, trade missions, and ongoing non-profit associations in a number of countries. "Jennings Randolph was one of the legislative fathers of the TVA. In 1987, he was able to convince the TVA to join the Agribusiness association. The TVA did, in fact, participate in some of our international and national meetings, and was instrumental in setting up, with us, a renewable energy subcommittee, chaired by a top TVA official. This was about ten years ago. That particular activity has generated a number of subcommittee meetings, and there is more interest at the state-level agribusiness councils now as a result of that.

"So that, even against the backdrop of falling energy prices, and falling commodity prices, which makes many of the renewable energy feedstocks difficult to justify economically, the continued interest in renewables is part of this. TVA has been a big leader in biomass energy technologies.

"Randolph was a living legend. He had a charisma, and a humanitarian spirit that transcended all the passing issues. And when he would get up at the head table at meetings overseas, and tell his West Virginia homespun jokes, and, of course, weave more serious thoughts in. He was just an inspiration to those that were in these meetings, who subsequently went out into the world and to set up their own independent associations, and tried to treat people a little bit more humanely and honestly."

For more information on The Jennings Randolph Recognition Project, contact: e-mail: agenergy@aol.com, or fax (202) 887-9178.

change programs that went back and forth?

Hollis: Certainly, we have encouraged all those farmer exchange programs that we're aware of. One in particular, we worked with in Iowa. But that is a little afield from what we try to do. Our approach, and our basic idea all along, was to get the Russians, and the Ukrainians to form their own self-help organizations based on private enterprise principles. I was in Ukraine in 1997, and went into the countryside, and made some speeches and had some meetings with local Ukrainian farmers and agricultural processing leaders and other leaders, who were interested in trying to use the "Polish model," which is progressing.

A basic problem is that ag organizations that are based on the *commodity* model. They are set up and connected in the way that our system is here, directly to the USDA, with its "subsidy engine" feeding into the associations. They quickly lose independence and become, by proxy, nothing more than government toadies. Thus, if government policy is wrong, the entities are misguided, and the individuals in them have no way to correct the mistakes that are made at the highest levels. These are not true associations at all, and they also don't really have the flexibility that a true association has, to begin to implement creative ideas and programming that really give spirit and heart to people on the ground. And the spirit and the lack of enthusiasm and hope that one sees now across the former Iron Curtain countries—with some exceptions—is really disheartening and very sad, because *it needn't be this way*.

EIR: The toll had been great. But specifics for agriculture development have been announced in Russia, including: the priority of expanding poultry development; rescheduling, just putting off, debt in the farm and food-processing sectors, in order to keep operations going; increasing inputs of fertilizer; and generally, revving things up. The bad situation today is seen as an opportunity to make way for something better.

Hollis: I'm not saying we oughtn't to sell into Russia. We should help U.S. farm income by marketing. But what I am saying is, that there is a predatory nature in force-feeding the goose, or jamming huge amounts of dumped commodities into countries which can be counterproductive.

EIR: You know that U.S. chicken parts imported into Russia have become legendary: They are called "Bush legs," after George Bush!

Hollis: Right. The Russians have developed a taste for these foods but I'm not sure there is not a direct link between the chicken-leg issue, and the desire the Russians have to get self-sufficient in chicken production. They'll be reaching not for U.S. chicken company expertise, but they will be looking to Hungarian and Polish companies, that they have more compatibility with.

The Russians are resentful of the kind of marketing approach that withholds the money that was promised on the aid side, and instead jams them with this hard-trade lever,