
Profile: Robert Strauss

Bush names Democrat to Moscow embassy

by Marcia Merry

That Robert S. Strauss, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and trade representative to Beijing during the Carter administration, should be appointed as President Bush's choice for ambassador to the Soviet Union, should raise some eyebrows. Is this a first step toward establishing a bipartisan caretaker government, in response to the President's manifest incapacities—physical as well as mental—for the job?

While a Democrat, Strauss has longstanding ties to fellow Texans George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, including a business partnership with Baker in the late 1970s. Furthermore, Strauss can be counted on to represent the same economic warfare policies being pushed by the Bush administration against Europe, Japan, the Soviet Union, as well as the developing sector.

While Strauss does not know Russian, he does have one qualification for his post that is bound to appeal to Bush: He is an advocate of the doctrine of the *aura of power*. Probably his most important qualification, from the point view of the part of Anglo-American establishment most committed to trade war, is his connection with Dwayne Andreas of Archer Daniels Midland (ADM).

Strauss has also been connected with Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.), who has recently been mooted as a presidential candidate should Bush decline a second term. Strauss and Dole collaborated on programs to subsidize the development of ethanol as a gasoline substitute. In 1980, when a tariff was proposed against imported alcohol, Bob "the Fixer" Strauss, then chairman of President Carter's reelection campaign, is reported to have intervened to get Carter to oppose the tariff, and protect the ADM monopoly.

Conflicts of interest

Since 1981, Strauss has been on the board of the food commodities giant ADM, which company is also a client of the law firm Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer and Feld, which was established by Strauss over 40 years ago, and for which he is considered the "star" partner. ADM is the largest exporter in the current U.S. grain trade flow to the Soviet Union, and has other ventures in the works.

Strauss has other business connections that may conflict with government ethics codes: Coca-Cola Co., McDonnell

Douglas Corp., Fujitsu, Inc., Levi Strauss & Co., Pillsbury Co., RJR Nabisco, AT&T, Communications Satellite Corp., and MCA, Inc.

The implications of these connections, the profits and potential favoritism involved, are expected to be raised as issues at the Senate nomination hearings in July. It may even come up that Strauss stands to gain if MCA gets a movie re-run concession in the U.S.S.R.

Strauss has already taken actions to attempt to counter any suspicions of personal conflict by announcing that he will resign from ADM and other corporate boards, placing his assets in a blind trust, as well as selling his partnership in his law firm. Of course, he is not resigning from his lifelong commitment to the policies indicated by these business ties. This is clear when we focus upon his connection to Archer Daniels Midland.

The grain cartels

Archer Daniels Midland is an agribusiness giant which works in tandem with Cargill, the largest privately held firm in the United States and the center of the global food cartel. While other top U.S. companies are in financial crisis, ADM is doing \$8 billion a year net sales and other operating income, and Cargill is doing \$40 billion.

Based in Minnetonka, Minnesota, Cargill is actually run as a kind of international shadow government. When Mikhail Gorbachov made his U.S. tour in 1990, Minnesota was his first stop after Washington, D.C. Technically a U.S.-based multinational headed by Whitney MacMillan, Cargill is run for elitist transatlantic interests in the tradition of the British East India Company, and similar imperialist operations. Cargill controls over 25% of the annual world grain trade.

Strauss's good friend, the head of ADM, is Dwayne Andreas, considered to be the successor of the recently deceased Armand Hammer as the czar of East-West trade and back-channel relations. Andreas was groomed by Cargill for seven years, from 1945 to 1952, and then "let loose" to build up ADM as a loyal opposition company to Cargill and other cartel giants. While Cargill moved to lower its public profile, Andreas moved onto center stage, especially in regard to cartel operations in the East bloc. A forthcoming book, *Supermarketer to the World* by E.J. Kahn, Jr., (Time-Warner, 1991), portrays Andreas as just a dirt farmer made good, but he is actually a loyal operative for the cartels, and his henchman is Strauss.

In 1984, Andreas headed up the Presidential Task Force on International Private Enterprise, which launched the present-day policy of linking aid with trade concessions. Also in 1984, Andreas became chairman of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Trade and Economic Council, the private sector group founded in 1974, and first chaired by David Rockefeller. Under the U.S. Export Enhancement Program, ADM stands to make millions from the recently announced agriculture trade credits for Moscow.