



BAPTIST PRESS

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79-155

Religious Leaders Briefed

On SALT; Push for Senate OK

WASHINGTON (BP)--Representatives of 27 national religious organizations carried a message to the U.S. Senate Sept. 12 that the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) must be ratified.

After a day of intensive briefing by President Carter and other administration officials and ranking members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the 155 participants in the Consultation on SALT sponsored by the Religious Committee on SALT fanned out over Capitol Hill to lobby senators for the ratification of the treaty.

Baptist sponsors of the Religious Committee on SALT are the American Baptist Churches in the USA, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. All three have gone on record in support of the treaty. In June, the Southern Baptist Convention also voted in annual session to support the SALT treaty.

President Carter addressed the group at a White House breakfast before a trip to Hartford, Conn., for an energy speech. Carter stressed the consequences of Senate rejection of the treaty in his remarks.

"Our present allies might have to put out an anchor to the East as an insurance policy," Carter said, "if we fail to ratify SALT. It would also be a tremendous propaganda weapon for the Soviets if we gave them the opportunity to say that we are warmongers as evidenced by rejection of the treaty...I want to put the cap back in the bottle and contain the nuclear genie that is roaming the world now."

Zbigniew Brzezinski, assistant to the president for National Security Affairs, briefed the religious leaders on the objectives of the treaty. He said that the four major objectives of the negotiation process had been achieved "unequivocally....We did not achieve the objectives to the extent we had hoped but satisfactorily," Brzezinski admitted.

The possible linkage of SALT and the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba came up repeatedly throughout the day. Brzezinski, as well as spokespersons for the religious committee, denied any logical linkage. "To hold up or reject SALT because of the Cuban situation is copping out, chickening out," Brzezinski charged. "It is cheap, posturing, and an inefficient way out of supporting the treaty."

Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is holding hearings on SALT, said that Soviet combat troops in Cuba do "in fact, place the treaty in jeopardy." The powerful senator said, "This is a new reality in the Senate and it's no use pretending it's not there. The mood of the Senate--this is a prediction, not advocacy--is not prepared to ratify as long as Russian combat troops remain in Cuba."

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Church also said that he hopes to conclude committee action in October and send the treaty to the full Senate for early ratification.

Sen. Jacob Javits, R-N.Y., ranking Republican member of the Foreign Relations Committee, agreed with Church that there must be a satisfactory resolution of the Cuban situation before SALT can be ratified but refused to go so far as to say that meant the removal of Soviet troops.

Vice President Walter F. Mondale, speaking at a luncheon for the religious leaders, noted that the nuclear risks increase every year and that the United States must work "to reduce the risk of the final madness of a holocaust." He continued, "No nation has a higher responsibility than our own. We introduced nuclear weapons to the world."

Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, called for meeting the social needs of the nation or our "national security will be eroded no matter how great we are militarily."

Schindler also called SALT "a more acceptable arms management agreement than arms reduction" but supported its ratification.

In another major address, John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, denounced nuclear weapons and said that "our political and military authorities are responsible to a higher set of values; no longer are they defending 'the national security', they are defending human values, the survival and future welfare of the whole human race."

In a statement read to the press, spokespersons for the religious committee said "strategic nuclear arms proliferation is an obscenity, an affront to Creation, a colossal perversion of the most important human right of them all, the right to survival of life on this planet."

-30-

Baptist Disaster Relief
Units Locate in Hurricane Area

Baptist Press
9/14/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Mobile disaster relief units from the Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana state Baptist conventions have moved into the area devastated by Hurricane Frederic.

But due to communications foul-ups resulting from the hurricane devastation of 30 counties of Alabama, Mississippi and Florida not much information was available as of Sept. 14 about the extent of damage to Baptist property or details of relief efforts.

The Mississippi unit set up feeding and relief operations in Pascagoula, Miss., one of the hardest hit towns, while Louisiana's unit located in hard-hit Mobile, Ala., and the Florida unit located across the bay from Mobile.

Meanwhile, disaster units from the Texas, Oklahoma and Tennessee state Baptist conventions were reported to be on standby.

The Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission is working in cooperation with state Baptist Brotherhood departments to coordinate location of the disaster relief units and the eventual dispatching of repair crews of volunteers. The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and several state Baptist conventions are standing by to provide

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relief funds and other help as needed.

Reports indicate most damage occurred in Alabama and Mississippi. "We were extremely fortunate," Fred Martin, director of missions for the Pensacola Bay (Fla.) Baptist Association, told Baptist Press.

"Although some expensive homes along the water were damaged, our area was basically spared," he said. "If the hurricane had been 15 miles further east it would have been a different story, though."

Martin, the only direct contact Baptist Press could make in the disaster area because of crippled communications, said only four Florida churches are believed to have suffered any damage.

In fact, Martin said, the Florida disaster unit came first to his area and then diverted to Alabama where the need was greater.

Although damage reports were not available from the area, Baptist Press learned that Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian, Miss., which was destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969, suffered little or no damage. Also reports indicate that Mobile College, a Baptist school, was not damaged, although the home of the college's president, William Weaver, was reportedly heavily damaged.

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS: Baptist Press will update the above hurricane damage story when we receive reports from correspondents covering the damage and relief efforts.

Jack Gritz Retires
Early in Oklahoma

Baptist Press
9/14/79

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. (BP)--The board of directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma approved a motion that Jack Gritz, editor of the Baptist Messenger, retire early, effective Sept. 11.

Gritz, who will be 63 in December, observed his 30th anniversary as editor of the Oklahoma Baptist weekly news publication, July 31. He has served longer than any current editor of one of 34 state Baptist newspapers.

Before joining the paper in 1949, when he succeeded Albert McClellan as editor, Gritz was a pastor in Oklahoma and former associate secretary of the state convention's department of religious education.

A native of Okmulgee, Okla., Gritz is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and earned the master of theology degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and the doctor of theology degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He is a former president of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

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Farmer Named Interim
Chief Executive in Illinois

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--Arthur E. Farmer will serve as interim executive secretary of the Illinois Baptist State Association until a successor is found for James Smith, who resigned to become executive director of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Farmer, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church, Carbondale, Ill., recently retired as the Illinois Baptist special ministries director. He will work on a part-time basis, a day or two a week, as interim executive secretary.

Wendell Garrison, pastor of the Winstanley Baptist Church, Fairview Heights, Ill., is chairman of a committee to find a permanent successor for Smith.

-30-

Mrs. Johns Is
No Longer Alone

By Barbara Rust

Baptist Press

DALLAS (BP)--An anonymous good samaritan left \$2,900 on a reporter's desk after reading a story in the Dallas Morning News about Joanne Johns, whose battle with cancer has left her face disfigured.

The donor left the money, all in \$100 bills, in a small envelope with an unsigned note on the desk of the reporter, Steve Kenny, who wrote the story.

"I hope this will help you," the note said. "The Lord has blessed me and he wants me to share it with you. Best of luck. May the Lord bless you, too."

Almost 50 persons responded the day the story appeared about Mrs. Johns, 46, whose face was left severely disfigured after skin cancer operations seven years ago. Her nose, right eye, socket and brow were removed in the operations. Since the surgery, she has remained a recluse, barely able to support herself and her 9-year-old daughter. The money, she says, will be used to fly to Augusta, Ga., where she will be fitted with a new face prosthesis.

Most of the persons who called the day the story appeared said they wanted to send money. A few persons volunteered clothing and food, and one person offered to give Mrs. Johns a job.

Mrs. Johns, a member of Beverly Hills Baptist Church, Dallas, wept as she accepted the money. She described the anonymous donation and the calls of help she answered all that day as a "miracle of God."

"I've always said that God has chosen me as an example," she said. "I'm an example of the grace of God and how it exists in the middle of such hardship."

"God's done this. I just know he has," she said. "I would never ask for anything like this, but it sure will make things easier from now on."

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Mrs. Johns said her faith is the only strength she has to survive. It has kept her from punishing herself for not seeking treatment when the cancer was in its early stages, and it has kept her from feeling bitter about her face.

Her first prosthesis, designed five years ago by Bill Stenstrom, a medical illustrator at Southwestern Medical School, has turned orange with age and no longer fits her face.

Stenstrom now works at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, and he wants to design the new prosthesis.

"She's the sweetest person I know," he said. "She doesn't have an ounce of bitterness."