

## Williams postponement: victory against Abscam

by Warren Hamerman and Anita Gallagher

The Senate officially announced Dec. 1 that expulsion proceedings against Abscam frame-up victim Sen. Harrison Williams (D-N.J.) would be indefinitely postponed from Dec. 3. The Senate leadership's decision came after Williams established with increasing success that Justice Department misconduct and perjury pervaded the DOJ's investigation and prosecution of him, and Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) urged that the Senate abjure a "rush to judgment."

The decision of the Senate leadership, in fact, is the outcome of one of the most stunning political counterattacks of the recent period. Labor and constituency groupings had been mobilized, with coordination from the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) of *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche, into an effective national force. Their efforts delivered a tactical defeat to the Watergate apparatus of tainted elements in the Justice Department associated with former Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti and with the FBI. It is also a major tactical setback for the Eastern Establishment press.

### A brief review

Williams was a target of a special police-state operation run by the Carter Justice Department in which DOJ operatives, including convicted felons, attempted to bribe political officials. Although he refused every bribe, Williams was convicted last spring at the urging of Judge George Pratt, who withheld critical evidence from the jury.

On Nov. 17, Senator Williams requested of his Senate peers the right to conduct an extraordinary full

trial before the Senate itself, with the complete right to cross-examine Civiletti, current FBI Director William Webster, and 23 other witnesses, including the federal prosecutor in his case, Thomas Puccio, and other senior Justice Department officials. Senate leaders of both parties, spearheaded by Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.), rejected outright the demand. On Nov. 23, Senator Williams took the unprecedented action of going to federal court in Washington against that decision, demanding that the court enforce his request for a full trial before his peers because prosecution witnesses had perjured themselves.

Two days later, Katharine Graham's *Washington Post* ran a front-page box and long feature article attacking Senator Williams and Mr. LaRouche for forcing to the surface the Nazi corruption in the Carter Justice Department. LaRouche and his associates in the 9,000-member NDPC—one of the largest political action committee memberships in American politics—with Senator Williams could blow the lid off more than Abscam. Williams himself has publicly charged that among Jimmy Carter's and Benjamin Civiletti's primary motivations for "getting" Williams was that in 1976, and again in 1980, the Senator was in the midst of national efforts to prevent Carter from winning the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

The *Washington Post* article obliquely expressed the reason for Katharine Graham's hysteria. Graham, the publisher of the *Post*, is one of the longest-standing political opponents of LaRouche on international and domestic policy issues, centering around the questions

of depopulation and de-industrialization. The Nov. 25 *Post* article states: "Senator Williams, who said the NDPC represents his most active grass-roots support, described LaRouche and his supporters as 'very thoughtful people' and said their research into the constitutional questions raised by the Abscam case have been 'very accurate.' . . . In literature discussing what he describes as the 'frameup' of Williams, LaRouche . . . describes Abscam as a 'treasonous' action designed to break the will of Congress, then goes on to doubt the 'moral capacity' of Congressmen to stand up to it. 'There are members of Congress on both sides of the aisle so degenerate or so swayed by political opportunism that they variously promote or condone policies more hideous than those perpetrated by Albert Speer and others under Adolf Hitler,' he writes. . . ."

In over 30 states, LaRouche's political forces have secured signatures from prominent officials on the following urgent telegram to members of the U.S. Senate:

We the undersigned, condemn the entrapment and harassment methods of Abscam. If a constitutional democracy is to continue to function in this country, these sorts of operations must be rooted out. In that light, we call on the U.S. Senate to conduct a real investigation of this sordid affair and to put off any railroad vote on Sen. Harrison Williams until such an investigation is concluded.

Signers include numerous Democratic Party county chairmen, heads of labor unions, and leaders of state and regional central labor councils.

### **'Rush to judgment' delayed**

The postponement occurred when Senator Inouye asked the Senate leadership for time to prepare Williams's defense. Inouye said that if he were to do only that, it would take more than a month. The request by the widely respected Senator was the culmination of a process of counterattacks against the prosecution which mark a turning point in the entire Abscam war on constituency-based politics. Inouye made the point to the Senate leadership that "We would look like a bunch of self-righteous people trying to preserve our image in a rush to judgment," if the Senate voted to expel Williams and then his conviction was overturned. William's motions charging violation of due process are still pending before Judge Pratt.

Inouye also impressed upon the Senate leadership that all 15 expulsions in the history of the Senate had been for treason, and all occurred after the appellate process was complete.

That reading of history contradicts the construction that the Ethics Committee and other Senators are attempting to put on the Williams case: that the issue is

not whether Williams committed a crime, but whether he is guilty of "ethically repugnant" behavior—i.e., whether the news media had succeeded in making him "look bad," no matter what the facts.

### **Williams meets the press**

In a Dec. 1 press conference following the announcement of the postponement of the expulsion vote until at least Jan. 25, 1982, when the Senate reconvenes, Williams said that "The Senate action this morning will now give me the opportunity I need to fully develop all the evidence and present a winning defense against charges of unethical conduct. . . . This is the first time in history that the executive branch has moved in and tried to set up someone, has tried to manufacture and create what they hoped would be criminal conduct."

Under questioning, Williams criticized the Senate Ethics Committee, saying that it had made "a mistake in restricting its investigation. . . . I question whether the Ethics Committee was getting a comprehensive picture. . . . The Ethics Committee has continued to deny me the minutes of executive meetings."

One of the difficulties involved in the Ethics Committee revealing its deliberations is that the committee's chief investigator, Donald Sanders, has functioned throughout as virtually part of Abscam Prosecutor Tom Puccio's team.

To repeated questions of whether he would resign in January if he did not have 34 votes needed to defeat expulsion, Williams said, "I intend to fight all the way. It is not for myself, but for the principles." He added that if he were able to raise what he called "the right kind of fight,"

to whether the Senate was victimizing him to make the Ethics Committee look clean, Williams said, "I think the Senate is being victimized by the FBI and Justice Department, and I am the center of that. This kind of conduct is wrong in this country. It is loaded with the opportunity for the worst kind of intimidation and fear-mongering of the legislative branch.

Two of the questions directed to Williams concerned the role of the NDPC in his defense. Williams replied, "Anyone who feels as I do that basic constitutional provisions have been massively violated in this matter and feels that they must speak out, then I am glad that they are fighting this fight." The press conference was blacked out in the major Eastern press; but on Dec. 2-4, the *Baltimore Sun*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post* each carried editorials attacking Williams.

Late in November, Williams's office announced that the Senator had assembled substantial new evidence of Justice Department misconduct and perjury on the part of witnesses, including FBI agents. The postponement of the Senate vote will enable Williams to make use of that evidence.