

Bush: war on drugs at the crossroads

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Speaking before the press in Houston, Texas on Saturday, June 7, Vice-President George Bush announced that the Reagan administration has officially declared “for the first time . . . that the international drug trade is a national security concern” linked directly to international terrorism. Bush issued a partially declassified version of a National Security Decision Directive on Narcotics and National Security that was signed by President Reagan on April 8 of this year. It gives the military a far broader role in the War on Drugs, particularly within the Western Hemisphere.

“The narcotics threat—primarily a health and welfare issue in the '60s, evolving into a civil and corruption issue in the '70s—is now recognized as a national security concern,” Bush stated in a press release issued along with a six-point summary version of the Decision Directive (see *Documentation*).

Those six points detail an expanded role for U.S. military forces and military-directed technologies in bilateral and multilateral anti-narcoterrorist programs with other sovereign governments of the hemisphere. They are virtually identical to a proposal for a hemispheric war on drugs issued by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. at a conference sponsored by *Executive Intelligence Review* in Mexico City in March 1985.

Despite the vice-president's powerful words, a number of U.S. intelligence and federal law-enforcement sources contacted by *EIR* acknowledged that the presidential directive has a double edge. In effect, the Bush public announcement of the tough new administration stand against narcoterrorism reflects a long-simmering factional brawl within the administration: Will the war on drugs actually go in the direction of the LaRouche proposal and become the cornerstone of a revived Monroe Doctrine, or will it be the cover for a revival of “Roosevelt Corollary” gunboat diplomacy to collect the private bankers' debt from Latin neighbors already bled near to death by the IMF.

Several officials interviewed characterized the decision to release the declassified version of the presidential directive in Houston—near the Mexican border—as a concession to those in the administration who are intent on bashing Mexico into further submission to IMF looting. These forces would wish to use the Mexican role as a transshipment point in the cocaine and marijuana traffic into the United States to tar the

ruling PRI with the same “corruption” label that brought down Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos in a State Department/CIA-sponsored coup d'état earlier this year.

On Thursday, June 12, *New York Times* reporter Seymour Hersh, often a mouthpiece for the bankers' faction of U.S. intelligence tied to former CIA director William Colby, published a 3,000-word frontpage piece falsely accusing Panamanian National Guard chief Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega of being at the center of drug trafficking and arms sales to the M-19 Colombian terrorists.

Both Mexico and Panama have been targeted for State Department and “bankers CIA” destabilization this summer as part of Wall Street's drive to smash any movement towards an Ibero-American debtors' cartel, and to create a mess on the U.S. southern border to provide a stronger argument for Henry Kissinger's policy of decoupling America from Western Europe. In a recent article under Kissinger's byline in the London *Observer*, the former secretary of state called for U.S. forces to be pulled out of Europe. Kissinger cronies such as Deputy Defense Secretary Fred Iklé have called on the United States to plan to station 100,000 American troops in the Mexico-Central America corridor within 2-3 years.

Drugs and debt

In his remarks in Houston, Vice-President Bush cited the November 1985 M-19 raid on the Colombian Judicial Palace, resulting in over 100 deaths, as hard proof of the connection between narcotics traffickers and terrorists. In that raid, the M-19 destroyed all of the court records on 80 Colombian dope-smugglers scheduled for extradition to the United States for trial.

The involvement of U.S. military and related technologies, including satellite surveillance photos pinpointing locations of production areas, clandestine air strips, and laboratories, if utilized on a large scale, would create the conditions for a successful routing of the narcoterrorist apparatus. U.S. training and equipping of special anti-narcoterrorist units of the Ibero-American military and police agencies would dramatically augment those capabilities and end the conditions in which many Ibero-American governments now find themselves: Their own armed forces are outstripped by narcoterrorist armies with modern weapons, communications, and transportation.

For the Presidential Decision Directive to translate into an actual hemispheric War on Drugs, the Reagan administration “Gang of Three”—Donald T. Regan, George Shultz, and James Baker III—would have to be fired. Until that happens, and until the administration breaks free from the stranglehold of Wall Street and the IMF, the internal war over the implementation of the directive will continue, and may very well be turned into its very opposite: a booster for the dope cartel through a U.S.-sponsored destabilization of two of its key neighbors to the South—Mexico and Panama.

Bush statement on drugs and terrorism

The following is excerpted from the opening statement by Vice-President George Bush at a press conference in Houston, Texas, June 7, 1986.

. . . This spring, the President issued a directive, recently declassified in part, that explicitly recognizes the threat to U.S. national security from drug trafficking. For the first time, through the directive, the U.S. Government specifically states that the international drug trade is a national security concern because of its ability to destabilize democratic allies through the corruption of political and judicial institutions. It is also an important source of financing for some insurgent and terrorist groups.

Anyone who doubts the seriousness of this threat should remember the November 6, 1985 takeover of the Colombian Palace of Justice by M-19 guerrillas. When the fighting was over, more than 100 individuals had lost their lives, among them 12 Colombian Supreme Court Justices. According to the Colombian Government, many of the principal documents sought out and destroyed during the bloody takeover were U.S. extradition requests for major Colombian drug traffickers. As Chairman of the Administration's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism, I can tell you that the demonstrable role drug trafficking played in the massacre is anything but an isolated event.

Accordingly, we have declared it United States policy to aggressively join with other nations to halt the production and flow of illegal drugs, to reduce the ability of terrorists to derive support from drug trafficking, and to strengthen the ability of individual governments to confront and defeat this insidious threat.

I'll explain why this presidential directive is important. First, the directive mandates that narcotics control objectives should be fully integrated into this nation's foreign assistance planning efforts. Those goals must be given high priority in discussions by administration officials with their foreign counterparts. Also, the directive significantly improves the

ability of the Department of Defense and our intelligence agencies to support our war on drugs subject to readiness and statutory constraints. More generally, the directive reaffirms for the international community, in the strongest possible terms, this nation's resolve to find solutions to a problem that knows no borders. . . .

I hope that making the presidential directive public will . . . make every American understand the very real link between drugs and terrorism. Too many families are already painfully aware of the connection between drugs and terror in our homes, in our streets, and in our schools. Now we must convey that when you buy drugs, you could also very well be subsidizing terrorist activities overseas. The message is one which deserves to be just that simple and direct.

The following is excerpted from a Fact Sheet drawn up by the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System.

On April 8, 1986, the President signed a National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) on Narcotics and National Security. That document assessed the threat from the international narcotics trade and directed specific actions to increase the effectiveness of U.S. counter-narcotics efforts. Some of its major points are:

- Criminal drug trafficking organizations can corrupt political and economic institutions and weaken the ability of foreign governments to control key areas of their own territory and populace.

- Some insurgent and terrorist groups cooperate closely with drug traffickers and use this as a major source of funds.

- It is the policy of the United States, working in cooperation with other nations, to halt the production and flow of illicit narcotics, reduce the ability of insurgent and terrorist groups to use drug trafficking to support their activities, and strengthen the ability of individual governments to confront and defeat this threat.

- Among the actions directed by the President were:

- Full consideration of drug control activities in our foreign assistance planning.

- An expanded role for U.S. military forces in supporting counter-narcotics efforts.

- Additional emphasis on narcotics as a national security issue in discussions with other nations.

- Greater participation by the U.S. intelligence community in supporting efforts to counter drug trafficking.

- Improvements in counter-narcotics telecommunications capability.

- More assistance to other nations in establishing and implementing their own drug abuse and education programs.

- The Attorney General, as Chairman of the National Drug Enforcement Policy Board, shall submit a report to the President giving the status of plans and accomplishments under the Directive.