

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

NBC hit for coverup of anti-drug campaign

NBC White House correspondent Chris Wallace was singled out for attack twice during the first week of August by White House spokesman Larry Speakes, as President Reagan's new anti-drug initiative was launched.

Speakes charged on Aug. 1 that Wallace's coverage of the initial announcement of the plan was "the worst" of all the networks, aimed, he said, at creating hysteria by misrepresenting the program as a threat to the civil liberties of federal employees.

Two days later, Wallace and NBC were attacked again. When a *Los Angeles Times* poll was cited by one reporter, showing public confidence in the national networks, Speakes shot back, "I bet that didn't include NBC!"

The rebuke to NBC-TV is most apt; as *EIR* has long emphasized, that network is run by dope lobby interests who have issued libellous attacks against Lyndon LaRouche. NBC periodically features pro-drug "journalists" from *High Times* magazine such as Dennis King, Chip Berlet, and Mark Nykanen (the latter now an NBC employee), issuing wild accusations against LaRouche.

Also under fire from Speakes were

the two principal house organs of the Eastern Liberal Establishment. After the President went live on national television to spell out his anti-drug program, Speakes said, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* both "buried" the story the next day. The *Post* put it on page 8, the *Times* on page 24.

When Speakes announced that President Reagan planned to hold his next public press conference in Chicago on Aug. 12, one reporter cracked, "What are you trying to do, avoid us?"

ABC-TV's Sam Donaldson turned to UPI's Helen Thomas and grumbled, "I am going to advise my network that they do not carry the press conference." Speakes overheard the remark, and repeated it into the microphone, saying, "I want this on the record, what Sam just said."

Donaldson defensively retracted his statement as "not serious."

On Aug. 7, when the White House press corps was told that President Reagan and other Cabinet members had decided to take a drug test, pandemonium ensued. Donaldson belatedly that the issue of "how voluntary" the program for federal employees is, "is the difference between a police state and a free state"

But not one of the journalists has yet dared ask whether, under the new policy, mandatory drug testing might be required of them.

They all are required to have Secret Service security clearances to be allowed on the White House grounds every day. And, since every federal employee with a security clearance is required to submit to mandatory testing, why shouldn't that policy extend to others who require a security clearance, whether or not they're employed by the government?

I volunteer to be the first member of the White House press corps to take the test. How about all the rest of you?

What's up in Chicago?

The sudden decision of President Reagan to hold a nationally televised press conference in Chicago on Aug. 12, as part of a day-long swing through Illinois, demonstrates the new importance that Illinois holds for the future of the President's policies, as a result of the upset victories by candidates aligned with Lyndon LaRouche last spring.

The President wants to take full advantage of the disarray that has been created in the Democratic Party of Illinois by the antics of gubernatorial candidate Adlai Stevenson III.

Stevenson's bungling was of course precipitated by the victories of Janice Hart and Mark Fairchild, LaRouche Democrats, for statewide offices in the Democratic primary in March. Their campaign for a war on drugs and their famous pledge to "drive the tanks down State Street if that's what it will take to stop drugs," had a lot to do with their success and popularity.

Reagan certainly knows that, with the amount of anti-drug sentiment that has already been catalyzed in Illinois by the LaRouche candidates, the state is a key location to escalate his new anti-drug initiative.

As for Stevenson, he went the other direction, leaving his home state for Washington, D.C. during the second week in August to plead for support from the Democratic National Committee in his effort to run as the "Solidarity Party" candidate for Illinois governor.

Members of the Washington press corps encountering Stevenson for the first time since his days here as a U.S. senator walked away in disbelief. "I heard this guy was boring, but as I sat here listening to him, I found it impossible to concentrate," one reporter said. "He is unbelievable."