

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Carlton Turner: War on Drugs can be won

White House Drug Abuse Adviser Carlton Turner appeared Aug. 26 on Worldnet, the U.S. Information Agency international television network, to field questions from reporters in Colombia, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

Turner hit back hard at a battery of provocative questions from the reporter for *El Tiempo*, the Bogota newspaper linked to the pro-drug López Michelsen networks. He praised the bi-lateral treaties between the United States and Colombia, called the Colombian police force the "best, most efficient anywhere," and said that he has "every good feeling in the world I can have" about Colombia's anti-drug efforts.

He said Colombia "has set an example for all the rest of the Americas," and also singled out for praise Peru's "Operation Condor" efforts, and willingness to use its Air Force to go after drug labs.

El Tiempo has attacked the Colombian extradition treaty, saying it only puts the lives of justices in Colombia in jeopardy. Turner said nations cannot afford to buckle under to the threat of terrorists. *El Tiempo* also argued that eradication efforts in Colombia only helped marijuana and cocaine producers in the United States. Turner answered by detailing the domestic U.S. program against drugs.

Attack on U.S. demand for drugs outlined

Asked repeatedly about domestic U.S. anti-drug efforts by the Colombian, Mexican, and Dominican Republic reporters, Turner said: "There are now

moves to introduce legislation into the U.S. Congress to make drug pushing punishable by death." Eradication programs using herbicides, he said, are now ongoing in all 50 U.S. states, compared to only 7 in 1980.

He said that drug use is down dramatically in the United States (50% of its peak level in 1979 for marijuana among teenagers) in all categories except cocaine. He predicted that mandatory drug testing will "eliminated 67% of all cocaine users, all but the hard core."

Asked if mandatory testing would be declared unconstitutional, he said, "No one has a constitutional right to break the law." Drug abusers are "criminals" who "are financing the suicide of my nation," and although they should receive treatment rather than prison, they should be "held accountable and responsible for their actions."

"We are committed to getting across the idea that it is the drug user who is financing the mafias that run the entire drug trade, and the terrorism that goes along with it," he said. "The guy funding the whole operation is the guy handing the dealer the money. We can put aircraft in the air, we can put enforcement along the border, but as long as the guy wearing the three-piece suit can walk down Wall Street or anywhere else in this country and buy drugs with impunity, they're going to put the fuel in those planes and they're going to be coming in. . . . We want to make drug use intolerable in the U.S."

Turner attacked the U.S. media, especially the movies—naming the "Cheech and Chong" example—for having "glamorized" drugs, a trend, he said, that is now changing fast.

He cited one case of media responsibility for spreading the use of drugs: the phoney argument made a few years ago that marijuana was an effective treatment for glaucoma. "That was to-

tally false, and we documented it time and again, but the media kept refusing to publish the truth, and perpetuated the lie about it," Turner said. He noted a change in the attitude of the U.S. population toward intolerance toward drugs, which is pressuring the media to "clean up its act."

Domestic eradication efforts, in combination with those in 14 nations with which the United States is now cooperating in this hemisphere, has created a severe shortage of marijuana on the streets of the United States. "This is being attributed to weather conditions," he said, "because the media does not want to admit that our efforts are actually succeeding. But they are."

'DEA goes where it is invited first'

"We go only where we are invited by mutual agreement," Turner told Mexican reporters in response to the controversy over U.S. Drug Enforcement agents to operate in Mexico. Turner said he did not know the exact form of the agreement, but insisted that "we were invited, or we would not be there."

On the question of "militarization" of the U.S.-Mexican border, Turner said that the U.S. "posse comitatus" law prevents the military from engaging in any law-enforcement arrests, and that "Operation Alliance" along the U.S.-Mexican border is already under way as a cooperative U.S.-Mexican effort using, on the U.S. side, Customs and other civilian agencies, and some equipment borrowed from the military.

Turner refused to take the media's bait and criticize the Mexican government in its anti-drug effort, saying only: "I'll never be satisfied until the drugs are stopped for good. And that goes for my country, too."