

Bush drug plan: a step toward a real war?

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Declaring drugs “the gravest domestic threat facing our nation today,” President George Bush unveiled his National Drug Control Strategy in a nationwide television address on Sept. 5. The President’s speech, like the 136-page plan prepared by White House drug czar William Bennett, while flawed in several key respects, does represent the first serious effort by any American administration to craft a comprehensive assault against the drug plague. Held up against the Trilateral Commission-dominated Jimmy Carter administration’s 1976-80 unabashed support for drug legalization, the Bush plan is a potential first step in the right direction which must be expanded into a full-scale War on Drugs.

Measured in budgetary terms, the Bush plan would spend close to \$8 billion in FY 1990 on four basic areas:

- Tougher domestic law enforcement, including spending \$1.5 billion on “more prisons, more jails, more courts, more prosecutors.” These funds would be heavily weighted toward local and state police efforts directed against hardcore street drug crime.
- Fighting drugs at the source, with a five-year \$2 billion program for military and law enforcement assistance in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, and another \$1.5 billion on interdiction efforts in the Caribbean and at the U.S. borders.
- An increase of \$321 million in spending on drug treatment.
- A \$250 million increase in federal funds for school and community drug prevention programs to “stop illegal drug use before it starts.”

Congressional candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr., the author of a 1985 comprehensive War on Drugs proposal (see

page 60) and a recognized international expert on narco-terrorism, distanced himself from other leading Democrats who were quick to criticize the President’s plan.

In a campaign statement issued on Sept. 6, LaRouche stated, “I don’t want to waste time joining with the critics. There are mistakes in the plan, there are mistakes of omission—but, rather, I wish to strengthen the program.” LaRouche specifically called upon the Bush administration to “break with two of the world’s biggest drug pushers,” Hafez Assad of Syria, an architect of international narco-terrorism, and Communist China, which is responsible for an estimated \$70 billion a year in heroin trafficking. Both Assad and the Beijing regime are favorites of ex-Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, whose consulting company, Kissinger Associates, has been linked to some of the Chinese government agencies accused of involvement in the Golden Triangle opium trade. Back during the Nixon administration, Kissinger was personally responsible for the coverup of Communist China’s hand in the opium trade, ordering the maps of the Golden Triangle to be redrawn to exclude areas that extended into mainland China.

LaRouche also endorsed recent statements in the British press which identified “those who are proposing the legalization of drugs” as “the political fronts for those who are actually pushing it.” LaRouche cited recent pro-legalization editorial comments in the London *Economist* as exemplary of this propaganda and support component of the drug cartel. The *Economist* speaks for those major financial institutions in London and elsewhere which launder hundreds of billions of dollars in illegal drug profits annually. By even conserva-

tive estimates, the international drug cartel earns upwards of \$600 billion a year in profits. Combined with the tightly linked traffic in illegal weapons, the yearly figure soars to nearly \$1.5 trillion.

LaRouche's War on Drugs

In his March 13, 1985 fifteen-point proposal, delivered at a conference in Mexico City, Lyndon LaRouche called for a World War II-style war mobilization against the drug cartel, uniting all of the nations of the Western Hemisphere in a combined military effort to totally eradicate the drug trade—at the point of production, in the laboratories, in transit, on the streets of the United States—and most of all in the corridors of power.

Through his 1978 commissioning of the book-length profile of the international drug cartel, *Dope, Inc.*, LaRouche did more than any other living human being to name the names of the “citizens above suspicion” in both the East and the West who unleashed the Opium War strategy against the world’s population in the pursuit of their oligarchical power. Following the release of *Dope, Inc.*, associates of LaRouche helped found Anti-Drug Coalitions throughout the Western Hemisphere, in Western Europe, and in Asia, drawing tens of thousands of concerned citizens into the fight and publishing a magazine, *War on Drugs*, in as many as seven languages (it still appears today in four).

The Anti-Drug Coalitions were an outgrowth of a campaign waged beginning in 1977 by LaRouche and associates to defeat the effort to “decriminalize” marijuana and cocaine use in the United States, an effort run directly out of the Carter White House by then-drug adviser Dr. Peter Bourne. In a 1977 pamphlet, *Bust the Dope Ring in the White House*, LaRouche associates not only exposed the Trilateral Commission drug legalization scheme. They drew in such institutions as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, whose president, Los Angeles Police Chief Ed Davis, contributed an article to the pamphlet. In a matter of months, drug decriminalization bills in a dozen states were defeated, and such drug lobby groups as the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Legislation (NORML) routed.

In 1985, simultaneous to the release of the LaRouche Mexico City plan, an expanded edition of *Dope, Inc.* was published first in Spanish and then in English. This updated edition first popularized the phrase “narco-terrorism,” to describe the thorough integration of Soviet- and Chinese-sponsored irregular warfare forces into the drug trade. Later that year, LaRouche assisted the government of Guatemala in carrying out a pilot project targeting Soviet- and Cuban-sponsored narco-terrorist forces seeking to destabilize that key Central American nation. That effort, “Operation Guatusa I,” efficiently preempted a major Communist insurgency effort by exposing the guerrillas’ role in drug production and trafficking.

LaRouche’s identification of some of the world’s leading

bankers, as well as the Communist governments of the Soviet Union and China, as “kingpins” in the world drug trade, targeted him for slanders and eventual political frameup and jailing. As the world’s best known anti-drug crusader, LaRouche’s continued imprisonment remains a major impediment to a full-scale Bush administration assault on the narco-terrorist international. So long as LaRouche remains behind bars as a political prisoner, serious anti-drug forces worldwide will remain skeptical that the Bush administration is fully committed to combatting drugs.

A proper role for the military

In his Mexico City plan, LaRouche emphasized that a joint military assault on the drug cartel could be carried out with full respect for the sovereignty of all nations of the Western Hemisphere. He cautioned against the deployment of U.S. troops into Ibero-America, defining America’s role rather as a technological and support capability bolstering the indigenous military forces of the region.

President Bush last month provided the government of Colombia with an initial \$65 million in emergency military assistance to fight the Medellín and Cali cocaine cartels, following the assassination of Liberal Party presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán and several top police and judicial officials.

In his televised address, Bush carried this theme forward: “The message to the drug cartels is this: The rules have changed. We will help any government that wants our help. When requested, we will for the first time make available the appropriate resources of America’s armed forces. We will intensify our efforts against drug smugglers on the high seas, in international airspace and at our borders. We will stop the flow of chemicals from the United States used to process drugs. We will pursue and enforce international agreements to track drug money to the front men and financiers. And then we will handcuff these money launderers, and jail them—just like any street dealer. And for the drug kingpins, the death penalty.”

Nasty ‘turf’ problems

In both the President’s televised remarks and the written Drug Control Plan, an unusual emphasis was placed upon internecine “turf” warfare within the federal government’s anti-drug agencies themselves. The report calls for new guidelines to be crafted providing for incentives to inter-agency cooperation.

Senior drug enforcement officials have reported that these remarks were in large measure directed at Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. According to these officials, Thornburgh recently put out a department-wide order prohibiting cooperation with drug czar Bennett’s office, ostensibly in protest over Bennett’s encroachment on the AG’s role as America’s “top cop.”

Thornburgh has reportedly gone so far as to order a secret

alternate—even less ambitious—proposal to be prepared in anticipation of the Bennett plan being stillborn in Congress.

Whatever the motives behind Thornburgh's reported guerrilla warfare against the White House plan, the result is that the Drug Enforcement Administration, designated by Bennett to be a lead agency in the federal anti-drug effort, is in reported disarray, a situation that must be repaired if the anti-drug effort is to go forward.

Modest goals, initial successes

Held up against the LaRouche 15-point war plan, the Bush administration's National Drug Control Strategy falls short of an all-out war effort. In an appendix to the written plan produced by William Bennett's office, a series of two-year and ten-year objectives are spelled out. In 10 different categories of drug use, the Bush administration hopes to decrease drug usage by a mere 10% over the next two years and by only 50% over the next decade.

Perhaps the most glaring omission from the report and from the President's nationwide address is the total absence of any mention of narco-terrorism. Pentagon sources have complained bitterly that since 1985, there has been a de facto ban on any discussion of the involvement of Soviet-sponsored insurgency groups in the drug trade—even in Ibero-America. These gag orders have been linked to the Reagan and Bush administrations' giving of absolute priority to the "new détente" with the Soviet Union since the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachov.

Even with these flaws, largely through the valiant effort of the Colombian government of President Virgilio Barco, cited by President Bush on TV, the activities of the drug cartel have already been disrupted. Drug enforcement officials report that drug flows from Ibero-America into the United States between late July and the first week in August were down to a trickle, as the result of intensive crackdowns and seizures of drug barons' assets in Colombia. President Barco's restoration of the extradition treaty with the United States scored its first major victory on Sept. 6 with the arrival in Atlanta, Georgia of Eduardo Martínez Romero, a major money launderer for the Medellín Cartel who was arrested in Colombia during the initial crackdown following the Galán assassination.

Perhaps the single biggest test of the Bush war on drugs will come over the issue of the involvement of the major commercial banks in the laundering of drug money. The Bennett plan talks tough about drug money launderers and gives priority to intelligence relating to dope cash flows. On the other hand, Attorney General Thornburgh's most recent appointment as special assistant is Robert Mueller, the former chief assistant U.S. Attorney under William Weld in Boston and the man who engineered the 1985 coverup of the Bank of Boston when that staid Boston Brahmin institution was caught by the Treasury Department washing over \$1 billion in dirty money into Switzerland.

Bankers back mafia demands for drug

Even before the ink had dried on U.S. drug czar William Bennett's plan of action against illegal drugs, the international dope lobby was on its hind legs, crying that cocaine, heroin, marijuana and their derivatives should be legalized. Spokesman from the "right" and the "left," from Milton Friedman to Jimmy Carter's cocaine-pushing adviser Peter Bourne, from the prestigious London *Economist* to the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), have issued nearly identical arguments that the war on drugs has been lost, powerful banking institutions to launder over \$500 billion in illegal drug money each year, must be protected.

Great Britain's *Economist* magazine led the charge the week before the administration's announcement, with an editorial and feature story on what it snidely termed "Mission Impossible." The magazine offered the same defeatist nostrums which British opium traders have always served up to every colonial government which has ever attempted to protect its population from drugs. Equating drugs and alcohol, the *Economist* warned that "prohibition's failure is more dangerous yet, both for individual drug takers and for societies corrupted, subverted and terrorized by the drug gangs. . . . Demand creates supply, despite the panoply of international conventions and national laws. . . . Repeal them, replace them by control, taxation and discouragement. Until that is done, the slaughter in the United States, and the destruction of Colombia, will continue."

The London *Financial Times* focused its criticism on the President's assertion that "crack . . . is murdering our children," by retorting that "these evils are caused not by drugs themselves, but by the fact that they are sold in an unregulated, gang-infested black market." In order to avoid the costs of fighting the drug cartels, the *Financial Times* proposes to "decriminalise drug abuse itself, while expanding education and treatment. Addicts would then be able to register and obtain drugs, on a maintenance basis, through official channels. In this way the link that binds the addict to the black marketeers would be cut, though the trade itself would remain illegal."

In the United States, the same people who guided Presi-