

Clinton's drug policy will increase illegal drug flows

by Ronald Kokinda

The Clinton administration signalled a dramatic change in U.S. drug policy on Sept. 13. But if President Clinton or anyone in his administration claims that this policy change was developed on the basis of an agenda of fighting drugs, it's a lie. The political agenda behind the shift in drug strategy is not to wage a war on drugs, but has as its aim to accelerate the destruction of nation-states, and to weaken the nation-building commitment to continuing economic and technological progress.

According to State Department Counselor Tim Wirth, who previewed the change in an address to a conference of international journalists convened by the U.S. Information Agency in Washington, the interdiction of drugs will no longer be a priority. "On the specific issue of counternarcotics policy, the United States government and this administration is . . . changing its strategy . . . away from a predominantly interdiction effort," i.e., reducing drug flows by capturing drugs before and after they enter the United States, he said. Wirth's speech reflects the results of a just-completed study of U.S. drug policy carried out by the Clinton National Security Council. The NSC review is designed to support a directive that is to be signed by President Clinton shortly, and announced as part of a new administration drug strategy to be unveiled by national drug policy director Lee Brown.

It is virtually certain that, by junking interdiction rather than mounting a *competent* interdiction campaign, there will be a huge increase in cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and other harmful and addictive substances coming into the United States.

Law enforcement agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard and Customs Service are justifiably furious over the Clinton administration's shift in policy. It will deprive them of needed Defense Department equipment and backup. "The Customs and Coast Guard are going nuts over this," the Sept. 16 *Washington Post* quoted one administration official. "It's a pitched battle."

Instead of interdiction, Wirth said, the administration will focus its drug-control efforts primarily in two areas: reducing the demand for drugs at home, and beefing up the U.S. military presence in drug-exporting countries, particularly in Ibero-America.

The administration's proposal to shift U.S. Defense Department resources from interdiction to more direct interventions in Ibero-American and other drug-producing countries is a recipe for mischief. While the ostensible purpose of this change is to assist foreign governments in dismantling their home-based drug cartels, it will be used instead to extend Washington's political and economic tentacles into these countries, and to provide a justification for U.S. military invasions of countries, such as the U.S. intervention against Manuel Noriega's Panama, which resist the so-called new world order.

Wirth said the intention is "to work very carefully with the host country to develop a series—a set of institutions that will benefit not only our goal of lowering the level of narcotics leaving countries . . . [but] will also further our goal of advancing democracy."

This outlook complements the administration's recently unveiled so-called "Bottom-Up" strategic review, which identifies colonial-style policing operations in Third World "hot spots" and "democracy building," i.e., subversion of national institutions, as the major area for future U.S. military deployments (see *EIR*, Sept. 17, p. 63). As Morton H. Halperin, Clinton's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Democracy and Peacekeeping, argued in the Summer 1993 issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine, if Americans saw that U.S. policymakers "were promoting democracy around the globe, they would be more likely to support American policy with financial commitments and *military action* when necessary to accomplish" foreign policy objectives (emphasis added).

The Drug Enforcement Administration's recent announcement that it will pull out from Peru by the end of September because of budget cuts sends the message that, in reality, the pathetic amounts of aid which U.S. allies were receiving under the rubric of fighting drugs, will now be cut. "We feel obligated to pull our agents out of Peru at the end of this month because we have no budget," DEA head Robert Bonner said.

Wirth opened the speech by praising the new President of Bolivia, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, calling him a "quite remarkable individual." Sanchez is an open advocate of drug legalization, and, as Bolivia's finance minister from 1985-87, instituted the Jeffrey Sachs-authored "shock therapy" program, which led to a huge boom in the country's drug trade. Wirth held up Bolivia as a model for drug-fighting efforts throughout the continent. It was a "very moving event to see this kind of breadth of democracy in Bolivia, and very, very impressive," he said, detailing how the administration's so-called "democracy" programs will be used to reorganize justice and police systems and provide military training.

A real war on drugs

There is no doubt that the Reagan-Bush "war on drugs" was a failure. But as *EIR* has documented repeatedly (see *EIR*, July 30, 1993), the Bush administration's drug-interdiction effort was deliberately conducted in such a way that it *would* fail, and thus laid the basis for rejecting all interdiction attempts—the policy which underlies the Clinton administration's policy reorientation.

Wirth claimed that a major component of the policy will be to "develop economic alternatives . . . so that the people who are growing drugs have an alternative way of making money for themselves and their families." But as statesman Lyndon LaRouche has emphasized, a serious war on drugs must prioritize economic development and an economic policy which relieves the burden of usurious debt, provides long-term, low-interest credits for productive investments and infrastructure, allows access to advanced technology, and ensures a fair price for the producer. Similarly, a serious war on drugs must dry up the drug-money flows into the banking system. Nothing of the sort has been forthcoming from the Clinton administration.

The Ibero-American Catholic Bishops Conference in Mexico City reflected some of these concerns in a Sept. 13 declaration. The U.S.-inspired war on drugs is a total failure because it doesn't hurt the real powers in the narco-business, the bishops said, according to *EPD*, the German Lutheran Church's news agency. The anti-drug "war" is only hurting the small dealer and planters, while the big fish are continuing their dealings totally unhampered, and the way the United States is conducting this war has been to the disadvantage of the security and sovereignty of the states of Ibero-America, they charged. They called for aid programs that help farmers to turn to normal agriculture and defy drug cultivation, and

said that the injustice of the present world trade system must be corrected to allow Ibero-American farmers to sell their agricultural products at acceptable prices.

Shift in foreign aid

The anti-nation-state agenda which the Clinton team has put forward in its drug and defense policies, is also reshaping foreign aid policy to eliminate even the pretense of nation-building assistance. An administration interagency team, under NSC direction, has proposed a radical overhaul of foreign aid programs that would abandon country funding. Instead, 10 national goals, such as "transition from communism to democracy" and "nonproliferation and arms control," would be defined, and money would be allocated toward the goals, rather than to countries. Within these goals, managers would approve specific programs and choose between competing groups seeking to operate them. These groups would include U.S. government agencies, United Nations non-governmental organizations, and international voluntary organizations.

"We're no longer, in our foreign policy or international policies, defined by relationships between nations as much as we are by ideas and events . . . population, narcotics, the idea of democracy and free governments, the environment, terrorism," Wirth said. "The old constructs had Washington as the center hub with spokes going out to various nations and our foreign policy was defined by the relationship between capitals. That is no longer the case."

Under the new approach, the Executive branch rather than Congress would decide which projects would be funded in which countries in line with the congressionally approved goals. The plan has been presented to cabinet officers, and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake must now decide what to recommend.

Moving toward decriminalization

The Clinton policy shift fits into the blueprint for drug legalization of the Drug Policy Foundation and other pro-drug advocates. An investigation carried out by *EIR* earlier this year revealed that the advocates of drug legalization were hoping that Clinton would change U.S. drug policy in exactly the way the NSC proposes, arguing that this would lead, if not to outright legalization, at least to the "de-demonization" of drugs.

Last spring, when Clinton initiated the NSC study, the *Economist*, the City of London magazine which has advocated drug legalization, hailed the new administration for doing "what no American administration has dared do in living memory—set the scene for a proper debate" on legalizing drugs. When a top administration official such as Tim Wirth welcomes the election of a drug-legalization proponent as President of a drug-exporting country, one tends to conclude that the "proper debate" initiated by the Clinton administration has resulted in a new drug policy that de facto favors "free trade" in drugs.