

Corruption in the DOJ: 'Enough is enough!'

by Debra Hanania Freeman

When Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) brought down his gavel on the morning of April 30, calling his committee's Oversight Hearings on the U.S. Department of Justice to order, the air was thick with anticipation. Since the beginning of this year, the Department of Justice has come under heavy fire by both the Congress and the White House, as evidence of widespread corruption, judicial misconduct, and subsequent cover-ups, especially by long-time Department of Justice "careerists," has continued to build. U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno's appearance provided a key opportunity for U.S. senators, on both sides of the aisle, to initiate the kind of broad investigation necessary to effect the clean-out of the corrupt permanent bureaucracy that most agree is long overdue.

But, as the questioning began, it was clear that committee members had agreed, in advance, that there would be no serious tackling of the department's persistent pattern of misconduct, nor of the fact that both Attorney General Reno and FBI Director Louis Freeh have actively engaged in a cover-up of abuses committed by their predecessors and subordinates.

Republicans, led by Hatch, criticized Reno's decision not to seek an independent counsel's investigation of campaign financing, insisting that she had misread the law and ignored clear conflicts of interest. Reno responded, as she has in the past, that there was no specific and credible evidence of any wrongdoing by the Clinton administration that would warrant appointment of an independent counsel. Democrats protested that they did not criticize Reno's Republican predecessor, William Barr, when he used the same standard not to seek an independent counsel at one point during the Bush administration. And, so it went. Both sides prefaced their

remarks with high praise for Reno's overall performance and conduct.

While there is little doubt that there are members of the committee, in both parties, who have serious concerns about the department's behavior, they chose not to take this opportunity to voice those concerns. Whether or not these questions will come up during further hearings scheduled to occur before the summer recess, remains an open question.

Meanwhile, other elected officials, trial attorneys, and constituent leaders, are growing increasingly impatient with the continued failure of the Congress to exercise its oversight responsibility. Earlier this year, members of an independent panel of state legislators, led by former U.S. Rep. James Mann and Alabama attorney JL Chestnut, who had conducted hearings to investigate misconduct by the Department of Justice almost two years ago, renewed their call for Congress to conduct broad investigative hearings. They specifically cited cases of politically and racially motivated targeting of victims, including the FBI's Operation Frühmenschen, and the DOJ Office of Special Investigations' "Nazi-hunting." The members of the Mann-Chestnut Commission particularly cited the judicial railroad of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates as the worst case of systematic Department of Justice misconduct to date.

Earlier in the day on April 30, a group of 18 prominent African-American legislators submitted a stinging statement, for inclusion in the Judiciary Committee's official proceedings of the oversight hearings, in which they insist that any continued failure by the Congress to examine all the relevant evidence in the cases cited by the Mann-Chestnut Commission would constitute Congressional complicity in political corruption and cover-up.

The U.S. government's ongoing failure to correct such past abuses, particularly its failure to exonerate LaRouche and his political associates, five of whom remain incarcerated in Virginia prisons, is becoming more and more of an issue internationally, as leaders from around the world stress the critical importance of LaRouche's direct participation in shaping a solution to the current global economic and financial crisis. (See p. 62, for example, for a report on a forum in Washington addressed by former Jordanian parliamentarian Laith Shubeilat, calling for LaRouche's exoneration.)

Documentation

The following statement, titled "Enough Is Enough! Clean Out Department of Justice Corruption Now!," was entered in the record of the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on April 30.

Recent revelations that the FBI intentionally mishandled evidence and gave false testimony that resulted in the 1989 impeachment of U.S. District Judge Alcee Hastings from the federal bench, when viewed along with the landmark decision by U.S. District Judge Falcon Hawkins, dismissing the notorious "Operation Lost Trust" frame-up cases in South Carolina because of evidence of massive corruption and misconduct within the U.S. Department of Justice, confirm what many of us have known for some time. The "permanent bureaucracy" inside the Department of Justice, working as a virtual political assassination bureau, has routinely engaged in a repertoire of practices that includes cover-up, corruption, fraud, judicial abuse, and prosecutorial misconduct.

This fact was indisputably documented by a series of Independent Hearings to Investigate Misconduct by the U.S. Department of Justice, conducted on August 31-September 1, 1995. At those hearings, a panel that consisted of prominent state legislators from across the nation, and co-chaired by former U.S. Congressman James Mann, and distinguished Alabama attorney JL Chestnut, reviewed evidence and testimony of racially and/or politically motivated targeting of victims by the DOJ, that the United State Congress refused to hear. They examined cases of the targeting of African American public and elected officials under the FBI's Operation Frühmenschen, including the above-mentioned "Operation Lost Trust." They heard startling testimony of the misconduct of the DOJ's "Nazi-hunting" Office of Special Investigations, including the case that almost resulted in the execution of Ukrainian-born Cleveland auto-worker John Demjanjuk. And, they examined the judicial railroad of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates; a case that former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark described as "represent[ing]

a broader range of deliberate cunning and systematic misconduct, over a longer period of time, utilizing the power of the federal government, than any other prosecution by the U.S. government, in my time or to my knowledge."

Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI Director Louis Freeh have not only refused to clean out the "permanent bureaucrats," like Deputy Assistant Attorneys General Jack Keeney and Mark Richard, who are responsible for these abuses, but they have covered up for their past abuses, and allowed them to continue. And, thus far, the failure of both the Senate and House Judiciary Committees to fully exercise their oversight responsibility and hear *all* the relevant evidence of this massive corruption, especially in the cases cited above, has perpetuated a persistent pattern of cover-up.

It is time to put aside partisan concerns, and act to restore the American people's faith in their government. Clearly, there could be few issues more deserving of full Congressional oversight than this long-standing pattern of massive corruption within the U.S. Department of Justice.

Some of us have been victims of this corruption. All of us have been witnesses to it. Now we say, enough is enough! A clean-out is long overdue. And, it is our position, that if the relevant committees of the Congress refuse to hear this crucial evidence once again, we will see to it, that the stench of political corruption and cover-up follows them to the end of what will be very short political careers.

(Signed)

State Sen. Theo W. Mitchell, Greenville, South Carolina*

State Rep. William Clark, Prichard, Alabama

State Rep. Andrew M. Hayden, Uniontown, Alabama

State Rep. Tommie Houston, Birmingham, Alabama

State Rep. Thomas E. Jackson, Thomasville, Alabama

State Rep. Bryant Melton, Jr., Tuscaloosa, Alabama

State Rep. James L. Thomas, Selma, Alabama

State Rep. Ben McGee, Marion, Arkansas

State Rep. Ben Swan, Springfield, Massachusetts

State Sen. William L. Clay, Jr., Jefferson City, Missouri

State Rep. Charles Quincy Troupe, St. Louis, Missouri;

second vice president, Transit (ATU) local 788

State State Rep. Milton Toby Fitch, Wilson, North Carolina

State Rep. Howard J. Hunter, Jr., Conway, North Carolina; Deputy Minority Leader

State Rep. Harold James, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; chairman, Pennsylvania Black Caucus

State Sen. Robert Ford, Charleston, South Carolina

State Sen. Maggie Glover, Florence, South Carolina

State Sen. John Ford, Nashville, Tennessee

State Rep. Ira Murphy, Memphis, Tennessee*; General Sessions Judge*

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