

# Reno gives in, opens probe of President

by Edward Spannaus

Under threat of impeachment from Congressional Republicans, and guided by the corrupt permanent bureaucracy inside the Department of Justice, Attorney General Janet Reno has opened an initial investigation into fundraising by President Clinton, which could ultimately result in the appointment of a second special prosecutor against him. According to the *New York Times*, Reno took this step on the recommendation of the Justice Department task force that is already investigating Democratic National Committee fundraising and allegations of Chinese influence-buying.

The pretext for the new investigation of Clinton is the bogus issue of whether the President made fundraising calls from the Oval Office. The specific statute being cited has *no* application to what the President may have been doing—making fundraising calls to contributors outside the government. But, as one former Justice Department official observed, Reno had already “painted herself into a corner” by making a distinction between “hard money” and “soft money” in the question of Vice President Al Gore’s solicitations. Whether Reno did this out of incompetence, or on the malicious advice of her career prosecutors like Mark Richard, remains to be seen.

In any event, Reno has now opened up another avenue of assault on a President who is already besieged on many fronts.

Asked about this in a Sept. 23 radio interview with “EIR Talks,” Lyndon LaRouche said, “I don’t know what’s wrong with Janet Reno. I know there’s something very wrong with her. I have direct evidence of this.”

LaRouche said that Reno, “who was supposed to be a tough prosecutor, has turned out to be one of the most gutless wonders I’ve ever seen.” Although she came in, presumably as a tough prosecutor, “the Jack Keeneys, and the Mark Richards, and the others—the old apparatus that runs the Criminal Division of the Justice Department—just took her over, and later made her their patsy, right from Day One, as the Waco case shows, and the other cases.”

“She has been unable to do anything she was supposed to do as Attorney General,” LaRouche charged. “She’s simply a patsy for these guys.”

## The DOJ task force

Reno is being guided, in the campaign fundraising flap, by the special task force she created last November. This task

force operates under the control of Mark Richard, a 30-year Justice Department career prosecutor who is personally responsible for such outrages as the frameup of Cleveland autoworker John Demjanjuk, who was almost executed in Israel as a Nazi war criminal, based upon false evidence knowingly provided by the Office of Special Investigations, a Justice Department unit created by Richard and operating under his personal control.

On Sept. 16, it was reported that this task force, already consisting of 90 attorneys, FBI investigators, and others, was being expanded to add 40 more lawyers, FBI agents, and others. Although Reno made some changes in the leadership of the task force itself, it continues to operate under the overall supervision of Mark Richard and Lee Radek, the chief of the Public Integrity Section within the Criminal Division.

## Reno targets Clinton

Then on Sept. 20, the Justice Department announced that it had opened a formal inquiry into whether President Clinton had illegally solicited campaign contributions in telephone calls from the White House last year. “The Justice Department is reviewing whether allegations that the President illegally solicited campaign contributions on federal property should warrant a preliminary investigation under the Independent Counsel Act,” a statement said.

This is the same process that Reno has also recently initiated against Gore and against Hazel O’Leary, former secretary of energy. Independent counsels were previously appointed to investigate the late Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, and former Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros.

The law being cited against Clinton and Gore was passed in 1883 as part of civil service reform; its purpose was to protect government workers from shakedowns by their bosses. No one has ever been prosecuted under the law for making outside solicitations, and in fact the Justice Department has always refused to prosecute anyone for doing so.

But what Reno previously did, when the issue of Gore’s phone calls came up, was to say that the law didn’t apply because the money raised was “soft money” and not “hard money,” which is regulated under Federal election law. It was a fallacious distinction, which had no bearing on the law in question, but when allegations surfaced that Gore, and then also that Clinton, had solicited “hard money” over the telephone from their offices, Reno had boxed herself in—or, more likely, she allowed herself to be boxed in on the advice given by Mark Richard’s task force.

Thus, while it is highly improbable that either Clinton or Gore could be prosecuted under this law, the danger is that an independent counsel, once appointed, can go off in just about any direction he or she wants—further weakening a Chief Executive who is already under attack from enemies both foreign and domestic.