

LaRouche's role at center of fight over McDade-Murtha

by Debra Hanania-Freeman

On July 15, Joe McDade, the Pennsylvania Republican who is the author and principal co-sponsor of the Citizens' Protection Act of 1998, H.R. 3396, inserted the measure, as an amendment to the House Appropriations Committee bill that provides the budget for the U.S. Department of Justice. The bill, with the full text of McDade's amendment intact, was approved by the full committee in a voice vote that same day. The measure is expected to reach the House floor for a vote within a week.

The surprise move left many of the bill's supporters puzzled. H.R. 3396 was born out of McDade's outrage at the conduct of DOJ prosecutors when he was the target of a lengthy and costly politically motivated Federal prosecution. McDade has documented that Federal prosecutors intimidated his friends, subjected his family and staff to repeated hostile interrogations, and tried to convict him outside the courtroom through press leaks and other means.

While the charges were pending, McDade lost the chance to chair the powerful House Appropriations Committee, despite his status as the most senior Republican in the House of Representatives. Several months later, after having been the target of a ten-year campaign by the DOJ's "political assassination bureau," McDade was finally cleared of all charges against him. But, the damage had already been done.

McDade vowed that before he retired, he wanted to ensure that citizens would be protected from such flagrant abuse. H.R. 3396 requires that Federal prosecutors be held to the same standards of conduct and code of ethics as other attorneys. It defines punishable conduct and penalties, and creates an independent review board to monitor compliance with the standards.

McDade has repeatedly stated that his objective in introducing this legislation was to force a broad and far-reaching

public probe of DOJ misconduct; that, if the measure was to be truly effective at rooting out the systemic corruption and prosecutorial misconduct commonly associated with the DOJ's permanent bureaucracy, it had to be the subject of comprehensive hearings that would feature the most dramatic cases of Federal prosecutorial abuse.

In April, McDade told a Schiller Institute-sponsored delegation of prominent legislators and civil rights leaders, that with 218 co-sponsors, a simple majority of the House, he would have the power to personally determine the bill's fate, and guarantee that such hearings would occur.

The Schiller Institute, founded by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, has, for almost a decade, been engaged in a campaign against the Department of Justice's politically and racially motivated prosecutions, from the FBI's notorious Operation Fruehmen-schen, which targetted thousands of black elected and public officials for harassment and prosecution, to the politically motivated frame-up of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates. The institute decided to throw its full weight behind McDade's drive for hearings. The LaRouche movement launched an intense drive to mobilize elected officials, civic and political activists, and thousands of ordinary citizens across the nation, to contact their Congressional representatives. By July 15, that drive had resulted in 186 co-sponsors for H.R. 3396 officially recorded by the Clerk of the House of Representatives, and an estimated 21 more names waiting to be added to the list.

A surprising shift

It is not clear why, when his stated objective of having 218 co-sponsors was no more than a few days away, McDade shifted his strategy.

Well-informed Congressional sources say that, in order

to prevent hearings on the bill, excruciating pressure has been brought to bear on its co-sponsors. It is known that the DOJ has mobilized its entire gestapo apparatus, and all of its appendages throughout the Federal bureaucracy, against the bill. Attorney General Janet Reno attacked the bill in a public press conference and in testimony before a Senate panel. She signed her name to a 14-page memorandum, addressed to the leadership of the House Judiciary Committee, attacking the bill. She has also said that, should the legislation be passed, she would urge President Clinton to veto it.

Ironically, it is reported that House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) opposes the measure, because he fears that public hearings on H.R. 3396, especially at a time when Americans are growing increasingly disgusted by the antics of independent counsel Kenneth Starr, would cause an uncontrollable popular revolt against Gingrich's stated intention to initiate impeachment proceedings against the President.

Additionally, speaking on condition of anonymity, some members of Congress say that Gingrich has gained support for his efforts to kill H.R. 3396, by making Lyndon LaRouche the key issue in the fight. Apparently, Gingrich has sounded the alarm that public hearings would not only clear LaRouche's name, but would thrust LaRouche into the center of efforts to shape a new, more just financial system, as the current system moves toward a meltdown.

Congressman McDade's office denies that he has backed down from his commitment to public hearings. His staff claims that the move to attach his measure to the Appropriations bill simply amounts to a second approach. They point to the fact that McDade has not withdrawn H.R. 3396 as a "stand-alone" bill, and that if opponents of the bill succeed in an effort to strike the language from the Appropriations bill when it reaches the House floor, McDade will still fight for the House Judiciary Committee to schedule hearings.

But, Capitol Hill observers say that Joe McDade, who has served 36 years in the House, is too smart, and too experienced, to believe such a strategy would work. Even if the DOJ Appropriations bill were to pass a vote in the House, leaving McDade's amendment intact, the Senate version has no companion measure, and it is likely that the language would be struck in conference committee. At the same time, with the language now in the Appropriations bill, the Judiciary Committee has every excuse to continue to stall on setting a date for hearings. McDade can certainly ask the Judiciary Committee to reconsider scheduling hearings if the final version of the Appropriations bill ends up dropping his amendment, but sources say it will be so late in the session, that Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), who is known to be working with Gingrich to stop the bill, will simply let the bill die a quiet death in committee.

Schiller Institute escalates

While the fate of H.R. 3396 remains uncertain, legislative maneuvers and manipulations cannot put a lid on the popular

protest by a growing number of Americans against the political lynchings. In fact, those who have worked so hard to stop Congressional hearings on DOJ misconduct may, by the summer's end, wish they had let the hearings proceed in an environment they had some hope of controlling.

Instead, they will now have to contend with a situation that is far more difficult to control. In an effort to break the situation open, the Schiller Institute has announced that it will move to broaden the movement against human rights violations in the United States. Town meetings are being organized in major cities across the nation to take up three areas of abuse: 1) the human rights violations being carried out by the Department of Justice, in the LaRouche case, the Operation Fruehmenschen cases, the John Demjanjuk case, and others; 2) the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a slave labor program that can no longer be ignored; and, 3) the use of prisoners as a slave labor force, as proposed by Florida Rep. Bill McCollum's (R) effort to privatize Federal prisons. Newt Gingrich's "Conservative Revolution" crowd, as well as certain elements within the Democratic Party, who have worked under the umbrella of the National Endowment for Democracy to champion these policies, will be targeted. The national drive is expected to culminate in an event in Washington, D.C. in early September.

Videos Provide Evidence of DOJ Corruption

In August-September 1995, a group of distinguished state legislators and others, with the aid of the Schiller Institute, pulled together independent hearings "to investigate misconduct by the U.S. Department of Justice." They examined three types of cases: Operation Fruehmenschen against black elected officials; the LaRouche case; and the cases brought by the DOJ's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), including that against John Demjanjuk.

Two videos are currently available:

- DOJ Misconduct: 4 Case Studies (104 minutes),**
order number SIV-95-002, \$35.
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