

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Customs head wants to down drug planes

A bold anti-drug policy proposal to shoot down planes flying cocaine and other illegal drugs into the United States has been set before the Reagan cabinet by William von Raab, head of the U.S. Customs Service.

Von Raab's controversial plan, which has split the cabinet, is designed to stop the principal means by which deadly drugs are brought into the United States. Small planes, flying across the U.S. border from the Bahamas or Mexico, have eluded stepped-up interdiction efforts by U.S. Customs and Drug Enforcement Administration agents, by dropping their contraband from the air.

Frustrated U.S. anti-drug agents have watched with sophisticated new equipment as the planes load up with drugs, fly across the border, drop the drugs into a pre-arranged remote region, make a 360° turn, and fly across the border out of their reach. Agents radio the planes, informing them that they are breaking the law and demanding that they identify themselves and land, but they are ignored.

Von Raab, in a report sent to the President's cabinet last month, has said that the only way to cope with the problem is to give agents the authority to shoot the planes down.

"It would be a deterrent policy," Customs spokesman Dennis Murphy told me. "We would not need to use sidewinder missiles or 50mm guns to be effective. We could even use plastic bullets or paint that would only dis-

able, rather than destroy, the aircraft."

The four-page proposal created an uproar when it was first presented to a cabinet working group last month, according to reports. Parts of its contents were leaked to the *Washington Post*. But despite a strong division of opinion on the idea, it was forwarded to the full cabinet for consideration, and its fate will presumably be decided before the end of January.

Insiders report that CIA director William Webster and FBI director William Sessions are strongly against the proposal, while Education Secretary William Bennett, Coast Guard Commandant Yost, and, of course, von Raab favor it.

Murphy complained that there is a shortage of public officials willing to come out behind the policy. Congressmen who are otherwise obliged to adopt a tough anti-drug posture have been able to duck this issue by staying out of town on recess until after it is decided. Opponents of the idea are hoping it will die simply for lack of public exposure.

It's another case where President Reagan, who launched a "war on drugs" initiative in summer 1986, has apparently now decided that avoiding controversy is more expedient than escalating the fight.

In a speech to an anti-drug conference in Mexico City on March 13, 1985, Democratic presidential contender Lyndon LaRouche detailed a 15-point plan for a cooperative effort among nations to undertake a military-style war on drugs. The speech, published in the 1985 book, *A Program for America*, included the following statement: "All unlogged aircraft flying across borders or across Caribbean waters, which fail to land according to instructions, are to be shot down by military action."

As von Raab's policy proposal now sits before the President's cabinet, LaRouche's is the only public state-

ment of unqualified support for the policy on record.

### Cruel new twist to euthanasia push

Advocates of institutionalized euthanasia against the nation's sick and elderly added a cruel new twist to their argument in an hour-long documentary, entitled "Who Lives, Who Dies," aired on the Public Broadcasting System Jan. 5.

The documentary devoted lengthy segments to remarks by the infamous former Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm, spouting off about how, given the size of the federal budget and trade deficits and the national debt, we can't afford to provide state-of-the-art medical care to all.

Lamm's remarks made it clear that "living wills" and other policies to pull the plug on the nation's sick and elderly are driven not by merciful, but by cold-blooded fiscal considerations. They were designed to establish that the concept of "rationing" health care dollars is justified by the "reality" of fiscal "limits."

The new argument put forth in the documentary was that, given such rationing, health care priorities are skewed in such a way that those receiving lifesaving organ transplants or other benefits of breakthroughs in medical technology are soaking up limited health care dollars at the expense of millions of the nation's poor who are not getting adequate care.

The documentary tries to place the blame for the fact that 37 million poor Americans without health insurance are not receiving decent health care on the "selfish" desire of elderly or seriously ill persons to receive lifesaving care.

This tactic to turn the poor against the old and sick would have made Goebbels green with envy.