

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Meese hints Weld under investigation

At a Justice Department press conference to announce "Operation Stop Crop," an ambitious interagency domestic marijuana eradication mobilization, Attorney General Edwin Meese intimated that his former deputy William Weld is, or soon will be, under investigation on charges of perjury.

The morning of the July 13 press conference, the *Washington Times* reported that the DoJ had conducted an investigation of Weld, prior to Weld's resignation last March. Weld, who resigned, he said at the time, in protest of Meese's refusal to leave office, was being probed on charges of marijuana use, the *Times* reported. The story quoted U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts Frank McNamara saying that he would not deny that he saw Weld smoke marijuana during a party at a Virginia farmhouse in 1982.

Our reporter asked Meese about this. Meese, who made no bones about his "disappointment" with Weld in a television interview only the weekend before, said, "I won't comment."

"Don't you trust the word of your U.S. Attorney Frank McNamara? And do you think that Weld should be prosecuted for perjury if the allegations of his marijuana use turn out to be true?"

It is difficult to say if the strained expression on Meese's face represented an effort to suppress a grin. But he reflected, and said, "It would not be proper for me to comment on matters involving investigations either under way or pending."

### EIR focuses media on Iranian airliner

A total of five questions from *EIR* journalists—this writer and colleague Leo Scanlon—were put to Adm. William Crowe, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during his press conference at the Pentagon on Sunday, July 3, to announce the downing of an Iranian commercial airliner by U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf.

The questions were the only ones to properly focus attention at the internationally televised briefing on the abnormal behavior of the Iranian airliner, drawing out from Admiral Crowe critical information about the fact that the airliner was descending in altitude and gaining speed as it moved on a path directly toward the *U.S.S. Vincennes*.

**Benton:** How common is it for civilian aircraft to be outside of normal air corridors in that part of the world?

**Crowe:** I don't know that I can answer that question. It seems to me that two things are pretty clear. First of all, flying in that kind of constrained environment, that you would be very careful, particularly given the warnings and the NOTAMs [Notices to Airmen] we had issued. And secondly, I don't understand the responsibility of a country that, while it is attacking other ships, making a war zone out of a certain area of the ocean, and then goes ahead and flies a commercial airliner over that part of the ocean at the time that attacks and hostilities are under way.

**Benton:** Was there anything else unusual in terms of speed or altitude of this aircraft, other than that it did not respond and that they were out of their normal flight corridors?

**Crowe:** As I said at the conclusion of my statement, not all the data is in, but we do have indications that the

people on the ship were led to believe, from the flow of information—and we are reconstructing this now—that the aircraft was not only on steady bearing and closing, but that it had gone up in altitude and was increasing—or decreasing in altitude as it neared the ship. . . .

**Benton:** You may be implying by the abnormal behavior of this aircraft that it's not inconceivable that the pilot was trying to draw the fire of these missiles.

**Crowe:** I did not mean to imply that.

**Scanlon:** Has there been any pattern of Iranian F-14s using airliners in the area as shadow to conduct patrols or anything like that?

**Crowe:** We have not detected that as a pattern. . . .

**Benton:** Admiral, would you imply that not only was this out of the air corridor, and not responding to your signals, but that you detected that it was losing altitude and gaining speed, and flying over an area where combat activity was occurring? In addition to all those irregularities concerning this aircraft, have you been able to determine whether it took off on schedule as a normal commercial flight, or are there any other irregularities?

**Crowe:** We're trying to determine that right now. I would like to emphasize your point for a moment, the F-14s, on corridors, out of corridors. The important points here are the commanding officer has a responsibility to protect his people, his unit. He is engaged already in a surface action. He has a minimum amount of time. It is logical to conclude that while he is firing, and they are approaching him, and an aircraft lifts off from Iran, goes toward him, steady course, high speed, decreasing altitude, will not vary, will not contact him, it's a more than logical conclusion that he may very well be in jeopardy.