

Narco-terrorism is coming home to roost

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On May 5, six days after the outbreak of violence in Los Angeles, the Emergency Operations Center of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department issued an alert to all area law enforcement agencies. The memo warned that street gangs were stockpiling sophisticated weapons and were planning to attack police: "The first target is parole and probation offices, to destroy their records. Then, white police officers, engaged via drive-bys, phony calls, ambushes, and routine police work." The memo concluded: "Large numbers of semi-automatic and high-powered weaponry and ammunition, including armor-piercing, have been obtained via local looting and out-of-county purchases."

On May 8, the *New York Post* reported that a similar warning had been issued to police up and down the East Coast, after law enforcement authorities in a Washington, D.C. suburb received a threatening call to the effect that a group calling itself the Black Panthers (after the 1960s black militant organization) would begin killing cops in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. Although no such murders of police have yet been publicly reported, New York Police Department officials confirmed to the *Post* that they were taking the threats "very seriously."

Gangs are stockpiling weapons

Two weeks after the worst outbreak of urban violence since the 1960s, ostensibly triggered by a jury's acquittal of police officers accused of beating black motorist Rodney King, the evidence confirms *EIR's* initial assessment: The Los Angeles violence was neither "spontaneous" nor "popular," but was actually a well-planned act of urban irregular warfare carried out primarily by drug-trafficking gangs with the backup of Maoist radicals with known links to the Peruvian Shining Path, one of the world's most bloodthirsty narco-terrorist groups.

As *EIR* contributing editor Lyndon LaRouche has stated, the social conditions in America's inner cities approach those of the Nazi concentration camps, and have dramatically deteriorated over the 25 years since the urban riots and protests of the 1960s. A key lesson that is being ignored in the Los Angeles events of April-May 1992, is that narco-terrorism has come home to roost.

Indeed, local police officials in Los Angeles have confirmed to *EIR* that the majority of the more than 5,000 fires that broke out in the city in the first 48 hours after the Rodney

King verdict was announced on April 29, were set with sophisticated incendiary devices—not just rags and gasoline. And, although gun shops throughout the South Central area of the city were high-priority targets for looters, gang members concentrated on grabbing sophisticated rifles, high-powered scopes, and specialty ammunition. Similar kinds of weapons, according to federal officials, were already being stockpiled by gangs before the violence erupted. Said one former high-ranking Los Angeles Police Department official: "Los Angeles would have exploded this spring-summer even if Rodney King had never been born!"

Wrong 'experts,' wrong solutions

Tragically, the reaction by the Bush administration, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, and leading Democrats to the events in South Central Los Angeles has so far been at best to merely repeat the mistakes, that led to the current crisis in the first place.

After two days of touring the Los Angeles battle scene arm-in-arm with Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp in early May, President Bush announced a string of self-contradictory initiatives: a get-tough crackdown on urban violence and a reinvigorated program of inner city "enterprise zones" and other free market schemes, which he has dubbed "Weed and Seed" (see article, page 56). Promptly, leaders of the Crips and Bloods, the two major drug gangs behind the Los Angeles violence, proclaimed on a half-dozen nationwide television shows that they planned to administer the Bush urban renewal plan.

Bush's schemes to turn the Los Angeles ghetto into a shining example of the free market were matched by Los Angeles Mayor Bradley's choice of two top fellow Trilateral Commission members to play pivotal roles in the local response to the violence.

First, in a *Los Angeles Times* interview on May 13, Warren Christopher, who headed Bradley's commission of inquiry into the LAPD's handling of the Rodney King affair in 1991, boasted that he had personally called out federal troops on April 30, 1992, in his role as Bradley's liaison to the Bush administration. The Christopher Commission, which included such liberal luminaries as Bill Clinton's campaign manager Mickey Kantor and drug legalization advocate and former New York Police Commissioner Patrick Murphy, accelerated the campaign to dismantle the LAPD as an independent and professional police force.

The same day that Christopher was bragging about his role in the crisis management, Governor Clinton announced that Christopher, a Los Angeles lawyer and former Johnson and Carter administration official, would head up his search committee for a vice presidential running mate.

The same day, Mayor Bradley announced the appointment of Judge William Webster, former head of both the FBI and the CIA, as the head of yet another commission to "study" the LAPD's response to the outbreak of violence.