

Congressional Closeup by Carl J. Osgood

Subcommittee promises action on LaRouche case

Lyndon LaRouche spokeswoman Debra Hanania-Freeman delivered testimony before the House Appropriations subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary on May 11 in which she charged that the Department of Justice was guilty of grave misconduct in the case of the jailed American statesman and economist.

Freeman documented that Justice Department policies and Supreme Court rulings have vastly expanded the powers of prosecutors and, at the same time, made it increasingly difficult for courts and aggrieved individuals to hold federal prosecutors accountable for tactics that just a few years ago would have been considered grounds for case dismissal or disciplinary action.

She cited instances of tactics that included manipulation of grand juries; failure to disclose evidence favorable to a suspect or defendant; government intrusion into the relationship between defense attorneys and clients; tainting of evidence; intimidation of witnesses; entrapment of defendants; and blitzkrieg indictments or threats of indictment designed to force capitulation without trial. Freeman said that the Justice Department had gained a reputation as the most thoroughly politicized and ethically compromised department in the government.

"But," the LaRouche spokeswoman continued, "no other case has raised the level of international outcry than the case of Lyndon LaRouche." Freeman described the international mobilization to free LaRouche, including, most recently, the thousands of human rights figures from around the world who have petitioned President Clinton for LaRouche's release.

Freeman detailed the extraordinary motion filed last year by former

Attorney General Ramsey Clark on LaRouche's behalf, seeking to vacate LaRouche's unlawful sentence. She said that the principal ground cited for LaRouche's immediate release is that massive amounts of newly obtained evidence prove that "the prosecution conducted and participated in a conspiracy and concerted action with others to illegally and wrongfully convict LaRouche by engaging in outrageous misconduct, including financial warfare." The motion, she said, is supported by six volumes of newly discovered evidence that had been suppressed or concealed.

Freeman called on the committee to withhold all funding for the Justice Department until oversight hearings were convened by the appropriate congressional committees and the pattern of prosecutorial abuse is put to an end.

Subcommittee Chairman Neal Smith (D-Iowa) responded that committee members were well aware of the problem that Dr. Freeman had cited. He assured her that steps were being taken to initiate the type of hearings she was demanding and that he hoped that hearings would result in an early and happy resolution of the problem she had presented.

Durenberger calls for 'Big Brother' food agency

Sen. David Durenberger (R-Minn.) will introduce a bill calling for a single food safety agency, his staff told *EIR* on May 14, and "all the producers are behind it." Durenberger wants to unify the federal government's food safety and inspection services, which are now dispersed in several agencies—USDA, FDA, EPA, and the Department of Commerce.

Durenberger announced his plan on May 6, right on the heels of a demand by a new ecologist consumer

coalition, the New Council on Food Safety, for such an agency. The New Council, composed of anti-science groups like Food & Water, Inc. and the Community Nutrition Institute, is promoting "zero tolerance regulatory policies," prohibiting even minute, inconsequential residues of pesticides in foods.

The New Council wants a new federal agency "where consumers' interests can be dealt with away from market pressures," according to a report in the May 8 *Food Chemical News*. The new group would ban meat and poultry irradiation, hormones to increase animal weight or milk production, and chemical dips and sprays as a treatment for meat and poultry.

Opposition grows to Clinton's BTU tax

President Clinton's proposed tax on the heat content of fuels appears to be the weak link in his overall tax package, which was approved with minor modifications on May 13 by the House Ways and Means Committee. The full array of revenue measures in the bill would raise taxes by \$250 billion over five years, one of the largest increases in U.S. history.

Bennett Johnston (D-La.), chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, charged that the BTU tax would make the United States "completely dependent on foreign oil" and "may even lead to another war," UPI reported. Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) said the tax is "a loser, will cost jobs, and will hurt the environment."

On May 13, the Texas Senate unanimously voted to send a delegation of 10 to Washington to lobby against the BTU tax, following testimony that the tax would cost the average Texas family between \$300 and

\$700 a year, and result in the loss of 80,000 jobs in the state. Democratic State Sen. Carl Parker declared, "If you take it to them, look them in the eye and tell them you're going to rip their heads off if they don't do right, you'll get their attention."

Gonzalez rips money launderers

Delivering the keynote speech at the International Money Laundering Conference in Miami on May 13, Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.) charged that more than \$300 billion is illegally laundered in the United States each year by drug traffickers and others, UPI reported.

Gonzalez, who chairs the House Banking Committee, said, "Without question, much of these ill-gotten gains is still entering our banking system without being detected by our federal law enforcement and bank regulatory authorities. For this reason, the House Banking Committee is taking an in-depth look at the government's money-laundering detection, investigation, and prosecution activities."

Gonzalez said it is "imperative" that a major overhaul of federal efforts be undertaken "if we are ever to win the war against money laundering."

'Figaro' cites Gonzalez fight to control Fed

France's daily *Le Figaro* drew attention to the efforts of House Banking Committee Chairman Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.) to place political controls over the U.S. Federal Reserve System, and drawing the ironic contrast with the French government's effort to give greater "independence" to the Banque de France. The Federal Reserve, which is in fact unconstitution-

al, is independent of the U.S. government, and the "privatization" of the Banque de France would have similarly disastrous effects on France's economy.

In its economics coverage for May 13, *Le Figaro* wrote: "While France is involved in a reform that strives to strengthen the independence of the Banque de France, the U.S. is beginning to criticize the independence of the Fed and its technocratic organization. The chairman of the Banking Committee . . . Henry Gonzalez, has put forward a bill seeking to strengthen the controls exercised over the central bank." The idea is to render the Fed more "accountable" to Congress.

Le Figaro continued that the Clinton administration is "observing the greatest possible discretion" on this subject, since it wants Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan to rally behind the White House "recovery plan." But no matter how the debate ultimately goes, the article concluded, "the fact is that the debate has begun" over curbing the Fed's independence.

Roth covers for U.N., Serbian genocide

Rep. Toby Roth (R-Wisc.) called the Serbian war of aggression against Bosnia a civil war, in remarks on the floor of the House on May 10. While cloaking his arguments in populist rhetoric, claiming that the United States would have to pick up the tab for reconstruction of Bosnia if it moves to halt Serbian attacks, Roth is defending Serbian genocide.

Roth called those who favored U.S. intervention, naming Sens. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), "jingoists who want to send American men and women into combat in Bosnia." He said

that President Clinton claimed that American troops would not be deployed to Bosnia without a clear goal, so he asked "what could that goal be, when Bosnia is in the midst of a civil war, a blood feud?" He also claimed that "a clear majority of Americans are opposed to sending American troops into Bosnia," because, he said, "they see Bosnia as Europe's problem."

On the Vance-Owen plan, he said that it "may not be perfect, but it is every bit as good as we can realistically hope for in Bosnia. It is our only hope to avoid war, but it is Europe's responsibility to put Vance-Owen into effect."

Torricelli raves at Iraq over assassination 'attempt'

Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) issued a call on the floor of the House on May 12 for an investigation of the alleged attempt to assassinate former President George Bush while he was visiting Kuwait in April. He said, "It is time for this government, if these allegations are true, to unleash the real wrath of the United States government, as it has never been unleashed before, upon Saddam Hussein if he genuinely attempted to assassinate the former President of the United States."

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) attempted to strengthen the allegations, putting Arab press reports into the May 12 *Congressional Record*. One article, from the Kuwaiti paper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, claims that a terrorist network, from which 15 suspects have been arrested, including 10 Iraqis, had planned to destroy key places in Kuwait in order to facilitate "blowing up former U.S. President George Bush's motorcade."

U.S. officials, however, doubt the veracity of the evidence.