



Justice Department turning into a national police apparatus

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On Tuesday, March 3, the *Boston Globe* devoted a full page to a reprint of a *Washington Post* story praising Federal Bureau of Investigations Director William H. Webster. Three years into Judge Webster's 10-year term, *Post* writer Tom O'Toole asserted, the Bureau has thoroughly cleaned up its once-tarnished image. Minority hiring has dramatically increased, the old J. Edgar Hoover Cointelpro apparatus has been cleaned out, and no longer does the FBI face a battery of civil rights suits and pending criminal trials of top officials.

Even American Civil Liberties Union director Jerry Berman, a former editor of the Philip Agee-linked *CounterSpy* was trotted out to praise Webster's "Mr. Clean" approach to federal law enforcement. "I think Webster has moved the FBI away from politics and toward a focus on real criminal interests. It's a healthy focus," he said.

Beyond this public-relations hype lurks a very different reality, a reality that prompted one career law-enforcement official this week to describe the present state of crime prevention as "our darkest days."

The FBI is making a power play to assume control over *all federal enforcement functions*. Manuevers in the bureaucratic shadows have the aid of some very strange bedfellows—not least the *Washington Post*.

If FBI Director Webster succeeds, the new, reorganized federal law-enforcement community will consist of only one agency: the FBI.

- The Office of Management and Budget has already acknowledged that the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has been totally axed from the new federal austerity budget. ATF's enforcement functions—which cover all investigations into federal weapons violations, contraband alcohol, and tobacco-smuggling—are to be turned over to the FBI.

- OMB adviser Col. Dick Williams confirmed to *EIR* this week that he is working on a reorganization plan to have the U.S. Customs Service, the Border Patrol, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service dramatically reduced, with all their domestic enforcement powers

turned over to the FBI. A former assistant to the Carter administration's drug chief, narcotics legalization advocate Dr. Peter Bourne, Williams later served as Carter's OMB deputy director in charge of domestic policy.

Leading officials in both the INS and Customs have expressed extreme alarm at the Williams reorganization plan, which could be imposed by budgetary fiat without serious congressional deliberation. They note that the domestic offices of both agencies are crucial to all the investigative efforts, particularly those relating to drug-smuggling and illegal money-laundering.

- The Senate Permanent Investigations subcommittee (SPIS) this week issued a series of 11 guidelines for the Department of Labor aimed at forcing more stringent oversight by the federal agency over labor-union corruption.

Contacted by *EIR*, SPIS director William Goodwin admitted that the guidelines were not be expected to be received favorably by Labor Secretary Ray Donovan. "The Labor Department is labor's representation in the administration. You can't expect the Department of Labor to get tough with the unions."

The actual purpose behind the proposed guidelines, Goodwin conceded, is to build momentum toward turning over Labor's enforcement functions to the Justice Department and the FBI. Under such a reorganization, the DOL would be relegated to the role of a regulatory commission responsible for monitoring union compliance with FBI and Justice Department mandates.

- Informed sources in Washington have also indicated that the FBI has put in a bid to assume control over investigative and enforcement functions currently held by the Social Security Administration. This would give the FBI carte blanche to apply its Abscam and Brilab entrapment techniques to the enforcement of welfare and Medicare guidelines.

The drug issue is key

Of all the areas of federal enforcement Webster has set his sights on, the most serious is total FBI control

over drug enforcement.

Until the Attorney General Ramsey Clark's term, drug-enforcement functions had been retained by the Treasury Department. This division of labor reflected an understanding that the key to drug enforcement lies not in capturing the smugglers or the pushers, but rather in tracing the drug rings up to their financial control points.

Under Ramsey Clark, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs was transferred to the Justice Department, and the process of turning federal drug enforcement over to Hoover's gumshoes was set into motion.

In recent weeks, FBI Director Webster has openly called for the Reagan administration to bring the FBI into drug enforcement on both a domestic and international level. In a mid-February Associated Press interview, Webster went so far as to cite the FBI's Abscam, Brilab, and Pendorf political inquisition against noncriminal citizens as the justification for turning over DEA enforcement functions to the FBI. "We have had the most experience handling informants and deploying enormous sums of money."

The FBI's takeover of drug enforcement has already been initiated. The March 3 *New York Daily News* reported on a major drug bust involving an 11-person cocaine ring operating from Miami up to New York City. The largest cocaine buy-bust in U.S. history was carried out not by the DEA, but by the FBI.

Webster and Bensinger

U.S. intelligence sources have confirmed to *EIR* that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is making a takeover move against the DEA. They report that the strong opposition to such a consolidated Big Brother police-state apparatus is being countered by Webster through methods the FBI perfected during Abscam and Brilab: trial by press.

The sources report that over the next month, a series of scandals will be contrived to convince the Reagan White House that the Drug Enforcement Administration is too rife with corruption to be entrusted with the direction of a serious war on drugs. By default, the FBI will be given the mandate.

Judge Webster has recruited a dubious ally to his effort to wreck the DEA. During the last week in February, DEA Director Peter Bensinger, a holdover from the Carter administration, leaked an internal DEA document to the *New York Times*. That document accused the Northeast Region of the DEA (stretching from New England through the Mid-Atlantic states into Delaware) of having failed to meet its quota of drug indictments over a period of months in which heroin and other hard drug use had been on the rise. Using the self-administered press leak as a pretext, Bensinger summarily demoted the deputy director of

the Northeast Region and one other top DEA official.

What are the anticipated repercussions of this move? U.S. and West European sources unanimously agree that the spring 1981 period will see the East Coast of the United States flooded with high-grade heroin. The Golden Triangle opium crop, which began harvesting this week, has been estimated at 700 metric tons, the largest bumper crop in history. Preliminary heroin shipments seized from Golden Triangle sources indicate that this influx of heroin is also of unprecedented high quality.

The shakeup of the Northeast region at this time is being viewed as a virtual guarantee that no effective prevention will be mustered against the heroin flood.

One former top-ranking official of the DEA estimated that the disruption of the DEA at this time may ring the deathknoll of the Reagan administration's entire antidrug effort—an effort that was a hallmark of the President's electoral campaign. "The first year of any administration is always the make-or-break-period for serious drug enforcement. If the administration gets entangled in scandals and in reorganizations, then forget a war on drugs."

It is a poorly kept secret in the nation's capital that DEA Director Bensinger is working closely with Judge Webster in the next phase of the FBI takeover move. The two are next-door neighbors and close collaborators. And Bensinger has made it clear that he aspires to a top position in the new, expanded FBI. The nephew of former Attorney General Edward Levi (a leading advocate of the centralization of federal enforcement and the author of the Levi Guidelines that placed severe restrictions of pre-emptive counterintelligence investigations of terrorist activities), Bensinger is a close associate of Charles Percy (R-Ill.), an unabashed senatorial supporter of drug decriminalization. The Percy Amendment of 1979 aborted U.S. government collaboration with Mexico in a paraquat drug-eradication program. Bensinger is also a national committee member of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, an organization that holds official status as an "agent-in-place" asset of the FBI and DOJ.

But who is the original author of the FBI's "Operation Big Brother"?

In 1978, Harvard Law Professor James Q. Wilson wrote a study called *The Investigators*. In that study, Wilson developed the legal arguments that have been the basis for the Civiletti Justice Department's defense of Abscam and Brilab. In the same study, Wilson advocated severing federal and state law enforcement from any accountability to political institutions, in effect, placing the FBI above the Constitution. From 1967, Wilson was a leading participant in the Toward the Year 2000 project, the direct antecedent to the Carter's Global 2000.