
Interview

Justice Department's D. Lowell Jensen blasts drugs and domestic terrorism

The appointment by President Reagan of D. Lowell Jensen to the important post of Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division has been received enthusiastically in the law enforcement community. As a prosecutor in Alameda County, California for 25 years, Jensen prosecuted Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) leaders William and Emily Harris and Black Panther Party leader Huey Newton, and gave the evidence to the grand jury that indicted Eldridge Cleaver and Bobby Seale. Observers predict that Jensen will help reverse Justice Department policies associated with the Carter administration, which included the release or pardon of 18 convicted terrorists. Mr. Jensen is a longtime associate of Reagan chief of staff Edwin Meese, and worked with Meese in the prosecutor's office before Meese became then-Governor Reagan's legal affairs director.

On March 22, the New York Times published an article about Mr. Jensen that cited his support for the Abscam investigations as well as his support for reduction in penalties for marijuana possession. EIR's Freyda Greenberg obtained this exclusive interview on March 24 with Mr. Jensen to clarify the New York Times report.

EIR: The *New York Times* said that you "endorsed the position taken by William H. Webster, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, on undercover investigations similar to that used in the Abscam case involving official corruption." Is that true?

Jensen: It's a little early to make judgments about Abscam. I'm not yet in a position to comment. I was at Mr. Webster's speech to the Commonwealth Club, and when I was asked about it, all I said was that I was generally supportive of the tenor of Mr. Webster's remarks. [Mr. Webster had stressed in his address that agents would be strongly cautioned against entrapping suspects—F.G.]

EIR: The *New York Times* article referred to your having lobbied for reduction in the penalties for possession of marijuana.

Jensen: In my capacity as chairman of the California District Attorneys' Association, I represented the position of the group in opposing an earlier state law regarding the possession of marijuana. The previous law said that any possession was a felony and not alternative as a misdemeanor. The D.A.s' association advocated allowing possession to be alternatively treated as a misdemeanor and redefining small amounts as an infraction, meaning no jail sentence, the latter being treated as a misdemeanor if seen fit. Currently the California state law is about where it should be.

EIR: What is the present California law?

Jensen: Possession of one ounce of marijuana or less is an infraction but can be ruled a misdemeanor. Sale of marijuana is a felony. Cultivation is a felony. The D.A.s' position was based on pragmatism. The earlier law was unworkable.

EIR: There have been some, including Mr. Reagan, who have said that there is little that can be done to stop the influx of drugs. Do you agree?

Jensen: I am definitely not one of those people who thinks there is nothing we can do to stop the flow of drugs. Drugs are a horrendous problem in this country. While I can't yet say what I would recommend as far as manpower allocations, for example, we must be able to stop the flow of drugs.

EIR: I know you have had considerable experience dealing with terrorists. What is your evaluation of terrorism?

Jensen: Terrorism is a tremendously difficult problem, and it is of the highest priority. When I say terrorism I include domestic terrorism. That was what the Symbionese Liberation Army was and the New World Liberation Front, whatever [else] that was. These were clearly domestic terrorist acts.

EIR: Do you agree with the evaluation that terrorism is a sociological phenomenon?

Jensen: Absolutely not. These are calculated endeavors.