

Justice Department's Levi guidelines lifted: is the FBI being unleashed?

by Edward Spannaus

On March 21, the infamous "Levi Guidelines," which law enforcement officials claim were hampering the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its legitimate pursuit of domestic terrorism, were lifted by order of Attorney General William French Smith. But indications are that the FBI will use this more as an excuse to relaunch its discredited "Cointelpro" operations, than to undertake a serious attack on terrorism in the United States.

Under the old Levi Guidelines, instituted in 1976, the FBI could not investigate a terrorist group until a crime had been committed. FBI officials claimed—not always without merit—that encumbered their efforts to prevent terrorism. Under Attorney General Civiletti, it got worse—numerous terrorists were released from jail, including members of the Weather Underground, the Republic of New Afrika, and four Puerto Rican terrorists, who were then paraded around as heroes by the avowed terrorist FALN gang.

For years, this journal and its subsidiary *Investigative Leads* have advocated a political-intelligence approach to terrorism, investigations which would target the above-ground support apparatus and the "citizens above suspicion" who sponsor and finance terrorism, as well as the underground terrorist machinery itself. According to Attorney General Smith, the new Justice Department guidelines would permit the FBI to investigate a group providing funds or safehousing to terrorists as part of the same "criminal enterprise" as the terrorist organization itself.

Under the new guidelines, domestic security and terrorism investigations will be guided by the same "General Crimes and Organized Crime Guidelines" which have governed other FBI criminal investigations. Domestic security investigations will fall under the category of "criminal intelligence investigations," which also includes organized crime and racketeering. The concept of "criminal enterprise," which the FBI has used in pursuing organized crime investigations, will be extended to include domestic security and terrorism investigation.

Law enforcement or political gestapo?

However, the FBI's focus in recent years on "white-collar" crime, political corruption, and organized crime in-

vestigations under director William Webster can not be attributed to merely a distortion of investigative priorities caused by the Levi Guidelines. Rather, it reflects the FBI's deep proclivity toward performing a "political police" role, a bias which has existed since its creation and has continued through its recent "Abscam" prosecutions of public officials. Thus, as a counter-terrorist agency, the FBI's record is undistinguished; when it comes to rooting out the multi-billion dollar drug traffic plaguing the United States, the FBI's role is virtually non-existent. Yet when the FBI is determined to pursue a politically-selected target, such as former U.S. Sen. Harrison Williams or Teamster President Roy Williams, the FBI's diligence and investigative resources know no bounds. Senator Williams was hounded and videotaped for 13 months, and the FBI has acknowledged spending over a million dollars on audio taping alone in their prosecution of Teamster Roy Williams. When was the last time the FBI devoted those kinds of resources to prosecuting a major drug runner?

The lifting of the Levi guidelines undoubtedly represents a serious commitment by elements of the Reagan administration—but not necessarily by Webster—to go after terrorism. It was, after all, Webster who, as FBI Director, gave his approval to then-Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti in October 1979 to lift the federal warrants for Kathy Boudin and members of the Republic of New Afrika, who later turned out to be central figures in the Nyack, New York Brinks robbery and killings.

Therefore, law enforcement observers and sources were quick to point out that the long-awaited lifting of the Levi Guidelines is a double-edged sword. Sources have pointed out that the lifting of the guidelines puts the FBI at the center of all domestic counterintelligence operations, and the Bureau is already going around to special units of other intelligence agencies and asking them to turn over information. It is further noted that the FBI is in reality answerable to no one, not even the Attorney General, and it can generate all kinds of investigations and files without leaving a paper trail.

Among the FBI's immediate targets for Cointelpro operations are known to be the Posse Comitatus group, and other right-wing groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groupings. The FBI's bloody shoot-out in North Dakota

in February is widely viewed as a headline-grabbing stunt which was unnecessary from any law-enforcement standpoint. But the FBI's emphasis on right-wing organizations is part of William Webster's new "liberal" image for the FBI, with which the FBI hopes to ingratiate itself among liberals and the left, who have already rallied to its support around the Abscam and Brilab prosecutions.

LaRouche organizations: targets since 1969

The clearest example of the FBI's role as a political police force is its renewed targeting of groups and organizations associated with *EIR* founding editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. In 1977, the FBI officially terminated an eight-year investigation of the National Caucus of Labor Committees, the political cadre organization founded and headed by LaRouche. This "investigation" was highlighted by such features as a Cointelpro operation trying to incite Mark Rudd and the emerging Weatherman group to attack the NCLC in 1969, and continued "dirty tricks" interventions in NCLC-backed election campaigns. Upon its official termination, the FBI handed over the "dirty tricks" franchise against the NCLC to its alter ego, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith, while illegally continuing its own covert operations against LaRouche and the NCLC.

FBI operations against LaRouche surfaced again during the 1980 New Hampshire presidential primary campaign, and then came out into the open in a recent, highly publicized FBI investigation into the 1982 Congressional campaign in Baltimore, Maryland of LaRouche Democrat Debra Freeman. (The FBI's ongoing Cointelpro operations against LaRouche and the NCLC, including the recent FBI's recent re-entry into the realm of electoral interference in Baltimore, are the subject of current litigation in the case *LaRouche v. Webster*, S.D.N.Y., Civ. No. 75-6010.

FBI attacks Reagan policy

In the wake of President Reagan's March 23 announcement of his new strategic doctrine for the United States, based upon the development of defensive beam weapons systems, the FBI has gone into high gear against the LaRouche-affiliated organizations, including the Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF) and *EIR*, which have been the most energetic public advocates of the policy adopted by President Reagan on March 23. Many scientists who are in full agreement with the President's policy and the perspective advocated by LaRouche have privately stated that they fear FBI investigation and loss of security clearance if they are publicly associated with LaRouche or the FEF.

This is not all the FBI has done to try to damage and discredit the President. On March 24, the FBI released a partially declassified report on Soviet influence over the nuclear freeze movement. On March 26, the *New York Times* trumpeted on its front page: "FBI Rules Out Russian Control of Freeze Drive." The lead of the *Times* story stated that the FBI "has determined that the Soviet Union does not 'directly

control or manipulate' the American nuclear freeze movement."

To the average reader, the release of the FBI report came as a direct rebuttal of President Reagan's charges last November that Soviet agents had helped to instigate the freeze movement in the United States and had helped instigate demonstrations such as the large New York City rally last June 12.

A careful reading of the actual declassified portions of the FBI report shows that the *Times* is not completely lying. While the FBI report documents extensive Soviet measures to penetrate, influence and mobilize the U.S. peace movement and to discredit American defense and arms control and disarmament policies, it nevertheless concludes by saying that "we do not believe the Soviets have achieved a dominant role in the peace and nuclear freeze movements, or that they directly control or manipulate the movement." (See *Congressional Record* (House), March 24, 1983, pp. H 1791-1797.)

The FBI's recent focus on "white-collar crime," political corruption, and organized crime reflects the Bureau's deep proclivity toward performing a "political police" role. Examine the time and money it spent hounding Sen. Harrison Williams and the Teamster president. When was the last time the FBI devoted those kinds of resources to prosecuting a major drug runner?

In typical FBI plodding gumshoe fashion, the report on the freeze movement concentrated on KGB efforts as exercised through such overt channels as the World Peace Council and the Communist Party, U.S.A. The higher levels of control—which operate top down through the same KGB-British channels which have exerted not inconsiderable control over the FBI itself since World War II—are, of course, ignored in the FBI freeze movement report. This congenital incompetence in FBI intelligence methods is a common thread from the days of J. Edgar Hoover into the "liberal" regime of William Webster. But when the FBI lends itself to direct, overt efforts to discredit the President at a time when the President has proclaimed a new strategic doctrine which can bring an end to the age of thermonuclear terror and counter-terror, the FBI's incompetence shades into treason against the United States.