

Drug legalizers maintain offensive

The close of the first year of the Bush administration finds the war on drugs, the top domestic priority, in a confused and disoriented state. Prominent government figures, such as former Secretary of State George Shultz, Federal Judge Robert Sweet, and Rep. George Crockett (D-Mich.), broke ranks and joined the campaign for drug legalization, while the anti-drug programs of the administration remain in the planning stage or underfunded. Although the role of the military is still being defined, the most important anti-drug action of the year was the small but critical assistance provided to the Colombian government in its courageous defense against an attempted coup by the drug cartels.

The major achievement of the administration has been the creation of an augmented Office of National Drug Control Policy, under the direction of William Bennett. Bennett has confronted his opponents—the skeptics and the turncoats—with an articulate defense of his policies, but there is as yet no integrated national strategy to suppress the drug insurgency. On balance, it is the insurgents and their advance guard in the U.S. establishment who maintain the offensive.

The problem confronting Bennett was summed up by Gen. Frederick Woerner, retired chief of the U.S. Southern Command, who commented that relative to the threat posed by the drug insurgency, “we have no trade policy, we have no commerce policy, and I fear that in the absence of a total crisis, we are unable to develop a coherent strategy.” The resistance to an integrated approach to the drug war was illustrated by the administration’s shameless refusal to grant a minimal subsidy to the Colombian coffee price, thereby undermining the vitality of a nation fighting for its very survival.

The drug legalizers

The political reality of the drug issue is that 70% of the American population considers drugs to be the number-one problem facing the nation, and rate it more important than the next four problems combined. Despite this popular majority, the efforts of the administration to launch its campaign have bogged down.

At the forefront of the sabotage of anti-drug efforts is the Drug Policy Foundation, which overshadowed the administration’s efforts with an international campaign for drug le-

galization. The foundation’s board includes prominent press figures such as the editor of the London *Economist*, who responded to the Bennett anti-drug program with an international press barrage demanding drug legalization. Featured spokesmen for the surrender proposal include Milton Friedman and the gaggle of Carter administration officials who oversaw the creation of the current drug epidemic.

The European contingent of the surrender lobby, the International Anti-Prohibition League, initiated a parallel drive to expand the Dutch model of drug legalization throughout Europe.

The biggest blow to Bennett’s efforts was delivered by former Secretary of State George Shultz, who publicly endorsed the drug legalization proposals and the work of the Drug Policy Foundation. Bennett commented that opposition to anti-drug efforts within the State Department had not been limited to Shultz during the Reagan years, and lashed out at the “morally scandalous” behavior of the legalizers.

The drug legalizers are proceeding methodically, building support for politicians who endorse their cause and surfacing more of their prominent supporters within the government. Federal Judge Robert Sweet added his name to their ranks one day after Bennett launched his counterattack, and more such developments are predicted.

Military role undefined

A growing number of military specialists are now convinced that international anti-drug efforts must focus on the phenomenon of narco-terrorism, but the political basis for undertaking such a campaign is in a shambles. This is in part due to the Pentagon bureaucracy, which called in the Rand Corp. to produce a study showing that interdiction efforts—for which the military is uniquely equipped—are “cost-inefficient.” Despite this, plans are now being finalized to coordinate military and National Guard training with the anti-drug work of local law enforcement agencies, a practice which has quietly been going on for many years.

The more serious problem has come from the Department of Justice Office of Legal Affairs, which has produced a series of “opinions” stating that U.S. intelligence agencies and the military have the authority to arrest, kidnap, and assassinate foreign nationals on foreign soil. In addition to being completely unconstitutional and a violation of international law, the DoJ’s actions have been calculated to chill and destroy any possible collaboration between U.S. and Ibero-American governments. Finally, the Bush administration has chosen to ignore non-Ibero-American narco-terrorists—the Syrians and Communist Chinese most prominently. Thus the military is facing the task of fighting narco-terrorists without being able to target the sanctuaries of the enemy.

The ultimate millstone dragging down the anti-drug effort is the international scandal surrounding the Bush administration’s imprisonment of Lyndon LaRouche, the man who conceived the plan for a war on drugs in the first place.