

Inman strafes weak flank of Clinton's media adversaries

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Adm. Bobby Ray Inman's surprise withdrawal as President Clinton's defense secretary-designate on the eve of his confirmation hearings may go down as one of the best executed political flank attacks in recent American history. As a consequence of the respected four-star admiral's blunt explanation of his decision to withdraw from the Pentagon post at a Jan. 18 press conference in Austin, Texas, the Wall Street, London, and neo-conservative circles that have recently declared war on the Clinton presidency find themselves on the receiving end of an adept counter-offensive against the Fourth Estate and its allies in the Congress.

In measured words, Admiral Inman provided the press with an hour-long chronology of the factors that led to his decision. Citing a "new McCarthyism" led by East Coast syndicated columnists, Inman explained that he decided that the price of enduring daily press "offensives" was too great to warrant his return to public service, after having already devoted 30 years of his life. Inman's remarks were directed at the majority of Americans who live "outside the Washington Beltway" and who, he calculated, are as furious as he is with the trial-by-press antics of the media. Inman castigated the media for their hounding of President Clinton, characterizing the charges surrounding the Whitewater Development Corp. (see p. 67) as "legitimate issues in the 1992 election" and "probably very legitimate issues for the 1996 election. But what do they have to do with governing for the country in January 1994?"

Admiral Inman reported that he had received warnings from Republican Party friends in Washington that Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) had struck a deal with *New York Times* columnist and longtime Inman-hater William Safire to coordinate attacks against the defense secretary-designate and President Clinton in the Congress and the

press. The crux of the deal was that Dole would lead the attack against Inman's confirmation and Safire would turn up the heat on President Clinton's role in the Whitewater Development scandal.

This, Inman said, convinced him that, while his swift confirmation by the Senate was virtually assured, partisan politics would likely derail his efforts to secure strong bipartisan congressional support for the "fundamental" changes that he intended to pursue in defense spending and procurement procedures:

"The public has already clearly indicated a minimal support for tax increases," he explained. "So the amount of money available to spend on national security is going to continue to decline in the overall aggregate. Now that says you've got three choices. You can either draw down the forces you have and have less commitment to the outside world; or you can have sort of a hollow force that isn't ready, that couldn't respond; or you can fundamentally change the way you go about spending the money, take some risks that somebody might occasionally cheat and save \$50 billion that we spend every year trying to avoid that process. And if you do that, you can afford the force levels and the commitment in the outside world that the other reviews have said you need. But that's a wrenching change."

Almost immediately after his withdrawal announcement, the major national media drew together in an effort to dismiss the Inman resignation and his call to arms against the media's "McCarthyite" ways as the actions of a "coward," suffering from "paranoia." Less than five hours after Inman's Austin, press conference, all of the major news broadcasts were featuring the identical formulations, comparing Inman with Richard Nixon and H. Ross Perot. By then, some of Admiral Inman's most "committed" Senate backers, including John

McCain (R-Ariz.), had gotten cold feet and jumped into the media's self-defense campaign by endorsing the "Inman is paranoid" formulation first floated by Dole.

The media handling of Inman's resignation will remind many *EIR* readers of the media's frenzy against Lyndon LaRouche, particularly following the March 1986 upset electoral victories of two LaRouche associates in the Illinois Democratic Party primaries for lieutenant governor and secretary of state. Overnight, thousands of articles and news stories appeared across the country, each brandishing the identical formulation of "LaRouche, political extremist."

In fact, Admiral Inman made a direct reference to his past dealings with Lyndon LaRouche and the press's fixation on it in response to a question from an Austin reporter at his press conference. Asked whether he was aware of other specific allegations about to come out, Admiral Inman responded:

"No, none. . . . I was fascinated by the questioning process. The reporters have been out all over the country. Have you ever head Admiral Inman tell a racially oriented joke? If not, has he ever walked out when somebody else told one? That's sort of the nature of a lot of the discourse around the country. Somebody is going back, when I was the director of—deputy director of Central Intelligence, I was asked to meet with Lyndon LaRouche and his wife to debrief [them] on a trip from a foreign country. There have actually been reporters out to say, gee, is there a LaRouchie connection here that we ought to pursue?"

Safire and the ADL crowd

On Dec. 16, 1993, President Clinton announced the appointment of Admiral Inman to replace Les Aspin as secretary of defense just 24 hours after Aspin's resignation was made public. Although the decision was widely acclaimed by members of Congress from both parties, as well as from the defense establishment, a small circle of syndicated columnists associated with the Zionist lobby, wasted no time in launching a highly personal attack against Inman. William Safire led the charge, accusing Inman in a Dec. 23 column of being a "tax cheat" and a man bearing a severe "anti-Israel bias."

Safire was acting as the point man for an across-the-board assault against the Inman nomination by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)-allied media. Doug Bloomfield, a former official of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), slammed Inman and lamented Aspin's departure in a Dec. 23 column in the widely read *Washington Jewish Week*.

Admiral Inman detailed the origins of his war with the ADL crowd in the press conference, citing his actions as deputy director of Central Intelligence in early 1981 following the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in Baghdad. Inman became convinced that Israel was abusing its access to U.S. satellite reconnaissance data by using it for offensive military actions, like the Baghdad attack. He imposed restrictions on Israel's access, a move that prompted a



Bobby Inman at the White House Rose Garden on Dec. 16, 1993, when President Clinton asked him to serve as secretary of defense. In withdrawing his name a month later, Inman has exposed the "McCarthyism" of the media.

reaction from ADL-allied circles in Israel, such as Defense Minister and ADL protégé Ariel Sharon, who flew off to Washington in a fit of rage.

When Sharon failed to convince Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to override Inman's restrictive policy change, he went to Safire to get the *Times* columnist and William Casey pal's backing in the fight against Inman. Sharon lost the battle, and, apparently, responded by stepping up an aggressive spy operation against the United States. That spy effort, which drew strong support from the ADL, eventually ended with the November 1985 arrest of Jonathan Jay Pollard for espionage. The Pollard case was particularly serious, since it was widely believed, including by high-level officials of the Justice and Defense Departments, that Pollard had operated as a "false flag" agent, with vital U.S. military secrets being passed via Israel to the Soviet secret services. In his first column following the Inman nomination, Safire made a veiled reference to Inman's role in getting the federal judge to throw the book at Pollard, fresh "proof" in Safire's paranoid world, of Inman's "anti-Israel bias."

The Inman flap once again brings to the surface the issue of the destructive role played by the ADL and its media and congressional allies, especially among the so-called neo-conservatives. Lyndon LaRouche underscored this point in the weekly "*EIR Talks*" radio interview on Jan. 19:

Inman "has essentially said what is true. That the worst sleaze in Washington is typified by though not limited to the *New York Times* and by Bill Safire. That is an attempt to effect a major and much needed change in Washington at this time. There's no chance that any presidency will function in a positive way, unless that factor typified by the *New York Times*, the neo-cons, and Bill Safire is put back in the cage where it belongs."