

# North's drug-running becomes an issue

by Nancy Spannaus

The Virginia race for U.S. Senate still appears to be going Ollie North's way, but that may change in the two months between now and the fall elections. The key to the outcome is whether North's true history of drug-trafficking for his boss George Bush, and of other jobs for the secret government, becomes a major issue in the campaign.

The most promising sign so far came in the Sept. 6 debate among the four contenders—Republican North, Democrat Chuck Robb, independent Republican Marshall Coleman, and independent Democrat L. Douglas Wilder. Despite his general concentration on attacking Robb, former Governor Wilder popped the question:

“How could you ride on a plane with drugs being on the plane? . . . People are going to ask who is going to be the person to deal with drugs. Some don't see it coming into the country. Some turn their eyes when they see it in this country. . . . No, no; no one should ever have exchanged arms for hostages. That was against American policy, and it was against all that we said that we stood for.”

North responded angrily, with his standard line that he was the most investigated man on the planet, adding that he had allegedly been cleared of these charges by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). “The fact is, governor, only you and Lyndon LaRouche are raising the issue of drugs.”

Wilder—who had somewhat gone out on a limb in implying that North was on a particular plane with drugs, but was generally right on the mark—didn't back off. He replied, “Well, I don't know about Lyndon LaRouche, but I can tell you if there had been an investigation, I have not seen it. The people of Virginia have not seen the results. You should furnish the results to the people of Virginia; then I'll stop raising the question [applause]. But until such time, to tell me that something has been investigated and to then say you can't look into it because it's classified information. . . . Has classification ever been lifted, so the American people can know what's in the report?”

North again charged that only Wilder and LaRouche were persisting in raising these charges, repeating that he was “the most investigated man on this planet.” Wilder was quick to respond: “There might be very good reasons for that to be the case.”

## North's sensitivity

While the exchange on drugs did not take up a large part of the debate, it did receive coverage in two of the largest newspapers in the state, and on the radio. The debate was also broadcast live on C-SPAN and various cable TV stations. The issue which North has been trying to cover up is beginning to bubble to the surface.

This is not the first time Wilder has raised the issue of North's responsibility for running drugs into the country, as part of the Contra arms-supply operation. Wilder has referred to the recent testimony by a former DEA agent, Celerino Castillo, about North's pilots running drugs, and North being aware of the fact. On Aug. 31, Wilder charged that North couldn't deal with crime, because drugs are the main reason for crime, and North was compromised by “looking the other way” while Contra pilots flew drugs into the United States.

The issue of North's involvement with drugs has also been raised continuously by the Defeat that Son-of-a-Bush Committee, a political committee initiated by this author to prevent North's election. The SOB Committee has put out more than 10,000 bumper stickers and 20,000 pamphlets, in its first wave of activity. Several of its supporters have attended North's political events, and civic events, in hopes of educating the population on North's real record.

North has generally sought to sidestep the issue with one-word answers (like “balderdash”) or by deploying his security (i.e., goon squads) to remove those raising the disconcerting questions. As his answer to Wilder shows, he seems to be getting more and more sensitive on this issue.

## The danger

North's generally acknowledged lead in the Virginia Senate race is based on two factors. First, the fact that the opposition is split, particularly on the Democratic side, helps North. Second, North is being treated with kid-gloves by the media, with his real history being suppressed, in favor of the image of the sincere “outsider.”

The national fundraising machine which has been mobilized behind North has lent to the impression that he has an unstoppable steamroller. Leading Republicans who had opposed him at previous points—such as Reagan loyalist and former Sen. Paul Laxalt (Nev.)—have come on board. In addition, large groups of evangelical Christians have been bamboozled by North's rhetoric and sincere appearance, into believing he is the only moral choice in the race.

But North is still the lying, amoral thug he was at the National Security Council. He has never admitted to the mass of drug-running into the United States which he supervised, and apparently thinks he can get away with it. But, as the SOB Committee and other candidates press the issue, North's squeaky clean veneer may just crack. That's what's encouraging about the interchanges at the senatorial debate on Sept. 6.