

Mena drug scandal will soon hit North, Bush

by Edward Spannaus

Washington is awash with rumors about a major story just killed by the *Washington Post*—the story of gun-running and drug-running through Mena, Arkansas in the mid-1980s. But like most Washington rumors, they miss the point. Clinton-baiters such as the London *Sunday Telegraph's* Ambrose Evans-Pritchard are gloating over the notion that the *Washington Post* killed a story which Evans-Pritchard and his ilk want to misportray as a piece on the Arkansas Whitewater scandals.

But the truth of the matter is that once the actual story comes out on Mena, it will become obvious that this is not a Clinton story: It is a *George Bush* story. The real story behind Mena, is that a long series of extremely dirty and illegal covert operations was run out of George Bush's office while Ronald Reagan was President; the "Contra" operation—guns and drugs—was run out of the vice president's office supervised by Bush's national security adviser, and former CIA official, Donald Gregg.

Mena was only one of many locations used for Contra-related drug-running; Miami and New Orleans were others. The Mena-Contra apparatus was what Larry Nichols, who is now going around the country threatening Clinton and peddling Whitewater stories, was actually working for when Clinton fired him from an Arkansas state job because he was spending state time and money working with Oliver North and the Contras.

What the Post won't print

It has become common knowledge in Washington that the *Washington Post* has, for many weeks, been sitting on an explosive article on Mena which has been scheduled to run in its Sunday "Outlook" section. The article, drafts of which have been discreetly circulated, was co-authored by former National Security Council official Roger Morris and investigative reporter Sally Denton.

The Morris-Denton story is based on more than 2,000 documents concerning Adler Berriman "Barry" Seal, a major drug-runner and Drug Enforcement Administration-CIA informant who was shot to death in 1986. Seal operated out of the Mena airfield in western Arkansas from 1981 to 1986, flying guns out, and drugs in. The documents utilized by Morris and Denton include Seal's bank records, telephone records, personal correspondence and diaries, and extensive law-enforcement records.

The Seal records confirm what is already well known: that Mena was being used to fly weapons into Central America, and that drugs were brought back on the return flights. Numerous efforts to investigate the Mena operation during the Reagan and Bush administrations were all blocked on "national security" grounds.

According to Evans-Pritchard, the Morris-Denton article ran 4,000 words in length and would have taken up several pages of the *Washington Post's* "Outlook" section. According to Evans-Pritchard, as well as other sources, the *Post's* lawyers had spent many weeks going over the story line by line, and it was finally scheduled to run on Sunday, Jan. 29, when it was killed for good a few days before. Evans-Pritchard's spin on the story, of course, is that the paper is protecting President Clinton. Anyone who is honest about the *Washington Post* would know that Clinton is not their concern. The Mena story is much bigger than that.

Bush and the 'secret government'

Mena was simply one piece of an operation which was run out of Bush's office under the nominal authority of National Security Decision Directives Nos. 2 and 3. NSDD-2 created the National Security Council structure, including that covering Central America. NSDD-3, entitled "Crisis Management," created the Special Situation Group (SSG), headed by the vice president; soon after, the Crisis Pre-Planning Group was created under the SSG, as an inter-agency coordinating body whose staff coordinator was Oliver North. Under NSDD-2 and -3, taken together with Executive Order 12333, (which gave the National Security Council staff, i.e., the White House, direction of all covert operations, as well as "privatizing" certain intelligence operations), George Bush was in charge of the entire "secret government" apparatus.

The Iran and Contra scandals were just two of the many dirty operations run by the Bush apparatus. This involved a worldwide gun-running and drug-smuggling apparatus, and a myriad of foreign and domestic covert operations—including those directed against U.S. citizens.

This was the true story of "Iran-Contra" which was never investigated either by Congress or by Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh. For example, as *EIR* showed (Nov. 18, 1994, p. 73), Walsh's office was in possession of large amounts of evidence concerning drug-smuggling carried out by operatives involved in the Contra operation, but which Walsh concedes he never investigated. During North's failed Virginia campaign for U.S. Senate, the story of North's (and Bush's) complicity in drug-running began to seep into the public consciousness.

With the *Washington Post* dropping the story, other national publications are known to be sniffing around the Mena revelations. A new round of exposés about the Arkansas Contra scandal will undoubtedly add fuel to the demand for a full investigation of the crimes of George Bush and his flunky Oliver North.