

## LaRouche: Jury foreman was in secret government

by Herbert Quinde and Steve Meyer

Buster E. Horton, the jury foreman who led the conviction of Lyndon H. LaRouche and six associates in U.S. Federal Court in Alexandria, Virginia in December 1988, is a member of an elite national security decision-making unit of which Oliver North was a leading figure until he was fired in the wake of the Iran-Contra fiasco. Oliver "Buck" Revell, the number-two man in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was in charge of the government's secret "Get LaRouche" task force; he was also an administrator of the national security unit that included Oliver North and Buster Horton.

The revelations were made by American statesman and political prisoner Lyndon H. LaRouche, in an interview on Washington, D.C. radio station WRC Radio on March 14. Legal observers note that the revelations will have a substantial impact on the pending appeal of the LaRouche Seven. As one civil liberties activist commented, "This does suggest LaRouche was railroaded. If this doesn't get him out of jail, nothing will, and the country is lost."

Speaking from the Alexandria, Va. Detention Center during the seventh week of his incarceration, LaRouche told WRC talk show host Bob Levey: "The foreman of the jury was a member of the task force which has been trying to get me for five years. . . . Other people on the jury were part of government institutions. The judge allowed no *voir dire*, there was no impartial jury. There was no dismissal of government agents for cause. It was a government-agent dominated jury, headed by a jury foreman of the Agriculture Department. . . . He's a member of an elite, of about 100 persons, on the civilian side of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He is a part of the Continuity of Government operation, one of the most secret, sensitive parts of government. This Continuity of Government operation included—his partner in that was—Oliver North. His partner in that was Oliver "Buck" Revell of the FBI, who is the head of the

task force which has been going after me for five years. And he [Horton] was the foreman of the jury. Now, if that is not a corrupt jury, then there is no such thing as a fixed jury."

Although Horton identified himself as an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on his juror registration card, in fact he is a member of a select, unique interdepartmental apparatus whose function encompasses the most sensitive responsibilities for U.S. national security. In time of a national security emergency, such as a nuclear war or domestic civil disorder and insurrection, Horton's unit is responsible for the uninterrupted operations of the U.S. government. This activity is coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which in turn reports to the National Security Council.

### The Horton dossier

No ordinary bureaucrat, Horton held the exact same rank with respect to FEMA assignments as did Irangate superstar Oliver North.

Horton's association with North and the FBI's Revell is defined by his job description at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He is a senior executive of a special two-man unit which directs and maintains "emergency preparedness and readiness" for both the Washington, D.C. headquarters and the entire USDA emergency field apparatus nationwide. He is one of two people at USDA designated as the primary liaisons to FEMA. He had this responsibility throughout the Reagan administration, and continues in this position under the Bush administration.

Horton has multiple national security clearances, including a clearance to access NATO classified information. His status is so sensitive that he is on permanent 24-hour call. He is associated with and interacts with his counterparts at the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon.

Horton's responsibilities are outlined in detail by presidential executive orders. The most recent such executive order was issued just days prior to the start of the Alexandria LaRouche trial in November 1988.

According to sources, Horton's job at the Agriculture Department is so crucial that his activity in a national security emergency might well determine whether certain parts of the country eat or go hungry. He is trained to respond to a "federal radiological emergency" which could be the result of nuclear fallout in time of war or a Chernobyl-style nuclear reactor accident. In such a scenario, Horton is at the top of the USDA's chain of command to coordinate with FEMA, the Pentagon, the Department of Energy, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

### The 'kidnaping' of FEMA

Horton's promotion to this 100-person national security unit was a by-product of the 1982 National Security Decision Directive 3, which put then-Vice President Bush in charge of all U.S. intelligence operations, including "crisis pre-planning." An interagency structure called the Crisis Pre-Planning Group was initiated by the NSC, with Oliver North as the NSC staff liaison to other departments and agencies, according to documents declassified by the joint congressional committee that probed the Iran-Contra affair.

During the same period, President Reagan mandated the upgrading of FEMA to a proto-cabinet level agency.

Gen. Louis Giuffrida was put in charge of FEMA. His idea was to have a civilian multi-layered equivalent to the National Military Command Center. But North and others kidnaped the initiative, to build a "parallel" or "secret government" structure. Under the guise of protecting the national security, the useful process of interagency coordination instead created a Frankenstein monster.

Career bureaucrats such as Horton were pulled into the whirlwind of national security planning and given the necessary access to classified materials. Rubbing shoulders with Ollie North and Buck Revell's FBI agents became part of the responsibility.

The FEMA mandate to plan for "mitigating the consequences" of floods, hurricanes, and war was expanded to prepare to respond to terrorism and civil disorder. In this context, the FBI became important in NSC-FEMA planning.

In April 1984, about the same time that North was deployed to the Iran-Contra project as a priority, FEMA, NSC, and the Pentagon led a national security exercise known as Rex 84-Alpha. Sources report that this was the kind of national security exercise that Horton, as a USDA official, would have participated in.

The exercise was to test the structure set up by FEMA. The scenario for the exercise was that U.S. troops had invaded a country hostile to the United States in Central America (presumably Nicaragua). In response, rioting, civil disorder, and terrorism erupted in the United States.

The exercise was a success. The NSC, with FEMA's help, had created multiple horizontal interagency task forces, thereby destroying accountability by each department secretary, as the vertical command structure of government was "Kissingerized."

"The arrangement permitted Reagan administration officials to claim that they were not involved in controversial or illegal activities. . . . It was the ultimate plausible deniability," reported the *Miami Herald* in a July 5, 1987 article, titled "Reagan Aides and the 'Secret Government,'" by Alfonso Chardy. The article highlights North's role in coordinating an NSC-FEMA task force which "helped draw up a controversial plan to suspend the Constitution in the event of a national crisis, such as nuclear war, violent and widespread internal dissent or national opposition to a U.S. military invasion abroad." The article explains that the key to this plan was the *informal* contacts between government departments and agencies which facilitated illegal or improper intelligence community and law enforcement operations behind a national security screen, with total "plausible deniability."

Was Horton's role as foreman of a jury that convicted LaRouche and associates a coincidence or a conspiracy? There will be a definite answer in the courts, as the appeal of the LaRouche Seven is adjudicated in the near future. But many international experts have already passed judgment on the case, which one prominent West German jurist has dubbed the "American Dreyfus Affair."

LaRouche's charges against Horton have started to gain media attention. They were reported by the Brazilian daily *Tribuna de Impresa* on March 24. In the United States, the charges were aired by Nancy Spannaus, an associate of LaRouche who is running for U.S. Senate in Virginia. In a radio talk show in Roanoke, Va. on March 22, she described Horton's activities. The radio reporter later called the Agriculture Department for comment; the department spokesman confirmed that Horton was responsible for "continuity of government" in an emergency—but only for civilian, not military, matters.

Aficionados of the Iran-Contra scandal, which promises interesting new developments as North's defense lawyer attempts to put Ronald Reagan on the stand, have also taken note of the Horton story.

Horton's national security teammates, North and Revell, were both the subject of extensive media exposés and congressional investigations concerning their "off-line" cooperation on intelligence exchanges and pro-active COINTELPRO-style measures directed at an "enemies list" of people and organizations critical of the administration's foreign policy gambits, after the Iran-Contra fiasco was brought to light. Discovery materials obtained in the aborted Boston trial of LaRouche and associates, including a memo to Oliver North from Irangate principal Gen. Richard Secord, found in North's safe by Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh, confirmed that North had LaRouche on his "enemies list."