

United States Needs the Best Intelligence Service in World

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The FBI's competence was a central question when on Nov. 11, a group of Bush Administration national security officials, including National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Attorney General John Ashcroft, CIA Director George Tenet, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, and FBI Director Robert Mueller, held a two-hour session to chart out the next phase of the Administration's anti-terror efforts. According to a *Washington Post* account on Nov. 16, one key agenda item at the White House session was a report-back by Homeland Security czar Tom Ridge on his recent trip to London, where he met with officials of Britain's internal security agency, MI5.

The issue of whether the United States should establish a new counterintelligence and counter-terrorism agency, to replace the FBI as the lead agency defending the United States against internal terrorist and subversive threats, became a matter of urgency after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington. The earlier arrest of Robert Philip Hanssen, as a longtime Soviet and Russian spy, operating inside the National Security Division of the FBI, had already raised serious questions about the Bureau's competence in the counterintelligence field. Then 9/11 brought similar questions regarding the FBI's counter-terror mandate.

Two recent studies—by a governmental commission chaired by former Virginia Gov. James Gilmore, and by a Markle Foundation Task Force on National Security in the Information Age—called for replacing the FBI by a new counterintelligence/counter-terror agency, drawing its personnel from the FBI, the CIA, and other intelligence and law enforcement bureaus. Earlier, the Senate duo of Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.) had peddled the idea of incorporating those FBI and CIA functions within the now-established Homeland Security Department. Had the

Lieberman-McCain scheme passed the Congress and been signed into law by President Bush, the United States would have been well on the way to establishing the most powerful political police-state apparatus in modern times. Fortunately, the Lieberman-McCain scheme for creating a "Super Interior Ministry," more lethal than the Soviet Union's Stalinist police agencies, met with a wall of protest in the Congress, and was quickly and quietly shot down.

Nevertheless, there are genuine causes for concern that the United States is drifting, bit by bit, towards such draconian institutions. Recently the Bush Administration launched a pilot project inside the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), involving a super-computer system that will "mine" vast fields of data on all American citizens, searching for patterns of possible terrorist activity in individuals' credit card activities, bank deposits, gun purchases, travel itineraries, and phone and computer correspondences. To make matters worse, at least from a public relations standpoint, the head of this new super-techno spy project was Adm. John Poindexter, the former Reagan-Bush era National Security Adviser, who was convicted in the Iran-Contra fiasco, along with Oliver North. The last thing the Bush Administration needed, was to have the ghosts of Iran-Contra reappear in the midst of a debate over the future direction of homeland security, Constitutional rights, and how to balance the two factors.

LaRouche's Balanced View

In the midst of this tumultuous debate, Democratic Presidential pre-candidate for 2004, Lyndon LaRouche, offered crucial observations and proposals in recent interviews.

LaRouche concurred with those critics of the Bureau who have said, for years, that the FBI is not culturally capable

of handling the counterintelligence and counter-terror mission. The FBI is well-known for its meticulous “gumshoe” work, chasing criminals, analyzing crime scenes, etc. But such work is at odds with the kind of sophisticated analysis required to effectively defend the United States against enemies—both foreign and domestic—who demonstrated, with the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, both a capability and a commitment to threaten the security of the United States.

It was precisely because of the irregular warfare threat—including the threat emanating from elements within the United States national security establishment itself, associated with the neo-conservative “Clash of Civilizations” proponents—that LaRouche led the campaign up through January 2001, to block the confirmation of John Ashcroft as Attorney General. As LaRouche warned at the time, Ashcroft, who had served as Governor and State Attorney General of Missouri, and later in the Senate, represented the kind of personality that would respond to the economic crisis overwhelming the United States with police-state measures, like those used by the Nazis in Germany, following Hitler’s 1933 “Reichstag Fire” coup.

LaRouche emphasized that today, the best step to insure that the debate over the future of U.S. counter-terror and counterintelligence preparedness does not allow a drive for hideous police-state repression, is to fire Ashcroft. Let Ashcroft’s departure serve as a clear warning to those promoting a Gestapo solution to the combined crisis of global economic depression and irregular warfare, that their efforts will be crushed.

Only under such circumstances can a serious effort be mounted to establish a legitimate and viable counterintelligence and counter-terror capability.

Reviving the American System

LaRouche has also emphasized that any successful effort to defeat the threats of irregular warfare and the slide into unconstitutional police-state rule, must be based on a revival of the American intellectual tradition, particularly within the American intelligence services. The United States must have the best intelligence capability in the world. This is not a matter of technical expertise, or billion-dollar gadgetry. The core notion of “human intelligence” (“humint,” in intelligence parlance) must be based on a clear understanding of what the United States stands for in the world, historically, and in the current strategic context. No effective intelligence capability can be deployed unless the starting point is a clear, in-depth knowledge of the history of the United States, from the initial English settlements in North America, through the Founding Fathers, and the subsequent development of the American System of Political Economy, and



The man in the center, Attorney General John Ashcroft, and what he represents, is the problem in the debate over U.S. counter-terrorism intelligence among (left to right) FBI Director Robert Mueller, CIA Director George Tenet, Ashcroft, and Homeland Security head Tom Ridge.

the American diplomatic principles devised by John Quincy Adams.

This kind of in-depth knowledge requires far more than a mastery of American history. The American Revolution, the founding principles embedded in the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution of 1787, were themselves a distillation of the best traditions of republican thought, from Plato through the European Renaissance of the 15th Century.

To comprehend this historical foundation is vital to the ability to purge the United States—particularly the intelligence services—of every vestige of what the late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called the “American Tory” tradition—the legacy of the British East India Company penetration of the North American colonies, a penetration that eventually became the greatest internal threat to the survival of the United States in the 20th Century.

Thus, the issue of a new counterintelligence and counter-terror agency—and the launching of the new Homeland Security Department, which will, still, be the largest single law enforcement agency ever to be established in the history of the United States—goes far beyond the issue of whether the United States should mimic Britain’s MI5. At stake is the reconstituting of a national intelligence and counterintelligence capability that will genuinely serve the interests of all Americans, and all sovereign nation states around the world. That mission appears to be way beyond the capacities of the present Bush Administration. The issue must still be faced, squarely, if the United States is to turn back the tide of global resentment over the recent National Security Doctrine of the U.S.A., which threatens to transform America into a new global Roman Empire.