
Senate Hearings

Truth gets out about Bush's dope pushers

A second public hearing on the CIA and drug trafficking was held by the Senate Intelligence Committee on Nov. 26—and it turned out quite differently than was intended by chairman Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.). The hearing was only announced at the last minute, and the only other senator there was Richard Shelby (R-Ala.); some sources say that the hearings were only announced after the Democrats on the committee had left town for the Thanksgiving holiday. (Specter, it should be noted, has a long history with cover-ups: He was the Warren Commission's author of the "magic bullet" theory, to prove that a single assassin had killed JFK.)

The two scheduled witnesses were Contra leaders Adolfo Calero and Eden Pastora. In his opening remarks, Specter explained that the Committee had taken testimony from convicted drug dealer Danilo Blandón behind closed doors the previous day, and Specter summarized the testimony in such a way as to minimize any connection between the crack cocaine epidemic and the Contras.

Calero simply lied through his teeth, denying that anyone connected to the Contras was involved in drug trafficking. At what he thought was the end of his testimony, he declared: "If you will allow me the use of American slang, I would say that all of this story—rather than about crack, is about crap. . . . It's crap. . . . It's preposterous, ridiculous, absurd."

At this point, an African-American man stood up and began challenging the committee to present witnesses who would tell the truth. "Ask [former Drug Enforcement Administration agents] Celerino Castillo and Michael Levine about drug running. . . . Michael Ruppert tried to testify . . . you haven't called him yet. These guys were on the ground. They know what happened. They have documents they sent to the DEA. . . ."

The police approached the speaker, but the audience lent the man their support, clapping, shouting, and urging him to go on. Some could be heard calling out: "Put George Bush on the stand!" Specter asked the policeman to step aside, hoping to avoid an embarrassing confrontation.

Then, an associate of Lyndon LaRouche and activist with the FDR-PAC rose and said: "I want to support what this man is saying, because we believe that there's another cover-up going on; and the CIA is involved in this cover-up. We know that Celerino Castillo and Michael Levine know that this drug

operation was run by George Bush and Oliver North. [CIA director] John Deutch even admitted on C-SPAN that he would conduct an investigation of George Bush. Here's the evidence in this [EIR] Special Report, if anyone cares to find out the truth. We do not want to see another cover-up and hundreds of thousands more young drug dealers going to jail, serving George Bush's time."

As she spoke, the audience clapped and cheered. Specter responded: "If anybody has information to present to this committee, we are interested in receiving it. We understand the high level of emotional involvement here . . . we are prepared to listen to you."

A second black man also challenged the committee: "We need answers now. People are dying. Why did you call this meeting so suddenly?" Specter bristled, saying, "This meeting was *not* called suddenly. This meeting was scheduled three weeks ago."

Pastora: 'I didn't know anything'

In a desperate effort to return calm to the room, Specter called on Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), the new chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus who was in the audience, to join in questioning the witnesses. Waters conducted a much more serious examination of Calero, pounding him on the drug traffickers associated with the Contras. Waters raised the question of how Juan Norwin Meneses, a known drug dealer, could have walked into the United States "undetected as a drug dealer and operate for almost 10 years without being arrested," and she said that the DEA has extensive files on the Blandón-Meneses drug operation.

When Eden Pastora came on, with Waters sitting next to Specter, Specter was compelled to question Pastora much more seriously than he had Calero. In an effort to preempt Waters, Specter himself used information from the 1980s Kerry Committee investigation in his questioning of Pastora. Pastora was compelled to admit that he had received money and equipment, even helicopters and a DC-3 aircraft, from drug dealers—although he claimed that he did not know they were drug dealers at the time. He had to admit that Blandón was a "good friend" who had given him \$6,000, two trucks, and lent him a house to use. He also had to concede that drug traffickers could have taken advantage of the Contra infrastructure.

Waters confronted Pastora again on Meneses, asking if he knew that Meneses was connected to the Cali Cartel. When Pastora denied it, Waters pointed out that Marcos Aguado, the head of the Contra air force and one of Meneses's drug suppliers, was married to Pastora's daughter!

What had clearly been intended by Specter and Shelby to be a whitewash of Contra drug-dealing, resulted in something quite different, as a result of the activists' intervention. The Contra-cocaine story is getting too big to kill, and the issue of George Bush's responsibility is increasingly coming to the fore.