

# Federal anti-drug plan: chance for a cleanup

by Robert Greenberg

The war on drugs and crime announced by President Reagan in mid-October offers an opportunity to take serious and long overdue action to wipe out this plague infecting the United States, particularly its youth. This is the assessment of law enforcement professionals who are ordinarily skeptical of political promises to crack down, which they regard as mere vote hustling.

Their optimism is partly caused by the fact that the Reagan program specifically targets "those responsible for transporting and distributing drugs, *as well as the financiers and organizers*" (emphasis added). This is taken to mean that the administration is committed to directing investigations and prosecutions of the "citizens above suspicion," the well-protected types (the name of Detroit's Max Fisher, of the United Brands Caribbean drug-running combine, comes to mind) who usually remain untouched, while street-level "small fry," or middle-level merchandisers, take the heat for the planners and big moneymen.

Supplied with a \$200 million budget, the war on drugs will be fought by 13 task forces, combining the intelligence investigations and technology of every relevant federal law enforcement agency and intelligence agency, as well as the Defense Department, and the offices of the U.S. Attorneys from coast to coast. In overall command will be Attorney General William French Smith. Sources say the task forces will have the benefit of vastly upgraded intelligence and a flexible, case-by-case approach to allow the drug-hunters to maximize their impact. Another \$100 million may come as a result of administration-supported Congressional actions on the Hughes Bill providing state and local drug assistance.

Of potentially ever greater importance are signals that the administration may be getting ready to play diplomatic "hard ball" with drug networks outside the United States who have been able to buy and sell governments in Europe and the developing sector nations for years. An estimated 90 percent of the illegal drugs on the U.S. market originate abroad. New agreements with Thailand and other nations are reportedly a model for cooperation between America and other countries to stop drugs at the source. Attorney General Smith is currently on an international tour to explain the new approach to the top law enforcement officers of several nations.

A key test for the new policy will be the administration's willingness to offer political and logistical support to Bolivia's recent crackdown on the crime-and-terrorist nests which have long made their home there. Assistance to the new Bolivian government would bring the U.S. drug-fighters into direct conflict with the U.S. State Department and the FBI, which have been playing ball with the P-2 networks since Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State.

## FBI weakened?

No tears are being shed in "law and order" government circles over the apparent sharp rebuff to the FBI and its director William Webster which the new program represents. It is said that President Reagan was persuaded to act to put the new war on drugs into effect by White House adviser Ed Meese, after Meese's own review of the government's existing anti-drug efforts, in which the FBI had considerable clout, showed him that they weren't working. Webster and Budget Director Dave Stockman were said to be telling the President the U.S. could not "afford" a drug crackdown, perhaps because it might cut into the FBI's massive budget for Abscam and other "sting" operations.

The FBI's response to this rebuff has been to either attempt to take control over the entire program, or to sabotage it. Thus far this has taken the form of an extremely aggressive publicity campaign launched by the Bureau, to the effect that they will be running the newly formed statewide task forces. That claim, which they released to the wire services, is patently false, since the exact way in which the task forces are to be run has not yet been determined.

The FBI has staged several well-publicized drug busts in order to create the impression in the mind of the U.S. public that they should be in charge of the overall program. Among these busts was the sensationalist arrest of sports-car magnate John DeLorean on cocaine charges, and the announcement of the U.S. Attorney in Southern Florida of the indictment of four officials of the Cuban government for conspiracy to traffic marijuana and Quaaludes.

The FBI's attempt not to be cut out of the action, may be hurting them more than helping them. Sources in the Drug Enforcement Administration have told *EIR* that the DeLorean arrest was conducted so poorly that DeLorean could very well get off, and the whole affair might blow up in the Bureau's face. Nonetheless, the FBI has the ability to sabotage the administration's new effort, through lack of cooperation with other law-enforcement agencies. It has been pointed out to *EIR* that the FBI has more access to domestic intelligence than any other agency in the federal government, and failure to cooperate could undercut the entire program.

The potential for such sabotage has more recently been dramatically demonstrated in a recent edition of ABC television's *20/20* in which an FBI special agent in Indiana was exposed as having been cooperating with a known drug trafficker in the area, by tipping him off on the moves by local law enforcement authorities against him.