

'Secret government' thumbs its nose at the Constitution

by Kathleen Klenetsky

The parallel government which has corrupted U.S. foreign policy for decades, and which orchestrated the Iran-Contra mess, is using the congressional Irangate scandal as a forum to defend its operations against the lawful government of the United States.

The Senate and House special committees probing Project Democracy's Irangate scandal opened their public hearings May 5, taking four days' worth of testimony from retired Air Force major general Richard Secord. Secord, a fanatical admirer of Henry Kissinger's power politics, played an indispensable role in both key aspects of the Iran conspiracy, the sale of American arms to Iran, and the diversion of profits from those sales to the Contras.

Scorning immunity, a defiant Secord defended the entire Project Democracy scheme, insisting repeatedly that what he, Lt. Col. Oliver North, and the other key actors involved had done, was not only well within the confines of the law, but was required to defend U.S. strategic interests.

Secord set the tone for his testimony in his opening statement, lashing out at Attorney-General Edwin Meese for daring to expose the gun-running scheme to the American public last November. "In agreeing to testify, I have returned to the position I embraced at the time he went public with his grossly inaccurate disclosure about our operations," Secord declared. "The decision of Mr. Meese, and possibly others, to succumb to anxiety and ignorance, is particularly unforgivable in my judgment, in light of the fact that had he been receptive, he could have been advised of the facts surrounding these events before his announcement. This reasonable option was rejected and we were instead betrayed, abandoned, and left to defend ourselves."

In subsequent testimony, Secord defended Ollie North and the other principal U.S. actors in Irangate, as well as

other parts of the operation, including the CIA-linked Southern Air Transport, as honorable men who should be hailed as heroes, rather than being subjected to investigation and possible prosecution.

He also described in detail how he tried desperately to persuade President Reagan and Adm. John Poindexter to "keep up the fight" when Irangate first broke last November. In testimony May 6, Secord recounted how, on the day Poindexter resigned as national security adviser, Secord called him "to urge him not to quit, to stand in there and fight and let's get this thing straightened out." But Poindexter said "it was too late." When Secord told Poindexter he wanted to speak to Reagan directly, Poindexter "said it was too late. They'd already built a wall around the President."

Secord said he tried to speak to the President by phone later that same day, but was unsuccessful. Asked what it was he wanted to tell Reagan, Secord replied: "I wanted to tell the President that I'd like to see him and try to bring some rationality back into this matter. There's no reason to back away from these operations. . . . It was a good policy, and was worth a try. But in any case, once you made a decision like this, to back away from it, it was a terrible mistake, in my judgment. . . . And, so my advice would have been, 'Let's stake out our position. Don't cut and run.'"

It is most significant that Secord's testimony was drafted by Edward Bennett Williams. A powerful "insider" Washington attorney, Williams epitomizes the invisible government. He chaired the President's Intelligence Oversight Board during the precise period in which President Reagan was being force-fed the Iran arms policy.

Williams's service to the secret government is made even more clear by his client list: He has, for example, defended fugitive financier Robert Vesco, who is currently enjoying a

safe haven in Cuba, where he is assisting Castro's massive Caribbean drug-running operation to the United States.

But it isn't just the "defendant," Secord, who is defending the parallel government's existence. Despite the fireworks and posturing that have come out of the first week's hearings, the "prosecution," the congressional investigation, is also protecting the apparatus. As *EIR* has previously warned, the congressional investigation was being carefully orchestrated to produce evidence further implicating the President and Vice-President George Bush in the conspiracy, while keeping the heart of the Project Democracy parallel government apparatus intact.

Underscoring the rigged nature of the proceedings, is the fact that the Senate panel's chief counsel, Arthur Liman, is also a secret government insider—and like Edward Bennett Williams, also represented Robert Vesco!

Although in their opening statements May 5, Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii)

man of the Senate and House Irangate committees, respectively)

the only person who has seriously pursued that point so far is Sen. David Boren (D-Okla.)

ligence Committee, Boren had publicly labeled the Iran-Contra scheme a product of the "parallel government" several months ago.

Boren pressed Secord on the extra-legal nature of the Iran-Contra operation on May 7: "Did you not wake up some morning and think, 'How did I, as a private individual, start exercising all this responsibility to make foreign policy for the United States of America, in lieu of the Congress, the Secretary of State, the President?' . . . Did you not have even a moment of humility about your judgment in substituting yourself for the constitutional process of this country? . . . Have you ever read the Constitution of the United States? . . . Do you believe in it?"

But thus far, the major "revelations" the hearings have produced concern Secord's allegations about the involvement of top administration officials in the Iran-Contra scheme. The administration's highest levels "knew and approved of my activities" in running the private supply operation to the Contras, and, later, in helping in the transfer of arms to Iran, Secord told the hearings May 5. He also reported that he held three meetings with CIA director William Casey to discuss the private supply network to the Contras, and that Casey was fully "aware" of the operation, and "was in favor of it." Casey died May 6, and so is unable to confirm or deny the truth of Secord's statements.

Next day, Secord strongly implied that President Reagan knew that profits from the Iran arms shipments were being diverted to the Contras—something which Reagan has consistently denied. He also reported that George Bush had not only called Ollie North the day he resigned to offer his support, but also had met with Felix Rodriguez to discuss the Secord-North private Contra supply networks.

Walsh counterattacks

With Congress abandoning its responsibilities, the only official enquiry which is actually going after the upper echelons of the secret government network, is that being run by independent counsel Lawrence Walsh. Key members of the congressional Irangate investigation, most notably Sen. Warren Rudman (R-N.H.), the ranking Republican on the Senate committee, have repeatedly attacked Walsh, and sought to undermine his investigation.

They were joined by Secord, who interrupted his testimony May 7 to bitterly attack Walsh. During questioning about the disposition of some of the Iran arms sale proceeds, Secord shot out: "I'm not focusing on it right now. I've got bigger problems to focus on than that. I've got a special prosecutor over here across the street that's trying to throw all of us in jail for performing our duty as we saw it. . . . This is crazy."

Secord has every reason to be upset. Despite the mass of obstacles strewn in his path, Walsh has compiled an impressive record. Both of the indictments his inquiry has produced both hit at so far have resulted in convictions.

The day after the congressional hearings opened, Walsh secured his second conviction. Richard Miller, who was part of Spitz Channell's private Contra fundraising network, pleaded guilty to the same charges Channell had the week before: tax fraud. Like Channell, Miller named Ollie North as part of the conspiracy to defraud the government, and agreed to cooperate fully with Walsh's investigation.

North is not the only person who could get bagged by Walsh's probe into the Channell operation. Miller, in addition to getting \$500,000 in funds from the National Endowment for Democracy—identified in *EIR*'s Special Report, "Project Democracy: The 'Parallel Government' Behind the Iran-Contra Affair," as a key, overt arm of the parallel government's apparatus—also received secret contracts from the State Department, specifically the humanitarian affairs department when it was headed by Elliott Abrams, another key figure in Iranscam.

Earlier in the week, Lewis Tambs, the former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, tightened the noose around Abrams's neck, when, in an interview with the *New York Times*, he revealed that he had received orders from Washington to give illegal aid to the Contras. Tambs said his orders came from the Restricted Interagency Group, an informal organization of government officials who helped set Contra policy, and that the three key officers who gave him his instructions were Col. Oliver North; Elliott Abrams, who chaired the group; and the CIA's Alan D. Fiers.

Abrams's well-deserved demise may be right around the corner. According to the May 7 *Wall Street Journal*, Walsh is investigating whether other administration officials who met with Channell, including Abrams, were aware that tax-exempt donations were being used to buy weapons for the Contras.