

# Drug lobby sets new strategy for the Clinton presidency

by Our Special Correspondents

As Washington gets ready to usher in the Clinton administration, the Drug Policy Foundation held its annual meeting in the nation's capital Nov. 12-14, and assessed the prospects for drug legalization under the new regime. The watchword of the drug lobby domestically is: Go slow, avoid doing anything that would force Bill Clinton to openly dissociate himself from their agenda, and look for high-ranking appointments of officials sympathetic to a complete cessation of hostilities in the moribund "war on drugs."

Kevin Zeese, vice president of the foundation, said flatly, "I think we can expect benign neglect, which is good. Make this a low priority issue. I think we'll see less aggressive prosecution of the drug war, shifting the emphasis to health."

The Drug Policy Foundation (DPF) was established in the mid-1980s as a cleaned-up version of the original drug legalization group, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). Former Chicago commodities trader Richard Dennis, a funder of many liberal "One World" causes, socked a large amount of money into the DPF kitty to get the group off the ground. Instead of the pot-smoking hippies that once led the drug lobby, DPF put the emphasis on academics, doctors, lawyers, and elected officials—often burying the legalization agenda behind a facade of "objective" concerns for health and law enforcement issues.

## High-level participation

This year's annual DPF conference did not produce any high-profile analysis of the foreign policy end of the drug war, but it was significant that Dr. Jeremy Stone, a leading expert on Peru's Shining Path narco-terrorists from the American Federation of Scientists, was actively "networking" among the participants of the conference. Princeton professor Ethan Nadelmann, a former consultant on money laundering to the State Department, reported the views of drug advocate Andrew Weil, who says that leading strata in Colombia are ready to make peace with the drug cartels, and join in a campaign to legitimize cocaine derivatives, such as the tea products marketed by Bolivia. This de facto legalization campaign will be the

wave of the future, according to Nadelmann.

The academic, legal, and law enforcement officials who gathered at this meeting are confident that the Bush administration has soured the population on the idea of vigorously combatting the international drug cartels, even though all surveys show that Americans rank drug use as the major domestic problem today. So confident are the drug legalizers, that former police official Joseph McNamara (who otherwise makes his living by libeling the National Rifle Association and attacking the Second Amendment) was counseling his more fuzzy-headed, pot-smoking field troops to back off on the demands for legalization of drug use which have been the hallmark of this movement ever since their halcyon days in the Carter administration.

From the standpoint of the more sophisticated drug lobbyists, de jure legalization is an irrelevant issue in a society where drugs are now de facto legal. In short, why call attention to yourself by demanding legalization of something which any school child can purchase with impunity?

Clinton himself is on record as an opponent of legalization, and told a national TV audience that he thinks his brother Roger, a recovering cocaine addict, would be dead if cocaine were legal. Nonetheless, according to the drug lobby gathering, if the Clinton administration will let the "war on drugs" die a quiet death, the international drug cartels will be able to legitimize their revenues and stabilize the traffic in cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, and Americans will eventually accommodate themselves to the perspective of "maintaining" a vast population of drug-impaired wretches who will be juiced up by the cartels, and dried out in federally funded "treatment" centers.

## Why the 'war on drugs' was a failure

In reality, the key to drug policy has never been located with the addict or the pusher—drug policy is intimately tied to banking policy, and the deregulated banking system has become a "neutral broker" working to legitimize the billions of black market drug dollars. It is one of Lyndon LaRouche's most unique contributions to the anti-drug fight, to have identified this relationship between black market financial specu-

lators and the international drug cartels, and to have warned of the consequences of allowing persons like George Bush, a creature of this alliance, to formulate drug policy.

*EIR* warned two years ago that the Bush administration's phony war on drugs—spending billions of dollars a year without making any serious dent in the world drug trafficking—would help the drug lobby to spread its pernicious argument that the only recourse is to make mind-destroying drugs legal. *EIR* and Lyndon LaRouche's unique authority on this issue was based on decades of intensive research into the illegal drug trade, which led to the publication of a book-length dossier, *Dope, Inc.* In March 1985, LaRouche issued a 15-point proposal for carrying out a real war on drugs. Key to that proposal was a top-down assault against the international financial institutions that launder the hundreds of billions of dollars a year in illegal drug revenues through the commercial banks.

In this light, the question is, will the Clinton administration continue the Bush administration's commitment to defending the interests of the deregulated financial "casinos" that have replaced the banking system in America? If so, people may become demoralized enough to accept the terms of surrender proposed by the Drug Policy Foundation.

### **A reaction to police-state 'reforms'**

The respectable face for the policy of "benign neglect" advocated by the DPF was provided by an expanding group of politicians and judicial figures who attended and participated in this year's conference. Two years ago, the big news at the conference was the report from Ethan Nadelman that an unnamed federal judge was about to publicly endorse drug legalization. In the intervening time, the Bush administration culminated its "war" on the Bill of Rights with a series of initiatives which have shocked and disgusted even the criminal defense bar. And this year, a panel discussion at the DPF conference on the evils of mandatory sentencing provisions was led by U.S. District Judge Robert W. Sweet, California Superior Judge James P. Gray (both advocates of legalization), and U.S. District Judge James C. Paine.

The presence of such high-level judicial figures at this conference is reflective of a growing revulsion for the Reagan-Bush police-state "reforms" which were packaged as anti-drug measures. Judges have been quitting the bench or threatening to quit in record numbers, as the courts have been turned into plea-bargain factories run by politically ambitious prosecutors. While some judges, like Robert Sweet, actually support the arguments of legalizers like William F. Buckley and Milton Friedman, many more are simply desperate to reverse the collapse of the entire judicial system.

Conference seminars addressing various elements of this legal catastrophe featured top criminal defense attorneys from around the country, and were attended by a representative number of public defenders who are fed up with the kangaroo-court proceedings they are participating in. Cook

County Public Defender Thomas M. Donnelly, from Illinois, reported that his office is confronted with a nationally touted program called a Drug Court which is forcing as many as 400 people *per night* to plea bargain their way out of jail.

These courts were created to process the hundreds of young men picked up in "drug sweeps" which use the newly expanded definitions of "probable cause" as the premise for arresting and charging the suspects with a variety of drug offenses. No matter how vague the charge, and guilty or not, the suspect is faced with the threat of months and months of pre-trial detention if he does not plead guilty and accept probation and a criminal record. If he agrees, he is out on the street before dawn. According to Donnelly, of more than 3,000 arrests in a week, less than 6 go to trial. The judges openly threaten the public defender that any attempt to take one of these cases to trial will produce retaliation against other clients of the law firm, and when a trial does occur, the court staff is forced to work double shifts so as to create as hostile an attitude toward the defendant as possible.

This Chicago "drug court" has little to do with drugs as such, but is a pure police-state mechanism created by the criminal justice reform agenda pursued by the Department of Justice since the Nixon administration. The drug threat has been used to drive some of this legislation through Congress over the years, but internal Justice Department papers prove that curtailing the drug trade has never been the real aim of these reforms. They have been designed to do exactly what the Chicago court is doing: to marginalize and disenfranchise whole segments of the population who are convicted and sentenced without the pretense of a trial. This happened to almost 100,000 young men in Chicago alone just last year. Such wholesale injustice is as destructive to social order as drugs themselves.

### **Need for a moral stand**

Drug legalization will not reverse a single one of the U.S. Supreme Court decisions which have legitimized this farce. In the view of many cynical members of the bar, drug legalization will meliorate the effects of the police state, and obviate the need for a principled political fight for justice.

The image of the defense bar as compliant, but protesting, participants in the murder of justice in the United States will be furthered by the high-profile participation by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers in the Drug Policy Foundation conference. NACDL official William Moffitt, and other members of the Alexandria firm of Zwerling, Moffitt, and Kemler, participated in several legal seminar panels which examined the role of new asset forfeiture laws, which allow the prosecutor to freeze the defendant's assets in order to prevent him from paying his attorney. It apparently takes an attack on the bank account to turn some defense attorneys into political crusaders. It is unclear what it will take to get them to defend the Constitution without legitimizing the use of drugs.