

Militia hearings become a dog and pony show

by Leo F. Scanlon

On June 15, a Senate Judiciary Committee subcommittee held hearings which purported to be an investigation into the nature of the so-called "militia" movement in the United States, and an effort to determine what threat this movement might represent. The proceedings shed little light on those questions, but did illustrate how the militia issue has served to divert attention from any useful effort to identify the perpetrators of the terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City. The important questions untouched by the committee were: Whose political ideas are circulating in this populist milieu, and who benefits from the existence of this formation?

The hearing was convened by presidential candidate Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and Government Information, and followed related hearings on the terrorist threat and the counter-terrorist legislation proposed to deal with it. Specter promises to investigate the events in Waco, Texas and Ruby Creek, Idaho as well—subjects which will be the focus of House hearings in early July.

The House hearings have the potential, if they are serious, to examine and root out the rogue networks within the government which perpetrated those fiascos, and if those hearings are serious, it is the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), foreign intelligence agents such as Britain's Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, and their pro-secessionist collaborators in the bureaucracy and the think-tanks which should be brought under the microscope.

Department of Justice officials such as Mark Richard, who have vetted into the bureaucracy scores of people who are assets of this machine, should now be asked questions, such as: Who lied to the Attorney General about the nature of events at Waco and Ruby Creek? Who sold the media the fairy tale that the militia movement planned the Oklahoma City bombing? Who perpetuates these myths within federal

law enforcement agencies?

Specter, who is among the ADL's foremost supporters in the Senate, has good reason to avoid these questions, and Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), one of the ADL's top men in the House, staged an extraordinary stunt to preserve the dog-and-pony show atmosphere which made it possible for Specter to duck the issue. Schumer's aides leafletted Specter's hearing room with an announcement that Schumer and Dan Levitas, a leading ADL propagandist, would hold a press conference at the conclusion of the event, to denounce the proceedings as a "forum for the wacko-right."

Levitas's statement had already appeared that morning in *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill newspaper edited by neo-conservative luminary Morton Kondrake. Levitas's commentary opened with stock ADL formulations that the militia movement is a domestic threat equal to the Ku Klux Klan of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He accused Specter of playing the role of the House Rules Committee in 1921 and the Dies Committee in 1942, which boosted the Klan by holding spectacular and well-publicized "investigations" into the organization.

His conclusion pointed to the real issue: "The House leadership has chosen to ignore the threats posed by the paramilitary right in favor of hearings into government culpability in the Waco debacle. . . . Republican leaders in Congress are . . . sidestepping the clear and present danger posed by far-right groups." Precisely, because an investigation into "government culpability" which ignores the militia side-show, will spotlight him and his friends.

Local lawmen warn against ADL-style hysteria

While the spokesman from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms had little to offer, and the FBI merely said that it couldn't say anything important, because all the important things are currently under investigation (as usual),

local law enforcement officials did have some useful advice. Foremost was the admonition that the worst thing that could be done would be to paint the "militia" phenomenon with a broad brush.

Contrary to the propaganda spewing from the ADL, Chip Berlet, and the other "experts" who are slavishly quoted by the media, these local officials, who deal with the problem directly, emphasized the small and insignificant nature of the core radicals in the "militia" movement.

Col. Fred Mills of the Missouri State Highway Patrol (which has had two officers killed by white separatists in recent years) pointed out that the radical elements of the Christian Identity organizations—the KKK, CSA, and Posse Comitatus—have long been active in his region. "To say that all militia members are extremists, however, is overstating today's movement," he said. "Many people who attend militia meetings would be considered law-abiding, God-fearing citizens—farmers, entrepreneurs, former military personnel, and some who simply are curious as to what these groups are about."

Maricopa Arizona County Attorney Richard Romley emphasized, "We must be careful not to label all members of militias as supporters of the rantings of these extremists. . . . We must not be stampeded into quick, but ill-conceived action because of the horror of immediate events."

Both Romley and panelist John Bohlman, the Musselshell, Montana County Attorney who recently arrested his fellow panelist and leader of the Militia of Montana John Trochmann, called attention to the actions of a particular segment of the militia movement which calls itself the "Freemen." Bohlman pointed out that this organization functions as outlaws, rejecting citizenship and refusing to recognize local lawful authority, and has issued a variety of death threats to him and others.

Most revealing, are the "Freemen" theories which call for the creation of parallel (secret) judicial and legislative bodies, as well as "militias," as part of an overall revolt against the federal government.

The same concept was mentioned by Ohio militia panelist James Johnson, and by Michigan Militia panelist Norm Olson. Johnson said that the purpose of the militia movement is not to put people under arms—"Americans already have guns," he said—but to cultivate the creation of state and county organizations which will "bypass all you guys here inside Route 495," i.e., Washington.

Conspirophiles can't see Red(coats)

The Freemen concepts, which are circulated through thousands of fax machines and newsletters by the populist movement, are the crudest rehash of classic British propaganda against the American Republic. Rejecting the Constitution, they assert that all authority derives from common law, the county, and the state, and that the federal Constitution is a mere "contract" between the citizen and the representative government.

The "contract" has been broken, these Confederates insist, therefore common law actions, such as commercial liens and declaratory judgments, can be filed by an aggrieved party against any person or political figure targeted for harassment in order to force compliance with the "contract." The procedure is not a joke, since a court-certified lien requires no proof of claim, and wrecks a personal or business credit rating until the matter is straightened out.

This notion has been widely circulated by populists like Alfred Adask and Michael Benn in Texas, Red Beckman in Billings, Montana (who is now holed up in a stand-off with law enforcement agents), and a number of Utah state legislators who are active in the movement to call a new constitutional convention.

This is also the core idea behind the antics of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), his zombie-like acolytes, and their "Contract With America" propaganda. And the "state's rights" schemes advocated by the militia spokesmen are merely the clownish version of the legislative proposals advanced by the British and the Club of the Isles-funded think-tanks such as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

ALEC, for example, circulates proposed legislation on issues such as prison privatization, "restoring the 10th Amendment" and so on. These schemes frequently call for creating a permanent committee of the legislature, which is tasked to communicate with corresponding (ALEC-designed) committees in other states.

This is the very model being advocated by the militia movement. Virginia has already implemented the ALEC proposal to create a "state sovereignty committee" funded by the legislature. This effort to cultivate a new secessionism is directed by a top aide to former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Likewise, the briefing book prepared by the Michigan Militia and presented to the committee, which purports to "prove" that the United States has been taken over by a Clinton-led dictatorship, was a litany of national security actions which were deemed tyrannical by virtue of the fact that they were authorized by President Clinton. The militia researchers failed to note that none of the actions violate the current laws governing national security.

The Michigan researchers also failed to include a single violation of law committed by George Bush, Oliver North, and their drug-pushing friends. The reason is that this "bill of particulars" is ultimately nothing more than a rewrite of the dispatches of Evans-Pritchard, the militia movement's international public relations spokesman.

As *EIR* has reported consistently, Evans-Pritchard and the tabloid press which employs him have been hyping the militia movement since the day William Clinton took office. The publicly stated aim of this campaign is to "sandbag the President of the United States." It is this effort to intervene into the domestic affairs of the nation which is the proper matter for a national security investigation.