

'Bill Weld blocked our investigation'

Below are excerpts from the Oct. 23 hearings of the Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), during the testimony of Jack Blum, formerly the special counsel to the 1986-88 Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on terrorism and narcotics (the "Kerry Committee"). Blum's references are to William F. Weld, who was at the time the U.S. Assistant Attorney General. Weld, governor of Massachusetts, is now the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, against incumbent Democrat John Kerry, who chaired the Kerry Committee.

Mr. Blum: Now, you might ask, why did the hearings we ran in '88 and the report we released in 1989 not get more attention? And the answer is, we were subject to a systematic campaign to discredit everything we did. Every night after there was a public hearing, Justice Department people, administration people would get on the phone and call the press and say the witnesses were all liars, they were talking to us to get a better deal, that we were on a political vendetta, that none of it was to be believed, and please don't cover it.

Senator Specter: But let me ask you, on a question relevant here, did you ever see any of that interference by U.S. intelligence, CIA or otherwise, of any prosecutions against cocaine in Los Angeles?

Mr. Blum: We did not focus on Los Angeles and Los Angeles prosecutions. I can tell you there were cases in Miami, and there were other cases in other parts of the

country.

Senator Specter: Now did those cases permit cocaine dealers to continue to operate?

Mr. Blum: One had the sense they did, but—when we got into this area, we confronted an absolute stone wall. Bill Weld, who was then the head of the [Justice Department] Criminal Division, put a very serious block on any effort we made to get information. There were stalls. There were refusals to talk to us, refusals to turn over data. An Assistant U.S. attorney who gave us some information was reprimanded and disciplined, even though it had nothing to do with the case. . . . We had a series of situations where Justice Department people were told that if they told us anything about what was going on, they would be subject to very severe discipline.

Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.): Mr. Blum, when you talked to me, you said there was a systematic effort to discredit the work of the subcommittee. . . . How would you define "systematic"?

Mr. Blum: An organized effort from the top—

Senator Kerrey: Who was in charge of it?

Mr. Blum: As best I could tell, it was coming from the top of the Criminal Division.

Senator Kerrey: Who was at the top of the Criminal Division?

Mr. Blum: Bill Weld.

Senator Kerrey: And when you say, the effort was made, what would they do? Would they call—

Mr. Blum: They would tell U.S. Attorneys, systematically: "You can't talk to them. Don't give them paper. Don't cooperate. Don't let them have access to people who you have in your control." And we had a very tough time finding things out.

are required more rapidly than routine interdepartmental NSC staff support provides." This formalized George Bush's control over intelligence and covert operations.

5. On May 14, 1982, the first phase of the Bush takeover was completed, with the issuance of an extraordinary memorandum entitled "Crisis Pre-Planning," by the national security adviser. Citing the authority of NSDD-3, this memorandum established an interagency, standing Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) subordinate to the SSG. The CPPG was created as a *standing* body, which would meet regularly, and develop plans and policies for the SSG. The SSG-CPPG, under the direct control of the vice president, was given control over *any* area in which a *potential* crisis could emerge, and was to develop *preemptive policy options* for dealing with it. "Crisis management" was no longer just for crises.

This SSG-CPPG structure, according to a chart later thrown at Secretary of State George Shultz in 1983, operated

on the same level as the National Security Council, and was *above* the secretary of state. In reality, it superseded the NSC.

Shultz vigorously opposed the creation of a "Public Diplomacy" unit in the State Department which would report to the NSC instead of him. He asked Reagan for a structure in which he would be the President's "sole delegate in carrying out your policies." What he got back was a memorandum in the name of the President which stated: "Success in Central America will require the cooperative effort of several Departments and agencies. No single agency can do it alone nor should it." Attached was the chart entitled "NSDD-2 Structure for Central America" putting Bush's SSG-CPPG on the level of the NSC, in between the President and the secretary of state.

This is how, during the Reagan administration, intelligence and foreign policy "crisis management" was consolidated under the operational control of the Vice President of the United States, George Bush.