

Waters Exposed Contra Drug Trafficking

by Michele Steinberg

Aug. 16 (EIRNS)—On Aug. 6, LaRouche PAC posed the question, “Who is Porter Goss to sit in judgement against members of Congress for the racist Barack Obama?”

Well-placed intelligence sources in Washington had pointed to a bitter conflict between Rep. Maxine Waters and Goss, now co-chairman of the unconstitutional Office of Congressional Ethics that initiated the phony ethics charges against Waters. That conflict goes back to 1997-99, when Goss blocked the efforts of Waters to expose the Bush family/Iran-Contra cocaine trafficking which had created a hellish epidemic of crack cocaine use in South Central Los Angeles—Waters’ Congressional District—as well as in other parts of the country.

As *EIR* has reported, Goss became head of the

House Select Committee on Intelligence in 1997, courtesy of then-GOP Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, after playing a key role in protecting Gingrich in an ethics investigation.

In the aftermath of the 1998 release of the CIA Inspector General's reports, following the 1996 exposé of the crack cocaine scandal by now-deceased journalist Gary Webb, Waters demanded a full, open investigation by the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

Since 1996, Waters had vigorously pursued the investigation of the Webb revelations which appeared in the San Jose *Mercury News*. She conducted an in-depth investigation of the charges, including using her own money for a trip to Nicaragua to interview CIA assets and cocaine traffickers who were named in the Webb series, and held a forum at the 1996 conference of the Congressional Black Caucus.

On March 16, 1998, Waters and Rep. Juanita M. McDonald testified at a hastily-called hearing before Goss's Intelligence Committee, which was prompted, at least in part, by the fact that the CIA Inspector General Fred Hitz had announced that he was going to resign after Parts I and II of the report were released.

Hitz testified at the hearing that "during the Contra era, CIA worked with a variety of people to support the Contra program. These included CIA assets, pilots who ferried supplies to the Contras, as well as Contra officials and others. Let me be frank about what we are finding. There are instances where CIA did not, in an expeditious or consistent fashion, cut off relationships with individuals supporting the Contra program who were alleged to have engaged in drug trafficking activity...."

In her testimony, Waters not only detailed her own interviews, but passionately emphasized that *only* Congress had the subpoena powers to get to the bottom of this story. Neither the CIA, nor the Justice Department, nor the White House had such powers. She noted in speeches and interviews, that Iran-Contra chieftain Col. Oliver North had never been questioned about the drug trafficking. In the *New York Times*, North went after Waters for demanding such a useless and "baseless investigation."

In late 1998, Part II of the CIA IG's report finally came out, with extensive evidence of knowledge by high-level officials in the CIA and the White House, in 1984-86, of the cocaine-trafficking allegations. Referring to the new disclosures, Waters wrote a letter to Goss demanding another hearing.

"[T]he dramatic new developments in this ongoing scandal make it imperative that the House Intelligence Committee hold full public hearings to be able to fully and adequately complete its investigation," wrote Waters. "I ask you to set a date for the commencement of these hearings as soon as possible...."

Part II of the IG report came out in the midst of the impeachment against President Bill Clinton, and in that witchhunt atmosphere, Waters' letter was completely ignored. Even worse, reported investigative journalist Robert Parry, in *Consortium News*, when the follow-up Congressional probe that Goss had promised a year earlier was held in May 1999, it was a *closed, secret* hearing, where Goss did not even allow Waters to sit in.

But Waters did not stop fighting Washington's cover-up of the cocaine trafficking and money laundering. In 1999, she wrote letters to every top official in the bank regulatory and criminal justice chain of command demanding a halt to the proposed Citibank-Travelers Insurance merger, based on evidence of Citi's money laundering. Not only was Citi laundering drug money, she warned, but the creation of such a "mega-bank" would further destroy the access by minority communities' to credit and banking services.

Waters' interventions made her an enemy of Wall Street and the speculators, and that is what is behind the persecution of her today.