

LaRouche PAC's Questions Could Sink Goss Nomination

by Michele Steinberg and Anton Chaitkin

On Sept. 13, the LaRouche PAC turned up some critical questions that could sink the nomination of Porter Goss as Director of the CIA. Goss, the Florida-based former CIA agent and current Dick Cheney political hit man, has used his position in Congress over the last three years, to cover up the misuse of intelligence by the Bush Administration, including a coverup of the lies that were manufactured by the Pentagon and used to justify the Iraq war, and protection of the White House when it was revealed that political operatives in the nation's highest office, had leaked the name of a covert CIA agent in order to take political revenge on her husband, Amb. Joe Wilson. Wilson had produced evidence contradicting the story that Iraq had nuclear weapons.

This alone should be sufficient to stop the Goss nomination, which is being railroaded through the Senate on orders of Dick Cheney. Although Intelligence Committee Chairman Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) failed to ram through the Goss nomination in the first hearing day, Sept. 14, he is pushing for Goss to be confirmed on Sept. 20, the next hearing date.

However, new evidence uncovered by the LaRouche PAC, concerning the coverup of major narcotics trafficking operations in Lee County, Florida, in the mid-1980s, makes it imperative that the Goss nomination either be *withdrawn* or tabled while a *full investigation* takes place of the Florida narcotics trafficking, linked to the Iran-Contra, in the area that Goss represented as a Congressman. A LaRouche PAC press release issued on Sept. 13 (see *Documentation*) reported details of the story of a major Lee County drug case that was brought to full prosecution by the authorities, but was, by all accounts, dismantled, blocked, and derailed by pressure from above. "Who aborted the case?" the release asks. "What was

'the intelligence industry' in that area, in that Iran-Contra era? Ask Porter Goss."

No Lessons Learned from Iraq

Worse than Cheney's thuggery, is the timidity of the Democratic Party, which is putting the brakes on the Democrats who oppose the nomination. This is a hideous repeat of the October 2002 Senate rubber-stamp of the Iraq war. And again, the retreat is being led by Sen. Tom "McClellan" Daschle, Senate minority leader from South Dakota, who announced that he supports the nomination.

Fortunately, other members of the Senate were not as pliant, and Goss was bloodied in the Sept. 13 hearing.

In his first round of questioning, Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), the co-chairman of the Senate Select Committee in Intelligence, skewered Goss for his statements in an op-ed, and on the House floor, in which he attacked Sen. John Kerry for making "deep and devastating cuts in the intelligence community's budget and leading efforts in Congress to dismantle the intelligence capabilities of the nation."

Rockefeller first showed, that from 1996 to 2001, the Clinton Administration's budget request had increased every year, and that in five of those six years, the Republican-controlled Congress had cut Clinton's requests!

Then Rockefeller compared Senator Kerry's 1994 proposal, with the bill co-sponsored by Goss. In fact, Goss's bill proposed much deeper cuts in the intelligence budget than did that of Kerry. Goss would have cut the intelligence community's personnel by 20% over a five-year period.

Rockefeller asked Goss: "How do you reconcile these facts with your charge that it was the Democrats who did not sup-



Nominee for CIA director Porter Goss (left) with Vice President Dick Cheney. Cheney is trying to ram the nomination through the Senate double-time, but significant opposition emerged at the 11th hour.

port intelligence? Do you stand by your claims?"

All that Goss could say was, "the record is the record," and "the record speaks for itself," a mantra he repeated numerous times.

This "record is the record" evasion by Goss has become the basis for mounting opposition to him. In the hearings, both Sens. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) went after him for making such a "dismissive comment." Republican Sen. John Warner (Va.) attacked Goss for a similar sarcastic remark that the Senate probe into the Abu Ghraib prison tortures is "a circus." And Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) nailed Goss for his disgusting statement that he would not investigate who leaked the identity of covert CIA agent Valerie Plame unless someone sent him "a blue dress and some DNA"—a reference to the Monica Lewinsky operation against Bill Clinton.

Goss conceded to Feinstein, "I don't think it was my best comment ever." But then Goss covered all these areas by promising that he would cut out the partisanship game, Scout's honor.

Most disturbing was Goss's total protection of the Pentagon neo-cons' secret intelligence operations. Asked by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) why he had "led a party-line vote to reject an amendment that would have authorized an inquiry into dealings with Ahmed Chalabi," even *after* it was exposed that the Iraqi Chalabi gave military secrets to Iranian intelligence, Goss asserted that the exposé of Chalabi shows that "oversight" has worked well in that case.

And, when Senator Durbin demanded, "If you become the Director of the CIA, what will you do about this rogue

intelligence operation in the Department of Defense?" Goss—who has blocked every demand for hearings by the House Intelligence Committee into the rogue Office of Special Plans, under neo-con Doug Feith—brazenly replied, "I certainly would not want to characterize anything as a 'rogue intelligence operation' unless I had ample evidence, and much more background information than I do."

Goss was allowed to continue tell his "CYA" lies.

New Evidence Emerges

On Sept. 16, three days into the wide circulation of the LaRouche PAC release, "Ask Porter Goss," the *New York Times* published a lead editorial titled, "Failing the Senate Intelligence Test," which called for Bush, "if he is serious," to "shelve Mr. Goss's appointment and let Congress do its job" of intelligence reform. The *Times* flunked Goss on many issues, as a serious candidate for running the CIA. For one thing, Goss already "played election year politics by mischaracterizing the intelligence record of Sen. John Kerry," the editorial said. And Goss "hardly embodies the independent thinking" needed to run the Agency, rather than having a Bush-Cheney yes-man.

Most of all, the *Times* said, Goss is directly responsible for the "dysfunctional Congressional oversight that the 9/11 Commission found to be a critical factor in the nation's intelligence failures."

These are "grounds enough" for bouncing Goss, said the *Times*, but their charges only scratch the surface.

Since the LaRouche PAC memo was issued to Senate and House personnel on Sept. 13, other sources have come

forward about the Florida drug-running case, and new leads are now being investigated by LaRouche PAC.

Honest law enforcement officials, from various agencies, have expressed continuing outrage at the blocking of this investigation and prosecution during the 1980s. Officials who later inherited the investigative files in the relevant agencies asked, with anger, “Why is that man still not in prison?”—referring to a powerful Lee County official.

Professional staffers for Senator Kerry’s 1988 Committee investigation into narcotics trafficking and national security, noted in the 1980s, that Federal investigators were hot on the trail of other drug flights into the Lee County-Charlotte County area—flights associated with the “Iran-Contra” criminal apparatus. In the Committee investigation, Senator Kerry himself remarked that “our system of justice had been perverted; that [our covert agencies] had converted themselves into channels for the flow of drugs into the United States.”

It is known in law enforcement circles that Congressman Porter Goss is acquainted with circumstances surrounding the Lee County dope saga. The Senate should expect some answers.

Documentation

Questions Porter Goss Must Be Asked

LaRouche PAC released the following questions on Sept. 13, on the eve of hearings scheduled on the nomination of Florida Congressman Porter Goss as head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

During the early 1980s, a Federal task force from the Tampa-based U.S. Attorney’s office, the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Customs, and the Internal Revenue Service investigated leading personnel of the Lee County, Florida Sheriff’s Department. Undersheriff David Wilson was among the top officials of the approximately 1,000-member sheriff’s department who were being reportedly probed by the task force and a grand jury, on charges of international narcotics trafficking and related financial and other crimes. Cocaine planes were landing in Lee County, while sheriff’s deputies were reportedly being deployed away from the landing sites.

This was the take-off time for the crimes of “Iran-Contra”—the audacious cocaine-running, gun-running, money-laundering geopolitical enterprise led by then-Vice President George H.W. Bush and identified with Oliver North.

According to many reliable accounts, the Lee County in-

vestigation was squelched. U.S. Attorney Robert W. Merkle reportedly said that people from the “intelligence industry” were putting obstacles in the way of the probe. Law enforcement personnel were fired and moved out of the way. Over years, legal attacks and other forms of extreme pressure hit the Fort Myers News Press and other local news agencies, countering the exposure and potential prosecutions. Local reporters still express outright fear of discussing the matter. Law enforcement and other local public officials were repeatedly warned, you must stay away from this matter, this is off-limits.

Even now, over 20 years after this explosive case went off the tracks, veteran law enforcement officials, on both the Federal and local levels, still speak of being baffled, and express their shock and bitterness about this miscarriage of justice, under the pressure of higher-ups. They emphasize that the evidence of the cocaine and marijuana shipments, of their protection and supervision by Sheriff’s Department personnel, was known to them directly, and was known to sheriff’s deputies who complained.

Who aborted the case? What was “the intelligence industry” in that area, in that Iran-Contra era? Ask Porter Goss.

Porter Goss came to live in Lee County in 1971 after officially retiring from the Central Intelligence Agency. Several sites in the county, on nearby islands, and in the swamps to the east of Fort Myers, had been reportedly used for training CIA people involved in the anti-Castro Cuban adventures during the 1960s.

From the 1960s into the 1970s, Porter Goss and several other CIA veterans reportedly acquired, for their own use and profit, some of the Agency’s Florida land bases and nearby areas. Backed by two of his old CIA colleagues, Goss became the political manager (and the Mayor, etc.) of Sanibel Island, in Lee County. CIA operatives Al Johns and Wilbur “Bud” Cole emerged as owners of the Punta Gorda Isles development in neighboring Charlotte County. Other operatives from CIA, from the Defense Intelligence Agency and other intelligence sections, figured as among the new “land barons” in the area.

In 1982, at the height of the Federal probe into the Sheriff’s Department personnel, then-Gov. Bob Graham appointed Goss a Commissioner of Lee County.

Goss was the wealthy, socially-connected leader among those intelligence community barons then occupying the islands and swamps—the “intelligence industry” in that time and place. He must be asked, who squelched the investigation of these crimes?

For our previous dossiers on
Porter Goss, see *EIR*,
Aug. 20, Sept. 3, Sept. 10, 2004.