

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION**

# BUSH'S IRAN-CONTRA CONSPIRACY PARDONS

By Lennox Hinds, Esq.

President Bush's Christmas eve pardons of six Reagan administration officials involved in the Iran-Contra conspiracy is not only an abuse of a legitimate authority, but raises the issue of whether this particular pardon was designed to coverup the president's own criminal culpability. At the same time several

U.S. political prisoners, including victims of the Nixon era FBI's COINTELPRO frameups, were not pardoned.

Presidential pardons derive their authority from Article II, Section II of the Constitution which conveys broad powers to the president to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States.

When looking at the timing of the pardons, it is crystal clear that in the case of former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger - the highest Reagan official to be indicted - the pardon was not done after there was a trial. It was a preemptive strike! And this raises more questions and deep concerns.

President Bush said, "the prosecutions of the individuals I am pardoning represent what I believe is a profoundly troubling development in the political and legal climate of our country; the criminalization of policy differences."

Like his thousand points of light phrase, President Bush is in the dark with his reasoning. The fact of the matter is that the president lied to the American people and high government officials lied to the Congress and violated the law.

Lawrence Walsh, a Republican who is the independent counsel in the Iran-contra case, said, "Weinberger's notes contain evidence of a conspiracy among the highest-ranking Reagan administration officials to lie to Congress and the American public."

"... In light of President Bush's own misconduct, we are gravely concerned about his decision to pardon others who lied to Congress and obstructed official investigations," Walsh said.

Even the independent counsel raises the question of President Bush using his authority of issuing pardons as a way of covering up the violations of the Boland Amendment, which prohibited the sale of arms to the Nicaraguan contras, and possibly other laws regulating commerce with Iran. The arms for hostages deals even violated presidential orders against such actions.

Perhaps what operated here was another government unto itself which would tell Congress and the public one thing, but would do as it pleased in a dictatorial manner. The presidential pardons were like a blast of desert sand covering tracks and making it difficult to uncover the truth.

But one truth which we do know is that there are victims of governmental abuse, especially victims of the FBI's COINTELPRO frameups, who continue to languish in the prisons. These individuals, including Leonard Peltier, Geronimo Jaga (Elmer Pratt) and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (David Rico), are certainly worthy of presidential pardons. And even

Richard Nixon received a pardon.

WE will not see he administration considering individuals such as Peltier and Jaga as political prisoners because that would amount to an admission that these individuals were persecuted and prosecuted for political beliefs.

But, yet Bush sheds crocodile tears for Weinberger, claiming that pardon was done for humanitarian reasons and also that Weinberger be honored as a hero.

Another concern for us all is

that there has apparently been some tacit agreement with some sections of the Democratic Party leadership that they would not oppose the pardons. This was outrageous.

There are some real questions raised as to whether or not the changing of the nation's leadership, including confidence in Bill Clinton's election, was misplaced.

Certainly we must have a new administration that upholds the Constitution, not trashes it. And we must tell the new president that we expect the pardon

authority to be used correctly - to free victims of government repression.

And Congress has a very significant role to play by holding an investigation into President Bush's pardons of the six Iran-Contra figures.

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**NLV...THE WESTSIDE STORY**

# MAD MAN

By R.K. Brown

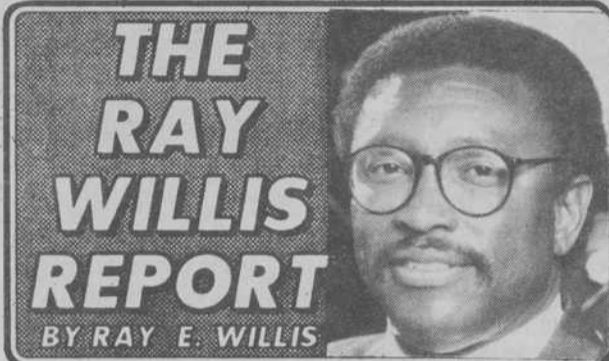
Recently a national phone poll suggested that at least 70% of Americans support the covert assassination of Saddam Hussein. The American public overwhelmingly feels that going in and murdering another human being is perfectly O.K.

We must remember that Hussein is no saint, and he has been accused of grave human rights atrocities, as well as trying to establish a nuclear weapons program. The basic question becomes, do these wrongful actions make it all right for an

external power to go in an cause war and chaos for a sovereign people?

Is Saddam a mad man or are Americans up to their imperialist ways again? This is my view of this current US action. First of all, there has been similar oppression and human rights violations occurring in South Africa for 30 years, but the US hasn't been concerned. We set in place sanctions, which have been in effect for a decade, with no true results.

*(See MAD MAN, Page 18)*



## RACIAL REALITY

This story takes us back to the year 1961 when I was in the sixth grade. As a member of my all-Black racially segregated elementary school's safety patrol, we eagerly looked forward to attending a special end-of-year party for Black and White school patrol teams at an amusement park in my hometown, Fort Smith, Arkansas. It was especially meaningful for me and my fellow patrol boys from the all-Black Howard Elementary School because this was the only time we would ever be permitted to enter the park. It was segregated.

The park's main attraction was a miniature choo-choo train that I always hoped to be able to one day ride. In fact, my friends and I often stole away from home to go down near the park to gape at the train through a chain link fence as it sped noisily around a set of steel tracks which followed the park's perimeter.

When the train chugged past our watchpost we could catch a whiff of the acrid fumes bellowing from the smokestack as it noisily whisked by. The sights and smells served to further fuel our desire to one day ride the celebrated miniature iron horse. Finally, when the long-awaited day arrived, we were primed and raring to go.

Once we got to the park, we headed straight for the train — not even stopping like most of the other boys did, to get ice cream, cake and sodas. Since we were first, we boarded the compartment up front, just behind the engine. Then we waited for enough boys to hop aboard behind us so we could begin our ride.

After a short while though, I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder and then heard a stern hill billy voice say to us, "You colored boys are going to have to get out and ride in the caboose."

Slightly puzzled, but unfazed, we got out and walked back to the last car on the train and got back on again. We weren't going to let our spirits be dampened. Anything to ride the train.

And what a ride it was. Boy did we have fun! It was much later that I realized we had been victims of discrimination. But we were just too young to understand. And besides, we had suffered far worse treatment than that in our young lives.

What prompts me to reminisce about this true-life experience was something similar that happened just last year in South Carolina involving two Black Cub Scouts. It seems they were denied admission to an amusement water-theme park because of their race. Said one of the mothers of the two boys in the aftermath of the incident, "This kind of stuff happened when I was a child, but I would never have dreamed it would happen to my son (today)."

To say the least, then as now, it is a rude lesson in reality. Hard to believe, but the passage of thirty-some years since my experience with racism as a patrol boy and this mother's son last year, hasn't changed racial reality very much, if at all.

Looking ahead to the future, I just wonder what the next thirty years will bring? Care to guess?

Until next week.

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