

tion of a new, sea-level canal. Japanese industrialist Shigeo Nagano took the lead in this regard. "The idea of Japan participating in or financing an alternative to the Panama Canal drove the Americans wild," writes Noriega. Thus, the destabilization campaign launched in 1986, which culminated with the 1989 invasion, "was a result of the U.S. rejection of any scenario in which future control of the Panama Canal might be in the hands of an independent, sovereign Panama—supported by Japan."

Noriega writes, that former Secretary of State George Shultz, and former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger—the two Bechtel corporation officials who launched the campaign against him—stood to profit by eliminating the Japanese as potential rivals in building a new canal.

Obstacle to the New World Order

Ultimately, however, it was because Noriega stood in the way of Bush's new world order, that he had to be eliminated: He said no to Bush's guns-for-drugs Nicaraguan Contra operation; he said no to renewing the lease on the counterinsurgency School of the Americas; and, he said no to Shultz's protégé, Nicolas Ardito Barletta.

Following the dictum of Henry Kissinger, that "[i]n order to solve a problem, you must first create the problem," Noriega went from being the best ally of the U.S. in the war on drugs, to being portrayed as the world's worst drug pusher. As he writes, he was placed in the "pantheon of the Hitlers, along with Saddam Hussein, Moammar Gadhafi, and Fidel Castro."

Noriega's trial in Miami did not prove his guilt, but any other outcome was ruled out of order. Witnesses, mostly major drug traffickers such as Carlos Lehder, were allowed to lie in exchange for lighter sentences, or release from prison scot-free. Prosecutors cut deals with the Cali cocaine cartel to obtain perjured testimony—"by silver or lead"—from the likes of trafficker Ricardo Bilonick. Often as not, these bought-and-paid-for witnesses offered contradictory testimony, and the chief

source of the accusation that Noriega was dealing drugs, Jose Isabel Blandon, was considered such a fabricator and prevaricator, that the prosecutors did not dare call him as a witness.

The government blackmailed one of Noriega's lawyers and forced him to become an informant. Another, Neal Sonnett, resigned suddenly before the start of the trial. Trial Judge William Hoeverler told co-author Eisner that "had Sonnett remained on the case, I think the outcome could have been different—Sonnet could have won the case." Hoeverler at times felt doubts about Noriega's guilt on the drug charges, "but was placated by the knowledge that Noriega was a bad character," writes Eisner.

Noriega was not allowed to present exculpatory evidence. Nothing that would implicate Bush, Oliver North, John Poindexter, and the rest of the Iran-Contra crowd, was allowed at trial.

The famous photograph proving that Bush lied when he claimed "I never met General Noriega," was not allowed into evidence. It showed Vice President Bush and Gen. Noriega, "the future President and the future pariah," smiling at each other at a December 1983 meeting at Panama's Omar Torrijos International Airport: "General, it's good to see you again," Noriega quotes Bush. "I hope you'll be supporting my old friends," Bush said, "Our pilots are already chosen and ready to start flying." Neither one of us realized it, but the pilots included such men as Jorge Canalias, Floyd Carlton Caceres, Cesar Rodriguez, future cocaine traffickers transporting Contra weapons in exchange for cocaine. They would later accuse me of dealing drugs."

Judge Hoeverler now hopes that the Court of Appeals, and ultimately the Supreme Court, will rule on the issues raised by Noriega's trial. While Bush bears the brunt of the blame for what happened in Panama, in the final analysis, as Eisner writes, "the responsibility lies with a country whose citizens should not be so complacent."

—Carlos J. Wesley

President Clinton's

If the times call for a strong President, he will govern much as Franklin D. Roosevelt governed—with boundless energy, great charm, and bold initiative. Faced with genuine evil or a national crisis of undisputed dimensions, Bill will rise to it. But in the more common situations where the public is uncertain about the choices it faces and what's at stake in those choices, I worry that his leadership may fail. He'll become unfocused and too eager to please."

So wrote former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich on Sept. 28, 1992, assessing the potential of his friend of twenty-five years, his fellow Oxford and Yale Law School student, the man who would be President four months later, Bill Clinton.

This ironic, humorous, and eye-opening look at the first term of the Clinton presidency, written from diary entries kept during those four years, is must reading for anyone truly interested in ensuring that Clinton does act like FDR, and *does so now*, as the moment of a "national crisis of undisputed dimensions" is upon us.

Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly stressed the strategic importance of this question over the past several months, most recently in "The U.S.A.-China Strategy," which appeared in the April 25 issue of *Executive Intelligence Review*. LaRouche wrote: "It is unlikely that any presently visible governments would act competently until such time as an 'economic Pearl Harbor effect' suddenly transforms public opinion in the manner needed to support dramatic, sudden executive action by the incumbent President of the United States. Therefore, the great danger is, that the President, and also his key partners, come to that moment of history-shaping decision inadequately prepared, and, for that reason, flub the situation, with disastrous effects for all mankind."

Whether or not Robert Reich, writing from his new job as University Professor of social and economic policy at

Friend Reminds Him Why He Came to Washington

Brandeis University's Heller School, is conscious of the *strategic* importance of Clinton's acting like FDR, he has clearly decided, having liberated himself from the Cabinet, to try to liberate Clinton from the grip of the evil that surrounds him, so that he might govern as FDR did.

The Thatcherite View

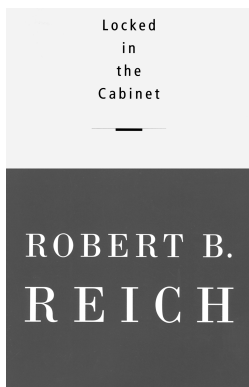
The British Tories haven't missed the importance of this book. Although it was released only on April 25, Her Majesty's London *Times* had already reviewed *Locked in the Cabinet* in its April 17 "Diary" column, under the title "Fat Chancellor."

"Diary" quotes one of the many zingers Reich has thrown into this book: Recalling his attendance at the international jobs summit, in early 1994, Reich writes: "The jobs summit is a deadly bore. I have to sit next to the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, who talks endlessly about the virtues of the free market and the social benefits of selfishness, all with such pomposity that I have to restrain myself from causing an international incident, by telling him what I think. He is as rotund as he is arrogant, a thoughtless disciple of Margaret Thatcher. Will the Tories wreck Britain before the British wreck the Tories?"

It is clear which side Reich is on in the battle against the Tories. Although he doesn't say so, he obviously had the same distasteful bellyful of Tory snobbery at Oxford, as a New York Jew, that Clinton did as an Arkansas hick.

'Conceptual Prison'

But Reich's anti-Tory view goes beyond his distaste for the disciples of Margaret Thatcher. He represented the closest thing to a sane economic outlook in the first Clinton cabinet, and was a consistent advocate for the needs of America's poor and working people. Reich was locked in battle inside the cabinet with such advocates of British/Wall Street budget-slashing as Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen; and outside the cabinet,



Locked in the Cabinet
by Robert B. Reich
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1997
338 pages, hardbound, \$25.00

with the man he calls a "robber-baron pimp," Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan.

"Greenspan haunts every budget meeting, though his name never comes up directly," writes Reich. "Instead, it's always our 'credibility' with Wall Street. It is repeatedly said that we must reduce the deficit because Wall Street needs to be reassured, calmed, convinced of our wise intentions. Never before in the history of mankind have the feelings of a street had such decisive force. The ancients worried about the moods of the skies, mountains, seas, and forests. We're placating a pavement. . . ."

"Like Paul Volcker, the Fed chief before him, Greenspan can put the economy into a tailspin simply by tightening his grip. Volcker did it in 1979, and Jimmy Carter was fired. Bill Clinton knows that. Greenspan has the most important grip in town: Bill's balls, in the palm of his hand."

In his account of a 1992 meeting of the Clinton economic transition team, which Reich headed, he spells out the reason he so strongly opposed deficit reduction as the basis for budget discussions. His concern, Reich writes, was not about the size of the deficit, but that the Federal budget document didn't differentiate between useful, if costly, invest-

ments in "human capital," and useless boondoggles. Using the example of the post-war G.I. Bill, he writes, "The G.I. Bill made college affordable to a whole generation of returning World War II veterans, and propelled much of the economic growth of the 1950's and beyond. The expense was justifiable, even though the Federal deficit was a much larger percentage of the national output then, than it is now."

"My real concern," he continues, "is that *the deficit* is already framing our discussions about what we want to accomplish in the future. Getting the deficit 'under control' is becoming the most important measure of success. We discuss it for hours! . . . We're building our own conceptual prison."

Liberated for What?

Reich says he decided not to stay on for Clinton's second term because of his desire to be with his wife and two teenage sons. The death of fellow cabinet member Ron Brown took a heavy toll as well; Reich was with him in France, on the first leg of the trip that took Brown to the Dalmatian coast and his death.

The publication of *Locked in the Cabinet* makes it clear, however, that Reich intends to remain the "middle-aged loose cannon," as he calls himself, who could help move Clinton in the direction of being a truly great President.

He portrays the real Bill Clinton, in 1994, after he has capitulated to Gingrich's bullying: "He stalks around the room, fuming, 'We're doing everything Wall Street wants! Everything Wall Street *doesn't* want gets slashed!' He takes another few steps. 'We're losing our *soul!*' He talks to no one in particular, but I can't help imagining he's yelling at Alan Greenspan, 'I can't do what I *came* here to do.' "

Locked in the Cabinet is aimed at helping Clinton remember what he went to Washington to do; and to do it.

—Marianna Wertz



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