

Senator Howard Metzenbaum
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md, 21701
7/23/91

Dear Senator Metzenbaum,

attn: legislative assistant ?

There is something legislators and media both missed or ignored about Ed Meese's Iran/Contra involvement: he for all practical purposes orchestrated the cover-up and the destruction of records relating to that scandal.

When he took over the press conference for President Reagan, who had just announced the tip of that iceberg, Meese was asked by a reporter why he did not have the FBI in the case as soon as he heard about it. Representing himself as a true civil libertarian, Meese responded that if he had involved the FBI immediately it would have been wrong because there then was no indication of any law violation. In this he was saying, and he did refer to individual rights, that for him to have asked the FBI to get involved would have been improper because there was no legal basis for it.

That was, as he and the White House had to have known, a deliberate lie. Yet according to Meese, no law enforcement purpose, no proper FBI investigation. And not a peep from White House counsel or anyone else. Those who had to know that the FBI does and always has conducted non-law enforcement investigations for the president.

No less an authority than J. Edgar Hoover testified to this before the Warren Commission in explaining that its massive JFK assassination investigation, not a law enforcement investigation because it then was not a federal crime to kill a president, was such an investigation, pursuant to lawful authority to conduct such investigations at presidential request. You'll find this in Volume 8 of those hearings, on page 98.

It would have been perfectly proper for the FBI to have started questioning everyone involved and to have protected the records from the massive destruction they suffered if Meese or those at the White House had told the president he had the authority, assuming what is not likely, that he had not already used it. I think it was the duty of those who knew to inform the president as soon as they were involved.

But instead Meese lied as publicly as anyone can lie, with all the cameras on him live and coast to coast.

This and blind acceptance of it made all that ensued possible, including exculpating of the guilty, who had time to destroy incriminating evidence and to cook stories up.

I do hope that at this late date the Senate will determine for itself whether Hoover testified truthfully and if as I'm sure is so calls Meese and others to account.

Hoover testified to, among others, the Chief Justice, the former solicitor general of the United States, two senators and two representatives. Surely they knew whether or not Hoover testified truthfully.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg