STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN PETE HOEKSTRA
REGARDING TESTIMONY BY
AARON BELK, VICE PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS
July 24, 1998

Good morning.

In a hearing in May, this Subcommittee heard from Tom Sever, acting president of the IBT, who tried to impress us with how willing the IBT is to cooperate with this investigation. Unfortunately, our experience has been otherwise.

The IBT has refused to allow us to interview its senior officials (which is one reason we seek deposition authority). It has refused to allow us to interview its outside auditors and actuaries. It has refused to allow its former law firm and a private investigator to turn over documents we have subpoenaed.

This morning, I'm happy to say, we will hear from a witness who knows the Marble Palace from the inside and who is willing to cooperate with this investigation.

Aaron Belk has been a Teamster for 20 years. He worked as a dock worker and a fork-lift operator for a trucking company in Memphis for 13-and-a-half years. He was elected as a regional vice president of the IBT in 1991, running on the Ron Carey slate, and came to Washington to work on the Carey transition team. He was later made the executive assistant to Carey. Consequently, Mr. Belk was present and working in a position of considerable authority and trust during a time when several developments occurred that are of critical interest to this investigation.

As we'll hear this morning, one of those episodes involved the scheme to launder money from the IBT's treasury into Carey's 1996 re-election campaign – a scheme Mr. Belk refused to take part in.

Mr. Belk also served from the fall of 1992 until early 1995 as the administrator of the IBT's Ethical Practices Committee, which was created to receive and investigate complaints about corruption in various union locals around the country.

Mr. Belk was appointed executive assistant to Ron Carey in January 1994, and therefore was in that position during the time when the Independent Review Board was investigating allegations that Carey himself might have ties to organized crime.

So, I look forward to Mr. Belk's appearance here this morning. I not only appreciate his willingness to be here voluntarily, but I applaud his courage in supporting the goal of a democratic union.

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