

Will Irangate block Gorbachov's march thru Ibero-America?

by Gretchen Small

Until the Iran-Contras affair broke open in November, 1986 was set to enter the history books as the year the United States handed over Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean—its own southern flank—to the Soviet Union, all under the label of “fighting communism.”

The Soviet Union made unprecedented inroads into Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking America in 1986. It wove closer diplomatic and economic ties with the largest countries, even as Soviet-directed narco-terrorism spread throughout the continent. As the year closed, Soviet officials prepared for Communist Party Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov's trip to Ibero-America in early 1987, a trip they expect will establish the Soviet Union as a major player in Western Hemisphere affairs.

Irangate disrupted the sell-out of Central America, just short of disaster. Now, unraveling before the public eye is the international underworld through which Iranian mullahs, Israeli gun- and drug-runners, Vesco's dope money empire, and Henry Kissinger's mafia within the United States establishment, ran their dirty deals against nation-states around the globe. But the details of who-sold-what-to-whom through which secret Swiss bank account, merely provide the “pay-check” trail on what boils down to a simple policy of the United States bombing its friends, and financing its enemies.

What conclusion can history draw of the group of U.S. officials and advisers, who:

- promoted communist uprisings and civil war in two countries decisive for battling Soviet influence in the area, Panama and Mexico, and called that “democracy”?
- declared the military in Ibero-America the primary threat to democracy, and applied pressure to weaken these military institutions, even as these institutions tried to battle growing narco-terrorist insurgencies?
- armed a band of mercenaries, led by recruits from the Lansky-Vesco organized crime syndicate and advised by terrorists in U.S. pay, and told the American public these mercenaries, the Contras, could defeat the Nicaraguan Sandinista army?

From the perspective of our southern neighbors, the United States had gone insane. Church and government leaders warned that the Contras, while no military threat to the Nicaraguan army, provide the Sandinistas with an excuse to tighten their dictatorship. “It is urgent and essential that the

Nicaraguan people, free of foreign interference or ideologies, find a way out of the situation of conflict that our country is experiencing,” Nicaragua's Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo wrote in a May 12 column in the *Washington Post*. He decried that the “East-West conflict has made of our country a disposable card, a pawn in the game between the superpowers.”

Nation-builders lose out

As 1986 opened, a military grouping within the Reagan administration had proposed an alternative to the Contras strategy. At a January “Conference on Low Intensity Warfare,” held at the National War College at Fort McNair, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Gen. John Galvin, commander of the U.S. Southern Command, argued that to defeat the Soviets' irregular warfare, the United States must return to the military principles upon which it was founded.

“We must assist in the business of building and, by doing so, of providing the nation's people with a stake in their future,” Weinberger urged. U.S. diplomacy, economic leverage, technology, and military capabilities must be unified behind such a “nation-building” strategy, he argued. The military can and should participate in “civic action” projects, such as “construction and restoration of infrastructure, the assisting of others in the improvement of their own lives . . . by restoring land, building roads, digging wells, or helping to provide medical and educational services,” Weinberger said.

“Absent such a strategy, the use of military assets alone will be reckless, wasteful, and unfair,” the defense secretary warned. He noted, too, that the United States cannot win the war by adopting the enemy's tactics. “To pursue terrorism we cannot commit acts of revenge that may kill innocent people who had nothing to do with the terrorism,” he said. The warning was ignored by those who hired Cuban exile Luis Posada Carriles to direct the Contras—the man accused of masterminding the bombing of a Cubana Airlines plane in 1976, which killed all 73 aboard.

Mercenaries over militaries

The advocates of the Contra strategy admit their goal is to keep the United States from adopting a winning nation-building strategy. Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams

has argued repeatedly that Nicaragua cannot be contained "through a combination of economic, political, and military support for its neighbors, and a diplomatic and economic quarantine of Nicaragua itself," the *Baltimore Sun* reported on Dec. 5.

Syndicated columnist Cord Meyer used the same formulation to defend the Contra strategy, in a Dec. 18 column in the *Washington Times*. Congress must be convinced, he argued, that no alternative to aiding the Contras exists: "A policy of containment [of Nicaragua] which . . . relies on building up the strengths of Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala is almost certainly doomed."

Cord Meyer, who headed the World Federalist Association for years, is one of a nest of communist sympathizers within the CIA which Allen Dulles protected, centered around the narcotics-linked American Institute for Free Labor Development. The fact that Cord Meyer boosts the Contras shows whose interests the policy really serves.

The same people arguing for the arming of new irregular forces in Central America as the answer to the Sandinista threat, led the campaign to weaken, or destroy, the military institutions of Ibero-America. "Enlargement of military forces to protect democratic institutions can threaten those very institutions, when the military dwarfs civilian institutions and assumes some of their functions," Abrams charged in a June 13 speech to the Inter-American Defense College.

Abrams' attack on the military took up a policy outlined in April by the liberal Trilateral Commission crowd. The 1986 *Report of the Inter-American Dialogue*, produced by 60 U.S. and Ibero-American policymakers including such Trilateral luminaries as McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, Cyrus Vance, and Elliot Richardson, called for 1) legalizing narcotics; 2) formalizing the Soviet Union's right to a voice in Western Hemisphere affairs; 3) building a "democratic network" with sufficient power to counter "communists and the military," which are put on equal footing. The report announced that the Dialogue would soon create a task force, which would draw up strategies to reduce military participation in "civilian" matters.

Panama and Mexico on the hit list

Panama's Defense Forces took the brunt of the anti-military campaign. Under the direction of the Don Regan-Poin-dexter gang, with back-up by the "bankers' CIA," the United States demanded that the Defense Forces be dismantled, and their commander, Gen. Manuel Noriega, be purged, and perhaps eliminated physically. Noriega won the Establishment's enmity as the most outspoken proponent within the Central American military establishment of the "nation-building" military doctrine.

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) took the lead in the campaign, calling hearings of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee; at which administration officials could testify. Were these officials blind to the dangers of disrupting Panama's military?

"Despite the Panama Canal's importance to the United States as a strategic and commercial gateway between the two oceans, relations with Panama will not return to normal until internal changes take place," officials told the *Washington Times* in February.

On Feb. 28, *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. attempted to bring Washington to its senses. "Why does Helms think Nazis will democratize Panama?" LaRouche asked in an open letter to Helms, published in *EIR*. LaRouche named the agencies controlling the "Get Panama" campaign: Ariel Sharon's networks, the Bolshevik "Trust" networks for which Helms aide Jon Speller works, the Cuban exile terrorist network built up by the old Lansky machine—the networks today caught in the Iran-Contras scandal.

In June, *EIR* issued a *White Paper on the Panama Crisis: Who's Out to Destabilize the U.S. Ally, and Why*. "If allowed to continue, the destabilization campaign of Helms and the Liberals, will hand the Panama Canal over to Soviet-directed narco-terrorists—without the Soviets having to spend the cost of a bullet," the *White Paper* warned. "The principal figures in the 'democratic opposition' movement which Helms and the State Department are attempting to bring to power, are neither 'honest' nor democratic, but rather frontmen working for the drug mafia." *EIR*'s book, also issued in Spanish, circulated throughout U.S. and Ibero-American policymaking circles.

Soviet-linked assets within the U.S. intelligence establishment panicked, claiming a "Noriega-LaRouche axis" had been formed. Expressing their fear, columnist Georgie Anne Geyer warned on June 19 that unless LaRouche and Noriega are eliminated, decades of Establishment control over Caribbean policy might be wiped out.

Coordinated step by step with the war on Panama was a "get Mexico" campaign. Here, too, Senator Helms took the lead. Denouncing "corruption and the power structure of Mexico," Helms called Mexico "a grave security risk to the U.S." In May, Senate Western Hemisphere subcommittee hearings into Mexico began. Again, high-level government witnesses testified. U.S. Customs Commissioner William Von Raab charged that "corruption is so pervasive, that one has to assume every Mexican official is corrupt unless proven otherwise," but announced that the United States could not provide proof of its charges, until he received a "list of non-corrupt Mexican officials."

The sheer cynicism of the campaign, carried out in the name of "fighting drugs," came close to destroying more than a decade of close anti-narcotics cooperation between Mexico and the United States. Who were these officials promoting as "honest democrats" in Mexico? Such friends of Donald Regan as Manuel Clouthier, ex-candidate of the National Action Party for governor of Sinaloa, who brags that the PAN and the communists have begun "the final stage of emancipation" of Mexico, and in whose warehouse police found several tons of marijuana in 1973.