

decide in the next 12 months whether this operation will be initiated. . . . At no point has the United States even expressed a willingness to begin dismantling these bases. On the contrary, the United States has increased its military presence, which also violates the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, which clearly and conclusively establish that the U.S. military presence must decrease.

Military implications of the conflict

Lt. Col. Arnulfo Castrejón, head of the U.S.-Panama Combined Commission for Military Security of the Panama Canal:

In East-West relations, he whose worldwide deployment of conventional forces holds advanced positions, will have a relative strategic advantage; that is one of the motives for which the North Americans still insist on remaining after the year 2000.

Under this United States interpretation, the United States of America maintains in Panama enclaves and military forces . . . for the purpose of intervention and control, especially over the remaining Latin American countries. . . .

The United States of America has also set up in Panama an agency and a military structure named "the Southern Command" of the U.S. Army, which has been assigned attributions which stretch from the United States border with Mexico all the way to the tip of Patagonia, in Argentina. . . .

In conformity with the study made to plan the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Panama, the process should begin by the end of 1989, at the latest. And, the U.S. Congress should begin this year to approve funds for such purposes. Therefore, any change destined to achieve the objective of remaining beyond the year 2000 could be expected to take place in the United States between 1988 and 1989. That is the reason why Panama has been under intense political pressure since the end of 1985.

Howard Air Force Base, the largest U.S. air base in the Southern Hemisphere, from the Mexican border to Patagonia, has the capability of receiving and stationing all nuclear and conventional strategic air systems. . . .

During the last two months, we were able to count an average of 30 to 35 flights daily between the United States and Panama of C-5 airplanes—the biggest transport plane the United States has, C-141 airplanes and C-180 airplanes.

We conclude from statistics and calculations of the tonnage carried in those planes' flights that their object was not only Panama, but rather they were in Panama reestablishing a resupply area for fuel, weapons, munitions, and food for [use in] intercontinental actions. . . .

Therefore, I am writing to you and informing you that the aggression would not only be against our country, but that you should be expecting any kind of act of aggression by the North Americans.

Charge U.S. aggression against Canal users

ROME—An interview with the Panamanian ambassador to Italy, Bruno Garisto, published on June 17 by the Italian weekly *Nuova Solidarietà*, was reprinted in the major dailies in Panama and has touched off considerable discussion in Panama. Following a U.S. decision to increase the tolls charged for crossing the Panama Canal, Ambassador Garisto released a second statement to the Rome-based newspaper, whose reporters are also correspondents for *EIR*:

"Panama denounced the unilateral decision taken by the U.S. government with respect to increasing the tolls paid to cross the canal. This increase, on the order of 9%, was unilaterally decided. The United States used its differences with my country, Panama, in order to put into practice a political, economic, and military strategy, at the global level. This strategy, which represents an aggression by the United States against all those who utilize the canal, is very serious and well-calculated, since

in this way the U.S.A. continues to pursue the objective of its own world economic hegemony.

"Through this strategy the United States wants to obtain the following main objectives:

- To impoverish Latin America and make it politically and economically more dependent.

- To divide and weaken the competitive trade position of the European Community and that of the other countries with respect to the United States.

- To obtain more funds to increase North American military intervention at the regional level and to flagrantly violate the Torrijos-Carter Treaty.

"All these actions are part of a strategy used by the United States against countries which benefit from the canal, with the purpose of using them in direct actions against Panama.

"Such actions moreover confirm the desire of the United States to economically subjugate the countries of the entire surrounding region through military and political pressures.

"The United States is using its differences with Panama as a strategy aimed at penalizing all the countries that use the canal."

—Antonio Gaspari