

held camera and videotape quality), to accentuate the impression that we are seeing real events, although in these cases they are simulated. . . . The names of Mexican officials linked to the prosecution of drug trafficking are real at times, and at others not. U.S. officials appear successful in the end, while Mexican figures are shown as weak. . . . Thus, from metaphor to reality, the U.S. public does not necessarily differentiate between exaggerations and truths. . . . After three days, the conclusion of the U.S. viewer is more than predictable.”

On Jan. 12, columnist Francisco Cárdenas Cruz warned on page 1 of the daily *El Universal* that “the intention of pressuring our country once again seems clear”; that “the worst” of the NBC program is that its moderator dared to “say that Mexico is like Panama,” and suggests that “our country be invaded, like the [Panamanian] isthmus was last December in search of Panamanian Defense Forces chief Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.”

Cárdenas Cruz adds, “Today it’s the ‘war against drugs,’ tomorrow it may serve as a pretext for the United States, as Brokaw proposed to DEA administrator Jack Lawn and to Charles Rangel, chairman of the Anti-Drug Committee of the House of Representatives, to invade Mexico in search—according to the reason put forward in Panama and behind the decision of the naval blockade of Colombia—of people linked to the drug trade.” Cárdenas Cruz concludes with the warning that while “the invasion of Panama by the United States merits world condemnation, despite the insistent efforts of Bush and company to try to turn the unjustifiable into something justified, the White House cares little for public opinion; perhaps a cynical expression of ‘concern’ [by Bush] because what occurred could damage relations between his country and Latin America.”

On Jan. 10, *El Día* editorialized, “The televised campaign could be a means of pressure and retaliation by the Bush administration against the Mexican government, for the attitude Mexico has taken in international forums on the invasion of Panama.” *El Día* called on “democratic and progressive forces” in the country to reach “agreements” and to “make strategic provisions” for maintaining “a permanent defense of sovereignty.”

The daily of record, *Excelsior*, warned that “a new interventionist spirit is present in America, hidden behind a supposed crusade against drugs,” and notes that the “disinformation” of the program, by creating animosity between the two nations, is “in reality playing into the hands of the drug traffickers.”

On Jan. 5, Elaine Shannon, author of the book *Desperados* upon which the script for the NBC series was based, wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*: “I really believe that Bush is really ridiculous when he says that he is invading Panama to protect Americans. . . . If he went there for that reason, he should to go Mexico also. There is more drugs and more danger for Americans in Mexico than in Panama.”

What price the invasion of Panama?

If one can believe public opinion polls, President Bush’s popularity stands at an all-time high largely because of the invasion of Panama. If so, it is because Americans have believed the lies fed to them by the administration and the media, and because they have not yet realized what the invasion has cost Panama and the United States.

Bush’s outlaw behavior is leaving the United States bereft of allies, at a time when the danger of a confrontation with the Soviet Union grows ever larger. The European Parliament condemned the invasion as a violation of international law.

But the administration insists that its decrees are “the law of the world.” Attorney General Richard Thornburgh said on Jan. 19 that the U.S. will “not tolerate wrongdoing that violates American criminal law anywhere in world.” What happens when, not a small country incapable of defending itself, such as Panama, but, say, the Soviet Union, or Red China, decides that the behavior of a Poland, a West Germany, or a Hong Kong “violates” their criminal law? On what grounds can the U.S. challenge their unilateral action?

The invasion was decided upon as early as last summer, and when the American commander, Gen. Fred Worner, balked, arguing that the crisis could be resolved without a U.S. military intervention, he was sacked. His replacement as head of the U.S. Southern Command, Gen. “Mad” Max Thurman, was sent in on Oct. 1, 1989 with explicit instructions: “Prepare to invade.”

Don’t expect the troops home anytime soon. The invasion has brought lawlessness to Panama. On Jan. 17, four gunmen, armed with grenades and AK-47 assault rifles, robbed a bank in the financial center of Panama City. The armed robbery took place virtually under the noses of the U.S. Army, the only functioning authority.

There is also guerrilla activity. On Jan. 19, U.S. military authorities deployed several hundred Green Berets to the provinces of Chiriqui and Bocas del Toro, and admitted that there are still pockets of armed resistance and that they fear a popular backlash. The Green Berets were told to expect to remain at least six months. Guerrilla activity is also reported in San Miguelito and Cerro Azul, leading into the Darien jungle.

Not only has Bush appointed partners of Colombia’s cocaine cartels as the government of Panama, but he has guaranteed that no Ibero-American government can collaborate with the United States. How can Peru, the world’s largest producer of coca leaves, join the United States against drugs or

anything else, when its ambassador's residence in Panama is surrounded by U.S. troops, barbed wire, and tanks, American soldiers hurl insults at its diplomats, and bombard them with high-volume rock and roll? What about Colombia and Mexico, which are also being threatened with military action?

By violating the diplomatic immunity of the Panamanian legations of Peru, the Vatican, Cuba, and Nicaragua, the U.S. has made its own diplomats abroad fair game for anyone with a beef against this country.

Israel, Egypt, the Philippines, and Turkey have been told they have to give up part of the aid they receive from the U.S., to help defray the costs of invading Panama. Not only is this insane proposal alienating long-standing allies, but the funds that will be obtained from it—\$330 million—are peanuts. Panama needs at least \$2 billion to repair the damage done by the invasion. Puppet "President" Guillermo Endara, who is coming to Washington to ask for money, warned on Jan. 18 that there will be "a huge disaster" unless aid is soon forthcoming. Otherwise, he said, "the people will seek other systems," including a return of the military government. "For me, of course, I would be a laughing stock. I will go down in history as an awful President, weak, a traitor."

Even more than the economic costs, was the massive loss of life. It is estimated that 4-7,000 persons were killed. And the U.S. occupation authorities continue their police-state practices, including the illegal preventive detention of political dissidents in concentration camps.

Documentation

Stop the persecution of Panamanian patriots

The following appeal by Nils Castro, foreign affairs secretary of the Democratic Revolutionary Party, was read to the Martin Luther King Tribunal meeting in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 14:

The U.S. military occupation of Panama has unleashed an ever-worsening climate of harassment and human rights violations against Panamanian nationalists. Thousands of Panamanians remain in concentration camps, where they are victims of health problems and bad treatment, especially by U.S. soldiers of Cuban origin. Among the prisoners should be noted *Gustavo Melgar*, general undersecretary of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD); *Mauro Murillo*, secretary of the PRD's Trade Union Front and general secretary of the National Workers Confederation of Panama; *Rafael*

Mezquita, PRD professional sector secretary; *Eloy Mercado*, bankworkers' leader; and *Alberto Pons*, leader of the PRD business sector.

Note especially the arrest of *George Fisher*, former labor minister and personal friend of *Jesse Jackson*, in reprisal for Jackson's protests of the genocide committed by the U.S. Army against the Panamanian people.

The cases of leaders and nationalist intellectuals like *Dr. Ricuarte Soler*, who disappeared after being arrested, interrogated, and registered by the occupation army, are no less dramatic. This climate of persecution is complicated by assaults on the right to asylum which range from surrounding and watching embassies to concocting arbitrary indictments of those who have managed to take asylum in foreign embassies, with the intent of justifying the refusal to grant them safe-conduct. At the same time, the political layers which collaborate with the foreign occupier are promoting persecution and witchhunts against the patriots who resist the invader, which ranges from destruction of means of communication to arbitrary firings and physical aggression against leaders.

These facts clearly show that a dictatorial regime has been set up in Panama, in support for and service of the government of the United States of America. In the face of an aggression which grows day by day, it is urgent that the agencies which defend human rights and Latin America's parliaments send observation missions to Panama which verify and denounce to the world the terrible and systematic persecution unleashed against Panamanian patriots by the U.S. Army and its local government. The survival of the Panamanian people as a nation, in the heart of the Latin American community, will depend to a large degree on that.

Panamanian scholar scores U.S.

The following message from Cecilio Simon, dean of the Faculty of Public Administration, Panama, was also read to the Martin Luther King Tribunal:

Dear Friends:

At this opening of deliberations of the Honorable Martin Luther King Tribunal, please receive this warm greeting from the Panamanian patriots who oppose the bloody invasion by the United States Army.

We are deeply honored that your tribunal will analyze the situation of Panama—assaulted and occupied since Dec. 20 by the criminal invasion of the Army of the United States of America. This has cost more than 5,000 Panamanian civilian lives, material damage, and the shame of seeing our sovereignty and our right to free determination stained.

The material damages, which economists from the government that was installed hours before the invasion on a U.S. military base—Fort Clayton—calculate at more than \$3 billion, could be repaired by inflating the Panamanian economy with millions of dollars from the international

banks, since the United States seems unwilling to provide restitution. That would aggravate our country's foreign debt crisis.

The moral damages and social trauma suffered by the relatives of dead, injured, disappeared, and imprisoned Panamanians and trampled sovereignty could never be forgotten. A brief run-through on this includes the following facts:

1) The tight control over the country by the U.S. Army does not permit any Panamanian institution the access required in order to know the correct number of casualties caused by the invasion.

2) The figures on dead, injured, and disappeared are kept strictly secret. And the obviously altered reports are given exclusively by spokesmen for the Southern Command.

3) The population seeking to locate their disappeared family members has not been informed of the common graves and the concentration camps.

4) Access to those hospitals and public offices which could provide information on the civilians who have disappeared is controlled by U.S. military forces.

5) United States Army troops burned bodies on the beaches near the Chorrillo district. Residents of the sector witnessed this.

6) Citizens opposed to the occupation are detained without arrest warrants issued by Panamanian civilian authorities. An anonymous denunciation is all that is needed for a citizen to be detained.

7) All information on detentions is denied. The courts are not functioning; therefore, it is impossible to present motions for *Habeas Corpus* or injunctions based on constitutional rights.

8) The detainees have been put in concentration camps and their relatives are denied access to them. The prisoners of war are in the open air, under the sun and the rain, and exposed for hours as a generalized form of torture.

9) The occupation forces control all means of communication. The script for all news broadcasts is written by the Southern Command's Public Affairs Office, which acts as the censorship office.

10) All those who oppose the current regime have been ordered fired from their jobs. Labor leaders have been detained to pressure them into acceptance of the puppet government.

11) All homes and offices of the political sectors opposed to the invasion have been raided and many of them destroyed and their property stolen. Political leaders continue receiving threats of being detained.

Friends. These lines are by no means an exhaustive inventory of the atrocities committed by the United States government by means of its occupation forces. With the support of those who embrace the legacy of the Founding Fathers of the great nation of the North and with the support of those who cherish the struggle for human rights led by Martin Luther King, we will move forward.

Anti-Drug Summit Talks

Andean countries face U.S. 'Big Stick'

by Valerie Rush

The three Andean nations of Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru met with representatives of the United States in Santa Cruz, Bolivia on Jan. 10-14, in an attempt to negotiate a common strategy for an effective war on drugs. The U.S. sauntered into the meeting, a preliminary to next month's presidential summit on drugs to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, with a "Big Stick" in each fist: IMF austerity conditionalities attached to anti-drug aid, and the threat of military intervention.

Any illusions of collaboration with Washington in fighting drugs at this time had already been dashed weeks earlier. The U.S. invasion and occupation of Panama, far from fighting drug trafficking as claimed, had instead succeeded in destroying that nation's sovereign military capability while installing allies of the enemy cocaine cartels in power (see *EIR*, Jan. 19, 1990, pp. 26-28). With that precedent, the Santa Cruz meeting was effectively doomed to failure.

Strings attached

Unconfirmed reports from Santa Cruz are that Colombia was seeking at least \$2 billion in aid from the United States, while Peru and Bolivia were asking \$700 million and \$400 million a year, respectively, for weaponry and assistance in drug eradication and crop substitution. According to a Reuters news agency report on the summit, all U.S. offers of economic assistance were "tied to progress in implementing an effective anti-drug program in each country and to the adoption of sound economic policies." Determination of "effectiveness" and "soundness" would, of course, be made by the United States. A 12-hour delay in concluding the Santa Cruz meeting was attributed to reportedly bitter opposition to any such conditionalities by Peru, Bolivia and, Colombia.

Such blackmail schemes are by no means foreign to U.S. tactics. Peru's Alan García was making major strides against the narco-terrorist enemy in that country in 1986 when a campaign—coordinated by the U.S. government—was launched to cut off international credits to that country. The