

## Panama Report by Carlos Wesley

### What chutzpah!

*While the Bushmen are moving to annex the country, their three puppets are playing spy against each other.*

A man is said to have *chutzpah* who kills his parents and pleads the mercy of the court because he's an orphan. Well, the Bush administration's most recent doings here are *chutzpah* to perfection.

On March 21, Sen. Larry Craig (R-Id.) introduced a concurrent resolution calling on George Bush to renegotiate the Panama Canal Treaties to maintain a U.S. military presence there, "because the Republic of Panama has dissolved its defense forces and has no standing army, or other defense forces, capable of defending the Panama Canal from aggressors, and therefore, remains vulnerable to attack both from inside and outside of Panama." First the U.S. arm-twists Panama into disarming itself, then a resolution is submitted to Congress that "calls on President President George Bush to renegotiate the Panama Canal Treaties, to permit the United States Armed Forces to remain in Panama beyond Dec. 31, 1999, and to permit the U.S. to act independently to continue to protect the Panama Canal."

The concurrent resolution, introduced in the House by Rep. Philip Crane (R-Ill.), is backed by Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, which means the Bush White House is also behind it.

The dismantling of Panama's Defense Forces (PDF) began with the 1989 invasion, under the supervision of then-Commander of U.S. Army South Gen. Marc Cisneros. The PDF "needed an enema," Cisneros told the *Los Angeles Times* of Jan. 20, 1990. Cisneros did not hide his contempt for all Panamanians. "They need to have a little infusion of Anglo values," he said. Six months after the invasion, on May 24, Cisneros

said that Panama "does not have to worry about being invaded by anyone. . . . I don't believe there is any need for an army here."

At the time, the foreign minister of the U.S.-installed government, Julio Linares, admitted that there was little Panama could do to resist. "It is an undeniable truth that Panama has been a country occupied by the Army of the United States since Dec. 20," he said. According to the May, 29, 1990 *La Estrella*, Linares said the U.S. was demanding the right for its "Coast Guard to patrol Panama's territorial waters."

When Panama finally signed the accord surrendering sovereignty of its territorial waters to the U.S. Coast Guard on March 18, 1991, it was not reported that Panama had been pushed into it. Instead, an AP wire published the next day in London's *Financial Times* claimed that the U.S. had agreed to "help in patrolling" Panama's waters, because "Panamanian officials have complained that lack of patrolling capacity has given rise to an increase in illegal activity." The agreement grants the Coast Guard the right to patrol Panamanian coasts under the Panamanian flag, making the government of Panama liable for any illegal boardings or acts of war against third countries by the U.S. Coast Guard.

On March 21, U.S. puppet President Guillermo "Porky" Endara proposed a number of constitutional amendments to Panama's legislature to forever abolish Panama's right to an army. By historical coincidence, on the very same day, U.S. Senator Craig and Representative Crane were submitting their resolution.

Although he has agreed to virtually every other U.S. demand, Endara, for who-knows-what reasons, is stubbornly insisting that he will never agree to any changes in the Canal Treaties to allow the U.S. to stay in Panama.

That's why some believe the U.S. has instigated a fight between Endara and his chief coalition partners, the Christian Democratic Party of First Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderón. The aim is to replace the ruling troika with a government headed either by Second Vice President Guillermo "Billy" Ford, or by Gabriel Lewis Galindo, a longtime business associate of Colombia's former President and drug cartel spokesman Alfonso López Michelsen.

On March 26, Endara said his private phone line, on which he discusses "the most confidential matters of government," had been tapped. This, he said, was discovered by a "foreign expert" employed by the CIA-trained Panamanian National Security and Defense Council (Conasepuden). Endara did not say who was tapping his phones, but pro-Endara spokesmen charged it was being done by a "psychological warfare expert of the Christian Democratic Party" of Arias Calderón.

Apparently in retaliation, agents of the Institutional Protection Service (SPI, which most people in Panama pronounce "spy"), another CIA-trained force run out of the presidency, raided a safehouse of the Public Force, which is under Arias Calderón, who is also Minister of Government and Justice.

Earlier, published reports charged that the number of phones tapped illegally under the Endara regime is as high as or higher "than under the military dictatorship of Gen. Manuel Noriega." The reports said that the wiretaps are being monitored by the Conasepuden, which is nominally under Endara, out of safehouses at the U.S.-controlled base at Fort Amador.