

Manuel Piñeiro, Castro's hit-man

The surfacing of Manuel Piñeiro as a leader of the São Paulo Forum constitutes, in and of itself, grounds for firing any U.S. intelligence or national security official who has argued that Fidel Castro and his Forum are no longer a threat to the security of the United States or its hemispheric allies.

For 35 years, "Redbeard" Piñeiro has served as Castro's dirty operations man for the Western Hemisphere, personally setting up and directing Cuba's assassination, kidnapping, and terror international in the region. Piñeiro founded Cuba's General Intelligence Directorate (DGI), after Castro seized power in 1959, maintaining his ties with it as deputy interior minister (1961-74). In 1974, he left the Interior Ministry to take charge of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee's newly established Americas Department, a unit created to centralize Cuba's operations in Ibero-America under the personal control of Castro, to whom Piñeiro reported.

Throughout, Piñeiro has worked on one operation: deploying a centralized terrorist international, along the lines of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's instructions to the 1966 Tricontinental Congress, that "the armed groups . . . form . . . coordinating committees to make more difficult the repressive task of the Yanqui imperialism and to facilitate

our own cause." In 1967, the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) was formed, a sort of first-generation São Paulo Forum.

During the early 1970s, Piñeiro lived in Chile for several months, directing the estimated 14,000 "internationalists"—which included members of the Cuban Interior Ministry's Special Troops—deployed into Chile by Cuba to secure the Salvador Allende government. After the overthrow of Allende in September 1973, Piñeiro's Americas Department helped set up the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee (JCR) in 1974 as the successor to OLAS, assigned to provide a unified command for "just and necessary revolutionary violence" on the continent. It was led by Uruguay's Tupamaros, Chile's Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Gorriarán Merlo's People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) of Argentina, and Bolivia's National Liberation Army.

Piñeiro's most successful operation was the 1979 Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. His Americas Department provided the Sandinistas intelligence, communications, arms, and even exiled Chilean Army officers, who had earlier been incorporated into the Cuban Armed Forces. Cuba's first public narco-terrorist operation—the arms-for-drugs deal with Colombia's M-19 movement, revealed with the 1981 arrest of Jaime Guillot Lara—was also a Piñeiro job. Cuba's ambassador at the time, Fernando Ravelo, was pulled out of Colombia after the scandal, and reassigned as Piñeiro's deputy at the Americas Department.

mental terror-drugs nexus. In the words of a former Salvadoran guerrilla: "Nicaragua was a large arms fair, a sort of huge gray market. You could get anything."

Known political supporters/advocates: Under the administration of George Bush, the U.S. State Department provided political support for members of the Forum steering committee, in the name of "peace negotiations." Coordination with the FMLN of El Salvador was notorious: the State Department reviewed and approved FMLN proposals for reducing El Salvador's Armed Forces; the U.S. ambassador and military attaché visited FMLN camps; Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson met with the top five FMLN commanders on Jan. 1, 1992, to tell them that "we wanted to make peace." Subsequently, Sandinista and FMLN leaders were invited, by the State Department, to speak at U.S. college campuses.

Thumbnail historical profile: The Cuban Communist Party (CP) initiated the founding of the São Paulo Forum, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall made it clear that the coming disintegration of the Soviet bloc threatened to bring with it the disintegration of all Soviet-allied and socialist

movements internationally. In July 1990, Brazil's Workers Party (PT) sponsored the first conference, where representatives of 40 organizations and parties, from 13 Ibero-American and Caribbean countries, met in São Paulo, with Cuban officials, to discuss how to revise revolutionary strategy in the midst of the crisis of socialism worldwide.

Initially founded as a loose, political umbrella organization with a mandate to propose common actions, over the past five years the Cuban CP has directed the systematic transformation of the Forum into a centralized political command structure, led by the principal narco-terrorist insurgencies in the Americas. Their objective has been to rebuild the old Communist International in the Western Hemisphere under Cuban control, as originally laid out in the January 1966 Tricontinental Congress.

In 1991, formal by-laws were drawn up, and a steering committee chosen. Its members: the Cuban CP, Brazil's Workers Party (PT), Mexico's Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), Nicaragua's Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN), Aristide's Haitian Lavalas, Bolivia's Free