

Carter in covert support for Somoza

U.S. gunboat diplomacy toward Nicaragua backs IMF policy in Central America

Charges that the U.S. is coordinating a multi-nation military intervention into Nicaragua on behalf of the brutal Somoza dynasty portends one of the biggest scandals of an American administration since the Bay of Pigs fiasco of the Kennedy days. Reliable reports of American involvement in Central America include direct logistical participation by the U.S. Army Southern Command headquarters in the Panama Canal Zone, infiltration of U.S. Special Forces men into leadership of Somoza's troops, and "looking the other way" on Somoza's weapons procurement and recruitment of mercenaries in the United States itself.

Regular troops from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, the Central American nations which, along with Nicaragua, form the Central American defense pact known as Condeca, have entered Nicaragua in recent days in support of Somoza. Condeca, founded, equipped, and trained by the U.S. Southern Command at the end of 1963, is still directed out of Fort Howard in the Panama Canal Zone today. Official denials from those countries of their involvement were belied by late reports of the capture of a Guatemalan colonel by the forces of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the group that heads the popular insurrection now battling to overthrow Somoza. The U.S., Condeca, and mercenary support for Somoza's National Guard follows months of Israeli military aid and advice, including the massive restocking of military equipment after the last outbreak of civil war in Nicaragua last September.

Reports of U.S. military involvement are being issued daily from Sandinista General Command. The charges, reported extensively in the Mexican daily press, have been virtually blacked out of the U.S. media, pointing to a top-down security clamp on any information, similar to the massive cover-up employed by the CIA-National Security Council to cover up the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

U.S. military commitment to Somoza follows less than a month upon Carter Administration support for an International Monetary Fund loan of \$66 million to bail out the Somoza government, money that is now

being used for weapons purchases, according to the anti-Somoza spokesmen. Carter's abandonment of the "human rights" line and return to 19th-century gunboat diplomacy on behalf of the International Monetary Fund in the Nicaraguan case signals a dangerous escalation on the part of the Administration in its plans for direct deployment of U.S. troops across the globe to enforce Malthusian austerity.

Genocide, not "Reds," the issue

The issue in Nicaragua is not a battle of "communists" and "anti-communists," as most of the major press in the United States is claiming, but the question of IMF genocide in the developing sector as a whole. The Somoza regime, which has served as a paradigm for decades for the imposition of brutal austerity and backwardness on the Third World, is battling to suppress a nation-wide popular uprising that has unfolded into full-scale conventional war since May 31.

On that date, the Sandinista Front General Command called on the population to join in a "final offensive" against Somoza. Thus far, the scarce battle reports indicate the population has responded fully. A general strike beginning June 4 is reported by international news agencies to be 90 to 100 percent successful, and has even paralyzed the capital city of Managua. A spokesman for the Group of 12 civilian anti-Somoza front reported that as of June 5th, Sandinista forces were controlling the city of Leon in the north, and significant territory in the southern area near Rivas.

High-level desertions from Somoza's National Guard have also begun to occur, and various cabinet ministers have fled the country.

The response of the dictatorship was to order that anyone who participated in the general strike be treated as a "Sandinista sympathizer" and be shot! The National Guard has launched an "Operation Mop-up" against most of the major cities in the country, and are using tactics applied by the U.S. during the Vietnam War, including the bombardment of the cities with

nerve gas, fragmentation bombs, and napalm, along with airborne machine-gun strafing.

Children, women and the elderly have been cut down without mercy in the churches, schools, and streets. All men between the ages of 18 and 25 have been sought out and shot for being "Sandinista sympathizers." Anyone with blood stains on their person or dirt under their nails is shot summarily for "having been in combat." In one instance, two surgeons who had been treating the wounded on a round-the-clock basis were pulled out of the operating room by National Guardsmen and shot on the street in full daylight as "subversives."

U.S. role

On May 20, the Mexican government of President Jose Lopez Portillo broke all relations with the Somoza regime for carrying out "horrendous genocide" against the population, and called on all Latin American nations to follow Mexico's lead in declaring that government an outlaw nation. Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda then called on the U.S. to consider similar action.

The Carter Administration is instead carrying out one of the most outrageously hypocritical charades in modern history. While the U.S. delegation to the

Organization of American States shed crocodile tears of concern for "human rights" in Nicaragua, the U.S. not only refused to join Mexico—even on the basis of genocide, an internationally recognized crime against humanity under the Nuremberg Statutes—but has employed every diplomatic pressure to blackmail other Latin American nations into continuing relations with Somoza. The capitulation of Latin America to that Carter pressure set the immediate preconditions for the current crisis in the area, by maintaining even the thin veneer of legitimacy for Somoza's government. While still trying to maintain a cover of "neutrality," U.S. military aid is now being escalated.

Propping up the drug networks

The Carter Administration's strategic concern in maintaining "Somocismo" is to ensure that the countries in the area do not break with IMF austerity policies and follow Mexico's lead toward sovereign industrial development. Central America has for decades been deliberately kept in the most vicious backwardness by U.S.-controlled military puppets. If Somoza and the National Guard fall, it will be a tremendous blow to IMF dictatorships throughout the continent, putting Carter Administration pro-IMF policy on the line.

U.S. military involvement in Nicaragua detailed

Despite "categorical" denials issued by the Carter Administration and a virtual blackout in the national press, solid and specific evidence of U.S. military involvement in Nicaragua continues to mount.

On June 5, the Sandinista National Liberation Front issued the serial number—62-10—of the Hercules transport which delivered weapons from Fort Howard in the Panama Canal Zone at Bluefields Airfields and Puerto Cabezas in Nicaragua on May 30 and 31.

Other charges of U.S. military involvement—both direct and indirect—on the side of Somoza include:

- Sandinista officials charged that Somoza's son Tachito completed a deal for 10 T-28 planes last week in the U.S. to be delivered from Fort Lauderdale to Puerto Cabezas at a future date. T-28s, an older model training plane, have been frequently refitted for use in counter-guerrilla operations in Latin America. Tachito's visit also included

the recruitment of mercenaries to fight with Somoza's troops, according to reports appearing June 1 in the Mexican daily *Uno Mas Uno*. Over 2,500 foreign mercenaries, primarily U.S. Vietnam veterans recruited through New Mexico and Florida, are already in Nicaragua, according to the same report.

- Spokesmen for the Group of 12, a civilian opposition group, have accused Somoza of using the IMF money to buy nerve gas, 500-lb. bombs, and "pac-pac" anti-personnel bombs, as well as the military aircraft, in the U.S.

- 100 U.S. military Special Forces personnel have infiltrated Nicaraguan territory under cover of "jungle training exercises," according to sources tied to the U.S. intelligence community. More are reported being deployed as fast as possible without becoming exposed.

- The charges of U.S. military intervention on behalf of Somoza were also corroborated by a Nicaraguan official now seeking political asylum in

The "banana republics" of Central America in particular also serve as a central deployment center for the international drug running networks such as those linked to the United Fruit Company. Any development program, like that of Mexico with its emphasis on sovereignty, immediately jeopardizes decades of control, destabilizing the nexus of international drug networks.

Circles around Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig in the United States, as well as people around General Somoza himself, are now bluntly stating that Mexico is the ultimate target of the bloodbath they have let loose in Central America. Luis Pallais Deballe, a relative of Somoza and vice president of the Nicaraguan Senate, has been openly organizing support for Somoza in Washington. He told the Washington National Press Club last week that not only the future of Nicaragua was at stake in the current battle, but all of Central America, including "democracy and Mexican oil."

That same line dominated discussion at a conference on Central America held May 30 on Capital Hill by the Council on Interamerican Security (CIS), a Washington-based think tank which collaborates closely with Kissinger's British intelligence-run Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. The CIS had

held an earlier conference two months ago entitled "Mexico 2000" which had discussed Mexico as a "strategic threat" to the United States, in which the possibility of an invasion of Mexico was aired. (On-the-spot reports also indicated that the conference became a virtual campaign rally for NATO Commander Alexander Haig.)

This time, CIS spokesmen declared that their "biggest problem" on the continent was Mexico, in fury at Mexico's break in relations with Nicaragua last month. Mexico's action was criticized for opening the way to "Cuban" penetration throughout the area, and Mexican President Lopez Portillo was described as "now a part of the whole Central American strategy" of the Cubans and Soviets. CIS officials like Francis Bouchey, executive vice-president of the CIS whose wife is employed at Somoza's Nicaraguan Information Service in Washington, have also become hysterical over the role of the Mexican press in breaking the National Security Council blackout on news from Nicaragua, the source for many of the charges of U.S. involvement in the area.

Regional war?

Maintaining IMF rule and knocking out Mexican influence in the area may not be so easy, despite

San Francisco. The official, formerly in charge of the nation's airports, stated that "Somoza told us that he had orders from the Pentagon to put an end to the Sandinistas and that he would obey those orders even if it meant destroying all the cities and killing all the Nicaraguan people. ... I am deserting the personal guard of Somoza since I have realized that the national guard is composed of traitors and (anti-Castro—ed.) Cuban and U.S. mercenaries, who are committing horrendous genocide against the defenseless Nicaraguan people."

In response to the mounting evidence of U.S. involvement and Carter Administration cover-up, Lyndon LaRouche, U.S. presidential candidate and chairman of the U.S. Labor Party, issued a call on June 5 for the U.S. Congress to launch an immediate investigation into the Carter administration's Bay of Pigs operation. LaRouche, deploring the genocide on behalf of which this U.S. military aid is occurring, called on other political leaders and the American press to join him in this call.

Carter Administration denies U.S. role

On June 5, Carter Administration spokesman Hodding Carter issued a "categorical denial" of "any U.S. military involvement, direct or indirect" with the government of General Somoza in Nicaragua when questioned by New Solidarity International Press Service correspondents at the State Department briefing. He specifically denied, as well, charges that a U.S. Hercules transport plane landed in Nicaragua on May 30 and 31 and unloaded arms and ammunition. And Carter denied any knowledge of the involvement by Condeca troops or equipment in the Nicaraguan civil war and any knowledge of the whereabouts of "Tachito" Somoza, the head of Nicaraguan National Guard Training School, reported to be in Kansas and other areas of the U.S. last week. Defense Department spokesmen have also denied reports of U.S. involvement.

Somoza's superior weaponry. Somoza and his U.S. backers know that their only hope is to "internationalize" the conflict, thus providing a cover for sending U.S. troops into the area. A U.S. military strike against Mexico would then become an immediate danger.

That this is a very live option was made clear by none other than U.S. Energy Secretary Schlesinger in a Paris press conference on May 22. In response to a question on reports

Brown are engaged in planning a military invasion of Mexico under the pretext of securing U.S. oil supplies, Schlesinger stated:

"Given the correlation of forces in Latin America, it is not possible to make a military intervention in Latin America."

But given last week's developments in Central America, political observers are wondering how that "correlation of forces" will be affected if U.S. troops move into Central America under any guise.

Moving quickly in the direction of regional war, Somoza charged last week that Costa Rica aided and abetted a Sandinista invasion of Nicaragua from inside their territory, and that Nicaragua was considering invading Costa Rica in retaliation. The Costa Rican security minister announced in response that Costa Rica, which has no military of its own, will call on Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico for defense aid should

his country be attacked, presaging a broad regional conflict between Costa Rica's allies and Somoza's military allies in Condeca.

IMF "conditionality" means genocide

Nothing demonstrates more clearly than the example of Nicaragua, that the content of the International Monetary Fund's "conditionality"—which Undersecretary of the Treasury Anthony Solomon last month demanded be extended to all nations alike—is mass murder in Latin America and the Third World.

Every developing sector nation which has desperately tried to obtain funds from the International Monetary Fund for industrial development projects or even just basic import needs for consumption, can testify to the months or years of crawling, begging and political "accommodations" they have been forced to go through to get similar, or lesser, amounts of money. Somoza, whose National Guard is napalming entire cities and who has ordered all males between 18 and 25 shot for suspicion of being "Sandinistas," has received his IMF grant with no questions asked.

A review of a few cases of IMF "conditionality" are striking in contrast:

- *Peru*—In contrast to its speedy service to Somoza, the IMF withheld funds from bankrupt Peru for three years as blackmail to force the elimination from the

The Central American Defense Council

Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza has announced plans to convoke Condeca, the Central American Defense Council, to aid him in his battle against the Sandinista-led uprising and for a possible invasion of Costa Rica. Condeca is an integrated command and control body of the military forces of Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Although the United States formally is not a member of Condeca and functions only in an "advisory" capacity, the fact is that Condeca from the beginning has been run out of the U.S. Southern Command in the Panama Canal Zone. Practically every officer in the Central American armies was trained on U.S. bases in the Canal Zone, and the local militaries have been standardized under U.S. procedures, equipment, and even uniforms. Condeca also deploys a significant number of U.S. and South American mercenaries, who are dressed in uniforms of the Central American armies.

Condeca conducts "joint training operations" an average of twice yearly, which have generally served as the cover under which "live" counterinsurgency operations are run. In the 1976 Eagle IV maneuvers, for example, the Guatemalan EGP guerrillas were tracked down and massacred. And in 1977, Condeca used Eagle VI maneuvers to launch combined napalming runs against the Sandinista liberation forces in the north of Nicaragua.

Regional security force

Although the U.S. managed to establish a Latin America-wide security body in 1947 under Organization of American States auspices, this body (known as TIAR), had never had the political flexibility to function as the kind of unified task force that Anglo-American monetarist interests were looking for. Condeca was conceived as a solution to this problem. As General George Mather, ex-commander in chief

cabinet of several ministers opposed to the IMF's genocidal conditions. Since Peru has yielded to the IMF, living standards have been drastically reduced as steady devaluations, budget, credit and import cuts have brought the economy to a standstill; meat consumption is practically nonexistent; and 54 percent of the population is unemployed. A team, from Warburg, Kuhn Loeb and Lazard investment houses has been invited in to rewrite Peru's nationalist mining laws to permit speculators to grab up mineral reserves, and the government is now considering Dope, Inc.'s suggestion of legalized casino gambling.

• *Jamaica*—The IMF's official press release announcing the loan—delayed until Jamaica was completely bankrupt—states that a “reduction in consumption levels of the population” is the key condition for the loan. During the past 12 months of direct, on-the-spot IMF control of the Jamaican economy, wage increases have been held to 15 percent, 45 percent currency devaluations have led to an equal increase in living costs, food rationing is under discussion, and basic goods are scarce throughout the island. Hospitals even lack soap and alcohol. This year will be worse: the new government budget is 60 percent less than last year's when inflation is considered.

• *Africa*—Food production on the entire continent has collapsed, due to an IMF-mandated return to

primitive farming methods. The IMF has refused Sudan access to credits needed to complete its ambitious agricultural development program, which could, if adequately capitalized, feed all of Africa. In Zaire, food is so scarce that one newspaper report warned that “three million Zaireans may turn on the 30,000 well-fed Europeans.” Once a thriving food-producing nation, Zaire has been blocked by IMF “conditionalities” from importing the gasoline needed to truck seed to the countryside for planting.

Yet, endorsing the IMF's aid to Nicaragua, U.S. Treasury Secretary Werner Blumenthal, a supporter of the extension of IMF “conditionality” over the U.S. economy, sent a telegram to a Nicaraguan Solidarity Committee explaining the U.S. decision to not block the IMF loan. “The IMF is not the appropriate instrument for those considerations” of genocide, he wrote, adding that he was personally opposed to any attempt to “politicize the IMF, an institution which has remained remarkably free of political interference, and whose continued success demands that it remain that way.”

—Gretchen Small

of the U.S. Southern Command, explained to a Congressional Committee in 1969, “To improve the effectiveness of the area (Latin America), we have continued to encourage interservice and regional cooperation, assisted in establishing integrated command and control centers with common operating procedures, and have supported the conduct of joint and combined exercises [security deletion].... I would think that the permanent establishment of a (TIAR/OAS) peacekeeping force is perhaps not attainable ... (but) the Central American Defense Council (Condeca) is continuing to show promise as a regional organization.”

Condeca, according to the popular view, was formed after the Cuban Revolution in order to stop “Cuban-Communist expansionism” in the Central American area. But this is a myth. Although Condeca was not officially established until 1963, four years after Fidel Castro took power, it was actually conceived and made operational a decade earlier.

The first occasion on which a Condeca-style force was actually put into motion, was around the 1954 military coup against the progressive Arbenz government in Guatemala, which was trying to carry out moderate, Mexican-style reforms. This coup, orchestrated by United Fruit Co. and its erstwhile lawyer and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, relied on military personnel and supplies from Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the U.S. and Guatemala—i.e. the Condeca nations.

From 1954 forward, the Guatemalans became the most vociferous advocates of formally establishing an alliance among the armed forces of the countries that had participated in the 1954 coup. The target of such an alliance was to be Mexican-style commitment to industrial development.

It is the same story with Condeca's activation today.