

The following are excerpts from testimony by U.S. Ambassador to Panama Arthur H. Davis before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Feb. 19, 1986. Ambassador Davis was questioned about government "harassment" of the opposition.

... We have to move very rapidly to let them know that we are sure we do not want those things to continue. . . . Over the last years, from the time of the negotiations of the Canal Treaty and more recently in the last few months with the removal of Mr. Barletta and the Spadafora case, practically every visitor, whether it is congressional, senatorial, or senator's staffs or military, has stressed the great desire of the United States for a more civil constitutional type government. The Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) have always had a large voice in the politics of Panama. . . . We have

consistently, under many administrations, stressed our great desire to have, as I say, an opening of democracy and put the military under civilian power. We have also stressed right up to the recent days, in meetings with Noriega and other people in Panama, our desire that the PDF calm down and take a back seat. . . .

I will certainly keep insisting upon a solution to the Spadafora case, and I think we always have to study whatever means we have, whether it is military assistance or aid assistance, in order to bring that about. . . . I do believe that the force of the United States and the pressure of the United States will have an effect on Panama. I think we will have to keep pressuring . . . to see to it that both on the opening up of democracy and on the violations of their human rights, that they know what our definite stand is and they know the consequences.

Qaddafi's Spadafora

Hugo Spadafora spent his life as a gun-running mercenary for any "liberation army" Qaddafi could find. Born of Italian-Panamanian family, Hugo joined the Italian Socialist Party while studying medicine at the University of Bologna in the early 1960s. Spadafora's connections to Middle Eastern terrorism followed quickly, when he accepted a scholarship to Cairo University in 1965. Once in Cairo, "the first thing I did was to go to the Cuban Embassy and tell them I was ready to go," Spadafora bragged to the *New York Times* in December 1980.

The Cubans rejected him, he claimed. So, he joined Amil Cabral's "liberation" war in Guinea-Bissau in 1966, to receive "a political education." Spadafora returned to Panama in 1967, to join "guerrilla" organizing of the Paris-café set at the University of Panama. Jailed in June 1969 for opposing the Torrijos government, Spadafora soon cut a deal with the government, and secured his release.

In 1978, Spadafora formed a "Bolivarian" brigade, to fight with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The 80-man brigade joined "Commander Zero," Eden Pastora in the Southern Front, the wing of the rebels financed by gangster Robert Vesco and his Costa Rican protector, Don "Pepe" Figueres. The Bolivarian Brigade was a precedent for today's gnostic narco-terrorist armies, exemplified by the "Americas Battalion" now fighting in Colombia. Explained Spadafora in 1980, "The time has come for the creation of a Bolivarian force—independent of superpow-

ers and governments and capable of combatting militarily anywhere in the continent where the armed struggle is the only avenue left for peoples seeking their liberation. . . . There are tens of thousands of Latin Americans willing to fight for the liberation of the continent, but for this we must achieve the authentic unity of all revolutionaries, of Marxists, of Catholics, of Social Democrats, of progressive Christian Democrats."

He traveled back and forth between Libya, Europe, Mexico, and Central America. With a reputation as a coward who never fought, Spadafora used the cover of his "brigades" to funnel arms and money from Libya to all sides of Central America's civil wars. In 1982, Spadafora began running weapons to the Nicaraguan "counter-revolution," which his friend Eden Pastora had now joined. By a year later, he claimed to have split with Pastora, to begin supplying the Misurata "Indian resistance." When assassinated, rumors had it that Spadafora was setting up "guerrilla" operations in Panama.

On Sept. 14, 1985, Spadafora was found, decapitated, in a river bordering Costa Rica and Panama. The opposition immediately charged that General Noriega had ordered him killed. International media took up the charge, burying any clues which lead to another doorstep.

Not reported were the charges by Eden Pastora, broadcast on Miami radio, that Spadafora had betrayed the "contras," selling their arms shipments to the Sandinistas. Nor was it reported that the Costa Rican Judicial Investigations Organization found, in November, that Spadafora had been killed, not in Panama, but in the Punta Burica area of Costa Rica. On newspaper, *La Nacion*, reported that the area where Pastora's body was found is a center of the drug-trade, with "extensive marijuana plantations and cocaine-processing laboratories."