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Central
America

The Nicaragua Debate and the Future of U.S. Foreign Policy

by

Joshua Muravchik

After five grueling debates within the compass of five months in 1986, the Congress agreed to the President's request for military aid for the rebels fighting Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Whatever this decision may herald for that long suffering country, for the United States it may signal a decisive departure from the era when the boundaries of U.S. policy were narrowly circumscribed by the trauma of Vietnam.

A new Congress will have to consider the "Contra" aid issue again in 1987, for despite the boasts of some rebel spokesmen a year will not be nearly enough time to bring the Sandinistas down, nor will \$100 million be enough money to do the job. And in 1987, the President's party will hold a few fewer seats in the Congress than in 1986. Yet, barring some egregious act on the part of the rebels that causes Americans to recoil, it is not likely that the Congress will choose to reverse direction now. Having voted the rebels the means by which to shift their war against the Sandinistas into a higher gear, many members of Congress--even including some who have opposed the aid--will recognize that to cut them off cold now would have consequences

far beyond Central America. It would signal to the world a fickle inconsistency on America's part that would frighten our friends and tempt our adversaries.

Moreover, the President's cushion in the House may be somewhat deeper than the 12 vote margin of his victory. A couple of dozen centrist Democrats led by Representative McCurdy of Oklahoma ended up voting against the President's program. (Indeed, in a last ditch effort to stymie the administration, the House leadership threw its support to McCurdy's compromise proposal, to the ire of some liberals.) But the McCurdy group is basically sympathetic to the rebel's cause, and might well, under different legislative circumstances, provide additional votes for continuing the aid. The President's position enjoys no similar cushion in the Senate, but may benefit from the scheduled turnover in the leadership of the Select Committee on Intelligence (under whose aegis the rebel aid program falls) where two supporters of aid (Senators William Cohen and David Boren) will succeed two opponents (Dave Durenberger and William Leahy) as chairman and vice-chairman. Having given the President this victory after so much pulling and hauling, the Congress is likely now to allow

his policy to play out, at least for a time, or until something alarming happens.

The legislative triumph climaxed a four-year long struggle within the House, which had opposed military aid to the rebels almost from the program's inception. When the issue first came before the body in 1982, it adopted, by unanimous vote, the Boland Amendment, which barred aid to the rebels for any purpose other than interdiction of the flow of supplies from the Nicaraguan government to the Communist guerrillas in El Salvador. This narrow scope was accepted by the administration in order to forestall a complete ban on aid to the rebels, proposed by Representative (now Senator) Harkin, but this strategy did not work for long. In 1983, the House voted a complete ban, but relented in conference with the Senate, which had approved some aid. In 1984, the House again voted to prohibit any aid, this time by a 64 vote margin, and this time it would not back down to the Senate, thus halting the flow of support and requiring that the President receive congressional approval before any further disbursements could be made to the rebels.

The President sought such approval in 1985, redesigning his request in order to make it more palatable. He kept the dollar figures low (a mere \$14 million), limited the aid temporarily to

non-lethal equipment (thus the designation "humanitarian"), and linked it to a new attempt to stimulate negotiations between the Nicaraguan government and the rebels. No sooner had the House rejected this request, than two events caused it to have second thoughts. The most publicized event was external--Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's much publicized visit to Moscow. The second event was internal to the House, but it was no less important.

The President's proposal had been defeated in favor of an amendment offered by Western Hemisphere Subcommittee chairman Michael Barnes and Intelligence Committee chairman Lee Hamilton. The Barnes-Hamilton amendment provided funds for Nicaraguan refugees, notably to resettle "Contra" fighters and their families, and to underwrite the Contadora negotiations. It had been presented as a peaceful vehicle for achieving the same goals that the President sought through martial means. But once the President's proposal was safely buried, a large bloc of House liberals who had voted for Barnes-Hamilton as a substitute for the Reagan plan, turned around and voted against it on final passage, joining with conservatives to send it to overwhelming defeat.

For these liberals, Barnes-Hamilton had been nothing more than a device with which to defeat the President's approach. But for

the considerable number of middle-of-the-road Democrats and Republicans who genuinely thought of Barnes-Hamilton as an alternative approach, this reversal brought surprise and dismay. And worry. Although polls repeatedly showed that large majorities of the American electorate opposed aid to the Nicaraguan rebels (as well as to the Salvadoran government), they also recorded widespread apprehension about the rise of Communism in Central America. The same electorate that invariably tells pollsters that it favors increases in government services and decreases in taxation, now was telling them that it was anxious to stop Communism in our hemisphere but reluctant to go to much pain or accept many risks in order to do so. Moderate Democrats in Congress grew fearful that defeating the President's program--unpopular as it seemed--without offering any genuine alternative, would leave them responsible for whatever troubling developments might unfold in the region.

Moreover, the liberals' volte face belied their protestations that they sought the same goals as the President but by different means. And this impelled moderate legislators who genuinely shared the President's goals, to ask themselves afresh whether there was in fact any realistic alternative to his approach.

As a result, an alliance of conservative and moderate

Representatives coalesced behind a proposal that provided \$27 million in non-lethal "humanitarian" aid to the rebels. This set the stage for a renewed legislative battle in 1986 over the more controversial question of directly providing military aid.

The five-stage battle of 1986 was seen by supporters and opponents of rebel aid, alike, as an historic debate. Majority Whip Tom Foley called the debate a "truly historic" occasion. Liberal Democrat Ted Weiss said when the rebel aid measure passed that this was "truly . . . an awful day in our history." On the other side, Representative Jack Kemp declared: "our vote will be recorded in history as to which side we are on." And Senator Pete Wilson said: "the 99th Congress, if it is remembered at all, will be remembered as that which stopped Communism in this hemisphere or that which failed to stop it."

And indeed, the rebel aid controversy likely will prove the most important foreign policy debate Congress has undertaken since the first half of the 1970s when it adopted a variety of measures constraining American actions in Indochina and eventually cutting off aid to our allies there. No issue since then has posed such fundamental questions about the purposes and methods of U.S. foreign policy. At issue in the Nicaragua debate, said Representative Shannon, "is not what we think about the Nicaraguans, but rather what we think about the United

States and the role that we are going to play in the world." As the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's resident specialist on Latin America, Mark Falcoff, has put it, "'El Salvador' or 'Nicaragua' are but metaphors for a larger discussion."

To listen to or read the debates over Nicaragua on the floor of the House and Senate was to watch the clash of two paradigms. On one side was the paradigm that dominated U.S. discussion of foreign policy throughout the 1950s and most of the 1960s, which viewed the struggle with and containment of Communism as the sine qua non of U.S. policy. This paradigm was best captured in President Kennedy's oft-repeated declaration that the United States would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty." On the other side was the paradigm that dominated foreign policy debate from the late 1960s through the 1970s. It was most succinctly expressed in the phrase "no more Vietnams."

And, indeed, warnings that President Reagan's policy was leading the country to "another Vietnam" constituted the heart of the argument of the opponents of rebel aid. To be sure, they made other points as well, but most of these were weak.

A few clung to the sympathetic view of the Sandinistas that

was more widespread on Captiol Hill in the first year or two after Somoza was toppled. Representative George Brown of California described Nicaragua as a nation seeking "to mold a political, economic, and social system best suited to their own history and tradition." Representative John Conyers said that "the Nicaraguan government has brought down illiteracy from 55 percent to 13 percent and, by nearly every objective measure of human rights, has demonstrated that it is much more concerned with the welfare of its poeple than are the govenments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras." And Representative Mervyn Dymally announced that "For the first time in the history of Nicaragua, blacks are enjoying some sense of freedom." More often, aid opponents argued merely that the Sandinista regime was not as bad as the Reagan administration made it out to be. Senator Zorinsky, the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, stated that "The Sandinista government is not one of my choosing, but It apparently is the choice of the majority of the Nicaraguan people," and in reference to the administration's accusations against the Sandinistas, he said: "All the 'big lie' techniques in the world will not make the Sandinistas more brutal than Somoza, or the Contras more democratic than the Sandinistas."

Other aid opponents concurred in the administration's

criticisms of the Sandinistas, but argued that its own policies were at fault or would compound the problem. Former Intelligence Committee Chairman, Senator Inouye said, "we have driven the Sandinistas into the arms of the very people we want to keep out of Central America--Cubans and the Soviets." Senator Pell, the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations committee declared: "I do not know what the Sandinistas would do without the Contras It gives them the excuse which they seek and which they need" for repressive measures. Representative Stark warned that "we could be doing what President Reagan fears most, driving the Nicaraguan government into the hands of the Communists." Senator Levin argued that "military aid seems more likely than not to increase the intransigency of the Sandinistas." And House Intelligence Committee chairman Lee Hamilton argued that Reagan's policy had "driven the Sandinistas further into the Soviet embrace, as the Sandinistas turned to the only nations that would help them."

In whatever variant, these arguments ignored the fact that the Sandinistas had proclaimed well before they took power their intention to rule Nicaragua as a "Marxist-Leninist vanguard" party and to lead it in the "transformation from capitalism to communism," as well as their admiration for "the glorious Russian revolution." All of this was included in various party

platforms including the one adopted in 1977 at the height of the ascendancy of the Front's putatively "moderate" faction. Within weeks after the Sandinistas took power, Cuban advisers were streaming into Nicaragua while offers of similar assistance extended by both Panama and Costa Rica--two nations that had assisted the Sandinista struggle--were rebuffed. Within months, a Sandinista delegation traveled to Moscow where it signed a party-to-party agreement with the Soviet Communist Party and issued a joint communique endorsing, among other things, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. At around the same time, Alfonso Robelo and Violetta Chamorro, the two non-Sandinista members of the revolutionary junta resigned to protest the Sandinistas' betrayal of the revolutions' democratic promises. And within little more than a year, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) had replaced the traditional Communist party (the Socialist Party of Nicaragua) as Nicaragua's representative at international Communist congresses. All of this was well before the beginning of the "Contra" war, and before President Reagan took office.

Other congressional opponents of aid dwelt on the flaws of the rebels, who were accused of being "terrorists," "killers," and "rapists." But these accusations were hard to assess. The rebels themselves acknowledged that some atrocities had

occurred, as they always do in war, especially civil war. But are the Nicaraguan rebels more abusive of civilians than other armies have been? The accusations that they are come mostly from Americans with close ties to the Sandinista government and from U.S. "human rights" groups with Sandinista sympathies. The most widely publicized report on rebel abuses--the so-called "Brody Report"--was issued in 1985 under the auspices of the Washington Office on Latin America and the International Human Rights Law Group. Its author, attorney Reed Brody, had traveled to Nicaragua at the instance of the law firm of Reichler and Applebaum, which is paid and registered as the Washington lobbyist for the government of Nicaragua. There, with the assistance of the government's official human rights commission (not to be confused ~~with the~~ with the independent, highly respected, and much persecuted Permanent Commission on Human Rights, which the governmental body was intended to supplant), Brody gathered affidavits from various purported victims or witnesses of rebel misconduct. Brody's "research" was then independently verified on behalf of the two human rights groups by two other lawyers who reinterviewed ten of Brody's 150 witnesses with the assistance of an American translator, Valerie Miller, author of Between Struggle and Hope, an authorized chronicle of the Sandinista literacy campaign, for which task she had, she says, been personally selected by the campaign's

director, Father Fernando Cardenal, now Nicaragua's Minister of Education.

It is hard to square the accounts of widespread and ^aw~~o~~nton rebel atrocities with two undisputed facts about the resistance. First, it has attracted some fifteen or twenty thousand recruits (more presumably, if one considers turnover) from the same population groups that it is accused of terrorizing. This makes it many times larger than any other guerrilla force in Nicaraguan history. Some members of Congress argued that the rebels' recruiting successes are attributable to the effectiveness of the CIA, but this makes no sense. Rebel soldiers receive no pay (making them the world's first unpaid "mercenaries," to use the Sandinistas' epithet which surprisingly was echoed by several legislators.) If indeed it were so easy for a foreign intelligence service to raise a guerrilla army of this size, internecine warfare would no doubt be raging in every country on earth. Second, the Nicaraguan government has seen fit to conduct mass evacuations of population, mostly Indian but in some locales also Hispanic, from areas of heavy rebel activity manifestly in order to deprive the guerrillas of a supportive human environment.

The other two main charges against the rebels were that they are "Somocistas" and that they embezzled the American aid sent

them the previous year. But the "Somocista" argument rested solely on the fact that a significant number of the rebels' top military officers had served in Somoza's National Guard. Young men in every country join their nation's armed services for a variety of reasons, and it is hard to see the justice behind a blanket indictment of all former guardsmen in the absence of evidence of individual wrongdoing, of which in this instance none has been presented. Nor is there evidence that these former Guardsmen adhere to any particular ideology. Indeed, "Somocismo" was not an ideology but a style of rule, characterized by its extreme venality and concentration of power in one man's hands. It is doubtful that Somocism remains a meaningful category (except for historical purposes) since Somoza's death, which occurred before the first "Contra" group was founded.

The charges of misuse of funds, like those of widespread atrocities, arise from sources of doubtful objectivity, and they, too, defy common sense. Representative Barnes, chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee ordered an inquiry by the General Accounting Office into the dissemination of the \$27 million allotted to the rebels by Congress in 1985, and the GAO reported that it found insufficient records to account for all the funds. But a guerrilla war can hardly be run according to

the same accounting standards as a domestic government agency. The Republicans on Barnes' subcommittee protested that they had been excluded from the inquiry, and even asked why the issue had not been handled by the Intelligence Committee, as it had been in the Senate, where the same charges were dismissed as groundless. These protestations may have been no less partisan in motivation than Barnes's actions had been, but if objectivity had been the chief goal, Barnes or the Democratic leadership in the House could readily have found a means to secure bi-partisan aegis for this investigation as has been done on numerous other issues. Above all, it was hard to understand why the Sandinistas and their sympathizers were so exercised about the rebel aid proposal if in fact the funds were being generally misspent.

In the end, Barnes translated his criticisms into an amendment offered immediately after the House's June vote approving aid to the rebels. The amendment required a detailed accounting for past funds before any new moneys could be disbursed, and even Reagan administration officials expected it would pass. But surprisingly it was defeated by a larger majority than had supported the aid measure itself, and this was widely interpreted as a tacit rebuke of Barnes's handling of this issue.

Whatever measure of truth may have been contained in the various accusations against the "Contras," these were to a great extent false issues. The overwhelming majority of opponents of aid to the rebels would have held the same position, as they themselves often made clear, even if the whole rebel movement could have been made over anew with each one of its members handpicked by Speaker O'Neill or Senator Kennedy. The core objection, as dozens of members explained during the floor debate, was to the very notion of aiding an insurgent movement aiming to overthrow a government with which the United States maintains diplomatic relations. In contrast, as far as I can find, only one member of either house--Senator Biden--argued that he was not opposed in principle to such aid, but would vote against this particular program because of his misgivings about the "Contras."

The existence of diplomatic relations apparently served to distinguish the case of Nicaragua from that of Afghanistan, whose rebels receive U.S. assistance with nary a congressional objection. But it is hard to see why the existence of diplomatic relations should in itself be the decisive consideration, or to believe that in fact it was, even for the Congressmen who raised this issue. No congressional voices were raised in protest against the logistical support that U.S.

agencies were reported to have given to the rebellious soldiers and officers who toppled Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, with whom we had diplomatic relations and more. And conversely, had President Reagan severed diplomatic ties with Managua, it is doubtful that a single member of the House or Senate who opposed aid to the rebels would have reversed his or her vote.

Indeed, any such step would more likely have evoked cries of protest from the many opponents of rebel aid who believed that America's concerns about Nicaragua could and should be settled in negotiations. Many of them proclaimed during the floor debates, as Senator Gorton put it, "the question before us is one of means, not end." But others acknowledged that negotiations could not achieve all of the objectives that the President said his policy aimed at. Representative Solarz and Representative Hamilton, for example, each took pains to distinguish between what Solarz called "security" issues--the size of Nicaragua's armed forces, the presence of Soviet bloc forces or bases, and subversion of Nicaragua's neighbors--and those he called "political" issues--democratization and civil liberties within Nicaragua. While insisting on their concern for the Nicaraguan people, these Representatives argued that Nicaragua's domestic conditions are not realistically negotiable because the Sandinistas will not agree to relinquish or share

power. But, so the argument goes, the Sandinistas might well agree to satisfy the United States on the security issues in exchange for an end to U.S. aid to the rebels.

According to numerous reports this is precisely the deal that then Assistant Secretary of State Enders offered the Sandinistas in 1981, to no avail. Solarz argues, rather lamely, that Enders's offer might not have been clear enough and, more compellingly, that events since 1981, notably the U.S. invasion of Grenada and the rise of the "Contra" movement, may have softened up the Sandinistas, making them more willing to compromise. Perhaps, but the question is less whether the Sandinistas would agree to a deal than whether they would abide by what they agreed. The administration argues that the security and political issues cannot be separated because, as Assistant Secretary Abrams puts it: "Whatever agreements may be negotiated, there can be no sealed borders between Nicaragua and its neighbors. Ultimately only the people of Nicaragua can verify that agreements will be respected." Obviously, Nicaraguan deployment of MiG aircraft can be detected by America's own "national technical" means, but arms shipments to the Salvadoran guerrillas probably cannot.

Solarz retorts that U.S. intelligence agencies currently seem able to gather information about Nicaraguan subversion of

neighboring countries, and would continue to be able to do so in monitoring the kind of agreement he proposes. But of course we only know about those Nicaraguan activities our agencies have succeeding in uncovering; we by definition know nothing of any activities that have not been uncovered. We don't really know, therefore, how much of the picture we are getting, or how much of it we will continue to be able to get. Moreover, public disclosure of intelligence information to justify retaliatory measures (or its use in a private diplomatic protest to the offending party) risks the destruction of the source, as for example is reported to have happened when the administration, in justifying its 1986 bombing attack on Libya, revealed its interception of communications between Tripoli and Libyan embassies abroad.

Thus, the problem of verification and the problem of enforcement are entwined. The rebel movement, once choked off, cannot be resurrected. Governor Babbit of Arizona, a prominent Democratic centrist, who shares the Solarz-Hamilton approach to this issue, wrote that "The United States, with its overwhelming dominance of the hemisphere, has the power and the duty to enforce such an agreement." So it does, as many likeminded members of Congress also commented. But to use U.S. military force for such purposes is to rely on a blunt instrument. Even

limited air strikes aimed "surgically" at military targets, as the Libyan operation reminded us, inevitably also inflict civilian casualties.

No administration will want to take such action without hard intelligence, and hard intelligence may be hard to come by. In the months prior to the Cuban missile crisis, the U.S. government received numerous human source accounts of the presence of missiles in Cuba, but, given the stakes, President Kennedy was necessarily loathe to react until he had proof in the form of aerial reconnaissance photos of the silos. Aerial photography has improved since then, but it still can't see inside trucks or crates or under foliage, which is precisely what it would need to do to verify a Sandinista commitment to cease providing aid to guerrillas in neighboring countries. Short of that, the U.S. government would face recurring dilemmas over whether to risk using military force in response to violations that could not be proven, or to risk ignoring violations that, though unprovable, might well be very real.

While the administration argues that the kind of settlement Solarz envisions is unrealistic, he and many of his colleagues say the same about the kind of military solution the rebels seek. "Virtually everybody agrees that with or without American assistance, there is virtually no way the Contras" can

"overthrow the Sandinistas," he says. In truth, no one knows one way or the other what chances the rebels have of military success. An insurgency of these proportions against an indigenous Communist government is without precedent. Rebel supporters sometimes talk of the model provided by the various anti-Communist rebellions in Eastern Europe, all of which might have succeeded but for the use of Soviet forces. But each of those rebellions was energized and unified by nationalist sentiment aroused against foreign-imposed rule. The Sandinistas, in contrast, though they have given Cubans wide sway within their country, are nonetheless Nicaraguans who siezed power largely on their own.

On the other hand, those who argue that the rebel forces are insufficient to oust the Sandinistas are taking an unjustifiably static view. Administration supporters have pointed out that the Sandinista forces that triumphed in 1979 consisted of only one third or one fourth as many men as today's rebels have under arms (although the National Guard they defeated was also just a fraction of the size of today's Sandinista army). But this, too, misses the point. If indeed the Sandinistas had a few thousand men under arms by the time they marched into Managua in July 1979 that was only because their ranks had snow-balled in the preceding months as the tide of history seemed to be flowing

their way. Humberto Ortega, the FSLN's chief military commander, revealed in a 1980 interview in the Cuban newspaper Granma that the Sandinistas threw 150 men into their penultimate national offensive in September 1978. That was almost surely the bulk of their available forces just 10 months before they siezed power. Yet they had been in the field for seventeen years! Today's rebels have been at it for five years and have one hundred times as many men. Who is to say what strength they might or might not have in ten months, or in a few years?

Another argument often iterated by members of Congress who said they shared the President's goals, but disagreed with his means was that Communism would be best resisted not by the use of force, but by eradicating its "causes." Senator Weicker argued that "it will be far less expensive to eliminate those causes which brought Communism into our hemisphere" than to aid the rebels. Representative Downey said: "You will not defeat the Communists in Central America until you defeat their reasons for being," and Representative Obey said: "If you really want to stop the Marxists in Cental America we have to have a dramatic, radical change in our whole world economic policy." The problem with this argument is that poverty is pervasive in Third World countries, among which those of Central America rank average or better on to most indices of popular wellbeing. If it is wrong to try to resist Communism in poor countries, then we will just have to consign the bulk of Third World peoples to Communism, a fate that will benefit neither us nor them.

On the other hand, it is certainly true that the wisest strategy for resisting the spread of Communism would not rely solely on military force, but would seek as well to encourage socio-economic progress and to nurture democratic institutions. Ironically, congressional liberals who opposed the administration's military policies in Central America also often

opposed his programs for socio-economic and political progress. In 1984, the Kissinger Commission recommended that continued military aid to Central America be combined with a "Marshall Plan" for the region. The Congressional Quarterly reported that year that "the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs . . . gutted the key provisions of Reagan's Central America initiative" as "the Democratic majority on the panel spurned Reagan's request for a five-year commitment of more than \$8 billion in economic aid" to the region. That same year the House voted to kill (although the Senate rescued) the National Endowment for Democracy, an innovative program designed to lend support to democratic currents and groups in undemocratic Third World countries. Its aim is to avert future Nicaraguas by nurturing a third alternative to tyrannical regimes of the right and tyrannical insurgents of the left. The bulk of the opponents of aid to the Nicaraguan rebels voted to kill the Endowment.

But if opponents of aid to the Nicaraguan rebels had a lot of weak arguments, they also had a few strong ones. They argued that Congress could not trust the administration to carry out a program of covert action in Nicaragua in a competent and level-headed fashion and with adequate consultation. On a narrow plane, these concerns grew out of the CIA's mishandling

of its relations with the Senate Intelligence Committee. At its inception, the Nicaraguan program had received surprisingly broad bi-partisan support from that committee, albeit only for the purpose of interdicting Nicaraguan assistance to the Salvadoran guerrillas. The committee's consensus crumbled in 1984 under the combined impact of the revelations about the mining of Nicaragua's harbors and the publication of a guerrilla warfare manual seeming to recommend practices that were contrary to U.S. aid and morally repugnant.

Members of the Intelligence Committee and CIA director William Casey exchanged words about whether or not the committee had been properly briefed about the mining, and in the end Casey had little choice but to apologize to committee vice chairman Moynihan who had resigned in protest. Whether or not CIA briefers had mentioned the mining to the committee, there is little doubt that when it hit the press, the news came as a surprise to most committee members, and that this violated the spirit if not the letter of the rules governing the agency's relationship to the committee. In the case of the guerrilla manual, intelligence committee members were reported to have satisfied themselves that it was the work of field personnel and had not been authorized at high levels in the agency. But this could have been reassuring only in the most limited sense. Who,

after all, was in charge?

Whether or not the mining and the manual were morally reprehensible, they were undoubtedly foolish, the manual for its tacit assumption that a democratic guerrilla force could use all of the same tactics that Communist guerrillas use, the mining because it seemed to use Nicaraguans as mere cover for an action that was essentially carried out by Americans rather than keeping the U.S. in a supporting role to an indigenous Nicaraguan revolution. It is now reported that changes have been made in the personnel running the Nicaragua program for the agency, and that these changes have enhanced congressional confidence. Perhaps they have, but past blunders have undoubtedly left a residue of uneasiness in Congress.

There was also a broader issue of trust on which opponents had a good case against the administration. Though the policy of aiding the rebels had been pursued consistently over five years, the administration kept changing its description of the policy's goals. Representative Hamilton put it: "The rationale has shifted from the need to interdict alleged arms shipments to El Salvador, to pressuring the Sandinistas to hold elections, to giving the Contras a bargaining chip in dealing with the Sandinista, to forcing the Sandinistas to restructure their government, to forcing the Sandinistas to negotiate with the

Contras." Hamilton's account was somewhat embellished, but his essential point was true. Some believed that the administration's goal all along was to overthrow the Sandinistas, but that it proclaimed less drastic goals in order to string Congress along. It is more likely, however, that the program began with the simple aim of harassing the Sandinistas and that its goals grew more ambitious as a surprisingly large number of Nicaraguans flocked to the rebels' banner.

Whatever the genesis of the policy, administration spokesmen continued to maintain that its purpose was not to overthrow the Sandinistas, but they were repeatedly though obliquely contradicted by the President, himself, who spoke of the need to make the Sandinistas "cry uncle." In 1986, the administration's case for its policy rested heavily on the argument that military pressure by the rebels would compel the Sandinistas to negotiate in good faith. But, as Representative Foley pointed out: "Bringing this [Sandinista] Government to the bargaining table is the officially stated objective of the administration, but the fact is that the administration also says that no Marxist-Leninist regime has ever willingly come to the bargaining table."

A good case could be made that the bargain that Solarz propounded--decoupling American security concerns from the

question of Nicaragua's internal dispensation--would more likely be achieved through the military pressure that the administration favored than through the acts of propitiation and demonstrations of good faith that the administration's critics recommended. But who could expect the rebels to fight just for U.S. security interests? And even if they would, this would leave unanswered the crucial question of how to enforce such an agreement. That was why the administration insisted that any negotiation must address the issue of internal Nicaraguan democratization. But if the administration's opponents were naive in believing that the Sandinistas would live up to an agreement that did not loosen their grip on power, the administration was no less naive in arguing that the Sandinistas might negotiate their power away.

By far the most important argument of the opposition was that the President's policies would lead the nation into "another Vietnam." Again and again on the floor of the House and Senate the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was invoked, and Representative Kostmayer summed up what dozens of his colleagues had said: "I know that the parallels with Vietnam are timesome and somewhat hackneyed, but I believe that they are not overstated. They are accurate and they are important."

The argument came in different variants. The most

simple-minded and mean-spirited was Speaker O'Neill's refrain that the President would not be "happy" until Americans were fighting in Nicaragua. A more sophisticated argument was Senator Kennedy's: "The President's claim that U.S. combat troops will not become involved in Nicaragua is inconsistent with his description of what is at stake." This point was sound, and it was made by several others, as well. But to what conclusion did it lead? Several speakers seemed implicitly to argue that if the President's assessment of the regional threat posed by the Sandinistas was accurate, then the use of U.S. force might be required, and since that was undesirable, the President's assessment ought to be dismissed as inaccurate. This, of course, was illogical. Moreover, it could plausibly be argued that even a dire threat assessment might justify giving aid to the rebels but not the use of U.S. forces. Direct U.S. intervention, in this view, would risk a backlash in Latin America that would offset the gains of ousting the Sandinistas.

The most compelling variant of the "another Vietnam" argument held that by backing the rebels the United States was investing its prestige in their battle and building a moral obligation to them. It was also exacerbating Nicaragua's relations with its neighbors. Even though the President might be quite sincere in his protestations that he had no intention to involve Americans

in the fighting, circumstances could easily arise in which the United States might feel impelled to rescue the rebels, or rescue Honduras, or rescue American prestige.

Although the President and most of his men, notably excepting Secretary Schultz, rejected this argument outright, their denials rang hollow. In fact, the argument was irrefutable, and the administration had only one good answer to it. That was that failure to back the rebels now would make it more likely that the United States, itself, would have to confront the Sandinistas down the line.

In reality, no one can foresee which course--aiding the rebels further or abandoning them--is more likely to lead to direct U.S. engagement. There is no denying, though, the truth of the critics' charge that Reagan's policy might lead America to direct involvement in hostilities in Central America.

Of course, it also might not. The very same critics, as recently as two years ago, were arguing just as vociferously that Reagan's military aid program for El Salvador would lead us into "another Vietnam" there. Representative Downey called the 1984 Broomfield amendment raising aid to El Salvador "the modern Gulf of Tonkin resolution," and Senator Leahy declared that year: "American troops will be used in El Salvador It's

inexorable." It seems clear now that they were quite wrong. And with the benefit of hindsight, it seems clear too that had military aid been denied El Salvador, as the majority of congressional liberals urged, the United States might well have been drawn into conflict, either to stave off a Communist victory in El Salvador, or in response to other events in the region that might have been precipitated by a second Communist triumph in Central America. (It should be added that the apparent success of U.S. policy in El Salvador owes something as well to congressional pressures that compelled the administration to press harder for human rights reforms there.)

The Nicaraguan situation, moreover, is less like Vietnam than was El Salvador. In El Salvador, like Vietnam, the United States was supporting a rather ineffective army against a growing insurgency. In Nicaragua, of course, the insurgents are "our guys." And Nicaragua is unlike Vietnam in other important ways. It is for one thing much smaller. Americans tend to think of Vietnam as a small country. It is not. Its population is larger than that of France or England. Nicaragua, in contrast is a genuinely small country, one twentieth the size of Vietnam in population. Second, in relation to Nicaragua, the logistical situations of the United States and its adversaries are reversed. In Vietnam, the United States had to reach around the

globe to supply its forces and its allies, while the Soviets and the Chinese had relatively short and easy access. In Nicaragua, we have easy reach, while the Soviets have great distances to travel.

But whatever the differences, the administration could not convincingly rule out the possibility that the United States will get involved in fighting in Nicaragua, and this was the strength of the opposition's case. Yet the opposition lost the debate, nonetheless, because it had no alternative policy to offer. The liberals' 1985 reversal on the Barnes-Hamilton Amendment was, in that sense, an epiphany. The goal of "no more Vietnams" is simply not an adequate guide for U.S. foreign policy.

What, after all, is meant by "no more Vietnams"? If it means, no more wars, then it expresses a wish widely shared, but beyond the power of any policy to assure, for a nation may always be subjected to war by others. If it means, no more losing wars, then, too, it is a wish widely shared that cannot be assured. Perhaps its meaning is best expressed in a phrase recently coined by columnist Tom Wicker. Nicaragua is like Vietnam, he wrote, because it is a "policy war." By this he apparently means a war not imposed on us by a direct attack upon our own territory or that of allies to whom we have defense obligations,

a war fought for political objectives or to stave off some danger that seems less than clear and present. In other words, a war of the type Chamberlain and Daladier averted at Munich.

In the aftermath of World War Two, Western publics concurred in the painful conclusion that the failure to take up arms against dangers that had seemed distant had led directly to the necessity to confront them on one's own shores. For some, this bitter lesson was all but cancelled by the experience of Vietnam. Not that the policy of appeasement was resurrected. But a new theory was raised by what Carl Gershman dubbed the "new foreign policy elite" of the 1970s. It held that the use of force had lost its much of its efficacy in the contemporary world. Armed with this conviction--or perhaps disarmed by it--the administration of Jimmy Carter attempted to formulate a foreign policy one of whose chief principles was the avoidance of "policy wars." But within four years, that policy had been rocked by such severe setbacks that the President felt compelled to proclaim a new "doctrine" embracing sweeping U.S. commitments to the defense of the Persian Gulf and thus threatening to involve the nation in "policy wars" larger and more dangerous than any before. ✓

But if the lessons of World War Two ought not to be quickly discarded, is there nothing to be learned from our harrowing

experience in Vietnam? Surely there is. What Vietnam taught us was that the policy of containment--the first expression of our mastery of the the lessons of World War Two--was flawed. Resisting Communist expansion in a strictly defensive way and wherever it might threaten was ultimately beyond our means. As Soviet power grew more equal with our own, we could not indeed police the whole world.

But though that was the main lesson of Vietnam, we have yet to find a satisfactory policy to supplant containment. During the Kissinger years, the United States turned to detente, hoping "to create a vested interest in mutual restraint" and thereby restrain Communist expansion with less call upon American force. It is a moot point whether detente would have worked out better had the public and Congress given fuller support to all of its components and the presidency not been paralyzed by Watergate. But from the outset the Soviets asserted their determination to continue supporting "liberation" struggles, that is, to continue to try to expand by force Communism's domain. Thus, at best, detente itself could not have been an adequate substitute for containment.

After Kissinger, President Carter tried his own, more conciliatory, version of detente, aiming, as he put it, to meet "the great challenge . . . to demonstrate to the Soviet Union

that our good will is as great as our strength until, despite all the obstacles, our two nations can achieve new attitudes and new trust." But he himself recognized after the invasion of Afghanistan that this approach severely misconstrued Soviet motivations.

With the failure of detente, in either the Kissinger or Carter variants, the United States repaired, in fact if not in doctrine, to what some called "selective containment," resisting the advance of Communism where where we feel we can, where it seems important, where we are obliged by treaty to do so. This approach has severe shortcomings. If we declare in advance the perimeter within which we are determined to resist Communism, then we virtually invites mischief everywhere else, as may have been the case in Korea in 1950. Leaving the issue vague, on the other hand, creates uncertainties not only in the minds of our adversaries but in those of our allies and ourselves, as well. Either way, selective containment means that if the Soviets or their proxies press in the right places they will meet little resistance from us.

These shortcomings may be inescapable, but there is one obvious way in which this policy can be strengthened, that is by what is now being called the "Reagan doctrine," to wit, lending support to forces seeking to oust Communist governments at the

periphery of the Soviet empire. Indeed, the "Reagan doctrine" is a natural if not inescapable concomitant to "selective containment." If global containment is impossible, as Vietnam taught us, because we cannot match our adversaries at every point of their choosing, we can compensate by choosing some points of engagement ourselves, points that seem favorable to us and where their assets can be put in question rather than ours. In the process, if a Communist government is successfully ousted anywhere, we will reap the added benefit of undercutting Communism's claim to represent the tide of history.

If we must discard containment's ambition to resist everywhere, then we must also discard its constraint of resisting only defensively. When the policy of containment was first formulated, some conservatives, notably James Burnham, protested against its purely defensive approach. But then, the Soviet empire rested entirely in Eastern Europe, and to seek to "roll it back" meant to directly risk a new general war. Today, the Soviet empire stretches far from its borders and can be attacked at its fringes without similar risk.

Without the Reagan doctrine, selective containment is a very unpromising policy. And until the Soviet Union undergoes the kinds of change that would make a genuine and deep detente possible, or unless the United States wants to retreat to

fortress America, there really is no alternative to it. That was the essential truth that the Congress discovered in 1986 as it wrestled with our policy toward Nicaragua.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

July 29, 1986

Central
America

LIBYAN ACTIVITIES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Libya has attempted to subvert many countries in Latin America. The methods are numerous: funds to leftist parties, training and arms to guerrilla movements, conferences for radicals and terrorists. Libya has also run illegal activities out of its Peoples' Bureaus, gathered recruits through "friendship societies," engineered takeovers of legitimate Islamic organizations, and created its own Muslim groups and schools.

Very little has been published about these activities. However, a new Department of State report helps to bridge this information gap. Libyan Activities in the Western Hemisphere discusses Qadhafi's political, economic, and military ties with the Sandinistas, as well as his attempts to spread subversion in the Caribbean and South America.

This report also shows that Libya's goal in the region is twofold: to destabilize current governments and to foster an anti-U.S. climate. Much of the information has never before been released.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Kagan
Deputy for Policy and Public Affairs
Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

ADVANCE COPY

LIBYAN ACTIVITIES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

"My brother, given the brutal terrorist action launched by the U.S. government against the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, I wish to send sentiments and solidarity from the FSLN National Directorate and the Nicaraguan people and government."

Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua, to
Muammar Qadhafi, May 1986

"Libyan fighters, arms, and backing to the Nicaraguan people have reached them because they fight with us. They fight America on its own ground."

Muammar Qadhafi, September 1, 1984,
New York Times

"We will send arms to the rebels in Latin America, in spite of America....We are the leaders of a world revolution which combines the masses of all continents."

Muammar Qadhafi, June 11, 1986

"The trouble is that left to Libya, the Caribbean would soon become not a 'zone of peace,' a phrase that militants of the left like to raise when it suits them, but a sea of blood."

Daily Express (Trinidad),
July 14, 1986

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
"REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY": LIBYA AND NICARAGUA	2
QADHAFI HELPS GUERRILLA GROUPS	5
SUBVERTING THE CARIBBEAN...AND BEYOND	6
CONCLUSIONS	9
NOTES	11

INTRODUCTION

Muammar Qadhafi seized power in a military coup in 1969. In the succeeding years, he has attempted to foment revolution by pursuing a dual strategy of subversion of legitimate governments and support for terrorism. This dual strategy is the cornerstone of his effort to carry out the program he described in the "Green Book," Qadhafi's handbook which describes his version of an ideal society (similar in function to Mao's "Red Book"). He proposes a program of radical socialism and societal upheaval which distorts Islam in the same way that "liberation theology" distorts Christianity.

His activities in the Western Hemisphere began in the 1970s, when he arranged for Latin American extremists to come to guerrilla training camps in Libya. They intensified in 1979, when he held a conference of Latin American terrorist and guerrilla groups in Benghazi. And now they have spread through the Caribbean and into the Latin American mainland.

That this is a potentially dangerous development can be seen from current terrorist attacks against American and other targets in Europe--attacks in which Libya has had varying degrees of involvement.

"REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY": LIBYA AND NICARAGUA

Foreign policy analysts and the news media have noted Sandinista relations with the Cubans and Soviets, and Sandinista dependence on Eastern-bloc aid, arms, and advisers. However, a different yet related aspect of Sandinista policy has not received as much attention: the relationship between the Sandinistas and Libya. Libya gave the Sandinistas aid before they came to power, and now has political, economic, and military ties with the Sandinista government.

Relations between the Sandinistas and Libya result from years of carefully developed contacts between radical forces in Central America and the Middle East. In 1969, Sandinista representative Benito Escobar arranged for training in Lebanon for a contingent of 50-70 Sandinistas; several years later, other contingents of Sandinistas were sent to camps in Libya.¹

Also during the 1970s, Tomas Borge, a founder of the FSLN, became a familiar figure in both Damascus and Beirut, not only because of his trips there on behalf of the Sandinistas, but also on behalf of Fidel Castro. The wide range of contacts he amassed served him well as he prepared for the Sandinistas' own revolution.²

In 1979, Qadhafi invited the leaders of Central American guerrilla groups, including the Sandinistas, to a meeting in Benghazi during which he pledged financial and political support for their movement.³ Shortly thereafter, Borge used Libyan money to obtain arms from North Korea and Vietnam for the Sandinistas.⁴

By the time the Sandinistas came to power in mid-1979, they had developed close political relations with the Qadhafi regime.⁵ Tomas Borge and Construction Minister Moises Hassan were key figures in working with Libya. Both were instrumental in obtaining a \$100 million loan from Libya; in late 1980 Borge made an unpublicized visit to Libya to complete arrangements for the loan agreement and to discuss Libyan offers for joint agricultural ventures in Nicaragua. The Libyans made the loan in 1981, receipt of which the Sandinistas have since publicly acknowledged.⁶

On June 20, 1981, the Sandinistas had a lavish celebration in Managua marking the eleventh anniversary of Qadhafi's ouster of the United States from its air bases on Libyan territory. Junta member Sergio Ramirez stated in his speech at the public ceremony: "The ties between the Libyan people and the Nicaraguan people are not new, but were consolidated when the Sandinista Front struggled in the field of battle to win the

liberty of our homeland. The solidarity of the Libyan people, of the Libyan government and comrade Muammar Khaddafi [Qadhafi] was always patently manifest. This solidarity has been made real, has been made effective, has been made more fraternal since the triumph of our revolution." The representative of the Libyan "Peoples' Bureau" (as their embassies are called), Ibrahim Mohammed Farhat, returned these sentiments in his response, with references to Libya's "particular friendship" with Borge.⁷

Libya's support for the Sandinistas has not been purely political and economic; the Libyans have also sent arms shipments to the Sandinistas. One huge arms shipment was intercepted in Brazil during April 1983.⁸ Four Libyan planes had made a stop in Brazil for technical reasons. The crews claimed that the planes were carrying medical supplies to Colombia. The Brazilians became suspicious when the pilots could not produce cargo manifests. The planes were searched by skeptical Brazilian authorities, who found about 84 tons of arms, explosives, and other military equipment. Press reports have indicated that the planes, three of Soviet manufacture, contained: two dismantled fighter planes, wire-guided missiles, rifles, machine guns, mortars, bazookas, 90mm cannons, eight multiple rocket launchers, five tons of bombs, eight anti-aircraft guns, 600 light artillery rockets, and other unspecified crates of military equipment.⁹

The Sandinistas' initial reaction to the discovery of this arms shipment was almost as noteworthy as the shipment itself. The Nicaraguan ambassador to Brazil, Ernesto Gutierrez, stated: "It was a donation from our Libyan comrades, but I do not know what it was."¹⁰ Subsequently Rafael Solis, then Secretary of the Nicaraguan Council of State, and now FSLN delegate in the National Assembly, admitted that the arms were destined for the Sandinista army. He added it should be no surprise that the Sandinista government received arms from Libya and Soviet-bloc countries, and further emphasized that such arms supply relationships are discussed openly in Managua. Asked why the shipment was labeled "medical supplies," Solis said the Libyans would have to answer that.¹¹ Qadhafi's response was that the planes were indeed carrying arms to Nicaragua and he was sorry for any problems the incident caused for Brazilian authorities.¹²

The Sandinistas and the Qadhafi regime have expressed solidarity on numerous occasions. A resolution passed on March 18, 1986, by a Qadhafi-sponsored conference in Tripoli stated: "The conference expresses its appreciation for the steadfast stance of the Sandinista revolution in confronting the U.S. imperialist plots and declares its support and backing for the

Nicaraguan people and its revolution."¹³ Qadhafi himself said at the conference, "Brothers, we should all stand by the people of Nicaragua against the blatant and harsh threats from the United States."¹⁴

Even earlier, on September 1, 1984, Tomas Borge represented the Sandinista government at the fifteenth anniversary celebration of Qadhafi's overthrow of King Idris of Libya (Qadhafi's celebration was ignored by moderate Arab leaders--only the Vice President of Syria attended). Qadhafi, acknowledging Borge's attendance, stated: "Libyan fighters, arms, and backing to the Nicaraguan people have reached them because they fight with us. They fight America on its own ground."¹⁵

Qadhafi's reference to "fighters" can be taken literally, as there have been reports of Libyans assisting the Sandinistas in the fight against the armed democratic resistance as well as serving as advisers and pilot trainers.¹⁶ About forty Libyan advisers reportedly work in the Ministry of the Interior; their mission is to assist the political police in "interrogation techniques." They live in a Managua suburb, La Colonia las Colinas.¹⁷

Libya has also used Nicaragua to support terrorism in Latin America. Nicaragua has had the practice of issuing passports to Middle Eastern radicals, a matter of concern in light of Qadhafi's threats of terrorism against U.S. citizens around the world.

This "solidarity" works both ways. In Barricada, September 11, 1985, an "Announcement of Admission of Members to Green World Guard" stated: "Considering the international scope of the Great Revolution of September First and the role of revolutionary leader Muammar al-Qadhafi in inciting revolutionary and rebel forces worldwide to rise up and rebel...with these historic factors in mind, the revolutionary forces of the world urge those organized into revolutionary movements, worldwide revolutionary committees, and rebel forces everywhere to join the ranks of the Green World Guard."¹⁸

Economic ties between Libya and the Sandinista government continue. On January 16, 1985, the Sandinistas announced a barter trade agreement regarding Libyan oil. The amount of the agreement is \$15 million.¹⁹

The Libyans have followed up on their 1980 discussions with Borge about joint agricultural projects. The Libyan and Sandinista governments have set up a joint venture company called ANILIB (Agricultura Nicaragua Libia). Its Managua

offices are two blocks from the Libyan Culture Center. (The Culture Center, or Centro Libio, offers courses featuring the Green Book as a textbook and gives out free copies of the Green Book upon request.)

Headed by a Libyan, Sa'id Gawair, ANILIB has invested \$20 million in two projects:²⁰

Its largest current project, an agricultural complex near the military airport at Punta Huete, grows sorghum, corn, cotton, and beans and has 130 laborers on 3,700 acres. The project is on land expropriated from COSEP (Superior Council of Private Enterprise) head Enrique Bolanos and on land taken from an American.

Ten miles east of Managua, near the town of Tipitapa, is another ANILIB project, a cattle-fattening facility. It handles 50,000-60,000 head of cattle per year and has 30 workers.

Two additional projects are in the planning stage: a sugar mill with a projected Libyan investment of \$200 million, and an additional cattle-fattening facility, to be constructed in the San Miguelito area, at an estimated cost of \$36 million. As the joint venture company now exists, shares in the venture are 51% Nicaraguan and 49% Libyan.

QADHAFI HELPS GUERRILLA GROUPS

Through its "Peoples' Bureaus," Libya has provided financial support to radical leftist and guerrilla groups in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The Colombian M-19 (Movement of April 19), and at least one other guerrilla group in Colombia, have also received Libyan support.²¹ Solidarity has been publicly expressed as well. At a March 15, 1986, conference Qadhafi stated: "We are sorry to say we have received a report from the 19 April Movement in Colombia that our friend and comrade Alvaro Fayad, general commander of the 19 April Movement, was killed in a battle in the past 2 days. If this report is confirmed, and in any case, we have to stand up and salute him and we glorify him."²²

Press reports indicate that several hundred thousand dollars have been sent to the MIR (Leftist Revolutionary Movement) terrorist group.²³ Uruguayan guerrilla groups have used the Basque terrorist group ETA as their point of contact with the Libyans.

Guerrilla groups trained in Libya include M-19, Peruvian terrorists, and Alfaro Vive of Ecuador. As early as September 1983, members of Alfaro Vive traveled to Libya for military training and political indoctrination. The four-month training course included instruction in the use of bazookas, machine guns, assault rifles, patrol and ambush tactics, use of TNT and construction of detonators. A small cadre of Costa Ricans went to Libya for training in November 1985.

SUBVERTING THE CARIBBEAN...AND BEYOND

While Libya's official presence in Latin America is decreasing, other Libyan activity is on the upswing. This tide of events has caused such concern that high-level officials from Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador met in January 1986 to discuss Libyan activity in the hemisphere.²⁴

Six countries in the Western Hemisphere have Libyan "Peoples' Bureaus" (embassies): Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, and Suriname. (Of these, Panama and Suriname do not have embassies in Libya, probably for economic reasons; the other three countries do.)

Other Libyan government presence is slightly less overt. Barbados, Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, and Nicaragua all have Islamic groups created by Libya. In Barbados, it is the "Islamic Teaching Center"; in Nicaragua, the "Islamic School" and the "Islamic Center"; in Curacao and the Netherlands Antilles, the "Islamic Call Society." Under cover of "religious groups," Libya may be establishing intelligence links.

And there is a still deeper level of Libyan involvement: covert funding. In at least eight Caribbean countries, Libya is providing support to leftist movements: Antigua, the Bahamas, Dominica, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Martinique, and St. Lucia.

In Antigua, Libya has forged ties with the leftist Antigua-Caribbean Liberation Movement. Tim Hector, the movement's leader, met with Qadhafi in Libya in July 1982; his party's official newspaper, Outlet, carried a picture of his meeting with the Libyan dictator. Hector also participated in an April 1983 Libyan conference attended by 1,500 radicals from around the world.²⁵

In the Bahamas, the Vanguard Nationalist and Socialist Party has sought Libyan help to finance its election campaign.

In Dominica, Libya has financed a political movement called the "Caribbean Nation Movement." This Jamaica-based organization, founded in 1982, is run by a three-member "Leadership Council," of which Roosevelt Douglas is the head. The Libyan funds are used both for demonstrations and subversive activities.²⁶

In the spring of 1986, a Libyan official tried--apparently without success--to induce Caribbean nationalists to take violent action against U.S. interests in the region. Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of Dominica, said on March 4, 1986, that her country is a major target of Qadhafi because of its support role in the Grenada rescue mission. "Anybody who is hand in glove with the Libyan regime is not spouting ideology. He is embracing terrorism."

In the Dominican Republic, Libyans recently led a march on the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo.²⁷

The Haitian Liberation Movement also has Libyan ties. Raymond and Alex Fils-Aime, the heads of the movement, met with Libyan officials in Tripoli in March 1986 to plan strategy (the Anti-Imperialism Conference they attended will be discussed later).

Libyan contacts with the Caribbean Revolutionary Alliance of Guadeloupe, Progressive Labor Party of St. Lucia, and radical groups from Jamaica and Trinidad have also occurred.

In addition, leftist leaders from Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and the French "Departments" have been invited to Libya for "seminars" at which they are urged to undertake violent action rather than peacefully participate in the political process. Some have also received paramilitary training in Libya.

Even more recently, from March 15-18, 1986, the Libyan "International Center for Combatting Imperialism" held a conference in Tripoli, attended by about 1,000 representatives of radical and terrorist groups.²⁸ The movement was begun in Tripoli on August 28, 1981; its initial organizational meeting was held February 21, 1982. Later that same year, from June 15-18, its First Global Conference was held.²⁹

At the 1986 conference, the director of the Center, Musa Kusa, met separately with delegates from Caribbean countries to urge them to show greater militancy. Representatives of groups

from Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, and St. Lucia were among those attending, as well as M-19, Sendero Luminoso (Peru), the Liberation Front of Guyana, the Liberation Front of Martinique, and Montoneros.

A Jamaican leftist was approached by a Libyan from the "Center for International Revolution" after the conference and asked to organize a bombing attack against the U.S. Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica. The Jamaican refused to become involved.

In addition to its activity in the Caribbean, Libya is now stepping up its activity on the South American continent itself. One of its more recent activities is the clandestine purchase of arms. In late February 1986, a Libyan delegation attempted to buy arms from Brazil. The Brazilian government subsequently announced in April 1986 that it was tightening up controls on arms shipments.

In other countries, Libya has concentrated its attention on revolutionary leftist and terrorist groups.

On April 18, 1986, the leftist MOJUPO (Political Youth Movement) staged a demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires. The Libyan Peoples' Bureau provided funds to pay for newspaper advertisements and to defray other costs incurred in their anti-U.S. demonstration.

In Guyana, a Guyana Committee for Solidarity with Libya has directed an anti-U.S. demonstration. The demonstration occurred on April 19, and was led by Gerald Anthony Perreira, Secretary of the Committee, who has made frequent visits to Tripoli.

In Panama, the Revolutionary Workers' Party has received Libyan funding. The Libyan Peoples' Bureau in Panama also functions as a hub for Libyan activity in Colombia and Venezuela.

Libya is also attempting to spread its influence into Paraguay by means of ties with Humberto Dominguez Dibb, the owner of two major Paraguayan dailies, Hoy (Today) and La Tarde (The Afternoon). After the U.S. raid on Libya, Dominguez made a veiled suggestion in his papers' editorials that a mob overrun the U.S. Embassy.

There are reports that Libya has used Suriname as a point of transit for subversive activity elsewhere on the continent. Surinamese students have also studied in Libya. ³⁰

In Venezuela, the Libyan Peoples' Bureau received permission from Tripoli earlier this year to carry out terrorist attacks. Officials of the Peoples' Bureau have been known to purchase explosives as recently as May 1986. So far, however, the Libyan-Venezuelan community has not been receptive to Qadhafi's overtures. Nevertheless, Libya has had some success in establishing ties to radical opposition groups in Venezuela. A raid on a radical group in January 1986 resulted in the capture of materials linking opposition members to Libyans. Libya has also provided financial aid, political indoctrination, and insurgent/terrorist training in Libya for Venezuelan guerrillas.

Libya's support for terrorism has not stopped it from making overtures to governments in the region. In an effort to shore up Libyan relationships with Latin American governments after the U.S. raid, Qadhafi sent special envoys to Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. These envoys attempted to convince Latin American governments that the U.S. action was unjustifiable and should be condemned. A few Latin American papers assisted in this effort.

The envoys also attempted to justify Libyan involvement with terrorist groups. "What is Libya's terrorism?" asked envoy Ibrahim Abu Hassam. "All it is doing is backing all liberation movements throughout the world."³¹

CONCLUSION

Libya has attempted to subvert many countries in Latin America. The methods are many: funds to leftist parties, training and arms to guerrilla movements, conferences for radicals and terrorists. Libya has also run illegal activities out of its Peoples' Bureaus, gathered recruits through "friendship societies," engineered takeovers of legitimate Islamic organizations, and created its own Muslim groups and schools to promote its distorted version of Islam.

Libya's goal in the region is twofold: to destabilize current governments and to foster an anti-U.S. climate. Its training and supplying of armed movements serves the former purpose; its instigation and funding of anti-U.S. propaganda and demonstrations supports the latter. More recently, Libya has combined these two objectives by directing some guerrilla groups it funds to attack U.S. facilities in Latin American countries, so far without success.

Since the Benghazi conference in 1979, Qadhafi has attempted to bring together Latin American guerrilla and terrorist movements for greater unity of purpose and action. At first he utilized conferences and joint training in Libyan camps to build solidarity between groups from various countries. Later he set up centers for revolutionary activity in the countries themselves. These organizations received much of their direction from the Peoples' Bureaus in the countries themselves or their neighbors.

That Libya's reach has extended to Nicaragua, to the Caribbean, and into the South American continent is a matter of serious concern for the whole Western Hemisphere.

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