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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
19 June 1984

# The Ticking Bomb

The White House staff is agonizing over this question: What if Italian prosecutors prove Soviet complicity in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II? How should President Reagan react?

Journalist Claire Sterling, who has followed the case closely, reported the other day that State Prosecutor Antonio Albano has filed a still-secret report charging that the Bulgarian secret services recruited Mehmet Ali Agca, the would-be Turkish assassin, to kill the Pope and thereby weaken the Solidarity movement in Poland.

The prosecutor, according to the report, has recommended the indictment and trial of three Bulgarians and six Turks, including Agca, for conspiracy to kill the Pope. Judge Ilario Martella, whose investigation under Italian law has covered the same ground, will rule next month on whether a trial should go forward.

Government officials say that they have no reason to doubt the accuracy of Sterling's report.

Western experts on Soviet Bloc affairs have always assumed that the Bulgarian secret police are under the direct control of the Soviet KGB. The Italian prosecutor's report does not mention the KGB, but it implies prior Soviet knowledge and approval of the assassination attempt.

As long as Bulgarian involvement depends only on the testimony of Agca, and Soviet complicity remains speculative, the Reagan Administration faces no particular problem. But what if Sergei

Ivanov Antonov, a Bulgarian airline executive whom Agca is said to have identified as one of the secret policemen directly involved in the assassination plot, were to testify that the Bulgarians got their orders from Moscow?

If persuasive evidence of this sort were offered, it is hard to see how Reagan could avoid a harsh denunciation of the Soviet Union. It is equally hard to see how the President could then meet at the summit with Soviet leader Konstantin U. Chernenko in the near future.

The White House hopes that the problem won't arise. The Administration is trying to get arms-control talks going again, and is angling for an eventual summit. About the last thing that the Reagan team needs is for the time bomb ticking away in Rome to go off.

But if it does, should the President denounce the Russians in vintage Reagan rhetoric and accept the inevitable damage to U.S.-Soviet relations? Should he blast the Bulgarians but try to let the Russians off the hook? Or should he dump the whole blame onto the late Yuri V. Andropov, who was boss of the KGB when the attempted assassination took place, and ostentatiously pretend that the new leadership had nothing to do with it?

If events in an Italian courtroom pose the question in stark and unavoidable terms, there is no easy answer to this excruciating moral and political dilemma.

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# Overt Cutoff on Covert Aid

Now that the House of Representatives has voted to cut off funds for the Nicaraguan rebels being supported by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Reagan Administration should accept the decision and find more acceptable ways to bring about policy changes in the Sandinista government.

The House voted 241 to 177 last week to deny a \$21-million supplemental appropriation that the Administration had sought for the *contras*, as the anti-Sandinista rebels are known. Key Republican members, at the request of President Reagan, had linked aid for the *contras* to a supplemental appropriation of \$61 million in military aid for the government of El Salvador. Administration officials claim that progress in El Salvador's war is not possible unless the arms flow from Nicaragua to Salvadoran rebels is cut off by the *contras*.

But the Administration's rationale does not fit the facts. While the Sandinistas clearly provide some aid and comfort to the guerrillas in El Salvador, the Salvadoran rebels have enough arms and popular support inside their homeland to fight effectively on their own. For better or for worse, El Salvador's problems can be solved only in El Salvador, not by pursuing illusory subversives in a neighboring country.

The Administration's rationale for helping the *contras* also does not jibe with what *contra* leaders say. They say flatly that they want to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. Overthrowing governments is not the kind of activity in which the United States should be involved.

Finally, the Administration's rationale does not jibe with what the Sandinistas think the United States is up to. The Sandinistas believe that the *contras* are merely the spearhead of yet another U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua, and have used this paranoid fear to portray themselves as defenders of their homeland against *Yanqui* aggression.

The *contra* attacks also give the Sandinistas an

excuse to dismiss all dissent against the government as subversive and CIA-inspired, even when it comes from legitimate sources like the Roman Catholic Church and the independent newspaper *La Prensa*. This is especially dangerous, because even ineffective *contra* attacks could give the Sandinistas an excuse to limit free debate and campaigning before Nicaragua's elections in November.

Those elections will give Nicaraguans their first real opportunity to pass judgment on the results of the Nicaraguan revolution. The Somoza dictatorship that was overthrown in 1979 was widely detested, so few people in Nicaragua would vote for a return to the old days. But it is less clear that all Nicaraguans are happy with the Sandinistas and their Marxist experiment in governing. It is vitally important that the November elections be as open and as unfettered as possible. Reagan claims that this is what he wants, but those words would ooze cynicism if U.S. funds allowed the *contras* to interfere with the campaign or voting.

Once the *contra* money runs out, the Administration will have other, more potent, tools at its disposal to deal with the Sandinista government. The most important is financial leverage. Even if, as statistics indicate, the Nicaraguan economy is perilously weak, that is no reason to presume that the Sandinistas are immune to economic pressure. If anything, they may be especially receptive to positive economic incentives from the Administration, such as an offer to reopen U.S. markets to Nicaraguan sugar and other commodities.

During floor debate on the Administration's Central American aid package, Rep. William S. Broomfield (R-Mich.), who ushered it through the House, accused Reagan's critics of pursuing a "hypocritical, contradictory and counter-productive" policy in Central America. Broomfield's strong words were aimed in the wrong direction. They describe exactly what is wrong with the Administration's policy toward Nicaragua.

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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
19 April 1984

# Congress Roils Foreign-Policy Waters

By P. H. TERZIAN

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), no stranger to melodrama, need not fear for his reputation. His abrupt resignation as vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee in protest over the CIA's failure to keep the committee "properly" informed about its activities in Central America has made him a congressional hero of sorts. Resignations on principle are as rare as dismissals for cause in Washington. Moynihan reminds us that in politics as in boxing it may be better to go down swinging than to hang on the ropes and be beaten silly.

And yet, was it worth the trouble? Of all the foreign-policy issues that could be profitably debated on Capitol Hill, a breach of etiquette seems somehow inappropriate for a bold self-sacrifice. Even the breach is now disputed. Some senators contend that they were properly informed; others deny it. The House claims to be satisfied, the Senate complains that it was not "fully" briefed by the CIA, and Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), chairman of the committee, is annoyed that his information was not "current." Goldwater's language was suitably esoteric, the only thing left is for the Democrats to demand a special prosecutor.

Of course, congressional barons are congenitally offended, and there is little that Ronald Reagan or any President can regularly do to mollify the egos or soothe the feelings of several dozen Claghorns and Throttlebottoms. The legislative sense of self-importance is no idle mood: The Senate

does not call itself the world's greatest deliberative body for nothing.

Nor does it cavil at translating its indignation into action—and if there has ever been any routine danger to the foreign policy of the Republic, it is the prospect of congressional interference. Indeed, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the congressional role in modern times has been almost consistently baleful. Certainly its current determination to bend Central American policy to its petulant will is in character.

The separation of powers is bound to generate conflict, and the smooth workings of government will always depend on the skills and statesmanship of people in all branches. But does Congress have a creative role to play in foreign policy? Sometimes. Has it used its powers and resources to advance the national interest? Not really. It has habitually reduced foreign policy to the ingredients of partisan dispute or provincial concern, and, while keeping its responsibilities ill-defined, has grown increasingly jealous of its prerogatives.

To be sure, the wisdom of presidential government has not always been self-evident. Thirty years ago Dwight D. Eisenhower was to be congratulated for protecting White House documents from the inquiring hands of Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy. Today, as Sam Ervin used to say, "executive privilege is executive poppycock." Who can deny our luck that Franklin D. Roosevelt defied an isolationist Congress to prepare for the Axis threat and supply Britain in its hour of need?

Now, such shadowy substances as international law and Third World approbation are invoked to protest Reagan's policies in Central America and the Caribbean. Part of this is politics-as-usual: One President's sober vision is another's military vainglory. We now know that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the 1930s was obtuse, and that Secretary of State Dean Acheson was entitled to complain some years later that "what the executive brings is initiative, proposals for action; what the legislature brings is criticism, limitation, modification or veto."

Can we learn from hindsight? It seems reasonable to suppose that the Senate persists in its obtuseness, and that the popularity of certain measures, or the apparent will of Congress, may not ultimately serve the needs of the nation.

It is useful to remember that it was the Senate, not the President, that kept the United States out of the League of Nations

and passed the odious McCarran Act to restrict unwelcome immigration. The Senate response to Hitler was an affirmation of American neutrality and the Nye Committee's well-publicized incantations about "merchants of death."

Even in the bipartisan high tide of the Cold War, Congress persisted in annual scrutiny of the Bricker Amendment, which would have severely restricted the President's treaty-making powers and enjoyed the warm support of the American Bar Assn. And kicking itself in anger at the end of the Vietnam War, the Senate punished the innocent with the War Powers Resolution, thereby usurping the President's constitutional powers of military action.

Now, as the United States is challenged in its own hemisphere, it is consultation (or the lack of it) that spurs Capitol Hill to action. It should not be any surprise that the exercise of privilege awakens congressional interest: The legislature cannot conduct foreign policy, nor does the Constitution suggest that it should. What Congress is supposed to do it does in sufficient quantity.

Woodrow Wilson wrote in 1885 that Congress "can violently disturb, but it cannot often fathom, the waters of the sea in which the bigger fish of the civil service swim and feed. Its dragnet stirs without cleansing the bottom." That was true when he wrote it, and it remains true a century later.

*P. H. Terzian is an assistant editor of this page.*

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# Taking On Terrorists

Sometime soon the Reagan Administration will send to Congress a package of anti-terrorism legislation that may dispel some of the mystery about how it plans to deal with this increasingly dangerous form of warfare. What little is known so far about National Security Decision Directive 138 raises some disturbing questions.

On April 3 President Reagan signed a secret directive calling for a get-tough policy on international terrorism. According to Times staff writer Robert Toth, the directive envisions intensified intelligence-gathering efforts, including higher pay for informers and improved communication with other governments on terrorist information.

The policy also calls for the training and employment of special paramilitary teams to combat terrorists under the direct control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These teams could be used not only to fight terrorist attacks as they occur—and, when appropriate, to carry out reprisals—but also to carry out "preemptive" operations. It's the preemptive aspect that is perplexing and of concern.

Let there be no mistake: Terrorism is a dirty, appalling form of warfare that grows more dangerous each year. Overall terrorist activity has increased fourfold in a decade.

Last year alone well over 600 people died in attacks by international terrorists. Many victims were American, ranging from the 241 servicemen killed by a truck bomb in Beirut to diplomats and servicemen gunned down in foreign capitals. Innocent bystanders are often part of the carnage.

Terrorism is the largest single worry hanging over this summer's Olympics in Los Angeles.

Today's most dangerous terrorists are not hot-eyed idealists gone "round the bend," but those trained and directed by governments—Libya and Iran being the major cases in point. Other countries serve as terrorist training bases.

Civilized countries cannot let terrorists have their way. The countries must do what they can, separately and in concert, to identify terrorists, control their movements across borders, punish those who maim and murder in the name of higher politics, and lean hard on governments that help them.

Common sense tells you that if a government has solid evidence of a planned act of terrorism it must move to prevent it. But how far does the new presidential directive go in this direction? How tightly will the White House control its paramilitary forces? What form of congressional oversight will be exercised? Will preemptive action be used only to head off a specific terrorist act, or also to destroy camps or safe houses that are known (or merely believed) to be used by terrorists?

Experts on terrorism know that it is almost impossible to get reliable information from inside a terrorist organization. Yet without such evidence preemptive strikes could be made against the wrong people in the wrong places. One false move and the program could be dead, with terrorism home free.

Congress has an obligation to answer these and other questions before it agrees to start this new chapter in the battle against terrorism.

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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
16 April 1984

# Distressing Signals

President Reagan and his policy-makers are giving private signals that they remain committed to the policies that they have been following in Central America and are confident that they will be able to continue along that course once Congress cools off and comes to its collective senses. That is a most disturbing attitude.

The most disturbing element is the evidence that public support in official Washington for the peace initiative of the Contadora nations—Mexico, Venezuela, Panama and Colombia—is not matched in private. There appears to remain a paternalistic view that the Reagan Administration knows best.

"We've been winning the war in Central America but losing all our battles in Washington," a State Department official told Times reporter Doyle McManus.

But that State Department official was wrong, and so are the President and all around him who remain convinced that the United States, by sponsoring its own campaign of CIA terrorism against Nicaragua and by pouring more military aid into El Salvador, can resolve the terrible problems of Central America, let alone "win" something.

The war being waged in Nicaragua by the CIA-sponsored *contras* has no more legitimacy than the guerrilla campaign in El Salvador sponsored by the Sandinistas of Nicaragua. Both are destructive, diverting desperately needed resources from impoverished people. Both prolong violence and postpone peaceful settlement, imperiling fledgling democratic procedures—including national elections in May in El Salvador and in November in Nicaragua.

The continued flow of arms from Nicaragua to the rebels in El Salvador is cause for concern. It cannot be ignored any more than the U.S. intervention in

Nicaragua can be concealed. Both are contrary to accepted principles, for it is evident that imposition of a Marxist regime in El Salvador is the goal of the Sandinistas and overthrow of the Marxist regime in Managua is the objective of the CIA.

Despite the outcry raised in Congress last week over the CIA's mining of Nicaragua's harbors, Administration officials say that they will stick to their "game plan" in Central America. The main reason for this single-minded determination, they insist, is that their many critics in Congress and elsewhere cannot offer a better policy, a viable alternative.

But there is another course appropriate to the problem—a course respectful of the binding treaties that control relations in this hemisphere, a course supported by virtually every nation. That is the 21-point peace plan of the Contadora Group. It is a plan agreed to by the principals. Diplomats of those nations are at work drafting implementing treaties. They hope to have them ready by the end of this month. This initiative by the nations themselves contrasts with Washington's disinterest and what appears to be no more than cynical exploitation by Nicaragua itself.

The Contadora process could be given immediate impetus by the U.S. government with a unilateral renunciation of armed intervention in the affairs of Central American states. That would respect a basic element of the Contadora plan. It would challenge Nicaragua to match its commitment to democracy at home and non-intervention abroad with deeds. It would provide a respite in the fighting as a step to a cease-fire, essential to the Contadora process. And it would respect the mood evident in the votes in recent days of 281 House members and 84 senators.

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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
10 April 1984

# Betrayal by America

The single-minded determination of the Reagan Administration to impose its wishes in its own way on Nicaragua has left the United States isolated, an outlaw in the world community. The reputation of the nation is at stake, and with it Washington's influence in the free world. Worse, the policy jeopardizes the fragile structure of international law and order that has painstakingly been constructed in the 40 years since World War II.

At the heart of the controversy is President Reagan's commitment to force against Nicaragua. He has sought to justify the terrorism that he finances as necessary to frustrate the terrorism of Moscow and Havana against neighboring states. But he has failed to persuade others that there is virtue in what he has been doing. And he has allowed the terrorism to get out of control, damaging ships of several nations with no apparent forethought of the consequences. So it was no surprise that he found himself alone in the U.N. Security Council last week when the council called for an end to the mining of Nicaraguan harbors. Among those voting against the United States were China, France, Egypt, the Netherlands, Pakistan and Peru. One trusted friend and ally, Great Britain, abstained on the vote, but made clear its opposition through private channels.

Now this arrogation of power by Reagan has been extended to the World Court, with the assertion that the United States will not accept the jurisdiction of the court on matters relating to Central America for two years, lest Nicaragua convert the court into a propaganda platform. That is a terrible lesson to teach the world about the legal process, about the respect within the United States for the law and for civilized procedures.

This corruption of principle is all the more appalling because it also stands condemned by the Contadora nations, the four peacemakers of the

Americas that have again pleaded for an end to foreign intervention.

There are questions that go beyond the law. The murderous campaign on land and the harbor-mining program sponsored by the U.S. government in Nicaragua are wanton disruptions of the economy of a desperately impoverished nation. The United States has the dollars, the firepower and the resources to maintain the disruption, to defy international opprobrium, as long as it wants to, but the results need to be seen for what they are—overwhelmingly counterproductive. Fresh suffering is being imposed on a population too long brutalized. The democratic opposition finds itself under new repression—a repression justified by the Sandinista regime in the name of national security. Legitimate opposition now can be conveniently dismissed as another manifestation of the Central Intelligence Agency's campaign of terror. Censorship of La Prensa is once again heavy. The risks of rigging the November election are enhanced, but also the probability that the Sandinistas will need no tricks to win.

There is an alternative to the policy being pursued by the White House. That alternative has been spelled out by the Contadora nations and agreed to by all key states of the region. It is a plan of peace through negotiations. But the plan has received only lip service from Washington as the Administration pursues a policy clearly aimed not only at containing the Marxism of the Nicaraguan revolution but destroying it as well.

A campaign of terror is no way to persuade the Americas that there is an alternative to the blandishments of Havana's ideologues. The tyranny of Reagan's present policy and his flagrant neglect of the rule of law are a betrayal of what the United States can bring this hemisphere in leadership, in principles, in freedom.

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# Nicaragua Tightrope

The latest escalation in the Central Intelligence Agency's covert war against Nicaragua—the mining of the country's major ports—is the riskiest tactic so far in a campaign that has always been a mistake and that now is downright dangerous.

The Reagan Administration has allowed the CIA to provide financial and logistical support to anti-Sandinista guerrillas operating out of Honduras and Costa Rica for almost three years, with no substantial results. The attacks carried out by the so-called *contras* have done little to weaken the Sandinistas. If anything, the CIA's not-so-secret war has helped the most ardent revolutionaries strengthen their grip on Nicaragua. It has given the most extreme Sandinistas an excuse to crack down on internal dissent, and has increased their popular support by allowing them to pose as nationalists standing up to Yankee pressure.

The *contras* have never been a serious military threat to the Sandinista government. The Sandinistas worry about them chiefly because they believe that the guerrillas are the spearhead of a larger invasion force that will eventually try to overturn the Nicaraguan revolution—a force that they expect will include troops from the United States.

The Administration denies that it is trying to overthrow the Sandinistas, and insists that it wants only to pressure them into modifying their rigid revolutionary stance—to cease their harassment of the Roman Catholic Church, the press and rival political parties, and to stop providing aid and comfort to rebel guerrillas in El Salvador.

But mining harbors goes beyond putting pressure on a hostile government. It is a direct attack on a nation's economic lifeline. In the case of Nicaragua it is an especially harmful tactic, because the nation's economy is particularly weak and heavily dependent on exports and imports. So far none of the ships damaged by the primitive but effective magnetic mines placed in Nicaragua's ports by the *contras* were on military missions. Four, including a

Soviet ship, were trade tankers carrying commodities like oil and molasses. Another was a Dutch vessel dredging a harbor.

The most worrisome aspect of the mining tactic is the possibility that it will be construed by the Nicaraguans as an attempted blockade, which is an act of war under international law. So far the Sandinistas have shown restraint in fighting back against the *contras*. But the serious economic problems that will be caused by an effective blockade could provoke them to move against Honduras and other neighboring nations that have helped the United States support the *contras*.

A Honduran-Nicaraguan war would further complicate the Central American crisis, adding to bloodshed and making it even harder for Latin American nations to settle Central America's wars and rebellions among themselves. The presence of U.S. military personnel in Honduras also raises the specter of the United States being dragged, wittingly or unwittingly, into a regionwide conflict.

Some officials in the Reagan Administration think that it would be easy for the United States and its allies in Central America to overthrow the Sandinista government by force. They are foolishly optimistic. Certainly Nicaragua would not be another Vietnam, but it would not be another Grenada, either. All available evidence indicates that a military campaign against the Sandinistas would be bloody and prolonged. It would alienate our important friends in Latin America and cause deep political divisions in this country.

By escalating its pressure against the Sandinistas to the level of a blockade, the Reagan Administration is being needlessly provocative and increasing the chance of direct U.S. involvement in a regional war in Central America. The Administration should call off the CIA and use more subtle and, in the long run, more effective means—creative diplomacy, economic leverage and moral suasion—to deal with the Sandinistas.



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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
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# Mix-up of Strategies?

The Senate Appropriations Committee was right to reject a hurried Reagan Administration request for \$21 million in covert aid for anti-Nicaraguan rebels in Central America. It should do the same this week with another questionable request, this one for a substantial increase in military aid for El Salvador.

Why the Nicaraguan guerrillas, who are fighting the Sandinista government from bases in Honduras with assistance from the Central Intelligence Agency, suddenly need more aid was not fully explained. That, along with the Administration's decision to rush the request through Congress by amending a totally unrelated appropriations bill designed to help poor Americans pay for home heating, troubled Republicans as well as Democrats on the committee. That is why Republican Sens. Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon, Lowell P. Weicker Jr. of Connecticut and Warren B. Rudman of New Hampshire helped vote the amendment down.

Those Republicans, and the other members of the committee, should be doubly skeptical next week if the Administration follows through with its announced intention to attach an amendment to provide more than \$93 million in military aid for El Salvador to another appropriations bill designed to pay for emergency food relief for several African countries. Some Administration officials are even suggesting that they will tie covert Nicaraguan funds to that bill, too, in a second effort to ram the proposal through Congress.

The official explanation of the need for emergency aid for El Salvador's security forces is Reagan Administration concern that those forces might run low on ammunition and other supplies before that

country's March 25 presidential elections. U.S. officials have promoted the elections as a key step toward creating a stable democratic government in El Salvador, and they fear that the guerrillas fighting to overthrow the government will try to disrupt the vote by force.

But correspondents in El Salvador, as well as professional military observers, report that there is no evidence that government forces face any kind of supply crisis. Salvadoran military units are proceeding with regular field operations, and are making preparations to defend the elections in case the guerrillas renege on their pledge not to disrupt the voting. If there are local shortages of ammunition, spare parts, field rations or other supplies, they may be contrived—reflecting the historical tendency of commanding officers in all armies to stockpile supplies and underreport what they have available in hopes of getting even more.

If there were shortages, Secretary of State George P. Shultz and other Reagan Administration officials should have started warning Congress about them weeks ago. There is no question that Congress will have to debate sending more military aid to El Salvador before the end of the summer. But nobody could blame the Administration for wanting to have such controversial issues as aid for El Salvador and the rebels in Nicaragua out of the way before the presidential election campaign begins in earnest.

It is hard to shake the notion that the Administration's emergency request for military supplies for El Salvador and the Nicaraguan rebels has more to do with political strategy in the United States than with military strategy in Central America.

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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
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# Nicaragua: Let the People Judge

The Sandinistas have talked about holding elections in Nicaragua ever since 1979, when they led the popular uprising that overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza. Until this week there was little action to match the talk.

That changed on Wednesday, when the Nicaraguan Council of State, which is controlled by the Sandinistas, published the details of a proposed law setting forth rules for elections to take place next year. Under the law Nicaraguans would vote for a president, vice president and 90-member Constituent Assembly to rewrite the nation's constitution.

The proposed law is due to be approved by the Council of State within two weeks. But doubts persist that an election will be held, because some key Sandinista leaders have warned that voting will be delayed if there is any threat to Nicaragua's stability—either widespread terrorism by anti-government rebels, the so-called *contras*, or an invasion by a foreign power. That seems reasonable. The last thing that a state under siege, or one that believes that it is under siege, wants to do is tinker with its form of government.

What worries the Sandinistas about the *contras* is not the problems that they cause, but their ties to the United States. The *contras* receive barely-secret aid from the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Sandinistas fear that the CIA's covert war is a prelude to a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. Given the sad history of past U.S. interventions in that country, the Sandinista fears are rational.

Reagan Administration officials insist that they do not want to overthrow the Sandinistas, only to prod them into loosening their grip on Nicaraguan

society. They cite the movement toward elections as one indication that U.S. pressure is working. But even if the strategy has been useful to some extent, it does more harm than good.

*Contra* activity gives the most radical Sandinistas an excuse to push for repression against dissidents in the country. Rebel violence has been used to discredit the many sincere critics of the Sandinistas who remain in Nicaragua and who look to elections as a chance to offer their people a constructive alternative to the rigid revolutionary fervor of the Sandinistas. CIA involvement with the *contras* gives the Sandinistas a perfect opportunity to portray themselves as nationalist heroes defending their country against U.S. aggression. And as long as the *contra* activity continues, the Sandinista leaders who do not want elections will have a strong argument for blocking them.

The Reagan Administration should give the Sandinistas breathing room, tighten the CIA's leash on the *contras*, and watch for the next steps toward the long-promised Nicaraguan elections. Doing so would involve no risk. The rebels pose no real threat to the Sandinistas, and a new strategy would deprive the Sandinistas of their only real excuse for delaying elections.

It is important that free and open elections be held in Nicaragua as soon as possible, for they would give the people of that country a clear opportunity to judge the Sandinistas and their revolution. Allowing the people of Nicaragua to freely express their will should be foremost in the minds of all those who claim to care about Nicaragua's future—whether they sit in Managua or in Washington.

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# Horror Story

In all decency, the U.S. government should move promptly to settle the long-pending lawsuit brought against it by nine Canadian citizens who were the unknowing subjects of medical experiments 27 years ago in a Montreal hospital.

This is a horror story that came to light seven years ago, and the horror has never ended for the victims. The Central Intelligence Agency secretly funded a 25-year experiment in the control of the human mind. Involved were several medical research institutions and government hospitals in the United States and Canada.

Without their knowledge, selected patients in the Montreal hospital were given heavy doses of LSD. A member of the Canadian Parliament, David Orlikow, first learned of the experiments in newspaper accounts. His wife had entered the Montreal hospital for treatment of depression during the time of the experiments. She said that she had been given doses of hallucinogenic drugs, and, in the 27 years since, she said that she has been unable to concentrate and even now is unable to read an entire magazine article. Another victim, according to a report in the New York Times, said that the

experiments left her with no memory of the births of her four children.

The Canadian government had not shown much interest in the suit until after the case was discussed recently on a nationwide Canadian television program. The Canadian embassy in Washington then sent a note to the U.S. State Department asking the United States to give relevant documents to the attorneys for the nine Canadians. Foreign Minister Allan J. MacEachen of Canada said that he was considering an appeal to the International Court of Justice in The Hague in behalf of the subjects of the experiments. His statement was considered a move to persuade the United States to settle the suit, which was filed in federal court in Washington, seeking \$1 million for each victim.

The evidence is plain. There is no way to reconcile the CIA-sponsored medical experiments on unknowing subjects with conduct worthy of this nation. They never should have been permitted, and the U.S. government should meet its obligation to negotiate a settlement without dragging the victims through the ordeal of long and tortuous legal proceedings.

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29 December 1983

# Blunt Indictment

The deep misgivings that the Pentagon has felt from the beginning about U.S. military involvement in Lebanon shine through unmistakably in its report on the October massacre of Marines at Beirut airport. That report, prepared by a five-member commission headed by retired Adm. Robert L. J. Long, stands as yet another blunt and informed challenge to a Reagan Administration policy that, in the 15 months since its inception, has been so mercilessly hammered and confounded by events that it can now be said to have lost all focus and relevancy.

The Long Commission is unsparing in its criticisms of local Marine commanders in Beirut and higher-ups in the chain of command for failing to take better protective measures "in the light of the deteriorating political-military situation in Lebanon." But the commission also blames the Reagan Administration for its inability to respond to changing conditions in Lebanon that steadily placed the Marines in greater peril. Why there was not more vigorous action taken to defend the Marines, what policy considerations may have dictated a continuation of a low-profile stance in spite of manifestly increasing dangers—these remain among the most urgent of unanswered questions.

One of the more intriguing sections of the commission's report cites "policy decisions" for the

failure to provide effective "human intelligence" to the local Marine commander. It recommends that Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger establish "all-source intelligence support" for military commanders in high-risk areas. The suspected and really inexplicable absence of such intelligence in Lebanon is thus confirmed. What must now be explained, by Weinberger or the President, is why there were policy—meaning political—decisions not to seek out and use all intelligence resources as were available.

The Long Commission urges the Pentagon to draw up alternatives to the continued deployment of the Marines in Beirut. It implies, in other words, that the Marines should be pulled out, not least because even now it finds that security measures are inadequate "to prevent continuing significant attrition . . ."

The President this week accepted the ultimate responsibility for what befell U.S. forces in Beirut in October. The clear danger remains that the United States, if it retains its forces in Lebanon, will continue to suffer casualties, for no good purpose, even while facing the risk of deepening involvement in a country that is by no means one of its vital interests. The responsibility for that would also and inescapably be the President's. Surely the time has come for him to admit the failure of a policy, and to act to forestall further American loss.

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## Reassessing Policy on Gays

The time has come for the federal government to reassess its out-of-date policy against granting security clearances to homosexuals. The case that could have been made in the past that homosexuals might be more easily blackmailed into betraying government secrets to avoid being publicly identified has been undermined by the openness of many homosexuals and the tolerance developing in the society around them.

The injustice in the government policy was never more apparent than in the case of John W. Green, who says that he never hid his sexual preference and yet held a special clearance while managing a top-secret project at TRW Inc. until 1981. He lost

the clearance after 10 years when government investigators discovered his homosexuality during a background check on another TRW employee.

The federal government banned homosexuals from many jobs in the early 1950s. Policies have been changed—or tossed out by courts—in most areas except the military and national security. Green's case illustrates the problem with any assumptions about a person's vulnerability because of his or her sex life, no matter its orientation. It is time for the government to drop a prohibition that is no longer valid, and to evaluate potential security risks on an individual basis rather than on a stereotype that is now outdated.

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LOS ANGELES TIMES  
 1 November 1983

# Intelligence Bumble

It is clear now that it was not only the American people, their representatives in Congress and the public's eyes and ears in the news media that were kept largely uninformed about what was going on in Grenada for most of last week. The military forces that were called on to invade the tiny Caribbean island also had their share of ignorance and uncertainty to contend with.

The problem was not that information was deliberately withheld from those required to do the fighting. The problem was that the information that they were given proved incomplete and inadequate. Reagan Administration officials heatedly deny that there was any intelligence failure in the planning or execution of the Grenada operation. But the facts as they have trickled out, now that the Administration has eased its arrogant effort to control the flow of news, make nonsense of that assertion.

What the facts show is that there was a shocking absence of both basic information and timely tactical intelligence about Grenada. Given this dearth, it may have been only sheer luck that U.S. troops did not suffer significantly higher casualties than they did as they moved to secure the island.

*Item.* Apparently the troops of the initial landing force were provided with nothing better than photocopied tourist maps with which to orient themselves and locate military objectives. More complete and up-to-date maps, an essential tool of warfare, became available only when a Cuban hoard of them was captured.

*Item.* It took nearly a week for the U.S. government to figure out how many Cubans really were on Grenada. The first estimate of around 600 was very nearly doubled after a few days, whether on the basis of the opposition that was encountered or on a misreading of captured documents isn't clear. The result in any case was a quick summoning of substantial backup units to augment the U.S. forces that had already been landed. By the end of the week the Administration found itself in the embarrassing position of having to tacitly accept Havana's own claims that there were fewer than 800 Cubans on Grenada.

Not knowing for sure how many Cubans there were or how they were armed helped lead at first to an underestimation of the degree of military

opposition that was expected. In the end American casualties fortunately turned out to be relatively light, and credit must also be given the armed forces for the care that they took to avoid inflicting casualties on Grenadian civilians. The one exception came with an attack on a mental hospital that was not marked and around which some Cuban troops were active. Proper preliminary intelligence, though, would have identified the building for what it was and perhaps helped spare its inhabitants.

The paucity of sound intelligence is especially inexplicable in the light of the anxious attention that the Reagan Administration has for so long been calling to Grenada. That concern predates by far the bloody coup that last month toppled the Maurice Bishop regime. And it predates the subsequent chaotic conditions that the Administration cited, in justification for the invasion, as imperiling American lives and interests.

Months ago President Reagan himself went on television to display aerial photos of the lengthy airfield that the Cubans were building on Grenada. He attributed a sinister military purpose to that construction, and maybe he was right. But if the Administration's suspicions were deeply aroused, if the alarm bells were ringing in Washington, why weren't more intelligence resources devoted to keeping current with what was going on in Grenada? Why was there, after the invasion, such seeming confusion or surprise over the extent of Cuban involvement on the island and the military buildup that was discovered there?

U.S. intelligence services can't be everywhere, and they can't know everything. But they can be expected and certainly should be required to make a considerable effort to gather fundamental information about a place that the President has told the American people caused him deep concern. It was clearly too late to start assembling that information once the American civilians on Grenada were presumed placed in jeopardy and orders for the invasion were given.

Still, the Administration claims that there was no intelligence failure. Perhaps in the narrow sense it is right. For if no major effort was made to gather intelligence about Grenada, then plainly no subsequent failure need be acknowledged.

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25 October 1983

## Sealing Up Government

Congress will now have time to hold hearings on the broadest government attempt at censorship in our history. That is the most significant aspect of the Senate vote last week to block for six months the censorship directive that President Reagan put into effect last March without consulting Congress.

The directive would impose lifetime censorship on more than 100,000 government officials who handle sensitive information. Under the scheme, government employes with access to classified information would have to sign an agreement to submit to pre-publication review all written material that they plan to make public whether or not it contains classified material. During their government careers and for the rest of their lives they would be under the thumb of a government censor. Even fiction based on their experience in government would have to be submitted to the censor, whose orders could be enforced by court injunction.

Nothing like this has ever been attempted by a prior administration, and the censorship directive

not only violates the First Amendment rights of government officials but, more ominously, also undermines the public's right to be fully informed on matters of grave consequence to the nation.

Would it make sense for officials of a prior Administration not to be able to comment on the current situation in Lebanon without submitting their statements for approval to the Reagan Administration? The mere thought is absurd. The Reagan order, intended to guard sensitive information, is so extreme that it itself is a threat to national security because it would deprive the public of access to a broad range of views necessary for informed public debate.

The action of the Republican-controlled Senate gives Congress two opportunities: first, to examine every aspect of the censorship directive, and, second, to write into law, if necessary, a carefully defined policy that protects secrets without undermining the First Amendment. The present directive is simply unacceptable.

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# War in the Shadows

For the second time in three months the House of Representatives has voted to cut off covert U.S. aid to the rebels fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. This time the Reagan Administration should accept the rejection of its hostile policies toward Nicaragua, and try more constructive moves toward the Sandinistas.

The House first voted in July to stop the Central Intelligence Agency from helping the *contras* who want to overthrow the Sandinista regime, but the action was not followed up by the Senate, where a Republican majority is more sympathetic to the Administration than is the Democratic-controlled House. Since then the CIA's war against Nicaragua has grown larger and more aggressive. Recent reports indicate that the agency has even helped plan *contra* sea and air raids against Nicaraguan communications and oil-storage facilities.

But the latest vote cannot be ignored. By a 227-194 margin the House voted to delete aid to the *contras* from the Intelligence Authorization Act for 1984. Even if the Senate does not include a similar provision in its funding bill, the issue will have to be resolved by a joint conference committee. This time the Senate should go along with the House and stop the covert assistance, offering in its place open support to countries that feel imperiled by the Sandinistas—Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras.

Reagan Administration officials insist that the *contra* raids help cut the flow of arms to leftist guerrillas in El Salvador, but that arms flow has been negligible for some time. It looks more and more as though the Administration's real goal in Nicaragua is to overthrow the Sandinistas, an aim distasteful to the American public. It remembers, better than the CIA's secret warriors apparently do, the long-term failures caused by past U.S. covert actions in Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs and Chile. It also finds it morally reprehensible to overthrow

another government, even one that the United States rightfully judges to be misguided.

Despite their many failings, the Sandinistas still command popular support in Nicaragua. They came to power on the crest of a popular uprising against a hated dictator, Anastasio Somoza, whose family was propped up by the United States for two generations. And while the Sandinistas have alienated many of their original supporters by trying to turn Nicaragua into a rigid Marxist state—harassing the Roman Catholic Church, limiting freedom of the press, stifling political opposition and militarizing the nation far beyond its legitimate needs—they have not brutalized their people as Somoza did. So any hostile action that the United States takes against their government only generates more support for the Sandinistas by making them appear to be anti-*Yanqui* nationalists.

Whether the Reagan Administration likes it or not, the days when the United States could have its way completely in Latin America—covertly or openly—are past; this country is going to have to live with the Sandinistas. And whether the Sandinistas like it or not, they are going to have to live with the United States as the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere. That reality is the best argument for both nations trying to reach an understanding based on mutual self-interest.

But before any accommodation can be reached, the CIA's war in the shadows must end. All evidence indicates that it served its stated purpose—persuading the Sandinistas that the United States will prevent them from exporting revolution to neighboring countries. To push the covert campaign any further now—when both the Nicaraguans and this country's Latin American allies in the Contadora Group are working their way toward a diplomatic settlement to the fighting in Central America—would beg more trouble, not bring peace.