

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 4DWASHINGTON TIMES
6 June 1985

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Frank talk about dangers at our doorstep

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Forces bound by a common thread

It is often unpleasant to resurrect what many think are the unpleasant ghosts of the past. Unfortunately, that is what we do when we talk frankly about the forces of "international communism" at work in our hemisphere.

It has long been politically the safe thing to do to ridicule any mention of this alleged phenomenon. Professors and pundits have assured us for years that "international communism" as such no longer really exists — which is why it is ridiculed as a "phantom," the object of irrational phobias of extremists, know-nothings, or people living in the past.

It has been explained to us that we can no longer clinically and accurately use this loaded expression because of the Sino-Soviet split, the Yugoslav-Soviet split, the Albanian-Soviet split, and other manifestations of polycentrism.

Perhaps, indeed, communism is no longer a monolithic force subsuming all Marxist-Leninist states under the Soviet banner. Nevertheless, how can one label the presence today in Nicaragua of Cubans, Bulgarians, Libyans, Czechs, North Koreans, East Germans, Vietnam-

ese, Soviets, and Communist elements of the Palestine Liberation Organization?

If this is not some facsimile of international communism, then we are at a loss as to how to explain the common thread that binds these forces together. If we must pay our dues to the gods of polycentrism, then perhaps we might refine our terminology by calling this phenomenon "Soviet international communism," since neither Maoist, Titoist, or Albanian brands of communism are at work here.

Since we so rarely discuss the facts about international communism as such, there are a few which should be remembered in the context of our current debate on Nicaragua:

- The people do not want

communism. Never in history has a majority of a free electorate democratically chosen a Communist form of government. (There is only one exception: the minuscule state of San Marino. In the case of Chile, Mr. Allende, although a Marxist, did not run for office as a Communist with a Communist Party in tow, or with an avowedly Communist political program. Neither did he win a majority of the vote.)

- Communists have always come to power through violent takeovers. These takeovers have always involved seizure of power by a well-organized and externally assisted minority over an unorganized and unwitting majority. Such takeovers consistently entail the use of a "popular front" of Communist and non-Communist elements; the establishment of a Communist Party which uses an ideological party line to enforce internal conformity and identify and eliminate deviationists; the use of camouflage to disguise the party's true intentions and full political program; the use of propaganda and disinformation to manipulate the international media; the use of violent and ruthless methods to eliminate all organized opposition, including ethnic minorities, organized religion, non-government-controlled media and the "class enemy;" and finally, the use of gradualism in the process of eliminating opposition and implementing internal security — so that the people do not realize what is happening to them until it is too late.

- No Communist regime that has consolidated its power has ever been overthrown and replaced by a non-Communist order. (The only exception is Grenada). Every other form of government offers people the chance to retain a system of trial and error. It is easy to overthrow a Shah or a Somoza after trial has been granted and error perceived. But once communism is firmly in place, the possibility of trial and error is no more.

A vote against aid to the Freedom Fighters is a vote to consign Nicaragua to an indefinite period of no freedom of choice.

- The human cost of communism wildly exceeds most Americans' expectations.

The numbers of people murdered by Communist regimes (outside of war deaths) are approximately: low estimate, 60 million; high estimate (more accurate in light of recent scholarship), 150 million.

The greatest tide of refugees in world history flows from Communist states to non-Communist ones: today it comes from Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Indochina, East Europe, and Nicaragua. (During the entire Vietnam War there was nary a refugee fleeing from Indochina. It was not until communism triumphed that life became so unbearable that people who could withstand decades of war fled to the seas).

Communism invented the concentration camp. Millions have been imprisoned, executed, or worked and starved to death in these camps. Communist regimes will not permit enterprising Western reporters anywhere near these camps, so you don't hear about them on the evening news.

Communist regimes recognize no restraint on their absolute power.

From this they establish ideological falsehoods as the standards of right and wrong and the standards by which deviationism is measured; from this stems the systematic denial of all individual human rights.

The quality of life always deteriorates under communism: the militarization of society; the destruction of the consumer economy; the rationing of food; the deterioration of existing housing and insufficient new construction to meet population growth; the destruction of medical care through lack of medicine and medical supplies (despite all the propaganda about free universal medical care in the U.S.S.R., for example, a 900-bed hospital in Moscow gets an

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allocation of 250 hypodermic needles per year — a supply insufficient for one day in a Western hospital — with instructions on how to straighten them, clean them and de-rust them); the destruction of religion (in Russia in 1914 there were 77,000 Orthodox churches, whereas today in the entire U.S.S.R. there are only some 7,000); the destruction and political control of education and culture; the rewriting of history, and the destruction of monuments to the national heritage; and the assault on family life and parental jurisdiction over children.

• Soviet-style communism invariably means the export of terrorism, violence, and revolution to other countries. Soviet proxy states participate in an efficient division of labor in this sphere: Cubans as troops, Bulgarians and Vietnamese as arms suppliers, East Germans as secret police trainers and military advisers, etc.

Since it is Soviet and not Albanian proxies who are present on our continent today, it is not an accident that the Communist Sandinista regime is an active collaborator in this division of labor.

• The Sandinistas are Communists. As Defense Minister Ortega said: "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our revolution . . . without Sandinismo we cannot be Marxist-Leninist and Sandinismo without Marxism-Leninism cannot be revolutionary."

The identical pattern of Communist takeover methods, internal policies, and external behavior is repeating itself in Nicaragua. There can be no doubt, given the vast evidence we have accumulated, that Nicaragua is becoming another Cuba.

• Communist regimes, including the Nicaragua regime, spend vast resources on disinformation — to deceive the international media and foreign political decision-makers.

A principal goal is to disseminate false information about the nature of their own system: the principal disinformation theme of all Communist regimes is to convince others that they are not really Communist.

This is done in many ways by the Sandinistas but most prominently by the "guided tour." Countless American visitors are taken on this guided tour and see nice things and talk to "average citizens" who tell them what the regime wants them to hear.

Nobody wants to believe that he has been or can be fooled. But if Congress is to believe the testimony of constituents and reporters who base their information on the "guided tour," Congress may as well believe

everything they are told on the identical guided tours in Moscow, Havana, East Germany, North Korea or any other totalitarian state.

Congress must decide whether it will resist international communism on our continent or let it prosper. Isolationists in the Congress may base their opposition to the administration on the principle that other countries should be allowed self-determination.

Unfortunately, in Nicaragua today there can be no self-determination, because of the reality of "foreign-force determination." The foreign force is the Soviet Union and its proxies, otherwise known as the forces of international communism.

Will the Nicaraguan people be given enough assistance so that they will be able to determine their future on the basis of a balance of foreign forces, or will Congress permit an imbalance, an imbalance against democracy, an imbalance against any system of trial and error?

If Congress chooses to deny the Nicaraguan friends of democracy a chance for self-determination, it will be voting in favor of the first victory of the Soviet strategic offensive on our own continent.