

'Bomb, bomb, talk, talk': Dr. K. in Central America

by Gretchen Small

Henry Kissinger is intent, it seems, on replaying in Central America the strategy which led to the awesome failures of the Vietnam War. Then dubbed "bomb-bomb, talk-talk," these days the *New York Times* calls it a "two-track" approach: "diplomatic persuasion on the one hand, and military pressure on the other."

In Kissinger's scheme, Nicaragua will get the bombs; the "talk-talk" is for the Soviet Union—just as Southeast Asia was a pawn for Kissinger in a broader game of global negotiations with the Soviet Union—and China. A repeat of Cambodia's fate, sacrificed to Pol Pot's genocide as a final "good faith" gesture to the "China Card," now faces Central America.

Systematically, Kissingerians in the administration have waged a campaign to turn the Central American battles—launched by Kissinger's liberal depopulation friends in the Carter administration—into an East-West conflict. In the spring of 1982, then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig argued that the appropriate negotiating partner for the United States in Central America was the Soviet Union. Ripping up the unwritten accords which followed the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, it has been more quietly argued, could "bring the Soviets to the global negotiating table," where Lord Peter Carrington's long-advocated redivision of East and West spheres of influence in a "New Yalta" could be secured.

Yuri Andropov has backed the Jesuit and Social Democratic-led "guerrilla" movements as much as necessary for a "Soviet cover" to stick without undue expenditure of effort. In an April interview with the West German equivalent of *Time* magazine, *Der Spiegel*, Andropov had openly mooted a deal along the lines of "You take Nicaragua, we take Paki-

stan." "Would the United States not care what kind of government rules in Nicaragua? Nicaragua is an enormous distance from America. We have a common border with Afghanistan, and we are defending our national interests by helping Afghanistan," Andropov told his interviewer.

Kissinger, reportedly, is promising in Washington that his "pressure" strategy can deliver a dramatic peace accord for Central America—and the Middle East—in time for the 1984 U.S. presidential elections. Alongside his own "back-channels" with the Cubans—Kissinger reportedly held "secret talks" with Cuban representatives in Panama during his one-day stop in that country. Kissinger is assuring Washington that he can get the Soviets to pressure Cuba to pressure Nicaragua to stop subversion . . . and so on.

Perhaps before Reagan puts his future in Kissinger's hands, some loyal advisers manipulated classified information from the Paris peace talks on Vietnam to secure the confidence of the camps of both presidential contenders before the 1968 election. Kissinger has made his opposition to President Reagan's strategic posture clear in the past months; his "channels" with Central America and the Soviets could equally be used to blow up Central America at a critical point in the campaign—to build the "peace" movement behind the freezenik Democrats.

Contadora countered

Kissinger's "bomb-bomb/talk-talk" strategy for Central America, combined with dramatic promises of a Marshall Plan for security and economic assistance for all in the region who join his game, ignores the efforts of the Contadora Group

(Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia) to lay the groundwork for peace. The Contadora Group, given the backing of Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, and other Ibero-American nations in their efforts, argued that Ibero-America must resolve its own problems—precisely so that the area does not become another battlefield of East-West conflict.

Under Contadora's auspices, talks had begun between the Central American countries as a first step to stopping the escalation to war between Honduras and Nicaragua, and regional discussions begun on the potentialities of economic cooperation to alleviate the economic problems of Central America.

From the beginning, "New Yalta" voices argued, Contadora would fail—because the Soviets were not included in decisions in the Caribbean Basin! From the "liberal" side, the Interamerican Dialogue, a group of U.S. and Ibero-American think tankers under the leadership of Kissingerian Sol M. Linowitz, issued a report in April 1983 calling for U.S.-Soviet discussions on the Caribbean and Central America. The depopulation advocacy networks of the Nazi International and Club of Rome in Venezuela have continually argued the same point. Aristedes Calvani, a vocal leader of the wing of the ruling Christian Democratic party opposed to President Luis Herrera Campins, has attempted to undercut Venezuela's role in Contadora since its founding, arguing that the conflict is "international," not local, and requires Soviet participation in any solution.

Since Kissinger seized control of Central America policy, the possibilities of U.S. disengagement from fighting have collapsed, and are now close to nil. Overt Soviet military intervention is now on the agenda.

While Henry was in town from Oct. 10 to 17, "rebel" comando raids destroying Nicaragua's oil facilities were followed by Exxon's announcement that it will no longer rent tankers to Mexico to transport oil to Nicaragua after Lloyds of London declared that it will no longer insure them since the area is now a war-risk. Mexico, Nicaragua's sole oil supplier, began consultations with Venezuelan officials on the possibilities of Venezuela joining Mexico in assuring oil supplies to Nicaragua. Neither Venezuela nor Mexico is prepared to provide military escort for their tankers, however, and Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense (FDN), the group claiming responsibility for the previous attacks, has already broadcast warnings that Nicaragua's "Puerto Sandino is considered a military objective. No oil tanker should risk itself by stopping there."

If the point was missed, Kissinger delivered an ultimatum to the Sandinista government during his one-day visit to the country, various sources concur: the United States is prepared to crush Nicaragua, and has troops off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Nicaragua, 6,000 Honduran troops in the North, and landing strips 3 kilometers from the Nicaraguan border just waiting to go—if the Nicaraguans don't "negotiate." A few days later, the *New York Times* took care to publish "leaks" from Washington sources that the attacks on

oil installments are but the first of a "new phase" of attacks on industrial and infrastructural targets in Nicaragua.

With a touch of the surreal, Assistant Secretary Langhorne Motley had proffered "negotiations" just before the Kissinger Commission landed. Returning to Washington, Motley informed the press that while no progress had been made, his visit was "productive," and "a significant step." According to one report, Motley even stated that he had informed the Nicaraguans that some of the actions of the "contras," as they are called, could be considered "counterproductive."

"The United States can choose between peace and war," Sandinista junta head Daniel Ortega responded, announcing that the junta will now seek military assistance from foreign powers, a threat to proceed with plans to obtain MIG fighters from the Soviet Union or its satellites, a move the Sandinistas had hesitated from taking under strong pressure from other Ibero-American powers in the Contadora Group. The population is now being whipped up to "fight house to house, school for school" against "imperialist troops" who are planning to invade.

Nicaragua has committed itself to bring in significant outside military forces—from the Soviets or its satrapies like Libya. Spokesmen for the contras announced that January is their target date to establish a provisional government someplace in Nicaragua—and call in not only Condeca, the recently reconstituted

American countries, minus Costa Rica and Nicaragua, but the U.S. for military aid. Under those circumstances, the possibility of Andropov sending missiles to Nicaragua, and a replay of the Cuba Missile Crisis, cannot be ruled out.

And what for El Salvador?

The New Yalta package for Central America is not limited to "restoring democracy" in Nicaragua, as the bombings of all oil supplies is politely referred to, but Kissingerian "democracy" looms for El Salvador as well.

The Kissinger Commission reported its sudden discovery that El Salvador's military is involved in death-squad activity, a fact "admitted" to Commission members by former military man, Roberto D'Aubuisson, himself accused of attempting to win elections in early 1984 by shooting up the "centrist" Christian Democratic leadership. Secretary of State Shultz will have the reactivation of the death squads in recent weeks as a major item on his agenda when he visits El Salvador, it is now reported.

Does the sudden concern for "human rights" signal the activation of proposals for the United States to place the Salvadoran government of Maganua—its own creation—into receivership, perhaps through direct U.S. occupation "to secure the elections"? The idea that three impeccable Kissingerians might head up El Salvador policy if Washington opted for the "Japan option"—direct U.S. occupation followed by elections—was suggested in an article in the winter issue of *Foreign Policy*.