

The U.S. policy disaster looming in Central America

by Timothy Rush

“The most probable point at which a limited Soviet military operation into West Germany would occur, would be the launching of U.S. military operations in the Caribbean. Shifting our forces would give the Soviets a golden opportunity: Europe’s defenses would be at their weakest, and the Soviets could claim that they were merely responding to ‘U.S. aggression’ against a ‘friend of Moscow’ in the Caribbean. And Henry Kissinger and his friends like General Gorman [of the U.S. Southern Command] are now pushing for just such a U.S. Caribbean adventure to occur around the time of the U.S. election, or later in 1984.”

So went the warning issued by Independent Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche in a nationally televised broadcast Sept. 30. And, as the election results began pouring in, the wire services began to buzz with the story: “Soviet MiGs Headed for Nicaragua.” The *New York Post* summarized the situation in its banner headline Wednesday, Nov. 7: “Triumph and Crisis.” From that moment on, in a series of escalations and counter-escalations on both sides, the crisis grew until by the end of the following week, anonymous “senior administration officials” were being quoted in the press saying that the crisis was growing “just the way the Cuba missile crisis of 1962 developed.”

LaRouche contended that the reason the Kissinger-aligned Eastern Establishment in the United States wants the Reagan administration tracked into a disastrous Central American war is that Establishment’s “New Yalta” agreements with the Kremlin to abandon Europe, and reduce America’s area of influence to only a misery- and war-wracked Western Hemisphere. The irony is that the faction around Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, which has correctly understood the im-

portance of an enhanced U.S.-European alliance and a NATO-wide commitment to beam defense systems, is now swallowing the Central American bait offered by the Soviet Union.

The first thing to go in a major commitment of U.S. fighting forces to Central America will be America’s ability to fend off the Warsaw Pact’s pressures on Western Europe. Do Weinberger and company really want to bear the responsibility of having “won” Nicaragua—and lost Europe? The next thing to go will be America’s friends in South America. Do they want responsibility for having “won” Nicaragua—and lost all of Ibero-America?

The pace of escalation

The initial alarms about imminent arrival of Soviet MiG-24s, a plane suited to offensive as well as defensive operations, led to a “Watch on the Caribbean” for three days while a Soviet ship was unloaded in the Nicaraguan port of Corinto. It became apparent that the MiGs were not aboard—although Czech training planes and Soviet M-24 Hind helicopters may have formed part of the stepped-up flow of supplies which the Soviets timed to coincide with Reagan’s re-election.

Over the following week, State Department, Pentagon, and White House officials confirmed the following U.S. actions:

- A new round of U.S. military maneuvers in the area, including sea exercises, and land exercises in Honduras, involving some of the same units involved in the Grenada invasion of October 1983.
- A series of high-altitude reconnaissance flights with a surveillance plane known as the “Blackbird.”
- Lower-flying incursions to create patterns of sonic

booms from one side of Nicaragua to the other, mistaken in some areas for aerial bombardment.

After charges by Pentagon and White House spokesmen that there was now "sufficient evidence" that Nicaragua planned to invade its northern neighbors, Honduras and El Salvador, Pentagon spokesman Michael Burch stated that if either country requested military assistance, "we would respond with whatever assistance was necessary."

As first reports about the arrival of "offensive weapons" proved unfounded, what remained in place was a sharply scaled up mobilization of U.S. capabilities in the region. A "Grenada style" invasion is very much "in the air." Visitors to the Army War College outside Washington, D.C. reported that in the corridors of the College, "the talk was not of *if* there would be a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua, but *when*."

On the Nicaraguan side, the Sandinista leadership—in step with new Soviet supply shipments—put the entire population on maximum alert. All high school students were put through special arms training, and tanks moved into special positions ringing Managua. Defense Minister Humberto Ortega explained Nov. 13 that the regime had called the maximum alert not because they knew for certain that a U.S. invasion was imminent, but because the junta wanted to "fortify the general readiness of our people."

Soviet role

On Nov. 15, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vladimir Lomeiko asserted in a U.N. press conference that the Soviet Union did not send MiGs to Nicaragua. He charged that recent U.S. actions were "a crude violation of international law, a manifestation of a policy of state terrorism, [and] an encroachment on the rights of the Nicaraguan people."

But even Nicaragua's fanaticized leaders, prepared for the ecstasies of martyrdom by the resident Jesuits of their government, know better than to believe they are anything more than bait on a Soviet fishhook. "I don't expect that the Warsaw Pact is going to come defend us if we're invaded," said junta member Sergio Ramirez Nov. 13.

The real Soviet game is revealed by an "Open Letter" in the KGB organ, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. In its Nov. 7 issue, senior-analyst Fyodor Burlatskii, who issued the KGB's endorsement of Mondale in November 1983, outlines an agenda for U.S.-Soviet relations which demands that the United States drop the "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative as a matter of "a fundamental interest" in U.S.-Soviet relations. If the United States does so, Burlatskii writes, the Soviets will look the other way on matters of "passing and partial interest." Nicaragua, perhaps?

The implied "New Yalta" offer recalled the famous Andropov interview with *Der Spiegel* magazine in June 1983, in which he suggested that the West shouldn't mind what Russia was doing in Afghanistan—it had "the same kind of interest as the U.S. had in Nicaragua." Invasion, anyone?

While such hints of a "deal" are thrown out to feed illusions in some Washington quarters that it will be possible to

quarantine a "new Grenada" from unpleasant side consequences, the Soviets are smilingly monitoring and encouraging a massive international outbreak of repudiation of any U.S. military move. Willy Brandt, Social Democratic Party chairman in Germany and leader of the pro-Soviet wing of the Second International, returned from a tour of 11 Ibero-American nations at the beginning of November to lead giant rallies against U.S. involvement in Central America. Brandt's more-and-more overt coalition partners, the Green Party, have longstanding ties to the Sandinista regime. A U.S. invasion of Nicaragua could well be the trigger incident for an early-1985 toppling of the Kohl government by a "Red-Green" coalition, which Moscow is counting on to pull West Germany out of NATO.

As Burlatskii summed up Soviet perceptions: "Pan-Americanism has become unacceptable for U.S. allies—the West European countries and Japan."

As the Soviets also well know, direct U.S. military involvement in Central America will provoke an even more profound wave of anti-Americanism in Ibero-America, with spectacular opportunities for expansion of Soviet operations and influence.

The peace efforts of the Contadora nations, so blatantly undermined by State Department maneuverings in mid-October and the war fever kicked off by the MiGs scare, rallied sufficiently at the annual Organization of American States meeting in Brasilia Nov. 12-16 to re-open some room for negotiations. However, Mexican Foreign Minister Bernardo Sepúlveda repeated a warning that if "generalized conflict" occurred in Central America, "it would bring with it death and destruction at the expense of the security of the nations of the area, of their sovereignty, and independent life." Such a "conflagration" would "worsen inter-American relations for many years."

Is awareness of the Central American trap getting through to anti-Kissinger forces in Washington? An unnamed administration official was quoted in U.S. newspapers Nov. 11 wondering why Soviet supply shipments to Nicaragua were being made so directly and so blatantly. An Evans and Novak column of Nov. 14 revealed that the sensational first news of the possible arrival of the MiGs was leaked election night by "White House aides not responsible for National Security." The syndicated column noted that Weinberger and Casey had wanted a quieter approach. Both know this terrain—both have had run-ins before with the "Palace Guard" operations of Deaver and Baker.

The leading effort to open eyes in Washington before it is too late has fallen to the international policy forces of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, meeting in Washington D.C. Nov. 24-25 under the auspices of the Schiller Institute. The conference will stress the economic policies—based on removing the IMF from the region and re-establishing the basics of American System economics—which could stabilize the region in short order without the need for direct U.S. military involvement.