

## EIR Feature

# Who runs the Contra cocaine connection?

by Gretchen Small

“We have investigated all the accusations, in some cases exhaustively, and we have found no substantial evidence which supports them,” Justice Department spokesman Patrick Korten stated on Aug. 14, 1986, reporting the results of the Department’s investigations into charges that the Nicaraguan Contras run narcotics.

That Justice Department statement was even more sweeping than the one handed to Congress on April 16, 1986, by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Elliott Abrams, himself involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Contras. Some Contras “may have engaged in such activity,” Abrams’s release read, but “it was, insofar as we can determine, without the authorization of resistance leaders.” The “limited number of incidents” found, occurred during an 18-month period when the Contras were receiving no U.S. assistance, leaving them “particularly hard-pressed for financial support.”

No substantial evidence? The independent counsel in charge of “Irangate” investigations, Lawrence Walsh, has decided to take over investigations into the Contra narcotic connection, and has asked the Justice Department to hand over all relevant files. Included in one of those files, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal* on Jan. 9, is the testimony of a witness that bags of cocaine were seen loaded onto a Southern Air Transport cargo plane in Barranquilla, Colombia, in 1985—the *very same* plane that was shot down over Nicaragua on Oct. 5, 1986, ferrying weapons to the Contras.

The political fall out of the “narcontra” story has only begun to hit the United States. As the full story of the Contra cocaine connection comes to light, the U.S. officials complicit in Contra drug-trafficking, those who covered up that traffic, and certainly any official who defends drug-running on the grounds that the drug-trafficker in question was “financially hard-pressed” at the time, will face the wrath of an American public that has discovered the names of those who murdered its children through drugs.

From Day One of the first Reagan administration, *EIR* and Lyndon LaRouche, Jr. warned President Reagan that if he accepted the Contra policy for Central



Guatemalan Army soldiers burning marijuana seized in a jungle raid in November 1985. While ostensibly committing itself to a hemispheric War on Drugs, the United States has, through its support for the Nicaraguan Contras, ended up boosting the very drug traffickers who are flooding dope into American cities, and undermined the nationalist military that wants to fight drugs.

NSIPS/Jeffrey Steinberg

America, the administration would, sooner or later, face a “Watergate” of insurmountable proportions. The Contras are drug-runners, we warned; if they receive U.S. government support, no credibility will be left to the new administration’s War on Drugs.

President Reagan did not listen, but succumbed instead to the blackmail and pressures of the Trilateral Commission, whose leading members, including Alexander Haig and Henry Kissinger, designed the Contra policy. Unless U.S. support for the Contras is immediately halted, and those responsible prosecuted, President Reagan may yet pay the price for that error.

As the following articles show, the problem is not a few rotten apples in the Contra barrel, nor that Contra supporters hoped to turn a rough crowd into an anti-communist force, and reform them in the process. The Contra policy was designed from the beginning as part of Henry Kissinger’s stated plan to turn Central America into a new Hong Kong, a dope haven bled by endless warfare. The Contras never had anything to do with stopping the Soviet advance upon the U.S. southern flank. *The Soviets control the narcotics traffic of which the Contras are but one part*—and they have demonstrated their support for the Contras by selling them weapons, even as they arm the Sandinistas.

The Polish government sold \$6 million worth of AK-47s to the Contras, U.S. newspapers reported in 1985. In June 1986, the Panamanian military stopped a Danish ship, the *Pia Vesta*, on its way to El Salvador, where it was to deliver 250 tons of Soviet-made military equipment—sold by East German state trading companies to the NSC-directed Contra resupply line headquartered out of the Ilopango base in El Salvador.

Was this Soviet support a secret? The *Wall Street Journal* wrote on July 18, 1986: “[Lt. Col. Oliver] North’s work had risks. It is full of secrets which are very dangerous to reveal; for example, the identity of the people who are providing East bloc arms to the Contras.” Someone knew, and they knew the Contras run drugs.

The U.S. dope connection in the Caribbean is nothing new. Since the days of Teddy Roosevelt, U.S. policymaking for the Caribbean and Central America has been kept tightly in the grip of the United Fruit-centered financial interests who run the narcotics trade from the top. The Contras of today are the children of mobster Meyer Lansky’s Batista and Somoza; the Sandinistas and Castroites, the children of Lansky’s Caribbean Legion. All—Batista, Somoza, the Caribbean Legion, the Sandinistas, and mobster Robert Vesco’s protector, Fidel Castro—had their backers in the American intelligence community.

The grouping that pushed the Contra-cocaine policy upon the Reagan administration—the “bankers’ CIA”—is the same that pushed drugs in Southeast Asia, and that runs the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), State Department-funded institution which has payrollled cocaine runners as “labor” leaders throughout Ibero-America.

The networks of former CIA Assistant Deputy Director of Operations Ted Shackley are already under investigation in the Iran-Contras scandal, for running dope in Southeast Asia and Central America. Soon, the name of AIFLD founder and Contra-supporter Cord Meyer will figure in the investigations. After all, Meyer’s leading protégé in Central America, former Costa Rican President José “Pepe” Figueres, runs a chunk of the Contras, and is a leading business partner of the Havana-based drug baron Robert Vesco.