

Panama Report by Carlos Wesley

U.S. plans a 'Philippines election'

Project Democracy's CAP, Jimmy Carter, and the State Department are set to repeat what they did to Marcos.

Panama's President Manuel Solís Palma blasted Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez April 3, for his blatant interference in Panama's internal affairs. Pérez (known as CAP) and the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Governments (COFEHG), an organization set up by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, are openly attempting to manipulate the outcome of Panama's upcoming presidential elections, May 7.

During a visit to the United Nations March 31, Pérez said, "The Panamanian electoral process does not guarantee honest elections in that country." In his April 3 response to Pérez, Solís Palma said that he "regretted" the Venezuelan's remarks, adding that "the opinion that counts is that of the people participating in the elections in Panama." Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Ritter said he did not want to "guess as to Pérez's intentions." "I prefer to believe that his statement is aimed at promoting friendship between the two countries and not at further dividing Panamanian society and much less meddling in the domestic affairs of my country."

Ritter's diplomatic language notwithstanding, Pérez's "intentions" are crystal clear. After two years of unsuccessfully attempting to remove the commander of the Panama Defense Forces (PDF), Gen. Manuel Noriega, the Eastern Establishment's "Project Democracy" gang is at it again. This time they are trying to trash Panama's May 7 elections in a replay of the operation through which Ferdinand Marcos was overthrown in the Philippines

in February 1986.

As U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said March 22, unless the U.S.-backed opposition candidates win, the United States will not recognize the results. A victory by the pro-Noriega presidential candidate, Carlos Duque, will automatically constitute "fraudulent elections," proclaimed the State Department.

This is exactly how the operation to overthrow Marcos was carried out. Ferdinand Marcos did, after all, win his reelection in 1986, at which point the U.S. backed anti-Marcos mass demonstrations to protest the "fraudulent elections" and to force Marcos into exile. It is worth noting that running the campaign against Noriega from the American embassy in Panama is John Maisto, who was the case officer in charge of the operation against Marcos.

Socialist International agent Carlos Andrés Pérez is the Establishment's brown-nosed errand boy to make the "Marcos gambit" work. The irony that Pérez is the one chosen to "bring democracy" to Panama, is not lost on Panamanians. As the April 2 Panamanian newspaper *La Republica* noted, referring to Venezuela's recent riots, "In Panama we had violence sparked by Washington's corrupt money. However, the Panama Defense Forces have never committed any massacres, such as the loathesome massacre that took place in Venezuela, where the government keeps its death toll secret, but the people know that more than 1,000 people died."

While in the United States, Pérez stopped in Atlanta, where Carter's COFEHG released a report on the Panamanian elections March 28. The report poses three possible "scenarios" for the May 7 elections, none of which even remotely considers the possibility of a victory by the pro-government COLINA slate. One, that "with the prospect of a massive defeat for the pro-government slate," the elections would be canceled. Another is that "the government would commit massive fraud." The third, is that the PDF would allow the U.S.-financed Democratic Opposition Alliance (ADO) coalition to win the election, provided the opposition were willing to reach a "*modus vivendi*" to allow the PDF to control certain "areas it deemed essential for its continued institutional autonomy."

The last is only possible if Noriega leaves, the report states. Right on cue, Ricardo Arias Calderón, ADO's first vice-presidential nominee, issued a statement promising to leave the PDF untouched, "in exchange for Noriega's departure." The PDF's response was to declare itself "on alert" in the face of this obvious attempt to split its ranks.

The insanity of the Carter-Pérez operations and other "Project Democracy" attempts to sabotage Panama's elections was again made evident March 29, when U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh and Drug Enforcement Administration head John Lawn publicly praised General Noriega's PDF for its help in breaking up a \$1 billion international drug-money laundering ring. This open acknowledgement of continued cooperation between the PDF and U.S. law enforcement in the war against drugs, once more made a joke of the original pretext for the anti-Noriega campaign, the phony federal drug charges in Miami.