

Panama lawmakers' conference rallies opposition to New Yalta deal

by Carlos Wesley

The new Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Bernard Aronson, flew off on what former Central Intelligence Agency socialist Cord Meyer publicly called "an urgent mission to Moscow," to get help from Mikhail Gorbachov to rescue the administration's Panama policy. Meyer said in his syndicated column published June 23 in the *Washington Times*, that Aronson would tell the Russians that the commander of Panama's Defense Forces (PDF), Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, stands in the way of the Soviets' "improving relations with the United States."

The Bush administration's bizarre decision to seek Soviet help in crushing Panama, was prompted by the setback to its plans for an intervention into that country dealt by the "Conference of Latin American Parliamentarians for Panama." At the conference, held on June 17-18 in Panama, 150 lawmakers from 15 Ibero-American countries, representing more than 1,000 of their fellow senators and congressmen, said no to the U.S. administration's scheme to use the Organization of American States (OAS)'s "multilateral" backing to oust the Panamanian government and General Noriega, and to tear up the 1977 Panama Canal treaty.

Besides seeking Russian support, the administration enlisted the Socialist International, which complied by expelling the largest party in Panama's ruling coalition, the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), from its ranks at its centennial world congress in Stockholm on June 22. The Socialist International, a grouping of 81 socialist parties, has been brokering the condominium arrangements between the United States and the U.S.S.R., and its expulsion of the PRD once again proved the validity of the charges of "agent of the multinationals and imperialism," leveled against its longtime chairman, Willy Brandt, by former Mexican President Luis Echeverría. Brandt has long been suspected as an agent of Communist East Germany.

Supposedly the Socialist International acted against the PRD because of the annulment of Panama's recent May 7 elections. But the real reason was that the lawmakers' conference in Panama threw a wrench into the plans for the OAS to become an international policeman. The tip-off was provided by Prime Minister Michael Manley of Jamaica, who made the motion for the expulsion. Manley was the first Western leader to openly call for abolishing national sovereignty, when he proposed, on June 10, the creation of a supranational intervention force under the United Nations,

supposedly to fight drugs. The OAS intervention into Panama was to have set the precedent for the creation of the supranational army proposed by Manley.

To further this project, Henry Kissinger's right-hand man for Ibero-America, Luigi Einaudi, was officially nominated by the White House as the new U.S. ambassador to the OAS. Einaudi is an expert on military matters who has run State Department hemisphere policy since the last days of the Nixon administration and throughout the presidencies of Carter, Reagan, and Bush.

But even as Aronson was trekking to Moscow, the administration's "multilateral" intervention strategy was crumbling. The OAS itself, stung by Vice President Dan Quayle's ultimatum of June 12 in Guatemala, where he said that unless the OAS forced Noriega out, the U.S. would take measures, backed off from parroting the U.S. demands, and instead called for a dialogue among all parties in Panama. Diego Cordovez, the Ecuadorian foreign minister and one of the members of the OAS commission on Panama, charged that "foreign forces are exerting pressures so that no solution is found to the Panamanian conflict," according to reports published June 18.

U.S.-Soviet plot suspected

The shift in the OAS's stance became more marked as it became increasingly evident that as a result of the lawmakers' meeting, the hemisphere's nations are moving to back Panama against U.S. aggression. In Peru, on June 26, Prime Minister Luis Alberto Sánchez said that Panama's problems "should be solved by the Panamanians themselves." Previously, Sánchez had been in the forefront of those calling for Noriega's ouster.

The Brazilian daily *Correio Brasiliense* pointed out on June 26 that "as a result of the thaw in relations between Washington and Moscow," Panama had recovered "strategic military importance," for the U.S. as a base for intervention into all of Ibero-America. The newspaper, known to be close to Brazil's intelligence services, also reported that Panama is resisting the attempts to dismantle the militaries of Ibero-America by both the United States and the Soviet Union. "For Panama," noted *Correio Brasiliense*, "the presence of the military in politics is normal and even desired by the majority of the populace because it represents a guarantee of national defense and territorial integrity."

Support for Panama is growing throughout Ibero-America, said Brazilian Rep. Luiz Salomão, one of the leading members of the Brazilian delegation at the lawmakers' conference. In a speech to the Brazilian House of Representatives, June 20, Representative Salomão told his colleagues that he and Brazilian Sen. Aluizio Bezerra "were able to demonstrate the solidarity of the Brazilian Congress towards Panamanian sovereignty. . . . We were also able to hear the expressions of Latin American solidarity including in regard to the slander campaign against the Panamanian authorities," particularly against Noriega who has been falsely accused by the U.S. of being a "drug kingpin." One of the key aims of the lawmakers' conference was to provide information about reality in Panama, which most people lack because of U.S. media disinformation.

Documentation

The truth about the U.S.-Panama conflict

Below are excerpts from addresses delivered by Panamanian government leaders to the Conference of Latin American Parliamentarians, held in Panama on June 17-18, explaining the reasons behind the U.S. campaign to obliterate the sovereign nation of Panama.

Greetings from the Legislature

From the opening remarks of Celso Carrizo, president of the Panamanian Legislative Assembly:

. . . Your presence constitutes a statement of support for the Panamanian cause, which is also the cause of the peoples you represent. You are friends of Panama, and Panama thanks you for each and every show of solidarity that you have given in Congress, in the press, and in the streets of your countries.

We know that it has not been easy to come to Panama. I am not only referring to the changes in commitments and agendas, nor to the effort of traveling. . . . We realize that to be in solidarity with our country means overcoming much opposition. You have had to see beyond a worldwide campaign of disinformation. You have had to stand up to threats from the United States government. . . .

Therefore, the representatives of the Latin American people, from the Rio Grande to Patagonia, declare at this meeting their brotherhood in the face of threats of foreign aggression and, above all, set an example of solidarity to counteract all the efforts to isolate our countries, as is sought today with Panama. . . .

We have invited you to our country . . . because we want to provide you with first-hand information about our situa-

tion. . . . We have invited our foreign minister to explain to you in full detail the continued United States violations of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties [handing over the canal to Panama] and of the norms of international law. Our planning and political economy minister will provide you a review of the terrible economic damage that U.S. aggression has inflicted upon us. And our defense forces will provide you with the basis for judging the significance of U.S. military aggression.

We want to establish a direct relationship between you and ourselves, the legislators and national authorities who defend our nation's integrity on the front lines of the battle for national liberation. . . .

'A special moment in history'

Panamanian President Manuel Solís Palma:

. . . You have arrived in the country at a very special moment in the history of mankind and Latin America. Agreements between the superpowers have revived old concepts about conventional weapons and the strategic value of our most coveted territories. The foreign debt has significantly decreased the autonomy of many countries, and new forms of dependency affect the political and economic development of large segments of the continent's population. . . .

This nation has been the victim of the gravest abuses and outrages by the U.S. government, which has violated all the principles of relations between free and independent countries. The U.S. government is trying to impose on us a model that fits U.S. conditions and interests. It is extremely dangerous for a superpower to set itself up as a universal judge and to unilaterally determine when, where, and how human rights are to be respected or a democratic regime is to be established. . . .

This has led to a very particular supranational concept of democracy and human rights according to the definition assigned by the superpower. This definition allows the superpower, under the pretext of protecting individual and collective rights, to ignore the principles of non-intervention and self-determination without which international coexistence is utterly impossible. . . .

Since it was not to their advantage to level the charge of communism against Panama, the United States decided to invent a new monster, and turned to the charge of drug trafficking. In the international scandal they raised, they never produced any court-admissible evidence. The cornerstone of the entire discreditation campaign can be reduced to statements by false witnesses and testimonies of persons serving time on drug-trafficking and money-laundering charges in the U.S., where the reduction of prison sentences in exchange for turning government witness has become part of the U.S. penal system.

As befits a free and sovereign nation, Panama has rejected and will firmly reject the intolerable attitude of the United States. This is why we are requesting the support of all peoples. We hope our experience can warn them of what could

befall each of them in the future if we all do not unite in a strong general movement in defense of our inalienable rights.

My homeland is today under attack, economically besieged, and militarily threatened by a foreign power that is attempting to impose its nefarious plans, not only on Panama, but throughout Latin America. In view of this serious danger, we Latin Americans should unite and act without delay or hesitation. We must confront this ominous situation . . . with the common objective of having our rights as free and sovereign countries respected. . . . We must contribute to the Panamanian cause, which has become the common cause of Latin America. . . .

U.S. imperialism intentionally rehearses in Panama a form of intervention that it is beginning to apply in all of Latin America and against all of the world's oppressed peoples. But this power has not only attacked us, threatened us, interfered in our internal affairs, and limited the exercise of our rights of sovereignty, freedom, and self-determination. . . . This power has [also] insidiously and systematically initiated a large-scale disinformation campaign throughout the international community to create a false, distorted, and evil image of Panama, its people, institutions, and leaders.

Distinguished parliamentarians: The various views presented regarding Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega constitute a key aspect of the Panamanian situation.

The United States has carried out a spectacular, unique, and persistent effort to convince the world of its thesis that Panama is afflicted by a problem that can easily be solved with General Noriega's removal or resignation from the Panama Defense Forces' command post. This childish and deceptive concept is aimed at reducing the Panamanian situation to a simple personal matter and does not correspond to its complex character. . . .

General Noriega is the foremost leader of the liberation process, just as Gen. Omar Torrijos was in his time. His leadership is a factor of national cohesion and a basic element of political coordination between the military and those civilians who have pledged to carry out the Panamanian people's national struggle.

The consolidation of this leadership is essential. . . . Surrendering General Noriega would be tantamount to surrendering the movement, because it would represent the first step in dismantling the political structures that allow us to continue waging the great battle for Latin America. It is absolutely false, illusory, and deceptive that General Noriega's ouster would lead to the achievement of stability and peace.

Stability and peace depend on many factors, not on such a superficial and foolish formula. They particularly depend on foreign non-intervention . . . and on the participation of the people in the country's political leadership. I believe Latin America must acknowledge it owes a debt to Commander Noriega. This attacked, insulted, and slandered man

has withstood the onslaught, and this can only be achieved when a human being is inspired by the most profound beliefs. . . .

U.S. treaty violations reviewed

Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Eduardo Ritter:

. . . At this point in time, the Panama Canal Treaties are, to a large extent, a dead issue. The treaties have been violated so openly and with such impunity that very little of them is really being fulfilled. . . . We have pinpointed more than 1,000 violations. . . .

You must remember that the Torrijos-Carter Treaties do not contain only five or six articles. They are a decolonization plan with different stages to be fulfilled each year. . . .

The first basic part calls for the appointment of five U.S. citizens and four Panamanian citizens as members of the board of directors of a body that would operate as an association. Today, this is a lie. The United States has systematically prevented the presence of the Panamanian members at the meetings of the board of directors of the Panama Canal. . . . They have been denied U.S. visas to attend the meetings. . . . A board of directors meeting has not been held in Panama for the past year, although the treaties call for the meetings to be held in Panama. . . . Consequently, this concept of the treaties as an association between two states is a farce and a lie. . . .

Another aspect of the treaties, the direct economic benefits that Panama should derive from the canal . . . is a dead letter. Over the past 16 months, the United States has not paid a single penny to the Republic of Panama for the use of the canal. . . .

The treaties came into force 10 years ago in October 1979. The treaties stipulate that over the first 11 years of the treaties' validity—between 1979 and 1990—the canal administrator would be a U.S. citizen and the deputy administrator would be a Panamanian citizen. The treaty says this situation would be reversed on January 1, 1990. The administrator would be a Panamanian citizen and the deputy administrator would be a U.S. citizen.

However, one year ago, the U.S. government gradually began to strip the administrator of his functions, and a heretofore unknown position was invented. The board of directors' secretary will assume the administrator's functions when the administrator is a Panamanian. . . . The United States, through a U.S. Congress resolution and with the U.S. administration's complicity, has said it will not accept a Panamanian administrator. Its excuse is that there cannot be a Panamanian administrator as long as General Noriega is in Panama. . . .

I will now point out the fourth [violation]. . . . The U.S. military presence in Panama must cease on December 31, 1999. Pentagon documents clearly state the dismantling of these military installations which . . . takes 10 years to be completed. Consequently, the United States will have to

decide in the next 12 months whether this operation will be initiated. . . . At no point has the United States even expressed a willingness to begin dismantling these bases. On the contrary, the United States has increased its military presence, which also violates the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, which clearly and conclusively establish that the U.S. military presence must decrease.

Military implications of the conflict

Lt. Col. Arnulfo Castrejón, head of the U.S.-Panama Combined Commission for Military Security of the Panama Canal:

In East-West relations, he whose worldwide deployment of conventional forces holds advanced positions, will have a relative strategic advantage; that is one of the motives for which the North Americans still insist on remaining after the year 2000.

Under this United States interpretation, the United States of America maintains in Panama enclaves and military forces . . . for the purpose of intervention and control, especially over the remaining Latin American countries. . . .

The United States of America has also set up in Panama an agency and a military structure named "the Southern Command" of the U.S. Army, which has been assigned attributions which stretch from the United States border with Mexico all the way to the tip of Patagonia, in Argentina. . . .

In conformity with the study made to plan the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Panama, the process should begin by the end of 1989, at the latest. And, the U.S. Congress should begin this year to approve funds for such purposes. Therefore, any change destined to achieve the objective of remaining beyond the year 2000 could be expected to take place in the United States between 1988 and 1989. That is the reason why Panama has been under intense political pressure since the end of 1985.

Howard Air Force Base, the largest U.S. air base in the Southern Hemisphere, from the Mexican border to Patagonia, has the capability of receiving and stationing all nuclear and conventional strategic air systems. . . .

During the last two months, we were able to count an average of 30 to 35 flights daily between the United States and Panama of C-5 airplanes—the biggest transport plane the United States has, C-141 airplanes and C-180 airplanes.

We conclude from statistics and calculations of the tonnage carried in those planes' flights that their object was not only Panama, but rather they were in Panama reestablishing a resupply area for fuel, weapons, munitions, and food for [use in] intercontinental actions. . . .

Therefore, I am writing to you and informing you that the aggression would not only be against our country, but that you should be expecting any kind of act of aggression by the North Americans.

Charge U.S. aggression against Canal users

ROME—An interview with the Panamanian ambassador to Italy, Bruno Garisto, published on June 17 by the Italian weekly *Nuova Solidarietà*, was reprinted in the major dailies in Panama and has touched off considerable discussion in Panama. Following a U.S. decision to increase the tolls charged for crossing the Panama Canal, Ambassador Garisto released a second statement to the Rome-based newspaper, whose reporters are also correspondents for *EIR*:

"Panama denounced the unilateral decision taken by the U.S. government with respect to increasing the tolls paid to cross the canal. This increase, on the order of 9%, was unilaterally decided. The United States used its differences with my country, Panama, in order to put into practice a political, economic, and military strategy, at the global level. This strategy, which represents an aggression by the United States against all those who utilize the canal, is very serious and well-calculated, since

in this way the U.S.A. continues to pursue the objective of its own world economic hegemony.

"Through this strategy the United States wants to obtain the following main objectives:

- To impoverish Latin America and make it politically and economically more dependent.

- To divide and weaken the competitive trade position of the European Community and that of the other countries with respect to the United States.

- To obtain more funds to increase North American military intervention at the regional level and to flagrantly violate the Torrijos-Carter Treaty.

"All these actions are part of a strategy used by the United States against countries which benefit from the canal, with the purpose of using them in direct actions against Panama.

"Such actions moreover confirm the desire of the United States to economically subjugate the countries of the entire surrounding region through military and political pressures.

"The United States is using its differences with Panama as a strategy aimed at penalizing all the countries that use the canal."

—Antonio Gaspari

U.S. economic warfare

Gustavo R. González, Panama's Minister of Planning and Economic Policy:

. . . In 1988, United States government aggression against our economy stiffened. In its economic aspect, the aggression focused on attacking internal and external payments systems, as well as tax collections.

The freezing of the National Bank of Panama's deposits in the U.S. Federal Reserve impeded check-clearing operations in our banking system. In addition to the uncertainty created, that led to closing down the banking system for nine weeks, which provoked a substantial reduction in the monetary base.

The country's production of goods and services fell 17.1% in 1988, which translates into a 19.3% per capita reduction in product, a regression to the levels of the late 1970s. . . .

Our exports of goods and services were reduced 11.1% in 1988, as a consequence of coercive measures, especially the paralysis of our international payments system, the elimination of tariff preferences some Panamanian exports had in the U.S. market, and the disinformation campaign which discouraged tourists from coming.

On the import side, those measures endangered supplies of food, medicine, fertilizer, and inputs and strategic intermediary goods for manufacturing, which caused scarcity of basic consumer goods. Imports were cut on the order of 35.3%, with foodstuffs going down 29.2% and intermediate consumption goods (excluding petroleum) down 44.1%.

Outstanding—for their magnitude, nature, and implications for compliance with international contracts—among the measures of aggression against the public finances are the suspension of payments which were agreed in the Canal Treaty to the Republic of Panama and the prohibition of United States citizens and U.S.-owned companies operating in Panama from paying taxes, fees, dividends, or any other disbursement to the government of the Republic of Panama and its dependencies, under threat of fines and imprisonment. Through these measures, the U.S. government and U.S. companies withheld an estimated \$175.3 million from the Panamanian government. That withholding of tax revenues belonging to the Panamanian people [continued] during 1989 [and] is now estimated at more than \$250 million.

The deterioration of economic activity had a major impact on the labor market, causing open unemployment to rise from 11.8% to 16.0% in 1988. . . . There were 125,000 unemployed at mid-year last year.

In 1988, 33.6% of the Panamanian population lived in poverty. The crisis raised that to 40.2%, which implies that 151,000 are in poverty. . . . Health care deteriorated.

Given the havoc wreaked on our economy by the economic aggression against us, it is estimated that the reconstruction process will take Panamanian society at least half a decade of continuous effort and sacrifice.

Socialists promote global green fascism

by Mark Burdman

On the occasion of its 100th anniversary meetings in Stockholm, Sweden, June 20-22, the Socialist International proclaimed a "new mission" for its members: the creation of a green fascist world order. Thus, while tumultuous events in China and the Soviet bloc shook the foundations of the current world political structure, the Socialist International (SI) showed itself to be worse than irrelevant. It touted the very fascist policies, which people living under communist tyranny are now offering their lives in order to defeat.

Speakers at the anniversary celebrations endorsed the Soviet government's proposal for "international ecological security," and demanded the implementation of the genocidal "sustainable development" program put forward by the World Commission for Environment and Development, better known as the Brundtland Commission. This is headed by Gro-Harlem Brundtland, the Socialist prime minister of Norway, who was a featured speaker at the Stockholm event.

Stockholm was the site of the 1972 U.N. Global Conference on Man and the Environment, which for all intents and purposes launched the "environmentalist" movement. This history was enthusiastically invoked by Swedish Minister of the Environment Birgitta Dahl, who noted in her speech that "the new mission" of global ecogism was particularly crucial now, because 1992 will be the year of the Second Global Conference on Man and the Environment.

Dahl is the chairman of the Environment Committee of the Socialist International, which produced a 37-page manifesto entitled "Towards Environmental Security: A Strategy for Long-Term Survival." Under the cover of defending "the working class, the poor, and the underprivileged," the program uses the manipulative rallying cry of "protecting the environment" to undermine the continuing commitment of developing countries to technological progress.

In the weeks leading up to the Stockholm conference, Swedish Agriculture Minister Mats Hellstroem, writing in *Tiden*, the monthly theoretical magazine of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, identified the main challenge of the Socialist International to be to induce the countries of the South to abandon their commitment to economic growth (see