

Bush's takeover of the drug war and covert operations

On June 7, 1986, Vice President George Bush announced that the Reagan administration had officially determined, for the first time, "that the international drug trade is a national security concern" linked to terrorism.

Bush, in fact, represented himself as the nation's top warrior against drugs. On Jan. 28, 1982, President Reagan had created the South Florida Task Force, under Bush's command, to coordinate efforts to stem the tide of narcotics. On March 23, 1983, Bush was placed in charge of the National

Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS). Then, in August 1986, Bush was appointed the chief of "Operation Alliance," a cooperative arrangement with Mexico to stop the flow of drugs across the Mexico-U.S. border.

It was the classic case of the rogue cop, but much worse. There was a perverse irony in Bush's words, "that the international drug trade is a national security concern," because under George Bush, the national security apparatus of the United States not only protected, but actually *conducted*, much of the drug trade. We show here precisely how Bush systematically gathered the nation's national security apparatus under his personal control in the first few years of the Reagan-Bush administration.

'Crisis management'

To understand how Bush's "secret government" worked, we must look at the "crisis management" apparatus in the White House and the misnamed National Security Council staff — which is not a "staff" for the National Security Council

Bush seizes control of U.S. intelligence

Jan. 21, 1981: George Bush is sworn in as Vice President.

March 22, 1981: The *Washington Post* publishes a story, headlined "Bush to Head Crisis Management."

Dec. 4, 1981: President Reagan signs Executive Order 12333, which 1) puts all "foreign intelligence" operations under the National Security Council, 2) allows agencies other than the CIA to conduct "special activities" (covert operations), and 3) allows use of private "assets" for intelligence operations.

Dec. 14, 1981: National Security Decision Directive Number 3 (NSDD-3) on "Crisis Management" is signed; it makes the Vice President chairman of the Special Situation Group, responsible for crisis management.

Jan. 12, 1982: NSDD-2 formalizes National Security Council structure, with Senior Interagency Groups (SIGs) for foreign policy, defense policy, and intelligence.

Jan. 28, 1982: Bush is put in charge of South Florida Task Force on drugs.

May 14, 1982: "Crisis Pre-Planning" memorandum is issued; it establishes a standing Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) under the SSG. The SSG-CPPG, under Bush, is given control of *any* area in which a *potential* crisis could emerge, and it develops *preemptive policy options* for dealing with it.

April 10, 1982: NSDD-30, "Managing Terrorist Incidents," gives Bush control over the convening of the SSG, and creates the Terrorist Incident Working Group (TIWG) to support the SSG.

July 1982: NSDD-47 sets up a secret interagency "continuity of government" committee, made up of about 100 top government officials. Around this time, a new secret agency is created, called the Defense Mobilization Planning Systems Agency, whose officials are instructed to report to Vice President Bush.

January 1983: NSDD-55 expands the "continuity of government" program, supervised by Bush.

March 23, 1983: Bush is put in charge of the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS).

May 25, 1983: Secretary of State George Shultz objects to the role of the CPPG, chaired by Bush, and proposes a structure for Central America, in which authority would run from the President to the National Security Council to the Secretary of State, and then to the interagency groups. Shultz is overruled.

April 3, 1984: NSDD-138 elaborates TIWG as supporting Bush's Special Situation Group.

July 1985: Vice President's Terrorism Task Force created, headed by Bush.

February 1986: Vice President's Terrorism Task Force report issued, which creates the Operations Sub-Group (OSG), officially a sub-group of Bush's TIWG, and also a permanent counter-terrorism office located in the National Security Council staff, headed by Oliver North.

August 1986: Bush is appointed the chief of "Operation Alliance," an anti-drug effort conducted with Mexico.