

Haig sets out to make 'many Vietnams' in Central America

by Timothy Rush and Dennis Small

The events of late August and the first days of September blew out any semblance of containment and restraint in the deadly Central American theater of conflict. The strategic deterioration of the region is now of a startling pace and magnitude.

The basic stage-manager was U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig. Quietly but systematically building up U.S. military capabilities in the Central American region throughout the summer, Haig broke every tacit understanding of restraint that Reagan and Mexican President López Portillo had worked out during their June summit, and which had been reaffirmed at the July meeting in Nassau among the foreign ministers of Mexico, the United States, Venezuela, and Canada.

Regular and irregular U.S. military forces now stand poised for a major Vietnam-style activation across Central America, whose strategic target is to corner Cuba and threaten to pull it—forcibly—out of the Soviet camp. Haig is receiving active backup in this enterprise from right-wing military forces of Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, who have already silently stationed personnel in Central America for the purpose.

Arrayed on the battlefield against this alliance are Central America's leftist and guerrilla forces under the direction of the Socialist International, which shares Haig's eagerness for a Vietnam-style bloodbath in the region. Haig and the socialists also coincide on a policy commitment to deindustrialize and depopulate the Third World—Central America included—goals which will be significantly furthered by the descent of the area into endemic civil wars.

Haig's buildup

During the past weeks, direct American involvement in Central America has picked up markedly, if with little fanfare. Secretary of State Haig himself has been open on this point. Asked by the *Christian Science Monitor* in an Aug. 24 interview if contemplated increases in U.S. aid to El Salvador were modest, Haig responded: "Nothing is modest when you deal in these difficult times, with increased levels of economic or security-related assistance." In a press conference three

days later, Haig reaffirmed full American backing for the Duarte regime and the Salvadoran military, charged that the guerrillas had moved to a new phase of "straight terrorism," and pointedly reiterated Reagan administration lies that it is Cuba and the Soviet Union who are the only significant backers of the insurgencies in the region. Once more, Haig took the occasion to whitewash the documented role of his friends in the Socialist International in these activities.

The specifics of recent increased U.S. involvement in the area include:

- Crosschecked reports first appearing in the Mexican press confirm that the United States has begun to construct a naval base in the strategic Gulf of Fonseca, the body of water on the Pacific Coast lying at the juncture of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The first two nations, eager to stop the flow of Sandinista arms across the Gulf to their guerrilla allies, are reportedly joining with the United States in this effort.

- The dispatch of 21 Green Berets to Honduras for assignment to the Honduras-Salvador border area. This at a stroke brings the U.S. presence in Honduras to almost half the level in El Salvador which provoked such an outcry earlier in the year.

- Strong evidence of similar "special forces" deployment, smacking of Gen. Maxwell Taylor's Vietnam days, to provide leadership to the reported 6,000 anti-Sandinistas mercenaries concentrated on the Honduras-Nicaragua border. A recent issue of the recruiting magazine for international mercenaries, *Soldier of Fortune*, revealed that almost all the officers of this prospective invasion army are products of counterinsurgency training at select U.S. military bases, especially in the nearby Canal Zone.

- On Aug. 26, the Pentagon announced the dispatch of an additional four helicopters to El Salvador with an operating team of six men.

The Nicaraguan Sandinistas, for their part, are reportedly involved in a red-alert activation and buildup of their armed forces, in the full expectation of an imminent armed incursion into Nicaragua by U.S.-backed military forces, possibly including the 6,000



Salvadoran guerrillas.

Honduran-based troops. And in El Salvador, the FDR/FMLN insurrectionists have launched a renewed offensive targeting the economic infrastructure of that already hobbled country. "There is a forced-draft, supercharged move to build up both sides militarily," is the way one American directly in contact with Salvadoran security forces put it.

Mexican-French initiative

In this highly charged prewar environment, the Mexican government of José López Portillo has launched a number of "eleventh-hour" political initiatives designed to defuse the almost unavoidable military showdown, and to force the Salvadoran civil war in particular to the negotiating table. In late August, for example, López Portillo hurriedly scheduled a state visit to Guatemala for Sept. 5, in order to cool out current and potential regional tensions. These included the issue of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico and the independence of the British colony of Belize. But on Sept. 2, the two governments announced that the trip had been indefinitely "postponed," with the sudden emergence in Guatemala of three previously unknown far-right terror groups which threatened López Portillo's life if he entered Guatemalan territory.

On the morning of Aug. 28, the Mexican government launched another almost-desperate attempt to force the Central American crisis from the battlefield to the negotiating table. The Mexican and French foreign ministries issued a joint communiqué which recognized the Salvadoran guerrillas of the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and their political negotiating front, the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR), as a "representative political force" which must be included in negotiations for "profound changes in the social, political, and economic areas,"

including the "restructuring of the armed forces." While studiously avoiding a break in diplomatic relations with the Duarte Junta in El Salvador, the communiqué nonetheless gave important backing to the FDR/FMLN forces.

High-level official sources in Mexico report in private that this move—which France agreed to only under heavy Mexican pressure—was crafted to break the "socialist left" versus "Haig right" war scenario currently gripping all of Central America and which they believe threatens to unleash a "Vietnamization" process that could engulf Mexico as well. But there is also a strong possibility that the risky Mexican move will backfire, and strengthen the hand of the insurrectionary left and the Socialist International—including the Socialist Mitterrand government in France. This effect would further polarize the entirety of Latin America on "left"/"right" lines.

The *Washington Post* hoped that this would be the outcome of the Mexican move, in an Aug. 31 editorial: "The first effect of the Franco-Mexican gesture will be to encourage the guerrillas. The second effect will be to increase the sense of isolation within El Salvador's government, and its dependence on security forces over which its control is already inadequate. The ultimate effect will be to increase the desperate determination of both sides to press for a military solution, regardless of the casualties and desolation of the country."

Secretary of State Haig is also doing everything possible to urge things in that direction, working closely with regional ally Venezuela to pull together the widest possible rejection of the Mexico-France move in the rest of Latin America. On Sept. 2 the Venezuelan government announced that it had gathered eight other signatories on a formal condemnation, including those of Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, the Social Democrat-

ic government of the Dominican Republic, and the Southern Cone military dictatorships of Argentina, Paraguay, and Chile.

Haig and his Venezuelan friends are also using the Mexican-French move as an opportunity to discredit Mexico throughout the Third World as a model of stable industrial development. For example, Leopoldo Castillo, secretary of foreign relations for Venezuela's ruling COPEI party, promptly stated that Mexico "can never constitute an example of human rights," since "millions of Mexicans die of hunger, while a corrupt and decadent oligarchy of parties reigns and derives the benefit of the enormous wealth of that nation."

Ramsey Clark runs amok over El Salvador

The irony of Haig's insistence that "the Cubans and Soviets run the El Salvador terror" was highlighted by the appearance of Guillermo Ungo, president of the Salvadoran FDR, at a crowded press conference in New York City Aug. 31. Sr. Ungo's escort was Ramsey Clark, a former U.S. attorney general. Larry Birns of the Socialist-allied Council on Hemispheric Affairs introduced Ungo; the conference was held on the premises of the Methodist Church office at the United Nations Church Center.

In 1979, Clark led pro-Khomeini demonstrations down the streets of Teheran on behalf of a demented Zbigniew Brzezinski, who thought he was playing an "Islamic Card" against the Soviet Union, while Brzezinski publicly insisted the United States was continuing to support the Shah!

EIR has learned that the Clark-Ungo collaboration began at a major planning session of the Socialist International-Theology of Liberation Forces at Guanajuato, Mexico, the last weekend in July. Among those in attendance were Clark; Birns; Rep. Mickey Leland (D-Tex.) of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the House Black Caucus; Xavier Gorostiaga, the Jesuit controller of the Sandinista junta; and, in an "unofficial" capacity, Guillermo Ungo. The cover for the planning session was an analysis of "U.S.-Mexico relations" hosted by several Mexican think tanks close to the United Nations. Ungo left the meeting to go directly into consultations with Mexican Foreign Minister Castañeda and his French counterpart Claude Cheysson.

What is Washington's policy toward Cuba?

by Cynthia Rush

Secretary of State Alexander Haig's recent attacks on the Soviet Union and Cuba for fomenting El Salvador's civil war and backing the "straight terrorism" of insurgent forces is only the most vocal aspect of the approach toward Cuba that Haig and his right-wing collaborators in the Socialist International have devised. The purpose of that policy, which invokes a perverse interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, is to pull Cuba out from under the protective umbrella of the Soviet Union and force it to "negotiate" with the United States—on U.S. terms. Intoxicated with the delusion that the Soviets would actually tolerate such a move, Haig and fellow social democrat at the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick have embarked on a campaign to isolate Cuba politically and economically as a prelude to achieving their policy goals.

Some of the more publicized aspects of this campaign include Jeane Kirkpatrick's overt support for Huber Matos, the former Cuban political prisoner whose new organization Free and Democratic Cuba (CID) is being promoted as an "alternate" Cuban government. At an Aug. 22-23 rally in Miami, to which Kirkpatrick sent warm greetings, the CID's social-democratic leadership announced that its goals were "to take power in Cuba . . . through armed struggle coordinated with an uprising on the island and support from the [Cuban] exile community." The 1,500-person rally was attended by leading Christian democrats and social democrats from Central and South America.

Michael Novak, the Jesuit theologian who has influence within the Reagan administration through his association with Kirkpatrick, reported on Aug. 25 that "all that was needed was the emergence of a leader" to give the Cuban exile movement an aura of respectability, "and now he has emerged in the name of Huber Matos."

To bolster its respectable image, the CID has tried to disassociate itself from some of the better known and more extremist Cuban exile groups. Asked about "Cubans United," which recently set sail from Miami under the direction of convicted Watergate criminal Frank Sturgis to establish a "government in exile" on Guantanamo, a CID spokesman responded "they're just a crazy fringe group. . . . We have nothing to do with them."

However, the CID and the crazy fringe group appar-