

How George Bush ran all U.S. intelligence operations

by an EIR Investigative Team

The greatest barrier to George Bush's presidential aspirations no longer lies in the Republican primaries. Indeed, with Bush's sweeping victory in the "Super Tuesday" primaries on March 8, and his projected victory in the Illinois primary, it would appear that he has just about sewn up the nomination, and could comfortably set his sights on the general election.

Instead, recent developments in the legal arena may present a barrier not only to his immediate aspirations, but to his entire political career. Indictments by independent Irangate special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, and revelations in the case of the *United States vs. LaRouche et al.* (see page 61), are expected to reopen the inquiry into Bush's role in the Iran-Contra affair.

That inquiry, according to a number of intelligence sources, threatens to go far beyond the narrow scope of the Iran-Contra affair to date, to reveal Bush's role as the executive managing all U.S. intelligence operations, since no later than mid-May 1982. In other words, not only was Bush knowledgeable about the operations that were involved in the Iran-Contra caper, but he, more than likely, was responsible for the development of the policy and programs that led to it in the first place.

While pinning that responsibility on George Bush has proved difficult in the past, documents currently in the possession of *EIR* point strongly in that direction. These documents, which detail Bush's role as the head of the Special Situations Group (SSG) of the White House, provide investigators with a roadmap to the actual history of the "secret government," which has run Reagan administration policy since the fall of 1983. Once the Pandora's Box is reopened by a combination of the Walsh indictments and the LaRouche case, a fuller investigation of Bush's role, and the cover-up of that role, may prove inescapable.

Bush and the 'Old Boys'

The backdrop to Bush's role as chief executive of intelligence operations, dates to his 1980 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, according to intelligence community sources. At that time, as was widely publicized,

Bush's campaign was not only backed by a broad section of the "Old Boys" in the intelligence community, but was pretty much dependent upon that network. Among the intelligence professionals who played national roles in Bush's campaign were former CIA deputy directors such as Ray Cline and E. Henry Knoche, former top figures in the Defense Intelligence Agency such as Lt. Gen. Sam Wilson, Lt. Gen. Howard A. Aaron, and Gen. Richard Stillwell, once the CIA's chief of covert operations for the Far East. Many former intelligence officers also worked on Bush's research staff, and Robert Gambino, a former head of security for the agency, served as Bush's security director.

Moreover, while this group played a key role in the national campaign, many others worked at the state level. For example, Bruce Rounds ran Bush's New Hampshire campaign. He was a former CIA officer, as was Bush's Tennessee finance officer, Jon Thomas, his Virginia coordinator, Jack Coakley, and Harry Webster, a field coordinator in northern Florida who worked in CIA clandestine operations for 25 years.

Their commitment to Bush was no surprise. Bush was, in their eyes, the man who helped keep the CIA together after the dark days of Watergate and various congressional committee investigations. After it became clear that Ronald Reagan would be the nominee, this crowd offered to throw its support and capabilities behind Reagan if Bush became the vice presidential candidate.

There was an additional caveat to that agreement, however, according to intelligence sources. Bush, as vice president, was to be given responsibility for all intelligence community operations. That appointment assured these intelligence professionals that Bush would be in a position to rebuild the intelligence community, with the direct support of the White House, and away from the prying eyes of Congress. This, these sources say, was readily agreed to by the Reagan team.

Intelligence in the Reagan era

The focus of the "revitalized" intelligence community

was being set during a series of meetings held prior to and during the transition period, under the sponsorship of Roy Godson's National Strategy Information Center. In summary, the perspective outlined was that the United States and Soviet Union are in a constant state of warfare through surrogate means, and that this would be the primary form of warfare for the foreseeable future. Thus, the United States, in order to combat the Soviets, had to adopt covert and paramilitary operations as the primary instrument of U.S. policy.

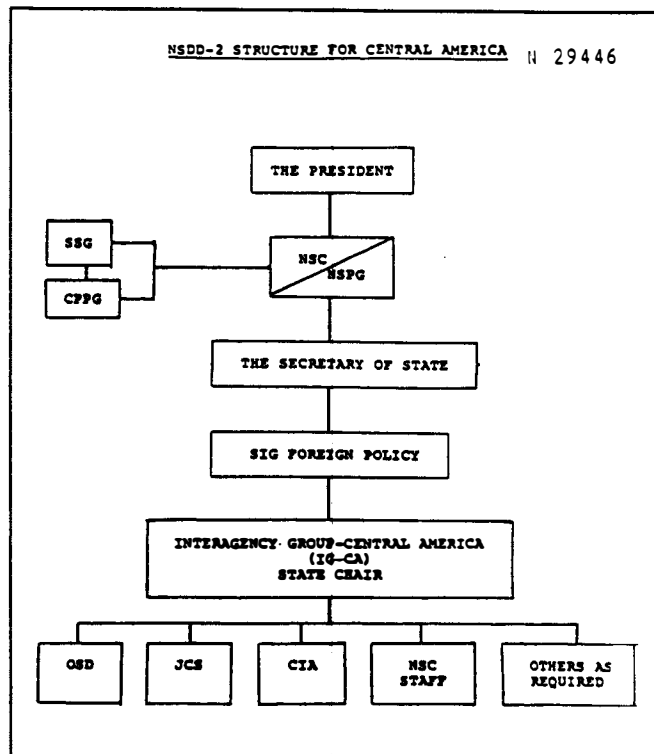
Domestically, the U.S. intelligence community had to once again be given unfettered powers to combat what they defined as their opponents. In this vein, what was essentially being called for was the reinstatement of counterintelligence operations or Cointelpro programs. The point man for this new policy was former high-ranking CIA official Theodore Shackley.

During the transition period, Shackley gave a briefing to Vice President-elect Bush and William Casey, summarizing this view and outlining an implementation plan which focused on the necessity of creating private or proprietary operations, and running these operations out of the White House.

It is important to note that not all of the people in the intelligence community who backed Bush supported the Shackley policy, nor was that approach locked in during the early days of the administration. Many of them passionately fought against that policy as bad and dangerous for the country. They hoped to use their enhanced position to develop a more comprehensive strategic and economic policy to rebuild the United States after the ravages of the Carter years. By being on the inside, they hoped to be in a position to prevent any excesses on the part of the Shackley crowd. As it turned out, despite a bitter fight, they lost.

What was accepted by all factions, was the necessity of running operations out of the White House, and the necessity to create proprietary operations to rebuild the intelligence community. To accomplish this, two unprecedented steps were taken. First, for the first time in history, the Director of Central Intelligence, William Casey, was given a cabinet-level post. As a cabinet officer, Casey was not simply responsible for coordination of intelligence and providing that information to the administration, but now had direct policy input.

The second step was the reorganization of the White House bureaucracy to allow efficient management of these operations out of the executive office. One early development, according to intelligence sources, was the hiring of Ted Shackley and his northern Virginia-based TGS Associates, as a special consultant to the White House on covert operations. The person who hired Shackley, these sources state, was a long time associate of his in the CIA, Donald Gregg, at the time special adviser on intelligence matters to National Security Adviser Richard Allen. After Allen left the White House, Gregg moved over to become the adviser on national security affairs to Vice President Bush. Gregg is currently a target of independent prosecutor Walsh's inves-



The Special Situations Group (SSG), chaired by Vice President Bush, was given a virtual blank check for global "crisis management." (Released by congressional committee investigating Iran-Contra.)

tigation.

As this was occurring, steps were taken to effect a significant "privatization" of the intelligence community. Shortly after the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, many intelligence professionals were quietly told to "go private," in preparation for the issuance of what became Executive Order 12333, which formalized the relationship between these private operations, and the official intelligence community.

That executive order permitted the hiring of private individuals and organizations for use in intelligence activities, both foreign and domestic, officially making them part of the intelligence community. An example was Peregrine International, created by two former Border Patrol and Customs agents, Gary Howard and Ron Tucker, and staffed by recently retired Special Forces operatives, among them former Staff Sergeant Fred Lewis. Lewis, Howard, and Tucker have recently emerged in the Boston LaRouche case, as key players in a systematic government harassment effort against LaRouche and his associates.

It is not insignificant that Lewis, Howard, and Tucker's activities against LaRouche began after Peregrine collapsed in 1984. These three then sold themselves to the highest bidder. Lewis ended up working for the networks that later came to light in the Iran-Contra affair. In particular, he is reported to have worked closely with former CIA operative Felix Rodriguez in counterinsurgency operations in El Salvador. Rodriguez at the time was working closely with Donald

Gregg, the national security adviser to Vice President Bush.

The Special Situations Group

The key part of the reorganization of the White House bureaucracy to facilitate these operations was the early-1982 creation of the Special Situations Group (SSG) by National Security Decision Directive 3, Crisis Management. It was chaired by Vice President Bush, and was buttressed shortly thereafter by the May 14, 1982 creation of the Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) chaired by then National Security Adviser William Clark. In the memorandum issued by Clark announcing the creation of the CPPG, he states:

“National Security Decision Directive 3, Crisis Management, establishes the Special Situation Group (SSG), chaired by the Vice President. The SSG is charged, *inter alia*, with formulating plans in anticipation of crisis. In order to facilitate this crisis pre-planning responsibility, a Standing Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) is hereby established.

“The CPPG will be chaired by the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and will consist of senior representatives of your agencies [State, Treasury, Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and CIA—ed.] and of the Office of the Vice President. The CPPG will meet periodically in the White House Situation Room and will:

- “● Identify, to the extent possible, areas where U.S. interests are at stake in which rising tensions or other circumstances suggest the possible emergence of a crisis

- “● For each potential crisis, insure that an interagency group is established and developing contingency plans. Provide guidance to the group and task it with the preparation of preemptive policy options to prevent a crisis if possible as well as the preparation of politico-military options for dealing with the eventual crisis.

- “● Present such plans and policy options to the SSG.

- “● Devise procedural measures, draft executive instruments and identify resources essential to implement decisions by the President.

- “● Provide to the SSG, as crises develop, alternative plans of action/options and coordinated implementation plans that will permit successful resolution.

- “● Provide to the SSG recommended security, cover and media plans that will enhance the likelihood of successful execution.”

“The first meeting of the CPPG is scheduled for Thursday, May 20, 1982, in the White House Situation Room from 1000-1200. Agencies are requested to provide the name of their CPPG representative to Oliver North, NSC Staff. . . .”

Thus, the vice president was practically given a blank check to develop plans, policy and instruments, for every crisis area across the globe, crises which are virtually unlimited in number. Included among these were the responsibility for dealing with terrorism and drug crises. An organizational chart attached to a memorandum from the President to the Secretary of State concerning U.S. policy in Central America further underlines the role of the SSG as *primus inter parus*

in developing such plans and policy (see accompanying diagram).

In fact, many of the instrumentalities that were later used in the Iran-contra operations, were first developed as an outgrowth of Bush's SSG responsibilities. For example, Bush's various “War on Drugs” operations, the South Florida Task Force and the National Narcotics Border Interdiction Service, were in fact intelligence operations utilized to place operatives throughout Central America and the Caribbean, as well as other areas of the world. (No surprise, therefore, that DEA agents were later called on to play a role in the Iran-Contra operations.)

Bush's various task forces for the fight against terrorism gave institutional support to the extraordinary powers utilized by Poindexter, North, Secord, and others, including the FBI's representative on these groups, Oliver “Buck” Revell. Aside from legitimate operations, this group used these powers to “neutralize” political opponents, running Cointelpro disruption and harassment programs against private individuals and organizations, including Lyndon LaRouche and his supporters, under the guise of fighting terrorism. As has emerged in the LaRouche and other cases, this group used a mixture of formal government agencies and private intelligence organizations for that purpose.

The fact that Lt. Col. Oliver North's first job at the NSC was as its representative on the CPPG, may also explain why he became such a powerful figure in the intelligence operations run out of the White House.

The role of Don Gregg

This provides the framework for explaining the much discussed role of Bush's national security adviser, Donald Gregg, in all aspects of the Iran-Contra affair. Once explained, the Gregg connection could prove to be George Bush's undoing. For example, Gregg, who was the author of the intelligence finding authorizing the expansion of the Contra program, was in fairly frequent contact with Felix Rodriguez, a key player in the Contra supply operations. Gregg also popped up as a point man in monitoring the progress of the Contra supply operation, and in fact, on at least one occasion, Sept. 18, 1984, wrote a memo informing Bush of the funding effort.

The question that has yet to be answered is, given his obviously deep involvement in the Contra supply operation, in what capacity was Gregg acting? Was he acting as Bush's representative on the CPPG, which in fact was one of his responsibilities? If so, this would explain his obviously unrestricted involvement in the matter.

Thus, institutionally, Vice President George Bush was on top of all intelligence plans and policies for the White House, including the plans and policies that later became known as the Iran-Contra affair. This circumstance provides the correct framework for finally solving the puzzle of Bush's role in that matter, and other matters that have yet to see the light of day.