

Supranational rule for Central America

by Gretchen Small

When leaders of the Socialist International, Soviet chieftain Mikhail Gorbachov, former President Jimmy Carter, and President George Bush all join forces to gang up on a region of the world, watch out! Between March 30 to April 7, a series of meetings brought together exactly that nasty combination, to work out details of a supranational apparatus to rule over Central America.

The show started on March 30, at a Consultation on the Hemispheric Agenda held at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The socialist President of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez, and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker gave keynote speeches, hailing bipartisan cooperation and dialogue as a part of "a new world . . . struggling to be born." Among those participating were ex-Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford from the United States, Rafael Caldera of Venezuela, and Daniel Oduber of Costa Rica; the foreign ministers of Mexico and Venezuela; ex-U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker, and the ubiquitous David Rockefeller.

The Carter crowd hammered away at the need for supranational government. One proposal which caused an outcry, was that an international tribunal to oversee national elections be created under the auspices of the Organization of American States, which would have the power to certify whether election results were fraudulent or valid. When a Mexican official stood up, with the backing of several other Ibero-American representatives, to challenge this idea as an elimination of sovereignty, Carter graciously offered them the right to file a "minority" resolution stating this objection.

"Minority" objections were overruled. "Latin America and the United States agreed unanimously today that Latin America will support the U.S. President's strategies on Central America and against drugs, in exchange for determined action by his government on the foreign debt problem," Carter announced in a final press conference. He was quickly seconded by Pérez.

Then came the April 2-5 visit of Gorbachov to Cuba, hailed by the U.S. media as a "stunning end of an era." Gorbachov was practically serving as Bush's emissary, according to most media coverage. Indeed, Gorbachov suggested that Central America's future be resolved at an international conference. The White House responded that a U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit could deal with such matters.

German Socialists in Washington

But before Gorbachov took off from Havana, a delegation of West Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) landed in Washington, D.C. to offer the Socialist International as the enforcers on the ground for any U.S.-Soviet deal to control the region. The Socialists, led by SPD chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel, were received with open arms. Bush administration officials galore received them, starting with the President himself. Secretary of State Baker, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills, and several prominent members of Congress, among them the Democratic Party defense team of Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), part, Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.),

Discussions ranged from the importance of Gorbachov's "reforms," to the Brady Plan for Third World debt and the need for an equivalent plan for Eastern Europe. The scope of the discussions led foreign policy experts to observe that the Bush administration "isn't waiting till the elections to start treating the SPD like it's running Germany." Vogel, bragging that he had been the first European politician to meet Defense Secretary Cheney, commented upon leaving, "In our talks here, we noticed that unlike the years before, the SPD is now taken very seriously again by the Americans."

Other members of the delegation announced they were "extremely gratified" by the changes in Washington's approach to the Soviet Union. "The *Ostpolitik* policy which was initiated by my party, by Willy Brandt, is now being acknowledged as a very fruitful policy, and the right way for the West to approach Moscow. The administration has come around to this view. . . . NATO must develop a new approach, which moves beyond the old black-and-white view that East and West are eternal enemies," delegation member Norbert Wiczorek confided to a reporter.

Concrete agreement was reached to coordinate Central American policy, it appears. The SPD offered to play a "flanking role" in the joint Bush-Gorbachov diplomacy for a "pacification" of the region, European papers reported. Wiczorek explained, "We praised the new point of view of the administration" toward Nicaragua, and "pledged to use all our influence in Central America to help achieve a democratic resolution." The delegation also promised to help arrange West German participation in the supranational police force for Central America's borders, which the United Nations is now forming.

Upon leaving April 7, Vogel declared that Baker had shown "deep interest" in the Socialist International's political contacts in the region. He hinted that the U.S. State Department will soon invite Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski, the SPD's special envoy for Central America, to Washington, to hear his report on Central America.

When Vogel flew off to Moscow the following week, it appeared that the Socialist envoy was acting as an intermediary between Bush and Gorbachov.