

# Donald Gregg: liar and CIA thug

by Joseph Brewda

Pressure is mounting against the nomination of Donald P. Gregg, former aide to Vice President George Bush, as U.S. ambassador to South Korea. Of all the Bush operatives who lied to Congress during the Iran-Contra affair and who are now slated for payoffs, Gregg was the most outrageous, and the Congress knows it. Since recent revelations in the Oliver North trial prove that Bush repeatedly lied about his involvement in Iran-Contra operations, Gregg's nomination hearings before the Senate in May could become a media extravaganza targeting the failing presidency.

From 1982 through the end of the second Reagan administration, Gregg was Bush's national security adviser, from which post he oversaw the administration's Iran-Contra policy. When the scandal broke in November 1986, Gregg played a key role in protecting Bush by lying to Congress, muscling journalists, and discrediting anyone who might implicate the vice president. Gregg's responsibilities were enormous, since Bush ran all intelligence operations during both Reagan administrations, as specified by National Security Decision Directive 3.

## Lying to the Congress

The following gives some indication of the lies that Gregg told in his May 18, 1987 testimony before the joint congressional committee investigating the Iran-Contra affair:

- On Aug. 8, 1986, Felix Rodriguez, the CIA case-officer responsible for the illegal supplying of arms to the Contras in contravention of the Boland Amendment, had one of many meetings with the Bush aide. Gregg's notes from that meeting state that "a swap of weapons for dollars was arranged to get aid for the Contras." Gregg testified that he could not explain the reference.
- On Jan. 1, 1985, Rodriguez gave Bush and Gregg a slide show on his military operations in El Salvador. Gregg testified that neither he nor Bush realized at the time that Rodriguez was involved with the Contras. Gregg claimed that he only came to this realization in December 1986, one month after the Iran-Contra affair became public.
- On May 1, 1986, Rodriguez again met with Bush and Gregg. Gregg claimed that the Contras were not discussed, although a scheduling note for the President reporting on the meeting stated that "resupply of the Contras" was one of meeting's topics.

## A career of dirty operations

A career CIA agent since 1953, Gregg was well suited for running Bush's Iran-Contra operations, as well as lying to Congress. He was closely associated for decades with various CIA operatives involved in the Iran-Contra deals, including Rodriguez.

Back in the early 1970s, Gregg was responsible for directing the CIA's drug-infested Saigon division, when Theodore G. Shackley was the CIA station chief for Vietnam. During most of the Carter years, Gregg was back in Washington, serving directly under Shackley, who was then the CIA's Deputy Director of Plans.

The speechwriter for George Bush's ill-fated 1980 presidential campaign, Shackley designed the covert operations policy for the Reagan administration. Virtually every major operative in the Iran-Contra affair worked under Shackley, either at the CIA or at his "private" businesses, including Gen. Richard Secord, Iranian go-between Albert Hakim, Thomas Clines, and Felix Rodriguez. When Rodriguez was not meeting with Gregg, or in the jungles of Central America, he worked out of Shackley's Rosslyn, Virginia offices, according to sources.

Similarly, all CIA military operations during the Reagan years were overseen by one Rudy Enders. It was Enders, for example, who oversaw the mining of Nicaragua's harbors. Enders joined the CIA in 1961, and worked under then-Miami station chief Shackley in the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion. Felix Rodriguez joined the CIA, and the Miami station, that same year. Both worked under Gregg in Vietnam.

And what about George Bush?

Back in 1974, when George Bush was U.S. ambassador and CIA representative in Beijing, Gregg was CIA station chief in South Korea. In 1975, Gregg was the CIA liaison to the Pike Committee, which was then holding hearings into CIA abuses. CIA subversion of that committee is a story in itself. Bush was CIA director during that period.

But what some say really impressed Bush was Gregg's role as the CIA representative on the Carter National Security Council, starting in 1979, where he oversaw all NSC covert operations. He continued in that position under Reagan through 1982, when he joined Bush's staff.

It was the Carter National Security Council which overthrew Anastasio Somoza and installed the Sandinistas in power in Nicaragua, and overthrew the Shah and installed the Ayatollah Khomeini in power in Iran. As director of NSC covert operations, Gregg was responsible for every slimy operation run in both Central America and Iran in the 1979-80 period of the Carter government, including the way the Iranian hostage crisis was played to ensure that the fundamentalist regime stayed in power. Gregg was one of the key government officials who bridged both administrations, and ensured that the U.S. government would continue to play the "Iranian card."