

'Bush manual' project opens new assault on Ibero-American armies

by Gretchen Small

In October, a nervous Bush administration escalated its extraordinary organizing campaign against the militaries of Ibero-America. Officers even *potentially* opposed to the U.S. project to reduce their institutions to U.S.-run national guards must be purged, U.S. operatives demanded, and the timetable of army "restructuring" escalated. More frank than is customary, the operatives warned that as long as the military remains intact in the region, so will the hated "culture of economic nationalism," and thus, also, the possibility of rebellion against the bankers' free trade dictatorship which has ruled supreme for the last 10 years.

Leading the charge was the very team, headed by U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States Luigi Einaudi, which put together the notorious anti-military "Bush manual," the book entitled *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*, which, U.S. officials have lied up and down the continent, had nothing to do with the U.S. government. This offensive could be called "Bush manual II," or perhaps soon enough, the "Bush-Clinton manual." As this team has made clear, this policy is a bipartisan one. If anything, it will only escalate if Clinton becomes President of the United States in January 1993.

'Bush manual' authors deploy

On Oct. 16, Juan Rial, one of the three editors of the book, reminded a conference at the Institute of Peruvian Studies in Lima that the goal of this project is to transform the militaries of Guatemala and the Southern Cone into U.S.-run "national guards." Rial, a Uruguayan, sounding every bit an ideologue for his country's Tupamaro "former" terrorists, argued that this goal had already been achieved in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean through two equally successful methods: U.S.-supranational intervention (Panama and El Salvador), and by communist overthrow (Cuba and Nicaragua). (See *Documentation*.)

Three days later, the other two editors of the Bush manual, Louis Goodman and Johanna Mendelson, co-chaired a three-day conference at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. in which the implications, regional and national, of the Feb. 4, 1992 uprising in Venezuela were

addressed. Here, during the opening panel, another author of *The Military and Democracy*, Brazilian "military sociologist" Alexandre Barros, identified the middle-level military officers throughout the region as the primary immediate threat to their "restructuring" project, and urged that purges of that layer therefore begin immediately. Like Rial, Barros expressed open pleasure that collapsing pay levels, prestige, and morale in the military throughout the continent have created a profound "identity crisis."

The report a week later that the United Nations "peace" commission in El Salvador has demanded that more than 110 officers in that country be purged or transferred, including high-level officers such as Defense Minister Gen. René Ponce who had leaned over backwards to satisfy U.S. "reformers," came as a rude reminder to some that the "Bush manual" project is both operational U.S. policy and aimed at the military itself, not simply those who dare oppose the project.

On Oct. 27, the U.S. Information Service put Gen. John Galvin, former head of the U.S. Army Southern Command and of NATO forces in Europe, on a tele-conference broadcast to Peru, Bolivia, and Nicaragua to promote "The U.S. Experience in Civic-Military Relations." Galvin denied that the United States considers armies to be no longer necessary in Ibero-America, arguing instead that it merely believes "the armies should be of an adequate size which corresponds to the economic capacity of the country, and no more." After repeating the insane U.S. litany that Peru can only fight the brutal Shining Path insurgency through "democratic means," Galvin proposed "the formation of NATO-style alliances" in the Americas as the means to ensure peace and stability. The latter is one of the formulas currently favored in the United States as a means to establish formal U.S. command over what remains of the "restructured" Ibero-American militaries.

On Nov. 9-10, the "Bush manual" crowd is holding yet another conference in Lima, this time sponsored by the Peruvian Center for International Studies (CEPEI), home to two of the three Peruvians participating in the "Bush manual" project. Brazilian, Chilean, Mexican, U.S., and Peruvian experts will gather to discuss "Peru and the New Hemispheric

Relations,” including a panel on the inter-American system of collective defense. CEPEI’s target is to set the political agenda before elections for the Constituent Congress are held Nov. 22. To ready the environment, the CEPEI held another roundtable on Oct. 27, where Bush manual author and outspoken leftist Marcial Rubio joined others in discussing the “Armed Forces and the Constitution.” Peru is being especially targeted because of their military’s ongoing war against Shining Path.

U.S. role exposed

One useful result of this anti-military drive, however, is that the “Bush manual” project has been revealed to be exactly what *EIR* said, and U.S. embassy officials denied: Not only is it a straight U.S. government operation, but the center of Washington’s anti-military organizing. Any doubts of this were laid to rest at the Oct. 19-21 Woodrow Wilson Center symposium on the “Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience,” where Barros had called for purging mid-level officers.

At the outset, organizers announced that the symposium had been the brainchild of the Rial-Goodman-Mendelson “Democracy Project” based at the American University in Washington, D.C. and the Peitho Institute in Montevideo, Uruguay, the same project which produced *The Military and Democracy*. Over the course of its six years of existence, the “Democracy Project” has become “a viable force . . . in many parts of Latin America,” Mendelson bragged to her Wilson Center listeners.

The event was a Democracy Project show through and through: Goodman, Mendelson, and Barros led the proceedings; another project participant, State Department academic Richard Millet, circulated a profile of the Venezuelan military he had prepared after holding “private interviews” with officers over the course of the past year; and the *éminence grise* of the Democracy Project, U.S. Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, was brought in to deliver marching orders.

It was also a U.S. government operation through and through—from Einaudi, to planning and financing. The U.S. government finances a large part of the Wilson Center itself, and appoints half its board of directors. The National Republican Institute for International Affairs and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, both branches of the government-funded National Endowment for Democracy, and the U.S. Department of Defense all helped plan the symposium, a conference flyer reported.

Many of the prominent Venezuelans who came to Washington to discuss the future of their country, including journalists, businessmen, politicians, and members of the government, had their expenses paid by the conference supporters—that is, by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), the U.S. Information Agency, the U.S. embassy in Caracas, Venezuela’s Fundación Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho, and the North-South Center of the University of Miami. In fact, the entire Democracy Project has been

financed for six years by AID, the U.S. Departments of Defense and Army, the U.S. Institute for Peace, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Juan Rial’s ravings are indeed U.S. policy.

A bipartisan policy to crush nationalism

Discussion at the Wilson Center event made clear that a Clinton victory in the U.S. elections Nov. 3 will change little of this policy. Einaudi, the architect of U.S. policy toward Ibero-America for the past 20 years under Democratic and Republican administrations alike, insisted that Venezuelans understand that the U.S. insistence on “democracy,” as they define it, is a *bipartisan* policy. He was emphatic that Carlos Andrés Pérez represents the U.S. system on the continent, and therefore he stays in power—period (see *Documentation*).

Kissinger Associates partner William Rogers joined Einaudi at the conference, to ensure that people understood this was *establishment* policy being discussed. Rogers stressed that behind the U.S. drive for “democracy,” lies the unyielding commitment to impose what he termed “free trade capitalism” worldwide. “The economic transformation of the world is number one” on the post-Cold War agenda, he announced, and adherence to “democratic principles” is crucial to “the continuation of economic reforms.”

Here, indeed, can be found the crux of the battle over the military. As Barros identified the problem in his opening remarks, the military remains a dangerous bastion of what one participant in the symposium denounced as “the culture of economic nationalism.” The problem stems from the conviction which still dominates the military that they are responsible for defending their nation as a whole. The Democracy Project view of nationalism was captured by Richard Millet in his analysis of the Venezuelan military. Millet attacked the “romantic” identification of the officer corps with the nation’s independence struggles as “an attempt to reject the uncomfortable and complex realities of modern international economic and political realities.” Millet derided “this almost nostalgic harking back to the independence era for goals and ideals” as a foolish wish to “restore the nation’s past glory”—clearly not a goal of the U.S. Democracy Project.

As Juan Rial warned in a study prepared last May on the Uruguayan military by his consulting firm Perelli and Rial, the problem is not limited to the Venezuelan military. “The signs of growing discontent in the middle-level officers in many countries” must be followed closely, he wrote, because their concerns “appear to combine . . . populist elements with a deeply rooted nationalist feeling. They feel betrayed by their superiors, the political class, the government, and their old partners in the powerful North. A marked anti-American sentiment has especially begun to appear. The old concept of the Armed Forces as the moral reservoir of the nation . . . appears with . . . clear populist connotations.”

Military accused of being a threat to 'democracy'

Einaudi's threats. *Excerpts from U.S. Ambassador to the OAS Luigi Einaudi's remarks on Oct. 21 at the Woodrow Wilson Center symposium, "Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience."*

I would like to submit, that the importance of Venezuela in international relations, may be more due to democracy than to oil. There is no doubt that, in the recent years, we have seen a perception of Venezuelan Presidents, of Venezuelan foreign ministers, of Venezuelan party leaders, who, in fact, have projected Venezuela beyond its borders, into the trouble spots of this hemisphere and beyond, in a way that is most unusual for a Latin American country, few of which are known for having launched an . . . independent foreign policy.

In that sense, Venezuela played a critical role in the evolution of U.S. policy. . . . [Chile's ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS)] Heraldo Muñoz, right now at the table, is one of the key people, perhaps the key person, in the turning of . . . the classic Venezuela doctrine, the Betancourt Doctrine, into part of the collective conscience of the hemisphere. . . .

Let me just say that from the standpoint of the people I have worked with in the American government, any interruption in the legal democratic process in Venezuela . . . would provoke an extreme reaction. Let me say that this reaction would not [be] limited to . . . the U.S. government as such. U.S. citizens, businessmen in Venezuela, have been regular articulators, and supporters, of the policy that democratic continuity is essential to the continuation of the business partnership. If the business conditions are radically altered in a way that undermines stability, the reaction . . . [is] inevitably going to be very damaging. . . .

Venezuela is not Haiti. . . . It is a commonly accepted truth in American politics, that Haiti has never been democratic. . . . Haiti is Haiti and is not representative. . . . In a sense, Peru is Peru and is also hard to extrapolate, it has an extraordinary terrorist group that has to be faced and this creates all kinds of ambiguities.

But Venezuela is Venezuela. Venezuela is, has been democratic since . . . 1958 . . . and in that period Venezuela has managed to become the standard-bearer for the possibili-

ty of democracy in Latin America. In that sense, Venezuela is not Venezuela, because an interruption there has a tremendous impact on the reality and the future of U.S.-Latin American relations. . . . Venezuela is in a very important and very unique type of situation; it creates an impact on the whole scene of U.S.-Latin American relations. . . .

The point is that Venezuela has a President with a personal charisma, history, potential of external reality . . . external projection. . . . He has a projection still of vigor, of courage, of modernity, of adaptability. . . .

Venezuela, in this sense, stands across the U.S.-Latin American relationship. . . . What happens there, the maintenance of change within a constitutional, democratic, framework, is absolutely critical to our collective, regional, future. . . . If there is an interruption, let me assure you there will be . . . a whole range of reactions . . . [that] would make impossible business as usual, that's the bottom line.

Barros demands the heads of middle-level officers. *From Brazilian "military sociologist" Alexandre Barros's remarks on Oct. 19 to the Woodrow Wilson Center Venezuelan symposium.*

I will discuss the Venezuelan crisis from much more of a regional and military sociology point of view. . . .

It seems to me that this is the most serious crisis, identity crisis, that the military is facing these days. . . . The military has had a tendency to deny it; they think that somehow it is a shame to face an identity crisis. I had an interaction with a four-star general at a meeting the other day, and I mentioned this and he said, We have no identity crisis, and I said, general, I'm sorry, you do, because if you didn't have one, you wouldn't have asked me to come here to tell me what to do with your profession. . . .

I think the basic question [they are asking] is, what are we good for? What do we exist for as a profession? . . . The profession is not only attracting fewer people, but attracting people with possibly different motivations, and the prestige and pay are getting lower. The gap between the young and the old generations is increasing.

The great problem now is, what do we do with the people in the middle? The generals are going to be retiring pretty soon, and the younger lieutenants and captains are getting in with the new view. What do we do with the majors and colonels? It seems to be the serious problem. How do we solve it: By attrition? By dismissing these people? This is possibly one point that should be addressed because this will be where the major source of frustration of military movement would lie at this point.

[Argentine military "expert"] Rosenda Fraga, at a meeting some six months ago, mentioned that as the new democracies go along with neo-liberalism, the military tend to have a backward view of looking for nationalism, and for going back to old policies. However, from the point of view of the crisis of the profession, this is not satisfactory either. This

does not provide the younger generation with either the task or the weapons or the means that they need to do something that they perceive as being the profession.

The Cold War is over. What do we do about it? We all know that a good portion of the so-called military task in Latin America was related to the idea of the Cold War, and [now] it's not there. . . .

Development in communications and perceptions are removing a monopoly that the military had, or quasi-monopoly it had, in socializing its members. In societies where there was no hegemony of either liberal democracy or of capitalism, the military institution had a whole training and education system that made a very effective effort in socializing its members in values which might be coincidental, or might not be coincidental, with the rest of society. What is happening is that this quasi-monopoly is lost, and the younger generation of officers is looking at it from a much more integrated point of view with civil society.

The military profession is about to become a profession like any other. It doesn't have either the charge, or the attraction, and many of the purposes are being lost.

Turning the military into National Guards. *The following is from a report filed by EIR's Lima bureau on the Oct. 16 presentation by Uruguayan anti-military guru Juan Rial to the Institute for Peruvian Studies in Lima. His remarks are paraphrased, except where indicated.*

With the exception of Guatemala, the armed forces of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean are very different from those of South America. Mexico's armed forces, for example, "are extremely professional. . . . The same is true for Central American and Caribbean armies. Except for Guatemala, the armies have always been modeled on the U.S. National Guard. . . . In most cases, they have been defeated: Batista in 1959; the Dominicans in 1965, the Nicaraguans in 1979. Others, like the Salvadorans, practically had to recreate themselves from scratch, totally rearm in 1991, and others, like the Panamanians, were totally transformed."

In South America, the armed forces were created by French or German military missions and thus, like any other armed forces, they defend their founding values, transmitted in this case from the Middle Ages. All the armed forces are conservative, regardless of the regime they serve. "If they want to transform themselves, it will have to be as part of a revolutionary process." Immediately after the revolution, however, they become forces which must maintain order.

Even today, South America maintains extremely "conservative . . . antiquated . . . medieval" forces, designed to contend with foreign wars "which they didn't have." In the 20th century, there were no foreign conflicts in South America because the Bolivia-Paraguay and Peru-Ecuador wars didn't involve populated regions or large troop deployments. And "what Argentina had in the Malvinas . . . was

practically a colonial adventure."

In this century, South America's armed forces have performed a state function, replacing the state throughout the national territory, as well as performing a political role, as moderator and arbiter. In 1959, when Castro proclaimed himself a Marxist, the armed forces were in danger of disappearing, and decided not to disappear. When the guerrillas appeared, the armed forces repressed them, in some cases like Venezuela, within a constitutional framework, but in others, by taking over the government. Why do the military take over governments? They evaluated subversion only as an ideological-political fact, without understanding its material causes.

"The situation has changed dramatically in almost all countries . . . due to the events from 1989 onward," as the pretext of fighting subversion backed by international communism disappeared. There's tremendous confusion because, despite the disappearance of international communism, subversion continues in our countries.

"At the same time, however, very big changes in our countries' policies occurred, as they entered a phase in which the state underwent severe crisis. . . . In almost all countries there was a big downsizing of the state . . . processes of privatization and deregulation occurred; obviously, for the military, the state is the only referent, and they began to feel uncomfortable."

The same international overseers who seek reductions in the military budget around the world began to exert pressures. Reduction in military expenditures implies a smaller defense budget, and even more than this. With the drop in wages, many officers request retirement and a large part of the new personnel entering military schools comes from the lower classes. Instead of restructuring, the armed forces tried to keep doing what they have always done, and this generated a general level of pauperization of the troops.

"The majority of the armed forces react badly to these measures when they have to change their organization" and restructure the military institution. In the case of Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín in Argentina, "his movement consisted of middle-level officers. Then the Venezuelan surprise occurred, where it was precisely the middle-level officers who protested the conditions within the armed forces and adopted a new position. Paradoxically, the middle-level officers in those countries no longer believe in the market or in capitalism, but rather oppose it."

But the armed forces have no other option than to continue to serve a state in which they no longer believe. This creates a problem for the armed forces of how to survive. For example, in Argentina, Menem keeps the armed forces busy ordering them to form part of U.N. peace-keeping forces.

The armed forces are thus going through a big "existential crisis" in South America, with few funds, little prestige, and with no definite role.