

The other purpose was to set the stage for brutal and bloody purges and slaughter against what Moscow considers to be "overpopulated" Turkic regions of Soviet Central Asia, and to prepare the way for military operations against Iran, and at a later point, against Turkey.

The Armenian population clearly has no knowledge of how their national aspirations are being manipulated by Moscow. In May 1987—timed with the activation of the Armenian petition campaign to reincorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia—the KGB's Middle East expert, Igor Belyaev, authored an article in the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, which proclaimed Khomeini's Iran and Muslim fundamentalism as a major security threat to the Turkic "republics" of the Soviet Union. The same theme was repeated by Belyaev in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* Jan. 13, 1988, shortly before all hell broke loose in the Transcaucasus. Now, a bare two months later, there are heavy Soviet troop concentrations near the Iranian border with Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Bulgaria vs. the Turks

The evidence that confirms there is a design for an anti-Turkic resurgence is provided by the simultaneous launching in March of a massive Pan-Slavic and anti-Turkish campaign in Bulgaria, the only satellite in Eastern Europe which has been culturally and historically pro-Russian.

On March 3 and 4, all Bulgarians were given two days off from work to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano, which ended the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War and created modern Bulgaria. The event was extraordinary to begin with, because two-day holidays are unknown in the East bloc. Moreover, since there were no great festivities for the 100th anniversary, in 1978 why, suddenly are they taking place for the 110th anniversary?

The answer lies in the themes that were highlighted. Banner headlines and speeches praised the "Liberation from the Ottoman Yoke," the "great" San Stefano Treaty "of Peace," and proclaimed the "Russians" as "liberators" and "protectors." Left unsaid was any reminder that the treaty which created the first modern-day version of "Greater Bulgaria," was dictated by Moscow. For the last three years, Bulgaria has been engaged in its own campaign to extinguish its Turkish minority and last autumn, opened an exhibition in Sofia on the "Ottoman genocide against the Armenians."

More light is shed on the succession fight in progress in Moscow in a backhanded manner by the situation in Hungary. Timed with the eruptions in the Transcaucasus, the Hungarian Communist Party announced that its party conference scheduled for May, which was supposed to resolve the question of who will succeed the 75-year-old Janos Kadar, has been postponed, at least till June. Rumors are flooding Budapest that it will probably be put off until the autumn. The Hungarian leadership in this sense are not fools. They will wait until the smoke clears in Moscow before taking any plunges of their own.

Reagan prepares a intervention against

by Gretchen Small

At 10 p.m. on March 16, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater announced that four battalions of U.S. troops were being deployed to Honduras, for "an emergency deployment readiness exercise" of unspecified duration, allegedly initiated at the request of Honduran President José Azcona. That reason for the deployment met with increasing skepticism, as the reports came in on how it took U.S. Ambassador Everitt Briggs 90 minutes to convince Azcona to issue the request—after the U.S. Interagency Policy Review Group had met to plan the operation.

Fitzwater himself left open the possibility that the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua is not the primary target of the deployment. "This exercise is intended also as a signal to the governments and peoples of Central America of the seriousness with which the United States government views the current situation in the region," he said.

From Panama to Great Britain, strategic analysts drew the obvious conclusion: The target of this "readiness exercise" is Panama, only 45 minutes by jet from the U.S. bases in Honduras.

The deployment brings the total of U.S. troops based in Honduras to 6,000, and joins a steady build-up of U.S. military force in Panama. On March 1, the U.S. announced that National Guard maneuvers, named "Total Warrior," would be held in the former Canal Zone from March 12 to April 12, despite Panamanian objections. Shortly thereafter, U.S. warships appeared off both coasts of Panama. On March 5, one hundred Marine and Air Force Special Forces trained in anti-terrorist operations, were sent in, bringing the number of security specialists in Panama to 700. Then, on March 16, as the 3,200 soldiers readied themselves for Honduras, the alert status for the 10-12,000 American soldiers regularly based in Panama was upgraded to "Charlie" status.

Voices close to the administration named Panama as the likely purpose of the "readiness exercise." Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), a leader in the campaign to oust Panama's Defense Forces Commander Gen. Manuel Noriega, told the Senate on March 17 that "the fact is, we very well may need to utilize the capabilities of these troops as it relates to guarding our own interests, the Panama Canal and the lives and property of our citizens in Panama. . . . [The troops] demonstrate . . . that we do have strength. . . . There's the

military Panama

dual prospect of utilizing and keeping these troops in the position where we can move them rather quickly to Panama.”

The *Wall Street Journal's* March 18 editorial urged quick military action against Panama. “The people of Panama are crying for deliverance from the gangsters running their country. . . . Anything the U.S. did to free the Panamanians would have them (and all the U.S. dependents in the Canal Zone) parading through the streets with American flags. . . . U.S. troops are sitting in Honduras. It is the task of U.S. leadership to identify America's interests and act accordingly,” it wrote.

The U.S. media simultaneously began announcing that a “request” for military invasion of Panama from Eric Delvalle, the State Department's “President in hiding,” is expected imminently, because Panamanian opposition spokesman (based in Washington, of course) now realize that they have been unable to mobilize any sufficient support inside Panama for the ouster of General Noriega.

Panama coup fails

March 16 indeed marked a watershed in the U.S.-Panama crisis. Three weeks of economic strangulation and diplomatic isolation finally produced the riots, economic chaos (Panama had no water or electrical service for nearly 18 hours), and rebellion from within the Defense Forces which the secret government, Project Democracy's forces in the Reagan administration sought to force Noriega to resign.

There was a hitch, however. The coup attempt by several Defense Forces colonels and majors, most recently returned from U.S. training courses, failed to rally support from any troops—not even those under the command of Col. Leonidas Macías, the police chief who led the rebellion. Instead, the coup was suppressed in less than five hours, and the anti-Noriega plotters arrested.

The correct conclusion was drawn in Washington. “Historically, it is a proven fact that once a coup d'état fails, it takes weeks or months to pull off another one,” a Washington insider in U.S. efforts against Noriega told the *Wall Street Journal*. He admitted that Noriega “continues to have a lot of authentic support among the majority of officers.” As an opposition leader moaned, “now an element of the military that was with us is removed. Noriega is immensely strengthened.” Nor were the military men the only U.S. assets caught

in the March 16 operation.

The public disorder, indeed the worst since the crisis began, was not, however, the beginning of the end for Noriega, as claimed by the opposition. The riots and sabotage of electrical facilities were carried out by a limited group of provocateurs, who timed their sabotage to coincide with the coup attempt. But the majority of the demonstrators were public employees, out on the streets not to demand the ouster of Noriega, but to force the government to come up with some plan to pay them.

Their targets were several key World Bank moles in the economic cabinet, held over from the Delvalle days, who had refused to allow the implementation of an emergency economic plan to deal with the financial crisis resulting from the United States' economic embargo.

A plan had been drawn up for the government to issue bonds, or credit notes, pegged to the dollar, which would circulate for the duration of the immediate crisis. The notes would be issued under powers granted to the government in the Constitution for “cases of war, grave disturbances of public order or urgent social interest which require rapid measures,” and their acceptance made obligatory for commercial businesses. The plan was not adopted, despite promises to the government's union base for over a week that any day it would be put into effect. Planning and Finance Minister “Catín” Vásquez, Treasury Minister Héctor Alexander, and Comptroller Francisco Rodríguez refused to allow the bond scheme, union leaders were told, because it would wreck Panama's “credibility” with the multinational credit institutions!

Union leaders then organized protest actions, demanding the ouster of those high-level bureaucrats who did not understand that action was required to defend the nation. There are too many meetings, and too little action by the government bureaucracy, they told their base. War has been declared against the country, and war measures are required. The pro-government public employee unions declared they will strike, until the “foot-draggers” and “super-technocrats” be fired.

Socialist intervention falters, too

Another group of State Department agents situated inside the Panamanian nationalist coalition is also on the hot seat, and may be purged shortly. These are the leaders of the pro-government Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) who have been coordinating with the Socialist International's “Vesco Three”—Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, Alfonso López Michelsen of Colombia, and Daniel Oduber of Costa Rica—to force Noriega out.

The Socialist International has built up assets in this crisis, inside Panama, and in the rest of Ibero-America, by painting itself as a defender of sovereignty, ready to defend Panama from “imperialist” aggression. (The particular carrot offered by the Socialists was the usual promise of large sums of money from their rich West German foundations).

The snag in their operation occurred, when it became evident that the only concern of the Socialists, was that *they* be given the franchise to run the new government which the State Department plans to install in Panama.

The former Presidents, dubbed the "Vesco Three" for their ties with Robert Vesco's Medellín Cartel, joined by Uruguayan President Juan Sanguinetti, served as the mediators in negotiations between the Reagan administration and the governments of Spain and the Dominican Republic, to arrange exile for Noriega.

Thus, the international reports published throughout the week of March 13, that General Noriega was packing his bags for his final trip out of Panama, originated not in Panama, but in Washington, Caracas, and Madrid.

On March 15, Panama's *La Estrella* reported that West German Social Democratic leader Hans Jürgen Wischniewski had released a four-point plan to solve "Panama's profound crisis," put together by the Socialist International. Top on their list is that General Noriega must leave, "but as a decision of Panama and not of the United States," Wischniewski said. Likewise, the Socialists insist that supervision of Panama's government be managed by a "Latin American Control Commission," and not the United States. The report rocked Panama, because Wischniewski insisted PRD head Romulo Escobar Bethancourt agreed with the Socialists, both that Noriega should leave, and Panama's elections be placed under international control.

The costs of intervention

The tottering, scandal-rocked Reagan administration, handing over its European and Asian allies one by one to the Soviet empire, chose Panama as the place where the United States would demonstrate its "toughness." Many involved in that decision to this day cannot imagine that when surrounded by U.S. military might, General Noriega and a broad majority of Panamanians may still stand up to the United States, and refuse to hand over their country to the drug-runners, money-launderers, and oligarchs in the "opposition" which the U.S. insists must run Panama.

But can the U.S. go "toe to toe" with Panama, and then back down? Thus, because of the Reagan administration's stubborn clinging to the insane "Project Democracy" policy in Central America discredited in the Iran-Contra scandal, the impetus for military intervention into Panama now grows, as the options inside Panama for overthrowing Noriega diminish. The costs of such an intervention, both politically and militarily, are incalculable. Any notion that an invasion similar to the Grenada operation can succeed against Panama, is lunatic. Civil war inside Panama is only part of the military equation to consider. The Americas as a whole will explode, in political turmoil and warfare. The crisis will then blow back into the United States itself. If the administration continues on this course, the United States will sink into a new Vietnam, on a much larger scale.

A test case of limited sovereignty

The series of recent measures enacted by the United States against the nation of Panama, constitute acts of war, undertaken with the intent of establishing a system of government in that country answerable to Washington and the international financial cartel.

As former U.S. National Security Council member Norman Bailey stated on Dec. 8, 1987, in a public forum in Washington, D.C., "Getting rid of Noriega is not all that important. Getting rid of the system is what is important. Getting rid of the institution [of the military]—that is what is important." Let there be no mistake: Project Democracy's war on Panama seeks to establish a new "Reagan Corollary," more extensive than the Roosevelt Corollary, which overturned the original intent of the Monroe Doctrine.

Under this new doctrine, the United States assumes the right to decide which governments are legitimate, and which not, to impose constitutional procedures which govern any nation, and to determine the size, deployment, and mission of the armed forces in those nations. Governments that object will find their nations faced with economic embargo, assets seized, treaties with the United States unilaterally abrogated, and their territory, perhaps, militarily occupied.

If the Reagan Corollary succeeds in imposing a new government in Panama, any debtor nation which refuses to starve their population to meet debt payments, can look forward to the same measures of war.

I. Establishing a government in hiding

1) The crisis begins when, on Feb. 25, President Eric Delvalle announced that he was firing Defense Force Commander Gen. Manuel Noriega. Delvalle had been ordered to do so by U.S. Assistant Secretary Elliott Abrams, at their Miami meeting less than one week before.

Panama's Legislative Assembly met in emergency session that evening, and following the procedures provided for in Panama's Constitution, voted to remove Delvalle from office, on grounds that he was taking orders from a foreign nation. The Assembly named Manuel Solis Palma to replace