

# BULLETIN

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## U.S. AIM IN PANAMA: A NEW PUERTO RICO

For over sixty years Panama has been one of the most important and well-secured "colonies" of the United States in this hemisphere. In recent years, however, economic necessities and growing nationalism have created a dilemma for the U.S., the resolution of which could threaten its domination of Panama and, possibly, all of Latin America. The principal issue, of course, centers around the Panama Canal.

Part of the U.S.' problem stems from the acknowledged fact that the present canal is inadequate to copewith the growing demands of world shipping. Due to the narrowness of the canal's locks and the tremendous increase in canal traffic, ships seeking passage are forced to spend precious time awaiting their turn. In addition, many of the huge ships that are being constructed today are toolarge to fit through the locks, and must instead take the long and expensive detour around the tip of South America. These delays and detours mean added expenses to world, mainly U.S., shippers, and, coupled with the loss of potential revenues for the canal, point to an urgent need for a new, larger canal.

Despite all the shadow-talking by the U.S. about a possible canal in Nicaragua or Colombia, Panama remains the only realistic site for a sea-level canal, due to its perfect location and geography. Recent U.S. diplomatic and investment activities in Panama prove that such speculation is only meant to intimidate Panama, whose economy rests heavily on the canal.

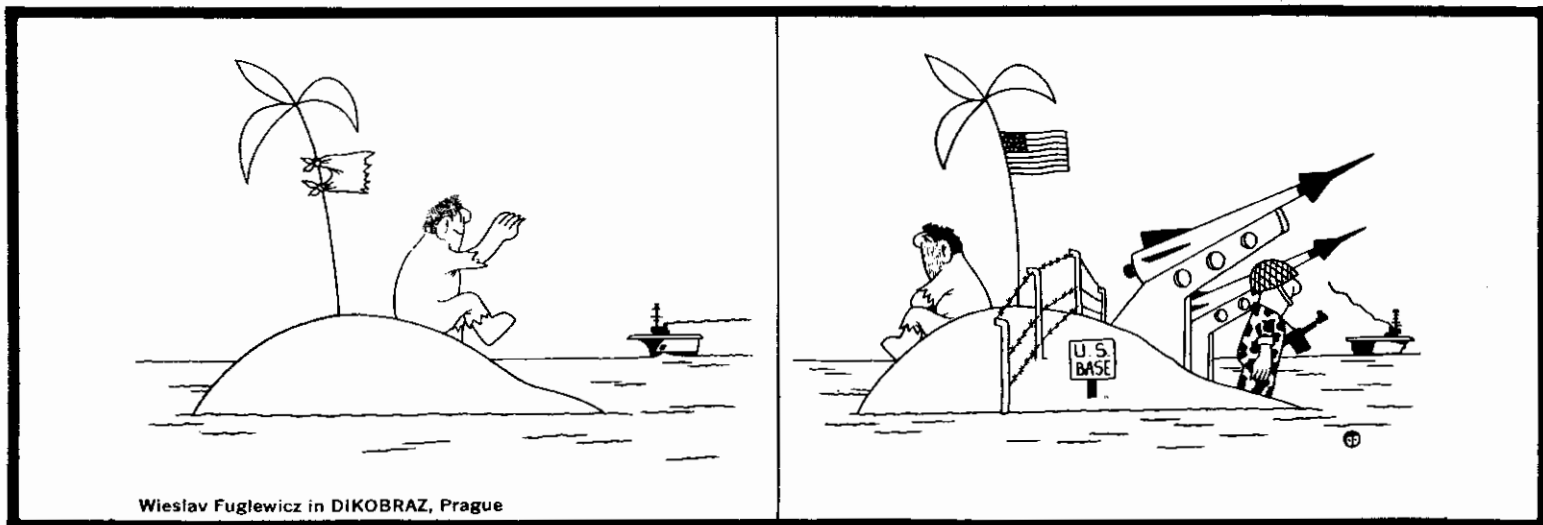
The U.S. would have had a new canal years ago were it not for one roadblock: the Panamanian people. After World War II, nationalism and the struggle for sovereignty

increased sharply in Panama, as in most other exploited, oppressed countries, and began to be developed on an organized, mass scale. In 1947, a U.S. proposal to build a new canal in Panama was withdrawn after popular protests. In subsequent years, the tempo of nationalism quickened. There were numerous strikes, demonstrations and other popular actions, which became increasingly more anti-imperialist in tone. This internal development reached a climax in the violent events of January 9-12, 1964

The uprising of 1964 marked a turning point in the development of Panama's left-nationalist movement. The trouble was precipitated by the arrogant refusal of North Americans in the Canal Zone, who are called Zonians, to allow the Panamanian flag to fly alongside the U.S. flag. This was in defiance of their own Governor's order and was a great insult to Panama. When a group of Panamanian students marched into the Zone and attempted to raise their flag, they were attacked by the Zonians, who also ripped and trampled upon Panama's flag. The Panamanians retreated, hurling stones at the Zonians.

What followed was a bloody assault by Zonian police and U.S. Marines in which 24 Panamanians were killed and over 500 wounded. In retaliation, scores of U.S.-owned automobiles were burned, as well as many buildings in the city which housed U.S. corporations. Some were completely destroyed. The situation, though brief, came very near to developing into open rebellion, and had a profound effect on the Panamanian people—and also on the oligarchy and the U.S.

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Wieslaw Fuglewicz in DIKOBRAZ, Prague

## REBEL PRIESTS IN ARGENTINA

Argentina was newsworthy this week as a result of an incident of a kind so common in countries living under oligarchic imperialist "gorilla" rule that the press of the country involved normally doesn't even bother to report them.

The scene of the incident was the San Pablo Sugar Refinery, in the province of Tucuman, where 96 of the mill's workers were unjustly fired by the management, thus provoking a serious state of resentment among the people.

Amidst the passivity which has come to characterize labor unions and even self-styled "progressive" political sectors in recent times, it seemed that the incident would have no further consequences. Nevertheless, on January 21 the local priest, Father Juan Sanchez, delivered a sermon which energetically defended the mistreated workers and, it seems, proclaimed their right to employ force in opposing the arbitrary measure taken against them.

At the end of the sermon more than 300 workers and their families staged a militant demonstration, in the course of which stones were hurled against the plant and offices of the sugar refinery. Father Sanchez took part in one of the demonstrations. The protest had all the characteristics of a rebellion.

The Governor of Tucuman threatened to retaliate with violent repression and protested to the Archbishop of the province, who, to his surprise, affirmed that the priest had acted correctly. Messages of solidarity poured in from Catholic sectors in other regions of the country.

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## CIA UNION MEDDLES IN BRAZIL

A U.S.-based "international" union known to have received funds from the CIA has been charged with meddling in the internal affairs of Brazilian oil workers. The union is the International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers (IFPCW). According to charges published in *Ultima Hora*, a leading Rio daily, the IFPCW office representative in Brazil disbursed funds to pay-off government interventors, influence newspapermen and big local union elections.

The IFPCW was linked to the CIA in a series of articles published in the *Denver Post* showing the union's history as a recipient of funds from CIA conduits, such as the Andrew Hamilton Fund and the American Friends of the Middle East.

The IFPCW's meddling in Brazil is related to current attempts of Brazilian oil workers to organize themselves into an independent national union. There is fear that such a nationalist union might take on anti-U.S. overtones.

Much of the effort to keep Brazilian oil workers under the aegis of the U.S.-based international union has been carried out by the American Institute of Free Labor Development, which is closely linked to large U.S. corporations, such as the W.R. Grace Co. The Institute has a long history of trying to keep the Latin American labor movement "free", which means under U.S. control.

News of the IFPCW meddling was released to the major

## OUR MAN IN SAIGON

Every chance he gets these days, General William C. Westmoreland leaps at the chance to show the South Vietnamese (puppet) forces in the best possible light. There have been numerous reports on the A.R.V.N.'s (Saigon Army's) bad performance, on the corruption at all levels in the armed forces, and on how the Vietnamese are letting the American fight the war.

This week, during a briefing in Phan Thiet, a U.S. colonel mentioned an A.R.V.N. unit. Westy broke in with a question: "How is the A.R.V.N. performing compared with a year ago?" Hesitating a moment, the colonel said that there had been some improvement. "Well, are they performing well?", Westy shot back. "Well, no sir. I could not say they were performing well." "But are they improving?", Westy challenged again. "Yes sir," the colonel said. "By that I mean, for instance, when we get to a new location now they are more inclined to dig in *before* they put up their hammocks."

Westy then tried another tact. "How are they under fire?", he asked. The colonel, by this time realizing he was getting in deeper and deeper, hesitated, looked down at his boots, and then looked up and told Westy that just the other day there was a Vietnamese (puppet) lieutenant who had been shot in the leg and had refused evacuation for four days.

"He has?", Westy blurted out. "That's the kind of thing that's not getting reported. Did you give this to any responsible reporter?" The colonel said no, that there were no reporters present at the time. "Well, if that lieutenant would have turned around and run there would have been reporters here," Westy said indignantly. (Reuters Dec. 12)

"Informed sources say pilots of the CIA-supported Air America company are now flying combat missions against Pathet Lao Communists in Laos.

"They are using old U.S. T28 trainers which have been souped up with new engines by the U.S. Air Force and fitted out with guns and bomb racks. Air America, widely known as the 'CIA airline,' was set up to handle charter flights for the U.S. government in Laos and Vietnam. The anti-guerrilla work on its T28s represents an expansion of the outfit's mission.

"Under the Geneva agreements of 1954 and 1962, Laos is a neutral country and no foreign military personnel may be stationed there. But the United States, which is supporting the royal Lao government against the Communists who have seized half the country, is now moving around this restriction through covert CIA operations." (*The Sunday Oregonian*, January 7, 1968.)

newspapers in Washington by the international affairs division of the United Auto Workers, but according to Gary Busch of the UAW staff, none of the papers used the material. Busch also noted that wire service stories filed from Rio were not transmitted here; he called it a "news blackout."

The charges were documented with a detailed expense account showing disbursements of several thousand dollars, for such purposes as "giving us favorable coverage" and "keeping quiet about our plans." (*LIBERATION News Service*, Jan. 15.)

The small oligarchy that rules Panama was forced into breaking diplomatic relations with the U. S. and called for a new, not merely a revised, treaty to replace the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty of 1903, which had made Panama an "imperfect protectorate". Publicly, the treaty was to give Panama greater control over the canal and return a measure of sovereignty to the nation. But in fact, the oligarchy only sought to pressure the U. S. into giving it more money for the leasing of the canal, while the U. S. sought to further tighten its hold on the canal and on the nation—to make it a more perfect protectorate.

Finding itself confronted with a rebellious people and in dire need of a new canal, the United States, not ready at that time to use force to impose its will, entered into negotiations, hoping to eliminate both problems through neo-colonialist methods. Out of these secret negotiations came three proposed treaties which, if passed, would further undermine Panama's sovereignty and would relegate her to a quasi-protectorate status similar to that now held by Puerto Rico. Thus, it would seem that the U. S.' answer to Che's "many Vietnams" is "many Puerto Ricos."

The first of the three treaties ostensibly abrogates the old canal treaty, but in fact changes little except to provide additional revenue to the oligarchy. It sets up a joint canal administration comprised of 5 Americans and 4 Panamanians. This body is given very broad powers and its decisions are determined by a majority vote. A separate judicial system for the canal and its residents would be established. Another article prevents Panama from using the water from its own lakes if this would interfere with the operation of the canal. One important article (XX) states that the "joint" administration "may, if necessary, call upon the armed forces of the Republic of Panama or of the United States of America for military assistance whenever it deems such military assistance necessary in carrying out its responsibilities" of providing for "the protection of persons and property in the canal area, and for the maintenance of public order and peace in the canal area."

The second treaty authorizes the U. S. to build a new sea-level canal, which would be administered by another joint commission based on the same 5-4 ratio. For this canal, which would probably be built with the use of nuclear explosives, the U. S. would obtain extensive and valuable land. The treaty would "expire" 60 years after the canal was opened, or by 2067. Of course, it could be extended. All that Panama would receive would be an increase in its allowance and permission to fly its flag in the zone. In other respects the treaty is similar to the first one.

Crucial to the United States' designs on Panama is the "Treaty On The Defense Of The Panama Canal And Of Its Neutrality." Whereas the ill-famed Platt Amendment of 1903 openly and brutally made Cuba a U. S. protectorate, or rather a semi-colony, the U. S.-Panama Defense Treaty is slightly more subtle in its approach, though the aim is the same. It establishes a two-man Joint Committee, one representative from each country, which would have extensive powers. Many of the provisions which are considered odious by Panamanians would be subject to the approval of this committee, thus giving the illusion that Panama would have equal responsibility and authority with the U. S. in administering the Treaty. However, with an oligarchy as subservient to U. S. desires as the present one, the U. S. would have little difficulty in determining the Commit-

tee's decisions. This has led some Panamanians to suggest that this arrangement was made for the purpose of improving the oligarchy's standing among the mass of people. By making it appear as though the oligarchy had adopted a nationalist stance, and had won a victory over the Yankees in obtaining the status of equal "partner", the oligarchy would be further entrenched and stabilized, and criticism of the Treaty and further development of nationalist sentiment would be weakened—all of which would please the oligarchy and the U. S.

The treaty itself devastates most of Panama's remaining sovereignty. The U. S. would be granted unrestricted access to and movement over Panama's land, waters and air space. The vehicles, boats and planes, and their contents, would not be subject to any duties or inspections by Panama. Thus, the U. S. could secretly introduce nuclear weapons into Panama. (Many Panamanians maintain that this has already been done.) Under the broad powers granted by Article XII, the U. S. would be able to turn Panama into one huge espionage and intelligence base. The training of Latin American counter-insurgency forces, which has been going on for years, would be institutionalized and legalized. An unlimited number of U. S. military bases could be established on Panamanian soil outside the canal area. The seven existing bases would be legalized, which in fact they now are not. In addition, Panama would suffer many indignities, too many to enumerate, which no nation should be made to endure.

The capstone of this treaty, Article II, paragraph (2), permits the U. S. to intervene militarily in Panama's affairs if the necessity should arise. "In case of an international conflagration or the existence of any threat of aggression or any armed conflict or *other emergency* endangering canal Defense, the Republic of Panama and the United States of America shall take such preventive and defensive measures as are necessary for the protection of their common interest . . . *Any such measures which it shall appear essential to the United States of America to take and which would affect the territory of the Republic of Panama outside the Defense Areas and the Canal Area . . . will be the subject of consultation in the Joint Committee.*" (Emphasis added -ed.) Thus, the deliverance of Panama's sovereignty to the U. S. is completed. Panama is clearly on the bottom in this "joint" operation.

The facade of partnership fooled no one in Panama. When the contents of the treaties were discovered last summer, the Foreign Minister of Panama said that his government had been "prohibited by diplomatic protocol," implying an understanding with the U. S., from publishing the texts of the treaties—until after they were signed. The Panamanian legislature did pass the treaties. But upon learning of their contents, the people of Panama protested so vehemently, through militant demonstrations, that President Robles hesitated to sign them.

The U. S.-oligarchy strategy now is to attempt to divert public attention away from the treaties by whooping it up over the coming national elections in May. None of the candidates have taken a clear position on the treaties, though

# TREATY ON THE DEFENSE OF THE PA

[Below are the most important sections of the proposed U.S.-Panama Defense Treaty. To our knowledge most of these sections have never been published in the U.S., and would not have been published in Panama had the two Governments had their way. A close reading will clearly demonstrate why.]

## ARTICLE II

(1) The Republic of Panama and the United States of America shall provide jointly for the defense, security and continuity of operation of the Panama Canal and its appurtenant and supporting facilities and services and of the Canal Area. . . . To this end and for its part, the Republic of Panama hereby makes available to the United States of America the use of Defense Areas described in Annex A of this Treaty for Canal Defense and related security purposes. Pursuant to this Treaty, the United States of America shall have the right to act to ensure Canal Defense. For the purpose of carrying out its responsibilities hereunder, the United States of America shall have access to and free movement between the Defense Areas and the Canal Area referred to in this paragraph. . . .

(2) In case of an international conflagration or the existence of any threat of aggression or any armed conflict or other emergency endangering Canal Defense, the Republic of Panama and the United States of America shall take such preventive and defensive measures as are necessary for the protection of their common interest in effectuating the purposes of this treaty. Any such measures which it shall appear essential to the United States of America to take and which would affect the territory of the Republic of Panama outside the Defense Areas and the Canal Area referred to in paragraph (1) of this article will be the subject of consultation in the Joint Committee.

(3) Within the Defense Areas, the United States of America may, for the accomplishment of the defense and security mission of the United States [Armed] Forces: (a) establish, develop, operate, maintain and protect facilities and installations, including those necessary for the training, hospitalization, recreation, education, maintenance and support of Members of the Forces, the Civilian Component and dependents; (b) use, install and employ equipment, weapons, vessels, vehicles, aircraft and other materiel; and (c) as hereinafter agreed, employ the services of contractors to facilitate the establishment, construction, development, operation and maintenance of the aforesaid facilities and installations.

(4) In recognition of the humanitarian needs for search and rescue, mercy and disaster relief operations in the Latin American area, Defense Areas may be utilized in support of such operations. The Republic of Panama shall permit the overflight of its territory for these and other operations authorized by this Treaty.

(5) (a) The Republic of Panama and the United States of America may agree to revise Annex A by releasing areas, adding areas or making other adjustments in order to meet changing conditions. . . . (b) The authorities of the Republic of Panama shall give sympathetic considerations to requests of the United States Forces for permission to make occasional use of additional areas for maneuvers and training for limited periods of time. Such requests shall be processed through the Joint Committee.

(6) All equipment, facilities, materials, supplies and other property brought into, acquired or constructed in the Republic of Panama by, on behalf of, or for the use of, the United States Government shall remain the property of the United States of America and may be disposed of in the Republic of Panama if such disposal is consistent with the purposes of this Treaty, and otherwise, if accomplished under conditions mutually agreed upon. . . .

(7) The United States of America shall be under no obligation to restore any Defense Area, or any portion thereof, to its original condition upon its reversion to the Republic of Panama pursuant to paragraph (5) of this Article.

(8) Access to the Defense Areas or any portion thereof shall be controlled by the United States with the cooperation of the armed forces of the Republic of Panama in such a manner as may be agreed through the Joint Committee.

(9) Except as specifically changed herein or by the agreement of the two Governments in the Joint Committee, the United States of America shall continue to enjoy the operational rights, user rights, rights of access, rights of way, and easements (including rights of way or easements for pipelines, communications, sanitation and utilities services) enjoyed on the day this Treaty enters into force. . . .

## ARTICLE VI

(5) United States contractors shall be exempt from taxation in the Republic of Panama on the holding, use, transfer by death, or transfer to persons or agencies entitled to tax exemption under this Treaty, of movable property, tangible or intangible, the presence of which in the Republic of Panama is due solely to the temporary presence of these persons in the Republic of Panama, provided that such exemption shall not apply to property held for the purpose of investment or the conduct of other business in the Republic of Panama or to any intangible property registered in the Republic of Panama.

(6) United States contractors and their employees (except locally procured labor) shall not be liable to pay taxes to the government of the Republic of Panama or to any other taxing agency in the Republic of Panama on any income under a contract made in the United States of America with the Government of the United States of America in connection with the construction, maintenance or operation of any of the facilities or installations covered by this Treaty. The provisions of this paragraph do not exempt such persons from payment of taxes on income derived from other sources in the Republic of Panama, nor do they exempt such persons and their employees who, for United States tax purposes, claim Panamanian residence, from payment of Panamanian taxes on income. . . .

## ARTICLE VII

(2) Vessels and aircraft operated by, chartered to or under the operational control of the United States of America for official purposes related to the purposes of this Treaty shall enjoy access to and movement between Defense Areas. In enjoying access to any port or airport in the Republic of Panama, vessels and aircraft operated by, or chartered to, the United States Government for official purposes related to the purposes of this Treaty shall be free from fees, tolls or landing charges. . . .

# PANAMA CANAL AND OF ITS NEUTRALITY

United States Government-owned vehicles and equipment, and members of the United States Forces, the civilian component, and their dependents shall be accorded access to and movement between Defense Areas and access to and from Defense Areas through the ports and airports of the Republic of Panama. No tolls, taxes, or other charges shall be payable by or on behalf of the United States of America for such access and movement. . . .

(4) To permit use of the air space over, adjacent to, and in the vicinity of the Defense Areas, the Republic of Panama and the United States of America shall take whatever measures are appropriate so that such traffic over those areas and the adjacent areas will be coordinated in order to provide maximum safety consistent with the accomplishment of the defense and security missions of the United States Forces and the needs of civil and military air navigation. All civil and military air traffic control and communications systems shall be developed in close coordination and shall be integrated to the extent necessary for the operation of this Treaty. Procedures, and any subsequent changes hereto, necessary to effect this coordination and integration will be by arrangement between the appropriate authorities of the two Governments. . . .

## ARTICLE X

(1) The authorities of the Republic of Panama shall have jurisdiction over Members of the Forces, the Civilian Component and their dependents with respect to offenses committed within the Republic of Panama, including offenses related to security, which are punishable by the laws of the Republic of Panama. When an offense, including an offense against the security of the United States of America, is not punishable by the laws of the Republic of Panama and is punishable by the laws of the United States of America, jurisdiction shall be exercised by the United States of America over the aforesaid persons.

(2) The Republic of Panama agrees that when an offense is punishable by the laws of both countries, the military authorities of the United States of America may exercise within the territory of the Republic of Panama concurrently with the Republic of Panama the criminal and disciplinary jurisdiction conferred on them by the law of the United States of America over Members of the Forces, the Civilian Component and their dependents. Where the right to exercise jurisdiction is concurrent, the following rules shall apply:

(a) The Republic of Panama shall have the primary right to exercise jurisdiction in all cases except those specified in subparagraph (b) of this paragraph.

(b) The military authorities of the United States of America shall have the primary right to exercise jurisdiction, when such a right is conferred on them by the applicable law of the United States of America, over Members of the Forces, the Civilian Component and their dependents (i) when the offense is solely against the property or security of the United States of America or (ii) when the offense is solely against the person or property of another Member of the Forces or the Civilian Component or a dependent or (iii) when the offense arises out of any act or omission done in the performance of official duty.

(c) If the State having the primary right decides not to exercise jurisdiction, it shall notify the authorities of the other State as soon as practicable. The authorities of the State having the primary right shall give sympathetic consideration to a request from the authorities of the other State for a waiver of its right in cases where the other State considers such waiver to be of particular importance. Except in cases where the Republic of Panama has determined that it is of particular importance that jurisdiction be exercised by its authorities, the Republic of Panama shall waive in favor of the United States of America the primary right to exercise jurisdiction under subparagraph (a) of paragraph (2) of this Article.

Members of the Forces, Civilian Component and their dependents shall be deemed to be residents of the Canal Area with respect to the authority and jurisdiction of the Panama Canal Authorities and the courts of the Canal Area for the purposes of Articles XXIV and XXV of the Treaty concerning the Panama Canal signed on this date. The jurisdiction exercised by the courts of the Canal Area shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States of America under Paragraph (1) and subparagraph (b) of paragraph (2) of this Article. . . .

## ARTICLE XII

The United States Government may establish, maintain and operate, or arrange to be operated for its benefit, telecommunications facilities, meteorological and navigational aids, radio, television and radar transmitting and receiving equipment, submarine and subterranean cables, and other such electronic devices as may be required for the purposes of this Treaty. The United States Government may retain all

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Panama's flag being raised by students during 1964 uprising against U. S. presence in Panama.

communication networks and communications electronic facilities operating, and all those radio frequencies, powers, and band widths which are in use by it, on the date this Treaty enters into force. . . .

## ANNEX A

The Defense Areas, the use of which is made available by the Republic of Panama to the United States of America in accordance with the terms of this Treaty, are as follows: Military Bases means an area in the Republic of Panama the use of which is made available by the Republic of Panama exclusively to the United States Forces for Canal Defense and related security purposes.

Maneuver Area means an area in the Republic of Panama to which the Republic of Panama grants access to the United States Forces for training and maneuver purposes in connection with Canal Defense and related security purposes.

Surveillance Area means an area in the Republic of Panama to which the Republic of Panama grants access to the United States Forces for Canal Defense and related purposes.

Auxiliary Facility means an area in the Republic of Panama the use of which is made available by the Republic of Panama exclusively to the United States Forces for the installation and operation of facilities auxiliary to Canal Defense and related security purposes. . . .

ANNEXED AGREEMENT  
REGARDING VARIOUS MATTERS

That the training and liaison activities involving military forces of Latin American countries friendly to the Republic of Panama conducted at the time of the entry into force of this Treaty may be continued for a ten-year period commencing from the date of such entry into force, and thereafter for additional five-year periods as agreed by the two Governments. . . .

That customs and other inspections will not be made of the vessels, aircraft, vehicles and equipment referred to in paragraph (2) of Article VII of this Treaty.

**ARGENTINA** continued from page two

Almost immediately, the undercurrent of conflict between the military regime of General Onganía, on the one hand, and Argentina's progressive Catholic sectors, on the other, burst into the open and spread quickly.

The ultrareactionary forces in Argentina, like their counterparts in Brazil and in almost all of Latin America, have labeled as "subversive" the activity of the sectors that have identified themselves, although in limited terms, with the people's aspirations for social justice.

The San Pablo incident has snowballed into a crisis in the political panorama of Argentina, which appears to be living through the state of calm that usually precedes great storms. The next few days will probably give a clearer idea of how large the snowball may grow. (Reprinted from *Granma Weekly Review*, January 28, 1968.)

the oligarchy, whom the candidates represent, obviously favors them since it helped draw them up. Expected to win the Presidency is Arnulfo Arias. Himself a member of the oligarchy, Arias has twice been removed from that office, in 1947 and 1955, for having been too "liberal." He did in fact pass some reforms then, mainly a social security act. Arias, who could be likened to Argentina's Peron, has wide popular support. An effective demagogue, Arias would probably enact some mild reforms, if he is allowed to take office. But it isn't believed that he would take the measures necessary to recover Panama's sovereignty or eliminate the widespread social ills that exist.

The left movement, which in Panama means the illegal Communist Party and its allies, is in a difficult position. In 1965, after a popular student leader was murdered by the police, the people of Colon, Panama's second largest city, protested vigorously. During this uprising, in which many people were beaten by police and many government buildings were burned down, Panama's FBI attempted to incite the people against the Communists a la Indonesian style, calling on them to kill all the reds. Although this attempt was a failure, many Communists were jailed and the Party was driven underground.

The Party managed to survive intact and today, though its ranks are much diminished, it continues to function quite actively though, out of necessity, in secret. In the university, Communists and their supporters have successfully dominated the student elections for the last eight years. During my recent visit to Panama, I was told of the many and various activities that the left forces are engaged in. While much work remains to be done, there has been considerable advance made among the students and to a lesser degree among the peasantry, particularly among the plantation workers. The unions are owned by the oligarchy and political development is only beginning to be developed among the workers. But a large, militant strike by teachers a couple of years ago, in which women participated for the first time, indicates an increasing political consciousness among the professional workers.

The political situation in Panama can be summed up thusly: the left forces, though constantly watched and harassed, are quite influential despite their small numbers. The mass of people have not yet attained the level of political consciousness that would warrant armed revolution at this time. They still support Arias. They still have to be weened from their illusions about bourgeois democracy. Much apathy still has to be overcome. However, there are conditions and potentialities that exist which could bring about a rapid, qualitative change in the political scene. Poverty and the other problems common to all Latin America are considerable in Panama. So is the discontent that accompanies these conditions. More importantly, most of the people, possibly 90-95%, are opposed, in one way or another, to the proposed treaties. Anti-yankee sentiment is widespread and is increasing. The situation is ripe for great advances in mass political development.

The oligarchy and the U. S. may well divert attention from the treaties for the time being. But if they attempt to pass the treaties, even in modified form, Panama will very likely witness serious mass uprisings which could threaten the very things the U. S. is trying to save: its oligarchy, its canal and its hegemony.

# GUATEMALA: AN EYE FOR AN EYE

"We must carry the war as far as the enemy carries it: to his home, to his centers of entertainment, in a total war. It is necessary to prevent him from having a moment of peace, a quiet moment outside his barracks or even inside; we must attack him wherever he may be, make him feel like a cornered beast wherever he may move. Then his morale will begin to fail. He will become still more savage, but we shall see the signs of decadence begin to appear."

The above paragraph, an excerpt from the message sent by heroic guerrilla Major Ernesto Che Guevara to the Tricontinental last year, is being put into practice by the guerrillas of Guatemala. This week the Guatemalan capital experienced its most turbulent period of the last few years, following the murder of Rogelia Cruz Martinez, "Miss Guatemala of 1959," whose nude body bearing signs of violence appeared in the locality of Siquimala, where the bullet-ridden bodies of seven peasants shot by members of rightist organizations were also found.

The FAR's vigorous answer to these atrocities was Tuesday, January 16's attack on four high-ranking officers of the U.S. military mission in Guatemala—masterminds of the rightist organizations . . . . Another attack was made the same day against Manuel Villacorta, a high-ranking official of Castillo Armas' regime, who escaped unhurt. That night the residence of Col. Manuel Avila, Chief of the National Police, was fired upon.

On the same day, members of rightist organizations murdered former Representative Alejandro Silva Falla, member of Congress during the Jacobo Arbenz Administration, and his aide, Ricardo Garcia Samayoa. Tuesday night the regime ordered a nation-wide state of alarm and announced that the measure was aimed at "the capture of all leftists and rightists" guilty of the attacks.

The following afternoon, millionaire landowner Alfonso Alejos de la Cerda was killed near the capital's airport. Alejos was considered to be one of the financial sponsors of the NOA and MANO rightist groups. The same day, a captain and his military escort were attacked and wounded while en route to army general headquarters.

Taking advantage of the state of alarm, the regime's repressive forces have arrested dozens of "suspected persons," and violated homes, shops and offices in search of revolutionaries and weapons. Motorists are required to drive at 30 kilometers per hour and are constantly stopped and searched. The press may print only the "special bulletins" issued by the government.

Mendez Montenegro, who has been powerless, despite U.S. support, to stop the FAR and 13th of November guerrillas who have been active in the country for several years, has devoted his efforts during the past few months to the systematic physical suppression of his principal political opponents, mainly those of the left. The possibility of a coup d'etat against his government—which the BBC of London predicted as long ago as last November—has now become real.

For the execution of his crimes, Mendez Montenegro utilizes organizations created and directed by officers of the U.S. military mission in Guatemala. These organizations, with the regime's approval, kidnap, torture and murder the individuals pointed out by the state security forces.

The Organized Nationalist Anti-Communist Movement (MANO), the New Anti-Communist Organization (NOA) and the Anti-Communist Council of Guatemala (CADEG) have been responsible for the murder of more than 4000 persons in the last eighteen months. Yet not a single member of any of these organizations has ever been arrested by the authorities.

A communique issued last May by the Revolutionary Directive Center of the FAR stated that "The gangs of assassins of MANO and other terrorist groups operating under the orders of the Ministry of Defense will receive the punishment they deserve for their numerous crimes."

In spite of last week's events, the general impression exists that this is only a preview of more important activities to come against the Guatemalan regime. (Reprinted from *Granma Weekly Review*, January 28, 1968.)

## MORE ON GUATEMALA

In Guatemala City, all motorists are required to drive at night with their interior lights on. This is done, by law, so that the recently doubled 3,000 man, rifle-toting police force can see who is inside. Better targets for them and the special commando units of the Guatemalan Army camouflaged in their civilian clothes.

To show how serious U.S. government involvement in the Guatemalan civil war is, American officials are trying to suppress the facts on the daily battles occurring there and the deployment of one of the largest Green Beret teams in South America. Further underlying the importance the Pentagon puts on Guatemala is the fact that the U.S. has sent three new Huey helicopters to aid in combating the guerrillas there. Hueys, a basic ingredient of the Vietnam and counterinsurgency war tactics, are in short supply in south-east Asia, but their need in Guatemala was judged by Washington to be more urgent.

Guatemalan forces fighting the guerrillas are avoiding the courts and taking no prisoners in this extra-legal war. Instead—as per U.S. instructions taught in Panama in violation of the 1903 treaty which created an American military presence in the Canal Zone for protection only—captured guerrillas are being shot on the spot . . . . At times, this policy of taking no prisoners has proved highly beneficial in dealing with personal feuds. (*LIBERATION News Service*, Jan. 12.)

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## TO OUR READERS

The magnificent victories of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam in recent weeks have forced many in Washington to begin to think "unthinkable thoughts." They should also stimulate among those who actively oppose the war a re-examination of previously-held positions.

The main immediate goal of the offensive was to wipe out the Saigon puppet structure. This was accomplished. Scores of pacification teams were wiped out and the whole pacification program was shown to be a fraud and a farce. The puppet police system was in large part destroyed. In several towns, including Saigon and Hue, police departments were burned to the ground and thousands of prisoners were freed. The Saigon puppet army, such as it was, suffered heavy defeats, and Wilfred Burchett reports that of the troops that remain, whole battalions have either disintegrated and returned to their homes or gone over to the NLF, bringing their arms with them.

U.S. strategy in recent months has been for the Saigon troops to control the cities and towns, the "secure" bases, thus allowing U.S. troops to fight the war in the countryside and the jungles. What has become more obvious every day—that the secure bases were neither secure nor bases, that the Saigon troops were incapable of suppressing a highly motivated, unified and politically conscious population, and that the U.S. was meeting with failure in the countryside—was made crystal clear with the recent offensive. The U.S. is now faced with an impossible task: to simultaneously suppress the cities and defeat the Liberation Army in the countryside.

The lessons of the offensive for the peace movement and the left here in the U.S. should be learned well. The Vietnamese patriots have been teaching those who would listen for a long time. But now the lessons should be obvious. Critics of their struggle have long maintained that their fight in large part depended on outside—political, diplomatic, military and economic—support, largely from the socialist world. Recently, right wing critics have argued that the Vietnamese were playing for the U.S. elections in hopes that Johnson might be defeated. In fact, of course, the Vietnamese have always held that self-reliance is the key to victory, that it is the political and military strength of its own forces which are decisive.

At the same time, a second lesson is equally important. A revolutionary movement does not limit itself by one-sidedness. Often, in this country, discouragement and pes-

simism set in when immediate victories are not forthcoming. Every time a major demonstration is planned, an argument is made that "we have already tried demonstrations and they don't work." Others reject electoral politics as an avenue of struggle. On the other hand, the resistance movement is put down by some as "alienating the masses." What the Vietnamese have taught us is that a many-sided struggle is necessary. They do not just fight in the countryside but also in the cities. They use armed self-defense, armed propaganda teams, and a number of variants of guerrilla warfare. And they use other military means as well. Their struggle is, however, hardly limited to the military. Political cadres work in the church, the unions, the hamlets and in the army. They even work in the aggressor's army. They wish the war to be over, but they have a sense of history and a long-range view. Concrete tactics are applied to concrete situations. They do not have the leisure to reject possible weapons out of hand.

Finally, their great strength lies in their mass outlook and, therefore, their mass support. Theirs is in every sense of the word, a popular democratic struggle. That such a major operation as the recent offensive in dozens of cities could come off under the noses of the CIA, a terrorist police organization and thousands of spies, obviously meant that informers could not effectively be used against them. Not only does the NLF enjoy the support of the masses but it constantly seeks to widen and deepen that support.

Lyndon Johnson has now had his main props knocked from under him. Whatever myths he wished to perpetrate a month ago are no longer tenable. Nevertheless, his urge will be to widen the aggression, to escalate the murder. What he should have learned and what the American people should now know, is that when Hanoi offered to enter into talks if the U.S. permanently halted its bombing and other acts of aggression, it was doing so from a position of strength. And its strength grows by the day.

Our movement here at home faces grave responsibilities. We can do no less than try to emulate our Vietnamese brothers. This means to fight for unity, to continually struggle to increase our numbers, to use every and all means available—draft resistance, electoral work, disruption of the system, demonstrations—as we see necessary. And we must show that the Vietnamese demands pose the only fair solution to the war: stop the bombing; recognize the NLF; return to the 1954 Geneva Accords recognizing Vietnamese sovereignty, unity and independence; and withdraw U.S. troops and bases.

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