

# CAQ

**BIG BROTHER  
Goes High-Tech**

## CovertAction



### “Enduring Truths,” Changing Markets

—Noam Chomsky

#### ▼ I N S I D E ▼

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—David Banisar

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—John Goetz



# “Enduring Truths,” Changing Markets



by Noam Chomsky

*Adapted from a December 8, 1995 speech in Washington, D.C. to benefit CAQ.*

I'm here in Washington for two talks, one to focus on the international arena and another on the domestic scene. I thought I'd start tonight with the international arena. The two are closely linked, of course, even more so than in the past, as the globalization of the economy and the interconnection of the global system increase. Well, in the international arena, just to get it out of the way, there is a conventional view that in international affairs, US policy since the Second World War has been shaped by the Cold War, that is, by the need to defend the security of the United States in the world against the threat of aggressive Communism. Now that problem is finally over, so there's a new era of great opportunity opening.

Noam Chomsky is institute professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has written and lectured widely on linguistics, philosophy, intellectual history, contemporary issues, international and domestic affairs and policy.

This was articulated very lucidly by the Clinton administration's leading intellectual, the National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, a couple of years ago, when he outlined the Clinton Doctrine, as it came to be called. He said, "Throughout the Cold War, we contained a global threat to market democracies. Now, we should seek to enlarge their reach." And he went on to say that there's no longer any barrier to our extending to the whole world what he called "the enduring truths" about our own history and the "constant face" of everything we have ever done, namely our dedication to "tolerant societies" in which governments do not "abuse people."

The most fundamental of Lake's "enduring truths" is, "Of course, we do not seek to expand the reach of our institutions by force, subversion, or repression." But rather,

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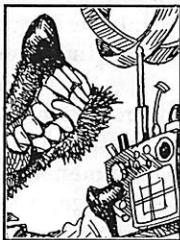
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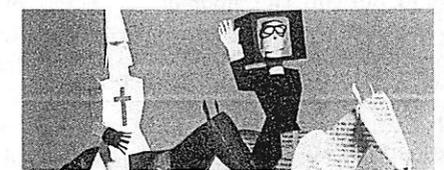
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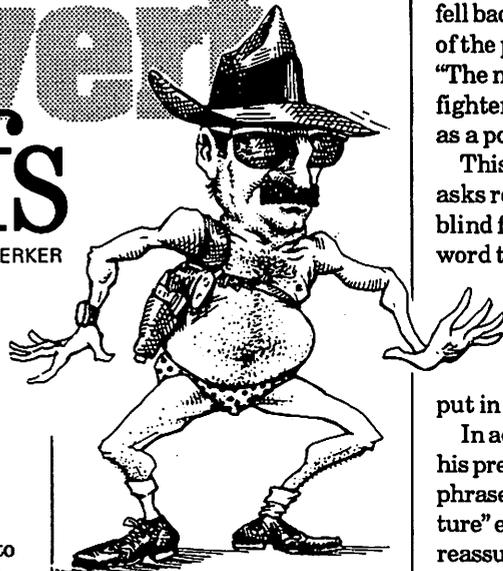
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# Covert Briefs

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT WUERKER



## The Public's Right to Believe

Congress has justly taken much of the rap for failing to oversee and rein in the CIA, but the media deserve a chunk of the blame. Reporting on intelligence often spans the arid gulch between lazy and self-serving; between sycophantish and collusive.

Recently, a panel of the Council on Foreign Relations recommended that the CIA take the gloves off, run more covert ops, and perhaps dump the 1977 ban on using journalists and clergy as non-official cover.

It turns out that the CIA, using a secret loophole, has been selectively circumventing that ban all along.

Dangerous and despicable as the policy of using reporters is, the ways in which media routinely carry the agency's foul water are more subtle and pervasive, but little less servile.

Old intelligence beat specialists like Walter Pincus do get some great inside stuff, but, no doubt, in part because they have established a relationship of confidence and trust with the intelligence community. And one has to wonder, what does it mean if the spooks confide in you, but you, the reporter do not have the same relationship with the reader?

Writing for the *Washington Post* — which officially discourages anonymous

sourcing — Pincus relies on a bevy of nameless insiders. On Jan. 13, he reported that until recently, the CIA had “no formal structure” in Bosnia (citing “a high-ranking intelligence officer”). But now, the CIA “is establishing a significant clandestine presence for the first time in Bosnia to track the activities of political and military opponents of the Dayton peace accord ...” (“intelligence sources”). The operation would also provide the agency with “an opportunity” for the Directorate of Operations to get back in favor with Director John Deutch (“one source familiar with the Bosnian operation”). Other sources for this article:

- “intelligence sources here”
- “officers there”
- “military and intelligence sources”
- (just plain) “sources”
- “a top CIA official”
- “current and former government officials”
- “a current official”
- “a former high-ranking intelligence officer”
- “active and retired intelligence officials”
- “former State Dept. official”
- “an officer associated with the program”
- “former intelligence official”

And when Pincus couldn't think of another appellation

for his unnamed sources, he fell back into the hack-haven of the passive voice as in: “The non-Bosnian Muslim fighters ... have been seen as a potential threat.”

This kind of reporting asks readers to take on blind faith the writer's word that the sources are reliable and gives no opportunity to assess who is grinding which ax to put in whose back and why.

In addition, Pincus rests his premise on the wiggle phrase that “no formal structure” existed. He goes on to reassure readers of the benevolence (to say nothing of the competence) of the CIA which “will deal with the bad guys and keep track of good police and interior types” (“a government intelligence official”) — perhaps using the same team “that branded Haiti's Aristide a psychopath and put Emmanuel Constant on the agency payroll to tell the good guys from the bad, and the bad guys from the good old boys” (one cynic in the CAQ office).

## More Random Violence

The *Post's* blind spots can become black holes capable of sucking in all meaning. It recently reported on a Haitian “gang” believed to be part of the “Red Army” that operates in the slums of Cité Soleil: “The group armed with machine guns and other weapons, is demanding jobs and improved living conditions but is not believed to have an ideological agenda.”

## Newt Gingrich: Accessory to Murder?

CAQ reported last issue that Newt Gingrich, an ex-officio member of the House Intelligence Committee, was pushing an \$18 million covert operation to “change the nature” of the government of Iran. On New Year's eve, the program was quietly incor-

porated into the 1996 intelligence spending bill, buried in a secret part of the military authorization bill. When the news surfaced, Teheran, predictably, responded to the threat. It appropriated \$20 million to “uncover and neutralize” the US program by among other methods arresting and executing opponents on charges of espionage. On Jan. 23, Iran announced that three jailed Iranians charged with spying for the US would be executed.

## A Pat on the Back

After Newt Gingrich whined that Clinton had snubbed him on the plane ride to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's funeral, Rep. Pat Schroeder stood up in Congress to offer the Speaker a mock Oscar for “Best Performance by a Child Actor.”

## Mickey Rat and Pocahontas Legree

The 7¢ a maquila worker gets for sewing a pair of Pocahontas PJs, is one half of one percent of \$11.97 that Wal-Mart charges the US consumer. According to the National Labor Committee (NLC), Haitian workers sewing Pocahontas and Mickey Mouse pajamas and other garments for export to the US “are forced to endure starvation wages, are robbed of benefits, and routinely face inhuman production speed-ups, forced overtime, filthy working conditions, and gross sexual abuse.” Although former Pres. Jean-Bertrand Aristide raised the minimum wage to \$2.40 a day, employers circumvent even this base through setting unrealistic, illegal quotas and paying by the piece.

They are abetted by the Agency for International Development which had fervently promoted foreign investment in Haiti's assembly industries during the Duvalier dictatorship. When Aristide was elected presi-

dent, however, AID abruptly halted support and undercut his ability to enforce reform.

The NLC, which recently forced the GAP clothing company to allow independent monitoring of labor standards of its suppliers throughout Central America, calls for "living wage standards as a condition for world trade." Said Charlie Kernaghan, director of NCL, "Haiti proves again that the so-called corporate codes of conduct policed by the companies themselves are pure PR. Further, how does it help the US people when when companies like JC Penney and Walt Disney pay starvation wages in Haiti? How can you have free trade with a country that pays its workers \$.30 an hour."

### Fine-tuning the Thumb Screws

Accusation of torture can just ruin a bureaucrat's day: There are all those stubborn blood stains to scrub off the national image and costly PR campaigns to muffle the screams.

Israel, which has long been accused of routinely torturing prisoners, mostly unruly Palestinians, has launched a cleanup — of its image. A new proposal would impose a 10-20-year prison term on civil servants who torture or authorize torture, unless the "pain and suffering [is] inherent in interrogation procedures or punishment according to the law." And the law, governed by a set of 1987 guidelines, neatly excepts interrogators who use "a moderate measure of physical pressure," not reaching "the level of torture."

Whoever writes Tel Aviv's doublespeak also deserves a heartfelt *mazeltov* for this little triumph in the delicate art of self-serving dissembling. Israel finally paid a financial settlement to the widow and two children of Ahmed Bouchikhi. In 1973, the Moroccan immigrant

was working as waiter in Norway when Mossad agents, mistaking him for a terrorist, gunned him down. Israel described the payment, made 22 years later, as a way of thanking Norway for its role in the peace process and not as an admission of guilt. Said Prime Minister Shimon Peres: "Israel will not take responsibility because Israel is not a killing machine." Bouchikhi was not available for comment.

### Illiberal Benchmarks

One of the main arguments liberals mounted for supporting Clinton in the '92 elections was the president's ability to appoint judges. How has Clinton done? The Alliance for Justice reported that Clinton has shied away from putting bona fide liberals on the federal bench. (Al Kamen of the *Washington Post*, missing the point that Clinton is not a liberal himself and therefore would be unlikely to appoint them, surmised that the president was motivated by "fear of tangling with Senate Republicans.")

What about "minority" appointments? Clinton started well, with 25% in 1993, and 36.5% in '94, but the number fell last year to only 15%.

Also revealing was that of Clinton's 185 federal appointments, 53 had experience as prosecutors, while only two had been public defenders.

But in the end, money talks and class outs: A third of his appointments — a higher percentage than either Reagan or Bush achieved — were millionaires.

### Dangerous (to Whom) Substances

While possessing five grams of crack will get you a mandatory five years in prison, ordering up a batch of the bubonic plague bacterium that wiped out one-third of 14th-century Europe, turns out to be perfectly legal. So is

holding even more dangerous pathogens such as anthrax and ricin botulinal toxin, called "the most lethal substance known."

When white supremacist Larry Wayne Harris complained that the FedEx shipment of plague for which he had paid \$240 was late, someone at the Rockville, Md.-based American Type Culture Collection grew suspicious and notified the Centers for Disease Control.

Soon the FBI, police, public health officials, and emergency workers in spacesuits were knocking at his door. In the house they found smoke grenades, blasting caps, almost a dozen M-1 carbines, and white separatist literature. In the glove compartment of his car, parked in his driveway, sat the three vials of plague still packed in two layers of glass, absorbent foam and a sealed metal canister.

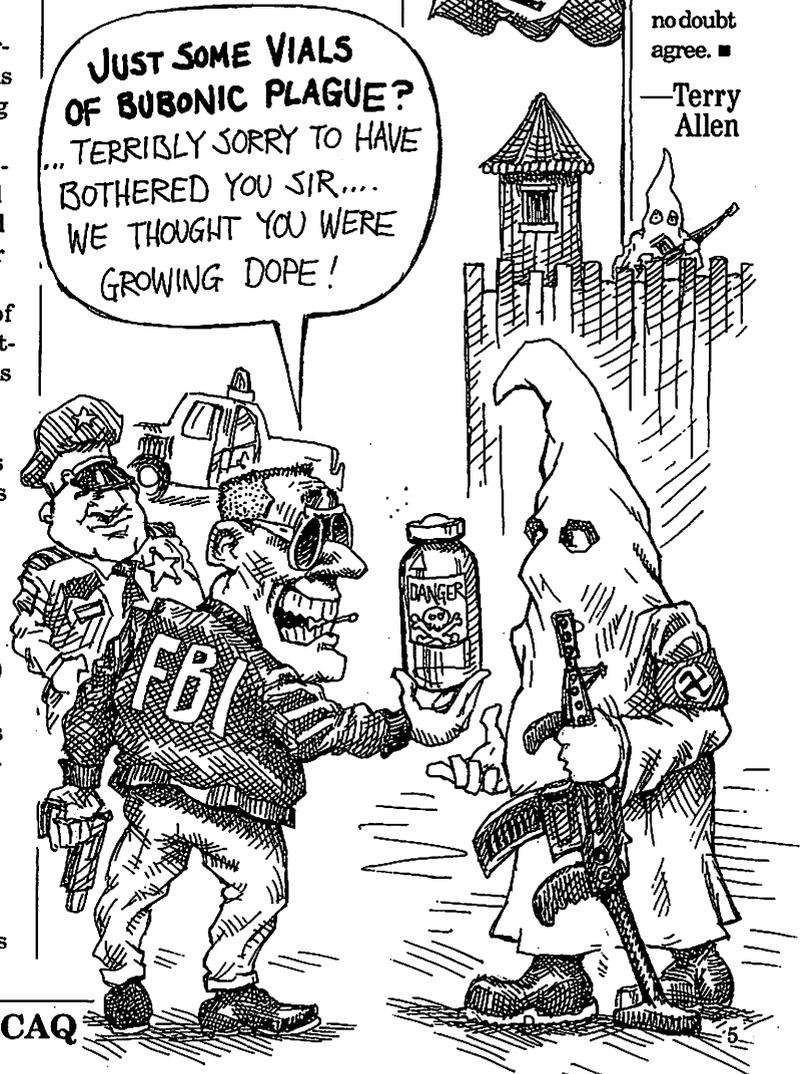
They were labeled "infectious substance" as required by federal regulations. But in the end, all they could pin on the certified microbiologist and Aryan Nations member was a single charge of wire fraud for giving his home address instead of that of the lab listed on his permit.

### The Fine Art of the Perk

Rather than mingle with the people — who waited hours in the bitter cold for tickets and then jostled for a place before the paintings — CIA head John Deutch got in early to see the Johannes Vermeer exhibit at the National Gallery. Explained his spokesperson, "It's a little-known fact that art lovers pose a significant threat to the national

security." Jesse Helms would no doubt agree. ■

—Terry Allen



# Big Brother Goes High-Tech



by David Banisar

*"Subtler and more far-reaching means of invading privacy have become available to the government. Discovery and invention have made it possible for the government, by means far more effective than stretching upon the rack, to obtain disclosure in court of what is whispered in the closet." — US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, 1928<sup>1</sup>*

Today, Justice Brandeis would be appalled by new surveillance technologies that go far beyond anything he could imagine. Rapid tech-

David Banisar is co-author of *The Electronic Privacy Sourcebook* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, May 1996), and editor of the *International Privacy Bulletin*. He is an attorney at the Electronic Privacy Information Center and Deputy Director of Privacy International. (Privacy International will be sponsoring its second conference on Advanced Surveillance Technologies in Ottawa, Canada, on September 16, 1996. For more information, see <http://www.epic.org> or fax 202-547-5482.)  
1. *US v. Olmstead*, 277 U.S. 438 (1928), (Brandeis dissenting).

nological advances, in conjunction with the end of the Cold War and the demand for greater bureaucratic efficiency, are promoting a seamless web of surveillance from cradle to grave, from bankbook to bedroom. New technologies developed by the defense industry are spreading into law enforcement, civilian agencies, and private companies. At the same time, outdated laws and regulations are failing to check an expanding pattern of abuses.

In Justice Brandeis' time and up to the 1960s, surveillance was mostly tedious manual and clerical labor. Tracing people's activities required physically following them from place to place at close range, interviewing those they came in contact with, typing up the information, and storing it in file cabinets — with little possibility for cross-referencing. Only governments willing to go to extremes were able to conduct widespread surveillance. Electronic surveil-

lance was similarly a one-on-one proposition; the East German secret police, for example, employed 500,000 secret informers, 10,000 just to eavesdrop on and transcribe its citizens' conversations.<sup>2</sup>

The development of powerful computers able to centrally store and process large amounts of information revolutionized surveillance. In addition to the millions of tax dollars spent developing law enforcement applications,<sup>3</sup> the federal government used the new computer systems to increase the efficiency and reach of its bureaucracies.

At the same time, the private sector was exploring the profit-making possibilities. Companies offering telephone, credit card, banking, and other consumer services began using massive computer systems not only to increase efficiency, but to apply to credit, marketing, and other schemes.

Now, information on almost every person in the developed world is computerized in several hundred databases collected, analyzed, and disseminated by governments and corporations. And increasingly, these computers are linked up and sharing their cyber-gossip. Using high speed networks with advanced intelligence and single identification numbers such as the Social Security number, computers can create instant, comprehensive dossiers on millions of people without the need for a centralized computer system. New developments in genetic and medical research and care, advanced transportation systems, and financial transfers have dramatically increased the quantity of detail available. A body of national and international laws and agreements facilitates the transfer of information across state and national borders and frequently prevents local and national communities from regulating against invasions of privacy. A pending bill, S. 1360, would allow credit information bureaus such as Equifax to compile giant databases of medical records without notifying patients, and would further restrict states from passing laws to protect privacy.

### End of the Cold War

Intelligence, defense, and law enforcement agencies have a long history of

2. Speech by Hansjorg Geiger, German Federal Commission for the Stasi Files, Apr. 14, 1993.

3. The 1966 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommendation for more funding of technology for law enforcement led to a research project under the National Institute of Justice.

stretching and breaking those legal constraints enacted to protect civil liberties.<sup>4</sup> And with the end of the Cold War, defense and intelligence agencies are seeking new missions to justify their budgets and are transferring technologies to civilian applications. The CIA and National Security Agency, for example, are emphasizing economic espionage and stressing cooperation with law enforcement agencies on issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and money laundering. In 1993, the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Justice (DoJ) signed a memorandum of understanding for "Operations Other Than War and Law Enforcement" to facilitate joint development and sharing of technology.

The government is also using grants to influence the direction of research and development (R&D). While many federal grants have been dried up by

Information on almost every person in the developed world is computerized in several hundred databases collected, analyzed, and disseminated by governments and corporations.

budget cuts, generous funding still flows to encourage public-private sector cooperation in computer technology. The National Laboratories, such as Rome, Ames, Sandia, and Los Alamos, have active R&D partnerships with the FBI; the National Institute of Justice is providing grants and support to transfer this technology to local and state police agencies. The DoD's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) has provided tens of millions of dollars to private companies through its Technology Reinvestment Project to help develop civilian applications for military surveillance technology.

To counteract reductions in military contracts which began in the 1980s, computer and electronics companies are expanding into new markets — at home and abroad — with equipment originally developed for the military.<sup>5</sup>

4. See, e.g., Ward Churchill and Jim Vanderwall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents From the FBI's Secret War Against Dissent in the US* (Boston: South End Press, 1990).  
5. Peter Behr, "Information Technology, As Contracts Funds Shift to State and Local Governments; Demand Grows for Software and Systems," *Washington Post*, Oct. 9, 1995, p. F12.

Companies such as E-Systems, Electronic Data Systems (founded by Ross Perot), and Texas Instruments are selling advanced computer and surveillance equipment to state and local governments that use them for law enforcement, border control, and administering state programs such as welfare. The companies are also pushing their products to numerous Third World countries with dismal human rights records. Not surprisingly, repressive regimes in Thailand, China, and Turkey are using the US-made equipment to crush political dissent.<sup>6</sup>

### Bureaucratic Invasions

The authoritarian impulse is not the only motive for the expansion of information technology. The simple need for increased bureaucratic efficiency — necessitated by shrinking budgets for social spending — is a force behind much of the push for improved identification and monitoring of individuals. Fingerprints, ID cards, data matching, and other privacy-invasive schemes were originally tried on populations with little political power, such as welfare

recipients, immigrants, criminals, and members of the military, and then applied up the socioeconomic ladder. Once in place, the policies are difficult to remove and inevitably expand into more general use. Corporations are also quick to adapt these technologies for commercial use to target consumers, to manipulate markets, and to select, monitor, and control employees.

The technologies fit roughly into three broad categories: surveillance, identification, and networking. Frequently used together — as with biometrics and ID cards, or video cameras and face recognition — they facilitate the mass and routine surveillance of large segments of the population without the need for warrants and formal investigations. What the East German secret police could only dream of is rapidly becoming reality in the "free world."

6. Privacy International, *Big Brother Incorporated: A Report on the International Trade in Surveillance Technology and its Links to the Arms Industry*, available in electronic form on the Worldwide Web at [http://www.privacy.org/pi/reports/big\\_bro/](http://www.privacy.org/pi/reports/big_bro/)



MORPHO SYSTEMS, INC.

**Morpho's PR boasts its Tacoma, Washington facility can "operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can process more than 20,000 tenprint [fingerprint] cards each day."**

## ID TECHNOLOGIES

### Playing Cards & Numbers

In a computerized and networked world, a universal unique person identifier allows easy retrieval and consolidation of data. Pressure for a single identifier — ostensibly to facilitate information sharing for administrative purposes — is increasing and several schemes currently in place are sliding toward a mandatory system of universal identification.

• **Identification numbers.** In the US, the Social Security Number (SSN) was developed in 1938 to identify workers eligible for government retirement benefits. In 1961, the IRS began using it as a tax identification number and slowly other agencies followed. Since banks and other non-governmental entities can legally turn away customers who refuse to supply a SSN, its use in the private sector is virtually taken for granted in everything from medical insurance to telephone to credit applications. Several bills pending in Congress would create new national databases rooted to the SSN for all eligible job holders and for welfare and immigration purposes.

• **Identification cards.** Once a system of universal identification is established, it is a short step to requiring people to have and carry ID cards. The history of ID cards is long and ignoble. The Roman Empire used tiles called *tesserae* to identify slaves, soldiers, and citizens over 2,000 years ago. The most notorious modern example — the South African passbook, which helped regulate apartheid — contained relatively little information compared with today's cards. In addition to name, address, and identification numbers, the modern incarnation of the *tesserae* can include photograph, fingerprints and magnetic strips or microchips to automate entering the data into reading devices.

In a process that privacy advocates call "function creep," cards originally designed for a single-use are being expanded to link multiple databases. In Thailand, Control Data Systems set up a universal ID card to track all citizens.<sup>7</sup> (See p. 11.)

"Smart cards," widely used in Europe, have an embedded microchip that can hold several pages of information. Even more advanced optical technology, which can store hundreds of pages of data on a chip, is currently used in the US. Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corporation recently announced that it was providing 50,000 Florida

### Two soldiers have sued to keep their DNA out of a registry in which the Pentagon plans to store 18 million samples for 75 years.

residents with cards that could hold medical records, including X-rays.

Multifunction cards are the next step. Utah is one of several states considering a single smart card for such diverse services as motor vehicle registration and libraries. Other federal government proposals for "reinventing government" call for a single card for welfare benefits, food stamps, and other

federal government functions. Florida and Maryland have already experimented with the concept.

And the cards are getting smarter all the time. "Active badges," already in use in numerous high-tech companies, transmit their location and, of course, that of the wearer.

### Body Parts

• **Biometrics.** If a corporation or government goes to all this expense and trouble, it needs ways of definitively identifying individuals and making sure they are not confused with one another. Biometrics — verification through unique physical characteristics — began in the late 19th century with fingerprinting. Recently, automated systems which electronically scan and digitalize fingerprints have taken the technology beyond its traditional role in criminal investigations. The FBI has spent several hundred million dollars over the last few years creating an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). Because of the improvements in access, fingerprints are now used for more applications at the state level as well. California and New York require all welfare beneficiaries to be fingerprinted. Even after a New York survey revealed that little fraud was actually detected by the massive fingerprinting effort,<sup>8</sup> the state expanded its program to include all members of the recipient's family. And, as in so many other cases, the technology is moving from the margins of society into the mainstream.

California is now requiring thumbprints on drivers' licenses; several banks in the Southwest are fingerprinting non-customers who wish to cash checks; and a proposed California referendum would require all newborns to be fingerprinted and issued an official ID card.

A particularly steep incline on the slippery slope to universal tracking is greased with DNA. The complex molecular structure that holds a genetic code unique to each individual is present in even the smallest sample of hair, tissue, or bodily fluids. Many states are now empowered to take DNA samples from all convicted felons. The FBI has already spent hundreds of millions of

7. Philip Elmer-DeWitt, "Peddling Big Brother," *Time*, June 24, 1991.

8. Kimberly McLarin, "Welfare Fingerprinting Finds Most People Are Telling Truth," *New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1995, p. B1.

dollars on the technology and infrastructure to create a computer network to link the state databases to create a de facto central registry.

But the largest single DNA database is being proposed by the Department of Defense, which plans to create a registry of all current and former military and reserve soldiers. Ostensibly designed to identify bodies, the registry would hold four million samples by 2001 and eventually be expanded to handle 18 million. Claiming that destroying the samples when the person left the service would be "impractical," the DoD proposes storing the DNA for 75 years. Two soldiers have filed suit to prevent the collection of their genetic information, arguing that it is an invasion of privacy and that there are no restrictions on how the DNA can be used.<sup>9</sup>

Somewhat less physically intrusive is a system based on hand geometry, which measures the length and distances between fingers. The US, Netherlands, Canada, and Germany have started a pilot program in which international travelers will be issued a smart card that records the unique hand measurements. Each time travelers pass through customs, they present the card and place their hand in a reader that verifies their identity and links into numerous databases. The member countries have signed an international agreement facilitating information sharing and agreeing to eventually require all international travelers to use the cards. Marketed by Control Data Systems and Canon, it already has 50,000 participants.

### Sneaking a Peek

In all of these methods of verification, the targeted individual is usually aware of being checked and is often required to cooperate. To facilitate covert identification, much research is currently being conducted into facial recognition and facial thermography. Facial recognition is based on measuring facial curves from several angles, digitalizing the information, and doing a computer

comparison with existing images in a database or on an ID card.<sup>10</sup> NeuroMetric, a Florida manufacturer, claims that its system can scan 20 faces a second, and by 1997 will be able to scan and compare images against a database of 50 million faces in seconds. The Immigration and Naturalization Service is spending millions in a pilot program using video cameras and computer databases to identify "known illegal and criminal aliens, terrorists, drug traffickers and other persons of special interest to the US Government" at airports, checkpoints and other ports-of-entry.<sup>11</sup> A.C. Neilson, the large marketing company, recently patented a

teller machines, point-of-sale terminals, welfare agencies, and computer networks.<sup>13</sup> One serious drawback, they admit, is that alcohol consumption radically changes the thermograms.

## SURVEILLANCE AND DATAVEILLANCE

Unless the quality of information keeps pace with the quantity, though, the old computer motto "garbage in, garbage out" rules. Not surprisingly, then, the commercial and governmental forces that have pushed for improved identification technologies are

also supporting ways to refine information-gathering techniques. New technologies have enhanced the ability to see through walls, overhear conversations, and track movement. At the same time, "dataveillance" — following people through their computerized record trail — has become part of daily life.

• **Advanced microphones.** The FBI's and ARPA's "Rapid Prototyping Facility" at the Virginia Quantico Research Laboratory is producing "microminiature electronics systems" — unique surveillance equipment customized for each separate investigation. They hope for a 24-hour turnaround for specifically designed devices, including a "microphone on a chip." The

FBI has already developed a solid-state "briefcase-size electronically steerable microphone array prototype," that can "discreetly monitor" conversations across open areas. On the state and local level, jurisdictions such as Washington, D.C., and Redwood City, California, are considering microphone systems first developed to detect submarines. Placed around the city, they would "hear" gunshots and call in the location to police headquarters.<sup>14</sup>

• **Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTC).** Technical developments have in-



system using facial recognition for covertly identifying shoppers to track their buying habits around a particular region.<sup>12</sup>

Facial thermography measures the characteristic heat patterns emitted by each face. Mikos Corporation claims that its Facial Access Control by Elemental Shapes (FACES) system can identify individuals regardless of temperature, facial hair, and even surgery, by measuring 65,000 temperature points with an accuracy level surpassing fingerprints. It estimates that by 1999, with a price tag of only \$1,000, the devices could be used in automated

13. Francine J. Prokoski, "Identification of individuals by means of Facial Thermography," Institute for Electronics and Electrical Engineers, 1992 International Conference, p. 120.

14. Jennifer Warren, "Sensors Tested as Weapon in Cities' War on Gunfire," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 3, 1996, p. A1.

10. Simon Davies, *Big Brother* (London: Pan Books, 1996).

11. INS Funding Request, FY 1993.

12. US Patent No. 5,331,544, July 19, 1994.

9. Susan Essoyan, "2 Marines Challenge Pentagon Order to Give DNA Samples," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 27, 1995, p. A5.

creased the capabilities and lowered the cost of video cameras, making them a regular feature in stores and public areas. In the UK, dozens of cities have centrally controlled, comprehensive city-wide CCTC systems that can track individuals wherever they go, even if they enter buildings. Effective even in extreme low light, the cameras can read a cigarette pack 100 yards away. Baltimore recently announced plans to put 200 cameras in the city center. The FBI has miniaturized CCTC units it can put in a "lamp, clock radio, briefcase, duffel bag, purse, picture frame, utility pole, coin telephone, book and other [objects]" and then control remotely to "pan/tilt, zoom and focus."

•**Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR).** Originally developed for use in fighter planes and helicopters to locate enemy aircraft, FLIR can detect a temperature differential as small as .18 degrees centigrade. Texas Instruments and others are marketing handheld and automobile- and helicopter-mounted models that can essentially look through walls to determine activities inside buildings.<sup>15</sup> Law enforcement agents are pointing them at neighborhoods to detect higher temperatures in houses where artificial lights are used to grow marijuana. They are also using FLIR to track people and cars on the Mexican border and search for missing people and fugitives.

## These detectors use radar to scan beneath clothing to detect items such as guns and drugs.

•**Passive millimeter wave detectors.** Developed by Militech Corporation, these detectors use a form of radar to scan beneath clothing. By monitoring the millimeter wave portion of the electromagnetic spectrum emitted by the human body, the system can detect items such as guns and drugs from a range of 12 feet or more. It can also look through

15. Bureau of National Affairs, *Criminal Practice Manual*, Sept. 28, 1994, p. 451.

building walls and detect activity. Militech received a \$2 million grant from ARPA's Technology Reinvestment Project to fund development of working systems for local police.<sup>16</sup>

•**Van Eck Monitoring.** Every computer emits low levels of electromagnetic radiation from the monitor, processor,



and attached devices. Although experts disagree whether the actual range is a only a few yards or up to a mile, these signals can be remotely recreated on another computer. Aided by a transmitting device to enhance the signals, the FBI reportedly used Van Eck Monitoring to extract information from spy Aldrich Ames' computer and relay it for analysis.

•**Intelligent Transportation Systems.** ITS refers to a number of traffic management technologies, including crash-avoidance systems, automated toll collection, satellite-based position location, and traffic-based toll pricing.<sup>17</sup> To facilitate these services, the system tracks the movements of all people using public or private transportation. As currently proposed by TRW, a leading developer of the technologies involved, the

16. Andy Coghlan, et al., "Nowhere to Hide," *New Scientist* (London, special supplement), Nov. 4, 1995, p. 4.

17. Sheri Alpert, "Intelligent Transportation Systems in the United States," *International Privacy Bulletin*, v. 3, n. 3, p. A1.

data collected on travel will be available for both law enforcement and private uses such as direct marketing. Automated toll collection is already in operation in several states, including New York, Florida, and California. Tracking systems for counterintelligence purposes are also already in place in New York City, where the FBI has set up a permanent "real time physical tracking system."<sup>18</sup> On a commercial level, insurers are pushing car owners to install the "Lojack," which is supposed to help retrieve stolen cars by sending out location signals once the system is remotely activated. Since cellular phones transmit location information to the home system to determine call routing, they can also be used for automated tracking of the caller's movements. In 1993, fugitive Colombian drug kingpin Pablo Escobar was pinpointed through his cellular phone. Currently there is an effort to develop a 911 system for cellular systems that would give location information for every cellular phone.

•**Digital Cash.** Potentially, digital cash will create one of the most comprehensive systems for the collection of information on individuals. Using computer software and smart cards to replace physical cash, consumers can spend virtual money for small transactions such as reading an electronic newspaper online, making phone calls from pay phones, paying electronic tolls, buying groceries, as well as for any transaction currently done through credit cards. Since most of the systems under development (such as the one by Mondex in Canada and the UK), retain information on each transaction, they create an unprecedented amount of information on individual preferences and spending habits. Another system, Digi-cash, which provides for anonymous online transactions, is offered by the Mark Twain Bank in St. Louis. Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies have been fighting anonymous digital cash on the grounds that it could be used for money laundering.

18. David Burnham, *Above the Law: Secret Deals, Political Fixes, and Other Misadventures of the U.S. Department of Justice* (New York: Scribner Books, 1996), p. 138.

# The Repression Trade

by Simon Davies

The Western world gave a collective cheer when pro-democracy demonstrators occupied Beijing's Tiananmen Square. China, after all, is the regime we love to hate. Receiving less coverage was the systematic witch hunt that followed. The Chinese authorities tortured and interrogated thousands of citizens in an attempt to ferret out the subversives. But even if their comrades had resisted the terrors of the secret police, the hapless students stood little chance of anonymity. Mounted throughout Tiananmen Square were UK-manufactured surveillance cameras. The images they recorded were repeatedly broadcast over Chinese television and used to identify and locate almost all of the targeted protesters.

The Beijing tragedy is just one example of Western surveillance technology supporting military and totalitarian regimes. According to a report by Privacy International, Western companies linked to the international arms industry are investing big money in Big Brother. More than 70 percent of the hundreds of firms manufacturing and exporting surveillance technology named in a Privacy International report also export arms, chemical weapons, or military hardware. The biggest sources are the UK and the US, followed by France, Israel, the Netherlands, and Germany.

Some companies tapped into the repression trade early on. US-based IBM and British computer firm ICL (International Computers Limited) provided the technological infrastructure for the South African automated passbook system, upon which much of the functioning of the apartheid regime depended. In the late 1970s, Security Systems International supplied security technology to Idi Amin's brutal regime in Uganda. In the 1980s, Israeli-based Tadiram (recently purchased by US-based Electronic Data Systems, founded by Ross Perot) developed and exported the technology for the computerized death list used by Guatemalan intelligence. PK Electronics provided the Chinese authorities with bugging equipment and telephone tapping devices.

Much of the technology these companies export is crucial to maintaining the infrastructure of repression. In such non-democratic countries as Nigeria, China, Rwanda, Zambia, and Indonesia, it tracks the activities of dissidents, human rights activists, journalists, student leaders, minorities, trade union leaders, and political opponents. It is also used to monitor larger sectors of the population, cheaply and efficiently capturing, analyzing, and transmitting the financial transactions, communica-

tions activity, and geographic movements of millions of people. This sophisticated computer-based technology vastly increases the power of authorities and puts mechanisms of political control within their easy reach.

The notorious human rights abuses in Indonesia — particularly those affecting East Timor — would not be possible without the strategic and technological support of Western companies. Suppliers of surveillance and targeting technology to the Indonesian police and military include Morpho Systems (France), De la Rue Printak (UK), EEV Night Vision (UK), ICL (UK), Marconi Radar and Control Systems (UK), Pyser (UK), Siemens Plessey Defence Systems (UK), Rockwell International Corporation (US), and SWS Security (US).

## Thailand Sets a Brutal Pace

The Thailand Central Population Database and ID card system, developed by US-based Control Data Systems, involves sophisticated intelligence that has been used by the Thai military for political control. (Similar ID card and smart card systems have been marketed to more than two dozen developing countries.) The government-issued ID card features electronic fingerprint and facial imaging, and is linked to an electronic database covering the entire population. The database spans most government agencies and is controlled by the powerful military/police-dominated Interior Ministry.

After extensive discussions with Thai authorities, Control Data designed a system which accesses a staggering variety of databases, including: Central Population Database, National Election System, Political Party Database, Political Member Database, Voter Listing, Electronic Minority Group Registration System, Electronic Fingerprint Identification System, Electronic Face Identification System, Population and House Report System, National Tax Collection System, Village Information System, Secret Information System, Public Opinion System, Criminal Investigation System, National Security System, Social Security System, Passport Control System, Driver Control System, Gun Registration System, Family Registration System, Alien Control System, and Immigration Control System.

The Smithsonian Institution was so impressed that it gave the Thai government its and *Computerworld's* joint annual award for innovative use of technology — which the Thai Ministry of the Interior was then able to wave in the face of critics.

The abuses in Thailand are being replicated and improved on in both the First and Third Worlds. According to Privacy International, "the unregulated development and export of these technologies create grave and unnecessary threats to developing countries." ■

Simon Davies is a law fellow at the University of Essex and director general of Privacy International.

Source: *Big Brother Incorporated: A Report on the International Trade in Surveillance Technology and its Links to the Arms Industry* (London: Privacy International, 1995).

# Electronic Sheep to the Slaughter

*Dateline: Los Angeles, July 2021, 5:30 a.m.* As citizen 016-36-5420 sleeps, her computer checks in with the local power authority (a subsidiary of the communications company) which signals the coffee maker to start up, and confirms a 6 a.m. wake-up call. Over breakfast, she reads the articles on the computer screen that her intelligent agent has clipped to fit her personal communications profile. She pays for the service by inserting a digital cash card and pressing her thumb up against the reader to verify identity. The system checks her bank to confirm sufficient funds, debits the amount, and enters her updated credit information into a database linked to marketers, insurers, law enforcement, and 1,700 other organizations.

In her car an hour later, the onboard computer checks with the local traffic authority and picks the best route to work. An automatic roadway scanner records her route by reading information on the license plate, checks that she doesn't speed, and debits tolls. Meanwhile, a video display flashes ads from local restaurants and stores as the car approaches them. Automatic sensors probe the car for contraband.

At gate of her workplace, after her identity is automatically confirmed by a facial/thermal recognition system, she parks. On the job, a badge electronically transmits her loca-

tion wherever she goes. The automated toilet checks for the presence of illicit drugs and other anomalies inconsistent with her medical profile. Her desktop computer constantly checks to ensure that she is not playing games, wasting time, using unauthorized programs, or receiving personal communications. Phone calls she makes are randomly scanned by her employers, law enforcement and intelligence agencies in search of trigger phrases, such as gun, explosive, and union. As she leaves work, a scanner checks for pilfered property.

After work, she goes to a union meeting, where an investigative firm hired by the employer uses microphones and thermal detectors to secretly observe the meeting, record the proceedings and identify the participants.

She stops by the grocery store to buy food and other items with the digital cash card but decides against buying desert or beer after the rise in the last insurance bill. Her purchasing profile is updated and forwarded to her employer, to the insurance company, and to a consortium of large marketing companies. After a stop at the hardware store to buy fertilizer for the garden, the data is automatically relayed to a database on potential terrorists.

Back home, she turns on the communications device. Over 2,000 different programs are listed with probable preferences at the top. After she chooses, specially targeted advertising is relayed while her viewing profile is automatically updated and the national ratings company is notified. As citizen 016-36-5420 sleeps, she may be forgiven for dreaming of electronic sheep. ■

— D.B.

## DISSEMINATION AND ANALYSIS

Once information is gathered and linked using the unique identifiers and networks, it can then be analyzed using artificial intelligence and eventually disseminated. Databases supplemented by artificial intelligence systems can scan through the vast quantities of information and detect patterns and relationships.

• **Databases.** The government maintains hundreds of databases with information on individuals. One of the largest, the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC), contains over 24 million records and connects over 500,000 users in 19,000 federal, state and local agencies. Over the past several years, NCIC has grown to include juvenile records, and in 1994 it incorporated records of suspected gang members and terrorists. Every year, over a million NCIC records are accessed for criminal investigations and civil background checks. A 1993 General Accounting Office report found that there was virtually no computer security or con-

trol on the system and that abuses regularly occurred.<sup>19</sup>

Seeking to further expand access to NCIC, FBI Director Freeh is lobbying the FCC for radio broadcast spectrums to provide mobile access to a national system connecting federal, state, and local officials. Motorola Corporation is already offering wireless access to the

To hide its purchases of direct marketing lists to add to databases for investigations, the DEA had the Tennessee Valley Authority buy the lists for it.

NCIC database, bar code scanning of drivers' licenses, and cameras for instant transmission of pictures.

At the same time, the private sector has been increasing its capabilities at an even greater rate. Using purchase records, surveys, credit reports, department of motor vehicle and medical re-

19. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

ords, and numerous other files, direct marketing companies are gobbling up information about individuals to create comprehensive records for targeted selling. Donnelly Marketing claims to maintain records on 86 million households and 125 million individuals. Many of these databases are also being used by the federal government. The FBI,

DEA, and IRS have all secretly purchased direct marketing lists to add to their databases for investigations. To hide its purchase, the DEA even went to the trouble of having the Tennessee Valley Authority buy it the lists.<sup>20</sup>

• **Artificial Intelligence.**

The more comprehensive and interconnected systems use artificial intelligence (AI) to detect patterns and relationships. There are several types of AI used for law enforcement, including link-analysis, which can explore relationships between different pieces of information;<sup>21</sup> neural

20. Document obtained by author under the Freedom of Information Act.

21. Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), *Information Technologies for Control of Money Laundering*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Sept. 1995, p. 56.

networks, which attempt to emulate the human brain to make inferences about information,<sup>22</sup> and expert systems, which process data based on rules entered into the computer by experts. One of the largest users of intelligent systems is the Treasury Department, to help it detect money laundering and drug trafficking. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), a "database of databases," links hundreds of government databases, including ones containing "suspicious transaction" reports, DEA files, and commercial information. After applying an expert-based system to analyze information and assign scores rating each transaction, FinCEN then uses link-analysis.<sup>23</sup> The FBI is also using AI to track organized crime, drug enforcement, and counterterrorism through its multi-domain expert system (MDES) which also links associates, phone calls, and relationships of suspects.<sup>24</sup>

### Legal and Political Response

From the 1928 *Olmstead* decision, when the Supreme Court ruled that wiretapping was not a search under the Fourth Amendment, through recent decisions on computer databases, the legal response to new surveillance technologies has been mixed. In 1968, the Court overruled *Olmstead* and decided that the Constitution "protects people, not places." The decision established that technologies that breach a "reasonable expectation of privacy" violate the Fourth Amendment and therefore require a court order based on "probable cause."<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, the Court often finds, unreasonably in many cases, that individuals do not have an expectation of privacy for their bank records, phone numbers, and other personal information held by third parties.

In at least one case, the courts have shown an inclination to protect privacy from the new technologies. They split on the use of the heat-detecting Forward Looking Infrared, with several federal circuit courts ruling that FLIR

does not violate the Fourth Amendment because the energy that is released and detected is "waste heat."<sup>26</sup> The most recent decision in the 10th Circuit, however, questions the legality of using both FLIR and other new surveillance technologies. In a marijuana growing



nologies.<sup>28</sup> He says that in decisions, such as the 1928 *Olmstead* case, the Court was "implausibly reading the Constitution's text as though it represented a deliberate decision not to extend protection to threats that 18th-century thinkers simply had not foreseen." In more recent cases, Tribe noted, court decisions have reflected "a failure of technological foresight and imagination, rather than a deliberate value choice." They imply that the framers of the Constitution deliberately ignored future technological changes and their implications for privacy. Some civil libertarians are hopeful that the courts will base future analysis of surveillance technologies on this 10th Circuit decision and not give free rein to the government agencies and corporations that have persistently overstepped the boundaries of individual privacy. Others, assessing the direction and composition of the Supreme Court, see few prospects of shielding their privacy from

the ever more sophisticated and intrusive lens of Big Brother. ■

case in which it threw out evidence obtained through thermal images of a house, the Court noted that

the Defendants need not have anticipated and guarded against every investigative tool in the government's arsenal. To hold otherwise would leave the privacy of the home at the mercy of the government's ability to exploit technological advances: the government could always argue that an individual's failure (or inability) to ward off the incursions of the latest scientific innovation forfeits the protection of the Fourth Amendment. ... [T]he government would allow the privacy of the home to hinge upon the outcome of a technological race of measure/counter-measure between the average citizen and the government — a race, we expect, that the people will surely lose.<sup>27</sup>

Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Tribe notes that the Supreme Court usually fails to protect constitutional rights when dealing with new tech-

28. Lawrence Tribe, "The Constitution in Cyberspace," keynote address, First Conference on Computers, Freedom, and Privacy, Burlingame, Calif., March 1991.

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22. William Perry, "What is neural network software?" *Journal of Systems Management*, Sept. 1994, p. 12.

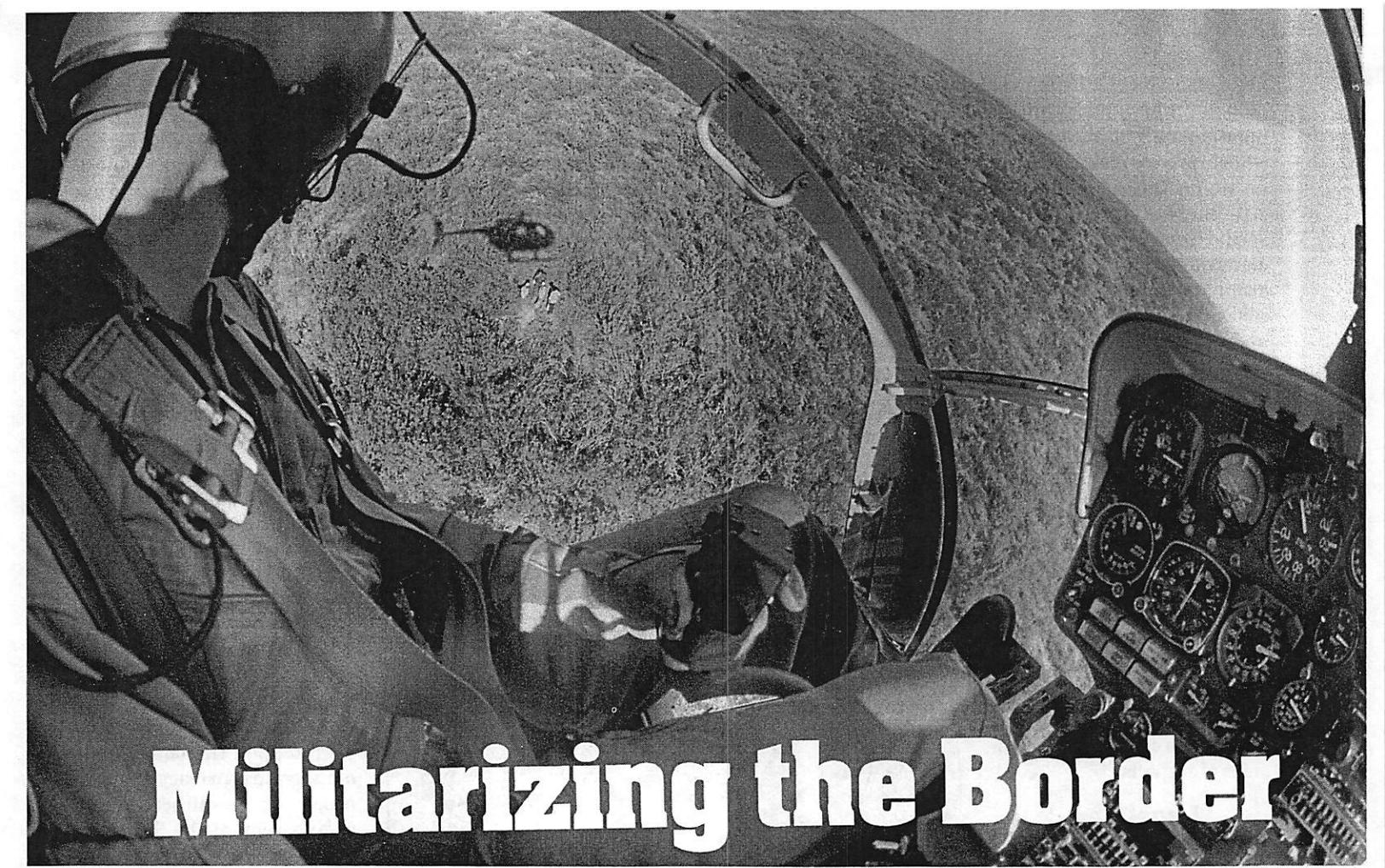
23. OTA, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

24. Burnham, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

25. *Katz v. United States*, 389 U.S. 347 (1967).

26. *US v. Pinson*, 24 F.3d 1056 (8th Cir.), cert. denied, 115 S. Ct. 664 (1994).

27. *US v. Cusmano*, 1995 U.S. App. Lexis 27924, Oct. 4, 1995.



# Militarizing the Border

L.M. OTERO

*From San Diego to the Rio Grande Valley, US soldiers are on duty. First it was the “War on Drugs,” now they have an additional mission, blocking Mexico’s emigrants.*

by José Palafox

In California’s Imperial Valley, soldiers from an antidrug task force hunker over night vision equipment to watch for illegal border crossings. At the San Diego port of entry, National Guards inspect vehicles. In the Arizona desert, heavily-armed Marines, DEA agents, and the Border Patrol conduct joint patrols as “training exercises.” Inside a nondescript building on an army base near El Paso, military translators, linguists, and analysts decipher intercepted messages and feed the results into massive, interlinked databases. And in night skies across the Southwest, the drone of military reconnaissance aircraft breaks the desert silence.

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Photo: US Border Patrol helicopter casts a shadow over Mexican immigrants on US side of border.

These are scenes from an intensifying campaign being waged on the US-Mexican border. A decade ago, the Reagan administration and an overwrought Congress drafted the US military to help fight the “War on Drugs” along the border. Now, in a significant break with past policy, which officially limited the military’s crime-fighting mission to stopping illegal drugs, the Clinton administration has broadened the Pentagon’s role to include suppressing the flow of undocumented immigrants.

In January, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) unveiled a new “battle plan” to double US military and local law enforcement along the border. This plan will build on the formidable joint military-law enforcement infrastructure already in place as

part of the Pentagon’s antidrug initiatives. In the San Diego sector alone, some 350 members of Marine and Army units—more than double the current National Guard and Pentagon contingent — will help monitor electric sensors, staff night-vision scopes, assist with communications and transportation, and conduct aerial surveillance.<sup>1</sup>

While the border region, and especially its Latino population, bears the brunt of this policy, it is but the latest escalation of military involvement in domestic law enforcement.

According to Mary Cheh, a constitutional and national security law specialist at George Washington University

1. Marcus Stern, “Army Gets Bigger Role on Border,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Jan. 12, 1996, p. A1; *San Francisco Chronicle*, “US Boosts Law Enforcement Along the Border; INS Prepares for Surge from Mexico,” Jan. 12, 1996, p. A1.

School of Law, "We can easily become too comfortable with the integration between the Army and law enforcement," she said. "It starts slowly and imperceptibly, but before you know it, there's very little difference between [the two]. And that's dangerous."<sup>2</sup>

For immigration rights activist Roberto Martínez, director of the American Friends Service Committee office in San Diego, the concern is less

## The growing military presence at the border is a "low-intensity warfare against immigrants."

theoretical. The growing military presence at the border is, he said, a "low-intensity warfare against immigrants. It's kind of like a war without guns. But then again, the Border Patrol is already armed to the teeth. What are we going to have next, an armed military at the border?"<sup>3</sup>

In fact, traditional bans on using the military as police have eroded dramatically in the last decade. Exceptions created expressly for antidrug operations cracked open the door; the Clinton administration is opening it wider still in the politically expedient campaign to thwart unwanted immigrants.

### Call in the Cavalry

For more than a century, the post-Civil War Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 banned military involvement in domestic law enforcement.<sup>4</sup> But beginning with the Reagan administration, presidential and congressional initiatives, abetted by compliant federal courts, have chipped away at legal protections.

The first breach in the firewall came with the Defense Authorization Act of 1982. To combat "contraband" — both substances and people — that law permitted the military to provide equipment, intelligence, and facilities to civilian law enforcement agencies, and help train them. Although the act gave the military a role in enforcing immigration

laws as well as contraband, its primary target was the cross-border drug traffic.<sup>5</sup>

Four years later, the breach grew larger. In 1986, the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, headed by Vice President George Bush and Attorney General Edwin Meese, launched Operation Alliance to "foster inter-agency cooperation and interdict the flow of drugs, weapons, aliens, currency, and other contraband across the Southwest border."<sup>6</sup> This ongoing joint operation coordinates the activities of at least 15 federal, state, and local agencies, including the INS, FBI, DEA, Coast Guard, Customs Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Marshals' Service, U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Secret Service, as well as the Department of Defense and the National Guard.<sup>7</sup>

enforcement. The act assigned the Pentagon three statutory missions: to integrate the various US command, control, communications and intelligence (C<sup>3</sup>I) assets to monitor illegal drugs; to enhance the National Guard's role in drug interdiction and enforcement operations; and to serve as the lead agency in detecting and monitoring the transportation of drugs into the US.<sup>8</sup>

Both the House and Senate versions of the act would have given the military the power to arrest drug law violators. These provisions were killed in conference committee primarily because of opposition from the Pentagon, which hesitated to take on a direct policing mission. Also killed in conference was a House provision that would have required the Defense Department to "seal" the US-Mexico border.<sup>9</sup>

The 1991 Defense Authorization Act broadened military drug enforcement



The military constructs a wall separating Nogales, Ariz. from Mexico.

The Defense Authorization Act of 1989, passed as a fulminating George Bush waved bags of crack cocaine at television viewers, expanded and formalized the military's role in drug law

powers still further. It allowed the Pentagon to establish antidrug operations bases and training facilities and to train federal, state, and local agencies (and foreign governments). With the 1991 act, Congress authorized the military to carry out aerial and ground antidrug reconnaissance near and outside US borders.

Unlike National Guard members, who may be deputized, US military personnel still do not have the power to arrest criminal law violators — with very

2. Kirk Spitzer, "Military Plays Large, Low-Key Role in Domestic Law Enforcement," *Gannett News Service*, July 14, 1995.  
3. Stern, *op. cit.*

4. The use of the armed forces in putting down riots, as in Detroit in 1967, is a "state of emergency" exception. National Guard forces, which, at least in theory, are controlled by state governors, are not covered under the statute. See the discussion in David Isenberg, "Militarizing the Drug War," *CovertAction*, n. 42, Fall 1992, pp. 42-47.

5. *Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1982*, (Public Law 97-86) as cited in Timothy Dunn, *Militarizing the US-Mexico Border* (Austin: Center for Mexican-American Studies, University of Texas/CMAS Books, 1996), pp. 106-08.

6. Gabriela D. Lemus, "U.S.-Mexican Drug Control: Operation Alliance as a Case Study," in Bruce M. Bagley and William O. Walker III, eds., *Drug Trafficking in the Americas* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

7. Statement of James E. Bowen, the senior tactical coordinator of Operation Alliance. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, 1990, cited in Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

8. Isenberg, *op. cit.*

9. Dunn, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56.

## "JTF-6's relationship with law enforcement is one of total integration." — JTF-6's Lt. Gen. George Stotser

limited exceptions.<sup>10</sup> But after more than a decade of explicit presidential and congressional orders to enlist, the Pentagon is involved in just about every other aspect of drug law enforcement. And while soldiers cannot make arrests, their "rules of engagement" for border support duties permit them to shoot to kill if they or accompanying law enforcement personnel are endangered.<sup>11</sup>

In the decade since Operation Alliance began, the Pentagon and federal

is the El Paso-based Joint Task Force 6 (JTF-6). Set up in November 1989 at the Biggs Army Airfield adjacent to Fort Bliss, JTF-6 grew out of President Bush's National Drug Control Drug Strategy. According to the US Army,

from 1990 to 1993, JTF-6 conducted 1,260 antidrug support missions, most of them "operational," i.e., patrols, exercises designed to flood drug smuggling corridors with military personnel, and intelligence support.<sup>12</sup> In a clear sign of the military's rapidly expanding role even before officially taking on immigration, in the first six months of 1995 alone, the number of support requests approved jumped to more than 4,000.<sup>13</sup>

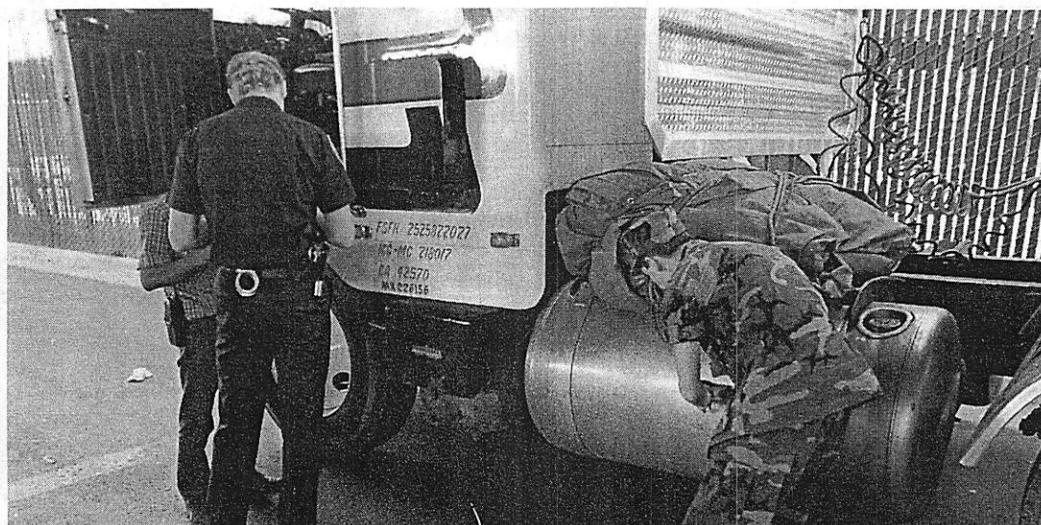
police agencies. These Special Forces units account for roughly one-third of JTF-6 antidrug missions.<sup>15</sup>

All told, the Pentagon is spending about \$800 million a year to help enforce the drug trafficking laws alone. Its missions, carried out to assist primarily the Border Patrol and Customs — the designated lead enforcement agencies on the border — fall into several categories:

- Ground and aerial reconnaissance, including sensors, listening posts, observation posts, ground surveillance radar, and ground patrols.
- Training in patrol techniques, helicopter insertions and extractions, operations and intelligence, and Advanced Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain.

- Logistical support, primarily engineering projects such as barrier erection, road repair, and range construction.
- Research to identify and demonstrate technologies combining military and law enforcement applications.

Describing the relationship between law enforcement agencies and JTF-6, task force commander Lt. Gen. George Stotser commented: "Joint Task Force 6's relationship with law enforcement, in my view, is one of total integration."<sup>16</sup>



WILLIAM WILSON/CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

**National Guardsman helps Customs inspect truck crossing into US.**

law enforcers have put in place a joint civil-military apparatus that can easily adapt to a new mission on the border. Not only does the military have a working relationship with the Border Patrol, Customs, the FBI and other agencies, its antidrug efforts have already indirectly helped curb the flow of unwanted immigrants. As just one example, when Army engineers build roads along the frontier to help the Border Patrol catch smugglers, those roads also enhance the agency's immigration control mission.

### Joint Task Force 6

The keystone of the Pentagon's antidrug effort under Operation Alliance

10. A significant exception is federal parks and forests where National Guard and Army personnel have arrested marijuana growers in, among other places, Hawaii and Humboldt County, California. See Michael Dorgon, "California Fights Losing Battle Against Marijuana," *Dallas Morning News*, Nov. 26, 1995, p. A3.

11. Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

The number of troops involved is substantial. According to Brian Sheridan, head of the Pentagon's Drug Enforcement Policy and Support Office, on any given day approximately 4,600 soldiers are working counter-drug operations.<sup>14</sup> (That number is already increasing as the Pentagon takes on immigration.) While many are soldiers or National Guards on temporary assignments, including mundane tasks such as motor pool maintenance, several hundred are on permanent Drug War duty. They include 50 Special Forces soldiers who provide year-round training to civilian

12. US Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, April 1994. *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement: JTF-6 Activities along the U.S.-Mexico Border*, p. 4-2.

13. Testimony of H. Allen Holmes, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, House Judiciary Committee, July 20, 1995.

14. Spitzer, *op. cit.*

### High-Tech on the Border

But the operational integration of the US military with civilian law enforcement agencies is only one face of an increasingly militarized frontier. As University of Texas-El Paso border researcher Timothy Dunn noted, militarization also includes law enforcement's increasing reliance on military technology, equipment, and strategies.<sup>17</sup> Nowhere has that process advanced further than on the Mexican border.

15. *Ibid.* Among other assignments, in 1992, members of JTF-6's Special Forces units helped establish an urban combat rehearsal site at Fort Hood, Texas, for BATF agents preparing to assault the nearby Branch Davidian compound outside Waco. The BATF's enlistment of JTF-6 in the Waco raid preparations is a sterling example of the potential for abuse of the military's drug war mission. BATF created a "speed lab" from the whole cloth to show a drug connection, which would allow JTF-6 to honor the request for support. See Richard Leiby, "In the Ruins of a Raid, Questions Smolder," *Washington Post*, July 18, 1995, p. A1.

16. Quoted in Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

17. *Ibid.*

The Pentagon has turned over to the Border Patrol and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies much of the "excess equipment" used during and after the Vietnam War, including Blackhawk helicopters, heat sensors, night vision telescopes and electronic intrusion detection devices. The DoD valued such military technology transfers at \$260 million in 1995.<sup>18</sup>

The Border Patrol has also acquired new stadium-style kleig lights and computerized fingerprinting equipment (IDENT) for use by the hundreds of new agents deployed as part of intensive anti-immigrant programs such as Operation Hold-the-Line (formerly called Operation Blockade) in El Paso and Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego.

Now, thanks to a joint effort by the Justice and Treasury Departments and the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Border Patrol also has its own high-tech Border Research and Technology Center near San Diego. There scientists develop new border control techniques and technologies, as well as refining and adapting existing ones. Last year, for example, the center began testing a photo-ID system developed by Hughes Aircraft Company. According to Robert Bach, executive associate commissioner of the INS, "The technology came out of the CIA and the Department of Defense. They used it and it was made available to the INS."<sup>19</sup>

## DEA's El Paso Intelligence Center has access to a stunning array of financial, political, and criminal intelligence on both foreign nationals and US citizens.

But Pentagon and even CIA involvement in the border campaigns extends beyond equipment. Both the soldiers and the spies are working within an integrated intelligence network, originally planned for the Drug War but now also turning some of its resources to stopping undocumented immigrants.

### The Spooks of El Paso

The centerpiece of coordinated border intelligence operations is the El Paso

18. Holmes, *op. cit.*

19. Sandra Dibble, "Star Wars Arrive at the Border: High



JEFFREY D. SCOTT

**Coming and going. Three Border Patrol agents mend fence as man crosses from Mexico into Nogales, Ariz.**

Intelligence Center (EPIC, like JTF-6, based at Biggs Army Airfield). Managed by the DEA, EPIC's primary mission is to provide tactical intelligence to 15 federal agencies, including all the usual suspects. It employs some 300 people, including Defense Department personnel, FBI agents, and other federal law enforcers "seconded" to the DEA.<sup>20</sup> In addition to human talent—generally linguists, analysts, and translators—JTF-6 supports EPIC by providing raw intelligence gathered by the Defense Department worldwide, analysis, and organizational instruction.

But as the clearinghouse for drug intelligence, EPIC by no means relies on the Pentagon alone. In addition to the fruits of military intelligence-gathering, FBI investigative files, Treasury Department Financial Crimes Enforcement Center (FinCEN) reports, CIA and NSA drug-related intelligence, and reports from state and local law enforcement agencies all flow into its databases. In conjunction with the FBI, the DEA has also created a master database, NADDIS-X.<sup>21</sup> All told, EPIC has access to a stunning array of financial, political, and criminal intelligence on

both foreign nationals and US citizens.

EPIC has become the model for a burgeoning drug intelligence complex, including the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), with an unknown number of personnel, the CIA's Counternarcotic Center, and the Defense Intelligence Agency's Counterdrug Intelligence Center, both with around 200 employees. Additional drug intelligence units are scattered among regional task forces and at the Army's Southern Command in Panama, and within Treasury, Justice, and Customs.<sup>22</sup>

Even before the official announcement of the Pentagon's immigration mission, the drug intelligence network showed distinct signs of "mission creep." EPIC, JTF-6, and Operation Alliance have all staked out positions on controlling the flow of immigrants, and EPIC has for several years maintained files on groups that smuggle undocumented immigrants.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, in 1993, drug war policymakers turned to a Defense Department research institution, the Sandia National Laboratory at Kirkland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for advice on border enforcement strategies. Chosen for its expertise in "physical security," the Sandia lab's recommendations included the construction of a triple-layer fence along the border.<sup>24</sup>

Tech Developed by the Military, CIA may aid enforcement," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 8, 1995, p. B 1.  
20. "Freeh Orders New Measures to Strengthen Drug Intel Efforts," *Tactical Technology*, Apr. 13, 1994; Bill Lodge, "DEA Office Chief for Dallas to Lead Drug Data Center," *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 27, 1995.  
21. *Tactical Technology*, *op. cit.*

22. "USA: New Anti-Drug Strategy," *Intelligence Newsletter* (Paris), Sept. 22, 1994.

23. Statement by Laurie E. Ekstrand, Associate Director Administration of Justice Issues, General Accounting Office, House Judiciary Committee, Mar. 10, 1995.

24. Advanced Systems Integration Department 9561, Sandia

The INS has also consulted with the Pentagon's Center for Low-Intensity Conflict in drawing up deployment plans for Border Patrol agents along the border and for advice on how best to enhance immigration enforcement efforts with surveillance equipment.<sup>25</sup>

Such cooperation between the military and federal civilian law enforcement is part of a broader effort by the US government to create a coordinated border enforcement apparatus. In its latest effort, the Clinton administration last October moved to centralize all border policy in the office of a "Border Czar."

### The Border Czar

Federal officials have long complained that rivalries and turf wars among border enforcement agencies hampered their ability to crack down on drug trafficking and illegal immigration. INS Commissioner Doris Meissner explained, "You have four states, and a series of federal agencies. We need to look at the border as one entity."<sup>26</sup>

Responding to such concerns, Attorney General Janet Reno last October announced the appointment of San Diego US Attorney Alan Bersin as the first Special Representative for Southwest Border Issues, or "Border Czar." His office will coordinate multi-agency projects, such as using the FBI to target "immigrant smuggling" as organized crime, and reorganizing Customs Service and INS inspections. Bersin will report directly to Reno, and he will serve as her representative in discussions with the Mexican government on drugs, immigration, and other bilateral border issues.

Bersin has already moved on one important front. His office is coordinating a federal, state and local drug crackdown in Imperial County, California, that, if successful, could become a "prototype for counterdrug efforts elsewhere" along the border. This operation, the Valley Project, involves 17 different agencies including the Army, California National Guard, and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and will have its own intelligence command center (similar to the DEA's EPIC).<sup>27</sup>

National Laboratories. 1993. *Systematic Analysis of the Southwestern Border*, v. I.

25. Ronald Ostrow, "Border Has Tightened, Official Says," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 14, 1994.

26. Sebastian Rotella, "Reno Names Prosecutor as 'Border Czar,'" *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 14, 1995, p. A1.

27. Marcus Stern, "Imperial Valley drug flow fought," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Jan. 13, 1995, p. A1.

But the Valley Project could also become a prototype for trouble. The project follows stepped-up efforts to block illegal entries further west near San Diego. Accordingly, says border researcher Dunn, would-be border-crossers will be forced into the middle of a major drug enforcement operation. "The Border Patrol is quite consciously pushing them to remote, difficult terrain where antidrug efforts are concentrated and they're willing to use a higher level of coercion," observes Dunn. "This is very dangerous; this is where they [the Border Patrol] could make deadly mistakes."<sup>28</sup>

Bersin will also represent the attorney general in discussions with the Mexican government on immigration, drug control, and other binational issues.<sup>29</sup> There is plenty to discuss. Mexican officials are caught between the need to placate their primary trading partner and largest creditor and the need to at least pay lip service to Mexicans' well-founded complaints about ill-treatment at the hands of US border enforcement officials.<sup>30</sup>

In one instance where Mexico's economic crunch tipped the scales in favor of US priorities, last February Mexican officials agreed to expand Grupo Beta (Mexico's border police unit in Tijuana) to include Nogales and Matamoros. The announcement came a week before the two countries reached final agreement on the \$20 billion US "bailout" of the Mexican economy.<sup>31</sup> Hat in hand, Mexican President Zedillo dutifully expressed his commitment to "greater collaboration" with the US government on immigration issues.<sup>32</sup>

While Grupo Beta is barred by Mexican law from enforcing US border laws — its original purpose was to protect emigrants from criminal activity — the Mexican government is under strong pressure to use it to discourage emigration. In an indication that the pressure is working, Grupo Beta units have recently been used to prevent massed groups from rushing US ports of entry.<sup>33</sup>

28. Interview, Feb. 3, 1996.

29. Rotella, *op. cit.*

30. Human Rights Watch, "Crossing the Line: Human Rights Abuses Along the US Border With Mexico Persist Amid Climate of Impunity," Apr. 1995.

31. Robert Collier, "At Border, Mexican Police Unit Is the Migrants' Best Friend," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 25, 1995, p. A7.

32. Quoted in *Time*, June 19, 1995, p. 33.

33. Dunn interview, *op. cit.*; Mark Shaffer, "Tensions Rise Along Border; INS Crackdown Frustrates Legals," *Arizona Republic*, Jan. 15, 1996, p. A1.

Aside from international diplomacy, bureaucratic wrangling, and whipping up public support, Border Czar Bersin must also deal with the fallout from increasingly stringent border enforcement. As federal prosecutors target undocumented immigrants, the nation's already overcrowded local jails and federal prisons cannot absorb the flow of immigrant detainees. Here, too, the military has a role to play.

### No Room at the Pen

In a new tactic unveiled in San Diego's Operation Gatekeeper, federal attorneys stepped up prosecutions of immigration-related crimes, and of immigrants with criminal records. As a result, there were 1,039 prosecutions for felonious entry into the United States in 1995 alone, equaling the total for the previous nine years.<sup>34</sup> But that may be just the beginning.

A Republican "Congressional Task Force on Immigration Reform," appointed by Newt Gingrich and chaired by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.), recently proposed a "three strikes" law for undocumented border crossers. It would require the Border Patrol to hold for prosecution any undocumented immigrant guilty of violating the same immigration law more than once. Under current law, undocumented persons are usually detained only until they agree to "voluntary departure."

According to a *San Diego Union-Tribune* editorial which projected the impact of the proposal, in the San Diego sector alone "close to 15,000 undocumented immigrants are apprehended each week. If 20 percent of those are repeaters, the three-strikes rule would mean adding about 3,000 offenders a week to our already severely overcrowded jails."<sup>35</sup>

The Congress is taking steps to address these concerns. Legislation now pending in the Senate, the Immigration in the National Interest Act shepherded by Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), would allow closed military bases to be used as detention centers for undocumented immigrants.<sup>36</sup>

34. Rotella, *op. cit.*

35. "Stemming flow of illegals," *San Diego Union-Tribune* editorial, July 16, 1995, p. G2.

36. *Immigration in the National Interest Act*. The bill also includes a provision that would allow the attorney general to deputize state and local police for "immigration emergencies" and another that would expand wiretapping authority to cover immigration-related crimes such as passport fraud and the manufacture of false identification.

The Clinton administration has similarly addressed the looming prisoner overflow and fears that Mexico's economic crisis would "wash north" even more undocumented people. Last year, "top immigration policy-makers" practiced an "enhanced border control plan," that includes using military bases as detention centers. In joint exercises held in Orlando, Florida; Nogales, Arizona; and McAllen, Texas, INS and military personnel set up "holding areas" on military bases and practiced rounding up and detaining "prisoners" (actually role-playing soldiers and agents).<sup>37</sup>

This contingency plan is in effect an extension of Operation Distant Shores, which directed the military-run camps used to detain Cuban and Haitian refugees in Panama and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Now, Mexico has been added to the list of Distant Shores' potential source countries, and the military will take over management of detention centers from the INS in the event of a Mexican "immigration emergency."<sup>38</sup>

"This is a prudent military plan to handle a mission already placed on the military, which is to handle immigration when the numbers overwhelm civil authorities," commented a US Army officer involved in the exercise.<sup>39</sup>

"Immigration emergency" or not, Border Czar Bersin has already received Navy agreement to provide detention space for immigrant inmates at the Miramar Naval Air Station outside San Diego.<sup>40</sup>

### Double Bind

US policymakers want it both ways. In their wholehearted embrace of "free trade," they have consistently followed economic policies that both create the conditions for mass immigration and make the illicit drug trade an economically attractive option for dispossessed



INS guard inspects passengers at checkpoint several miles north of the border.

PETER KELLY/IMPACT VISUALS

Mexicans. The NAFTA agreements and the Mexican bailout are only the sharpest and most recent examples. Economic dislocations from NAFTA are anticipated to generate significant numbers of new migrants. And after the peso collapse, in return for US dollars and loan guarantees, the US Treasury demanded that Mexico enact harsh neoliberal austerity measures virtually guaranteed to drive even more Mexicans across the border.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time, the US wants open borders only for the flow of capital and "legitimate" commerce. In a global economy in which factories and capital flit across boundaries in the blink of an eye, people seem to be the only factor of production undeserving of free transit. Instead, immigration is to be limited and controlled.

Border Czar Bersin provides the official line: "Our border is intended to accomplish twin purposes: On the one hand, it is intended to facilitate trade in order to bring our nation the significant benefits of international commerce and industry. At the same time, it is geared to constrain and regulate the free movement of people and goods in order to

block the entry of illegal migrants and unlawful merchandise."<sup>42</sup>

To blunt the contradictions inherent in these "twin purposes," the US must militarize the border to protect "free trade" Yankee style. The consequences are both immediate and potentially far-reaching. For immigrants from the south, and for Latinos in general, the results are already manifest in an increasing hostility, manufactured in part by officials eager to whip up support for their "solution" to the problem.

Roberto Martínez, who has documented many abuses along the border, points out that as the government continues to "lump together undocumented immigrants, drugs, crime, and terrorism to justify increased enforcement and militarization, attitudes toward immigrants will not only not change but will continue translating into open hostility and violence."<sup>43</sup>

More broadly, enlisting the military in law enforcement — first limited to drugs, now adding immigration, and next? — is an inauspicious omen. Faced with a self-inflicted rising tide of disorder, and not just on the border, the only response the state appears capable of shaping relies on a larger and better-integrated military-police apparatus. ■

37. Sam Dillon, "U.S. Tests Border Plan In Event of Mexico Crisis," *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1995, p. A16.

38. Alan Bersin, "Solution to housing federal prisoners," *San Diego Union-Tribune* editorial, Oct. 17, 1995, p. B 7.

39. Pierre Thomas and Bradley Graham, "US Drafts Plan for Influx of Illegal Immigrants," *Washington Post*, Apr. 8, 1995, p. A6.

40. Bersin, *op. cit.*

41. See Ken Silverstein, "Wall Street Declares War on the Zapatistas," *CovertAction*, n. 52, Spring 1995, pp. 42-45.

42. Prepared statement of Alan D. Bersin, United States Attorney, Southern District of California, before the House Appropriations Subcommittee of the Department of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies, March 29, 1995.

43. As cited in Tom Barry, *Crossing the Line: Immigrants, Economic Integration, and Drug Enforcement on the U.S.-Mexican Border* (Albuquerque: Resource Center Press, 1994), p.129, n. 114.

# Pepper Spray Madness



JIM WEST

*Involved in at least 60 US deaths, pepper spray can be used to punish “unruly” criminal suspects, mete out street justice, and quell civil unrest. Above, locked out Staley Co. workers are targeted.*

by Lynne Wilson

Imagine that someone has sprayed a substance 600 times hotter than cayenne pepper into your face, eyes and nostrils. Imagine that while this is happening, your hands are cuffed behind your back. Or you have asthma or bronchitis. Or a heart condition. Or you're drunk or just plain upset. Chances are, the pain will be intense, breathing will become difficult, your eyes will swell into blindness, you will become disoriented and fall to the ground. Fear and panic will set in. If you

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are unlucky enough to be in an altercation with the police and you are in restraints on your stomach, you may die.<sup>1</sup>

Last summer, Javier Trejo didn't have to imagine. After his wife, Maria, called police to report that he was drunk and abusive, Orange County, California, sheriff's deputies subdued him with pepper gas and threw him in a holding cell. About an hour later, he was pronounced dead. "I asked the police for help," cried Maria. "I didn't say kill him."<sup>2</sup>

1. Steffee, Lantz, Flannagan, Thompson and Jason, "Oleoresin Capsicum (Pepper) Spray and In-Custody Deaths," *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*, v. 16, n. 3, 1995, pp. 185-92.

2. Mark I. Pinsky, "Assault on Pepper," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1995.

Trejo became one of the 60 in-custody deaths since 1990 in which pepper spray was a contributing factor.<sup>3</sup> Derived from the cayenne pepper plant, *oleoresin capsicum* (OC) or pepper spray, was officially introduced into the US in the 1980s by the Postal Service as a dog repellent. In 1987, claiming that it produced no long-term health risks, the FBI adopted it as an "official chemical agent."<sup>4</sup> Ever since, in liquid and foam

3. Mark Pinsky, "If Pepper Spray Isn't Lethal, Why All The Deaths?," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1995, p. A1.

4. Copwatch (Berkeley, Calif.) Fact Sheet: "Help Ban Police Use of Pepper Spray," Oct. 1995; California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training Bulletin 92-25 (Aug. 18, 1992), *Training/Orientation Outline for Oleoresin Capsicum*.

form, OC has gained popularity among police searching for a non-lethal method of subduing people in street encounters. They claim that it avoids the major drawbacks of other chemical agents: It doesn't blow back on those using it and can be washed off with relative ease. It has the further advantage of not leaving the kinds of injuries that generate brutality complaints.

Echoing advertising by the 200 pepper spray manufacturers, police managers also report that it is "95 percent effective

## The pain from pepper spray, which can last up to 45 minutes, is so intense it has been called a form of torture.

in stopping suspects almost immediately" compared to tear gas or Mace at 60 percent.<sup>5</sup> The International Association of Chiefs of Police asserts not only that OC is better "on violent, intoxicated/drugged and mentally ill individuals," but also that it "has not caused any deaths, even among persons with pre-existing conditions."<sup>6</sup> With this kind of propaganda, it is no surprise that pepper spray has replaced and surpassed police use of Mace on the streets. Virtually every state authorizes it.

### Crime of Punishment

While there is no question that pepper spray aerosol is less lethal than a gun and that when used correctly, it causes considerably less physical injury than a baton or an attack dog, it is neither as effective nor as benign as claimed. According to Andrea Pritchett of Copwatch, a citizens group in Berkeley, California, "It's used in addition to other forms of force such as guns, batons and mechanical restraints, not in their place. ... And when you add it to other force methods, pepper spray

5. Jeff Gammage, "Police Get New Spray for Subduing Suspects," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 16, 1995, quoting Capt. Jeremiah Daley, a Philadelphia Police Academy instructor.

6. Intl. Association of Chiefs of Police, "Pepper Spray Evaluation Project: Results of the Introduction of OC Into Baltimore, MD, Police Department," June 22, 1995, p. iii.

tends to make a person actually more difficult to control." Nor, she claims, is it likely to reduce excessive force lawsuits against police, since many of California's 28 in-custody deaths involving OC have resulted in wrongful death suits.<sup>7</sup>

As for its being benign, the pain, which can last up to 45 minutes, is so intense that the National Coalition on Police Accountability (N-COPA) has called for monitoring pepper spray as a form of torture as defined by the United Nations Convention on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment signed by the US last year.<sup>8</sup>

After police chiefs in Britain and Australia tried to add OC to their arsenals, activists argued that it would violate the Chemical Weapons Convention. They cited instances in Israel and Guatemala,<sup>9</sup> as well as in the US, where OC is used not only to control civil unrest and subdue dangerous suspects, but

to mete out extrajudicial punishment as a kind of street justice. In a Washington state case, a young black man who had mouthed off to the cops was pepper sprayed after being handcuffed. He was then left in a patrol car with the heat on high for half an hour.<sup>10</sup>

7. Interview, Dec. 19, 1995.

8. N-COPAResolution passed at 1995 Convention. See *Policing By Consent*, Dec. 10, 1995, p. 7, for full text. Torture is defined under the Treaty as methods that are intentionally used by law enforcement officials to cause severe pain and suffering and to force an individual to submit to the officer's authority.

9. Jonathan Wright, "Shoot Not to Kill," *The Guardian* (London), May 19, 1994.

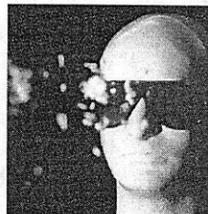
10. Interview with victim, Dec. 1995. Heat intensifies the pain. The case is under investigation.

The ACLU has raised additional concerns that the number of deaths in which OC has been a contributing factor may be much higher than the 60 so far documented. For example, although none of the autopsy reports for 26 post-spray deaths studied by its Southern California branch listed pepper spray as a cause of death, the group concluded that "documents recovered ... establish that [California] state scientists have warned for more than two years that so little is known about residual effects of pepper spray that medical examiners may not know what to look for during an autopsy."<sup>11</sup> It was only in July 1993 that a North Carolina coroner issued the first US autopsy report directly connecting pepper spray to an in-custody death. It noted that Angelo Robinson, a 24-year-old black parolee stopped for disorderly conduct, had bronchitis at the time of his death. "Officers reportedly sprayed Robinson 10-15 times and then placed him in a prone position on the ground while he was handcuffed, a position that has been known to cause death" from positional asphyxia, in which the weight of the body compresses the chest and causes respiratory failure.<sup>12</sup>

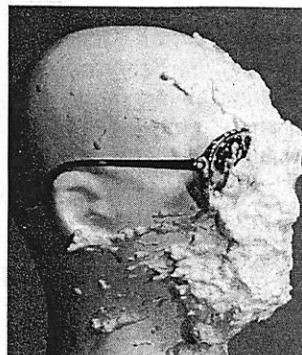
As the danger becomes better known, more medical researchers are

11. Allan Parachini, *Pepper Spray Update: More Fatalities, More Questions*, ACLU of Southern California, June 1995, p. 1. The group also issued reports in Sept. 1993 and Mar. 1994, both entitled *Pepper Spray: A Magic Bullet Under Scrutiny*. For copies, write to ACLU, 1616 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90026.

12. Chapel Hill, N.C., Medical Examiner's autopsy examination of Angelo Robinson, July 11, 1993; and for positional asphyxia, see R.L. O'Halloran and L.V. Lewman, "Restraint Asphyxiation in Excited Delirium," *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*, v. 14 (4), 1993, pp. 289-95 (discussing 11 cases of sudden death of men restrained in a prone position by police).



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recognizing OC-related deaths and reporting an alarming nationwide increase: from two in 1992 to 26 in 1993.<sup>13</sup> In addition to better documentation, these figures indicate the exponential increase in pepper spray use by law enforcement agents. In one particularly gruesome incident reported by the National Institute of Justice, police sprayed a youth with so much pepper spray that his clothes were soaked. When he was later shot with an electric stun gun by police, his clothing caught on fire.<sup>14</sup>

### Peppering Prisons

If misuse is a problem on the street, it is a disaster in US prisons. The Department of Justice (DoJ) and every federal court that has looked at its use in correctional facilities has found abuses. This fall, after more than 100 inmates rioted at the privately-run West Tennessee Detention Facility, prison guards pumped pepper gas into two dormitories seized by the prisoners.<sup>15</sup> In late 1994, the DoJ Civil Rights Division investigated a county jail in Syracuse, New York, and reported "an unacceptably high and im-

proper use of pepper spray... Nearly every inmate interviewed told... of excessive and improper use ... particularly when inmates are not resistant and after the inmate has been restrained and presents no danger." One suicidal inmate in Syracuse was restrained with three cans of pepper spray. The prisoner reportedly died shortly afterward from positional asphyxia.<sup>16</sup>

More recently, a federal district court judge in Washington State barred the use of pepper spray in a state juvenile facility. "[I]t should be used," he ruled, "only if there is a threat of equal or greater harm to others or to a sub-

Police soaked his clothes with so much pepper spray that when they shot him with an electric stun gun, his clothing caught on fire.

stantial amount of valuable property than the pain and danger of harm that the pepper spray presents."<sup>17</sup> Pat Arthur, plaintiffs' attorney in the case, emphasized a lack of training: "If staff aren't trained in other intervention methods, they resort to pepper spray." Calling it "a chemical weapon," she said, "I have seen videotapes of kids who are being sprayed. The pain is so intense: the kid immediately falls to the floor, screaming. There is no question of an injury being suffered."<sup>18</sup>

### Weapon of Choice

Local community groups, outraged by the startling increase in pepper spray use, are now calling for accountability. Copwatch demanded an outright ban after 37-year-old Aaron Williams, arrested for disorderly conduct, died after being beaten, kicked, and repeatedly pepper-sprayed by San Francisco police officers, probably while in a handcuffed, horizontal position. Following that incident, police commanders conceded that officers had violated official policy

against transporting handcuffed prisoners lying face down (raising the danger of positional asphyxia) and had disregarded the warning to pay special attention to suspects acting in bizarre ways.<sup>19</sup> In this, as in other cases, regulations — even when they exist — are often ignored by cops who see pepper spray as a very low level use of force, well below the baton.<sup>20</sup>

According to Allan Parachini of the ACLU, which helped draft the San Francisco policy, Williams died because of a "failure of procedure. ... Pepper spray never alone causes death but when it is combined with other restraints, there is a definite risk of fatality. [It] can be a valuable tool in many different situations. The challenge is to set clear standards regarding how to use it, in what circumstances. ... [I]t doesn't serve anyone's purposes ... when it is used on people in psychiatric distress or on drugs. When used on these people and combined with a hogtie restraint, you are just asking for a fatality."<sup>21</sup>

Regardless of injuries and even death resulting from its use, there is not a single federal agency currently responsible for regulation. "Because pepper spray is probably not a food or a drug within the meaning of FDA legislation, the Consumer Product Safety Commission may be the only federal agency with authority in this field." As manufacturers increase their efforts to push the use of pepper spray in prisons, to "disperse crowds," and to "facilitate cell extraction," federal regulation is needed now more than ever.<sup>22</sup> But given the current state of the federal budget, such regulation is unlikely. Equally unlikely is that police will voluntarily restrict use. Pepper spray, despite the risk of death, and precisely because of the instant punishment and torture it inflicts, is a weapon of choice. ■

19. Alan Parachini, Southern California ACLU, citing San Francisco Police Department Use-of-Force policy: "1. Use of Liquid Chemical Agent (Mace/Oleoresin Capsicum) to Accomplish Custody," Aug. 24, 1994.

20. For information about the Aaron Williams case see Parachini, ACLU 1995 report, *op. cit.*, p. 1. The Seattle Police Department, for example, simply authorizes the use of approved "chemical restraints" whenever an officer is "otherwise authorized to use physical force." Seattle Police Department Manual, Section 2.09.051(1).

21. Interview, Dec. 22, 1995.  
22. Parachini, *op. cit.*, citing analysis by Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of Public Citizen Health Research Group, Washington, D.C., June 1995.

13. Steffee, Lantz, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

14. Copwatch, "Help Ban...", *op. cit.*

15. "Inmates demand return," *Houston Chronicle*, Oct. 30, 1995, p. 4A.

16. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, "Investigation of Onondaga County Jail," Oct. 18, 1994, pp. 2-3.

17. *James Horton, et al. vs. Bob Williams, et al.*, U.S. District Court, Tacoma, Wash., Cause No. C94-5428RJB, Order of Dec. 6, 1994.

18. Interview, Jan. 3, 1996.

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# The Guyana Gold Mining Disaster: Poison in the Lifeline



GUYANA CHRONICLE



PHILIP M. HOCKER/MINERAL POLICY CENTER

August 1995. Cracks in the tailings pond wall (l). Protesters at Omai's Georgetown offices (top).

*The devastating breach of the tailings pond at one of South America's largest gold mines released millions of gallons of cyanide-laced sludge and spurred pressure to restrain foreign development at the expense of the population and the environment.*

by Nazim Baksh

There's been a lot of snow lately in the small tropical country of Guyana on the humid northeast coast of South America. It is not coming from the sky, but from the country's National Commission of Inquiry into an environmentally devastating toxic spill at the Omai gold mine. Environmentalists, labor unions and members of opposition parties charge that the panel's January 8, 1996 report is a snow job.

Nazim Baksh is a producer at CBC National TV News (Toronto). He was born in Georgetown, Guyana, and now lives in Canada.

It focused on an August 19, 1995 incident when large cracks split the earthen wall of the tailings pond at South America's largest open pit gold mine, allowing 838 million gallons of cyanide-laced sludge to gush into the Omai River. The Omai is a major tributary of the Essequibo River, which runs through 600 miles of the rich and exquisite hinterlands of Guyana to the Atlantic. Along the way, it provides the main source of drinking water and fish to the mixed population of Amerindians, Afro-Guyanese, and East Indians eking out a subsistence living along its banks. The spill put 15,000 people at direct risk of cyanide poisoning and exposed the rest of Guyana's population of 750,000 to possible

long-term effects, such as impact on the food chain. Over five days, the discharge emptied more than 60 percent of the total waste in the tailings pond — enough poisoned water to fill a one kilometer high tank with a base the length and width of a football field, sidelines included.<sup>1</sup> By the time news of the flow reached the Guyanese capital of Georgetown, President Cheddi Jagan was calling it the country's worst environmental disaster. His government ordered the mine closed pending the commission's investigation and declared 80 kilometers of the Essequibo an environmental disaster zone.

1. Desiree Kissoon Jodah, "Courting Disaster in Guyana," *Multinational Monitor*, Nov. 1995.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

**Part of a legacy of foreign intervention, the CIA-instigated riots in 1963 left the capital ruined and the country in the hands of a corrupt regime.**

After a four-month inquiry, the five-member commission with ties to government, business, and industry,<sup>2</sup> failed to determine responsibility for the accident; neither did it mandate future safeguards or enforcement measures. Nonetheless, it approved reopening the mine, permitted an expansion that the company had long sought, and authorized the construction of a new tailings pond. The mine would also be allowed to continue using the controversial "heap-leach process" in which a solution of cyanide sodium is applied to ore in order to leach out the gold. This technique produces large quantities of cyanide-contaminated tailings which are stored in giant open pits. Activists charge that Omai Gold Mining Ltd. (OGML) — which generates 20 to 25 percent of Guyana's GNP — pressured the impoverished Guyanese government to downplay the continued danger of environmental disaster. Omai manages the mining operation in Guyana on behalf of Cambior, a Canadian-based company with a 65 percent share, and Golden Star Resources Ltd. (GSRL), a US-based company which controls 30 percent; the Guyanese government has a five percent interest in the operation.<sup>3</sup>

2. The Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) has questioned the impartiality of some commission members: Yolanda Poo, according to the GHRA, is a senior manager of the National Bank of Industry and Commerce, a Royal Bank of Canada affiliate which does business with Omai and Omai's major shareholders respectively. The other members of the commission are a colonel in Guyana's military, a retired manager of a local manufacturing company, a retired magistrate and a legal adviser to the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission. (GHRA, October 10, 1995)  
3. These two companies also control major mining op-

erations around the globe. Cambior operates in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Peru, as well as in Alaska and Canada. GSRL operates in Surinam, Venezuela, French Guiana, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Mali, and Senegal.  
4. Golden Star Resources, Ltd., *Report to Shareholders*, August 29, 1995.

**A history of US interference had etched into the national consciousness an understanding of how foreign involvement adds to the misery that already characterizes daily existence.**

that the discharge was only "a major industrial accident," not an environmental disaster, and that production should resume in two to six months.<sup>4</sup>

Many Guyanese saw that kind of semantic jockeying in the face of monumental damage as yet another example of powerful North American transnationals acting as public relations bullies and dismissing the human and environmental costs of their profit-driven enterprises. Not only did mainstream North

American media ignore the disaster, but by and large both the US and Canadian governments treated it as an inevitable fact of mining life. In the weeks that followed, the company stonewalled, threatened, ducked blame, and circumvented compensation agreements.

Most Guyanese were not surprised, either by the spill or by the refusal of foreign interests to accept responsibility. A long history of US interference in Guyanese affairs had etched into the national consciousness an understanding of how foreign involvement adds to the misery that already characterizes daily existence.<sup>5</sup> The most blatant example occurred before the 1963 elections, when the US used covert means to destabilize the country in order to ensure that the People's National Congress (PNC) replace President Jagan's leftist PPP.<sup>6</sup> What followed was 28 years of mismanagement, corruption, and systematic human rights abuses under US- and British-backed President Forbes Burnham. In 1992, that same President Jagan, whom the CIA helped oust, was re-elected.<sup>7</sup>

### Shifting Blame

His administration was beset from the beginning by an inept bureaucracy that had grown accustomed to using bribes

to supplement its income, by a corrupt police force and army, and by widespread economic mismanagement and a decimated physical infrastructure.

Dependency on the income from the Omai operation — terms for which were set under the regime of his predecessor — has put the Jagan government be-

5. Another notorious incident involving Americans, cyanide and the Essequibo took place in 1978 not far from Omai. Rev. Jim Jones, a US citizen, orchestrated a horrendous massacre by convincing more than 900 of his followers (most of whom were US citizens) at the People's Temple in Jonestown to drink cyanide-laced punch. When an investigative team led by Rep. Leo Ryan (D-Calif.), some of whose constituents were at Jonestown, arrived at the site, it was too late. Ryan was gunned down by Jones' security guards.

6. Council on Hemispheric Affairs (Washington, D.C.), *News and Analysis*, Sept. 20, 1990.

7. Although the State Department and CIA refuse to declassify the documents relating to their operation in Guyana, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a top adviser to the Kennedy administration, issued an apology to the people of Guyana for interfering in their affairs. (Tim Weiner, "Ghost of a Kennedy-C.I.A. Plot Has Come Back to Haunt Clinton," *New York Times*, Oct. 30, 1994).

tween a financial rock and an ecological hard place. The squeeze tightened as eyewitness accounts of animal death and human illness poured in and OGML cranked up its public relations machinery. Corporate spokespeople in the US and Canada brushed off reports of damage as simply ax-grinding by "illegal local miners" intent on discrediting international mining companies. Omai general manager Rejean Gourde indicated that the company would not discontinue use of cyanide because "there is absolutely no actual evidence of loss of aquatic life in the Essequibo and certainly no danger to human life."<sup>8</sup>

The evidence, however, was there for all to see — and smell. Shortly after the effluent started flowing into the Essequibo at a rate of 15 million gallons every hour, three people checked into a local hospital, sick from drinking water a fair distance from the spill. Miners working eight miles downstream from Omai reported schools of fish and a herd of wild hogs floating dead down the river. Four days after the discharge began, the United Nations released a

## Corporate pressure to downplay the environmental crisis spread almost as quickly as the toxic waste.

report that "aquatic life in the Omai River and parts of the Essequibo has been seriously impacted."<sup>9</sup> Health officials in the Guyanese government also confirmed details: Residents in Bartica, a small town of about 18,000 located 90 miles from Omai on the Essequibo River, saw hundreds of dead fish floating down the river and turned in samples to the local government office as proof. Another 300 dead fish were collected in a net that the mining company stretched across the Omai River, ostensibly to prevent affected fish from drifting downstream and into the Essequibo.<sup>10</sup>

Hoping to mitigate cyanide poisonings, the government sent in an army of officials armed with bullhorns. In low-flying helicopters, small boats, and trucks, they fanned out along the Esse-

8. Bert Wilkinson, "Gold Mine Says Repair Crews Nearly Stopped Cyanide Spill," *Associated Press*, Aug. 23, 1995; and Jodah, *op. cit.*

9. Wilkinson, *op. cit.*

10. The Georgetown-based *Stabroek News* and *Guyana Chronicle* carried numerous reports.



GUYANA CHRONICLE

**Omai site, August 1995. Before the spill, the tailings pond had been full.**

quibo, warning residents to avoid drinking, bathing, and fishing. For the first time, the fish and pure water of the river were off-limits and no one knew

for how long. Among the thousands of residents affected was Khaleel Khan, a butcher in Bartica, who said that he was banned from slaughtering animals because there was no clean water to wash the abattoir or

the carcasses. "It is my sole means of livelihood. I am hoping that [the government] will find an alternative source of water to wash the abattoir," he said. A poultry farmer who lost nearly a hundred chickens, estimated at about US\$300, said they were killed "because they were given water from the river."<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, OGML shifted into damage control mode. Company officials distributed bottled water and tried to minimize costs. Although the government-appointed Crisis Management Committee and Omai had agreed that all compensation claims should be submitted for official review and approval, the company "hastily began paying out," said Vishnu Masir, a member of the crisis team. Two weeks after the discharge, OGML gave nearly 60 local fishermen about \$100 each as compensation for the 10 days they were banned from fishing. Masir charged that the company was

11. "Riverine Businesspersons Worried About Livelihood," *Stabroek News*, Aug. 25, 1995.

trying to cheat the fishermen by asking them to sign forms waiving their rights to any further compensation, without explaining the long-term consequences.<sup>12</sup>

The National Committee for the Defense Against Omai (NCDAO) is taking its case to Cambior's home base. "Fifteen thousand people suffered damages as the result of the spill and under the Quebec civil code they can seek redress in a Quebec court,"<sup>13</sup> argued spokesperson Dermot Travis. On February 13, NCDAO, backed by Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, announced that it would launch a multimillion dollar suit against Cambior. Said Sierra Club's Shelley Kath: "We cannot allow the public waterways of the world to be used as some sort of free septic system."

Although his administration did not press the mining corporations on the issue of compensation, President Jagan promised shortly after the disaster that the parliament would meet to review environmental law. The Amerindian People's Association applauded the statement but said it was a little too late. The group reminded Jagan of his sanguine assurance in 1993 when the mine opened that the Omai venture would transform Guyana's "mudland into the gold land of the future."<sup>14</sup> They criticized the gov-

12. "Government Stops Omai Paying Off Fishermen Affected by Spill," *Associated Press*, Sept. 8, 1995.

13. Allan Robinson, "Cambior Cleared in Guyana Spill," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), Jan. 23, 1996.

14. "Gold Fever Leads To Disaster," World Rainforest Movement (Chedington, England), Aug. 24, 1995.

ernment for failing to monitor the industry or pass laws that would make multinationals think twice before becoming careless.

### What Caused the Discharge?

Indeed, in the weeks that followed, the question of what happened and what could and should have been done to prevent it became a subject of national debate. It was not as if there hadn't been sufficient warning that safeguards were inadequate. Official sources admitted that before the cataclysmic August spill, at least two other major discharges in April and May 1995 had let thousands of gallons of cyanide-laced slush into the river.<sup>15</sup>

After the May discharge, Prime Minister Samuel Hinds, who holds the portfolio of environment minister, had criticized Omai and asked it to modify its operations to prevent a recurrence. It had taken the company six days to report the illegal discharge. Roger Moody of Minewatch, a London-based environmental group which monitors communities affected by industry, called the delay "criminal negligence" and "a violation of international standards."<sup>16</sup>

Moody, who visited Guyana on behalf of the Amerindian People's Association, said that when area residents first reported hundreds of dead fish floating down the Essequibo in May, the company denied any connection. Instead, OGML had its workers gather up and bury the dead animals before an investigation could be mounted. In the end, the company admitted to the discharge but claimed it was an accident caused when a power cable was severed during expansion work at the mill.<sup>17</sup>

The problem with that explanation, said Moody, is that if there were an electrical shutdown, everything would stop working. "How is it that one of the re-



According to Golden Star's annual report (inset), its CEO has "access to state-of-the-art" technology. Guyanese vendor has access to contaminated fish.

FRANCOIS SHALOM

lease doors came open?" Another more rational explanation is that the company was deliberately releasing waste into the Omai to reduce rapidly accumulating chemical sludge. Then, a power outage prevented company officials from shutting off the flow before detectable quantities of cyanide waste escaped. (There was no report on the concentration of the effluent during this May spill.)

The possibility that the company was deliberately releasing cyanide-laced tailings cannot be ruled out. OGML was facing a crisis. After two years of operation, the tailings in the pond had exceeded specified capacity. One month before the May spill, the company made it clear to the government that it would have to release cyanide slush from its tailings pond or risk shutting down the operation altogether.<sup>18</sup> Just before the

May incident, the company officially applied to release a limited amount of effluent from the ponds. Prime Minister Hinds sent in local experts to test the toxicity level. After finding that cyanide concentrations — even in the pond with the lowest level — exceeded US safety standards by

17 times, they recommended against letting Omai discharge effluent.

The company had several alternatives. It could build another more environmentally sound tailings pond, treat the tailings before discharge to reduce toxicity, or cart them away for safer disposal. A member of the investigative team, Dr. Joshua Ramsammy, a marine scientist with Guyana Environment Monitoring and Conservation Organization (GEMCO), charged that after failing to get permission to dump the effluent, the company took an easy out: It simply raised the level of the retaining wall to accommodate additional waste.

"That might not have been such a good idea," he noted.<sup>19</sup>

Interestingly, as far back as 1993, the company had targeted August 1995 as the date for disposing of its rapidly accumulating cyanide waste.<sup>20</sup> After the April release drew fire, the company had threatened that if it was prevented

*Sunday Stabroek*, Apr. 2, 1995; and "Omai Review Team Visits Mining Site," *Stabroek News*, Apr. 8, 1995.

19. According to Ramsammy, sodium cyanide gets mixed with water in concentrations ranging between 150 and 200 parts of cyanide to one million parts of water or ppm. With sufficient exposure to air and sunlight, the cyanide evaporates and eventually the concentration is reduced but "it rarely disappears completely." Tests of effluent in the section of the tailings pond with the lowest concentration of cyanide showed that the waste the company was proposing to be released registered 12 ppm. The US Environmental Protection Agency allows for limited release of effluent with cyanide concentrations of 0.7 ppm. Prime Minister Samuel Hinds confirmed that the cyanide slush released in August measured concentrations between 25 and 30 ppm. (Interview, Aug. 25, 1995.)

20. "Omai Review Team Visits Mining Site," *Stabroek News*, Apr. 8, 1995.

15. Interview with member of investigative team, Aug. 1995.  
16. Interview with Moody, Aug. 25, 1995.  
17. Canute James, "Guyana's Gold Lives Up To Its Potential," *Financial Times* (London), Aug. 17, 1995.

18. Gitanjali Persaud, "Omai Waste Problem Can be Solved,"

from discharging the slush, it would have to shut down operations. Deliberate or not, the August spill, which came on the month of Omai's deadline, provided a quick fix to OGML's immediate storage problem.

### Tailings of Woe

By then, all parties were well-practiced in shifting blame. The tailings pond at Omai had been designed by the Canadian branch of Knight Piesold, an engineering consulting firm with branches in the US. Shortly after the August

By reassuring that a proposed US mine will be safer because it has a stronger structure and an impermeable plastic liner, Knight Piesold is tacitly admitting that it applied lower standards in Guyana.

breach, the company tried to distance itself by declaring that it did not deal with the part of the dam where the leak occurred, but it was "perplexed about what appears to be cracks along 200 meters of the dam."<sup>21</sup> Knight Piesold officials insisted that the dam conformed to Canadian standards and was designed to contain heavy metals and cyanide-laced water. Bruce Brown, director of the firm, noted that although the design called for the tailings pond to crest 15 meters above the lowest point on the foundation, at the time of the August spill, the level had reached 45 meters. Brown said he had no idea why the height was increased.<sup>22</sup>

In a report to a Guyanese government-appointed committee looking into the August discharge, Philip Hocker, President of the Mineral Policy Center in Washington, D.C., quoted OGML's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a requirement that precedes all similar mining operations.<sup>23</sup> It indicated that

21. Allan Robinson, "Vancouver Engineers Deny Fault in Guyanese Disaster," *Globe and Mail*, Aug. 25, 1995.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Companies operating in volatile Third World countries usually get "risk insurance" from developed nations like Canada and the US, or from the World Bank, etc. Canada's Export Development Corporation (EDC) provided \$100 million, with an additional \$50 million from the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. The EIS, a precondition for the risk insurance,

no more than a half million cubic meters could be safely stored in the tailings pond. In fact, the 4 million cubic meters of cyanide-contaminated discharge — even excluding what remained in the ponds — was eight times that safe limit.<sup>24</sup>

It would appear then, that the company violated its EIS guidelines and is guilty of negligence. In a statement he prepared for submission to the Commission of Inquiry, Hocker went on to accuse the company of failing to organize a contingency response plan or provide

equipment that could deal with a spill — despite previous accidents. And because there was no access road to the site, he charged, it took five days to reach the outflow area with response equipment and to seal the area. OGML responded by writing to the prime minister asking that the candid environmentalist be removed

from an advisory subcommittee<sup>25</sup> of the Commission of Inquiry, charging that Hocker was biased. In the end, neither Hocker nor any other environmentalist was included on the decision-making commission. He did sit on a subcommittee and wrote the minority report rec-

was submitted by Vancouver, B.C.-based Rescan Inc. "Omai Gold Project," Jan. 1991.

24. Memorandum from Philip Hocker to William Woolford, deputy director, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission Members, Process Review Committee, Nov. 8, 1995.

25. "Canadian Mine-Owners Want US Expert Kicked Out of Spill Inquiry," *Canadian Press*, Oct. 26, 1995.

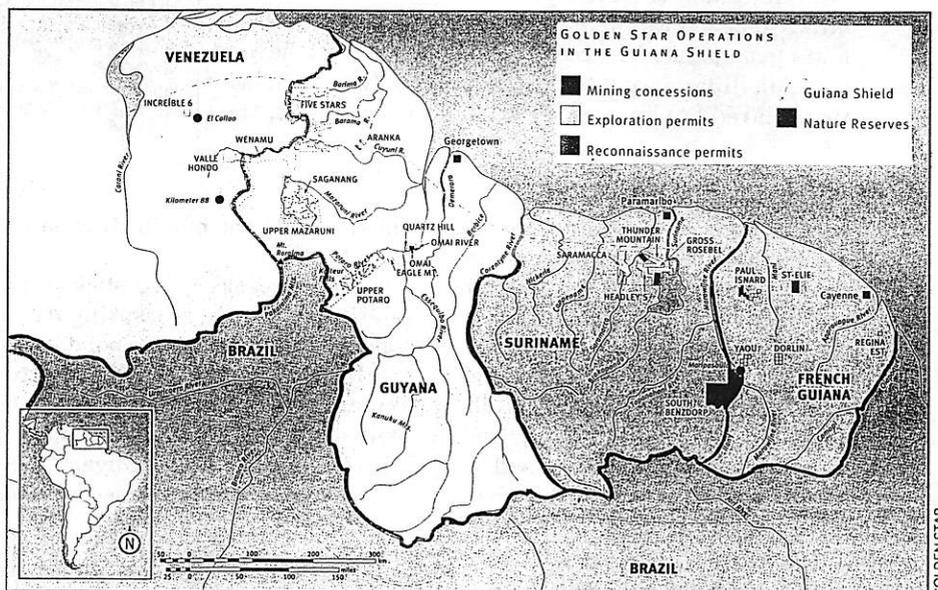
ommending that Omai be required to implement the same level of environmental safeguards common in the US.

In any case, preventing the release, rather than cleaning or covering it up, would have been in Guyana's interests. The January Commission failed to find the cause of the spill. Ramsammy speculates that the large amounts of slurry in the pond and the additional height of the retaining wall, combined with the use of dynamite not far away, must have caused the dam to break. Henry Roy, chief financial officer of majority owner Cambior, discounted damage from on-site explosives, noting that the dam is "at least a couple of football fields away from the open pit area where gold is mined."<sup>26</sup>

### Cutting Corners and Applying Double Standards

The failure to prevent the incidents or even diagnose the causes raises fears among some US politicians and environmentalists. House Chief Deputy Whip Bill Richardson (D-N.M.) is urging administrative action to block a gold mine using a similar cyanide heap-leach process just three miles outside Yellowstone National Park. North American environmentalists and some government officials point to Omai as an example of the risk of storing huge amounts of waste in sensitive ecosystems. They fear that the New World Mine's proposed 70-acre reservoir, designed to permanently hold an estimated 5.5 mil-

26. Peter Kennedy, "Guyana Spill Shakes Industry," *Financial Post* (Vancouver), Aug. 26, 1995.



GOLDEN STAR

# Golden Star's Less Than Stellar Record

A key figure in one of Omai's parent companies, the US-based Golden Star Resources Ltd., has a history of successfully escaping the consequences of massive pollution. Back in the 1980s, Robert Friedland, who would become a notorious figure in the gold mining industry, seemed to have the Midas touch. In 1985 he founded Golden Star, which promptly bought the Omai concession from Anaconda British Guiana Mines.<sup>1</sup>

Friedland, who was born in Chicago but became a Canadian citizen in the late 1980s, also owned Galactic Resources, which he described as a "new age mining company with global ambitions." In 1986, using cyanide extraction, Galactic began operations at Summitville, a huge open pit gold mine (like Omai), in the San Juan mountains of Colorado. Six years later, a 27-kilometer stretch of the Alamosa River was biologically dead, US taxpayers were saddled with a multimillion dollar clean-up, and Friedland was gone. The governor of Colorado, who ordered a criminal investigation into the Galactic operations, called the spill an "immoral act" and accused Galactic of being "too interested in their own greed to do a responsible job."<sup>2</sup>

In a 1993 Canadian exposé on him and Galactic, Friedland defended the mining techniques used at Summitville as "state-of-the-art" and a "model for other mining companies." In the last statement, at least, he was truthful. In January 1993, exactly one month after Galactic declared bankruptcy, Friedland's next project, the

Omai gold mine, began production using the very same technology that had destroyed the Alamosa.

As Golden Star would do later in Guyana, Friedland shirked responsibility. Although he insisted that he had left the Colorado operation before disaster struck, in fact, most of the damage was done between 1985 and 1986 when he was CEO; he had simply left before the leak developed and the extent of the devastation was exposed.



**Robert Friedland has a history of pollute, cut, and run.**

VANCOUVER SUN

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirmed that the heap-leach had been leaking cyanide, acidic water, and heavy metal into the local river system for years, and estimated that the mine had used about five million pounds of sodium cyanide. Colorado Department of Health Inspector Jim Horn commented, "there were 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of heavy metals leaving the site in dissolved form [every day]. ... There was no life in the river for 17 miles."<sup>3</sup> The site itself was a wasteland: The CBC described the massive Summitville heap-leach as 48 acres consisting of 12 million tons of crushed ore full of cyanide. With a price tag of \$33,000 a day, the EPA clean-up is expected to last ten years and

cost US taxpayers \$60 million.<sup>4</sup>

It is inconceivable that Guyana, with an annual GNP of \$424 million, could fund a comparable clean-up after Omai is played out and businessmen like Friedland have moved on to exploit their next site. ■

1. Golden Star was originally partnered with the Canadian company Placer Dome. By the time Cambior picked up its 60 percent stake in the 16-mile concession at Omai in 1990, the extraction technology had already been decided and 96,000 feet of exploratory drilling had been completed.
2. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "A Truly Galactic Mess," with Victor Malarek, *CBC's 5th Estate*, Sept. 21, 1993.
3. Roger Moody, "The Ugly Canadian: Robert Friedland and the Poisoning of the Americas," *Multinational Monitor*, Nov. 1994.
4. "Truly Galactic Mess," *op. cit.*

lion tons of toxic wastes and tailings, could leach into the area's water supply and destroy aquatic life. The reservoir is to be built by none other than the Denver branch of Knight Piesold.

Don East, president of Knight Piesold, said his company's blueprint calls for stronger materials than those used in Guyana. The New World dam will be made from compacted rock, rather than Omai's earthen embankment. "In addition," he promised, "the liner for New World's holding basin is to use clay and

plastic, while the one in Guyana uses only clay."<sup>27</sup>

Knight Piesold is in a sticky public relations bind. By reassuring Americans that its US tailings pond will be safe because it has a stronger structure and an impermeable plastic liner, the company is tacitly admitting that it applied lower standards in Guyana. "Tailings ponds are normally lined with very

plastic," says Ramsammy, "but OGML had persuaded the authorities that there was no need to use plastic because the soil in that area is impermeable if compacted." Experts familiar with the Omai site disagree with the company and confirm that the soil is extremely porous and therefore susceptible to leaching. In other words, durable plastic should have been used at Omai but wasn't.

"Either there was a construction error," wrote Hocker in his report, "or the

27. David Kalish, "Guyana Disaster Energizes Opponents of Gold Mine Near Yellowstone," *AP*, Aug. 25, 1995.

A Golden Star executive said the media were creating an unwarranted panic because, after all, "no one lives on the Omai."

engineers fundamentally misunderstood the construction material or the underlying soil." There is another possibility: The company cut corners either because it believed that it could get away with it in a Third World country dependent on the revenue, or calculated that, in any case, the cost of accidents was less than the price of safeguards.

### Assessing the Effects

How much more would it have cost Knight Piesold and OGML to include durable plastic in the tailings pond? According to Dr. Ramsammy, not much. However, cutting corners while reaping large profits was the company's top priority from day one. Clearly less important was protecting the environment and the population. Although the owners of the Omai mine were well aware of the consequences of the discharge, they initially disputed reports that human health was at risk. Richard Winters, vice president of corporate development at Golden Star, said the media were creating an unwarranted panic because, after all, "no one lives on the Omai."<sup>28</sup>

The tens of thousands of Guyanese who live along the banks and depend on the Essequibo River for fish, water to irrigate hundreds of acres of fruits and vegetables, and to provide drinking water for thousands of livestock, might disagree.

Over the last several years the association representing Amerindians, most of whom live in the Essequibo region, has reported increased incidences of health

28. Jeanie Stokes, "Cambior Says Guyanese Mine Spill May Be Contained," *Bloomberg News Service*, Aug. 23, 1995.



PHOTOS: FRANCOIS SHALOM



### Life along the Omai in Guyana, a country with closer cultural and linguistic affiliations to its Caribbean neighbors than the mainland.

Presumably, said Suresh Narine, a Guyanese doctoral candidate in chemical physics at Trent University, Canada, cyanide from previous releases has already leached into the soil along the porous banks of the Essequibo and poisoned vegetation.

Once the cyanide gets into the food supply," he added, "it binds with iron in hemoglobin which is normally used to transport oxygen to various cells in the body. When the cyanide enters the body in sufficient concentrations, the brain and other cells are denied oxygen and die as a result. Over a period of time, the cyanide can cause mental retardation and birth defects."<sup>31</sup>

There is much debate over the extent to which cyanide is biodegradable.

Nor is cyanide the only concern. Heavy metal pollution often accompanies improperly regulated mining.<sup>32</sup> In 1990, the South Carolina Brewer Gold Mine, which uses the same heap-leach process as Omai, accidentally released 10 million gallons of cyanide into the Lynches River, killing as many as 11,000 fish. State officials raised concerns about the possible introduction of copper, which is highly toxic to aquatic life. As of December 12, 1994, according to

problems including malaria and stomach sickness, according to Eric Huntley of Caribbean Environment Watch.<sup>29</sup> Linking clusters of illness to environmental degradation is difficult even under First World conditions. In Guyana, given the lack of scientific resources and OGML's track record, prospects for identifying, treating, and compensating victims of cyanide poisoning are dim indeed.

The danger, however, is substantial. According to Guyanese government figures, cyanide contamination at Omai began at 25 to 30 parts per million, but was quickly diluted to three parts per million. Levels of two parts per million are potentially lethal to humans, a concentration as low as 0.5 ppm can kill some species, with 0.005 ppm having debilitating effects on fish (*i.e.*, preventing them from reproducing).<sup>30</sup>

29. John Vidal, "Cyanide River named disaster area," *Guardian* (London), Aug. 24, 1995. Stagnant water, which results from mining operations, has been linked to the spread of malaria.

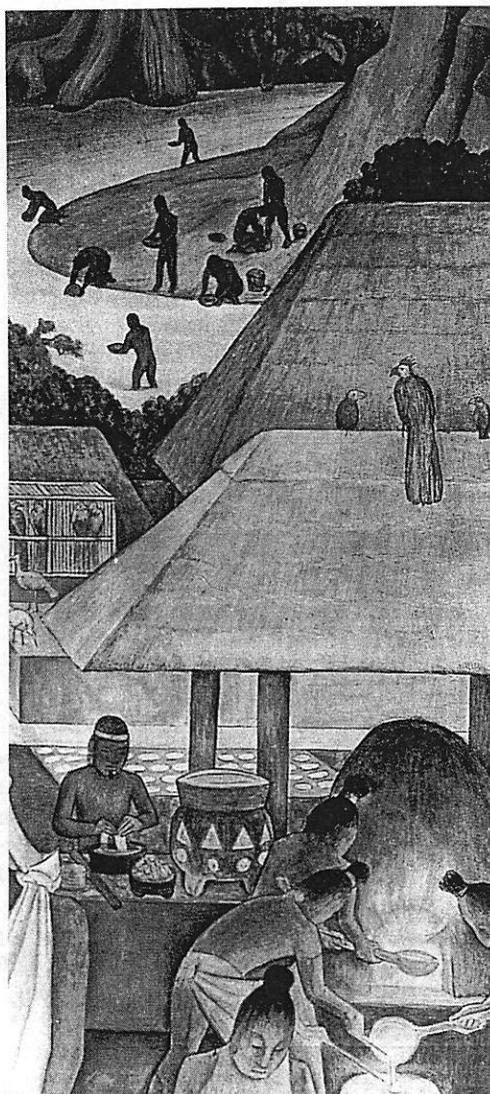
30. Case Study, "Heavy Rain Burst S.C. Dam: Major Cyanide Spill," *Clementine* (Washington, D.C.), Winter 1990.

31. Interview, Aug. 27, 1995.

32. Pratap Chatterjee, "Environment-Guyana: Cyanide Spill Could Be Long-Term Disaster," *Inter Press Service*, Aug. 30, 1995.

Omai's Environmental Impact Statement, its tailings pond had copper at eight times the EPA's benchmark standard for storm water runoff.<sup>33</sup> But even if copper, arsenic, lead, mercury, cadmium, and other heavy metals had been in relatively low concentration to begin with in the Omai operation, said Ramsammy, "by constantly recycling the water in the milling process, the concentration of heavy metal is built up." And since they don't degrade, they stick around for decades. But without independent testing around Omai, no one can accurately assess the composition of the discharge or the extent of damage.

33. "Omai Gold Mines Ltd. Omai Gold Project: Environmental Impact Statement Addendum: Tailings Effluent Management." Feb. 1995. Rescan Consultants Inc., pp. 2-5. In this most recent addendum, Omai was allowed to quadruple the concentration of cyanide in the effluent it releases from the tailings pond into the river from 2ppm in 1991 to 8ppm. Interestingly, Omai had been denied its spring 1995 request to raise the level to 8ppm.



Diego Rivera "Mixtec Civilization"

## All That Glitters

It is less difficult to assess damage to OMGL. Although losses from the shutdown affected stock prices and slowed production, Omai could afford it: The company is making a killing in Guyana. After an initial \$243 million investment, Omai produced 206,000 ounces of gold in its first year of operation. From January to August 1995, the company pulled out 160,000 ounces. According to Cambior chief executive Louis Gignac, Omai's production is expected to reach 550,000 ounces — (worth about \$220 million) in 1996 once the mine reopens.<sup>34</sup> So successful was the mine before the spill that the owners planned a \$58 million expansion. The estimate of gold reserves when production started in 1993 — 40.6 million tons of ore — has been revised upward to 64 million tons and the life of the mine extended from 10 to 12 years.

Understandably, the company, which was counting on Omai for 45 percent of its gold production this year, took the government's green light to restart operations with a great deal of satisfaction. The Guyanese government was also anxious to have operations under way even though it is asking for assurances from Omai that a similar disaster will not occur in the future.

Hocker says that in this respect, the Guyanese government is naive. "Unfortunately, the government of Guyana is depending on the goodwill of Cambior instead of looking at it as a contract that has to be negotiated and enforced; the government has to make its expectations very clear and have the backbone to inspect these expectations or get out of the contract."<sup>35</sup>

Output from Omai has helped to increase Guyana's gold production more than fourfold since 1992. Guyana's finance minister said that with the closing of the mine in the last four months of 1995, the country's projected 6.7 percent growth rate (1995) would drop to 4.7 percent. In a struggling economy, that is a hard hit. Even more unpleasant is Omai's threat to pull the plug on its Omai operation rather than submit to "too many environmental conditions on renewed production." The government's options are limited. Accord-

34. Peter Kennedy, "Mine Shutdowns Add to Cambior Loss," *Associated Press*, Nov. 15, 1995.

35. Interview, Jan. 22, 1996.

ing to Hocker, "the [Omai] project has tremendous momentum, directing it is like turning an ocean liner and there aren't many powerful tugs around."<sup>36</sup>

## The Price of El Dorado

In their quest for the mythical city of El Dorado, the Spanish conquistadors just missed the rich Omai area. Between 1889 and 1911, German, Dutch, and Guyanese gold miners took out 112,000 ounces of gold from the area. Around 1911, they abandoned their efforts, apparently satisfied that the site was played out.<sup>37</sup>

Even a decade ago, the dark deep water of the Essequibo meshed with its tributaries, creating one of the most breathtaking natural environments in all of South America. Now, everyone, it seems, wants a piece of El Dorado, no matter what the consequence. Small miners are using mercury in their processing, and divers are risking their lives to make six years' Georgetown wages in a couple of months.<sup>38</sup> The biggest impact, however, came from the use of sophisticated technology which has rewritten the profit equations and devastated the environment. In the last several years, missile drilling and big suction dredges have ravaged the river beds, extracting up to 16 ounces of gold in 12-hour shifts. Parts of the interior of the river system are being clogged and destroyed. In places where there was deep water, four-wheel trucks can now cross easily.

In April 1995, the *Guyana Chronicle* published several aerial pictures taken by Capt. Miles Williams. Run without an accompanying story, they made obvious what was happening: Parts of the mighty Essequibo were muddy and yellowish, sick and dying.<sup>39</sup> It has taken this type of damage and pressure from international and local environmental groups to finally push the Guyanese government to draft environmental laws. Although environmentalists charge that the proposed regulations lack teeth, their probable passage may be a first step in protecting what is left of the Essequibo River and the communities that depend on it for sustenance before it is too late. ■

36. Jodah, *op. cit.*

37. Canute James, "Guyana's Gold Lives Up To Its Potential," *Financial Times*, Aug. 17, 1995.

38. "Poor Man's Gold Rush," *Economist*, May 12, 1990.

39. "Changing Rivers: Gold Mining is taking toll on the mighty Essequibo River and other major waterways," *Guyana Chronicle*, Apr. 5, 1995.

# Dismantling Yugoslavia Colonizing Bosnia

by Michel Chossudovsky  
photos by Paul Harris

*While Western soldiers  
make headlines as peace  
enforcers, an army of  
international bankers,  
lawyers, and  
creditors continues its  
economic conquest  
of the Balkans.*

**A**s heavily-armed US and NATO troops enforce the peace in Bosnia, the press and politicians alike portray Western intervention in the former Yugoslavia as a noble, if agonizingly belated, response to an outbreak of ethnic massacres and human rights violations. In the wake of

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**More than 10,000 refugees flee to Croatia across a makeshift bridge as ethnic cleansing begins in Bosnia in 1992.**

the November 1995 Dayton peace accords, the West is eager to touch up its self-portrait as savior of the Southern Slavs and get on with "the work of rebuilding" the newly sovereign states.

But following a pattern set early on, Western public opinion has been misled. The conventional wisdom holds that the plight of the Balkans is the outcome of an "aggressive nationalism," the in-

evitable result of deep-seated ethnic and religious tensions rooted in history.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, commentators cite "Balkans power-plays" and the clash of political personalities to explain the conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

1. See, e.g., former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Robert Zimmerman, "The Last Ambassador, A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs*, v. 74, n. 2, 1995.  
2. For a critique, see Milos Vasic, et al., "War Against Bosnia," *Vreme News Digest Agency*, Apr. 13, 1992.



PAUL HARRIS

**Although the war devastated the economy and created shortages of staples, smuggled goods sometimes appeared in besieged Sarajevo.**

Lost in the barrage of images and self-serving analyses are the economic and social causes of the conflict. The deep-seated economic crisis which preceded the civil war is long forgotten. The strategic interests of Germany and the US in laying the groundwork for the disintegration of Yugoslavia go unmentioned, as does the role of external creditors and international financial institutions. In the eyes of the global media, Western powers bear no responsibility for the impoverishment and destruction of a nation of 24 million people.

But through their domination of the global financial system, the Western powers, in pursuit of national and collective strategic interests, helped bring the Yugoslav economy to its knees and stirred its simmering ethnic and social conflicts. Now it is the turn of Yugoslavia's war-ravaged successor states to feel the tender mercies of the international financial community.

As the world focuses on troop movements and cease-fires, the international financial institutions are busily collecting former Yugoslavia's external debt from its remnant states, while transforming the Balkans into a safe-haven for free enterprise. With a Bosnian peace settlement holding under NATO guns, the West has unveiled a "reconstruction" program that strips that brutalized country of sovereignty to a degree not seen in Europe since the end of World War II. It consists largely of making Bosnia a divided territory un-

der NATO military occupation and Western administration.

### Neocolonial Bosnia

Resting on the Dayton accords, which created a Bosnian "constitution," the US and the European Union have installed a full-fledged colonial administration in

## The US and EU have installed a full-fledged colonial administration in Bosnia.

Bosnia. At its head is their appointed High Representative, Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister and European Union representative in Bosnian peace negotiations.<sup>3</sup> Bildt has full executive powers in all civilian matters, with the right to overrule the governments of both the Bosnian Federation and the Republika Srpska (Serbian Bosnia). To make the point crystal clear, the accords spell out that "The High Representative is the final authority in theater regarding interpretation of the agreements."<sup>4</sup> He will work with the multinational military implementation force (IFOR) Military High Command as well as creditors and donors.

3. Testimony of Richard C. Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Dec. 19, 1995.  
4. *Dayton Peace Accords*, "Agreement on High Representative," Articles I and II, Dec. 15, 1995.

The UN Security Council has also appointed a "commissioner" under the High Representative to run an international civilian police force. Irish police official Peter Fitzgerald, with UN policing experience in Namibia, El Salvador, and Cambodia,<sup>5</sup> presides over some 1,700 police from 15 countries. The police will be dispatched to Bosnia after a five-day training program in Zagreb.<sup>6</sup>

The new constitution hands the reins of economic policy over to the Bretton Woods institutions and the London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The IMF is empowered to appoint the first governor of the Bosnian Central Bank, who, like the High Representative, "shall not be a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina or a neighbouring State."<sup>7</sup>

Under the IMF regency, the Central Bank will not be allowed to function as a Central Bank: "For the first six years ... it may not extend credit by creating money, operating in this respect as a currency board." Neither will Bosnia be allowed to have its own currency (issuing paper money only when there is full foreign exchange backing), nor permitted to mobilize its internal resources.<sup>8</sup> Its ability to self-finance its reconstruction through an independent monetary policy is blunted from the outset.

While the Central Bank is in IMF custody, the EBRD heads the Commission on Public Corporations, which supervises operations of all public sector enterprises, including energy, water, postal services, telecommunications, and transportation. The EBRD president appoints the commission chair and will direct public sector restructuring, *i.e.*, the sell-off of state- and socially-owned assets and the procurement of long-term investment funds.<sup>9</sup> Western creditors explicitly created the EBRD "to give a distinctively political dimension to lending."<sup>10</sup>

As the West trumpets its support for democracy, actual political power rests in the hands of a parallel Bosnian "state" whose executive positions are held by non-citizens. Western creditors have embedded their interests in a con-

5. United Nations General Secretariat, *Curriculum Vitae of Thomas Peter Fitzgerald*, n.d. (1995).

6. *Dayton Peace Accords*, "Agreement on International Police Task Force," Article II.

7. *Ibid.*, "Agreement on General Framework," Article VII.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, "Agreement on Public Corporations," Article I.

10. "Stabilising Europe," *The Times* (London), Nov. 22, 1990.

stitution hastily written on their behalf. They have done so without a constitutional assembly and without consultations with Bosnian citizens' organizations. Their plans to rebuild Bosnia appear more suited to sating creditors than satisfying even the elementary needs of Bosnians.

And why not? The neocolonization of Bosnia is the logical culmination of long Western efforts to undo Yugoslavia's experiment in market socialism and workers' self-management and to impose the *diktat* of the free market.

### The Shape of Things to Come

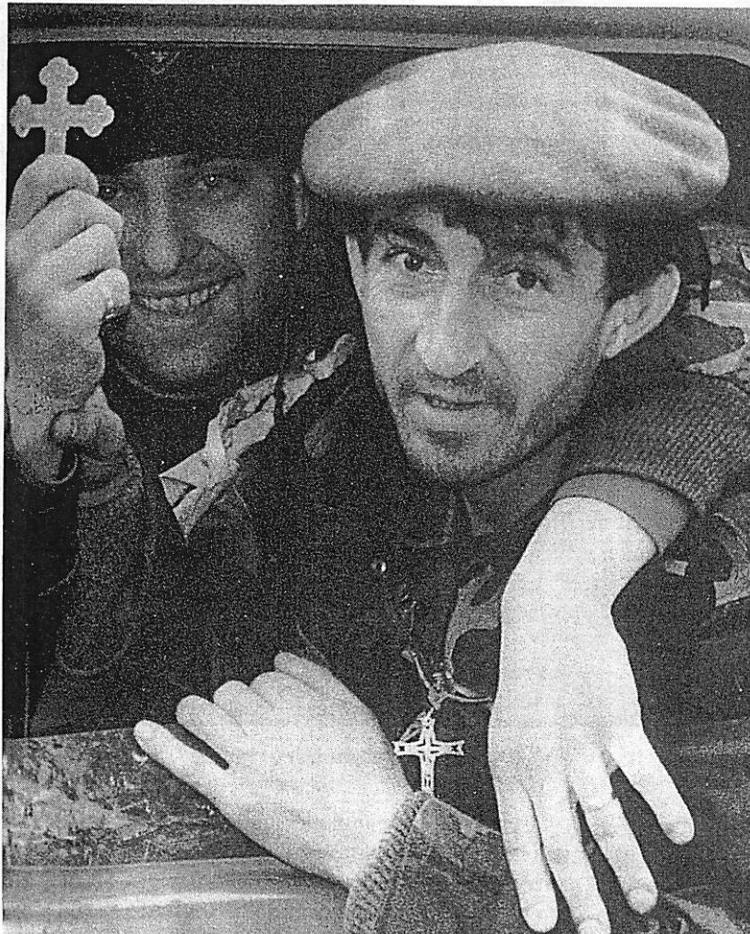
Multiethnic, socialist Yugoslavia was once a regional industrial power and economic success. In the two decades before 1980, annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 6.1 percent, medical care was free, the literacy was 91 percent, and life expectancy was 72 years.<sup>11</sup> But after a decade of Western economic ministrations and five years of disintegration, war, boycott, and embargo, the economies of the former Yugoslavia are prostrate, their industrial sectors dismantled.

Yugoslavia's implosion was partially due to US machinations. Despite Belgrade's non-alignment and its extensive trading relations with the European Community and the US, the Reagan administration targeted the Yugoslav economy in a "Secret Sensitive" 1984 National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 133), "US Policy towards Yugoslavia." A censored version declassified in 1990 elaborated on NSDD 54 on Eastern Europe, issued in 1982. The latter advocated "expanded efforts to promote a 'quiet revolution' to overthrow Communist governments and parties," while reintegrating the countries of Eastern Europe into a market-oriented economy.<sup>12</sup>

11. World Bank, *World Development Report 1991*, Statistical Annex, Tables 1 and 2, 1991.

12. Sean Gervasi, "Germany, the US, and the Yugoslav Crisis," *CoverAction*, n. 43, Winter 1992-93, p. 42.

The US had earlier joined Belgrade's other international creditors in imposing a first round of macroeconomic reform in 1980, shortly before the death of Marshall Tito. That initial round of restructuring set the pattern. Throughout the 1980s, the IMF and World Bank periodically prescribed further doses of their bitter economic medicine as the Yugoslav economy slowly lapsed into a coma.



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**Behind the cheer lies something more sinister. These Bosnian soldiers display a trophy of war: an Orthodox cross taken from a Serb they killed that morning.**

From the beginning, successive IMF-sponsored programs hastened the disintegration of the Yugoslav industrial sector—industrial production declined to a negative 10 percent growth rate by 1990<sup>13</sup>—and the piecemeal dismantling of its welfare state, with all the predictable social consequences. Debt restructuring agreements, meanwhile, increased foreign debt, and a mandated currency devaluation also hit hard at Yugoslavs' standard of living.

13. World Bank, *Industrial Restructuring Study: Overview, Issues, and Strategy for Restructuring*, Washington, D.C., June 1991, pp. 10, 14.

### Mr. Markovic Goes to Washington

In autumn 1989, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Yugoslav federal Premier Ante Markovic met in Washington with President George Bush to cap negotiations for a new financial aid package. In return for assistance, Yugoslavia agreed to even more sweeping economic reforms, including a new devalued currency, another wage freeze, sharp cuts in government spending, and the elimination of socially-owned, worker-managed companies.<sup>14</sup> The Belgrade *nomenklatura*, with the assistance of Western advisers, had laid the groundwork for Markovic's mission by implementing beforehand many of the required reforms, including a major liberalization of foreign investment legislation.

"Shock therapy" began in January 1990. Although inflation had eaten away at earnings, the IMF ordered that wages be frozen at their mid-November 1989 levels. Prices continued to rise unabated, and real wages collapsed by 41 percent in the first six months of 1990.<sup>15</sup>

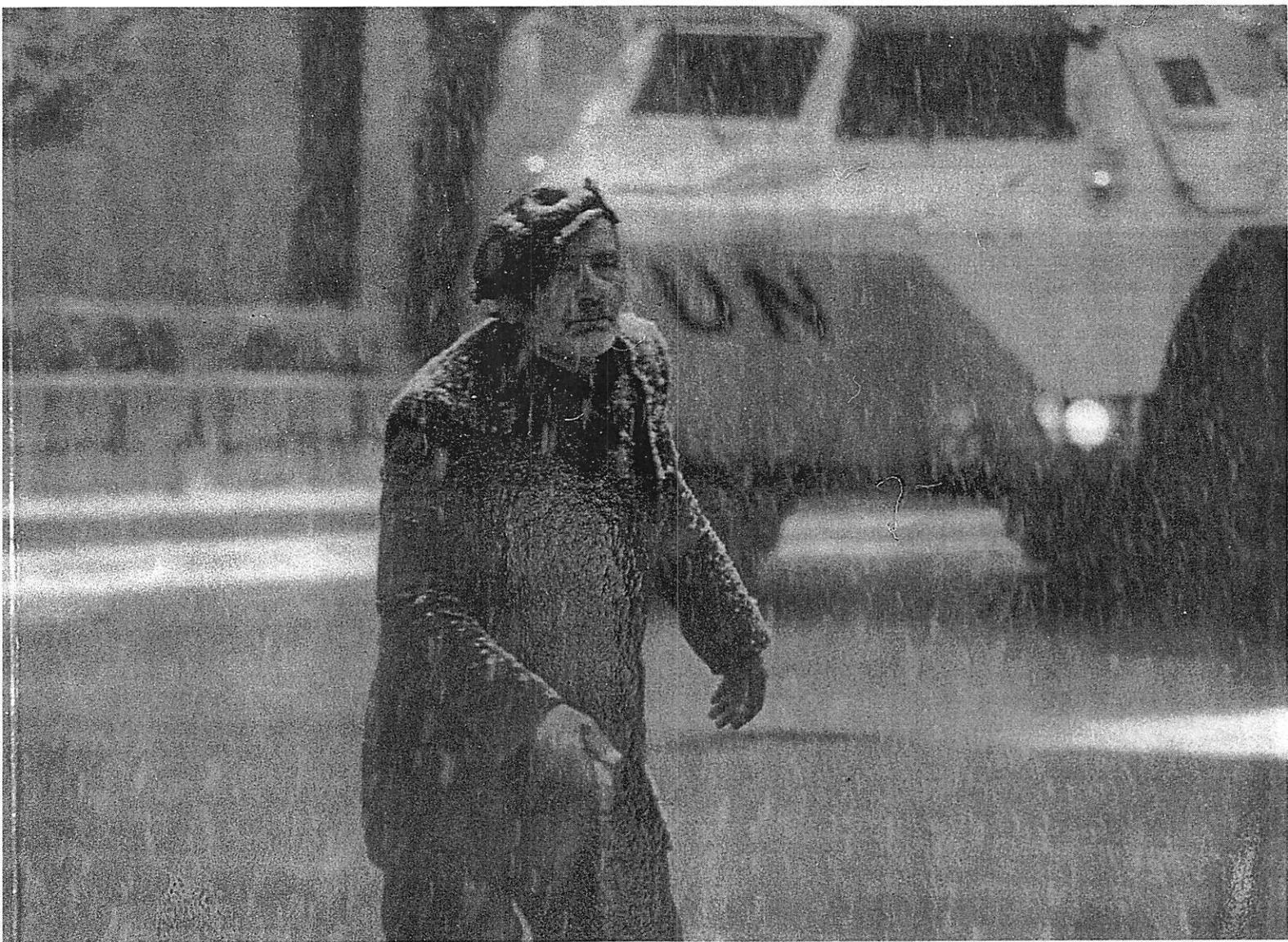
The IMF also effectively controlled the Yugoslav central bank. Its tight money policy further crippled the country's ability to finance its economic and social programs. State revenues that should have gone as transfer payments to the republics and provinces went instead to service Belgrade's

debt with the Paris and London clubs. The republics were largely left to their own devices.

In one fell swoop, the reformers engineered the final collapse of Yugoslavia's federal fiscal structure and mortally wounded its federal political institutions. By cutting the financial arteries between Belgrade and the republics, the reforms fueled secessionist tendencies that fed on economic factors as well as ethnic divisions, virtually ensuring the de facto secession of the republics.

14. Gervasi, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

15. World Bank, *Restructuring, op. cit.*, p. viii.



PAUL HARRIS

Sarajevo, February 1995.

The IMF-induced budgetary crisis created an economic *fait accompli* that paved the way for Croatia's and Slovenia's formal secession in June 1991.

### **Crushed by the Invisible Hand**

The reforms demanded by Belgrade's creditors also struck at the heart of Yugoslavia's system of socially-owned and worker-managed enterprises. As one observer noted,

The objective was to subject the Yugoslav economy to massive privatization and the dismantling of the public sector. The Communist Party bureaucracy, most notably its military and intelligence sector, was canvassed specifically and offered political and economic backing on the condition that wholesale scuttling of social protections for Yugoslavia's workforce was imposed.<sup>16</sup>

16. Ralph Schoenman, "Divide and Rule Schemes in the Balkans," *The Organizer* (San Francisco), Sept. 11, 1995.

It was an offer that a desperate Yugoslavia could not refuse. Advised by Western lawyers and consultants, Markovic's government passed financial legislation that forced "insolvent" businesses into bankruptcy or liquidation. Under the new law, if a business was unable to pay its bills for 30 days running, or for 30 days within a 45-day period, the government would launch bankruptcy proceedings within the next 15 days.

The assault on the socialist economy also included a new banking law designed to trigger the liquidation of the socially-owned "Associated Banks." Within two years, more than half the country's banks had vanished, to be replaced by newly-formed "independent profit-oriented institutions."

These changes in the legal framework, combined with the IMF's tight money policy toward industry and the opening of the economy to foreign competition, accelerated industrial decline.

From 1989 through September 1990, more than a thousand companies went into bankruptcy. By 1990, the annual GDP growth rate had collapsed to a negative 7.5 percent. In 1991, GDP declined by a further 15 percent, while industrial output shrank by 21 percent.<sup>17</sup>

The IMF package unquestionably precipitated the collapse of much of Yugoslavia's well-developed heavy industry. Other socially-owned enterprises survived only by not paying workers. More than half a million workers still on company payrolls did not get regular paychecks in late 1990. They were the lucky ones. Some 600,000 Yugoslavs had already lost their jobs by September 1990, and that was only the beginning. According to the World Bank, another 2,435 industrial enterprises, including some of the country's largest,

17. Judit Kiss, "Debt Management in Eastern Europe," *Eastern European Economics*, May-June 1994, p. 59.

were slated for liquidation. Their 1.3 million workers — half the remaining industrial workforce — were “redundant.”<sup>18</sup>

As 1991 dawned, real wages were in free fall, social programs had collapsed, and unemployment ran rampant. The dismantling of the industrial economy was breathtaking in its magnitude and brutality. Its social and political impact, while not as easily quantified, was tremendous. “The pips are squeaking,” as London’s *Financial Times* put it.<sup>19</sup>

Less archly, Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic warned that the reforms were “having a markedly unfavourable impact on the overall situation in society. ... Citizens have lost faith in the state and its institutions. ... The further deepening of the economic crisis and the growth of social tensions has had a vital impact on the deterioration of the political-security situation.”<sup>20</sup>

### The Political Economy of Disintegration

Some Yugoslavs joined together in a doomed battle to prevent the destruction of their economy and polity. As one observer found, “worker resistance crossed ethnic lines, as Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Slovenians mobilized ... shoulder to shoulder with their fellow workers.”<sup>21</sup> But the economic struggle also heightened already tense relations among the republics — and between the republics and Belgrade.

Serbia rejected the austerity plan outright, and some 650,000 Serbian workers struck against the federal government to force wage hikes.<sup>22</sup> The other republics followed different and sometimes self-contradictory paths.

In relatively wealthy Slovenia, for instance, secessionist leaders such as Social Democratic party chair Joze Pucnik supported the reforms: “From an economic standpoint, I can only agree with socially harmful measures in our society, such as rising unemployment or cutting workers’ rights, because they are necessary to advance the economic reform process.”<sup>23</sup>

18. Already laid-off and “redundant” workers constituted fully two-thirds of the industrial workforce. World Bank, *Restructuring*, op. cit., Annex I.

19. Jurek Martin, “The road to be trodden to Kosovo,” *Financial Times*, Mar. 13, 1991.

20. British Broadcasting Service, “Borisav Jovic Tells SFRY Assembly Situation Has ‘Dramatically Deteriorated,’” Apr. 27, 1991.

21. Schoenman, op. cit.

22. Gervasi, op. cit., p. 44.

23. Federico Nier-Fischer, “Eastern Europe: Social Crisis,” *Inter Press Service*, Sept. 5, 1990.

But at the same time, Slovenia joined other republics in challenging the federal government’s efforts to restrict their economic autonomy. Both Croatia leader Franjo Tudjman and Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic joined Slovene leaders in railing against Yugoslavia’s attempts to impose harsh reforms.<sup>24</sup>

In the multiparty elections in 1990, economic policy was at the center of the political debate as separatist coalitions ousted the Communists in Croatia, Bosnia and Slovenia. Just as economic collapse spurred the drift toward separation, separation in turn exacerbated the economic crisis. Cooperation among

## International financiers made a desperate Yugoslavia an offer that it could not refuse.

the republics virtually ceased. And with the republics at one another’s throats, both the economy and the nation itself embarked on a vicious downward spiral.

The process sped along as the republican leaderships deliberately fostered social and economic divisions to strengthen their own hands: “The republican oligarchies, who all had visions of a ‘national renaissance’ of their own, instead of choosing between a genuine Yugoslav market and hyperinflation, opted for war which would disguise the real causes of the economic catastrophe.”<sup>25</sup>

The simultaneous appearance of militias loyal to secessionist leaders only hastened the descent into chaos. These militias, with their escalating atrocities, not only split the population along ethnic lines, they also fragmented the workers’ movement.<sup>26</sup>

### Western Help

The austerity measures had laid the basis for the recolonization of the Balkans. Whether that required the breakup of Yugoslavia was subject to debate among the Western powers, with Germany leading the push for secession and the US, fearful of opening a

24. Klas Bergman, “Markovic Seeks to Keep Yugoslavia One Nation,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 11, 1990, p. 6.

25. Dimitrije Boarov, “A Brief Review of Anti-Inflation Programs: the Curse of the Dead Programs,” *Vreme News Digest Agency*, Apr. 13, 1992.

26. *Ibid.*

nationalist Pandora’s box, originally arguing for Yugoslavia’s preservation.

Following Franjo Tudjman’s and the rightist Democratic Union’s decisive victory in Croatia in May 1990, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, in almost daily contact with his counterpart in Zagreb, gave his go-ahead for Croatian secession.<sup>27</sup> Germany did not passively support secession; it “forced the pace of international diplomacy” and pressured its Western allies to recognize Slovenia and Croatia. Germany sought a free hand among its allies “to pursue economic dominance in the whole of Mitteleuropa.”<sup>28</sup>

Washington, on the other hand, favored “a loose unity while encouraging democratic development ... [Secretary of State] Baker told Tudjman and [Slovenia’s President] Milan Kucan that the United States would not encourage or support unilateral secession ... but if they had to leave, he urged them to leave by a negotiated agreement.”<sup>29</sup>

Instead, Slovenia, Croatia, and finally, Bosnia fought bloody civil wars against “rump” Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) or Serbian nationalists or both. But now, the US has belatedly taken an active diplomatic role in Bosnia, strengthened its relations with Croatia and Macedonia, and positioned itself to play a leading role in the region’s economic and political future.

### The Post-War Regime

Western creditors have now turned their attention to Yugoslavia’s successor states. As with the demise of Yugoslavia, the economic aspects of post-war reconstruction remain largely unheralded, but the prospects for rebuilding the newly independent republics appear bleak. Yugoslavia’s foreign debt has been carefully divided and allocated to the successor republics,<sup>30</sup> which are now strangled in separate debt rescheduling and structural adjustment agreements.

The consensus among donors and international agencies is that past macro-

27. Gervasi, op. cit., p. 65.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

29. Zimmerman, op. cit.

30. In June 1995, the IMF, acting on behalf of creditor banks and Western governments, proposed to redistribute that debt as follows: Serbia and Montenegro, 36 percent; Croatia, 28 percent; Slovenia, 16 percent; Bosnia-Herzegovina, 16 percent; and Macedonia, 5 percent.



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**Cellist Vedran Smailovic, often called the "Soul of Sarajevo," plays in the ruins of the concert hall of the Skenderija Stadium with composer Nigel Osborne from Edinburgh, March 1993.**

economic reforms adopted under IMF advice had not quite met their goal and further shock therapy is required to restore "economic health" to Yugoslavia's successor states. Croatia and Macedonia have followed the IMF's direction: Both have agreed to loan packages — to pay off their shares of the Yugoslav debt — that require a consolidation of

the process begun with Ante Markovic's bankruptcy program. The all too familiar pattern of plant closings, induced bank failures, and impoverishment continues apace.

And global capital applauds. Despite an emerging crisis in social welfare and the decimation of his economy, Macedonian Finance Minister Ljube

Trpevski proudly informed the press that "the World Bank and the IMF place Macedonia among the most successful countries in regard to current transition reforms."<sup>31</sup>

The head of the IMF mission to Macedonia, Paul Thomsen, agreed. He avowed that "the results of the stabilization program were impressive" and gave particular credit to "the efficient wages policy" adopted by the Skopje government. Still, his negotiators added, even more budget cutting will be necessary.<sup>32</sup>

But Western intervention is making its most serious inroads on national sovereignty in Bosnia. The neocolonial administration imposed by the Dayton accords and supported by NATO's fire-power ensures that Bosnia's future will be determined in Washington, Bonn, and Brussels — not Sarajevo.

### **Reconstruction Colonial Style**

If Bosnia is ever to emerge from the ravages of war and neocolonialism, massive reconstruction will be essential. But judging by recent Balkan history, Western assistance is more likely to drag Bosnia into the Third World than to lift it to parity with its European neighbors.

The Bosnian government estimates that reconstruction costs will reach \$47 billion. Western donors have pledged \$3 billion in reconstruction loans, yet only \$518 million dollars have so far been given. Part of this money is tagged to finance some of the local civilian costs of IFOR's military deployment and part to repay international creditors.<sup>33</sup>

Fresh loans will pay back old debt. The Central Bank of the Netherlands has generously provided "bridge financing" of \$37 million to allow Bosnia to pay its arrears with the IMF, without which the IMF will not lend it fresh money. But in a cruel and absurd paradox, the sought-after loans from the IMF's newly created "Emergency Window" for "post-conflict countries" will not be used for post-war reconstruction. Instead, they will repay the Dutch Central Bank, which had coughed up the money to settle IMF arrears in the first place.<sup>34</sup> Debt piles up, and little new

31. *Macedonian Information Liaison Service News*, Apr. 11, 1995.

32. *Ibid.*

33. "The Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall provide, free of cost, such facilities NATO needs for the preparation and execution of the Operation" (Annex 1-A). Under the accord, NATO personnel will pay no Bosnian taxes, including sales taxes.

34. *United Press International*, "IMF to admit Bosnia on Wednesday," Dec. 18, 1995.

money goes for rebuilding Bosnia's war-torn economy.

While rebuilding is sacrificed on the altar of debt repayment, Western governments and corporations show greater interest in gaining access to strategic natural resources. With the discovery of energy reserves in the region, the partition of Bosnia between the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian-Serb Republika Srpska under the Dayton accords has taken on new strategic importance. Documents in the hands of Croatia and the Bosnian Serbs indicate that coal and oil deposits have been identified on the eastern slope of the Dinarides Thrust, retaken from rebel Krajina Serbs by the US-backed Croatian army in the final offensives before the Dayton accords. Bosnian officials report that Chicago-based Amoco was among several foreign firms that subsequently initiated exploratory surveys in Bosnia.<sup>35</sup>

"Substantial" petroleum fields also lie in the Serb-held part of Croatia just across the Sava River from Tuzla, the headquarters for the US military zone.<sup>36</sup> Exploration operations went on during the war, but the World Bank and the multinationals that conducted the operations kept local governments in the dark, presumably to prevent them from acting to grab potentially valuable areas.<sup>37</sup>

With their attention devoted to debt repayment and potential energy bonanzas, the Western powers have shown little interest in rectifying the crimes committed under the rubric of ethnic cleansing. The 70,000 NATO troops on hand to "enforce the peace" will accordingly devote their efforts to administering the partition of Bosnia in accordance with Western economic interests rather than restoring the *status quo ante*.

While local leaders and Western interests share the spoils of the former Yugoslav economy, they have entrenched socio-

ethnic divisions in the very structure of partition. This permanent fragmentation of Yugoslavia along ethnic lines thwarts a united resistance of Yugoslavs of all ethnic origins against the recolonization of their homeland.

But what's new? As one observer caustically noted, all of the leaders of Yugoslavia's successor states have worked closely with the West: "All the current leaders of the former Yugoslav republics were Communist Party func-

## Opinion-makers present cultural, ethnic, and religious divisions as the sole cause of the crisis, when they are in fact largely a result of the process of economic and political fracturing.

tionaries and each in turn vied to meet the demands of the World Bank and the IMF, the better to qualify for investment loans and substantial perks for the leadership."<sup>38</sup>

### The Only Possible World?

Western-backed neoliberal macroeconomic restructuring helped destroy Yugoslavia. Yet, since the onset of war in 1991, the global media have carefully overlooked or denied their central role. Instead, they have joined the chorus sing-

ing praises of the free market as the basis for rebuilding a war-shattered economy. The social and political impact of economic restructuring in Yugoslavia has been carefully erased from our collective understanding. Opinion-makers instead dogmatically present cultural, ethnic, and religious divisions as the sole cause of the crisis. In reality, they are the consequence of a much deeper process of economic and political fracturing.

Such false consciousness not only masks the truth, it also prevents us from acknowledging precise historical occurrences. Ultimately, it distorts the true sources of social conflict. When applied to the former Yugoslavia, it obscures the historical foundations of South Slavic unity, solidarity and identity. But this false consciousness lives across the globe, where shuttered factories, jobless workers, and gutted social programs are the only possible world, and "bitter economic medicine" is the only prescription.

At stake in the Balkans are the lives of millions of people. Macroeconomic reform there has destroyed livelihoods and made a joke of the right to work. It has put basic needs such as food and shelter beyond the reach of many. It has degraded culture and national identity. In the name of global capital, borders have been redrawn, legal codes rewritten, industries destroyed, financial and banking systems dismantled, social pro-

grams eliminated. No alternative to global capital, be it market socialism or "national" capitalism, will be allowed to exist.

But what happened to Yugoslavia — and now continues in its weak successor states — should resonate beyond the Balkans. Yugoslavia is a mirror for similar economic restructuring programs in not only the developing world, but also in the United States, Canada and Western Europe. The Yugoslav reforms are the cruel reflection of a destructive economic model pushed to the extreme. ■

38. Schoenman, *op. cit.*



Window in Bosanski Brod's bombed out town center, reflects a ruined economy.

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35. Frank Viviano and Kenneth Howe, "Bosnia Leaders Say Nation Atop Oil Fields," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Aug. 28, 1995; Scott Cooper, "Western Aims in Ex-Yugoslavia Unmasked," *The Organizer*, Sept. 24, 1995.

36. Viviano and Howe, *ibid.*

37. Cooper, *op. cit.*

# The Browning of Russia

by John Feffer

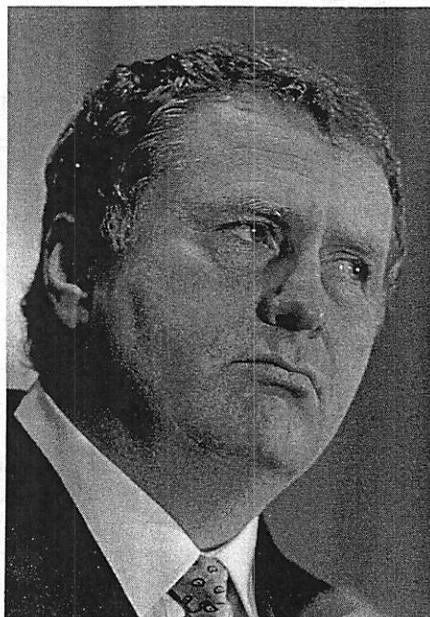
Russian politics is a lot like interior decorating: It's all about color.

For almost 75 years, Russia was painted different shades of Bolshevich crimson, from Stalin's blood red to Gorbachev's pinkish *perestroika*. After Boris Yeltsin wrested Russia away from the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991, the country rallied around the new democratic tricolor of white, blue, and red, and dabbled intermittently with some post-Chernobyl Green politics. With the 1993 parliamentary elections, however, came the "browning" of Russia as outsider Vladimir Zhirinovskiy — Ross Perot on steroids — cornered the nationalist market.

Today, after the communist-nationalist victories in the December 1995 parliamentary elections, everybody is talking about a new color combination: the red and the brown. Following the victories of various communist or socialist parties in Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Belarus, and Bulgaria, the renewed strength of red is not surprising; such are the dramatic political pendulum swings during a transition period — ultra-liberal austerity programs followed by socialist/Keynesian backlashes. Red, in any case, is somewhat of a misnomer. The Russian communists have learned from their Hungarian and Polish compatriots that socialism is *oppositional* politics while capitalism is *governing* politics.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, with respect to economics, the "new and improved" communists rarely discuss Marxism-Leninism, preferring instead to emphasize business ventures and foreign in-

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1. As opposition parties after 1990, both the Polish and Hungarian socialists decried the shock-therapy capitalisms imposed by their respective neo-liberal governments. Once in power, however, these socialist parties have proceeded to implement economic programs that are virtually indistinguishable, differing only in pace and occasional rhetoric.



RICK REINHARD/IMPACT VISUALS

## Ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy

vestments. Although trends within the Communist Party range from neo-Stalinism to something approximating social democracy, the economic consensus is "red capitalism."<sup>2</sup>

Much more influential in the long term for Russia than the reds is the continued importance of the new shades of brown — associated with fascism and right-wing nationalism. In 1993, analysts spoke of nationalism's *resurgence* in Russia; now we must speak of its new *respectability*. Virtually all political actors — from communists to liberals — support policies that once were the province of Russia's nationalist right. The West, particularly the United States, is not simply an observer of these trends. Over the last four years,

2. The party's platform called for lowering taxes, and its leader, Gennadi Zyuganov, reassured reporters of his party's eagerness for foreign investment. Meanwhile, according to a recent survey in *Izvestia*, 61% of Russia's business elite comes from the old communist *nomenklatura*. (Open Media Research Institute (OMRI) *Daily Report*, Jan. 12, 1996. This Soros Foundation-funded venture in Prague puts out a daily report by e-mail and a bimonthly magazine, *Transition*.) Russian communism, with few exceptions, was and continues to be a set of privileges and connections, not of ideals and principles.

Western policy recommendations have helped fuel this nationalist revival. And today, after failing to rope its former Cold War adversary into an unequal partnership, the US is doing its best to isolate Russia with a new version of containment doctrine. This one-two punch has done much to kindle the fires of resentment, prompt an aggressive foreign policy response, and ensure that brown suffuses Russia's ideological palette.

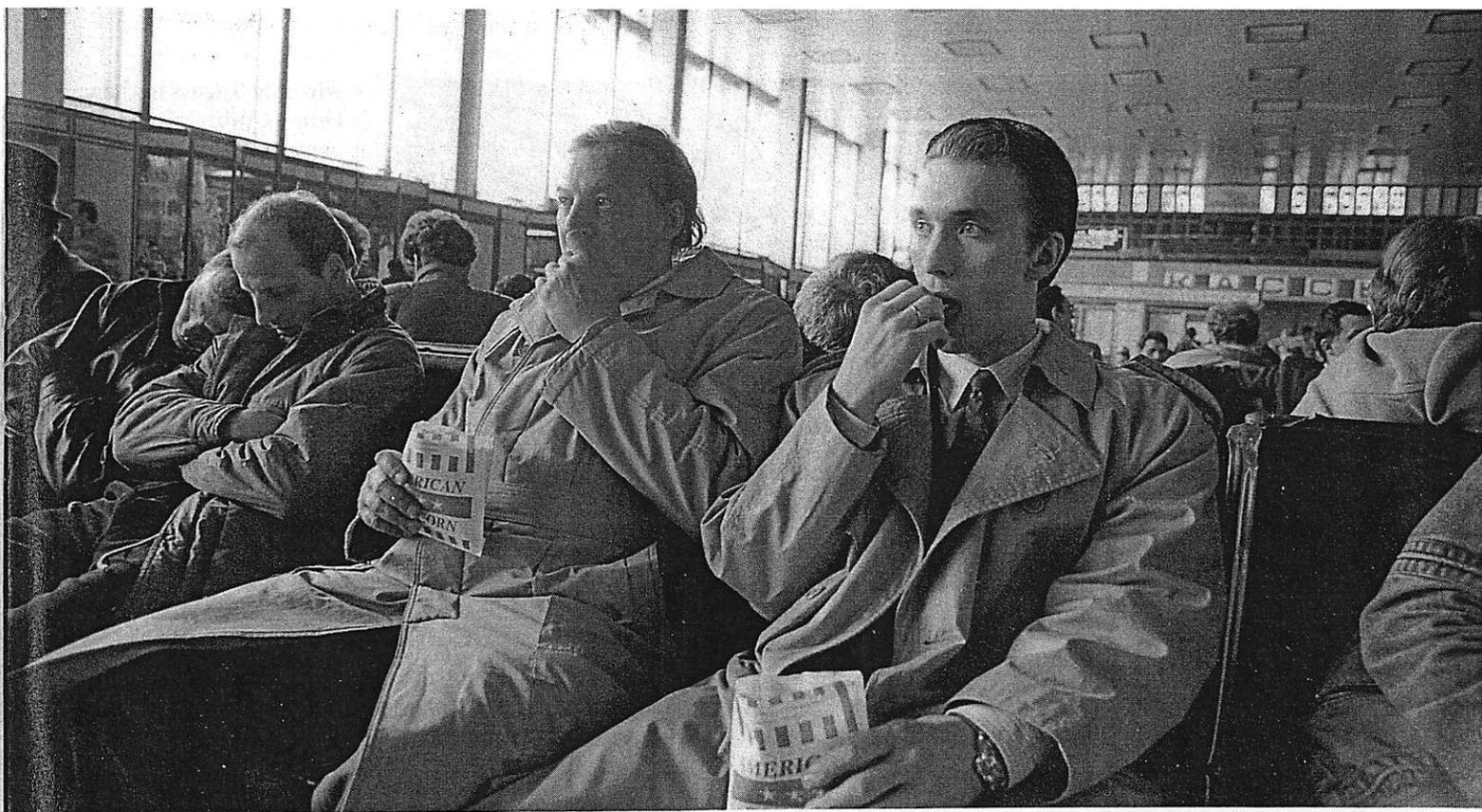
## The New Nationalists

In the early 1990s, conservative historian Richard Pipes dismissed Russian nationalism as a minority passion, a hoary pre-revolutionary relic.<sup>3</sup> Sharing Pipes' bias, most Western analysts described a pat dichotomy: embattled communists versus heroic democrats. Nationalism seemed to have nothing to do with the 1991 coup or the 1993 standoff between Yeltsin and the parliament. Nationalism had nothing to do with building a democracy or creating a market system.

Most Russians, however, understood that nationalism was not a creation *ex nihilo*, but rather the resurgence of a sentiment which Soviet leaders from Stalin to Brezhnev, even with their supposed internationalism, had frequently used to bolster their legitimacy. It tapped into historic allegiances to blood and soil that ran deeper among the populace than loyalty to communist

Virtually all political actors — from communists to liberals — support policies that once were the province of Russia's nationalist right.

3. See Walter Laqueur's updated introduction to his *Black Hundred* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), p. vii.



DAVID B. REED/IMPACT VISUALS

**US reformers to the Russian people as the social safety net and economy dissolve: "Let them eat popcorn."**

politicians or solidarity with the international working class. And as the USSR disintegrated, nationalist opposition to communism proved stronger than democratic dissent,<sup>4</sup> whether at the heart of Russia or in the former republics, where it nourished the Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Kazakh independence movements.

By the time Vladimir Zhirinovskiy burst on the scene in the early 1990s, nationalism was well-established, hardly a minority passion at all. Indeed, the very variety of nationalisms—centrist, democratic, xenophobic, religious, pan-Slavic, Eurasian—demonstrated the ideology's vitality. But it took several years for these various nationalist alternatives to mature and permeate politics as a whole.

Zhirinovskiy exploited this rich vein of chauvinism, which—more than rants about retaking Alaska, surging south to the Persian Gulf, and distributing vodka to all comers—was the core of his appeal. His strong showing in the 1993

elections prompted reams of press coverage as well as several books that speculated on the likelihood of Vlad the Successor (to Yeltsin, that is). Nonetheless, in terms of real political influence, Zhirinovskiy's brand of *ubernationalism* was seen as a fluke<sup>5</sup> and generated little in the way of legislation or governmental action.

By 1995, the lunatic fringe was still visible. Leader of the National Republican Party Nikolai Lysenko, for instance, used his on-air campaign time to denounce "mafia hordes" from the Caucasus and Central Asia that were "raping our women" and "killing on the squares and streets of our cities."<sup>6</sup> Avowed fascist Alexei Vedenkin promised on national television in early 1995 that if he came to power, he would "personally execute" human rights advocate Sergei Kovalev.<sup>7</sup> Vedenkin never made it into the Duma, the lower house of the legislature. Zhirinovskiy and his Liberal Democratic Party, meanwhile, captured the third largest number of seats. While this represented a drop from 1993, few analysts had predicted

that Zhirinovskiy would demonstrate such staying power.

**Nationalist Consensus**

The 1995 elections, some argue, marked a decline in nationalism's popularity. The Liberal Democrats didn't do as well; Aleksandr Lebed's vehicle, the Congress of Russian Communities, barely edged into the Duma with nine seats; the smaller nationalist parties will not even be represented. What this analysis neglects, however, is that all parties have now incorporated nationalist themes. The recent elections have proven that you don't have to be a fascist or a monarchist or a raving racist to be a Russian nationalist: Nationalism now comes in all colors of the rainbow. Or, rather, brown has smeared its way across the full spectrum.

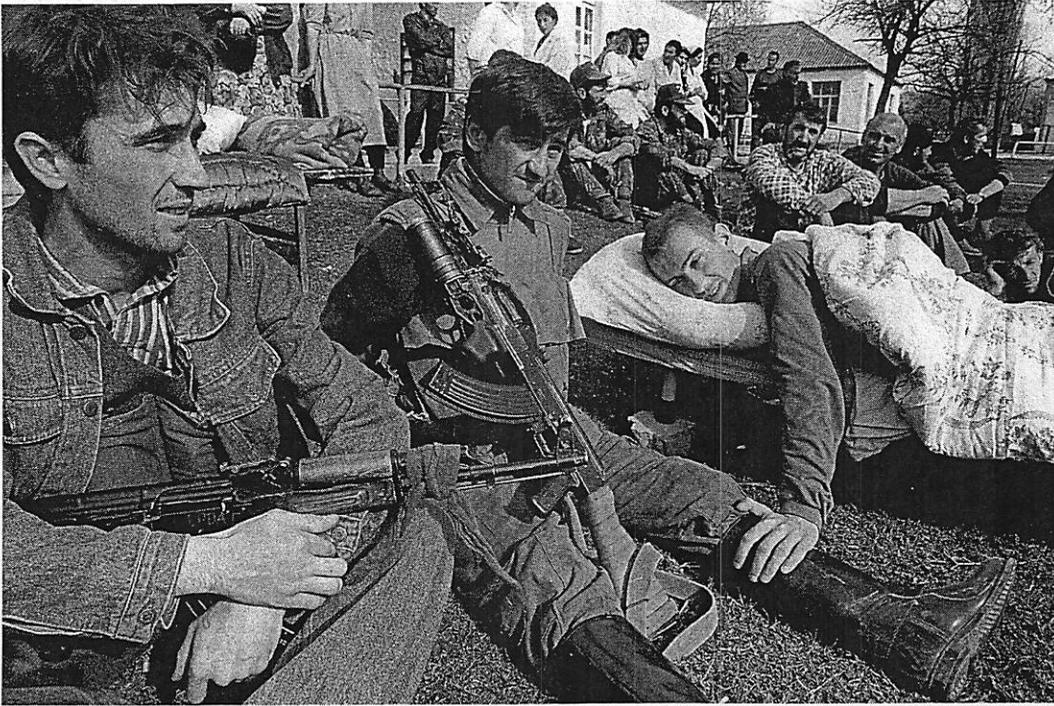
For instance, all politicians agree that Russia must protect its own compatriots abroad, counter Western hegemony in the foreign policy realm, establish law and order with a firm hand at home, and safeguard the traditional pillars of Russian society: family, the church, and the military. Unlike Eastern Europe, Russia is hesitating before jumping through the requisite hoops to join the West. Under the influence of a new nationalist consensus,

4. The history of democratic dissent during the Soviet era can be written on a postcard—Andrei Sakharov, the minuscule Moscow Trust group, a few lonely Western-oriented dissidents in the hinterlands. The largest and best organized subversive organization, meanwhile, was the All-Russian Social Christian Union for the Liberation of the People, which operated in the mid-1960s. (David Rowley, "Russian Nationalism in the Cold War," *American Historical Review*, Feb. 1994.)

5. A popular Moscow rumor dismissed Zhirinovskiy as a KGB-created virus designed to scare the West into supporting Yeltsin more vigorously.

6. *OMRI Daily Report*, Dec. 5, 1995.

7. Laura Belin, "The Strange Career of Alexei Vedenkin," *Transition*, June 23, 1995.



TEJUN VOETEN/IMPACT VISUALS

**On the pretext of preserving federal unity, Russia invaded Chechnya. Here, Chechen fighters in a rebel stronghold in the mountains.**

Russia is busy delineating its geopolitical *samobytnost* or distinctiveness.

Don't be fooled by party name or affiliation. Gennadi Zyuganov, head of the newly triumphant Communist party and a champion of the new red-brown synthesis, eschews all the old proletarian internationalism and articulates a strong "Russia first" position: "not one party in Russia will have a future," he proclaims, "if it doesn't adopt a national coloring."<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the Communists are committed to resurrecting the Soviet Union, with Moscow at the center. "The USSR and Russia had always been one and the same state," declares communist businessman and new parliamentarian Vladimir Semago.<sup>9</sup> The Georgians and Lithuanians might have long suspected this imperial conflation; they will not willingly agree to such subordinated federalism in the future. Nationalism, plus a strong state, plus a corporatist-capitalist economic platform: Not since the glory days of Stalinism have communism and fascism flirted so outrageously in Russia.

### Discovering the Inner Patriot

Meanwhile, nominal centrist Boris Yeltsin has cozied up to the reinvigor-

ated Cossacks, bedded down with the Orthodox Church and the military (the two most trusted institutions in society), and trumpeted far and wide the rights of the Russian diaspora (echoing Slobodan Milosevic's cry in Serbia). Former military men such as Aleksandr Lebed and Aleksandr Rutskoi have called for an army-led national revival. Award-winning film director Nikita Mikhailkov, former Social Democratic party leader Oleg Rumyanstev, and former Gorbachev economic adviser Stanislav Shatalin have all recently discovered their inner patriot. Even self-proclaimed liberals are trying to get into the act: Boris Fedorov, former finance minister and darling of Western economic reformers, has described his party *Forward Russia!* as "demopatriotic."

This brown-tinged tide has nearly washed away the "democrats," the ones who brought down communism, defended Yeltsin at the barricades, and promised to bring their country into the Western mainstream. Democratic Russia, the anti-communist umbrella group created in 1990, has dwindled to insignificance. Russia's Democratic Choice, led by former Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, was held responsible for the failed liberal reforms his government enacted in 1992 and managed to

Jamestown Foundation, *Prism* is a weekly compilation of articles, many taken from the Russian press.

win only 9 seats in the new Duma. Yabloko, the most popular of the Western-oriented parties, received roughly 7 percent of the vote and came in fourth with 40-odd seats. According to its young leader Grigori Yavlinsky, it represents "the middle class that lost out in the reforms." But Russia's shaky middle class runs a distant third in influence behind the powerless poor majority and the powerful rich minority.

Associating the "democrats" with economic and geopolitical decline, the communists easily swept the 1995 elections. They overwhelmed the Our Home Is Russia party, led by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, by appearing, paradoxically, as outsiders. The communists also under-

stood a deeper lesson. The defining issue in this election was not, as in years before, communism versus capitalism. Rather, it was a battle between Russian nationalism and Westernizing reform. And it doesn't require a rocket, or even a political, scientist to divine the most important factor in precipitating this change. In the old Soviet days, Dickensian caricatures of capitalism filled the pages of *Pravda*. Today, Russians don't need to read *Oliver Twist*, they can live it.

### The Economy: All Shock, No Therapy

Nationalism has prospered in inverse proportion to the country. "In a rich nation, my program would not go over very well," the ever quotable Zhirinovsky has said, "But in a poor, embittered country like Russia, this is my golden hour."<sup>10</sup>

Every day in Moscow, indigents cluster at subway entrances and line the connecting tunnels, clasping icons, displaying crudely lettered signs, and meekly holding out their hands. Old women stand for hours in the cold trying to sell three packs of cigarettes or a single pair of gloves. There are an estimated 200,000 homeless in Moscow today; the city has one overnight shelter

10. Quoted in John Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

which can accommodate 24 people.<sup>11</sup> Food prices nearly rival those of the West, yet monthly salaries average in the low hundreds. The "new Russians," meanwhile, snort cocaine, feast at expensive restaurants, drive BMWs, and gobble up privatized apartments for pennies from the desperate and the alcoholic. Rich entrepreneurs, bankers, and foreigners party in one city, while the vast majority of the poor scrape by in the other.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, Russia has had to contend with both the legacy of communism (corruption, mismanagement) and the impact of capitalism (privatization, polarization). Factories are not producing, workers are not being paid, and strikes are paralyzing one sector after another.<sup>12</sup> The recent drop in industrial output exceeds that of the US depression of the 1930s.<sup>13</sup> Russian agricultural and manufactured goods are being squeezed out of every market — from Western Europe to Eastern Europe, from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to Russia itself (imports grew from 14 to 39 percent of Russian retail trade from 1991 to 1994).<sup>14</sup> To prevent the economy from simply disappearing, the government has been forced to sell non-renewable resources, primarily from its fuel sector. Russia has also borrowed in such desperate quantities from world financial institutions that it is currently challenging Brazil's position as the world's largest debtor nation.

As living standards continue to drop for about 80 percent of the population, "economic reform" has become a euphemism for state-sponsored theft.<sup>15</sup> The breakdown of the health-care system and pervasive ecological rot have caused a decline in life expectancy and a rise in child mortality.<sup>16</sup> The privatization process has shifted state resources into the hands of former *nomenklatura*, organized crime, foreign investors, or combinations of the three. Financial scams — perhaps the most public face of what Russians call "wild capitalism" — have fleeced mil-

lions of citizens. According to one estimate by *Ekho* radio, since 1991 over half the Russian population has lost money in the new financial institutions.<sup>17</sup> Domestic capital, much of it ill-gotten, is leaving the country in huge chunks — \$50 billion in 1994 alone.<sup>18</sup> The Russian financial world is a cross between a sieve and an S & L.

Organized crime, meanwhile, now controls over 40 percent of the economy, including 35,000 businesses, almost 400 banks, nearly 50 stock exchanges, and 150 government-owned enterprises.<sup>19</sup> The Russian mafia, which is more a constellation of large and small operators than a well-coordinated conspiratorial force, collects protection from 80 percent of all banks and private enterprises; organized crime groups number over 5,000 and employ more than 3 million people.<sup>20</sup> In 1994, 177 businessmen and 185 criminal bosses were executed gangland-style, while four parliamentary deputies have been killed since the 1993 elections.<sup>21</sup>

The line between business, crime, and politics is often quite thin. Success-

## Yeltsin has cozied up to Cossacks, bedded down with the Orthodox Church and the military, and trumpeted the rights of the Russian diaspora.

ful financiers have been suspected of and in some cases indicted for multi-million dollar scams involving fake accounts, fabricated export-import licenses, and many well-placed bribes. Several of these crooks *cum* businessmen have run for political office to obtain parliamentary immunity.

### Countering the West

With the economy nosediving and organized crime escalating, nationalists are having a field day. While their alter-native in the realm of political economy is somewhat vague—more centralization, less democracy—their foreign policy position is relatively detailed.<sup>22</sup>

So recently a great power on the world scene, Russia has not warmed to an age of limits. It doesn't consider itself the loser of the Cold War. If any country lost, it was the Soviet Union, a different entity altogether. The traditional isolationism of Russian nationalists, who tire of the burdens of maintaining a multiethnic empire, has declined in influence. Eager to preserve international prestige and influence, Russian policymakers have seized on the concept of *derzhava* or great power, according to which Russia must hold the West at arm's length and reestablish its former global status by championing its own national interests. Considerably less accommodating than four years ago, the Yeltsin administration has decried NATO expansion into the former Soviet bloc, lobbied for influence over the dispensation of peace in former Yugoslavia, and insisted that Russia must have free rein over its self-defined sphere of influence. It is the last point that is particularly problematic. *Derzhava*, in other words, means not simply parity with the West but domination

over the less powerful. Under the guise of either peacekeeping or federal unity, Russia invaded Chechnya, occupied Moldova, messed about in Tajikistan and Georgia, sparred with Ukraine over Crimea and the

Black Sea fleet, and threatened the new Baltic states.

The days of the naive Westernism of former Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev are over. Today, the foreign policy spectrum runs from *realpolitik* to unabashed chauvinism. At the realist end, Russia is trying to broker economic partnerships with the East, revive its flagging arms trade, and bring the CIS countries into a tighter (and more subordinate) relationship. At the other, more intolerant extreme, Russia is constructing its own version of the Monroe (or "Monroviski") Doctrine. Russia's imperial ambitions "are in its blood," asserts Vadim Lukov, the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's policy planning staff.<sup>23</sup> This startling admission from a high-ranking official demonstrates just

on increased state participation in the economy, is often described in the West as a "left" program, which it may be when compared to *laissez-faire* liberalism.  
23. Paul Goble, "Kozyrev Sees Special Path for Russian Advisor," *Prism Weekly Report*, July 28, 1995.

11. *Monitor Daily Report*, Aug. 23, 1995.

12. According to the Russian Labor Ministry, 11,000 strikes took place in 1995. (*Monitor Daily Report*, Jan. 2, 1996).

13. Mikhail Gerschaft, "The Economic Grounds for Russian Nationalism," *Prism Weekly Report*, Oct. 20, 1995.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Monitor Daily Report*, Aug. 25, 1995.

16. According to a Labor Ministry spokesperson, the average life expectancy is now 57.3 years for men and 71.1 years for women. Infant mortality is twice as high as in the United States. (*OMRI Daily Report*, Aug. 23, 1995.)

17. *Monitor Daily Report*, July 5, 1995.

18. *OMRI Daily Report*, Feb. 28, 1995.

19. *Monitor Daily Report*, Sept. 26, 1995. These figures approximate those of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Trade, the Central Bank of Russia, and Interpol.

20. Karim Alimov, "The Drug Trade in Central Asia," *Prism Weekly Report*, Nov. 3, 1995.

21. *Monitor Daily Report*, Aug. 17, 1995; *OMRI Daily Report*, Aug. 17, 1995.

22. Their economic alternative, which generally focuses

how comfortable the elite has become with the new nationalism.

These self-professed imperial ambitions can also be glimpsed in the official military doctrine, which includes, for instance, a provision for the first use of nuclear weapons. More recently, the government-affiliated Institute of Defense Research has proposed an even more aggressive doctrine that identifies NATO as an explicit enemy, proposes alignment with anti-Western countries, and even considers reoccupying the Baltics (to prevent NATO expansion, protect ethnic Russians, and combat a "Baltic mafia").<sup>24</sup> Four years ago, such suggestions could have come only from the margins of the policy debate. Today, however, the Russian government itself is considering deploying tactical nuclear weapons in western Russia, Belarus, and the Baltics to counterbalance NATO. If NATO moves, "Russian tolerance will be exhausted," says Defense Minister Pavel Grachev.<sup>25</sup>

### The West Knows Best?

Rooted in a declining economy, authoritarian politics, and an increasingly aggressive foreign policy, Russian nationalism certainly has fertile soil in which to grow. But these developments are neither inherent nor inevitable. They do not result simply from Russian incompetence, illiberalism, or latent communism. Western involvement in creating the Russia of today has been considerable.

Consider the radical economic reform package that the Russian government unleashed upon the population in January 1992. Following the advice of Western economists such as Anders Aslund and Jeffrey Sachs, the Gaidar government lifted price controls and proposed eliminating the government's ballooning budget deficit in an astounding four months. Overnight, ordinary Russians watched as their already modest standard of living fell through the floor. Popular resentment and parliamentary opposition ultimately forced the Gaidar government to backtrack on a number of its more shocking proposals. Eventually, key market ideologues such as Boris Fedorov left the government; Sachs and Aslund left the country.

The international community, however, continued to insist on fast-track reform. The International Monetary

Fund (IMF), for instance, has routinely held back assistance until the Russian government met its conditions by paring down social spending, putting a lid on inflation, removing trade barriers to Western goods, and restructuring the financial sector. And without the imprimatur of the US-dominated IMF, the flow of aid from other sources, both bilateral and multilateral, would have been constricted.

In the aftermath of the December 1993 parliamentary elections, which dealt the radical reformers a losing

## The Clinton administration has squeezed and isolated Russia out of economic and geopolitical self-interest.

hand, even the most hidebound observers of Russia began to notice a connection between a self-destructing economy and the resurgent popularity of the communists and the extreme nationalists. Was not harsh economic medicine generating a "Versailles complex" in Russia that had produced national socialism in Germany after World War I? In a moment of rare candor, the future Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott admitted that a ravaged Russian economy needed a little less shock and more therapy. Washington promptly forced a retraction, letting free-market ideology obscure common sense.<sup>26</sup>

### Aid Repaid with Interest

Those sections of the economy and social fabric not undermined by US reform strategies were distorted considerably by US aid programs. Instead of concentrating its meager aid on large-scale industrial retooling or social safety net repair, the US has focused on private sector development. Japan, for one, has characterized this strategy as pumping money into a black hole.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the US assistance flowing through the "Enterprise Funds" has more often than not gone into the pockets of those with connections —former *nomenklatura*, black marketeers, shadowy criminal types. When not enriching the already rich, US funds are often earmarked for Russian purchases of US goods, playing a

variation on the old theme: What's good for General Motors is good for Russia. (See next page.)

The US government has had a political as well as economic strategy. Following the Bush lead, the Clinton crew threw its support behind Yeltsin, come what may: It stood by while Tsar Boris concentrated power in the executive branch, trampled on human rights, and sent the army to beat up on the Ingush, Chechens, Moldovans, and others. The White House needed a heroic reformer, and despite Yeltsin's problems — alcoholism, authoritarianism — he was Washington's man in the Kremlin; a force for stability, a democrat against the nationalists.

Since he assumed the presidency in 1991, the US has supported Yeltsin, and he, for his part, actively courted US approval. But recently, this sweet East-West relationship has soured as Russia has become less compliant than the West had hoped, and Yeltsin, too, has begun to sound the nationalist call.<sup>28</sup> Moscow is resisting Washington's push to disarm and to welcome NATO onto its borders. Moreover, the US hasn't offered Russia a power-sharing role in a reconfigured European security system or in international economic organizations such as the G-7. It has dictated to Russia certain policy no-nos, such as high-tech sales to India and Iran. And it has shifted aid to other regional actors such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan, in the hopes of balancing Russia's power.

### Why Neo-Containment?

And while Russia's designs on the "near abroad" are by no means benign, even discounting Zhirinovskiy's imperial ravings, neither is the West's agenda for the region. The Clinton administration has squeezed and isolated Russia for several reasons. The first is economic self-interest. The structural adjustment of the Russian economy includes the elimination of trade barriers to US goods and the opening of Russia's vast material resources (oil, precious metals, natural gas, lumber) to potential US joint ventures. ("Joint" in this case generally means that the Russians work and the Americans profit.)

24. Stanislav Lunev, "Russia's New Military Doctrine," *Prism Weekly Report*, Dec. 1, 1995.

25. Quoted in *Monitor Daily Report*, Sept. 26, 1995.

26. Jurek Martin, "Talbott faces a grilling over his views on Israel," *Financial Times* (London), Feb. 8, 1994.

27. Yumiko Miyai and James Finkle, "G-7 drafts aid package," *Daily Yomiuri* (Tokyo), Apr. 15, 1993.

28. See, e.g., Alexei Pushkov, "Letter from Eurasia: Russia and America: The Honeymoon's Over," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1993; Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs*, Mar./Apr. 1994.

# Looting the Ruins

Russian nationalists don't have to dig very deep to find "sinister" US plans to hollow out the Russian economy. In fact, through its Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Washington trumpets its self-interested investment strategy far and wide.

Ostensibly, these institutions are committed to strengthening US markets overseas by offering insurance and financing to US corporations that might not otherwise invest in "risky" countries. In practice, however, they are scouts for corporate bonanzas, and vehicles for attracting paybacks to whatever party is in power in Washington. Most important, they pay little attention to what the economies of other countries really need.

For instance, the US strategy for Russia has relied heavily on the extraction of raw materials — oil, natural gas, and gold. Instead of aiding Russian development of high-tech industries or improving agricultural output, Washington is helping US companies milk Russia of its non-renewable assets.

- Omolon (Cyprus Amax Minerals): \$52.5 million in financing and \$60 million in insurance from OPIC to extract gold from Kubaka in the Russian Far East;
- Swift: \$160 million in financing and political risk insurance for oil and gas exploration in western Siberia;
- Snyder Oil: \$40 million from OPIC in financing to develop oil fields in the Perm region.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, Exxon, Texaco, Conoco, Anderman Smith, Nabors International, and Enron have received both government assistance to facilitate investments into oil and natural gas enterprises and golden parachutes to ensure that not one of them will lose any money.

This emphasis on extracting Russia's natural wealth has infuriated many Russian politicians, even those of the *laissez-faire* stripe like parliamentarian Irina Khakamada. The US government strategy, she laments, is designed to "fund Russia's conversion into a banana republic."<sup>2</sup>

It is not all extraction. OPIC backed a number of ventures: The *Reader's Digest* received \$1.9 million in insurance to launch the Russian version of its publication;<sup>3</sup> Marriott received \$93 million in financing and political risk insurance to build a hotel in Moscow;<sup>4</sup> Global Forest Management Group got \$10 million financing to "manage" a timber project in the Far East;<sup>5</sup> and two Seattle firms were rewarded with multi-million dollar contracts to set up a cellular phone service and process Russian fish.<sup>6</sup>



TEJUN YOETENIMPACT VISUALS

**While Washington subsidizes the exploitation of markets and pushes US products in the former USSR, the falling standard of living creates anger and unrest.**

Often, the investment strategy requires Russian partners to purchase US goods. For example, the controversial \$1 billion Export-Import Bank financing for Aeroflot to obtain Russian-built jetliners requires the Russian airline to purchase US-made engines from Pratt & Whitney. Boeing, which is not in on the deal, has complained of unfair subsidies to a rival.

As usual, the government is not dispensing its largesse for free. First, there are the political kickbacks. Through the good offices of Democratic powerbroker Robert Strauss, US businesses that benefit from OPIC and the Export-Import Bank deposit their appreciation in Democratic Party coffers. US West, for example, received \$125 million in loan guarantees from OPIC to develop a wireless communications network in Russia. In the last two years, the company has given a \$147,667 thank you to the Democratic Party.<sup>7</sup>

Then there are the profits for OPIC itself. In 1994, this government body turned a \$167 million profit on repayment of its loans.

It seems, then, that everyone — the US government, US businesses — benefits from this arrangement. Except the Russians, that is, who must watch as their wealth is pumped out and the profits accrue to wealthy business owners of various nationalities. Russian nationalists who charge the US with neocolonial ambitions can marshal a good deal of supporting evidence. ■

1. Information on these deals comes from *Petroleum Economist* (Aug. 1994) and Richard Lapper, "Finance for Russian gold venture sets precedent," *Financial Times* (London), Jan. 11, 1996.
2. Quoted in Peter Ford, "Russia to US: Don't Shun Our High Tech," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 1995.
3. Richard Boudreaux, "Bad Timing Doesn't Slow Gore's Mission," *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 1995, p. A1.
4. Will Englund, "Agency offers 2 Md. firms aid for Russian projects," *Baltimore Sun*, June 29, 1995.
5. *East-West Commersant*, July 21, 1995.
6. "OPIC to Help Seattle Firms," *Journal of Commerce*, Sep. 30, 1994.
7. See Ken Silverstein, "Ron Brown's VIP Junkets," *The Nation*, June 5, 1995.

The second is geopolitical: NATO continues to require a *raison d'être*. The Bosnia operation offers a temporary rationale for "out-of-area" adventures; but to justify continued high levels of spending on the European theater, the US needs a more credible threat than the Serbs. The containment doctrine kept the military-industrial complex afloat for years. Neo-containment, as in keeping Russia boxed in and subordinate, is one of the Pentagon's answers to the end of the Cold War.

There is a third, speculative possibility: The US wants to eviscerate Russia economically. Rather than bring the Second World into the First, it is to the US' advantage to drive the former Soviet Union into subservient Third World status. Look at Germany and Japan 40 years after the Marshall Plan, State Department wonks might be saying. Sure, they're stable members of the "free world" but they're pounding us in most major markets. Why should the US pave the way for Russia to emerge as the 21st century's economic miracle? With its vast resources, reasonably skilled workforce, and capacity to leapfrog over current technologies, surely Russia is in a better position to accomplish this feat than was small, resource-poor Japan after World War II. Besides which, Russia has nuclear weapons, a still considerable army, and superpower expectations. Better to send its economy into a tailspin and thereby scale back its geopolitical ambitions.

There is a good deal of residual anti-Russian sentiment inside the Beltway upon which such a strategy can thrive. "We have to get over the idea ...that this is a partnership," proclaims Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), preferring a phrase straight out of the 1950s — "tough rivalry."<sup>29</sup> Or as the ever fatuous Charles Krauthammer writes: "We gave bear-stroking a try. It did not work."<sup>30</sup> Bear-stroking? Reducing the Russian economy to rubble? Providing a thimbleful of aid?

### Democracy on the Rocks

But whether or not the US intends to hobble Russia, the twin policies of reducing aid to Russia and boxing it in geopolitically fuel the politics of resentment that put Zhirinovskiy on the world

29. Quoted in Martin Fletcher, "End of the Bill and Boris show," *New York Times*, Mar. 3, 1994.

30. Charles Krauthammer, "Enough Bear Stroking," *Time*, Jan. 31, 1994, p. 116.

stage and nationalism in every political program. Nationalists can rightly point to existing conditions — the increased chaos, national decline, and inequity under liberal reform — and position themselves as the alternative; they can denounce liberalism as a Trojan horse introduced into Russia by the West in order to bring its former Cold War adversary to its knees. Neo-containment has not brought stability; the marketplace has encouraged rather than stemmed the rising tide of lawlessness; and liberal economic reform has put chickens in the supermarkets but not into the pots of average Russians.

Liberal optimists are still advocating patience. It takes time for markets to *mature* (for graft to become less blatant) and for organized crime to be absorbed into more respectable pursuits (from running guns to operating casinos). But at least, they argue, Russians can now enjoy a political democracy.

But can they?

Political institutions are becoming less, not more democratic. In 1993, Boris Yeltsin established a disturbing precedent when he ordered Parliament disbanded, then had the army storm it. The police subsequently detained 90,000 people during the "state of emergency" and expelled 10,000 Caucasian traders and refugees from Moscow.<sup>31</sup> Worse, almost all the Russian "liberals" supported these moves. (They can't be exclusively blamed — Western democracies by and large sided with the executive branch.) Subsequently, Yeltsin has attempted to rule by decree, imposing restrictions on media, and suspending critical human rights provisions during "emergency" situations such as the continuing war in Chechnya.

Nonetheless, democratic opposition has taken advantage of some openings. Journalists, workers, human rights advocates, and non-governmental organizations have all challenged the president and his policies; independent reporting on the Chechen conflict helps explain the majority anti-war sentiment in Russia. The response by several close associates of the president has been to publicly urge him to become even more authoritarian. According to this currently popular school of political thinking — also known as the "iron fist" — a strong hand, not unlike Chilean or Sin-

31. Wendy Slater, "Russia: the Return of Authoritarian Government," *RFE/RL Report*, Jan. 7, 1994.

gaporean authoritarianism, is needed to steer Russia through the transition.

Even if Yeltsin resists these appeals, his successors may not. After all, thanks to Yeltsin's lobbying, the constitution concentrates power in the executive branch.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the presidential elections scheduled for June 1996 may usher in an autocrat by democratic means, *à la* Germany in the 1930s. Yeltsin's main opposition will be communist Gennadi Zyuganov. Another contender is Aleksandr Lebed, the blunt general-turned-politician and, as of 1995, parliamentarian. His party may have lost big in the elections, but Lebed himself retains popularity and remains at the top of the list of presidential contenders. In his military career, he has "brought order" to Moldova and has openly professed his admiration for Chile's Gen. Pinochet. Democracy, Lebed believes, will arise only by "tough, authoritarian methods."<sup>33</sup> With a compliant Duma, someone like Lebed could turn Russia into Chile on a grand scale, a Chile that not only clamped down on internal dissent but stamped out opposition in its neighboring countries as well.

Given the state of the economy, the pace of democratization, the disintegration of society, and a climate of pervasive pessimism, it is small wonder that the nationalist cause has such resonance. Additionally, Moscow's complaints about NATO and skewed European security arrangements have validity. But the danger arises when majority ethnic groups employ nationalism to victimize minorities at home or in smaller countries on its borders. By satisfying legitimate Russian concerns, the West could encourage Russia to become an equal member of the world community and not push it into becoming a fallen superpower wreaking havoc according to its Monroviski Doctrine. And only by providing real assistance — instead of IMF-sponsored dependency and the conservative rhetoric of self-reliance — will the West ensure that Russian nationalism assumes healthy proportions instead of growing into the big brown monster it threatens to become. ■

32. The parliamentary elections are not of greatest importance, for the Duma wields less and less power, particularly over foreign policy. Sergei Markov, "Russian Political Parties and Foreign Policy," in *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

33. *Monitor Daily Report*, Nov. 14, 1995.

# WELFARE STATE



MAX SCHUMANN

## “Enduring Truths” *continued from inside cover*

by Noam Chomsky

alone in history, we've always kept to persuasion, compassion, and other peaceful means.

Commentators were much impressed by this enlightened vision of the move from containment to enlargement, and by this very persuasive rendition of the enduring truths of history, although it's true that some were afraid that we might go too far in our traditional altruism and benevolence. Henry Kissinger was one who urged that we also pay some attention to our own interests and needs instead of just dedicating ourselves wholeheartedly in the service of others as we've traditionally done and are now planning to do throughout the world.

There were similar refrains sung in the client states. For example, the prestigious International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, in its 1989 Review of World Affairs, explained that during the Cold War, in the United States, “the principles of democratization and commitment to human rights and free markets [were] distorted by or subordinated to the need to contain a Soviet threat,” but with the Cold War ending, the United States “will be able to see the problems of the world's impoverished nations — their critical debt burdens, fragile political processes and related human rights violations — in their own terms rather than through an East-West prism.”

In other words, the US will now at last be free to show its constant face and to act in accordance with the “enduring truths” — for the first time in history. Well, I won't insult your intelligence by comparing the enduring truths to the facts. Instead, let's turn to the present situation now that we're free to see the problems of the world without the shackles of

the Cold War and to show our constant face without Cold War distortions. In particular, we're now able to see the problems of the world's impoverished nations. Accordingly, Washington has announced further cuts in its foreign aid, which is an international scandal. US foreign aid is the most miserly in the developed world and would be virtually invisible if we were to remove the biggest component — which goes to a very rich country, Israel — and which, incidentally, stays high and unchanged. It also happens to be the component of the foreign aid budget most strongly opposed by the public.

In general, public opinion and policy are not very well correlated. There are usually pretty substantial differences between them, but the current period is marked by an astonishing difference. It's become a real chasm. I doubt if there is a period in history when the divergence between public opinion, which is well known from many attitude studies, and policy has been so dramatic and so marked as in the present period. That's one indication of the deterioration of functioning democracy that's a very marked and striking feature of the contemporary era, here dramatically, and to some extent in other places.

The current Congress has cut further the ridiculously low aid budget, leaving intact only one component, which amounts to 40 percent of the total — aid to Israel and Egypt — which is about the same thing because of Egypt's relation to Israel. However, there is a one-third cut in aid for education, health care, family planning and environmental protection in poor nations, and a 40 percent cut just announced in US contribution to low-interest loans to poor countries through the World Bank. That's all because we are now free to view the problems of impoverished nations without the distortion of the Cold War.

## Teaching the UN a Lesson

**T**hat's only part of the story. The US is also busy continuing, in fact, escalating, its dismantling of the more democratic aspects of the United Nations. It recently announced that it's going to cut, probably terminate, its contribution to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; the Food and Agriculture Organization is on the way out; the International Labor Organization is not likely to survive very long, for one thing because it committed a rather serious transgression a couple of years ago. It departed from its usual practice; it almost never criticizes one of its rich donors, but it did condemn the US a couple of years ago for its severe violations of international labor conventions by permitting the hiring of permanent replacement workers to break strikes, and that criticism is a crime for which you have to have proper retribution, so they're probably on their way out.

Incidentally, the United States has the third worst record in Europe and the Western Hemisphere in accepting international labor conventions. There are two worse — Lithuania and El Salvador, so we're not at the bottom. But in any event, there's good reasons for the ILO to go. They're all headed for extinction because the US refuses to pay its legally required funding for them. UNCTAD [the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development] is also on the way out. It provides expert economic analysis about the international scene, but it happens to conflict with the IMF/World Bank or-

porations, which indeed is very benign — so he can join the long list of our kind of guys: the Brazilian and Argentine neo-Nazi generals; Gen. Chun of South Korea, to mention one who was recently in the news; Ceausescu of Romania who was a particular favorite; Mobutu of Zaire; Somoza and a whole host of Latin American monsters; Saddam Hussein, a great friend and ally, and in earlier days, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin. Stalin was particularly admired by Truman and Churchill, as we now know from released internal records, but this was when we were still not quite able to live by enduring truths.

There are several reasons why, in a way, it's unfair to continue this review. One reason is that every other power in the world is exactly the same, although the West perhaps wins some prizes in cowardice and deceit — good education helps with that. But more to the point here, we have to recognize that, true, the Cold War did end, but according to received doctrine, it was replaced right away by new and very severe problems, so that the enduring truths have to be put on the shelf a little longer and we can't yet show our constant face to the world.

One of the enduring truths was explained by the Bush administration a few weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, when it sadly informed the public and the Congress that there would be no peace dividend. The Russians were gone (nobody could pretend that they were on the march any longer), but that threat had been replaced by a different one: "The technological sophistication of Third World pow-

ers" which requires that we keep the Pentagon budget pretty much where it was, or even going up, as it is now, and maintain what's called the "defense industrial base," which means the whole of high technology industry. And we must also maintain our intervention forces, the White House informed Congress, aimed primarily at the Middle East, which is where they have been aimed for a long time. Recall that this was well before Saddam Hussein's invasion of Ku-

wait. This at the time when Saddam Hussein was still a favored ally and trusted friend. But we had to maintain the intervention forces poised toward the source of the major energy reserves of the world.

The Pentagon budget, in fact, has remained high. It's now actually higher in real terms than during the Nixon years — about 85 percent of the Cold War average, and it's increasing. For a rational person, this fact gives some measure of the perceived importance of the Soviet threat during the period when we were supposedly defending ourselves from it — the point is obvious so I won't expand on it. The Pentagon budget, as you know, is now going up. The Heritage Foundation, which calls itself conservative in some odd Orwellian usage, has presented the budget which the Republican Congress is pretty much implementing.

Meanwhile, any government service that goes to people is down. But two parts are going up: The Pentagon budget has to increase and, of course, the other component of the security system, the imprisonment of the population, which has now taken off into the stratosphere, has to increase too. Newt Gingrich agrees.

The reasons were explained, for example, by a spokesman for the aircraft industry, for Lockheed (which happens to have its corporate headquarters in Gingrich's district, and just received a huge subsidy from the Clinton administration for having had to face the big problem of merging with Martin-

## Any government service that goes to people is down, but two parts are going up: the Pentagon budget and the other component of the security system, the imprisonment of the population.

thodoxy and often to undermine it, so that has to go.

The UN did have a group which monitored and provided data about transnational corporations. In fact, it was just about the only source of such information — that's already dead. Generally, any part of the UN that serves the interests of people and not investors is on its way out because we are now free to show our constant face and to live by the enduring truths without the distortions of the Cold War.

## Human Rights, Inhuman Wrongs

**W**ell, the same reasons explain why the US wasn't able to view human rights violations in their own right, but now we can. So, take this hemisphere, where the prize for human rights violations is currently held by Colombia, which gets about half of all US military aid and training for the hemisphere on pretexts that are too ludicrous to discuss. That aid is increasing under President Clinton, and is extending a well-documented correlation (which has been rather close for many years) between torture and US aid.

The same reasons also explain the warm welcome a few weeks ago for Gen. Suharto of Indonesia. He's a really world-class killer and torturer, greatly beloved in the West. Suharto is "our kind of guy," a high administration official told the press when he was here, despite the hundreds of thousands of corpses. Suharto "is at heart benign," the London *Economist* explained — probably thinking of his attitude to foreign cor-

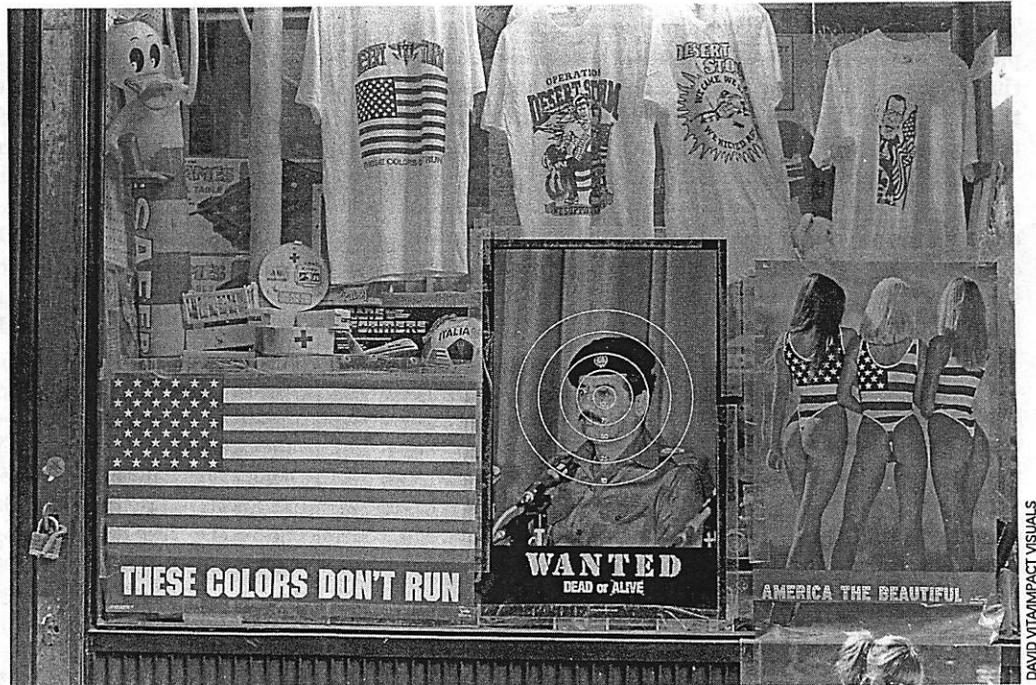
Marietta, along with big subsidies for the corporate executives and so on). So an executive of Lockheed-Martin, the new merged corporation, pointed out that it's a "dangerous world" out there in which "sophisticated fighter airplanes and air defense systems are being sold," so we're really in trouble.

Whom are they being sold by? Well, mostly by us. We have about 75 percent of the international arms market for the Third World, and the executive went on to say, "We've sold the F-16, [the most advanced fighter plane] all over the world. What if a [friend or ally] turns against us?" So it's a real dangerous world out there. And there's an obvious solution to that, namely, we should sell more F-16s, but now upgraded ones, so the public should pay Lockheed and put money into the hands of Gingrich's constituents. We should pay Lockheed to upgrade F-16s so they're even more dangerous. And then we should do what's called "selling" them to the Third World, which means giving them with Export-Import Bank loans and other guarantees that are again paid for by the public. And having created a more dangerous world out there, we then have to spend tens of billions of dollars on F-22s in order to counter the threat that we just created.

That's the obvious solution, and that's indeed what we're doing. And that's why the Pentagon budget is going up, with a sort of a small point on the side: The public is overwhelmingly opposed to increasing the Pentagon budget, by about six to one. Even the Pentagon is opposed to it and says it doesn't want all that stuff. But there's someone more important who does want it, namely, people like Newt Gingrich's rich constituents and others like them who have to be protected from market discipline. If they had to face the market, they'd be out selling rags or something, but they need a powerful nanny state to pour money into their pockets.

They happen to be represented by the country's leading welfare freak, Newt Gingrich. That's literally correct. It's not an exaggeration. And furthermore, it's well known although it's not reported. Nor is the fact that the Pentagon system has long been the country's biggest welfare program, transferring massive public funds to high-tech industry on the pretext of defense and security. And that it is a pretext is also well known, certainly in Washington, since the late 1940s, for example when Sen. Symington of Missouri, an aircraft producer and at that time Secretary of the Air Force under Truman, explained that the word to use is not "subsidy," the word to use is "security."

That's the way you can get the public to pay the costs of high-tech industry which cannot survive in a "pure, competitive, unsubsidized, 'free enterprise' economy," as *Fortune* pointed out, so that the government must therefore be the "savior," as *Business Week* added. That's the role of the Pentagon: providing what's called "dual use technology." That means military



Former bosom buddy Saddam Hussein became devil incarnate during the Gulf War.

technology that can be adapted to civilian uses like computers and lasers and the whole rest of the routine. And in fact, the whole framework of the advanced industrial system rests on that technique of extorting money out of the public on completely fraudulent pretenses. So quite naturally, that major state intervention in the economy through the Pentagon system not only has to be sustained but has to be increased.

### Other Novel Horrors

That's one reason, then, why the enduring truths have to be on hold. We've got this big problem out there of the technological sophistication of Third World powers that we have to defend ourselves against even though the Russians are gone. There's a second reason why the enduring truths have to be kept on the shelf for a few more years: Although the Cold War ended, it was replaced by an unanticipated outbreak of ethnic conflicts and other irrational violence, and religious fundamentalism, and so on, maybe even a "clash of civilizations" — one of the fancy phrases from Harvard — and other novel horrors. So we're still not free to show our constant face to the world.

Let's have a look at that, starting with today — troops going to Bosnia where they can be expected to implement what's now pretty clearly in process, namely the effective partition of Bosnia between greater Croatia and greater Serbia, whatever it may be called. Washington hopes that under its guiding hand, both of these surviving units will be, as Croatia already is, part of the expanded Middle East region run by the United States. The US has always regarded that region as basically a fringe of the Middle East. And in the Middle East, with its enormous energy reserves, the US since the Second World War has insisted on unilateral control.

In part, this anticipated US base in the Balkans will also serve as a kind of a leverage with regard to another prize — Eastern Europe. With the end of the Cold War, most of Eastern Europe is returning back, is being forced back, into what it was for hundreds of years, a service area of what we now call the

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Third World serving the West. The question is: Who's going to pick up most of the prizes? And here there are some conflicts; the Germans have their ideas, and American investors have their ideas, and they're not entirely identical. And the base in the Balkans gives some leverage in influencing that outcome.

The US troops in Bosnia are not garden variety peacekeeping forces; in fact, they're not peacekeeping forces at all — for a good reason. The US has an unusual military doctrine, possibly unique, which disqualifies it from genuine peacekeeping operations — that is, operations in which civilians are involved. So we're different from Canada, or Ireland, or Norway, or Fiji Islands, or other places that do send peacekeeping forces. The difference is that US forces are not permitted to face any threat. If they sense a threat, they are supposed to respond with massive force, and that's unusual and perhaps unique. We just saw that in Somalia, where the threat was very, very slight — teenagers with rifles — but the country ended up, according to Washington sources, with about 7,500 to 10,000 civilians killed in the course of that operation.

## About 70% of the US population has opposed the Vietnam War not as “a mistake,” but as “fundamentally wrong and immoral.”

That's because of the US military doctrine which is unique and does rule out any US participation in peacekeeping operations. This is not one. That was made very clear when Washington announced that there will be “robust rules of engagement,” no more limits on the use of force, nothing like those wishy-washy Europeans. The US will use “deadly force” wherever necessary, the Secretary of Defense said. Anthony Lake added: “If anyone fools with our forces, they will get hit immediately and very hard.” The implication is pretty clear: They can commit atrocities if they like, but don't fool with our forces.

### The Real Vietnam Syndrome

Well, there's actually a kind of an official reason, at least in the doctrinal system, why the US has this unique military doctrine. The reason is supposed to be the Vietnam experience. That's kind of interesting, an interesting fraud. The problem is that there are two stories that have to be concealed. Story number one is that the US attacked South Vietnam and then all of Indochina during the Kennedy years, and then expanded its aggression, leaving three countries in total ruins with millions of people killed and limited likelihood of recovery. All those facts are unspeakable in the US, in fact, in the West in general.

The second point that has to be concealed is that the public opposed this and opposed it on moral grounds. But you're not allowed to know that. During the period when polls were taken — from the '70s up till the early '90s there were regular polls asking about the Vietnam War — roughly 70 percent of the people, it's a very stable figure, opposed the Vietnam War as, I'm quoting: “fundamentally wrong and immoral,” not “a mistake.” Well, well-educated folks understand that it was at worst a mistake, but good intentions cannot be questioned, it could not be called fundamentally wrong and immoral.

Now, since the facts are considered completely unacceptable, we need a better story, and the better story is that the

public opposed the war because of US casualties. So in other words, the public is just as rotten as the educated folks, the commissar class. That's the story, and the same fanciful tales incidentally are told about Somalia and now Bosnia. They are clearly refuted by public opinion studies, but facts are one thing and enduring truths are something else. So the US forces are going to Bosnia under “robust rules of engagement” and of course under US command, called “NATO.” Again, that's a doctrine that is unlike other countries' — I know of no other one.

It should be mentioned that sending troops to Bosnia is being debated, in fact, hotly debated. In the December 3 *New York Times*, there was a big discussion. The paper's Asia specialist, Barbara Crossette, warned us to remember that Cambodia is “barely alive after decades of civil war, genocide, and foreign occupation [by the Vietnamese],” a foreign occupation which terminated the genocide and called forth wrath and punishment by the United States, punishment for those who had committed the crime of ridding the country of Pol Pot, “the Prussians of Asia,” as the *New York Times* angrily called the Vietnamese, referring to what is probably the closest approximation to humanitarian intervention in history, but somehow isn't in the canon. Not that they did it for humanitarian reasons. Neither does anyone else, but this intervention comes closer to meeting those conditions than anything else I can think of.

Crossette goes on. She stresses the difficulty of achieving the “good intentions” of the United States and its allies in Cambodia, and points out that “That's a warning for Bosnia.” Well, does anyone remember anything in Cambodia besides civil war, Khmer Rouge genocide, and occupation by the Vietnamese? Does anybody remember, for example, a six-year bombing campaign before the Khmer Rouge takeover, the heaviest bombing in world history of civilians, which, according to the CIA, left 600,000 people dead, millions of refugees, about 100,000 people dying a year in the city of Phnom Penh alone in 1975 when the Americans finally left, and predictions by high US officials that a million people would die under any circumstances because of the devastation in the country that had been carried out during this extraordinarily intense bombing of civilian areas.

That was the first half of the Decade of the Genocide. (The phrase is not mine; it's the title of the one independent government investigation of the horrors of Cambodia by the government of Finland.) It's called “decade” because it started in 1969 when the US bombing began, continued in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge took over, and ended in 1979 when they were kicked out by the Vietnamese. But somehow the first six years of it are gone from history, and incidentally, were remarkably little reported at the time. But what we are warned about is just the parts that are allowed into history.

### Breaking Up Is Hard to Do

Let's look a little more broadly at this great plague of violence and ethnic conflict that's erupted after the Cold War and is forcing us to conceal our constant face. Is there an upsurge of such violence as a result of the Cold War? Well, that's checkable. What about the Balkans? That's certainly post-Cold War, but post-Cold War doesn't mean result of the Cold War. In fact, it isn't a result of the Cold War or its termination. That region was a US ally, a virtual client. It was subjected to a standard neo-liberal program through the 1980s, and that

was a bigger factor in the breakup and the violence that followed than anything to do with the Russian empire. [See p. 31 — ed.]

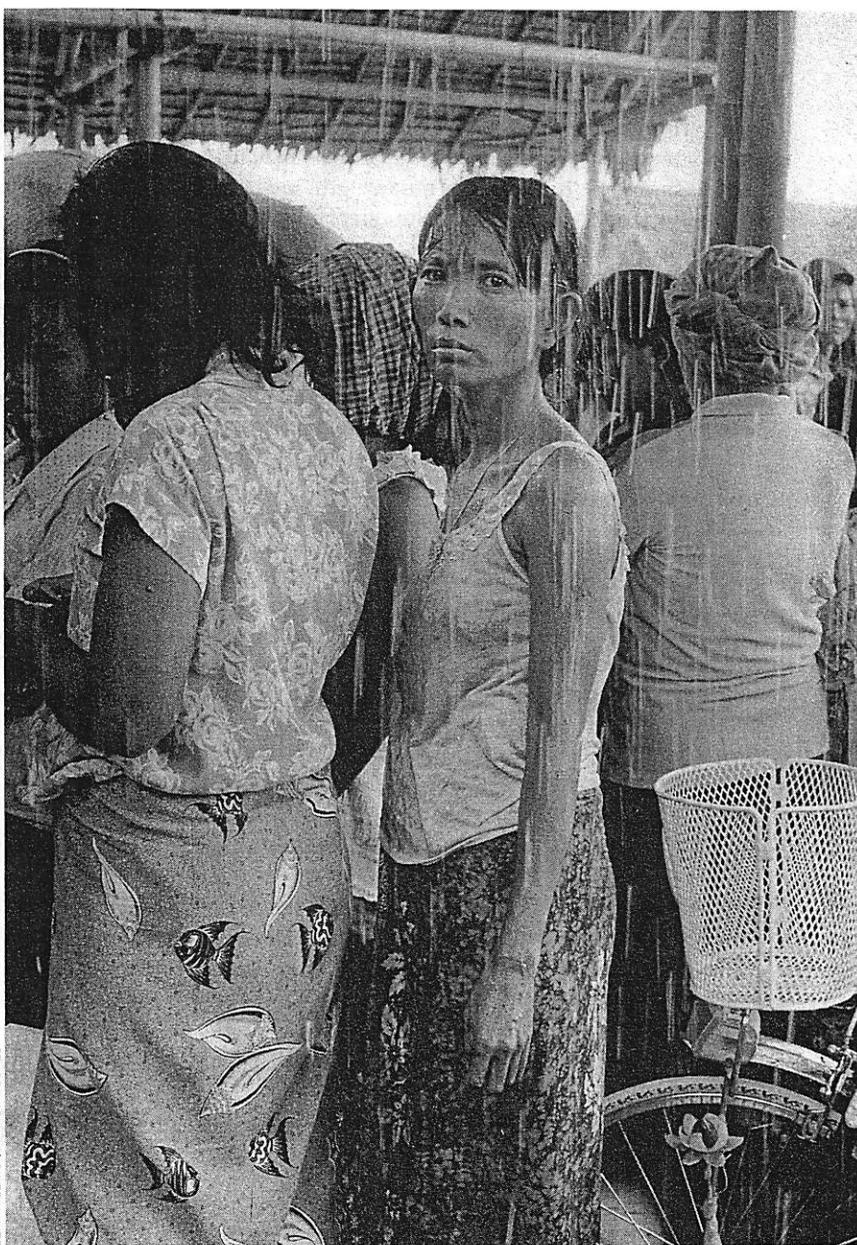
What about Africa? Say, Rwanda? That goes back decades. Burundi had similar massacres about 20 years ago, nobody cared. No Cold War connection. What about Haiti? That's too ludicrous to discuss. Are there any incidents that actually are the effect of the breakup of the Russian empire? Yes, there are some. Chechnya, for example. The violence and terror there is a consequence of the breakup of the Soviet empire, but that's hardly a new phenomenon in world history that calls for deep thought from intellectuals. The end of tyrannical rule and imperial rule quite typically — in fact, without exception as far as I know — led to an increase in suppressed conflicts, disarray, and often worse.

So take a look at say post-colonial Africa, or take a look at what happened in India and Palestine after the British empire collapsed. Or look at the French empire in Algeria or Indochina ending up with a horrendous ethnic conflict. But one that doesn't count because the aggressors happened to rule history in that case. The same was true of the breakup of the Dutch empire. Horrible violence in what's now Indonesia. In all of these affairs, there was a Cold War element as in anything during these years, but it was pretty far out on the margins.

The real problem throughout is described pretty frankly in US internal documents and even elsewhere too. For example, British Foreign Office records commenting on what's called "the fall of China" in 1949, say that China is moving "towards an economy and a type of trade in which there is no place for the foreign manufacturer, the foreign banker, or the foreign trader." And that's a problem and therefore we have to do something about it. That's the core element in the extraordinary violence that has followed the breakup of traditional empires. The point is that the Chinese, like the Haitians, didn't quite understand who constitutes civil society.

In Haiti, the core element, the core sentence, of the US program which restored Aristide is the following: "The renovated state [in Haiti] must focus on an economic strategy centered on the energy and initiative of Civil Society, especially the private sector, both national and foreign." In other words, the rich families living up in the suburbs who supported the coup, and investors in New York City, are Haitian civil society, and the renovated state must focus on their interests, not on those of the people in the slums of Port-au-Prince or the peasants in the hills, since they are not Haitian civil society.

Well, the most recent example of the breakup of an empire prior to the Russian empire is the Portuguese empire that collapsed just 20 years ago, and that led to a huge outbreak of ethnic conflict throughout the places where there were Portuguese colonies — in Africa and Southeast Asia. On Africa, there's a lot to say but not much time. Let me just quote Basil Davidson, one of the most respected historians of Africa. He says: "Those responsible for the contra subversion in Africa will be cursed by history for enormous and terrible crimes, which will long weigh heavily on the whole of Southern Africa." He is referring to Britain and the US, the leading sup-



**Cambodian refugees wait for food at a camp on the Thai border housing 140,000 "displaced persons."**

porters of South Africa and its murderous assault on the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique as soon as the Portuguese empire broke up.

According to the UN Economic Commission on Africa, more than a million and a half people were killed, and more than \$60 billion in damage was done during the Reagan years alone. That's during the period when we were carrying out "constructive engagement," which is the subject of Davidson's comment. In Angola, that war continues, much worse than in Bosnia in the same years, but basically unreported because it's not very useful to point out that Savimbi, the worst killer and war criminal, is a man who was hailed right here in Washington not long ago as a great hero and a leading freedom fighter.

What about Southeast Asia? There was a Portuguese colony in Southeast Asia, East Timor, also attacked at once. Yesterday, December 7, was the twentieth anniversary of that invasion. In that case, East Timor was attacked not by South Africa, but by another one of our clients, "our kind of guy" in that region, Suharto, with decisive US military and diplo-

matic support that increased under Carter. It's continuing today, although the British have now taken over as the leading supporter of the worst atrocity since the Holocaust relative to population (which is the only meaningful measure). The US is still playing a major role, although protest here has put some limits on US participation, and has caused the Clinton administration to work out some tricky techniques to evade congressional restrictions and so on, to help "our kind of guy" continue his exploits.

The fact is, by recent standards, including the standards of our own actions, that the collapse of the Soviet empire, while bloody, has been remarkably peaceful compared with other recent cases. These are the obvious ones.

### "Day of Awe"

What about elsewhere? Say, the Middle East? There's a bright spot, not just bright but awe-inspiring, one of the grand successes in reconciling an ethnic conflict that goes back to the collapse of the British empire, namely the Israel-Palestine conflict. Now, that's been the biggest international story by a long shot since September 28, when the Oslo II agreement was signed in Washington. It was "a day of awe," as the headlines put it. There was another huge outpouring of emotion and adulation for everyone involved in the "day of awe" after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, "a martyr for peace," in Clinton's words a couple of weeks later.

The reasons for the awe are given by massive international newspaper coverage here and abroad. I'll just give a couple of samples. Headline: "Israel Agrees to Quit West

## In exchange for scattered Bantustans, Palestinians under Oslo II recognized the legality of West Bank settlements and Israeli sovereignty over, in effect, any region it chooses to keep.

Bank" — that's *The Guardian* in London, kind of on the left. "Israel and the PLO Sign Agreement Extending Palestinian Rule to Most of the West Bank" — that's Reuters, reported internationally in the *Financial Times* in London, in newspapers here, and so on. "Rabin negotiated the accord to eventually cede Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinians" — that's the *New York Times*. Rabin's thinking "underwent a remarkable transformation from 1992 as he agreed to 'peace with the Palestinians' — that's the *New York Times*. "Rabin proposed walling off the Gaza Strip and the West Bank from Israel" — that's the *Washington Post*. "His plans were inevitably leading to a real 'Palestinian state,' not 'a Palestinian Bantustan' as critics claim — that's the left *New Statesman* in England.

That's a pretty fair sample from the US and British press. So there's good reason for a day of awe, that's pretty impressive. The accounts have a number of interesting features. One is that the factual assertions are not just plain false but ludicrously false. If you look at the facts, you find that what happened is something quite different. The agreement breaks the West Bank into four zones. One zone is greater Jerusalem, which Israel has already annexed and taken over, and if you look at the *New York Times* maps, they've already ceded

it to Israel. It's supposed to be under the negotiations, but not according to the *New York Times*. It's part of Israel.

That's a big area. Just what it is, nobody knows because it keeps expanding. But the Israeli government, including the "martyr for peace" and his successor Shimon Peres, have made very clear that it's going to extend to include the urban complex of Maaleh Adumim to its east, and to go virtually to the Jordan Valley, which Israel is also keeping, so essentially to bisect the West Bank. That's one of the four zones and is never discussed because it has already been ceded to Israel. The other three zones of the West Bank do give some authority to the Palestinians, namely downtown Nablus and Jenin and a couple of other cities; that amounts to something like one to two percent, maybe at the outside three percent of the West Bank. So there, the Palestinian authority has control. In 70 percent of the West Bank, Israel has unchallenged, total control. In the remaining zone, which is on the order of 28 percent, Palestinians have local authority, but Israel has overriding control, veto power. In fact, it has veto power in 100 percent of the West Bank and Gaza according to the agreements that were signed. Gaza is unmentioned in Oslo II. Here Israel keeps the roughly 30 percent that it wants.

Well, there is not a word in the agreement about any eventual ceding of any control. The actual arrangements are precisely for scattered Bantustans, as indeed is reported in Israel. This is also what Rabin's successor, the dovish Shimon Peres, very forcefully said — not in secret, but to a gathering of ambassadors where he explained Oslo II and said a Palestinian state "will never happen," whatever the *New*

*Statesman* and others might choose to believe.

Furthermore, all these plans are rapidly being implemented with increasing settlements — using your tax funds with the agreement of the Clinton administration and the Bush administration before it. In return for these concessions, Palestinians have to recognize, and under Oslo II do recognize, the legality of existing and future settlements on the West Bank, and indeed Israeli sovereignty over, in effect, any region it

chooses to keep. Well, that's the great "day of awe."

What about Rabin's vision having undergone "a remarkable transformation," as the *New York Times* described it? Well, it did actually. Take 1988, at the peak moment of US-Israeli rejection of any Palestinian rights. At that point, Rabin — then Defense Minister — called for Israel to control 40 percent of the occupied territories. That's the traditional position of his Labor Party back to 1968. Now he's settled for only twice that much, along with agreements that rescind all UN and other decisions about the legality of the settlements and Israeli rights to territories. So there's a remarkable transformation but it just happens to be in the opposite direction. Incidentally, the same is true of West Bank resources; Israel has got to control them, especially water. It did sign a water agreement with Jordan, but in that agreement, Palestinian rights are completely ignored. And of course, the water in Israel is out of the discussion.

As far as we know, the water in the Palestinian areas has been and will continue to be overwhelmingly used for Israel itself and for settlements. That is so that settlements can have swimming pools and green lawns and so on, while villages next door don't have water to drink. Well, that's the great agreement, "the day of awe." In fact, what happened, and



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the facts are not in dispute, is that Israel and the US, the US primarily, have rammed through the most extreme rejectionist proposal that has ever been put forth anywhere within the mainstream political spectrum in either country. It's about the same as the Sharon plan of 1981, the far right Sharon plan, as has been pointed out in Israel, I should say.

So September 28 was indeed a "day of awe." It was a day of awe for the rule of force in international affairs and for the power of doctrinal institutions in societies with very obedient intellectual classes. And I should say what's particularly remarkable about this is the subordination of much of the world to US propaganda. In Europe and Latin America, intellectuals and policy makers have forgotten what they themselves were advocating four or five years ago, and now accept the US doctrinal system. That is very impressive. It does merit awe.

All of this becomes even more awe-inspiring if you look a little bit at the history which has been suppressed to an unusual extent — actually an extraordinary extent here, even in scholarship. There is no time to review it, but there's plenty of material in print if you want to look it up, even when scholarship suppresses it.

In brief, ever since Kissinger's takeover of Middle East policy in 1971, the United States has led the international rejectionist camp. It stood virtually alone in the world in rejecting a very broad international consensus — a consensus which Washington itself had crafted but then abandoned under Kissinger's control — that called for Israeli withdrawal from the territories in return for peace. The US then went on to flatly reject any Palestinian rights, and has continued to do so in order to block any peace process.

The US has had to repeatedly veto UN Security Council resolutions and to vote alone, with Israel or with one or another client state occasionally, year after year, against General Assembly resolutions. It's been forced to block diplomatic initiatives from Europe, from the Arab states,

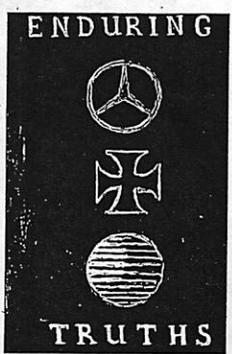
from the PLO, in fact, from everyone. And it won. It won flat out. It won on the ground, and it won in what passes for history, and that's a very impressive achievement which tells us quite a lot about world order and how it's maintained, and how it's justified by those who benefit from good educations.

### From Containment to Rollback

**W**ell, let me go back finally to the conventional story. I think there is a move from containment, but I don't think it's a move to enlargement. Rather, to borrow another bit of Cold War rhetoric, it's a move from containment to rollback. There have been major changes in the international economy and in the world scene in the past 25 years, of which the end of the Cold War is only a small part, and they have indeed placed extraordinary new power, new weapons in the hands of private tyrannies and the states that they pretty much dominate. The changes have enabled these private tyrannies to launch a very significant attack against democracy, against human rights, even against markets if we look closely, and to roll back the hated expansion of democracy, human rights and freedom that has been won in long, long and often bitter popular struggles. And we're seeing that right around us here, as in much of the world.

Well, it's not the first such moment. This has happened before, repeatedly. This kind of end of history has been hailed by the powerful and the privileged and by their minions many times before, always wrongly. Whether in fact, this claim this time around is right or wrong is not something for us to predict, because we can't. It's something for us to decide and to determine, which indeed we can. ■

*Part II will be in CAQ's summer issue.*



**THE GHOSTS of KWANGJU**



# Partners in Repression

by Bill Mesler

*As the ghosts of Kwangju haunt Korea, two former presidents face possible execution for crimes which the US ignored or abetted. So far, the US role remains shrouded.*

Somewhere beneath the rolling green foothills and picturesque rice paddies of rural southwestern Korea, near the city of Kwangju, bodies lie buried in hidden, unmarked graves. They are the victims of the Kwangju massacre, the mass killing of pro-democracy demonstrators that has so haunted the collective conscience of South Koreans since 1980.

Most were shot or bayoneted while denouncing the military coup by General Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, who together would govern Korea for the next dozen years.<sup>1</sup> Some were medical personnel gunned down while giving first aid to the more than 2,000 injured after government troops opened fire. Some were hapless onlookers. Some were children under ten. But to those who have been fighting for four decades for democracy in South Korea, they are all known simply as "the martyrs."

The Korean government has admitted that it buried at least 200 victims near Kwangju; dissident groups put the figure closer to 2,000. The exact number is not known because for years, Korea, dominated by coup-conspirators Chun and Roh, has shown little inclination to delve into the excesses of totalitarian rule.<sup>2</sup> But now, as democracy slowly begins to take root, Koreans are trying to emerge from their dark legacy of authoritarianism. They are beginning by digging up the ghosts of Kwangju.

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1. For a comprehensive anthology of relevant essays, see Donald Clark, ed., *The Kwangju Uprising: Shadows over the Regime in South Korea* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988).

2. *Ibid.*



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

**Former South Korean President Roh Tae Woo escorted to trial.**

## Dangerous Questions

On January 17, the government announced that investigators would begin excavating suspected sites of the mass graves. The move was part of an incredible chain of events that has left former presidents Chun and Roh in prison. They and six former army generals — four of whom are members of the National Assembly — were indicted this January for mutiny and sedition in connection with their roles in the 1979 coup and subsequent Kwangju massacre.<sup>3</sup> If they are found guilty, they could face the death penalty.

3. David Holley, "Former S. Korean Leaders Face Sedition Charges," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 23, 1996.

But the questions run deeper than the personal culpability of Chun and Roh, whose guilt is already assumed by most Koreans. And the answers unearthed by the government investigation into Kwangju will provide more than facts. They will shape an emerging democracy put on hold by repressive authoritarianism. Kwangju has become the symbol of all that was wrong with that past, all that was wrong with a leadership of military dictators and strongmen.

For many Koreans, the massacre is also a symbol of all that was and continues to be wrong with the nation's close relationship to the United States. In the 16 years since Kwangju, anti-Americanism in South Korea has grown dramatically,<sup>4</sup> with young South Koreans now six times more likely to fear the US than North Korea.<sup>5</sup> The massacre, and apparent US support for Gen. Chun, cemented those fears in the minds of millions and was a unifying force within the pro-democracy movement.

The investigation by prosecutors may open a Pandora's box. Revelations in the case could raise the lid on the extent of US influence over Korea's economic, military, and political affairs, and challenge a 50-year strategic relationship that critics say sacrificed Korean democracy and human rights at the altar of the Cold War.

For years, despite a long paper trail showing US involvement on many levels, Washington has given only token responses to demands for information.

4. Donald Clark, ed., *Korea Briefing, 1991* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991). See especially, Donald Clark, "Bitter Friendship: Understanding Anti-Americanism in South Korea."

5. *The Economist* (London), "Uncle Sam's young opponents," June 4, 1994, quoting a 1994 survey.

"For the US to revisit this issue, there would be a lot of resistance from people in the Pentagon and the military establishment," says Henry Em, assistant professor of modern Korean history at the University of California at Los Angeles. "Nobody is saying American soldiers did the shooting in Kwangju. But they are saying Americans are guilty of complicity. If the US keeps silent about the events in 1979 and 1980, the people in South Korea will see this as arrogance. More importantly, the silence would imply complicity or guilt. The US should disclose its role and, if appropriate, offer an apology. That wouldn't just be great for democracy in South Korea. That would be great for democracy in the United States."

### The Craft of Repression

Democracy and self-determination have not come easily to Korea. Japan's formal annexation of Korea in 1910 began over three decades of brutal rule that ended with Japan's defeat in World War II. During that war, a young Dean Rusk drew up a plan that left the North in the hands of the Soviets and the South in the hands of the Americans. Millions of families were and continue to be arbitrarily divided in a Cold War tragedy of division with few parallels in the modern world.

America's first order of business in the newly divided South was to disband the

would be an ugly foreshadowing of America's future role.

After a brief experiment with democracy in 1960 that lasted less than a year, Pak Chung Hee, an ex-officer in the World War II Japanese Army, took power in a military coup. For the next 32 years, the country would be ruled by a succession of generals.

Some Koreans grew cautiously optimistic about prospects for increased self-determination when, in 1976, US presidential candidate Jimmy Carter pledged a complete withdrawal of US forces from Korea. Pentagon officials, however, went into a tizzy. (A year later, Maj. Gen. John Singlaub, chief-of-staff of the US Forces Korea Headquarters, would be fired over his public denunciation of the Carter plan.<sup>7</sup>) But in the face of the Pentagon's strategic obsession with Korea, Carter's plan languished. The nail in its coffin was hammered by a 1979 report by the investigations subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, which rewrote the book on the North Korean threat. Overnight, US intelligence estimates of the size of North Korea's army rose from 450,000 to between 550,000 and 600,000.<sup>8</sup>

"It seems very possible that those figures were pushed up," says Col. Dan Smith, of the Center for Defense Information, a former officer in the Defense Intelligence Agency. "Of course there is a question about whether or not we need to keep so many troops in

Korea. But that question has fallen on deaf ears in the Pentagon."

In the end, the Carter administration changed course and provided the military regime with \$85,000 worth of "interrogation equipment" and \$243,000 in "riot-control agents."<sup>9</sup>

7. Bernard Weinraub, "Carter Disciplines Gen. Singlaub, Who Attacked His Policy on Korea," *New York Times*, May 22, 1977, p. 1.

8. House Armed Services Committee, Investigations Subcommittee, *Impact of Intelligence Reassessment on withdrawal of US troops from Korea*, Sept. 7, 1979.

9. *Japan Times* (Tokyo), June 11, 1980.



Victims of th

### US Winks At Coup

On October 26, 1979, amid growing nationwide demonstrations for democracy, President Pak was assassinated. He had been obsessive about his personal security in the wake of successive assassination attempts by North Korea; ironically, the killer was Kim Chae-gyu, the Pak-appointed director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>10</sup>

While the assassination stunned the nation, it also sparked hopes for a true democratic renewal. But there was no jubilation at the US State Department, which seemed more concerned about the scheduled presidential elections for a successor. *Newsweek* quoted an unnamed official in the US embassy in Seoul who voiced dissatisfaction with the candidates: "None of the three Kims is an ideal choice. Kim Young Sam is not qualified, Kim Dae Jung is too radical,

10. The KCIA, founded by Pak in 1960, was modeled after its US namesake. Most Koreans correctly assume the two were officially related, and after he was assassinated, thanked the US for removing Pak. Over the years, the KCIA has consistently drawn fierce criticism as a perpetrator of South Korea's most serious human rights abuses. The agency gained international notoriety for violating international law and protocols during its 1973 kidnapping of opposition leader Kim Dae Jung from a Tokyo hotel room. The incident severely strained relations between South Korea and Japan over the next decade.

Exactly one hour after the US statement, 10,000 ROK troops launched the bloody assault on the demonstrators.

local democratic committees that had risen up to take power from the Japanese after their WWII defeat. The US restored to power the hated Japanese colonial police force which, like the Vichy in France, served the occupying army. They put in charge the same Japanese-trained officers who had only recently been disarmed by civilians during the Japanese withdrawal.<sup>6</sup> It

6. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).



Wangju massacre.

and Kim Jong Pil is already tainted [by his association with the Pak administration].<sup>11</sup> A democratically elected leader and a newly democratized Korea in 1980 clearly did not fit into US strategic interests.

And it was not in the cards. Two months after Pak's assassination, the Pak-appointed legislature elected reform-minded Choe Kyu-ha as president in a move seen as a step toward general democratic elections. As his first act in office, Choe lifted Pak's draconian Emergency Decree No. 9, which forbade all forms of dissent and granted amnesty to imprisoned opposition leader Kim Dae Jung and 68 other dissidents.

But less than two weeks later, popular optimism was dulled when the Choe government started to unravel. On December 12, Gen. Chun Doo Hwan began his "creeping coup" by first seizing control of the military. (Gen. Roh Tae Woo, a co-conspirator, who commanded key troops for Chun, would later succeed him as president.) Gradually, Choe became a figurehead with Chun calling the real shots. Chun's power was cemented in April 1980, when he illegally appointed himself director of the KCIA.

11. Fred Bruning with Bernard Krisher, "Korea Picks a President," *Newsweek*, Dec. 17, 1979, p. 68.

Pro-democracy demonstrations continued, and by May up to 60,000 people — mostly students — were in the streets. On May 17, the government declared martial law, banned all political activity, closed the universities, and arrested Kim Dae Jung and hundreds of opposition leaders.

### Bloody US Fingerprints

The actions provoked outrage, especially in Kwangju, the capital of southwestern Korea's Cholla province. As one of Korea's most impoverished regions, Cholla had long been a center for protest against successive authoritarian regimes. Most of the country's leaders, including Pak, Chun, and Roh, hail from the more conservative region of southeastern Kyongsang, where bias against people from Cholla is rampant.<sup>12</sup> Chun's bid for absolute

power and the arrest of Kim Dae Jung, a Cholla native, provoked outrage in Kwangju and sparked fierce student demonstrations.

The nine-day crisis began when the military deployed the "black beret" paratroopers to Kwangju and the infamous special forces killed dozens of the demonstrators. The deaths provoked progressively larger demonstrations. By May 21, 1980, some 200,000 demonstrators had taken to the streets and the army was forced to retreat. With the city surrounded by ten thousand Republic of Korea (ROK) troops, a hastily assembled citizens' committee asked the US to mediate between the civilians and the armed forces. Six days later, the US denied the request, issuing what many Koreans still see as a go-ahead for Chun to retake the city by force: "We recognize that a situation of total disorder and disruption in a major city cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely." Exactly one hour after the statement's release,

12. Until recently, the Samsung industrial conglomerate had an explicit policy not to hire graduates of any university in the Cholla province. See *The Economist*, "The underdogs bite back," Dec. 16, 1995.

on May 27, 10,000 ROK troops assaulted Kwangju in a bloody attack that left hundreds, if not thousands, dead.

Whether or not the US actively supported Chun's coup, it was certainly not unwelcome in Pentagon war rooms. Washington's attitude toward Chun was made all too clear in February 1981 when, just months after the Kwangju massacre, Reagan invited Chun to be the first foreign head of state to visit the White House. Reagan called the Korean president a "key defender of freedom's frontier" and Korean television broadcast images of the two leaders enjoying cocktails together. It was a scene few Koreans are likely to forget.

Across the political spectrum, most Koreans assume that the US supported the Chun coup. State-controlled news reports from the time broadcast regular assurances of Washington's support for



Just months after the massacre, Reagan met with Chun at the White House and called him a "key defender of freedom's frontier."

the actions of the Korean military. US failure to take a strong stand against Chun's takeover indicated at least tacit support. And according to one newspaper report, US involvement was more extensive: Chun had solicited the US position on the secret coup plan early in the spring of 1980, several months before the coup and subsequent massacre.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, documents obtained from the ROK military during the 1988 investigation revealed that coup co-conspirator Gen. Kim Jae Myung met with US Army Gen. Robert Sennewald on May 26. Another document cited the need for "verbal cooperation from the US-ROK Combined Forces Headquarter."<sup>14</sup>

13. *Shin-Dong-Ah*, March 1988. A monthly political journal.

14. Summaries of the investigation and quotes from selected documents can be found in the *Korea Fact Sheet*, available from the Washington-based Korea Info. Center.

## America's Role

The specter of US involvement was palpable. Many of the troops used in Kwangju were under the operational command of a US general. According to a 1978 agreement, the US forces commander in South Korea (Gen. John Wickham, Jr., at the time) had operational control over several of the units used in the Kwangju massacre; Korean military commanders had to request control of the units. Records show that as the crisis took shape, Wickham gave Chun control over the key military units that were used to suppress the demonstrations in Kwangju.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the most important evidence of US knowledge of Chun's plan to use military force to suppress demonstrators in Kwangju was the unexplained redeployment of two early warning aircraft from Okinawa and the repositioning of an aircraft carrier from Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philip-

Many of the troops used in Kwangju were under the operational command of a US general.

ines to the seas near Korea. Korean media reported that the redeployment had been ordered at a special, high-level White House meeting attended by President Carter, Secretary of State Ed Muskie and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.<sup>16</sup>

Adding additional weight to the case for US foreknowledge was testimony by Lee Hee Sung, martial law commander-in-chief during the Kwangju massacre. During a separate 1988 investigation by a group of opposition legislators, Lee confirmed that the date to send troops back into Kwangju was actually moved from May 24 to May 27 because of "the time needed for deploying the US air force and navy from Okinawa and the Philippines in the near seas of Korea."<sup>17</sup>

15. State Department, "United States Government Statement on the Events in Kwangju, Republic of Korea, in May 1980," June 19, 1989.

16. *Dong-Ah Daily News*, May 22, 1980.

17. See State Department, *op. cit.*

While lacking the teeth of the current investigation, the 1988 effort did pressure Washington to issue its only formal reply to the allegations. In a June 1989 report on the US role in the massacre, the State Department flatly denied any prior US knowledge of the assassination of President Pak; claimed that Chun's coup had been carried out without US knowledge or approval; and asserted that "most" (but not all) of the carnage in Kwangju was committed by special forces units not under US operational control.

The report also claimed that South Korean officials failed to release a US statement prepared during the crisis, calling for dialogue between the military and dissidents. The military regime, the report read, "used its control over the media under total martial law to distort the US position, portraying it not as condemnation but as support."<sup>18</sup>

The last assertion is most curious, since the State Department could have just as easily released the statement itself. Indeed, in public, the US openly supported repressive measures. On May 23, just four days before the massacre, State Department spokesperson Hodding Carter told reporters that the Carter administration "has decided to support the restoration of security and order

in South Korea while deferring pressure for political liberalization."<sup>19</sup>

## Democracy Returns

And deferred it was. For the next seven years, the military regime imposed martial law, imprisoned dissidents, and committed serious human rights violations, including torture. Then in January 1987, Seoul police were forced to admit that they had tortured to death Pak Chong-chol, a student at Seoul National University. Even Chun could no longer ignore mounting demands for democracy.<sup>20</sup> A timetable was set for national presidential elections in 1988, which were won by Chun protégé and fellow coup conspirator Roh Tae Woo.

The elections were hardly free and fair. The government held the press un-

18. *Ibid.*

19. Quoted in *Korea Fact Sheet*, *op. cit.*

20. Andrea Savada and William Shaw, eds., *South Korea: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1992).

der tight rein and severely curtailed freedom of dissent, especially with the notorious National Security Law, which allows arbitrary detention for practically any form of dissent.<sup>21</sup> But in the end, it was an opposition split between pro-democracy leaders—the more radical Kim Dae Jung and the more moderate Kim Young Sam—that allowed Roh to win the election with only 37 percent of the vote.

But the seeds of democracy had been planted. In 1992, Kim Young Sam was elected president. In his inaugural address he pledged that during his administration, "justice will flow like a river."<sup>22</sup> Many Koreans were skeptical. Kim had, after all, ensured his election by merging his party with the Liberal Democratic Party started by Chun and Roh. But at the time of the merger, Kim defended himself by telling the press: "To catch a tiger, you have to walk into the tiger's den."<sup>23</sup>

## In Deep Slush

Kim has apparently caught not one but two tigers. Former Presidents Chun and Roh were arrested last December and charged with corruption and mutiny. President Kim called the arrests the beginning of a "great revolution" and said that Koreans must be ready to "get rid of the military culture and the specters of the coup d'état in order to protect democracy."<sup>24</sup> The catalyst for the arrests came in October, when Roh's former security chief, Lee Hyun Woo, told law enforcement officials of a \$63 million illegal slush fund he ran for the president.<sup>25</sup> Some ascribe less than laudatory motives to President Kim's reformist zeal. They speculate that he ordered the Kwangju arrests to deflect accusations that he may have benefited from Roh's slush fund,<sup>26</sup> or to bolster waning support for his party in the wake of sweeping electoral gains in 1995 local elections by the left-leaning Democratic Party.<sup>27</sup> Regardless, the arrests of Chun and Roh have been extremely popular.

By the time Roh's bribery trial began in December, investigators had uncovered \$653 million in illegally obtained

21. *Ibid.*

22. "Rohd to ruin," *The Economist*, Oct. 28, 1995.

23. Shim Jae Hoon, "Break With the Past," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Dec. 14, 1995.

24. "Slowing the Revolution," *Asia Week*, Dec. 22, 1995.

25. "Rohd to Ruin," *The Economist*, *op. cit.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. "South Korea's Local Heroes," *The Economist*, July 1, 1995.

funds and were searching for more. The legal proceedings are expected to be a prelude to the trials that will be held on the Kwangju massacre as soon as government investigators have finished building their case.<sup>28</sup>

### Context of US Role

Perhaps more than any nation save Puerto Rico and the Philippines, the Republic of Korea has been dominated militarily, economically and politically by the United States. Since its bloody civil war of the early 1950s, Korea has served as East Asia's Cold War bulwark against "encroaching communism." Large-scale military cooperation flows both ways. The US contingent of 37,000 troops in South Korea is the largest overseas US deployment outside of Western Europe. During Vietnam, Korea served as a staging ground for US troops while more than 300,000 Korean soldiers — many serving in the famed White Horse division — were forced to fight alongside Americans. Nearly 4,000 died.<sup>29</sup>

Today, the end of the Cold War, transformations in the former communist world, and détente with China have lessened Korea's geopolitical significance. But Pentagon planners still see their influence over the Korean peninsula as integral to US strategic and economic interests in the region. As recently as January 1995, US Air Force Lt. Gen. James Clapper, Jr., then director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on "The Worldwide Threat to US Interests." He cited three "principal concerns": political/military developments in Russia; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and North Korea, which he called "my major near-term military concern."<sup>30</sup>

US military interests are so paramount that even members of the South Korean military have accused the US of trying to secure its presence by exag-

28. Sheryl Wu-Dunn, "Ex-President of South Korea Goes on Trial on Bribery Charges," *New York Times*, Dec. 18, 1995.  
29. Carter, Eckert, Lee, Lew, Robinson and Wagner, *Korea: Old and New* (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers for Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), p. 398. Detailed information on Korean participants in Vietnam is hard to find, but the subject matter is slowly starting to creep into modern Korean literature, and has been critically dramatized by Korean Vietnam war veteran Ahn Junghyo.  
30. Testimony, Sen. Armed Forces Committee, Jan. 17, 1995.



Anger over the treatment of demonstrators, such as this man, has fueled the desire by most Koreans for justice and democratic reforms.

gerating the North Korean threat. In February 1994, *Newsweek* published a "leaked" Pentagon computer simulation suggesting that South Korea's defenses would collapse within a couple of weeks in the event of a communist attack. South Korean generals and politicians alike scoffed at the assertion.<sup>31</sup>

### Reconciling with the Past

Most Koreans questioning the US role in Korea do not seek revenge. In the case of Kwangju, they simply want honest answers about one of the most tragic events in their modern history. "We need to learn from the past, we need to reconcile with the past, so we can make the future," said Jai Ho Shim, a Korean columnist, author and former reporter for one of Korea's largest daily newspapers, *Dong-Ah Daily News*, in a January interview.

According to Shim, only through understanding Kwangju can Korea hope to achieve true democracy. Although Kim Young Sam has instituted important changes, human rights in Korea remain curtailed. Labor rights remain limited and the country's notorious national security law, used to justify thousands of arrests since the 1960s, remains on the books. The law permits the arrest of, and up to a ten-year sentence, for any-

31. "A Report From the Korean Front Line," *The Economist*, Feb. 12, 1994.

one who has taken an action "in support of an enemy organization."<sup>32</sup> It has been regularly applied with impunity against any critics of the regime.

"We don't have basic human rights in Korea," said Shim. "[We can] sit and debate about human rights in China or human rights in the United States. But we aren't even allowed to talk about human rights in our own country."

As for Korean-US relations, there may still be a long way to go. Americans still don't seem to understand Korea, nor do they understand the US role in shaping and preserving authoritarianism in the nation. US political pundits still qualify their discussion of Korean military regimes with the term "soft authoritarianism." The feeling is typified by *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristof's recent observation that, "While a relatively small number of South Koreans were tortured to death under Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh, the great majority of people gained under their rule."<sup>33</sup>

It is an attitude that will be difficult to change, both in the Pentagon and in the hearts and minds of millions of Americans. A full accounting of the US role in Kwangju would be a start. ■

32. *Human Rights Watch*, "Continue Suspension of OPIG Guarantees for South Korea," Dec. 15, 1995.

33. Nicholas D. Kristof, "Ex-Seoul President Now Facing Judgment of Democracy," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 1995.



US ARMY

# Ten Years Later La Belle Disco Bombing

*US warplanes launched a bloody attack on Libya after Reagan claimed Qaddafi was behind a fatal Berlin bombing. Now, documents from East German spy files raise new questions.*

by John Goetz

**O**n April 5, 1985, a bomb rocked the La Belle discotheque in West Berlin, a club frequented by US soldiers. When the smoke cleared, two GIs and a Turkish woman were dead, 200 — including more than 50 US soldiers — lay wounded, and the Reagan administration claimed the justification it needed for an attack on Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. But a decade later, the haze surrounding the identities and motives of those responsible still lingers.

In the years since, the US claim of Libya's ultimate responsibility has gone unchallenged except by a handful of critics. Within hours, the Reagan administration pointed the finger at

Libya, and the US has stuck to that position ever since. US claims of definite proof notwithstanding, no one has ever been convicted in the La Belle case.

Early on, the German government arrested various people, but then released them for lack of evidence.<sup>1</sup> German investigations began anew in 1990, when, after East Germany's collapse, intelligence files from its Ministry for State Security (*Staatssicherheit* or "Stasi"), fell into the hands of West German security services. Those files appeared to confirm the longstanding US claim of Libyan culpability. Prosecutors eventually brought one man to trial, but that case fell apart.

1. *Volksblatt Berlin*, Dec. 1, 1988.

Now, a closer reading of the Stasi records casts serious doubt on claims of Libyan responsibility. The files instead reveal a rat's nest of double and triple agents, competing intelligence services, and multiple allegiances that leaves the identity of the crime's authors more uncertain than ever. Like so many other unexplained events in the history of covert operations, the La Belle disco bombing has become a swamp with little solid ground.

## Reagan vs. Libya

The Berlin intrigues were part of an ongoing shadow war between Libya and the US. In the Reagan administration's first days, it had ordered a CIA covert operation to destabilize, overthrow,

John Goetz is a journalist based in Berlin, Germany.  
Photo: Berlin police sift through La Belle rubble for clues.

and assassinate Qaddafi.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the early and mid-1980s, Libya and the US engaged in an underground struggle, leaving a trail of corpses scattered across Europe—Libyan diplomats and businessmen, US-backed Libyan dissidents, and the occasional innocent bystander.<sup>3</sup>

By early 1986, frustrated by the CIA's failure to get rid of Qaddafi and eager to revenge the deadly Christmas bombings of the Rome and Vienna airports, the White House opted for a military assault on Libya.<sup>4</sup> All it needed was an appropriate provocation. To the disappointment of the White House, a US attack on Libyan Navy vessels in March failed to incite the Libyan leader. When La Belle exploded two weeks later, the US had the provocation it sought. Nine days after the bombing, US warplanes attacked the Libyan capital, Tripoli, and Benghazi, its second city, leaving a toll of 100 dead, including Qaddafi's infant adopted daughter.

### Shaky Evidence

Skeptics of the "Libya did it" theory point to this history of intrigue, behind-the-scenes plotting, and open US hostility toward Qaddafi in questioning the US version of events. The Reagan administration had ardently sought any excuse to proceed with its planned military assault, and the La Belle bombing provided that pretext — too conveniently, some thought.

Some familiar with a US history of manufactured provocations, such as the Gulf of Tonkin incident, suggested that the US was itself responsible for the bombing.<sup>5</sup> A documentary by British journalist Tom Bower said it was the Syrians. The Israelis seemed to agree.

2. For narratives of the US-Libya conflict, see William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995), pp. 280-89; and Seymour Hersh, "Target Qaddafi," *New York Times Magazine*, Feb. 22, 1987.

3. In 1984 and 1985, at least five Libyan diplomats or regime-supportive businessmen were assassinated in Europe. US-backed Libyan exile groups claimed credit for some of the killings, and West Berlin gangster Hilmar Hein was convicted in another, non-fatal attack. Hein told an unconfirmed tale of separate meetings with NSC adviser John Poindexter, NSC aide Oliver North, and their Iran-Contra cohort, Sadegh Tabatabai. Hein's prosecutor said he believed the gangster was involved in almost all of the assassination attempts against Libyan diplomats in Europe. See Rainer K.G. Ott, *Berliner Sachen: Motiv Geldgier: Geschäftsbericht einer Branche, die es gar nicht gibt*, Sender Freies Berlin, Studio Drei, April 28, 1987. Libya, for its part, was responsible for at least 25 fatal attacks on anti-Qaddafi dissidents abroad, according to Amnesty International. ("AI Appeals to Libya Over Assassinations," *Reuters*, July 17, 1987.)

4. Hersh, *op. cit.*

5. Noam Chomsky, "Libya in U.S. Demonology," *Covert Action*, n. 26, Summer 1986, pp. 21-22.

Other candidates included West German terrorists or radical Palestinian factions.

Evidence for these alternatives was shaky, but the Reagan administration's allegations were no more solid. They consisted solely of NSA intercepts of coded exchanges between Tripoli and the East Berlin Libyan Peoples Bureau. A cable from the East Berlin bureau to Tripoli reportedly said, "We have something planned that will make you happy." Another, hours after the bombing, said, "An event occurred. You will be pleased with

thread on which to hang Libyan guilt. One senior German official said that they were "very critical and skeptical" of US intelligence blaming the Libyans.<sup>8</sup>

### The Case Against Libya

The German attitude changed in 1990. That summer, the German press trumpeted the news that the Stasi's own files showed that it had known in advance all about the attack on La Belle and that even the heads of the German Democratic Republic were complicit in the bombing.<sup>9</sup>



**National Security Planning Group, Jan. 6, 1986, when the decision to use force against Libya was made. Clockwise from left: Reagan, Shultz, Baker, Meese, Regan, Poindexter, Casey, Crowe, Weinberger, and Bush.**

the result."<sup>6</sup> The intercepts did not say that Libyan agents had bombed the disco.

But there were other problems, too. Under orders from the National Security Council, the raw intercepts went straight to the White House. They were not, as is usual, first analyzed at NSA. As one NSA analyst later noted, "There is no doubt that if you send raw data to the White House, that constitutes misuse because there's nobody there capable of interpreting it. You screw up every time you do it — especially when the raw traffic is translated into English from a language such as Arabic, that's not commonly known."<sup>7</sup>

The NSA's Middle East analysts have yet to see the cables. The White House provided copies to West German intelligence, which deemed them a flimsy

6. Hersh, *op. cit.* But in an early indication of the translation's fuzzy provenance, other, slightly different versions of the cables' contents were also reported. See, e.g., "Transcript of Address by Reagan on Libya," *New York Times*, Apr. 15, 1986.

7. Quoted in *ibid.*

According to the Stasi documents,<sup>10</sup> the plot had begun with a PFLP-GC (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command) conference held in Tripoli from February 26 to March 3, 1986, where PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jibril gave the order for more action against US targets.<sup>11</sup> Among those attending was Yousseff Chraidi (code-named "Nuri"), a Palestinian working in Libya's East Berlin bureau.

Nuri set out to organize an attack against a US installation in West Ber-

8. Quoted in *ibid.*

9. See e.g., *Stern*, Aug. 9, 1990. US "anti-terrorism experts" also jumped on the bandwagon. See Steven Emerson, "Where Have All His Spies Gone?" *New York Times Magazine*, Aug. 12, 1990. In addition to making the standard claims of final proof, Emerson promised that several German nationals linked to the attack would soon be revealed. They never have been.

10. As reported in e.g., "East Germany's Stasi: Where Have All the Files Gone," *The Economist*, Sept. 22, 1990.

11. The US had long accused Libya of sheltering the PFLP-GC in return for its "terrorist" favors. But then, the US had also accused Libya of maintaining links with nearly every known "terrorist" organization, from the Irish Republican Army to Chicago street gangs. Blum, *op. cit.*

lin, said the Stasi's informants. Along with two other bureau employees, Nuri began considering possible targets, including school buses carrying the children of US military personnel, discos frequented by US soldiers, movie theaters — even US military barracks.

East German border authority reports had Nuri traveling frequently to West Berlin to purchase and transport weapons from a West German dealer. On March 26, informers reported that the Libyan People's Bureau security chief met with Nuri's group to suggest they throw hand grenades into a disco frequented by US soldiers. That attack was called off because of heightened security conditions in West Berlin.

After a curious gap from April 1-4, the Stasi files reported an impending attack against the La Belle disco on the night of April 4-5, not with hand grenades but

## The Stasi files reveal a rat's nest of double and triple agents, competing intelligence services, and multiple allegiances.

with four kilograms of explosives mixed with nails and scrap metal. A border authority report that night noted that Nuri crossed into West Berlin at 10:45 p.m. and returned three minutes later. Another Stasi document had Nuri then going to an East Berlin disco with other conspirators at 11 p.m. and staying there until 2 a.m., ten minutes after La Belle exploded. And an informant reported in detail how, later that morning, Nuri called different West Berlin newspapers and took credit for the disco bombing in the name of an Arab organization that has never been heard of before or since.

The Stasi files seemed to settle the case: Nuri's group had done the bombing. Yet some awkward facts remained: No one had ever actually seen any of the Libyans anywhere near the disco the night of the explosion, nor had they been seen with the explosives, nor had the identity of the actual bomber ever been determined. And Qaddafi's back-channel efforts to rebuild Libyan-US relations right after the bombing did not gibe with a purported Libyan offensive.<sup>12</sup>

12. Libya initiated secret contacts with the Reagan administration through semi-official channels and private individuals. "Report Quotes North on Why He Sought US

## Not With a Bang

Relying heavily on the Stasi documents, West German prosecutors arrested a Palestinian named Imad Mahmoud, whom they identified as a PFLP-GC member, for conspiracy in the bombing. Mahmoud, they admitted, was a minor player who had dropped out before the bombing occurred, but, they said, they couldn't locate Nuri or other important plotters.<sup>13</sup>

Stasi files independently obtained by journalists as they prepared to cover the trial seemed to confirm prosecutors' contentions that Libya, with East German foreknowledge, had commissioned the bombing.<sup>14</sup> Mahmoud's trial began in April 1993, but instead of confirming Libyan responsibility with a conviction, the trial turned to farce. After witnesses either failed to appear or self-destructed, prosecutors stopped the trial and La Belle fled from public view.

One of the prosecution's problems was the Stasi informants who filed the damning reports. Their contradictions and inconsistencies proved extremely damaging to the case — and raise serious questions about the entire "Libya did it" thesis. When journalists covering the story determined the identities behind the maze of code names the Stasi used for its informants, the results were equally unsettling. Excluding the East German border authority entries, the Stasi reports naming Nuri's group came from only three main informants. All three had serious credibility problems.

## A New Look at the Sources

Take Ali Chanar (sometimes transliterated as "Chanaa"), codenamed "Alba," a Palestinian born in a Lebanese refugee camp, who came to West Berlin as a student. Stasi files show that he had fallen in love with an East German woman, and the Stasi threatened to cut off his access to East Berlin unless he would spy for them.

Alba was the source for many of the most damaging file entries and provided the widely-publicized report on

Raid on Libya," *New York Times*, June 25, 1987.

13. Stephen Kinzer, "Two German Trials Reopen Pre-1989 Wounds," *New York Times*, Apr. 22, 1993, p. A12.

14. Some files were obtained by Wolfgang Gast of *Die Tageszeitung* through a German version of the Freedom of Information Act. Under Germany's unique law, only information in the East German files must be made available; files gathered by West German authorities are exempt.

Nuri's post-bombing phone calls to claim responsibility. But during Mahmoud's trial, Alba became an embarrassment for the prosecution. Berlin prosecutors had canceled three charges against him not long before he testified, but the Stasi informant refused to answer questions and admitted under oath that he had lied during earlier questioning.

Alba's performance was nothing new. In 1991, he testified at a different trial with similar results. Included in the Stasi files was a ruling written by the presiding judge in that case finding Alba "unreliable" and his testimony "improbable."

Even worse, Alba's widely-cited Stasi report that Nuri called various West Berlin media outlets to take credit for the bombing crumbles under close scrutiny. There is no record of any newspapers receiving, let alone publishing such a claim. West German intelligence debriefings of a Stasi defector, made available here for the first time in English, cast further doubt on Alba's Nuri phone call story. In the debriefing transcripts for Stasi Col. Frank Wiegand, the former spymaster describes his work as one of the Stasi officers in charge of the La Belle investigation.<sup>15</sup> According to Wiegand, the Stasi read Alba's report on Nuri's phone calls, but could find no record of them. (The Stasi was widely and correctly thought to monitor virtually all phone traffic between East and West Berlin.)

The transcripts also show Wiegand rather pathetically asking his debriefer if the West could confirm any such phone calls. His new West German colleague, who had also worked on the case, replied in the negative: "All I can say to that is that we have no information about it; no such call was ever recorded."

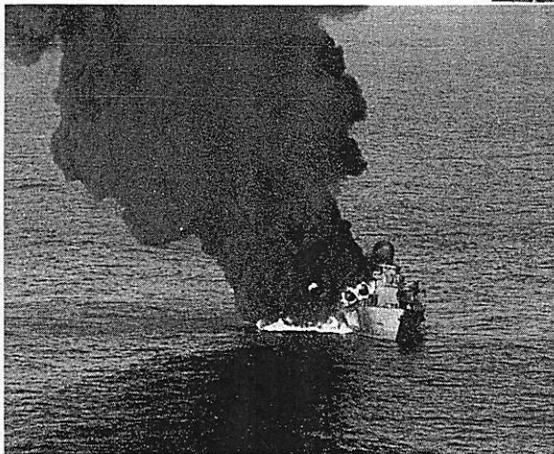
If Alba's credibility was now tattered, the second most important Stasi informant supporting the Nuri/Libya thesis does not come off much better. Mahmoud Abu-Jabber, codenamed "Faysal," was well-placed as a member of Nuri's inner circle. Stasi files and KGB reports copied by their East German confreres clearly cast Faysal as a CIA informer. The KGB reports regularly referred to Faysal as "an agent of the enemy."

One KGB surveillance report (copied in the Stasi's La Belle files) shows that Faysal met with his CIA contacts on

15. Author's notes on Wiegand's debriefing transcripts. Neither these transcripts nor other Stasi documents mentioned below have yet been officially released.

April 3, 1986 — two days before the La Belle bombing — and told them the price of the coming attack would be \$30,000 and not \$80,000 as previously reported.<sup>16</sup>

Like Alba before him, Faysal failed as a prosecution witness against Mahmoud. In pre-trial interviews with West Berlin prosecutors, Faysal directly contradicted reports he had filed with his Stasi handlers. He told the prosecutors that Nuri was “a devil and a braggart who claimed he was behind everything.” The triple agent then confounded the prosecutors, saying, “I am not of the opinion that the attack against La Belle was done by those Libyans whom I know



PHOTOS: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

**Damage inflicted by Navy pilots in Libyan air attack (top).  
Libyan ship bombed by US (I).**

[the Nuri group], but rather by a different group. Many of the Libyans behaved suspiciously. That was to hide the group that in reality did the attack.”<sup>17</sup>

The Stasi’s third main informant, Nagir El-Algabahn, codenamed “Abass,” also contradicted his earlier reports to the Stasi. He testified that Nuri was a dreamer who saw himself as James Bond and that he was always drunk or on drugs. But Abass also testified he was convinced that both the West and the East Berlin authorities were informed about Nuri’s plans and failed to stop them.<sup>18</sup>

### **Curiouser and Curiouser**

Three key Stasi informants whose reports had implicated Nuri and the Libyans had turned out to be double, possibly triple, agents. Alba was spying for the West. Faysal had been pegged as a CIA agent. Abass swore that intelli-

16. This report, typical in its ambiguity, implies that, at the least, the CIA had forewarning of an imminent attack.

17. Author’s trial notes. No transcript of the trial is publicly available.

18. *Ibid.*

gence agencies on both sides of the Wall knew the bombing was coming. And the West Berlin police had admitted that they had a fourth Stasi informant inside Nuri’s circle, Mohamed Ashur, on their payroll.<sup>19</sup>

Even the supposed mastermind of the bombing, the long-vanished Nuri, was, the Stasi thought, an agent for the West Berlin police. Stasi defector Wiegand told his debriefers as much, and a Stasi copy of a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Security Report claimed that Nuri operated in West Berlin as an informer for the local gendarmerie.

That would explain how Nuri, who was wanted for the murder of a Libyan CIA informant in West Berlin’s Tiergarten in 1984,<sup>20</sup> managed to repeatedly cross Checkpoint Charlie — perhaps the world’s most tightly controlled border crossing — without being arrested. At the time, West Berlin was an occupied city under the control of the Western al-

19. West Berlin police chief Lothar Jackmann in *Die Tageszeitung*, Oct. 24, 1990. Ashur was killed not long after the bombing of Tripoli. According to the Stasi files, he met his end after trying to blackmail the Libyan ambassador into giving him the secret telex codes for the People’s Bureau.

20. *Berliner Morgenpost*, July 7, 1984. The victim, Mustafa Elashak, was identified as a CIA informant in both Stasi and West Berlin police files.

lies, who had ultimate authority over intelligence matters. West Berlin authorities had Nuri’s photo and knew his alias, and their informers kept them aware of Nuri’s movements. Still, Nuri traveled unhindered, if not unwatched, in West Berlin.

The East Germans, too, kept an eye on Nuri’s travels. They noted with interest one incident where Nuri and another suspected conspirator were stopped at the border. Nuri’s companion was turned back, but the wanted killer passed through to the West.

That the Nuri group was thoroughly infiltrated by Western secret services

**Stasi: “It was our opinion that the conspirators were in contact with the West German secret service, the CIA, and the police.”**

also gave renewed vigor to old claims that the US either commissioned the bombing or knew about it and let it happen for policy reasons — as an excuse to attack Libya.

### **The Stasi’s Conundrum**

The Stasi certainly thought so. According to Col. Wiegand, he was almost alone in favoring the Nuri/Libya thesis. In fact, Wiegand reported with some



GERMAN INFORMATION CENTER

**Yousseff Chraidi, "Nuri," (r) passed frequently from East to West Berlin through Checkpoint Charlie, then the world's most heavily surveilled border crossing.**

embarrassment that his Stasi superiors laughed at him for embracing that theory. They scoffed, he said, because they doubted the sources — their own informants — and because there was no physical evidence linking Nuri's group to the planting of the bomb or the explosives used.

But, Wiegand added, his Stasi fellows also cited circumstantial evidence pointing not at Libya but back to the US. They cited a PLO Security Division document in their files reporting that the US knew in advance about the late March bombing of the German-Arab Society.

Wiegand said the evidence also included the West German intelligence services' own conclusions about US involvement. "Through our radio monitoring, we intercepted virtually everything that you did over the telephone and you favored the thesis for a while that the CIA did the thing themselves," he told his debriefer.

Wiegand recalled one phone intercept where a high-ranking West German intelligence officer spoke with the Berlin official responsible for the La Belle investigation. According to Wiegand, the investigator, when pressed for his conclusions, told the West German spook, "Well, when I add



STERN

it all up, I think that the Yanks did this thing themselves."<sup>21</sup>

Wiegand's Stasi superiors pointedly asked him why, if the West Berlin authorities thought the US was behind

21. At the time, West German police officials publicly limited themselves to questioning the evidence against Libya. A week after the bombing, Manfred Ganschow, chief of the antiterrorist police in Berlin, "rejected the assumption that suspicion is concentrated on Libyan culprits." Two days earlier, Christian Lochte, the head of a West German domestic intelligence unit, told the press, "It is a fact that we do not have any hard evidence, let alone proof, to show the blame might unequivocally be placed on Libya." Cited in Hersh, *op. cit.*

the bombing, they should blame Libya. The Stasi proponents of the CIA theory now suspected that their informants inside Nuri's group had fed them false information in an elaborate doublecross.

One Stasi officer, who had tracked the affair, Wolfgang Stuchly, outlined that argument in a written statement on La Belle prepared for the 1993 Mahmoud trial. Stuchly wrote that, "It was our opinion that they were in contact with the West German secret service, the CIA and the police. This suspicion was based on the fact that they were arrested many times in West Berlin for criminal activities and always remained mobile and had been interrogated around various things and had become contact persons. ... We assumed that the West Berlin authorities were informed of the activities and the developments of the [Nuri] group."

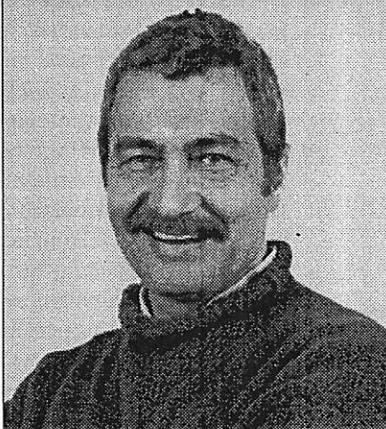
### Loose Ends

In early 1994, German authorities finally found Nuri — in jail in Lebanon — and filed extradition papers with the Lebanese authorities. Needing to make the strongest possible case for extradition, Berlin prosecutors asked the US to turn over its "incontrovertible evidence." Despite repeated formal requests over an 11-month period, the US failed to comply. Nuri walked out of jail in August 1994.<sup>22</sup> Legal efforts to resolve the La Belle case had reached a dead end.

We are back in the swamp. The case made against the Nuri group, weak as it is, makes it the leading candidate for the bombing. But for whom were they working? The Stasi files contain strong hints, multiplied elsewhere, that the West Germans and the US, at the least, had agents in place who knew of the bombing. They did not prevent it. Even Col. Wiegand, who had faced ridicule by standing up for the Nuri thesis, had to admit that when he looked back at his four-year investigation, "I never could get [the CIA thesis] off the table, and you know, the one theory does not exclude the other." ■

22. See Robert Fisk, "Surreal smile of the Berlin 'hitman'; Is Yasser Chreydi the man behind the 1986 German disco bombing?," *The Independent* (London), Mar. 24, 1994; Rick Atkinson, "US Delays Underlined As Disco Bombing Suspect Freed in Lebanon," *Washington Post*, Aug. 3, 1994.

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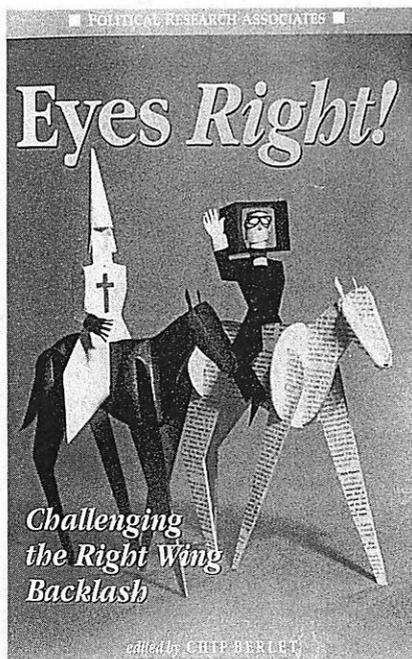
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# Off the Shelf:

CAQ'S BOOKS OF INTEREST



## Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States

by Sara Diamond

GUILFORD PRESS, 1995, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 445 PP., \$19.95 PB.

## Eyes Right!: Challenging Right Wing Backlash

edited by Chip Berlet

POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES/SOUTH END PRESS, 1995, INDEX, 398 PP., \$17.00 PB.

In attempting to describe and analyze the trajectory of the post-war US right, sociologist and long-time right-watcher Sara Diamond set herself a daunting task. With *Roads to Dominion*, she has succeeded admirably. With a solid theoretical grounding and eminently readable prose style, Diamond weaves together the disparate strands of the US right to create a seamless narrative of its steady climb to power. For all those casting wary glances at the ascendant right, *Roads to Dominion* is a must read.

Diamond identifies distinct rightist movements — conservative anticommunist, racist, Christian, and neoconservative — and locates each in relation to its positions on the role of the state (generally supporting the state as enforcer but not as redistributor) and to their primary emphases: Economic libertarianism, social and moral traditionalism, and anticommunism (or more generally, US global supremacy).

These organizing principles enable the reader to situate the bewildering plethora of groups, movements, parties, and factions within the broad currents of the right and to draw the lines from, to take just one easy example, George Wallace to David Duke to Pat Buchanan.

Diamond's narrative approach is equally useful. The reader gets a real feel for the right's successful "long march through the institutions" — something the left once brashly threatened — as well as the controversies that enveloped and shaped it. In this sense, *Roads to Dominion* also carries as subtext a primer for doing social movements right. (Which is not to say that progressive social movements can ever expect corporate largesse like that which fueled the right's rise, but the right has learned many other lessons the left would do well to heed.)

One area where Diamond deserves special credit is her non-demonizing approach to her subject. In contrast to some, so blinded by fear and loathing that all they see is a monstrous caricature, Diamond remains calm and collected. She even takes some well-deserved pokes at liberal and progressive sectors for "intellectual dishonesty" in tarring the Christian Right as "radical" — as if there were anything radical about supporting traditionally oppressive social relations, especially within two-party electoral politics. Along the same lines, she swipes at the longstanding social science dismissal of some movements as "radical" or "extremist:" "[They] are pejorative terms. They reveal their originators' sympathy for the political status quo but elucidate little else."

Sara Diamond has done an excellent job of illuminating the nature of the US right. And she has laid the groundwork for more well-informed polemics against the rightist threat. In *Eyes Right!*, political researcher and organizer Chip Berlet and an impressive group of activists, journalists, and intellectuals (including Diamond) pick up

the cudgel. Where *Roads to Dominion* takes the academic high road, *Eyes Right!* is combat in the trenches, and there is nothing wrong with that.

*Eyes Right!* first identifies the opposition, with sections organized around the religious right, homophobia, economic backlash, racism and immigrant-bashing, and the "far right;" examines right-inspired divisions that threaten progressive action, such as black homophobia and white fears about affirmative action; and ends with series of practical, commonsense strategies for countering the right's undeniable progress.

While *Eyes Right!* suffers some terminological confusions (Diamond's book will help here), curious *lacunae* — where is Louis Farrakhan in the discussion of black conservatives, or anywhere else? — and a tendency to rhetorical overkill, it remains an informative, practical, and heartening contribution. It is a *real* freedom fighters' manual.

## Cult Rapture

by Adam Parfrey

FERAL HOUSE, 1995, PHOTOS, BIBLIOGRAPHY, 371 PP., \$14.95 PB.

## Popular Alienation: A Steamshovel Press Reader

edited by Kenn Thomas

ILLUMINET PRESS, 1995, PHOTOS, 343 PP., \$19.95 PB.

Diamond and Berlet *et al.* are, of course, impeccably progressive. Not so with Adam Parfrey and Kenn Thomas, and they could probably care less. Parfrey, investigative journalist and head of the outré Feral House press, and Thomas, editor and guiding spirit behind the conspiracy-oriented *Steamshovel Press*, are of a different, parallel universe. Some of its inhabitants transcend left and right as they climb toward the speculative heights where Communism and Capitalism are merely facets of the *one great conspiracy*. Others turn away from politics altogether to soothe their alienation in culturally pathological but, especially in Parfrey's hands, perversely fascinating private utopias. Between *Cult Rapture* and *Popular Alienation*, we have a tourist map of the terra incognita where, as Parfrey puts it, "the panic-stricken middle class escapes its apocalyptic nightmare."

These two volumes reflect the different aims and methods of their creators; *Popular Alienation* is one big primary document of the conspiracy milieu, teth-

ered ever-so-precariously to earth by Kenn Thomas' genial and sympathetic print persona. It features the work of nearly every conspiracy "star," as well as revealing glimpses of conspiracy culture from the inside. Cult Rapture, on the other hand, largely consists of Parfrey's engagingly written, sometimes queasily voyeuristic profiles of the margins.

*Steamshovel's* UFO seekers, JFK assassinologists, Vince Foster mysterians, and Shroud of Turin tusslers are clearly "fusion paranoids," as the *New Yorker* labeled them in a condescending article last year. Bo Gritz and Linda Thompson, the subjects of some of Parfrey's profiles, till this same soil. This is the terrain where the Liberty Lobby meets the left, where the Trilateral Commission runs the world, and one-time Vietnam War protesters join militias to fend off the New World Order.

Parfrey argues that middle class is flying apart under the stresses of global corporate capitalism, and out of the political debris a "new Populist paradigm" both nostalgic and progressive is arising. "Populists rightly perceive Corporate America as abandoning domestic markets and domestic production for better prospects elsewhere," argues Parfrey, but such popular insights are leavened with a "Don't Tread on Me," backwoods anti-statism that sees insidious plots in every zoning ordinance — not to mention gun control.

While *Steamshovel* is content to go careening down the obscure byways connecting JFK and MLK and Watergate and Iran-Contra and Fostergate and on and on *ad infinitum* — Thomas and his contributors seem generally unaware that there exists a world beyond conspiracy-land — Parfrey responds to the attacks on the "fusion paranoia" milieu he chronicles, and with which he obviously identifies. He comes out swinging, attacking the label as a tool to "castigate those who research conspiracies using information from both the Left and the Right."

In the provocative, if scattershot, book-ending essay, "Finding Our Way Out of Oklahoma," Parfrey challenges left and liberal critics. In his view, the post-Oklahoma City bombing militia panic plays into the hands of the real enemy: the government-corporate state. To the extent that the Anti-Defamation League, the Southern Poverty Law Center, or Chip Berlet hype the militia threat (and, he adds, they all have

self-interested reasons for doing so), they aid and abet Big Brother's "headlong rush into technocratic dystopia."

Parfrey somewhat unfairly zeroes in on Berlet, accusing him of questioning "government skeptics rather than the government itself" and driving a wedge "between left and right critics of the elite." While Berlet can defend himself, Parfrey's philippic raises broader questions for the progressive community, which has mostly responded reflexively and dogmatically to both the "fusion paranoids" and the deeply confused populist impulse. The divide may be as much cultural (or class or geographic) as political; perhaps there is more common ground here than has been recognized.

Or perhaps not, but for those who want to take a walk on the wild side, Parfrey and Thomas provide ample material with which to begin finding out.

### White House E-Mail: The Top Secret Computer Messages The Reagan/Bush White House Tried to Destroy

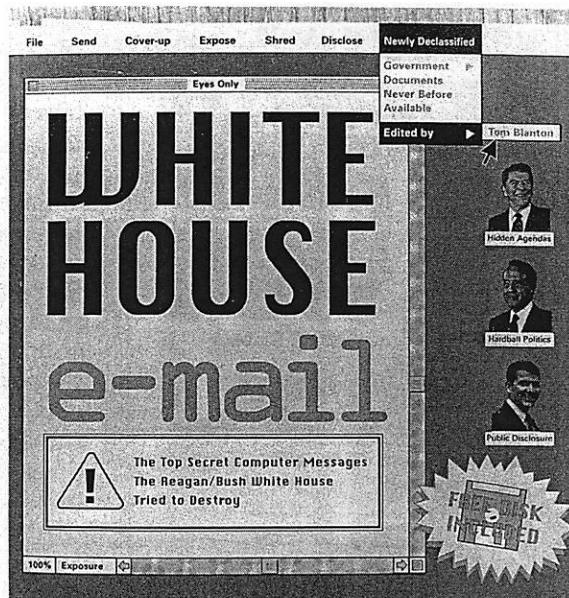
edited by Tom Blanton

THE NEW PRESS, 1995, PHOTOS, INDEX, BIBLIOGRAPHY, DISK, 254 PP., \$14.95 PB.

In January 1989, just hours before the outgoing Reagan administration's planned destruction of hundreds of computer tapes containing records of e-mail among White House staffers, the private National Security Archive filed suit to prevent their destruction. After a legal battle in which the succeeding Bush and Clinton administrations also asserted the right to destroy e-mail, the federal courts ruled that White House e-mail indeed constituted official records and thus had to be made publicly available.

*White House E-Mail* is one result. Distilled from 42,000 Reagan-era electronic memos, the book compiles 500 (half on an accompanying computer disk) of the most provocative, illuminating, and incriminating messages flying among the computers of Oliver North, John Poindexter, Bud McFarlane, and their National Security Council staffs and associates.

They include little gems such as a 1986 request from NSC staffer Howard



Teicher for a State Department paper on providing battlefield intelligence to Saddam Hussein in his war against Iran. Two months later, another message showed NSC staffers discussing how to hide their assistance to Iraq from the press. Such efforts help explain Hussein's misreading of US intentions after he invaded Kuwait, as well as the US public's incomprehension of US machinations in the Persian Gulf.

But it was not all deadly serious. There are intra-office flirtations, boyish pranks, and deliciously, a mysterious memo in which Ollie North reports to NSC staffer Jackie Tillman, "Oh lord. I lost the slip and broke one of the high heels. Please forgive. Will return the wig on Monday." We can only speculate.

The National Security Archive's Tom Blanton has done a fine job of not only selecting and organizing representative e-mail but, equally important, also providing running commentary that places individual messages or sets of messages in their historical and political-bureaucratic contexts. He also ably deciphers the sometimes inscrutable bureaucratic codes and obscure references. *White House E-Mail* offers a candid, valuable glimpse at the inner workings of the Reagan White House foreign policy apparatus.

### A Century of Spies: Intelligence in the Twentieth Century

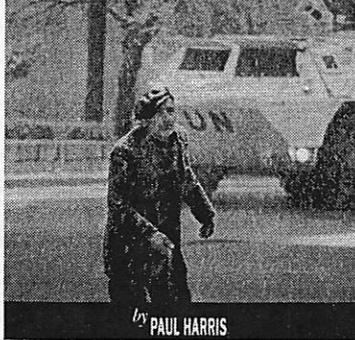
by Jeffrey T. Richelson

OXFORD, 1995, ENDNOTES, INDEX, 534 PP., \$30.00 HB.

Jeffrey Richelson clearly knows his field, but this latest effort from one

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of the premier establishment intelligence scholars is not especially rewarding. It is not for lack of information, and the man can spin a nice tale, but perhaps that is the problem. Richelson's litany of spy scandals, operations, institutional mutations, and technological innovations swirls by in a series of eerily disconnected vignettes. In one chapter alone, the reader rushes from Israeli intelligence failures in the 1967 war to the Team A/Team B controversy within the CIA and on to the fall of the Shah, with barely a thread of connective tissue. Richelson attempts but fails to establish a cohesive thematic framework — in that chapter and throughout the book.

*A Century of Spies* overcompensates for its lack of cohesion with an overwhelming barrage of codenames, acronyms, and technical specs. If it is exhaustive, it is also exhausting. In a sustained reading, it all begins to run together, which suggests where the book does succeed: as an encyclopedia or sourcebook, a point of reference and departure. The intelligence buff will find it handy for quick lessons on a sketchily remembered or newly encountered PAPERCLIP, Pelton, or Penkovsky, and Richelson's sources provide a first step toward more serious investigations.

But beyond that, Richelson disappoints on several levels. Granted, the US and Europe played central roles in this century's evolution of intelligence, but there is nary a mention of BOSS or the KCIA, not a word about the international police state intelligence networks of Latin America's Southern Cone, or for that matter, Cuba's legendarily far-reaching service.

Neither does Richelson apply himself very earnestly to explaining what it all means or what the future may hold, or even what problems and issues lie just over the horizon. His formulations on these points are scant and perfunctory, so obvious as to be trite. Similarly, Richelson's portrayal of intelligence as a neutral tool that can be used for good or evil seems remarkably simplistic. He hardly mentions, let alone addresses, the impact of a culture of secrecy on relatively open political systems.

*A Century of Spies* is best when digested in small chunks and has some limited utility as a quick reference, but breaks little new ground and passes on too many important questions. ■

— Phillip Smith

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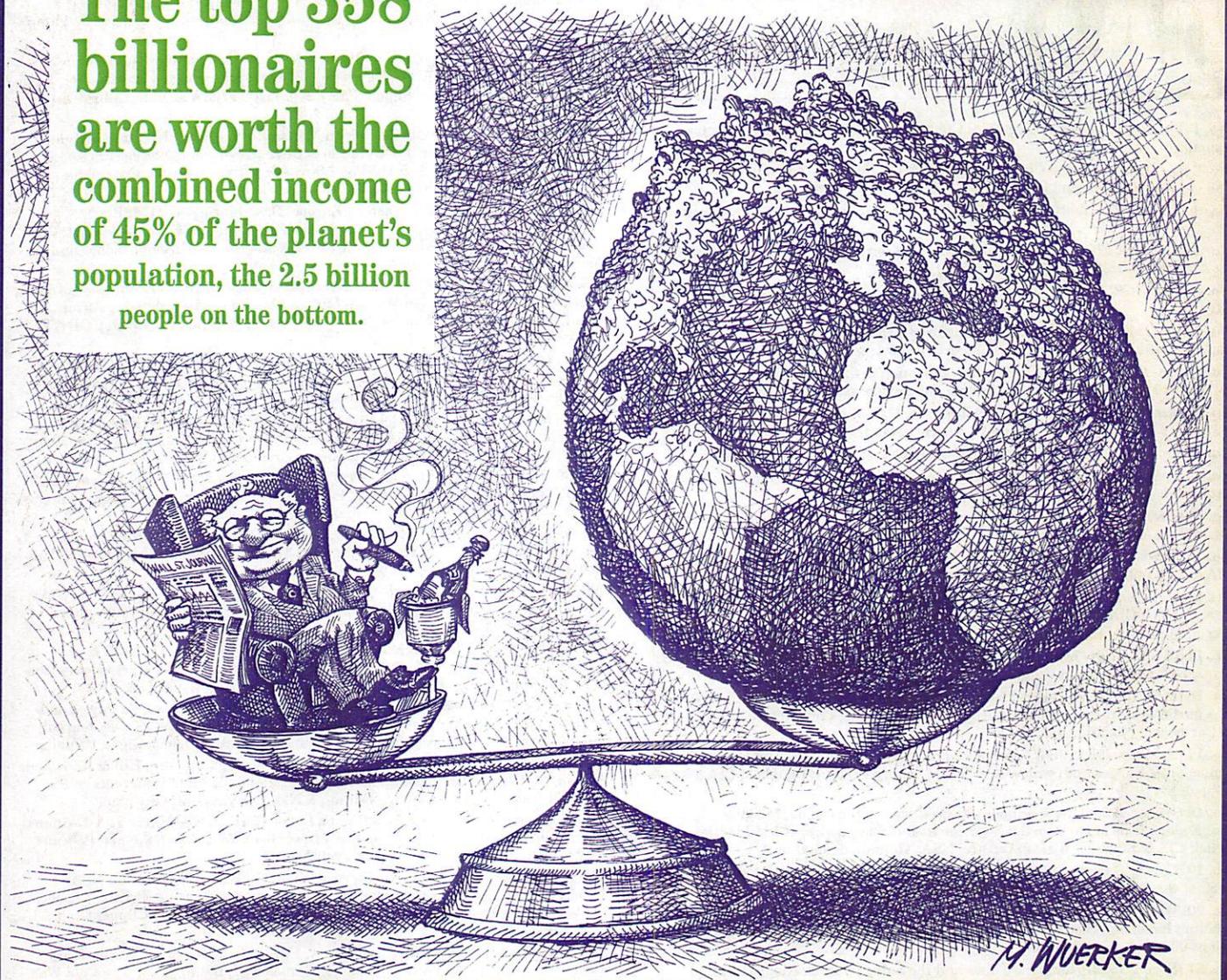
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