A RAND NOTE

COUNTERING COVERT AGGRESSION

Stephen T. Hosmer, George K. Tanham

January 1986

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Prepared for

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

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PREFACE

This Note examines how the United States might better counter covert aggression. The note was prepared at the request of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Among other issues, the study (1) examines the uses of terrorism, subversion, and insurgency as instruments of state policy, (2) analyzes the principal constraints that restrict U.S. freedom of action to deter or respond to such aggression, and (3) suggests policy and operational measures that might help the United States and its allies to cope with covert aggression in the future.

SUMMARY

Covert aggression--in the forms of state-sponsored terrorism, subversion, and insurgency--will likely remain the dominant mode of warfare in the Third World for the foreseeable future. For reasons of operational expediency and the need to control costs and risks, the communist and other states abetting such attacks will usually attempt to mask their role and/or ultimate objectives.

While terrorism presents the most widespread danger to U.S. nationals and property, subversion and insurgency most fundamentally threaten U.S. national security interests. Terrorist acts alone rarely if ever bring to power Marxist-Leninist regimes, whereas subversion and insurgency sometimes do.

Political and military constraints, along with doubts about the efficacy of retaliation, militate against attacking sponsoring states in most cases of covert aggression. Nevertheless, the United States must prepare the way in the event punitive or preemptive military actions against such transgressor states become necessary. Among other preparatory steps, the United States should:

- Conduct sustained information campaigns to educate domestic and international audiences about the states that continue to sponsor terrorism, subversion, and insurgency.
- Maintain up-to-date portfolios of targets suitable for U.S. military attack in countries that may provoke U.S. retaliation.
- Prepare to mine the aggressor's harbors or rivers when sustained pressure is needed, say, to secure the release of U.S. hostages.
- Make vigorous efforts to persuade American citizens to leave countries that are potential targets for U.S. retaliatory strikes.
- Plan to undertake more effective operations than mere harassment of regimes sponsoring covert aggression.

While retaliation may prove feasible in some contingencies, the United States will still have to rely on limited and localized defensive measures to cope with most future challenges. To counter covert aggression more effectively, the United States should:

- Upgrade the professionalism and quality of the military and internal security forces and intelligence services of its more vulnerable Third World friends and allies.
- Increase the professionalism of U.S. training and advisory personnel and reform U.S. military assistance practices.
- Improve the continuity and quality of U.S. intelligence analysis and coverage of the Third World, particularly with regard to human intelligence.
- Exercise better crisis management to prevent extremists from seizing control of countries undergoing revolutionary change.
- Maximize the political-military effectiveness and staying power of the resistance movements it chooses to support in the Third World.

Because the U.S. military and civilian bureaucracies show little interest in maintaining the counterinsurgent, paramilitary, and special operations capabilities to counter covert aggression, U.S. national security leaders *must exercise unusually close oversight of these capabilities*. In particular, they must ensure that the United States recruits and maintains cadres of expert advisers and trainers, skilled in the political and military aspects of unconventional warfare, to work with Third World military and security forces, intelligence services, and resistance movements.

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I. COVERT AGGRESSION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF STATE POLICY

Since World War II, most communist and other state-sponsored aggression against U.S. allies, nationals, and property in the Third World has been covert. For reasons of operational expediency and the need to control costs and risks, the states that have abetted such attacks have usually attempted to mask their role and/or ultimate objectives.

Three forms of covert aggression most seriously threaten U.S. allies and interests:

- **Terrorism**, especially state-supported terrorist operations designed to destabilize governments or influence specific policies of the United States and its allies.
- **Subversion**, particularly where the aggressor state attempts to recruit and assist indigenous political and military actors to overthrow their government by coup d'etat.
- **Insurgency**, where the external power provides guidance, training, and arms support to guerrilla or other irregular forces seeking to overthrow a government or backs separatist groups attempting to secede from an existing state.[1]

While terrorism receives the most notoriety and presents by far the most ubiquitous danger to U.S. nationals and property, subversion and insurgency most fundamentally threaten U.S. national security interests because they are more likely to change the international power balance. Terrorist acts alone rarely if ever bring to power Marxist-Leninist regimes, whereas subversion and insurgency sometimes do. Indeed, the Marxist-Leninist takeovers in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Angola, South

[1]Political destabilization operations involving external communist or other foreign state financial, organizational, and propaganda support to antigovernment political movements constitute a fourth common form of covert aggression. Several forms of covert aggression may be employed simultaneously against a target government.

Yemen, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua all to some degree resulted from subversion or externally supported insurgency.[2]

Covert aggression is not novel. The Soviets have for many decades sought assiduously to secure lodgments and positions of influence in the Third World by proselytizing indigenous civilian and military leaders and by other subversive activity. Afghanistan is only the most recent example of successful communist subversion.[3]

Although the Soviets apparently did not participate directly in the 1978 communist coup in Afghanistan, their long-standing subversive efforts nevertheless aided the overthrow. Leaders of a local Marxist-Leninist coalition that had been established with Soviet encouragement organized the coup; Afghan army and air force officers trained in the USSR executed it.[4]

The United States began to respond seriously to externally supported communist insurgency in 1947, when, as a consequence of the Truman Doctrine, it came to the aid of the Greek government against the

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[2]Soviet subversion may also have played a role in the purge of pro-Western elements from the Ethiopian Dergue and Mengistu's final seizure of power in February 1977. Quite possibly, the Soviets knew of Mengistu's plan to eliminate his pro-Western rivals and had provided the Ethiopian leader with assurances of recognition and arms assistance in the event of a takeover. Moscow's decision to open up the flow of Soviet arms to Ethiopia coincided with Mengistu's assumption of control. See Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflicts*, D. C. Heath & Company, Lexington, Mass., 1983, p. 90.

[3]The 1978 overthrow of the Rubai Ali regime in South Yemen and its replacement by a more staunchly pro-Soviet leadership also counts as a product of Soviet and other external communist subversion. Militia and air force units that had been organized and trained by Cuban military advisers engineered the coup. Prior to his overthrow, Rubai Ali had been attempting to move South Yemen toward an accommodation with its noncommunist neighbors and away from excessive dependence on the USSR. See ibid., p. 171.

[4]As one analysis put it, the pre-1978 Soviet Afghan policy simultaneously operated on overt and covert tracks. The overt track took the form of military and economic assistance to the Kabul government, while "the covert track involved the identification, motivation, guidance, and support of Afghans who could be expected to develop a Marxist organization committed to the overthrow of the very government the USSR was overtly assisting." See Nancy Peabody Newell and Richard S. Newell, *The Struggle for Afghanistan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1973, p. 111.

Greek communists. Since then, the United States has been called on repeatedly to help combat Soviet- and Chinese-supported communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia and Cuban-backed guerrilla movements in Latin America.[5]

State-sponsored terrorist attacks have actively threatened U.S. citizens and property since the early 1960s, when agents of the North Vietnamese-controlled Viet Cong security service first struck U.S. military and diplomatic installations in South Vietnam. Similar attacks against U.S. citizens and property were to be repeated in Lebanon nearly 20 years later, by radical Shias operating from Syrian-controlled territory with Iranian support and encouragement.[6]

In fact, both the objectives and modus operandi of the 1965 Viet Cong terrorist assaults against the U.S. embassy and Brinks military living quarters in Saigon closely paralleled the 1983 bombings of the U.S. embassy and Marine headquarters in Beirut. In each case, the terrorists attacked the U.S. facilities with explosive-laden vehicles to discourage a further American involvement in the country.[7]

Because covert aggression generally carries less risk, cost, and difficulty than open belligerency, the United States must expect its adversaries to continue to use terrorism, subversion, and insurgency to advance their Third World interests. Indeed, for the foreseeable future, covert aggression will likely remain the dominant form of warfare in the Third World.

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[5]Recent examples of covert external support to insurgencies in Latin America include Cuba's key role in the successful Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua and the training, advice, and logistic support being provided by Nicaragua, Cuba, and other communist and radical states to the insurgents in El Salvador.

[6]Iran and Syria rank among the most egregious practitioners of terrorism. These countries have frequently sponsored covert terrorist attacks to further their own interests in the Middle East. See United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1983*, September 1984, pp. 10-13.

[7]The October 1983 truck-bombing of the Marine headquarters at Beirut airport strongly influenced the U.S. decision to withdraw its peacekeeping force from Lebanon.

Among other advantages, covert aggression:

- Allows both weak and militarily powerful adversaries to attack U.S. allies and interests in the Third World without running a high risk of creating a casus belli or inviting military retaliation.
- Reduces the diplomatic and economic costs of hostile acts that otherwise might cause a rupture of diplomatic and commercial relations, provoke international condemnation, or even lead to the imposition of collective economic sanctions.[8]
- Provides the aggressor a potentially high payoff from a relatively small investment, usually in the form of limited arms, training, and advisory support. The material costs of defending against covert aggression clearly outweigh the costs of conducting such warfare.
- Decreases the chances of a successful defense by keeping the intended target off guard (a sine qua non for successful subversive and terrorist operations) and making it difficult for the target to organize effective or timely countermeasures.
- Permits insurgent, subversive, and terrorist elements to obtain domestic and international support that they might not get if the true role and purposes of the external sponsor were known.

In most instances, the states engaged in covert aggression want to conceal their involvement and aims for a combination of reasons. Communist China, for example, cloaked its support to the Viet Minh during the first Indochina war in great secrecy because: (1) public knowledge of the Chinese involvement might have hindered the Viet Minh's quest for both popular support in Vietnam and international sympathy; (2) China did not want to alarm noncommunist nations by appearing to

[8]The Soviets have long proved adept at maintaining "normal" relations with governments while simultaneously attempting to undermine them by covertly backing subversive or insurgent movements dedicated to their overthrow.

export revolution; and (3) China feared that open support would increase the risk of direct U.S. military intervention in the conflict.[9]

Similar considerations--particularly the desire to manipulate international and U.S. domestic opinion--motivated North Vietnam to mask the extent of its military involvements in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam during the second Indochina conflict. The North Vietnamese also sought to conceal their true political objectives, including the immediate reunification and socialization of South Vietnam after the war. They furthermore kept their plans from their South Vietnamese comrades-in-arms in the Viet Cong, who the North Vietnamese knew would have been alienated by the prospect of a rapid absorption.[10]

Cuba attempted to conceal its political and military assistance to the Sandinistas for many of the same reasons. By masking their true involvement, the Cubans sought to ensure the widest possible international and Nicaraguan domestic support for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and, at the same time, to minimize the risks of provoking adverse counteractions from the United States.

In parallel with this Cuban stratagem, the hard-line Marxist-Leninists among the Sandinista leadership conducted an elaborate deception of their own: They eschewed leftist rhetoric and adopted moderate programs to mislead U.S. and world opinion about their aims and to attract non-Marxist opposition groups in Nicaragua to join them in a broad anti-Somoza front.[11]

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[9]See J. J. Zasloff, *The Role of the Sanctuary in Insurgency: Communist China's Support to the Vietminh, 1946-1954*, RM-4618-PR, The Rand Corporation, May 1967, pp. vi, 36-41.

[10]For a firsthand account by a founder of the National Liberation Front and a former minister of justice for the Vietcong Provisional Revolutionary Government of the "duplicity" of the North Vietnamese on this and other issues, see Truong Nhu Tang, *A Vietcong Memoir*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1985.

[11]See Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, Random House, New York, 1985, pp. 37, 79-81, 90-91, 100-101, 110-111; and Douglas W. Payne, "The 'Mantos' of Sandinista Deception," *Strategic Review*, Spring 1985, pp. 9-20.

II. RETALIATION AGAINST SPONSORS OF COVERT AGGRESSION

CONSTRAINTS ON GOING TO THE SOURCE

Various self-imposed and externally imposed political and military constraints restrict the U.S. freedom of action to counter covert aggression. These constraints especially limit U.S. options for going to the source of covert aggression: that is, taking military or other punitive action directly against the communist and other extremist states that sponsor terrorist, subversive, and insurgent attacks on U.S. allies and interests in the Third World.

Constraints Stemming From Covert Mode of Attack

The covert nature of the aggression often constrains U.S. responses and also reinforces other constraints. Washington decisionmakers find it difficult to justify and organize appropriate punitive responses to particular terrorist acts because they often do not know the extent and character of the sponsoring state's role in the attack. Similar uncertainties about the levels and objectives of external communist involvement in an insurgency or civil war also inhibit U.S. decisionmakers from adopting timely and effective countermeasures.[1]

Even when U.S. decisionmakers have known the degree of external state involvement in an insurgency or terrorist act, the covert nature of the involvement still has inhibited the United States from mobilizing and sustaining domestic and international support for effective military or even economic countermeasures. The United States has particular difficulty persuading allied governments to participate in or even sanction punitive responses, when such governments have foreign policy interests or influential domestic constituencies opposed to such action. In such instances, even the barest cover or pro forma denial of

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[1]Washington policymakers, for example, clearly operated at a disadvantage during much of the 1975 Angolan conflict because they misperceived the degree of Soviet and Cuban involvement and commitment to an MPLA victory in Angola--involvement and commitment both communist actors took pains to camouflage. See Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflicts*, D. C. Heath & Company, Lexington, Mass., 1983, pp. 178, n. 8, 269-270.

involvement from the aggressor--whether plausible or not--provides these allies with a a convenient pretext to avoid imposing economic sanctions or other punitive measures.

Concern About Provoking Great Power Confrontation or Wider Conflict

In many cases, the U.S. freedom to take direct action against the sources of covert aggression is circumscribed because the USSR or one of its principal clients sponsored the aggression. Over the years, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies have provided significant arms, training, logistic, advisory, and financial support to various insurgent, terrorist, and subversive groups in the Third World.

Although the Warsaw Pact countries have given some aid directly to terrorist or insurgent groups, they have funneled a large portion of it through Soviet Third World clients, such as North Vietnam, Cuba, and South Yemen. Indeed, among the most egregious sponsors of terrorism and insurgency in the Third World are countries that receive some degree of Soviet protection because they are linked by treaty with the USSR (North Korea, Syria, and South Yemen) and/or Soviet forces are stationed on their soil (Cuba and Syria).

The United States hesitates to retaliate against such Soviet clients lest an attack trigger a great power confrontation and draw a new or larger permanent Soviet military presence into the area. In particular, the United States will probably continue to eschew the types of heavy and repeated attacks against Soviet clients that would likely be required to force these clients to stop supporting terrorist or insurgent groups.[2]

America's response options are also constrained by the fact that several Soviet clients, particularly Vietnam and North Korea, are formidable regional military powers capable of retaliatory operations on their own. The United States and South Korea have abstained from military reprisals even in the face of repeated, serious overt and

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[2]Even in the Vietnam war, when U.S. combat forces were heavily engaged and when no Soviet-Vietnamese treaty as yet existed, concerns about provoking a greater Soviet involvement in the conflict or triggering a Soviet riposte against vulnerable U.S. allies elsewhere in the world constrained U.S. military operations against North Vietnam. See Stephen T. Hosmer, *Constraints on U.S. Strategy in Third World Conflict*, R-3208-AF, The Rand Corporation, September 1985, pp. 24-33.

covert provocations from the Pyongyang regime because they did not want to risk provoking another Korean conflict.[3]

Because of these considerations, the United States will more readily retaliate against weaker states that lie on the margin of the Soviet empire (states like Nicaragua and Libya) than against clients that are central to Soviet interests.

Concern to Avoid Damage to Other U.S. Foreign Policy Interests

Other, competing U.S. foreign policy interests also constrain U.S. options for moving against the sources of Soviet aggression. As a great power with global responsibilities and interests, the United States wants to avoid actions that would seriously damage its alliance system or undermine its fundamental security objectives in other areas.

Differing national interests and outlooks often lead foreign governments and peoples to view particular acts of covert aggression less critically than does the United States. Washington decisionmakers hesitate to engage in punitive military actions that might provoke widespread international condemnation, particularly among important U.S. allies, or promote adverse political change in countries important to the United States, say, by undermining pro-American governments.

American leaders want to avoid actions that might weaken the U.S. global power position in relation to that of the USSR. This concern strongly influenced the Carter administration's decision during the Iranian hostage crisis to eschew military pressures against Iran lest such actions push Iran into Moscow's arms and establish a potentially dangerous Iranian-Soviet military and political collaboration.[4]

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[3]These provocations include the *Pueblo* seizure, the EC-121 shootdown, the commando attack on the Blue House, the Rangoon assassinations, and many incidents along the DMZ that have cost the United States some 50 dead and the South Koreans some 1000 dead since the 1953 Korean armistice. For U.S. and South Korean casualties along the DMZ, see Richard G. Head, Frisco W. Short, and Robert C. McFarlane, *Crisis Resolution: Presidential Decision Making in the Mayaguez and Korean Confrontations*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1978, p. 151.

[4]See Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Failed Mission," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 18, 1982, pp. 28-30.

Humanitarian, Ethical, and Legal Constraints

America's options for responding to covert aggression are also circumscribed by humanitarian, ethical, and legal constraints. The traditional U.S. concerns to avoid injury to innocent civilians and to minimize collateral damage necessarily limit retaliatory actions.

Moreover, the need to maximize international as well as domestic support for any such U.S. counteractions requires the United States to demonstrate that targets struck in retaliation for acts of covert aggression are *related* and *proportionate* to that aggression. To demonstrate the relationship, the United States may have to compromise intelligence sources or methods. The reluctance to compromise such intelligence could itself constrain the response.

Options for dealing with some sponsors of covert aggression are also limited by U.S. inhibitions against overthrowing established governments, even if the governments are implacably hostile to the United States. Furthermore, the United States hesitates to resort to assassinations, even if the targets for assassination are known terrorists.[5]

The manifest inability of any U.S. government to keep its covert operations covert severely limits options for countermeasures. Widespread leaks usually accompany any covert operation that raises even the slightest controversy in the Executive Branch or Congress. Moreover, as the Bay of Pigs, Angola, and Nicaragua have shown, the United States has extreme difficulty maintaining the secrecy of operations involving large numbers of foreign nationals.

Doubts About Efficacy of Retaliation

In some cases, U.S. decisionmakers eschew options for attacking the sources of covert aggression because they doubt such tactics will prove efficacious. Reprisals do not appear to deter fanatical terrorist groups from further terrorist attacks.

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[5]Recent presidents have prohibited by executive order any U.S. government employees from engaging or conspiring in assassination.

The Israeli experience demonstrates that even a policy of certain and heavy retaliation fails to deter Palestinians and Lebanese Shias from joining terrorist organizations and dying for their cause in suicidal attacks against their Israeli enemies.[6] Indeed, both the Israeli and Western experiences in Lebanon suggest that reprisals may spur the recruitment of new terrorists and increase or widen terrorist attacks.[7]

Given the propensity of reprisals to beget further terrorist attacks, U.S. leaders tend to avoid retaliatory strikes if such actions are likely to (1) endanger the lives of Americans still residing in the country targeted for attack, including any American hostages already under terrorist control, (2) incite widespread terrorist attacks against vulnerable U.S citizens residing or traveling abroad, or (3) trigger an outbreak of terrorist bombings and assassinations inside the United States. The last concern is by no means trivial: According to FBI reports, Iranian and Libyan radical groups have already developed the infrastructure to mount terrorist operations within the United States.[8]

Decisionmakers also worry that the United States may be unable or unwilling to sustain a policy of reprisal against the state sponsors of covert aggression for a long enough time or at a sufficient level of intensity to achieve the desired effect. The Israeli experience with states sponsoring terrorism and with terrorist groups suggests that reprisal operations can require comparatively *large-scale* and *protracted* retaliatory campaigns.[9]

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[6]See Hanan Alon, *Countering Palestinian Terrorism in Israel: Toward a Policy Analysis of Countermeasures*, N-1567-FF, The Rand Corporation, August 1980, pp. 80-81.

[7]The two terrorist bombing campaigns in Marseilles that killed 8 people and injured 91 in December 1983, for example, are believed to have been mounted in revenge for the French retaliatory air raid against terrorist targets in Baalbek, Lebanon, that followed the November terrorist bombing of the French military post in Beirut.

[8]As one FBI official put it, "When they think they should act, they will." See *Washington Times*, June 4, 1985, pp. 1 and 4.

[9]The heavy and frequent Israeli reprisal attacks against Palestinian and other targets in Jordan prior to the expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1970 and in Lebanon since 1970, for example, have involved all arms of the Israeli military: artillery fire, land forces, airborne operations, air force strikes, and naval operations. Even excluding the high costs of the 1982 Israeli

Large-scale, protracted campaigns would present much greater political problems for the United States than would tit-for-tat retaliation. Moreover, they would significantly increase the risk of Soviet military involvement in the event the targets of the campaigns were clients of the USSR.

The U.S. experience with military pressure against states supporting communist insurgencies has been sobering. In neither Southeast Asia nor Central America has the United States demonstrated the freedom of action to effectively force communist regimes as committed as those in Hanoi and Managua to cease aggression against their neighbors.

PREPARING TO GO TO THE SOURCE

The persistence of the aforementioned constraints and doubts tends to make attacks on state sponsors an unattractive option in most cases of covert aggression. However, compelling national interests may on occasion require the United States to take some form of retaliatory or preemptive military action.

Because the United States knows which countries are most inclined to sponsor terrorism and insurgency, the opportunity exists to prepare the way in the event that punitive or preemptive military attacks against a transgressor become necessary. Preparation requires reducing the costs and risks of possible future U.S. military responses, thereby increasing U.S. freedom to preempt or retaliate.

An important preparatory step involves sustained information campaigns to educate domestic and international audiences about the states that continue to sponsor terrorism, subversion, and insurgency. Such an educational effort would seek to make covert aggression *less covert* and thereby deprive aggressor states of some low-cost and low-risk benefits of this type of warfare. By continuing to publicize the activities of states sponsoring covert aggression, the United States may eventually be able to induce other nations to join in diplomatic or economic sanctions against the sponsors.

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invasion of Lebanon, these reprisal operations have involved a relatively high rate of casualties among the Israeli military units carrying them out. See Alon, pp. 77-80.

At the minimum, an information program could help to mute possible domestic and international criticism of any future U.S. military retaliation. Publicizing covert aggression, however, requires both good intelligence and a willingness to expose some U.S. intelligence sources and methods.

Another preparatory step involves the identification of targets suitable for air or ground strikes or other U.S. military action in countries that may provoke U.S. retaliation. The selected targets should be related to covert aggression and vulnerable to attack without significant civilian casualties or collateral damage. Because punishment closely following a terrorist act may cause less political fallout than a delayed reprisal, target portfolios should be kept up-to-date so that retaliation can be prompt.

For contingencies in which the United States may want to apply sustained pressure on an aggressor state, say, to secure the release of U.S. hostages, it may have to resort to other military responses. In confrontations with Soviet clients, for example, *hard-to-sweep mines* emplaced by aircraft in the aggressor's harbors or rivers would provide a number of advantages. These mines would give the United States sustainable leverage over an opponent without necessarily inflicting repeated attacks on persons and property--attacks that would be more likely to harm American hostages, provoke worldwide political condemnation, or invite Soviet military intervention.

The United States should also make vigorous efforts to persuade its citizens to leave countries that are potential targets for U.S. retaliatory attacks. Some 1000 to 1500 U.S. citizens continue to reside in Libya, for example, despite the invalidation of U.S. passports for travel to that country. Libya, one of the world's most outrageous practitioners of covert aggression, has sponsored terrorism, subversion, and insurgency against U.S. friends and allies in numerous areas of the world.

Given its record, Libya would seem to be a prime candidate for future U.S. retaliation. Yet, the presence of large numbers of potential American hostages in that country restricts U.S. freedom to retaliate. The compliance of Americans with President Reagan's

executive order of January 7, 1986, prohibiting U.S citizens from remaining in Libya after February 1, 1986, will increase U.S. options to retaliate.[10]

When weighing options for taking action against the sources of covert aggression, U.S. leaders would be well advised to steer clear of operations designed mainly to *harass* the regimes sponsoring such aggression. While possibly satisfying the decisionmakers' understandable desire to "do something," harassment operations are likely to prove politically counterproductive by creating additional domestic support and international sympathy for the target regime. Past U.S. harassment operations, such as the paramilitary raids and economic sabotage waged under Operation Mongoose against Cuba during the early 1960s, have demonstrated that such limited actions are unlikely to bring down or reform hostile governments.

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[10]See *The New York Times*, January 8, 1986, p. 6.

III. IMPROVING U.S. DEFENSIVE RESPONSES TO COVERT AGGRESSION

While the capability to take direct action against the sources of covert aggression may prove vital in some future contingencies, the United States will still have to rely on limited and localized defensive measures to cope with most future challenges. Many important defensive measures--such as the military and economic assistance the United States provides to vulnerable Third World governments--have long been an integral part of U.S. policy toward the Third World. Other defensive responses--including the measures now aimed at countering the terrorist threat--have been adopted more recently.[1]

Several U.S. defensive responses require greater policy emphasis and operational improvement. These include the U.S. policies and capabilities to:

- Strengthen Third World military and security forces
- Provide security assistance to Third World states
- Improve U.S. and Third World intelligence capabilities
- Manage crises to prevent hostile takeovers
- Support Third World resistance movements
- Conduct a sustained defense against covert aggression.

STRENGTHENING THIRD WORLD MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES

The United States can counter covert aggression more effectively, first of all, by *upgrading* and *reforming* the military and internal security forces of its vulnerable Third World friends and allies. The competence and reliability of the indigenous military forces usually decide the success or failure of insurgent and subversive movements. Moreover, the United States must count to a large extent on the local

[1]The U.S. freedom to pursue certain of these defensive measures has also been significantly constrained. The U.S. Congress, for example, has been reluctant to support antiterrorist or other police training programs for Latin America or to provide U.S. training and other security assistance to Third World military establishments suspected of gross human rights violations.

police and internal security agencies to protect American citizens and property from terrorist attack overseas.

Because Third World military forces have the ultimate power to determine their country's domestic- and foreign-policy orientation, they are a crucial target for subversion. Indeed, Third World officer corps often constitute the most important avenue, as well as barrier, to subversive takeovers. A relatively small number of radical officers engineered the Marxist takeovers in Ethiopia (1977) and Afghanistan (1978). In contrast, Sadat blocked a similar takeover bid by pro-Soviet conspirators in Egypt (1971) with help from loyal military and security officials.[2]

The U.S. covert operations to overthrow leftist Third World governments have succeeded when they have had the active or tacit support of local military forces, as they had in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954).[3] Operations have failed when they have encountered resolute indigenous military opposition, as they did in Indonesia (1958) and Cuba (1961).

The quality and reliability of the defending government's military forces often determine the outcome of an insurgency. Insurgents can rarely, if ever, prevail against well-led, professional indigenous counterinsurgent forces, as long as the counterinsurgent forces are adequately supplied and serve a government that has more than a modicum of popular support.

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[2]Soviet officials attribute the socialist setbacks in both Egypt and Ghana to the failure of those countries to reorganize their officer corps on the class principle and to purge them of "unreliable social-class elements." See Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflicts*, D. C. Heath & Company, Lexington, Mass., 1983, p. 68.

[3]The U.S.-orchestrated covert operations that overthrew Mossadegh in Iran and Arbenz in Guatemala were accomplished rapidly by comparatively small military forces that had to do little serious fighting and consequently suffered only minor casualties. The U.S. involvement in both coups remained secret at the time of their execution; it became publicly known only in later years. See Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1979; see also Stephen Kinzer and Stephen Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, Doubleday, New York, 1983.

Because indigenous military forces and security services are critical to combating covert aggression, the United States must be able to objectively evaluate the internal security vulnerabilities of its principal friends and allies in the Third World. When indigenous forces appear inadequate to cope with potential terrorist, subversive, or insurgent threats, the United States must be ready to use its influence and assistance to promote necessary reforms and upgrading.

The United States must attempt, in particular, to encourage the reform of patently vulnerable military institutions in countries likely to be threatened by insurgency or other internal unrest. Indigenous military forces must be capable of holding the line on their own in such conflicts, as the American public will likely oppose any extensive or prolonged U.S. combat involvement to rescue Third World governments threatened by future insurgencies.

Most Third World military institutions are not trained, structured, indoctrinated, and equipped for counterinsurgent warfare. The United States may therefore have to encourage considerable reorientation, retraining, and reconfiguration of the local military to prepare an ally to cope with an insurgent threat.[4]

In providing counterinsurgency advice and assistance, the United States must emphasize programs that will upgrade the quality of leadership and discipline in the armed forces. It must find ways to extend the military's political base among the local population and thereby broaden the military's sources of intelligence and recruitment. It must seek where necessary to improve the pay and service conditions of both officers and rank and file.[5] Finally, it must provide its Third

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[4]Retraining and reorganization must begin as early as possible, before an insurgency grows to crisis proportions. Insurgencies are most vulnerable in their formative stages, before they develop reliable infrastructures and secure base areas. Defending governments will have the advantage if they act early to suppress insurgencies.

[5]The revolution that brought a Marxist government to power in Ethiopia began with mutinies by junior officers, NCOs, and enlisted men who were protesting gross inadequacies in their pay, food, water supplies, and other living conditions. See Hosmer and Wolfe (1983), pp. 179, 270-271, n. 11.

World allies with military equipment that is suitable for counterinsurgent warfare and compatible with indigenous maintenance and operational capabilities.

Before attempting major force expansions, training and assistance programs must in most cases give first priority to upgrading the professionalism of existing forces so as to improve the quality of the troops already on hand. Since improvements in leadership and competency for counterinsurgency require time, the United States must regard the professionalization of Third World forces as long-term projects requiring sustained U.S. attention and resources.

UPGRADING U.S. ASSISTANCE CAPABILITIES

Despite the manifest importance of the mission, the United States is not as yet adequately postured to work effectively with Third World military and internal security forces. Past efforts to evaluate, train, advise, and equip Third World forces have revealed a number of shortcomings that must be corrected.

These shortcomings include the U.S. propensity to shape Third World forces too closely in the image of U.S. forces, which have not been designed for counterinsurgent warfare; to provide Third World forces with high-technology weapons and equipment that are too costly for and ill-suited to local capabilities and likely battlefield requirements; and to make Third World forces overly reliant on U.S. advice and support, a situation that could seriously impair local capabilities in the event of U.S. aid cutbacks.[6]

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[6]This is by no means a trivial concern, given the devastating effect of U.S. aid cutbacks to South Vietnam after 1973 and the inconstancy of U.S. military assistance to other important Third World regions. American military assistance to countries in the Caribbean basin, for example, has risen and dropped sharply over the years. Most notably, during the Carter administration U.S. military aid and advisers in the Caribbean and the number of international military education and training (IMET) students from the region decreased dramatically. See Lt. Col. Curtis S. Morris, Jr. (USAF), *The United States-Caribbean Basin Military Connection: A Perspective on Regional Military-to-Military Relationships*, Occasional Papers Series, No. 7, The Center for Hemispheric Studies, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy, Washington, D.C., August 1983, pp. 17-24. Also see Stephen T. Hosmer, *Constraints on U.S. Strategy in Third World Conflict*, R-3208-AF, The Rand Corporation, September 1985, p. 123 and n. 4.

The U.S. military services also tend to treat the training and advising of Third World military establishments as routine and largely technical activities requiring little special preparation or expertise. Even in Third World states already experiencing hostilities, far too many U.S. advisers and trainers lack adequate area and language training and a background in counterinsurgent warfare.[7] This propensity, along with the counterproductive practice of frequently rotating U.S. military assistance personnel, seriously undercuts the effectiveness of U.S. training and advisory efforts.[8]

To assist its Third World friends and allies in countering covert aggression, the United States must *first improve the professionalism of its own training and advisory personnel and reform its military assistance practices.* Among other steps, the U.S. military services need to recruit and maintain a *permanent* cadre of foreign-area, language-qualified, counterinsurgency specialists to help with the design of security assistance programs and to evaluate, advise, and train Third World military forces.

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[7]This proved to be the case not only in Vietnam, but also in Lebanon and El Salvador. According to a *New York Times* report, the U.S. military personnel chosen to conduct the U.S. military training programs that began in December 1982 in Lebanon had no expertise in Lebanese affairs and little or no familiarity with the religious factionalism that plagued the country's military establishment. As one U.S. Army officer put it, the U.S. trainers "were just good old American boys." His own lack of expertise made one senior U.S. officer in Beirut reluctant to advise Lebanese army officers: "My word was lethal. Everything I said was done. That kind of worried me because I was not well-informed on the cultural problems, so I was reluctant to say anything." *The New York Times*, March 11, 1984, pp. 1 and 12. Even in the case of El Salvador, which has received continued priority attention under the Reagan administration, all U.S. military services have experienced difficulty in providing suitably trained and qualified military advisers. Indeed, one former commander of the U.S. military group in El Salvador reported that service personnel managers attempted to "push" officers lacking area, language, or counterinsurgency training as candidates for duty in El Salvador. See Col. John D. Waghelstein (U.S. Army), "Post-Vietnam Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Military Review*, May 1985, p. 47.

[8]The frequent rotation of advisory personnel was the bane of the U.S. advisory effort in Vietnam. Because of the short tours, the program lacked continuity; many U.S. advisers were rotated out of the country just when they had begun to know enough to have some effect. As a result, most Vietnamese counterparts being advised had far more experience in counterinsurgency warfare than did their U.S. advisers.

These specialists must understand the critically important political, economic, and social components of counterinsurgent warfare. They must also master counterinsurgent tactics, including small-unit and deep-penetration operations. To train such specialists, the military services will have to expand their educational programs relating to foreign areas and counterinsurgent warfare.[9]

The United States must accord the advising and training of Third World forces the status of a high-priority military mission. Personnel programs must be designed to attract and retain top-flight professionals to perform this mission. Among other incentives, advisory and training personnel should expect assignments consistent with their career specialties and promotions at least as frequently as their peers.[10] Moreover, advisory and training specialists who prove unusually effective in working with particular Third World military establishments must be assigned to serve in those countries for periods considerably longer than the tours of duty now permitted.

IMPROVING U.S. AND THIRD WORLD INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES

The continuing threat posed by covert aggression also requires that the United States (1) improve the continuity and quality of its own intelligence coverage and analysis of the Third World and (2) help to upgrade the intelligence capabilities of its vulnerable Third World friends and allies.

Effective action against terrorism, subversion, and insurgency requires accurate and timely intelligence. If comprehended and acted upon expeditiously, advanced warning should allow friendly governments to foil most subversive plots and terrorist attacks. Good intelligence is also needed to suppress insurgencies. Indeed, one of the most accurate indicators of effectiveness in counterinsurgency is the quality

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[9]For a critique of the limited curricula now devoted to these subjects in U.S. service schools and staff colleges, see Waghelstein, pp. 46-48.

[10]For a critique of the training and personnel management policies of the U.S. Army Special Forces as they relate to capabilities for providing military assistance, see Col. David J. Baratto (U.S. Army), "Special Forces in the 1980s: A Strategic Reorientation," *Military Review*, March 1983, pp. 2-14.

and quantity of the intelligence available about the enemy.[11] As noted above, accurate and timely intelligence is also needed to unmask the states sponsoring covert aggression and to target appropriate military counteractions against such sponsors.

In the past, the U.S. intelligence coverage of the sponsors and targets of covert aggression in the Third World has been erratic and uneven. Gaps in collection coverage and inaccurate intelligence estimates have at times contributed importantly to U.S. policy and operational failures in the Third World.[12]

The threats posed by covert aggression in the Third World will *recur* and thus will require *sustained* intelligence attention. Simply put, the U.S. intelligence community must attach a continued high priority to the collection and analysis of information relating to the sponsors and likely targets of insurgency, subversion, and terrorism.

The United States must especially devote greater resources to human intelligence (HUMINT). Because technical means of collection often cannot expose covert aggression, increased attention must be given to more traditional collection methods.

The penetration of security-conscious dissident and terrorist groups, for example, frequently requires the recruitment of numerous low-level sources and may take years to accomplish. Similarly, only a large number of agents and informants can supply the kind of operational intelligence that is often most needed in counterinsurgency. However, as Vietnam and Lebanon demonstrated, U.S. capabilities in human intelligence are weak and in need of upgrading.[13]

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[11]Toward the end of the Malayan emergency, for example, the U.K. Police Special Branch knew the names, locations, and unit assignments of most of the guerrillas still at large in Malaya and could identify one out of two insurgents encountered in combat. The majority of contacts that resulted in guerrilla deaths or capture in Malaya were attributable to Special Branch and other intelligence. See Riley Sunderland, *Antiguerrilla Intelligence in Malaya, 1948-1960*, RM-4172-ISA, The Rand Corporation, September 1964, pp. v, 1, and 25.

[12]Washington attempts to design an effective diplomatic and military response to the 1975 communist intervention in Angola, for example, were severely handicapped by shortcomings in U.S. intelligence information on and assessments of the levels and objects of the Soviet and Cuban covert involvement in Angola and the comparative military capacities of the various liberation movements fighting for power in that country. See Hosmer and Wolfe (1983), pp. 178, n. 8, 269-270.

[13]According to the former U.S. assistant chief of staff for

In addition to improving its own intelligence coverage, the United States must also underwrite long-term training and assistance programs that will improve the intelligence capabilities of its more vulnerable Third World friends and allies. By upgrading the competence of indigenous intelligence services, the United States can both help to strengthen the defenses of local governments against communist subversion and insurgency and also secure better local protection for U.S. nationals and property against terrorist attacks.

The United States should use its support and advice especially to improve the *intelligence consciousness* and *self-sufficiency* of Third World military forces fighting active insurgencies. To the extent such forces come to understand that good intelligence contributes to their personal safety and to the success of their combat mission, they will be less inclined to engage in the counterproductive practices--such as abusing the local population and executing enemy prisoners--that will dry up the sources of their intelligence.

The professionalization of Third World intelligence services will require sustained U.S. effort. However, the United States need not bear the burden alone. Indeed, it should encourage its European and other allies to help with the training and advising of Third World intelligence services, particularly when those allies possess a unique expertise--such as the United Kingdom's extensive experience with Police Special Branch operations--or are politically better postured than the United States to work in a particular Third World nation.

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intelligence, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam: "the drastic cutback in resources and training devoted to human intelligence since World War II . . . seriously reduced our capacity" to exploit HUMINT in Vietnam. Similarly, the DOD commission that investigated the 1983 terrorist attack on the U.S. Marine headquarters at the Beirut airport found that the U.S. Marine commander "was not provided with the timely intelligence tailored to his specific operational needs that was necessary to defend against the broad spectrum of threats he faced," including the suicidal vehicle attack that killed the 241 marines. The commission went on to say that the HUMINT support to the Marine commander was "ineffective" and that the paucity of U.S.-controlled HUMINT was largely due to U.S. policy decisions to reduce HUMINT collection worldwide. See Maj. Gen. Joseph A. McChristian, *Vietnam Studies: The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1974, pp. 157-158, and *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, December 20, 1983, pp. 5, 9-10.

MANAGING CRISES TO PREVENT HOSTILE TAKEOVERS

The United States may at times thwart covert aggression by using its power and influence to prevent radical extremists from seizing control of countries undergoing revolutionary political upheaval. Even though direct U.S. military intervention is likely to be precluded in such revolutionary situations, the United States can still use its political, economic, and military power to back outcomes that will keep communist or other extremists from taking over.

Experience suggests that it is considerably easier to prevent radical extremists from seizing power than it is to dislodge them once they have assumed control. For one thing, the extremists' military and internal security forces will be far smaller and less well organized before they take power than after.

Castro probably had only 300 men under arms six months before the Batista regime collapsed at the end of 1958.[14] By the time of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, however, Castro had already built up an armed militia of some 150,000.[15] Similarly, Sandinista combatants of all political stripes probably numbered less than 1000 nine months before Somoza fled Nicaragua in mid-1979.[16] By mid-1985, however, Sandinista military and security forces totaled nearly 120,000.[17]

Moreover, as long as a local revolution is still being contested, the United States has the opportunity to back alternative political and military solutions that might stem the revolutionary tide. This is a much less formidable task than securing political change by reintroducing opposition forces into the country after the extremists have seized power, as the United States tried to do in 1961 with the

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[14]By the time Batista fled Cuba on January 1, 1959, new recruits had swelled Castro's ranks to about 3000. The Batista regime was ousted with comparatively little fighting. Batista's total combat losses in the war against Castro were probably no more than 300 men. See Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1971, pp. 1038, 1040, and 1042.

[15]Ibid., p. 1321.

[16]At the time of Somoza's departure, the number of Sandinista fighters had risen to about 5000. See Department of State and Department of Defense, *The Sandinista Military Buildup*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., May 1985, p. 1.

[17]Ibid.

Cuban Expeditionary Force and is now trying to do with the Contras in Nicaragua.

Had the United States devoted but a fraction of the effort to preventing the installation of the Castro regime that it eventually expended on trying to oust that regime, Cuba would probably not be ruled by Marxist-Leninists today. Similarly, had the United States used its full political and economic power to promote a moderate alternative to the Somoza regime, the Sandinistas would probably not now control Nicaragua.

In both Cuba and Nicaragua, the United States failed to secure the ouster of bankrupt incumbent regimes *while time remained to organize an alternative government* that could prevent an extremist seizure of power. In the case of Cuba, this failure resulted partly from a disagreement within the Eisenhower administration about the extent of communist penetration of the Castro movement and partly from the reluctance of U.S. officials to have the United States "intervene" in Cuba by taking "any positive action to unseat Batista."[18] In the case of Nicaragua, where the extent of communist penetration was better known, the U.S. failure to act came largely from the Carter administration's reluctance to overthrow an existing government.[19]

Based on the lesson of Cuba and Nicaragua, the United States must be willing and ready to act decisively in situations where revolutionary change threatens its Third World allies.[20] The opportunity for effective U.S. intervention will probably be limited; the United States

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[18]Thomas (1971), pp. 965, 976-977, 985-986, 1015-1019. Also see Cole Blasier, "The Elimination of United States Influence," in Carmelo Mesa-Lago (ed.), *Revolutionary Change in Cuba*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977, pp. 47-48; and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, Vol. 2, *The President*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1984, p. 505.

[19]See Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, Random House, New York, 1985, pp. 74-77, 86-87.

[20]Some analysts believe this is the lesson of the Iranian revolution, as well. Zbigniew Brzezinski, for example, contends that the Carter administration could and should have acted more decisively in late 1978 and early 1979 to stave off the collapse in Iran. Brzezinski suggests that Washington should have explicitly pressed the shah to assert effective authority and, if all else failed, encouraged a military coup to save the country. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, Farrar-Straus Giroux, New York, 1983, pp. 393-398.

must therefore prepare to exert its influence and power promptly, despite the inevitable uncertainties surrounding such situations. Indeed, decisionmakers must guard against the fallacy that they can wait for the smoke to clear and still preserve their options for effective action.

Cuba and Nicaragua also point up the *dangers of using the termination of U.S. military assistance as a means of punishing defiant and odious regimes* threatened by leftist revolutions. While insufficient to bring about the military reforms and political change desired by the United States, the cutoff of U.S. arms support to Cuba and Nicaragua demoralized and weakened the government forces in both countries and contributed to their eventual collapse.[21]

EXPANDING U.S. CAPABILITIES TO SUPPORT THIRD WORLD RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

To counter covert as well as overt communist aggression, the United States is manifesting a growing willingness to support resistance movements in Third World countries that have fallen under Marxist-Leninist rule during the past decade. By assisting these resistance movements, the United States increases and extends the military, economic, and diplomatic costs of communist aggression. The higher cost to the aggressors may help to deter similar aggression in the future. Most important, the U.S. assistance helps to keep alive the possibility of eventually defeating communist aggression in one or more of these countries by unseating the incumbent communist regimes and forcing the withdrawal of the external communist troops that maintain most of them in power.

Because the overthrow of an incumbent communist regime would likely require a protracted struggle, the United States must encourage Third World resistance movements to develop military and political structures and adopt battlefield strategies that can be sustained over time. Particularly important, resistance movements must develop secure bases and underground support networks inside the country of their operations. The resistance movements that operate primarily from internal bases,

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[21]See Thomas (1971), pp. 985-986, 1017, 1040; and Christian (1985), pp. 88, 92, 104, 114-115.

like the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan and UNITA in Angola, exhibit far greater resilience and military effectiveness than the movements that mount raids largely from external sanctuaries, as is the case now with the noncommunist resistance in Cambodia and the Contras in Nicaragua.

To maximize the effectiveness of its support to Third World resistance movements, the United States requires a small but highly professional cadre of guerrilla warfare experts who know the local cultural and physical environment in which the individual resistance struggles are being conducted. Besides skills in the military tactics of guerrilla warfare, these specialists must also master the political, economic, and social dimensions of such conflicts, including how to build and maintain clandestine support structures in urban and rural areas. Among other tasks, these guerrilla warfare experts should help to design U.S. assistance programs for Third World resistance movements and advise and train resistance fighters both in the United States and abroad.

The United States must maintain a reserve of expertise to work with Third World resistance movements, even when such a capability is not being used or does not appear to be needed. In the past, this country has allowed its paramilitary assets to atrophy and has had reason later to regret this neglect.

The United States was obviously handicapped, for example, during the early stages of the Contra program by a lack of expertise on how to effectively organize and prosecute a resistance war.[22] The absence of professional know-how led to organizational mistakes and tactical errors--such as the abortive operation to mine Nicaragua's harbors--that have proved politically and militarily costly to the Contra program in both the United States and Nicaragua.

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[22]To quote a U.S. official who helped manage the Contra program, "When we started up the program, you couldn't find five guys who knew what they were doing in terms of organizing a resistance operation." Among other effects, the lack of a reliable in-house American paramilitary capability led the CIA to turn to Argentinians to organize and train the Contras. However, the "heavy-handed Argentine approach tainted the movement in the eyes of many Nicaraguans." See David Ignatius and David Rogers, "Why the Covert War in Nicaragua Evolved and Hasn't Succeeded," *Wall Street Journal*, March 5, 1985, pp. 1 and 24.

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING CAPABILITIES TO COUNTER COVERT AGGRESSION

The United States has needlessly handicapped itself in countering covert aggression by failing to *develop* and *maintain* the requisite professional expertise and other capabilities to deal with this threat. Specifically, it has failed to acquire and sustain sufficiently professional capabilities for counterinsurgent, paramilitary, and special operations.

Since World War II, the United States has sought at various times to build counterinsurgent, paramilitary, and special operations capabilities. Once it had them, however, it allowed them to atrophy, only to attempt to resurrect them once again in response to some new crisis or opportunity.

The increased U.S. interest in and commitment to special operations forces (SOFs), for example, experienced during World War II, the Korean war, and the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, particularly under the Kennedy administration, gave way to periods of comparative neglect.[23] The resources and policy emphasis devoted to developing U.S. counterinsurgent and paramilitary warfare capabilities also fluctuated. Among other costs, this inconstancy has impaired the effectiveness of U.S. training and advisory missions, deprived the United States of an important institutional memory, and led it to mount ad hoc uncoordinated and unprofessional operations.

Without the spur of an immediate war or crisis, the U.S. military and civilian national security bureaucracies have had little incentive to develop and maintain capabilities that they perceive to lie outside the mainstream of their conventional roles and missions. The U.S. military services, for example, traditionally have not given high priority to developing an expertise for counterinsurgent warfare or for improving the competence and reliability of Third World military establishments.

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[23]The U.S. budget for SOFs rose to about $1 billion in the late 1960s, declined to $100 million in 1975, and in 1985 was back up to about $1 billion and rising.

The military services tend also to discount the amount of experience and specialized area, language, and military expertise needed for advisory training missions in the Third World.[24] Similar attitudes carry over to special operations forces, which the military services seem to resist because such forces are elite, unorthodox, and overly specialized ("conventional soldiers should be able to do any military job"). Moreover, special forces are perceived to constitute an unnecessary drain on scarce resources and are considered to be of only marginal value in war.

In sum, because of the weak institutional support within the military and civilian bureaucracies for maintaining capabilities to counter covert aggression, *U.S. national security leaders must exercise unusually close oversight of these capabilities.* In particular, U.S. leaders must ensure that U.S. policies and capabilities accord with the following realities and requirements:

- Covert aggression in the form of state-supported terrorism, subversion, and insurgency is likely to remain the dominant mode of warfare in the Third World for the foreseeable future.
- While the United States may be able to employ unilateral capabilities, such as U.S. special operations forces, to defend its citizens and interests in some emergencies, the indigenous forces and agencies of its Third World friends and allies must accept the primary burden for countering covert aggression.
- As a consequence, the United States has an important, long-term interest in upgrading the professionalism and quality of the military and internal security forces and intelligence services of its more vulnerable Third World allies. It also has an interest in maximizing the political and military effectiveness and staying power of the resistance movements it chooses to support in the Third World.

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[24] According to Col. John D. Waghelstein, "the U.S. Army still does not regard guerrilla warfare, insurgency and counterinsurgency as being unique." See *Military Review,* May 1985, p. 44.

- To more effectively assist its Third World friends and allies, the United States must improve the professionalism of its own internal security assistance capabilities. In particular, it should recruit and maintain expert advisers and trainers, skilled in the political and military aspects of unconventional warfare, to work with Third World military and security forces, intelligence services, and resistance movements.
- The United States must design personnel policies and programs to attract, retain, and train the top-flight professionals needed to perform these advisory and training missions.
- While the quality of these training and advisory experts must be high, their numbers need not be large.[25] A similar emphasis on quality over quantity must guide the development of U.S. special operations forces for rescue and other counterterrorist missions. In addition, the tasks and missions of the various service special operations forces must be more clearly defined than is now the case.
- Once the United States develops capabilities for countering covert aggression, it must *sustain* and periodically *renew* them. Experience has shown the serious costs of allowing such capabilities to lapse.
- A major educational effort will be required both inside and outside the government to ensure continued support for the security assistance policies and capabilities needed to counter covert aggression. American leaders, as well as the U.S. public, must understand that covert aggression constitutes an ongoing threat that can be met only by defenses designed and manned for the long term.

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[25]History shows that even small numbers of experienced and professionally competent external advisers can have a major salutary effect on a Third World government's internal security policies and practices. The highly influential Lansdale advisory mission to the Philippines in the early 1950s and the British Advisory Mission to Vietnam in the 1960s were both small.