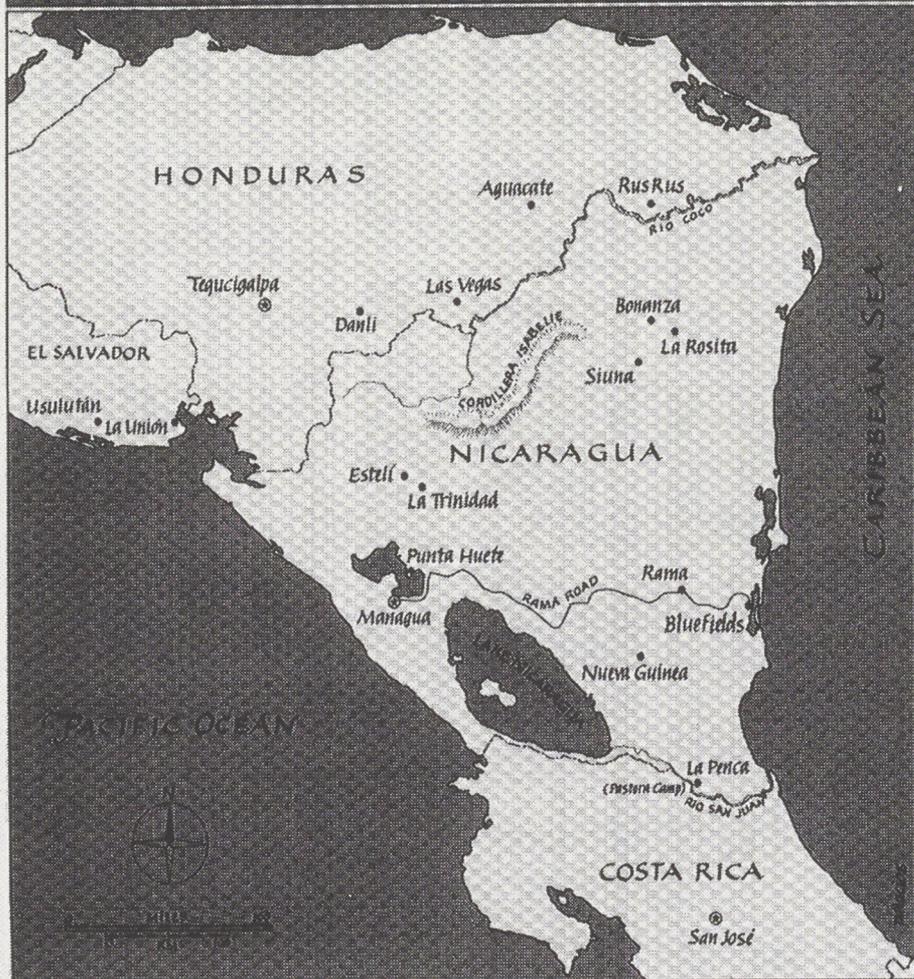


PART IV



*Hazardous Duty*



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# Counterattack

1978–1984



**D**URING MY FINAL days at Fort McPherson, Army colleagues called to offer their moral support. They felt I had been treated unfairly, but no one put his views in writing. Speaking out on Carter's disastrous defense policy blunders might get them "Singlauded" by Jimmy Carter, a fate few would risk.

I also received job offers from business and industry. But I wasn't ready to trade in my uniform for a pair of plaid golf pants. I still considered myself bound by my officer's oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

So I welcomed the visit of John Fisher, president of the American Security Council (ASC), and retired Army Lieutenant General Danny Graham. Fisher had begun the ASC in the 1950s as a conservative organization dedicated to educating Congress and the American people on national security issues. One of his main activities was organizing speaking tours by academic and military experts. Danny Graham had already signed on the ASC speakers circuit and urged me to do the same.

I'd known Dan Graham for over ten years. He'd been an intelligence officer on Westmoreland's J-2 staff in Saigon. Danny was a short, feisty soldier with a ready grin and flashing blue eyes that belied a probing intellect. He had resigned as a three-star general rather than continue supporting the détente policies of the Ford White House. Danny's specialty was strategic issues, including advanced weapons systems.

I knew the defense issues that had precipitated my early retirement would continue to be critical well into the future. Carter's mishandling of the

Korean troop withdrawal, his decision to abandon new strategic weapons without demanding a compensating Soviet reduction, and his simplistic belief that the military dictators of Panama could be trusted to stably manage that vital American asset prompted me to accept John Fisher's offer.

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A DAY after my official retirement, the ASC hosted a press luncheon for me and Lieutenant General Gordon Sumner, who had retired on the same day I did.

General Sumner had a distinguished combat record and had held important positions in the Army and Joint Staffs. He had been president of the Inter-American Defense Board, the military arm of the Organization of American States. Sumner was the best-informed American officer on Western Hemisphere security issues. The Senate Armed Services Committee asked Sumner how his colleagues on the Inter-American Defense Board viewed the Panama Canal treaties. Unlike the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whom Carter had ordered to testify in favor of the treaties, Gordon Sumner had received no such admonition. He honestly stated that most military officers on the Board favored continued U.S. military control over the Canal.

He then stated frankly his personal opposition to the treaties and giving up American sovereignty over the Panama Canal. When he did so, he realized that Carter's retribution would be swift. Indeed, he was soon "Sing-lauded."

Our press luncheon was invigorating. For the first time since my encounter with John Saar, I was free to speak publicly with complete candor. I set the record straight as to Carter's Korean troop withdrawal policy, detailing the "diplomatic sham" in sending Undersecretary of State Habib and General Brown to South Korea to consult with our allies, after the President had already secretly approved the withdrawal.

I also predicted that the Soviet Union would cynically exploit Carter's olive branch approach to stabilizing the nuclear weapons race through the SALT process. "The Soviets are not born-again Christians," I told the assembled press. "They are in fact born-again Bolsheviks. And they have no Judeo-Christian ethic guiding them to grant us the same concessions we are making in the hope they will reciprocate."<sup>1</sup>

Press reaction to my comments was favorable. I looked forward to my speaking tour.

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OVER the next two years, I spoke often to civic organizations, veterans groups, and university audiences all across the country on national security

issues. The focus of my speeches was the need for America to reestablish its national defenses and strategic position as the leader of the free world, following the military debacle in Indochina and the political disaster of Watergate.

After stressing the vital principle of civilian leadership over the military, I took advantage of my retired status to speak for my active-duty colleagues whom Carter had muzzled.

This was important because Carter had repeatedly bypassed the Joint Chiefs of Staff when making key decisions.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, among my senior Army officer colleagues, it was widely believed that Jimmy Carter had selected Air Force General David Jones to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff because he was one of the few senior officers who publicly supported Carter's Panama Canal treaties.

Carter demanded unquestioned loyalty, but did not reciprocate by consulting senior officers. And as many of these officers learned, he was prone to use the Singlaub option. General John Vessey was also stung by Carter's vindictiveness. Carter refused to approve General Vessey's nomination to be the Army's chief of staff when his Korea assignment ended. This was because Vessey had publicly supported me. Carter instructed Army Secretary Clifford Alexander to offer Vessey the job of Vice Chief of Staff, under his former subordinate, General Edward "Shy" Meyer. Alexander and Carter assumed Vessey would rather retire. They were wrong. He served with distinction under Meyer, and was eventually selected by President Reagan to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

President Carter believed that the Soviet Union was a country similar to our own, which had suffered grievously during World War II and had been isolated by the West's containment policy. To Carter, the "chronic United States-Soviet confrontation mentality" was "shortsighted and counterproductive."<sup>3</sup>

One of his advisers on arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union was W. Averell Harriman, who assured the President that Soviet leaders had "great respect" for him and that President Brezhnev saw personally meeting Carter as "one of the great events" in his life. During the critical SALT II arms negotiations Harriman cautioned Carter that, above all, Brezhnev and his government believed in supporting socialist liberation movements around the world "just as deeply as Americans believe in human rights."<sup>4</sup> Therefore Carter refused to even consider using the leverage of the negotiations to extract a reduction of Soviet-sponsored subversion in the Third World.

No doubt the President sincerely held these beliefs—at least until December 1979, when the Soviet army rolled over Afghanistan. I sometimes recounted for my audiences a telling anecdote I'd heard while at Fort McPherson. After Carter's first successful gubernatorial election, but before

he took office in 1971, the Greek Orthodox Primate visited Atlanta on a State Department tour. A prominent local Greek-American hosted a reception for the Primate, which Carter attended. Afterwards he told his host how much he enjoyed being present. This event was, he said, his first "international experience." Less than six years later, he was elected president of the United States and was leading our negotiations with the Soviet Union.

But I knew that the Soviet Union had used the years of the *détente* period for an unprecedented military buildup. By the late 1970s, the Soviets vastly outnumbered the West in ground forces, tactical air forces, submarines, and, above all, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). And their superiority in numbers was rapidly matched in qualitative parity and even superiority in certain key technologies. For example, the SALT agreements had allowed both sides to deploy 1,320 heavy ICBMs capable of carrying multiple warheads—Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs). But we permitted the Soviets the exclusive right to retain 300 additional large launchers; these they quickly converted to carry accurate new ten-warhead MIRVs, in obvious disregard for the spirit, if not the letter, of the SALT I agreement. Yet the administration's chief arms control negotiator, Paul Warnke, sincerely believed the Soviets could somehow be convinced not to bend future agreements to their own advantage in a similar manner.

I was not so sanguine. America had been bogged down in Indochina during the years of the Soviet military buildup. The Soviets correctly saw us in the most vulnerable political and military position we'd been in since World War II.

I stressed to my audiences the critical need to modernize our strategic nuclear forces. For the first time since the advent of the ICBM, the United States was in a position of true vulnerability to a crippling Soviet first strike. An attack by only 300 Soviet SS-18 MIRV'd missiles—less than a third of their total ICBMs—could destroy our entire land-based ICBM force.

But the Carter administration proceeded blithely along the SALT II arms negotiation path.

Our logical response to these Soviet moves was the deployment of enough heavy MIRV'd missiles to survive a first strike with a viable deterrent. But the administration was against developing the ten-warhead MX missile. There was a chilling implication to this policy, which few in the public understood. Without a survivable ICBM force, a future president might face the terrible decision of firing our land-based missiles before an incoming Soviet strike could destroy them. This so-called launch-on-warning scenario was certainly enough to scare an old soldier like me.

In my lectures, I proposed an alternative concept that we called "peace through strength." This was the reversal of America's gradual unilateral

disarmament of the détente period. The policy was predicated on the belief that the Soviets would use their growing military superiority over the West to achieve geopolitical goals.

I also proposed that the United States conduct serious research on a practical missile defense system, incorporating possibly both space- and land-based technology. From what I understood of the Soviets, they would keep building missiles far beyond their legitimate defense needs (just as they built tanks), until they were convinced we had developed a practical defense against ICBMs.

In this regard, I emphasized, America had to draw upon the vast advanced-technology resources found in our academic and industrial laboratories to counter the massive weight of the modernized Soviet armed forces. It was certainly not *immoral* for a country to defend itself, as many in the administration seemed to imply.

But in my speeches I always stressed that I did not “believe that the answer to our military decline is to be found in support of *every* program emanating from the Pentagon.” I knew there were generals and admirals (supported by greedy contractors and pork-barreling congressmen) perfectly willing to bankrupt the country to see their pet weapon systems deployed.

America, I added, had to rebuild its intelligence capabilities. President Carter’s director of Central Intelligence, his Annapolis classmate Admiral Stansfield Turner, had presided over the dismantling of the Human Intelligence and Covert Operations facilities of the CIA. Carter wanted to rely on reconnaissance satellites and electronic surveillance, which served little purpose in combating the growing Soviet-sponsored subversion in the Third World.

I also emphasized the need to use positive, non-military means to roll back the spread of communism, beginning with the captive nations of the Soviet empire. The Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians had been almost completely abandoned under the détente policy, which accepted Soviet control over hundreds of millions of people who had been “liberated” by the Red Army during World War II.

— Finally, I believed the United States had to continue military and economic aid to our strategically located allies, even if their governments did not currently meet our high standards of democracy and stringent human rights requirements. This was the only way we could continue to influence their internal reforms. Abandoning them out of some misguided sense of moral superiority would only increase their social upheaval and invite Soviet subversion, which always found fertile ground in periods of chaos.

BETWEEN my marathon road trips on the Styrofoam-coffee/cardboard-chicken circuit, I found refuge at our new home high in the Fraser Valley of Colorado. Mary and I had first visited the area when I commanded the Army Readiness Region in Denver.

Early in that tour we had purchased a small condo in Fraser, which had a great view of the Continental Divide and the Winter Park Ski Area. We spent our spare time enjoying the clean air and magnificent mountains. I could fish and hike in the summer, hunt in the fall, ski in the winter, and smell the wild columbines and snowdrops in the spring. It was a great place to relax and clear my head of bureaucratic drudgery. Mary knew the name of every flower and plant we encountered any place in Grand County. The year-round population was less than 7,000 and we did not have one traffic light in the entire valley.

We had stopped in for a few days as we traveled from Korea to Fort McPherson. During that brief visit, I located and purchased eight acres on top of a ridge overlooking the Fraser Valley and offering an even better view of the western slope of the Continental Divide. From the property, which was 9,200 feet above sea level, we faced a series of peaks over 13,000 feet high. I knew them all in detail, having climbed them all in past summers.

After my retirement we moved to the condominium, from which Mary designed and I supervised the construction of our retirement home on "the high ground." The house made generous use of local fir and granite. Its design and orientation were such as to maximize the effectiveness of the solar panels which provided its primary heating, but coincidentally gave it a truly breathtaking view.

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GENERAL Danny Graham quickly became the chief public proponent of the modernization of America's strategic posture with his advocacy of a space-based missile defense system called "High Frontier." I shifted my efforts toward the other end of what I called the "spectrum of conflict," to unconventional warfare, insurgency, and low-intensity conflict.

The Soviet experience in Indochina had been exactly the opposite of our own. By supporting a Communist surrogate with massive military aid, the Soviet Union had acquired valuable strategic assets in Vietnam, including huge, well-stocked naval and air bases at Cam Rahn Bay and Danang.

The significance of these new bases was that the Soviets had achieved geopolitical prominence by supporting a surrogate's "war of national liberation." The Kremlin had learned that military expansion was a profitable business.

The Soviets were pumping arms, equipment, and military advisers into troubled regions of Africa and Latin America. Their principal military surrogate, Cuba, played an increasing role. Tens of thousands of Cuban combat troops, supported by Soviet and East German advisers, propped up the Marxist MPLA government in Angola. The new Marxist dictatorship in Ethiopia, led by a brutal military dictator named Haile Merriam Mengistu, provided the Soviets a strategic foothold in the Horn of Africa, which dominated the maritime approaches to Mideast oil ports, just as Angola dominated the tanker route around Africa.

When Soviet military support began flowing into the new Marxist government of Mozambique on the east coast of Africa, it became obvious that there was a clear geopolitical strategy unfolding. If the Soviet Union could establish a global system of strategic bases to separate Western Europe, the United States, and Japan from their sources of petroleum and vital raw materials, the policy of containment would have been finally defeated.

They deliberately targeted countries with strategic potential for subversion, while ignoring repressive governments in nonstrategic areas. Thus Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia received the full brunt of the Soviet-surrogate military "support," while remote brutal dictatorships such as Idi Amin's Uganda were ignored. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev made this abundantly clear in a confidential conversation with the president of Somalia in the mid-1970s. "Our goal," Brezhnev said, "is to gain control of the two great treasure houses on which the West depends, the energy treasure house of the Persian Gulf and the mineral treasure house of Central and Southern Africa."<sup>5</sup>

In Central America, Soviet-Cuban attention was focused on the three most socially dislocated countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. And it was in Nicaragua that the Soviet Union and its surrogates would make their most concerted, and successful, effort to establish a strategic foothold on the North American continent.

By the 1960s, economic domination by traditional oligarchs (usually of European ancestry) over the impoverished masses of *mestizos* and Indians was already crumbling. In the late 1970s, the dynasty of the Somoza family in Nicaragua, led by the corrupt and repressive President Anastasio Somoza, came under attack from a broad-based revolutionary movement that included labor leaders, professionals and businessmen, the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, and *campesinos*. The Carter administration stopped military assistance to Somoza and encouraged the Organization of American States to isolate Nicaragua and promote a truly democratic, pluralistic, and nonaligned revolution.<sup>6</sup>

The Somoza government and its small National Guard were no match for

the revolutionaries, who had joined forces under the banner of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, a coalition named for Augusto Cesar Sandino, a national hero of the 1930s. The revolutionaries toppled Somoza in 1979, and the Sandinista coalition took power in the capital Managua. The Carter administration immediately extended aid to the revolutionary government, including over \$100 million in outright grants and 100,000 tons of food. Clearly the intention of the United States was to support a broad-based, nonideological revolution in Central America. President Carter invited Sandinista Comandante Daniel Ortega to Washington to discuss American support.<sup>7</sup>

But as both the White House and members of the Sandinista coalition soon discovered, Comandante Ortega and his brother Humberto, the Front's military leader, had little interest in Western support. Cuban military advisers had fought alongside the Sandinistas in the final offensive. Within a month of Somoza's fall, hundreds of Cuban intelligence officers from Castro's Directorate General of Intelligence (DGI), supported by a large Soviet KGB contingent and East German military officers, were already in Managua. The broad-based Front quickly became a secretive junta where power was jealously restricted to those Sandinistas such as the Ortega brothers who had been trained in guerrilla warfare by Cubans and indoctrinated in Marxist-Leninist ideology. Indeed, many of the new leaders in Managua had done relatively little of the anti-Somoza fighting, but had solid revolutionary credentials based on years of training in the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> It was these hard-core Communists who quickly organized the General Directorate of State Security (modeled on the Soviet KGB), a repressive secret police force that soon dominated Nicaraguan society.

According to historian John Norton Moore, the purpose for the sudden transformation of Nicaragua into a police state quickly became obvious. "The Comandantes," Moore has written, "began a massive secret military build-up even as the United States poured in economic assistance for their regime."<sup>9</sup> Over the next eighteen months, the Sandinistas increased the size of their conscript army to more than six times that of the former National Guard. Cuban and Soviet advisers trained this force, which was soon equipped with modern Soviet-bloc weapons. While the Sandinistas were still consolidating their power, Soviet, Cuban, and East European military engineers conducted surveys for large new military bases, including an airfield at remote Punta Huete (hardly the "tourist" airport proclaimed by the Sandinistas), capable of handling Soviet Backfire strategic bombers and the Bear maritime patrol bomber. The new Sandinista government described these construction activities as "disinterested help" from friendly socialist powers.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that this Soviet buildup in Nicaragua began a

full two years before there was any external resistance to Sandinista rule.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with this blatant Communist takeover, many members of the original Sandinista coalition, including legitimate military heroes like Eden Pastora, the legendary Comandante Zero, tried to protest, but were soon imprisoned or forced into exile.

I viewed these events in Central America with increasing anxiety. Obviously, much of Latin America, including our populous southern neighbor, Mexico, was a ripe target for similar Soviet-sponsored "liberation." This subversion would clearly begin with terrorism and ostensibly broad-based revolutionary struggles, as was exactly the case in Guatemala and El Salvador.

During this period, Soviet-trained and -funded terrorist groups in the Middle East, Western Europe, and South America increased their activities. Even the decimated CIA was belatedly forced to concede that the Soviet Union had embarked on a global campaign of terrorist subversion designed to destabilize fragile Third World governments, to intimidate Israel, and to confound NATO. It was no accident that the German Red Army Faction and the Italian Red Brigades targeted their countries' key military leaders and senior executives of important defense contractors. But as veteran journalist Claire Sterling has noted, no international terrorist group ever targeted a government or military official within the Soviet empire. The reason for this was obvious: All effective international terrorist groups were under the direction or control of the KGB, its East European subordinate services, or the intelligence services of Soviet surrogates, such as Cuba or North Korea.<sup>12</sup>

(Although the Soviet Union consistently stonewalled for decades, denying accusations that it sponsored terrorist groups, the recent collapse of East Germany provided a bonanza of documentary evidence of Soviet and East Bloc sponsorship that included massive funding, arming, training, and logistic support. For example, a recent raid by West German police of a terrorist safe house in Frankfurt-am-Main unearthed detailed maps of the NATO fuel-pipeline system, with instructions for its sabotage. West German terrorists had used these plans for several attacks in the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Many convicted West European terrorists were living in state-sponsored sanctuary when the East German Communists were overthrown.<sup>14</sup>)

The most notorious Soviet-sponsored terrorist assassination attempt was the attack on Pope John Paul II in May 1981. One of the two assassins, a Turkish terrorist named Mehmet Ali Agca, was definitely linked to the Bulgarian secret service, which was known to be the KGB's most loyal East Bloc subordinate.<sup>15</sup>

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THE Sandinista takeover in Nicaragua was only one of several setbacks in 1979, the year in which the administration's foreign policy based on détente and the moral superiority of human rights ground to a complete halt.

The only positive event that year was the conclusion of the ill-fated Korean troop pullout fiasco. Representative Sam Stratton formally requested that Carter drop the withdrawal plan, which was still languishing as uncompleted White House policy. The President refused to publicly retreat, but he privately recognized his policy was dead in the water.<sup>16</sup>

Several congressmen went out of their way to let me know my frank testimony in 1977 had been a key factor in keeping the issue alive.

In Iran, the White House at first supported the embattled Shah, one of America's staunchest allies in the Middle East, who was under attack by domestic opponents from both the pro-Soviet left and the Muslim fundamentalist right. Once again, Carter's preoccupation with human rights eventually distorted his strategic vision. As resistance to the Shah's authoritarian, but pro-Western, government increased, his police and military suppressed rioting in Iran's cities. At this critical point, the American ambassador in Tehran, Westmoreland's old nemesis from Indochina, "Field Marshal" William Sullivan, arbitrarily tilted toward the Shah's right-wing opponent, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a Muslim extremist with a deep hatred for America. Rather than discipline his ambassador, Carter allowed U.S. policy to be dictated from the Tehran embassy.<sup>17</sup>

By November 1979, the Shah was exiled, Ayatollah Khomeini was in power, and angry mobs of fundamentalist "students" had taken hostage fifty-four of our embassy staff. Ambassador Sullivan had conveniently departed before this debacle.

This image of frustrated impotence grew worse in December 1979. Two days after Christmas, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, where they had been increasing their "adviser" presence for months amid growing unrest against the pro-Moscow government. The Soviets rapidly deployed large Spetsnaz detachments to secure key border passes and airports, a decisive move that opened the doors of the mountainous Asian nation to their armored and mechanized units.

Moscow claimed they had been "invited" to intervene in Afghanistan by President Hafizullah Amin. But one of the first moves by Spetsnaz troops was to capture Amin and turn him over to pro-Soviet officers who assassinated him. Within days of the invasion, a Soviet-trained Communist dictator named Babrak Karmal returned from exile in Moscow and took power.

President Carter was shocked by the invasion. His advisers had long

assured him that we could do business with the Soviets if we only treated them fairly and concentrated on peaceful cooperation and détente. However, he was initially more concerned that the Soviet invasion “wiped out any chance” for Senate ratification of his SALT II treaty. But in trying to pressure the Soviets to stop their aggression in Afghanistan, Carter stubbornly refused to “link” the reward of a new arms control agreement to a Soviet pullout.<sup>18</sup>

Carter relied instead on the ineffectual response of an American grain embargo, which was uncoordinated with other Western grain exporters who quickly made up the Soviet shortfall. The only group hurt by this policy was the American farm community. The President next acted with typical sanctimony by leading a Western boycott of the upcoming 1980 Moscow Olympics.

Moscow was not impressed. Obviously Soviet leaders well understood the post-Vietnam syndrome in America. With the fall of Indochina and the loss of our Middle Eastern ally in Iran, America could project little military power in the region. And we also seemed deeply reluctant to again intervene in “liberation” struggles in the Third World. The country had come to view anti-terrorist activities and covert intelligence operations with bitter distaste. CIA director Stansfield Turner had encountered little resistance in Congress when he arbitrarily fired most of the Agency’s veteran covert operators. In fact, Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, would probably have gone further, even abolishing the Agency itself—“a rogue elephant on a rampage”—and assigning its intelligence collection functions to the Pentagon and State Department.<sup>19</sup>

And since human rights and arms control continued to dominate the administration’s foreign policy, no expanded requirement was seen for Special Operations forces. A small anti-terrorist Delta Force was finally formed within Army Special Forces, after airliner hijackings worldwide had reached epidemic proportions. And Carter approved plans to completely eliminate the Navy’s SEAL units, which were our only unconventional forces trained for coastal insertion from submerged submarines. The Pentagon was being forced to severely cut back Army Special Forces, Rangers, and Air Force Special Ops units.

Later, when I asked Army Chief of Staff Shy Meyer about those cutbacks, which made no sense in light of the greatly expanded Soviet unconventional-warfare operations worldwide, he explained the prevailing attitude of the Carter White House.

“Jack,” Meyer said, “we were told, ‘There’s no use training a Super Bowl team, if they’ll never have a Super Bowl to play in.’”

That illusion was certainly shattered on April 24, 1980, when a small unit, composed of Delta Force troops, Rangers, and Air Force and Marine air crew, en route to rescue the fifty-four American diplomat hostages in Tehran

met disaster on an infamous gravel airstrip in Iran known as Desert One.

I was at home in Colorado when a friend on the East Coast called with the news of the disaster early the next morning. The more I learned about the failed operation, the more obvious it became that our country had lost its well-tuned special operations capability that we had used so effectively in Indochina. The Iranian rescue mission was a Joint Task Force with combined assets of all four services. The operation was planned by Colonel Charlie Beckwith, a veteran Special Forces officer who had built up Delta Force at Fort Bragg in the 1970s. Like many of the MACV/SOG operations, Beckwith's plan combined audacity with attention to practical details.

Beckwith's small rescue force was flown by Air Force C-130s to Desert One, a gravel road in the salt desert wilderness south of Tehran. Large CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters from the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* were to rendezvous with the rescue force and proceed to Desert Two, a mountain staging zone near Tehran. The helicopters would be hidden under camouflage nets and Beckwith's force would proceed to the Tehran embassy compound aboard trucks and vans. Late at night they would blast into the embassy compound, kill the Iranian guards, and free the hostages. AC-130 Spectre gunships would orbit overhead to suppress Iranian reinforcements. The helicopters would then land, take out the hostages and rescue team, and fly to an isolated airstrip thirty-five miles south of Tehran, which had been sealed off by Army Rangers transported from Egypt aboard C-141 Starlifters. The helicopters would then be destroyed and the entire force would extract on the C-141s.

It was a risky but well-conceived operation. Unfortunately, the White House insisted on micro-managing the tactical plans. To prevent security leaks, the entire team never trained together, and unnecessary radio silence among tactical components was ordered. But a direct satellite radio link from Desert One to the JCS Tank in the Pentagon and to the White House was required.

As often happens in war, well-laid plans unravel. No sooner had Beckwith's aircraft touched down at Desert One with the advance party than they encountered a busload of Iranian villagers and a tanker truck with gasoline smugglers. They captured the bus passengers, but the truck crew escaped. Contingency plans called for these civilians to be removed to Egypt by C-130 after the rescue force proceeded to the next phase. But only five of the six helicopters that struggled through a terrible sandstorm from the *Nimitz* were capable of flying on to Desert Two. Beckwith's plan required a minimum of six operational choppers. In different conditions he might have reduced this force, and thus his helicopter requirement, and proceeded with his mission. But Charlie Beckwith was acutely aware that the JCS and the President himself were looking right over his shoulder.<sup>20</sup> He opted to abort.

In the noisy confusion of blowing dust and the roar of aircraft engines, one of the helicopters collided with a C-130 and both aircraft exploded. Eight men were burned to death and several others were badly injured. Munitions began exploding and the five remaining helicopters were abandoned as the force clambered aboard the remaining C-130s.

Important Classified communications equipment and operational maps that contained the locations of safe houses in Tehran were left behind. Beckwith wanted the choppers destroyed by an air strike, but Carter personally refused to authorize the raid for fear of injuring the stranded Iranian bus passengers on the ground.<sup>21</sup>

I later learned that this decision had placed the four-man "ground team" of undercover CIA and Delta Force officers already in Tehran in great jeopardy. Major Dick Meadows, who had served with such distinction in MACV/SOG, had come out of retirement to volunteer for this risky assignment. He deserved better than to have the locations of his escape route safe houses revealed to the enemy. Through a combination of guts and luck, Dick Meadows and his associates eventually escaped from Tehran.

Discussing the bloody fiasco with other officers experienced in special operations, I was reinforced in my belief that the military needed a permanent, well-funded, independent Special Operations Command that would combine the assets of all four services, as well as civilian covert action personnel. This command could train together with the intensity needed for successful unconventional warfare.

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AS THE 1980 presidential election campaign gained momentum, I decided to support the candidacy of Ronald Reagan, who represented the principles of peace through strength that I had been advocating. I met Reagan, then an unofficial candidate, at a Senate luncheon for him the year before. He marched right up and warmly shook my hand.

"General," he said, "you give me more material for my speeches than anybody else."

Reagan had been following news accounts of my speeches and the American Security Council reports of them.

"Governor Reagan," I replied, "you're probably the only national politician who really understands what I'm talking about."

At the Republican National Convention in Detroit that August I worked with several well-known conservative politicians and leaders such as General Alexander Haig and Danny Graham to incorporate the major elements of the peace-through-strength policy into the Republican Party's national platform. I was well pleased with the nominee for president. Ronald Reagan

had consistently advocated dealing with the Soviet Union from a position of military and economic strength. Unlike Jimmy Carter, Reagan was not beset by doubts about a fundamental "malaise" in American society. Reagan also recognized the difference between totalitarian states determined to undermine the West and authoritarian regimes that we could steer toward reform, using the leverage of military and economic assistance.

And George Bush, as a former CIA director and ambassador to Peking, certainly understood the realities of the global East-West struggle.

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SOON after the 1980 presidential election, I was invited by the Asian People's Anti-Communist League (APACL) to address their regional conference in Perth, Australia. The APACL had been founded by Chiang Kai-shek and South Korean president Syngman Rhee in 1954. In 1966, the group merged with other conservative organizations to form the World Anti-Communist League (WACL). It was a highly diverse group united by a common goal of resistance to Marxism-Leninism or any other form of totalitarianism.

My mentor and friend retired General Dick Stilwell, who was working with the Reagan transition team, assured me that, unlike Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan was deeply interested in America's future role in the Pacific basin and had already pledged to support our traditional allies in the region, South Korea and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

I called my address to the delegates a "Message of Hope and Optimism." I stressed that the new administration intended to strengthen the armed forces of the United States so that America would no longer be dominated by the Soviet Union. I assured the delegates that the Reagan White House would reassess the failed policy of *détente*. The brutal invasion of Afghanistan, I said, was one unfortunate product of *détente* that would not go unchallenged. Non-Communist governments in South Asia that had felt abandoned by the Americans following the Afghan invasion could expect new alliances and economic and military assistance from the United States.

Although the new administration would not punish its allies with overly rigid human rights requirements, keyed to elaborate bureaucratic ledger-keeping as a condition for military and economic assistance, human dignity would remain a major American concern. But this administration would apply the same standards to both allies and opponents. We would encourage authoritarian governments to reform, but we would not exempt totalitarian regimes from criticism.

Above all, I predicted, the new administration would conduct a realistic foreign policy, viewing the world in practical terms, not through the self-deluding idealistic prism of the Carter administration.

The conference received my message warmly. Before I left Perth, the

League's honorary chairman, Dr. Ku Cheng-kang, invited me to attend the 14th Annual Conference of WACL, which would be held in August 1981 in Taipei, Taiwan.

My speech to the Perth conference was reported in the local press, and I received a call from a former Gull Force POW, whose unit I had helped rescue on Hainan Island in 1945. This led to an invitation to Melbourne, where Major Ian Macrae, the senior surviving former Hainan prisoner, had organized a dinner in my honor.

About a dozen former POW officers and senior NCOs attended the party, held in the handsome old Navy-Army Club. I gave them a little speech about the frantic planning and execution of Mission Pigeon. They were curious about the other members of the rescue team.

When I got to the story of my Chinese interpreter, Lieutenant Peter Fong, the grizzled old veterans put down their cigars and brandy snifters and listened with silent intensity.

To me, Peter's story was both a commentary on twentieth-century realities and a monument to the human spirit. The previous year I had received a letter, carefully written in tiny Mandarin characters on a thin piece of rice paper. Among the dense ranks of characters were the English words "Mission Pigeon" and "Peter Fong." The message was accompanied by a translation from a Chinese-American lawyer in New Jersey.

Peter Fong's letter was both alarming and intriguing. Events in his life, he wrote, were then quite "difficult." He requested my help in securing an American visa for his son, Dick Kwang, who would like to visit me in the United States. Even in the translation, Peter's tone indicated he was not free to express his true situation. I contacted the American embassy in Peking offering the required guarantee that the young man would not become a ward of America and wrote to Peter, in care of his wife in Shanghai. The embassy was not convinced; Dick's visa request was refused. I sent a blistering letter to the officious young vice-consul who had refused the visa and it was finally granted.

When young Dick Kwang arrived in Colorado, he told me the true story of his father's "difficult" situation. During the chaos of the early Great People's Cultural Revolution, Mao Tse-tung had reminded his cadres that, although 95 percent of the people will support the revolution, there will always be 5 percent who are counterrevolutionaries, who must be either reeducated or eliminated. An arrest quota of 5 percent of the population—tens of millions of innocent people—was enforced in some areas.

Because Peter Fong spoke English, was a Christian, and had once worked for the Americans, he was swept up in this quota and sent to a slave labor camp on the Yangtze River, where he labored barefoot in the mud for over ten years. After the first Kissinger visit in 1972, officials wanted to learn English, so Peter was shifted from field work to teaching English to the

children of camp officers. He saw a story about my encounter with President Carter and managed to smuggle the letter to me through his son during the young man's annual visit.

After learning as much as I could from Dick, I helped arrange political asylum for him and then took him to find relatives in California. The last we heard was that Peter Fong was still a prisoner, and his wife, a doctor, was forbidden to practice medicine. The former Australian POWs were outraged.

One of them, a businessman named Miskin, the ex-camp supply officer, told me his best friend had just become Australia's foreign minister and was planning a trip to China. Miskin was certain he could convince his friend to request Peter's release.

Back in the States, I worked closely with my Gull Force contacts in Australia and with the Australian embassy in Washington. At first the Peking government utterly denied there were any political prisoners or slave labor camps. But I provided the specific location of the camp and detailed descriptions that I had obtained from Dick Kwang. Then Peking admitted there were some reeducation camps for "criminals," but there was no prisoner named Peter Fong. I provided Peter's Chinese name. A few weeks later, Peking stated that Peter Fong had emigrated to the United States years before. I then provided affidavits from Peter's relatives that he was still in China.

After over six months of constant effort, Peter was released from a camp and reunited with his wife in Shanghai. He was able to buy passports from a corrupt official. Under guidelines from the Reagan State Department, the new consulate in Shanghai was favorably disposed toward anti-Communist Chinese. Peter and his wife were issued visas. In December 1981, they finally joined their son in New York. I was able to help him attain a grant of asylum and permanent resident status.

Throughout his long years in captivity, Peter Fong had never surrendered to Communist indoctrination or sought special favors from his captors. He was just as tough a soldier during those terrible years as he had been on Hainan Island.<sup>22</sup>

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IN NOVEMBER of 1981, with the encouragement and help of Walter Chapiwskyj, I hosted a meeting in Phoenix for several conservative friends to help in the establishment of an American chapter of WACL.<sup>23</sup> For a few years in the 1970s, the former American WACL chapter had been headed by a notorious pseudo-scientific racist named Roger Pearson, who had successfully infiltrated the mainstream American conservative movement. He published a couple of fringe journals advocating White supremacist and anti-

Semitic claptrap. It was unfortunate that Pearson used this position to second the nomination to WACL of a number of neo-Nazis and fascists, who joined several European chapters. Unable to force Pearson's resignation, the members of the board of directors voted for the disestablishment of the American WACL chapter. This took place in 1978. Until 1981, there was no recognized U.S. chapter. When I attended the WACL conference in Taipei, I was shocked to discover that a racial segregationist zealot from Mississippi, named Elmore D. Greaves, was attempting to gain recognition as the U.S. chapter.

Dr. Ku had warned me about the damage Pearson's involvement had done to the League's reputation in the United States, and had also voiced concern about the tendency of anti-democratic fanatics to flock to the League, often bringing with them their racist and anti-Semitic dogma. He hoped that an American chapter could be established around mainstream conservatives, including former military officers with distinguished records. I told him that any group I would head would be focused on national security and foreign policy and would avoid any half-baked theories of racial superiority. And I reminded Dr. Ku I had fought fascism in two theaters of World War II, and I certainly had no sympathy for strutting Nazis.

The unwelcome presence of right-wing extremists was a problem shared by many anti-Communist groups. Indeed, there were screwball zealots out there in the woodwork who were so far right that they had passed through the porous membrane separating fascist from Communist. While still at FORSCOM, I'd had my first encounter with this phenomenon. One of my old OSS Kunming associates, Mitch WerBell, ran a rather mysterious security training academy in Georgia. He went out of his way to be sociable, but I sensed he wasn't completely open about his work. Then I discovered he was on the payroll of the extremist political cult leader Lyndon LaRouche, whose deceptively named U.S. Labor Party was a collection of dangerous misfits who espoused both far-left and far-right ideology. For several months these young fanatics would telephone my office with "vital intelligence," which inevitably boiled down to their paranoid theories that the world was being dominated by an unholy alliance of Jewish bankers, the British royal family (who "controlled" global drug traffic), and their Soviet subordinates.

I warned Mitch WerBell to break off with these crazy misfits, and he said he would. Unfortunately, Mitch had become somewhat of a mercenary in his later life and kept the lucrative connection alive.

The problem of extremists is common to all political advocacy groups, not just conservatives. Liberal organizations, labor, civil rights, and "peace" groups are constantly purging their ranks of unwanted Communists and Trotskyists. And many of these organizations have been less diligent about screening their ranks than the conservatives.<sup>24</sup>

But I was determined that any WACL chapter I headed would be ab-

solutely free of such racists and anti-democratic fanatics. Further, I hoped that a revitalized American branch could serve as a catalyst to purge far-right elements from other League chapters.

In November 1981, I helped create the WACL's American affiliate, the United States Council for World Freedom (USCWF), and agreed to serve as its first chairman. Lieutenant General Danny Graham became the vice-chairman. Our advisory board included a number of retired military officers, including General Lew Walt, who had commanded the Marines in I Corps during the Vietnam War. John Fisher supported the new organization by serving on its advisory board, as did Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, and a bright young former combat infantry officer in Vietnam named Andy Messing, who ran an educational group called the National Defense Council. Our board included a number of mainstream conservative academics and nationally known attorneys.

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THE Reagan administration's first priority was to modernize America's strategic nuclear forces to achieve a better balance with the Soviet Union. The decision to build the B-1 bomber, the MX missile, and the Trident missile submarine sent an obvious message to the Soviets that they were no longer dealing with a weak, indecisive American leader.

It was in the area of strategic defense, however, that I saw Reagan making the most progress. Before his election, Ronald Reagan had voiced his opposition to continuing the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction. Now retired Lieutenant General Daniel Graham was able to influence the White House in exploring a practical strategic defense system. Graham's High Frontier organization worked on the premise that the United States should exploit its technological superiority to demonstrate to the Soviet Union that the MAD concept was a dead end. To do this, he proposed a "technological end run" around the Soviets by deploying a space-based missile defense system, which a panel of academic advisers assured him could be done within three years, if the administration made it a priority.

President Reagan liked Graham's ideas, and the Strategic Defense Initiative was born. Unfortunately, Dr. George Keyworth, Reagan's science adviser, was pessimistic about developing the computer capability needed to command and control an effective missile defense system. Whereas Danny Graham had stressed a practical program—akin to the "brilliant-pebbles" kinetic-kill anti-missiles now in prototype—Keyworth and other academic scientists seemed intent on using the initiative to channel R&D money into exotic basic research in lasers and charged particle beam weapons, which would have no practical application for decades. They were abetted in this

by the Defense Department bureaucracy and powerful aerospace corporation contractors who had a vested interest in keeping MAD alive.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and the new JCS chairman, General John Vessey, undertook a thorough modernization of America's conventional forces, which countered the massive Soviet buildup in tanks and attack helicopters in Europe.

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BUT the Soviets were still actively exercising their "Third Option" of unconventional warfare and insurgency, using their Cuban and East European surrogates. They were, in fact, staging a strategic campaign against the West within the smoke screen of the "wars of national liberation," which Averell Harriman had convinced Jimmy Carter were legitimate Soviet foreign policy.

The fact that the West was actually at war—albeit a low-intensity conflict—became obvious to me during several trips to Central America during this period. As always, the Communist strategy was to exploit poverty and social upheaval, which was certainly to be found in abundance in Central America.

In Guatemala the Guerrilla Army of the Poor was controlled by Cuban advisers, who exploited the government's heavy-handed repression of the Indian peasant majority. Cuban agents operated with relative impunity from the traditional academic sanctuary of the national university in Guatemala City. When moderate politicians tried to reconcile the situation, they often fell victim to assassins of both the extreme right and the Communist left. During a visit to Guatemala in 1979, Danny Graham and I learned that Cuban guerrilla warfare specialists and intelligence agents were actively engaged, keeping the trouble brewing. But in the United States, the news media usually portrayed the insurgency in simplistic terms with the cruel Spanish-ancestry oligarchs brutally repressing the Indian masses.

The guerrilla war in El Salvador was different. Under U.S. pressure, the traditional ruling oligarchy had begun a program of land reform. And the army junta finally allowed a Christian Democratic Party moderate, Jose Napoleon Duarte, to take office in December 1980, eight years after his election. The small but growing Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) was dominated by Cuban-trained Communists and supplied by the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. There was clear evidence that the Soviet-sponsored arms buildup in Nicaragua was meant to transform that country into the central staging base for the "liberation" of Central America and eventually of Mexico.

In fact, the blatant nature of this plan was one of the proximate causes of the defection of leading non-Communists from the Sandinista government

in Nicaragua. Eden Pastora, the military hero of the Sandinista victory over Somoza, was shocked by the cold-blooded approach of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega and his brother Humberto to the insurgency in neighboring El Salvador. He later stated that the "nine top Communists" in the Sandinista government gave priority to aiding the insurrection in El Salvador over addressing critical economic problems in Nicaragua.<sup>25</sup> Taking a page from Ho Chi Minh's book on wars of national liberation, for years neither the Sandinistas nor the FMLN guerrillas would admit to the flow of Communist arms from Nicaragua to El Salvador. It was not until 1989 that FMLN leader Joaquín Villalobos publicly acknowledged the Sandinista aid.<sup>26</sup>

In August 1981, the Reagan administration's Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders went to Managua with an offer to renew economic assistance if the Sandinistas stopped their support for the Communist insurrection in El Salvador and cut their links to guerrilla groups elsewhere in Central America. The Sandinistas conferred with their Cuban sponsors and allowed the initiative to go unanswered while they continued their support of Communist guerrilla groups in Central America.<sup>27</sup>

In El Salvador itself, the army was the government's main weapon against the FMLN guerrillas. After failing to stop Nicaraguan-Cuban assistance to the rebels, the United States resumed military aid to El Salvador and the Pentagon dispatched U.S. military trainers to assist the army. But Congress was still gripped with the Vietnam syndrome, terrified of any U.S. military entanglement. They put an arbitrary limit of fifty-five U.S. trainers on our military assistance mission and severely restricted their freedom of movement in the small country to prevent any U.S. participation in combat.<sup>28</sup>

These restrictions limited the trainers' effectiveness. When Andy Messing and I visited El Salvador in August 1982, we found a very disturbing situation, which we both recognized from our experience in Vietnam. U.S. aid to the Salvadoran military was often inappropriate. America had equipped their air force with A-37 attack jets armed with 500-pound bombs. The army was still organized along conventional lines with clumsy battalion-size units armed with heavy-caliber weapons, including artillery. Like the ARVN of the early 1960s, this force was clearly no match for the hit-and-run attacks of the lightly armed guerrillas. Moreover, the ill-advised use of artillery and jet-attack aircraft was causing widespread civilian casualties and winning the guerrillas unearned sympathy. I couldn't believe the U.S. military was making the same kinds of mistakes we had in Indochina.<sup>29</sup>

Andy and I were aboard a Salvadoran army Huey helicopter returning from La Unión to the capital late one afternoon when the chopper was diverted to pick up casualties from an ambush near a coffee plantation. The chopper settled down in a gritty cloud of volcanic dust. We heard the crack of small arms and the thud of automatic weapons fire nearby. Scared young

soldiers trundled beneath the rotors with their wounded comrades. No sooner were the three moaning casualties dumped onto the deck than the pilot lifted off.

As we climbed away from the battlefield, one of the wounded men, a stocky kid with pronounced Indian features, began to hemorrhage bright arterial blood from a gaping wound in his thigh. The two door gunners squatting on their little bike seats simply stared at the wounded soldier as his dark face grew pale and he slipped into shock. I shouted over the roar of the engine for the gunners to administer first aid. But they stared back at me expressionless. Obviously, they didn't know what to do.

Andy Messing took charge, using the soldier's belt for a tourniquet and applying a pressure bandage to the wound. The man was still alive when we landed at Ilopango air base outside of San Salvador. When we queried the local commander about the incident, he admitted that most of his troops had never received first-aid training. And the understaffed and hard-pressed U.S. military mission could not provide that training.

This was only one of many serious deficiencies in our overly constrained military assistance program to El Salvador. In Washington I conferred with my old friend Nestor Sanchez, who had come over to the Pentagon from the CIA with Undersecretary Frank Carlucci. Nestor had been one of my captains in the JACK operation in Korea and was now a deputy assistant secretary of defense responsible for Latin America. I told him that I thought I should start a private support effort for the hard-pressed Salvadoran army. He said that as long as it was essentially humanitarian aid, there could be no objection from the U.S. government.

Over the next months I worked with concerned conservative groups in the States to fund a private military assistance effort for El Salvador, which provided volunteer American doctors and military veteran trainers in such important areas as first aid, field sanitation, and communications. We even managed to find a retired Army parachute rigger who trained a dozen counterparts in the Salvadoran airborne battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Bob Brown, the publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, was energetic in this effort. Through his vigorous activities and funding, dozens of private American non-combat trainers and advisers went to El Salvador to assist their military. By these and similar efforts elsewhere in the world, Bob Brown demonstrated true patriotism and dedication to the principles of democracy and morality which refute the image of a crass mercenary so prevalent in media reports on his activities.

But the fundamental problem in Central America, of course, remained Nicaragua, where the hard-core Communist cadre of the original Sandinista government was now firmly in control. The Soviet Union was pumping in hundreds of millions of dollars of military assistance. Thousands of Cuban and Soviet-bloc trainers were working to build an army of more than 60,000

regulars, backed by an equal number of well-armed militia: a force *ten times* larger than Somoza's National Guard. And defectors revealed that the army was intended to eventually grow to a total of 500,000 regular and reserve troops. Nicaragua's population was only 3.5 million; this meant that almost 20 percent of the population would be under arms.<sup>30</sup>

Although heavy weapons arrived slowly at first, within a year of the revolution Soviet T-55 battle tanks and armored personnel carriers were photographed being unloaded from Soviet and Cuban ships. Predictably, the Sandinistas conducted a vigorous disinformation campaign, claiming the huge military buildup was "exclusively for defensive" purposes.<sup>31</sup> But the growing Sandinista arsenal so far outstripped any force in Central America that only a fool could deny that the Soviet Union was busily constructing a major strategic base on the North American mainland.<sup>32</sup> And the Soviets' new Sandinista surrogates were undoubtedly destined for "internationalist" duty elsewhere in Latin America.

By this time a number of Nicaraguans who had fought to overthrow Somoza, like Adolfo Calero, a businessman and former dean at the University of Central America and a life-long opponent of the Somoza dictatorship, were living in exile and prepared to organize a democratic resistance to the growing Communist dictatorship in Nicaragua. They were joined by former Sandinista supporters, like Eden Pastora, who had become disillusioned. Naturally I was eager to meet such men, but I learned from embassy officials in Central America that the new Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance movement—the "Contras"—was already in contact with the Central Intelligence Agency, and that covert American support was being organized. My old OSS case officer, Bill Casey, was now director of Central Intelligence, so I knew the resistance was in good hands.

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IN VIEW of the mounting Soviet effort at the low-intensity end of the conflict spectrum, I focused my public speaking efforts on what Danny Graham christened the "Low Frontier." I pointed out to civic groups and university audiences that the high end of the conflict spectrum, full-scale nuclear war, obviously involved the highest level of violence. But it had to be recognized as having the lowest order of probability of occurrence. Conventional war, which fell in the middle of the spectrum, involved relatively moderate levels of violence. As a result of the significant improvement in our conventional forces under the Reagan defense program, the chances of America being involved in a conventional war with the Soviets, Chinese, or North Koreans were significantly reduced.

But we were *already* involved with the Soviets' surrogates at the low end

of the conflict spectrum that included terrorism, subversion, and guerrilla war. The terrorism, sabotage, and assassination then sweeping much of the Third World were not simply a crime wave, but military operations in an unconventional war, which included political warfare, disinformation, and both overt and covert propaganda. Unless we recognized that our enemies were exercising their "Third Option" in the ongoing conflict, I warned, we could be defeated just as certainly as we would had we continued to ignore the Soviet threats at the upper regions of the conflict spectrum.

The United States had to increase its capability to wage unconventional warfare by supporting anti-Communist forces already engaged in the conflict in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Central and South America. I urged support for the President's efforts to increase the covert operations capabilities of our intelligence community, which was beginning to deliver effective support to the Mujaheddin resistance in Afghanistan, anti-Communist forces in Angola, and the new democratic resistance in Nicaragua.

But the Vietnam syndrome still crippled our efforts and dominated congressional oversight of our unconventional-warfare operations. In Angola, for example, Dr. Jonas Savimbi's anti-Communist UNITA forces were conducting a heroic resistance to the Marxist MPLA army supported by well-equipped Soviet, East German, and Cuban regulars, who outnumbered them three to one. Savimbi's tough guerrillas moved freely in all the provinces. They were inflicting heavy casualties on the 23,000 Cuban combat troops. Congress, however, through restrictive legislation known as the Clark Amendment, seriously limited the administration's freedom of action in the area, preventing us from delivering enough military aid and noncombatant advisers for UNITA to win a clear victory.

The problem there was compounded by the Gulf Oil Company, whose concession was controlled by the MPLA and guarded by Soviet and Cuban troops. Gulf's payments to the MPLA government actually subsidized this Communist occupation. And Gulf's influence in Congress was enough to keep the Clark Amendment alive.

I told my audiences that we must learn to "integrate" our economic, political, and military efforts in combined unconventional warfare just as effectively as the Soviets do. This integrated strategy entailed all the assets of covert intelligence activities, black and gray psychological operations, information campaigns, and economic warfare.

We would have to revitalize the covert action and human intelligence capabilities of the CIA that had been stripped away by Carter's CIA director, Stansfield Turner. The Special Operations forces of the Army, Navy, and Air Force had to be expanded and restructured under an effective joint command that would prevent future fiascoes like that of Desert One. Unnecessary legislative restraints like the Clark Amendment that limited as-

sistance to anti-Communist forces in the Third World had to be abolished. And finally, we had to increase the government information activities of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty, and establish Radio Marti to broadcast into Cuba. We had to recognize that the Soviet Union had successfully exploited the failed policy of *détente*. We could turn the tables on them by encouraging resistance to Soviet rule in the captive nations of Eastern Europe and by actively aiding freedom fighters in Central America, Africa, and Afghanistan.

Those of us who had studied patterns of Soviet aggression for decades realized that their system had to expand militarily or it would implode. And we were determined to fight that expansion at the low end of the conflict spectrum. In effect, our new unconventional-warfare effort would go beyond the traditional policy of containment, which had thwarted Communist expansion since World War II, to a policy of "rollback" by providing encouragement and support to dissidents inside the Soviet empire.

As part of my Third Option information campaign, I was invited to address Reagan administration defense policy officials. National Security Adviser Dick Allen asked me to present the concept of fully integrated unconventional warfare to a group of National Security Council officers concerned with special operations. I flew to Washington and met the group at the NSC offices in the Old Executive Office Building (OEOB) next to the White House. My coordinator for this project was a friendly young Marine major named Oliver North. We hit it off very well. I heard he had a fine combat record in Vietnam and friends mentioned his seemingly limitless energy and appetite for hard work.

Over the coming months I made my presentation on the Third Option and our unconventional-warfare strategy to several of the service chiefs and secretaries. Navy Secretary John Lehman was especially enthusiastic. When Andy Messing and I mentioned to Lehman the still-current plans to eliminate the Navy SEALs, the Secretary was flabbergasted. He immediately took action to rescind the order. To my great satisfaction, I was able to watch the organization of an expanded and reinvigorated Special Operations Command during the first Reagan administration.

During my Washington visits I sometimes stopped in to brief CIA director Bill Casey in his office at the OEOB or out at the Langley headquarters. I made a point of keeping him informed on my speaking campaign and our private support efforts in Central America.

"Jack," Casey said, one sleety winter afternoon, "I want you to know that the President is aware of and pleased with your work."

He added that the emerging policy known as the Reagan Doctrine had been partially inspired by my Low Frontier speeches. The policy did indeed combine many of my fundamental concepts, including assistance to anti-

Communist rebels in the Third World and economic and psychological support for the captive nations of the Soviet empire.

I gazed past his desk, out the window to the traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a nasty evening and thousands of government workers were streaming home to the suburbs. I realized that I probably had more influence as a private citizen than I would have had as a mid-level defense official struggling in the bureaucratic trenches.

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MY RESPONSIBILITIES within WACL continued. One of my main concerns was still purging the League of neo-Nazis, racists, and other non-democratic elements. I was greatly helped in this effort by retired Major General Robert Close, a senator in the Belgian parliament and a representative to the European parliament. Bob Close headed the Belgian WACL chapter. He had fought in the anti-Nazi resistance during World War II, was captured, brutally treated, and spent the remainder of the war as a concentration camp prisoner. No one could accuse him of being a fascist. He came to my home in Colorado to work on the problem of expelling neo-Nazis, anti-Semites, racists, and anti-Catholics from the League. We researched the backgrounds of hundreds of League members and dozens of organizations which had applied for memberships. It became obvious that one contingent of delegates dominated by a Mexican neo-Nazi group called the Tecos would have to go, as would several British and European groups who had infiltrated League chapters.

On May 10, 1983, Bob Close and I released the so-called Tabernash Report demanding the expulsion of "extremist, neo-Nazi, neo-fascist, racist, or similar organizations" from the League. Henceforth, we would refuse to invite any extremists to attend WACL conferences we hosted. Bob Close would host the 1983 League conference in Luxembourg and I planned to host the 1984 conference in San Diego. To ensure the word got out that the League had no use for fascists, racists, and anti-Semites, I invited Irwin A. Suall, director of fact finding for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, to send observers to upcoming conferences. He appreciated my invitation, and we appreciated the presence of his observer teams.<sup>33</sup>

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THAT fall two events occurred that reminded the world of the true nature of the Communist powers aligned against the West. On September 1, 1983, Korean Air Lines flight 007 from New York to Seoul, via Anchorage, a Boeing jumbo jet with 269 people on board, was blasted out of the sky by

a Soviet air force interceptor near Sakhalin Island. The plane was hit by at least one air-to-air rocket and exploded, its debris and innocent passengers raining down over a wide area of the Sea of Okhotsk, north of the Japanese island of Hokkaido. There were no survivors.

The Soviets tried to blunt world outrage by implying that the airliner was flying without aerial navigation lights and did not respond to repeated calls from Soviet air traffic control centers. But the American government used tape recordings from one of our electronic intelligence Ferret satellites to reveal that no attempt had been made to contact the plane or to request Japanese air controllers to do so. The truth was that the airliner had strayed from the normal Anchorage-to-Seoul air corridor, probably because of an incorrectly calibrated inertial navigation system.

For me and many of my associates the tragedy was compounded by the loss of our close friend Congressman Larry McDonald, who had been flying to Seoul to participate in ceremonies marking the thirtieth anniversary of the U.S.-Korea Defense Treaty. Larry had asked me to be a part of the delegation and travel with him. I had just returned from Korea one month earlier, so I decided against it. I did not want to wear out my welcome in Korea. I'd known Larry McDonald since I'd served in FORSCOM, when he was a conservative Democratic congressman from Georgia's 7th District. He was one of the most knowledgeable people about the U.S. Constitution and American history I'd ever met.

Even under the supposed openness of Glasnost, it's never been revealed whether the Soviet pilot knew the Boeing 747 was a civilian airliner or if he mistook it for an American RC-135 electronic intelligence aircraft that had been flying in international air space well offshore that same morning. In either case, the cruelty of the act underscored the fundamental brutality of the Soviet system. It was inconceivable that any Western air force would have committed a similar outrage, even if an unarmed Soviet spy plane were intercepted by a fighter.<sup>34</sup>

A month later, the South Koreans suffered another blow. A delegation of high-ranking government ministers from Seoul was in Rangoon, Burma, attending a wreath-laying ceremony at a war memorial pavilion. The group was waiting for South Korean president Chun Doo-Hwan, whose car was delayed in traffic, when a massive bomb exploded, killing sixteen of the Korean delegation and three Burmese. Local police later confronted a North Korean saboteur agent, who killed himself with a hand grenade rather than surrender. Within a week, South Korean intelligence assembled firm evidence that the bomb had been planted by the North Korean secret service.<sup>35</sup> Friends in the American intelligence community confirmed that the assassination attempt had been a North Korean operation, and they stressed that Kim Il-Sung's agents probably received Soviet cooperation in staging the attack.

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IN MAY 1984, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Dr. Fred Ikle invited me to head a panel of outside experts to reassess our military assistance policy to El Salvador and to recommend changes. I was more than happy to do so, because I believed the effort to date was badly flawed by lack of direction, incompetence, as well as crippling congressional restrictions. There wasn't much we could do about the Congress, but I knew the Pentagon had to improve its performance or we could anticipate a prolonged bloody conflict, ending in a Communist victory.

The so-called Singlaub Panel I assembled were all recognized experts in unconventional warfare. Retired Major General Ed Lansdale had decades of experience in counterinsurgency in both the Philippines and Indochina. My old friend Brigadier General Heinie Aderholt was probably the most knowledgeable retired officer on the use of air power in counterinsurgency. And Dr. Edward Luttwak had written brilliantly on light infantry and special operations.<sup>36</sup>

In our discussions the panel concurred that the Salvadoran military effort to date had been clumsy, heavy-handed, and often brutal. The FMLN guerrillas operated in close proximity to the civilian population, employing small-scale terrorism, assassination, and sabotage. Even as the guerrilla forces became larger, it was basic error to combat them with regular forces, including jet aircraft and field artillery.

We unanimously agreed that the fundamental priority in any new American policy had to be de-escalating the level of violence. El Salvador was a small, poor country; waging the kind of war currently under way might well destroy it.

Ed Lansdale sagely pointed out that military assistance groups often became informal arms vendors, in effect brokering the sale of surplus weapons such as the inappropriate A-37 ground-attack jets. In order to keep these jets flying in bad weather conditions, the Americans had convinced the Salvadorans to squander part of their limited military aid budget on a sophisticated radar installation at the Ilopango air base. We resolved that future American assistance should include "slow-mover" AC-47 gunships, rather than more jets. These gunships had been used to great effect in breaking up guerrilla attacks in Vietnam and they could do the same in El Salvador without the massive collateral damage of bombing.

The list of blunders went on. We discovered that the Americans were selling the Salvadoran army extremely expensive lightweight 105mm howitzers that could be transported by helicopter. Ed Luttwak offered to find out the background of the requirement for this exotic hardware. An hour later

he came back to our Pentagon conference room with the full story. In order to keep the lightweight howitzer production line open, some obscure Pentagon bureaucrat had launched the ploy of selling one per month to the hapless Salvadorans. At the price they were paying, they could have had three conventional artillery pieces for every lightweight gun we made them purchase.

But I was convinced that all this emphasis on high-caliber hardware was completely out of line. El Salvador needed a well-equipped and well-trained national police force, not a large conventional army to combat the insurgency. Their unwieldy infantry battalions conducting clumsy search-and-destroy operations only alienated the rural population. It was my strong recommendation that America concentrate its efforts in building up an effective paramilitary rural constabulary in El Salvador, an organization made up of local residents familiar with the geography and people of each village.

But here we were stymied. Over the previous decade liberals in Congress had prohibited American foreign aid being used for police training. Police in Third World countries were viewed as agents of the repressive oligarchy. But without adequate training in counterinsurgency, police often fought assassination and kidnapping through illegal means. El Salvador's notorious death squads were typical of this reaction. But the most vociferous congressional opponents of these "fascist" police refused to vote funds for American aid to reform and train the needed counterinsurgency constabulary. Nevertheless, we recommended the establishment of such a professional police force under strict control of the civilian government. We also recommended the thorough retraining of the Salvadoran army for small-unit night operations deep in traditional rebel sanctuaries. Finally, the Singlaub Panel stressed that the combined government forces in El Salvador had to undertake much greater responsibility for civic action projects in the countryside and that the thrust of our truncated military training effort should be in those directions.

I was pleased to see that every one of our recommendations was implemented in the next few years. It was especially heartening that the U.S. government was finally permitted to join an international effort to retrain El Salvador's police forces. The earlier hypocrisy of chiding the Salvadoran government over the death squads while withholding aid for professional police training had finally ended.<sup>37</sup>

By the summer of 1984 it seemed that America had reversed the stagnant drift of the post-Vietnam years and was set on a course to defend freedom and support democracy in our own hemisphere and throughout the world. But in all my marathon travel and public speaking, I had overlooked the obvious fact that 1984 was a presidential election year. And I had underestimated the power of congressional liberals to politicize national security.