

A CHRISTIC INSTITUTE SPECIAL REPORT: THE CONTRA-DRUG CONNECTION

The Christic Institute filed a civil lawsuit in a Miami Federal District Court in May of 1986--a full six months before the Iran/contra scandal broke nationwide. The suit was brought on behalf of journalists Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, who were injured in the May 1984 La Penca press conference bombing. The Institute lawsuit first revealed Oliver North's secret network of ex-CIA and military officers--including Richard Secord, Albert Hakim, Theodore Shackley, Thomas Clines, and Rob Owen. The suit charges these men, 29 in all, with responsibility for the La Penca bombing, and for supporting the Nicaraguan contras when such activity is strictly forbidden by the Federal Neutrality Act.

Our investigation revealed that some of these men have been associated with large-scale drug trafficking in covert wars in Cuba, Southeast Asia, and Central America--as well as illegal arms sales and political assassinations, for over two decades. The case, which is expected to come to trial in mid-to-late 1988, will undoubtedly reveal new and important information about the contra-drug connection.

FACING THE REAL DRUG WAR

A major theme of the Reagan presidency in the 1980's has been the 'War on Drugs', both at home and abroad. During her anti-drug crusade, Nancy Reagan has told America's youth to "Just Say No!" to drugs. Meanwhile, President Reagan and his law enforcement agencies have vowed to stem the flow of narcotics across the U.S. border and "control the problem at its source," namely, in the drug-exporting countries of Latin America.

Astonishingly, however, over the past two years, mounting evidence has implicated the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan "contras"--President Reagan's so-called "freedom fighters" attempting to overthrow

the government of Nicaragua--and their supporters in large-scale drug trafficking. Contra narcotics smuggling stretches from cocaine plantations in Colombia, to dirt airstrips in Costa Rica, to pseudo-seafood companies in Miami, and, finally, to the drug-ridden streets of our society.

The evidence suggests that not only were high Reagan Administration officials aware of contra drug trafficking, but some have attempted to cover up this fact and have directly assisted such illicit activity. Despite what has already been revealed by the Iran/contra scandal, the contra-drug connection and the potential U.S. government link to it remains one of the most underreported yet explosive stories of this decade.

THE EVIDENCE

Evidence of drug trafficking by the contras and their supporters centers on four related allegations: 1) that a major "guns-for-drugs" operation has existed between North, Central, and South America that has helped finance the contra war; 2) that the contra leadership has received direct funding and other support from major narcotics traffickers; 3) that some of the contra leaders have themselves been directly involved in drug trafficking; and 4) that United States government funds for the contras have gone to known narcotics dealers. Each piece of evidence cited below falls within one or more of these categories.

Guns-for-Drugs

Much attention has been focused on the secret resupply operation set up by the Reagan Administration to keep the contras armed when such assistance was outlawed by Congress between October 1984 and October 1986. Lesser known is that this resupply operation involved not only sending arms down to the contras, but

