

The very best mujahaddin forces are being starved of American-supplied weapons because they insist on fighting a low-intensity guerrilla war while the CIA demands a quick victory by way of commando-style frontal assaults on the cities. Ahmad Shah Massoud, the top mujahaddin commander, told a western TV journalist: "The CIA says we are disorganized and can't run our own affairs. This means they want to control us. But we won't be controlled. So they haven't sent us arms this year" (CNN TV Broadcast, December 6, 1989).

The mess in Afghanistan is hauntingly similar to what happened in Yapti Tasba and Nicaragua: the CIA skimmed and stalled on weapons necessary to fight a Soviet-backed adversary that had a seemingly limitless supply of modern weapons and communications, the FDN was but one of many groups fighting the Sandinistas and had little popular support inside Nicaragua yet it was favored by the CIA and Honduras and received over 90 percent of the weapons and money, the FDN sought to smash the self-determination goals of the various Yapti Tasba resistance forces, CIA blunders were covered up by blaming the resistance groups for incompetence and disunity, and the best combatants were denied adequate and sufficient weapons. Without these problems Yapti Tasba could have been liberated by 1985 and Nicaragua by 1986.

### **The Sins of the CIA**

Very few, if any, CIA covert actions have been successful.

Almost all have been failures. A typical operation focuses on a strong leader to whom exaggerated promises are made, then technical experts impose off-the-shelf prepackaged methods that are counterproductive and antagonize everyone, economic self-reliance is replaced by economic dependence, military forces overextend confident that more support will be forthcoming, finally revelations about the covert support become an embarrassment in Washington and a liability to the President, support is cut off and the action is dropped, and the resistance is left high and dry and exposed.

"We'll get it right next time" never happens and the template of failure is moved to another position on a map.

An autopsy would reveal multiple causes of death: irresponsible leadership, irreparable press portrayal, irreconcilable divisions in U.S. Congress, and irredeemable CIA sins. These "sins" are:

1. The CIA was cheap and timid. Too little support was provided at the start. By the time barely adequate weapons began to be provided to the Indian resistance, the FSLN had five years to upgrade and triple its forces and create a propaganda smokescreen. With ground-to-air missiles and equivalent firepower, the Yapti Tasba resistance groups would have knocked out the FSLN's "Push-and-Pull" light bombers and Mi-17 and Mi-24 helicopters, and then been able to better utilize advantages in civilian support, knowledge of terrain, and better fighters to defeat the Sandinista military forces. Sophisticated weaponry did not appear until Fall, 1987 and even then it was but too little and too late.

2. The CIA created artificial leaders. Only a movement can create a leader. Too much support was given to leaders instead of movements. A self-determination movement can be supported but it cannot be redirected or suppressed. When the CIA failed to control the resistance through legitimate leaders it helped set up a puppet Kisan leadership that won little respect or authority over the resistance or from Yapti Tasbans; finally, the CIA set

up its own organization -- FAUCAN -- in an unsuccessful effort to hijack the resistance forces. These tactics turned the resistance against the CIA and led to near killings of CIA personnel.

3. The CIA demanded counterproductive unity. Too much emphasis was placed on forcing unity with the Contras. Even the U.S. Congress twice formally recognized the distinct nature of Yapti Tasba war by special appropriations in 1986 and 1988 to Misurasata and Yatama. However, the CIA consistently sought to force a self-determination war over territory to merge with a civil war over ideology. In November 1986 seven Misurasata commanders who were supposed to be flown to Florida for advanced training were instead flown to El Aguacate, the CIA base in Honduras and subjected to threats and bribes to join their forces with the Contras.

4. The CIA overstepped its logistic support role for political and military control. The CIA asserted that because it paid the bills it should control the money, communications and operations. This created destructive antagonisms.

5. The CIA blocked and diverted U.S. Congressional funding. In 1986, the CIA took over the \$5 million appropriated to Misurasata by the U.S. Congress and constricted expenditures and suffocated the organization. About \$4 million never went to Misurasata. In March, 1988, as part of a humanitarian assistance package, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$2.19 million to Brooklyn Rivera's Yatama to be used for food, medicine, clothes and shelter for combatants and their families. Congress made the appropriation as an act of support for the Yatama-FSLN preliminary accord of February 2, 1988. However, the CIA blocked and diverted the funds to support the Yatama groups in Honduras that were against political accommodation with Managua.

6. The CIA emphasized a military solution and blocked civic action and political organization necessary to strengthen and intensify civilian participation.

7. The CIA organized and supported Laos-model cross-border commandos instead of helping the guerrilla fighters inside the Sandinista-occupied territories. Though the CIA-Honduran bases facilitated supply and "accountability", this strategy weakened a large part of the Yapti Tasba resistance by making it addicted to and dependent upon outside assistance which itself was vulnerable to Washington's political whims.

8. The CIA emphasized and imposed a conventional army-style centralized command structure that was too top-heavy, cumbersome and distant to direct guerrilla units far inside Yapti Tasba. The resistance's original structure was far superior: decentralized, independent groups of mobile guerrilla fighters that operated permanently within the occupied territories and alongside the people.

9. Almost all CIA personnel and contract agents who worked with the resistance groups were antagonistic to the movement's goals.

10. The CIA carried out its own projects that ruptured its relationship with Congress and cut off U.S. assistance to both Nicaraguan and Yapti Tasban resistance groups; these included the 1983 harbor mining, the 1984 revelation of the clownish training manual, and the 1985-1986 secret NSC-CIA-RIG network that obtained funds and weapons from private sources and other countries.

The U.S.'s yo-yo funding to Yapti Tasba resistance groups and open support of the anti-Yapti Tasba Resistencia Nicaragüense, prompted some in Yatama to talk to the Sandinsitas.

In the fall of 1987, at the height of the long-awaited military buildup, Yatama's Brooklyn Rivera and FSLN Minister of Interior Tomás Borge agreed to another round of negotiations. Externally, Rivera wanted to parley Yatama's military successes into a negotiated settlement and had the backing of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. Internally, Rivera sought to convince others in Yatama to go with him to Managua by citing CIA and State Department foul-ups and manipulations as the reasons for being "pushed" back to the negotiating table. This was the second time that Rivera had taken U.S. military aid and then used the military achievements to enter into negotiations with the FSLN. The State Department and the CIA were exasperated with Rivera's turnaround.

**FIG. XX CIA/US -- YAPTI TASBA RELATIONS**

- 1981 August: behind the scenes support for training of a few Astros in Argentina and Guatemala; most trained in Honduras. September: Astros start military assistance empty-handed and on their own. November: US supplies \$19 million for training of Nicaraguans but Yapti Tasbans are marginalized.
- 1982 Early 1982 Misura receives some FAL-FNs from Argentina through CIA channels. May: Argentina ends its participation. US supplies \$21 million for FDN buildup, and, again, the Yapti Tasba resistance is marginalized. Misura survives on FDN military handouts.
- 1983 CIA pumps in direct but limited support to Misura. Special training projects. ARDE begins to receive CIA supplies and passes on old weapons to Misurasata. Israel begins to help with military supplies. October "Urgent Fury" invasion of Grenada panics FSLN into massive buildup and reinforces CIA overemphasis on a military only solution in Nicaragua instead of assisting the development of a stronger domestic and international political base for the Nicaraguan and Yapti Tasban resistance forces. Yapti Tasba resistance receives but a tiny fraction of the US \$24 million.
- 1984 January: discovery of CIA mining of harbors shocks US Congress and jeopardizes military assistance to Misura and Misurasata (via ARDE). Boland Amendment cuts off direct assistance. Other countries begin to provide assistance to Misura and Misurasata (via ARDE). Misurasata receives 200 equipos from CIA in October. Also in October, the existence of a CIA manual (Psychology Operations in Guerrilla Warfare) is discovered by an angry US Congress. Supplies for Misura and Misurasata are insufficient to advance the Yapti Tasba war.
- 1985 Private and "friendly" country support allow maintenance of Misura and Misurasata but it is not enough to go on offensive inside Yapti Tasba. Oliver North and RIG network established to keep FDN-UNO and ARDE going. Yapti Tasba forces marginalized. October: Oliver North support for formation of Kisan in Honduras. Only marginal assistance.
- 1986 CIA participation in North network keeps Nicaraguan and Yapti Tasba resistance groups barely afloat. October 6 Hasenfus crash exposes network. November 25 Meese reveals arms sales to Iran funds Contras (not Yapti Tasba groups). October 15: \$100 million released by US Congress which includes \$5 million for Misurasata which the CIA withholds. November: CIA tries to brainwash Misurasata commanders into joining Contras at El Aguacate base in Honduras. CIA stonewalls on control of Misurasata funding.

- 1987 CIA-Yapti Tasba relations at flash-point. March: CIA tries to force Misura and Kisan fighters to join its FAUCAN organization; CIA field people close to being eliminated. April: CIA forced to take back seat and let US State Department take over liaison with Yapti Tasba resistance. CIA-assisted arms buildup after June formation of Yatama.
- 1988 End of military assistance with Feb. 3 defeat of Contra aid bill. March: U.S. Congress appropriates \$2.19 million of humanitarian assistance to Rivera's Yatama which is blocked and diverted by the CIA to the old Kisan leadership Yapti Tasba group in Honduras.
- 1989 March 24, the Bush-Baker Nicaraguan initiative ends any chance of further military support to the RN Contras who must quit fighting to receive humanitarian aid. The Yapti Tasba resistance is not mentioned.