

THE CIA FAMILY JEWELS AND LATIN AMERICA

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Documents made public on June 26, 2007 by the Central Intelligence Agency describe a series of intelligence operations, mostly involving domestic spying, that first came to light in the 1970s. They also include some discussion of assassination plots against foreign leaders. The C.I.A. account of these activities, running nearly 700 pages, is **known as the “Family Jewels.”**

The New York Times has assembled a **panel of intelligence experts and historians to review and comment on these documents.**

Appended to this message I send you a *word-file “i02-NYT-CIA-FamilyJewels”* with some of these commentaries, published by The New York Times in the paper edition and on the Web site.

The “family Jewels” are about domestic spying of US-citizens. So, why are they also important for Latin America? Let me try to look for some answers.

1. CIA THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE NOT BOUND BY LAW AND ETHICAL RULES

In his memoirs, “Reflections of a Cold Warrior,” published in 1996 after his death, Richard M. Bissell Jr., who directed C.I.A. operations during the late 1950s and early 1960s, wrote:

“Many of us who joined the C.I.A. did not feel bound in the actions we took as staff members to observe all the ethical rules that we would have observed and regarded as valid before we joined. But in a larger sense, the patriotism, the belief in the need for the United States to play an important role in the world¹ had some of their roots in our upbringing and education, and they certainly did affect the atmosphere in the agency.”

The documents give many examples where the CIA was breaking the law and violating ethical rules.

2. HIGH LEVEL LEADERS WERE INVOLVED

Most activities were known before the official publication of the documents, but they show the direct involvement of Directors of the CIA, Secretary’s and Presidents. We even can see that John F. Kennedy was not the saint he was painted to the rest of the world.

3. THE US TRAINED AGENTS FOR SECRET SERVICIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES

The C.I.A. and other American agencies trained and equipped foreigners to serve their nations — and, in secret, the United States. Once the Americans set up a foreign service, **the foreigners could both help carry out American foreign policy by suppressing Communists and leftists, and gather intelligence on behalf of the C.I.A.**

The program, according to recently declassified American government documents, had trained hundreds of thousands of foreign military and police officers in 25 nations by the early 1960s. It helped create the secret police of Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Peru, the Philippines, South Korea, South Vietnam, and Thailand. (See the appended NYT-documents, chapter “K”)

(The family jewels are about domestic spying. This kind of documents evidently were included because one part of the program included a two-day course in Florida in April 1973).

¹ A very good book about this point: James W.Loewen “**Lies my teacher told me – Everything your american history textbook got wrong**” A Touchstone Book, published by Simon & Schuster.

Politicians and false patriots think they need to create heroes, so you can find this kind of lies not only in the USA. But maybe the case of the USA with the belief in their “*important role in the world*” is more pathetic.

4. THE CIA CONTRACTED CRIMINALS

Gangsters like Sam Giancana worked for the CIA. See section "O" for details.

In this context we also can understand why actually President George W. Bush doesn't want to extradite to Venezuela the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, who blew up a Cuban plane with 73 persons and was involved in other terrorist attacks. Posada was in the seventies an Venezuelan secret agent, tortured prisoners in Venezuela, and worked in secret at the same time for the CIA. He knows too much.

5. THE CIA TRIED TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

Several documented failed assassination plots against Fidel Castro, implemented by the most powerful agency of the world, seem part of a comedy.

It also almost makes us laugh when we read how on December 11, 1959, Richard Bissell sent the CIA Director Allen Dulles a memo suggesting that "thorough consideration be given to the **elimination** of Fidel Castro" and Dulles struck out the word elimination, substituted **removal from Cuba** — and gave the go-ahead. Fidel Castro is now an old and sick man. Today June 29 George W. Bush spoke hopeful about the time when "God will take him away" (all the international news agencies commented it; you can note some progress from "elimination" to "removal" and finally to "God's will"), but Fidel is still alive and between us.

But what about assassination plots against other foreign leaders?

Jaime Roldós, president of Ecuador, hated by Washington and the oil companies, died in a plane crash on May 24, 1981. Newspapers throughout the hemisphere blazed "CIA Assassination"².

The same year on July 31 Omar Torrijos, President of Panamá, defender of the poor and of human rights, close to be candidate for the Peace Nobel price, died in a plane crash. "CIA Assassination" once again headlined articles and editorials.

When will we know the truth? When will be undisclosed additional documents? Maybe in 2040 or 2050?

6. TRUTH IS DANGEROUS – AND SO REPORTERS ARE DANGEROUS

You have to protect your own people from truth, because truth is dangerous.

See the timetable (chapter "C"): On Jan. 16, 1975 President Ford invited representatives of The New York Times to the White House. The president tells editors that **it is not in the national interest to discuss the C.I.A.'s past** and that **the reputation of every president since Harry S. Truman would be blackened** by the record.

On Feb. 21, 1975 President Ford enlisted **Donald H. Rumsfeld**, the White House chief of staff, to **create a "damage-limiting operation for the president."**

On Oct. 13, 1975 President Ford and his advisers meet to weigh the damage. Mr. Colby tells the president that **"any document which officially shows American involvement in an assassination is clearly a foreign policy disaster."**

The presidential hand may have been hidden in some cases, but the "Family Jewel" documents **show in fine detail how the C.I.A., at the direction of high level officials in the Kennedy and Nixon administration, spied on journalists.**

7. ARE TODAY'S TACTICS SO MUCH DIFFERENT?

- This point is discussed in chapter "B" of the appended documents. Mr. Bamford, one of the experts consulted by the NYT, says **the scale of the [National Security Agency's](#)**

² About these crashes, see: John Perkins, Confessions of an Economic Hit Man, A Plume Book

interception of phone calls and e-mail messages of Americans and others in the United States in recent years — which prompted a lawsuit from the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) in which Mr. Bamford is a plaintiff — **almost certainly dwarfs the electronic surveillance and the review of mail carried out by the N.S.A. and the C.I.A. in the 1960s.**

- Violations of human rights of prisoners by different ways are well known and need no comment.
- Opposition organizations in Venezuela discuss openly that there is no way to remove President Chávez by elections (he is popular and will win again and again) and that they have to find other methods to “reinstall democracy” as they call it. These kind of organizations and individuals get money from the US-government. They deny it, but there are proofs: Declassified documents by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)³ show that **the US State Department drains financial help to this kind of organizations and individuals in Venezuela** by US organizations like the NED, USAid, IRI (International Republican Institute) and Center for a free Cuba. Reporters without borders, who protest against restrictions to the freedom of media in Venezuela, also get this kind of help.
- There are a lot of clear proofs that the US Government knew before about the plans for the coup d'état of 2002 in Venezuela and that it was involved in different kind of actions. The USA and Spain were the only countries that recognized the new government. This government was really dictatorial, eliminating parliament, Supreme Court and all the 26 governors (elected in independent elections). The people protested, went on the streets, and less than three days later Chávez was reinstated as legitimate president. Very bad days and a shame for the US diplomacy.
- One of the worst points of US-Diplomacy was the actuation of John Negroponte as Ambassador in El Salvador. He coordinated actions against the leftist government of Nicaragua, led by the Sandinist Daniel Ortega: illegal US-financing and training for the terrorism against the legal and democratic government of Nicaragua. When you compare the declarations of Negroponte in hearings of the US congress with his actions, you only can call him cynical. Peace Nobel Prize winner Rigoberto Menchú and others call him a war-criminal. Recently Negroponte was named by President Bush as Sub-Secretary of State with competence for Latin America. The past charges against Negroponte were dismissed. But what can we think about this designation? What are the intentions?

Daniel Ortega, removed with US help, is at this moment again the President of Nicaragua, he is bringing a message of hope and dignity, and he seems to be very popular. A lot of time lost, a lot of lives lost, but it seems that Negroponte couldn't stop history.

8. OUR FEARS TODAY

- President Chávez of Venezuela and also President Correa of Ecuador say publicly that the US-President will be the principal responsible if anything happens to them. Maybe some observers in the US see this as a kind of cheap nationalism, populism and manipulation or some kind of paranoia.
- For Latin America President Carter was a US President with a human face, and President Clinton also was seen as a man with good will, with whom you can talk.

³ The Venezuelan-US American lawyer Eva Gollinger published a lot of documents about this kind of financing.

- But at this moment you only have to see the voices inside of the United States, like the New York Times. Analyzing the **VISIBLE** signs, it seems that we are back in the sixties or seventies. What about **ALL THE THINGS WE CAN'T SEE**, things we will know only within 20 or 30 years (like the Jewels, redacted more than 30 years ago)? Why shouldn't we be afraid?

9. WHO IS THE REAL LOOSER?

- Of course, the US are a powerful nation, they have economic power (and economic power controls also mass media), they have a veto in the United Nations (so they have immunity and guaranteed impunity), they have also some twenty thousand nuclear arms. And they still believe in the need to play their role as the "leader of the free world"
- In my personal opinion one of the biggest allies of Latin America during the last years was involuntary George W. Bush. With his extreme external politics he helped us to open the eyes. At the beginning Venezuela was alone, with a president who likes to play always a risky political game (this has two sides: big risks – and big steps). Some people thought it would be easy to stop him. In 2002 came a desperate coup d'état, but he couldn't be stopped.
- At the present moment the US government has very few friends in Latin America: Colombia, Peru, maybe you can count Chile. There are a lot of solid democracies, with popular support (in Ecuador Correa in a recent referendum got 83% support, but real support, not like the 99% once in the Soviet Union).
- Economy in South America is growing fast, the countries with unorthodox politics have the fastest growing (Venezuela, Argentine),. And it seems that Latin American economy is more and more independent of the economic development in the USA. Economic integration is making big progress.
- In the recent meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of American States in Panamá we saw a situation never seen before: Condoleeza Rice proposed an investigation of limitation of freedom of media in Venezuela. The Venezuelan foreign minister responded that this point was not in the agenda. Condoleeza gave a short response and abandoned the room. And the Venezuelan minister countered speaking about violations of human rights by the United States. Condoleeza knew very well why to leave the room: she was left alone, there was not one voice to support her position. Yes, there are a few governments on her side, but they didn't want to lose popularity, they didn't find it opportune to show such a position in public . . .
- This is only one visible sign, there are many others. The first victim of the actual politics of George Bush are the United States themselves, getting more and more isolated. And it may be very, but very difficult for the next US President to reduce the actual mistrust, to change from domination and imposition –not accepted any more– to a new relation of peaceful partnership, in the interest of all our people.