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COVERT ACTIVITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The anti-Reagan media and the Congressional liberals would have us believe that there is something evil, new and un-American about covert activity in Nicaragua. On the contrary, if you have read Solzhenitsyn, you would know that it is always a social good to save a nation from Communism. Furthermore, there is a successful precedent for U.S. covert activity to overthrow a Communist government in Central America. It happened in Guatemala in 1954; and thereby hangs a little known piece of history.

President Dwight Eisenhower determined that a Communist government in Central America was intolerable to U.S. security and a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. He appointed a distinguished U.S. career diplomat, Whiting Willauer, to head the operation.

Willauer was a brilliant man, a lawyer and a linguist, who had served as U.S. Ambassador to several countries. He had been special representative to the Philippines to reconstitute the civilian economy after World War II. He had held an important position with General Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers during World War II, he was the legal coordinator of Admiral Richard Byrd's second Antarctic expedition, he held a pilot's license, and he was an expert diver, having received an award for dangerous rescue work.

In 1954, Willauer was appointed Ambassador to Honduras for the specific purpose of helping to overthrow the Communist regime in neighboring Guatemala. Willauer headed the U.S. team consisting of Ambassador Robert Hill, John Puerifoy, and several CIA men.

The Willauer team accomplished a unique objective: the successful overthrow of a Communist regime; and Guatemala has been free from Communist control ever since. Allen Dulles later gave Willauer a commendation which stated that the Guatemalan revolution could not have succeeded without his guiding hand.

On December 10, 1960, Secretary of State Christian Herter called Willauer into his office and said that President Eisehhower had "a very special job" for Willauer. He was asked to be the senior partner of a two-man partnership with a top CIA man in directing an operation that had started in March that year, run by Cubans but backed by the CIA.

Five days later, Willauer started work as the top representative of the U.S. Government on the Bay of Pigs invasion to overthrow Castro in Cuba. After the Eisenhower Administration was replaced by the Kennedy Administration in January 1961, Secretary of State Dean Rusk personally telephoned Willauer and asked him to continue on the same job.

Within weeks, however, the tide turned in the Kennedy Administration. At a meeting in Rusk's office on February 8, Willauer reviewed the invasion plans for top State Department officials. It became apparent that, while Willauer's main objective was to make the Bay of Pigs invasion a success, the others were more interested in what other countries would <u>think</u> of the invasion.

On February 14, Willauer's CIA partner phoned Willauer and said, "We can't talk to you any more. We can only talk to other people." Not only the CIA, but everyone in the State Department clammed up and refused to talk to Willauer about anything. They simply froze him out of further plans without a word, even without getting the benefit of Willauer's expertise for whomever replaced him as project director.

We all know now that the Bay of Pigs invasion was one of America's most humiliating defeats. Castro's air force was not knocked out; the Swan Island radio station "somehow" failed to broadcast the signal alerting the Cuban underground to revolt; the Lignum Vitae Island radio station was forbidden to tell the Escambray guerrillas to cut the only rail line from Havana to the Bay of Pigs; some invaders armed with 30-caliber machine guns received 50-caliber ammunition; others armed with Garand rifles received cartridges made for Springfields; paratroopers had no sleep for two nights and no food or water for seven hours before jumping into Cuba; and American warships steamed away without even offering the out-gunned invaders a Dunkirk-type evacuation.

A few months later, Willauer died of a broken heart, knowing that if he had been kept on the job, people now dead would be alive, and seven million people would have been liberated from Communism. Five years later, in a frank interview with journalist Stewart Alsop, Kennedy's Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said about the Bay of Pigs: "You know damn well where I was at the time of decision -- I recommended it."

President Reagan's options in Nicaragua are not easy, but they are clear. He can liberate a Central American country from Communism as Eisenhower did in Guatemala; or he can acquiesce in a planned defeat and leave a nation enslaved by Communism as Kennedy did.