

# POX AMERICANA



*Chinandega, Nicaragua, in ruins after bombing by U.S. pilots in 1927, a decade before the much more widely publicized attack on Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The latter is often referred to as the first terror bombing of a civilian population — erroneously, as clearly indicated by this photograph. There have been countless similar events since then, with no end in sight.*

## PHILIP AGEE ON THE CIA, 9/11 AND U.S. TERROR

*“Since the end of the Cold War, the political class and the CIA have had no similar worldwide threat. Well, now it seems that they have one again. They will use every bit of power they have to bring other countries in line.”*

On 24 September 2001, just thirteen days after terrorist attacks against symbols of U.S. economic and military might in New York and Washington, Philip Agee visited Stockholm to address the issue of U.S. influence on Swedish news media, in a series of events arranged by Nordic News Network (details at: [www.nnn.se/abf/abf.htm](http://www.nnn.se/abf/abf.htm)).

Agee is one of the most interesting and important figures in modern U.S. history. No one has done more to shed light on the darker side of U.S. foreign policy, based on the knowledge and insights he gained as an agent of the CIA, the Central Intelligence Agency.

His disclosures have been important in their own right, but his example may be even more important. He was the first to leave the CIA and reveal its secrets to the world— confirming much of what had long been suspected, but routinely dismissed as ideological nonsense, “conspiracy theories” and so on. Since then, many former employees of the CIA and other government agencies have provided valuable service by following his example.

[www.nnn.se/pox.htm](http://www.nnn.se/pox.htm)

That example is the product of a remarkable personal journey. He grew up in very comfortable circumstances in Florida, and was a devout Catholic who for a time seriously considered becoming a priest. "My entire background and education were conservative," he has written. "That meant conformity and acceptance of authority. Nothing could have been more natural than to go into the CIA to fight the holy war against Communism." This was in the 1950s, "long before the world knew [that the CIA was] into political assassinations, torture and overthrowing governments".

Between 1960 and 1968 he worked as a CIA agent in various countries of Latin America. "During those years, I changed," he writes. "I wondered why we were so afraid of governments that put priorities on helping peasants and other poor people."

Those doubts led to his resignation from the CIA in 1968, and he eventually decided to write a book about his experiences and the conclusions he had drawn from them. It was entitled *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, and it caused an international sensation when it was published in 1975.

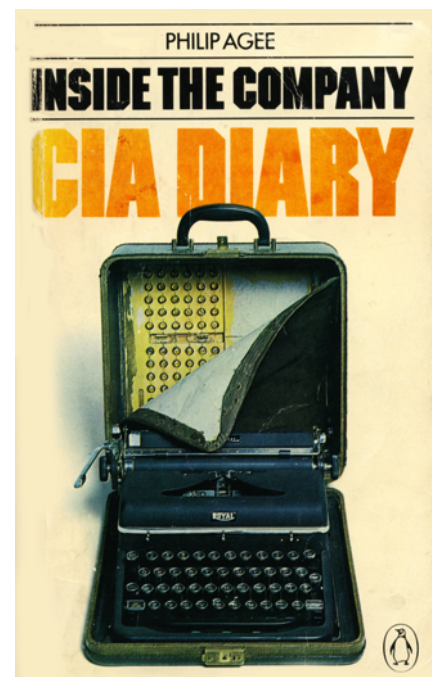
"I tried to show how our operations help to sustain favourable operating conditions for U.S.-based multi-national corporations", Agee has explained. "These conditions, together with political hegemony, were our real goals.... 'Free elections' really meant freedom for us to intervene with secret funds for our candidates. 'Free trade unions' meant freedom to establish our unions. 'Freedom of the press' meant freedom for us to pay journalists to publish our material as if it were their own. When an elected government threatened U.S. economic and political interests, it had to go. Social and economic justice were fine concepts for public relations, but only for that."

Naturally, the CIA and the Nixon government then in power— and Henry Kissinger, in particular— did everything they could to discourage Agee. Among other things, he was expelled from five NATO countries under pressure from the United States. When that failed, they mounted an intensive propaganda campaign to discredit him, via their contacts at *Newsweek*, the BBC, CBS' "60 Minutes" and other "respected news sources". In fact, the campaign against Philip provides an excellent illustration of how the CIA infiltrates and manipulates news media.

But none of that seemed to have much effect. Agee went on to write several other books and a series of articles in such publications as *Covert Action Quarterly*, of which he is a co-founder. At present, he is helping Cuba— a frequent target of CIA propaganda and destabilization efforts— to further develop its crucial tourist industry by means of an on-line travel agency.

Philip Agee's visit to Sweden coincided with proposals to reinstate CIA practices which his disclosures had helped to outlaw 25 years ago, including the assassination of foreign nationals and close co-operation with persons known to have committed serious violations against human rights. Those and related matters provided the backdrop for his talk in Stockholm.

*First published in 1975, Philip Agee's CIA Diary describes in detail the destabilization and other methods used by the agency to maintain U.S. control over the countries of Latin America.*



## THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

*Address by Philip Agee  
ABF House, Stockholm  
24 September 2001*

Thank you all for coming. I would also like to thank Göran Eriksson, the director of ABF, for inviting me to participate in this series on U.S. influence on Swedish news media. It is a very broad topic, and I am sure you understand that, since I do not live here and do not speak or read Swedish, it is not possible for me to analyse Swedish media and point out areas of possible U.S. influence.

But I am familiar with the practices of the past, which I believe have never ended, and I would like to begin by citing a well-known observation of A. J. Liebling, a U.S. journalist and media critic who was active during the early 1900s: "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one," he said.

In a sense, this has always been true. News media in general, except for state-funded organizations, are part of the private sector. I know that, here in Sweden as in Britain, you have state television and state radio. But generally speaking, and certainly in the United States, the press has always been in the private sector.

### *The power of the word*

The United States— that is, the political class of the United States— has known about the power of the word for a very, very long time. A personal experience may serve to illustrate how powerful the written word can be.

For legal reasons, I stayed away from the United States for about seventeen years— from the time I started work on my first book, in the early 1970s, until my autobiography was ready for publication in 1987. The publisher of the latter was very eager for me to return to the States for the promotion of the book, but my lawyers all warned me not to take a chance. They suspected that there could be secret criminal indictment, as there could have been all those years, and argued that the risk was not worth it.

My wife and I decided that we would take that risk. We went back, and they didn't touch me. I did the promotion of the book, and that began ten years of frequent travel to the U.S. for lectures at universities and speeches at political rallies, civic centres, churches, even out in the street. Altogether, and must have spoken at more than 500 events in the United States.

One of my trips, around 1989 or 1990, was to the University of California at Santa Cruz. When the organizers told me that the event was scheduled to take place at a civic centre with room for about 3000 people, my reaction was: "Oh, my god! We are going to look like we're all alone in there. We will never attract more than a couple of hundred people." But they said, "Don't worry. You'll see."

Sure enough, on the night of the meeting the arena was packed. During the discussion period after my talk, which was about the war in Central America still going on at the time, a man stood up way in the back. He was a very large person, with a lot of long hair, a bushy beard, and a plaid lumberjack shirt. He paused for a moment, and then

said my name in an enormous, booming voice: "Philip Agee!" He said, "Philip Agee—I want to thank you for saving my life!"

With that, the place became as quiet as you could imagine. You could have heard the proverbial pin drop. He went on to tell the story of how he was seriously wounded in Vietnam, and had to spend several years in a veterans' hospital in the United States. While in hospital, he became despondent: He thought there was no hope, and decided to commit suicide. But then someone gave him a copy of my first book.

He said: "When I read that book, it changed my life." He said that he decided then not to end his life, but to spend the rest of it helping Vietnam War veterans who had problems like his own. From that point in the mid-1970s until the time of this meeting some fifteen years later, he had made a career of social work among Vietnam War veterans suffering from mental problems because of the things that they had done and seen in Vietnam.

This is merely one personal story, but it indicates the strength of the written word. Possibly, one life was saved—possibly.

### *Covert action*

The CIA, as you probably know, was founded in the years following World War II—supposedly, to prevent another Pearl Harbor, the Japanese surprise attack which brought the United States into the war. In that sense, the events of September 11th represent a terrible failure on the part of the CIA and the rest of the U.S. intelligence establishment.

There are at least twelve or thirteen different intelligence agencies in the United States, and they are spending on the order of thirty billion dollars per year—the CIA being simply the foremost among them. Of course, the CIA was not only established to collect information and to anticipate attacks. From the beginning of the CIA's existence, it was also used to intervene secretly in the internal affairs of other countries. Virtually no country on earth was exempt.

This secret intervention—as opposed to the collection of information—was called covert action, and it was used in a variety of ways to influence the institutions of other countries. Interventions in elections were very frequent.

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This secret intervention—as opposed to the collection of information—was called covert action, and it was used in a variety of ways to influence the institutions of other countries. Interventions in elections were very frequent. Every CIA station, that is the undercover CIA office inside a U.S. embassy, included agents who were involved in covert action. In addition to intervention to ensure the election of favoured candidates and the defeat of disfavoured candidates, the CIA also infiltrated the institutions of power in countries all over the world. I am sure that Sweden is no exception, and was not an exception during all the years of the Cold War.

There was electoral intervention, propaganda via the media, and also the penetration and manipulation of women's organizations, religious organizations, youth and student organizations, the trade union movement—very important—but also the military and security services and, of course, political parties. All of these institutions were free game for penetration and manipulation by the CIA.

In short, the CIA influenced the civic life of countries all around the world. It did this due to a lack of faith in democracy in other countries. There was a desire for control. The secret U.S. policy was to not leave things to "chance", that is to the will of the people in whatever country it might be. They had to be tutored, they had to be "guided" in such a way that they would be safe for U.S. control. Control was the key word. None of this was done for altruistic or idealistic reasons.

### *Three key factors*

Where the media are concerned, there are three important factors involved: sources, selection and the "slant". With regard to sources, it is my understanding that Swedish news media have very few of their own people working abroad. That means that they are dependent on what they get from other sources, for example the Associated Press, Reuters, BBC or CNN. Those huge organizations which have people all over the world are, of course, selling their products here.

So you receive those products here, and an editor uses them in any way he chooses. What seems to be happening with globalization is that the treatment of news is becoming more and more homogeneous. Sweden, of course, is a unique society with a unique history, culture and language. You would surely have a unique way of viewing and interpreting world events—a vision of the world that is Swedish, in contrast to that of the U.S., Germany or any other nationality.

*What is most important in the news is what is left out.... Editors determine what is news and what is not.*

But how do you maintain this cultural identity with regard to international news, if the media here are dependent on foreign sources?

These sources are, of course, becoming fewer and fewer, as the process of monopolization continues. Consider the mergers that have occurred just during the past ten years or so—for example, Time merging with Warner, then taking over CNN and now merging with AOL. Or General Electric, another giant corporation, taking control of NBC. This is a process that has been going on for a long time, resulting in fewer and fewer independent sources.

Selection may be the most important factor of the three, because what is most important in the news is what is left out. It is a form of censorship. There is a lot of news out there; but editors determine what is news and what is not. Whatever is overlooked, not reported, says a lot about the media.

### *Invisible background*

This has been very well illustrated during the past two weeks. I imagine that we have all seen the same reports over and over again, on what happened in New York and Washington, along with the demonization of Osama bin Ladin. There has been some reporting, but not very much, about the fact that bin Ladin is a product of the United States. He is a creature of the CIA, having gone to work for the it in Afghanistan. It was the largest operation ever carried out by the CIA, and its purpose was to bleed the Soviet Union.

Bin Ladin was one of thousands who volunteered to fight with the mujihadin against the Soviets. As I recall, there were seven different groups. All seven were basically fundamentalist Islamic forces, who felt that the Soviet invasion defiled an Islamic country. Bin Ladin was among those who did not stop fighting after the Soviets were

expelled. In fact, he started laying plans for the future while the war against the Soviet Union was still going on. He was able to develop a worldwide network which today is operating in sixty countries or more.

*How much reporting have we seen on analyses of what has driven these people to such desperation that they carried out those attacks on September 11th?*

Very little of this background on bin Ladin as a creation of the United States has been brought to public attention during the past two weeks. Most of what we have seen and heard is related to the "solution", which is war. How much have we read or heard about those voices calling for alternative solutions to the problem of international terrorism? How much reporting have we seen on analyses of what has driven these people to such desperation that they carried out those attacks on September 11th?

I have not seen very much of that. This may be due to the fact that I am living in Cuba at present. But I do read the *New York Times* on the Internet every morning, for example, and have access to quite a lot of other news. When it comes to alternative solutions to the problem, such as a re-examination of U.S. policy in the Middle East, particularly with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, I don't think I have seen anything. The only thing we get is Bush saying, "This is war, we are at war, this is the first war of the 21st century, this is a question of good versus evil, whoever is not with us is against us", and so on.

That is pretty much the attitude we had in the CIA during the 1950s. When we analysed the operational climate and all the political forces in any given country, we had our friends and we had our enemies. There was no one in between. The friends were centre and right-wing social democrats, conservatives, liberals, in some cases all the way over to neo-fascists. The enemies were left-wing social democrats, socialists, communists, all the way to those advocating armed struggle.

This is the way we saw the world. It was a strictly dualistic view of the political climate in any given country where we were operating. It was very much like what we are hearing today from Washington.

### *The uses of journalists*

The third important factor affecting the news is, of course, the slant or bias. It reflects the moral, social and political values of the person doing the writing, or at least the editor. This is where the CIA played a very fundamental role in years past, and I cannot imagine that it suddenly stopped when the Cold War came to an end.

In fact, like many others, I believe that the Cold War never really ended. It did so along the east-west axis. But the Cold War always had a north-south dimension—the war against forces of liberation in Third World countries. That never ended, and it continues today.

I also believe that the CIA's media operations have continued. They involve the recruitment and payment of editors and reporters who take the CIA's material and publish it as if it were their own. Taken all together—the sources and selection of material, and the point of view or slant—the result is essentially what is known as propaganda, but which passes for "unbiased news".

Journalists are also very important to the CIA for non-journalistic activities. They serve as very convenient agents of access for the Agency. Particularly since they come from a country with a neutral tradition, Swedes in general have always been of great interest

to the CIA. This is because they do not carry a lot of political baggage, as do people from most other countries. I am aware of the ongoing debate here concerning just how neutral Sweden has or has not been. But in the rest of the world, the neutrality of Sweden has created a special attraction for U.S. intelligence agencies, because Swedes have readier access to certain target individuals than, say, an American or a German would.

The fact is that journalists are used for non-journalistic purposes— as collection agents for intelligence, and for making contacts, because a journalist can approach practically anyone and ask for an interview or develop some type of relationship. Of the hundreds of journalists who have come to me over the years, I have no idea how many have been sent by the CIA. I get some idea when I read what they write. But I learned to be cautious, early on.

### *Education in injustice*

The covert action operations to which I referred earlier were carried out all over the world, and certainly in Latin America where I was posted. I spent three years in Ecuador, then three more in Uruguay. In both cases, my cover was as a political attaché in the U.S. embassy.

I then returned to Washington, pretty disillusioned with the work. I was a product of the U.S. education system of the 1950s, which provided me with a very good liberal education, but no political education at all. I was simply brought up to believe that whatever the government did was good, and that it was doing these good things in the name of us all.

It was not until I got down to Latin America that I began to get a political education. Whatever my ideas when I went down there, I saw things around me every day that influenced me. I saw the terrible economic and social conditions, and the injustices that could not be ignored.

The two most fundamental, interrelated problems were the grossly unequal distribution of land and the unequal distribution of wealth. In the early years of the Kennedy administration— I had gone down to Latin America toward the end of the Eisenhower period— there was much talk about land reform as a way of dealing with those problems.

*The aim of our programmes was to support the status quo, to support the oligarchies of Latin America, excluding the vast majority of the population.*

But with the success of the Cuban revolution, and its success in surviving U.S. attempts at invasion and other hostilities, land reform in the rest of Latin America was put aside. "Stability" was the order of the day.

The view in Washington was that, if reform programmes were pushed, it could lead to instability and create openings for liberation forces all over Latin America that were inspired by the Cuban revolution.

So, the aim of our programmes was to support the status quo, to support the oligarchies of Latin America. These are the power structures that date back centuries, based on ownership of the land, of the financial resources, of the export-import system, and excluding the vast majority of the population. With all of our programmes, we were supporting these traditional power structures. What first caused me to turn against these people were the corruption and the greed that they

exhibited in all areas of society. My ideas and attitudes began to change, and eventually I decided to resign from the CIA.

It is widely believed that, once you have joined the CIA, it is likely being in the mafia, that you can never leave. But that is actually not the case. The CIA does not want people working within the organization who are not happy and do not want to be there. They are security risks, for one thing. So, people are coming and going all the time in that large organization of some 18,000 employees.

### *Maddening diary*

I decided to start a new career in teaching, and enrolled as a Ph.D. student in a programme of Latin American studies at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. In the course of those studies— of the Spanish Conquest, the colonial period, and all the horrors that have occurred over the centuries in Latin America— I gradually came to the conclusion that what my CIA colleagues and I had been doing during the 1950s and '60s was nothing more than a continuation of nearly five hundred years of exploitation and political repression.

It was then that an idea entered my mind which had previously been unthinkable— to write a book that would show how all this works. The research required me to spend a year in Paris, and then another year in London where the British Library's newspaper archive proved to be invaluable. There, I was able to read all the news reports relating to the places that I had worked in Latin America, in many cases dating back to the 19th century.

*The purpose of the Agency's various activities was to prop up those forces that were considered to be friendly to U.S. interests, while penetrating, dividing, weakening and destroying those forces that were regarded as unfriendly.*

When the book finally came out— the title was *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* — it was reviewed in the CIA's classified in-house journal, *Studies in Intelligence*. I managed to get a copy of the review, which speculated that I had kept copies of all the stuff I had worked on while I was in the CIA, because they could not believe that I was able to reconstruct all those thousands and thousands of details from memory. It drove them absolutely crazy. But, in fact, most of the maddening details were gleaned from the newspaper archive of the British Library.

The book had a tremendous effect on the Agency's effectiveness, its ability to continue its standard operations. The most gratifying result was that many Latin Americas told me how important the book was for defending themselves and their organizations from destruction by the CIA. In the broadest sense, the purpose of the Agency's various activities was to prop up those forces that were considered to be friendly to U.S. interests, while penetrating, dividing, weakening and destroying those forces that were regarded as unfriendly to U.S. interests— the forces of the political left that I mentioned earlier.

Thus, for Latin American revolutionaries to come to me and say how much they appreciated the book, with all its details on how the CIA works to subvert institutions in other countries, was extremely gratifying.



*Suitable enemy*

Since the events of two weeks ago, there has been much comment and speculation about the new era we may now be entering. Looking back, there was a long Cold War that had already begun during World War II. An important turning point occurred in 1950, when it was decided to start an arms race that would serve the dual purpose of forcing the Soviet Union into bankruptcy while stimulating the U.S. economy. Since the Soviet Union was still recovering from the devastation of World War II, it would never be able to catch up; but it would be compelled to make the effort, nevertheless. Meanwhile, military spending in the U.S. would keep going up and up, which in turn would stimulate the U.S. economy through a sort of "military Keynesianism". This continued through the Reagan administration of the 1980s.

But in the decade since the end of the Cold War until September 11th, the U.S. security establishment—the political class, the CIA, the people who fought the Cold War—had no real enemy to focus on. True, they had Saddam Hussein for a while, and they might have had a minor enemy here, another one there. But there was no real worldwide threat similar to that of the Cold War. Well, now it seems that they have one again.

*The war on terrorism will serve as the justification for restraints on civil liberties. They are building the psychological climate for broad-based acceptance of an ongoing war.*

What this means is that the United States is going to be in this for quite some time. I have a feeling that it is going to go on for ten or fifteen years, because they are not going to wipe out international terrorism or something like bin Ladin's group overnight.

During this period, they are going to be doing the same things they did in the Cold War. We can already here it in such expressions as, "Whoever is not with us is against us." They are going to be trying to use every bit of power they have to bring countries in line behind the United States.

It also means important changes within the United States, because the war on terrorism will serve as the justification for restraints on civil liberties. They are building a huge crisis in the United States. They are building the psychological climate for broad-based acceptance of an ongoing war, for which there will be no quick resolution. There will be no great battles, either.

*Little room for alternatives*

During this period, there will be very little room for alternative views and alternative solutions in U.S. news media. What are the alternatives? Well, one is obviously to address the question of why these people are doing these things: What are the roots of international terrorism? How does U.S. foreign policy create this type of reaction? How does U.S. support of everything that Israel does, including the oppression of the Palestinian people, influence fundamentalist Islamic groups?

In other words, a feasible alternative would be a reconsideration of U.S. foreign policy, to see if it would not be possible to create a more just situation in the Middle East. But the United States is stuck. It is stuck with an authoritarian regime in Egypt, which is one of the really shaky countries at the moment. Algeria has gone through a horrible period, and the fundamentalist movement there has not died away at all. In Pakistan

the government could fall; fundamentalists there could take over, and they would then have nuclear weapons in their hands. So, a lot of things can happen in the months and years ahead.

Unfortunately, I suspect that there will be greater self-censorship by U.S. media in order to line up behind the government, however its policy of war may turn out.

There is already talk of a personal identification system of some kind for the entire country, together with large-scale surveillance of the population— especially

immigrants, and Muslim immigrants in particular. There will be some opposition to this; but historically, the courts have usually gone along with the government, even though they are theoretically supposed to be the guarantors of civil liberties. For example, the courts went along with the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. So, it will be possible to restrict, and even infringe upon, civil liberties and human rights in the United States.



*Philip Agee at his office in Havana*

It is early days to draw any conclusions about how all this is going to develop, since it is still in the planning stage. But in my opinion, if they carry out this military solution— with an attack or a series of attacks, or the establishment of military bases in Islamic countries— they will be doing exactly what bin Ladin wants them to do. It would turn more and more people to fundamentalism and to his organization. They could kill him tomorrow, but the organization that he has established will live on, and it will be nearly impossible to penetrate.

My reading of the situation is that there have been a few defectors from bin Ladin's organization who have provided valuable information. But the U.S. has not been able to have anyone working in these clandestine groups around the world and reporting from the inside. It has had to make do with whatever it can learn from a few defectors. Certainly, the CIA and the other components of the U.S. intelligence apparatus will be using all available technical means to locate and attack these groups, wherever they may be. They should certainly know where all the training bases are located, since they were established by the CIA, itself. But that will not be nearly enough.

I will conclude by noting that my experience here today has been very favourable, as I have had the good fortune to make a statement on Swedish public radio and public television, which I certainly could not have done in the United States. No one would have listened to anybody saying, "Don't go to war. Rethink the policy. Go to the roots of why all this is happening." These are alternative views which should be given access to the media, and I certainly hope that, at least here, you will continue to give access to people who think differently than the militarists of the United States.

I thank you all very much for coming here tonight, and for your attention.

*Discussion with members of the audience on following page...*

## DISCUSSION

### *Comments and questions of audience in italics*

*I regard this period as the most dangerous in the world since the Cuban missile crisis. I wonder if you share that assessment. I would also like to ask your opinion of Professor Robert Wright's op-ed piece in today's New York Times, which argues that the United States will have to surrender some of its sovereignty if it expects to get anywhere with its "war on terrorism". That means, for example, that it will have to submit to something like the international war crimes tribunal, which it has been willing to impose on others but not on itself.*

Philip Agee: The comparison with the Cuban missile crisis had not occurred to me, but I do not feel that the present situation is the same as in October, 1962. The main difference is that, this time, there is no open confrontation with nuclear weapons—although there is a danger that fundamentalists might get their hands on such weapons. That risk is especially high in Pakistan, as I noted earlier.

But the most serious danger right now has to do with the measures that the Bush administration may take. The first thing I thought of was that they might use tactical nuclear weapons. Of course, that would not do very much good, and would produce nuclear fallout in large parts of Central Asia.

So, it is indeed a very dangerous period, and perhaps the greatest threat is to civil liberties in the United States.

As for the second part of the question, I do not believe that the U.S. will have to surrender any of its sovereignty in order to get the backing of other countries around the world. It might have to give up some information. You may have noticed that Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, keeps saying, "We've got the proof, and we may share it with certain governments". But the U.S. government is not prepared to share it with its own people, who will have to pay the bill and put their lives on the line in order to fight this phantom figure. It is almost insulting.

The argument, of course, is that making the information public would endanger their sources and compromise their methods. That is the oldest line in the book. They will always say that, and they probably do not have adequate information. They have some indicators or circumstantial evidence, perhaps. But it is probably not strong enough to justify a full-scale war, "the first war of the 21st century".

In any event, the U.S. is the sole superpower, and it is able to count on the British following in lock-step. Together, they will try to get the NATO countries and others to follow. They already have the Security Council resolution. So, I think they are going to go about this in a very systematic fashion, and I suspect that they are going to have to establish bases in Muslim countries such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and in Afghanistan, itself.

*It is my understanding that there is a secret budget of 30-50 billion dollars controlled by the CIA, the DIA and especially the NSA for terror activities around the world. I believe there are also training centres for torture and terrorism, including the use of remote-controlled bombs, in the states of Texas, Georgia and Florida. The CIA is reported to have financed the Albanian rebels in the Balkan region, and similar groups throughout Central Europe, and to have financed the Brigada Rosa in Italy which is responsible for a terror bombing in 1978 that was blamed on the Communists. The U.S. has bases in Latin America and trains professional terrorists that are sent all over the world. What can you tell us about all this?*

Well, to reaffirm what I said earlier, the United States has been involved in state terrorism from the 1940s on, and it still is. There is an old expression in English about the pot calling the kettle black—in other words, one person accuses another of doing exactly what he is doing, himself. When the U.S. starts denouncing terrorism around the world, while at the same time is the strongest and longest-running terrorist power in the world, it makes you wonder what language really means.

The U.S. has always felt that it has the right to intervene and promote terrorism in other countries. This has been fully documented by my friend, Bill Blum, a former State Department official whose books present a litany of CIA interventions around the world since the 1940s.\* If you only read the part on what they did in East Germany during the 1950s and '60s, you will see that they organized a full-scale terrorist campaign to create chaos and undermine the government there.

But they did this all over. I was myself involved in some of these activities. I worked, for example, with the police in Latin American countries, and they were often involved in torture. I remember one Sunday morning in the office of the chief of police during a state of siege in Montevideo. My boss, the CIA chief of station in Uruguay was present, along with the local army colonel in charge of anti-riot forces.

We began to hear a low moaning coming through the walls and, at first, I thought it was a street vendor outside. But then it became clear that it was someone being tortured in another part of the building. As this horrible sound became louder and louder, the police chief told the colonel to turn up a radio in order to drown out the groans and screams.

There is no end to such examples, and Latin America was one of the places where the worst offences occurred. But it was not just Latin America. Remember Greece under the military junta, which was urged by the CIA to prevent the election of Georgios Papandreou. That began seven years of severe political repression by the fascist regime.

So it does not have to be in a Third World region like Latin America. It can happen right in Western Europe, and even in a NATO country. Italy, which you mentioned, was targeted from the very start. The first important CIA intervention in elections occurred in Italy following World War II. The CIA was established in September of 1947, and the Italian elections were coming up in March of the following year.

President Truman directed the CIA to prevent the Communist Party from gaining a majority in the parliament. Since the Communists had been the strongest of the resistance forces and had produced many heroes, they emerged from the war with tremendous prestige and had a good chance to do well in the 1948 election. So the CIA set up all kinds of operations to support the Christian Democrats. It also developed a very close liaison with Pope Pius XII and with the Catholic Church, in general—and with the mafia, by the way, which had helped U.S. forces during the war. As a result, the Christian Democrats won the election in March, 1948.

The United States government in general, and the CIA in particular, have been conducting these kinds of interventions all along. In Brazil, for example, a government elected in the early 1960s underwent a period of instability. This led to the resignation of the president and the accession of the vice-president, as called for by the Brazilian constitution. The new president was Joao Goulart, a large landowner. But he was also a populist who proposed a major land reform. If there was any place in the world that needed land reform, it was Brazil, and it still is. In addition, Goulart adopted an independent foreign policy, and even made a trip to China.

So the CIA organized his overthrow by the Brazilian military in March, 1964. That ushered in twenty years of a fascist regime in Brazil. What happened? The same thing as everywhere else: the institutionalization of torture, death squads, "disappearances", and eventually a backlash.

What later happened in Chile, after Salvador Allendé became president, was almost a carbon copy of what happened in Brazil. In Chile, the CIA carried out a programme of destabilization for nearly three years in order to turn the people against the government.

So the short answer to your question is that terrorism fomented by the U.S. government started in the mid-1940s, and has continued through the present day. It is not only the CIA, but also the U.S. military committing outright terrorist acts such as the bombing of Libya some years ago.

\*Editor's note: See *Killing Hope* and *Rogue State* by William S. Blum, both published by Common Courage Press, Maine, U.S.A. The former is available in Swedish under the title of *CIA & USA:s verkliga utrikespolitik*; published by Epsilon Press, Göteborg. See also William Blum's web site at: <http://killinghope.org>

*Do you have any idea how big the peace movement is in the United States. Also, what will happen to the U.S. Muslims, if they are called upon to go and fight other Muslims in Asia? Will there be civil war in the United States? What will happen?*

To be honest, it is too early to tell. There have been some peaceful voices, and you can be sure that some Americans are going to organize against this war. But even though there was a large movement against the Persian Gulf War, it was split. As in other places, it is difficult to develop total unity in such opposition movements, and that tends to weaken them.

But there will surely develop a peace alternative to this war, and it is not a war that will be over in a matter of days or weeks. There is not going to be a set battle between military forces, for example. This means that there will be plenty of time for a peace movement to grow and become stronger. And when U.S. citizens start coming home in body bags, as from Vietnam or Somalia, the peace movement will be strengthened.

But there is no way to predict how strong it will be. Eventually, the issue will be taken up in Congress where one of the most positive figures right now is Congresswoman Barbara Lee from Oakland, California. She is the only one who refused to sign the resolution empowering Bush to go to war, and she has received all kinds of hate mail since then. But the National Lawyers Guild, a progressive movement of some 6000 lawyers which was founded in the 1930s, has taken out a full-page advertisement in a San Francisco newspaper to support her.

This is only the beginning, and we will just have to keep an eye on developments. I will certainly be doing that from Havana. I might mention, by the way, that the current political campaign in Cuba is called "The Battle of Ideas". This is a response to U.S. initiatives, including laws known as the Toricelli and Helms-Burton acts, which openly call for the subversion and destruction of the Cuban revolution.

The Cubans understand very well how the United States intends to do this, which is one of the reasons there is no freedom of the press as we know it. Cuba will not tolerate the kinds of subversive media operations that have been targeted at other Latin America countries through the years. In the same way, the Cubans are doing everything in their power to protect their own institutions. "The Battle of Ideas" is a programme for confronting U.S. efforts to destroy the revolution.

For those of you who have never been to Cuba or may have limited knowledge of the situation there, I will note that it has been highly successful in many ways. When you compare the Cuban experience over the past forty years with the rest of Latin America—and that is the only appropriate context—you will find that it is the only country in the region that has made any consistent progress.

Everyone should be aware of its outstanding achievements in the field of health care; people come from all over the world for organ transplants and other medical

treatments. This has led, in turn, to the development of world-class pharmaceuticals and biochemical industries. They have, for example, developed the first vaccines for common forms of meningitis and hepatitis.

Cuba has an educational system and a literacy rate which are second to none in Latin America. Every child can go through school, all the way through university or technical school, without the parents ever having to pay a cent.

Cubans are also well-known as phenomenal athletes. I believe it was the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, which analysed the results of the Sydney Olympic Games—controlling for national and personal income, population size of the country, etc., in order to create a “level playing field” between large and small countries—and found that Cuba had won the Olympics when such factors were taken into account.

But there seems to be no end to the United States’ official hostility toward Cuba—although the recent bombings seem to have opened an opportunity for a reduction of hostilities. On September 11th, Fidel Castro denounced the bombings in the strongest possible terms and expressed total Cuban solidarity with the people of the United States.

In any case, Cubans are very aware of the power of propaganda, and they have their own campaign to counteract what is coming into their country from the U.S.

*Is it fair to say that the word “communism” is the most valuable trademark in the world, when it is used as a psychological trademark to scare the living daylight out of people?*

It is certainly a powerful word and, along with other powerful words such as democracy and freedom, has been very badly misused. To cite one example. I read all of the dispatches filed by Anita Snow, the Associated Press correspondent in Havana, who cannot mention the Cuban government without attaching the adjective, “communist”. Apparently, that has got to be included in every article she writes, although I don’t know if she puts it in or an editor does. But its function is obviously to remind readers that this is a dirty regime. By contrast, when journalists write about the United States, they do not refer to the “capitalist regime” in Washington.

It is a label, and the effect is almost comical at times. They have pinned all sorts of labels on me over the years. They tried to make me out as a KGB agent, as a Cuban agent, an alcoholic, a womanizer—think of something negative, and they have tried to stick it to me.

They started with a fairy tale after I had finished writing my first book in mid-1974. On the fourth of July—and you know what that day means for Americans—the New York Times published a front-page article about this former CIA officer somewhere in Latin America who was drunk and despondent, and had been telling everything he knew to the KGB. But I had not even been in Latin America at the time, and certainly not spoken with the KGB; I had been struggling with my book.

It was something they made up in order to get the first blow in. The first blow is always the most important—because a person can issue a denial, but what people will remember is the accusation. I was identified as the wayward agent, of course.

*If we are going to conduct a global war on terrorism, we must first agree on what it is. If we take, for example, the actions of the CIA and especially Henry Kissinger in supporting Pinochet’s military regime in Chile, should that not also be considered as terrorism? Is it possible that the “crusade” against terrorism might rebound against the United States and, if so, how could that be made to happen?*

Well, the information is out there, for anyone who cares to acquire it. The only question is whether there is a will to emphasize the history of U.S. sponsorship of terrorism, including the Kissinger period, and to make it public. This is what I was

referring to when I spoke of selection— that is, what is news and what is not news. Since the attacks on September 11th, I do not believe there has been any serious effort by the U.S. mainstream press to review the history of U.S. involvement in and support of terrorism. The news is monopolized by those who want to go to war.

For that reason, I do not think it will be very easy to avoid this "war on terrorism". The U.S. media are so powerful, and they fill our minds every day with what they think we should know and how we should interpret it. They are working hand-in-hand with the government, and they share the same values. This is what makes it possible for them to earn a lot of money by selling advertising. After all, these institutions are privately owned institutions whose capital is supposed to yield a return for stockholders. They have to keep this constantly in mind, like any other corporation, and so they go along with the government.

*It is a great consolation to hear your words at a time like this, when our thoughts are being manipulated. Could you give us some advice regarding a cure or some sort of medicine that will help us Swedes to resist that manipulation?*

I would urge you to go back and review the 1960s and 1970s, when this country was leading the world in opposition to the Vietnam War and the slaughter that was taking place there. I realize times have changed, but a lot of lessons can be learned by recalling how that movement developed here. I am sure that many of the principles of the past can be reapplied, because they will be valuable and relevant forever. Perhaps they can be applied now to oppose the use of violence to create more violence, which is vicious cycle that is now likely to occur. As I noted earlier, there will be time to develop such a movement, because this violence is going to continue for quite some time.

That's one thing. The other thing is to try to keep the news media open to alternative points of view, and not submit to merely repeating the line of the U.S. government.

*Regarding Cuba, for some time now there has been circulating on the Internet a declassified document of the U.S. National Security Agency about planned operations in 1963 to justify the invasion of Cuba. I believe that President Kennedy objected to it, but military leaders wanted to attack U.S. ships and blame it on Cuba in order to justify an invasion. That document was a valuable reminder during these past two weeks, but now it appears to have disappeared from the Internet. I would like to hear your comment on this.*

Yes, there were plans to carry out certain acts of terrorism that would be attributed to the Cubans. These plots came out of the Pentagon, but were rejected by the Kennedy administration. A good source for this kind of material is the National Security Archive, which is now affiliated with George Washington University. They have done marvellous work. I believe they were the ones who obtained all the documents on Chile that have recently been released. Among other things, those documents show how the U.S. pinned the label of "communist" on the Allendé government— although it was in fact a socialist government— and how they have continued to do so ever since.

*How important is it that the current president's father is a former CIA director and that many of his old cronies are now advising the son, who is not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed?*

There have been many analyses and much speculation about who is really running things in Washington. There are those who say that it is Vice-president Cheney, others

say that it is George Bush Sr. who is making the decisions behind the scenes. Actually, "W" has been putting on a pretty good show since the attacks in New York and Washington. At this point, however, I really can't answer your question.

But I can tell you that the elder Bush was a bit obsessed with me when he became CIA Director one month after the assassination of the Agency's chief of station in Athens. That happened around Christmas, 1975, and my first book had come out in January of that year; so the CIA tried to pin the blame on me. It was true that I had disclosed the names of CIA agents working in various other countries. People were aghast to learn, for example, that there were 65 CIA agents working out of the U.S. embassy in London, or 60 in Paris, Rome or Bonn.

But I had never met the station chief who was murdered in Athens, and I never mentioned him in any of my writings. It was a pure myth that I was responsible. Nevertheless, George Bush Sr. was convinced that I was and, when Barbara Bush published her autobiography in 1995, she repeated the myth by relating how her husband had told a black-tie crowd of 800 people at the Washington Hilton that I was responsible. So I sued her, and I won. She had to correct that part of her book, write me a letter of apology, and acknowledge the error.

*Do you suspect that the CIA or any other intelligence agency of the United States had anything to do with the murder of Olof Palme?*

I haven't the slightest idea, but I really doubt it. Olof Palme gave the U.S. a lot of trouble—no doubt about that. He had many admirers in the United States, and many detractors, as he had here. But I do not think that the U.S. would go to the extreme of assassinating a Western European leader, even one as independent as Olof Palme. But, again, I really don't know. I prefer to concentrate on the things that I know about, and leave the speculation to others.

*Some years ago, a Swedish radio programme referred to one of your books in which it was stated that the CIA controlled some 400 newspapers and media companies around the world. Is that true?*

I suspect the book you are referring to is *Dirty Work: The CIA in Western Europe*. It was an anthology, and we had quite a bit on the media in that book. I do not recall the actual number, but it was substantial. In the United States, there was a time when every major news organization was co-operating with the CIA. The official in charge of media operations during the 1950s, used to refer to his "mighty Wurlitzer". A Wurlitzer is a huge jukebox, you know, and he gave his programme that name because it involved the orchestration of propaganda all around the world.

For example, we would put out a story in one country of Latin America, and then get CIA stations in ten or fifteen other countries to do the same. This gave the appearance of a news item that was making the rounds of the media on its own merits, when in actual fact it was being fed through secret CIA channels. Local agents would take the story to journalists who could be relied upon to get it published. We made a huge amount of news that way, by orchestrating propaganda.

But I think the word "control" is too strong in this context. The CIA did not really need to control newspapers. It only had to place whatever it wanted to place, and that could be done through the control of one person. If it had the right editors on the payroll, they would make sure that things got published. So in most cases, it was a question of individuals, not entire organizations.

But there were organizations founded by the CIA to produce news analyses and feature articles which would then be circulated in different parts of the world. One of the largest propaganda operations during the early years was the Congress for



Cultural Freedom, which was founded in Berlin during the 1950s. Its political line was right-wing social democratic, and its headquarters were in Paris. Several publications were set up through this Congress, including the magazine *Encounter* in England; there were others in Germany, India and in France. It was a huge propaganda operation.

But in most cases, it is not necessary to control entire institutions in order to use them to get a message out. The key word is "penetration", which means recruiting or placing someone inside the organization who will do your work for you.

*Do you feel that the events of 11 September are likely to increase support for the missile-defence system or to weaken it, now that it has been demonstrated that such a "shield" in outer space is not able to protect the U.S. population from attack? Also, do you believe that the U.S. will try to draw out its so-called war on terrorism so that it will have an excuse to establish a presence in Afghanistan, as it has done with its large military base in Kosovo?*

In the short term, the events of 11 September raised doubts about the missile-defence system, because they showed that protecting the U.S. from terrorism has little or nothing to do with missiles. But in the long term, that system and other types of military programmes will probably benefit—partly due to the commercial spin-offs that military spending has yielded in the past, such as the transistor and the computer chip.

As for the strategic significance of Afghanistan, the key factor is the petroleum of the Caspian region. From what I have read, the proven reserves there are on the order of those in Saudi Arabia. Of course, U.S. policymakers will not be saying this: They will be talking about the crusade against terrorism. But they no doubt see a need for a military presence in Central Asia, in the countries where this oil is going to be extracted and shipped. So there may very well be a permanent military presence, as in Saudi Arabia, in order to ensure U.S. access to and transport of those petroleum resources. Down the line, we can expect to see the issue of petroleum becoming intertwined with the crusade against terrorism.

*Is it possible for the CIA to infiltrate U.N. agencies? I ask this because of allegations that Israel's Mossad and the CIA have used UNESCO to gather intelligence in Iraq. The former U.S. inspector in Iraq, Scott Ritter, has said this, for example. It has also been alleged that Saddam Hussein had connections with the CIA during his exile in Egypt, and that the 1963 fascist coup in Iraq was initiated by the CIA. Do you know anything about this?*

I have no inside knowledge of possible CIA infiltration of the U.N. weapons-monitoring programme in Iraq. I would assume that it did take place, however, because the programme was essentially controlled by the United States. I should think that it would be a perfect opportunity—too obvious to ignore. So, I would assume that they made an effort to penetrate the programme for monitoring and destroying weapons.

Regarding a possible link between the CIA and Saddam Hussein in Egypt, I have no idea. But I can tell you that the CIA played a very important role in the provocation of the Iran-Iraq war. It encouraged the Shah of Iran to demand half of the waters in the Shatt al 'Arab that had always been recognized as part of Iraq. At the same time, they began fomenting rebellion among the Kurds of northern Iraq. All of this eventually led to that horrible war, and the CIA's fingerprints are all over the initial stages.

*The past few weeks have caused me to realize that I am a child of the United States. I have visited there, of course, and I know that there are homeless people and stuff like that. But I go to the movies where the U.S. flag is always flying and U.S. citizens always save the world. I drink their soft drinks, I eat their food, and the fact is that I kind of enjoy it. That is my problem right now. I would like to ask you: How important is the export of U.S. culture for the CIA?*

The CIA has published more than one thousand books in order to spread the views of certain authors, which can certainly be regarded as a cultural operation. In some cases, the authors were hired by the CIA to write these books.

In general, however, the spread of U.S. popular culture is a commercial phenomenon that benefits from having a lot of power. I cannot remember any CIA activities that were designed to spread U.S. culture around the world. I don't think it has needed to.\* Even Cuba gets the U.S. version of break-dancing, of rock 'n roll, and so on, and there is an enormous interest in U.S. popular culture. Cuban young people always know the latest songs and all the entertainment stars.

By the way, those of you have never visited Cuba, I would urge you to do so. If you want to know what is waiting for you, go to the web site of CubaLinda.com. It is the result of what I have been doing for the past four years, having decided around 1997 to continue some thirty years of solidarity work by presenting Cuban realities to the world, and to bring the world to Cuba in order to see those realities at first hand. It is an attempt to counteract forty years of propaganda, manipulation and lies that have been disseminated primarily by the United States.

\*Editor's note: This response is based on Philip Agee's knowledge and experience of the CIA. There are, however, other institutions which do strive to expand U.S. cultural influence abroad. Among them are those agencies of international commerce and foreign relations which constantly work against broadcast content rules and other "trade barriers" which various countries have devised to protect their own cultural products and traditions.

Also, there is at least one government agency whose specific purpose is to spread and promote U.S. culture abroad. It is the U.S. Information Agency, whose background and operating methods have been outlined by former employee, Nancy Snow, in *Propaganda, Inc.: Selling America's Culture to the World* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998).

In the foreword to that work, Herbert L. Schiller notes that: "The commercial flood of U.S. cultural products which engulfed the world during the past fifty years— movies, TV programs, recordings, publications, student exchanges, theme parks, data bases, etc.— was by far the most important means for transmitting ideology, anti-communism and American socio-economic institutions."

*The other day, I saw a report on Fox News with a lot of U.S. flags waving, a lot of music, a lot of emotions. I did not want to be affected by that, but I was. It caused me to wonder: What is the way out of this? I do not see the U.S. backing off from Africa, from the Middle East or from Latin America. Is the solution for us to become more aware, or for the EU to offer an alternative to U.S. policy? And a final question: Is there a CIA agent among us this evening?*

A lot of people have asked me how to keep the CIA from infiltrating an organization. I always tell them that you can't. The CIA, the FBI and all of these agencies have people who are prepared to join any open organization. But what you can do is to ensure that everyone does a lot of work for the cause, whatever it may be— enough work so that infiltrators will be more valuable to the cause than to the CIA or the FBI with the information they provide.

The best thing you can do as an individual is to take an active part in the organizations that do or will exist to find a peaceful solution to the problem of international terrorism— and such organizations will emerge, or already exist. But get involved, because every individual counts. To all those who may think that nothing they can do can have any significance, I say: You're wrong. There is strength in numbers.

I believe that this is what will happen in the United States and in a country like Sweden. People will get concerned, they will get involved, they will see the futility in creating yet another cycle of violence which offers no real solution to international terrorism. As I mentioned earlier, the more frequent and forceful the attempts to solve the problem with military attacks, the stronger bin Ladin will become. That is precisely the reaction he wants to provoke.

\* \* \*

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