

# Central America's Israeli connection

by Joseph Brewda

In November 1983, in a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin, President Reagan consented to the creation of a Joint U.S.-Israel Political-Military Committee. Nominally aimed at greater coordination of Middle East policy, the agreement ratified Israel's *carte blanche* to sell weapons and provide "security assistance" throughout Central America and the Caribbean. The U.S. representative to the Committee was first Lawrence Eagleburger, who left the State Department a year later to become president of Kissinger Associates; then Michael Armacost, a member of the National Security Council's 208 Committee, the hub of the covert operations that set off the Contra-Irangate scandal.

Israel's permanent representative to the semi-annual planning meetings, and continuous back channel, was David Kimche, a former Mossad executive who was the director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and Israeli architect of the arms-for-hostages deal with Khomeini.

The Joint Committee merely ratified a policy spelled out in the secret military clauses of the 1978 Camp David accords (negotiated on the U.S. side by Maj. Gen. Richard Secord and Eric Von Marbod), and in the 1981 informal Memorandum of Understanding between Israeli Defense Minister and leading Israeli mafia figure Ariel Sharon and then Secretary of State Alexander Haig. (Haig, an active player in bringing about the 1979 revolution in Iran, was the Reagan administration's biggest booster of the Contra policy until his ouster in summer 1982.)

Israel would be Washington's surrogate in Central America—no questions asked. Israel embarked on a binge of gun and drug trafficking and attempted coups modeled on the 1980 "cocaine colonels" coup in Bolivia, in which the Sharon gang was heavily involved. The already corrupt NSC staff became the main liaison to the Israelis.

While part of a strategic "New Yalta" policy, *greed* is key to understanding the Israeli mafia's involvement in Central America and its role in fueling the Contra policy. In 1977, when Israeli arms brokers moved into Guatemala in the wake of Carter's "human rights" embargo, Israeli weapons and other equipment were made available to all bidders—at an average 400-600% markup. Arms brokers David Marcus Katz and Pesach Ben-Or based in Mexico City and Guatemala City, respectively, and Jacob Nimrodi, the top Israeli gun-runner to Iran, had skimmed huge profits off the top of the Reagan administration's covert support for the Contras,

according to a Dec. 12, 1986 article in the *Washington Post*.

Every step of the way, the Israeli brokers had the stamp of approval of Sharon, Kimche, and the Trilateral Commission's Zbigniew Brzezinski, for these rich deals.

Katz and Ben-Or were ushered into Central America by Ariel Sharon who, starting in November 1982, began annual trips to the region. Sharon's first target was Honduras (see box) where he hooked up with General Gustavo Alvarez in what evolved into an aborted coup attempt.

To get things going, Israeli intelligence created a string of front companies in the United States and Central and South America. Under the secret terms of Carter's Camp David accords, the Israeli agents controlled warehouses of U.S.-made weapons on U.S. territory which were declared off limits to U.S. law enforcement for years. Numerous sources have identified some of these front companies and players. They include:

- Sherwood International. Based in Washington and Miami, Sherwood "advises countries and companies on international arms sales." Directed by Israeli national Michael Koken, Sherwood has worked as an NSC-sanctioned arms smuggler into Central and South America, and elsewhere. Sherwood's network reportedly overlaps that of Israeli Col. David Ben David, now Miami-based, who had earlier overseen Mossad operations in Asia, including bankrolling private armies in the Philippines.

- Israeli Aeronautics Industry. The premier Israeli arms-smuggling company was spun out of the old U.S. Sonneborn Institute networks which smuggled U.S. arms to the Haganah during the 1948 Israeli War of Independence. IAI's founder and director, Al Schwimmer, was recently exposed as the Israeli who oversees Israeli arms sales to Iran. During the Sonneborn Institute days, Schwimmer oversaw arms trafficking to Palestine through his partnership with Nicaraguan leader Anastasio Somoza. Today, IAI's Central and South American arms trafficking is directed by Mexico City-based David Marcus Katz.

- Pesach Ben-Or and David Marcus Katz. Since his sponsorship by Brzezinski in 1977, Ben-Or has operated from the top three floors of the Cortijo Reforma Hotel in Guatemala City, directing sales of guns to the Contras and other insurgent groups. Occupying these same floors is a special unit of the Cuban DGI, which, in partnership with Ben-Or, coordinates the breaking of the U.S. blockade to the Sandinistas' Nicaragua.

Ben-Or's Mossad business fronts first took off, as intended, after the Carter administration's embargo of several states in Central and South America, including Guatemala. Six months into the 1977 embargo, Zbigniew Brzezinski quietly told Guatemalan President Lucas that he should expect an approach from David Marcus Katz, IAI's man in Mexico City. Katz offered the Guatemalans, then facing Cuban-backed insurgents, Galil rifles—at a 300% markup. In 1982, Ben-Or and Katz, together with some 300 Israeli "advisers" in Guatemala, brought the "born again," lunatic General Rios

Montt into power in a bloodless coup—a coup intended to enhance arms sales throughout the region, by the wars Montt was to provoke.

- Echemecs. Operating under the cover of an agricultural implements firm, Echemecs is one of the fronts established by Ariel Sharon during his tenure as Agriculture Minister of Israel. In 1984, Echemecs, with its associated firm, International Security Defense Systems, was the base for a coup try by former Honduran Defense Minister General Alvarez. Financing for the coup derived from cocaine sales by the Echemecs-linked Gerard Latchinian, now in a Honduran jail.

### **Mossad coup capability**

The Mossad, especially since Henry Kissinger “farmed out” U.S. covert operations to the Israelis, has run NSC-sanctioned coups all over Central and South America, and elsewhere. In some cases, the attempts have been deliberately bungled, like the coup tried against the Soviet-controlled regime in Surinam.

The model for these operations is the Mossad coup in Bolivia in 1980, coordinated by Sharon-ally Israeli Gen. Rehavam Ze’evi. In 1977, Ze’evi nominally left Israeli intelligence to go to Ecuador, where he established a security firm to advise the government. Traveling with Ze’evi was his business partner, Betsalel Mizrahi, one of Israel’s most notorious drug smugglers. From Ecuador, Ze’evi worked with elements of the Argentine military and the Unification Church (Moonies) to put the “cocaine colonels” in power in Bolivia, to foster the creation of Israeli-directed “narco-empires.”

Mossad coups in the region, as well as arms sales, were helped by Carter’s “human rights” embargos. That policy has been continued under Reagan by Elliott Abrams, who became Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, and then for Inter-American Affairs. Under Abrams’s tenure, Sikh narco-terrorists were protected by the State Department and NSC, and safehoused in Ecuador. Abrams, whose ties to the Mossad proceed through the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Committee for the Free World, was also recently exposed as an architect of conduiting illicit or “private” funds to the Contras.

One typical Mossad coup attempt took place on the island state of Dominica. In 1979, one Charles Yanover, a Mossad cut-out and gangster based in Toronto, funded two dozen members of the ADL-controlled Nazi parties and Ku Klux Klan chapters of Louisiana and Canada to overthrow the government of Eugenia Charles. Yanover, whose brother was then a senior official in the Canadian government’s Privy Council, had earlier been involved in a North Korean-funded plot to assassinate the head of state of South Korea. Yanover’s mob patron, the Cuban-based Robert Vesco, wanted to use Dominica as a transshipment point for his weapons and drug empire. This same Vesco now assists Cuban and Soviet arms running to the Sandinistas; and his associates, Pesach Ben-Or and David Marcus Katz, traffic weapons to the Sandinistas’ Contra opposition.

## **Dope, Inc.’s pointman in Honduras: Gen. Alvarez**

Former Honduran strongman Gen. Gustavo Alvarez has been an important nexus point for the Contras-drugs-arms network in Central America. From his start in the ’70s as a lieutenant colonel taking bribes from the Standard Fruit Company, Alvarez was rapidly promoted to the top ranks, becoming the undisputed power of Honduras.

Under U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte from 1981-84, Alvarez was groomed as the region’s pointman for the Contra apparatus then being emplaced. Under Alvarez’s direction, Honduran military intelligence, the G-2, became the liaison between the Contras and the Army, and in December 1982, then Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon visited Honduras to set up arms-trafficking networks. Behind the press fanfare was a reputed secret arms deal and military pact.

Sharon’s visit was immediately followed up by that of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s right-hand man, Col. Bo Hi-Pak, who helped to establish the political and financial apparatus for Honduras’s upgraded role in the drugs-for-arms smuggling network behind the Contras. The Moon cult’s “anti-communism,” like Alvarez’s, is but the cover for its cocaine connections. It was no accident that the publication of the Moon cult’s Ibero-American group, CAUSA, openly praised the Bolivian “cocaine colonels” of Col. García Meza as a paradigm of “anti-communism.”

Bo Hi-Pak helped found APROH, the Association for the Development of Honduras, which became the civilian sponsor of Alvarez’s corrupt faction within the military. Alvarez himself was inducted into the Moon cult, and permitted the Moonies to proselytize within the military.

Anti-Alvarez forces within the Honduran military succeeded in ousting the general on corruption charges in March 1984, putting him forcibly on a plane for Miami. In October 1984, the FBI announced the arrest of eight men in Miami, including several prominent Alvarez backers, caught transporting \$10.5 million worth of cocaine to finance a coup/assassination plot against then Honduran President Suazo Córdoba. Named as head of the plot was Alvarez’s former chief of staff General Bueso-Rosa. The plotters insisted that the cocaine was “only” to finance their cause. So, too, say the Nicaraguan Contras.

Pardoned in 1986 under a general amnesty, Alvarez is now back in Honduras, advising the Contras.