

# THE ADMIRAL WHO JUMPED SHIP

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## Inside the Center for Defense Information

MICHAEL JOHNS

There are over 5,000 retired admirals and generals in the United States, but one retired rear admiral—Gene La Rocque—has provoked more attention and discussion than most.

It isn't that La Rocque was a military standout of any sort. While his career had its highlights—he was aboard the USS *MacDonough* at Pearl Harbor the day of the Japanese attack, participated in World War II raids on Palau, Truk, and the Philippine islands of Leyte and Luzon, commanded several ships, and served as Director of the Inter-American Defense College at Fort McNair—most of his superiors found his 31-year service in the U.S. Navy rather unexceptional. Nor is La Rocque's prominence a product of any immensely influential position he held in the service. He did rise to the level of flag officer, but was asked to retire after being passed over for third star rank.

Instead, the 69-year-old La Rocque owes his prominence to his position since 1972 as director and chief spokesman for the Washington-based Center for Defense Information (CDI), the favorite military and strategic think tank of disarmament activists, congressional liberals, and isolationists. As director of CDI, La Rocque has lent his military credentials—and those of several other retired military officers on the CDI staff—Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll, Air Force Major General Jack Kidd, Navy Captain James Bush, Marine Colonel James Donovan, and others—to an extensive campaign for significant cuts in America's defense budget and for a "fortress America" strategic philosophy. It is an extremely unusual position in which to find a retired Navy officer, which makes this retired rear admiral more than just another liberal recruit; Gene La Rocque has become the left-wing counterpart of some former radicals who have embraced conservatism—an ally all the more useful to the Left in light of what he once was.

### Defense without Weapons

CDI claims to stand for a "strong defense"—a position boastfully printed atop every issue of CDI's flagship newsletter, *Defense Monitor*—but it has proposed the cancellation of the B-1 bomber, anti-satellite weapons, the Stealth bomber, the MX missile, civil defense programs, the DIVAD air defense gun, the Trident submarine, the Midgetman mobile missile, the C-17 cargo aircraft, sea-

launched cruise missiles, intermediate-range nuclear missiles, chemical weaponry, the Strategic Defense Initiative, the AMRAAM radar-guided missile, the J VX vertical lift aircraft, and the A-6E Navy attack aircraft. CDI has also advocated removing all nuclear weapons from U.S. aircraft carriers, scrapping tactical nuclear modernization, removing all aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles capable of hitting targets in the Soviet Union, and removing all forward deployed atomic demolition munitions. As La Rocque explained his views before a forum of religious leaders in 1982: "There is no way to defend against [Soviet] ballistic missiles carrying nuclear weapons. So 'superiority' has become meaningless in military terms."

Although it has paid occasional lip service to the need for a modest nuclear-armed submarine capability, there is not one noteworthy weapons system that CDI has worked to support over its 16-year existence. And in the past 30 issues of *Defense Monitor*, which is published 10 times a year, CDI has derided almost every major new weapons system or defense program as either provocative, a waste of tax dollars, or not in the security interests of the nation.

The organization has also advocated a reduction in U.S. arms sales overseas, a complete phased withdrawal of our ground forces from Korea and Europe, closing of U.S. military installations in the Philippines, a freeze in U.S. military spending, the giveaway of the Panama Canal, decreased spending for Special Operations Forces, demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, a comprehensive nuclear test ban, and abandonment of anti-Communist guerrillas in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua.

### Yankee Armageddon

CDI's studies consistently conclude that the United States and the Soviet Union are moving irrefutably toward nuclear war, a dismal situation for which the United States can take most of the blame. La Rocque declared at a special United Nations session on disarmament in 1981: "Make no mistake about it, we in the United States are planning, training, and arming for a nuclear war." He told the American Academy of Political and Social Science in 1983: "War is inevitable sooner or later if we believe our

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contest with the Soviet Union is one of good versus evil." And he told a St. Louis nuclear freeze rally in 1983 that the United States "started this race to oblivion at Hiroshima . . . [and] we permitted this situation which exists today."

La Rocque concedes that: "The United States must have, in this nuclear era, a retaliatory capability that will deter a Soviet attack, and the best weapons to do that are nuclear weapons in our submarines." But his rhetoric echoes that of Mutual Assured Destruction strategists. In 1985 he told *The Futurist*: "We have no defense against Soviet missiles and . . . the Soviets have no defense against our missiles. That understanding is fundamental to any discussion of national security. In fact there is no such thing as national security." He says that "we should not have a first-strike capability or policy because that is apt to precipitate the very action that we want to oppose—the start of a nuclear war."

### Rollback without Freedom Fighters

Like Ronald Reagan, La Rocque argues that the Soviets are in retreat: "The Communist philosophy, the Communist ideology, the Communist economic and political system is a flop—it has failed everywhere in the world. . . . Mozambique is a basket case economically. Angola survives on the oil and gas it sells to us." He adds: "The Soviets have been kicked out of China . . . kicked out of Indonesia, kicked out of Egypt, kicked out of Somalia, and are about to be eased out of Afghanistan. . . . Sooner or later, we are going to get them all [Communist countries] back in our camp . . . we are going to get eastern Europe back in our camp, we are going to get Cuba back in our camp, we are going to have Nicaragua completely in our camp." The key to this global democratic victory, he believes, is for America "to stay very strong economically and politically . . . We have to look after the needs of our own people, we have to have properly educated people. Secondly, we have to be interventionists all over the world . . . we want to intervene with our political, our economic system, our social order, everywhere in the world."

La Rocque fails to recognize, however, the role that military force has played in encouraging the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan and other parts of the world. La Rocque told *Policy Review* that American support for the Mujahideen resistance combating the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan will "simply prolong the fighting." "I don't think you can persuade people to support our ideology with a gun and I think any attempts by other nations to persuade people to accept their ideology with a gun have failed."

La Rocque claims that we could have "weaned" the Sandinistas from the Soviets "if we had spent a portion of [the money we sent to other Central American countries] to help Nicaragua." Today, if we want to get Nicaragua back on our side: "I would go down and put up some health care clinics, I would send educators—school people to teach. . . . If we can't use our brains and our resources to influence a tiny little, poor country of three million people to get in step with all of us, we haven't used our imagination."

A 1987 CDI newsletter warns of the dangers of taking decisive military action against the Communist govern-

ment in Nicaragua, alluding to some self-determination that they believe exists there: "An invasion would make a mockery of America's commitment to the principle of self-determination and bring discredit on our government among millions of our own citizens and more millions of our friends abroad."

In an interview with *City Paper* in 1984, La Rocque even disagreed with the opinion that Soviet MiG fighter jets in

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**Admiral Elmo Zumwalt contends that after being picked to retire, La Rocque "became very bitter. In his final meeting with me, he made it clear that he intended to get even with the Navy."**

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Nicaragua would threaten the surrounding democracies: "It doesn't hurt anybody even if they had MiG 21s, which are 25 years old. They'd have such a dickens of a time trying to maintain them in combat condition that they wouldn't have much of a capability, even if they're in good shape, to attack other countries in the area."

### Cuban Rhythms

Asked to explain the presence of 40,000 Cuban troops in Angola, La Rocque cites the cultural and ethnic similarities between the two nations: "They intermarry—blacks and whites, grays and blues are all the same in Cuba—there isn't any color line as exists elsewhere. It was settled by a vast number of Africans—their rhythms, their dancing, it's African in its heritage. . . ." After returning from Cuba in June 1980, La Rocque told *Cubatimes*: "Soviet influence on Cuba's military, from what I could see, was almost nonexistent."

He advocates open trade with Cuba, which he considers the "best weapon we have" to liberate the nation from Communism, but thinks that "it is not ours to decide what ought to happen." (More consistent than others on the Left, La Rocque also supports free trade with South Africa, contending that sanctions and disinvestment are not the way to end apartheid.) La Rocque calls the Bay of Pigs a "shameful experience" because "if you want to capture Cuba militarily, the military can do it . . . but we want to do it openly. We don't want to fund contras secretly . . . I have no problem when this nation decides to use military force, but let's do it openly, proudly, flag flying."

Asked, however, whether he supported overt American efforts such as those in the Dominican Republic in 1965 or Grenada in 1983, both largely credited with fostering democracy in times of crisis, La Rocque remarks: "I think it was wrong for us to use military force—to kill people—to get what we want in a country. . . . I would have built the airstrip for the Grenadans; you could have put the entire

population of Grenada—90,000 people—on the U.S. government payroll for less than it cost us for the invasion.”

### Fortress America

La Rocque strongly supports the INF treaty, but opposed the original American deployment of intermediate-range missiles widely credited with bringing about the agreement. During the height of the debate over the deployment of Euromissiles, La Rocque’s comment—“If you dummies let us, we’ll fight World War III in Europe”—was

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used repeatedly by European groups opposed to deployment. And a CDI co-sponsored conference, “The First Conference on Nuclear War in Europe,” held in Groningen, Holland, was designed to scare host countries from accepting intermediate-range nuclear deployment.

La Rocque advocates pulling all American troops out of Europe but concedes that this must be done “cautiously, carefully, and not precipitously.” A 1973 issue of *Defense Monitor* argued: “It has become more difficult to see what Soviet interests would be served by an attack on Western Europe. . . .” La Rocque told *Policy Review* he sees no conventional imbalance against the West in Europe: “I think our forces are appropriate to our situation. If we had wanted more tanks, 20 years ago we could have built them.”

He also advocates withdrawing U.S. troops from Asia. During a visit to Tokyo in 1975, La Rocque told the *Japan Times* that Americans are not going to support another ground war in Asia “for any reason” and that “our military bases in Japan and Korea do not in any way contribute to the national defense of the U.S., directly or indirectly.” During this visit, he was quoted by United Press International as saying: “For the American people, if another 30 million [Asian] people come under the control of Communism, it isn’t anything to be concerned about.”

### Getting Even with the Navy?

Several of La Rocque’s former Navy superiors think that his current positions are motivated by bitterness over being denied promotion beyond Rear Admiral. He “became very bitter,” says Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, who worked with La Rocque in five different positions and was Chief of Naval Operations at the time La Rocque was asked to retire: “In his final meeting with me, he made it clear that he intended to get even with the Navy.” Zumwalt says, “There is no

doubt in my mind that [getting even with the service] was his motivation when he started [CDI].” Admiral Tom Moorer, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and La Rocque’s superior in the 1960s, also attributes La Rocque’s far-left rhetoric to “bitterness over not being promoted further.” La Rocque denies Zumwalt’s charges, claiming he never even had a final meeting with Zumwalt. “I am not the least bit bitter,” La Rocque replies, “I never expected to be an admiral and I didn’t care . . . I loved the Navy life . . . I am a sailor.”

The relationship between La Rocque, who did not attend the Naval Academy, and his former Navy colleagues has been a rocky one since a task force that he headed in 1968 at the request of Paul Nitze, then Secretary of the Navy, concluded that the war in Vietnam could not be won, even with greater levels of bombing. La Rocque told *Playboy* in 1981 that “Nobody wanted that report. There was never any name attached to it and it was never published.” La Rocque also spent four-and-a-half days as the first witness against the government in the Pentagon Papers trial, recalling today that he told the court: “The release of the [Vietnam] invasion plans two years after the invasion had taken place did not jeopardize U.S. national security.”

Ironically, one CDI staff member, deputy director Eugene Carroll, did not always harbor the organization’s staunch disarmament and isolationist views. In the Fall 1980 issue of *Wings of Gold*, the quarterly magazine of the Association of Naval Aviation, Carroll, just several months into retirement, asked: “When our Navy can no longer protect U.S. national interests in the Indian Ocean, who will do it for us?” He concludes that “to continue as we are now with inadequate resources, particularly with critical personnel shortages, can only degrade our future capabilities.” He also defended the AWACS aircraft, argued for closer support facilities to Camel Station and a major base on the Red Sea coast of Egypt, and praised the courage of the Navy-Marine Corps team that launched the failed Desert One mission in 1980 intended to rescue American hostages in Tehran.

Today, however, Carroll sings a far different tune. In 1983, Carroll told the Communist *Daily World* that he considered the Reagan administration’s arms control policy “dangerous and unwise,” but was pleased with Andropov’s “skill and imagination.”

### On Soviet Television

A volcano of criticism toward La Rocque and CDI erupted in the summer of 1983 after La Rocque appeared on Soviet television, lending his American military credentials to a condemnation of U.S. arms control policies and questioning President Reagan’s sincerity about arms reductions. Following the five-minute interview, a Soviet commentator remarked that “La Rocque has quite accurately defined the weak points in the American approach to the talks” and proceeded to broadcast eight minutes of film on various antiwar activities in New York.

Some 586 retired American flag officers, representing over 75 percent of the Navy’s retired top command and including seven of the past eight Chiefs of Naval Operations, signed their names to a July 1983 public petition, published in the *Washington Times*, which labeled La





Soviet-supported NVA troops march victoriously through Saigon in 1975.  
CDI labels this "change in the Third World."

Rocque's actions "reprehensible," "contrary to our precepts," and "injurious to the best interests of our country." While the open letter of condemnation recognized La Rocque's right to free speech, it strongly questioned "Rear Admiral La Rocque's judgment in using a totalitarian controlled medium" to "condemn the policies of the United States." The advertisement also deplored "the attempt of certain officers, without access to the latest classified information, to advance—under the cover of their retired rank—their own biases for the reasoned conclusion of the professional active military officers, who are briefed daily on Soviet progress in weapons development and deployment."

La Rocque fired back at the retired flag officers, telling the *Washington Post*: "These old guys are sitting around Coronado or Florida or elsewhere, playing golf and collecting stamps, and they're not involved anymore. No one's calling them to go on television shows or radio programs or fly to Australia." To that Mooror replied: "Anyone who's jealous of La Rocque is one step away from St. Elizabeths Hospital."

### Big Guns Against CDI

La Rocque "speaks with authority on Naval activities in which he had limited, or zero experience," says Admiral Mooror, former commander of the Seventh Fleet, Chief of Naval Operations, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Retired Admiral Bill Thompson says that La Rocque "gives himself credit for being a great strategist in the Navy. He never really had a job of that magnitude." Retired Admiral Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations at the time of La Rocque's departure, says that the selection board charged with determining which admirals would be promoted and which would be asked to retire "was clear that he [La Rocque] was among the lowest performers and

he was therefore designated to retire." Zumwalt says he would label La Rocque "among the bottom 20 percent of flag officers with regard to his technical experience."

In 1974 La Rocque told a joint atomic energy committee, chaired by Senator Stuart Symington, that he had witnessed a near nuclear launch off the Japanese shore during his 1964-65 tour aboard the cruiser *Providence*: "Lo and behold, we were ready to fire and the machinery clanks and the computers all buzz and whirl and up popped a red-tipped missile. Now a red-tipped missile is a nuclear missile. . . ." The only problem with La Rocque's story was no one else aboard the ship recalled an incident even remotely similar to it, and La Rocque never bothered to report the incident at the time.

Admiral Mooror, who was commander of the seventh fleet at the time, says: "La Rocque is either lying or he has failed in his duty. . . . Any Captain that has an event like that happen in the mysterious way that he described it is failing in his duty. He did not report that; I would have known about it immediately." Mooror says that La Rocque's report "made it far more difficult for the seventh fleet units to function in the western Pacific." Today La Rocque responds: "I saw it happen; I was the captain of that ship. Sure it happened. . . . You see the nuclear warheads are painted with a red tip and they're in a big box that we put on top of the *Providence*. . . why should I report it. . . they wouldn't have gone off. . . in my view it was not something I chose to report. . . I had no responsibility to report it."

### Reactions on Capitol Hill

Much writing on the military frequently makes one's eyes glaze over; CDI's timely reports, by contrast, are easy to read. Perhaps in part for this reason, CDI is an influential voice on Capitol Hill and in the mainstream media. CDI

has received public endorsements from Senator Mark Hatfield, who hails the organization's "non-partisan analysis," and Representative Donald Fraser, who compliments CDI's "usual fine job of presenting accurate information and sound analysis." La Rocque and other CDI analysts have testified some 50 times before House and Senate committees, and CDI boasts that legislative assistants rely heavily on its information; CDI studies have been frequently entered into the *Congressional Record*. A 1983

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## As La Rocque declared at a special United Nations session on disarmament in 1981: "Make no mistake about it, we in the United States, are planning, training, and arming for a nuclear war."

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CDI brochure goes as far as claiming that: "On several occasions, government officials have referred newsmen and other callers to CDI for facts the Department of Defense couldn't provide." CDI has also sponsored fellowships for congressional aides interested in attending a course on "U.S. National Security Policy," taught by a CDI consultant, and La Rocque has taught seminars on "The Challenge of the Soviet Union" to mid-level CIA officials. A March 1978 CDI fund-raising letter bragged that "CDI analyses played a key role in the cancellation of the B-1 bomber, nuclear strike cruiser, and additional heavy attack aircraft carriers" and that they had "influenced the slowdown in development of the new land-based mobile ICBM (the MX) . . . and the reduction of U.S. arms sales overseas." As further evidence of CDI's influence, in 1981, CDI assistant director Barry Schneider coauthored an article for *Chemtech* with Paul Warnke, former director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, titled "A Nuclear War Must Never Be."

Within the last year, La Rocque has also represented CDI's views on defense matters in interviews with all three networks, Bill Buckley's *Firing Line*, CNN's *Crossfire*, PBS's *All Things Considered*, and other influential shows. CDI also hosts a television show on defense matters from their in-house videotaping facilities, which is broadcast on cable throughout the country. And CDI studies are cited frequently in the mainstream media, often matter-of-factly and without proper description of CDI's clear ideological bias. In 1984 alone, CDI claims to have been cited in 3,000 articles and editorials across the country. A 1979 CDI movie, *War Without Winners*, directed by Haskell Wexler (a former associate fellow at the radical Institute for Policy Studies who was cinematographer for a 1975 documentary on the 1960s terrorist group the Weather Underground), was broadcast on hundreds of American television stations.

Recently, however, CDI has begun to generate some congressional opposition. In 1983, for instance, after CDI published a paper urging Congress to delete procurement funding for a U.S. anti-satellite system, Representative Melvin Price, then Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, took to the House floor to denounce CDI's double standard in not opposing the existing Soviet anti-satellite system: "The Center does not explain why it is no threat to peace if the Soviets have a (anti-satellite) system—as they do—but it somehow would risk war in space if the United States even tests such a system." After La Rocque testified before the House Budget Committee's Task force on Defense and International Affairs in 1985, Admiral Zumwalt presented committee chairman Bobbi Fiedler with a list of what he contended were 82 inaccurate or misleading assertions contained in La Rocque's analysis of the U.S.-Soviet military balance.

Jeff Subko, Democratic Senator James Exon's legislative assistant for defense matters, says La Rocque "was an admiral, that carries something, but I wouldn't consider him one of the top experts." Jim Hickey, legislative assistant to Congressman Herbert Bateman, says he is "surprised, reading La Rocque's writings, that he was even in the military . . . I find their material lacking in strategic logic." Mike Lofgren with Congressman John Kasich believes "La Rocque is so extreme, it's hard to take him seriously." Mark Kronenberg, legislative assistant for defense issues with Democratic Representative Beverly Byron, says he reads CDI's *Defense Monitor* "for amusement. . . . It isn't very credible or objective."

### FBI Investigation

This past year, CDI was singled out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in a 73-page report on Soviet Active Measures in the United States. The report identified CDI and the Generals for Peace and Disarmament (GPD), whose book La Rocque wrote the forward to, as organizations frequently used in Soviet disinformation campaigns on defense issues. The FBI report described how CDI had supported statements made by former Soviet military officers and reported that "the Soviets have effectively utilized statements made by the GPD and CDI officials in their active measures campaigns."

The FBI also wrote that Mikhail Milshteyn, a retired Soviet lieutenant general "affiliated with Soviet intelligence services," met with La Rocque "on numerous occasions." La Rocque has visited Moscow as a guest of the Soviet Institute of the USA and Canada, and another CDI staff member, associate director James Bush, participated in and spoke to a 1986 conference of the World Peace Council, an identified Soviet front group. (Bush, coincidentally, was also commander of the Navy submarine *Simon Bolivar* at the time convicted Soviet spy James Walker did his spying from the submarine.) In 1987, La Rocque brought retired and active duty Red Army officers to Washington, where CDI offered them a platform to criticize the American SDI program and American nuclear weapons. The gathering, which included Milshteyn, was hailed in *Izvestia*: "It can be said that they [the American and Soviet representatives] completely coincided with the wide complex of the peaceful initiatives proposed by the Soviet Union." La Rocque



responds, "The Soviet Union has adopted some ideas that I have been advocating; I have not adopted Soviet ideas."

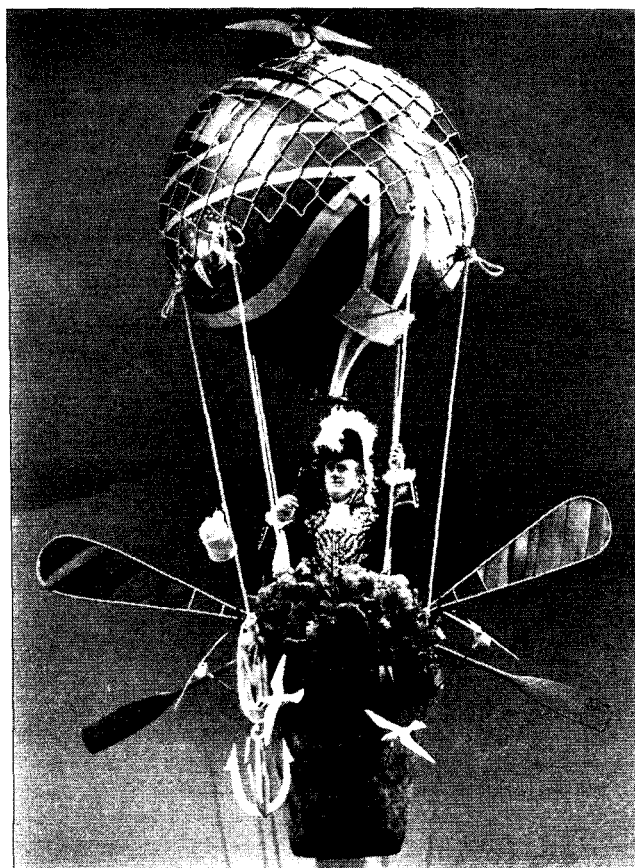
CDI is frequently mentioned in the Soviet press, almost always favorably. In 1981, for instance, a correspondent for Moscow Radio praised CDI deputy director Eugene Carroll, saying: "When I was in Washington quite recently, I happened to be at the Center for Defense Information where I talked with Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll . . . the rear admiral expressed his support for Leonid Ilich Brezhnev's appeal to the U.S. administration to give up dreams of attaining military superiority over the Soviet Union." When correspondent Iona Andronov from *New Times*, an official English-language Soviet publication, arrived at CDI to write an article on the organization, the Soviet propagandist wrote: "I was received there, to my surprise, as something like an old acquaintance." *New Times* quoted La Rocque as saying: "To justify deals running into the thousands of millions, the bogey of military threat is needed. Today, as before, that bogey is 'Moscow.' The Americans are told that the Communists are godless, the Communists fought in Vietnam, the Communists have taken over Angola, and the Communist Mecca is Moscow, Russia. And of late to the old bogey of Communism there is more and more often added an alleged threat from Russia. In this way all-engulfing ideological and national fear is being cultivated."

### CDI Misinformation

CDI's reports are an interesting conglomeration of subtle manipulations and excuses for why the United States should not assert itself in defense of democracy. Reports seldom acknowledge any deterrence value in American weaponry. Though the SDI system has not yet been developed, CDI has already concluded in its most recent *Defense Monitor* that: "Any conceivable 'Star Wars' system to intercept ballistic missiles would be vulnerable to simple and relatively cheap countermeasures and could not protect people and cities from nuclear attack." A 1987 *Defense Monitor* on sea-based weapons warns that "without U.S. restraint now, the Soviet Union will also develop more lethal sea-based missiles, thus diminishing the security of both nations."

A 1984 *Defense Monitor* echoes the Soviet Union's criticisms of American forward-based defense aircraft, terming 2,400 American F-111s, F-4s, F-16s, A-6s, and A-7s "tactical aircraft" that are "capable of striking the Soviet Union," but claiming that 260 Soviet Backfire bombers "can only hit the U.S. if they fly at airliner speeds, on one-way missions." In fact, only the F-111 is capable of striking targets in the Soviet Union; the A-6 and A-7 are carrier aircraft without the capability of striking Soviet targets unless in Soviet waters, and the F-4 and F-16 are utilized primarily for close air support and tactical air missions against Soviet aircraft, while the Backfire, with aerial refueling capacities, is an intercontinental-capable bomber.

A 1974 *Defense Monitor* reports that "most recent U.S. frigates are twice the size of new Soviet cruisers. . . ." However, frigate size is generally not an accurate indication of capability. In a 1985 *Defense Monitor*, CDI attacks the Reagan administration for increasing its support for Special Operations Forces, when, in fact, Congress has



David Cooper

"Things are seldom what they seem."  
—from Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*

taken most of the initiative in expanding the program.

Though CDI did once question Soviet arms sales policies in a 1979 issue of the *Defense Monitor*, it has generally portrayed the Soviet Union as less aggressive and threatening than experience would indicate. A 1986 report, for instance, titled "Soviet Geopolitical Momentum: Myth or Menace" concludes that "Soviet foreign involvement has to a large extent been shaped by local conditions over which the Soviets have had little control." The report neglects to place Nicaragua or North Korea on its list of nations under Soviet influence. A 1980 report intending to depict Soviet geopolitical influence since 1945 neglects to cite any Soviet influence in Austria from 1945 to 1955, in Chile from 1970 to 1973, in Iraq, or in North Korea.

A 1975 *Defense Monitor*, published after the fall of Saigon, refers to the NVA's 20-year war against South Vietnam as 'change in the Third World': "Vietnam should have taught the lesson that compulsive resistance to change in the Third World can be very damaging to our interests."

CDI has also worked hard to deny Soviet arms violations and to shift the debate away from this sensitive topic. A 1985 *Defense Monitor*, for instance, assures its readers that "charges that the USSR has violated past arms control treaties are either largely unsubstantiated or arise from ambiguities in the wording of treaties." A 1987 CDI report titled "Soviet Compliance with Arms Agreements: The Positive Record" warns against even discussing Soviet violations: "The administration's efforts to convict the So-

viet Union of cheating is inconsistent with a serious effort to negotiate nuclear arms limitation agreements with the Soviet Union.”

### **Paul Newman's Salad Dressing**

CDI has received much of its support from General Motors heir Stewart Mott (whose mansion first housed

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CDI), actors Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward (CDI receives a portion of all proceeds from Newman's salad dressing and spaghetti sauce products), and the Joan B.

Kroc Foundation, set up by the widow of the man who built the McDonald's fast food chain. Support has also come from the New York-based Fund for Peace, largely financed by stockbroker Randolph Compton, and the Field Foundation of the Chicago department store and publishing fortune. A public financial audit conducted in 1986 revealed total assets exceeding \$2 million.

Aside from receiving support from liberal Hollywood heavyweights like Newman and Woodward, La Rocque has also offered his own views on American film. In 1986, La Rocque condemned the patriotic movie *Top Gun*, a top-grossing film about young Navy fighter pilots, telling the *Los Angeles Times*: “It is almost like a fairy tale. I hate these films. They glorify war and militarism. And that's dangerous.”

Today, La Rocque and CDI find themselves in perhaps the most uncomfortable political position in the organization's 16-year existence. After several years of consistently criticizing Reagan defense budgets, programs, and policies, CDI is now changing its tone toward Ronald Reagan, and generally supporting the president's recent INF agreement and urging him to follow through on his stated desire for 50 percent reductions in long-range missiles. The organization that once placed itself to the left of Jimmy Carter, condemning the Democratic president's new militarism toward the end of his term, is now quietly applauding the first president to bring about reductions in nuclear armaments—Ronald Reagan. As a headline of a recent CDI defense paper described Ronald Reagan's treaty: “The INF treaty makes good common sense.” 

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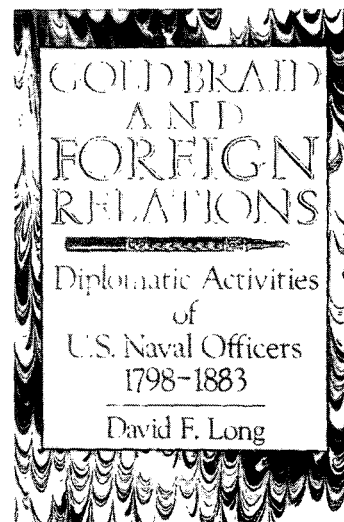
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## HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE MISSING!

If you had received a recent issue of **CRISIS** magazine, here's what you would have read:

"I believe the Soviet Union is a great torch which emits hope for the preservation of peace on our planet. Always in the vanguard of the overall struggle for peace, the Soviet Union has become the personification of ethical and moral norms in international relations."

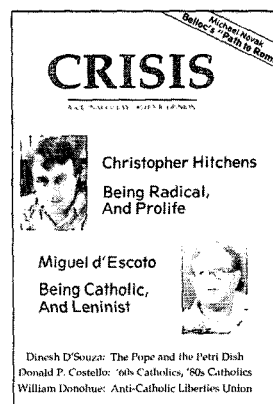
--From an expose of Miguel D'Escoto, Sandinista commandante and former Maryknoll priest, who said the above when he was recently awarded the Lenin Prize in Moscow.

"You see a woman kicked in the stomach. Your instinct is properly one of revulsion. You learn that the woman is pregnant. Who will reply that this discovery does not multiply the revulsion? And who will say that this is only because it makes it worse for the woman?"

--Christopher Hitchens, leftist columnist for The Nation magazine, chooses **CRISIS** to speak out for the first time against abortion, and call for the reversal of Roe v. Wade.

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# A MARTIAL PLAN FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

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## Militarism Is Bone and Soul of the Sandinista Revolution

HUMBERTO BELLI

Since coming to power in Nicaragua in 1979, the Sandinistas have been building a military civilization unprecedented in Central American history. Already Nicaragua possesses one of the largest standing armies of Latin America—75,000 regular soldiers and close to 100,000 militiamen—in a population of scarcely three million citizens. By the 1990s, according to revelations by a high-ranking defector, Major Miranda, the militia will increase in size to 600,000. But the militarism of Nicaragua is not to be measured simply by the energy and resources devoted by this impoverished country to war or defense. We must speak as well of an ethos: the entire cultural-psychological universe of the Sandinista regime is infused with military values and attitudes.

The March incursion into Honduras should put to rest any thoughts that this military civilization will wither away as a result of the Arias peace plan or the denial of U.S. military aid to the Contras. On the contrary, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega confirmed Miranda's revelations that the Sandinistas intend to expand their forces even if relations with their neighbors and the United States are "normalized." The militarism of the Sandinistas preceded the Contras, and it is by no stretch of the imagination a defensive reaction to the threat of a U.S. invasion. Instead, militarism is bone and soul of the Nicaraguan revolution, one of its most essential and permanent ideological elements. It is also intrinsic to the psychological makeup of the Sandinista leaders. The Sandinistas could not demilitarize Nicaragua without threatening the foundations of their sociopolitical order.

### AK-47s Against the Sky

Military imagery permeates all realms of Nicaraguan society. The most impressive monument erected by the Sandinistas in Managua is a huge statue of a worker defiantly brandishing a Soviet AK-47 assault rifle against the sky. As in Castro's Cuba, the real leaders of the revolution are all "comandantes" (commanders) in military uniform, except when a public relations consultant advises President Daniel Ortega to wear a business suit on visits to the United States. The logo of the Sandinista newspaper, *Barricada*, carries a graphic of a guerrilla fighter shooting his gun from a barricade.

The speeches of the comandantes are riddled with words of battle—"enemies," "annihilate," "defeat," "crush," "attack," "offensive"—even when referring to issues such as agriculture. When addressed by the comandantes, the regime's supporters are instructed to cry out, "National Directorate, we await your order!" Students in a literacy campaign in 1980 were organized in "brigades." Coffee and cotton harvesters are divided into "production battalions."

Elementary school textbooks teach children to add by counting hand grenades and bullets. Children are also taught to hate the United States. At military parades they are directed to shout phrases such as "Free fatherland or death!" alternating in a chorus of raised fists with "Here, and there, the yankee shall die!"

A messianic, sometimes apocalyptic, vision of world revolution often finds in the comandantes some poetic expression, such as this from Minister of Interior Tomas Borge: "New offspring of history are being born in the midst of grief, anguish, and heroic splendor. Social revolution is the order of the day in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Central America is being rocked with social earthquakes."

### Good Marxmanship

One origin of the Sandinistas' militarism is their Marxist-Leninist worldview. For Marx and Engels, history was literally a battlefield of antagonistic classes, in which bourgeois society could only be destroyed through violent revolution. Lenin, repudiating pacifist socialists, wrote that "National wars against the imperial powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, progressive, and revolutionary."

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HUMBERTO BELLI, a member of the Sandinista party until 1975, was editorial page editor of *La Prensa* (Managua) from 1980 to 1982, and is currently associate professor of sociology at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is author of two histories of the Sandinista revolution, *Christians Under Fire* and *Breaking Faith*. His article is adapted from a paper given at a Foreign Policy Research Institute conference on the possibilities of reform in Communist countries.