

Operation Condor: The CIA is not innocent

By: Raúl Antonio Capote / Granma

17/03/2020



Over the years, the CIA has spied on the diplomatic and military communications of hundreds of nations by using encryption machines from a Swiss company owned by the CIA and Germany's Federal Intelligence Service (BND), as revealed by the National Security Archive, an independent research center.

Both the Washington Post and the German public-service television broadcaster (ZDF) have recently published this investigation, with great media impact worldwide, as hundreds of international news agencies reported the news and commented on the information.

It turns out that the Swiss company Crypto AG, owned by the CIA and BND, has for years sold and installed thousands of encryption machines in several nations, including Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Spain, Greece, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq, Indonesia and the Philippines, among others.

The encryption machines enabled the CIA to decode, for example, thousands of messages closely related to Operation Condor; the 1973 military coup against the Popular Unity Government in Chile; the 1976 coup in Argentina; the 1976 assassination of former Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier in Washington; the Falklands War; and more than a few others.

According to the National Security Agency, the CIA used Crypto AG's machines to spy on those implementing Operation Condor - a coordinated extermination plan carried out by several Latin American dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s to eliminate leftist, democratic and revolutionary forces in those nations. They, the executioners, encrypted their communications, "without knowing the United States might be listening."

The encryption machines used by "Condortel", Operation Condor's communications network, were provided by Crypto AG by agreement with the CIA and the repressive governments involved in Operation Condor.

According to The Washington Post and ZDF, the spy project was first known as "Thesaurus", and then "Rubicon". The Post pointed out that both the CIA and the U.S. National Security Agency have controlled nearly all aspects of Crypto AG since 1970, in collaboration with BND.

Most of the media outlets, that commented on or simply published the information, put forward the incredible theory that the CIA acquired knowledge of crimes committed by Operation Condor through the spy operation. Referring to either Thesaurus or Rubicon, some went further in their "naïveté" and took up the story that some CIA officials were "frightened" by information regarding the horrors perpetrated by the military dictatorships, and wanted to denounce them.

Did the CIA know about Operation Condor or not?

Plans for repression, the forerunners of Operation Condor, emerged from the School of the Americas and the Conferences of American Armies in the 1960s, where U.S. sponsored "preventive" actions in the region were mapped out, as part of intelligence, psychological and cultural warfare operations conducted under the slogan of "no more Cubas."

Declassified CIA documents dated June 23, 1976, published by the Uruguayan newspaper La República, July 29, 2007, revealed that security officials from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia met in Buenos Aires as early as 1974, "to organize coordinated actions against subversive targets."

The National Intelligence Daily's top secret report, prepared by the CIA director for high-ranking officials only, likewise reported that Argentines had conducted spy operations against subversive elements, as did Chileans and Uruguayans.

U.S. researcher Patrice McSherry states that this document proves that coordination of repressive efforts by South American dictatorships began in 1973 and 1974, before the extraterritorial plans were named "Operation Condor" at a meeting in Chile in 1975, and that the CIA was deeply involved in the planning and execution of the actions.

Operation Condor was an intelligence plan designed and coordinated by the CIA and security services of Latin American military dictatorships, to annihilate the left. Along with the Gladio and Phoenix Operations, it was part of the United States' global strategy during the Cold War to confront "the advance of communism in the world."

Declassified CIA files indicate that, in 1975, Chilean Chief of Intelligence Manuel Contreras was invited to the CIA's Langley headquarters, where he stayed for 15 days. After this visit, Contreras met with leaders of military intelligence services from Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay on November 25, 1975. Later, Brazil joined the group.

According to the "Archives of Terror" discovered in Paraguay, Operation Condor led to the tragic loss of more than 50,000 civilian lives, over 30,000 missing, and some 400,000 prisoners.

Gladio was a secret organizational structure composed of military and civilians who, in collaboration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), operated in Europe from the late 1950s through October 1990. Gladio's secret armies in Europe, mainly Italy, carried out multiple acts of terrorism and selective crimes, under the pretext of confronting the threat of the Red Army occupying the region, in the event of a third world war.

It was Cuban-born terrorist Orlando Bosch Avila, involved in the infamous Barbados bombing with Luis Posada Carriles, who fired the machine gun that seriously wounded Bernardo Leighton and his wife in Rome, in an assassination attempt organized by Italian terrorist Stefano Delle Chiaie, a member of Operation Gladio.

Phoenix was a top secret program, developed by the CIA in Vietnam in 1967, in an attempt to "neutralize" the Vietcong by killing South Vietnamese civilians suspected of supporting combatants in the North and Vietcong soldiers.

William Colby, CIA director in that time, admitted in 1976 that Phoenix operations killed more than 20,000 between 1967 and 1972. The My Lai massacre was just one Phoenix operation.

Phoenix methods and techniques were used in Operation Condor.

United States intelligence services did not learn about Operation Condor via espionage. The CIA organized, planned, advised and was involved in implementing the gruesome extermination plan. It is responsible for crimes against humanity, crimes for which the U.S. government should be brought to justice. The CIA has enjoyed

impunity for years, but cannot escape history, which has already conducted a trial and issued its ruling.

IN CONTEXT

A few examples of Operation Condor crimes:

-In Buenos Aires, Chilean Army General Carlos Prats and his spouse Sofia Cuthbert were killed by a remote-controlled bomb.

-High-ranking Uruguayan army officers secretly travelled to Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and kidnapped a couple, activists in the Uruguayan opposition, Universindo Rodriguez Diaz and Lilian Celiberti, with their two children, Camilo and Francesca, eight and three years of age, respectively.

-Orlando Letelier, former minister in Salvador Allende's government, was killed by a car bomb in Washington. His assistant, Ronni Moffitt, a U.S. citizen, also died in the explosion.

-Kidnapping and disappearance of the Zaffaroni couple in Argentina.

Source: Ecured & Prensa Latina