

3-9-1990

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## Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Costa Rican Report On U.S. Intelligence Penetration Of San Jose Government, Related Matters." (1990).  
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## **Costa Rican Report On U.S. Intelligence Penetration Of San Jose Government, Related Matters**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

*Published: Friday, March 9, 1990*

[Appearing below are highlights from the 03/01/90 issue of the New York Times on coverage of a report by a Costa Rican congressional committee. The report was released in December during the US invasion of Panama. It is based largely on testimony by Costa Rican government officials, the Iran-contra hearings, related trials and a US Senate subcommittee investigation into drug trafficking. See also CAU 03/07/90.] \* Dimitrius Papas, a CIA agent, established a group of 15 Costa Rican agents known as the "Babies," within the intelligence directorate of the Costa Rican Public Security Ministry. This group conducted surveillance of senior Costa Rican officials, including a telephone eavesdropping system that is illegal under Costa Rican law. Next, the CIA reportedly used the Babies to plant false leads to sidetrack the investigation of the 1984 bombing at La Penca. Two contra leaders, Marcos Aguado and Octavio Cesar, who claimed CIA connections, met with George Morales, and offered him US government cooperation in defending himself against pending US drug trafficking charges if he would finance gun running flights, which would be allowed to return to the US loaded with drugs. Morales was later convicted of drug smuggling and is now incarcerated. \* The report cites Senate subcommittee testimony, stating that the first load of weapons was carried by a plane in July 1984 from Fort Lauderdale, Fla. John Hull and several assistants met the plane, which landed on his ranch, and arms were exchanged for a load of cocaine. (See CAU 03/07/90 for recent developments on Hull.) \* Eden Pastora, a former Nicaraguan insurgency leader, and target of the 1984 bombing, identified Hull as a CIA operator controlled by Philip Holtz, the second secretary of the economic section of the US Embassy in Costa Rica. Hull and Holtz worked together at establishing safe houses used by Lt. Col. Oliver North, and Robert Owen, among others. At the time, Owen was a secretary to Dan Quayle. The Costa Rican report says that Owen called Hull to a meeting with a group of pilots from Pastora's organization at a safe house in San Jose when the bomb exploded at La Penca. Shortly after the explosion, Hull called an associate, instructing him not to lend his small plane to evacuate anyone wounded at La Penca. Next, a group of Pastora supporters who arrived at Hull's ranch that evening were refused permission to use the plane to fly out the wounded. \* Jack Terrell, a mercenary working for the contras, said he met with several contra leaders, Hull, Owen, Felipe Vidal (see CAU, 03/07/90), and Amac Galil. Galil was suspected of transporting the bomb to the press conference at La Penca. Terrell said the group was discussing the need to kill Pastora when Vidal told Hull that the attempt at La Penca failed because "the bomb was detonated ahead of time." \* The report accuses Hull and Vidal of murder. It also recommends prosecuting these two and 20 others for violating Costa Rican neutrality laws. The others include North, Owen, and Holtz. According to the Times, the Costa Rican report expands on an account of the La Penca bombing appearing in Leslie Cockburn's book, "Out of Control," and on accounts by other journalists, including Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan. Hull lost a lawsuit charging Honey and Avirgan, who was wounded in the bombing, with criminal libel for linking him to the bombing. Hull and 28 others were countersued by the Christic Institute, a Washington-based public interest law firm. In 1988, a few days before the case was to begin, a Miami judge dismissed it on grounds that plaintiffs had not proven Galil had planted the bomb.

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