

# Latin America and the 'Family Jewels'

By Kate Doyle

WHEN THE CIA DECLASSIFIED ITS "FAMILY JEWELS" in June, a few small pearls about the agency's programs in Latin America tumbled into view. The secret documents were compiled in 1973 on orders from then CIA director James Schlesinger, who, in the interest of controlling the damage inflicted on the CIA by the Watergate scandal, commanded his personnel to identify any CIA activities that might be construed as illegal. The compilation of reports that flowed to Schlesinger's office became known as the family jewels. Henry Kissinger called it "the horrors book."

Those horrors are familiar to anyone with a passing acquaintance with the CIA's history: assassination plots, spying on U.S. citizens, drug experiments on human guinea pigs. Most were revealed three decades ago by Congress and the press, and some of what we knew has been inexplicably censored from this newest version. Because Schlesinger's focus was on domestic operations, the family jewels don't disclose anything new about the CIA's most notorious operations in Latin America—overthrowing presidents (Guatemala, 1954), staging invasions (Cuba, 1961), and fixing elections (Chile, 1964), to name a few.

But the family jewels aren't all paste. A pair of memos from the agency's powerful chief of counterintelligence, James Jesus Angleton, offers a rare window into the CIA's role in a long-standing U.S. program to train police forces in Latin America and exploit them for intelligence purposes. (To read the memos, see pages 607–12 of the family jewels at [www.nsarchive.com](http://www.nsarchive.com).) The program was born out of U.S. fears about the spread of Communism after the Second World War, when Washington considered lesser-developed countries weak links in the chain forged to protect the free world and sought to strengthen their capacity to fight subversion.

Shortly after the CIA coup that toppled Guatemala's Jacobo Arbenz, Eisenhower's National Security Council ordered a worldwide survey of foreign security forces that could be harnessed to fight the war on Communism. The survey, called the Overseas Internal Security Program, was led by officers of the Pentagon, the CIA, and the In-

ternational Cooperation Administration (later the Agency for International Development). The effort evolved into the Office of Public Safety (OPS) under AID.

One of the godfathers of the program, Albert R. Haney (a key member of the CIA team that ousted Arbenz), wrote that "the U.S. cannot afford the moral luxury of helping only those regimes in the free world that meet our ideals of self-government." Guatemala was the first Latin American country to come under the program in 1956, quickly followed by Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Venezuela.

According to his now declassified memos, Angleton saw foreign security forces as more than tools for killing Communists: The CIA could recruit them as spies. His staff ensured that CIA-sponsored officers were included in OPS programs and in classes at the International Police Academy in Washington, provided them with equipment, and gave them special CIA training outside OPS channels.

The documents were likely included in the family jewels because one of them mentions a class given to 26 police officers from 10 countries by the Bomb Squad of the Dade County Police Department in Miami in 1973. As Angleton wrote, "The program provides the trainees with ample opportunity to develop basic familiarity and use proficiently through handling, preparing and applying the various explosive charges, incendiary agents, terrorist devices and sabotage techniques." In other words, it taught foreign police and paramilitary agents how to make and use bombs.

The new documents highlight Angleton's direct involvement in this effort over the course of two decades. They show that the CIA took the smallest details of the secret training of Latin American security forces with the utmost seriousness at the highest levels. The covert U.S. support for secret police and paramilitaries that began with this program would continue across the hemisphere throughout the Cold War, with ruinous results that still reverberate today. ■

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