Part 7 – Cold War in Latin America

Important Cold War Events in US Latin American Relations:

1954: US CIA helps overthrow the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in Guatemala after Arbenz nationalizes property owned by the United Fruit Company

1959: Fidel Castro leads communist revolution in Cuba

1961: US trains Cuban exiles and stages Bay of Pigs invasion in a failed attempt to overthrow Castro’s Regime

: US begins "Operation Mongoose" an attempt to destabilize the Cuban government and assassinate Castro

: Kennedy announces formation of Alliance for Progress -- US aid plan for Latin America. Latin American nations pledge to institute reforms in return for US dollars, but few reforms are actually instituted.

1962: Cuban Missile Crisis

1965: President Johnson orders marines into the Dominican Republic to keep a "leftist" government from taking power.

1971: CIA destabilizes elected government of Salvador Allende (in Chile), a "Marxist," and allegedly encourages a coup.

1981: Reagan administration begins supply aid to "Contras" fighting against socialist Sandanista government in Nicaragua

1980’s: US provides aid to repressive governments on El Salvador and Guatemala to assist in wars against "communist" insurgents

1986: Regan’s Iran-Contra scandal becomes public

1989: US invades Grenada to overthrow a Marxist government

1989: US invades Panama to arrest General Manuel Noriega on drug dealing charges
Iran-Contras Affair

Ronald Reagan's efforts to eradicate Communism spanned the globe, but the insurgent Contras' cause in Nicaragua was particularly dear to him. Battling the Cuban-backed Sandinistas, the Contras were, according to Reagan, "the moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers." Under the so-called Reagan Doctrine, the CIA trained and assisted this and other anti-Communist insurgencies worldwide. Assisting involved supplying financial support, a difficult task politically after the Democratic sweep of congressional elections in November 1982. In order to raise money, the Reagan administration sold weapons to Iran despite en embargo placed on the country by the United States.