

RS#05: Source 4 – Iran-Contra Hearing Testimony, Adolfo Calero, 1987

The following testimony was given to the joint Congressional committee during the investigation of the Iran-Contra affair. Adolfo Calero, a former manager of a Coca-Cola plant in Nicaragua, led the Nicaraguan Democratic Force and aided the Contras in Nicaragua, with the assistance of Oliver North.

Examine this historical source and summarize the information it provides. Does the source support a view of Oliver North as a patriot, a pawn, or an outlaw?

Adolfo Calero Testimony, May 20, 1987

[Opening Statement]

Yes, we received funds from foreign sources. That was the only way to survive after the U.S. aid was cut off by Congress. We gratefully welcomed the support of patriotic Americans and citizens of other countries who understood our plight and the serious implications of our defeat. But we bore the brunt of fighting for our freedom. We never asked for intervention by American military forces. This has been our battle, and not a Vietnam. We are making history but also repeating it. In 1775, front companies were set up in Europe to receive funds contributed by France and Spain. It all developed into a delicate international problem but it served a worthy cause, that of the American revolutionaries fighting to free this country from the British Empire. God bless all of the Americas...

Mr. BARBADORO: Now, between July of 1984 and 1986 when the U.S. Government funding resumed, you spent approximately \$19 million for arms and ammunition, correct?

Mr. CALERO: Correct, sir.

Mr. BARBADORO: Prior to July of 1984, had you had any experience in purchasing weapons?

Mr. CALERO: No, sir.

Mr. BARBADORO: How did you determine what arms to buy and how much to pay for them?

Mr. CALERO: Well, I knew what was being used and we had prepared before, with the CIA, a budget, which listed all the materials that we were going to buy with the new funding, which never came, but—so I knew what we had to get and I consulted with our military men.

Mr. BARBADORO: Did you also consult with Colonel North?

Mr. CALERO: Oh, I told him, I used to tell Colonel North practically everything. I had no reservation. I had full confidence and trust in him...

Mr. BARBADORO: Did you also tell him after you made a purchase what you had purchased and how much you had paid and who you had bought it from?

Mr. CALERO: Yes. Yes.....

Mr. MITCHELL: Mr. Calero, did Colonel North ever tell you that he talked with President Reagan about this matter?

Mr. CALERO: He always told me that the President was back of us, was plugging for us, and that was public, of course, I mean through President Reagan's Saturday radio talks and in his press conferences and in every opportunity he had, he did....

Mr. MITCHELL: My question is, did Colonel North ever tell you that he, Colonel North, said anything to the President?

Mr. CALERO: No. I mean, he did not tell me I told the President so-and-so...