John Rendon

From Powerbase

John Walter Rendon Jr. is 'a leader in the strategic field known as "perception management," manipulating information -- and, by extension, the news media -- to achieve the desired result.' He is the former executive director of the Democratic National Committee. In September 2001, the Pentagon had secretly awarded Rendon a $16 million contract to target Iraq and other adversaries with propaganda. According to James Bamford:

His firm, the Rendon Group, has made millions off government contracts since 1991, when it was hired by the CIA to help "create the conditions for the removal of Hussein from power." Working under this extraordinary transfer of secret authority, Rendon assembled a group of anti-Saddam militants, personally gave them their name -- the Iraqi National Congress -- and served as their media guru and "senior adviser" as they set out to engineer an uprising against Saddam...

According to federal records, Rendon charges the CIA and the Pentagon $311.26 an hour for his services.

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Regime Change in Panama

In 1989, shortly after his election, President George H.W. Bush signed a highly secret "finding" authorizing the CIA to funnel $10 million to opposition forces in Panama to overthrow Gen. Manuel Noriega. Reluctant to involve agency personnel directly, the CIA turned to the Rendon Group. Rendon's job was to work behind the scenes, using a variety of campaign and psychological techniques to put the CIA's choice, Guillermo Endara, into the presidential palace. Cash from the agency, laundered through various bank accounts and front organizations, would end up in Endara's hands, who would then pay Rendon.

...Endara was running against Noriega's handpicked choice, Carlos Duque. With Rendon's help, Endara beat Duque decisively at the polls -- but Noriega simply named himself "Maximum Leader" and declared the election null and void. The Bush administration then decided to remove Noriega by force -- and Rendon's job shifted from generating local support for a national election to building international support for regime change. Within days he had found the ultimate propaganda tool.

At the end of a rally in support of Endara, a band of Noriega's Dignity Battalion attacked the crowd, killed Endara's guard, and left him seriously wounded.

Within hours, Rendon made sure the photos reached every newsroom in the world. The next week an image of the violence made the cover of Time magazine with the caption POLITICS PANAMA STYLE: NORIEGA BLUDGEONS HIS OPPOSITION, AND THE U.S. TURNS UP THE HEAT. To further boost international support for Endara, Rendon escorted Ford on a tour of Europe to meet British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the Italian prime minister and even the pope. In December 1989, when Bush decided to invade Panama, Rendon and several of his employees were on one of the first military jets headed to Panama City.
...There, on a U.S. military base surrounded by 24,000 U.S. troops, heavy tanks and Combat Talon AC-130 gunships, Rendon's client, Endara, was at last sworn in as president of Panama.

**Gulf War '91**

Rendon's involvement in selling the war began in July 1990.

What the Kuwaitis wanted was help in selling a war of liberation to the American government -- and the American public. Rendon proposed a massive "perception management" campaign designed to convince the world of the need to join forces to rescue Kuwait. The Kuwaiti government in exile agreed to pay Rendon $100,000 a month for his assistance.

To coordinate the operation, Rendon opened an office in London. Once the Gulf War began, he remained extremely busy trying to prevent the American press from reporting on the dark side of the Kuwaiti government, an autocratic oil-tocracy ruled by a family of wealthy sheiks. When newspapers began reporting that many Kuwaitis were actually living it up in nightclubs in Cairo as Americans were dying in the Kuwaiti sand, the Rendon Group quickly counterattacked. Almost instantly, a wave of articles began appearing telling the story of grateful Kuwaitis mailing 20,000 personally signed valentines to American troops on the front lines, all arranged by Rendon.

Rendon also set up an elaborate television and radio network, and developed programming that was beamed into Kuwait from Taif, Saudi Arabia...

After Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, it was Rendon's responsibility to make the victory march look like the flag-waving liberation of France after World War II...

**Regime Change in Iraq**

After the war ended, the Top Secret order signed by President Bush to oust Hussein included a rare "lethal finding" -- meaning deadly action could be taken if necessary. Under contract to the CIA, Rendon was charged with helping to create a dissident force with the avowed purpose of violently overthrowing the entire Iraqi government. It is an undertaking that Rendon still considers too classified to discuss. "That's where we're wandering into places I'm not going to talk about," he says. "If you take an oath, it should mean something."

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