

Bankers greet debtors' club with coup threats, blackmail, terrorism

by Valerie Rush

Coup attempts, assassination threats, blackmail, and a new narco-terrorist offensive have been some of the responses of the world banking elite to last month's formation of the long-awaited Ibero-American debtors' club. From Argentina to Colombia, Venezuela to Peru, each government has been delivered its warning: Put down the debt bomb and submit to our dictates . . . or we will bury you!

Ibero-America is thus faced with an inescapable necessity: a race against time to forge effective weapons of economic integration and political solidarity which can immobilize its enemies before those enemies destroy it.

Exemplary is the case of Colombia, where the continent's failure to move fast enough and hard enough to construct a common anti-drug defense capability with muscle has left that country as well as its weaker neighbors Peru and Bolivia vulnerable to the continued assaults of Dope, Inc. and therefore to the dictates of the drug mob's senior partners, the international usurers determined to collect their debt at all costs.

Dope Inc. 'goes legit'

Just two months after the Colombian dope mafia was forced to flee a nationwide police dragnet following the brutal April 30 mob slaying of Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, Colombians were stunned to learn that the same dope mob had just offered the President a deal whereby it would repatriate over 3 billion "narco-dollars" stashed in Swiss and offshore bank accounts and dismantle its trafficking operations in return for immunity from extradition to the United States and "a fair shake" from the Colombian legal system.

The mafia's letter to the President, delivered through the mediation of former President Alfonso López Michelsen and the present Attorney General Carlos Jiménez Gómez, urges President Betancur to "consider the possibility of [our] reincorporation into Colombian society in the near future so that we can fully enjoy her as decent people, as citizens. . . We also believe that, within the intelligent, generous, and tenacious effort that your government is carrying out in the search for peace and well-being of the citizenry, our unilateral statement is a link . . . that completes the chain of achievements

of your nearly two-year-old administration."

Newly-appointed Justice Minister Parejo González immediately denounced the offer as reprehensible and swore that he personally would never negotiate with criminals. The Catholic Church issued a strong statement demanding that the cocaine mafia face the fullest punishment of the law. Senators and deputies from across the political spectrum publicly rejected the idea of negotiating with the murderers of Lara Bonilla. President Betancur, while issuing no public statement on the letter, nonetheless responded by calling on Interpol to assist Colombian law enforcement in apprehending its authors.

Nonetheless, the mafia offer is being defended by an array of anti-government "citizens above suspicion" whose connections to the drug mafia have been elaborated in past *EIR* coverage. By deliberately blurring the distinctions between the government's morality and that of the drug traffickers, these forces hope to both undermine the Betancur government's credibility and build a fascist capability among desperate layers of the population to use as a battering ram against the presidency.

Noted Colombian folk hero and Nobel Prize author Gabriel García Márquez, for example, has gone unabashedly public in defense of the mafia offer. "What the drug traffickers are proposing is unconditional surrender which should be seen as a triumph of Colombian justice. I believe it is less immoral to accept the mafia's surrender than to destroy the Sierra Nevada [mountains] with poisons while trying to get rid of marijuana."

García Márquez was referring to the fact that the Colombian government has just begun its first aerial herbicide spraying program against the country's vast marijuana plantations. The Nobel laureate and his "ecologist" friends have mobilized the Indian populations of the Sierra Nevada into mass protests against the government's anti-drug herbicide program.

In case one should be deluded into thinking that García Márquez is just an ingenuous nature lover, note the following from a recent interview the novelist granted to the New York City porno rag *The Village Voice*: "The drug trade is a means

of self-defense in a country like Colombia, where no one is going to let themselves die of hunger. . . . Some may write novels or make movies, others may traffic in drugs or become presidents of the Republic. . . . Drugs are a reality and some day they will be viewed objectively." And, in the best tradition of the *Wall Street Journal*, García Márquez added that the drug trade has provided Colombia with vital "breathing space" which has kept her from sharing the worse economic crises of her neighbors.

García Márquez's sentiments have been echoed in the pages of the daily *El Tiempo*, owned by the oligarchical Santos family and representing the political machine of former President López Michelsen. According to a column written by Ernesto Santos Calderón, the young "leftist" son of the Santos empire, "A government so in favor of peace and national reconciliation has nothing to lose by listening to what a powerful underground business interest has to say. . . . The unique capacity of Colombians for dialogue . . . is a quality which, while sometimes appearing scandalous or a defect, is something we should never lose."

El Tiempo was also the newspaper which cried buckets of tears over the fate of the private zoological parks expropriated by government forces during raids on the vast estates of that "powerful underground business interest" following the assassination of Lara Bonilla.

Enter the 'Kissinger factor'

The crisis currently shaking Peru is exemplary of what awaits Colombia, and the rest of the continent, if it loses to the financial oligarchy. Ravaged by an escalating terrorist drive and debilitating economic crisis, Peru has been especially targeted for destabilization to the point where coup rumors are insistently circulating.

The government's refusal to join forces with the debtors' club strategy has only intensified that country's vulnerability. Last week, for example, under pressure of the International Monetary Fund, the Peruvian government authorized the creation of Swiss-styled anonymous bank accounts within the domestic banking system whereby deposits in soles can now be made, no questions asked. Such a move serves as de facto legalization of the drug trade and can only strengthen the hand of the very forces inside Peru which are financing the terrorists and fostering a coup environment.

In recent weeks, the terrorist Sendero Luminoso gang has tremendously accelerated its bloody rampages. Although normally based in rural regions of the country, Sendero has announced a plan to "take Lima" by cutting it off, Pol Pot-style, from all transportation and supply routes and literally strangling it into submission. The plan is said to be in its third and final stage and, in fact, Sendero assaults on schools, food warehouses, electrical towers, police stations, and villages are now occurring in southern Lima province.

By not-so-strange coincidence. Luigi Einaudi—noted

Kissinger operative and author of a Rand Corporation scenario for regional warfare in South America—arrived in Lima three weeks ago as part of a so-called "debt survey" the State Department adviser is conducting in the aftermath of the Cartagena debtors summit. Einaudi, an expert in Ibero-American military affairs, is well known in Peru for his involvement in the 1975 coup which wiped out all vestiges of military nationalism from the Peruvian government. During his June visit, Einaudi met with a "select group" from the Institute of Peruvian Studies, a think-tank of anthropologists and sociologists which has been identified as a spawning ground of the Sendero Luminoso terrorists.

Calls for a "stronger hand" against the Sendero insurgents from all quarters prompted the government on July 9 to announce a second 30-day "state of emergency," putting all southern Peru under de facto military control. The situation continues to be chaotic, however, and latest reports are that terrorists from other parts of the world are augmenting the Sendero commando forces.

A restive military

Argentina's warning from the international financial oligarchy arrived in uniform, when a localized military uprising in the industrial city of Córdoba forced President Alfonsín to initiate a purge in the upper ranks of the military command. The situation is hardly resolved, however, and tensions between the military hierarchy and the Radical government are being heightened by human rights exposés placing blame for the 1970s "dirty war" at the doorstep of the Armed Forces.

Bolivia and the Dominican Republic are in similarly tense situations, where fierce austerity conditionalities have driven those countries to the point of explosion. Bolivia, which just survived a near-coup against the Siles Zuazo government orchestrated by that country's cocaine mob, is cut off from international credit and facing starvation conditions. Informed observers fear that other coup attempts will be made. In the Dominican Republic, the entire country is in a state of alert in anticipation of an imminent 50-270% increase in the price of fuel which is expected to trigger new and bloody riots. "Nuisance arrests" of labor, student and left political leaders have been ordered by the government in hope of suppressing the protests.

Not even Venezuela has been ignored. Justice Minister Manzo González revealed this week that, during a recent visit to El Paso, Texas, he received warnings from U.S. government intelligence sources that he had been targeted for assassination by powerful South American drug criminals. Manzo offered a press conference upon his return to Caracas, at which he informed reporters that the assassination plot had begun with the murder of his Colombian colleague Lara Bonilla, and was intended to also include Bolivian President Siles Zuazo as well as all other Ibero-American signators of the International Treaty Against the Drug Trade.