

State Department joins drug mob in Ibero-American destabilization

by Valerie Rush

Kissinger Associates, Inc. director Lawrence Eagleburger confessed in a Sept. 10 *New York Times* interview that the economic policy toward Latin America which he upheld during his recent tenure as undersecretary of state for political affairs was responsible for encouraging the introduction of illegal drugs onto the streets of U.S. cities—thereby making a mockery of President Reagan's "war on drugs."

Under the phony banner of "fighting communism," regimes like the marijuana-and-cocaine-exporting "free enterprise" island of Jamaica have become the favorite sons of the State Department, while independent governments currently locked in battle with the drug mafias—like Siles Zuazo's Bolivia and Betancur's Colombia—have the added burden of the State Department's "stamp of disapproval" to contend with.

The reality is that while Kissinger continues to dominate State Department policy through stooges like Eagleburger and his successor, the United States will be fighting *neither* communism *nor* drugs!

Asked about Jamaica's enormous drug trade and U.S. State Department policy toward the country, Eagleburger told the *New York Times*: "Our emphasis has been: Can Jamaica be made economically viable so that we don't face the [leftist Prime Minister Michael] Manley kind of problems in the next election. To be honest, I wasn't aware Jamaica was that large a marijuana producer. To the best of my knowledge, it didn't come up." Eagleburger, hardly as deaf and dumb as he pretends, is trying to sell Milton Friedman's "anything goes" argument, which would equate the term "economically viable" with whatever sells, including, of course, narcotic drugs.

Even more explicit was the Drug Enforcement Administration's Caribbean chief based in Miami, Sam Billbrough, who told the *Times*: "Some analysts believe that if you came in with a severe narcotics program you could affect the existence of the present [Jamaican] government. . . . Drugs are a serious problem. But communism is a greater problem."

Bolivia's war against the mafia

This policy of "overlooking" the drug trade when expedient to do so has gone at least one criminal step further in the case of Bolivia, whose government is in hand-to-hand

combat on a daily basis with powerful domestic and international enemies determined to put the "anti-communist" cocaine colonels back in power.

From his first days in office, President Hernán Siles Zuazo realized that the survival of constitutional government in coup-torn Bolivia would depend on defeating the immense political power of the cocaine mafia and, like President Belisario Betancur in Colombia, has learned that a multi-national approach to fighting drugs is the only one with a chance of succeeding.

Thus, Siles Zuazo helped to lobby for the Aug. 11 "Quito Declaration," which declared trafficking in illegal narcotics a "crime against humanity" and established mechanisms for a continent-wide Ibero-American war against drugs.

The Siles Zuazo government has also made recent unprecedented inroads against the drug mafia's clandestine operations in the interior of the country. Dozens of illegal airstrips and cocaine-processing laboratories have been uncovered and dismantled.

Siles Zuazo's latest move against the drug mob came in September, when he "suspended" Rafael Otazo from his government-appointed post as the head of Bolivia's Commission to Fight Drugs because Otazo, like the attorney general of Colombia, had held private and unauthorized negotiations with leading mafiosi.

Otazo, who, after meeting with Bolivian cocaine king Roberto Suárez, publicly described him as "a great industrialist and undeniably a patriot," also used the drug mafia's own brush to try to smear the Siles Zuazo government, accusing at least two close collaborators of the President with involvement in cocaine trafficking. Other mafia-linked elements in Congress have actually demanded that the President be investigated for "authorizing" Otazo's meeting with Suarez!

Mafia smear tactics

The mafia tactic of accusing anti-drug fighters of being "on the take" is hardly a new one. In Colombia, former Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla had scarcely been sworn into his post in August 1983 when known drug traffickers suddenly appeared bearing "proof" that Lara Bonilla had taken money from prominent mafiosi, charges which, of course, were never proven. Lara Bonilla was later assassi-

nated by that same drug mafia.

Colombian President Betancur himself has been charged with taking campaign contributions from the drug mafia, by such upstanding citizens as fugitive drug banker Jaime Michelsen Uribe and from his cousin López Michelsen, the former President under whose 1974-78 regime Colombia was turned into a haven for the drug traffickers.

Similarly, leading anti-drug fighter and U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche has been charged with financing his operations with drug money. Coinciding with the early August Democratic Party convention in San Francisco, a special edition of the Yippie publication *Overthrow* appeared, which accused Democrat LaRouche of receiving funds from the Andean drug mob!

The campaign against Siles Zuazo has not been restricted to the drug mob. The Falange Socialista Boliviana, the openly neo-Nazi party of Bolivia, has presented the Bolivian Congress with a demand for the ouster of the Siles Zuazo government as "unconstitutional." The FSB is the same party which President Siles Zuazo indirectly identified the first week in September as being behind a planned wave of assassinations of public figures preparatory to a coup attempt. The Bolivian armed forces were put on a state of alert and numerous suspects arrested during the weekend of Sept. 8-9, a quick action which apparently succeeded in forestalling the violence.

Siles Zuazo's anti-drug efforts, undertaken on the most meager of budgets, and his fight to keep his constitutionally elected government in power, have had to contend with a virtual sabotage campaign stemming from the U.S. State Department.

Just days after surviving a kidnapping and aborted coup d'état by drug-related military elements last June, President Siles Zuazo was descended upon by U.S. Rep. Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.), who threatened a cut-off of U.S. economic aid to the floundering Bolivian economy if "stronger measures" against drugs were not taken. In the weeks following, the State Department's "leak sheet," the *New York Times*, began to publish a series of articles accusing the Siles Zuazo government of corruption and "foot-dragging" in its anti-drug campaign.

Washington, D.C.-based journalist Georgie Anne Geyer has persistently promoted the State Department's line that the Siles Zuazo government is infiltrated by communists, and caused a scandal in August by charging that the Bolivian deputy minister of the interior was a Cuban agent. Before Geyer issued her charges, she had conducted an interview with Henry Kissinger, plugging him as the next Secretary of State.

More recently, in the Sept. 7 edition of the Caracas daily *El Universal*, Geyer published another attack on Siles Zuazo, this time going after him for his first government in 1956 which, according to Geyer, destroyed mining and agricultural production by nationalizing those sectors, increased illit-

eracy, used the universal vote to "fool the masses," and established Latin America's first concentration camps!

Target: Colombia

Against Colombia's Betancur, the slander campaign has been no less insidious. Betancur's fiercely independent foreign policies and his war on drugs threaten entrenched political and financial oligarchs with close ties to the Kissinger circles, powers like former President Alfonso López Michelsen. Further, it is recognized that Betancur's continent-wide leadership is the key to whether countries like Bolivia and Peru can protect their sovereignty against the narco-terrorist onslaught to which they are currently being subjected.

Betancur's success at home against the drug mafia and also in bringing the country's guerrilla movements into an unprecedented truce with the government has depended in large part upon his tremendous popularity with the Colombian population, and it is just that popularity which Betancur's enemies hope to undermine.

Since the beginning of September, Betancur's enemies have stepped up their attacks on his administration:

- Inspector General of the Colombian Armed Forces Anaya announced that he possessed evidence that the largest guerrilla organization, the communist FARC, intended to violate the truce with the government and attempt a seizure of power. Anaya's statement was intended to undercut the amnesty agreement with the guerrillas.

- The López Michelsen-dominated Congress voted to reject Betancur's invitation to appoint two delegates to the "national dialogue" which Betancur had agreed to as an integral part of the peace agreement with the guerrillas. The Congress argued that to join such a "national dialogue" would be to delimit its own deliberative powers.

This same argument is picked up by López-controlled elements in the labor federations, who have also come out opposing the U.S.-Colombian Extradition Treaty, which has served as an important means for waging the war against the mafia.

- The López-affiliated newspaper *El Tiempo* has devoted its editorial pages to diatribes against Betancur's amnesty, while publishing various internationally authored coup scenarios.

Betancur is not letting these provocations go without answer. On Sept. 12, he revealed that a presidential memorandum was being circulated throughout the command hierarchy of the Armed Forces which made it clear that no one but the minister of defense had the authority to issue pronouncements on national political or economic affairs in the name of the Armed Forces. The rebuff to Inspector General Anaya was clear, if implicit.

Keeping the momentum of the peace amnesty moving forward, while maintaining a ruthless persecution of the "citizens above suspicion" behind the drug trade, is the Betancur government's main challenge at this point.