

Western Hemisphere war on drugs has started to get serious

by Valerie Rush

A recent new series of Western Hemisphere anti-drug initiatives suggests that a "get serious" approach to the continent's oft-declared war on drugs has finally begun to prevail, both in Washington and in the capitals of Ibero-America. initiatives come on the heels of the March 13 presentation in Mexico City of Lyndon LaRouche's strategic war plan for defeating the drug trade and, in certain key aspects, echo a number of the proposals that LaRouche has elaborated.

The latest-breaking development proceeds from Colombian President Betancur's early April trip to Washington, D.C., where an anti-drug pact between the U.S. and Colombian governments was announced which promises to dramatically augment that South American country's anti-drug efforts.

Colombian Justice Minister Enrique Parejo González, accompanying Betancur on his U.S. trip, announced to the press April 3 that the plan, to be substantially financed by the Reagan administration, involved 1) use of effective new herbicides to eradicate all of Colombia's marijuana fields over the next three years, 2) the dynamite bombing of all clandestine airstrips in Colombia, and 3) no changes in the U.S.-Colombian Extradition Treaty.

LaRouche's anti-drug war plan, which describes the international drug trade as "an evil and powerful empire in its own right, a financial, political and military power greater than that of entire nations, . . . a government upon which we must declare war," urges among other actions the use of "military airborne assaults" to crush the cultivation, processing, also demands that "the mandate given to law-enforcement forces deployed in support of this war, must be the principle that collaboration with the drug-traffic or with the financier or political forces of the international drug traffickers, is treason in time of war."

Crackdown already underway

The first two commitments of the U.S.-Colombian anti-drug pact are, in fact, already being implemented by the

Betancur government. The herbicide glyphosate has been employed against marijuana cultivation along, especially, Colombia's Atlantic coastal region since last year, while the bombing of illegal runways used by traffickers was made official policy at a Colombian national security council meeting in late March. Additionally, a law proposing confiscation of all private assets linked to the cultivation, processing, financing, and trafficking of illicit drugs is presently under consideration by the Colombian Congress.

The third point of the pact, confirmation of the standing extradition treaty between the two countries, is of special importance since the treaty has been a target of violent attack by mafia apologists and their narco-guerrilla "fellow travelers" ever since its implementation by the Betancur government following the April 30, 1984 assassination of Parejo's predecessor, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla. Recently, there has been a renewed drive by tainted political forces to dilute the treaty legislatively. That drive, for the moment at least, has been stopped cold.

Parejo's announcement of the pact was accompanied by an unequivocal demand that the United States fulfill its part of the deal with more than mere financial aid. "Colombia expects the United States to take on the commitment of strengthening the war on drugs, to bring about a real decrease in demand and distribution in its own territory, because it will serve no purpose for us to continue a war against drug trafficking if the demand continues to increase."

Betancur reiterated in his speech at Georgetown University the same day, "We are ready to pay any price, even our lives, to free humanity from this plague. . . . We do not want to feel alone in this battle."

Lusinchi delivers anti-drug shock

Inside a few knock-out blows to the behind the drug mafia which has been tightening its stranglehold over that country.

During the last week in March, President Lusinchi per-

sonally intervened to free prominent lawyer and journalist Bayardo Ramírez Monagas from jail, where he had been thrown by a judge he had publicly criticized for excessive "tolerance" toward the drug mafia. Further, the Venezuelan President named Ramírez as the new head of a specially created presidential commission against drugs, Conacuid. At the swearing-in ceremony for the new anti-drug commission head, Lusinchi declared:

"I understand exactly the message that naming Dr. Bayardo Ramírez Monagas carries. . . . This designation is a message that both carries a protest and also our commitment to strengthening the war against drugs in our country. This designation is fully supported and carries tremendous meaning. *Will it deal a blow? Yes, it will, and it would please me for this to happen, and for certain quarters to get this message with perfect clarity. That was how it was conceived* [emphasis]

President Lusinchi's words were not only directed at the corrupt judges, lawyers, police, etc. who serve as the mafia support apparatus in Venezuela, but also were aimed at the pin-striped bankers, financiers, and business giants, like the Cisneros family which has brazenly manipulated Venezuela's judicial and legislative branches to cover up its own suspect activities.

While addressing the growing level of mafia corruption inside Venezuela, Lusinchi also did not spare the United States, which has not adequately attended to the drug problem within its own territory. "What country can view itself as a great power," asked the Venezuelan President, "with the most sophisticated weapons and ample resources, when its foundations are being shattered because its youth have been taken over by drugs?" Lusinchi met with his Colombian counterpart just days before Betancur's arrival in Washington, D.C. and consulted on, among other subjects, how to escalate the continent's anti-drug efforts.

Perhaps most encouraging was the published statement of Venezuelan Congresswoman Paulina Gamuz in the *Diario de Caracas* of March 29, in which she urged that the continental drug problem be viewed as a crisis situation of proportions equivalent to threatened nuclear holocaust. Gamuz is an executive member of Venezuela's ruling Acción Democrática party and an active participant in shaping her country's anti-drug efforts.

Said Gamuz, "Perhaps we should admit that we are in an emergency situation comparable to that in time of war and should come up with appropriate emergency legislation and procedures to face up to the problem." (See excerpts.)

LaRouche's strategic anti-drug proposal was explicit on precisely this point: "Law-enforcement methods, by themselves, will fail; even joint law-enforcement efforts by the nations bordering the Caribbean would fail. The nations of

Central and South America will each and all either fall under bloody, Nazi-like dictatorships, or will be destroyed through more or less perpetual civil war, unless the international drug-traffic's invasion of this Hemisphere is crushed by the methods and weapons of war."

The following are excerpts from "The True War" by Paulina Gamuz, published in Diario de Caracas of March 29, 1985.

When barely a year ago a debate on drugs and their consequences was held in the Chamber of Deputies, a committee was named to draft a law against the illicit use of psychotropic substances. We said that while the world lived in fear of . . . the possibility of eventual destruction of the human species by the effects of nuclear war, another more subtle but equally destructive kind of war was shaping up. We were and are dealing with the war of drugs and today more than ever we have reasons for reaffirming what we said then.

We have increasingly dramatic proof of how the drug and arms trade are closely linked, how the money from that trade is sufficiently good and clean to finance any revolution or armed movement. A drug trafficker sought by Venezuelan justice and currently a prisoner in Miami, like Lizardo Márquez Pérez, changes his vulgar and shameful garb as one who fosters human misery for that of a heroic ideologue, justifying the war of drugs as the only way in which impoverished peoples can deal with the sophisticated wars and infinite resources of the wealthy countries. . . .

The recently approved [V] not suffice, because despite its innovative approach it lacks the audacity to view crimes related to the drug trade and their coverup as genuine acts of treason and crimes against state and society. This must be the way to characterize the judges and other officials, who despite the law, happily apply leniency when it is inconvenient for drug traffickers to be punished. . . .

Perhaps we must go further still and . . . come up with special tribunals, special methods for dealing with the drug problem. Perhaps we should admit that we are in an emergency situation comparable to that in time of war and should come up with appropriate emergency legislation and procedures to face up to the problem.

To achieve this we must be convinced first of all that the problem cannot be reduced to a drama involving part of a sick population . . . but goes much further, to the deliberate intention of large drug consortiums to seize political, military, social, and economic terrain and to supplant the state with sub-states ruling through human degradation.

To work in this way is the priority task of congressmen, rulers, journalists, and all citizens concerned with the problem. This constructive proposal should be welcomed by the judges who today have shut out this reality because of a poorly understood