

celled! The PSM accused Barco of "sponsoring a military solution to the crisis threatening the country," and called for "international pressure to stop the bloodbath."

The *Washington Post* apparently agrees with the communists. On Nov. 14 it devoted lengthy coverage to "alleged" military collaboration with the Medellín Cartel of drug traffickers in Colombia. The article quoted one political figure saying that "narcotics traffickers are working with other land-owners and cattlemen, and with sectors of the state security forces, in unleashing a dirty war against the left."

Within his own government, Barco is surrounded with allies of Moscow's "irregular warriors." The President's own human rights adviser is Alvaro Tirado Mejía, formerly a left-wing journalist and currently dedicated to launching an "offensive" in favor of human rights, to include special courses for the armed services and military intelligence forces on human rights.

Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa, former head of the Colombian human rights committee and an ex-minister, wrote in the daily *El Espectador* that Tirado Mejía showed special courage in admitting that state security groups violated human rights in Colombia. "The problem for the government," he said, "and especially for the chief of state, is to accept the importance and veracity" of Tirado Mejía's speech.

Strait-jacketing the armed forces

The issue of narco-terrorism and the role of the armed forces dominated this year's annual meeting of Army commanders of the Americas, held Nov. 12-15 in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Most of the conference was held behind closed doors, but attempts to influence the outcome of the conference from without were many.

A document circulated in Mar del Plata by the Project Democracy faction within Argentina's Peronist Party known as the "reformists" demanded that the Army chiefs "not invoke the fight against narco-terrorism" to justify a "revitalization of the doctrine of 'national security.'" The document insisted that police and security forces be primarily responsible for repressing the drug trade, and that if "other means" were to be employed, it had to be a decision of individual governments.

The Brazilian daily *Jornal do Brasil* reported on Nov. 17 that while Argentina's President Raúl Alfonsín had "exhorted the commanders of American armies meeting in Mar del Plata to find solutions that will put an end to terrorism and the drug trade," he did so from the standpoint of those that view the military itself as a threat to democracy.

Three days later, Alfonsín, a favorite of the Socialist International, was given the "W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award" by Project Democracy's National Democratic Institute in Washington. For decades, Alfonsín has been obsessed with dismantling the military, writing a proposal as early as 1971 that called for the 75% reduction of the Argentine military forces over the course of the succeeding decade. His government has reduced the military budget to the point

Interview: Elena de Ramírez

Extradition crucial to war on drugs

Javier Almario and Maximiliano Londoño spoke in Bogotá with Mrs. Elena de Ramírez, widow of Col. Jaime Ramírez García, the former chief of the anti-narcotics division of the Colombian National Police, on the anniversary of her husband's assassination by narco-terrorists. In collaboration with Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, Colonel Ramírez struck major blows against the drug traffickers, such as the break-up of Tranquilandia, a cocaine complex in the Colombian jungle where 14 tons of pure cocaine were captured and 45 traffickers arrested, in March 1984.

EIR: One year after Colonel Ramírez's assassination, how do you see the country? Has it reacted against the drug traffic?

Elena Ramírez: A year after Jaime's death I see that, unfortunately, the step that has been taken has gone backward, and it is a big one. We have regressed very strongly in the field of attacking drug trafficking.

EIR: What things have changed with respect to what Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla had achieved, with Colonel Ramírez's collaboration?

Elena Ramírez: When they were working, fortunately there was a group that was against drug trafficking, such as Minister Lara Bonilla; there also was the collaboration of [U.S.] Ambassador Lewis Tambs. A time came when President Belisario Betancur attacked the drug traffic. Things advanced a lot. The drug traffickers were running,

that no money for re-equipment or ammunition exists. Recruitment to the military in Argentina has dropped precipitously as a result.

A new defense law proposed by Alfonsín's Radical Party, exemplifies the strategic importance of the debate over narco-terrorism. The text of the new law currently under debate by the Congress was released to the Argentine press in time to coincide with the Mar del Plata conference. It states that the sole task of Argentina's military is to prepare to defend the

fleeing the country, because cultivation, transport, and shipments were attacked; the drug traffic was being hit hard from every side. The nation was made conscious of the damage that was being done.

EIR: In which areas?

Elena Ramírez: In the field that everyone knows: in extradition. That is the most important and the one the [drug traffickers] fear the most. That is definitive: extradition. And also, you realize that the confiscations being done now are not the same; the operatives, everything . . . everything has shrunk. The government has not shown collaboration with the people who want to fight drugs; the incentive which has to be given to the persons who attack it, has not been given from any side. And I don't see right now any leader trying to attack drug trafficking.

EIR: Did Colonel Ramírez suffer from this disincentive?

Elena Ramírez: Yes. During his life he suffered it, because he, having fulfilled all the requirements to enroll in the course to become a general, had a hard time getting into it. He had much opposition to being enrolled into the generals' course, precisely because of the work he was doing. . . . There was always opposition, from many persons, and then, when he finally did take the course and was supposed to be promoted, his promotion was delayed.

EIR: The defense minister said that they did not give him the promotion posthumously because he did not die in combat.

Elena Ramírez: I completely disagree, because the police statutes say that when someone dies in combat, that person is immediately to be promoted to the next higher rank, and Jaime fought narcotic trafficking to the last moment. And there was combat going on even at that moment, because some of the agents who were near the site where my husband, Col. Jaime Ramírez was assassinated, responded to the hired gunmen. So a combat did take place; an ambush, which is a combat. As far as merits are concerned, it is also said that Jaime was qualified as

the number-one officer in the world in fighting the drug traffick.

EIR: How do you believe this affects the National Police?

Elena Ramírez: Frankly, as I had the opportunity to express when they told me they were not going to promote Jaime, I told top officials of the police that this was not right, because it is a disincentive for people who are interested in fighting drugs. That they would be saying: "I fight against such criminal people, and after exposing my life, that of my loved ones, my career, everything, and my effort is not compensated." Then they say: "Is it worth going on fighting for this, or not?" I believe that this has been something that unmotivates the subordinates and many officials who would have been in a situation to fight against this evil.

EIR: When Pope John Paul II was in Colombia and spoke against the drug traffic, people reacted very positively. When Minister Lara Bonilla was killed, people reacted against the drug traffic, as well as when they killed the editor of *El Espectador*, Don Guillermo Cano. Do you think that this reaction has not been exploited to combat this scourge?

Elena Ramírez: In the case of Minister Lara Bonilla, the people's reaction was indeed taken advantage of, because President Belisario Betancur listened to the outcry of the people, and that was when they applied the extradition treaty. But recently, everything has been "blah, blah, blah," and they have not really listened to the people.

EIR: What was the effect that Colonel Ramírez's fight had at the international level, and what recognition did he have?

Elena Ramírez: Internationally, Jaime was a leader; he was one of the persons who urged the formation of this front of nations to unify against the drug traffic, and it was, I think, a very intelligent solution on his part. It was recognized in other countries more than in Colombia.

country against *foreign* enemies, and therefore *prohibits* the military from any domestic role!

One Radical senator attending the opening session of the military conference, explained that the defense law would prohibit the country's armed forces from participating in repression against "eventual insurrectionary movements." He added that the bill currently under consideration "will expressly prohibit the Armed Forces from elaborating a hypothesis of internal conflict."

Ironically, that program differed not one iota from that put forward by a group of communist-linked "human rights" activists from Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, and Colombia, who came to Buenos Aires while the Mar del Plata conference was taking place, to plan how to convoke "an international tribunal . . . to judge military and state terrorism in Latin America." Attending from Colombia, was Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, a deputy elected by the Colombian Communist Party's electoral front, the Patriotic Union.