

Bush helps narco-terrorists eliminate military foes

by Gretchen Small

Narco-terrorists in three countries—Colombia, Peru, and El Salvador—are to set to become the final arbiters for the restructuring of the institutions of all Ibero-American nations along lines acceptable to themselves and the drug trade. How close these evildoers are to victory is evident in Colombia, where they now serve in the cabinet, and are preparing to dictate the terms of a new Constitution.

The terrorists could never have won such power in the Americas, if it were not for the fact that the Bush administration has thrown its diplomatic, military, and economic weight behind the narco-terrorists' topmost strategic objective: the *elimination of the very institution of the national military itself in Ibero-America*. The policy strikes at all the nations in the Americas, not just the three immediately endangered by insurgent forces. A country without a military to defend its sovereignty, can quickly be subjected to direct colonial occupation, as demonstrated in Panama.

When the anti-military project was launched by the Anglo-American Establishment in the mid-1980s, few spoke publicly of eliminating the military. Such Establishment think tanks and policy forums as the Inter-American Dialogue focused on building a consensus behind the insane proposition that the militaries in the region constitute as great, or an even greater threat to "democracy" than the terrorist killers. Now it has become accepted dogma that the power of the military must be curbed in every aspect, whether it be men under arms, access to national policy making, or independent technological and scientific capabilities, for "democracy" to work.

Narco-terrorists to office, patriots to jail

In phase two, the Establishment is moving rapidly to jail or kill all opponents of its project. Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega, who built up the Panamanian National Guard into an actual army, carrying out one of the most active civic-military programs in the continent, sits in a U.S. jail, vilified as a drug-runner. Also under arrest is Argentina's Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín, revered as a new de Gaulle, and who has warned that the ongoing dismantling of the Argentine Armed Forces will lead inevitably to the breakup of Argentina as a nation.

Brazil's media and government are demanding that Air Force Brig. Gen. Hugo de Oliveira Piva, the military scientist who oversaw the creation of Brazil's advanced air and space program, be forbidden from continuing his work even in a private capacity; the possibility of bringing criminal charges against him for his role in securing the transfer of technology to other developing sector nations has been raised.

Nothing exemplifies better than the crisis in Colombia how this anti-military campaign is abetting the narco-terrorist drive for power in Ibero-America—and the immediate future which faces those nations that continue to accept this policy.

Nov. 6, 1990 marked the fifth anniversary of the M-19 movement's seizure of the Justice Palace, and murder of half of Colombia's Supreme Court justices. The M-19 action, one of the bloodiest terrorist actions ever carried out in Colombia, was bankrolled by the drug cartels. Yet today, the ideologue of the M-19 movement, Antonio Navarro Wolfe, serves in the cabinet as health minister, while Gen. Jesús Armando

Arias Cabrales (ret.), the military officer who led the operation to retake the Justice Palace, faces severance of all ties to the Army, the loss of his pension and all privileges, and dishonor.

General Arias Cabrales retired from the Army only three months ago, serving in his last post as Commander of the Army. Throughout his service, he distinguished himself as an implacable opponent of the drug trade and its insurgent allies who have not stopped their daily kidnappings, assaults, and bombings. But on Nov. 1, the Attorney General of Colombia, a group of supporters of Amnesty International, and the Colombian Communist Party, recommended that the President dismiss Arias Cabrales for refusing to "negotiate" with the M-19 commandos during the 1985 Justice Palace assault. President César Gaviria must now decide.

The dismissal recommendation "is the product of persecution by the State against those who have laid their lives on the line in fulfilling their duty," Gen. José Luis Vargas, the former Bogotá police commander during the M-19 occupation, commented bitterly. This is an attack on those who actually defended democracy, while those who attacked it and intended to destroy it occupy high posts of government, he added. "As a witness from the front lines, [I can assure you] that if it was not for the decisive and timely action of the Colombian Army and Police under the command of General Arias Cabrales, this country would be far different . . . we would be worse than Cuba."

The same M-19 which carried out the attack is campaigning to pack the Constituent Assembly, whose delegates are to be elected on Dec. 2, with its supporters, so that they can rewrite the Constitution, the Bogotá daily *El Tiempo* warned in an editorial on Nov. 3. Before voting, Colombians should visit "the remains of the Justice Palace, and remember that Arias Cabrales was not the author of that crime, nor the cause of the death of the learned judges. That was others. Then let them decide."

Salvadoran army facing extinction

In El Salvador, the outright elimination of the Army as in Panama is the central issue of politics—even as the insurgents of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) continue to bomb and attack.

The FMLN has long been the model of action studied by the Andean narco-terrorists. In 1985, M-19 commander and current cabinet minister Antonio Navarro Wolfe told the Mexican magazine *Cuadernos Políticos* that M-19 strategy sought to break the impasse between the FMLN and the military in El Salvador, by opening a second revolutionary front in the Andean Spine.

Yet even so, Bush administration officials have put out the word that they have decided to "Lebanize" their policy towards El Salvador, the *New York Times* reported on Sept. 16 and again on Oct. 22. Bush officials state that what they mean by "Lebanize" is to pull out support for the El Salvador

government, build up its neighbors, and "watch what happens," the *Times* noted. The real aim of that policy, however, has just been demonstrated in Lebanon, which has been handed over for extermination at the hands of Syria, the world's leading narco-terrorist power.

This "Lebanon" policy lies behind all the talk in Washington that the military in El Salvador is the number-one obstacle to peace. Congress and Bush administration officials agree that military aid to the country must be cut to ensure that the government and the military negotiate "in good faith" with the FMLN, and that the military be "adequately reformed."

What is meant by "adequately reformed" has been revised steadily, until it now means its elimination. In 1989, according to a *Christian Science Monitor* story at the time, State Department officials met secretly with FMLN representatives to review the terms of a new FMLN "peace proposal." The centerpiece of that proposal, issued only after the State Department had reviewed it, was that the Salvadoran military be cut by two-thirds, from its approximately 56,000 soldiers currently, to 10-12,000. When the United Nations-overseen "peace talks" began in 1990, the FMLN made that one of their non-negotiable conditions for reaching a ceasefire.

At the round of U.N. negotiations held in Geneva, the government agreed to the FMLN demand that they "reform" the Army structure. In the next round of negotiations in Costa Rica, however, the FMLN came back with new demands, this time that the military not be restructured, but *abolished and replaced by a "civilian-controlled public security force."*

Although President Bush protests that this bill ties his hands, officials have made quite clear that they agree 100% with the congressional targeting of the military. In an opinion column in the *Washington Post* Oct. 12, Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson complained that "too often in the past" the U.S. has "retreated in the face of intransigence by the Armed Forces, because we have shrunk from the danger of cutting military aid in the middle of a war waged by a murderous and committed guerrilla army."

That "mistake" won't be made again, Aronson insisted. He called for cutting the military by 60%, as the first step in implementing "proposals for changes in the structure and size of the Armed Forces that would have gotten a Salvadoran leftist killed less than a decade ago."

The State Department has backed the FMLN all the way in its anti-military fight. A front-page article entitled "Taming the Latin 'tiger'" appearing the Sept. 2 *Los Angeles Times*, reviewed precisely how stripping the Salvadoran Army is viewed in Washington as "the key to new progress in disarming" Central America. "Central America's armies are under pressure to thin ranks, and Washington is backing the effort," the paper wrote.

It reported that the Bush State Department sent a memo to each Central American government which argued that the

armies of the region are as much a cause of civil war, as the insurgents. "The proliferation of weapons and the size of national [military] forces has contributed significantly over the decade to regional insecurity. Development of smaller, apolitical and professional forces can meet the threat posed by insurgent forces better than large, offensive forces"—language lifted from the script which prepared the elimination of the Panamanian Defense Forces.

The *Los Angeles Times* piece specified that any idea that supporting the anti-drug war will get around this commitment is an illusion. "As we move into the drug war in Central America, we must be careful not to nurture anti-democratic elements in the military who want to use drug trafficking like they used communism to justify doing as they please," an unnamed U.S. official told the paper. The preferred agency for the "anti-drug war" in the region is the Costa Rican narcotics police, currently being trained by U.S. Special Forces.

Panama: test case for dismantling military

by Carlos Wesley

When George Bush ordered the invasion of Panama last Dec. 20, one of his chief aims was to destroy Panama's Defense Forces (PDF). As a military force, the PDF was not very impressive, but it was developing the capability to fulfill its primary mission: to be ready by the year 2000 "to protect and defend the Panama Canal."

That was an obligation assumed by Panama when it signed the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Panama Canal treaties, under which full control of the waterway is supposed to revert from the United States to the Republic of Panama by the year 2000. In 1984, when Gen. Manuel Noriega became the commander of what was then the National Guard, he initiated the organizing of a modern, professional military force to ensure that Panama could comply with the defense commitments imposed by the treaties.

By the time of the invasion, Panama had organized two battalions—"Batallón 2000" and "Batallón Paz"—and some additional infantry and other specialized companies, for a total "Army Battle Order" of around 4,500 men. An estimated 1,000 additional men were distributed between Panama's fledgling Air Force and Navy. The Air Force was equipped with helicopters and passenger planes, but no combat aircraft. The Navy's total "combat capability" consisted of five coastal patrol boats. The rest of the 14,000-person PDF were not fighting men, but customs agents, secretaries, homicide investigators, traffic cops, patrolmen, and so forth.

The PDF had no artillery. There were about a score of

vintage armored personnel carriers, but no tanks, no rocket launchers, and no anti-aircraft batteries.

Destroying the PDF

Although for two years prior to the invasion, U.S. administration officials repeatedly said that their fight was only with Noriega, not with the PDF, and even as the invasion was getting under way, George Bush took to the airwaves to assure the Panamanians that once Noriega was out of the way, "we have no continuing axe to grind with the PDF," it was the PDF as an institution which was targeted for destruction. As drawn up by Gen. Maxwell Thurman, the invasion plans called for "not only the capture of Noriega, but destruction of his entire military command structure, through attacks on 27 different locations."

A week after the invasion, the U.S.-installed President of Panama, Guillermo "Porky" Endara, announced on U.S. orders that Panama's constitution would be amended to forever ban an army.

In a May 24 speech at the Panamanian oligarchy's watering hole, the Union Club, the head of U.S. Army South, Gen. Marc Cisneros, said: "I don't believe there is any need for an army here." Panama "does not have to worry about being invaded by anyone," said Cisneros, who commanded the U.S. ground forces on Dec. 20. To replace the PDF, a new constabulary was established, the Public Force. Lt. Gen. Carl Stiner, operational commander of the invasion forces, announced that the new force "will be armed only with shotgun and pistols."

Although many officers and most men of the extinct PDF were at first incorporated into the new Public Force—"we didn't want them to become guerrillas," explained Roberto Azbat, the new chief of the constabulary—almost all of the former PDF officers have since been purged and replaced by people trained by the U.S. Department of Justice. Panamanians currently studying at military academies abroad will not be allowed to serve in the Public Force.

To reinforce the anti-military policy, the U.S.-installed government has instructed all foreign governments to recall their military attachés. Henceforth, Panama will only allow police attachés to be accredited as diplomats.

The Public Force numbers a total of 12,000 members, of whom a very small number, about 100 or so, have been organized into a SWAT-type unit, supposedly to fight drugs and deal with subversion. The remainder have been stripped of patrol cars, even of flashlights. In the town of Puerto Armuelles, Public Force officers were issued bicycles to carry out their patrols. The government announced that it is selling off the helicopters and other aircraft from the former PDF—as part of its policy of privatizing all state-owned property. The U.S. confiscated all the PDF patrol vessels, and is now demanding that Panama sign a treaty allowing the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard to patrol Panama's territorial waters for drugs because Panama no longer has the resources to do so.