

1989. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a promising supplier is good news for the Japanese aluminum industry, which anticipates rapid increases in aluminum demand in the near term. The Japanese Ministry for International Trade and Industry (MITI) estimates that demand for aluminum-related products will increase by nearly 40% in 1995, to 4.7 million tons. Ensuring stable supplies of raw aluminum has become a serious problem for Japan, which depends almost entirely on imports.

Oil and natural gas

In September, Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu approved a proposal made by a mission from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to provide the Soviet Union with up to 5 billion yen in loans to help expand oil and natural gas production there. Kaifu gave his approval to the commitment when he met former Chief Cabinet Secretary Keizo Obuchi, who returned home from a week-long visit to Moscow.

Japanese investment is being sought for a natural gas development project in the Soviet Far East, and Vladimir Golanov, vice president of the Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said on Sept. 10 that Soviet businesses also expect Japanese investment in such fields as lumber, marine products, and iron ore development.

Narcos now in dual with government of

by Andrea Olivieri

With less than one month to go before the Dec. 9 election of delegates to the Constituent Assembly that will rewrite Colombia's Constitution, the César Gaviria government has entered into a virtual dual power arrangement with the very narco-terrorists it had once vowed to destroy. At the same time, the cocaine cartels that finance those terrorists have escalated their assault on the government, kidnaping another two journalists—this time relatives of the murdered presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán—and demanding a governmental pardon in exchange for the hostages.

What the drug cartels seek is nothing more than what their narco-terrorist partners have already received. The same M-19 guerrillas who, exactly five years ago, on behalf of the cocaine cartels, turned the Colombian Justice Palace into a holocaust that claimed over 100 lives, including half the Supreme Court magistrates, and destroyed the nation's legal archives, today hold a cabinet post, constitute a bonafide political party under exceptional government protection, and are electioneering nationwide for Assembly seats.

Boosting the M-19's electoral bid is the Colombian Attorney General's office, which has just issued the conclusions of a five-year "investigation" of the Justice Palace holocaust, which incredibly blames the Armed Forces—*not* the M-19—for the loss of life and "excess force" used in ending the terrorist siege. Attorney General Alfonso Gómez Méndez, who is married to leading M-19 propagandist and "journalist" Patricia Lara, has called on the Defense Ministry to dishonorably discharge the general who led the counter-assault against the M-19.

This attack on Gen. Jesús Armando Arias Cabrales, whose 36 years of service—first as commander of the 8th Army Brigade and later as Commander of the Army—have earned him widespread respect and intense loyalty both within and outside the Armed Services, stunned many Colombians. Even the Colombian Congress, notoriously corrupt and cowardly, held an impromptu 76-5 vote in favor of granting the general a third star, to protest the Attorney General's action.

The call for General Arias's dismissal is viewed by some

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power Colombia

as part of a deliberate anti-military campaign, timed to promote the M-19 at the polls. Gen. José Luis Vargas, the Bogotá police commander at the time of the Justice Palace siege, charged Nov. 3 that the demand for Arias's dismissal "is the product of state persecution against those who have risked their lives in the line of duty."

On Nov. 5, the president of the Andean Studies Center told the press that his organization would pay homage to General Arias Cabrales, to protest the government's witch-hunt. Gerney Ríos González charged that Arias "is a victim of official anti-militarism. . . . General Arias's 36 years of service to democracy and the institutions should merit his retirement from the Army as defense minister. Not so. Instead, after two months as a 'democrat,' [M-19 leader Antonio] Navarro Wolf was made health minister, presidential candidate, and now reformer of the Constitution."

The daily *El Tiempo* on Nov. 3 editorially observed, "It is curious that the decision of the Attorney General's office was released just as the electoral debate was launched, in which the issue of the Justice Palace is undoubtedly going to be on the agenda."

Indeed, the M-19 is exploiting the incident for all it's worth. During one electoral sally by Navarro Wolf, he was asked by the press to comment on the solicited sanction of General Arias, to which the "former" narco-terrorist replied, "It is necessary to pardon the guerrillas and the counter-guerrillas." Navarro's replacement in the Health Ministry, M-19 member Camilo González Possom, was even more outrageous, calling on the Attorney General's office to be benevolent, and "to give the military which received and executed orders during the siege of the Justice Palace the same treatment offered the guerrillas who occupied the Supreme Court—that is, absolution."

Not accidentally, polls in Colombia are now reporting that the M-19 will get a majority of the delegate seats on Dec. 9.

The anti-drug daily *El Espectador* immediately editorialized about the sorry state of affairs in Colombia, where the Gaviria government has turned those responsible for the Jus-

tice Palace massacre "into a tribunal which dispenses juridical absolution or pardon" for others. Former Interior Minister Carlos Lemos Simmonds, who was forced out of the previous Barco government for warning against dealing with narco-terrorists, admonished on Nov. 5 that values had become so inverted in Colombia, that "the hand is held out to those beyond the law, while those who throughout their military career have always acted in defense of the law and the institutions are treated as anti-socials. . . . A strong response is necessary so that this state of affairs is corrected as quickly as possible."

The killing continues

The true nature of the beast which President Gaviria has invited in the front door was revealed by those colleagues of the M-19 who have chosen, for now, to remain "outside the system." The FARC and ELN guerrillas, both as notorious as the M-19 for their involvement in the drug trade, had exchanged offers and counter-offers with the Gaviria government, designed less to win an M-19-styled amnesty for themselves than to weaken the resolve of the Armed Forces in fighting narco-terrorism.

Less than two days after those groups had once again offered to initiate peace talks—even releasing 22 police hostages as an erstwhile "goodwill gesture"—a 1,000-man combined force of the FARC and ELN simultaneously hit two adjacent towns in northern Colombia on Nov. 10, considered their biggest offensive of the year. In Taraza, 250 miles north of the capital of Bogotá, an Army post held off the terrorists for five hours, with nearly a dozen soldier casualties and at least 40 guerrillas killed. Base commander Lt. Col. Jaime Fajardo was killed in the assault, the most senior officer to die in combat in several years.

Another FARC attack on a police patrol in the province of Huila on Nov. 11 resulted in the deaths of one police officer and five children who were being transported to a police-sponsored bicycle race. The next day, the ELN dynamited a police post on the outskirts of Bucaramanga.

President Gaviria commented that the possibility of talks with the rebels was "growing distant," and on Nov. 11, he temporarily suspended contact with the two groups.

Despite the polls pointing to increased public acceptance of the M-19, there are signs that Colombians are growing tired of the government's narco-tolerance. The widespread defense of General Arias Cabrales in the face of the Attorney General's obvious witchhunt tactics suggests that joint government/M-19 efforts to dismantle the country's defense capability will not go unchallenged. The anti-drug daily *El Espectador* urged Nov. 11 that President Gaviria abandon his fantasy of peace through dialogue and take up the cudgels against the narco-terrorist enemy once again. "President Gaviria and his government now more than ever have the opportunity to exercise their authority," the paper's editorial urged.