

Ibero-Americans decry U.S. rights abuse

Members of a delegation of congressmen from Ibero-America that visited the United States at the end of February to investigate human rights violations against Democratic presidential candidate and political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche, are launching a number of initiatives to press for his freedom. One of the lawmakers, Cong. Miguel Bush Ríos, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Panama's National Legislature, is preparing a report on the LaRouche case, and will present a resolution for Panama's legislature to call on the U.S. government to free LaRouche, said a spokesman on March 5.

Bush, of Panama's opposition PRD party, was one of the seven members from three Ibero-American nations in the congressional delegation. Several are undertaking initiatives similar to that of Congressman Bush. The others in the delegation were: Cong. Carlos Rivas Dávila, Minister of Economics of Peru during the APRA administration of President Alan García; Cong. Oswaldo Bockos, of the current Peruvian ruling party, Cambio 90; Cong. Lino Cerna Manrique (APRA), Cong. Francisco Palomino García (APRA) and Cong. Eduardo Salhuana of the United Left party (IU), all from Peru; and Cong. Jorge León Díaz (Independent) from Venezuela.

"It is not only in Latin America that human rights are violated. Surprisingly, even in the United States itself, human rights are being violated, specifically in the case of Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche," Congressman Palomino said in a radio interview broadcast nationwide by Radio Programas network on Feb. 28, as soon as he returned to Peru. Palomino added that the U.S. government has tens of thousands of documents that prove the innocence of LaRouche, "who because of his ideas has been kept in prison, on the pretext of tax fraud, for the past three years in the Minnesota jail."

Palomino informed a reporter that he told a U.S. congressional aide: "I will do everything in my power to prevent the U.S. from investigating human rights violations in Peru, unless an investigation of the charges of human rights violations against LaRouche by the U.S. is undertaken. All we are asking for is reciprocity," said the Peruvian lawmaker.

According to the lawmakers, Organization of American States Secretary General João Baena Soares expressed similar sentiments when they raised the LaRouche case with him, during a meeting at OAS headquarters on Feb. 25. "The secretary repeatedly insisted that he was not passing judg-

ment on the merits of the LaRouche case—that is something for the OAS Commission on Human Rights to decide—but is just defending the need for all member countries to subscribe to the accords. He was very forceful about this," said one congressman.

The secretary general told the congressmen that he would ask the OAS Human Rights Commission to reconsider the LaRouche case, which it had previously refused to consider. Baena Soares offered his good offices, after Congressman Bockos of Peru's ruling Cambio 90 party, on behalf of the delegation of lawmakers, formally handed him a copy of the full complaint and supporting documentary evidence earlier presented to the OAS by LaRouche and five associates. According to the source, Baena Soares was moved to act, at least in part, because of the reciprocity issue.

During their tour, the delegation met with LaRouche's attorneys Odin Anderson and Ramsey Clark, the former U.S. Attorney General. The congressional delegation traveled to Chicago for a "Food for Peace" conference of the Schiller Institute (founded by LaRouche's wife and collaborator, Helga Zepp-LaRouche) on Feb. 22-23, and thence to New York City, where they met with state and municipal leaders, and with Catholic Church officials. The office of United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali also arranged for the lawmakers to meet with the ranking human rights official at the UN's New York headquarters.

The State Department's heavy hand

The congressional visit was just one of several recent actions by Ibero-American lawmakers on the LaRouche case. On Feb. 12, the Congressional Committee on Human Rights of the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of Mexico officially adopted the case for study. Earlier, the Commission on Human Rights of the House of Representatives of Bolivia's Congress called upon the OAS and the United Nations to pursue an investigation. The persecution of LaRouche appears to be "an irregular occurrence," stated Bolivian Cong. Gonzalo Ruiz Paz, chairman of the commission, "consisting of depriving a political leader of his freedom, merely because of the fact that he was a political enemy of the Bush administration" and because of his "harsh criticism of [Henry] Kissinger."

But, showing its continued blatant disregard for human rights, the Bush administration has used every dirty trick at its disposal to stop these embarrassing challenges. For example, the Speaker of Panama's Legislature, who is known to be very close to the U.S. embassy, attempted to dissuade Congressman Bush from joining the delegation, telling him that he had learned that LaRouche was a "child molester." His pressure tactics backfired.

The same cannot be said for U.S. congressmen, cowards who surrendered to the administration's blackmail: Not one American congressman or senator had the courage to meet with their Ibero-American counterparts.