
Interview: Héctor Luis Campos

'Argentina's Army is only an abstraction'

The following interview was conducted by EIR's Buenos Aires correspondent with Héctor Luis Campos, Argentine military nationalist and one of the leaders of the non-commissioned officers who participated in the Dec. 3, 1990 military rebellion headed by Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín. Campos and his fellow carapintadas, or "painted faces," as they are known in Argentina, in reference to the camouflage paint worn by combat soldiers, are currently on trial for their involvement in that rebellion.

Colonel Seineldín and 14 other commissioned officers were convicted in August 1991 on charges of "aggravated rebellion and illicit association," and were sentenced to long prison terms—life sentences, in most cases. Despite his incarceration, Seineldín has continued to be a rallying point for nationalist forces, not only in Argentina, but in the whole of Ibero-America.

EIR: Aside from what is happening in this trial, what is your opinion of what is happening with the Argentine Army, and with the Armed Forces in general?

Campos: In today's Argentina, the Armed Forces constitute little more than an abstraction. The non-existence of concrete functions which the National Constitution defines as its mission, and the lack of the means and practices to carry those functions out, is equivalent to the phenomenon of the *ñoqui* in the Argentine Congress or in any other official body. That is, they receive a salary but do no work.

EIR: In August of last year, during his presentation before the court that condemned him to life imprisonment, Colonel Seineldín made a series of charges which today reflect the problems of all of Ibero-America's armies. What do you think of what is happening continentally?

Campos: Well, Colonel Seineldín was clear and concrete in his reflections. The Armed Forces of the continent are serving as the political instruments of their governments and therefore are being "used" for things which have nothing to do with them, and which are totally distinct from the missions which justify their existence. If you add to this the fact that foreign economic policies have been imposed on Ibero-America, we have a highly dangerous result, and we find

ourselves with armies that have been turned into internal police, anti-drug police, or simply unemployed, as in the Argentine case.

EIR: What is the role of the non-commissioned officer in the Army, given the current military situation in Ibero-America?

Campos: The role of the non-commissioned officer, with his training, activity, and knowledge, was and should continue to be the backbone of the [military] institution. Through personal and daily contact with the citizen, as defined by law, the non-commissioned officer serves as teacher and guide in the preparation and training of the armed reserve of the Fatherland. As this is not occurring today, the very *raison d'être* of the non-com is diminished, and the personnel and matériel that the nation provides for provisioning its reserve defense forces is wasted. To this we should add the constant need for technical upgrading that modern warfare demands.

EIR: Did there exist a technical and military specialization on the part of the non-commissioned officers of the Argentine Army, and is that capacity being destroyed?

Campos: The Argentine Army stood out in the Americas as being the first to have a school for non-commissioned officers, such that the Argentine non-coms always played outstanding roles in international schools and training courses. This technical and military specialization began to decline in the early '80s, coinciding with the end of the anti-subversive war. The Malvinas War and the arrival of "anti-militarist democracy" marked a worsening in the loss of professionalism on the part of the non-coms, while lack of budget translated into lack of modern equipment, and low wages forced personnel to seek second jobs in order to survive, and made seeking a military career a utopia. Therefore, there does not exist any specialization in today's Army.

EIR: As a patriot and defender of national and Ibero-American principles, what would you say to all those colleagues in Ibero-America who have begun to resist the assault of George Bush's new order, in which the reduction of the national armies is a key aspect?

Campos: In command of inferior numbers and weaponry, General San Martín from the south, and General Bolívar from the north nonetheless succeeded in liberating the continent. How was this possible? Because both knew that they were fighting for a just cause, with clear and harmonious ideas. Today, as then, it is important, indeed fundamental, to be clear what we are fighting for. The greatest enemy of Argentina is not Chile or Brazil. The greatest enemy of Venezuela is not Colombia, etc., etc. The enemies of Ibero-America are those who get rich at the expense of our people's hunger, and who want police armies to enforce international deals that will guarantee the hegemony of the United States in the region.