

# Terrorist scenario for Venezuela is exposed on election eve

by Cynthia R. Rush

A mobilization by the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) inside Venezuela and throughout the continent has badly damaged the Venezuelan Radical Cause (Causa R) party and its plan, which is backed by the U.S. State Department and Cuba's Fidel Castro, to seize power through armed insurrection if it failed to gain a clear electoral victory in the Dec. 5 presidential elections. As of Dec. 2, the last day on which political propaganda was allowed to be released, each of the three major candidates—-independent and former President Rafael Caldera, Social Christian Osvaldo Alvarez Paz, and Radical Cause's Andrés Velásquez—were all predicting their overwhelming victory. But, while polls vary widely, in at least one, Velásquez's position had dropped from being neck-and-neck with Caldera to giving him 18% against the former President's 31%.

The threat of armed insurrection is the strategy of the São Paulo Forum, the umbrella group of Ibero-America's narco-terrorist and pro-terrorist organizations set up by the Cuban Communist Party in 1990 to take over the continent starting with Venezuela. Among its members are Colombia's M-19, El Salvador's FMLN, and Nicaragua's Sandinistas. Radical Cause's leaders, especially Velásquez and Secretary General Pablo Medina, have been forced onto the defensive by the MSIA mobilization, which included the release of a hard-hitting exposé, "Radical Cause wants to Install a Narco-Terrorist Dictatorship in Venezuela," which was also circulated by the Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV), whose secretary general is Alejandro Peña Esclusa.

The volatile pre-election environment is such that Venezuela's Supreme Court debated, but rejected, invalidating Velásquez as a candidate because he had failed to resign as governor of Bolívar state, which is a technical violation of election law. The Armed Forces are fully mobilized to prevent any disturbances on election day, but the country is rife with rumors of a military coup, especially in the event of a Radical Cause victory.

Clearly worried about a military move against Radical Cause, and the development of a situation not under its control, the Clinton administration sent Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Alexander Watson to Caracas just days before the election to threaten anyone who would overturn "democracy." Arriving in Caracas at the same time was

Richard Feinberg, former president of the Inter-American Dialogue (IAD) and currently responsible for Ibero-America at the U.S. National Security Council. The IAD is the Washington, D.C.-based think-tank which dictates President Clinton's policy for Ibero-America and which has openly backed Velásquez. The IAD promotes the "selective" legalization of the drug trade, and the dismemberment of the Armed Forces.

The State Department has reason to be worried. The MSIA/PLV statement not only exposed Radical Cause's ties to the São Paulo Forum, six of whose member parties are fielding presidential candidates in their respective countries over the next year and a half, but it also documented the São Paulo Forum's unsavory relationship with the IAD and with high-level State Department and Clinton administration personnel.

The MSIA exposé appeared in such Venezuelan dailies as *Ultimas Noticias*, *El Mundo*, and *Diario de Caracas*, and has been echoed in statements by leading Venezuelan political and military figures. Defense Minister Vice Adm. Radamés Muñoz León warned on Nov. 23 that the "guerrilla international" may be preparing to disrupt Venezuela's presidential elections, and pointed to attacks on Venezuelan military border posts by Colombian narco-terrorists. Those narco-terrorists, he warned, have ties to the subversives inside Venezuela who hope to destabilize the country on election day, an unsavory reference to Radical Cause and the São Paulo Forum.

The Miami-based *Diario Las Américas* also published two articles using the MSIA information, as did media in Panama, Brazil, and Peru, all pointing to the São Paulo Forum's plan to "set fire" to the continent, beginning with the Venezuelan elections. As a result of the exposé, Alejandro Peña has received several death threats, but a larger number of citizens called to support the MSIA, welcoming its determination "to tell the truth" about Radical Cause. The news of threats against Peña was also published in leading Venezuelan dailies.

## On the defensive

The impact of the MSIA exposé inside Venezuela has forced Velásquez and Medina to deny any association with the São Paulo Forum, despite Radical Cause's documented ties to the narco-terrorist coalition. Radio and television in-

interviewers have repeatedly asked them about the São Paulo Forum, provoking hysterical responses from both.

On Nov. 19, Eladio Larez of Radio Caracas Televisión confronted Velásquez with details revealed in the MSIA statement, although not mentioning the source, and commented that "people are not making these accusations gratuitously." Completely out of control, Velásquez leaped from his chair and interrupted, "that's not true. Radical Cause does not belong to any international Forum . . . absolutely not!" When asked why people "make this link" then, Velásquez pathetically explained that it was because he and Medina had received several "invitations," including to the United States. But, he added, the São Paulo Forum is just an informal group of people promoted by Brazilian Workers Party candidate Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, and "we don't see the sin of participating in that."

The party's status has been further complicated by charges against Medina, made by Army Lt. Raúl Álvarez Bracamonte on Nov. 12, and elaborated in later statements to the press. Álvarez told a military judge that Medina had been the recipient of weapons stolen from the Defense Ministry in March 1992 and handed over originally to jailed Col. Hugo Chávez, leader of the February 1992 coup attempt against Carlos Andrés Pérez (CAP). Medina had distributed some of those weapons to Caracas neighborhoods, Álvarez charged. In an interview in the Nov. 25 *El Mundo*, Álvarez pointed to Medina's numerous trips to Cuba, and accused the Cuban intelligence agency, the DGI, of financing Medina's activities. He also named the Cuban ambassador to Venezuela as one of Medina's closest collaborators, and warned that if Radical Cause won the elections, it intended to offer an economic bailout to Cuba using Venezuela's oil.

Based on Lieutenant Álvarez's accusations, the Second Military Tribunal of Caracas requested that the Supreme Court determine whether there were grounds for trying Medina, who is a congressman, on charges of rebellion, concealing weapons, offending the Armed Forces, and refusal to give sworn testimony. If the Supreme Court concludes there is sufficient evidence to merit a trial, it would strip Medina of his parliamentary immunity.

### **A provocateur**

Radical Cause's leaders are showing the strain. On Nov. 23, following a government event of "democratic reaffirmation" convened by President Ramón J. Velásquez at the Miraflores Palace, Medina accosted Defense Minister Muñoz León in a hallway, grabbed him by the arm, and accused him of framing him up by refusing to consider exculpatory evidence on the weapons possession charge. Muñoz coolly responded that Medina would have to present his evidence to the courts, not to the Defense Ministry, while his aides separated the two.

Medina's thuggish behavior provoked a series of media attacks on him, and elicited support for the defense minister

from several quarters. *El Diario de Caracas* editorialized on Nov. 25 that "it's obvious that Medina went to Miraflores to provoke." This shows, the daily added, that "Radical Cause, or at least its secretary general Pablo Medina, may be prepared to provoke further incidents during that great act of democratic reaffirmation to take place on Dec. 5." Muñoz called Medina a "provocateur," and warned that "these are the types of people who hope to rule this country. The people must identify them and see how irresponsible they are." He vowed that the Armed Forces would continue to carry out raids and searches to find the stolen weapons mentioned by Álvarez Bracamonte.

Medina's verbal assault on the defense minister has also led to public squabbles among Radical Cause's leadership. Andrés Velásquez accused Medina of hurting his electoral campaign, and charged him with holding "personalist and authoritarian" attitudes. Velásquez even portrayed himself as a defender of the Armed Forces against Medina's claims of a coup plot. Medina whined that the only person defending him against charges of weapons stockpiling is his mother, who took out an ad in the newspaper on his behalf.

### **Radical Cause's strongest defenders**

Proving the point the MSIA makes in its exposé, Radical Cause's strongest defenders are the very members of the unholy alliance made up of the São Paulo Forum's narco-terrorists, the IAD, and the State Department.

Coinciding with Radical Cause's rantings against Venezuela's Armed Forces, the "former" narco-terrorist and presidential candidate of Colombia's M-19, Antonio Navarro Wolf, launched a tirade against the Venezuelan National Guard, accusing it of abusing Colombian residents in Venezuela and of accepting bribes.

In Caracas, the State Department's Alexander Watson threatened that a military coup in Venezuela would be met with an immediate negative reaction from the United States. In the midst of an unstable situation continent-wide, the U.S. would view any overturning of "democracy" based on free-market economic reforms as extremely dangerous, particularly if the armed forces were involved. In tandem with Watson's remarks, the Dec. 1 *El Universal* quoted an anonymous "high-level U.S. government official" who warned that "undemocratic" countries such as Cuba and Haiti had suffered severe economic crises because of their political isolation. With a message obviously intended for Venezuela, this official noted that President Clinton had offered to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement to all Ibero-American countries "as long as they are democratic."

Just days earlier, Gustavo Roosen, president of Venezuela's state-owned oil firm PDVSA, warned that a military coup would be met with a Haiti-style embargo of Venezuela and repudiation by all of Ibero-America. Roosen is a backer of Radical Cause, and his company, as reported in the IAD's most recent annual report, is a financial backer of the IAD.

# Civil war looms in South Africa, despite the new constitution

by David Hammer

After intensive, months-long negotiations, spokesmen of the ruling National Party, the African National Congress (ANC), and various smaller parties on Nov. 17 concluded a final agreement on a new, one-man, one-vote constitution for the Republic of South Africa. On April 27, national elections will take place, which the ANC is widely expected to win, but it will begin governing on Dec. 6, through the "Transitional Executive Council," a de facto national unity government with the ruling National Party. A five-year transitional period will follow the election, during which a new, permanent constitution will be drafted by the Parliament elected in April.

The interim constitution eliminates the 10 homelands and nominally independent black states established in the apartheid era, and divides the country into nine new states. The central government has wide powers to intervene in the states, and any questions of interpretation will be settled by the new Constitutional Court, appointed by the President.

Though applauded by the world's news media, the "new South Africa," as demonstrated by the accompanying interviews, is plunging toward brutal repression at minimum, and more likely, civil war.

Some of the country's key constituencies boycotted the constitutional talks, including the Inkatha Freedom Party, which represents most of the country's approximately 8 million Zulus, and the Conservative Party and the Afrikaner Volksfront, representing much of the Afrikaner population. These organizations, together with others, had demanded that a permanent constitution which would guarantee strong regional powers be drafted first, with national elections to follow afterwards.

The fear of the Zulus, the Afrikaners, and many other whites and blacks is that without such safeguards, the ANC, which is dominated by the hard-line South African Communist Party, would, once in power, carry out the sort of imprisonment, torture, and murder that it has admitted conducting against its own members in concentration camps in Angola, Tanzania, and elsewhere during exile.

As the enforcers of International Monetary Fund austerity, the ANC will have to repress even its own base. This was acknowledged by the pro-ANC *Financial Times* of London on Nov. 29: "Popular expectations will soon strain the intentions of even the most benevolent government; at that point,

it must either give in to populism, or suppress it. The latter now seems most likely; the new South Africa will start with a hefty dollop of the old."

The April elections themselves will be fraudulent. Even U.S. Project Democracy spokesman Patricia Kiefer of the South Africa Project of the National Democratic Institute admitted to the *Washington Post* on Nov. 29: "I don't think by any standard it is going to be free and fair—there's too much intimidation and violence already in the political culture."

The accompanying interviews are from two of the country's key political figures. Each highlights the urgent necessity of a large-scale, genuine economic development program for South Africa if it is to have any chance of avoiding disaster.

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## Interview: Mwezi Twala

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### S. African 'solution' is a U.S.-made sham

*Mwezi Twala is a former African National Congress (ANC) commissar, and now the chairman of the Returned Exiles Coordinating Committee, comprising many former ANC members who were put through ANC torture and detention camps in Angola and elsewhere. He is also the regional organizer for the Vaal Triangle region (south of Johannesburg) for the Inkatha Freedom Party. He was interviewed on Nov. 29.*

**EIR:** Could you give us your assessment on how things stand in the country after the agreement on the interim constitution and the scheduled April 27 elections? According to the world's news media, this inaugurates a great new period of freedom, prosperity, and so forth for South Africa. How do you see it?