

Aug. 18, 1989: Presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán, a close friend and colleague of the murdered Lara Bonilla, is assassinated by the cartel, triggering a bloody war—including the bombing of a commercial airliner in which 114 die, the bombing of Bogotá's security police headquarters, the bombing of the offices of the paper *El Espectador*, and numerous other terror attacks. Galán's elimination from the race paves the way for the May 1990 victory of President César Gaviria Trujillo.

August 1989: After Galán's murder, President Virgilio Barco declares a "war on drugs" and seeks military aid from the United States. The necessary matériel is not made available. Covert amnesty negotiations with the narco-terrorist M-19 are begun.

October 1989: Cartel lawyer (and Escobar's godfather) Joaquín Vallejo Arbeláez reveals that the cartel had considered hiring Henry Kissinger as their Washington lobbyist. Kissinger's office refuses to confirm or deny having received such an offer.

February 1990: Escobar's narco-terrorist partner, the M-19, is granted a political amnesty by the Barco government. The M-19 is later incorporated into Gaviria's cabinet and is instrumental in getting extradition constitutionally banned in Colombia.

September 1990: Weeks after his inauguration, President Gaviria ends Barco's war on drugs and offers the cartels lenient prison terms and immunity from extradition.

June 1991: Escobar "surrenders" to a jail of his own construction, with guards of his own choosing, and continues to traffic drugs and murder opponents. He announces his intention to study law and run for the presidency, and gives an interview to the *Washington Times* stating that "legalization is the solution to put an end to drug trafficking."

July 1992: Revelations of Escobar's continuing crimes force Gaviria government to tighten prison conditions. Escobar escapes with all his henchmen and relaunches terrorism.

1993: Government tries to negotiate new surrender deal with Escobar. A powerful "vigilante" group called PEPES surfaces and begins to kill cartel members and lawyers, bomb Escobar's properties, and threaten his family. A joint Army/National Police task force, dubbed the Escobar Search Team, is initially hard on Escobar's heels, but the trail grows cold amid police charges that the attorney general's office is sabotaging Search Team efforts.

October 1993: Gaviria government passes legislation designed to give virtual amnesty to the rival Cali Cartel; the deputy attorney general overseeing police affairs is discovered to have been an agent of the drug cartels, passing security information to both the Cali and Medellín cartels; with his purge, the Escobar Search Team's efforts revive. Several cabinet members of the Gaviria government publicly promote drug legalization.

Dec. 2, 1993: Pablo Escobar is killed in shootout with the Escobar Search Team.

Ukraine gets remake of Munich betrayal

The western attitude toward Ukraine is "a remake of Munich 1938," which could lead to a new general war on European soil, Ukrainian writer Yuri Pokalchuk writes in a guest commentary in France's *Libération* daily on Dec. 8.

Pokalchuk begins by noting that force has "succeeded so well" in the internal affairs of Russia, that there is no way Russia won't be tempted to use threatening speech vis-à-vis its neighbors. This is clear in the "aggressive posture toward Europe" adopted by intelligence chief Yevgeny Primakov in his Nov. 25 press conference, in which he rejected NATO attempts to integrate central and eastern European countries into the NATO structure.

Pokalchuk stresses that if Russia takes such a hard line on matters pertaining to countries of the former Warsaw Pact, how much harder will its attitude be toward the former Soviet republics. After Kiev refused, on Nov. 18, to unconditionally transfer to Russia the totality of its strategic missile capabilities, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a declaration calling Ukraine "a threat for the security of Russia." Furthermore, the recently released Russian military doctrine gives Russia the right to a "nuclear first strike" if it claims to be threatened by a nuclear state. Is Ukraine meant by this?

The writer wonders whether all the noise being made by Russia about the missiles, the Black Sea Fleet, Crimea, etc., takes on meaning if one keeps in mind the Russian desire to place Ukraine under Russian influence again. It is only in this context, he stresses, that one can understand the Ukrainian reticence to transfer its missiles to Russia. The missiles are "the only bargaining chip that Ukraine has, to exchange them for a guarantee by the United States or Europe for Ukraine's national independence and territorial integrity."

But, he goes on, the West is abandoning Ukraine in its unequal confrontation with Russia, hoping that Russia will succeed, "one way or the other," in bringing Ukraine under its bondage. The Ukrainians feel "insulted and embittered" before this "remake of Munich." The western wager is that Ukrainian "cowardice and resignation" will prevail, but this is "not assured. For after the Ukrainians, they risk having to make the same wager again respecting the Moldavians, the Belarussians, the Baltic countries, and—why not?—the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Czechs. If the bet failed, a Yugoslav-style war would threaten Europe. Even worse. Is Europe so myopic, so forgetful and so deaf to its own security—the same Europe which, two times in this century, has seen the flames of war, flames which were lit at the borders of Mitteleuropa?"