

General Bedoya: In two years, we can get rid of the drug trade

The following speech by former Colombian Army Commander Gen. Harold Bedoya Pizarro (ret.) was delivered at a seminar organized by EIR and the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement in Colombia, on July 23. The seminar was entitled, "The Peruvian and Colombian Peace Processes." General Bedoya was a Presidential candidate in the recent national elections.

Rather than pointing the finger at other nations and making them out as criminals for the drug-trafficking problem, what Colombia needs is allies and partners. Specifically, to resolve the problem of drugs and terrorism, Colombia needs to ally with nine countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru (the coca producers and processors), the United States (the major consumer), Mexico (transit country), Spain (drug entry port into Europe), Holland and Germany (which are the major producers of "Ecstasy" and of various chemical precursors in making illegal drugs), and with Russia (which like other former Iron Curtain nations, sells weapons to the mafia and the narco-terrorists). In Colombia, one can find Russian rifles, Russian rockets, Russian-made ammunition. Russia is involved here, as are other countries which were from the Iron Curtain. For example, weapons are also coming in from Central America, from Cuba and Nicaragua.

If we ten nations were to join forces and agree, we could eliminate this problem. It would be an agreement in which we would allocate tasks: Colombia, of course, would have to eliminate the crops and laboratories, pursue the drug-trafficking mafias, and fight against terrorism caused by the drug trade. The United States would have to end drug consumption. Peru and Bolivia would have to reduce their production of coca leaf. The Dutch and Germans would need to stop selling precursor chemicals, and the Russians would have to stop selling weapons. We could, in this way, certify—or decertify—each other, according to whether we met our responsibilities or not.

The United States would be decertified if it continued to consume, as would Holland and Germany if they continued to sell precursor chemicals, or Russia, if it continued to sell weapons to the drug-trafficking mafias. Thus, we would do away with hypocrisy, and with the farce that Colombia is the only country responsible for all this.

Look at the size of the problem: In the United States, between drug consumption, rehabilitation of addicts, and the fight against the drug trade, they spend in one year, the equiva-

lent of Colombia's entire Gross National Product. That's right: \$90 billion! In Colombia, we spend nothing to fight consumption and drug addiction, not a single peso. In the fight against the drug trade, we hardly spend anything. In the fight against the cartels, we spent practically nothing. How much does the United States give Colombia? Very little. They are trifles: a few old helicopters which fall apart daily from obsolescence.

But, they say Colombia is the only one responsible. Well, it is true that we bear a great deal of responsibility for what we have accepted, and what we have lived through. But the responsibility is worldwide. What we military men call the "theater of operations" of the mafia and the drug trade, is worldwide. Within the theater of operations is the zone of operations, the zone of communications, the supply zone, the rear guard—this type of analysis works perfectly for this case.

For example, here in Colombia, we are consuming \$3-4 billion a year in contraband generated and financed by the drug trade. The same is true of the drug-money laundries. This contraband is what has given Colombia an unemployment rate above 15%, and in cities like Cali, unemployment is already above 20%, since it is the area where more drugs are produced, the city where the drug mafias live and operate. It is a demonstration of how the country is narcotized. The country is in bad shape, destroyed. Colombia is no longer producing food, it's not trading. Colombia has been left nearly exclusively with just a little coffee, with the little oil left to us; nothing else is produced.

A Marshall Plan is needed

Every day one can hear that the country is in total crisis. Well, to resolve this problem, a Marshall Plan is needed, like that with which Europe recovered after World War II. We are talking about a plan to rebuild a country from the ashes. In the first place, we need to ally with the industrialized countries, with the Group of Seven, for them to invest in the reconstruction of the country, especially in all those zones which are devastated by the drug trade, such as the south of the country and the eastern part of Colombia, which are saturated with drugs.

If the industrialized countries were to invest in Colombia, we could develop the Marshall Plan, which would involve contributions of capital, of technology, trade, services, and the creation of poles of development. In Colombia, we need several poles of development. One such would be in the south,



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with its base being Florencia (capital of Caquetá), to cover the southern region: Putumayo, Amazonas, the Amazon region. With this development pole, we could rebuild areas devastated by the drug trade, and we would rehabilitate these zones, putting the land to work once again to grow food instead of drugs, recovering the jungle that was burned or slashed to produce coca, while researching how to exploit the jungles which are very rich in biodiversity. In this project, the whole Colombian government would participate, as well as the United States and other industrialized nations.

To accomplish this, a civil-military operation would be needed, in which military engineers would participate in rebuilding the area, in building bridges, highways, landing strips, trains, schools, everything that could be done. And, logically, there would be great involvement on the part of the Colombian government, especially from the Presidency. This would be a development pole to embrace the entire south, including the borders with Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil.

Another development pole would have to be located in the north of the country —Urabá, Chocó—with the same intent, but embracing the entire Gulf of Urabá. They, too, have crops of narcotic drugs, drug laboratories, and there, too, there has been devastation caused by terrorism and violence.

Still another development zone would be the region of Colombia's northeast. We are talking about Arauca, Casanare, where the development pole would be headquartered in Arauca. This zone also has more or less the same problems: border problems, drug problems, terrorism problems. We would also have another development pole to cover the north, the Santander provinces, the area of Catatumbo River, another

border area that is affected by the drug trade. This region includes southern Bolívar province, southern César, where we daily have the problem of terrorism. This development pole would have Bucaramanga as its epicenter.

And so, we have to begin to economically develop the country, with both domestic and international resources, with the participation of the government, with the active participation as well of the Armed Forces. I am certain that if we do this, four years is more than sufficient to rebuild the country.

And then there is the alliance we must forge with the developed countries. It is the alliance we must convoke to fight the drug trade and the drug mafias. Colombia holds several "first places": first place in coca production, first place in drug laboratories, first place in mafias. We can get rid of these "first places" through this alliance. We must develop a strategy for weakening, and then eliminating, the drug trade.

In two years, we can lick this problem. I don't see this being a difficult matter. The fact is that up until now, we haven't wanted to actually fight the drug trade. We have allowed the drug trade to reach up to the Presidency of the Republic, and when this happens, then there is simply no political will to take on the problem. If one achieves power with dirty drug money, one cannot launch the battles required. That is why there has been an appearance of fighting the drug trade over the last four years, but you all well know that during those four years, Congress has dedicated itself to legislating in favor of those criminals.

With this great political problem resolved, which I believe is already resolved—or at least that regime of corruption and drug trafficking has been defeated—then we can make this

alliance. It is an alliance of all our friends to do away with the entire drug process. You know that the drug problem includes the crops, the laboratories, the cocaine production complexes, and it takes a large military, police, and judicial alliance to defeat these criminal organizations, and so that is where all the nations involved in this problem must participate. We only need a little time to accomplish this, not a lot of time. It is already known where the crops are, where the laboratories are. Just getting into an airplane and looking down tells you where they are. So, we must simply uproot this. Then enters the other plan, the reconstruction plan, so that at the same time that we are eradicating, we are also immediately rebuilding around the development poles.

That is how we will get the country going again.

War on narco-terrorism

The other thing is the war against terrorism, which is another fight we have never wanted to take on. The picture is very painful and very sad. Very sad to see how they are running kidnappings, running the drug trade, from the jails. They are running terrorism from the jails; from the prison cells they give orders on how to handle the national geography; and from the jails, they have practically put the Colombian people up against the wall. This fight must be waged.

The government will give the members of these criminal organizations—call them drug traffickers, terrorists, narco-

terrorists, or what you will—an opportunity to surrender to the state, since in the end it is the state which is responsible for how Colombians live, and these opportunities will be given when and where the government considers it convenient and when circumstances permit. The peace, or dialogue, process, can be held, but without the state renouncing its obligations, because the first obligation of the state is to guarantee life, honor, property. This cannot be renounced. The only one responsible in all this is the state: The government, Congress, the justice system, all the institutions must work in this direction.

Obviously, the country will have to make a series of reforms. This country is left without the legal tools to take on such a problem. Along came General Clark, a U.S. general who headed the Southern Command, then headquartered in Panama when I was Army Commander. And he came because there was U.S. radar in Vichada, which monitored the flight of airplanes in that sector of Colombia's east. He went with me one day to fly over all of Vichada, observed everything, and asked me a question: General Bedoya, what is the size of the department of Vichada? I answered that it was more than 90,000 square kilometers. Then he asked me how many soldiers we had in Vichada, how many helicopters, how many military bases and air bases. I answered: "We have what you saw. One air base and one helicopter, nothing more." He told me that "the area of Vichada is nearly equal to that of Vietnam, which is a little more than 100,000 square kilometers, and in Vietnam, we had 2,000 helicopters. I don't know how you do what you have to do with your fingernails, without anything; you are really making miracles, without any help. You are heroes."

I tell you this story to give you an example of how we have had to fight in Colombia, without anything, against a powerful and rich enemy, which has every resource, which is well armed, which has an international diplomatic corps that functions, that has its delegates in Europe, in the United States, in the world media, which is supported by multiple non-governmental organizations (NGOs). From this, they are battling the entire country and are morally destroying it.

The narcos violate human rights

The country must make a great effort. The entire world must make a great effort, because we are waging a war that benefits the entire world, and yet the world is indifferent. Four months ago, I was in Washington, and there I had a television debate with Mr. Vivanco, who is the director of Human Rights Watch. They invited me to participate in those debates in the United States, because they say I am a great violator of human rights here in Colombia. And these organizations always want to put me up against the wall. So I asked them to allow me to ask a question, since there were three of them against me, as always. I asked them a single question: "You are always fighting for human rights, which is something we all do, because I too want human rights respected. We all want peace,

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we all want the drug trade to be ended. I know that in the United States there are 20 million drug addicts, sick and crazy people in the streets and in the hospitals, because of the mafias and the drug traffickers. Why don't you denounce the drug traffickers as violators of human rights? Why haven't you demanded that the drug trade be considered an international crime, a crime against humanity?"

But, there was no answer. They didn't understand that the drug trade produces weapons, produces violence, produces terrorism. That the drug trade produces sick people, destroys the ecology, destroys the jungles, destroys the rivers. That the drug trade takes over governments, as happened here. Here we have a drug-trafficking government. The President has just said so on television. He admitted that he brought in Cali Cartel money. He reached the Presidency and lasted four years ruling Colombia.

If the mafias do all this, why don't we try them internationally? The only thing left to the people after the mafias' operations is what has been left to us: poverty, misery, unemployment, corruption, a bankrupt economy, congressmen on trial for corruption. The drug trade leaves all that human misery behind it. So, why don't we try them? Why do we allow these gentlemen their international showcases, like that which has been put together in Germany, and which are being put together in Colombia and in other parts of the world?

The world must join Colombia in this battle; we Colombians have been left with no other choice but to defeat the drug trade, to defeat terrorism, because if we do not, the country is not going to have jobs, is not going to have development, there will be no capital investment, there will be no industry, there will be no international confidence. Everything we produce in Colombia will be ephemeral. No one is going to want to come to Colombia when they know they could be kidnapped. The first thing we have to do is clean up this drug-trafficking problem, and I guarantee you that Colombia will start to live again. But, if Colombia does not make this decision now, starting Aug. 7, a decision to go all out and have the whole world back us up, and we Colombians support the government in making that decision, which it has never until now made—we tell lies every day and the world knows we are telling lies, but it likes us to tell lies that we are waging a great battle against violence and the drug trade—if we don't make that decision, there will be poverty, there will be hunger, we will face all the plagues of Egypt.

This is what I wanted to tell you tonight. I will promote the cause of Colombia winning this fight and that it overcome this problem soon. We can defeat this tangle of drug trafficking, of violence, and of corruption so that we don't continue to suffer what we have been suffering. And I will be supporting the government in these decisions, if they are taken, obviously. If they aren't, well, I will be the person who tells the Colombians what I think, and the ideas needed to resolve this problem.

Thank you very much.

Soros legalizers map out 'Guaviare strategy'

by Gretchen Small

On June 11, in an auditorium at George Washington University provided by the Anthropology Department's Andes program, top strategists of George Soros's international drug legalization apparatus convened to map out, with controllers of the coca growers of Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia, the next phase of their war to legalize the drug trade.

The cover for the strategy session was a seminar titled "The War on Drugs: Addicted to Failure," sponsored by the organizations which form the backbone of the "Coca 90s" strike force exposed by *EIR* in its June 5, 1998 *Feature* on "George Soros's 'Coca Revolt' in Bolivia," including: the Soros-funded Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA); the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies (IPS); the Transnational Institute, IPS's cohort in Amsterdam, where the Coca 90s project is headquartered; and Acción Andina, a network of legalizers extending from La Paz and Bogotá, to the drug legalization capital of the world, Amsterdam.

The star attractions were six speakers from the Andean Council of Coca Producers (CAPHC), an Andean-wide narco-terrorist association. CAPHC's most prominent spokesman, Bolivia's Evo Morales, was unable to attend, because he was denied an entry visa into the United States. Featured instead was a self-professed leader of the 1996 insurrection of drug growers in the south of Colombia, Omayra Morales, CAPHC's secretary of information and culture, who hails from the department of Guaviare, where the 1996 insurrection began.

What emerged from the discussions, is that a major war is in the making in the Andean region. The model for the insurrection, is that July-August 1996 uprising in the coca-producing regions of the south of Colombia, where hundreds of thousands of coca-growers were driven by the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), at gun-point, into serving as cannon fodder for the narco-terrorists. The critical role assigned the legalization forces assembled in that auditorium, is to create the political conditions under which the insurrection can succeed.

Backdrop of failure

The seminar was held one day after the close of the June 8-10 UN General Assembly's Special Session on Drugs. Many of the speakers had been in New York City for that session, attempting to shape the discussions as best they

could, to further their drive for legalization. They came back frustrated about what they had failed to accomplish there, and about how little headway they are making generally in their drive for world drug legalization.

WOLA's Coletta Youngers denounced the UNGA session as "the world's biggest pep rally for the war on drugs." Our only success there, she said, was the advertisement placed in the *New York Times* for the opening day, June 8, by Soros's Lindesmith Center, with a list of prominent world figures attacking the war on drugs. Martin Jelsma, coordinator of the Transnational Institute's "Drugs and Democracy" project, urged that an international mobilization be launched to defeat a proposed UN Strategy for Coca and Opium Poppy Elimination, which he fears would give legitimacy to eradication programs.

Originally, the seminar had been planned for just before the UN session, at which the final report of an international taskforce, set up six months earlier under the direction of Jelsma with the mission of developing arguments to discredit "Airbridge Interdiction in the Andes," a joint U.S.-Peruvian program, would be released. The "Airbridge" program has largely shut down the drug cartels' ability to use airplanes for trafficking between the Andean nations; it drives the legalizers mad, because it demonstrates that appropriate U.S. coordination with the national militaries and law enforcement agencies in the Andean countries, *can* inflict grave damage on global drug-trafficking, thus destroying the "war-always-fails" axiom upon which legalization is premised.

After six months, the taskforce has yet to come up with a strategy with which to defend the drug-carrying planes flying over the Andes. Instead of releasing a report, as they had planned, they issued an executive summary of the taskforce's conclusions, because the country studies submitted are "still in process."

The executive summary admits: "The strategy of air bridge denial was, and is hailed by U.S. officials as a resounding success, and is touted as justification for further spending on such multinational source country and interdiction programs. Official U.S. government sources acknowledge that traffickers have adapted to air bridge denial by using other land, sea, river and air routes. However, they also insist that such adaptations require that 'denial' programs be reinforced, invigorated and extended on land and water routes. While we recognize the efficacy of closing, in some measure, the air bridge between Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, the evidence suggests such optimism is unfounded."

The "evidence" was nonexistent, and the attempts to pretend otherwise, were outright laughable, as typified in the remarks of Peruvian CAPHC adviser and economist Hugo Cabieses. Proudly announcing that he had studied under Trotskyist economist Joan Robinson, Cabieses claimed that the reason the price of coca in Peru has dropped precipitously—a drop which all acknowledge has encouraged many coca-growers to return to growing food—has nothing to do

with traffickers' increased difficulty in getting coca paste out of Peru. It is simply that Peruvian traffickers are "inefficient," he said, because, "as economics teaches us, the market" drives the inefficient out of business.

Human rights fraud

Several speakers pointed out that, where the legalization movement has delivered significant blows to anti-drug efforts, it has succeeded in transforming the drug issue into a matter of "democracy" and "human rights," and this, therefore, is where efforts should be concentrated.

This was the principal argument of WOLA's Youngers, who pointed to the use that has been made of human rights conditionalities (principally, the so-called Leahy Amendment), which require that U.S. security assistance programs meet human rights criteria. The Leahy Amendment, she said, has prevented the Clinton administration from delivering aid to the Colombian Army, even though that aid was announced at the beginning of 1997.

Joy Olson of the Latin American Working Group (LAWG), a coalition of non-governmental organizations affiliated with the National Council of Churches, pressed for others to join LAWG in investigating U.S. military cooperation programs, as the most efficient means to identify pressure points for attack. Outlining some of those investigations (she focussed on U.S.-Mexican relations), Olson urged that the seminar participants mobilize to identify, and close loopholes which they allege make the Pentagon budget less restricted by human rights clauses than aid channeled through the State Department.

Younger, who attacked the U.S. Army Southern Command, charging that it carries out its "own parallel foreign policy" in Colombia, endorsed Olson's strategy, praising a study being prepared by LAWG as exemplary of the work required to stop "militarization" being carried out "under the cover" of anti-drug efforts.

'Collective kidnapping'

During the second panel, the insurrection strategy was outlined by the six speakers associated with CAPHC: Omayra Morales and Ricardo Vargas of the Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP), from Colombia; Cabieses and CAPHC vice president Carlos Francisco Barrantes, from Peru; Theo Roncken from Holland; and Gregorio Lanza, from Bolivia. Each argued that the *cocaleros* movement has decided upon three non-negotiable demands:

- To stop all "forcible" eradication, whether by fumigation or law enforcement;
- To permit no drug eradication policy or operation in any area under their control, which is not negotiated through them, in the name of "local control" and "democracy";
- To resist any attempt to "impose" any other policy, along the lines of the FARC-led 1996 Guaviare uprising in Colombia.