

IMF, UN, Wall Street sponsor Colombia's third drug cartel

by Valerie Rush

The international financial oligarchy, with the support of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the U.S. State Department, and now several governments of Europe, is overtly boosting Colombia's narco-terrorist army, otherwise known as the FARC Cartel, for co-governorship in that country. The plan is to spread legalized drug production throughout the Andean region of South America, thereby reaping untold billions of drug dollars to pump into the speculative bubble that has come to replace the world economy. If they succeed, entire countries will cease to exist as sovereign nation-states, and will instead become the drug-pushing satrapies of Wall Street and the City of London.

The interface of the financial oligarchy with the world narcotics trade was clearly in evidence in last month's conclave of the so-called "Millennium Group" in the Caribbean resort city of Cartagena, Colombia. Huddled behind closed doors with Colombian President Andrés Pastrana were what the news media called "thirteen of the world's leading financial and business heavyweights." Ostensibly gathered to discuss how to garner international support for Pastrana's proposed \$7.5 billion face-lift for Colombia, the Millennium Group was in fact there to map out a strategy for "investment" in the world's largest drug cartel—whether all of the participants were aware of that fact or not.

Encouragement of drug production is not new to the international financial elites. As early as September 1978, a Colombian specialist at the IMF insisted that drugs (in that case, marijuana) are "just a crop, like any other. It brings in foreign exchange, and provides income for peasants. . . . You know, legality is a relative concept. In a few years, marijuana may become legal anyway."

Indeed, from the standpoint of these international financiers, Colombia's drug crops were de facto legalized last year, when the IMF directly "recommended" to the Pastrana government that it include the revenues of "illicit crops" (that is, narcotics) in the country's Gross National Product.

The 'heavyweights'

Among the "international heavyweights" who descended on Colombia in late January were America On-Line director

Jim Kimsey, Mitsubishi's Minoru Makihara, former American Express CEO James Robinson, former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Lorenzo Zambrano of Mexico's Cemex, and Ronnie Chan of Hong Kong's Hang Lung Development Co. Leading the pack, of course, was Wall Street's Richard Grasso, chairman of the New York Stock Exchange.

Grasso's presence in Cartagena was the giveaway as to the real purpose of the Millennium Group's visit. Last June, Grasso had flown down to the so-called "demilitarized zone" in Colombia's southern jungle region, which has been under the tight control of the FARC narco-terrorists for over a year, courtesy of President Pastrana's appeasement policy. During his visit, which was approved by Madeleine Albright's U.S. State Department, Grasso had met with FARC financial chieftain Raul Reyes, supposedly to "explain the capitalist system," although it is a known fact that the FARC already uses sophisticated computer technology to deploy its billions of dollars in profits from kidnapping and drugs into stock markets around the world. Grasso offered the FARC "investment options" to "further the peace process," and the Wall Street honcho and the narco-terrorist exchanged a public "abrazo," or embrace, for the cameras.

Accompanying Grasso last June on his trip into Colombia's cocaine heartland was Finance Minister Juan Camilo Restrepo. Not surprisingly, it was again Restrepo who interrupted the Millennium Group summit in Cartagena, fresh from yet another jungle consultation with the FARC's Reyes, in order to give the "heavyweights" an update on the status of Pastrana's "peace process."

Emerging from the day-long meeting, AOL director Kimsey told the press that Pastrana had been assured of international support for his Colombia Plan, as long as he stuck to his peace policy (that is, the progressive surrender of the country to the FARC narco-terrorists), and to his policy of economic austerity, as recently concretized in the country's first-ever agreement with the IMF. Oblivious to the fact that this country of 40 million people has 1.9 million internal refugees, is suffering from widespread bloodshed, 20% official unemployment, dramatically eroded living standards, and plummeting industrial and agricultural production, Kimsey

gushed that Colombia was a land bursting with opportunities, and that all it really needed was “an image boost.”

Kimsey also stated melodramatically that he had felt safer during his 24-hour stay in Colombia than in many cities in the United States. This despite a Jan. 28, 2000 advisory put out by the U.S. State Department explicitly warning U.S. citizens against travel to Colombia. “Violence by narco-traffickers, guerrillas, paramilitary groups and other criminal elements continues to affect all parts of the country, both urban and rural. Citizens of the United States and other countries have been the victims of recent threats, kidnappings, domestic airline hijackings, and murders. . . . There is a greater risk of being kidnapped in Colombia than in any other country in the world,” the advisory read.

IMF seal of approval

If there was any doubt that the Millennium Group was carrying out the official policy of the international financial community, that was dispelled a week later, when the Pastrana government announced that the IMF has committed itself to supporting *unconditional and unrestricted* funding for “investments” to win the FARC to the “peace process.” Pastrana’s National Planning director Mauricio Cárdenas revealed to the press that, during his recent visit to the FARC’s “DMZ” to initiate the “economic phase” of the peace negotiations, he had assured the FARC leadership of IMF backing for public investments “necessary to the peace process.”

The Bogotá daily *El Espectador* wrote on Jan. 28: “To prove to the rebels the seriousness of the promise, [the minister] showed them the agreement signed between the government and the IMF, containing a clause which he called ‘the peace clause.’ The document said that, although a peace agreement would hopefully mean reduced security expenditures in the long run, the authorities may need to temporarily increase the deficit of the non-financial public sector, in contrast to the basic goals of the [IMF] program, for the purpose of assuring adequate implementation of the peace agreement.”

In other words, open the money spigot to the world’s leading narcotics cartel, with the IMF’s blessings!

Apart from its “recommendation” to generously invest in the FARC as part of the “peace process,” the IMF is holding the Pastrana government to the usual genocidal austerity conditionalities that are its stock in trade. It is precisely such conditionalities which will knock out what little remains of the country’s real economy, and which will drive more and more of a desperate population into the arms of the FARC Cartel.

Although neither Grasso nor the Millennium Group nor the IMF ever specify precisely what “investments” they have in mind to “further the peace process,” we are given a hint of what is intended in an interview with UN envoy to Colombia Jan Egeland, a former Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway, which appeared in the Jan. 22 issue of the *Boston Globe*. Egeland says that the Colombian government and United Na-

tions are prepared to jointly collaborate with the FARC narco-terrorists in an “alternative development” scheme in the FARC-controlled “DMZ.” In fact, the *Boston Globe* cites President Pastrana saying that his government is *already* working on this with the FARC. The collaboration, explained Egeland, would involve providing funds for building roads and schools, and for encouraging the cultivation of alternative crops for coca and poppy farmers.

What Egeland did not say is that the money would necessarily be channeled through the sole authority in that area, the FARC!

This stands in sharp contrast to the stated policy of the Clinton administration, as expressed last spring during a visit to Colombia by Thomas Umberg, aide to White House drug adviser Barry McCaffrey. Said Umberg, “Our experience with alternative development in Bolivia and Peru is that these programs can be effective as long as the government controls the zone, to be able to direct the development and make sure the benefits go to the appropriate people. The [Colombian] government has no control over the demilitarized zone, and cannot oversee it. That is why we don’t support it. There are many other areas where the government does have control, and we will work in those. . . . *We will give no aid where there is no effective presence or control by the state.*”

UN envoy Egeland, a Norwegian, was also instrumental in setting up a trip to a handful of European countries of a joint delegation of Colombian government negotiators, and a half dozen top FARC chieftains — purportedly to study “alternate economic models” for Colombia. The FARC narco-terrorists are being received as if they were visiting international dignitaries, as opposed to the murderous drug runners that they are.

While all of this “collaboration” is being billed as “anti-drug,” the obvious question that no one seems to want to raise is why the FARC would devote its energies to wiping out its own major source of revenue? It has been confirmed by U.S. government agencies that during the FARC’s year-long reign over the “DMZ,” cocaine and heroin production has skyrocketed. And yet, President Pastrana continues to insist that the FARC are not drug traffickers at all, but merely rebels with a cause. The *Boston Globe* article quoted Pastrana telling U.S. Rep. William Delahunt (D-Mass.) and several other U.S. Congressmen who visited Colombia in January, “It’s one of the starting points to say that [the FARC] are not a narco-guerrilla group. They are really a guerrilla insurgency group, and they are willing to fight drugs.”

There is a quid pro quo involved in all this, but it is not the “anti-drug” scenario which the UN and others paint it. Rather, the international elites want to channel vast flows of narcotics profits into the global financial bubble, and they are prepared to give the FARC narco-terrorists all the political support they require to accomplish this, even if it means creating one, two, or many “coca dictatorships” throughout South America.