

Narco-terrorism at war on Ibero-American nations

by Valerie Rush

The "multinationals of crime," as Peruvian President Alan García recently described the global drug-and-terror apparatus, have declared total war against the nation-states of Ibero-America, especially targeting those with the potential for resisting the murderous austerity dictates of the International Monetary Fund. In country after country across the continent, the narco-terrorists have deployed in bloody defiance of national institutions, determined to bring down governments and sow chaos in their wake.

The latest act of war was enacted in Bogota, Colombia, and directed against the government of Belisario Betancur. The action began Nov. 6 when a commando squad of M-19 guerrillas, disguised as police officers, drove through the vehicle entrance of the five-story Judicial Palace in a hail of machine-gun fire. At least 10 Supreme Court judges were seized as hostages, and the building was slowly evacuated of its several-hundred-person staff. The guerrillas began to burn all the legal archives they could get their hands on, and set off several bombs to make sure the destruction was complete. Fires reportedly raged uncontrolled through major portions of the building. Among the records burned were all juridical proceedings—past, current, and future—of cases related to drug traffickers considered or under consideration for extradition.

As the event unfolded, it became eminently clear to all observers that, while guerrillas were carrying out the raid, it was the mafia that was directing the action. Just one month ago, every member of the Colombian Supreme Court received a warning that he (or she), together with his entire family, would be liquidated should the court continue to consider extradition requests and refuse to declare unconsti-

tutional the extradition treaty, under which seven drug traffickers have already been sent to the U.S. to stand trial.

The question came to a head in early November when the Supreme Court initially ruled against the extradition to the United States of Honduran drug trafficker Ramón Matta Ballesteros, a top figure in the Ibero-American drug-trafficking circuit and believed to have been involved in the kidnap/murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena in Mexico last February. Along with the Supreme Court's decision, a legally-mandated five-day period was established for further evidence to be presented that might justify Matta Ballesteros' extradition. The M-19 assault on the Supreme Court occurred during that five-day waiting period.

The siege at the judicial palace concluded Nov. 7 with a combined army/police assault on the M-19 bunker. President Betancur had firmly refused to negotiate with the terrorists, and offered them physical protection only if they surrendered. The M-19 responded with attacks and insults against the President, and the reported "execution" of the president of the Supreme Court, along with several other magistrates. When it was over, guerrillas and hostages alike were dead, although an official report on the outcome has not been released as of this writing.

This was not the first time that the M-19 guerrillas have served as the armed wing of Dope, Inc. in Colombia. In March of 1984, just days after a successful police raid on the jungle-based "cocaine city" known as Tranquilandia, in the province of Caquetá, a 100-man squad of M-19 guerrillas occupied and raised havoc in the capital city of Caquetá, Florencia. At the time, the action was universally viewed as retaliation for the police raid—then considered the largest

drug bust on the continent. A month and a half later, Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla—the man responsible for Tranquilandia—was assassinated by the drug mafia.

The M-19 rampage in Colombia follows by less than a week the orchestrated massacre of 21 Mexican anti-narcotics agents in the remote jungles of Veracruz, in southern Mexico. The agents had been lured to the spot by reports of a giant marijuana shipment, and were cut down by machine-gun fire from a small army of 80-100 mafia assassins. Those officers machine-gun fire from a small army of 80-100 mafia assassins. Those officers not killed on the spot were seized, bound, and then executed. Among the dead are the head of the state judicial police of Veracruz and a commander of the federal judicial police.

The massacre, which has triggered a vast manhunt by army troops from the region, took place one week after the escape from jail of José Contreras Zubias, top lieutenant of imprisoned Mexican drug-czar Rafael Caro Quintero. Both Contreras and Caro Quintero stand accused of the kidnaping and murder of U.S. DEA agent Enrique Camarena Salazar.

The Mexican affair, like the Colombian, is being viewed, not merely as just one more mafia outrage, but rather as a challenge to the nation as a whole. Wrote columnist Javier Lozada, in the Nov. 7 edition of *El Sol de Mexico*, "They don't seem to be mere narcotics or marijuana growers. Things go much beyond that, given that virtually a small army, armed to the teeth, was required to eliminate as they did more than two dozen special agents."

Peruvian mafioso nabbed

Peru, which has been repeatedly shaken by the narco-terrorist rampages of the Shining Path, has given the rest of the continent a lesson in how the rules of the game must be broken when the sovereignty of the nation is at stake. In an early morning raid on a luxury beach house north of Lima Nov. 1, Peruvian authorities succeeded in capturing the country's number-one fugitive mafioso, Reynaldo Rodríguez López. Rodríguez first made headlines when his huge underground cocaine laboratory, which reportedly produced 15% of all the cocaine shipped to the United States, exploded on the urban perimeter of Lima. Investigations unveiled a network of drug trafficking and corruption which led into the uppermost layers of the previous Belaunde government.

The arrest of Rodríguez López, as even the headlines of the Lima press have suggested, has Peru's "citizens above suspicion" shaking. Immediately following Rodríguez's arrest, "unusual movement at the airport" was reported in Lima. "The Godfather Begins to Talk," was the Nov. 2 front-page headline of the Peruvian daily *La Republica*. It is said that Rodríguez has already implicated a dozen or more well-known Peruvians during his interrogation, but no names have been released.

Rodríguez Lopez is confined in a maximum-security cell, as much to protect him from expected assassination attempts as to prevent his escape. Stated his lawyer, "I fear for his life

because there are so many who want to shut him up. He is lost, but he won't go to prison alone. Many will go with him. . . ."

One prominent Peruvian with special cause for concern is former Prime Minister Manuel Ulloa, who is known to have exercised considerable influence over the Belaunde government, especially the economic policies which fostered the dynamic growth of the drug trade in Peru. In fact, last month Ulloa lost a libel suit against the Peruvian National Anti-Drug Coalition, which had accused Ulloa of creating the economic conditions in the country for the flourishing of the narcotics "industry."

Military war on drugs

As early as last March, U.S. political figure Lyndon H. LaRouche released a draft emergency statement entitled "A Proposed Strategic Operation against the Western Hemisphere's Drug Traffic." The draft, presented at a March 13 conference in Mexico City and distributed widely among government, military, police, and political layers of both North and South America, recommended that the war against drugs be fought with all the weapons of war—advanced military technology and full cooperation among the police and military forces of the continent. Said LaRouche:

"The international drug-traffic has become an evil and powerful government in its own right. It represents today a financial, political, and military power greater than that of entire nations within the Americas. It is a government which is making war against civilized nations, a government upon which we must declare war, a war which we must fight with the weapons of war, and a war which we must win in the same spirit the United States fought for the unconditional defeat of Nazism between 1941 and 1945. Law-enforcement methods, by themselves, will fail; even joint law-enforcement efforts by the nations bordering the Caribbean would fail. The nations of Central and South America will each and all either fall under bloody, Nazi-like dictatorships, or will be destroyed through more or less perpetual civil war, unless the international drug-traffic's invasion of this Hemisphere is crushed by the methods and weapons of war."

The war also must be directed against the "citizens above suspicion" who direct and finance the trade from behind the scenes. LaRouche urged "a system of total regulation of financial institutions, to the effect of detecting deposits, out-bound transfers, and inbound transfers of funds, which might be reasonably suspected of being funds secured from drug trafficking." He also urged the confiscation of all real estate, business enterprises, financial institutions, and personal funds of drug traffickers.

LaRouche's proposal has spearheaded a debate across Ibero-America, and has served as inspiration for a number of collaborative efforts—mostly bilateral—among the nations of the continent. The urgency of adopting such an all-out joint military strategy as Ibero-America's number-one priority has never been greater.