

Iran. On Aug. 30, a Saudi diplomat announced that Riyadh would answer any attacks on Saudi tankers by "attacking an Iranian tanker." The same diplomat emphasized that "the monster [Khomeini] has to be kicked down."

Then, in an interview with the weekly *Al Musawaar* on Aug. 28, Egyptian Defense Minister Marshal Abu Ghazala recommended that the military forces of the Gulf Cooperation Council be pulled together. The interview was understood in the Gulf as a signal that Cairo would be ready to do more militarily if requested. Intelligence sources report that Cairo and Riyadh are discussing Egyptian intervention in case of Iranian aggression against Saudi Arabia.

Such a display of Arab unity has taken the Iranians by surprise and put them on the defensive. Although they increased their attacks against unescorted ships on Sept. 1, they are not expected to launch a major offensive before the end of the month.

The Soviets too are embarrassed, and are witnessing the collapse of their policy of "equilibrium" between the Arabs and Iran, and the potential loss of their asset, Khomeini. On Aug. 25, the publisher of Kuwait's *As Seyassa*, Ahmed Jarallah, warned Moscow that it could not "forget about striking a happy balance" between the Gulf Security Council and Iran. In other words, the Soviets cannot afford to side with Iran too openly.

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Communists bid for as violence spirals

by Valerie Rush

The national executive board of the Unified Workers Confederation (CUT), the largest trade union organization in Colombia, was closeted on Aug. 31 in a nine-hour battle over who would control the fate of the Colombian labor movement: the communists or the democrats. Against the backdrop of social and political decomposition triggered by right-left narco-terrorism, the CUT battle represents a striking microcosm of this besieged nation.

At the conclusion of the nine hours, CUT president and former Labor Minister Jorge Carrillo categorically informed the press that he would not permit the trade union organization to be used to destabilize the national institutions in this period of crisis. He was directly responding to the efforts of Communist Party leaders who have "burrowed" into the CUT, to use the labor movement as a battering ram against the armed forces, political parties, and government of Colombia.

Carrillo, who created the CUT last year in an effort to break the stranglehold of the drug mafia over the country's trade unions, is best known for his proposals to follow the Peruvian model of limiting debt repayment, while adopting a "great projects" approach to reviving the economy and creating jobs.

Carrillo's aggressive pro-development stance, together with his anti-communism and his anti-drug commitment, have made him a spokesman for Colombia's nationalist forces. They have also won him many enemies; Carrillo's name appears on a "hit list" just revealed to the press by the attorney general's office. On that list are military officers, journalists, professors, former government officials, even a priest. At least one person on that list, the head of the Human Rights Commission of Antioquia province, Dr. Hector Abad Gómez, was assassinated Aug. 25.

Labor movement threatened

Carrillo was insistent that the CUT "will not be used by any political party, because it has been 'reddened' to the point that it could lead to failure if the situation continues. . . . [The CUT] is an example that would have served the nation,

labor takeover in Colombia

and its failure would be a hard blow to the workers and to trade unionism, because there are no other alternatives. The only alternative is the CUT, and if it fails in its efforts, the Colombian labor movement will have failed."

Carrillo also warned that the CUT's name would not be used to back any political candidates from the *Unión Política* (UP), the political front of the Colombian Communist Party, nor to attack the armed forces, nor to sign communiqués with any political organizations. He specifically referred to two paid ads that appeared in the Colombian press under the name of the CUT, "that had not been consulted on with the entirety of the (CUT) leadership, and whose views are not shared by important sectors" of the federation.

He also disavowed a meeting held by the Communists in the CUT with Liberal Party executive Eduardo Mestre Sarmiento, who has been publicly linked to a leading cocaine trafficker. That meeting was to consider joint sponsorship of a mass protest or nationwide civic strike. Carrillo said he had not participated in that meeting, and that "it is unfortunate that it occurred." He insisted that no such strikes or mobilizations had been authorized by the CUT executive. Rather, he said, "Large silent marches have been approved for Sept. 24, in five cities . . . which will have a much greater impact than a general paralysis. . . . With the situation in the country as it is, one can't play with things. The nation demands unity of all Colombians."

Carrillo was asked by reporters to comment on accusations that the CUT is synonymous with the left, to which the veteran trade unionist responded, "The enemies of unity have sought from the beginning to McCarthyize the process, but the leftists are lending them credibility by doing things they shouldn't."

'Who benefits?'

If the CUT is captured by the Communists, conditions in Colombia will rapidly deteriorate, as the left-right violence scenario escalates into virtual civil war. Already, terrorism has reached unprecedented levels, and assassinations have

spread to prominent figures of every political stripe. When Dr. Abad Gómez, a professor at the University of Antioquia and candidate for mayor of the Antioquian capital of Medellín, was assassinated, he was attending funeral services for lawyer and president of the Educators Association of Antioquia, Luis Felipe Vélez Herrera. Vélez was also a founding member and regional leader of the CUT. Murdered with Dr. Abad was a fellow doctor and professor at the university, Leonardo Betancur. Three other Medellín professors have fled the country under threat of death.

The Aug. 25 Medellín murders, capping a several week murder spree directed at professors, students, and trade unionists, triggered a nationwide 48-hour teachers strike, and student riots and protests in Medellín and Bogotá. President Virgilio Barco followed an emergency cabinet meeting to discuss the heightened violence with a nationally televised address, at which the Colombian head of state announced a series of measures ranging from assignment of 90 specialized anti-terror judges to banning the import of high-powered motorcycles, the kind frequently used in assassinations. The prohibition of motorcycle sidecars, favored by mafia assassins, is stalled, due to protests from motorcycle-riding delivery boys. And the Supreme Court has received its first legal challenge to the creation of the 90 special judgeships as "violating the penal code."

All 22 individuals whose names appear on the infamous "hit list" have submitted a public letter to President Barco, protesting the lack of seriousness of the measures he has announced. The letter also protests that despite the publication of their names as future victims of terrorism, not one of them has yet been provided with security to guarantee their lives. The letter was delivered personally to Barco by three of those threatened, former Attorney General Carlos Jiménez Gómez, former Foreign Minister Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa, and former head of the national security police, Gen. (ret.) José Joaquín Matallana.

Vásquez Carrizosa, also a human rights specialist and regular columnist for the daily *El Espectador*, wrote Sept. 3 that Barco had provided a "superficial and shallow" review of the crisis facing the country, a crisis "not to be remedied by denying permits for motorcycles of a specific power."

Although the "hit list" was originally reported to have been discovered in the home of a murdered senator of the communist UP, it was later revealed by Attorney General Mauro Hoyos to have been mailed Aug. 19 to the Antioquia press by the Communist Party-run FARC guerrillas, with the claim that the FARC had discovered this "extermination plot against democratic figures" by intercepting military intelligence.

A skeptical *El Espectador* columnist, Antonio Panesso Robledo, observed Aug. 31 that "There is nothing more secret in a terrorist organization than the list of its future victims," and yet this hit list "inexplicably" made its way into the hands of the Communists. Panesso concludes, "The old way of clarifying a mystery still holds: Who benefits?"