

The narco-terrorist alliance

The alliance between the mafia and the terrorists is neither new, nor limited to the theater of propaganda and psychological warfare. It is the communists' military capability in the country which the mafia needs in order to impose its will. While the alliance is not new, the capability of the narco-terrorists increased sharply over the past year, with the unification of all terrorist organizations, including the M-19 and the Communist Party's Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC), into a central military command, called the Simón Bolívar National Liberation Front.

M-19

The Cuba-allied M-19 terrorists have never disguised their collaboration with the narcotics mafia. On Dec. 5, 1984, a leader of the Cuba-allied M-19, Iván Marino Ospina, called a Mexico City press conference to announce M-19 support for mafia threats to "kill one American for every Colombian extradited." Said Marino Ospina, "These threats should be carried out throughout the world against the representatives of rapacious imperialism . . . and will serve as the basis for negotiations if some day these traffickers, who are also Colombians . . . use their money to build the nation."

Several weeks later, cocaine czar Carlos Lehder answered Marino Ospina's call: "The M-19 is the only movement that has declared itself against extradition. Iván's call in Mexico is a call for the guerrilla movements to join in the [drug] bonanza."

FARC

The Communist Party's FARC, the oldest of Colombia's guerrilla movements, was formed over 30 years ago during the period of civil war known as the Violencia. Today, the Moscow-run FARC is the largest insurgent force under arms in Colombia. Together with aboveground Communist leaders, the FARC's guerrilla chieftains insistently proclaim that their strategy is to "defend" the peasants involved in the drug trade. At least half of the FARC's 39 "fronts" operate in coca- and marijuana-growing areas of the country.

"We have no problems with people growing coca. It is not a vice or problem for the people, but for the government," Hermil Lozada, commander of the FARC's Seventh Front told the Colombian newspaper, *El Espectador* on Nov. 2, 1986.

In March 1987, *Semana* magazine asked the head of the FARC, Jacobo Arenas, to respond to charges published in the newspaper, *Solidaridad Iberoamericana*, that his guerrillas finance themselves through the drug trade. He answered:

It is true that in the area of [the Seventh Front] there are coca growers, but the growers are not "narcos" at all. Growers are growers, as they could be of rice or sesame. . . . Those people who say that the coca growers should set about planting banana, corn, yuca—this is blah, blah, blah. A group of crazies speaking stupidities. . . . What we are telling the [coca] growers is: "Comrades, we are not going to prohibit you from sowing, because it is generalized, and besides, we are not the government. Grow it."

The Communist Party and its FARC have not limited their cooperation with the drug trade to passive support. Reports of FARC "protection" and "taxing" of the drug trade go back as far as 1977-78, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials report.

In December 1986, Héctor Hurtado, executive member of the Colombian Communist Party, gave his organization's backing to the drug mafia's campaign to end U.S.-Colombian cooperation against narcotics—the number-one issue which the mafia has dedicated its resources to stopping. Hurtado hailed the decision of Colombia's Supreme Court to overturn the U.S.-Colombian extradition treaty (a decision taken at the point of a mafia gun) as unconstitutional, calling it "a matter of sovereignty; we can't let the courts decide our affairs."

Anti-military march

On Jan. 19, 1987, the Communist Party organized a march of 23,000 peasants in Guaviare, to protest how the military's anti-drug programs in the area had "militarized" the department. Colombia's agriculture minister charged that the march had been organized by the drug traffickers to force a military retreat. Even presidential peace adviser Carlos Ossa Escobar, who had previously denied that narco-terrorism existed, acknowledged the charge, and insisted, "If the guerrillas don't rapidly split from the narcos, they will be corrupted by it and lose."

On June 16, 1987, two hundred FARC terrorists planted land mines in the Colombian jungle province of Caquetá which blew up two army convoy trucks, killing 32 soldiers and officers. This time, presidential counselor Ossa Escobar was emphatic on the drug connection. "In Caguan, the region of Caquetá where the army suffered its ambush, the FARC totally controls the production of coca. . . . The hypothesis that they fear an operation similar to that in Putumayo [army raids on vast coca crops the previous week], and are therefore trying to divert attention with attacks like those of Caquetá, is very probable."