

EIRFeature

Military patriots rise up to save Ibero-America

by Dennis Small

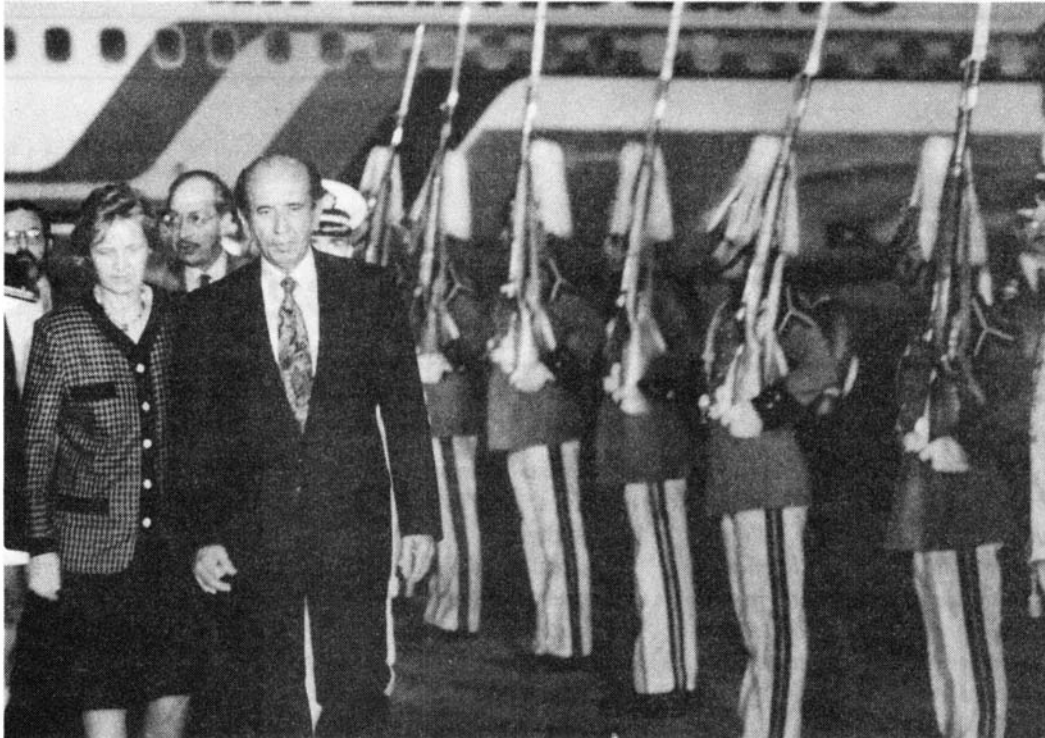
On Nov. 27, 1992, a military coup headed by admirals Hernán Grüber and Luis Cabrera, and Air Force general Francisco Visconti Osorio, nearly seized power in Venezuela. They were the visible leaders of the “July 5 Civil-Military Movement,” which moved to overthrow the corrupt government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez and his pro-International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic policies, which are strongly supported by Washington.

The Nov. 27 coup attempt failed for two principal reasons: 1) It was betrayed by the fourth leader of the group, a high-level Navy officer, who went over to the government hours before the uprising began; and 2) a crucial video announcement of the coup by Grüber, Cabrera, and Visconti, all in full-dress uniform, which was slated to be shown on national TV as the coup was in progress was never shown; instead, three scruffy leftists went on the air calling on the population to take to the streets to do battle with whatever weapons they had at hand. The impression was that the coup was wildly ultra-leftist, which most Venezuelans were not prepared to support.

Many observers have commented that, had the true video been shown (see box, p. 22), the coup might well have succeeded.

The Nov. 27 coup attempt in Venezuela capped a year of revolt all across Ibero-America against the austerity policies of the IMF, against its corrupt “democracies,” and against Washington’s policy of dismantling the armed forces of the continent. If 1992 began with pretty much every Ibero-American government in Washington’s hip pocket, the year certainly didn’t end that way: As of early 1993, civil-military resistance movements had managed to kick over the policy chessboard in at least four Ibero-American nations.

As General Visconti put it in the exclusive interview with *EIR* which we present below, “The nationalist current within the armies of the Latin American armed forces is becoming stronger every day . . . and is becoming and is perceived as an obstacle to the interests of those behind the new world order.”



Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez in a ceremony at Caracas airport in 1991. It is unlikely he will hold onto power to the end of 1993.

Perhaps most worrisome of all to Washington and Wall Street is the growing contact and coordination among Ibero-America's nationalist movements. As Visconti emphasized, in response to a question about Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín's movement in Argentina: "I'm not familiar with those movements in detail . . . [but] any regional or international movement which opposes the attempts of those supranational agencies to limit sovereignty . . . must be supported and must be integrated into a regional and worldwide crusade. . . . The idea of integration is necessary for survival."

The Ibero-American revolts of 1992 were unleashed by events in Haiti on Sept. 30, 1991, when the military there, outraged at his efforts to impose IMF looting by terrorizing and murdering his opponents, overthrew Marxist President Jean-Baptiste Aristide. Despite massive international pressure, including a criminal economic blockade organized by the United States and the Organization of American States, the Haitian government and people have held out for over a year and a half, sending an unmistakable message across the continent: Even the smallest and poorest of nations is capable of standing up to and resisting IMF genocide and the destruction of the armed forces.

In early February 1992, the Pérez government in Venezuela was preparing to send troops into Haiti to snuff out the resistance, on U.S. instructions. Instead, the Venezuelan military revolted, and on Feb. 4 the country underwent its first attempted coup of the year, led by Col. Hugo Chávez. Although the uprising failed, it decisively changed the conti-

nent's political landscape: Military revolts against the policies of the new world order were no longer inconceivable in a major South American nation. Washington deployed desperately to keep Pérez in power, and to threaten nationalists in other countries possibly considering similar moves.

But on April 5, 1992, President Alberto Fujimori of Peru, with the backing of the military, dissolved the corrupt Congress and Supreme Court in order to carry out an all-out war against the Shining Path narco-terrorists. Here too, Washington screamed its opposition, but so far Peru has held out, insisting on its sovereign right to defend itself in war against a foreign-backed enemy. On Sept. 12, the Fujimori government shocked the world by capturing Abimael Guzmán, the feared leader of Shining Path. His arrest and subsequent life sentence led to a wave of optimism that it was possible to reassert sovereignty and stop narco-terrorism, even over Washington's opposition.

Days later, on Sept. 29, 1992, the chessboard was also kicked over in Brazil, with the impeachment of President Fernando Collor de Mello on charges of corruption. Collor was forced to resign on Dec. 29 by a combination of mass street demonstrations of over a million people, and military insistence that Collor had to go—or else.

And on Nov. 27, the second Venezuelan coup attempt of 1992 occurred. Although Pérez managed to survive this revolt, it is unlikely that he will be able to hold on until the end of his term in December 1993. His fall will lead to the same kind of remoralization across Ibero-America that occurred with the capture of Shining Path's Guzmán.