

U.N. 'Truth Commission' on El Salvador is one big lie

by Gretchen Small

The report issued March 15 by the so-called U.N. "Truth Commission on El Salvador" is a monstrous whitewash of the 12-year war waged against that country by the communist insurgents in the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN). Treating the narco-terrorist FMLN as an occasionally cruel but legitimate opposition force, the U.N. commission redefines the war, *which the FMLN began*, as "state-sponsored terrorism," and the casualties which occurred in that war as "human rights abuses." The commission lies that the military of El Salvador was responsible for 85% of human rights abuses committed during the war, that government-protected forces were responsible for another 10%, and that the FMLN, its decade of warfare, assassinations, bombings, and destruction ignored, guilty of only 5%.

With this, the U.N. has finally positioned itself to achieve the goal behind its misnomered "peace accord." Since the "enemy image" has been placed squarely upon the entire military officer corps, the full-scale dismantling of the Salvadoran Armed Forces is now set to begin. Already, the U.S. Congress and government have joined the U.N. in labeling El Salvador as a pariah state, unless it carries out the sweeping changes of its military and judicial system demanded by the commission.

"The consequences of these findings could alter El Salvador's political landscape," the March 16 *Washington Post* intoned. Indeed, if the Truth Commission's lies are allowed to stand, not only El Salvador will fall under communist sway. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted on March 8, "success or failure will have consequences beyond the area"; if successful, it could set a precedent for resolving "disputes" in countries such as Colombia and Peru, where narco-terrorist forces have also declared war on their respective governments. The full backing given thus far by the Clinton administration to the pro-communist fraud perpetrated by the commission, even as communist forces raise their head again in Russia, represents the height of folly.

The Truth Commission project has yet to succeed inside El Salvador, however. On March 23, Defense Minister Gen. René Emilio Ponce announced in a television broadcast that the Armed Forces will not capitulate to communism. The commission report is "unjust, incomplete, illegal, unethical, biased and insolent," Ponce charged. "The Armed Forces . . . will use the legal resources it considers necessary and

sufficient as a right of legitimate defense against those who promote its destruction and that of the republic."

The Armed Forces issued a 95-page booklet on March 1 entitled "The Threat to Sovereignty and the Destruction of the State." "Communism has not disappeared," it warns, but rather the communists are now preparing, with U.N. support, to achieve their long-standing goal of disbanding the military as the key precondition for their seizure of power. Citing a December 1992 article published by *EIR*, the Armed Forces charged that El Salvador is being used as an "experiment" for a supranational plan to impose communist rule and "limited sovereignty" worldwide (see *Documentation*). Copies of the booklet were distributed to the U.S. Congress in mid-March.

Partisans in the conflict

What is this U.N. Truth Commission which is being treated by media and governments alike as a de facto international court, and its report as a legitimate legal document? Far from being impartial truth-seekers, all three "legal experts" who form the commission have long been partisans of the very communist insurgents whom their report now absolves of major guilt!

Take the case of U.S. commission member Thomas Buergenthal. Before sitting in judgment upon El Salvador, Buergenthal worked for the agencies which financed the narco-terrorist insurgencies in Central America in the first place. In 1986, Buergenthal, then serving as human rights director at the Carter Center at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, was named administrator of the newly formed Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation. Former President Jimmy Carter provided the name for the foundation; Dominique de Menil, an heiress to the Swiss-based Schlumberger oil exploration company fortune, provided the largesse.

Each year since 1986, the Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation has awarded a \$100,000 prize to one or two chosen "human rights" activists or institutions. In 1986, one of the two prizes went to the Group for Mutual Support (GAM), a well-known front-group for the narco-terrorist Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), allies of the FMLN and, like the FMLN, also directed and supplied by Fidel Castro's regime. In 1990, another URNG-associated group in Guatemala, the Council of Ethnic Communities

“Runujel Junam” (CERJ), received the award.

In 1991, the award was given to the Jesuit-run Central American University in San Salvador. Since 1979, that university has served as a hotbed of Liberation Theology organizing, and the brain-trust for the FMLN. University officials may protest that this is not so; but as recently as November 1992, several top officials of the university were featured speakers at a forum in Bogotá, Colombia dedicated to analyzing the successes of the FMLN in El Salvador as a potential model for how Colombia's narco-terrorist groups can reach the level of power now enjoyed by the FMLN. There, university leaders left no doubt on which side of the war they stood (see *EIR*, Dec. 11, 1992).

Nor were those the only times that the financier of the foundation administered by Buergethal had supported the Central American insurgencies. According to *Town and Country* magazine of September 1991, Dominique de Menil doles out every other year a separate \$20,000 prize to radical activists. That prize, named the Oscar Romero Award after the pro-FMLN bishop Oscar Romero, who was viciously murdered in 1980, has financed leaders of the Marxist Liberation Theology movement in Ibero-America, from “a Catholic activist in San Salvador” to the voodoo-promoting malthusian Catholic cardinal of São Paulo, Evaristo Arns.

Financing communists has been a long family tradition in Dominique de Menil's family. Her father, Conrad Schlumberger, was a financier of the French Communist Party; the first client of the oil company founded in 1929 by Dominique's father and uncle, was Lenin's Soviet government.

Specializing in political protection

The other two commission members are among the politicians in the region who have intervened to promote the narco-terrorist project through “democratic” means.

The chairman of the commission, former Colombian President Belisario Betancur, opened the first “peace negotiations” with Colombian narco-terrorists, specifically with the M-19, during his presidency (1982-86), a policy which he continues to champion. Because Betancur, along with his successors, have offered concessions on matters of principle and national interest to the narco-terrorists, their “dialogue” has not led to anything resembling peace in Colombia. What the process begun by Betancur did advance, however, was the M-19's “march through the institutions.” The M-19 entered the current Gaviria government, and from there it has led the rewriting of the national constitution along lines befitting their gnostic-Marxist political project.

The third commissioner, Venezuelan Reinaldo Figueredo, has served on various occasions in President Carlos Andrés Pérez's cabinet. Pérez is a President even more active on behalf of the narco-terrorists in Ibero-America than Betancur. For example, he hosted the Colombian guerrillas

during negotiations with the Colombian government, provided them with passports and so forth. He has long had excellent working relationships with the FMLN, the Sandinistas, and Fidel Castro.

Figueredo, even as he sat in judgment of El Salvador, was charged by Prosecutor General Ramón Escovar Salom of Venezuela with aiding Pérez and Interior Minister Alejandro Izaguirre in a scheme to embezzle \$17 million of government monies in February 1989. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case.

Allegations as a weapon of war

How did this commission arrive at their calculation that 85% of human rights abuses were committed by the military—a supposed “fact” publicized around the world? Commission members and a staff of some 20 investigators and “human rights experts” interviewed nearly 2,000 Salvadoreans and received information on more than 22,000 cases. Some 85% of those allegations were directed at the military.

Who were their sources? No one knows; they were kept secret. Even the March 16 *New York Times* acknowledged that “though the document has extensive footnotes and the weight of its proof is described, it does not include enough investigatory evidence to make possible an independent evaluation.” These were the *ex parte* procedures which led Defense Minister Ponce to charge that the commission had placed itself “outside the scope of jurisdiction and of legal norms standing in all countries.”

The methodology used by the Truth Commission sets a number of dangerous precedents which narco-terrorist supporters in the human rights lobby have long attempted to establish. Chief among them is the declaration that the terrorists' above-ground logistical, political, and intellectual infrastructure—a fifth column without which the relatively small guerrilla forces could not sustain their military operations—should have been treated as neutral or innocent, even when on the battlefield of war.

Once the report was issued, the media took over the task of building the “big lie” against El Salvador's military. First it was reported that the commission found that the military caused 85% of all *casualties* in the war. On March 28, an editor of the *Washington Post*'s “Outlook” section, Jefferson Morley, took this lie one step further, writing that the commission had *proven* that the Salvadoran government had killed 70,000 civilians in the past decade—an absurdity given that a total of 75,000 people are believed to have died in the 12 years of war, 10,000 of them soldiers. Did the FMLN then not exist?

A drumbeat has already begun in the U.S. media for the U.N. to convene a Nuremberg-style international tribunal against El Salvador's military, based upon the Truth Commission's assertion that El Salvador's judiciary is “incapable of fairly assessing and carrying out punishment” of the crimes

they allege were committed. One such call appearing in the March 14 *Washington Post* noted that an international tribunal against El Salvadoran military officers would be more "practical" than any war tribunal against the Serbian communist-fascists. How convenient for the U.N. Secretariat, which now faces increasing pressure for its role in *protecting* Serbian aggression in the Balkans.

If the U.N. fails to impose itself as judge of the accused Salvadorans, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher mooted on March 25 the possibility that the United States may put Salvadoran military men and civilians on trial for human rights violations, presumably via the same outlaw procedures used to kidnap, try, and convict Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega, otherwise known as the "Thornburgh Doctrine."

Documentation

'Communism is not at the end of its road'

On March 1, the El Salvador Armed Forces issued a 95-page booklet, La Amenaza a la Sobernia y la Destruccion del Estado (The Threat to Sovereignty and Destruction of the State), to remind policymakers of what appears to have been conveniently forgotten these days: that the groups making up the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) are all self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists whose goal is the seizure of power. Selections from FMLN documents from 1981, 1986, 1987, 1989, and 1990 ordering general insurrections, assassinations, and economic sabotage, are included, as are FMLN documents urging ever more active campaigns to isolate El Salvador's government internationally.

The booklet reviews the articles of the Constitution under which the Armed Forces are empowered to wage war to defend the nation from this threat, and the orders given by the country's civilian Presidents to that effect. Thus, the booklet states, any search for the truth must pose the question: "Who sustained armed conflict in El Salvador and who seeks the destruction of the Armed Forces?" In answer to that question, the text of an article appearing in the December 1992 issue of EIR's Spanish-language sister magazine Resúmen Ejecutivo is cited, in which it is argued that "El Salvador served as a 'laboratory' for establishing the principle of limited sovereignty on a global scale," starting with its demilitarization. Extracts from the booklet follow:

This document summarizes the following points:

- That communism has not disappeared. Its immediate objective in El Salvador is the destruction of the Armed Forces toward consummating its assault on power. . . .
- That El Salvador continues to serve as a laboratory for establishing the principle of limited sovereignty on a world scale.
- That the surrender of Nicaragua to the Marxists in 1979 caused a proliferation of armed conflicts in the region. . . .
- That the subversive groups who imposed armed conflict in El Salvador are Marxist-Leninists.
- That the plans which they developed internally and internationally were directed at seizing power to install a socialist government through use of revolutionary violence of the masses, terrorism, kidnapping, and sabotage; all within the process of the popular revolutionary war, the combative solidarity of the people, and proletarian internationalism.
- That planned foreign aid was received opportunely and in sufficient quantities; that part of that aid continues to flow for carrying out the FMLN's political plans and to maintain a reserve of war materiel and other logistical means. . . .
- That the Fatherland, our laws and the fundamental institutions of government as legitimate representatives of the people, are the only ones capable of judging the behavior of the Armed Forces. . . .

The guidelines imposed by the Communist International at the Conference of the Latin American Solidarity Organization coming out of the Tricontinental I [a meeting held in Havana, Cuba in 1966], contained implicit assignments for the destruction of Latin America's military institutions, the essential objective for seizing power of the subversive groups in these countries.

This destruction is to be carried out by different methods, whether peaceful or violent, by political or ideological infiltration of the institutions, undermining the discipline of personnel in order to cause divisions among the cadre, even to the point, where possible, of eliminating the top command by means of personal attacks or by political or conjunctural interventions.

This destruction of the Armed Forces is nothing more than an application of the aforementioned Marxist-Leninist guideline for seizing power. . . .

Developing sector governments and institutions are the object of interests of the economically powerful who politically intervene, occasionally for noble purposes but other times to rid themselves of those who hinder them or who are not docile to their interests. That is why it can be stated with reason that communism has neither crumbled nor sunk; it has not reached the end of its road, it has only changed its approach; it continues to pursue the same goal of eliminating any obstacles in its path.