
INTERVIEW

Antonio Blanca, French envoy to Ibero-America

French President Mitterrand's special ambassador Ibero-America, Antonio Blanca, held a private meeting with Colombian President Belisario Betancur and his foreign minister Jan. 24 as part of France's announced decision to establish a "special relationship" with Colombia's new leadership. The following are excerpts from the press conference.

EIR: Mr. Ambassador, the new policy initiated by President Betancur includes the proposal for joint renegotiation of Ibero-America's foreign debt, as proposed to President Reagan last December. In addition, this new policy is one of political opening and the projection of Colombia as a mediator of certain heated issues in Latin America, such as the Central America crisis. Within the spirit of the French-Mexican declaration [for peace in Central America], how do you see the Colombian government participating in this policy?

Blanca: The indebtedness of the Third World strikes very hard. The financiers have discovered the other facet of the problem, that it promotes certain disordered forms of development. Latin America is particularly hard hit, the debt of those countries is more than \$300 billion. . . . This certainly demands the special attention of all interested countries and institutions as well, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the Interamerican Development Bank. France has facilitated the conditions of renegotiation so that it can be done by the best means possible—one shouldn't forget the small countries like Bolivia. France has a position of flexibility and understanding.

EIR: What is the French position with respect to the process of creating a "debtors' cartel" such as that proposed by Carlos Alzamora, the secretary general of SELA [Latin American Economic System]?

Blanca: It is not up to France to take a stand on a cartel or not a cartel; this is just a hypothesis, but no one has picked up the ball yet.

EIR: What about the spirit of the French-Mexican declaration?

Blanca: That declaration is still active, and its ratification by the new Mexican government has not surprised us. We are proud, and the countries that criticized us for it now

advocate the same solutions. The Farabundo Marti Front and the Revolutionary Democratic Front led by Guillermo Ungo [in El Salvador] are some of the forces in battle which should be called into negotiations. In French law there exists a crime for not helping a person in danger. This should be broadened to populations in danger; El Salvador is in danger and merits help. . . . Nicaragua has the right to live in peace and has the right to establish its revolution with all its defects and achievements. The Nicaraguan youth made a great sacrifice and should be respected. . . . We the French are opposed to not leaving any other alternative to a people but turning to the Soviet Union.

Question: What are some of the concrete and positive aspects that you see in President Belisario Betancur's policies?

Blanca: President Betancur has done away with the traditional view of the European on the street toward Colombia. Betancur is giving many headaches to European politicians and for France this has been a very pleasant surprise. In relation to the new policy we see, I answered the question that your colleague [EIR] asked me. The participation of Foreign Minister Rodrigo Lloreda Caicedo in the meeting in Contadora Island before the preparatory meeting of the Non-Aligned in Managua, the declaration that came out of that same Contadora meeting are very positive and in the spirit of the French-Mexican declaration. That Colombia has taken this position we highly commend. [Colombia's entrance to] the Non-Aligned is a decision that Colombia and France cannot ask that it do it or not do it. France belongs to the Atlantic Alliance although it does not belong to the Atlantic military pact. We want the Non-Aligned to be the most non-aligned possible and Colombia's adhesion in this sense we view very sympathetically.

EIR: In his recent trip to Egypt and India, President Mitterrand posed the necessity of making technology transfer and the industrialization of the countries of the South the content of North-South relations. Within this perspective, he signed nuclear cooperation accords with both Egypt and India. In your talks with President Betancur, did you speak of the possibility of nuclear accords of this type?

Blanca: These are things that are not discussed at my level, these are things discussed among chiefs of state. The only thing I can say is that what was discussed by me could belong in this vein but I can say nothing more on this subject.

In a reception following the press conference, Ambassador Blanca spoke further with EIR correspondent Carlos Cota Meza:

EIR: You said that with the governments of Mitterrand and of Felipe González there existed the possibility of creating a European axis for greater cooperation with Ibero-America. Felipe González supported the joint renegotiation of the Ibero-American debt and proposes that the old debts be convert-

ed into new debts for development of those countries. However you showed some reluctance to accept the joint renegotiation of the debt.

Blanca: Well, Felipe isn't owed very much.

EIR: Well then, what is the position of your government regarding the inevitable economic crisis and the inability of the Third World to pay its debt, like it or not?

Blanca: You're right. Much debt is going up in smoke, probably all of it. We don't want a moratorium on the debt that will be the equivalent of wiping the slate clean and leaving the countries of the Third World as mere exporters of raw materials, which is what would occur if there were a moratoria on the debt and a new process of indebtedness launched based on raw materials exports. In 10 years time, when the prices of raw materials fall again, then we will need to make another debt moratorium. What interests my government is the planned industrialization of the countries of the Third World. For example, Colombia. Colombia is a country which has much coal. What would you prefer: Colombia as an exporter of coal or Colombia, a carbochemical power? What Colombia should do is industrialize its coal exploitation, import technology to develop a carbochemical industry; this is the kind of policy that we favor.

A wire issued by EFE, the Spanish government wire service on the Madrid founding meeting of the Club of Life appeared Jan. 29 in the Diario de las Americas, the leading Spanish-language newspaper of general distribution on the East Coast of the United States, published in Miami. Headlined, "Meeting in Madrid to Support a New Economic Order," the text read:

Madrid, Jan. 25 (EFE)—The "Club of Life," an organization which proposes to support the creation of a new economic order, and which is opposed to "the Malthusian policy of the Club of Rome," began its meetings in Madrid.


The club was conceived last year in the General Secretariat of the European Labor Party, in Germany, and was formally created in October 1982, in Rome.

"The Club proposes," as was indicated by the leader of the Club of Life, Delia Estévez, "to support the creation of a new world economic order, beginning with the granting of a moratorium on the foreign debt of the Third World countries, particularly the Ibero-American ones."

This request, she added, must take concrete form in the meeting that the Non-Aligned countries will holding in New Delhi in March of this year. The "Club of Life" hopes that Spain, whose government has not made any official decision on the matter, will also attend that meeting.

"Spain," said Delia Estévez, "has an important role to play, on account of its special relations with the Ibero-American countries."

The club states that it is an international association, independent of any government, that finances itself through private means, among them the sale of its publications.



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