
COLOMBIA

Midterm elections in Colombia to strengthen Betancur government

by Fernando Quijano

As the campaign for Colombia's midterm elections came to a close on March 4, President Belisario Betancur was charged by former Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos Lemos Simmonds with planning to establish a leftist totalitarian regime by calling a plebiscite to install himself as dictator some time after the March 11 elections. Simmonds also charged Betancur with atomizing the Liberal Party, silencing the Conservative Party, and discrediting the financial community and the military.

It was precisely this kind of charge that gave Soviet sympathizer Henry Kissinger and Nazi-lover Gen. Augusto Pinochet the excuse to overthrow and butcher Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973. However, unlike Allende, who was surrounded by leftists, communists, and terrorists, Betancur, a Conservative, is pressing to prevent Central American terrorism and KGB-Nazi drug trafficking from overrunning Colombia. Then why is Lemos Simmonds, who through his magazine *Consigna* is the official spokesman for former Liberal President Turbay Ayala (1978-82), making these charges?

The National Movement of Galán

The facts are that the electoral results of the March 11 elections for municipal councils and departmental assemblies will probably go a long way toward changing the oligarchically controlled two-party system. Not that the Liberal and Conservative Parties will disappear, but Betancur, who won the presidential election through, and governs on the basis of, what he calls the National Movement, will be succeeded in 1986 by adherents to his National Movement ideal within the Liberal Party. This process of nationalist institution-building will provide tremendous stability to Colombia. Because of Colombia's political and geographic placement (it is the buffer between Central America and the rest of South America), this tendency will provide a major block to operations by the drugrunners and their Kissinger Commission allies to spread chaos, terrorism, and subversion throughout Ibero-America.

Polls taken several weeks ago among Liberal voters showed that over 70% favored Luis Carlos Galán's New Liberalism grouping. Traditionally the *mitaca* (midterm) elections serve as an indicator within the parties as to who

will be the presidential candidate two years later. Thus, Galán, who heads up candidate slates that are competing against several official Liberal slates, will come away as the only legitimate presidential aspirant among the Liberals. Given that polls taken at the end of February showed that he would defeat both Liberal and Conservative slates in the capital city of Bogotá and probably obtain similar results in other large cities, Galán stands to emerge as the probable next President of Colombia.

Galán's New Liberalism has made its campaign theme the necessity for eradicating from the political map the forces that governed Colombia during the Liberal presidencies of López Michelsen (1974-78) and Turbay Ayala. (These two Liberal administrations had the participation and total support of Betancur's adversary in the Conservative Party, the Hapsburg-connected Alvaro Gómez Hurtado.). This campaign accounts for Galán's popularity; everyone remembers that it was precisely during 1974-82 that Colombia was made into a haven for drugrunners and wildly usurious and speculative financiers who fronted for and laundered the drug revenue.

A war against the drug mafia

Here is where the alliance between President Betancur and Galán comes in: Betancur defeated López Michelsen in the 1982 elections, and his government has proceeded to launch an all-out war against the financiers and drugrunners. His minister of justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, is a member of the New Liberalism and was Galán's campaign manager in 1982.

This fight against the drug mafia has been popular, but it has also been extremely dangerous. Lara Bonilla has been the target of several assassination plots by the drug traffickers, and last month a former deputy minister of justice who fought for the extradition of drugrunners to the United States was gunned down. The President's brother was kidnapped by the ELN (a pro-Cuban terrorist group); later it was found out that the same group was planning to assassinate Galán. This has not been the only manifestation of violence; during the last two months the country has been wracked by a wave of massive unrest and violence coming from the drugrunners and the terrorists of the left and right. Increasing evidence is

emerging publicly concerning a growing collaboration between *all* the terrorists and the drugrunners.

Betancur himself, in a speech to the nation on Feb. 26, said: "What a week we've just been through! It seemed at moments that, having forgotten the value of democracy, we were intent in laying siege to it, in making it falter by putting it through excessive and dangerous threats. . . . We have been through social strife of diverse characteristics, because people discovered they had rights that had heretofore been denied to them. Also, a corrupting illness [was] created by the drug traffickers, who distort morality, the economy, and international relations, *which we will continue to battle.*" Observers noted that the violence appeared to represent a plot by many to stop the elections. That plot, for the moment, appears to have failed miserably.

However, in order for the Betancur administration to survive in the aftermath of the March 11 elections and for the Galán forces to have a chance in 1986, they must address the following key areas: 1) the economy, 2) the war against drugs, 3) the question of violence, and 4) foreign policy as it affects national security.

The economy: Recently Betancur has for the first time shown signs of understanding the necessity of modernizing agricultural production and undertaking capital-goods industrial projects. In a speech on Feb. 24, he stated, "How can it be explained that some countries have specialized in becoming producers of raw materials while others have reserved manufacturing for themselves?" He answers that though there are political factors, as when Britain prevented India from industrializing, the creation of an industrialized North and an underdeveloped South in the second half of the 18th century is primarily the result of the South failing to "industrialize its agriculture, therefore providing neither raw materials nor markets for its manufacturing. This is a historical lesson for Latin America, because without an elastic supply of food it is not possible to develop. . . . There are additional reasons: first, transportation . . . then the weaknesses of our scientific and technological systems. . . . Finally, during the last century political stability was threatened by political instability."

This orientation, implemented through the formation of an Ibero-American customs union based on a debtors' alliance, will permit Colombia to survive. If Betancur were to go back to a World Bank-Club of Rome "adequate technologies" outlook, he would not finish out his term.

The war on drugs: Betancur, through the government, and Galán, by campaigning, must force through large-scale use of paraquat to destroy drug crops. Currently, the program is still experimental. With the new government of Venezuela, which has also pledged a war on drugs, they must also strike hard at the "citizens above suspicion," especially going after the intersection between Nazis, Communists, and terrorists. For example, López Michelsen has always praised Pinochet's fascist economics; simultaneously he is good friend with Gabriel García Márquez, novelist and terrorist sympathizer, and Fidel Castro—not to mention his acquaintance

with the M-19. Finally, López was the biggest proponent of legalization of cocaine and marijuana. He is also one of the wealthiest men in Colombia. Have all the secret services and military intelligence been bought? Surely that is not possible.

Violence: Betancur has chosen to deal with the large terrorist groupings by declaring an amnesty and carrying out negotiations. So far only a few have taken advantage of the amnesty and the rest are in negotiations with the President's Peace Commission.

Although a large-scale Kissinger-inspired campaign slandering Betancur as a communist has at times almost caused a rupture with the armed forces, so far Betancur has carried the day. Obviously he is trying to make sure that these groupings do not join with the Central American terrorists. He is also giving the many thousands who have participated for years in a guerrilla war a chance to reintegrate themselves into society by trying to separate the individuals from the crime.

It goes without saying that if the terrorists continue to obey the international dictates of the Kissinger-KGB combination, Betancur will have to take massive military action. But then he will have *politically won the war*, his only remaining task being a relatively easy military mop-up.

Foreign policy: Betancur has to make the destruction of the Kissinger Commission approach the basis of all foreign policy. In this context the Contadora group (Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Panama) and its development arm Cadesca, being led by Colombia, must announce this year a commitment to construct an interoceanic sea-level canal capable of handling the largest modern ships; this should be a joint Contadora project built as a Colombo-Panamanian canal.

As part of this effort, Betancur should have the Armed Forces participate in the process of integration of Ibero-America. A first step would be for the military to involve itself massively in the all-out war against drugs, and through this process to develop the intelligence and technological capabilities that will permit them to wage war on extra-hemispheric enemies as well as assist the great tasks of building the large transport and communications infrastructure necessary for Ibero-American integration.

For this purpose, military scientific academies must immediately be formed around an Ibero-American Space Agency, as well as related academies dealing with the most advanced technologies ranging from lasers to nuclear fission and thermonuclear fusion. In particular, expertise will have to be gained in Peaceful Nuclear Explosives for construction of the interoceanic canal and the other large-scale projects required for the 21st century. Without this kind of foreign policy, U.S.-Ibero-American relations will continue to dramatically deteriorate, as Kissinger destroys Ibero-America on behalf of the KGB.

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