

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

EIR smokes out factional struggle on drugs

The heavy hand of the international financial forces attempting to block the War on Drugs in the United States was clearly seen in Washington this week in contrasting reactions to the Betancur government's forceful action against the M-19 narco-terrorists in Colombia.

While the treasonous *Washington Post* blamed the Betancur government for the bloodshed because of it refused to capitulate to the drug-runners, the State Department followed suit in its own way by refusing to comment at all on M-19 links to drug-trafficking, and Attorney General Ed Meese waffled. All of this came to light because of *EIR's* probing.

First, this reporter demanded the State Department's official position at its daily briefing. The State spokesman said: "We are deeply shocked by the terrorist takeover of the Palace of Justice. The U.S. government condemns the lawless elements that perpetrated this act of senseless violence. It represents a complete lack of respect for the rule of law and the principles of democracy in a free society. President Betancur faced an extremely difficult situation, and we expressed our fullest support to the Colombian government as it sought to bring the Supreme Court takeover to a conclusion."

Sounds good enough, but when asked to comment specifically about the M-19's links to drugs, the spokesman said, "I can't help you. We don't have anything on that."

Later that day, I posed the same question to Jon Thomas, head of the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters in the State Department, who

was sent into the State Department by the White House as a man with military, rather than diplomatic, credentials, to coordinate U.S. collaboration with Ibero-American nations in the War on Drugs.

Thomas had a different answer on the critical question of the link of the M-19 to drugs. "It has been clear in the past that the M-19 has been involved with narcotics trafficking. We've caught them with their hands in the cookie jar, and that's a matter of record," he told me on the record.

He also confirmed this during his testimony before the Task Force on International Narcotics of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Nov. 12, where Drug Enforcement Administration Assistant Administrator David Westrake also said that "certainly there has been a relationship between the M-19 and drug trafficking for several years." He added, "There was some speculation that narcotics-related files were destroyed as a priority of the group in the raid."

Despite Thomas's clear statement, and Westrake's testimony, however, the "official" State Department line continued to be "no comment." The next day, when Thomas's verbatim quotes were presented to State Department press spokesman Bernard Kalb, he snarled again, "We have nothing on that!"

Next, Ed Meese was put to the test. The attorney general was holding a press conference with Italian Interior Minister Luigi Oscar Scalfaro to announce a joint agreement between our two countries to fight drugs, organized crime, and terrorism. This reporter asked Meese whether he supported Betancur's action, citing the testimony of the slain Colombian judge's wife that drugs was the motivation for the M-19 terrorist act.

Clearing his throat, Meese said, "I

don't think it is appropriate to comment or second-guess what occurred in Colombia." He quickly reverted to a generalization, adding, "The fact that increasingly narcotics traffickers are resorting to terrorist criminal acts to try to intimidate governments, witnesses, or others, is one of the reasons for extending the [joint Italian-American] working group and task force to the subject of terrorism."

Not exactly what President Betancur, and the other Ibero-American nations hotly waging the bloody War on Drugs in their countries needed to hear!

Monarchists on the Hill

Representative Don Edwards (D-Calif.) told New Solidarity International Press Service correspondent Kathleen Murphy that Prince Charles had specifically requested a meeting to discuss how to change the U.S. Constitution while he was in Washington, D.C. Edwards was in the on meeting held at the Library of Congress, and said that Charles "was especially interested in the fact that there were promonarchists at the Constitutional Convention" (back in 1787).

"He wanted to know how strong the monarchist movement was at the time," Edwards said, adding that Charles was "taken" with the observation, that "if George III had been wise enough to come over and have the kind of discussion we were having with the Prince now, then we would still be part of England."

Charles was "most interested in how the Constitution is changed and adapted, how flexible it is," a Library of Congress spokesman said. Among those present at the meeting were representatives of the Committee for a Constitutional System, which advocates major changes in the Constitution.