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## Profile: Gen. Miguel Maza Márquez

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# Anti-drug? or anti-military?

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Gen. Miguel Maza Márquez, head of Colombia's political police, the Administrative Security Department (DAS), has been painted as the "star" of the Colombian government's anti-drug war, internationally as well as within Colombia. His actions and his allies, however, beg the question: Is fighting drugs the general's actual commitment, or does he have another agenda in mind for the anti-drug war, one that does not include the final defeat and eradication of the drug trade?

General Maza Márquez has long been the favorite law enforcement official of the legalization lobby in Colombia, and his affinity for the political ambitions of the founder of that lobby, Ernesto Samper Pizano, is well-known. The Communist Party also lauds him as an ally against the military. Gen. Maza Márquez has adopted the Communist Party's ultimatum that the Armed Forces be purged of all anti-Communists who oppose the "peace process."

Rather than pressing forward the battle against the drug cartels, Maza is busy stirring up inter-agency fights between the institutions which should be coordinating efforts to combat drugs. For months, Maza's only line of investigation has been to try to find links between the traffickers and the Armed Forces of Colombia. More than once the general has sought to overthrow those who oppose this single-minded focus, and grab greater power for himself in the Barco government.

The question has been now raised in Colombia, of just how good was the security protection provided by the DAS to Luis Carlos Galán, the presidential candidate most hated by the legalization lobby, and murdered by mafiosi on Aug. 18?

For more than a year, the Colombian Communist Party—whose armed wing, the FARC, has set up its own cocaine cartel headquartered in La Uribe—has attempted to divert public demands for a war on drugs, with a saturation propaganda campaign that violence in Colombia is not caused by the drug trade, nor by left-wing narco-terrorists, but only by "Nazi" anti-Communists within the military who have made an alliance with the drug-runners.

In April 1989, with the release of a "special report" on "paramilitary groups" prepared by the DAS, Maza Márquez

took up the Communists' cause. The report, based primarily on the testimony of a "former" member of the terrorist M-19 movement, one Diego Viafara Salinas, charges that *all* the self-defense squads in the country, and especially those in the department Magdalena Medio, are nothing but armies of fascist assassins, created and financed by the drug traffickers, with the aid of the Army. That the mob has formed paramilitary forces to enforce their rule in certain areas is indisputable, but to charge, as Maza Márquez has done, that *any* anti-Communist who forms self-defense groups against the terrorists, is a de facto drug trafficker is an absurd lie.

Maza has stubbornly upheld this thesis. In June, when a car bomb exploded just seconds after his car had passed, he blamed the narco-paramilitary forces for the attack. But instead of demanding that elected officials back a political-military offensive against the traffickers, Maza trained his fire on the Armed Forces and the police, charging that those institutions had not joined in investigations into the self-defense network in Colombia.

After the murder of Galán on Aug. 18, the Communist Party escalated its attacks on the government—by citing Maza Márquez and his exposure of *narcoparamilitarismo* as the real cause of violence in the country. In its Aug. 31 issue, the Communist paper, *Voz Proletaria*, cited the DAS reports, and demanded that the Congress hold hearings.

Maza Márquez has been obliged. In testimony before Congress on Sept. 20, Maza implicated President Virgilio Barco himself in the alleged coverup of the "narco-paramilitaries." "The new escalation of violence is largely due to the instruction given by mercenaries to our nationals, which has resulted in indiscriminate terrorism" he stated, thus reducing the drug mobsters' all-out war against the nation of Colombia to a problem of a few "mercenaries." He testified that "more than two years ago," Barco had been informed by him of the presence of mercenaries in Colombia, training paramilitary groups.

"Barcogate Erupts," read the triumphant headline over the Maza Márquez story on Sept. 21 in *La Prensa*, one of the most fanatic of the newspapers in opposing President Barco's war on drugs. Maza now publicly insists that he opposes legalization of drugs, for moral reasons. But like the drug-legalization lobby, Maza says the drug problem cannot be wiped out frontally. "Time and patience is the key. This problem cannot be resolved from one day to the next because society's acceptance of it has made the matter complex," he told a seminar at the Police Cadet School at the end of September.

The legalization lobby still cheers him on. On Oct. 2, journalist Antonio Caballero, a fervent champion of legalization, published a diatribe against the Colombian Army, charging that the Army is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Communists. General Maza is the brave man who has exposed the network of military men implicated in drug trafficking, Caballero wrote, and "perhaps the attempted assassination [of him] was due to this charge."