

Guatemala elections help 'Dope, Inc.'

by Dennis Small

Former military government official Jorge Serrano Elias surprised most political observers by coming in a close second in the Guatemalan presidential elections on Nov. 11. With 24.6% of the vote, he was right behind front-runner Jorge Carpio Nicolle, who had 25.4%. Since neither candidate received a clear majority, there will be a runoff election on Jan. 4, 1991.

Serrano was a top official in the 1982-83 government of Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, who was heavily sponsored by the Israeli Mossad. Ríos Montt tried to run for President this time, but was barred by the Guatemalan Supreme Court. Serrano is widely viewed as little more than a stand-in for his fanatical old boss. Both men are leaders of the evangelical fundamentalist movement in Guatemala, which now commands the loyalty of about one-third of the population in this formerly 99% Catholic nation.

To hear the U.S. State Department tell it, "democracy" was the big winner. In 1985, Guatemala elected its first civilian President in 16 years. The current elections were portrayed by official Washington, and the liberal media, as a reaffirmation of democracy.

But the real victor was "Dope, Inc.," the international drug cartel that has been progressively taking over this largest of Central American nations, especially over the last five years of rule by outgoing President Vinicio Cerezo.

Five years ago, when Cerezo took over from the military government of Gen. Mejía Vitores, the drug trade had only a tenuous foothold in Guatemala. Some marijuana was grown in the jungle Petén region; a relatively small amount of Colombian cocaine was transhipped through the clandestine airfields on Guatemala's Pacific coast, on its way up to Mexico and the United States. Narco-terrorist groups, such as the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), were functioning, but at nowhere near the level of their allies in neighboring El Salvador. Only the most far-sighted of analysts, such as now-jailed U.S. politician Lyndon LaRouche, foresaw the danger that the drug trade posed to Guatemala.

Back in 1985, right before the last elections, LaRouche commissioned the preparation of a half-hour videotape and a 100-page *EIR* Special Report, "Soviet Unconventional Warfare in Ibero-America: the Case of Guatemala," both of which warned of the imminent danger:

"Guatemala now stands on the edge of falling into the

hands of the narco-terrorists," the *EIR* report argued. "At the first point that the drug mafia determines that Guatemala can be bought up, through a flooding of dirty money into the pockets of leading politicians, military officers and police officials, the impact of that action, in combination with a major escalation in acts of cannibalistic terrorism by an increasingly well-armed guerrilla force, will precipitate a qualitative shift that could turn Guatemala into a new Iran. This fact is not adequately understood by the Reagan White House."

Today, after five years of "democratic" liberal policies under Cerezo, Guatemala is a major producer of opium: In 1989, it grew 14 tons of the drug, which was refined in Mexico into 1.4 tons of pure heroin, with a U.S. street value of about \$3 billion. Guatemala has also become a major transshipment center for Colombian cocaine traveling to the United States. Marijuana production is far more widespread than it was in 1985. And narco-terrorist groups have gained substantially in resources and power.

Questions have been raised about the integrity of numerous politicians and even presidential candidates. The Nov. 15 *Washington Times* editorialized that "rumors abound . . . that Alfonso Cabrera, Mr. Cerezo's hand-picked successor [and defeated candidate of the Christian Democratic Party] is closely tied to the drug trade."

As for the victorious candidates Carpio and Serrano, they have more in common than their first name, Jorge. They have both vowed to further blunt the Guatemalan military's longstanding policy of *fighting* the narco-terrorists, in favor of *negotiating* with them to guarantee them a share of political power—as per the demands of the State Department. This is the same insane liberal strategy which threatens to hand El Salvador over to narco-terrorism, and which has created a state of virtual dual power with the dope mob in Colombia.

The liberal U.S. media are also egging on both candidates to assault Guatemala's military. The *Washington Post*, for example, editorialized on Nov. 13, "The 'dirty war' is blazing again in Guatemala. . . . The security services have made Guatemala the worst human rights offender in all of Latin America."

Serrano's come-from-behind victory in the first round is particularly ominous. The *Washington Post* of Nov. 13 happily headlined its coverage "Evangelical positioned for win in Guatemala," and presented Serrano as "the instant favorite to win the Jan. 6 runoff, in part because of the electoral strength of Guatemala's Protestant evangelicals." "Protestantism" does not mean the same thing in Guatemala as it does in the United States or Europe. There are some 300-fundamentalist sects in Guatemala today, most of them financed and promoted by the CIA and the State Department's Project Democracy networks. High on their list is the destruction of the Catholic Church, which in Ibero-America has been a bulwark against the drug trade and liberal economic policies.