

Lawmakers tour U.S. on injustice to LaRouche

A congressional delegation from South America began a one-week tour of the United States in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 18, to both protest and further investigate human rights violations in the case of Lyndon LaRouche, according to information from the Paris-based Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations. The South American lawmakers have expressed deep concern that LaRouche, currently a presidential candidate in the Democratic Party primaries in the United States, "was prosecuted and convicted for reasons of his political beliefs."

LaRouche, 69 years old, has been incarcerated for just over three years. He is currently in the Federal Medical Center in Rochester, Minnesota, where he is serving a 15-year jail term after having been convicted of charges of conspiracy to commit financial fraud, and conspiracy to impede the Internal Revenue Service.

The case of LaRouche, who is campaigning for the presidency from prison, has drawn much attention in Ibero-America. The Congressional Committee on Human Rights of the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of Mexico officially adopted the case for study on Feb. 12. The Mexican decision came after a presentation of the case by Dennis Small, a LaRouche co-defendant who was imprisoned for over two years.

Similarly, the Committee on Human Rights of the House of Representatives of Bolivia's Congress called on the United Nations and the Organization of American States to undertake investigations. The LaRouche case appears to be "an irregular occurrence," stated committee chairman Congressman Gonzalo Ruíz Paz, "consisting of depriving a political leader of his freedom, merely because of the fact that he was a political enemy of the Bush administration" and because of his "harsh criticism of [Henry] Kissinger."

The Organization of American States (OAS) previously refused to accept a complaint that LaRouche's human rights were violated.

The delegation

Traveling in the delegation are: from Peru, Cong. Carlos Rivas Dávila (APRA), minister of economics during the administration of Alan García; Cong. Oswaldo Bockos, (Cambio 90); Cong. Carlos Calderón Carvajal (APRA); Cong. Lino Cerna Manrique (APRA); Cong. Francisco Palomino García (APRA); Cong. Eduardo Salhuana (IU). From Panama, Cong. Miguel Bush Ríos (PRD). And from Venezuela, Cong. Jorge León Díaz (Independent).

The Ibero-American congressmen will visit Washington, New York, and Chicago. They will meet with a number of their counterparts in the U.S. Congress; with OAS Secretary General João Baena Soares; with United Nations officials; and with leaders of American religious, human rights, and civil rights organizations.

They will also meet with LaRouche's attorneys, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and Odin Anderson, who recently filed a legal motion asking that LaRouche's conviction be vacated on the grounds of Executive Branch misconduct, among other reasons.

The visit takes place as a senior United Nations human rights official has asked the U.S. government to respond to charges that it violated LaRouche's human rights. The official, Angelo Vidal D'Almeida Ribeiro, the Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Human Rights Commission who is mandated to investigate compliance with the U.N.'s "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Beliefs," presented a report Feb. 7 to the 48th plenary session of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, now meeting in Geneva, asking the U.S. to comment on reports that LaRouche has "been subjected to harassment, investigation, and prosecution solely because of his beliefs."

Uproar in Mexico

The highly embarrassing challenge to the United States on LaRouche's human rights has been suppressed in most press, but not in Mexico. As a result of a well-attended press conference given by Dennis Small in Mexico City Feb. 11, nationwide television Channel 11 ran the story. The U.N. Special Rapporteur in Geneva has asked the U.S. to comment on charges that it violated the human rights of Lyndon LaRouche, the televised news report read, and the U.S. has yet to respond.

The television news spot also reported Small's statement that LaRouche is in jail for opposing the economic policies of the Bush government.

Twelve media, including the major national press, attended Small's press conference, which generated an extensive discussion of the political prospects for George Bush and the North American Free Trade Agreement, as well as the LaRouche case. So far, however, only the television station has dared to cover the hot political topic.

On Feb. 12, Small addressed the Congressional Committee on Human Rights of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies for 75 minutes, in a meeting arranged by Congresswoman Cecilia Soto de Estévez of the Authentic Revolutionary Party of Mexico (PARM). Six other legislators were present at the hearings, including the Committee Chairman Amador Rodríguez Lozano of the ruling PRI party; Committee Secretary Victor Ortuna of the National Action Party (PAN); and Jorge Moscoso of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD).