
Interview: Gen. Hernando Zuluaga García (ret.)

A civil-military electoral alliance can restore the Colombian nation

General Zuluaga heads a slate of 15 senatorial candidates, representing an electoral alliance between the Colombian branch of the continent-wide Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) and the National Participation movement, the latter an organization of retired military officers headed by General Zuluaga. The candidates are running on a "program for peace," which includes the following points: 1) defense of the right to life, national sovereignty, and the Armed Forces; 2) fight against corruption, criminality, and the impunity of criminals; 3) exploitation of the Cusiana oil fields to industrialize the country and create new jobs; 4) protection and strengthening of the agricultural and industrial sectors; 5) education to restore national values and Christian moral principles; and 6) construction of great infrastructure projects to achieve Ibero-American integration. The elections are scheduled for March 13, 1994.

This interview was conducted on Feb. 14 by Bogotá correspondent Javier Almario.

EIR: Why does a retired general seek a Senate seat?

Zuluaga: Because a retired general has been committed, since his youth, to honest service to his country, the institutions, and the citizenry. The truth is that one retains this commitment, under oath, upon leaving active service, even unto death. I persist in this, in continuing to serve my people and Colombia with honesty, with firmness, with character, with the spirit of service.

EIR: How will you apply these qualities in the Senate?

Zuluaga: There is a great deal to do in the Senate. The first is to defend national sovereignty, the national institutions, the Armed Forces and, naturally, to fight against corruption, immorality, injustice, and the impunity of criminals. I believe that Colombia has been going through a difficult situation, a crisis situation, for several years. New alternatives must be opened up for Colombia, new possibilities must be created; Colombia must be given an organization through which to express itself and in which it can authentically participate, with a real, not a false democracy, such as the one we have had for many years in Colombia.

The reality is that certain destructive tendencies threaten the nation and its Armed Forces. There are both international and national non-governmental organizations which are aim-

ing their guns at the very concept of the nation, to do away with the backbone of the nation which is its Armed Forces and its Catholic Church, especially in the nations of Ibero-America.

There exists an organization called the Inter-American Dialogue, which is sponsored by the United States, is made up of traditionalist politicians from all the countries and parties of the continent, and which, in supposed "defense of democracy," has dedicated itself to destroying the very concept of the nation and of the Armed Forces. Its precise objective is to do away with those institutions so that we revert to the condition of a colony on the eve of the 21st century. Their strategy is to reduce our Armed Forces to a shadow of their current selves, to fade them out and practically eliminate them, because without the Armed Forces there can be no sovereignty, there can be no nation, and then the [U.N.'s] Blue Helmets could enter as if they own the place, as they already are doing, to rule us, because they believe we are all still children, that we have not yet come of age within the concert of nations.

EIR: People who defend the new order that was brought in by the Bush government, allege that national sovereignty is an obsolete concept, that the Armed Forces are no longer necessary, because the military force of the United Nations or of the United States is adequate to control conflicts among nations. What do you think?

Zuluaga: That is totally wrong. The fact is that they don't want us to have an idea of what a nation is and what its institutions are, to be better able to make our nations into whatever they please. The truth is that the industrialized nations have a serious overproduction problem which has driven them into a recession. They want to open the markets, but in a one-sided way. Everything for them and nothing for us. They want us to lower tariffs, to fill up on luxuries and other products and then, to restrict our own chances for progressing and industrializing, for giving adequate employment to Colombians. To simply relegate ourselves to the role of producing exclusively raw materials. So, they sell to us at the prices they set, and they buy from us, also at the prices they set. They want to relegate us to becoming the overseers on a plantation called Colombia, which they can then use to squeeze all the benefits out of it, leaving us behind as their pawns.

EIR: There are two countries which do not have armed forces, which are Costa Rica and Panama. In the case of Panama, the Armed Forces were destroyed by means of the U.S. invasion. Now some present those two countries as models of how nations can function without need of armed forces. What do think of these supposed models?

Zuluaga: This is a fiction. Costa Rica and Panama have had a National Guard, but it is a National Guard that carries out all the functions of the armed forces. They have a navy, air force, army, police. It is all a question of what you call them. The concept of an armed forces exists within that National Guard or Security Guard, or what have you. That is simply a democratic feint to try to weaken the armed forces.

EIR: In the program of your electoral alliance, you defend the integration of Ibero-America. Would you compare this proposal with Simón Bolívar's ideal of making Ibero-America into one great nation?

Zuluaga: The vision of the Liberator becomes more urgent every day. We cannot enter the 21st century without having realized this magnificent vision. Isolated and alone, the people and nations of Ibero-America can do nothing against the great economic and political power blocs that exist. The only possibility for defending our interests and those of our people is by forging a political, economic, social, and military bloc of nations. This is the only way in which we could manage to free ourselves from the impositions of the great powers, of the International Monetary Fund [IMF], of the World Bank, and of all those agencies which send us recommendations which are in fact orders for us to carry out, and which our governments resign themselves to carrying out in full.

Every once in a while they give us a new formula. And ten years later, they tell us it wasn't the right one, it was a failure. Then they tell us we must try another formula. Here we had the ECLA [the U.N.'s Economic Committee on Latin America] idea for at least ten years, and then they told us that wasn't the right one, and that the fashion now is the "opening." Who knows what will come later? The point is that we must have autonomy, we must have authenticity. We must be ourselves, and to be ourselves we must unite in a bloc so that we can have representation, so that we can have solidarity which will place us on a level of equality with the other great blocs that exist in the world today.

EIR: What exactly are you referring to when you say we must carry out a new liberating campaign like the one that gave us our independence?

Zuluaga: It is a campaign for economic freedom, for social freedom, for complete freedom. At the beginning of the last century, we had a campaign to win political freedom, but over time we lost that political freedom. We must now make a campaign for complete freedom. This must principally be carried out through the weapon of intelligence, through the weapon of conciliation, of unity, of character, of creativity,

of our integrity, our principles, our values, which will make us respected because we are still viewed in the world as third-rate citizens; they still believe we are colonies. We are people with our own identities, with what belongs to us, and we are going to fight for that because that is how we will raise ourselves as a people and recover our dignity.

EIR: What is the economic program you are going to uphold in the Congress? You have said in your speeches that the current finance ministers do not represent their countries, but rather the IMF and World Bank.

Zuluaga: We have to come up with our own economic policy. Our own, which is not imported, nor prescribed by Harvard or by anyone else, which is based on what we are and on what we can be, based on our natural resources, which are: land, minerals, forests, agriculture, oil. Of course, our most important resource is our people, who are intelligent, who are active, and who are dynamic. We have to find a middle ground between dehumanized capitalism and radical socialism.

We have to move toward a concept of economic positivism, but with a view toward the social impact. That is, we must locate ourselves within something more rational, more human, more dignified, more Christian, more compatible with our culture, with our way of being, with our potential. And we have to find this economic positivism, that is, a middle ground between savage capitalism, that of the "opening," of privatization without any social sense, and an absolutely closed communism, in which freedom of thought and action are eliminated, and which brings on calamities, starvation, and disgraces on account of an ideology which today is obsolete and meaningless for the whole world. We must find our way and develop it.

EIR: Your words remind one of the social encyclicals of Pope John Paul II and what has been called the social doctrine of the church. Is your political thought influenced by the church's social doctrine?

Zuluaga: We share the social doctrine of the church because in it, man and his dignity come first. It really is the state, it is the economy, it is the means of production, which must be at the service of man and of his dignity and action. We are identified with many of the ideological assumptions contained within this doctrine. We want to ground that doctrine in the national reality, and in doing so find an authentic pathway for ourselves.

EIR: Let us turn to an issue of great importance for all Colombians, the question of security. You were a general during the Belisario Betancur government, which initiated dialogue and negotiations with the so-called Marxist guerrilla groups. After 13 years of negotiations and dialogue, what is your evaluation of the results of that dialogue and what would your proposal be for truly achieving a lasting and not a fictitious peace?

We retired military men should be the authentic political arm of the active-duty military and the fundamental political support for the values, the principles, of all that represents the authenticity of our nations.

Zuluaga: The focus that has been given to the issue of violence, the guerrillas, the drug trade, crime, subversion, has not been in any way complete. It has always been partial; sometimes with a strong bias toward the military, and other times with a purely political angle, but never thinking in terms of using all the powers of the state, in order to converge on a solution to the problem.

But to reach a solution, one must eradicate the causes, not merely fight the effects. The guerrillas, violence, kidnapping, extortion, the drug trade itself, are nothing but the effects of more profound causes which are social. So one must address these social causes if one wants a lasting peace. I am not saying anything other than that we must give the Colombian people a complete response, with all the powers of the state functioning in unison in pursuit of an objective which is lasting peace. Not a peace painted on the wall with little white doves, or a peace painted on the grave as the communists, the guerrillas, the criminals are wont to do. They speak of a peace, but it is the peace of the grave for the peasants, for citizens of good will, for our working citizens. No, that is not peace. We do not seek the peace of the little painted doves, but a true and lasting peace, a complete peace, a spiritual peace, a peace of the soul which can only come about when one takes a deep look at the social roots behind the phenomena we are now experiencing.

EIR: According to what you are saying, a true peace cannot be achieved under the current economic "opening," the plan to apply the conditions of the International Monetary Fund, of economic looting?

Zuluaga: There is no way. Peace cannot be achieved through unemployment, through abandonment of the Colombian countryside, nor with marginalization, with the pitiless layoffs of workers. New companies must be created to make room for the people who will soon overwhelm the bureaucracies. But we cannot subject the Colombian population to hunger, to lack of protection.

EIR: You have said that one way of achieving the peace is to repeat what was done in the 1960s, when there was a period of peace. Can you clarify this?

Zuluaga: In the '60s in Colombia, we had guerrillas, bandits they were called, some liberal and others conservative, who murdered, extorted, ambushed, kidnapped, and did exactly the same things that those who today claim to have a foreign ideology are doing. But that phenomenon reached

the point at which something had to be done to put an end to it and attack its causes. At the time, a complete strategy was designed, in which all the public powers collaborated in meeting an objective. The military was not sent merely to fight with the rifle, but also by making schools, bringing teachers, building bridges, improving highways, creating health brigades. Then the people felt the presence of the state, and the military had the resources to establish that presence.

By doing this, a helping hand was provided. The guerrillas and bandits were thus isolated, because the people were not with them but with the state, with the Army, with the Armed Forces. For lack of material, the bandits disappeared and peace reigned throughout Colombia. I am from Tolima, from the state most affected by that bandit violence. And peace has reigned in Tolima since that time. It is only now, with the coffee crisis, that armed groups are beginning to return to my land, because of the government's apathy. But this could be stopped with a conception different from that now being applied.

Colombia had peace for many years, in many states, because a different strategy was applied and yielded results, but the political class has forgotten it. . . . The peasants, the humble people loved us very much and the politicians became jealous and said that the military had to be removed from playing such a role because we were winning too much sympathy, and so they took away all the money for civic action, and they turned that money into what has come to be known as *auxilios parlamentarios*, or congressional slush funds, from which the political elites could steal. It was supposed that the political elites would build the schools, the colleges, the bridges, hire the teachers, etc., but the politicians instead gave to foundations that put money back into their own pockets and those of their families. And the Colombian people, in the countryside and in the slums, were left without a solution by the state. That is the real truth.

EIR: Are the politicians still jealous of the military?

Zuluaga: Of course! The Inter-American Dialogue is proving it. The only opponent of the pseudo-democracies, which are in fact party-ocracies, is the military, because we are the only ones in Colombia and in the other countries who feel for the nation, who truly feel for the Colombian people. Because we are the children of that people. I am a peasant before I am a general. I was born in the countryside, to my honor, and I know the Colombian peasantry, the humble people. What happened is that I bettered myself, and I am a general; I

improved myself with regard to social appearance, but my roots are in the peasantry, and I will continue to be a peasant, and I will therefore continue in defense of the people. I dedicated my military career to that and I will dedicate my political career to that.

EIR: General, another example of a period of peace and prosperity was the period of regeneration, of Rafael Núñez. Núñez managed to defeat the different radical groups. Do you believe that that period could serve as an example for our current situation?

Zuluaga: Rafael Núñez achieved the national unity that was shattered by radicalism. Through radicalism we had many wars in the past century and many different constitutions, many petty tyrannies. He succeeded in rooting out those tyrannies, rooting out recalcitrant regionalism through a national unity that was concretized in the Constitution of 1886. Now they want to return us to that period because they want us to fight one another within a concept of regionalization. It is very good that the regions are given a budget, that there is not the political and budgetary centralism that existed then, but we cannot reach the extremes in which we have 25 or 26 different republics within a single republic which is Colombia. If we do not coldly and honestly consider where we are leading the country, we are going to return to those periods.

EIR: You mentioned that the Inter-American Dialogue's campaign against the armed forces is not only in Colombia but also in all of Ibero-America. Would you recommend that retired military personnel from other areas do the same thing you are doing, that is, to enter into electoral politics?

Zuluaga: Yes, definitely. We retired military men should be the authentic political arm of the active-duty military and the fundamental political support for the values, the principles, of all that represents the authenticity of our nations. We must defend this, we must defend our people, our institutions, our religion, our culture, and we can only do so by forming ourselves into the political arm of the armed forces, into the patriotic arm of our nations.

EIR: What should be the relationship between Ibero-America and the United States?

Zuluaga: Ibero-America and the United States should have the best relations in the world because, after all, we are on the same continent. We have much to learn from the United States; not so much from the government of the United States as from the North American people, who have been a vigorous, intelligent, progressive, giving, hard-working, and courageous people. The problem is that we must have a relationship of equality, demanding respect from its powers, from its governments, from the people, from the bankers, those who believe we are still under-age, who believe that we should be an Indian reservation called Colombia, where they can enter with their laws and their orders and dictate what we should or should not do.

I respect the North American people greatly. I respect the United States; what's more, I've lived in the United States several times and am enchanted with the order, the authority, the discipline, the sense of work, the social sense. There are many things I love about it. But, one must maintain an appropriate relationship, because we too are a worthy people, an intelligent, independent, creative, hard-working people, a people who want to be treated as part of the world community. I believe that the American people understand this. Often the governments do not, but they will come to understand it under pressure from the American people.

EIR: Do you believe that Lyndon LaRouche's freedom will contribute to improving relations between the United States and Ibero-America?

Zuluaga: I see Lyndon LaRouche as an apostle of a generous and loving cause concerned with the aspirations of the Ibero-American nations. Now free of the injustice that sent him to jail, he is going to continue to uphold the banner of much more human relations with the Ibero-American continent. He has defended the idea of relations more rooted in respect for our culture and our values. If he continues on that path which I believe he has pursued for a long time, he is going to find tremendous receptivity in every country of the continent, from Mexico to Patagonia.

EIR: What do you most remember from your military career?

Zuluaga: My military career was marvelous and extraordinary. I was successful in every endeavor. I never experienced a failure. I have to remember it in its entirety, because it was a miracle, from beginning to end. In life, one may remember anecdotes, hold some memories stronger than others. But I believe that in my military life, the most important thing was having made the decision at the right moment to leave behind that which I loved most, which was everything to me, so that I would not have to alter my behavior, nor my values, nor my principles; so I would not have to get on my knees when the government wanted to force us to our knees. That I remember with much joy and much pride, that I had the ability to resign my military career and all that it represented for my life, so that I would not have to surrender the principles and values I pursued for 33 years, serving Colombia as a soldier and as a general of the republic.

EIR: But what happened?

Zuluaga: The country began to lose the image of the soldier; the image of the constitutional mission that we held. The government tried to discredit us, to humiliate us, to place us under conditions inferior to those of the enemies of the fatherland, who are the bandits, the guerrillas, the criminals, the extortionists. Then, they began to give houses, cars, scholarships, and other sinecures to the criminals and to deny us even the most sacred of rights, which is the right to speak, to recommend, to defend Colombia and the Colombian people.