

# São Paulo Forum plots with terrorists at Havana confab

by Valerie Rush and Gretchen Small

On March 14, terrorists bombed the Lima home of prominent Peruvian journalist Patricio Ricketts. A dean of the Peruvian press corps, a close friend of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, and an outspoken opponent of Peru's Shining Path narco-terrorists, in the past few months Ricketts had used his regular column in the Lima daily *Expreso* to target the São Paulo Forum, a continental terrorist apparatus coordinated out of Havana, Cuba. When the Zapatista uprising began in Mexico on Jan. 1, Ricketts became one of the few on the continent who dared warn publicly that the Zapatista insurgency was no simple Mexican matter, but should be recognized as the launching of a "Shining Path North" project, the opening of a new flank in the terrorists' continent-wide war.

The terrorists exploded a vendor's fruit cart filled with 90 kilos of dynamite under the window of Ricketts's study, destroying Ricketts's home and the three next to it, and shattering windows in a two-block radius. Two passersby were killed, but Ricketts and his family, fortunately in a back room at the time, survived.

In a television interview that night, Ricketts declared defiantly, "No one will force me out of my home, and no one will silence me, much less a group of subversive criminals." He also revealed that he had received a call of support from President Fujimori. Peru's professional journalist associations, however, have remained strangely silent on the bombing, while most of Peru's media downplayed the near-killing of their colleague. U.S. dollars do not flow these days for human rights campaigns directed against terrorists.

On the same day of the bombing of Ricketts's home, an article appeared in the daily *La República* by the aging leader of Peru's 1964 "peasant" guerrilla movement, Hugo Blanco, which attempted to favorably contrast the "democratic" nature of Mexico's newly emerged Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) with the "terrorist" Shining Path. Blanco's argument, that the continent's guerrilla movements should abandon the "authoritarian" Senderista model for "authentic" Zapatismo, is precisely the myth that Ricketts's columns had challenged.

As this scenario for a new continent-wide Zapatista offensive gets under way, this time with the backing of the Inter-

American Dialogue and the supranational U.S. State Department and United Nations apparatus known as "Project Democracy," it is no accident that outspoken men such as Ricketts who debunk the myth of a "democratic" guerrilla movement, are seen as obstacles to be gotten out of the way.

## The 'moderates' of the São Paulo Forum

That myth is nowhere better exemplified than in the case of the São Paulo Forum, a reincarnation of the Cuba-spawned Tricontinental Conference held in 1966 in Havana which launched guerrilla warfare against the governments of Ibero-America. The forum, which derives its name from its 1990 founding meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, includes among its founding members the Cuban Communist Party, the recently legalized FMLN of El Salvador, the amnestied M-19 narco-terrorists of Colombia, the Causa R party of Venezuela, the Sandinista Front of Nicaragua, the Haitian Lavalas movement of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's PRD party of Mexico, and the socialist Workers Party (PT) of Brazil. Less publicized forum adherents include the URNG guerrillas of Guatemala, the MPT of Argentina, and the narco-terrorist National Guerrilla Coordinator from Colombia.

Not only are prominent forum members, such as the M-19's Antonio Navarro Wolf and the Brazilian PT's Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva, running presidential candidacies in their respective countries, but they and their comrades have been feted by the State Department and other Project Democracy forces as representatives of a new "moderate" and "democratic" left which has laid down its guns and with which collaboration is now not only possible, but even desirable.

These fantasies were dealt a severe blow by a series of exposés run the week of March 14 in the Colombian daily *El Tiempo*, which revealed that the latest meeting of the forum, held in Havana in late January, included the participation of terrorist chieftains from the Colombian FARC and ELN movements and from Peru's Shining Path, along with a reputed spokesman for the Mexican EZLN.

According to the *El Tiempo* reports, based on eyewitness

accounts, the Havana-sponsored Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Congress for Solidarity, Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and the Lives of Our Peoples, attended by more than 1,000 delegates from so-called people's organizations from across the continent, served as a cover for two other events. The first, a summit meeting of Colombia's narco-terrorist organizations, was reportedly held simultaneously with the Fourth Congress and, according to photographic and videotaped evidence, included the unauthorized participation of Colombian Bishop Nel Beltrán Santamaría.

The second was a two-day session of the São Paulo

Forum, held immediately following the Fourth Congress, in which such fugitive terrorists as Alfonso Cano and Gutiérrez Bermúdez of the Colombian FARC and Leonel Pardo of the ELN not only were active participants, but distributed working documents for consideration by the forum. Also attending as specially invited guests, reported *El Tiempo*, were a Peruvian named Castillo, said to be the secretary of political organization of Shining Path, and a man named Velásquez identified as an EZLN leader from Mexico.

According to a State Department-published transcription

## Castro: No one will surrender his weapon

*Excerpts from speech given by Cuban President Fidel Castro to the closing ceremony of the Fourth Latin American and Caribbean meeting for Solidarity, Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and the Lives of Our Peoples, at the Havana Convention Center on Jan. 28, 1994. Emphasis has been added.*

. . . I cannot speak—and this is something you understand quite well—as freely as each of you can. In other words, being a guerrilla and being in the government are two different things. We wish we could go back to those guerrilla days. I look back on them with envy. The problems facing a revolution in power, a revolution responsible for the lives and futures of 11 million people, are very big. This forces us to refrain from bluntly saying everything we think. *Were we to speak our minds, diplomatic relations with many, or some, countries would be broken.* . . .

I feel just as revolutionary as I have been ever since I gained revolutionary awareness. I must add that I have not changed. Perhaps today we have more experience than we had before, but our ideas remain the same. . . . To be anti-neo-liberal is to be anti-imperialist. We could add that to be anti-neo-liberal is to be anticapitalist, most definitely. . . . Capitalism is fated to devour itself. . . .

The system fails when expansion stops. . . . And a system that is obliged to expand continuously is disastrous for the world. . . . Nature is being destroyed. The waters, the atmosphere, the oceans, lakes, rivers are being poisoned. The air is being poisoned. Because of the anarchistic, chaotic, and disorderly development, much is being destroyed. . . . They are truly endangering man's living conditions. I am not exaggerating. This was discussed

during a summit in Rio de Janeiro a little more than a year ago. . . . We are already . . . feeling the effects of a change in the weather. . . . These calamities were never observed in the past: unforeseen heavy rains and stronger hurricanes in some areas. These are all problems resulting from the heating of the atmosphere. . . .

There is another problem. For the Third World countries to develop, the economies of the developed countries must stop growing. This would be possible if a rational social system existed. . . . Were we to divide the amount of energy into quotas we can each use, we would need to solve the problems of those countries just beginning to develop. . . . We must add another problem: significant population growth. This growth is many times higher than the production of food. . . . If China were to develop, that alone would be a nightmare for all of the world's large economic blocs. China alone. It would be a nightmare. . . . It has been proven that all the material and energy resources in the world would not be enough. . . .

Capitalism is genocide for today's world, just think for a minute about the problem of population. . . . The world population is growing at an approximate rate of 100 million inhabitants a year. . . . What solution do neo-liberalism and capitalism offer? . . .

Now they are murdering the leaders and cadres of the FMLN. . . . They are so stupid that they are doing this after achieving peace. They are killing the revolutionaries. What will the revolutionaries think? Who is going to surrender his weapon only to be murdered later? Who can believe in the intentions and promises of the imperialists? . . .

We do not wish to return to the past. I can tell you that we do not want even the smallest corner of one of those stars the imperialists wish to add their flag. . . . The only way our star can descend from its triangle is to join the emblems of the united peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. I hope there will always be some red there because we cannot renounce red. We will never renounce, nor do we want to renounce, red. . . .

of Fidel Castro's closing speech to the Fourth Congress (see box), the Cuban dictator urged attendees not to lay down their weapons: "Who is going to surrender his weapon only to be murdered later? Who can believe in the intentions and promises of the imperialists?"

### A Colombian 'Chiapas' in the works?

*El Tiempo* also revealed that Colombian military intelligence had prepared a three-page classified report on the Havana congress, charging that one of the primary purposes of the meeting was to put together "a strategy to pressure the [Colombian] government, through bodies such as Amnesty International and Human Rights [sic], to hold dialogue with the guerrillas." Right on cue, Amnesty International issued a violent attack on the Colombian Armed Forces and government in mid-March, claiming that the military and its "paramilitary thugs" were responsible for more than 70% of all human rights abuses in Colombia, and the guerrillas only 2%! Amnesty has declared that the purpose of its report is to pressure the next government of Colombia (which will be elected in May) to rein in the Armed Forces—and presumably to negotiate a peace agreement with the National Guerrilla Coordinator.

The *El Tiempo* revelations have already turned into a diplomatic incident, with Colombian Foreign Minister Noemí Sanín requesting a "clarification" from the Castro regime. The revelations come at an especially sensitive moment, as relations between Cuba and Colombia were only restored last year and five Colombian government ministers were planning to visit Cuba in April to sign economic agreements, possibly including the sale of up to 20,000 barrels per day of crude oil to the fuel-strapped island nation.

Castro responded with a personal telephone call to Minister Sanín, assuring her that no such terrorist conclave was held in Havana, much less under his government's sponsorship, and that none of the cited individuals were in Cuba. Castro's protestations bring to mind his speech to the Fourth Congress, at which he regretted that he had to "refrain from bluntly saying everything we think. Were we to speak our minds, diplomatic relations with many, or some, countries would be broken."

*El Tiempo's* exposés have also triggered a fight within the Colombian Catholic Church, which unfortunately has within its ranks numerous clerics vying for the role Bishop Samuel Ruiz has played in Mexico as spokesman and messenger for the EZLN terrorists. Chief among these in Colombia is Bishop Nel Beltrán, who has served as a "mediator" in government-guerrilla talks for five years and who, according to *El Tiempo*, was active at the guerrilla summit in Havana. Bishop Nel Beltrán has insisted that he was on a 15-day vacation in the United States during the period of the Cuba events, but Colombian Prosecutor General Gustavo de Greiff has confirmed *El Tiempo's* charges. The Colombian Bishops Conference is now threatening to sue De Greiff.

## Kidnapping, Inc., business in Ibero-

by Carlos Méndez

While the climate of destabilization spreads in Mexico in the aftermath of the Jan. 1 Zapatista insurgency, the kidnapping industry in Mexico—and throughout Ibero-America—continues to flourish. On March 14, Alfredo Harp Helu, billionaire president of the administrative council of the financial group Banamex-Accival, was kidnapped in Mexico City.

Like his cousin Carlos Slim Helu, owner of the privatized company Teléfonos de México, Harp Helu was one of 77 Mexicans named on a list of businessmen targeted for kidnapping, found in the secret arms cache that exploded in May 1993 in Managua, Nicaragua. The explosion of that bunker revealed many things and confirmed others, such as the participation of the Basque ETA terrorists and, above all, the existence of a narco-terrorist international whose foci are Cuba and Nicaragua.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, this narco-terrorist international has been much more active, since terrorist subversion is no longer financed by either the former Soviet Union or the former East Germany. Drug trafficking, bank robberies, blackmail, and kidnapping today provide the financing for Ibero-America's narco-terrorist international. In Mexico alone so far this year, there are officially registered more than 500 kidnappings, with ransom demands in some cases exceeding \$15 million.

### The Mexican 'industry'

The recent kidnapping of banker Antonio Harp Helu is but one of more than 2,000 kidnapping cases registered in Mexico in recent years. "Viewed as the second best source of funds after bank robbery, the kidnapping of businessmen has become a highly successful 'industry' in Mexico," reported the Mexican daily *El Economista* March 15. According to the newspaper, authorities report that kidnapers have received multimillion-dollar ransoms—\$5, \$10, \$15, even \$50 million in one case—but some of their victims have also been assassinated. "In the past two years, kidnappings in the country have grown 200%, of which more than 50% did not end well, reported sources from international security agencies."

The first person to arrive at the site of the Managua explosion in May 1993 was Tomás Borge, the Sandinistas' former