

Colombia under renewed mob siege

by Valerie Rush

The leak of confidential minutes to an emergency Cabinet meeting called last Nov. 7 by Colombian President Betancur has fueled a renewed offensive by the dope mob to take that country from the top down, and as such represents a major breach of Colombia's national security. Presidential and congressional elections are both scheduled for the first half of this year, and a reemergence of the drug traffickers into positions of political power in that country will depend in large part on the discrediting of Betancur's anti-drug war and the silencing of nationalist elements both within and outside his government.

On Nov. 7 of last year, Colombia's Palace of Justice was seized by the narco-terrorist M-19, and the Supreme Court magistracy—among others—taken hostage. An emergency meeting of the presidential cabinet was convoked to determine strategy in the face of this criminal challenge to the Colombian state.

The minutes of that meeting, somehow acquired and made public by the dope-linked Radio Caracol, reveal that a number of cabinet members, prominently including Labor Minister Jorge Carrillo Rojas, demanded that the government stand firm against the narco-terrorists' blackmail. Carrillo, formerly a top trade union leader, is best known for his fierce opposition to the austerity policies of the International Monetary Fund, and for his advocacy of using drug repayment monies to finance large-scale development projects instead. Carrillo is cited in the minutes insisting that "any dialogue be with the Armed Forces, because the only message to be sent [the terrorists] is that of their surrender, and the only offer, that of respect for their lives and impartial trials."

With the unanimous backing of the cabinet, President Betancur resolved to send an offer with terms of surrender to the M-19 leadership, while rejecting any possibility of negotiating with the terrorists.

The publication of the minutes, which has triggered a storm of press commentary, has served to identify—and target—ministers like Carrillo for drug mob vengeance. At the same time, it has opened the way for the drug-tainted media to decry anew the specter of "militarization" of the country—at precisely the moment when the Colombian Armed Forces are engaged in bloody combat against a narco-

terrorist multinational army out to destabilize, and ultimately destroy, the Betancur government.

Exemplary is *El Espectador* columnist María Jimena Duzán, who accuses the cabinet hard-liners at that Nov. 7 meeting of resorting to a "militarist conception" for solving the Justice Palace siege. She sneers at "the Olympian manner" in which the ministers afterwards defended the handling of the Justice Palace siege as "protecting the institutions," noting that "if the institutions were saved, half of the members of the Supreme Court were sacrificed." Ignoring the fact that the magistrates were murdered by the M-19 narco-terrorists, Jimena Duzán concludes that the executive's "military criteria"—applied in numerous instances of public disorder—has now put at risk "the state of law in Colombia and the structures of political power."

The convergence of a heavily-armed, multinational brigade of rampaging narco-terrorists on Colombia's southeastern provinces during the past several weeks has forced a mass deployment of troops into that region, where they have found mass graves with the bullet-riddled corpses of guerrillas tried and executed by their own leaders for betraying "the cause." One can only wonder if Jimena Duzán and her liberal co-thinkers prefer the "democratic" criteria of the narco-terrorists.

Speech by Jorge Carrillo

'Use coffee bonanza for great projects'

Jorge Carrillo Rojas, Colombia's Minister of Labor and Social Security, gave the following speech at a testimonial dinner in his honor in Pasto (Province of Nariño) on Jan. 24. Nariño, bordering Ecuador, is a spectacularly beautiful region, which however has the most feudalistic social structure in the country.

Since I took office as Minister of Labor, it has been one of my most ardent desires to visit Nariño, which I now see fulfilled. It is not just a question of paying tribute to this beautiful and generous province and its honest hard-working people. What is happening is that when I come to lands such as Nariño, where the geography has hardly been transformed by the hand of man, I become aware of the greatness of our people which does not faint despite the difficulties and the neglect to which it has been subjected for decades.

Things are improving of course, although not as speedily as the government of President Betancur would like. Nonetheless, the principal wealth, the population, and in particular

the unemployed, are there, waiting for an opportunity to make their contribution to the development of the nation. The advent of a new coffee bonanza necessarily means a unique chance to put to work a good portion of our workforce which at present has no jobs.

It is calculated that the increase in the world coffee prices, due to the fact that the latest Brazilian harvest was destroyed by frost, will bring in approximately \$1.6 billion more this year, and \$3-5 billion dollars more in the three to four years to come. If these funds are channeled into national development, the bonanza will have a permanent and positive effect, because it will serve to create capacities which the country does not presently have.

There are projects already studied by governmental agencies, ready to be implemented as soon as the financing exists; among them one can count projects for a total of approximately \$470 million, which were amply discussed in a forum on agro-industry and fishing last year in the city of Cali. There are many other already evaluated projects. With the coffee bonanza, we don't need to wait for foreign capital to arrive, in order to finance them.

Taking advantage of the coffee bonanza, problems can begin to be resolved that urgently require solution, such as that of producing food in a sufficient quantity so that every Colombian can have a balanced diet rich in proteins.

The national food problem consists of the fact that the great majority of our 29 million compatriots eat rice, potatoes, yucca, and bananas every day, while very few eat meat, milk, and eggs. Nationally, on the average, only one-fifth of the protein and 75% of the calories needed for good nutrition, are consumed.

The bad national diet is a reflection of poor agricultural production. We must create the conditions for our peasants to be turned into farmers. In no other way can we increase productivity in the countryside. To work in little tracts of land, by pick and shovel methods, without access to modern technology, degrades human beings to the condition of beasts who carry out a repetitive activity from generation to generation, without having access to adequate standards of living and culture for the human species. You, the people of Nariño, know very well this difficult situation.

Transforming the diet

To establish what is necessary to do today in a correct program of agricultural production, we must start by estimating the quantity of milk, meat, and eggs which the population will need from now until the year 2000, to propose the great changes that must be realized in the countryside and in the related industrial base.

In the short term we must set up a livestock industry capable of producing four times as much meat, three times as much milk, and seven times as many eggs as are produced today. The key point to increase the production of animal protein is centered in rapidly increasing the cattle population

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and feeding it with a diet of high-grain content. We must double the number of head of cattle in the pasturelands and reduce the time of production of meat, since at present it takes up to three years to produce a piece of meat on the table of the consumer. This time can be halved if the cattle are confined in fattening barns and fed a balanced, high-grain-content diet.

The pro-hectare yields in cereals both for human and animal consumption, must be doubled between now and the year 2000, and the land under cultivation must increase to about 20 times as much as now.

A Colombian farmer in the year 2000 must develop the capacity to feed at least 11 citizens, instead of the two poorly fed ones of today. We must set as a goal that with the same economically active population working in agriculture as at present, the production and productivity shall be raised to the estimated levels. One million new jobs would be created in infrastructure building, provision of services in technical inputs, transport, warehousing, and meat processing, as well as research and development activities for new agricultural technologies.

To have an idea of the tremendous impact of the creation of new jobs in new industries, think about what it would mean to have to double the number of tractors in the fields and quintuple the production and supplying of fertilizers.

If we decide to defeat usury and impose the necessary unity between economics and morality, as was indicated by Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, and ratified by the recent Synod in Rome, we could begin an era of real industrial growth and reaffirm our sovereignty in the face of the claims of certain international financial institutions which only suggest to us adjustments and cutbacks, and never back us in our great projects for growth. As I said on other occasions, only a grand alliance for production between industrialists, farmers, and urban and rural workers, can implement the task of turning Colombia into an agricultural and industrial power. The important thing is that we are already taking steps in that direction.

Long live the people of Nariño!