

Media pronounce narco-terrorist cult as the future of Ibero-America

by Andrea Olivieri

On June 2, less than a week after Colombians elected César Gaviria Trujillo as their President and commander of their nation's war against the cocaine cartels, the *Washington Post* dedicated its post-electoral coverage to the candidate of the "M-19 Democratic Alliance," Antonio Navarro Wolf, whose third-place showing in the election was described as the most important political phenomenon "in Colombian politics this century." Navarro Wolf is a "former commander" of the recently legalized M-19, a narco-terrorist gang which went down in history for its 1985 seizure of Colombia's Justice Palace on behalf of the cocaine cartels. Half of the Supreme Court justices were executed, the nation's legal archives burned, and 100 people killed during that siege.

Today, the M-19 is being offered continent-wide power on a silver platter. Its sudden thrust into the limelight is part of the gameplan of its Anglo-American and Soviet sponsors to present the M-19 as a model of the so-called democratic process "sweeping" the continent. Navarro was explicit on this strategy when he told the Brazilian daily *Folha de São Paulo* May 28 that "A very important political party renovation is taking place in South America. I think we should have rapid integration of those parties to build Latin American integration." He described the M-19's close friendship with the Brazilian Workers' Party, which is identified with the gnostic doctrine of "theology of liberation."

The 'political phenomenon of the 1990s'

The *Post*, which lovingly portrays Navarro as a "thin, scholarly and professorial" leftist of the non-Marxist variety, suggested that Navarro will get a "high-visibility post" in Gaviria's cabinet, and quoted the M-19er: "We are the political phenomenon of the 1990s. We are growing rapidly, and we aspire to be the majority party by the year 2000." The Eastern Establishment's flagship paper, the *New York Times*, similarly credited the M-19 with mediating the so-called peace talks with the country's other narco-terrorist forces, and predicted that the M-19 will "finally walk through the doors of government" on Gaviria's inauguration day. The *Wall Street Journal* and the *Christian Science Monitor* similarly presented the M-19 as idealists who have recognized the impossibility of winning an armed revolution and who are now committed to winning peace for the violence-torn

nation of Colombia.

None of the U.S. media have mentioned the one—and only—relevant fact about these terrorists. Far from being the "liberation fighters" the press has portrayed them to be, the M-19 has always been and *continues* to be a crucial accessory to the cocaine cartels' strategy for capturing political power in Colombia. The 13% of the vote the M-19 garnered on election day was no hopeful expression of "the country's hunger for change," as the *Post* would have us believe. Rather, it was a product of political and financial dirty tricks by former Colombian President and mafia godfather Alfonso López Michelsen, and by the billionaire cocaine cartels themselves.

Starting in 1981, when—according to Navarro—a "non-aggression pact" was signed between the M-19 and Medellín Cartel chieftain Pablo Escobar, the guerrilla group took out a cartel franchise in exchange for providing protection to drug mafia activities. By 1985, the M-19 was conducting full-scale armed actions on behalf of the cocaine cartel, such as the Justice Palace siege.

In 1988, the M-19 launched its final operation, kidnaping prominent Colombians as part of a strategy to open the door to a negotiated "amnesty" that could pave the way to political power. That strategy worked, and may now be the model for the M-19's drug-running sponsors.

The strategy of the M-19 and the cartels is obvious. The *Wall Street Journal* of May 22 didn't even blush when it wrote, "So strongly in favor of peace is M-19 that it even urges the government to give up its 10-month old war on drugs and make a deal with the drug lords." Rafael Pardo, the aide of President Virgilio Barco who negotiated the M-19 amnesty, admitted, "M-19 gave up its violent ways, but its politics are the same as before." Navarro boasted of the state security guards assigned to protect him: "The only difference with the past is that before they hunted me and now they protect me."

A cult of Gnostic 'magicians'

The M-19 is not simply an asset of the drug mafia. It is also committed to imposing New Age institutions in place of traditional, national ones. Navarro told an interviewer in 1985 that the reason for the attack on the Justice Palace was

that the M-19 sought to destroy “one of the last, if not the last, respectable institutions which the country has. . . . We evaluated what the Supreme Court meant, in a country which no longer believes in anything, and which only has two institutions left: the Catholic Church and the Supreme Court.”

Navarro is a co-founder of the M-19, and self-described as a follower of M-19 leader Jaime Bateman, who was killed during a suspected drug-smuggling operation in 1984. Bateman told the Peruvian magazine *Caretas* in November 1983 that the secret to a successful guerrilla insurgency lay in the M-19’s adoption of the methods of the gnostic “magicians.” Bateman claimed he was “invisible” to his enemies and “immortal” because of a “mental chain” that his mother, a leading member of the gnostic cult, wove to protect him and his organization. Bateman went on in that interview to explain:

“I believe more in passion than in ideology, or theory. . . . I believe that our work needs more passion right now than reason. When people reason, they become pathetically slow, afraid. . . . Science stultifies the world, and stultifies thinking. . . . The traditional left refuses to acknowledge the importance of cults, magical thought, religious manifestations.”

Navarro, in a 1985 interview to the Mexican magazine *Cuadernos Políticos*, endorsed Bateman’s “philosophy” as the key to recruiting *children* into the M-19’s strategy of cultural and military warfare:

“What Bateman said is true: You don’t need so much to win over the minds of the people, as you have to win their hearts. . . . Very rapid social dynamics are needed in countries with . . . a youth without hope, which expects nothing from the future. . . . For example, in the [guerrilla] camps, we worked with *gamines*, abandoned children who do not have parents and live in the streets: Thousands of children aged 10, 14, 16; these are the worst of human marginality, because they are marginalized in childhood. Organized in the camps, these children become a factor of tremendous dynamism in the popular struggle. . . . To what do you call all these people? To something quasi-magical, audacious, novel, vital.”

Navarro also described the M-19’s geopolitical strategy: “For us, what is fundamental is what is happening in the Pacific Basin of South America—Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and even Chile. . . . This is where we shall find the solution to the stalemate of the revolution in Central America, where certain limits have been reached because of the force of imperialism and the small size of the countries involved in the conflict. We believe that the new fronts which are being opened up in the South American Pacific Basin will provide hope, give oxygen, to the Latin American revolution.”

The M-19 has extensive links throughout the Pacific Basin, where for years it headed a multinational narco-terrorist force calling itself the Americas Battalion. It is also well-connected in Europe, where its support apparatus is the so-called “solidarity” and “human rights” organizations linked

to the London-based Amnesty International; the “religious” organizations that subscribe to the “theology of liberation” doctrine; and a network of so-called Colombia Committees. Scattered throughout these support networks are elements of the global terror apparatus wielded so effectively by the Soviets.

A glimpse of the real M-19

Feb. 26, 1980: An M-19 assault occupied the Dominican Embassy in Bogotá during a diplomatic reception. Over a dozen ambassadors were taken hostage, along with 60 others. The embassy was held for 61 days, and serious bloodshed avoided when the Turbay Ayala government paid a secret ransom and provided the terrorists with safe-conduct to Cuba.

Dec. 9, 1981: Mexican authorities arrested Jaime Guillot Lara, a Colombian drug trafficker and, according to Mexican sources, a leading member of the M-19. Guillot confessed to being a major arms supplier for the M-19, using cocaine shipments to finance weapons purchases.

Dec. 5, 1984: M-19 leader Iván Marino Ospina called a Mexico City press conference to announce M-19 support for the cocaine cartel’s threat to “kill one American for every Colombian extradited.” Said Marino Ospina, “These threats should be carried out throughout the world against the representatives of rapacious imperialism, and will serve as the basis for negotiations if some day these traffickers, who are also Colombians . . . use their money to build the nation.” Several weeks later, cocaine czar Carlos Lehder (currently serving a life sentence in the U.S. for drug trafficking) responded: “The M-19 is the only movement that has declared itself against extradition. Iván’s call in Mexico is a call for the guerrilla movements to join the [drug] bonanza.”

Nov. 6, 1985: Forty M-19 narco-terrorists, including Marino Ospina, stormed the Colombian Justice Palace and executed 12 members of the Supreme Court. According to then-Justice Minister Enrique Parejo González: “Let’s get one thing straight. The [M-19] guerrillas did not enter the Justice Palace to talk. They came to kill. They sought out as the immediate target of their action . . . the same judges whose lives had been threatened for having given favorable opinions on the extraditions. . . . They murdered them in cold blood. . . . The rebels burned the archives and the library where all the documents related to drug traffickers’ extraditions were kept. Their conditions were non-negotiable, one of them being a public trial of the head of state to be carried out by the assailants themselves.”

June 1988: An M-19 assault team kidnaped Colombian statesman Alvaro Gómez Hurtado, murdering his bodyguard. The ransom demands included a government commitment to establish a negotiations commission which would facilitate a political and juridical amnesty for the M-19. César Gaviria Trujillo, then interior minister, denounced the M-19 action as an effort “to win a national audience for its political project.”