

Colombia: Carter's Pot Farm Of The Future

On June 23, Peter Bourne, Carter's presidential advisor on drug abuse, and Malthea Falco, special State Department representative on narcotics policy, flew to Bogota to meet with Colombian president Alfonso Lopez Michelsen. Official reports of the discussions held reveal that the Carter envoys offered Lopez technical and financial assistance to aid in government attempts to control Colombia's vast drug producing and smuggling network. What went unreported in the Colombian press is the fact that Bourne and Falco are leading the drive in the United States for the decriminalization of marijuana and cocaine, Colombia's two leading illegal exports, and that Bourne's and Falco's assignment in Colombia was to pressure, bribe or blackmail President Lopez into converting Colombia into the largest drug plantation in the world.

Keith Stroup, the head of the U.S.-based National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) made explicit in a recent interview what Falco, an ex-member of NORML's Advisory Board, was after in Colombia. Stroup explained NORML's support for the idea of an "Organization of Dope Exporting Countries" (ODEC), of which the first three likely members would be Jamaica, Colombia and Costa Rica. When reminded of the 1971 UN Conference on Psychotropic Drugs at which 42 nations pledged their opposition to the proliferation and abuse of "such (psychotropic) substances and to the illicit traffic to which it gives rise," Stroup casually outlined the various ways a country could circumvent such an arrangement. One such possibility would be the creation of "free port zones" outside the reach of government regulation. Such "free ports" are already extensively used in Columbia by smugglers as the nexus of their vast contraband operations. Stroup also reminded the interviewer, "It only takes one country's violation of the treaty to make it invalid." The lure of increased tourist revenues from legalized drug production could be just the incentive such a country would need, suggested Stroup. Furthermore, the government-sanctioned cultivation of these drugs would guarantee billions of dollars of export revenues to "ODEC" members.

Carter Agents Within

The pressure campaign being conducted against the Lopez government by Carter's highly-qualified drug pushers has its counterpart inside Colombia itself. Over the last several weeks, the self-defined fascist wing of the Conservative Party led by Alvaro Gomez Hurtado and the Fabian wing of the Liberal Party have openly promoted the legalization of marijuana as a new and lucrative cash crop for Colombia:

* On June 13, Jorge Media Salazar, Liberal director of the illustrious Banco de Bogota, responded to a question

on the effects of illicit drug revenues on the Colombian economy. "One thing is the trafficking of drugs, and quite another thing are export revenues of \$1.5 billion."

* On June 18, Liberal daily *El Espectador* editorially called on the government to "plant its feet firmly on the ground and look to the future" in recognizing that "marijuana is not much more harmful than alcohol or tobacco."

* On June 17, Alvaro Gomez Hurtado's newspaper, *El Siglo*, editorially charged the Lopez government with appearing "ridiculous" in its futile attempts to control drug trafficking and urged that it end the "impotent spectacle" of trying to control an uncontrollable situation. The editorial demanded that the government stop using the Armed Forces in a "policeman's role" to fight drug traffickers and suggested the legalization of marijuana production in a call to Lopez to "either do something spectacular (to end the drug problem) or relieve our customs officers and our judges from temptation."

* On June 19, *El Siglo* columnist and leading propagandist for Gomez Hurtado, Juan Diego Jaramillo, openly called for the liberation of marijuana as a legal cash crop in Colombia. Diego Jaramillo argued that U.S. decriminalization of marijuana was imminent and that if Colombia did not both legalize and *nationalize* the cultivation and exportation of marijuana, other countries would be there first and Colombia "will have killed the goose that lays the golden eggs."

The drive to convert Colombia into the narcotics center of the world has several implications. Foremost, it is intended to provide the source for an unending supply of mind-killing drugs with which to saturate an enslaved working class in the United States. Carter's deindustrialization-zero growth energy policies demand a stupified labor force which can be herded off to labor-intensive work projects without resistance. Secondly, billions of dollars of export revenues from narcotics sales to the U.S. could be easily tapped by Wall Street for debt payment, a most comforting thought for the currently bankrupt New York banks.

However, the conversion of Colombian agriculture from a net food producer to an exporter of narcotics spells nothing short of starvation and triage for the already impoverished and enraged Colombian population. This fact has served as a decisive "reality principle" in determining the actions of Lopez Michelsen's constituency-based party machine. Lopez's recent rejection of Yale Professor Jose Cabranes as Carter's appointee to the ambassadorship to Colombia marks the first substantial sign of resistance to Carter's drug plans. Cabranes, nominated by Miami mayor Maurice Ferre — a leading Carter backer and notorious "Golden

Triangle" drug smuggler — was intended by Carter to be the linchpin of the drug scenario for Colombia. Colombia's rejection of the nomination has dealt an important blow to those plans.

Lopez's chosen candidate for the 1978 presidential elections in Colombia, Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, has taken a similar first step in condemning the proliferation

of a drug culture in Colombia as "the virus of moral degeneracy." Turbay had posed a programmatic alternative to Carter's genocidal plans for Colombia in a speech earlier this month when he called for intensive mechanization of the countryside to free labor for the industrial employment of the Colombian economy.

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Response Begins To Gomez Hurtado's Drug-Pushing

The following are excerpts from a June 28 letter written to the widely-read Bogota Liberal daily El Tiempo by one Josefina Velez de Escobar. This is the first public response to the drug-pushing policies of Alvaro Gomez Hurtado through his newspaper El Siglo.

The *El Siglo* columnist Juan Diego Jaramillo insists on a highly negative, destructive and detrimental thesis for the country...on the problem of marijuana...

It is necessary to alert public opinion to this thesis of *El Siglo's*, which is as pitifully backward as if it existed in Bedrock, the city of the Flintstones; and as contradictory as if it were deliberately attempting to mislead Colombians. Let us see why:

The problem of drug addiction begins at its "source," that is, in the production of the raw materials. For *El Siglo*, the problem has its "origins" in the fact that there exist drug addicts,

or "consumers." This is sheer idiocy...

To pretend that the problem is an "economic" one, that is to say, that only those who have the purchasing power can afford the vice, is another aspect of the vulgar and "desarrollista" (a reference to the Brazilian economic model — ed.) theory which is as insane as the (column's) final conclusion that "it is necessary to legalize the production of marijuana" to obtain revenues. And that the "buyers" defend themselves as best they can...

I call attention to this thesis which I furiously denounce and combat because it demonstrates a total ignorance of the drug problem and because it is a threat against the country. The mere fact that a newspaper calls for legalization of the cultivation of marijuana is equal to a call to farmers to abandon the growing of food and to dedicate themselves instead to the production of this corruption. We can gauge the consequences!

Venezuelan President Upsets Carter's Plans

The Carter Administration planned the current visit of Venezuelan president Carlos Andres Perez to the United States to culminate in the establishing of "special relations" between the two countries, making Venezuela into what one Brazilian paper called "the officialized voice of Jimmy Carter in Latin America." Even before the end of the five-day visit, President Perez has shot down U.S. hopes of placing Venezuela securely in its hipocket, and reaffirmed his country's commitment for a new world economic order.

The Carter Administration had four basic objectives on which it hoped to secure Venezuelan agreement. Venezuelan support for Carter's human rights policy toward Latin America was considered sewn up following Venezuela's active support for the United States' human rights position at the just-ended meeting of the Organization of American States. Venezuelan aid in blocking the West German nuclear plant deal with Brazil was judged only slightly more difficult. Of more fundamental interest to the Carter Administration was the securing of a "U.S. option" on Venezuela's oil reserves in

the Orinoco, and the use of Venezuela's petrodollars in bailing out the debt of the Caribbean countries.

Perez has explicitly rejected all but one of the Carter Administration objectives, as the following brief selections from two of Perez' speeches in the U.S. vividly demonstrate. Perez announced even before leaving Venezuela that Venezuela's oil would not be an item of discussion. Perez sharply rejected Carter's human rights stand as a vicious fraud without a new world economic order in his greeting to Carter at the White House, and then fully supported Latin American's right to develop nuclear energy in a speech before the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States.

Printed below are excerpts of a speech by President Carlos Andres Perez at the White House June 28:

Mr. President of the United States and Mrs. Carter:

...The problem of world peace can no longer be defined in terms of strategic balance, balance of power, zones of influence, blocs and military alliances. Peace is not only