

OAS to set meeting to condemn drugs

by Dolia Estévez-Pettingell

The drive to win international support for the Quito Resolution of Aug. 11, which condemned drug trafficking as a "crime against humanity," has moved into the Organization of American States (OAS), of which the United States is, of course, a member. On Aug. 20, *EIR's* reporter attended a meeting of the OAS Special Task Force on Drugs, called to discuss convening an "Inter-American specialized" conference on drugs that would carry forward the Quito Resolution. The working session in Washington, D.C., was attended by almost all the OAS ambassadors and by the Secretary General of the OAS João Baena Soares—a rare occurrence.

Baena, just back from a South American tour where he met with the Presidents of Colombia, Bolivia and Peru, said that the leaders of those nations believe that "something very immediate and very concrete must be done by the OAS." He called for participants to give serious thought to the Venezuelan proposal for a "regional fund" to help nations fight drugs.

Baena was followed by the Venezuelan and Bolivian ambassadors, who gave detailed reports on the fight against drugs in their respective nations. The Venezuelan ambassador, Edilberto Moreno, announced that his government had recently ordered the creation of an "anti-drug command" to "suppress" the mafia who have turned Venezuela into their "international bridge" for both the drug trade and money laundering. He quoted Colombian Justice Minister Lara Bonilla, who was killed by the mafia, to remind the audience that the mafia is a "supranational organization" which must be fought internationally.

Fernando Salazar, the Bolivian ambassador who is also the chairman of the OAS drug task force, showed a video tape to demonstrate how coca plantations are being destroyed by the army in Bolivia. He also gave the latest developments on the drug fight in his country which, along with Colombia, is being accused by the United States of not being serious about fighting drugs. If that were true, he added, "Lara Bonilla would have not been assassinated by the mafia." He said that the United States should take its "share of responsibility" by reducing drug consumption at home.

A draft agenda for a meeting on drugs proposed the following: an in-depth analysis of the drug trafficking problem

by a "panel of experts"; a condemnation of drugs as a crime against humanity as in the Quito Resolution; and international cooperation, including creation of a "regional fund" against drugs and a call for the United States to crack down on consumption levels at home.

"We accept the challenge of taking quick actions in the war against drugs," were the concluding remarks by the Bolivian ambassador. A deadline of 15 days was given for the governments of the OAS member nations to respond on the agenda proposal.

What follows are selected excerpts from the speech given by Edilberto Moreno, Venezuelan ambassador to the OAS.

. . . The problem of drugs has already ceased to be dealt with simply as one of "public health," as a "social problem," and has turned into something more serious and far-reaching which affects our National Sovereignty: a problem of national security and defense, because it strikes at the independence and security of the nation. . . .

Drugs in all their manifestations of production, commercialization, consumption, and so forth, de-nationalize and de-naturalize us by injuring our ethical, religious, political, historic, cultural, economic, and republican values.

It is useful to point to the criteria set forth by the Colombian martyr, Dr. Lara Bonilla, who was assassinated in Bogotá. . . . "The drug traffickers act in accord with their interests, without limitations of an ideological-political type nor of nationality. They do not stop at borders. It is not an internal problem, an exclusively national problem, nor one against some nationals, but against transnational organized crime circles who threaten to shatter our society and destabilize us institutionally. To provoke a reaction against drugs, the repressive apparatus must encounter a rapid and appropriate administration of justice, a special and operative justice."

. . . Drugs for Venezuela turn out to be a problem "fundamentally imposed and imported."

Venezuela . . . has become the victim of the commerce of the drug runners, who have taken over the country because of its magnificent geostrategic location as a "transshipment bridge," where in the last six months there have been huge "million-dollar" confiscations which were intended for the international market. . . .

The chief of the Venezuelan state ordered the formation of an Anti-Drug Command, including the Armed Forces and three national police corps, with the sole purpose of carrying out a repressive fight against the drug traffickers which have taken Venezuela as an "international bridge" for drug trafficking and so-called "laundering" of dollars from the dope trade. . . .

Venezuela considers that to fight the illicit drug trade, *international cooperation* is required, and that the setting up of the Venezuelan-Colombian Convention, into which both countries have integrated their efforts, has effectively contributed to advancing this fight.