

Colombian drug kingpin calls for armed uprising, builds rebel army

by Robyn Quijano

Colombian cocaine kingpin Carlos Lehder Rivas, now sought by the Colombian government for extradition to the United States to face charges for cocaine and marijuana trafficking, called a secret jungle press conference on Jan. 28 to announce his intention to form a half-million-man army to overthrow the government of President Belisario Betancur. Lehder's radical "revolutionary" movement for the liberation of the continent's drug traffickers went on this new offensive as Pope John Paul II traveled through neighboring Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru in an offensive against precisely the kind of hedonism, immorality, cultism, and radical ideologies that Carlos Lehder preaches.

Lehder, who created a "National Latin Movement" several years ago in his attempt to buy himself political offices and take over his home state of Quindio in the middle of one of the big drug production zones, is determined to organize the Colombian population behind drug runners. Lehder's ideology is openly national socialist (Nazi), and he reiterated in his recent press conference his long standing admiration for Adolf Hitler. Lehder finds it useful to use the name of Hitler "to finish off the monarchical oligarchy," the name he uses for the present government and its war on drugs. "The world is very afraid of Hitler," he told the journalists.

When asked what he thinks of Hitler, he answered: "Adolf eliminated 21 million communists and 10 million enemies allied to them. He is the greatest warrior which humanity has ever had. What happens is that history is told by the Jews the way they want the world to see it. But ask the Germans what really happened. I, for example, half of my blood is German and it is as if a Brazilian were asked to speak about Colombia. He can't do it; it's got to be a Colombian who speaks about Colombia. The Jews never should have come to Germany; they should have stayed in their land."

Lehder's movement openly backs the West German Green Party, stating that their environmentalist goals are similar to those of his National Latin Movement.

Lehder learned his love of nature and radical idealism while rising quickly from car-thief to hot-shot drug connec-

tion in the United States during the 1970s, when he accumulated enough wealth to enter the big time. A partnership with world-class swindler and dirty-money financier Robert Vesco was launched with their joint purchase of a private island in the Bahamas, a traffickers' paradise equipped with guarded fortresses and refrigerated airplane hangers.

Vesco's business dealings are handled in the United States by the law firm of Kenneth Bialkin, head of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which has been caught red handed financing neo-Nazi movements in the United States.

Vesco's partnership includes Fidel Castro. Lehder is the drugs-for-guns middleman between Havana and the M-19 guerrillas in Colombia. The Nazi Lehder and the "leftist" M-19 are working in concert to launch a bloody civil war which will allow great parts of the national territory to fall exclusively into the hands of the drug runners and their terrorist and military allies.

During President Betancur's December 1984 visit to Mexico, M-19 head Ivan Marino Ospina turned up in Mexico City to tell press that his organization fully endorsed legalized drugs and amnesty for the drug mafia, and called for fulfillment of the Colombian mafia's threat to murder U.S. diplomats around the world. Marino Ospina also explained: "The drug traffic has taken on a special characteristic in my country because Colombians have benefitted from this activity."

In Lehder's recent clandestine interview, he praised the M-19 as "the only movement which has declared itself against extradition," and said he would begin negotiations with Marino Ospina "because he is a nationalist and a revolutionary."

Lehder evaluated his allies among the M-19 terrorists like this: "The M-19 is a movement which has made positive changes like leaving behind extortion and kidnapping. It is the only movement which has proclaimed itself against extradition. The M-19 plays a primordial role for the masses as does the Latino [National Latin Movement] and the other political parties. Ivan's call from Mexico is a call for the guerrilla movements to incorporate themselves into the [dope] bonanza; I prefer for them to finance themselves with the

bonanza to financing with the anguish of Colombians by means of extortions or kidnappings.”

Carlos Lehder appeared in the jungle after months of running from Colombian justice to head up the public relations campaign of the international drug mafias. They believe they can stop the war on drugs launched by Ibero-American presidents over the last year—with the backing of President Reagan—by using pure terror tactics. Lehder’s wild jungle theatrics consisted of an appearance as a bearded guerrilla leader surrounded by the members of his “army,” who appeared to be foreign and carried a wide range of modern weaponry “to defend national sovereignty.” It was a publicity stunt that 10 journalists did their utmost to publicize throughout the nation.

The following is a close paraphrase of Lehder’s statement, as shown on the national TV news program of Juan Guillermo Rios: “After the execution of Lara Bonilla, I went abroad; I was away for seven months and I just got back. I’ve come back to prevent the extradition of Colombians, to be part of the national dialogue, to speak with military officers, to speak with Ivan Marino Ospina because he is a nationalist and revolutionary. I will speak with the nationalist sectors of the Colombian Army.

A war of terror

When the first four Colombian drug runners were extradited to the United States in December, the Colombian mafia put out the word that they would kill five Americans for every Colombian extradited. Now Lehder has upped the ante, threatening not only the life of President Betancur, but that of any citizen who dares to fight the dope mafia. Lehder announced that it was “the people” who had assassinated drug-fighting Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, to prevent more than 300 Colombians from being extradited to the United States. He said that he is convinced that “those who violate national sovereignty and those who sign a treaty to extradite our people, must be beaten with the same stick.”

Lara Bonilla had not only proposed the extradition treaty, but was responsible for busting the world’s largest “cocaine cities,” and leading the national effort to reject mafia monies in political campaigns and the “Robin Hood” gifts of housing and zoos the mafia was using to buy-off the population. Carlos Lehder and the owners of Tranquiland and other cocaine production centers have been implicated in the murder of Lara Bonilla.

U.S. Ambassador Lewis Tambs and DEA officials have gotten similar treatment. Bombs were planted in front of the U.S. embassy leading to the unfortunate withdrawal of the ambassador. Since the mafias won that round, they have more brazenly pushed their strategy of terror.

In a front-page copywritten *San Francisco Examiner* story of Jan. 31 headlined, “Hit Squad Targets U.S.; Drug Dealers in Colombia Seek Revenge Against DEA,” Phil Bronstein writes that a hit squad left Colombia “within the past few

days. . . . The Colombians, hired by major drug traffickers in their country, have been offered \$300,000. It will go to the first man to kidnap an agent alive, according to DEA memos. Any captured agent would reportedly be tortured or murdered, federal sources involved in the investigation told the *Examiner*.”

John Thomas, an assistant secretary of state, said on Jan. 31 that officials are taking very seriously the reports of the Colombia terror squad being deployed to the United States to attack federal drug enforcement agents. Thomas said that the drug runners are in “rough shape” and are “hitting back.”

“In Colombia,” Thomas said, “there have been unprecedented numbers of arrests and seizures. Next year the government of Colombia expects to destroy the vast majority of the marijuana harvest. So what you see is the terrorists, the Colombian traffickers, backed up against the wall. We’re hurting them. We know that. They’re striking back.”

A hemispheric conference

Strong determination to fight and win the war with the drug mob internationally was apparent at the Western Hemisphere Conference on Drugs sponsored by Sen. Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.). Cabinet-level officials attended from Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Mexico, and all nations of the hemisphere were represented by high-level diplomats.

Senator Hawkins announced that Nancy Reagan will be holding a “summit” of first ladies from the Western Hemisphere in Georgia in the middle of the year to coordinate efforts against drug abuse. This proposal, and the overall atmosphere of determination that governments can beat the drug traffickers, must now move forward into the economic realm. Winning the war on drugs means closing down the International Monetary Fund and the banking institutions that launder the hundreds of billion a year that the footsoldiers of Dope, Inc. produce.

Narcotrafico, S.A.

Just days before Lehder’s jungle pronouncement, the best-selling book *Dope, Inc.*, commissioned in 1978 by Lyndon LaRouche, was released in a Spanish-language edition at press conferences in Bogota and other Ibero-American capitals. With its new chapters on the Ibero-American dirty-money/drug trade, the book carries a searing expose of Lehder.

Released to the press less than a week ago, *Narcotrafico, S.A.*—dedicated to Rodrigo Lara Bonilla—is already making waves across Ibero-America. In Panama, a financial haven for the drug trade, entire chapters of *Dope, Inc.* are being read nightly on a popular radio show. In Mexico, a review of the book, emphasizing its exposure of the Nazi PAN party, was carried by the prominent Mexico City daily *El Heraldo*. In Peru, the leading Lima daily, *El Comercio*, reported on the book’s release, focusing on the portions on the synthetically created Peruvian terrorist army Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path).