

U.S. liberals target Guatemala

by Gretchen Small

The United States liberal press has ganged up with the U.S. State Department to demoralize and then destroy the armed forces of Guatemala. Their reasons for doing so are elementary. The Kissinger circles' "new Yalta" scheme to redivide the world with the Soviet Union, requires that no nation in Ibero-America shall maintain a strong defense, nor an armed forces capable of defending it.

Guatemala's armed forces, which currently rule the government, provide the primary institutional stability in a country where political parties are new and weak. Collapsing export prices and increased interest payments on the country's foreign debt have pushed Guatemala, like the rest of Ibero-America, into the worst economic crisis since the 1930s.

In a new *EIR* film released in August, "Soviet Unconventional Warfare in Ibero-America: The Case of Guatemala," Army spokesman Col. Marco Antonio Castellanos warns that the dollars which the drug mafia controls give them enormous advantage, in a situation in which legitimate economic activities face austerity, or are failing outright. In 1984, according to official statistics of the Guatemalan Guardia de Hacienda (Home Guard), over \$370 million in marijuana, opium, and cocaine were seized in Guatemalan territory. The bulk of the dope was produced inside the country, almost exclusively in remote areas under the control of Soviet-sponsored insurgent forces.

These figures reflect the wholesale value of the drugs seized, equivalent to an estimated \$3.7 billion in retail revenues on the streets of the United States. But the volume of drugs confiscated represents no more than 5-10% of the total volume that passed through Guatemala during 1984.

The Soviet-allied drug mafias have targeted Guatemala as merely a way station to the United States, which, as Col. Hector Rosales emphasizes in the film, is the real target of Soviet efforts. And yet, Guatemala is battling the drug fight by itself. "What if we get tired, and we say, 'Okay, come in—take it over. We'll join you'? Analyze the situation from that angle, and you see that you have a tremendous problem. Right now, you don't have it because we are stubborn. But, how much longer are we going to be?" Rosales asks.

Guatemala's armed forces sent a special mission to

Washington, D.C. in July, to inform U.S. officials that the marriage between the drug mafias and terrorist movements, has produced a renewed narco-terrorist insurgency, centered in the primary drug-production zones of the countryside. They requested American aid for their battle against the narco-terrorists.

Thus far, they have received nothing but stony silence from Washington in response to their requests for military training, aid, and equipment. After eight years of the ongoing U.S. military embargo against the country—imposed by the Carter administration in March 1977 under the direction of National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski—Guatemala is in desperate need of spare parts and new military hardware in order to carry out a war against narco-terrorists, who often operate with the most modern and sophisticated weaponry provided by the drug mob.

Instead, the Guatemalans are being sent to the International Monetary Fund, which is demanding military cutbacks under the guise of "budget-cutting," and are being treated to an international campaign demanding "liberalization."

On July 28, both the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* published "icebox" articles on Guatemala, ending a virtual U.S. press blackout on the country. The articles portrayed right-wing death squads and military brutality in Guatemala, reminiscent of the coverage during the Carter administration's "human rights" campaign.

The *New York Times* reported on the "disappearance" of "at least 60 Indian peasants" near Patzun, Guatemala, over a seven-month period, while the *Boston Globe* "predicted" the death of Dr. Eduardo Meyer, head of Guatemala's national university, San Carlos University, citing the fact that no rector at the university has survived to the end of his term since 1978.

In subsequent coverage, the *New York Times* began forecasting "complete collapse" of the economy by Jan. 1986, charging military corruption and the refusal to implement further IMF austerity programs as the prime causes of collapse. The full policy was outlined in the Aug. 11 issue: "The Guatemalan Army is running out of money, options and time," wrote the *Times*. Threats to weaken the armed forces, issued by Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo, the presidential candidate of Guatemala's Christian Democratic party, were quoted to make the point. "The army is disposed to hand over the civil government, but the real work will be to diminish the power now concentrated in the single institution of the armed forces," stated Cerezo.

Predicting an increase in political violence and inter-army factional fighting between now and the November presidential elections, the *Times* argues that Reagan administration policy is premised on forcing the armed forces back to the barracks, and out of policy-making. For the administration, "the economic crisis will provide leverage, as Guatemala seeks increased assistance," gloated the *Times*.