

# Colombian military targets 'citizens above suspicion' for cocaine trade

by Valerie Rush

The Colombian military has launched a mop-up campaign against the cocaine-trafficking "Medellín Cartel," which has already toppled one of the Cartel's leading agents inside the government, and which promises to unveil many other figures in the highest political and business circles of the country.

Ever since the scandalous January release from jail of the Cartel's number-two fugitive Jorge Luis Ochoa, Colombia's courts, Congress, and executive branch have been seriously discredited in the eyes of those remaining forces in the country fearful of the irremediable loss of Colombian national sovereignty to the drug mob. Under pressure from the military to take decisive action, President Virgilio Barco still has time to revive the U.S.-Colombian extradition treaty and put some real teeth into it.

The mop-up began March 1, when the Air Force pursued and destroyed a highly sophisticated aircraft belonging to Cartel kingpin Pablo Escobar Gaviria. The computerized airplane, a trafficker's dream, had been seized for its illegal registration and sequestered at a military airbase, only to be smuggled off the base under the noses of the military. The pursuit and on-the-ground bombing of the *Aerocommander* on an airstrip adjacent to Escobar's own estate prompted a furious public threat of revenge against that military service by the mafia godfather. It was probably the first direct threat against the Colombian military to come from the Cartel.

Three weeks later, on March 22, a carefully-planned dragnet by the IV Army Brigade was thrown over the entire district of El Poblado, Medellín's most exclusive neighborhood, and came within minutes of capturing Escobar himself. Sophisticated alarms were tripped by soldiers as they closed in on a Swiss chalet-styled country home called "El Bizcocho," and Escobar's bodyguards traded fire with the army while the Cartel boss managed to escape. In a simultaneous raid elsewhere in the city, Escobar's wife María Victoria Henao and sister-in-law were captured. A civilian judge subsequently released them.

In both raids, documents and video and audiocassette tapes were seized, along with vast quantities of weapons, motorcycles, cars of various makes and models, and other equipment. In a press conference on March 24, IV Brigade commander Gen. Jaime Ruiz Barrera revealed how the captured documents and cassettes, now in the possession of military intelligence, expose relations between the Cartel and prominent and/or influential figures within ruling and busi-

ness circles. He specified that some of the Cartel collaborators "are identified [in the documents] by letters. There is a very important lawyer with links to the Council of State, who is noted as HB. An official of the Attorney General's office, identified as HL. A builder, who is identified as DLW."

"In these same cassettes and documents is material addressing questions of the [government-decreed] plebiscite, extradition, purchase of weapons abroad, bribery, activities carried out by paid assassins, threats, confrontations between the Medellín Cartel and the [communist] Patriotic Union, with the "Cali Cartel," and on financing of a person who is currently under detention in relation to the assassination of Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos Jiménez."

General Ruiz Barrera also revealed that his "Operation Crucible" served to uncover one of Pablo Escobar's frontmen, who is identified as Gustavo Adolfo Upegui López, who used the alias "Major García," and in whose name "El Bizcocho" was registered. Upegui López was also in charge of maintaining the payroll for Escobar's bodyguards.

The name of Upegui's wife also appears in the investigation of the mafia assassination of Attorney General Mauro Hoyos, since one of the cars used to kidnap the official was in her name. The general added that Upegui was in charge of Escobar's network of informants which had infiltrated different government entities, and is responsible for the tapes of information provided to Escobar through illegal interceptions of official and other telephone lines.

## One down, more to go

Demands on March 24 by interim Attorney General Alfredo Gutiérrez Márquez, for military intelligence to hand over the captured tapes and documents "for an investigation," immediately provoked suspicion, since it was Gutiérrez who had called for the legalization of the drug trade and dialogue with the cocaine cartels, days after his predecessor had been buried. The results of an internal investigation conducted by Carlos Mauro Hoyos into possible Cartel agents in his office, according to the daily *El Espectador*, went to the grave with him.

On March 28, four days later, Gutiérrez Márquez was abruptly forced to resign, after the military released to the public the information that the airstrip to which Escobar's *Aerocommander* had been tracked, and ultimately destroyed, was owned by Libardo Gutiérrez Márquez, the Attorney General's brother and an acknowledged front-man for Esco-

bar's smuggling activities.

Members of the Council of State, a presidential advisory body on constitutional matters, also demanded that the military turn over the explosive evidence they had captured. That demand, too, provoked suspicion, since the Council had just days earlier ordered the suspension of an arrest warrant for Escobar's extradition to the United States, as illegal.

*El Espectador* has suggested that the "HB" described by General Ruiz Barrera as a Cartel infiltrator into the Council of State, is one Geisel Humberto Buitrago Mustafá, who is one of Pablo Escobar's lawyers and a close associate of Liberal Party senator Bernardo Guerra Serna, who himself is an advocate of dialogue with the Medellín Cartel. Another Buitrago, magistrate Samuel Buitrago Hurtado, called on national television for the legalization of the drug trade in December 1986. At the time he was *president of the Council of State!* President Barco never commented on the opinions of his leading constitutional adviser.

*EIR's* own archives reveal that the only Medellín builder with the initials DLW, as also mentioned by the IV Army Commander, is Diego Londoño White, whose firm Londoño y Vayda Ltda., has been identified as the firm which constructed Pablo Escobar's "bunkers." The Londoño White family are intimate friends of former Colombian President Alfonso López Michelsen. Diego's brother Santiago Londoño White was the treasurer of López's re-election campaign in 1982, and had—together with current Liberal Party president Ernesto Samper Pizano—accepted donations from the Medellín Cartel's transport kingpin Carlos Lehder, currently on trial for drug trafficking in Florida.

It was also Santiago Londoño White who arranged and attended a 1984 Panama meeting of Pablo Escobar and Jorge Luis Ochoa with López Michelsen, where the traffickers had proposed to pay off the Colombian foreign debt in exchange for an amnesty from the government.

The military's declaration of war against the drug traffickers has dramatically raised the stakes in the fight for Colombia. A March 30 press conference by General Ruiz Barrera revealed that the Cartel has threatened to assassinate him and other high-level commanders of the Colombian Armed Forces, and has hired at least 15 lawyers to provoke "human rights" scandals designed to discredit the military's anti-drug efforts.

General Ruiz Barrera also revealed that the office telephone lines of President Belisario Betancur (1982-86) had been intercepted by the Cartel, and that military intelligence had captured recordings of telephone conversations from that office. Finally, it has been revealed that among those arrested during the March 22 army raid on Escobar's estate were members of the terrorist M-19 guerrilla group, who were reportedly coordinating operations with Escobar at the moment of the raid. Both the M-19 and the Moscow-controlled Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have publicly called for legalizing the drug trade in the recent period.

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## 'Regional Affairs'

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# Feverish pace of New Yalta sellouts

by Konstantin George

Contrary to the disinformation peddled to the mass media that little of note occurred during the March 21-23 Shultz-Shevardnadze Washington talks on regional issues, events in Central America, Afghanistan, and Angola provide a far different reading on the status of the New Yalta deals under way between the Reagan administration and Moscow.

"Feverish" accurately describes the pace of the U.S. sellout to Russia, far exceeding the dimensions of the original carving of the world into U.S.-tied and Soviet spheres of influence at the Yalta conference at the end of World War II.

## Central America

First, Washington has agreed to employ violence, including a military invasion, to topple Panama's Defense Forces commander General Noriega, an action which can only further Soviet interests. Moscow, in turn, pressured the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua to conclude a cease-fire agreement with the Contras—which it did.

The Nicaraguan deal resolved precisely nothing. The Sandinistas remain the leading military power in the region, with more than 120,000 combined soldiers and militia, while the United States has taken care of limiting, and even dismantling—as in the case of Panama—nationalist military forces in the region.

Moscow's agents in the leadership of the Socialist International can be found at the forefront of both the Nicaragua deal and the attack on the Panamanian Defense Forces. The operations are united in the persons of West German Social Democrat Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski and Venezuelan ex-President Carlos Andrés Pérez. Wischniewski signed the Contra-Sandinista pact, in his capacity as the *official* international representative of the Sandinista government, on March 23. He then flew into Panama on March 24 with the head of the Christian Democratic opposition, Ricardo Arias Calderón, who said that any measures, including economic warfare and even invasion, are justified to overthrow Panama's military, and urged other countries to join the U.S. war on Panama.