
Colombia

Barco orders armed forces not to fight

by Javier Almario

"The requirements for supplies and weapons, as well as the increases in troop levels, have been promptly fulfilled," President Virgilio Barco said upon accepting the resignation of his Defense Minister Rafael Samudio Molina in early November, after Samudio had ordered his troops to end the "martyrology of the Armed Forces" by launching an offensive against the guerrilla groups which have been ravaging Colombia.

The Colombian President has repeatedly argued that the military is well equipped, and therefore that they have everything they need to obtain victories. However, the President himself has undertaken to throw obstacles in the path of the military's activities to defend Colombia.

Dope, Inc.'s orders

The President is carrying out to the letter the orders of the Inter-American Dialogue, a transnational group of bankers which at its last meeting in April, put out the line that the Ibero-American countries have to legalize the drug traffic, and eliminate or weaken their armed forces. "The military cannot consider itself the ultimate guardian of national values, or insist that national security embraces all aspects of policy," these mouthpieces of Dope, Inc. demanded.

The so-called captains of capitalism were merely echoing the calls for an end to the prestige and power of the armed forces in Ibero-America, repeatedly printed in the Soviet publication *América Latina*.

The Colombian Attorney General, Horacio Serpa, who was named by Barco to replace the assassinated Carlos Mauro Hoyos, even though he was a known pro-communist and belonged to the networks of Amnesty International, has undertaken punitive actions against any military officer who effectively responds to the guerrilla actions. The military are slapped with fines, because in the Attorney General's view, they are violating human rights whenever they take actions against armed groups steered from Moscow.

The latest of the Attorney General's actions was to indict Gen. Jesús Armando Arias Cabrales, who until early November had been the chief of the military zone of Uraba, where

the guerrillas of the Popular Liberation Army and the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) have their headquarters. General Arias had dislodged the M-19 terrorists who seized the Colombia Justice Palace in a fiery bloodbath Nov. 6-7, 1985.

In that action, funded by the drug mafia, the M-19 assassinated half the members of the Supreme Court of Justice, who were studying various questions on the extradition treaty with the United States, which allows extradition of drug traffickers.

According to the Attorney General, the blame for the deaths of the magistrates and 100 other people is shared equally by the leaders of M-19, Carlos Pizarro León Gómez and Antonio Navarro Wolf, who masterminded the seizure of the Justice Palace, and those who directed the operation to remove them—General Arias Cabrales, Gen. Víctor Delgado Mallarino, who was then chief of police, and Lt. Col. Edilberto Sánchez.

'Rebellion,' not terrorism

Worse yet, the Attorney General conceives that the M-19 guerrillas should not be tried for all the crimes committed in the seizure of the palace—the murders and destruction of documents—but only for being "rebels," which carries a punishment of three years in jail. In that interpretation, all the other crimes are justified because "they were committed in combat and do not constitute acts of ferocity, barbarity, or terrorism."

Moreover, the Supreme Court of Justice, still terrorized by the seizure of the Justice Palace, ruled that in no case, not even during periods of State of Siege, can military penal justice be applied against civilians. The ruling follows the recommendations of ex-President Alfonso López Michelsen, who is notorious for his dialogues with the drug mafia in Panama in 1985.

The guerrillas who are arrested *in flagrante* by the armed forces will be handed over to the civil courts, where they are immediately freed by the judges fearful of guerrilla reprisals.

Meanwhile, President Barco named Alvaro Tirado Mejía, a Marxist of the López Michelsen camp, as presidential adviser for the defense of human rights. His first official act was to try to establish a teaching position in the military schools on the "human rights" of terrorists.

Tirado Mejía and Attorney General Serpa have established a new judicial doctrine, according to which, not only can the military not try any civilian, but indeed, the civil courts will put the military on trial.

"People don't realize that the military forces are finished," stated Gen. Fernando Landazábal Reyes, a former defense minister. In fact, 273 military leaders have been tied up in various trials and many others have been fined. The Communists have exploited the opportunity to instigate penal actions against the very military officials who have been effective in combatting the guerrillas.