

Andean Report by José Restrepo

Dual power in Colombia

Soviet-backed narco-terrorist "irregulars" are going for direct power, while Washington turns a blind eye.

While the Bush administration continues to promote the lie that the Soviet Union has turned "peace-loving," that the Cold War is over, and that therefore Ibero-America's militaries are now redundant, reality is proving otherwise. Colombia is currently paying a very high price for these criminal fantasies of Bush and his Colombian co-thinkers.

The pro-Soviet, drug-trafficking Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has combined its 7-10,000 rebel force with those of the pro-Castro, drug-trafficking National Liberation Army (ELN), to wage a narco-terrorist offensive intended to shatter the country's productive infrastructure and force the government of César Gaviria into a dual-power arrangement. El Salvador, where the Moscow-run Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) is on the same fight-and-talk track under Washington's approval, is the model for Colombia.

Lest anyone doubt the Soviet hand in this, one need only refer to the FARC's acknowledged close ties to the hard-line Soyuz faction in the Soviet Parliament; so close in fact that the late FARC ideologue Jacobo Arenas last year called Gorbachov "a CIA agent," for his flirtations with George Bush.

The murderous FARC/ELN offensive has been portrayed by would-be appeasers inside the Gaviria government as a mere "pressure tactic," designed to win the narco-terrorists' sanctioned participation in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly,

which has been meeting since Feb. 5 to draft a new Colombian Constitution.

Indeed, on Feb. 5 alone, the FARC/ELN carried out 50 assaults. Seventeen soldiers, two civilians, and 13 terrorists were killed, another 15 soldiers abducted. The national pipeline network was dynamited at 12 places, 10 electricity towers were blown up, 15 buses burned, and a bridge connecting the capital Bogotá to the city of Villavicencio was damaged. That bridge was vital in transporting food and fuel from Colombia's Eastern Plains. And in the first 40 days of 1991, there have been 37 attacks on the pipeline, 17 on electrical towers, 7 bridges and 4 coal-mining installations destroyed, and 382 people killed.

And yet the FARC/ELN campaign, in combination with ongoing political and propaganda assaults on the Colombian Armed Forces, leaves little doubt that the real goal is to cripple the military's defense capability, while cutting off Bogotá's food, water, and electricity, igniting generalized conflict across the country, and creating a "provisional government" which could later be legalized via plebiscite.

For example, it is no accident that cocaine trafficker Pablo Escobar, chieftain of the Medellín Cartel, has insisted to the Gaviria government that he will only surrender if the Attorney General's office finds that the Defense Ministry's National Police, and not his hired guns, was responsible for the Jan. 25 murder of cartel hostage

Diana Turbay, the daughter of former President Julio César Turbay Ayala.

Nor is it accidental that a spokesman for the Colombian Communist Party's electoral front, the Patriotic Union, recently told the press that the Armed Forces should stick to protecting Colombia's borders, and let a new "civilianized" police force take care of "public order problems." Similarly, prominent drug legalization propagandist Antonio Caballero snidely wrote Feb. 10 that "the more power, the more weapons, the more men, and the more money the military is given, the more the enemy grows."

The leading anti-drug daily *El Espectador* warned in a Feb. 11 editorial that President Gaviria's austerity program was destroying the Armed Forces, and concluded by demanding an explanation from the President as to why he has allowed narco-terrorist "irregulars" like the M-19 within state institutions "at the cost of decimating the state's own regular forces."

Currently at issue is the demand of the FARC and ELN that they be permitted to enter the Constituent Assembly *without* disarming their forces. Although the government has thus far balked at the demand, there is every likelihood that President Gaviria will ultimately yield in the name of "peace," as he has done so many times before. In fact, Government Minister Humberto de la Calle has already announced that a government commission has been set up to conduct *direct negotiations* with the narco-terrorists, as per their initial demands.

Should Gaviria accept the FARC/ELN's latest "peace conditionality," *armed* terrorists will be seated alongside Colombia's political leaders to rewrite the law of the land, and the first dual-power arrangement with narco-terrorism will have been ushered in, under Washington's benign oversight.