

Andean Report by Andrea Olivieri

'Soviet' emerges in Colombia

Narco-terrorist "people's assembly" readies the guillotine for the country's republican institutions.

The National Constituent Assembly, meeting in Bogotá for the purported task of rewriting Colombia's Constitution, has turned into a dangerous "subversive institution," with the complicity of the Gaviria government, warned former minister Carlos Lemos Simmonds, in an explosive May 2 interview with the opposition daily *El Espectador*. Lemos was forced to resign his government post in March 1990 after charging that sections of the government of then-President Virgilio Barco were becoming increasingly tolerant of "the drug traffickers and those who speak for them." Lemos is currently a delegate to the Assembly.

According to Lemos, the M-19, which has been responsible for untold assassinations, kidnappings, and such terrorist acts as the mafia-financed holocaust at the Colombian Justice Palace in 1985, has captured full control over the Assembly, and most other delegates are following its lead. Lemos protests that the Liberal government of President César Gaviria has criminally "absented itself" from the proceedings, abandoning Liberal delegates like himself, and leaving the field to a combination of narco-terrorists, drug cartel frontmen, and otherwise spineless and/or corrupt politicians. He concludes: "The M-19 seeks to dismantle the institutions, because that is what it sought by force of arms, and now will achieve by law."

Lemos's interview was released following the May 1 decision of the Assembly to authorize itself to write, approve, and immediately enact con-

stitutional legislation—in defiance of the Colombian Supreme Court and Council of State, the latter serving as a magisterial oversight body on constitutional matters. It also follows the formation of an unholy alliance between two of the Assembly's three co-presidents (M-19 chief and presidential hopeful Antonio Navarro Wolf and libertarian "neo-conservative" politician Alvaro Gómez Hurtado), in favor of dissolving the National Congress and erecting the unicameral Constituent Assembly in its place.

The Navarro Wolf-Gómez Hurtado alliance is, in itself, enough to make one shudder. It is dubbed the "alliance of the kidnaper and the kidnaped" by the press, a reference to the M-19's bloody 1988 abduction of Gómez Hurtado (during which his bodyguard was murdered), to force negotiations that would ultimately lead to the M-19's amnesty and admission into the Gaviria government. Although presented as "strange bedfellows," they are in fact far from it. Over the years, Gómez has repeatedly lent the pages of his "right-wing" daily *El Siglo* to the "leftist" propaganda of the M-19. Not accidentally, these perverse allies in subversion are also long-standing advocates of drug legalization.

Today, like Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the two are using their "people's assembly," or *soviet*, to undermine and ultimately overthrow Gaviria's "Kerensky" regime, with every intention of installing a narco-dictatorship in its place. And President Gaviria, oblivious if not outright complicit, is assisting the process.

When three narco-terrorists from the so-called National Guerrilla Coordinator (CNG) briefly occupied the Venezuelan Embassy in Bogotá May 5 to demand amnesty negotiations with the government, Gaviria not only gave them safe passage to Caracas, but also presented them with an offer to hold those negotiations in any of 16 sites inside Colombia. The narco-terrorists have since accepted. This all occurred *one day* after a narco-terrorist ambush of a military patrol claimed the lives of 10 soldiers.

The CNG's demands include 20 seats on the 73-member Assembly, which already has 23 occupied by the M-19 and a handful of smaller amnestied guerrilla forces. Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, who was in Bogotá early in May for a two-day state visit and to offer his personal endorsement of the "daring" National Assembly, was reportedly working out the details for his personal mediation of those negotiations. Should an amnesty be approved for the CNG's ELN and FARC guerrillas, the latter better known as Colombia's cocaine-trafficking "Third Cartel," the current dual-power situation in the country will unalterably tilt toward chaos.

El Espectador editorially warned May 4 that the consequences of the Assembly's self-declared autonomy would be "political, social, and economic instability that already has and will continue to have negative impact on public peace. . . . That the mandate of Congress is eliminated in one stroke . . . could have serious consequences, causing unwelcome divisions in public opinion and leading to confrontations that could be anything but peaceful. The same would occur if [the Assembly] ignores the judicial rulings of the Supreme Court and Council of State, for which respect by the authorities and citizens alike is the foundation of a state of law."