

Resistance surfaces in Colombia to the deal with narco-terrorists

by Andrea Olivieri

The narco-tolerant policy of the César Gaviria government in Colombia has met a challenge from one of the country's few survivors of its now defunct war on drugs.

Former Colombian Justice Minister Enrique Parejo González, a long-standing advocate of extraditing drug traffickers, had submitted his resignation as ambassador to Switzerland on June 25, to register his "moral incompatibility" with the government's surrender to the forces of narco-terrorism, including the recent constitutional ban on extradition. He announced his intention to return to Colombia shortly.

Gaviria's Foreign Ministry responded by rejecting Parejo's resignation and urging him to retain the protection of a foreign diplomatic post. Parejo answered with a public reaffirmation of his resignation, and provocatively declared: "The state has the duty, as stated by the Constitution still in force, to protect the life, honor, and goods of all citizens. If the government fears that my return to the country would endanger my life, my personal security, isn't it thus demonstrated that the government doubts the efficacy of its own policy vis-à-vis drug trafficking and narco-terrorism?"

President Gaviria's infamous plea-bargaining deal with the chiefs of the so-called Medellín cocaine cartel—who had murdered Parejo's anti-drug predecessor and nearly succeeded in assassinating Parejo—was justified in the name of "ending narco-terrorism."

Parejo's willingness to lay his own life on the line, rather than share in the moral degradation of the government he was delegated to represent abroad, is serving as inspiration for others. A former senator, Hector Polania, sent Parejo a statement of solidarity, declaring: "On the occasion of your powerful protest against the recent national submission to criminals, I want to reiterate my solidarity, admiration, and friendship. You are a key element of the scarce reserves of dignity and courage that remain to the country."

U.S. complicity unveiled

Parejo's action is also implicitly an indictment of the Bush administration, which helped orchestrate the Gaviria government's capitulation to the narco-terrorists and is now, cynically, expressing "regret," and even threatening reprisals, over the dual-power situation reigning in that country as a result.

On June 27, under the headline "The United States Nego-

tiated the Non-extradition of Escobar," Colombia's anti-drug daily *El Espectador* cited the July 1 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* to the effect that the recent "surrender" of Medellín Cartel chieftain Pablo Escobar followed assurances "that he would never be extradited to the United States—a demand that the Bush administration had already sacrificed months ago, in part to win Colombia's vote during the Gulf crisis."

The *U.S. News and World Report* exposé confirmed what this magazine was told, and reported, in December of 1990 by a high-level Colombian Foreign Ministry official, regarding a deal that had been struck between the Bush and Gaviria governments, whereby Colombia would throw its vote in the United Nations Security Council to the U.S. side in Bush's war against Iraq, in exchange for an okay from Bush to Gaviria's negotiations with the cocaine cartels.

Although both the Foreign Ministry and the U.S. embassy in Bogotá rushed to deny the magazine's assertion as "unfounded" and "mere rumor," it is in fact common knowledge that the plea-bargaining arrangement between the Colombian government and the Medellín Cartel was crafted in Washington. As the *Washington Times* reported as far back as October 1989, the Gaviria government—not yet in office—was fully expected to strike a deal with the traffickers, and "some sources said the U.S. would accept Colombian proposals for plea-bargaining in specific cases, or partial amnesties, if these further the goal of stopping the shipment of drugs to the United States."

That this was indeed U.S. policy was revealed in February 1990, when U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Thomas McNamara told the press, during an anti-drug summit of Andean leaders in Cartagena, Colombia, that "the solution to the drug-trafficking problem is not extradition." And the March 1990 strategy report of the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters declared that "while extraditions of major traffickers should continue *through the next year*, success ultimately rests in Colombia's ability to prosecute and jail traffickers in Colombia" (emphasis added).

The Iraq treatment?

And yet, suddenly, the Colombian press is filled with rumors that the United States, unhappy with Pablo Escobar's

lenient treatment, is threatening "reprisals." President Gaviria himself was forced to deny the possibility, in a June 23 interview granted to the widely read daily *El Tiempo*. Then on June 25, Ambassador McNamara warned that unless Escobar gets a hefty prison term, comparable to U.S. standards, "we will have problems between the Colombian and American people." U.S. "drug czar" Robert Martinez told the U.S. media that "Colombia will be on trial with Pablo Escobar."

For those Colombian patriots horrified by the Gaviria government's capitulation to the narco-terrorists who have devastated their country for more than a decade, *El Espectador's* exposé of the Bush-Gaviria pact proves that there is no solace to be found in the self-righteous sabre-rattling of the Bush administration.

In fact, the situation currently existing in Colombia—Congress dissolved, President ruling by dictate, and a new national Constitution written by "amnestied" terrorists and front-men for the drug cartels—is the explicit creation of the Bush administration's "Democracy Project," re-dubbed "new world order" in the aftermath of the Iraq massacre. The political, social, and economic instability which characterizes Colombia at this moment provides precisely the laboratory conditions for a wide array of "retaliatory" measures, ranging from trade warfare, to economic blockade, to so-called surgical strikes and all-out invasion à la Iraq. Bush's new world

order is one of "limited sovereignty," population reduction by any and all means, and resource grabs. In Iraq, it was oil; in Colombia, perhaps cocaine?

Drug legalization—by phases

Certainly, the Gaviria government is doing everything in its power to accommodate the Bush administration's "free trade" ethos, by stripping the war-ravaged Colombian economy of the protectionist remnants of bygone days. At the same time, the Colombian economy is being rapidly "dollarized," the result of an avalanche of American greenbacks into the country, triggered by a series of Finance Ministry measures:

- tax amnesty to facilitate "capital repatriation";
- total crackdown on credit by means of a 100% reserve ratio, in the name of fighting inflation;
- very high domestic interest rates; and
- creation of a virtual free-exchange market.

The *Financial Times* of London wrote on July 2 on the dollar flood: "As to how much is due to drug income, no one is even prepared to guess, but the large proportion of cash involved suggests that contraband could be a main factor. The government denies that measures taken this year to open up foreign exchange markets have made it easier to change drug dollars." Estimates are that dollars are entering the country at the rate of \$9 billion a year!

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