

Andean Report by Valerie Rush

A Dominican debacle for Cisneros

A Venezuelan political leader gives Gustavo Cisneros a "hot foot" in the Dominican Republic.

Alejandro Peña Esclusa, secretary general of the Venezuelan Labor Party and a former presidential candidate in that country, broke open a hornets' nest in the Dominican Republic during a one-and-a-half hour live interview Jan. 16 with Dominican television personality Julio Hazim. Peña called for an investigation into the extensive business operations inside the Dominican Republic of Venezuelan magnate Gustavo Cisneros, an intimate of Henry Kissinger.

Peña's early morning comments, transmitted nationwide on Colorvision network in Santo Domingo and repeated later that same afternoon on Cablevision network, referred to the continued ban in Venezuela of the controversial book *Narcotráfico, SA (Dope, Inc.)*—thanks to the efforts of Cisneros—and to usurious debt-for-equity and privatization scams being foisted upon Ibero-America.

Channel 13, another television network in the Dominican Republic, announced that night that two representatives of Gustavo Cisneros would be interviewed live the next morning, on the same Colorvision network as Peña, to respond to the charges against Cisneros and "to expose the LaRouche organization." U.S. economist and presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche commissioned the writing of *Dope, Inc.* back in 1978, and Cisneros has been obsessed with LaRouche ever since.

Sources also reported that the Cisneros representatives had flown in Cisneros's private jet from Caracas immediately following the Peña

broadcast. According to one knowledgeable source, the Cisneros team had been instructed to "sue the pants off everyone connected to that show." Later, it was learned that Gustavo Cisneros himself and top aide José Rafael Revenga—the man who personally oversaw Venezuela's unconstitutional banning of *Narcotráfico, SA* in 1985—were on that airplane. A press conference by the Cisneros crew at Santo Domingo international airport was planned that same afternoon, then abandoned.

Scheduled to appear on Colorvision the morning of Jan. 17 was José Rafael Revenga. Repeated television announcements of the planned appearance stirred excited anticipation throughout the island nation. Just prior to the broadcast, however, Cisneros personally contacted an executive of the network to report that he had decided to cancel the interview, to avoid giving Peña "too much publicity."

Many Dominicans had been eagerly looking forward to witnessing Cisneros's public tantrum over the Peña revelations. The Venezuelan magnate has many financial interests in their country, as well as a great deal of political influence, and had even been granted Dominican citizenship (alongside his own Venezuelan citizenship), in the mid-1980s by then-President Jorge Blanco, who has since been convicted and jailed for embezzling state funds.

Nonetheless, a few years ago, Cisneros was forced to give up his Dominican citizenship after the ma-

majority leader in the Dominican Senate cited information in the book *Narcotráfico, SA* as proof that Cisneros was not a fit Dominican citizen. The incident took place right after Cisneros had taken a tour of the Dominican Republic in the company of Henry Kissinger, jet-set designer Oscar de la Renta (Kissinger's annual host in the Dominican Republic), and Venezuelan crooner José Luis ("Puma") Rodríguez.

Just a few months ago, all the senators of the majority Democratic Liberal Party (PLD) signed a resolution, calling on their Venezuelan colleagues to end the illegal prohibition against *Narcotráfico, SA* in Venezuela.

Peña left the Dominican Republic without incident, just 24 hours after his arrival there. During his stay, he had also given several other television interviews reviewing the presidential candidacy of U.S. political prisoner LaRouche, the widespread corruption among U.S. ruling elites, the depopulation policies of the international financial elites, and the creditor banks' efforts to turn Ibero-America into "narco-economies" to prop up the collapsing world monetary system.

In particular, he targeted the free-trade obsession of the Bush administration in Washington, and of President Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela. "The fact is," said Peña, "that the monetarists are a fundamentalist cult, a sect that worships money. Man creates money for his own use, but this free-trade cult has turned around and now sacrifices everything to this golden calf."

According to the networks which broadcast Peña's comments, they received an unprecedented flood of calls from Dominican viewers seeking more information about the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement, of which Peña is a leader.