

Thus, the Seventh Forum on Peace and Human Rights had the explicit intention of forcing a renewal of dialogue and negotiations between the government and the Marxist guerrillas, at precisely the moment in which popular pressure has forced the César Gaviria government to suspect those talks.

President Gaviria has rejected the proposal to accept U.N. mediation on several occasions, including earlier this year when he stridently dismissed Nobel Peace Prize winner and former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, when the latter arrived in Colombia to offer himself as mediator. However, Gaviria does not disagree with the idea of dialogue with the terrorists. Rather, because of widespread popular opposition to negotiating with terrorists who are daily kidnapping, blackmailing, and murdering Colombians, current conditions are considered "inappropriate" for renewing such dialogue.

The communists' forum was, however, intended to change the national consensus, and to try to force the government into a position which would eventually lead to abandoning national sovereignty to a United Nations' supranational government.

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## Interview: Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa

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# The model is El Salvador

*The following interview with former Colombian foreign minister Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa, currently director of Colombia's Permanent Committee on Human Rights, was conducted by Javier Almario during the Seventh Forum on Peace and Human Rights, held in Bogotá on Feb. 19.*

**EIR:** Can you explain for us your proposal for the United Nations to intervene in the Colombian conflict?

**Vásquez:** The United Nations should intervene because it needs to take account of what factors, what groups are in conflict, to submit a proposal for them to decide. I propose that it be the United Nations which comes to mediate. But it must mediate among two or three adverse groups. Understand that the United Nations cannot come up with a concept outside the framework of what is being discussed here.

**EIR:** This role of the United Nations in resolving the internal problems of nations is new. . . .

**Vásquez:** It isn't new. It has already been done in El Salvador, in an internal war in El Salvador. It is doing it and has done it. In Honduras it is doing it. It has done it.

**EIR:** But it is new for the U.N. to get involved in the internal affairs of a country.

**Vásquez:** It is new, but there already exists a mediator for an internal war.

**EIR:** Is what the United Nations did in El Salvador the example for Colombia?

**Vásquez:** Of course, El Salvador. The Farabundo [Martí Liberation] Front was at war with the government. Peace was achieved with United Nations' mediation.

**EIR:** Ever since Bush announced the new world order the United Nations has been an instrument of foreign policy of the United States and England.

**Vásquez:** That the United States has a very great influence in the United Nations is indisputable. But the United Nations is the only world organization to which one can resort to achieve peace in the country.

**EIR:** How many U.N. personnel would be required to verify the agreements and to eventually oblige the government and the guerrillas to comply with them?

**Vásquez:** I couldn't know. It all depends on the zone which is going to be verified.

**EIR:** Don't you believe that this would lead to a foreign military intervention?

**Vásquez:** Forgive me for not answering because I must go now.

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## Interview: Manuel Cepeda

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# U.N. intervention is welcome in Colombia

*Colombian Communist Party Secretary General Manuel Cepeda was interviewed by Javier Almario during the Seventh Forum on Peace and Human Rights, on Feb. 19.*

**EIR:** Do the Communists support Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa's proposal to seek a U.N. intervention to facilitate peace negotiations?

**Cepeda:** We totally support Vásquez Carrizosa's proposal. We believe that if this alone is achieved as a result of this forum, we will have met our objective.

**EIR:** Why do you support U.N. intervention?

**Cepeda:** We think that a U.N. intervention could unblock the negotiations between the guerrillas and the Colombian government, because achieving peace in the country requires the entrance of a major authority. And the United Nations has that strong authority.

**EIR:** Aren't you afraid that the U.N. intervention would lend itself to a foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Colombia?

**Cepeda:** No, because the U.N. action to verify the agreements is a quiet intervention, it is almost a matter of a secret action.

**EIR:** But the U.N. is an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. The U.N. massacred Iraq, invaded Somalia, granted the Serbs permission to carry out ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, and is starving the Haitians to death. . . .

**Cepeda:** But there are many different interests in the United Nations other than those of the United States. Note that the intervention of the United Nations in El Salvador and in Nicaragua was very positive. In El Salvador, with the peace process. In Nicaragua, the U.N. achieved the demobilization of the Contras.

**EIR:** But an intervention of the United Nations would lead to U.S. troops intervening in the country by putting on blue helmets. . . .

**Cepeda:** Military intervention in the country is already a fact. The DEA [U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration] is already here, there are innumerable U.S. military advisers, there are U.S. bases in San José del Guaviare, there are U.S. bases in Amazonas. We already have U.S. intervention here, there is already interventionism. On the other hand, an official U.N. intervention could be a positive intervention.

**EIR:** In El Salvador, an intervention of 10,000 people was required. How many U.N. agents will have to intervene in Colombia?

**Cepeda:** This remains to be resolved. Colombia is a very large, very complex country with a much more difficult guerrilla process. Here, the central issue is how many people will it take to verify compliance with the agreements between the government and the guerrillas.

**EIR:** So the U.N. intervention in Colombia will be more prolonged than in El Salvador?

**Cepeda:** Yes, in Colombia the process will be much more difficult, and much slower than in El Salvador. There, the guerrillas took 10 years. Here, it has half a century.

**EIR:** Do you think the new Clinton government favors negotiations between the government and the guerrillas?

**Cepeda:** I'm not going to stick my neck out to defend Clinton.

**EIR:** But the Inter-American Dialogue organization, which is handling Clinton's foreign policy, proposes using the political weight of the United States to resolve conflicts in every country through negotiations.

**Cepeda:** Well, that position could be positive.

## Mulroney resigns, as Canadian crisis grows

by Gilles Gervais

On Feb. 24, 1993, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced his resignation as head of the Conservative Party, thereby becoming the seventh prime minister in Canadian history (since the beginning of Confederation in 1867) to quit his duties as head of Her Majesty's government while still in office.

Among the former prime ministers who resigned, only three were forced to do so citing "ill health": John Abbott (June 1891), Robert Borden (July 1920), and Mackenzie King (November 1948).

Mulroney's exit from politics had less of the theatrics of his predecessor, the flamboyant Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who suddenly quit the prime ministership in early March 1984, coming to his final abrupt decision during a famous wintry midnight walk in the woods.

Mulroney's decision did not come as a total surprise, but it did come a few weeks after he had assured his cabinet and fellow Canadians that there was no basis whatsoever to the rumors of his imminent departure and that he would lead his Conservative Party troops in the next federal elections.

Conservative Party insiders are now pondering how to come up not only with a candidate who can unify the party at the national convention in June, but with one who will be able to hold on to power in the upcoming elections, given that the Conservatives have been stuck below 21% in the popularity polls for the last three years.

They will be looking for a new Conservative Party leader (who will then become prime minister, under the parliamentary system) who will be able to avoid the fate of the Liberal Party's John Turner, the Bay Street lawyer and prime minister (briefly) who lost badly to Mulroney's Conservatives in the 1984 general elections that followed Trudeau's resignation. The Conservatives are hoping to replicate the exploit of Great Britain's John Major in salvaging an unpopular government.

### The Mulroney legacy

Under the tenure of Mulroney, the Canadian economy has posted records for financial and physical hardship, while the social and political structure has become increasingly fragmented. The three-year-old U.S.-Canada Free Trade