

Narco-terrorist Int'l meets in Havana

by Carlos Méndez

In late July, Cuban President Fidel Castro and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas brought together in Havana the key elements of a continent-wide narco-terrorist apparatus which they have been building up in recent years, the political front for which is the São Paulo Forum. That this narco-terrorist apparatus represents a sophisticated network of kidnappers and terrorists was revealed on May 23 of this year, when a weapons cache exploded in Managua, Nicaragua.

Castro himself gave the green light for this apparatus to go into action with his participation in the São Paulo Forum's Fourth Conference, held in Havana July 21-24. Over 100 Ibero-American leftist parties and organizations were represented there, including the Cuban Communist Party, Daniel Ortega of the Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of Mexico's Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), Luiz Ignacio "Lula" da Silva of Brazil's Workers' Party (PT), Jorge Shafik Handal of El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), Antonio Navarro Wolf of Colombia's M-19, Léber Seregni of Uruguay's Tupamaros Movement, and members of Venezuela's Causa-R party.

Among the special guests at the conference were Leonardo Boff, a suspended Franciscan priest and a leading representative of the Marxist, schismatic Theology of Liberation group, and Guatemalan terrorist and Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú. Both were recipients of special awards by Castro on Aug. 3. Also singled out was liberation theologian Frei Betto of Brazil, spiritual adviser to PT presidential candidate Lula, an intimate of Fidel Castro, and director of *América Latina*, the São Paulo Forum's official publication, whose first issue was announced in Havana.

The São Paulo Forum was created in 1990 at the urging of Cuba's Communist Party. During the July 21-24 meeting, the group's leaders presented themselves as an alternative to collapsing neo-liberal economic policies.

The downfall of neo-liberalism is evident, as seen in Brazil, Venezuela, and Guatemala. But the alternative offered by the São Paulo Forum represents the same, or worse, policy since its premise is the continued payment of the usurious foreign debt. Many of the speakers emphasized that the Ibero-American left must adopt a "pragmatic" approach, and not make any radical promises—such as stopping usury—that it can't keep.

Moreover, the forum attacked "militarism," the code-

word for attacking the institution of the armed forces, and supported human rights, the United Nations, and "the efforts of the FMLN, the FSLN, and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) to strengthen the peace processes taking place in the region." In the closing session, Castro expressed respect for those engaged in armed struggle but said that the situation has changed and is not advisable at this time.

The explosion in Managua

Castro's words are one thing. The truth is that the forum leaders have been building a complex narco-terrorist apparatus, as revealed by the May 23 explosion in Managua. The People's Liberation Forces (FLP), a faction of El Salvador's FMLN, claimed responsibility for the arsenal's existence. Aside from proving that the peace accords imposed on El Salvador by the U.N. are a farce, the lists of potential kidnap victims among Ibero-American millionaires, and the hundreds of false passports and identity documents found at the site, imply a sophisticated network which is international in scope.

Perhaps one of the most surprising aspects of the Managua explosion was the fact that Tomás Borge, the former interior minister in the Sandinista government, was the first to arrive on the scene, dressed in his pajamas. That someone of Borge's importance should be the first to arrive shows that this was no small event. As a diplomat quoted in the July 14 *Washington Post* put it, "You'd have to be really naive to believe that this wasn't overseen by some part of Sandinista intelligence." Nicaraguan Government Minister Alfredo Mendieta said in a July 22 press conference that those who created the arsenal "perhaps" had the backing of a secret unit which operated during the Sandinista regime, but is now disbanded. Anonymous sources quoted by the *Washington Post* said that the arsenal's existence is proof that the Sandinistas are still linked to a sordid network which made Nicaragua a center and refuge for leftist operations.

Borge's role in all this is key. Known to be close to the Cubans, he is the only founding member of the FSLN still alive, and is also the president of the Conference of Latin American Political Parties (Coppal), as well as the official biographer of Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Borge's attacks on Ibero-America's armed forces are particularly relevant, given what has come to light in the aftermath of the May 23 explosion.

On March 26, 1992 in a speech in Managua, Borge attacked the existence of Ibero-America's armed forces and said that "armies are only good for making coups and for repressing people and, furthermore, they eat up a good portion of our budgets." Describing armies as "a cancer in our countries," he concluded that there is no reason for them to continue to exist, the March 27, 1992 Mexico City daily *Excelsior* reported at the time. Obviously, without the armed forces, the narco-terrorist international is free to do what it wants.