

Lack of security for relief agencies and UN workers in Angola has exacerbated the plight of these people. For example, in Huambo province, where fighting remains fierce, according to IRIN news agency, “the precarious sanitary situation as well as the shortage of food is resulting in high malnutrition among children.” In the area of Kwanza Norte province, because of lack of security, relief agencies have been unable to extend any aid to more than 12,000 displaced people, and the situation is described by religious people in the area as “extremely serious.” UNITA’s seizure of towns in the area north of Bie, has also forced people to flee. According to reports from Lisbon, the city of Kuito “has in the last few weeks received an ‘army’ of displaced people, more than 13,000 who are already suffering from hunger as a result of the suspension of World Food Program humanitarian flights.”

Congo-Brazzaville: As indicated in the March 21 radio report cited above, the “little war” in Congo-Brazzaville, which has pitted the government of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso against militias of former President Lissouba, has had a devastating effect on the population. This war is a “spin-off” of the war in Angola, with Lissouba a backer of Savimbi, and Sassou-Nguesso, who came to power through war in 1997, a backer of the Angola People’s Liberation Movement (MPLA) government in Luanda. The country’s tiny population has been largely displaced. For instance, according to IRIN, up to 300,000 people were displaced in the Pool region in March, and their condition was described as “catastrophic.” “The displaced, concentrated in different areas, are facing starvation and disease outbreaks with 10-15 people, mostly children, dying every day in one settlement alone. . . . Much of Pool’s population was reported to have fled into the forests. . . . In addition, some 120,000 residents of southern Brazzaville, who fled toward Pool in December at the outbreak of fighting in the city, remain unaccounted for.” As of March 10, “humanitarian agencies have had no access to the region due to insecurity, and the displaced have received no relief assistance.”

In the area of Bas Congo, the situation has been made worse by an influx in the third week of March of 80,000 refugees from Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with what relief workers call “dire consequences” for the local population and the refugees themselves.

Meanwhile, in the Congo itself, in the last month, tens of thousands of refugees have flooded Zambia from the eastern Congo, due to the escalation of fighting in that area. It is estimated that throughout the Congo, there are at least 467,000 internally displaced people, with acute localized food shortages and outbreaks of disease.

Farther to the east, the governments of Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi — all of which are part of the warlord force sponsored from London and complicit channels in the United States, beginning with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice — have all constructed “protected villages,” or camps, for people who have been forcibly removed from their homes.

In northern Uganda alone, there are nearly half a million people living in camps, without adequate food, water, or sanitation. The death rate in the camps is high, especially among children, from malnutrition-related diseases, particularly diarrhea. The Ugandan government has refused to declare the area a “disaster zone,” permitting proper relief to come into the camps. At the conference on “Internally Displaced Persons,” organized on March 30 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, Anglican Bishop Macleord Baker Ochola declared that the government has a “design to wipe us out,” speaking of the Acholi people of northern Uganda. “We have been asking the government to declare Gulu and Kitgum districts a disaster area but the issue has not been heeded. If people were suffering or dying in Kampala, Washington, and London, the international community will make noise. But because the people are from Acholi, nobody is talking, just looking on.”

Project Democracy gets its coup in Paraguay

by Cynthia R. Rush

On March 28, the democratically elected President of Paraguay, Raúl Cubas, resigned, after four days of street violence which followed the March 23 assassination of Vice President Luis María Argaña in downtown Asunción. Cubas, who, together with his close ally, nationalist Gen. Lino César Oviedo (ret.), was accused of orchestrating the Argaña murder, sought, and was granted, asylum in Brazil. General Oviedo, an outspoken opponent of globalization, left the country with his family for Argentina, where he was also granted political asylum by the Menem government. Cubas’s replacement is Senate President Luis González Macchi, who immediately proclaimed that with Cubas and Oviedo out of the way, Paraguay could now, finally, make the transition to real “democracy.”

But whose “democracy”?

What transpired in the days between March 23 and March 28 was in reality the second phase of an operation begun in April 1996. Then, Anglophiles in the U.S. State Department, together with the British-sponsored Inter-American Dialogue (IAD) and its assets in the governments of the Common Market of the South (Mercosur, including Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay), mobilized against an alleged “coup plot” by Oviedo, to force the popular general’s resignation as head of the Army, and, they hoped, out of any position of influence in this very poor country. Oviedo has a broad base of support among the peasantry and within the middle and lower ranks of the Army.

As we warned at the time (see *EIR*, May 17, 1996, see graphic), this operation was set into motion to smash the institutions of the nation-state, especially the Armed Forces, and impose the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) genocidal dictates — under the guise of “free trade and democracy.” The only real “plot” taking place at that time in Paraguay, was the assault on the military described by *EIR* in its 1993 bestseller, *The Plot to Annihilate the Armed Forces and the Nations of Ibero-America*.

That General Oviedo is today accused of masterminding the Argaña assassination and deploying snipers to kill anti-government demonstrators, is evidence that the same forces are at work to finish the job begun in 1996. According to the Paraguayan daily *ABC Color*, President González Macchi has never made a secret of his hope that Oviedo would someday get the same treatment as Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega, and be spirited out of the country, accused of an “international crime.” González has vowed to bring Oviedo back to Paraguay to serve the ten-year prison sentence he received for his alleged coup plotting.

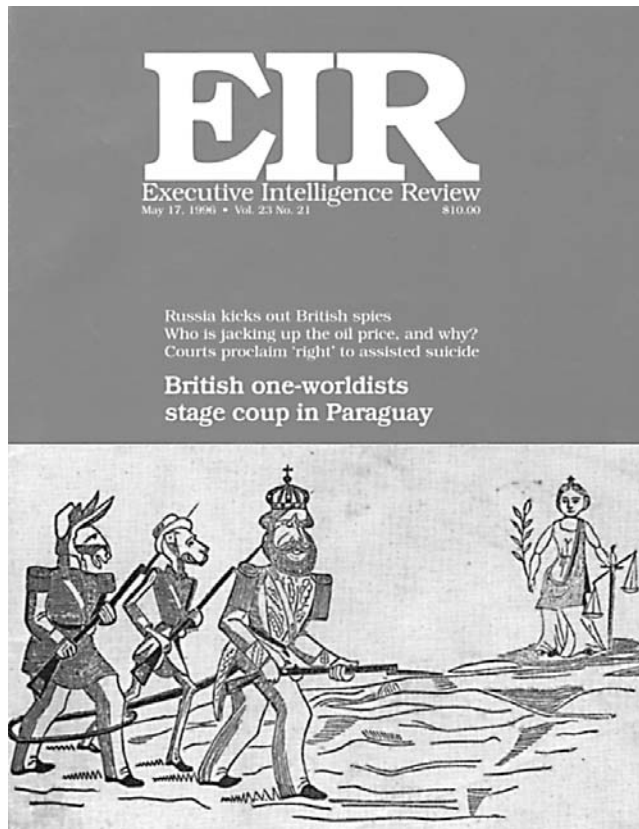
To the dismay of these Project Democracy fanatics, their 1996 operation failed, both to get rid of Oviedo and to guarantee imposition of the neo-liberal economic “reforms” demanded by the IMF. In fact, along with Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia, nations all currently undergoing political and economic convulsion, Paraguay has been singled out by international bankers for not fully embracing these nation-wrecking policies.

As the April 1 *Washington Post* lamented, rather than implementing the free-market reforms and privatizations which “have brought gleaming modern skyscrapers and the Internet to all corners of Latin America,” Paraguay remains “stuck in a semi-feudal system of powerful landowners, corrupt politicians and wasteful state-run corporations.” According to the April 1 *New York Times*, the “democratic” solution which included Cubas's resignation, includes an agreement by the ruling Colorado Party to begin privatizing the state-owned water, electricity, and telephone companies.

A ‘third force’ deploys

In 1997, General Oviedo won the Colorado Party's primary and became its Presidential candidate. When he was thrown in jail for his alleged 1996 coup plotting and disqualified as a candidate, his running mate, Raúl Cubas, took his place and won the election in August 1998. Cubas then incurred the wrath of London and Wall Street, first by releasing Oviedo from jail, and then by refusing to obey a Supreme Court ruling which ordered the retired general back to prison.

Cubas's opponents tried to deal with the Oviedo problem by initiating impeachment proceedings against the President, accusing him of improperly discharging the duties of his office by disobeying the Supreme Court's ruling. But, according to a report in *ABC Color*, as of Sunday, March 21, the opposition did not have the votes to impeach Cubas. Even Domingo



In this cover story of May 17, 1996, “British One-Worldists Stage Coup in Paraguay,” *EIR* warned that an operation was under way to smash the institutions of the nation-state, under the guise of “free trade and democracy.”

Laiño, the opposition Presidential candidate in the 1998 elections, stated that “there would be no impeachment.”

Yet 48 hours later, everything had changed. On the morning of Tuesday, March 23, as he drove to work, Vice President Luis María Argaña was attacked and killed by three or four assassins armed with automatic weapons and grenades. The mafia-style murder shocked Paraguayans, as well as neighboring governments. Almost immediately, the word went out that Cubas and Oviedo were responsible for the hit. Argaña, who together with his right-hand man González Macchi, enjoyed a very close relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Asunción, had been responsible for removing Oviedo as the Colorado Party's Presidential candidate, and had attacked Cubas for disobeying the Supreme Court's ruling. Were Cubas to be successfully impeached, Argaña would become President.

During the regime of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, Argaña's status as one of the general's favorites earned him the nickname “the Prince.” After Stroessner was overthrown — General Oviedo was the officer who held a grenade to Stroessner's head and convinced him to step down — Argaña transformed himself into a “democrat” and became a favorite of the globalizers.

The lower House of Congress had not been scheduled to vote on the impeachment until April 7. But, swayed by the emotional impact of Argaña's murder, it voted to impeach Cubas on March 24, and the Senate then called him to appear on March 25 to be tried. Trade unionists shut down the capital in a general strike; schools and shops were closed, transportation stopped, and rioting students and peasants clashed with police in front of the Congress. By Saturday, March 27, six student demonstrators had been killed by snipers positioned on top of buildings close to the Congress. "We are on the brink of civil war," warned Angel Seifart, a former Vice President and defender of President Cubas.

All the marks of a British operation

For all the attempts to portray this as a spontaneous response to Argaña's murder by an enraged populace, this total institutional chaos did not come about by chance. Events which occurred on and after March 23 bore all the marks of a classical British "third force" operation, right down to the professional hit-squad which murdered Argaña, and the unidentified snipers whose killings were blamed on Oviedo and Cubas.

The same forces which mobilized against Oviedo in 1996 were at the center of what were euphemistically called "mediating" efforts to force Cubas's ouster. Fearing that Oviedo would mobilize his own broad base among the country's peasantry and within the Armed Forces, U.S. Ambassador Maura Harty, joined by the papal nuncio and the ambassadors of Brazil and Argentina, threatened Cubas that if he chose to stay on and fight, as several diplomatic sources had reported, he would lose the backing of the "international community." According to reports in the Argentine press, it was Harty who armtwisted the commanders of Paraguay's Armed Forces into agreeing to support the new government.

Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso was the other heavyweight brought in. He called Cubas several times during March 26-27, telling him, among other things, that if he didn't accept a negotiated solution, Paraguay would be expelled from Mercosur for violating its "democracy" clause. Because Paraguay is economically dependent on Brazil and Argentina, that threat carried considerable weight. It was at that point that Cubas resigned and González Macchi was inaugurated as the new President.

But, given the unstable regional situation stemming from Brazil's financial meltdown, Paraguay's new government isn't likely to last long. González Macchi's announcement that he intends to serve out the remaining four years of Cubas's term has already blown holes in the "democracy" facade, as the Constitution calls for only a six-month term followed by new elections. The Cardoso government is said to be "uncomfortable" about that fact, and according to the daily *O Globo*, has been left holding "a hot potato."

Interview: Gilles Munier

A French perspective on the war vs. Iraq

Mr. Munier has been Secretary General of the Franco-Iraqi Friendship Society since 1986. He was interviewed in Paris by Christine Bierre, in mid-March.

EIR: You have just returned from Iraq. Can you tell us about the military and political impact of the Anglo-American air raids against Iraq?

Munier: I came back from Iraq about a month ago. (My previous trip went back to four days before the Anglo-American bombings of last December.) I went with a group of French senators who also wanted to see for themselves what the situation is.

I have known Iraq for around 30 years; I go there five to six times a year. I'm well placed, therefore, to evaluate the evolution, or, the degradation, of the situation.

The air raids in December did not demoralize the population, even though this was their purported aim. The Anglo-Americans thought that they would be able to push the population to demonstrate against the regime. Not only did that not happen, but, according to different eye-witness reports which I gathered, the population reacted more against the spectacle of the thing. Even though they were furious at having to impotently watch the destruction of their infrastructure, they did not lock themselves up, nor did they escape to the countryside. Many were up on the roofs watching the missiles drop. People preferred to witness for themselves the brutality of the attack. . . . They don't have CNN. . . .

Those air raids had no impact on the morale of the Iraqis. Quite the contrary, Saddam Hussein has been reinforced, because he is perceived as a resistance fighter, a modern-day Saladin.

EIR: Where are the Anglo-Americans concentrating the bombings? In this undeclared war, which has been going on since December, where the density of daily sorties and air raids has already surpassed that of last December, what has been the impact on infrastructure and human lives?

Munier: Americans are concentrating their attack on the two no-fly zones, following two scenarios. The first, is to re-run the attempted land invasion scheduled to be launched