

Laundering the FARC cartel in Colombia

by Valerie Rush

Six leaders of Colombia's narco-terrorist FARC cartel returned from their government-sponsored tour of Europe in February, cheerful and rosy-cheeked, and spewing media mouthfuls about "cooperation" and "learning experiences." The government of President Andrés Pastrana, in turn, promised new and wonderful breakthroughs in the so-called "peace process." A joint communiqué issued on March 2 by the two parties, gushed: "Not since the beginning of the peace process, have we achieved such mutual confidence as was achieved during our 23 days of travel, 24 hours a day."

In the aftermath of the FARC's "Eurotour," there has been an unending trek of prominent political and business figures into the FARC-held southern jungles of Colombia, to pay homage to the newly laundered FARC and its grizzled chief, Manuel "Sureshot" Marulanda. Former President Belisario Betancur flew down there, after telling the press that he was going to meet "a legend." Several government ministers were deployed by Pastrana to explain the administration's so-called Colombia Plan to the FARC, and win its blessing. The leaders of all of Colombia's major business federations are expected to make their pilgrimage to the FARC shortly.

On March 4, America Online founder Jim Kimsey followed in the footsteps of New York Stock Exchange President Richard Grasso, and travelled to the heart of FARC territory to meet with "Sureshot" and exchange caps with him. In an interview later with the *Washington Post*, Kimsey explained, "It's the kind of thing that's irresistible to me. To talk to the oldest guerrilla in the world and to try to persuade him of the wisdom of how the world is going to change."

Kimsey was accompanied on his trip to the Colombian jungle by Joseph Robert, described by the *Post* as head of a "real estate empire founded on the wreckage of the savings and loan scandal." The *Post* says that the "swaggering" Kimsey—who is affectionately dubbed "Rambo" by Robert—is typical of the new class of "try anything once" Internet billionaires, described by an anthropologist cited in the article

as "productive narcissists."

What comes through in the *Post* interview with Kimsey is the incredible arrogance with which he, Robert, Grasso, and their ilk are readily implementing the Wall Street-State Department policy of de facto legalization of the drug trade. How else does one describe the scenario of world-class financiers discussing investment possibilities with narco-terrorists, while sitting in the middle of the world's largest coca plantations? In fact, it is rumored that an eventual merger between Colombia's FARC and America Online, could end up as "America Main-line."

Terrorists by any other name

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the FARC's terrorist rampages continue unabated. On Feb. 27, a FARC assassination team killed Army Gen. Crispiniano Quiñones (ret.), shooting him through the head at point-blank range. On March 6, Colombian media personality Fernando González Pacheco announced plans to abandon Colombia because of FARC death threats against him. On March 9, a 200-man FARC column decimated the town of El Bordo, in the southeastern department of Cauca, while freeing scores of FARC terrorists from a local jail. At least 20 buildings were levelled by home-made missiles, created by filling gas cylinders with explosives.

On March 10, the country's most prominent newspaperman, *El Tiempo* editor Francisco Santos, fled Colombia with his wife and children, after security agencies informed him that hit-men hired by the FARC were gunning for him. Santos was the founder of the "No Más" ("No More!") peace movement, which has organized millions of Colombians in street demonstrations to protest the continued kidnappings, assassinations, and terrorism. FARC chieftain Marulanda had issued a threat in February last month that the country's media figures had "debts to pay."

On March 14, the FARC set off two powerful car bombs

designed to decimate the Fourth Brigade Army base in the city of Medellín, the second attack on the facility in less than a year. Although the bombs caused substantial damage to the Army base, they fell short of their target, and ended up levelling two adjacent residences, killing two people and seriously injuring more than a score.

The human rights ‘cartel’

For any readers having difficulty reconciling these two versions of the FARC, the explanation is simple. Without the international “human rights” lobby and the drug legalization interests which fund it, the FARC cartel would be seen for what it is: the world’s leading narcotics-trafficking organization. Instead, armed and equipped by millions in drug revenues, and aided and abetted by powerful financial interests who have systematically used “human rights” as a battering ram against Colombia’s defense forces, the FARC has been converted into an insurgent army which has blackmailed the government into a power-sharing agreement that not only spells the end of Colombian sovereignty, but which poses a narco-terrorist threat to every nation in the region.

Indeed, it is no accident that just as the U.S. Congress began debate on a proposed \$1.6 billion package of U.S. aid to Colombia, the bulk of which is slated to boost Colombia’s seriously outflanked Army, a slanderous assault against that Army was launched simultaneously from the United Nations, Madeleine Albright’s U.S. State Department, and Human Rights Watch, the non-governmental organization (NGO) funded by international mega-speculator and drug legalization financier George Soros. The reports, in turn, fed demands from certain members of the U.S. Congress who have long participated in witch-hunts against Ibero-America’s military forces, to tie “stringent conditions” to the Colombia aid package that would virtually gut the military assistance portion.

The reports detail stories of torture, kidnappings, forced disappearances and executions. And, while there is little reason to doubt that such horrors are perpetrated in Colombia, both on the side of the FARC-ELN and of the drug-linked vigilante forces opposing them, there is no basis for concluding—as these reports do—that these crimes are carried out in connivance with the Colombian Military Forces. Indeed, a perusal of the State Department report reveals that it draws most of its evidence directly from Soros’s Human Rights Watch (HRW), which in turn manufactures its “detailed, abundant, and compelling evidence” from its own “interviews” with anonymous victims and perpetrators—many of whom have reportedly been paid to lie.

Another source of HRW’s “evidence” comes from Attorney General Alfonso Gómez Méndez, who married narco-terrorist apologist and propagandist Patricia Lara, and whose 1990 stint as Attorney General was committed to perpetual “investigations” of terrorist complaints against Colombia’s Military Forces. Gómez Méndez was also a frequently cited source for the book *State Terrorism in Colombia*, produced by a gaggle of international human rights NGOs in 1992,

which served as a hit-list, complete with identification photos, against the Colombian military’s leading counterinsurgent officers.

A five-year investigation of the 1985 narco-terrorist assault on the Justice Palace in Bogotá, which gutted the building, destroyed the country’s legal archives, and killed more than 100 people, concluded with a recommendation by Gómez Méndez to dishonorably discharge the Army Commander at the time, General Arias Cabrales, for using “excessive force” in ending the murderous terrorist siege. Gómez’s recommendation outraged Colombians, who were counting on the Military Forces to shatter the burgeoning partnership of drug cartels and terrorist guerrillas exemplified by the Justice Palace atrocity. Gómez was forced into a temporary retreat, but the “human rights” assault on the military had already begun.

Yet another source cited by the Human Rights Watch report is the Human Rights Unit of the Attorney General’s office, which appears to have its own share of dirty secrets. A March 13 editorial in the *Washington Times*, based on official documents acquired by that newspaper, details how the human rights machinery operates behind the scenes against the military. According to complaints lodged with the Colombian Attorney General’s office in 1998 and 1999, two respected Colombian leftists were approached by Jaime Caycedo, secretary of the Colombian Communist Party, and by Ana Teresa Bernal, coordinator of Colombia’s most prominent human rights NGO, Redepaz, with offers of bribes and asylum in Europe, in exchange for false testimony that would link Colombian Generals Fernando Millán and Rito Alejo del Río to paramilitaries.

Instead of accepting the bribes, the individuals filed complaints. One of the individuals testified that he was then harassed by Attorney General agents, and threatened by one Marcela Rolbán of the Human Rights Unit, that “I had to . . . retract my report against human rights leaders and that I had to say that the Army had paid me for that version, or else I would be incarcerated for giving a false statement.”

The two targetted generals were eventually forced out of the military by President Pastrana, who declared that their continued service “was no longer convenient.” And more military heads are expected to roll, now that Pastrana has pledged to cashier—with or without hard evidence—any military officer or soldier upon whom even *suspicion* falls of collaboration with paramilitaries.

While the FARC was touring Europe, their most prominent and tenacious opponent inside Colombia, Gen. Harold Bedoya (ret.), was on a tour of his own, to build support for a diametrically opposed policy. Hosted by the Presidential campaign of Lyndon LaRouche, Bedoya joined LaRouche in addressing a Washington, D.C. seminar on Feb. 23, on “The War on Drugs and the Defense of the Sovereign Nation-State.” Immediately below, we present the full remarks of both LaRouche and Bedoya, and major excerpts from the discussion period which followed.