

Wall Street Task Force Dictates Opium War Strategy Against Americas

by Gretchen Small

The final report issued on Oct. 12 by a task force convened by the New York Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the Inter-American Dialogue to elaborate long-term U.S. policy toward Colombia, is a mandate for war: not a war against the rampaging armies of the drug cartels, but a war against all persons, institutions, and countries in the Americas which might oppose Wall Street's decision to reduce the continent to a no-man's-land of warring drug plantations. The final report, cynically titled "Toward Greater Peace and Security in Colombia," dictates that the United States employ its full diplomatic, military, and economic power, to force Colombia, and its neighbors, to surrender to the narco-terrorist hordes which are marching ever-greater numbers of Colombians, Panamanians, Ecuadorans, and others, into their concentration camps inside Colombia.

The CFR-Dialogue report—which is a de facto policy document of *either* a Bush or a Gore administration in Washington—confirms in spades *EIR* Editor-in-Chief Lyndon H. LaRouche's charge, that the Wall Street-London financier interests, maddened by the collapse of their world empire, are carrying out a deliberate strategy of waging a new Opium War against the Americas. New York's CFR and the Washington-headquartered Inter-American Dialogue are, after all, the Anglo-American financiers' premier foreign policy think-tanks on this side of the Atlantic.

If You Fight, the FARC Will Shoot You

The conclusions of the task force's final report can be summed up in three points:

1. Only a "political solution," a negotiated settlement with the FARC and other raging narco-terrorist bands in Colombia, is acceptable. The Colombian state will not be permitted to defeat the narco-terrorists militarily, as Peru's President Alberto Fujimori and the military of Peru proved is eminently feasible.

2. The United States should not supply Colombia's military with the equipment needed to fight the drug traffickers and their armies, but rather must enforce the reorganization of the Colombian military, placing it under virtually direct U.S. command, so that it finally bows to "diplomatic efforts to find a political solution." This policy is called "professionalization of the Armed Forces," and involves purging the military, establishing "monitoring mechanisms," human

rights oversight, etc.

3. The United States must assume a more active role in forcing Colombia and its neighbors to accept the narco-terrorists' terms. "Multilateral structures" are to be set up, under which the United Nations and the Organization of American States will strip Colombia of all sovereignty. The report insists that the Colombian state and elite must be put through "thorough-going reforms," and the international community should draw up "performance criteria and benchmarks" by which Colombia's commitment to "peace" is to be judged.

The task force's "specialists" admit that the drug trade "fuels and benefits" the FARC, the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Units of Colombia (AUC) paramilitaries. There was disagreement among them, however, over whether their participation in the drug trade makes them criminals or not, the report stated, without a hint of irony. All concurred, however, that the Andrés Pastrana government's groveling deals with the FARC and ELN are "steps designed to put an end to the country's decades-old conflict." And the report specifically endorsed the Colombian government's decision to hand over to the FARC a Switzerland-sized territory, which functions today as a de facto independent state, and further praised their intention to do the same for the ELN.

This statement of Wall Street policy should not be misread as some proposal for the future; it is being implemented now. Two of the Colombian advisers to the CFR-Dialogue task force, Augusto Ramírez Ocampo and Juan Manuel Santos, recently joined the Pastrana government, as the Development and Finance ministers, respectively.

On Oct. 16, the Pastrana government ordered 388 military officers purged on unspecified, and of course unproven, accusations of "human rights violations." This unprecedented action was taken the same week that the FARC invited a journalist to film the concentration camp where they are holding more than 400 captured policemen and soldiers. The FARC itself released the pictures of the emaciated and dying men, as an unmistakeable message: "You see what awaits you, if you do not bow to our demands."

No Opposition But LaRouche

LaRouche now stands as the sole force around which the opposition can rally to defeat such fascist policies. The task

force's basic message is that regardless of whether the next U.S. administration be headed by George W. Bush or Albert Gore, handing power to the narco in the Americas will be the policy. As their final report notes, their mission is to provide "a long-term time frame, and goes beyond any single administration, either in Colombia or the United States." And they asserted that this is a policy which is to be imposed in Washington by "sustained, high-level bipartisan leadership for years to come."

This message is meant both for opponents of Wall Street's madness inside the United States, and for the rest of the Americas. The task force declared that it is "important to caution against alarmist prognoses"—an unmistakeable reference to President Clinton's anti-drug policy adviser, Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.). McCaffrey launched a spirited fight in July 1999 to break the policy of "negotiating" with the narco-terrorists, and to mobilize U.S. assistance to the Colombian military and state, so that it might defend itself.

Putting the lie to the Wall Street games, McCaffrey had declared: "There's 240,000 police and army and 37 million people facing savage attack from 25,000 internal enemies funded by hundreds of millions of dollars in drug money. . . . It's a serious emergency situation." Perhaps as many as two-thirds of FARC units "benefit financially from an association with drug criminal organizations by either guarding the crops, transporting the product, or in some cases actually producing HCl," the psychoactive agent in cocaine, according to McCaffrey. All three narco-terrorist armies have, in some cases, he pointed out, "doubled the pay scale of a Colombian infantry battalion and tripled the number of automatic weapons of a Colombian Army battalion." U.S. military assistance is urgently required, he said.

But the real content of Wall Street's report, lies less in its pedantic phrases, than in the composition of the task force itself. The team was co-chaired by U.S. Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), and Brent Scowcroft, former President George Bush's longtime personal aide who served as his National Security Adviser. Joining the direct representatives of Wall Street's law firms and financial houses (Sullivan & Cromwell, Warburg Dillon Read, et al.) on the task force, were an equal mix of Democrats and Bush Republicans. Among its members were President Clinton's former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, and former White House Chief of Staff Thomas McLarty; Maryland's Kathleen Kennedy Townsend; Manatt, Phelps and Philips partner Jim Jones, Wall Street's Ambassador to Mexico in the first part of the Clinton Administration; Bush's Iran-Contra operative, Elliott Abrams; Ohio Republican Sen. Mike DeWine; Richard Hass, another former member of President Bush's National Security Council team; and that epitome of "bipartisanship," Bush's once-Democratic Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Bernard Aronson.

The task force was also packed with old, bloody "Colombian hands." One such was Thomas McNamara, president

of David Rockefeller's Americas Society, who, as President Bush's Ambassador to Colombia, helped orchestrate then-President César Gaviria's phony "surrender" deal with the Medellín Cartel and its leader, Pablo Escobar. Gaviria, who today is overseeing the dismantling of the anti-drug Fujimori regime in Peru, became President of Colombia over the murdered body of the fiercely anti-drug nationalist, Luis Carlos Galán, assassinated by an assault rifle whose serial number traced it to an Israeli arms shipment paid for by Iran-Contra's Abrams himself.

Aronson, who oversaw McNamara's deals with the Medellín Cartel as Assistant Secretary of State, has published repeated newspaper commentaries arguing that "peace" in Colombia will be achieved only when the Pastrana government reaches a formal alliance with the bloody FARC.

Freeing Trade in Dope

The policy underpinning the CFR-Dialogue task force report, is drug legalization, although those words do not appear there in print. Both organizations are on the record favoring legalization. It was the Inter-American Dialogue which made itself notorious in 1986 as the first major Wall Street Establishment body to call for legalization of the dope trade, in order to ensure that "strapped economies carrying large burdens of external debt" can meet their payments from the "foreign exchange that the drug trade provides." The CFR followed suit in 1997, issuing its own legalization report, "Rethinking International Drug Control: New Directions for U.S. Policy."

The Project Director for that 1997 CFR report also served on the CFR-Dialogue Colombia task force: Mathea Falco, Jimmy Carter's Assistant Secretary of State for International Affairs, a notorious, outspoken advocate of drug "decriminalization." Falco has made a career out of lobbying for drug legalization, and she, like the CFR itself, is hefty funded by the king of drug legalization, George Soros. Falco also heads a separate, San Francisco-based "Working Group on Colombia" set up by the CFR this year. Falco's only criticism of the final conclusions of the CFR-Dialogue report, was that it did not openly call for the U.S. government to "undertake an active mediating role in Colombia." She would have the United States directly step in to "bring the [Colombian] government and the various guerrilla factions to the negotiating table."

For his part, the project director of the CFR-Dialogue task force, the Inter-American Dialogue's Michael Shifter, argued in an article in the July/August 1999 issue of the CFR's *Foreign Affairs* journal, that just because the FARC and the ELN "have combined revenues of about \$900 million a year, some \$500 million of which is derived from taxes on coca producers and the rest of which comes from kidnapping and extortion," that is no reason to consider them "common criminals or drug mafias," because "their criminal activities help sustain a political agenda."