

'FARC International' Deploys Across Ibero-America To Pick Up the Pieces

by Gretchen Small

Fidel Castro's triumphal visit to Hugo Chávez's Venezuela during Oct. 26-31, is only the most-publicized feature of a broader radical regroupment under way across Ibero-America by the São Paulo Forum, the unified narco-terrorist apparatus founded by Castro's Cuban Communist Party in 1990. As the banker's strategy of "globalization" disintegrates, the São Paulo Forum has positioned itself to seize leadership over hundreds of millions of desperate people at the moment of a global financial crash, with the stated intent of unleashing a coordinated, continent-wide uprising, pivoted around the drug-running Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The personal deployment of Fidel Castro into this process, to anoint self-proclaimed FARC ally Hugo Chávez, the President of Venezuela, as his official successor as "leader" of a continental revolution, provides a telling reminder that the coming bloodbath is, in fact, being orchestrated by the same Wall Street-London financier interests which brought Fidel Castro to power in the first place, 40 years ago. Then, Wall Street used the likes of a low-level stringer such as the *New York Times'* Herbert Matthews, to run publicity for Castro; today, the same job is done for Castro's FARC allies by New York Stock Exchange President Richard Grasso, America Online honcho Jim Kimsey, and, of course, the *New York Times* as well.

Whereas in 1959, Castro was a useful pawn to keep control of the region during the Cold War, today, Castro's narco-terrorist spawn serve as Wall Street's shocktroops, used to sweep away all institutions of the nation-state which could defend the Americas from Wall Street's Opium War.

Deployments for a continental uprising are well-advanced, and moving faster than any government in the Americas has dared recognize—including that of the United States. The FARC wages its warfare at will in Colombia, enjoying the support of the Chávez government in Venezuela. Its allies in Bolivia launched a revolt of the coca-producers a month ago, and have now been joined, in an as-yet limited fashion, by their Peruvian counterparts. And insurgencies on a par with that already drowning Colombia, can be exploded in Brazil and Ecuador, at any moment of the São Paulo Forum's choosing.

'This Great War,' Colombia

The São Paulo Forum was founded by the Cuban Communist Party and Brazil's Workers Party (PT), in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet empire, with the explicit purpose of replacing the largesse from the Soviet Union, East Germany, and elsewhere, which had sustained terrorist networks and capabilities in the region, with money from the drug trade. In our Nov. 10, 1995 issue, *EIR* published an exhaustive, 64-page *Special Report* on the São Paulo Forum's capabilities and activities, extending from the Americas into Spain, through the Basque separatist killers, the ETA, which forms an integral part of the leadership of the Forum ("London's Irregular Warfare vs. Nations of the Americas").

Yet, for ten years, the slightest mention of the existence of the São Paulo Forum—an increasingly public, very active, and tightly coordinated structure—has been systematically suppressed by the Anglo-American Establishment's intelligence and security services. Rather, the lie is propagated that, with the end of the Cold War, the great threat to democracy today, are the national Armed Forces of the region, which, therefore, have been systematically starved of resources, reduced in size and responsibility, purged of nationalist men of character, and "restructured" to the point that their continued existence is now in doubt in many countries.

Thus, has the current, existential conjuncture been reached.

The perspective guiding São Paulo Forum actions in this period, was laid out in summary fashion in a speech delivered at the so-called "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Popular University" in Buenos Aires, Argentina, by U.S. sociologist James Petras, and published in a special supplement of the "Plaza de Mayo Mothers Association," edited by the Argentine daily *Página 12*, on Oct. 13. Petras has been a regular participant in São Paulo Forum deliberations since its founding, and is an ideologue of sorts for their narco-terrorist cause.

The decisive battle today, equivalent in importance to the Cuban Revolution and the war in Vietnam, is "the great confrontation between the American Empire and the great struggle in Colombia," Petras declared. "Colombia is the pivot of Latin America today. Where we [sic] have more than 20,000 combatants, and hundreds of thousands of sympathiz-



Cuba's Fidel Castro (left) and Venezuela's Hugo Chávez.

ers, in confrontation with the empire and its Colombian lackeys. . . . What happens in Colombia, if the empire is defeated, will have consequences for all of Latin America. Colombia is no Caribbean island, nor a small Central American country. It is a country with a large population, bordering Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, etc. There is much at stake."

"This great war" has already started, Petras said, under conditions in which the revolutionary forces are equal to, or possibly strategically stronger than, the Colombian government's forces. Petras pointed to globalization's free-market economic policies, as the great force which has weakened the state in Colombia, discrediting the government in the eyes of its people.

Petras then identified three principal forces flanking the Colombian narco-terrorist offensive:

"In Brazil, we have the Landless Movement (MST), with 10,500 delegates attending its congresses and organizations; with the capability to organize 390 land seizures between last May 1 and 6th, 89 of them in Pernambuco [state] alone. . . . They are more organized than Germans!" he exclaimed. The MST is now working on a national project "moving towards the cities," he said, organizing workers and lower-middle-class people, to form a nationwide rural-urban movement.

"And beyond Brazil, there is Ecuador, where we have a powerful Indian peasant movement," the Ecuadoran National Indigenist Confederation (CONAIE), Petras said. The CONAIE leads "a great process of radicalization" against the government's dollarization program, and in defense of the "revo-

lutionaries" of Colombia, he claimed, asserting that after CONAIE swept the municipal and local elections in the highlands, "all the *sierra* is now revolutionary Indian terrority."

The third force is Chávez's Venezuela, where more than 70% of the population has been mobilized, and which refuses to attack the Colombian "revolutionary" forces.

Petras reviewed the forces existing in other countries of the continent, but he singled out the "strategic" importance of the Zapatista and allied insurgent forces in Mexico, because of their ability to mobilize *within* the United States. Petras emphasized that "there are millions of Mexicans on the other side of the border of Texas, California, etc."

Arrayed in Support of the FARC

That Petras outlined this perspective before an institution run by Argentina's Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, brings us back to where we started: that, as significant as the narco-terrorists' military force has grown in the region, it is the support of the London and Wall Street financial establishment which gives them, ultimately, their strategic advantage.

One of the most prominent meetings held by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during her August tour of five South American countries, was with representatives of this very Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Association and other representatives of Argentine terrorist networks (e.g., *Página 12*'s Horacio Verbitsky). This group of FARC allies she called "human rights" activists, and told them: "The role of the military has been the major problem in Latin America.

We work with governments to affirm the idea of civilian control. . . . That is the center of our foreign policy.”

The founder of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Hebe de Bonafini, is a leading figure in the São Paulo Forum. She calls Mexico’s Zapatista leader, Marcos, “her son,” and was the subject of recent protest by Spanish officials, because of her support for ETA (she justifies their assassinations as acts of “self-defense”). Like Petras, she believes, as she told the latest issue of Argentina’s freebie leftist monthly, *El Destierro*, that “the FARC is a revolution we have to support.”

Across South America, “leftist” organizations are passing resolutions and mobilizing their bases, to come to the defense of the FARC. So, too, leaders of the São Paulo Forum’s forces have been criss-crossing South America in recent months. Bolivian officials announced on Oct. 30, that an investigation has been ordered to confirm intelligence reports that the FARC has deployed “advisers” into Bolivia, to train the coca-producers led by Evo Morales (another São Paulo Forum regular) in more sophisticated guerrilla warfare techniques. Security forces believe that recent killings and kidnappings of soldiers and police in the Chapare region, as well as the use of new explosive devices, are typical of the FARC *modus operandi*. According to Bolivia’s *El Diario*, police believe that as many as 20 FARC fighters are in Bolivia, and report that the coca-producers are newly equipped with M-16s, a serious advance over their previous old Mausers, and M-1s or M-2s.

Lt. Col. Lucio Gutiérrez, the supporter of the FARC and Hugo Chávez who, together with the CONAIE, led the Jan. 21, 2000 putsch in Ecuador, visited Brazil in late August to solidify alliances with the Workers Party (co-founder of the São Paulo Forum) and Landless Movement. He told the daily *Folha de São Paulo* at the time, that he foresees a “civil war” in Ecuador, against neo-liberal free-market policies.

This same Gutiérrez was quick to endorse the short-lived mutiny of Lt. Col. Ollanta Humala in Peru at the end of October.

Egos of the World, Unite

It is in this broader perspective that the significance of Castro’s visit to Venezuela can be found. Chávez and Castro have long formed a mutual admiration society, but the message delivered by Castro’s carefully staged, high-profile visit went beyond mere friendship, to announce a virtual alliance between their regimes, prepared to seize the moment offered by the revolutionary situation which is developing worldwide as globalization crumbles. The Chávez regime—which defends the FARC as honest revolutionaries, and is in the process of outlawing all independent trade unions in Venezuela—is being put forward as a new “model” for world change. As Chávez told newly appointed Venezuelan ambassadors the day before Castro arrived, “representative democracy” has failed in Ibero-America; and so history has placed Venezuela “at the epicenter of a world battle for a new world, to change the face of the planet.”

There is more than friendship between our peoples, Chávez said during a public appearance with Castro; “it is a geopolitical vision of the integration of our peoples. . . . We have proven that our two peoples are one and the same.” Waxing nostalgic over the beginnings of the Cuban Revolution, Castro likewise told Venezuelans, “We are you, and you are us.”

Castro used every public event on his trip—and they were numerous: He addressed the National Assembly, toured three provinces, gave several university addresses, joined Chávez on his regular four-hour Sunday radio and television program, headed the Cuban baseball team when it squared off against a Venezuelan team led by Chávez, and held a joint videoconference with reporters in seven other capitals—to hail Chávez as the new Simón Bolívar, the founder of Venezuela. Castro’s crude pandering to Chávez’s ego would have embarrassed a more sane mind. “You have done more in a few months than Bolívar could even have dreamed of,” Castro exclaimed. He told 3,000 peasants gathered in Chávez’s hometown that, one day, people will come to visit the house where Chávez was born, as today they visit Bolívar’s birthplace.

Castro made a public display in the process, of how he, Castro, deploys the younger Jacobin megalomaniac. In his nationally televised speech before the National Assembly (which all but two opposition deputies boycotted), Castro delivered instructions on how Venezuela must proceed, if its “revolution” is to be successful, and reiterated, “Objectively speaking, I think that only one man could carry out such a complex process in Venezuela: Hugo Chávez.”

During their song-and-dance routine on Chávez’s “Hello, President!” radio and television show, Castro told Chávez to get tighter security. “I am more conscious than you of the responsibilities which you have with Latin America and the globalized world. You have no substitute at this time in this country. Remember that I could be your father.” Ever so modest, Castro said that, while he could disappear without incident, “I am not Hugo Chávez, a young leader full of life.”

The alliance was sealed with the signing of a five-year oil deal, under which Venezuela will provide Cuba with one-third of its oil imports, 53,000 barrels of oil per day, below market prices and on concessional payment terms. Cuba will pay for the oil largely by barter: exporting vaccines, doctors, and up to 3,000 physical education teachers and sports coaches—the latter clearly needed, as Castro’s baseball team trounced Chávez’s 17 to 6.

Just as it did with Castro in 1958-59, the chief mouthpiece of the Wall Street Establishment, the *New York Times*, endorsed “The Ambitions of Hugo Chávez,” as it titled a Nov. 6 editorial. “The rise of a demagogic leftist leader in Latin America need no longer be considered the threat it was during the Cold War,” it wrote. Nor should “Chávez’s courtship of the . . . FARC” worry the United States. “Other Latin American leaders, like Brazil’s President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, should urge Mr. Chávez to put his influence with the FARC to more positive use by encouraging it to take part in meaningful peace talks with the Colombian government.”