

facto recognition of belligerency status. . . .”

March 4, 2000: Jim Kimsey, the co-founder and chairman emeritus of America Online, and his sidekick, millionaire real estate investor Joseph E. Robert, Jr., paid a personal visit to the FARC in its Caguán redoubt. Their meeting lasted a good three hours, and included talks with FARC “Supreme Commander” Manuel Marulanda, alias “Sureshot.” At the end, Kimsey swapped baseball caps with Marulanda, giving him his AOL cap.

In a March 20 commentary published in the *Washington Times*, Kimsey and Roberts reported they had discussed “the new global economy” and potential U.S. investments with the FARC, and suggested the next step was for FARC leaders to come to the United States, to speak “directly to the U.S. Congress and to the American people. . . . [W]e do believe our leaders should listen to them.”

Council on Foreign Relations member Kimsey and his partner Robert, like Grasso, are among those business executives and speculators who made their millions (or billions) off the “New Economy” of the Information Age, and who see themselves as shaping a “new world order,” in their own interests—one that supplants the nation-state with corporatist power.

Kimsey, in particular, is plugged into the military and intelligence community. A Special Forces Ranger officer during the Vietnam War, Kimsey there served as assistant to the commanding general of Special Operations at the Military Assistance Command, responsible for making assessments of special operations. He left military service in 1970 to start a career as a stockbroker (a move which ran into difficulties in 1975 when the SEC banned him from any brokerage involvement for five years after he pled guilty to charges of stock manipulation). He kept his fingers in the military “pot.” Kimsey serves on the advisory board of the Joint Special Operations Forces Institute, and is a member of the “Tail to Tooth” Commission of Business Executives for National Security (BENS), which is involved in counter-terrorism projects.

November 2000: The Kimsey-Robert duo remained on the case, visiting Havana, for a seven-hour private dinner with Fidel Castro in which, explained Robert, they “explore[d] getting Castro’s support” for the Colombian jungle project they are developing.

March 28, 2000: Britain’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State with responsibility for Latin America, John Battle, announced to the House of Commons that Prime Minister Tony Blair’s government “would welcome” a joint mission of the FARC and Colombian government such as just toured Europe, and has so informed the Colombian government.

March 30, 2000: A FARC communiqué called upon the government of the United States to legalize drug consumption, and for the U.S. Congress to send a delegation to “their” territory in southern Colombia, to tour the region, to dialogue with the FARC leaders first-hand.

U.S. Still For Talking To Colombian Terrorists

by Valerie Rush

In his much-cited national address on Sept. 20, President George Bush announced his government’s commitment to carry out a war on terror “until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated,” wherever it exists around the world. What about the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), right here in this hemisphere?

The FARC is on the State Department’s official list of terrorist groups, with which the U.S. government will have no dealings—supposedly. The FARC is so heavily involved in all aspects of the cocaine trade, that it is the world’s number-one drug cartel, controlling about two-thirds of the cocaine that enters the United States every year. It systematically perpetrates hideous crimes, including kidnapping and murdering civilians, and forcibly impressing thousands of children into guerrilla military service. And the FARC has already spread its narco-terrorist activities to neighboring Andean nations, and threatens the security of the United States itself.

And yet the U.S. State Department continues to *actively promote* the Colombian government’s criminal policy of so-called “peace negotiations” with the FARC, under which, three years ago, they were granted a vast “demilitarized zone” (DMZ) in the cocaine heartland of southern Colombia, and from which they today exercise de facto control over about half of the national territory.

When Is Terrorism Not Terrorism?

The answer to this rather obvious, but most embarrassing, question, lies in what can be called “the Grasso factor.” This refers to the famous photograph of New York Stock Exchange President Richard Grasso embracing Raúl Reyes, the head of FARC finances, in the cocaine-producing DMZ of Colombia. What that photo merely typifies, Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR* have documented over decades: The FARC, *like all terrorist groups around the world*, are nothing but instruments of irregular warfare deployed by powerful financial groups in order to achieve their political goals.

This is as true in Afghanistan as it is in Colombia. The only serious war against narco-terrorism is one that begins by going after the “Grasso factor”—the powerful financial oligarchical interests—running the irregular warfare in each regional theater.

That, unfortunately, is not the way Washington is approaching the Sept. 11 terror attacks in this country; nor is it the way it is approaching Colombia’s FARC.

The Colombian case is again before the public eye, as

the Andrés Pastrana government in Colombia must decide in early October, whether to “renew” the DMZ, an area the size of Switzerland, that is under FARC control. A national debate on this issue is ongoing—Colombian style.

On Sept. 30, a former Colombian culture minister was kidnapped and assassinated by FARC narco-terrorists. This was followed two days later by the assassination of a Congressman and the attempted assassination of a prominent retired general.

Consuelo Araujo Noguera, 66, wife of current Prosecutor General Edgardo Maya, and who was Colombia’s Minister of Culture during the early part of Pastrana’s term, had been kidnapped a week earlier, along with more than 20 others, during a FARC highway blockade. When Army forces discovered the kidnapers’ trail, the terrorists abandoned all but the ex-minister and a female friend. Already quite ill and ravaged by her week-long ordeal, Araujo was unable to keep pace with her fleeing captors. They forced her to her knees, and shot her five times in the head and back. Her friend was thrown over a cliff, and discovered by Army troops several hours later, barely alive.

On Oct. 2, leftist Congressman Octavio Sarmiento was assassinated allegedly by paramilitary vigilantes, possibly in retribution for the Araujo murder. That same day, assassins believed tied to the FARC, shot retired Gen. Rafael Cifuentes in the head, but reports are that his condition is stable, and he

will survive. General Cifuentes, whose adult son was murdered by the FARC several years ago, is a former director of Colombia’s Military School and former commander of the Army II Brigade. He resigned his post under the Samper Pizano government (1994–1998) in protest against that narco-regime. General Cifuentes has since been politically and electorally active.

The majority of Colombians, horrified by these latest terrorist atrocities, is now demanding that Pastrana put an end to both the DMZ and the farcical “peace process,” which has served far too long as a cover for the mass buildup of narco-terrorist forces in Colombia, now spreading throughout the Andean region. Newspaper editors, congressmen, Presidential candidates, business and labor leaders, and the average person on the street are all screaming for the government to take off the gloves, allow the Army to do serious battle, and finally treat the FARC as the drug-trafficking terrorists they are.

But Pastrana will do nothing of the kind. He will extend the DMZ and the negotiation process, with the full backing of the State Department and Wall Street. President Pastrana has let it be known, that not only does he plan to renew the DMZ on Oct. 8, but he is also prepared to negotiate a “truce” with the FARC. It will, in effect: 1) prohibit Armed Forces deployment against the FARC *anywhere in the country*, through a six-month “bilateral cease-fire”; 2) give the narco-terrorists a power-sharing role in the government, by convoking a Constituent Assembly to rewrite Colombia’s Constitution; and 3) finance the FARC out of the government’s own coffers, during this “transitional period.”

The U.S. State Department has stuck firmly to its policy of support for Pastrana’s insane strategy of appeasement and capitulation. At an Oct. 1 press conference, spokesman Richard Boucher repeatedly declared the Bush Administration’s support for the Colombian “peace process.” He was asked, “Isn’t the DMZ being used as a sanctuary for terrorism, to establish links with other terrorist groups in the world, and being handled by a terrorist group, according to the United States?” Boucher said only, “I think those are all questions that President Pastrana will consider as he makes this decision.” Reporters rejoined, “You’re tiptoeing completely around the same kind of peace initiative in Afghanistan.”

A Serious National Defense

With the news of the kidnapping and assassination of Araujo, the Colombian military deployed 10,000 strong to the perimeters of the DMZ, chomping at the bit to be allowed by Pastrana to enter the FARC sanctuary . . . to no avail. In fact, on a number of occasions this year, the military has dealt serious blows to the FARC, but has been restrained from carrying its campaigns through to conclusion—because of the “Grasso factor.”

In February, more than 3,000 Colombian troops were deployed to the FARC-dominated southeast jungle region near Colombia’s border with Brazilia and Venezuela, where “Op-

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FIGURE 1

Colombia: The Narco-Terrorist War Theater



1,200 heavily armed terrorists *out of the DMZ*, to join with another 1,000 guerrillas in Colombia's southeast jungles. Their objective was to decimate the Carijagua military base established in the area in the aftermath of "Operation Black Cat," lay waste to any intervening towns and villages, and reestablishing the crucial cocaine-trafficking corridor to Brazil that the February military operations had disrupted. This time, 6,000 Colombian soldiers, led by the highly trained Rapid Deployment Force, responded with "Operation August 7": They moved into the area, destroying a portion of the terrorist column, killing the FARC's number-two military chieftain, and forcing the FARC forces to disperse into the jungle, and from there return to their Pastrana-sanctioned DMZ.

But the Colombian military was unable to move sufficient ground troops into the jungle area, to be able to actually retake *and hold* the territory in question. In this campaign, as in many others, the Armed Forces have been limited to conducting an essentially aerial war on its own territory. Vastly under-funded and under-equipped, it is subjected to withering political attacks from the human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—which are funded by the drug-legalization lobby (including the notorious George Soros). The Colombian Army is fighting an uphill battle. The anti-drug aid that the U.S. government today provides Colombia, under the so-called "Plan Colombia," is so limited, and has so many strings attached—e.g., it cannot be used to fight the FARC, because they are supposedly

eration Black Cat" was launched against the largest cocaine trafficking ring in South America (see *map 1*). Vast cocaine plantations, a dozen drug laboratories, and Brazil's biggest drug lord "Fernandinho Beira Mar," who had been living under the protection of the FARC, was uprooted and arrested.

It has been plausibly reported that real-time intelligence support from the United States contributed significantly to the Colombian Army's successes—indicating that not everyone in Washington is happy with the "Grasso factor." Said U.S. Southern Command chief General Pace, who observed the raids first hand, "The FARC and narco-trafficking are one and the same in this region."

Then in early August, the FARC deployed a column of

principally "terrorists" and not "drug runners"—that it is little more than a bad joke.

Yet some in Washington may be rethinking this losing policy in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks. According to the Spanish-language Miami newspaper *El Nuevo Herald* of Oct. 1, Florida Democrat Sen. Bob Graham, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, thinks that, with each passing day, the FARC more closely resembles Osama bin Laden's organization. Graham, until now a supporter of the State Department and Pastrana's policy of narco-negotiations, today believes that "the structures of the FARC, its sources of financing and even its objectives," coincide with those of Al-Qaeda, bin Laden's terrorist network.