

# U.S. Finally Turning Against FARC Terrorists

by Valerie Rush

The mid-October capture in Bogotá, of a top money-launderer for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) narco-terror cartel, provided the Bush Administration and its allies with a golden opportunity to reverse years of disastrous tolerance of narco-terrorism in the Americas. A joint, two-year investigation by the CIA, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and Colombian intelligence agencies led them last month to the doorstep of one Juan Pablo Rubio Camacho. Rubio Camacho—according to Colombian National Police reports—had laundered millions of dollars in profits from kidnap ransoms and drug-trafficking and extortion, as the FARC has expanded over the past decade into the most dangerous drug cartel in the Western Hemisphere.

Seized along with Rubio, who has agreed to turn state's evidence in exchange for enrollment in the U.S. Federal Witness Protection Program, was a veritable treasure trove of names, phone numbers, shipping documents, and income ledgers detailing the FARC's multibillion-dollar activities. One U.S. agent told the media: "This is just the beginning. . . . The hunt will be intense. The objective of Colombian, U.S., and world authorities is to unmask and put an end to the economic emporium the FARC has set up through the drug trade. We are going for . . . the heads of this group."

Bush's State Department has put together a list of suspected FARC financial frontmen, who have been stripped of their U.S. entrance visas. With Rubio's cooperation, FARC bank accounts will now hopefully be identified and seized.

Ironically, the United States has long had in its possession all the evidence it needed, not only to declare war on the FARC Cartel, but also to go after the *true* heads of this narco-terrorist gang: the Wall Street and City of London bankers who openly invited the FARC's illegal billions to keep their own bloated financial empire afloat.

More than two years ago, New York Stock Exchange President Richard Grasso flew down to FARC-dominated territory in the cocaine heartland of Colombia, embraced the FARC's financial "czar" Raúl Reyes, and reported that he had been discussing "mutual investment opportunities" with this "highly sophisticated" narco-terrorist. Grasso's visit paved the way for a virtual pilgrimage of the world's leading financiers and business magnates down to "FARClandia," the demilitarized zone from which government forces are prohibited. Precisely this "Grasso Factor," as Lyndon LaRouche has dubbed it, must now be targeted.

## The FARC Cartel . . . Up Close

When Rubio was arrested, the police also confiscated \$50 million worth of financial instruments registered in Panamanian banks, and maturing in 2005. Said one investigator, "The FARC guerrilla leaders move such quantities of money, that they can afford the luxury of putting such amounts in instruments at very long term . . . because they don't need it."

Indeed, according to a report published in the Colombian daily *El Tiempo* of Nov. 6, the FARC's three main sources of income—"vaccinations" (protection money extorted from Colombia's businesses), kidnap ransoms, and drug trafficking—have yielded over \$3 billion in the past decade! Some have purchased highly sophisticated weaponry; some have hired mercenaries to train the FARC's estimated 16,000 narco-terrorist cadres in assassination, demolition, and other tactics of irregular warfare. But a large portion has gone into bank accounts scattered around the world; into the kind of investments NYSE President Grasso was so anxious to discuss with Raúl Reyes.

Equally as important as the details on FARC money flows now coming to light, are its international connections. It was known last year that the FARC had forged a multimillion-dollar alliance with the Tijuana Cartel in Mexico, when FARC leader Jorge Briceño Suárez (a.k.a. "Mono Jojoy") deployed Dr. Carlos Ariel Charry to Mexico, to negotiate a 20-ton shipment of cocaine from the FARC. When Charry got busted in Mexico, he was found to be carrying a video of himself, arm-in-arm with "Mono Jojoy," that was intended as his "letter of introduction" to the Tijuana Cartel bosses.

Then there was "Operation Black Cat," the joint Colombian-U.S. military raids held in February 2001 near the Colombian border with Brazil. About 10,000 hectares of coca under FARC control were discovered, along with 12 cocaine labs capable of producing two tons of cocaine a week. Fernandinho Beira-Mar was captured—a leading Brazilian druglord living in Colombia under the protection of the FARC for the past year, and said to be responsible for 60% of the drugs smuggled out of Brazil.

The evidence obtained with Rubio's arrest and cooperation has enabled the United States to escalate against the FARC. But it was the events surrounding Sept. 11 that transformed U.S. policy, giving the upper hand to those inside the Bush Administration, who have been arguing for an end to U.S. support for President Andrés Pastrana's illusory "peace negotiations" with the FARC. Indicative are comments in October by U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson, that U.S. policy would now focus on cutting off the financial flows to the FARC Cartel and indicting and extraditing FARC chieftains on drug-trafficking and money-laundering charges.

As LaRouche has insisted, the only way to defeat terrorism is to cut off its sustenance—the global trade in illegal drugs and weapons. Washington's apparent turnaround in policy toward the FARC is an important first step in that direction; but the "Grasso Factor" will have to be taken on.