

Colombia's Rescue: Victory Is Possible

by Maximiliano Londoño Penilla

From the Editors: *On July 2, Colombia spoiled the British gameplan against all of Ibero-America, when its Armed Forces freed, without bloodshed, 15 high-profile hostages held by the narco-terrorist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Vélez hailed the Army as “humanity’s heroes,” and described the operation as one of “perseverance—one that has tested the unlimited intelligence of Colombians, embodied in the intelligence of the Army and the Fatherland. [It was] a respectable operation from every standpoint; a military epic paying homage to human rights.”*

Uribe stressed that the Army had refused to kill, or even capture, the guerrillas who delivered the hostages to the disguised military helicopter which took them to safety, because he wanted to send a message that the FARC should not mistreat hostages still in captivity. Best estimates are that there are a total of 700 such victims, most of them kept in dehumanizing, barbaric conditions.

Over the last year, the Colombian government has been succeeding against the FARC, knocking out five of the long-time members of its seven-person Secretariat, among other things. In his statement after the raid, Uribe emphasized, however, that he was inviting the FARC to “make peace.... [and] begin by freeing all the hostages still in their possession.”

Uribe was seconded by the freed former Presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, who said, “I believe this is a signal of peace for Colombia. We can achieve peace if we trust in our Military Forces, and I truly wish to thank each one of Colombia’s soldiers, because they are demonstrating that peace is possible—with intelligence, with prudence, and with wisdom.”

On July 3, Maximiliano Londoño Penilla, president of the Lyndon LaRouche Association of Colombia, released the following statement.

The Colombian Army’s successful rescue of 15 hostages held by the FARC, carried out under the personal leadership of President Alvaro Uribe Vélez, marks a turning point in Colombian history. As soon as the news became public, the country was gripped by paralysis, because everyone wanted to hear about the details of the operation. Later, after 10:00 p.m., Uribe, the Defense Minister, the Foreign Minister, the high military command, and the former hostages, held a victory press confer-

ence, and reported on aspects of the operation and anecdotes about the hazards of their captivity, which in some cases began as long as ten years ago.

The three Americans who were also rescued travelled immediately to the United States, and had no contact with Colombian media. All good Colombians, which is the majority of us, were ecstatic, and had the rivers of tears of joy been collected, surely Mars would have once again become green.

The precision and care with which the operation was carried out sends an additional message which Uribe transmitted to the FARC: Any further bloodshed is unnecessary. This is a time for reconciliation and lasting peace.

The understanding that is still lacking, is that in order to defend the general welfare, there must be, along with [Uribe’s] program of “Democratic Security,” a program of “Economic Security” for all, just as Lyndon LaRouche has spelled out. Ingrid Betancourt, and all the other former hostages, displayed the moral transformation they had undergone, under the most brutal of conditions which daily threatened their physical existence.

Despite exhaustion, disease, and anguish, they all reported that they never gave up hope of returning to freedom, and life. But they also revealed that during the most difficult moments, the social relations and cooperation they had developed among themselves, combined with the continuous public expressions of support and messages from family members, friends, and Colombians in general, allowed them to keep alive a spark of faith and the hope of a better future, and the possibility of a “miracle” that would alter their ominous path.

So, with rigorous work and enthusiasm, miracles can indeed occur in this universe.



Juan Felipe Barriga-SP
Former Colombian Presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt embraces the head of the Army, Gen. Mario Montoya, during the press conference on July 2 after the Army’s successful raid to free 15 hostages from the narco-terrorist army, the FARC. Betancourt was held captive for six years.