

## Andean Report by Valerie Rush

### A 'partisan' solution for Colombia?

*Moscow's dialogue proposals for narco-terrorized Colombia give a foretaste of the Soviets' global "peace" plans.*

An Aug. 8 feature in the Soviet Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* welcomed the incipient dialogue between Colombia's narco-terrorists, which the Soviets call "partisan-insurgents," and the government of Virgilio Barco as a step along the path toward seizing power. *Pravda's* analyst endorses "the strategic task of the insurgents," which it says is a war of national liberation," but claims that the different components of that "liberation movement" have different styles.

Writes *Pravda* of the mafia-employed M-19 guerrillas, "The partisans motivated their kidnaping [of former Conservative Party presidential candidate Alvaro Gómez Hurtado] by their aspiration to start a dialogue of the insurgents with the government."

The mediation effort to secure Gómez's release by a combination of politicians, desperate but well-intentioned business and labor leaders, and elements of the Church, has taken the form of the National Coexistence Commission, a form of institutionalized blackmail against the government by Moscow's narcoterrorist "partisans."

*Pravda* also praises the Colombian Communist Party's guerrilla army, known as the FARC, which is successfully carving out entire portions of Colombian territory for military, economic, and political domination by its 40,000-strong army.

An interview with FARC chieftain Jacobo Arenas in the Colombian press Aug. 7 revealed that in substantial portions of rural Colombia, the FARC

has in fact replaced the official administrative infrastructure of the government. "We finance a great peasant mass, which previously was financed by the Agrarian Bank, the Cattlemen's Bank, or the Coffee Bank. . . . The guerrilla movement gives [the peasantry] money to work with . . . and we create partnerships with them for crops and cattle. After 10, 12, or 15 months, the cattle are sold, the basic funds recovered, and the peasant gives us half the profit."

Challenged on the FARC's reputed reliance on drug cultivation for much of its financing, Arenas would not deny it, except to protest that corrupt army generals also profit from a relationship with the narcotics.

While the FARC, the only mass-based guerrilla force in the country, has a self-confessed strategy of seizing power through sheer force of arms and terror, it is clearly not averse to playing politics as well. In addition to maintaining a direct 24-hour hotline to the presidential palace, which President Barco reportedly uses daily, it also has an "electoral front" known as the Patriotic Union (UP). In his interview, Arenas admitted that the UP was "cooked up here [at FARC headquarters] as a broad-based political movement, but those who didn't think it up pulled out and sank its future. The Communist Party presented itself as its head, as its architect."

Arenas said that a "great historic opportunity" was thereby lost, leaving the UP with only a limited usefulness because of its explicit Communist orientation. "We have launched another

project, that of the Bolivarian Meeting of the People. . . . The idea is the same as that of the UP, but we continue to insist on its broadness." Perhaps in an attempt to shed its Communist image, the "limited-use" UP has just requested admission to the Socialist International.

Notwithstanding the FARC's willingness to dabble in dialogue, on Aug. 23, a 300-man FARC commando unit first ambushed a military patrol in Saiza municipality, department of Córdoba, and then assaulted a police station in Saiza itself. More than a score of civilians, soldiers, and police agents were gunned down indiscriminately, and one mother and her two infants were burned alive when their home was torched by the terrorists.

Eleven soldiers, and an equal number of policemen, were taken hostage by the FARC, which then proceeded to contact the "National Coexistence Commission" to mediate their release. With the military's proverbial gun to its head, the Barco government disauthorized the Commission's involvement. Army troops flooded the region where the FARC kidnapers and their victims were holed up, and the Defense Ministry issued a communiqué (directed at the would-be mediators) warning that any unauthorized civilians in the area would be shot.

At last report, the military has the FARC terrorists completely surrounded. An attempt by the presidency to "clarify" the situation by talking to the FARC leadership through the "red telephone" brought an explicit threat that unless the government demobilized the troops at once, the FARC would slaughter its hostages. To emphasize the point, a second FARC commando unit assaulted a police station in the department of Huila, taking an unknown number of policemen hostage.