
Strategic Map

The buildup for a 'Tet offensive'

In recent weeks, Moscow's irregular warfare troops in Colombia have demonstrated the capacity for highly mobile deployment, targeting sensitive border regions, hitting military command structures, foreign multinational personnel, and economic infrastructure, occupying entire cities and assaulting urban centers, leading mass peasant insurgencies, paralyzing political leaders with blackmail, and wielding the vast resources of the drug trade.

On Oct. 27, the CUT (Unified Workers Confederation) will be conducting a nationwide strike under Communist Party domination, an action widely viewed as gauging the depth of subversive infiltration within the labor movement. The guerrillas have revealed plans to forge a joint military command within the next six months. *EIR* estimates that within 6-18 months, Moscow's capability for in-depth and simultaneous guerrilla deployment on all flanks will be in place, and a Colombian "Tet Offensive" could deliver the crucial Andean Spine of Ibero-America into Russian hands (see inset map).

1. Caquetá: On Sept. 25, 200 guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) ambushed an army patrol in this southern jungle department, killing 15 and wounding another dozen. President Virgilio Barco publicly claimed that "military error" was responsible for the ambush.

2. Urabá: Civic strikes and a head-on confrontation between the military chief and the leftist banana workers unions have paralyzed this region in northern Antioquia department close to the border with Panama.

3. Tumaco and Pasto: These cities in the southern department of Nariño are under military occupation due to a spate of terrorist-led marches, rioting, strikes, and a separatist movement which is protesting the economic crisis and official neglect.

4. Magdalena Medio: Three cities in this north-central region were simultaneously assaulted on Oct. 5 by the combined forces of the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN). Police and military barracks, banks, and government offices were attacked by rockets and grenades, and there were both military and civilian casualties.

5. Riohacha: The capital of the La Guajira peninsula in northern Colombia has been hit by civic strikes and violence, in response to economic collapse. La Guajira not only

borders the Gulf of Maracaibo, whose oil-rich resources are the source of historic tensions between Venezuela and Colombia, but also contains El Cerrejón, Ibero-America's largest coal reserve, which is under joint exploitation by Exxon and the Colombian state.

6. San Andrés: The Colombian-owned island just opposite the Nicaraguan coast lost its source of electricity due to suspected arson against its sole energy complex. Resulting tensions on the island could rekindle Nicaragua's long-standing claim to the island.

7. Vichada: On Sept. 26, the Colombian army raided a vast cocaine complex in this department on the border with Venezuela. The complex was capable of refining more than three tons of pure cocaine a month. Evidence was uncovered indicating that the FARC guerrillas garnered a quarter of a million dollars *per month* for providing security.

8. Arauca: The ELN guerrillas have resumed the dynamiting of Colombia's major Caño Limón-Covenas oil pipeline in this department bordering Venezuela, after a brief hiatus during which they considered, and rejected, Barco's "peace initiative." The pipeline has been dynamited more than 50 times in 1988, causing extensive ecological damage and multimillion-dollar revenue losses.

9. La Uribe: This area between Tolima and Huila departments is the site of the "Casa Verde" (Green House), headquarters of the FARC command. The Green House has a direct telephone link-up to the presidential palace, and has been declared off-limits to the Armed Forces.

10. Medellín: Pablo Escobar, the head of the cocaine-trafficking Medellín Cartel, has publicly threatened the head of the highly-successful anti-drug IV Army Brigade, General Jaime Ruiz Barrera.

11. Bogotá: ELN murder attempt against the president of Texas Petroleum Corp. in Colombia was a near-miss.

12. Ecuador: The arrest of an M-19 group inside Ecuadoran territory led to charges by that government of a Colombian invasion.

13. Antioquia: The headquarters in this department of the Second Army Division, headed by chief counter-insurgent Gen. Farouk Yanine Díaz, was car-bombed, destroying four square blocks.

14. Huila: On Oct. 10, guerrillas dynamited a bridge, hitting a civilian bus and reportedly killing women and children; identified as one of the first terrorist actions directed against a civilian target.

15. Cauca: Mass peasant marches, reportedly organized by the M-19 and Quintín Lamé guerrilla forces, were held Oct. 10 in this department to protest planned government use of glyphosate herbicide against cocaine crops; the government opted for manual eradication.

Colombia and the Andean spine

