

# Narco-terrorism rears head in Argentina

by Cynthia Rush

Argentina's profound political and economic crisis worsened in the early morning of Jan. 23 when a group of left-wing terrorists took over the Third Infantry Regiment at La Tablada on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, leading to a 29-hour shootout with armed forces units. When the shooting ended, 36 were dead, most of them subversives, and 63 wounded.

The nation is paralyzed by an unprecedented energy crisis and deepening economic recession due to the International Monetary Fund's economic policies. The violent incident, reminiscent of terrorist attacks of the 1970s which most Argentines recall with horror, is a further blow to the country's precarious stability.

One source has told *EIR* that Argentina has become a "powder keg" as a result of this incident, and suspects the involvement of foreign intelligence services. Former CIA director William Colby, and his immediate circle, are suspect. It is also feared that the incident augurs the beginning of a major offensive by Soviet-backed narco-terrorists, to ensure the destruction of any sovereign institutions still intact.

The 50-person squad which took over the La Tablada base was made up of members of assorted leftist groupings, primarily the Trotskyist People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) which was active during the 1970s, and is now grouped into the "Movement of Everyone for the Fatherland" (MTPP). Also included, according to reports, were members of Argentina's Communist Party who have traveled to Nicaragua in the past to "help" with that country's coffee harvest. However, in the attack on La Tablada, these individuals attempted to pass themselves off as right-wingers, supporters of the nationalist Army Col. Mohamed Ali Seineldín.

Seineldín, a hero of the 1982 Malvinas War, has taken a stand against the pro-Soviet Project Democracy apparatus which seeks the dismantling of Ibero-America's armed forces. For that, he has been dubbed a "coup-monger" by U.S. and Argentine social democrats.

Upon entering the base, the leftists distributed pamphlets identifying themselves as members of the "New Argentine Army," allegedly formed to "combat Marxist subversion within the government" and the ruling Radical Party's "campaign to destroy the Army." The pamphlet praised both Seineldín and Col. Aldo Rico, the leader of earlier military rebellions.

On cue, early press reports in Argentina and internationally insisted that the incident was another military uprising, probably involving Seineldín's supporters. Although by mid-day on Jan. 23, several government officials and congressmen admitted that Colonel Seineldín had nothing to do with the action, President Alfonsín made no official statement until the evening of Jan. 24.

The group's plan apparently was to quickly enter the base, steal weapons from the sizable arsenal located there, distribute their literature and leave. The terrorists were highly trained, and fought ferociously with Soviet and Chinese-made weapons, not commonly found in Argentina. Government sources described the group's action as "demonstrating a high degree of knowledge of operations of this kind." One observer likened the ERP to Peru's Shining Path, because of the brutality of its methods.

The plan was foiled when neighbors alerted police to the terrorists' presence, and when soldiers inside the regiment offered unexpected resistance. This gave Army artillery units time to get to the base and oppose the terrorists with tanks and mortar fire. Many of the young soldiers who left the base made clear that the long-haired attackers "were leftists," who had nothing to do with the armed forces.

## 'Something big is up'

Sources evaluating the events of the past few days suggest that a serious investigation must consider possible involvement of the Alfonsín government. There are numerous officials inside the government who openly sympathize with the goals of the MTPP and the left.

It is significant that the subversive action was initially intended to implicate Colonel Seineldín, "proving" recent accusations by the MTPP and the government that the colonel was plotting to overthrow Alfonsín with Peronist presidential candidate Carlos Menem. One week prior to the Jan. 23 attack, the MTPP filed suit with a federal judge, alleging that Seineldín and Menem had met secretly, and planned an "institutional coup" against Alfonsín, by which Congress would be dissolved and current Vice President Victor Martínez installed as President.

In a Jan. 20 press conference, Alfonsín echoed the MTPP line very precisely when he charged that Seineldín "philosophically conspires against democracy," and attacked Menem for having characterized the military hero as a "valiant man." He added, "There are many people close to Dr. Menem who visit Colonel Seineldín."

After the fighting ceased at La Tablada, officials found leaflets issued by the attackers which claimed that they took the action to halt an "imminent military coup." Among the dead was a leader of the MTPP from the Zarate section of Buenos Aires. It was the MTPP, Communist Party, and other assorted leftists who, following Colonel Seineldín's early December military action, called for arming the citizens and waging "people's war" against the armed forces.