

## Andean Report by Andrea Olivieri

### Colombian military hits FARC haven

*But some factions in the Gaviria government don't want to mop up the narco-terrorists, and they are showing their colors.*

After seven months of meticulous planning, the Seventh Brigade of the Colombian Army wiped out the staff headquarters for the eastern region of the narco-terrorist Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC). Using T-37 planes and Black Hawk helicopters, the Army located the center, hidden by heavy cloud cover and a dense jungle canopy in the department of Meta, and after an intense bombardment, landed troops to secure the place, known by its acronym EMBO.

The FARC, Moscow-trained and -directed, is the largest guerrilla force in Colombia. It is also known as the "Third Cartel" for its role in the cocaine trade, which it uses both to finance itself, and as political warfare against the state.

The Meta camp, a virtual citadel, was strategically key. It guarded one of the only access routes to the so-called Green House, the headquarters of the FARC executive, 20 kilometers away. Although troops remain ensconced in the inhospitable region, they have as yet made no move toward the Green House. Asked if the Army would extend its offensive to FARC headquarters, Seventh Brigade Commander Gen. Humberto Correa Castaneda said, "I require the order of my top commanding officer: the President of the Republic." But President César Gaviria told a reporter, "The Armed Forces do not need the President's permission" to recover the national territory.

This evasive answer indicates that political factions within the Gaviria government oppose a military mop-up of the narco-terrorists. Gaviria him-

self favors a negotiated settlement, and has even put the chief of the narco-terrorist M-19 in his cabinet, for the sake of "peace."

The Army assault on EMBO takes place as Colombia is dramatically polarized. On Nov. 12, the FARC ambushed a police car carrying five youngsters who had taken part in a police-sponsored bicycle race. The FARC not only dynamited the car, but then machined-gunned any survivors. Calls flooded the government demanding a hardline response.

A national outcry has also greeted Attorney General Alfonso Gómez Méndez's efforts to humiliate the Armed Forces by publicly censuring ex-Army Commander and anti-terrorist hardliner Gen. Jesús Armando Arias Cabrales. The defense minister told Congress that the Armed Forces were being turned into a "clay idol," easily shattered. Newspaper editors worried that Colombia's most dedicated defenders were being treated like criminals. The usually meek Congress voted unanimously to protest the sanction against General Arias.

Even President Gaviria, who has backed the Attorney General, was forced to state that he did not necessarily agree with Gómez's charges. He nervously told the press that the widespread unrest in the Armed Forces over the ruling against General Arias "is not aimed at the President, nor does it pretend to place blame on the President."

Conservative Sen. Hugo Escobar Sierra charged that the Attorney General's office was persecuting more than 500 members of the Armed For-

es, and questioned if this witchhunt was "to demoralize the Armed Forces" so that they cannot fight. He read aloud from the *curriculum vitae* of General Arias, and then read from that of amnestied M-19 leader Antonio Navarro Wolf—Gaviria's former health minister, now candidate for the Constituent Assembly—which included repeated acts of terrorism.

Especially telling is the Nov. 11 decision of the editors of the Bogotá daily *La Prensa* to publish excerpts from a new book by Diana Duque, entitled *No nacimos pa' semilla*, which indicts the Colombian government for its failure to battle subversion. Duque cites liberally from Gen. F.A. von der Heydte's book *Modern Irregular Warfare*, the German classic recently translated into Spanish and republished by the Schiller Institute, on how subversion will typically seek to disguise an existing state of war, lulling the state into maintaining "the fiction of peace." Says Duque, "Sometimes much time will pass before the affected state recognizes the magnitude and objectives of subversion. This hidden war has existed in Colombia since 1982."

Duque denounces "violentologists" like Eduardo Pizarro (the brother of the late M-19 chieftain Carlos Pizarro), who "minimize" subversion's irregular warfare strategy by labeling it "socially endemic violence." Duque charges that such an analysis "psychologically disarms Colombian democracy and diverts the response of the state's defense apparatus from its main enemy, subversion."

Navarro Wolf has appealed to the President to intervene against these "violent verbal attacks" on the M-19. He also demanded a special session of Congress be convened to hear his self-defense, and access to free time on state-run radio and television to respond to these "insults and abuse."