

# Bush negotiates with Cuban drug dictatorship

by Cynthia Rush

If there were any doubts that the Bush administration is negotiating the same type of power-sharing arrangement with Cuba's communist dictatorship that it has already completed with El Salvador's FMLN guerrillas and Nicaragua's Sandinistas, former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara confirmed the fact during a recent conference in Havana. Speaking Jan. 12 at a three-day conference on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, McNamara asserted that "there is no threat to U.S. security from Cuba today. I say that quite categorically."

Recommending that the United States and Cuba "move to find a way of improving relations between our two countries," McNamara also reported that Fidel Castro had promised him that Cuba no longer "exported revolution" to Ibero-America. "The Cubans were candid in saying . . . were they going to do it in the future? No," he said.

Castro may not be exporting revolution, but he certainly is exporting drugs. Evidence of this was published in *EIR*'s bestseller *Dope, Inc.* Now, an interview published in the Jan. 6 edition of the Mexican magazine *Proceso* reconfirms that Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl directly control drug-trafficking operations run from the island. Iliana de la Guardia, daughter of a Cuban army officer who was executed in 1989 on charges of drug trafficking, provided *Proceso* with graphic details of Cuba's role in drug trafficking, and of Fidel Castro's personal sponsorship of American drug trafficker and fugitive Robert Vesco.

The United States invaded Panama allegedly to topple a "narco-dictator," and touts its anti-drug war in Ibero-America. So why is a top-level member of the Anglo-American establishment like Robert McNamara, whose public views reflect administration policy, cozying up to a drug-running communist dictatorship?

Haiti is one explanation. Following the coup last September which toppled madman dictator Jean-Baptiste Aristide, the Bush administration worked through the governments of the "Group of Three"—Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela—to court Castro and promise to reincorporate Cuba into the "family of Latin American nations." This stands in stark contrast to the U.S.'s brutal treatment of Haiti after the coup, and suggests a deal by which Cuba would support Aristide's reinstatement in return for favors from the U.S.

On Jan. 14, State Department spokesman Margaret Tutwiler sent more signals to Cuba, using McNamara's same

conciliatory tone. "We would welcome Cuba's full support for the Central American peace process," she cooed, and expressed the hope that this "would include calling for an end to insurgencies and support for democratic governments." Further reflecting this bargaining stance, the State Department has also condemned the actions of three Cuban exiles who were recently captured on the island's northern coast and have been sentenced to death for conspiring against the "Revolution."

## Castros have 'absolute power'

It's no surprise, therefore, that the *Proceso* interview with Iliana de la Guardia has been publicized neither in Mexico nor internationally. Her explosive revelations could interfere with the negotiations. De la Guardia, who left Cuba for Mexico in 1990, told *Proceso* that her father, Col. Antonio de la Guardia Font, had been involved with other officers in certain drug-trafficking operations which the Castro regime counted on to get foreign exchange. But, she explained, contrary to what Fidel Castro had charged, "Neither my father nor the other accused were of high enough rank to control the air space above the Cuban coast behind the backs of Raúl and Fidel. Everyone in Cuba knows that."

The July 1989 trial of Colonel De la Guardia Font, his brother Patricio, and Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez was a publicity stunt. According to Iliana de la Guardia, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and other agencies possessed detailed information on the extent of Cuban drug trafficking; Castro orchestrated the trial, she said, not only to preempt any U.S. action against Cuba on the drug issue, but also to rid himself of opponents. Both Ochoa and her uncle, Patricio de la Guardia Font, "had differences with Fidel and said so openly. . . . Ochoa didn't hide his criticisms of Fidel." Fidel's greatest fear, De la Guardia said, was that Ochoa and her uncle "would become a faction inside the Armed Forces." There was never any proof of Ochoa's involvement in drug trafficking, she added. "He was simply a political victim."

It was Fidel Castro personally who asked Col. Antonio de la Guardia Font to take care of Vesco, said De la Guardia, when Vesco asked for asylum in Cuba in 1984. A fugitive from U.S. justice, Vesco was not only one of the main financiers of the Medellín cocaine cartel, working with Colombian kingpin Carlos Lehder. He is also intimately linked to organized-crime networks in and around the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL). Before fleeing the U.S., he stole millions from Investors Overseas Services (IOS), the money-laundering apparatus for the financial empire of gangster Meyer Lansky.

When Vesco took over IOS, he worked through the law firm of Wilkie, Farr and Gallagher, one of whose partners, Kenneth Bialkin, later became the ADL's executive director. Vesco is still in Cuba, Iliana de la Guardia reported, under Castro's protection, "with his two houses and his yacht."