

# EIR holds third Andean seminar, to stop creation of 'Coca Republic'

by Gretchen Small

Addressing an *EIR* seminar on "The Peace Process in Peru and Colombia," held in Bogotá, Colombia on July 23, one of Colombia's most distinguished retired officers, former Presidential candidate Gen. Harold Bedoya, declared that should it rally the will to do so, Colombia *could*, with international aid, defeat the drug trade and terrorism, even in as short a time as two years.

The Bogotá seminar was the third in a series organized by *EIR* in the Andean region, to lay out for national elites, the concepts required to win the war against narco-terrorism, in the context of today's world financial crisis. The first was held on May 28 in Caracas, Venezuela; the second on June 5, in Lima, Peru. Speaking along with Bedoya in Bogotá, were two well-known LaRouche spokesmen in the region: Luis Vásquez, *EIR*'s bureau chief in Peru, and Maximiliano Londoño, president of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) in Colombia.

The timing of the seminar, and a packed schedule of meetings throughout that week for Peru's Vásquez, allowed *EIR* to intervene in the policy debate raging during the crucial transition period before Colombia's new President, Andrés Pastrana, takes office on Aug. 7. In presentations before numerous institutions in Bogotá, Vásquez outlined the case of Peru, as exemplary of how victory is possible, if the "risky" political decision is taken to defeat the drug cartels and their armed terrorist wings. As he reminded the Colombians, when the Fujimori government acted in 1992 against the Shining Path narco-terrorists, Peru was at the point of disintegration—much as Colombia is today. We publish excerpts from presentations at the seminar in the pages that follow.

## Shall the cartels get their own country?

Pastrana, unlike his predecessor Ernesto Samper, is not a narco. However, under strong international pressure, he has already begun to seek peace with the narco-terrorists, at any price. He has promised that, upon taking office, he will order the withdrawal of all military forces from an area in the heart of the cocaine- and heroin-trafficking region in Colombia, which is twice the size of El Salvador. Thus will the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), be given command of nearly 50,000 square kilometers of territory.

What is this, but the establishment of an independent "Coca Republic"? From this enormous, uncontested base of operations, where will the cartels strike next? Has no one

considered the security threat that such insanity represents for neighboring nations, such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, and Brazil? Is it not assured that the impact will soon be felt on the streets of the United States, as the cartels pour in the drugs?

That prospect has woken up some people in the Colombian establishment. In a July 21 editorial, the daily *El Tiempo* warned that the decision to hand territory over to the FARC "could be the beginning of the irreparable division" of Colombia, and must be reconsidered.

Yet, almost no voices have been raised internationally against the creation of a "Coca Republic." Instead, Pastrana's peace plans have been repeatedly endorsed by the U.S. State Department. The German government, joined by prominent members in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church of Germany and Colombia, is even hosting negotiations.

Consider what is today endorsed as "peace" talks:

- On July 10, Pastrana, accompanied by only one aide, met with the head of the FARC and its top military commander. There, he promised to hand over the territory, a unilateral concession for which he received only promises of more talk. The man who made the talks possible, Alberto Levya, could not attend, as he had fled Colombia to avoid an arrest warrant on charges that he accepted money from the Cali Cartel.

- During July 12-15, in Mainz, Germany, the notorious Heideggerian Bishop Karl Lehmann, and government "spook" Werner Mauss, directed talks between the National Liberation Army (ELN) and leaders of Colombian "civil society." An accord was signed, in which the ELN, too, was promised territory. In return, the ELN promised to stop kidnapping children, people over 65, and pregnant women, and even specified that they might stop kidnapping for ransom altogether—if they were paid "sufficient resources" in return. German officials have suggested that they will seek European Union financing for the ELN. Multinationals operating in Colombia may also be asked to finance the ELN, with a figure of \$14 million being mooted as a goal.

- Recognizing a good thing, the paramilitary United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC) has held negotiations with "civil society" representatives in Colombia, in which they, too, demanded control over territory, and promised to stop kidnapping children. They, however, said nothing of elderly people, or pregnant women.