

Anti-drug assistance to Colombia is blocked

by Valerie Rush

“The only winners here are the narcos and the guerrillas,” said Colombian Ambassador to the United States Luis Alberto Moreno, in response to the Clinton administration’s early November failure to push through a promised aid package to bolster Colombia’s increasingly desperate war against narco-terrorism. Moreno might also have added, that the “winners” on the U.S. side are the political and financial interests who see a narco-terrorist victory in Colombia as an essential stepping-stone on their own perverse path toward global drug legalization, and the destruction of the sovereign nation-state.

In early August, White House anti-drug policy adviser Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.) had warned that the crisis in Colombia had reached emergency levels, and that providing substantial U.S. financial aid to, especially, the besieged Colombian military, is critical to saving that country from narco-terrorist takeover, and the region from destabilization. McCaffrey’s efforts, combined with lobbying visits to Washington in September by such influential figures as former Colombian Armed Forces Commander and 1998 Presidential candidate Gen. Harold Bedoya (ret.), had succeeded in forcing both the lukewarm Colombian government of Andrés Pastrana and the worse-than-lukewarm U.S. State Department, under Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, to finally place a proposed \$1-1.5 billion aid package for Colombia on the administration’s agenda. It remained for President Clinton to secure Congressional approval.

But then, the combined forces of the human-rights/drug-legalization lobby, and their “strange bedfellows” in George Bush’s Republican Party, moved into high gear to prevent President Clinton from getting the proposal onto the Congressional agenda. The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a “human rights” group which publicly shares its platforms with George Soros’s pro-drug legalization Lindesmith Center and Human Rights Watch, began organizing opposition to the aid package, through seminars and open letters to the media. Their argument is that “increasing aid to the Colombian military would have disastrous consequences for Colombia, and represents a danger for the region as a whole. . . . The U.S. is getting involved in a brutal counterinsurgency war.”

WOLA’s Coletta Younger and Lindesmith’s Ethan Nadelman drafted an open letter to the continent’s official anti-drug leaders, who held a summit meeting in Washington in

early November with McCaffrey, urging them to abandon the “failed” war on drugs, and to undertake more “pragmatic” solutions. Younger and Nadelman were published in the Colombian daily *El Tiempo*, which has been reactivated to editorially endorse drug legalization, now benignly dubbed “harm reduction” by the legalization lobby. *El Tiempo* also invited Harvard “economist” Jeffrey Sachs, adviser to President Pastrana, to address a seminar earlier this year, at which Sachs lamented repression of such a lucrative business as the drug trade, and urged a more “free-market” approach to the drug problem.

Republican sabotage

Making strange bedfellows with this motley human-rights/pro-legalization gang were Republican hard-liners such as Reps. Dan Burton (Ind.) and Benjamin Gilman (N.Y.), who, in their own way, deliberately sabotaged the proposed aid package for Colombia. From one side of their mouths, Burton and Gilman denounced the Clinton administration for giving inadequate support to Colombia’s national police, and from the other, they denounced McCaffrey for urging substantially increased aid for the Colombian army, which Burton and Gilman slandered as “rampant with allegations of human rights abuses.”

Their public anti-drug militancy notwithstanding, the Republican duo’s motives for opposing McCaffrey on aid to Colombia are necessarily suspect, for no one in their right mind can look at the heavily equipped army of drug-trafficking terrorists now controlling 50% of Colombian territory, and still think that fighting drugs there can be limited to police actions.

House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Tex.) did his part to block the Colombian aid by playing the budget game. DeLay attacked the Clinton administration’s foreign aid package as “robbing the Social Security fund,” a warning that any administration effort to increase funds for the war on drugs in Colombia would be used as an election smear. Lacking a strong mobilization of the American citizenry against drugs and narco-terrorism by President Clinton, DeLay’s tactic had its intended effect, and Clinton “dropped the ball.”

Perhaps worst of all, was the sabotage that came from inside the Clinton administration itself. On Aug. 10, Secretary of State Albright, in an op-ed in the *New York Times*, insisted that a military solution to the crisis in Colombia “is unlikely,” and endorsed President Pastrana’s disastrous “peace plan” of negotiating power-sharing with the FARC narco-terrorists. Albright’s op-ed was an attack on McCaffrey’s initiative, timed to coincide with the arrival in Colombia of a State Department fact-finding delegation, headed by Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering.

At this point, the urgently needed U.S. aid for Colombia’s battle against narco-terrorism is not slated to come up for Congressional approval until next year. By then, the FARC narco-terrorists may be dictating the terms of surrender.