

a Grand Coalition between CDU-CSU and SPD, which the population would prefer, but neither the SPD nor the CDU wants that.

Coalition Scenarios

All these coalition scenarios that are being sparked by the Greens' crisis, might not work, because the PDS, the FDP, the CDU-CSU, and even the SPD are being shaken by internal brawls and succession fights of their own. In the case of the CDU and FDP, the fights revolve around the political repercussions of the global monetary-economic crises of 1997 and 1998, which led to their dramatic election defeats, and their loss of control of the government, in the national elections of September 1998. The CDU and FDP have been in unabated internal succession fights ever since, and they are far from having regained stability. The resignation of CDU general party manager Roprecht Polenz, after only six months in office, on Oct. 23, is an example. His successor, Laurenz Meyer, is considered a transition figure as well, and he is already the CDU's third general party manager in the last two years. The CDU is not in shape to govern, or co-govern, the nation.

The SPD is losing members and voters to the PDS, but what is most amazing, is that the SPD leadership is even promoting the process. Harald Ringstorff, SPD Governor of the State of Mecklenburg, who presides over the first "red-red" government — of the SPD and the PDS — said, in an interview on Oct. 22, that it would be wrong if the SPD tried to regain the lost votes on the left spectrum of the electorate. These votes should be left to the PDS, whereas the SPD should continue conquering former "territory" from the CDU and FDP. This means that Schröder, who is also national SPD chairman, should stay on his neo-liberalist policy course. But this is exactly what has cost the SPD a net loss of 22% in popularity since late August. The SPD will go under, if it follows the advice of people like Ringstorff. And the PDS would benefit — were the party itself not paralyzed by internal faction fights. The recent top-level talks between the PDS and the SPD are opposed by many leftists in the PDS, who consider contact with a "neo-liberalist party like the SPD" an act of "treason" against the principles of "socialism." The PDS might split over that issue during coming weeks.

Therefore, because there are no convincing options for coalitions other than the present government, which is falling apart, and with political parties controlled by an "establishment" that is running away from economic reality, Germany is headed toward ungovernability.

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State Dept. Intends To Fund Colombian Narco-Terrorists

by Valerie Rush

A high-level State Department official declared in mid-October that Washington would be willing to consider paying Colombia's murderous narco-terrorists to cease their kidnapping and extortion practices, "under certain obligatory conditions." Those "obligatory conditions" apparently do not include ending their bloody insurgency against the Colombian nation-state, or abandoning their billion-dollar cocaine- and heroin-trafficking racket.

In Washington on Oct. 19, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere Bill Brownfield told media that the United States would not oppose the creation of such a financing mechanism for the narco-guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN), but only if the FARC murderers of three U.S. citizens in Colombia last year were surrendered to U.S. authorities, and no more American citizens or interests were targeted. "Not a penny of U.S. resources will be offered to the guerrillas" until they meet these criteria, insisted Brownfield. "There are scenarios under which we could play a role, but these do not exist today. If the circumstances change, we'll see."

Brownfield's comments echoed those of State's Office of Andean Affairs director Phillip Chicola, who said on Oct. 18, during a visit to Bogotá, that U.S. support for international financing of the guerrillas would become feasible "when there is a clear agreement as to where the peace process is going." Chicola was the first State Department official to open direct negotiations with the FARC, holding a secret two-day confab with the FARC's notorious chief of finances, Raúl Reyes, in Costa Rica on Dec. 14-15, 1998, despite the fact that the FARC was — and remains — on the U.S. government's list of international terrorists, with whom dialogue is prohibited. Making public that the State Department is opening negotiations again, Chicola used his trip to give his first public report on those "relatively positive" 1998 talks. What is important to the United States, he said, is that the FARC implement Reyes's assurances that the FARC "will make it a policy" not to kill Americans.

While Chicola was in Colombia, Colombian government representatives, scores of international "human rights" and "peace" non-governmental organizations, Colombian narco-

terrorists released from their jail cells for the occasion, and various government delegations, including an “observer” from the Clinton Administration, were meeting in Costa Rica for an International Conference on Peace, Human Rights, and Humanitarian Law.

One proposal coming out of that conference was that an international fund be created to pay the narco-terrorists the equivalent of a salary, if they would stop kidnapping and extorting civilians and businesses to finance their armed insurgency against the Colombian state.

The proposal was immediately embraced by the head of the Colombian industrialists society, ANDI, whose members have been heavily targeted by the narco-terrorists, while UN Human Rights Commissioner Anders Kompass endorsed the idea as one which had already proven successful in El Salvador and Guatemala. Although Wall Street has not yet issued a formal opinion on this latest proposal, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Grasso, offered a similar FARC-financing mechanism more than a year ago, when he visited the so-called “demilitarized zone” under the narco-terrorists’ control, and was photographed embracing the FARC chieftains while discussing “investment potential” in their cocaine heartland.

Collaborating with Nazis

All too consistent with the State Department’s repeated endorsement of ongoing power-sharing negotiations between the Andrés Pastrana government in Colombia and the FARC narco-terrorists, this latest U.S.-backed proposal is the moral equivalent of paying Adolf Hitler to move his crematoriums out of sight. Indeed, recent revelations of at least five Nazi-style concentration camps in the FARC’s “demilitarized zone,” where more than 500 soldiers, police, and civilian kidnap victims are being held hostage under horrendous conditions, makes the comparison all too real.

The FARC recently invited several mothers of captive soldiers to visit these camps, and “allowed” photographers to take pictures, which were then released to the national media. Scenes of barbed wire, cobbled-together wooden planks serving as beds, no sanitary facilities, and sickly hostages—some of them in their third year of captivity—brought the word “Auschwitz” to the lips of even the most toughened government officials. In particular, the plight of one hostage, an Army colonel who was paralyzed from the waist down when his helicopter crashed during an anti-narcotics raid six months ago, has been given widespread coverage. The colonel, reportedly kept drugged but deprived of necessary medical treatment, is said to have begged for a bullet to end his misery.

Precisely as the FARC intended, these horror stories have prompted a growing chorus of support for a proposed swap of these captives for hundreds of battle-hardened FARC terrorists currently sitting in jail cells around the country. Once again, the Pastrana government is capitulating to FARC blackmail. President Pastrana announced on Oct. 29 that his government, despite being prohibited by law from carrying

out a “prisoner exchange” with the FARC, will make exactly that a top priority at the “peace” talks.

Barbarism Reigns

FARC barbarism is not limited to the territory that President Pastrana surrendered to the narco-terrorists over a year ago, when he withdrew all military and police forces and gave the FARC free rein to terrorize, murder, and subjugate the 90,000 inhabitants of the area. In the neighboring department of Putumayo, on the Ecuadoran border, the FARC is engaged in bloody combat with drug-trafficking “paramilitary” forces, who are challenging the FARC for dominion over the extensive coca plantations located in the department, half the estimated 300,000 acres planted nationwide with the raw material from which cocaine is extracted.

Although the Army has attempted to protect Putumayo’s handful of cities, the rest of the impoverished state remains trapped between two murderous armies of criminals. All transportation has been blocked for many weeks, with no food or fuel going in or out of Putumayo’s towns, villages, and isolated farms. Electricity and communications lines have been downed, and any civilians attempting to smuggle in food, to travel, or to cross the border into Ecuador are considered “military targets,” and murdered. Civilians suspected by one side of helping the other, are summarily executed, often by being burned alive or decapitated. Children and the elderly hide in their homes and face starvation, while adults and youth are being forced to take up arms with one side or the other, merely to avoid being caught in the crossfire.

Nor is the north of the country safe from such ravages. Recently, more than 1,000 FARC terrorists assaulted two towns in the Uraba region, near the border with Panama. The towns of Bagado and Dabeiba had both suffered narco-terrorist attacks in previous years, but the few score police and soldiers assigned to protect them, didn’t stand a chance against the terrorist horde that descended. A three-day siege, during which the Colombian Army and Air Force attempted to relieve the towns, ended with an unknown number of casualties on both sides. The police stations, telecommunications offices, mayors’ offices, schools, hospitals, and churches were razed by FARC explosives, and a Black Hawk helicopter carrying Army troops crashed, killing all 22 on board.

Both the FARC and the “paramilitaries” have been increasingly targeting Colombian political figures for kidnapping, less for ransom than to intensify the level of terror in the country and to turn the Oct. 29 state and municipal elections into a farce. In the last two weeks in October alone, at least four federal legislators and one congressional candidate had been taken hostage, as the Pastrana government scurries back to the negotiating table to grant still more concessions to the narco-terrorists.

Pastrana’s treasonous policy of appeasement toward the FARC may stem from cowardice, but the State Department’s readiness to pay these terrorists their blood money is a crime against humanity, answerable as such.