

Oscar Pimienta, a hero of the Cali cartel capture who was accused last May of skimming U.S. aid. American officials are still trying to work out how to conduct an audit that will not compromise police security.

When Judge Diego Coley ruled that there was enough evidence to hold Pimienta for trial, he said, he was called to Serrano's office. He surreptitiously recorded the upbraiding that Serrano gave him, accusing the judge of trying to destroy a brilliant police career and besmirch Serrano's reputation.

Coley filed a complaint with the attorney general over Serrano's conduct. When newspapers published the story, radio talk show hosts immediately sprang to Serrano's defense. Callers to the shows disparaged Coley.

"Instead of hurting Serrano, this incident has increased his popularity," Coley said. "People think, 'Yes, the general should put that judge in his place.'"

Coley, who was transferred a few days after the ruling, has become disillusioned. "I met him when he was a colonel and he was friendly. Now he is arrogant—all he cares about is his image."

Serrano does not discuss the incident, but his supporters say he has good reason to suspect attempts to undermine his reputation. In the midst of their operations against the Cali cartel, Montenegro recalled, intelligence agents discovered that drug traffickers had set up bank accounts in the Cayman Islands in the names of Serrano and Montenegro in an attempt to make it appear that the police officials had taken bribes.

Further, corruption is a sensitive issue for Serrano, who has dismissed more than 6,500 officers suspected of ineffectiveness or dishonesty. The campaign began five years ago, when half the Cali force was on the drug traffickers' payroll.

"Dishonesty makes him angry," Herman Bustamante said. "He takes drastic measures when corruption is involved."

Serrano's anti-corruption campaign has made him enemies among the dismissed officers, who Bustamante said are as much a threat to the general and his family as the criminals he has captured. As a result, the Serranos must travel with escorts at all times.

All have apartments in the same building—the general's is the penthouse—with police security in the lobby and a roadblock at the end of the street. They have lived this way for a more than a decade.

"Our life changed," Jorge Serrano said. "I had few friends—only those who dared to be my friends. I had to go everywhere in an armored car. With five bodyguards around all the time, a person feels inhibited."

Even so, they do not feel safe. Jorge Serrano and his family recently joined his brother and sister in exile.

"We understood that we had to make sacrifices," said the younger Serrano during an interview on his last day in Colombia. "All that he had done for the country is reflected in us. He is a dedicated person who believes that the more he sacrifices, the harder he works, the better things will turn out."

THE DANGERS IN THE CAUCASUS

HON. BILL MCCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, rarely has the situation in a strategically crucial area been so tenuous and fraught with dangers as the situation in the Caucasus presently is. These dynamics are of immense importance

for the United States because the Caucasus is the gateway to "the Persian Gulf of the 21st Century"—the energy resources of the Caspian Sea Basin and Central Asia. As well, the Caucasus constitutes the natural barrier between Asia Minor and Russia—an area increasingly contested by a close ally, Turkey, and a global power, Russia. Both Turkey and Russia are reclaiming traditional spheres of influence and, in the process, reviving their historic conflict.

At the core of the brewing crisis in the Caucasus are two increasingly conflicting dynamics that are on a collision course. On the one hand, there is an intensified effort, spearheaded by the Clinton Administration, to find a negotiated political solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue in order to clear the way to an oil pipeline across the Caucasus. While no negotiated solution is in sight, the U.S. involvement has already created expectations for panaceas and economic boom among all local powers. Now that these expectations are not materializing, there is a rebounding spread of radicalism and militancy—from Armenia (where political violence is on the increase) to Azerbaijan and Georgia, where military activities reinforce the hardening of political positions. On the other hand, there looms an escalation in and beyond Chechnya. Spearheaded by Islamist forces, including terrorists from several Middle Eastern countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the new cycle of fighting is expected to spread into the entire region for geo-strategic reasons. The surge of Islamist terrorism is likely to serve as a catalyst for the eruption of the tension and acrimony building throughout the entire Caucasus.

Having just returned from a trip to Russia, including Chechnya, German BND Chief August Hanning reported to the Bundestag that the situation in the Caucasus has "escalated dangerously". Once the weather improves in the early Summer, the fighting in Chechnya will not only escalate, but also spread to the fringes of the Russian Federation and to the rest of the Caucasus. Hanning is most alarmed by these prospects because the Islamist forces in Chechnya are supported and guided by "the Afghan Taliban and globally operating terrorist bin Laden as well as by groups of Islamist mercenaries." Through these channels, Hanning found out, the Chechen forces have been provided with large quantities of modern weapons including "Stinger-type" anti-aircraft missiles. Hanning warned the Bundestag of the dire strategic and economic ramifications for the West if the Chechnya war spread to Georgia, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and the rest of the Caucasus.

Russian experts also warn that the Mujahedin and other Islamist forces in Chechnya are preparing for a major escalation and expansion in the fighting. Oleg Odnokolenko of the Moscow newspaper *Segodnya* is right in calling the forthcoming escalation "the start of a fundamentally new war—a fullscale third Chechen war." As was the case with the previous Chechen wars, the Islamist leadership and the local senior commanders—particularly Shamil Basayev and Khattab—consider terrorist strikes at the heart of Russia and, should the need arise, also the West their winning weapon. Their most recent preparations suggest an intent to this time go way beyond another round of Moscow bombing.

However, the declared major objective of the Chechen Islamists is the incitement of a

regional flare-up. Ali Ulukhaye, Chechnya's ambassador to Baku, recently stressed the regional context of the unfolding was against Russia. Ulukhaye stated that "Chechens will not be satisfied with the liberation of their own territory." Only a regional solution is a viable solution for the Chechen Islamist leadership. Ulukhaye explained that "the freedom of Chechens is impossible until all the Caucasian people are liberated. We will drive the occupation army up to the Don. We should liberate the territory from the Don to the Volga, from sea to sea [from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea] and up to Iran and Turkey from Russia and set up a confederative Caucasian state. If we are liberated from the empire, the Abkhazian, Ossetian and Nagornyy-Nagornyy-Karabakh conflicts will be resolved by themselves peacefully." Ulukhaye highlighted the urgent imperative to resolve the latter conflict because "Nagornyy-Karabakh always was an inalienable part of Azerbaijan." According to Ulukhaye, the Chechen Islamist leadership and its allies have already earned the right to determine the fate of all other nations and peoples in the Caucasus. "Today, Chechens carry the burden of the Caucasus Russian war on their shoulders," he noted. However, the war must be expanded to other fronts as well in order to be able to defeat Russia. "If the Caucasian peoples divide this burden equally, then it will be easy to deal with Moscow. The matter is that if, God forbid, Chechens are defeated, Georgia and Azerbaijan will be the Kremlin's next target," Ulukhaye explained. "The Caucasian peoples have no possibility of resolving their problems independently," and therefore must unite behind the Chechen Islamist leaders in order to take on Russia.

Among these crisis points, Nagorno-Karabakh is uniquely volatile because of internal pressures in Baku. The growing militancy in Azerbaijan not only closely fit Ulukhaye's message and logic, but is also driven by indigenous strategic and economic interests. To be economically viable, the anticipated oil and gas pipelines will have to cross areas currently held by the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. Since late March, there have been strong indications that Baku is contemplating the resumption of hostilities against both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. For example, the military elite of Azerbaijan (both on active service and recently retired) led by General Zaur Rzayev, and former Defense Minister Tacaddin Mehdiyev just met and briefed President Haidar Aliyev about the urgent imperative to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh issue by force. The delegation argued that everyday that passes increases the world's acceptance of the "Nagorno-Karabakh entity", thus reducing the likelihood that Azerbaijan will be able to recover this important region. The delegation stated that "the military are confident that it is possible to resolve the conflict and liberate the land only in a military way." Indeed, since late March, there has been a worrisome escalation in the military clashes along the Azeri-Karabakh cease-fire line. These clashes should be considered probing of the Armenian defense lines and readiness by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

This threat is most dangerous because interested third parties can flare-up the southern Caucasus on their own. Given the growing

tension, militancy and hostility, and localized eruption is bound to escalate into a wider conflagration. For example, an anti-Armenian clash instigated by any one of the numerous Chechen and foreign Mujahedin detachments currently in Azerbaijan can serve as a spark for this regional eruption. The Azerbaijani forces will be drawn into the conflagration once the Karabakhi forces attempt retaliation or active defense. The Armed Forces of Armenia and the Russian forces deployed in Armenia, will intervene to prevent the collapse of Nagorno-Karabakh. Ultimately, and herein the danger lies, such a war will serve the interests of the Chechen leadership because this war will divert Russian resources from Chechnya and Georgia, where the local Russian forces attempt to block the Chechens' supply lines, to saving the Armenians. Consequently, the Chechen forces will be able to resume their offensive operations against smaller and weaker Russian forces.

Many experts share the apprehension about the Chechen war spreading to the Armenia-Azerbaijan region. In her recent "Open Letter to the Armenian People," Baroness Cox, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, elucidated the mounting threat to Armenia. "A decade after regaining its independence, Armenia might be in such great danger that its independence and very existence may be threatened. The hope created by negotiations with Azerbaijan currently being pursued by the Armenian government is deceptive. The Islamist forces in the Caucasus are determined decisively to 'resolve' the 'problems' of Armenia and Karabakh by force. Nobody, least of all Azerbaijan and Turkey, will stand in their way." Baroness Cox rightly stressed that the situation in the Caucasus is far from having been already decided. "My aim is not to sow despair," she wrote. "On the contrary, I firmly believe that an independent Armenia and Artsakh are destined to flourish and to emerge as bulwarks of stability and prosperity in the Caucasus. However, this destiny will not be achieved, and the worst will happen, if the current political dynamics are allowed to continue." I share both the apprehension and hope expressed by Baroness Cox.

Indeed, the main challenge facing us is to prevent this scenario from materializing. Widespread hostilities have not yet begun. However, with intentions and preferences clearly declared, all sides are now posturing—trying to read the situation in order to make their fateful decisions about escalating and expanding the fighting. Therefore, it is high time to take preventive steps in order to contain and stifle the brewing crisis. The American policy toward Nagorno-Karabakh, because of the important Armenian community in the US, is looked upon by all the regional powers as a test case and a measure of the West's resolve to save what is both a cradle of Judeo-Christian civilization and a contemporary strategic asset in a crucial though most volatile region.

Ultimately, the fate of the Caucasus will be determined by the resistance, defiance, resolve and bravery of the local people. The proud ancient peoples who have retained their heritage and religion through centuries of Islamic onslaught and pressure will not surrender now. The Armenians' defense of their homes and heritage against overwhelming odds—as they have done for centuries—is indeed a cornerstone of the retention of Western presence and interests in the Caucasus.

However, the Armenians may succumb to an Islamist onslaught. Such a development will be detrimental to the US national interest in the Caucasus.

Therefore, the United States should live up to the challenge and make a concentrated effort to prevent the war in Chechnya from spreading and escalating to the point of endangering the regional stability, let alone the very existence of the Armenians. Our own vital interests are served by these undertakings. Hence, striving to retain access to the energy resources of the Caspian Sea Basin and Central Asia—the Persian Gulf of the 21st Century—the United States must both buttress the Armenians' ability to withstand the building pressure, prevail in the trials ahead, and ultimately project stability into this strategically and economically crucial region; as well as support the Russian endeavor to contain the Islamist upsurge in the Caucasus before terrorism gets out of control.

TAIWANESE AMERICAN HERITAGE WEEK 2000

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, this month I join people throughout Colorado and across the nation in celebrating Pacific American Heritage Month. The Pacific American community represents an important foundation of America's future and I commend their proud celebration of heritage and community.

Taiwanese American Heritage Week—held from May 7 to May 14—celebrates the unique and diverse contributions of the more than 500,000 Taiwanese Americans in the United States. This portion of the population has made countless significant achievements in this country and their accomplishments can be found in every facet of American life. For instance, Taiwanese Americans have succeeded as successful and notable artists, Nobel Laureate scientists, researchers, human rights activists, and business leaders.

In addition to recognizing these contributions, this is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the success of democracy on the island of Taiwan. Since 1987, the Taiwanese people have possessed the rights to select their own leaders, practice the religion of their choice, and express their thoughts openly and freely. Taiwan is a vibrant and democratic participant in the family of nations. The election last March of opposition leader Mr. Chen Shui-bian as the new president, and my friend Ms. Annette Lu as the new vice-president of Taiwan, should be considered the crowning achievement of this drive by the people of Taiwan toward full-fledged democracy and freedom.

While Taiwan has established a model democracy, there remain political challenges. Gaining worldwide recognition of the legitimacy of Taiwan's government is paramount. With all that Taiwanese and Taiwanese-Americans have accomplished, there can be no complete satisfaction until Taiwan's status and global contributions are respected and appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwanese American Heritage Week recognizes the long-standing friendship between the United States and Taiwan. I com-

mend the great accomplishments and contributions of the Taiwanese American community.

WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, on May 6–8, 2000, more than 1,200 students from across the United States will be in Washington, DC, to compete in this national finals of the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program. I am proud to announce that the class from West Anchorage High School from Anchorage will represent the state of Alaska in this national event. These young scholars have worked diligently to reach the national finals and through their experience have gained a deep knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The names of the students are Brandi Backus, Jennifer Chen, Kaithyn Clark, Karen Elano, Meghan Holtan, Marissa Johannes, Alyson Merrill, Colin Moran, Stephanie Painter, Brandon Reiley, Neeraj Satyal, Isaac Schapira, Nathan Senner, Stephanie Shanklin, Eric Sjoden, David Street, Ryan Tans, Carisa Verdola, Robby Wayerski.

I would also like to recognize their teacher, Richard Goldstein, who deserves much of the credit for the success of the class.

The We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The three-day national competition is modeled after hearings in the United States Congress. These hearings consist of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges. The students testify as constitutional experts before a panel of judges representing various regions of the country and a variety of appropriate professional fields. The students' testimony is followed by a period of questioning by the simulated congressional committee. The judges probe students for their depth of understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge. Columnist David Broder described the national finals as "the place to have your faith in the younger generation restored."

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the We the People . . . program has provided curricular materials at upper elementary, middle, and high school levels for more than 26.5 million students nationwide. The program provides students with a working knowledge of our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the principles of a democratic government. Members of Congress and their staff enhance the program by discussing current constitutional issues with the students and teachers and by participating in other educational activities.

The class from West Anchorage High School is currently conducting research and preparing for the upcoming national competition in Washington, DC. I wish these young "constitutional experts" the best of luck at the We the People . . . national finals and my staff