
Interview: Brigadier General Francisco Visconti Osorio

'The idea of continental integration is necessary for our survival'

Venezuelan Air Force Brig. Gen. Francisco Visconti Osorio, one of the leaders of the frustrated Nov. 27, 1992 uprising who has been given asylum in Peru, granted the following exclusive interview to Dennis Small, EIR's intelligence director for Ibero-America. The general is currently in exile along with 50 other Venezuelan Air Force pilots and technicians. The interview was conducted in Lima, Peru on Jan. 29, 1993, and has been translated from Spanish.

EIR: The civil-military uprising on Nov. 27, 1992 posed the need for urgent change in Venezuela, in the economic, political, and moral arenas. Regarding the first, what is the problem in Venezuela today, and what are the proposals of your movement? What should be done with Venezuela's foreign debt? What should be done regarding the International Monetary Fund?

Visconti: Venezuela has its own peculiarities. On the one hand, it is the Latin American country whose natural endowments have enabled it throughout its history to enjoy the greatest resources, to be able to develop a life that fully satisfies the basic needs of its people. And yet we have a phenomenon in which all of these resources which we have access to have not been adequately used, but have been wasted. Wasted by poor administration and wasted by the effects of the corruption we have denounced, where in effect the arrival of a political party in power in Venezuela means *caudillismo*, as seen in the most recent cases. Upon taking power, that party becomes a modern-day chieftain, with its corrupt leader, and the resources of the nation become the loot which they end up distributing among themselves.

The result is that instead of growing and developing, the resources of this richest nation in Latin America have been diverted to become the illegal booty of the people who dominate the country.

This situation has been worsened by the fact that not only have the resources of Venezuela's productive process been wasted, but international credits have been sought and similarly wasted and misused by the same national leaders. That is to say, we wasted what we produced or what we obtained

on the basis of the productive capacity of the country's natural resources. And in addition, we have sought loans and also wasted these.

A real development process has not been advanced in Venezuela, although the capacity to do so exists. The results are clear. We are a country to which some 10 years ago, every Latin American wanted to go, because it was "El Dorado"; it was where one could find the best opportunities, from an economic standpoint. We have gone from that to a country today where critical poverty afflicts approximately 40% of the population; where the middle class—the buffer class, the class which in the past more or less enabled Venezuela to have a fairly reasonable standard of living—has notably shrunk. And instead of the middle class moving into the upper class from the economic point of view, it has become a poor class. At the same time, a large section of the poor class has slipped into critical poverty. From the economic point of view, the upper class has shrunk to approximately 3%, but a 3% with the unique feature of having accumulated practically the entirety of the country's wealth. Instead of there being more wealthy people, there are fewer people who count themselves among the rich, but they have more capital than the wealthy who had previously existed.

And so, the internal situation in Venezuela is becoming polarized into a vast poor class, and a very tiny, but very rich, upper class. This has never happened before. Before there was a middle class, as I have noted, which allowed the situation to be balanced.

Given this reality, what is happening or is going to happen? Well, there is the danger that, to the extent that the economic situation becomes more critical, to the extent that the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund continue to be unconditionally and excessively applied, we face the danger of a social explosion perhaps more radicalized than what occurred on Feb. 27, 1989. This could end up in anarchy. And who can say whether it might not degenerate into internal warfare, into a civil war, where the great mass of the population—which has no access to the means of satisfying its basic needs under an inflexible economic