9-28-1989

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Colombia: Patriotic Union Nominates Presidential Candidate

by John Neagle
Category/Department: General
Published: Thursday, September 28, 1989

On Sept. 10, the leftist Patriotic Union (UP) nominated Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa as its candidate for the May 1990 presidential elections. UP members have been targeted for assassination by drug traffickers and other rightist zealots. Jaramillo is one of the most heavily protected politicians in Colombia. He became UP president after the assassination of Jaime Pardo Leal in October 1987. Jaramillo, a member of Colombia's lower house, fled the country in March after UP theorist Jose Antequera was gunned down at Bogota's international airport and after receiving several death threats. He returned to Colombia in June. Jaramillo has accused Medellin drug ring leader Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha of ordering the assassinations of his UP colleagues and threatening his life. Since 1986, more than 500 UP members have been murdered. The UP was formed by members of Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and other leftists after the guerrillas agreed to a truce in March 1984. Jaramillo insists that "the UP cannot be considered the political arm of the FARC." He also emphasized that the UP has differences with the Colombian Communist Party (PCC). Jaramillo is the 11th candidate to enter the presidential race. (Basic data from AFP, 09/10/89)

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