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New Report Again Concludes Colosio Assassination was Not a Plot

by LADB Staff

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In a ruling in mid-March, the special prosecutor in charge of investigating the assassination of former presidential candidate Luis Donald Colosio said the incident was a random act and not a plot by any political groups, drug traffickers, or secret agents. The conclusions by special prosecutor Luis Raul Gonzalez Perez, revealed a few days before the fifth anniversary of Colosio's assassination, created an outcry from opposition legislators and members of the governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Colosio was gunned down on March 23, 1994, while campaigning in Tijuana (see SourceMex, 1994-03-30).

Colosio's killer, Mario Aburto, was arrested at the scene and later sentenced to 46 years in prison. Gonzalez's report said that Aburto Martinez killed Colosio to achieve "fame and notoriety." Aburto had delusions of grandeur and saw himself as a savior to society, Gonzalez said in testimony before the Chamber of Deputies.

In the report, Gonzalez said his office investigated 20 separate theories linking the assassination to drug traffickers, but was unable to uncover sufficient evidence to prove any of those theories. Gonzalez reached a similar conclusion in a report released on the fourth anniversary of Colosio's death in 1998 (see SourceMex, 1998-03-25).

Five other special prosecutors have also failed to uncover or have been unwilling to present evidence that pointed to any plot in the Colosio case. Despite his conclusions, Gonzalez said the investigation remains open. "Nonetheless...it can't be ruled out...that there was some direct or indirect influence behind the crime," Gonzalez said.

Special Senate committee criticizes latest report

In the Senate, the special committee investigating the Colosio case (Comision Especial de Atencion y Seguimiento al Caso Colosio) criticized Gonzalez's report and urged the Procuraduria General de la Republica (PGR) "not to sweep the matter under the rug," but to keep the investigation open. Committee chair Sen. Mario Vargas Aguiar said all the reports presented by the various prosecutors during the past five years have been "erratic and confusing."

Several members of opposition parties said Gonzalez's report is further evidence that the Zedillo administration is trying to protect some high-ranking members of the PRI, who may have planned the assassination. In the Chamber of Deputies, the delegation from the center-right Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) went so far as to suggest that the killing was engineered by Raul Salinas de Gortari, brother of former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. "The PAN delegation in the Chamber of Deputies is convinced that the same person who ordered the assassination of [former PRI secretary general] Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu was the instigator in the Colosio case," said PAN Deputy Javier Castelo Parada, a member of the special legislative commission to investigate the Colosio case.

Other theories claim Carlos Salinas played a role in Colosio's assassination. "Definitely, Carlos Salinas de Gortari had something to do with this crime," said Sen. Amador Rodriguez Lozano, a member of the PRI. "But we cannot determine the extent of his involvement."

Mariano Palacios Alcocer, who recently left his post as PRI president, also urged the PGR to continue the investigation to determine whether there was an intellectual author to the Colosio assassination. "The PRI is not satisfied simply with naming the material author of the assassination," Palacios said at a ceremony commemorating Colosio's assassination. (Sources: The Dallas Morning News, 03/19/99; Reuters, Spanish news service EFE, 03/23/99; El Universal, 02/08/99, 03/23/99, 03/24/99; Excelsior, La Jornada, 03/24/99)

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