

#16 \$3.00
\$3.50 in Canada

VOYAGES SF

MERC: 2000™
AN OBVIOUS AND CURRENT MENACE

2300 AD™
BUNKER HILL CLASS CRUISER

CYBERPUNK FICTION
LINKUP

REVIEW
DARK CONSPIRACY™





J.B. KING

MERC: 2000

AN **Obvious** AND **Current Menace**

G L E N A L L I S O N

Colombia

The *Republica de Colombia* is a small country located in the northwestern portion of South America. It is here that the Andes Mountains reach their northern terminus. Colombia lies almost entirely in the north tropical zone. The tropical heat of this area is modified by the higher elevations of the Andes and high wind action. The subtropical zone lies between 1,500 feet and 6,000 feet and is located usually on the slopes and valleys of the Andes. The temperate zone comprises the area 6,000 feet and 10,000 feet. Most of the important cities in Colombia are located between 3,000 feet and 9,000 feet above sea level.

The vegetation in the temperate zone is rich and varied. Forest products are a potential source of income that is only now being tapped. Up to 10,000 feet the palm tree is abundant. Toucans and hummingbirds are found everywhere. The tapir, peccary, and several types of deer are also found here, as well as the puma, jaguar, and the spectacled bear. There are plenty of turtles, lizards and snakes here also.

Colombia is a mixing of indians and whites, which has been going on for the last four centuries. From the time of the Conquistadores until the mid-19th century, the Roman Catholic faith was the only religion allowed in the country. Even today in the 21st century, 80% of Colombian citizens are Catholics. Many of the people living here are descendants of the Incas and other indian groups and still speak languages in addition to Spanish.

Starting in the 1970s and slowly building their business, the drug lords have gained in power. First growing and importing marijuana to the United States and then harvesting and processing the coca leaf into cocaine, these drug lords have slowly taken over the government in Colombia. The current president of Colombia, Francisco Escalera, just happens to be a first cousin to Esteban Jesus Montelongo, suspected to be the head of the drug cartel known as "Black 29." Although working behind the scene, Black 29 exerts a great deal of force to keep the Colombian government working for them.

There is no extradition of cartel members out of Colombia and, of course, members do not pay taxes. The Colombian army and police forces throughout the country go out of their way to avoid any possible confrontation with Black 29. Twenty years ago, several members of the cartel were prosecuted for various crimes. Immediately, a wave of car bombs and sniper assassinations swept the country. In one case, half of

the jury died within twelve hours as well as the two key witnesses for the prosecution. Naturally, nothing could be done but release the cartel members who then sued the government for false arrest.

The Current Situation

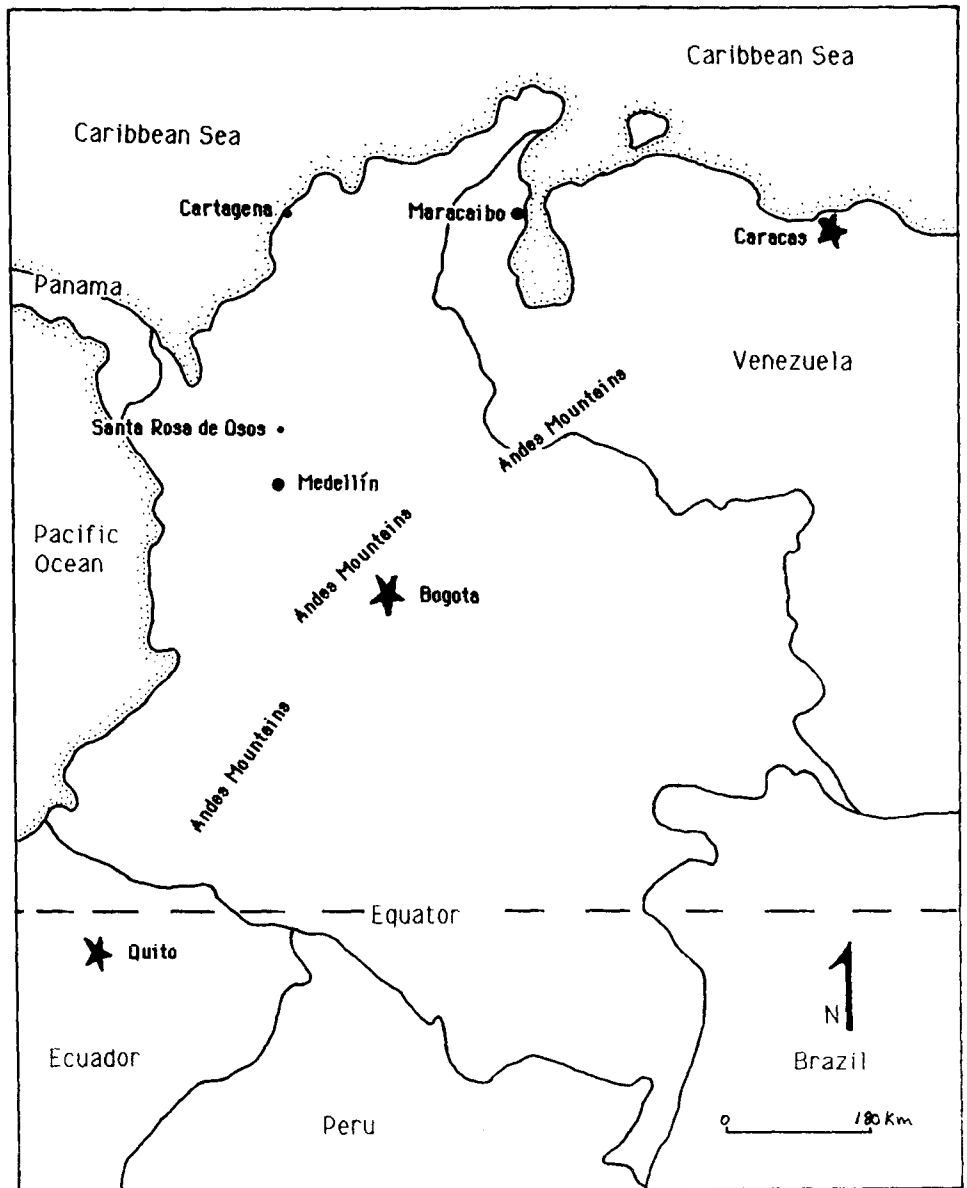
Through threats, fear, and applications of a great deal of money, Black 29 has become the foremost drug organization in Colombia. Currently, Esteban Jesus Montelongo is involved in activities in most of South America and has many business and political connections in the United States.

Three months ago, Black 29 worked out an alliance with six other criminal organizations working the drug trade. Cocaine and marijuana shipments to the United States and Europe have doubled. The ambassadors to Panama and Colombia have disappeared and a judge in New Orleans was gunned down in front of the federal

courthouse. Experts in the White House state that the situation will get worse unless the alliance is broken up. And these experts say that will happen when Montelongo and the other organization leaders are eliminated. Not only would the situation then return to normal, but drug traffic to the United States should be reduced.

Mission Briefing

Intelligence sources confirm that Esteban Montelongo is the mastermind behind the rise to power of Black 29 and is also the main force behind the criminal alliance. President Tanner has declared that this organization is "more dangerous than a rattle snake coiled to strike" and must be stopped. Unnamed sources indicate that Montelongo will be at his hilltop stronghold for the next six days and the decision has been made to go into Colombia and bring Montelongo out and to the United States.

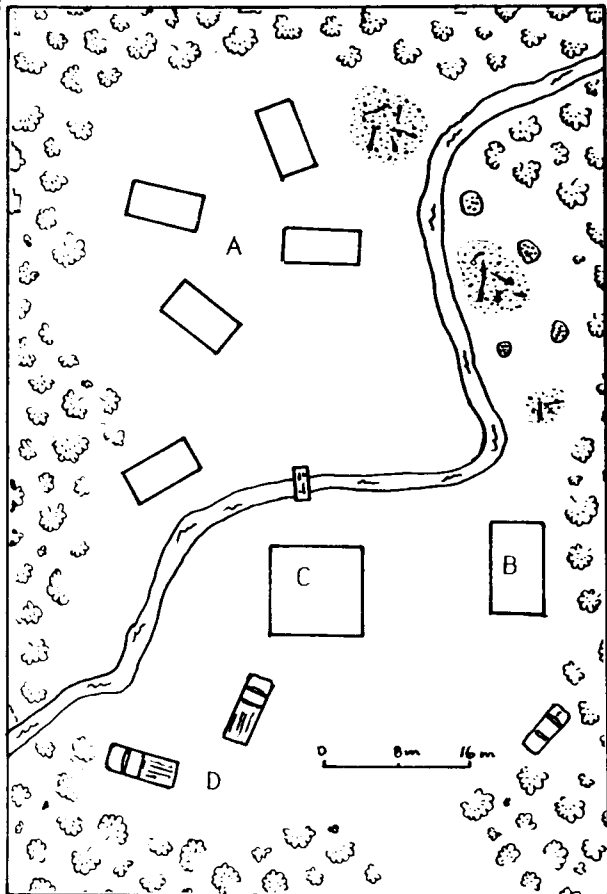


Since having U.S. troops on foreign soil is not socially acceptable (especially if they were caught), the CIA and DEA have arranged for a mercenary group to do the job. The team is to grab Montelongo and get him out of Colombia or, failing that, liquidate him.

There are no radar installations at Montelongo's home, but air traffic in and near Medellin is monitored by specialists working for Black 29. For this reason, the team will make a HALO (high altitude, low opening) parachute drop onto an abandoned airstrip southeast of the town of Santa Rosa de Osos which is roughly 60 kilometers northeast of Medellin.

Approach

From the airstrip, the team will make their way 20 km across the open country to Montelongo's hilltop home near Santa Rosa de Osos. If the team encounters any hostile troops or other personnel that might give away their presence, they have free license to make sure that such persons cannot do so (by whatever means necessary). The Colombian government is not to know of this invasion of their sovereignty. If any drug processing sites are discovered, the team is to eliminate them, providing that doing so will not jeopardize their mission.



Retrieval

The team will make a broadcast on a pre-arranged frequency about one half-hour before they go in to grab Montelongo (to warn the pick up crew). Then, when they need to be picked up, another message will bring a helicopter to the site within five minutes. A red flare placed by the team will show the pilot where to land.

Map Descriptions

Processing Site:

Carved out of the jungle, about 2,800 meters above sea level, the site is relatively flat and a stream flows from the northeast to the southwest through the clearing. In the center of the clearing, a one meter-wide foot bridge crosses the stream. Near the stream, above the storage shed (B) are found several circular depressions in the earth and a large amount of green coca leaves drying in the sun on coarse woolen cloths. During the day, workers can be found here turning the drying coca leaves and treading the dried leaves into a paste in a hydrochloric bath in the earthen depressions.

A. LIVING SITE: This is the living area for the workers and guards. Five shacks are arranged in a haphazard square. A few many dogs lie in the shade of the buildings and some chickens scratch out a living on the beaten earth. (Use the Shed/Hut floor plan from **Merc: 2000** page 79 for these buildings.)

B. CHEMICAL AND OTHER STORAGE: This shed is used to store the chemicals needed to process the cocaine. In one corner is one glass container of ethyl alcohol and some copper tubing, three 55-gallon drums of ether, two 55-gallon drums of acetone and six one-gallon glass bottles of hydrochloric acid. These materials are very flammable and extremely explosive. Also found here are ten large sacks of dried coca leaves waiting to be processed. Also stored in the shed are food stuffs and other supplies for cooking such as oil, flour, and white gas for portable cooking stoves. In a box in a corner are 400 rounds of 9mm ammunition. (Use the Vehicle Repair Shed from **Merc: 2000** page 79.)

C. PROCESSING PLANT: Inside are several large tables and sinks as well as four bunsen burners and numerous glass beakers, tubes, and vials. In one corner are a 55-gallon drum of ether, a 55-gallon

drum of acetone and a one-gallon glass bottle of hydrochloric acid. Also here are two double-burner camp stoves and a gallon of white gas in a metal can. Under one of the tables are five quart bottles of ethyl alcohol and a variety of pieces of distilling equipment. (Use the stable building from **Merc: 2000** page 79.)

D. CAR PARK: There are two one-ton trucks here with canvas tops over the beds. Also found here is a broken-down, abandoned Chevy Nova. It no longer runs and no one has bothered to tow it away. Eventually the jungle will claim it. With a little work, it could be repaired.

Montelongo Stronghold:

The stronghold is just outside the town of Santa Rosa de Osos, roughly 60 km from Medellin. The hilltop is approximately 2,400 meters above sea level. The compound is surrounded by a stone wall. A gravel track surrounds the perimeter. A paved road comes up the hill from the main road about eight km away.

A. GATEHOUSE AND STONE WALL: A small gatehouse manned by two guards is located at the perimeter entrance. The gate is made of chain-link reinforced with iron bars. The one meter-high wall is roughcut stone. Guard dogs usually have the run of the compound after dark. There are six Doberman pinschers and four German shepherds available. During the day, guard and two-dog patrols follow the walled perimeter at one hour intervals. Motion sensors are planted at 50 meter intervals between the wall and the gravel track. They are continually malfunctioning and there is a 50% chance that they will not be turned on. If they do work, the motion sensors will turn on flood lights mounted at strategic spots around the site.

B. PAVED PARKING AREA: This area is used for temporary parking for visitors' cars. It can double as a landing pad for a helicopter if necessary.

C. GARAGES: These two garages are used to house Montelongo's fleet of vehicles. C1 holds a 4WD F-250 Ford pickup (maroon) and a Toyota Landcruiser (dark green). One garage bay is empty. Also found here is a complete set of automotive repair tools, a ten HP air compressor, and a set of airpowered tools. C2 holds two Mercedes 450 SLs (one dark blue and one silver) and a Rolls Royce Silver Spirit (metallic grey).

D. TENNIS COURTS: These are frequently used by Montelongo, his family (when they are here), and house guests.

E. MAIN HOUSE: This is the mansion where Montelongo spends about 10-12

days a month while he meets with clients and entertains guests. (Use the mansion found on pages 76–77 of **Merc: 2000**.)

F. HELICOPTER LANDING PAD:

Guests quite often arrive by helicopter and land on this paved pad. Though Montelongo uses it sometimes, he prefers to travel to his stronghold by car.

G. SERVANTS' QUARTERS: This is where the cooks, guards, and maids live. (Use the building on page 179 of *Twilight: 2000*, but double the size of the basement storage room, make it into extra bedrooms, and eliminate the second floor as well as the stairs up to it.)

H. GUEST HOUSE: This building is used for visitors who have not been invited to stay in the main house. Particularly underlings of some of the important visitors. Sometimes, extra guards are allowed to stay here on a very temporary basis. (Use the building on page 178 of *Twilight: 2000* and eliminate the garage. Instead, use this area for a sort of dormitory with four extra beds. These could be beds for guests' bodyguards or less important underlings.)

Referee's Notes

The adventure will take place in two sections. First, the team will travel from the abandoned airstrip to the stronghold. Along the way, encounters with animals and reptiles can occur or perhaps an encounter with peasants out trapping birds, hunting for food, or clearing land for a new field. About one-third into the journey, the team should stumble upon the cocaine processing site. There will be 4–8 guards, 2 chemists, and at least 12 peasants working on drying the coca leaves or treading it into a paste in a hydrochloric acid solution out-of-doors in shallow pits in the ground. The guards are Veteran NPCs, carry either Uzi or MP-5 SMGs, and are nervous. They will not be surprised easily. The purpose of this encounter is to get the team's adrenalin flowing but not get anyone hurt too badly to continue.

The second part of the adventure will take place in and around Montelongo's stronghold. There should be at least four bodyguards in the main house. The guards should be available in numbers to make this snatch-and-grab job a bit more than a walk to the nearest convenience store. Exactly how many guards there should be will depend on how many team members there are and how experienced they are.

Also on the grounds are ordinary servants. There should be at least one cook, two household maids, a gardener, and a vehicle mechanic. These innocents could accidentally get in the way during the

firefight that is sure to erupt.

Try to make this part suspenseful at first as the team sneaks up and into the stronghold. Then, make the rest of the adventure full of action and confusion as the firefight begins. For a little more suspense, have some reinforcements show up from down the road and maybe have the helicopter pick up be a bit late arriving.

NPCs

All peasant workers found in this adventure are Novice NPCs and are armed only with machetes or (very rarely) old, worn out bolt action hunting rifles like the Mauser if they have any weapons at all. The stronghold guards are all Veteran NPCs, wear individual tactical radios or ITRs (see page 14 of **Merc: 2000** for

details) and also carry M12 or Uzi SMGs. Montelongo's bodyguards are Elite NPCs, wear ITRs and carry Uzi SMGs as well M92S automatic pistols.

Alternatives

If the players don't manage to silence the bodyguards and grab Montelongo, one of the body guards can call for help. This help would arrive within five minutes and would probably be guards from the gatehouse down at the main road, eight km away. Another option would be to have someone arrive to visit Montelongo by helicopter several minutes before the team moves in (or even as the perimeter guards are being silenced) with more body guards. All of this can certainly make life more interesting for the players. ■

