

# Hated Pérez is out of office in Venezuela

by Peter Rush

Late in the evening of Aug. 31, the Venezuelan Congress voted overwhelmingly to make permanent the suspension from office of President Carlos Andrés Pérez (known as CAP), thus ending his hopes of returning to office to serve out the last five months of his five-year term. By this vote, the Congress withstood the threat by CAP's political machine of thugs and crooks to unleash civil war, and also withstood the behind-the-scenes continued backing for the corrupt CAP by the U.S. State Department and the Inter-American Dialogue, a very influential organization of former government ministers, bankers, and others promoting the Anglo-American agenda for Ibero-America (see *Feature*).

What remains to be seen is whether the government of interim President Ramón Velásquez, which was appointed three months ago when CAP was suspended pending his trial on corruption charges, will reverse CAP's hated free-market economic policies, and proceed to crack down effectively on the wave of violence, especially bombings, that have racked the capital city of Caracas. The terror wave is widely believed to be the work of CAP's private paramilitary organization within his Democratic Action (AD) party, the apparent strategy being to use the bombings to destabilize the country and create such chaos that next December's elections would have to be cancelled.

CAP is so unpopular, blamed for both the disastrous International Monetary Fund-approved economic policy and the rampant corruption by which a tiny elite has enriched itself at the expense of the country, that his AD party is expected to get less than 10% of the vote, virtually annihilating it from the public scene after three decades of being the largest party in Venezuela. The party's turn to violence was its last card to play to forestall this outcome.

CAP's definitive ouster is a ringing victory for the majority of Venezuelans, who for years have demanded such a move along with an end to his hated economic policies. In 1992, two military coups were launched to oust him, and although they were not immediately successful, they received strong backing from the population.

## CAP's backers

CAP's principal backing throughout came not from inside Venezuela, but from the U.S. State Department, which

denied his notorious corruption and bolstered him as the flagbearer of International Monetary Fund-style "democracy" and other "new world order" policies throughout Ibero-America. Prior to his suspension, State Department honcho Luigi Einaudi and U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela Michael Skol made clear, amply and often, to all Venezuelan political parties and the Armed Forces that the United States wanted CAP to complete his term, no matter what. In the international arena, CAP has been a stalwart backer of former President Bush's new world order, and domestically, did the bidding of the major banks and the IMF in turning over the Venezuelan economy to speculation, free-trade looting, and drug money laundering.

CAP's other stronghold of international support is the pro-terrorist apparatus of the Socialist International. Meeting in the Dominican Republic on the very day on which CAP was fired, social democratic parties from 23 Ibero-American countries voted a resolution in total support of CAP, their longtime friend. Nicaraguan Tomás Borge, the architect of the Sandinista victory in 1979 and a leading terrorist controller on the continent to this day, gave a speech in fawning praise of CAP. Another one of CAP's good "democratic" supporters over two decades has been Fidel Castro.

These and other details of CAP's corruption were published in a pamphlet released by the Venezuelan Labor Party and the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) earlier this year which has received very wide circulation in Venezuela and other Ibero-American nations. (The pamphlet was serialized in *EIR*, July 30-Sept. 3, 1993.)

## A strategy of terror

The rash of bombings over the last months — mercifully there were no deaths — has instilled fear throughout Caracas, in particular. The very night before the vote, a bomb went off outside the headquarters of the AD party. Two months earlier, letter bombs were sent to members of the Supreme Court who voted that CAP should stand trial for embezzling \$17 million in government money. And there have been persistent rumors of a planned assassination of a top political leader, possibly former President Rafael Caldera, currently the front-runner for the December presidential elections. In fact, Caldera issued a statement from Brazil at the end of August, blaming the coterie of CAP and another AD ex-President, Jaime Lusinchi, for being behind the wave of terrorism.

Despite the bombings, it became apparent a few days before CAP's final demise that not one member of any of the opposition parties in Congress was going to vote for his return. As a result, the AD party, fearing an even worse backlash against their members, decided to abstain, and the final vote was therefore unanimous for CAP's ouster. CAP immediately announced that he would appeal the decision to the Supreme Court, and said he would address the nation the following day.