

## Editorial

### *Let's win the war on drugs*

Nancy Reagan's campaign to "Just say no!" was a sad parody of the kind of war that must be fought if we are to stop the spread of drugs. As the election of Ernesto Samper Pizano to the position of President of Colombia shows, and the present senatorial campaign of Ollie North in the United States, the power of the drug mafia digs deep in our society. Crucial to this is the role of laundered drug money in sustaining the crisis-ridden global economic structure.

The recent revelations that the Samper Pizano election campaign was bankrolled by the cocaine cartel are creating shock waves in Colombia and also have already had important repercussions in the United States, where forces in the State Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration substantiate the charges that he cut a deal with the Cali mafia in order to win the run-off election. This has created sufficient concern to place a question mark over the actual inauguration of Samper Pizano next month.

This scandal has come as no surprise to *EIR*. For the past 15 years, as part of our campaign to stop the spread of drugs by hitting at the jugular—the connection of these criminal cartels to the banking system—we have documented the role which Samper Pizano has played as an interface between financial and criminal institutions. For this whole period, Samper has acted as a broker for banking interests who were willing to support the drug cartel on behalf of Colombian and foreign banks.

Ten years ago, on the occasion of the abduction of Patricia Paredes de Londoño, who with her husband is a leading anti-drug fighter in Colombia, we demonstrated the overlap of these networks, in detail. We documented Samper's role as a collaborator of Carlos Lehder, a partner of dope-lobby financier Robert Vesco in Caribbean operations. Lehder was sent to a U.S. federal prison as a major criminal. As we wrote in the Aug. 14, 1984 issue of *EIR*, in 1982 Lehder "gave over 20 million pesos to the López Michelsen campaign at a meeting in a Medellín hotel with Ernesto Samper Pizano, López Michelsen's campaign manager."

Samper was a member of the executive council of

the International Cannabis Alliance for Reform, which was calling upon the United States to legalize Colombian marijuana imports into the United States. In this he had and still has, the support of the Ollie North wing of the Republican Party which sought support for their own involvement in drug trafficking from the writings of Adam Smith on behalf of the ideology of free trade. Smith, of course, was on the payroll of the British East India Company at the time, and his advocacy of the non-regulation of drug trafficking coincided with the interests of British opium interests.

Ollie North's boss, George Bush, attempted to justify the U.S. invasion of Panama by the lying pretext that Panama's leader, Gen. Manuel Noriega, was using Panama as a base for drug trafficking. It would certainly be correct now for the United States to announce that it will sever diplomatic relations with Colombia should Samper be inaugurated, for the duration of his term in office.

One very forceful move which the United States can make to defeat the drug cartel here and in Ibero-America, is to offer full support to Venezuelan President Caldera in his fight to stop drug-money laundering by imposing stringent controls on the Venezuelan banking system. He did this to stem the flow of money out of the country in the wake of the collapse of Banco Latino. It should be noted that the problems in Venezuela are of the same magnitude as a series of other collapses of financial institutions in the United States and in Europe.

Venezuela's economic crisis, then, comes within conditions of the collapse of the international financial system, but it is complicated by the role of the Cisneros financial interests in Venezuela and Colombia who are tied in to drug-running interests in Ibero-America and Spain. Thus, by protecting the the integrity of the Venezuelan economy, President Caldera has struck a blow at the very same drug interests who are trying to seize power in Colombia. Here is a perfect opportunity for the Clinton administration to weaken the drug cartel at home and abroad, merely by offering the support of his administration to Venezuela's President, while denying it to Colombia's Samper.