

# President Clinton hits Dope, Inc. in Colombia, decertifies Samper

by Andrea Olivieri

President Clinton defied pressures from within and outside his administration to soft-pedal his policy toward the Samper Pizano narco-regime in Colombia on March 1, the day the President is required by law to certify or decertify narcotics-producer countries as “cooperating fully” with the United States in the war on drugs. Faced with a “mountain of evidence” implicating Colombian President Samper, as well as significant parts of his administration, with “cooperating fully” with the so-called Cali Cartel of cocaine and heroin traffickers, President Clinton denied Colombia certification status. In so doing, he provided much-needed support for those inside Colombia who have been battling to drive the drug cartels out of their country, at great personal risk.

Making the announcement to the press that day was Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Robert Gelbard, who has been a consistent hard-liner toward the Samper regime, versus that faction in the government associated with the Inter-American Dialogue, the bankers’ lobby which had been urging Clinton to seek “cooperation, not confrontation” with the cartel’s government in Colombia, up to the last moment.

Said Gelbard: “The decision to deny Colombia certification was not made lightly. We work with some extremely dedicated individuals who, in spite of tremendous odds, have continued to attack the drug syndicates. Many valiant Colombians have died fighting the drug trade. . . . These efforts have been undercut, however, at every turn, by a government and a legislature not only plagued by corruption, but which are fostering corruption in order to protect themselves. The Cali traffickers have been running their operations from prison, and the prosecutor general has been the target of a public campaign to undermine and discredit his efforts.”

Decertification, according to U.S. law, requires that all U.S. bilateral aid to Colombia, except humanitarian and anti-drug financing, be ended, and that access to loans and investment credit from such entities as the U.S. Ex-Im Bank and Overseas Private Investment Corp. be cut off. The United States must veto loans to Colombia in the half-dozen international financial institutions in which it is a member. President Clinton has reserved the right to apply trade sanctions,

including cancellation of preferential tariffs and suspension of imports from Colombia, in the future, should that prove necessary. In this context, Gelbard warned the Samper government against taking reprisals against the United States.

## Cartel fights back

Samper’s reaction to the decertification decision by the Clinton administration was one of defiance. In a nationwide speech that night, Samper “deplored” the U.S. decision as “unacceptable intervention” into Colombian affairs, promised to “review” all existing cooperation programs with the United States, and announced plans to seek new commercial partners. Fully aware that the decertification decision was directed at his administration, and at him personally, Samper insisted that he was “here to stay.” Finally, he denounced those Colombians who have dared to air their criticisms of his regime abroad, a reference to, among others, Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) President Maximiliano Londoño, who spent 10 days in Washington to lobby for Colombia’s decertification. Samper insisted that he would resolve his country’s internal crisis “Colombian-style.”

What that means, concretely, was detailed by *La Prensa* columnist Diana Duque Gómez, who wrote on Feb. 29 that Samper’s “blatantly criminal and amoral” regime was applying the law of *omerta*, “the old mafia tactic of bribery, intimidation, and assassination” in order to try to silence its critics. Duque enumerated the recent assassinations of Samper’s political opponents, of potential witnesses against him, of investigating attorneys, and others. Duque’s warnings were echoed by a columnist in the daily *El Nuevo Siglo*, who charged on March 3 that Samper has formed his own “Ton Ton Macoute” to silence his enemies.

Other columnists have described how Samper is using millions of dollars to buy support, including of radio and television companies, journalists, and congressmen. Samper has been travelling around the country, distributing funds for numerous social projects designed to buy him sympathy, while at the same time cutting back on the already pitiful budget of a military engaged in full-scale war with narco-terrorism. As Samper’s former campaign manager Fernando

Botero put it, Samper “is raffling off the nation to save himself.”

Samper is also trying to use the decertification of his administration to stir up a “narco-nationalist” rage against the United States. Wrapping himself in the Colombian flag, the cartel’s President and his cronies have repeatedly accused the United States of violating Colombian sovereignty, and of trying to destabilize his regime. But his arguments won’t wash. *El Nuevo Siglo* editorialized on March 4, “U.S. decertification was not against Colombia, nor against all Colombians, but is a procedure to make public protest against the evidence recognized everywhere” of Samper’s narco-corruption. *La Prensa* headlined its coverage, “The U.S. Decertifies Samper.”

On March 5, *La República* carried a column by the former head of the Latin American Banking Association, lawyer Fernando Londoño Hoyos, who wrote that, in decertifying Colombia, “the United States understood, as anyone would, that when three-fourths of the State is dominated by the Cali Cartel (Presidency, Congress, Attorney General, and Comptroller), one can have no confidence in a war against the drug trade.” Londoño said, “While we may not all be drug traffickers, nor accomplices, nor protectors of the cartel, we are all guilty of the ugly sin of omission. We want to live off the blood of the martyrs, but we don’t deserve to.”

“Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, the entire Supreme Court burned alive in the holocaust of the [Justice] Palace, Guillermo Cano, Carlos Mauro Hoyos, Luis Carlos Galán, Alvaro Gómez, and so many others, are the true heroes of the Fatherland. But in their tombs, they are suffering from our betrayals: the treason of the Constituent Assembly, when, in an evil alliance with the cartels, it prohibited extradition; the treason of those who made an Octavian deal with the people from Cali; the treason of the people when they elected Samper and the corrupt congressmen; and the treason of all when it was proven that the President and the Congress were corrupt, and they were nonetheless tolerated so as not to ‘weaken’ the institutions.”

## The British and drug legalization

For two decades, Colombia has been targetted as a special project of the international financial elites who run the international drug trade. That project is now nearing its final goal: to use a renegade State run by the drug cartels to establish a precedent for legalizing the drug trade itself. At the head of the legalization project is still, just as it was in the days of the Opium Wars against China, the British Crown. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Samper is now turning to the British for the support Clinton has refused him.

As part of a new “anti-narcotics strategy” just announced by the Samper regime, a diplomatic mission is being dispatched to London to formalize new “cooperation agreements” with that country, while existing U.S.-Colombian anti-drug programs, and relations with the U.S. Drug Enforce-

ment Administration and Central Intelligence Agency, are “under review,” preparatory to being axed altogether. As Samper’s Justice Minister Carlos Medellín put it, “We’re only receiving a few coins from the United States. I think we should stop receiving them.” Medellín declared that “Colombia will look to the European Community and, in particular, to Great Britain. . . . There will surely be economic cooperation on the part of Great Britain.”

Britain is ready to welcome Samper with open arms, as a glance at British diplomatic relations with Samper over the past two years reveals:

- In April 1994, one of the inner core of the Samper team visited London: Gustavo de Greiff, an outspoken advocate of drug legalization who was then serving as Prosecutor General of the previous Gaviria administration, and would later play a key role in covering up the first hard evidence of Samper’s narco-corruption. De Greiff’s daughter was Samper’s first campaign treasurer. De Greiff told the media on April 20: “The British welcomed and understood my thesis on drug legalization. . . . Here the subject is treated with more rationality.” Moreover, he said, Britain is “a country with dignity and pride, which does not let itself be pressured by other countries.”

- In July 1994, immediately following his election to the Presidency by a scant 1% margin, and at the height of the “narco-cassette” scandal implicating him in taking drug money for his campaign, Samper was summoned to the United States and given a stern warning against any collusion with the drug cartels. From there, he went to London, where, according to *El Espectador* of July 19, 1994, “The President-elect. . . received the warmest welcome from the government, press, and businessmen.” In London, Samper pledged to retain standing cooperating agreements with Britain, including that the British secret services would train Colombia’s political police, the DAS. Today, the DAS is widely viewed as Samper’s personal Gestapo, deployed against his political opponents.

- On Feb. 20, 1995, while U.S. authorities were demanding that Samper take action against the cartels or face decertification, the British foreign affairs undersecretary, David Davis, travelled to Colombia in the company of British Petroleum President Lord Ashburton. BP has a concession to exploit Colombia’s vast Cusiana oil fields. Davis told Samper that British aid “is not conditioned. . . . The British government has very strong ties of friendship with Colombia, and part of this friendship implies confidence.” Colombian television showed Davis sniffing poppy flowers during a visit to a Colombian plantation of opium poppies. Samper responded to British “confidence” in him by ordering that Colombia’s Petroleum Stabilization Fund, which handles 40% of Colombia’s oil income, be held abroad, exclusively in British banks.

- On June 1, 1995, British Trade Minister Richard Needham arrived in Colombia as part of a 40-man business

delegation, and declared that drugs and narco-terrorism were not an obstacle to British investment in Colombia. Asked what he thought of other countries' concerns about these factors, he answered, "That's their problem."

• On March 1, 1996, the London *Financial Times* editorially denounced the U.S. certification procedure as flawed, and instead urged "a cooperative international approach" to the drug problem, "up to and including the possible decriminalization of some currently illegal substances."

## Samper's troubles have just begun

On March 1, EIR intelligence director for Ibero-America Dennis Small was interviewed by phone by Samir Vergara, of F.M. Radio Caracol in Colombia. The call was prompted by the demand of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement in Mexico that Colombian Ambassador to Mexico Gustavo de Greiff be recalled, and by an EIR Memorandum, "Why Colombia Must Be 'Decertified' by the Clinton Administration" (see EIR, Jan. 26, p. 40:



Dennis Small

**Caracol:** One of the news items this week is the request in Mexico to declare [Colombian Ambassador] Gustavo de Greiff *persona non grata*. Colombian officials say this is a big operation against Colombia; there have been protests in front of our [Colombia's] embassy by the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement. It was founded in 1990 and represents the Washington news agency, *EIR*, or *Executive Intelligence Review*. Mr. Dennis Small, good morning. . . . What is your relationship to the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement?

**Small:** The Ibero-American Solidarity Movement is a group of Mexican citizens who are politically active in their country. *EIR* is based in Washington, and was founded by current Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. Recently, *EIR* published a memorandum proposing that Samper's government be decertified on the issue of fighting drugs.

**Caracol:** Let's talk about this. In that four-page document,

you recommend that the U.S. not certify Colombia.

**Small:** Yes, we indicated three reasons for this: First, the elections which put Samper in the Presidency were illegal and dirty, because of the role of drug money. Second, throughout his Presidency, he has kept his side of the deal with the Cali Cartel; and third, Samper has established a narco-dictatorship, not a narco-democracy, as some say, under which opponents of the Samper regime have been assassinated; Alvaro Gómez, for example. Others, such as the journalists affiliated with our magazine, Javier Almario and Maximiliano Londoño, have been intimidated and threatened with death.

Nonetheless, I think that the issue of decertification, the decision on which will be announced today in Washington, is really the least of the problems Samper will face in the coming period. I think it's quite possible that there will be hearings in the [U.S.] Congress from which the entire truth of the Cali Cartel's Presidency, that is, Ernesto Samper's Presidency, could emerge.

**Caracol:** Where do you get your information, and by what means do you affirm what you just said about Alvaro Gómez's murder, a still ongoing investigation? The killers, and what was behind his murder, are unknown—no information has been released on this in Colombia. Where do you get your information?

**Small:** We publish information which is publicly available and well known to Colombian, U.S., and other media. What I just said is public knowledge: Alvaro Gómez Hurtado, an anti-Samper opposition leader, was assassinated. Yes, the murder's material authors are unknown at the moment. Nonetheless, if we ask the famous *cui bono?* that is, who benefits from this assassination, then the investigation must necessarily lead in the direction of the Cali Cartel and the politicians associated with it.

**Caracol:** This is a bold assertion, and I would say, one which doesn't follow the rigorous journalistic guidelines which are especially demanded in the United States.

**Small:** No, no. What we're saying is what any honest journalist is saying right now. . . . I repeat, the beneficiaries—also of the murder of General Cifuentes's son, and of other threats and murders—are the Cali Cartel. And when they threaten our correspondents and representatives in Bogotá, just as they have threatened other journalists who have fought against drugs by indicating who is behind the drug trade, who proposes drug legalization, any investigation necessarily leads in this direction. I would say, in fact, that anyone *not* looking in that direction, is the dishonest journalist.

**Caracol:** You mean that anyone who disagrees with you is dishonest.

**Small:** No. I think the dishonest journalists are those not investigating who benefits from these murders, and trying to cover them up.

**Caracol:** But you're not investigating, you're drawing conclusions.

**Small:** No. We are indicating, as we have done in this document, the direction in which the investigation should go. I think it's clear, and rather obvious, that the beneficiary of Alvaro Gómez's murder is the Cali Cartel.

**Caracol:** Why?

**Small:** Because he was one of the strongest opponents of Samper's government. He was one of those who insisted in having a serious war on drugs. This is also the case with *EIR*'s correspondents in Colombia, who have been the victims of death threats, break-ins, and other attacks.

**Caracol:** But Mr. Small, don't you think that this government has given very clear signs of its willingness to fight drugs, having put [the cartel's] capos in jail, and fully backed the Prosecutor General in his investigation of the congressmen who received this money? Doesn't that indicate to you that it is really attacking the cartels?

**Small:** No, I don't think there are any such signs, and I think that this is exactly what circles in Washington are saying, too. I think that this is what will come to light in the hearings which may very well occur in the U.S. Congress. The point is that the jailed capos stay in jail until they decide to leave, as the Santacruz Londoño case showed.

The key point here is that Samper's Presidency is a 20-year-long, or more, project of those international forces which want to legalize the drug trade. In 1979, Samper . . . came to the United States, invited by the so-called drug lobby, organizations such as the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), and *High Times* magazine. And here, Samper began to promote the idea of drug legalization, just as Colombian ambassador in Mexico Gustavo de Greiff does.

This idea of legalizing the drug trade is a two-decade-long project of very powerful financial circles in the United States and internationally, with strong representation from George Bush's political group and British financial circles represented by the London *Economist*. This drug legalization project is also something that will be exposed in the coming period.

**Caracol:** Speaking about Washington circles, to which do you belong? Who finances you? Who is behind you?

**Small:** Our magazine was founded by Lyndon LaRouche, a controversial American politician who is currently a Presidential candidate. LaRouche won nearly 10% of the vote in the recent Democratic primary in Delaware. About 10% of all state legislators in the United States have written President Clinton to demand the exoneration of LaRouche, who became a political prisoner under the Bush administration. Bush jailed LaRouche as a political prisoner for five years, and LaRouche was paroled after Clinton took office. Ten percent of all U.S.

state legislators not only oppose what happened to LaRouche, but demand his exoneration.

**Caracol:** That is to say, you represent a person in the United States who is really a criminal.

**Small:** No. We represent an American political figure who is a Presidential candidate, who for five years was a political prisoner of the Bush administration, precisely because he fought against drugs and the financial interests behind the drug trade. Perhaps you don't know it or understand it, but in the United States we have had many cases of political prisoners, as happens in many nations in the world.

**Caracol:** So who gives the money for your magazine?

**Small:** Our magazine is financed through subscriptions and other services. For example, *EIR* has an Alert Service. We sell subscriptions, special reports, and so forth; for example, two or three years ago we published a special report that sells for \$250, entitled "The Bush Plan to Legalize Drugs." Hundreds of those special reports were sold, both in English and in Spanish.

**Caracol:** Mr. Small, are you the people who are demanding the removal of our ambassador, Gustavo de Greiff, in Mexico City?

**Small:** Well, through its Mexico City offices, *EIR* circulated a letter criticizing Ambassador De Greiff and indicating his role in Mexico in defending drug legalization. Ambassador De Greiff answered our letter, and we in turn replied to him. The information *EIR* circulated has also been used by Mexican political groups opposed to the drug trade who want Ambassador De Greiff to leave the country. Mexico has enough problems with having a Cali Cartel representative as Colombia's ambassador in Mexico.

**Caracol:** But, Mr. Small, how can you say that Gustavo de Greiff, a man who was Colombia's prosecutor general, is a Cali Cartel representative? What evidence do you have to make such a bold assertion? Everything you've told us seems to be totally lacking in seriousness.

**Small:** I refer you to public information on the fact that in 1980, Gustavo de Greiff was a partner—and he admits this—in an aviation company called Aerolíneas el Dorado with Rodríguez Orejuela. And at that time, the Rodríguez Orejuelas had already been identified internationally, if not yet convicted, as drug traffickers. Either we assume that Ambassador De Greiff is dim-witted, which I don't think is the case, or he was working with these people, fully aware of what they were up to.

**Caracol:** Mr. Dennis Small, editor of *Executive Intelligence Review*. Thank you for taking this call from Cadena Caracol of Colombia. Have a good morning in Washington.

**Small:** Thanks for the chance to speak with you.