

Colombia's Gen. Harold Bedoya Fingering for Assassination

In a July 24 interview broadcast by Colombia's Radio Caracol network, the military commander of Colombia's second-largest narco-terrorist force, the National Liberation Army (ELN), Nicolas Rodríguez Bautista (alias "Gabino"), named Gen. Harold Bedoya (ret.) as the principal obstacle to the implementation of the Pastrana government's promise to demilitarize and hand over to ELN control a significant part of the territory of the Colombian state of Bolivar. "Gabino" lied that Bedoya, the former Commander of the Military Forces and now head of the *Fuerza Colombia* political movement, is the effective leader of the paramilitary forces in the Bolivar region.

In Colombia of today, such a charge is tantamount to an assassination order.

Simultaneously, networks of the governmental Prosecutor General's office in Colombia have targetted Bedoya for possible prosecution and jailing, on fabricated charges. On July 23, the national television news program, NTC Noticias, reported in its evening news broadcast that an anonymous witness for the Prosecutor General's office has now identified General Bedoya as the purported intellectual author of the Nov. 2, 1995 assassination of former Senator Alvaro Gómez Hurtado. Testimony by the same witness, whose identity is a secret, was used a year ago to jail other Colombian military officers.

General Bedoya told NTC that the charge was "totally false."

Prosecutor General Alfonso Gómez Méndez is no neutral party in Colombia's narco-terrorist wars. Gómez Méndez ran for Senate in 1994 on the slate of the Cali Cartel's President Ernesto Samper Pizano (charges were raised at the time that he, like Samper Pizano, also accepted drug money for his campaign), and he has made his career supporting narco-terrorists and prosecuting military leaders.

Clearing the Terrain of Opposition

The back-to-back threats against General Bedoya, the most prominent, still living leader of Colombians' resistance to the takeover of their nation by the drug mafias and their narco-terrorist armies—the ELN, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the United Self-Defense of Colombia (AUC)—must be taken with absolute seriousness.

In recent years, General Bedoya has taken the point in the battle against Wall Street's drive to legalize the drug trade and dismember the Colombian nation. As Military Commander,

General Bedoya publicly opposed President Samper Pizano's efforts to hand over territory to the narco-terrorist FARC, and ultimately was fired because of it. In 1998, when President Andrés Pastrana announced his intention to demilitarize 52,000 square kilometers in the south of the country, and hand the area over to the FARC on the pretext of furthering "peace" negotiations, General Bedoya warned, in an interview with *EIR*, that "what is being surrendered . . . is the infrastructure that controls half the country: the river communication channels and the geographic corridors of mobilization, through which they have access to 500,000 square kilometers. . . . Countries like Brazil, like Peru, like Venezuela, and like Ecuador are going to be exposed to the actions of these terrorist organizations." Should the demilitarization proceed, he warned, "the entire region is lost."

Subsequent events have proven General Bedoya's warning correct.

In 1999 and 2000, General Bedoya travelled to Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, and the United States, to speak about the international strategic threat represented by the policy of capitulation to the drug cartels, a policy adopted by the Pastrana government and promoted by the U.S. State Department, in the hypocritical name of "peace." He urged honest international forces to rally against Wall Street's Opium War in the Americas, and shocked his audiences with the picture of New York Stock Exchange president Richard Grasso embracing "Raúl Reyes," the head of the FARC's finances. He explained that both Wall Street and the International Monetary Fund were deployed to bring about the legalization of drugs, in order to try to prop up the cancerous speculative bubble which has taken over the world financial system.

During a September 1999 visit to Washington, D.C., General Bedoya met with more than a dozen Congressional and Senate offices, briefed diplomats from around the world, and gave numerous press interviews, including a very well-attended briefing at the National Press Club. In February 2000, General Bedoya came back to Washington to hold a joint seminar with U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., whose candidacy he endorsed. The two addressed the crucial issue, "The War on Drugs and the Defense of the Sovereign Nation-State."

Inside Colombia, General Bedoya has organized a national movement which refuses to accept the Balkanization of Colombia into warring criminal states. In recent months, he has given his active support to the mass opposition which



Gen. Harold Bedoya (ret.) is the most prominent, still living leader of Colombians' resistance to the narco-terrorist takeover of their nation.

arose to the Pastrana government's plans to demilitarize an area in the south of the state of Bolivar, and hand it over to the ELN. Control over this area, located near Colombia's main oil fields, rich in gold, and riddled with coca and opium plantations, would give the narco-terrorists control over the strategic Magdalena River Valley, with its waterways and agriculture.

As a prospective candidate in the 2002 Presidential elections, General Bedoya represents a pole of political power potentially capable of rallying the immense majority of the Colombian people who are disillusioned with the traditional political parties and terrorized by the savageness of the narco-terrorists.

Who Did Kill Alvaro Gomez?

The charge that General Bedoya was involved in the assassination of Gómez Hurtado is preposterous. Gómez Hurtado and Bedoya were both leading public opponents of the drug-cartel-run regime of President Ernesto Samper Pizano, whose Interior Minister, Horacio Serpa, is known as a longtime ally of the ELN. Gómez Hurtado was organizing publicly for Samper to resign, or to be ousted, up to Nov. 2, 1995, the day he was killed. Gómez Hurtado and his newspaper, *El Siglo*, supported the Armed Forces and General Bedoya, by name, in their battle against the narco-terrorists, noting that this met the criteria of a "Just War" as outlined by St. Augustine and other Christian leaders. Gómez Hurtado

had also criticized then-U.S. Ambassador Myles Frechette for his outspoken opposition to allowing the Colombian military to fight the narco-terrorist FARC and ELN "with the same vigor with which the drug trade has been fought."

A year after Gómez Hurtado's assassination, Colombian media revealed that a group of prominent civilian and military leaders of Colombia had been preparing a coup d'état against the Cali Cartel's Samper Pizano, and that Gómez Hurtado had reportedly agreed to head up a new government. By one account, the coup was to take place on Nov. 11, 1995, but on Nov. 2, Gómez Hurtado was murdered.

By his own, later admission, it was U.S. Ambassador Frechette who fingered the coup plans to the Samper-Serpa regime. Frechette reported in August 1996, that a year before, in August 1995, a group of Colombian citizens had come to him, to sound out U.S. reaction to a planned civil-military operation to oust the narco-President. Frechette said that the group represented certain "concerns" of the military, and he, Frechette, had told them that the United States would oppose any coup, and he proceeded to warn the Samper government of the plan.

Following Frechette's report, *EIR* asked publicly whether the U.S. State Department did not have a role in "fingering" Gómez Hurtado for assassination by Samper and related cartel interests. It is a question worth pursuing today.

Although *EIR* has no independent confirmation of the claim that Gómez Hurtado was part of the coup plot denounced by Frechette, it is a matter of public record that, in the months before his murder, Gómez Hurtado had become the most prominent national figure to demand that "the corrupt system be overthrown." At the time of his death, Gómez Hurtado was looked to by Colombian patriots as the one man with the political will and stature to stand up to Samper's thuggery. Political elites in Colombia privately confided that, in the aftermath of the Gómez Hurtado assassination, none now dared challenge the Samper government.

EIR wrote in its Sept. 27, 1996 issue: "At the time of Gómez's assassination, *EIR* laid the blame at the doorstep of the Samper regime. In light of Ambassador Frechette's admission that he had alerted the cartel-run government of Colombia to the coup threat, it is appropriate to now ask as well: What responsibility does the U.S. State Department . . . have in the elimination of Samper's leading political opponent?"

Today, given the scurrilous attempts to use the assassination of Gómez Hurtado to prosecute, jail, and possibly murder those who were Gómez Hurtado's political allies in the military, and General Bedoya in particular, *EIR* repeats the question: Was Myles Frechette, today reportedly serving as a Latin American adviser to Republican Party Presidential candidate George W. Bush, involved in fingering Gómez Hurtado for a hit? And, are the Wall Street interests to whom he answers now trying to similarly finger General Bedoya for assassination?