

Andean Report by Andrea Olivieri

Colombian voters betrayed?

The inclusion of two pro-drug enemies of Colombia in the new Gaviria government is a deadly mistake.

Someone's played a terribly cruel joke on the Colombian electorate. After enduring more than a decade of political corruption and narco-terrorism, Colombians were finally offered a choice between candidates who openly advocated legalization of drugs and appeasement of the drug cartels, and the single candidate who pledged to continue the war against drugs and to allow no compromises with the enemy, César Gaviria Trujillo. Successor to the martyred anti-drug figure Luis Carlos Galán, Gaviria was elected President in May and inaugurated Aug. 7.

But President Gaviria's first act in office was to put the two most prominent drug legalization advocates among his former rivals into his cabinet, all in the name of "democratic representation."

One of these, Development Minister Ernesto Samper Pizano, is not unknown to EIR's regular readership. As the front-man of former President and drug cartel protector Alfonso López Michelsen, Samper will undoubtedly serve as Dope, Inc.'s advocate inside the Gaviria administration. An intensely ambitious man with no scruples, Samper's technique has often been to cloak himself in the guise of a populist, and he is already being described as the man who may temper Gaviria's more orthodox monetarist tendencies. One thing is certain: Samper can be expected to do his utmost to sabotage President Gaviria's best impulses, while preparing for the presidency in 1994.

Although Samper is by far the more dangerous of the two, it is Anto-

nio Navarro Wolf whose appointment to the Health Ministry was the worst slap in the face to the Colombian population. Navarro Wolf, a British-trained engineer who helped found the narco-terrorist M-19 in 1970, turned "legit" one year ago when his terrorist hordes succeeded in blackmailing the previous Virgilio Barco government into offering Navarro and friends a political amnesty which invited them into the government.

The M-19 gained notoriety internationally for its cocaine cartel-financed siege of the Colombian Justice Palace in 1985, and its cold-blooded execution of half the Supreme Court. Navarro was emphatic during his presidential campaign earlier this year that he is the same bloody assassin he always was. As he cynically explained to reporters, "The only difference with the past is that before they hunted me and now they protect me."

However, Navarro is not merely an asset of the drug mafia which has paid his way for nearly a decade. He is also committed to imposing "Gnostic magic" as the new Colombian cultural matrix. In a series of interviews in the 1980s, he claimed to model himself on the ideas of the lunatic co-founder of the M-19, Jaime Bateman, who insisted that his mother's Gnostic beliefs made him invisible to his enemies. Navarro described Colombia's abandoned children as prime recruitment targets for his gang, and insisted that "magic" and "passion" were the necessary lures. He also defined the Catholic Church as one of two crucial enemies to be destroyed. The other was the Colombian Supreme Court.

Navarro's appointment to Gaviria's cabinet was fought to the bitter end by the courageous anti-drug daily *El Espectador*, which editorially accused the Barco government of having created, with its pact with the M-19, a "dangerous monster" which now threatens the country's political future. Pointing to the lucrative concessions and political payoffs to the amnestied terrorists by a government "which has assumed the paternity of the M-19," *El Espectador* warned Aug. 2, "As if this were not a peace pact, but the surrender of the government to a subversive movement, we already have the head of this movement walking the halls of power, indicating what path the constituent assembly should take and the principles that should serve as the basis for the [constitutional] reform. And as if that weren't enough, he is now rumored to become the next health minister."

Navarro's near-appointment as Gaviria's education minister was thwarted when the Colombian Association of Universities issued a press release on Aug. 4 describing Navarro as failing to demonstrate the moral, human, ethical, or cultural fitness for the job of educating Colombia's new generations.

President Gaviria's dangerous concessions to the drug lobby can be traced directly to the pressures of the Bush administration. Washington's consistent sabotage of Colombia's war on drugs, its obsessive allegiance to the "free-market economics" so dear to the cocaine traffickers, and its longstanding covert ties to the drug- and arms-smuggling networks cultivated by former CIA chief George Bush, have left little maneuvering room for a Colombian government so financially tied to the banks' purse strings. Whether Colombia's nationalists can stiffen Gaviria's backbone remains to be seen.