

# Drug cartel threatens Colombian opponents

by Andrea Olivieri

“You cannot afford the luxury” of allowing another of your political opponents to be assassinated “behind your back,” warns Maximiliano Londoño, head of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement in Colombia and an associate of Lyndon LaRouche, in an open letter to Colombia’s narco-dictator Ernesto Samper Pizano. Both Londoño, a contributor to this magazine, and *EIR*’s Bogotá correspondent Javier Almarío, have been the targets of death threats and harassment, designed to silence their criticisms of Samper’s corrupt government and his alliance with the Cali drug cartel.

“In my double position as both journalist and political figure, I have been your adversary, and I understand quite well that our activities disturb you,” writes Londoño. “However, given that you happen to be in the Presidency, for the moment, you cannot afford the luxury of failing to provide minimal protection for the lives, as well as the freedom of expression, of even your fiercest political opponents. . . . One more crime against an opponent of your regime, after the horrible murder of your harshest political rival Dr. Alvaro Gómez, would unleash a new attack against your government, nationally and internationally. It would be a fatal error for a President to allow his rivals to be eliminated ‘behind his back,’ as now seems to be the custom in our country.”

Londoño’s charges have been reproduced by Colombia’s Conservative opposition daily *La Prensa*, and aired in radio interviews. They have also been covered in Mexico, Argentina, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, while political figures from across the Western Hemisphere have written to Samper demanding adequate protection for Londoño, Almarío, and their families.

## Growing desperate

Samper’s growing reliance on intimidation to win himself more time in the Presidency reflects a new level of desperation on the part of the narco-terrorist cabal which currently runs Colombia. This desperation can be directly linked to the Oct. 22 executive order issued by President Bill Clinton for the purpose of hitting the Cali Cartel. One result of this U.S. pressure was the Colombian Council of State’s confirmation of the cartel’s nemesis, Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdívieso, in his post for three more years.

Another is the apparent “falling-out among thieves” between Cali Cartel kingpins Gilberto and Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela. According to the Bogotá daily *La Prensa* of Dec.

4, the two brothers—currently imprisoned in Bogotá’s La Picota prison—had a fist fight over whether Samper could be trusted with their lives and their fortunes. Gilberto argued for sticking with Samper, while Miguel, fearing extradition to the United States by the weakened narco-President, has announced that he is considering turning State’s witness, in exchange for promised “house arrest” by Prosecutor Valdívieso. Samper’s former campaign treasurer Santiago Medina, the man who first fingered Samper as fully complicit in taking drug money for his Presidential bid, has just been granted “house arrest” for his cooperation.

Possibly adding to the pressure on Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela is the fact that a former employee, Cali Cartel accountant Guillermo Pallomari, is currently in the U.S. witness protection program and singing like a bird. Pallomari has not only confirmed Medina’s charges against President Samper, but has identified numerous others, including Attorney General Orlando Vásquez, as on the cartel payroll as well. Pallomari has just accused Miguel Rodríguez of having ordered the execution of Pallomari’s wife in early August, which Pallomari says was the ultimate reason for his “defection” from the cartel. If murder charges are pressed against Miguel Rodríguez, he could face as many as 40 years or more in jail, and any deals he has with Samper could go up in smoke.

Samper’s hopes are currently centered on the so-called Accusations Committee of the Colombian House of Representatives, which was asked by Samper himself to open up an investigation into the charges against him. The only problem is that the majority of members of the committee are from the Samper bloc of the ruling Liberal Party, and many of them—including committee chairman Heyne Mogollón—are themselves currently under investigation for corruption! No one is expecting a recommendation for Samper’s impeachment trial from this committee, especially after the head of military intelligence, Gen. Luis Urbina, succeeded in taping a phone conversation by Mogollón, in which he admitted to having been “influenced” in Samper’s favor. Urbina was promptly sacked by Samper for the “illegal interception” of a congressman’s telephone.

In fact, Samper is so confident of being cleared, that his defense lawyer Antonio Cancino gave interviews to the press on Dec. 3 on how the Accusations Committee will “necessarily and unequivocally recognize the President’s innocence” when it releases its findings later in the week. Cancino based his forecast on the authority of none other than Attorney General Orlando Vásquez, who had just offered his opinion that “there is no merit to begin a formal investigation” of Samper. The Attorney General is also under investigation for corruption by the drug mob!

Mogollón himself told interviewers Dec. 5 that his committee would probably “shelve” its investigation of the President, but acknowledged that it could be reopened at any time during Samper’s Presidency, which runs through 1998.