
EIR Memorandum

Why Colombia must be 'decertified' by the Clinton administration

I. Introduction: Colombia's Samper government is in bed with the Cali Cartel

The United States government is currently reviewing Colombia's anti-drug performance over the past year, to determine whether or not to certify it for continued financial and other assistance for the next 12 months. There are three congressionally mandated criteria for U.S. certification of a nation as "cooperating fully" in the war on drugs:

1) compliance with the 1988 U.N. Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which urges action against "illicit cultivation, production, distribution, sale, transport, and financing of drugs, money laundering, asset seizure, extradition, mutual legal assistance, law enforcement and transit cooperation, precursor chemical control, and demand reduction";

2) compliance with bilateral narcotics agreements with the United States, and with multilateral agreements; and

3) taking "legal and law enforcement measures to prevent and punish public corruption—especially by senior government officials—that facilitates the production, processing or shipment of narcotics and psychotropic drugs and other controlled substances, or that discourages the investigation or prosecution of such acts."

The administration of Ernesto Samper Pizano resoundingly fails in all three criteria. As we document below:

a) Samper was illegally "elected" President of Colombia in June 1994, with massive infusions of drug money into his campaign;

b) in his year and a half in office, he has done everything possible to maintain his pact with the Cali Cartel, including letting jailed drug-runners virtually walk out of jail unobstructed; and

c) politically, he has established a feared "narco-dictatorship" in the country, under which serious opponents of his pro-drug policies are assassinated (such as Sen. Alvaro Gómez Hurtado), assaulted, or threatened with impunity (such as the case of *EIR*'s Bogotá correspondents).

The international drug cartels are waging what is tanta-

mount to war against the United States and other countries, and President Samper, through his ongoing complicity with them, is permitting harm to be done to the United States and other nations. This is not to say that the government of the United States should declare war on Colombia: The nation and people of Colombia are friends of the United States, and are themselves victims of the drug cartels; the United States should by no means engage in British-style gunboat diplomacy.

It does mean, however, that sharp political and economic action must be taken by the government of the United States, including the decertification of the current Samper administration. To fail to do so, would effectively constitute connivance and collaboration with the international drug cartels; it would be aiding and abetting such forces in their intent to destroy the United States.

Action such as decertification, not words, is the only language that Samper and the Cali Cartel understand.

II. The Samper record as President

A. Samper's campaign was funded by drug money

On June 19, 1994, Ernesto Samper Pizano was elected President of Colombia on the Liberal Party ticket of President **César Gaviria**, whose economic reforms during his four-year term were described in a September 1994 Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) report as having provided drug kingpins "more opportunities and . . . easier access to launder and safeguard their illicit wealth within Colombia."

Two days *after* Samper's election, the transcripts of several audiocassettes that had been in the possession of the Gaviria government for nearly a week, were leaked to a contending Presidential candidate, and then made public. They contained conversations—later confirmed as authentic—between Cali Cartel bosses **Gilberto** and **Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela**, and "journalist" **Alberto Giraldo** (later confirmed to be a top-ranking figure in that same cartel), discussing the donation of up to \$6 million to the Samper campaign.

On Aug. 7, 1994, Samper was inaugurated, and he named **Horacio Serpa Uribe**, a long-standing Samper intimate who had presided over the 1991 rewrite of the Colombian Constitution by a delegated assembly massively bribed by the drug cartels, as his powerful interior minister. Videotaped proof of that bribery exists, but was squelched by then-President Gaviria. The new Constitution prohibited extradition of Colombian citizens, eliminating a crucial weapon in the war on drugs in Colombia. Samper named **Humberto de la Calle Lombana**, whose "close collaborators" were described by French anti-drug investigators as "indisputably linked to the Cali Cartel," as his vice president. De la Calle's wife was the subject of a two-year investigation for fraud linked to the Cali Cartel.

One week after Samper's inauguration, outgoing Prosecutor General **Gustavo de Greiff** ruled that there was no evidence to warrant an investigation of President Samper in connection with the "narco-cassette" revelations. De Greiff's daughter **Monica de Greiff** had been a treasurer for the Samper Presidential campaign in its early days, and was herself later discovered to have ties with the Cali Cartel. Gustavo de Greiff, like Samper, an ardent advocate of legalized drugs, was named Colombian ambassador to Mexico. In August 1995, it emerged that de Greiff had been a business partner with the Cali Cartel's Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela in El Dorado Airlines, in 1980, when Rodríguez was already identified as a drug trafficker. The former Prosecutor General is also being sought for questioning by the United States for his possible role in obstruction of justice, in a case involving a Cali Cartel hit man.

In September 1994, **Joseph Toft**, the retiring head of the U.S. DEA office in Bogotá, publicly dubbed Samper's government "a narco-democracy," insisting that the DEA possessed a great deal of evidence concerning the millions of dollars contributed by the cartel to Samper's Presidential campaign.

In early 1995, Samper pledged to the U.S. government that he would dismantle the Cali Cartel and eradicate existing drug crops within two years; U.S. certification was granted under a "national interest waiver" on March 1, 1995. No serious actions were taken, until the U.S.-backed Prosecutor General **Alfonso Valdivieso** initiated *Process 8000* in late April, an independent probe into the narco-corruption of numerous congressmen and public officials, including Samper's Attorney General and Comptroller General. On June 5, the U.S. Justice Department unsealed a 161-page indictment against the entire leadership of the Cali Cartel, including several U.S. "citizens above suspicion." Four days later, agents of the U.S. DEA and CIA aided Colombian special police units in capturing cartel boss Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela; other arrests soon followed. Based on evidence garnered from those raids, one month later, Prosecutor Valdivieso ordered the arrest of Samper's campaign treasurer, **Santiago Medina**, for having taken campaign contributions

from Cali Cartel front-companies.

Medina testified that he had solicited and accepted drug money for Samper's campaign, on direct orders from the candidate himself, and from Samper's campaign manager **Fernando Botero**, whom Samper subsequently named defense minister. Botero resigned his post and later was arrested and jailed along with Medina. On July 27, Samper preemptively called on the "Accusations Committee" of the Colombian House of Representatives to conduct an investigation of his electoral campaign.

That four-and-a-half-month investigation was overseen by Committee Chairman **Heyne Mogollón**. Like the majority of the commission's members, Mogollón was a Samper supporter in the ruling Liberal Party; along with several Liberal Party members, Mogollón was himself being investigated for taking drug-tainted funds for his own electoral campaign. On Dec. 14, fourteen of the 15 members of Mogollón's "Accusations Committee" accepted the recommendation of the Attorney General's office—itsself under investigation by the Prosecutor General's office—and shelved their investigation of Samper for "lack of evidence."

Among the evidence the committee refused to consider, was mounds of testimony and hard documentation, including photographs, dossiers, and computer disks, provided to U.S. authorities by **Guillermo Pallomari**, a Cali Cartel treasurer and paymaster who surrendered to authorities and is today a DEA-protected witness in the United States. That evidence had been shared with several special prosecutors sent from Colombia to interrogate Pallomari. Also ignored by the committee was Medina's testimony, described as "tainted" by Mogollón, despite the Prosecutor General's insistence that Medina's admissions had been confirmed both by Pallomari's testimony and by outside sources.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Narcotics Affairs **Robert Gelbard** dubbed the committee's investigation "unserious."

B. Samper's deal with the Cali Cartel is still intact

Notwithstanding President Samper's public pledge to destroy the Cali Cartel, his administration has done virtually nothing to inhibit its illicit activities, despite the imprisonment of many of its top bosses:

- There have been no attempts to confiscate the assets of the imprisoned cartel bosses, which include vast business, real estate, and stock market holdings.
- There have been repeated attempts to pass legislation in the Colombian Congress that would weaken the legal cases against the Cali Cartel druglords, such as the recent Senate effort to decriminalize "illicit enrichment." Only timely U.S. pressure forestalled approval of that legislation.
- No trial proceedings have yet been initiated against any of the imprisoned cartel bosses.
- Media reports are that the cartel prisoners regularly

dined on lobster and champagne, had unrestricted visits from family, henchmen, political supporters, and others, and that they are actively running their drug affairs from jail.

- Prison security has been such that the prisoners could walk out of their jails any time they chose—which is exactly what José Santacruz Londoño did on Jan. 11, 1996.

- The Samper government struck a deal with the FARC narco-terrorists to effectively legalize coca crops in the country's southern provinces, after the FARC organized so-called "peasant" and "Indian" marches to protest fumigation of their drug crops. The deal involved offering exemption from eradication for all crops of three hectares or less, described by the media at the time as de facto "legalization."

- The Samper administration has publicly stated its commitment to dismantling the highly effective "faceless judges" system that protects judges' and prosecutors' identities so that they cannot be bribed or intimidated by drug defendants.

- The Samper administration remains adamantly opposed to restoring extradition.

- As President, Samper has maintained a constant assault against the Colombian Armed Forces, one of the few remaining bulwarks against the powerful drug cartels. Samper has purged its most effective counterinsurgent officers, especially those who have been critical of his appeasement policies toward the country's narco-guerrilla forces, and has personally sought to eliminate the key tenets of "due obedience" and military legal jurisdiction that preserve military authority and discipline.

- Leading M-19 "former" terrorists have been named by Samper to diplomatic posts throughout Europe, and to such lucrative positions as director of Samper's flagship "Solidarity" welfare program. In 1985, the M-19 earned international notoriety for its seizure of the Colombian Justice Palace, the slaughter of half the Supreme Court magistrates, and the gutting of the nation's legal records. The M-19's action was financed by the drug cartels, which feared an imminent Supreme Court decision in favor of extradition.

C. Samper's feared narco-dictatorship

Despite Samper's frequent lip-service to "democracy" and "defense of human rights," he has established a virtual narco-dictatorship, under which anti-drug forces have been variously threatened, intimidated, and even assassinated.

- On Nov. 2, 1995, Samper's leading political opponent, **Alvaro Gómez Hurtado**, was assassinated as he was leaving a college lecture hall. A former senator, former ambassador to the United States, and three-time Presidential candidate, Gómez, along with his brother Enrique, had been in the forefront of a political movement demanding Samper's resignation and a full-scale corruption investigation into his government. Gómez's nephew, **Daniel Mazuera Gómez**, immediately resigned his post as Samper's development minister. Over 100,000 supporters at Gómez's funeral chanted, "Samper, Assassin!" and "Samper, Resign!"

- *EIR* correspondent in Bogotá **Javier Almarío**, and frequent *EIR* contributor **Maximiliano Londoño**, along with their families, have been the targets of an intense campaign of telephone and mail harassment and death threats throughout the period of Samper's Presidency. Despite repeated requests for an official investigation of the threats, and for security protection, the response from law enforcement authorities and Samper's own office has been unserious, at best. No security has been provided, and the death threats continue. *EIR* has for decades published in-depth exposés of the political and financial corruption behind the international drug trade, and as early as 1976 had identified Ernesto Samper Pizano as a Colombian agent of the drug legalization lobby and, later, of the drug cartels themselves.

- A mid-November article in the magazine *Cambio 16* reported the complaints of the 60-person foreign press corps in Colombia, who charged that their telephones were tapped and that Samper had created a task force to harass foreign journalists and smear them as "DEA" when their coverage was too critical of the Samper regime.

- Immediately following the Dec. 14, 1995 announcement of the congressional "Accusations Committee" that there was insufficient evidence to investigate the President, Samper went on national radio and television and threatened, "Those who, following this ruling, persist in compromising my honor and in discrediting the government, [should know] that I will not hesitate to use all the legal means at my disposal to stop them from doing any more harm."

Among others, Samper was targeting Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso, whose unrelenting anti-corruption probes threaten to unearth what the "Accusations Committee" hoped to bury. Just a few weeks earlier, Samper's personal lawyer **Antonio Cancino** had responded to the Council of State's 12-10 vote ratifying Prosecutor Valdivieso's four-year term in office by threatening, mafia-style, "After Samper is exonerated . . . what will follow is a political trial . . . to identify those responsible for handing our justice system over to the United States"—a scarcely veiled reference to Valdivieso. Council magistrates who had voted in Valdivieso's favor reported receiving death threats.

- In early October 1995, a "former" M-19 narco-terrorist-turned-congressman, **Carlos Alonso Lucio**, played before the Colombian House of Representatives secretly-taped telephone conversations from the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, supposedly proving "U.S. interference in Colombian internal affairs." Lucio never explained how he got the tapes, but they are believed to have been "leaked" to him by the Colombian political police, DAS, on Samper's authorization. In fact, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Myles Frechette told the Jan. 1, 1996 *Journal of Commerce*, "It is our belief that those conversations were intercepted by the Colombian government. We aren't happy about it." He added that he now only makes official declarations over the telephone, on the assumption that all embassy phone lines are bugged.

III. Samper's two decades of service to 'Dope, Inc.'

1977: Samper is appointed president of the National Association of Financial Institutes (ANIF), the lobbying machine of the Grancolombiano financial group, headed by banker **Jaime Michelsen Uribe**, who is first cousin to former Colombian President (1974-78) and Samper's mentor **Alfonso López Michelsen**. ANIF, under Samper's Presidency, sponsors international tours, high-profile symposia, research projects, and publications advocating drug legalization. In a July 1980 press release, Samper himself describes ANIF as "the Latin American coordinator of the international alliance to amend marijuana laws." Samper is also a member of the executive council of the International Cannabis Alliance for Reform (ICAR), which is working through the United Nations for marijuana legalization globally.

During López Michelsen's Presidency, numerous economic and banking reforms facilitate the growth of the burgeoning narcotics trade. Grancolombiano becomes the country's number-one financial group, and is known as "The Octopus," because its financial tentacles spread throughout the Colombian economy. By December 1983, however, the Grancolombiano group is placed under investigation for illegal banking practices. Jaime Michelsen Uribe flees the country, and today remains a fugitive from justice.

1980: Samper is named director of the Liberal Party's new think-tank, the Institute of Liberal Studies, by Alfonso López Michelsen, which serves as a campaign launching pad for López's Presidential aspirations.

1982: Samper is made campaign manager of López Michelsen's Presidential campaign and, it is later revealed, accepts substantial campaign contributions from the bosses of the Medellín cocaine cartel in exchange for López's pledge to legalize drugs if reelected. López's bid for the Presidency fails.

1984: Cali Cartel boss **Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela** feels the heat from then-Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla's anti-drug investigations and sells his majority holdings in one of the cartel's premier money-laundries, the Banco de los Trabajadores, to a front-man. Brought onto the bank's board of directors in his place is, among others, Ernesto Samper Pizano. One month later, Lara Bonilla is assassinated by mafia hit men, and López Michelsen secretly meets with the cartel druglords in Panama to try to negotiate an amnesty for them. His efforts are unsuccessful. That same year, Samper is elected Bogotá city councilman, on a platform urging legalization of Colombia's contraband trade. He will use that post as a stepping-stone into the Senate in 1986.

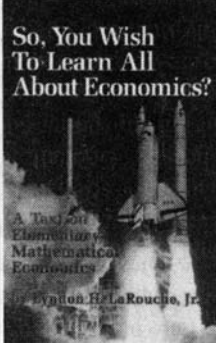
1989: Samper tours Spain, France, Sweden, and Venezuela, arguing for drug legalization and negotiations with the drug cartels as a "viable alternative" to a failed war on drugs.

1990: Samper runs for the Presidency. According to a DEA informant inside the Cali Cartel, Samper accepted at least \$800,000 from the cartel, in exchange for a promise to help ban extradition. The cartel's contributions notwithstanding, Samper's pro-drug history dooms his bid in the anti-drug backlash following the August 1989 mafia slaying of Presidential front-runner **Luis Carlos Galán**.

Samper denounces then-President Virgilio Barco's emergency declaration of war against Galán's killers as "not convenient on the eve of new elections." He publicly opposes U.S. offers of anti-drug aid and extradition of drug traffickers, and instead urges dialogue with the drug mob. He slams a U.S. move to cancel entrance visas of two dozen Colombians suspected of cartel ties, calling it an act of "moral terrorism." He urges a "reformulation" of the ruling Liberal Party's drug policy, and tells the media, "If repression fails, there must be legalization."

Despite losing the Presidential race, Samper is named development minister under President César Gaviria.

1994: Early in 1994, Samper leaves the Gaviria cabinet and accepts the post of Colombian ambassador to Spain, where, according to his campaign treasurer Santiago Medina, he meets with cartel representatives on funding for his Presidential campaign. His Presidential campaign receives multi-million-dollar infusions from the Cali Cartel, and he wins the election by a 1% margin.



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