

have the recruits go home to their villages, and not linger at the bases, situated just outside the towns that have become centers of the rebellion.

The dissolution and disaffection in the Army was at the center of the fight between Berisha and his Chief of General Staff Gen. SHEME Kosovo, who is also the Army chief, whom Berisha fired on the evening of March 3, after the state of emergency was proclaimed. It is a sign that Berisha's troubles with the Army are not over, that he was forced to go outside the normal Army leadership, to find a replacement for General Kosovo. On March 4, Berisha appointed Gen. Adem Copani, who had been Berisha's personal military adviser. Further signs that Berisha has lost control over large parts of the Army, include the curious fact that the announcement that General Copani was replacing General Kosovo, was made not by the Albanian Defense Ministry, but by the Interior Ministry.

Also, when the state of emergency was declared on March 3, Berisha placed his close crony, Bashkim Gaveideda, boss of the Shik, or secret police, in charge of the emergency. Most of the forces sent south to crush the revolts, are special units from the Shik, the Interior Ministry, and armed mercenary units recruited from the north of Albania, through funds disbursed by Shik and the Interior Ministry.

This makes it clear why the regime hopes that most of the Army in the south disperses. What happens when the military does not go home, but instead stays and joins the rebellion, can be seen in the southern coastal town of Saranda. By the afternoon of March 4, six patrol boats from the Saranda naval base, were functioning as a technically competent manned unit on the side of the rebels. Similarly, on March 4, two Albanian MiG-15 pilots, ordered to strafe a convoy of civilian cars in the south, instead flew their planes to Italy and asked for political asylum.

The most critical days of the crisis are approaching. The danger of a Balkan war grows through two routes: The first, massacres against the Greek minority, and/or an outrage against the Albanian population of Kosova launched by Serbia's British-controlled fascist Milosevic. The second route, already advanced, is the process of fragmentation in Albania. This process has gone beyond the "north-south" divide. There is no coherent, or centrally coordinated rebellion in the south, but rather, numerous simultaneous, local rebellions, each with its own command, and each operating more or less independent of the others. Under conditions of such fragmentation, each local entity will seek out a special relationship with neighbors of Albania, which would redraw the Balkan map, threatening in the near future, a new Balkan war.

The Albanian case now proves the warnings of Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR* over the years, that the continuation of IMF policies and the existence of sovereign nations are not compatible, that IMF policies will lead to the literal destruction of nations. Today, the horror is wrecking Albania. Unless the IMF is stopped, tomorrow it will be all the Balkans, and beyond.

Clinton defies British on U.S.-Mexico clash

by Valerie Rush

President Clinton withstood intense pressure from British assets and their dupes inside the U.S. Congress and media networks, and resolved Feb. 28 to certify Mexico as a good-faith ally in the war on drugs. At the same time, he informed Colombian President Ernesto Samper Pizano for the second year in a row that his country will be denied such certification as long as the narcotics cartels continue to pull the strings of the Colombian Presidency.

Close collaboration between the U.S. and Mexican governments against the drug cartels and their political protectors, would not only put the brakes on the murderous narcotics trade, but would help expose the rot of a financial system addicted to the multibillion-dollar profits of that trade. That is just what the opium-tainted City of London, and the likes of Sir George Bush and Carlos Salinas de Gortari, want to prevent.

In the weeks leading into Clinton's Feb. 28 decision, the drumbeat for decertifying Mexico began among Bush Republicans, fed by revelations in the *New York Times* and elsewhere of widespread "narco-corruption" within Mexican political circles. Some even began to scream for shutting the U.S.-Mexican border, to "punish Mexico" for its supposed lack of cooperation. Stampeded by the media barrage, Democrats, led by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), joined Republicans in demanding that Clinton de-certify Mexico. The announcement on Feb. 18 that Mexico's newly appointed drug czar Gen. Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo had been arrested on charges of running protection for the head of the Juárez drug cartel, was presented by U.S. certification opponents, not as confirmation that the Zedillo government was prepared to act, but as proof of government corruption.

That such corruption exists is not news, either to the U.S. or the Mexican governments. In fact, narco-corruption was fostered throughout the political and financial systems of Mexico, under the *direct joint collaboration* of the previous Salinas and Bush Presidencies. What is news is that the current administration in Mexico is now moving to root out that corruption, and that the Clinton administration is undoing some of the damage done by Bush's pro-drug policies. In the Feb. 28 press conference on certification, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright described the Mexican government's arrest of Gutiérrez Rebollo as "an act of political courage of the highest order." It is precisely that political courage which convinced President Clinton to certify Mexico.

The ramifications of an effective anti-corruption drive in Mexico were drawn by *El Financiero* columnist Jorge Fernández Menéndez, who wrote Feb. 25 that the corrupt “associations” now being unveiled between Mexican state security agencies and the drug cartels, date back to the early 1980s, when George Bush, former CIA director and vice president in charge of Reagan’s “war on drugs,” ran his Contra-cocaine pipeline, from Colombia, through Central America and Mexico, onto U.S. streets. Fernández Menéndez pointed out that the Mexican cartels were so heavily involved in the Contra-drug resupply operations set up by Bush that the Mexican druglords even lent their ranches for training the Contras. “Evidently, an operation of this sort . . . could not have been carried out without the backing of very powerful groups,” he stated. If one wants an explanation for the narco-political scandals erupting in Mexico today, one needs to look for their sponsors back then, he said.

Pressures continue

The pressure on Clinton is by no means lessened, now that his certification decisions have been announced. In the U.S. Senate and House, challenges to the President’s decision to certify Mexico have been submitted, with an eye toward overturning certification within 30 days. In hearings before the House National Security and International Affairs subcommittee just prior to the certification deadline, committee chairman Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) repeatedly denounced Mexico for a laundry list of anti-drug “failures,” and threatened the Clinton administration that “a double standard that undermines the role of certification in our international drug strategy could be questioned by some. . . . I fully expect that if Mexico is certified and if Colombia is decertified, a close examination of this decision by Congress certainly will follow.”

By deliberately blurring the distinction between the cartel-owned Samper government in Colombia, and the Zedillo administration in Mexico, the anti-Mexico lobby hopes to blow the whole certification process up into an embarrassment for the Clinton administration. Not surprisingly, this is precisely what City of London mouthpieces have been promoting all along.

Exemplary is the London financial establishment’s *Economist* magazine, an advocate of drug legalization which has been as fulsome in its praise for Samper’s narco-dictatorship in Colombia as it has been in its denunciations of Mexican “narco-corruption.” In its Feb. 22 pre-certification issue, for example, the *Economist* waxed indignant that Washington is so tough on Colombia’s Samper Pizano, despite the fact that “Colombia has hit its mobsters hard. . . . What more do they want? Ernesto Samper’s head on a charger?” The magazine suggested that things are so dirty in Mexico that U.S. troops could some day end up marching into Mexico City to “clean up.” Despite that, protests the *Economist*, the Clinton administration still insists on “bashing Colombia, while lauding Mexico.”

Similarly, the British-dominated UN has come to Colombia’s defense, with its International Narcotics Control Board issuing an annual report which, according to one journalist, gives “rave reviews” to Samper’s so-called “anti-drug initiatives,” just as the INCB did last year.

The U.S. government has a different view of Samper’s efforts. In the press conference with Albright, Assistant Secretary of State for Narcotics Affairs Robert Gelbard described the results of a year of “narco-dominance” in Colombia: drug seizures down; drug cultivation vastly expanded; repeated sabotage of anti-corruption investigations through threats and bribery; imprisoned drug lords given light sentences, and allowed to conduct their trafficking business from prison, etc. Gelbard singled out Samper and Interior Minister Horacio Serpa Uribe for the most serious charge: aiding and abetting the drug cartels. Even as Colombian law enforcement was pressing ahead with prosecutions of the Cali Cartel mafia, he said, those two were “attempting to negotiate a deal with those same criminals.” Gelbard added, “The denial of certification was taken in support of the law-abiding citizens in Colombia, so that long-festering corruption problems will be adequately addressed.”

Although anticipated economic and trade sanctions have not yet been imposed on Colombia, the Clinton administration is reserving the right to do so should the corruption problems in Colombia “continue to fester.”

The decertification of Colombia, aimed explicitly at Samper and his narco-corrupt coterie, has enraged the Colombian President, whose first response has been to suspend his country’s drug eradication program, which had been jointly planned, financed, and executed with the United States. Although Samper’s spokesmen claim the decision is “purely technical,” a means of reevaluating the program “to make it more effective,” there are many who recognize the move for what it is. Independent Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdívieso, for example, said, “We wouldn’t want to imagine that this could be interpreted as a capricious decision, and a hurried response to the decertification, because this could become a serious encouragement to criminal behavior.”

Samper is also tightening his grip on the country as a whole. On Feb. 28, the opposition daily *La Prensa* published its last issue. Its owners, which include former Colombian President Misael Pastrana and his son, former Presidential candidate and Samper rival Andrés Pastrana, charged that the paper had been forced to close by a systematic campaign of financial strangulation. Specifically, they pointed to a prohibition imposed by the Samper government on any official agency advertising in the newspaper, and intimidation of private advertisers.

It was *La Prensa* which first published revelations in 1994 that Samper was elected to the Presidency with \$6 million in contributions from the Cali Cartel, revelations which were later whitewashed by a corrupted Congressional investigating committee. Samper has now taken his revenge.