

Andean Report by Javier Almario

On drugs and free market economics

Carlos Andrés Pérez, Bush's itinerant ambassador for free-market liberalism, endorses Colombian model.

We should raise a statue to the smuggler. The smuggler was a pioneer of trade between Colombia and Venezuela. He was not unaware of the geographic unity between our nations, and rejected artificial barriers imposed by customs," was the shameless paean to the origins of "free-trade economics" offered up by Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, during a May 8 presentation given before the Colombian-Venezuelan Council of Trade and Integration in Bogotá.

What Pérez did not, of course, say is that this same argument lies at the core of the drug traffickers' demands for an amnesty: that they are little more than successful entrepreneurs obeying the laws of the marketplace.

President Pérez's address to the forum was a last-minute decision, just as his visit to Colombia was. The explicit purpose of his visit: to promote George Bush's policies for Ibero-America. Pérez, or CAP as he is known in Ibero-America, arrived in Colombia direct from the United States, where he discussed with both Bush and David Rockefeller the most efficient means of applying Bush's plan to turn all of America into one single free trade zone.

"We shouldn't think simply of Colombian-Venezuelan integration, nor solely of Latin American integration. We should think rather in terms of the integration of all the Americas. I have criticized the United States in the past for its imperialist attitude. But that era is gone. We should now view the United States as our great partner," CAP declared.

The Venezuelan President also took advantage of the occasion to openly endorse Colombia's ongoing National Constituent Assembly, which was convoked by a state of siege decree to reform the Colombian Constitution, but which is now—like the Jacobin movement it freely models itself upon—preparing the "guillotine" for any national institution that stands in the way of its plans for installing a narco-dictatorship.

In an address to the Assembly itself, CAP said: "Gentlemen delegates, I am certain that this experiment of the Constituent Assembly, this revolutionary experiment, will be a model for modernization in Ibero-America and in the world. I am certain that the Assembly will repeat itself in other Latin American countries."

CAP's praise of Colombia's narco-terrorist Assembly occurs, not accidentally, at the same moment that he has offered his presidential services as "mediator" between the Gaviria government and the FARC/ELN terrorists who continue to wreak bloody havoc on both sides of the Colombian-Venezuelan border, while demanding negotiations with Gaviria. CAP's explanation for his offer is that he has played a similar role in El Salvador and Nicaragua, so why not in Colombia?

CAP's unqualified endorsement of the Constituent Assembly, which has just unilaterally declared itself "omnipotent, autonomous, sovereign and absolute," was seen by many Colombians—including inside the National Congress and Supreme Court—as intolerable interference in their

country's internal affairs.

Speaking to a gathering at the International Book Fair in Bogotá May 7, CAP justified the Bush administration's genocidal actions in Iraq, with the argument that the world "has entered a new era, exemplified by the United Nations' intervention to enable Kuwait to recover its sovereignty." In this "new era," said CAP, armies and weapons will be of no importance.

And, to adjust ourselves to this "new era," Pérez said in a press conference held at the Colombian presidential palace, "the concept of sovereignty must undergo major changes, so that supranational rights can acquire full force and validity. If we do not modify the concept of sovereignty and subject it to United Nations' supervision, we will not be able to move from a bipolar to a multipolar world."

Pérez's arrival in Colombia also provided a context for a high-level forum on George Bush's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative. At that forum, organized by the U.S. Embassy, the Javeriana University, and others, U.S. Ambassador Thomas McNamara echoed Pérez's call and demanded that Ibero-America eliminate "thoughtless nationalism."

Sounding for all the world like the archetypal Roman proconsul, McNamara called upon Colombian businessmen to purge themselves of "negative attitudes toward foreign investment" and of their "aversion to risk."

Without Carlos Andrés Pérez's appearance in Colombia as a public relation's man for the Anglo-American empire, Ambassador McNamara's statements would no doubt have triggered a furious public response. Thus, it was no accident that McNamara concluded his May 9 address by eulogizing Carlos Andrés Pérez, whom he described as a "very capable and intelligent man."