

two governments. The President of Brazil expressed his appreciation for the efforts deployed by the government of Venezuela and EDELCA (Caroní Electrification Agency), in the preparation of an offer already presented to their Brazilian counterpart. The leader of Brazil informed his Venezuelan homologue that technical studies in Brazil on electrical interconnection are in their final phase. The two Presidents hope that the project can be concretized as soon as possible.

Both Presidents expressed their satisfaction with the fact that, as one of the results of the strengthening of Venezuelan-Brazilian relations, the supply of Venezuelan oil and derivatives to Brazil has notably increased. In this sense, they expressed optimism for the favorable perspective of cooperation between *Petróleos de Brasil* and *Petróleos Brasileños*, through joint investigations and associations for the development of specific projects in areas of common interest. They stressed in this regard the possibility that Petrobras might participate in the exploitation of crude oil in Venezuela, and PDVSA would invest in Brazil in the area of refining. Toward the promotion of these projects, the Presidents of PDVSA and Petrobras signed a Protocol of Intentions in the presence of the mines and energy ministers of the two countries.

The two leaders welcomed initiatives posed in the area of cooperation in mining and steel production, such as the use of the Orinoco Industrial Park of CVG-SIDOR, to invest in the Brazilian private sector, and the services of an industrial port in the area; the exploitation of Brazilian experience in the design, engineering, and construction of railway transport, as well as in deep-water ports for the handling of bulk minerals and large-capacity shipping. These possibilities for cooperation also include the development of binational projects between the *Corporación Venezolana de Guayana*, CVG, and the *Compañía Vale Do Río Doce*, CVRD, of Brazil, for the exploration and exploitation of minerals in a sustainable way. . . .

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso expressed his satisfaction to President Rafael Caldera for the offer of cooperation on Venezuela's part for the formation of youth orchestras in Brazil, based on the successful Venezuelan experience in this field. . . .

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso told President Rafael Caldera of his government's decision to join the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), an initiative that represents one more element in the strengthening of integration links among the countries of the region. . . .

In evaluating the activities that have been undertaken in the context of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, the Presidents spoke of the Brazilian proposal to create a Permanent Secretariat headquartered in Brasilia, for the purpose of giving the Treaty an institutional structure more adequate to the needs of the two countries . . . to achieve the harmonic and sustainable development of the Amazon region. . . .

Interview: Maximiliano Londoño Penilla

Colombia must change its legal framework

During a brief visit to the United States, the leader of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) in Colombia was interviewed July 7 by Marianna Wertz.

EIR: I would like your assessment of the situation in Colombia following the arrests of Cali drug cartel leaders, including how you think this has affected the Ernesto Samper Pizano regime, and where you think this will go with respect to cleaning out the drug apparatus in Colombia?

Londoño: The situation is very hopeful for Colombia in the sense that President Samper is "caught between a rock and a hard place." That is to say, the pressures which come both from abroad, coming from the Clinton administration, as well as from the great majority of Colombians who wish to rid ourselves of the scourge of drugs, has created an environment in which the government has intervened to succeed in putting some of the bosses of the Cali Cartel behind bars. This is a victory. The fact that Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela, Santa Cruz Londoño, and others have turned themselves in under the pressure of search and seal operations, has led to the result that they are now under the control of the justice system.

The problem we have now is a juridical problem. The institutional and legal framework, the very penal code itself, does not allow them to have severe punishments. That means that the penal code was actually made by the narcotics traffickers, through their lawyers, when during the previous Gaviria administration, a policy was put through which is now called "the subjugation of justice." It was a deal with the drug lords in which, in order to get them to surrender, the minimum sentence is four years and the maximum is 12 years. In the case of multiple offenders it can increase to a maximum sentence of 24 years. Now, on top of that, a series of options is opened up. If you turn yourself in voluntarily, they lower the sentence by one-sixth or four years. If you cooperate with justice, then they take away one-third of what remains. If you also plead guilty, they lower the sentence by another sixth. If, moreover, you have good behavior and study, then you won't have to serve your whole sentence, but for every two days in jail they take one day away. And so in these conditions, the most that these top crime bosses will serve in jail will be eight years. This is unacceptable from the standpoint of the national interest of Colombia and from the international community's standpoint.

This is the dilemma we face now: how to change this

legal framework, because not even the 1991 Constitution works, because the drug lords also intervened into that and eliminated extradition. The great challenge for President Samper is how to change this penal code.

EIR: Your own security and that of your family has been threatened by the terrorists and drug traffickers. Can you tell me what measures have been taken to get the government to protect your right to organize and the right of your party to carry out electoral activity?

Londoño: Well, we have had some threats in the last weeks, at the rate of about one a week, including a book of funeral condolences that was sent me, various telephone calls threatening that they are going to “make ground meat” out of me, or saying, “Tell him to shut up. Or doesn’t he care about his wife and children?” And this came in a context in which various of our associates have been assaulted, there have been burglaries of homes, and a failed attempt to break into our office. We consider this as part of a pattern intended to shut us up. We have asked that the government respond appropriately with instructions to its security agencies and we hope that this will occur. Because it is also beneficial to the country that we be able to freely express the defense of moral values, and the values that Colombia needs. So we hope that President Samper will attend to our petition to ensure the protection that will enable us to carry out our work in freedom.

EIR: The finance minister of Colombia recently made a statement [see box] which seems to reflect the influence of Lyndon LaRouche’s repeated calls for a debt moratorium and a return to a development policy. Do you see this having its impact in Colombia?

Londoño: The state of affairs, as LaRouche has emphasized, is that the financial and monetary system is bankrupt, and this is bankrupting countries, and Colombia is obviously no exception. The opening up of the country to free trade over the last four years has bankrupted all the economic activities of the country. The textile sector has practically disappeared, along with clothing, steel, leather, plastics, wood products. Agriculture is wiped out—we now import food, which is absurd. This is the result of the systematic application of the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, an institution which is itself bankrupt. So in the face of this, the Samper government has found itself having to try to offer something to these sectors that are demanding abundant credit, who want technology, but at the same time the Constitution established a central bank which is the fourth branch of power, or rather, it is a foreign body in the country, and no one controls it. It makes the credit and monetary and exchange policies. Any government that wanted to start to generate the credit to create wealth does not have the legal power to do it.

It in this context that Finance Minister Guillermo Perry

said that the central bank’s sole function cannot be controlling or reducing inflation, because there is also the need to increase employment and favor the growth of the economy. It is important to note that in his Ninth Forecast, Lyndon LaRouche discussed the need to reform this whole system of central banks and to put them into bankruptcy reorganization and to set up a system for supplying long-term credit. LaRouche’s forecast circulated widely in Colombia in ruling circles and in various sectors of the population.

So it is very interesting that the Samper government has faced reality too, and there is now a debate on what other alternatives present themselves for implementation, and LaRouche’s is the only viable one being offered for a nation to move forward. The Samper government has found itself in a situation where it had to wage a war on drugs, which no one imagined it could ever do, because Samper had campaigned for legalization of drugs. No one would have thought that the Samper government would fight the Cali Cartel, and yet this is happening. Likewise, in the economic domain they are facing the need to abandon orthodoxy, i.e., the neoliberal model, and to look for an alternative to allow the economy to grow and develop. In this sense LaRouche’s activity is key, because his programmatic proposals contribute to having different options.

BOGOTA—At a press conference on June 29 at the offices of the economic think-tank Fededesarrollo, Colombian Finance Minister Guillermo Perry charged that the total autonomy granted to the central bank is a violation of the 1991 National Constitution, which obliges the state “to guarantee economic and social rights to all Colombians, such as the right to work. Is it that the Bank, despite being an integral part of the State, is not subject to those constitutional mandates?”

Perry criticized the law which regulates the central bank by establishing as the bank’s sole objective the adoption of “specific inflation goals that must always be less than the previous results achieved.” This, said Perry, means ignoring such important economic factors as recession, jobs, and economic growth. He charged that his predecessor Rudolf Hommes nearly drove Colombia into “a Mexico-style crisis” through a policy of “revaluation, short-term foreign indebtedness, and excessive public expenditures.”

President Samper has announced that he will submit a bill to Congress, to reform the law regulating central bank activity. The Colombian President said, “It is not possible that the only matter for the central bank and government to discuss is reducing inflation, because this is not the only variable in the economy. The country needs to grow, generate jobs, and export.”