

---

## The Perafán Case

---

# Extradition back on the agenda of continental War on Drugs

by Valerie Rush

The May 23 decision by the Venezuelan Supreme Court to extradite multibillionaire Colombian druglord Justo Pastor Perafán to the United States, could have major consequences for the national security of the Western Hemisphere, and beyond. The only Cali Cartel chieftain who had not either surrendered under protected conditions to the Colombian authorities, or been killed, Perafán possesses court-admissible evidence that could put scores of bankers, politicians, even heads of state, behind bars, should he choose to cooperate with U.S. authorities.

Perafán was arrested by Venezuelan National Guardsmen on April 17, in the Venezuelan border state of Táchira, where he had been hiding incognito for over a year. U.S. authorities immediately submitted a petition for his extradition to New York City, where he faces eight counts of drug-trafficking and conspiracy charges. The Cartel's legal machinery simultaneously went into action, seeking to have him returned to Colombia, where he would have faced slap-on-the-wrist "illicit enrichment" charges and a "five-star" prison cell; had that failed, they would have tried to concoct charges against him in Venezuela that would have undermined the U.S. extradition request.

Among the reasons given by the Supreme Court for ruling in favor of the U.S. extradition request were: 1) The United States submitted its petition two and a half hours earlier than Colombia did; 2) the U.S. charge of drug trafficking is also a crime in Venezuela, while Colombia's charge of "illicit enrichment" does not exist in the Venezuelan criminal code; 3) although the 1922 U.S.-Venezuela extradition treaty does not count drug trafficking as a crime, the UN's Vienna Convention against use of illegal drugs—to which Venezuela subscribes—does; 4) the Clinton administration pledged not to sentence Perafán to a term greater than the 30-year maximum contemplated by the Venezuelan penal code.

Most importantly, the Supreme Court ruling, giving precedence to the U.S. request, sent an unmistakable message that Venezuela would not allow itself to be turned into a haven of the drug cartels, as neighboring Colombia has already become.

### Extradition battle

Perafán's extradition to the United States is the first such extradition of an important Colombian drug trafficker in a decade. In 1987, the late Colombian President Virgilio Barco put Medellín Cartel "transport czar" Carlos Lehder Rivas on a plane to the United States, where he was given a life sentence. The "Extraditables" of the Medellín and Cali cartels pledged that no Colombian President would dare to extradite one of them ever again, and to this date, through an ongoing campaign of terror and blackmail, that has been the case.

The battle over extradition dates back to at least 1984, when Colombia's then-Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla fought to establish a "world pact" against drugs, and global extradition procedures against traffickers. He was assassinated by drug cartel hit men on April 30, 1984. In 1985, the cartels hired a commando squad of the M-19 guerrilla group to occupy the Bogotá Justice Palace, burn down its legal archives, and massacre the Supreme Court magistrates it took hostage. The Supreme Court was at the time deliberating on the viability of the U.S.-Colombia extradition treaty, and was expected to validate it.

Over the next several years, the country's most outspoken advocates of a serious War on Drugs were slain, including influential newspaper editor Alfonso Cano, Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos, and front-running Presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán. Colombia's extradition policy under President Barco was unofficially suspended, as a result.

With the nation terrorized into impotence, César Gaviria was brought into the Presidency in 1990, where he struck a deal with the Cali Cartel. In 1990, Gaviria illegally shut down the Colombian Congress and replaced it with a Constituent Assembly of 70 delegates, many of whom were later proven to have been bribed by the drug cartels. That Assembly, co-chaired by M-19 leader Antonio Navarro Wolf, formally banned the extradition of Colombian nationals, a ban that remains in force today.

It is precisely this degeneration of Colombia, from a sovereign nation into a fiefdom of the drug cartels, which has alerted many Venezuelans to the danger that they, too, face.

Venezuela has been targetted by the continent's drug cartels and financiers, and is today considered one of the premier money-laundering centers and transit countries for the drug trade.

## Venezuela takes a stand

This threat to Venezuela was driven home by Francisco Santos Calderón, managing editor of the influential Colombian daily *El Tiempo*, who warned, during a mid-May visit to Caracas, that Venezuela must not allow itself to be turned into an "oasis" for drug traffickers. He insisted that a Supreme Court ruling in favor of Perafán's extradition to Colombia "would have immense repercussions on an international level," and concluded: "For the future interest of Venezuela, Perafán must be extradited to the United States."

In the *Documentation* that follows, we take a closer look at some of the political and business figures, in both Colombia and Venezuela, who stand to lose a great deal, should Perafán decide to talk about what he knows.

---

## Documentation

---

# Who is Pastor Perafán?

## I. The Colombian connection

**César Gaviria Trujillo**, former Colombian President (1990-94) and currently secretary general of the Organization of American States (OAS). According to an April 20 report in the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*, the authorities investigating Perafán in Colombia "determined that Perafán attended the inauguration of President César Gaviria Trujillo." The same newspaper, in its April 21 edition, states that a future confession on Perafán's part would affect "officials of the previous [Gaviria] government, with whom Perafán maintained relations from the time he operated as a prosperous businessman."



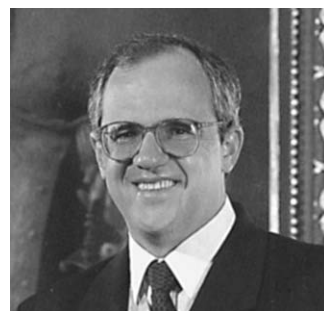
*César Gaviria Trujillo*

The now defunct newspaper *La Prensa*, in its March 31, 1996 edition, stated that "Perafán appears to be very close to nearly all of Liberal society [a reference to ruling Liberal Party, to which both Gaviria and current President Ernesto Samper belong — ed.], since the days of President César Gaviria Trujillo."

Judging from Perafán's guest appearance at Gaviria's in-

auguration, it would appear that the druglord in fact served as the Cali Cartel's liaison to the Colombian Presidency. Within weeks of taking office, Gaviria unveiled a legislative decree, jointly drafted by government and cartel lawyers, promising to end the threat of extradition, and offering substantially reduced prison sentences in exchange for the druglords' surrender to and cooperation with the authorities. At the time, an opposition daily editorialized that the decree represented "the abandonment of a state of law [for a] quietly agreed-upon reign of crime." The next year, Gaviria convoked a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the Colombian Constitution, and to ban extradition.

**Ernesto Samper Pizano** is the current President of Colombia. According to the March 31, 1996 edition of *La Prensa*, Perafán had participated in the fund-raising efforts organized by drug traffickers Gilberto and Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, to assure sufficient funding for Samper's victory in the



*Ernesto Samper Pizano*

1994 Presidential elections. That same newspaper says that Perafán was "known by the leading political insiders of the Samper regime," and that in 1994, "he provided his luxury hotel, Chinauta Resort in Chinauta, Cundinamarca, to Ernesto Samper so that the President could hold a meeting just a few days after the Presidential election."

The March 31 *La Prensa* also says that it is known that Perafán provided generous donations to at least one of the members of the Accusations Committee of the Colombian Chamber of Representatives, which was responsible for investigating corruption charges against President Samper brought by the prosecutor general's office. Despite the evidence against Samper, the commission absolved him of the charges. The individual so identified is Congressman **Roberto Herrera**. The check is in the hands of investigators for the prosecutor general's office.

**Horacio Serpa Uribe**, who just resigned as Samper's interior minister, to run as a Presidential candidate in the 1998 elections. By both military circles and those linked to the FARC and ELN narco-terrorists, Serpa is known as "Commander Serpa," because of his close ties to the ELN. On March 27, 1996, Serpa was subpoenaed to testify before the prosecutor general's office on his relations with Justo Pastor Perafán. Upon leaving, journalists asked him about that relationship. A nervous Serpa replied that he had only met him once. One day later, Serpa issued a statement to the media, denying any such relationship.

However, both in his written testimony and in his statements to the radio, Serpa admitted that in 1992, he had participated, together with Perafán, in a meeting at the Orquidea Real Hotel with a group of individuals from Cauca Depart-

ment (from which Perafán comes), but that the discussion had been on the local situation there. Serpa's written statement says that "days later, I was informed by then-Defense Minister Rafael Pardo Rueda, that one of those who attended said meeting was Mr. Pastor Perafán, whom the authorities had been investigating for possible infractions of the penal code."

On March 31, 1996, *La Prensa* wrote that relations between Perafán and Serpa were not limited to that supposedly casual encounter. "The prosecutors' investigations tend to show that Serpa was the main contact between Samper Pizano and the Cali Cartel, because of his friendship with Perafán and with Victor Patiño Fomeque, alias 'The Chemist'. . . . Secret witnesses told the prosecutor general's office that Perafán, like Patiño Fomeque, visited Serpa in his office at the Government Ministry (today called the Interior Ministry)."

**David Turbay**, currently comptroller general of the Republic, admitted having received a check from Pastor Perafán. Turbay said the check had to do with the sale of a work of art, and he was exonerated by the prosecutor general's office. However, it is probable that Perafán could tell a different story. The prosecutor general's office always suspected that it was actually a contribution to Turbay's failed senatorial bid.

**Juan Manuel Santos**, currently a candidate for the 1998 Presidency, and a vice-president of the influential Washington-based Inter-American Dialogue. David Turbay, in publicly defending himself from claims that he maintained some kind of criminal association with Perafán, stated in a March 1996 radio interview that he knew Perafán, "because everyone in this country knows him; he is an industrialist who accompanied Dr. Juan Manuel Santos on a mission to the Pacific Basin," when Santos was foreign trade minister during the Gaviria Presidency.

Santos partially denied Turbay's assertion, stating that Perafán had not been part of the official government mission. Instead, Santos claimed that when the official delegation arrived, Perafán was already staying at the hotel where the government had made its reservations. If Santos's story is true, then he can minimally be accused of the crime of omission, since the Gaviria government already knew that Perafán was being sought by Interpol.

**Gustavo De Greiff**, former Colombian prosecutor general and currently Samper Pizano's ambassador to Mexico. In the only statements he made to the press following his arrest in Venezuela, Perafán said that officials of the Colombian prosecutor general's office had attempted to blackmail him, and had promised to suspend the investigation against him if he handed over a large sum of money. President Samper, thinking that the matter could be used to smear Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso, demanded that Perafán's charges be pursued immediately. Valdivieso, who has headed up investigations into the corruption of Samper's government, replied that the blackmail attempt had indeed occurred, but that it was during De Greiff's reign as prosecutor general. The affair end up smearing Samper's already rather tainted ambassador to Mexico, instead.

**Guillermo Alberto González Mosquera**, Samper's former defense minister, who had to resign on March 16, 1997, because of the scandal surrounding his acceptance of a check from Perafán, as a contribution to his earlier congressional campaign.

**Alberto Iragorri Hormaza**, congressman from the department of Cauca, is another of those implicated. The prosecutor general's office has in its possession a check sent by Perafán to finance Iragorri's campaign.

**Francisco José Jattín**, in 1994 under the Gaviria Presidency, awarded Perafán a medal during a congressional ceremony. Jattín was president of the Colombian Senate at the time, and was carrying out Resolution 174 of April 7, 1994, which ordered him to give the drug trafficker the award. Jattín was reelected senator that same year.

It is said that at least 20 more congressmen received money from Perafán for their 1994 senatorial campaigns. There is in the possession of the prosecutor general's office, and possibly in the hands of the National Police as well, a lengthy list of individuals from Colombia's political elite who have had a relationship with Perafán. There are lists of cancelled checks; lists of guests who visited Perafán's luxury hotel, the Chinauta Resort, with all expenses paid; and lists of the various front men used by Perafán.

Perafán has business holdings in Russia, the Bahamas, and South Africa.

## II. The Venezuelan connection

To more precisely understand Perafán's relations in Venezuela, it is necessary to look at who his protectors are, who his front men are, who hired his Venezuelan lawyer Hugo Moreno, who Moreno's contacts are, and, above all, who laundered his money. There are strong indications the money was laundered through a bank linked to Banco Latino, which in turn leads the investigator to the Cisneros Group and to former President **Carlos Andrés Pérez** (known as "CAP").



*Carlos Andrés Pérez*

### A) Political links

During the period in which Perafán was detained at the Venezuelan Office of Military Intelligence, Lt. Col. Hugo Moreno (ret.), Perafán's Venezuelan lawyer, went before the Venezuelan Supreme Court to seek his client's extradition to Colombia. At the same time, as charged by Interior Minister José Guillermo Andueza, independent congressman **Walter Márquez**, from Táchira, did everything possible to block the Colombian's extradition to the United States, by trying to get Perafán held for trial in Venezuela on minor charges involving

false documents. Márquez is closely linked to former Venezuelan President Andrés Pérez. Hugo Moreno is a neighbor of Márquez in San Cristóbal, the capital of Táchira state; well-informed Venezuelan sources have told *EIR* that Moreno is not only Márquez's friend, but also a member of Fuerza Tachirense, Márquez's regional political party.

Walter Márquez is a founder in Venezuela of the Universal Christian Gnostic Church, together with a Colombian criminal by the name of Julio César Medina Vizcaíno. According to a thank-you letter sent by CAP's campaign committee, this sect participated in CAP's 1988 Presidential campaign. Further, CAP helped Márquez in past elections for governor of Táchira. Sources indicate that Márquez will be CAP's candidate for governor of Táchira in the 1998 elections, especially now that CAP no longer belongs to the Democratic Action party, from which he was expelled. CAP is a native of Rubio, in the state of Táchira, a town just a few minutes from Capacho where Perafán lived.

The Gnostic Church has well-documented connections with Colombia's narco-terrorists, specifically with the M-19. According to a late 1983 interview with then M-19 leader Jaime Bateman, he and his forces claimed to be "invisible" to the military, because the Gnostics "do a chain every Saturday to protect us, the organization. Their executive committee, or whatever it's called, sends us congratulations all the time." Bateman added that his mother was a Gnostic. "Look," he

said, "basically, I believe in my mother. . . . The old chain gives me a lot of cool, a lot of security. . . . Mystic or not, I'm persuaded that it works."

The Gnostic Church was also involved in the 1984 kidnapping and brainwashing of Patricia Londoño Paredes, at the time the editor of the Colombian magazine *War on Drugs*. Her husband, Maximiliano Londoño, was then head of the Colombian Anti-Drug Coalition, which had worked with Justice Minister Lara Bonilla in advancing the War on Drugs, until the minister's assassination in April 1984. The Londoños had been active proponents of reviving extradition as a potent tool in the war on drugs, and had devoted their energies especially to unveiling the political and financial supporters behind the drug cartels. Every individual connected to the Londoño kidnapping turned out to be a member of the Gnostic Church.

Alejandro Peña, an associate of Lyndon LaRouche who is also head of the Venezuelan Labor Party, has led a high-profile media campaign against the Gnostic Church for its criminal connections, and has demanded that the Rafael Caldera government investigate the role of Congressman Walter Márquez in attempting to sabotage the extradition of Perafán to the United States. Several years ago, Márquez achieved the dismantling of the José Antonio Paez Special Command (CEJAP), a special counterinsurgent unit of the Armed Forces and Police. Márquez claimed that the CEJAP assassinated several fishermen on the Colombian-Venezuelan border (El Amparo), although there exist clear indications that they were terrorists—not fishermen. Since then, the operations of the narco-terrorists on the border have notably increased.

Further, it is reported that Márquez participated in two meetings with drug traffickers in Barranquilla and Cartagena, Colombia. It is also said that Perafán financed Márquez's campaign for governor of Táchira.

Ana Celita de Márquez, Walter Márquez's wife, is the lawyer who registered the Moon sect with the Justice Ministry's Office of Justice and Religion. The Moonies, through their newspaper the *Washington Times*, have promoted the legalization of heroin.

#### B) Financial links

In 1993, the National Guard carried out Operation Sierra Carlos, which identified the illegal laundering of some \$2 billion along the Colombian-Venezuelan border, although Venezuelan intelligence sources insist the figure was actually \$20 billion. Every bank along the border—Banco de Maracaibo, Banco de Occidente, Sofitasa, and Banco Barinas—was at the time the property of Banco Latino, which was then owned by Gustavo and Ricardo Cisneros, along with several other businessmen closely linked to Carlos Andrés Pérez. On the board of Banco Latino was also one of Pérez's brothers. Reliable sources have told *EIR* that the drug dollars identified by Operation Sierra Carlos belonged to Perafán, and were laundered through Banco Latino's networks.

For previews and  
information on  
LaRouche publications:

## Visit EIR's Internet Website!

- Highlights of current issues of *EIR*
- Pieces by Lyndon LaRouche
- Every week: transcript of the latest **EIR Talks** radio interview with LaRouche.

<http://www.larouchepub.com>

e-mail: [larouche@larouchepub.com](mailto:larouche@larouchepub.com)