

Colombia Lead Candidate Nearly Killed: Cui Bono?

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Days before the narco-terrorists of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) tried, on April 15, to assassinate Presidential contender Alvaro Uribe Vélez in the city of Barranquilla, *Newsweek*, in its March 25 edition, published a highly hostile report on the Colombian candidate, in which it stated that practically the only way to prevent his election to the Presidency, was to kill him. In the very first paragraph of the *Newsweek* article, author Joseph Contreras was categorical in demanding Uribe's head: "Now, Uribe commands an approval rating of 59%, and it seems nothing short of an assassin's bullet can stop the maverick politician from winning the May election." *Newsweek*, like a number of the mass communication media in our country, also presented Uribe as a sponsor of the so-called self-defense or paramilitary groups, and insinuated that he and his father were tied to the narcos.

Why would *Newsweek*, which is part of the media empire of the Wall Street financial house Lazard Frères which also owns the *Washington Post*, want to eliminate Alvaro Uribe? An image of the grotesque embrace between New York Stock Exchange President Richard Grasso, and FARC chieftain "Raúl Reyes," which took place on June 26, 1999 in the jungles of Caguán, comes immediately to mind.

The attack against Uribe was designed to soften him up, ultimately to convince him that he should renew the failed process of negotiations with the FARC. Otherwise, so the lesson goes, he will not only become a target for attacks, but widespread terrorist actions will end up "convincing" the population itself that it's necessary, once again, to sit down and "dialogue" with the narco-terrorists. In fact, Uribe has been changing the tenor of his speeches, from the hard-line position of confronting the narco-terrorist offensive, to the *supposedly* hard-line position of forcing the guerrillas to "negotiate seriously"—that is, to the very policy that has already miserably failed.

At the same time there are, within the Uribe campaign, individuals like Rudolf Hommes, Jorge Humberto Botero, and Santiago and Armando Montenegro, globalists and die-hard advocates of "economic opening," who are demanding that Colombia intensify its International Monetary Fund economic program, the same one which has already left half the population without work, and which has allocated nearly half of the national budget to servicing the debt.

President Andrés Pastrana's so-called "peace process" was made possible by the strategic alliance forged between Wall Street and the FARC. A genuine hard-line policy against narco-terrorism, such as that represented by the Presidential candidacy of Gen. Harold Bedoya Pizarro (ret.)—or, as was sometimes suggested by Alvaro Uribe early in his campaign—represents a threat to the powerful international financial interests which encouraged the political and territorial concessions extended to the FARC by Pastrana, on the pretext of seeking peace for Colombia.

Peter Romero, from his post as Clinton's Undersecretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, was one of the main authors of the so-called "Pastrana peace process," and when it became clear that that policy had failed, the same Romero tried to recycle it through implementation of the "Plan Colombia." In the words of Madeleine Albright, then Secretary of State, the policy was one of "the carrot and the stick"—that is, to militarily harass the FARC, only to force them to "seriously negotiate." FARC leader "Tirofijo" ("Sureshot") and his military commander "Mono Jojoy" still laugh themselves silly over Washington's strategic foolishness.

However, they now want to recycle the negotiations folly yet again, and Wall Street and the City of London hope that the next Colombian government, whatever it may be, will implement it, albeit "corrected and expanded."

Will an eventual Uribe government be able to swallow all this? Perhaps the Wall Street firm Violy, Byorum & Partners, which organized the 1999 Cartagena meeting of the Millennium Group—prominent international businessmen who backed Pastrana's negotiation process with the FARC—should be asked. Among the Millennium Group was the same Richard Grasso of the infamous "Grasso Abrazo," and his friend Jim Kimsey, head of America Online, who weeks later would visit the Caguán to meet "Tirofijo" himself.

It turns out that one of the Senior Managing Directors of Violy's firm is the same Peter Romero who, from inside the State Department, had sponsored negotiations with the FARC. Romero is the official who had sent Philip Chicola, then head of the office of Andean Affairs for the State Department, to meet in secret—although later it became public—with the FARC's "Raúl Reyes," on Dec. 14-15, 1998, in Costa Rica.

Another of Violy's Senior Managing Directors is none other than Rudolf Hommes, one of Uribe's leading advisers!

Violy McCausland, President of Violy, Byorum & Partners, worked for nearly two decades in the Wall Street firm J.P. Morgan, and afterwards with James D. Wolfensohn, who went on to become World Bank President. McCausland boasts that during her career, she has facilitated mergers, acquisitions, privatizations, restructurings, and financing projects surpassing \$30 billion. When one talks about corruption on a macroeconomic scale, we are referring to these privatizations and related financial activities, through which the assets of Ibero-America's nations have been sold off at bargain-basement prices, to the benefit of Wall Street's own.