

EIR Political Economy

Colombian canal project could thwart separatist plot

by Javier Almario and Carlos Wesley

The national debate provoked by the frequent massacres carried out by narco-terrorists in the Colombian region of the Gulf of Urabá, took an unexpected turn on May 22, when President Ernesto Samper Pizano proposed the building of the Atrato-Truandó interoceanic canal as a solution to the isolation and violence afflicting the region. While it is highly unlikely that Samper's proposal is anything but an attempt to divert attention from the narco-scandal in which he is embroiled, still, the placing of a spotlight on the canal project is most useful. *EIR* and the friends of Lyndon LaRouche in Colombia have supported this ambitious development project since the early 1980s, as of great benefit not only to Colombia, but to the whole world (see below).

But in Urabá today, the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are using the continuous massacres carried out by the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), and its counterparts in self-defense units or among allies of the Peace, Hope, and Freedom group (EPL), as a pretext to promote the British imperial strategy of demanding the presence of UN peacekeeping forces, and fostering separatist sentiment in Urabá, with the argument that the national government "is unable to protect the civilian population." Comparisons between Urabá and Bosnia-Herzegovina are appropriate here.

For over a year, Alvaro Uribe Vélez, governor of Antioquia (in which Urabá is located), advised by Harvard University professor Roger Fischer, a supporter of the idea of transforming the UN into a supranational world government (see box, p. 19), has demanded that UN "blue helmets" be deployed into the Urabá region. An army of NGOs is already in Urabá. Pax Christi International, for example, has proposed the creation of "neutral zones where the civilian population will reside," similar to those which the UN supposedly pro-

tected in Bosnia, in which thousands of Muslims were massacred by the Serbians, under the "protection" of UN troops.

Bedoya draws the line vs. separatism

The polemical statement made by Army Commander Gen. Harold Bedoya Pizarro on April 12, changed the course of the debate. Bedoya affirmed: "If we continue to allow foreigners to tell us how to protect our borders, we shall lose Urabá, just as we lost the Panama Canal. Any country in the world would be interested in the Urabá region, and if we Colombians continue to play their game, we'll lose the Atrato canal. . . . The Europeans have their sights trained on Urabá."

General Bedoya's statement was correctly perceived by the UN, its NGOs, and such allied think-tanks as the Washington, D.C.-based Inter-American Dialogue, as a direct challenge to their separatist game plan. In response, they have attempted to publicly humiliate Bedoya, and to force his resignation as Army commander. However, their attempt has backfired. A debate called in the Senate by Sen. Omar Flórez, for the purpose of subjecting General Bedoya to ridicule for his statements, instead proved the correctness of his assertions. It turned into a debate on proposals for the development of the Gulf of Urabá region, which borders Panama, and intersects the departments of Chocó, Antioquia, and Córdoba, the latter currently a victim of narco-terrorist violence (see **Figure 1**). Among the charges which the participating senators made, was that General Bedoya's statements had negatively affected Colombia's relations with the European Union.

Rather than weakening Bedoya, the Senate debate strengthened him. Support for his statements ranged from leftists such as Jaime Dussán, to conservatives such as Luis Guillermo Vélez. Vélez stated that, in fact, the Colombian Army had not been defeated by the guerrillas, but that NGO

activity had caused the Army to lose the war “in the United States, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Holland.” Defense Minister Juan Carlos Esguerra also had to support Bedoya, explaining that the general’s disputed statement referred to numerous, primarily European NGOs, that seek foreign intervention in Urabá by ignoring the national government and “going above the law.” Esguerra also explained that the general’s remarks referred to the federal government’s rejection of “the proposal to bring the UN’s blue helmets in to pacify Urabá, made repeatedly by Antioquia Gov. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, who, fortunately, will not propose it again. Rest assured that in Urabá, the only soldiers patrolling, will be those wearing the helmets of the Colombian Army, and the helmets worn by the sailors of the National Navy,” Esguerra told the senators.

The debate clearly implied that the presumed opposing forces, responsible for the massacres in Urabá, are manipulated by foreign interests for the purpose of justifying a foreign intervention—whether a military intervention using UN troops, or those of UN members, or through UN interference in the region, or even in the whole country. With the exception of the communists, spokesmen from across the political spectrum represented in the Senate, told the FARC and the EPL “not to play into the hand of foreign interests.”

British geopolitics: the Bentham plan

This British strategy for Urabá is not new. For more than three centuries, Great Britain has had its sights trained on Panama and Urabá, and in different periods of history, it has succeeded in getting the United States to back its cause, through ideological or cultural manipulation. Since the turn of the century, U.S. foreign policy has in large part been based on British geopolitics of the 18th and 19th centuries. When U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt said in 1903, “I took Panama,” and seized Panama from Colombia, he was implementing a plan first developed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), the founder and first director of Britain’s intelligence service.

Bentham’s plan for Spanish America, was to take control of the outlets of all the navigable rivers, the islands critical to navigation, and the Panamanian isthmus, as a means of imposing imperial control over the entire region (Figure 2). For this reason, the British seized the Malvinas Islands, tried to take the Rio de la Plata region, seized Jamaica, took possession of Guyana, with the intention of controlling the deltas of the Orinoco and Esequibo rivers, and used several islands as the headquarters of various pirate groups which, like the FARC and ELN guerrillas today, sabotaged trade and looted and destroyed physical infrastructure.

In 1822, Bentham wrote his “Junctiana” proposal, a plan to build a canal connecting the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The canal was to have been built on land seized from Mexico (in what is today Nicaragua), and would have bordered on the north with Mexico, and on the south with Colombia. Bentham’s ally in these plans was American traitor Aaron Burr, who intended to become the ruler of a slave empire extending

FIGURE 1

Colombia’s Urabá region



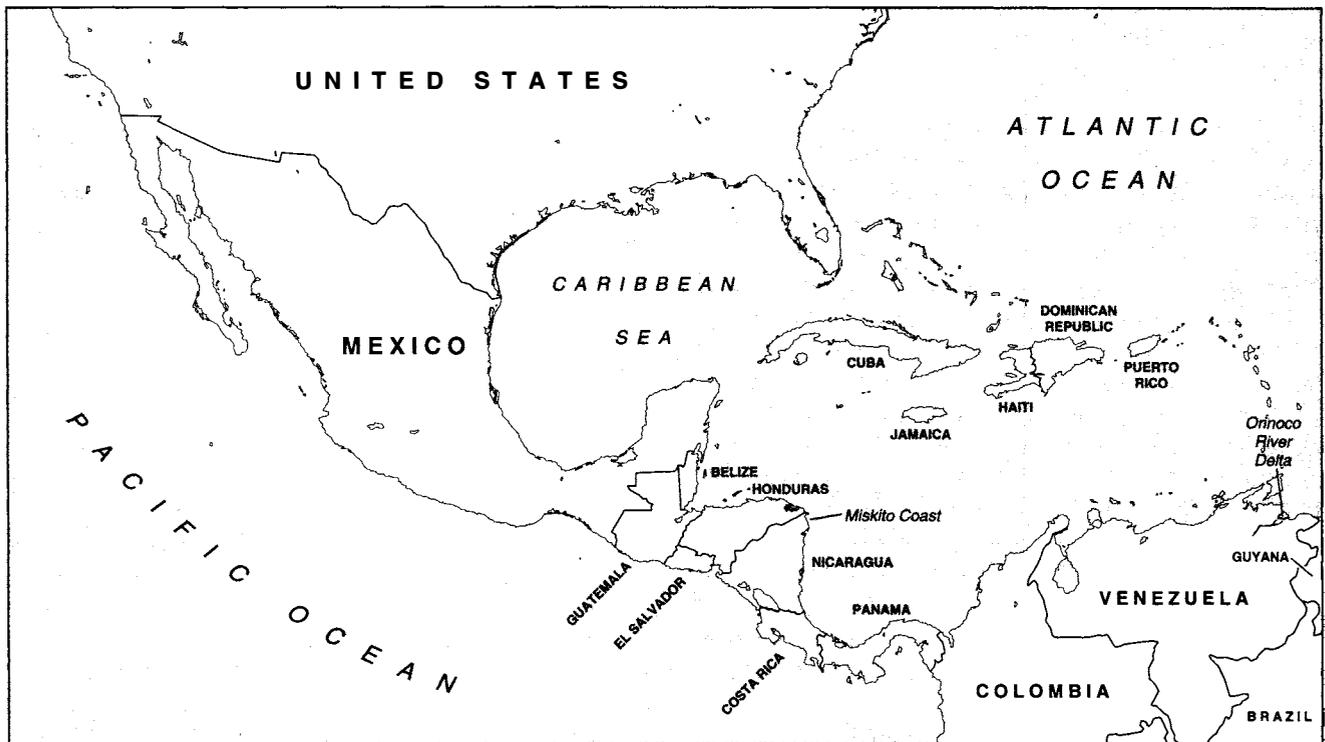
from Mexico, through Central and South America, including the Antilles—everything south of the United States.

Bentham’s Junctiana was to have been a new state, through which the canal would be built, with the involvement of a company financed largely by British investment. The state, however, was not intended to be Spanish-American, but would rather be called the Anglo-American United States. According to Bentham, neither Colombia nor Mexico was capable of providing the necessary security to protect these investments, because, as he put it, having become independent so recently from such a bad form of government, they were in constant danger. The habits and culture of a large portion of society, he said, were not of the required level.

Bentham’s idea was that the canal company would bring in profits by collecting tolls from users, charging the same amount to everyone. The proposed route was through Nicaragua. However, he said, Mexico shouldn’t try to build the canal, because this would anger Colombia. Nor should Colombia try to build the canal, because this would anger Mexico. Junctiana should have good legislation, a good judiciary, and good government. In reality, this implied and presupposed that the territory of Junctiana would be part of the Anglo-American United States. It would have two port cities,

FIGURE 2

The Caribbean region



one on either end of the canal, which would be replicas, in miniature, of “the civilized world.” The people residing there would be officials of the supervisory classes, civilian and military leaders, who would appreciably increase the value of the active population, and the circulation of wealth in the territory, starting as soon as the project began.

Except for the fact that Bentham’s proposed route was through Nicaragua, what he wrote was a perfect description of what eventually became known as the Panama Canal Zone, right down to the Gold Roll and the Silver Roll. (In the Canal Zone, U.S. employees are distinguished from native employees, such that there are actually two different payrolls. Until relatively recently, they frequented different coffee shops, sent their children to different schools, used different water fountains and bathrooms. The names Gold Roll and Silver Roll referred to the fact that, originally, Americans were paid in gold dollars, while the natives were paid in silver dollars. Now that there aren’t any gold or silver dollars, there is simply a difference in wage levels, by which Americans are compensated for suffering the “rigors” of work in the tropics.)

Bentham, of course, also wrote books on other topics: *In Defense of Usury*, and *In Defense of Pederasty*.

As early as the 17th century, the British attempted to control the Darien Gap, connecting what is now Panama and Colombia, through a colony established by William Patterson, who subsequently founded the Bank of England. British

Capt. Augustus Lloyds, employed by Colombia, succeeded in convincing the liberator, Simón Bolívar, to let him explore Panama, to establish a possible route for the canal. He returned, proposing a route that would divide the Panamanian city of Bahía Limón in half—virtually the same route as the current canal.

According to Colombian historian Eduardo Lemaitre (*Panama and Its Separation from Colombia*), the British tried to establish a beachhead on the Central American isthmus. They took Belize (from Guatemala), and succeeded in controlling the Mosquito Coast in the northern part of Central America. The British pirate Francis Drake had previously made incursions into Portobelo (Panama), while Henry Morgan attacked the old city of Panama. We call these individuals pirates, but to the British, they are known as Sir Henry and Sir Francis. England also tried to get Panama to declare its independence from Spain, by supporting an Indian chief named Andrés, whom the British called the “King of Darien and sovereign of Panama.” In 1780, Lord Nelson was ordered to take Lake Nicaragua, known as the “Gibraltar of Spanish America.”

Seeking control over a route between the two oceans, in 1845 the British solemnly crowned an Indian “King of the Mosquitos,” with the name of Robert Charles Frederick I. They then landed him at Bahía Almirante in the Panamanian province of Bocas de Toro, and from then on, proclaimed

themselves “protectors of Indian rights.”

In contrast to British imperial designs, the current Colombian Senate debate on Urabá put a spotlight on the vast development potential of this region, making it clear that any investment in the region would be to the benefit of all Colombians. Recalling the plans for building the Atrato-Truandó Canal, several senators from the Antioquia region discussed the need for deep-water ports, railroads, and highways. Investment figures in the range of \$1.5-15 billion were mentioned. There was talk of a “Marshall Plan” for Urabá.

A commission created

On May 22, President Samper, desperate to find anything to boost his popularity, and echoing the Senate debate, proposed the building of the Atrato-Truandó Canal. His government has already ordered the creation of a commission made up of the finance, communications, transportation, economic development, and national planning ministers, to determine the best route.

Whatever Samper’s motives, the debate generated by his proposal has revived dormant hopes, especially among the inhabitants of Chocó, Antioquia, and Córdoba. But it has also activated old enemies of the canal project, such as Samper’s political godfather, ex-President Alfonso López Michelsen, also known as “the Godfather” of the drug trade.

At the beginning of the 1980s, co-thinkers of Lyndon LaRouche, as well as some national institutions, mobilized around the proposal to build the Atrato-Truandó Canal. In 1984, the Colombian Fusion Energy Foundation, an organization inspired by LaRouche’s economic policies, together with the Bogotá chapter of the Colombian Society of Economists, the Colombian Geographical Society, and Sen. Daniel Palacios Martínez, created the Pro-Atrato-Truandó Civic Board.

That same year, Senator Palacios introduced a bill giving the President extraordinary powers for a four-year period, to create a mixed-capital company (public and private), for the purpose of building the canal, and to dictate whatever changes were necessary to attain that goal. The bill was passed by the Congress in 1984. In August 1985, the organizations belonging to the Pro-Atrato-Truandó Civic Board organized an international conference to promote the new law. Ramtanu Maitra, of *EIR*’s bureau in India, attended representing Lyndon LaRouche, and explained the latter’s world infrastructure program, including the proposed building of the Kra Canal in Thailand.

At that conference, *EIR* presented a study of the economic benefits Colombia would derive from building the canal. *EIR* presented the old studies done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1960s. In studying 30 possible routes for the building of a new interoceanic canal, the Corps of Engineers considered the Atrato-Truandó route among the best (**Figure 3**).

Already at that time, the Panama Canal was considered obsolete, since it could only handle 60,000-ton ships, while

Pugwash world federalists behind Urabá grab

Two leaders of the Urabá separatist project are pupils of a brainwashing project set up in Antioquia, Colombia in 1995, by Roger Fisher’s Harvard Negotiations Project (HNP). Antioquia Gov. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, and Gloria Cuartas, mayor of Apartadó, both advocates of supranational oversight of Urabá enforced by UN blue helmets, have been principals in Harvard’s “Pedagogy of Tolerance” project since Fisher opened its first seminar in Medellín on April 24, 1995.

An international law expert and an adviser to Robert McNamara’s U.S. Defense Department in the 1960s, Fisher is one of the leading architects of the post-Kennedy, post-industrial global paradigm shift directed by British intelligence’s psychological warfare division, the Tavistock Institute. His “working assumption,” he argues, is that “conflict is an inevitable feature of social life”; the only issue is, who will “manage” it.

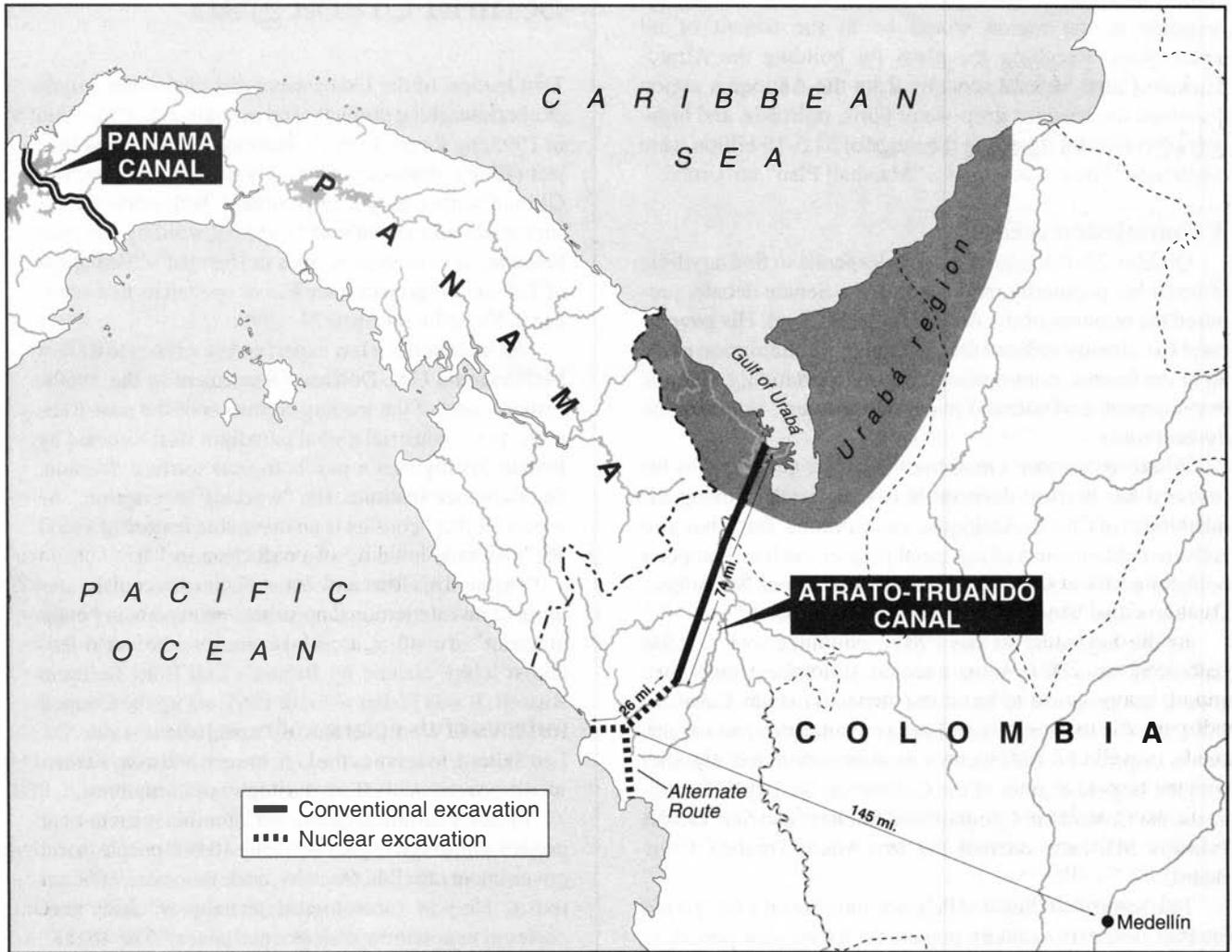
Through his Harvard center, Fisher directed the creation of an international apparatus of experts in “management” of conflict, as an instrument of the world-federalist lobby created by Britain’s evil Lord Bertrand Russell. It was Fisher who, in 1961, set up the Council for a Livable World, for Russell’s mad scientist aide, Dr. Leo Szilard, to serve as the U.S. branch of Russell’s one-world-government effort, the Pugwash Conference.

Fisher’s current program in Colombia is a two-year project whose stated goal is to train 40,000 people (local government officials, teachers, trade unionists, civic activists, etc.) in “sociological techniques” and “processes of negotiation, dialogue and peace.” The 40,000, each sent out to tutor others, is considered sufficient to reshape the nation. The site chosen by the Harvard team for their project, was Antioquia, one of the departments of which Urabá is a part, and where the drug cartels first established their grip in Colombia.

Joining Fisher as a “professor of tolerance” in the first phase of the Colombian program was Shafik Handal, the veteran head of El Salvador’s Communist Party and unrepentant advocate of armed struggle, who directed the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front’s war against his nation for decades. Handal is also a product of Fisher’s behavioral training. The Conflict Management Group set up by Fisher in the 1980s, the subgroup of the HNP which runs the Antioquia project, played a central role in establishing the current UN dictate over El Salvador. “We advised and trained both sides in the war between the government and the opposition FMLN,” CMG literature brags.

FIGURE 3

Proposed route for the Atrato-Truandó Canal



250,000-ton tankers were navigating the globe. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended the peaceful use of nuclear energy as a means of building a new canal. It was estimated that 19 nuclear explosions would be required, along 26 kilometers of rocky mountains; along the remaining 185 kilometers, conventional excavation technology could be used. The canal would have a good two-way course, at sea-level (without locks), and would operate year-round.

In one of its southern deserts, the United States built an experimental canal to test the method of excavation by small nuclear explosions. It also studied wind patterns in the Atrato-Truandó region, to determine at what time of the year explosions could be carried out without risk to human beings, and also what areas would have to be evacuated prior to the explosions. The possibility of using conventional explosives was debated, but it was determined that these would be more

costly. At the time that these studies were done, in Colombia, the Institute of Nuclear Affairs and the Institute of Hydrology and Meteorology were established.

Today, the United States has developed small fission bombs which can be used for such purposes, and from which the risk of any contamination is minimal. It is also now possible to blast through the mountains in question by using mechanical "moles," like those used to build the tunnel across the English Channel. In this case, there would be a 26 km tunnel, accommodating a canal deep enough for today's largest vessels.

This type of project could only lead to an explosion of economic development and cultural optimism, while unifying and integrating the Colombian nation, now so mortally threatened by separatism, narco-terrorism, and the advocates of one-world government.