

January 29, 2003

Norwegian Nobel Committee
Drammensveien 19
NO-0255 OSLO
Norway

Nomination: Governor **Guillermo Gaviria Correa** and
First Lady **Yolanda Pinto de Gaviria**
Department of Antioquia, Colombia

Dear Norwegian Nobel Committee:

2003 Nobel Peace Prize recognition of Governor Guillermo Gaviria Correa and First Lady Yolanda Pinto de Gaviria, Department of Antioquia, Colombia, will uniquely inspire and empower nonviolent co-gender transformational leadership for world peace now and in the century ahead.

The Story

In the mid-afternoon of April 21, 2002, high in the Colombian mountains near the coffee-growing town of Caicedo in Antioquia Department, the recently married Governor Guillermo Gaviria Correa, aged 39, and first Lady Yolanda Pinto de Gaviria engaged in an emotional parting embrace. Then unprotected he walked forward with three companions to engage FARC guerrillas in a nonviolent dialogue of reconciliation in solidarity with the guerrilla-threatened people of Caicedo. When they parted both Guillermo and Yolanda knew that in the next few minutes he could be kidnapped or killed.

She wanted to accompany him but he ordered her to remain behind to take charge of the 1000-person-strong, 85-mile, 5-day March of Reconciliation that they had led from the Antioquian capital Medellín to Caicedo. The Governor--completely committed to political expression of the nonviolent principles of Jesus, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.--had ordered the Police and Army not to protect the March and not to attempt rescue or retaliation if he were kidnapped or killed. It was a moving moment as we watched the Governor and his companions disappear around the bend of the mountain road ahead.

Governor Gaviria was intent on seeking a uniquely nonviolent breakthrough in Caicedo to begin to end the tragic bloodshed that has plagued Colombia not only for nearly four decades but for a century. His speeches had evidenced profound commitment to the spirit and practice of nonviolence: "Nonviolence was born with Jesus Christ; in the past century it was followed by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and in this century it will be the light to guide the people of Antioquia."

After a six-hour wait it became clear that the Governor Gaviria had been kidnapped. He remains captive nine months later. Two of his three companions returned shortly a Catholic priest, Carlos Eduardo Yepes, and a Baptist minister, Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., an African-American nonviolence educator closely associated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The third, the Antioquia Peace Commissioner, Gilberto Echeverri Mejía, a former Colombian defense minister and former governor of Antioquia, continues in detention with the Governor.

On April 21, in dark mountain cold under unseen guerrilla surveillance, the courageous First Lady led the marchers in a poignantly soul-stirring Mass for Nonviolent Reconciliation that had been planned to be held inside the now unapproachable town of Caicedo. She then led the marchers via buses back to Medellín.

Transcending her grief, during April 23-26, the First Lady courageously chaired the 5th World Conference on Nonviolence that had been planned by the Governor to advance nonviolent knowledge and action for peace and justice among 3,000 local and international participants. Concurrently she led the First Nonviolence Youth Camp that she had organized to bring together more than 1,300 children from throughout Colombia--many orphaned, traumatized by violence, and victimized by poverty and discrimination. Subsequently, as a prominent public figure she continues with courage and determination to keep alive the work of nonviolent reconciliation and to secure freedom for the Governor, the Peace Commissioner, and other prisoners of the civil war.

In a message recently received by the First Lady, the Governor wrote that he is even more deeply committed to principled nonviolence and that he is planning a Second March of Reconciliation to Caicedo when he regains freedom.

This story of the Governor and First Lady's nonviolent peacemaking leadership, supported by thousands of Colombians in every walk of life, offers hope not only for Caicedo, Medellín, Antioquia, and Colombia but for a bloodshed-weary 21st century world.

But do they merit Nobel Peace Prize recognition?

The Significance

Three affirmative reasons are advanced for your far-sighted consideration: (1) lessons derived from ancient and modern theories of violence, (2) the imperative need for co-gender partnership for peacemaking in the 21st century, and (3) congruence of the nonviolent peace leadership of the Gavirias with provisions of Alfred Nobel's Will.

First, the Governor's "top down" commitment to nonviolent peacemaking action constitutes a breakthrough of pioneering strategic significance for the peaceful future of humankind. It differs markedly from the historic "bottom up" contributions of Gandhi and King who led victims of colonial and racist injustice in nonviolent transformational struggles against dominant structures of violent power. Furthermore, the ancient wisdom of Aristotle on causes of revolution helps us to understand the path breaking importance of Governor Gaviria's determination to put nonviolent political theory into peacemaking practice.

Aristotle on Causes of Revolution

"The important thing to remember is that those who are responsible for the exercise of power, whether they be individuals or organs of government or tribes or what you will, great or small, it is they who cause the disturbance that leads to revolution. They may do so indirectly, as when the rest, jealous of their power, begin a revolution, but also directly when they themselves are so superior that they are no longer content to remain on terms of equality with the rest" (Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book V, Chapter 4).

The unique significance of the Governor's commitment to nonviolent reconciliation on the basis of equality is that he pursues it from the position of a democratically elected political leader and member of Colombia's dominant socioeconomic elite. In risking his life, he shows that the nonviolence of Jesus, Gandhi, and King can be practiced from the "top down" as well as from the "bottom up." This is a lesson of monumental importance for the future of humankind.

Burton on Nonviolent Problem-Solving

The Governor's effort to seek a problem-solving dialogue of reconciliation with the revolutionary FARC and the citizens of Caicedo is also in complete conformity with the diagnosis and prescription of one of the world's leading conflict resolution theorists, Professor John Burton [*Deviance, Terrorism and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems* (1979)]. Simply stated, all violence comes from the denial of human needs. Oppressed and oppressors have the same set of needs, primary among which are recognition of identity and human dignity. Unless needs are met neither moral exhortation nor violent coercion will stop violence. The most promising peacemaking approach is to create processes of problem-solving in which all whose needs are violated can participate in seeking their satisfaction. The Governor explains, "Nonviolence offers alternative ways for peaceful struggle by those sectors of society who are most marginalized and sacrificed by political and social imbalances."

Heifetz & Linsky on Adaptive vs. Technical Solutions

Moreover, the Governor's nonviolent leadership exemplifies an "adaptive" approach to achieving peace and justice in Colombia as opposed to a lethally suppressive "technical" one--a distinction recently made by Harvard University professors Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky in *Leading on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (2002). They point out that most leadership failures can be attributed to making narrowly "technical" responses to challenges rather than broadly "adaptive" ones.

This distinction aids understanding of the creative importance of the Governor's effort to seek nonviolent liberation of Antioquians from tragic conditions of behavioral and structural violence through a comprehensive, need responsive, problem-solving approach. Perhaps his training as a civil engineer and experience in public works, transportation, and urban planning--in addition to his commitment to nonviolence--contribute to his advocacy of systemic versus repressive solutions to Colombia's peace problems. The Governor explains, "Nonviolence shows that violence is a symptom which indicates there are more serious and deeper causes to change."

Second, the imperative need for co-gender partnerships to solve problems of violence and injustice that threaten human survival and well-being in the 21st century. Too often the women who sustain men and serve needs of society in their own capacity are left in the shadows of peace leaders. Such was the case of Gandhi's wife Kasturba and of Coretta Scott King until she was called upon to carry forward the widow's cross of nonviolence after her husband's assassination. Nobel Peace Prize co-recognition of Yolanda Pinto de Gaviria at an early stage of their nonviolent service--which is no less auspicious for the human future than that of the early Gandhis and Kings--will send a powerful message especially to young men and women of the world.

Third, the role of the Gavirias as 21st century "champions of peace" in the spirit of Alfred Nobel's Will. Their work in bringing to Colombia the nonviolent Kingian tradition of the United States and the Gandhian tradition of India to join with the peace aspirations of the Colombian people--as an alternative to revolutionary and counterrevolutionary armed interventions--contributes to "fraternity between the nations." Their courage in confronting armed revolutionaries without invoking protection of the armed forces of the State, takes a step forward toward conditions that will permit "abolition or reduction of standing armies." And their leadership in convening the 5th World Conference on Nonviolence that brought together proponents of nonviolence from Haiti, India, Ireland (Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire), Mexico, South Africa, Spain, and the United States--as well as diplomats, officials, clergy, and the people of Colombia--serves to inspire others in "the holding and promotion of peace conferences." So does their organization of the First Nonviolence Youth Camp which deserves to be celebrated as a uniquely meaningful contribution to the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).

Respectfully,

Glenn D. Paige
President
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
University of Hawai'i
Author of *Nonkilling Global Political Science* (2002)

Enclosures

Biographical profiles
Governor Guillermo Gaviria Correa
First Lady Yolanda Pinto de Gaviria

Bilingual report on the March of Reconciliation to Caicedo
Los estamos esperando /We are waiting for you
Sí... Hay un camino: Nonviolencia/ Yes... There is a way: Nonviolence

