

REPUBLICA DE COLOMBIA



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA NACIONAL  
DESPACHO

Bogotá, D.C., February 17, 2003

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The Honorable  
DONALD RUMSFELD  
Secretary of Defense  
Washington, D.C.

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Dear Secretary Rumsfeld

It was a pleasure to meet with you in Washington last week, as well as to have had the opportunity to discuss the issues that affect our nations' security.

As Colombia's Minister of Defense, I feel privileged to have been your counterpart in this highly valuable exchange of views and feel confident it will help to bring our two countries closer together. Thank you for your valuable time and the attention you devoted to our meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the U.S.-Colombia Bilateral Working Group team for your warm reception and attentive service. I know how hard organizing such a complex event might be and your staff was able to do an exceptional job.

There is much that Colombia is doing in order to guarantee the rule of law and eliminate the terrorist organizations that operate in our country. As I mentioned during our meeting, the Government of Colombia has drafted the National Defense and Democratic Security Policy, which is enclosed.

As presented in our meeting The Colombian National Defense Policy has three main objectives within the framework of defending the rights and liberties of all people in Colombia:

- To capture the main leaders of the FARC, ELN and the AUC and promote demobilization of recruits.
- To completely eradicate illegal cultivation of coca, as well as to end the crime and threat to democracy that drug trafficking produces, as this is the means by which the terrorists finance as much as 60% of their operations.
- To end kidnapping and extortion in Colombia both of which are gross violations of individual rights and liberty and which help fund terrorism.

Although I know these objectives are ambitious, I believe that they are attainable. The Colombian military and police institutions have started to take the necessary measures to better face the challenges presented by the reality of an offensive strategy to combat the multi-dimensional threat posed by these narcoterrorists. These measures include

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Increasing the size and mobility of our forces, the centralization of military purchases within the Ministry of Defense, creating concrete metrics of performance to be used to gauge success.

In addition we are working hard to enhance our intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities by improving the technical means for gathering intelligence as well as its strategic use.

The support of the United States has been crucial in the professionalization and improvement of the Colombian Public Forces, as well as our Judicial system.

It is my sincere belief that both our countries will continue to benefit from our close bilateral relations, specially now that both our nations face many of the same preoccupations regarding terrorism, regional stability and transnational crime.

As I had the opportunity to inform you, we have embarked upon an aggressive campaign to formalize training and intelligence cooperation not only with our neighboring countries, but also with several member countries of the European Union and Israel. Still, we will need your continued cooperation, particularly in the areas of counter-terrorism, intelligence, training, and counter-narcotics.

Furthermore, the Government of Colombia is completely committed to the protection of human rights not only as means to protect our civilian population from the internal conflict, but also as means to enhance and improve our people's sense of well being which is a fundamental promise of democracy.

I don't want to miss this opportunity to invite you and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to visit our country, where we can deepen and enhance our bilateral relationship.

With my very best wishes to you and your staff, and with my warmest personal regards,

MARTA LUCÍA RAMÍREZ DE RINCÓN  
Minister of National Defense

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