

REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

Bogotá, 20 March 2002

DONALD H. RUMSFELD
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Handwritten: *Handwritten signature*
 Stamp: **LARRY DI RITTO**
 3/24

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld,

Please allow me to express all my sympathy and my solidarity with the Armed Forces of the United States, with the United States Government and with you personally at this critical hour in history. I have no doubt that your courageous decision to intervene in Iraq is fully justified and that success will soon prove you right.

President Uribe has wholeheartedly supported the coalition led by the United States in its efforts to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussein. A stop must be put to twelve years of breaches to Security Council resolutions. We also believe that the Iraqi people must be relieved of the suffering that for so long they have had to bear. But above all we think that it is imperative to send a clear message that State support for terrorism will not be tolerated, especially when such a State is in the business of developing weapons of mass destruction. It is a crucial matter that every country understands the importance of this message.

As a country that has suffered and suffers daily the ravages of terrorist violence, violence that is often supported by the know-how and technology of international terrorist networks, as I had occasion to discuss with you in Washington, we are well placed to appreciate the nature of this threat. President Uribe has received a unique mandate from the electorate to bring security to our people and defeat terrorism. That is what we intend to do with our policy of Democratic Security, which aims to strengthen the rule of law over our territory, reaffirm the authority of democratic institutions and thereby close all spaces to terrorist organizations and drug traffickers. Territorial control by democratic governments is part and parcel

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of any effort to check terrorism. That, I think, is what you are rightly trying to achieve in Iraq, and that is what we are doing in Colombia.

As President Uribe has said, the United States can count on full support from the Government of Colombia. Only firm international pressure and, when necessary, decisive international action will deter States from aiding and harboring terrorists. United as we are in this purpose, we will gladly consider any requests you might have to support your campaign against terrorism.

My thoughts are with you as you bear the great responsibility of serving President Bush and your country at this key moment in history. May the Armed Forces of the United States have every success.

Yours sincerely,



MARTA LUCIA RAMIREZ DE RINCON
Minister of National Defense