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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY
AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation between SECDEF and Colombian Minister of Defense Marta Ramirez

1. (U) Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had a phone conversation with Colombian Minister of Defense (MOD) Marta Lucia Ramirez on 10 July 2003. MOD Ramirez requested the phonecon to discuss the status of the war in Colombia and regional policies toward Colombia.
2. (U) She invited the SECDEF to visit Colombia, either to participate in a regional working group of Ministers of Defense or on a bilateral visit. SECDEF said he would consider the MOD's invitation to visit Colombia and would provide his answer within a week.
3. (U) SECDEF asked the MOD about Colombia's relations with Venezuela. MOD Ramirez said President Chavez says all the right things, but that the FARC continues to cross the border freely into Venezuela.
4. (U) SECDEF asked about the status of Colombia's demobilization program. MOD Ramirez said she had turned this into a "weapon of war" to demoralize the FARC. They have had record numbers of defections. Many of the demobilized are youths who joined the guerrillas while barely 11 years old. MOD added that the program provides valuable intelligence about the guerrillas.
5. (U) SECDEF underscored the importance of an Article 98 agreement and asked the MOD's help to push for an agreement.
6. ~~(C)~~ Action Items from the Phonecon. Respond to MOD's invitation to visit Colombia. Provide SECDEF an itinerary proposal. Recommend a bilateral visit rather than participation in a regional conference.

Peter W. Rodman

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Classified by: DASD/WHA R. Pardo-Maurer
Reason: 1.5(b) and (d)
Declassify on: X1

X02440 /03



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Cc: SECDEF
DEPSECDEF
USD(P)

Prepared by LTC (b)(6), ISA/WHA, (b)(6)

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