

Bogota, Colombia, March 5, 2007

Press Release

LET WASHINGTON DIVULGE WHAT IT KNOWS ABOUT PARAMILITARY AND  
“PARA-POLITICAL” ACTIVITIES EN COLOMBIA

In connection with the planned visit of President George W. Bush to Colombia, Senator Jorge Robledo, spokesperson for the Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA), wanted answers to the following questions: “Are the State Department and the US Embassy in Colombia aware of what has happened in terms of paramilitary activities and “para-politicking” in Colombia over the last twenty years? Do they know that nearly one hundred political leaders close to President Uribe are jailed, fugitives from the law, and named or implicated because of their relations with paramilitary organizations? Do they know that already nine members of the Colombian Congress, all close friends of the Uribe administration, have been ordered to jail by the Colombian Supreme Court because of their involvement? Are the State Department and the US Embassy aware that in Colombia people speak increasingly of “para-Uribismo,” not merely “para-politicking”? Was there no connection between US policies and the formation of these criminal organizations and activities?”

Senator Robledo formulated these questions after sources close to the administration of President Uribe touted the forthcoming March 11 visit of George W. Bush to Colombia. These sources portrayed the visit as an explicit backing by the White House of Colombia’s President, even with respect to the para-politicking scandal.

Senator Robledo reminded us that, under Plan Colombia, the military presence of the United States increased to the tune of four billion dollars. The US presence includes well-known robust operations by numerous agents of the CIA, the DEA, the FBI, regular US military as well as mercenary forces. In that regard Robledo cited comments by U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy who said that “the Colombian government is not simply a victim of their corrupt influences.” Leahy further stated that the Colombian government “allowed the flourishing of paramilitary groups, sometimes colluding with those groups, other times fostering their activities.” (El Tiempo, March 4, 2007)

Senator Robledo emphasized that the truth about paramilitary and para-political activities must be addressed for peace to be achieved in Colombia.

Press Office

Senator Jorge Robledo

Official Spokesperson, Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA)

