

**Editorial
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Colombian President Santos on the rampage

For Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos democratic rules seem to apply only when they are to his political benefit. His reaction to recent mass protests by small miners and coffee growers, and revelations of illegal appropriation of lands by large national and multinational financial groups, has been to demonize the social movements and issue false accusations against its leaders. Santos' statements suggesting a link between Senator Jorge Robledo and violent guerrilla activity are patently false. Senator Robledo has a well-documented record of rejection, in word and deed, of armed violence as a tool of political struggle. So does the PDA, the Polo Democrático Alternativo. The PDA and Senator Robledo merely exercise their rights to free speech, democratic opposition, and the organization of civil and democratic resistance against government policies that they deem detrimental to the people of Colombia.

Following President Santos' despicable attack against Senator Robledo, the shadowy, drug-trafficking paramilitary group *Los Rastrojos* issued public death threats two days ago against the PDA, Senator Robledo, and many other leaders of political parties, labor organizations, and social movements. By his irresponsible statements President Santos precipitates the frightening activities of violent actors and further imperils the rule of civilized political struggle. President Santos should condemn the death threats

immediately and take action to discourage the activities of paramilitary operatives.

President Santos should examine the real causes of the mass protests against his administration, and stop acting in an undemocratic and authoritarian manner.