

Doctor
CÉSAR JULIO VALENCIA COPETE
President
Supreme Court of Colombia

Re: The *Polo Democrático Alternativo*'s solidarity with the President of the Supreme Court facing the latest attack from the President of the Republic, Dr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez.

Your Honor:

The National Executive Committee of the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* most emphatically repudiates the decision of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez to accuse Dr. César Julio Valencia Copete, President of the Supreme Court, of insult and slander. We condemn it as an attempt, common to tyrants, to subordinate judges to the power of the executive. We lend to each and every member of the Court our support for the decision to uphold the law in cases related to links between political leaders and paramilitary death squads and vigilante groups. We call upon all Colombian democrats, without exception, to defend the separation of powers as established in the Constitution of Colombia and to respect the dignity and the decisions of the Court.

The accusation that we are referring to is in and of itself reprehensible but even more so in light of four facts that ought to be widely known in Colombia and the world:

First, the President has made many previous attacks on the Supreme Court, including applying pressure so that their judgments are favorable to his interests, making misstatements that put into doubt the credibility of their decisions, and directing insults at judges, all of which has the objective of discrediting the Supreme Court and the Justice System and facilitating impunity. Second, it is known that the majority of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez' attacks on the Court are the reaction to decisions that have not been favorable for the paramilitaries, including the latest, which began with a call from President Uribe to the President of the Supreme Court to pressure him in processes that involve, in separate cases, a confessed criminal nicknamed 'Tasmania' and Senator Mario Uribe, the cousin of President Álvaro Uribe. Third, it is public knowledge that almost all of the so-called *parapolíticos* [Colombian politicians with links to paramilitary bosses and groups] backed Álvaro Uribe in his two presidential campaigns, a reality that gives one a better understanding of the degree of Colombia's breakdown and the nature of those who govern it. These problems highlight the importance of the Court's powers in terms of protecting the truth about extremely serious facts; however, they also critically put at risk the Court's integrity and explain why the Court has been the target and victim of attacks.

On January 18, 2008, the newspaper *El Tiempo* reported that 46 congresspersons elected in 2006 have been involved in the *parapolítica* scandal, and *El Nuevo Siglo* reported on January 14, 2008, that 125 high-placed political leaders have been linked to paramilitary death squads. In both cases, nearly all of them were *Uribistas* [either Uribe supporters or members of his political party, *La U*]. In what country in the world that has not decayed to the point Colombia has would there be tolerance for a head of state

with this sort of past, even after the director of secret police had been arrested and charged with supporting paramilitary vigilantes and after court decisions had corroborated that there was indeed fraud committed in the 2002 presidential elections?

The fourth fact has to do with the calculated decision of the President, in his own notoriously antidemocratic way, to formulate a charge against none other than the President of the Supreme Court, knowing that this process will entail anything but justice. The only possible witnesses in the procedures are three high employees of the Uribe government. The trial will begin with the Prosecution Commission of the House of Representatives, an entity controlled entirely by the political friends of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the very same people who systematically refuse to comply with the law when he is the accused and who constitute part of the bureaucratic apparatus that is also controlled by the head of state. Will there be justice for the President of the Supreme Court if the accuser, the witnesses, and the judges all share the same interests and belong to the same *parapolítico* group under investigation by that Supreme Court? Is it possible to conceive of anything more biased? No one should be surprised if this case reaches all the way to international tribunals.

Please know, Honorable President of the Supreme Court, that the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* will never align itself with those who proceed in this way, using their position to attack the separation of powers that was established in the Constitution as the foundation of democracy, even if they could claim that their objectives were noble. In this case, the flagrantly undemocratic nature of their intentions is quite obvious.

Sincerely,

Carlos Gaviria Díaz
President

Daniel García-Peña
Secretary

Polo Democrático Alternativo

Bogotá, 21 January 2008.