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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 23, 2005

The Honorable Alvaro Uribe
Presidente de la Republica de Colombia
Palacio Nariño
Carrera Octava # 7-26
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Dear President Uribe,

Our programs with Colombia represent one of the United States' most ambitious initiatives in Latin America. The path you have chosen to remedy the problems plaguing Colombia recognizes the vital importance of your Government's role, as well as that of the United States' continued involvement. Because of this close partnership, I write to express my concern over recent reports that the Colombian Congress is on the verge of approving a version of demobilization legislation that would leave intact the complex mafia-like structures and wealth of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), such as the AUC paramilitary group.

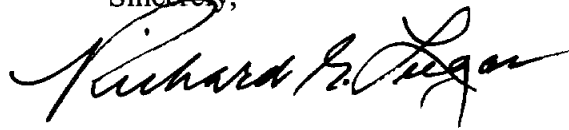
I recognize that this is a difficult legislative process, but I am concerned that the bill put forward by your Government, and approved by the First Commissions of the Colombian Congress, does not require paramilitary combatants who wish to receive sentencing benefits to initially fully disclose their knowledge of the operative structure and financing sources of these FTOs and the role of individual members in illegal activities. I am also troubled that, under the proposal the top commanders of these FTOs, many of whom the U.S. government is seeking to extradite, can reportedly receive extremely short sentences for their crimes, even if the groups they command remain active and continue to engage in drug trafficking and terrorist activities.

The demobilization process is of sufficient importance to both Colombia and the U.S. that we must ensure that it leads to the appropriate outcome and sets the right precedent for negotiations with other FTOs, such as the FARC. Not only Colombia's future is at stake, but also the future of peace and security throughout the region. The U.S. has consistently supported your efforts, and those of previous Administrations, to fight drugs and terror in Colombia, and, during the past 5 years, the United States has invested over \$3 billion in these efforts. I do not wish to see the progress our governments have made on these issues squandered or support in the U.S. Congress for these efforts lessen.

For these reasons, I urge your Government to ensure that the demobilization of these narco-terrorists is conducted pursuant to an effective legal framework that will bring about the complete dismantlement of the underlying structure, outlaw illegal sources of financing, and degrade the economic power of these FTOs.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard G. Lugar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent.

Richard G. Lugar
Chairman