



**LET NOT THE WORLD JUDGE US**  
**BY OUR POLITICAL DISCOURSE, BUT BY OUR ACTIONS**

**Álvaro Uribe Vélez**  
May 2007

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*Bogotá, May 18, 2007*

The following are the words of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez during the National Police Change of Command to General Oscar Naranjo Trujillo.

On this rainy morning, when, as the poet says «under the provident influx of spiritual rain, the land flowers with dreams,» we gather here in the field at the General Santander School to take another step toward our search for security, which implies the happiness of all Colombians.

I would like to express gratitude to General Jorge Daniel Castro Castro for all his long years of effort. He gave 39 years of service to the police force, with self-sacrifice, with patriotism, and with effectiveness. For more than 3 years he has fought shoulder to shoulder with us, experiencing the fatigue of the police, the sacrifice of his people, the suffering of Colombians, and the anguish of the government, as we sought security for Colombians.

General, in the name of so many groups of people in our nation who during the exercise of your command saw the Police arrive for the first time to protect them... in the name of so many families who felt relief from the pressure of kidnapping...in

the name of so many Colombians who have begun to enjoy the decrease in terrorism...and in my name, having shared so many hours of anguish with you, we thank you.

And to you, Ms. Alicia, your wife, and your family, for all your efforts.

It was just yesterday that you received the command of the Police Force from another patriot who is with us today, General Teodoro Campo, with whom we began this phase of Democratic Security.

And today the Command of the Police is being received by a brilliant figure – brilliant in intelligence, brilliant in commitment, brilliant in honorable values - General Oscar Naranjo Trujillo. He has served the institution for 31 years, always rising in the fight and in the search for merit.

When this government began, he took on the challenge of the immense difficulties facing the city of Cali. In recent years, he has been the head of the Judicial Police, at a conjuncture at which Colombia wants to definitively free itself from terrorism.

He comes to Police Command surrounded by the dreams of all of our citizens who desire security as the only road to peace, surrounded by the trust of the national and international community, surrounded by the respect of all the members of the Police, and, of course, as the repository of the confidence of the Government of the Nation.

I give you, General Naranjo, my full vote of confidence that you will successfully carry out this task you are now beginning.

And we join in the angst of your wife, your sons and daughters, your parents, and your entire family, the angst of all our citizens, for you to fulfill that which we spoke of on Monday night. The defeat of the FARC secretariat, the capture of drug traffickers such as Diego Montoya and Varela, who are still at large, the capture of Vicente Castaño, and of those who did not submit to the Law of Justice and Peace, the defeat of terrorism in general, of drug trafficking, the liberation or the rescue of Colombians, of our countrymen who are kidnapped, and of the three kidnapped North Americans.

And we gather this morning in this field to also talk about some

issues: the interceptions, the infiltrations. Let's also talk about Democratic Security, the violence against unions, the peace process, of truth, the kidnap victims, the Sub Intendant (Jhon Frank) Pinchao, of the fate of Dr. Ingrid Betancourt and the other kidnapped citizens, of our conversation with the President of France, and of our duties.

## THE INTERCEPTIONS

My countrymen, let's speak of the interceptions, the infiltrations. This is a state ruled by law. The characteristics of Rule of Law demand that those who exercise government functions or positions of authority must be an example of submission to the law, which has been established externally to them.

Those least authorized to violate the law are we citizens who at any time exercise positions of authority or government. This is a fundamental characteristic of Rule of Law.

It is like another fundamental characteristic, the free expression of opinion, which is stimulated by our concept of Community State, and well rooted in the hearts of Colombians.

This illegal behavior violates the law, discredits government actions, darkens rule of law, and restricts the freedom of citizens.

Interception is a means of gathering evidence that does not violate the law, but it cannot be a means for constraining the freedom of citizens.

Interceptions must be subject to judicial laws and they must be oriented toward clearing up matters that violate the law, to gather evidence on persons who violate the law.

Rule of law has several characteristics. We will mention two. The obligation of governors who exercise authority to obey the law, the law that has been established externally to them.

The person least authorized to violate the law, the person most obligated to be an example of fulfilling the Law, is the person who governs or exercises authority. A second characteristic of Rule of law is that it has to create a reality within which citizens can enjoy their freedoms, so that there can be citizen participation as an expression of the freedom of each individual and freedom of the society as a whole, participation

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that is affected when freedoms are denied.

That is why interceptions must be oriented exclusively toward investigating a crime, not in constraining citizens' freedoms. To investigate a crime, interceptions must have been previously ordered by the competent state institutions and must target the investigation of that crime only.

Interceptions cannot occur without authorization from the

competent officials, and they must take place only for matters and people involved in a crime.

If there is someone in a terrorist group and an interception must be made, it must be made to investigate that crime, which is his tie to the terrorist group, and with rigorous observance of formalities and prior authorization from the competent authority.

Interceptions must be made according to the formalities of the law, to investigate the crime. It is one thing to intercept someone who is attacking national security, in the country or abroad, who is committing the crime of terrorism against Colombia and against his countrymen. In that case interceptions must be made with legal authorization. But it is another thing to intercept a journalist or a politician who is exercising his freedoms.

Interceptions related to crime and criminals with legal authorization as established in our laws is a necessary measure for obtaining security.

Illegal or unjust interception, in violation of democratic ethics, counter to the freedom of the citizens, of their privacy, of their

freedom to express their political ideas, to move ahead with their journalistic labors, is an offense against Rule of Law. It is a restriction of the freedom that we must guarantee for every citizen.

Let there be an end to this evil of believing that freedoms are for a functionary to abuse and to constrain the freedom of citizens. This cannot happen any more in our Nation!

## THE INFILTRATIONS

And the topic of the infiltrations. I am not opposed to having public opinion know about everything in the Colombian government. The government least surprised by the infiltrations is this one. One of the instructions I have given to my companions in the government, from the beginning of my administration, is that when we are aware of an act of corruption, let us be the first to tell public opinion and the justice system. Let us not wait for them to have to come with their investigative journalism, with a picklock, to clarify matters.

And we have fulfilled that commitment. Forty days before the presidential elections last year,

the government at its own initiative communicated to public opinion and the justice system relative to cases of corruption detected inside state agencies, government agencies.

For public opinion to know it all seems good to me. It is a necessity. But care must be taken with the timing.

The law says that in the investigation stage, before the indictment, the file for the criminal process must be subject to confidentiality for many reasons. Confidentiality is in order to not affect the investigation, to prevent the person being investigated from being slandered through an inopportune infiltration, when later, when the justice system declares his innocence, it may be impossible to repair the damage inflicted on his honor.

The law is wise. Just as in the trial stage the citizen is allowed to see everything that has to do with the case, the investigation stage requires confidentiality in the legal proceedings.

I think that all Colombians need to make an internal reflection in order to respect the confidentiality of legal proceedings.

Why did I say that I was in favor of televising the audiences for the Law of Justice and Peace? So that public opinion might hear everything said there. It doesn't matter whether it is live or broadcast moments later.

Let's see what worries me as President about infiltrations: the timing and the motives.

It is a serious matter to violate the confidentiality of legal proceedings, because it affects an investigation and can unjustly affect the honor of a citizen, just as it is a serious matter to hide the truth in a trial.

What is my complaint about these infiltrations? Why if information was gathered about possible crimes committed from the Itagüí prison was it not told to the government? It's good for authorities that have that information to hide it from the government when the government is an accomplice in the crime. But this government from the first moment has reacted with total determination every time a crime has been revealed.

One of my ambitions when I leave the presidency is to be able to look at my countrymen with a clear

conscience that I pursued crime without reservation, with total determination.

This is an administration that will complete five years in August, which has demonstrated no reservations or omissions in the pursuit of crime, which has unreservedly demanded the truth. This government deserves for the state institutions that learn of types of crimes to report them in a timely manner and to not surprise the administration by first informing the public and managing to make the government the last to know about it.

Could it be that we have lacked determination? Look, could it be that we lacked determination when we took out 1,700 members of paramilitary groups using the institutional armed forces? Could it be that we lacked determination to demand the release of former senator Gnecco, when it was thought he had been kidnapped from Ralito? Could it be that we lacked determination to demand the capture of Murillo Bejarano, known as Don Berna, when the Office of the Public Prosecutor tied him to the crime of a deputy in Córdoba? Did we lack determination to order the paramilitary leaders taken to La



Ceja? Could it be that we lacked determination to order them transferred from La Ceja to Itagüí? Did we lack determination when we extradited 574 people requested by the justice systems of another country for different crimes? Could it be that we lacked determination to demand that the public security forces prevent the rearming of demobilized persons? Could it be that we lacked determination to capture those who want to rearm or take them out with institutional armed forces? Four hundred who have attempted to take up weapons again have been killed, and more than 800 who attempted to take up weapons again have been put in prison.

A government committed at all times to the struggle against crime, deserves in that case for Police intelligence to have communicated about the crimes committed from Itagüí prison.

Let it be clearly understood, interception is to investigate crime or criminals with authorization from the law and the Constitution, not to restrict the freedoms of citizens, not to constrain their individuality.

Infiltrations are in opposition to a government that wants

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## **SECURITY FOR UNION WORKERS**

Now let's talk about Democratic Security, about the unions, and about the peace process.

I told United States representatives – and I ask those who are here with us as representatives of the different United States agencies to tell them there, and for our

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Chancellery to widely communicate to the United States and to the international public – that here we have been working on the task of Democratic Security from the first moment of this government.

We are not coming out in defense of the union workers now out of fear that the FTA will not be approved, or that the continuation of Plan Colombia will not be approved. We have defended them since before winning the presidential election.

Before the election in 2002, I gave my countrymen a Democratic Manifest, a 100-point platform. Point 27 says: our security will be democratic, to protect equally the businessman threatened with

kidnapping and the union worker or journalist threatened with assassination. To protect equally the spokesmen for the government and the representatives of government critics.

And we have fulfilled that. We do not need to be pressured to undertake the task of protecting union leaders.

At five thirty in the morning on Thursday, August 8, 2002, the day following my inauguration, instead of remaining in Bogotá recovering from the big day, in breakfasts required by protocol, we went to Valledupar to unreservedly launch the struggle to rescue the democratic institutions, to defeat the guerrillas and the paramilitaries, and to effectively protect our countrymen.

Each time a union worker has been assassinated during our government, the Vice President, the Minister of Defense, and I have come out and offered a reward, taking the lead in the capture of the assassins, and increasing the effective protection of union leaders.

The recorded actions of a government cannot be devalued

by a demagogic discourse unfamiliar with the reality.

I ask the United States Embassy in Colombia to help the newspapers of the United States and the democratic congressmen, to learn the truth, and to learn it not just in part but in whole.

Before beginning our administration, here in Colombia in one year 256 citizens, union workers, and teachers were assassinated. Our work has been effective; the trends are very good. Nevertheless, we have not been able to get down to zero.

In 2005, 25 were assassinated. Last year it got worse, 60. This year 2 union workers have died year to date in armed actions, and 8 teachers. Of the 8 teachers, 2 were with the FARC. In other cases, they were killed for eminently personal reasons. But all of them are serious. Nothing justifies an assassination.

But the government has to tell the world – based on justice – the reason for every case. And these cases are being rigorously investigated.

The two union members assassinated this year... please, let

it be known by each congressman in the United States, because we would rather be defeated by real facts and not by slander!

Let each congressman in the United States know. Let us be defeated by our incapability, or by the failure to produce results, but not by slander!

This year a member of the INPEC union died. The justice system has now informed us that he was assassinated not in relation to his union activity, but in relation to his job as a guard at the INPEC. This is being rigorously investigated by an independent justice system that is supported and respected by the government. On May 3, while I was in the United States, a person who later turned out to be a member of the union in Sucre was killed during an armed action. The Colombian Army killed him, because this person was armed and in a terrorist group, confronting the institutional armed forces. He died during that action. The body was examined immediately by the CTI.

We cannot accept that an action that produced a terrorist casualty be called an assassination of a union worker.

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And I have said clearly that if what the justice system and the Navy has said so far were to be proven false, the first to recognize it would be the government. Cover-up and distortion are far from our temperament, far from our conception of state.

So then, just as the government recognizes that we have not yet been able to provide total protection, that there are still assassinations, the government asks that our advances be recognized.

I ask the United States Congress to not turn a deaf ear to the reality of our advances!

Just as I recognize all that is left to be done, I ask you to recognize how far we have advanced!

It is just that we have not had an easy job here. It has not been a

bed of roses. We have 60 thousand terrorists here. The ETA in Spain are a couple of hundred. I was surprised on Good Friday in 1998, watching the agreement with the IRA from the University of Oxford, that there were just a few hundred. In Colombia we have 60 thousand terrorists.

And then there is talk of impunity. We accept the fact that here there was impunity of 98 percent, but we ask the international community and the United States Congress to recognize that we have made progress against impunity.

Do not judge us by our political discourse, but by our acts!

First, the most effective thing for defeating impunity is to make advancements against crime. With 30 or 35 thousand assassinations as there were in one year in Colombia, no justice system can handle that. The first factor to overcome impunity is an effective advance in the fight against criminals, in an armed confrontation by the Police Force, the Army, of all the public forces against criminals.

When criminals are not confronted by the institutional armed forces, they create a state of violence, a state of anarchy that

does not allow impunity to be overcome.

But this must also be taken into account: the country introduced the accusatory penal system, modifying its codes just last year. We have only had since last year to be able to advance in the implementation of the accusatory penal system. The Office of the Public Prosecutor was given an additional budget of 70 million dollars. And we do not have extra money here – here we experience a critical scarcity of resources.

The government did not hesitate in attending the claim by the Supreme Court of Justice – and its President is here with us – to provide the budget resources to allow the Supreme Court of Justice to have its own investigative body.

Congress has just approved the Development Plan that gives authorization to continue to strengthen the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

Here we had 98 percent impunity, but our efforts are not in vain.

I can accept from the democratic congressmen that there is much left to do here to defeat impunity,

but they have to remember what we have done!

In recent months the independent justice system, supported and respected by the government, has pronounced 47 sentences, convicting 59 people for having participated in assassinations of union leaders.

At the same time, in an evaluation done two weeks ago by the justice system and the Minister of the Interior of the Law of Justice and Peace, it turned out that the first 26 testimonies served to shed light on 106 crimes, many of them against union leaders.

We have an agreement under the leadership of the International Labor Organization (ILO) involving the government, businessmen, and unions, to defeat impunity relative to the assassination of the members of union organizations. I went over it with businessmen and workers yesterday.

Please, the international community must know this: this challenge to our democracy has not yet been won, but we are winning.

And I know, Generals Padilla de León and Naranjo Trujillo, that we

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are going to enlist additional efforts to be able to tell the world that Colombia has ended the tragedy of the assassination of workers and teachers.

In the same way that we are ending the assassination of journalists. When I came to the Presidency, Colombia had suffered through years in which 15 journalists were killed each year. This year not one has been assassinated.

The dismantling of the paramilitaries and the weakening of the guerrillas has produced the result that in our country today journalists feel freer.

We have been taking the rifle off the shoulder of the guerrillas. We have been taking the rifle off the shoulder of the paramilitaries, so that they can state their opinions, write, and analyze in a country that is pleased to guarantee the full exercise of their freedoms!

Please, gentlemen in the United States Embassy, let the North American Congress know, because we cannot accept for the FTA to be approved in Panama and Peru, and Colombia be punished as a result of this battle. To be treated as a pariah! That is unacceptable! We recognize everything we still have to do, but we ask that everything we have honorably done and are doing be recognized.

## PARAMILITARIES

Let's look now at the topic of paramilitaries.

An illustrious analyst in this capital city of the Republic suggested that Uribe, in order to free himself from the accusation of being a paramilitary member, had to dismantle the paramilitary groups.

This analyst was unaware that I have played my political career without reservations. That analyst ignored the fact that I have

been an honored combatant for democracy, in the most difficult of jobs. That analyst ignored that I have put my neck in the guillotine during the 30 years of my political career to combat crime.

But let's give a response to the world. I do not need to be pressured to confront the paramilitary groups. Our confrontation with the paramilitary groups began with our first confrontation with the guerrillas, at five in the afternoon on Wednesday, August 7, 2002, and at five thirty in the morning of that August 8<sup>th</sup> in Valledupar.

Out of Christian and Democratic convictions, out of a yearning to be effective in our purpose of leaving a better Colombia for the generations to come, we have walked a road exclusively dedicated to the democratic institutions.

In this area I have said what I am going to repeat today. We could have taken the opportunity to secretly unite with the paramilitary movement, to send them a message to cease the massacres and help us to fight the guerrillas. Perhaps we would be further ahead in dismantling the ELN and the FARC, but that is not our road.

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Our conviction has been one only: institutionality. Fighting all terrorists equally, exclusively through the institutional armed forces of the Nation.

This is a road that in the short run may not be the most effective. But it is the road that provides the most reconciliation and confidence, which is what this country needs for the years to come and for the generations to come.

And the results are there. Our Democratic Security Policy pressured the demobilization of 40 thousand terrorists, more than 30 thousand from the poorly named

paramilitaries, and so far 10 thousand from the guerrillas. This has no precedent in the world. The results are there: 1,700 paramilitaries killed before, and now 400 who tried to rearm. Thousands captured before, now more than 800 who attempted to rearm.

I repeat today: we have suspended extradition procedures in five cases, because they have helped to demobilize 30 thousand paramilitaries. But those recently captured, such as Mr. Veloza – known by the name «H.H.»- and Mr. Salomón, whom the competent authorities accuse of having been second in command in the organization of Jorge 40, have been detained because they did not submit to the Law of Justice and Peace. The government will not present them as being eligible for the benefit of a reduced sentence under that law. And besides, they are requested in extradition, and the Supreme Court of Justice has given approval, so we will proceed to extradite them.

And let me talk about the paramilitary phenomenon.

Now that we are seeking to bring the truth to light, we cannot lose sight of one of the reasons for the

truth: historic memory. What happened must be told, but we must also tell of the causes that produced this phenomenon of cruelty.

I was a student at my alma mater, a public and democratic and fighting university, the University of Antioquia, at the beginning of the seventies. They made us think that the world had but once course: socialism as the road to communism.

We left a class after studying Nicos Poulantzas and the construction of dictatorship by the proletariat, to go to another class to study Louis Althusser and his critique of the entire state apparatus, as the scaffolding for reproducing the conditions of exploitation.

And then we studied Marta Harnecker, which made us see that all business efforts are simply tricks to immorally capture surplus value produced by the workers.

And in Political Science they told us that the only valid state was a dictatorship by the proletariat, and that the only valid means of political action was class struggle.

And what great damage they did to Colombia. And how mistaken



they were about history. They did not anticipate, nor did they allow us to anticipate that in China Mao Tse-Tung would be followed by the openness of Deng Xiao-Ping. They did not anticipate, nor did they allow us to anticipate the fall of the Berlin wall or the collapse of the Soviet Union. They instilled in Colombia the class struggle and hatred. These Marxist guerrillas, these Marxist guerrillas created the paramilitaries.

I told Dr. Alicia Arango (Private Secretary of the Office of the President), that I saved the first page of the newspaper El Tiempo from yesterday, because it must be shown nationally and internationally. On the same page a Colombian hero, victim of the FARC, Sub Intendant Pichao appears...and on the same page you see the stories of the paramilitaries. I saved it to tell the world that the cruelty of the FARC engendered the cruelty of the paramilitaries.

Now, in our process to bring the truth to light we are seeking to learn about all the connections between the paramilitaries and politicians, those that have not been brought to light with the guerrillas.

This is one of the differences between this peace process and

prior processes. Who taught them to kill, and at the same time penetrate the worker's movement? The guerrillas. And who learned? The paramilitaries? Who taught how to kidnap and at the same time penetrate politics? The guerrillas. Who learned? The paramilitaries. Who taught to penetrate and threaten journalists while they produced massacres? The guerrillas. Who learned? The paramilitaries.

We must not lose sight of this. This cruel phenomenon of paramilitarism, that is now being dismantled, has an origin. This phenomenon was created by the FARC. That executioner that is still alive, and that we must exterminate from the face of our Nation, the FARC, created it.

What a huge task, General Padilla de León, General Naranjo Trujillo.

And the state was nowhere in sight. So many years of guerrilla action in the regions, and the state was nowhere to be seen. First substituted by the guerrillas, and then substituted by the paramilitary reaction. Guerrillas and paramilitaries competing in cruelty as executioners of the Colombian people. And the state absent, and the people of the regions subjected.

That is why I trust, Mr. President of the Supreme Court of Justice, I trust, Mr. Vice Public Prosecutor of the Nation, that the justice system in its wisdom will know how to establish differences: the difference between the Colombians who, subjected in the regions to the executioners of terrorism, had to go to them as a humanitarian gesture or as a result of insurmountable coercion, and the people who went to them with complicity.

I trust that for the good of the future of Colombia, so that this tragedy will not be repeated, that the justice system in its wisdom will clarify and establish the differences.

And let us continue with this topic. Today we have a paramilitary scandal, but there is paramilitary peace. That is good for the Congress of the United States to know. It is good for the international community to know.

We do not recognize paramilitary violence anymore. To some extent some sectors of Colombia legitimized them, as a reaction against the guerrillas. We have said the only valid and legitimate action against the guerrillas is that of the institutional armed forces.

Today the paramilitary leaders are in jail. And those that are not in jail must be taken prisoner. By your people, General Naranjo, by your people, General Padilla de León. They must be taken prisoner, and judged by the regular justice system without the benefits of the Law of Justice and Peace.

And those that attempt to rearm must be treated as simple terrorists. As simple drug traffickers. And they must be effectively fought by the public security forces.

We have a task ahead of us: to free our citizens in Nariño from the FARC, from a new armed organization called the «the ONG,» and «the rastrojos (the stubble).» Let us not talk about these bands as a remainder of the paramilitary phenomenon, but as part of a terrorist and drug trafficking phenomenon that wishes to abuse the Colombian people.

Side by side we have the FARC criminals, «the rastrojos,» and an organization of criminal bands, «the ONG.» We are going to finish them off!

Yesterday a fellow countryman said to me, «President, you have

announced three days in the Pacific at the end of May. You have said you are going to El Charco, to Buenaventura, to Juradó, where the San Juan River flows into the ocean, to...» (What's the name, a bit to the north, in Pizarro, where the river flows into the ocean?) Baudó». We are going there. He said to me, «President, don't go there. There is a group of criminals, the «ONG.» The FARC is there. The drug traffic is there.» That's where we are going!

General Padilla de León, General Naranjo: we must finish off these criminals. All of them! With anger, with passion. And my critics and my friends, starting with Lina, say to me, «Álvaro, don't get angry.» But if we don't get angry, we are not going to finish off these criminals. If we sit here and talk nicely over tea in Bogotá we are not going to finish them off. We have to finish them off with our anger showing, fighting them in the fields and in the cities of Colombia.

A Spanish philosopher once said, «rational conclusions by men for difficult tasks are only carried out when they are led by an emotion, and by a state of excitement in the soul, with total commitment to reaching those goals.»

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We are going to finish them off, Generals! So that new generations of Colombians can live in peace.

And may the United States Congress know that here there has been more determination to defeat terrorism, than the determination they may have had in so many international wars in which they have participated.

We have respected the loyal alliance with the United States, but we ask the Congress of the United States to respect the brave struggle by the Colombian people against expressions of terrorism.

Please, gentlemen from the Embassy, let these words not remain here in the General Santander School of Police. Transmit them fully to each one of the 465 members of the United States Congress.

## THE TRUTH

The topic of the truth. Last week members of the Conciliation Commission visited me, and the Episcopal Conference was in that meeting. What did they propose to me? They brought a proposal from Itagüí, to divide confessions into two parts. The crimes would be confessed to the Public Prosecutor, and the ties, secretly, as a sacrament, to the Catholic Church. They said it was necessary to take that road, because otherwise the country would be destabilized.»

I immediately answered no. I have sworn two times to fulfill the Constitution and the Law when I was inaugurated as the President of Colombia. The only thing for me to do is to procure the truth demanded by the law.

I also said, «From the point of view of the legitimacy of the state, the only thing that changes is that

anything they have to say in relation to the President of the Republic should be said to the public and to the competent authorities.»

This struggle must fill us with valor. It must fill us with energy.

We have promoted the truth without holding back. We have promoted the truth without distortion, because we also believe that is the only thing that will bring reconciliation in the end. Because we also believe that it will allow the citizens of Colombia and of the world to understand the dimensions of the tragedy that we have lived through, and thus avoid its repetition.

Upon realizing the dimensions of the tragedy, the commitment inside each Colombian will be greater, so that this beautiful collective group that is our Nation will prevent the repetition of the tragedy. And so that we may attain a nation without guerrillas, without paramilitaries, without drug trafficking, and without corruption. That is why we have promoted the truth.

I am not afraid that the truth will destabilize us. No, it does not destabilize. Truth without

distortions clears away the storm and consolidates democratic institutions. That is why we promote it.

So then, many are accused. I have also said that in Colombia the union workers have not been assassinated by companies, but by guerrillas and by paramilitaries. That is the fruit of my observation after so many years of life in Colombia.

I have also said that if a company ends up convicted by the justice system of having assassinated workers, the government will support the justice system so that it may be extremely relentless. We would not hesitate to request extraditions to judge those responsible under the full weight of our laws.

Despite my respect for the justice system, my way of thinking is that the union leaders assassinated in Colombia, from José Raquel Mercado, assassinated by the M-19, to those killed in recent years by the FARC and by the paramilitaries, have not been assassinated by businesses. They have been assassinated by guerrillas and paramilitaries.

Who has provoked this? The guerrillas who were the teachers, and

the paramilitaries, the promising students.

When the guerrillas combined massacres with penetration of the union movement, it created risks for those union leaders. What came next? The paramilitaries tried to do the same. And then came the blood bath. The paramilitaries assassinated union leaders, whom they accused of cooperating with the guerrillas, and the guerrillas assassinated union leaders, whom they accused of cooperating with the paramilitaries.

And be careful with this. Last year we lost ground on the good trend we had established until 2005, and that we are now recovering. Things got worse due to the confrontation between the terrorists in the FARC and in the ELN. It was no longer just a confrontation between guerrillas and paramilitaries. It was a confrontation between guerrilla groups.

So in Arauca, Generals, help the Public Prosecutor to bring the truth to light. One day they assassinate a teacher. The FARC assassinates him because they accuse him of cooperating with the ELN. The next day they

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assassinate a union leader in a hospital, because the ELN accuses him of cooperating with the FARC. The whole world must know this. And it is not because we are going to remain in mere analysis, but because we have to know the reality of things in order to be able to fight against them and recover peace for Colombia.

The case of Ingrid Betancourt, of our kidnapped countrymen. How good that we are learning the truth. How good that the government of France knows today that Ingrid Betancourt is not held there in the comforts of a five star hotel, but in the suffering of slavery. Executioners like that are unfamiliar with the history of humanity. Why are Europe and

the United States scandalized by the Nazi concentration camps, yet no similarly strong voices condemn the FARC's concentration camps?

The testimony of Sub Intendant Pinchao, hero of our nation, symbolic figure of this policy to present to the world, and the testimony of Chancellor Fernando Araujo, demonstrate that the FARC concentration camps are crueler than the Nazi concentration camps.

While Europe sought to negotiate with Hitler, Hitler advanced. We are not going to allow ourselves to be guided down a fool's road to hand the country over to the FARC.

Generals, we are going to rescue Ingrid Betancourt, I beg you. And I will give you but one virtue of mine to support this petition: my infinite love for Colombia. We are going to rescue Ingrid Betancourt. We are not going to play little games with the FARC criminals. Those criminals can forget about demilitarized zones!

While they cleared out Hungary and Czechoslovakia for Hitler, the Nazi movement advanced. In good faith here we cleared out Caguan, and the government then

in good faith was deceived by those criminals. We are not going to demilitarize a millimeter of the nation's territory. And we will not give an inch on the rescue of Ingrid Betancourt and our other countrymen that are captive with her.

And let the Congress of the United States have no doubt, because we are also going for a military rescue of the three North Americans who are held captive by the FARC in Colombian territory. Here there is no vacillation in the fight against terrorism.

Last night some journalists who sacrifice all to constantly cover these speeches asked me, «President, are you going to free the FARC members in jail after the FARC did not accept?» I said I am not negotiating with that criminal Raúl Reyes. I am not negotiating with that pack of criminals. What we are doing here is seeking the release of our countrymen and we are going to move ahead, with the aid of the Procurator General, with the wise counsel of the justice system, with counsel from the international community, we are going to move ahead on the task of releasing many FARC members from prison.

We are working with the Minister of the Interior to find the legal mechanism to do it, and we are going to do it, and they are going to leave jail with a commitment to not return to crime. They are going to leave jail with a commitment to be under the tutelage of perhaps the Catholic Church. Because we are not going to negotiate with Raúl Reyes and company, but neither are we going to hold back on any effort to free our fellow citizens who are kidnapped.

It is the FARC that does not want the humanitarian agreement. The FARC wants the demilitarization so that it can continue to deceive the Colombian people. What hurts the FARC is that the government got in the way of their violent takeover of Colombia. What hurts those criminals is that they are no longer the most important figures in the interest of the public.

We have not lost our memory. Let us not be upset by the audiences of the Law of Justice and Peace. Remember that we had Raúl Reyes and Marulanda and Jojoy on TV deceiving the Colombian people during those years of Caguán. They are no longer the main actors. How good to have

substituted the terrorist councils in Caguán on Saturday television programs with the Community Councils of the poor people of Colombia on the Institutional Channel on Saturdays.

Let us not forget these things, or forget the guerrillas who leave jail, and are reinserted into society with the commitment to not rejoin the guerrillas. We are going to make them into our allies in our beautiful cause of reestablishing peace in Colombia. We are going to make them our allies in the beautiful cause of a pluralistic Colombia, of a Colombia without exclusions and without class hatred, without violence, and with full exercise of freedoms. We are going to convert those guerrillas who leave jail into our allies in the goal of freeing our kidnapped fellow countrymen.

General Naranjo, you have received your command in the midst of a light rain, in the midst of the joy of a land that flowers when the rain falls. After the rain the earth flowers, and under your command of the Police Force, may security flower.

My dear General, all you members of the Police, may this be the commitment of all. Co-

lombia without the FARC secretariat. Let us finish off those spoiled terrorists of Reyes, Marulanda, and Jojoy. Let interceptions be done with legal authorization to finish off those criminals, not to restrict the liberty or constrain the individuality of Colombians.

General Naranjo, let the paramilitaries who have not submitted to the law be brought quickly to prison, beginning with Vicente Castaño. General Naranjo, let the drug trafficking criminals, Varela, Diego Montoya, together with the ONG in Nariño, the rastrojos, be quickly dismantled. Let Colombia demonstrate by its actions that this is a country that is on its feet, fighting to end, once and for all, these years of suffering from terrorism.

Let it be a soul commitment, this effort you are beginning in the Police Force, to contribute in such a way that new generations of Colombians can live happily in the noble land of our nation.

A warm greeting to the Police Force of Colombia at this time of definition, and long live our Colombian Nation.





