



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Press Statement

**Philip T. Reeker, Deputy Spokesman**

Washington, DC

July 8, 2003

## **Colombia: Determination and Certification of Colombian Government and Armed Forces with Respect to Human Rights Related Conditions**

On July 7, 2003, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell determined and certified to Congress that the Colombian Government and Armed Forces are meeting the statutory criteria related to human rights and severing ties to paramilitary groups. These conditions are that the Colombian Armed Forces are suspending military officers credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights or to have aided or abetted paramilitary organizations; cooperating with civilian prosecutors and judicial authorities in prosecuting and punishing such members; severing links with paramilitary organizations; and executing outstanding orders for the capture of paramilitary leaders; and that the Colombian Government is prosecuting and punishing those members of the Armed Forces credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights or to have aided or abetted paramilitary organizations.

The Secretary's determination is based on a thorough, careful evaluation of the conditions in U.S. law and the relevant actions and policies of the Government of Colombia and the Colombian Armed Forces. The process leading to the determination was not intended to be a complete review of the human rights situation in Colombia, but was focused strictly on the statutory criteria. The Secretary made the decision to certify based on our discussions with the Government of Colombia and Colombia's Armed Forces, consultations with a wide range of international and Colombian non-governmental organizations active on human rights issues, and information provided by our Embassy in Bogotá.

Human rights are central to our policy in Colombia. Despite notable progress, we recognize that more needs to be done to improve the human rights performance of the Armed Forces, including ending military-paramilitary collaboration. President Uribe shares our concern and is committed to working with us on concrete measures the Government of Colombia should take to achieve these objectives.

Section 564(a)(1) of the FY 2003 Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act provides that up to 75 percent of foreign assistance funds for Colombia may be obligated prior to a determination and certification by the Secretary of State pursuant to paragraph (2), which further provides that up to 12.5 percent of the remaining 25 percent may be obligated only after the Secretary of State has made a determination and certification with respect to certain human rights related conditions.

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