



Press Statement
Tom Casey, Acting Spokesman
Washington, DC
August 3, 2005

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

On August 1, 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice determined that there is sufficient progress to certify to Congress that the Colombian Government and Armed Forces are meeting statutory criteria related to human rights and severing ties to paramilitary groups.

Promoting respect for human rights is central to our policy in Colombia. While there has been progress, we also recognize that more needs to be done to improve the human rights situation, sever military-paramilitary ties, and end impunity in Colombia. Under Secretary R. Nicholas Burns met with President Uribe and key members of his cabinet and staff during a July 26-27 visit to Bogotá. In those meetings, the Government of Colombia agreed to expedite resolution of the most critical cases of human rights abuses and further demonstrated its commitment through new appointments to its senior leadership.

We expect continued high-level attention to resolving human rights concerns from the government of Colombia. President Uribe and other senior Colombian officials have assured us they are committed to working with us on concrete measures the Government of Colombia should take to achieve these important objectives.

This August's determination and certification by Secretary Rice, which is effected pursuant to Sections 563 (a) (3) and 556(a) (2) of the FY 2004 and FY 2005 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act (FOAA), permits the final 12.5 percent of withheld FY 2004 funds, and the first 12.5 percent of withheld FY 2005 funds, to be obligated. The last 12.5 percent of withheld FY 2005 funds cannot be obligated until the Secretary makes another certification and determination. Under Section 563(a)(1) of the FY 2004 FOAA and Section 556(a) (1) of the FY 2005 FOAA, 75 percent of assistance to the Colombian Armed Forces has already been obligated without conditions, and the first 12.5 percent of withheld FY 2004 funds were obligated following the Secretary's certification for Colombia in September 2004.

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