



THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
August 17, 2004

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary

The President has authorized the Department of State to continue assistance to Colombia in carrying out an "Airbridge Denial Program" against civil aircraft reasonably suspected of trafficking in illicit drugs. In granting this authorization, the President has determined that Colombia has put in place appropriate procedures to protect against loss of innocent life in connection with interdiction operations. The United States Department of State, with the support of other U.S. agencies, has the ability to continue to work with the Government of Colombia to ensure effective counternarcotics operations while observing strict adherence to agreed-upon and well-established safety procedures.

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