



## EMBASSY *of* COLOMBIA

W A S H I N G T O N

# THE URIBE ADMINISTRATION'S DEMOCRATIC SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

The Colombian people and their institutions face a number of serious interrelated threats including the illegal drug trade, kidnapping and extortion, money laundering, and the trafficking of arms, ammunition and explosives. In order to address the country's security situation, the Uribe Administration developed and is currently implementing a long-term strategy, entitled the "Democratic Security and Defense Policy."

### *Goals*

The basic principle behind the strategy is to establish and reinstate the rule of law in Colombia and protect the population. The security strategy takes into account that this is not just a military matter. The policy's objective is to weaken illegal narco-terrorist groups through a variety of political, economic and military means and force a negotiated settlement that leads to a lasting and democratic peace. In order to ensure a State presence – that is, restoring law and order and regaining control over the entire Colombian territory, the Democratic Security Policy sets out to:

- ▶ **Consolidate State control** throughout Colombia to deny sanctuary to terrorists and perpetrators of violence;
- ▶ **Protect the population** through the increase of State presence and a reduction in violence;
- ▶ **Destroy the illegal drug trade** in Colombia to eliminate the revenues which finance terrorism and generate corruption and crime;
- ▶ **Maintain a deterrent military** capability as a long-term guarantee of democratic sustainability; and
- ▶ **Transparently and efficiently manage resources** as a means to reform and improve the performance of government.

### *Results*

President Uribe maintains the confidence of a vast majority of Colombians due, in large part, to his government's actions under the Democratic and Security Defense Policy, which has achieved several significant results. Many of the improvements in the country's security situation on both a qualitative and quantitative level have been achieved through close collaboration with the United States. The pillar of this close collaboration is Plan Colombia.

Among many of the policy's achievements are the following: the murder rate is down; kidnappings have declined; aerial spraying has decreased the cultivation of coca crops; the presence of security forces has significantly increased; human rights violations have dropped; and public security has improved.

The policy has achieved these goals by:

- ▶ **More actively engaging the civilian population:** The Government has encouraged the voluntary cooperation of citizens with authorities. Research on the prevention of crime suggests that it is more effective with citizen involvement. A network of citizens will act as a “neighborhood watch” in both urban and rural areas to provide authorities with information that will help prevent crime and pursue criminals. In addition, the government has implemented a civilian informer network to reward those who provide information that leads to the prevention of a terrorist attack or the arrest of members of one of the illegal armed groups.
- ▶ **Support soldiers:** In an effort to increase military and State presence in rural areas, the Government has recruited “support soldiers” that combine productive activities in the countryside with military service. These support soldiers will be fully trained and will improve security in the more remote regions of the country.
- ▶ **Increasing intelligence capacity:** Important steps have been taken towards a more coherent intelligence operation by all different agencies with the establishment of a Joint Intelligence Committee. The revamping of the intelligence system will result in greater real-time intelligence processing and analysis. Not only are State forces gathering the correct information in an effective and efficient manner, but analysis is being carried out at greater speeds and is more readily available to all relevant security forces.
- ▶ **Reinstating control over national roads:** A core component of the security strategy is to regain control over our sovereign territory by maintaining security on Colombia's national road system. The road security operation has shown significant positive results, as demonstrated by increased traffic on inter-municipal roads. This effort includes weekend caravans that have made it safe again for people to travel outside their cities. This has had a positive impact on local economies and on people's sense of security.
- ▶ **Demobilizing illegal groups:** Colombian State institutions are jointly working to strengthen mechanisms to promote and regulate individual voluntary demobilization of members of illegal groups. Demobilization reduces the violent actors operating in the country and affects morale among illegal groups. Only in 2003, 3,600 members of terrorist organizations were demobilized (60% of the Uribe Administration's goal for the 4-year term).
- ▶ **Integrating armed forces services:** Service integration has begun in earnest in Colombia with the creation of the Sixth Brigade and its first results are apparent. The change being introduced in Colombia is much like the Goldwater-Nickles Defense Reorganization Act. The Act undertook a systemic reform of the U.S. military and led to outstanding performance in the Persian Gulf War by modifying the chain-of-command and service rivalry problems.
- ▶ **Increasing defense spending:** The Government has generated new revenues to fight terrorism and violence. The Government raised taxes on upper-income individuals and corporations to generate an additional \$800 million in revenue to pay for 6,000 new elite soldiers, 10,000 new police officers and as many as 100,000 civilian informants who will provide intelligence to authorities. In fact, some companies and individuals contributed the tax even though they were not obliged to do so, in a clear demonstration of the country's mood and commitment to fighting terror.