



June 6, 2007

VIA FAX

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

Since the year 2000, the United Steelworkers (USW) has been a leader in defending trade unionists in Colombia against violent repression. Colombia continues to lead the world in trade unionist killings, accounting for three-fifths of the trade union assassinations in the world.

Of the over 4,000 trade unionist killings since 1986, only a handful of those cases have ever been successfully prosecuted.

The United Steelworkers (USW) gained first-hand knowledge of these human rights violations in Colombia when we sent a U.S. delegation there. Our delegation heard scores of workers tell stories about abuses, including threats of violence and death, forced exile, kidnapping and torture.

During this mission, two local trade union leaders at the Colombian mining operations of U.S.-based Drummond Company were dragged off a company bus and brutally murdered by paramilitary forces. Shocked by these murders and the subsequent murder of another union leader at Drummond, the USW took the unprecedented step of filing an Alien Tort Claims Act ("ATCA") against the Drummond Company.

Meanwhile, while the Attorney General of Colombia claims to be investigating Drummond for the murders of three trade unionists in 2001, the USW is aware of witnesses in protective custody in Colombia who have knowledge about Drummond's connection with these murders, but who have never been asked about this knowledge.

Nearly every day, new evidence emerges linking Colombian paramilitaries, responsible for horrific human rights violations and drug trafficking, to ever-higher levels of the Colombian government.

While the U.S. has been providing the DAS with assistance to protect trade unionists, the former head of the DAS Jorge Noguera is currently under indictment for colluding with illegal paramilitary groups that kill trade unionists.

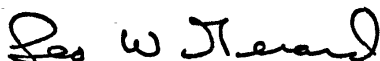
Recently the Fiscalía of Colombia exposed an attempt to assassinate Senator Gustavo Petro. According to the Fiscalía, this plot was hatched by Julian Villate. Of note is that Mr. Villate in August 2004 admitted to being one of the leaders of "Operation Dragon," a plan to put 175 social and labor leaders under surveillance and to neutralize these leaders in part by assassination. At the time, Mr. Villate indicated that the Colombia Ministry of Interior and the DAS knew of and approved this plot. Notwithstanding Mr. Villate's admitted involvement in "Operation Dragon," he remains at large and gainfully employed at the Drummond Company.

Congress can not ignore the fact that after all the aid that has been given to the Colombian military for the purpose of coca eradication, in 2006 there has been an 8% increase in coca production in Columbia. As our own Drug Enforcement Agency has concluded, both the Colombian military and the paramilitaries are the major drug traffickers in Colombia.

These facts lead one to conclude the government of Colombia is not serious about ending the slaughter of trade unionists or fighting terror and drugs in Colombia and therefore is not entitled to any further military assistance or preferential trade benefits. And even as to non-military aid, we would insist on a strict auditing procedure that ensures that money appropriated for certain purposes is indeed used for those purposes.

In conclusion, Congress should discontinue all further military assistance to Colombia, condition non-military assistance with strict auditing procedures and refuse to approve the bi-lateral free trade agreement.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

LWG/pak