

RELEASE IN PART B6

UNCLASSIFIED

WHA/AND:TSTEERS-GONZALEZ
08/26/2009 202-647-4173
THE SECRETARY

WHA:CKELLY
WHA/FO:MDRUCKER - OK
WHA/AND:KWHITAKER - OK
WHA/CAR:VDEPIRRO - OK +

WHA/AND, WHA/BSC, WHA/CEN/PAN, WHA/PPCP, WHA/USOAS

IMMEDIATE ASUNCION, +

PRIORITY WHADP, +

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL, MARR, OPDC, CO

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE/LETTER PRIOR TO AUGUST 28 UNASUR SUMMIT

REF: A. STATE 86734
B. STATE 82581

1. (SBU) This is an action request, see paras 4 - 6.
2. (SBU) On August 14, the USG and Colombian government provisionally agreed ad referendum to the text of a bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) (septel). We expect the final agreement may be signed in Bogota in about a month, following a final review by both sides. As noted in reftels, the DCA would permit the United States access to several Colombian military bases and facilitate effective bilateral cooperation on security matters in Colombia. It would not/not authorize establishment of any U.S. bases or ports, nor would it result in an overall increase in the number of U.S. military personnel or U.S.-citizen civilian contractors in Colombia.
3. (SBU) On August 18, the Secretary and Colombian FM Jaime Bermudez met in Washington to discuss the DCA, including the importance of coordinating our public affairs and diplomatic strategies (septel to follow). There is some concern that the upcoming Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) summit would become a regional referendum on the DCA. Colombian President Alvaro Uribe

will attend the summit provided that a full range of regional security matters can be discussed, not just the DCA. In this context, we are reaching out to selected UNASUR members to ask that they raise other regional security issues beyond the DCA.

4. (SBU) Action requested for Santiago, Asuncion, and Lima: that you find an opportunity prior to the August 28 summit to raise the importance of discussing the full range of regional security topics during the summit, and not merely the DCA, with appropriate high levels of host government.

5. (SBU) Action requested for all: that Ambassadors to UNASUR member states deliver the attached letter from the Secretary to host governments in advance of the August 28 summit.

6. (U) Begin text:

Dear Madam/Mr. Minister:

I wanted to take a moment to write to you and your colleagues about the upcoming summit of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), scheduled for August 28 in Bariloche. UNASUR provides an important forum to address the issues and challenges that affect the region. The United States supports the formation and effective functioning of regional groups such as UNASUR. They promote stability, cohesion, and leadership on key issues, and ensure the best possible communication between nations.

As you know, our common neighbor, Colombia, has faced an ongoing threat from an unholy alliance of terrorist groups funded by the insidious illegal narcotics trade. These terrorists have threatened the security of average Colombians and sought to overthrow by violence and corruption successive, democratically-elected Colombian governments. The actions of these groups also threaten the security of other countries in the hemisphere, sometimes directly, in many ways indirectly. Over the last decade, Colombians have beat back this threat, to the benefit of us all. My country is proud of the role we have been able to play in this effort.

This battle is far from won. Our governments and people are collectively forced to find ways to protect ourselves and our institutions from such threats. I am certain these very issues will be addressed at the upcoming summit, including the recently concluded Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA). We understand the

sensitivities associated with U.S. military activities in the hemisphere and the questions your government may have regarding the scope and extent of this agreement. I hope the efforts made in the last few weeks by both my government and the Colombian government have helped address those questions.

I would like to take this opportunity to make several key points about the DCA. First, this agreement is a bilateral agreement with Colombia to deepen our cooperation on security challenges within Colombia, permitting U.S. access to specified agreed Colombian facilities to undertake mutually agreed activities on Colombian territory. It is a bilateral agreement that does not pose any threat or risk for the citizens of other nations. On the contrary, our mutual efforts to combat drug trafficking benefit the security of the region as a whole. The agreement does not permit the establishment of U.S. bases in Colombia. It will not result in an increase in the U.S. military presence in Colombia, and we do not seek any such increase. Activities undertaken at or from Colombian bases by U.S. persons will be coordinated in advance by Colombian authorities. All activities will be based on full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity of states, and non-interventionism.

We are committed to being as forthcoming as possible in addressing concerns about this bilateral agreement with nations in the region, and we have endeavored to do so in recent weeks through a variety of mechanisms. As concerns or questions arise, I hope that you will feel free to reach out to us to seek clarification.

The UNASUR summit provides a unique opportunity for the organization to address a range of security issues that affect the hemisphere, and I salute your leadership for deciding to discuss these matters. The security challenges affecting our hemisphere, and your nations in particular, are pressing and grave. Our firm belief is that a collective and collaborative approach to these matters is essential. It is our commitment to work with UNASUR nations to help address these concerns.

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

End text.

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WHA/PPC:JBISCHOFF - OK
WHA/PA:SMANGIARACINA - OK
WHA/OAS:LANSELEM - OK
PM:TCOUNTRYMAN - OK
PM/SNA:CCONNELL - OK
PM/RSAT:SWOLF - OK
D(S):LCUE - OK (PROVISIONAL)
S/P:PHARRELL - OK
P:PAGUILERA - OK
OSD: [] - OK
JCS: [] - INFO
SOUTHCOM: [] - OK
L/WHA:DHUITEMA - OK
L/PM:MGUARIN - INFO
L/LEI:PPRUGH - INFO
NSC:LROSSELLO - OK

Y

IMMEDIATE BRASILIA
IMMEDIATE BUENOS AIRES
IMMEDIATE CARACAS
IMMEDIATE GEORGETOWN
IMMEDIATE LA PAZ
IMMEDIATE LIMA
IMMEDIATE MONTEVIDEO
IMMEDIATE PARAMARIBO
IMMEDIATE QUITO
IMMEDIATE SANTIAGO

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PRIORITY BOGOTA

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