

# Colombia: State Terror in the Name of Peace

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## Introduction

The first casualty of state terror is the corruption of language, the invention of euphemisms, where words mean their opposite and slogans cover great crimes: There is no longer a world consensus that condemns crimes against humanity. This is because mass murder and assassinations secure investor 'confidence', because Indians are dispossessed so the mines can be exploited; oil workers disappear so the petroleum will flow; and the international financial press praises the success of el Presidente for "pacifying the country".

When narco-presidents are embraced by the leaders of North America and Europe, it is evident that criminals have become respectable the respectable have become criminals.

But other voices from other regions have put the past and present war criminals on trial. In Argentina, the Generals of the disappeared are spending their last years behind bars. Arrest warrants against Israeli military commanders have been issued in Spain, Dubai and elsewhere. Tony Blair, complicit in Bush's genocidal war in Iraq runs from a citizens' arrest in Malaysia for his war crimes. Colombia, the US and Israel, the epicenters of state terror, stand alone in the General Assembly of Nations, condemned but not yet on trial. Their days of impunity are ending. Unending wars, rampant corruption, massive financial swindles - the inner rot - are eroding the outward facades of military power.

Writers and intellectuals have a role to play in hastening this process by exposing the lies that sustain the killing machines. Let us proceed:

## Lies of Our Times

Democratic Security Doctrine (neither democratic nor for personal safety):

The corruption of language accompanies every great political crime. The notion of "Democratic Security" is no exception. In the current Colombian context, murdering leaders of social movements to secure the re-election of a party of political assassins is democratic. "Security" is the euphemism for hidden cemeteries of unmarked graves of unnamed persons. "Freedom of the Media" exists when it solemnly announces another "major military triumph"... the killing of unarmed peasants cultivating their fields.

Economists are "experts" when they proclaim that the economy is growing ... only the people are suffering. Politicians are "statesmen" when they declare they are "one with the people" - except for the 4 million forcibly dispossessed and the 300,000 family members of the dead and disappeared; the dead and dispossessed have yet to appreciate the One who affirms he is "with the People".

When el Presidente states that war is peace, militarization is security, inequalities are social justice: only those who fail to understand these Official Truths need fear a midnight knock on the door.

#### The Official Definition of Terrorist

This is a person or persons who fail to understand that the road to peace is through billions spent on warplanes, helicopter gun ships, military bases and subcontracting military advisers and mercenaries.

#### Enemies of peace talks

According to el Presidente, those human rights groups who oppose killing adversaries and who propose dialogues instead of monologues are the enemies of peace; only monologues ensure that there is one “official truth” and no other.

#### The Price of Prosperity

According to el Presidente and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), poverty, unemployment and low wages are the price of democracy and prosperity ... but only the workers and peasants pay the price and only the rich prosper.

#### A Novel Definition of Sovereignty

According to el Presidente, ceding territory to a foreign imperial power to build seven military bases operating with their own laws and jurisdiction is the new definition of sovereignty. Sovereignty equals foreign occupation.

#### The New Definition of Subversion

According to el Presidente, humanitarian accords and initiatives for peace are pretexts for subversion; their advocates know in advance they will be rejected by the State. Instead, dehumanizing the enemy and the advocates of peace facilitates the bombing of subversive villages, the ‘real’ enemies of peace.

#### On Praise and Condemnation

What does it tell you about a President when he is condemned by all the human rights groups and social movements and praised by all the financial newspapers and military institutions?

#### A President with World Records

There is no doubt that President Uribe will enter the Guinness Book of World Records.

El Presidente is backed by more narco-congress members than any other President or Prime Minister in the world (including Afghanistan).

El Presidente presides over the displacement of more people (4 million refugees) in the shortest time (8 years) than any President in the world. (It took Israel over half a century).

El Presidente has allowed more US military bases than all the Latin American presidents combined. El Presidente presided over the killing of more trade union activists and leaders

than any other leader in the world (1,500). For every first in death and dispossession, President Uribe deserves a new award, an Ignoble Prize.

But he is not alone. Three US Presidents, Democrats and Republicans, Clinton, Bush and Obama provided billions of dollars in arms, and hundreds of advisers to promote 30,000 narco death squad killers and 300,000 soldiers who are instrumental in Uribe's achievement of "world records".

Let us remember, and punish, past and present crimes against humanity, but let us also move ahead in the quest for dialogue among those willing because they are the majority who believe in peace through Justice.

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