

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 24, 2010

Dear Representative Baldwin:

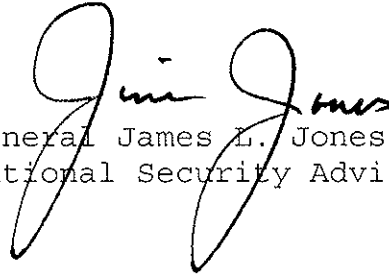
Thank you for your letter to President Obama regarding U.S. security assistance to Colombia in light of the United States-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA). The President and I both appreciate your concern about Colombia's human rights situation. This Administration is firmly committed to working with the Colombian Government to identify areas where Colombia can make lasting changes that will continue to reduce abuses and impunity. As you are aware, the President expressly raised with President Alvaro Uribe his concerns regarding extrajudicial killings in Colombia when they met last year in Washington. Officials at all levels of the United States Government continue to draw attention to human rights concerns in the context of our deep and positive relationship with Colombia.

As for the recently signed United States-Colombia DCA, we believe that this bilateral accord is a timely and crucial mechanism that allows us to update several long-standing security agreements with the Colombian Government. As our partners throughout the Americas have come to recognize, in light of the full text of the signed agreement that we have made public, it does not set the way for an increased U.S. military presence in Colombia. In fact, the number of U.S. military personnel stationed in Colombia has continued to drop recently, a trend that we expect will continue in future years.

Also, consistent with the President's commitment to help Colombia consolidate the important security advances of the past decade made with U.S. assistance, the President's FY 2011 budget underscores the importance of ensuring that our assistance to Colombia is broad based and consistent with our interests and values.

I strongly encourage you to keep our National Security Staff abreast of any new developments on this important topic, and I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this and other national security matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Jones", written in a cursive style with large loops.

General James L. Jones, USMC, Ret.
National Security Advisor

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-4902