



Leo W. Gerard
International President

May 15, 2008

By Facsimile Transmission (202) 225-8259

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

Re: Extradition of Paramilitary Leaders

I am writing in regard to the serious concerns raised by the extradition of 14 top Colombian paramilitary leaders to the United States. While there are, of course, some positive results which will flow from this extradition – first and foremost, the assurance that these leaders will no longer be able to keep running their paramilitary units from their jail cells – there are also some very real potential negative consequences which need to be addressed.

A number of human rights and labor groups have expressed to us, as well as to the press, their concern that these extraditions will put a halt to the ongoing efforts in Colombia to obtain a full accounting of the paramilitaries' crimes, ascertain the whereabouts of hundreds of unmarked graves and continue to bring to justice Colombian government officials and businessmen (both Colombian and U.S.) who have collaborated with the paramilitaries in human rights abuses.

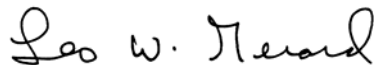
On the latter issue, for example, extradited paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso has information on the collaboration of U.S. banana companies (such as Dole & Del Monte) with paramilitary groups who killed 4,000 civilians in Antioquia. Mr. Mancuso has also claimed that the coal companies in the Cesar Department – which includes the Alabama-based Drummond Company, whom we have sued for the killing of three unionists in 2001 – have all made regular payments to the paramilitaries. In addition, a number of witnesses have claimed that Drummond made payments to extradited leader Rodrigo Tovar (alias, "Jorge 40") to carry out these killings.

It is critical that all steps be taken to ensure that all the evidence which these paramilitary leaders, and others like them, have about such crimes be preserved and brought to light. Given that, at least for the moment, it appears that they are going to be prosecuted for drug-related offenses only, it does not appear that the Justice Department intends to engage in such a process. Indeed, in his 60 Minutes interview this past Sunday, Salvatore Mancuso stated that the U.S. Justice Department never showed any interest in what he knew about, *inter alia*, U.S. corporate complicity with paramilitaries in Colombia. This raises the concern of whether, in fact, the Bush Administration, in authorizing these extraditions, actually intended to cover up the crimes of which these paramilitaries can speak.

In light of these concerns, we would respectfully request that the U.S. Congress take an active part in continuing the process, begun in Colombia, of obtaining evidence regarding serious human rights abuses which the extradited paramilitary leaders were involved in and/or of which they have knowledge. We believe that the U.S. Congress could assist in this matter by (1) helping labor and human rights groups in the U.S. and Colombia locate and have access to these paramilitary leaders for questioning; and (2) hold hearings in which the U.S. Congress would itself continue the work of information gathering begun in Colombia, albeit imperfectly, under the Justice & Peace Accords.

Thank you for your attention and assistance in this regard.

Sincerely,



Leo W. Gerard
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c: Honorable Richard Durbin, Senate Majority Whip
Honorable Edward Kennedy, Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Steny Hoyer, House Majority Leader
Honorable James Clyburn, House Majority Whip
Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee
Honorable George Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Education & Labor
Honorable Sander Levin, Chairman, House Subcommittee on Trade
Honorable William Delahunt, Chairman, International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight