

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2010

His Excellency
Álvaro Uribe Vélez
President of the Republic of Colombia
Bogota

Dear Mr. President:

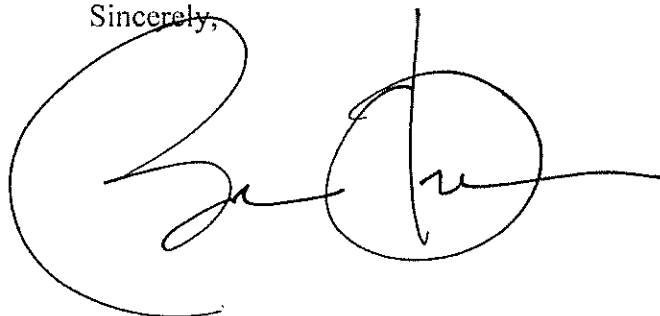
As you know, the recent decision by the Colombian Constitutional Court regarding a possible re-election referendum and your acceptance of the decision have generated great interest in the United States and elsewhere, as I know it has in Colombia itself.

This interest stems from the importance the developments hold not only for Colombia, but for the Americas as a whole as they demonstrate how functioning democracies, like Colombia, are governed by the rule of law and an abiding respect for their constitutional framework. By accepting, as a matter of course, the ruling from a co-equal branch of government, you provided an invaluable example that all citizens -- even Presidents -- must be subject to the law and accept the outcomes of their countries' democratic institutions.

This seemingly simple principle is too often ignored throughout the region and your clear acceptance of it will resonate in the Americas for years to come and form another vital chapter in your legacy. When you took office, Colombia was engulfed in violence and lawlessness that threatened the survival of the rule of law and Colombian democracy itself. Through your unyielding efforts and those of your fellow Colombians, this August you will be able to proudly turn over the reins to a country with a limitless future. That is a testament to the strength of your leadership, and the Colombian people.

The United States is pleased to have played a role over several administrations in helping Colombia make the advances it has in the past decade, and I reaffirm our continuing commitment to work with Colombia to deepen the cooperation and friendship our countries have enjoyed under your tenure. We are linked together by our strategic partnership and our commitment to democracy, human rights, social justice, and economic progress in the Americas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, written over the word "Sincerely,".