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<http://www.elcorreo.eu.org/Carta-abierta-de-James-Petras-al-Presidente-SarkozyJames-Petras-Open-Letter-to-President-Sarkozy>

Carta abierta de James Petras al Presidente SarkozyJames Petras Open Letter to President Sarkozy

- Empire et Résistance - Union Européenne - France -
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El reconocido sociólogo estadounidense James Petras publicó este lunes una carta abierta al presidente de Francia, Nicolás Sarkozy, a propósito de la intervención de éste en el proceso por un canje humanitario en Colombia.

[ANNCOL](#). Colombia, 13 de diciembre de 2007

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"Comparto su impulso humanitario para poner fin a los prisioneros políticos en Colombia. Sin embargo, debemos ser realistas al respecto : La libertad de los prisioneros políticos retenidos por las FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) depende de una negociación de dos partes que incluya la liberación de los insurgentes de las FARC de los calabozos del Estado colombiano", asegura Petras.

El estadounidense afirmó que la "muy publicitada intervención" de Sarkozy falló al no mencionar a los prisioneros políticos del Estado colombiano, "torturados y vejados por un presidente que tiene algunos congresistas cercanos esperando juicio por sus extendidos vínculos con escuadrones de la muerte paramilitares y narcotraficantes".

"Si quiere ser un mediador honesto o un consecuente líder humanitario, debe actuar imparcialmente y aplicar un espíritu de reciprocidad. Ha actuado, hasta los momentos, por una sola de las partes, algo que no conduce a una resolución positiva en el intercambio de prisioneros", agregó.

"Pareciera que Uribe es un político democrático, una afirmación que es contraria a todos los reportes de derechos humanos de Naciones Unidas, organizaciones colombianas, la Organización de Estados Americanos, Organización Internacional del Trabajo, que reportan y documentan que Colombia es el lugar más inseguro del mundo para periodistas, uniones de intercambio, abogados de derechos humanos y líderes pacifistas, debido al terrorismo financiado por el Estado", añadió.

Petras concluye afirmando que Sarkozy goza de la credibilidad política y el poder para "persuadir, presionar o arrastrar" a Uribe a la mesa de negociaciones para alcanzar la liberación de Ingrid Betancourt así como de los 500 prisioneros "que se pudren en agujeros en Colombia y los Estados Unidos" y lo exhorta a "que, ya que ha construido una relación tan carnal con su 'buen amigo' el presidente Bush, emplee todo su encanto en él y dígame que regrese a Colombia a los dos líderes de las FARC, como parte del intercambio de prisioneros, por los tres efectivos anti insurgencia que pagan cárcel en poder de las FARC", insiste Petras.

Open Letter to President Sarkozy

On the Humanitarian Exchange of Political Prisoners in Colombia and the United States

By JAMES PETRAS

[Counterpunch](#)

. December 12, 2007.

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I read with great interest your letter to FARC leader Manuel Marulanda. I share with you a humanitarian impulse to end the imprisonment of political prisoners in Colombia. However let us be clear, principled and realistic about this : The freedom of the political prisoners of the FARC is dependent on a quid pro quo - the liberation of the resistance fighters of the FARC in the dungeons of the Colombian state.

Your dramatic and highly publicized intervention has focused world public opinion on the prisoners held by the FARC, but you failed to mention the plight of the Colombian government's political prisoners, tortured and brutalized by a President, whose many closest Congressional associates are awaiting trial for their long-term ties to the paramilitary death squads and narco-traffickers.

Let us begins anew, President Sarkozy. If your want to be an honest mediator or consequential humanitarian leader you must act impartially with a spirit of reciprocity. You have, up to now, acted in a one-sided manner, which is not conducive to a positive resolution of the interchange of prisoners. In your short, highly publicized appeals you have not acted in good faith and equanimity.

For example, early in December you appealed 'solemnly' to the FARC (specifically to its Secretary Manuel Marulanda) to unilaterally release its prisoners including Ingrid Betancourt without any parallel appeal to President Uribe to release his prisoners and those held in the United States. Your appeal resembled more a publicity stunt with its empty substance and theatrical 'solemnity'. Do you think Latin America's most astute and legendary guerrilla leader would be intimidated by your rhetoric putting the onus 'for the life' of Ingrid on Marulanda's shoulders ? Your colonial double morality convinced no one and certainly did not advance the process of negotiations. Your ethical posturing may delight some middle age, ex-Maoists-turned soap opera philosophers in Paris, but has no place in dealing with serious and consequential revolutionaries.

Let me suggest that, since you have formed such a carnal relation with your 'good friend' President Bush, you turn your charm on him and tell him to return the two FARC leaders back to Colombia as part of the prisoner exchange for the three US counter-insurgency operatives serving time in a FARC jail. Reciprocity, Sir, is sine quo non of any negotiations among equals.

Secondly you have made a public issue of condemning the 'methods' and 'goals' of the FARC - but not Uribe. This is certainly not a way to begin negotiations. It gives the appearance that Uribe is a democratic politician which goes contrary to every United Nations, Colombian, Organization of American States, International Labor Organization, human rights report which document that Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world for journalists, trade unionists, human rights lawyers and peasant leaders because of state-sponsored terrorism. It is presumptuous of you, President Sarkozy, to question the moral credentials of the FARC since you and your Foreign Minister Kouchner have given the State of Israel your unconditional support despite the fact that they hold over 10,000 political prisoners, most of whom have been brutally tortured and many have never been officially charged or brought to trial. A regime like yours, whose foreign minister endorses the economic stranglehold (cutting food, medicine, water and electricity) on an entire people in Gaza and the US bloodbath in Iraq, has no moral authority to give lectures in 'methods' and 'goals'. Let me speak to the point, Mr. President : The FARC neither hold 10,000 political prisoners like your ally, the Jewish State, nor invades and colonizes independent countries like your 'good friend' President Bush. So having lifted the veil of Gallic hypocrisy, let us turn to some of the real issues that confront the opening of negotiations.

Location of the negotiations

The FARC's insistence on a specific location is not a choice of foliage and fauna, but a guarantee of their security in the face of numerous broken agreements with the Uribe regime. President Sarkozy, your insistence on, indeed demand for, 'photographic proof' of the survival of Ingrid Betancourt led to the most recent example of Uribe's

fundamental untrustworthiness : The emissaries carrying the 'proofs' to you via Venezuela were arrested and jailed, blatantly violating an implicit understanding of safe conduct among yourself, President Uribe and President Chavez.

Between 1984-1990, the FARC reached an understanding with Presidents Betancourt and Gaviria to give the electoral process a chance. Many former FARC members with other progressive individuals and leftist groups formed the 'Patriotic Union' (UP). In the course of 5 years, over 5500 members of the UP were murdered, including two Presidential candidates, destroying those electoral methods so close to your heart. President Sarkozy, I call these events to your attention, in case your advisers have failed to inform you of the dangers and pitfalls facing any FARC negotiations with the Colombian Government. More to the point, the FARC's insistence on location is to protect its leaders and negotiators from any sudden move by Uribe to break off negotiations and capture or kill FARC leaders.

You should be aware that Uribe has accompanied his call for a reduced territorial de-militarized zone with a \$100 million dollar reward to FARC members to assassinate or turn over their leaders to the Colombian Army.

Uribe's Unilateral Imposition of Conditions

President Sarkozy, as you well know, to enter into any negotiations, one side cannot unilaterally and arbitrarily impose conditions that prejudice the other side, as Uribe has done. The 'paramilitary' President has not only decided the location, but also the length and breadth of the de-militarized zone, the limited time span for a settlement, the subsequent behavior of the released resistance fighters and a Red Cross visit to the clandestine jail of the FARC, as well as insisting on a slanderous characterization of his negotiating partners.

The reduced size of the de-militarized region (as well as its choice and time span) raises deep suspicion about the motives of the government. A smaller demilitarized zone makes it easier for the Uribe regime to invade and capture FARC negotiators. A larger de-militarized zone does not affect the substantive issues to be negotiated ; it facilitates negotiations by increasing the security of the negotiators.

Secondly, the negotiations cannot be arbitrarily decided in the course of a single month as there are numerous issues of great complexity that need to be resolved : First and foremost the inclusion of the two FARC leaders jailed in the United States thanks to their arbitrary transfer by Uribe.

There is no way in the world that the FARC will agree to allowing a Red Cross delegation to FARC's political prisoners, which facilitates Uribe's US high tech advisers to detect and attack FARC's location. Uribe's insane obsession to physically annihilate the FARC as shown in his latest outburst should lay to rest his claim for Red Cross humanitarian assistance.

Needless to say, Uribe's call on the 'impartial' Church to assist in negotiations is a joke in bad taste : The Church has been an uncritical apologist of Uribe, his political organization and his jailed death-squad Senators and Congress-members (thirty in number). There are several Colombian human rights groups, which have been recognized internationally for their courage and impartiality including Justice and Peace and Reiniciar that can better serve any intermediary role.

President Sarkozy, despite the limitations and your predictable moral posturing, you have successfully exposed Uribe's failed and dangerous policies of 'freeing' the FARC prisoners by force. You have, through promises and threats, got Uribe to partially agree to the reasonable FARC demand for a de-militarized zone for the negotiations. Concessions wrought from Uribe however are elusive - what he gives with one hand, he takes back with the other : He multiplies unacceptable conditions precisely to undermine the negotiations. For it is in the details that the process will progress.

Carta abierta de James Petras al Presidente SarkozyJames Petras Open Letter to President Sarkozy

Now here is the danger, President Sarkozy. Your opening gesture, and more your successful pressure to secure a terrain for negotiations has won you the support of many French citizens deeply committed to the freeing of their compatriot, Ingrid. You have become the darling of the French and Western media. I will not hold that against you ; You took interest, you spoke, you actedbut you have not yet succeeded.

To even begin the negotiations, you must once again convince Uribe to be reasonable (at least to the rest of the world), to forget his hidden agendas and to accede to a safe and secure demilitarized zone of adequate size and give negotiators adequate time to resolve their differences. Under normal circumstances, Mr. President, you must admit these are reasonable demands. But as you must now know, Uribe is neither a willing negotiator nor disposed to an equitable settlement. You have the media spotlight. You have wide domestic and international support. You have all the political credibility (and power) to persuade, pressure or drag Uribe to the negotiating table to free Ingrid and the others as well as the 500 FARC prisoners rotting in the TB holes of Colombia and the US. Success or failure is now in your hands, President Sarkozy. You have assumed the solemn duty to free Ingrid. Let us hope you live up to your responsibility.

Fraternally,

James Petras

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