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PRESS RELEASE

Far Worse than Watergate

Widening Scandal regarding Intelligence Agency as New Government Takes Office in Colombia

A new report released in the United States today reveals that the Watergate-like scandal in Colombia is even more shocking than initially reported, with the presidential intelligence agency, DAS, not only spying, but also carrying out dirty tricks and even death threats on major players in Colombia's democracy.

"The new Colombian president, who will be elected on Sunday, will have a major clean up on his hands and must ensure that Colombia's intelligence agencies can never again be used to spy on, harass and undermine the legitimate activities of key democratic actors," said Lisa Haugaard, executive director, Latin America Working Group Education Fund.

Far Worse than Watergate also details new evidence that shows that this illegal activity may have been carried out with orders from top presidential advisors.

"This scandal is far more outrageous than we initially imagined. It includes spying in international territory, sending grotesque death threats, using blackmail, framing a journalist in a fabricated guerrilla video and conducting sabotage against Constitutional Court judges," Kelly Nicholls, executive director, the U.S. Office on Colombia said. "The U.S. government must take this into consideration when deciding whether to certify Colombia's compliance with the human rights conditions."

These operations did not target alleged terrorists, but rather people carrying out legitimate, democratic activities. The targets included: Supreme Court and Constitutional Court judges, presidential candidates, journalists, publishers, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations and human rights defenders in Colombia, the United States and Europe.

"Last week U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton praised the Colombian Government's commitment to building strong democratic institutions," said Abigail Poe, deputy director, Center for International Policy. "However, this scandal puts that assertion into question. Moving forward, the United States must take this new evidence seriously and urge the investigation to include those outside the DAS who ordered and were consumers of illegal intelligence."

The report, *Far Worse than Watergate*, was produced by the U.S. Office on Colombia, the Latin America Working Group Education Fund, the Center for International Policy and the Washington Office on Latin America.

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