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Colombia is exporting paramilitaries to Honduras, and has become a security threat in the Americas

OTTAWA – The Canadian government made another attempt during the week of September 14 to pass the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (CCFTA) through second reading in Parliament. Conservative MPs rose one after another over a period of three days to praise the Uribe regime while trotting out the usual arguments in favour of “free trade” with Colombia – the magic bullet to solve all poverty and human rights problems. However, the Harper government free traders likely didn't have in mind Colombia's newly found vocation of “exporting” paramilitaries to serve as mercenaries in other counties like embattled Honduras.

Colombian media is reporting that illegal armed groups in that country are recruiting demobilized paramilitaries to work as mercenaries in Honduras, and that recruitment has taken place on lands belonging to the Colombian government.

<http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/5900-colombia-exports-paramilitaries-to-honduras.html>

As a selling point for going ahead with the CCFTA, some Liberal and Conservative MPs claimed this week that a free trade deal between Canada and Colombia would also provide a measure of “security” by serving to counter the intentions of neighbours such as Venezuela's Chavez. These MPs failed to mention that Colombia has the largest standing army in South America, and with the recent agreement with the United States for the use of seven military bases, it is Colombia that has become *the* destabilizing factor in South America.

On the 15 of September at a meeting in Quito, Ecuador, the South American Council of Defence of the union of South American nations, known as UNASUR, asked Colombia for an explanation regarding the new US military bases. Colombia refused saying that the agreement's terms were confidential. Brazil's Foreign Minister Celso Amorin summed up the feelings held by most UNASUR countries at the Quito meeting, “Colombia hasn't understood the unease that it has caused because of this agreement on military bases”.

It would appear that the Harper government hasn't understood that in proceeding with a free trade agreement with Colombia, Canada is not only turning a blind eye to massive human rights abuses in that country, but would also be complicit in aiding and abetting a pariah state bent on intimidating all its neighbours in South America.

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