



News From Congressman Bill Delahunt

For Immediate Release:
June 28, 2007

For Further Information:
Mark Forest –202-225-3111/774-487-2534

DELAHUNT LAUNCHES INQUIRY INTO U.S. BUSINESS TIES TO COLOMBIAN TERRORISTS *US Has a “Moral Responsibility” to Help End Violence in South American Country*

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Bill Delahunt today announced that the Congressional panel he chairs – the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight – will investigate allegations that U.S. companies gave funding to Colombian groups the Bush administration has classified as terrorist organizations.

“If we are a nation that respects the rule of law, we cannot countenance injustice, no matter where it occurs, or who commits it,” said Delahunt. “If American investors and companies have played a role – even an unwilling one – in Colombia’s violence, we can’t look the other way.”

At a hearing today entitled “Protection and Money: U.S. Companies, Their Employees, and Violence in Colombia,” Delahunt’s panel heard testimony that an Alabama-based company – Drummond Co., Inc. – supposedly paid members of a Colombian terrorist group to kill three union organizers working at one of its mines. Witnesses at the hearing included a former member of the terrorist group; a Colombian union organizer; and a representative of the families of the murdered men, who have a civil suit pending in U.S. federal court.

These accusations come on the heels of the admission by another U.S. company, Chiquita Brands International, that it gave the same terrorist group \$1.7 million from 1997 to 2004. Chiquita was fined \$25 million by the US Justice Department for its dealings with a right-wing paramilitary faction known by its Spanish initials AUC. Delahunt will ask representatives from Chiquita and Drummond to appear before his panel in order to respond to the charges.

In addition, former AUC members have alleged that other U.S. companies, including Del Monte and Dole, have also provided funding for their activities. These terrorist acts have included massacres, bombings, beheadings, and targeted killings – particularly of union members.

Delahunt announced the investigations stating the U.S. has a “special moral responsibility” to address the violence that has wracked Colombia for decades – not just because of the allegations about corporate bankrolling of terrorist activities, but because America’s appetite for cocaine and heroin has funded both the AUC and the left-wing guerrillas known as the FARC.