

OPS cc MASTER Colombia NB.

SUBJECT: COLUMBIA  
UK/Columbian relations  
Sept '83



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DTI

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

**PRIME MINISTER'S**

17 September 1983

**PERSONAL MESSAGE**

**SERIAL No. T 134/83**

Dear Mr President,

I am taking advantage of the visit to Colombia of the Minister for Trade, Paul Channon, to send you my further thoughts on the general questions on which we exchanged views at the time of the Williamsburg Summit and on bilateral relations between our countries.

I have followed with great interest the vigorous efforts of your Government to master the difficulties arising from the world recession, and especially from high interest rates, and to sustain, as we seek to do, the open trading system. The prudent financial policies which Colombia has traditionally followed set an excellent example but none of us have been immune from regional and worldwide trends which I know have affected Colombia severely also. There are now some signs that recovery is under way. We must ensure that it endures and does not rekindle inflation. These hopeful signs give us encouragement to persevere.

The international standing of Colombia has just been demonstrated by the successful efforts of your Finance Minister to raise a 250 million dollar loan from a number of foreign banks. Four British banks are participating and I understand that the loan agreement is due to be signed in London at the end of this month.

The British Government has also been following closely the serious situation which exists in Central America and the

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efforts of the governments of the region, and notably that of Colombia, to help find a basis for a peaceful settlement. I am grateful for your message of 5 July which we are continuing to study with our partners in the European Community. I am glad that you will have an opportunity to further your contacts with the Community during your forthcoming visit to Europe.

Relations between our two countries continue to be warm as they have been since the time of your independence. A useful series of bilateral exchanges was started in 1982 and we look forward to a Colombian delegation visiting London in 1984. Britain recognises the special importance of coffee for your balance of payments and will continue to support the international coffee agreement. I would, of course, like to see more trade of all kinds between our countries, in both directions. Meanwhile, I note that the balance of trade has this year moved markedly in favour of Colombia. Our industries are competing actively in the Colombian market, as I am asking Paul Channon to explain in greater detail. For example, British suppliers have made proposals for two major projects currently under study by your Government, the Metro system for the City of Medellin and the new naval base on the Pacific Coast. I am sure that there is much that both sides can do to strengthen our friendship and co-operation.

I send you my best wishes for the success of your administration.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Dr. Belisario Betancur Cuartas