Colombia Rebels Aborted Attack on President to Pursue Peace Talks

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Rodrigo Londoño, alias “Timochenko,” offered the revelation in an interview with Venezuela-based cable network Telesur.

The attack on the president had been planned before the 2011 death of then-FARC chief Alfonso Cano in a Colombian military operation, Timochenko said.

“During those months one of our commands reported that it had all the conditions in place to attack President Santos and Alfonso was unequivocal on that: ‘If we’re talking, that’s not acceptable. Dismantle everything you have.’ – It was an order that could not be discussed,” Timochenko said.

The late FARC leader, Timochenko said, was especially enthusiastic about reaching a peace agreement with the Colombian government, which made him “lower his guard a little,” something that “in large measure had a great impact” on bringing about his death.

The current leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, also referred to the peace agreement the guerrillas are discussing with the Santos administration in Havana which they have committed themselves to finalizing within six months, a step – he said – with which he is “satisfied.”

“Satisfied in the sense (with) the efforts we’ve been making ... and (with) the sectors in Colombia that are supporting it, and that one sees that every day it’s growing and they are

understanding it better," he said, adding that it also means that "we have to move along with great caution."

"Because peace still hasn't come, because we still haven't signed the accord," he added.

Timochenko said that if sufficient will exists, the negotiators will be able to sign the agreement even before the six-month period has elapsed, but without that will it might be longer before an accord can be inked.

"We can do it earlier if there's the willingness, but if not (the required time) could be underestimated. It could be that we don't achieve a final accord, because the issues will be resolved (only) if there's a real political intention to confront them," he said.

Timochenko said that "the basic thing" is to generate "an environment in which we can deal with all these struggles ... without firing any shots at each other."

"What we need now is to sow hope, what we need now is not to leave seeds that once again produce war. We're not going to leave the land fertilized for a new confrontation," he said.

Timochenko also said that the FARC held "a consultative meeting" among its members before participating in the talks with the government, which began in November 2012, thus providing "complete security that there is not a single guerrilla or command or combatant who has expressed disagreement."