

Intercession of Virgin Mary Prevented war in South America, newspaper reveals

Bogota, Mar 24, 2008 (CNA) - The Colombian daily "El Tiempo" revealed on Holy Saturday that a crisis that could have ended in an open conflict between Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela was averted by Colombian President Alvaro Uribe confiding the situation to the intercession of Mary under the three different titles by which she is the country's patroness.

The crisis between Colombia and its southern (Ecuador) and northeastern (Venezuela) neighbors started On March 1, when Uribe ordered a military raid into Ecuador's territory against a rebel camp used by Marxist guerrillas to launch terrorist strikes. The raid targeted and killed the No. 2 FARC rebel leader, Raul Reyes.

In response, Ecuador's President Rafael Correa cut all diplomatic relationships with Colombia. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Correa's political ally, ordered a massive military surge to the Colombian border as well.

Quoting Fr. Julio Solórzano, Chaplain of Colombia's Presidential Palace, El Tiempo revealed that on March 5, when the rhetoric and blames between the presidents was increasing tensions, President Uribe called for a Rosary to pray for the end of tensions.

The Rosary, prayed at the Presidential Palace's chapel, was dedicated, upon Uribe's request, to the Marian to Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, Our Lady of Coromoto and Our Lady of Mercy, respectively the patronesses of Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador.

Uribe invited all officials at the Presidential palace to the Rosary, as well as the minister of Defense and the Interior.

"For believers -El Tiempo wrote- the prayer was more than effective, since only two days after the presidents of the three countries shook hands during the Group of Rio summit, and for many the crisis was over."

In fact, on April 7, at the Dominican Republic summit, the three presidents vented their differences, but agreed to stand down after Colombia apologized for the raid.

"The President is a man of faith, he always carries with him a wooden Cross and a Rosary. I have heard him pray several times in the motorcade or on the presidential airplane." "He always tries to be coherent with his faith in his work, pleasing God with what he does," Fr. Solórzano was quoted by the "El Tiempo."