

**THE UNITED STATES AND COLOMBIA:  
THE JOURNEY FROM AMBIGUITY  
TO STRATEGIC CLARITY**

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## FOREWORD

This monograph is an important contribution to the special series, "Shaping the Regional Security Environment in Latin America," published jointly by the North-South Center of the University of Miami and the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College.

The report comes at a critical juncture, a time of promise for greater economic integration between the United States and Latin America, but also a time of profound concern about the deteriorating security situation in a number of countries in the region. Moreover, the events of September 11, 2001, have radically changed the strategic imperative for the United States. Within this larger context, American strategy towards Colombia shifted from a counternarcotics focus to more comprehensive support for that nation's security. The shift recognizes that Colombia's problems are deeply rooted and go beyond illegal narcotics. In the last year the Bush administration committed the United States to help Colombia defend democracy and to defeat the illegal armed groups of the left and right, doing so by promising to help that nation extend effective sovereignty over national territory and provide basic security to the people.

The author, Dr. Gabriel Marcella, identifies the strategic challenge of Colombia within the framework of the weak state and ungoverned space, made more complicated by the violence and corruption generated by the international organized criminals sustained by illegal drugs. He argues that the lessons learned in dealing with the security challenges that Colombia faces will have powerful consequences for the adaptation of American strategy to the conflict paradigm of the 21st century.

The Strategic Studies Institute and the North-South Center are pleased to offer this report as part of the continuing effort to inform the debate in the United States and abroad on the best way to support the government and people of Colombia.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

## PREFACE

Like Dr. Gabriel Marcella's previous monograph on *Plan Colombia*, this monograph is eloquent and powerful. It is also urgent testimony to the immense stake that the nations of the Western Hemisphere – including the United States – have in the outcome of Colombia's continuing crisis. That crisis goes well beyond the question of illegal drug trafficking and terrorism. The related social violence, criminality, corruption, human suffering, and instability lead to more violence and strife, as well as compromised democratic processes. In turn, the resultant political, economic, and social instability challenges the de jure and de facto sovereignty of the Colombian state, and it undermines the vital institutional pillars of regime governance and legitimacy. Ample experience demonstrates that this kind of political deterioration leads to some form of "narco-socialism" or state failure.

At the same time, the Colombian crisis extends past the political boundaries of that country. The spillover effects permeate hemispheric neighbors, the United States, and the entire global community. In these terms, Colombia is a revealing paradigm for 21st century conflict. The implications of these harbingers of crises to come to other weak states are grave. The powerful combination of ungoverned national territory, insurgent terrorism of the left and right, transnational organized crime based on illegal drug trafficking, a deeply rooted elite culture characterized by a lack of accountability, violence, and impunity breed the viruses that threaten stability and prosperity. (And, again, the consequences include violence, crime, corruption, conflict, human agony, the erosion of democracy, and possible state failure).

The consequences of the crisis and its overlap effects preclude a vibrant community of democracies working toward the common goal of economic integration, peace, and prosperity in the hemisphere. On the other hand, if the countries of the hemisphere want to achieve that positive vision, they – as well as the United States – must go beyond past and present U.S.-mandated, myopic, ad hoc, piecemeal, tactical and operational military solutions – based on the current "politically correct" issue for the control of narco-terrorism. Rather, we must all embrace Gabriel Marcella's "Journey from Ambiguity to Strategic Clarity." Such a coordinated long-term U.S.-Latin American exercise may be difficult, but it is absolutely

necessary given the obvious alternatives. Continued neglect and indifference to hemispheric instability problems will profoundly affect the health of the U.S. economy – and the concomitant power to act in the international security arena. Indeed, strategic access or denial of Latin America to the United States is at stake.

The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center is pleased to collaborate with the U.S. Army War College. We offer, through a recent conference and now through a series of studies such as this, an ongoing analysis of the policy issues that are of critical importance to this country and to the Western Hemisphere.

Ambler H. Moss, Jr.  
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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

GABRIEL MARCELLA teaches strategy in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the United States Army War College. He previously served as International Affairs Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief, United States Southern Command. Dr. Marcella has written extensively on Latin American security issues and U.S. policy. Recent publications include "Plan Colombia: The Strategic and Operational Imperatives," *Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Resolving the Ecuador-Peru Conflict* (coauthor); "The Interagency Process and National Security: Forward Into the 21st Century," and "The U.S. Engagement with Colombia: Legitimate State Authority and Human Rights." Dr. Marcella's current research focuses on the Colombian crisis and U.S. strategy, national security decisionmaking, and the strategic dimensions of civil-military relations. He is a frequent commentator on Latin American security and U.S. policy in the printed and electronic media.

## SUMMARY

There has been a remarkable turnaround in the policy of the United States towards Colombia. It has gone from an exclusive focus on counternarcotics to a comprehensive recognition of that nation's deeply-rooted problems. The factors that drove this change are the tragic events of September 11, 2001, as well as the increased terrorism of the insurgents that threaten the state and society in Colombia. The evolution of American policy takes into account a recurring global geopolitical reality, of which Colombia is a paradigm: the problem of weak states and ungoverned space.

Colombia's weak state is beset with a complex interaction of violence and corruption from the terrorist left and right, as well as the workings of international organized crime that prospers on the movement of illicit narcotics. At stake for the United States and the hemispheric community is the security of the immediate Andean and adjacent areas. Given the region's worsening economic situation and the fragility of democratic institutions, the strategic denial of Latin America is taking shape.

In this context the successive administrations of Andrés Pastrana and Alvaro Uribe have taken decisive measures to strengthen the institutional capacity of Colombia to deal with the multiple challenges it faces. These include expanding the size of the police and armed forces to provide security; conducting aggressive eradication of illicit narcotics; mobilizing people, money, and programs to reestablish the effective presence and services of the state across the national territory; building international support to isolate the terrorists and control international borders; and developing a more comprehensive relationship with the United States. The George W. Bush administration and the Congress have jointly developed expanded legal authorities to support Colombia's needs, but the resources allocated are still relatively modest. The United States, as well as the international community, needs to provide more robust assistance to Colombia. It will require a generational effort. Unless such support is forthcoming, Colombia and much of Latin America may well become ungovernable.

# THE UNITED STATES AND COLOMBIA: THE JOURNEY FROM AMBIGUITY TO STRATEGIC CLARITY

In Colombia, we recognize the link between terrorist and extremist groups that challenges the security of the state and drug trafficking activities that help finance the operations of such groups. We are working to help Colombia defend its democratic institutions and defeat illegal armed groups of both the left and right by extending effective sovereignty over the entire national territory and to provide basic security to the Colombian people.

President George W. Bush  
*The National Security Strategy  
of the United States,*  
September 2002

## **Introduction.**

President Bush's sweeping support for Colombia underlines a remarkable turnaround in U.S. policy. Driven for years by the ambiguity of a counternarcotics-only approach, the United States has now adopted a more comprehensive recognition of Colombia's deeply rooted and complex security problem. Indeed, Colombia is a revealing paradigm for 21st century conflict. It is a surprisingly weak state under assault by a powerful combination of ungoverned national territory, insurgent terrorism of the left and right, international crime organized around drug trafficking, a deeply rooted counterculture of violence and impunity, ecological damage, and institutional corruption. Unlike the Cold War military and ideological confrontation between two superpowers, a country's debilities, rather than its strengths, breed the viruses that threaten the international community and the United States.

State weakness is one of a number of forces battering away at the Westphalian state system that has prevailed since 1648. That system raised respect for sovereignty as the basic organizing principle of international order. Accordingly, all states, whatever their internal differences and religious makeup, are beneficiaries of international order and are obligated to reciprocate by upholding the same principles.

Sovereignty is being violated with impunity by criminal



nonstate actors, who take advantage of ungoverned space, weak to nonexistent border controls, the facility offered by globalization, and the corresponding corruption of government officials and institutions. David C. Jordan, a prominent scholar of Latin America, comments on this pattern:

Finance, trade, and organized crime are globalized phenomena and operate in a de facto integrated system. This integrated economic system has a tendency to create a transnational criminal oligarchy undergirded by state rivalries. Political rivalry facilitates the growth of an unchecked transnational elite—an important part of which is criminal. At the same time, the processes within the states assist the rise, transformation, and persistence of unaccountable rulers despite formal democratic procedures.<sup>1</sup>

The corruption of emerging democracies follows, a process that Jordan terms “narcostatization.”<sup>2</sup> In January 2003, for example, Mexico shut down for the second time in 6 years its equivalent of the U.S. Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Special Prosecutor’s Office for Drug Crimes. The reason: its 200 employees were being questioned for corruption by drug traffickers.<sup>3</sup> Since the year 2000, more than 800 employees of Mexico’s attorney general’s office have been suspended, fired, or charged with crimes, and another 1,300 were or are being investigated.

Similarly, in late January 2003, Guatemala became the 23rd nation cited by President George W. Bush for having “failed demonstrably” to meet its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements because of a “heightened level of corruption.”<sup>4</sup> The list includes Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam. The same 22 nations were listed in 2002.

Narcostatization works the vulnerable seams of sovereignty and renders states poor Westphalian partners. An excellent illustration came in May 1999, when the Venezuelan government denied overflight rights to American reconnaissance craft monitoring airspace for drug flights moving north and east from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. Moisés Naim, editor of *Foreign Policy* and one time minister of finance in Venezuela, commented on the irony of the decision: “Venezuelan authorities placed more importance on the symbolic value of asserting sovereignty over air space than on

the fact that drug traffickers' planes regularly violate Venezuelan territory."<sup>5</sup> Sovereignty can thus become a refuge for states unwilling to uphold their international obligations.

The export of illegal drugs from weak states in the Andean region, especially Colombia, and their accompanying violence and corruption have a powerful effect on regional security and U.S. society. Indeed, despite the seeming hyperbole, Colombia's President Álvaro Uribe called narco-trafficking "a greater threat than Iraq" and urged that after the war in Iraq is over the United States lead a coalition with a massive deployment of naval and air power to attack it and terrorism.<sup>6</sup>

The strategic and operational lessons learned as the United States responds to the Colombian crisis will have significant implications for Latin America as well as for the U.S. role around the globe in succeeding years. U.S. grand strategy envisions a hemispheric community of economically integrated democracies cooperating on the world scene for common purposes. Narcostatization, if it continues, threatens to deny Latin America strategically to the United States, something that neither the Nazis in World War II nor the Soviets during the Cold War could do. Colombia is then both a paradigm of 21st century conflict and a critical test case for U.S. strategy. This monograph analyzes the nature of Colombia's complex problems, looks at the evolution of U.S. strategy, and makes recommendations for new directions.

## **Why Colombia Matters.**

Colombia's importance to U.S. national interests cannot be overstated. Its 43 million people and location astride two oceans make it geopolitically significant. It is the fifth largest trading partner in Latin America for the United States, with two-way trade exceeding US \$11 billion annually. Direct U.S. investment in Colombia exceeds \$4 billion. Colombia is the tenth largest supplier of oil to the United States and could rise in that ranking if petroleum extraction could be conducted in a more secure environment. An estimated 2.5 million Colombians live in the United States, and more come every day, including some of the country's most talented people.<sup>7</sup> Colombia has an immensely diverse and valuable ecosystem and is a partner with Amazon Basin nations in efforts to protect it. As the anchor of Andean security, Colombia's internal troubles export violence, corruption, drugs, and ecological damage to the immediate region.

Colombia provides some 90 percent of the cocaine entering the United States and produces 70 percent of the world's total. Illegal drug use kills some 50,000 persons each year in the United States. The costs of health care, accidents, policing, and lost productivity related to addiction and crime reached \$160 billion in 2000. Illegal drugs are one of the main causes for the swelling prison population in the United States and the serious crime problem among communities. A permanently addicted population is an enormous social and economic burden.

From the context of the post-September 11, 2001, heightened security consciousness, Colombia's internal problems represent a formidable international threat. Unlike the threat paradigm that defined the East-West conflict during the Cold War, Colombia belongs to a class of countries that threaten the international community, not with their individual or collective strength but with their weaknesses. A "broken windows theory" of international relations would argue that the decline of the regional neighborhood threatens the international community in untraditional ways: international organized crime, the violation of sovereign borders, contraband, the illegal shipment of arms, chemicals, laundering of dirty money, suborning of public officials (members of the police, military, legislative bodies, judiciaries, and so on), the corruption and intimidation of the media, displaced persons, and the formation of an international *demimonde* within which terrorism breeds and intersects with organized crime. A January 2003 article in Bogotá's *El Tiempo* made this point in reporting that more than 50 Colombian criminal gangs, with perhaps a total of 2,000 members, were responsible for robberies and narco-trafficking in Madrid, Spain.<sup>8</sup> That country is home to more than 400,000 Colombian immigrants of the Colombian diaspora.

This melancholy brew puts at risk not only the ideals of democracy and human dignity, but also threatens to derail the ambitious hemispheric integration agenda of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the accompanying package of social, economic, political, and ecological advances to which the presidents at the Summits of the Americas have committed themselves since the Miami Summit of 1994. For the United States, it is even more pertinent because homeland defense is taking on renewed prominence in strategic planning. Illegal drugs, violence, contraband, illegal migration, and corruption directly affect homeland defense because of the easy penetrability of air, land, and maritime borders.

The Colombian crisis occurs within the context of a broader Latin American crisis of authority, governance, and legitimacy. Economies are declining, with unemployment at politically unsustainable levels. The institutions of democracy are fragile, while social delinquency and citizen insecurity are reaching intolerable proportions. Moreover, environmental degradation continues, reducing the quality of life and breeding the frustration that engenders more violence. As a result, the legitimacy of democracy as the preferred political form is under assault by a new wave of populism that promises much but so far has delivered little to the people. In this troubled environment, achieving the FTAA, with a potential market of 800 million by 2005, becomes a stretch.

Latin America's deterioration has five critical implications for the U.S. strategic position. First, U.S. investments and exports to the region will decline in the face of shrinking markets. Second, Latin America (notably Venezuela and Mexico) once provided a large amount of U.S. energy imports, but the political polarization in Venezuela between the supporters of President Hugo Chávez (who preaches a combination of anti-American nationalism, populism, and class warfare) and the political opposition led to the interruption of the flow of petroleum in the winter of 2002-03 from what was once the United States' most secure source. Third, the support of Latin American countries is fundamental to the United States over a spectrum of transnational issues that affect the health and security of U.S. society: illegal drugs, terrorism, international crime, contraband, global warming, environmental degradation, and dealing with contagious diseases. Fourth, the deterioration of socioeconomic conditions and citizen insecurity accelerates illegal migration to the United States.

Fifth, the delegitimation of democracy in Latin America could become a strategic defeat for the influence of U.S. principles around the globe, from human rights to democracy to free trade.<sup>9</sup> Already evident is another leftward drift in the politics of certain Latin American countries, as leaders try to meet the unfulfilled promise of democracy for a better life for the masses. This is visible in the form of an informal "axis of populism, or axis of popular rhetoric,"<sup>10</sup> alleged to be taking shape among Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Ecuador's President Lucio Gutiérrez, Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez, and Cuba's President Fidel Castro. Though this is an unlikely lot (Lula and Gutiérrez, neither reckless populists nor communists, are, in fact, pragmatists) and the rhetoric

may be overblown, support for U.S. global policy is declining in Latin America. Echoing this view, Peru's Foreign Minister, Allen Wagner, stated in 2002 that because of inattention to Latin America's economic problems, the United States was losing its strategic partner – namely, Latin America. In 2002 the aggregate economy of Latin America contracted by 0.5 percent, taking it back to 1997 levels.<sup>11</sup> In the meantime, the United Nations Children's Fund reported that half of the 120 million children in Latin America are poor, with 20 million working in the streets.

### **Colombia's Uniqueness.**

Colombia is sometimes referred to as the Tibet of Latin America because it is geographically enclosed and relatively unknown by the academic community. One of the leading authorities on the country, David Bushnell, states, "Colombia is the least studied of the major Latin American countries, and probably the least understood."<sup>12</sup> Colombia's history and politics do not conform to some of the classical patterns of Latin America. A two-party system, Liberals versus Conservatives, has dominated political life since independence, with few legitimate leftist alternatives, including having a weak Communist Party. These are reasons for the emergence of a militarized left, composed of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC), the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN), and smaller offshoots. They are the oldest guerrilla groups in the world and are self-sustaining by virtue of internal sanctuaries and income from drug trafficking, extortion, and kidnapping. Unlike the rest of Latin America, Colombia, until recently, always stood out for its consistently solid economic performance. Moreover, the military has been subordinated to civilian authority, though, as will be discussed later, at a significant cost for civil-military relations and national defense.

Though the Vice-royalty of New Granada was an important component of Spain's system of imperial defense, the area of modern Colombia was a relatively backward part of the Spanish empire and remained a poor country until the coffee boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. No country in Latin America has the difficult geography, divided by three massive chains of the Andes, and the pattern of dispersed settlements, poor national integration, and poor communications. The airplane literally transformed internal travel.<sup>13</sup>

Regional autonomy has been a strong factor in national politics. Independent states within the larger Colombia, for example, had their own armies in the 19th century.

Colombia also experienced the national trauma of *La Violencia*, an undeclared civil war that began in 1948 and killed an estimated 200,000 people in the next 10 years. This searing experience led to the National Front Agreement of 1957, by which the two parties agreed to alternate the presidency and apportion political power. The arrangement actually weakened the political parties and democracy by foreclosing competition. It also marginalized the military even more. Moreover, the National Front generated corruption. An Athenian democracy controlled by a few families characterized the country until the Constitution of 1991 was passed. Colombian political life is represented by two clashing cultures: one of legality designed to limit the abuse of power and one of impunity. An astute Colombian states, "Our judicial system is full of restrictions for tyranny, but is very lax with respect to crime."<sup>14</sup> As will be seen later in this monograph, Colombians continue to pay a high price for this dualism.

### **Anatomy of a Weak State.**

Though few states have it in complete form, sovereignty has four components: a sovereign state should exercise complete political authority over its national territory, monopolize the instruments of legitimate use of force, control its borders, and conduct foreign policy freely with other governments who recognize it as independent. At the same time, a sovereign state has responsibilities to uphold these principles in the international system, so that the other members benefit from the association.

Sovereignty is not absolute; scholars debate whether a state can lose its sovereignty. They conclude in the affirmative for states that commit genocide, thereby legitimating foreign intervention for humanitarian purposes. The concept of sovereignty evolves, and its application in a globalized world is becoming less and less absolute. A controversial example of this is extending the authority of the International Criminal Court to any citizen of any country thought to be guilty of human rights violations; for example, Chile's Augusto Pinochet was wanted by Spanish justice and detained accordingly by British law.<sup>15</sup>

The evolving concept of conditional sovereignty is central to the

*National Security Strategy* promulgated by President George W. Bush in September 2002. Arguing on its behalf, Richard Haass, director of the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State, asserts, "When states violate minimum standards by committing, permitting, or threatening intolerable acts against their own people or other nations, then some of the privileges of sovereignty are forfeited."<sup>16</sup> Making sovereignty conditional and contingent has enormous policy implications. It allows, argues Haass, the use of force against states that support international terrorism and preemptive force against states that threaten to use weapons of mass destruction. The legitimization of a strategy of preemption against such rogues is the most innovative and controversial aspect of the Bush National Security Strategy of 2002. Historian Philip Bobbitt, former director of Strategic Planning at the National Security Council, admonishes:

We are at a moment in world affairs when the essential ideas that govern statecraft must change. For five centuries it has taken the resources of a state to destroy another state. . . . This is no longer true, owing to advances in international communications, rapid computation, and weapons of mass destruction. The change that will accompany these developments will be as profound as any that the State has thus far undergone.<sup>17</sup>

Colombia has the last two attributes of sovereignty but not the first two. It is indeed a vigorous member of the international community and enjoys diplomatic relations with the majority of the states of the world.<sup>18</sup> Colombia is an active member of the United Nations (a rotating member, holding the presidency of the Security Council in 2002, and participating in multinational peacekeeping operations under UN auspices), the Organization of American States, and countless other multilateral organizations. It does not, however, exercise complete political authority within its national boundaries, nor does it monopolize the instruments of coercion. An estimated 40 percent of the national territory is not controlled by the government, both in rural and urban areas. The problem becomes more severe because neighboring states — Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru — do not exercise sovereign control over their own borders with Colombia (though Ecuador does much better than the others). These defects are at the heart of Colombia's impact on international order and the policy dilemmas they pose for the United States, Latin American countries, and European states.

In Colombia, five competitors vie for political authority

and for the monopoly of force, and they make war against the state, themselves, and society. They are: criminal gangs with no apparent agenda other than materialism; internationally organized drug trafficking criminal gangs (estimated to number 162 drug cartels within Colombia) of extraordinary international reach; the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC), with 17,000 to 18,000 members; the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN), with perhaps 5000 members; and the Colombian Self Defense Forces (Fuerzas de Autodefensa de Colombia – AUC), estimated at 12,000. These three insurgent/terrorist groups enjoy little standing in the international community, though for decades the FARC and ELN laid claim to a revolutionary agenda of social justice and enjoyed some international legitimacy. Since the mid-1980s they have become financially dependent on criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, extortion, and kidnapping, and thereby lost any semblance of revolutionary legitimacy. In 2002, through the effective personal diplomacy of President Andrés Pastrana, even the reluctant European Union recognized the FARC and ELN as terrorist groups.

The five groups deploy enough armed power to maintain a level of violence that makes “colombianization” a metaphor for interminable violence and the corrupting influence of illegal drugs. The Colombian state infrastructure of judicial system, police, military, schools, and communications is nearly absent in major portions of the national territory, precisely where the five contenders occupy space, apply their de facto legal systems, and conduct foreign operations with traffickers, assorted criminals, gun runners, soldiers of fortune, international terrorists, and corrupt government officials of various countries.

It is important to underscore that Colombia is not a failing state.<sup>19</sup> (See Table 1.) It is, instead, a geographically large state that has historically been enfeebled by strong regionalist tendencies and an elite preference for weak central authority. However, the narcotics-related violence of the past 2 decades has generated immense insecurity that has national and international resonance, as well as a serious negative impact on economic growth. Some basic facts will illuminate the challenges to internal sovereignty and international order.



Population	43,000,000
GDP	US \$90 billion
GDP growth rates	1.4% (2001), 1.6% (2002)
Unemployment (urban)	18.2% (2001), 17.6% (2002)
Underemployment (urban)	30% (2000), 33% (2002)
Poverty*	54.9% of population (1999), 54.8% (2000), 54.9% (2001)
Indigence*	26.8% (1999), 27.1% (2000), 27.6% (2001)

\*Poverty means a person earns the equivalent of US \$2 per day, indigence \$1 per day.

Source: Abstracted from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, 2003, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2001-2002* (Santiago, Chile: United Nations).

**Table 1. Basic Statistics on Colombia.**

### **Weak Military.**

Colombia measures three times the size of Montana and is endowed with a very difficult geography. (See Figure 1.) In mid-2002, Colombia's military had only 60,000-80,000 soldiers available for combat against the FARC, ELN, and AUC; to protect the electrical infrastructure, roads and communications, and oil and gas pipelines (5,000 critical points) from sabotage by these insurgent groups; and to patrol 18,000 kilometers of roads and rivers. The rest of the troops were in support roles or in training. Additionally, 6,242 *corregimientos* (districts) needed military presence, but only 980 had it, while the AUC, FARC, and ELN were present in some 5,300 districts. Military resources were concentrated in zones of higher population density and greater economic activity.

This is nothing new; a weak military has been the historical pattern. Colombian elites historically have preferred a weak central government and a weak military. A vicious cycle developed: civilians preferred a weak military for fear that it would take political power, but then gave it missions it could not possibly fulfill because of lack of resources. Not until 1997 did the Colombian Army, for example, acquire an aviation wing. This occurred very late, even by Latin



Figure 1.

American standards, and was especially telling, given Colombia's extraordinary size, difficult topography, communications, and the pervasiveness of the violence. The military was often forced to improvise to get resources. For example, to protect itself from extortion by the FARC and ELN, a Colombian coal mining company in the department of César had to pay the army to provide security because the army did not have the resources to deploy soldiers for that purpose.<sup>20</sup> Many examples of such ad hoc arrangements, wherein the Army did not have the resources for the mission assigned to it, exist. Over time, a military commander's promotion potential also depended upon his ability to improvise resources.

Through most of the 19th century, the army seldom counted more than 2,000 soldiers. During the U.S.-Colombian crisis over Panama of 1903, which led to Panama's independence, the digging of the Canal, and the long-term U.S. military presence, Bogotá had a mere 500 troops and an insignificant navy. The reasons for a small and weak military are deeply embedded in Colombian history. Independence from Spain was received in 1819 from an army largely led by the foreign Venezuelan officers of Simón Bolívar. A strong sense of anti-militarism emerged early on among Colombian elites. Additionally, elites in Colombia's autonomous regions did not want

to empower Bogotá with too much authority in the form of the military or in taxing power. Civilian leaders have also preferred to maintain the armed forces at arm's length from society, thus creating a communication breach between civilians and military institutions. The institutional bias against the military impedes the nurturing of mutually supportive civil-military relations and development of the strategic instrument of legitimate coercive authority.

As recently as the mid-1990s (during the Ernesto Samper administration), Colombia experienced a time of intensified internal violence. The government reduced the military budget instead of increasing it. The modern Colombian Army originated with the participation of a battalion in the Korean War alongside the U.S. Army, which was under the command of the father of General Barry McCaffrey, former Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command and later Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Clinton administration. The Colombian army's evolution was deeply influenced by operations against *La Violencia*, which began in 1948, and by the wave of insurgency initiated by the FARC in 1964, later joined by the ELN and smaller groups.<sup>21</sup> Unquestionably, the Colombian Army is one of the most experienced counterinsurgency armies in the world. It has been conducting counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations for 5 decades, but civilian governments have rarely provided it with the necessary resources, a reality that began to change after President Pastrana came to power in 1998.

*Lack of Civilian Ability to Oversee the Military.* Another debility is that Colombia civilian authorities lack the experience of working with the military in integrating strategy, intelligence, and operations – a costly deficiency for a society at war for so long. This is not to argue that the Colombian military is autonomous from civilian control. Far from it; it is one of the most obedient. For a long time civilian leaders have held the attitude that the military can be left to itself to take care of national defense, doing so without the civilians establishing clear expectations, providing the strategic guidance, and holding military commanders accountable.

The problem of civilian involvement is deeply rooted; civilians appear to lack the intellectual know-how and political will to direct the legitimate armed instrument of the state in a strategic manner. Even though Colombia has one of the best civilian-headed ministries of defense in Latin America, not enough professional civilians are qualified in strategic and military affairs. Among civilian intellectuals,

there is a general indifference regarding military affairs. Civilians and the members of the military rarely socialize and have few professional interactions.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that civilians do not bear their full responsibility in national defense.<sup>23</sup> As part of its assistance, the United States has mounted an ambitious civil-military relations program to help Colombian officials develop the skills for strategic planning.<sup>24</sup> However, it will take a significant investment of time in civilian professionalization to create the depth of expertise required to inspire confidence and trust between civilians and the military. A civilian career service in defense would be a welcome innovation.

*Minimal Defense Budget.* The defense budget, which includes the police (the police are part of the Ministry of Defense), increased from \$2.965 billion to \$3.256 billion in 2001, still a small 3.5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) for a nation at war. Colombia's defense budget also covers such costs as traffic control in the capital. The actual percentage of GDP spent on the military in 2000 was a meager 1.89 percent. Colombia's average annual defense spending in the 1990s of 1.35 percent of GDP ranked low, compared with other countries in Latin America, none of whom had the internal security threat of the magnitude of Colombia's. Chile and Argentina had few internal security threats. The comparison with countries experiencing internal conflicts was even less favorable. (See Table 2.)

<b>Countries with Few Internal Security Threats</b>	
Chile	2.06
Argentina	1.48
<b>Countries with Internal Conflicts</b>	
Algeria	3.9
Colombia	1.35
Lebanon	3.2
Turkey	4.4
Venezuela	1.38

**Table 2. Percentage of GDP for Defense Spending.**

According to the highly respected National Association of Financial Institutions, located in Bogotá, adding 10,000 troops per year to the Colombian army would cost a mere 0.15 percent of the GDP, which could be financed by eliminating unnecessary expenditures and internal corruption.<sup>25</sup> Despite this record of insufficient resources, the Colombian military was performing better in 2002-03 because of the restructuring and expansion that began with the Pastrana administration. It was still too small and lacked the tactical mobility to “take and hold” territory.

The Colombian military is transforming itself to fight more effectively and take the offensive against the three terrorist groups. As part of this transformation, it is critical that the military strengthen its societal linkage. For example, according to a law passed in 1962, high school graduates — *bachilleres* — were exempt from combat risk while serving in the military. This measure was akin to the college student deferments for Americans during the Vietnam conflict; while well-intentioned, it weakened what the Prussian military thinker, Carl von Clausewitz, called the trinitarian relationship among the people, the armed forces, and society that is so crucial to winning in war. Consequently, until recently, the army had some 35,000 soldiers who were deskbound and not available for combat operations in the field.

A U.S. State Department official calculated that a Colombian high school graduate has a 1 in 50 chance of being drafted, while the humble nonhigh school graduate of the lower class has a much better chance. Moreover, to poor people, being a member of the military is a paying job. So, of course, they are the ones who will do the dirty work of fighting and dying. Thus, Colombia exemplifies the “rich man’s war and the poor man’s fight.”<sup>26</sup> Even though some high school graduates do indeed serve in combat, current practice still reflects an elite view that military service is suitable only for those of the lower class. Such an attitude is not conducive to the collective sacrifice that is crucial to winning wars. President Uribe, in January 2003, called for legislative approval of mandatory military service.

### **Weak, Dysfunctional Judicial System.**

Colombia’s judicial system is weak and dysfunctional, with 95 to 98 percent of crimes committed going unpunished. This amazing statistic is true, despite the fact that Colombia’s allocation is the second highest percentage of a national budget to its judicial system

in Latin America: 4.5 percent in the late 1990s. On a per capita basis, it employs one of the highest numbers of judges of any democracy, 17.1 per 100,000 people. In comparison, the United States employs two and Spain three judges for the same number of citizens.<sup>27</sup> The ineffectiveness is compounded by the lack of police presence in 157 of over 1,000 municipalities; thus the absence of the capacity for law enforcement and an invitation to the FARC, ELN, and AUC to do what they want. Much of the impunity originates from the intimidation and bribing of judges and witnesses, and some from the complexity of the system itself. Also, a general disregard for law in Colombian political culture has deep roots in Spanish imperial administration and the Laws of the Indies promulgated by the distant metropole: "Hecha la ley, hecha la trampa" (Once a law is made, corruption begins). Members of the Colombian legislature who do not resist the temptation of bribes and intimidation often will water down or defeat legislation aimed at strengthening the government's ability to deal with drug trafficking.

*Corruption.* Corruption is a pervasive problem. Speaking of the societal impact of corruption and criminality, distinguished Colombian scholar Francisco E. Thoumi warns against the dishonesty trap:

. . . when criminal behavior is tolerated and accepted, the socialization process ends, producing a generation of individuals with weak internalized constraints. In these cases, it may be argued that a society falls into a "dishonesty trap" from which it is very difficult to escape. The problem is simply that where most people are dishonest, it is very costly for anyone to be honest.<sup>28</sup>

The data support Thoumi. For example, Bogotá's *El Tiempo* reported in a January 2003 poll that Colombians expect 10 percent of public officials to be corrupt, while 57 senators and representatives, 83 former legislators, and a former comptroller general had been accused of "influence peddling."<sup>29</sup>

The same newspaper reported that 4,000 legal proceedings were underway against people accused of bribing. "In Colombia," it said, "almost everything can be bought or sold."<sup>30</sup> It is reported that half of the Colombians who solicit visas to the United States, approximately 150,000 per year, present one false document.<sup>31</sup> For this crime, 591,000 legal proceedings are underway. A World Bank-sponsored study concluded: "The capture of the state, meaning the capacity of interest groups to influence through corrupt practices the

higher levels of state decisions, appears as one of the most dominant forms of corruption in Colombia."<sup>32</sup>

### **Lack of State Presence and Control.**

The state does not exercise control over an estimated 40 percent of the national territory, precisely the areas where illegal drugs are cultivated and where the FARC, ELN, the AUC, and the narco-traffickers are active, in a sense filling the void with de facto administrative systems in place of the state. This is especially true of the northwestern areas of Urabá and Chocó as well as those of eastern and southeastern Colombia, the lightly populated departments of Arauca, Guaviare, Meta, Guainía, Caquetá, Vaupés, Vichada, and Putumayo, parts of which make up the *llanos* (plains) of the Amazon Basin, where permanent habitation is difficult and the presence of the state is minimal.

Colombia at the dawn of the 21st century still has numerous expanding internal frontiers, zones of initial colonization by peasants and entrepreneurs seeking quick wealth in the form of valuable wood or other commodities. The agencies of government are scarcely, if at all, present in these areas. This is notably the case in the remote southern department of Putumayo, the locus of much of the coca cultivation and the citadel of the FARC for many years. With good reason, one senior Ecuadorian officer said of Putumayo, "We don't have a border with Colombia but with the FARC." Of all the neighboring countries, Ecuador is the most deeply affected by spillover violence and corruption. It has also made the greatest efforts to place military forces as a security cordon along the Colombian border, as well as to coordinate border security with Colombian counterparts.<sup>33</sup>

As noted before, Colombia, much like its neighbors, does not control its borders. The unpopulated border with Panama is frequently traversed by both the FARC and AUC, who enter the remote jungle of eastern Darién to get supplies and to fight each other, with little challenge from Panama's police.<sup>34</sup> Panama is hard put to control the area with its police force, having disbanded its despised military after the 1989 U.S. operation JUST CAUSE. Even before JUST CAUSE, the area was essentially beyond the sovereign control of Panama. Illegal armed groups (either the FARC or AUC) entered the Darién in January 2003 and killed four Panamanian citizens, prompting another bilateral meeting between Bogotá and

Panama City to try to beef up security.

The long Venezuelan frontier is easily penetrated by the FARC and ELN for rest and recreation and for logistical support, with apparent compliance by the Chávez government (which has been accused of playing a double game of sympathy, if not support, for the FARC and ELN along with support for the Colombian government), according to public statements made by military opponents of the Venezuelan government. The Colombian defense minister in February 2003 asserted concern about Venezuela's attitude, "With the government of Venezuela [cooperation] has been very difficult. We shall see how things evolve in Venezuela but we really have difficulties there, above all because Colombian guerrillas have moved with certain liberty in that boundary area." She went on to contrast Venezuela with increasing cooperation from Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador to control borders.<sup>35</sup> Ecuador keeps reinforcing its troops and police on the border with Colombia.<sup>36</sup>

The long, unpopulated, and jungle-covered Brazilian and Peruvian borders are practically open, though both countries in recent years have made greater efforts at border control.<sup>37</sup> Brazil is constructing the extensive Amazon System of Surveillance to protect the security of the vast region more effectively, while the Brazilian Army's Amazon Military Command, located in Manaus, attempts to provide security to the distant borders by establishing a presence (*presencia*) in garrison communities in the upper Amazon. All of the borders afford the freedom to move guns, ammunition, precursor chemicals (for drug production), drugs, money, and people and to conduct hot pursuit against any enemy.<sup>38</sup> Violence often spills over into the territories of Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

Another telling deficiency is the absence of the Colombian National Police in many areas in sufficient numbers to deter crime. Though there has been significant growth in police and supplementary military forces since 1993, the gap between Colombia and peaceful law-abiding societies is impressive. Table 3 indicates comparative statistics of the distribution of police per population for 1993 and shows that Colombia is at the very lowest of international rankings.



Colombia	1,670
Switzerland	2,000
U.S., Australia	2,500
Canada, Sweden	2,500
France	3,500
Austria, Peru	3,500
Malaysia	4,700
Uruguay	7,600

**Table 3. Comparative Police Forces per Million People.** <sup>39</sup>

The Uribe administration promised to place a minimum of 46 police in each municipal capital by September 2003. When Uribe took office in August 2002, there were 79,000 professional police. Plans are to increase the total to 100,000 by the end of 2003.<sup>40</sup> At that rate, Colombia will have approximately 4,300 police per million people. The return of policemen was already having a notable impact. In the town of Chalán, the Sucre department had been without public security since 1996, when the FARC detonated a “burro bomb” that killed 11 policemen. On December 29, 2002, 55 policemen returned to duty, and the life of the small town resumed a more normal rhythm.<sup>41</sup>

### **Weak Tax Collection System.**

Two critical measures of the effectiveness of a modern state are its ability to legitimately coerce compliance to the rule of law (monopoly of force) and the ability to collect taxes (what political scientists call extracting resources) to provide governance.<sup>42</sup> The two are intimately related. Tax revenues provide the resources for extending the benefits of the social contract between the state and the people. On both counts Colombia is deficient. The tax system is complex, repressive, inequitable, and suffers from extensive evasion. The following statistics are eloquent.

The government collects half of its budget in taxes and finances the rest. Eight tax reforms in the 1990s increased collections by a mere 3 percent. In a country of 43 million, 4,500 large tax contributors account for 90 percent of the income tax. Only 10 percent of the population pays taxes of any kind. In some regions, such as La

Guajira, contraband accounts for 60 percent of the economy. Penalizing tax evasion is made difficult by the fact that less than 8,000 employees are available for the task, and 20,000 are needed. Finally, on a comparative basis, tax collection corresponds to 4 percent of gross domestic product, versus in 11 percent in developed countries. According to Carlos Ossa, Comptroller General under President Andrés Pastrana: "Colombia has not made a serious effort. We have agreed on how much to spend but not on the size of our state, nor on how much to collect from taxes."<sup>43</sup>

Upon taking office, President Uribe declared a state of emergency in the nation and imposed a new tax on wealthier citizens and businesses. The new tax of 1.2 percent affected those with \$65,000 of liquid assets. An estimated 400,000 people would qualify for the tax, raising approximately \$800 million for the defense budget.<sup>44</sup> It seemed certain that this would not be a one-time tax.

### **The Nature of the Conflict.**

Colombia today would be a completely different country if it had not suffered for the last twenty years all the perverse effects of narco-trafficking. . . . It would be more secure, more governable and more democratic (Ministry of Defense of Colombia).<sup>45</sup>

The Colombian conflict is generated by a complex mix of historical contention over land ownership, common criminality, narcotics related crime, and insurgency (FARC and ELN) that once had an ideological foundation but now has been corrupted by money from narcotics, kidnapping, and extortion, as well as the AUC paramilitary response.<sup>46</sup> The AUC's response to insecurity also relies on money derived from narcotics to sustain operations. Colombia's violence can be divided into negotiable and nonnegotiable forms.<sup>47</sup> Negotiable violence has a political quality, while nonnegotiable violence has a criminal one. The lines between the two, however, are becoming less distinct. In the environment of early 2003, for example, the AUC offered a cease-fire and the possibility of negotiations with the government. The purpose was clear: to gain political legitimacy in view of the charge by U.S. foreign policy that they, like the FARC and ELN, were terrorists. Yet, the prospect of removing the AUC's 12,000 combatants from the field to reduce violence was difficult to refuse. The Uribe government would offer lenient terms, therefore, a form of legitimation to those paramilitaries not guilty of crimes.

Since the mid-1980s, narcotics have totally transformed the

conflict by providing larger amounts of funding to support military operations against the state and society. Colombia thus joins a number of states where a peculiar combination of “greed and grievance” is the factor that drives violence.<sup>48</sup> Cocaine and to a lesser extent heroin are the equivalent of diamonds in Sierra Leone and Angola: the fuel that feeds violence. There is a symbiosis, a pragmatic strategic alliance between narco-traffickers, the insurgents/terrorists, and the paramilitaries. Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, Colombia’s leading scholar on the insurgent groups, states, “Given this complex symbiosis, between drug trafficking and the armed actors, we see in Colombia – much like other areas of the world – a war economy, in which merge the drugs market and the market of light arms.”<sup>49</sup>

The conflict is not a civil war, where the major competitor to state authority represents a coherent political program and a substantial base of popular support.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the FARC, the largest force making war against the state and society, forcibly recruits and enjoys, at best, only 2 to 4 percent of popular support, the ELN about the same, and the AUC slightly more at 6 percent. The FARC does not have a large base, unlike the AUC which has a higher level of support in some areas. Given the atrocities they perform and the corruption engendered by wealth, the FARC’s political agenda of reform and social justice no longer is credible. The FARC also reject the laws of humanitarian conduct in war, because they regard these as a foreign imposition designed to undermine them. The war can best be described as one driven by greed, the residues (perhaps the camouflage) of revolutionary ideology, the will to power, and pervasive insecurity in a country where the rule of law does not apply throughout major portions of the rural and urban national territory.

The insurgents’ tactics run the gamut: terrorism, intimidation, bribery, kidnapping, and assassination. Colombia annually leads the world in kidnapping, with those motivated by ransom money doubling to 1,174 (out of a total of 2,986 for all kidnappings) in 2002 from the year before.<sup>51</sup> The FARC and ELN took 75 percent of the victims. The Colombian army depicts the target of actions by the three groups as shown in Table 4.

Group	Against Civilian Population	Against Armed Forces
FARC	45%	55%
ELN	90%	10%
AUC	90%	10%

**Table 4. Target of Actions.** <sup>52</sup>

The amount of violent crime is extraordinary. Colombia's homicide rate is three times higher than in Brazil and Mexico and 10 times the rate of the United States and Argentina. Moreover, some 60 percent of all the kidnappings in the world take place in Colombia.<sup>53</sup> Violence annually costs some 25 percent of the growth in GDP. The average cost of violence for Latin America is 14.2 percent of the region's GDP, estimated at US \$168 million annually and up to half of the private capital invested. Colombia ranks with El Salvador for the economic toll of violence in Latin America in recent years, as indicated in Table 5.

	El Salvador	Colombia	Venezuela	Brazil	Peru	Mexico
Direct Costs	9.2	11.4	6.9	3.3	2.9	4.9
Loss of Wealth	4.3	5.0	0.3	1.9	1.5	1.3
Material Losses	4.9	6.4	6.6	1.4	1.4	3.8
Indirect Costs	11.7	8.9	4.8	5.6	1.6	4.6
Productivity, Investments	0.2	2.0	2.4	2.2	0.6	1.3
Work, Consumption	11.5	6.9	2.2	0.4	1.0	3.3
Transfers <sup>54</sup>	4.0	4.4	0.3	1.6	0.6	2.8
TOTAL	24.9	24.7	11.8	10.5	5.1	12.3

**Table 5. Comparative Economic Costs of Violence as Percent of GDP.**<sup>55</sup>

Violence is the principal cause of death and the greatest public health problem in Colombia. Among men between 15 and 44 years,

homicides represent 60 percent of the causes of death. At birth, Colombian men can expect to lose an average of 4 years of life expectancy to the risk of homicide.

With respect to confidence in the judicial system, some 52 percent of the lower class victims of armed robberies did nothing, and only 5 percent went to the police. In the higher social classes, the figures were 34 and 22 percent, respectively. The lack of confidence in public security spawns the privatization and decentralization of security. The impact on the social fabric is devastating, literally destroying the bases of civil society. A recent report, sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank and written by Mauricio Rubio, a leading student of crime and violence in Colombia, states,

The incentives for the privatization and decentralization of security are much stronger when there are channels of communication between [illegal] armed groups and delinquency: if the group that protects a certain territory sustains itself with criminal activities in other areas, it will diminish the financial pressure on the community which receives protection that is subsidized by victims of crime outside that territory.<sup>56</sup>

Commenting on the national problem, General Enrique Mora asserted, "We Colombians have historically accepted living with violence."<sup>57</sup>

### **The Massacre at Bojayá.**

Colombia is beset by a vicious, multidimensional, irregular conflict with no well-defined lines of territorial demarcation between the contenders. The following case studies will illuminate some of these dimensions. The massacre of 119 innocent civilians at Bojayá in May 2002, the worst massacre of this nature in Colombia's long-running violence, amply demonstrates this. The difficult to access town of some 1,000 people lies 235 miles northwest of the capital. The tragic events are an excellent case study of the strategic and operational consequences of an ineffective state that does not provide sufficient governance and security to its people. The Afro-Colombian Chocó department, endowed with the highest rainfall in the world after Bangladesh, is the poorest in Colombia, with 80 percent unemployment. It has virtually been abandoned by the central government in terms of infrastructure and services. After the massacre, *El Tiempo* published these editorial comments: "Since

the beginning it has been condemned to die living, separated from the economic and social projects of the state. . . . [I]t will always be the back yard of a centralized Colombia, remembered only when tragedy touches its inhabitants.”<sup>58</sup>

The area around this town, which lies adjacent to the long Caribbean-bound Atrato River, has been contested between the FARC and the AUC for years because the Atrato has strategic value as a conduit for shipping cocaine to the Caribbean and Pacific and for importing guns and ammunition from Central America and Panama. The Chocó itself is strategically convenient for illegal activities because it is the only department of Colombia with coasts on the Pacific and Caribbean. It is important to note that the Drug Enforcement Agency of the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that some 65 percent of the cocaine entering the United States comes through the eastern Pacific, Central America, and Mexico.<sup>59</sup>

In 1996, the AUC took control of the town. The FARC, in turn, evicted them in 2000 in order to exercise control over the Middle and Upper Atrato area. They attacked the only police station in the area, in Vigía del Fuerte across the river, killing 21 policemen. Some of the bodies were found mutilated. Moreover, the FARC executed six people they accused of collaborating with the paramilitaries, including the local mayor. The meager response of distant authorities was to order restrictions on the sale of food and fuel.<sup>60</sup>

In an effort to retake control, between April 21 and April 30, 2002, approximately 250 paramilitaries established themselves in the area to the displeasure of the local citizens, who wanted to avoid being caught in the crossfire once again between what *El Tiempo* called the narco-rightists and the narco-leftists. The people requested of the paramilitary commander, alias Camilo, in writing that the illegal armed groups locate themselves outside the urban area so that the civilian population could avoid the fighting. Camilo, who later would be killed in combat, answered that the paramilitaries were going to “cleanse the Atrato area,” and that, therefore, they would stay in place.<sup>61</sup> On April 26, the Public Defender’s office, which is responsible for citizen security with representatives across the nation, issued an early warning about the risks of an impending battle between the two illegal groups. It was the most recent of about 50 warnings that local and national authorities had received but failed to act upon, either because some were thought to be unsubstantiated or because there simply were not enough people and resources to investigate.

On May 1, at about 6 o'clock in the morning, combat began. Paramilitary forces took up positions near the church, and the FARC did so on the periphery of the town. Assisted by three priests, some 300 people took sanctuary in the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, the only concrete structure in town, and ostensibly a place of genuine security. Churches historically are off limits to combatants, according to the universally accepted humanitarian principles contained in the laws of armed warfare, the millennial notion of the "Peace of God." To force out the paramilitaries, on May 2, at about 10:45 in the morning, the FARC launched a third crude gas cylinder bomb from about 400 meters from the church.<sup>62</sup> The depleted propane cylinder, known in Spanish as a *pipeta*, was filled with 40 pounds of dynamite. The FARC developed this notoriously inaccurate and devastating primitive artillery. It is a noisy, lethal terror weapon. The bomb exploded on the church altar, killing 119 (including 40 children) and injuring 98.

The survivors, led by priests, crossed the firing lines waving white flags and shouting repeatedly: "What do we want? That you respect our lives. Who are we? The civilian population."<sup>63</sup> On May 3, the FARC announced that they had retaken the town and permitted a commission of locals to reenter, evacuate the wounded, and identify and bury the bodies. Burials were completed by May 5, however without the presence of government officials to oversee and legally record the procedure. Almost all of the town's survivors fled across the river to Vigía del Fuerte.

On May 7, the 50th Navy Infantry Battalion, located in distant Turbo on the Caribbean coast, reached Bojayá, doing so by four launches capable of carrying 90 soldiers at a time up the Atrato, a very dangerous operation without adequate ground and air support. Moreover, only one boat was available to refuel the launches moving up the Atrato. The military was spread very thinly and lacked the mobility for quick response. For example, the Manosalva Army Battalion in Quibdó, the departmental capital, has the responsibility to cover 27,000 square kilometers of difficult if not impassable territory. The Quibdó unit, located much closer than Turbo, could not reach Bojayá quickly enough because of the lack of roads and aircraft.

The FARC publicly admitted they had committed an "error," though there was no indication that either commanders or troops responsible for the massacre were in any way disciplined for war crimes. The United Nations Mission admonished, "This 'error'

constitutes an infraction of humanitarian norms, because it openly violates international laws to that effect.”<sup>64</sup> The conduct of the FARC constituted an attack against a civilian population, a violation of Articles 3 and 13 of the Geneva Convention, which sets forth the principles of humanitarian distinction, discrimination and proportionality, as well as the immunity of the civilian population. There is an absolute obligation to refrain from attacking civilian populations and to limit the effects of military operations that can potentially affect protected persons, in this case, noncombatant civilians. The imprecision and the indiscrimination of the *pipetas* added to the ethical burden of the attackers.

By attacking the church, the FARC also violated the obligation to protect the security of places of worship. Finally, the FARC violated Article 17 of the Geneva Convention by forcing the displacement of people. The UN Human Rights Mission added that these infractions constitute war crimes. Though the paramilitaries received less attention in the mission report, they were also adjudged guilty of violating humanitarian norms and committing war crimes. They had exposed civilians to the dangers of military action and thus violated the principles of discrimination and immunity. Moreover, they were guilty of not respecting places of worship and of forcing the displacement of people.

Finally, the government was criticized. “It is clear,” stated the report, “that the absence or insufficient presence of the agents of the State [sic] in the area of conflict increased the vulnerability and risk of the civilian population in the Middle Atrato, leaving it exposed to the action of two illegally armed groups.”<sup>65</sup> The UN Human Rights Mission report also implied that some collusion between government officials and the paramilitaries in the area existed, though it could not prove it with evidence.

The lessons from Bojayá are many and profound. First, although the loss of life was enormous, it is not unique in Colombia’s complicated conflict. Countless events of this nature have taken place and continue throughout the national territory.<sup>66</sup> *Semana* magazine reported, for example, that illegally armed groups were responsible for 46 such massacres, in addition to 300,000 people being displaced in the first 9 months of 2002.<sup>67</sup> Massacres of civilians clearly manifest the inability of the state to provide minimal security to its citizens. Powerless to block the two illegal groups from moving into place and engaging, the legitimate coercive authority of the state, in the form of the armed forces, arrived in Bojayá to retake



control four days after the civilians were slain and injured. Impunity reigns for both the FARC and the paramilitaries. There is no rule of law because the police and judicial system, essential elements for controlling and adjudicating conflict, are not present in sufficient numbers, and if present, are not backed by the ultimate dissuasive power of the armed forces. Colombia's military troops are too few, too distant, and lacking in the tactical mobility to react quickly and cover the vast national territory effectively.

### **Fernandinho and Perverse Globalization.**

The interplay of ungoverned space, weak state authority and presence, as well as the international reach of drug trafficking are manifest in the story of the capture of Fernandinho.<sup>68</sup> On April 21, 2001, as part of operation Gato Negro, the Colombian armed forces captured Brazil's top drug dealer, who reputedly controlled 70 percent of Brazil's cocaine distribution. Luis Fernando da Costa, 33 years old and nicknamed Fernandinho Beira Mar (Freddy Seashore) was caught in the vicinity of Barrancominas, in the lightly populated Vichada department of eastern Colombia, next to Venezuela and not far from the Brazilian border. The FARC's 16th front used that department, along with Guainía and Guaviare, as a staging base for operations; a mobility corridor; and an area for coca cultivation, refining, and shipment into Venezuela and Brazil. The Colombian military reported that these three departments accounted for more than 80 percent of the cocaine that the FARC itself produced. Fernandinho was the largest foreign trading partner of the FARC, swapping \$10 million per month in guns and ammunition for cocaine. Within days, he was deported back to Brazil, reportedly because of fears that he could escape from a Colombian prison.

Barrancominas had become a center of cocaine activity totally under the control of the FARC. The taking of the town by the military culminated a 3-month operation spearheaded by the Rapid Reaction Force, the Fuerza de Despliegue Rápido (commonly known as the FUDRA), involving some 3,000 troops and netting the following: more than 60 cocaine laboratories, 22 airstrips, and 16 rebel camps "scattered across the jungle like craters on the moon," plus 50,000 acres of previously unknown coca plantations.<sup>69</sup> Fernandinho stated that Barrancominas had become the principal gathering point for the transshipment of cocaine to Europe via Suriname, Guyana, and Holland. After his arrest, he revealed the following details about

the intersection of the motivation of the FARC, ungoverned space, drugs, guns, and the international market:

The FARC are the richest and strongest guerrillas in the world. Their leaders live like millionaire capitalists: beautiful women, good food and liquor. . . In Colombia not a kilo of cocaine moves without the permission of the FARC. . . . I was but a peon in the drug traffic in Brazil and Paraguay. . . . For each kilo I sent they paid me \$3,000. . . . The drug business is pretty good for the FARC; for each kilo that is ready to be shipped they charge \$500, for each flight . . . \$15,000. . . . I paid the FARC \$10 to \$12 million a month. Each flight carried between 700 kilos and a ton of coca. . . . Each pilot was paid \$25,000 and the co-pilot \$5,000 . . . and a little bit was paid to the air controllers so that they would not cause problems with the flights. . . . Part of the payment for the coca was made to the FARC in 3,000 guns and three and a half million rounds of ammunition, which came from Paraguay. . . .<sup>70</sup>

The cocaine business had completely distorted the local economy. The town of 600 had some 20 bars, billiard halls, houses of prostitution, and even a carpeted cockfighting ring. Barrancominas had once been a delightful destination for eco-tourism.

The tale of Barrancominas demonstrates the unholy linkage between vast ungoverned space, narco-terrorism, ecological destruction, and a perverse form of globalization that regularly violates international borders. These boundaries are a minor impediment to traffickers, particularly in the expansive Amazon Basin. For example, in August 2000, Peruvian officials announced that they had broken up a ring that had air-dropped 100,000 AK-47 rifles to the FARC in eastern Colombia. The weapons were bought in Amman, Jordan, and dropped over Colombia by a Peruvian Air Force plane. The deal was apparently coordinated with the approval of President Alberto Fujimori's security advisor and keeper of intelligence secrets, the notorious Vladimiro Montesinos (who would later be jailed for various criminal activities; Fujimori himself fled to Japan to escape Peruvian justice). Similarly, the Russian *mafia* was involved in attempting to assemble a submarine in Colombia to ship cocaine out. Opined Alfredo Rangel Suárez, one of Colombia's leading security experts, "It's globalization. Weapons come into Colombia in exchange for cocaine that goes to New York and Europe. It's pure capitalism, a primitive and effective form of barter."<sup>71</sup>

## White Horse and Parallel Power.

Perverse globalization has a powerful reach. On January 18, 2001, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno announced that U.S. and Colombian law enforcement authorities had concluded a 10-month investigation, called "White Horse," that had led to the arrest of more than 50 individuals in both countries who were part of a heroin smuggling operation between Colombia and the United States, specifically between the cities of Pereira and Philadelphia.<sup>72</sup> More than 110 individuals would be arrested, and 22 kilos of heroin, 10 of cocaine, 15 weapons, and \$1.3 million in U.S. currency would be seized. An entire drug smuggling operation was dismantled, at least for the time being.

Pereira and Philadelphia are separated by 2,400 miles. Between 1998 and 2001, the Pereira-based network sent "mules" north to carry an average of 20 kilos of pure heroin, some in the form of pellets secreted in the stomachs of the carriers. Each mule swallowed between 50 and 100 pellets. It is reported that the Pereira organization sent 15 mules per month, 12 of which completed the journey undetected by customs officials or not killed by the leaking of heroin into their stomachs. Some of the heroin-derived profits made in North Philadelphia's crime-ridden "Badlands" ghetto would be sent to Pereira, at times also via the mules' stomachs. One man reportedly swallowed \$171,000 in tightly folded rolls.<sup>73</sup>

Pereira and North Philadelphia are linked by poverty, hopelessness, and crime; in sum, lawlessness and ineffective governance, in addition to Colombian diaspora ties. Countless variations to this theme are ongoing in the Western Hemisphere. Brazil was once a transit point for illicit drugs. Now it is the world's second largest consumer after the United States as well as an important transit country. Prospering from this business are the urban drug gang "commands" that have grown so much in wealth and armed power as to threaten the state with their own "parallel power." Well-equipped with automatic rifles, grenades, and rocket launchers, they have established "parallel power" in the major cities. On September 30, 2002, the Red Command (Comando Vermelho) of Rio de Janeiro deployed its members from the *favelas* (shanty towns) to the fashionable business-tourist districts of Ipanema and Leblon, ordering businesses to close, taxis and street vendors to leave. One report states that it was a protest against the jailing of Fernandinho, who apparently uses his cell phone to run Red Command from

jail.<sup>74</sup>

Warned a local businessman: "What is clear to me is that the government is losing the war against the traffickers--they are the ones who are in control."<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the First Capital Command, São Paulo's strongest gang, threatened to blow up Bovespa, Latin America's largest stock exchange. One of the consequences of such high levels of delinquency is the growing requirement for the police, military, and intelligence services to work together in border control and public security. Still lacking, however, is multinational cooperation because of sensitivities about sovereignty; poor intelligence collection and sharing; and the lack of political will and resources to conduct the adequate intelligence, police, and military operations to control borders.<sup>76</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld addressed this problem at the Defense Ministerial of the Americas meeting in Santiago, Chile, November 19, 2002: "In this hemisphere, narco-terrorists, hostage takers and armed smugglers operate in ungoverned areas, using them as bases from which to destabilize democratic governments. . . . Elected governments have the responsibility to exercise sovereign authority . . . throughout their national territories."<sup>77</sup> He proposed that military forces in the Americas work together to meet the challenge.

### **The Collar Bomb.**

Another dimension of Colombia's conflict is the irrational dehumanization, the growth of a veritable counterculture of violence, what distinguished Colombian scholar Gonzalo Sánchez calls "the desacrilization of death and the banalization of life."<sup>78</sup> On May 15, 2001, the barbaric incident of the collar bomb occurred, which reverberated around the globe and put pressure on President Pastrana to end the peace process. Elvia Cortez, a rural property owner and community activist, was killed by a bomb placed around her neck, literally a collar bomb. The criminals demanded \$7,500, or the bomb would be allowed to explode. They left the note: "To unlock the collar there are numerous ways, mechanical, hydraulic, electrical, and digital. It's important to note that it can only be unlocked at a specific hour either during the day or night." The sophisticated device, which was sensitive to body temperature for detonation, decapitated her and killed the technician sent to disarm it. The main perpetrator, thought to be one of nine common criminals not associated with any of the three terrorist groups, was convicted

1 year later and sent to prison for 32 years, while an investigation against eight others began.

The judge conducting the proceedings commented that the bomb had not been manufactured nor installed by members of the FARC, that the delinquents had received advice from the Basque group Fatherland and Liberty (Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna – ETA) and Middle East terrorist groups. This assessment, he stated, came from U.S. anti-explosive experts. These experts added that the bomb was so sophisticated that the equipment to disarm it was not available in Colombia.<sup>79</sup>

One-and-a-half months later, the FARC kidnapped and held for ransom a mother, Luz Amilbia, and her five-year-old daughter, Luisa Fernanda. They were forced off a bus traveling in Antioquia and taken into the mountains. Colombian intelligence released recordings of phone negotiations conducted between the FARC and Jorge Cano, husband of Luz Amilbia and father of Luisa, and a common worker of limited means. After Cano paid 23 million pesos, the FARC negotiator requested another payment of 150 million pesos to liberate not just the mother, but also the daughter, who was now sick from respiratory complications. Finally, after much delay, the FARC negotiator, known as Paisano in the conversation, agreed to release both for the 23 million.<sup>80</sup>

### **Operation ORION: Retaking Comuna Trece in Medellín.**

Medellín's Comuna Trece slum neighborhoods are home to 129,000 people. For 10 years, until October 2002, it was a stronghold of the FARC and ELN, which terrorized, extorted, kidnapped, and murdered with impunity. Evidence of the lack of government control was the fact that the AUC itself had penetrated about 70 percent of the other slum areas of the city, doing so with the support of some 400 armed gangs numbering 10,000. The amount of crime in Comuna 13 was extraordinary: homicides were six times the national rate. The terrorists took over homes and schools and forcibly recruited males to fight in their ranks. In the past, the military and police would mount occasional forays, but nothing of a magnitude that would regain control and free the people from the repression.

President Uribe put security first, demanding that the armed forces, long accustomed to a defensive attitude, take the offensive. Defense Minister Martha Lucía Ramírez affirmed, "Our public forces [in the past] had retreated, were more defensive. Today they

are taking the offensive.”<sup>81</sup> On October 16, 2002, Uribe ordered 3,000 troops backed by helicopters to retake the area. Instead of pulling out quickly, the military stayed for days, establishing a sense of permanent security, followed by the reinsertion of the police and the construction of two military posts. The commander of the Fourth Army Brigade, General Mario Montoya, commented, “Last time, we went in to Comuna 13 for 24 hours. . . . This operation is going to take 8, 10, 15, 21 days, whatever it takes.”<sup>82</sup>

Operation ORION resulted in 18 dead, 34 wounded, 250 arrests, and the freeing of 20 kidnap victims. In addition, quantities of arms were captured. With the eviction of the terrorists, a sense of normalcy was restored. The minister of defense promised that the government would follow up with economic and social recovery programs. Similar operations would be mounted in Cali, Cartagena, Bogotá, and other cities, which were also ringed with densely populated slums that were the breeding grounds of violence and had come under various levels of penetration by the FARC and the ELN.

### **The Emergence of the Strategic Relationship: United States and Colombia.**

Understanding the nature of the conflict is key to understanding the evolving response of the United States. Colombia has been receiving U.S. assistance for decades, beginning with the Cold War-oriented military assistance pacts of 1952. Colombia was an important theater for U.S. military and economic support in the 1960s, which in 1964-65 temporarily set back the FARC. A modest but steady level of military and economic assistance and legal training continued into the 1990s. Both the strategic imperative and the kind of assistance changed radically with the inception of the “drug war” in 1989 and the mandate given to the U.S. military to take on a counternarcotics mission, followed soon by the intensification of the security problem in Colombia.

By 1997-98, the United States had spent nearly a decade of effort in Peru and Bolivia to reduce coca production and shipment. The strategic breakthrough came in the mid-1990s through the combined application of interdiction, eradication (voluntary and forced by means of aerial spraying of glyphosate, commercially known as Roundup), and the implementation of alternative crop production (called alternative development) for peasants who lost out by no longer being able to produce coca. The United States funded much of

this, including the costs of providing alternative development. The lesson learned here was that the three elements must go together for success. But Colombia would severely test this thesis, because the conditions there were far different from those in Bolivia and Peru.

Success in these two countries forced the enterprise north (the balloon effect) into eastern and southern Colombia. In these remote areas beyond government control, soil, moisture, and temperature conditions can produce four crops of coca in 12 months. An estimated 300,000 acres of coca were under cultivation by the end of 1999. This allowed Colombia to produce an estimated 520 metric tons, compared with 245 produced by Peru and Bolivia combined. Until 1997, most of the coca was grown in Peru and Bolivia, while coca base was shipped to Colombia for processing and distribution into the markets of the United States, Canada, Europe, and elsewhere. Table 6 shows the dramatic shift in production patterns.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>Peru</b>	460	435	325	240	175
<b>Bolivia</b>	240	215	200	150	70
<b>Colombia</b>	230	300	350	435	520
<b>Totals</b>	930	950	875	825	765

**Table 6. The Shift in Andean Cocaine Production (Metric Tons.)**

The successes in Bolivia and Peru increased coca production in Colombia and intensified an already bad security problem there. This frustrated officials in Washington who had invested so heavily in the programs for Peru and Bolivia. Further disappointment came from another quarter. By 1997-98, the Colombian army was being beaten in battalion size formations by the FARC. Such poor performance by a professional and very experienced counterinsurgency army was unheard of in the history of modern Latin America. At the same time, citizen support for the paramilitaries was increasing, ostensibly the result of the government's inability to provide security in the face of the FARC's offensives and atrocities against the civilian population. The fall of Colombia to the FARC with the emergence of a veritable Farclandia as a drug state was not a far-fetched prospect among policymakers in Washington, Caracas, Quito, Lima, and Brasilia.

For some time, senior officials in Washington had been thinking that Colombia needed a major boost of U.S. support and

a more comprehensive strategy that could be sustained beyond an administration. In November 1999, the U.S. Congress voted a \$165 million supplemental aid package for Colombia, which, added to the \$124 million appropriated earlier, made Colombia the third largest recipient (though far behind Israel and Egypt) of U.S. aid in the world. At that time, Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering, an experienced hand in Latin American affairs, argued for a long-term national plan rather than the fitful short-term steps that each year had to be acted upon through the U.S. political process. It was also felt to be imperative that the Colombian government become more proficient in linking a long-term plan with operations in the field, thus mobilizing resources and personnel across the ministries to do a more effective job. This would demonstrate to the U.S. Congress and the American people that the creative talents and resources of Colombians would be committed to the cause of rebuilding the nation.

Common wisdom prevails that little of magnitude happens in the Western Hemisphere without leadership from the United States, especially on such a controversial, sovereignty-laden issue as fighting the scourge of narcotics at the international level. Accordingly, U.S. economic and military assistance would be critical in encouraging Colombians to sacrifice for their own survival and in prodding the international community, namely the Europeans, to assist. The original 5-year plan that was developed envisioned a total contribution of \$7.5 billion, with \$4 billion to be provided by Colombia, \$1.3 billion by the United States, and the balance by Europe. Such an allocation responded to the notion of “co-responsibility” for drug production (Bolivia, Peru, Colombia) and drug consumption (United States, Europe), which was accepted as a principle for equitably sharing the burden of solving the problem.

The main elements of the original U.S. aid package are critical to understand because *Plan Colombia* has not been an easy sell, due to misinformation and plain lack of information. Moreover, the allocations demonstrate that this was not merely a narrow military assistance program, contrary to criticism both in the United States and abroad:

1. Support for human rights and judicial reform – \$122 million.
2. Expansion of counternarcotics operations in Southern Colombia – \$390.5 million (for helicopters, humanitarian



- assistance, and development assistance).
3. Alternative economic development – \$81 million for Colombia, \$85 million for Bolivia, and \$8 million for Ecuador.
  4. Increased interdiction efforts – \$129.4 million.
  5. Assistance for the Colombian police – \$115.6 million.

(These dollars were an emergency supplement to the \$330 million earlier provided and \$256 million committed for 2001.)

Despite increased dollars for the various programs, the U.S. commitment to Colombia was defined only as counternarcotics support. Eventually, 18 Black Hawk and 30 Huey II helicopters were sent to Colombia, to be used for counternarcotics operations, force protection, and eradication of coca fields, lab destruction, and, if necessary, humanitarian assistance. Then Secretary of Defense William Cohen prohibited all Department of Defense “personnel from engaging in actual field operations or deploying to areas where hostile confrontation is imminent.”<sup>83</sup> While the counternarcotics restrictions were strictly observed, it remained to be seen whether they made good strategic and operational sense in the complex security environment of Colombia.

### **The Price of Strategic Clarity and the End of the Peace Process.**

While *Plan Colombia* was in its second year of implementation, the international system was shaken to its foundations by the events of September 11, 2001. Those events had important ramifications for U.S. policy around the globe, created new alliances, and radically changed the definition of threats. The events also had a profound impact on the strategic equation in Colombia. The challenge of what U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld called “draining the swamp” of terrorism with global links resonated deeply in Bogotá and among the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC. Though these groups already appeared on the U.S. State Department’s list of terrorist organizations, after September 11, they were viewed as part of a broader international threat assessment, even though Colombia was never formally made part of the global war on terrorism.

Senior U.S. diplomats who dealt with Colombia explained that all three insurgent groups needed to be placed on the same list for policy reasons, to achieve consistency in U.S. policy toward Colombia. If the

AUC were on the list, the diplomats argued, then so must the FARC and ELN. This made it easier to justify counterterrorism support to Colombia, especially after September 11. Although the three groups lacked the classical characteristics of international terrorist groups, they were, nonetheless, present in at least 18 countries, including diplomatic missions, and to this day regularly cross borders to conduct illegal activities in Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, and Brazil.<sup>84</sup>

Much like his predecessors, President Pastrana began a “peace process” with the FARC in 1999, one fraught with great contradictions and the high risk of failure from the very beginning. As part of the bargain and as a confidence builder, he gave the FARC a demilitarized area (*despeje*) the size of Switzerland, inhabited by a small population of 96,000. This is an old tradition with precedents in Colombian history: the central government’s weak authority results in surrendering sovereignty in the form of virtual sanctuaries to insurgents in outlying areas. Given the government’s inability to control vast areas of the national territory, *de facto despejes* have come to exist, areas of practical autonomy for irregular forces, since independence in 1819. The *despeje* (literally, an area “cleared” of government presence) was located in the Caguán region south of Bogotá. Herein the FARC established complete control, without interference from Bogotá and much to the dismay of Washington, which could hardly disagree in public with the modalities of a “peace process” undertaken by Colombia. The “peace process” went nowhere and was resuscitated at regular intervals because of Pastrana’s commitment and the international expectations it had raised. The peace talks were resumed one final time before an impending military offensive by the government against the FARC was started to retake the *despeje*.<sup>85</sup> President Pastrana, “risking all for peace,” had extended himself, his negotiators, and his government’s credibility as far as he could for 3 years – with nothing to show for such extensive efforts other than his administration’s and the Colombian citizens’ frustration and virtual surrender to the FARC of national sovereignty over national territory.

The FARC had used the *despeje* as a logistical support base for military operations beyond it, to kidnap and assassinate, and to grow coca. In spite of the government’s renewal of negotiations in good faith, the FARC conducted some 170 armed attacks in the next 30 days, culminating on February 20, 2002, in the hijacking of a civilian aircraft and the kidnapping of one passenger, Senator Jorge

Eduardo Gechem Turbay, head of the Senate Commission on Peace and member of a large and politically prominent family. President Pastrana thereupon announced the end of the process and ordered Colombian armed forces to retake the *despeje* that had been given over to the FARC as a goodwill gesture to start the peace process. Days later, former senator and then presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt was kidnapped by a FARC column, making a total of six parliamentarians being held hostage by the FARC.<sup>86</sup> Betancourt had not been released as of May 2003. Analysts believe that such a high-level captive will be useful to the FARC in a future exchange of prisoners with the government.

One month earlier, on January 20, 2002, under the auspices of UN representative James Lemoyne and the support of the Catholic Church and 10 “friendly countries” (Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela), an agreement had been made between the Colombian government and the FARC to try to reach a cease-fire by April 7, 2002.<sup>87</sup> It was clear to many observers that a cease-fire was not likely to occur by this deadline for a number of reasons. Peace, especially in internal conflict, can be defined as a “pattern of stability acceptable to those with capacity to disturb it by violence.”<sup>88</sup>

Achieving such a peace did not stand a chance in the political climate of January 2002. First and most important, the FARC had shown by their actions for the previous 3 years that they were not interested in peace, which would require surrendering their strategic objective of taking power by force of arms, the only way they could achieve it.<sup>89</sup> Second, students and practitioners of peace processes, such as former Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front Comandante Joaquín Villalobos of El Salvador, pointed out that Colombia’s peace process was ill-conceived because it had the following serious procedural and substantive defects: 1) a poorly defined agenda; 2) unclear goals on the part of the government; 3) the FARC’s unrealistic reform agenda, which addressed some of the nation’s economic and social problems (while these reforms are unquestionably needed, few could be implemented in wartime by a weak government under assault from the left, right, and international organized crime); 4) the very difficult task of verifying and enforcing compliance with a cease-fire with some 100 widely dispersed and mobile insurgent fronts throughout Colombia (because of their wide dispersal, Commanding General of the Armed Forces Fernando Tapias earlier recommended putting all the FARC inside the *despeje*);

5) the absence of an effective third-party negotiator (until James Lemoyne of the United Nations became involved); and 6) too much personal involvement by President Pastrana.<sup>90</sup>

The leader of the nation should have delegated the responsibility of negotiating with the FARC to lower level officials and avoided putting at risk the prestige of the presidency, which raised expectations too high. The peace process and the cease-fire were doomed for even more fundamental reasons. The FARC had little incentive to negotiate seriously because the military balance in the battlefield was at that time not sufficiently unfavorable to them to want to seek the best deal before it was too late. The Colombian military could not hold the ground it won back from the FARC because it did not (and still does not) have sufficient forces to exercise permanent local control across the nation. A cease-fire by April 7, 2002, was simply not an achievable goal, given the military strength of the FARC, its immediate resumption of attacks on the infrastructure and innocent bystanders after January 20, and the probability that the FARC's central command could not control some of its autonomous front commanders. Moreover, given the insurgents' low popularity, their economic dependence on the drug business and other illegal activities, and the past inability of the state to guarantee the survival of insurgents who put down their guns in an attempt to reintegrate themselves into society, the FARC had more to lose than to gain by agreeing to peace.

Finally, the incentives to negotiate a peace in a civil war, which Colombia's conflict is not, are far different from the incentives that drug-trafficking terrorists have for negotiating. Most of the experience of the United Nations and other third parties to broker peace negotiations deals with civil wars, where the two opposing forces have competing political objectives. Yet, those forces are united by the common objective of building a sustainable peace. Terrorists are criminals who, by definition, do not have a legitimate political objective. Indeed, peace would be the ruination of the FARC's agenda to make money unimpeded. It would also entail their practical extinction as a political and military movement. Moreover, there are the difficult ethical, political, and security problems of how to reintegrate them into society once the shooting stops. This issue would surface in a dramatic way in January 2003, when the Uribe government offered an amnesty to members of the AUC who put down their arms. At that time, two of the main paramilitary groups refused the deal. Those charged with crimes against humanity, such

as assassination, torture, and political persecution, were excluded from the offer.

The frustrations with the peace process and the post 9/11 international environment underscored an important reality: the FARC and the ELN were almost completely delegitimated at home and abroad by the time of the January 2002 negotiations. Their claims to a political agenda of reform and social justice stood in naked contrast with their campaigns of assassinations, kidnappings, extortions, and indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations; forced recruitment of child soldiers (over 6,000 children, according to the United Nations);<sup>91</sup> direct involvement in promoting and deeply benefiting from the drug trade; inflicting ecological damage by blowing up oil pipelines;<sup>92</sup> and even developing a training link between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the FARC (three IRA explosives experts were caught after they had left the *despeje*).<sup>93</sup>

The events of September 11 and the emergence of an international coalition against terrorism raised sharper questions about the legitimacy of insurgent movements around the globe. In the January 2002 negotiations, the FARC put forth among its demands the requirement that Pastrana recognize them as “valid political interlocutors in the peace process.” This assessment highlighted a dilemma. How could a legitimate democratic government, aspiring to apply the rule of law, justify the contradiction of granting legitimacy to terrorists, who repeatedly rejected the rules of humanitarian warfare enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, especially in the post-September 11 global environment of anxiety and extraordinary security precautions? The FARC’s behavior suggested two possible reasons: that they were out of touch with reality and could only talk behind the security of the gun or that they regarded themselves to be so criminal as to be beyond any concept of legitimacy.

The Colombian government virtually had surrendered its authority in 1999 by setting aside the *despeje* for the FARC, a huge risk that backfired, and then early in 2002, government representatives engaged the FARC in internationally and domestically sanctioned negotiations. The Papal Nuncio to Colombia, Monsignor Beniamino Stella, identified the ethical quagmire as “the great deception of the international community because of the guerrilla terrorism.”<sup>94</sup> It was surreal to watch the political theater of representatives of well-meaning organizations, such as the United Nations and other members of the international community, earnestly trying to broker the cease-fire agreement with the terrorists and, thus, bestow a form

of legitimacy upon them.

Though President Pastrana and the international organizations apparently viewed the negotiations as worth one last-ditch push for peace, the FARC's actions following the January negotiations proved that they had not come to the table in good faith. Unfortunately, the outcomes were ethical obfuscation and loss of thousands of human lives since the inception of the "peace process." But it achieved an important strategic breakthrough for Pastrana that laid the foundation for his successor: the international isolation and delegitimation of the FARC, the major antagonist that Colombian society faced. It also opened up new strategic options for the United States and for the international community to assist Colombia more fully.

### **Evaluating *Plan Colombia*.**

These policy developments serve as a backdrop for an assessment of the impact of the multiyear *Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State* (usually referred to by its shortened form, *Plan Colombia*). The Clinton administration had for some time urged Pastrana to develop a national strategy so that the United States could support Colombia in a comprehensive manner. *Plan Colombia* was the brainchild of Dr. Jaime Ruiz, senior advisor to President Pastrana. Ruiz, who holds a doctorate in engineering from the University of Kansas, argued that strengthening the capacity of the state, especially the military capability, was key to the success of any national plan.<sup>95</sup>

The strategic theory behind this plan was very simple: economic development, security, and peace are directly linked. Taking the money generated by drugs out of the market reduces the warmaking capacity of all three terrorist groups, thereby reducing the level of violence and enhancing the prospects for peace. There was, thus, a convergence of the U.S. strategic interest – reducing the flow of narcotics – and the more comprehensive interest of Colombia for getting U.S. military support. But the convergence, as will be seen later, was only partial and led to strategic and operational distortions from which the United States is attempting to emerge.

The central premise of the U.S. component of *Plan Colombia* was that money from the trade in illegal drugs feeds the coffers of the guerrillas, whose attacks give rise to citizens' self-defense organizations – the paramilitaries. If the narcotics funds could be

stopped or drastically diminished, the guerrillas could not mount their ambitious military campaigns against the state and society and would become much less threatening. Moreover, Carlos Castaño's paramilitaries would have less reason for being. With their main source of funds cut off, a less powerful FARC and ELN would be more likely to negotiate seriously, and the paramilitaries would also have a greater incentive to join them and government representatives for serious peace talks to end the fighting and rebuild Colombia. Indeed, part of this calculation may be proving correct. In late 2002, the paramilitaries offered to cease fighting, and negotiations for that purpose appeared forthcoming.

Additionally, it was anticipated that as these armed threats to the state and society were eliminated, the forces of public order (police and military) would be able to regain effective control of the entire national territory, making it easier to eradicate illegal narcotics. Restoring security throughout Colombia would allow the rule of law to be established because the state would have the monopoly of force and regain its citizens' trust. From the U.S. perspective, the strategic dilemma was and continues to be that even if drug production were significantly reduced, the FARC, the main force in the field fighting against the government, would adapt its strategy and retain significant war-making capacity. Thus, the complementary objectives of security and democracy could only be achieved by removing the illegal armed groups from the battlefield. Whether U.S. antinarcotics support as a component of the multiyear *Plan Colombia* would be sufficient to help to achieve the plan's overall goals has always been in question. But at least U.S. statesmen could point to the fact that the United States was helping Colombia and establishing a foundation for the future, however incomplete the support may have been.

The audacious goals of *Plan Colombia* were to strengthen the state by reenergizing an economy that, by the end of 2002, had 15 percent unemployment, reducing narcotics production and trafficking, and restoring civil society. *Plan Colombia* was an economic and social strategy to restore the country's economic health along with a more functional democracy. Though one part of the plan did include the military, *Plan Colombia* was not, contrary to many nongovernmental organizations' and media reports, a military strategy.<sup>96</sup> Critics of the plan should note that the military assistance portion was only 7 percent of the \$7.5 billion. There is an important strategic reality about this: no nation other than the United States has the political will and the capability in resources to apply the full package of

assistance with serious performance conditions — at the time of *Plan Colombia's* inception to be used for counternarcotics purposes only, with appropriate respect for human rights — to a beleaguered ally deeply in need of outside support. The military component was only one of the plan's 10 elements designed to remake the nation into a secure democracy, free from violence and corruption.

*Plan Colombia* has not been fully funded, the biggest gap resulting from the Europeans' small contribution. Apart from the initial U.S. contribution of \$1.3 billion (which grew to \$1.8 billion by 2002), international support for Colombia has amounted to a total of between \$550 to \$600 million from the European Union, the United Nations, Spain, Japan, Canada, United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland.

What are the returns? It would be unfair to attribute all progress to *Plan Colombia*, which has been in effect for barely 3 years. Much of what has been accomplished antedates the implementation of the plan, particularly in the area of security. By early 2002, Colombia still needed a national strategy to link the instruments of power (political, economic, social, informational, and military) in a cohesive and mutually reinforcing pattern. Indeed, the Colombian ministries are shallow in personnel and resources. This is particularly relevant to the implementation of *Plan Colombia's* "Annex I: Interagency Action Plan," the multimilitary program for coca eradication, alternative development, and security in Putumayo Department. Colombia's fragmented nation and weak state institutional apparatus present serious intellectual and political problems in confronting the multiple challenges of insurgency, drug-related international organized crime, and paramilitarism.

The intellectual impetus for *Plan Colombia* eventually produced the much-awaited Colombian national security strategy, *Democratic Security and Defense Policy*, which was published in the fall of 2002, bearing the Uribe team's strategic concepts. It is a sophisticated and comprehensive document that will be an excellent foundation for linking the national military strategy and the supporting social and economic programs necessary to bring governance and security to the people. The United States pushed for the development of such a document, in order to have a coherent Colombian planning framework for the application of all the instruments of national power.

*Creating a Strategic State.* Strategy, in Clausewitzian terms, is



the calculated relationship between political ends and military-economic-diplomatic means. Clausewitz also speaks of the concept of the “center of gravity” of a state, the source of all strength. If a state is weak and corrupt (recall the anatomy of a weak state, while some two-thirds of Colombia’s Congress took bribes or were intimidated in the late 1990s, according to former U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Curtis Kamman<sup>97</sup>), the central question that arises is: Can such a state develop and implement national security strategy and military strategy effectively? Corruption weakens the state’s own center of gravity – its legitimacy – and the capacity of society to respond to the crisis of national survival.

The concept of the “strategic state” is central to the effort, because only a well-organized state with effective and ethical leadership and personnel can mobilize resources, justify the sacrifices demanded of its citizens, and forge the civil-military coalition to win a war. To paraphrase the sentiments of General Tapias with respect to what is required in Colombia, the state must recover the legitimate authority to act. Such a state must have the following attributes: a national command authority that combines the presidency with sufficient diplomatic, economic, intelligence, and military capabilities within a legal system that safeguards citizens’ rights but is adaptable for national crisis, such as war. Ideally, “the strategic state” would encompass the three branches of government, executive, legislative, and judicial, thus maximizing popular support for the national enterprise and collective sacrifice.

If the answer to the above query remains a “no,” then it follows that the state can only fight a war in a desultory operational fashion, neither winning nor losing, but bleeding slowly into the indefinite future. Over time, such a pattern will mean that the armed fist of the state may be effective in its own way, as is evident already in Colombia, but it will not be complemented by the social and economic measures that the state must implement to serve the people with effective governance. The challenge for Colombian leaders is to bring greater coherence to the national effort, to mobilize societal resources to the task of making war and rebuilding the nation. Israeli scholar Gil Merom states,

It is quite clear that resorting to large-scale ground action requires a significant ability to convert societal into military resources. Yet, it would be wrong to assume that warring states are restricted only by the sum total of their societal resources or by their ability to convert these into military means. States are also

bound by their political capacity to use or lose human resources – i.e., to get their soldiers and citizens to agree to use violence and be its victims; to harm others or be killed or maimed.<sup>98</sup>

Given the Colombian state's manifest weaknesses in coercive authority, governance, collection of taxes, administration of justice, and the lack of territorial control, the task is even more compelling. It is not beyond hope because of the talents and resources of the Colombian people. Societies, moreover, decide to mobilize for collective sacrifice when their backs are to the wall, a national longing that President Uribe began to tap into immediately upon taking office in August 2002. President Uribe is demonstrating a new decisiveness to, for example, reform the tax system in order to increase revenues to pay for a bigger defense budget and thus put more forces in the field. As mentioned earlier, Colombia ranks among the lowest in Latin America in central government tax revenues collected from its citizens, in addition to the high level of corruption and the dysfunctional judicial system.<sup>99</sup> Following a classical pattern witnessed in other internal wars since 1945, Colombia's greatest strides have been made in the strength and performance of its armed forces under tremendous pressure simultaneously to restructure, expand, and change to an offensive mentality, all over a period of 4 years. As recently as 1998, the army was being beaten by the FARC in battalion-size engagements. By the end of Pastrana's term in August 2002, the Colombian army was larger (there are now 55,000 professional soldiers and more than 105,000 regulars, with increasing numbers available for combat); it is more aggressive and better led, organized, trained, motivated, and equipped. Members of the armed forces now have pension and labor benefits, which they did not have before.

A very necessary step was keeping effective military commanders in the ranks, thus breaking with the practice of having senior commanders serving in their respective positions for only one year before retirement. For example, Commanding General of the Armed Forces, General Fernando Tapias and his Army counterpart, General Jorge Mora Rangel, traditionally would have served one year and then retired. They completed three years of service in 2002. The force expansion continues, with a growth of 20 percent expected in 2003. General Tapias and General Mora (who succeeded Tapias as Commanding General of the Armed Forces upon the latter's mid-2002 retirement), with the support of the defense minister, starting

under Pastrana with Rodrigo Lloreda, have transformed the army into a more formidable fighting force.<sup>100</sup> Its Rapid Deployment Force (Fuerza de Despliegue Rápida) conducted important operations in 2001, including "Gato Negro." Perhaps the most impressive operation in 2001 was "7 de Agosto," which deterred a force of 1,300 FARC guerrillas from attacks in the South and East; captured an impressive quantity of arms, supplies, and vehicles; killed a leading guerrilla commander (Urias Cuéllar); and dismantled 17 FARC camps.<sup>101</sup>

In terms of operations, the year 2002 was very successful for the armed forces. They conducted 8,304 operations, killing 1,718 members of the FARC, ELN, and AUC. The FARC lost 3,433 members (1,898 captured, 1,197 killed and wounded, and 338 deserted). The paramilitaries lost 944 (168 killed and wounded, 756 captured, and 20 "surrendered to justice.") In the production and marketing of drugs: 1,022 people were captured, 857 labs were destroyed, and large quantities of chemical precursors and money were seized.<sup>102</sup> An indication of how much the Colombian army has improved is the fact that the FARC has not scored a major victory over the army in the last 2 years. In the area of joint planning and operations, there are slow improvements. However, these are inadequate to overcome the simple reality of insufficient troops and not enough tactical mobility to insert troops quickly, deter attacks, defend the infrastructure and population, and to "take and hold" territory.

Though the Colombian military has improved its performance and grown significantly, it has a long way to go before it achieves the size and proficiency required for sustained success. The top quantitative and qualitative requirements for any military organization are leadership, tactical mobility, intelligence, and quality of the troops. These must be complemented by logistical support, quick reaction, aggressive small unit operations, and cooperative relations with the civilian population. The Colombian army's new aggressiveness takes advantage of improved mobility (going from 18 helicopters in 1998 to 172 by 2002) and battle-experienced field commanders, but it still does not have the manpower to transition to a "persisting strategy," in which the police and military work together to establish permanent presence in key areas of the country. The FARC's massacre of 119 civilians at Bojayá in May of 2002 demonstrates the severity of this problem. The town had no police, while early warning intelligence about a prospective FARC-AUC battle in the area went unheeded, and then it took four days to move military

forces to retake the town.

As for its human rights record, the Colombian army has dramatically reduced the number of violators from within its ranks, though collaboration by elements of the armed forces with the paramilitaries remains a serious issue. General Tapias has established a policy of “zero tolerance” of police and military collusion with paramilitary forces (“paras”). In 2001, the armed forces conducted major operations against the paras, killing 116 and capturing 992, as well as confiscating a significant number of weapons, ammunition, vehicles, communications equipment, and financial records. Since September 2000, more than 600 members of the armed forces and the police have been dismissed because they colluded with the paras. President Pastrana ended the careers of at least four generals and numerous mid-level officers and noncommissioned officers believed to have been collaborating with the paras. Moreover, the Ministry of National Defense has an extensive human rights training program for military and police.<sup>103</sup>

Greatly expanded, better equipped professional military and police forces, committed to applying the principles of just conduct (*jus in bello*) in military and police operations and to working together for the same goals, provide the best insurance against human rights violations by insurgents and paramilitaries. Under such improved conditions, uniformed personnel would have no reason to collude with illegal forces. Human rights violations and the displacement of people as the result of the violence (estimated to be over 2 million, with 49 percent of the families being female headed) will continue to be problems until the government establishes effective and pervasive legitimate authority across the nation. This will have a high economic cost; however, Colombia can afford it.

Counterinsurgency doctrine recommends that Colombia have a 10 to 1 advantage for the armed forces to prevail over the 20,000 to 25,000 guerrillas, plus the estimated 12,000 paramilitaries.<sup>104</sup> This would require tripling the size of the current armed forces, which would allow the army simultaneously to conduct operations against the insurgents, support the police to go after the drug entrepreneurs, defend infrastructure and communications, and establish a better *presencia* nationwide. Currently, the Army cannot, because of insufficient forces, hold territory it wins back because it must constantly redeploy to meet FARC, ELN, and paramilitary attacks elsewhere. Major General Gary Speer, then acting chief of the U.S. Southern Command, stated in congressional testimony on March

5, 2002, "The real issue is the government of Colombia, through its security forces, the police and the military, does not control portions of the country."<sup>105</sup>

Counterinsurgency is expensive business; it cannot be done on the cheap and requires the full mobilization of a nation's resources over a relatively long period of time. It requires fighting and building and extending the reach of the state, in order to bring the benefits of governance and security to areas that have not had it. To expand its armed forces to the proper size, the Colombian Congress and leadership elites must do something totally novel in their nation's history: give enough resources to the military to do its job as part of a coherent national political-economic-military strategy. This will require a veritable revolution in civil-military relations and implementation of obligatory universal military service. The announcement in January 2003 that obligatory military service would soon be established was a welcome development, but it remains to be seen how the new draft will be implemented and whether it will incorporate all classes of society equitably. President Uribe made a dramatic increase in the defense budget to a goal of 5.8 percent of gross domestic product for 2003.

Colombians can take heart from the fact that one of the reasons that the FARC returned to the "peace process" on January 14 and 20, 2002, was the improved operational capability of the armed forces, which allowed President Pastrana to negotiate from a position of relative strength rather than weakness. He mobilized over 10,000 troops and an assortment of ground and air equipment to retake the *despeje*.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, with the government appearing to be on a permanent offensive, the paramilitaries offered the cease-fire of late 2002. The principal lesson learned in successful modern counterinsurgencies, such as in the Philippines, Malaya, El Salvador, and Oman, is that the battlefield must be linked to the peace process. A real peace process ending in conflict termination is only possible when the armed forces of the government establish enough asymmetry on the battlefield to convince the insurgents that further war is counterproductive to their physical and political survival. The FARC's feverish propaganda against *Plan Colombia*, while Uribe's ambitious strategy, the Democratic Security and Defense Policy, was being implemented, is evidence of the guerrillas' fear that the Colombian state may some day succeed in strengthening itself.

Another reality is that the Pastrana and Uribe administrations have made a serious dent on the FARC's coca-derived budget for

military operations. After the break up of the “peace process” and their forced eviction from the *despeje*, the FARC focused intensified attacks against government officials and infrastructure, with the tactical objective of eliminating government presence in rural areas. For the balance of 2002, the FARC appeared to focus operations on bringing the cost of war to the urban dwellers of the major cities. On February 7, 2003, the FARC conducted a murderous car bomb attack on the exclusive social club El Nogal in northern Bogotá, killing at least 30 and wounding 150. While these attacks were costly in lives and property, they did not change the strategic balance nor did they win for the FARC the hearts and minds of the Colombian people. Indeed, these atrocities have earned them heightened international repudiation.

### **The Southern Campaign: Temporary or Permanent Success?**

The second area to measure the effectiveness of strategy is the core of the U.S. investment: the counternarcotics drive in southern Colombia, notably Putumayo Department (a lightly populated, underdeveloped region with a long history of illegal activity and boom-and-bust economy), which was the locus of intense coca cultivation.<sup>107</sup> Putumayo, adjacent to the Ecuadorian border, is also the citadel of the FARC, which contests it with the AUC. The United States has helped equip and train Colombian army units (so far, a brigade, which comprises three battalions, totalling approximately 3,000 soldiers) to support the police to eliminate coca plants and destroy the infrastructure of support for drug trafficking, such as laboratories and airstrips. The counternarcotics units support the police by securing an area and then providing perimeter defense so that the police can enter, conduct arrests, gather evidence, and destroy labs and coca plantings.

These efforts achieved important quantitative successes. By December 3, 2001, the Colombian Antinarcotics Police (Dirección Antinarcóticos – DIRAN) had destroyed 61 cocaine hydrochloride (HCL) labs, 330 cocaine base labs, 5 heroin and 9 other drug or precursor chemical processing facilities; had put 54 clandestine airstrips out of service; and had seized or destroyed almost 30 metric tons of cocaine HCL, base cocaine and *basuco* (low-grade cocaine byproduct). The government signed pacts for alternative development/voluntary eradication with 37,000 small farmers.<sup>108</sup> An aggressive aerial eradication program sprayed nearly 120,000

hectares in 2002, well ahead of the 94,000 for 2001. Plans for 2003 are to continue aggressive spraying and increase it by one-third from 2002.

Whether these counternarcotics achievements are permanent depends upon a number of interrelated variables: the completeness of the eradication program, the ability of the government to enforce the new regime, and the level of support for alternative development (growing other crops, providing access roads, markets, seeds, capital, schools, medical service, and police protection) to wean away the “mom and pop” campesino growers. Eliminating the large, plantation-size coca fields became easier in 2002 when Colombia received the full complement of spray planes dedicated to the effort.<sup>109</sup>

The scheme will work if the “balloon effect” can be contained and if the government provides security and meaningful alternative development. The “balloon effect” is the result of successful government eradication efforts, whereby eliminating coca plantings in one area makes the coca production migrate to the refuge of other areas of Colombia or back to Peru and Bolivia where production flourished until the mid-1990s. The “balloon effect” process was well underway in 2002, with coca plantings estimated to be present in 22 of Colombia’s 32 departments, according to the United Nations. In a broader sense, the balloon effect is more than cultivation. It includes the displacement of trafficking routes, violence, and consumption into new areas and countries.

These are a lot of “ifs” for a government that historically has had a scant presence and had provided little in services to people in its outlying areas. Reports in early 2002 from the field to Washington indicated that the scheme was in serious jeopardy. The Achilles’ heel of the Southern Campaign was reported to be in three areas: the lack of security, insufficient support in the government’s alternative development program, and the bad quality of Putumayo’s soils. Nathan Christie, an expert on coca eradication at the U.S. Department of State, put it diplomatically: “Well-financed alternative development programs will be required to transform eradication’s ability to reduce cultivation into more permanent gains.”<sup>110</sup>

While alternative cropping is not easy in the weak soils of Putumayo and Caquetá, neither is it economically competitive, given the distance to markets, poor roads, and lack of security. Moreover, a senior official at the U.S. Department of State noted the motivation: “People don’t go to Putumayo to be yeoman farmers.”<sup>111</sup> Concerning

alternative development to growing coca, a February 2002 report from the General Accounting Office stated:

... alternative development will not succeed unless the obstacles are overcome. Among them, the Colombian government does not control many coca growing areas, it has limited capacity to carry out sustained interdiction operations, and its ability to effectively coordinate eradication and alternative development activities remains uncertain.<sup>112</sup>

The report added that farmers were replanting coca, even though they signed agreements not to, because they do not believe the government will return to enforce the agreement. Another alternative for eliminating coca is aerial spraying of the coca fields, but for this to be effective it must be ubiquitous within its target areas, sustained, repetitive, and predictable, so that growers are permanently deterred. The Uribe government is committed to such deterrence, arguing that farmers know that it is illegal to grow coca and heroin. It is possible that a permanent regime of sanctions for growing coca can be enforced if the government persists and some form of alternative cropping is available. Moreover, true peasants do not like to be criminals; the more hardened *cocalero* risk-takers are another matter.

After pessimistic assessments of early 2002, reports from the field in late 2002 indicated that the temporary coca-based economy in Putumayo was being abandoned. Because of the various disincentives encountered in the face of sustained eradication,<sup>113</sup> farmers were either leaving or planting legal crops, though grumbling that government support was inadequate. Unfortunately, it appeared that some were moving to adjoining Nariño Department, where coca plantings migrated. Nonetheless, Uribe's Minister of Justice and Interior, Fernando Londoño, boldly promised in January 2002 that the government would destroy the financial support of the FARC by eliminating the coca and heroin: "It will be liquidated and nothing will be left. In order to maintain a guerrilla army of 15,000 they need a lot of coca and this will disappear."<sup>114</sup> Whether this was bravado or realism only time will tell, but it indicated a level of political will that is central for success.

The success of the antinarcotics and alternative development efforts depends upon the ability of Bogotá to establish a permanent presence of the state in areas traditionally lacking governmental control. Security through state authority is the *sine qua non* for



strategic success. While the FARC, ELN, and the paramilitaries contest territory, it is imprudent to launch ambitious alternative development schemes designed to wean away the peasants, who are caught in the dangerous crossfire from the coca economy, between the AUC and the FARC seeking to control it and the government seeking to eliminate it.<sup>115</sup>

Moreover, among officials in Washington involved in programs of institution building and alternative development, there has always been a concern about the narrowness of the U.S. approach to Colombia and its impact on democracy. Having invested heavily in drug eradication and alternative development, they worry that it is far easier to measure objectives achieved, such as hectares sprayed, number of plants manually eradicated, or contracts signed with peasants, than building the vascular system for democracy. Such indicators, they note, are unreliable for measuring effective governance and the relationship of mutual respect and support that should exist between the state and its citizens.

Relying on such statistics alone overlooks the weaknesses of Colombian democracy.<sup>116</sup> A narrow focus on indicators like these makes the Colombian government and the United States appear arbitrary, heavy-handed, and not really concerned with effective governance. Much of the criticism leveled at *Plan Colombia* focused on these points and the additional concern about the dignity of hapless peasants deprived of a livelihood. However, peasants always knew that coca cultivation was illegal and potentially damaging to their future prospects. They also knew that the Colombian government rarely sustained programs, either to reward or punish them.

### **U.S. Strategy: From the Ambiguity of Counternarcotics to Legitimate State Authority and Human Rights.**

Long before September 11, 2001, the policy of the United States carefully delineated the boundary between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency. Mindful of the perceived absence of U.S. support for counterinsurgency, because of failure to differentiate intellectually among cases in applying the Vietnam metaphor to U.S. military strategy, the Clinton administration (1993-2001) scrupulously hewed to a policy of supporting with military and economic assistance only Colombia's effort to eradicate narcotics. This culminated in the promulgation of Presidential Directive 73, the Clinton policy for Colombia, which set forth the limits of U.S.

assistance to counternarcotics. While this policy recognized political realities at home, it seriously stretched intellectual and operational credibility, in view of the inescapable ground truth that the insurgents and the paramilitaries profited from and promoted the narcotics economy. In fact, it was essential that U.S. strategy address the intersection of drugs, insurgency, and terrorism.

Whatever their misgivings may have been, U.S. policymakers implemented a range of counternarcotics initiatives after the declaration of the “drug war” by the first Bush administration in September 1989. These included the upgrading of the Office of National Drug Control Policy to a cabinet department under General (ret.) Barry McCaffrey; the establishment of a Defense Department Office of Counter-Narcotics Support; enhanced assistance to producer and transit countries; and the establishment of a comprehensive interdiction effort in the form of AWACS reconnaissance flights, intelligence sharing, radar sites, and Joint Task Forces on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, with one in Texas to coordinate the air, sea, and land interdiction of the movement of narcotics into the United States. The United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), in Panama and later in Miami, became the unified command par excellence for counternarcotics. At one time, nearly 90 percent of its operations involved counternarcotics support.

At the same time, Congress enacted statutes that still demarcate U.S. assistance to Colombia; for example, no equipment and training could go to Colombian forces for counterinsurgency missions, and no assistance could go to military units that harbored violators of human rights (the Leahy Amendment). The latter created a lengthy and complex vetting process for all Colombian soldiers who receive U.S. assistance.<sup>117</sup> Once the policy was made, the safeguards were established to ensure end-use compliance for U.S. equipment and training. Therefore, the operational ends were consistent with U.S. policy and law but not with good strategic sense. Many critics in the United States within and outside of government doubted that a clear distinction could be made between “assistance” and on-the-ground use of U.S. military resources or that there could be a distinction made between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency.

Nevertheless, *Plan Colombia*’s requested role for the United States was scrutinized vigorously by U.S. legislators, auditors, academics, and the media. No indication of violating the legal constraints placed on counternarcotics support was ever alleged. Adding to the strategic assessment was the dominant school of thought within

the U.S. Government with respect to how a government can win an internal war. Remembering the lessons applied successfully in El Salvador in the 1980s (which were driven by the mistakes made in Vietnam), statesmen, academics, and a number of U.S. legislators and military strategists argued that Colombians needed to mobilize their national resources and make the sacrifices required for successful counterinsurgency – to ensure that the effort would sink strong roots in society.

Moreover, the gestation of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Colombia contained two divergent impulses that begged to be brought back into one. At the level of “politics of the possible,” it was support for a counternarcotics approach, fraught with grave misgivings about its adequacy on the ground in Colombia. The second and far more intellectually sound impulse, which was not politically possible due to congressional opposition and the lack of understanding among the intelligentsia and policy activists, favored establishing security nationwide, through a combination of counterinsurgency support and support for achieving control over the national territory. Colombia’s problems were still seen as those of law enforcement. It is important to note that U.S. congressional thinking on Colombia was heavily swayed in the 1990s by the Colombian National Police, particularly the Commander, Rosso José Serrano, who developed a very effective way of dealing personally with the U.S. Congress. This further distorted the analysis of policy alternatives.

Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command, General Charles Wilhelm, early in his tenure (1997-2000), recognized the need for a strategy of “territorial control,” but it was not possible to advocate this strongly in public. Policymakers and strategists started moving in the direction of the second impulse immediately after September 11, though cautiously. After February 20, 2002, when President Pastrana ended peace talks with the FARC and ordered the military to retake the *despeje*, the U.S. polity (including Congress, the Defense and State Departments, the media, the academic community, and the general public) for the first time considered the heretofore unthinkable and politically difficult alternative: much expanded U.S. military assistance to Colombia. Even support for counterinsurgency, thought to have died an unlamented death with the end of the Cold War, returned to serious discussion as a strategic option.

Accordingly, under this new set of circumstances, the first order of business would be to establish an environment that builds a

sense of order throughout Colombia. The “security first” approach called for a strategy, with related tactics, that places emphasis on controlling the national territory and its infrastructure and providing the panoply of governance to the people, especially security. This, in turn, requires a set of civil-military activities that buttress the strategic objective. While *Plan Colombia* recognized the need for these civil-military activities, the U.S. military component of support was mired in the quicksand of law enforcement (eliminating drug production capacity was regarded to be essentially a policing effort, supported by the military), instead of dealing with counterinsurgency and territorial control. The reasons for this were myriad, ranging from the poor human rights record of the Colombian military (which until recent crackdowns allowed a level of apparent coordination with, if not support of, paramilitary activities); the “slippery slope” argument of getting involved in an interminable internal war, with “no light at the end of the tunnel”; and competing strategic global priorities in a Washington that is always reluctant to take on more responsibilities.<sup>118</sup>

Thus, the weakness of U.S. support for *Plan Colombia* lay in the relationship between the premise and the strategy. While some of the premises underlying U.S. support were correct, the strategy to achieve the objectives was inadequate. The strategy was based on wishful thinking. Finally, until quite recently, constructing a more comprehensive strategy for Colombia was unachievable because it could not be sold to the U.S. Congress or the American people, especially with a “peace process” underway in Colombia. After September 11, 2001, the media recognized the contradiction in U.S. policy, for example, in this editorial in the *Washington Post*: “The administration . . . should abandon its attempt to distinguish counternarcotics from counterinsurgency aid to Colombia. If the United States can support governments and armies battling extremists in Central and Southeast Asia, . . . it ought to be able to give similar aid to an embattled democratic government in Latin America.”<sup>119</sup>

Many human rights-oriented nongovernmental organizations and academics have opposed military assistance to Colombia. Unfortunately, the strategic error that all of these groups make is that they underestimate how ineffective Colombia is as a state, attributing to it a level of authority, effectiveness, and security capability it simply does not have and indeed must develop. Samuel P. Huntington stated the problem of governance succinctly: “Authority has to exist before it can be limited.”<sup>120</sup> Some of the opposition to the

assistance is ideologically based. Some may be due to inadequate information about the complex geopolitical realities of Colombia, a serious deficiency among many U.S. academics and members of the media, as well as some nongovernmental organizations.

This information deficiency also applied to important sectors of the U.S. Government that tried to understand the unique nature of Colombia's conflict. The wrong metaphors were applied to Colombia: "another Vietnam," "another El Salvador," "no light at the end of the tunnel," and so on. The other strategic error made by critics was arguing that military assistance was inappropriate. They overlooked the reality that without a security shield, little in the areas of socioeconomic institution building and reform could be sustained. This is one of the forgotten lessons of El Salvador and Vietnam – and a lesson that deeply informs the U.S. effort to assist Afghanistan after the eviction of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Beyond these inherent tensions, U.S. support for Colombia contained the familiar strategic defect of a mismatch between very ambitious goals – democracy, protection of human rights, support of the "peace process," coca eradication, judicial reform, and alternative development – and very limited means. The original U.S. contribution to *Plan Colombia* and supplemental funding proposed for the future, though real budget money, were minor amounts in terms of the comprehensive needs of Colombia. U.S. policymakers had always recognized this discrepancy but justified it in terms of establishing a foundation for the United States, Colombia, and the international community to build on. The Europeans have been notably reticent in making their full contribution because of concerns that the United States has been militarizing its policy on Colombia.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, until the FARC depredations of 2002, especially the massacre of civilians at Bojayá, Europeans still tended to see what was going on in Colombia as a civil war rather than terrorism.

At the same time, military and civilian strategists in the Pentagon argued quite persuasively that the best way to strengthen democracy and more rapidly eliminate the drug scourge was to assist the Colombian military and police to establish territorial control, so that they could be more effective in counter-terrorist, counterinsurgency, and counternarcotics operations. Much of Colombia's small army is tied down in static defense of infrastructure. General Tapias, for example, stated to *El Tiempo* on January 27, 2002, that the armed forces were defending 2,000 strategic points around the country prior to the January 20, 2002, agreement to continue the "peace process,"

in addition to the heavy deployment of over 10,000 troops around the *despeje* that they would eventually retake from the FARC.

A new U.S. approach would require a more comprehensive package of military assistance than one narrowly focused on narcotics suppression and interdiction. Such a policy would also render the United States a more effective defender of human rights and would eliminate the artificiality of requiring, for example, that certain equipment, such as Blackhawk and Huey helicopters, be used only for counternarcotics purposes. More absurdly, to a nation fighting for its survival, there was an incongruity in U.S. senior military officials being prohibited by congressional legislation from engaging Colombian counterparts in planning how to win its complex wars – the strategic and operational requirement for Colombia's survival. This was hardly a way to establish confident bilateral cooperation.

A key area for enhanced U.S. military assistance is protection of the 480-mile oil pipeline from the Department of Arauca to the Caribbean. The pipeline is periodically destroyed by the FARC and ELN; in 2001, this cost Colombia \$450 million in lost revenues, equal to 0.5 percent of economic growth, plus significant ecological damage. The Bush administration asked Congress for and received \$93 million in the 2003 budget for the security of the pipeline. This money will go to train units of the army's 18th Brigade in forming a quick reaction force.<sup>122</sup> It will also train and support a helicopter element to provide quick reaction capability to a platoon. In other words, the money will go to enhancing the capabilities of an existing brigade by training units within the brigade and providing air mobility to do quick reaction operations. The funds would also be used to improve the security of the long pipeline via improvements in communications, roads, and defense sites. U.S. Army Special Forces were deployed to Arauca in late 2002 to begin training the brigade. The administration has requested \$110 million for 2004 to train and equip Colombian army elite units, to buy C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, and to sustain the infrastructure security program.<sup>123</sup>

The lack of a comprehensive strategic relationship between Washington and Bogotá matters in other ways. Colombia's fundamental challenge is to establish the authority of the state throughout the national territory, extending full benefits of its institutions and governance to all citizens. Where the state is not present, the illegally armed groups compete to fill the vacuum, setting up *de facto* administrative and legal systems, often destroying

the local economy and forcing people out. This geopolitical reality was marginally addressed by U.S. help in training and equipping counternarcotics battalions. Even though such training easily transferred to the other units, it would hardly make an impact on the larger army. The creation of separate air forces and separate logistical systems, for counternarcotics and for everything else, weakens coordination among the Colombian armed forces, the Colombian antinarcotics battalions, and U.S. military advisors. Colombians have observed that the United States seems to care only about the drug issue; thus, they view the counternarcotics forces as the “gringo army” versus the “real” army, the Colombian armed forces.

If U.S. military assistance can provide the means to help Colombia to recover control of its national territory and thereby provide dependable public security, this would remove the *raison d'être* of the paramilitaries: the absence of security provided by the state. U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne W. Patterson began nudging U.S. policy in this direction by stating after September 11 that *Plan Colombia* is the basis of U.S. counter-terrorist strategy. More robust commitment to Colombia would have the additional advantage of greater clarity and strategic relevance of U.S. policy, as seen by our Latin American regional partners, especially those directly affected by spillover violence and corruption.

A different and more comprehensive U.S. strategy would greatly enhance the chances of achieving the most noble element of U.S. foreign policy: the protection of human rights. The first step toward this goal would be to help the Colombians establish effective and legitimate public security at the many local areas now extremely deficient. The next step would be for the Colombian government to coordinate state institutions and services, including education, justice, health and sanitation, communications, and economic development, to provide services to all citizens equably, thereby addressing the social and economic needs of the people. Institutions that provide essential services to all citizens are reasonable expectations of the social contract between democratically elected governments and the people they serve.

By following through with these two essential, though complicated and difficult steps, the government would seriously address the root causes of insecurity and insurrection and begin reestablishing its connections with civil society – all of which work together to protect human rights. These monumental tasks require

the establishment of legitimate state authority in those areas that have never had it and its re-establishment in those urban and rural areas where such authority was either weak or abandoned.

A comparative study of the history of internal wars since 1945 tells us that government counterinsurgency efforts have been successful when government-supported militias helped maintain local security. Establishing legally constituted supplementary military forces for local security is a serious need in Colombia. Popular resistance to FARC depredations exists, providing a receptive environment for local militias supported by the state.<sup>124</sup> This would end reliance for security on the illegal paramilitaries, which originated as legitimate popular responses to the lack of state authority in areas of conflict dominated by the FARC and ELN. In an effort to improve public security, the Uribe administration moved quickly to increase the size of the national police, establish a national *carabineros* system, as well as locally based, lightly armed militias and an early warning network that relies on the people. The *carabineros* are akin to the French *brigades mobiles*, which would constitute highly mobile light infantry units that would be inserted to take over a conflicted zone and then turn it over to the police.

To promote human rights, the United States employs the limited leverage of conditionality, contained in the Leahy amendment, named after its originator, Senator Patrick Leahy, to security assistance, which requires that the military personnel be vetted for human rights rectitude. This applies to all men and women in the Colombian armed forces who receive training and equipment.<sup>125</sup> The problem with this limited approach is that it is insufficient by itself to get to the heart of the human rights problem. It fails to recognize the interconnected nature of the threats to weak state authority: the insurgents, those involved in drug processing and trafficking, and the illegal paramilitaries. To attribute the state's weakness to illegal drugs alone misses the mark. As discussed earlier, the FARC and ELN thrive on funds from narco-trafficking. The paramilitaries completed the vicious circle by taking the law into their own hands to fight the insurgents and protect their property, but they became parodies of their enemies by perpetrating horrendous atrocities and by subverting members of the Colombian armed forces in the process. By 2000, the paramilitaries were committing close to 70 percent of the human rights violations in the country.

The U.S. new, more holistic approach to Colombia, advocated by President Bush in the National Security Strategy, is philosophically



different: assisting the Colombian state to acquire complete power over the means of legitimate coercion, by defeating the FARC, ELN, the AUC, and other paramilitary groups, as well as the narco-traffickers. This strategy is open-ended, and its limits are still being defined because of the continuing impact of legislative limits on U.S. assistance. In other words, though the intellectual argument for expanded assistance has been made, the political decision to carry through depends on either changing the legislative limits or working within them as well as possible. The latter approach will continue to cause distortions in the way the United States deals with Colombia.

The conundrum in Washington in early 2003 was how to convert a counternarcotics-based strategy to counterterrorism and territorial defense. They are qualitatively and quantitatively different, requiring different strategies and force packages. Nonetheless, clearly the United States will increase its assistance and training support under the rubric of counterterrorism, because in many ways counterterrorism is the strategic equivalent of counterinsurgency.<sup>126</sup> It is also certain that there will be no U.S. “combat boots” on the ground. Colombians are perfectly capable of doing their own fighting. How far the expanded assistance will go remains to be seen.

In Colombia, the main reason for political killings (some 3,500 per year for the last 10 years), kidnappings, displacement of over 2 million people, and economic destruction is the interrelated nature of the combined threats and the inability of the state to act, because of a combination of lack of resources, lack of political will, and the debilitating impact of continuing corruption. The ineffectiveness of the state is at the heart of Colombia’s ills. Using different words to express the same thesis, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters and Law Enforcement Affairs, Rand Beers, said, “The Government of Colombia’s inability to prevent violence by the three illegal armed groups (the FARC, ELN, and the paramilitary AUC) is at the root of Colombia’s human rights woes.”<sup>127</sup>

### **Synchronizing Strategy: The United States and Colombia and the Uribe Difference.**

While improvements in military capabilities and narcotics eradication can be quantified, other essential elements, namely,

rebuilding institutions such as the judicial system, are not as easily described. Revitalizing the economy also depends upon reestablishing a climate of security and predictability for investments. Despite the failure of a badly conceived and managed “peace process,” President Pastrana, via *Plan Colombia*, bequeathed an excellent foundation to President Uribe. By ending the *despeje* and breaking off the fruitless “peace process,” President Pastrana opened strategic options for the United States and Colombia, options that did not exist before. *Plan Colombia* and the national security strategy, the Democratic Security and Defense Policy, are conceptual frameworks and serve as calls for collective action by Colombians and by the international community.

The objectives of Uribe’s Democratic Security and Defense Policy converge with the sentiments stated by President Bush in his National Security Strategy. They are the following:

- Guarantee the security, freedom, and human rights of the population.
- Consolidate state control over national territory.
- Eradicate drug trafficking.
- Defend democratic order and the rule of law.
- Promote economic prosperity and social equity.
- Reconstruct the social fabric.

President Uribe explains, “The general purpose of the Defense and Democratic Security Policy is, therefore, to ensure that there will be no legal or security vacuums in any part of the national territory. To reach this objective, all means available to the State will be used.”<sup>128</sup> To underline the importance of these commitments, President Uribe wrote a letter to President Bush on September 19, 2002, in which he detailed his strategy:<sup>129</sup>

- Establish comprehensive policies to eliminate the cultivation and manufacturing of trafficking in illicit drugs and to strengthen the state and establish the rule of law throughout the national territory, especially in areas under the influence or control of the three illegally armed groups.
- Adopt major reforms with respect to the budget and personnel of the Colombian armed forces.
- Provide more financial resources to implement these programs.

- Support sustainable rural development programs.

His letter was soon followed in late September by a state visit to Washington. President Uribe spoke directly with President Bush to seek U.S. support to carry out these commitments.

The U.S. policy of counternarcotics support only, which defined Colombia's problem as solely a drug-related, rule of law issue rather than a security issue, also made an important contribution in establishing the bases for long-term sustainable assistance. By 2002, U.S. policymakers from both the executive and legislative branches had learned much about Colombia through trial and error. Finally they were coming to the conclusion that U.S. policy in Colombia was merely addressing the country's symptoms, not the causes of its debility. This was strategic wisdom that the aftermath of September 11 and the behavior of the FARC helped to bring about.

The exclusive focus on counternarcotics support, moreover, brought into play the equally complex and controversial issue of demand reduction in the United States and Europe. Addressing this issue is the responsibility of all governments whose citizens buy the illegal drugs and whose law enforcement authorities have not yet figured out how to stop their entry. The mixed success of the Southern Campaign in Putumayo should be warning that coca eradication alone will not provide Colombia essential security.

## **Recommendations.**

Specifically, the United States should provide a package of military equipment, advice, and intelligence support to allow the Colombian government to assert authority over its national territory. The package should include advice on how to develop counterinsurgency strategy and conduct joint operations and how to organize and maintain logistics. Colombia's armed forces badly need tactical mobility and intelligence support. They need approximately 400 helicopters and more fixed-wing aircraft to provide faster insertion of troops and logistics into the battlefield. By mid-2002, they had some 172 helicopters. It takes time to build an army and train air force and navy personnel. The best military intelligence is of little value if the armed forces are too small or unfit to use it to support operations.

A comprehensive package of U.S. military assistance entails more than the willingness of the executive and Congress to be forthcoming.

It also involves the ability of the Colombian armed forces to absorb the assistance. Clearly, this will be a long process, but improvements in leadership, tactical mobility, and intelligence can be made rapidly, as the Colombian military has shown since 1998. Restructuring and expanding military institutions is a complex business. U.S. and Colombian military officials need to sit down across a table and figure out how to integrate such training and equipment for a much expanded force. At home, Washington needs to institutionalize a senior-level policy coordinating and integration mechanism for Colombian policy and appoint a director with enough clout to get the job done across the entire interagency system.

In early 2002, the interagency policy system appeared to be moving in the direction of greater support, despite the announcement by President Bush on February 27 that the United States had been “providing advice to the Colombian government as to drug eradication, and we need to keep it that way.”<sup>130</sup> For the time being, the decision was made not to include Colombia in the global war on terrorism, partly out of respect for Colombia’s elections that were forthcoming in summer 2002 and partly because the U.S. Congress was not yet prepared for a dramatic change in policy.

Yet by the fall of 2002, President Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive 18, a new Colombia policy that replaced President Clinton’s PDD 73. Although continuity exists in the policies with respect to U.S. assistance to combat illegal drugs and terrorism, defend human rights, and promote the social and economic programs, as well as strengthen the ineffective judicial system, there are important differences. A report from the Department of State to Congress sets forth the expanded policy commitments:

1. Continue assistance to combat illicit drugs and terrorism, defend human rights, promote economic, social and alternative development initiatives, reform and strengthen the administration of justice, and assist the internally displaced.
2. Enhance counterterrorism capability by providing advice, assistance, training and equipment, and intelligence support to the Colombian Armed Forces and the Colombian National Police.
3. Promote economic growth and development through

support of market based policies and implementation of the Free Trade Act of the Americas and the Andean Trade Preferences Act. . . .

4. Substantially reduce the production and trafficking of cocaine and heroin . . . by strengthening counternarcotics programs. . . .
5. Increase the institutional development, professionalization, and enlargement of Colombian security forces to permit the exercise of governmental authority throughout the national territory while ensuring respect for human rights.<sup>131</sup>

The State Department report clarified the change in U.S. policy:

In implementing these programs, the Administration and Congress increasingly came to understand that the terrorist and narcotics problems in Colombia are intertwined and must be dealt with as a whole. Working with Congress, the Administration sought and Congress enacted new authorities in the 2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act that would help to more readily address the combined threat. . . . In practical terms, the training, equipment, intelligence support and other U.S. programs . . . will be available to support Colombia's unified campaign against narcotics trafficking and designated terrorist organizations.<sup>132</sup>

Besides the impressive coca eradication rates mentioned earlier, the report listed the broader achievements of U.S. policy: nearly half of the 5,000 hectares of heroin sprayed; support for alternative licit crops; opening of 20 Justice Centers (Casas de Justicia) to provide cost-effective legal service to people who had no previous access to the judicial system; the protection of 3,043 human rights activists, journalists, and union leaders; economic assistance to over 500,000 displaced persons; steps to reintegrate child soldiers (some 300); and support to justice sector reform programs and law enforcement. Since 1999, 64 Colombians have been extradited to the United States on criminal charges, and 140,000 new jobs were created from 1992 to 1999.<sup>133</sup>

The change in U.S. policy, both on the executive and legislative sides, is a far cry from the counternarcotics-only mandate of Clinton's PDD 73. Robust military assistance, designed to establish greater

control of the national territory, is imperative. Such a commitment would make the United States a more credible and effective ally, increase chances for success in the overall drug war, shorten Colombia's agony, greatly advance the cause of human rights, strengthen regional security in the conflicted Andean area, and make a dramatic improvement in international law and order. However, the United States should do this only in partnership, as Colombians commit themselves to mobilizing their nation, to allotting sufficient resources (military and nonmilitary) to the national effort, and to democratizing the burden of fighting and dying. President Uribe, who calls himself "Colombia's first soldier," appears to have the attributes of strategic genius that Colombia desperately needs and is working very dynamically to mobilize his nation and its abundant but largely untapped human resources.

President Uribe is expanding the size of the armed forces and the police; establishing a nation-wide, community based, early warning intelligence system; forming a national militia system; downsizing the governmental bureaucracy (ostensibly to channel funds to the defense budget); implementing zones of rehabilitation to bring back governance and security to communities; and, demanding aggressive military operations from his commanders. It remains to be seen whether Colombian citizens at all socioeconomic levels will summon the political will and accept the need for collective sacrifice. Uribe has also asked his regional neighbors to assist Colombia by controlling their borders.

The strength of democratic civil-military relations during war, that is, the relationship of mutual support and respect among the people, the government, and the armed forces, is notably weak in Colombia.<sup>134</sup> Collective sacrifice for the common good has not been a shared value in Colombian culture, and the best efforts of the U.S. Government and military are not likely to inculcate it. However, the U.S. policy implementation community, civilian and military alike, should make every effort to convince Colombians that this principle of mutual support is central to the task of winning the battle against the scourges of narco-terrorism and corruption. Finally, the United States still ought to apply in the relationship with Colombia the hard lesson learned in Vietnam and applied so well in El Salvador: Do not take away the burden of sacrifice and the benefits of learning-by-doing from the ally in the field.

Counterinsurgency should still be the responsibility of Colombians. Only the citizens of Colombia can build effective

state authority through collective sacrifice, so that it is considered legitimate by the people.<sup>135</sup> Can such a plan work, given Colombia's enormous defects described throughout this monograph? The analysis is studded with caveats, such as remedying institutional weaknesses and eliminating pervasive corruption in a weak state. However, there is really no other alternative than a deeper U.S. commitment. The alternative of a country permanently at war with itself and potentially with its neighbors is a nightmare scenario that would seriously affect Latin America as well as the U.S. ability to maneuver its power and influence to deal with challenges elsewhere across the globe. The other danger is that the United States, because of political inhibitions and competing priorities at home, will become comfortable with a level of assistance that is barely sufficient to improve the situation but not decisive enough to help end the conflict.

Unless the United States acts effectively, there is the risk of continued narcostatization, of governments coming under the corrosive influence and control of narcotics-related money and political interests. Such a prospect would seriously weaken the willingness of states to fulfill their international obligations. If left unchecked, such a process could lead to the strategic denial, rather than the strategic vision, of Latin America as a vibrant community of democracies working toward the common goal of economic integration in the hemisphere.

U.S. policymakers must develop a strategy for the long term because Colombia's multiple interrelated problems are not amenable to a quick fix. Indeed, this is likely to be a generational effort, requiring endurance and the ability to sustain long-term assistance on the part of Washington. Moreover, the U.S. strategic and operational engagement with El Salvador in the 1980s clearly showed that there will be inevitable difficulties and misunderstandings along the path of cooperation between asymmetric allies. We will find ourselves working with a center of gravity of the ally in the field that includes the presidency, ministry of defense, the armed forces and police, and the ministries of justice and interior. The challenge is to strengthen the center of gravity so that it gradually gains confidence and learns to perform more effectively on its own. What the United States cannot do is impart political will to the Colombian people. The Uribe government is the ideal partner to work with to combine will, strategic and operational creativity, and resources to the tasks ahead.

## ENDNOTES

1. David C. Jordan, *Drug Policy: Dirty Money and Democracies*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, p. 217. This is a splendid analysis of the theory of democracy and at the same time a critique of globalization and the deleterious effects of illegal narcotics money on the institutions of democracies in transition, such as Latin America's.

2. Jordan ranks states along the spectrum of democracy and levels of penetration by narcostatization. He argues that there are pseudodemocratic states (anocratic) and procedural democracies; in both, accountability is not widespread, facilitating narcostatization. At the time of Jordan's writing, he listed Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia at varying levels of narcostatization.

3. Kevin Sullivan, "Citing Corruption, Mexico Shuts Drug Unit," *Washington Post*, January 21, 2003 ([www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19054-2003Jan.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19054-2003Jan.html)).

4. U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, "U.S. Releases Annual Narcotics Certification Report," January 31, 2003 (<http://usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl.p=/products/washfile/georg/ar&f>).

5. Naím, "The Five Wars of Globalization," *Foreign Policy*, January-February 2003, p. 36.

6. "Uribe pide que EE.UU. intervenga en la region," *El Comercio* (Quito), January 17, 2003. ([www.elcomercio.com/noticias.asp?noid](http://www.elcomercio.com/noticias.asp?noid)).

7. Estimates are that up to four million Colombians live outside the country, 10 percent of the national population. Colombia's constitution of 1991 provides one senate seat to represent Colombian immigrants.

8. "Más de medio centenar de bandas de criminales colombianas hay en Madrid," *El Tiempo*, January 28, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/judi/2003-01-29>).

9. An eloquent statement of this view is Abraham F. Lowenthal, "U.S. Can't Afford to Turn a Blind Eye to Latin America," *Chicago Tribune*, December 15, 2002.

10. Larry Birns, Director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, cited in Juan Forero, "Latin America's Political Compass Veers Toward the Left," *New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com/2003/01/19/international/americas/19LATI.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/19/international/americas/19LATI.html)).

11. United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Balance Preliminar de las Economías*, Santiago, Chile: United Nations, 2002, p. 1.

12. David Bushnell and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided*



*Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. viii. Bushnell notes that within American scholarship: "Colombia is . . . featured far less frequently than Brazil or Argentina or even . . . Chile or Peru."

13. Colombia has the second oldest airline in the world.

14. In Spanish: "Nuestro sistema penal está poblado de restricciones a la tiranía, pero es laxo con el crimen." Cited in Michael Reid, "Un País Aparte," *El Espectador*, April 21, 2002 ([www.elespectador.com/the\\_economist/nota2.htm](http://www.elespectador.com/the_economist/nota2.htm)).

15. The United States, under the George W. Bush Administration, does not recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over American citizens.

16. "Sovereignty: Existing Rights, Evolving Responsibilities," remarks by Ambassador Richard Haass to the School of Foreign Service and the Mortara Center for International Studies at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, January 14, 2003.

17. Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield Of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History*, New York: Knopf, 2002. p. xxi.

18. To save money for defense and national reconstruction, President Álvaro Uribe closed down a number of Colombian embassies, consulates, and trade missions by the end of 2002.

19. Colombia should not be lumped into the category of post-colonial failed and failing states of the kind found in Africa, for example. For greater clarity on this issue, see Robert H. Dorff, "Democratization and Failed States: The Challenge of Ungovernability," *Parameters*, Vol. 53, Summer 1996, pp. 17-31.

20. Interview with Colombian diplomat, New York City, February 8, 2002.

21. For information on the U.S. support role in this period, see Dennis M. Rempe, *The Past As Prologue? A History of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in Colombia, 1958-66*, Carlisle, PA: North-South Center and Strategic Studies Institute (Special Series on Implementing *Plan Colombia*), March 2002. On the history of the FARC, see Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, *Las FARC, 1949-1966: De la autodefensa a la combinación de todas las formas de lucha*, Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1991.

22. It is reported that perhaps six civilians in Colombia are qualified in military affairs and strategy.

23. Explanations for the weakness of the state and the military can be found in Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, "Colombia: situación actual y perspectivas futuras de un conflicto," draft manuscript, Princeton University, 2002. Colombian intellectuals also appear to have inoculated themselves against supporting a sufficient counterinsurgency for the military. For example, during 1997-98, a period

in which the Colombian Army was suffering battalion-size battlefield defeats from the FARC, some were irresponsibly proposing cutting the already small army by half, regarding it as organized only for traditional defense against an external enemy. On this, see Francisco Leal Buitrago, Patricia Bulla Rodríguez, María Victoria Llorente, and Alfredo Rangel Suárez, "Seguridad Nacional y Seguridad Ciudadana. Una Aproximación Hacia La Paz," in *Armar la Paz Es Desarmar La Guerra*, edited by Álvaro Camacho Guizado and Francisco Leal Buitrago, Bogotá, Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1999, p. 98.

24. See, for example, the summary of proceedings: Unclassified Telegram 9087, "Civil-Military Relations During Conflict Conference, September 20-22," American Embassy, Bogotá, October 4, 2002.

25. Preceding statistics were taken from Asociación Nacional de Instituciones Financieras, *Informe Semanal*, No. 619, February 18, 2002, p. 1.

26. We are not talking about, as some Colombians would point out, the sacrifices made by those paying the high price from criminal activity, such as kidnapping. Such nonpolitical violence prospers in a climate of societal dishonesty, insecurity, and impunity before the law. Some Colombian army officers also regard soldiers from the lower class as better fighters in the field than upper and middle class soldiers.

27. Edmundo Jarquín and Fernando Carrillo, *Justice Delayed: Judicial Reform in the Americas*, Washington: Inter-American Development Bank, 1998, p. 11.

28. See Thoumi, "Why a Country Produces Drugs and How That Determines Policy Effectiveness: A General Model and Some Applications to Colombia," Miami: Florida International University, Latin American and Caribbean Center, January 2002, p. 21.

29. "Qué tan corruptos se ven a sí mismos los colombianos!," *El Tiempo*, January 26, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com./judi/2003-01-26>).

30. *El Tiempo*, January 26, 2003, "En Colombia hay más de 4.000 procesos penales por soborno," (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/judi/2003-01-27>).

31. "La mitad de los colombianos que solicitan visa a E.U. presenta al menos un documento falso," *El Tiempo*, January 27, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.com/judi/2003-01-28/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA-INTERIOR-261617.html>).

32. World Bank, *Corrupción, Desempeño Institucional y Gobernabilidad: Desarrollando Una Estrategia Anti-Corrupción Para Colombia*, Bogotá: March 6, 2002, p. 6.

33. The source of this information is various discussions by author with Ecuadoran and Colombian military commanders.

34. There have been countless efforts in the past between Panama and Colombia to control the border and prevent routine incursions into Panama by the FARC and AUC. See: Greg Flakus, "Panama, Colombia Officials Set to Meet on Border Control," VOANEWS.com (<http://www.voanews.com/article.cfm?objectID=A2ECD9E6-AAD2-4D3C-9D4409A2E54>).

35. Agence France Press, "Bogotá denuncia amparo de Chávez a la guerrilla," *Miami Herald*, February 6, 2003 ([www.miami.com/mld/elnuevo/news/world/americas/5114889.htm](http://www.miami.com/mld/elnuevo/news/world/americas/5114889.htm)).

36. "Frontera norte: la seguridad fue reforzada," *El Comercio* (Quito) ([www.elcomercio.com/noticias.asp?noid=49105](http://www.elcomercio.com/noticias.asp?noid=49105)).

37. Richard Millett, *Colombia's Conflicts: The Spillover Effects of a Wider War*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, October 2002.

38. See, for examples, Iain Bruce, "Running Drugs Down the Amazon," *BBC News*, June 9, 2000 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/784422-5>); Lia Osório Machado, "Financial Flows and Drug Trafficking in the Amazon Basin," MOST network on The Economic and Social Transformations Connected with Drug-Trafficking (<http://www.unesco.org/most/ds22eng.htm>).

39. Mauricio Rubio, "El desbordamiento de la violencia en Colombia," in Juan Luis Londoño, Alejandro Gaviria, Rodrigo Guerrero, eds., *Asalto al Desarrollo: Violencia en América Latina*, Washington, DC: Inter American Development Bank, 2002, p. 133.

40. "En septiembre, todo el país tendrá Policía: asegura el general Teodoro Campo," *El Tiempo*, January 23, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/noticias>).

41. Luz Neira Sáenz Fuentes, "Siete años estuvo Chalán sin Policía," *El Tiempo*, January 23, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/noticias>).

42. In an article on China's problems of state weakness, Shaoguang Wang lists six essentials of the effective state: monopolize legitimate use of force, extract resources, shape national identity and mobilize consent, regulate society and the economy, maintain the coherence of state institutions, and redistribute resources. See Wang, "The Problem of State Weakness," *Journal of Democracy*, January 2003, Volume 14, No. 1, pp. 37-38.

43. "How Much in Taxes Do Colombians Really Pay?" Unclassified Telegram, American Embassy Bogotá, September 12, 2002 (Bogotá 8332). The previous statistics on tax collection are based on this telegram.

44. Scott Wilson, "Colombia Declares Emergency: New President Raises Taxes on Rich to Step Up War on Rebels," *Washington Post*, August 12, 2002 ([www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A8426-2002Aug12](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A8426-2002Aug12)).

45. Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *El Narcotráfico, una Amenaza para la Seguridad Nacional*, Bogotá, November 2000, p.1.
46. It should be noted that the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia combine numerous regional groups, some of which exercise significant autonomy from the national umbrella AUC.
47. Gonzalo Sánchez, "Problems of Violence, Prospects for Peace," in Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, Gonzalo Sánchez, *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*, Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2001, p. 11.
48. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001; Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis, "Understanding Civil War: A New Agenda," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, 2002, No. 1. The sources of income for the FARC, ELN, and AUC are brilliantly analyzed by Alfredo Rangel Suárez, "Parasites and Predators: Guerrillas and the Insurrection Economy of Colombia," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, Spring 2000.
49. Pizarro, "Colombia: una guerra civil, guerra contra la sociedad, guerra terrorista o guerra ambigua?," manuscript provided by the author, Princeton University, 2002. Nazih Richani, in a highly controversial article, refers to an unbreakable "war system," where all the actors have a vested interest in maintaining the war system. Richani, "The Political Economy of Violence: The War System in Colombia," *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 39, 1997, No. 2.
50. The kind of conflict it is the subject of much discussion. See, for example, Eduardo Posada Carbó, *Civil War? The Language of Conflict in Colombia*, Bogotá: Fundación Ideas Para La Paz, 2002. An excellent chronology using the "civil war" approach is Bert Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2001.
51. A brilliant literary rendition of the dreadful industry of kidnapping is the work of Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez, *News of a Kidnapping*, New York: Penguin Books, 1997. Originally published in Spanish as *Noticia de un Secuestro*.
52. "Ejército de Colombia," Briefing by Colombian Army General Carlos Ospina, National Defense University, Washington, DC, January 27, 2003.
53. For the differential impact of violence, see Alejandro Gaviria and Carlos Eduardo Velez, *Who Bears the Burden of Crime in Colombia?* Washington, DC: The World Bank, January 2001. Their conclusion: in the cities the rich bear the brunt of property crimes and the poor in the rural areas, although the rich are better able to protect themselves, including the option of leaving the country.

54. Transfers of wealth or income between persons, not considered a cost to society, but to individuals.

55. Rubio, "El desbordamiento de la violencia," p. 27.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

57. General Enrique Mora, comments made at the meeting of the Commanders in Chief of the United States, Colombian, Venezuelan, Ecuadorean, Peruvian, Bolivian, and Brazilian armies, Washington, DC, July 18, 2002.

58. *El Tiempo*, May 15, 2002.

59. Drug Enforcement Agency, "Drug Trafficking in the United States" ([http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/drug\\_trafficking.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/drug_trafficking.html))

60. The reconstruction of these events relies upon various sources, especially the report of the Colombian Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Informe de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos Sobre la Misión de Observación en el Medio Atrato*, Bogotá, May 20, 2002 (hereafter cited as UN Human Rights Mission). Excellent detail of the human dimensions of the events are in Scott Wilson, "No Sanctuary from War," *Washington Post*, May 8, 2002 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn-articles/A56591-2002May8.html>).

61. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

62. Of the two other *pipetas*, one did not explode and the other did so within 50 meters of the church. Therefore, the FARC already was already well aware of the potential risk to innocent lives before firing the third.

63. UN Human Rights Mission, p. 10.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-21.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

66. For a chronology and description of terrorist attacks against 88 towns by the FARC, ELN, and the AUC in the years 1999, 2000, and 2001, see the special edition of *Revista Ejército*, "Bajo los Escombros del Terrorismo," Bogotá, circa 2002. According to this report, the FARC committed 69.3 percent of the attacks; the ELN, 15.9; and the paramilitaries, 5 percent. These percentages do not tell the whole story. In recent years, for example, the AUC has been charged with some 70 percent of the human rights violations in Colombia.

67. "La crisis humanitaria," *Semana*, January 11, 2003 (<http://semana.terra.com.co/opencms/Semana/articulopresion.html>).

68. For information on *Gato Negro*, see Comando General, Fuerzas Militares de Colombia, "Operación Gato Negro" ([www.fuerzasmilitares.mil.co/noticijs7.htm5](http://www.fuerzasmilitares.mil.co/noticijs7.htm5)).
69. T. Christian Miller, "Rebels Blur the Lines in Drug War," *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 2001, p. 5 ([http://collhrnet.igc.org/new\\_items/latimes.503.htm](http://collhrnet.igc.org/new_items/latimes.503.htm)).
70. "Fernandiño comienza a hablar," *Semana*, April 30, 2001; republished in Comando General, Fuerzas Armadas de Colombia, *Noticias y Actualidad* (<http://www.fuerzasmilitares.mil.co/noticijs10.htm>).
71. Mike Williams, "Trafficking Fuels Rebel Expansion," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 9, 2001 ([www.iansa.org/news/2002/jul\\_01/rebel.htm](http://www.iansa.org/news/2002/jul_01/rebel.htm)), p. 2.
72. Drug Enforcement Agency, "Attorney General Janet Reno Announces Over 50 Arrests in International Heroin Ring," News Release, January 18, 2001 ([www.usdoj/dea/pubs/pressre/pr011801.htm](http://www.usdoj/dea/pubs/pressre/pr011801.htm)).
73. This information is found in the compelling report by Thomas Ginsberg, "Smashing the Connection: Breaking the 'White Horse,'" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 7, 2002 ([www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/special\\_packages/inquirer\\_magazine/4662550.html](http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/special_packages/inquirer_magazine/4662550.html)).
74. Anthony Faiola, "Brazilian Gangs Take Turf Wars Out of the Slums: Even Upper-Class Areas Are Invaded by Traffickers," *Washington Post*, December 15, 2002, p. A37 ([www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A56053-2002Dec14](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A56053-2002Dec14)). See also Julio A. Cirino, "Hacia Una Nueva 'Narcolandia'?" in *Libertaddigital.com*, July 17, 2002; and Larry Rohter, "Ipanema Under Siege: Rio's Gangs Flex Harder," *New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com2002/weekinreview/20ROHT.html](http://www.nytimes.com2002/weekinreview/20ROHT.html)). Gangs have been a threat for some time in Rio, requiring the Brazilian Army to help the police restore order. See James Brooke: "Brazil's Army Joins the Battle in Lawless Rio," *New York Times*, November 5, 1994, p.A14. The Brazilian Army operation of 1994 is analyzed by William Mendel, "Combat In Cities: The LA Riots and Operation Rio," Foreign Military Studies Office, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, July 1996.
75. Faiola, "Brazilian Gangs," p. 2.
76. Brazilian concerns about the security of the Amazon are superbly analyzed by Luis Bitencourt, "The Importance of the Amazon Basin in Brazil's Evolving Security Agenda," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Heather A. Golding, eds., *Environment and Security in the Amazon Basin*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2002, pp. 53-74. See also Astrid Aranás and Eduardo A. Gamarra, "Drug Trafficking, National Security, and the Environment in the Amazon Basin," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Heather A. Golding, eds., *Environment and Security in the Amazon Basin*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2002, pp. 75-98.
77. "Rumsfeld Urges Elimination of Havens of Global Crime," *Miami Herald*, November 20, 2002 ([www.miami.com/mld/miami/herald/news/world/americas/4559791.htm](http://www.miami.com/mld/miami/herald/news/world/americas/4559791.htm)).

78. Gonzalo Sánchez, "Problems of Violence, Prospects for Peace," p. 9.

79. "Collar Bomba," *Columna Quincenal* (<http://usuarios.ecuanex.net.ec/periodismo/page75.html>), accessed January 3, 2003. See also "Condena de 32 años por collar bomba," *El País* (Cali), September 24, 2002 (<http://elpais-cali.terra.com.co/historico.sep24002/nal/A224N2.html>).

80. The content of the recording can be read in Gustavo Pérez Ramírez, "Historia de una infamia: El caso del secuestro y liberación de una pequeña pone en tela de juicio la credibilidad de las Farc," in *Revista Cambio*, June 23, 2000 (<http://usuarios.ecuanex.net.ec/periodismo/page75.html>).

81. Cited in Frances Robles, "Colombian Troops Stalk Leftist Rebels in Cities," *Miami Herald*, October 28, 2002), p. 1 ([www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/2002/10/28/news/world/americas/4384962](http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/2002/10/28/news/world/americas/4384962)).

82. Cited in Robles, p. 2. See also the report by Scott Wilson: "Urban Anti-Rebel Raid a New Turn in Colombian War," *Washington Post*, October 24, 2002, p. A28 ([www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A8476-2002Oct24](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A8476-2002Oct24)).

83. Information provided by LTC George Rhynedance, Public Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, August 31, 2000.

84. See "Los nexos internacionales de las FARC," *El Tiempo*, August 19, 2001 ([http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/19-08-2001/judi\\_pf\\_o.htm](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/19-08-2001/judi_pf_o.htm)). There is significant spillover of FARC-generated violence in these countries. The FARC is fairly autonomous in resources and does not appear to want to conduct terrorism at the international level.

85. See Scott Wilson, "Colombian President Rejects Rebel Offer: Pastrana To Send Army Into Guerrilla Zone," *Washington Post*, January 14, 2002 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A37547-2002>). See also the perceptive commentary of Fernando Cepeda Ulloa, "Facilitación Internacional," *El Tiempo*, January 15, 2002 ([http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/15-2002/reda\\_pf\\_2](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/15-2002/reda_pf_2)).

86. These events are described in "La historia secreta," *Semana*, February 24, 2002 (<http://semana.terra.com.co/1034/actualidad/ZZZFJ18121YC.asp>).

87. Scott Wilson, "Colombia, Guerrilla Group Set a Timetable for Talks: Agreement Envisions Formal Cease-Fire Accord by April 7," *Washington Post*, January 21, 2002, A12 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A12030-2002Jan20>).

88. Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., *The Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, p. 67.

89. See, for example, Alfredo Rangel Suárez, "No hacerse falsas ilusiones: No

habrá tregua," *El Tiempo*, February 1, 2002 ([http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/01-02-2002/rede\\_pf\\_4.html](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/01-02-2002/rede_pf_4.html)). Rangel, one of a few distinguished Colombian defense strategists, stated that a cease-fire would not be convenient for the FARC because "it would mean abandoning their strategic objective of taking power by the force of arms."

90. The critical views of Villalobos, then a fellow at Oxford University, can be found in "Colombia vs. El Salvador," *Semana*, January 6, 2002 (<http://semana.terra.com.co/1026/actualidad/ZZZ4Q5Y32WC.asp>). He argued that Colombia has a "negotiation of lies," because the FARC made war but did not negotiate, while the government only sought negotiation. An equally bleak perspective came from Senator Ingrid Betancourt, "For the time being, the negotiations have no chance of success. They've been warped from the outset. Their goal isn't to arrive at conclusion, but to win for the parties involved. . . . Everyone lies. And pretends to believe the lies of the other." From her book, *Until Death Do Us Part: My Struggle to Reclaim Colombia*, New York: Harper Collins, 2002, pp. 221-222. A serious impediment is the FARC's definition of "peace." Raúl Reyes, one of the FARC commanders, stated to *El Tiempo*, November 7, 1999: "Peace is not simply the silencing of guns, nor the end of military engagements." To Spain's *El País*, he added that peace was ". . . not the demobilization and surrender of arms, but the solution of deep social, economic, and political problems of the country." (Cited in Eduardo Posada Carbó, "Paz de Verdad?" newsletter of the Fundación Ideas Para La Paz, February 2001.) This is a definition and defense of class warfare. Moreover, the definition was so sweeping that it could not constitute the bases for either a cease-fire or peace negotiations, a point also raised by Villalobos above. An excellent study of how to settle civil wars is Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, especially the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2. Walter postulates three critical phases in successful negotiations: ". . . a negotiation phase during which combatants choose whether to initiate peace talks, a bargaining phase during which they choose whether to reach and sign a peace settlement, and an implementation phase during which they choose to execute the agreed upon terms," p. 20. The Colombian process did not get to the first phase.

91. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, the FARC has over 6,000 children soldiers under the age of 18 fighting within its ranks. See *Las Farc siguen reclutando menores, denuncia Unicef*, "El Tiempo", February 13, 2002 ([http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/13-02-2002/judi\\_pf\\_0.html](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/13-02-2002/judi_pf_0.html)). Carel De Rooy, United Nations representative in Colombia, stated, ". . . they're throwing kids to the front as cannon fodder." Cited in Juan Forero, "A Child's Vision of War: Boy Guerrillas in Colombia," *New York Times*, December 20, 2000 (<http://ebird.dtic.mil/Dec2000/e2001220childs.htm>). For more detailed information on the brutal treatment of children, including executions for flagging morale, see Centro de Análisis Sociopolíticos, *Juguetes de la Guerra: Niños reclutados por la guerrilla en Colombia*, Bogotá, 1999. See also Mauricio Sojo Vásquez, "Este país que mata niños," *El Espectador*, February 17, 2002 (<http://www.elespectador.com/paz/nota5.htm>). The abuse of women and prisoners is also notorious among the FARC. See Escuela de Comunicación Social y Periodismo, Universidad Sergio Arboleda, *El Regreso del Infierno: Historias de los que volvieron*, Bogotá, 2001.



92. The FARC and ELN regularly blow up the Coveñas-Caño Limón pipeline that goes from Arauca to the Caribbean, at times extracting payment from Occidental Petroleum, and frequently causing catastrophic ecological damage.

93. "Dime con quién andas...El IRA habría enseñado a las FARC a utilizar personas como choferes inocentes de carro bombas," *Semana.com*, February 8, 2003 (<http://semana.terra.com.co/opencms/Semana/articuloImpresion.html?id=68059>).

94. "Gran decepción en comunidad internacional por terrorismo de guerrilla: Nuncio Apostólico," *El Tiempo*, February 9, 2002 ([http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/09-02-2002/poli\\_pf\\_0.html](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/09-02-2002/poli_pf_0.html)).

95. Interview with Dr. Jaime Ruiz, World Bank, Washington, DC, May 28, 2002.

96. Serious misinformation about the United States militarizing its support package accompanies the public discussion on the U.S. contribution to the \$7.5 billion total budget for *Plan Colombia*, a document produced by Colombia's Department of National Planning. Of the original US \$1.3 billion contribution, 61 percent was designated as military. For an early assessment of the origins and elements of *Plan Colombia*, see Gabriel Marcella, *Plan Colombia: The Strategic and Operational Imperatives*, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, April 2001. The Institute's extensive series of papers on Colombia can be accessed at <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/ssi/index.html>.

97. Interview with Ambassador Curtis Kamman, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, December 20, 2000.

98. Gil Merom, "Liberal Democracies, The Balance of Tolerance and the Legacy of Small Wars," manuscript, Department of Political Science, Tel-Aviv University, September 1996, p. 7.

99. For an analysis of the weakness of Colombia's judicial system, see Luz Estella Nagle, *The Search for Accountability and Transparency in Plan Colombia: Reforming Judicial Systems Again*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, May 2001.

100. For the improvements in the Colombian Army, see Thomas Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002.

101. "Así se inició cerco a las FARC," *El Tiempo*, August 19, 2001 ([http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/19-08-2001/judi\\_pf\\_1.htm](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/19-08-2001/judi_pf_1.htm)).

102. *El Tiempo*, December 29, 2002 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/ar/noticias>).

103. Statistical information was abstracted from "Paramilitaries (Part III): GOC

Improves Record Against AUC, But Needs To Do More,” Unclassified Telegram, Department of State, Bogotá 1494, February 15, 2002. For more information on the relationship between the military and paramilitaries, see Human Rights Watch, *The “Sixth Division;” Military-Paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia*, New York: Human Rights Watch, 2001. The term “Sixth Division” refers not to an Army division, but implies a supportive relationship between the Colombian Army and the AUC.

104. Students of counterinsurgency, such as Sir Robert Thompson, Thomas Marks, and Anthony James Joes, point out that the 10-to-1 ratio is seldom achieved in the real world. The key variables for success must also include effective leadership, ethical rectitude, tactical mobility, intelligence, logistics, and a substantial investment in bringing governance and participation to the people most directly affected by the conflict.

105. Tim Johnson, “U.S. General: Colombia Needs More Troops,” *Miami Herald*, March 6, 2002 (<http://ebird.dtic.mil/Mar2002/e20020307usgeneral.htm>).

106. The Colombian armed forces could always have retaken the *despeje*, it was simply a matter of the political cost to be paid. Surprisingly, the FARC put up little resistance to the military, melting into the forest without engaging the forces. It must also be recognized that Pastrana played a form of coercive politics never seen in 3 years of the “peace process.”

107. Putumayo’s violent history earned it a rare honor, the publication of a papal encyclical. On June 7, 1912, Pope Pius X promulgated *Lacrimabili Statu* (“On the Indians of South America”) to lament the deplorable condition of the Indians that were being brutally exploited as slave labor in the Upper Amazon by speculators in tropical products like rubber.

108. Statistics derived from “Antinarcotics Police Interdiction: Results and Projections,” Unclassified Telegram, American Embassy, Bogotá, December 12, 2001.

109. For this perspective, see the excellent field research of Nathan Baker Christie, *Bursting the ‘Balloon’: Aerial Eradication of Illicit Coca Cultivation in Colombia*, M.A. Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, May 2001. Christie, who works in the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Narcotics and Legal Matters, conducted on-site research in Putumayo.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

111. Interview with Stuart Lippe, Office of Colombian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, February 12, 2002.

112. General Accounting Office, *Drug Control: Efforts to Develop Alternatives to Cultivating Illicit Crops in Colombia Have Made Little Progress and Face Serious Obstacles*, Washington, DC: GAO-02-291, February 2002, p. 3.

113. There was also considerable debate about the amount of coca fields actually eradicated. See: Frances Robles, "100 Guerrillas Killed in Colombia Since Talks Failed," *Miami Herald*, March 8, 2002, p. 18A. See in same page information on Colombian coca production in 2001, based on satellite imagery. Due to one area of the country not having been surveyed in 2000 because of cloud cover, it was now believed that coca production actually increased by 33,600 hectares (82,992 acres) in 2001 compared with production figures in 2000. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy issued an official statement: "The figures underscore the pervasiveness of cultivation and trafficking in Colombia; the magnitude and complexity of Colombia's interlocking security, drug control and economic challenges; and the need for sustained U.S. engagement." For the impact on coca farmers in Putumayo, see Scott Wilson, "Colombia's Air Assault on Coca Leaves Crop, Farmers in Its Dust," *Washington Post*, November 23, 2002, p. A1 ([www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A45987-2002Nov12](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A45987-2002Nov12)).

114. "El Ministro de Justicia e Interior, Fernando Londoño, dice que este año el Gobierno acabará con el narcotráfico," *El Tiempo*, January 13, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/poli/2003-01-12>).

115. Adding fuel to the debate was commentary that coca growing has expanded rather than contracted, despite Colombian claims of 16.8 percent drop in acreage. See Associated Press, "Colombia Claims Coca Crop Decline," *New York Times*, February 27, 2002 (<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/international/AP-Colombia-Coca-Crop.html>). The issue of measuring acreage eradicated remained a controversial and highly technical one.

116. Interview with Olivier Carduner, Director of South American Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC, February 27, 2002.

117. The Department of State invoked the Leahy amendment to deprive the Colombian Air Force's 1st Air Combat Command of U.S. military assistance because it had been implicated in the killing of 18 noncombatant civilians by cluster bombs during a strafing of the village of Santo Domingo in December 1998. The long and fruitless investigation prompted Department of State spokesman Richard Boucher to state: "The prolonged investigation has raised questions about the Colombian air force's commitment to determine the facts, and we think, damages the reputation of Colombia's air force. We expect due process and we expect a just ruling based on objective facts." Cited in Reuters, "U.S. Bans Aid to Colombian Air Force Unit," *MSNBCNews* (<http://famulus.msnbc.com/FamulusIntl/reuters01-14-075613.asp?reg=Americas>).

118. Interview with Frank L. Jones, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, February 25, 2002. Jones worked in the Department of Defense office for counternarcotics support.

119. *Washington Post*, January 14, 2002 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A40957-2002>) The *Post* resumed its strong support in an editorial on February

24, 2002, entitled "Help for Colombia;" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac/wp-dyn/A57958-2002Feb24>). The *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, and *Dallas Morning News* also endorsed more robust military assistance. Conspicuous by the absence of its support until later was the *New York Times*, which for years resisted expanded military assistance to Colombia.

120. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, p. 8.

121. The vagaries, contradictions, differing perspectives, and actual contributions of European countries about and to *Plan Colombia* are exhaustively analyzed in Joaquín Roy, "Europe, Neither *Plan Colombia* Nor Peace Process: From Good Intentions to High Frustrations," *Working Paper Number 11*, North-South Center, University of Miami, January 2003.

122. Karen De Young, "Wider U.S. Role in Colombia Sought: \$98 Million Requested for Military Training, Equipment," *Washington Post*, February 6, 2002, p. A15 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A29333-2002Feb5>). Also U.S. Government source, American Embassy, Bogota, March 22, 2003.

123. The Colombian media noted that this represented a shift in U.S. support from defense to offense. See "Estados Unidos aprueba aviones contra las FARC," *El Tiempo*, February 6, 2003 (<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/noticias>).

124. Militias, an old theme in national history, remain a contentious issue among Colombians, but clearly there is a need. See Scott Wilson, "Colombian Rebels Met by a New Unarmed Foe: Villagers' Resistance Could Alter War," *Washington Post*, February 9, 2002, p. A1 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A48175-2002Feb8>).

125. The Leahy Amendment would, therefore, require that all personnel be vetted if the United States were to send military assistance to reorganize, train, and reequip the armed forces of Colombia. This would be an extraordinary work load, probably beyond the capabilities of the American Embassy.

126. A senior Bush administration official opined in fall 2002 that the difference between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency is semantics.

127. Rand Beers, "Andean Regional Initiative," Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, July 11, 2001 ([http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/rm/2-1/jun\\_aug/4054.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/rm/2-1/jun_aug/4054.htm)).

128. *Defense and Democratic Security Policy*, p. 4.

129. Secretary of State, "A Report to the Congress on United States Policy Towards Colombia and Other Related Issues," U.S. Department of State, November 2002, p. 6.

130. Karen De Young, "Colombia Aid Proposals Shelved: Pentagon Officials Urged Expanded U.S. Role Against Rebels," *Washington Post*, February 28, 2002, p. A14 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A14117-2002Feb27>).

131. Secretary of State, "A Report to the Congress. . .," pp. 7-8.

132. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

133. *Ibid.*, pp.10-13.

134. For a modern interpretation of the "remarkable trinity" and its strategic application, see Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, 3rd ed., pp. 91-134. On the contemporary debate in American society about the "gap" between civilians and military and the impact on military effectiveness, see Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds., *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001, pp. 325-474. It is noteworthy that Colombian Army Commander, General Carlos Ospina, uses the trinitarian concept in strategy and operations briefings, evidence that the military is aware of the importance of the concept in the conduct of their operations.

135. There is a rich literature on "state building" and war. In addition to Philip Bobbitt's work cited in footnote 16, two of the best are Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back*, in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 170-226; and Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State*, New York: The Free Press, 1994. For a brilliant application of the theory of state building through war, the bellicist theory, to Latin America, see Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America*, State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002. Centeno argues persuasively and eloquently that the bellicist theory of state formation was less relevant to Latin America. Central authority and its armed forces evolved as weak entities, compared to their counterparts in the history of Western Europe.

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