Plan Colombia And Beyond: Pastrana to Santos (2000 to 2012)

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PLAN COLOMBIA AND BEYOND: PASTRANA TO SANTOS (2000 TO 2012)

By

Jonathan D Rosen

A DISSERTATION

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PLAN COLOMBIA AND BEYOND: PASTRANA TO SANTOS (2000 TO 2012)

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This dissertation analyzes the formation, implementation, and evolution of Plan Colombia from 2000 to 2012. This work is an examination of U.S. foreign policy towards Colombia and uses theories and methods from International Relations Theory and Comparative Politics. This project answers the following questions: 1) Why did the U.S. pass Plan Colombia after de-certifying the country three years in a row; 2) What was Plan Colombia for Pastrana, and what was Plan Colombia for Clinton; 3) How did the goals of Plan Colombia change after the events of 9/11 and the inauguration of Alvaro Uribe; 4) Has Plan Colombia achieved its goals?; 5) Where is Plan Colombia today?; 6) What are the lessons of Plan Colombia? In sum, this work is divided into four puzzles or periods to examine the critical junctures or moments of Plan Colombia. While this work is a single-case study, it has broader lessons for other countries.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the origins and outcomes of Plan Colombia from 2000 to 2012. This work uses the theoretical concepts and methodological tools drawn from International Relations Theory and Comparative Politics to examine the critical junctures and evolution of Plan Colombia from its initial approval in July 13, 2000 by the U.S. Congress through its implementation from Andres Pastrana (1998-2000), Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010), until the Juan Manuel Santos administration (2010- April 2012). This research does not undertake an in-depth examination of the Santos Administration because it was written when relatively little data was available. The Santos administration, however, creates several broad trends worth mentioning as it helps explain the significant evolution of Plan Colombia and U.S.-Colombian relations over time. Due to these limitations, President Santos will not receive the same in-depth treatment as the other Presidents.

This research focuses on a single-case that explores the formulation, approval, and evolution of Plan Colombia over time. Colombia is a critical case in the U.S. led war on drugs for six reasons. 1) Colombia has been a long-time security threat dating back to the cold war before the emergence of drug trafficking in the country; 2) During the 1970s and beyond, the country became and remains today deeply entrenched in drug cultivation, processing, and trafficking, thus presenting new post-cold war security concerns for the U.S.; 3) Colombia constitutes a microcosm of the failures and successes of the U.S. led war on drugs; 4) Colombia is located in an important strategic area because it borders the
Panama canal and Brazil, which is a major economic power in the region. Security challenges that transpire in Colombia, therefore, can threaten trade and prosperity for the region; 5) Colombia remains the principle ally of the U.S.; 6) Colombia is a democracy and Washington does not want its allies to become anti-democratic. It, however, is important to recognize that a single-case study has limitations, particularly in terms of its ability to reach generalizable theories or conclusions that can be applied to other countries. Despite the limitations of a single-case study, Colombia is a critical case study and provides experts, policy makers, and scholars with crucial lessons. More details and discussions about the limitations of a single-case study will be discussed in the methodology section below.¹

**Puzzle One: Origins of Plan Colombia**

Beginning in 1995, the U.S. government decertified Colombia and the Ernesto Samper administration three years in a row for failing to comply with the requirements set forth by the U.S. In July of 2000 during the Pastrana administration, the U.S. Congress approved and President Clinton signed into law a bill designed specifically to assist Colombia’s combat against drug trafficking.² This initiative is known as “Plan Colombia.” The first puzzle seeks to analyze and examine what transpired between 1995 and 2000 that led to the creation and signing of Plan Colombia into law by the U.S. Why

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² Washington estimated that Plan Colombia would cost $7.5 billion. Of the $7.5 billion, the U.S. would provide $ 4 billion and the international community would contribute the remaining $3.5 billion. In terms of financing, Plan Colombia allocated 80 percent of the money towards “hard components,” such as military spending, while only 20 percent of the money was allocated for “soft” programs, such as alternative development.
did President Clinton sign Plan Colombia into law and provide the Colombians with billions of dollars in aid after de-certifying the country three years in a row?³

**Puzzle Two: From Drug Trafficking to Narco-Terrorism**

The terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists on September 11th, 2001 fundamentally changed U.S. foreign policy, as the Bush Administration focused on the “war on terror” and subordinated the war on drugs to the war on terror. President Alvaro Uribe was inaugurated as the new President of Colombia on August 7th, 2002. From the beginning of his presidency, Uribe had very different goals and objectives than his predecessor. Specifically, Uribe sought not only to combat drug trafficking within Colombia but what he referred to as “narco-terrorism.” Why did the discrepancies evaporate between the U.S. and Colombia? Why did the U.S. accept the new strategy designed by Uribe? How is it that the less powerful country, Colombia, was able to set the agenda?⁴

**Puzzle Three: Beyond Plan Colombia**

By the end of the decade, President Bush (2009) and President Uribe (2010) ended their perspective presidential terms. Towards the end of the Bush Administration and the beginning of the Obama Administration, the U.S. has reduced its aid to Colombia. How did the Colombians perceive and evaluate Plan Colombia in terms of its successes and

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failures? Were the initial goals of the U.S. and the Colombians achieved? If so, how were these goals achieved? Why did the policies change from Uribe to Santos?"
importance of “levels of analysis” and the need to distinguish between the different levels of foreign policy and security analysis. The first level of analysis is theories of grand strategy and, these theories are essential for understanding the long-term goals of a state, as well as the formation of Plan Colombia. International Relations Theory, in particular, has been prone to these debates among contending theories and paradigms. In addition to realism and liberalism, soft constructivism also has explanatory power in terms of its ability to explain the perceptions and social constructions of the U.S. and Colombia. Determining whether Plan Colombia, for instance, has been successful and achieved its goals is a constructivist issue.

However, theories of grand strategies alone are insufficient, and, therefore, this research design employs various techniques and approaches from Comparative Politics in order to examine the internal dynamics and politics that impacted the formation and evolution of Plan Colombia. In other words, it is not possible to comprehend and analyze the formation of Plan Colombia and its evolution without examining the role of key institutions, such as the executive branch and Congress. This dissertation examines the role of three U.S. Presidents (Clinton, Bush, and Obama) and three Colombian Presidents (Pastrana, Uribe, and Santos). This work also examines the role of the U.S. Congress and how it helped impact the formation and evolution of Plan Colombia during these critical junctures.

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8 Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 193; Crandall, Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia, 159; Crandall, Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia during the Samper Administration, 95-120
Middle range theories demonstrate that scholars cannot understand U.S. foreign policy and drug trafficking in Colombia without examining the internal dynamics within a country. Comparative Politics, in essence, requires one to have in-depth knowledge of the culture, history, and institutions within the state apparatus. Some of the following questions need to be examined: how do the institutions function? How is a policy made? Who are the actors involved in policy-making? What are the “rules of the game” and different institutions involved in the policy making process?9

METHODODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND TECHNIQUES

The methodical approach for this work is a case study. Colombia is an important case because it lies at the epicenter of the U.S. led war on drugs and has been a major security concern for the U.S. This work uses diachronic analysis to examine the critical moments of Plan Colombia.10 Therefore, this research endeavor is not a complete history of Plan Colombia but focuses on the critical junctures. Plan Colombia provides scholars and policy makers with various important lessons for other countries. However, one has to be cautious about the lessons from Plan Colombia, as some policy experts and pundits read too much into Plan Colombia and desire to apply the model to other countries. Despite the limitations, Plan Colombia has various policy implications or lessons. A single-case study has some limitations, such as the ability to draw generalizable theories that can be tested in other countries. Comparing Colombia to other cases could be a fruitful topic for further research. On the other hand, multiple case studies complicate the research design as one has to answer several important questions with regards to the justification of cases

chosen. For instance, which countries are chosen and why? Does the researcher compare countries based on most similar or most different cases? How does one avoid issues such as selection bias and selecting on the dependent variable? In sum, this project does not use multiple-case studies, but rather focuses on key moments or critical junctures in Colombia, which has been and continues to be a crucial country for drug production as well as trafficking.\textsuperscript{11}

In terms of the methodological technique, this endeavor adopts process tracing to examine the critical junctures of Plan Colombia. Process tracing enables researchers to evaluate and determine the causal mechanisms. This work also draws upon both primary and secondary sources in order to examine the critical junctures of Plan Colombia. This project, for instance, analyzes research from both U.S. and Colombian government documents. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) and UN reports, in particular, have been consulted and provide a plethora of information with regards to coca cultivation and overall trends in drug trafficking. Various scholars also have conducted research with regards to the trends in cultivation and the economic dynamics of drug trafficking. Sources have been consulted in English and Spanish in order to provide a rigorous and complete analysis and understanding of the issues from both the U.S. and Colombian perspectives.

In addition, this work uses techniques from constructivism, primarily the analysis of speech acts made by authoritative figures to trade the de-securitization process. This project consulted interviews from newspapers, speeches, and other documents and

\footnote{David Marsh and Gerry Stoker, eds., \textit{Theory and Methods in Political Science} (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 392.; King, \textit{Designing Social Inquiry}, 245}
examined the statements made by key leaders, such as President Obama. This work, however, does not use content analysis, which is another form methodological technique performed by constructivists requiring extensive numerical analysis of content, such as the frequency in which an issue appears in a newspaper. While this is a useful technique, it was not useful for the analysis of this dissertation.

This work also uses statistical analysis in order to analyze empirically whether Plan Colombia has been successful and achieved its goals. For instance, statistical estimates exist on the various aspects of the drug trade, such as coca cultivation. Data will be gathered from available reports and the relevant security literature. Various scholars in Colombia, such as Daniel Mejia, have conducted extensive statistical analysis on drug cultivation and trade in Colombia.

This dissertation also uses other qualitative methods, such as open-ended IRB approved interviews with various experts, such as academics, journalists, and government officials, who have been involved in policy formation and research and are experts in each stage of the process and formation of Plan Colombia. Open-ended interviews, using the snowball technique, provide the interviewee with the opportunity to answer questions and provide useful insight into Plan Colombia.\footnote{The Snowball technique requires one to gather names from experts and they eventually become duplicated as the same number of experts keep reappearing.} The individuals selected for interviews are from Colombia and the U.S. in order to provide a methodologically sound sample of individuals who can present the entire picture of Plan Colombia. Each person interviewed was either an expert in U.S. foreign policy towards Colombia and/or the war on drugs as well as the internal armed conflict in Colombia. The goal was not to survey and
interview the people in Colombia\textsuperscript{13}, but rather to interview policy expert and scholars who would provide keen insights into Plan Colombia.\textsuperscript{14}

**LESSONS AND ANALYTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

After analyzing the various critical junctures or key moments of Plan Colombia, this work will end with several policy recommendations that will make a significant contribution to the field. The empirical analysis of Plan Colombia is the first subject addressed in the policy recommendations suggestions. Determining whether Plan Colombia has achieved its objectives and can be defined as a success can be measured empirically. Statistical analysis, for instance, provides estimates about the number of hectares of coca produced in Colombia. This work calculates the money spent on drug trafficking and examines empirically whether drug production has increased or decreased. In addition to the availability of drugs, this work will examine the cost and purity of drugs today in order to measure the achievements of Plan Colombia. The initiatives to combat the FARC also can be empirically studied as the number of FARC members operating within Colombia can be estimated as well as the revenue that illegal armed groups earn from illegal activities, such as drug trafficking.

The second major policy recommendation is titled analytical recommendations and addresses the notion of autonomy. What IR theories are useful for explaining the behavior of Colombia and its relations with the U.S.? How does Colombia help scholars understand various IR concepts, such as alliance politics? What does the Colombia case

\textsuperscript{13} In other words, I did not desire to find out what the population thinks about drug trafficking in Colombia. Instead, the goal was to interview experts on the subject in hope that they would provide key insights.

suggest for scholars of International Relations and policy experts regarding the relations between hegemonic powers and weaker actors?

Finally, the third policy recommendation addresses the notion of lessons. What are the conclusions or lessons that can be drawn from Colombia? What does Plan Colombia teach scholars and policy makers about drug trafficking?

**PART TWO: THEORETICAL APPROACH**

This section briefly examines the theoretical approaches employed in this work. This research is an analysis of U.S. foreign policy. U.S. foreign policy lies at the fault lines between Comparative Politics and IR, and theories of grand strategy alone are insufficient for understanding Plan Colombia. Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism are the three theories that provide the most explanatory power. One of these theories alone, however, cannot explain Plan Colombia, but all three together provide a complete or holistic analysis of the Plan and increase the explanatory power. Understanding the formulation and evolution of Plan Colombia, therefore, requires analyzing domestic politics and how international relationships affect domestic politics. Said differently, the dynamics within Colombia requires examining the intermestic issues that explain Plan Colombia. In sum, it is essential to utilize an eclectic theoretical approach and employ the tools of Comparative Politics. Theory alone is insufficient and one must delve into the domestic factors that play a role in the formation of Plan Colombia. The international factors also can interact with domestic factors, creating an intermestic level of analysis. IR theory fails to explain the internal dynamics that influenced the formulation and transformation of Plan Colombia.
THE VALUE OF THEORY

This research endeavor consciously adopts an eclectic theoretical approach. Today, the world in which we live is more complicated than ever, and in order to understand such a complex world, scholars need to employ different tools in order to explain events that occur. For International Relations scholars, IR Theory is an important tool for understanding these phenomena and events that have transpired. Some individuals, particularly outside of academia, believe that IR Theory does not have much explanatory power and is akin to an intellectual exercise among academics in the “ivory tower.” In *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, John Mearsheimer quotes Paul Nitze who played a major role in foreign policy during the Cold War era. Nitze wrote that “most of what has been written and taught under the heading of ‘political science’ by Americans since World War II has been…of limited value, if not counterproductive, as a guide to the actual conduct of policy.”¹⁵ Nitze’s statement suggests that theory has little use in the “real world” and does not have any explanatory power. Instead, politicians and individuals who participate in the policy making process should use their experiences, information analysis, and common sense when designing a policy or making an important decision. Mearsheimer responds to such critics of IR theory and states the following:

This view is wrongheaded. In fact, none of us could understand the world in which we live in or make intelligent decisions without theories. Indeed, all students and practitioners of international politics rely on theories to comprehend their surroundings. Some are aware of it and some are not, some admit and some do not; but there is no escaping the fact that we could not make sense of the complex world around us without simplifying theories.¹⁶

¹⁶ Ibid., 10
Therefore, to understand the formation of Plan Colombia and how it evolved over time, this research applies IR theory as a lens or framework to explain this complicated case. International Relations scholars often use one theory or paradigm and fail to use other theoretical perspectives to explain their question. This work argues that scholars, such as John Mearsheimer, participate in what is referred to as “cherry picking.” Cherry picking is when a scholar selectively chooses cases in order to explain the issue being examined and is a form of selection bias. This is not the correct method to conduct social science research. In an interview at the University of California, Berkeley, Harry Kreisler asked Robert Pape whether he would classify himself as a realist. Pape responded that he does not like to label himself and believes that scholars should use the appropriate theories necessary to analyze and answer a question. This is the practice that scholars should be engaged in, as opposed to finding cases that explain why their particular theory of choice has more explanatory power or relevance. The use of examples to justify the value or explanatory power of a particular theory is improper social science research. Critics of an eclectic approach would argue that the paradigm or theory one uses determines the type of questions that a scholar asks.

NEO-REALISM

Neo-realism has explanatory power in terms of its ability to explain state to state relations between Colombia and the U.S. Realism clearly indicates that the U.S. has geo-strategic goals, and Colombia played a role in the grand strategy of the U.S. Washington, for instance, viewed Colombia as a pillar of democracy and a crucial ally for its foreign

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17 Ibid. I would argue this point based on Mearsheimer’s case selection. It appears that he choices cases that will justify or explain his theory.

policy in the region. Colombia also is a vital country for security in the region because it borders Venezuela, Brazil, and the Panama Canal. Security in Colombia, therefore, is a major priority in order to ensure stable trading zones. In addition, neo-realism explains how a powerful country, such as the U.S., can use its power to alter the goals of a policy. Realism also has several hypotheses regarding agenda setting and how power impacts bilateral relations between a strong state and weaker power. According to realism, the hegemonic state, in this case, the U.S., will use its power to dictate the terms and conditions and dominate the agenda setting process over the less powerful country. Therefore, the less powerful country will not be able to set the agenda and will be required to follow the orders of the hegemonic actor.\(^\text{19}\) However, is it possible for the weaker country to set the agenda and maintain relative autonomy, despite realist logic? Realism has important contributions with regard to alliance politics. Realists argue that countries either balance against a power or bandwagon. According to realist logic, Colombia, a staunch ally of the U.S. should bandwagon with the U.S. This hypothesis will be tested in the subsequent pages.

Realism has various other shortcomings in its ability to explain Plan Colombia. One serious shortcoming of realism is that it focuses on states as the unit of analysis and ignores other actors, such as drug traffickers. Bagley and Tokatlian argue that “in fact, multiple subnational and transnational actors are involved in this international industry, most of whom operate outside, if not in direct defiance, of national authorities through

the hemisphere." Bagley and Tokatlian also stress the importance of the market, whereas realists underestimate the importance of globalization and market forces. Even though they are illegal, drugs should be viewed as any other commodity in a legal market. Drug traffickers, therefore, will continue to supply drugs if the demand for such commodities continues to exist and the potential to earn money remains.

LIBERALISM

Liberalism helps examine the economic linkages that exist between Colombia and the U.S., which is something that realist scholars have neglected. The relationship between Colombia can be characterized as one of asymmetric interdependence, as opposed to one of complex interdependence. Colombia is heavily reliant on the U.S. as a trade partner. In economic terms, Colombia only accounts for less than one percent of the overall U.S. trade. That being said, Colombia is an important energy producer of coal and oil. Trade, however, is not the only indicator of economic interests as the U.S. has significant investments within Colombia.

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In Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition, Keohane and Nye argue that realists underestimate various other factors, such as linkages between states. Two forms of interdependence exist: complex and asymmetric. The relationship between Canada and the U.S. can be described as a complex interdependence. It is extremely unlikely that the U.S. and Canada will enter into war because both countries share many linkages. Liberalism, therefore, emphasizes the role and importance of cooperation. Colombia and the U.S. have many linkages, but Colombia depends on the U.S. for foreign aid. In addition, the U.S. and Colombia started negotiating free trade agreements but the relationship between Colombia and the U.S. is not one of complex interdependence.
Liberalism is useful because it focuses on the economic linkages and asymmetric exchange as tools of foreign policy to encourage greater interdependence. The weaker countries, however, do have a degree of relative autonomy. As a result, the greater degree of interdependence the subordination the weaker power obtain, and the greater the capability to negotiate about certain issue areas. Interdependence is not only a tool of the hegemonic power, but the weaker actor, Colombia, can use interdependence to obtain various goals and concessions from the hegemonic actor. In other words, interdependence, when used correctly, can be an effective mechanism to extract or obtain certain resources.

**CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Soft constructivism focuses on perceptions and the social construction of issues, such as national security priorities. Constructivism helps explain how the elites in Colombia and the U.S. perceived each other. Such perceptions help determine the nature and intensity of interactions. From the U.S.’s perspective, some individuals perceived Colombia as a failed state. From the Colombian perspective, Colombian elites believed that they needed the U.S. as an ally in order to receive the necessary support to combat drug trafficking and the various internal actors. Constructivism also clearly demonstrates that the U.S. was not only concerned with its national security interests but also the electoral dynamics within the U.S. The Republicans challenged Clinton during his Presidency, and Gore during his Presidential campaign, arguing that they were not tough enough on drugs. The Democrats felt obligated to respond and prove that they were not “soft on crime.” In addition, Washington perceived Colombia as a thriving democracy in the region, which also helped support U.S. values. In terms of hypothesis testing,
Constructivists would hypothesize that countries can collaborate despite different perceptions and social constructions as long as countries can find common linkages and grounds for cooperation.  

CONCLUSION

International Relations theory provides scholars with a framework to understand the world in which we live. Theories of grand strategy are particularly useful in explaining long-term trends and goals of a state. Realism has a great deal of explanatory power, particularly in terms of the formation of Plan Colombia. Realism, however, has many weaknesses. It is impossible to understand foreign policy without “opening” the black-box and examining the internal and political dynamics that influence policy-making. President Clinton, for example, did not want to appear “soft” on crime and “soft” on the war on drugs. He desired to demonstrate that he was tough on crime and wanted to help alleviate the drug trafficking problem in Colombia. Neo-realism also is insufficient because it fails to account for other non-state actors and forces, such as the market and globalization. Drug traffickers and organized criminal groups are non-state actors and defy the laws of the state. Neo-realism does not address these non-state actors because it views the state as the primary actor and unit of analysis in the international system. Drug

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23 This dissertation also invokes the use a constructivist framework developed by the Copenhagen School. The Copenhagen School revolutionized security studies, challenging the fundamental principles of security for other theories. Buzan and his colleagues argue that security is a contested concept and we must consider security for what and for whom. In order for something to become securitized, an existential threat must exist. Political actors, such as the president, must convince the citizens that the topic attempting be securitized is serious and a potential threat. What is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience. There will be instances in which the word security appears without this logic and other cases that operate according to that logic with only a metaphorical security reference. See Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, Security : A New Framework for Analysis (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 239.; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," International Organization 46, no. 2 (-01-01, 1992), 391.
trafficking organizations, however, have a great deal of power and can influence security within a state.

Interdependence Theory is essential for this work because it helps explain the linkages that exist between countries and emphasizes economic forces; more economic linkages enables the weaker country to become less subordinated and provides the weaker actor with more leverage and bargaining power. The more linkages that exist between countries the less likely that both countries will enter into war. Two forms of interdependence exist: complex and asymmetric. The relationship between Colombia and the U.S., however, is not one of complex interdependence but rather can be defined as asymmetric interdependence. The Colombian government and the U.S. have linkages between them, but they are not intrinsically linked together. Indeed, Colombia is much more dependent on the U.S., and the U.S. is able to uses its power to set the agenda.

While neo-realism and liberalism have a great deal of explanatory power, they still are insufficient in analyzing the concept of security. For the Copenhagen School, security is a contested concept. One must first ask the following question: security for what and security for whom? This is a fundamental contribution to security studies because traditional scholars have focused on the realist notion of state security. Buzan and his colleagues argue that different sectors and levels of security exist. Therefore, one can analyze an issue and examine the different levels and sectors that are involved. Constructivism is very helpful for this dissertation because it is a tool for examining how an issue becomes securitized. In this sense, security studies are a method as well as a

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framework for analysis. Determining how Plan Colombia should be designed, however, is a constructivist issue. Norms and ideas play a major role in how a government defines a security problem as well as their solutions to solve the problem.\textsuperscript{25} Under Pastrana, the Colombians have a very different idea of the major issues and challenges in Colombia than did the Clinton Administration. Finally, this work will contribute to the literature by discussing the notion of de-securitization.

\textbf{PART THREE: THE COLOMBIAN PUZZLE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT}

Before delving into the first puzzle of this dissertation, it is important to briefly provide a brief history of drug trafficking and organized crime within Colombia.\textsuperscript{26} It is not possible to understand the formation or the different critical junctures that impacted the evolution and transformation of Plan Colombia without having a basic understanding of the history and events that resulted in the formation of Plan Colombia. Colombia has a long history of violence and organized crime.\textsuperscript{27} Over the 1990s, the U.S. government spent an estimated one billion dollars attempting to combat drug cultivation and trafficking within Colombia. Despite these efforts, the area of coca under cultivation proliferated drastically. Over the ten year period from 1989 to 1998 the production of coca leaves within Colombia proliferated from 33,900 to 81,400 metric tons, which is an astounding increase of 140 percent. Bagley states that “These dramatic increases in overall


\textsuperscript{26} Peter Smith H., \textit{Drug Policy in the Americas} (Boulder: Westview Press, 366.

production reflected the fact that between 1996 and 1999, the total number of hectares of
coca lead under cultivation in Colombia rose by almost 100 percent, from 68,280 to
120,000 hectares.” These statistics are quite astounding, especially considering the
billion dollars of U.S. aid provided to Colombia over the decade to combat drug
cultivation and trafficking.29

During the 1990s, Colombia had many other issues besides coca-cultivation. In
fact, Colombia continued to be the major cocaine-refiner in the world during this period.
Research indicates that Colombia supplied approximately “80 percent (220 metric tons)
of the total cocaine imports (approximately 300 metric tons) smuggled into the United
States in 1999.”30 In addition to producing and trafficking cocaine, the Colombians also
produced opium poppy, which is later refined into heroin. 1998 statistics, however, reveal
that the Colombians produced 61 metric tons of this good in one year alone, which is an
astounding increase from the zero metric tons only several years earlier. In terms of
heroin production, Colombia was and continues to be only a minor producer and
cultivator of heroin in the world. During this time period, scholars estimate that
Colombia supplied only two percent of the supply of heroin consumed around the world.

28 Bruce Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence And U.S. Policy in Colombia In The 1990s. 2001)., 1
Drug Control: Narcotics Threat from Colombia Continue to Grow (Washington, D.C.: GAO/ NSAID,[1999]), 4-5
29 Peter Andreas, "Free Market Reform and Drug Market Prohibition: Us Policies at Cross-Purposes in
Latin America," Third World Quarterly 16, no. 1 (-03-01, 1995), 75-88.; Bagley, Drug Trafficking,
Political Violence And U.S. Policy in Colombia In The 1990s, 1-31; Bruce Michael Bagley, "The New
Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America," Journal of
30 Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31; Drug
Control: Narcotics Threat from Colombia Continue to Grow, 99-136.
Yet, the heroin produced in Colombia entered into the U.S., particularly the eastern region.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1989, the situation in Colombia began to spiral out of control, as Luis Carlos Galán, the Liberal Party presidential candidate, was assassinated. This tragic event represented the third presidential candidate assassinated by the Medellín cartel before the elections of 1990. With U.S. support, the Colombian government attempted to dismantle the two major drug cartels operating within Colombia: the Medellin and Cali cartels. In the 1990s, the U.S. implemented what is known as the kingpin strategy, where the government focused on dismantling the leaders of the cartels operating within Colombia. The Colombians continued to follow the notorious leader of the Medellín cartel, Pablo Escobar, and killed him in 1993.\textsuperscript{32}

By the beginning of the 2000s, drug trafficking and violence continued in Colombia. Bagley argues that Colombia was one of the most dangerous countries in the most dangerous and violent states around the globe at the beginning of the 2000 and became a major concern for the U.S. from a security perspective.\textsuperscript{33}

**Drug Cultivation and Trafficking in Colombia**

Despite one billion dollars of aid granted to Colombia during the 1990s, coca cultivation in the Andes continued to flourish, signaling the continued failures of the war on drugs. In 1998, for example, the number of metric tons of coca being cultivated in Colombia

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.; Bagley, Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31
\textsuperscript{33} Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31
was 81,400, which represents a drastic increase over the 1990s. Just ten years earlier, reports estimate the number of metric tons being cultivated in Colombia at 33,900. These changes represent an astonishing 140 percent increase in coca cultivation. Politicians questioned how such massive increases in the area of coca under cultivation could occur every year despite the U.S. funding and efforts to help the Colombians combat drug production and trafficking.\(^\text{34}\)

Coca cultivation had shifted from Peru and Bolivia and moved to Colombia. In fact, Peru produced the majority of coca in the world during the middle of the 1980s while Colombia only cultivated approximately 10 percent of the global coca supply. In 1985, for example, Peru accounted for 65 percent of the total coca grown in the world.\(^\text{35}\) Several important interdiction efforts targeted coca cultivation in Bolivia and Peru. In particular, two successful operations—Operation Blast Furnace and Plan Dignidad—resulted in the decrease of cultivation in Peru, but inevitably shifted coca cultivation to Colombia. With the support of the U.S. government, the Colombians effectively dismantled what is referred to as the “air-bridge.” The air bridge refers to the airspace that enabled coca paste to travel from Bolivia and Peru into Colombia where the paste could be refined and processed into cocaine. In 1995, the President of Peru, Alberto Fujimori, authorized the air force to intervene and gave them permission to shoot aircrafts flying between the two countries. The air force implemented the strategy with remarkable success, shooting down 25 airplanes and deterring aircrafts from flying

\(^{34}\) Ibid.; *Drug Control: Narcotics Threat from Colombia Continue to Grow*, 99-136.

between the two countries.\(^{36}\) As a result of these interdiction efforts, Colombia witnessed tremendous decreases in hectares of coca being cultivated in Peru.

Bolivia also experienced major declines of coca production during this period. In 1998, for instance, the number of hectares of coca cultivated in Bolivia decreased dramatically to 39,000 hectares from 48,000 hectares cultivate in Colombia in 1996 alone.\(^{37}\) The interdiction efforts, however, had unintended consequences, forcing the drug traffickers to adapt. As a result of the “partial-victories,” Colombia became the world’s primary cultivator of coca.\(^{38}\) In fact, Colombia accounted for approximately 90 percent of the coca produced in the world in the early 2000s.\(^{39}\)

In addition to cultivating coca, Colombia also was—and remains—the leading refiner of cocaine in the world. Therefore, Colombia has dominated all aspects of the cocaine industry including cultivation, refinement, and trafficking for decades. At the end of the 1990s, researchers estimate that Colombia continued to dominate the cocaine industry, supplying eighty percent of the cocaine imported in the U.S. In terms of metric tons, scholars estimate that Colombia provided 220 of the 300 metric tons that entered into the U.S. market.\(^{40}\)

\(^{36}\) Bagley, Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31,3
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
\(^{38}\) Ibid.
\(^{40}\) See Bagley trends in the 1990s 2; Bagley and Tokatlian, Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin American Drug Policies; Bruce Michael Bagley, "US Foreign Policy and the War on Drugs: Analysis of a Policy Failure," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 30, no. 2/3, Special Issue: Assessing the Americas’ War on Drugs (Summer - Autumn, 1988), pp. 189-212.; Bagley, The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America, pp. 161-182
Cocaine, however, is not the only product that the Colombians produce and traffic; Colombians also produce and participate in the trafficking of marijuana, the majority of which reaches the U.S. Research indicates that the Colombians trafficked approximately 4,000 metric tons of marijuana into the U.S. in 1999 alone. Yet, marijuana and heroin result in fewer profits for drug trafficking than cocaine because Colombia produces such smaller quantities of heroin and marijuana is much cheaper than cocaine. In addition, cocaine is a more expensive drug than marijuana, and therefore, it is more profitable to traffic.

In addition to marijuana, the production of opium, which is refined to produce heroin, also proliferated rapidly in Colombia over the decades. In 1998, for instance, the production of opium was estimated to be approximately 61 metric tons in Colombia, which is a 100 percent increase from previous years when the cultivation of opium was virtually non-existent. In terms of the global heroin market, Colombia was—and remains—only a minor producer and distributor of heroin in the world market. Interestingly, the small percentage of heroin produced and trafficked—less than 2 percent—reaches the eastern portion of the U.S. but did not enter the European market.  

The Defeat of the Colombian Kingpins

What is extremely baffling about Colombia is that the drug cultivation and trafficking did not decrease even after the collapse of the two major cartels: Medellin and Cali. The question is why? Why after such large amounts of money and the collapse of the cartels would drug trafficking not decrease rapidly in the country? Certain key events led to

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41 Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31, 2.
42 Ibid., 2
serious efforts to dismantle the large cartels operating within Colombia. In 1989, the Medellín cartel assassinated Luis Carlos Galán, who was the candidate for President for the Liberal Party. This assassination was only one of three other murders of candidate running for the Colombian Presidency in 1990. The Barco administration attempted to combat the cartels. The new policy became referred to as the “kingpin strategy” because the Colombians sought to dismantle these large cartels by going after the leadership. Killing the leaders would be akin to cutting off the head of a snake and would dismantle the cartels; the logic being that the cartels could not function without their major leaders or capos. After endless monitoring and tracking of Pablo Escobar, the Colombians intercepted a call that he made and killed him in 1993. Both the Colombians and Washington viewed the collapse of the Medellín Cartel as a major success for security within Colombia. Under Escobar’s leadership, the Cartel’s corrupt practices presented major security dilemmas for the democratic stability of Colombia. Not only did the cartel traffic drugs, but it also bribed government officials, judges, and other law enforcement authorities. The Medellín cartel demonstrated that it was not afraid to use violence against government officials as well as political candidates. The collapse of both cartels represented a significant victory because it prevented Colombia from becoming a narco-state, or a state dominated by drug trafficking organizations.

The dismantling of the Medellín cartel, however, created a vacuum and enabled the Cali cartel to fill the void created by the collapse of the more power Medellín cartel. With the support of the U.S. government, the Colombians killed Pablo Escobar and

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44 Bagley, The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America, pp. 161-182; Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31
weakened a cartel. The death of Pablo Escobar and the defeat of his powerful criminal organization enabled the Cali cartel to increase in strength and seize control of the what was left of the organized criminal industry left remained from its rival—and more powerful—cartel. Differences existed between the Cali and Medellín cartels, with the major distinction being levels of violence. First, the Cali cartel had fewer members than the much larger Medellín cartel, which had approximately 70,000 at the height of its power. Research indicates that the Cali cartel had approximately 5,000 members or 65,000 less than the Medellín cartel. In addition, the Cali cartel was much less violent than Medellín, spending more effort influencing politicians through bribes and other elements of coercion. In fact, a major leader of the cartel, Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, spent approximately a billion dollars in order to bribe a plethora of individuals including but not limited to government officials, law enforcement officials, politicians, and judges.

The Colombians also invoked the king-pin approach for the Cali cartel, which eventually led to the collapse of the cartel. Even after the eventual dismantling of both cartels, drug trafficking continued within Colombia. While the king-pin strategy was successful in toppling the cartels, it created a vacuum and enabled smaller organizations to continue trafficking drugs. Russell Crandall states:

Unlike the drug war’s current focus on crop eradication, U.S. antidrug policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s was formulated around the ‘kingpin strategy.’ As the name suggests, the strategy involved pursuing the major drug-trafficking cartels: Medellín and Cali. The hope was that by capturing the kingpins, a leadership and logistical vacuum would form, forcing the cartels to implode. This did not happen. Instead of reducing the amount of cocaine and heroin produced in Colombia, the kingpin strategy actually caused the production to shift to small-and medium-size

45 Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 193, 81 to 82. See footnote 72
46 Peter Andreas, "Dead-End Drug Wars," Foreign Policy, no. 85 (-12-01, 1991), 106-128.; Bagley, US Foreign Policy and the War on Drugs: Analysis of a Policy Failure, pp. 189-212
This in turn has ‘atomized’ drug production and trafficking: drug-processing labs and shipments are now smaller, more dispersed, and much more difficult to locate and interdict.\textsuperscript{47}

The fragmentation of the cartels into smaller organizations has been referred to as the cockroach effect. When one turns the lights on in a kitchen or dark place, cockroaches disperse into all directions just as the drug cartels experienced a fragmentation.\textsuperscript{48} Smaller cartels, or what have been referred to as cartelitos, emerged and took control of the drug production and trafficking within Colombia. It is estimated that 300 smaller organizations, or cartelitos, moved into fill the void created by the collapse of the two major cartels operating within Colombia. Another consequence of the vacuum was that other organizations, such as the guerrillas, filled the void and took control of the cultivation of coca leaf within Colombia as well as the refining of the product.\textsuperscript{49}

It is important to note that the smaller organizations, or cartelitos, began to operate in areas of Colombia where the Colombian government had little or no control. The vast majority of Colombia is comprised of the Andes and jungle and the Colombia state was rather weak at this time and did not have the ability to administer law and order in remote regions of the country.\textsuperscript{50} The smaller organizations took advantage of the weakness of the Colombian state and continued to flourish.\textsuperscript{51} Weak states, such as Colombia, act as


\textsuperscript{49} Andreas, \textit{Dead-End Drug Wars}, 106-128; Bagley, \textit{Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century}

\textsuperscript{50} In an interview, Sanho Tree noted about the massive size of Colombia as well as the geography of the country. Sanho Tree, Director of the Drug Policy Project, August 15, 2012.

\textsuperscript{51} Beatriz Acevedo, Dave Bewley-Taylor and Coletta Youngers, \textit{Ten Years of Plan Colombia: An Analytical Assessment}, The Beckley Foundation, [2008]).
fruitful places for organized criminal networks to operate because the state does not have the capacity to stop such illegal activities from occurring.

Despite the victories against the major cartels, the smaller cartels or cartelitos created major problems for law enforcement and government officials. The cartelitos did not have a large structure and operations like the Cali and Medellín cartels. In essence, a smaller organizational structure makes it easier to give orders and commands to drug traffickers. More importantly, law enforcement had significant challenges because of the dispersion phenomenon that existed as a result of the fragmentation of drug traffickers into smaller organizations.52

DOMESTIC DYNAMICS: INTERNAL ACTORS WITHIN COLOMBIA

Colombia is a very complicated yet fascinating case study because many actors impact security and participate in drug trafficking within Colombia.53 Colombia has a long history of violence, and54 it is not possible to understand the political dynamics within Colombia without briefly understanding the actors involved in the internal conflict that has occurred for decades. One could spend an entire career studying and learning about

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52 Crandall Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 193, 83; Juan Tokatlian, The United States and Illegal Crops in Colombia: (Berkeley, CA : Center for Latin American Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 29.; Juan G. Tokatlian, Globalización, Narcotráfico y Violencia: Siete Ensayos Sobre Colombia. (Bogotá: Editorial Norma, 2000).


54 Colombia had a long civil war that lasted from 1899 to 1902. This conflict is referred to as the “War of a Thousand Days.” DeShazo et al explain that the war “pitted the Liberal and Conservative parties against each other on a national scale, leaving deep political scars that were re-opened during ‘La Violence’ from 1948 to the mid-1950s. See Peter DeShazo, Tanya Primiani and Phillip McLean, Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007 (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, [2007])., 3.
the armed conflict within Colombia and the different actors. Many works have been written on the subject and this brief analysis does not begin to address the complexities of the internal conflict in Colombia. However, it is important to briefly mention the actors because they also participate in drug trafficking and the money earned from drugs helps finance the internal conflict within Colombia.

Colombia has a long history of violence and internal conflict. The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaries de Colombia (FARC) is one of the major internal armed actors that have contributed to the internal strife. This leftist guerrilla organization claimed Marquetalia to be an independent “republic,” where “guerrilla leaders held cabinet positions determined by their military experience and Marxist education.” The FARC had linkages with the Communist Parties, but scholars question the level of relationship between the two groups. The FARC participates in various aspects of organized crime, such as kidnaping and extortion, in order to accumulate revenue. The FARC also receives income by taxing the peasants who cultivate coca. It is important to note that the FARC did not participate in the drug trade outside of Colombia.

Determining the profits earned by the FARC from drug trafficking and other illegal activities is quite a daunting task. Again, it should be noted that statistics are estimations. Different calculations exist for the profits earned and should be viewed as a

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56 Craig, Colombian Narcotics & US-Colombian Relations, 243-270; Crandall, Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia, 193.
57 Ibid.61
58 Bagley, Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s ,1-31
range. Bagley estimates that the FARC earned approximately $400 million from its operations relating to drug trafficking at the end of the 1990s. He states:

By the end of the decade, Colombian government estimates places the FARC’s total earnings from the drug trade as high as 400 million dollars per year. Added to the estimated US$ 500 million per year that the FARC were believed to earn from their more ‘traditional’ guerrilla activities (e.g., collection of revolutionary ‘taxes’ on landowners, kidnapping. Extortion, robbery, ‘commissions’ collected from local governments and businesses, and their own business investments, [the] FARC’s total annual income in 1999 may have amounted to as much as US $ 900 million.\(^5^9\)

Scholars, however, disagree whether money earned from drug trafficking operations help sustains the FARC. Analysts who think that drugs are crucial for FARC operations argue that the organization would be significantly weakened—if not depleted—without the vast resources earned from the drug trade. Critics of this argument counter-argue that the FARC has many potential sources of income. If the FARC earns very minimal amounts of money from the drug trade, they would be required to adapt and would increase other forms of organized crime, such as kidnapping, which are quite lucrative.\(^6^0\)

The profits earned from the drug trade have helped finance the FARC and have enabled them to expand and strengthen their operations throughout Colombia. In 1986, the FARC had an estimated 3,600 members in the organization. The numbers continued to increase rapidly overtime. By 1995, the FARC operated in 60 fronts within Colombia and had an estimated 7,000 members. By 1999, the FARC had approximately 10,000 combatants operating in Colombia. During its strongest period, the FARC had 17,000 combatants between 1999 and 2001.\(^6^1\)

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\(^{59}\) Ibid., 10.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
The FARC recognized that it was not strong enough to overthrow the Colombian government and implement a Marxist revolution. In order to continue the war against the government, the FARC forces began to disperse throughout different regions and established different zones or front lines. As a result, the locations and operations of the FARC have shifted overtime. The dispersion of the groups operating in different regions of Colombia leads one to question how the leadership exercises control over the different factions. With regards to this topic, Russell Crandall notes:

These dispersed groups—called frentes, have operated in a semi-autonomous manner since their inception, and doubtless, at times have little or no idea what type of operations—or even specific ideologies—other frentes are implementing. Moreover, there remains a great debate today in Colombia as to whether the central hierarchy of the FARC is always able to effectively control all of its frentes, which now number roughly 100.62

Despite these concerns about organizational and control issues, the FARC today still remains a powerful actor and major player in Colombia. Yet, the FARC are not the only actors involved in the drug trade as various other organizations exist.

The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) is the other major guerrilla organization operating within Colombia. The ELN adopted what has been described as a more “traditional” revolutionary group and can be compared to Castro’s revolution in Cuba. The ELN also participates in organized criminal operations, such as extortion. This organization also has reverted to blowing up oil pipelines and extorting money from large corporations who conduct business within Colombia. However, the ELN differs from the FARC because it does not participate in drug trafficking activities.63

62 Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 193, 62
63 Andreas, Dead-End Drug Wars, 106-128, 15
Another major actor in Colombia is the paramilitaries. A 1968 decree enabled “the creation of civil defense forces to defend property against guerrilla incursions.”\textsuperscript{64} The paramilitaries have evolved over time, originally consisting of peasants who acted as a “self-defense” unit. The creation of the paramilitaries resulted from the weaknesses of the Colombia state and its inability to govern in Colombia.\textsuperscript{65} Russell Crandall notes that the “new forms of paramilitary groups were born out of drug traffickers’ resistance to guerrilla harassment; today they are no longer directly related to the drug cartels, but instead, consist of quasi-autonomous, drug revenue-supported groups committed to clearing the Colombian country-side of guerrilla influence.”\textsuperscript{66} Throughout its history, the FARC have threatened owners of land. The hostile relations between landowners and the guerrillas forced the landowners to fight back and combat the guerrilla organizations with their own paramilitaries.\textsuperscript{67} In 1997, Carlos Castaño, a former member of the Medellín cartel, created the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or the AUC. Castaño attempted to improve the organization and structure of the paramilitaries in order to increase its presence in Colombia.

\textbf{COLOMBIA AND ITS HISTORY OF WEAK INSTITUTIONS}

It also is important to delve into the comparative politics elements of the Colombian state. It is safe to say that Colombia has always suffered from a weak state with weak institutions that have been prone to corruption and have helped foster organized crime.

\textsuperscript{65} Bagley, Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s 1-31
\textsuperscript{66} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia}, 193, 85; Ibid.; Crandall, \textit{Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia}, 159; Gamarra, \textit{Entre La Droga y La Democraci}
\textsuperscript{67} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia}, 85
and other criminal activities. One potential answer for why Colombia has weak institutions is the geographic complexity of the state. The rugged territory makes it more difficult for the Colombia state to assert control over rural areas. The Colombian state has never had complete control of the state and the vast rural territories have helped foster the guerrilla organizations. Pizzaro and Gaitán argue “in a comparative, historic perspective, the Colombian State has always been small, poor, and weak.” They argue that geography has been a major factor in the weakness of the state, declaring that “first, it is a vast territory cross-cut by a very complex geography, one of the world’s most hellish. This has given rise to a multitude of markets and scattered pockets of population.” The Colombian state apparatus remained poor for many years and contributed to the inability of the government to establish and enforce the law throughout the country. It is important to remember that a poor state will not have the resources necessary to implement programs, strengthen institutions, and fund law enforcement initiatives, as these activities require resources. As a result of the lack of resources, the Colombian state did not have the ability to project itself throughout the vastly diverse geographic terrains. Pizzaro and Gaitán credit the poverty of the state to the fact that Colombia did not have a major commodity to export to the global market until the beginning of the twentieth century. They argue: “it was not until the first decades of the twentieth century that Colombia was able to stabilize a product (coffee) for which there

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69 Ibid., 70
was demand on the world market. In addition, industrialization was slow in coming, and
the state’s resource base was very shaky.”

**The Clinton Administration**

This section moves away from the overall historical trends and focuses on answering the
questions proposed in the development of Plan Colombia and how it came to fruition. It
is appropriate to examine the various explanations as to why Plan Colombia came into
fruition and was signed by President Clinton in 2000 after years of quarrelsome relations
between the U.S. and Colombia. In order to understand the formation of the Plan, it is
essential to begin with the relationship between the Samper and Clinton
Administrations.

From the beginning, the Clinton Administration had a negative view of Ernesto
Samper because of his previous statements and positions on drug legalization. Washington classified Samper as “soft” or weak on the issue of drugs. In addition, Samper allegedly had connections with the drug cartels. As a result, the U.S. and Colombia did not always have great diplomatic relations, particularly during the middle of the 1990s. From the outset, the U.S. had a negative view on Ernesto Samper, who was the President of Colombia from 1994 through 1998. Samper allegedly was on the payroll of the drug cartels and used drug money to finance his campaign for the

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70 Ibid., 70
71 Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia*, 193; Crandall, *Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia*, 159
Presidency of Colombia. In the past, Samper also advocated for a rethinking of drug policies and supported the legalization of drugs.\textsuperscript{74} The U.S. government has had a long history of anti-drug policies and rhetoric, and Washington, therefore, viewed Samper as “soft” on the issue of drugs. From the outset, the U.S. had a negative view of President Samper and questioned whether he could be an effective ally in combating drug trafficking in Colombia. In 1993, the deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, Phil McLean, had a conversation with Samper about the problems that he confronted. Mclean described his discussion with Samper:

I said, ‘Enesto, you have a major, major problem with the ‘Unites States: you’re perceived as being soft on narcotics. This is the problem and there’s only one way to fix it—you’ve gotta show that you’re serious about this issue and to do this you’re gonna have to do something about this particular issue…’ At that time there was no specific information that I knew of, and I was supposedly in the center of all the ‘in’ in intelligence on anything that implicated Samper.\textsuperscript{75}

\textbf{1994: Republicans Take Over Congress}

The U.S. obviously had geo-strategic interests in Colombia and viewed it as a very important country for security within the region. The Clinton administration and many politicians viewed drug trafficking from Colombia as a serious threat that needed to be addressed. Realism helps one understand the national security element and bilateral relations between the U.S. and Colombia. However, realism ignores the internal dynamics within the U.S. that led the Clinton administration to pass Plan Colombia. The year 1994 represents a major turning point because the Republicans won the majority in the Congress. This is significant because the Republicans viewed the drug issue as a major priority and supported a tough U.S. foreign policy with regards to drug trafficking.

\textsuperscript{74} Crandall, *Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia during the Samper Administration*, 95-120

\textsuperscript{75} Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia*, 193 From 1990 to 1993, Mr. McLean held the position of deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-America affairs.
policy. It is not possible to understand the formation of Plan Colombia without taking into consideration the domestic pressures that President Clinton faced, particularly after the Republicans became the majority in Congress. Clinton did not want to be perceived as soft on the war on drugs and such pressures from Republicans forced him to strengthen his policy with regards to drugs. In addition, Al Gore ran for President in 2000 and he wanted to prove to the Republicans and diffuse criticism among the electorate that he was soft on the issue of drugs. Plan Colombia, therefore, represented an opportunity to demonstrate that he was serious about U.S. geo-strategic interests within Latin America and viewed U.S. national security as a major priority. In sum, realism has zero explanatory power when it comes to the internal dynamics of the state. Only through invoking the use of a Comparative Politics perspective can scholars understand the events that led to the formation of Plan Colombia.76

**ERNESTO SAMPER TOUGHER STANCE ON DRUGS**

Samper knew that the U.S. viewed him as soft on drugs, and this forced him to be tougher on drugs in order to appease the U.S. and help soften the violence of the critics. Russell Crandall notes that Samper, in fact, was forced to implement harsher policies than ever imagined. He states:

> These actions also reveal Samper’s profound lack of credibility on the drug issue in Washington. Knowing that critics both in Colombia and Washington were highly dubious about Samper’s willingness to fight the war on drugs, Samper was forced to go further than either he of the United States had ever imagined. Thus we have the paradoxical situation whereby this supposedly narco-compromised president ended up, whether he liked it or not, being a reliable and predictable ally with Washington vis-à-vis the drug war.77

76 Ibid.; Crandall, *Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia*, 159; Crandall, *Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia during the Samper Administration*, 95-120

77 Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia*, 193; Crandall, *Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia*, 159, 109
This quote demonstrates that Samper actually became tougher on the war on drugs than many people would have ever expected. Also, one could argue that Samper was forced to do more than any of his predecessors with regards to drugs in order to maintain relations with the U.S.\textsuperscript{78}

**COUNTERPRODUCTIVE POLICIES: THE U.S. DE-CERTIFIES COLOMBIA**

In 1995, 1996, and 1997, the U.S. government de-certified Colombia for being uncooperative on the war on drugs. Many experts have criticized de-certifying a country because it can remove access to money for countries that are vulnerable and require access to markers, trade, and foreign aid. A country can experience dire consequences if a U.S. President implements a de-certification. De-certification results in the suspension of foreign assistance from the U.S., but, it should be noted that this does not include money used for drug related assistance, nor does it count for humanitarian aid. In addition, de-certification results in the U.S. opposing loans from various institutions being granted to the country that fails to comply. However, it should be noted that the U.S. issued what is known as a national interest waiver, which was an attempt to avoid complete de-certification.\textsuperscript{79} De-certification also can impact the reputation of a country in the international arena, and, in turn, could hinder potential investors from investing

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 109 "Standing Guard for Uncle Sam," *The Economist*, 1995, .

\textsuperscript{79} The certification process occurred in 1986 under the Reagan administration, a period which experienced tremendous amount of drug use, often called the crack epidemic. The U.S. Congress required the Executive Branch of the U.S. to certify countries in order to ensure that countries are complying with the standards set for by the U.S., see *Passing Judgment: The U.S. Drug War Certification Process* drugstrategies.com. 1 Bill Spencer, "Drug Certification," *Foreign Policy in Focus* 6, no. 5 (-03-01, 2001), 1.
within the country. In sum, “the impact of decertification on U.S. aid is immediate and direct: non-exempt aid is automatically suspended.”\textsuperscript{80} 

Clearly, Washington and the Samper administration had many differences in terms of their views regarding the results and progress of the war on drugs. The Clinton administration viewed Samper as a major threat to potential progress on the war on drugs. On the other hand, the Samper administration believed that it had made a tremendous amount of progress, particularly with the collapse of the Cali cartel. For Samper, the collapse of the cartel represented a significant victory and signified the ability of the U.S. and the Colombians to work together and cooperate on certain issues and goals.\textsuperscript{81} For instance, the DEA as well as the CIA participated in the defeat of the cartel and the capture and or defeat of certain major leader working for the cartels.\textsuperscript{82} Defining what is a success and what is not a success is a constructivist issue and will differ among different individuals.

The certification process has been very controversial and has been viewed by many as the U.S. exercising its authority and forcing other “backward” countries to apply to the rules. Adrian Bonilla argues that the U.S. has believed that it has the responsibility to use its hegemonic power to intervene in backwards countries and help them fix the problems. The realist assumptions of the U.S. have led other individuals to argue that the U.S. often behaves as a “bully,” forcing weaker countries to comply in order to have


\textsuperscript{82} Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 114
access to various privileges. As the most powerful country in the region, the U.S. had the ability to coerce Samper into enacting certain policies because the Colombians needed the aid from Washington. In order to receive the aid, the Colombians had to meet the standards of the U.S. The U.S. viewed Samper as someone that could be controlled, and perhaps, even manipulated to comply with the U.S. geo-strategic interests. De-certification also can cause resentment among countries that are officially de-certified by the U.S. because such countries often do not approve of being objectified and judged by the hegemonic actor, the U.S. Finally, it is important to note that the de-certification process is quite political and is by no means objective, resulting in different countries receiving varying degrees of treatment.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGINS OF PLAN COLOMBIA

Beginning in 1995, the U.S. government de-certified Colombia and the Ernesto Samper administration three years in a row for failing to comply with the requirements set forth by the U.S. In July of 2000, during the Pastrana administration, the U.S. Congress approved and President Clinton signed into law a bill designed specifically to assist Colombia combat drug trafficking. This initiative is known as “Plan Colombia.” This chapter will explore the events that occurred between 1995 and 2000 that resulted in the creation and signifying of Plan Colombia into law by the U.S. Why did President Clinton sign Plan Colombia into law and provide the Colombians with billions of dollars in aid after de-certifying the country three years in a row?

THE PASTRANA ADMINISTRATION

President Pastrana, the successor to Samper, took office in 1998 and represented an opportunity for a change in strategy. According to Marc Chernick, a professor at Georgetown, Pastrana had two main objectives: peace and the desire to improve relations with the U.S. Pastrana came to power in Colombia and desired to help Colombia solve its internal conflict that has resulted in a tremendous amount of violence and suffering in Colombia and has lasted for decades. In addition, Pastrana wanted to improve relations with the U.S. Washington understood that drug cultivation and trafficking still occurred in large numbers in Colombia despite the king-pin strategy and the successful operations that led to the dismantling of the major cartels operating within Colombia. In addition,

84 Mark Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University, August 9th, 2012.
the U.S. learned from its mistakes with the Samper Administration, and Washington recognized that its “efforts to publicly undermine Ernesto Samper had resulted in an undermining of the Colombian state at the very time that the guerrilla and paramilitary groups were becoming stronger than ever.”

Indeed, the new leader in Colombia provided the U.S. with a new opportunity. The U.S. viewed Pastrana as a noteworthy ally in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. From the outset, the relations between Pastrana and the U.S. began on far better terms than the Samper Administration. Pastrana also recognized the need to develop a solution to the internal conflicts within Colombia, and he was able to leverage the U.S. and plead that Colombia was in dire need for assistance. In other words, Colombia was on the verge of collapse, and Pastrana convinced the U.S. that Colombia could not combat the problems without the necessary resources from Washington.

By 1999, the internal conflict in Colombia had devastating effects on the Colombian economy; the GDP decreased by 4.2 percent in Colombia, which represented the worst recorded economic performance that Colombia had experienced since the Great Depression. The decrease in GDP also coincided with drastic increases in the levels of unemployment and individuals living in poverty. Specifically, in 1999, Colombia experienced a staggering 18 percent unemployment, and the poverty rate proliferated in 1999, increasing by 57.5 percent over a five year period. In addition to the economic instability as a result of the internal violence, neighboring countries became concerned about security levels, worrying that the internal conflict in Colombia would negatively

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85 Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 193 143
impact security in the region. DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean argue, “neighboring countries began to feel the effects of violence in Colombia as the internal armed conflict took on an increasing regional dimension. FARC units frequently violated national borders, especially in remote areas such as the Darién in Panama, to rest and refit.”

**Pastrana Travels North**

President Clinton invited Pastrana to the White House shortly after he came to power. It appears as though Clinton wanted to increase his soft power and demonstrate that he sought a cooperative to improve relationship with Pastrana, a relationship that would be much less quarrelsome than the relationship between Washington and the Samper administration. At the White House in 1998, Pastrana stated:

> On behalf of our people, I would like to express our thanks to the people of the United States, and personally, I'd like to state that although I've only been President for 3 months now, it would be very difficult I think for Nohra and I to be welcomed so warmly anywhere else. I came here with the hope of forging an alliance with President Clinton and the United States, and I will leave having established a true friendship with the President, and I hope with his Nation.

As the events transpired, it became evident that Pastrana did not represent an equal partner, but rather had to comply with Washington’s demands and vision of how to fight the drug war in order to receive money for counter-narcotic initiatives. Pastrana and the U.S. differed on their goals and objectives. Pastrana came to power desiring peace in Colombia and viewed socio-economic inequalities as a major problem within Colombia that needed to be addressed. For Pastrana, the need for land reform and money to address the economic and social issues occurring in Colombia, particularly in the rural areas, became a primary concern. Pastrana proposed large amounts of aid in order to

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87 Ibid., 8
89 Serafino, *Colombia: Conditions and U.S. Policy Options*, 1-44
address the various inequalities in the rural regions of Colombia, desiring to implement a Marshal Plan for rural Colombia in order to increase the economic prosperity of people living in the region.\(^{90}\) In a 1998 press conference in Colombia, Pastrana stated:

> We are committed to a peace process which is difficult, but we are committed to it, and we will forge ahead. We know the country we've received is in a financial situation worse than any in Colombia's history. We know we have to take harsh measures, and we will take them. We will protect the poorest sectors. Clearly, there are instructions to be given to ministers for all the social areas, those that have to do with social investment, with poverty, with health and education, with building houses; and matters of social interest are matters within the budget on which we are not going to try to reduce our expenses but try to keep them up and strengthen them. And we will have to make a major effort from the viewpoint of the administration, as we are doing, to cut our expenses, to cut a number of things.\(^{91}\)

In 1998, Pastrana began peace negotiations with the FARC in an effort to end the long conflict. Pastrana and the representative of the FARC, Manuel Marulanda Velez, entered into peace talks and agreed upon the establishment of a demilitarized zone, or zona de despeje in Spanish, in Caqueta. Pastrana described the situation, stating:

> I think that it's very important to be able to establish a dialog, a direct dialog with President Clinton, with the Secretary of State, with General McCaffrey, with the National Security Council Adviser, especially with this whole demilitarized area which, according to Colombian law, can be established so that the representatives of the guerrilla movement can come to that area so we can guarantee their life, so that the representatives of Government can go to that area and their lives will also be guaranteed. We can have international observers present in this demilitarized area, as well as journalists who will also be attending.\(^{92}\)

He continued, declaring:

> We had the opportunity today to explain to the President and to his Cabinet that this area will be established for 90 days. That was the commitment; that was the agreement. What we seek are 90 days after next November 7th. During that time we want the FARC to sit down at the negotiating table. They've already appointed three representatives. The Colombian administration will be naming a representative. We'll establish an agenda for those meetings.\(^{93}\)

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\(^{90}\) Acevedo, Bewley-Taylor and Youngers, *Ten Years of Plan Colombia: An Analytical Assessment*, 1-13

\(^{91}\) Serafino, *Colombia: Conditions and U.S. Policy Options*, 1-44

\(^{92}\) William J. Clinton: *The President's News Conference with President Andres Pastrana of Colombia*, 4

\(^{93}\) *Ibid.*, 5

\(^{93}\) *Ibid.*, 4
When asked if the U.S. was willing to lead the peace process effort in Colombia,

President Clinton responded to the reporter, stating:

Well, I would like to do anything that I can, but I think the President has taken the lead in a way that is, I think, innovative and very heartening to the rest of us. Again, I hope that those who have been involved in the turmoil in Colombia will take his offer in good faith. From the point of view of the United States, I think we should be in a supporting role however we can be of help. One of the things that we would very much like is the United States citizens who have been kidnapped. If they are alive, we'd like them released. If they're not, we'd like them accounted for. That would help us a great deal.  

He continued:

But I personally have been struck with admiration for the way that President Pastrana has handled this so far. I don't know what else anybody could do, and I think that the path he is pursuing is the one most likely to bring results. If there is anything we can do to support that, of course, I would be happy to do so.  

Pastrana’s intentions backfired and, in effect, the demilitarized zone prevented Pastrana and the military from operating within this 42,000 square kilometer zone, which was the size of Switzerland. According to Pastrana, the zone signified the peaceful intentions of the Colombian government and the desire for peace negotiations. In reality, the zone enabled the FARC to operate without any intervention or negative repercussions from the Colombia government, and therefore, served as an area of central command for the FARC. The FARC quickly placed 5,000 troops in the demilitarized zone and could do whatever they wanted in this area. In addition, the FARC took this opportunity to re-arm and store weapons in this zone.

This zone provided the FARC with a massive territory where they could organize and plan various attacks. Pastrana and his administration had zero control over the region, and, in essence, this area became a separate state controlled by the FARC. As

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94 Ibid., 2
95 Ibid., 2
96 Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s, 1-31,12
time passed, the FARC continued to operate in this region, and Pastrana failed to make any achievements with the FARC in terms of negotiations. In 1998, General McCaffrey described the situation in Colombia as “out of control, a flipping nightmare.” Pastrana’s approval ratings also decreased drastically as a result of the failures of the peace negotiations and the disastrous de-militarized zone. By the end of 1999, Pastrana’s approval rating decreased from 42 percent to 22 percent.

By the summer of 1999, Pastrana spoke with Washington and emphasized that Colombia desperately needed assistance. The U.S. urged Pastrana to develop a Plan that could be discussed and reviewed by Washington. In 1999, Pastrana developed a plan that became known as “Plan Colombia.” Pastrana had several major objectives and issues that he had to address upon assuming office. During this time, the Colombian economy was quite weak. Pastrana understood that issue of drugs had to be confronted, but he believed that the peace process was vital for this to happen. Pastrana also had to address the humanitarian crisis occurring in Colombia. Therefore, his version of Plan Colombia, focused on peace first, then developmental issues, and finally drug trafficking. Pastrana believed that peace had to be achieved first and then developmental assistance in order to improve Colombia’s economic status. Some scholars believe that, in reality, it is quite difficult to separate the drug issue from the internal conflict because the FARC financed the conflict with revenue earned from the illicit drug business. Sandra Borda Guzman, a Political Science Professor at Los Andes University, argues, “I don’t think

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97 Ingrid Vaicius and Adam Isacson, *The "War on Drugs" Meets the "War on Terror"* (Washington, D.C.: Center for International Policy, [2003]), 2
99 March Chernick 8/9/2012
100 Chernic, *MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University*
that it was ever possible to differentiate both things [drugs and the internal conflict] that clearly."^{101}

Pastrana constructed a Plan where drug trafficking and organized crime played a tertiary role, preparing several versions of Plan Colombia for the various potential donors.^{102} Pastrana stated that Plan Colombia would be a $7.5 billion plan with the intention to help the Colombian economy, as well as promote peace and other programs, such as social development programs. Pastrana designed the Plan believing that the U.S. government would provide $4 billion, while the international community would provide the rest of the money. When describing Plan Colombia and its formation, Arlene Ticker of Los Andes University, states, “I don’t think Plan Colombia again was ever conceived as a counter-narcotics policy by the Colombian government at least in its main components. For me the ultimate goal was state strengthening and particularly military strengthening.”^{103} Pastrana traveled to Washington to promote his version of Plan Colombia, which barely mentioned the role of the military and focused much more attention on the different forms of economic and social aid that could help create peace in Colombia. While drug trafficking certainly impacted Colombia, combating drug cultivation and trafficking did not constitute a major initiative for President Pastrana.^{104}

When describing the Plan designed by Pastrana, Chernick states, “If you look at that, it

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^{102} Tickner, *Professor Los Andes University*

^{103} Tickner 8/6/2012

was not much of a strategy, but it was a nice overall vision. It is hard to find fault with that Plan.\textsuperscript{105}

Plan Colombia from the outset, then, was an intermestic issue. In other words, it is not possible to understand the formulation of Plan Colombia without examining the international issues at hand as well as the domestic politics within both countries. The intermestic nature of the issue enabled and provided the Colombians with greater relative autonomy in the early stages of Plan Colombia during its formulation as Colombia had become tired of the war and Pastrana wanted peace. Plan Colombia also appeared to be an excellent initiative and opportunity for the U.S. to combat drug trafficking in Colombia. Republicans in Congress criticized President Clinton for being soft on drugs. Republicans portrayed the President as a “soft” liberal who admitted to trying marijuana—but not inhaling—while in college at Georgetown University. Such statements made Clinton an easy target. The religious right, in particular, then and now, remains a prominent force for wholesome and traditional American values and morality. In sum, Plan Colombia provided Clinton with a forum to demonstrate that he was serious about combating drug trafficking, and, indeed, should not be labeled as soft on the issue of drugs.

Debates occurred in Congress regarding Plan Colombia and its strategy. Marc Chernick was one of the experts on Colombia who testified before the House International Relations Committee. Chernick explained to the Committee that Pastrana’s vision of Plan Colombia and his notion that peace would assist against drug production and trafficking would be an effective policy to combat anti-narcotics. Chernick explains

\textsuperscript{105} Chernick; ibid
that “the reaction from the Congress was this is nuts. We are going to make peace with the narco-guerrilas and we are going to fund that, and they were totally hostile, completely hostile.” After the debate in Congress, which occurred in late spring of 2000, Plan Colombia underwent a fundamental transformation.

The transformation of Plan Colombia and reformulation of the policy designed by Pastrana in large part was a result of the efforts and influence of Barry McCaffrey, who held the position of “drug czar” at this time. McCaffrey viewed Colombia as a problem country and knew that it would not be popular for the U.S. to become involved in the internal conflict in Colombia. McCaffrey was a key member and helped influence President Clinton. Chernick explains, “Barry McCaffrey from inside the white house took control of this…McCaffrey saw this as an opportunity. He understood that some sort of US assistance program supporting peace in Colombia was not going to fly.” The U.S. needed to combat drugs first and not involve itself in the internal conflict in Colombia. McCaffrey recognized that the Congress would support a strong anti-narcotics strategy. As a result of McCaffrey and his efforts, Washington fundamentally altered Plan Colombia and transformed it into an anti-narcotics policy.

McCaffrey’s influence resulted in the Clinton administration disagreeing with the formula or strategy for Plan Colombia. First, Plan Colombia appeared rather vague and did not have enough emphasis on the war on drugs. The Clinton Administration re-engineered the formula, making the number one priority and focus combating drug trafficking through supply-side programs and expanded “Plan Colombia to a wider

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106 Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University
107 Ibid.
strategy of strengthening the role of the state in the fight against drugs.\textsuperscript{108} The Clinton Administration had a different conception of the problem and solution and used its power to alter Plan Colombia and invert the initial formula designed by Pastrana. Washington downplayed the interdependent nature of the drug problem, and, instead, viewed the major problem to be the supply of drugs coming from Latin America, particularly Colombia. Washington also wanted to avoid becoming involved in the complicated internal dynamics and struggles occurring within Colombia as a major concern existed that the U.S. could not afford to become involved in another “Vietnam style” conflict.\textsuperscript{109} As a result, the Clinton administration clearly distinguished the counter-narcotics initiatives in Colombia from deeper involvement in the complicated internal situation which had been happening for decades. Brian Sheridan, the Assistant Secretary of Defense, made a great comment that summarizes the sentiments during his testimony in early 2000. He testified:

\begin{quote}
The targets are the narco-traffickers, those individuals and organizations that are involved in the cultivation of coca or opium poppy and the subsequent production and transportation of cocaine and heroin to the U.S. Only those armed elements that forcibly inhibit or confront counterdrug operations will be engaged, be they narco-traffickers, insurgent organizations, or illegal self-defense forces. I know that some are concerned that we are being drawn into quagmire. Let me assure you, we are not.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

This quote demonstrates that policy experts and politicians remembered the lessons from Vietnam and did not want to intervene in the internal dynamics in another country.

Focusing on drug trafficking enabled Washington to combat drugs and attempt to stop the cultivation and eventual trafficking of drugs into the U.S. border without becoming

\textsuperscript{108} Acevedo, Bewley-Taylor and Youngers, \textit{Ten Years of Plan Colombia: An Analytical Assessment}, 1-13; DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, \textit{Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007}, V-55, 3
\textsuperscript{109} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia}, 193; Crandall, \textit{Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia}, 159
\textsuperscript{110} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia}, 193, 149.
involved in the over four decade-long civil conflict. It is important to remember that the various illegal armed actors also participate in drug trafficking and use the money to finance their operations.

**U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE**

In the House of Representatives, the members did not make drastic changes to the proposed bill by President Clinton. Some members, however, attempted to make changes and alter the flow of money. Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from California, argued that more money needed to be spent on domestic aspects such as programs to help addicts receive treatment and rehabilitation in order to return to their lives and become productive members of society.\(^{111}\) The argument and logic behind supporting demand reduction programs is that drug traffickers operate because they have a market. As every student of economics knows, the laws of supply and demand will dictate the levels of production of a product. Less Americans addicted to drugs in the U.S., therefore, would help curb the number of users demanding drugs. Despite her valiant efforts, Pelosi’s attempt to funnel money into programs designed to treat addicts and rehabilitate them into productive members of society ultimately failed.

The debate in the Senate resulted in various amendments to the bill proposed by Clinton. Some senators desired to address human rights issues. Patrick Leahy, in particular, became a champion of human rights issues and expressed concern with Colombia’s long record of human rights abuses. Leahy proposed that the Secretary of State would “have to certify the Colombian military officers accused of committing

\(^{111}\) Ibid., 151
human rights violations were being tried in civilian courts, and that the Colombian Armed Forces was terminating links between the military and paramilitary groups.\footnote{112}

The human rights initiatives resulted in small amounts of aid being devoted to this issue and led to minor decreases in the military budget. However, it would be a mistake to believe that human rights constituted a major component of Plan Colombia. The military components of Plan Colombia always remained a crucial aspect of the bill, as Washington desired to provide Colombia with the appropriate resources necessary to combat drug trafficking in order to decrease the flow of drugs entering the U.S.\footnote{113}

Another key person should be credited for the passage of Plan Colombia: the Colombian Ambassador Luis Alberto Moreno. Ambassador Moreno was very effective and made himself known to the U.S. members of Congress. In addition to his excellent diplomatic skills, Moreno knew that Colombia desperately needed money from the Clinton administration. He supported Plan Colombia because he viewed the Clinton administration as an important ally for Colombia. In sum, Moreno supported Plan Colombia and became a staunch advocate of the Plan.\footnote{114}

After the various debates and concessions, Congress passed Plan Colombia and sent it to the President for ratification. On July 13\textsuperscript{th}, 2000, President Clinton signed Plan Colombia or H.R. 4425, into law and provided Colombia with significant amounts of aid to combat the drug war. Plan Colombia, in essence, became a U.S. led initiative as all of the international donors backed away and refused to support such a Plan. However, U.S.}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{112} Ibid., 152
\footnote{113} Ibid., 153; DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, \textit{Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007}, V-55; Vaicius and Isacson, \textit{The "War on Drugs" Meets the "War on Terror"}
\footnote{114} Chernic, \textit{MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University Crandall, "Deep into the Anti-Drug Mire"; "El Plan Colombia: El Debate En Los Estados Unidos} (Washington, D.C.: Center for International Policy, 2000).
officials continued to emphasize that Plan Colombia would be a counter-narcotic initiative, and the U.S. would not become involved in the internal dynamics within Colombia. The drug czar, Barry McCaffrey declared that “the primary focus on this supplemental effort is to provide support for Colombia’s intensifying counter drug (sic) efforts. As a matter of Administration policy, the United States will not support Colombian counterinsurgency efforts.”

**UNDERSTANDING THE FORMATION OF PLAN COLOMBIA**

In reality, Washington created Plan Colombia and devised the strategy according to its goals and objectives. It is important to note that a Spanish version of the document did not exist until several months after the document had been created in English. The fact that the Plan did not exist in Spanish for several months proves that the U.S. set the agenda and developed Plan Colombia according to the goals, priorities, and strategies of Washington.

Realism also helps explain the role of power and the ability of stronger states to set the agenda. For realists, strong states can do what they want, while weaker states must comply with policy and do what they must. Altering Plan Colombia was quite easy for the U.S. After the collapse of the Cold War, the U.S. emerged as the most powerful country in the world. As a hegemony, the U.S. was able to use its power to invert the formula.

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The U.S. also intervened in Plan Colombia based on certain inherent assumptions about the role of the superpower in the international system. Adrian Bonilla argues that the U.S. thought that it has not just the right, but the responsibility to intervene in countries experiencing problems, or “backward countries,” and should use its power to “fix” the problems within other countries. These realist assumptions are nothing new since the U.S. viewed Latin America as a subservient region for decades. Since the Monroe Doctrine in the early 1800s, Latin America has been the “backyard” of the U.S., and therefore, the U.S. has the right and responsibility to control its weaker neighbors of the south.  

In sum, the hegemonic actor, the U.S., was able to shift the formula and set the agenda due to its position in the international system. On the other hand, the weaker actor, Colombia, did not have the ability to set the agenda and inevitably was required to follow along and abide by the decisions of the stronger power. Therefore, the Colombians had to appease the stronger power in order to receive money to combat drug trafficking in Colombia.

The stronger power, the U.S., did not collaborate with the Colombians and work with the government in order to develop a joint plan that satisfied both countries. For the U.S., it became important to market Plan Colombia as a key part of a Colombian led initiative. Such statements demonstrate that the U.S. did not want to have its soft power

Nothing, however, could have been further from the truth. The U.S. did not solicit advice from neither the Colombians nor the international community. Instead, the U.S. had a vision of what needed to be done in order to decrease the security risks and stop drugs from being cultivated and trafficked in the U.S.

Realism further explains why the U.S. did not work through institutions and focused on state to state relations with Colombia. For realists, states are the unit of analysis in the international system. Realists recognize that cooperation occurs between countries, but they are very skeptical of institutions. In the False Promises of Institutions, John Mearsheimer argues that institutions are a forum for power politics. Realists also are critical of institutions because of the potential for free riders and defecting. Mearsheimer emphasizes that states care about relative gains vis-à-vis other states because the world is zero-sum. Therefore, states are not concerned about absolute gains, instead they desire to gain an advantage over the competitors.

In addition to explaining the formation of the Plan, Realism also has explanatory power in terms of understanding the components of the Plan. For realists, the number one goal of a state is to survive in the anarchic system. The U.S. viewed drug trafficking in Colombia as a serious threat and as well as a national security issue and needed to develop a solution in order to address the problem. Washington did not want drug


\[120\] John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," International Security 19, no. 3 (Winter, 1994), pp. 5-49. For more on realism, see Waltz, Theory of International Politics; Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics
trafficking organizations to impact the security of the U.S. and its position as a sole superpower.\textsuperscript{121}

Although Realism explains the power dynamics and the long-term goals or grand strategy of the U.S., it also is important to understand the role of economics and how economic considerations impacted Plan Colombia. Colombia is a vital country in terms of security because it borders on various important trading partners, such as Venezuela and Brazil.\textsuperscript{122} In addition, Colombia neighbors the Panama Canal, which is a major transit point and crucial geographic location for trade. The U.S. has an interest in stability in the region and does not want the economic trade interrupted because it could hinder the prosperity and security within the U.S. Realism, however, fails to account for the economic linkages that exist between the two countries. Colombia is more dependent on the U.S. for aid, trade, and access to markets, and, therefore, the relationship cannot be defined as one of complex interdependence. In terms of the numeric percentages, Colombia accounts for less than one percent of the U.S. trade. In addition to trade, the U.S. also has many economic investments in Colombia, and, therefore, stability is necessary in order to attract investors.\textsuperscript{123}

Realism, however, fail to account for the notion of perceptions among different elite actors. Identifying the problem and developing a solution are constructivist issues. Since Reagan, the U.S. viewed Colombia as a major issue for U.S. national security and

\textsuperscript{121}Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics}; Kenneth N. Waltz, \textit{Man, the State and War} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Mearsheimer, \textit{The Tragedy of Great Power Politics}

\textsuperscript{122}Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics}.

managed to securitize the war on drugs. Analysis of the speech acts and examination of the money allocated to combating the war on drugs demonstrate that Regan successfully securitized the war on drugs. Critics, such as Ethan Nadelmann, argue that the war on drugs should not be viewed or constructed as a security issue, but rather it should be seen as a health problem. Less money should be spent on supply side policies and the money should be allocated to treatment, prevention, and education. However, supply-side policies have continued to dominate U.S. drug policies since the Reagan administration. For Washington, the logic is that the U.S. would not have a major drug problem if the Colombians did not produce and traffic such noxious substances. According to this form of thinking, the only way to win the war on drugs is to stop the cultivation of the drugs through eradication programs, and second, to combat the cartels through interdiction programs as well as jailing drug traffickers. Jailing drug traffickers has not been effective since many of the leaders control the drug trafficking organizations and operations from prison. An entire chapter in this dissertation is devoted to the results or the “balance sheet” of Plan Colombia, measuring the outcomes by examining the empirical evidence.

In sum, the identification of the problem was quite different for both governments. The U.S. wanted to focus on combating the supply of drugs. The Colombians, however, had a different social construction of the problem and the solution to the events occurring within Colombia. Pastrana desired to bring peace to the country and solve the internal strife in order for Colombia to be less violent and dangerous.

124 Wendt, Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics, 391
Pastrana devised Plan Colombia with the notion of economic development in mind. He believed that Colombia had major development issues and needed improvements in order to help the country become wealthier and more powerful. For Pastrana, drugs constituted the third dimension of Plan Colombia and played a role in the security in Colombia, but Pastrana subordinated the need to stop drug trafficking to his larger visions of peace.\textsuperscript{126}

**FINANCING OF PLAN COLOMBIA**

The Europeans did not approve of Plan Colombia and provided no financial aid in terms of financing. The Europeans do provide Colombia with some money for programs addressing developmental issues, but they do not view such money as part of Plan Colombia.\textsuperscript{127} The main program that finances Plan Colombia is known as the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI). From 2000 to 2005, the ACI has provided Colombia with $2.8 billion.\textsuperscript{128} Colombia also receives money from a program called Foreign Military Financing, or FMF. In 2005, the total number of aid combining both ACI and FMF funds was $4.5 billion when combined.\textsuperscript{129}

**COMPONENTS OF PLAN COLOMBIA**

The final version of Plan Colombia passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by Clinton had ten major elements or components:

- an economic strategy
- an international strategy
- a peace strategy

\textsuperscript{126} "El Plan Colombia: El Debate En Los Estados Unidos; Crandall, Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia, 193; Crandall, Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia, 159

\textsuperscript{127} Connie Veillette, Plan Colombia: A Progress Report (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service,[2005]),1

\textsuperscript{128} This is fiscal year

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 1
- a human development strategy
- a fiscal and financial strategy including austerity and economic adjustment measures
- a military strategy
- a judicial and human rights strategy
- a social participation strategy
- a counter-narcotics strategy
- a judicial and human rights strategy
- an alternative development strategy

However, these ten components did not receive equal weight. Washington allocated 80 percent of the funds for Plan Colombia for hard components, as opposed to soft issues such as human rights and alternative development. The subsequent sections below discuss the major components of Plan Colombia.  

**Military Components**

In order to fight the war on drugs, Washington has relied on its relationship with militaries in other countries. Adam Isacson argues that “the drug war, which is evolving into a larger battle against organized-crime groups that finance themselves with drug proceeds, has made it possible for the U.S. government to maintain the close military-to-military relationships forged during the Cold War, a period when many generals served as heads of government.” Armed forces have continued to play a major role in combating drug trafficking, often blurring the lines between the traditional functions of the police and the military. In essence, the drug war represents a decline in the progress made during the transitions from authoritarian regimes to democracies in Latin America.

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because the military reverted to assuming a role that it invoked in the past prior to the transitions.\textsuperscript{132} Said differently, Isacson states:

The turn to militaries to patrol the streets, to man checkpoints, to carry out searches and seizures, and to arrest and interrogate suspects is a step backward for the region. A key characteristic of the past 30 years’ transitions to democracy has been the removal of soldiers from tasks that would have them in constant contact with the population in daily life. Many countries’ police forces were moved from defense to public-security or interior ministries, with civilian chiefs and separate police academies.\textsuperscript{133}

It is important to note that the police and military, by definition, have different roles. The police force in a country is designed to maintain and enforce the law. For instance, the police investigate crimes of different levels of severity ranging from murder to theft. On the other hand, the military defends the state from external enemies. A military, for example, defends a country from foreign invaders in order to protect the sovereignty and survival of the country.\textsuperscript{134} Analysts argue that it becomes dangerous when the two units blend together and a distinction is not made clear.\textsuperscript{135}

The U.S. has a long history of maintaining separate roles for the military and the police within the U.S. In fact, laws have been passed that ensure that a distinction continues to exist. The Posse Comitatus statute prohibits the government to use soldiers to conduct policing activities, unless the President of the U.S. orders the military to perform policing duties in times of extreme danger and/or uncertainty. The U.S., however, “has not been so judicious in the military roles it has encouraged within Latin


\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 2


In sum, the military component of Plan Colombia accounted for a great deal of the funds. In fact, 80 percent of the money allocated went towards “hard” components in order to combat the supply and trafficking of drugs. In July of 2000, the U.S. Congress passed an emergency supplemental package titled P.L 106-246, which provided the Colombians with $1.3 billion in order to help combat drug production and trafficking in Colombia, as well as other countries in the Andean region which historically have been major cultivators of coca. Colombia received $860 million of the $1.3 billion from the emergency-aid package. The vast majority of the money for the aid, $632 million, was allocated to assist the military combat drug trafficking. The U.S., however, placed limitations on the number of troops that could be deployed to Colombia with the initial support package. The military components of Plan Colombia would only continue to increase, particularly with the election of Alvaro Uribe, who desired to combat the FARC and merged the war on drugs with the war on terror. The evolution of Plan Colombia and a more in-depth analysis of the military will be discussed further in the next chapter.

**AERIAL ERADICATION**

A major component of Plan Colombia is the eradication of coca crops which are later processed into cocaine. Three main forms of eradication exist: voluntary manual, forced manual, and aerial spraying. Until 2007, aerial spraying was a crucial component of Plan Colombia and billions of dollars have been spent on flying airplanes over Colombia and

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spraying pesticides in order to destroy coca being cultivated. However, it should be noted that aerial spraying efforts are not new in Colombia, and initially began in the 1970s in order to eradicate the cultivation of cannabis crops. Aerial spraying enabled pilots to spray large number of hectares from the air with a version of Round-up®, a common pesticide designed to kill weeds that can be purchased in stores. The airplanes began spraying an effective concentration of Roundup Ultra that consists of Cosmo-Flux® and glyphosate, which is a weak type of organic acid. Research indicates that glyphosate has disastrous health impacts and has led to various cases of poisoning. Riley et al. discuss the problem of constant toxicity, stating:

Some literature suggests that glyphosate can cause chronic health effects in laboratory animals. Lifetime glyphosate feeding studies have shown reduced weight gain, liver and kidney effects and degradation of the eye lens. These effects were significant only at the higher doses tested… In spite of animal tests showing a low mammalian toxicity, significant poisoning effects caused by both intentional and accidental exposure to glyphosate have been recorded in humans and laboratory animals.

Further research demonstrates that glyphosate can have negative health impacts on reproduction. Research on animals found that glyphosate can indeed reduce the sperm count for men. Other research has suggested that glyphosate also can cause problems

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140 Ibid, 9 10.
with pregnancy. Monsanto, however, denies the claims and argues that the product has been tested and is safe.\footnote{141}

Destroying coca crops by aerial spraying also has damaging effects on the environment. Research indicates that Roundup Ultra is damaging to the environment. At time, the wind factor proves to be hard to control as it can blow the pesticides to different regions.\footnote{142} The State Department asserts that the aerial spraying programs are executed in a manner that will minimize harm and spray drift. Scholars indicate that many reports have been conducted contradicting the statements of the State Department and demonstrate that aerial spraying does not have major negative externalities.\footnote{143} Ramírez, Lemus, Stanton, and Walsh argue that spray drift is a major problem and is underplayed by Washington. They state the following:

However, the sheer number and consistency of the reports of damage lend them credibility, and many complains have been verified by Colombian state agencies, intergovernmental commissions, or independent parties. Herbicide spray drift is a [sic] probably a major cause of the damage; models created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) show that herbicide can drift up to 600 feet downwind from their targets. Although, on paper, a procedure exists to compensate small farmers whose legal crops are destroyed by spraying, in practice it has not functioned.\footnote{144}

As a result of the spray drift, Roundup Ultra can enter into the water and result in pollution, causing significant damages to the ecosystem. The chemicals in the pesticide


\footnote{143} Ibid

\footnote{144} Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, \textit{Colombia: A Vicious Cricle of Drugs and War}, 61-98,118.
have had negative impacts on various crops and resulted in damages to their production, which is an integral part of the food supply. It is reported that spraying such pesticides can have numerous health impacts, and research has been conducted that demonstrates that glyphosate can lead to respiratory problems, damage to the nervous system, digestive problems, and skin infections.\textsuperscript{145}

Despite the research regarding the negative ramifications of aerial spraying, the U.S. government ignores the major ramifications that the aerial spraying program has had on the environment in Colombia as well as on health. The EPA has conducted several studies regarding the health impacts, but critics have noted that the EPA studies have major problems in terms of objectivity and accuracy. For instance, the EPA conducts the studies based on information provided by the State Department. The EPA, however, lacks the appropriate resources to measure the number of hectares sprayed and relies on the data collected by the U.S. government or other agencies. Since the EPA cannot collect data, it is very difficult to conduct a rigorous and objective study. In addition, the EPA lacks some of the major details with regards to how the aerial spraying program is conducted.\textsuperscript{146}

The aerial spraying program also has been criticized on the ground-level that it is illegal and violates the Colombian constitution. It is important to note that no other country in Latin American permits the spraying of pesticides from airplanes besides Colombia.\textsuperscript{147} The Administrative Court located in Cundinamarca reached a verdict that

\textsuperscript{145}Acevedo, Bewley-Taylor and Youngers, Ten Years of Plan Colombia: An Analytical Assessment, 1-13, \textsuperscript{146}Ramirez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War, 61-98, 119-121 \textsuperscript{147}Isacson, Mission Creep: The U.S. Military's Counter-Drug Role in the Americas, 27; Isacson, The U.S. Military in the War on Drugs, 1-15; Holmes, de Piñeres and Curtin, Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis, 157-184
the aerial fumigation program is unconstitutional for several reasons. First, citizens living in Colombia have the constitutional right to public health and security. In addition, the court ruled that the government has the right to provide people living within Colombia a healthy environment in which to live. However, President Uribe refused to suspend the aerial spraying program and ignored the ruling of the court. This in part is a result of the political dynamics and system within Colombia where the President has much more power than the President in the U.S. In Colombia, the President has the ability to mandate certain policies or laws and the Congress has much less power to stop the executive. On the other hand, the President in the U.S. is highly constrained by the “checks and balances” built into the system. The Congress and the Judiciary, for instance, have the ability to thwart the ability of the President to enact certain policies.

**ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND CROP SUBSTITUTION**

Critics of aerial spraying argue that Plan Colombia should have allocated more money towards issues of economic development as opposed to spraying the countryside with pesticides. Developmental programs could help aid farmers and provide them with legitimate alternatives to growing coca. Some issues and challenges exist that must be considered when talking about alternative development strategies. Daniel Mejia, an Economist at Los Andes, argues: “It [alternative development] has been, in a lot of cases, a complete waste of money.” The question is why? This section will examine some of the challenges with alternative development. First, coca grows anywhere and is very resilient, unlike many other products, and many farmers cultivate coca in order to

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148 Ramirez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, *Colombia: A Vicious Cicle of Drugs and War*, 61-98, 121 Plan Colombia: The Harmful Impacts of Aerial Spraying | AIDA ; Transnational Institute | Plan Colombia’s Aerial Spraying. A Failure Foretold
149 Daniel Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University, August 6, 2012.
survive. Second, coca tends to be grown in impoverished regions. Third, coca has many uses beyond being refined into cocaine. For instance, coca is chewed by people in the highlands to avoid altitude sickness. Coca is also an ingredient used to make tea and other products such as toothpaste. Fourth, coca plays an important role in indigenous rituals in the Andean countries and is exchanged between individuals as a cultural practice. Vidart notes that, “the Andean Indian chews coca because that way he affirms its identity as son and owner of the land that yesterday the Spaniard took away and today the landowner keeps away from him. To chew coca is to be Indian… and to quietly and obstinately challenge the contemporary lords that descend from the old encomenderos and the old conquistadors.” Coca is also used by indigenous groups in various religious ceremonies.

Sanho Tree argues that growing coca is a rational choice for many peasants living in the highlands because it grows everywhere, is easily produced, and acts as the primary source of income for coca farmers living in the highlands. Marijuana, as well as coca and even opium poppies, have a major advantage over other crops in that they can grow in poor soil. Marten Brienen, an expert on development in Bolivia, argues that coca functions like a weed. He states: “that plant is indestructible. It does not matter how you

150 Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, Colombia: A Vicious Cricle of Drugs and War, 61-98, 117Gaviria, Políticas Antidroga En Colombia Éxitos, Fracases y Extravíos, 445
151 Francisco E. Thoumi, The Size of the Illegal Drugs Industry in Colombia (Coral Gables, Fla. : North-South Center, University of Miami, 20.
153 Thoumi, Illegal Drugs, Economy and Society in the Andes, 416, 31 Thoumi, The Size of the Illegal Drugs Industry in Colombia, 20; Tokatlian, Globalización, Narcofrático y Violencia: Siete Ensayos Sobre Colombia ; Tokatlian, The United States and Illegal Crops in Colombia ;, 29
154 Cite TREE
treat it, it will grow.”

This is very important to note because other legal crops cannot grow in such remote regions of Colombia, where the texture of the soil is poor and not conducive to cultivation. Even if a peasant wanted to grow other crops such as oranges, oranges will not grow in such high altitudes. Growing other products also requires expertise, which is not the case for coca.

Washington has attempted to help coca cultivators grow other legal products, such as rice, coffee, citrus fruit, grains, maize, and bananas. The U.S. efforts have been futile as coca growers continue to grow coca as they prove to be more profitable. The reasons that growers cultivate coca are purely economic, yet the U.S. fails to understand the reality of life for campesinos residing in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. Daniel Mejia notes that farmers earn more money when they make coca paste or coca base as opposed to strictly cultivating the coca leaf. Basic economics teaches us about the laws of supply and demand and rationality. Brienen argues that “if you look at the price of raw coca…it is relatively stable.” Therefore, it does not take a complicated theoretic model to understand that coca cultivators will continue to grow coca despite the fact that it is illegal because of the earning potential.

In addition, the laws of supply and demand help explain the logic and rational for growing coca. Coca growers have a market for their goods because they play an integral

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155 Marten Brienen, director of Academic Programs in Latin American Studies, August 1, 2012.
157 Thoumi, The Size of the Illegal Drugs Industry in Colombia, 20; Tokatlian, Globalización, Narcotráfico y Violencia: Siete Ensayos Sobre Colombia.; Tokatlian, The United States and Illegal Crops in Colombia ; 29; Juan Tokatlian, Seguridad y Drogas: (Santiago de Chile : Comision Sudamericana de Paz, 44.
159 Brienen, Director of Academic Programs in Latin American Studies
part in the supply chain process and production of cocaine. In other words, cocaine cannot be produced without coca. As long as cocaine is being demanded and profits can be earned, then coca growers will have a market to sell the coca that they cultivate. As a result of the demand, coca growers can earn more money growing and selling coca than they can from bananas or various other legal products. In fact, research indicates that growers can earn between four to ten times the money growing coca than other legal alternatives, such as bananas.\(^\text{160}\) Coca growers earn a living growing this product, and, therefore, it is a rational choice for them to want to maximize their income.\(^\text{161}\)

Another reason why coca is more profitable is that it requires less effort to maintain and to transport. In an interview, Marten Brienen raises an important point regarding the infrastructure problems in Colombia, stating, “Coca lasts for a good long time. It [coca] can be stored away. If you grow bananas, or organs or any kind of fruit, what people care about is what it looks like…this is an attractive fruit.”\(^\text{162}\) People do not want to eat a fruit that looks unappealing. He continued, “An attractive fruit can’t be dented. If you are going over a bunch of not great roads through the Andes, it is hard to get fruit from one place to the other, especially at a point of export and to keep it in shape so that you can market it internationally.”\(^\text{163}\) This is not true at all for coca as the only thing that buyers care about is the total bulk weight of the coca. Thus, problems would still exist even if oranges grew in the Andes. One of the major issues with fruit like oranges is how can one transport them to the market? Rural Colombia has major

\(^{160}\) Daniel Mejia argued that these statistics are wrong. He stated that coca growers earn much more money when they develop the past or base. Mejia, *Associate Professor Los Andes University Carpenter, Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, 107.

\(^{161}\) Ibid., 109

\(^{162}\) Brienen, *Director of Academic Programs in Latin American Studies*

\(^{163}\) Ibid.
problems with infrastructure, particularly roads, and it would be very difficult for an individual to transport oranges from the highlands to the market before the product spoils. Ted Galen Carpenter also describes the situation for coca cultivators, stating:

Because they operate outside the law, drug-crop growers do not have to deal with many of the obstacles that farmers of legal crops must endure. Those obstacles include poor transportation infrastructure, lack of access to credit, lack of reasonable and consistent government standards for recognizing titles to property (as well as lack of efficient enforcement of property rights), and volatile, unpredictable markets for agricultural products. Buyers for trafficking organizations merely purchase the crops, pay the growers well, and haul off the crops. Not surprisingly, a significant percentage of Latin American farmers prefer to do business that way even if it means dealing in an illegal product.164

Carpenter’s statement demonstrates that coca-producing countries have developmental issues because starting a business of growing bananas and selling them requires transporting them to a market. Carrying baskets of oranges from the highlands to market without machinery is extremely difficult and inefficient. Purchasing a wheel-barrow or other types of transportation requires a peasant to have money to purchase such products. A peasant may not have access to capital and cannot sign a loan for money in order to develop a productive business. Even if access to credit exists, contractual issues could arise and less developed regions of Colombia, for instance, do not have strong enforcement of property rights. Legal issues can be quite complicated and enforcing them requires time, and perhaps, a lawyer to represent a client in order for justice to occur. Hiring a lawyer and educating oneself with regards to one’s rights requires capital. This brief scenario helps demonstrate that growing legal crops and transporting them to the market is very challenging.

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164 Carpenter, Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America, 108 Thoumi, The Size of the Illegal Drugs Industry in Colombia, 20; Vidart, Coca, Cocales y Coqueros En América Latina
Another important element hindering the growth of legal goods is the security dynamic. Peasants are forced to grow coca because the armed actors, such as the FARC, could harm them if they do not grow the plant. An individual residing in rural Colombia does not have the choice to grow other crops because the FARC demands that coca must be cultivated as it is an integral part of the processing of cocaine. In other words, the money from cocaine trafficking cannot be obtained if coca is not refined into cocaine. People are rational when their lives are threatened and will continue to grow coca if they are pressured by illegal armed actors who demand that they cultivate coca leaves. In sum, the security element is a major challenge for alternative development and crop substitution programs.

**STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND INSTITUTIONS**

The U.S. and Colombia have both promoted improving democracy as well as the rule of law and value them as an important aspect of Plan Colombia. This is largely rhetoric, as the statistics demonstrate that the U.S. has spent 80 percent of the money on hard components, such as the military, and only 20 percent of the money on soft programs, such as alternative development, human rights, and democracy promotion. The U.S. re-engineered Plan Colombia as a supply-side initiative designed to combat the cultivation of coca and drug production. Clinton had a different perspective of both the problems and the solutions to the situation in Colombia. Plan Colombia is consistent with past priorities of the U.S. Security always has been the number one objective for the U.S. in terms of foreign policy. Economics occupy the secondary major goal in terms of U.S.
foreign policy, while human rights, democracy, and other value issues are tertiary in importance.  

**CONCLUSION**

The U.S. has a long tradition and history of anti-drug policies and regimes. With the end of the cold war, drug trafficking, particularly from countries in the Andean region became the major security threat for the U.S. In the early 1980s, Reagan managed to securitize the war on drugs and make it a national security issue. Reagan viewed drugs as “evil” and believed that the U.S. had a major problem as more resources were needed to spend to combat the supply. Like Reagan, George W. Bush increased aid to Latin America, particularly in the form of military and police financing. Bush implemented the Andean Initiative, designed to combat cultivation and trafficking in the Andean region. Despite all of these efforts, drug trafficking remained constant and cultivation continued.

After three years of de-certifying Colombia, Washington viewed Colombia as a major issue and security threat to the U.S. In 1994, the Republicans obtained the majority in Congress, and Clinton felt domestic pressure in the U.S. and did not want to be perceived as soft on the crime and the war on drugs. By 2000, the previous events led Clinton to sign into law Plan Colombia which provided the Colombians with billions of dollars in funding as culminated in 2012. Clinton disagreed with the problem and

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developed a different Plan Colombia than the initial proposal by President Pastrana. Constructivism demonstrates that different actors have varying perceptions as well as solutions about problems. Pastrana wanted to focus on peace first, then developmental issues, and finally drug trafficking. The statements of politicians demonstrate that they feared extensive involvement in the internal dynamics of Colombia and did not want to become involved with the FARC and other actors. Washington reflected back to Vietnam and wanted to avoid another potential Vietnam-type situation in Colombia. Therefore, Clinton made combating drug production and trafficking of the major initiative of Plan Colombia. In fact, 80 percent of the aid given to Colombia supported the hard components on the Plan focused on combating the cultivation and trafficking of drugs. Such a significant amount of money spent on the military component resulted in criticisms from many experts. In an interview, Sandro Calvani, the Director of UNODC Colombia Program in Bogotá from 2003 to 2007 argued:

Like several other International initiatives against illicit drugs born or strengthened in the '80s, the goals of Plan Colombia were over-ambitious (sic) and wrongly targeted. The drug problem was wrongly defined as mainly a criminal matter, which it is not: it is instead mainly a public health issue on the consumers' side and a poverty issue on the producers' side. The wrong definition or perception led to a quite inaccurate priorities of the goals of the Plan and of its activities, which focused on law enforcement against drug criminals, who are just the link between producers and consumers, instead of focusing on the two ends of the market. Such inaccurately defined goals were the wrong foundation for a success, which in fact did not happen.

In order to understand the formulation and evolution of Plan Colombia, this chapter invoked the use of an eclectic theoretical framework as well as what Laura Neack refers to as “levels of analysis.”

168 Crandall, "Deep into the Anti-Drug Mire"; Crandall, Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia, 159; Crandall, Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia, 193
169 Comments are his own. Interview on July 31, 2012
terms and conditions of Plan Colombia. For neo-realist, the number one goal of a state is
to survive in the international system, which is anarchical in nature. The U.S. used its
power to re-engineer Plan Colombia because it wanted to ensure its security and remain
the dominant power in the region. In other words, the U.S. sought to maintain the status
quo.

Neo-realism, however, has many weaknesses. First, the state is the unit of
analysis for neo-realists, and, therefore, this theory ignores other non-state actors and
external forces, such as the market. Drug traffickers and organized criminal networks are
illegal and defy the laws of the state in order to earn profits. In addition, realists ignore
the forces of the market and the rules of economics, particularly the laws of supply and
demand.\footnote{Bagley and Tokatlian, \textit{Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin American Drug Polcies};
Keohane, \textit{Neorealism and its Critics}, 378} Neo-realists argue that states are like black-boxes and billiard balls crashing
into each other. Said differently, each state is led by rational actors and has the same
goal: to survive. It is impossible, however, to study foreign policy formation without
opening the black-box.\footnote{Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics}; Mearsheimer, \textit{The Tragedy of Great Power Politics};
Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Secuirty Delimma," \textit{World Politics} 30, no. 2 (1978), 167-214.} One cannot understand Plan Colombia without invoking the
tools of Comparative Politics and examining the domestic factors that help contributed to
the formation of Plan Colombia; the pressure felt by Clinton to demonstrate that he
viewed drugs as a serious issue and was not soft on drugs played a major role and
contributed to the formation of Plan Colombia.\footnote{Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics}; Keohane, \textit{Neorealism and its Critics}, 378.}
CHAPTER THREE: URIBE AND THE FUSION OF THE WAR ON DRUGS WITH THE WAR ON TERROR

The terrorist attacks conducted by Muslim extremist on September 11th, 2001 fundamentally changed the dynamics of U.S. foreign policy. Within Colombia, the situation changed with the election of Alvaro Uribe, who represented a fundamental shift from Pastrana. Uribe came to power and vowed to combat the illegal armed actors operating within Colombia, such as the FARC. He refused to negotiate with the FARC, signifying a major policy change from his predecessor, Pastrana, who developed the disastrous demilitarized zone which became a lawless region for the FARC to occupy and organize various operations and attacks. Connie Veillette states, “He vowed not to negotiate with any of the armed groups until they declared a cease-fire and disarmed. Uribe implemented new laws giving the security forces increased power, and instituted a one-time tax to be used to increase the troop strength and capabilities of the Colombian military.”174 In addition, Uribe vowed to retake control of seized territory that became occupied by the FARC. In order to accomplish his goals, Uribe needed to fundamentally alter the formula of Plan Colombia. The events on September 11th helped Uribe successfully alter Plan Colombia and “sell” the new changes to President Bush and his administration; the Bush administration accepted the changes, resulting in the blurring of the lines between the guerrillas and drug traffickers, or narco-terrorists. How did Uribe successfully alter the goals of Plan Colombia? Why did the Bush Administration accept

174 Veillette, Plan Colombia: A Progress Report, 1-11"Under Uribe, the Dark Side of Colombia - New York Latino Journal "
the changes to Plan Colombia made by Uribe and his administration? Under Uribe, the weaker power shifted the formula and the stronger country, the U.S., accepted the new conditions and agenda of Plan Colombia defying traditional neo-realist logic. What were the goals of the re-engineered version of Plan Colombia? Were these goals the same or different as the original version of Plan Colombia? Has either country accomplished to goals set forth? If so, how and when were these goals achieved?175

EXTERNAL SHOCK: SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

It is not possible to understand the evolution and changes in Plan Colombia without briefly examining the impact that the external environment during this period had on U.S. foreign policy and the geo-strategic interests of Washington. The attack on the World Trade Centers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on September 11th, 2001 led to significant changes in U.S. foreign policy. The war on drugs became subordinated to the war on terrorism as the Bush administration launched the “Global War on Terror,” which later became the “Global War on Terrorism.” Bush vowed to combat terrorism throughout the world, stating in his address to the Nation in 2001:

> From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime. Our nation has been put on notice, we’re not immune from attack. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans.176

This quote demonstrates that the Bush administration’s number one objective was to combat terrorism on a global scale and to prevent future attacks on the U.S. Said

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175 Crandall, Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia during the Samper Administration, 95-120; Barry Buzan, “Will the 'Global War on Terrorism' be the New Cold War?” International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 82, no. 6 (Nov., 2006), pp. 1101-1118.; Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 193; Tokatlian, Globalización, Narcotráfico y Violencia: Siete Ensayos Sobre Colombia.

differently, the terrorists’ attacks on September 11th drastically shifted the motivations, goals, and focus of the U.S. and must be examined in order to understand the construction and evolution in Plan Colombia. Instead of focusing on state to state relations or security in the region, Bush decided to have a global war and combat terrorists.177

The Bush administration’s “Global War on Terrorism” has been highly controversial for many reasons. First, terror is a state of mind, and it is not possible to have a war against a state of mind. Second, terrorism is a tactic and can be described as a weapon of the weak.178 Third, determining who is a terrorist and who is not is a social construction, and, therefore, is a constructivist issue.179 A terrorist to one individual might be a freedom fighter to another person. An Islamic extremist could argue that such tactics are used to combat western imperialism and argue that the people that the Bush administration defines as terrorist are actually freedom fighters. During the American Revolution, for example, the British viewed the American fighters as terrorists because they used guerrilla war style-tactics and did not adhere to the conventional rules of war. However, Americans view these individuals as heroes who acted with great valor to help found the United States.180

President Bush managed to securitize the war on terror, successfully placing the war on terror at the top of the security agenda and making it the number one priority of

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177 This defies realist logic. Bush was neo-conservative realist, which combines realism with Wilsonianism. Daalder, America Unbound : The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy , 246.
178 Ibid.
179 Buzan, Will the 'Global War on Terrorism' be the New Cold War?, pp. 1101-1118; Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, Security : A New Framework for Analysis, 239.
the U.S. government. Barry Buzan and his colleagues at the Copenhagen School help explain the notion of securitization and how actors can securitize concepts. Security is a contested concept as it depends on for what and for whom is being securitized. Said differently, what is perceived to be a major security threat to one politician or individual may not be perceived as a security threat to another person. Buzan and his co-authors demonstrate that security can impact different levels and sectors and is a much more intricate and complicated concept than the realists proclaim it to be.

Bush managed to securitize the war on terror by convincing the American public that terrorism is a major threat to U.S. national security and needs to be confronted in order to prevent further attacks, particularly on U.S. soil. An examination of authoritative speech acts demonstrates Bush’s efforts to securitize the war on terror. In a speech to the joint session of Congress on September 20th, 2001, President Bush declared his war on terror. He stated:

On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars, but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war, but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack...The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics, a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam. The terrorists' directive commands

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181 Washington has failed to learn from lessons of the past and becomes surprised that a poor and underdeveloped region begins to harbor terrorist. Chalmer’s Johnson developed the term “blowback” to describe such a situation. A larger point also can be learned about the contradictions in international relations when examining history. During the Cold War, the U.S. supported the Mujahedeen and Osama Bin Ladin and helped arm them in order to defeat the soviets and Afghanistan. The U.S. willingly supported this group because it viewed the former USSR as the major threat and enemy of the U.S. This teaches us that today’s friend is tomorrow’s enemy. See Chalmers A. Johnson, Blowback : The Cost and Consequences of American Empire(New York : Henry Holt, 2004), 268.


183 Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, Security : A New Framework for Analysis, 239
them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinctions among military and civilians, including women and children...\(^{184}\)

Bush argued that the terrorists hate Americans because of the freedom granted to individuals in the U.S. Bush successfully marketed and “sold” the American public on the need to increase resources and fight terrorism. Bush also pressured other countries to cooperate in this global war. In a later speech in 2001, he stated:

We ask every nation to join us. We will ask, and we will need, the help of police forces, intelligence services, and banking systems around the world. The United States is grateful that many nations and many international organizations have already responded, with sympathy and with support, nations from Latin America, to Asia, to Africa, to Europe, to the Islamic world. Perhaps the NATO Charter reflects best the attitude of the world: An attack on one is an attack on all. The civilized world is rallying to America’s side. They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror, unanswered, can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments. And you know what? We’re not going to allow it.\(^{185}\)

The events on September 11\(^{th}\) fundamentally altered U.S. foreign policy towards Colombia. Pizarro and Gaitán describe how September 11\(^{th}\) impacted U.S. foreign policy regarding drug trafficking, stating:

The events of September 11 left the debate between the Departments of State and Defense in the dust. Because of the FARC, ELN, and AUC (Autodefensas Unidas do Colmbia—United Self-Defense Forces) were no longer considered insurgent or counterinsurgent forces but terrorist groups, direct or indirect combat against them was legitimized with a simple stroke of the pen. This perspective gained credibility as the pattern of linking illegal drug traffic with terrorism grew; after all, drug trafficking is one of the principal ways terrorists groups are financed, internally and within Colombia. Debates in the U.S. Congress over new anti-terrorists legislation paved the way, such as the one spearheaded by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, Dennis Haster (R-IL), in 2001, aimed at linking the fight against terrorism with the fight against drugs.\(^{186}\)

Politicians within the U.S. began to compare the FARC in Colombia with other terrorists groups, such as Al Qaeda. Senator Bob Graham, a Democrat from Florida, stated that

“The FARC are doing the same thing as global-level terrorists, that is, organizing in small cells that don’t have contact with each other and depend on a central command to organize attacks, in terms of logistics and financing. It is the same style of operations as Bin Laden.” Other politicians agreed and continued to conflate the war on drugs with the war on terror and compare the FARC to other terrorist organizations. For example, Mark Souder, a Republican from Indiana, stated, “it is not just narcotics. It has developed into terrorism and we need to fight terrorism in our hemisphere.”

Francis X Taylor, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the State Department, echoed the sentiments by the previous two politicians. He stated:

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Force of Colombia (AUC), are on the list because they participate in terrorist activities. They will receive the same treatment as any other terrorist group, in terms of our interest in pursuing them and putting an end to their terrorist activities…It will include the use of all the resources in our power as well as those available to the countries in the region…where appropriate, as we are doing in Afghanistan, the use of military force, if that is appropriate to put an end to their activities.

**URIBE’S VISION AND REORIENTATION**

Now that we have examined the impact that the events of September 11th, 2001 had on the foreign policy of the U.S., it is time to analyze the internal dynamics within Colombia and see how such changes led to the shift in Plan Colombia. The failures of Pastrana and his efforts to negotiate with the FARC led to the election of Alvaro Uribe, as the “Colombians who had voted for peace in 1998 opted in 2002 for a hardline approach to dealing with guerrillas.”

Uribe played to the intermestic issues in Colombia dominating the competition during his Presidential campaign in 2000, refusing to negotiate with the

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187 The war on drugs meets the war on terror. Isacson, *Extending the War on Terrorism to Colombia: A Bad Idea Whose Time has Come*

188 Ibid.

189 Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, *Colombia: A Vicious CIRCLE of Drugs and War*, 61-98, 111
FARC, and vowing to combat the various internal armed actors.\textsuperscript{190} María Victoria Llorente, the Executive Director of the Fundación Ideas Para La Paz, argued that the election of Uribe was a consequence of Pastrana.\textsuperscript{191} After his election in 2002, Alvaro Uribe became the new President of Colombia, and stated in his inaugural speech, “When a democratic State provides effective guarantees, even if it comes to do so gradually, any violence against it is terrorism. We do not accept violence as a means of attack on the government, or as a means of defense.”\textsuperscript{192} He vowed to combat illegal armed actors within Colombia and refused to negotiate with such groups that have participated in violence and have been terrorizing Colombia for decades. His hardline stance against the FARC represented a significant shift from the former president, who desired to bring peace to the country but implemented the demilitarized zone for the FARC. This policy can only be characterized as counterproductive as the FARC moved into this zone and ran operations from this area. In essence, this area provided the FARC with a huge territory that was not under the control of the Colombian state, and the FARC, therefore, could essentially do whatever they desired in this lawless region.

The FARC responded to the statements and efforts made by Uribe and attempted to assassinate the President with gas cylinder bombs. The plot failed but resulted in the death of innocent by-standards. These acts led Uribe to declare a “state of internal unrest,” as he ordered the military to occupy certain regions within Colombia in order to address the situation of unrest.\textsuperscript{193} Uribe’s speech changed as he conflated the war on drugs with the war on terror and referred to the guerrillas as narco-terrorists. Uribe

\textsuperscript{190} Thanks to Dr. Bagley for pointing this out to me.
\textsuperscript{191} She also declared that Santos is a consequence of Uribe. 8/8/2012
\textsuperscript{192} http://www.cfr.org/americas/inaugural-speech-alvaro-uribe/p4738
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
managed to re-engineer the goals of Plan Colombia and shift the major initiatives towards focusing on combating the narco-terrorists, as opposed to only combating drug traffickers. Ramírez Lemus, Stanton, and Walsh explain the new trends implemented by Uribe, stating:

Uribe’s actions, which have enjoyed the full and unconditional support of the Bush administration, distance Plan Colombia even more from Pastrana’s original vision. While counterterrorism has become another objective of U.S. policy in Colombia, the impact of Plan Colombia should be evaluated according to the original U.S. goals. Foreign policy discourse has changed, but at the end of 2003 Colombia was still the leading producer of cocaine in the Western Hemisphere, and the internal armed conflict still raging.  

The ability of the weaker country, Colombia, to alter the agenda and reformulate Plan Colombia as designed by the U.S. defies traditional logic in International Relations theory. Realists would hypothesize that the stronger country has more power and is able to set the agenda, and the weaker country must simply bandwagon or balance against the hegemonic actor. During the Pastrana administration, President Clinton constructed a different vision of the problem and solution to the situation in Colombia and reformulated the Plan to focus on drug trafficking first as opposed to peace. How was Uribe, the President of the weaker country, able to reorder the fundamental design of Plan Colombia? Uribe managed to convince the stronger power, the U.S., that the illegal actors in Colombia are terrorists and they finance their operations through drug trafficking. Determining whether the FARC are terrorists is a constructivist issue because it depends on the perceptions of the actors. It is important to note that both the FARC and the ELN have been placed on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. Are the FARC terrorists or do they participate in acts of terror? Regardless of how one classifies

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194 Ibid., 112.
196 CNN - Professor Bruce Bagley on the Crisis in Colombia - August 31, 2000
the FARC, it is important to remember terrorism is a tactic and the FARC desires to
overthrow the Colombian government and use terrorist tactics to attempt to accomplish
these objectives. Russell Crandall also notes that it would be incorrect to assume that all
guerrillas participate in drug trafficking. He states:

But guerrilla involvement in the drug trade does not-and did not- mean that all of the guerrillas are
actually narco-guerrillas, in essence, indistinguishable from the drug traffickers. In fact, while the
guerrillas undoubtedly do participate in the drug trade, they maintain a distinct political and
economic ideology, even if it does seem quite anachronistic now that the Cold War is over and
Marxism-Leninism has been largely discredited worldwide.\footnote{Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia}, 193, Crandall, \textit{Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia}, 159}

Uribe’s new focus on combating the narco-terrorists, therefore, represents a shift
and signifies a change from the concerns of the Clinton administration, which focused on
drug trafficking first. As previously discussed, the Clinton administration, policy
analysts, and the defense community in the U.S. feared intervening in Colombia in order
to avoid becoming involved in another Vietnam type quagmire. Bush, on the other hand,
bought into the new agenda and viewed the FARC as terrorist that need to be combatted.
In sum, Uribe and his reorientation of Plan Colombia demonstrated that a weaker state,
indeed, can set the agenda and alter the security strategy and policies between two
countries. The powerful country, however, must concede and agree with the construction
of the problem. In essence, Uribe was quite brilliant in his ability to recognize the
problem and convince the stronger power that Colombia required more assistance from
the U.S. in order to combat the terrorists within the country. Uribe highlighted the
intermestic issues between both countries and quite brilliantly convinced the Bush
administration that Colombia represented a worthy ally and deserved the necessary
resources to combat the narco-guerrillas.
The Bush administration accepted the reorientation of Plan Colombia because it fit in with the larger agenda of Bush and the neo-conservatives, or Vulcans, in his administration that helped guide his foreign policy.\(^{198}\) Uribe’s new vision for Plan Colombia, in essence, was quite brilliant because he marketed and sold Bush on the need to combat these internal actors rather than solving the internal conflict in Colombia as part of the global war on terror.\(^{199}\) Like Bush, Uribe vowed to fight the narco-terrorists and desired funding from the U.S. in order to combat terrorism. Adam Isacson describes the situation, stating:

Three years later, the mission of U.S. aid has expanded well beyond that of the war on drugs. Counter-terrorism is now the principle rationale, though policymakers are still trying to figure out what that term means in a country whose terrorists groups are armies that control territory and have tens of thousands of members. Three U.S. citizens working on a Pentagon contract have been hostages of FARC guerrillas since February 2003.\(^{200}\)

The relationship between Uribe and Bush can only be described as ideal or a “match made in heaven.” Uribe had the same fundamental principles and vision as Bush, desiring to combat the narco-terrorists. In return for his loyal support, President Bush went further than any other President, enabling military aid to be used for other purposes besides combatting the war on drugs. Pizarro and Gaitán assert that “the most significant change in U.S. military assistance to Colombia was removal of the condition, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, that military aid to Colombia be subject to its exclusive use in the war on drugs.”\(^{201}\) President Bush, therefore, failed to separate or distinguish the war on drugs and the war on terror, invoking the use of

\(^{198}\) Daalder, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*, 246  
\(^{199}\) Ibid.  
\(^{200}\) Isacson, *Optimism, Pessimism, and Terrorism: The United States and Colombia in 2003*, 245-255, 252  
\(^{201}\) Pizzaro and Gaitan, *Plan Colombia and the Andean Regional Initiative*, 80,69 Vaicius and Isacson, *The "War on Drugs" Meets the "War on Terror"*
counterinsurgency strategies. Piazarro and Gaitán argue, “George W. Bush crossed the ‘invisible line’ that, formally if not always in practice, separated the counternarcotics fight from counterinsurgency programs. All Plan Colombia and the Andean Initiative funding may be used for both.”\textsuperscript{202} The blurring of the lines became apparent when President Bush submitted legislation designed to aid the Colombians against the “narco-guerrilas.” Piazarro and Gaitán assert that “the change was effected in the foreign aid package of President Bush submitted by Congress on February 4, 2002, which included ninety-eight million dollars for protection of Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline in Colombia. A single sentence in the bill (H.R. 4775) gave the Colombian government authority to use Plan Colombia assistance in the war against the insurgency.”\textsuperscript{203} In sum, President Bush bought into Uribe’s re-orientation of Plan Colombia and helped his newest ally by providing Uribe with the appropriate resources necessary to combat the narco-terrorists.\textsuperscript{204}

Upon taking office, Uribe made combating terrorism the number one priority of his administration just as President Bush framed terrorism as the number one national security and foreign policy issue for the U.S. He argued that Colombia did not have an internal conflict, but rather terrorists operating within the country. In essence, Uribe erased Colombia’s history of having an internal conflict and framed the problem as a terrorist issue. Before Uribe, the word terrorist did not constitute a major part of the vocabulary in Colombia. Marc Chernick explains that “he [Uribe] basically erased this

\textsuperscript{202} Pizzaro and Gaitan, \textit{Plan Colombia and the Andean Regional Initiative}, 80,69
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 69
long history of conflict,“ and he made it clear that people should not use the term armed conflict and could face repercussions for such language. Chernick notes that “all the NGOs [and] international organizations were told you cannot use the language of internal armed conflict.”

Uribe also provided the Bush administration with the opportunity to combat non-Muslim terrorist organizations. This helped demonstrate that Bush was not at war with only adherents of the Muslim faith, but that he was committed to fighting terrorist organizations anywhere around the globe regardless of the religious beliefs of the terrorists. Bush stressed that he was not a war with the entire Muslim world, but rather he sought to combat extremists, who hated the U.S. due to the freedom granted to the citizens. After the events that transpired on September 11th, Bush found a partner in Uribe, who shared similar security interests and foreign policy objectives of the U.S. Therefore, the relationship between Uribe and Bush can be defined as ideal because both leaders had the same objectives. Uribe vowed not to negotiate with the narco-terrorists and sought to increase funding to combat terrorism and violence within Colombia. In addition, Uribe became a willing partner to help Bush expand the global war on terror around the world. President Bush and the elites within the U.S. also feared that Colombia was on the verge of becoming a failed state and something needed to be done in order to prevent Colombia from collapsing. A joint report by the National Defense University and the National War College highlighted the extremely likely possibility that Colombia could collapse. The authors reported: “Colombia, fragmented and wracked by

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205 Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University;
206 Ibid.
violence, today teeters on the edge of implosion, raising the specter of a failed state on
the U.S.’s southern flank, posing a threat to U.S. national and regional interests.”

The relationship between the U.S. and Colombia begs the question as to why
should the U.S. care about Colombia? In other words, why is Colombia an important
country in terms of the geostrategic and economic interests of the U.S.? In terms of U.S.
foreign policy, Joyce Kaufman’s research indicates that the U.S. places certain issues as
priorities in terms of importance. Again, the first priority for the U.S. always has been—and
will continue to be—security. The U.S. wants to ensure that it survives in the
international system and remains the dominant power in the hemisphere. The second
priority for U.S. foreign policy has always been economic issues. The tertiary issue is
value issues, such as democracy and human rights. Colombia is a crucial state in terms of
geostrategic interests as well as economic ties and investments for the U.S. Various
leading security analysts in the U.S. perceived Colombia as a major threat to U.S.
security, and “have regarded Colombia as one of the Western Hemisphere’s chief
security problems, greater even than Cuba, which had occupied that uncomfortable spot
since 1962.” The Bush administration as well as other elites and policy makers feared
that a failed Colombia would result in insecurity in the region and serve as a potential
breeding ground for terrorist organizations. Defining what constitutes a failed state is a
social construction. Individuals such as Jean-Germain Gros have identified different
definitions or taxonomies of a failed state. In accordance with Gros’ taxonomy,

208 All Bush’s Horses and all Bush’s Men: How Far should the U.S. Go to Help Put
College,[2003]), 1
209 Joyce P. Kaufman, A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield,
223.
210 Ibid.
211 Pizzaro and Gaitan, Plan Colombia and the Andean Regional Initiative, 80,55
Colombia guerrilla organizations operate throughout Colombia and the Colombian government does not have control over a vast majority of the territory. Morever, “with the FARC, ELN, AUC and several smaller paramilitary and illegal drug groups operating with impunity over an estimated 40-50% of Colombian territory, the GOC has lost effective control over much of its writ.” After September 11th, the government of Colombia failed to ensure the security of citizens within the country and control the different means of coercion.

In terms of security, Colombia occupies a strategic position in the region, which has historically been the “backyard” of the U.S. ever since the Monroe Doctrine. Instability within Colombia not only negatively impacts Colombia but the security of its neighbors. Colombia neighbors on the Panama Canal, which is a key location for the trade and the transportation of goods and services. In reality, the “Panamanian security forces are no match for well-armed guerillas and narco-traffickers that use Panamanian territory to conduct operations.” Ecuador also is concerned about its security as many of the FARC are located near the borders. Reports also indicate that Venezuela “may secretly support both the FARC and the ELN, given the leftist tendencies of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.” Uribe lambasted Chavez, stating:

\[213\] Ibid 5.; GOC government of Colombia
\[214\] Ibid., 5
\[215\] "El Plan Colombia: El Debate En Los Estados UnidosAll Bush’s Horses and all Bush’s Men: How Far should the U.S. Go to Help Put Colombia Back Together again?" Think again: Failed States - by James Traub | Foreign Policy
The truth, President Chavez, is that we need mediation against terrorism, and not the legitimation of terrorism. Your words and your attitudes give the impression that you are not interested in peace in Colombia, but that Colombia should be victims of a terrorist government in the hands of FARC. The truth, President Chavez, and the truth with witnesses as ours is, is that we need people to help us overcome this tragedy of terrorism, but we need people who will not take advantage of the need for the humanitarian accord to invoke help for Colombia, and not come to Colombia simply to intervene there, and to pursue an expansionist project.\textsuperscript{217}

He continued:

One cannot abuse a whole continent, or set it on fire as you do, by speaking of imperialism, when you, based on your own ambitions, are looking to set up an empire. The truth, President Chavez, is that we cannot abuse history, we cannot stain the memory of our heroes, by disfiguring them in popular demagoguery, in misleading the people. General Santander gave us the example of observance of the law. The truth, President Chavez, is that we cannot make a mockery of the law, as you do, trying to abuse General Santander, and exchange the rule of law for personal whim. The truth, President Chavez, the truth with witnesses, is that we cannot mislead the people by misinterpreting the legacy of the Liberator Bolivar. Bolivar was an integrationist, but not an expansionist. Bolivar independence to our nations, but he did not bring them a new era of subjection. Bolivar did not spend his time trying to remove European domination from the Americans, only to impose his own terms with the power at his disposal - as you wish to do - on the people of Venezuela and on the people of Colombia.\textsuperscript{218}

In addition, Colombia borders Brazil, which is becoming a rising economic power. Brazil also shares an unguarded border with Colombia. Therefore, “Colombia’s long and largely unguarded border with Brazil provides a safe-haven for the FARC and is a source of tension between the two nations.”\textsuperscript{219}

The internal problems in Colombia upon Uribe’s ascension to power posed many threats to the U.S., especially since Colombia is located only several hours from Miami. Phil McLean echoes such sentiments, stating: “If failed states on the other side of the globe threaten U.S. interests, then Colombia, a country just two hours from Miami…is truly a scary prospect.”\textsuperscript{220} In September 2002, Galen Jackman, the Army Brig. General of the U.S. Southern Command, declared that the FARC had begun to expand into its

\textsuperscript{217} For the link to such statements, see http://www.colombia.ru/eng/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=110, 1
\textsuperscript{218} http://www.colombia.ru/eng/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=110, 1
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid 9 Angela Rabusa and Peter Chalk, \textit{Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and its Implications for Regional Security} (California: RAND,[2001]).
\textsuperscript{220} \textit{All Bush’s Horses and all Bush’s Men: How Far should the U.S. Go to Help Put Colombia Back Together again?}
neighboring regions, representing a major security threat. The internal situation within Colombia also creates tension between countries in the region as well as the U.S. because of problems with human migration. The internal dynamics within Colombia can cause refugees to flee their country as they are worried about their security. The neighboring countries, therefore, are concerned about a mass exodus of Colombians, which could result in massive increases in the number of refugees entering the various countries. As a result of the high levels of violence during this period, many Colombians also began fleeing Colombia and relocating to the U.S., particularly Miami.

In addition to the security dynamics, Colombia also represents an important country in terms of economic trade and investments. Some scholars have argued that Colombia “is the most important market in the developing world for U.S. exports and by 2010 total U.S. trade with Latin America will exceed U.S. trade with Europe and Asia combined.” U.S. citizens have significant investments in Colombia and a worsening security situation could result in problems causing Americans to remove investments from the country. Joseph Ganistky of the University of Miami states that “if you don’t have security, if the government cannot guarantee security, then you do not do business. This is the reason why millions of people left the country.” Ganistky argues that companies must take into account the security situation within Colombia before investing in order to maximize their return on investment. He continues, “For companies, they make a very clear assessment of their risk and take insurance for kidnapping and hire

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222 All Bush’s Horses and all Bush’s Men: How Far should the U.S. Go to Help Put Colombia Back Together again?
223 Ibid., 7
224 Joseph Ganistky, Director, UM Center for International Business Education and Research, August 1, 2012.
people and have policies to cover whatever may happen, so if your employee is kidnaped or killed, there will be compensation for relatives."^{225}

Finally, the U.S. has interests in Colombia due to various value issues, such as democracy. Colombia has had a long history of democracy and represents a bastion of democratic governance in Latin America, which is a region that has experienced many authoritarian rulers. In fact, Colombia is the second oldest democracy in the western hemisphere and has continued to hold democratic elections that can be characterized as fair and free.^{226} In addition, Colombia has experienced peaceful democratic transitions throughout its history. The Bush administration wanted to support Colombia and did not want one of the oldest countries in the region to become overrun by the narco-terrorists. For all of the aforementioned reasons, the Bush administration saw Colombia in dire need of support in order to preserve U.S. economic interests and avoid potential catastrophes with the country. Uribe understood that he needed help from the U.S. and sought to extend his hand to Bush and in return pledge his support. Bush supported Colombia as it fit in with his larger geo-political objectives. The record between the Bush administration and other countries deteriorated drastically overtime. By the end of his Presidency, Bush had alienated many countries in Latin America and had very low approval ratings. However, his relationship with Uribe continued to remain strong.^{227}

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^{225} Ibid


^{227} "Uribe, A Bush Ally, Treads on Shaky Ground - TIME "
http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1592017,00.html (accessed 6/21/2012, 2012); "A Legacy of Mixed Messages | the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs "
NEW GOALS OF PLAN COLOMBIA

Upon taking office, Uribe vowed to continue Plan Colombia and the fight against drug trafficking. He stated:

The agents of violence are funded by an international criminal business drugs. They fight with weapons not made in Colombia. No democracy can stand aside from the sufferings of the Colombian people. We will continue with Plan Colombia, adding aerial interdiction and practical substitution programs, such as payments to small-farmers for the eradication of unlawful crops and care for the restoration of our woodlands. We will follow the path already opened up in the United States, knock on doors in Europe and Asia, and reinforce our unity of purpose with our neighbors. If we do not drive out drugs, drugs will destroy our freedoms and our ecology, and the hope of living in peace will be no more than an illusion. We want peace; not the kind of temporary reassurance that comes from insincerity, or an uneasy agreement or a tyrannical government.228

The Bush administration desired for Plan Colombia to be an extension of the war on terror and help combat the FARC and ELN operating within Colombia. As a result of the events of September 11th, the foreign policy of the U.S. changed drastically and the war on drugs became subordinate and less important for national security than the war on terror. Uribe pledged to combat the narco-terrorists, who also participate in drug trafficking. Indeed, the FARC participate in drug trafficking, and the profits from the drug trade help the FARC finance its operations. However, many other individuals and groups participate in drug trafficking in Colombia. As discussed in the previous chapters, the demise of the Medellin and Cali cartels created a vacuum and allowed smaller groups of cartelitos to traffic drugs. Uribe wanted to combat drug trafficking, but he came to power in Colombia with the intention of combating the FARC and other actors within Colombia, which he referred to as terrorists.229

228 "Inaugural Speech by Alvaro Uribe - Council on Foreign Relations "
229 Bagley, Bagley, Drug Trafficking, Political Violence, and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s , 1-31; Bagley, Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century
EXPANSION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

In 2001, President Bush sought to increase the funds provided to Colombia to combat the narco-terrorists. However, limitations existed on the number of troops that could be deployed. In 2002, The Bush administration attempted to alter the restrictions placed on the amount of military aid towards Colombia and requested that the Congress remove all the stipulations and restrictions with regards to military aid.\(^{230}\) Ted Galen Carpenter recounts the history and rejection of the U.S. Congress with regards to this appeal:

The House of Representatives in July of 2001 rejected the administration’s bid to allow an unlimited number of civilian personnel to be in the country, which would have ended the FY 2001 cap of 300 American civilians. Instead, the House, on a voice vote, amended the administration’s proposal, voting to cap the total number of military and contract personnel at 800. However, the amendment merely instructed the administration to inform Congress if and when it planned to exceed 300 civilian employees and to state the actual number it intended to send. As a practical matter, the so-called cap provided no effective limit.\(^{231}\)

In effect, Congress provided the Bush administration with the metaphorical green light and enabled it to increase military personnel to Colombia in order to combat the narco-guerrillas.

Congress’s approval of this policy represents a critical juncture that enabled the Bush administration to become involved in the internal dynamics of Colombia. This represented a fundamental shift away from the fears instilled during the Clinton administration that the U.S. did not want to become involved in another Vietnam war. Uribe’s ability to fuse the war on drugs with the war on terror resulted in the Bush administration becoming involved in the internal dynamics of Colombia in order to help Colombia fight terrorists within the country and, therefore, adhering to Bush’s promise to


\(^{231}\) Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*,
fight terrorism around the world. Ted Galen Carpenter argues that “whatever the initial intent, Plan Colombia inexorably draws the United States into Colombia’s civil war. Indeed, the government in Bogotá apparently wants to draw Washington in.”

Carpenter goes even further and questions whether the U.S. has become involved in nation building in Colombia. The Bush administration pledged to support the Uribe administration and his fight against the narco-terrorists. Carpenter states that “it is likely that such cautionary sentiments will be swept aside and that the United States will expand the mission in Colombia.”

Critics of Plan Colombia have questioned whether Plan Colombia has become a nation-building exercise disguised by rhetoric or that Plan Colombia is simply an initiative to combat the narco-terrorists. Analysts do not have to look back too far into Latin American history to realize that the U.S. has a terrible record with regards to nation building in the region. Expressed differently, “but given America’s miserable track record in nation-building mission through the initial post-Cold War decade, such a possibility ought to make Americans more rather than less nervous about their country’s growing involvement in Colombia.” Up until the end of his tenure, President Bush supported Colombia until he became impeded with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. More will be said on this topic in the chapter on de-securitization.

232 Ibid., 65
233 Ibid., 86 Max G. Manwaring, Implementing Plan Colombia: Strategic and Operational Imperatives for the U.S. Military, ([2001]).
234 Carpenter, Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America, 87 Manwaring, Implementing Plan Colombia: Strategic and Operational Imperatives for the U.S. Military, 1-4
CONTROLLING LAND SEIZED

After vowing to combat the FARC and refusing to negotiate with them, Uribe implemented Plan Patriota as a supplemental initiative to Plan Colombia. It is not possible to understand Uribe’s success against the FARC without briefly examining Plan Patriota, which sought to recapture territory that had been seized by the FARC. This represents a strong contradiction from the policies of Pastrana and the negotiations with the FARC as Uribe not only desired to regain territory but wanted to maintain control over the territory. In 2003, the government in Colombia strengthened the security components of Plan Colombia even further by instituting a policy referred to as the Democratic Security and Defense Policy. These policies had very clear goals and objectives, seeking to “clear, hold, and consolidate” territory occupied by the illegal armed actors. In order to recapture land seized, Uribe asserted the need to strengthen and increase the numbers of the armed forces. As a result, Colombia saw a drastic increase in the size of the police as well as the military from 279,000 in 2000 to 415,000 in 2007. In 2003, under the auspices of Plan Patriota, the Colombian government successfully combatted the FARC and forced them to retreat away from the various areas that they occupied surrounding Bogotá, which is the capital of the country. It is important to note that Plan Patriota became “the largest military operation in modern Colombian history, with the declared objective of striking a blow against the rearguard of the FARC-EP and capturing its principle leaders.”

235 Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance (Washington, D.C.: GAO,[2008])., 12
to combat the FARC in key areas in which the organization operated, such as Guaviare, Meta, and the department of Caquetá.\textsuperscript{237}

Plan Patriota, however, has had many challenges, particularly with regards to its execution and coordination among the different security forces operating within Colombia. The FARC adapted to the efforts made by the Colombians and retreated into zones of Colombia which can be classified as rural and isolated, thus, making it harder to capture FARC operatives. The human rights commission notes, “The execution of the Plan Patriota revealed a lack of coordination between the Security Forces and the civilian institutions of the Government at national and local levels, as well as the absence of civilian State entities in these regions, which also affected the civilian population.”\textsuperscript{238}

Such statements demonstrate the weakness of the Colombian state and the difficulty in asserting state control over rural and remote regions in Colombia. In sum, Uribe’s efforts can be described as an attempt to increase the capacity, or arm, of the Colombian state and combat the FARC by reclaiming land that they stole from the government. Yet, much of the territory in Colombia remains ungoverned and the Colombian state does not have the ability to control such regions. The solution is quite simple: more money must be allocated to increase the strength of the state and its ability to govern. Money allocated for the military can help the armed forces reclaim the land, but the problem becomes how to govern and control the state after the land has been seized. Ultimately, a weak state will not be able to control the land within Colombia even after such territory has been reclaimed.

\textsuperscript{237} Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 115, 12.

Despite the challenges of implementing state control over remote regions, Uribe continued to develop new strategies for combating the FARC and refused to soften his hardline policies against them. In 2004, for instance, Uribe created the Coordination for Integrated Government Action (CCAI) in order to help facilitate the transportation of both civilian and military assistance to 11 major regions that had experienced serious conflicts and struggles. Throughout his presidency, Uribe battled major strongholds of the FARC, such as La Macarena, with an offensive strategy referred to as Plan Consolidacion.239

In order to increase the presence of the Colombian state in rural zones, Plan Colombia allocated resources in order to strengthen the police forces in regions of Colombia that have experienced tremendous amounts of contestation. Specifically, Plan Colombia provided $92 million from the fiscal year of 2000 to 2008 to create a Carabineros squadrons unit, which were created by the Colombians in order to increase the presence of the state in the rural regions, as well as help fortify and govern the areas seized from the guerrilla organizations. Reports indicate that the Colombians had 68 Carabineros squadrons as of 2008. Additionally, each squadron consisted of 120 individuals. The major goal of these squadrons was to increase the presence of the state and improve stability in regions that had been previously ungoverned. From the outset of his presidency, Uribe sought to increase the capacity and reach of the state and establish a state presence in each of the 1,099 municipalities. Prior to 2002, analyses indicate that

239 Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 14.
169 municipalities had zero police force presence. Uribe boasted that the presence of the Colombian state increased dramatically during his reign. The U.S. Embassy in Bogota revealed that the presence of the Colombian state increased dramatically during Uribe’s presidency, as each municipality had the presence of the police force as of July 2007. The mere presence of police forces in every region does not mean that challenges do not still exist. In fact, some regions have several police officers that are required to patrol vast amounts of territory, numbering over hundreds of square miles. A presence of several police officials in a massive territory demonstrates the need for the Colombians to strengthen the state and its ability to control and protect the entire Colombian state, as opposed to simply securing Bogota.

EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

Conducting counter-terrorism strategies requires training of military forces as well as equipment. The U.S. has provided Colombia with large amounts of money supporting the Colombian armed forces since the implementation of Plan Colombia. From 2000 to 2004, the U.S. provided the Colombians with $2.44 billion under the auspices of Plan Colombia. Of the $2.44 billion, Plan Colombia allocated $1.97 billion for the military and the police forces operating within Colombia. From 2000 to 2008, the U.S.

242 This is the fiscal year "UNHCR - Colombia " http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e492ad6.html (accessed 8/28/2012, 2012); DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007, V-55
Defense and State Department have allocated approximately $4.9 billion in assistance to the military as well as the police in Colombia under the auspices of Plan Colombia. The U.S. Defense and State Departments have provided the Colombian armed forces with support and tactical training, and the number of individuals in the armed forces proliferated by 50 percent over the eight year period from 2000 to 2008. Military aid also enabled the Colombians to develop a Joint Special Operations Command as well as mobile units that consist of army personnel. The assistance to the mobile units has done the following:

helped the Colombian Army conduct mobile operations throughout Colombia, a capacity that Defense officials said generally did not exist at the outset of Plan Colombia. According to a senior U.S. Military Group official, the mobile brigades’ effectiveness can be seen in the number of combatants from illegal armed groups captured and killed or who have surrendered.

In terms of military assistance, the U.S. funding has attempted to develop various brigades to assist in combating both drug trafficking and insurgency by implementing counterinsurgency tactics. The “U.S. assistance to the Colombian military has focused on developing the capabilities of the Colombian Army’s Aviation Brigades and the creation of an Army Counter-narcotics Brigades and mobile units that focus on counter-narcotics, infrastructure protection, and counterinsurgency missions.”

Washington also has allocated financial resources to support and maintain helicopters that can be used by the

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244 Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 115, 34 DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007, V-55; Holmes, de Piñeres and Curtin, Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis, 157-184; Isacson, Mission Creep: The U.S. Military’s Counter-Drug Role in the Americas

245 Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 115, 27.
Colombian army. From the fiscal year of 2000 to 2008, Washington has provided the Colombians with $844 million for the Army Aviation Brigade. The U.S. has provided assistance in the form of training and support. In terms of helicopters and other aircrafts, the brigade has the Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP), leasing helicopters from both the U.S. and the Russians, and the FMS fleet. The PCHP fleet has a total of 52 aircrafts, 17 of which are UH-1Ns, 13 are UH-60L Blackhawks, and finally, 22 are UH-1Is. The aviation units, however, have had various problems that hindered efficiency. One of the major challenges have been repairing and maintaining helicopters as the Colombians lacked the appropriate numbers of well-trained mechanics who can maintain the equipment. In addition to providing funding and resources for the army brigade, which has 2,300 men in the unit, Plan Colombia provided the Colombian forces with equipment, base construction, and other technological tools, such as radar sites. Washington can provide the Colombians with the helicopters and equipment, but the Colombians lacked trained mechanics who can maintain the equipment. Like any machine, helicopters will break-down and need to be repaired. Reports indicate that brigades continue to face challenges in terms of adequate staffing required to perform tasks. A GAO report provides an excellent analysis of the problems, stating:

We found that the Army Aviation Brigade is still understaffed. According to State, as of June 2008, a total of 43 contract pilots and 87 contract mechanics were needed to operate the PCHP. U.S. officials expect that almost all of these contract personnel will be replaced with Colombian Army personnel by 2012, at which time U.S. program officials said all program support to the Army Aviation Brigade would consist of technical support. According to the commander of the Army Aviation Brigade, however, the Colombians are buying 15 additional UH-60 Blackhawks

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246 Ibid., 29
247 Ibid., 32
248 Isacson, *Optimism, Pessimism, and Terrorism: The United States and Colombia in 2003*, 245-255, 246
through the FMS system for delivery starting in October 2008, and in July 2008, the United States loaned 18 UH-1Ns from PCHP’s inventory in Colombia. 

This quote demonstrates that the execution of Plan Colombia proved to be quite problematic.

**Uribe Seeks to Secure Infrastructure**

A major concern for the Colombians has been securing the infrastructure in Colombia from terrorist attacks. Various attacks have occurred on the oil pipelines in Colombia in previous years, resulting in tremendous financial losses for the oil companies. Insurgent attacks on the pipelines also have had dire economic consequences because the pipeline was force to close for repairs. In 2001, for example, attacks on the pipelines occurred 170 times, costing an estimated $500 million in economic losses. Companies also are less likely to invest in Colombia due to security concerns. It is a logical decision for potential investors to question the security situation within Colombia and ponder whether an oil pipeline will continue to be destroyed by guerrilla organizations. In sum, the fundamental responsibility for a state is to ensure its survival and the security of the citizens living within it. Uribe recognized that investors would not continue to invest in Colombia if they were concerned about basic safety and conducting routine operations. Bombings of pipelines and roads negatively impact the economic prosperity of a country by detracting investors and hindering commerce. Therefore, securing the infrastructure represented a major priority for Uribe, who desired to combat the terrorists who hindered the potential for economic prosperity in Colombia.

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249 *Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 115,32 DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007, V-55.*

250 *Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 35.*
INCREASE OF RESOURCES FOR INTERDICTION

Plan Colombia has allocated money to assist the Colombians in interdiction efforts. From the fiscal year 2000 until 2008, both the Defense and the State Departments have provided the Colombian Marines and Navy with $89 million to help improve the ability of such forces to participate in interdiction efforts. The Navy plays a crucial role in interdiction efforts by stopping drugs from being trafficked. Colombian officials have declared that the Marines and the Navy are credited with seizing over half of all of the seizures of cocaine in the year 2007, demonstrating that the waters play a major role in the transportation and shipment of cocaine.\(^\text{251}\)

The Colombian Naval forces, however, have faced difficulties and one of the major problems for the maritime forces have been the lack of resources necessary to conduct interdiction activities. The Navy also has faced many challenges with intelligence operations because it lacks the necessary information to help improve effectiveness in the seizure of shipments. Drug traffickers have been able to adapt to law enforcement efforts and have altered the trafficking routes. Intelligence, therefore, plays a major role and can help improve the ability of the Navy to intercept shipments. The U.S. has been assisting the Colombians and helping them to improve their intelligence capabilities. The Colombian navy, however, does not have a great presence on the seas and needs to increase its patrolling capacities. The U.S. Southern Command officials have discussed this problem, noting the continued problem being a lack of resources. Research indicates that “the Colombian marines maintain a permanent presence on only

\(^{251}\) Ibid., 37
about one-third of Colombia’s nearly 8,000 mile of navigable rivers.” The ultimate goal is to increase the presence of the Navy in order to help improve the ability of the Colombian naval forces to interdict shipments.

Increasing the presence of the Colombian Navy and overall efforts to interdict products may appear at first glance to deter traffickers; however, minor successes in confiscation of drug shipments should not be mistaken as victories in the war on drugs. It is necessary to briefly examine several problems with interdiction efforts. Stories in leading newspapers quite frequently report about the successful interdiction of shipments from drug traffickers. Scholars note that it is quite easy to “market” to the public the notion that the war on drugs is being won, regardless of whether interdiction efforts result in an increase in shipments obtained. For instance, an increase in the interdiction of drugs enabled politicians and government officials to proclaim victory and demonstrate that law enforcement efforts have worked and have resulted in large quantities of illicit substances being seized from organized criminal networks and, subsequently, preventing such substances from reaching the market and causing the drug traffickers to lose money. Likewise, several months of low statistics in terms of drugs interdicted by law enforcement teams can be sold as a victory against the war on drugs because it demonstrates that fewer shipments must have been sent by drug traffickers. Such logic fails to recognize that drug traffickers must adapt constantly in order to survive in this clandestine business. As a result, drug traffickers are forced to recognize what regions and routes are being targeted by law enforcement and adapt to the interdiction efforts by shifting the shipment routes. Drug traffickers are experts at noticing areas that are less

252 Ibid., 38
commonly patrolled and can alter the routes in order to exploit such weaknesses. It would be a mistake to think that the Colombian law enforcement authorities or the various entities within the U.S. have the ability to stop drugs from entering into the U.S. and being shipped or transported to other regions.²⁵³

Ted Galen Carpenter notes that we should hesitate before praising the interdiction efforts and declaring victory against the war on drugs. Carpenter states that “interdiction realities are far different from the picture painted by drug warriors. International interdiction has increased markedly over the past two decades, in part because of the improvement in radar and other detection methods.”²⁵⁴ However, he notes that empirical evidence does not exist to show that such interdiction efforts have had a major impact on the supply of drugs. Critics are quick to point out that drugs remain purer, cheaper, and more readily available than ever before and, therefore, it would be wrong to praise the interdiction efforts.²⁵⁵ It also is important to understand the limitations of interdiction efforts. Custom officials in the U.S., for instance, can randomly sample large containers entering the various major ports around the U.S. In Miami, inspectors can randomly select a container to inspect for drugs in an attempt to combat drug shipments from other countries. Anyone who has ever driven by the port of Miami or any major port in the U.S. knows that the containers are massive. A quick inspection of a container requires

²⁵³ "7. Reducing the Supply of Illegal Drugs "
²⁵⁴ Carpenter, Bad Neighbor Policy : Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America, 93; Drug Interdiction (CG-MLE-3)
²⁵⁵ See Bruce Bagley, "Seminario De Seguridad" (El Colegio de La Frontera Norte, . http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMeqNJzWXCo
unpacking and inspection of some of the materials in the hot and humid Miami. This is quite a daunting task as drug traffickers have adapted and do not ship cargos loaded with cocaine. Instead, they intersperse the illicit substances and hide it in other legal products. A random inspection of a cargo container the size of a semi-truck will inevitably not be able to capture all shipments of cocaine. The U.S. has neither the money nor the capacity to inspect every product entering the major ports, let alone the myriad of other places that receive shipments of goods and services from other countries. Determining how much man-power would be needed to merely inspect ever cargo container entering the port of Miami alone is a daunting task. Carpenter explains the limitations and failures of the interdiction efforts, stating:

The limitations of interdiction are a long-standing reality. In the mid-1990s, the U.S. Customs Service admitted that only 3 percent of the nearly 9 million shipping containers entering the United States were checked by custom inspectors. To take just one example, of the 5,000 truckers entering the United States daily from Mexico, only about 200 are inspected. Most drug traffickers are perfectly willing to chance those odds.256

**Conceptual Analysis of Alternative Development Programs**

Although “soft-side” programs never represented a major component of Plan Colombia, such programs continued to receive resources. From the fiscal year 2000 to 2008, Washington allocated approximately $1.3 billion under the auspices of Plan Colombia for non-military programs, emphasizing judicial reform as well as programs designed to improve social as well as economic development within Colombia. The USAID has provided the Colombians with funds exceeding $500 million for alternative development programs over an eight year period, beginning with the 2000 fiscal year. The USAID

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256 Carpenter, Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America; Gamarra, Entre La Drogay La Democracia; Brienen, Director of Academic Programs in Latin American Studie; Thoumi, Illegal Drugs, Economy and Society in the Andes, 416; Thoumi, The Size of the Illegal Drugs Industry in Colombia, 20.
revised its original goals and, in 2002, promoted the long-term activities as opposed to projects with short-term goals that can help Colombia increase their levels of income. In other words, the 2002 objectives emphasized combating the underlying, deep-rooted alternative development issues.

Although some progress has been made, the alternative development programs continued to face many challenges.\(^{257}\) One of the major challenges has been the limited geographic reach of the alternative development initiatives. Research indicates that “alternative development programs are largely focused in economic corridors in the western part of Colombia, where according to USAID officials, a greater potential exists for success due to access to markets, existing infrastructure, and state presence and security.”\(^{258}\) As of 2008, the eastern regions in Colombia, in particular, lack basic alternative development programs under the Uribe administration. Major infrastructure problems continue to stifle the potential for such programs to succeed and produce significant results. Another major problem with alternative development policies has been the “Zero Illicit” policy implemented by the Colombian government during Uribe’s tenure. This policy “prohibits alternative development assistance projects in communities where any illicit crops are being cultivated.”\(^{259}\) This is quite shocking, as the regions where coca is being cultivated require the most assistance in terms of alternative development.

\(^{257}\) Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 48.
\(^{258}\) Ibid., 49
\(^{259}\) Ibid., 50
**PART TWO: RESULTS OF PLAN COLOMBIA DURING THE URIBE ADMINISTRATION: SUCCESSES AGAINST THE FARC**

While Uribe did not have major advances in curbing drug cultivation or trafficking, he did achieve successes against the various illegal armed actors operating within Colombia. From the outset of his Presidency, Uribe fulfilled his campaign promises and vowed to combat the FARC, refusing to negotiate and combating what he referred to as terrorists operating within Colombia. Defeating the FARC has been a daunting task and has required the necessary military resources to combat such a formidable foe. One of the major difficulties for the Colombian armed forces has been the rough terrain where the FARC operates. Combating armed groups in difficult terrain has led to critics questioning if it is even possible to defeat the FARC. Uribe, however, rejected the comments made by critics and continued to combat the FARC. As of 2004, the U.S. provided the FARC with $99 million in order to help combat the guerrilla organizations, or narco-terrorists, in a crucial security region of Colombia, known as Arauca, which is where the oil-pipeline is located. Uribe’s desire to combat the FARC and his subsequent increases in the number of resources spent resulted in significant gains for the Colombian government. Uribe successfully killed key leaders of the FARC, resulting in the weakening of the group. In 2008, for instance, Uribe’s forces entered into Ecuador and killed Raul Reyes, a key member of the FARC. According to statements by the

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261 Isacson, *Optimism, Pessimism, and Terrorism: The United States and Colombia in 2003*, 245-255, 247  
Colombian Ministry of Defense, the Colombian government successfully increased the territory controlled in the country by 20 percent, from 70 percent in 2003 to 90 percent in 2008. The initiatives designed by Uribe helped decrease the financial power, numbers, and strength of the FARC, the ELN, and other paramilitaries. The Drug Enforcement Agency revealed that the FARC had been significantly weakened as a result of operations and the membership has decreased significantly from an estimated 17,000 forces operating in Colombia in 2008 to 8,000 in 2008. One government report notes:

According to State and embassy officials, nongovernmental observers, the number of FARC combatants and its capabilities have been drastically reduced by continuous assaults on its top leadership, the capture or killing of FARC members in conflictive zones, and a large number of desertions. In 2007, the Colombian Ministry of Defense reported that it had captured or killed approximately 4,600 FARC combatants and about 2,500 had demobilized. According to the Colombian this year—over two-third of the total for all of 2007. U.S. Military Group officials told us FARC now avoids direct combat with Colombian security forces and is limited to hit and run terrorist attacks.263

The capturing and killing of major leaders also had negative consequences in terms of Uribe’s popularity among different leaders in the Latin America. Many of the FARC members operated on the borderline of Ecuador. In March of 2008, Colombian forces entered Ecuador in order to capture a leader of the FARC known as Raul Reyes as well as 16 other FARC operatives. The events that transpired in Ecuador upset many politicians throughout Latin America, who argued that such actions violated Ecuador’s sovereignty. The Colombian government also criticized its neighbors, alleging that both Venezuela and Colombia had linkages with the FARC. Oscar Naranjo, the Colombian national police chief, asserted, “when they mention negotiations for 50 kilos of uranium, this means that the Farc are taking big steps in the world of terrorism to become a global..."
aggressor. We’re not talking of domestic guerrillas but transitional terrorism." After the raid, the diplomatic ties with Ecuador decreased. In addition, Venezuela also expelled Colombian diplomats operating within the country as a result of the outrage over Uribe’s actions. The Colombians viewed the border-crossing incident as a necessary measure in order to kill the FARC operatives and combat terrorism within Colombia.265

The revenue earned per kilo of cocaine sold also decreased significantly which is a striking results because the DEA estimated that the FARC earned approximately 80 percent of its revenue from drug trafficking during this period. Different scholars can debate whether the FARC would still operate if they did not earn money from drug trafficking. As Bruce Bagley asserts, it would be a mistake to believe that the FARC would cease to exist without the revenues from drug trafficking.266 Clearly, the profits from drug trafficking help finance the FARC, but the FARC can earn money from other illegal activities, such as distortion, kidnapping, the trafficking of women, and various other illegal endeavors.

Uribe and his administration have praised Plan Colombia as a success because Colombia is safer than before and the FARC have been weakened dramatically. However, David Mares declared in an interview, “when people talk about safety they


should specify what criteria that they want to use.” While Uribe has obtained major successes combating the FARC, it would be wrong to assume that the FARC does not still present a major problem for Colombia. The FARC continues to occupy important areas in Colombia. Sandro Calvani, the Director of the UNODC Colombia Program in Bogotà from 2003 to 2007, stated, “the FARC's and Autodensas' destructive impact on Colombian future has been defeated, most probably forever. Former armed group leaders' have abandoned the armed fight and they are now among the most prominent political leaders, including the mayor of Bogotà, leaders of Cali and Medellin.” Colombian officials have cautioned jumping to conclusions and praising victory against the FARC. The Colombian officials recognize that the FARC still remains a major threat to Colombian national security and continues to occupy and control various regions within the country. Colombian government representatives admit that the FARC continues “exercising control over important parts of the country, such as Meta, which serves as a key transport corridor linking many of the coca cultivation areas in the eastern part of the country with the Pacific ports used to transport cocaine out of the country.”

**Victories Against the AUC**

Uribe vowed not to negotiate with the FARC, but he entered into peace accords with the paramilitaries and efforts have been made to demobilize the AUC, the major right-wing paramilitary organization operating in Colombia. The negotiations began in 2003 and have obtained significant results. Over a period of three years (2003 to 2006), it has been

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268 Dr. Calvani notes that such opinions are his own and his is not speaking on behalf of the UNODC.

269 *Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance*, 25.
estimated that approximately 32,000 AUC soldiers began to demobilize. Why did many of the leaders of the paramilitaries support the demobilization process, when it appeared to be a major advancement for Colombia and the Uribe administration? Adam Isacson explains, “while the negotiations with paramilitaries look like a giant leap toward peace, the reason it could fail is also the main reason why most paramilitary leaders support it: the agreement will most likely include a mechanism to grant the leaders amnesty in both Colombia and the United states for their crimes.”\(^{270}\) In addition, it is important to note that many of the leaders of the paramilitaries supported Uribe as a candidate.

Some of the soldiers and officers have disbanded but have become members of other organized crime networks.\(^{271}\) The new criminal networks that have resulted from the demobilization of the AUC are referred to as Bandas Criminales (BACRIM).\(^{272}\) It is a rational choice for soldiers to join criminal networks because soldiers can apply their skills to the lucrative business of organized crime and drug trafficking. The various groups that have emerged from the paramilitaries have continued to attack civilians and have been responsible for a plethora of egregious violations of human rights. BACRIM are different from the paramilitaries in several important ways. Bagley notes, “they tend


\(^{271}\) Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 26.

to be politically much more deft and subtle in seeking political alliances inside the
Colombian economic and political establishment, often hiding their political linkages
through indirect and ‘clean’ candidates without records of paramilitary affiliations.\textsuperscript{273} In
addition, BACRIM have expanded their activities beyond drug trafficking and into areas
such as gold mining in order to diversify their portfolios and different avenues for earning
revenue necessary to finance their operations.\textsuperscript{274}

Different estimates exist regarding the number of individuals involved in the
various groups that succeeded the paramilitaries. For instance, the Colombian National
Police estimated that the groups have 3,749 members operating within Colombia as of
2010.\textsuperscript{275} Conversely, other approximations are much higher, placing the numbers at
6,000 members. Others estimate that 6,000 groups operate within Colombia and stress
that the members of such organizations are not concentrated in certain departments.
Rather, they are located throughout Colombia, operating in 29 of the 32 departments that
exist within Colombia.\textsuperscript{276} The State Department reports that the Colombians have
continued to train and deploy vast number of police forces throughout Colombia with the
goal of increasing the “arm” of the state and implementing law and order. In 2005, the
Colombian National Police deployed 9,176 police officers to various rural areas

\textsuperscript{273} Bagley, Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First
Century ,17 Nuevas Bandas Criminales Amenazan Seguridad En Colombia: Naranjo, Articulo OnLine ; En
Colombia Hay 10 Bandas Criminales Dedicadas Al Narcotrafico, Segun Las Autoridades - 20090520-Caracol.Com.Co ; Conozca Como Las Bandas Criminales Se reparten Zonas De Colombia - Diario El Pais Isacson, Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellin, Colombia, 1-19Restrepo and Bagley, La Desmovilizacion De Los Paramilitaries En Colombia: Entre La Esperanza y El Escepticismo
\textsuperscript{274} Nuevas Bandas Criminales Amenazan Seguridad En Colombia: Naranjo, Articulo OnLine ; En
Colombia Hay 10 Bandas Criminales Dedicadas Al Narcotrafico, Segun Las Autoridades - 20090520-Caracol.Com.Co
\textsuperscript{275} The summer of 2010
\textsuperscript{276} “World Report 2011: Colombia | Human Rights Watch ” http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2011/world-
throughout Colombia. A significant number of the total forces deployed (8,166) received the mission of securing and protecting the roads in Colombia from attacks.\textsuperscript{277}

It is necessary to understand the realities of the demobilization before reaching the conclusion that the process has been a success. On paper, this process seems like a major victory for Uribe and his administration in combating the armed conflict within Colombia. The previous examples, however, demonstrate that one must be cautious when analyzing the demobilization efforts and understand the potential ramifications and consequences. It also is important to note that some individuals believe that the demobilization of the AUC can only be defined as a farce. Marc Chernick, for instance, argues, “The demobilization was mostly a fraud.”\textsuperscript{278} The demobilization basically dismantled paramilitaries. They left the structures intact and …it is fiction, and it’s misleading, and dangerous fiction that they are now only criminal bands and the paramilitaries is wrong…”\textsuperscript{279} Critics, therefore, believe that that the paramilitaries are still much more of a threat than conceived by proponents of Uribe.

**WEAKENING OF THE ELN**

The Uribe administration also has achieved success in combating one of the other major armed groups: the ELN. Colombian officials estimate that the ELN has decreased drastically from 5,000 members in 2000 to approximately 2,200 and 3,000 members as of 2008. The same tactics used to combat the FARC, therefore, have been successful in

\textsuperscript{277}Veillette, *Plan Colombia: A Progress Report*, 1-11, 8
\textsuperscript{278}Chernic, *MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University*
\textsuperscript{279}Ibid.
weakening the ELN organization and represent another indicator of the “partial victories” of the war on drugs achieved by Plan Colombia under Uribe.\textsuperscript{280}

\textbf{INITIAL SUCCESSES COMBATING CORRUPTION}

Plan Colombia, as well as Uribe’s Democratic Security policy, vowed to combat corruption occurring within Colombia. Colombia has a long-history of corruption that has hampered the ability of the state to perform basic functions. During the reign of the notorious Medellín and Cali cartels, Colombia was on the verge of becoming a narco-state, or “failed state”\textsuperscript{281}, as drug traffickers bribed many politicians and faced very few-if any-ramifications for such behavior. The accusations that President Samper had received money from the cartels resulted in extreme pessimism about the ability of Colombia to function and casted doubt on the rule of law. According to well-recognized corruption indicators, Colombia has experienced drastic improvements with regards to decreases in corruption.

Various structural changes within Colombia also must be recognized as such changes inevitably played a role in the decreases in corruption. In 2004, the Colombian Congress passed a law creating an accusatorial system that revolutionized criminal law in Colombia.\textsuperscript{282} The new rules and procedures enable oral as well as public trials, placing

\textsuperscript{280} Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 11527


\textsuperscript{282} Holmes, de Piñeres and Curtin, Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis, 157-184 Jesus Ramirez Suarez, La Constitucion Colombiana De 1991 : (Dearrollos Legales, Comentarios y Jurisprudencia) (Santafe de Bogota, D.C. : Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Derecho, Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, 1194), 297; Holmes, de Piñeres and Curtin, Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis, 157-184.
the responsibility for prosecution of the Office of the Attorney General. The USAID’s efforts helped lead to the creation of 35 oral trial courtrooms. Another major advantage of this new system is that plea bargains can occur, which inevitably helps increase efficiency by decreasing the amount of time required to prosecute and, ultimately, solve a criminal case.

**Para-politics Scandal**

As the statistics demonstrate, Plan Colombia has provided Uribe and his administration with the resources necessary to combat the FARC. Some of the successes have been clouded by scandals and human rights abuses. The death squad scandal has been one of the most notable events under the Uribe administration. In 2006, reports emerged that Uribe had close connections with right-wing paramilitary groups and even worked with the paramilitaries. The paramilitaries have been the culprit of various human rights abuses, torturing and even murdering thousands of Colombians. The police arrested various politicians, such as the former governor of Sucre and a former congresswoman, who allegedly had connections with the right-wing paramilitaries. Adam Isacson argues,

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“the paramilitaries could not have functioned without support from the politicians who held local power. Evidence, much of it from former paramilitary leaders, has brought a cascade of criminal investigations of legislators, governors, mayors and other officials, who made common cause with the far-right warlords.”

Several individuals have argued that the paramilitaries controlled a large percentage of congress and had much more power than many Colombians would have thought. In fact, it has been estimated that the paramilitaries control approximately 30 percent of the Colombian congress. In 2009, the Colombian government investigated 43 of the 263 members of congress who the Colombian population elected in 2006. In addition, the Colombian courts convicted 12 members for ties to the paramilitaries, while another 13 members underwent trial proceeding in 2008.

A report released by a think tank in Colombia reported: “the truth could be much more overwhelming than what would appear from the recent scandals: the paramilitary phenomenon was huge…in addition to being a counterinsurgent military project, it was also a political project.”

In sum, the “parapolítico” scandal demonstrates that corruption still exists within Colombia even among high-ranking officials. DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean describe the scandal and its impact, stating:

The recent “parapolítico” scandals that have resulted in the arrest of dozen of national legislators and other officials indicate that drug corruption and influence peddling reaches high levels. Importantly, however, the Colombian courts are going after “big fish,” a positive sign in the

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287 Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Claims of “Success” Don't Stand Up to Scrutin, 1-13,4
288 Uribe, A Bush Ally, Treads on Shaky Ground - TIME ; "Colombian Establishment Rocked by Death Squad Scandal | World News | Guardian.co.uk "
289 Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Claims of "Success" Don't Stand Up to Scrutin, 1-13,4
290 Journal article on Colombian death squad scandal, 2
struggle to combat corruption. Colombia’s decentralized political system, with significant fiscal resources assigned to local governments, requires special attention in preventing corruption.\textsuperscript{291}

Others have debated such accusations, arguing that the Uribe administration has taken initiatives to undermine the legitimacy of the Colombian Court in order to ensure that the perpetrators are not prosecuted from such crimes.\textsuperscript{292} This statement demonstrates that Uribe, indeed, has used illegal tactics in order to help defendants avoid being prosecuted. Therefore, it is important to recognize that Colombia still faces many challenges, particularly with regards to corruption. A decentralized state with weak institutions helps foment corruption and provide a fertile breeding ground for organized crime to flourish. In addition, the profits earned from drug trafficking provide participants with the means necessary to take advantage of a weak state and bribe law enforcement and government officials.

\textbf{“FALSE POSITIVE” SCANDAL}

In 2008, another major scandal, commonly referred to as the “false positive” killings, created controversies in Colombia. Uribe desired to combat the FARC and sought to demonstrate that such efforts have been effective. Various security and militia forces killed thousands of civilians and subsequently dressed them in the appropriate attire worn by the guerrillas. The reasons for such egregious acts are that the military and security forces sought to increase their numbers in order to improve their statistics against the


FARC with the ultimate goal of receiving benefits and other rewards for such successes against the guerrilla organizations.  

**Human Rights Abuses**

Despite Uribe’s accomplishments against the FARC, human rights abuses continued within Colombia during his administration. Many of the human rights abuses resulted from the armed conflict. This is another sign of the weakness of the Colombian state and its inability to provide many of its citizens with basic rights. Under Uribe, the Colombian government failed to enforce the law and did not prosecute violators of human rights. As a result of the armed conflict, millions of Colombians have been displaced and forced to flee their homes. In 2006 alone, reports indicate that more than 200,000 Colombians had been displaced as a result of violence. Many of the displaced individuals in Colombia are the most vulnerable populations, such as the indigenous minorities and the Afro-Colombians. These two groups are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses and have been forced to flee their lands. During his tenure, Uribe failed to assist these vulnerable populations, focusing more on combating the narco-terrorists.

Another major form of human rights violations has been violence that has occurred against members of labor unions. The Uribe administration failed to address the extremely high levels of violence conducted against members who organized and formed

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labor unions.\textsuperscript{295} Trade unionists, in particular, have experienced human rights abuses and have even been murdered. Data gathered by one labor organization indicates that since 1991, 2,245 labor union members have been murdered in Colombia.\textsuperscript{296} This is a staggering number and demonstrates that many Colombians are vulnerable and denied basic rights, such as the right to organize. Overall levels of violence against trade unionists, however, have decreased, although such numbers still remain high. Some argue that levels of violence against the union leaders are a result of the weakening of the FARC. DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean state, “to the limited extent that sufficient information is available to draw any presumed conclusions, there appears to be a direct relationship between greater (and lesser) levels of activity by illegal armed groups and violence against trade unionists.”\textsuperscript{297}

Some experts, however, caution out that analysts must not conflate human rights abuses with Plan Colombia. Sandra Borda states that the “human rights problem is one that you will have if you have a war on drugs with or without the war on drugs.”\textsuperscript{298} In other words, Colombia would have experienced human rights abuses regardless of Plan Colombia because they are consequences of the internal armed conflict. Such comments are quite interesting, but it is important to remember that Plan Colombia provided the

\textsuperscript{297} DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, \textit{Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007}, V-55, 27.
military with the necessary resources to strengthen its capabilities and overall power. In addition, Uribe clearly did not view human rights as a priority, and focused instead on combating the internal armed actors by whatever means necessary.

**URIBE DESIRES PASSAGE OF THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IN RETURN FOR HIS LOYALTY**

Another level of analysis deals with the economic dimensions that played a major role during the Uribe administration. It is not possible to understand the situation in Colombia during the Uribe administration without examining the internal dynamics of the state and examining the role of trade policy and its impact. One of the major domestic agendas of Uribe became the promotion of the U.S.-Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA). Uribe wanted his ally to the North, President Bush, to approve and ratify the CTPA in order to help Colombia and promote economic development. President Bush also desired to ratify the agreement, explaining to Congress that he intended to sign the CTPA in August of 2006. Uribe placed his faith and trust in his partner to the North and hoped that the agreement would pass. For Uribe, the trade agreement would provide Colombia with access to U.S. markets and help improve the Colombian economy. Colombia has a population of 46 million people and is a very important country in South America, particularly in terms of the security interests of the U.S. The Colombian economy, however, is one percent of the U.S. GDP. The U.S. is the largest trading partner for the Colombians and provides them access to a much bigger market. Statistically, 39 percent of the exports produced by Colombia entered the U.S. market. While the U.S. has economic linkages or connections with the Colombian government, it would be wrong to argue that the relationship can be defined as one of complex
interdependence. The Colombian economy is much smaller than the U.S., and, in addition, the Colombians account for only one percent of total U.S. trade. Colombia, however, does import various products from the U.S., such as oil and a variety of other petroleum products.\textsuperscript{299} It is important to note that the trade agreement would promote increasing levels of interdependence between both countries. If implemented correctly, greater interdependence would enable Uribe and Colombia to obtain various concessions or leverage over the hegemonic partner.

While the relationship between Colombia and the U.S. cannot be described as one of complex interdependence, it can be characterized as asymmetric interdependence. Colombia and the U.S. have various ties and linkages, but not as many linkages as the U.S. and other countries, such as Canada. The trade agreement would benefit Colombia much more than the U.S., and, therefore, Uribe continued to urge President Bush to ensure the passage of the trade agreement.\textsuperscript{300} The major components of the trade agreement deal with market access, decreasing barriers to trade, and promoting free trade. Specifically, 80 percent of the duties on exports of both industrial and consumer products would be removed with the approval of the agreement, increasing the ability for products to move between the two countries free of trade diverting measures. Both Uribe and Bush viewed the elimination of such barriers as significant progress towards promoting trade and increasing the ties between Colombia and the U.S.\textsuperscript{301}

\textsuperscript{301} Villarreal, \textit{U.S.-Colombian Trade Promotional Agreement}, 1-6.
The trade agreement had various formidable opponents within the U.S. Fears existed among certain groups, such as the American Friends Service Committee (AFL-CIO) and Public Citizen that a trade agreement with Colombia would harm the U.S. economy and hurt workers within the U.S. by diverting jobs from the U.S. to Colombia. A Congressional Research report notes:

On the other hand, a number of other groups, such as the AFL-CIO, Public Citizen, and American Friends Service Committee, generally opposed the idea of regional trade agreements with Andean countries. These opponents generally argue that these kinds of trade agreements cost the U.S. economy jobs, erode protection for the environment and worker’s rights, and improve extraneous commitments on countries. U.S. sugar producers also have voiced concern about the adverse cumulative impact the CTPA and other trade agreements would have on sugar producers.302

Due to the structure of the political system in the U.S., groups have the ability to lobby their Congress and voice their displeasures with various policies. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives are especially cognoscente of the ability opinions and desires of voting members who reside in their congressional district. Each state in the U.S. also has two Senators regardless of size. Therefore, a state that has sugar farmers can lobby to pressure Senators about the importance of sugar to the industry in that particular state. In sum, the design of the political system in the U.S. by the founding fathers helped opponents of the trade agreement mount a formidable opposition, arguing that such an agreement would hurt the economic prosperity of people who work in certain industries and reside in certain districts.

Uribe placed a tremendous amount of his political clout on his ability to convince President Bush to pass the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in order to benefit Colombia. Uribe allied closely with President Bush and his policies and became his biggest friend in the region. In metaphorical terms, Uribe placed all his eggs in one basket. He truly wanted Bush to pass the agreement and compensate him and Colombia for his support for the implementation of U.S. policies, such as the war on terror. Bush wanted to help his strongest political ally of the U.S. and ratified the agreement. Bush also wanted to improve his reputation and legacy in Latin America, which remained very low throughout his administration. However, he needed Congress to approve the bill in order for him to sign it into law. Uribe and the Colombians failed to comprehend the nature of the U.S. system and did not understand the different dynamics of policy making within the U.S. In fact, experts have argued that very few people within Colombia understand how policy is made within the U.S., which can be akin to making sausage. In other words, it can be a complicated and often ugly process that is a result of various comprises and concessions by members of Congress. Uribe failed to recognize that President Bush did not have the same power that the Colombian president had in terms of law making. The Congress in Colombia can be very ineffective, and the President has much more power in terms of the ability to make laws and set the agenda. Uribe needed

305 Bordan Guzman, Associate Professor at Los Andes
to lobby American Congress, not the Executive Branch, as Congress inevitably prevented the passage of the FTA during Uribe’s tenure.\footnote{Ibid.}

**CONCLUSIONS**

Plan Colombia has had “partial successes,” particularly in combating the illegal armed actors operating within Colombia. Uribe came to power and had a completely different vision and social construction of how to achieve victory in Colombia.\footnote{Bagley, *Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century*; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 429. "War-Torn Colombia Less Violent in 2003, Government Says," *Reuters*Jan. 6, 2004.; Christman, Heimann and Sweig, *Andes 2020: A New Strategy for the Challenges of Colombia and the Region*; Crandall, *Clinton, Bush and Plan Colombia*, 159; Crandall, *Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia during the Samper Administration*, 95-120; Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia*, 193.} Uribe disapproved of Pastrana’s de-militarized zone and refused to negotiate with the FARC. Uribe also made an important distinction, arguing that Colombia did not have an internal armed conflict but a terrorist problem.\footnote{Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics*, 378.} Uribe successfully altered Plan Colombia and made the number one priority combating the narco-terrorists. Indeed, revenue obtained from drug trafficking enterprises has helped finance the FARC, but one can debate whether the FARC should be labeled as a terrorist organization. In reality, the FARC uses terrorist tactics in order to intimidate Colombians and achieve their goals.

Uribe shifted the goals of Plan Colombia, defying realist logic. According to neorealism, the weaker power will be required to adhere to the rules set forth by the hegemonic actor. In other words, the weaker actor will be required to oblige to the stronger actor and comply with the rules in order to receive foreign aid and the money necessary to combat the war on drugs.\footnote{Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics*, 378.} The events of September 11th resulted in the
U.S. waging a global war on terror in order to combat terrorism around the world and prevented them from conducting future attacks on U.S. territory. Uribe successfully sold and marketed Plan Colombia as an initiative to combat the narco-terrorists, and President Bush bought into the new shifts in the agenda and goals of Plan Colombia because they went along with U.S. national interests and priorities. In addition, Uribe’s Colombia provided Bush with non-Muslim terrorists, enabling him to defend his policies and argue that the war on terror was against any terrorists regardless of religious affiliations or ethnic identity. Uribe’s ability to frame the internal conflict in Colombia as part of the larger war on terror, in essence, was quite successful. The new version of Plan Colombia provided him with the necessary resources to combat the illegal armed actors, which is something that the Clinton administration wanted to avoid. Unlike Bush, the Clinton administration, as well as many government officials, politicians, and policy analysts, feared becoming involved in the internal dynamics of Colombia in order to avoid becoming bogged down in another Vietnam type situation.

From the outset, Uribe and Bush had a strong relationship because they had social constructions of the major issues in Colombia. Uribe became a blessing in disguise for the Bush administration because he vowed to combat the terrorists and helped Bush implement his larger vision in Latin America. Uribe enabled the U.S. to place bases in Colombia, which angered his neighbors. It is safe to say that by the end of their

311 Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University; Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia*, 193.
respective administrations, both Bush and Uribe did not have much soft power nor did they have many political allies or “friends” in Latin America. In 2005, Uribe stated:

Let me say this. First, I want to repeat, on behalf of all Colombians, our gratitude because of the help we receive from the United States. It is very important, from your people, from your Congress, from your government, and, of course, from President Bush. We consider your country, your government, your people a great ally of Colombia. Second, to defeat terrorism, we need political will, persistent democracy and social cohesion.

Uribe remained the only ally and supporter of the Bush administration according to the statistics and perceptions among Latin American governments. In 2009, Bush awarded Uribe with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his valiant efforts. In the award ceremony, Bush stated:

For President Uribe, the great demands of office continue. Today the United States honors all Colombians by honoring the man they have chosen to lead them. By refusing to allow the land he loves to be destroyed by the enemy within, by proving that terror can be opposed and defeated, President Uribe has reawakened the hopes of his countrymen and shown a model of leadership to a watching world. Colombia remains a nation with challenges. But the future will always be bright in a country that produces men such as President Álvaro Uribe.

Critics argue that the award gives the wrong message, as President Bush acknowledged the leader of a country who failed to produce changes with regards to human rights abuses. During his tenure, Uribe continued to ignore major human rights abuses that have occurred throughout Colombia and have outraged human rights activists and members of civil society. After Bush recognized Uribe at the White House, Human Rights Watch released the following statement: “US President George W. Bush’s decision to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to President Álvaro Uribe of

312 “U.S. Military Base Plan Puts Colombia in Hot Water - TIME "
313 http://search.proquest.com/docview/463932713
314 A Legacy of Mixed Messages | the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs ; Bush Pushes Trade Pact to Aid Colombia and His Legacy - Los Angeles Times ; Latinobarómetro Poll: Latin Americans, Despite Stereotype, are Political Moderates - World Public Opinion ; Uribe, A Bush Ally, Treads on Shaky Ground - TIME ; Nye, Soft Power : The Means to Success in World Politics, 191
315 President Bush Honors Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients 2
Colombia is a disturbing example of the Bush administration’s disregard for serious human rights concerns out of zeal to show unconditional support to governments that it views as strategic allies, seven leading nongovernmental organizations said today.”

Uribe vowed to combat the FARC upon obtaining office. By the end of his tenure, violence in Colombia had decreased and Uribe has successfully combated the FARC by forcing them to retreat. In addition to forcing the FARC to retreat, Uribe made advances in terms of the professionalization of the military. Sandra Borda Guzman states, “before Plan Colombia, armed forces in this country, you wouldn’t believe it. They were inefficient, no intelligence, they were not getting results.” Uribe managed to strengthen the armed forces in Colombia and make them more effective. As a result of such efforts, Uribe increased security within Colombia. One military official explains that one of the indicators has been the ability for Colombians to travel between various cities via car, which was something that was not possible before Uribe.

These “partial victories” represent significant strides for Colombia in terms of increasing security, however Plan Colombia failed to address many underlying issues. In particular, Plan Colombia failed to allocate significant resources to strengthen democracy, promote the rule of law, and help strengthen existing institutions. In terms of long-term strategy, a country with weak institutions fosters corruption and foments organized crime. Colombia has never had strong institutions and Uribe’s re-orientation

317 She is referring to strategic intelligence as opposed to mental capacity.
318 This interview occurred on July 31”, 2012. The official requested for the interview to be anonymous because he is still on active duty.
319 Bagley, Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century, 7 Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Alaims of “Success” Don't Stand Up to Scrutin, 1-13; Isacson, Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellin, Colombia, 1-19.
of Plan Colombia failed to address the deep-rooted issues. Pizarro and Gaitán echo such sentiments declaring, “fundamental to any country’s real achievement of the rule of law and respect for human rights is a state that is capable of guaranteeing a minimum of democratic order.” Colombia, therefore, will continue to face hardships if it does not have a state that is capable of carrying out the rule of law and decreasing corruption. Colombia has made significant strides from the days of Pablo Escobar when Colombia was on the verge of collapse and becoming a narco-state. Having democratic order requires that the state “must be capable of legislating and enforcing laws, and second, power must be exercised by duly elected officials who are willing to be held accountable for their actions.” The Colombian state, therefore, must strengthen its institutions if it ever has a chance of combating organized crime and corruption.

During this period examined, Plan Colombia has been an utter failure in terms of reducing the cultivation and trafficking of drugs. Plan Colombia allocated billions of dollars for aerial spraying. Despite spending large amounts of money, coca cultivation actually increased in some areas of Colombia. More will be said in the next chapter about the failures of Plan Colombia to decrease drug cultivation, which was the initial goal of the Plan.  

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CHAPTER FOUR: BEYOND PLAN COLOMBIA AND DE-SECURITIZATION

Towards the end of the decade, President Bush (2009) and President Uribe (2010) ended their respective presidential terms. By the end of the Bush Administration and the beginning of the Obama Administration, the U.S. reduced aid to Colombia. How did the Colombians perceive and evaluate Plan Colombia in terms of its successes and failures? Were the initial goals of the U.S. and the Colombians achieved? If so, how were these goals achieved? Why did the policies change from Uribe to Santos?

The chapter is divided into the following manner for organizational purposes:
First, the goals of Plan Colombia will be analyzed during this period; second, after examining the goals for both the U.S. and Colombia, this work will analyze whether Plan Colombia achieved these goals. A significant transition occurs in 2010 with the departure of Uribe and the inauguration of President Santos. President Santos has made significant statements and implemented new policies departing from Uribe. Santos has recognized that the war on drugs has been a failure and is more open to dialogue, arguing:

Sometimes we all feel that we have been pedaling on a stationary bicycle. We look to our right and our left and we still see the same landscape. There has been an important decrease in the world’s coca crops, mainly due to the great efforts we have made in Colombia, but the market is still huge and the business is highly profitable. My proposal is very simple: we need to start an in-depth discussion, led by scientists and experts, about the ‘war’ against drugs. We have to determine whether we are doing the best we can, or whether there are better options.\(^\text{323}\)

The latter part of the chapter will discuss the change in rhetoric and policy that has occurred with the inauguration of Santos. Santos’s policies and stances will be contrasted with those of Uribe.

Determining what constitutes a success or failure is a constructivist issue. Examining whether Plan Colombia has been successful and achieved its goals requires one to compare the goals and outcomes. As previously discussed, the original goals have shifted over time. In 2000, President Clinton signed into law Plan Colombia, positioning combating drug trafficking as the number one priority. The Clinton administration then re-engineered Plan Colombia and making the number one priority of the Plan to reduce coca cultivation and trafficking. Has Plan Colombia achieved the original goal of reducing coca cultivation and drug trafficking set forth by the Clinton administration? The answer is no, and an extensive analysis is provided in the subsequent sections.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the goals of Plan Colombia shifted drastically after the events of 9/11. Uribe assumed Presidency and vowed to combat the terrorists such as the FARC and other armed actors. The narco-terrorists, as the name implies, earned a tremendous amount of money and financed their operations from the proceeds of drug trafficking. Uribe successfully convinced President Bush that Colombia had a terrorist problem. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the cultivation and trafficking of drugs no longer mattered for Uribe and for the Bush administration. Uribe wanted to stop drug trafficking, but his number one priority became combating the FARC. Arlene Tickner states, “I don’t think plan Colombia again was ever conceived as a counter-narcotics policy by the Colombian government at least in its main components. For me the ultimate goal was state strengthening and particularly military
strengthening.”324 David Mares echoes such sentiments, stating, “I don’t believe it was ever the intent of the Colombians to use this to destroy the drug trade.”325 The previous chapter demonstrates that Uribe made very important strides in Colombia, particularly with regards to the FARC. Plan Colombia, therefore, has had some successes with regards to the war against the narco-terrorists resulting in decreases in the levels of violence. The large decreases in the levels of violence such as kidnappings and murders indicate that Uribe’s policies and initiatives to combat the various illegal armed helped stabilize security within the country. However, even though the number of kidnappings in Colombia decreased dramatically, it is important to note that Colombia continues to rank as the country with the highest kidnapping rate despite Uribe’s valiant efforts.326

Uribe would argue that Plan Colombia has been a success because his administration combated the narco-terrorists, making Colombia safer. Indeed, Uribe’s efforts have resulted in substantial decreases in the number of FARC members. However, it would be a grave mistake to believe that the FARC has been defeated and does not continue to constitute a major security concern for Colombia.327 Although the FARC has been weakened under Uribe, the organization remains a formidable adversary. The FARC has been forced to retreat and leave the neighboring cities and towns in Colombia, but it continues to operate within the various rural regions in Colombia. It would be shortsighted to believe that the successes by Uribe represent a victory against

324 Tickner, Colombia and the United States: From Counternarcotics to Counterterrorism, 72; Tickner, Professor Los Andes University; ”El Plan Colombia: El Debate En Los Estados Unidos; Tickner, Professor Los Andes University; Tickner, Colombia and the United States: From Counternarcotics to Counterterrorism, 72; Crandall, Driven by Drugs : US Policy Toward Colombia, 193

325 Mares interview 8/24/2012

326 DeShazo, Primiani and McLean, Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999 to 2007, V-55

the FARC. This organization has the ability to rearm and regain strength and continue to fight the government. The Colombian state continues to face challenges with regards to its inherent weaknesses and inability to maintain control over many of the rural regions throughout the country.

The next portion of this chapter will analyze the failures of Plan Colombia regarding the inability to reduce coca cultivation and drug trafficking. Some experts incorrectly argue that Plan Colombia never has been a drug initiative. From the beginning, Plan Colombia clearly states that it seeks to reduce coca cultivation, drug production, and trafficking by 50 percent. While the lines between the war on drugs and the war on terror became blurred after September 11th, Plan Colombia has failed with regards to its drug aspects. This next section will empirically evaluate the results of the drug trafficking initiatives.328

It is not possible to discuss Plan Colombia and the drug war without examining aerial spraying because this strategy constituted one of the major initiatives of Plan Colombia. Determining whether or not aerial spraying initiatives have been successful can be measured empirically by examining the statistical results produced by various agencies. It should be noted that one has to be careful with statistics and view them with some skepticism because various organizations have different methodologies and ways to calculate statistics. Although one must be cautious when evaluating statistics and not view them as an exact number or a science, statistics, indeed, are valuable because they

provide researchers with a base line or estimate of progress. It is impossible to argue that the aerial spraying initiatives have been successful when the number of hectares of coca being cultivated increased overtime. An examination of the balance sheet reveals that aerial spraying has not only been unproductive but also counterproductive because of the environmental damages and health care problems created from such initiatives. The Bush administration officials would counter-argue that Plan Colombia has achieved its goals because the targets have been sprayed. In other words, Plan Colombia achieved its goals because the airplanes sprayed the correct number of targets set forth by President Bush. Therefore, determining what is a success is a constructivist issue and is subjective to those being asked.

Despite spending billions of dollars, the area of cultivation increased in certain regions and drug trafficking continued. Plan Colombia failed to achieve its goals of decreasing coca cultivation by 50 percent, which was one of the major goals set forth in 2000. This is despite of the fact that the U.S. sprayed hundreds of thousands of hectares of coca being cultivated. In 2002, for instance, the U.S. sprayed 130,364 hectares of coca fields according to the report on Colombia by the UNODC. The number of hectares sprayed increased dramatically over the years. In 2006, the U.S. recorded spraying a total of 172,025 hectares of coca. The total number of hectares sprayed began to decrease in 2007 as a shift occurred towards manual eradication. In 2009, the total

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329 Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University.
330 Thanks to Bruce Bagley for pointing this out.
331 Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2011 (Bogota, Colombia: UNODC,[2012]),80. Plan Colombia: The Harmful Impacts of Aerial Spraying | AIDA ; Gaviria, Políticas Antidroga En Colombia Éxitos, Fracasos y Extravíos , 445; Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Alaims of "Success" Don't Stand Up to Scrutin, 1-13; Isacson, Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellin, Colombia, 1-19
numbers of hectares sprayed were 101,940.\textsuperscript{332} The 2008 Government Accountability Report indicates that the area of coca being cultivated increased by approximately 15 percent in 2006 from 2000; in 2006, farmers cultivated 157,000 hectares. U.S. officials have noted that increases may result from different calculations. From 2005 to 2007, for instance, more regions received surveys regarding coca under cultivation. In 2008, the area under coca cultivation in rural Colombia increased by 27 percent.\textsuperscript{333}

Farmers have adapted to the aerial spraying initiatives and continue growing coca. Cultivating coca and selling it to drug trafficking organizations is an illegal business and requires that farmers adapt to the changing circumstances. Increases in law enforcement lead to shifts in coca being cultivated in other areas. Also, farmers inter-mix coca with other plants and legal substances and make it much harder to locate from an airplane or satellite. Farmers can grow coca in smaller plots of land in order to avoid detection. It is not a simple cultivation that would allow for a direct impact of an airplane to spray pesticides and destroy the coca.\textsuperscript{334} Profits from coca cultivation are the primary means of

\textsuperscript{332} Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2011, 8-107, 80.; Vandra FelbabBrown et al., Assessment of the Implementation of the United States Governments' Support for Plan Colombia's Illicit Crop Reduction Components (Washington, D.C.: USAID.


\textsuperscript{334} Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University; Mejia and Restrepo, The War on Illegal Drugs in Producer and Consumer Countries: A Simple Analytical Framework ; Daniel Mejia and Daniel M. Rico, "La Microeconomia De La Produccion y Tráfico De Cocaína En Colombia," (2010).; Loveman, Addicted to Failure: U.S. Security Policy in Latin America and the Andean Region, 367; Thoumi, Illegal Drugs, Economy and Society in the Andes, 416; Tokatlian, Globalización, Narcotráfico y Violencia: Siete Ensayos Sobre Colombia. ; Tokatlian, The United States and Illegal Crops in Colombia, 29; Tokatlian, Seguridad y Drogas, 44.
income for coca cultivators, and, therefore, they learn from past interdiction efforts. Even after plants are sprayed, growers can clean the plants or spray products to ensure that the coca does not die. Ramírez Lemus, Stanton, and Walsh assert, “though large-scale producers are known to fragment their coca field in order to avoid detection, most small coca plots are cultivated by individual farmers for their own subsistence.”

In addition to aerial spraying, Plan Colombia allocated money for manual eradication and other programs such as crop substitution. As of May 2008, the Colombian governmental officials revealed that manual eradication initiatives resulted in the eradication of 28,000 hectares. Manual eradication presents several challenges. One of the main challenges of manual eradication becomes providing individuals participating in the program security from the guerrilla organizations that earn profits from coca cultivation and can threaten the lives of individuals participating in such programs. It becomes a rational choice for a coca cultivator to grow coca not only in order to earn more profits per yield of coca than other products, but also in order to live and avoid being persecuted by the guerrilla organizations as well as other drug trafficking organizations. It is important to note that many of the areas where coca is cultivated are located in contested areas that are inundated with FARC operatives. Despite various initiatives designed to protect participants in manual eradication, reports indicate that violence still occurred against manual eradicators by various means, including fire from snipers as well as the use of improvised explosive devises and minefields. By the end of

335 Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War, 61-98,117.
336 Mares, Drug Wars and Coffeehouses: The Political Economy of the International Drug Trade, 188; Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University; Mejia and Restrepo, The War on Illegal Drugs in Producer and Consumer Countries: A Simple Analytical Framework; Mejia and Rico, La Microeconomía De La Producción y Tráfico De Cocaína En Colombia; Menzel, Cocaine Quagmire :Implementing the U.S. Anti-Drug Policy in the North Andes-Colombia, 213.
August 2008, 23 manual eradicators died as a result of such actions taken against them by the various groups that stand to profit from coca cultivation. Reports indicate that the total number of individuals that died from participating in the manual eradication program reached 118 over a three year period (2005 to 2008). Manual eradication initiatives occur in some of the most dangerous regions of Colombia that are controlled by the FARC, and, as a result, the Colombians must provide the participants in the manual eradication program with security in order to prevent them from being killed. For the aforementioned reasons, it would be a mistake to believe that manual eradication efforts have been successful in decreasing coca production.

**INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT**

Another major consequence of the aerial spraying initiatives has been the displacement of many individuals who live in the regions affected by aerial spraying. Poor, small farmers, in particular, are harmed as a result of aerial spraying and are forced to relocate to other regions. Various organizations such as the Council for Human Rights and Displacement in Colombia have conducted research and estimated 75,000 people have been displaced in 2001 and 2002 as a result of aerial spraying. It is important to note that

these displaced farmers, many of whom live near the border of Ecuador, are not eligible for the same governmental benefits provided to individuals displaced as a result the internal conflict.338

One can read newspapers and read stories about seizures in drug shipments or the capturing of drug traffickers, yet, it is important to be skeptical of the overall trends. A capturing of one drug dealer and the seizure of several shipments does not change the fact that the U.S. has spent billions of dollars fighting the war on drugs in Colombia. The overall empirical measures demonstrate that drugs remained more readily available during this period and easier to purchase. Youngers and Rosin note that contrary to the evidence, U.S. officials continue to view counterdrug programs as effective. They state:

A significant gap exists in the U.S. drug control programs between expansive goals and limited achievements. U.S. officials routinely assert that international counterdrug programs are successful. Short-term tactical successes are indeed evidence—coca crops are eradicated, traffickers are arrested, and shipments are intercepted…There is no evidence demonstrating a significant reduction in the supply of illicit drugs on the U.S. city streets. To the contrary, the stability of price and purity levels of drugs point to their continued accessibility. Winning the drug war is as elusive today as it was when the effort was first launched.339

**URIΒE’S DEPARTURE FROM POWER**

In 2010, Uribe departed from power after the Colombian courts ruled on the referendum, denying him the opportunity to run for a third term in Colombia. Some have hailed the ruling as a victory for Colombian democracy. He certainly accomplished a tremendous

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amount in terms of decreasing violence in Colombia and combating the terrorists. By the end of his tenure, Uribe was very unpopular with many leaders in Latin America, but he remained the only ally of the Bush administration in the region and continued to support Bush’s vision with regards to the global war on terror. Uribe went as far as to allow the U.S. to create bases in Colombia, which irritated his neighbors to no avail. Uribe certainly did not improve his relations with Colombia’s neighbors, nor did he devote any effort to promoting cooperation with his neighbors. Uribe declared that two of Colombia’s neighbors, Ecuador and Venezuela, both allowed the FARC as well as the ELN to relocate near the borders of Colombia and each country. Uribe went a step further and “publicly accused Venezuela and Ecuador of acquiescing or tolerating the presence of FARCA and ELN on their territory and even aiding and financing them.” Such acquisitions did not sit well the leaders in Caracas and Quito and resulted in tense, or perhaps a better word would be cantankerous relations, between Colombia and its neighbors. In sum, by the end of his reign, Uribe had lost a tremendous amount of soft power with other countries in the region. By the end of Uribe’s presidency, he did not have a friend in the region after alienating and subordinating diplomatic relations to winning the war against the narco-terrorists.

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340 BBC NEWS | Americas | Uribe Defends Security Policies ; President Bush Honors Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients ; U.S. Military Base Plan Puts Colombia in Hot Water - TIME "Santos v Uribe (Colombian Politics)," 403, no. 8779 (2010); Uribe, A Bush Ally, Treads on Shaky Ground - TIME
341 Colombia Uribe Says Venezuela is Paradise for Terrorist - Bloomberg
342 Crisis Group report 4 Latinobarómetro Poll: Latin Americans, Despite Stereotype, are Political Moderates - World Public Opinion ; Uribe, A Bush Ally, Treads on Shaky Ground - TIME ; Fight Against Drug Trafficking in Colombia is Failing: Experts - Colombia News | Colombia Reports Venezuela Expels Colombian Ambassador - Daily News - EL UNIVERSAL
343 BBC NEWS | Americas | Uribe Defends Security Policies ; U.S. Military Base Plan Puts Colombia in Hot Water - TIME
Uribe’s major accomplishment was the weakening of the FARC. Uribe argued that his administration dealt a crushing blow to the FARC, and Colombia was on the verge of achieving a new stage in its history by reaching the “post-conflict stage.” Indeed, the Uribe administration forced the FARC into retreat, but this does not mean that the FARC as well as the other actors are still not operating. In addition, these various groups also have the capability to rearm and strengthen their power. A report by the International Crisis group states that “Nevertheless, insurgents,-- though significantly weakened-- have adapted and continue to operate, while new security threats have emerged in both rural and urban areas.”

After eight years, Uribe left the Presidency in Colombia with an abysmal record on human rights and various scandals. One of the most controversial scandals was the “False Positives” scandal, where members of the Colombian military dressed civilians in FARC attire in order to inflate the statistics with regards to the number of FARC members killed. Increased statistics would enable them to be eligible for rewards in the form of monetary bonuses. Under Uribe, the military also violated international humanitarian law with such tactics. In sum, Uribe’s legacy has been one of mixed-feelings, as many of his accomplishments have been accompanied by human rights abuses. Said differently, the “Uribe legacy, consequently, is mixed, since violent conflict

has become more diffuse, with a broader range of criminal and armed groups operating and interacting in both rural and urban areas.”³⁴⁵

**Election of Juan Manuel Santos**

The former defense minister for Uribe, Juan Manuel Santos, defeated Antanas Mockus, a member of the Green Party, in a landslide victory, winning 69 percent of the presidential-runoff that occurred on June 20, 2010.³⁴⁶ Santos’s ascension to President of Colombia represents a critical juncture as he made many fundamental changes in terms of policy. The most fundamental change was his recognition of Colombia having an internal armed conflict. This is a fundamental shift from Uribe, who denied that Colombia had an internal armed conflict, and, instead, said that Colombia simply had terrorists. Experts, however, never have denied that Colombia has had an internal armed conflict, as it has been occurring for decades. Uribe has responded publicly to President Santos’ discussion of the internal “armed conflict.” Santos was Uribe’s right-hand man, and he has started talking about an internal conflict, in essence, challenging Uribe’s construction of the situation in Colombia. Using the words “armed conflict” implies civil war, while Uribe stressed that Colombia had a terrorist problem. Hannah Stone writes, “this was met with a furious response by his predecessor and one-time mentor, Alvaro Uribe, who insists that the country faces not an internal conflict, but a terrorist threat.”³⁴⁷ The former president fired off a volley of Tweets via Twitter, complaining that the country’s armed

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.
³⁴⁷ *Santos v Uribe (Colombian Politics)*
groups are terrorists fighting against a legitimate state, and do not deserve the status of belligerents, and should not be given political recognition.”

**SANTOS SEeks to Assist Marginalized Communities**

Certain groups in particular, such as the various indigenous communities as well as the Afro-Colombians, have been prone to maltreatment by the armed conflict. In 1990, Colombia passed laws that enabled the Afro-Colombian communities to gain the title to their lands that they have occupied for many years. Afro-Colombians have faced extreme violence, particularly from the Paramilitaries, because the Afro-Colombians are located in land that can be used to produce coca and later processed into cocaine. The Colombian state has not ensured the security of the Afro-Colombian communities in rural Colombia, and, therefore, many individuals have experienced violence and or even have been killed. Amnesty International describes the lack of security and precarious situation that the Afro-Colombians must endure, stating:

Over recent years, Afro-descendant communities living in departments bordering the Pacific coast of Colombia have faced repeated death threats, killing and forced displacement at the hands of the paramilitary, either acting alone or with the collusion of the security forces, who accuse them of being guerrilla collaborators. These human rights violations are often motivated by efforts to secure control over lands rich in mineral resources or with other economic potential. Many of these lands are legally owned by Afro-descendant communities who hold collective land titles. Repeatedly, paramilitaries have threatened and killed members of these communities just in advance of or after they have been granted these land rights. Guerrilla forces have also killed and threatened members of these communities accusing them of siding with the security forces or with paramilitary groups.

This statement by Amnesty International demonstrates that the Afro-Colombians have experienced many hardships and the Colombian state under Uribe have failed to provide

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these vulnerable communities with security and basic rights. Many politicians have ignored marginalized groups, such as the Afro-Colombians, but President Santos has taken steps to address the grievances of such a vulnerable population. Despite such efforts by Uribe to improve the security of these groups, the murder rates of such populations continue to increase. The Santos administration must provide further protection for these groups, as they are still subjected to the large levels of violence. Said differently, the “protective measures defined by the government for Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, their organizations, and leaders are insufficient.” Critics complain that the Colombian state has not taken into considerations the opinions and suggestions of the marginalized communities with regards to the creation of policies. In other words, such policies have not “advanced in the creation of effective protective measures that are consulted with the affected communities and take into account the specificities of their ethnicity and the collective nature of their communities.” In addition, the Santos administration has failed to ensure the security of these groups despite constant threats.

**THE VICTIM’S LAW**

President Santos did not wait long before addressing issues such as human rights abuses, which were largely ignored under Uribe. Uribe sought to combat the terrorists using the necessary force required and ignored the repercussions of such policies, such as human rights abuses. In 2009 alone, 177 crimes occurred and were recorded in Colombia against human rights activists. It is quite possible that many more occurred under Uribe’s

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350 Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 1-25; Santos v Uribe (Colombian Politics), 10.
351 Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 1-25 ,12
352 Ibid.,12
administration. Of the 177 crimes that have been documented, the paramilitaries were responsible for approximately 47 percent of these crimes. Various state agencies also participated in such crimes and abuses of human rights, accounting for an estimated 9 percent of the recorded crimes.\textsuperscript{353}

From the beginning, Santos vowed to address human rights abuses and has attempted to separate his administration from the past scandals and abuses that occurred during his predecessor’s administration. Just three months into his Presidency, Santos proposed and submitted two important laws to the Congress in Colombia that sought to address human rights violations and compensate individuals who have experienced hardships as a result of the internal conflict within Colombia. The Colombian congress combined the two pieces of legislation proposed by Santos into one law, which is known as the Victim’s Law. The congress officially passed the law on June 10\textsuperscript{th}, 2011. The law sought to compensate victims from the internal armed conflict in Colombia from 1985 until 2011.\textsuperscript{354} This is something that Uribe rejected because he did not believe that Colombia had an internal conflict. Uribe had a different perception as well as different solutions to the problem. For Uribe, resources had to be spent combating the various terrorist organizations, resulting in a continued decrease in violence and prosperity in Colombia.

The law begins with the acceptance by the Colombian government that an internal armed conflict in Colombia continues to occur. The Law, therefore, is partly symbolic but also clearly identifies that Colombia has an armed conflict and something must be

\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., 3. This is according to a human rights NGO.

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 15, see war of wards Ibid.; Santos v Uribe (Colombian Politics); "Santos Firma Decreto De Ley De Victimas | ELESPECTADOR.COM " http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/imagen-317740-santos-firma-decreto-de-ley-de-victimas (accessed 8/22/2012, 2012).
done in order to compensate the plethora of victims that have been forced to flee their homes as a result of such large-scale violence.\textsuperscript{355} The Victim’s Law recognizes that individuals who suffered hardships have rights, and, in particular, the right to receive reparations for their hardships. The law symbolizes a fundamental shift from Uribe and a step in the right direction with regards to addressing human rights abuses. However, various challenges still exist with regards to the implementation of the law. Critics have criticized the Colombian government for not consulting the different human rights organizations in order to listen and incorporate their concerns with the law. A report by the Washington Office on Latin America states, “we hope that the government meets the obligations stated in the law and that it guarantees the participation of victims and civil society in the different phases and implementation.”\textsuperscript{356}

The Colombian government also has faced challenges with regards to people desiring restitution as a result of human rights abuses. Leaders of communities that have been displaced a result of the Colombian armed conflict have been murdered as they sought reparations from the Colombian state. It has been reported that various leaders requested protection from the Colombian state because they had received threats. Yet, the Colombian State has failed to protect the leaders of these groups and these individuals were later murdered for their attempts to regain the land that they had been removed


\textsuperscript{356}Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 1-25,15 "BBC Mundo - Noticias - Colombia: Las Víctimas De La Ley De Víctimas "
from. The Washington Office on Latin America notes, “it is a great concern that the law does not sufficiently guarantee a protection program for the victims, witnesses and public servants that assures the life and integrity of the persons and families reclaiming their land rights.”\textsuperscript{357} In other words, the Colombian government has the responsibility to protect individuals who have suffered from such hardships and ensure that they do not experience more violations of their human rights as a result of their attempts to reclaim their land. The WOLA report continues, stating, “It is broadly demonstrated that current protection programs do not respond to the security needs of the displaced population and victims. As they stand, these programs cannot guarantee the protection of communities that wish to return to their lands in their places of origin.”\textsuperscript{358} In sum, the reparations policies represent a step in the right direction, but the Colombian state suffers from traditional weaknesses and has not demonstrated the ability to protect citizens within the country who are supposed to benefit from this program. The murder of 18 leaders of such communities despite some requesting protection from the government is quite embarrassing. Efforts must be made to protect many of the most vulnerable populations in Colombia.\textsuperscript{359}

Jan Camilo Restrepo, the Colombian Minister of Agriculture, announced in October of 2010 the creation of what has been titled the Pilot Project for the Restitution and Formalization of Lands and Territory. The project has several major goals, including increasing the territories that belong to various marginalized populations in Colombia, such as the Afro-Colombians. The project also seeks to provide farmers with the rights to

\textsuperscript{357} Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 1-25,16
\textsuperscript{358} Ibid., 16
\textsuperscript{359} Ibid., 16-18.
the land that they have farmed on for more than five years by granting them an official
title, or ownership of the property. The program has witnessed some results, particularly
with regards to granting farmers ownership of the land. Despite these initial results, the
lack of security continues to hinder further progress from being made with regards to
restitution initiatives. The project has enabled some farmers to receive the official title of
their property, but problems have arisen with regards to the implementation of the land as
a result of security factors.360

ADDRESSING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Upon assuming the Presidency, Santos also sought to address the internal displacement
problem within Colombia as a result of the internal armed conflict. Millions of
Colombians have been forced to flee their homes because of fear for their lives and
violence in their communities. In fact, Colombia remains the world’s leader with the
largest number of individuals displaced, surpassing other war-torn countries, such as Iraq,
Sudan, and Afghanistan. In fact, Colombia produces the greatest number of refugees in
Latin America.361 Research indicates that approximately 117,000 Colombians are
documented refugees and have obtained official refugee status. This number, however,
does not include the number of people who are located in other countries illegally and
have not officially received refugee status. It also is important to note that the refugees
have relocated to over 20 countries.362 The refugees strain the social services in many of
the other countries, which cannot afford to continue accepting large inflows of refugees

360 Ibid.,18 UNHCR | Refworld | Profile of Internal Displacement: Colombia ; Michael Solis: Colombia’s
Internally Displaced People ; IDMC | Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Colombia
361 UNHCR | Refworld | Profile of Internal Displacement: Colombia ; Michael Solis: Colombia’s Internally
Displaced People ; IDMC | Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Colombia
362 Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 14
every year due to the current economic recession. Santos’s Victim’s Law is an effort to address the internal displacement as a result of the internal conflict, but the weakness of the Colombian state continues to hinder progress. The number of displacements continues to increase, as the Colombian government lacks the appropriate capacity and strength to address such problems.363

The refugees also remain susceptible to attacks by the guerrilla organizations. In particular, “the refugee population that resides in the areas along the border with Colombia continues to be victimized by attacks perpetrated by Colombian illegal armed groups. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and recruitment into trafficking networks.”364 The National Development Plan for 2010-2014 (PND) is the official program developed to help displaced persons. However, the PND “does not include any concrete measures of prevention of displacement nor protection of this population during its displacement, return, or reintegration.”365 In sum, although Santos faces various challenges and minimal progress has been achieved, such advances still represent drastic changes from Uribe.

ADDRESSING IMPUNITY

Colombia has had a long history of impunity in which violators of human rights are not held accountable for their egregious actions. The Santos administration also has made changes in order to prosecute violators of human rights. This represents yet another fundamental shift away from the Uribe administration that failed to prosecute human rights violators.

363 Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 1-25, 13
364 Ibid., 14.
365 Ibid., 14. In the report, the authors put this in bold for emphasis.
rights violators. The Uribe administration even assisted violators of human rights to avoid being prosecuted by undermining the legitimate efforts of the courts.\textsuperscript{366} Defenders of human rights also have been threatened with violence and even murder for their stances. In addition to human rights advocates, key witnesses in human rights cases have received threats and even been murdered, prohibiting justice. Such threats deter potential witnesses from discussing violations with law enforcement officials because the Colombian state has clearly demonstrated that it has not been capable of protecting these witnesses from the violators of human rights. It is important to note that witnesses and human rights activists have not been the only groups that have been threatened or even killed as lawyers and judges also have been murdered.\textsuperscript{367}

A new Prosecutor General was appointed in Colombia in December of 2010, representing a positive step because until this point, the position had been empty. The Prosecutor General has attempted to use the judicial system to prosecute human rights violators. Despite valiant efforts, Colombia still records an astonishing impunity rate of 90 percent. To say the least, the new leader of the criminal justice system faces many challenges, particularly with regards to the prosecution of human rights violators. Critics argue: “the administration of justice in cases of violations against human rights defenders

\textsuperscript{366} Human rights watch Impunity 2
remains tragic. The majority of investigations remain in the preliminary phase. The prosecution also has been slow because the cases are investigated in what can best be described as a decentralized manner. Human rights advocates state that “a repeated recommendation from Colombian and U.S. human rights groups is to centralize these cases within the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Unit of the Prosecutor General’s office in Bogotá.” The Prosecutor General also faces challenges because he lacks the appropriate resources necessary to administer justice.

**Peace Talks**

In June of 2012, the Congress in Colombia passed a law that potentially paved the way for peace talks with the guerrilla organizations. Such actions represent a fundamental shift from Uribe, who came to power vowing to combat the FARC and refused to negotiate with these organizations. In part, the Colombians elected Uribe for his hard-line stances against the FARC and his refusal to negotiate with such “terrorist” organizations as voters remembered the disastrous negotiations that occurred between the FARC and the Colombian government during the Pastrana administration. Pastrana’s demilitarized zone provided the FARC with territory the size of Switzerland, enabling them to reorganize and centralize their operations in this lawless territory. The negotiations failed and, in essence, provided the FARC with their own state where they could operate free from intervention by the Colombian state.

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368 *Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office*, 3.
369 Ibid., 3 *Colombia Making Progress Against Impunity: UN - Colombia News | Colombia Reports; Impunity Remains High for Crimes Against Colombian Unionists - Colombia News | Colombia Reports; Norwegian Human Rights Fund; Colombia must Fight Impunity for Sexual Violence Crimes – UN Official*
Santos’s new policy to negotiate with the Marxist rebels has provoked controversy as many Colombians remember the failed negotiations that occurred under the Pastrana administration. In 2012, the Colombian Senate passed the “Legal Framework for Peace.” This bill proposed less stringent sentences for leaders of the FARC if the Colombian State and the FARC could reach a peace agreement. The logic is that the Colombian government is willing to negotiate reduced sentences in order for peace to occur within Colombia, as Colombians have become tired of dealing with the decades old armed conflict. Santos hopes to move forward and obtain peace within Colombia despite the various challenges. Millions of Colombians have been victims as a result of the armed conflict, and Santos, therefore, has separated himself from Uribe and has been willing to initiate new policies in order to achieve the goals.

**SANTOS AND THE WAR ON DRUGS**

Santos has recognized that the war on drugs has been an utter failure in Colombia. He has argued that it is necessary to have a serious debate regarding drug policy and that something needs to be done to change the current situation. In an interview, Santos stated:

> I would talk about legalising (sic) marijuana and more than just marijuana. If the world thinks that this is the correct approach, because for example in our case we used to be exporters, but we were replaced by producers in California. And there even was a referendum in California to legalise it and they lost it but they could have won it. I ask myself how would you explain marijuana being legalised in California and cocaine consumption being penalised (sic) in Idaho? It’s a contradiction. So it’s a difficult problem where you set the limits. It’s a difficult decision. For example, I would never legalise very hard drugs like morphine or heroin because in fact they are suicidal drugs. I might consider legalising cocaine if there is a world consensus because this drug

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370 Merco Press, *Colombia passes law*
371 The internal conflict in Colombia and the future of the country has been debated by many experts. Scholars have varying opinions with regards to the peace process in Colombia and what the future holds for the country. One of the most comprehensive books is the edited volume by Restrepo and Bagley.
has affected us most here in Colombia. I don’t know what is more harmful, cocaine or marijuana. That’s a health discussion. But again, only if there is a consensus.\footnote{372}

Santos’s comments reveal that he is open to a serious discussion about legalization of drugs, implying that he desires for the discussion to be based on sound scientific evidence with regards to the health impacts that such drugs have on people. It appears that Santos has a different social construction of the war on drugs as well as the potential solutions. Indeed, his perceptions are quite different than his predecessors, and some might even criticize him as being radical.

Santos understands that the U.S. led war on drugs has caused a tremendous amount of bloodshed and violence. The Colombians are tired of experiencing the hardships that have resulted from the war on drugs, and Santos’s statements symbolize the willingness of the President to move in a new direction in regards to drug policies and the war on drugs. Santos’s statements represent a fundamental shift in policy from Uribe, who desired to combat coca cultivation because the production of such substances helped fuel the terrorist organizations. Uribe refused to listen to critics about the negative repercussions of aerial spraying. As previously discussed, many studies had been conducted that demonstrate that the aerial spraying program in Colombia has had disastrous health and environmental effects. Uribe never talked about legalization or decriminalization of drugs. He had a different social construction and focused on supply-

\footnote{372 "Colombian President Calls for Global Rethink on Drugs | World News | the Observer " http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/13/colombia-juan-santos-call-to-legalise-drugs (accessed 8/22/2012, 2012).}
side initiatives, attempting to simultaneously combat the cultivation, production, and trafficking of drugs in Colombia.

Some scholars have criticized Santos, arguing that such statements are merely rhetoric. Daniel Mejia claim, “as time goes by, what I have seen is pure rhetoric. Yeah, let’s open a debate and it is welcome but I [Santos] will not push it.” Mejia contents that the debate for legalization must start in Colombia or Mexico because it will not begin in other countries that have not suffered as much as Colombia or Mexico from the war on drugs. In other words, Mejia questions who will begin the debate regarding the war on drugs if Colombia or Mexico fail to start such dialogues and discussions.

In sum, Juan Manuel Santos has recognized that the war on drugs has been a failure and many people have suffered in Colombia as a result of such policies. Santos is open to addressing new agenda and promoting new policies. Indeed, Santos remains an ally of the U.S., but Colombia desired to have more relative autonomy to make its decisions. Under Santos, the Colombia government no longer wants to be subordinate to the U.S. and is diversifying its partners, seeking trade relations with China. Such actions defy realist logic, which argues that a country can either balance, or bandwagon. Santos is maintaining good relations with the U.S., but he is not putting all his hopes or political clout into the U.S. Instead, he has sought to diversify his partners in order to

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373 Mejia interview Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Alaims of "Success" Don't Stand Up to Scrutin, 1-13; Isacson, Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellín, Colombia, 1-19; Mejia and Rico, La Microeconomía De La Producción y Tráfico De Cocaína En Colombia; Mejia and Restrepo, The War on Illegal Drugs in Producer and Consumer Countries: A Simple Analytical Framework; Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University

374 ibid

crease the relative autonomy of Colombia. This is a stark contrast from Uribe who placed all his faith on the Bush administration.376

CONCLUSION

Plan Colombia has been very controversial, particularly as a result of the aerial spraying initiatives. Despite the failures of aerial spraying, the U.S. continued this activity for many years. More recently, the U.S. has supported more efforts at manual eradication programs. The aerial spraying initiatives in Colombia have not only been ineffective but have been counterproductive. Mejia states, “what we’ve seen is that aerial spraying does not work as a strategy.” Mejia declares that rigorous studies using quasi-natural experiments, structural models, and economic strategies prove that aerial spraying does not work. He continues, “it does not reduce coca cultivation in the medium, or short-term, or long-run. What it does is create incentives so that farmers, in the presence of aerial spraying…but plant more coca.”

Coca cultivators must adapt to external actors in order to continue to survive. For instance, molasses can be sprayed on the plants in order to protect it from the pesticides. The U.S. has financed efforts to spray pesticides from airplanes, which has had many negative consequences in terms of health and environmental effects. The U.S., however, continues to deny such reports and argues that aerial spraying is safe. Washington counters critics by defining the accuracy of the spraying, arguing that pilots control for wind. Research, however, demonstrates that spray drift has been a major issue.377

376 Ibid.
377 Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, Colombia: A Vicious Cricle of Drugs and War, 61-98,118.
Despite spending a tremendous amount of money on spraying coca cultivated in Colombia, drug cultivation increased overtime. It is impossible to define the program as a success if the number of hectares being sprayed led to increases in cultivation, or barely impacted the percentage of coca being cultivated. Sandro Calvani, the Director of the UNODC Colombia Program in Bogotà from 2003 to 2007, argues that Plan Colombia was overly ambitious, stating:

Like several other International initiatives against illicit drugs born or strengthened in the '80s, the goals of Plan Colombia were over-ambitious and wrongly targeted. The drug problem was wrongly defined as a mainly criminal matter, which it is not: it is instead mainly a public health issue on the consumers' side and a poverty issue on the producers' side. The wrong definition or perception led to a quite inaccurate priorities of the goals of the Plan and of its activities, which focused on law enforcement against drug criminals, who are just the link between producers and consumers, instead of focusing on the two ends of the market. Such inaccurately defined goals were the wrong foundation for a success, which in fact did not happen.  

In addition, it is quite difficult to receive an accurate report with regards to the impacts of spraying coca. It is important to note that various agencies have different mechanisms for calculating coca, and, therefore have found different results. Washington calculated that the area under cultivation decreased by seven percent since 1999. On the other hand, the United Nations’ research resulted in a much different number. According to the UN, the aerial spraying initiatives since 1999 resulted in a 50 percent decrease in the area being cultivated in Colombia. A 50 percent decrease in the area of coca being cultivated suggests that the aerial spraying programs have been effective, while a seven percent decrease implies that the program has been much less effective.

378 Calvani, Sandrow. UNODC, July 31, 2012. Dr. Calvani wanted to note that such statements are his opinion and not the agencies which he worked for in the past.
effective. This also raises another important issue in terms of how agencies measure coca being cultivated and the difficulty in finding such information.  

Uribe placed all of his faith in the Bush administration for support and rewarded the Bush administration for their aid to Colombia. By the end of Uribe’s Presidency, he hardly had an ally in the region, as he had alienated many of them with his desire to combat the internal terrorists operating within Colombia. The border crossing to capture Raul Reyes in Ecuador resulted in substantial tension between the two countries. Uribe also accused both Ecuador and Venezuela of assisting the ELN and the FARC. In sum, Uribe’s Presidency did not improve the soft power of Colombia in the region, nor did it help promote cooperation between Colombia and other countries in the region.

In addition to angering his neighbors, Uribe upset many human rights advocates around the world for his failure to address the grave human rights abuses within Colombia. Extremely high levels of impunity continued under Uribe for violators of human rights. The former President even went as far to meddle in the internal affairs of the Colombian Court and successfully undermined cases to prosecute violators of human rights. Uribe basically became so focused on combating the narco-terrorists that he ignored any of the repercussions or collateral damage, such as human rights abuses. In addition, Uribe failed to help address the displacement of a plethora of Colombians,

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379 Veillette, Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACID) and Related Funding Programs: FY2005 Assistance, 1-36; Veillette, Plan Colombia: A Progress Report, 1-11; Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, 115.


381 Impunity Remains High for Crimes Against Colombian Unionists - Colombia News | Colombia Reports; Norwegian Human Rights Fund; Colombia must Fight Impunity for Sexual Violence Crimes – UN Official; Human Rights during the Juan Manuel Santos Administration's First Year in Office, 1-25
who were forced to flee their homes as a result of the violence. Uribe did not seek to accommodate victims and merely sought to continue combating the FARC and forcing them to retreat, ignoring the millions of displaced Colombians. Uribe also failed to ensure basic security for many vulnerable members of the population living within Colombia.382

The Court’s decision to not allow Uribe to run for a third term resulted in the election of Juan Manuel Santos to the Presidency in Colombia. Santos, the Former Defense Minister under Uribe, became the President of Colombia and made some drastic changes from his predecessor. Santos and Uribe had fundamentally different social constructions of the problems as well as the solutions within Colombia. Santos came to power and recognized the importance of human rights and the need to prosecute human rights violators as a result of the internal armed conflict. The new President also vowed to compensate victims for their hardships as a result of the internal conflict within Colombia. The recognition that an internal armed conflict did indeed exist within Colombia represented a major milestone in Colombia as Uribe refused to recognize that Colombia had an internal conflict but rather terrorists terrorists.

Another major shift happened when President Santos said that he would be willing to negotiate with the guerrilla organizations. This represents a fundamental change from Uribe, who came to power in Colombia and refused to negotiate with the FARC. Many Colombians voted for Uribe as a hard-line candidate who would be tough against the FARC and combat them unlike Pastrana, who negotiated with them and implemented the demilitarized zone. Uribe prepared for the post-conflict stage at the end of his presidency. However, believing that the FARC no longer presented a threat for

382 Santos v Uribe (Colombian Politics)
Colombia and would cease to exist was a major mistake. Indeed, Uribe dealt striking blows to the organization, but the FARC continued to operate and has the capability to rearm and strengthen their capabilities.383

Santos has attempted to implement the appropriate changes in order to prosecute violators. While many challenges still exist with regards to the prosecution, Santos’s efforts are a step in the right direction and represent a drastic change from Uribe. Under Uribe, impunity remained a major problem and the Colombia judiciary system failed to prosecute many individuals who participated in egregious acts and violated the human rights of Colombians. Uribe even interfered with the judiciary system in order to ensure that the court did not prosecute offers for violations of human rights.

The final major difference between Santos and Uribe deals with the issue of drug production and trafficking. For Uribe, the drugs provided the terrorists with the revenue necessary to finance their operations. Uribe viewed drugs as a major problem and sought to increase aerial spraying programs. He refused to recognize the futility of the aerial spraying programs despite empirical evidence that coca cultivation actually increased under his Presidency.384 Contrary to Uribe, President Santos has recognized that the war


384 A shift later occurred from aerial spraying to manual eradication initiatives. Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Alaims of "Success" Don't Stand Up to Scrutin, 1-13; Isacson, Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellin, Colombia, 1-19.
on drugs has been an utter failure. He has publicly stated that he is open to discussion regarding legalization and decriminalization based on sound research and international consensus. In sum, the former right-hand man to Uribe, Santos, has sought to undo the policies that Uribe implemented and move Colombia forward in a different direction. Santos believes the war on drugs has not worked and Colombia needs to move forward and discuss alternatives as opposed to continuing to repeat the same mistakes of the past.
CHAPTER FIVE: DE-SECURITIZING PLAN COLOMBIA

In the aftermath of the transition between?, Obama pledged to support Colombia. In reality, he has sought to de-securitize Colombia as a major security issue and priority for the U.S. government. Why did the U.S. cut funding to Plan Colombia and attempt to de-securitize Colombia? How have efforts been made to de-securitize Colombia? Has Obama successfully de-securitized Colombia? In terms of methodology, the use of authoritative speech acts and an analysis of the financial resources will help demonstrate whether or not Colombia has successfully been de-securitized.

This chapter will examine the notion of de-securitization. Barry Buzan and his colleagues at the Copenhagen School provide scholars with a methodology for analyzing how something becomes securitized. However, they fail to examine how an issue can become de-securitized. This chapter argues that Obama has de-securitized Colombia as a result of other more pressing priorities that he inherited from President Bush. Obama inherited two wars from George W. Bush as well as a dire economic situation, hailed by the experts as the worst financial recession since the Great Depression. Mexico also began to explode with violence as a result of the various gangs battling for control of turf and drug routes. Voices emerged that sought to de-securitize the war on drugs and shift the foreign policy goals in Colombia during the end of the Bush administration. This chapter seeks to trace the beginning of the de-securitization effort in Colombia. In order

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385 Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, Security: A New Framework for Analysis, 239
to do this, it is important to briefly examine the emersion of Plan Colombia II as a proposal that began the discussion about de-securitization.386

This chapter uses speech acts as well as analyze the allocation of resources for Plan Colombia in order to prove that President Obama has sought to de-securitize drug war in Colombia. Authoritative speech acts enable scholars to track the discourse of key figures with regards to a country. However, one can say whatever he or she wants, but this does not mean that the goals are accomplished. Speech acts alone, however, do not suffice; politicians can speak about a topic and attempt to change the discourse on the subject, but this does not mean that such efforts will succeed. This requires scholars to “follow the money” and examine if resources have been allocated to support the goal of subject that the politician is attempting to securitize.

Examining the allocation of resources is the best way to determine if something has been successful because politicians and members of the epistemic community can discuss issues in public, but this does not mean that their goals have been achieved. Many scholars and policy makers comprise the epistemic community and have talked about the need for Washington to have a serious debate about drug policies and change the course of U.S. foreign policy. For decades, academicians have written about the failed war on drugs in Colombia and the need for change, but this does not mean that Washington has listened. This can be proven when one examines the finances and allocation of resources to Colombia through programs such as Plan Colombia.387 In sum,

387 Bruce Bagley, for instance, has been writing about this topic for decades. In addition, Ethan Nadelmann has been one of the leading advocates for harm reduction policies and the legalization of drugs. Bagley, The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America, pp. 161-182;
speech acts of authoritative figures are important and provide useful insight into the
discourse of the subject but alone they are insufficient. Politicians and key figures can try
to change the discourse and perceptions of the public. Examining the allocation of
resources is vitally important, and is what I have termed “the show me the money”
phenomenon. In order to prove that something has been successfully securitized or de-
securitized, scholars must follow the money trail in order to see if a security issue has
successfully been securitized or even de-securitized. Proving the de-securitization of the
war on drugs in Colombia requires an examination of the allocation of resources provided
by the U.S.

PLAN COLOMBIA II

Before delving into Obama’s efforts to de-securitize the war on drugs in Colombia, it is
important to understand that significant alterations were made to change the direction of
Plan Colombia starting even before the beginning of the Obama administration. In 2007,
the National Planning Department (NDP) and Department of Justice and Security (DJS)
produce a report titled Colombia’s Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting
Social Development (2007 – 2013). This Plan is often referred to as Plan Colombia II.
Plan Colombia II promoted a rethinking of past efforts and an inversion of Plan
Colombia. Washington allocated 80 percent of the resources for Plan Colombia towards
“hard” components. Plan Colombia II proposed developmental issues. According to The
Miami Herald, “58 percent of the money would go toward economic and social projects,

388 This is a famous line from the movie Jerry McGuire. See "Jerry Maguire (1996) - IMDb "
including strengthening human rights and the justice system, long thought to be weak points in the Colombian government.”

Several agencies in Colombia developed Plan Colombia II with ten major goals or objectives in mind. The report states that “the Strategy presented by the national government for consideration by the international community has the main goal of consolidating achievements and advancing still further on the main goals of: strengthening democracy, overcoming threats to democratic stability, promoting human rights, promoting economic development and social development, and fighting poverty.”

Steven Dudley estimated that the Plan would cost $43 billion. The authors of Plan Colombia II recognized the successes against the FARC under the Uribe administration, but they emphasized the fact that Colombia needs aid to promote “soft issues.” In no particular order, the ten major points of Plan Colombia II are as follows:

1) Promote alternative development and provide Colombians with other legal alternatives. In addition, the Plan seeks to promote environmental awareness and conservation.
2) Consolidate the current accomplishments against the various “narco-terrorist” organizations.
3) Consolidate territorial control, especially in regions that have experienced extreme levels of violence and conflict.
4) Promote flexibility and cooperation
5) Promote the efforts to demobilize actors and members in the armed groups.
6) Improve policies against human rights violators.
7) Fight impunity.
8) Improve the economy.
9) Develop and improve social policies.
10) Help individuals displaced as a result of the internal conflict and drug war.

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389 See Dudley
390 Colombia’s Strategy For Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development (2007-2013), 1-80
391 Ibid.
While Plan Colombia II represents a critical juncture because it raised the dialogue for shifts in the thought process regarding the war on drugs in Colombia as well as the internal conflict within the country, Plan Colombia II failed to make progress and was implemented by neither the U.S. nor Colombia. For the remainder of his tenure, Uribe sought to combat the FARC and “narco-terrorists,” and he continued to ignore issues such as human rights violations and alternative development. As discussed in the previous chapters, Santos has addressed some of the challenges and proposals made in Plan Colombia II. Ultimately, while Plan Colombia II never came to fruition, it represents a critical juncture because it promoted rethinking Plan Colombia and implementing new policies.

**Why Obama Would Cut Plan Colombia**

Before proving this, it is important to examine why Obama would want to defund Plan Colombia after the U.S. has provided the Colombians with billions of dollars to fight the drug war. The first major reason is that President Obama inherited many problems from the previous administration and sought to re-orient U.S. foreign policies and priorities. Obama inherited two very costly and unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While President Obama did not support the war in Iraq, he assumed responsibility for the decisions and policies of the Bush administration once he assumed the role of commander and chief of the U.S. Popularity for the Iraq war began to wane and the American public became weary of losing American lives. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey in February of 2008 regarding the war on in Iraq. 54 percent of Americans believed that the U.S. made the wrong choice to intervene in Iraq, vastly
outnumbering the number of individuals that believed that President Bush made the correct decision to intervene in Iraq.\textsuperscript{392}

President Obama has different perceptions of the world as shown when he desecuritized the war on terror by focusing more on state to state relations and regional security as opposed to acting as the world’s policemen and seeking to fight a global war on terror. During his Presidency, Obama has mentioned neither the global war on terror nor the war on terror and eventually started withdrawing the troops in Iraq. He could easily point to Colombia and show that his administration vowed to combat all forms of terrorism. Colombia, therefore, fit within the world vision of President Bush and his construction of the situation as well as his perception of how to solve the problem.\textsuperscript{393} President Obama vowed to end the war on Iraq and fulfill his campaign promises as the American public became tired of seeing U.S. soldiers killed in this controversial war. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey and discovered that 52 percent of Americans supported the policy to withdraw troops from Iraq as soon as possible. A June 2007 poll recorded 56 percent of the American population supported removing the troops from Iraq and bringing them home.\textsuperscript{394}

In August of 2010, President Obama officially stated that the Combat Mission in Iraq had ended, asserting “We have sent our young men and women to make enormous


\textsuperscript{393}Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, Security: A New Framework for Analysis, 239.

\textsuperscript{394}Daily Number: Views of the Iraq War - Pew Research Center; Public Attitudes Toward the War in Iraq: 2003-2008 - Pew Research Center; Iraq and Public Opinion: The Troops Come Home - Pew Research Center
sacrifices in Iraq, and spent vast resources at a time of tight budgets at home.” After praising the troops, Obama proclaimed that the U.S. had to move on, declaring that “through this remarkable chapter in the history of the United States and Iraq, we have met our responsibility. Now it’s time to turn the page.” The drawing down of troops in Iraq, however, did not ease the minds of Americans as Obama still had to address the increases in violence in Afghanistan and the resurgence of the Taliban. In sum, it is clear why Colombia became less of a priority as Obama sought to address the looming war in Iraq and address the problems of the increasing violence in Afghanistan. Fighting two wars during a devastating recession has preoccupied Obama, and, therefore, he sought to make Colombia less of a U.S. priority.

Events in the Middle East have continued to occupy the attention of the Obama administration. The “Arab Spring” resulted in regime change in Egypt and led to conflict in Libya, as Gadhafi refused to step down from power and promised to travel door to door and extinguish “the rats” within his country. Obama became preoccupied with the situation in Libya. Today, Obama remains concerned about the Middle East as events in Syria continue to worsen. The situation in Iran regarding nuclear weapons also continues to occupy President Obama’s time and distract him from other foreign policy issues.

396 Ibid.
Netanyahu and some members of the “Israel Lobby” have vowed to support Israel by whatever means necessary.\textsuperscript{399}

The previous chapters have discussed how drug trafficking in Colombia became one of the top national security issues for the U.S. in 1999. However, Colombia no longer appeared to be the major drug trafficking epicenter in the war on drugs during the Obama administration. The routes began to shift towards Mexico and the various cartels began to battle for territory as well as control of the drug trade, leading to extreme levels of violence. Mexico, not Colombia, became the priority for several reasons. First, Mexico and the U.S. share a vast border and have many interconnections. The ease at which Mexican cartels can infiltrate the U.S. and impact the security of American lives caused many politicians to call for more protection along the border and resources to combat drug trafficking in Mexico. Rick Perry, the governor of Texas, called for Obama to place the National Guard on the border in order to help secure the border region and decrease the large levels of violence.\textsuperscript{400} Mexican cartels have successfully penetrated the U.S. order as elements of Mexican cartels operate in more than 230 American cities.\textsuperscript{401} Americans are concerned about the extreme levels of violence and their security, particularly those living in the states that border Mexico. Nearly every day, one can read a newspaper and hear about the extreme levels of violence in Mexico that have resulted

from the war on drugs and war among the different organizations. As of 2012, more than 50,000 Mexicans have died as a result of the war on drugs.\footnote{\textit{Mexico's Drug War: 50,000 Dead in 6 Years - in Focus - the Atlantic} \url{http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2012/05/mexicos-drug-war-50-000-dead-in-6-years/100299/} (accessed 8/27/2012, 2012). \textit{RANDAL C. ARCHIBOLD and DAMIEN CAVE}, "Mexicans Unflinching in Face of Drug War's Carnage," \textit{NYT}.} Violence has spilled over the border and dead bodies have appeared on the U.S. side of the border. The U.S. has become very concerned about Mexico and the extreme levels of violence within the country. The U.S. border is quite porous and organized criminal networks have penetrated the border. The U.S. State Department has even released statements recommending that tourists do not travel to Mexico because it is too unsafe. It appears that today Mexico is the Colombia of the 1980s and 1990s. Drug trafficking and organized crime has “popped up” in Mexico leading U.S. politicians and the American public to pay less attention to Colombia and focus on the violence resulting from the drug war occurring in the U.S.’s neighbor directly to the south.

Another major element that cannot be ignored is the economic recession that President Obama inherited from George W. Bush as a result of the sub-prime mortgage crisis on Wall Street. The recession has been the worst economic situation since the Great Depression and has resulted in hardships for millions of Americans. Over the course of his administration, Obama has attempted to stimulate the economy and promote job creation. The economic recession has led many experts and critics to argue that the U.S. must “tighten its belt” and cannot afford to be the “world police” of the globe. During Obama’s tenure, Americans have become weary and questioned why the U.S. has continued to fight wars abroad when millions of Americans are struggling at home. These wars have cost a tremendous amount of money and could have been spent creating...
jobs or on education. Joseph Stiglitz, a noble prize winning economist at Columbia University, estimated the total cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at over $3 trillion.\textsuperscript{403} As a result, it is not difficult to see why popularity for the spending abroad has made many individuals very skeptical. The average American is concerned with “pocket book issues,” such as where is the next meal is coming from or how to pay for higher education.\textsuperscript{404} The Tea Party, for instance, has emerged, and called for the U.S. to tighten its belt and stop excessive spending. In addition, the Tea Party does not want to U.S. to be the world’s policemen and has urged the U.S. leadership to focus on pressing domestic issues within the U.S. The economic recession and movements at home are another contributing factor demonstrating why President Obama has desired to de-securitize Colombia as a major foreign policy issue for the U.S. during this great recession. As the U.S. has spent billions of dollars for Colombia’s drug war in the past, it would be quite difficult for President Obama to increase the money allocated for Colombia to combat the war on drugs whilst budgeting other foreign policy issues as discussed above as well as the financial crisis. President Obama desires for the Colombians to finance their own war on drugs and has shifted resources away from Plan Colombia as will be explained in the subsequent pages of this chapter.


In addition, it is important to use the tools of Comparative Politics once again and examine election politics in order to understand why President Obama has tried to de-securitize drug trafficking in Colombia. Obama will run for re-election in November of 2012. Voters in the U.S. tend to vote with their wallets and tend to examine whether or not they are better off in terms of finances before President Obama assumed office or four years later. In other words, many voters will evaluate President Obama based on the performance of the economy. As a result, President Obama has less motivation to spend billions of dollars helping Colombia fight the war on drugs and is more interested in his ability to demonstrate that the economy has improved and jobs have been created.

The Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, has argued constantly that Obama has not proven that he is capable of creating jobs nor has he improved the economic situation in the U.S. From the outset of his Presidency, President Obama has taken initiatives to improve the economy and help millions of struggling Americans with the passage of the stimulus package. As the election cycle rapidly approaches, the economy and President Obama’s economic report card will continue to receive a great deal of attention and the previous national security issue in Colombia will continue to remain less of a priority. For the near future, then, the drug war in Colombia will receive little attention as President Obama campaigns for re-election.

**Speech Acts**

This next section of the chapter will examine the authoritative speech acts of Obama regarding drug trafficking, Colombia, and Plan Colombia. The goal of this section is to demonstrate that President Obama has sought to change the discourse with regards to
drug trafficking in Colombia. In addition, President Obama has not painted Colombia as a major threat to national security. Before delving into the speech acts, it is important to briefly analyze what we can reasonably expect President Obama to say in such speech acts. Perhaps it is best to momentarily think back to the speech acts of George W. Bush when he attempted to securitize the war on terror or the war in Iraq. President Bush painted terrorism as the major threat to U.S. national security and vowed to combat terrorism around the globe. He explained the capabilities of groups such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda and vowed that they must be defeated. An analysis of President Bush’s speech acts revealed that he perceived the terrorists as a major threat and attempted to sell to the American public that the terrorists must be combated at whatever costs in order to avoid another catastrophe such as the terrorist attack on September 11th, 2001. Bush argued that the terrorist hate Americans because of their freedom and way of life and wrongly linked Saddam Hussein with the attacks on September 11th, despite the fact that Saddam had no connections to Al Qaeda. President Bush invoked the use of language, which painted Iraq as the most dangerous country in the world and as Mr. Hussein as a terrible dictator that needed to be toppled because Saddam had WMDs and such a ruthless dictator could not be trusted with them. In sum, the point of briefly discussing the rhetoric of George Bush is to explain the language that can be used when an actor attempts to securitize an issue. The language is quite dire, as the actor must attempt to portray a particular issue or region as a major security threat than must be addressed.\footnote{\textit{"President Bush’s Speech to Congress Declaring War on Terror - Full Text of George W. Bush’s Speech to Congress Declaring War on Terror "}\hspace{2pt}http://middleeast.about.com/od/usmideastpolicy/a/bush-war-on-terror-speech_2.htm (accessed 7/21/2012, 2012),\textit{1 George W. Bush and John W. Dietrich, The George W. Bush Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches and Commentary} (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 320; \textit{"Transcript of President Bush’s Address - CNN "}\hspace{2pt}http://articles.cnn.com/2001-09-}
What can we expect to hear from President Obama, who desired to de-securitize the war on drugs in Colombia? What would be appropriate for President Obama to say? Will the language be as dire as an actor trying to securitize a particular issue? President Obama is a politician and must remain diplomatic in his language. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that he will outright say that Colombia is not a security priority for the U.S. This chapter predicts that the speech acts will contain language explaining the interconnectedness and need for equal responsibility with regards to drug trafficking. In other words, the hypothesis is that President Obama will vow to help the Colombians and support them, but he will emphasize cooperation and coordination in the combat against drug trafficking. Experts would not expect for Obama to make statements about the need for increases in funding to combat drug trafficking nor would we expect him to paint Colombia as a major national security objective that could threaten the security within the U.S. and the region. Obviously, Obama cannot outright say that Colombia is no longer a U.S. priority with regards to national security issues. Instead, we would expect Obama to recognize the achievements of Colombia with regards to increasing security and decreasing violence. In addition, we could hypothesize that Obama will make statements about Colombia as a thriving democracy.

This next section will analyze some of the speech acts and test the aforementioned hypotheses and determine if they are correct. In a join conference that occurred in October 2012, President Obama praised Colombia for the improvement in security levels, declaring, “As I said to my fellow leaders yesterday, there was a time not so long ago when few could have imagined holding a summit like this in Colombia. That we have
and that the summit was such a success is a tribute to the remarkable transformation that’s occurred in this nation.”\textsuperscript{406} Such praises imply that Colombia has made great strides in terms of security and is no longer teetering on the verge of becoming a failed state. Obama continued to praise Colombia by stating, “There’s a level of security that’s not been seen in decades. Citizens are reclaiming their communities.”\textsuperscript{407} Analysis of these brief statements indicates that Obama is pleased with Colombia for the improvements that it has not made. Obama praised Colombia and implied that Colombia is more secure today than ever before. These kind words with regards to Colombia and its current level of security demonstrate that President Obama is suggesting that Colombia is no longer a major security threat, and he paints Colombia as having a bright future. During his speech, he continued to say: “Democratic institutions are being strengthened. In Colombia today, there’s hope.”\textsuperscript{408} Such words of praise are a far contrast from the days of which Colombia was a major national security threat to the U.S. as well as the fact that Colombia lies in close proximity to the U.S., allowing it to easily impact the national security of the U.S.

In his remarks made at the joint conference, President Obama pledged support for Colombia and cooperation between the two countries. He stated, “Today, I pledged to President Santos that as Colombia forges its future Colombia will continue to have a

\textsuperscript{406} Remarks by President Obama at CEO Summit of the Americas | the White House , 2
\textsuperscript{407} Remarks by President Obama and President Santos of Colombia in Joint Press Conference | the White House
strong partner in the United States.\textsuperscript{409} Obama emphasized the need for cooperation in his speech at the Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, stating:

So there are a number of areas where I think cooperation is proceeding. Sometimes it's not flashy. I think that often times in the press the attention in summits like this ends up focusing on where are the controversies. Sometimes those controversies date back to before I was born. (Laughter.) And sometimes I feel as if in some of these discussions or at least the press reports we're caught in a time warp, going back to the 1950s and gunboat diplomacy and Yanquis and the Cold War, and this and that and the other. That's not the world we live in today.\textsuperscript{410}

In his speech at the Summit, Obama made an interesting point when he discussed the notion of equal partnership, as opposed to one where the U.S. sets the agenda. He declared, “When we met for the first time two years ago, we agreed to take the partnership between our two countries to a new level. This is part of my broader commitment in the Americas to seek partnerships of equality that are based on mutual interest and mutual respect.”\textsuperscript{411} Such rhetoric might sound innocuous, but behind such statements is a deeper meaning. President Obama’s statement suggests that he wants Colombia to have an equal partnership with the U.S. Many Colombians have viewed the U.S. as the hegemonic actor that has implanted policies that it has viewed desirable without the consent of the U.S. We can recall the Clinton administration’s 180 degree shift in the formula of President Pastrana and his version of Plan Colombia. Pastrana had one construction of Plan Colombia, while the U.S. had a different perception of the problem in addition to a different social construction of the solution. The U.S. has a long and troubled history in Latin America where Washington intervened in “backwards countries” and believed that it has the obligation to help such “backward” countries. In other words, the U.S. used its hegemonic position to intervene in the internal dynamics of

\textsuperscript{409} Ibid., 2
\textsuperscript{410} Remarks by President Obama at CEO Summit of the Americas | the White House, 2
\textsuperscript{411} Ibid., 2.
An equal partnership is a step in the right direction. Colombia desires to be treated as a serious ally and equal partner as opposed to having the U.S. use its hegemonic power to dictate the terms and conditions.

An equal partnership, however, is exactly what the term implies: equal. Equal means that the Colombians must share the burdens and responsibilities of combating drug trafficking. President Obama’s comments, therefore, imply that the Colombians must meet the challenges and “step up” and fight the drug war in Colombia. In other words, the Colombians cannot simply rely on the U.S. for billions of dollars in aid because President Obama has other important domestic issues that he must address. In sum, such statements by President Obama might appear to be merely rhetoric, but, in reality, they have a deeper, more profound meaning for the relationship between the U.S. and Colombia. An equal partner has more advantages because the Colombians have more leverage in terms of designing the initiatives and policies to combat drug trafficking if they are not receiving billions of dollars from the U.S., but this requires Bogotá to finance the war on drugs.

President Obama’s notion of equal partnership extends to more than just drug trafficking. During his remarks, President Obama commented on the economic partnership between the two countries. He stated, “President Santos and I reviewed our progress and, I’m pleased to say, reached agreement on several new initiatives.”

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Obama praised the approval of the Free Trade Agreement between Colombia and the U.S., arguing that this agreement would benefit both countries. He stated, “As I said before, this agreement is a win for both our countries. It’s a win for the United States by increasing our exports by more than $1billion, supporting thousands of U.S. jobs and helping to achieve my goal of doubling U.S. exports.”\(^ {414} \) Despite the fact that Colombia only accounts for a small percentage of U.S. trade, President Obama’s statement demonstrates that Colombians indeed are an important trading partner for the U.S. Such assertions reveal that Obama wants more integration between the U.S. and Colombia, and the FTA is a step in the right direction towards helping increasing cooperation and integration between these two important partners. Obama argued that the FTA also would benefit Colombia, stating “it’s a win for Colombia by giving you even greater access to the largest market for your exports—the United States of America.”\(^ {415} \)

President Obama also has made statements regarding the partnership with Colombia on security issues, declaring “I reaffirmed to President Santos that the United States will continue to stand with Colombia shoulder to shoulder as you work to end this conflict and build a just and lasting peace. And that includes supporting President Santos’s very ambitious reform agenda, including reparations for victims and land reform.”\(^ {416} \) Obviously, President Obama wants to reaffirm the Colombians that he supports their effort to combat the FARC and other internal actors operating within the

\(^ {414} \) Ibid., 2.
\(^ {415} \) Ibid., 2.
\(^ {416} \) Ibid., 3.
country. However, an analysis of the finances indicates that President Obama supports the Colombians, but he is not willing to spend billions of dollars and does not view the internal conflict in Colombia as a major national security threat for the U.S. President Obama’s support for Santos’s efforts to help marginalized communities and address the consequences that have occurred as a result of the internal conflict within Colombia indicate that he supports President Santos’s attention to human rights abuses and value type issues. It is important for Obama to support Colombia and recognize its accomplishments because Colombia is a functioning democracy, and Washington wants to support free and fair elections in the democratic process in Latin America.

The previous sections have analyzed the speech acts of President Obama with regards to Colombia and cooperation. Now, it is time to turn to Obama’s rhetoric on the war on drugs within Colombia and analyze his statements in order to see if they falsify or confirm the hypotheses made in the beginning of this chapter. With regards to drug trafficking, President Obama remarked:

> And so whether it’s working with President Santos or supporting the courageous work that President Calderón is doing in Mexico, I, personally, and my administration and I think the American people understand that the toll of narco-trafficking on the societies of Central America, Caribbean, and parts of South America are brutal, and undermining the capacity of those countries to protect their citizens, and eroding institutions and corrupting institutions in ways that are ultimately bad for everybody.

This statement demonstrates that Obama recognizes the negative impact that the drug war has on societies. While President Obama supports President Santos and the war on drugs, the budgetary allocations of the money—as will be examined below—demonstrate that

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417 President Obama and President Santos Meet in Oval Office | the White House; RealClearPolitics - Press Conference with Presidents Obama & Santos; Colombian-American Leaders Visit White House on Colombian Independence Day | the White House
Mexico, not Colombia, has become the priority for Washington. Indeed, Obama supports strengthening institutions within Colombia and improving the capacity of the state.

Obama also has recognized that the U.S. needs to be an equal partner in the war on drugs and address demand reduction. This is a shift in policy as the U.S. has historically focused on decreasing the supply of drugs and has allocated much less money towards demand reduction. At the Summit for the Americas, Obama stated, “So this is part of the reason why we’ve invested, Chris, about $30 billion in prevention programs, drug treatment programs looking at the drug issue not just from a law enforcement and interdiction issue, but also from a public health perspective.” This quote demonstrates that Obama recognizes the need for the U.S. to be an equal partner and help the countries combating drug trafficking throughout the Americas by reducing demand. As Francisco Thoumi has stated, the Colombians often have felt that the U.S. has not done enough and that Colombia would not have a drug problem if the “gringos” to the north did not consume such large quantities of drugs. In sum, Obama’s statements represent progress and demonstrate to Colombia as well as other countries in the region that the U.S. wants to be an equal partner and help these countries combat drug trafficking by decreasing the market for drugs within the U.S.

Obama also made other comments that indicate that the U.S. wants to be a partner and adversary with Colombia. He explained, “This is one of the reasons why we have continued to invest in programs like Plan Colombia, but also now are working with Colombia, given their best practices around issues of citizen security, to have not just the

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United States but Colombia provide technical assistance and training to countries in Central America and the Caribbean in finding ways that they can duplicate some of the success that we’ve seen in Colombia.” Such statements reveal that President Obama desires for Colombians to play a role and assume more responsibility as an equal partner. Obviously, he cannot outright say that the U.S. does not want to support Colombia, but he can use his rhetoric to urge the Colombians to be more active and participate in the war on drugs.

In sum, a brief analysis of several important comments made by President Obama demonstrates that he has attempted to change the rhetoric on Colombia and, in effect, has sought to de-securitize Plan Colombia and the war on drugs in Colombia. President Obama’s statements did not depict Colombia as in dire need of U.S. assistance. Instead, he made assertions that implied that the situation in Colombia has improved a tremendous amount. Said differently, Colombia has made significant progress and is no longer a major national security priority for the U.S. President Obama’s statements confirm the hypotheses made in the beginning of this chapter. Obama wants to be diplomatic and cannot outright say that he is de-securitizing Colombia because Colombia no longer represents a major priority for the U.S. in terms of its national security interests. As expected, President Obama made comments about the need for a more equal relationship and partnership with the Colombians. A more equal relationship, in turn, means that the Colombians must incur more of the responsibility and finance its own war on drugs.

Speech acts by authoritative figures are important to analyze, but rhetoric alone cannot prove that something was successfully de-securitized. The successful de-securitization of Plan Colombia and the war on drugs in Colombia, hence, would require the U.S. to provide the Colombians with fewer resources and, in essence, defund the war on drugs in the country. That is to say, a politician can say whatever he or she desires, but this does not mean that such efforts to change the dialogue, securitize, or de-securitize an issue or region will be successful. This requires scholars and analysts to analyze the money allocated to the Plan Colombia and the war on drugs in Colombia. The term coined in this chapter is “show me the money.” In order to prove that President Obama successfully de-securitized the war on drugs, one must analyze the money flows and track which programs received less money or “show me the money” and prove empirically that Colombia has become de-securitized.421 An examination of the budgetary allocations and funding for Plan Colombia will help prove empirically whether or not the war on drugs in Colombia has been de-securitized successfully by President Obama.

The first place to examine in terms of resource allocations would be the money used to finance Plan Colombia. In 2011, President Obama’s budget proposal included sharp decreases in spending for Plan Colombia, reducing the aid allocated for the Plan by $50 million. Uribe, the Colombian President at the time, expressed concern about the decrease in funding for Plan Colombia as proposed by President Obama. In an interview, he asserted, “‘This reduction in money to Plan Colombia…worries us.’”422 He continued to voice his concern, declaring, “‘Luckily we signed the cooperation agreement [with the

421 Jerry Maguire (1996) - IMDb
U.S.], which guarantees a continuation of the same conditions as under Plan Colombia.”

The attempts to defund Colombia proposed making even more severe cuts to Plan Colombia as time passed. The budget proposal for the State Department for 2012 shows that President Obama proposed cutting the money allocated for Plan Colombia by 15 percent. In the 2012 budget, the U.S. sought only to provide the Colombians with $400 million to help them combat drug trafficking, representing a rapid decrease in the amount of resources that Washington sought to provide Colombia in the past. Rodrigo Rivera, the Colombian Defense Minister in 2011, flew to Washington D.C. for an official visit and voiced his trepidations with the fact that Washington desired to cut the resources for the Colombian war on drugs. He declared, “It is an issue of concern that Colombia continues to receive the help of the United States, which has been absolutely essential over the past years.”

The statements made demonstrate the concern among the Colombians as to whether they can combat coca cultivation and drug trafficking within the country without significant help from the U.S. One could question whether Colombia does has the capacity to combat drug trafficking and extend the presence of the state without significant assistance from the U.S. The equal partnership rhetoric implies that

423 Ibid.
425 US Cuts Military Aid to Colombia by 15% - Colombia News | Colombia Reports ; Plan Colombia and Beyond » Defense Budget
the Colombians must “step up” and play more of a role if Colombia wants to consider itself an equal partner with the U.S.

In February of 2011, reports revealed that President Obama’s 2011 budget proposal that he submitted to Congress did not even mention Plan Colombia. This, however, did not mean that Colombia would not receive any form of aid. The budget proposal, however, would provide Colombians with 20 percent less aid—military and economic—than it received in 2009. Colombia Reports state, “according to justf.org, Colombian military aid will be 20% down to $228 million, 20% less than it received in 2009. Economic aid will be slightly diminished and it’s proposed to be worth $239 million.”

These statistics reveal that President Obama has sought to decrease funding for Plan Colombia. However, it is important to examine the statistics regarding what the Colombians spent. The U.S. has desired to shift the financial burden to the Colombians. In other words, Washington wants the Colombians to pay for their own war on drugs. To see if this is happening, it requires an examination of the money spent by the Colombians. As expected, U.S. aid dollars towards Colombia increased from 2002 to 2008 during the Bush administration from $388,550,141 to $433,664,757. The Colombian defense budget, however, has increased drastically from 2002 to 2008 when President Obama took office. In fact, the numbers are quite astounding with the Colombians spending SUS 4,186,135,410 in 2002 and $12,328,723,355 in 2008. These

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426 Plan Colombia Not Mentioned in US 2011 Budget Proposal - Colombia News | Colombia Reports Plan Colombia and Beyond » Defense Budget
statistics demonstrate that the Colombians are being required to spend more money to finance their own war on drugs and improve security within the country.\(^{427}\)

In conclusion, Colombia is no longer a major security threat or national security issue for the U.S. In part, the de-securitization of Colombia is a result of what happens when a country praises itself as a success. Jennifer Holmes also argued, “Maybe US aid is less crucial now then it was.”\(^{428}\) President Obama cannot continue to provide Colombia with billions of dollars because he must address various other major issues that have distracted him from Colombia. First, Obama inherited the worst economic situation since the Great Depression as a result of the subprime mortgage crisis on Wall Street.\(^{429}\) Obama knows that his re-election, in part, could be determined by the economic performance of the U.S. Therefore, Obama has been preoccupied with the financial situation in the U.S., and the millions of American are struggling to find jobs. Groups, such as the Tea Party, have emerged and called for Obama and Washington to stop excessive spending and focus on domestic issues in the U.S. as opposed to spending money on foreign missions.

Obama also has had other foreign policy priorities that have become more pressing than Colombia, such as the end of the American operation in Iraq as well as the increasing levels of violence in Afghanistan. In addition, Obama continues to deal with the situation in Iran and try to avoid another potential war in the Middle East, although

\(^{427}\) Ibid. http://www.elespectador.com/columna-hablar-de-plata-pena; See just the fact-http://justf.org/Country?country=Colombia&year1=2002&year2=2002&funding=All+Programs

\(^{428}\) Holmes, de Piñeres and Curtin, *Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis*, 157-184.

some neo-conservatives are in favor of doing “whatever necessary” to protect Israel and ensure that Iran does not develop nuclear weapons. In addition to the foreign policy issue of the Middle East, Obama and Washington has become more concerned with the extreme levels of violence in Mexico as a result of the drug trade. Since Calderon assumed power, more than 50,000 people have died from the drug war. Mexico, not Colombia, has become the main focus for the U.S. because of the large border and spillover effects. The U.S. remains shortsighted and focuses on the most current or pressing security issues.

This chapter has analyzed the speech acts of President Obama regarding the war on drugs in Colombia. President Obama has stressed the need for a more equal partnership between the Colombians and the U.S and improved cooperation. While Obama has emphasized the importance of the relationship between Colombia and the U.S., he desires for the Colombians to play a greater role in their own problems. The speech acts demonstrate that Obama has sought to change the discourse and challenge the Colombians to assume more responsibility, and, therefore, become more “equal” partners. Said differently, a more equal partnership requires the Colombians to take on more responsibility and not continue to rely on the U.S. for large amounts of aid.

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431 Mexico's Drug War: 50,000 Dead in 6 Years - in Focus - the Atlantic ; Mexican Drug Gangs have 230 'Branches' in U.S. and Canada ; Office of the Governor Rick Perry - [Press Release] Statement by Gov. Rick Perry on Obama Administration’s Decision to Slash Number of National Guard Troops at U.S.-Mexico Border
This chapter also has examined the finances and proven that efforts have been made to defund Plan Colombia. President Obama did not even mention Plan Colombia in his 2011 budget proposal to Congress. Obama wants Colombia to “step up” and pay for the war on drugs in Colombia. It is easy to understand why some Colombians could feel that the U.S. has given up on the war on drugs and forgotten about Colombia. Obama is preaching an equal partnership, but one should be very skeptical whether Colombia has the state capacity and resources necessary to fight the war on drugs itself.

Another important element that must be mentioned is the proponents of Plan Colombia. Advocates of Plan Colombia who believe that it has accomplished its job argue that it is perfectly logical for the war on drugs to be securitized because Plan Colombia resulted in many great successes. Although Plan Colombia did not decrease drug cultivation or trafficking, it did result in major successes, particularly under Uribe, in increasing the presence of the state in remote regions of Colombia and regaining territories formerly controlled by the FARC. Uribe successfully combated the FARC and forced them to retreat, which ultimately lead to a decrease in violence in Colombia. As a result of the successes of Plan Colombia, it is quite logical that Colombia is no longer on the brink of becoming a failed state and currently does not occupy a major priority for the U.S. in terms of national security priorities.432

The “partial victories” of Plan Colombia have increased security and decreased violence in Colombia, resulting in President Obama desiring to decrease resources to

Colombia, and, in essence, de-securitize Colombia as a major U.S. priority. It would be a mistake to think that Colombia could not take a turn for the worse and that instability within the country could not increase. Smaller organizations, such as BACRIM, have emerged and could lead to increases in instability in Colombia. In addition, the FARC could rearm and regain strength becoming, yet again, a major security threat for Washington. Some experts note that it is premature and wrong to thing that Colombia is now a success without problems. Marc Chernick even goes as far as to say that Colombia is not safer and still faces many problems, noting that the FARC has not been defeated by any means: “What I see is a reconfigured battlefield. If you are a social movement leader, human rights defender and academic, you are still threatened...do we have a more stable Colombia? No! No!” Such statements demonstrate that the conflict in Colombia continues and the FARC will strengthen, if they have not already. In an interview, Jennifer Holmes stated, “Things can always get worse” when asked if the FARC could re-securitize and become a major security threat. Holmes argues that the history of the FARC demonstrates that such a scenario is quite possible. Thus, the possibility exists that drug trafficking in Colombia might become securitized and the more efforts might be made to provide the Colombians with the necessary resources to combat such organizations. It is impossible to predict the future, but it is quite possible that Colombia will become re-securitized. Inevitably, only time will tell.

433 Bagley, Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century; Bagley, DRUG TRAFFICKING, POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND U.S. POLICY IN COLOMBIA IN THE 1990s, 1-31
434 Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University
435 Jennifer S. Holmes, "Associate Professor of Political Economy and Political Science at the University of Texas at Dallas" August 21, 2012). Holmes, de Piñeres and Curtin, Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis, 157-184
436 Holmes, Associate Professor of Political Economy and Political Science at the University of Texas at Dallas
CHAPTER SIX: ANALYTIC CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY LESSONS FROM PLAN COLOMBIA

The final chapter of this dissertation has been divided into two sections: analytical conclusions and policy lessons that can be drawn from Plan Colombia. The goal of this chapter is to answer the “so what” question. This work has examined Plan Colombia from Pastrana to Santos and examined the critical junctures. Analyzing Plan Colombia alone, however, is insufficient, and the final section of the chapter seeks to bridge the divide between academia and the “ivory tower” and the “real world” by answering the “so what” question. Far too often, some academics, particularly Political Scientists, avoid delving into the “policy world” and simply engage in what remains an intellectual exercise. Some scholars have criticized the field of Political Science for being obsessed with imitating the rigor or economics and invoking the use of rigorous tools. This work seeks to bridge the divide and move beyond a sheer intellectual enterprise and answer some of the following questions. What does Plan Colombia teach us? Does Plan Colombia have any valuable lessons? In other words, why does Plan Colombia matter?

In terms of analytical conclusions, Plan Colombia teaches scholars fundamental lessons in IR theory. This section will analyze what IR theories are useful for explaining the behavior of Colombia and its relations with the U.S. How does Colombia help scholars understand various IR concepts such as alliance politics? What does the

Colombia case suggest for scholars of International Relations and policy experts regarding the relations between hegemonic powers and weaker actors?

Before delving into the theoretical arguments, it is important to examine why the U.S. care so much about Colombia, and why has Washington allocated $8billion to Plan Colombia over its duration. First, the U.S. has many security concerns regarding the stability and the future of Colombia. A major concern for Washington is that drug trafficking in Colombia can traverse borders into other countries in the region. Second, the U.S. supported Colombia for many years because Colombia is a bastion of democracy, and the U.S. supports democracy throughout the region. While Uribe had victories in terms of combatting the FARC and the internal armed actors in Colombia, the FARC and internal armed groups still operate in Colombia. These groups have the potential to hinder Colombia’s ability to strengthen democracy and institutions. Third, the U.S. is concerned about the stability and the future of Colombia as the internal armed conflict, drug trafficking, and organized crime have the ability to impact trade and security throughout the region. The FARC is regaining power and it is quite possible that the FARC and the ELN could launch strikes against crucial infrastructures and locations for transportation such as the Panama Canal. In addition, the FARC could potentially target key oil producing centers, located in neighboring countries such as Brazil.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, the U.S. has security interests in Colombia and viewed Plan Colombia as a crucial policy to help Colombia combat its security threats. Realism is one of the IR theories that helps explain how the U.S. was able to reverse the formula and shift the design of Plan Colombia by 180 degrees. However, realism fails to understand how and why a middle range country, such as Colombia, can
challenge a stronger hegemonic power and enhance its bargaining leverage vis a vis the
dominant country. Said differently, Colombia does not simply have two options as realist
logic indicates: to balance or bandwagon.439

Before delving into the weaknesses of realism, it is important to analyze its
analytical capacity. The relationship between Colombia and the U.S. by no means could
be described as equal as the Colombians depend on the U.S. for aid and resources.
During the Clinton administration, Pastrana proposed a version of Plan Colombia, but the
U.S. failed to accept it because Washington feared becoming involved in a situation
resembling Vietnam. Under Clinton, the U.S. used its power to set the agenda for Plan
Colombia. In essence, Uribe defied the logic of realism during his tenure and
demonstrated that smaller powers have the ability to set the agenda. As discussed
extensively in the second puzzle, Uribe came to power with the goal of combating the
FARC and other illegal armed actors operating in Colombia. He made significant policy
changes from the former President, refusing to negotiate with the FARC and vowing to
bring peace to Colombia. The events of September 11th, 2001, fundamentally changed
the course of U.S. foreign policy, with the primary focus for the Bush administration
becoming combating terrorism around the globe and invoking a global war on terror.
Uribe described the internal armed actors in Colombia as narco-terrorists, providing a
fusion for the war on drugs with the war on terror. Uribe, therefore, convinced President
Bush and his administration that Colombia was a deserving ally of U.S. aid and fit
perfectly into the global vision and grand strategy of the U.S.

439 Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics; Waltz, Theory of International Politics
Uribe’s ability to shift the nature of Plan Colombia to focus on “narco-terrorism” provides an important lesson in IR theory. According to realism, great powers have the ability to set the agenda and use their power, whether economic or military, to implement strategies that fit within the global vision and security initiatives of the U.S. Under Uribe, Colombia, the weaker power set the agenda, demonstrating that weaker powers do not always have to simply follow orders from great powers. It is important to note that the Bush administration approved the new objectives of Uribe and accepted the re-orientation of Plan Colombia because it fit within the goals of the U.S.

Without a doubt, Uribe remained a “true” ally of the U.S. and the Bush administration, supporting Bush’s global vision. The relationship between Bush and Uribe remained strong throughout both of their tenures in office. By the end of the Bush administration, Uribe became the only ally or “friend” that President Bush had in the entire region. Although Uribe pledged his support for President Bush, he was able to pursue his own domestic priorities despite the U.S.\textsuperscript{440} The strong relationship and alliance between Colombia and the U.S. enabled Colombia to achieve major successes during Uribe’s tenure. In sum, Uribe’s ability to re-orient the direction and focus of Plan Colombia represents a significant lesson for leaders of small states and IR theorists.

President Santos also has made several policy maneuvers which suggest something about the politics of bandwagoning.\textsuperscript{441} Santos has not simply bandwagoned with the U.S. during his tenure, but he has sought to build alliances with other countries, such as China. Li Changchun, a government representative of China, traveled to

\textsuperscript{440} Uribe, \textit{A Bush Ally, Treads on Shaky Ground} – TIME
\textsuperscript{441} Mearsheimer, \textit{The Tragedy of Great Power Politics}; Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics}
Colombia in April of 2012, demonstrating that Colombia and China are seeking to increase ties or linkages between the two countries. In May of 2012, President Santos traveled to China with the goal of initiating a trade agreement between the two countries. While in China, Santos stated “as we did in Japan last year, here in China we will explore the possibility of negotiating a Free Trade Agreement.” Santos is seeking to extend his options and build relationships with other countries so that Colombia does not simply have to rely on the U.S. for everything. In other words, Santos, unlike Uribe, does not want to place all his hope or put all his “eggs in one basket” as his predecessor did. Instead, Santos desires for options and relations with other countries that will help strengthen Colombia not only in economic terms but also provide it with more leverage and negotiating power.442

In sum, President Santos appears to be conscious of the new limitations that the growing distance between the national security interests of the U.S. and the Colombians represents in the second decade of the 21st century. As a result, a trade-off exists between closely aligning with the U.S. and Colombia being able to develop its own foreign policy without the influence of Washington. In analytical terms, therefore, the realist approach fails to capture the nuances in its interpretation of the foreign policy autonomy that closely aligned subordinated countries, such as Colombia, can achieve against the stronger power. On the contrary, a country that is no longer closely aligned with the greater power will be less likely to exercise the same degree of leverage and exert its relative autonomy in its foreign policy.

442 China's Rep Visits Colombia and Meets Santos - Colombia News | Colombia Reports.
This work also demonstrates that realism alone is insufficient because it cannot account for the economic linkages between the two countries. Liberalism reveals that national security is not the only consideration for the U.S. and economic linkages focus on explaining and understanding how economic interconnections impact the relationship between the U.S. and Colombia. The U.S., for instance, provides substantial amounts of aid through Plan Colombia with the goal of increasing the security in Colombia.\textsuperscript{443} However, Colombia sought the approval of the trade agreement known as the TLC, and the U.S. became interested in the TLC because the approval of this agreement became a mechanism for the U.S. that would benefit both countries economically. The transition from Uribe to Santos resulted in a change in the discourse towards key issues such as human rights and democracy and is another important factor that helps explain why the U.S. eventually passed the free trade agreement. The free trade agreement also provides a justification for the U.S. in further reducing the aid granted to Colombia under the auspices of Plan Colombia without damaging the Colombian economy. In sum, liberalism’s emphasis on the economic relationships, although minor for Washington provides additional theoretical grounding for a more nuanced and analytical analysis.\textsuperscript{444}

Constructivism is the final theoretical approach used in this work and helps explain the issue of perspectives and social constructions. Constructivism also explains the role of leaders and importance of leadership.\textsuperscript{445} From the outset of Plan Colombia, Clinton and Pastrana had different social constructions of the problems and solutions; the

\textsuperscript{444} Ibid.
differences in perceptions help policy analyst understand why the final version of Plan Colombia differed drastically from Pastrana’s initial vision and proposal. Constructivism also explains the perceptions and consensus that occurred between Uribe and Bush and how Uribe successfully sold Bush that Colombia was a vital country for the U.S. and its geo-strategic interests. Said differently, the constructivist approach explains the proactive leadership of Uribe who personally convinced Bush and the U.S. that the new version of Plan Colombia was in the national interest of the U.S. In sum, liberalism adds a component but is unable to explain everything because it neglects the role of leadership. Constructivism, therefore, acts as a useful analytical tool and fills the void left by the other two theories. Scholars and policy analysts studying relations between the U.S. and other countries in Latin America or throughout the developing world cannot truly understand foreign policy without taking an eclectic theoretical approach to explain and understand the additional bargaining vis-à-vis the U.S. that can be attained by the less powerful country.

**De-Securitization**

The U.S. has sought to de-securitize\(^{446}\) the war on drugs in Colombia for various reasons. First, the U.S. is experiencing a great recession, and Washington does not have the resources to continue providing the Colombians with billions of dollars in assistance through Plan Colombia. Second, the war on drugs has shifted routes and Mexico has received more attention from the U.S. as both countries share a large border and violence and bloodshed have spilled over the border. However, the advocates of Plan Colombia

\(^{446}\) Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. 
argue that it has been a success and should be considered a model and used in other countries such as Mexico. Santos counters such arguments and continues to say that the war on drugs in Colombia has been a failure. Colombia has witnessed 40 years of bloodshed and violence. In addition to the vast number of Colombians who have suffered from the war on drugs and its consequences, Colombia also has forgone and sacrificed economic earnings as a result of organized crime and the internal conflict. Santos argues that we need to think of alternative paradigms. The rhetoric of Santos presents the possibility of a structural gap between the U.S. and Colombia in terms of interests as well as the perceptions of the problem. Santos wants to search for an alternative paradigm that will lead to less bloodshed of the Colombian people and state.

De-securitization, therefore, can occur in one country, as it has in the U.S.; the U.S. has tried to de-securitize the war on drugs in Colombia as a major U.S. national security concern. On the other hand, U.S. policy can result in Colombians interpreting the de-securitization process as the U.S. giving up on the war on drugs. The U.S. has precipitously declared victory in the war on drugs in Colombia, the empirical results and analytical analysis demonstrates that Colombia still has a drug problem as well as an internal armed conflict. While this work is a single-case study, similar problems have occurred with de-securitization in other countries, such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

De-securitization, therefore, is not as easy as the securitization process during a crisis because it requires the development of alternative strategies, paradigms, and social constructions both in the U.S. and the other country in the bilateral relationship. Realism fails to account for the importance of perceptions. De-securitization inevitably has consequences that remain contemplated by other countries being de-securitized and realists do not consider this point. Like realists, liberals also fail to account for the role of perceptions although they recognize the importance of economic interdependence. De-securitization can have important economic consequences for Colombia because the economic issues are much smaller than the military aid provided under the auspices of Plan Colombia.

**Policy Contributions**

1. The U.S. has rushed to praise Plan Colombia as a success, which in and of itself is a questionable issue. Indeed, Uribe successfully combatted the FARC and the guerrillas, but Colombia still has an internal armed conflict and by no means has Uribe eliminated the various actors. Colombia also continues to confront drug trafficking and organized crime has returned to the country as a result of the shifting routes. As a result, the U.S. led policies have had negative consequences for Colombia as the routes shifted from Colombia to Mexico and now back to Colombia.

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448 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*
2.

Plan Colombia demonstrates that military aid alone cannot solve the problem. 80 percent of the money of Plan Colombia at one time was funneled to the military. Indeed, Colombia was able to contain the FARC but it did not eliminate the threat. Focusing on the military aspect alone ignores other issues such as the capacity of the state. A key question is when the U.S. de-securitizes a state, does it have the institutional capacity to control its own territory and maintain security? The FARC have adapted and continue to earn profits from drug trafficking, and, therefore, remain a formidable threat to Colombian security. Ultimately, it is not possible to eliminate the guerrillas without addressing issues such as alternative development. The FARC is able to recruit young people by promising them friendship, brotherhood, food, and various other things that young people who live in an extremely poor area do not have; many of the recruits live in regions mired in poverty and lack basic education and the opportunity to improve themselves. Therefore, Colombia cannot solve its internal conflict without addressing issues such as alternative development, and the need for assistance to socially excluded areas. President Santos has proved willing to negotiate with the internal armed actors to produce peace. If the negotiations fail, Colombia will have to increase its military action but the underlying social and developmental issues will still remain. Most importantly, the U.S. will not provide the Colombians with the same support as it has in

449 Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance.
450 Merco Press, Colombia passes law
the past. Instead, the Colombians will need to fight this battle themselves and cannot rely on the hegemonic power to the North to provide these resources.\textsuperscript{451}

3.

Aerial spraying has been counterproductive, and Colombian peasants continue to grow coca and intersperse the crops so that they cannot be detected as easily from the air. The peasants also cultivate coca in the jungle and under canopies so that it is harder to locate. The aerial spraying initiatives have simply caused coca cultivation to shift and “balloon out” to other regions.

A brief discussion of statistical analysis of UNDOC reports demonstrate that aerial spraying has been ineffective, and Colombia still has major problems with coca cultivation. The UNODC is one of the best reports because they explain their methodology and take many measures to provide accurate results.\textsuperscript{452} It is not important whether Colombia produces 61,000 hectares or 62,000 hectares of coca as drug production and trafficking is an illegal business and is not a science. The statistics, however, provide analysts with a range of estimates but should not be viewed as a science. Daniel Mejia, one of the leading experts on this subject, argues that “what shouldn’t be believed is the figures produced by the state department in the U.S. Why?

Because they have never been clear about their methodology. They have never explained

\textsuperscript{451} Isacson, \textit{Extending the War on Terrorism to Colombia: A Bad Idea Whose Time has Come}; Isacson, \textit{The U.S. Military in the War on Drugs}, 1-15.; Isacson, \textit{Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellin, Colombia}, 1-19.

\textsuperscript{452} Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2011, 8-107, 89-102. Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University; Mejia and Restrepo, \textit{The War on Illegal Drugs in Producer and Consumer Countries: A Simple Analytical Framework}; Mejia and Rico, \textit{La Microeconomía De La Producción y Tráfico De Cocaína En Colombia}
to anyone—not even the UN about how they do the survey.”\(^{453}\) The main substance of concern is cocaine. Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia account for nearly 100 percent of the production of coca in the world.\(^{454}\) The hectares of coca being cultivated can be measured overtime, enabling scholars and policy analyst to analyze Plan Colombia’s effectiveness with regards to decreasing the cultivation of coca. Again, it is important to remember that different agencies have different measures for calculating coca cultivation. Calculating the area of coca being cultivated is by no means a science and should be viewed as a range as opposed to an exact number. While the numbers are not exact, the data provides analysts with a benchmark or estimation as to how well Colombia has done in terms of combating coca cultivation.\(^{455}\)

In 1999, Colombia produced 160,100 hectares, while in 2002 Colombia witnessed a significant decrease in the yields of coca, recording 102,000 hectares of coca cultivated according to the 2011 UNDOC report. The total acreage in Colombia decreased rapidly from 2003 to 2006; in 2003, Colombia recorded 86,000 hectares. The 2006 estimates of coca decreased to 78,000 hectares. In 2010, the total acreage of coca being cultivated in Colombia decreased by an estimated 15 percent. Some regions in Colombia, however, continued to cultivate large quantities of coca. The 2011 UNODC report notes that the Pacific region cultivated an estimated 42 percent of the entire coca in Colombia in 2010. In 2009 and 2010, an interesting evolution occurred in the methodological techniques for

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\(^{453}\) Mejia, ibid.


\(^{455}\) Mejia and Rico, *La Microeconomía De La Producción y Tráfico De Cocaína En Colombia*; Mejia and Restrepo, *The War on Illegal Drugs in Producer and Consumer Countries: A Simple Analytical Framework* ; Mejia, *Associate Professor Los Andes University*
calculating coca cultivation. Coca farmers in Colombia and began cultivating coca in smaller plots of land, making it harder for satellite images to detect such small amounts of coca. To address this problem, the UNODC implemented measures to calculate and include smaller plots of coca being cultivated throughout Colombia. The 2009 unadjusted number reported for coca cultivation in Colombia is 68,000 hectares. After considering the small fields under cultivation, the 2009 hectares under cultivation increase to 73,000. The unadjusted figure reported for 2010 is 57,000 hectares. On the other hand, the adjusted figure is 62,000 hectares.

Rural Colombia, however, has witnessed increases in coca cultivation. According to the country report by the UNODC for 2011, coca cultivation in Putumayo increased dramatically to 9,951 hectares in December of 2011 from 4,785 in December of 2010. This significant change represents a 108 percent increase in coca cultivation from 2010 to 2011. Another region in Colombia that has witnessed dramatic increases in the area of cultivation under production has been Norte de Santander. In December 2010, Norte de Santander recorded 1,889 hectares of coca, while in December of 2011, this region cultivated 3,490, representing an 85 percent increase in the total hectares of coca being cultivated. Guaviare also saw a 20 percent increase in the hectares under cultivation from 5,701 in December 2010 to 6,839 in December of 2011. Other regions in Colombia, however, have experienced decreases in the net change of coca cultivated from December 2010 to December 2001. Cordoba, for instance, recorded a 72 percent decrease from

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3,889 in December 2010 to 1,088 in December 2011. Amazonas also recorded a 64 percent decrease from 338 in December of 2010 to 122 in December of 2011. It is important to recognize that the decreases may appear large but the overall hectares produced in regions such as the Amazonas are much smaller than the total hectares cultivated in other locations such as Putumayo. The amazon, for instance, accounts for only 1.1 percent of the total hectares produced in Colombia from 2005 to 2011. On the other hand, the pacific region of Colombia historically has produced the most number of coca fields. The 2011 Colombia report by the UNODC reveals that from 2005 to 2011, the pacific region in Colombia accounted for 42 percent of the total hectares produced in Colombia. Putumayo-Caqueta accounted for 20.8 percent of the coca produced between 2005 and 2011.

The statistics, therefore, reveal that Colombia has made progress in decreasing the overall acreage of coca cultivated within Colombia. Before praising victory, it is important to analyze the recent trends in coca cultivation in the two other coca cultivating countries: Peru and Bolivia. An analysis of the data reveals that cocaine production in Peru has been increasing since 2005. In 2005, Peru cultivated approximately 48,200 hectares of coca. By 2007, Peru recorded 53,700 hectares of coca under cultivation. The area of cultivation increased quite rapidly to 61,200 hectares in 2010.

Coca Fields in Colombia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Dec.-2010</th>
<th>Dec.-2011</th>
<th>Change % 2010-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putumayo</td>
<td>4,785</td>
<td>9,951</td>
<td>+ 108%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaviare</td>
<td>5,701</td>
<td>6,839</td>
<td>+20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>5,350</td>
<td>3,104</td>
<td>-42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vichada</td>
<td>2,743</td>
<td>2,264</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle del Cauca</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>+48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information adapted from *UNODC Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey* 2011, 8-107, 10.

Coca Cultivation Variation Per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net area under coca cultivation</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(thousands)</td>
<td>62,000 hectares</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>64,000 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific region</td>
<td>25,682</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>26,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central region</td>
<td>15,308</td>
<td>-31%</td>
<td>10,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-Guaviare region</td>
<td>8,709</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putumayo-Caquetá region</td>
<td>7,363</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>13,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazon region</td>
<td>1,505</td>
<td>-52%</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *UNODC Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey* 2011, 8-107, 7.
Like Peru, Bolivia has witnessed a proliferation in the coca being cultivated within the country. Bolivia had 21,800 hectares under cultivation in 1999. Coca cultivation, however, dropped quite rapidly to 14,600 hectares the subsequent year. From 2000 to 2004, coca cultivation in Bolivia increased. Coca cultivation dropped from 27,700 in 2004 to 25,400 in 2005 but has continued to increase overtime. In 2009, the total area of coca cultivated reached 30,900.\textsuperscript{462}

The data reveals several key talking points or lessons. Colombia has seen an overall decrease in the acreage of coca cultivation. However, Colombia remains the premier coca producing country in the entire world even after the billions of dollars allocated to the Colombia government through Plan Colombia. While Colombia has seen decreases in the overall acreage, Peru and Bolivia have witnessed increases in cultivation over the past several years. This is a prime example of the balloon effect in action. The concept of the balloon effect is one of the best-studied phenomena by drug trafficking scholars.\textsuperscript{463} In other words, the balloon effect is as close to a law like the theory of relativity because it can be proved empirically. The balloon effect is when coca cultivation and our routes shift to another region as a result of increases in law enforcement and interdiction efforts. Enforcement activities, therefore, cause coca cultivation to “balloon out” to other regions. Individuals who grow coca can easily move

\textsuperscript{462} World Drug Report, 33.
their crops and cultivate coca in areas in forest that are hard to spot from a plane and also are difficult to notice from a satellite. Individuals who cultivate coca also can replant the crop after it has been sprayed. Cultivators are forced to react and can plant the product in different regions, causing cultivation to “balloon out” to other regions that are harder to spray. Ted Carpenter states that “one would be hard-pressed to come up with a more concise description of the “push-down, pop-up” (of “balloon”) effect and the inherent futility of the drug eradication component of the hemispheric war on drugs.”

In sum, spraying pesticides from a plane have been not only ineffective but counterproductive, particularly because of the negative impacts on the environment and consequences on the health of people that have resulted from such initiatives.

Marten Brienen argues that “the demand for the product is inelastic. There is a certain demand for this product…the more you hamper the availability of this product, the higher the price is, the more attractive it becomes for people to grow it.” Therefore, coca will continue to be grown because of the profits that can be earned by the farmers. Brienen declares that “If you manage to eradicate 80 percent of the total acreage, you would have raised the price to the point where every farmer will want to switch to this particular crop…it provides you with a constant income throughout the year.” With the support of the U.S. government, Colombia has received billions of dollars to help combat drug trafficking and has witnessed some decreases in coca cultivation. With Colombia being the epicenter of the war on drugs in South America, Peru and Bolivia have received

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464 Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, 114
465 Brienen, *Director of Academic Programs in Latin American Studie*
466 Ibid.
less attention in terms of coca cultivation, and, therefore, both countries have witnessed proliferations in coca cultivation.\textsuperscript{467}

Determining whether Plan Colombia has been a success and whether the U.S. and the Colombian governments have succeeded in combating drug trafficking does not result in a definitive answer and depends on one’s social construction and perceptions.\textsuperscript{468} When asked has the U.S. and the Colombian government succeeded in combating drug trafficking, Sandro Calvani, the Director of UNODC Colombia Program in Bogotá from 2003 to 2007, writes that the “The Colombian Govt (sic) made sincere and intellectually honest efforts to focus on farmers at least with the same intensity than what was done against drug traffickers. More than 80,000 families of coca farmers…were reached by various programmes which incentivated (sic) their alternative licit productions and convinced them to stay out of illicit crops.”\textsuperscript{469} While Calvani praised the Colombian government’s efforts, he also made critical statements questioning the success of Plan Colombia. Critics of Plan Colombia would agree and argue that Plan Colombia has been an utter failure in terms of reducing drugs, as drugs are cheaper, purer, and more readily available today than ever before. Therefore, it is quite difficult to argue that Plan Colombia accomplished its goals in terms of reducing cultivation, production, and trafficking of drugs.

Plan Colombia has an important lesson in terms of supply-side policies and combating drug trafficking. While Plan Colombia has resulted in significant improvements in security within Colombia, drug cultivation, production, and trafficking

\textsuperscript{467} Romero, Coca Sustain War in Rural Colombia
\textsuperscript{468} Barry Buzan, Security: A New Framework for Analysis
\textsuperscript{469} The author of these quotes noted that such statements reflect his own opinions and does not represent the opinion of the UNODC.
still remain a major issue. Supply-side initiatives alone are not enough, and countries must address the notion of demand. The U.S. is the largest consumer of cocaine in the world and provides the Colombians with a fast market for such products. The U.S. must be an effective partner with Colombia in order to curb demand for such substances.\textsuperscript{470} The laws of supply and demand demonstrate that the Colombians will continue to traffic drugs as long as a market exists for such products. More emphasis, therefore, must be placed on demand reduction. Countries must become equal partners in the war on drugs and address the notion of demand as opposed to only stopping the supply of drugs. Decreasing the demand for drugs requires more money to be spent on education, prevention, rehabilitation, and treatment so that addicts can become productive members of society and beat their addiction to drugs.\textsuperscript{471}

**IS PLAN COLOMBIA A MODEL?**

One of the major questions that has emerged is whether Plan Colombia should be used as a model. Whether or not one thinks that Plan Colombia is a model depends on the perceptions of Plan Colombia as to whether or not it accomplished its goals. Plan Colombia, indeed, had successes against the FARC and various other organizations. In an interview, one military official argued that Colombia is much safer today than ever before.\textsuperscript{472} Today, Colombians can drive their cars from different regions, while this was not the case only a short-time ago. Officials and policy makers in Washington are quick to praise Plan Colombia as a great success. Others counter that if Plan Colombia is not a


\textsuperscript{471} Ethan Nadelmann, "Addicted to Failure;" Ethan Nadelmann/ Uso y Prohibicion De Drogas, 13-13; Andreas, Dead-End Drug Wars.

\textsuperscript{472} This was an anonymous interview that occurred in 2012.
model, then what is? Colombia is much safer and secure than ever before. One simply has to analyze the statistics regarding kidnapping and murders, which demonstrate that Colombia has reached a significant turning point and is much safer today than ever before.\(^{473}\)

As a result, some policy makers have argued that Plan Colombia should be used as a model and implemented in other regions of the world that suffer violence and problems related to drug trafficking. President Clinton, for instance, visited Mexico and called for a “Plan Mexico,” in order to help Mexico make the strides and advancements in security that Colombia has made. Other government officials have suggested using the same model in Afghanistan. Adm. Mike Mullen, the Joint Chiefs Chairman, traveled to Colombia in June of 2010 and proclaimed, “I see the same kinds of challenges in Afghanistan, and I also see them in Mexico.”\(^{474}\) Such statements suggest that both Afghanistan and Mexico suffer from many of the challenges that Colombia has obtained, and, therefore, both of these countries could benefit from an initiative designed to combat drug production and increase security.

Juan Manuel Santos has maintained the continuity of Plan Colombia and believes that Colombia provides lessons for other countries. Santos desires to help other countries in the region deal with similar problems that Colombia has experienced. In his opinion, other governments can learn from both the successes and failures of the Colombian case.


\(^{474}\) Isacson, *Don’t Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Alaims of "Success" Don’t Stand Up to Scrutiny*, 2.
In turn, Santos has made efforts to involve Colombia in the security dynamics of the Northern Triangle.⁴⁷⁵

Another major question is how exportable is the Colombian model? This is quite a daunting question but it is important to recognize that Colombia and Mexico are two different countries. Colombia has an internal armed conflict, while Mexico does not. Both countries have different histories, geographies, and political systems. The comparison and question of whether Plan Colombia is a model for Afghanistan becomes an even more daunting proposition. In addition, Afghanistan has tribal societies that have more loyalty to their clans than the state. One could argue that Afghanistan has never had a functioning state.

When questioning whether Plan Colombia should be considered a model, it is important to recognize that trade-offs exist between security and other issues such as human rights. The U.S. has neglected human rights issues and abuses, particularly against the indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations in Colombia. The most important thing for the U.S. has and continues to remain security. Policy analysts can question how effective was the U.S. in helping Colombia consolidate democracy by strengthening institutions and protecting human and civil rights over the long-term. The situation in Colombia teaches policy experts that trade-offs exist and such trade-offs have

⁴⁷⁵ "Organized Crime in Central America: The Northern Triangle | Wilson Center "
http://www.wilsoncenter.org/node/19779 (accessed 9/20/2012, 2012); "Univision News Tumblr, as Central America Heads Towards Lawlessness a New Drug Strategy is Needed "
major implications and can lead to blow-back. Critics of Plan Colombia caution that this policy cannot simply be implemented and exported to other countries as a model. One military official argued that Plan Colombia and Mexico are both very different countries and Plan Colombia is not a model that can simply be exported from one country to another.

Critics of Plan Colombia argue that Colombia should not be a model and, in fact, Colombia is not safer than before. The FARC have not been defeated, but instead Colombia has witnessed a re-orientation of the battle ground. The demobilization of the AUC has been a farce as many of them joined BACRIM and applied their skills to drug trafficking. It is quite easy for someone living in Bogota or another major city to argue that Colombia is much safer. However, many Colombians do not venture outside the country to the rural towns where the war rages on in full force. Sanho Tree of the Institute For Policy Studies argues that the perception of success is quite different if one does not leave the major metropolitan area. Tree states that “It is like living on two different planets. If you are in Bogota, the conflict and the bad stuff is like something that you watch on TV.” The armed conflict in Colombia continues and rural towns have witnessed extreme levels of violence. Marc Chernick argues that today Colombia is not a safe place and it is quite dangerous to be in certain professions, such as human rights defenders or advocates.

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477 Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University
478 Tree, Director of the Drug Policy Project
479 Chernic, MALAS Director Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at Georgetown University
Plan Colombia has achieved security gains, but they have come at high costs. Adam Isacson argues that Plan Colombia should not be a model. He stated, “looked at more closely, though, Colombia’s security gains are partial, possibly reversible, and weighed down by ‘collateral damage.’”\(^{480}\) Collateral damage includes a plethora of human rights abuses and lost lives as a result of the war on drugs in Colombia. In an interview, Lisa Haugaard of the Latin American Working group questioned how one could call Plan Colombia a model, arguing that the costs in terms of human lives as a result of human rights abuses have been way to grave in order to consider Plan Colombia a model for other countries. She notes that from 2004 to 2008, the Colombian army convinced young men that they would be working as brick layers but later murdered them in order to falsify the results against the armed groups. She continued that “I have seen a huge increase in direct violations of human rights…” as over 3,000 people have been killed and over 2 million people displaced as a result of Plan Colombia.\(^{481}\) Hauggard also emphasized the Uribe administration’s role in protecting human rights abusers. The Administrative Department of Security, or DAS, is an intelligence service operating in Colombia that often has functioned more as the secret police. It has been reported that the first director, Jorge Noguera, had linkages with the paramilitaries and even provided the AUC with information about Colombia’s military operations. Noguera provided the AUC with secret information about names of human rights defenders as well as leaders of labor organizations.\(^{482}\) Isacson agrees with Haugaard, stating that approximately 21,000 police, soldiers, paramilitaries, and guerrillas have been killed as a result of Plan

\(^{480}\) Isacson highlighted certain words for emphasis, Isacson, Don't Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Aliains of "Success" Don't Stand Up To Scrutin, 1-13, 1.

\(^{481}\) Haugaard interview; Ibid

Colombia and the attempt to bring peace to the country. It has been estimated that 14,000 civilians also have been killed since 2010. The increases in security, therefore, have cost a tremendous amount in terms of blood and treasure.

Plan Colombia demonstrates that a country, such as Colombia, can comply with the U.S. and make improvements and levels of progress with regards to coca cultivation, but this does not mean that the country has become more democratic or has more robust institutions. 80 percent of the money for Plan Colombia assisted the military and the “hard components.” Plan Colombia demonstrates that military aid and supply-side polices alone cannot solve the problem. 80 percent of the money of Plan Colombia at one time was funneled to the military. Indeed, Colombia was able to contain the FARC but it did not eliminate the threat. Focusing on the military aspect alone ignores other key issues such as the capacity of the state. A key question is when the U.S. de-securitizes a state, does it have the institutional capacity to control its own territory and maintain security? The FARC have adapted and continues to earn profits from drug trafficking. It is not possible to eliminate the guerrillas without addressing issues such as alternative development. The FARC is able to recruit young people by promising them friendship, brotherhood, food, and various other things that teenagers who live in an extremely poor area do not have; many of the recruits live in regions mired in poverty and lack basic education and the opportunity to improve themselves.

Therefore, Colombia cannot solve its internal conflict without addressing issues such as alternative development, and the need for assistance to socially excluded areas.

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483 Isacson, Plan Colombia-Six Years Later: Report of a CIP Staff Visit to Putumayo and Medellin, Colombia, 1-19; Isacson, Don’t Call Plan Colombia a Model: On Plan Colombia 10th Anniversary, Alaims of “Success” Don’t Stand Up to Scrutiny, 1-13.
President Santos has proved willing to negotiate with the internal armed actors to produce peace. If the negotiations fail, Colombia will have to increase its military action but the underlying social and developmental issues will still remain. Most importantly, the U.S. will not provide the Colombians with the same support as it has in the past. Instead, the Colombians will need to fight this battle themselves and cannot rely on the hegemonic power to the North to provide these resources. Colombia has traditionally had a very weak state and has not been able to exert control over much of the territory.

Uribe made some progress in terms of state presence but Colombia still has a weak state that has been prone to corruption and abuses. In addition, the institutions in Colombia remain weak and must be strengthened. While Santos has sought to address this problem, Colombia still faces many challenges with impunity and prosecuting violators of the law, particularly human rights abusers.

The U.S. has rushed to praise Plan Colombia as a success, which in and of itself is a questionable issue. Indeed, Uribe successfully combatted the FARC and the guerrillas, but Colombia still has an internal armed conflict and by no means has Uribe eliminated the various actors. Colombia also continues to confront drug trafficking and organized crime that has returned to the country as a result of the shifting routes. As a result, the U.S. led policies have had negative consequences for Colombia as the routes shifted from Colombia to Mexico and now back to Colombia.

The U.S. perceives the security threat in Colombia as fading and the realist proposition that countries have interests as opposed to friends will occur. Colombia

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484 Santos v Uribe (Colombian Politics)
cannot expect that the U.S. will remain a close ally with the U.S. when the security threat disappears in the eyes of the U.S. This is the reality that Santos faces as he diversifies his friends throughout the region. Santos, therefore, has sought to improve Colombia’s relations with other countries in the Americas, such as Brazil and Canada, as well as European countries, and, finally, Asian countries, particularly China. It also is quite possible that as the U.S. distances itself from Colombia, if problems do indeed occur as a result of drug trafficking, organized crime, and the internal armed conflict, the U.S. will not be willing or equipped to reengage Colombia. As a result, Colombia will have to fights its own war on drugs and solve its own problems within the country without the assistance of the U.S.  

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has examined the analytical conclusions and policy lessons from Plan Colombia. Indeed, Plan Colombia, particularly under Uribe, has had some successes and increased security in Colombia. However, in terms of reducing cultivation, production, and trafficking, Plan Colombia has been an utter failure. While the total hectares of coca being cultivated in Colombia have decreased overtime, Peru and Bolivia have witnessed increases in coca cultivation. The U.S. has failed to learn from the lessons of history, which demonstrate that coca cultivation can shift and adapt. In other words, increasing aerial spraying programs in Colombia can shift coca cultivation to the neighboring countries. This is exactly what has happened despite spending billions of dollars trying

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to spray the countryside in Colombia. Another cost that needs to be factor into the balance sheet of Plan Colombia is the negative repercussions and cost of the environmental damage. It is quite difficult to estimate the cost of the environmental damages to Colombia from the aerial spraying program.\textsuperscript{489} Flora and fauna, however, have not been the only things damaged by the pesticides; aerial spraying initiatives have had devastating effects on the water and various animals residing in the rich ecosystem of Colombia. In addition to polluting the environment and causing health effects, aerial spraying initiatives also have failed to produce results. In sum, the aerial spraying initiatives have not only failed to reduce coca cultivation, but also have had negative consequences on the environment as well as the health of Colombians. It, therefore, is safe to argue that such initiatives have costs large amounts of damage and, in turn, been counterproductive. Ramírez Lemus, Stanton, And Walsh provide an excellent summary of the negative repercussions of aerial spraying initiatives, stating the following:

The fumigation strategy in Colombia is not merely ineffective; it is also counterproductive. It has destroyed the livelihood of thousands of peasant farmers who lack viable economic alternatives to producing illicit crops, also endangering their health and the environment. The implementation of the fumigation program in disregard of Colombian legal principles, and against the will of local and regional elected officials, has undermined the rule of law and government authority. And as coca cultivation has dispersed in response to the fumigation, the illegal armed actors have followed the new production, further extending the reach of the internal armed conflict.\textsuperscript{490}

Despite the failure of Plan Colombia to reduce cultivation and drug trafficking in Colombia, many advocates praise Plan Colombia and argue that it should be used as a model. The U.S. has been too hasty to praise Colombia for its success and has sought to de-securitize the issue. The Colombians still have an internal armed conflict and drug trafficking organizations operating within the country. Many officials in Washington

\textsuperscript{489} Youngers and Rosin, The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1-15; Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War, 61-98; Mejia, Associate Professor Los Andes University

\textsuperscript{490} Ramírez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh, Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War, 61-98,116
have praised Plan Colombia as a success, applauded, and moved on to other important foreign policy issues. The future of Colombian security looks quite bleak as the Colombians will have to fight the war on drugs and address the internal armed conflict without the assistance of the U.S. However, it is possible that efforts will be made by policy experts and politicians to re-securitize Colombia in the near future if the situation worsens.

Ultimately, only time will tell, but the future of the war on drugs in Colombia looks quite bleak.
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