

Paz en Colombia:

A Discussion of the Violent Policies of the U.S. and Colombian Administrations in their “Peacemaking” Efforts in Colombia and the Search for an Environment for Negotiations

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“But for now, the staccato crackling of automatic weapons and the beating of chopper blades are still louder than the voices of dialogue and reconciliation.”

~Marc Cooper, from his article in *The Nation*, entitled “Plan Colombia”

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Introduction

The most recent phase of violence in the war ravaged Colombia has lasted over forty years and survived the addition of new armed actors and various administrations' proposals for peace. The attempts at peacemaking have involved anything from amnesty for the guerrilla groups involved in the armed struggle, demobilization of the various armed actors and granting of special zones of authority to the guerrilla groups, to full-scale eradication of the coca and poppy crops that fuel the drug trade. These attempts at peacemaking have integrated various national and international actors. While the stipulations and conditions of these peace processes have differed, they all share the experience of having failed. The violence in Colombia persists, and is becoming increasingly complicated by the addition of new actors and new international contexts. Considering the unyielding nature of the violence, the question then arises of whether or not peace is possible in Colombia. The change in the global climate since the late 1980's and the end of the Cold War, the onslaught of neo-liberal economic policies and the introduction of various new dimensions into the internal conflict in Colombia (drug-trafficking, paramilitaries and private military contractors to name a few), have all served to hopelessly muddy the prospects for peace.

The post-September 11th environment has further complicated the violent conflict in Colombia- a conflict that is already deeply charged with various political, social and economic motivations. In light of the bipolarity inflicted upon the world by the United States' led "war on terror", the question of whether peace is possible becomes even more problematic. The true question becomes: Is peace in Colombia possible in a world that is dominated by inherently repressive economic and thereby repressive social institutions?

Can peace be attained through the normal channels of international involvement, reformation of national policies and reintegration of the historically excluded members of the Colombian population into society in a “democratic” Colombian regime which still partially denies the connection between the social and political orders that allow for the desultory and enduring violence?

When considering the effect the post September 11th re-polarization of the world has had on restructuring the nature of the violence in Colombia, it becomes abundantly clear that the alliance between the U.S. and Colombian administrations in their militaristic approach to ending the violence in Colombia precludes any possibility of a peace process. Their use of military and subsequently violent measures has and will continue to fail to bring about any sort of socioeconomic change within Colombian society, and without structural changes in the socioeconomic fabric of society, any sort of peace induced by military measure, will surely be temporary. As Marc Chernick writes, “there is no military solution to the armed conflicts in Colombia.”¹ Forty years of guerrilla warfare, the legacy of the mercilessly bloody period of partisan-based violence known simply as *La Violencia* (the violence), and the establishment of the quasi-authoritarian and definitively politically exclusionary institution of two-party hegemony known as the National Front have formed the foundation for social and political life in Colombia.

Considering Colombia’s long history of violence, it becomes obvious that violence and military measures cannot be an integral part of the peace process. For that matter, it seems paradoxical that any peace process would promote violence and

¹ Marc Chernick, “Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia”, In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999.

militarization as a means to an end. Yet, what the U.S. used to call the Department of War, it now calls the Department of Defense. Soon enough, the Department of Defense may be called the Department of Peace, as the current U.S. administration continued to develop euphemisms that disguise its offensive strikes as methods for defending democracy at home and abroad. While some academics and strategists may argue that use of state military force is the only way to end the conflict between the armed actors in Colombia, we must be reminded of the words of pacifist and singer, Joan Baez, “Nonviolence offers no guarantees. But the curious thing is that people who do violence don’t receive guarantees either. Statistics show that you have a better chance of coming out alive in a nonviolent battle.” While this sentiment is overly simplistic in terms of the complicated nature of the Colombian conflict, it highlights the fact that a military strategy offers no guarantees to ending a protracted conflict, and thus should be debated not just in strategic terms, but in terms of the human lives that will be lost. In light of the global environment shaped by the war on terror, the climate of U.S./Colombian relations has become one in which the true nature of the conflict has been transformed to fit the requirements for the U.S. to launch military-led propositions for conflict resolution in Colombia. The war on terror has effectively obscured the nature of the conflict, especially in its media representations in the U.S.

In view of the fact that the various attempts at peacemaking involving the international community have failed in Colombia, it appears that the conflict must be re-contextualized. Neither the broad nor specific agendas drafted at the start of peace processes have manifested a negotiating table where rational negotiations have taken place. The broad agendas, including prospects for agrarian and social reforms have been

too lofty to be broken down into feasible plans for change, while the specific agendas have included aspects irrelevant to the nature of the conflict in Colombia that stems from its political and social history. Violence inevitably interrupts any promising set of negotiations and as a result, innocent civilians are often killed. While even the most knowledgeable academics and experts have not been able to propose a viable peace plan for Colombia, this thesis proposes that at the very least it is possible to reduce the level of violence in the areas caught in the midst of the fighting between the various armed actors and to reduce the suffering of innocent civilians, providing an environment where negotiations can ensue.

In an ideal world, power structures would be eliminated, as they are ultimately exploitative of someone or some element of nature. The Colombian state has historically embodied a repressive power structure by limiting political participation and consciously neglecting rural areas, which continue to visibly suffer from this past abandonment. Ideally and ideologically, I would like to assert that oppressive state institutions themselves must be dismantled before this world, in general, can benefit from the peace that follows consensus-based decisionmaking. However, as so many of Colombia's societal ills and the discontent of its armed guerrilla actors are inspired by a history where state presence was limited in rural areas, it is understandable that a solution to the conflict would involve the insertion of state presence in these abandoned areas. Nevertheless, this insertion of a state presence must be guided by a plan to introduce socioeconomic reform, not by a plan to increase police and security presence. The latter is a reactive rather than a proactive measure that will only contribute to the cycle of violence.

This thesis is not so presumptuous as to develop an actual method for a viable peace process, but is rather an examination of what steps should be taken to create the *conditions* for a resurgence of peace talks. While it may sound rudimentary and idealistic, the idyllic conditions are those in which the actors directly and indirectly involved, namely the Colombian government, the military, the paramilitaries, the guerrillas, and the representatives of the United States, begin to see each other not as collective groups of enemies, and specifically not as “terrorists”, but as human beings.

Part One: A Brief History of the Conflict in Colombia- The Lasting Impact of the National Front

The current nature of the conflict in Colombia is directly the result of Colombia's political and social history. While this history begins farther back than even the exploitation of South America by the European colonizers, this discussion will begin with the period of political exclusion called the National Front, which lasted from 1958-1986. The National Front was essentially a system of authoritarian democracy in which the two dominant political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, alternated power every four years. The end result of the National Front, while it produced an immediate end to the bloody ten year period of partisan conflict known as, *La Violencia*, was the replacement of the vertical cleavages in society, which were based on opposing party affiliations, with new horizontal cleavages that divided the elite involved in the political arena from those who were politically and socially excluded.² The National Front can be justified on basis of the fact that the alternative would have been more mass violence like that witnessed during *La Violencia*. However, the repercussions of the nearly thirty-year period of the National Front have contributed significantly to the persistence of violence in Colombia. Daniel Pecaute blames two major impediments to the flourishing of Colombian democracy on the National Front: the blind loyalty of the majority of Colombian voters to traditional parties, and inability of parties from the left to attract voters to their radical social reform programs.³ There is a decided lack of class

² Marc Chernick, "Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia", In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p.159-200.

³ Daniel Pecaute, "Guerrillas and Violence", In: Bergquist, Charles et al., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992, p.217-239.

consciousness in Colombia, especially in light of its lasting Marxist guerrilla insurgency. While *La Violencia* involved a peasant struggle, it did not result in a social revolution and was more partisan-based than class-based. The segmentation of the market in Colombia has not united classes, as workers, capitalists and managers in a certain sector of the economy all attempt to profit at the expense of the rest of society by lobbying together for policies that increase the rents of the sector.⁴ Class-conscious solidarity has never been bolstered in Colombia enough to manifest a social revolution, despite the fact that the FARC guerilla movement grew out of an environment of social discontent in areas such as the coffee-growing areas where coffee growers were aligned along class lines.

While Colombians are increasingly disassociating themselves with the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties and supporting independent candidates, the legacy of political and social exclusion as the result of the National Front has not been erased from the Colombian social fabric. As Marc Chernick writes, “Many of the social and political factors that have fomented violence at the local level have not been addressed for fifty years. This heterogeneous social reality is at the root of Colombian violence...the National Front, did not bring peace fully to the local level or pacify the myriad of social actors, who were at war with each other.”⁵ An academic debate exists concerning the nature of democracy in Colombia during the National Front, and whether at its most base forms it was an authoritarian or simply oligarchical democracy, but democracy in Colombia has inarguably never done its best to promote political participation. Colombia also historically has one of the lowest levels of electoral participation in South America.

⁴ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁵ Marc Chernick, “Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia”, In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p.164.

As Daniel Pecaute observes, civil democracy in Colombia has resorted to exceptional measures to survive, and has limited the potential for strong opposition parties. Limited democracy carries the weight of coexisting with armed struggle by marginalizing it and exposing it to the dangers of disorganization.⁶

The survival of any semblance of democracy in Colombia has relied on exclusion of the rural masses. During the predominantly rural-based, *La Violencia*, the rural masses became pawns in the struggle that did not actually involve their welfare and hence they have failed to solidify their movement.⁷ As a result of this, as well as international economic factors, the rural masses have been disproportionately affected by the violence in Colombia, a country that possesses one of the highest numbers of internally displaced persons in the world. Those that suffer the most in the rural areas are not directly involved with the three main actors in the conflict: military, the paramilitaries, and the guerrillas, but nevertheless have become the victims of their battles.

⁶ Daniel Pecaute, "Guerrillas and Violence", In: Bergquist, Charles et al., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992, p.217-239.

⁷ Daniel Pecaute, "Guerrillas and Violence", In: Bergquist, Charles et al., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992, p.217-239.

Part Two: A Brief History of the FARC and an Argument Against the Use of State Violence Against the FARC

At this point in the struggle in Colombia, the largest and most powerful armed guerrilla insurgency in Colombia is the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, known as the FARC. As a guerrilla movement, the FARC grew out of the expression of the rural agrarian struggle which survived *La Violencia* as well as the almost total elimination of the bandits that predated the formal organization of the FARC. On May 27, 1964 the Armed Forces of Colombia, with assistance from the United States, launched a military campaign to undermine the “subversive center” that was jeopardizing their notion of western democracy and supposedly threatening national security.⁸ The subversive center was no more than a set of peasants who had survived *La Violencia* and who had settled in the region of Marquetalia in the Tolima Department. The demands of the peasants were basic. They desired from the central government better infrastructure so that they could transport their agricultural products for sale, better schools for the education of their children, and security against the first version of paramilitaries in Colombia, called the “*pajaros*”.⁹ Marquetalia was declared an “independent republic” and its residents were labeled anything from bandits to “agents of international communism”.¹⁰

Failing to gain any legitimate support from the international community, the peasants were victim to Operation Marquetalia, a mission of 16,000 soldiers entailed with

⁸ Secretariat of the Central General Staff, FARC-People's Army, “36 Years for Peace and National Sovereignty”, Official Website of the FARC-EP, < http://www.farcep.org/pagina_ingles/>, 01 May 2004.

⁹ Secretariat of the Central General Staff, FARC-People's Army, “36 Years for Peace and National Sovereignty”, Official Website of the FARC-EP, < http://www.farcep.org/pagina_ingles/>, 01 May 2004.

¹⁰ Secretariat of the Central General Staff, FARC-People's Army, “36 Years for Peace and National Sovereignty”, Official Website of the FARC-EP, < http://www.farcep.org/pagina_ingles/>, 01 May 2004.

the task of essentially wiping out these “bandits” in the region. In response to this brutal attack, forty-eight men, poorly armed and lacking sufficient resources, and commanded by Manuel Marulanda Velez, oriented themselves into an armed revolutionary movement, which according to the official FARC website, is:

infused by our people's tradition of struggle, by the resistance of the natives and the black slaves to the violent and bloody methods used by the Spanish when they came to these lands, by the 1780 Commoner insurrection lead by Jose Antonio Galan, by the valour, courage and dignity of those who liberated our nation from spanish colonialism between 1810 and 1819 and raised the banners of anti-imperialism, social justice and latin american unity, unfurled by the Liberator, Simon Bolivar but brought down and stained by the creole political class. This nucleus took up the echo of pain and anger of those massacred on Dec. 6, 1928 in the "Banana Region" and made the cherished aspirations of the working class and people its own.¹¹

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), thus ideologically arose in the face of oppressive military force.

As one of the first Colombia guerrilla movements to arise, the FARC was somewhat influenced by an ideology that was not specific enough to the environment of political exclusion in Colombia at the time of its conception in the 1950s.¹² The FARC's statements are often still rooted in the exhausted class-struggle Marxist rhetoric that dominated the Communist world during the Cold War.¹³ However, the FARC's 10-point “Platform for a Government of National Reconstruction and Reconciliation” is not fundamentally anti-capitalist, but rather the FARC accepts a market economy, foreign

¹¹ Secretariat of the Central General Staff, FARC-People's Army, “36 Years for Peace and National Sovereignty”, Official Website of the FARC-EP, < http://www.farcep.org/pagina_ingles/>, 01 May 2004.

¹² Marc Chernick, *Insurgency and Negotiations: Defining the Boundaries of the Political Regime in Colombia*, Doctoral Thesis, New York: Colombia University, 1991.

¹³ Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia's 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003.

investment, and the concept of private property. While the FARC initially developed as a peasant-based group in peripheral regions of colonization, they have transformed into efficient organizations that have focused on territorial expansion, and employ the extortion of taxes from the drug and petroleum industries and use violence as a means to assert their authority. The unstable presence of the FARC and the resort to predatory means has undoubtedly weakened security in Colombia and threatened the human rights of the populations where their territories and actions invade.

In the arena of the social sciences, French scholars such as Alain Touraine and Daniel Pecauc have most recently dominated the discussion of the impact of the resort to arms by the guerrilla opposition movements in Colombia. The theories of these French academics have appealed especially to Colombian scholars who are disillusioned with the guerrilla left. According to Touraine, armed movements do not solely arise from the absence of channels for political participation and state neglect of certain areas, but also undermine social movements and provoke violence, as well as undermine community leadership.¹⁴ The issue is not necessarily that other social movements have been denied participation in Colombia's conflict, but that the guerrilla movements drew attention away from their struggle. Colombia, then, simply needs more social movements free from the ideology of armed struggle.¹⁵ According to Daniel Pecauc, professor of political sociology and expert on Colombia, the guerrilla groups profit by representing the political and social orders as arenas of violence and they take advantage of this desultory

¹⁴ Marc Chernick, "Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia", In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p. 159-200.

¹⁵ Marc Chernick, "Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia", In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p. 159-200.

and enduring violence as a mode of sociopolitical conflict and as a tactic used by the regime.¹⁶ As Marc Chernick comments, the expansion of the guerrillas into new territories has inarguably led to the weakening of civil society, and subsequently violence has not just been singularly shaped by the absence of state institutions in areas notoriously neglected by the state.¹⁷

An ongoing debate exists as to whether the FARC is still a legitimate ideological force representing the grievances that accompany socioeconomic oppression, or whether they have simply become preoccupied with amassing wealth. While the FARC undoubtedly extorts the drug trade and taxes the rich and the wealthy landowners through various means, there is nothing that suggests that the members of the FARC do so to accumulate personal capital. The FARC are still predominantly embedded in the rural areas, and living in the mountains and jungles, not in three-piece suits and expensive condominiums. Salaries are not systematically paid to members of the FARC and even if the generous estimates of how much money the FARC extort annually from the drug and petroleum trade, ransoms from kidnapping, and the taxation of the rich were to be divided by the number of members of the FARC, each member would still not be making a living wage.

The goal of the FARC has historically been to take power of the State, however they have not seized opportunities for proving that they are possible of providing more sufficiently for Colombia's marginalized people. Their social experiments have been limited and they refused to take advantage of the *despeje zone* granted to them under the

¹⁶ Daniel Pecaut, "Guerrillas and Violence", In: Bergquist, Charles et al., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992, p. 217-239.

¹⁷ Marc Chernick, *Insurgency and Negotiations: Defining the Boundaries of the Political Regime in Colombia*, Doctoral Thesis. New York: Columbia University, 1991.

Pastrana administration, but instead demanded control of an additional municipality where they could create a model for alternative development to coca.

However, while it may be true that guerrilla insurgencies have marginalized other forms of civil opposition to state policies and socioeconomic injustices, this does not legitimize the use of State violence in response to guerrilla violence. It is not the duty of the state institutions to use violence against its citizens, even if these citizens are labeled as insurgents. Writers such as François Furet, Antoine Liniers, and Philippe Raynaud posit that violence exists as part of the democratic logic itself, and is inherent in the system.¹⁸ They theorize that terrorism in Western societies results from the lack of resistance possible in the sovereignty based on majority rule. These authors think that the Western model of democracy allows for no court of appeals and thus individuals must resort to violence, “under the pretext of restoring the original thrust to the democracy and of freeing popular will from the deformations imposed on it by representative mechanisms.”¹⁹

Within Colombia’s “democracy”, violence has indeed become a dominant form of political and social protest. The duty of the state is not to combat this political and social violence with more violence, even if this political and social violence is carried out in the form of senseless kidnappings or property destruction by the guerrilla groups- two of the most common tactics of the FARC. When the tactics of the FARC violate the safety of innocent civilians, the State has a responsibility to intervene. Colombian administrations have overwhelmingly failed to protect these innocent civilians by launching attacks on

¹⁸ Daniel Pecaute, “Guerrillas and Violence”, In: Bergquist, Charles et al., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992, p. 217-239.

¹⁹ Daniel Pecaute, “Guerrillas and Violence”, In: Bergquist, Charles et al., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992, p.220.

guerrilla groups and co-opting paramilitary forces to attack innocent civilians in violation of human rights and International Human Rights Law.

FARC leader, Simón Trinidad, captured in January 2004 by the Colombian military, reported to *Tiempos del Mundo* in October 2001 on behalf of the FARC, “Whether we come to power through peaceful or armed means is up to the oligarchy. If it is willing to change things in this country, such as to give up its privileges, we will do it through peaceful means, through dialogue, and if not we will continue the armed struggle in combination with other forms of struggle.”²⁰ While a defining characteristic of the FARC has been schizophrenia in their ideology and tactics, Trinidad’s words highlight the fundamental duty of the Colombian state in securing peace without resorting to violence or increased militarization and their responsibility for setting the tone of any future peace initiatives.

Amongst the numerous examples of state violence illogically associated with bringing an end to the conflict in Colombia is the U.S. widening of the counter-terror authority in the past year to provide Colombia with increasingly non anti-drug policy endeavors. As is likely, if the guerrillas survive Uribe’s hardliner approach and drug cultivation withstands the tenacity of Plan Colombia (described in detail later), the U.S. cannot pull out for fear that, “abandoning a neighbor beset by narco-terrorists is unthinkable in the current political climate.”²¹ What remains of utmost importance in finding a political and social environment conducive to negotiations, is acknowledging

²⁰ Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003.

²¹ Adam Isacson, “Optimism, Pessimism, and Terrorism: The United States and Colombia in 2003, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2005, Volume X, Issue 2, p. 253.

the fact that while such policies as Plan Colombia remain in existence, the guerrillas will undoubtedly remain hostile towards negotiations, and maintain what Adam Isacson describes as their intransigent nature, tendency to make demands while giving nothing in return, and their aggression against the civilian population.²² Political analysts frequently use the term, “political autism” to convey the guerrillas’ indifference to public opinion of them, and their tactic of reminding the public of past government and paramilitary offenses rather than attempting to explain the motivations for their struggle.²³

Prior to the war on terror, the neo-liberal invasion of Latin America logically made the Marxist-oriented guerrillas recalcitrant when involved in negotiations where socioeconomic equality was not considered a preeminent goal. The FARC’s mistrust of outsiders partially stems from class anger and their resulting political and social exclusion. Before January 2002, integration of the international community into the peace talks was sidelined by both the government and the FARC. The FARC logically find it difficult to trust the capitalist world’s governments and international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS).²⁴ This does not imply that the FARC is devoid of blame for the failure of past attempts at peacemaking, but rather that the FARC have rightfully not readily adapted to the constraints of a neo-liberal Colombia.

²² Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003.

²³ Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003.

²⁴ Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003.

Part Three: An Overview of the Nature of U.S./Colombian Relations

To say that the events of September 11th which launched the ferocious “war on terror” have created a negotiating environment wholly dissimilar from that which has guided U.S./Colombian relations in the past would be fallacious. In fact, the opposite is true. The U.S./Colombian policies associated with the war on terror are actually just a continuation of past policies associated with the United States’ futile war on drugs, and its prior attempt to find an ally in Colombia. The authority under which the United States and Colombian governments impose their brand of militarism and oppression exist, as well, on a continuum with the colonial legacy that robbed Latin America, but the extent of this historical legacy is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The relationship between the United States and Colombia has developed over a period spanning centuries. Colombia has always been an historical ally of the United States, in particular with regards to the close economic bond that they share, with exception, of course, when the United States claimed the province of Panama without consent of Colombia. During the 1950’s, Colombia was the only Latin American country that sent troops to fight America’s war against Korea in the 1950s. In the post-Cuban revolution era, the Kennedy administration and the Alliance for Progress acknowledged the need for social, political and economic reform in Latin America, but in conjunction with hemispheric military cooperation and counter-insurgency efforts, and frowned upon the small self-defense communities that were establishing themselves in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution. The way in which U.S. military relations with Colombia developed

ended up serving as the model for U.S. military policies for limiting Communist insurgencies in other areas of the globe.²⁵

The influence of the Cuban Revolution, beginning in 1959, and Che Guevara's concept of the *foco* as a method of action for carrying out a successful revolution, aided the already insurrectionist environment in Colombia. Che Guevara spoke of how even countries with an oligarchic democracy, such as what Colombia's democracy has historically been classified, were vulnerable to revolution.²⁶ The primary motivation for the U.S. military involvement in Colombia was thus the result of a Cold War ideological clash, where the U.S. maintained an economic interest in preventing a Communist Revolution in Colombia. In alignment with the majority of U.S. foreign military interventions, the U.S. proxy war in Colombia was part of a continental response rooted in clashing ideologies more so than in an effort at establishing stability and entrenching multi-party democracy in Colombia.²⁷

The escalation of military aid to Colombia thus predated the events on September 11th and the subsequent launch of the war on terror. The Plan Colombia package, which proposed a large-scale eradication of the coca crops that physically fuel the drug trade and an increase of U.S. military aid to and police presence in Colombia, was approved in June 2000 in the context of the drug war, not in the context of the war on terror. The overlap of the war on drugs and the war on terror and the parallel politics which sustain them are, nevertheless, glaringly real. When the war on drugs was proven to do little to

²⁵ Marc Chernick, *Insurgency and Negotiations: Defining the Boundaries of the Political Regime in Colombia*, Doctoral Thesis, New York: Colombia University, 1991.

²⁶ Marc Chernick, *Insurgency and Negotiations: Defining the Boundaries of the Political Regime in Colombia*, Doctoral Thesis, New York: Colombia University, 1991.

²⁷ Marc Chernick, *Insurgency and Negotiations: Defining the Boundaries of the Political Regime in Colombia*, Doctoral Thesis, New York: Colombia University, 1991.

reduce drug supply in Colombia and other areas in the Andes nor reduce consumption in the U.S., the need to wage a war on terror has been used as a justification for the U.S. to sustain the large level of funding over multiple years and to openly wage a counter-insurgency program in the name of both anti-drug *and* counter-terror strategy. In the context of the post-September 11th world, counter-narcotics efforts have thus become a subset of counter-terrorist efforts, when in reality both problems are indicative of deeper socioeconomic conditions and their contributions to the escalation of the Colombian conflict have been dramatized by America's various ideological wars.

Moreover, this ideological war manifesting itself violently in Colombia as the result of the U.S./Colombia military alliance under the administrations of current Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and U.S. President Bush, is strikingly similar to the nature of U.S. military intervention in Colombia during past administrations. In the context of U.S. foreign policy, relationships with other nations are determined on a case by case basis, but almost always under the auspices of an overarching ideology, which presently can be summarized as the war against terrorism. Amnesties and attempted negotiations in Colombia's history have taken place either in an atmosphere of a bipolar Cold War world or a bipolar world where the U.S and its allies are waging a war on terror. The period in between the Cold War and the war on terror was marked by a definitive emphasis on the war on drugs, where Colombia served as the primary battleground. The failures of the war on drugs continue to manifest themselves in the Colombia arena.

Part Four: The Transition from the United States' led War on Drugs to the War on Terror and the Development of the Paramilitaries

According to Tokatlian, as part of a world phenomenon of misguided prohibition policy, drug trafficking and the labeling of drug traffickers as a rising criminal class, have presented themselves in Colombia as a form of defective globalization.²⁸ Tokatlian expresses that the various wars being waged in Colombia, “the war on drugs”, “the counterinsurgency war”, “the war against the establishment”, to name a few, are really just euphemisms for the an inability of any individual or organization to understand the crisis that has multiple actors, where there is no specific, identifiable source of blame.²⁹

In the context of a fragile and fractured state and a discredited political regime, the state of human rights in Colombia has rapidly decomposed and a space has been generated for proto-state organized crime community revolving around the drug trade.³⁰ At times the underground economy has shown faster growth rates than the formal economy. Illegal economic activity in Colombia does not necessarily carry a negative social stigma and on numerous occasions the Colombian government has participated in the illegal economy.³¹ Thus the delegitimization of the State has accompanied and condoned the rapid growth of the illegal economy. Charles Tilly compares the devices used by nation-states to establish themselves, as the same ones employed by units of organized crime as war making, extraction and capital accumulation are often used by

²⁸ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

²⁹ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

³⁰ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

³¹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

nation builders to gain power and authority.³² Tokatlian makes the valid claim that the drug-related organized crime has not grown due to a institutionalization of its legitimacy or from a citizen acceptance of its socio-political project, but because of the weakness of the State's legitimacy and the existence of a voracious capitalism and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, with little regard for the collective well-being of the Colombian population as a whole.³³

The United States led war on drugs, initially launched by President Nixon, and targeted heavily at Colombia, coexisted with an impulse of technological and economic globalization allowed for incentive and opportunity for the drug trafficking industry to grow in Colombia even in the face of staunch demand-side persecution associated with the militarized war on drugs. Most experts on the political economy of Colombia agree that the only way to stymie the drug trade, which has added to the violence in Colombia and undermined the flourishing of democracy, is to decrease demand. The futility of trying to stop the supply side of the drug trade by capturing drug traffickers and destroying the drug crops and industry facilities is evident in the fact that new drug entrepreneurs continue to emerge and crops are continually replanted in Colombia and in neighboring countries as the result of a balloon effect, where drug production is simply pushed outside of Colombia's borders into neighboring countries in the face of drug crop eradication efforts. Much like the war on terror, the processes associated with focusing on the supply side in the drug war are not new developments.

³² Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

³³ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

The dialogue between the United States and Colombia regarding the psychoactive drug (PSAD) industry has always been problematic as both sides see it as each other's problem, and both sides have continuously denied examining the roots of the social problems that make demand high on the U.S. side and the entrance into the industry both appealing and profitable on the Colombian supply side. Throughout the futile drug war and now into the war on terror, the U.S. has maintained its stance that ending the drug trade is the key to making peace rather than viewing the creation of the conditions for peace (political inclusion, land and wealth redistribution, etc.) as a means of ending the drug trade.

Early attempts at controlling the PSAD industry mistakenly focused on extradition of high-ranking drug entrepreneurs, despite the fact that this method had little effect in limiting cocaine production and trafficking.³⁴ The supply side strategy only became increasingly militarized, not more effective, which has had the effect of complicating the Colombian conflict and making it more violent. The history of the Colombian government's reaction to the illegal drug trade is pockmarked with contradictory economic and political policies, which highlight the pressure to both deal with punishing the purveyors and producers of illegal drugs on basis of their illegality, the desire to take advantage of the foreign exchange generated by the drug trade to the benefit of the Colombian economy, and the pressure from the United States to reduce supply of an equally demand side problem.

However, the past economic gain of these drug trafficking industries and the consequent arrival of US dollars into Colombia benefited the import and illicit trade sector, but did nothing, of course, to help those living in poverty. While completely

³⁴ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

ignoring the legality of the drug trade, drug trafficking has inarguably worsened social conditions and relations in Colombia by further concentrating wealth in the hands of a few and creating an industry in which the enormous profits cannot effectively recirculate back into the Colombian economy (currency, which, were it possible to recirculate, would probably not go towards improving the conditions of the politically and socially excluded) and to further mystify the relationships between the armed actors in the Colombian conflict.

By the mid-1970s, marijuana cultivation had grown significantly in Colombia which led to an illegal export boom, and its consumption constituency broadened. During the 1970s, policymakers avoided the issue of narco-trafficking, partially because the government was happy to have the foreign exchange that the drug trade was creating and there were already too many issues that needed to be tackled. Moreover, the socially negative macroeconomic effects of the drug trade were too complex to understand at the time, and since most wealthy Colombians not involved in the PSAD industry had illegal foreign dollar accounts and had gained their wealth by breaking some Colombian economic law or another, the PSAD industry was not wholly separable from the legal economy.³⁵

When marijuana was the main illegal drug export, its illegal trade was not viewed as a crisis, and it was not until cocaine became the primary drug export that drug policy became a leading issue in Colombia. Prior to this, Colombian President Alfonso López-Michelsen reacted mainly to the drug problem by dealing with the foreign exchange supply growth and it was not until the Samper administration that the issue of legalization

³⁵ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

of drugs was raised.³⁶ But while supply side attempts at undermining the drug trade were proving futile, the controversy sparked by the legalization question, proved that advocating legalization would also prove futile.

In 1978, when Turbay became President, his reported affiliation with the drug industry in part led him to take a public aggressive anti-drug stance.³⁷ The U.S. government forcefully advocated the supply side eradication of the marijuana crops by using defoliants such as paraquat, as had been done in Mexico, but the undeniably harmful ecological effects imposed by spraying, made the program too controversial, so a military alternative was implemented instead.³⁸ There was a brief period in 1978 when Turbay implemented manual eradication of the marijuana by army personnel under “Operation Fulminant”, but the program did not last long because the army argued that it both took resources away from the counterinsurgency battle against the guerrillas and weakened the image of the army in the eyes of the peasants whose livelihood was effectually being destroyed by the eradication.³⁹

Under Turbay, Colombia instated the National Security Statute, which granted the government more power to combat both the drug industry and the guerrillas, and allowed for the creation of self-defense groups, which later developed into paramilitary groups.⁴⁰ The extradition treaty signed at the end of Turbay’s administration, became a leading part of Colombia’s drug policy, despite the fact that the extradition of drug-trafficking leaders to the U.S. was more symbolic than anything else, and had no long-lasting effect on

³⁶ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

³⁷ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

³⁸ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

³⁹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁴⁰ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

reducing the Colombian supply of illegal drugs. The extradition treaty also undermined Colombian sovereignty through the imposition of U.S. involvement in Colombia's drug policy.

While Turbay's successor, Belisario Betancur, displayed progressive efforts at peacemaking, he concurrently endorsed aerial herbicide spraying on marijuana plantations, which was successful in weakening the industry, but not in destroying it, as cultivation merely shifted to other areas. Meanwhile, assessing the benefits of eradication are difficult in light of the fact that drug consumption patterns act independent of eradication efforts and minimization of the profits from the drug trade may not depend on the success of eradication efforts, but rather on other factors.

President Betancur's administration preoccupied itself with promoting the political incorporation of the guerrillas and dealing with the economic problems left over from the Turbay administration. The issue of a tax amnesty to utilize the hidden capital generated from the drug trade was reintroduced under Betancur, but never voted on.⁴¹ Under Betancur, the Colombia and U.S. governments cooperated to destroy a cocaine manufacturing base and in retaliation, Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated, because he publicly opposed the politicization of the drug industry through the development of a political base by the drug barons. Consequent to the assassination of Lara Bonilla, an offensive campaign began to jail and extradite high-end Colombian drug dealers, and aerial spraying of marijuana crops with glyphosate ensued.⁴²

⁴¹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁴² Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

Whereas, by the end of his term, Betancur had initiated the Colombian war against subversion, the successive Barco administration witnessed the formal escalation of the war on drugs by the United States. Under Barco, the first Bush administration appointed the inaugural head of the newly created National Drug Control Policy branch. The job of this Drug Czar was to reduce the amount of cocaine entering the United States through drug eradication and enforcement in the drug-source countries. In December 1989, the dual factors of the U.S. invasion of Panama, apparently motivated by the drug-trafficking activities of Noriega, and the White House decision to place an aircraft carrier battle group in the waters off of Colombia to interrupt drug shipments, signaled that the U.S. was going to amplify its role in what had effectually become a war on drugs. The invasion of Panama and the subsequent apprehension of Manuel Noriega reflected a strengthening of Washington's anti-drug campaign and the U.S. tradition of using force against its militarily and economically weaker neighbors.⁴³

When Barco became President in 1986, what ensued were an increase in assassinations of those who opposed the drug industry and an increase in intra-industry violence as well as violent paramilitary actions against peasants. On June 25, 1987 the Supreme Court cited the extradition treaty as invalid, because its ratification had not adhered to the required legal procedures. Barco continued on his anti-drug campaign by focusing on the issue of extradition and established extradition as an administrative rather than a judicial function in order to bypass judicial conflicts with the method of extradition. A turning point in the drug war came with the assassination of leading Presidential candidate, Luis Carlos Galán by the drug bosses who feared his support of

⁴³ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

the extradition treaty and the peacemaking dialogue that would establish codes of amnesty for the guerrillas.⁴⁴ Barco consequently launched a military campaign against what he called the “narco-terrorists” and concentrated his efforts on capturing drug traffickers and making sure their networks were destroyed and properties confiscated.

Under President George Bush Sr., the U.S. got involved in Barco’s campaign by offering \$65 million in emergency military aid to Bogotá and introducing the broader Andean Initiative in September, which formally commenced the militarization of the supply-side campaign of the drug war. The Andean Initiative deployed over \$260 million in military and law enforcement assistance for Colombia, Peru and Bolivia within its first few months of existence, and U.S. Special Forces and military advisers were sent to train law enforcement and military personnel in Latin America. The Bush administration made it a point to encourage Latin American countries to “request” U.S. military assistance despite the fact that most leaders were not convinced that militarization was an effective method of combat in the drug war.⁴⁵ Then Colombian President, Virgilio Barco, requested military equipment and advisers, but still claimed that there was no urgency for U.S. forces, in order to assuage Colombian nationalist sentiments which opposed U.S. intervention.⁴⁶ Bush’s Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, was supportive of the idea of greater military involvement in the drug war.⁴⁷ As George W. Bush’s vice-president

⁴⁴ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁴⁵ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁴⁶ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁴⁷ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

under the current U.S. administration, Cheney has not altered in his support for military intervention as a means of combating the “war on terror”.

Meanwhile, Bruce Bagley rightly asserts that these financial contributions by the U.S. were a mere symbolic gesture, as funds were directed to the wrong sector, making the military responsible for fighting the war on drugs, when this fight should have ultimately been a domestic responsibility.⁴⁸ The type of military aid granted was implausible. Fighter planes were discharged, despite the fact the drug war was logistically to be fought on the ground.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the primary role of the Defense Department is to protect the U.S. from armed aggression, not to initiate military intervention. The end of the Cold War allowed for the drug war to take over the need for national security bureaucracy to reap the benefits of a wide-reaching military establishment.⁵⁰

In response to the Barco offensive, the Medellín drug cartel declared war against anyone that opposed them, and the attacks on judicial, political, and media representatives and civilians alike that were undertaken by members of the Medellín cartel, provided for a weakening of public support for the Barco campaign against “narco-terrorism” that was failing to yield the capture of the main ringleaders of the drug trade.⁵¹ Sentiments shifted when a top drug-trafficker was killed in a shootout on December 14, 1989. Domestic and foreign pressures on Barco undermined any prospects

⁴⁸ Bruce M. Bagley, “Dateline Drug Wars: Colombia: The Wrong Strategy”, *Foreign Policy* 77 (Winter): 154-171, 1989-1990.

⁴⁹ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁵⁰ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁵¹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

for a negotiation with the drug traffickers that surfaced with the formation of an ad-hoc commission to seek solutions to ending the drug war.⁵²

The conflict associated with the political assassinations during the height of Barco's drug war was addressed with a strategy imposed during the Gaviria administration. This strategy entailed the non-extradition of the parties involved in the assassinations in exchange for the voluntary subjugation of the major drug traffickers to justice.⁵³ A crucial turning point came with the imprisonment of the head of the Medellín cartel, Pablo Escobar, in 1993. Subsequently, the rival Cali cartel was temporarily strengthened and as mentioned, associated with giving funds to Samper for his campaign, but was later dismantled by the Colombian government in 1995 with the help of the United States.

With the destruction of the two major drug cartels, the business of drug-trafficking drifted away from the vertical relationships within the industry towards the segmentation of the industry into many specialized phases.⁵⁴ As the result of this atomization of the drug trade, five hundred smaller drug trafficking industries arose according to the Colombian central intelligence of the police. At the same time as the drug trade atomized, the FARC and the paramilitaries were competing for control of the

⁵² Juan Tokatlian, "La Política Exterior de Colombia Hacia Estados Unidos, 1978-1990: El Asunto de las Drogas y su Lugar en las Relaciones Entre Bogotá y Washington," In: Arrieta Carlos G., ed, et al., *Narcotráfico en Colombia: Dimensiones Políticas, Económicas, Jurídicas e Internacionales*, Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, p. 277-374.

⁵³ Alejandro Reyes Posada, La Violencia Política, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁵⁴ Alejandro Reyes Posada, La Violencia Política, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

cultivation of the illicit crops that fuel the drug trade.⁵⁵ As the actual transport of the cocaine to the markets, mostly in the United States, is the phase of the industry associated with the greatest risk, the development of cartels to control transportation emerged as the primary method of organization, but the dismantling of the two major drug cartels, the Cali and Medellín groups, did not significantly disrupt the cocaine market.⁵⁶

The presidential campaign for the 1990-1994 term was the first in which the illegal PSAD industry took center stage as its threat on Colombia's democracy became very clear in the context of the increased number of drug-related murders and assassinations. This was also the period in which the assassinations of the political representatives of the guerrilla movements in the Unión Patriótico (U.P.) political party occurred, which seriously undermined the attempt to reincorporate the guerrillas into the democratic system.

When César Gaviria took office in 1990, it was clear that the formation of the Constitutional Assembly to reform the Constitution was needed and Gaviria hoped that the new constitution would strengthen the judiciary system, guarantee human and economic rights, and decentralize power and decision-making in order to foster a democratic political environment in Colombia.⁵⁷

Only thirty percent of those eligible to vote actually voted for the representatives that would compose the Constitutional Assembly. The largest group in the Assembly was

⁵⁵ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁵⁶ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁵⁷ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

the Democratic Alliance, which consisted primarily of members of the M-19, one of the more militant guerrilla groups in Colombia. In recognition of the failures of the sixteen month war against narcoterrorism, Gaviria began negotiations with the drug traffickers by offering reduced sentences to those drug traffickers that turned themselves in and three notable drug traffickers took advantage of this offer, but violence against political figures continued, nevertheless. After negotiations involving a famous Colombian priest, Pablo Escobar, leader of the Medellín cartel, surrendered and was imprisoned in a special prison built outside his hometown.

During the Samper administration (1994-1998), the historically close relationship between the U.S. and Colombia weakened significantly, because of accusations against Samper that he accepted campaign funds from the Cali drug cartel. While Samper was in power, the U.S. was involved in the “air bridge” of small planes linking the harvested coca crops of Peru and Bolivia with the cocaine-processing laboratories of Colombia. Between 1994 and 2001, as many as 50 planes were shot down and while drug shipments to the labs consequently did decrease, they were just forced elsewhere outside of Colombia.⁵⁸

The eventual imprisonment of all the main members of the Medellín cartel was portrayed by the media as a giant leap in the war against narco-terrorism, while the total number of murders in Colombia reached a record high, negotiations with the guerrillas were halted and the PSAD industry was expanding into the heroin market. The method of militarization of the anti-drug campaign has transferred to the current Colombian administration under Uribe, but the militarized anti-narcotics strategies are now a part of

⁵⁸ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

the overarching war on terror. Even when it has temporarily shown to lead to decreases in drug production, the use of military force and fumigation of crops by members of the armed forces is inherently flawed, because it is not done in cooperation with those whose livelihoods are being destroyed by supply side eradication.

In accordance with the predominance of oligarchical industries in Colombia, the cocaine industry is similar to the legal Colombian agricultural industries where wealth is highly concentrated despite the large number of farmers that produce the raw material. However, the illegality of the final product makes the cocaine industry highly different than that of the banana or coffee industry, for example. One of the most detrimental aspects unique to the illegal industry is its tendency to promote violence. Violence is used as a method of conflict resolution when business deals do not go as planned, as a threat against competing group's entrance into or undermining of the market, as a means of protection of the illegally obtained property for drug cultivation and processing, and as a method to eliminate law enforcing agents attempting to undermine the industry.⁵⁹

With the PSAD industry, the profit value-added is directly related to the risk assumed because of the illegality of the product being exported, so arguments for decriminalizing drugs are logical in that if the risk in the industry were not so high, the potential for profit would significantly lower and the appeal to get involved in the industry would be lost. However, the discussion of the legalization of drugs is a futile one as the legalization is very unlikely to occur, and thus it is more beneficial to discuss the drug trade in the context of how it contributes to the violence in Colombia.

Krauthausen and Sarmiento, tireless researchers on the cocaine industry in Colombia,

⁵⁹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

simplify the discussion to a concept that dictates that trust and violence dominate the PSAD industry, as those involved in the industry have to trust their partners to be able to do business, but at the same time be prepared to use violence implement agreements⁶⁰

The success of the PSAD industry in Colombia is directly related to a lack or respect for the legal institutions and this lack of respect is inextricably linked to the institutional failure of Colombia's political and economic systems. The isolation of the coca-growing regions has correlated with a weak state presence in these areas, and the void has predominantly been filled by guerrilla and community organizations, despite the peasants' desire for a stronger state presence.

Krauthausen and Sarmiento discuss clandestine networks that have developed amongst those involved in the higher ends of the PSAD industry and the political and economic institutions, government policymaking and law enforcement agencies and the guerrilla and paramilitary organizations in order for the PSAD entrepreneurs to integrate into mainstream Colombian society.⁶¹ While PSAD entrepreneurs enter these networks to protect the wealth they amass from the industry, it seems only logical that the formation of these networks is indicative of the drug trade's formation as the result of Colombia's history of social and political exclusion and its defunct form of capitalism that limits entrance into the legal markets. The proven links between politicians and drug-trafficking also point to the PSAD industry's sheer profit-bearing characteristic.

⁶⁰ Ciro Krauthausen and Luis F. Sarmiento, *Cocaína & Co.: Un Mercado Illegal por Dentro*, Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1991.

⁶¹ Ciro Krauthausen and Luis F. Sarmiento, *Cocaína & Co.: Un Mercado Illegal por Dentro*, Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1991.

In determining the impact of the drug trade on Colombia, it is impossible to avoid the “narco-guerrilla” and “narco-terrorist” rhetoric that infiltrates the discussion. These labels do not just refer to the drug traffickers that rely solely on the drug trade for their livelihood, but also the guerrillas and paramilitaries that have been linked to drug trade activities. Ted Galen Carpenter writes, “The obsession with the antidrug crusade as the moral equivalent of war during the Bush years was a variation on a theme that began to emerge several years earlier. Throughout the early and mid-1980s, various right-wing hawks built elaborate theories of a “narco-terrorist” or “narco-communist” threat to American security,” which some analysts concluded was a conspiracy connected to the Soviet KGB.⁶² The forced link between the drug-traffickers and the insurgents, highlighted in the terms “narco-guerrilla”, “narco-terrorist” or “narco-communist”, have make it appear as though the drug trade exists as a true threat to national security.⁶³ In the same fashion, the war on terror has used misleading and ill-applied labels to insinuate that guerrillas are a true threat to U.S. national security, irregardless of whether these guerrillas extort profits from coca production and drug trafficking. During the first Bush administration, drug trafficking was portrayed as an independent national security threat rather than as a part of a larger communist threat.⁶⁴ However, the attempts at eradication of the drug supply made during the second Bush administration have been linked with the ideologically driven war on terror.

⁶² Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p.48.

⁶³ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁶⁴ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington’s Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

The Emergence of the Paramilitaries and Their Connection to the Drug Trade:

Scholar on Colombia, Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, uses Karl von Clausewitz's idea of finding the "center of gravity" of any point of controversy to begin a discussion and in the context of the Colombian conflict, he refers to this center as the drug trade.⁶⁵

Tokatlian asserts that those involved in the organized drug trade in Colombia are asserting what Bernice Carroll calls disintegrative power, or the power of the weak.⁶⁶

Disintegrative power is indicative of most institutions of organized crime and expressed through the power of influence and the power of domination and control.⁶⁷ Disintegrative power is manifested in a relatively diffuse manner through the effective erosion of social institutions and economic and political stability of the State. In the case of Colombia it is imperative to note that the defiant and violent actions of institutions of organized crime simultaneously highlight the deficiencies of the State.⁶⁸ As seen in post-Communist Russia with the rapid growth of criminal organizations, the inability of the State to provide for its citizens in the context of the capitalistic demands of globalization provides the perfect environment for the growth of criminal activity. In this sense, the ineffectiveness of the justice system in Colombia, traditionally politicized and formalistic, has become a functional asset for all the armed actors involved in the conflict.⁶⁹ In accordance with the necessary tactics for their survival and or growth, the

⁶⁵ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

⁶⁶ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

⁶⁷ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

⁶⁸ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

⁶⁹ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

Colombian business sector, the guerrillas and the paramilitaries have all found ways to establish some sort of relationship with the drug trafficking industry, which has elevated and exacerbated the violence and explains why the insertion of the drug trade into the Colombian conflict could position it as the “center of gravity” in the discussion of the dynamics of the conflict. The context of the drug trade will thus be used to discuss the insertion of the paramilitaries into the Colombian conflict and to examine the debatable connection of both the guerrillas and the paramilitaries to the drug trade. The fact that those linked to the drug trade, no matter how tenuously, are predominantly termed “narco-terrorists”, will logically lead into a discussion of how the war on terror has obfuscated the Colombian conflict and jeopardized the ongoing peace process.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, formal paramilitary groups have inserted themselves in transitory regions from which guerrillas have either been expelled or regions where guerrillas have gained sympathy from the local populations. In a relatively short time, the drug explosion of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s led to massive land grabs by the arrival of those profiting from the drug trade who were familiar with corruption and violence as methods of aggrandizing wealth.⁷⁰

In 1982, during Betancur’s presidency, in order to formally challenge the guerrilla subversives, the Colombian military formed paramilitary sects and groups of *campesino* (peasant) soldiers financed by the landowners in the regions most greatly affected by the guerrilla presence.⁷¹ Until 1989, it was legal for the Colombian Armed Forces to enlist

⁷⁰ Alejandro Reyes Posada, La Violencia Política, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*,. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁷¹ Alejandro Reyes Posada, La Violencia Política, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

civilians in armed support. With the development of the paramilitaries the military became more focused on granting their assistance to the paramilitary extermination of political opposition, social leaders and bases of guerrilla support. When the guerrillas began their campaign to extort profit from the first groups of druglords, they were met with an equally organized and violent force. In the same year as the formal creation of the paramilitaries, *Muerte a Secuestradores* (MAS) was also formed as a unit whose sole existence was to attack both the violent guerrillas *and* those non-combatants who merely supported groups like the FARC by offering them ideological support in the face of unyielding oppression.⁷² MAS later moved into territories acquired by the drug mafias. During the greater part of the 1980s, the drug trafficking mafias were allied militarily in the struggle against the “subversives”: guerrillas and guerrilla supporters, alike. These mafias benefited economically from the creation of private armies, separate from but related to the Colombian military, to secure the areas where they conducted business.⁷³

In 1996, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) was formed from seven smaller military-sponsored armed defense organizations, as the primary paramilitary organization that would launch massive military campaigns against the guerrillas and civilians in regions of guerrilla control and influence. Carlos Castaño became the undisputed leader of the paramilitary forces. Along with the development of paramilitary organizations in Colombia, came the armed defense of the large plots of land and lucrative business such as the drug trade. The territorial expansion of the paramilitaries

⁷² Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*,. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁷³ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

has contributed to the concentration rather than the distribution of land and the expulsion of peasants.⁷⁴ The nine regions where the armed confrontation between guerrillas and paramilitaries has been most intense have all, with exception of Arauca, also been victim to massive land sweeps by the paramilitaries.⁷⁵ In the main agrarian areas of conflict, the drug traffickers not associated with the paramilitaries have bought estates whose ownership was being disputed by peasants and have used this land in their fight against the paramilitary groups.⁷⁶ The land conflicts being waged, in futility, have been most volatile on the Caribbean coast and in Magdalena Medio region. In all of these regions the rural *campesino* population and the estate cattle raisers have been expelled to the towns and cities.⁷⁷ Those places where land conflicts are rampant also logically correspond to those where the majority of guerrilla and paramilitary violence has taken place.⁷⁸ By examining the geographical relationship between military presence, the land grab by the paramilitaries and the conflicts over land, it becomes apparent how strongly the drug traffickers and landowners have facilitated the growth of the paramilitaries to the detriment of the poor farmer and peasant populations in these areas. In areas such as the eastern part of the Caribbean coast where narco-investment has been limited, there still exists a direct relationship between land conflicts and the rise of paramilitaries, but in

⁷⁴ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁷⁵ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁷⁶ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁷⁷ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁷⁸ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*. Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

these areas paramilitaries simply defend large estates.⁷⁹ In Magdalena Medio, a region with one of the highest rates of violence, all the conflicts associated with the entrance of the paramilitaries and drug traffickers seemed to have emerged: high numbers of violence, land conflict and displaced persons. The AUC has been notorious for violently expelling peasant populations accused of cooperating with the guerrillas, and are responsible for a majority of the massacres of civilian populations.

The entrance of the paramilitaries into the equation of the Colombian conflict has been a main factor in precluding a negotiation to the armed conflict between the government and the guerrillas. The AUC have simultaneously undermined the authority of the central government in territories they occupy and exacerbated the decline of the Colombian State. While Colombia's peace negotiations with the guerrillas began in 1982, years before the peace processes were established with the guerrilla insurgencies in several countries in Central America, Colombia is the only country not to have achieved success, and this in part due to the influx of contributions to the violence in Colombia, the most significant of which has been the creation of paramilitary forces.

Mauricio Romero, an academic who has written extensively on the rise of paramilitaries, uses the term "*empresario de la coerción*" (business of coercion) to refer to those in Colombia who specialize in the administration and use of organized violence in exchange for money or another object of value to them.⁸⁰ In order to understand the rise of the paramilitaries, it is important to understand the threat that was posed to the

⁷⁹ Alejandro Reyes Posada, *La Violencia Política*, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004

⁸⁰ Mauricio Romero, *Paramilitares y Autodefensas: 1982-2000*, Bogotá: Editorial Planeta Colombiana, 2003.

status quo through a rebalancing of regional power in Colombia as the result of those peace processes, which suggested that the guerrillas be granted autonomy in certain regions. Romero's research of the paramilitaries maintains that the interventions of the central government in their negotiation of the peace accords with the guerrillas triggered the destabilizing dynamics in the regions affected by the armed insurgency as did the subsequent entrance of the paramilitaries.⁸¹

As the negotiations with the guerrillas during the various peace processes polarized the local political elites and those in armed control of the rural areas, the executive and military branches of the Colombian government became increasingly fragmented and public order logically did not ensue. Thus the paramilitaries entered the Colombian conflict to monopolize the violence at the local rural levels and this process occurred during a distinct polarization between the local political elites and the competing social movements and during an emerging period of competition between the consolidated guerrillas and the those involved with drug trafficking.⁸² In the case of the paramilitaries, their objectives for using violence have been the restoration and redefinition of local and regional political regimes "threatened" by the peacemaking processes of the central government.

Uribe's administration has recognized that negotiations with the paramilitaries and their permanent dismantlement, while full of uncertainties, is necessary. The AUC has proven itself as not only an illegitimate private security force but a most insidious

⁸¹ Mauricio Romero, *Paramilitares y Autodefensas: 1982-2000*,. Bogotá: Editorial Planeta Colombiana, 2003.

⁸² Mauricio Romero, *Paramilitares y Autodefensas: 1982-2000*,. Bogotá: Editorial Planeta Colombiana, 2003.

one, inflicting countless human rights abuses and supporting a massive land campaign against the peasants. Their dismantlement will increase state legitimacy and in order to reclaim the public image of the State, Uribe's security policy has undertaken efforts to demobilize the guerrillas in hopes of completely dismantling them by 2005. At the end of August 2003, the Colombian government presented a proposal to Congress that grants extensive benefits to paramilitaries who agree to be reintegrated into civilian life and broad amnesty for those who have committed human rights abuses. While the demobilization of the paramilitaries is one of the most important preconditions for creating an environment for negotiations, Uribe's strategy in this department contradicts his increased militarization in other efforts such as eliminating the threat of the drug trade.

The Guerrilla Connection to the Drug Trade:

The guerrilla movements found their base in the already mobilized peasant bases that formed in the context of the land and social conflicts of the previous decades of partisan violence. The guerrilla movement spread across the areas of more recent colonization such as the banana and coffee-growing regions and established quasi-control over the land and the commercial factors associated with the commodity exports of the area. By the 1980s the guerrillas, namely the FARC and the ELN, had extended their presence into the cattle lands of Magdalena Medio and the Atlantic Coast and into the oil producing regions of Arauca and Casanare in the Eastern Plains.⁸³ The drug export booms of the 1970s -1990s', first in marijuana, then in coca and finally in opium poppies

⁸³ Marc Chernick, Conclusion, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

and their processed form of heroin, allowed the FARC to assert authority over social relations and production of these drug-related goods in the new zones of colonization.⁸⁴

In the early 1980s, the guerrillas provided an obvious source of protection for the drug industry's high-risk operations in the guerrilla controlled areas in which the operations were facilitated, and herein developed the narco-guerrilla connection that has obfuscated the conflict in Colombia by falsely linking the two in the eyes of U.S. foreign policy.⁸⁵ The guerrillas are involved in taxing PSAD businessmen, as they do traditional elite landowners and kidnapping of the high-end participants in the industry and their relatives to get ransom payments.⁸⁶ However, the conflict between the capitalistic nature of the drug trade and the ideology of the FARC guerrilla movement make the relationship between the two problematic. While the FARC are not fundamentally anti-capitalist, the illegal psychoactive drug industry has hindered the development of a capitalist democracy in Colombia and the trends in the PSAD industry have paralleled those in the legal sector of the economy where an increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few has been predominant. This trend is fundamentally opposed to the Marxist-based ideology of the FARC. The FARC and other guerrilla groups seem to only participate in the widespread rent-seeking and predatory behavior that occurs in the drug-trafficking industry as a means to an end, rather as a means of financially sustaining their movement. Meanwhile, Thoumi asserts the valid point that the dramatized relationship between guerrillas and narco-trafficking has not been applied to the narco-political relationship that has produced such scandals as that which plagued the Turbay and Samper

⁸⁴ Marc Chernick, Conclusion, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

⁸⁵ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁸⁶ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

administrations, further demonstrating the absence of state responsibility in sustaining the drug trade and the transference of blame to the most obvious scapegoat: the guerrillas.

Part Five: The History of the Peace Process in Colombia and the Integration of the International Community-From Betancur to Uribe

In order to understand the way in which Plan Colombia developed, it is necessary to understand the history of the peace process in Colombia and its various successes and failures within each administration. Only combined with these successes and failures could the new global preoccupation with the war on terror help create such a misguided plan for resolution of the violence as Plan Colombia. Efforts to negotiate peace in the 1980's were primarily Colombian national efforts, and the ultimately fruitless nature of these efforts signaled that the international community was needed. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the Andean region of South America became the foremost producer of illegal narcotics in the Western Hemisphere, the conflict in Colombia became more internationalized, despite the fact that the peace process effectively did not. In 1989, the U.S. and Colombia initiated their all-out campaign against the major drug cartels and Colombia became the third largest recipient of U.S. security aid in the world.

Only since 1997 have the Colombian government, guerrillas and members of civil society been open to the prospect of assistance from the international community, in particular because prior national peace negotiations delegated the "belligerent status" to the guerrillas, elevating the nature of the conflict to beyond what the military situation on the ground afforded.⁸⁷ As this thesis is an examination of how Colombia citizens can best achieve peace in the context of the international situation, which is inherently repressive and ideological, examining the history of the peace process through the lens of the history

⁸⁷ Marc Chernick, "Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia", In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999. p.159-200.

of international involvement in the peace process is pivotal. The Colombian attempts at negotiating peace can be divided by successive presidential administrations since 1982. These are as follows: Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), Virgilio Barco (1986-1990), César Gaviria (1990-1994), Ernesto Samper (1994-1998), Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) and the current Uribe administration (2002-).

In 1982, under the Betancur administration, the Colombian government signed cease-fire agreements with four guerrilla groups and then attempted to invoke a national dialogue with other political actors, which would have included issues such as the need for agrarian reform that plagued the demands of the FARC. Belisario Betancur concluded that a peace process would have to respond to the objective and subjective cause for the violence, by addressing the needs of the individual revolutionaries and the political and structural causes of violence. He addressed the idea that violence spreads in areas where state presence is limited or non-existent, and consequently drafted a development plan called the *Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación* (National Rehabilitation Plan). Betancur essentially rebuilt an image of democratic authority, by not letting the untrustworthy Colombian congress intervene. He also reasserted the link between democratic logic and progress toward social equality, and gave the impression that civil rule was paramount.⁸⁸

However, Betancur's plans lacked sufficient support. His administration witnessed the bloody takeover of the Palace of Justice by the M-19, a Colombian guerrilla group, and the assassination of the entirety of the FARC's political party (*Union Patriótica*) candidates. This undermining of the effort of reincorporating the FARC into

⁸⁸ Daniel Pecaute, "Guerrillas and Violence", In: Bergquist, Charles et al. *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1992. p217-239.

the Colombian political system rightfully caused the FARC to become highly disillusioned with the peace process. Neither the unconditional amnesty offered to the guerrillas under Betancur in 1982 nor the cease-fire concluded in 1984 succeeded in restoring peace to Colombia. Additionally, the ascendancy of new factors such as the drug-export boom and the rise of the paramilitaries, thwarted Betancur's efforts, and the international community remained uninvolved.

Under Virgilio Barco, the Colombian government asserted that the guerrillas were outside the law, which subsequently limited the negotiations for disarmament and reincorporation of the guerrillas into society. However, Barco succeeded in getting the M-19, one of Colombia's more militant guerrilla groups, to disarm and run political candidates.

During César Gaviria's administration, elections were held for a constitutional assembly to write a new constitution according to the demands of the Colombian constituency compiled in the informal plebiscite. The reforms to the power-sharing tradition of authoritarian democracy in Colombia set forth in the 1991 Constitution were intended to promote a more participatory democracy. However, in terms of electoral participation, Colombia ranks as one of the lowest in Latin America, and the incorporation of marginalized groups into the political system has been unsuccessful. The 1991 Constitution attempted to make the government more accountable to the Colombian citizenry by advocating a larger allocation of budget resources to the social sectors, and weakening clientelist practices, but it did not provide for the parallel government financing to accommodate these changes.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

The ratification of the new constitution on July 5, 1991 included the banning of extradition, weakened the executive powers, undermined clientelist practices and granted Colombians invaluable economic rights in terms of health care and education and other basic needs, and strengthened the judicial branch.⁹⁰ However, these goals of this rather progressive Constitution proved merely theoretical, and have not had the intended effects of furthering the peace process.

In terms of his direct contributions to the peace process, Gaviria used Barco's methods to negotiate with other guerrilla groups, namely, the *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (EPL), *Quintín Lame* and the Revolutionary Workers' Party, the *Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores* (PRT). The unilateral cease-fire initiated with these groups, however, did not persuade the FARC and the ELN to follow suit. Under Gaviria, heated negotiations took place in Caracas, Venezuela and Tlaxcala, Mexico during which the remaining guerrilla groups of the united front, the *Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar* (CGSB), tried to negotiate the size and breadth of the areas the guerrillas would control following a successful cease-fire. The nature of the negotiations demonstrated how dedicated the guerrillas were to maintaining local politics and power, while large sectors of society and the state remained uninterested in local politics.⁹¹ The negotiations were hampered over the issue of how much of the territory within the various municipalities held by the guerrillas should be demilitarized. A final negotiating meeting held in Mexico halted as the result of a guerrilla kidnapping of a former minister of government, and a military strategy was consequently undertaken by the Gaviria

⁹⁰ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

⁹¹ Marc Chernick, "Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia", In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p.159-200.

administration against the guerrillas. The Gaviria administration also led a propaganda offensive which announced that the guerrillas had abandoned their Marxist ideals in favor of drug trafficking and criminal behavior.

President Samper drifted from the Barco-Gaviria peacemaking model consisting of the assembly, disarmament and reincorporation of the guerrillas. The Samper administration agreed to shift the conduct of the effectual war against the guerrillas and, “commit the state to respect the norms and procedures for internal armed conflicts recognized under international law.”⁹² This commitment included invitations to respected national and international organizations to ensure that both sides in the conflict were adhering to the norms for domestic war and insurgency. While the futility of creating international norms and guidelines for such a chaotic and destructive event such as a war should actually be the focal point of any discussion of international human rights law, Samper at least made an attempt to involve international mediation to end the conflict.

In 1995, the Colombian government and congress ratified the Second Geneva Protocol on internal war, but the strategies included in the Protocol were never applied, because of the internal crisis and Washington’s distrust of Samper as the result to his links to the drug trade. At one point, the FARC demanded the removal of office of Samper as a precondition for negotiations. Samper also hastened the development of the paramilitaries, who have caused untold deaths and human rights violations, by allowing for the armament of civilians in rural security cooperatives. In 1997, under extreme

⁹² Marc Chernick, “Negotiating Peace Amid Multiple Forms of Violence: The Protracted Search for a Settlement to the Armed Conflicts in Colombia”, In: Arnson, Cynthia J. ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p.159-200.

pressure from the United States, Colombian congress passed laws allowing the government to seize lands held by the guerrillas as the result of drug trafficking profits.

In the wake of the U.S.-Colombian relations crisis of the Samper years, the U.S. became highly involved in Colombia politics, and while President Clinton was eager to advance the peace process, his administration did not necessarily agree that peace with the guerrillas needed to precede preeminent U.S. goals associated with its drug war on Colombia and other Andean countries. U.S. military assistance to Colombia increased from \$289 million in fiscal year 1999 to a \$1.6 billion aid package over two years proposed in 2000. As the result of the over ten million person protest on October 24, 1999 calling for a negotiated settlement to the armed conflict and an end to the violence, the UN Secretary General named a special advisor for Colombia who attempted to open up dialogue with all actors in the conflict, but did not have a special mandate to mediate peace.

When Andrés Pastrana took office in June 1998, a renewal of the peace process was imminent. Pastrana based his election campaign on his commitment to the peace effort. Shortly after getting elected, Pastrana met with Manuel Marulanda Vélez, leader of the FARC, and they agreed to begin peace negotiations. Civil society and the international community became more highly involved. The initial peace talks under Pastrana proceeded without the prior negotiation of a cease-fire. Pastrana initially accepted the guerrilla's conditions that the state release control of a 42,000 square kilometer demilitarized zone, or *zona de despeje*, which served to reinforce the fact that the state had essentially never been present in this area and thus should not be allowed to intervene only when violence necessitates intervention.

Pastrana was at first hesitant about involving the international community in the peace process. While there were some significant strides made in international diplomacy under Pastrana, they did not have any lasting impact in mitigating the tense conflict. Prior to Pastrana, one such notable peace initiative was undertaken by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 1997 called “*La Paz es rentable*” (peace is profitable), which conducted studies to build the framework for possible solutions to issues of conflict that could stymie future negotiating sessions, such as agrarian reform, justice, natural resources, urban violence and human rights.⁹³ Under Pastrana, February 1998 attempts by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) to bring Colombians together to discuss possible approaches to the crisis remained detached from overall U.S. policy or policymaking, as do most projects created by secondary institutional actors.⁹⁴ By the time the international community got involved in the armed struggle in Colombia, the conflict had already become a multipolar conflict pitting two left-wing insurgencies against state security forces and right-wing private armies with ties to state actors and local powerholders.⁹⁵

Pastrana’s engagement with the U.S. continued to mistakenly rely on anti-narcotics measures, despite the fact that Pastrana eagerly engaged the U.S. in facilitating

⁹³ Marc Chernick, “Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking”, In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p. 159-200.

⁹⁴ Marc Chernick, “Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking”, In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p. 159-200.

⁹⁵ Marc Chernick, “Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking”. In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p. 159-200.

the peace process. In the aid package approved in a supplementary appropriations bill in June 2000, it was evident that the U.S. antinarcotics programs would continue to rely on military confrontation and the belief that confronting illegal drug trafficking would sever the financial resources going to the guerrillas and subsequently weaken them. As a precondition for U.S. aid, the Clinton administration demanded that Colombia create a more comprehensive strategy for establishing peace, and the result was Plan Colombia, which proposed a \$7.5 billion strategy that initially called for the U.S., the European Union and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to invest around \$3.5 billion and for Colombia to invest the remaining \$4 billion. It is with the advent of Plan Colombia that the misguided attempts to relate the victory in the drug war to the victory of a peace process become frighteningly real.

The original Plan Colombia rhetoric highlighted the root causes of conflict in Colombia, and intended to address them with actions respectful of human rights and aware of the need for social development, but the plan turned out to be nothing more than a lofty fig leaf for naked U.S. interest, primarily for the interest of the majority in the U.S. Department of State and Defense, the White House Office of Drug Control Policy and the intelligence community to eradicate the narcotics supply in Colombia. In the end, of the \$1.3 billion for Plan Colombia, only \$3 million was channeled towards direct support of the peace process. Proponents of the uneven distribution of Plan Colombia argued that military support would lead to an improvement in the human rights record of the Armed Forces and would allow the U.S. to more actively participate in reforming the Colombian military.

The onset of the Clinton administration provided few substantive changes from the Bush administration, but made the drug war more subtle and less high-profile, that is until Clinton's last year in office when Plan Colombia was introduced.⁹⁶ During the Clinton administration, more drug offenders than ever filled America's prisons, the U.S. military became more active in anti-drug efforts along the U.S./Mexico border and economic sanctions were imposed for the first time in Colombia for Colombia's non-cooperation with Washington's drug war.⁹⁷ Finally, the U.S. government voted to put \$1.3 billion into Plan Colombia, which was the largest supply-side anti-drug offensive to that point. While Drug Czar General Barry McCaffrey claimed that the financial contribution to Plan Colombia would strengthen democracy and human rights in Colombia, the now deceased Senator Paul Wellstone, along with a few others, were skeptical. Wellstone believed that like numerous other cases of U.S. intervention in Central and South America that the Colombian conflict would merely escalate as the result of increased militarization.⁹⁸

Trust between the FARC and the government eroded when in mid-2000, the U.S. Congress approved Washington's contribution to Plan Colombia, which ultimately strengthened both sides hard-liners, by giving the guerrilla leaders an excuse to essentially challenge the peace process and the Colombian Conservatives the outlet of

⁹⁶ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁹⁷ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Bad Neighbor Policy: Washington's Futile War on Drugs in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁹⁸ Adam Isacson and Ingrid Vaicius, "'The War on Drugs'" meets the 'War on Terror'", The Official Website for the Center for International Policy's Colombia Program, <http://ciponline.org/colombia/0302ipr.htm>, February 03, 2004.

again relying on support from the U.S.⁹⁹ The FARC prophetically rejected the plan as a disguised counterinsurgency package. At a meeting in Madrid in July 2000, nearly all of the assembled European nations rejected Plan Colombia and organized, instead, as the Consultative Group in Support of the Colombian Peace Process. The Europeans later prophesized that the escalated militarization of the war on drugs would have negative repercussions not just for Colombia but for the stability of the whole Andean region. The U.S. and EU responses have historically diverged regarding the issue of effective peacemaking. In the past, the U.S. has attempted primarily to fight narcotics and the U.N., European and NGO response has been to focus on human rights issues and the stalled peace process. U.S. administrations, especially since Reagan, have viewed peace as a byproduct of effective military intervention and eradication of drug production and drug trafficking, and cannot comprehend how efforts at establishing peace through alternative means could eradicate the problems that predominantly stem from socioeconomic ills. Rather than see the establishment of peace as a means of eradicating drug trafficking and “terrorist” activities, U.S. administrations have notoriously chosen to implement reactionary rather than preemptive measures.

Pastrana implied, rhetorically, that, “peace would be a successful antinarcotics policy.”¹⁰⁰ However, the outcome of Pastrana’s approach to peacemaking was not successful. Adam Isacson, Senior Associate of the Center for International Policy on

⁹⁹ Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003.

¹⁰⁰ Marc Chernick, “Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking”. In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p.248.

Colombia in Washington, DC, writes that the term “peace process” is not an accurate title for what occurred during the Pastrana administration, as the dialogues between the Colombian government and the FARC and the ELN, “consisted of little more than haggling over procedural questions between small, unrepresentative, mutually distrustful groups of negotiators. Neither set of talks ever came to consider the serious challenges facing Colombia, reforms to address them, or mechanisms for reintegrating the groups’ members into post-conflict society.”¹⁰¹ On the night of February 20, 2002, when the peace process had formally ended, as the result of the hijacking of a domestic airliner by the FARC earlier that day, Pastrana announced, “None can doubt that, between politics and terrorism, the FARC has chosen terrorism. We Colombians offered an open hand to the FARC and they have responded to us with a slap.”¹⁰² Six months before the end of his term, Pastrana announced that the peace process with the FARC was over, because the FARC were not serious or reasonable. Pastrana gave the FARC four hours to leave the *zona de despeje* and the Armed Forces were already prepared to take over the area. By 2002, public opinion was in favor of Pastrana’s decision, and no longer behind the peace process.¹⁰³ The repeated failures of the peace process have led to a disillusioned civilian population that does not necessarily oppose a military end to the conflict.

¹⁰¹ Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003, p.4.

¹⁰² Adam Isacson, “Was Failure Avoidable? Learning from Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process”, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series, Paper No. 14, Miami: University of Miami North-South Center, 2003, p.3.

¹⁰³ Marc Chernick, “Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking”. In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p. 159-200.

The environment created by the war on terror has also made many United States citizens disillusioned with the power nonviolence, because military measures were immediately implemented in the initial primary targets on the war on terror: Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile, U.S. citizens during the Clinton years witnessed the successful peacemaking efforts in Northern Ireland and the notable advances in the Middle East peace process that occurred at Camp David.

The U.S. also significantly improved their relations with Central America by moving from a politics of war to a politics of peacemaking in such countries as El Salvador. While the Central American Free Trade Agreements looms like a cloud over the advances made in the demilitarization of U.S. intervention in Central America, the transition from a politics of war to a politics of peacemaking shows that peaceful measures are, indeed, a better alternative to militarization and violence.

However, in the same manner as socialist revolutions have historically led to authoritarian regimes, and as a consequence many misunderstand the ideals of socialist doctrine, many Americans believe that non-military solutions to conflict simply do not work. Unfortunately, as Marc Chernick comments, failed peace processes can increase violence, and lead to a more energized campaign by groups involved to employ violence for political gain.¹⁰⁴ Essentially, then, Plan Colombia is a manifestation of the failure of the peace processes. In order for peacemaking, rather than warmongering, to be seen as a viable option in Colombia, it must distance itself from the war on terror. If support in the

¹⁰⁴ Marc Chernick, "Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking". In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p. 159-200.

Bush administration continues to lump military efforts in Colombia with the war on terror, citizens will not comprehend the unique political and social history that created the conflict in Colombia and continue to view the conflict as a threat to U.S. interests rather than as a threat to the lives of innocent Colombians.

The Clinton administration denied that U.S. involvement in Colombia would turn into anything like the prolonged U.S. intervention in Nicaragua or Vietnam, but that U.S. aid programs aimed only at reducing the northward flow of drugs, and yet just three years after this declaration counter-terrorism has become the main focus in Colombia.¹⁰⁵

However, the word “terrorism” has yet to be sufficiently defined. Rather, the term encompasses practically anyone who opposes the Bush administration’s policies. U.S. defense officials are simply being guided by a doctrine termed “effective sovereignty” which relies on the assumption that less populated and ungoverned or “undemocratic” areas of the hemisphere are destined for terrorist activity.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Adam Isacson, “Optimism, Pessimism, and Terrorism: The United States and Colombia in 2003, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2004, Volume X, Issue 2.

¹⁰⁶ Adam Isacson, “Optimism, Pessimism, and Terrorism: The United States and Colombia in 2003, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2004, Volume X, Issue 2.

Part Six: The Concept of Terrorism in the Language of Chomsky: Tracing the Development of the War on Terror

In the preface to his work, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New*, Noam Chomsky recalls the story told by St. Augustine. In this story, a pirate is captured by Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great asked the pirate, “how he dares molest the sea.” In reply, the pirate asks, “How dare you molest the whole world? Because I do it with a little ship only, I am called a thief; you, doing it with a great navy, are called an Emperor.”¹⁰⁷ In the Western context, the concept of international terrorism has reached unprecedented meanings in terms of what constitutes violence against the State and the notion of international terrorism has been completely detached from the forms of violence imposed by the West, particularly the United States, in its quest for complete economic domination of the globe.

The term “terrorism” entered the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, mainly to refer to the violent methods executed by *governments* in order to gain the submission of its people.¹⁰⁸ Clearly, this understanding of terrorism no longer applies, at least to the Western media portrayal of terrorism, as the term terrorism currently refers to “retail terrorism” by individuals or groups.¹⁰⁹ More frightening, however, is that the Western notion of terrorism has not just excluded to idea of state-led terrorism against the will of the state’s citizens, but now includes not just those individuals and groups who challenge the supremely powerful, but also the enemy nations who challenge the

¹⁰⁷ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

¹⁰⁸ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ “Origins and Fundamental Causes of International Terrorism,” UN Secretariat, reprinted in M. Cherif Bassiouni, ed., *International Terrorism and Political Crimes*, IL: Charles Thomas, 1975.

supremely powerful. It seems that the United States' and Colombian administrations are being help up to a standard of governance determined by the judgment of the media.

The Western notion of international terrorism was first doctrinally administered during the Reagan administration as it openly declared free enterprise and an increase in U.S. intervention, subversion and international terrorism as its goals, a tactic used most blatantly in Nicaragua and El Salvador.¹¹⁰ Chomsky writes that in the 1980s, “international terrorism” replaced human rights as “the soul of our foreign policy” in the aftermath of a rise in mobilization and political and social consciousness of those opposed to the Vietnam War and what the U.S. involvement in Vietnam represented.¹¹¹

The “war on terror” was not declared by President George W. Bush, but rather redeclared in reference to the Reagan-Bush administration's attempt to eradicate what the administration called the “evil scourge of terrorism” in Central America and the Middle East/Mediterranean region. Because the implementation of state terrorism necessitates viewing its victims as “mere things” whose lives have “no value”, as Hegel remarks, it is easy for citizens of Western State's inflicting their brand of international terrorism to deny the existence of these victims.¹¹² While the name of each victim of the September 11th attacks has been memorialized, those affected by U.S. sponsored terrorism exist in an atemporal realm that can only be defined as a force of opposition to “us”, despite the fact most of these victims are utterly defenseless. In the context of the war on terror, it thus

¹¹⁰ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

¹¹¹ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

¹¹² Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

becomes obvious why the armed actors find it increasingly difficult to see each other as individuals that are part of the same human race.

In a Pentagon-commissioned study by terrorologist Robert Kupperman, undertaken during the Reagan administration, Kupperman defines terrorism as the threat or use of force used to, “achieve political objectives without the full-scale commitment of resources”¹¹³, a definition that is particularly relevant to the situation in Colombia. The FARC act without the assistance of State resources, and began their mobilization partly in reaction to the lack of State resources in their areas and their marginalization from society. Not surprisingly, they are those most commonly referred to as terrorists amidst the conflict. The Reagan administration’s initial war on terror focused on state-directed international terrorism, and used Claire Sterling’s book, *The Terror Network*, as its reference point.¹¹⁴ From Sterling’s book, the administration deduced that the global terror network was aimed solely at destabilizing democratic societies, particularly Western democratic societies. While the book was later debunked, this theory was not disregarded and continues to guide media coverage of terrorism and U.S. foreign policy to a certain extent. Colombia, too, relative to the rest of Latin America, has been hailed as a beacon of democracy in some academic literature. While the National Front period proved Colombia’s brand of democracy to be more authoritarian than “democratic”, it is worthwhile to note the continuing lack of channels for democratic participation in Colombia that continue to fuel the violence.

¹¹³ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

¹¹⁴ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

The language utilized by governments to mask intent is astonishing. As an audience watches a nightly newscast on the war in Iraq, for example, euphemisms such as “collateral damage” mask the true story of innocent civilians and much needed infrastructure being demolished for a greater purpose of “winning the war”. Moreover, proponents of the war on terror fail to critically examine what makes a terrorist act different from an act of legitimate resistance. Under the apartheid regime in South Africa, the African National Congress was labeled as one of the most notorious terrorist groups in the world for committing acts of violence against members of the apartheid government. However, considering the brutally repressive nature of the apartheid regime, could not these acts be considered methods of legitimate resistance? Should not the word “terrorism” be reserved for the acts of violence that defy explanation? The U.S. reaction to acts of state subversion, however, shift from case to case. There is a general consensus amongst U.S. foreign policy that no state has the right to defend itself from U.S. attack.¹¹⁵ Moreover, in U.S.-supported democratic regime such as Colombia, it appears that no group has the right to challenge Uribe’s policies. Chomsky calls the U.S. a, “terrorist state *by right*.”¹¹⁶ The war on terror launched by the Bush administration is merely a continuation of the use of state-directed international terrorism used as a means of U.S. foreign diplomacy since its conception.

Chomsky writes:

“we may observe that the remedy for international terrorism- at least, a substantial component of it- lies within our grasp, and is extremely simple: stop participating

¹¹⁵ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002.

¹¹⁶ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002, p.125.

in it. But no action is taken to this end, and indeed the matter is scarcely even discussed. Rather, one finds accolades to our benevolent intentions and nobility of purpose, our elevated 'standards of democracy, freedom and humanism', sometimes flawed in performance. Elementary facts cannot be perceived and obvious thoughts are unthinkable. Simple truths, when expressed, elicit disbelief, horror and outrage- at the fact that they are voiced."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New Edition, MA: South End Press, 2002, p. 143.

Part Seven: The Effects of the Language and Implementation of Plan Colombia on the Peace Process in Colombia: The Imagined Connection between Narcotraffickers, Guerrillas and Terrorism

The terrorist rhetoric that has dichotomized the globe defines a terrorist not just as one who literally terrorizes civilians, but one who opposes the state. An “insurgent” is basically a “terrorist”, as well. Applying the words “counterterrorist” and “counterinsurgent” to the discourse of U.S. foreign aid to Colombia does nothing to aid an outsider’s understanding of the political violence in Colombia or why farmers persist to cultivate coca, despite harmful coca eradication attempts by the U.S. The war on terror effectively obfuscates the fact that the Colombian conflict has roots far deeper than any of the wars the United States have launched against Colombia, namely the war on drugs and the war on terror.

The inclusion of counterinsurgency language in the stipulations of Plan Colombia implies that a lasting democracy can only be established through force carried out against the guerrillas rather than through cooperation with the guerrillas. The fabricated synergy between drugs and terrorism has complicated the peace process in Colombia by implying that any efforts at establishing peace must come through war, namely through eradicating the guerrilla terrorists, rather than through addressing the problems which motivate the guerrilla groups. The terrorist rhetoric and the military involvement, which is implied in near every condition of Plan Colombia, will likely prevent it from creating an environment of respected democratic institutions in Colombia, as its architects claim it will.

The type of violence that is occurring in Colombia supports that which emanates, “mutual suspicion and enmity and discourages people from attempting to achieve

common goals.”¹¹⁸ As seen through the context of the history of Colombia and Colombian/U.S. relations, this violence is not only the result of Colombia’s political, social and economic history, but also of current ideologies associated with the “war against terrorism” being waged by the U.S. and its allies. However, “The ‘war against terrorism’ is waged against terrorist organizations, states that harbour terrorists, but not against state terrorism.”¹¹⁹ It is only in a binary with this state terrorism that the guerrillas can intimidate the rural populations. In Colombia, the terrorist rhetoric that classifies guerrillas as “narcoterrorists” relies on the U.S. and Colombian governments and their militaries for its conceptualization and contextualization. Both the state and the enemies of the state, rely on each other to define one another. Zulaika and Douglass, two experts on terrorism and Basque nationalism, further argue that the rhetoric on terrorism is central to the terrorism phenomenon plaguing the world in that the response to so-called terrorism becomes the primary vehicle for the terrorists.¹²⁰ Thus terrorism is primarily a media creation, as the threat of terrorist acts is only as dangerous as various news sources make it out to be.

In the 1980s, military advances carried out by the U.S. in the name of counterterrorism were justified as extensions of previous efforts to fight Communist subversion in other countries, while counterterrorist efforts within the U.S. were intended to allow the FBI to conduct investigations into those who opposed the Reagan

¹¹⁸ Jennifer S. Holmes, “Plan Colombia, Violence, and Citizen Support in Colombia”, In: Holmes, Jennifer S. ed. *New Approaches to Comparative Politics*. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003, p. 85.

¹¹⁹ Eds., “From Al Afghani to bin Laden”. *Interventions*. Vol. 4(1)1-6, Taylor & Francis Ltd. p.2.

¹²⁰ J. Zulaika and W.A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables and Faces of Terrorism*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 4.

administration's policies in Central America.¹²¹ At present in South America, the U.S. waging of the counter-drug war against Colombia has been linked to the war against terrorism. Counterterrorist and counterinsurgency efforts are inextricably linked with each other and with the counternarcotics strategies and the foreign policies of the U.S. and Colombian governments.

By 1985 the U.S. government was spending \$2 billion a year to combat terrorism, and in February of 1985, U.S. Secretary of State Schultz announced the establishment of the Overseas Security Advisory Council and asked Congress to allow for a \$4.2 billion budget to support a ten-year project on counterterrorism.¹²² However, between 1974 and 1994, more people died in the United States from bee stings than from terrorist acts.¹²³ News reporting about terrorism confines the discourse to a worldview that, "opposes countries and cultures within a hierarchy of values in which 'we' are at the top and the practitioners of terrorism at the bottom. Thomas Cooper calls this 'adversarial perspectivism'."¹²⁴ Within a little over the last decade, U.S. military presence in and aid to Colombia has skyrocketed. What initially began as an attempt by the U.S. to directly attack drug traffickers and cartels turned into a mix of anti-drug *and* counterinsurgency aid from the U.S. In 1992 and 1993 the United States General Accounting Office (GAO)

¹²¹ J. Zulaika and W.A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables and Faces of Terrorism*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 15.

¹²² J. Zulaika and W.A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables and Faces of Terrorism*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 9.

¹²³ J. Zulaika and W.A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables and Faces of Terrorism*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p.6.

¹²⁴ J. Zulaika and W.A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables and Faces of Terrorism*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p.13.

audited the expenses for the drug war in Colombia as the result of the fear that counternarcotics funds were being implemented illegally for counterinsurgency efforts.¹²⁵

This discussion of the terrorism discourse and its effects on redefining conflicts is especially appropriate for Colombia. The U.S. and Colombian governments connect the guerrilla threat, primarily posed by the FARC and the ELN, to the threat posed by coca production, and this threat is then linked with terrorism. However, the labeling of the guerrillas as terrorists ignores the context in which the FARC and the ELN developed, as well as marginalizes the fact that their demands for greater socioeconomic equality and agrarian reform in Colombia were never realized. These “terrorists” in Colombia are subsequently singled out as the cause for the violence that plagues the nation, rather than the historical lack of political inclusion and reform made by the Colombian government.

In a State Department briefing on October 29th, 2003, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Robert Charles, told Senators that the war on drugs in Colombia had reached a “tipping point” and admitted freely that the circumstances which had led to this point were a post September 11th focus on the links between narcotics and terrorism and regional self-interest in eradicating narcotics and terrorism in the hemisphere.¹²⁶ Undoubtedly, this regional self-interest represents the interest of the Colombian and U.S. government and military, including the paramilitaries, not the coca growers or the guerrillas. Furthermore, the link between narcotics and terrorism has been exaggerated and to some extent fabricated following the events of

¹²⁵ Jennifer S. Holmes, “Plan Colombia, Violence, and Citizen Support in Colombia”, In: Holmes, Jennifer S. ed., *New Approaches to Comparative Politics*. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003, p. 92.

¹²⁶ Scott Miller, “Crucial Stage in Drug War Reached, State Department Official Says”, Official State Department Website, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

September 11th. Attempting to apply the increasing emphasis on terrorism in the past decade to the Colombian situation, which is complicated by the presence of various state and non-state actors, implies the reorientation the globe into two distinct groups, the “terrorists” and “counterterrorists”, in a simulacrum of Cold War bipolarity. Despite U.S. State Department claims, the drug war has been an admitted failure in reducing drug consumption in the U.S. and even though overall coca hectareage in Colombia may have been reduced, a balloon effect has led to the spread of coca production in surrounding Andean countries, and crops undetectable by helicopters and infrared technology are reportedly popping up in the deep jungles of the Colombian Amazon. And, if U.S. goals for Plan Colombia are not just to eliminate the drug trade, but to stabilize Colombia and promote democracy, as U.S. Southern Command General James T. Hill and U.S. foreign policy claim, then the militaristic implementation of Plan Colombia is also failing miserably.

In reference to Plan Colombia, a Scandinavian diplomat was quoted as saying, "It's the only aid package I know of where the military component was put smack in the middle of a development package. It contaminated everything in the eyes of Colombian civil society and the European community."¹²⁷ About one in six dollars from Plan Colombia and subsequent aid packages supported development schemes such as aid packages to help coca-growers switch to legal crops and emergency assistance for the thousands displaced by the violence.¹²⁸ The remaining funds contribute to aerial

¹²⁷ ____, "Ten Questions for Colombia Policy", Official Website of the Latin American Working Group. 08 Nov. 2003. <<http://www.lawg.org/pages/from%20old%20website/Countries/Colombia/10questions.htm>>

¹²⁸ Adam Isacson and Ingrid Vaicius, “‘The War on Drugs’” meets the ‘War on Terror’”, The Official Website for the Center for International Policy’s Colombia Program, <http://ciponline.org/colombia/0302ipr.htm>, 03 February, 2004

fumigation campaigns employing harmful herbicides that cause both human and ecological harm and to increasing the size and effectiveness of the Colombian military and security. In August 2002 a worldwide anti-terror appropriation became law, which allowed for \$4 million for installation of police units to protect construction of reinforced police stations in guerrilla-controlled areas and \$25 million for anti-kidnapping units, which are shared between the police and the Colombian Army.¹²⁹ Despite the allocation of some Plan Colombia funds to alternative development schemes, which are severely disproportionate to the budget allocated to the military and the police, Plan Colombia is decidedly undermining the possibility for finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. Of the \$2.44 billion given in U.S. aid to Colombia between 2000 and 2003, an estimated \$99 million, for example, has been granted since August 2002 to help the military protect the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline, which the guerrillas subsequently continue to bomb; of the estimated 33,000 Colombian families helped by U.S.-funded alternative development programs, as of October 2003, another estimated 35,000 Colombian families have been displaced from their homes by fumigation efforts since 1999.¹³⁰

Pastrana's administration stopped fumigation after the first round of spraying to allow Plan Colombia's alternative development aspect a chance. In July 2001, 37,000 families in Putumayo agreed to sign pacts through which they would receive basic assistance and technical and infrastructural support in exchange for eradicating all their coca within a year of receiving assistance, but the assistance was limited, if it was made

¹²⁹ Adam Isacson and Ingrid Vaicius, "'The War on Drugs'" meets the 'War on Terror'", The Official Website for the Center for International Policy's Colombia Program, <http://ciponline.org/colombia/0302ipr.htm>, 03 February, 2004.

¹³⁰ ____, "The United States and Colombia, 2003; A look at the numbers", The Official Website for the Center for International Policy, <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/031028stat.htm>, 18 Nov 2003, (Statistics were compiled from various other sources. See website for these sources).

available at all.¹³¹ By April 2002, 8,500 of the 37,000 families who had agreed to the pact received assistance. The bureaucratic mess led to the FARC killing several alternative development workers in September 2001. Despite how debatable their tactics are in asserting their authority, the guiding ideology of the FARC remains to protect peasants and those living in poverty from state repression. Alternative development schemes have failed to create the deep-seated agrarian reform needed to sustain peasants struggling in the face of discriminatory national and international economic policies, and thus the FARC can justify their attack on human rights activist and those from the political Left who fight for the poor in theory, but not in practice.

Alternative development schemes have failed to provide farmers with a sustainable income, or more relevant, an income as high as that achieved by growing coca or poppy crops (used to make opium). Alternative development schemes are difficult to implement, and it is glaringly obvious that violence and militarization have not been successful means to an end of the conflict. Those in the Clinton Administrations that supported Plan Colombia argued that it would aid Pastrana's peace package by getting the guerrillas to negotiate in "good faith". Instead, during Pastrana's attempts at facilitating a peace process, Plan Colombia gave the advantage to hardliners on both sides of the conflict.¹³²

With the end of the Pastrana administration and the ushering in of Uribe, Plan Colombia could not hope to function within the context of a peace process. In his

¹³¹ Adam Isacson and Ingrid Vaicius, "'The War on Drugs'" meets the 'War on Terror'", The Official Website for the Center for International Policy's Colombia Program, <http://ciponline.org/colombia/0302ipr.htm>, 03 February, 2004.

¹³² Adam Isacson and Ingrid Vaicius, "'The War on Drugs'" meets the 'War on Terror'", The Official Website for the Center for International Policy's Colombia Program, <http://ciponline.org/colombia/0302ipr.htm>, 03 February, 2004.

testimony given on October 29th, 2003 at the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing on the progress of Plan Colombia, Southern Command General James T. Hill explained that Phase II of Plan Colombia would focus on expanding the size of the armed forces and enlisting *campesino* soldiers to, “guard towns where government presence was formerly lacking”.¹³³ Phase III of Plan Colombia, General Hill described as the culmination of the entire plan, “by expanding the government presence and control nationwide”.¹³⁴ Thus, it is clear that the current aims of Plan Colombia are not to promote democracy by incorporating those citizens who have historically been politically and socially excluded from society, but instead to reinforce the power of the Colombian regime in power, led by President Uribe, and to eliminate the threat to this power posed by the guerrillas. Moreover, the enlistment of civilian *campesinos* to defend rural areas is a decided involvement of civilians as soldiers in the armed struggle and further complicates the conflict rather than reducing tensions. The involvement of civilians in the armed struggle has been perhaps the most tragic effect of the decade’s long Colombian conflict, as massive populations have been displaced and suffered the deaths of paramilitary and guerrilla massacres. The current President, Alvaro Uribe, elected on an independent ticket, said he wanted to double the police and the armed forces and create a, “network of civilian support that would act against ‘terrorism’”, and this claim was made

¹³³ _____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”. Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>, 18 Nov. 2003.

¹³⁴ _____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>, 18 Nov. 2003.

before September 11th, 2001.¹³⁵ Uribe's words supported the U.S. transformation of its foreign security policy in Colombia to cohere to the new framework of the war on terrorism. The practice of using civilians to fight terrorism is an ultimately futile way to advance the peace process, because it inherently pits different sectors of the population against each other and implies the eradication of certain groups rather than cooperation amongst them.

Rather than co-opting the guerrilla forces in the peace process that would ultimately predict their own future, Plan Colombia's proposed goals aim to institutionalize the authority of Colombian governments that are friendly to the U.S. and who have historically done little to either implement successful agrarian reform or alleviate socioeconomic inequalities, and as the Scandinavian diplomat pointed out, this type of development of democratization will be carried out militarily, as it is by the U.S. in several other areas of the globe.

In his testimony given at the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing on the progress of Plan Colombia, Southern Command General James T. Hill said that, "Trying to decide whether a mission against a FARC unit was a counter-drug or counter-terrorist one was an exercise in futility and hampered operational effectiveness on the ground."¹³⁶ The recent approval by U.S. Congress of Expanded Authority legislation allows the U.S. military to use funds formerly available explicitly for counter-drug and

¹³⁵ Marc Chernick, "Colombia: International Involvement in Protracted Peacemaking", In: Sriram, Chandra Lekha and Wermester, Karin eds. *From Promise to Practice: strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003, p.233-266.

¹³⁶ ____, "Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia", Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>, 18. Nov 2003

counter-drug related efforts in Colombia, to provide aid to the Colombian government in a coordinated campaign against the “terrorist” activities of the illegal armed groups such as the FARC and the ELN.¹³⁷ The use of Expanded Authority allows the military to bypass the step of deciding from which branch of the government funding will come for the implementation of the various components of Plan Colombia, thus implying that the counternarcotics and counterterrorist efforts are one in the same. In what was formerly an effort to wage a war on drugs, the U.S. has turned into what General Hill describes as a regional struggle against narcoterrorists as a whole.¹³⁸ The words “narcotraffickers” and “narcoterrorists” are used interchangeably in U.S. and Colombian government rhetoric, with no regard to the drug traffickers and guerrillas that commit human rights offenses and those who do not.

The “terrorist” acts committed by the guerrillas are not unmotivated. U.S. involvement in maintaining control of resources in Colombia has the capacity to shape whether actors in the conflict undertake armed violence and to determine the possible strategies the actors may use to assert their platforms or legitimate forms of the use of force.¹³⁹ The linkage between economic security and defense, a link which the U.S. has become increasingly reliant on to maintain its hegemonic status in what appears now to be a univocal world, has been used to justify military intervention to secure resources like

¹³⁷ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>, 18 Nov. 2003.

¹³⁸ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, <http://usinfo.state.gov>, 18 Nov. 2003.

¹³⁹ Thad Dunning and Leslie Wirpsa, “Oil and the Political Economy of Conflict in Colombia and Beyond: A Linkages Approach”, Forthcoming in *Geopolitics*, pp. 1-41.

oil.¹⁴⁰ In his testimony, General Hill freely admitted that, “Assisting Colombia in their fight continues to be in our own best interest,”¹⁴¹ which exemplifies that the goal of creating long-term stability in Colombia through Plan Colombia is limited by the U.S. reasons for involvement in the first place, which include the protection of its own economic interests in Colombia. One example of this protection of economic interests that is masked in the language of Plan Colombia is the highly plausible claim held by some, indigenous leaders included, that herbicide spraying under Plan Colombia is just an excuse to clear the area for oil development rather than an attempt to end the guerrilla threat.¹⁴² President Bush has sent U.S. Special Forces and Colombian Army brigades to protect the Occidental pipeline in Colombia, having handed over \$1 to the Colombian army for every barrel of oil produced.¹⁴³ In regards to this decision, America’s former ambassador to Colombia, Anne Patterson, said, “It is something we have to do. It is important for the future of the country, for our petroleum supplies and for the confidence of our investors.”¹⁴⁴ With this statement, the ambassador admits that U.S. foreign policy in Colombia decidedly treats Colombia like a commodity on the market. Apparently, the U.S. believes that this stabilization of the international community will come through the

¹⁴⁰ Thad Dunning and Leslie Wirpsa, “Oil and the Political Economy of Conflict in Colombia and Beyond: A Linkages Approach”, Forthcoming in *Geopolitics*, pp. 1-41.

¹⁴¹ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

¹⁴² David Edeli and Kyle Richardson, “Colombia’s Expanding War”, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 2003, Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 68.

¹⁴³ Arianna Huffington, “The Bush Oil-igarchy’s Pipeline Protection Package”, February 21, 2002, Arianna Online, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://www.ariannaonline.com/columns/files/022102.html>>

¹⁴⁴ Arianna Huffington, “The Bush Oil-igarchy’s Pipeline Protection Package”, February 21, 2002, Arianna Online, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://www.ariannaonline.com/columns/files/022102.html>>

democratization of the world and the spread of the free market. Furthermore, with what Patterson claims are the more than three hundred additional sites with infrastructure of strategic importance to the U.S. in Colombia, the attempt to ‘protect’ them all will be costly in terms of economics and in terms of human lives.

Southern Command General James T. Hill describes Plan Colombia as, “a six-year plan designed to defeat the threat Colombians face,” and describes this threat as:

“the three largest illegal armed groups in Colombia, all named on the State Department’s list of foreign terrorist organizations and two named on the President’s list of drug kingpins: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC, the National Liberation Army or ELN, and the United Self-Defense Forces or AUC. While these groups may retain fragments of their founding philosophies, they appear to have jettisoned ideology in favor of terrorist methods and narco-trafficking.”¹⁴⁵

While General Hill must be credited here with at least admitting that the AUC, a lethal paramilitary force in Colombia, is just as likely to commit “terrorist” acts as are the guerrilla groups, the language used is still not ideal. The founding socialist ideologies of regional guerrilla movements like the FARC are rooted in such ideologies that supported the events, which occurred in the former coffee-growing areas of Colombia. These occurrences were inspired by efforts to change the unjust working conditions imposed on day-workers by coffee plantation owners and the management of conflicts over land tenure.¹⁴⁶ In response to the moderate aims of the guerrilla movements, the Colombian government chose to use force, which led to the consolidation of the peasant resistance

¹⁴⁵ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State., 18 Nov. 2003 <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

¹⁴⁶ Ricardo Vargas Meza, “The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Illicit Drug Trade”, Official Website of the Transnational Institute (TNI), <<http://www.tni.org/drugs/pubs/farc.htm>>, 30 Nov. 2003.

into the armed self-defense movement by the end of the 1940s.¹⁴⁷ The demands of the guerrilla movements, had they been met, would have been inherent in building an environment of political inclusion and democratic governance in Colombia. However, because these demands were not met, the guerrilla movements chose to rely on inflicting civilian casualties and violent means to assert their authority. These acts would not necessarily be classified as “terrorist” acts, if the guerrillas did not threaten the Colombian government’s ability to maintain its power in a sphere of political exclusion, and the subsequent ability of the State to carry out neoliberal reforms. “The underlying economic crises (poverty and social dislocation) and anti-imperial concerns that heated Third World conflicts during the Cold War have not disappeared. Rather, in areas like Colombia’s Putamayo region and the marginalized border areas of neighboring countries, aspects of the economic globalization that has accompanied the collapse of communism have sharpened these crises and thus aggravated intra-state conflicts.”¹⁴⁸

While ninety percent of Colombians, naturally, do not favor the FARC, this percentage is likely influenced by the fact that many Colombians no longer believe that the FARC’s actions are rooted in any sort of ideology, but rather that the FARC is merely committing senseless acts of violence for the sake of economic profit.¹⁴⁹ “Whereas the ideological movements of the past sought to win over the ‘hearts and minds’ of the

¹⁴⁷ Ricardo Vargas Meza, “The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Illicit Drug Trade”, Official Website of the Transnational Institute (TNI), 30 Nov. 2003, <<http://www.tni.org/drugs/pubs/farc.htm>>

¹⁴⁸ David Edeli and Kyle Richardson, “Colombia’s Expanding War”, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. Winter 2003, Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 63.

¹⁴⁹ David Edeli and Kyle Richardson, “Colombia’s Expanding War”, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. Winter 2003, Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 64.

citizenry at the early stages in their quest for political power, before the routinization of violence set in, today's combatants who fight for economic gain need not trouble themselves with public approval."¹⁵⁰ The anti-FARC sentiment has not gained momentum solely because of the shifting tactics of the FARC, but rather because the FARC has had to respond to increased militarization and various forms of economic globalization. Despite the fact that the FARC has lost much of its moral legitimacy and ideological credibility, it continues to recruit indigenous youth, because as Edeli and Macdonald argue, the FARC are more beneficial for these youth than, "facing the basic problems and suspicions the conflict has brought to their communities."¹⁵¹

Supporters of Plan Colombia fail to see the global context in which the program was developed, that is to say in an era of globalization. Edeli and Richardson comment that, "U.S. policy toward Colombia and the Andean region should reflect the dual impact that globalization has had on intra-state conflicts. While limiting the funding to insurgent groups can be an important facet of government strategies, they must also focus on the economic and social factors that still lead young people to drug traffickers, insurgency movements, and terrorist organizations."¹⁵² Furthermore, any efforts to limit funding to insurgent groups under Plan Colombia focus on destroying the insurgents' income base,

¹⁵⁰ David Edeli and Kyle Richardson, "Colombia's Expanding War", *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 2003, Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 64.

¹⁵¹ Theodore Macdonald and David Edeli, "Voices of the Unvanquished: Indigenous Responses to Plan Colombia", *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 2003, Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 12

¹⁵² David Edeli and Kyle Richardson. "Colombia's Expanding War". *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 2003. Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 69

¹⁵² David Edeli and Kyle Richardson, "Colombia's Expanding War", *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 2003, Vol. 26, Issue 4, p. 67.

which in many cases is the drug trade, and this destruction subsequently exacerbates the social and economic problems in Colombia which contribute to the cycles of violence.¹⁵³

The lack of viable alternatives to violence for the guerrillas and drug production by the coca growers is evidenced by the fact that Colombia often has the highest unemployment rates in Latin America. The results illustrated in the table below indicate that in 2001, unemployment was viewed by the Colombian public as a greater threat than crime and corruption; however many Colombians still tend to blame the tradition of violence in Colombia on the guerrillas.

Table 5.5 Principal Problem Facing the Nation December 2000–January 2001

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Unemployment | 33% |
| Corruption | 30% |
| Delinquency/Crime | 23% |
| Education | 10% |

Source: Barometro Iberoamericano Informe de Opinión de Latinoamerica y de la Peninsula Ibérica Enero 2001 Consorcio Iberoamericano de Empresas de Investigación de Mercados y Asesoramiento

Source: *New Approaches to Comparative Politics*, edited by Jennifer S. Holmes

General Hill claims that the people of Colombia’s discontent with the guerrilla “terrorist” groups developed, “after seeing how the FARC had used their safe-haven to plot terrorist acts and establish drug base camps instead of developing their notional politics into a concrete reality.”¹⁵⁴ Sufficed to say, past co-optation of the guerrilla groups into the political system resulted in disaster, as evidenced by the slaughter of the Unión Patriótico: the FARC’s political party. Attempts by the guerrillas to form their ideologies

¹⁵⁴ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

into political parties would likewise be unwelcome in the political sphere dominated by the Conservative government under President Uribe. However, this obstacle to cooptation of the guerrillas into a democratic political system does not mean that alternative solutions to Plan Colombia do not exist.

The long-term strategy, following Plan Colombia, of the Colombian services, interagency and military is to defeat Colombia's narcoterrorists and return Colombia, in the words of General Hill, "to the ranks of peaceful and prosperous nations."¹⁵⁵ General Hill completely ignores the fact that the periods of relative peace in Colombia have been accompanied by the abandonment of the heavy coffee-growing regions by an exclusionary two-party system of government. Plan Colombia is headed for quagmire, because the war against terrorism in Colombia is not winnable via a strategy which relies on violence and further fosters the political exclusion of "radical" guerrilla groups that has plagued Colombia for decades.

Violent acts by Colombian guerrillas that, in previous decades, would have been categorized as "assassinations" or "kidnappings" are now clumped together in the overarching category of terrorism. Marc Chernick claims that the term "narco-guerrillas" obfuscates the relationship between the guerrillas and the drug traffickers in making their relationship seem like a new phenomenon by ignoring the fact that the guerrillas have been extorting a portion of such commercial products in the areas they control for years.¹⁵⁶ In the same sense, the relationship between terrorism and guerrillas that arises

¹⁵⁵ _____. "Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia", Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

¹⁵⁶ _____. House of Representative Committee on International Relations. *U.S. Narcotics Policy Toward Colombia.*, 104th Cong. 2d., sess., 47.

when labeling the guerrillas “narcoterrorists” within the Plan Colombia rhetoric is just as obfuscated, and influenced not by truth but by the reigning ideology of the U.S. imposed New World Order. U.S. foreign policy is ultimately targeting coca growers, not drug traffickers or the violent guerrilla groups who profit from taxing the drug trade. Militarization of the drug war will invariably deepen the aforementioned narco-military connection.¹⁵⁷

Narcoterrorists are criticized for committing human rights violations as the result of their use of kidnappings and assassinations as methods for their larger armed struggle. Conversely, General Hill explained that training of the Southern Command and U.S. forces in charge of implementing Plan Colombia, involves the institutionalization of human rights and respect for law by the Colombian military.¹⁵⁸ Like the short courses offered at the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas), which attempt to “teach” human rights in eight, twelve or sixteen hour classes to their students who will go on to intervene militarily in Central and South America, the Judge Advocate General School serves a similar purpose with regards to US intervention in Colombia. The JAG School is a U.S. military legal assistance project in Colombia, which relies on *imposing* human rights, not on creating an environment where the recognition and practice of human rights flourishes naturally. General Hill said, “Colombia is fighting its illegal armed groups justly, in accordance

¹⁵⁷ William M. LeoGrande and Kenneth E. Sharpe, “Two Wars or One? Drugs, Guerrillas, and Colombia’s New *Violencia*”, *World Policy Journal*, Volume XVII, No 3, Fall 2000, Official Website of the World Policy Journal, 30 Nov. 2003, <<http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/leogrande.html>>

¹⁵⁸ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

with democratic values and human rights.”¹⁵⁹ These “just” practices are placed in opposition to the “unjust” practices of the guerrilla groups. While General Hill claims that the vast majority of human rights abuses in 2002 were attributed to Colombia’s “illegal” armed groups, it is important to note that the statistics are compiled by government agencies, and thus many reports of human rights abuses by the Colombian military are likely ignored. The language used by General Hill, in saying that he is convinced that the Colombian government is serious about promoting human rights “aggressively”, makes for an interesting analysis of the power of language to determine the potential success of foreign policy.¹⁶⁰ The use of the adverb “aggressively” to describe the promotion of non-violence is uncanny in that it is a complete contradiction.

The 2000-2001 U.S. aid package to Colombia was also comprised of a human rights certification act that contained six principles intended to foster an atmosphere for the flourishing of human rights in Colombia; however President Clinton waived the conditions after Colombia only met one of the requirements, which subsequently allowed paramilitaries to massacre enemies of the state- namely narcoterrorists.¹⁶¹ During the period of August 2000 to the present, human rights cases involving military officials were tried in military courts, rather than civilian courts, as conditioned in Colombia’s 1997 Constitutional Court decision. One can thus assume that human rights abuses committed

¹⁵⁹ ____. “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>.

¹⁶⁰ ____, “Southcom Chief Optimistic About Situation in Colombia”, Official Website of the U.S. Department of State, 18 Nov. 2003, <<http://usinfo.state.gov>>

¹⁶¹ ____, “Ten Questions for Colombia Policy”, Official Website of the Latin American Working Group, 08 Nov. 2003, <<http://www.lawg.org/pages/from%20old%20website/Countries/Colombia/10questions.htm>>

by the military and paramilitaries during this period as the result of the execution of the stipulations of Plan Colombia were not prosecuted in the military courts.

During the installation of a new commander to the Colombian Air force on September 8th 2003, President Uribe made the following comments concerning human rights NGOs in Colombia: “They are politicians in the service of terrorism, cowards who wave the banner of human rights in order to hand back to terrorism in Colombia the space that our public forces and our citizens have taken away from it.”¹⁶² What Uribe implies with this sentiment is that the problem with the human rights “traffickers” is not necessarily that they are in the “service of terrorism”, but that they represent leftist political ideologies that threaten the dominance of the Colombian elite, the Government and the military. Uribe went on to say that human rights advocates in Colombia, “are traffickers in human rights, and they ought to take off their masks once and for all, show themselves with their true political ideas, and quit the cowardly hiding of their ideas behind human rights.”¹⁶³ President Uribe’s words reinforce the dangerous connection between leftist and Marxist-leaning political ideologies and terrorism, a connection that divided the world during the Cold War era. But whereas the Cold War rift focused on the inherent fear of Communism by the capitalist West, the new emphasis is on the fabricated fear of “terrorism”. In response to Uribe’s comparison of human rights organizations to terrorists, U.S. Representative Jim McGovern from Massachusetts said, “We know that

¹⁶² ____, “Presbyterian Church of Colombia Responds to Threats against Human Rights Defenders by President Alvaro Uribe”, Presbyterian Church of Colombia Synod Council. 22 Sept. 2003, Official Website of the Latin American Working Group, 18 Nov. 2003.
<<http://www.lawg.org/pages/new%20pages/countries/Colombia/presbyresponse.htm>>

¹⁶³ ____, “Presbyterian Church of Colombia Responds to Threats against Human Rights Defenders by President Alvaro Uribe”, Presbyterian Church of Colombia Synod Council. 22 Sept. 2003, Official Website of the Latin American Working Group, 18 Nov. 2003,
<<http://www.lawg.org/pages/new%20pages/countries/Colombia/presbyresponse.htm>>

when high government and military officials start labeling civilian leaders and organizations as ‘terrorists’ or ‘sympathizers,’ their deaths will soon follow.”¹⁶⁴

In 2001, Governor Guerrero from southern Colombia announced that the fumigation imposed by Plan Colombia, “doesn’t really take into account the human being” and that the fumigation process would further isolate people from the national government and send them running to the drug traffickers.¹⁶⁵ In this claim, Guerrero makes reference to the blatant disregard for the welfare of the indigenous and *campesino* communities affected by aerial eradication under Plan Colombia, and their under representation in the formation of alternatives. He also makes reference to the terrorist rhetoric infused in Plan Colombia, which inherently opposes the people affected by Plan Colombia into terrorist and non-terrorist facets, without giving the plan a human face and taking into consideration the various actors and trends that complicate the Colombian political, social and economic landscape. Sadly, with the \$555.29 million in U.S. aid to Colombia’s military and police requested for 2004 (80.3% of the overall U.S. aid requested to Colombia for 2004), it looks as if the chances of U.S. recognition of the inherent failure of Plan Colombia’s and the ultimate futility in fighting a “war on terrorism” will not be realized anytime in the near future. However, continuing to advocate the use of non-violent measures for all armed actors involved will contribute to destroying the false labels that put human beings into categories and do not allow

¹⁶⁴ Jim McGovern, Speech by Jim McGovern, September 10, 2003, Official Website of The Center for International Policy, <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/ngos.htm>, 08 Nov. 2003.

¹⁶⁵ Christopher Marquis, “Colombian Governors Protest U.S. Backed Spraying of Coca”, *New York Times*, 12 March 2001, Official Website of the *New York Times*, 30 Nov. 2003, <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F20B11F63B5E0C708DDDA0894D9404482>>

enemies to see each other face to face, but only across a fence built of weapons and rhetoric instead of jungles and dialogue.

The decisions of both the Uribe and Bush administrations have left civilian populations that are ill-prepared for peace. Uribe, and past Colombian presidents, have advocated arming civilians and creating organized armed civilian self-defense groups as methods for fighting the guerrilla insurgency. This end goal of this method is precisely the problem, however. Peace, and an end to the violence in Colombia, cannot be seen through the limited scope of simply beating the guerrilla insurgency. To eradicate the guerrilla population would only kill the voice that has been stifled for centuries while another voice of resistance builds elsewhere. In order for civilians to remove themselves from the violence, they must not only remove themselves from the sites of direct paramilitary/military and guerrilla confrontation, but also remove themselves from the international context that takes the authority to decide what is good and what is evil- to impose labels associated with moral dichotomies- without acting with regard to any universal moral principles.

Unfortunately, the likelihood of this international context of terrorism fading any time soon is minimal. The release of the State Department foreign aid budget request for 2005 revealed that while only Colombia and Peru possess groups on the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations, the word "terrorism" is rampant in the aid requests for the description of U.S. programs in each country. In the case of Bolivia, the officials from the State Department write, "In order to ensure that Bolivia does not become an active transit point for international terrorism, we have also stepped up cooperation with the Bolivian military, customs, immigration, financial institutions,

police and other organizations to ensure better Bolivian control over its long, sparsely inhabited borders.” Another example states, “The principal U.S. interests in the seven countries of the Eastern Caribbean...are preventing and combating transnational criminal activity against the United States, including terrorism.” There are also several requests for non-drug military aid to Colombia and names almost every country in the Latin American realm as an ideal “transshipment” location for illegal drugs destined for the United States.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Adam Isacson and Eric Stoner, “Highlights of the Bush Administration’s 2005 Latin American Aid Request”, Official Website of the Center for International Policy, 19 February 2004, <<http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/040219memo.htm>>, 04 April 2004.

Part Eight: Uribe's Democratic Security Strategy and Its Inherent Failures

Uribe's administration has focused on infiltrating formerly neglected municipalities and territories with state presence in the form of increased security and police presence. As it stands, the war on terror has helped to fund the Uribe's administration's tactic of increasing State presence in the formerly abandoned areas of Colombia by increasing security through the establishment of policing forces in hundreds of municipalities. The best way for Colombia to escape its continuous cycles of violence would be to establish at least some form of good governance, which strays heavily from the joint U.S./Colombian endeavor to increase military and police presence under the auspices of a joint effort called Plan Colombia. An increase in military and police presence may make citizens "feel" safer, but realistically does little to change the conditions which contribute to the armed actors choice to continue their struggle for power in a the framework of a Colombia where this is little economic opportunity for the poor. As the war on terror has re-contextualized the conflict in Colombia, it may take an administration change for there to be a legitimate rejuvenation of negotiations for peace-negotiations which must ultimately involve all the armed actors.

The infiltration of State presence into formerly abandoned areas is necessary in the context of the demands of the historically marginalized. In addition, the most violent regions in Colombia are those where state presence has been lacking: where property rights are tenuous in newly settled areas, areas where illegal mining and agriculture occur, and in areas where conflict ensues following drug traffickers' investments where

peasants and guerrillas have been fighting for land rights.¹⁶⁷ There is also a direct correlation between regions of electoral abstention and the presence of armed actors in these regions.¹⁶⁸ In those areas where the legal state is present, participation in the democratic system has been rising, but in areas where state presence is limited, political participation has been weakened, and thus the democratic system is not being entrenched.¹⁶⁹ Arguably, then, state presence is a positive force for mitigating violence and fostering a democratic atmosphere, but only if this presence is not in the form of increased militarization.

By March 2004, the government declared that a police presence had been restored to all 1098 municipalities.¹⁷⁰ The other “accomplishments” in the establishment of state presence have been those introduced through the Democratic Security Strategy, namely greater numbers of combat troops that can be hastily employed by air, and a network of peasant soldiers and civilian informants.¹⁷¹

Uribe’s Democratic Security Strategy involves a five step plan to create a “secure” environment in Colombia. The first step involves the consolidation of state control throughout Colombia through the establishment of police presence in every municipality in Colombia. The administration claims that this stage has been completed, as the more than 158 municipalities formerly lacking a police presence (and

¹⁶⁷ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.

¹⁶⁸ Marc Chernick, Conclusion, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

¹⁶⁹ Marc Chernick, Conclusion, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

¹⁷⁰ Marc Chernick, Conclusion, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

¹⁷¹ Marc Chernick, Conclusion, In: Marc Chernick, ed., *A Methodology for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The Case of Colombia*, Bogota: UNDP and the Universidad de los Andes, forthcoming 2004.

this is a conservative estimate) have been supplanted with police forces. The second step is the protection of the population through the elimination of terrorist organizations and the reintegration into society of those groups and individuals that renounce violence. The third step is the elimination of the illegal drug trade in Colombia, a process that has been ongoing for decades, through the confiscation of the property and finances of illegal drug traffickers. Fourth, is the maintenance of a deterrent capability for the violence in Colombia and fifth is the creation of a framework for the transparent and efficient management of resources. The initial installation of Uribe's security strategy has purportedly led to significant decreases in the homicide rates, number of massacres and attacks by the guerrillas and paramilitaries and kidnappings in the last eighteen months.¹⁷² While actual statistics in these indicators of security, the incidents of social and political violence, are debatable, the overall trend does point towards a decrease in these incidents. No matter how effective Uribe's security strategy may appear, however, it remains difficult to understand how armed actors can be expected to renounce violence before they can be reintegrated into society, when Uribe's administration explicitly advocates the use of force to undermine the strength of the guerrillas and the paramilitaries. Both advocating and denouncing violence does not provide for a consistent policy, nor does it provide an environment where the guerrillas can begin to trust the state that has ruthlessly neglected the areas they control for decades. The components of Uribe's security strategy have statistically reduced the FARC assaults on villages and towns, but the institution of military and police presence is not a sustainable way to mitigate conflict and will eventually exacerbate it and create new dimensions, just

¹⁷² The information gathered concerning Uribe's Democratic Security Strategy and its effects over the last eighteen months was obtained from a presentation given by Miguel Ceballos at Georgetown University on April 26, 2004 in a roundtable on Colombia with leading scholars on the subject.

as violence breeds violence, or at the very least silence that will resurface later into a bombastic noise.

The notion of national security interests representing the interest of state institutions is a problematic one in the context of trying to establish peace in an a conflict environment. Tokatlian highlights the highly subjective nature of the concept of national security. What constitutes national security depends on the point of reference, whether it be the individual citizen, the nation itself, the government, the regime or the State, and the level of analysis, namely whether national security interests are in terms of local, regional or international concerns. Tokatlian also notes that the perspectives of the periphery on the subject of national security rarely make coverage in the publications edited by the center, usually the privileged in the United States.¹⁷³ The argument made by Brian L. Véase, and cited by Tokatlian, concerning the vicious cycle promoted by obeying the interests of national security, is particularly relevant for Colombia. This is that the search for state security leads to insecurity amongst the various internal social actors, which leads to the delegitimization of the State. Its capacities to promote order and domestic peace are thereby limited and the level of insecurity, in general, is thus elevated.¹⁷⁴ Irrespective of the vastly different political histories of Colombia and the United States, they are both now united in the war on terror.

The Bush administration's advocacy of increased security measures as a means of "defending" U.S. citizens has had the reverse effect of limiting their security by denying

¹⁷³ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

¹⁷⁴ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

them their civil liberties. This denial is no longer limited to poor minorities, those notoriously marginalized from society, but to anyone- even an upper class Caucasian college student who does not support the “national interest” and the violent methods that are guiding this interest. By instituting greater police presence in formerly abandoned municipalities in Colombia, people, poor and rich alike, may temporarily feel safer and legitimately be safer from the manifestations of criminal and social violence, but the wall will eventually come crashing down. Like the United States, Colombia cannot rely on its muscles to continually rectify past wrongs.

Conclusion

In very broad terms, the process of globalization refers to a historical and dialectical process characterized by the growing power of capital and the free market. The process of globalization has been reinforced in the field of international relations by an increasing transition of power from the nation-state to the non-state actors such as domestic and transnational corporations and privatized legal and criminal macro-organizations.¹⁷⁵ Proponents of globalization espouse an ideology that the development associated with globalization will lead to more socioeconomic equality, but in practice the spread of the free market and the privatization of services for efficiency, as well as the involvement of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have generated enormous inequality between not just individuals but between entire countries. The process of globalization has not been synchronous amongst countries. Moreover, what it has done to further dichotomize the two components of the center-periphery model of international relations, it has also done to create more center-periphery disparity within the developing countries affected.

The negative manifestations of globalization have been particularly prevalent in Latin America and in Colombia, especially. Associated with the increasing erosion of political sovereignty (highlighted by the close alliance between Bush and Uribe in the war on terror) these negative manifestations include the growth of the drug trade, an increasing number of human rights violations (while transnational NGO's and organizations such as the United Nations concurrently attempt to set international human

¹⁷⁵ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

rights standards and codify violations), environmental destructions, increase in the organized criminal transnationals, and increased internal and external migrations.¹⁷⁶

In Colombia, the armed actors act in a parallel fashion to the brand of imperialism that currently dominates our global structures in an “us versus them” binary that effectively prohibits peace. This neo-colonialism punishes those who have traditionally suffered under the imposition of capitalism via colonization. However, the binaries are no longer so clear, and in Colombia, especially, the structures of oppression have become so complex and the onset of the drug trade and the oil boom have so complicated the enemies, centers and peripheries, that there is little hope for peace without a total abandonment of these labels that divide the Colombians. No longer are the guerrillas acting solely on the ideological behalf of the poor and oppressed, nor is the Colombian state waging this war against the poor on its own. During past peace negotiations, an inability of one group to “give in” to the other after a decades long power struggle has undermined any legitimate attempts to end the conflict. If armed actors began to see each other as individuals, who all must share the land and resources of Colombia, then the time would be ripe for negotiations. If not, then the all those unarmed actors, more specifically, all those unarmed civilians who remain excluded economically, socially and culturally from Colombian society, will continue to suffer. And it is those rural communities of civilians who are most affected by the violence that are waging the war to save their local lands and families from being wiped out by the insidious manifestations of globalization and the war on terror.

¹⁷⁶ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, *Globalización, narcotráfico y violencia: siete ensayos sobre Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2000.

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