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*Europe: Neither Plan Colombia,
nor Peace Process — From Good
Intentions to High Frustration*

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EUROPE: NEITHER PLAN COLOMBIA, NOR PEACE PROCESS: FROM GOOD INTENTIONS TO HIGH FRUSTRATION¹

Joaquín Roy

Europe and Colombia

Introduction

With the public announcement of a reshaped Plan Colombia in mid-2000, European attitudes toward involvement in attempting to solve the crisis of Colombia's endemic violence has oscillated from alarm to hope and, finally, to frustration. The overall scene has been dominated by a sense of powerlessness, mixed with realism and internal contradictions between member states and institutions of the European Union (EU).

In the early stages, Europeans remained cautious of the U.S.-inspired Plan Colombia, poorly promoted as a credible Colombian project. "A virtual contribution" to what appeared to be "a virtual Peace Process,"² in the off-the-record words of European Union Commission staff, accurately described the European attitude.³ "Good intentions" became the label attributed to European involvement in Colombia, illustrating not only its willingness but also its limitations. "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth" seemed to be the Colombian attitude in view of the pledged, yet ambiguous, European contribution. High expectations were detectable in public declarations, considering that significant diplomatic capital had been invested.

From the beginning of European involvement, therefore, the message was clear that Europe wanted to distance itself as much as possible from Plan Colombia, which it understood to be a project centered around counterinsurgency and security issues. After a brief period of uncertainty, followed by the successful revival of the peace process in January 2002, European diplomacy seemed to have its role strengthened from that of mere observer to the status of participant in brokering the peace process. The renewal of the process was credited to the role of the international community, with heavy European involvement. However, European leaders experienced apprehension, pessimism, and a certain degree of realism finally set in the minds of European leaders in view of the decision of President Andrés Pastrana of Colombia to terminate the peace process on February 20, 2002. In addition, the continuation of violence perpetrated by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo — FARC-EP) that culminated in the kidnapping of prominent Colombian Senator Eduardo Gechem Turbay, led Pastrana to order Colombian troops to enter the territory previously awarded as sanctuary.⁴

Although these actions were an admission that the Colombian government's negotiation efforts of more than two years had failed, European expectations for resolution had been raised. Pastrana's successor, newly elected President Alvaro Uribe appears to have anticipated this harder European attitude when he declared a state of emergency on August 12, 2002, and confronted the increased level of hostility shown by the FARC and the social pressure exerted over months of frustration.

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Meanwhile, under the new Bush administration, U.S. opinion had already shifted toward a more hard line attitude, as reflected in timely columns by former Clinton administration officials.⁵ Editorials endorsed President Bush's attempts to make U.S. support more effective.⁶ These published opinions confirmed that many U.S. elite had significantly shifted toward the idea of more active participation in the Colombian conflict, sidelining the peace negotiations as an apparent result of the attacks of September 11. "Terrorism" was the code word widely used, replacing "counterinsurgency strategy" and "curtailing narco-trafficking," buzzwords originally used to sell Congress on the need for Plan Colombia. The Colombian government began to lobby energetically for the use of U.S. counter-drug trafficking resources in anti-insurgency activities, equating the fight against the FARC with the military offensive against al Qaeda.⁷ In public statements, the White House limited its position to the parameters outlined by Congress in the fight against drugs.⁸

Mexican and U.S. media focused special attention on the sudden shift with apprehension and anticipation of more dramatic news to come.⁹ Lively Hispanic op-ed columnists from Miami expressed caution while endorsing the Colombian government.¹⁰ In Europe, Spanish commentaries captured the nature of the event.¹¹ The British media took due notice, setting the tone for the rest of European opinion.¹² European leaders expressed understanding and support for President Pastrana's decision. The EU presidency issued the following declaration, setting the tone for future actions and expressing its general attitude toward the crisis:

- The European Union fully understands and respects the decision which the President of Colombia felt obliged to take on 20 February 2002, putting an end to the Process, which began in 1998, of dialogue, negotiation and the signing of agreements with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army (FARC-EP) and to the Disengagement Zone. President Andrés Pastrana has, throughout those years, displayed an untiring determination to achieve peace in Colombia, which, unfortunately, cannot be said of the FARC-EP.
- The European Union utterly condemns the latest attack against the civilian population attributed to the FARC-EP. The gravity of the aircraft hijacking and the kidnapping of several of its passengers demonstrates that the FARC-EP pay no heed to the repeated calls from the whole of Colombian society and the international community to ease the conflict.
- The European Union deeply regrets the fact that, since the signing on 20 January 2002 of the Consensus Schedule Agreement for the future Peace Process with the Colombian Government, the FARC-EP have demonstrated their lack of willingness to make serious progress in the Process, by failing to honor the undertakings signed with the Government. The FARC-EP's grave provocations have led to the breakdown of a negotiating process on which the Colombian people had based their hopes for peace. The European Union profoundly deplores these provocations, which come on top of the violence which the paramilitaries continue to perpetrate.
- The European Union has reiterated several times its rejection and condemnation of the practice of kidnapping, extortion and other crimes committed by armed groups in Colombia. In the present grave circumstances, the EU renews its urgent appeal for respect for International Humanitarian Law and the protection of the civilian population, and it reserves the right to change its policy towards the armed groups.
- At this difficult time, the European Union wishes to express its support for and solidarity with the Colombian people as a whole, and with President Pastrana and his Government. The Union hopes that Colombian democracy, on the basis of a strict observance of the Rule of Law and full respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, can completely fulfill the aspirations for peace and prosperity of all the Colombian people.
- The EU once again assures the Colombian people of its support for any initiative to establish a genuine dialogue with a view to ending the conflict which is tearing Colombia apart.¹³

Reacting to the kidnapping of presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, the Spanish Presidency of the European Union issued a declaration condemning the action and demanding her release.

- The Presidency of the European Union expresses its most energetic condemnation of the kidnapping of the candidate to the presidential election, Ingrid Betancourt, carried out on February 23, by the FARC-EP, and it demands her immediate release.
- The Presidency of the EU wishes to transmit its solidarity to the family of Ms. Betancourt, as well as

to the Government and the Colombian people.

- The Presidency of the EU reiterates its full support for democracy in Colombia in facing terrorist acts that attempt to interfere with the development of the campaign for the upcoming legislative and presidential elections.¹⁴

The most important part of this trendsetting declaration was the labeling of these types of activities with the novel expression of “terrorist,” a term never used before by official European bodies when referring to the Colombian guerrillas. This was a drastic change of tone, detected by the Colombian authorities and international observers. Previously, less inflammatory expressions, such as “combatants,” were used by the international community to depict the behavior of this guerrilla organization.

This new declaration had a more complex profile. First, it was exclusively issued by the Spanish presidency in Spanish, with no translation available in English or any other EU language, despite standing promises that other versions would be available as announced on the web page of the Spanish EU presidency. EU member state diplomats noticed that the language used, in particular the expression “terrorists acts,” allowed for multiple interpretations. The unavailability of an English translation added to the confusion and speculation.

Second, European and Colombian interpretations of the declaration ranged from the extreme — that the declaration was inspired by the Colombian government — to the more measured interpretation that the declaration was an attempt by the Spanish government to please both the Colombian and U.S. authorities and at the same time lead the EU efforts to pressure the guerrillas.

Third, the declaration and its interpretations dramatically contrasted with the decision of the EU on May 2, 2002, not to include the FARC and the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional — ELN) on the list of terrorists organizations, while the right-wing paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia — AUC), was posted on this infamous roster.¹⁵ As a result, the Colombian government; two of the leading presidential candidates, Alvaro Uribe and Noemí Sanín; and influential opinion columnists protested the decision and asked for help from the Spanish government. Other candidates, such as Luis Eduardo Garzón and the staff of kidnapped Senator Betancourt espoused hope the decision would keep the door open for the FARC to negotiate. According to the Colombian press, this was apparently the reason why some European governments (allegedly led by Sweden and France) opposed the official declaration of the FARC and the ELN as “terrorists,” as proposed by Spain and Belgium, because to do so would make it difficult to pressure the groups for negotiations.¹⁶ Following this logic, France has maintained this strategy by allowing Senator Betancourt to maintain dual citizenship. Along the same lines, Sweden’s position was that labeling the FARC as terrorists diminished the EU’s leverage. The Swedish government categorically denied that it opposed the inclusion of the FARC in the list. On the contrary, Sweden supported the measure.¹⁷ French Ambassador Daniel Parfait denied these alleged motivations and confirmed France’s endorsement of condemning all terrorist acts,¹⁸ a statement passionately ratified by President Jacques Chirac during a press conference held at the II EU-Latin American Summit in Madrid on May 17, 2002. At the same Summit, President Pastrana obtained unequivocal backing from Spain’s Prime Minister José Maria Aznar, who pledged to pressure his colleagues to include the FARC in the EU terrorist list.¹⁹ European observers remind critics that it was not until the end of the truce that the Colombian government used the terrorist label.²⁰ This controversy also explains why the Spanish presidency’s declaration was not revised; it did not receive the necessary approval from the Council to become a full EU declaration with the potential of becoming a common position or to serve as the basis for inclusion of the Colombian guerrillas on the terrorist list.

However, the Boyajá massacre of May 2, 2002, caused the Colombian government and public opinion to increase pressure on EU representatives and member states’ governments to include the FARC on a future list.²¹ This took place amid tensions caused by corruption and calls for an increase of military resources.²² The Spanish presidency of the EU issued another declaration that asserted the following:

The Spanish presidency of the EU expresses its most energetic condemnation against the new terrorist action taken by the FARC on May 2. . . . The EU has reiterated its firm condemnation of the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated by armed groups in the course recent years in Colombia. . . . The EU has identified among its priorities the fight against terrorism and the need to prosecute criminal and terrorist

activities that are an attempt against the state of law and fundamental liberties... In this context, the EU has adopted specific restrictive measures directed against persons and entities, in order to fight terrorism. The elaboration of a list is among these measures, which implies a continued process to be revised periodically, resulting in the eventual inclusion of other persons and entities. Decisions in this regard are made by consensus, and they are solitary and confidential.²³

In the course of the II EU-Latin America-Caribbean Summit held in Madrid, President Pastrana successfully received backing from Spain's Prime Minister Aznar and a promise that he would try to influence his colleagues to include the FARC on the terrorist list. Sweden pledged not to oppose the measure.²⁴ However, in the aftermath of the election of Alvaro Uribe as president of Colombia on May 26, 2002, the ambivalence and contradictions of the various EU actors regarding labeling the FARC became obvious, predicting a future flexibility, according to long-term objectives. While the European Parliament (EP) delegation visiting Colombia to witness the election branded the atmosphere as permeated by "violence, fear, intimidation and blackmail," the culprits were deemed "insurgent movements."²⁵ High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana expressed admiration for the democratic process, "in spite of the campaign of threats, intimidations, and assassinations;"²⁶ Foreign Affairs Minister of Spain Josep Piqué recognized the difficult conditions under "very serious violence threats;"²⁷ the Commission congratulated the new president for seeking dialogue with "armed groups."²⁸ The "terrorist" label seemed to have disappeared from EU declarations, opening the door for a new setting for negotiations.

Tenacious lobbying by newly elected President Uribe²⁹ finally persuaded the Council of the European Union, in its format as the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to insert the FARC in the list of terrorist organizations.³⁰ The ELN, however, which was also rumored to be a candidate for a simultaneous inclusion on the list after the breakdown of negotiations with outgoing President Pastrana, was left out.³¹ Consequently, according to EU standards, the paramilitary organization AUC and the guerrilla FARC became the only two groups officially branded as "terrorist."

As a result, the EU's specific programs had to be reevaluated in accordance with the new security situation presented by the uncertainty of measures taken by the incoming administration, while maintaining Europe's pledge to help Colombia. Before the elections of May 20, not only did Plan Colombia appear to be headed for open confrontation, but the hopes associated with the peace process had vanished. Although entered into with good intentions, the European attitude toward the Colombian situation changed to one of high frustration.

After the elections, change was on the horizon but its direction was unknown. The climate of confrontation heightened by the guerrillas' launching of artillery rounds against the Colombian Congress during Uribe's inauguration, led to a declaration of a state of emergency on August 12, 2002.³² Understandably, Europe's apprehension grew in view of increased U.S. military involvement in the form of advisory personnel to train special Colombian units, Uribe's call for UN involvement, and plans for an inter-American force to assist Colombia's antidrug efforts.³³ All this led to an overall pattern of caution expressed by the leadership of the European Commission.³⁴ Nevertheless, if resumption of negotiations for a political settlement to this conflict is to be achieved, European involvement still seems irreplaceable, thus calling for a complete review of Europe's perceptions and actions.

Rejecting Plan Colombia, Betting on the Peace Process

In mid-January 2002, a highly controversial agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC over extension of a sanctuary-territory was on the verge of collapse. Colombian presidential ultimatums and the unpredictable guerrilla reaction created an unstable situation in danger of degenerating into a full-scale war.³⁵ The direct potential result would be invasion of the sanctuary-territory awarded to the FARC. As the events of January 20 confirmed, an impending change in the policies and actions of the United States, occurred after extensive discussions and lobbying by various interests.³⁶ EU officials and numerous European diplomats³⁷ saw their attempts to mediate a lasting peace, or at least a partial truce in time and space, end. A statement on Colombia by the Spanish presidency of the EU was categorical:

The Presidency of the European Union, deeply concerned about the current situation of the dialogue process with the FARC-EP, reiterates its support to the efforts of President Pastrana and the Colombian government to find a negotiated solution to the conflict. At the same time, it calls on the FARC-EP to confirm with facts their

will for peace, and to find a way to keep alive the hopes placed in such a dialogue by the Colombian people and the International Community. Meanwhile, we support the decisions adopted by President Pastrana, as the legitimate representative of the democratic will of the Colombian people.³⁸

When the government and guerrillas agreed to keep negotiating under extreme diplomatic pressure,³⁹ the EU confirmed its commitment to deliver aid, including the funding of projects in the guerrilla-held sanctuary.⁴⁰ Brussels expressed its most positive statement up to that time on the process:

- The European Union expresses its satisfaction at the signing on 20 January 2002 of the Consensus Schedule Agreement for the future Peace Process between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP. This opens a new period and defines the priority issues necessary to take the Process through the implementation of concrete acts of peace, with specific and verifiable deadlines.
- The European Union stresses the importance of the deadline agreed to on 7 April 2002 for a cease-fire and an end to the hostilities. It considers of utmost priority the release of all hostages by the FARC-EP. The Union hopes that an immediate decrease in the intensity of the conflict and an end of human rights violations and of attacks against the civil population will create an atmosphere of trust to boost the negotiations and fulfill commitments already undertaken by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP.
- The Union welcomes the contributions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and of the Group of Facilitators in reaching the Consensus Schedule Agreement. The Union will continue to support the efforts of the international community in promoting peace in Colombia.⁴¹

The announcement⁴² of a new schedule of talks leading to an April 7 cease-fire revealed the crucial role played by European representatives.⁴³ Although the armistice was no longer anticipated, the EU and European governments had invested a considerable amount of diplomatic energy, political support, and continuous funding of regional and bilateral projects to the Peace Process (so called in European circles, rejecting the spirit and letter of the original U.S.-led Plan Colombia).⁴⁴ Consequently, the eventual collapse of the tenuous negotiating lines represented a major setback not only for the staff of the European Union, but also for the political reputation of numerous European heads of government and state. Established on March 9, 2001, in Los Pozos (Caquetá), the Dialogue Table (Mesa de Diálogos) of 26 Países Amigos, to meet every six months, created a Facilitating Commission (Comisión Facilitadora) to meet bimonthly and later more often, composed of 10 countries (Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela). An open confrontation between the FARC and the Colombian Army would also have endangered the systematic diplomatic role of European governments in negotiations with the ELN, the other Colombian guerrilla organization. This danger was magnified after the February 20 breakdown.

The Colombian government breathed a sigh of relief because economic and social assistance was expected to come mostly from Europe. Satisfaction was felt in both Europe and Colombia late Sunday, January 20, when hours before the deadline the Colombian government and the FARC confirmed, as advanced by the media,⁴⁵ a new agreement to resume peace negotiations.⁴⁶ In spite of the fragility of the agreements, the role of the international community and particularly the efforts of European diplomats were credited as irreplaceable.⁴⁷ A declaration from Brussels came in the following unequivocal manner:

- The European Union acknowledges the efforts carried out by President Pastrana of Colombia to re-launch the process of dialogue founded on the San Francisco de la Sombra Agreement, which established the need of a cease-fire and the interruption of hostilities. Likewise, the European Union condemns the kidnappings, the attacks against the civil population, the extortions and the destruction of national infrastructures.
- The European Union also embraces the work carried out by the United Nations and the Group of Facilitating Countries, particularly by the four members of the European Union, which has enabled the re-establishment of the trust needed to try to find a negotiated solution to this conflict. The International Community has carried out a very constructive and useful role throughout the negotiations, and the European Union shall support its presence in future negotiations.
- The European Union hopes that the negotiations that are being carried out shall lead to specific facts, proving the will of the FARC-EP to sincerely advance in the procedure, complying with the engagements signed with the Government. The European Union stressed its will to continue supporting

democracy in Colombia and President Pastrana's efforts to achieve peace as a State policy, in the frame of democratic institutions, the State of Law and the respect of human rights.

- Finally, the European Union, once again, vigorously condemns the kidnappings, extortions and other crimes, which represent a flagrant violation of human rights and International Humanitarian Law. To this effect, it underlines that the FARC must take on a new stage, bearing in mind the will and firmness of the Colombian society and the International Community.⁴⁸

The agreement and the process that led to it was not universally endorsed in Colombia, where a majority of the population and the leading candidates to succeed Pastrana have been critical of a policy they perceive to be awarding advantages to the FARC "with no practical return."⁴⁹ In the Colombian media, the role of the international community was questioned regarding its limitations, contradictions, and dependency on its national interests.⁵⁰ Domestic and international observers denounced the limitation of the pledge made by the FARC to discontinue collective kidnappings (labeled as "miraculous fishing") but the guerillas still authorized selective abductions in exchange for ransom.⁵¹ The political climate did not improve, kidnappings and assassinations continued, destruction of infrastructure became a daily routine, and threats of acute urban violence were translated into an ominous reality.⁵² History seemed to repeat itself when President Pastrana canceled his scheduled attendance at the World Economic Forum in New York City (as a gesture of solidarity by this organization following the September 11 attacks), as he did a year earlier when he returned to Colombia from Paris, skipping his trip to Davos, Switzerland, the regular site for this meeting.⁵³

The highs and lows of European involvement are well established. For most of 2001, the overall agenda of the Peace Process/Plan Colombia could not be implemented until the latest EU official decisions were made. Coming off a roller coaster that had lasted more than one year, on April 30, 2001, European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten proudly announced to a gathering of international donors in Brussels that the EU had confirmed a contribution of €335 million (about US\$304 million) for the Colombian Peace Process,⁵⁴ a sum later increased to about \$366 million.

Simultaneously, President Pastrana declared in Bogotá that the much heralded and controversial Plan Colombia was financially completed.⁵⁵ Added to a total of \$4 billion in Colombian funds, the European Union pledge completed the external funding of \$3.5 billion. A grand total of \$7.5 billion would power the scheme destined to transform Colombia from a disintegrating society, dominated by guerrilla war and drug trafficking, into a full-fledged democracy with a prosperous economy.

Ten months later, the overall outlook was enigmatic, and there were still dark clouds hovering overhead. The end of the process on February 20 was the final blow. The Colombian president was finishing his mandate. He had been receiving pressure from three fronts: the activity of the paramilitary forces, the ongoing terrorist and extortion policies executed by the guerrilla groups, and the suddenly changed international strategy of the United States caused by the September 11 attacks.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, very few concrete steps toward the implementation of European assistance had actually taken place, because security on the ground had not been conducive to successful execution of recovery and development programs. Nonetheless, while uncertainty mounted, due to a new cycle of violence and controversy amid rumors of U.S. intervention and expanded assistance,⁵⁷ in early February 2002, the European Commission announced in a supreme act of confidence and optimism the disbursement of the first installment of funds for specific projects in the Magdalena Medio region.⁵⁸

The diplomatic role of the international community, especially the European Union and its member states, proved to be irreplaceable. This is still the case. EU leaders, such as Chris Patten,⁵⁹ Javier Solana,⁶⁰ and members of the European Parliament, visited Colombia in support of fact-finding missions. King Juan Carlos I extended protocol state visits to Bogotá, dramatizing Spain's support of the Colombian government and the peace process. The intervention of European diplomats in January 2002 was highly instrumental in supporting the UN representative's last-minute attempt to stall what appeared to be the end of the truce between the Colombian government and the FARC guerillas.⁶¹ Overall, European diplomacy has maintained its leadership in negotiations with the ELN. Inaugurating the Spanish presidency of the European Union, the Spanish government took the lead in efforts to strengthen the feasibility of negotiations with the FARC and ELN.

Europe's Global Contribution: "Don't Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth"

Partly in response to public opinion pressure and as a follow-up to its preceding policies and programs, the European Commission led the effort for international assistance to Colombia. On April 30, 2001, the impressive show of unity demonstrated by the 27 countries and 10 international organizations convened by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in the EU capital was a dream come true for world cooperation. In reality, however, only about \$100 million was contributed by the EU institutional budget.

But funding appeared to be coming from many other sources in a sort of phone and television marathon competition. A year earlier, the United States promised \$1.3 billion, \$250 million of which was designated for social and institutional programs. Spain led Europe with a promise of \$100 million. Japan committed \$70 million for irrigation projects; the UN pledged \$131 million for children's programs; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the international banks provided almost \$1 billion; and \$300 million was earmarked for loans awarded by the World Bank, the IDB, and the Andean Community. Switzerland reserved \$15 million, and Sweden confirmed its previously pledged \$20 million. The White House promised to convince Congress to dedicate millions to Andean projects. Even Portugal gave about \$300,000.⁶² The figures and scope of these contributions will not surprise most observers but should be placed in the wider context of the EU's Andean program.⁶³

Table 1. Contribution of the European Union and European States

	Credit	Cooperation (in US\$-millions)	Total (in US\$-millions)
Germany	—	18	18
Austria	—	0.60	0.60
Belgium	—	10.10	10.10
Denmark	—	0.60	0.60
Spain	76	24	100
Finland	—	2.20	2.20
France	—	18	18
Netherlands	—	7.20	7.20
Ireland	—	0.90	0.90
Italy	10	5	15
Norway	—	20	20
Portugal	—	0.25	0.25
United Kingdom	—	7.02	7.02
Switzerland	—	8.5+12	20.50
Sweden	—	4+16	20
EU COM	—	126	126
Total	86	280.37	366.37

Although the figures may not look too impressive, they were of the utmost importance for Colombian officials because the programs concentrated heavily on institutional and social strengthening, humanitarian aid, and transparency. Priority zones were the southern part the Bolívar region, the Southeast, Macizo, and Magdalena Medio. It was decided that a "fast track" process would be used to channel the funds.⁶⁴

This atmosphere of optimism was tempered by threats of continued violence. Celebrating the May 1 Labor Day, the FARC sent an internet message pledging "not a minute of silence, but life-long combat."⁶⁵ They fulfilled this threat with a year of violence, culminating in the massacre of more than 100 people in Bojayá, an area contested for control with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas

de Colombia — AUC).⁶⁶ Urban terrorism spilled over to the city of Cartagena de Indias, threatening its tourist industry, which had survived despite the endemic deterioration of the Colombian economy.⁶⁷ The United States declined requests from pacifist organizations to delay delivering military aid.⁶⁸ Representatives of the European Parliament reaffirmed their view by portraying Plan Colombia as a war project — not as a peace program — and maintaining the EU should not become involved.⁶⁹ The fine print of official declarations and government statements also revealed uncertainties and conditions under which international assistance to Colombia would have to be delivered. With the impact of the massacres inflicted by right-wing paramilitary forces and the collapse of negotiations between the Colombian government and the ELN still fresh in their minds, EU officers demanded a more rigorous policy from the Bogotá government and stressed the need for heightened security for personnel designated to direct and implement the different programs in the field. As in the past, the presidency of the EU issued warning declarations denouncing the uncertain climate.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, off-the-record commentaries in Brussels reiterated that the figures used to announce contributions corresponded to old projects that had been petitioned by the Colombian government. This contradictory and ambivalent context had a tortuous and long history that could be traced back to the birth of Plan Colombia.

With a deadline of January 31, 2001, President Pastrana agonized over whether to negotiate with the FARC or unleash the army over the guerrilla-controlled DMZ territory after months of obtaining only a few concessions in return.⁷¹ Simultaneously, the Colombian government agreed to the terms of another zone awarded to the ELN under pressure from and with the mediation of the international community. At the same time, the European Parliament (under a conservative Christian Democratic majority⁷²) passed a resolution opposing Plan Colombia (474 votes in favor, one against, and 33 abstentions). Most Europeans perceive the Plan as inspired by the United States with “militaristic” and counterinsurgency purposes, with the dangerous potential of spilling over to other Andean neighbors.⁷³

In contrast, to demonstrate European support for the Colombian people, a European Commission-sponsored team of experts arrived in Bogotá to evaluate social and economic assistance projects to be funded by the EU and its member states. Ambassadors of the 15 member states accredited in Bogotá sent an energetic appeal to all parties in the Colombian crisis to resume negotiations toward achieving a lasting peace.⁷⁴

This cloudy and contradictory scenario demonstrates that Europe’s involvement in resolving the endemic Colombian confrontation has always been very problematic. In spite of heartening declarations issued by the EU and key state actors and the commitment offered to the Colombian government, the deterioration of the situation in 2000 contributed to an increasingly pessimistic view. This negative assessment applied equally to the domestic evolution of the conflict and to the prospects of a European contribution to remedy the damage and to obtain a lasting peace, either via adherence to Plan Colombia or as a separate aid package. European and U.S. perceptions of Colombian problems and their causes have been too disparate. A give-and-take approach between Europe and the United States and mutual negotiation in identifying priorities are the keys to potential, yet difficult, trans-Atlantic cooperation.

Although the diagnosis in early 2000 appeared to be optimistic, based on European actors being favorably disposed toward helping Colombia, by year’s end prospects had worsened. Long-sought European involvement in Colombia seemed to oscillate between two extremes. On the optimistic side, Europe was committed to supply the necessary political support for bringing a lasting peace to Colombia by contributing around \$1 billion in funds for social and economic programs. On the other side, however, off-the-record voices warned that unless the United States refurbished the most polemic parts of Plan Colombia, Europe would be compelled to deliver “a virtual contribution to a virtual peace plan.”

Plan Colombia in the European Perspective: Good Intentions

European perceptions became more explicitly negative once certain details regarding potential military involvement by the United States were announced to the general public in August 2000, during President Clinton’s unprecedented short visit to Cartagena de Indias. An analysis of antidrug-trafficking efforts in the absence of sufficient attention given to social matters further damaged the overall critical European evaluation of what, until that moment, had been the almost exclusive domain of governments and specialists.

Ironically, since the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy has been the factor that has provided cohesiveness to Old World positions. All it takes is for the United States to offer the Europeans an easy

prompt, project, or excuse. In this instance, Colombia created a Plan that was supported by the United States. In response, the Europeans organized an impressive show of coherence to demonstrate their own coordinated approach, independent from the U.S. position.

Three conditions were necessary to make the European-U.S. alliance possible. First, the policy that becomes the question of discord should be affordable, with little cost to European governments or organizations. Second, European resistance should be assisted by some sort of U.S. domestic opposition to the policy being proposed or implemented by the U.S. government. The home front then becomes a European ally. Third, the items on the agenda subject disagreement should not be of a highly sensitive nature for any of the U.S. or European parties or of a global nature, such as the September 11 attacks. In other words, the items on the agenda should not constitute a serious threat to any of the new fundamental European security concerns, for example, energy, migration, or radical nationalism, or special issues affecting any of the member states. In this scenario, an ad hoc European opposition platform would fall apart at any given moment when the national interest of any one European partner seems to be at risk.

Europeans also need to have allies on the U.S. home front, in public opinion, partisan politics, think tanks, and/or the academic community.⁷⁵ Until September 11, Plan Colombia fit this bill perfectly. Regarding political and economic costs, the Plan could be contested with relatively few risks. It was regionally localized. It was already opposed in important parts of the U.S. home front, especially by conservative columnists.⁷⁶ It helped that Colombia's Latin American neighbors also disagreed with U.S. policy.⁷⁷ This coherent scenario, however, suffered from the events of September 11. It remains to be seen if European states will side with the United States in an expanded intervention in Colombia.

It is also understandable that an issue as complex as the Colombian crisis would become the subject of an internal debate among the leadership of European Union institutions and the core of tactical disagreements among some member states. Negative perceptions of the situation have never been monolithic. Some European sectors and governments are more prone to express unconditional support than others. Others are freer to vent their concerns and irritation over some of the most polemic aspects of the Plan or its various interpretations. As a general rule, most of the member states are skeptical of a project they perceive as inspired by the United States. They also have difficulty understanding the objectives of an operation that borders on interference (*injerencia*) in the internal affairs of another country. Although European officials are usually tame in their public declarations, they believe this conflict can only be resolved by Colombians. Government corruption, social injustice, and the abandonment of state obligations are signaled as causes of the crisis. However, at large, a general picture survives. Plan Colombia has been a candidate for a cohesive European response. While Europeans oppose the United States' rationale for a military-security strategy, they are struggling to design a joint policy. The European point of view regarding terrorism differs from the U.S. in that it does not equate the FARC with al Qaeda. European governments share with the U.S. and Colombian governments the need to combine political, social, and military analyses. The emphasis of each ingredient is what separates Europe from U.S. views.

Once the details of U.S. backing were more explicitly known, the reaction in Europe could be described as a one-two movement of arms and hands, a sort of warm-up exercise. First, European diplomats and government leaders lifted their arms and placed their hands over their heads in disbelief and fear. Second, they put their hands in their pockets to secure their purses and wallets and to make sure their money was still in place. They argued they were being asked to pay for big "incidentals" that could potentially become larger than the core projects. For example, the original budgets for some construction projects ballooned to stratospheric heights. European financial help would be needed once Colombian military hardware and munitions were exhausted, along with all Colombian military personnel, and the last drop of Colombian blood had been shed, as one Colombian scholar illustrated a few hours before President Clinton arrived in Cartagena de Indias.⁷⁸

In sum, European governments perceived that they were called upon to pay the expenses of a war they did not perpetrate, expand, or worsen. For decades, U.S. involvement in some parts of the world, especially in some regions of Latin America, has been likened to the actions of a well-intentioned elephant that tries to maintain an impossibly low profile while its slow, clumsy movements, knock down the supporting pole of various circus tents with unforeseen negative consequences. From the European perspective, U.S. participation in Plan Colombia fits this analogy.

The global panorama contributing to the European perception has been complicated by various versions and interpretations of Plan Colombia officially announced by the Colombian government.⁷⁹ Colombian authorities, apparently unhappy with the two complementary approaches developed by Bogotá and Washington to sell the same product to two different audiences (basically, the Colombian population and the U.S. Congress), were eager to respond to the concerns of Europeans about the original plan by inviting Brussels to propose a “special plan for Colombia,” an invitation that the Europeans were ready to accept. When Colombian Foreign Minister Fernández de Soto met with EU Commissioner Chris Patten on May 19, 2000, he pointed out that the Commission’s concerns centered around the military component, the lack of involvement of the parties in dispute resolution, an improper addressing of human rights issues, and land reform and tax problems.⁸⁰ The avoidance of the label “Plan Colombia” became part of the European agenda and discourse. The use of expressions such as Peace Process in its place became the rule.

Having expressed these concerns, Patten took the lead in pursuing a solid European response to Colombian needs, expressing “disheartened”⁸¹ sentiments and dismay (if not irritation) when some of the member states hesitated to offer contributions and support. The external affairs commissioner was very blunt: “I am also concerned that some member states want to disassociate European support from Plan Colombia. I fully understand, and even share to some extent, the criticisms of Plan Colombia. But it would send a worrisome political signal if we granted EU aid to projects which did not fit under the Plan.” Patten himself stated to Fernández de Soto that the Commission intended “to do everything in its power to continue the process” and proposed to the “member States that a European aid programme for Colombia be set up,” offering the services of the Commission to coordinate this joint effort.⁸² The record shows that this task was accomplished.

The European Union, the governments of the most influential members (by virtue of their historical linkages with Colombia or the volume of their aid programs to Latin America or both), and the governments of countries outside of the Union, such as Norway and Switzerland have expressed an extreme degree of concern for the Colombian crisis. They have also pledged, with different terms and conditions, considerable resources. It seems that Colombia is a hot item. Not since Vietnam or the bloody clashes in Central America has Europe had a chance to become involved in a conflict that erupted after the Cold War’s end. The urgency to act and cooperate to solve the pressing problems of Colombia has attracted the attention of all the influential European governments and organizations, virtually without exception. The narcotrafficking dimension has contributed greatly to this interest because Europe is suffering as much as the United States from the consequences of the trade and drug use.

Two pivotal (but different in nature) protagonists of European assistance are under scrutiny and pressure to be successful: Spain and the European Union institutions. Other governments, especially France and Germany, are caught between the need to speak up and pressure to cooperate in some way. Finally, other states have yet to clarify their positions concerning assistance.

Major Actors and Secondary Partners

The European Commission in the Driver’s Seat

The Colombian scenario is regarded by the EU Commission as a priority in the region.⁸³ External Affairs Commissioner Patten has shouldered the difficult tasks of listening to the complaints of critical member states and the European Parliament⁸⁴ about Plan Colombia, welcoming the enthusiasm of others, especially the Spanish government, and offering cooperation, while trying not to irritate the U.S. government. More explicitly than in typical obscure official documents, the views of the European Commission on Colombia and its justification of the need for European involvement were lucidly stated in a short piece published as a newspaper column by Commissioner Patten.⁸⁵ In an exclusive interview given to Bogotá’s *El Espectador*, he insisted on correcting the perception that Brussels’ role was limited “to using its wallet,” and that aid was conditional upon more respect for human rights. The EU Commission wanted to minimize its differences with the United States but confirm its participation in the Peace Process, not in what was officially known as Plan Colombia. Patten noted that European assistance would be concentrated on alternative rural development and institutional strengthening.⁸⁶

Although Patten attached in statements disclaimers that his opinions did not reflect the view of the Commission (they did), he pledged maximum support for the main protagonists of the peace process: Colombia and the Andean states. The process needs a balanced and integrated regional focus that originated within the region because the problems are larger and more complex than the domains limited by national borders. The main challenges are the violation of human rights, the lack of respect for the rule of law, and the deterioration of the role of the state caused by drug trafficking. Europe not only has an interest at stake, but also a responsibility. However, in spite of some signs of progress, the European commissioner for external affairs has a realistic view of the endemic conditions that need to be addressed with a deeper structural response. Violence is not only the cause of the problem; it is also the consequence of the prevalent situation in the country. That is why the EU Commission has to denounce any perpetrator of human rights violations and demand their punishment.

In an attempt to “put his money where his commitment was,” Patten pledged political support for the peace process with concrete financial backing of about €105 million, an amount that was in addition to the standard humanitarian aid already being provided. The overall EU contribution thus amounted to about the US\$300 million that was confirmed on April 30, 2001. Confirming other declarations, three areas are the priority for the European Union: the promotion and defense of human rights, the reduction of socioeconomic disparities, and institutional reinforcement.

As in other EU declarations, the philosophical key for European involvement and modality was highlighted in Patten’s opinions. When observers of the new situation remembered precedents of European involvement in Latin America with the usual corresponding disagreement with the United States, the clash over Plan Colombia brought back memories of European opposition to the United States’ dealings with Cuba after the Cold War, especially regarding extraterritorial laws such as the Helms-Burton Act, later known as the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996.⁸⁷ However, the European agenda in this case seemed much better propelled by the perceived success of Europe’s participation in negotiations to solve the Central American crises of the 1980s. The San José process and the conviction that the conflict was caused not by Soviet-Cuban involvement, but rather by social inequality, was the model that seemed to be a candidate for application through a Plan Colombia II, formulated from the European view.⁸⁸ Explicit references to the model of Central American cooperation were obvious in Patten’s column. As was the case there, peace in Colombia was regarded as an enterprise calling for regional Latin American dimensions, in need of contributions “by many people in many countries,” as stated by former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias in his 1987 Nobel Peace Prize speech regarding his efforts to bring peace to Central America. In any event, the above-mentioned considerations were reflected in the official declarations of the European Commission.⁸⁹

In an effort to build a base for the identification of thematic sectors feasible as EU-sponsored projects, the Latin American Group of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (REPER) agreed on the following series of principles:

- Recognition of the Colombian civil society and local communities as fundamental actors,
- The understanding that the Colombian government needs to contribute financially to the projects,
- Non-intervention of armed groups in the identified regions for EU activity,
- Neutrality and transparency in all EU-sponsored programs,
- Close relationship with national programs,
- An expectation that the success of programs will not be possible without an impeccable respect for human rights and the modification of the redistribution system of wealth and resources.

Among some concrete measures and locations, the following were outlined:

- EU activities should be inserted in a wider context of international assistance, most especially in the fight against drug production and trafficking. Massive utilization of fusarium axysporum should be banned.
- The EU should use its diplomacy in the fight against chemical products used as a base for drug production, the intensification of inter-regional cooperation in drug-trafficking control, and in the fight against money-laundering activities.
- Some specific regions are identified as a priority: the Choco, the Macizo Colombiano, the South

(Putumayo, Caquetá, Nariño), the Magdalena Medio (which became the star of EU efforts in subsequent months) and the Cartagena del Caira.⁹⁰

However, observers could detect a double discourse between what Europe was asked to do and how it responded in public and off the record. European governmental analysis showed a worrisome, yet understandable double face. Governments that maintained a cordial relationship with the Colombian government were careful not to portray in public what in private and in confidential communications they considered an alarming picture. They described the situation as endemic, one that should not be considered simply as a conflict between government and guerrillas reminiscent of a cops and robbers pursuit in a tropical scenario, but of a society that is terminally fractured. This double discourse also applied to commentaries on an apparent agreement between the United States and Europe.

When engaged in informal, off-the-record conversations, European officials tended to be forthcoming and clear. European governments and organizations were under the impression that they were called upon to pay for a social and economic bill, while on the other side of the Atlantic the issue was reduced to a drug-trafficking and military problem. One graphic Spanish expression is characteristic of reactions to the financial proposal. As a commentary on the section of Plan Colombia regarding the contribution of the international community,⁹¹ one senior diplomat made this comparison to the role of the EU: “poner la pasta (shelling out the dough).”⁹² In cruder terms, never detected in documents or veiled declarations, there was a prevailing European impression that the Colombians had been contributing the dead, the Americans had supplied the military hardware, and the Europeans had given the money to defray the cost of the social and environmental damage caused by the other two. European assistance was perceived as a sort of remedy once implementation of the U.S.-led military plan was terminated. This feeling was shared in corridors and after-hour meetings by many European diplomats in Madrid, Paris, and Brussels and has permeated several reports and commentaries with an amazing cohesiveness. Expressions used by U.S. researchers match the picture portrayed by European commentators: “With our economic cooperation they [Colombians] are going to clean up the dirty mess left by the Americans when they leave.” This harsh picture of the role to be played by European assistance⁹³ worsened after the breakdown of February 20, 2002.

In spite of all these difficulties, the EU executive signed on February 7, 2002, the first concrete European Commission-controlled and coordinated project, the Financing Agreement, to implement the Magdalena Medio Peace Laboratory, in the amount of €34.8 million. Commissioner Patten expressed the EU’s views with clarity: “The European Commission today takes a concrete step in support of a negotiated solution to the Colombian conflict by encouraging the active participation of civil society organizations in the pacification of the country. This program is a concrete expression of the EU’s firm support for the peace process. We want to contribute to a wide national consensus in favor of peace. If this pilot program proves to be successful, we could establish a similar peace laboratory elsewhere in the country.” As an example of trust and cooperation, in agreement with national authorities, the Commission delegated the implementation of the program’s first phase to the Development and Peace Corporation of the Magdalena Medio (Corporación de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio — CDPMM). The organization had just been awarded Colombia’s National Peace Prize, has a long record of intervention in the Magdalena Medio, and enjoys high credibility among the Colombian population. When implemented, this innovative project will encourage the broad participation of citizens in the search for peace. It will focus on “reinforcing local institutions, supporting civilian actors engaged in promoting peace and fostering economic and social development.” It will have an impact on 13 town councils in the region, including the capital, Barrancabermeja. This “Peace Laboratory” concept will build on the participation of citizens at the grassroots level by exploring “ways to defuse the conflict and to bring about sustainable development.”⁹⁴

The Controlling Role of the European Parliament

As the end of January 2001 approached, the deadline for continuation of the DMZ given to the FARC as an inducement for peace negotiations was looming in the minds of all protagonists. Dramatizing even further the seriousness of the moment, President Pastrana cut short his trip to Europe and returned to Bogotá amid rumors of military pressure to intervene in the FARC-controlled area. At the same time, the Colombian government decided to give final approval to details of another *despeje* zone for the benefit of the ELN. With

the changing of the guard in Washington, speculation abounded that a change of course toward Colombia could occur. Not by coincidence, the Committee of Development and Cooperation of the European Parliament took the lead and enacted a plenary session resolution of the European parliamentary body. The content of the declaration was interpreted differently, according to the inclinations of various Colombian actors and observers involved. This topic will be the subject of a future study after the course of events unfolds.

The Commission reaffirmed its position through an intervention by Commissioner Poul Nielson, a Danish Social-Democrat who holds the portfolio of cooperation. This slightly significant detail shows that the interest of the EU was wider than the monopoly of one commissioner's portfolio. Also, the approach taken by the international assistance portfolio since the European Union's latest expansion reflected the impact of the Nordic countries' views, equipped with a strict attitude toward accountability, efficacy, transparency, and emphasis on human rights and democratization. Reminding the audience of the EU's political and financial support of the Colombian peace initiative, Nielson again expressed the Commission's concern about the "military component" of the Plan, confirmed the endorsement of the 1998 UN approach to the treatment of the drug problem, and pledged the EU's institutional support for positive measures in demand reduction and the strengthening of the rule of law. He committed €105 million for the period 2000-2006, with an additional €10 million in 2001, and announced the arrival of EU experts to study projects in the Magdalena Medio region, earmarking another €20 million. He also confirmed the political support of the EU, by way of the Group of Friends (*Grupo de Países Amigos*), in securing negotiations regarding the *despeje* zones and encouraging effort to avoid spillover of the conflict to other countries, thus advocating a regional approach.⁹⁵

The Resolution of the Parliament was prompted by the harsh intervention of a United Left member of the parliamentary body from Portugal, Joaquim Miranda, who acted as president of its Cooperation and Development Committee. Miranda first stressed that the EU could not remain indifferent to the Colombian crisis or assume "ambiguous positions." In his view, a crucial element of the situation was Plan Colombia; he called on the Commission and the Council to distance themselves from it for four reasons: its "militaristic character," its lack of "linkage process" with Colombian society, its lack of recognition of the "paramilitary phenomenon," and the fact that the Plan "endanger[ed] the negotiation process." He recalled that the Council on September 9, 2000, called for a specific European plan and insisted on the need to differentiate it from Plan Colombia, with a veiled criticism of the "only European government" (referring to Spain, as discussed previously) publicly and financially committed to its support. He finally stressed the need for drastic social and economic reforms in Colombia to redress the historical causes of today's problems.⁹⁶

In this context, the plenary session of the European Parliament approved one of the strongest declarations ever made regarding the situation of a Latin American country. Besides insisting and elaborating on the above items and repeating portions of the declarations made by commissioners and parliamentarians (endemic crisis, violation of human rights, inadequacy of Plan Colombia, and shared responsibility in combating drug trafficking), the text outlined a mandate for the EU to support a peace process that would reinforce institutions, alternative development, and humanitarian and social aid. NGOs and civil society should be empowered for this task. Wealth redistribution is a must in a system where peasants do not own the land. In sum, the EU was exhorted to implement its own "nonmilitaristic" strategy with "neutrality and transparency" and with the participation of civil society in the negotiation process. It urged the Commission to commit the necessary financial resources and allow the Council to evaluate the situation every six months. A regional approach and international cooperation to stop the trafficking of drug-producing substances and money laundering also needed to be part of the total package, which would require the cooperation of all armed groups and input from neighboring countries that would contribute to a comprehensive solution. In particular, the text expressed alarm that acts of violence and terrorism (assassinations, kidnappings, massacres) had increased since the opening of peace negotiations. Impunity gave rise to a sense of frustration and impotence among the population, while international observers, such as UN representative Mary Robinson, certified the inadequacy of measures against paramilitary groups and called for an EU commitment to the protection and financing of human rights organizations.⁹⁷

In recent months, the European Parliament blamed violence not on any one party but evenly targeted all factions. Blame has also come from different sides of the EP's political spectrum, with conservatives stressing the abuses committed by the guerrillas⁹⁸ and socialists (collectively or on an individual basis) pinpointing the conflict's deep roots to social inequality and the collapse of Colombia's state system, an endorsement of

domestic analysis critical of the status quo.⁹⁹ With the precedent of a declaration of support for the peace process on October 4, 2001, the European Parliament approved a resolution on March 16, 2002, summarizing its perception of events around the end of the truce and the legislative elections. Among other items, the EP “condemned” the assassination of Senator Martha Catalina Daniels and the kidnapping of five other senators and presidential candidate Betancourt, lamented the return of open-armed confrontation, and blamed the FARC for the renewed violence. While backing the decision of Pastrana and recognizing his efforts toward peace, the EP insisted that the Colombian president could not “tolerate” the actions of the paramilitary. Finally, the EP, “in contrast with other views,” noted that the EU must continue supporting a negotiated and peaceful settlement that included necessary social reforms.¹⁰⁰ As a further sign of the European Parliament’s concern for the Colombian crisis, a five-member delegation, headed by Spain’s EP member José Ignacio Salafranca, visited Colombia to witness the election of May 26, 2002, and offered to present its report and recommendations to the EU.

Spain: a Special Relationship

Spain’s perception of the Colombian crisis can be described as an apparent contrast between two attitudes. On the one hand, Spanish public opinion,¹⁰¹ the NGO network, and the think-tank and academic community reacted to Plan Colombia with criticism. If ideological lines were expected to appear in an analysis of the conflict from a Marxist-leaning guerrilla perspective counterpointed by an opposing view from the Spanish conservative press, no such fracture occurred in the case of Plan Colombia. On the other hand, observers may be puzzled by the publicly stated enthusiasm for the Plan expressed by the Spanish government’s offering of political support and funds for all aspects of the Plan. This apparent contradiction would make Spain the exception to the rule that Plan Colombia was critically received in Europe. However, this inconsistency can be explained on two grounds. First, in the case of the Spanish government, the implementation of double discourse was activated because it was a convenient means of accomplishing an effective public relations campaign vis-à-vis the Colombian and U.S. governments. However, while public declarations were respectful of the Colombian government and all sides in the conflict, in private the picture was as harsh as the one shown by the rest of the Europeans.

The second justification for the apparent magnanimity and generosity of the Spanish pledge is attributable to two factors. The most convincing explanation for Spanish support continues to be the historical and cultural commitment of Spain toward the development and democratization of the Latin American continent after the Spanish transition was consolidated and became a point of reference. The governmental commitment is also explained by a less scientifically demonstrable factor, known to witty observers as “the syndrome of signing up for everything” (*apuntarse a todo*), that still affects Spain after decades (if not centuries) of isolation. It is similar to the European knee-jerk reaction to oppose the United States on an issue as a way of counteracting the overwhelming presence of the one and only superpower. In search of issues to demonstrate international protagonism, Spain is the opposite of an isolationist middle power. Colombia is the ideal issue for a country that aspires to an expanded international role. The novelty of the last part of the century is that Spain has returned to the Americas for reasons not unlike those that brought the galleons to the region during the times of Conquest. Today, Spain has become the leader of European investment in Latin America. Although Spanish investment in Colombia is not as high as in Argentina or Chile, the spillover effect of the Colombian crisis has alarmed Spanish investors and, consequently, has propelled the Spanish government to act accordingly. Damaged by its political crisis, Colombia ranks as the second worst Latin American economy in a survey of Spanish firms in terms of public administration efficiency, economic and business prospects, community efficiency of business enterprise, and as a favorable environment for business.¹⁰²

It is a known fact that the diplomatic establishment of Spain has several ideological profiles. The conservative view that dominated the ranks of the Spanish foreign service in the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s has been pushed aside by a more liberal and left-leaning attitude toward the world’s problems as a more effective way of protecting the national interests of Spain. In contrast with some European countries, a critical view of U.S. foreign policy is not the monopoly of the Spanish left, but has also been a natural attitude of the right since the United States defeated Spain in the 1898 intervention in Cuba. When it comes to U.S. policy in Latin America and its link to reactionary governments in the area, the Spanish diplomatic service is generally very critical. The Colombian crisis has served to consolidate both lines of thought.

In general terms, the view of a notable number of Spanish diplomats, in sync with the perception of NGOs, academics, and the media, includes a picture of a fractured Colombian state that lacks legitimacy and territorial control and is unrecognized by a society that demands justice. Among the urgent structural problems to be addressed are a culture of discrimination and social exclusion, a persistent armed conflict equivalent to a civil war, a society plagued by common crime, a will to modernize without democracy, an endemic impunity and absence of justice, and the overwhelming presence of the narco-trafficking culture. The overall result is that politics are rejected by the population as an undesirable activity. Plan Colombia fails to answer the central question: Is it exclusively geared to terminate drug-trafficking activity, or is it proposed to address other issues?

The resolution of the Colombian situation offers three variables: an improbable victory of one of the parties; the very plausible continuation of the conflict; and a process of political negotiation, an option that seems more feasible in the medium term. However, the Colombian government should be warned that in negotiating with the guerrillas, the aim of accomplishing peace requires that the opponents come out with their dignity intact to guarantee their reinsertion into society. Terms of surrender and sudden demobilization are to be avoided if the objective is solid negotiation between the government and all sectors of the society on one side and the insurgent groups on the other. This negotiation should include all of the pending issues plaguing Colombian society: the agrarian problem, the management of energy resources, political representation, social policy, regional powers, the role of the police and military, and a policy to protect the safety of the population.

This diplomatic view is realistic, too. A short-term solution is not predicted. The construction of a truly democratic government will not be possible if important sectors of society are excluded. All sides have to cooperate to counteract inertia when a government is floundering and lacks credibility and territorial control. The challenge is to create a new state.

In answer to President Pastrana's petition for international cooperation, Spain's diplomats were doubly concerned. On the one hand, they took note of the critical approach of their colleagues in the European Union, whose sensibility for Latin American issues differed from Spain's. On the other, they saw that Spain might appear isolated once those critical sectors managed to swing general attitudes. Plan Colombia was perceived as imprecise, militaristic, and dictated by the United States. As a result, Spain's diplomats suggested that the Colombian government should be persuaded to delay the selling and implementation of the Plan, deleting all items having to do with the fight against drugs or eradication of illegal crops. As a substitute, Colombia was invited to present another plan that almost exclusively comprised projects for social and economic development, agrarian reform, improvement of justice, and the fight against corruption.¹⁰³

In any event, Spain's specificity in answering Colombia's plea was shown in Madrid's early response. The special relationship that is the hallmark of Spain's links with Latin America was given a special profile. The specific linkage between the Spanish government and Colombia was framed in the General Treaty of Cooperation and Friendship signed on October 29, 1992, and the Act of the Joint Commission signed on March 15, 1999, and confirmed by the Spanish government's declaration issued on July 7, 2000, pledging all available help in support of the peace process.¹⁰⁴ Spain then committed more than \$100 million for the 2000-2003 period, about one-third of the total sum committed by all of the European states and from the EU budget. As previously described, roughly \$76 million are in loans (FAD), \$12 million for microcredit programs and about \$12 million in direct donations. Six principal areas were identified: social needs, human development, poverty reduction, environment, good governance, and conflict prevention. Three lines of action are present in all sectors: fight against poverty, equality between men and women, and environmental protection. Coordination with NGOs and international organizations is a priority. In addition to this basic funding, other programs managed by the International Cooperation Agency were implemented for the approximate amounts of \$12 million in 2001 and a similar sum in 2002. Spain's local and regional cooperation programs with Colombia received about \$6 million in government grants for 2001. In total, Spain's contribution has matched the pledge announced at the meeting of donors held in Madrid on July 7, 2000.¹⁰⁵

Nonetheless, the general picture of actual financial support remains unclear. Observers may be well advised to scrutinize the details of the Spanish pledge in terms of funding projects to be backed and items to be financed. As in other cases of Spain's development assistance programs (not an exception in the overall European picture), the pitching of Plan Colombia became the selling of the contribution of real and virtual

programs and projects. In the absence of detailed documentation, as we have seen, the bulk of the total package (between US\$100 and \$124 million) may ultimately be a composite of current projects with the addition of commercial lines of credit. Keep in mind 70 percent of the funds pledged belong to credits controlled by the Ministry of the Economy, while only 24 percent are to come from the funding of projects directly administered by Spain's aid agency. When pressed for details of the specific Spanish package to be presented in coordination with other European donors, data and documentation on specific projects have not been available.¹⁰⁶

Other European Institutions and Partners

As in any political family, some members are more inclined to show radical attitudes than others. With regard to Plan Colombia, some EU member states have distinguished themselves by maintaining a sharply antagonistic view. Belgium and Germany have been leaders in insisting that the EU should distance itself from Plan Colombia and European assistance should be limited to a set of conditions.¹⁰⁷ Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Austria, and Denmark have resolutely insisted on program funding for the protection of human rights and the involvement of civil society. However, some members (Germany and Austria) are concerned that strong declarations and politically imposed limitations may hinder the effectiveness of existing projects in Colombia, making the contribution of some states very problematic because they are not ready to provide "fresh money."¹⁰⁸ These shortcomings reveal the dependency of European assistance on national programs or in the context of subgroupings, as discussed below.

The Group of Friends has been a strong proponent for international involvement that will facilitate agreements and contacts between Colombian factions. The group was formed with a clear strategy in mind that reflects the European Union as its nuclear axis (Spain and France) but also includes states that have a reputation for being neutral (Switzerland) or have considerable experience in serving as a bridge (Norway). Cuba is the Latin American representative, a reflection of its sincere commitment to resolve the crisis and an acknowledgment that it has more to lose if problems become worse. The top Cuban leadership, including Fidel Castro himself, has been actively involved in obtaining highly important diplomatic successes in dealing with the ELN. In sum, most of the significant agreements between the Colombian government and the FARC have been crafted with the support and diplomacy offered by the Group.

Although members of the Group have been very critical of the attitude of the ELN, they did make efforts to engage the guerrillas in negotiations during the last two years, culminating in a series of agreements crafted in a meeting held in Havana on January 12, 2002. Under the auspices of the Spanish presidency of the EU, the main parties (the Colombian government and the ELN) committed themselves to meet in Havana from January 29-31, accompanied by members or representatives of the "Facilitating Commission" and the National Convention, the presidential candidates, the UN, and several sectors of Colombian society. This initial Havana conclave took place with notable media exposure, and its opening was presided by Fidel Castro himself,¹⁰⁹ who in turn offered to serve in a similar process of mediation with the FARC. All this happened while alleged links between Cuba and international terrorism, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euskadi ta Askatasuna — ETA) were aired in the press and energetically denounced by different governments and right-wing interests in Colombia.¹¹⁰ This dimension received close attention during the hearings held by the U.S. Congress in late April 2002.¹¹¹

A number of thematic forums were subsequently scheduled. The first one on humanitarian law was hosted by Switzerland (February 25-27), the second on participating democracy and the State in Spain (March 25-27), followed by agrarian reform in France (April 29-May 1), energy resources in Norway (May 27-29), and ending with one on the economy and social problems in Havana (June 24-26). France and Spain made the issuing of visas conditional upon the end of kidnappings and other violations of human rights in the ELN-controlled zone. The ELN was given notice of the strict Common Positions delivered by the EU on international terrorism, in response to the new international climate. When ELN representatives claimed that the policy of kidnapping was dictated by "financing necessities," the EU representatives stated this notion was unacceptable.¹¹² Subsequently, the series of forums was cancelled.¹¹³

The development of Plan Colombia involved the French government in three ways. First, France was holding the presidency of the European Union during the second semester of 2000. France is also a member

of the Group of Friends. In 2002, the French Ambassador Daniel Parfait¹¹⁴ held the presidency of this international group that supported the peace effort. In addition to this diplomatic dimension, France has traditionally been an influential and leading force in Latin American affairs, especially when French cultural and economic interests (French investment is the leader in Colombia) prevail. The French government could not afford to miss this opportunity to strengthen its somewhat weakened world stature after the end of the Cold War.

In spite of these three factors, French officials insisted France's involvement in Colombia was a matter of principle. In the French view, Colombia was experiencing a loss of values similar to what happened to France at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The key was identification of the balance between "liberty and equality," with the proper insertion of "fraternity."¹¹⁵ Although in some aspects of domestic policy the influence of conservative President Jacques Chirac is present, in most avenues of foreign policy France still seems to reflect the line of François Mitterrand. This is most obvious in France's attitude toward sensitive aspects of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America, such as the cases of Cuba opposing the extraterritorial reach of U.S. laws, such as the Helms-Burton Act, Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato's Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), and Central America leading Europe in the design of policies of cooperation assistance during the 1980s. The French government is also backed by its vocal proleftist and liberal press, led by the influential *Le Monde*¹¹⁶ and by the traditional leaning of its academicians toward causes of the marginalized¹¹⁷ and the need to identify the real victim of the conflict, Colombian society.¹¹⁸

In keeping with this line of thought, Ambassador Renaud Vignal, director of the Americas Department of the Quai D'Orsay, endorsed with clarity the overall assessment of the European Commission and measured the consensus of its most vocal member states while holding the presidency of the European Union. The program of European support for the Peace Process, as Europe's response prefers to be known, confirms that the search for peace is the only hope that Colombia has. This is a process that will require time, patience, and compromise for all parties involved in the conflict. According to Ambassador Vignal's statement, there is no other alternative. Echoing other European voices, he stated that only a general agreement, not a military solution would guarantee a lasting peace. He then pledged a complete package to be carried out with the cooperation of other organizations, based on the following points: support of the state of law, defense of human rights, fight against the causes of violence, environmental protection, and consolidation of regional cooperation. The example of European integration was used to gather the contributions from neighboring states.

For the last two years, the United Kingdom has expressed its commitment to the peace process in Colombia in the form of unequivocal declarations of its commitment to the efforts of international organizations and NGOs, by distancing itself from the most controversial aspects of the original Plan Colombia by delivering funds. The United Kingdom has translated its commitment to the Colombian peace process with concrete contributions to programs of the UN Human Rights Office in Bogotá. Since March 2000, more than £348,000 have been disbursed, including £50,000 to the UN Trust Fund. Since President Pastrana's trendsetting speech in London on April 13, 2000,¹¹⁹ British public opinion and the actions of the Foreign Office have confirmed a traditional line of action, well outlined in public documents¹²⁰ and shared with private organizations.¹²¹

On linkages with the U.S.-endorsed Plan Colombia, the British government declared that the Plan is the Colombian government's program to tackle Colombia's interconnected problems. "Neither we nor the EU have made a contribution to the Plan." *The Guardian* aptly illustrated a general opinion: "Nobody wants to be seen at the tag end of a U.S. plan — particularly when some countries don't agree with the military."¹²² In public declarations and private communications, this line of thought has been consistent: "There is no UK Government financial involvement in Plan Colombia, either bilaterally or through the EU. No expenditure is planned by the UK Government to support the Plan."¹²³ However, British public opinion and leaders recognize that international drug use feeds the Colombian tragedy.¹²⁴ General Michael Rose, who became well known in the pacification process of Yugoslavia, recalled, "We conveniently forget that it is our social habit of taking drugs that has wrecked a country, destroyed large areas of the Amazon rainforest, killed 24,000 people in 1999 alone, and blighted the lives of millions of Colombian people." Consequently, he concludes that "the international community is proceeding with undue caution — mainly because of the past human rights record of the Colombian security forces. He also considers EU financial support as "niggardly compared with the high level of drug money flowing into Colombia from Europe."¹²⁵

High-level British officials have expressed their opinions in public and in private statements on specific issues of the Colombian crisis. The British government has always been seriously concerned about increasing levels of violence, particularly actions directed toward trade unionists and human rights defenders. Consequently, U.K. officials have raised their concerns with Colombian authorities. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is seen as a prerequisite for advancing the peace process and the indispensable basis for expanded international support. London considers that the best way to secure and improve human rights in Colombia is through peace talks between the Colombian government and the main guerrilla groups. Among the initiatives suggested are actions to help combat the appalling practice of child soldiers. Central to British strategy has been support of the efforts of Jan Egeland, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Colombia. British representatives have urged the EU Commission to channel as much aid as possible through reputable international and local NGOs with proven track records in delivering humanitarian assistance. In this area, the United Kingdom places high importance on the accountability and transparency of EU assistance. However, London does not believe the Commission should impose a blanket ban on aid to the Colombian government.¹²⁶

More specifically, the British government is very concerned about the continuing high levels of violence committed by illegal paramilitary groups against members of NGOs and allegations of harassment from Colombian armed forces. However, the United Kingdom does not distinguish between their atrocities and those of the FARC and the ELN. It is perceived that they are all involved in illicit drug production and responsible for mass kidnappings, extortion, and murder. There is no evidence the FARC enjoys popular support among large sections of the Colombian population. Moreover, British officials consider that by agreeing to the existence of a zone for the FARC, the Colombian government has shown itself to be much more serious about its intentions to find peace.¹²⁷ The events of February 2002 have confirmed this view, generally shared by other European partners.

As a member of the Group of Friends and particularly as a guardian of the Geneva Convention, the Swiss government has been instrumental in providing added credibility to European efforts to facilitate the peace process. In successive declarations, Switzerland has stressed the need for obtaining a lasting peace and has suggested using many kinds of efforts. Reaffirming the views of other European partners, Switzerland places among its priority points compliance with international human rights agreements, a general consensus generated by all sectors of the Colombian people, and a careful analysis of environmental damage. Consequently, Swiss representatives express difficulty in accepting the military component of the Plan and the indiscriminate crop eradication program. With a pledge of \$12 million (later expanded to \$20 million) to be dispersed over three years, the Swiss have claimed they will contribute to the following areas: assisting displaced people, protecting human rights, negotiating with the ELN, establishing the office of the Defender of the People, and offering diverse support for NGOs.¹²⁸

Few observers can deny the important influence Germany has, not only in EU affairs, but in the overall global scene. In a systematic way, the Federal Republic of Germany has regained its central place in world affairs since its near self-destruction as a result of World War II. German leadership also understood the message of Robert Schuman and, as a western Federal Republic and as a reunified country, has been at the forefront of the European Union's presence in the world. It is not surprising that the Colombian crisis, in light of the overpowering presence of German investment in Latin America and the generosity of its development assistance programs (30 percent of the total EU activities), has caught the attention of the German government. Germany's attitude toward Plan Colombia can be summed up as support for the efforts of the government and the Colombian people to create peace in the country within the framework of bilateral agreements. Germany, however, does not want its activities to be identified with Plan Colombia. It supports the peace process along with other European governments within their own European program.¹²⁹ These principles reflect the evolution of an attitude expressed in several individual declarations and by adherence to EU positions. In recordings of EU official meetings, Germany "insisted on making very clear in the text that the EU distance itself from Plan Colombia."¹³⁰ Negotiations are the only way to obtain peace. Germany backed this view with a 50 percent increase (DM10 million) of its financial contribution to Colombia, which today has totaled DM1.57 billion (almost \$800 million).¹³¹

Belgium, one of the most vocal opponents of the U.S.-inspired version of the Plan, has led the European assertion that the causes of the Colombian crisis lay beyond guerrilla activities and drug trafficking. Pointing

out the “inequality, low living standards and inadequacy of the government to meet the demands,” the Belgian government is “diametrically opposed” to the Plan as presented by the Colombian government, wishing a more “integral solution” and pledging the support of social programs through funds distributed by Belgian NGOs. Figures have amounted to BF100 million in recent years, the pledge of a loan of BF23 million for conflict prevention programs, extra funding of BF50 million for 2001, and there are similar expectations for 2002. The total contribution amounts to about US\$8 million.¹³²

Sweden has distinguished itself in two areas: its independent political view and the volume (\$20 million) of pledged contributions, which is the second highest among EU countries. This contribution consists of all new direct assistance and loans, without including credits. In political terms, Sweden is a force to influence EU decisions and protect member state autonomy in foreign policy, setting the tone for the Commission’s actions. A balance between the work of the Group of Ten and a coordinated policy of the European Union is the ideal Swedish attitude. A political solution based on careful analysis of all social, economic, and military dimensions is the best policy to follow, keeping the door open for renewed negotiations with the FARC. This is reflected in Sweden’s resistance to the inclusion of the guerrillas in the EU list of terrorist organizations, an act that would have made future negotiations much more difficult.¹³³

Although not a member of the European Union, Norway is the second largest European provider of direct assistance to Colombia. Oslo has pledged to transfer \$20 million to NGOs for human rights and humanitarian projects. This contribution was committed as early as July 2000 in Madrid and was earmarked for the period 2000-2002. Norway has been a strong proponent of program funding for the protection of human rights and the involvement of civil society. Previously, Norway’s funding made possible the opening of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogotá in 1997. Particularly in the ELN negotiations, Norway supported the efforts of bringing about fundamental political, economic, and social reforms as a prerequisite for lasting peace in the country and to reduce the violence and suffering of the civilian population. Norway contributes with diplomatic and political efforts as a member of the Group of Friends and with humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict. Norwegian funding also supports initiatives to mobilize the stronger participation of civil society in the conflict resolution process and to promote and protect human rights. The funds are to be channeled exclusively to the United Nations and other international organizations, such as Norwegian and local NGOs, with no funds committed to Colombia’s government programs because Norway has no bilateral cooperation agreement with the Colombian government.¹³⁴

Among individual European states, Denmark has pledged \$0.6 million, Austria has promised \$0.6 million for social and institutional development, Finland has announced \$2.2 million for human rights programs under the UN programs, Italy has committed \$10 million for a “Culture of Peace” and local institutions’ projects, and Portugal has reserved \$250,000 for social development and institutional strengthening.

NGOs and Civil Society: Initiative and Watchdog

Heavily dependent on government funding, international private organizations and grassroots movements have a long history of contributing to the development of Latin American countries, by fighting against violations of human rights and oppression and participating in peace processes. While physical activities are limited by the terrain and political circumstances, the influence of these organizations and private citizens has grown since the explicit announcement of Plan Colombia.¹³⁵ Among European organizations, Pax Christi has taken the lead with fact-finding missions and reports. Cuba and Colombia have been subjects of recent missions. The Colombia project took place in the first part of 2001, and its conclusions are still mostly valid, reflecting a view that is shared by many independent European organizations critical of the social and political conditions in Colombia, the inadequacy of U.S. participation, and the slowness and vague commitment of Europe and the international community at large.¹³⁶ Another impressive document produced by Pax Christi is the report on the kidnapping “industry,” as socially devastating as the murderous methods of armed groups.¹³⁷

The visit of Pax Christi’s commission “was intended to provide an additional impetus to European solidarity with the victims of the Colombian conflict.” Its “main objective was to promote international aid to the local peace initiatives by citizens.” The report reflects that the “people of Colombia are rightly proud of all that is still good in their country, but there is an urgent need for international recognition and aid.” However,

according to Pax Christi's report, "the political climate in Colombia has not improved since the start of the peace negotiations between the government and the armed resistance. There is skepticism surrounding the effectiveness of President Pastrana's peace strategy, his good intentions notwithstanding. The guerrillas demanded and have been granted far-reaching concessions, but have responded with mass kidnapping and structural extortion. The calls from many sections of the population for more effective, bolder measures are becoming louder." Nevertheless, the report points out that the "people are aware that peace will only be achieved through negotiation, and that it will be years before the parties are able to sign a final peace accord."¹³⁸

Regarding President Pastrana's call for help from the international community, Pax Christi's report recalls that the United States only became involved "on a military level within the framework of the 'War on Drugs.'" In contrast, "the EU has only distanced itself from the American approach, but has offered no alternative." The report emphasizes that "very little has come of the planned Colombian contribution to Plan Colombia of US\$5 billion." It goes on to say, "Partly as a result of intensive lobbying, Europe spoke out against the entire Plan Colombia, referring to the military element being performed by the Americans. They did indicate a willingness to fund social projects, and focused on areas similar to the social component of Plan Colombia — crop substitution, peace developments, a reinforcement of the constitutional state and economic development. Most of the international contribution comes in bilateral aid."¹³⁹

Moreover, Pax Christi reports, "There is no joint European policy for how the contributions will be spent, and the details of these projects remain largely unclear. The European Commission itself is bearing only US\$90 million of the social development projects (3.6% of the international community's total). The details are also almost entirely unknown." Furthermore, the report demands, "Colombia would benefit from rapid payment of the project monies. The government institution for crop substitution, Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Alternative (PLANTE), for example, is carrying out the current projects with American aid funds (US\$102.5 million through USAID). These budgets, however, are insufficient in total to finance the crop substitution. The PLANTE institute has as yet heard nothing concrete from the EU."¹⁴⁰

As a consequence, "support from the EU to Colombia has so far been limited, fragmented, unclear and slow." This is "partly explained by mistrust of the Colombian government and the American military support to Plan Colombia. But another significant fact is that interest in Latin America is fading in Europe. For various reasons, EU foreign policy and development cooperation officials are focusing their attention on other parts of the world."¹⁴¹ Pax Christi Netherlands, however, "is of the opinion that Dutch and European attention for Colombia is essential."¹⁴²

Other aspects of the report include the following:

- Europe is involved in various ways in the conflict, and cannot view the specific drug issue in isolation from European society. After all, Europe is an important supplier of the chemicals for drugs production, forms an important market for Colombian drugs, and part of the drugs income is laundered through European banks.
- Many Colombians are now pinning their hopes on the EU, because they associate the United States mainly with military involvement. Until now, however, this hope has been unjustified, and the United States — surprisingly enough — has been acting more effectively than a divided and slow Europe in the areas of crop substitution and even human rights (pressure on the army).
- The prospects of a structural, national peace will remain slight as long as the armed parties continue to have considerable economic interests in sustaining the war. The international community therefore has an obligation to tackle these interests, both in Colombia and elsewhere.
- On the other hand, in the absence of a national peace agreement, the international community must provide support to citizens who gain freedom at a local level every day against the interests of the armed parties. It would appear that socio-economically stronger municipalities are far more resilient against the advancing armed parties who threaten them with forced drugs growing, recruitment and violence with impunity. In this sense, economic development programs with a social dimension make a contribution to practical peace efforts. Basic organizations such as church and social bodies, NGOs and cooperatives are collaborating to an increasing extent in the development of the region. This relates to projects in the areas of crop substitution, agricultural projects for small farmers and other employment projects.

- The European agricultural policy, with its import restrictions that include Latin American countries, hinders the development of alternative agricultural crops in Colombia. Many farmers are also interested in the development of organic farming. But access to the European market is also essential for organic crops. In addition, technical training and (organic) certification will be necessary.¹⁴³

The report offers some concrete recommendations for the role of the European Union:

- In view of the seriousness of the conflict, the effect it has on the region, and the European involvement in the Colombian drug issue the European Union is morally obliged to make a contribution to possible solutions.
- Europe should set its own course with respect to Colombia, separate from the bilateral activities of the United States and Colombia. This relationship could be given form both inside and outside Plan Colombia.
- The ambassadors must play a role in the design and implementation of this joint European policy. Their recommendations must be based on a permanent dialogue with local social organizations, the church, the Colombian government, the armed parties, the military and the economic elite.
- The European Union (bilateral and the EC) should conduct a permanent joint policy with respect to Colombia directed to a structural approach to the causes of the conflict: socioeconomic development, manual eradication and crop substitution, agricultural reform, combating corruption, encouraging good administration, environmental policy, supporting native societies and reinforcing the legal system. Also the public educational system and the health care system should be given full attention, because the Colombian government gives higher priority to military projects.
- The EU has shown signs of an ambivalent position with respect to Colombia. On the one hand, the EU has distanced itself from the military component of Plan Colombia, but on the other hand, the financial commitments made by the EU are too limited to result in serious crop substitution and socioeconomic development. This support is indispensable for the peace process, especially on a local level.
- The Plan Alterno (crop substitution and social development) of the governor of Cauca deserves special recommendation. The future European Observation Committee must play a supplementary role in the identification of useful projects and local peace initiatives.
- The concrete substance of the current European commitments (bilateral and from the European Commission) is fragmented, unclear and slow. The associated EC decision-making must proceed transparently, and a more rapid effectuation of the aid funds is necessary.
- The Colombian government has indicated that the support from the EU can be channeled through ‘the basis’ (church, local NGOs, etc.) as well as through the national government. The local church bodies could be a useful instrument for channeling aid funds, despite their limited capacity. The fact is that the Roman Catholic Church in Colombia enjoys sufficient moral authority among the various Colombian parties, has excellent contacts with the basis and takes responsibility for the continuity of the activities.
- The joint European policy must also contain a guideline for the international committees who are to negotiate with the armed parties (the FARC, the ELN and probably in the future with the paramilitaries). Important components of these guidelines must be: respect for international humanitarian law by the armed parties (humanitarian agreement) and bringing an end to the funding of the conflict by the drugs trade.
- The EU must enter into a dialogue with the military and economic elite in addition to the negotiations with the armed parties. Both groups have an obligation to make realistic proposals for peace and socioeconomic development. The economic elite could make a substantial financial contribution to their execution.¹⁴⁴

Conclusions: The Needs, Limitations, and Prospects of European Support

Once the security situation improves, the European commitment to Colombia will not falter, at least in the political and humanitarian sectors, in spite of the worsening situation resulting from President Pastrana’s February 20 decision to terminate the peace process with the FARC and the declaration of emergency decided by Alvaro Uribe on August 12. The pressure to participate will continue, in spite of formidable obstacles, from a series of related factors.

Among the positive factors are the following:

1. First and above all, European participation has always been welcome in Latin America, in general, and especially in unique crises such as the one in Colombia. European contributions are seldom perceived as cases of *injerencia*. In fact, if European involvement in Central America serves as a basis for comparison, the participation of the European Union, its member states, or European NGOs is not a procedural mandate that needs to be monitored for reasons of justifying budgets and expenses. The blue emblem with the twelve stars very often functions as a shield of excellence and guarantees, for anyone with ambivalence toward identification of programs funded by U.S. agencies that European participation in the matter is politically independent. This may be an unfair treatment of the overall contribution record of U.S. actors, but it reflects the damage inflicted by past mistakes. The mediating, facilitating, and monitoring services of European states and agencies offer considerable political capital that can successfully be used in the future.
2. U.S. government sources, think tanks, and academics agree with the Colombian government that Europe is an indispensable actor. In view of the complexity of the Colombian crisis, it needs to be addressed by a multiplicity of contributors.¹⁴⁵ No commentator questions the pivotal role to be played by European actors regarding international assistance to Colombia, under the umbrella of the European Union, delegating their humanitarian functions to the NGO networks, or using the corresponding autonomy of the foreign policies of the member states.
3. Before September 11, the role to be played by European actors would probably have been enhanced and received more impetus if a more cautious U.S. policy in Colombia were implemented as a result of the reformed view of the new Bush administration.¹⁴⁶ Then and now, a more diplomatic implementation of Plan Colombia (or its new version after February 20, 2002) may give more breathing room to a European impetus that is free from entanglement in a complex scenario worsened by the priority status given to military arguments.¹⁴⁷ The negotiation, a textbook case of potential cooperation, between the United States and its European partners, facilitated by agreeing to lessen the military aspects of the original Plan Colombia provided both parties with a sense of accomplishment. For the U.S. government, this might have been obtained at the cost of blaming the previous administration's projects. For the Europeans, the reduction of the military aspects of the Plan was the selling point for devising a more generous package of aid. A common strategy developed by the U.S. government and the European Union on pressuring the Colombian government for more effective control of the paramilitary forces was still in order.¹⁴⁸ However, instead of simply opposing Plan Colombia, European observers have been keenly pointing out that the results of indiscriminate fumigation have been questioned even by internal evaluation of intelligence agencies of the United States. Some evaluations advise replication or cooperation with European programs, focusing on the Magdalena Medio projects.
4. Once the peace process is resumed, a greater European leading role, backed by development assistance funds and investments nurtured by a better economic climate, would provide them with a much needed pressure base to bring guerrilla factions to the table for real negotiations beyond cease-fires and neutral zones. The events of January 2002 confirmed this thesis, dramatized by the breakdown of February 20.
5. It may well be that the precedent of the Central American experience still allows us to have hope. Granted, the end of the Cold War might have contributed to the resolution of the Peace Process to a greater extent than the pressure exerted by the European contribution through the tenacious road traveled during the San José Process. It is also true that the negotiations and an end to the bloody conflicts did not eradicate the socioeconomic causes of the civil wars, although the massacres ended. The complexity of the Colombian crisis and its subsequent spillover effects in the Andean region may present insurmountable obstacles that are too large to be solved by European-led aid and assistance. At least putting an end to the mutual massacres may be a reasonable goal to be achieved. After February 20, the urgent objective was diplomatic mediation. With the hardening of measures taken by President Uribe after the state of emergency declaration, the EU's attitude became more cautionary.

Among the major difficulties, those that still must be addressed are the following:

1. For most of 2001 and 2002, European involvement has been presided over by a double discourse, dictated by a combination of declarations and a wait-and-see attitude. The matter presented a more positive outlook after the January 31, 2001, deadline forced the renewal of talks between President Pastrana and FARC leader Manuel Marulanda. Additional positive developments occurred before and after Colombian officials met European leaders in Brussels to iron out the details of the European contribution, following recommendations issued by the team of European experts who toured Colombia in a mission of identifying and evaluating projects to be funded.¹⁴⁹ Even so, the Colombian scenario and its agenda until the February 20, 2002, fiasco were still dominated by a comment offered by a high representative of a European government: "We will make a virtual contribution to a virtual peace plan."¹⁵⁰ This was confirmed by the declarations that led to the European Parliament's Resolution. Nonetheless, this message has served, then and now, as pressure on all parties to sit down and to negotiate.
2. The second problem for the implementation of European aid has been, before and after February 20, the ongoing security limitations due to the activities of guerrilla organizations (the ELN in a wide zone targeted for EU pilot programs; the FARC in the rest of the country) and the threat presented by right-wing paramilitary groups. Without a relatively peaceful climate and protection guarantees, independent NGOs can do very little to improve local conditions. The Colombian government has been unable to prove it can maintain even a minimum level of security for the implementation of important projects, as estimates regarding the size of national territory under government control range between 30 and 40 percent, and state security is not even visibly present in provincial capitals. The new situation after August 2002 has made security a major concern.
3. In addition to the above shortcomings, observers in Brussels and diplomatic representatives in Bogotá are concerned that local Colombian organizations (government and private) do not have the capacity or the honesty to manage the large amounts of aid announced. Setting this precedent for humanitarian and development aid is accompanied by a certain degree of skepticism regarding the ability of agencies to deliver the assistance because of traditional setbacks, including delays in receiving funds and resources, competition among the different groups, and lack of coordination and the so-called "absorption capability." In order to overcome this handicap, Colombian leadership will have to come up with concrete plans to be offered to international actors in sensitive areas such as cession of sovereignty, cooperation with international justice, and transparency.¹⁵¹
4. In short, "good intentions," the title of a classic analysis of international assistance, is the fitting label to be applied to the balance of global aid to Colombia.¹⁵² However, it is also true that European contributors hold high expectations; this should not be considered unusual, but standard in international relations.

In sum, the following conclusions are in order:

In spite of these difficulties, the most optimistic observers believe that the prevalent uncertainty, international alarm, and feeling of powerlessness in obtaining substantial military results will finally force the parties to come to terms and negotiate a lasting peace, which apparently was the reason behind the impasse and subsequent transitory agreement of January 20, 2002. Since mid-2001, all efforts endorsed by the international community have come from that direction. Arrangements have included the exchange of prisoners and sick and injured combatants and pressure from the United States and the international community on the Colombian government to negotiate with the ELN.¹⁵³ Meanwhile, the government reciprocated with a frequent message of "normalcy" to continue life as usual, a pattern that can be labeled as denial and an obstacle to finding a cure for the national ills.¹⁵⁴ This confluence of factors coexisted with the continued climate of violence, a social atmosphere laced by kidnappings, the confusing internal conflict of the paramilitary leadership,¹⁵⁵ and the sensation of fighting against time at the end of Pastrana's term, waiting for the next president to inherit the problems. President Uribe should not make the mistake of confusing the fading of Europe's fascination with the guerrillas with an endorsement of paramilitary actions. The best policy for obtaining

European backing is to accept the reconstructive aspects of Europe's "Plan Colombia," in view of the predictable failure of the military solution.¹⁵⁶ In the context of the May 26, 2002 election, most influential European observers and U.S. counterparts¹⁵⁷ agreed with this vision, which remains valid today.

Throughout the crisis, the European Commission has been optimistic because the conditionality of aid based on respect for human rights permitted this institution to focus on that area, where most of the projects funded by the EU are concentrated.¹⁵⁸ This agenda is fully backed by the member states, who ultimately dictate policy, either as individual governments or in coordination through the decision-making mechanism of the EU. After all, "La esperanza es lo último que se pierde" ("Hope is the last thing that is lost"), a feeling shared by numerous Colombian organizations in search of an exit from the crisis.¹⁵⁹ With this objective, Europe has continued to bet on Colombia's future. Temporary accords, such as the ones of January 20, 2002, harvested some hopeful, but limited, results. It is always expected that, in the event of a lessening of the confrontation, the role of Europe will come back to center stage. For the time being, recognition will be the most coveted award.¹⁶⁰

While recognizing imperfections and limitations, this paper tries to pay a minimum of justice to the European effort, whatever the final result of the Colombian crisis. Most foreign observers think the impossibility of a total military success by either the Colombian Armed Forces or the guerrillas will finally give the spotlight back to the international community for a lead role in negotiations toward a political settlement. This need was further dramatized by the plea made by President-elect Uribe when he called for the mediation of the United Nations in solving the conflict.¹⁶¹ Paraphrasing Madeleine Albright's labeling of the United States as the "indispensable" nation of the post-Cold War era, the European contribution will be duly recognized as the "irreplaceable participant" in the recovery of Colombia.

NOTES

1. Monograph originally presented at the conference on “Colombia’s Ambiguous War in Global and Regional Context: Insurgency, Transnational Crime, and Terror,” organized by the U.S. Army War College and the North-South Center from March 24-26, 2002, in Miami. My gratitude is extended to Ambler H. Moss, Director of the North-South Center, and Max Manwaring of the U.S. Army War College, for their support in designing the scope of this research, and to Aimee Kanner for editing the original version of this paper. The updated paper also served as a basis for discussion at the conference on “Existe una política de la Unión Europea para Colombia?” organized by the Institut d’Hautes Etudes de l’Amérique Latine of the University of Paris (Sorbonne) on March 19-20, 2002, and as a background document for a report drafted in a workshop organized by the Fundación Ideas para la Paz in Cartagena de Indias, April 25-26, 2002, thanks to the invitation of Pilar Gaitán and Fernando Cepeda.

2. For a complete up-to-date analysis of the evolution of the conflict and a documented registry of proposals and different ideas, consult the web site of the Fundación Ideas para la Paz: <<http://www.ideaspaz.org/>>.

3. Numerous officers of the governments of France, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and several members of the staff of the European Commission and Parliament have contributed with commentaries and documents. All elected to remain anonymous and should not be held accountable for the content or tone of my commentaries, which are my exclusive responsibility.

4. For examples of the impact of this dramatic event on international cooperation, as reflected in the Colombian press see *El Tiempo*, “Se rompió el proceso de paz con las Farc,” February 20, 2002; *El Espectador*, “CE estudia cooperación con Colombia tras ruptura proceso paz,” February 22, 2002; Marta Rojas, “En marcha ‘Operación Tanathos’” *El Espectador*, February 21, 2002; *El Espectador*, “Unión Europea ‘justifica’ y respeta la decisión de Pastrana,” February 21, 2002; *El Espectador*, “¿Es posible revivir el proceso?” February 21, 2002; *El Espectador*, “Los países amigos, en vigilia,” February 21, 2002; *El Tiempo*, “Se rompió el proceso de paz con las Farc; el ejército entra al Caguán después de la medianoche,” February 20, 2002; Víctor Manuel Vargas, “Europeos creen que tarde o temprano habrá que construir una salida política al conflicto,” *El Tiempo*, February 22, 2002.

5. Peter Romero, “Save Colombia,” *Washington Post*, February 20, 2002, A15.

6. *Miami Herald*, “Colombia Strikes Back Attacking Terrorist Rebels,” February 22, 2002; *Washington Post*, “Help for Colombia,” February 24, 2002, B06.

7. AFP, “Ofensiva de las FARC se acerca a Bogotá,” *Diario las Américas*, February 28, 2002.

8. EFE, “Bush le dice ‘no’ a Pastrana,” *El Nuevo Herald*, February 28, 2002, 1A.

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13. *Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the breakdown of the Peace Process in Colombia* (Brussels, February 22, 2002).

14. This is an unofficial, literal translation done by the author. *Declaración de la Presidencia de la Unión Europea sobre el secuestro de la candidata presidencial en Colombia* (Madrid, February 25, 2002). <<http://www.ue2002.es/principal.asp?opcion=6&subopcion=1&idioma=espanol>>; <<http://www.ue2002.es/principal.asp?idioma=ingles>>. The complete, original text in Spanish (February 25, 2002) is as follows:

La Presidencia de la Unión Europea expresa su más enérgica condena del secuestro de la candidata a las elecciones presidenciales de Colombia, Ingrid Betancourt, realizado el 23 de febrero por las FARC-EO, y exige su inmediata liberación.

La Presidencia de la Unión Europea desea trasladar su solidaridad a la familia de la Sra. Betancourt, así como al Gobierno y al pueblo colombianos.

La Presidencia de la Unión Europea reitera su pleno apoyo a la democracia en Colombia frente a actos terroristas que pretenden interferir en el desarrollo de la campaña para las próximas elecciones legislativas y presidenciales.

15. Council, May 2, 2002. For a complete documentation of EU measures: <www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex>.

16. *El Tiempo*, “Pastrana sorprendido,” May 3, 2002; Pilar Lozano, “La sorpresa de la UE,” *El País*, May 4, 2002; AFP, May 3, 2002; *El Tiempo*, “Colombia pedirá a la UE incluir a Farc en lista de grupos terroristas,” May 3, 2002; “Las críticas a Europa,” May 2, 2002; Víctor Manuel Vargas, “Diplomáticos europeos consideran ‘error’ lamentable no incluir a Farc en lista de terroristas,” *El Tiempo*, May 4, 2002; D’Artagnan, “Farc con visa,” *El Tiempo*, May 4, 2002; *El Tiempo*, “El despiste europeo,” May 6, 2002; EFE, “Presidencia española de UE apoya inclusión,” *El Tiempo*, May 6, 2002; Análisis Coyuntural, “la decisión de la UE frente a las FARC y el ELN,” May 3, 2002.

17. Explicit declaration by the Swedish ambassador in Bogotá, Olof Skoog, to the author on May 10, 2002.

18. Explicit communication to the author.

19. Cristina Sen, “Los Quince otorgan a Pastrana un balón de oxígeno,” *La Vanguardia*, May 18, 2002, 4; Bosco Esteruelas, “Aznar pide que la guerrilla colombiana figure entre los grupos terroristas de la UE,” *El País*, May 17, 2002, 2.

20. Víctor Manuel Vargas, “Diplomáticos europeos,” *El Tiempo*, May 4, 2002.

21. EFE, *El Tiempo*, “Presidencia española de la UE apoya inclusión,” May 6, 2002; ANCOL, “Asegura Pastrana: Suecia se compromete a revisar exclusión,” May 6, 2002; ANCOL, “Unión Europea evaluará petición,” May 7, 2002; ANCOL, “Lista de terroristas puede modificarse,” May 7, 2002. APF, May 9, 2002 “Solana qualifie les FARC de ‘groupe terroriste’ à inclure dans la liste UE.”

22. Afp, “EE.UU. suspende la ayuda a Colombia,” *Diario las Américas*, May 10, 2002; *El Tiempo*, “Plata antidrogas fue desviada,” May 10, 2002; *El Tiempo*, “Y qué dicen de la corrupción?” May 10, 2002; *El Nuevo Herald*, “Diez mil hombres más,” May 10, 2002.

23. Declaración de la Presidencia sobre las ofensivas de las FARC (May 7, 2002). The complete declaration in Spanish is as follows:

La Presidencia de la Unión Europea expresa su más enérgica condena ante la nueva acción terrorista cometida por

las FARC el pasado día 2 de May, que ha causado más de un centenar de muertos, otro tanto de heridos, casi ciento cuarenta desaparecidos y posiblemente cuatro mil desplazados. La Unión Europea traslada su más sincero pesar a los familiares de las víctimas, a la Nación y al Gobierno de Colombia.

La Unión Europea ha venido acompañando activamente al Pueblo colombiano y al Gobierno del Presidente Pastrana en sus esfuerzos para mejorar la situación en el país. En sus comunicados, la Unión ha reiterado de forma constante su más firme condena a las violaciones de los derechos humanos y del derecho internacional humanitario que los grupos armados han perpetrado a lo largo de estos últimos años en Colombia.

La Unión Europea ha fijado entre sus prioridades la lucha contra el terrorismo y la necesidad de perseguir las actividades criminales y terroristas que atentan contra el Estado de Derecho y las libertades fundamentales. En este contexto, la Unión Europea ha adoptado medidas específicas restrictivas, dirigidas contra determinadas personas y entidades, para luchar contra el terrorismo. La elaboración de una lista se encuentra entre estas medidas, lo que implica un continuo proceso que se revisa de forma periódica, y que podría originar, en su caso, la inclusión de otras personas y de otras entidades en dicha lista. Las decisiones al respecto se adoptan por consenso y son solidarias y confidenciales.

24. *La Vanguardia*, “Los Quince otorgan a Pastrana un balón de oxígeno,” May 18, 2002; EFE, “Pastrana celebra que Suecia apoye incluir a las FARC en la lista terrorista,” *Diario las Américas*, May 25, 2002.

25. “Comunicado de prensa de la delegación de observadores del Parlamento Europeo,” Bogotá, May 26, 2002.

26. “Declaración de D. Javier Solana,” May 27, 2002.

27. “Piqué felicita al ganador de las elecciones,” Madrid, May 27, 2002.

28. Declaration, May 27, 2002.

29. Ana Romero, “España es muy rigurosa con el terrorismo, ¿por qué allá las FARC serían terroristas y acá no?,” ABC, May 26, 2002.

30. AFP, “Añade Europa a las FARC en la lista negra;” *El País*, “Bruselas incluye a las FARC en la lista negra de grupos terroristas,” June 13, 2002.

31. EFE, “Planea la UE incluir FARC y el ELN en lista terroristas esta semana,” *Diario las Américas*, June 11, 2002.

32. Juan José Aznárez, “Las FARC lanzaron 14 proyectiles contra el Congreso,” *El País*, August 9, 2002; Pilar Lozano, “El nuevo presidente de Colombia decreta el estado de excepción para combatir el terrorismo,” *El País*, August 13, 2002.

33. Andrés Oppenheimer, “¿Una fuerza militar latinoamericana?” *El Nuevo Herald*, October 3, 2002; Carol Rosenberg, “Preparan nuevas armas para ayudar a Colombia,” *El Nuevo Herald*, October 5, 2002; AFP, “Rechaza la ONU a los ‘casco azules’ de Uribe,” *El Nuevo Herald*, October 5, 2002; AP, “U.S. to train Colombian unit,” *Miami Herald*, October 4, 2002.

34. Rui Ferreira, “La Unión Europea aún duda sobre el Plan Colombia,” *El Nuevo Herald*, October 4, 2002.

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38. Madrid, January 10, 2002.

39. Fernando Cepeda, “Facilitación internacional,” *El Tiempo*, January 15, 2002; “El papel de la comunidad internacional,” editorial, *El Tiempo*, January 21, 2002: <<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/21-01-2002/prip160013.html>>; ABC: <<http://www.abc.es/especiales/index.asp?tid=4&hid=2064&cid=2064>>.

40. AFP, "La UE no excluye financiar proyectos en zona de las FARC," *Diario las Américas*, January 16, 2002, A; AFP, "Unión Europea y España apoyan," *Diario las Américas*, January 13, 2002, 3A.

41. Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Schedule Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP (Brussels, January 24, 2002).

42. For a complete text of the agreement: <<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/21-01-2002/prip159999.html>>; from the Colombian government: <<http://www.presidencia.gov.co/webpresi/noticias/2002enero/infenot.htm>>.

43. *El Tiempo*, January 21, 2002: <<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/21-01-2002/prip159998.html>>. Gonzalo Guillén, "Firmarán la tregua en abril," *El Nuevo Herald*, January 21, 2002, 1A; Nancy San Martín, "Colombia peace process revived," *Miami Herald*, January 21, 2002, 3A; *Le Monde*, <<http://www.lemonde.fr/article/0,5987,3222—258520-00.html>>; ABC, <<http://www.abc.es/internacional/noticia.asp?id=73143&dia=Hoy>>.

44. For a complete chronology of this process: <<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/21-01-2002/prip160010.html>>; ABC, <<http://www.abc.es/especiales/index.asp?cid=2067&did=4941&tid=4&hid=2064>>.

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70. Declarations of the Belgium presidency (July 30, 2001): <<http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom/LoadDoc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=73&DID=67597&GRP=3701&LANG=1>>.

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72. Insiders of the EU Parliament pointed out a notable number of the conservative members were absent because they were attending a gathering of the European Popular Party in Germany.

73. AFP, “UE rechaza de plano la parte militar del Plan Colombia,” *Diario las Américas*, February 2, 2001; *El Tiempo*. Portafolio. “Eurodiputados piden a FARC descongelar el diálogo,” February 2, 2001; Bosco Esteruelas, “El Parlamento Europeo rechaza el Plan Colombia por ‘militarista,’” *El País*, February 2, 2001; European Parliament, “Resolution on Plan Colombia and the support to the Colombian peace process,” February 1, 2001; European Union. European Parliament, Nielsson, Poul, “Speaking points,” Committee of Development and Co-operation,” January 31, 2001; Joaquim Miranda, President. Commission on Development and Cooperation. “Intervention” European Parliament. Plenary session, January 31, 2001.

74. Vicente Arcieri, “Empresarios, dispuestos a invertir en Colombia,” *El Tiempo*, February 3, 2001; *El Espectador*, “Apoyo internacional a negociaciones de paz,” February 2, 2001.

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78. See articles by Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Hasta el último gramo de cocaína y el último hombre colombiano," *El Tiempo*, Bogotá, August 28, 2000; and Joaquín Roy, "Fins a l'últim home, l'últim dólar i l'últim gram de cocaína," *Avui*, Barcelona, September 5, 2000. See also Pilar Lozano, "Clinton presenta su plan antidroga en una Colombia dividida," *El País*, August 30, 2000; Andrew Reding, "Plan Colombia: Un túnel demasiado largo," *La Opinión*, Los Angeles, October 20, 2000; and Javier Valenzuela, "Estados Unidos teme verse envuelto en un largo conflicto en América Latina," *El País*, August 27, 2000.

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80. Internal communications and interviews with EU staff.

81. Letter to Josep Piqué, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, September 19, 2000.

82. Internal communication.

83. For a comprehensive view of the Commission's assessment of the Colombia crisis and the EU contribution, see *Colombia. Country Strategy Paper 2001-2006* (2002). <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/colombia/csp/>. In candid language, Brussels outlines some fundamental problems: "social inequality, injustice, corruption, impunity and poverty... [where] the cancer spread progressively and generalized to such point that the role of the State and its institutions has been dramatically reduced."

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85. Chris Patten, "Colombia: una cita por la paz," *El Mundo*, Madrid, and *El Espectador*, Bogotá, October 24, 2000.

86. "No es simplemente sacar nuestra billetera," "El Plan Europeo," *El Espectador, especial*, August 2001.

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88. For background on the model of the European Union's role in Central America, see Henrique P. de la Vega, "En busca de la paz perdida," *Proceso de Paz en Colombia, Colombia*, January 7, 1999. <<http://www.procesodepaz.com/notas/Enero071999/A1007N1.html>>.

89. Communication from Mr. Patten and Mr. Nielson to the Commission, "Multiannual support programme for Colombia," Brussels, October 17, 2000: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/colombia/intro/sec_1647_3.htm>.

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96. Joaquim Miranda, president of the Commission on Development and Cooperation, "Intervention." European Parliament. Plenary session. January 31, 2001.

97. European Parliament, "Resolution on Plan Colombia and the support to the Colombian peace process," February 1, 2001.

98. For a sample of a result of a fact-finding mission, see: Emilio Menéndez del Valle, "¿Adónde vas, Colombia?" *El País*, August 2001.

99. Pedro Santana Rodríguez, "Colombia: la crisis política," *Leviatán*, Madrid, otoño/invierno, 2001, 65-74.

100. Resolution of the European Parliament, March 16, 2002.

101. For a selection of the most critical early commentaries in the influential Spanish daily *El País*, see articles by Miguel Angel Bastenier, "Ultimatum o rogativa," *El País*, February 2, 2001; Eduardo Haro Tecglen, "Colombia," *El País*, September 1, 2000; Herman Tertsch, "Mal plan el de Colombia," *El País*, November 18, 2000; Javier Valenzuela, "Estados Unidos teme verse envuelto en un largo conflicto en América Latina," *El País*, August 27, 2000.

102. ABC, "Chile, el mejor mercado valorado de Latinoamérica," January 7, 2001.

103. The above items, comments and recommendations are a summary of several conversations that occurred during July and September 2000 and July 2001 with Spanish diplomats who have direct knowledge and duties in the area, and are supplemented with the consultation of pertinent documentation. All arguments included were proposed, circulated, and discussed several months before the official dissemination of the Plan and the trip of President Clinton to Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) in August 2000.

104. It is interesting to note that personal support is not limited to the unquestionable backing of Pastrana's actions. Leading candidate Alvaro Uribe received the protection of the chief of security of Spain's president (Semana, "Protección de Aznar," April 29, 2002, 23).

105. Embassy of Spain in Bogotá, "Nota informativa sobre la cooperación española en Colombia," OTC Colombia, April 2002.

106. Information derived from European Union sources (January 2001).

107. COLAT, "Council of the European Union. Meeting," September 26, 2000.

108. COLAT, "Council of the European Union. Meeting," October 2, 2000.

109. For a sample of media repercussions: EFE, "Castro en cita de paz con las FARC," *El Nuevo Herald*, January 31, 2002, 15A.

110. Gonzalo Guillén, "El corredor clandestino del terrorismo," *El Nuevo Herald*, February 3, 2002, 1A.

111. AFP, "EU relaciona a Farc con IRA," *El Heraldo*, April 25, 2002; AP, "Nexos del Ira y las Farc," *El Universal*, April 25, 2002; Sergio Gómez Maseri, "Nexos Ira-Farc no convencen," *El Tiempo*, April 25, 2002.

112. European Correspondent (Les correspondants européens — COREU) draft, January 12, 2002.

113. In this context, see the report by Pax Christi and its critical view of the role played by European interests (mostly insurance companies) in strengthening the "industry" of kidnapping through the payment of ransom and the absence of a solid EU legislation. See also the interview with Liduine Zumpolle, representative for Latin America, in Marisol Gómez Giraldo, "Piden firmeza de UE contra el secuestro," *El Tiempo*, May 1, 2002.

114. Para una muestra de sus opiniones, véase su intervención en una conferencia sobre valores celebrada en Cartagena ("Palabras claves para valores esenciales," *El Universal*, April 27, 2002.)

115. "Palabras claves para valores esenciales," *El Universal*, April 27, 2002.

116. *Le Monde*, <<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cahier/ameriquelatine/>>. For a sample of individual analysis, see Marie-Laure Colson, "Le plan Colombie isole Pastrana," *Libération*, November 18, 2000, 12; Patrice de Beer, "Washington accorde à la Colombie une aide financière exceptionnelle," *Le Monde*, October 20, 2000, 3; Patrice de Beer and Marie Delcas, "Bill Clinton se rend en Colombie pour soutenir le plan de lutte antidrogue," *Le Monde*, August 31, 2000; Alain Devalpo, "Le 'plan Colombie' sur la sellette," *l'Humanité*, July 12, 2000, 10; Christian Kazandjian, "Les Dangers du 'plan Colombie'" *l'Humanité*, July 20, 2000, 10; Maurice Lemoine, "Plan Colombie, passeport pour la guerre," *Le Monde diplomatique*, August 2000.

117. See the dramatic appeal crafted by the Latin American scholarly community of Paris in the document titled "Un llamado para Colombia." See also, for example, essays by Pina Cusano, "Geopolítica delle mafie caraibiche," *Limes*, Roma, 2, 2000, 133-146; Antonio Sema, "Come si combatte in Colombia," *Limes*, 2, 2000, 99-109; Ramón Mantovani, "Italia ed Europa possono aiutare a pacificare la Colombia," *Limes*, 2, 2000, 127-132; Thomas Gómez, "Il paese introvabile," *Limes*, 2, 2000, 117-126.

118. For a review of the most influential studies of a leading French expert on Colombia, see Daniel Pécaut, *Guerra contra la sociedad* (Bogotá: Espasa Hoy, 2001).

119. Andrés Pastrana Arango, President of the Republic of Colombia, address at Canning House, London, April 13, 2000.

120. For a sample, see *Foreign and Commonwealth Office News*, "Foreign Office hosts international meeting on Colombia, June 16, 2000; *Foreign and Commonwealth Officer News*, "UK support for Colombian peace process, June 28, 2000; *Foreign and Commonwealth Office News*, "Ministers press for peace in Colombia," September 6, 2000; *Foreign and Commonwealth Office News*, "Relations between the UK and Colombia," Speech given by FCO Minister of State, John Battle, to the British-Colombia Chamber of Commerce, Canning House, London, October 11, 2000.

121. *Colombian Newsletter*, "Why Colombia has achieved its objective, UK vote of confidence in Colombia," June 2001; *Colombian Newsletter*, "Human rights action must continue," November 2001.

122. Martin Hodgson, "Pastrana seeks European cash for cocaine war," April 13, 2000, 13.

123. Private communication from high official of the Foreign Office, October 2, 2001.

124. Owen Bowcott, and Martin Hodgson, "British generals join the war on drug producers," *Guardian*, April 18, 2001, 14.

125. *The Times*, "How the West has wrecked Colombia," December 15, 2000, 9.

126. From internal communications by Foreign Office officials.

127. From internal documents, December 18, 2001.

128. Statement by Víctor Christen, Ambassador of Switzerland, "Segunda Reunión del Grupo de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia. Programa de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia, Intervención de Suiza," Bogotá, October 24, 2000.

129. Explicit declaration by the German government to the author via its consulate in Miami, January 12, 2001.

130. Internal communications of the Commission, October 13, 2000.

131. See speech by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ludger Volmer, delivered in the Bundestag in Berlin on July 5, 2000; statement by German delegation at the conference on the Colombian peace process on October 24, 2000 in Bogotá.

132. See Hedí Boutmans, "La cooperación al desarrollo contribuye a una paz duradera en Colombia," November 2000.

133. From EU and Sweden sources.

134. Data from EU and Norwegian sources.

135. For example: Drugs and Conflict: <<http://www.tni.org/reports/drugs/debate1.pdf>>; Amnesty International, “Amnesty International’s Position On Plan Colombia,” Paper No. 1, June 2000: <<http://www.amnesty-usa.org/news/2000/colombia07072000.html>>; Ricardo Vargas Meza, “Europe and Plan Colombia, Drugs & Conflict Debate Paper,” TNI, no. 1, April 2001: <<http://www.tni.org/drugs/research/plcoleu.htm>>. From Human Rights Watch, Brussels: Lotte Leicht and José Miguel Vivanco, HRW Appeal to EU to Suspend Aid to Colombia, *Human Rights Watch*, September 1, 2000: <<http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/09/eu-ltr0911.htm>>. For a supplementary, balanced U.S. view: United States Institute of Peace Library, *Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State*, May 15, 2000: <http://www.usip.org/library/pa/colombia/adddoc/plan_Colombia_101999.html>. For an early assessment of Plan Colombia: Ingrid Vaicius, Adam Isacson, and Abbey Steele, “Is Plan Colombia dead?” Center for International Policy, October 27, 2000: <<http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/102701.htm>>.

136. International Delegation of Pax Christi Netherlands in Colombia, “Peace in Colombia; a matter of civil initiatives,” *Pax Christi*, February 22-March 10, 2001: <<http://www.paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>. As a sample of other minority organizations based in the Netherlands that oppose the Plan Colombia: *Stop Plan Colombia*, <<http://www.stopplancolombia.nl/>>. A sample of Radio Netherlands commentary: Saskia van Rheenen, “Plan Colombia Divides Europe and US,” Radio Netherlands, March 1, 2001: <<http://www.rnw.nl/hotspots/html/colombia010302.html>>.

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138. <<http://paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>.

139. <<http://paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>.

140. <<http://paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>.

141. <<http://paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>.

142. <<http://paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>.

143. <<http://paxchristi.nl/colpax2001ukr.html>>.

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