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THE U.S. ENGAGEMENT WITH COLOMBIA: LEGITIMATE STATE AUTHORITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Gabriel Marcella

The United States must adopt a strategy in Colombia that focuses on helping to establish state authority throughout the nation. This will enhance the chances of achieving the most noble element of U.S. foreign policy: the protection of human rights. The first step toward this goal would be to help the Colombians establish effective and legitimate public security at the many local areas now deficient. The next step would be for the Colombian government to coordinate state institutions and services, including education, justice, health and sanitation, communications, and resources for economic development, thereby addressing the valid aspects of the insurgents' agenda of grievances. Institutions that provide essential services to all citizens are reasonable expectations of the social contract between democratically elected governments and the people they serve.

By following through with these two essential, though complicated and difficult steps, the Colombian government would seriously address the root causes of insecurity and begin reestablishing its connections with civil society.

A new, more holistic U.S. approach in Colombia would require a more comprehensive package of military assistance than one narrowly focused on narcotics suppression and interdiction. The United States needs to commit considerable funds and adept political and military advisors — not U.S. combat troops — to help Colombia win its war on all fronts and reestablish its government's authority.

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The mission of the Dante B. Fascell North-South Center is to promote better relations and serve as a catalyst for change among the United States, Canada, and the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean by advancing knowledge and understanding of the major political, social, economic, and cultural issues affecting the nations and peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

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September 11 and the End of the Peace Process

September 11, 2001, reshaped international relations and had a profound impact on the strategic equation in Colombia. The challenge of what U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called “draining the swamp” of terrorism with global links resonated deeply in Bogotá and among the insurgent forces: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — FARC), the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional — ELN), and the paramilitaries, among them, the United Self-defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia — AUC). Though these groups already appeared on the U.S. State Department’s list of terrorist organizations, as of 9/11 they formed part of a broader international threat assessment.¹ Two weeks into 2002, an ill-conceived “peace process,”² initiated by President Andrés Pastrana with the FARC in 1999, was resuscitated at the last minute before an impending military offensive by the government against the FARC was started. President Pastrana, “risking all for peace,” had extended himself, his negotiators, and his government’s credibility as far as he could for three years — with nothing to show for such extensive efforts other than his administration’s and the Colombian citizens’ frustration and virtual surrender to the FARC of national sovereignty over a demilitarized zone (*despeje*) the size of Switzerland, located in San Vicente del Caguán, an area south of Bogotá.

In spite of the government’s renewal of negotiations, the FARC conducted some 170 armed attacks in the next 30 days, culminating on February 20, 2002, in the hijacking of a civilian aircraft and the kidnapping of one passenger, Senator Jorge Eduardo Gechem Turbay, head of

the Senate Commission on Peace. President Pastrana thereupon announced the end of the process and ordered Colombian armed forces to retake the *despeje* that had been given over to the FARC three years earlier as a goodwill gesture to start the peace process. Days later, former Senator and current presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt, was kidnapped by a FARC column, making a total of six parliamentarians being held hostage by the FARC.³

One month earlier, on January 20, 2002, under the auspices of United Nations representative James Lemoyne and the support of the Catholic Church and 10 “friendly countries” (Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela), an agreement had been made between the Colombian government and the FARC to try to reach a cease-fire by April 7.⁴ It was clear to many observers that a cease-fire was not likely to occur by this deadline for a number of reasons. First and most important, the FARC have shown by their actions for the past three years that they were and are not interested in peace, which would require surrendering their strategic objective of taking power by force of arms, the only way they could achieve it.⁵ Second, students and practitioners of peace processes, such as former FMLN Comandante Joaquín Villalobos of El Salvador, point out that Colombia’s peace process was ill-conceived because it had the following serious procedural and substantive impediments: a) a poorly defined agenda; b) unclear goals on the part of the government, c) the FARC’s unrealistic reform agenda, which addresses some of the nation’s economic and social problems (while these reforms are unquestionably needed, few could be implemented in wartime by a weak government under assault from the left, right, and international organized crime); d) the very difficult task of verifying

Gabriel Marcella teaches strategy at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He has written extensively on Latin American security and defense policy. Previously, he served as International Affairs Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Southern Command. He is also a consultant to the Departments of Defense and State. The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government. The author thanks General (Ret.) Fred Woerner, Ambassador (Ret.) Myles Frechette, Stuart Lippe, and Frank L. Jones for their comments and insights

and enforcing compliance with a ceasefire with some 100 widely dispersed and mobile insurgent fronts throughout Colombia (Commanding General of the Armed Forces Fernando Tapias earlier recommended putting all the FARC inside the *despeje*); e) the absence of an effective third party negotiator (until the UN's James Lemoyne's recent engagement); and f) too much personal involvement by President Pastrana.

The cease-fire was doomed to fail for other reasons, as well. The FARC had little incentive to negotiate seriously because the military balance in the battlefield is not sufficiently unfavorable to them. The Colombian military could not hold ground it won back because it did not (and still does not) have sufficient forces to exercise local control across the nation. A cease-fire by April 7, 2002 was simply not an achievable goal, given the military strength of the FARC, its immediate resumption of attacks on the infrastructure and innocent bystanders after January 20, and the reality that the FARC's central command cannot (and perhaps may not want to) control some of its autonomous front commanders. Finally, given the insurgents' low popularity (estimated at 2 percent support among Colombians) and the past inability of the state to guarantee the survival of insurgents who put down their guns in an attempt to reintegrate themselves into society, the FARC had more to lose than to gain by agreeing to peace.

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

The tragic events of September 11 and the emergence of an international coalition against terrorism have raised sharper questions about the legitimacy of insurgent movements around the globe. In the January 2002 negotiations, the FARC

put forth among its demands the requirement that Pastrana recognize them as "valid political interlocutors in the peace process." This assessment highlights another dilemma. How can a legitimate democratic government, aspiring to apply the rule of law, justify the contradiction of granting legitimacy to terrorists, particularly in the post-9/11 global environment of anxiety and extraordinary security precautions?

The Colombian government had virtually surrendered its authority in 1999 by setting aside the *despeje* for the FARC, a huge risk that backfired, and then early in 2002, government representatives engaged the FARC in internationally and domestically sanctioned negotiations. The Papal Nuncio to Colombia, Monsignor Beniamino Stella, identified the ethical quagmire as "the great deception of the international community because of the guerrilla terrorism."⁷ From the perspective of this writer, it was sad to see representatives of well-meaning organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and other members of the international community, earnestly broker the cease-fire agreement with the insurgents and, thus, legitimate them. Though President Pastrana and the international organizations apparently viewed the negotiations as worth one last-ditch push for peace, the other side's actions following the January negotiations proved that they had not come to the table in good faith. Unfortunately, the outcomes were ethical obfuscation and loss of thousands of human lives since the inception of the "peace process."

Plan Colombia

These policy dilemmas serve as a dramatic backdrop for an assessment of the impact of the multiyear *Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State* (usually referred to by its shortened form, *Plan Colombia*). The strategic theory behind this plan, designed by the Colombian government to be carried out primarily by Colombia with U.S., European, Japanese, and Canadian assistance, is very simple: economic development, security, and peace are directly linked. The Colombian government specifically requested U.S. assistance to lessen narcotrafficking and its proceeds.

The central premise of the U.S. component of *Plan Colombia* is that money from the trade in illegal drugs, called narcotrafficking, feeds the coffers of the guerrillas, whose attacks give rise to

citizens' self-defense organizations — the paramilitaries. If the narco funds could be stopped or drastically diminished, the guerrillas could not mount their ambitious military campaigns against the state, and society and would become much less threatening. Moreover, Carlos Castaño's paramilitaries would have less reason for being. With their main source of funds cut off, a less powerful FARC and ELN would be more likely to negotiate seriously, and the paramilitaries would also have a greater incentive to join them and government representatives for serious peace talks.

Additionally, as these armed threats to the state and society are eliminated, the forces of public order (police and military) will be able to regain effective control of the entire national territory, making it easier to eradicate illegal narcotics. Restoring security throughout Colombia will allow the rule of law to be established because the state will have the monopoly of force and will have regained its citizens' trust. From the U.S. perspective, the strategic dilemma has been that, even if drugs were significantly reduced, the FARC would retain significant war-making capacity. Thus, the complementary objectives of security and democracy can only be achieved by removing the illegal armed groups. Whether the United States' antinarcotics support as a component of *Plan Colombia*, which is to be implemented over five years, will be sufficient to help to achieve the plan's overall goals has always been in question.

The audacious goals of *Plan Colombia* are to strengthen the state by reenergizing an economy with 18-20 percent unemployment, reducing narcotics production and trafficking, and restoring civil society. *Plan Colombia* is an economic and social strategy to restore the country's economic health along with a more functional democracy. Though one part of the plan does include the military, *Plan Colombia* is not, contrary to many non-governmental organizations' and media reports, a military strategy.⁸ The military component is only one of the plan's 10 elements designed to remake the nation into a secure democracy — free from violence and corruption. *Plan Colombia* has not been fully funded, the biggest gap resulting from the Europeans' small contribution. The plan's projected cost was \$7.5 billion — with \$4 billion to be provided by Colombia and \$3.5 billion by the international community — of which only \$1.3 billion was the United States' contribution. Apart from the U.S. contribution, international support for Colombia has amounted to a total of between

\$550-600 million from the European Union, the United Nations, Spain, Japan, Canada, United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland.

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

Strategy, in Clausewitzian terms, is the calculated relationship between political ends and military-economic-diplomatic means. If a state's system is weak and corrupt (some two-thirds of Colombia's Congress take bribes or are intimidated), according to recent American Ambassador Curtis Kamman,⁹ the central question that arises is: Can such a state carry out its strategic plans effectively? Corruption weakens the state's own center of gravity — its legitimacy.¹⁰ This question is neither tautology nor idle academic speculation, because only a strategically oriented state with strong leadership can mobilize resources, justify the sacrifices demanded of its citizens, and forge the civil-military coalition to win the war.

If the answer to the above query remains a "no," then it follows that the state can only fight a war in a desultory operational fashion, neither winning nor losing, but bleeding slowly into the indefinite future. Over time, such a pattern will mean that the military instrument may be effective in its own way, as is evident already in Colombia, but it will not be complemented by the social and economic measures that the state must implement to serve the people with effective governance. The challenge for Colombian leaders is to bring greater coherence to the national effort.¹¹ Given

the Colombian state's manifest weaknesses in coercive authority, governance, administration of justice, and territorial control, the task is even more compelling, though not beyond hope, because of the talents and resources of the Colombian people.¹²

Following a classical pattern witnessed in other internal wars since 1945, Colombia's greatest strides have been made in the strength and performance of its armed forces under tremendous pressure over a period of three years. As recently as 1998, the Army was being beaten by the FARC in battalion-size engagements. As of 2002, the Colombian Army is bigger (there are now 52,000 professional soldiers out of nearly 117,000, with perhaps 35,000 available for combat); more aggressive; and better led, organized, trained, motivated, and equipped. Commanding General of the Armed Forces Fernando Tapias and Army Commander General Jorge Mora Rangel, with the support of the Defense Minister, starting with Rodrigo Lloreda, have transformed the Army into a more formidable fighting force.¹³ Its Rapid Deployment Force (*Fuerza de Despliegue Rápida*) conducted important operations in 2001, including "Gato Negro," which captured the notorious Brazilian drug lord, Fernandinho, who was trading money and arms for cocaine with the FARC. Perhaps the most impressive operation was "7 de Agosto," which deterred a force of 1,300 FARC guerrillas from attacks in the South and East; captured an impressive quantity of arms, supplies, and vehicles, killed a leading guerrilla commander (Urias Cuéllar); and dismantled 17 camps.¹⁴ In the area of joint planning and operations, there are slow improvements.

Though the Colombian military has improved and grown significantly, it has a long way to go before it achieves the size and proficiency required for sustained success. The top quantitative and qualitative requirements for any military organization are leadership, tactical mobility, intelligence, and quality of the troops. These must be complemented by logistical support, quick reaction, aggressive small unit operations, and cooperative relations with the civilian population. The Colombian Army's new aggressiveness takes advantage of improved mobility (going from 18 combat helicopters in 1998 to nearly 95 by the end of 2001) and battle-experienced field commanders, but it still does not have the manpower to transition to a "persisting strategy," in which the police and military work together to establish per-

manent presence in key areas of the country. Moreover, some 200 municipalities (out of over 1,000 nationwide) do not have police.

As for its human rights record, the Colombian Army has dramatically reduced the number of violators from within its ranks, though collaboration by elements of the armed forces with the paramilitaries remains a serious issue. General Tapias has established a policy of "zero tolerance" of police and military collusion with paramilitary forces ("paras"). In 2001, the armed forces conducted major operations against the paras, killing 116 and capturing 992, as well as confiscating a significant number of weapons, ammunition, vehicles, communication equipment, and financial records. Since September 2000, more than 600 members of the armed forces and the police have been dismissed because they colluded with the paras. President Pastrana ended the careers of at least four generals and numerous mid-level officers and noncommissioned officers believed to have been collaborating with the paras. Moreover, the Ministry of National Defense has an extensive human rights training program for military and police.¹⁵ Greatly expanded, better equipped professional military and police forces, committed to applying the principles of just conduct (*jus in bello*) in the conduct of military and police operations and to working together for the same goals, comprise the best insurance against human rights violations by the insurgents and paras. Under such improved conditions, uniformed personnel would have no reason to collude with illegal forces. Human rights violations and the displacement of people (an estimated 1.5 to 2 million) will continue to be problems until the government establishes effective and pervasive legitimate authority across the nation. This will have a high economic cost; however, Colombia can afford it.

Counterinsurgency wisdom suggests that Colombia needs a 10 to 1 advantage¹⁶ for the armed forces to prevail over the 20,000 to 25,000 guerrillas, plus the estimated 8,000 paramilitaries. This would require tripling the size of the current armed forces, which would allow the Army simultaneously to conduct operations against the insurgents, go after the drug entrepreneurs, defend infrastructure and communications, and establish a better presence (*presencia*) nationwide. Currently, the Army cannot, because of insufficient forces, hold territory it wins back because it must constantly redeploy to meet FARC, ELN, and paramilitary attacks elsewhere. Major General Gary Speer,

acting chief of the U.S. Southern Command, stated in congressional testimony on March 5, 2002, "The real issue is the government of Colombia, through its security forces, the police and the military, do not control portions of the country."¹⁷

The history of the Colombian military shows unwillingness by civilian authorities to support national defense seriously. For example, contrary to Latin American counterparts, the Colombian Army has been very small through most of its history, reflecting and reinforcing the unwillingness of civil society and the political leadership to provide it with enough resources to do its job. Consequently, the military's organizational weakness combines with the generalized innocence of, if not disdain for, military strategy among the intellectual and political classes. The relationship between civilians and the military is the crucible for determining how military power is used to defend the nation. In other words, the political purpose (the reason why) and military power (the means) are brought together in strategy (the how). In the nineteenth century, the Army rarely counted more than 1,000 soldiers. During the Colombian-American crisis of 1903 over Panama, the Army had 500 men.

The modern Colombian Army originated with the participation of a battalion in the Korean War and with the security problems produced by the *violencia* that began in 1938 and lasted for decades. Colombian civilians and military professionals do not work well together in integrating strategy, intelligence, and operations, a costly deficiency for a society at war for so long. This is not to argue that the Colombian military is autonomous from civilian control. Far from it, the charge is more fundamental: civilians appear to lack the intellectual know-how and political will to direct the legitimate armed instrument of the state. Thus, they do not bear their full responsibility in national defense.¹⁸

To expand its armed forces to the proper size, the Colombian Congress and leadership elites must do something totally novel in their nation's history: give enough resources to the military to do its job as part of a coherent national political-economic-military strategy. This will require a veritable revolution in civil-military relations and implementation of obligatory universal military service, a proposal that went from the executive to the Colombian Congress in late 2001 and has not been acted upon. A U.S. State Department official calculates that a high school graduate

(*bachiller*), who is exempted by a 1962 law from combat, has a 50 to 1 chance of being drafted, while the humble non high school graduate of the lower class does the fighting and dying. Thus, Colombia exemplifies the "rich man's war and the poor man's fight."¹⁹ This reflects an elite view that military service is suitable only for the lower class. The defense budget, which includes the police, increased from \$2.965 billion to \$3.256 billion in 2001, still a small 3.5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) for a nation at war. The actual percentage of GDP spent on the military in 2000 was a meager 1.89.²⁰

Nonetheless, Colombians can take heart from the fact that one of the reasons that the FARC returned to the "peace process" on January 14 and 20, 2002, was the operational capability of the armed forces, which allowed President Pastrana to negotiate from a position of relative strength rather than weakness.²¹ The principal lesson learned in successful modern counterinsurgencies, such as in the Philippines, Malaya, El Salvador, and Oman, is that the battlefield must be linked to the peace process. A real peace process ending in conflict termination is only possible when the armed forces of the government establish enough asymmetry on the battlefield to convince the insurgents that further war is counterproductive to their physical and political survival. The FARC's feverish propaganda against *Plan Colombia* is evidence of their fear that the Colombian state may some day succeed in strengthening itself.

The Southern Campaign

The second area to measure is the core of the U.S. investment: the counter-narcotics drive in southern Colombia, notably Putumayo Department (a lightly populated, underdeveloped region with a long history of illegal activity and boom-and-bust economy), which is the locus of intense coca cultivation and the citadel of the FARC, now contested with the AUC across from the Ecuadorian border. The United States has helped equip and train Colombian Army units (so far, a brigade, which comprises three battalions) to support the police to eliminate coca plants and destroy the infrastructure of support for drug trafficking (primarily laboratories and airstrips). These efforts have achieved important quantitative successes. By December 3, 2001, the Colombian Anti-Narcotics Police (Dirección Antinarcóticos — DIRAN) had destroyed 61 cocaine hydrochloride

(HCL) labs, 330 cocaine base labs, 5 heroin and 9 other drug or precursor chemical processing facilities; had put 54 clandestine airstrips out of service; and had seized or destroyed almost 30 metric tons of cocaine HCL, base cocaine and *basuco* (low-grade cocaine byproduct). The government signed pacts for alternative development/voluntary eradication with 37,000 small farmers.²²

Whether these counter-narcotics achievements are permanent depends upon a number of interrelated variables: the completeness of the eradication program, the ability of the government to enforce the new regime, and the level of support for alternative development (growing other crops, providing access roads, markets, seeds, capital, schools, medical service, and police protection) to wean away the mom and pop *campesino* growers. Eliminating the large, plantation-size coca fields should be easier in 2002, when Colombia receives the full complement of spray planes dedicated to the effort.²³ The scheme will work if the “balloon effect” can be contained and if the government provides security and meaningful alternative development. These are a lot of “ifs” for a government that historically has had a weak presence and has provided little in services to people in these outlying areas. Reports in early 2002 from the field to Washington indicated that the entire scheme was in serious jeopardy.

The Achilles’ heel of the Southern Campaign is in three areas: the lack of security, insufficient support in the government’s alternative development program, and the bad quality of Putumayo’s soils. Nathan Christie, an expert on coca eradication at the U.S. Department of State, puts it diplomatically: “Well-financed alternative development programs will be required to transform eradication’s ability to reduce cultivation into more permanent gains.”²⁴ Additionally, alternative cropping is not easy in the weak soils of Putumayo and Caquetá. Nor is it economically competitive, given the distance to markets, poor roads, and insecurity. Moreover, a senior official at the U.S. Department of State noted, “People don’t go to Putumayo to be yeoman farmers.”²⁵ Concerning alternative development to growing coca, a February 2002 report from the General Accounting Office says, “. . . alternative development will not succeed unless the obstacles are overcome. Among them, the Colombian government does not control many coca growing areas, it has limited capacity to carry out sustained interdiction operations, and its ability to effectively coordinate

eradication and alternative development activities remains uncertain.”²⁶ The report adds that peasants are replanting coca, even though they have signed agreements not to, because they do not believe the government will return to enforce the agreement. Another alternative for eliminating coca is aerial spraying of the coca fields, but for this to be effective it must be ubiquitous within its target areas, sustained, repetitive, and predictable, so that growers are permanently deterred.

The success of the anti-narcotics and alternative development efforts depend upon the ability of Bogotá to establish a permanent presence of the state in areas traditionally lacking governmental control. Security through state authority is the strategic *sine qua non* for *Plan Colombia*. While the FARC, ELN, and the paramilitaries contest territory, it is imprudent to launch ambitious alternative development schemes designed to wean away the peasants, who are caught in the dangerous crossfire from the coca economy.²⁷

Moreover, among knowledgeable officials in Washington, there is a concern about the narrowness of the U.S. approach to Colombia and its impact on democratic institution building. Having invested heavily in drug eradication and alternative development, officials worry that it is easier to measure objectives, such as hectares sprayed, number of plants manually eradicated, or contracts signed with peasants, than building democracy. Such indicators are unreliable for measuring true progress, and relying on them alone reinforces the weakness of Colombian democracy.²⁸ A superficial and narrow focus on indicators like these makes the Colombian government appear arbitrary, heavy-handed, and not really concerned with effective governance.

U.S. Policy: From Counter-Narcotics to a Fuller Strategic Relationship, Legitimate State Authority, and Human Rights

Colombia’s importance to the United States’ national interests cannot be overstated. Its 43 million people and location astride two oceans make it geopolitically significant. It is the fifth-largest trading partner in Latin America for the United States, with two-way trade exceeding \$10 billion annually. An estimated 2.5 million Colombians live in the United States, and more come every day. As the anchor of Andean security, Colombia’s internal troubles export violence,

corruption, drugs, and ecological damage to the immediate region. Colombia provides some 80 percent of the cocaine entering the United States and produces some 70 percent of the world's total.

From the context of the post-9/11 world's heightened security consciousness, Colombia's internal weakness represents a formidable threat. Unlike the threat paradigm that defined the East-West conflict during the Cold War, Colombia belongs to a class of countries that threaten the international community not with their individual or collective strength but with their weaknesses. A "broken windows theory" of international relations would argue that the decline of the regional neighborhood threatens the international community in untraditional ways: international organized crime, the violation of sovereign borders, contraband, the illegal shipment of arms, chemicals, laundering of dirty money, suborning of public officials (members of the police, military, legislative bodies, judiciaries, and so on), the corruption and intimidation of the media, displaced persons, and the formation of an international *demi monde* that sustains terrorism. This melancholy brew puts at risk not only the ideals of democracy and human dignity, but also the ambitious hemispheric integration agenda of a Free Trade Area for the Americas (FTAA) and the accompanying package of social, economic, political, and ecological advances that the presidents at the Summits of the Americas have committed themselves to since the Miami Summit of 1994. For the United States, homeland defense is taking on renewed prominence in strategic planning. Illegal drugs, violence, and corruption directly affect homeland defense because of the penetrability of air, land, and maritime borders.

Long before September 11, 2001, the policy of the United States carefully delineated the boundary between counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency. Mindful of the perceived absence of support at home for counterinsurgency because of failure to differentiate among cases in applying the Vietnam metaphor to U.S. military strategy, the Clinton administration (1993-2001) scrupulously hewed to a policy of supporting with military and economic assistance only the effort to eradicate narcotics. While this policy recognized political realities at home, it seriously stretched intellectual and operational credibility, in view of the inescapable ground truth that the insurgents and the paramilitaries profit from and promote the narcotics economy.

Whatever their misgivings may have been, U.S. policymakers implemented statutes that still demarcate U.S. assistance to Colombia. Once the policy was made, the safeguards were established to ensure end-use compliance for U.S. equipment and training. Therefore, the operational ends were consistent with U.S. policy and law. Many critics in the United States within and outside of government doubted that a clear distinction could be made between "assistance" and on-the-ground use of U.S. military resources or that there could be a distinction made between counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency.

Nevertheless, *Plan Colombia's* requested role for the United States was scrutinized vigorously by U.S. legislators, auditors, and the media, and no indication of violating the legal constraints placed on counter-narcotics support was ever alleged. Adding to the strategic assessment was the dominant school of thought within the U.S. government with respect to how a government can win an internal war. Remembering the lessons applied successfully in El Salvador in the 1980s, statesmen, academics, and a number of U.S. legislators and military strategists argued that Colombians needed to mobilize their national resources and make the sacrifices required for successful counterinsurgency — to ensure that the effort would sink strong roots in society.

Moreover, the gestation of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Colombia contained two divergent impulses that begged to be brought back into one. At the level of "politics of the possible," it was support for a counter-narcotics approach, fraught with grave misgivings about its adequacy on the ground in Colombia. The second and far more intellectually sound impulse, which was not politically possible due to congressional opposition, favored establishing security nationwide, through a combination of counterinsurgency support and support for defending the infrastructure. Policymakers and strategists started moving in the direction of the second impulse immediately after 9/11, though cautiously. After February 20, 2002, when President Pastrana ended peace talks with the FARC and ordered the military to retake the *despeje*, the U.S. polity (including Congress, the Defense and State Departments, the media, the academic community, and the general public) for the first time considered the heretofore unthinkable and politically difficult alternative: much expanded U.S. military assistance to Colombia. Even support for counterinsurgency, not a strategic option since the end of the Cold War, returned to favor.

Accordingly, under this new set of circumstances, the first order of business is to establish an environment that builds a sense of order throughout Colombia. The approach calls for a strategy, with related tactics, that places emphasis on controlling the country. This, in turn, requires a set of civil-military activities that buttress the strategic objective. While *Plan Colombia* recognized the need for these civil-military activities, its military component was mired in the quicksand of law enforcement (eliminating drug production capacity) instead of dealing with counterinsurgency and territorial control. The reasons for this are myriad, ranging from the poor human rights record of the Colombian military (which until recent crackdowns allowed “. . . the paramilitaries to massacre suspected guerrillas with impunity”);²⁹ the “slippery slope” argument; and competing strategic global priorities in Washington.

Thus, the weakness of U.S. support for *Plan Colombia* lies in the relationship between the premise and the strategy. While some of the premises underlying U.S. support were correct, the strategy to achieve the objectives was inadequate.³⁰ Finally, until quite recently, constructing a more comprehensive strategy for Colombia was unachievable because it could not be sold to the U.S. Congress or the American people, especially with a “peace process” underway in Colombia.

Beyond these inherent tensions, U.S. support for Colombia contained the familiar strategic defect of a mismatch between very ambitious goals (democracy, protection of human rights, support of the “peace process,” coca eradication, judicial reform, and alternative development) and very limited means. The original U.S. contribution to *Plan Colombia* and supplemental funding proposed for the future, though real budget money, are minor amounts in terms of the comprehensive needs of Colombia. U.S. policymakers had always recognized this discrepancy but justified it in terms of establishing a foundation for the United States, Colombia, and the international community to build on. The Europeans have been notably reticent in making their full contribution because of concerns that the United States was militarizing its policy on Colombia.

At the same time, military and civilian strategists in the Pentagon argue quite persuasively that the best way to strengthen democracy and more rapidly eliminate the drugs scourge is to assist the Colombian military and police to establish territorial control, so that they can be more effective in

counterinsurgency and counter-narcotics operations. Much of Colombia’s small Army is now tied down in static defense of infrastructure. General Tapias stated to *El Tiempo* on January 27, 2002, that the armed forces were defending 2,000 strategic points around the country prior to the January 20, 2002 agreement to continue the “peace process,” in addition to the heavy deployment of over 10,000 troops around the *despeje*.

A new U.S. approach would require a more comprehensive package of military assistance than one narrowly focused on narcotics suppression and interdiction. Such a policy would also render the United States a more effective defender of human rights and would eliminate the artificiality of requiring, for example, that certain equipment, such as Blackhawk and Huey helicopters, be used only for counter-narcotics purposes. To a nation fighting for its survival, there is an incongruity in U.S. officials being prohibited by legislation from engaging Colombian counterparts in planning how to succeed in counterinsurgency — the strategic and operational requirement for Colombia’s survival.³¹ This was hardly a way to establish confident bilateral cooperation.

A key area for enhanced U.S. military assistance would be protection of the 480-mile oil pipeline from Arauca to the Caribbean, which is periodically destroyed by the FARC and ELN; in 2001, this cost Colombia \$450 million in lost revenue, equal to 0.5 percent of economic growth, plus significant ecological damage. The Bush administration asked Congress for \$98 million in the 2003 budget for the security of the pipeline. This money would go to train troops and provide 12 helicopters and other equipment for a 2,000-4,000 member “critical infrastructure brigade” of the Army.³² The funds would also be used to improve the security of the long pipeline via improvements in communications, roads, and defense sites.

The lack of a comprehensive strategic relationship between Washington and Bogotá matters in other ways. Colombia’s fundamental challenge is to establish the authority of the state throughout the national territory, extending full benefits of its institutions and governance to all citizens. Where the state is not present or is weak, the three illegally armed groups thrive as competitors to state authority, setting up *de facto* administrative and legal systems. This geopolitical reality is marginally addressed by U.S. help in training and equipping counter-narcotics battalions. Even though

their training is fungible, these units will hardly make an impact on the larger army. The creation of separate air forces and separate logistical systems weakens coordination among the Colombian armed forces, the Colombian anti-narcotics battalions, and U.S. military advisors. Colombians have observed that the United States seems to care only about the drug issue; thus, they view the counter-narcotics forces as the “gringo army” versus the “real” army, the Colombian armed forces.

If U.S. military assistance can provide the means to help Colombia to recover control of its national territory and thereby provide dependable public security, this would remove the *raison d'être* of the paramilitaries: the absence of security provided by the state. U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne W. Patterson appeared to be nudging U.S. policy in this direction by stating after 9/11 that *Plan Colombia* is the basis of U.S. counter-terrorist strategy. More robust commitment to Colombia would have the additional advantage of greater clarity and strategic relevance of U.S. policy as seen by our Latin American regional partners, especially those directly affected by spillover violence and corruption, namely, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, and the Caribbean states.

A different and more focused U.S. strategy in Colombia would greatly enhance our chances of achieving the most noble element of U.S. foreign policy: the protection of human rights. The first step toward this goal would be to help the Colombians establish effective and legitimate public security at the many local areas now terribly deficient (there are over 200 municipalities without police). The next step would be for the Colombian government to coordinate state institutions and services, including education, justice, health and sanitation, communications, and economic development, to provide services to all citizens equably, thereby addressing the valid aspects of the insurgents' agenda of grievances. Institutions that provide essential services to all citizens are reasonable expectations of the social contract between democratically elected governments and the people they serve. By following through with these two essential, though complicated and difficult steps, the government would seriously address the root causes of insecurity and insurrection and begin reestablishing its connections with civil society — all of which work together to protect human rights.

These monumental tasks require the re-establishment of state authority. A study of the history of internal wars also tells us that government counterinsurgency efforts have been successful when governmental-supported militias helped maintain local security. Establishing legally constituted supplementary military forces for local security is a serious need in Colombia. Popular resistance to FARC depredations exists, providing a receptive environment for local militias supported by the state.³³ This would end reliance for security on the illegal paramilitaries, which originated as legitimate popular responses to the lack of state authority in areas of conflict.

The current U.S. approach to human rights in Colombia is to employ the limited leverage of conditionality — contained in the Leahy amendment, named after its originator, Senator Patrick Leahy — to security assistance, which requires that military personnel be vetted for human rights rectitude. This applies to all men and women in the Colombian armed forces who receive training and equipment for counter-narcotics operations. The problem with the current U.S. approach to human rights in Colombia and to policy toward Colombia in general is that it fails to recognize the interconnected nature of the threats to weak state authority: the insurgents, those involved in drug processing and trafficking, and the illegal paramilitaries. To attribute the state's weakness to illegal drugs alone misses the mark. As discussed earlier, the FARC and ELN thrive on funds from narcotrafficking; the paramilitaries completed the vicious circle by taking the law into their own hands to fight the insurgents and protect their property, but they became parodies of their enemies by perpetrating additional atrocities — and by subverting many members of the Colombian armed forces in the process.

The United States' new, more holistic approach to Colombia, recommended herein, is philosophically different: We must assist the Colombian state to acquire complete power over the means of legitimate coercion, by defeating the FARC, ELN, the AUC and other paramilitary groups, as well as the narco-traffickers. The United States needs to commit considerable funds and adept political and military advisors — not U.S. combat troops — to help Colombia win this war on all fronts and reestablish its government's authority.

In Colombia, the main reason for political killings (some 3,500 per year for the last 10 years),

kidnappings, displacement of nearly 2 million people, and economic destruction is the interrelated nature of the combined threats and the inability of the state to act. State weakness is at the heart of all of Colombia's ills. Using different words to express the same thesis, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters and Law Enforcement Affairs, Rand Beers, said, "The Government of Colombia's inability to prevent violence by the three illegal armed groups (the FARC, ELN, and the paramilitary AUC) is at the root of Colombia's human rights woes."³⁴

Conclusion and Recommendations

While improvements in military capabilities and narcotics eradication can be quantified, the other elements, rebuilding the institutions, such as the judicial system, are less so. Revitalizing the economy also depends upon reestablishing a climate of security and predictability for investments. Despite the failure of a badly conceived and managed "peace process," President Pastrana, via *Plan Colombia*, has established an excellent foundation for his successor. *Plan Colombia* is both a conceptual framework and a call for collective action by Colombians and by the international community. Moreover, the post-9/11 world has less tolerance for the duplicity of criminals masking as liberators. By ending the *despeje* and breaking off the fruitless "peace process," President Pastrana has opened strategic options for the United States and Colombia.

The current U.S. policy of counter-narcotics support only, which defines Colombia's problem as solely a drug-related, rule of law issue rather than a security issue, is not enough to make the critical difference. In fact, in early 2002, U.S. officials were deeply concerned that the efforts of Colombia and the United States were failing to achieve the objective of dramatically reducing coca production, along the lines achieved in the 1990s in Bolivia and Peru. Some were coming to the conclusion that U.S. policy in Colombia was merely addressing the symptoms, not the causes.

The exclusive focus on counter-narcotics support, moreover, brings into play the equally complex and controversial issue of demand reduction in the United States and Europe. Addressing this issue is the responsibility of all governments whose citizens buy the illegal drugs and whose law enforcement authorities have not yet figured

out how to stop the flow. The apparent failure of the Southern Campaign (the counter-narcotics drive in southern Colombia) is another reason for a radical change in policy.

Specifically, the United States should provide a package of military equipment, advice, and intelligence support to allow the Colombian government to assert authority over its national territory. The package should include advice on how to develop counterinsurgency strategy and conduct joint operations and how to organize and maintain logistics. Colombia's armed forces need tactical mobility and intelligence support; at this time, they can barely mobilize some 50 to 90 helicopters. They need approximately 400 helicopters to provide faster insertion of troops into the battlefield. It takes time to build an army. The best military intelligence is of little value if the armed forces are too small or unfit to use it to support operations.

A comprehensive package of U.S. military assistance entails more than the willingness of the executive and Congress to be forthcoming. It also involves the ability of the Colombian armed forces to absorb the assistance. Clearly, this will be a long process. Military institutions take time to restructure and expand. U.S. and Colombian military officials need to sit down across a table and figure out how to integrate such training and equipment for a much expanded force. At home, Washington needs to establish a senior-level policy coordinating and integration office for Colombian policy and appoint a director with enough clout to get the job done across the entire interagency system. The interagency policy system is moving in this direction, despite the announcement by President George W. Bush on February 27, 2002, that the United States has been "providing advice to the Colombian government as to drug eradication, and we need to keep it that way."³⁵ For the time being, the decision has been made not to include Colombia in the global war on terrorism, partly out of respect for Colombia's forthcoming elections.

Nonetheless, a far more robust military assistance, designed to establish greater control of the national territory, is imperative. Such a commitment would make the United States a more credible and effective ally, increase chances for success in the overall drug war, shorten Colombia's agony, greatly advance the cause of human rights, strengthen regional security in the conflicted Andean area, and make a dramatic improvement

in international law and order. However, we should only do this if Colombians commit themselves to mobilizing their nation, to allotting sufficient resources (military and nonmilitary) to the national effort, and to democratizing the burden of fighting and dying.

The strength of democratic civil-military relations during war, which military strategist Carl von Clausewitz referred to as the “trinitarian” relationship of mutual support among the people, the government, and the armed forces,³⁶ is notably weak in Colombia. Collective sacrifice for the common good is not a shared value in Colombian culture, and the best efforts of the U.S. government and military are not likely to inculcate it. However, we should make every effort to convince Colombians that this principle of mutual support, so aptly defined by Clausewitz as a strength during times of war, also acts as a nation’s strength during times of peace.

Finally, we still ought to apply in our relations with Colombia the hard lesson we learned in Vietnam and applied so well in El Salvador: Do not take away the burden of sacrifice and the benefits of learning by doing (and sometimes stumbling) from the ally in the field.

Counterinsurgency should still be the responsibility of Colombians. There should be no U.S. soldiers’ combat “boots on the ground” in Colombia. Colombians are perfectly capable of fighting their own war. Moreover, only Colombians can build effective state authority that is considered legitimate by the people.³⁷

Can such a plan work, given Colombia’s enormous defects described throughout this paper? The analysis is studded with caveats, such as remedying institutional weaknesses and eliminating pervasive corruption. However, there is really no other alternative than a broader U.S. commitment. U.S. policymakers must develop a political game plan and be prepared to deal with the next administration in Bogotá. The United States’ strategic and operational engagement with El Salvador in the 1980s clearly showed that there are inevitable difficulties and misunderstandings along the path of cooperation between asymmetric allies. We will find ourselves working with a center of gravity of the ally in the field that includes the presidency, ministry of defense, the armed forces and police, and the ministries of justice and interior. The challenge is to enlarge and strengthen the center of gravity to perform more effective-

ly. What the United States cannot do is impart political will to the Colombian people.

It will take a strategic tutorial of major scope by the Bush administration with the Congress, the American people, and the Colombians to reshape domestic consensus on Colombia and radically change U.S. policy. The rationale for such an effort must include the geopolitical changes wrought by 9/11, terrorism, regional security and homeland defense; eliminating the drug scourge; advancing the twin causes of human rights and democracy; and economic integration of the Western Hemisphere. Unless we change course, Colombia will continue to bleed; illegal drugs will continue to flow worldwide; more people will be displaced; and the paramilitaries, insurgents, and drug criminals will continue to coerce, corrupt, and kill. Unless we change course, the security of the entire region will deteriorate further, and the human tragedy will cut deeply into the credibility of U.S. power and influence. For these reasons, it is in the best interests of the United States to take a new, holistic, philosophically different approach to Colombia.

NOTES

1. Even though it was argued that the FARC do not take part in international terrorism, there is evidence that they are present in at least 18 countries, including diplomatic missions, and that they have been involved in illegal activities in Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, and Brazil, according to Bogotá's *El Tiempo*. See "Los nexos internacionales de las FARC," August 19, 2001 (http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/19-08-2001/judi_pf_o.html). Though they do not conduct terrorist operations, there is a significant spillover of FARC-generated violence and corruption in those countries.

2. See Scott Wilson, "Colombian President Rejects Rebel Offer: Pastrana to Order Army Into Guerrilla Zone," *Washington Post*, January 14, 2002 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A37547-2002>). See also the perceptive commentary of Fernando Cepeda Ulloa, "Facilitación Internacional," *El Tiempo*, January 15, 2002 (http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/15-01-2002/redda_pf_2). The critical views of Comandante Joaquín Villalobos, now a fellow at Oxford University, can be found in "Colombia vs. El Salvador," *Semana*, January 6, 2002 (<http://semana.terra.com.co/1026/actualidad/ZZZ4Q5Y32WC.asp>). He argues that Colombia has a "negotiation of lies," because the FARC makes war but does not negotiate, while the government only seeks negotiation. An equally bleak perspective comes from Senator Ingrid Betancourt, "For the time being, the negotiations have no chance of success. They've been warped from the outset. Their goal isn't to arrive at a conclusion, but to win time for the parties involved. . . . Everyone lies. And pretends to believe the lies of the other." From her book, *Until Death Do Us Part: My Struggle to Reclaim Colombia* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 221-222. A serious impediment is the FARC's definition of "peace." Raúl Reyes, one of the FARC commanders, stated to *El Tiempo*, November 7, 1999: "Peace is not simply the silencing of guns, nor the end of military engagements." To Spain's *El País* he added that peace was "... not the demobilization and surrender of arms, but the solution of the deep social, economic, and political problems of the country." (Cited in Eduardo Posada Carbó, "Paz de Verdad?," newsletter of the Fundación Ideas Para La Paz, February 2001). Such definitions are so broad and imprecise that they cannot constitute the bases either for a cease-fire or peace negotiations, a point also raised by Villalobos above.

3. These events are described in "La historia secreta," *Semana*, February 24, 2002 (<http://semana.terra.com.co/1034/actualidad/ZZZFJ8121YC.asp>).

4. Scott Wilson, "Colombia, Guerrilla Group Set a

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

5. See, for example, Alfredo Rangel Suárez, "No hacerse falsas ilusiones: No habrá tregua," *El Tiempo*, February 1, 2002 (http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/01-02-2002/redda_pf_4.html). Rangel argued that a cease-fire would not be "convenient" for the FARC because "it would mean abandoning their strategic objective of taking power by the force of arms."

6. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, the FARC has over 6,000 children soldiers under the age of 18 fighting within its ranks. See "Las Farc siguen reclutando menores, denuncia Unicef," *El Tiempo*, February 13, 2002 (http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/13-02-2002/judi_pf_0.html). Carel De Rooy, United Nations representative in Colombia, stated, "... they're throwing kids to the front as cannon fodder." Cited in Juan Forero, "A Child's Vision of War: Boy Guerrillas in Colombia," *New York Times*, December 20, 2000 (<http://ebird.dtic.mil/Dec2000/e20001220childs.htm>). For more detailed information on the brutal treatment of children, including executions for flagging morale, see Centro de Análisis Sociopolíticos, *Juguetes de la Guerra: Niños reclutados por la guerrilla en Colombia*, Bogotá, 1999. See also Mauricio Sojo Vásquez, "Este país que mata niños," *El Espectador*, February 17, 2002 (<http://www.elespectador.com/paz/nota5.htm>).

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

8. Serious misinformation about the United States' militarizing its support package accompanies the public discussion on the United States' contribution to the \$7.5 billion total budget for *Plan Colombia* (produced by Colombia's Department of National Planning under Dr. Jaime Ruiz, now at the World Bank). Of the original US\$1.3 billion contribution in 2000, 61 percent was designated as military. Critics of U.S. support should note that this represents 7 percent of the \$7.5 billion. Yet, this points out a fundamental strategic reality: no nation other than the United States has the political will and capability to provide the full package of military assistance and apply serious restrictions (to be used only for counter-narcotics purposes, with appropriate respect for human rights), to a beleaguered ally in the Western Hemisphere. For an early assessment of the origins and elements of *Plan Colombia*, see Gabriel Marcella, "*Plan Colombia*: The Strategic and

Operational Imperatives,” Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, April 2001. The Institute’s extensive series of papers on the Colombian crisis can be accessed at (<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usassi/welcome.htm>).

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

10. Speaking of the societal impact of corruption and criminality, Francisco E. Thoumi warns against the “dishonesty trap”: “. . . when criminal behavior is tolerated and accepted, the socialization process ends, producing a generation of individuals with weak internalized constraints. In these cases, it may be argued that a society falls into a “dishonesty trap” from which it is very difficult to escape. The problem is simply that where most people are dishonest, it is very costly for anyone to be honest.” See Francisco E. Thoumi, *Why a Country Produces Drugs and How That Determines Policy Effectiveness: A General Model and Some Applications to Colombia* (Miami: Florida International University, Latin American and Caribbean Center, January 2002), 21.

11. The following meditation by Gil Merom states in the starkest terms the task for a democracy at war: “It is quite clear that resorting to large-scale ground action requires a significant ability to convert societal into military resources. Yet, it would be wrong to assume that warring states are restricted only by the sum total of their societal resources or by their ability to convert these into military means. States are also bound by their political capacity to use or lose human resources—i.e., to get their soldiers and citizens to agree to use violence and be its victims; to harm others and be killed or maimed.” Quoted from Gil Merom, “Liberal Democracies, The Balance of Tolerance and the Legacy of Small Wars,” manuscript, Department of Political Science, Tel-Aviv University, September 1996, 7.

12. An important indicator of state weakness: Colombia is ranked among the lowest in Latin America in central government tax revenues collected from its citizens. Another indicator: impunity for crimes committed is over 95 percent. For the weakness of Colombia’s judicial system, see Luz Estella Nagle, *The Search for Accountability and Transparency in Plan Colombia: Reforming Judicial Institutions Again* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, May 2001).

13. For the improvements in the Colombian Army, see Thomas Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002). A bold and very necessary step was keeping effective military leadership, thus breaking with the practice of serving in their respective positions for only one year before retirement. Tapias and Mora will complete three years in 2002.

14. “Así se inició cerco a las FARC,” *El Tiempo*, August 19, 2001 (http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/19-08-2001/judi_pf_1.html).

15. Statistical information was abstracted from “Paramilitaries (Part III): GOC Improves Record Against AUC, But Needs To Do More,” Unclassified cable, Department of State, Bogotá 1494, February 15, 2002. For more information on the relationship between the military and paramilitaries, see Human Rights Watch, *The “Sixth Division;” Military-Paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2001). The term “Sixth Division” refers not to an Army division but to the illegal paramilitaries.

16. Students of counterinsurgency, such as Sir Robert Thompson, Thomas Marks, and Anthony James Joes, point out that the 10-to-1 ratio is seldom achieved in the real world. Key variables include leadership, tactical mobility, intelligence, and logistics.

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

18. Explanations for the weakness of the state and the military can be found in Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, “Colombia: situación actual y perspectivas futuras de un conflicto,” draft manuscript, Princeton University, 2002. Colombian intellectuals also appear to have inoculated themselves against supporting a counterinsurgency role for the military. For example, during 1997-1998, a period during which the Colombian Army was suffering battalion-size battlefield defeats from the FARC, some were irresponsibly proposing cutting the small army by half, regarding it as organized only for traditional defense against an external enemy. On this, see Francisco Leal Buitrago, Patricia Bulla Rodríguez, María Victoria Llorente, and Alfredo Rangel Suárez, “Seguridad Nacional y Seguridad Ciudadana. Una Aproximación Hacia La Paz,” in *Armar la Paz Es Desarmar La Guerra*, eds. Álvaro Camacho Guizado and Francisco Leal Buitrago (Bogotá: Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1999), 98.

19. It should be pointed out that the vast majority of the killings occur from criminal activity, which of course prospers in an environment of insecurity and impunity before the law.

20. Colombia’s average annual defense spending in the 1990s of 1.35 percent of GDP ranked low compared with other countries in Latin America: Chile, 2.06 percent; Bolivia, 2.03 percent; Argentina, 1.48 percent; and Venezuela, 1.38 percent. Other countries with internal conflicts spent more in terms of percentage of GDP for defense: Algeria, 3.9 percent; Lebanon, 3.2 percent; and Turkey, 4.4 percent. Colombia’s defense budget also covers such costs as traffic control in

Bogotá. Preceding statistics were taken from Asociación Nacional de Instituciones Financieras, *Informe Semanal*, No. 619, February 18, 2002, 1. *Informe Semanal* states that the cost of adding 10,000 more troops to the Colombian Army would be 0.15 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), which, it argues, could be financed by eliminating unnecessary expenditures and corruption.

21. The Colombian armed forces could have regained control of the *despeje*; it was simply a question of at what cost. Over 10,000 troops and an assortment of ground and air equipment were mobilized. Moreover, the coercive diplomacy practiced by Pastrana indicated a toughening never seen before in the three years of the "peace process."

22. Statistics from "Antinarcotics Police Interdiction: Results and Projections," Unclassified Telegram, American Embassy, Bogotá, December 12, 2001.

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

24. Christie, 107.

25. Interview with Stuart Lippe, Office of Colombian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., February 12, 2002.

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

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

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

29. Frances Robles, "100 Guerrillas Killed in Colombia Since Talks Failed," *Miami Herald*, March 8, 2002, 18A. See also "Colombian Coca Figures on Rise, U.S. Says," *Miami Herald*, March 8, 2002, 18A, which includes new information on Colombian coca production in 2001, based on satellite imagery. Due to one area of the country not having been surveyed in 2000 because of cloud cover, it is now believed that coca

production actually increased by 33,600 hectares (82,992 acres) in 2001 compared with production figures in 2000. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy issued an official statement: "The figures underscore the pervasiveness of cultivation and trafficking in Colombia; the magnitude and complexity of Colombia's interlocking security, drug control and economic challenges; and the need for sustained U.S. engagement."

30. Personal communication from Frank L. Jones, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, February 25, 2002. Jones worked in the Department of Defense office for counter-narcotics support.

31. There has been an upsurge in the U.S. media in support of counterinsurgency aid to Colombia. Commenting on the post-9/11 environment and the failure of the peace process in Colombia, an editorial in the *Washington Post* on January 14, 2002, said, "The administration also should abandon its attempt to distinguish counter-narcotics from counterinsurgency aid to Colombia. If the United States can support governments and armies battling extremists in Central and Southeast Asia. . . it ought to be able to give similar aid to an embattled democratic government in Latin America." See (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A40957-2002>). *The Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, and *Dallas Morning News* also endorsed more robust military assistance to Colombia. *The Washington Post* resumed its strong support in an editorial on February 24, 2002, entitled "Help for Colombia"; see (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A57958-2002Feb24>).

32. Karen DeYoung, "Wider U.S. Role in Colombia Sought: \$98 Million Requested for Military Training, Equipment," *Washington Post*, February 6, 2002, A15 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A29333-2002Feb5>). Major newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle*, have published editorials against military assistance to Colombia. Many human rights-oriented non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also made the same case. Unfortunately, the strategic error all of these groups make is that they underestimate how weak Colombia is as a state, attributing to it security capabilities it simply does not have. Some of the opposition is ideologically based. Much of the opposition may be due to inadequate information about the geopolitical realities of Colombia, a serious deficiency among many U.S. academics and members of the media.

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

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

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

36. For a modern interpretation of the "remarkable trinity" and its strategic application, see Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought* (London: Frank Cass, 2001, 3rd ed.), 91-134. On the contemporary debate in American society about the "gap" between civilians and military and the impact on military effectiveness, see *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, eds. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 325-474.

37. There is a rich academic literature on "state building" and war; two of the best examples are Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 170-226; and Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).