

The London School of Economics and Political Science

*Negotiating Intervention by Invitation: How the
Colombians Shaped US Participation in the Genesis
of Plan Colombia*

Álvaro Méndez

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This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Dr. Alvaro Méndez, and to my mother, Leonor Suárez de Méndez.

Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the genesis of Plan Colombia, the aid programme that transferred US\$1.3 billion to Colombia during fiscal year 2000/2001 alone. It was found that President Andres Pastrana *invited the intervention* of the US in many aspects of Colombia's internal affairs, from his peace process with guerrilla insurgents to his project to reassert the authority of the state over Colombia's 'internal periphery'. A complex, three-way negotiation between the two core Executives and the US Congress ensued, which yielded a more limited intervention than the Colombians desired. It was also found that, the vast power asymmetry notwithstanding, it was the small state that took the initiative and managed to exert influence over the great power. These findings conclusively refute the paradigmatic presumption in the IR literature that Plan Colombia was hegemonically imposed. To the contrary, the protracted (two years long) negotiation of terms showed the 'hegemon' decidedly reluctant to be drawn too far into its internal affairs of its 'victim'.

Plan Colombia follows a characteristic pattern in US foreign relations, which has been noted before; a unique form of 'imperialism' whereby subject states actually *invite* the intervention of the great power, in some cases even to the point of occupation. Unlike the approach typical of the IR field, which is predominantly *a priori* in method, the treatment herein is essentially inductive. For my fieldwork I interviewed the gamut of elite participants in the making of the Plan, from ex-President Pastrana himself to Thomas Pickering, the third-ranking officer in the US State Department. Letting the facts from all sources speak for themselves, I have arrived at counterintuitive results of interest to theorists and practitioners of international relations.

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'If Lilliputians can tie up Gulliver, or make him do their fighting for them, they must be studied as carefully as the giant'.¹

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THE THESIS

This dissertation expounds and empirically substantiates the thesis that 'Plan Colombia', the United States (US) foreign aid programme for the South American nation, was not a scheme that originated in the US and was then imposed on Colombia, but rather one which the Colombians themselves initiated and engaged the US in bargaining over. While the US did have an anti-drug strategy in place in the Andean region, Plan Colombia did not emerge from this, but instead was a reaction and response to a carefully orchestrated invitation from the Colombians. The main assertion of theory underlying this conclusion is that what weak states 'lack in structural clout they can make up through creative agency'.² It is believed that this finding can enhance understanding of the international system and of the not insignificant role of weak states therein.

Plan Colombia is a far more complex phenomenon than first meets the eye. How be it may that US intervention was driven by quintessentially contemporary concerns like the drug trade, the conduct of the Colombian political elite nonetheless falls into a long-established pattern of external dependency, fostered *both* by the chronic 'tragic flaw' of its domestic system: the alienation of the centre from the periphery (and *vice versa*) and by the (at least arguable) strength of the Colombian political elite, its seamless integration within the international Western elite.

The genesis of Plan Colombia

This work narrates and analyses the negotiation for one of the few signally successful foreign aid packages ever assembled. When the enabling act passed Congress in June 2000, Colombia had reached one of the lowest ebbs in its two hundred year history. The production and refinement of coca for sale in the developed nations of the world had severely, seemingly

¹ Robert O. Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics," *International Organization* 23, no. 2 (1969). p. 310

² Andrew Fenton Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw, *The diplomacies of small states: between vulnerability and resilience*, International political economy series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). p.2.

irreversibly debilitated the authority of the state. The consequent loss of effective control over much of its own territory had precipitated capital flight and therewith a deep economic slump that promised little hope of recovery – except perhaps through more of the illegal drug trade. This had undermined the state fisc through a massive loss of desperately needed revenue. Plan Colombia stopped this spiralling political and economic crisis in its tracks. The exceptionally large amount of aid transferred by the US to the Colombian government has decisively turned around Colombia’s situation, putting it on track to full recovery of state authority over nearly all of Colombia’s territory, and restoring investor confidence. A surprisingly robust economic resurgence has ensued, even while the underlying problem of coca production has remained intractable.

Intervention by Invitation

The title of this dissertation, ‘Intervention by invitation’, signifies the particular way in which the Colombian government exercised creative agency in relation to the great power. The US government intervened in Colombia’s internal affairs on a much grander scale than previously contemplated, largely because the Colombians resolved to invite it. This was a conception originating with Colombian President Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) and his inner councils, who believed they could trust the US to intervene ‘softly’, *i.e.* with enough respect for Colombia’s sovereignty to suit Colombians. Indeed, they invited more US intervention than the US was prepared to deliver. What ensued was a complex three-way negotiation between the core Executives of both states and the US Congress, the upshot of which was a tightly controlled acceptance of the Colombian invitation.

The smaller state made the first move, notwithstanding the enormous power asymmetry at all levels between itself and the superpower; *but for* which intervention would have been highly improbable, given the fiscal and political trends of the day. Colombia managed to sway the ‘hegemon’ throughout a two-year-long negotiation of the terms of intervention. This complex process showed the US as decidedly reluctant to be drawn too deeply into the internal affairs of its ‘client’. The agency of both sides then interacted densely and dynamically to produce the final outcome we now call ‘Plan Colombia’.

This dissertation presents clear evidence to warrant what has been to date an uncommon interpretation of the events that make up the history of Plan Colombia. The intuition of it has been embodied in a thesis and its corollary, which one hopes may shed light on matters

heretofore consigned by systemic theory to the black box of ‘unit-actors’.

Although both thesis and corollary were put to the empirical test of field evidence, the reader should bear in mind that this goal alone does not end all. To undertake fieldwork is to expose oneself to the ardent flux of reality. That which has been discovered over and above this thesis in its original form, relevant to the intuition underlying it, ought to have been and was included in this dissertation’s final conclusions. This study was actually as much *exploratory* as (in the strict sense) empirical.

Thesis: The Pastrana Administration invited US ‘soft’ intervention, because they had come to the realisation that the Colombian state lacked the capacity to reverse its slide toward failure, and to reassert its authority over the whole of Colombian territory.

Corollary: Plan Colombia was meant to do something fundamentally different for Colombia than for the US: to solve not the drug problem, but the crisis of state capacity precipitated by the massive flow of drug money into the hands of guerrillas aiming to overthrow the state.

US relative indifference

Hegemonic or not, then or now, it will be argued that the US governmental and foreign-policy establishment had at first little strategic need and less interest in intervening in Colombia’s internal affairs in the period 1998-2000, except to mollify US public opinion by being seen ‘doing something’ about the domestic scourge of drug addiction. By contrast, the Colombian state’s and political elite’s continuance was directly and tangibly at stake; the Colombians had far more to gain from the success, and far more to lose from the failure of their efforts to interest the US in intervening, than did the US itself.

This clear differential of stakes held and national interest involved, by itself suggests that Plan Colombia was primordially a Colombian project; indeed, the empirical evidence herein presented, gathered from a gamut of elite interviews, indicates that the Colombians actually invited more US intervention than the US was willing to deliver. The US as a whole (outside the State Department) had to be, to a certain extent, coaxed into participating in Plan Colombia. It was the domestic outcry over the local effects of drug addiction and the resultant politics of the 2000 Presidential elections that did any real persuading, not the US foreign policy establishment. Thus, this fortuitous confluence of both nation-states’ domestic affairs was a necessary condition to precipitating a response on the sheer scale of Plan Colombia.

THE STATE OF THE ART: THE LITERATURE REVIEWED

This study has found the origin of Plan Colombia in the creative agency of the weak (or small) state of Colombia. In the context of a literature that features the pervasive assumption that the agency of weak states is non-existent or insignificant, this finding is counterintuitive. The following review will point out that the assumption of non-agency is an *assumption* and not an *empirical fact*. But it is also a fact that the International Relations (IR) literature contains all the theoretical elements requisite to see through this flawed assumption. The general problem with the existing literature is its failure to bring the theorisation about weak states on board; instead, too many publicists have adhered unthinkingly to a paradigmatic assumption.

The concepts needed for understanding the agency of the weak states being already present in the body of IR theory, it will be shown in the main body of the thesis that Colombia's agency in the making of Plan Colombia is a prime instance of it. It is thus hoped that weak states may be made more visible to theorists and practitioners in the IR field.

The literature on Plan Colombia

Plan Colombia, and the claim that it is one of the most successful instances ever of nation-building intervention by the US, has generated a large literature. 'Few US policies towards Latin America in recent years have generated as much interest, and controversy, as the multi-year program to assist Colombia in its fight against drugs and related violence', as notes Shifter.³ Many and varied are the views on its merits, implementation and implications, but for the purposes of this dissertation; however, what is investigated here is whose agency lies at its foundations. This review is undertaken with this aspect brought into focus.⁴

'As in most discussions about Plan Colombia – and about the notably complex situation in Colombia itself – there is an unfortunate tendency towards polarization. For some, Plan

³ Michael Shifter, "Una dècada del Plan Colombia: por un nuevo enfoque," *Politica Exterior* 136(2010). p.1.

⁴ For an excellent book providing a general overview of the different aspects of Plan Colombia from a Colombian perspective, see: IEPRI, ed. *El Plan Colombia y la internacionalización del conflicto* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001).. This edited version offers an incredibly valuable tool to those who are looking to expand their knowledge on Plan Colombia. Two chapters are worth being highlighted: Socorro Ramirez, "La internacionalización del conflicto y de la paz en Colombia," in *El Plan Colombia y la internacionalización del conflicto*, ed. IEPRI (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001).; Diana Rojas and Adolfo Atehortua., "Ecos del Proceso de Paz y el Plan Colombia en la Prensa Norteamericana," in *El Plan Colombia y la internacionalización del conflicto*, ed. IEPRI (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001).;

Colombia is a great success story, while for others it has been a dismal failure'.⁵ The literature is divided into two main camps concerning US intervention: the first is from the left, which sees only the operation of 'US hegemony' in seeking to dominate the world for the sake of capitalist interests; the other Liberal and Realist, who see in Plan Colombia essentially nothing but the pursuit of 'national interest', although the two schools might well differ over whether wisely or effectively. As discussed below, all three schools of thought are for once on the same page in finding nothing of Colombian agency in the story of Plan Colombia, focussing one-sidedly on the Colossus of the North to the neglect of any Latin American actors, which are generally assumed to be insignificant. This focus is rooted in an assumption that Plan Colombia must have been created, developed and implemented in Washington by the Clinton Administration.

The polar opposite position, although no one has seemed to take it up, would be that Plan Colombia was created, developed and implemented entirely in Bogotá by the Pastrana Administration, who managed to manipulate the Americans into accomplishing their will. This of course would be the stance of Colombian boosters, and perhaps of those hardy souls who believe few material limits constrain the resourcefulness of agency and what it might socially construct out of systemic anarchy. Neither version captures the genesis of Plan Colombia with entire accuracy, precisely because neither is grounded in adequate empirical research, but relies to a great extent on ideological posturing. Somewhere in the interstices of warring camps lies the factual (and hopefully demonstrable) truth.

Those who deny any role to Colombian agency

As mentioned, in general, the literature on Plan Colombia lopsidedly favours the (mostly unexamined) presumption of US origin. Those who adopt this perspective may be divided broadly into two camps: the radicals and the mainstream. The fundamental disagreement between these two camps is over the nature of US agency, with the former imputing malevolence to it while the latter impute more pragmatic motives.

Radical views

Radicals interpret US agency and its motives in 'imposing' Plan Colombia on the Colombian nation within a conceptual framework that sees capitalism as the root of the evils of the world

⁵ Ibid.

and the US as its bastion. It follows that the purpose of Plan Colombia must be ‘capitalist exploitation’.

Prominent scholar Robert Pastor observes that although the radicals are quite a heterogeneous lot, two common threads knit them together: (1) US exploitation is the main cause of Latin America’s problems; and (2) US Latin American policy is driven by the economic interests of its capitalist class almost exclusively, not by purely ‘geopolitical’ concerns.⁶ In the context of Colombia, radical authors argue that the volatile situation in Colombia directly results from ‘a system of exploitation imposed by the United States, mainly for economic reasons’.⁷ In their view, Washington designed and imposed Plan Colombia to solidify its empire and to ‘defeat leftist challenges to its power in Latin America’.⁸

Epitomising the radical view is the work of Noam Chomsky, who argues that Plan Colombia is a unilateral imposition on Colombia in order to advance the neoliberal agenda, as well as a counterinsurgency strategy to exterminate any challenges to Washington’s ambitions in Latin America.⁹ Chomsky infers that the Plan, although appearing to be Colombian, is in actuality an American plot. He bases this deduction on the fact that ‘the draft of “Plan Colombia” was written in English, not Spanish’.¹⁰

James Petras theorises that Plan Colombia is a continuation of a counter-insurgency plot that the Kennedy Administration had begun in the 1960s: ‘Plan Colombia was President Clinton’s extension and deepening of President Kennedy’s counter-insurgency doctrine for Latin America’.¹¹ The main differences the intervening 30 years have made are: US involvement has escalated as the insurgency has escalated; the official rationale has shifted from Cold War containment of Communism to the war on drugs.¹²

⁶ Robert Pastor, *Exiting the whirlpool: U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

⁷ Ibid. p. 30.

⁸ William Aviles, "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3 (2008). p. 412.

⁹ Noam Chomsky, "Plan Colombia," in *Rogue states: the rule of force in world affairs* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 62.

¹¹ James Petras, "The Geopolitics of Plan Colombia," in *Masters of war: militarism and blowback in the era of American empire*, ed. Carl Boggs (2003).p. 83.

¹² Ibid.

Another radical view is that of Doug Stokes, who argues that Plan Colombia was originally a Colombian idea, but then the Great Hegemon transmogrified it ‘from a regional development initiative, as originally envisioned by Pastrana, to an aggressive military engagement’¹³ with ‘newly emergent radical opposition within the region. This opposition encompasses guerrilla movements [not so new in Colombia] ... which are loosely allied with Venezuela, the US’s largest crude oil supplier’.¹⁴ In sum, he views Plan Colombia with suspicion and conjectures that the plot was part of a ‘pervasive strategy of state terrorism ... to protect its economic and political interests in South America’.¹⁵

Adam Isacson also regards Plan Colombia as a US plot begotten in Bogotá at the instigation of the US. He surmises that President Pastrana delivered Plan Colombia, as Washington used a stick and carrot approach to modify Colombian behaviour. According to Isacson, in the late Summer of 1999 US envoys threatened Pastrana with the loss of valuable US foreign aid if he pursued a policy of negotiation with the FARC (stick), while promising more aid if he agreed to a militarisation plan to fight drugs (carrot). He goes on to allege that Pastrana produced the Plan almost immediately ‘in English by October 1999’.¹⁶

Jairo Estrada Alvarez’s edited book titled *Plan Colombia: Ensayos Criticos* argues that Plan Colombia originated in Washington as an extension of previous US attempts to dominate and interfere in Colombia’s internal affairs. More specifically, the Plan was a renewed stab at *Pax americana* in the context of increasingly cutthroat global capitalist competition.¹⁷ Similarly, Rodas Chaves claims ‘Plan Colombia’ was given that name to give the appearance that it had been conceived at the own initiative of the Pastrana Administration, whereas in reality it was

¹³ Doug Stokes, *America's other war: terrorizing Colombia* (London: Zed Books, 2004). p. 93.

¹⁴ Doug Stokes, "Better lead than bread? A critical analysis of the U.S.'s Plan Colombia," *Civil Wars* 4, no. 2 (2001). The facts that Stokes alleges are often problematic; for instance, Venezuela was not the largest crude oil supplier to US in 2001, as he claims. According to official figures, Venezuela was only the fourth largest crude oil supplier to the US in 2001 (471,283 barrels per year), surpassed by Saudi Arabia (588,075 barrels), Mexico (508,715 barrels), and Canada (494,796 barrels). As of 2011 Canada has become the largest supplier. Venezuela remains in fourth place. This information can be verified from: EIA, "Petroleum and Other Liquids: U.S Imports by Country of Origin," (Washington, DC: U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012).

¹⁵ Stokes, *America's other war: terrorizing Colombia*. p. 3.

¹⁶ Adam Isacson, "Was Failure Avoidable? Learning From Colombia’s 1998-2002 Peace Process," in *The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center Working Paper Series* (Miami: University of Miami, 2003). p. 17.

¹⁷ Jairo Estrada Álvarez, ed. *Plan Colombia: Ensayos Criticos* (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001). p.16. Estrada Alvarez also edited another critical book on Plan Colombia in 2002 and all of the authors on that book argue that Plan Colombia originated in Washington, see: Jairo Estrada Álvarez, ed. *El Plan Colombia y la Intensificación de la Guerra: Aspectos Globales y Locales* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2002).

a geopolitical plot by the US to impose the neoliberal agenda not only on Colombia, but also on neighbouring countries.¹⁸

Countering the above, and reinforced by the empirical research for this thesis, a leading human rights advocate admitted to the author in an interview that Plan Colombia was not in fact the imposition that radical publicists assume:

[Plan Colombia] was not an imposition ... [it] was cooked up pretty much I would say by Colombians and Americans. I would say that Colombians were smart enough to sell this very ambitious project to [the] Americans. And Moreno [Pastrana's Ambassador to the US] was obviously very important in the process. He [was an] extremely skilful lobbyist, that [was] perhaps his most important talent ... [he] had the capacity to persuade his interlocutors specially with the American interlocutors. He was pretty critical here [Washington] ... to describe [Plan] Colombia as an imposition from Washington is I would say is not only simplistic, is not only inaccurate ... this was pretty much an opportunistic joint venture.¹⁹

Mainstream views

Mainstream analysts are more varied in their views than the radicals, and interpret US agency and its motives within a number of conceptual frameworks most of which eschew the category of good and evil, concentrating more on national security as the mainspring. Broadly, these theorists might be classified as either Liberals, who emphasise the importance of factors other than military power or Conservatives, who believe that military power is indispensable to solving crises.

Crandall, in his well-documented research into the history and evolution of US policy in Colombia, postulates that, to understand their relationship correctly, one must view it as an 'interaction between a growing superpower and a relatively weak country'.²⁰ Crandall claims that it follows that, although 'Colombian and American officials claimed that Plan Colombia had been created in Bogotá, the program's 'intellectual roots were in Washington'.²¹

¹⁸ Germán Rodas Chaves, *El Plan Colombia : análisis de una estrategia neoliberal*, 1. ed. (Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2002).

¹⁹ *Confidential Interview by Author with Human Rights Advocate*, 2nd May (Washington and London) 2012.

²⁰ Russell Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 15.

²¹ Russell Crandall, "Colombia: The Narcotization of U.S. Policy," in *The United States and Latin America after the Cold War* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p. 91.

Tokatlian asserts that Plan Colombia originated in Washington and constitutes what he called ‘*intervención por deserción*’,²² which might be translated ‘intervention in default [of the state hosting the intervention]’. In this scenario, the Colombian state lacked capacity to contain its internal armed conflict or uphold national sovereignty, upon which pretext Washington led a temporary intervening coalition until the re-establishment of adequate power in Bogota.²³ Carvajal and Pardo acknowledge that Plan Colombia underwent different versions. An initial version by Pastrana in 1998 (greater Plan Colombia), but also a second version that emerged in 1999 (the actual bill approved by Congress in 2000). They both argue that the 2000 version of Plan Colombia was ‘made in USA’.²⁴

Arlene Tickner in her early works saw Plan Colombia as a ‘marriage of convenience’,²⁵ with only limited input from Bogotá. She surmises that President Pastrana meekly submitted to US directives delivered in August 1999 by then Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering; adopting the same subaltern position as previous Colombian administrations.²⁶ Her views evolved over time, and by 2007 she was stating that Pastrana had drawn Washington in after intensifying ‘Colombia’s association with the United States and *requested* greater involvement by that country in domestic affairs’ [emphasis added].²⁷

Friesendorf claims Plan Colombia originated in Washington with little input from Colombia as ‘essentially a White House text. The Spanish version ... was only available months after

²² Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "El Plan Colombia: Un modelo de Intervención?," *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* 54-55(2001). p. 209.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Leonardo Carvajal and Rodrigo Pardo, "La internacionalización del conflicto doméstico y los procesos de paz (Historia reciente y principales desafíos)," in *Prioridades y desafíos de la política exterior colombiana*, ed. Martha Ardila, Diego Cardona, and Arlene B. Tickner (Bogotá: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung en Colombia : Hanns Seidel Stiftung, 2002).

²⁵ Arlene Tickner, "La Guerra contra las drogas: Las relaciones Colombia-Estados Unidos durante la Administración Pastrana," in *Plan Colombia; Ensayos Críticos*, ed. Jairo Estrada Alvarez (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Arlene Tickner, "Intervención por Invitación: Claves de la política exterior Colombiana y sus debilidades principales," *Colombia Internacional* 65, no. Enero-Junio (2006). p. 91. The arguments of this particular article were jointly presented with the author in the following conference paper at the London School of Economics: Alvaro Mendez and Arlene Tickner, "Colombian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century," in *Colombia in Regional Perspective: its place in 21st century in Latin America* (London 2009).

the circulation of an English-language version'.²⁸ He mistakes Pastrana's accommodation to a workable plan as submissiveness, and assumes that the plan finally approved in Washington was radically different from the one Pastrana originally proposed.²⁹ Ramirez *et al.* also view Plan Colombia as mainly a Washington invention imposed on an unwilling Colombia. They erroneously claim that the original plan proposed by Pastrana 'had included no mention of military aid',³⁰ and assume it was drafted in Washington because of the 'explicit counterdrug and implicit counterinsurgency focus'.³¹ They mistake the necessary give and take of the legislative process as weakness, and incautiously assume it was made in Washington because it was written in English, 'was only minimally circulated in Colombia, received spotty media coverage, and was never discussed in the Colombian Congress'.³²

Those who admit a role for Colombian agency

Gabriel Marcella argues that Plan Colombia originated in Bogotá. He provides the most rigorous and objective discussion of this point available in the literature to date. Grounding himself on a broad base of interviews, he concludes that 'contrary to speculation in the media, [Plan Colombia] was authored by a Colombian—Jaime Ruiz, Chief of Staff for Pastrana'.³³ According to Marcella, Jaime Ruiz, having studied in the USA to PhD level, was already well acquainted with how the US does business, and was asked to take responsibility for producing the initial draft of Plan Colombia.³⁴ Marcella sees Colombia as a 'revealing

²⁸ Cornelius Friesendorf, *US foreign policy and the war on drugs : displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*, CSS studies in security and international relations (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007). p.130.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Maria Clemencia Ramirez, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh, "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drug Control Policies," in *Drugs and democracy in Latin America: the impact of U.S. policy*, ed. Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin (Boulder, Colorado: L. Rienner, 2005). p. 108.

³¹ Ibid. p. 107.

³² Ibid. p. 108. For other authors highlighting this mainstream view also see: Andelfo Garcia, "Plan Colombia y Ayuda Estadounidense: Una Fusión Traumática," in *El Plan Colombia y la internacionalización del conflicto*, ed. IEPRI (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001).

³³ Gabriel Marcella, Army War College (U.S.). Strategic Studies Institute., and Dante B. Fascell North-South Center (Fla.), *Plan Colombia: the strategic and operational imperatives*, Implementing Plan Colombia special series (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2001). p. 7.

³⁴ *Interview by author with Gabriel Marcella (Professor US Army War College)*, 2nd April (Carlisle, Pennsylvania) 2007.

paradigm for 21st century conflict',³⁵ which threatens the international community not because of its strength, but because of its weaknesses providing an ideal breeding ground for terrorist organisations. From this perspective, he concludes that in Plan Colombia the US was focussed on strengthening Colombian state authority. Failing this, the country's internal problems would pose an alarming threat not only to US national security but to that of the entire region and risk spiralling out of control. He contends that the US had to 'commit considerable funds and adept political and military advisors ... to help Colombia win its war on all fronts and re-establish its government's authority'.³⁶

In an insightful report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, DeShazo, Mendelson and McLean also recognized Colombian agency, stating that 'Pastrana rebuilt Colombia's weakened relationship with the United States and with extensive consultations with Washington *fashioned* a comprehensive initiative announced in September 1999 called "Plan Colombia" to address the crisis facing the country' [emphasis added].³⁷ Carpenter also acknowledges that Plan Colombia was a 'vehicle for U.S. involvement ... [originally] envisioned by Colombian President Andres Pastrana'.³⁸ Carpenter notes that the Plan eventually approved was not the same as the one originally envisioned by Pastrana, but that Washington still 'agreed to provide \$1.3 billion to assist Bogotá'.³⁹

Michael Shifter shrewdly discerns that the origins of Plan Colombia lie somewhere in between Bogotá and Washington, but that the general perception was that the Plan is 'essentially American',⁴⁰ and this generated resistance to the Plan, particularly in Europe.⁴¹ Although highly critical of the military emphasis of Plan Colombia, Amira Armenta *et al.*

³⁵ Gabriel Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*, Shaping the regional security environment in Latin America special series (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute/ U.S. Army War College, 2003). p. v.

³⁶ Gabriel Marcella, *The U.S. Engagement with Colombia: Legitimate State Authority and Human Rights* (Miami: University of Miami North South Center, 2002). p. 9.

³⁷ Peter DeShazo, Johanna Mendelson, and Philip McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Instability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia," (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2009). p.11.

³⁸ Ted Galen Carpenter, "Plan Colombia: The Drug War's New Morass," in *Cato Policy Report* (Washington: Cato Institute, 2001). p.1.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.1.

⁴⁰ Michael Shifter, "La Confusion de Washington," *Ideele* 131(2000).

⁴¹ *Interview by author with Michael Shifter (President Inter-American Dialogue), 29th November (Washington, DC) 2006.*

acknowledge that the origins of Plan Colombia can actually be traced to ‘Pastrana’s political peace discourse in 1998. His Plan was proposed as a process simultaneous to the negotiations’ with the FARC.⁴² Also critical of certain elements of Plan Colombia, Hans Blumenthal nevertheless admits that Plan Colombia was a Colombian gambit that succeeded in engaging the international community to share responsibility for Colombia’s many internal problems.⁴³

Julia Sweig asserts two versions of Plan Colombia, an initial Colombian version introduced by Pastrana in 1998, and a second stripped-down American version – the one approved by Congress at the instance of President Clinton in 2000 – that ‘was hastily drawn up in English ... on the back of a napkin on an airplane’.⁴⁴ While this account is not entirely accurate and will be clarified below, Sweig’s account is insightful and her study accurately concludes that credit for passage of the bill through Congress partly ‘belongs to Bogota’s diplomats in Washington who mounted one of the most sophisticated and effective lobbying campaigns of any foreign country in years’.⁴⁵

Aviles too concludes that Plan Colombia resulted from the interaction of key decision makers in both Bogotá and Washington. The gist of his argument is that, as all the actors involved were part of the same transnational elite network, this ‘facilitated the development of Plan Colombia and the ultimate US contribution to that package’.⁴⁶ This interesting theory lacks convincing evidence supporting its claims, however, as most (if not all) of it was gleaned from secondary sources. Aviles uncritically and rather naively assumes that this elite network is unique to the bilateral relationship between the US and Colombia; never considering that most key decision makers of every government in the world may be understood as enmeshed in transnational elite networks. Aviles’s is nevertheless an interesting conclusion inasmuch as the present study also found that both sides’ Executive agencies ‘fused’ with each other in the

⁴² Amira Armenta, Jelsma Martin, and Ricardo Vargas Meza, "Europe and Plan Colombia: Chronicle of a Commitment with an Uncomfortable Plan," in *Drugs and Conflict* (Transnational Institute, 2001). p. 5.

⁴³ Hans Blumenthal, "El Plan Colombia Algunos mitos y realidades," *Nueva Sociedad* 172, no. Marzo-Abril (2001).

⁴⁴ Julia Sweig, "What Kind of War for Colombia?," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 5 (2002). p. 129.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 130.

⁴⁶ Aviles, "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." p. 426.

making of Plan Colombia, in a way resembling aspects of Europeanisation, as will be seen below.

The literature on weak states

The literature on weak (or small) states is so vast and wide-ranging that economy dictates this section focusses on those issues more pertinent to Plan Colombia. There is a general lack of agreement on the most suitable definition of weak state; thus, some scholars have questioned the concept's validity.⁴⁷ Some theorists distinguish 'weak' from 'small', although this is applicable mostly to regional integration contexts. As Colombia's regional situation as such is not within the scope of this dissertation, the following brief overview will use the terms interchangeably.⁴⁸

The classics

Writing in 1969, Robert Keohane argued that with the United Nations (UN) 'as a forum and a force and claiming "nonalignment" as an important diplomatic innovation, small states [had] risen to prominence if not to power',⁴⁹ increasing the academic community's interest in weak states and their foreign policy behaviour. Excepting the publication by Fox in 1959 of *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*, little research had been conducted on the subject before then.⁵⁰

Persaud notes that the early literature fell into three categories sharing one underlying theme: power and capabilities. This categorisation is merely a guide, as the categories can overlap inconveniently.⁵¹ The first school of thought 'separate[d] developed small states from Third World countries',⁵² with Rothstein and his seminal *Alliances and Small Powers* (1968) being an example.⁵³ Among 'Rothstein's most interesting theoretical arguments is his effort to

⁴⁷ Peter Baehr, "Small States a tool for Analysis," *World Politics* 27, no. 3 (1975).

⁴⁸ This author also uses the term interchangeably: Robert I. Rotberg, *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

⁴⁹ Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics." p. 291.

⁵⁰ Annette Baker Fox, *The power of small states: diplomacy in World War II* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

⁵¹ Randolph B. Persaud, *Counter-hegemony and foreign policy: the dialectics of marginalized and global forces in Jamaica*, SUNY series in global politics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

⁵² *Ibid.* p.14.

⁵³ Robert Lewis Rothstein, *Alliances and small powers* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1968).

describe the effects of various types of international systems on small power situation behavior'.⁵⁴ Rothstein also provides an early and interesting definition of the concept, arguing that a weak state is 'a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so'.⁵⁵ The second school centred on security, as 'the less self-reliant a state is, the more vulnerable it is to foreign policy penetration'.⁵⁶ Handel exemplifies this view in his classic *Weak States in the International System*, arguing that military weakness entails 'high or total dependence on external help',⁵⁷ so that it is not the 'size of a state that determines its place and role in the international system [but] its relative strength'.⁵⁸

Persaud's third category is psychological.⁵⁹ Marshal Singer exemplifies this school by defining weak states as those 'which are psychologically dependent (with regard to their national identity), on another country';⁶⁰ noting that, sadly for the 'underdeveloped, weaker states of the world, the brutal truth is that they are simply too poor to be very good or very important customers of the industrial Powers'.⁶¹ These schools were 'in fact united by a subtext, viz., political realism'.⁶² In the end, most of these authors came to agree with Baehr's

⁵⁴ Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics." p. 299. Other works that could be classified under this category include the following: David Vital, *The inequality of states: a study of the small power in international relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).; George Liska, *Alliances and the third world*, Studies in international affairs, no 5 (Baltimore,: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).; and: Robert Endicott Osgood, *Alliances and American foreign policy* (Baltimore,: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).

⁵⁵ Rothstein, *Alliances and small powers*. p. 29.

⁵⁶ Persaud, *Counter-hegemony and foreign policy: the dialectics of marginalized and global forces in Jamaica*. p. 14.

⁵⁷ Michael I. Handel, *Weak states in the international system* (London: Cass, 1981). p. 53.

⁵⁸ Persaud, *Counter-hegemony and foreign policy: the dialectics of marginalized and global forces in Jamaica*. p. 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 15.

⁶¹ Marshall R. Singer, *Weak states in a world of powers: the dynamics of international relationships* (New York,: Free Press, 1972). p. 216.

⁶² Persaud, *Counter-hegemony and foreign policy: the dialectics of marginalized and global forces in Jamaica*. p. 16. Other early exponents of this early realist view on weak states include the following: Trygve Mathisen, *The functions of small states in the strategies of the great powers*, Scandinavian university books (Oslo,: Universitetsforlaget, 1971).; August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland, *Small states in international relations* (New York,: Wiley Interscience Division, 1971).; and Edward E. Azar, *Probe for peace: small-state hostilities*, Critical issues in political science (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1973).

conclusion that the concept was not appropriate, ‘as an analytical tool ... small states form too broad a category for purposes of analysis’.⁶³

Standstill in the literature

Attempts were made to theorise weak states in the mid-1980s, but proved too Eurocentric.⁶⁴ Some lamented that weak states suffered ‘benign neglect’⁶⁵ in the international politics field. Eventually, academics ‘either turned to general IR theories because the size of states was not considered a relevant category anymore or they developed new approaches to study [weak] states’.⁶⁶ One new approach was Katzenstein’s, who asked how weak states might cope with increasingly globalised economic markets.⁶⁷ The interest of his inquiry is in its assumption of weak-state agency.

In 1988 Joel Migdal published *Strong Societies and Weak States*.⁶⁸ In this important work he argued that ‘weak states and strong societies prevailed in developing countries’,⁶⁹ which were more preoccupied with survival than progress; concluding, ‘without severe social dislocations and additional conducive conditions, it is unlikely that new strong states will emerge in the foreseeable future’.⁷⁰ Weak states were thus self-condemned to their subordinate status—a description seemingly bespoke-tailored to fit Colombia.

⁶³ Baehr, "Small States a tool for Analysis." p.466.

⁶⁴ Christine Ingebritsen et al., eds., *Small states in international relations*, New directions in Scandinavian studies (Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 2006).

⁶⁵ Christmas-Moller, "Some Thoughts on the Scientific Applicability of the Small State Concept: A Research History and a Discussion," in *Small states in Europe and dependence*, ed. Otmar Höll (Vienna: Braumüller, 1983). p.12.

⁶⁶ Ingebritsen et al., *Small states in international relations*. p. 12.

⁶⁷ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Small states in world markets: industrial policy in Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). The following article also contributed to the debate of bringing weak states back as a focus of research: Stephen D Krasner, "Transforming International Regimes: What the Third World Wants and Why," *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1981).

⁶⁸ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong societies and weak states : state-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁶⁹ Tim Forsyth, *Encyclopedia of international development* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005). p.754.

⁷⁰ Migdal, *Strong societies and weak states : state-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World*. p. 277.

The revival of weak states theory

The end of the Cold War prompted a revival in the literature on weak states, which examined the unprecedented and increasing impact of technology, which has empowered both state and non-state small actors to use information to even out and partially neutralise more traditional sources of power.⁷¹ The emergence of the global South in international politics has also inspired this revival. This parallels the emergence of Constructivism as an alternative to Realism, which:

emphasizes the role of agency in constituting structure ... stress[ing] that the structure of the international system and the identities and interests of the units that comprise it are not fixed but rather result from the normative understandings that develop among nations over time.⁷²

Such norms, insofar as they pass unquestioned even by great powers, may shield the small states disproportionately to their relative inventories of material power, so overemphasised by Realists. The classical Realist view was summarised by Thucydides, reporting what the Athenians told the Melians: '[A]s the world goes, right is only in question between equals in power. Meanwhile, the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must'.⁷³ In the case of Colombia, however, empirical observation suggests that socially constructed norms condition the US-Colombia bilateral relationship, over and above power asymmetry.

Baldacchino discerns a pattern of 'smaller states [like Colombia succeeding] in diplomatic adventures where (a) they are essentially bilateral [vs. US]; (b) the smaller state commands the moral high ground ['shared responsibility']; and (c) the issue at stake is essentially financial or economic [US aid]'.⁷⁴ Calling it the 'tyranny of the weak', Kissinger propounds 'a less notable ... but more extraordinary [than Thucydides], strand of argumentation that considers "the power of powerlessness", and the ability of small states to ... achieve their intended, even if unlikely, policy outcomes'⁷⁵ – outcomes inexplicable in pure material terms.

⁷¹ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 5 (1998).

⁷² Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, *Small states in global affairs: the foreign policies of the Caribbean community (CARICOM)*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). p.4.

⁷³ Thucydides, quoted Godfrey Baldacchino, "Thucydides or Kissinger? A Critical Review of Smaller State Diplomacy," in *The diplomacies of small states: between vulnerability and resilience*, ed. Andrew Fenton Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). p. 21

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 35.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 22.

The Plan Colombia saga is a conspicuous example of that paradox. (Indeed, Kissinger's view may be a truism in situations where even the smallest state is still 'too big to fail'.)

The same intuition has been formulated – specifically in the context of Colombia – by Gabriel Marcella in the following words:

Colombia's internal weakness represents a formidable threat ... [one of] 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 ... contraband ... laundering of dirty money, suborning of public officials ... the corruption and intimidation of the media, displaced persons, and the formation of an international *demi monde* that sustains terrorism'.⁷⁶

Agency and 'penetrated' political systems

But even this is not the whole story of the strange power of weak states, which derives not merely from their unintended impact on the international system as a whole. The agency of weak states in affecting the behaviour of stronger powers is implicated as well. Perhaps the most convincing causal analysis explaining this phenomenon was invented by Rosenau. According to him, 'national societies can be organized as penetrated political systems with respect to some types of issues';⁷⁷ where 'penetrated' means that a political society cannot exclude external actors from influencing domestic policy.⁷⁸ Here the key to understanding the agency of small states like Colombia: even superpowers are not 'impenetrable' (and the US system by virtue of its inherent openness may be the most penetrable of all). Applying this to the US-Colombia relationship, US domestic drug policy – predicated on supply interdiction rather than demand reduction (because rehabilitation is difficult and uncertain, and effective deterrence would be controversial) – makes the US highly 'penetrable', insofar as it obliges dependency on supplier states' cooperation.

Rosenau theorises the agency of small states to differ from that of great powers in that 'the weight of systemic ... (governmental ...), and idiosyncratic (or individual-level) variables [is]

⁷⁶ Marcella, *The U.S. Engagement with Colombia: Legitimate State Authority and Human Rights*. p.7

⁷⁷ James N. Rosenau, "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in *Approaches to comparative and international politics*, ed. R. Barry Farrell (Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966).p. 147.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p.147.

a function of the size/strength of a given country ...'.⁷⁹ Idiosyncratic variables, like who the leader happens to be, make far more of a difference to small states. Colombia seems to be no exception: this study found the entrepreneurship of Colombian President Pastrana to have been central to the success of Plan Colombia.

Colombia: weak, fragile or failed?

Robert Rotberg, who has written extensively on state failure and its risk to the international system, theorises criteria for distinguishing failed states from merely weak ones. Of all the public or political goods furnished by the state, the most critical is security from threats both foreign and domestic. Other goods range from justice to physical infrastructure. Weak states perform adequately in some provisions but far from all. Failed states by contrast are 'deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions ... the enduring character of that violence [rather than its intensity identifies a failed state]'.⁸⁰ It loses control of its borders and territory outside the capital, cannot suppress criminal violence, and is subject to chronic economic depression. Rotberg finds Colombia nearly fits this definition, and claims it exemplifies a 'dangerously weak' state.⁸¹

Harvey Kline, as part of Rotberg's study, concluded that Colombia was *verging* on failure:

Central government has ceded de facto authority and physical control over large portions of the country ... Insecurity is omnipresent ... [c]orruption is endemic. Narcotics trafficking is corrosive and all consuming. But the central government ... provides other political goods ... GDP levels are comparatively high, infant mortality ... remain[s] low, education and literacy rates are strong, and the international legitimacy of Colombia is positive. Colombia is failing ... [h]owever, it has not 'failed'.⁸²

In his article *Colombia: Failed, Failing, or Just Weak?*,⁸³ McLean concurs, pointing out that:

Colombia does not ... fit the commonly understood profile of a failed state. Life in the cities for most people could be described as 'normal.' The economy ... is troubled but far from prostrate. Colombia is a unified country ... not experiencing what could be correctly classified as a civil war. Because it has one language, one culture, and no

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 183.

⁸⁰ Rotberg, *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror*. p.5.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Harvey F. Kline, "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State," in *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003). p.179.

⁸³ Phillip McLean, "Colombia: Failed, Failing or Just Weak," *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2002).

pressing racial struggle, the ... enmity that drags down so many other candidates for failure does not constrain Colombia ... [and] its electoral democracy produces alternation in power and at least offers the possibility that the political system can design solutions to ... the country's challenging problems.⁸⁴

Indeed, sounding guardedly optimistic about the prospects of recovery, McLean provides the rationale that underlay the invitation to the US to intervene; yet warning that 'Colombia can halt its descent toward failure with the help of much needed foreign aid, but only if the newly elected leaders ... show the skill and determination to address the fundamental problems too long ignored by the country's traditionally weak state'.⁸⁵

The literature on Intervention

Richard Little's classic account of intervention is the most pertinent grounding of the concept for the purposes of this study.⁸⁶ Little makes the point that 'intervention has never generated much research at the theoretical level'⁸⁷ prior to his analysis. Attempts to formulate an interdisciplinary concept had failed before Little; thus, most theorisation of intervention has occurred only since then. He identifies in the classical literature of IR two basic approaches to the concept of intervention: (1) the 'push' theory of Morgenthau, where the stronger state exploiting its power asymmetry 'pushes' uninvited into the weaker's internal affairs; and (2) the 'pull' theory of Thucydides, where the parties to civil wars in weaker states 'pull' great powers into the relative power vacuum:

[R]ival parties in every state – democratic leaders trying to bring in the Athenians, and oligarchs ... the Spartans ... when each party could always count upon an alliance which would do harm to its opponents and at the same time strengthen its own position, it became natural for anyone who wanted a change of government to call in help from outside.⁸⁸

This dichotomy explains rival views on Plan Colombia: Morgenthau can see in US intervention nothing but exploitation; Thucydides, by contrast, admits a possibility that the US was sincerely invited in by the Colombians. One notes that Morgenthau's concept is

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 134.

⁸⁶ Richard Little, *Intervention: external involvement in civil wars* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975).

⁸⁷ Ibid. p.1.

⁸⁸ Quoted in: Little (1975) p. 3. See also: Thucydides, Rex Warner, and M. I. Finley, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Rev. ed., The Penguin classics (Harmondsworth, Eng., Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972).

derived from his Realist paradigm,⁸⁹ whilst Thucydides's sprang from his empirical observations of the Peloponnesian War; thus, his view is likely to be more true to life.⁹⁰ Little criticises both concepts, however, for presuming a unit-actor state, an obsolescent notion that modern theory has transcended; the internal processes of government having been brought into account in IR theory and method.⁹¹ He remarks, '[T]he ability of the "Great Powers" to penetrate the domestic political system of other [weaker] states has been considerably over-estimated and the potential which did exist has diminished'.⁹²

Morgenthau's paradigm can conceptualise intervention 'only in terms of dyadic interaction between two states' involving the power asymmetry between them,⁹³ a criticism applicable to the hegemonic model of American intervention in Colombia. In reality, the half-century-long civil conflict in Colombia is what set the stage for external intervention, and the invitation to the US created a more complex, *triadic* relation involving the weak Colombian state, those contesting its power, and the US. It is worth quoting Little at length about the alternative:

Thucydides shows that intervention [is] a response to a stimulus ... But in the form he presents, it is restricted ... to a bipolar international system ... His conception ... can be ... generalized if the number of actors is reduced to three ... the triad forms the most useful structure with which to examine intervention ... two actors, by conflict or cooperation, create a stimulus to which a response from a third actor can be partial or impartial. So four distinct [interventional] situations ... are contained in the triad.⁹⁴

These are: (1) the third party responds to the stimulus of dyadic cooperation impartially (*i.e.* in a way neither party favours); (2) it responds to dyadic conflict impartially (as mediator); (3) it responds to dyadic cooperation partially (often provoking conflict); and (4) it responds to dyadic conflict partially (tipping the balance).⁹⁵ It is apparent that both the Athenian intervention Thucydides comments and US intervention today *via* Plan Colombia both fall into Little's fourth category.

⁸⁹ Hans Joachim Morgenthau, "To Intervene or Not to Intervene," *Foreign Affairs* 45(1967). p. 425 *et passim*.

⁹⁰ Thucydides, Warner, and Finley, *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

⁹¹ Little, *Intervention: external involvement in civil wars*. pp. 3-4.

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

The end of the Cold War brought about a transformation of both the conditions – and the norms – prompting intervention in internal conflicts. As the bipolar confrontation receded, the repercussions of state weakness became more salient in international affairs.⁹⁶ According to MacFarlane: ‘These changes reflected ... the evolving nature of war. Interstate war had largely disappeared ... while the incidence of internal war continued to rise [and] engagement was difficult to avoid for ... reasons closely linked to the character of these wars’,⁹⁷ particularly humanitarian ones.⁹⁸

Intervention without Invitation

The recent (post-Cold War) and largely unprecedented tendency to humanitarian intervention into the internal situation of failing and failed states *without* invitation has become one of the most hotly contested issues in IR studies. On one side is the non-intervention principle enshrined in Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter: ‘All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations’.⁹⁹ But the events of Rwanda and other, like humanitarian crises after the end of the Cold War produced a backlash against the absoluteness of state sovereignty that eventually led to the Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which enshrined different (arguably supplementary) principles, known in sum as the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P):

A. State sovereignty implies responsibility, and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself. B. Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Patrick Stewart, "Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2006). See also: Stewart Patrick, *Weak links: fragile states, global threats, and international security* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁹⁷ S. Neil MacFarlane, *Intervention in contemporary world politics*, Adelphi paper, (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002). p. 50 *et passim*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 50 *et passim*.

⁹⁹ United Nations., *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International court of justice* (San Francisco, 1945). p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), "The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty," (Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2001). p. XI. See also, the Brahimi Report: United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," (2000).

R2P was officially adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005.¹⁰¹ This upshot has not laid the debate and contest to rest. As the ICISS Report itself noted, humanitarian intervention ‘has been controversial both when it happens, and when it has failed to happen’.¹⁰²

It is a controversy, however, which does not apply directly to the case of Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia was never undertaken in the full-blown humanitarian crisis conditions, though it may well be true that the state was slipping toward such a *dénouement*. The Pastrana Administration spared the country this fate precisely by inviting US intervention in advance of it. Rather, what does apply is specifically intervention by invitation, whether in the context of a humanitarian crisis or not, and to this notion we now turn.

The literature on Intervention by invitation

The concept of intervention by invitation was discussed as early as 1880 in international law literature. William E. Hall probed the legal justification of powerful states to intervene in weaker states undergoing civil war.¹⁰³ Hall unequivocally declared that ‘intervention in a civil war, even upon request, is unlawful’.¹⁰⁴ Academic discussion of the concept was broached by Lauterpacht in 1958, who concluded that ‘intervention by invitation is not unlawful because it lacks the quality of dictatorial interference which is the hallmark of an illegal intervention in the technical sense’.¹⁰⁵ He assimilated the duties of interveners in civil war to those incumbent in the recognition of international personality: *if* the insurgents are in occupation and control of a substantial portion of national territory *and* conduct hostilities in accord with the rules of warfare, then the third party would be obligated to remain impartial and not intervene; but if either condition is not met, then intervention may be lawful.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Alex J. Bellamy, Sara Ellen Davies, and Luke Glanville, *The responsibility to protect and international law* (Leiden Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011).

¹⁰² (ICISS), "The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty." p. 1.

¹⁰³ William Edward Hall, *International Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880).

¹⁰⁴ Elihu Lauterpacht, "Notes on Intervention by Invitation," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 7, no. January (1958). p. 103.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p. 104.

On 15 July 1958 US Marines landed in Beirut ‘at the request of [Lebanese] President Camille Chamoun ... to prevent Syrian or Egyptian forces from intervening in Lebanon’.¹⁰⁷ In this case Potter concluded that a justification for the US landing ‘near Beirut was to be found in the invitation of the duly elected Government of Lebanon, an invitation extended on July 14 ... Such invitations had not been unknown in the past and had always been regarded as adequate bases for intervention’.¹⁰⁸

The term ‘intervention by invitation’ entered the field of IR in the first issue of *International Studies* in 1959, in an article by M. K. Nawaz, an Indian scholar at the School of International Studies in New Delhi.¹⁰⁹ Basing himself on Hans Kelsen’s seminal *Principles of International Law*,¹¹⁰ Nawaz defined intervention as ‘interference by threat or use of force—by one State in the affairs of another ... it is considered prohibited unless justified by special circumstances. An invitation or request by a recognized government ... would be a valid justification for intervention, and, consequently, “Intervention by Invitation” is not illegal’.¹¹¹

The concept remained dormant in academic circles but erupted once again in 1986 with the publication of *Empire by Invitation* by Geir Lundestad.¹¹² He investigated the US presence in Europe after World War II and argued that US ‘empire was an informal one in the sense that Americans found themselves being invited by other states’.¹¹³ This line of reasoning, however, was deemed inapplicable to the global South, as ‘it centred on the developed First World’.¹¹⁴ As Lundestad acknowledged himself, ‘the invitational aspect was nowhere as

¹⁰⁷ Leo J. Daugherty, *The Marine Corps and the State Department: enduring partners in United States foreign policy, 1798-2007* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2009). p. 108.

¹⁰⁸ Pitman B. Potter, "Legal Aspects of the Beirut Landing," *American Journal of International Law and Politics* 52, no. October (1958). p. 728.

¹⁰⁹ M.W. Nawaz, "Intervention By Invitation and the United Nations Charter," *International Studies* 1959, no. 1 (1959). The concept had already been partially developed in the field of International Law, see: Hall, *International Law*.

¹¹⁰ Hans Kelsen, *Principles of international law* (New York: Rinehart, 1952).

¹¹¹ Nawaz, "Intervention By Invitation and the United Nations Charter." p. 204.

¹¹² Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952," *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 3 (1986).

¹¹³ Steven Hugh Lee, *Outposts of empire : Korea, Vietnam and the origins of the cold war in Asia, 1949-1954* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995). p. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 4.

consistent as in Western Europe',¹¹⁵ leaving its relation to other parts of the world in doubt.¹¹⁶ He published a similar article in 1999 expanding on the applicability of the invitational part of his concept,¹¹⁷ extending it to the 'entire American Century'.¹¹⁸ Lundestad concluded that with the exception of Latin America, where the 'US role was clearly different from what it was in other parts of the world',¹¹⁹ the US appeared 'to be the real partner of choice'.¹²⁰

In 1999 Georg Nolte tackled the issue of intervention by invitation from a legal perspective.¹²¹ It was the 'first comprehensive treatment in recent times of the international law problems raised by the use of force by foreign troops in internal conflict at the invitation of a government'.¹²² One of the most important parts of his work was a study of 'over 60 cases of intervention of foreign troops since the 1960s, in which the government invitation played a prominent role as a possible justification for intervention'.¹²³ Of the sixty cases analysed, forty cases of intervention 'at the invitation of an effective [legitimate] government' were found.¹²⁴ Nolte concluded that 'intervention upon invitation in internal

¹¹⁵ Geir Lundestad, *Just another major crisis? : the United States and Europe since 2000* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). p. 303.

¹¹⁶ A year after Lundestad a young Iranian academic published *Involvement by Invitation*, suggesting that the US intervened in Iran partly as a result of Tehran's invitation. Not altogether convincing, the book is nonetheless an early example of intervention by invitation in the scholarly literature. See also Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement by invitation : American strategies of containment in Iran* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987).

¹¹⁷ Geir Lundestad, "'Empire by Invitation" in the American Century," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (1999).

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 190.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 210.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 217.

¹²¹ Georg Nolte, *Eingreifen auf Einladung : Zur völkerrechtlichen Zulässigkeit des Einsatzes fremder Truppen im internen Konflikt auf Einladung der Regierung = Intervention upon invitation : use of force by foreign troops in internal conflicts at the invitation of a government under international law*, Beiträge zum ausländischen öffentlichen Recht und Völkerrecht, (Berlin ; New York: Springer, 1999).

¹²² Bernd Martenczuk, "Book Review: " (George Nolte) Intervention upon Invitation: Use of Force by Foreign Troops in Internal Conflicts at the Invitation of a Government under International Law", *European Journal of International Law* 11, no. 4 (2000). p.941.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 943.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 943.

conflicts therefore is a reality in international relations that has been recognized as lawful in the reactions of the international community'.¹²⁵

In 2000 Wippman published interesting and relevant criticisms of the concept of intervention by invitation.¹²⁶ He concluded, in line with other 'existing and proposed justifications for the trans-boundary use of force in international relations, [that intervention by invitation] carries many potential risks, which must be considered along with the potential benefits'.¹²⁷ Three big problems were identified: firstly, the concept could be problematic if the invitation does not come from a government that represents the people; secondly, the 'intervention may entail a disproportionate use of force that causes more harm than good to the people of the affected State; [and thirdly] intervention may result in exploitation of a State's people or resources by a self-interested intervenor'.¹²⁸ He argues that these risks might be minimised by reliance on 'multilateral decision making and oversight'¹²⁹ by the international community and the UN.

The available literature on the concept of intervention by invitation seems to have emerged predominantly from an international law perspective.¹³⁰ In 2003 Le Mon called for a closer examination of the issue by scholars of international politics.¹³¹ He concluded that the concept of intervention by invitation must be approached critically:

tak[ing] into account the intersections of international law and international politics: While the case studies display how state ... action influences the law, the inverse is also true. International law influences state behavior as well, and given certain normative goals ... any such laws should be evaluated for their efficacy in promoting these norms.¹³²

¹²⁵ Ibid. p.943.

¹²⁶ David Wippman, "Pro-democratic Intervention by Invitation," in *Democratic Governance and International Law*, ed. Gregory H. Fox (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹²⁷ Ibid. p.326.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p.327.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 327.

¹³⁰ Louise Doswald-Beck, "The Legal Validity of Military Intervention by Invitation of the Government.," *British Yearbook of International Law* 56, no. 1 (1985).

¹³¹ Christopher Le Mon, "Unilateral Intervention by Invitation in Civil Wars: The effective control test tested," *International Law and Politics* 35(2003).

¹³² Ibid. p. 791.

Adopted Definition

According to Nolte, the concept of intervention by invitation has mainly been ‘used as a military intervention by foreign troops in an internal armed conflict at the invitation of the government of the State concerned. Such interventions may involve actual fighting by the foreign troops but their operations may also be limited to power projection or to other forms of active military support’.¹³³ The invited intervention noted in this study of the Colombian case has not entailed actual fighting by US troops, but merely its military support. Nolte goes on to observe, ‘In a wider sense, intervention by invitation could conceivably also cover non-military interventions as well as military interventions by the invitation of other actors than the government, but such use is less relevant’.¹³⁴ It is stipulated that the invitation spoken of in this study did not come from any other actors besides the duly elected government of Colombia. Thus, the invitation’s worthier legitimacy favours the legitimacy of the intervention, as it did not violate Colombian state sovereignty, but rather operated to shore it up.

Rounding out the picture is a definition formulated in 2001 by Tokatlian, which is adopted supplementally to clarify the case of Plan Colombia. Tokatlian defines intervention by invitation as where ‘*un Gobierno electo solicita colaboración externa ante la imposibilidad de preservar, demodo autónomo, el orden interno, la unidad nacional y la institucionalidad democrática* [an elected government solicits external collaboration due to the impossibility of preserving autonomously its internal order, national unity and democratic institutions]’.¹³⁵ The invitation is given in hopes that it will roll back the consequences (and perhaps also the underlying fact) of the state’s incapacity, as in fact happened in with Plan Colombia.

METHODOLOGY

This study is *qualitative* in its methodology. It relied extensively on unstructured interviews of elite participant observers in the genesis of Plan Colombia, in addition to documentary and archival matter, located on three continents, South America, North America and Europe.

¹³³ Georg Nolte, "Intervention by Invitation," in *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, ed. Rüdiger Wolfrum (Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, 2011). p. 1.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 1.

¹³⁵ Tokatlian, "El Plan Colombia: Un modelo de Intervencion?." p. 209.

Correlation between variables?

The social sciences have acquired the habit of following a methodology designed to emulate the celebrated successes of the natural sciences in their conception of what is scientific knowledge.

It is widely considered sufficient to identify independent and dependent variables and to establish between them a statistically valid correlation which holds up under constant testing so as to establish a presumptive causal relationship that can be relied on for prediction.

Milton Friedman states that:

[a] scientific hypothesis or theory typically asserts that certain [variables] are ... important in understanding a particular class of phenomena. It is frequently convenient to ... stat[e] that the phenomena ... behave in the world of observation *as if* they occurred in a ... simplified world containing only the [variables] that the hypothesis asserts to be important. ... Such a theory cannot be tested by comparing its 'assumptions' directly with 'reality'. ... Complete 'realism' is clearly unattainable, and ... whether a theory is realistic 'enough' can be settled only by seeing whether it yields predictions that are good enough for the purpose in hand or that are better than predictions from alternative theories. Yet the belief that a theory can be tested by the realism of its assumptions independently of the accuracy of its predictions is widespread and the source of ... perennial criticism ... Such criticism is largely irrelevant.¹³⁶

Amongst the several conclusions Friedman's reasoning entails one is that discovering predictable correlations between variables is the sum and substance of the social sciences, and that what may intervene between correlate variables is undiscoverable and unimportant. If this were true, then the present study would be 'unscientific' and of little value to the world.

Opening up the 'black box'

Dissatisfaction with this approach, however, has arisen, and as time goes on alternatives to such an approach have been refined. Unlike natural sciences which generally concern non-human beings, social sciences concern oneself and each other, exclusively. The assumption that all human beings are essentially the same, and thus that knowing oneself one can know others, gives rise to a confidence that one can gain further knowledge than is revealed by correlations between variables that may be 'remote' from each other in time and space. One may wish to know *for its own sake* what 'causal mechanisms'¹³⁷ intervene between variables,

¹³⁶ Milton Friedman, *Essays in positive economics* (University of Chicago Press, 1953). p. 41.

¹³⁷ Oisín Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling," *Political Science and Politics* 40, no. 4 (2007), p. 765 *et passim*.

regardless whether that enhances prediction or not. This is the motive and impetus behind the present study of Plan Colombia.

Process-tracing

One important methodological refinement was developed by Alexander L. George, who in 1979 published what is widely considered the first and classic account of the use of *process-tracing* in qualitative research, especially as applicable to the single case study method. In 2005 George and his colleague Andrew Bennett took the concept to the next level in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.¹³⁸ According to Tansey, this ‘book represents a robust defense of qualitative methodology, and case study research in particular. Touching on a wide range of theoretical, methodological, and philosophical issues, ... [it] provides guidance for case-study research and delineates the ways in which case studies can contribute both to theory development and to theory testing’.¹³⁹ Many of the recommendations of this work were applied to this research.

In the context of attempting to understand not just the existence but also the exact nature of the correlation between actor beliefs and their rational (or irrational) proceedings, George noted, ‘A more direct ... approach to causal interpretation in single case analysis [is] to trace the process – the intervening steps – by which beliefs influence behavior’.¹⁴⁰ George further notes that ‘data requirements for employing the process-tracing procedure are substantially greater than those for [other methods]. Good data on information processing that preceded the policy maker's choice of action often are not available to the investigator’.¹⁴¹ The value of this study transpires in that the author gained exceptional access and superabundant data on that ‘processing’ from most of the participants in Plan Colombia’s genesis.

George articulated the following definition of what about the causal nexus under study is to be established:

[T]he ways in which the actor’s beliefs influenced his receptivity to and assessment of incoming information about the situation, his definition of the situation, his

¹³⁸ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*, BCSIA studies in international security (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005).

¹³⁹ Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling." p. 765.

¹⁴⁰ Alexander L. George, "The Causal Nexus: between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The "Operational Code" Belief System," in *Psychological models in international politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979). p. 113.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 114.

identification and evaluation of options, as well as, finally, his choice of a course of action.¹⁴²

These categories have been borne in mind throughout the author's fieldwork and have in part determined the organisation of the material presented herein. The picture that emerges from all of the data discovered formed a highly consistent 'picture' of the actors involved, both American and Colombian, their motives and policy choices. For this reason, and to spare the reader tedium, the author has eschewed drawing explicit attention to the application of this method to the data. If the data had been any more ambiguous, then another course might have been advisable, but the 'facts on the ground' have proved so uniform in their import, that just reporting them was found sufficient to verify the author's thesis to a very high degree of probability. It might be well, nonetheless, to sketch very briefly the application of this method to the present study, bearing in mind that it found not contrasts but a high degree of congruence, in the relevant time frame, between the relevant beliefs of the elite actors interviewed. The following was found with great consistency.

All actors interviewed were political elites holding high offices of public trust, whose beliefs were fairly uniform on certain core issues; their 'receptivity to and assessment of incoming information' were decisively influenced by their experiences of democratic politics, which constrained their assessment of the means available for addressing the situation to those which can be 'sold' to voters in competitive elections; the degree of constraint differing somewhat between Americans and Colombians (*e.g.* concerning the uses of armed force); their commitment to the governing structure of which they were the masters, and their consequent unreceptivity (not necessarily without reason) to the demands for its abolition or radical remaking by certain other actors involved in the situation; and the history of US-Colombia relations – peculiar in some ways compared to US-Latin American relations in general (as noted in this dissertation) – by which the Colombians viewed the US *as if* a mostly benevolent but sometimes unpredictable uncle, while the Americans viewed Colombia *as if* a now-adult problem child for whom some residual responsibility is ineluctable; although the depth of historical memory, of course, varied across individuals and groups.

All actors interviewed defined the situation of Colombia such that the state was at high risk of failure; the state as constituted was legitimate (or rival constitutions worse); alternatively, the

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 113.

state's failure would be too costly notwithstanding its relative demerits. All actors interviewed identified and evaluated options on the assumptions that state failure ought to be prevented by all available democratic means; the means available to Colombia might well (but were not guaranteed to) include external as well as internal resources; Colombia's internal resources were inadequate to prevent state failure; and the US was by far the likeliest (though not the only) source of external resources. The course of action collectively chosen by all actors interviewed is of course the subject-matter of this dissertation—Plan Colombia.

Some fundamental disagreements arose among some of the elite participants in formulating Plan Colombia; *viz.* (a) human rights violations by the Colombian armed forces, and (b) the efficacy of supply interdiction in the war on drugs. These Plan Colombia opponents' acts inside Congress were noted in some detail so as to establish the non-hegemonic nature of the originating process; it was deemed unnecessary to undertake full-blown process-tracing of these actors, as they were defeated in obstructing the Plan. It was the purpose of this research to inquire into Colombian (or small state) agency in relation to a great power under these (possibly exceptional) circumstances; not to contrast the 'operational codes' of opposing sides inside the great power's councils, as in George's original paper.

Moreover, the beliefs and behaviour of actors aside from the Colombian and US core Executives and the US Congress, elites 'peripheral' to the Plan (drug lords, guerrilla and paramilitary commanders, civil society leaders), were not taken into account, as the scope of this thesis is limited to Plan Colombia's origin inside government circles as an official policy and programme, not its intrinsic merits or the broader controversy surrounding it.

The case for elite interviews amid process tracing

One conspicuous oversight in George and Bennett's study was their neglect of elite interviews, as pointed out by Tansey.¹⁴³ This may be the most straightforward kind of process-tracing under circumstances where sampling difficulties are at their minimum. Elite interviewing may be used in order to triangulate with other sources (*viz.* documents, memoirs, secondary sources); to add to the store of information about the attitudes, values and beliefs of the studied population to greater depth than prefabricated survey questions allow; to compile an evidentiary basis for inferring the characteristics and acts of a larger population

¹⁴³ Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling.", p. 766.

(though random sampling is needed); and finally—and most relevant to process tracing—to reconstruct an event.¹⁴⁴ This is where elite interviewing comes into its own:

One of the strongest advantages of elite interviews [is to] interview first-hand participants ... and obtain accounts from direct witnesses ... When interviewees have been significant players ... their memories are strong, and ...[when they] are willing to disclose their knowledge ... in an impartial manner, elite interviews will arguably be the most important instrument in the ... data collection kit.¹⁴⁵

This is why the author relied on elite interviews more than any other non-historical method. It was used to triangulate other evidence and add to the fund of knowledge, but above all to reconstruct how the Plan originated; not for making inferences about a larger population. The biases that the author noted were an expected favourability toward Plan Colombia and an expected tendency to overestimate one's own role in its successes. These biases were triangulated out by comparing the interviewees' accounts to one another (see below).

Schedule of interviewees

The author made strenuous efforts to gain access to the highest levels of policy making in both countries. The following persons were actually interviewed in the field in the course of this research project.

The American Side

The following interviews were conducted in English with key players from the US who were instrumental in the making and/or implementation of Plan Colombia.

Table 1.1: Key US actors interviewed

INTERVIEWEE	TITLE	Place
Rand Beers	US Undersecretary of Homeland Security for the National Protection and Programs Directorate (US Assistant Secretary of State for INL: 1998-2002)	Washington
William R. Brownfield	US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001)	Washington
Mark Coomer	Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy	Washington

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 766.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 767.

Dennis Hastert	Senior Republican Representative from the State of Illinois and 59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007	Washington
David T. Johnston	Program Manager for Cuba, US Agency for International Development (Colombia Desk Officer at USAid during the period under examination)	Washington
Stuart Lippe	Senior Colombia Specialist, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, US Department of State (deeply involved with Plan Colombia during and after the period under examination)	Washington
James F. Mack	US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 2000-2002	Washington
Joseph McBride	US Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs, US Embassy Bogotá: 1996-1999	Washington
Robert McGarity	Security Affairs Adviser, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, US Department of State (deeply involved with Plan Colombia during and after the period under examination)	Washington
Richard O'Connor	Chief of Office of National Drug Control Policy—Office of Supply Reduction (Senior Analyst during the period under examination)	Washington
Thomas Pickering	US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs: 1997-2000	Washington
Peter Romero	US Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1998-2001	Washington

The Colombian side

The following interviews were conducted in Spanish with key players in the making of Plan Colombia (or, in a few cases, who were eyewitnesses through membership in the same policy network).

Table 1.2: Key Colombian actors interviewed

INTERVIEWEE	TITLE	Place
Mauricio Cardenas	Director DNP (<i>Planeación</i>): 1999-2000.	Bogotá
Adrienne Foglia	Pastrana's Foreign Press Secretary: 1998-2002	London
Guillermo Fernandez de Soto	Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002	Hague
Alfonso Lopez Caballero	Colombian Ambassador to the UK: 2002-2006	London

Luis Alberto Moreno	Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005	Washington
Juan Esteban Orduz	Deputy Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002	New York
Andres Pastrana	President of Colombia: 1998-2002	Bogotá
Jaime Ruiz	Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002	Washington
Victor G. Ricardo	High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000	Miami
Francisco Santos	Vice-President of Colombia: 2002-2010	Bristol
Gen. Fernando Tapias (ret)	Commander of the Armed Forces: 1998-2002	Bogotá

Other interviewees

These interviewees were academics and often also practitioners in the field of foreign policy who were interviewed for their extensive writings and wide experience of Colombia and of the events leading up to and surrounding Plan Colombia.

Table 1.3: Others interviewed

INTERVIEWEE	TITLE	Place
Gabriel Marcella	Adjunct Professor at the US Army War Collge & External Researcher Strategic Studies Institute	Washington
Phillip McLean	Adjunct Professor in the Elliot School of International Affairs—George Washington University & Senior Associate Center for Strategic and International Studies	Washington
Michael Shifter	Adjunct Professor of Latin American Politics at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service & President of the <i>Inter-American Dialogue</i>	Washington
Arlene Tickner	IR Professor at the Univerisdad de los Andes	Bogotá
(Anonymous)	Senior Human Rights Activist	Undisclosed

Interviewing technique

Interviewing technique in the social sciences is typically based on certain assumptions that may not always hold.¹⁴⁶ The 'democratisation of opinions'¹⁴⁷ assumes that all opinions are equally valid, so that good data may be collected from randomly selected respondents; yet in

¹⁴⁶ Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, *Handbook of interview research: context & method* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p.6.

fact a special group of insiders may have vital information available to no one else. In such cases the researcher must ‘rely on informants’,¹⁴⁸ as was done in this study. ‘Researcher-respondent duality’ assumes roles analogous to leader and follower are taken by researchers who actively ask and respondents who passively answer questions; however, open-ended interview formats enable respondents to take the lead.¹⁴⁹ As Marvasti has noted, ‘unstructured interviewers ... simply provide a general sense of direction and allow respondents to tell their stories’.¹⁵⁰

This format was deemed most apt for this study, as informants were assumed (correctly it turned out) to know things that the author might not know that he did not know. A third assumption is that respondents are fonts of knowledge, which was deemed applicable to this study. The in-depth nature of the interviews conducted for this study was crucial; as Marvasti puts it, ‘by not limiting respondents to a fixed set of answers, in-depth interviewing has the potential to reveal multiple, and sometimes conflicting, attitudes about a given topic’.¹⁵¹ Instead of forcing respondents to choose sides, in-depth interviewing may uncover ‘it-depends’ explanations whereby informants place qualifiers on their responses.¹⁵² This was deemed essential to this study of US-Colombia relations at the elite actor level, where power asymmetry might be expected to yield ambivalent responses to certain questions.

Triangulation

The data collected through elite interviews – and the evidence gathered from other sources – could not, of course, be taken at face value. So as to correct for the highly personal biases expected of insider informants, triangulation methods were extensively applied. Triangulation is ‘supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of [or evidence for] it agree with it or ... do not contradict it’.¹⁵³ Denzin distinguishes at least four broad categories of triangulation: by data source (including persons, times and places); by method

¹⁴⁸ Amir B. Marvasti, *Qualitative research in sociology: an introduction*, Introducing qualitative methods (London: SAGE, 2004). p.16.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p.20.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p.21.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 21.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Matthew B. Miles and A. M. Huberman, *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994). p. 266.

(observational, interview, documentary); by researcher (interviewer A, B, C *etc.*); and by theory (rational-choice, constructivist, *etc.*).¹⁵⁴

Triangulation data should have different biases, different strengths, which complement each other.¹⁵⁵ This study triangulated as data sources both persons (multiple elite informants) and times (*viz.* Plan Colombia with past instances of similar interventions by the US in Colombia's internal affairs). The former was especially important for detecting bias, especially the informants' overestimation of their importance in the origination of Plan Colombia. Investigator and theory triangulation were avoided, but method triangulation was applied to the extent of closely comparing interview- with documentary evidence in case the data from any source might be falsified. Moreover, the author's personal experience (or 'participant observation') as a native Colombian sometimes served to triangulate interviewee claims.

Sampling methods

Tansey remarks that 'the nature of ... process-tracing ... has implications for the way researchers should pursue elite interviews', including sampling.¹⁵⁶ In a process-tracing context, the advantages of non-random sampling depend on the study's purpose. As Tansey notes, 'the causal processes of interest [may be] very specific episodes of decision-making at the elite level, where a limited set of actors are involved in deliberations, decisions, and actions regarding a particular political outcome'.¹⁵⁷ Such was the case for this study: inferring the properties of a large population from a small sample was not purposed, and non-random sampling was used. Tansey notes the validity of non-probability sampling of prospective elite interviewees, concluding, '[T]he most appropriate sampling procedures are thus those that identify the key political actors – those who have had the most involvement with the processes of interest'.¹⁵⁸ In the case of Plan Colombia their number was also quite small; thus, it was possible to interview if not the entire population then the major part of it. The

¹⁵⁴ Norman K. Denzin, *The research act: a theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (New Brunswick, NJ: AldineTransaction, 2009). p. 301 *et passim*.

¹⁵⁵ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. p. 267.

¹⁵⁶ Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling." p. 768.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 769.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 765.

author was fortunate to have been able to interview nearly all of the key actors in creating Plan Colombia. Many of whom were easily identifiable from publicly available documents.

Referral (or 'snowball') sampling

However, a supplementary method known as snowball sampling or referral sampling was used as well. This entails asking subjects (called 'seeds') to name others who may be asked to give facts or opinion on the topic, then interviewing the referrals. The method is especially apt in research on 'hidden populations' like drug addicts or illegal aliens, when no sampling frame exists and the size and boundaries of the population are unknown.¹⁵⁹ More relevantly to this study Babbie tells how snowball sampling was used to discover an otherwise inaccessible network of policy makers in Australia.¹⁶⁰ It was similarly deemed advisable to deploy referral sampling to triangulate documentary identification, lest some players 'hid' (not necessarily intentionally) behind bureaucratic anonymity.

Referral sampling and trust

Elite interviews are notoriously difficult to negotiate; access is for most researchers an almost insuperable problem, especially in a country Colombia, where socially stratification is higher than in the US. Actors who have played important roles in controversial events often eschew contact with outsiders; trust is a scarce commodity. Babbie cites one use of referral sampling to build trust based on prior group membership, the method relied on by the author.¹⁶¹

Viewpoint saturation

No formula exists for determining the size of a non-random sample, but referral sampling lets the researcher expand the sample step by step, concomitantly analysing results, to any size deemed necessary or convenient;¹⁶² continuing in the same vein until the data gets 'saturated', *i.e.* no new viewpoints emerge from new interviewees.¹⁶³ If the target population comprises few specimens, the researcher may interview so many of the population that the

¹⁵⁹ Douglas Heckathorn and Cyprian Wejnert, "Respondent-Driven Sampling: Operational Procedures, Evolution of Estimators, and Topics for Future Research " in *The Sage handbook of innovation social research*, ed. Malcom Williams and W. Paul Vogt (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011).

¹⁶⁰ Earl R. Babbie, *The basics of social research*, 5th ed. (South Melbourne, Australia: Cengage Learning, 2011). p. 208.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling." p. 770.

¹⁶³ Mark Eric Williams, *The Sage handbook of innovation social research*, 1st ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011). p. 188.

chances of bias are minimal with or without saturation—a result that might be termed exhaustion. If and when saturation and/or exhaustion is reached, further data collection is unnecessary.¹⁶⁴ Although the literature warns against biases in snowball sampling the chances of that were minimised in this study by the small size of the whole population and the fact that the author interviewed well over half of the relevant elites. Such was the uniformity of interview data that saturation was soon reached, yet the author continued nearly till exhaustion.¹⁶⁵

Narrative format

A narrative format was adopted as most apt for bringing to light the complex social process that process-tracing is bound to investigate, in a study that relies methodologically as much as this one on elite interviews. As Denzin notes, ‘The linguistic and textual basis of knowledge about society is now privileged ... [what] we study is contained within storied, or narrative, representation ... persons are constructed by the stories they tell’.¹⁶⁶ Interview narratives are vehicles for the cumulative knowledge of the participant observers in Plan Colombia.

PLAN OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation is structured as follows. The next two chapters, Chapters 2 and 3, will present an historical overview of the internal condition of the Colombian state, and how this has over time conditioned the state’s external relations, highlighting the ingrained patterns of behaviour that have by consequence been set. These chapters will aim to explicitly compare past events and behaviour to the present time.

The three chapters to follow, Chapters 4, 5 and 6, will narrate the story of the genesis of Plan Colombia itself, from the ascent of Andres Pastrana to the Colombian Presidency beginning in early 1998 to the enactment of Plan Colombia by the US Congress in July 2000. The story is divided into three ‘phases’ which reflect both the stages of an invited intervention – namely, (1) the invitation, (2) the bargaining over its terms, and (3) the acceptance thereof – as well as the corresponding trilateral nature of the interaction that yielded the Plan; a ‘three-way game’, as it were, involving the Colombian Executive (the ‘offeror’), the US Executive

¹⁶⁴ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*.

¹⁶⁵ Williams, *The Sage handbook of innovation social research*. p. 476 *et passim*.

¹⁶⁶ Molly Andrews, *The uses of narrative: explorations in sociology, psychology, and cultural studies* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2000).p. xi.

(the ‘bargainer-in-chief’), and the US Congress (the ‘acceptor’). Phase One covers the time frame beginning with Pastrana’s decision to stand for the Colombian Presidency and ending with the debacle of the Pastrana Administration by the summer of 1999. Phase Two begins with the US State Department’s intervention to go between the Colombians and Congress and ends with US President Clinton’s official announcement of ‘his own’ Plan Colombia. Phase Three is largely the story of Plan Colombia’s fate in Congress, ending with success in the summer of 2000.

Once the story of Plan Colombia and its background have been told, Chapter 7 will conclude with the final discussion of the findings and what they mean for the thesis of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY COLOMBIAN HISTORY FROM THE FOUNDING TO THE PANAMANIAN SECESSION AND ITS AFTERMATH (1810-1946)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter and the one to follow situate Plan Colombia and its causal nexus in a broader, synoptic historical context, in order to establish that Colombia's invitation to the international community to intervene in its internal affairs at the end of the 20th century was no singularity but part and parcel of an established, long-running tendency of Colombian political culture and tradition. It is the author's claim that the events of 1998-2000 forming the subject-matter of this dissertation are best understood as a continuation of an ingrained pattern of Colombian political behaviour at both national and international levels. The Pastrana Administration's concept of the 'shared responsibility' of aid donor states for narco-trafficking – by which they justified to the world their appeal for aid, – however meritorious it may have been on its own terms, must also be seen as a pretext for the latest instalment in a regular course of dealing with Colombia's internal weaknesses, by inviting the intervention of North America and/or Western Europe. Appearances and theorisation to the contrary notwithstanding, the invitation is nothing new; its congeners date back to the founding era of the Republic of Colombia. The existence of such a historical trend is the substance of the following two chapters and is of the essence of my thesis; in a way, it is more important than my case study of 'Plan Colombia', which is presented as one signal instance of these trends.

The tendency of Colombian elites to invite intervention is hypothesised to have arisen from a 'Janus-faced' cause that mirrors the Janus-faced nature of Colombian foreign policy; on one face, the social distance of Colombia's *criollo* elites from the rest of its society, compounding the severe difficulties the political centre in Bogotá encounters in asserting effective authority in its own periphery; on the other face, the social integration of the same elites with Western elites and a strong identification with the Western powers, resulting in a high level of trust in their elite counterparts abroad and a perception of their intervention as friendly, not hostile.

As corollary to the foregoing, the following chapters also evidence that Colombia has been at some risk of state failure, to differing degrees depending on circumstances, from its founding. This has always entailed the risk to the country as a whole of a descent into anarchy (outside of Bogotá). Certainly, the international community has perceived Colombia as a weak state

for most of its existence.¹⁶⁷ Facts evidencing that such an interpretation of Colombian political history is both accurate and current will be brought up, together with other facts rounding out the causal investigation. The first historical chapter begins with the founding of the Republic of (Gran) Colombia in 1819, going forward through the Thousand Days War and the Panama crisis, and ending in the forty years of peace that ensued. The subsequent chapter takes up the narrative with the recrudescence of violence in the 1950s, called simply *La Violencia*, and the Cold War, followed by the rise of drug trafficking and the upsurge of violence and corruption that at length put the state itself at risk under the administration of President Ernesto Samper, with which that chapter ends in 1998.

EXOGENOUS DETERMINANTS OF POLITICAL CULTURE

This section will investigate both the physical facts and the historical record of Colombia's early years in search of evidence for the first causes of certain persistent modes and patterns of behaviour that have been observed to typify the behaviour of Colombian political elites ever since independence. These patterns will then be explored in greater depth, so as both to establish their real existence and to relate them back to contemporary Colombian politics and diplomacy.

An exceptionally difficult Geography

The vast and forbidding Andes mountain ranges of Colombia have hoven up more barriers to nation building by far – obstructions to transportation and communication; the dispersal and mutual isolation of population centres; a bewildering variety of ecologies and habitats to be adapted to – than has confronted any other country in Latin America.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, Colombia's geography is hemmed-in to the point of being hermetic: 'Colombia is sometimes referred to as the Tibet of Latin America'.¹⁶⁹ Possibly for this reason, Colombia has never been a research priority of academic experts in the Latin American region; it is 'probably the least understood' country there.¹⁷⁰

Historically, the Colombia state has struggled to extend and maintain its control over all of

¹⁶⁷ McLean, "Colombia: Failed, Failing or Just Weak."

¹⁶⁸ David Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1993). p. 36.

¹⁶⁹ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*. p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. vii.

the territory formally under its sovereignty. An important, if not the only reason for this has been its complex, exceptionally difficult geography, which to this day makes for ‘dispersed settlements, and poor communications’, which has encouraged internal disintegration.¹⁷¹ Watson argues, ‘Geography plays a fundamental role in the history of Colombia’,¹⁷² an observation echoed by many other scholars, who argue that no other country in the Western Hemisphere has had to confront a topography as challenging as Colombia’s—divided by ‘three massive chains of the Andes [mountains]’,¹⁷³ with ‘peaks as high as 5,500 metres (18,000 feet)’.¹⁷⁴ This has provided an ideal breeding ground for ‘guerrilla conflict and has created challenges for state building as well’.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, according to Lopez Alves, ‘state building in Latin America ... took place in the absence of inter-state conflict ... Geography – mountain chains, jungles, deserts, poor roads, treacherous rivers ... impeded the types of wars that provoked the well-studied bloodbaths in the Old World’.¹⁷⁶ In Latin America as a whole, and all the more so in the specific case of Colombia, ‘geography discouraged the type of interstate conflict that builds nations...[and] increased the chances of internal conflict’.¹⁷⁷

How, then, did Colombia’s capital come to be located in Bogotá, a situation seemingly tailor-made to exacerbate every one of these challenges? One must bear in mind the motive force of gold fever, which drove the Spanish colonisers deep into the interior of the inhospitable and inaccessible land that would become Colombia, meticulously prospecting while exploring the diverse regions of the hinterlands. The Spanish did find gold, and during the colonial period Colombia became ‘the principal source of gold in the Spanish Empire’.¹⁷⁸ The Spanish finally became obsessed with the myth of *El Dorado*, a place with limitless reserves of gold

¹⁷¹ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*.

¹⁷² Cynthia A. Watson, "Civil-Military Relations in Colombia: A Workable Relationship or a Case for Fundamental Reform?," *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2000). p. 530.

¹⁷³ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*.

¹⁷⁴ Jennifer S. Holmes, Sheila Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Kevin M. Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves, *The other mirror: grand theory through the lens of Latin America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001). p. 68.

¹⁷⁷ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. p.17.

¹⁷⁸ Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: the power game*, 3rd ed. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). p. 496.

supposed to exist somewhere deep in the Andes. The better to explore this difficult terrain, they established their colonial, imperial capital nearby what became Bogotá. They ‘eventually had to accept that El Dorado did not exist’¹⁷⁹, yet this served as the initial motive not only for challenging the geographical limitations of the region but also for locating the capital in a place remote from all other commerce and development besides gold prospecting and mining. Thus the Spanish located the capital of New Granada in such as remote, out-of-the-way place as Bogotá, which was effectively landlocked – in notable contrast with the cities/power centres of Colonial North America, all of which were on the sea (or in quick communication by major river), and thus in easy communication with each other (think of Boston, New York, Philadelphia [on the exceptionally wide and easily navigable Delaware River flowing into Chesapeake Bay], Baltimore, Charleston, Savannah).¹⁸⁰

New Granada and its successor Gran Colombia were also divided into two halves, for purposes of communication and transportation, by the Isthmus of Panama which widened up into an entire continent – Central and North America – that cut off or greatly impeded effective intercourse between the Pacific and the Caribbean coasts of Gran Colombia – with Bogotá isolated from *both* of them.

Isthmian Region

One region especially noteworthy for its inaccessibility from the capital in Bogotá is the Isthmus of Panama itself. It may also be considered a major influence on the development of Colombia’s often dysfunctional political culture. The discovery of the Western Hemisphere was, after all, an accident of the Spanish search for a faster route to the Far East.¹⁸¹ After their discovery of the Americas, the Spanish did not give up on the idea of blazing a trail to the Orient, and in this context their efforts to find out a ‘passageway between the two oceans’¹⁸² date back as early as 1523, when Charles V ‘adopted the idea of a canal’.¹⁸³ Shortly thereafter the Crown commissioned surveys to evaluate the best possible way of building such a canal.

¹⁷⁹ David Downing, *Colombia*, Global hotspots (New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010). p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the river valleys : the odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

¹⁸¹ E. Taylor Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1935).

¹⁸² *Ibid.* p. 178.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 178.

By 1797 an international consensus had arisen that the Isthmian region was the most feasible place for the construction of such an inter-oceanic canal.¹⁸⁴

This combination of formidable topography – together with a long, complicated and often dysfunctional colonial history – is widely cited as sufficient reason to explain the failure of effective national political integration and the consequent ‘persistence of dominant regional centers’ that first broke up Gran Colombia and later greatly complicated the difficulty of governing what was left of Colombia from its nominal centre and capital in Bogotá, as well as the lag of economic development proportionate to Colombia’s natural wealth in comparison with North America and other parts of the Western world.¹⁸⁵

Colonial Heritage

In colonial times, that part of the Spanish Empire in America destined to become the modern Colombia posed enormous challenges to the early *conquistadores* owing to its topography, which was exceptionally complex even for an Andean land. The forking of the Andes chain into three *cordilleras* at its terminus divided the land into three distinct regions, ‘the eastern highlands; the West, centring on the basin of the Cauca River; and the Caribbean coast’.¹⁸⁶ This trilateral division of the region dictated the pace of the *Conquista*, which according to Skidmore and Smith was ‘incremental and uneven’.¹⁸⁷ The first group of *conquistadores* came *via* the Caribbean coast, and proceeded to conquer the eastern *cordillera* after taking over the littoral. The western parts of Colombia fell to *conquistadores* ‘coming northward from Peru and Ecuador’.¹⁸⁸ Safford and Palacios note that all were endeavouring to reach the centre of the country, which all believed contained massive amounts of gold. It is customary nowadays to frown on this gold mania as disreputable and even immoral; however, it is important to understand it in its socioeconomic context. The typical *conquistador* was unable to finance an expedition to the New World, hence those undertaking these arduous and risky

¹⁸⁴ Stephen J. Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

¹⁸⁵ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*, Latin American histories (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). p. 27.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence," in *Modern Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). p. 223.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 223.

voyages were haunted by the prospect of ruinous bankruptcy owing to the massive debts taken on to ‘obtain ships and other equipment needed by these enterprises. Because of the burden of these debts ... [*conquistadores*] attempted to recoup by engrossing as much as possible of any treasure encountered’.¹⁸⁹ Failure to repay at often usurious interest rates usually led to debtors’ prison according to the law of the times, from the notoriously harsh conditions of which the debtor might not escape alive. The inevitable consequence of this state of affairs was that ‘whatever the zone of conquest, initial European activity almost invariably amounted to little more than rapine. The *conquistadores* expected the indigenes to feed them as well as to enrich them with gold’.¹⁹⁰

Social Class and Creole Elites

The Spanish colonial system imposed a social stratification on all of Latin America including Colombia, ranging from extreme polarisation between significant numbers of Europeans vs. indigenous populations, to the overwhelming demographic predominance of indigenous peoples, to the racial mixing called *mestizaje*. Colombia in particular seems to fall somewhere in between *mestizaje* and extreme polarisation.¹⁹¹

According to Vanden and Prevost, society in Colonial times might be represented as a steep pyramid with native Spaniards at the apex and multitudes of indigenous and African peoples at the bottom.¹⁹² As a result, ‘European-born Spaniards dominated the highest positions’¹⁹³ in society. This strongly hierarchical regime resulted from the Crown’s conviction that people unconnected by birth to the territory they governed would always prove more loyal and obedient, and ‘less entangled in local interests’.¹⁹⁴ In the context of New Granada (the future Colombia) all of its ‘viceroys were Spanish born’.¹⁹⁵ These Spaniard elites (called *peninsulares* or ‘[Iberian] peninsulars’) also monopolised the law courts, the clergy and the

¹⁸⁹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 29

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 29.

¹⁹¹ Marshall C. Eakin, *The history of Latin America : collision of cultures*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁹² Vanden and Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: the power game*. p. 105.

¹⁹³ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 56.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 56.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 56.

military.¹⁹⁶ Those born in America to Spaniard parents (called *criollos* or ‘creoles’) also played some role, but were mostly relegated to subaltern positions, or in the best case to municipal and regional offices such as town mayorships.¹⁹⁷

In the fullness of time elite educated creoles began to challenge the dominance of native Spaniards.¹⁹⁸ The shortest route to upward mobility for them was ‘the study of the law’.¹⁹⁹ The other strata of society, namely *mestizos*, blacks and indigenous peoples, did not enjoy the same opportunities for upward social mobility, and most of them ‘suffered the vicissitudes of poverty and powerlessness’²⁰⁰ during this time and for the centuries to come. Only the rise of the coffee trade, beginning around 1900 – thus coming very late in Colombia’s long history – had ever given the Colombian masses any hope of bettering their economic circumstances.²⁰¹

Exploitative Mercantilist System.

The Spanish colonies in the Americas were wholly owned and managed by the Crown, and in the early colonial period its authority was absolute over the provinces forerunning Colombia. With the establishment in Madrid of the Council of the Indies in 1524, the Crown not only monopolised the regulation of life in the American colonies, but also micromanaged in every one of its myriad aspects. The economy in particular was adversely impacted: – run, from overseas, upon mercantilist and *dirigiste* precepts and principles, the colonial trading system was closed, the colonies being permitted to trade with Spain only, but forbidden to trade with other countries and even with each other except to the limited extent determined by bureaucrats ensconced in Seville.²⁰² Inter-colonial trade was eventually freed in the middle of the 18th century, but according to Parks ‘it was too late’.²⁰³ Combined with the inconducive physical geography, these economic shackles resulted ‘in an intense sectionalism that vastly

¹⁹⁶ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

¹⁹⁷ Michael LaRosa and Germán Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012).

¹⁹⁸ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

¹⁹⁹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

²⁰⁰ Vanden and Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: the power game*. p. 105.

²⁰¹ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*. p. 6.

²⁰² George Lauderbaugh, *The history of Ecuador* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012). p. 27.

²⁰³ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 10.

complicated the first efforts at political organization',²⁰⁴ and subsequently for most of Colombia's history 'hampered the ability of any government in Bogotá to create the notion of a nation'.²⁰⁵

Relief came only in the form of Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808 and his subsequent decision to install his own brother on the throne. Already tired of 'Spanish rule and Spain's insistence on monopolising foreign trade, [Spanish colonies] seized the moment to declare independence'.²⁰⁶

CENTRIFUGAL TENDENCY OF COLOMBIAN POLITICS

It is noteworthy that even during the struggle for independence the various forces fighting for it against the Spanish Crown did not constitute a truly united front. The fighters did not even have a proper army; they were forced 'to put together an army and to urgently train military officers ... [as they] had no kind of military academy'.²⁰⁷ The whole was moved by a motley assortment of ideologies and motives held together only by the common enemy. These deep divisions surged to the forefront as soon as that common enemy had been defeated.²⁰⁸

Patria Boba [Booby Fatherland]: 1810-1819

Also known as the First Republic, these were the years 'between the Declaration of Independence of 1810 and *Libertador* Simon Bolivar's final victory over the Spanish troops in 1819'.²⁰⁹ The Act of Independence was prepared by Jose Acevedo y Gomez, and declared on 20 July 1810. In this document Acevedo briefly outlined the political views of the *peninsulares* (those born in Spain) and contrasted them with those of the *criollos* (those born

²⁰⁴ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 36.

²⁰⁵ Watson, "Civil-Military Relations in Colombia: A Workable Relationship or a Case for Fundamental Reform?." p. 530.

²⁰⁶ Duncan Green, *Faces of Latin America* (London: Latin America Bureau, 2006). p. 53.

²⁰⁷ Jorge P. Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1989). p. 55.

²⁰⁸ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

²⁰⁹ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 50.

in Colombia of Spanish or Spanish-descended parents). Political power had been in the control of *peninsulares* up to this point.²¹⁰

Careful note should be taken that above all this *grito de independencia* was an expression of protest against the abuses the creoles had been subjected to by the peninsulars. Like their North American forerunners, the Founding Fathers of Colombia were not at first necessarily asking for full independence from Spain, but merely wanted the creole class to be heard and its rights respected. Accordingly, Jose Miguel Pey de Andrade, a creole and the Mayor of Bogotá, was designated the ‘new nation’s first Chief of State’.²¹¹

Unable to manage political consensus and unity, Pey de Andrade was forced to resign office on 27 February 1811. A few days later the ‘founding fathers organized a *Colegio Electoral Constituyente del Estado de Cundinamarca* as the nation’s first Constitutional Assembly and Congress’.²¹² On 4 April 1811 they ratified Colombia’s first constitution, and appointed its ‘second Chief of State, Jorge Tadeo Lozano [de Peralta Gonzalez-Manrique] for a three year period’.²¹³ After just five months in office, President Lozano resigned due to internecine infighting between rival political factions in Congress. At this stage, one of the pre-eminent Founders, Antonio Nariño, was appointed President and shortly thereafter a second constitution was drafted and ratified.²¹⁴ The scale, the bitterness and the intransigence of the infighting, and the debilitating effect it had on governability, was a harbinger of things to come. This polarisation and extremism characterised Colombian politics from then onwards.

Weak Bolivarian Colombia (1819-1830)

This pattern of embittered polarisation infected even the highest levels of government, and inauspiciously persisted throughout the founding period. Simon Bolivar, having defeated the Spanish at the Battle of Boyacá on 7 August 1819, became President of New Granada and Francisco Antonio Zea Vice-President. This inaugurated consolidation of the nominal forbear of the territory that would become modern Colombia—Gran Colombia,²¹⁵ which

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid. p. 50.

²¹² Ibid.p. 50.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 50.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

was announced on 17 December 1819 by the ‘proclamation of union at Angostura’.²¹⁶ Ratification occurred at the Congress held in ‘Cucuta on 6 October 1821’.²¹⁷ It received the name Gran Colombia because of its grand size, comprising the large and important regions of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela.²¹⁸ At this time Panama was still under Spanish control and made no part of Gran Colombia.

As the commander of the armed forces of the independence movement, General Bolivar was obliged to travel extensively throughout the country, and thus he found it necessary to delegate his powers as appointed President. Initially, many of his functions were undertaken by Vice-President Zea, but Zea was soon instructed (by Bolivar himself) to travel to Europe to obtain diplomatic recognition for the new Republic, and hopefully also to raise badly needed funds on credit. At this point Bolivar named General Santander (a passionate federalist) to be ‘acting President’²¹⁹ and General Nariño (an equally committed centralist) to be the acting Vice-President, but the two did not work well together due to their ideological differences, and Nariño was forced to resign.²²⁰

Bolivar was hopeful that these early tensions would be resolved once they all met to ratify ‘the existence of the new Republic of Gran Colombia’²²¹ in May 1821 at Cucuta. The ‘Congress of Cucuta’ that was held there drafted and approved, on 12 July 1821, Colombia’s first modern constitution and already the third in the young Republic’s brief history.²²² The constitution had been drafted along the strongly centralist lines favoured by Bolivar and so hated by Santander. Bolivar sensed the weakness of his new Republic, and was determined to counteract this by monopolising power in the hands of a single supreme authority capable of defending Gran Colombia’s independence against Spain and the other great powers. What he did not count on was the weaknesses that would arise from divisions that were internal to the

²¹⁶ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p.50.

²¹⁷ Manuel Arteaga Hernández, Jaime Arteaga Carvajal, and Círculo de Lectores (Bogotá Colombia), *Historia política de Colombia*, 1. ed. (Bogotá, D.E: Intermedio Editores, 1986). p. 183.

²¹⁸ Alberto Montezuma Hurtado, *Breve historia de Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1984).

²¹⁹ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 56.

²²⁰ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

²²¹ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 56.

²²² Gerhard Robbers, *Encyclopedia of world constitutions*, 3 vols. (New York: Facts On File, 2007).

constitution of the new state. Bolivar and Santander came to personify the two mutually centrifugal tendencies that were to characterise Colombian politics ever afterwards, to wit the Conservative Bolivar versus the Liberal Santander.

Not only did things not turn out as Bolivar had hoped, but his centralisation gambit did not resolve the polarising differences between the factions and in some ways exacerbated it. The ideological factions and their leaders were unable to compromise. Santander kept advocating and agitating for a federal state structure throughout this period; influenced by the philosophy of Bentham, he likewise advocated the principles of utilitarianism as the ideological basis for the new republic and its laws, which infuriated the Bolivarians. Bentham's prime directive was that laws 'should be directed toward the achievement of the greatest good for the greatest number of people'.²²³ Santander became known as the *Hombre de las Leyes* [the man of the laws].²²⁴ It is important to note that at that early point Panama was still not part of Colombia, and had not even achieved independence from Spain. Once this happened on 28 November 1821, Panama joined (Gran) Colombia.²²⁵

The disintegration of Gran Colombia

From an early stage Venezuelans and Ecuadorians showed unhappiness with being yoked to Colombia. In the Colonial period they had been similarly unhappy with their dependency on the centralising power of Spain; now, during the first years of independence (the mid-1820's) they were being forced into a similar arrangement with Bogotá (so it seemed to them), which they also felt was too far away – as 'inaccessible as Madrid if not more so'.²²⁶

Ideologically, they were alienated by the centralisation of power in Bogotá engineered by Bolivar in Cucuta in 1821, with most political elites in Caracas and Quito complaining of being ignored (by Santander, be it noted) in every conceivable way.²²⁷ Even the most 'routine appointments in Caracas [and Quito] were acted on in national cabinet sessions [in Bogotá]'.²²⁸ There arose a pervasive sense that Bogotá would end up siphoning away most of

²²³ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 61.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 57

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 61.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid. p. 55.

the benefits of the union envisioned by Bolivar, especially as it had already become the centre of culture in the former colony of New Granada. Safford and Palacios argue that, though not comparable to European capitals like Paris or London, Bogotá nonetheless offered a remarkable environment for the ‘university-educated elite ... [being] the center of political controversy and the chief arena of political careers’²²⁹ throughout the liberated territory.

The sense of being overmatched was accompanied by an equally pervasive sense that Santander and his Presidential administration in Bogotá were militantly ‘civilian’ and prejudiced against military men, most of whom had originated in the territory that was to become Venezuela.²³⁰ A part-explanation for the territorial imbalance of military personnel may be that the battle for independence had originally been fought near Bogotá, causing a high number of ‘Colombian’ casualties. Consequently, those who hailed from the future Venezuela and Ecuador held the lion’s share of surviving ‘top military commands’,²³¹ yet could offer little to the civilian authority in Bogotá – a trend that was to continue throughout the subsequent history of these countries.

Eventually, the feeling of being humiliated spread amongst Venezuelans and Ecuadorans; a feeling which united them, despite their own political differences, in ‘opposition to Bogotá’.²³² This sentiment soon boiled over into a determination to become independent countries. Such a development was not in fact deeply feared in Bogotá, where it was believed that integration bore more potential for dissonance than harmony. The battle for Venezuelan and Ecuadoran independence commenced with the end of Bolivar’s two year personal dictatorship (on 27 April 1830), and met little resistance from Bogotá, due also to the fact that the ruling elites there perceived military power as disruptive and, opting to promote civilian authority, ‘sought to reduce the size of the military’²³³ in the remainder of Colombia from the very beginning.

On 6 May 1830 a political convention convening in Valencia ‘rejected the Colombian

²²⁹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 60.

²³² Ibid. p. 61.

²³³ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 136.

constitution and proceeded to promulgate a new one for Venezuela'.²³⁴ Three months later, on 10 August 1830, under the direction of General Flores, a group of local political elites met 'in Quito and [signed] an act of independence from [Colombia], naming the new state Ecuador, and installing Juan José Flores as provisional president'.²³⁵ The secession of Venezuela and Ecuador ensued from the failure of Bolívar's desperation measure of holding the country together through dictatorship. It was largely a prestige matter; few concrete benefits ensued; Venezuela and Ecuador ended up inheriting essentially the same weaknesses as Colombia, political fragmentation and a weak central power enabling 'strong regional identities'²³⁶ – except for one fundamental difference: these two countries were left with a strong military tradition, for better and for worse.

Weak Republican Period (1830-1903)

The period between 1830 and 1903 was marred by endemic state weakness and political instability, giving rise to repeated armed conflict, yet with only two *interstate* wars²³⁷ compared with a total of 'twenty three [intrastate] conflicts'.²³⁸ According to Tilly's classic work on state-building, the presence of too many internal conflicts and the absence of external ones does not conduce to a strong, coherent state.²³⁹ A healthy state-building process entails decreasing internal enmities; however, 'this process of subordination of internal rivalries has not occurred uniformly in Colombia'.²⁴⁰

The end of Bolívar's dictatorship and the dissolution of Gran Colombia created an urgent need of drafting a new constitution for what was left of Colombia. The new constitution of 1831 appointed Santander (then living in exile, having been banned by Bolívar) as the new President. The country was already strongly regional and sectional, with the political elite

²³⁴ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 123.

²³⁵ Lauderbaugh, *The history of Ecuador*. p. xix.

²³⁶ Hollis Micheal Tarver Denova and Julia C. Frederick, *The history of Venezuela*, The Greenwood histories of the modern nations, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005). p. 62.

²³⁷ Montezuma Hurtado, *Breve historia de Colombia*.

²³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 163.

²³⁹ Charles Tilly, "Bringing the state back in," in *Bringing the State back in*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

²⁴⁰ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. p. 17

dwelling in the southern Andes, in the vicinity of Popayan; the business elites in the northeast Caribbean coast around Cartagena; and elements of both elites in the centre of the country in Bogotá. None of these groups were ‘powerful enough to rule alone. Consequently, they needed to reach compromises in order to gain political influence’.²⁴¹ This circumstance created a political culture that favoured the convoking of conventions and roundtables that would bring together the disparate and centrifugal political and economic forces constantly at work throughout Colombia’s history.

Keeping it together

The collapse of the Bolivarian union of Gran Colombia had a profound effect on the formation of the national territory of Colombia. Already in this formative period, many other provinces that would eventually make up the emerging Republic of Colombia expressed and sometimes acted upon their aspirations for independence from Bogotá. To take three signal examples, Casanare (a region destined to fall under the control of the FARC guerrillas in the 1990s) threatened secession with voluntary annexation to Venezuela; the Cauca Department (an area notoriously under the control of the Cali drug cartel in the 1990s) declared its intention to break away and unite with Ecuador; and ferment in favour of independence also roiled the Isthmus of Panama even at this early date.²⁴²

The effect of a weak army

From this very early stage, the Colombian state found it difficult to deal with internal conflict in part because after the Venezuelans departed, from ‘1832 through the end of the nineteenth century the military as a corporate group had less weight in [Colombian] politics’²⁴³ than anywhere else in Latin America. Thus, the pre-existing military inadequacy was compounded by Colombian elites’ determination for their country ‘to become an enlightened society following Western European models’.²⁴⁴ They perceived the military as reactionary and dangerous to that goal and, opting to promote civilian rule, ‘sought to reduce the size of the military’²⁴⁵ from the founding. The trend has continued into the twentieth century, and is

²⁴¹ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 60

²⁴² Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 132.

²⁴³ Ibid. p. 131.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 136.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 136.

reflected in the incapacity of the central Colombian state to rule its periphery until the advent of Plan Colombia at the end of the 1990s.²⁴⁶

Elite classism

According to Osterling, independence from Spain brought few if any comprehensive changes to the stratified social structure.²⁴⁷ At this stage political power was ‘cornered’ by an elite of creole whites as narrow as the peninsular elite had been, who monopolised all senior political, ecclesiastical and military offices.²⁴⁸ It was a society in which power was practically inherited, not earned by personal merit. These elites did not even consider abolishing their own social, economic or political privileges.²⁴⁹ The rest of society – Indians, *mestizos* (offspring of mixed indigenous and European blood), and African slaves and their descendants continued at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid, just as in colonial times.²⁵⁰ Notwithstanding having overthrown the imperial system, the creoles were products of that system and even regarded themselves as genuine scions of Spain.²⁵¹ The rulers of Colombia, at the time of independence and ever since, had too little in common with those over whom they ruled.

Ideology and violence

Ideology in Colombia during this period was dominated by European philosophies to which creole elites were exposed while studying law at the inns of court, nearly all of which were located in Bogotá.²⁵² Studying law, and the ideology with which it was imbued, was virtually an essential part of creole identity. It had been the vehicle of choice for upwardly mobile creoles in colonial times, and after independence it remained the standard pathway to political office.²⁵³ Among the most evident tokens of European ideas and ideologies were expressions

²⁴⁶ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*.

²⁴⁷ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 60.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 61.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 60.

²⁵¹ Malcolm Deas, "'Weapons of the Weak?' Colombia and Foreign Powers in the Nineteenth Century," in *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital*, ed. Matthew Brown (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008). p. 186.

²⁵² Victor Uribe-Uran, *Honorable lives: lawyers, family, and politics in Colombia, 1780-1850*, Latin American series (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

²⁵³ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 57

to be found in the early constitutions. The first constitution of 1811 featured the rhetorical cannonades of Rousseau and the French Revolutionaries in proclaiming itself the guarantor of ‘the imprescriptible rights of man and of the citizen’.²⁵⁴ Subsequent constitutions invoked the ‘general will’ and other notions contained in *Le contrat social*, for example that the popular sovereignty ‘is indivisible, imprescriptible, and unalienable’.²⁵⁵ English and American precepts were also taken on board in the form of a strict separation of legislative, executive and judiciary powers from each other. At the same time, some serviceable elements of Spanish colonial tradition were conserved, as in the perpetuation of the *residencia*, an end-of-term inspection of officers’ conduct, and in the sanction and establishment of Catholicism.²⁵⁶

From the very beginning of its history as an independent nation Colombia was dominated by two ideologically polarised parties, the Liberals and Conservatives. ‘Clear ideological differences separated the political groups’.²⁵⁷ The Conservative Party advocated strong central government, close cooperation with the Catholic Church, and a system of popular political participation limited by qualifications; the Liberal Party endorsed federalism, separation of church and state, and a more inclusive franchise.²⁵⁸ From this perspective, ‘a competitive [to the point of a polarised] two-party political system soon developed ... the legacies of which brought disastrous consequences in the 1940s and 1950s’.²⁵⁹ The strong polarisation between these two elitist parties gave rise to a unique political culture ‘whereby one party would rule to the complete exclusion of the other party, offering little more to the other party out of power than a challenge to mobilize for violence’.²⁶⁰

It should be noted that this dysfunctional, fanatically partisan political culture interacted very badly with the excessive weakness of the central government. Throughout the 19th century Colombians were to wrestle unsuccessfully with the balance and distribution of powers in their organic laws. As one constitutional revision superseded another, formal power oscillated

²⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 90.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 90

²⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 90.

²⁵⁷ Bradley Lynn Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: the making of an inter-American alliance, 1939-1960*, New studies in U S foreign relations (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2008). p. 2.

²⁵⁸ Downing, *Colombia*.

²⁵⁹ Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: the making of an inter-American alliance, 1939-1960*. p. 2.

²⁶⁰ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 86.

between the centre and the periphery as extreme centralisation was exchanged for extreme federalism and *vice versa*. The centralism of Bolivar and the tendency he represented never succeed because of the remoteness and the disconnect of Bogota from the life of the country overall. This reinforced the case for the opposite tendency, and a turn to federalism would ensue. But this created further problems of its own, as the centre, weakened by the devolution of power away from itself, could not suppress lawlessness in the provinces or hold the nation together; making way for multiple outbreaks of political violence which, in their recurrence and indecisiveness, resembled the perennial insurgencies and vigilantism of the 20th century; even though these outbreaks are usually labelled ‘civil wars’ in the literature. Three violent events that illustrate these historical and continuing weaknesses of the Colombian state are to be noted.

Civil war 1859-1963

The federalist maximum was reached in the 1850s and 1860s. Devolution away from Bogota had created a self-sustaining process reinforcing the centre’s weakness and the lawlessness of the outlying areas together, leading to yet more calls for regional autonomy to ‘fix’ the very ills being created. It was speculated that if the centralised power that had become the main prize of cutthroat ambition were parcelled out to the provinces, this would deflate those who coveted it so furiously. In the event this proved delusional, as ‘the fragmented federal system rather than diminishing partisan conflict, generalized it. Minority parties in the states could not accept the prospect of permanent powerlessness and soon staged revolutions against the locally dominant party’.²⁶¹ The result was yet another civil war, pitting Conservative President Mariano Ospina in Bogotá against opportunist General Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera of the province of Cauca; which erupted in 1859 and ended with Mosquera’s victory in 1863.

Rionegro violence: 1863-1885 Mosquera and the Liberals experimented with federalism, taking it even further. With the *Rionegro* Constitution of 1863 Colombia adopted one of the most extreme forms of federalism in the world, dividing an already weak country into nine autonomous states.²⁶² While Bogotá did retain control of Colombia’s international relations, practical sovereignty in all other affairs was given to the provinces, with hardly any limits on their ‘individual liberties; each state had its own army ... [and] complete freedom in arms

²⁶¹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 221

²⁶² Arturo Alape, *La Paz, la Violencia: Testigos de excepción* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 1985).

production and traffic'.²⁶³ According to Colombian historian Arturo Alape, this precipitated a hornet swarm of confrontations; between 1863 and 1885 a total of 54 civil wars flared inside these nine provinces – two were instigated by the Conservative Party, 14 by the Liberal Party against the Conservatives, and 38 by one faction of Liberals against another.²⁶⁴ In the same period in all provinces, a total of 42 constitutions were dreamed up and swept away.²⁶⁵

The War of a Thousand Days:1899-1902 Amid such lawlessness electoral politics would inevitably be punctuated by an alternation of personalist dictatorships with violent rebellions that saw 'Liberals and Conservatives engaged in some of the bloodiest fighting in all of the Americas. The War of a Thousand Days (1899-1902) left at least 100,000 dead in a country of some three million of people'.²⁶⁶ This war in particular, coming at the end of the period under study, potently inflamed regionalism and secessionist sentiment, especially in Panama, by exposing the Colombian state's weakness and 'inability to maintain peace there'.²⁶⁷

The Isthmus slips away

Contrary to a widespread myth that Panama was 'stolen' by the US, Panamanian history has been characterised all along by a strong 'spirit of autonomy and a series of secessionist revolts'²⁶⁸ from the mid-1820s onwards. Over time the region continued to grow apart from the rest of Colombia, partly due to neglect by Bogotá, but also to their growing awareness of the international importance their province had attained in Europe and the US; 'autonomy and development of a transit facility became linked in the minds of Panamanians'.²⁶⁹

One reason advanced in the 1840s to justify independence was that Venezuela and Ecuador's secession in 1830 had provided a historical precedent strongly validating an equal right of Panama (or any other part of 'Colombia') to secede.²⁷⁰ The Panamanians believed that the

²⁶³ Harvey F. Kline, *Colombia: portrait of unity and diversity*, Westview profiles Nations of contemporary Latin America (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983). p. 39.

²⁶⁴ Alape, *La Paz, la Violencia: Testigos de excepción*.

²⁶⁵ Kline, *Colombia: portrait of unity and diversity*. p. 39.

²⁶⁶ Eakin, *The history of Latin America : collision of cultures*.p. 232.

²⁶⁷ Michael L. Conniff, *Panama and the United States: the forced alliance*, 2nd ed., The United States and the Americas (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001). p. 61.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 11

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 11.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

‘weakness, instability, maladministration, and neglect of the Bogotá government and the geographic position of the Isthmus were [also] sufficient reasons for the exercise of that right’.²⁷¹ Consequently, in November 1840 two districts in the Isthmus declared themselves the independent ‘State of the Isthmus’.²⁷² These two districts soon requested recognition from the US, but just when Washington was ready to send a negotiator, ‘the end of the civil war brought Panama back into the fold’²⁷³ and the US withdrew.

For the remainder of the nineteenth century the people of the Isthmus failed to integrate ‘into the Colombian national ethos’.²⁷⁴ Bogotá was too remote to properly represent them; the capital was only ‘accessible via an arduous, month-long journey’²⁷⁵ by sea, rivers and tortuous mountain trails. Despite diligently paying taxes, Panamanians did not get much back in terms of ‘social services (hospitals, schools, roads, and basic infrastructure) that would improve the lives of the people’.²⁷⁶ When an opportunity finally arrived in 1903 for secession to succeed, ‘Panamanians rebelled—with the encouragement of the United States’,²⁷⁷ confronting Colombia with one of the worst foreign crises it ever endured. The Panamanian secession will be explored more in depth later in this chapter.

The foregoing exogenous determinants of political culture yielded a long-term trend (noticeable, however, from the beginning) toward the secessionist break-up of the territory originally constituting Gran Colombia – in stark contrast to the territorial consolidation and expansion typical of the North American experience. Cultural and linguistic kinship between Latin American states also determined that conflicts would as likely as not arise ‘internally’ (within nominal national political boundaries) as ‘externally’ (across boundaries). The visible and all-pervasive social stratification determined that conflicts would likeliest arise between ruling elites and their subjects, who were quite different to themselves and in a sense lived ‘in another world’. The wild geography determined that the Colombian elites’ remote governing

²⁷¹ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 191.

²⁷² Ibid.p. 190.

²⁷³ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 27.

²⁷⁴ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 81.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 81.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 81.

centre would everywhere meet exponentially obstructive complications in all its attempts to maintain far-flung territorial control. Elite ideological polarisation determined that the centre would prove its own worst enemy in the struggle for national consolidation and economic development. All these determinations exerted the net cumulative effect of debilitating the Colombian state, dashing its pretensions to emulating the United States, and keeping it weak epoch after epoch until the present day. The stage was set for the slide toward state failure which ended up precipitating Plan Colombia.

COLOMBIAN DIPLOMATIC TRADITION

The Colombian state's internal debilities pervasively influenced its external relations, to the history of which we now turn in search of behavioural patterns – a 'tradition' – in the state's conduct of foreign relations, especially with European and North American great powers. The Colombian elite, peculiarly, harbours a sense of 'manifest destiny' disproportionate to its actual power resources, but which like the American has persisted into the contemporary age.²⁷⁸ This may be Bolivar's legacy, a vision of his country's future that was nothing if not grandiose.²⁷⁹ Colombia's deep political problems did not deter even the earliest generation of Colombian diplomats from believing themselves destined for preeminence. They 'anticipated Colombia's potential greatness, and they approached negotiations with the United States and European powers believing they held leverage, unrealistic as that may have been'.²⁸⁰

Unique relationship with the U.S.

Following the 1821 constitutional convention in Cucuta, the newly minted republic enjoyed a modicum of stability and 'international prestige not matched elsewhere in Spanish America'.²⁸¹ This early success earned diplomatic recognition, beginning with the United States' on 19 March 1822,²⁸² on the grounds that Colombia had achieved a well-organized, sovereign government. The US House Committee on Foreign Relations subsequently

²⁷⁸ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*.

²⁷⁹ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.

²⁸⁰ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 29.

²⁸¹ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 50.

²⁸² Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.

appropriated \$100,000 for diplomatic missions to Colombia.²⁸³ Three months later President Monroe received Manuel Torres (already living in Washington) as Colombian Ambassador to the United States.²⁸⁴

During the ceremony ‘Monroe sat down beside Torres, “and spoke with kindness which moved him even to tears. The President assured him of the great interest taken by the United States in the welfare and success of his country, and of the particular satisfaction with which he received him as its first representative” ... Torres was thus the first diplomatic representative from the Spanish American nations to be received officially by the government of the United States’.²⁸⁵ Not only foreign relations but also private social intercourse between Colombia and the US began early and put down deep roots. Creoles identified with the American Republic right from the start, and the US quickly became one of the most popular destinations of Colombian elites travelling abroad.²⁸⁶

Colombian influence on the Monroe Doctrine

Torres was a ‘peninsular’, but had migrated to Bogotá as a lieutenant in the Spanish Army.²⁸⁷ In Bogotá he helped found the movement for independence and was soon marked as an ‘enemy of the crown’.²⁸⁸ Targeted by the colonial authorities, he fled to the USA in 1796,²⁸⁹ establishing himself in Philadelphia. Soon he had made important contacts inside the US government.²⁹⁰ As Colombians fought for independence, Torres lobbied the US not only for the moral support of recognition, but also for material support – ammunition to keep the army of independence going.²⁹¹ Indeed, ‘Torres took a leading role in shaping public opinion in the

²⁸³ Ibid. p. 102.

²⁸⁴ Charles Lanman, *Biographical annals of the civil government of the United States, during its first century. From original and official sources* (Washington.: J. Anglim, 1876).

²⁸⁵ William Spence Robertson, "The First Legations of the United States in Latin America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 2, no. 2 (1915).p. 190.

²⁸⁶ Helen Delpar, "Colombia: Troubled Friendship," in *United States-Latin American relations, 1850-1903: establishing a relationship*, ed. Thomas M. Leonard (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

²⁸⁷ Raimundo Rivas, *Relaciones internacionales entre Colombia y los Estados Unidos. 1810-1850* (Bogota, Colombia: Imprenta nacional, 1915).

²⁸⁸ Raimundo Rivas, *Historia diplomática de Colombia, 1810-1934* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1961).

²⁸⁹ Anne Arsenault, "Manuel Torres: The "Franklin of the Southern world," *Pennsylvania Legacies* 3, no. 1 (November) (2003).

²⁹⁰ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.

²⁹¹ Rivas, *Relaciones internacionales entre Colombia y los Estados Unidos. 1810-1850*.

United States'.²⁹²

Torres died on 15 July 1822, a few months after the US official recognition of Colombia, but the historical evidence strongly suggests he was a persuasive, perhaps even a formative ideological influence on President Monroe and his eponymous Doctrine. Torres embraced the concept behind the Monroe Doctrine 'before Monroe himself':²⁹³ that the Americas were 'not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers [and that the US] will consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our [US] peace and safety'.²⁹⁴

Personal Diplomacy (the European case)

The Europeans were less eager to recognise Spanish American sovereignty. Spain was still a great power, even if diminished by its internal decline and by the Napoleonic Wars. Other powers, whatever their sympathy for the South American cause, feared giving a *casus belli* after all the blood Napoleon had shed. Moreover, Europe was in full conservative reaction after the 1815 Congress of Vienna; the Holy Alliance of Austria and Russia with Prussia, forming the core of the Concert of Europe, took a dim view of national independence. Great Britain, more receptive, was nonetheless eager to avoid upsetting the Continental balance of power. In 1848 the Concert would violently suppress corresponding aspirations throughout Europe. Even so, with diplomatic recognition by the US in tow, Colombian agents in Europe made bold to lobby for their diplomatic due.²⁹⁵ Britain recognised Colombia in 1825,²⁹⁶ but it would many years before Colombia enjoyed recognition from every state in Europe.

Diplomacy: Francisco Antonio Zea—lobbyist to Europe

Francisco Antonio Zea had been appointed by Bolivar himself as early as 1819 to represent 'New Granada' (*a.k.a.* Gran Colombia) to the European powers.²⁹⁷ Bolivar knew that the US at this stage lacked the capacity to furnish credit to the newly independent country, and was

²⁹² Arsenault, "Manuel Torres: The "Franklin of the Southern world."p. 11

²⁹³ Alfredo Vázquez Carrizosa, *Historia diplomática de Colombia / 1, La gran Colombia* (Santafé de Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 1993).p. 49.

²⁹⁴ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 131.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ivan Jaksic, *Andrés Bello: Scholarship and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). p. 86

²⁹⁷ Vázquez Carrizosa, *Historia diplomática de Colombia / 1, La gran Colombia*.

suspicious of its competitiveness; resenting also its lukewarmness and inadequate support (as he saw it) for his desperate struggle for independence from Spain. He preferred cultivating relations with Europe, and wanted a representative ‘on the ground’ to mobilise public opinion as Torres was doing in Washington.

His overriding objective was diplomatic recognition, but his representative Zea ‘issued a statement (April 8, 1822) from Paris to the European governments, declaring that Colombian ports were to be closed to those which did not grant recognition’.²⁹⁸ Zea was reprimanded by Bogotá for acting *ultra vires* in binding the Colombian state to a provocative ultimatum.²⁹⁹ Santander was particularly unhappy, and whilst Bolivar was absent on a journey, Santander as Acting President ousted Zea on 1 June 1822; after which Zea died.³⁰⁰ Bolivar was deeply aggrieved by this, insisting that he had given Zea plenary powers to negotiate.³⁰¹

Inviting a Defender

The subsequent falling-out between Bolivar and Santander archetypified the polarised nature of Colombian politics, and the fragility of a state obliged by circumstances to struggle for international recognition even after becoming independent for all practical purposes. The fledgling republic’s need to seek external support in foreign and domestic exigencies shaped inexorably a political culture that ‘survived’ through evolving a shrewd understanding of how to invite the intervention of great powers in ways that buttressed, not undermined Colombian sovereignty. The flip side, of course, is that inviting interveners to do what the Colombian state should have done for itself acted to reinforce the very debility it sought to alleviate. This section will look at the earliest example of this syndrome, the forerunner of things to come.

Inviting a defender: take 1—the US

Though historians may disagree about Torres’s influence on the Monroe Doctrine, the Colombians themselves perceived it as their own victory. Santander ‘being actively engaged in determining the scope and intent of this policy’,³⁰² interpreted it as giving Colombia ‘a

²⁹⁸ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.p. 104.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Vázquez Carrizosa, *Historia diplomática de Colombia / 1, La gran Colombia*.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Alejandro Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, its importance in the international life of the states of the New World*, Publications of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Division of International Law, Washington (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924). p. 122.

powerful ally in case its independence and liberty should be menaced by the allied powers',³⁰³ whose support offered to Spain at the time, under the treaty of 1815, for recovering its colonial possessions worried him as 'a threat to national security'.³⁰⁴

In a conference at the US State Department in Washington on 1 July 1824, Jose Maria Salazar, the new Colombian envoy, 'suggested to [Secretary of State] Adams that the independence of Spanish America was in danger',³⁰⁵ and invited the US to 'translate [their] message [Monroe Doctrine] into action',³⁰⁶ by forming a 'defensive alliance',³⁰⁷ formalised in a treaty that would give Colombia higher standing in the international system.³⁰⁸

The US was not so receptive as the Colombians desired; heeding Washington's valedictory warning against 'European entanglements',³⁰⁹ the Monroe Administration instead offered a commercial alliance. Fearing munitions for a Spanish *reconquista* being shipped aboard neutral vessels, Colombian Foreign Minister Pedro Gual lobbied hard to convince the US to accede to a clause abating in Colombian waters a then-current principle of maritime law that 'free goods make free ships',³¹⁰ until Colombia and Spain should finally settle the status of Spanish America.³¹¹ The Colombians failed to win over the Americans, however, and on 8 October 1824 Gual and Anderson signed a treaty giving the US most of what it wanted, including the commercial status of 'most-favoured nation'.³¹² It became the 'first treaty negotiated by the United States with an independent state of Latin America'.³¹³

³⁰³ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 132.

³⁰⁴ Joseph Smith, *The United States and Latin America: a history of American diplomacy, 1776-2000*, International relations and history (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005).p. 15

³⁰⁵ William Spence Robertson, "South America and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828," *Political Science Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1915). p. 88.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 92.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 87.

³⁰⁸ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.

³⁰⁹ Smith, *The United States and Latin America: a history of American diplomacy, 1776-2000*. p. 15.

³¹⁰ Benjamin Franklin and Jared Sparks, *The works of Benjamin Franklin; containing several political and historical tracts not included in any former edition*, 10 vols., vol. 1 (Boston,: Tappan & Whittemore, 1844).

³¹¹ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.p. 134.

³¹² Conniff, *Panama and the United States: the forced alliance*. p. 11.

³¹³ Robertson, "The First Legations of the United States in Latin America". p. 197.

Inviting a defender: take 2—Great Britain

The Gual-Anderson Treaty failed to yield the Colombians their desired outcome; Bogotá then turned to Europe to invite its great powers to stand sentinel as alternates. The Foreign Ministry drew up an ‘invitation’ to the British to intervene as guarantors of Colombia’s independence. This bore fruit in 1825, when British Foreign Minister George Canning not only recognised Gran Colombia but concluded with Colombian Foreign Minister Gual a Treaty of Friendship, Navigation and Commerce (*a.k.a.* the Gual-Hamilton Campbell Treaty) which provided more favourable terms of trade and maritime law.³¹⁴ All of the foregoing negotiations exhibit the Colombians’ high morale and strategic vision in the teeth of material weaknesses. Resourcefulness and perseverance characterise their search for external aid to supply the defects of their internal situation. Although these weaknesses might oblige them to yield to greater powers, it never discouraged the vigorous, proactive search elsewhere for terms better befitting their preferences.

Inviting a defender: take 3—Ecuador

Invitations to other countries to intervene in Colombia’s internal security were by no means limited to the classical great powers of Europe or North America. Another, very interesting early instance of the Colombian state’s dependency on external intervention comes from the mid-1840s, when Bogotá was fighting an insurgency in Pasto, a southerly province in the throes of a secession bid. In this context, the Colombians were pessimistically convinced that their ‘government lacked sufficient military forces to suppress the guerrillas already operating in Pasto, not to speak of dealing with possible revolts in other parts of the republic. [General] Mosquera therefore got the president of Ecuador, General Flores, to send Ecuadoran troops to help put down the guerrillas’.³¹⁵

According to Montezuma, this was an ‘extraordinary security measure’³¹⁶ and a calculated risk, and even in a sense a compromise of sovereignty that required the Colombian Congress to authorise President Marquez to invite Ecuador’s intervention. Once authorised, Ecuador sent to Colombia ‘one thousand soldiers’,³¹⁷ who gave the Colombians victory over the rebels

³¹⁴ Jaksic, *Andrés Bello: Scholarship and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. p. 86.

³¹⁵ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 148.

³¹⁶ Montezuma Hurtado, *Breve historia de Colombia*. p. 172.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 172.

in September 1840.³¹⁸ Without this intervention the weak Colombian state would have been unable to defeat the rebels, yet because of its extremity, it made the Marquez government a target of sustained criticism by its political opponents, who claimed that the invitation to Ecuadoran intervention was ‘of dubious integrity and [lacked] patriotism’.³¹⁹

Inviting a Guarantor

By the mid-1830s the idea of a passage across the Isthmus of Panama connecting the two vast oceans was abroad, and Colombia was looking ‘to secure a guarantee of the Isthmus by treaties with more powerful nations’³²⁰ in order to safeguard their hold over a region which appeared so desirable to other nations. To obtain such a guarantee of sovereignty against foreign aggression, they first invited, in the late 1830s, the intervention of Europeans, namely Britain and France.³²¹ When these powers rejected the invitation, the Colombians then turned to the US in 1846. This was a period of bitter competitiveness between the Europeans (Britain and France) and Americans for influence in the region. They ‘were all interested in a trans-isthmian...route as a way of extending their trade networks’.³²² The following section explores each of these invitations in deeper detail.

Inviting a guarantor: take 1—Britain and France

The initial invitation to intervene went out to Great Britain in 1839, when Colombia’s envoy to London, Manuel Mosquera, ‘was instructed to sound Great Britain on the matter’³²³ of guaranteeing Colombian sovereignty. The British responded that this would be difficult to achieve, as there was no historical ‘precedent for such a guarantee’.³²⁴

The London negotiations came to a full stop in 1841, when Britain learned that the Panama region was undergoing conflict with the central government in Bogotá, and had seceded from Colombia, seemingly successfully. Necessity, however, overcame humiliation to drive the Colombians to press on with inviting European intervention. In 1843 Colombia was treating

³¹⁸ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 194.

³²¹ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*.

³²² LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 199

³²³ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 194.

³²⁴ Ibid. p. 194.

with both Britain and France for an international agreement on cooperation and defence of an Isthmian canal. On offer for supporting the enterprise of either party was free access to all the coal and timber that was to be found, and to hundreds of thousands of acres of land for both construction and settlement. The only counter-condition was that Colombian troops only were to police the whole territory.³²⁵

Colombia's appeal for British and French protection of Panama and a guarantee of Colombian sovereignty, in exchange for its pledge of the neutrality of the Isthmus, was rejected by London.³²⁶ Paris was no more forthcoming, and the Colombian state's perennial incapacity drove Bogotá's perforce back into the arms of Washington for protection.³²⁷ According to Parks, it was this response by Britain and the vacillation of France that 'caused President Mosquera to turn towards the United States'.³²⁸

Inviting a guarantor: take 2—the US

Colombia had more success at convincing the United States to accept its invitation to intervene in the Isthmus of Panama as the guarantor of Colombian 'sovereignty and ... safety of transit over the Isthmus of Panama'.³²⁹

The specific arrangement enshrined in the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1846 was quite exceptional. For one thing, according to Randall, the treaty was 'the most comprehensive U.S. agreement in the nineteenth century until the end of the Spanish War in 1898'.³³⁰ Delpar points out that the peculiarity of this treaty was that the Colombian Government had found the ingenuity to craft an agreement that better served the interests of Bogotá than Washington.³³¹ This perspective on the 1846 treaty balances the 'emphasis on resistance to Washington that completely dominates so many works (e.g. Peter Smith, *Talons of the Eagle* [1996]) by examining Latin American strategies of collaboration to manipulate Washington

³²⁵ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid. p. 28.

³²⁸ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 200.

³²⁹ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 99.

³³⁰ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 29.

³³¹ Delpar, "Colombia: Troubled Friendship."

in pursuit of specific geopolitical goals'.³³² The treaty was to have far-reaching repercussions for the rest of the century, but it seemed to many observers at the time it was negotiated in 1846 little more than a toy 'at the instigation of the government in Bogotá, which ... desperately wanted an American undertaking to protect its possession of the isthmus from possible European aggression'.³³³

Some analysts maintain that the Colombians were so eager to get the signature of the US on an agreement because of their 'fears of British encroachment on Panama'.³³⁴ Healy echoes this by stating that the 'Colombian government had been apprehensive at the expansion of British power in [the region]'.³³⁵ While clearly the British represented a commercial threat due to their presence on the Mosquito coast, what these accounts ignore is that the Colombians actually had already tried to engage the British in an agreement similar to Mallarino-Bidlack before even considering engaging the US. Such an inference is seconded by Randall, who observes that Bogotá was trying 'to play the two [US and Britain's] ... ambitions and anxieties against one another to the [Colombian] advantage'.³³⁶ This course of action had been ongoing since 1837, when the Colombian *chargé* to Washington, Domingo Acosta, claimed that the British were 'planning to gain control of the isthmus, and ... urged the United States to resist British designs'.³³⁷

Negotiations in Bogotá: 'The face of the saint makes the miracle happen'

Benjamin Bidlack was appointed in early 1845 to negotiate with the Colombians over the possibility of digging a canal. Secretary of State James Buchanan specifically instructed him to emphasise to Bogotá that Washington was striving to 'ensure that the isthmus not fall into European hands'.³³⁸ Bidlack arrived at Bogotá on 1 December 1845;³³⁹ negotiations in

³³² William Schell, "Review Article of 'United States-Latin American Relations, 1850-1903: Establishing a Relationship by Thomas Leonard'," *The Business History Review* 74, no. 1 (2000). p. 188.

³³³ Smith, *The United States and Latin America: a history of American diplomacy, 1776-2000*. p. 33.

³³⁴ Robert H. Holden and Eric Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: a documentary history* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 27.

³³⁵ David Healy, *James G. Blaine and Latin America* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001). p. 41

³³⁶ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 28.

³³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 29.

³³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 29.

Bogotá commenced shortly thereafter in December. Instead of holding the formal meetings usual in diplomacy, the Colombians opted for more relaxed meetings with Bidlack to discuss all the possibilities of the agreement. The first set of these meetings were held between Bidlack and the Colombian minister of foreign affairs, Mallarino. Parker argues that these two ‘held frequent conferences in regard to the canal projects’.³⁴⁰

The two developed a rapport, and then the Colombians stepped up the pressure and President Mosquera himself ventured to invite Bidlack meet with him on a regular basis at the Presidential palace. Mosquera then made the US envoy a tempting offer: the possibility for Washington to obtain preferential commercial treatment that would give US vessels the same rights as Colombian vessels. Previous to that, Bogotá had been reluctant to acceded to such an agreement because it wanted ‘to build up [its own] large national merchant marine’.³⁴¹

Bidlack perceived a unique opening, and warned Washington in October 1846 that it would be ‘dangerous to let the golden opportunity pass’.³⁴² Throughout November 1846 he spent an inordinate amount of time urging the US State Department to allow him to enter into the agreement with Bogotá. It would seem that communications with Washington were somehow blocked or delayed; the month of December arrived and Bidlack still lacked any clear idea of how Washington wanted him to proceed.³⁴³ He whiled away his time ‘anxiously awaiting authority and instructions’,³⁴⁴ afraid as he was that the Colombians might change their minds. He finally proceeded with the negotiations as they were, convinced that by ‘securing to the Government of the United States the right of way across the Isthmus of Panama’,³⁴⁵ he would be best fulfilling the general instructions given him by Secretary Buchanan before his departure for Bogotá in 1845.

³³⁹ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 200.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 201.

³⁴¹ Ibid. p. 203.

³⁴² Noel Maurer and Carlos Yu, *The big ditch: how America took, built, ran, and ultimately gave away the Panama Canal* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011).

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 203.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 203.

In this diplomatic context he used the first half of December 1846 to meet with Mallarino and Mosquera on a daily basis to hammer out the text of the agreement. He endeavoured to entice the Colombians to agree to a more moderate arrangement that would not obligate the US to guarantee specifically both Colombian ‘sovereignty and ... safety of transit over the Isthmus of Panama’,³⁴⁶ but the Colombians rejected his suggestions and kept up the pressure on him to sign the agreement as it stood. Finally, on 12 December 1846, and ‘operating without proper authority [from the US]’,³⁴⁷ he signed the ‘treaty of amity, peace, and concord ... between the United States of America and [Colombia]’.³⁴⁸

Bidlack forwarded the treaty he had signed to the State Department on 14 December 1846.³⁴⁹ He was expectant and assumed Senate ratification would be swift and uncomplicated, but in this he erred. The first doubts actually arose inside the White House, after some of President Polk’s own cabinet members expressed serious reservations about whether the treaty, and Article 35 in particular, was consistent with the first principle of US foreign policy, settled since Jefferson, of ‘friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none’.³⁵⁰ After some deliberation, Polk’s doubts dissipated and he became ‘convinced ... that the transit was too important to be rejected’.³⁵¹ He sent the agreement to the Senate for ratification on 10 February 1847 with a note that read as follows. ‘The importance of this concession to the commercial and political interests of the United States can not easily be overrated’.³⁵² The Senate did not even acknowledge receipt of the draft agreement until 25 March, and in their coolness and scepticism the Senate postponed the first debates over the treaty until December 1847.

³⁴⁶ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 99.

³⁴⁷ Maurer and Yu, *The big ditch: how America took, built, ran, and ultimately gave away the Panama Canal*. p. 35.

³⁴⁸ Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected works of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 6* (Wildside Press, 2008). p. 47.

³⁴⁹ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.

³⁵⁰ Ronald E. Powaski, *Toward an entangling alliance: American isolationism, internationalism, and Europe, 1901-1950*, Contributions to the study of world history, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991). p. xvi.

³⁵¹ Eugene Irving McCormac, *James K. Polk, a political biography* (Berkeley, Calif.,: University of California Press, 1922). p. 710.

³⁵² *Ibid.* p. 710.

Negotiations in Washington by Herran

Getting wind of his treaty's sceptical reception in Washington, President Mosquera 'sent a large delegation [of 15 members] to Washington, led by former president Pedro Herrán [his son in-law], to advocate the benefits of unlimited access to the Panama route'.³⁵³ Rivas claims that Mosquera had specifically instructed his son-in-law Herran to remain in Washington for as long as it might take for [US] Senate approval to be won.³⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that Colombia did not have a diplomatic legation in Washington from 'November 1842',³⁵⁵ until Herran was received by the Polk Administration on 7 December 1847 as 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of [Colombia]'.³⁵⁶ These years of absence from the US capital coincide with the period when the Colombians were trying unsuccessfully to convince the Europeans to serve as guarantor of the Isthmian transit, during which 'former representatives had resided principally in New York'.³⁵⁷ Colombia was more interested at that time in raising private financial capital for their projects than obtaining the political support from Washington.

Once arrived, Herran undertook an aggressive and ultimately quite effective lobbying campaign. Herran opted for essentially the same technique of persuasion that Mallarino and Mosquera deployed so successfully in Bogotá the previous year to sway Bidlack to the treaty in the first place. Rather than following standard diplomatic practice and bombarding the State Department 'with long argumentative notes pointing out the advantages of the treaty, he chose to work quietly through conferences', *i.e.* meetings face to face.³⁵⁸ This unusual way of proceeding resembles the informal techniques later deployed by Ambassador Moreno and his team in Washington during the lobbying stage of Plan Colombia, beginning in 1998. And the Mallarino-Bidlack treaty also encountered determined opposition in Congress, where 'some senators argued that Article 35 constituted an alliance with [Colombia]'.³⁵⁹ Many felt that an

³⁵³ Maurer and Yu, *The big ditch: how America took, built, ran, and ultimately gave away the Panama Canal*. p. 36.

³⁵⁴ Rivas, *Relaciones internacionales entre Colombia y los Estados Unidos. 1810-1850*.

³⁵⁵ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 164.

³⁵⁶ Lincoln, *The Collected works of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 6*. p. 57.

³⁵⁷ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 209.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 209.

³⁵⁹ Maurer and Yu, *The big ditch: how America took, built, ran, and ultimately gave away the Panama Canal*. p. 36.

implicit commitment to an ‘entangling alliance...[should] not [be] considered as a safe precedent’.³⁶⁰

Herran’s surmised that one of the best means for overcoming such objections might be to encourage the US to send settlers to the Isthmus, whom the US would then have an interest in protecting additional to the sake of transit. He endeavoured thus to influence public opinion by promoting the attractions of colonising Colombia. The lobbying campaign was widened to include letters written to members of the House of Representatives – apparently in hopes of their indirectly influencing their respective Senators, – such as the one to Rep. Macklay (D-NY) in early 1848, wherein Herran made many rather startling promises about how settlers from the US would be treated. They would be given land for cultivation; their freedom of worship would be guaranteed; they would enjoy exemption from taxation for the first twenty years; they would be forever exempt from military service; their relocation expenses would be paid for by the Colombian State; and they would, moreover, be ‘admitted, from the moment [they arrive] ... to all the rights and immunities of any of its citizens ... [Colombia] will grant all the protection which depends on its power to industrious [Americans] who should desire to become cultivators of the soil in that republic’.³⁶¹

Herran also stressed the imminent threat posed by the British, who were then lurking around the Isthmus. He warned that ignoring their attempts to dominate the region could have very serious consequences on ‘North American trade and prestige’.³⁶² With the support of the Polk Administration, Herran’s efforts paid off: on 3 June 1848 ‘the Senate ratified the treaty twenty nine to seven ... Bogotá hoped that the Bidlack Mallarino Treaty would encourage other powers to form similar agreements with [Colombia], guaranteeing “universal neutrality” for the isthmus. This did not occur, however, and the United States became the sole foreign protector of the neutrality of the Panamanian isthmus’.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Smith, *The United States and Latin America: a history of American diplomacy, 1776-2000*. p. 34.

³⁶¹ Henry G. Wheeler, *History of Congress*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848). p. 235.

³⁶² Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. p. 210.

³⁶³ Maurer and Yu, *The big ditch: how America took, built, ran, and ultimately gave away the Panama Canal*. p. 36.

Implications of the Treaty

Holden and Zolov argue that the treaty was approved ‘just in time to accommodate the demand for oceangoing passage to California that would be generated by the gold rush of 1849’.³⁶⁴ With the approval of this agreement, Congress implicitly crafted Washington’s ‘first official protectorate’.³⁶⁵ The Bidlack-Mallarino Treaty was the only alliance that the US agreed to throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. The US had practically committed itself to routing communication between oceans through Panama inasmuch as it won the right to intervene to defend and to maintain order on any means of transit across the Isthmus, regardless to whom it belonged.³⁶⁶

The US exercised this right of defending its interests thirteen times before 1902. To do so, the US was obliged to occupy Panama at length more than once, putting US forces in relations of hostility with substantial elements of the local populace. The Treaty’s Sovereignty Clause implied a US obligation to quell any attempt by Panama to secede, even though the US knew, or should have known by then, that Panamanians had attempted this more than once before 1846. The Treaty made Washington responsible for Panama’s submission to Bogotá.³⁶⁷ As guarantor of Colombian sovereignty in Panama and free transit across the Isthmus, the US was obliged to relinquish any option whether or not to regard other states’ acts on the Isthmus as threats to US security.³⁶⁸

The quest overstays its welcome; the invitation grows cold

The Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty was ratified in 1848, coincident with the discovery of gold reserves in the West of the US. At this stage, the US reluctantly ‘agreed to support “perfect neutrality” of the Isthmus of Panama provided that U.S. citizens could freely pass through the isthmus as they pleased’.³⁶⁹ The treaty paved the way legally for American enterprise to build an inter-oceanic railroad in 1855, and the Isthmus had clearly attracted enough US interest

³⁶⁴ Holden and Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: a documentary history*. p. 27.

³⁶⁵ Brian Loveman, *No higher law: American foreign policy and the Western Hemisphere since 1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). p. 107

³⁶⁶ Conniff, *Panama and the United States: the forced alliance*. p. 19.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 20.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 20.

³⁶⁹ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*.p. 199.

and attention as an ideal place to build a canal.³⁷⁰

The US presence in the region ‘became a tremendous source of revenue, and joint Colombian-American development projects turned the region into showcase of inter-American cooperation’.³⁷¹ Income from the railroad was in fact the most important source of revenue for the government in Bogotá ‘from the turbulent 1850s until the contract was revised in 1867’.³⁷² The positive gains, however, were offset by a rising degree of ‘tensions between Panamanians, North Americans, and *Bogotános*; the parties argued over control of tax revenues, land rights/access, and freight rates’.³⁷³ Panama desired independence more than ever; Washington increasingly believed that Bogotá did not have the necessary capacity to govern the province; and Bogotá more and more believed that the ‘Americans threatened Colombian cultural and administrative power in the Department of Panama’.³⁷⁴

An instance of how explosive these tensions were becoming occurred in Panama City on 15 April 1856, in what became known as the ‘watermelon riots’. The incident started when a drunken American on transit ‘ordered a piece of watermelon from a black fruit-seller and refused to pay 10 cents for it’.³⁷⁵ A fight broke out between this and other American passengers and the black denizens of the City. By dawn the next day 15 white Americans and two black Panamanians had been killed and at least 25 wounded on all sides.³⁷⁶ The riot was seen as a direct attack on U.S. interests; Washington immediately dispatched the US Navy to intervene in Panama to restore order in a critical situation. By the time US marines arrived in town, the riot was over, and the marines could not justifiably intervene. Nevertheless, Washington decided at this point to keep a naval vessel permanently stationed in the area in case it should be needed to quell future such events.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁰ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

³⁷¹ Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: the making of an inter-American alliance, 1939-1960*. p. 3.

³⁷² Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 33.

³⁷³ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 199.

³⁷⁴ Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: the making of an inter-American alliance, 1939-1960*. p. 4.

³⁷⁵ David Foster Long, *Gold braid and foreign relations: diplomatic activities of U.S. naval officers, 1798-1883* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988). p. 137.

³⁷⁶ Mercedes Chen Daley, "The Watermelon Riot: Cultural Encounters in Panama City, April 15, 1856," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 70, no. 1 (1990).

³⁷⁷ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*.

This decision was perceived in Bogotá as a sea-change in US policy in the Isthmus.³⁷⁸ Washington began to insist on interpreting the 1846 treaty in ways Bogotá objected to. The treaty provided that Colombia cedes control of certain strategic islands in Panama harbour during periods of crisis. The US now demanded to transfer to the Panama Railroad Company any reserve rights, for which the US would pay Colombia \$1.2 million while releasing it from any further obligation to protect the route through the Isthmus. The US threatened that a Nicaraguan route through to the Pacific was available as a substitute, and that Colombia would lose the advantages it would gain from the Isthmus route.³⁷⁹ Bogotá, however, was unwilling to give up the revenues from US investment in Panama, which has been estimated at approximately ‘fourteen million dollars... by 1881’.³⁸⁰

Faced with the US ultimatum, the government sent emissaries to Europe to shop Colombia’s strategic assets around in exchange for English or French military and diplomatic intervention. Bogotá hoped this would forestall a US occupation and its consequences. Ideally, the Europeans would work out an international accord guaranteeing Colombia’s sovereignty over the Isthmus.³⁸¹ Once Bogotá discovered that the Europeans would not accept such an invitation on any terms, Colombia was obliged to weigh up its options in the bilateral relationship with the US. Learning how to deal with the US became the top priority.

Interest in a canal across the Isthmus did not evaporate. The successful opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 whetted Washington’s interest in building a similar edifice in the Americas, and ‘both houses of Congress established committees to investigate canal projects’.³⁸² Congress appropriated funds for conducting surveys in Central America to determine the most advantageous location. The results were clear—the Isthmus of Panama was the best choice. Yet the research indicated that the cost of such a project was too high; politicians in Washington toyed with the idea but formed no definite plans. Washington’s hesitation led to inaction on the terms of another treaty with Colombia in 1870, which actually contained an

³⁷⁸ Long, *Gold braid and foreign relations: diplomatic activities of U.S. naval officers, 1798-1883*.

³⁷⁹ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*.

³⁸⁰ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 200.

³⁸¹ Long, *Gold braid and foreign relations: diplomatic activities of U.S. naval officers, 1798-1883*.

³⁸² Smith, *The United States and Latin America: a history of American diplomacy, 1776-2000*. p. 36.

explicit authorisation for the US to build a ‘canal through Panama’.³⁸³

Washington’s dithering ‘drove the Colombians [once again] into the arms of Europe’.³⁸⁴ In 1879 at the International Scientific Meeting in Paris, Bogotá commenced negotiations with French commercial interests over a concession for building the canal. In 1880 a contract was let to the ‘*Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interoceanique*’.³⁸⁵ Preliminary work commenced on 1 February 1881 under the supervision of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the engineer who had designed the Suez Canal.³⁸⁶

The US reacted violently to the news, which came as a surprise and a shock. The US believed France uninterested in a canal for the sake of inter-oceanic traffic, but rather as a spearhead for eventual colonisation of Central America.³⁸⁷ Fortunately for Washington, Lesseps’ project failed spectacularly—*Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interoceanique* had become bankrupt by 1889 due to mismanagement, endemic corruption and rampant fraud. Still, the venture had dug approximately 40 percent of the eventual canal—at the cost of an estimated *forty thousand* workmen, who died of yellow fever and malaria whilst labouring in the tropical swamps.³⁸⁸

The French debacle galvanised the United States to occupy the Isthmus and complete the canal. Many factors influenced this development, including Theodore Roosevelt’s election to the US Presidency in 1901. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt had advocated a ‘two ocean’ navy, believing American power depended on this.³⁸⁹ The relevance of the Canal to this project, launching the US as a global great power, was manifest.

At that juncture, Colombia was undergoing major systemic changes: a new constitution and, in 1899 the outbreak of civil war. The events of 1886 became known as the ‘Regeneration’ and ‘ushered in a sustained period of Conservative rule during the Presidency of Rafael

³⁸³ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 200.

³⁸⁴ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 59.

³⁸⁵ Robert C. Harding, *The history of Panama*, The Greenwood histories of the modern nations, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006).

³⁸⁶ Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*.

³⁸⁷ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*.

³⁸⁸ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Núñez'.³⁹⁰ This represented a return to a centralism stressing 'Colombia's Hispanic and Catholic tradition and culture'.³⁹¹ Colombia signed a concordat with the Holy See embodying that separation of Church and State which entailed a special partnership between them; meaning that Bogotá would enforce the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church in many important affairs of life.³⁹²

This reaffirmation of tradition, however, was unable to stave off the social unrest that erupted as the 19th century closed. As the Spanish-American war came ended in 1898, a protracted civil war, the War of the Thousand Days, broke out in Colombia and 'lasted from late 1899 until early 1902'.³⁹³ A fanatical internecine bloodletting ensued between Conservatives and Liberals, burdening negotiations about the canal at a critical juncture.³⁹⁴

Intervention by invitation during the Thousand Days War

Panamanian secession was the great unintended consequence of the Thousand Days War. The crackup of the Liberal strategic position leading to this *denouement* began with the invasion of the Isthmus by Liberal General Herrera in 1902. The state, under Conservative control and 'unable to confront the rebel forces in such a distant area, requested United States government assistance. President Theodore Roosevelt accepted the request and promptly sent the Marine Corps to neutralize successfully General Herrera's forces'.³⁹⁵ This intervention at the invitation of the Colombian state was decisive. By year's end Herrera had capitulated and, boarding the American battleship *Wisconsin* on 21 November 1902, signed a peace treaty known as the Wisconsin Treaty, effectively ending hostilities and concluding peace between the two Parties. Liberal forces on the mainland had already agreed to the Nerlandia Treaty on 24 October 1902. Intermittent fighting and disorganised resistance, however, continued well into 1903, contributing to secession.

Meanwhile, the US had finally settled on a canal route, the existing path through the Isthmus. It was technologically more complex, yet partway finished. The US Senate ratified the Hay-

³⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 201.

³⁹¹ Ibid. p. 201.

³⁹² Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

³⁹³ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 201.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 74-75.

Herrán enabling treaty in early 1903, but it failed in the Colombian Senate.³⁹⁶ The Colombian elite worried about losing sovereignty over Panama as they slowly began to recover after the devastating war. In their weakened condition they felt disadvantaged in negotiating such a far-reaching agreement with the triumphalist administration of Theodore Roosevelt.³⁹⁷

Once burnt, twice shy: the Panamanian secession and its aftermath

Panama declared independence on 3 November 1903.³⁹⁸ The most consequential event in Colombian history since independence, it exposed the state's incompetence.³⁹⁹ A classic instance of state failure, it was due not so much to US meddling as to Colombia's own weakness and the necessity to compensate by inviting a stronger nation to intervene in what were its domestic affairs. The previous history of shopping the Isthmus to the great powers, seeking one both interested and strong enough to build the canal and to guarantee Colombia's sovereignty over it, testifies to this.⁴⁰⁰

Nevertheless, the national experience of losing Panama was emotionally painful. It happened during a period of deep internal unrest in Colombia; civil violence persisted from 1895 to 1902, just before Panama broke away.⁴⁰¹ A backlash ensued: in the 20th century Colombian political culture became introverted, protectionist, wary of American intervention, and hyper-vigilant of its sovereignty. It is clear, however, that the civil war had exacerbated a state debility that was already chronic. This is corroborated by President Roosevelt, who in his 1913 autobiography wrote:

We had again and again been forced to intervene to protect the transit across the isthmus, and the *intervention was frequently at the request of Colombia herself* [emphasis added] ... I took final action in 1903. During the preceding fifty-three years ... Colombia had been in a constant state of flux; and the State of Panama had sometimes been treated as almost independent, in a loose Federal league, and sometimes as the mere property of the Government at Bogotá ... In short, the experience of over half a century had shown Colombia to be utterly incapable of keeping order on the isthmus. Only the active interference of the United States had enabled her to preserve so much as a semblance of sovereignty. Had it not been for

³⁹⁶ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

³⁹⁷ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*.

³⁹⁸ Ximena Orjuela, *El Congreso hace historia: Colombia, 1819-1929*, 1. ed., Villegas historia (Bogotá, D.C., Colombia: Villegas Editores, 2004).

³⁹⁹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 239.

⁴⁰⁰ Montezuma Hurtado, *Breve historia de Colombia*.

⁴⁰¹ Germán Vázquez and Nelson Martínez Díaz, *Historia de América Latina*, 1. ed. (Madrid: SGEL, 1990).

the exercise by the United States of the police power of her interest, her connection with the Isthmus would have been sundered long before it was.⁴⁰²

The 45-year peace—an anomaly in Colombian history?

The end of the Thousand Days War – which had been managed only through US intervention at Colombian state’s invitation – precipitated a political transformation: ‘the Colombian elite renounced warfare as a legitimate form of politics’.⁴⁰³ The four decades that followed – from 1903 to 1946 – were relatively peaceful and stable ones, with no internal wars and no attempts to overtake the central government.⁴⁰⁴ During most of this time – from 1910 to 1930 – the Conservative Party, the victors in the Thousand Days War, held sway, backed by the pervasive influence of the Catholic Church. This period coincided with something new in Colombian affairs: economic growth resultant from becoming ‘fully integrated into the world market as coffee became consolidated’.⁴⁰⁵ The onset of the Great Depression upset the uneasy arrangement, bringing massive unemployment and unrest. Even Conservatives conceded the solution lay with the Liberal Party, which came to power with the election of Enrique Olaya Herrera in 1930. Olaya allayed labour violence by legalising trade unions.⁴⁰⁶ His successor, Alfonso López, took Colombia’s first stab at agrarian reform and social security, at which the elites of both Parties reacted vehemently. Up until this time the ‘elite [had] kept to this golden rule’⁴⁰⁷ of eschewing armed conflict as a means of achieving political ends, but the unstable equilibrium began to unravel with López’s *debâcle* and the election of Mariano Ospina Pérez in 1946 and his demagogic successor Laureano Gómez in 1950, whose dictatorial repressions fanned the flames of the extreme violence that erupted after the 1948 assassination of populist *caudillo* Jorge Eliécer Gaitán.⁴⁰⁸ The ever-latent tendency of Colombian politics to vindictive bloodletting had returned with a vengeance.

⁴⁰² Theodore Roosevelt, "I Took Final Action in 1903," in *Latin America and the United States: a documentary history*, ed. Robert H. Holden and Eric Zolov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 93.

⁴⁰³ Marco Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). p. 262.

⁴⁰⁴ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

⁴⁰⁵ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 266.

⁴⁰⁶ Helen Delpar, *Encyclopedia of Latin America* (New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1974). p. 149

⁴⁰⁷ Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. p.262.

⁴⁰⁸ Delpar, *Encyclopedia of Latin America*. p. 150.

CONCLUSION

The history of Colombia's internal politics and of its external relations both plainly exhibit a persistent and recurring pattern of behaviour that speaks for itself, all but asking to be called a political culture and a tradition. This culture and tradition has never subsided and continues to determine events in Colombia up to the contemporary age, not excluding Andres Pastrana's Presidency and his Plan Colombia, as will be shown below. It is characterised by three prime threads running through the events of Colombian history: (1) the weakness of the Colombian state and its perennial incapacity to impose its will on the territory over which it is nominally sovereign, habitually solved by inviting external intervention in its internal affairs; (2) elitist clientelism and the consequent simultaneous dependency and alienation of the masses in the body politic; (3) ideological polarisation and with it an unwillingness to compromise, leading to violence as the preferred solution to disputes. All three tendencies continue fully operative, except that the *inter-elite* violence has been modulated by a partisan condominium and proxy civil warfare, as will be seen in the next historical chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THE CONTEMPORARY RECRUDESCENCE OF VIOLENCE (1946-1998)

INTRODUCTION

The main feature of the Colombian polity from its beginnings has been the ‘absence of the state’⁴⁰⁹ outside the capital and too little (sometimes no) control over parts of its territory.⁴¹⁰ The experiences of the 19th century teach a clear lesson: ‘presidentialism/ centralism created fertile ground whereby party-led management of the state became the factor that contributed most directly to chronic violence’.⁴¹¹ This chapter explores how the pattern set at the Founding has carried over intact into the 20th century, producing the same tragic results, regardless how much Colombia’s circumstances may have changed under contemporary developments. Colombia turned in on itself for a season and underwent a relatively quiet phase after the US brokered peace between the Liberal and Conservative Parties. This uneasy slumber did not last; soon enough the violence recrudesced. Colombian politics continues in its old ways of *debilitation at home and agency abroad*, albeit ‘by other means’; when the same old consequences spiral out of control, the Colombians continue to manage the crisis by reaching for the same old remedy. The contemporary history of Colombia, in making the atavistic pattern of the classical period recognisable, will vantage the reader to recognise in Plan Colombia a ‘super-sized’ version of a familiar recipe.

La Violencia—the state debilitated (1946-1966)

Perhaps the worst violence in Colombia’s history between Liberals and Conservatives broke out just as the 20th century reached its halfway mark. It lasted for a decade and its dimensions were such that Colombians simply call it ‘La Violencia’ – *the Violence*. LaRosa and Mejía conclude that *La Violencia* ‘was a phenomenon that clearly demonstrated the weakness of the Colombian state’.⁴¹² It reflected the syndrome that had made the Panamanians discontent with the nominal centre of power in Bogotá. A vacuum of justice and authority demands to

⁴⁰⁹ Margarita Rosa. Serje de la Ossa et al., "Iron Maiden Landscapes: The Geopolitics of Colombia's Territorial Conquest," *South Central Review* 24, no. 1 (2007). p.39.

⁴¹⁰ McLean, "Colombia: Failed, Failing or Just Weak."

⁴¹¹ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 49.

⁴¹² *Ibid.* p. 85.

be filled with something or someone who can restore enough law and order for civilised life to carry on. The absence of the state creates an ideal environment for intervention, not only by external powers at the state's invitation, but by internal layers of civil society inviting themselves and each other to 'intervene' in the same situation. The difference is that 'frontier justice' can be taken up by anyone, with no one having final authority to bring quarrels to an end. Such was the practically universal condition of Colombian civil society.

If the root of this recrudescence was the absence of a state strong enough to impose civil peace, this should have affected the elites above all. The ideological polarisation inherited from the 19th century and its perennial rashes of violence, had by now hardened into very personal mutual hatreds, fomenting vendettas between elite family clans inevitably involving their lower-class clientele. Alape states that *La Violencia* was not atypical but deeply rooted in the history of the country, a legacy of partisan hatred stemming from the twenty years of civil war following ratification of the 1863 constitution, expropriation of land, and religious and anti-clerical persecution.⁴¹³ Ramsey finds similar historical roots but traces *la Violencia* rather back to the bloody Thousand Days War.

Ramsey also argues for the impact of the period between 1902 and 1946, traditionally perceived as pacific, for two reasons: first because in the 1920s Conservatives had oppressed labour unions, especially after the unrest between Colombian workers and the United Fruit Company; and secondly because in the 1930s the Liberals had brutally counterattacked. The Conservatives were thirsting for revenge once they returned to power in the late 1940s.⁴¹⁴

Guzman, Fals and Umaña in their seminal work *La Violencia en Colombia* find its roots in the recent political history of Colombia, especially the government of Liberal Olaya Herrera (1930-1934), who persecuted the Conservatives the most fiercely. His measures became so alarming that the Catholic Church was galvanised to intervene. The Liberals were denounced from the pulpit in such vitriolic terms that Conservatives felt justified in retaliating once Ospina Perez won the Presidency in 1946. The powderkeg of internecine hatred needed only a tiny spark to detonate it. That spark was soon forthcoming.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ Alape, *La Paz, la Violencia: Testigos de excepción*.

⁴¹⁴ Russell W. Ramsey, *Guerrilleros y soldados*, 2. ed. (Bogotá, Colombia: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1981).

⁴¹⁵ Germán Guzmán Campos, Orlando Fals Borda, and Eduardo Umaña Luna, *La violencia en Colombia : estudio de un proceso social*, Colección La Tierra (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1962).

The Bogotazo

On 9 April 1948 popular Liberal politician Jorge Eliecer Gaitan was assassinated in Bogotá.⁴¹⁶ Massive violent demonstrations ensued, known as the *Bogotazo*.⁴¹⁷ Skidmore and Smith explain that Gaitan confronted Colombia's entrenched elites with a challenge, 'not only to the Conservatives, who held the presidency under Mariano Ospina Perez (1946-50), but also to leaders of his own Liberal party'.⁴¹⁸

Violence in the wake of Gaitán's assassination The years following the *Bogotazo*, especially 1948 to 1953, witnessed a vicious confrontation not so much between the elites as between their fanatical clients, resulting in approximately 250,000 being 'killed, many with extreme cruelty'.⁴¹⁹ The elites themselves remained aloof, having 'effectively stigmatized civil war in the name of civility, civilian rule, and republican values'⁴²⁰ ever since the US-brokered accords of 1902. Historically, 'if the elites do not themselves take up arms ... it is not [considered] civil war, no matter the scale, intensity, or geographical spread of the armed conflict, even on the scale of the *Violencia*'.⁴²¹

The bloodletting was executed in rural areas beyond the control of state institutions; 'peasants [were] fighting peasants' more as proxies for their patrons, the endemic clientelism of Colombian society having driven the poor, above all, to cling to one Party or the other.⁴²² Most victims were 'young, male, and poor'.⁴²³ The scale and ubiquity of the violence so awed the academic establishment that violence became 'a legitimate area of academic research [in Colombia]—the researchers were referred to as *violentólogos* ["violentologists" or scientists

⁴¹⁶ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

⁴¹⁷ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 13

⁴¹⁸ Skidmore and Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence." p. 240.

⁴¹⁹ Downing, *Colombia*. p. 13.

⁴²⁰ Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. p. 262

⁴²¹ Ibid. p. 262.

⁴²² Nazih Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*, SUNY series in global politics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).p. 23.

⁴²³ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 86.

who study violence]'.⁴²⁴

Richani concurs that this violence 'was the logical outcome of the sociopolitical crisis and the inability of the prevailing institutional arrangement to contain it'.⁴²⁵ The period illustrated 'a severe disconnect between urban and rural Colombians and between the wealthy and the poor'.⁴²⁶ To put an end to it, General Rojas Pinilla staged a *coup d'Etat* with the unofficial blessing of the elite, setting up a 'military dictatorship from 1953 to 1957'.⁴²⁷

Although repressive, Pinilla's regime became unpopular rather with elites than the masses, as he spent vast sums on popular public works. At that point a military junta 'decided' (whether on their own or not) to remove Rojas, and a 'political agreement [between Liberals and Conservatives] called the National Front soon followed'.⁴²⁸ An elite condominium, it stipulated that the two Parties should 'alternate their hold on the presidency with calculated parity in each and every possible public office. This regime lasted from 1958 until 1974'.⁴²⁹ Its most important legacy was candidly to put Colombian democracy on exhibit as a fraud, a development with far-reaching repercussions.

'Frontier justice': guerrillas, militias and mafias (1966-1981)

The historical debility of the Colombian state spawned a frontier justice whereby local folk in Colombia's far-flung regions banded together in legal or illegal 'brotherhoods' and *bunds* to 'become substitutes for the authority of the state, not only controlling the dominant economic activities in those regions, but also defining and implementing justice in their own way'.⁴³⁰ The National Front compounded this tendency in the aftermath of *La Violencia* by 'push[ing] people who belonged to neither party toward the sociopolitical margins and eventually into armed ... forces'.⁴³¹ Three main political groups emerged as unintended consequences of the condominium—leftist guerrillas, rightist paramilitaries and blackmarketeering mafias. The

⁴²⁴ Ibid. p. 87.

⁴²⁵ Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. p. 23.

⁴²⁶ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 86.

⁴²⁷ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. p. 47.

⁴²⁸ Ibid. p. 47.

⁴²⁹ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 49.

⁴³⁰ Serje de la Ossa et al., "Iron Maiden Landscapes: The Geopolitics of Colombia's Territorial Conquest." p. 39.

⁴³¹ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 76.

next section discusses how this denial of popular participation ‘provoked discontent throughout the countryside’,⁴³² causing marginalised groups to organise themselves apart from the Colombian state.

Guerrillas: ‘The guns of [some of] the poor’

The guerrilla movements that were to become so pervasive were a new phenomenon. The largest and most important were the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the *Ejército Nacional de Liberación* (ELN) or National Army of Liberation. Formed in the early 1960s, both have violently defied a weak state. They may be distinguished from each other by origin, size and objectives.

The Ejército Nacional de Liberación (ELN)

The ELN was the first movement to spring up in reaction to the National Front. Founded in 1962 by radical university students after a trip to Havana during the Cuban Missile Crisis,⁴³³ it considers ‘itself a national liberation movement inspired by the Cuban revolution and [drawing] on a hybrid of Marxism-Leninism and Christian Liberation Theology’.⁴³⁴ It targeted urban areas for its early subversive actions; then rural areas, targeting ‘petroleum workers and peasant land colonizers’.⁴³⁵ By 1973 it had grown from 30 to 270 insurgents,⁴³⁶ whose temperament was revealed by the infighting within its leadership owing to ‘ideological disputes or different social origins, as well as personal rivalries—conflicts finally resolved in 1973 by ritual executions within the ELN itself’.⁴³⁷ In that year it was severely damaged by Colombian security forces at Anorí, Antioquia, and ‘its maximum leader, Fabio Vasquez, had to retire to Havana’.⁴³⁸ Having regrouped ‘by the 1980s [the ELN] began launching systematic and repeated attacks on oil pipelines owned by U.S. companies’.⁴³⁹ In 1982 it

⁴³² Skidmore and Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence." p. 244.

⁴³³ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*.

⁴³⁴ Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. p. 82.

⁴³⁵ Eduardo Pizarro, "Revolutionary Guerilla Groups in Colombia," in *Violence in Colombia: the contemporary crisis in historical perspective*, ed. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez G (Wilmington, DL: SR Books, 1992).p. 178.

⁴³⁶ Fabio Sanchez, Ana Maria Diaz, and Michel Formisano, "Conflicto, Violencia y Actividad Criminal En Colombia: Un Analisis Espacial," *Documento Cede 2003-05*(2003).

⁴³⁷ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 359.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. p. 359.

⁴³⁹ Skidmore and Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence." p. 244.

could count 350 members and was operative in three *departamentos*.

The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)

The FARC was the next movement to emerge in reaction to the National Front. Formed in *la Violencia* as a self-defence organisation by peasants driven to desperation by the aggressions of Conservative clientele,⁴⁴⁰ its leadership because of suppression by the state came to consist of 'members of the Communist Party and [radical segments of] the Liberal Party'.⁴⁴¹ The FARC set about establishing 'independent peasant republics',⁴⁴² a development that naturally alarmed Bogotá. Soon the Colombian army was mobilised to suppress it.⁴⁴³

The army failed. Unable to suppress the FARC on its own, Bogotá once again invited Washington to intervene to forestall a secession-like chain of events, this time under colour of the Cold War. With US support, the Colombian army in 1964 executed *Plan Lazo* against the insurgents' headquarters in rural Marquetalia, Tolima.⁴⁴⁴

The Plan succeeded in quashing the peasants' republics, but failed to end all subversive activities. If anything, the attack hardened the FARC ideologically, driving them underground. They re-emerged later as a Marxist-Leninist insurgency with effective 'mobile guerrilla units for offensive [military] action'.⁴⁴⁵ By 1966 it had re-emerged a highly disciplined organisation capable of inflicting massive violence in both urban and rural settings.⁴⁴⁶ Further efforts at suppression drove them even deeper underground in the 1970s. After a 'long period of hibernation ... during which its growth was very precarious and its presence limited to [remote]...regions',⁴⁴⁷ it would come back with a vengeance.

⁴⁴⁰ Alfredo Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia," *Journal of International Affairs* 53, no. 2 (2000).

⁴⁴¹ Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. p. 60.

⁴⁴² Ibid. p.62.

⁴⁴³ Gonzalo Sanchez, "Colombia: violencias sin futuros.," *Foro Internacional* 38, no. 1 (1998).

⁴⁴⁴ Américo Martín, *La violencia en Colombia*, 1. ed. (Caracas, Venezuela: Libros de El Nacional, 2010).

⁴⁴⁵ Skidmore and Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence."

⁴⁴⁶ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

⁴⁴⁷ Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia." p. 578.

Paramilitaries and mafias

Safford and Palacios believe a unique by-product of *La Violencia* was 'the emergence of violence as a form of criminal economic enterprise'.⁴⁴⁸ Disputes between poor peasants and *latifundistas* over land were the catalyst. A debilitated state translated into a weak regime of property rights, as 'local political bosses manipulated farmers into selling land by using threats and extortion'.⁴⁴⁹ This section summarizes the principal actors that emerged in parallel to the leftist guerrillas.

Paramilitaries (or self-defence groups)

Defining paramilitaries in Colombia is complicated by a multiplicity of meanings.⁴⁵⁰ Armed self-defence groups were organised as early as 1965 by landowners whom the state could not protect from guerrilla violence. They soon became indispensable to the army in combatting the guerrilla threat to law and order.⁴⁵¹ At first the state invested them with sanction and legitimacy in Decree 3398 of 1965 and Law 48 of 1968. These laws made self-help groups an essential tool 'of the security of the social order'.⁴⁵²

Vigilante groups mushroomed in the 1970s and early 1980s, due to 'the government's [persistent] inability to provide security throughout the country ... to make up for its own deficiencies the military worked with and not against the paramilitaries'.⁴⁵³

The coffee and emerald mafias

The trend toward self-help was particularly severe where coffee was grown. Violent mafias arose specialising both in trafficking coffee stolen from small producers and in 'protecting' those producers.⁴⁵⁴ Parallel developments arose in other parts where the uncertainty of property rights again contributed to recrudescence of violence. Control of natural resources

⁴⁴⁸ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.p. 351.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 352.

⁴⁵⁰ Phillip McLean, *Colombia--Thinking Clearly about the Conflict*, Policy Papers on the Americas (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002).

⁴⁵¹ Fernando Cubides, "From Private to Public Violence: The Paramilitaries," in *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: waging war and negotiating peace*, ed. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001).

⁴⁵² Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. p. 105.

⁴⁵³ McLean, *Colombia--Thinking Clearly about the Conflict*. p. 4.

⁴⁵⁴ Fernando Cubides, Ana Cecilia Olaya, and Carlos Miguel Ortiz, *La violencia y el municipio colombiano, 1980-1997* (Bogota: Universidad Nacional, 1998).

spiralled out of Bogotá's hands, particularly the mining of emeralds, in which Colombia is the richest in the world.⁴⁵⁵

In 1947 the Colombian Central Bank was granted an emerald monopoly, which stopped their illegal mining temporarily, but also aggravated social unrest in the areas affected. The onset of *La Violencia* and guerrilla rebellion against the National Front obliged Bogotá once more to face its own impotence. In 1969 the Bank's monopoly was abolished and emerald mining privatised. The net result was to spawn emerald-mafia turf wars that 'became the main mechanism through which areas were divided and in defining leadership and hegemony over the sphere of emerald production'.⁴⁵⁶

The drug mafias

The time was ripe for the cartelisation of narco-trafficking: 'poor law enforcement allowed Colombians to pick up the slack when [in the late 1960s] Mexico cracked down on its own marijuana farmers'.⁴⁵⁷ When Turbay's presidency ended (early 1978), 'Colombia had become the primary producer and exporter of marijuana to the U.S. market'.⁴⁵⁸ Marijuana-growing regions beyond the reach of the state 'experienced phenomenal economic growth: farmers, bankers, [politicians] and others associated with the trade enjoyed new wealth'.⁴⁵⁹

Colombia reacts tardily

Perhaps because narco-trafficking was not yet seen as a threat, the Colombian state reacted tardily. It was the US that alerted Bogotá to its rapid growth: the enormous profits were accelerating 'the corruption of Colombian law enforcement officials—police as well as judiciary—on a massive scale'.⁴⁶⁰ In 1973 the US Congress appropriated US\$6 million for a three-year programme to train 600 counter-narcotics policemen. On 13 December 1976 (the training still under way), the head of the Colombian Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was assassinated in Bogotá.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁵ Michael O'Donoghue, *Gems: their sources, descriptions and identification*, 2nd ed. (London: Elsevier, 2006).

⁴⁵⁶ Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. p. 106.

⁴⁵⁷ Stephen Johnson, "Colombia's Accommodation Process," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* VIII, no. 1 (2001). p. 3.

⁴⁵⁸ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 26.

⁴⁵⁹ Johnson, "Colombia's Accommodation Process." p. 3.

⁴⁶⁰ Robert W. Drexler, *Colombia and the United States: narcotics traffic and a failed foreign policy* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997). p. 101.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

This alarmed Washington even more, but still Bogotá did not react. By 1977 the training ended and Washington offered another US\$3.7 million for helicopters and counter-narcotics equipment, but Bogotá took no concrete action.⁴⁶² Washington continued pressing Bogotá in vain until 1978 when Julio César Turbay Ayala became President. In November 1978 Turbay instituted a ‘National Security Statue, authorizing military participation in national governance and law enforcement’.⁴⁶³ There followed *Operación Fulminante*, a gigantic two-year operation in the Guajira region, to accommodate US demands.⁴⁶⁴ While the operation ‘worked’ in theory – ‘6,000 tons of marijuana and about 300 boats and aircraft were seized’⁴⁶⁵ – production simply shifted elsewhere. This tunnel-visioned focus on marijuana ignored cocaine, which was exponentially growing in popularity in the US, and ‘coca cultivation and cocaine production accelerated, a transformation that had grave consequences for Colombian society—and U.S. drug policy’.⁴⁶⁶

Cartelisation of narco-trafficking The most important consequence was the ‘cartelisation’ of cocaine production by organised crime. The first was the *Cartel de Medellin* with its notorious boss, Pablo Escobar, who installed violence as ‘the primary tool for dealing with discord’.⁴⁶⁷ The Medellin Cartel’s bombings, kidnappings and assassinations terrorised Colombia throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s. Next was the *Cartel de Cali* of the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers. Unlike Medellin, Cali avoided legal and media attention, eschewing violence for a professional image. They ‘preferred the bribe to get business done, but ... could [also] be ruthless as any other mafia involved in international drug trafficking’.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ United States. Congress. Office of Technology Assessment., *Alternative coca reduction strategies in the Andean Region* (Washington, DC: Office of Technology Assessment, 1993). p. 93.

⁴⁶⁴ Kenneth E. Sharpe, "The Drug War: Going after Supply: A Commentary," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 2/3 (1988).

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 80

⁴⁶⁶ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 28.

⁴⁶⁷ Stephen L. Mallory, *Understanding organized crime*, 2nd ed. (Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2011). p. 55.

⁴⁶⁸ Ron Chepesiuk, *The War on Drugs: An International Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: CA: ABC-CLIO 1999). p. 24. It was the *Cartel de Cali* who funded President’s Samper controversial campaign in 1994. This will be discussed in proper detail at the end of the chapter.

In this initial period both cartels coexisted relatively peacefully; enough business was there for everyone. Both followed the same strategy: after buying processing chemicals in Europe, 'cocaine paste was brought from Peru and Bolivia. The final product was then smuggled into the United States. By 1982 the drug trade approximately accounted for 10 percent to 25 percent of Colombia's exports. At this point, however, the trade did not appear to be a threat to Colombian democracy'.⁴⁶⁹ Contrary to popular belief, cocaine smuggling did not benefit Colombia and its 'economy as a whole'.⁴⁷⁰ While some of their profits were deployed in entrenching their domestic power, the cartels exported the lion's share, which was 'deposited in the international system, mainly controlled by American, Swiss, and Japanese Banks'.⁴⁷¹

Violent Nexus: Triangular Conflict (1982-1991)

La Violencia began with Gaitán's assassination in 1948, long predating narco-trafficking. It was a recrudescence with roots in the 19th Century, yet it was amplified unprecedentedly in the period 1982-1991 with 'the consolidation of the drug cartels'.⁴⁷² The interactivity of guerrillas, paramilitaries and mafias, well under way by 1982, became a lethal triangle of mutually conflictual but uniformly centrifugal forces. It brought 'frightful levels of violence on Colombian society', threatening the very civil peace the state was invented to safeguard.⁴⁷³

Smuggling cocaine into the United States was booming by the mid-1980s; Colombia became one of its main sources in the world.⁴⁷⁴ There has been much speculation about precisely how much money was made in the drug trade. Only three studies furnish reliable data—Gomez (1988), Sarmiento (1990), and Kalmanovitz (1990).⁴⁷⁵ Analysing the trade in 1987, Gomez

⁴⁶⁹ Jennifer S. Holmes, "Drugs, Terrorism, and Congressional Politics: The Colombian Challenge," in *Contemporary cases in U.S. foreign policy : from terrorism to trade*, ed. Ralph G. Carter (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005). p. 38.

⁴⁷⁰ Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez G, eds., *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001). p. 75.

⁴⁷¹ Pablo González Casanova, *Latin America today* (New York: United Nations University Press, 1993). p. 329.

⁴⁷² Jorge Orlando Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and the Economy," in *Latin America and the multinational drug trade*, ed. Elizabeth Joyce and Carlos Malamud (Basingstoke, UK: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1998). p. 66.

⁴⁷³ Skidmore and Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence."

⁴⁷⁴ Sanchez, Diaz, and Formisano, "Conflicto, Violencia y Actividad Criminal En Colombia: Un Analisis Espacial".

⁴⁷⁵ Mauricio Reina, "Drug Trafficking and the National Economy," in *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: waging war and negotiating peace*, ed. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001).

estimated an annualised profit of about US\$1.4 billion.⁴⁷⁶ Sarmiento's estimate is between US\$1.4 and US\$3.7 billion.⁴⁷⁷ Highest was Kalmanovitz's at US\$5.2 billion.⁴⁷⁸ Whichever estimate is adopted, these profits were enormous and unnatural, potently subverting the motives of all actors at all levels of Colombian politics and society.

With their exorbitant takings 'many in the drug business began buying up land in rural areas ... It is estimated that 5-6 million hectares of land changed hands between rural landowners and drug traffickers in the 1980s',⁴⁷⁹ precipitating a 'demographic revolution'.⁴⁸⁰ Poor Colombians flocked to cocaine-producing areas in hopes of earning a living. The 'new illegal economy' harmed the country as a whole, however, rewarding aggression, illegality and immorality, and discouraging the more salutary influence of foreign direct investment.⁴⁸¹

A lethal cocktail: frontier justice, politics and cocaine

The illegal drug-trade, more than any other by-product of Colombian state weakness, fomented armed self-help groups over and above the impetus given by *La Violencia*. Taking the law into their own hands, they brought terror and violence to all regions. Armed groups everywhere were 'meting out death as a form of justice, a way of settling accounts or simply a means of intimidation'.⁴⁸²

Guerrillas + drugs = narco-guerrillas?

The term *narco-guerrillas* was coined in 1984, after clandestine cocaine laboratories were discovered by the Colombian National Police (CNP). Snipers who disappeared into the jungle fired on the CNP in the first raid on 10 March 1984 in Tranquilandia, Caquetá. They wore

⁴⁷⁶ Hernando Jose Gomez, "La Economia legal en Colombia: Tamaño, evolución e impacto económico," *Coyuntura Económica* 18, no. 3 (1988).

⁴⁷⁷ Eduardo Sarmiento, "Economía del Narcotráfico," in *Narcotráfico en Colombia: dimensiones políticas, económicas, jurídicas e internacionales*, ed. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta (Bogotá: Ediciones Uniandes : Tercer Mundo Editores, 1990).

⁴⁷⁸ Salomon Kalmanovitz, "La Economía del Narcotráfico en Colombia," *Economía Colombiana* 226, no. 27 (1990).

⁴⁷⁹ Randall, *Colombia and the United States: hegemony and interdependence*. p. 85.

⁴⁸⁰ Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian labyrinth: the synergy of drugs and insurgency and its implications for regional stability* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001). P. 16.

⁴⁸¹ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Political economy and illegal drugs in Colombia* (London: Rienner, 1995).

⁴⁸² Commission for the Study of Violence, "Organized Violence," in *Violence in Colombia: the contemporary crisis in historical perspective*, ed. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez G (Wilmington, DL: SR Books, 1992).

‘fatigue-type jungle uniforms ... [but] were never positively identified’.⁴⁸³ Bogotá suspected these cocaine complexes were guarded by guerrillas.⁴⁸⁴ Evidence found by the CNP led to another raid in *La Loma* (literally, ‘The Hill’) in the same region, where the ‘authorities found clear evidence of a FARC presence: sewing machines, uniforms with yellow triangle patches (the insignia of the Seventh FARC Front), and literature describing the movement’s strategy and goals’.⁴⁸⁵

The term was picked up by Washington after a peace accord with the FARC was signed by Belisario Betancur on 28 March 1984.⁴⁸⁶ The US began to suspect the FARC and shared its evidence with the Betancur Administration. Washington concluded the FARC was ‘involved in the management of laboratories and that consequently they had ceased to be mere vigilantes and were interested in taking control of the [drug] business’.⁴⁸⁷ Betancur, however, rejected this evidence, partly because ‘he had been elected on the promise of creating a permanent peace with ... the FARC’.⁴⁸⁸ Speaking to the nation after the signing of the accord, Betancur promised it would empower the state to concentrate on suppressing narco-trafficking, the real threat to Colombian democracy.⁴⁸⁹

The evidence against the FARC was in any case inconclusive at the time. Some like Villmarin-Pulido argue the FARC was in fact the third most powerful drug cartel in Colombia;⁴⁹⁰ others like Melo criticise the evidence as ‘tenuous and ... handled according to standard police practice: relatively imprecise “leaks” which the newspapers exaggerated for a few days’.⁴⁹¹ What is not in dispute is that the FARC was revitalised by the ‘taxes’ they

⁴⁸³ Rensselaer W. Lee and Foreign Policy Research Institute., *The white labyrinth: cocaine and political power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991). p. 171.

⁴⁸⁴ Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and the Economy." p. 81.

⁴⁸⁵ Lee and Foreign Policy Research Institute., *The white labyrinth: cocaine and political power*. p. 171.

⁴⁸⁶ Luis Eduardo Celis, "Los Acuerdos de la Uribe " *El Espectador*, 29th March 2009.

⁴⁸⁷ Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and the Economy." p. 81.

⁴⁸⁸ William L. Marcy, *The politics of cocaine: how U.S. foreign policy has created a thriving drug industry in Central and South America* (Chicago, Ill.: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010). p. 61.

⁴⁸⁹ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*.

⁴⁹⁰ Luis Alberto Villamarín Pulido, *El cartel de las FARC*, 1. ed. (Bogotá: Ediciones El Faraón, 1996).

⁴⁹¹ Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and the Economy." p. 81.

extorted from coca producers and their 'tactical alliances with narco-traffickers'.⁴⁹² It is estimated that the FARC took-in somewhere 'between \$200 million and \$600 million per year'.⁴⁹³ Weinstein points out that these new resources empowered the FARC to expand its guerrilla strategy in 1982 at the Seventh Conference,⁴⁹⁴ one of the most important outcomes of which was the adoption of an operational plan 'for building a military force that could defeat the Colombian army in open warfare'.⁴⁹⁵

The narco-connection helps explain the tremendous growth the FARC underwent from this time onwards. Rabassa and Chalk argue that the FARC 'grew from 350 fighters at its founding to approximately 3600 in 32 fronts in 1986, 7000 in 60 fronts in 1995, and 15,000-20,000 in over 70 fronts in 2000'.⁴⁹⁶ Regardless whether or not they coveted production of drugs, however, their time had probably not yet come. The civilian cartels were still too powerful. The window of opportunity did not open until after the CNP, with extensive help from Washington, shattered the Medellin Cartel in the mid-1990s. The FARC eventually found their narco-trafficking niche, but on a quite different scale and with a different *modus operandi* than the cartels.

Drugs and death squads

At the same time 'paramilitary groups financed by drug traffickers ... intensified a campaign of political cleansing directed against the left', *i.e.* guerrillas.⁴⁹⁷ This was foremost a reaction against the guerrillas' practice of unilaterally imposing 'taxes' on drugs producers. The latter banded together for their own protection, sending out teams to hunt down the tax-revenueurs (who imposed 'taxes' in 'creative' ways like kidnapping for ransom).⁴⁹⁸ The most notorious

⁴⁹² Skidmore and Smith, "Colombia: Discord, Civility and Violence." p. 245.

⁴⁹³ Alma Guillermoprieto, *Looking for history: dispatches from Latin America*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2001). p. 29.

⁴⁹⁴ Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside rebellion: the politics of insurgent violence*, Cambridge studies in comparative politics (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴⁹⁵ DeShazo, Mendelson, and McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Instability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia." p. 5.

⁴⁹⁶ Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian labyrinth: the synergy of drugs and insurgency and its implications for regional stability*. p. 26.

⁴⁹⁷ Mauricio Romero, "Reform and Reaction: Paramilitary Groups in Contemporary Colombia," in *Irregular armed forces and their role in politics and state formation*, ed. Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003). p. 185.

⁴⁹⁸ Sewall H. Menzel, *Cocaine quagmire: implementing the U.S. anti-drug policy in the north Andes-Colombia* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997).

of these early groups was *Muerte a Secuestradores* (MAS) or Death to Kidnappers.⁴⁹⁹ Funded by the Medellín Cartel in the early 1980s, it acted ferociously against the insurgents and anyone suspected of having ties with them.

MAS inspired the rise of two other, interrelated phenomena. One was the ‘*sicarios* (hired assassins) ... at the service of the highest bidder’.⁵⁰⁰ Knowing neither loyalty nor ideology, the *sicarios* were a highly effective tool of intimidation. By the end of the 1980s hired assassins had killed scores of people, including journalists, politicians, informants, judges and innocent civilians inside and outside Colombia, at the behest of whoever hired them, mostly cartels.⁵⁰¹

The second order of offspring were right-wing paramilitaries, many of which became outright ‘death squads’.⁵⁰² They were ‘organized either by private groups or by individual military or police officers’,⁵⁰³ and some massacred political enemies and committed other outrages. A great many of their victims were members of the political branch of the FARC known as the *Union Patriótica* (UP), which had been set up in 1984.⁵⁰⁴ By the end of the decade the UP had ‘recorded the death or disappearance of least 846 members since the party was founded’.⁵⁰⁵

In 1989, responding to allegations of this sort, the government sent a judicial team of fifteen investigators to gather evidence in the small town of La Rochela in Santander. Shortly after their arrival on 18 January 1989, the team was ambushed by a paramilitary unit, who killed twelve members and fatally injured the other three.⁵⁰⁶ Several months later Bogotá ‘issued a series of decrees declaring the self-defence groups illegal’.⁵⁰⁷ The human need of self-

⁴⁹⁹ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 86.

⁵⁰⁰ Violence, "Organized Violence." p. 271.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. p. 268.

⁵⁰⁴ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*.

⁵⁰⁵ Juan E. Méndez, *Political murder and reform in Colombia: the violence continues*, An Americas Watch report (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992). p.4.

⁵⁰⁶ "Último capítulo de masacre de La Rochela," *El Espectador*, 10th June 2009.

⁵⁰⁷ Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, *Drugs and democracy in Latin America: the impact of U.S. policy* (Boulder, Colorado: L. Rienner, 2005). p. 125.

defence, however, and the state's manifest inability to provide it has guaranteed that this paper decree would be nowhere near enough to deter the underground formation of self-help groups, who would continue to perpetuate violence throughout the 1990s.

The birth of narco-politics

Exorbitant profits empowered cartels to buy 'a substantial number of legitimate businesses [which facilitated] their ability to corrupt elements of the Colombian government and reducing the efficacy of the government efforts to enforce Colombia's laws'.⁵⁰⁸ The cartels soon discovered how systematically to apply their 'profits for political ends, as a means of ... exercising pressure or blackmail'.⁵⁰⁹ This trend surfaced at the regional level first, then moved on to the national and central government level. The resulting 'widespread involvement of many [Colombian] politicians with drug cartel chiefs ... [inspired] a new concept in Latin American studies and international relations: narco-politics'.⁵¹⁰ The trend tainted all parties, though some analysts argue it corrupted the Liberal Party the worst—the party in power from 1986 until 1998, when the Conservative Pastrana won the Presidency.⁵¹¹

The drug money that poured into Colombian politics 'introduced enormous new resources, both monetary and violent, into the [political system]'.⁵¹² A noteworthy by-product of this process was to have 'generated a significant degree of deinstitutionalization...giving regional and local forces greater power at the expense of the national leadership'.⁵¹³ A case in point is Pablo Escobar, the 'godfather' of the Medellin Cartel, who in 1982 'won election as a Liberal Party alternate [to Rep. Jairo Ortega] to the National Chamber of Representatives'⁵¹⁴ with the support of Envigado, an impoverished suburb of Medellin. Whenever Ortega was unable to fulfil his duties in Congress, Escobar stood in for him. Ortega and Escobar did not act alone, but worked in league with Liberal Senator Alberto Santofimio Botero, a corrupted politician

⁵⁰⁸ Mark Pieth, *Financing terrorism* (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002). p. 21.

⁵⁰⁹ González Casanova, *Latin America today*.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Francisco Gutiérrez Sanin and Luisa Ramirez Rueda, "The Tense Relationship between Democracy and Violence, 1974-2001.," in *Politics in the Andes: identity, conflict, reform*, ed. Jo-Marie Burt and Philip Mauceri (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

⁵¹² Ibid. p. 245.

⁵¹³ Ibid. p. 246.

⁵¹⁴ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 263.

in the Cartel's pay who came to epitomise how degraded Colombian politics had become.⁵¹⁵

Judiciary intimidation

One of the most terrifying assaults on the Colombian state waged by the cartels was judicial intimidation. It was admittedly helped by the Colombian judiciary's habitual incompetence, corruption and bias, which had always made it vulnerable to criminal influences.⁵¹⁶ Restrepo says, however, that outright intimidation of judges by interested parties reached its historical zenith at this time; the 'long arm' of the cartels 'almost paralysed the criminal administration [*sic*] of justice'.⁵¹⁷ The inability of the Colombian state to safeguard its own judges further eroded the weak and increasingly fragile political centre in Bogotá. So dire was the situation that senior officers of the Colombian security apparatus actually suggested that 'judges should arm themselves'!⁵¹⁸

Judges were confronted with a stark choice; in the words of Pablo Escobar, the godfather of the Medellín Cartel: *plomo o plata* ('lead or silver')—'death if they [convicted], a bribe if they set aside the charges'.⁵¹⁹ It is estimated that at least '350 members of the judiciary were killed, including fifty judges. Not only were judicial officials or police threatened, but their families were threatened as well'.⁵²⁰ These appalling numbers attest the heroism with which at least some judges pursued unswervingly the avenues of justice, despite the notorious incompetence of the state to protect them.⁵²¹

By the early 1990s, when violence against the Colombian state reached its crescendo, sheer desperation, that other mother of invention, prompted the idea of *Jueces sin rostro* ('faceless judges') or the anonymisation of judges' case assignments, which alleviated somewhat their personal security situation. A special system of courts to deal with narco-traffickers operated

⁵¹⁵ Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, *Kings of cocaine: inside the Medellín cartel, an astonishing true story of murder, money, and international corruption* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

⁵¹⁶ Francisco Gutierrez Sanin, "Inequidad y violencia política: una precisión sobre las cuentas y los cuentos," *Análisis Político* 43(2001). For a very good discussion on the weaknesses of the judiciary in Colombia see: Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 365-370.

⁵¹⁷ Elvira María Restrepo, *Colombian criminal justice in crisis: fear and distrust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). p. xx.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 141,

⁵¹⁹ Lee and Foreign Policy Research Institute., *The white labyrinth: cocaine and political power*. p. 10.

⁵²⁰ Brenda J. Lutz and James M. Lutz, *Global Terrorism* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008). p. 206.

⁵²¹ Restrepo, *Colombian criminal justice in crisis: fear and distrust*.

under rules of procedure whereby ‘both judges and witnesses remained unidentified’.⁵²² In practice, narco-trafficking was to make up only about 10% of the caseload; the system ended up abusively taking ‘cases relating to civic or popular protests or involving military control of public order—at times making the system of justice openly complicit with violations of human rights’.⁵²³ The special courts drew many constitutional challenges on the grounds that defendants had a right to face their accusers.⁵²⁴ The system was abolished in 2003, and today Colombian ‘judges currently dealing with dangerous criminals, together with the corresponding key witnesses, still remain completely unprotected’.⁵²⁵

‘justice by invitation’: extradition to the US

Reflecting its perennial incapacity to deal with crises of violence and lawlessness, Colombia as always looked abroad for foreign interveners who might help solve its internal problems. And as usual, it was Washington Bogotá invited to deliver what it was unable to provide for herself—an effective judicial system. This is a terrible irony inasmuch as Colombian political culture has always placed implicit faith in law. It is noteworthy that Colombia was a leader in judicial cooperation in the Western Hemisphere, signing its first multilateral extradition treaty in an early attempt to promote judicial intervention as a tool of international assistance at the First Inter-American Conference of American States in Washington in 1890.⁵²⁶ Bogotá even incorporated this agreement into its penal code in 1936 and 1938, but in terms that can hardly be translated into practice in narco-trafficking cases.⁵²⁷ Extradition traditionally attained only foreigners resident in a host country who were fugitives from justice in their home countries, not native citizens indicted by foreign courts claiming extraterritorial jurisdiction, as the US judiciary has come increasingly to do since America’s rise to superpower status.

On 14 November 1979 Virgilio Barco, Colombian Ambassador to the United States under President Turbay, completed more concrete negotiations with the Carter Administration over

⁵²² Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*. p. 369.

⁵²³ Ibid. p. 369.

⁵²⁴ Gerardo Laveaga and Alberto Lujambio, *El derecho penal a juicio: diccionario crítico* (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales, 2008).

⁵²⁵ Restrepo, *Colombian criminal justice in crisis: fear and distrust*. p. xxi.

⁵²⁶ "La Historia Jurídica de la Extradición," *El Tiempo*, 20th June 1997.

⁵²⁷ Luz Estella Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition," *Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review* 13, no. 4 (1991).

an applicable extradition treaty. Turbay pushed this treaty through the Colombian Congress to become *Ley Numero 27* by 3 November 1980. The new law enabled Bogotá to extradite to the US any Colombian national wanted by Washington ‘on drug-related charges’.⁵²⁸ The treaty was subsequently approved by the US Senate and ‘took effect in March 1982’.⁵²⁹

Obstacles to extradition

According to Edgardo Rotman, a prominent expert on extradition law, one of the main obstacles to the extradition of one’s own nationals is that it piques nationalist sentiment into revolt against the putative violation of sovereignty.⁵³⁰ This serves as pretext for endless objections, including claims of a right ‘to be tried by the judges of their nation, the right to live in their homeland ... including their protection against unfair trials and proceedings’.⁵³¹

Zannotti suggests, in the specific case of Colombia, that extradition ‘rather than undermining national sovereignty ... tends to reinforce it’.⁵³² With one of the ‘world’s highest impunity rates’,⁵³³ only an abysmal 1.2% of all reported crimes in Colombia resulted in a conviction between 1973 and 1993. Such widespread impunity ‘disserved and weakened Colombia by gutting the rule of law and dismantling the civil order’.⁵³⁴ The extradition treaty with the US might be viewed accordingly as ‘justice by invitation’. Colombian elites’ habitual recourse to the US as a backstop preventing Colombian state failure redounded again.

Colombian ambivalence about extradition

Heated controversy erupted in the wake of its ratification; many otherwise unsympathetic to narco-traffickers thought it violated Colombian sovereignty. In the event, however, Colombia probably exploited the treaty more than the US. The history of Colombia-to-US extradition shows that the Colombian state has wielded essentially plenary discretion about whether and

⁵²⁸ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*. p. 105.

⁵²⁹ Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition." p. 865.

⁵³⁰ Edgardo Rotman, "The Globalization of Crime," *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy* 10(2000).

⁵³¹ Isidoro Zannotti, *Extradition in multilateral treaties and conventions*, Studies on the law of treaties, (Leiden ; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006). p. ix.

⁵³² *Ibid.* p. ix.

⁵³³ Michael R. Pahl, "Wanted: Criminal Justice - Colombia's Adoption of a Prosecutorial System of Criminal Procedure," *Fordham International Law Journal* 16, no. 608-634 (1992-1993). p. 609.

⁵³⁴ Joshua Warmund, "Removing Drug Lords and Street Pushers: The Extradition of Nationals in Colombia and the Dominican Republic," *Fordham International Law Journal* 22(1998-1999). p. 2407.

whom it extradites. 'By June 1987 the U.S. government had made 140 extradition requests, and ultimately the Colombian government sent thirteen Colombians and two foreigners to face trial in the United States'.⁵³⁵ No one more deeply resented this law, of course, than those who were its main potential targets.

Washington's first request for extradition When the first official request for extradition came from Washington in 1982, Bogotá was unsure how to proceed. No one then in office knew how to apply an agreement negotiated by the previous administration. It should be noted that Colombian political culture provides very little institutional continuity; as one administration succeeds another, each tends to 'start the world over' from a zero baseline rather than build on the accomplishments of its predecessor. The new Administration of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) was no different; it was initially disinclined to accede to Washington's request.⁵³⁶

Betancur vacillated through 1983, unable to decide if enforcement compromised Colombia's sovereignty or not. The Supreme Court disagreed and moved to grant extradition.⁵³⁷ Betancur finally exercised his discretion to decline extradition. Even so, the cartels, suspecting it was only a matter of time before an extradition would succeed, stepped up the violence, hoping to intimidate the Colombian state itself.⁵³⁸

In the same year a series of scandals erupted known as the *dineros calientes* ('hot money'). Exposed were ramifying links between the cartels and major national politicians. The scandal implicated no less than Betancur's Justice Minister Lara Bonilla, yet the allegations against him seem to have been a fabrication of the cartels to damage the Administration's credibility. Lara Bonilla responded swiftly and 'began to investigate the influence of the Medellin Cartel in the Colombian political system despite death threats from the Cartel and its offer of bribe money'.⁵³⁹ The results of his investigation were conclusive: he discovered that at least thirty regional politicians had accepted drug-money to finance their campaigns.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 29.

⁵³⁶ Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: clientelist politics and guerrilla warfare*.

⁵³⁷ Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition."

⁵³⁸ "La Historia Juridica de la Extradición."

⁵³⁹ Chepesiuk, *The War on Drugs: An International Encyclopedia*. p. 117.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

On August 1983 'Lara Bonilla accused Escobar ... of being one of Colombia's major drug [bosses]'.⁵⁴¹ Soon afterwards Lara Bonilla bravely undertook 'to prosecute money laundering and shut down some of Escobar's illicit laboratories ... he was assassinated [on 30 April] 1984 on orders from Escobar'.⁵⁴² Betancur appointed Enrique Parejo Gonzales in his stead, who continued his predecessor's frontal war on the cartels, lobbying hard for the prosecution of Escobar, who was still a deputy member of Congress and as such enjoyed parliamentary immunity.

Driven by weakness—Betancur extradites For two and a half years Betancur 'refused to enforce the extradition law and instead preferred to test the efficacy of the Colombian judicial system without external interference'.⁵⁴³ Nagel argues that 'Betancur negated the extradition request solely for [domestic] political reasons ... Betancur played up to the radical groups' view that Colombia could no longer be subservient to the will of the United States'.⁵⁴⁴ When the situation became unmanageable after the cartels assassinated Lara Bonilla, then Betancur reacted, having finally recognized and accepted the deep-seated weakness of a Colombian state incapable of handling the powerful cartels. He moved officially to announce his support for extradition on 2 May 1984.⁵⁴⁵

On 19 September the Colombian House of Representatives stripped Escobar of parliamentary standing and immunity, and on 26 October Judge Tulio Manuel Castro-Gil charged Escobar with the assassination of Lara Bonilla. In 1985 Castro-Gil himself would be assassinated.⁵⁴⁶ On 5 January 1985 Bogotá extradited the first of five Colombians to the United States.⁵⁴⁷ It should be noted that the foregoing does not imply that Betancur refused to cooperate with the US before accepting the necessity of extradition; indeed, between 1983 and 1985 counter-narcotics aid from the US tripled and Colombia was commended by Washington for its anti-

⁵⁴¹ Lee and Foreign Policy Research Institute., *The white labyrinth: cocaine and political power*. p. 139.

⁵⁴² LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 90.

⁵⁴³ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 29.

⁵⁴⁴ Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition." p. 865.

⁵⁴⁵ "La Historia Juridica de la Extradición."

⁵⁴⁶ "Escobar: 17 Años de Historia del Criminal," *El Tiempo*, 2nd December 1993.

⁵⁴⁷ "La Historia Juridica de la Extradición."

drug efforts.⁵⁴⁸

Within days the Medellín Cartel reacted by launching the most violent intimidation campaign in Colombian history. Under Escobar's leadership, drug gangsters everywhere vowed to fight extradition to the death. They became known as *los Extraditables* (literally, 'the extraditable ones'). They campaigned publicly under the motto *Mejor en una tumba en Colombia que una cárcel en Estados Unidos* (roughly, 'Better a Colombian grave than an American gaol').⁵⁴⁹

NARCO-VIOLENCIA IN THE AGE OF EXTRADITION

The Colombian state was proved so weak that it could not even enforce its invitation to the US to intervene in justice affairs *via* the 1979 extradition treaty. *Los Extraditables* engulfed the political centre in terrorist assassinations of journalists, judges, politicians, police officers, and thousands of innocent civilians. The 'handwriting was on the wall' for all to see who were willing to read: Colombia was headed for state failure.

Manifold of violence

It would be oversimplistic to argue that the drug-cartels were alone behind the violence that was devastating the country at this time. Narco-violence was only 'one dimension of the problem facing Colombia. Another was the violence accompanying social disorganization in areas where traffickers and guerrillas fought for control of territory'.⁵⁵⁰ Sanchez considers the Colombian case very complex because the violence was 'multiple in terms of its origins, objectives, geography, *modi operandi*, and strategies ... Organized crime, guerrilla struggle, dirty war, and diffuse social violence ... [could] be part of a single situation'.⁵⁵¹ Undoubtedly, the cartels' violence was compounded by 'guerrillas and paramilitaries fighting over territory and—increasingly—over drug routes, and the Colombian armed forces pitted

⁵⁴⁸ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "National Security and Drugs: Their impact on Colombia-U.S. Relations," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 1 (1988).

⁵⁴⁹ Robin Kirk, *Más terrible que la muerte: Masacres, drogas y guerra de Estados Unidos en Colombia* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 2005).

⁵⁵⁰ Alvaro Camacho Guizado, "Drug Trafficking and Society in Colombia," in *Drug trafficking in the Americas*, ed. Bruce Michael Bagley and William O. Walker (Miami, FL: North-South Center Press, 1994). p. 122

⁵⁵¹ Gonzalo Sánchez, "Problems of Violence, Prospect for Peace," in *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: waging war and negotiating peace*, ed. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001). p. 3.

against the leftists insurgents'.⁵⁵²

Most of these outrages during the 80s had a single-minded objective—to dissuade Bogotá to send Colombian narco-traffickers off to the US for trial.⁵⁵³ The mayhem lasted approximately eight years and is described in more detail in the following sections.

First wave of violence 1985-1988

The violence inflicted on Colombia after extradition was enforced was feral and implacable. It started with the virtual annihilation of the highest court of the land, followed by waves of political assassinations and kidnappings. Despite extradition being declared unconstitutional in June 1987, anyone willing publicly to advocate the practice got killed or kidnapped, and 'those who survived were forced to leave the country'.⁵⁵⁴ By 1988 things had got so bad that the Colombian government estimated the homicide rate 'to be higher that it was during the peak years of *la violencia*'.⁵⁵⁵

It is difficult to establish the exact number of political homicides in 1988, but some estimate that at least 3,000 people died from the violent nexus of drugs, guns, and guerrillas.⁵⁵⁶ Alan Riding writing for the *New York Times* dubbed 1988 the 'year of the massacres', and reported that even for a country inured to violence like Colombia, the sheer scale of it was shocking.⁵⁵⁷

Extermination of the 'highest court'

One of the first shocks the Colombian government suffered came ten months after the first set of extraditions and two years after the Colombian Supreme Court had declared the extradition treaty constitutional in 1983. On 6 November 1985 a guerrilla movement called M19 attacked the *Palacio de Justicia* (Supreme Court) in Bogotá, taking approximately 350 people hostage. The Betancur administration reacted fiercely and ordered the army to storm the building only 27 hours after the attack began. This caused the death of more than one hundred people,

⁵⁵² DeShazo, Mendelson, and McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Instability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia." p. 4.

⁵⁵³ Chepesiuk, *The War on Drugs: An International Encyclopedia*. p. 152.

⁵⁵⁴ Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition." p. 869.

⁵⁵⁵ Bruce Michael Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," *Foreign Affairs* 67, no. 1 (1988). p. 71.

⁵⁵⁶ Victor J. Hinojosa, *Domestic politics and international narcotics control: U.S. relations with Mexico and Colombia, 1989-2000*, Studies in international relations (New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁵⁵⁷ Alan Riding, "Massacres Are Jolting Colombia," *The New York Times* (1988), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/15/world/massacres-are-jolting-colombia.html>.

including ‘most of the M19 leadership and [11 out of 24] of the justices’.⁵⁵⁸

After this debacle some analysts argued that the attack might be linked to *los Extraditables* as the Supreme Court had ruled against them.⁵⁵⁹ According to Crandall, some of these analysts even ‘reported that the M19 received U.S. \$1 million from the Medellín cartel ... to destroy the documents that linked drug traffickers to several pending extradition efforts’.⁵⁶⁰

I argue that, although this particular attack may not be connected to narco-trafficking, what is clear is that it further eroded the Colombian state’s credibility at withstanding the floodtide of violence engulfing it. The Supreme Court had to be rehabilitated from scratch. Out of the 13 surviving justices, 11 went on to resign, and ‘the two remaining members had to appoint replacements to fill the vacancies. This was no easy task, because those who were qualified were reluctant to accept the posts’.⁵⁶¹

Violence without borders—from Medellín to Baton Rouge and Budapest

As its narco-trafficking profits soared, the reach of the Medellín Cartel exceeded all national boundaries—an extraterritorial jurisdiction of ill repute. On 19 February 1986 an informer for the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the pilot Barry Seal, was assassinated in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on American territory.⁵⁶² Seal had worked undercover for the Medellín Cartel at one time, and his testimony was essential to assembling the US case against Escobar and his co-conspirators, justifying their extradition.⁵⁶³ The assassination was carried out by a Colombian death squad who were paid US\$500,000.⁵⁶⁴ With so much violence afoot inside Colombia at the time, Bogotá hardly heeded this incident, yet Baton Rouge was destined to have serious repercussions for Colombia.

⁵⁵⁸ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. p. 49.

⁵⁵⁹ Menzel, *Cocaine quagmire: implementing the U.S. anti-drug policy in the north Andes-Colombia*.

⁵⁶⁰ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 66.

⁵⁶¹ Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition." p. 868

⁵⁶² Robin Kirk, *More terrible than death: massacres, drugs, and America's war in Colombia*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2003).

⁵⁶³ "Trial opens today for 3 accused of murdering drug ring informer," *The New York Times*(1987), Date Accessed: 2012/03/21: <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/12/us/trial-opens-today-for-3-accused-of-murdering-drug-ring-informer.html>.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

Protection by invitation The Colombian state gradually acquired a habit of moving people under threat by *los Extraditables* overseas. This had kept them safe in the past and for a while it was continued despite Seal's murder. The former Justice Minister, for instance, Enrique Parejo Gonzales, the one who managed to strip Escobar of his parliamentary immunity and signed the first raft of extraditions in 1985, survived until 1986 through 'prophylactic exile'. The Colombian state, too weak to guarantee his safety, named him Ambassador to Hungary – considered an out-of-the-way destination at the time, – in hopes that distance and maybe the Hungarian state could protect him, but as the assassination of Seal should have demonstrated, the lawlessness of *los Extraditables* reached as far as the law of nations and could beat the system in the very bosom of the Hegemon. The Medellin Cartel infiltrated a death squad into Budapest who in January 1987 shot Parejo in front of his diplomatic residence. Miraculously, he survived.⁵⁶⁵

International terrorism The message was loud and clear—*los Extraditables* meant business and were willing and able to track down anyone. The sovereignty of states notwithstanding, there was no hiding place.⁵⁶⁶ Ignoring all warning signs and maybe for lack of an alternative, Bogotá continued to 'exile' for their own safety high-profile public figures under threat. An example was former Justice Minister Enrique Low Murtra, a staunch defender of extradition between 1987 and 1988. Shortly after he left the Ministry of Justice, it was decided to post him to Berne as Ambassador to Switzerland. A few months later, two *Euskadi Ta Askatsuna* (ETA) (*i.e.* Basque) terrorists were captured at the French-Swiss border on their way to blow up the Colombian Embassy! Low Murtra remained in Switzerland until 1990, then returned to Colombia. *Los Extraditables* had not forgotten him—he was assassinated in Bogotá on 30 April 1991, shortly after he had finished giving a university lecture.⁵⁶⁷

Political violence

Los Extraditables also resorted to kidnapping to pressurise the government, concentrating on important public figures to maximise its impact. In the first free election of mayors in March 1988, politicians campaigning for the post became targets of violence. On 19 January 1988

⁵⁶⁵ Katherine Roberts, Milt Freudenheim, and James F. Clarity, "Ambassador Shot by Cocaine Ring," *The New York Times* (1987), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18: <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/18/weekinreview/the-world-ambassador-shot-by-cocaine-ring.html>.

⁵⁶⁶ Kirk, *More terrible than death: massacres, drugs, and America's war in Colombia*. p. 88.

⁵⁶⁷ Pilar Lozano, "Asesinado en Bogotá el ex ministro de Justicia Enrique Low Murtra," *El Pais*, 2nd May 1991.

the leading mayoral candidate, Andres Pastrana, was kidnapped at his campaign headquarters in Bogotá. Initially, M19 was suspected, but it was soon clear that Escobar and his henchmen were behind this latest intimidation attempt.⁵⁶⁸ An all-out police rescue operation ensued that succeeded on 25 January, less than a week later, but on the very same day Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos was kidnapped.⁵⁶⁹ This time the Cartel was not willing to wait for Barco to mount another rescue operation and executed him in cold blood.⁵⁷⁰

Total war is declared One motive behind the fresh wave of violence was that Barco had been hinting at the possibility of reinstating extradition, declared unconstitutional on 25 June 1987 by the Supreme Court.⁵⁷¹ It was suspected that the Justices had acted ‘under the shadow of death threats’.⁵⁷² In this context, the day before Pastrana was rescued and Hoyos murdered, *Los Extraditables* made a sinister announcement *via* a popular radio station: they declared “total war” on anyone who favored extraditing Colombians to face drug charges in the United States’.⁵⁷³

Later in the summer of 1988, the Medellin Cartel’s fear of extradition became more acute than ever after they learned that one of their own Carlos Ledher, extradited to the US in 1987, had been sentenced by a Florida court in July 1988 ‘to life imprisonment without parole, plus 135 years, and fined \$350,000’.⁵⁷⁴ Wanting to avoid the same fate, the Cartel continued their indiscriminate terror, and managed to keep the 1979 treaty at bay for the time being.

Around this time Barco ‘set up a special counter-narcotics unit within the National Police headed by General Roso José Serrano and supported by British and U.S. intelligence services’.⁵⁷⁵ Only through their joint efforts was President Barco able to pursue the cartels by

⁵⁶⁸ Geoffrey Matthews, "Kidnap sparks election chaos " *The Times*, 20th January 1988.

⁵⁶⁹ Alvaro Pardo, "Colombian Attorney General Kidnapped, probably by Drug Barons," *Reuters News*(1988), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁵⁷⁰ Geoffrey Matthews, "Attorney General executed by drug baron kidnapers: Colombia plunged into crisis " *The Times*, 26th January 1988.

⁵⁷¹ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 29.

⁵⁷² Alan Riding, "Colombians grow weary of waging the war on drugs," *The New York Times*, 1st February 1988. p. A1.

⁵⁷³ "Top Colombia foe of Drug Smuggling dies in Kidnapping," *The New York Times*, 25th January 1988.

⁵⁷⁴ Chepesiuk, *The War on Drugs: An International Encyclopedia*. p. 122.

⁵⁷⁵ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 80.

confiscating their weapons and assets, and seizing their bank accounts. This frontal attack by Barco, however, only succeeded in the end in escalating the violence.

Second wave of violence: the 'free-fire zone'

From 1989 to 1990 matters spiralled out of all control: Colombia was 'enveloped in a cycle of extraordinary violence',⁵⁷⁶ becoming so feral and pervasive that historian Marco Palacios refers to the period as 'the free fire zone'.⁵⁷⁷ *Los Extraditables* continued resorting to murder and kidnapping as means of intimidation, hoping to sway public opinion against extradition, but then they turned to the indiscriminate bombing of anyone and everyone.⁵⁷⁸ Colombia was in dire straits as 'bombings, kidnapping and assassinations became part of daily life'.⁵⁷⁹ Colombians had to adapt to an environment of barbarism that spawned a counterculture whereby 'to kill or to die [became] normal ... the desacralization of death, the banalization of life'.⁵⁸⁰

Political Assassination—the death of Luis Carlos Galán

The epoch of the free fire zone began with the killing on 3 March 1989 at *El Dorado* Airport of José Antequera, a member of the *Unión Patriótica* (UP), a political party founded by the FARC and the Colombian Communist Party after the truce with the Betancur Administration. In the same incident the *sicarios* injured many others, including Liberal Senator Ernesto Samper, who survived to become the controversial President of Colombia in 1994.⁵⁸¹ This was followed by one of the most tragic events in Colombian history—the assassination of Luis Carlos Galán Sarmiento on 18 August 1989 while campaigning for the Presidency in Soacha, a suburb of Bogotá.⁵⁸²

Galán was leader of the *Nuevo Liberalismo* movement, an offshoot of the traditional Liberal

⁵⁷⁶ DeShazo, Mendelson, and McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Instability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia." p. 4.

⁵⁷⁷ Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. p. 213.

⁵⁷⁸ Nagle, "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Fear: Some Thoughts on Colombian Extradition."

⁵⁷⁹ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 91.

⁵⁸⁰ Sánchez, "Problems of Violence, Prospect for Peace." p. 9.

⁵⁸¹ Americas Watch Committee, *The Killings in Colombia*, An Americas Watch report (Washington, DC: Americas Watch Committee, 1989).

⁵⁸² Eugene Robinson, "Colombia Buries Slain Candidate," *The Washinton Post*, 21st August 1989 1989.

Party that had been advocating revitalisation of Colombian democracy since the late 1970s.⁵⁸³ His personality was charismatic and since his ascent to presidential politics he 'had been able to attract young Colombians untrammelled by blind party loyalties'.⁵⁸⁴ Galán was widely expected to win the upcoming 1990 elections and 'had promised to use the power of the state to dismantle the drug cartels'.⁵⁸⁵

His assassination was personally planned and orchestrated by Escobar, who obviously wanted to keep honest men away from the Presidency, in collaboration with his political 'godfather' Santofimio, who feared Galán as a threat to his corrupt political network.⁵⁸⁶ Despite the overwhelming evidence against him, more than twenty years of legal battles would pass amid the constant lobbying of Galán's surviving family before the Colombian government finally brought Santofimio to justice in August 2011.⁵⁸⁷

President Barco embraces extradition Galán's assassination galvanised the Barco Administration to aggressively target the Medellín Cartel.⁵⁸⁸ Bogotá intensified counterdrug operations and declared a state of siege to 'implement extradition procedures against important [crime] figures'.⁵⁸⁹ Youngers claims that this strong reaction by Barco was nothing but a command from Washington, as 'Bogotá was not doing enough against the illicit drug trade',⁵⁹⁰ as if the Colombians did not have their own good and sufficient reasons for pursuing criminal terrorists. Such a view underestimates the complexity of Colombia's domestic and international situation and caricatures the Colombian political system.

Colombian scholars Bermudez and Melo second the interpretation that Barco invited the US to administer justice in drug trafficking cases after admitting the impotence of Colombia's

⁵⁸³ Alfonso Valdivieso, "El Nuevo Liberalismo: Antes y después de Galán," *Vanguardia Liberal*, 18th August 2009.

⁵⁸⁴ Sarita Kendall, "Maverick Senator may upset Colombia politics " *Financial Times*, 28th May 1982. p. 6.

⁵⁸⁵ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 90.

⁵⁸⁶ Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. p. 212.

⁵⁸⁷ *Confidential Interview by Author with Human Rights Advocate*, 12th May 2012.

⁵⁸⁸ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 264.

⁵⁸⁹ Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez G, eds., *Violence in Colombia: the contemporary crisis in historical perspective*, Latin American silhouettes (Wilmington, DL: SR Books, 1992). p. 273.

⁵⁹⁰ Youngers and Rosin, *Drugs and democracy in Latin America: the impact of U.S. policy*. p. 104.

judicial system;⁵⁹¹ a view echoed by Restrepo, who identifies the principal rationale for Barco to embrace extradition as his ‘conviction that the Colombian system of justice was incapable of convicting drug traffickers ... [as a result] the Colombian administration sought to shift this particular responsibility to another state’.⁵⁹²

Historically, and especially since the Panama crisis in 1903, Colombian presidents have taken care not to be seen ‘drawing closer to the United States government in matters regarding Colombia's internal affairs’.⁵⁹³ Only if the situation becomes unmanageable do they resort to inviting external help with internal affairs; *e.g.* the embrace of extradition by Betancur in 1985 after the assassination of Lara Bonilla. Like his predecessors, Barco initially searched for options short of all-out war against *los Extraditables* that would benefit him politically. After all, it was not Washington that elected him, but the Colombian people. In the first couple of years of his presidency, he embraced a *Plan Nacional de Rehabilitacion* (‘National Rehabilitation Plan’) to try and bring prosperity to the provincial regions so as to decrease the levels of violence in the country.

Cooperation by invitation In the end, the rehabilitation plan had no impact on violence; Bogotá ended up collaborating with Washington and taking a proactive approach to counter-narcotics so long as he could set the terms of joint actions against the narco-traffickers.⁵⁹⁴ Collaboration reflected the state’s incapacity; Bogotá was impotent before the cartels. The daunting task of facing the most formidable crime organisation in the world, enriched and empowered by worldwide profiteering, required the international community’s collaboration, at Bogotá’s invitation, of course. For the obvious reason that states everywhere have an interest in suppressing violent crime on their territory, this was a genuine international consensus, not an imposition.

In the words of David Bushnell, a prominent expert on Colombia, Barco launched ‘the most

⁵⁹¹ Jaime Bermúdez and Jorge Orlando Melo, "La Lucha contra el Narcotráfico: Éxitos y Limitaciones," in *El gobierno Barco: política, economía y desarrollo social en Colombia (1986-1990)*, ed. Malcolm D. Deas and Carlos Ossa Escobar (Santafé de Bogotá: Fedesarrollo, 1994).

⁵⁹² Restrepo, *Colombian criminal justice in crisis: fear and distrust*. p. 57.

⁵⁹³ Drexler, *Colombia and the United States: narcotics traffic and a failed foreign policy*. p. 97.

⁵⁹⁴ H. Richard Friman and Peter Andreas, *The illicit global economy and state power* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999).

spectacular crackdown ever⁵⁹⁵ on *los Extraditables* the day after the assassination of Galán. This would have been impossible without Washington's intervention (by invitation). Aid was forthcoming in September 1989 in the form of a US\$65-million emergency package.⁵⁹⁶ The state of emergency allowed Barco to extradite 24 traffickers to the US between August 1989 and December 1990.⁵⁹⁷

Violence against the Establishment—and everyone else

Los Extraditables struck back with a reign of terror that deployed death-squads, *sicarios* and, latterly, bombs planted on cars, planes, even bicycles; 'aimed at government officials, police stations, the headquarters of political parties, banks, [newspapers] and even supermarkets [the terror] wreaked havoc in Colombia's major cities'.⁵⁹⁸ It began on 24 August 1989 when *los Extraditables* 'burned the houses of two politicians, placed bombs in two radio stations and issued a *communiqué* declaring war on the Government',⁵⁹⁹ and threatening to target judges, politicians, diplomats, magistrates, journalists, and anyone else sympathetic to extradition.⁶⁰⁰ They made it clear that the terror would continue so long as the state was willing to extradite Colombian nationals to the US.⁶⁰¹ Washington deemed it prudent to evacuate all dependants of American diplomats from Bogotá.⁶⁰²

It was essentially the Medellín Cartel that waged this campaign of brutal violence; by contrast the Cali Cartel known as *Los Caballeros* (gentlemen) preferred bribes. Escobar laid siege to the freedom of the press on 2 September, detonating a 120-pound bomb outside the offices of Colombia's oldest newspaper, *El Espectador*, whose owner, Alfonso Cano, he had already assassinated in 1986 for an investigative *exposé*.⁶⁰³ (Four days later Eduardo Martínez was

⁵⁹⁵ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 264.

⁵⁹⁶ "U.S. Emergency Aid Arrives in Colombia," *Washington Post*, 4th September 1989.

⁵⁹⁷ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*.

⁵⁹⁸ Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sánchez G, *Violence in Colombia: the contemporary crisis in historical perspective*. p. 273.

⁵⁹⁹ James Brooke, "Drug Traffickers in Colombia start a counterattack," *The New York Times*, 25th August 1989.

⁶⁰⁰ Eugene Robinson, "Cocaine Cartel Declares 'Total War'," *The Washington Post*, 25th August 1989.

⁶⁰¹ Associated-Press, "40 Dead, 1000 hurt in Bogotá blast," *The Record*, 7th December 1989.

⁶⁰² Joseph Treaster, "U.S. Officials' Families to quit Bogotá," *The New York Times*, 30th August 1989.

⁶⁰³ Joseph Treaster, "Drug Ring Bombs Newspaper in Bogotá," *The New York Times*, 3rd September 1989.

extradited to Atlanta to face charges of money laundering for the Medellin Cartel; he was the first Colombian to be extradited since 1987.⁶⁰⁴) Yet another newspaper, *Vanguardia Liberal*, was destroyed in mid-October in the regional capital of Bucaramanga.

On 27 November Escobar had Flight 203 of Avianca (Colombia's national airline) bombed, killing all 107 civilian passengers.⁶⁰⁵ This atrocity boomeranged, making him an international criminal and a military target.⁶⁰⁶ It would ultimately lead to his death in a 1993 shootout with the Colombian National Police. The headquarters of the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS), the state security apparatus, was next – bombed on a Wednesday morning (6 December), a timing calculated to maximise harm to bystanders. At least 40 people were killed and hundreds more wounded.⁶⁰⁷

Accusing Escobar and his deputy Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, General Maza Marquez, head of DAS, released evidence of conspiracy between the Medellin Cartel and a ETA terrorist in the airliner bombing.⁶⁰⁸ Terrorised Colombians begged the President to negotiate with the Cartel, but Barco refuse and on 15 December his perseverance paid off: the CNP tracked down and killed Gacha,⁶⁰⁹ who had been trying to start a new, Cartel-controlled political party—and had already got five mayors elected in several towns.⁶¹⁰

After a brief switch of tactics (declaring a 'truce' to pressurise Barco to abandon extradition, which Barco promptly rebuffed),⁶¹¹ the Cartel declared a 'state of alert',⁶¹² and on 11 March detonated simultaneous bombs in Medellín, Cáli, and Bogotá, 'killing 26 people and injuring

⁶⁰⁴ "Colombian Court Upholds Extradition of Drug Lords," *The Washington Post* 1989.

⁶⁰⁵ Darío Betancourt E and Martha L. García B, *Contrabandistas, marimberos y mafiosos : historia social de la mafia colombiana, 1965-1992*, 1. ed., Sociología y política (Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia: T.M. Editores, 1994).

⁶⁰⁶ Isabel Vincent, "U.S. role in death of Escobar explored," *National Post*, 19th May 2001.

⁶⁰⁷ Associated-Press, "40 Dead, 1000 hurt in Bogotá blast."

⁶⁰⁸ Simon Walker, "Police Chief Says Ex-Basque Separatist Organised Bombing.," *Reuters News*(1989), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18: <http://global.factiva.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁶⁰⁹ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

⁶¹⁰ Joseph Treaster, "A Top Medellin Drug Trafficker Dies in a Shootout in Colombia," *The New York Times*, 16th December 1989.

⁶¹¹ "Medellin Cartel Declares State of Alert," *Associated Press*(1990), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18: <http://global.factiva.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁶¹² Ibid.

... 200 more'.⁶¹³ Escobar dared to offer cash rewards to anyone willing to kill a policeman or member of the security forces; more than 100 were murdered in the next few months.⁶¹⁴ His political assassinations profoundly altered the course of Colombian politics, starting with the murder on 22 March 1990 of Bernardo Jaramillo, the Presidential candidate of the UP.⁶¹⁵ Just one month later on 26 April M19 Presidential candidate Carlos Pizarro was 'murdered aboard an airliner bound for Barranquilla from Bogotá'.⁶¹⁶

Compromise in the age of extradition

That election arrived in May 1990 in which three Presidential candidates lost their lives to the Medellín Cartel. Voting took place under tight security; *los Extraditables* had warned voters that bombs would be set off around the country. Turnout was lower than in the Presidential elections of 1986, but six million Colombians willing to defy the Cartel and exercise their right to vote turned out. The winner was Galán's former campaign manager, Cesar Gaviria.⁶¹⁷

A few days after taking office in August 1990, Gaviria announced intention to revolutionise Colombia with fundamental structural reforms to the economy, the political system, and the judicial system. Gaviria was expected to continue the tough policies of his predecessor, but once in office he moved to negotiate a solution to deal with the violence and narco-trafficking that had afflicted the country throughout the 1980s.⁶¹⁸ As early as September 1990 Gaviria was promising that 'any trafficker who voluntarily surrendered to the Colombian authorities and pleaded guilty to one or more charges would not be extradited to the United States but instead tried in Colombia'.⁶¹⁹ It is important to realise that this 'submission to justice' offer was not a capricious move; the policy had the implicit 'blessing of public opinion'.⁶²⁰ It

⁶¹³ Ron Chepesiuk, *The bullet or the bribe: taking down Colombia's Cali drug Cartel* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003). p. 131.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Harvey F. Kline, *State building and conflict resolution in Colombia, 1986-1994* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

⁶¹⁶ Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sánchez G, *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*. p. xii.

⁶¹⁷ James Brooke, "Strong Drug Foe Wins in Colombia by a Wide Margin," *The New York Times*, 27th May 1990.

⁶¹⁸ Camacho Guizado, "Drug Trafficking and Society in Colombia."

⁶¹⁹ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*. p. 267.

⁶²⁰ Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. p. 254.

seems that the terror of *los Extraditables* had worked.

Constitutional reform

Gaviria believed his structural reforms required amending the constitution, and he gathered support for drafting a new one. In October 1990 he proposed a referendum to authorise a constituent assembly.⁶²¹ The Supreme Court ruled in favour and the assembly was formed in December 1990. The new constitution was proclaimed on 4 July 1991.⁶²² The two important outcomes of this that relate to narco-traffickers and guerrillas are discussed as follows.

An end to extradition

The new constitution abolished extradition of Colombian citizens, temporarily allaying the Medellin Cartel's campaign of terror.⁶²³ Some argue that these constitutional reforms were undertaken 'under significant pressure from the country's drug trafficking organizations'.⁶²⁴ In theory, the change was made to improve the accountability of the Colombian justice system, and was accompanied by other ambitious reforms that 'tried to legislate many social changes, including the protection of many individual rights',⁶²⁵ including the right of Colombians to be tried by judges of their own country. In practice, these reforms proved too ambitious to be managed, for the perennial reason of the Colombian state's weakness. As Thoumi argues, the 'state [did] not have the resources or the organizational capability to guarantee those rights'.⁶²⁶ The weakness of the state was not to be remedied by just another constitutional revision.

Escobar accepts the new plea bargaining system

Within days of the new constitution's promulgation, Escobar gave himself up to the Colombian police to be placed under arrest.⁶²⁷ At age 41 he was placed in a prison of his own design and construction that looked more like

⁶²¹ Sebastian Edwards and Roberto Steiner, *La revolución incompleta: las reformas de Gaviria* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2008).

⁶²² Kline, "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State." p. 170.

⁶²³ Méndez, *Political murder and reform in Colombia: the violence continues*.

⁶²⁴ Arlene Tickner, "Colombia: U.S. Subordinate, Autonomous Actor, or Something in-Between," in *Latin American and Caribbean foreign policy*, ed. Frank O. Mora and Jeanne A. K. Hey (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003). p. 178.

⁶²⁵ Francisco E. Thoumi, *Illegal drugs, economy and society in the Andes* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press 2003). p. 210.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 210.

⁶²⁷ Kline, "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State."

a luxury resort. He selected 'his own guards, furnished his jail with comfortable appliances and furniture, developed an active social life, including cocktail parties, and continued his trafficking operations from jail'.⁶²⁸

When Escobar's phony imprisonment became public, Bogotá made plans to transfer him to a real prison, but 'fearing that he could be extradited, Escobar escaped and went into hiding'⁶²⁹ on 22 July 1992. According to Escobar himself, he did so because the Colombian government was too weak to guarantee his safety!⁶³⁰

Capture by invitation Escobar's escape embarrassed Bogotá, exposing its weakness to all the world. As if to compensate, President Gaviria launched an aggressive manhunt, creating a special operational unit in the CNP called *El Bloque de Búsqueda* (the Search Bloc).⁶³¹ This elite group proved capable of capturing a few members of the Medellín Cartel, but Escobar himself was elusive; still powerful enough to avoid capture by Colombia's inefficient security services.

In December 1992 Bogotá was stepping up its manhunt, but Escobar retaliated, declaring an open war on the Gaviria Administration and, as in the past, he resorted to terrorism; 'mainly large bombs against government targets ... and other public places where explosions would generate great public fear. This challenge forced the Colombian government to focus all its efforts on catching Escobar'.⁶³² At this stage Gaviria who, like so many Colombian Presidents before and since, had been reluctant for the first part of his administration to seek external help, invited the US to intervene with 'technical cooperation'.⁶³³ After more than a year on the run, Escobar was finally cornered. With American help, *El Bloque de Búsqueda* 'intercepted a cellular phone call on December 2, 1993 that Escobar had made to his son,

⁶²⁸ Thoumi, *Illegal drugs, economy and society in the Andes*. p. 210.

⁶²⁹ Harvey F. Kline, *Historical dictionary of Colombia*, Historical dictionaries of the Americas (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2012).

⁶³⁰ Camilo Chaparro, "Fuga de Escobar: Un Centenar de Acusados," *El Tiempo*, 25th November 1992.

⁶³¹ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*.

⁶³² Thoumi, *Illegal drugs, economy and society in the Andes*. p. 210.

⁶³³ Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002), 11th March (Bogotá, Colombia) 2006.

enabling the security forces to track him to a Medellin rooftop, where he was killed'.⁶³⁴

The Cali Cartel flourishes The Colombian state's law enforcement focus was too narrow, with an overconcentration on Escobar. Gaviria himself admitted that his Administration had 'viewed Escobar and the Medellin Cartel as the worst of two evils ... the Colombian government directed all its attention and resources against the Medellin Cartel'.⁶³⁵ This strategic blunder allowed the Cali Cartel to fill the vacuum left by Escobar's death, and expand the reach of its tentacles during the late 1980s and early 1990s. External aid from the US continued to be crucial to any possibility of progress against the renegade enemies of the Colombian state. Yet the state's cooperation with the US war on drugs was the condition on which all such aid depended. It was the threat to this aid posed by the Cali Cartel's infiltration of the State itself, at its highest levels, that brought the state to its nadir under the unfortunate Administration of Ernesto Samper.

The Nadir: The Samper Presidency (1994-1998)

Special attention must be given to the Presidency of Ernesto Samper if the historical context for Plan Colombia is to be complete. The political battle to win the Presidency of Colombia in 1994 was extremely tough, and required a runoff, as the first round was too close to call a winner.⁶³⁶ In the second round on 19 June 1994 Samper won by a wafer-thin margin over his opponent, the Conservative Andres Pastrana.⁶³⁷ Samper's electoral victory was soon marred by allegations that he had financed his campaign with contributions from the Cali Cartel. The President-elect tried to discredit the accusations, but tape recordings evidencing the illegal transactions surfaced, making it impossible for Samper to deny the drug money nexus.⁶³⁸ Despite repeatedly being exonerated by the Colombian Congress, Samper would be hounded by the accusations throughout his term. Grave consequences for Colombia, both domestically and internationally, ensued. The following section examines this crisis and its significance in more depth.

⁶³⁴ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 80.

⁶³⁵ Quoted in Chepesiuk, *The bullet or the bribe: taking down Colombia's Cali drug Cartel*. p. 130.

⁶³⁶ Abdon Espinosa Valderrama, "De la Primera a la Segunda Vuelta," *El Tiempo*, 31st May 1993.

⁶³⁷ "Ernesto Samper Nuevo Presidente," *El Tiempo*, 20th June 1993.

⁶³⁸ Kline, *Historical dictionary of Colombia*.

Narcoestado: the ultimate prize

Safford and Palacios argue that Samper's narco-funded campaign was not an isolated event, but that drug money had become deeply integrated into the clientelistic networks of both elite political parties going back as far as the 1970s when narco-traffickers started to pour money into the political system.⁶³⁹ Their view is echoed by Caballero, who argues narco-funding for political campaigns had been going on since the mid-1980s, and that it only became a scandal on this occasion because the US took note and got involved.⁶⁴⁰

The gravity of the situation in this particular instance lay in that it implicated the elite at the highest possible level, something that had never happened in Colombia before.⁶⁴¹ Joyce opines that, apart from throwing the legitimacy of the political system into serious doubt, the crisis also exposed the terrible 'weakness of the Colombia judicial system and its inability to deal with drug trafficking and corruption in public life, despite the existence of new institutions such as the prosecutor-general's office',⁶⁴² a new office set up by the 1991 constitution to shore up the judiciary.⁶⁴³

'Cali-gate': the election scandal

At first the extent of the corruption was unknown, but in time it became abundantly clear that Samper had been fully aware of receiving illegal contributions from the narco-traffickers. It is estimated that as much as US\$6 million made it into his campaign coffers.⁶⁴⁴ The audiotapes document conversations involving campaign treasurer Santiago Medina freely discussing the

⁶³⁹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

⁶⁴⁰ Antonio Caballero, "Drogas: la guerra de la dependencia," in *Que está pasando en Colombia? Anatomía de un país en crisis*, ed. Consuelo Ahumada (Santafé de Bogotá: El Ancora Editores, 2000).

⁶⁴¹ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002), 22 August 2011.

⁶⁴² Elizabeth Joyce, "Narcocassettes Jeopardize a President," *World Today* 52, no. 5 (1996). p. 122.

⁶⁴³ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

⁶⁴⁴ Kline, *State building and conflict resolution in Colombia, 1986-1994*.

Cali Cartel's contributions.⁶⁴⁵ An official investigation (dubbed *Proceso 8000*) was opened on 21 April 1995.⁶⁴⁶

In June 1995 Medina was arrested. He confessed that on Samper's instructions he had been keeping two separate account books; one open to public scrutiny and the other unofficially recording the illegal donations. Medina had kept a secret diary of his activities and offered it to the prosecutors at this stage.⁶⁴⁷ Samper was 'subsequently plunged into a Watergate-style morass of rumor and scandal'⁶⁴⁸ that spilled over onto other high-ranking politicians.⁶⁴⁹

Samper's Minister of Defence, Fernando Botero Zea, was arrested in August 1995. He had been Samper's campaign manager.⁶⁵⁰ At first, Botero refused to implicate his boss and maintained that it was Medina who had orchestrated the whole thing.⁶⁵¹ By the end of December 1995 Samper could suppose the whole ordeal finished, when an investigation by a Congressional committee (composed mainly of pro-Samper supporters) concluded that the President had been unaware of the illegal contributions, and that 'he had no case to answer'.⁶⁵²

On 22 January 1996, however, Samper's luck changed when Botero cracked and agreed to cooperate with National Prosecutor Alfonso Valdivieso, confessing that 'he as well as Samper knew that money from the drug dealers was entering the campaign'.⁶⁵³ On a televised speech the very same day Samper denied all the fresh accusations and argued that Botero had lied to minimise his own role in the affair and plea-bargain a reduced sentence.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁵ "Capurado Santiago Medina," *El Tiempo*, 27th July 1995.

⁶⁴⁶ William Avilés, *Global capitalism, democracy, and civil-military relations in Colombia*, SUNY series in global politics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

⁶⁴⁷ "El diario de Medina," *Revista Semana*, 16th October 1995.

⁶⁴⁸ John D. Martz, *The politics of clientelism: democracy & the state in Colombia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997). p. 3.

⁶⁴⁹ Thoumi, *Illegal drugs, economy and society in the Andes*.

⁶⁵⁰ Avilés, *Global capitalism, democracy, and civil-military relations in Colombia*.

⁶⁵¹ Joyce, "Narcocassettes Jeopardize a President."

⁶⁵² Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and the Economy." p. 77.

⁶⁵³ Harvey F. Kline, *Chronicle of a failure foretold: the peace process of Colombian president Andrés Pastrana* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007). p. 28.

⁶⁵⁴ Ernesto Samper Pizano, *Aquí estoy y aquí me quedo: testimonio de un gobierno* (Bogotá: El Ancora, 2000).

At this juncture Valdivieso resolved to indict Samper, but the latter's Presidential immunity meant that Congress's lower house would have to consent.⁶⁵⁵ On 12 June 1996 another Congressional investigation concluded that Samper had committed no crime and exonerated him for the second time.⁶⁵⁶ Critics of the investigation pointed out that at least 'one hundred congressman [were] under investigation for alleged connections with drug traffickers',⁶⁵⁷ when this finding was being made.

Kline agrees that, despite Congressional exoneration and serving out his Presidential term, Samper left office under a dark cloud. The allegations of corruption would 'bedevil Samper's entire administration, sapping its internal initiatives and seriously compromising its foreign policy, especially its relations with the United States'.⁶⁵⁸ The following section examines the detrimental effect the political crisis had on Bogotá's relationship with Washington.

Collapse of relations with the US

From the outset, Washington suspected Samper was tainted by drug money. At first the US tried to manage its relationship with Bogotá pragmatically; for example, when the campaign manager of Samper's opponent delivered the incriminating tape recordings to the American Embassy, hoping they would be published, 'U.S. State Department officials thought the issue too delicate ... and directed [the Ambassador] not to leak the tapes to the press'.⁶⁵⁹ The tapes were nevertheless leaked by a disgruntled DEA agent, and 'the firestorm he created ... left an indelible imprint on the Colombian political system'.⁶⁶⁰ After this a discreet approach was no longer possible.⁶⁶¹ The allegations 'poisoned [Samper's] relationship with the United

⁶⁵⁵ "Alistan Indagatoria a Samper," *El Tiempo*, 2nd February 1996.

⁶⁵⁶ Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and the Economy."

⁶⁵⁷ Joyce, "Narcocassettes Jeopardize a President." p. 122.

⁶⁵⁸ Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sánchez G, *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*. p. xvi.

⁶⁵⁹ Russell Crandall, "Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy toward Colombia during the Samper Administration," *Latin American Politics & Society* 43, no. 3 (2001). p. 102

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 103.

⁶⁶¹ *Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002)*, 16th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

States’;⁶⁶² US officials were—soon referring to Colombia as a ‘narco-state’ or ‘narco-democracy’.⁶⁶³

Tough on drugs

US officials confronted Samper with the then-still-secret evidence shortly after his swearing-in, and in effect ‘read the Riot Act’ to him. Samper could not expect good relations with the US unless he ‘got tough’. At this point the inexperienced new President’s morale gave way; and after the drug-money campaign-finance scandal broke, Samper would spend the rest of his Presidency striving in vain to mollify the US.⁶⁶⁴

If the US could be said to wield hegemony, it would consist in this, that for weak states good relations with the US may well be vitally important. The downside is that poor relations are considered ill-omened by important constituents, especially international ones. The domestic masses may cheer, foreign investors may become disenchanted and even disquieted by badly deteriorating relations. If to stanch this haemorrhaging of international confidence as well as to maintain Colombia’s standing as a US aid recipient Samper had to be beholden to the United States, it was only because first he had been caught beholden to the Cali Cartel.⁶⁶⁵

It is important to note that, hegemonic or not, the US role was not necessarily an evil one just for that. The US was determined by all means to keep Colombia from becoming the world’s first ‘civilised narco-state’; in this it may have succeeded. Taking the hint from the American warnings, Samper lashed out at the drug trade in furious but desultory fashion; for example launching *Operation Splendor* in December 1994,⁶⁶⁶ a crop fumigation scheme that provoked riots by poor farmers whose coca crop was ruined. These ill-planned operations hardly fazed the Cali Cartel (probably not by accident). Other, similar ripostes at a situation out of control

⁶⁶² DeShazo, Mendelson, and McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Instability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia." p. 8.

⁶⁶³ Cynthia J Arnson and Arlene B Tickner, "Colombia and the United States," in *Contemporary U.S.-Latin American Relations: Cooperation or Conflict in the 21st Century?*, ed. Jorge I. Dominguez and Rafael Fernandez de Castro (New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁶⁶⁴ Samper Pizano, *Aquí estoy y aquí me quedo: testimonio de un gobierno*.

⁶⁶⁵ *Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002)*, 7th March (The Hague, Netherlands) 2006.

⁶⁶⁶ See Russell Crandall, *Driven by drugs : U.S. policy toward Colombia* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002). p. 109.

set a pattern of ineffectiveness that were to bring down the state to one of its lowest ebbs in Colombian history.

Samper prosecutes the Cali Cartel

The pressure from the US, however, was unrelenting; especially vociferous were Republicans flush with their election triumph in November 1994. One of the conditions of continued good relations that was imposed was to install General Rosso José Serrano as Colombian National Police (CNP) Chief, instead of one the Americans knew was corrupted by the cartels.⁶⁶⁷ This was a lucky choice from a drug war standpoint. Serrano began by firing 67 high-ranking CNP officers and several thousand ordinary cops suspected of corruption. He also prioritised cooperation with the US DEA and CIA, and with this *modus operandi* in place he tackled the Cali Cartel with a vengeance, undertaking more than 200 raids on their organisation, not even sparing their homes. The kingpins were arrested and Cartel smashed, paving the way for the FARC and the ELN to move in and take over the drug trade.⁶⁶⁸

Decertification

Despite the significant progress in the counter-narcotics campaign through 1995, in 1996 the US State Department made a controversial decision – to decertify Colombia as a recipient of US foreign aid in the war on drugs. Mid-level State Department officials joined Republicans in Congress to produce this result; high-level officials preoccupied and out of loop.⁶⁶⁹ ‘Samper is seriously undermined by the U.S. decertification, although he is absolved (by one vote) of criminal charges for ties to the drug cartels by the Colombian House of Representatives’.⁶⁷⁰ It was a move that many observers thought quite unfair, but in a weakened condition Colombia was easily ‘pushed around’.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁷ Crandall, "Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy toward Colombia during the Samper Administration."

⁶⁶⁸ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (*Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002*), 1st April (Washington, DC) 2006.

⁶⁶⁹ Crandall, "Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy toward Colombia during the Samper Administration." p. 107

⁶⁷⁰ Julia Sweig and Michael M. McCarthy, "Colombia: Staving Off Partial Collapse," in *The Andes in focus : security, democracy, and economic reform*, ed. Russell Crandall, Guadalupe Paz, and Riordan Roett (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005). p. 36

⁶⁷¹ Crandall, "Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy toward Colombia during the Samper Administration." p. 108.

Samper's visa is cancelled

The Colombian Congress's second exoneration of Samper on 12 June 1996 inflamed opinion in Washington all the more. Under the influence of Myles Frechette, the US Ambassador, the State Department cancelled Samper's visa to enter the US,⁶⁷² the first time in history a sitting head of state's US visa had ever been cancelled. It dramatized 'Washington's objection to Samper's acceptance of narco-financed campaign contributions'.⁶⁷³ After all the violence that Colombia had endured over the last decade, US visas were a hot commodity for Colombians. Cancelling the visa of the President himself sent a very clear message to Colombians.⁶⁷⁴ It is a notable fact that Samper responded to this series of insults with cooperation not defiance: he launched another massive fumigation campaign and lobbied to have the constitution amended to reinstate the legality of extradition to the US, after Janet Reno, the US Attorney General, 'demanded the extradition of four Cali cartel leaders'.⁶⁷⁵

Samper deposed de facto

Relations between the two countries reached such a nadir that US State Department and drug enforcement officials effectively deposed Samper within the bilateral relation. On important decisions affecting Colombia's counter-narcotics operations, the US took to dealing directly with Police Chief Serrano, totally bypassing the head of state against all diplomatic protocol. This scorched-earth policy of the United States yielded predictable unintended consequences. '[D]isproportionate support for [the CNP] at the expense of the Colombian armed forces'⁶⁷⁶ probably facilitated the disastrous defeats the army suffered at the hands of the FARC in this time frame, between 1996 and 1998, at *Las Delicias*, *Patascoy* and *El Billar*.

The State teeters on the brink of failure

At this point in Colombia's history the combination of drugs, paramilitaries and guerrillas that had flared beginning in 1982 came to a crisis. During the Samper years the drug-fuelled violence ran amok to the point of pushing the state to the brink of failure. The tsunami of

⁶⁷² Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*.

⁶⁷³ Gabriel Marcella, *Democratic Governance and the Rule of Law: Lessons from Colombia* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2009). p. 16.

⁶⁷⁴ *Interview by author with Gabriel Marcella (Professor US Army War College)*.

⁶⁷⁵ Crandall, "Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy toward Colombia during the Samper Administration." p. 109.

⁶⁷⁶ DeShazo, Mendelson, and McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Instability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia." p. 16.

violence is summed up by Kline: ‘there was more violence during the period of the Gaviria government than the Barco one, and more in the Barco years than in the Betancur period. Further it appears that violence increased during the Samper [administration]’.⁶⁷⁷ Table 3.1 illustrates his point:

Table 3.1 Violence in Colombia in Comparative Perspective 1982 to 1994.⁶⁷⁸

President	Assassinations	Disappearances	Deaths in combat	Kidnappings	Total murders
Betancur	788	126	287	233	12,265
Barco	2,093	168	839	760	21,525
Gaviria	1,484	151	1,364	1,550	28,284
Average	1484	151	651	614	18,160

Despite the formidable level of violence and the pervasive ‘absence of the state’ from 1982 to 1994, during this time Bogotá managed to retard the penetration of this violence enough to avoid state failure by relying on US invited intervention. In the three presidencies before Samper, external intervention shored up Bogotá’s own domestic intervention whereby it perseveringly ‘negotiated with guerrilla groups and conducted indirect negotiations and plea bargaining with drug dealers and members of paramilitary groups’.⁶⁷⁹

With Samper accession to office, things changed drastically for the worse. The drug cartels, by bankrolling his campaign for the Presidency, achieved total penetration of the Colombian political system.⁶⁸⁰ Not only was Samper himself tainted by drug money, but at least 100 members of Congress were also dependent on organised criminals for political campaign financing.⁶⁸¹ Once the news broke, Samper became preoccupied with defending himself. As

⁶⁷⁷ Kline, "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State." p. 177.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 171. The numbers have been round-up to the nearest decimal.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 170.

⁶⁸⁰ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002). This view is supported by a number of scholars who provide similar arguments. For instance, see: Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

⁶⁸¹ Kline, *Chronicle of a failure foretold: the peace process of Colombian president Andrés Pastrana*.

aply concluded in a US State Department report of January 1998, the fiasco ‘significantly diminished the President's moral authority and political ability to govern ... the control of the central Government over the national territory [was] increasingly challenged by longstanding and widespread internal armed conflict and rampant violence—both criminal and political’.⁶⁸²

Real strategic planning yielded to an obsession with pleasing Washington. The upshot, such as the destruction of the Cali Cartel, merely threw open the window of opportunity to a new generation of guerrillas and paramilitaries. By 1995 most of the cartel kingpins were out of commission, either dead or serving time in Colombia or the US. Crandall argues that despite the success of the Kingpin Strategy, the overall production of cocaine increased,⁶⁸³ having shifted to smaller producers with better mobility and deeper links with vigilante groups. The following section discusses these events in more depth.

The guerrillas are strengthened

With the cartels finished and the state at its weakest point, the insurgent guerrillas ‘continued to be active in ambushes, bombings and kidnappings’.⁶⁸⁴ The academic literature in general tends to romanticize the guerrillas, but their deeds were never more brutal than in the 1990s, and were condemned by leading organisations like Human Rights Watch, who condemned them for their involvement in kidnappings, summary executions, and a general disregard for international humanitarian law.⁶⁸⁵ In 2002 even the ‘reluctant European Union recognized the FARC and ELN as terrorist groups’.⁶⁸⁶

The FARC

Perhaps the gravest challenge to the Samper administration were the FARC, who had entered into a peace process with the previous administration. The process was expected to continue as usual, but the drug money scandal massively delayed Bogotá's part in its continuation.

⁶⁸² U.S. Department of State, "Colombia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 " (Washington, DC. January 30 1998).

⁶⁸³ Russell Crandall, "From Drugs to Security: A New U.S. Policy," in *The Andes in focus : security, democracy, and economic reform*, ed. Russell Crandall, Guadalupe Paz, and Riordan Roett (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).

⁶⁸⁴ Kline, "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State." p. 172.

⁶⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch (HRW), "War without quarter: Colombia and international humanitarian law," (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1998).

⁶⁸⁶ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*. p. 9.

More than three months passed, for instance, before Samper could appoint a senior negotiator to the process.⁶⁸⁷ In the end the negotiations did not prosper and the FARC launched a spectacular terror campaign against the State.

The FARC's Eighth Conference Despite having grown from 2000 insurgents in 15 fronts in 1982 to around 6000 insurgents in more than 50 fronts in 1993, their 7th Conference's objective of defeating the Colombia army had not been realised;⁶⁸⁸ thus, the FARC leadership held an Eighth Conference in 1993 to review their mission. Massively enriched by taxing the coca-trade over the last ten years, they adopt a much more ambitious strategy,⁶⁸⁹ moving to empower local commanders and use small units or blocs yet powerful enough to inflicting maximal damage while evading detection.⁶⁹⁰

Las Delicias, Pastascoy and El Billar The new approach began to pay off as early as 1996. The FARC managed a string of devastating surprise attacks on Colombian military facilities. The first targeted *Las Delicias*, a remote counter-drug outpost near the border with Ecuador, manned by 117 soldiers.⁶⁹¹ About 800 insurgents from 5 blocs combined to take the post on 30 August 1996.⁶⁹² Thirty-six soldiers died in the attack and the other 86 were taken hostage. While most were eventually released, more than fifteen years would elapse before the last ten were freed in 2012.⁶⁹³

A second attack hit the Colombian Army's communications post in *Cerro de Patascoy*, also near Ecuador, on 21 December.⁶⁹⁴ The 32-man platoon guarding the post mainly comprised

⁶⁸⁷ Kline, *Chronicle of a failure foretold: the peace process of Colombian president Andrés Pastrana*.

⁶⁸⁸ Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002). These numbers are accurately confirmed by the following report: Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008.

⁶⁸⁹ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*.

⁶⁹⁰ Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).

⁶⁹¹ Robert D. Ramsey, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: the Colombian security force experience, 1998-2008*, Occasional paper (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute Press ; US Army Combined Arms Center, 2009).

⁶⁹² "La Destrucción de la base de las Delicias," *El Tiempo*, 21st December 1996.

⁶⁹³ "Liberación de 10 uniformados, fin de tenebroso capítulo para el país," *El Tiempo*, 2nd April 2012.

⁶⁹⁴ María Clemencia Ramírez, *Between the guerrillas and the state: the cocalero movement, citizenship, and identity in the Colombian Amazon* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

teenage conscripts. More than 200 insurgents quickly overwhelmed them.⁶⁹⁵ Eight teenagers died; the rest were kidnapped.⁶⁹⁶ The third attack took place at the beginning of March 1998 in the vicinity of *El Billar* in Caquetá, 260 miles from Bogotá; this exceptionally violent attack killed a total of 62 soldiers, while 46 were kidnapped.⁶⁹⁷ This was the worst defeat ever inflicted on the army in its history. Compounding its gravity, it was a *crème de la crème* counterinsurgency platoon that was annihilated.⁶⁹⁸ These attacks portended a reinvigorated and more potent FARC capable of defeating the state like never before. As Marcella points out, 'it was the first time that a modern Latin America army was successfully beaten by such irregular formations in the field'.⁶⁹⁹ The attacks were also condemned by Human Rights Watch, who argued that the kidnapping of soldiers was a clear violation of international law.⁷⁰⁰

Cocaine and the FARC The extent of the FARC's involvement in coca production is uncertain and controversial. Some analysts contend that their struggle is purely political, while others suspect that by the 1990s the FARC had lost their tenuous commitment to ideology and were shifting to becoming fully invested in the drug trade.⁷⁰¹ The available evidence supports the inference of major FARC involvement after the demise of the Medellín and Cali Cartels in 1995, as the trade fell into the hands of smaller producers who had deeper links with guerrilla groups like the FARC.⁷⁰²

It was shown above that the FARC profited from 'protecting' drug traffickers in the 1980s. Weinstein reports that at first they hesitated to partake in a drug trade that compromised their ideology, but the 'logistical necessity of responding to government counterinsurgency efforts

⁶⁹⁵ David Passage, *The United States and Colombia: Untying the Gordian Knot* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000).

⁶⁹⁶ Kline, *Chronicle of a failure foretold: the peace process of Colombian president Andrés Pastrana*.

⁶⁹⁷ Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia."

⁶⁹⁸ Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).

⁶⁹⁹ Marcella, *Democratic Governance and the Rule of Law: Lessons from Colombia*. p. 16.

⁷⁰⁰ (HRW), "War without quarter: Colombia and international humanitarian law."

⁷⁰¹ Weinstein provides a good summary of the different debates available in the literature. Weinstein, *Inside rebellion: the politics of insurgent violence*. p. 290-296.

⁷⁰² Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia."

drove the FARC⁷⁰³ to accept that survival trumped ideology. Ferro and Uribe describe in detail how the FARC was rejuvenated in the 1990s by this decision to profit.⁷⁰⁴ Their study shows that between 1986 and 1991 the FARC concentrated on material gain and self-interest. With the Medellin and Cali Cartels out of the way, the FARC moved into the processing of cocaine in the regions dominated by them.⁷⁰⁵

From 1995 to 1999 their role in coca production only increased and they moved to rally coca producers against fumigation and other counter-narcotics operations, and the 'presence of the army' on their 'turf'.⁷⁰⁶ This claim is corroborated by evidence that the *Las Delicias* attack was not a romantic adventure, but a strategic blow aimed at the army's coca-interdiction capacity and funded by local coca producers.⁷⁰⁷ By the end of the 1990s the FARC were on the verge of dominating the illegal business in many parts of Colombia. By early 2000s they had 'expanded their drug-related efforts to include drug trafficking, significantly expanding their drug-revenue war chest, which [was] estimated at over US\$300 million annually ... to fuel an increasingly brutal insurgency'.⁷⁰⁸

The paramilitaries are beefed up

Paramilitary groups, too, flourished during the Samper years, even after some of their leaders died.⁷⁰⁹ This was partly the result of the increasing activity by the FARC which at the same time reflected 'the inability of the government to protect people from the guerrillas'.⁷¹⁰ Two umbrella groups in particular are worth discussing.

CONVIVIR A few months after his inauguration on 13 December 1994, President Samper elaborated the Gaviria Administration's Decree 356 of February 1994 legally protecting the

⁷⁰³ Weinstein, *Inside rebellion: the politics of insurgent violence*. p. 292.

⁷⁰⁴ Juan Guillermo Ferro and Graciela Uribe Ramón, *El orden de la guerra: Las FARC-EP entre la organización y la política* (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana & Colciencias, 2002).

⁷⁰⁵ Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia."

⁷⁰⁶ Ferro and Uribe Ramón, *El orden de la guerra: Las FARC-EP entre la organización y la política*. p. 97.

⁷⁰⁷ "Cocaleros financiaron ataque a Las Delicias," *El Tiempo*, 1st December 1996. This information was also corroborated in an *Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002)*.

⁷⁰⁸ Russell Crandall, "Debating Plan Colombia," *Survival* 44, no. 2 (2002). p. 185.

⁷⁰⁹ Kline, "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State."

⁷¹⁰ Kline, *Chronicle of a failure foretold: the peace process of Colombian president Andrés Pastrana*. p. 40.

private security industry, to facilitate formation of *Asociaciones Comunitarias de Vigilancia Rural* (CONVIVIR) or Community Cooperatives of Rural Vigilance.⁷¹¹ The purpose of these groups ‘was to provide logistical support and information gathering to the military forces’.⁷¹² Within a year, upwards of 500 CONVIVIR units had been founded ‘with about 9,633 armed men’.⁷¹³

Allegations of human right abuses by these groups drove the Colombian Supreme Court in 1997 to prohibit these entities ‘from collecting intelligence for the security forces and from receiving military-issued weapons’.⁷¹⁴ At this stage, the high court stopped short of outlawing these organisations outright; they continued to operate and, although high-calibre weapons were denied them, they were permitted to carry pistols. They were finally outlawed in 1999, but Richani argues they continued to fly under the radar ‘in rural areas controlled by large landowners and narco-traffickers, their two staunchest supporters’.⁷¹⁵

AUC Also notable during the Samper Presidency was the founding on 18 April 1997 of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), led by Carlos Castaño. The AUC claimed that it had not been organised by the government, but was independent and self-organising. In 1995 Carlos Castaño had been going about convincing each of these individual self-defence groups of the necessity of a union under one commander, one insignia, one uniform, and one policy. (In the beginning acceptance of one policy was not essential.) Castaño’s own group became the model for both political and military structure. The AUC began with about 3000 armed men, but would grow to at least 8,000 by the end of the 1990’s.⁷¹⁶

AUC: violence and drugs Paramilitary groups had been outlawed in 1989. The enactment of

⁷¹¹ William Aviles, "Paramilitarism and Colombia's Low-Intensity Democracy " *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38(2006).

⁷¹² Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. p. 52.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Winifred Tate, *Counting the dead : the culture and politics of human rights activism in Colombia*, California series in public anthropology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). p. 51.

⁷¹⁵ Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*.

⁷¹⁶ Peter DeShazo, Tanya Primiani, and Philip McLean, "Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999–2007," (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) 2007).

CONVIVIR in 1994 brought back the same problems, as these groups reforged their links with the security services.⁷¹⁷ Bogotá has consistently claimed that they are prosecuted to the same extent as insurgent guerrillas, but some disagree and claim that the security services are in complicity with them.⁷¹⁸ Human Rights Watch has documented a persistent tie between the AUC and elements of the army.⁷¹⁹ AUC units have unleashed military-style offensives on those considered to be guerrillas or their sympathisers.⁷²⁰ Massacres were perpetrated by both guerrillas and paramilitaries and thousands of people fled to cities to escape the crossfire.⁷²¹

In a similar manner to the FARC, during this period paramilitary groups also ‘became closely involved in the drug industry, often fighting the FARC for control of the lucrative coca fields and trafficking routes but sometimes cooperating with them’.⁷²² The AUC just like the FARC ‘publicly denied any involvement in the actual production of drugs’.⁷²³

COLOMBIA AT THE END OF THE SAMPER PRESIDENCY

By the end of the Samper Administration the Colombian state had reached perhaps *the nadir* of its competence and legitimacy in all of its history. The gargantuan profits to be milked out of drug-trafficking and the tremendous empowerment of Marxist guerrillas consequent upon their takeover of this deadly trade had exposed the state’s every long-standing weakness. The US, the world’s most important power, was treating Colombia like a pariah—its ambassador openly denouncing the Head of State and notoriously bypassing him to deal directly with the Chief of the Colombian National Police. In a sense, the state had already undergone failure; the influence of drug money was everywhere and was everywhere seen to be triumphant.

In this crisis the Colombian elite’s ‘best and brightest’ mobilised not so much to bring their

⁷¹⁷ Holmes, Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, and Curtin, *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*.

⁷¹⁸ Robinson Salazar Pèrez, *Comportamiento de la Sociedad Civil Latinoamericana* (Montevideo: Libros en red, 2002).

⁷¹⁹ Human Rights Watch (HRW), "The Ties That Bind: Colombia and Military-Paramilitary Links," (Human Rights Watch 2000).

⁷²⁰ (HRW), "War without quarter: Colombia and international humanitarian law."

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, "Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999–2007." p. 6.

⁷²³ Kim Cragin and Bruce Hoffman, *Arms trafficking and Colombia* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 2003). p. 69.

own sovereign means to bear on the rescue of their country, as to call upon the great powers of Europe and North America to intervene in Colombia's internal affairs to make up what they was unable to accomplish themselves—following a time-honoured pattern observable since the Republic's founding. Andres Pastrana, the President who succeeded Samper, proved one of the most capable in contemporary Colombian history. It is ironic but altogether typical of the Colombian political elite (like elites everywhere), that his administration showed itself far more adept at crafting strategic invitations to foreign intervention than at unriddling their own deeply troubled and debilitating relationship with the whole body politic.

CHAPTER 4. PLAN COLOMBIA—PHASE ONE: THE COLOMBIAN INVITATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will narrate the story of Plan Colombia, its origins and its progress until the first anniversary of Pastrana's inauguration as President of Colombia. It is intended to exhibit Plan Colombia 'in the round', as primordially an initiative of the Colombian elite, yet dependent for its ultimate success upon the interaction between their gambit and the resources and interests of various political actors in Washington, but also to some extent beyond. Professor Phillip McLean characterised the complex process that yielded Plan Colombia thus: 'It's like physics – it's vectors coming in from different directions'.⁷²⁴ To understand that process, one must begin with understanding the motivations of the Colombian elite, who did not merely acquiesce in, but actually invited an extraordinarily high level of US intervention into their domestic affairs.

In short, the Colombian elite faced imminent, catastrophic state failure. This development, stemming from the chronic debility of the Colombian state, has prompted one of the more knowledgeable analysts in the field of US foreign policy in Latin America, Gabriel Marcella, to use the word 'Colombianization',⁷²⁵ to describe the wearing-down and eventually the sharp decline and partial collapse of state capacity across the board, under the relentless pressure of a civil conflict the insolubility of which can threaten even old, established democracies with ultimate demise.⁷²⁶ This chapter follows the Colombians' efforts to invite and attract US intervention in a situation that had spun out of their own control, and analyses the various creative means deployed in pursuit of this goal. It ends one year after the inauguration of President Andres Pastrana with his Administration having little or no progress to show toward meeting any of the new Administration's major aims.

⁷²⁴ Interview by author with Phillip McLean (Senior Associate Center for Strategic and International Studies), 15th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

⁷²⁵ Interview by author with Gabriel Marcella (Professor US Army War College).

⁷²⁶ Gabriel Marcella and Donald Schulz, *Colombia's Three Wars: U.S. Strategy at the Crossroads* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1999).

The prospect of state failure—the seed of Plan Colombia

The first allusions to the scheme that was to evolve into Plan Colombia were made by Andres Pastrana during his campaign for the Colombian Presidency in 1998.⁷²⁷ Pastrana called for US aid on the scale of ‘another Marshall Plan’, as if Colombia lay in ruins like Europe after World War II. Even before launching his campaign, candidate Pastrana had foreseen that he would, if he won, be inheriting one of the most difficult, dangerous situations in Colombian history. At this time, the situation in Colombia was out of control, as aptly described by William Brownfield, US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs:

In 1998, Colombia was confronting three crises simultaneously. An *economic crisis*, entering its third consecutive year in economic recession. A *security crisis*, in which people in Washington and elsewhere in the world were seriously asking themselves, is the FARC going to win? And finally a *drug crisis*, as we contemplated the possibility that large and powerful criminal organizations might conceivably penetrate and corrupt the government to such an extent that the world would come to regard Colombia as the world’s first narco-state.⁷²⁸

Indeed, by 1998, the year of the election, the Communist guerrillas and the paramilitary AUC had superseded the criminal cartels as the overlords of narco-trafficking. They had grown exceedingly rich and powerful, probably more so, collectively, than the Colombian state.⁷²⁹ These mounting dangers had triggered a worrisome flight of scarce and much-needed foreign capital, as documented in a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which warned that by the late 1990’s the ‘deterioration in the security situation [had] become an explicit development constraint for Colombia’⁷³⁰, and that the ‘need for protection [had] increased the cost of doing business in the country and security issues [had] negatively affected [foreign direct investment] inflows into Colombia’.⁷³¹

⁷²⁷ Youngers and Rosin, *Drugs and democracy in Latin America: the impact of U.S. policy*.

⁷²⁸ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001), 15th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

⁷²⁹ Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia."

⁷³⁰ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., *Investment policy review: Colombia* (Geneva: United Nations, 2006). p. 5.

⁷³¹ Ibid. p.5.

As Ambassador James F. Mack observed, ‘I don’t think the FARC was going to win a military victory ... but they ... made large parts of Colombia ungovernable’.⁷³² Moreover, Mark Coomer of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) inside the White House witnessed these events at first hand, and how the drug-trade was feeding the expansion of the insurgents’ political power. He attests that the FARC was not outcompeting the government in the contest for hearts and minds, nor was the populace turning to them for salvation. It had nothing to do with ideology; it was pure economics of the dirty industry of the drug trade. ‘And we watched that expansion in 1997 and 1998, and as the FARC expanded, the government of Colombia was not able to cobble together a sufficient coalition of interest to oppose that rising power and what you saw was an accelerated security crisis in the countryside ... to the tune that entire Colombian military battalions were being annihilated’.⁷³³

US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers also points out that the US had long suspected FARC’s involvement in the drug trade; initially by way of ‘taxing’ the coca-base producers and later moving into the organization of full-scale production by the time Pastrana came to office. The huge profits from drug production had by then empowered the FARC to beef up their arsenal of weaponry and expand their campaign to destabilize the Colombian government—thus, it was the drug-trade that was now feeding the expansion of the FARC’s political power.⁷³⁴ The Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert – by his own account one of the prime movers in Congress of US aid to Colombia since at least 1997 – observed, ‘Here is one of the oldest, *the* oldest democracy in the Southern Hemisphere, and it was really being threatened by the economy, and actually the security of that nation being taken over by narco-terrorists ... People didn’t have freedom to travel; you couldn’t get in and out of some of the major cities ... policemen and ... elected officials were being killed in their own homes and their own police stations, and the terror was ... taking over the

⁷³² Interview by author with Ambassador James F. Mack (*US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 2000-2002*), 16th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

⁷³³ Interview by author with Mark Coomer (*Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy*), 13th April (Washington, DC) 2007.

⁷³⁴ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (*US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002*).

nation'.⁷³⁵

The weakness of the state was underscored by a series of events. On 21 December 1997 FARC attacked the Colombian Army's communications centre in *Patascoy*, killing eight teenage soldiers and kidnapping twenty four more.⁷³⁶ This disaster was seen as a very powerful attack on the Colombian state and exposed its weakness.⁷³⁷ According to Jaime Ruiz, the attack proved how powerful the FARC had become. He claims that up to 70% of coca production was already in the hands of the FARC by this time.⁷³⁸ Such economic power could explain the fact that by this time the FARC had grown 'from 900 fighters and nine combat fronts at the start of the 1980s, to 12,000 to 15,000 men on 60 fronts by the end of the 1990s'.⁷³⁹ Similarly, by 1997 the FARC had come to have 'significant influence over 50 percent [or 600] of the nation's 1,071 municipalities'⁷⁴⁰; a significant number considering the fact that in 1985 they only had significant influence over 75 municipalities.⁷⁴¹

Juan Esteban Orduz, the Pastrana Administration's Deputy Ambassador to the US, invokes this in evidence of how badly the Colombian state needed help from the international community.⁷⁴² After another crushing military defeat was inflicted on the Colombian Army on 3 March 1998 in the vicinity of *El Billar* in Caquetá, where the FARC attacked a 153-man mobile brigade, killing a total of 62 Colombian soldiers and kidnapping another 46 – a debacle considered the worst defeat suffered by the Colombian Army in all its history – the

⁷³⁵ Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007), 28th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

⁷³⁶ Passage, *The United States and Colombia: Untying the Gordian Knot*.

⁷³⁷ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

⁷³⁸ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002). The extent of the FARC's involvement in coca production is uncertain and controversial. Ferro and Uribe have described in detail how the FARC was rejuvenated in the 1990s by combining insurgent with drug-related activities. As evidenced in the previous chapter, Ferro and Uribe also argue that by the late 1990s the FARC dominated the business of illegal coca production in many parts of Colombia. See also: Ferro and Uribe Ramón, *El orden de la guerra: Las FARC-EP entre la organización y la política*.

⁷³⁹ Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia." p.580.

⁷⁴⁰ Marcella and Schulz, *Colombia's Three Wars: U.S. Strategy at the Crossroads*. p.10.

⁷⁴¹ Rangel, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia."

⁷⁴² Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002), 20th February (New York) 2006.

slaughter, Orduz remarked, raised alarm bells in the US, especially coming on the heels of similar disasters at *Patascoy* and *Las Delicias*.⁷⁴³

Andrés Pastrana's election campaign

No one knew the jeopardy their country was in better than the Colombians themselves – and above all those who aspired to govern it, chief among them was Andres Pastrana. At the beginning of 1998, Pastrana decided to return to Colombia from living abroad in order to stand for the Presidency. He took up once again his idea of *Nueva Fuerza Democratica*.⁷⁴⁴ Pastrana officially launched his campaign on 9 February 1998.⁷⁴⁵ In Colombian politics candidates do much unofficial campaigning before ‘officially’ launching the real campaign.⁷⁴⁶ Guillermo Fernandez de Soto joined the Pastrana Presidential campaign team on 13 January. He later became his Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was to be a short campaign (100 days), but very intense.⁷⁴⁷

Even before the election, Pastrana had begun to round up the international support that he knew would be crucial to the success of his vision. In early November 1997, he travelled to Paris to meet Patrick Wajzman, one of France’s most important political analysts and the editor of *Le Figaro*. He also met the top 150 industry leaders of the country. According to *El Tiempo*, these French businessmen were confident that Pastrana had good chances to get elected. He also met with Jean David Levitte, a diplomatic advisor to Chirac.⁷⁴⁸

In March 1998, after the campaign had begun, Pastrana again travelled to Europe, this time to meet with his long-time friend José Maria Aznar, the Prime Minister of Spain.⁷⁴⁹ He also paid a visit to Germany to meet Chancellor Helmut Kohl.⁷⁵⁰ A month before these meetings, the Spanish and German governments had come to the Samper Administration’s rescue by

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ "Andrés Pastrana si ira a la convención Conservadora," *El Tiempo*, 17th January 1998.

⁷⁴⁵ "Entre Pastrana o Semana," *El Tiempo*, 30th January 1998.

⁷⁴⁶ Colombia. Presidencia de la República., *Plan Colombia: plan para la paz, la prosperidad y el fortalecimiento del estado*, 1a ed., Pequeño Formato (Panamá: Editorial Portobelo, Librería El Campus, 2000).

⁷⁴⁷ "Se alista la campaña de Andrés Pastrana," *El Tiempo*, 19th January 1998.

⁷⁴⁸ Alexander Terreros, "Que Pastrana explique su viaje a Europa," *El Tiempo*, 4th April 1998.

⁷⁴⁹ "Pastrana con Aznar Fotonoticia," *El Tiempo*, 27th March 1998.

⁷⁵⁰ "Llega hora cero para los vices," *El Tiempo*, 31st March 1998.

brokering a preliminary peace agreement with the ELN, one of Colombia's insurgent guerrilla armies.⁷⁵¹ Horacio Serpa, a member of the Samper Administration and Pastrana's main rival for the Presidency, had been instrumental in these negotiations, which had proved popular with the Colombian electorate. As a result, Pastrana's campaign manager, Victor G. Ricardo, advised him to take up the issue as part of his campaign strategy, too. The European expedition, however, was painted as opportunistic by his opponents, who demanded Pastrana explain why he had been seeking aid outside the country even before being elected.⁷⁵²

The Tequendama speech (8 June 1998)

The first round of the Presidential Election was held on 31 May 1998. It was a very tight race between Pastrana and Serpa, and although Serpa had edged Pastrana, the vote was too evenly divided to yield an absolute winner, triggering the second round.⁷⁵³ Victor G. Ricardo, one of Pastrana's most trusted confidants, recounted how at this juncture he urged Pastrana in an intense *tête-à-tête* to refocus his campaign message if he wanted to win the second round.⁷⁵⁴ Ricardo realised that conspicuously missing from their own campaign were credible, specific proposals for negotiating peace with the guerrillas. Pastrana had only mentioned the peace process in his campaign without making it central.⁷⁵⁵ Ricardo begged Pastrana to transform himself into the Candidate of Peace by proposing negotiations that, in addition to the ELN, would include the FARC, then the world's bloodiest, most notorious insurgents. At first Pastrana was aghast – Ricardo's vision would overshadow Serpa's platform of continuing negotiations with the ELN, requiring the heretofore unthinkable.⁷⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Ricardo insisted it was the key to winning the Presidency in the second round.⁷⁵⁷

According to Colombian scholar Marco Palacios, a comprehensive peace process was what Colombia wanted at that time, which explains why Serpa had chosen peace as the central

⁷⁵¹ "Se reactivan dialogos con el ELN," *El Tiempo*, 19th April 1998.

⁷⁵² Terreros, "Que Pastrana explique su viaje a Europa."

⁷⁵³ "News from the International Foundation for Election Systems," *Elections Today* 7, no. 4 (1998).

⁷⁵⁴ Horacio Serpa Uribe, "Una campaña de ideas," *El Tiempo*, 3rd April 1998.

⁷⁵⁵ *Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000)*, 12th January (Miami, FL) 2012.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

plank in his own campaign platform. Ricardo finally won Pastrana over to his own way of thinking.⁷⁵⁸ A week later, he delivered *the* pivotal campaign speech of his career on 8 June at the Tequendama Hotel in Bogotá, where he announced a comprehensive Peace Plan for Colombia.⁷⁵⁹ The speech was carefully calibrated to maximise its domestic and international impact. Addressing his domestic audience, Pastrana promised to end the forty-year-long war with the guerrillas, committing himself also to suppressing the paramilitaries and anyone else impeding peace in Colombia.⁷⁶⁰ As Ambassador Mack explains: '[T]hat's why the Colombian people elected [Pastrana]. The people wanted [the Peace Plan] to work – they supported that ... [Pastrana] thought he could negotiate a solution ... and it didn't work ... [the hard line of Uribe, Pastrana's successor, did work] but the population wasn't ready for that when Pastrana was elected'.⁷⁶¹

Addressing his international audience, Pastrana made clear his intention to seek the assistance of the international community, especially the US, in redressing Colombia's internal crisis.⁷⁶² The evidence of this speech alone shows that Pastrana had thought of a 'new Marshall Plan' for Colombia long before being elected. The manifest inference is that Plan Colombia was not necessarily a US idea from the start or an imposition of its will on Colombia or on Pastrana. Some analysts argue that his direct reference to the Marshall Plan was not casual, but a carefully thought-out gambit to secure international aid for his plans.⁷⁶³ This strategy became known as 'Diplomacy for Peace' and was intended to internationalise the struggle to end the violence in Colombia by 'seeking cooperation from multiple international sources, including the United States, Europe, Japan, as well as multilateral donor institutions such as the United Nations and the Inter-American Development Bank'.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁸ Marco Palacios, "Una Radiografía de Colombia," *Letras Libres* 35, no. 1 (2001).

⁷⁵⁹ "Pastrana lanza su plan de paz," *El Tiempo*, 9th June 1998.

⁷⁶⁰ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002)*.

⁷⁶¹ *Interview by author with Ambassador James F. Mack (US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 2000-2002)*.

⁷⁶² Andrés Pastrana Arango and Camilo Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*, 2. ed. (Bogotá: Planeta, 2005).

⁷⁶³ Arnson and Tickner, "Colombia and the United States."

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p.170.

Negotiations with the FARC are born

In the Tequendama speech Pastrana pledged to negotiate with the guerrillas without preconditions. Delivery on his promise was promptly forthcoming; on 13 June 1998, a week after the Tequendama speech and roughly two weeks after urging on Pastrana the necessity of featuring peace, Víctor G. Ricardo, met secretly with the top two commanders of the FARC, Manuel Marulanda (*a.k.a.* ‘Tirofijo’ [‘Sureshot’]) and Jorge Briceño (*a.k.a.* ‘Mono Jojoy’).⁷⁶⁵ The meeting was used as an initial discussion of the ‘terms of the future peace negotiations’⁷⁶⁶ with the FARC. Shortly thereafter, Pastrana was elected the new President of Colombia by half a million votes in the second electoral round held on 21 June.⁷⁶⁷ The defeated candidate, Horacio Serpa, had been ‘seen by many as too close to Samper, whom he had strongly defended while serving as his Minister of Interior’.⁷⁶⁸

Even before being sworn in, Pastrana began proactively pursuing peace with the insurgents. Since 1982 Colombian governments had been endeavouring to negotiate with the guerrillas, but Pastrana’s peace plan was by far the deepest, most comprehensive attempt in Colombian history – despite having been adopted and elaborated as a campaign strategy in mere days.⁷⁶⁹ Pastrana met unofficially with Marulanda on 9 July for talks about a possible peace deal.⁷⁷⁰ It was the first time in modern Colombian history that an elected president met any of the FARC commanders face to face. Pastrana even attended the meeting without his close protection team to show his deep level of commitment to the negotiations.⁷⁷¹

Pastrana engages with Washington

President-elect Pastrana wasted no time in appointing his Cabinet. By 27 July 1998 he had named Jaime Ruiz Director of the National Planning Department, Fernandez de Soto Minister

⁷⁶⁵ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (*Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000*). Also see: "A la mesa, un año después de la foto," *El Tiempo*, 6th July 1999.

⁷⁶⁶ Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sánchez G, *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*. p. xxi

⁷⁶⁷ *South America, Central America and the Caribbean 2002*, 10th ed., Europa regional surveys of the world (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 255.

⁷⁶⁹ Palacios, "Una Radiografía de Colombia."

⁷⁷⁰ "Encuentro de Pastrana con Tirofijo," *El Tiempo*, 10th July 1998.

⁷⁷¹ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (*President of Colombia 1998-2002*).

of Foreign Affairs, and Rodrigo Lloreda Minister of Defence. *El Tiempo* remarked that these appointments contrasted with his predecessors' in bearing the hallmarks of technocracy rather than partisanship and cronyism. His team crossed party lines, while including (without being limited to) a few trusted, life-long political allies. It may be affirmed that Pastrana began his Presidency by passing up the opportunity to pass out the customary political 'spoils', and surrounding himself instead with professionals of solid credentials.⁷⁷²

Pastrana gets invited to the White House

By then the Clinton Administration had shown signs of being impressed by the change not only of tone but of substance and personnel. As early as 26 July, just a month after his victory in the runoff, the President-elect thought it best to initiate *rapprochement* with the US as soon as possible so as to capitalise on the Clinton Administration's receptivity.⁷⁷³ Pastrana was in dire need of 'inviting US (fiscal and technical) intervention' to prevent state failure in Colombia, and anxious that matters be postponed no longer; yet acutely aware of American suspicion of his peace initiative and consequent eagerness to be debriefed about his latest meeting with the FARC high command. This he did, networking through personal friend and fellow Harvard alumnus Nick Mitropoulos, by then a Democrat Party political operator, who networked with James Steinberg of the National Security Council to arrange an informal meeting with Clinton on 3 August.⁷⁷⁴ The US responded favourably to the initiative, which began to put the Samper years behind. But they did *respond* to the Colombians; they did not summon them.

It is noteworthy that Pastrana had not yet taken office. Meeting the US President at this preliminary stage was an important signal that the US believed Pastrana contrasted smartly with Samper. Washington desired closer collaboration with Pastrana and the team he had assembled. On the Colombian side, the timing of the visit – 3 August, the Monday of the same week in which Pastrana was to be inaugurated – is equally significant of how central Pastrana anticipated the US would be to his own Administration.

⁷⁷² "Los hombres claves del Presidente," *El Tiempo*, 28th July 1998.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

A six-hour trip to DC

Jaime Ruiz, Pastrana's Director of the Department of National Planning (DNP), averred that Clinton's wish to meet Pastrana in July 1998, even before the latter took office was quite extraordinary and unprecedented. Indeed, the US had already agreed to host a State Visit of the President of Colombia in October 1998, underscoring the Americans' deep concern over what was happening in Colombia. Ruiz recalls, 'Despite being concerned with Colombia's drug production, [the US] did not impose the issue but said, "Do you want to have a peace process? Fine!" They were respectful of our [plans for a] peace process, which was quite surprising'.⁷⁷⁵

Some critics claim the US tried to ruin the peace process; for instance, Livingstone argues that the 'real aim appeared to be defeating the guerillas',⁷⁷⁶ but that was not the case. At this early stage, the US understood that if the peace process worked, it would lead to an ideal situation. In particular, Peter Romero understood the issue [given his background with the peace process in El Salvador].⁷⁷⁷

Pastrana and team were only out of Colombia for a few hours, – six in total in Washington – when they travelled to the US on 3 August to meet Clinton and his inner circle, yet this was considered sufficiently newsworthy for *El Tiempo* to cover it in an article titled 'Six Hours of Andres [Pastrana] in Washington',⁷⁷⁸. Stating that the 'era of mistrust [was] over',⁷⁷⁹ Pastrana's few hours with Clinton proved enormously productive and foreshadowed the trajectory of US-Colombia relations. The whirlwind visit started with Pastrana breakfasting with Enrique Iglesias, President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), to discuss how it might lend its financial assistance and technical expertise to Pastrana's still inchoative plans.⁷⁸⁰ Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto affirmed that the IDB's receptivity indicates

⁷⁷⁵ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

⁷⁷⁶ Grace Livingstone, *America's backyard: the United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror* (London: Zed Books, 2009). p.118.

⁷⁷⁷ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

⁷⁷⁸ Ana Maria Jaramillo, "Seis horas de Andrés en Washington," *El Tiempo*, 4th August 1998.

⁷⁷⁹ James Landers, "Colombia's president-elect declares new era in U.S. ties," *The Dallas Morning News*, 3rd August 1998.

⁷⁸⁰ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005), 30th November (Washington, DC) 2006.

technically solid planning *on the Colombian side*. It also indicates the Colombians were not passively submitting to US domination; otherwise, one would have expected the US to take the lead in making such arrangements with the IDB and other institutions.

Pastrana's term thus began with Colombia acting at its own initiative, the plans having been skilfully developed by Colombians, as the IDB's subsequent endorsement verifies.⁷⁸¹ From the meeting with Iglesias Pastrana was taken to meet Clinton, accompanied by his lieutenants Lloreda, Fernandez de Soto, Moreno and Orduz. Although the meeting was short, it proved productive according to Moreno's testimony.⁷⁸² On the American side, Assistant Secretary of State Peter Romero reports Clinton as having promised full support for Pastrana's plan to lead Colombia back from the brink.⁷⁸³

From the White House Pastrana was whisked off to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to meet drug czar Barry McCaffrey.⁷⁸⁴ One of ONDCP's strategic planners, Mark Coomer, witnessed that this meeting converted McCaffrey to a staunch supporter of the eventual Plan Colombia who was to play a pivotal role in persuading Congress to appropriate funds for it.⁷⁸⁵ (Rohter 1999) McCaffrey went so far as to usher Pastrana and team to the State Department for lunch with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Also attending were Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Director Thomas A. Constantine. Although to a superficial glance a pointless whirlwind tour, the visit in fact crucially cemented the alliance emerging between the two administrations. The two sides 'sized each other up' and discovered the 'chemistry' was there for fruitful collaboration.⁷⁸⁶ For President Pastrana this was the beginning of a

⁷⁸¹ *Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002)..*

⁷⁸² *Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).*

⁷⁸³ *Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001), 14th March (Washington, DC) 2012.*

⁷⁸⁴ Jose Antonio Puertas, "World Bank and IDB to lend Colombia two billion dollars in 1999," *Agence France Presse* (1998), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18.
<http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

⁷⁸⁵ *Interview by author with Mark Coomer (Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy).*

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

‘very positive and good relationship with President Clinton; they had bonded’.⁷⁸⁷

Pastrana takes office (7 August 1998)

Pastrana officially took office as President of Colombia on 7 August 1998. The President-elect was immediately put on notice that his window of opportunity for turning around the fortunes of the Colombian state would be a narrow one.⁷⁸⁸ The inauguration followed one of the worst weeks of guerrilla violence ever. In a 6 August *communiqué* the FARC announced that the wave of attacks was a final protest against Samper’s regime. ‘The violent and corrupt government of Ernesto Samper leaves the country wallowing in crisis’,⁷⁸⁹ asserted Alfonso Cano, one of FARC’s commanders. Pastrana’s inaugural speech announced his intention to initiate peace talks with the FARC and with the ELN, and to seek a peaceful resolution to the violent insurrection that had been afflicting Colombia for decades.⁷⁹⁰

Pastrana undertakes to rebuild state capacity with a stronger military

Pastrana and his team wasted no time in launching their bid to rebuild the Colombian state. Just two days after the inauguration Minister of Defence Lloreda announced a reorganisation of Colombia’s armed forces and the appointment of General Fernando Tapias to be Senior Chief Commander.⁷⁹¹ Pastrana had taken great care in choosing Tapias; he wanted an officer with an impeccable record. Tapias was to serve as his Senior Chief Commander for the entire presidential term of four years.⁷⁹² Because of seniority rules governing promotions, Defence Minister Lloreda, in order to promote Tapias, had had to dismiss about a dozen more senior officers who were suspected of collaboration with right-wing paramilitaries.⁷⁹³ Two motives likely drove these developments: (1) to prepare the Colombian military for American intervention in the way of military aid, and (2) to smooth the way for a peace agreement with the rebels.

⁷⁸⁷ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁷⁸⁸ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).

⁷⁸⁹ Patricia Hynds, "Colombia: Andres Pastrana Assumes Presidency," *NotiSur*, 14th August 1998. p. 1.

⁷⁹⁰ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

⁷⁹¹ Hynds, "Colombia: Andres Pastrana Assumes Presidency."

⁷⁹² "Descabezada la Cúpula Militar," *El Tiempo*, 10th August 1998.

⁷⁹³ "The "Sixth Division": military-paramilitary ties and U.S. policy in Colombia," (New York ; London: Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Immediately afterwards, on 18 August, Lloreda announced his armed forces rehabilitation programme: 'Plan 10,000' – the figure referring to the number of new soldiers planned per year.⁷⁹⁴ They were to be professionals specially trained in counterinsurgency, to replace the *bachilleres* (high school graduate conscripts constitutionally exempted from combat operations).⁷⁹⁵ Lloreda's was no novel idea; the army had attempted something similar in 1994 under *Plan Estrategia*, but the difference this time was the training specifically for counterinsurgency.⁷⁹⁶ But when Lloreda addressed the Department of National Planning (DNP), the Colombian agency in charge of the budget, to urge the army's deplorable state – the soldiers lacked even boots and basic supplies – Jaime Ruiz, its newly appointed director, returned a stark and brutal answer, 'We have no money; we are broke'.⁷⁹⁷ With that it became abundantly clear that foreign aid from the US was the last and only recourse.

Lloreda took the Vietnamisation bull by the horns immediately, publicly advocating that the FARC and ELN were no longer merely 'protecting' drug cultivators, but had actually taken over production from the civilian criminal gangs who had recently been immobilised by the Clinton Administration's Kingpin Strategy during the Samper Administration. Lloreda, as Defence Minister representing the army and police, claimed with some justification that the rebels were now 'making a living from drug trafficking', a position at odds with the rest of the Pastrana Administration at that time.⁷⁹⁸ Nevertheless, if the international community could be persuaded, then the Clinton Administration would be entitled under existing US law to assist the Colombian state in suppressing the insurgents, their ostensibly political nature and aims notwithstanding, and that would open the door to the state rebuilding that was their real overriding goal, not so much fighting a war on drugs that in their view was hopelessly lost.⁷⁹⁹

This expanding power of the FARC was being discussed in high-level meetings of the US

⁷⁹⁴ Alirio Fernando Bustos, "Otros 10.000 soldados contra la insurgencia," *El Tiempo*, 14th August 1998.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ "El Ejército tendrá 10.000 soldados más en dos años," *El Tiempo*, 16th May 1994.

⁷⁹⁷ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

⁷⁹⁸ "Minister says FARC rebels "make a living from drug trafficking" ", *BBC Monitoring Service: Latin America*(1998), Date Accessed: 2012/02/12. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁷⁹⁹ *Interview by author with Richard O'Connor (Senior Analyst Office of National Drug Control Policy), 10th April (Washington, DC) 2007.*

National Security Council, but the Administration still feared getting involved due to the potential political fallout.⁸⁰⁰ Yet, cautiously, they had already begun moving in the direction indicated by the Colombians. In a clear signal of support, Rand Beers, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), visited Bogotá in person on 29-30 August to officially deliver a helicopter to the Colombian government. It was part of a drug-war package already funded by the previous fiscal year's budget, but Beers's personal attendance symbolised a policy convergence as well as the growing *rapprochement* between Washington and Bogotá in the wake of Pastrana's electoral victory.⁸⁰¹

The US Office of National Drug Control (ONDCP) backs Pastrana's vision

The Americans reacted to these favourable political developments in Colombia by further laying a foundation for bilateral consensus. Thomas A. Constantine, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), visited Bogotá on 14 August, a week after Pastrana's inauguration, to announce a shift in US policy toward suppression of coca production which positively echoed Pastrana's position. In addition to ongoing eradication efforts, the US would also support alternative development measures, especially crop substitution, so that coca growers could economically switch to cultivating legal crops. (1998)⁸⁰² Pastrana was on record as having admitted that coca growing had become so lucrative for poor Colombian farmers that eradication efforts alone were bound to fail.⁸⁰³ Constantine stressed US commitment to aid Pastrana's domestic plans to pursue the war on drugs. This was an interesting development, as US drug czar McCaffrey had stated only a week earlier that eradication was still the cornerstone of the US policy in the drug war.⁸⁰⁴ It would seem that Constantine's job had been to soften the rough edges of US policy so as to pave the way to common policy ground.

⁸⁰⁰ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002).

⁸⁰¹ "El Subsecretario," *El Tiempo*, 29th August 1998.

⁸⁰² "Avanzada de Narcos en E.U.," *El Tiempo*, 14th August 1998.

⁸⁰³ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

⁸⁰⁴ Diana Jean Schemo, "U.S. to Change Strategy in Narcotics Fight in Colombia," *The New York Times*, 14th August 1998.

The FARC respond

Meanwhile, the FARC apparently foresaw the Colombian state's coming invitation to the US to intervene, and the latter's eventual acceptance, because on 21 August they proposed at their own initiative a prisoner exchange as a goodwill gesture – the soldiers they had taken prisoner at *El Billar* for guerrillas imprisoned by the Colombian state.⁸⁰⁵ What exactly the FARC were angling to accomplish at this stage is not evident, but it is rational to surmise that they were testing the new administration's commitment to the promised peace process. The FARC may also have appreciated how much the US distrusted Pastrana's intended inclusion of the insurgency in his state rebuilding plan, and may have been angling to cement this vision and their place in it before the US could intervene to prevent it. Pastrana responded favourably, asking only that the FARC reveal a list of the people that could be exchanged or 'liberated'.⁸⁰⁶

Pastrana gambles on peace: the De-Militarised Zone (DMZ)

Even while his Administration's bridge-building to Washington was paving the way for US intervention in the form of military aid, Pastrana himself was staking his political future on reconciliation with the decades-old insurgency. The lengths to which he went prove the sincerity of his intentions beyond a reasonable doubt. In accommodating the demands of the guerrillas (the FARC in particular), Pastrana even went so far as to accept one of their most outrageous preconditions, the establishment of a De-Militarised Zone the guerrillas would exclusively control for at least the duration of any peace negotiations.⁸⁰⁷ Matters moved so quickly that Defence Minister Rodrigo Lloreda could attend a Congressional hearing in Washington by the end of August to discuss this DMZ in detail, which the Colombians presented as a necessary part of any peace process. According to Hynds, Lloreda 'conceded the considerable risks but argued the Demilitarized Zone should be seen as a "laboratory for peace", and reassured Congress that anti-drug efforts would not be affected by the withdrawal of Colombian forces, already timetabled to occur in November'.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁵ "FARC Solicita Ley para Canje de Soldados y Guerrilleros," *El Tiempo*, 21st August 1998.

⁸⁰⁶ "Potenciales canjeables de las FARC," *El Tiempo*, 31st August 1998.

⁸⁰⁷ Kline, *Chronicle of a failure foretold: the peace process of Colombian president Andrés Pastrana*.

⁸⁰⁸ Patricia Hynds, "Colombia: President Andres Pastrana accuses U.S. of interfering in peace process politicizing Drug War," *NotiSur*, 25th September 1998. p.2.

SOUTHCOM Commander Wilhelm in Bogotá

General Charles Wilhelm came to Bogotá for an official visit on 9 September 1998 in order to confer with the Pastrana Administration's security advisors. It was his third visit to Colombia in 1998, but the first one under the new Pastrana administration. Up to that point most of US anti-drug aid had been earmarked for the Colombian police, but critics were arguing that it was 'impossible to combat drugs without helping those fighting the guerrillas, and that [involved] the army'.⁸⁰⁹ Lloreda announced on that same day (9 September) that 'the US government reaffirmed today its decision to cooperate with programmes promoted by the Colombian military forces and police to fight drug trafficking'.⁸¹⁰

The US Congress rebels

Congress, however, was not so easily reassured. On 16 September 1998 'the [US] House of Representatives would pass a bill with an amendment by Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), then Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, to withhold aid from Colombia if it [halted] aerial spraying in the area in question [DMZ]'.⁸¹¹ The amendment was approved by a large majority: 340 to 30 (although the underlying bill to which the amendment had been attached had yet to be approved).⁸¹² This vote jeopardised the linchpin of Pastrana's whole strategic development plan, and provoked an alarmed reaction from the Colombian Government.

Gilman had contended that the DMZ could potentially produce 75 tons of cocaine per year.⁸¹³ The Colombians replied that 'demilitarising' such a zone did not imply cessation of *anti-drug* operations like crop fumigation. Pastrana reacted quickly to explain matters personally before members of Congress within a week, on 24 September. One month later, the US Government announced a major increase of aid to Colombia.⁸¹⁴

⁸⁰⁹ Frank Bajak, "Southern Command chief: US military aid strictly anti-drug," *Associated Press* (1998), Date Accessed: 2012/02/11. <http://global.factiva.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁸¹⁰ "USA reaffirms anti-drug cooperation, says defence minister.," *BBC Monitoring Service: Latin America* (1998), Date Accessed: 2012/02/11. <http://global.factiva.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁸¹¹ Hynds, "Colombia: President Andres Pastrana accuses U.S. of interfering in peace process politicizing Drug War." p. 2

⁸¹² Sergio Gomez Maseri, "E.U. Condicionaría Ayuda Antinarcos," *El Tiempo*, 17th September 1998.

⁸¹³ Sergio Gomez Maseri, "Cultivos ilícitos han vuelto a crecer," *El Tiempo*, 30th September 1998.

⁸¹⁴ "Despeje y Ayuda," *El Tiempo*, 20th September 1998.

Pastrana seeks help from the international community

Pastrana next flew into the US on 22 September 1998 to address the annual UN General Assembly in New York – his first attempt to apprise the international community as a whole of his ambitious plan of development through peace.⁸¹⁵ He pleaded before the Assembly his view that illegal consumption of cocaine in developed nations was the driving force of the illegal production of coca in developing nations like Colombia, and directly responsible for some of his country's worst problems.⁸¹⁶ His development plan therefore presupposed an important contribution from the world at large, and he announced the creation of an 'international investment fund for peace' to facilitate the involvement of foreign nations in funding 'alternative forms of development to [Colombian] peasant farmers, with fair prices for their products at home and abroad, [so that] they [would] become less dependent on illicit crops'.⁸¹⁷

The Investment Fund for Peace

Pastrana would inaugurate in Bogotá the *Fondo de inversion para la paz* (Investment Fund for Peace) on 22 October 1998. This became his bid for international support for his 'Marshall-type Plan ... to fund development projects in war-torn areas of the country as part of efforts to end its long-running civil conflict'.⁸¹⁸ In his inaugurating speech he went on to state that 'like the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe after the horrors of the Second World War, this plan will give sustainability and direction to the peace that we all wish to achieve'.⁸¹⁹ The first US\$3.5 billion required for the plan was to be borrowed from the IDB and other such international governmental organisations (IGOs).⁸²⁰ The President of the IDB himself, Enrique Iglesias, was in attendance at the inauguration, and promised that his organisation would provide new lines of credit to partially underwrite the funding

⁸¹⁵ "Colombian president seeks financial help for peace plan," *Agence France Presse*(1998), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁸¹⁶ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002)*.

⁸¹⁷ "UN: Peace in Colombia could free world from evil of illicit drugs. President of Colombia tells Assembly," *M2 Presswire*(1998), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁸¹⁸ "Colombia Marshall-type plan aims to end civil strife: half of \$5.4-billion plan to be financed through loans, further raising the cost of debt servicing," *The Globe and Mail*, 23rd October 1998. p.A18.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.A18.

⁸²⁰ "U.S. \$3500 Millones para la Paz," *El Tiempo*, 23rd October 1998.

programme.⁸²¹

The IDB and other IGOs had previously shown an interest in working for peace in the region. In 1997 the IDB had even sponsored a study of the specific case of Colombia⁸²² purporting to provide ‘solutions to issues of conflict that could emerge at a future negotiating table, including agrarian reform, justice, natural resources, urban violence, and human rights’.⁸²³ Pastrana and his team were well aware of the IDB’s willingness to invest in projects that had a chance of achieving peace, which is why they endeavoured to get it involved.⁸²⁴

Pastrana’s Team goes to Washington

From the moment he had resolved to stand for the Presidency, Andres Pastrana had given overriding priority to repairing relations with the US.⁸²⁵ In order to carry this out on the ground, Pastrana had long before his election picked out Luis Alberto Moreno for the role of his ambassador in Washington.⁸²⁶ Moreno was a childhood friend of Pastrana, and now one of his most trusted political lieutenants. He had been a business partner and the producer of the television news programme by which Pastrana had made his name nationally as a news presenter. The process of appointing a new ambassador and having him accredited was a time-consuming diplomatic dance; Moreno was not to arrive in Washington until 16 September 1998. The hard work of preparing for the State Visit planned during Pastrana’s brief post-election trip to Washington, timetabled already for October 1998, had to be commenced well in advance. Pastrana posted Minister Plenipotentiary Juan Esteban Orduz to Washington in the meantime, one of his chief campaign advisors. It quickly became obvious to Orduz that no progress on Plan Colombia was being made, nor realistically could be made without his own continuing personal presence even after the Visit was over.

⁸²¹ "Colombia Marshall-type plan aims to end civil strife: half of \$5.4-billion plan to be financed through loans, further raising the cost of debt servicing."

⁸²² Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales (IEPRI), "La paz es rentable: Balance de los estudios (Proyecto de Consultoría al Departamento Nacional de Planeación)," (1997).

⁸²³ Chandra Lekha Sriram, Karin Wermester, and International Peace Academy., *From promise to practice : strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict* (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2003). p. 246.

⁸²⁴ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

⁸²⁵ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

⁸²⁶ Sergio Ocampo Madrid, "Moreno va en busca del tiempo perdido," *El Tiempo*, 13th September 1998.

Pastrana in Capitol Hill

Pastrana himself proceeded to Washington on 24 September to reassure Congress about the DMZ, especially those who had supported the Gilman amendment.⁸²⁷ Pastrana hinted that he considered the US 'obsessed' with the war on drugs, without considering its root causes. He warned that continued Congressional resistance to the DMZ could potentially complicate the situation of his Administration as fatally as the decertifications had blighted the Samper Administration; it was therefore imperative to surmount this obstacle. In Pastrana's own words: 'Despite [our reassurances] the establishment of the Demilitarized Zone never ceased to worry the US, especially Republicans who perceived it as advantageous to FARC. Nevertheless, they learnt to respect the Colombian [peace] process. To get them to understand that it was indispensable for peace required a huge diplomatic effort on our part'.⁸²⁸

Rand Beers before Congress

On his side, President Clinton reciprocated the move toward better relations by nominating Rand Beers for Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law on 29 September.⁸²⁹ At his appointment hearing before the Senate Beers stated that drug production in Colombia was increasing not because of any lack of cooperation by the Colombian government, but because of the success of counternarcotic efforts in Peru. He alerted the Senate to the recent heroin production increase in Colombia and Mexico, which he promised to target for eradication during his tenure. Beers strove to defuse the controversy in Congress and in US public opinion over Pastrana's peace initiative, pointing out that the DMZ had never been a major cocaine production area in the first place – contrary to Representative Gilman's contentions. He also hinted that if the FARC were sincere in their denial of interest or involvement in drug production, then they would not resist incursions for fumigation.⁸³⁰ Partly as a result of his and Pastrana's joint interventions, Congress was mollified. By 21 October Congress had approved a US\$96 million aid package to Colombia, earmarked primarily for material assistance to the Colombian National Police in their counter-narcotics

⁸²⁷ "Colombia's drug-bedevelled hopes of peace," *The Economist*, 1st October 1998.

⁸²⁸ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

⁸²⁹ "The Washington Daybook - Senate Committees ", *The Washington Daybook* (1998).

⁸³⁰ Gomez Maseri, "Cultivos ilícitos han vuelto a crecer."

efforts. The money would be used to purchase six Blackhawk helicopters for the police.⁸³¹

Pastrana's official State Visit to the U.S.: 26-30 October 1998

Pastrana's was the first State Visit to the US by a Colombian President in twenty three years, the last time having been in September 1975, when US President Gerald Ford had received Colombian President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen for an official State Visit.⁸³² The Colombians considered the Visit a 'vital opportunity to convince Mr. Clinton that the fight against drugs in Colombia – the cornerstone of bilateral relations – [had] been unsuccessful'.⁸³³ Minister of Foreign Affairs Fernandez de Soto described in an interview how hard the Colombian team had prepared for this visit. Colombia needed help and needed it badly. The visit was seen as the chance of a lifetime; the strategy had been crafted to achieve maximum results.⁸³⁴

Pastrana arrived at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington on 26 October 1998.⁸³⁵ The agenda was a long, complex one, but three topics were fundamental: first, the need to finance (at that point just the kernel of) Plan Colombia; second, the necessity of international support for the peace process just begun with the FARC, and hoped to be continued with the ELN; third, the desirability of support from various IGOs to reignite economic growth.⁸³⁶

President Pastrana had three meetings with President Clinton, two of which might be called 'businesslike' (if not indeed routine). The third, although 'social' in nature, proved to have the profoundest influence on US-Colombian relations. The first businesslike meeting, held in the Oval Office, dealt with the most sensitive issues on the agenda. In addition to the Colombians of Pastrana's core team, on the American side Vice-President Al Gore, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Attorney General Janet Reno, ONDCP Director Barry McCaffrey, US National Security Advisor Sandy Berger and US Ambassador to Colombia Curtis Kamman were in attendance. Addressed *inter alia* was the state of the Colombian

⁸³¹ Douglas Farah, "U.S. Drug Interdiction Effort Receives \$690 Million Boost; Budget Increase Targets Colombian Interdiction Efforts," *The Washington Post*, 24th October 1998.

⁸³² Interview by author with Alfonso Lopez Caballero (*Colombian Ambassador to the UK: 2002-2006*), 10th March (London, UK) 2005.

⁸³³ Adam Thomson, "Pastrana sets out to sell his Marshall Plan to Washington," *Financial Times*, 28th October 1998. p.3.

⁸³⁴ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (*Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002*).

⁸³⁵ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (*Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002*).

⁸³⁶ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.p. 124.

economy, which had been in decline since the Samper administration and would in 1999 precipitate the country into its worst year in many decades. The Colombian budget was under enormous pressure, and the Colombians admitted they were hard pressed to find sufficient resources for the Colombian state, hence their call for US and international support.⁸³⁷ Thanks in part to the Clinton Administration's support, the Colombians would obtain the recognition from the international community that they sought. A series of credit facilities was negotiated: US\$1.5 billion for FY 1999 from the IDB⁸³⁸ and US\$1.4 billion from the World Bank,⁸³⁹ the proceeds of which were destined mostly for social investment.⁸⁴⁰

In this meeting, too, Pastrana began formally to justify the terms of his peace initiative. The real opportunity to reach peace in Colombia depended on redoubling the programmatic efforts Colombia had been making against narco-trafficking, the profits of which constituted the insurgency's main source of financing. Between 1994 and 1998, as the illegal production of drugs almost doubled,⁸⁴¹ the FARC had become more powerful than the Colombian state. Pastrana and his team conceptualised their peace initiative very astutely as being necessarily interlinked with the war on drugs, and this proved very persuasive when presented to the American attendees. President Pastrana emphasised his diagnosis that the army would have to be involved, which would need US aid in training anti-narcotic battalions.⁸⁴² A more holistic policy was promised to coordinate the armed forces with the police, the better to penetrate guerrilla-held areas deemed no-go zones, like Putumayo. Modernisation of the army was prerequisite, and became an integral aspect of Plan Colombia thenceforward.⁸⁴³

The second businesslike meeting was more formal, with both sides seated opposite each other at the negotiating table, and consisted of a deeper, more practically detailed discussion of the

⁸³⁷ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

⁸³⁸ "El apoyo del BID," *El Tiempo*, 27th October 1998.

⁸³⁹ Puertas, "World Bank and IDB to lend Colombia two billion dollars in 1999".

⁸⁴⁰ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid. p. 124.

⁸⁴² Look at Isacson discussion on counternarcotic army units in 1999 Isacson, "Was Failure Avoidable? Learning From Colombia's 1998-2002 Peace Process."

⁸⁴³ For an interesting discussion on the Colombian Army see Richani, *Systems of violence: the political economy of war and peace in Colombia*. According to Marcella and Schulz (1999), Richani argues that Colombia has a 'self-perpetuating "war system" that is practically unbreakable'(p.3).

previously treated, main bilateral issues.⁸⁴⁴ Once this meeting concluded, but while they were still in the White House, Pastrana asked Clinton for a brief, informal one-on-one meeting, although this broke with diplomatic protocol.⁸⁴⁵ Clinton agreed, leading the way into the Oval Office, and drew out a map of Colombia with the DMZ highlighted. He asked Pastrana, ‘Is it true that this zone is to be without the presence of the Colombian state?’⁸⁴⁶ Pastrana clarified and justified the importance of the DMZ for the peace process, emphasising that everything conformed to the laws and constitution of Colombia. Clinton was completely persuaded by Pastrana’s exposition and gave his support on the spot. He sealed the deal by reaffirming his admiration of Pastrana for having personally travelled into the jungles of Colombia before his inauguration in search of peace.⁸⁴⁷ This commitment was the measure of how much he merited US support. Pastrana recalled in an interview with the author that Clinton was very attentive to him and to the Colombian delegation throughout his State Visit, even though the House of Representatives had begun impeachment proceedings against him just twenty days previously.⁸⁴⁸

After this *tête-à-tête* both Presidents proceeded to a press conference at the Rose Garden. Pastrana was deeply moved when Clinton began the conference by stating that the State Visit was ‘a new beginning for Colombia ... [and] ... also a new opportunity to strengthen the bonds between the two [countries]’.⁸⁴⁹ Clinton proceeded to laud Pastrana’s efforts to obtain a peaceful resolution to Colombia’s decades-long conflict.

Even before the Visit, Ambassador Moreno had begun to network non-stop with key people in Washington, and thanks to his efforts Pastrana met with Michel Camdessus, Director of the IMF, and succeeded in securing a US\$2.7 billion credit facility for Colombia accessible in the following year.⁸⁵⁰ Part of Pastrana’s development grand strategy was to signal investors the

⁸⁴⁴ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (*Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002*).

⁸⁴⁵ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (*Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002*).

⁸⁴⁶ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (*President of Colombia 1998-2002*).

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p.128.

⁸⁵⁰ "Pastrana sets out to sell his Marshall Plan to Washington," *Financial Times* (1998), <http://global.factiva.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

world over that Colombia was a safe place to put their investment money.⁸⁵¹ Pastrana has told the author that this meeting was the beginning of the turn in Colombia's economic fortunes. The years immediately ensuing witnessed the stabilisation and growth of the Colombian capital market.⁸⁵²

The 'debutant ball'

The State Visit ended with a remarkable social event: a gala dinner party at the White House on the evening of 28 October. A remarkably large number of celebrities attended, many of them Colombian, including Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez and pop singer Shakira. Pastrana and his team took every opportunity to network with the Washington elites on this eventful evening. At some point during the party Pastrana was overheard saying to McCaffrey, 'You can come [to Colombia] anytime!'⁸⁵³ – a subtle suggestion to Washington insiders, to lure them to Colombia for a return-visit during which the new Administration could press its case further. According to the *Washington Times*, this unusual and influential party began with an opera recital and ended with salsa dancing.⁸⁵⁴ This kind of exuberance is rarely seen at staid official state dinner parties at the White House; the Colombians livened things up.⁸⁵⁵

An icon of Colombian culture, salsa dancing was to be a mainstay of Colombian diplomacy – an essential ingredient of the lobbying and networking campaign to win over key members of Congress and of Washington's permanent bureaucracies.⁸⁵⁶ Salsa lessons and parties – aimed at junior staffers especially, to gain access and influence with their bosses – became fixtures at the Colombian Embassy.⁸⁵⁷ Pastrana returned home content, feeling he had succeeded in rehabilitating a troubled bilateral relationship between Bogotá and Washington. He expressed

⁸⁵¹ "Colombian Planning Director to Discuss Politics Aid with IMF," *Dow Jones International News*(2000).

⁸⁵² Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 129

⁸⁵³ Ann Geracimos, "Artists abound at dinner for Colombian president," *The Washington Times*, 29th October 1998. p. A14.

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁵ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

⁸⁵⁶ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002).

⁸⁵⁷ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).

pride in his accomplishments on this visit,⁸⁵⁸ and believed Colombia had entered a new era; imagining that his Administration had been admitted into the global elite, and that Colombia was on its way to becoming a respectable part of the international community.⁸⁵⁹

The US man for Colombia: Peter Romero

President Pastrana remembers that during the State Visit his minister of Foreign Affairs Guillermo Fernandez de Soto made a special request directly to President Clinton, he said ‘we need a counterpart to deal with you all [US] because we cannot bother you directly every time we need to talk to you all’.⁸⁶⁰ Pastrana remembers that Clinton honoured their request by appointing Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering to directly deal with them.⁸⁶¹ In practice, Pickering would not get fully involved with the Colombia case until the following Summer.⁸⁶² At this stage in the story, Pickering delegated this important responsibility on Acting Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs to personally handle the situation and maintain him fully informed of any developments.⁸⁶³

The Colombians try to bring the US into the peace process

During the State Visit, Victor G. Ricardo, Pastrana’s High Commissioner for Peace and the man he had assigned to negotiate with the guerrillas, had met with important officials in the State Department.⁸⁶⁴ He had been instructed to address Peter Romero in particular, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), about the DMZ and the peace process, if he would press the Colombian view of the matter.⁸⁶⁵ Pastrana’s team sought two important outcomes from this gambit: (1) to allay US scepticism about their methods of dealing with the rebels, lest hardening into hostility, it damages the new US-Colombia *rapprochement*; and (2) if possible to convince the Clinton Administration to actively engage the FARC in the peace process. In the event, Ricardo met with both Romero and Phil

⁸⁵⁸ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

⁸⁵⁹ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).

⁸⁶⁰ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

⁸⁶¹ Ibid.

⁸⁶² Thomas Pickering, "Anatomy of Plan Colombia," *The American Interest* 5 (2009).

⁸⁶³ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁸⁶⁴ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).

⁸⁶⁵ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

Chicola, the State Department's Director of Andean Affairs.⁸⁶⁶ The Colombians were convinced that if the US Administration could be persuaded to have direct contacts with the FARC, they would relent and give wholehearted support to Colombia's peace building efforts.⁸⁶⁷

PASTRANA BEGINS NEGOTIATING WITH THE FARC

Pastrana kept his word to the FARC in the teeth of continuing US scepticism. The Americans remained convinced the FARC were not acting in good faith and would continue producing illegal narcotics in the DMZ.⁸⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the promised demilitarization took effect on schedule on 7 November 1998, and the Switzerland-sized zone was made available to the FARC, and began to host the peace process.⁸⁶⁹ Pastrana believed this was a true 'confidence-building measure and predicted that it would lead to a cease-fire and prisoner exchanges'.⁸⁷⁰

Difficulties emerged almost immediately, however. The FARC delayed the commencement of peace negotiations for two more months after November 7, insisting *inter alia* that the 100 half-trained conscripts billeted at the Cazadores Battalion headquarters in San Vicente del Caguán inside the DMZ must first vacate.⁸⁷¹ After weeks of difficult discussions, which inserted Ricardo uncomfortably in between the immovable FARC and an angry Colombian military, the last army personnel left San Vicente on 14 December. The next day Ricardo and the FARC announced that the first meeting between Marulanda, the FARC's top leader, and President Pastrana would take place on 7 January.⁸⁷²

The State Department responds: Romero in Bogotá

At that point the State Department decided to become more actively involved in Pastrana's strategic *démarche*. Acting Assistant Secretary of State for (WHA) Peter Romero arrived in

⁸⁶⁶ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).

⁸⁶⁷ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).

⁸⁶⁸ Interview by author with Mark Coomer (Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy).

⁸⁶⁹ Isacson, "Was Failure Avoidable? Learning From Colombia's 1998-2002 Peace Process."

⁸⁷⁰ Johnson, "Colombia's Accommodation Process." p. 4.

⁸⁷¹ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).

⁸⁷² Bert Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001).

Bogotá on 8 November 1998 to confer with Pastrana and team about their whole ‘Marshal Plan for peace’, not only as it touched negotiating with the FARC. However, Romero arrived in Bogota just days after the FARC had attacked the city of Mitú, the capital of Vaupes Province, on the frontier with Brazil on 2 November. A thousand FARC insurgents had succeeded in taking over the entire city with little resistance from 120 resident policemen.⁸⁷³ The Colombian army had had a very hard time retaking Mitú as it was accessible only by river or air and the army had no military bases in the area. Bogotá was able to recover the city ‘only after the Brazilians granted permission to Colombian troops to land in Brazilian bases across the border’.⁸⁷⁴ Briefly, the urgent took precedence over the important.

Washington agrees to give the FARC the benefit of the doubt

Notwithstanding the bad faith the FARC had shown by launching such an attack in the midst of peace negotiations with Bogotá, Romero informed Pastrana in confidence that the Clinton Administration had accepted Victor G. Ricardo’s invitation to meet a FARC representative ‘unofficially’ in Costa Rica.⁸⁷⁵ According to Romero, the Pastrana team ‘thought that if that meeting took place that somehow this would enhance chances for negotiations. Our [US] goal was to try to find out what happened to the American missionaries [kidnapped by the FARC in 1993] who were [suspected of having been] killed somewhere in Northern Colombia’.⁸⁷⁶

Interestingly, Phil Chicola accompanied Romero on this visit. A month later Chicola would hold his notorious meeting with the FARC at Alvaro Leyva’s house in San José.⁸⁷⁷ Victor G. Ricardo recalls that at this juncture he wanted the US Administration to engage the FARC face to face in token of their commitment to Colombia. He encouraged the Americans with the idea that this would facilitate ongoing negotiations with the guerrillas. Ricardo promised Romero and Chicola secrecy lest criticism arises from Congressmen who opposed any sort of negotiations with violent Marxists. Ricardo it was who suggested Chicola would be the ideal

⁸⁷³ Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian labyrinth: the synergy of drugs and insurgency and its implications for regional stability*.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 43.

⁸⁷⁵ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (*Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000*).

⁸⁷⁶ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (*U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001*).

⁸⁷⁷ Curtis W. Kamman, "Acting A/S Romero's Visit to Bogotá, Nov. 8-10, 1998," in *National Security Archives* (1998).

man for the job, due to his experience negotiating with the Salvadoran guerrillas during the Cold War.⁸⁷⁸

A partnership is born

During his two day visit in Bogotá Romero cemented a US-Colombia partnership in a way that in some respects was unprecedented. He told Pastrana that the purpose of his whirlwind visit was mainly to brainstorm about how Washington might better assist Bogota to ‘resolve its internal conflicts’.⁸⁷⁹ Pastrana requited Romero’s expressed wish to work in partnership with Washington; it was agreed to foster ‘close coordination plus informal brainstorming and feedback’⁸⁸⁰ between the various agencies that would have to be involved in the affair.

Romero’s reaction

The visit had a great impact on Romero view of the Colombian situation (particularly coming so soon after the brutal attack on Mitú). In an interview, Romero recounted the following:

So seeing what was happening after three and half years [of Samper] in a situation that really was plummeting towards a failed state to the extent that you would have areas that the government controlled and huge areas that the government did not. Not that the government in Bogota would fail, no! It would still be there, but it would be hollow because it would not be able to exercise its authority over the rest of the country. That is what I saw happening and it was confirmed to me by special forces – US military at the Ministry of Defence.⁸⁸¹

It was in this context that Romero became fully committed to helping the Colombians. In fact, the US began at this precise stage the long journey of accepting Pastrana’s invitation to intervene to rescue the weak Colombian state from total collapse. According to Jaime Ruiz, Peter Romero became the main liaison for getting things moving in Washington, and without his support it would have been much more difficult to prioritise Colombia on Washington’s foreign policy agenda.⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁸ *Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).*

⁸⁷⁹ Kamman, "Acting A/S Romero's Visit to Bogotá, Nov. 8-10, 1998." p.5.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁸⁸¹ *Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).*

⁸⁸² *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

A plan on a plane

His two-day trip preoccupied Romero; he could not stop thinking about Colombia on the flight back to Washington. He mulled over the lengthy discussions he had with Pastrana and his team and the bleak assessment he had been given by the US Embassy. He was unable to avoid the conclusion that something big had to be done to tackle all the complicated issues that Colombia was facing. As he recounted to the author, ‘I was very depressed ... so on [the] plane back from Bogotá I said [to] “Phil [Chicola], we’ve got to do something and it can’t be some training to the police here and some equipment there; it’s got to be big; it’s got to be comprehensive and the Colombians have to sign on to it” ... I took out an envelope and on the back of an envelope we wrote what Plan Colombia had to have in it’.⁸⁸³

This episode has been taken out of its vitally important context and misunderstood as implying that Plan Colombia was invented by Americans and imposed on Colombians. For instance, Julia Sweig in an otherwise brilliant article reports that Plan Colombia was ‘hastily drawn up in English ... on the back of a napkin [actually an envelope] on an airplane’⁸⁸⁴, as if the English language were a decisive detail. She errs, firstly, in surmising that Romero’s jottings were *the* Plan Colombia that was actually, eventually approved in Congress—in fact, it would take another year and half and a long process of accommodation between the three main actors involved – the Clinton and Pastrana Administrations and the US Congress – before the final Plan was approved.⁸⁸⁵

Indeed, she seems to have conflated an event of late 1998 with certain events of 1999, in that she mislocates Romero’s 1998 trip in the context of the uproar in 1999 that followed a FARC atrocity in January 1999 implying that its military emphasis fell out of the political constraints imposed on the Clinton Administration by the 1999 commotion.⁸⁸⁶ The facts are that Romero’s back-of-an-envelope memo was but an early draft yet was already focussed on the military in view of the string of military fiascos *at Las Delicias, Patascoy, El Billar* and, finally, *Mitú*. Secondly, Sweig seems unaware that Romero scribbled his memo right after

⁸⁸³ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁸⁸⁴ Sweig, "What Kind of War for Colombia?." p. 129.

⁸⁸⁵ "Clinton Signs Colombia aid package, boost funds for Kosovo troops," *Agence France Presse*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/29. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁸⁸⁶ Sweig, "What Kind of War for Colombia?." p. 129.

participating in ‘brainstorming sessions’ [his words] with the Colombians—strongly implying it came from a Colombian-American meeting of the minds.⁸⁸⁷

The State Department secretly meets the FARC in Costa Rica

The Clinton Administration indeed signalled its willingness to support Pastrana’s peace plan. The US State Department sent Chicola to meet covertly with Raul Reyes, the FARC’s foreign policy spokesman, on 13-14 December 1998.⁸⁸⁸ Victor G. Ricardo, who facilitated Reyes’s discreet departure from Colombia and arrival in Costa Rica, arranged for the meeting to be hosted by a former ally of Pastrana, Alvaro Leyva, who had been given political asylum in Costa Rica after being accused of criminal activities under the Samper Administration.⁸⁸⁹

The two parties met for the first time in history, and the meeting seemingly went well.⁸⁹⁰ Peace Commissioner Ricardo kept his promise of secrecy, but news of the meeting leaked to the press and was published in Bogotá on 4 January 1999 in the newspaper *El Espectador*.⁸⁹¹ The next day the *Washington Post* published an article refuting the rationale and questioning the wisdom of letting US officials meet with an officially designated terrorist organization.⁸⁹² The State Department reacted defensively, claiming the meeting had been designed merely to show the Administration’s ‘support for the Colombian peace process and [to] obtain news of kidnapped Americans’.⁸⁹³ This explanation did not satisfy Clinton’s critics or many members of Congress; to them the decision showed ‘a lack of common sense’.⁸⁹⁴ The leaker’s identity has never been determined.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁸⁷ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁸⁸⁸ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 146.

⁸⁸⁹ "Costa Rica concedio asilo a Leyva," *El Tiempo*, 10th October 1998.

⁸⁹⁰ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).

⁸⁹¹ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*.

⁸⁹² Douglas Farah, "U.S. Officials, Colombian Rebels Meet; Unprecedented Secret Talks Last Month Were Aimed at Salvaging Peace Effort," *The Washington Post*, 5th January 1999.

⁸⁹³ "News in brief: US meeting with rebels," *The Guardian* (1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/12. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

⁸⁹⁴ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p.65

⁸⁹⁵ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000). Ricardo implied to the author that the source of the leak was Colombian, inferred from the fact that a Colombian magazine, *El Espectador*, had picked it up and published it in Colombia first. He hinted that the source was

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright intervened on 18 January 1999, by giving an interview to the Colombian newsmagazine *Semana*.⁸⁹⁶ By then the meeting had become a hot political controversy in the US. Pastrana later remarked that in consequence the US shied away from further participation in the peace process.⁸⁹⁷ Albright reiterated US support for Pastrana and his approach to peace, and tried to dampen the controversy.⁸⁹⁸ But controversy was not to be dampened. As late as 23 March 1999 Rep. Gilman published an article in the *Miami Herald* titled 'Don't Legitimize Terrorist Groups', excoriating Chicola for the meeting with FARC personnel.⁸⁹⁹

CONGRESS APPROVES AID FOR COLOMBIA

On 2 November 1998 it was announced that the U.S. Congress had approved US\$200 million in supplemental counter-narcotics assistance for 'aerial eradication of coca',⁹⁰⁰ which when added to the US\$96 million appropriated earlier, made Colombia the third largest 'recipient of annual U.S. aid in the world'.⁹⁰¹ On 29 November the Third International Conference of Ministers of Defence of the Americas convened in Cartagena, Colombia. On the conference's second day Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced that the US would extend aid to Colombia to help 'modernize' its army, an extraordinarily deep involvement in Colombia's domestic affairs.⁹⁰² The involvement was deeper than may have appeared to the public: it would transpire that new 'guidelines on information sharing were issued'⁹⁰³ in March 1999, enabling Colombian and US armed forces to exchange information much more extensively

known to himself – Alvaro Leyva, the host of the meeting, who (according to Ricardo) craved more prominence for himself, although his role in the affair had in reality been minimal.

⁸⁹⁶ Cancillería-Colombiana, *Entrevista de la Secretaria de Estado norteamericana, Madeleine Albright, con la revista colombiana "Semana" (Washington, Enero 18 de 1999)*, La Política Exterior de Colombia (Bogotá: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2002).

⁸⁹⁷ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 163.

⁸⁹⁸ "La Lucha Antinarcóticos no es Negociable," *Semana*, 18th January 1999.

⁸⁹⁹ Benjamin A. Gilman, "Don't Legitimize Terrorist Groups," *Miami Herald*, 23rd March 1999.

⁹⁰⁰ Jared Kotler, "Colombian farmers feel carrot and stick in U.S. narcotics drive," *Associated Press*(1998).

⁹⁰¹ Marcella and Schulz, *Colombia's Three Wars: U.S. Strategy at the Crossroads*. p. 4.

⁹⁰² Eduardo Char Mutis, "E.U. Apoyará Modernización del Ejército," *El Tiempo*, 1st December 1998.

⁹⁰³ Margaret E. Beare, *Critical reflections on transnational organized crime, money laundering and corruption* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003). p. 229.

and to cooperate in other ways on security issues.

The professionalisation of the army

Treasury Minister Juan Camilo Restrepo announced on 18 November 1998 that the plan to professionalise the Army was more expensive than could be borne by the Colombian state fisc as timetabled for 50% completion by 2002. Colombia was thus officially on record as lacking the means to carry out its own plan, or restore the state capacity and authority that depended on it.⁹⁰⁴ Pastrana and team were once again subtly sending Janus-faced messages, simultaneously addressed to domestic and external audiences – pointedly telling the world Colombia could not afford the military upgrade recommended by the US, while at the same time creating ‘public-relations cover’ lest the Colombian public blames Pastrana for the controversial step of inviting American intervention in Colombia’s internal affairs.

The need for a stronger Colombian army

In 1998 the Colombian army comprised 60,000 ‘regular’ soldiers; 34,000 conscripts drafted in a national scheme that prevents teenage males from graduating high school unless they do military service; but only 22,000 soldiers who could be called professional.⁹⁰⁵ The problem went far beyond the need for more soldiers or a bigger budget; it would be necessary to start from scratch in erecting the moral and material infrastructure (including training) needed to transform the increase in men and money into a fighting force that could effectively keep the peace throughout Colombia.⁹⁰⁶

According to the Pentagon, American aid could not arrive too soon. Charles Wilhelm, the US Commander of SOUTHCOM, conferred with General Tapias and Defence Minister Lloreda in Colombia on 18 January 1999,⁹⁰⁷ when Wilhelm pinpointed Colombia’s fundamental state failure: the guerrillas were able to move about the countryside at an average speed of 7 kilometres per hour, while the Colombian Army only moved at 6 kilometres per hour.⁹⁰⁸ Unless this inadequacy were remedied, the Colombian state could not maintain its territorial sovereignty. Wilhelm discussed in detail what steps were needed to professionalise the army.

⁹⁰⁴ "Profesionalizar FF.MM. es Costoso," *El Tiempo*, 11th November 1998.

⁹⁰⁵ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁷ AmEmbassy Bogota to SecState WashDC, "Ambassador Delivers Segovia Massacre Letter," (1999).

⁹⁰⁸ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

The US would begin training a Colombian counter-narcotics (CN) battalion in April 1999 with funds Congress had already appropriated for such operations. Wilhelm, however, was well aware that that level of funding would be inadequate to reverse the slide into state failure; only affirmative Congressional support could furnish sufficient means.⁹⁰⁹

PASTRANA ANNOUNCES GREATER PLAN COLOMBIA

President Pastrana officially inaugurated his greater Plan Colombia (comprising development of the Colombian economy within world markets and the peace process with the insurgency, in addition to US military aid) on 19 December 1998 in a speech in Puerto Wilches, a locale in the Colombian State of Magdalena Medio, where the FARC and ELN were constantly in conflict with right-wing paramilitaries, yet where development projects under the rubric of *Proyecto de Desarrollo* had succeeded in keeping out coca production. It was thus launched as primarily a plan for development and peace.⁹¹⁰ ‘The [greater] Plan Colombia presented to the Colombian people was an alternative development plan that was oriented to aid the victims of the prolonged armed conflict’.⁹¹¹ President Pastrana charged Victor G. Ricardo with executing the Plan;⁹¹² eventually, it became the National Development Plan 1998-2000 (*Cambio para Construir la Paz*) which was signed into law on 29 July 1999. It has been argued that this greater Plan Colombia ‘became the government’s principal policy document and in the subsequent years played the part of a national development plan’.⁹¹³

The Puerto Wilches speech proved pivotal. ‘In the name of true reconciliation and the success of the peace process [Pastrana stated] I invite all rebel groups to participate in the preparation, creation and implementation of programmes and projects’⁹¹⁴ linked to Plan Colombia. To underscore his determination, Pastrana declared, ‘*Más claro no canta un gallo: mi propuesta*

⁹⁰⁹ Interview by author with Mark Coomer (Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy).

⁹¹⁰ Horacio Godoy, "Plan Colombia's Strategic Weaknesses," in *Latin American Studies Association Annual Conference* (Dallas, Texas, 2003).

⁹¹¹ Ibid. p. 5

⁹¹² "President Pastrana launches plan for economic development, asks rebels to join," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*. (1998), Date Accessed: 2012/01/12.
<http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

⁹¹³ Godoy, "Plan Colombia's Strategic Weaknesses." p. 8.

⁹¹⁴ "President Pastrana launches plan for economic development, asks rebels to join".

es evidente, la insurgencia debe participar de manera activa en las decisiones del Plan Colombia [Clearer than this Chanticleer does not crow: the insurgents must participate actively in the decisions and agenda of Plan Colombia].⁹¹⁵ Pastrana wanted the rebels to have no doubts that he had been and would be consistent in his pursuit of peace, that the doors stood open for a negotiated end to the endless violence.⁹¹⁶

The empty seat: the FARC baulk at the plan

Despite the consternation the greater Plan caused in certain quarters in Washington, Pastrana and team were committed to trying everything to bring peace to Colombia. They travelled to San Vicente del Caguan on 7 January 1999 to inaugurate talks with the FARC guerrillas. The Colombian media, highly politicised and owned by partisan political elites, reported the day as a frustrating one and a bad start for the peace process, owing to the foreknown absence of FARC's main commander Manuel Marulanda. The FARC claimed, truthfully or not, to have 'extracted' from two captured paramilitary militiamen intelligence of a plot to assassinate Marulanda (indeed, important political forces in Colombia adamantly opposed talks with the FARC). Pastrana showed up all the same, to underscore his commitment to the process and to fulfil his word of honour given to the guerrillas.⁹¹⁷ Perhaps the most important issue of the day was that the Colombian state had conceded to the FARC a carefully calibrated political recognition. The FARC had originally insisted that their flag should fly alongside the flag of Colombia, and their anthem be sung along with the national anthem; but Pastrana himself had nixed those demands, vowing that he should prefer that the talks did not happen than that the FARC guerrillas should be treated like a sovereign power.⁹¹⁸

Pastrana pursues his vision of peace despite the US

Just a few days later, on 14 January, Pastrana arrived in Cuba for an official State Visit – directly on the heels of his State Visit to the US – to try and consolidate Castro's support for the peace process promised at the Non-Aligned Summit. Hugo Chavez, President-elect of Venezuela, was also in attendance at Pastrana's request. Pastrana gave a speech at the University of Havana in which he expressly used the name 'Plan Colombia', describing it as

⁹¹⁵ "Pastrana lanzo Plan Colombia," *El Tiempo*, 20th December 1998. p. A1.

⁹¹⁶ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

⁹¹⁷ Juan Jose Ramirez, "Las Explicaciones de las FARC," *El Tiempo*, 8th January 1999.

⁹¹⁸ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

a development plan aimed at bringing peace and reconciliation.⁹¹⁹ At the end of the Visit, as the heads of state were posing for photographs, Castro turned to Pastrana and said, ‘all of your colleagues come when they only have six months left ... to have their picture taken with me; you are the only fellow who had the *cojones* to come in the beginning’.⁹²⁰ Indeed, on 14 October 1998, immediately before Pastrana’s State Visit to the US, Colombia had voted a positive ‘Yes’ (when it might have abstained) on the UN Resolution demanding an end to the US embargo on Cuba.⁹²¹

On 17 January Marulanda finally emerged to declare that the FARC would not follow up their offer to exchange their kidnappees for imprisoned guerrillas unless the Colombian Congress enacted a statutory law (*ley de canjes*) formally authorizing this practice.⁹²² The FARC had embarked on an aggressive strategy of ‘playing hardball’. The Administration was not about to allow negotiations with FARC to interfere with their determination to rebuild the capacity of the Colombian state.⁹²³ Pastrana therefore had to steer a middling path between dependence on and independence from the United States, while maintaining his independence of the Leftist forces in the Latin American sphere. He parried Marulanda’s gambit, declaring on 19 January that he declined to create a permanent law facilitating the exchange of captives.⁹²⁴ Yet in the same announcement he also reassured the guerrillas, promising he would not open simultaneous negotiations with or broker a peace deal with the right-wing paramilitaries.⁹²⁵

The FARC kill US participation in the peace process

After a very brief truce, the FARC reactivated their war against the Colombian state. A fierce battle broke out with a Colombian army brigade in Arauca on 18 February 1999.⁹²⁶ A few

⁹¹⁹ Cancilleria-Colombiana, *Palabras del Presidente de la República, Andrés Pastrana Arango en su visita a la Universidad de Havana (Enero 15 de 1999)*.

⁹²⁰ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002)*.

⁹²¹ Reuters-AFP, "Crece Rechazo al Bloqueo contra Cuba," *El Tiempo*, 15th October 1998.

⁹²² Mariela Guerrero, "Por primera vez el jefe de las FARC habla sobre el canje y proceso de paz," *Revista Semana* (1999).

⁹²³ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002)*.

⁹²⁴ "No Rotundo a Ley de Canje Permanente," *El Tiempo*, 19th January 1999.

⁹²⁵ "No a los Paras," *El Tiempo*, 19th January 1999.

⁹²⁶ "Las FARC reanudan Acciones de guerra," *El Tiempo*, 19th February 1999.

days later, on 25 February, the FARC kidnapped three US citizens working with indigenous tribes in the Arauca region.⁹²⁷ They were found dead on Colombian territory near the border with Venezuela on 3 March. The US Government reacted angrily, condemning the killings and immediately attributing them to the FARC. The US ‘called on the Colombian Government to arrest and extradite to the United States those responsible’.⁹²⁸ According to Crandall, the killings ‘fueled Washington’s growing suspicions that the FARC was unwilling to cooperate and negotiate in good faith’.⁹²⁹ According to Arnson, ‘The FARC’s murder of the three US indigenous rights activists in March 1999 destroyed the political space for US contact with the guerrillas, put the State Department on the defensive, and eroded support for the peace process overall’.⁹³⁰ Congress became vocally critical of the Clinton Administration for ‘sitting down at the table with a group that actively seeks to wantonly kidnap and murder American citizens’.⁹³¹

In the aftermath US drug czar Barry McCaffrey, in an interview with the Colombian weekly *Semana*, stated that his military experience had taught him that both ‘carrots and sticks’ must be brought to bear in negotiating with an enemy. He confessed not understanding why the Pastrana Administration was still sitting at the negotiating table with the FARC; in his view, Pastrana should be dealing with the FARC on the battlefield.⁹³² Arnson argues that Clinton officials generally did not want to be perceived as publicly undermining Pastrana’s peace process; but of course the murder of US citizens spun the situation in a contrary direction, obliging them to go on record as having *inter alia* ‘expressed concern over the impact of the peace process on anti-narcotics operations, in light of an agreement to suspend over-flights in the Demilitarized Zone’.⁹³³

⁹²⁷ Russell Crandall, *Driven by drugs: US policy toward Colombia*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008).

⁹²⁸ Andrew Jacobs, "3 Kidnapped Americans Killed: Colombian Rebels are Suspected," *New York Times*, 6th March 1999.

⁹²⁹ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 147.

⁹³⁰ Cynthia J Arnson et al., "The Peace Process in Colombia and U.S. Policy," (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2000). p.9.

⁹³¹ *Ibid.* p. 9.

⁹³² "Colombia es una Amenaza ", *Revista Semana*, 29th March 1999.

⁹³³ Arnson et al., "The Peace Process in Colombia and U.S. Policy." p.10

The ELN, not to be outdone, hijacked a domestic flight with forty-six passengers on board a few weeks later, on 12 April.⁹³⁴ The jet belonged to Avianca, the Colombian national airline, and had been flying between Bucaramanga and Bogotá. The ELN said the kidnapping sent a message to Pastrana that every bit of Colombian territory was vulnerable to attack by them.⁹³⁵

Congressional fallout from the FARC affair

The first *tête-à-tête* of Colombian Ambassador Alberto Moreno with Thomas Pickering, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, took place towards the end of May 1999 at a luncheon in the Colombian Embassy in Washington. Pickering was worried about the peace process. A few days earlier, the State Department's brief but controversial engagement with the FARC in Costa Rica had erupted once more, when Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN) subpoenaed the State Department to release its records 'on alleged phone conversations and e-mail messages between [State] Department officials and the FARC'.⁹³⁶ The fiasco resurfaced just as Peter Romero – the official who had authorised Chicola to meet with Reyes – was being confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Western Hemispheric Affairs; Rep. Burton lobbying hard against his confirmation.⁹³⁷ The renewed debate reignited Congress's latent opposition to any peace initiative with an organisation classified as terrorist.⁹³⁸ The mood threatened to upset the delicate initiative should it become widely believed that the FARC were involved in the expansion of coca cultivation.⁹³⁹

The killing of the three Americans threw the whole peace process into potentially terminal disarray. The expiry of the DMZ also loomed, with no progress to show. President Pastrana was determined, however, to prevent the failure of his initiative, and on 2 May he took the extraordinary step of meeting with Marulanda in person, for the second time ever, to get the process back on track.⁹⁴⁰ The stalled talks were resumed, this time with some fruitful results.

⁹³⁴ UK Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia," (2011).

⁹³⁵ "El Secuestro del Avion fue un mensaje," 19th April 1999.

⁹³⁶ "US DEPT OF STATE: Daily press briefing ", *M2 Presswire*(1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

⁹³⁷ James Morrison, "A World Embassy row: picking a fight " *The Washington Times*, 25th May 1999.

⁹³⁸ Ibid.

⁹³⁹ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

⁹⁴⁰ "Primer acuerdo entre Pastrana and Tirofijo," *El Tiempo*, 3rd May 1999.

Pastrana and representatives of FARC signed an agreement on 6 May setting an agenda for the talks, officially designated *A Common Agenda For Change Toward a New Colombia*.⁹⁴¹ A special Thematic Committee was set up to evaluate reform proposals pursuant to the agreed agenda, to consist in (roughly) equal proportions of FARC guerrillas, government appointees, and members drawn from above-ground civil society organisations.⁹⁴² The Pastrana government at the same time extended the term of the DMZ by 30 days to give time for this agenda to be carried through by all interested parties. The agenda did give definite substance and weight to the peace process, in effect launching it on a practical level, but it also gave rise to enormous controversy both inside and outside Colombia.

Another blow to the peace process: Defence Minister Lloreda resigns

The controversy was quick to boil over. In a Scheduled Meeting of the Cabinet on 12 May 1999, Defence Minister Lloreda, undoubtedly hounded behind the scenes by a Colombian army high command alarmed by how much Pastrana had conceded to accommodate the FARC,⁹⁴³ confronted Pastrana very angrily. The information about the FARC disseminated by Peace Commissioner Ricardo to Lloreda and the rest of the Cabinet – for which the Commissioner himself largely depended on FARC – did not match what military intelligence was receiving from its assets in the field. Not without reason the army feared the FARC were succeeding in systematically disinforming the government even about their immediate operational (let alone their long-term strategic) intentions. Pastrana records that he responded forcefully, asserting that the peace process was not by right a topic of Cabinet discussion but a prerogative of the President, which only the President may at his own discretion bring before the Cabinet, as in the Special Meeting of 3 May just passed. Pastrana promised to sort things out with Lloreda ‘in private’ to the latter’s satisfaction⁹⁴⁴

Unsatisfied, Lloreda resigned mere weeks later, on 26 May.⁹⁴⁵ He was especially unhappy with the scale of concessions to the FARC. Seventeen high ranking officers of the Colombian army threatened to resign in a simultaneous show of solidarity, including even Commander-

⁹⁴¹ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia.", p. 373.

⁹⁴² Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 219.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 191.

⁹⁴⁴ *Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).*

⁹⁴⁵ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 189-194.

in-Chief Tapias, in order to appoint whom Pastrana had had to discharge eight more-senior officers.⁹⁴⁶ Lloreda, however, persuaded Tapias to stay on and provide institutional continuity and memory, and a public meltdown was averted. Pastrana appointed Luis Fernando Ramirez to replace Lloreda three days later, on 29 May.⁹⁴⁷ Lloreda's resignation was nonetheless a major blow to Colombia's image in Washington, especially as a large swath of public opinion inside and outside Washington – probably the majority of those who were paying attention – shared Lloreda's suspicions toward the FARC and lack of confidence in Pastrana's handling of negotiations with them. The resignation put Pastrana in danger of acquiring a reputation in the US like that of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain: – an appeaser who makes concession after concession to evil. The Lloreda uproar jeopardised US acceptance of the invitation to intervene in Colombia's internal situation, perhaps more than any other single event.⁹⁴⁸

Just as the picture could not have looked bleaker, the ELN, the other insurgent group,⁹⁴⁹ kidnapped an entire church congregation of 143 people attending Mass in Cali on 30 May. They freed 80 of them due to logistical difficulties, but the other 63 suffered the deplorable conditions of kidnappees. 'Peace' talks could not continue with the ELN, and Pastrana also suspended the political recognition he had given ELN in Executive Resolution No. 41 of 18 June 1999.⁹⁵⁰

THE U.S. RE-ENGAGES—ON MORE LIMITED TERMS

As much as the US was dissatisfied with Pastrana's accommodationism, there was no getting around the necessity of making the best of the opening Pastrana had created. The stubborn reality of narcotics trafficking irrupted yet again at this difficult juncture, in such a way as spotlighted Pastrana's efforts to get the US more involved. In a controversial move, the *Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas* (DANE), the Colombian national statistics office, announced on 6 June that the illegal cultivation of coca would thenceforth

⁹⁴⁶ "Generales dispuestos a irse con Lloreda," *El Tiempo*, 27th May 1999.

⁹⁴⁷ "Luis F. Ramirez, nuevo Mindefensa," *El Tiempo*, 30th May 1999.

⁹⁴⁸ Johnson, "Colombia's Accommodation Process."

⁹⁴⁹ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 486.

⁹⁵⁰ "Colombia: Prospects for Peace with the ELN," in *IGC Latin America Report* (Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group, 2002).

become part of its calculation of Colombia's annual GDP.⁹⁵¹ US Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey immediately voiced discontent with DANE's decision on 17 June. DANE excused itself as following the recommendations of the IMF, its Director stating that coca cultivation was a reality that could not be ignored.⁹⁵² This galvanised McCaffrey; immediately he instructed his strategic planner at ONDCP, Mark Coomer, to write a report outlining what could be done to roll back the advance of coca cultivation. This simple five-page report (some call it a memo) would lay the foundation for the aid package the US eventually offered Colombia. Coomer justified sending as much as US\$1 billion to Colombia. He recalled in an interview with the author that McCaffrey had 'loved the paper'. McCaffrey leaked it the following month according to Crandall.⁹⁵³

Meanwhile, however, forecasting massive opposition to aid for Colombia in Congress, Under-Secretary of State Pickering got himself instructed by Madeleine Albright to dedicate part of his time to whatever Pastrana and his team believed should have priority. Pickering asked to meet Pastrana to work out how the US might contribute, and Moreno agreed a visit to Colombia for August 1999.⁹⁵⁴ This visit marked the beginning of the endgame in the consolidation of the US aid package, which became known (on the American side) as 'Plan Colombia'.

US scepticism over the peace process continues to grow

The result of all these setbacks was increasing hostility in the US Congress. In a hearing in the House of Representatives on 1 July 1999 Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, led Congressional criticism of the Pastrana Administration's peace initiative, bluntly denouncing 'a process that results in 16,000 square miles of territory being given to narco-guerrillas who work hand-in-hand with the world's most dangerous drug dealers'.⁹⁵⁵ Perhaps in an effort to head off Gilman's denunciation, or at least to channel it in more constructive ways, on 13 July '[t]he office of drug czar Barry

⁹⁵¹ "Cultivos Ilícitos entran al PIB," *El Tiempo*, 6th June 1999. Also try to find the original source from DANE

⁹⁵² "McCaffrey se mete en el PIB," *El Tiempo*, 17th June 1999.

⁹⁵³ *Interview by author with Mark Coomer (Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy).*

⁹⁵⁴ *Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).*

⁹⁵⁵ Karen de Young, "Colombia's U.S. Connection Not Winning Drug War," *Washington Post*, 6th July 1999.

McCaffrey leaked a State Department memo that called for a massive increase in assistance to Colombia of nearly US\$1 billion'.⁹⁵⁶ Even if the leak originated elsewhere, the motive must have been similar (otherwise why leak it at all?).⁹⁵⁷

The Colombians were too committed to rebuilding their state and too much in need of US aid to give up. Minister of Defence Ramirez travelled to Washington on 15 July with General Tapias in tow to ask Congress for foreign aid of US\$250 million per year to fight specifically 'drug trafficking'. Ramirez and Tapias conferred with Peter Romero, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, and Frank Loy, Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs; as well as with McCaffrey.⁹⁵⁸ Such determination – in the teeth of one public relations debacle in the US after another – indicates at a minimum that the Pastrana Administration was hedging its bets on a peace accord with the double insurgency; and likely, too, that talks with both the FARC and the ELN were making no real progress. The Colombians were in effect asking the US to support an eventual confrontation with the insurgents, if need be. The title of one article in one of the main outlets of the Colombian press was 'Colombia asks [support] for the war'.⁹⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

At this point in the story of Plan Colombia Andres Pastrana had been in office for exactly one year. In all that time essentially no progress had been made toward any of his main domestic goals. The peace process with the FARC and ELN had borne no fruit; these organizations had if anything only stepped up their attacks on Colombian society. Abroad, the Administration's efforts to secure foreign aid for their state rehabilitation project had come to nought. If there were any truth to the claim that Pastrana was just an American puppet, then one would have expected to see more progress than this, after a full year in office, toward fulfilling what *ex*

⁹⁵⁶ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 162.

⁹⁵⁷ Coomer said the document (or the five-page long 'plan' as he called it) was not leaked by the ONDCP. Crandall assumes that the 'memo' was from the State Department, but what happened was that Coomer was working as part of 'taskforce' group between the NSC, State Department and the ONDCP. The specifics of the memo were actually published on 17 July in: Tim Golden and Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Plans Big Aid Package to Rally a Reeling Colombia," *The New York Times*, 15th September 1999.

⁹⁵⁸ *Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).*

⁹⁵⁹ Sergio Gomez Maseri, "Colombia pide para la guerra," *El Tiempo*, 16th July.

hypothesi is supposed to be a US agenda. The fact that this had not happened – indeed, that Congress was rather backing off from intervention – is the best evidence one could have that Plan Colombia was in essence a Colombian idea and project, and that its partial coincidence with the agenda of US foreign policy was had not been enough to procure the assistance on which the Colombians themselves were counting so much. They had been frantically signalling their invitation to the US to intervene in their internal affairs for a whole year, without any discernible result.

President Andres Pastrana and his team spent their first year in office exploiting every device and opportunity at their disposal to interest the Americans in the fate of the Colombian state and to invite their ‘soft intervention’ in rehabilitating its capacity to control its own territory. The Colombians were not deeply experienced in the ways of Washington, but were obliged to discover by trial and error how they might overcome the dysfunctional legacy of the outgoing administration; build on the existing but marginal US involvement in Colombia’s internal affairs; and manage a far-reaching escalation of that involvement in ways acceptable to both governments, to their constituencies and to the world. At first they badly underestimated how complex and difficult it would be to advance an agenda seemingly as straightforward as they believed Plan Colombia to be. In July 1999, after President Clinton had pledged his support and the State Department had committed Pickering to liaise between Washington and Bogotá, the Pastrana team had believed Plan Colombia was ‘in the bag’. On some unconscious level they had perhaps accepted the stereotype of the US as monolithic hegemon making decisions with supreme confidence and alacrity. They would find out soon how different the real story could be.

Colombia at this time was in such dire straits that Pastrana and his team had only very limited and rapidly dwindling resources to work with; his Administration had had to resort to their own utmost resourcefulness in order to make any impression at all on official Washington. In addition the Colombian economy was shrinking catastrophically, the peace process had borne no fruit, and domestic public opinion was turning rapidly against Pastrana, notwithstanding the irony of its favourability to the US. Such circumstances as these might well be called ‘pessimical’ for dealing with the difficulties that lay immediately ahead. The Great Hegemon, already sceptical of any peace process, was about to prove more reluctant than a hegemon is supposed to be, even about relatively ‘soft’ doses of financial and technical ‘intervention’. As will be seen in the following two chapters, the Colombians were to learn that only their gifts

of personal suasion could salvage anything from the collapse of their hopes a few months after this point in the story.

It will be seen in the next chapter (Phase Two) that originally the Colombians had believed they could interest the US in the entire spectrum of greater Plan Colombia, including social development, but above all the peace that Pastrana was so deeply committed to and was investing so much of his limited political capital in. The Colombians' bold gambit might have succeeded, but for circumstantial mishaps beyond the control of any agency, especially the bad faith and insincerity of the rebels themselves. Pastrana's miscalculation nearly brought down his grand strategy of inviting US intervention. Gradually, he and his team would learn to adjust themselves to the very real limitations of the Colossus of the North, and would scale back their ambitions to accord with the more modest degree of 'soft intervention' that Washington was prepared to venture.

CHAPTER 5: PLAN COLOMBIA PHASE 2: THE INVITATION NEGOTIATED

INTRODUCTION

The anniversary of President Pastrana's inauguration was not an encouraging one; he had fallen into deep trouble both at home and overseas. At the domestic level the 'national polls indicated that he had lost the confidence of most of the country'.⁹⁶⁰ According to *El Espectador* newspaper, Pastrana had 'flunked' his first year.⁹⁶¹ The result was, as *El Tiempo* reported on 20 July 1999, that 66% of Colombians polled supported US military intervention in their country, if it would help to resolve the nearly four-decades-long civil war. The sample was taken from forty cities in Colombia as well as from Colombians living in the US.⁹⁶² One might well conclude that the Colombian people had more confidence in the US military than in their own government and its accommodationism (let alone the guerrillas or their insurgency). This shift in public opinion was a sustained one: a declassified Information Memorandum dated 2 May 2000 reveals that the US State Department's Office of Research conducted two major polls in Colombia in February 2000.⁹⁶³ Importantly for the US, it was found that '80% of Colombians from all regions and sectors [held] favourable views of the US—twice the number who did in 1996'.⁹⁶⁴ The report concluded that 'the increased production of illegal drugs [had] convinced many Colombians that outside help [was] necessary'.⁹⁶⁵

At the international level, particularly in Washington, Pastrana was seen at the time as a weak leader unable to contain the spread of terrorism, despite – or because of – risky negotiations with the perpetrators of a forty-year-old civil war.⁹⁶⁶ Sound and far-seeing though they may

⁹⁶⁰ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p.155.

⁹⁶¹ Reuters, "Colombia's Pastrana Deeply Unpopular, Poll says," 1st August 1999.

⁹⁶² "Mayoria de encuestados apoyarian Intervencion," *El Tiempo*, 20th July 1999.

⁹⁶³ Peter F. Romero, "Colombians Dissatisfied with Democracy, Welcome U.S. Help against Counternarcotics," in *National Security Archives* (2000).

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁹⁶⁶ *Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).*

have been in theory, the grand designs of Pastrana and his team to invite US intervention on multiple levels, as had happened in Europe right after the Second World War – what I am calling ‘greater Plan Colombia’ herein, – had to be adjusted to a real world in which the Great Hegemon did not have a Marshall Plan in its hip pocket for every corner of the world.

The International Relations literature assumes, rather uncritically I believe, that the answer to the question ‘Who originated Plan Colombia?’ must be quite simply ‘the US hegemon’. In reality, the evidence to the contrary, both circumstantial and testimonial, is overwhelming. Among the most compelling (but far from the only) testimonial evidence comes from the current US Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) William Brownfield, who averred:

The invitation was by the Government of Colombia. Yes, there was dialogue, of course, in terms of what we could provide, how we could provide it, how quickly we could provide it, how we would sequence it, how many of our own personnel we would have to have in-country to ensure that the support was used in the most effective way possible. All of that was subject to dialogue by the Government of Colombia, but I will tell you there was never a moment to the best of my knowledge ... where we were adamant that we had to have people or things on the ground in Colombia, that the Colombian government did not specifically want and request.⁹⁶⁷

Ambassador James F. Mack witnessed that the Plan emerged from a drawn-out negotiation that *bonded* Colombians and Americans: ‘[T]he nature of US assistance was negotiated with the Colombians ... this went on for quite a few months ... it was definitely not an imposition ... both sides had their interests, but there was a lot of mutual understanding – a lot of strong friendships were formed’.⁹⁶⁸ McLean also attests that the Pastrana Administration took the lead:

The Colombians clearly drew the US in. Pastrana is important in that ... Pastrana was a very likable person and he pulled in the United States into the process. Even [Delaware Senator] Joe Biden, for instance ... [came] to Cartagena being very sceptical about the whole thing and then, because an airplane couldn’t come to pick him up, he had to stay an extra day and [the Colombians] worked him, to convince him [successfully].⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁷ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁹⁶⁸ Interview by author with Ambassador James F. Mack (US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 2000-2002).

⁹⁶⁹ Interview by author with Phillip McLean (Senior Associate Center for Strategic and International Studies).

Indeed, McLean even goes so far as to assert, ‘For the United States these were very difficult decisions, because ... the United States didn’t want to do this’.⁹⁷⁰ Brownfield spontaneously described Plan Colombia as uniquely bespoke by Colombians for the peculiar needs of Colombia:

It was a new approach, both to the problems of Colombia and to the bilateral relations between Colombia and the United States... and even in terms of [Pastrana’s] strategic approach as opposed to that of several other countries which were addressing some of the same issues ... in Bolivia, in Peru ... and his approach, I submit, was different from the others. And I suggest as well, at the end of the day it was more successful... When we first started to discuss what eventually became Plan Colombia with the new Pastrana administration in 1998 I was looking at a similar plan ... called *Plan Dignidad* ... It was the Bolivian government’s plan to address in essence the narcotics threat in Bolivia. And in some of my earlier conversations with [Pastrana’s team] I said, you know, is this what we are looking for eventually? And the response ... was first, this is not ambitious enough; second, we have other issues besides just narcotics and just poverty; and third and most emphatically, we will develop a Colombian strategy to deal with Colombia. And it was not said arrogantly, it was not said defensively; it was said in essence as people who were perfectly comfortable with what they are.⁹⁷¹

And according to Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, ‘I don’t think Plan Colombia would have worked unless there was a will and a need and a plan that was laid out by the Colombians. Colombians were the ones that said, if we had this resource and that resource ... then we can stop [narco-terrorism]’.⁹⁷² Plan Colombia was a Colombian initiative, then, to which the US responded – favourably, – but to which it *responded*. Further to this, Plan Colombia originated, not with an institution but with a small handful of identifiable persons who might thus be termed ‘political entrepreneurs’.⁹⁷³ Brownfield added:

I believe President Pastrana has had to respond often to questions about the peace process [with the FARC]; I believe as a consequence not enough attention has been paid to the strategy that he developed that came to be known as Plan Colombia. And a great deal of credit is given to his successor [Uribe] ... [but] it was Andres Pastrana who developed Plan Colombia, who developed a comprehensive, coherent national strategy to tie together the security, the law enforcement, the economic, the social and the

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁷¹ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁹⁷² Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007).

⁹⁷³ David L. Rousseau, *Identifying threats and threatening identities: the social construction of realism and liberalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

humanitarian elements of a national strategy.⁹⁷⁴

The state of affairs at this juncture in the story of Plan Colombia was such that, although the Colombians did have friends and well-wishers in Washington, it was still up to them to push, bargain and lobby for it hard enough to sell it to a formidable body of sceptics. Moreover, it had in fact to be negotiated through a hardly achieved meeting of the minds between the governments of the US and Colombia in which both sides had much to learn from each other.

As Brownfield reiterated to the author:

[T]he dialogue between the government of Colombia and the government of the United States was fluid and frequent from the time of the inauguration of Andres Pastrana ... that dialogue generated the thinking process and the analytical process that eventually brought about the Colombians' decisions on where to focus and how to focus their efforts ... the dialogue contributed significantly to the final content as well as the final success of Plan Colombia.⁹⁷⁵

Given the deleterious influence of the Vietnam Syndrome (especially in the US Congress), the end-result of a protracted bargaining process was just that level of invited (or 'soft') intervention which the Colombians perceived as the minimal necessary to be effective, but the Americans as the maximal possible or desirable under their domestic constraints. This chapter will show how the US and Colombia had to struggle through a process of mutual adjustment. Having taken the initiative to invite intervention, the Colombian administration also bore the burden of accommodating itself to what was politically possible in Washington.

THE U.S. ACCEPTS COLOMBIA'S INVITATION

At this low ebb in Pastrana's fortunes, which had been reached despite his Administration's often brilliant performance, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Peter Romero became 'increasingly worried that Pastrana and his key plan were not seemingly getting anywhere and the need to do something'⁹⁷⁶ had become evident. This feeling was immediately relayed to the White House *via* National Security Advisor Sandy Berger at a high-level meeting. Berger commissioned specifically Beers and Romero to draw up a budget with some specific figures for aid to Colombia. Beers remembers making up

⁹⁷⁴ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁶ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002).

three different budgets ‘one for \$3bn, one for \$2bn and one for \$1bn’.⁹⁷⁷ These proposals were then run by the OMB [Office of Management and Budget], but OMB thought the numbers were too high to get approval from Congress.⁹⁷⁸

The State Department lobbies Congress for Plan Colombia

After acknowledging that it was premature to ask Congress for money to aid Colombia right away, as evidenced by the OMB reaction, the State Department undertook a lobbying campaign of their own in support of Plan Colombia, with President Clinton’s approval.⁹⁷⁹ Romero and Beers finally had Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering proactively behind their efforts.⁹⁸⁰

Pickering would become more involved than Albright, yet at first he had been reluctant. In an interview with the author he recounted:

I was snowed. I had too much on my plate and I thought, from what little I knew about it at the time, [that] it would be very hard [but] Sandy Berger called me and said, “I have talked to Madeleine and we want you to pick up on Colombia, we think it is going to hell,” and I said to Sandy, “We all know it is going to hell. It is not something I particularly want to do, but if that is what you and Madeleine think has to be done, that’s what I get paid for, so I will do it”.⁹⁸¹

Albright publicly rode to the rescue of those crucial elements which were to become the eventual US aid package by the name of ‘Plan Colombia’. She began her campaign by publishing an editorial in the 10 August 1999 edition of *The New York Times* titled ‘Colombia’s Struggles, and How We Can Help’. Albright’s words ‘were intended to send a strong message not only to Colombia but also to the US Congress that it was the State Department and the White House that would be coordinating Colombia policy’.⁹⁸² The editorial publicly announced that Thomas Pickering would visit Colombia officially to

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁸¹ Interview by author with Ambassador Thomas Pickering (US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs: 1997-2000), 16th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

⁹⁸² Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 148.

demonstrate the Clinton Administration's commitment to Colombia and to Pastrana.⁹⁸³

Under-Secretary Pickering visits Colombia in person

Pickering in fact arrived in Bogotá on the same day that Albright's editorial was published, 10 August. 'Pickering became the highest-ranking US government official to visit Colombia in several years'⁹⁸⁴. He was accompanied by Rand Beers and Peter Romero.⁹⁸⁵ Some analysts claim – or more precisely, assume *a priori* – that Pickering made this pivotal visit in order to threaten or to command the Colombian 'puppet'.⁹⁸⁶

To the contrary, when asked by the author how much of Plan Colombia he believed had originated with the Colombians, Pickering himself acknowledged that the US played rather a secondary role in the strategic planning of the aid package:

The approach that we had ... [was] that most if not all the elements of the Plan were already in place, and that what we [the US State Department *esp.* himself, Peter Romero and Rand Beers] needed to do [was] to find a way to get Colombia to integrate these, and to be a catalyst for integration and take on the burden of filling the holes or other essential items which were not available to Colombia on their own.⁹⁸⁷

This take on matters was corroborated by Pastrana himself, who stated categorically that Pickering, far from bearing vexatious commands that the Colombians would rather have avoided, arrived in Colombia to announce the best news the Colombians had heard out of Washington thus far. Pickering offered an aid package which, in Pastrana's own words, 'to our pleasant surprise proposed the possibility of seeking US support not just for one year, but for all three years of office remaining to me'.⁹⁸⁸ Pickering's proposal coincided perfectly with elements of the 'Marshall Plan for Colombia' which Pastrana had referred to in his electoral campaign. Pastrana had presented this to the people of Colombia – and later to the international community – as part of a greater Plan, an integrated solution to the full spectrum

⁹⁸³ Madeleine K. Albright, "Colombia's Struggles, and How We Can Help?," *The New York Times* 1999.

⁹⁸⁴ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 148.

⁹⁸⁵ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (*US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002*).

⁹⁸⁶ Livingstone, *America's backyard: the United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror*.

⁹⁸⁷ Interview by author with Ambassador Thomas Pickering (*US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs: 1997-2000*).

⁹⁸⁸ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (*President of Colombia 1998-2002*).

of Colombia's problems resting on five pillars: first, the peace process; second, economic development; third, the war on drugs; fourth, reform of the justice system; and finally, fifth, aid for social and democratic development.⁹⁸⁹

Pickering's kernel was an important contribution to this his greater Plan Colombia.⁹⁹⁰ Indeed, Pickering's proposal was so much an integral component of Pastrana's overall vision that his Administration had by then already completed a great part of the preparatory work that Pickering's proposal necessitated.⁹⁹¹ What remained at this point was to reorganise the Plan in ways that would be best calibrated to call forth not only North American aid but also, it was hoped, that of other countries and international organizations.⁹⁹²

Dual strategy for Bogotá and Washington

At last it seemed that Washington and Bogotá were approaching a meeting of the minds. Despite their mistrust of a peace process that had conceded so much to the insurgents, the Americans were prepared to come to Colombia's aid on a massive scale. According to Beers, it was the beginning of a collaborative effort. 'We talked to the government of Colombia about what our general notion was and that we needed to do this together; it could not just be a US plan. They [Pastrana and his team] had been thinking along these lines anyway, but had not really had a way to figure out how'.⁹⁹³ The American team returned to Washington fully convinced that Romero had been right all along, that Colombia was in dire straits and urgently needed US aid.⁹⁹⁴

The State Department proposes a politically workable Plan

The US Administration at this point seems finally to have made up its mind to publish an official and irrevocable acceptance of the Colombians' invitation to intervene – albeit on the more narrowly focused terms that would be palatable to Congress. After Pickering's return,

⁹⁸⁹ Colombia. Departamento Nacional de Planeación., *Cambio para construir la paz: 1998-2002 bases*, 1. ed. (Colombia: Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 1998).

⁹⁹⁰ Colombia. Departamento Nacional de Planeación., *Cambio para Construir la Paz: Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 1998-2002*, 2 vols. (Colombia: Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 1999).

⁹⁹¹ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

⁹⁹² *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

⁹⁹³ *Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002).*

⁹⁹⁴ Crandall, *Driven by drugs: US policy toward Colombia.*

the Clinton Administration undertook in earnest the work of formulating its rationale for giving so much aid to Colombia. It has been reported that both McCaffrey and Pickering warned Pastrana that he risked ‘losing U.S. support if he [made] further concessions to the insurgents in an effort to restart stalled peace negotiations’.⁹⁹⁵ It has also been reported that they told him the US would only be willing to help the Colombians if they developed ‘a comprehensive plan to strengthen the military, halt the nation’s economic free fall, and fight drug trafficking’.⁹⁹⁶

Here, if anywhere, the US might be perceived as acting in the manner of a hegemon; nevertheless, developments soon to follow would show beyond any reasonable doubt that the Colombians conserved their independence – and not only in the fact that they continued negotiating with the insurgents in the teeth of the US warning. Plan Colombia was to unfold dynamically as a negotiation – between Colombia and the US, and, within the US, between stakeholders with rival agendas – of the terms on which the US would accept Colombia’s invitation to intervene; rather than as a hegemonic command running from Washington on down to Bogotá.

The Clinton Administration makes its case to Congress

On 20 September 1999 SOUTHCOM Commander Charles Wilhelm testified before Congress that the Colombian state could not get the edge in negotiating with the guerrillas unless it could hold its own against them on the battlefield; impressing on Congress the home truth that Colombia could not deal with its many problems without first rehabilitating (or for the first time forming) its military capacity.⁹⁹⁷ The next day, 21 September, Rand Beers testified before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, stating that ‘we have no intention of becoming involved in Colombia’s counterinsurgency, but we do recognize that given the extensive links between Colombia’s guerrilla groups and the narcotics trade, that counternarcotics forces will come into contact with the guerrillas and must be provided with

⁹⁹⁵ Douglas Farah, "U.S. Ready to Boost Aid to Troubled Colombia," *The Washington Post*, 23rd August 1999. p. A01.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. A01.

⁹⁹⁷ Larry Rohter, "Like Carrot, Stick Fails With Rebels In Colombia.," *The New York Times*, 27th September 1999. p.A9.

the means to defend themselves'.⁹⁹⁸ The response of the Chairman of the Caucus, Republican Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, clues-in how wary Congress remained of intervening deeply in Colombia's internal affairs. Grassley said:

[The present tendency in US policy would have us more deeply involved in Colombia's insurgency. Reports show that the guerrillas are now engaged in a major way in protecting and profiting from the drug trade. If so and we plan to expand efforts to go after that trade, then stepped [*sic*] efforts to deal with increased drug production involves us in confronting the guerrillas. This raises a host of questions that have yet to be adequately addressed by the Administration. It certainly has not explained its policy to Congress or the public. We are left with the appearance of a policy of drift and dissembling.⁹⁹⁹

Mellman Poll: Clinton looks soft on drugs

An alternative, or perhaps a supplementary explanation of US behaviour was that the Clinton Administration and the Democratic Party were running scared from the whole issue of drug addiction and its proliferation in the US. Just at this juncture a poll was released by Mark Mellman (at first only privately to the White House in September 1999) containing evidence that the American public feared the spread of drug abuse and blamed the Democrats for it. Mellman's data showed that the public would support an aid package for Colombia that earmarked the funds for Colombia's war on drugs.¹⁰⁰⁰ The poll was not made public until April 2000, when it appeared in *Newsweek*, a US tabloid. It is probable that the Administration and moderate elements of the Democratic Party took this polling data to heart as evidence that their preference for a domestic-focussed, demand-side rehabilitation approach to the drug problem had too little public support. With the 2000 elections looming, it was apparently thought best to be seen cooperating with the Republicans in seeing through to passage an aid package that heavily emphasised a supply-side, military solution to the drug problem.

Powerful lobbying interests were also behind this approach. In March 2000, for example, *Newsweek* would reveal what the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* had leaked in advance, that Plan Colombia was (like many aid packages given by the US) a highly elaborate political dance orchestrated with the participation of private US interests. The *Newsweek* article points

⁹⁹⁸ David Buckwalter, Dana E. Struckman, and Nikolas Gvosdev, "Continuity and Change in U.S. Policy toward Colombia, 1999–2009," in *Case Studies in Policy Making*, ed. Hayat Alvi and Nikolas Gvosdev (2010). p. 19.

⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 20.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 17.

out that the Mellman Poll was funded by Lockheed Martin, a powerful defence contractor and manufacturer of P3 radar planes that were eventually funded for counterdrug operations under Plan Colombia once it began to be implemented in 2001.¹⁰⁰¹

PASTRANA ACCEPTS THE LIMITED OFFER

In the wake of his 10 August 1999 meeting with Pickering, Pastrana felt reassured that his own idea of a ‘Marshall Plan’ for Colombia coincided in some needed essentials with Pickering’s aid package offer. The Colombians expected that Congress would move quickly to approve the aid, as the Session was rapidly approaching adjournment on 22 November 1999.¹⁰⁰² Aiming, therefore, for an official launch date of 23 September 1999 Pastrana felt under pressure to assemble his ideas and reduce them to writing as soon as possible in anticipation of the launch.

Made in Colombia

At this point he turned to one of his closest political advisors, Jaime Ruiz who having studied in the USA to PhD level, was already well acquainted with how things worked there, and asked him to assume responsibility for producing a draft Plan Colombia.¹⁰⁰³ In an interview with the author, Ruiz states that, due to the time pressure and because the objective was to convince the US government, he originally wrote the draft in English rather than Spanish. Ignorance of these circumstances has misled analysts into ‘much speculation as to whether the plan had been devised in Washington or Bogotá’;¹⁰⁰⁴ but the facts are clear and convincing. If corroboration be needed, the draft contained the kind of errors of grammar and idiom typical of Spanish-speakers, but which a native English-speaker would have been unlikely to commit.¹⁰⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰¹ Rodrigo Pardo, "El Plan Washington," *El Tiempo*, 28 March 2000.

¹⁰⁰² Office of the Clerk, "Session Dates of Congress," U.S. House of Representatives, http://artandhistory.house.gov/house_history/Session_Dates/sessionsAll.aspx.

¹⁰⁰³ Marcella, Army War College (U.S.). Strategic Studies Institute., and Dante B. Fascell North-South Center (Fla.), *Plan Colombia: the strategic and operational imperatives*.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Arnson and Tickner, "Colombia and the United States." p. 172.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002)*. Also see: Alfredo Molano, "La Paz en su Laberinto," in *Que está pasando en Colombia? Anatomía de un país en crisis*, ed. Consuelo Ahumada (Santafé de Bogotá: El Ancora Editores, 2000). And: Carvajal and Pardo, "La internacionalización del conflicto doméstico y los procesos de paz (Historia reciente y principales desafíos)."

Pastrana downsizes greater Plan Colombia to more modest dimensions

President Pastrana then asked Ruiz to resign from the Department of National Planning (*Planeación*) in order to work full time on Plan Colombia in the Cabinet office in the Presidential palace (*La Presidencia*) in Bogotá. He needed Ruiz to give up travelling up and down the country with *Planeación* and concentrate on Plan Colombia to the exclusion of all else. This is itself further circumstantial evidence of the Colombian origin of the Plan.¹⁰⁰⁶

At this stage Ruiz was tasked with integrating into the master National Plan of Development the objectives entailed in prosecuting the war on drugs the Americans insisted on. Expressly christening it ‘Plan Colombia’, Ruiz brought together the common features of the US war on drugs and the Colombian national plan of development. ‘which up to this point had been mostly associated with the issue of social development’.¹⁰⁰⁷

As he laboured over the draft inside *La Presidencia*, Ruiz gradually came to the realisation that the US was in earnest about helping Colombia, whereas the Europeans were not.¹⁰⁰⁸ As he stated to the author, ‘The US said “I buy your theory, I am willing to help you on both sides”’. The Europeans, however, were unwilling to help except to some extent on the side of social development. Ruiz said, ‘hold on—both things are connected, and that is why the [two-prong strategy] has to be called Plan Colombia’. Ruiz recalls that in his initial conversations with the Americans, they told him:

We need a strategy against drug-traffickers, and we are convinced that we also need to [include] the [Colombian] state ... we buy your [development] theory that the state has to be rebuilt, but we are also convinced that we need to hit the wallet of the narco-guerrillas [connecting the drug problem with the failed state problem].¹⁰⁰⁹

Pastrana officially announces his greater Plan

President Pastrana wanted Plan Colombia announced domestically first, in order to dispel any rumours that the Plan had been forced on them by Washington.¹⁰¹⁰ He did that on Friday 17

¹⁰⁰⁶ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid. This information was corroborated by two interviews on the US side: (1) Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001). (2) Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002).

¹⁰¹⁰ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.p. 204.

September 1999, in a televised message to the country,¹⁰¹¹ describing it as a US\$7.5 billion, three-year initiative that would ‘bring peace to Colombia’¹⁰¹² through a combination of means and schemes:

It is a plan made up of five strategies that touch fundamental subjects of the country like the peace process; the recovery of our economy and job creation; the reconstruction of the armed forces; the struggle against crime and corruption; the improvement of justice, the increase of the social participation, and the protection of the human rights.¹⁰¹³

Once he had announced the Plan to his fellow Colombians, Pastrana travelled to New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly on 20 September. Presenting the opposite face of Janus, he announced Plan Colombia to the world there.¹⁰¹⁴ Following that was an hour-long meeting with Clinton, still in New York, on 21 September to discuss the details of the aid proposal.¹⁰¹⁵ Pastrana recalls obtaining Clinton’s full support in his quest for aid.¹⁰¹⁶ On the following day, 22 September, Pastrana travelled to Washington to meet with Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and make the case for Plan Colombia. The Speaker, who was already deeply involved in dealing with the situation in Colombia and had been instrumental in shepherding previous aid to Colombia through Congress, gave Pastrana firm assurances of supporting his Plan.¹⁰¹⁷ Pastrana also met with Senate Majority Leader Sen. Trent Lott (R-MS), seeking personal assurances of his support in the Senate.¹⁰¹⁸

The Colombian government had previously calculated the ‘full cost of its Plan Colombia at

¹⁰¹¹ Cancillería-Colombiana, *Alocución radio-televisada del presidente de la República, Andrés Pastrana Arango, con motivo de la presentación ante la Comunidad Internacional, del Plan Colombia (17 de Septiembre, 1999)*.

¹⁰¹² Nina Serafino, "Colombia: Conditions and U.S. Policy Options," (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress, 2001).p.22.

¹⁰¹³ Cancillería-Colombiana, *Alocución radio-televisada del presidente de la República, Andrés Pastrana Arango, con motivo de la presentación ante la Comunidad Internacional, del Plan Colombia (17 de Septiembre, 1999)*.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cancillería-Colombiana, *Intervención del presidente de la República, Andrés Pastrana Arango, en la sesión plenaria de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas (Septiembre 20 de 1999)*.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002)*.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002)*.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007)*.

¹⁰¹⁸ "U.S. \$7.500 millones para salir de la crisis," *El Tiempo*, 18th September 1999.

US\$7.5 billion'.¹⁰¹⁹ Accordingly, on 23 September 1999 President Pastrana announced to the world his intention to seek 'US\$3.5 billion in foreign assistance to promote peace, prosperity, and a strengthening of the state'.¹⁰²⁰ Pastrana emphasised that the aid was purely supplemental to his greater plan to raise US\$4 billion domestically (international loans included).¹⁰²¹ Standing on the principle of shared responsibility, he let the international community know that he was asking for aid not charity; Colombia in its annual budget would be raising the greater part of the funding.¹⁰²²

Terrorism by the FARC

The FARC were likely committing their terrorism so as to reinforce the US Administration's tendency to limit its intervention and to stay aloof from Pastrana's peace process with the FARC – precisely because of the FARC's own behaviour. On 23 September, the same day as Pastrana's announcement of Plan Colombia, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article that summarised the mixed feelings some Congressmen continued to have about the Plan because of the negotiations with the FARC,¹⁰²³ which 'enraged Republicans on Capitol Hill'.¹⁰²⁴ The situation deteriorated to the point that the *New York Times* on 10 October could report that the White House had entered panic mode over the increasing inability of the Colombian State to handle the FARC; they could see nothing but 'quicksand in Colombia ... the guerrillas [appeared] stronger and more recalcitrant and the President [was] widely criticized as naïve'.¹⁰²⁵

Pastrana forges ahead with his peace process without the US

Without waiting for their lobbying efforts in Washington to bear fruit, Pastrana broadened his peace initiative in the teeth of the FARC's provocative and gratuitous attacks on several

¹⁰¹⁹ Youngers and Rosin, *Drugs and democracy in Latin America: the impact of U.S. policy*. p. 109.

¹⁰²⁰ Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sánchez G, *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*. p. xxv.

¹⁰²¹ "Plan Colombia, tras el apoyo del Congreso Estadounidense," *El Tiempo*, 23rd September 1999.

¹⁰²² Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).

¹⁰²³ John Diamond, "Capitol Hill Divided Over Colombian Aid Appeal," *Chicago Tribune*, 23rd September 1999.

¹⁰²⁴ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p. 231.

¹⁰²⁵ Tim Golden, "Now, State of Siege, Colombian Style," *New York Times*, 10th October 1999. p.3.

municipalities.¹⁰²⁶ Indeed, on 18-19 October Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto along with ‘[g]overnment representative Juan Gabriel Uribe and Colombian Ambassador to Cuba Julio Londoño met with the ELN’s Pablo Beltrán and Ramiro Vargas in Havana (Cuba) to re-establish “informal” talks’,¹⁰²⁷ which had been broken off after the ELN kidnappings of April and May.¹⁰²⁸ It would appear that Pastrana was prepared to forgive much – kidnappings, violent offensives from inside the DMZ – in order to keep the peace process going forward. This alone amply demonstrates his power to execute a strategy independent and even defiant of the US. Formal talks with FARC resumed on 24 October, after the Administration dropped its demand for an international verification commission in the DMZ. Both sides agreed civil society must participate in any peace process through the medium of ‘public hearings’, the first of which was timetabled all the sooner, in late December 1999. The FARC offered the government a conditional Christmas-New Year truce’.¹⁰²⁹

The ‘No More’ rallies

Resumption of the peace process coincided with, and probably provoked huge peace rallies on 24 October 1999 throughout Colombia, under the rubric of the *No Mas* (‘No More’) campaign,¹⁰³⁰ and involving at least 6-8 million Colombians,¹⁰³¹ with some estimates as high as 13 million.¹⁰³² The non-violent protesters demanded ‘a ceasefire, swift progress in peace talks and an end to violence against civilians ... “we want all the men of violence to cease armed actions against unarmed citizens”, said Francisco Santos, one of the main organisers of the demonstrations’.¹⁰³³

¹⁰²⁶ "At least 14 killed in Colombian guerrilla raids," *Agence France Presse*(1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁰²⁷ "Colombia: Prospects for Peace with the ELN." p. 30

¹⁰²⁸ Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian labyrinth: the synergy of drugs and insurgency and its implications for regional stability*.

¹⁰²⁹ Steven Dudley, "Colombian Rebels Agree to Cease-Fire; Right-Wing Militias Continue to Fight," *Washington Post*, 21st December 1999.

¹⁰³⁰ "Colombia: No More," *The Economist*, 28th October 1999.

¹⁰³¹ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia." p. 373.

¹⁰³² "Millions march for Colombia peace," *BBC Monitoring Service: Latin America* (1999), Date Accessed: 2012/02/11. <http://global.factiva.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*

The left drives a wedge between Colombia and the US

The opposition, however, was not asleep at the switch. Amnesty International mobilised to hold a press conference in London on 11 November 1999 publicly to announce their opposition to US ‘aid to the [Colombian] army until there are clear guarantees that it won't be used for human rights violations’.¹⁰³⁴ On 30 December, giving in to pressure from his top military chiefs, Pastrana would veto ‘a critical human rights bill [Genocide Bill] that was praised by the United Nation’s High Commissioner for Human Rights’.¹⁰³⁵ The ambitious bill had been passed by the Colombian Congress on 30 November, and would have addressed human rights violations in Colombia by beefing up the penal code to criminalise ‘forced abduction, genocide, and torture’.¹⁰³⁶ This only galvanised the NGOs to redouble their efforts at lobbying Washington to cancel aid to Colombia. Human Rights Watch held Pastrana himself directly responsible for failing ‘to take prompt, effective action to establish control over the security forces, break their persistent ties to paramilitary groups, and ensure respect for human rights’.¹⁰³⁷

Violence erupts on the home front

While Amnesty International was holding its press conference, a terrorist bomb in Colombia killed seven people and wounded dozens.¹⁰³⁸ The FARC claimed responsibility. Patricia Bibes has discovered that in fact the FARC were acting ‘on behalf of the narco-traffickers’ latest initiatives to influence the government’s decision on U.S. extradition requests for prisoners being held on drug charges. The day that the bomb exploded, President Pastrana was to sign a warrant that would have allowed extradition of criminals to the United States. Pastrana did cooperate with the United States on the extradition issue but was less resolute on other legislation’.¹⁰³⁹ Bibes infers from this nexus of the FARC with the drug cartels that the peace process was doomed from the start. Few events besides this attack could have underscored better Colombia’s dire need of US military aid. On 15 November 1999

¹⁰³⁴ "Amnesty opposes U.S. aid to Colombia.," *Reuters News*(1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁰³⁵ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*..p. 237.

¹⁰³⁶ Patricia Bibes, "Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism: Colombia, a Case Study," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 17, no. 3 (2001). p.250.

¹⁰³⁷ "The "Sixth Division": military-paramilitary ties and U.S. policy in Colombia." p. 2

¹⁰³⁸ Sergio Gomez Maseri, "Terrorismo reabre el debate sobre ayuda," *El Tiempo*, 14th November 1999.

¹⁰³⁹ Bibes, "Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism: Colombia, a Case Study." p. 250.

Colombia requested aid from the US to buy 14 Blackhawk helicopters, at a cost of US\$221 million, to be deployed in the war against narco-trafficking.¹⁰⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the ELN conditioned their participation in the Christmas truce on the State's providing extra funds for low-income housing and freezing petrol prices! Nevertheless, they did release the remaining Cali church hostages.¹⁰⁴¹ A further round of talks with ELN took place on 25 November 1999 to fix the time and place of the proposed National Convention for reform of the Colombian State.¹⁰⁴²

DMZ extension—Pastrana's popularity crumbles

Nevertheless, irrevocably committed to the peace process, the government on 7 December 1999 extended the DMZ lease for six more months, until 7 June 2000.¹⁰⁴³ It was the third time that Bogotá had extended the DMZ since it started in November 1998—Pastrana wanted to exhaust every possibility to make the peace process work.¹⁰⁴⁴ At this point, however, 'widespread reports of relaxing insurgents living rent free on the [DMZ] infuriated the urban elites and working class citizens alike; Pastrana's popularity plummeted',¹⁰⁴⁵

In early January 2000 a poll would be published reporting that a majority believed peace with the guerrillas, the cynosure of Pastrana's Administration, was impossible.¹⁰⁴⁶ The poll would also show most Colombians dissatisfied with Pastrana's conduct both of domestic and foreign policy, with 68 percent of the populace holding an unfavourable opinion of Pastrana himself.¹⁰⁴⁷ Pastrana recalled his situation and how difficult it was in an interview with the author, stating that he tried to keep an eye on the ultimate objective, which was to obtain

¹⁰⁴⁰ "Colombia hizo un pedido," *El Tiempo*, 15th November 1999.

¹⁰⁴¹ "Liberados tres feligreses de iglesia de la Maria," *El Tiempo*, 6th November 1999.

¹⁰⁴² "La Nueva fase entre el Gobierno y el ELN," *El Tiempo*, 29th November 1999.

¹⁰⁴³ "Despeje hasta el Dos Mil," *El Tiempo*, 7th December 1999.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).*

¹⁰⁴⁵ LaRosa and Mejía, *Colombia: a concise contemporary history*. p. 92.

¹⁰⁴⁶ "Colombia's Pastrana highly unpopular, poll says. ," *Reuters News* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

sufficient aid to bring Colombia back from the brink.¹⁰⁴⁸

THE ALIANZA ACT—CONGRESS'S OWN AID INITIATIVE

Senators Paul Coverdell (R-GA) and Mike DeWine (R-OH), sincerely believing that aid to Colombia should focus on anti-drug efforts, drafted and, on 20 October 1999, introduced before Congress the Alliance with Colombia and Andean Region Act of 1999 (*Alianza Act*).¹⁰⁴⁹ The legislation was 'introduced to authorize urgent support for Colombia and front line states to secure peace and the rule of law, to enhance the effectiveness of anti-drug efforts that are essential to impeding the flow of deadly cocaine and heroin from Colombia to the United States'.¹⁰⁵⁰ The bill purported to appropriate US\$1.6 billion over three years,¹⁰⁵¹ and was co-sponsored by Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) and Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), the same who had expressed fears of a Vietnam-like quagmire in Colombia.¹⁰⁵²

No coincidence

This Congressional attempt was not coincidence and illustrates the internal politics of the US Political system in which the Congress and the White House each had separate plans, interests, and ambitions in developing their aid to Colombia. Pastrana and his team were aware of this and for that reason they made sure to pitch and lobby their need for help also to members of Congress. Ambassador Moreno in particular became an expert in developing connections with senior members of Congress. He became particularly close of the Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL).¹⁰⁵³ Hastert was a fundamental driving force to get members of Congress down to Colombia. As he recently stated in an interview: 'I was a believer and I encouraged members of Congress to go to Colombia, because unless you can

¹⁰⁴⁸ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁴⁹ "The Washington Daybook-General News Events," *The Washington Daybook*(1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Luz Estella Nagle, "U.S. Mutual Assistance to Colombia: Vague Promises and Diminshing Returns," *Fordham International Law Journal* 23, no. 5 (1999),p. 1270.

¹⁰⁵¹ US-Congress, "Congressional Record-Senate June 21, 2000.," (2000). p.11658.

¹⁰⁵² US-Congress, "Alliance with Colombia and the Andean Region (ALIANZA) Act of 1999 " in S.1758 (2000).

¹⁰⁵³ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002).

see what the Colombians were doing, it was [impossible] to [conceive] what the concept of Plan Colombia was all about'.¹⁰⁵⁴

As a result of these efforts, Pastrana and his team invited an early delegation at the end of August 1999 led by Senators Grassley and Jack Reed (D-RI) to visit Colombia and see 'the drug-fueled crisis first hand'.¹⁰⁵⁵ While in Colombia, they also met with members of the Colombian Congress to express their concern with the continuing growth of illegal drug-trafficking of cocaine out of Colombia. They deeply believed that Pastrana's exaggerated emphasis on the peace process with the FARC was giving way for drug cartels to continue their illegal activities.¹⁰⁵⁶ According to Nagle, the Alianza Act proposal was actually introduced after 'high-level talks with President Pastrana in the summer and fall 1999'.¹⁰⁵⁷

The legislation had strong support from Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who stated, 'Without U.S. help, Colombia could lose its war – or seek to appease the narco-guerrillas'.¹⁰⁵⁸ Importantly, the *Alianza Act* was well received by Pastrana himself, who called the legislation 'a good starting point',¹⁰⁵⁹ considering it a gesture of reconciliation by the Republicans. On 7 October Pickering himself had testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in favour of the bill, stating that assistance was essential as Colombia's 'sovereignty [was] increasingly threatened by well-armed and ruthless guerrillas, paramilitaries and narco-trafficking interests, which [were] inextricably linked'.¹⁰⁶⁰ Senator Coverdell added that the 'situation in Colombia [was] indeed dismal and reaching emergency proportions'.¹⁰⁶¹

¹⁰⁵⁴ Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007).

¹⁰⁵⁵ US-Congress, "Congressional Record-Senate June 21, 2000.." p.11658.

¹⁰⁵⁶ "Pillaos," *El Tiempo*, 5th September 1999.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Nagle, "U.S. Mutual Assistance to Colombia: Vague Promises and Diminshing Returns." p. 1275.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Anthony Boadle, "U.S. closer to boosting military aid to Colombia," *Reuters News*(1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p. 233.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Karen De Young, "Drug Aid Plan for Colombia Is Stalled," *Washington Post*, 10th November 1999.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p. 233.

Colombians in DC

Pastrana's team in Washington had swung into action; the *Washington Post* reported that a Colombian delegation from the Ministry of Defence led by Luis Fernando Ramirez 'spent three days lobbying the White House, Capitol Hill, and the Pentagon for [the *Alianza Act*]'.¹⁰⁶² Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces General Fernando Tapias, a member of the delegation, recalled in an interview that they were optimistic; he requested a new fleet of helicopters and sophisticated equipment for counterdrug operations: 'The requests for aid were actually well received, but in the end the problem we encountered had nothing to do with us; members of US Congress were more preoccupied about the upcoming 2000 Presidential elections than in helping Colombia'.¹⁰⁶³ Democrats and Republicans began 'using the budget battle to grapple for political advantage in the upcoming struggle for control of Congress and the White House'¹⁰⁶⁴, which was of course detrimental to Colombia.

Opposition to the Alianza Act

The *Alianza Act* encountered fierce resistance from leftist NGOs, who opposed US aid on the grounds that the Colombian army maintained links with paramilitaries responsible for human right violations all over the country.¹⁰⁶⁵ Tapias held meetings with some of these groups in hopes of convincing them the army was improving its human rights practice. His testimony was dismissed by the likes of Amnesty International; the figures he provided meant nothing without concrete steps: 'sending US military to Colombia is the same policy that backed death squads in El Salvador'¹⁰⁶⁶ during the Reagan Administration.

The act also encountered some opposition in the academic community, who urged that the US was not responsible for solving Colombia's internal problems. For instance, Nagle argued that Colombian elites (some of them living abroad) should be paying for Plan Colombia: 'They have contributed as much as any drug lord or guerrilla to bringing their country to the point of its destruction because for decades their sole purpose was to rape the country of

¹⁰⁶² Douglas Farah, "Pact Near on Aid to Colombia," *The Washington Post*, 9th October 1999. p. A02.

¹⁰⁶³ Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002), 2006.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p.234.

¹⁰⁶⁵ "The "Sixth Division": military-paramilitary ties and U.S. policy in Colombia."

¹⁰⁶⁶ Boadle, "U.S. closer to boosting military aid to Colombia".

national resources and deny other fellow citizen their birth rights. They should be the ones made to pay for fixing the problem'.¹⁰⁶⁷

Alianza Act gets nowhere in Washington (Early November 1999)

Although enjoying plenty of support on Capitol Hill, by November it was clear the bill was going nowhere. Speaking at the close of the *Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Leadership Conference* on 5 November, General McCaffrey stated that he was deeply disappointed in Congress's inaction.¹⁰⁶⁸ Coverdell's and DeWine's handiwork had fallen 'victim to budget bickering'.¹⁰⁶⁹ and the White House had backed down for fear of 'overloading its foreign aid request'.¹⁰⁷⁰ The Colombian public reacted angrily to the failure of the *Alianza Act*. The weekly *Semana* accused the White House of unwillingness to take a forceful enough approach.¹⁰⁷¹

The Colombians react with proactivity

Ambassador Moreno had already warned Pastrana toward the end of October that their prospects were dimming due to infighting in Capitol Hill.¹⁰⁷² Pastrana said it felt as if Colombia had been a ship trying to make land in the middle of a storm.¹⁰⁷³ At this point he realised that only Colombian initiative would ever see an aid package of this size through the US Congress. It was then that he instructed Ambassador Moreno to undertake an aggressive and very personal lobbying campaign, making contact on the ground with as many Congressmen as possible.¹⁰⁷⁴ He pledged to Moreno that he would engage himself, calling on Congressmen in person to invite them to visit Colombia and witness matters for themselves.¹⁰⁷⁵

¹⁰⁶⁷ Nagle, "U.S. Mutual Assistance to Colombia: Vague Promises and Diminshing Returns."

¹⁰⁶⁸ "En la cuerda floja, la ayuda de Estados Unidos," *El Tiempo*, 6th November 1999.

¹⁰⁶⁹ De Young, "Drug Aid Plan for Colombia Is Stalled."

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p.234.

¹⁰⁷¹ "El Tio Conejo," *Revista Semana*, 13th December 1999.

¹⁰⁷² Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

¹⁰⁷³ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁷⁴ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).

¹⁰⁷⁵ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

Pastrana is deeply concerned

Pastrana seems to have panicked at this juncture: he recalled appealing for help to anyone and everyone who might lend a hand. He recalled appealing to Javier Solana, ex-Secretary General of NATO, that the Americans, Clinton in particular, might know Colombia had the Europeans behind him.¹⁰⁷⁶ Solana was to make a ‘significant contribution [to the enactment of Plan Colombia], sending messages [to the US] about what the international community [believed] needed to be done for Colombia and the urgency of the needed action’.¹⁰⁷⁷ Pastrana appealed to US Attorney General Janet Reno,¹⁰⁷⁸ and Orduz recalled contacting National Security Advisor Sandy Berger in hopes of bringing pressure on the White House.¹⁰⁷⁹

This latest appeal was greeted by a telephone call from US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on 8 November so as ‘to reassure [Pastrana] that despite the lack of action in Congress, the U.S. had not turned its back on him’.¹⁰⁸⁰ This was followed by a telephone call from Clinton himself on 9 November, promising that help was on its way.¹⁰⁸¹ The following morning the White House issued a press release stating that the Administration was ready to ‘ask Congress early next year to increase economic and antinarcotics aid to Colombia’.¹⁰⁸²

Pastrana was intensely worried about the nation’s financial situation. Colombia’s 1999 GDP had dropped to its lowest level in a very long time.¹⁰⁸³ Colombians faced the deepest recession in more than 60 years, with a decline in GDP of 4.3 percent and private investment falling ‘by over 60% ... one in five Colombians was unemployed’.¹⁰⁸⁴ Putting on a brave face to reassure the markets, Pastrana tried diverting public attention away from the economic

¹⁰⁷⁶ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁷⁷ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 205.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p. 234.

¹⁰⁸¹ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁸² "More Colombia Aid Urged," *The New York Times* (1999), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18.<http://library3.webster.edu/docview/110090408?accountid=14944>.

¹⁰⁸³ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Marcelo Giugale, O. Lafourcade, and Connie Luff, *Colombia: the economic foundation of peace* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003). p.151.

gloom by announcing on 9 November that the Colombian Supreme Court would reinstate the legal status of foreign extradition to constitutionality after an eight-year ban; opening the door to sending drug traffickers to the United States for trial in lieu of prosecution by Colombia's weak and intimidated judiciary.¹⁰⁸⁵

Pastrana secures support from Dodd

Rand Beers narrates a major turning-point in the lobbying of Congress, the winning-over of Christopher Dodd, the senior, very influential Senator representing the State of Connecticut, where the manufacturer of the Black Hawk helicopter was headquartered. He became instrumental in moving the Plan Colombia bill forward:

And so [Plan Colombia] then languished – maybe not quite the right word, – but it went untended until December [1999], when OMB was basically ordered by the President [Clinton] to resurrect the proposal and come forward with something; which appears to have been as a result of his conversation with Senator [Christopher] Dodd [D-CT], who had gone to Colombia [on 6-7 December, at the Colombians' invitation, on one of their orchestrated tours] and had come back from Colombia, and advocated strongly for the need to be supportive of Colombia. Now, Dodd was a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia, is my understanding, and so was an avid supporter of Colombia. So we then spent December putting a plan together and came forward with the proposal for the supplemental budget appropriation in, I want to say, January or February, after the formal budget had gone. And then we went through the process of getting passage of the bill.¹⁰⁸⁶

Albright meets Moreno

In the meantime, US Secretary of State, Albright reassured Ambassador Moreno on 12 December 1999 that 'Colombia was much in [their] minds',¹⁰⁸⁷ and that the Administration was committed to the promised aid package. It is well documented that Sandy Berger, too, began walking 'the corridors of power to make sure everyone knew that Clinton was "emphatic" that White House officials [work] hand in hand with Congress to secure a new aid package for Colombia in early 2000'.¹⁰⁸⁸ Orduz corroborates this, stating that the

¹⁰⁸⁵ "Se Reanuda la Extradicion," *El Tiempo*, 10th November 1999.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (*US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002*).

¹⁰⁸⁷ "Colombia: Secretary Reaffirms USG Support for Plan Colombia," in *National Security Archives* (1999).

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p. 234.

Colombian Administration had been contacted by Berger around this time.¹⁰⁸⁹

Colombia's dire condition was around this time being debated at the highest levels of the American security apparatus as illustrated by Beers testimony that the Clinton Administration 'spent December putting a plan together'.¹⁰⁹⁰ The 2000 National Security Strategy, for example, (prepared in 1999) pointedly argued the importance of aiding countries on the brink of state failure. Colombia was singled out as a case of critical importance to the US, due to the potential spillover of its problems beyond its borders, with 'implications for regional peace and security'.¹⁰⁹¹ The second instalment of the Hart-Rudman Commission's *U.S. National Security Strategy for the 21st Century* would be published on 15 April 2000. This was no ordinary report: it was produced by a special commission, convened in 1999 and led by Senators Gary Hart (D-CO) and Warren Rudman (R-NH), to review all of America's security policies at the turn of the century. It would turn out the most comprehensive review of its kind since 1947, when the Truman Administration had crafted the National Security Act.¹⁰⁹² It would spotlight the repercussions of various weak states failing. Colombia would again be singled out, with the consequences of failure estimated to become so severe that the report called for special priority to be given to Colombia.¹⁰⁹³

PLAN COLOMBIA BACK ON TRACK: YEAR 2000

The year 2000 proved decisive on a number of other fronts as well. In US politics it was a Presidential election year.¹⁰⁹⁴ According to some analysts, the Clinton Administration wanted to be seen as tough on drugs; with the Mellman Poll suggesting that the public blamed the Democrats for being soft on drugs, the White House was anxious lest the Presidency falls into

¹⁰⁸⁹ Juan Esteban Orduz, 2006. Interview by author. New York, NY, February 20.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (*US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002*).

¹⁰⁹¹ National Security Council (U.S.), *A national security strategy for a new century* (Washington, D.C.: The White House : National Security Council, 1999).

¹⁰⁹² United States Commission on National Security/21st Century., *Seeking a National Strategy: Concert for preserving Security and promoting Freedom : the phase two report of the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.: Kallisti Pub., 2000).

¹⁰⁹³ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "La construcción de un "Estado fallido" en la política mundial: el caso de las relaciones entre Estados Unidos y Colombia," *Análisis Político* 64, no. Septiembre-Diciembre (2008).

¹⁰⁹⁴ Samuel Issacharoff, Pamela S. Karlan, and Richard H. Pildes, *When elections go bad: the law of democracy and the presidential election of 2000* (New York: Foundation Press, 2001).

Republican Party hands. Plan Colombia was an opportunity for the Democrat administration to counter this perception and ‘protect its [the Democrat Party’s] flanks in the upcoming contest’.¹⁰⁹⁵

The Colombians had expected the US to deliver by the end of 1999. This expectation was disappointed, however, as controversial debates swirled around the US budget, making it difficult for the Clinton Administration to nail down specific commitments to the Plan. Two major complications may be identified as hindering Plan Colombia: first, opposition arose on the part of Republicans like Rep. Gilman (R-NY), or Rep. Burton (R-IN), who was unhappy that the Pastrana Administration had never involved the Colombian National Police (famous for fighting the drug cartels) at the planning stage. Burton warned, ‘it would be difficult to support aid unless the bulk of it went to the police’.¹⁰⁹⁶ Secondly, Senators like Grassley (R-IA), Jack Reed (D-RI) and DeWine (R-OH) had already designed a plan of their own (the *Alianza Act*). They believed their plan superior to the Colombians’ Plan Colombia – (proving once again that the eventual Plan Colombia was a Colombian initiative), – rendering the latter a needless and unwelcome rival.

Clinton announces Plan Colombia—to criticism

President Clinton himself weighed in on the quarrel, on 11 January 2000 announcing a goal of US\$1.6 billion in aid to Colombia.¹⁰⁹⁷ It was to be the ‘largest single increase in drug-war spending since Bill Clinton took office’.¹⁰⁹⁸ In the view of Senators Coverdell and DeWine, the original sponsors of the *Alianza Act*, their proposal was better than the Plan Colombia just announced. Clinton’s bill mirrored the *Alianza Act* in part, but adopted a more regional perspective ‘by providing sufficient funds for other countries in the Andean region’.¹⁰⁹⁹ This was turned into an objection to Clinton’s package by some analysts, who countered that the

¹⁰⁹⁵ Mark Eric Williams and Vinay Jawahar, "When Rational Policy Making Fails: Plan Colombia and the Approaching "Commitment Trap," *International Journal of Politics and Ethics* 3 no. 2 (2003). p.167.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*. p. 231.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Holmes, "Drugs, Terrorism, and Congressional Politics: The Colombian Challenge." p.35.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Michael Isikoff and Gregory Vistica, "Fighting the other Drug War -- Is a \$1.3 Billion Colombia Aid Package Smart Policy?," *Newsweek*, 3 April 2000.

¹⁰⁹⁹ US-Congress, "Congressional Record-Senate June 21, 2000.." p.11658.

Plan's 'direct geopolitical threats ... [to] Colombia's neighbours'¹¹⁰⁰ in the region would burden them, exposing them to the spillover effects of the crisis in Colombia. Perhaps for that reason Brazil became one of the Plan's strongest opponents in Washington, arguing that Plan Colombia was the 'biggest security risk' in the region.¹¹⁰¹ Vaicius, too, argues that Clinton's proposal was too militaristic, with 82% of the aid being directed to the Security Forces (55% to the Army and 27% to the police), but only 9% to alternative development, 2% to displaced victims of the conflict, 1% to human rights, and another mere 1% to peace initiatives.¹¹⁰²

Colombian Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto described the Clinton proposal as simply a 're-launch'¹¹⁰³ of Coverdell and DeWine's October 1999 proposal. (He clarified by admitting that the Clinton Administration's Plan built on the *Alianza Act*, but was more focussed on Colombia than the Republican proposal.¹¹⁰⁴ It is noteworthy that Clinton's gambit was editorialised by *The Augusta Chronicle*, a Georgia newspaper, simply 'as part of the Alianza Act of 1999'.¹¹⁰⁵ One of the *Alianza* aid package's main sponsors had been Senator Coverdell from Georgia. The editorial stressed that 'Coverdell and his Senate allies [were] right to prod the administration into a more active role'.¹¹⁰⁶

Lobbying Plan Colombia—Pastrana goes on the offensive

The agency of the Colombians in inviting intervention is perhaps nowhere more clearly seen than in their quite strenuous efforts to 'shop' their invitation farther afield, beyond the ambit of the United States or the Clinton Administration's foreign policy – and without asking or waiting for US permission, either. On January 12, the day after Clinton's announcement, Pastrana also announced a diplomatic initiative to lobby international actors in the US and Europe for support of Plan Colombia, pointing out that the amount sought from the US

¹¹⁰⁰ Luz Estella Nagle, "The Search for Accountability and Transparency in Plan Colombia: Reforming Judicial Institutions Again," (Strategic Studies Institute 2001).p. 4.

¹¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 5.

¹¹⁰² Ingrid Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos," in *International Policy Report* (Washington, DC: Center for International Policy 2000).

¹¹⁰³ Guillermo Fernandez de Soto, *La ilusión posible: un testimonio sobre la política exterior colombiana*, Colección Actualidad (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004).p. 94.

¹¹⁰⁴ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (*Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002*).

¹¹⁰⁵ "More Colombia Aid," *The Augusta Chronicle*, 16th January 2000. p. A4

¹¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p.A4.

represented only half of what was needed from the international community to finance the Plan.¹¹⁰⁷ Pastrana committed to lobbying in person *via* a proactive economic diplomacy tour, to commence officially in the US on 25 January 2000. He would proceed to Switzerland for the Davos Economic Forum on 29 January, and thence in search of international economic support, both public and private, both foreign aid and foreign direct investment.¹¹⁰⁸ Pastrana would also welcome Albright in Cartagena before proceeding in his international tour.

Some commentators note Pastrana actually began his economic diplomacy initiative before Davos, having already in mid-January brought executives of thirteen key multinational companies to Cartagena as an investment confidence-building measure.¹¹⁰⁹ Indeed, as early as June 1999 Pastrana had convinced international economic elites, including the President of the New York Stock Exchange, to witness the situation in Colombia and in the DMZ at first hand. Again, as late as March 2000, long after Davos, he would still be hosting fresh visits by international private-sector magnates to Colombia to meet the FARC; *e.g.* Joe Robert, a Washington real-estate tycoon, and Jim Kinsey, CEO of America Online, who had visited Cartagena in January.¹¹¹⁰

Pastrana was criticised at the time for naivety in believing that, if only given an opportunity to see how democratic capitalism worked, the FARC would change its ways. Pastrana would later defend his methods, arguing that he had simply been ‘exposing’ the FARC, unmasking them before the international community.¹¹¹¹ General Tapias remembers accompanying him to the DMZ, as well as escorting at least 52 US visitors to the DMZ, including members of Congress. He confirmed that it was essential to ‘take these [politicians] and businessmen out of their desks [in Washington] to show them the reality of the Colombian situation’.¹¹¹²

¹¹⁰⁷ Yadira Ferrer, "Conflict-Colombia: Diplomatic drive to expedite U.S. Aid," *Inter Press Service*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁰⁸ "Colombian President to Start "Economy Diplomacy" Tour.," *Xinhua News Agency*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁰⁹ "Que buscan los latinos en el Foro," *El Tiempo*, 27 January 2000.

¹¹¹⁰ Michael Radu, *Dilemmas of democracy & dictatorship: place, time, and ideology in global perspective* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2006).

¹¹¹¹ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

¹¹¹² *Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).*

Pastrana welcomes Albright in Cartagena

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Cartagena on 14 January 2000, touting the beginning of a new relationship with Colombia, and declaring that the US had been impressed with the Plan as drawn up by Pastrana's team.¹¹¹³ During this visit Pastrana expressed hope that by the middle of the year [2000], the European Union plan to help Colombia would materialise too.¹¹¹⁴

A few days later, on 24 January, Albright published her *Country Report on Human Rights Practices*.¹¹¹⁵ Detailing the human rights state of affairs in Colombia, it stated, 'despite some prosecutions and convictions, the authorities rarely brought officers of the security forces and the police charged with human rights offenses to justice, and impunity remains a problem'.¹¹¹⁶ The *Report* also highlighted how vigilante and paramilitary groups were still active, violating the human rights of civilians suspected (often wrongly) of collaborating with the guerrillas. The *Report* highlighted that these violations were often overlooked by the security services.¹¹¹⁷ The *Report* stressed that the FARC and ELN were some of the worst human rights violators in Colombia, constantly committing 'massacres and summary executions, [killing] medical and religious personnel, forcibly [recruiting] civilians (including indigenous people and hundreds of children)'.¹¹¹⁸ On the other hand, the *Report* also highlighted positive trends seen in the preceding twelve months, praising President Pastrana's commitment to clean up the Colombian military by purging anyone suspected of violating human rights. For example, the report mentioned how on April 1999, 'Pastrana formally retired from service Brigadier Generals Fernando Millan Perez and Rito Alejo del Rio; both had links to paramilitary groups'.¹¹¹⁹

¹¹¹³ Elaine Monaghan, "Albright declares "new relationship" with Colombia.," *Reuters News*, 15th January 2000.

¹¹¹⁴ "Colombia-Drugs/Europe Pastrana Sees European Donations by Mid-Year," *EFE News Service*, 15th January 2000.

¹¹¹⁵ Madeleine K. Albright, "Country Report on Human Rights Practices," in *National Security Archives* (2000).

¹¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 7.

¹¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 21.

Pastrana goes to Washington

Pastrana travelled to Washington on 25-26 January 2000. There, after first meeting with President Clinton to talk over the specifics of the appropriation Clinton had requested of Congress,¹¹²⁰ he proceeded to meet with influential Congressmen. According to Colombian media reports, by the end of his visit he appeared optimistic about Congressional approval, having received assurances of full support for the aid package from members of both Houses and both parties, including Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL), Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and Tom Daschle (D-SD), and Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA).¹¹²¹

US sources, however, were more pessimistic, reporting that Pastrana had encountered fierce resistance from two camps in the US: first, from some Republican Congressmen who thought Pastrana was too lenient with the FARC and doing too little to curtail their illegal production of narcotics.¹¹²² In a previous interview with the *Boston Globe*, Pastrana had ventured that the FARC might not be as deeply involved in drug trafficking as previously thought; musings that infuriated some Republicans, who were convinced otherwise.¹¹²³ Secondly, the left was putting up resistance as well: certain Democrat Congressmen believed US aid would be used as a tool for repression of and violation of the human rights of leftists.¹¹²⁴

They were getting pressure from NGOs – particularly Amnesty International and HRW – and from some media outlets like *The Boston Globe*, which directly asked members of Congress considering the aid to ‘be vigilant that this effort [Plan Colombia] not go the way of so many other military assistance programs south of the border that ended up encouraging repression rather than helping the people’.¹¹²⁵ Speaker Hastert recalls that Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was the Plan’s harshest critic.¹¹²⁶

¹¹²⁰ "Clinton to meet with Colombia's Pastrana Tuesday," *Agence France-Presse* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹²¹ "Congreso Respalda a Pastrana," *El Tiempo*, 27 January 2000.

¹¹²² Tim Golden, "Aid, Please. But No Strings.," *The New York Times*, 29th January 2000.

¹¹²³ Sergio Gomez Maseri, "Estamos erradicando con las FARC: Pastrana," *El Tiempo*, 29th January 2000.

¹¹²⁴ *Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007)*.

¹¹²⁵ "A Drug War with Side Effects," *The Boston Globe*, 23rd January 2000.

¹¹²⁶ *Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007)*.

Shared responsibility nonetheless finds support in Congress

Addressing the Senate on 26 January 2000, Senator Arlen Specter expressed grave doubts about the effectiveness of the Administration's aid package, arguing that 'as long as the demand for drugs exists, the supply will continue, and if not from Colombia, from somewhere else'.¹¹²⁷ He reasoned that any attempt to reduce supply would fail unless based on reduction of domestic demand. Ironically, Specter's reasoning – which featured the concept of shared responsibility (that countries whose demand for drugs is driving their production in remote parts of the world must bear some responsibility along with the producer countries), – lent all the more support to Pastrana's aim of involving the US. Successive Colombian governments have consistently urged that supply reduction depends on effective demand reduction; but Pastrana's team, passionately committed to shared responsibility though it was, kept a discreet silence nonetheless, lest outspokenness slim the chances of securing American aid.

Second stop: Europe

Departing the US, Pastrana arrived in Davos on 29 January. He used his attendance at the World Economic Forum to ply economic diplomacy and recruit support for Plan Colombia from the international community, especially for his peace initiative with the FARC. He succeeded in enlisting the Prime Ministers of Norway and Spain to facilitate the upcoming talks in Europe with leaders of the FARC.¹¹²⁸ Debriefed by Pastrana about details of European support for the peace talks, Victor G. Ricardo once back in Colombia from Davos proceeded again to Europe accompanied by a FARC delegation headed by Raul Reyes. They met with European officials in France, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, and the Vatican in search of financial, moral and political support.¹¹²⁹ Ricardo recalls two main objectives on this tour: (1) to soften the negative image of the Colombian state in Europe by showcasing Pastrana's sincere commitment to negotiating peace with the FARC; and (2) to cement the FARC's commitment to negotiating by having them showcase their agenda before the international community.¹¹³⁰ Concomitantly, Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto was

¹¹²⁷ US-Congress, "Trips Made Over the Recess Period," in *Congressional Records-Senate S63-S65* (Washington, DC2000).

¹¹²⁸ "Vuelo secreto," *Revista Semana*, 25th January 2000.

¹¹²⁹ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia."

¹¹³⁰ *Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).*

despatched to Spain to obtain financial support for Plan Colombia. Fernandez de Soto emphasised the concept of shared responsibility for Colombia's narco-trafficking problems; that although the crops were grown in Colombia, the 'chemicals for cocaine processing [came] from other countries, including Europe'.¹¹³¹ The Europeans, however, far more receptive to discourses about peace-building with the guerrillas, remained in denial about the Continent's drug problem.¹¹³²

The lobbying of Congress begins: Clinton officially requests funding

Following President Clinton's January public announcement of Plan Colombia, the White House officially asked Congress on 7 February 2000 for a total of US\$1,020.6 million to aid Colombia as FY2000 supplemental appropriations to its annual budget request. The funds to be given directly to Colombia broke down as follows:¹¹³³

- ⇒ US\$569 million to support the core 'Push into Southern Colombia' programme
- ⇒ US\$123 million to help the Colombians with interdiction activities
- ⇒ US\$90.5 million for economic and alternative development programs
- ⇒ US\$89.6 million to help the Colombian National Police
- ⇒ US\$76 million for the administration of justice and rule of law
- ⇒ US\$55.5 million to help with displaced persons
- ⇒ US\$15 million to promote and uphold human rights
- ⇒ US\$2 million for the peace process

The Administration requested US\$178.4 million more for existing drug interdiction operations in both Colombia and Ecuador and US\$76 million more for Colombia's neighbours for both interdiction and alternative development programmes.¹¹³⁴ All in all, the request amounted to US\$1.272 billion in direct and indirect assistance to the government of

¹¹³¹ "Colombia Foreign Min In Spain To Discuss Anti-Drug Plan," *Dow Jones International News*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹³² *Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).*

¹¹³³ Nina Serafino, "Colombia: U.S. Assistance and Current Legislation," (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress, 2001).

¹¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Colombia.¹¹³⁵ At this juncture the White House began an aggressive lobbying campaign to round up support.

US Ambassador Kamman recommends reinstatement of certification

To ease passage of the Administration's foreign aid package, Ambassador Curtis Kamman recommended on 8 February 2000 that the government of Colombia is restored to full certification, based both on the progress made by the Pastrana Administration and on the US national interest. Kamman was convinced anyway that in the previous year the Colombian government had complied with US requirements for cooperating in the war on drugs.¹¹³⁶ Kamman cited Colombia's reinstatement of its extradition treaty with the US as a very positive step, but also highlighted the pervasive weakness of the Colombian state to hint at the urgent need for Washington's aid.¹¹³⁷

Pickering coordinates a joint lobbying campaign

Thomas Pickering arrived in Colombia on 13 February for a *tête-à-tête* with President Pastrana. He has stated for the record that the reason for his visit was to find out specifics on the implementation of Plan Colombia the better to defend the aid proposal before certain members of Congress. It was the second visit by Pickering in six months.¹¹³⁸ Pickering made it clear to the Colombian media that the US was not planning to militarily intervene in Colombia's internal conflict.¹¹³⁹

ONDCP joins the lobbying

One of the star lobbyists for Plan Colombia on the American side was General McCaffrey, who testified before Congress on 15 February that Colombia urgently needed U.S aid to reverse the mushrooming cocaine production within its borders.¹¹⁴⁰ This testimony, however, was greeted by a vitriolic reaction against the aid package by members of Clinton's own

¹¹³⁵ Bibes, "Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism: Colombia, a Case Study."

¹¹³⁶ Curtis W. Kamman, "Colombia: Embassy Recommends Certification," in *National Security Archives* (2000).

¹¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹¹³⁸ "Pickering, el centro delantero del plan," *El Tiempo*, 15 February 2000.

¹¹³⁹ "No US military intervention in Colombia: Pickering," *Agence France Presse* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁴⁰ Luiz Torres de la Llosa, "White House begins push in Congress for 1.3 billion dollars for Colombia," *Agence France Presse*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

party, led by Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL), who denounced additional aid to Colombia on the grounds that such aid had failed in the past. She went so far as to ask the Administration to withdraw the aid proposal.¹¹⁴¹ Schakowsky also encouraged the White House to explore domestic prevention efforts, citing evidence from the Rand Corporation that ‘money spent [at home] on prevention and treatment programs is 10 times more effective’¹¹⁴² than money spent abroad.

Another concern identified as crucial at this early hearing was Vietnamisation, or the risk of becoming bogged down in Colombia’s internal conflict. Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI), for example, worried aloud that the US would be driven ‘deeper and deeper’¹¹⁴³ into Colombia’s endless civil war. McCaffrey assured the hearing panel that Colombia was in no way comparable to Vietnam – the US military would be providing training and equipment only, and would not participate directly in counterinsurgency operations.¹¹⁴⁴

This first round of lobbying on Capitol Hill was a good opportunity for both Administrations to take the temperature of the upcoming debate in Congress, and a first glimpse at who would be the problematic debaters.¹¹⁴⁵ It had become evident, too, that Republicans would be likelier than Democrats to back Clinton, with Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN) asserting that something like this aid package (referring to the *Alianza Act*) should have been approved long ago.¹¹⁴⁶ Similarly, Rep. Benjamin Gilman, one of the Colombia’s harshest critics, averred that it was ‘about time to treat Colombia as a serious national and regional security threat’.¹¹⁴⁷

¹¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁴² Tom Carter, "Congress questions 'Plan Colombia': Doubts money will stem the tide of illegal drugs," *The Washington Times*, 22th February 2000. p. A10.

¹¹⁴³ George Gedda, "Doubts abound on administration's Colombia policy ", *Associated Press* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁴⁴ "Colombia' cocaine production is up, undermining U.S. Policy," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 16th February 2000.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Interview by Author with Mauricio Cardenas (Director of the National Planning Department of Colombia: 1999-2000)*, 8th October (Bogota, Colombia) 2006.

¹¹⁴⁶ Torres de la Llosa, "White House begins push in Congress for 1.3 billion dollars for Colombia".

¹¹⁴⁷ Jose Delgado, "Republicans to approve aid to prevent more instability," *EFE News Service* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

McCaffrey also visits Colombia to mesh lobbies

Barry McCaffrey arrived in Bogota shortly thereafter on 23 February for a two day visit to inspect the Colombians' preparations and to meet with President Pastrana. As with Pickering, it was his second visit in six months.¹¹⁴⁸ One of the most important issues highlighted by McCaffrey during his visit was the coca eradication effort. He urged President Pastrana 'to stress publicly that even though the estimates for Colombian coca cultivation [continued] to increase, the rate of increase would have been higher still were it not for the eradication efforts undertaken to date'.¹¹⁴⁹ President Pastrana agreed, 'adding that he was glad to see that the Colombian navy and air force were also increasing their own narcotics interdiction efforts'.¹¹⁵⁰ A few days earlier McCaffrey had tried to make a case before Congress that cocaine production had increased by 'only' 140% in the last five years (1994-1999), but this tactic backfired, provoking a strong reaction from Congress.¹¹⁵¹ Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) complained that 'the more the administration [spends] in Colombia, the more coca [is] grown'.¹¹⁵²

Rand Beers testifies before Congress: the push into southern Colombia

The Narcotics and Terrorism Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on the Clinton aid proposal on 25 February. Rand Beers, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, testified, stressing that the Colombian state must not be allowed to fail. He furnished the Subcommittee with a summary break-down of American aid according to five key policy goals: first, the 'Push into Southern Colombia', to penetrate the region where drug production was rampant; second, 'Andean Interdiction', to bolster Colombia's capacity to interdict outbound drug smuggling; third, aid to the Colombian National Police to destroy coca plantations; fourth, economic development to provide coca farmers with alternative livelihoods; and fifth, to rehabilitate governing capacity by funding civil society groups to participate in government and developing the state's crisis

¹¹⁴⁸ "Colombia-US-Drugs: U.S. "Drug Czar" in Colombia to Analyze Anti-Narcotics Plan," *EFE News Service*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁴⁹ Curtis W. Kamman, "ONDCP Director McCaffrey's 2/23 Mtg. w/ Pastrana," in *National Security Archives* (2000). p. 3.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 3.

¹¹⁵¹ Torres de la Llosa, "White House begins push in Congress for 1.3 billion dollars for Colombia".

¹¹⁵² Jared Kotler, "Promoting controversial aid package, U.S. drug czar visits jungle outpost," *Associated Press*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

management (*e.g.* a stronger judiciary).¹¹⁵³

As Beers outlined as well the benefit of US aid, a fundamental goal of which was to gear up the Colombian army so as to penetrate into and retake control of no-go areas controlled by the guerrillas, like the New Hampshire-sized *El Putumayo*.¹¹⁵⁴ This meant the army would need three battalions of 950 soldiers each (in Putumayo).¹¹⁵⁵ Only increased aid could afford the two new counter-narcotics contingents and the Huey and Blackhawk helicopters that would give the army an edge over the guerrillas.¹¹⁵⁶ Beers' forthright and detailed testimony raised alarms in some quarters of Washington, however, owing to the Vietnam Syndrome.

The counter-lobbying

Congressional opponents of the Plan were quick to summon contrarian voices, one of whom was Jose Miguel Vivanco from Human Rights Watch (HRW). He stressed the ethical priority of human rights issues, which should govern legislation authorising US aid to Colombia.¹¹⁵⁷ Ruiz recounted in an interview with the author what fierce resistance from powerful NGOs he encountered when lobbying for his Plan in Washington. Their pressure had already led to the suspension of US aid to Colombia's 24th Army Brigade in October 1999.¹¹⁵⁸ HRW in particular was active in lobbying against aid to Colombia that they claimed would be used to reinforce an army that violates human rights. Two days before the 25 February 1999 hearing HRW had informed Secretary of State Albright of new evidence linking the Colombian Army to paramilitary groups responsible for human rights violations.¹¹⁵⁹ Ruiz's counter-argument was a thought-provoking one: 'The violation of human rights in Colombia was not due to a strong army but to a weak army'. It was a difficult argument to make in the teeth of the Cold War mentality of Latin American militaries, who had also violated human rights in the 1970s

¹¹⁵³ Narcotics and Terrorism Subcommittee (Senate Foreign Relations Committee), *Proposed Emergency Anti-Drug Assistance to Colombia*, 106, February 25th 2000.

¹¹⁵⁴ Ingrid Vaicius and Adam Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000," (Washington, DC: Center for International Policy, 2000).

¹¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁶ Serafino, "Colombia: Conditions and U.S. Policy Options."

¹¹⁵⁷ "The Washington Daybook-Senate Committees," *The Washington Daybook* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/24. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁵⁸ "The "Sixth Division": military-paramilitary ties and U.S. policy in Colombia."

¹¹⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, "HRW Letter to Albright," (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2000/02/22/hrw-letter-albright>.

in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil.¹¹⁶⁰

Wilhelm testifies before Senate panel

SOUTHCOM Commander Wilhelm testified before the Senate two weeks after Beers on 7 March 2000.¹¹⁶¹ Having travelled to Colombia on 7 February to discuss with Colombian officials the specifics of this drive into Putumayo,¹¹⁶² he believed if successful it would ‘ensure the necessary security for conducting counter-drug operations’.¹¹⁶³ Based in Miami and an advocate of US military aid, Wilhelm travelled at least 21 times to Washington in FY2000 in support of Pastrana’s initiative.¹¹⁶⁴

In his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee Wilhelm strongly contested the accuracy of the parallel between Colombia and Vietnam.^{1165,1166} To Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska, who asked point-blank if Colombia was ‘another Vietnam’, Wilhelm rejoined, ‘it is not Vietnam ... I spent 1965, ’66, ’69, and ’70 in Vietnam and I think I’ll know it when I see it happening again. When I go to Colombia I do not feel a quagmire sucking at my boots’.¹¹⁶⁷ His critics gloated that Wilhelm had failed to ‘sell’ Plan Colombia to Stevens, who declared his willingness to support it but only on condition that he could be shown specifics about what was to be done ‘if something goes wrong’.¹¹⁶⁸

The 7 March hearing gave Pastrana’s team another opportunity to gauge the pertinacious resistance to Plan Colombia, like that of Sen. Stevens, who stated that ‘the more lawmakers

¹¹⁶⁰ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

¹¹⁶¹ Senate Armed Services Committee., *Statement of General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps Commander In Chief, United States Southern Command*, 7 March 2000.

¹¹⁶² "U.S. South Commander Arrives in Colombia.," *Xinhua News Agency*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁶³ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000." p. 2

¹¹⁶⁴ Buckwalter, Struckman, and Gvosdev, "Continuity and Change in U.S. Policy toward Colombia, 1999–2009."

¹¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 20.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Statement of General Charles E. Wilhelm, United States Marine Corps Commander In Chief, United States Southern Command.*

¹¹⁶⁷ Quoted in: Dean A. Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm and the Shaping of U.S. Military Engagement in Colombia, 1997-2000," in *America's Viceroy: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Derek S. Reveron (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997). p. 127.

¹¹⁶⁸ Sarah Fritz, "Responses to Colombia concerns aren't reassuring," *St. Petersburg Times* 27th March 2000. p. 3A.

looked at the Colombian plan, the more flawed it appeared'.¹¹⁶⁹ Sen. McConnell (R-KY) was also very critical of Pastrana for providing the FARC with their own demilitarized zone in which to carry on their criminal activities.¹¹⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the US-as-hegemon theory of international relations, the hammering-out of Plan Colombia consisted of a difficult and complicated mutual accommodation process in which both sides had to adjust to the adverse preferences of the other party. On the Colombian side, the Pastrana team had to accept that so many American domestic political forces opposed US participation either in Pastrana's pet project of negotiating peace with the insurgents, or in the alternative counterinsurgency operations that would have made war on them. On the US side, both important Congressmen and important actors within the Administration had to proceed with the massive, risky funding that even a scaled-down Plan Colombia entailed, in the teeth of President Pastrana's insistence on proceeding at full speed with a peace process which the Americans could not shake their deep suspicions of. The US also agreed to assist Colombia in lobbying the EU and European states for social development aid that US had little use for from the standpoint of its internal politics.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, on the whole, the Colombians accommodated US concerns more than *vice versa*. However, a properly contextualised understanding of this fact leads the theorist not nearer but farther away from US hegemony theory: accommodating the US consisted almost uniformly of settling for *less* US economic intervention than both the Colombian state and the Colombian people would have preferred. The US was still suffering the 'Vietnam Syndrome' whereby anything smacking of US military intervention instantly provokes high anxiety. It was this reluctance that had to be accommodated first and foremost, and at times combatted and overcome. Secondly, Colombia was obliged to accommodate the concerns of significant domestic US political forces over human rights abuses by the Colombian state security sector, both by promising to undertake reforms of the Colombian armed forces and by presenting Congressmen the better face of Colombia so as to counteract the stereotypical 'banana republic' image that was already so widespread and accepted.

¹¹⁶⁹ "U.S. Senate skeptical on Colombia drug aid package," *Reuters News*(2000).

¹¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The evidence seems to indicate that the final outcome of mutual accommodation consisted essentially of a narrow American acceptance of a broad Colombian invitation. Indeed, if US intervention tended toward minimalism even in the short run, in the long run it was designed to be self-liquidating—very much unlike a hegemon. As Ambassador Mack put it to the author: ‘It’s amazing, Colombia has absorbed all that [US aid] today [March 2012]. The US footprint there is much smaller. Colombia has all their people trained up ... [while] US involvement has shrunk over the years’.¹¹⁷¹ The narrowing of US intervention was driven by various causal factors, mostly consisting of the constraints of domestic politics, which ranged from the focus on drugs, and military solutions to its supply, to the fortuitous missteps which had the effect of excluding US participation in the peace process with the guerrillas. This accommodation process by the Colombians was an essential part of the story, as indicated by McLean: ‘without the anti-narcotics focus this whole thing [US “soft intervention” *via* Plan Colombia] would not have taken place’.¹¹⁷²

¹¹⁷¹ *Interview by author with Ambassador James F. Mack (US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 2000-2002).*

¹¹⁷² *Interview by author with Phillip McLean (Senior Associate Center for Strategic and International Studies).*

CHAPTER 6—PLAN COLOMBIA PHASE THREE: NEGOTIATION THROUGH INTERVENTION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine in detail two sides of a highly conflictual legislative process, one outside and the other inside the US Congress. The first side of the process consists of the imaginative and creative lobbying strategy and tactics of the Pastrana team. The second treats of the proceedings of Congressmen which eventually yielded up the narrowly focussed Plan Colombia. This truncated version of President Andres Pastrana's development vision was all that the Colombians were able to get out of the US government, due to the running battle between rival factions in American politics that impeded strategic coherence in foreign policy decision making. If indeed half of foreign policy is done with a cheque, the cheques are often too contingent on internal politics to be counted on.

This in-depth examination of the legislative history of Plan Colombia proves how 'touch-and-go' it is for a grand design as ambitious as (greater) Plan Colombia to ever see the light of day. The reader should come away with the distinct impression that, but for the damage hard drug use was inflicting on the fabric of American society 'back home' in the local districts of Congress, Pastrana's Plan would have had no luck at all, no matter how hard the Colombians may have tried or how smartly they may have devised. This conclusion stands in contrast to the abstractions of IR theory, which postulates a top-down American 'hegemony' and theorises about it within a deductive paradigmatic 'international system' in a way that too rarely, if ever, is tested against stubborn facts. It is hoped that this more empirical approach, rather rare in the IR field, may persuade at least some that less theorising and more actual science is called for if IR would be said to have matured as an academic discipline.

THE COLOMBIAN LOBBYING OF CONGRESS

The first invitations the Pastrana Administration extended to US Senators to visit Colombia in person was merely the opening wedge of the Colombian drive to prevail in Congress. Behind the scenes the Colombians' hard work was gradually beginning to pay off more and more; eventually, they had orchestrated one of the most effective lobbying campaigns in recent diplomatic history, even though designed by themselves without benefit of the usual public relations professionals. Pastrana's primordial Minister Plenipotentiary in Washington,

Juan Esteban Orduz, told the author in an interview that he had been convinced from the start of the strategic soundness of targeting Congress and lobbying Congressmen in person. In his own words, ‘half of foreign policy is done with a cheque, so we had to get the cheque’.¹¹⁷³ He understood that Congress alone held the power of the purse and ‘wrote the cheque’. By then, however, it had dawned on the Colombians that getting that cheque could not be left up to the Clinton Administration. Clinton’s own difficulties with Congress in the pertinent time-frame were bad enough; what was worse, the Colombians themselves had alienated sizeable blocs of Congressional votes in both parties: first Republicans by accommodating violent Marxist guerrillas in the peace process of greater Plan Colombia, then Democrats by procrastinating to disown their paramilitary enemy. The Clinton Administration would not be able to turn this situation around singlehandedly; it was up to the Colombians to do their bit.¹¹⁷⁴

Lobbying Congress mano à mano: the Colombians ‘face up’

In light of all of these considerations, it had become clear that an effort to win over Congress *en bloc* would likely come to nothing. The Colombians would have to start from scratch and ‘retail’ their Plan, lobbying Congressmen face to face, one by one. Daunting as this might seem to some, the Colombians may have seen it differently; their culture takes for granted that familial and personal relations are what bind society together, and not so much law or money as in the North. According to one popular Colombian proverb—‘*It is the face of the saint that makes the miracle happen*’. Both Ambassador Moreno and Minister Orduz concurred that approaching members of Congress in person and lobbying them as individuals would give them the best chances of winning sceptics over to the Plan and reassuring them of the Pastrana Administration’s *bona fides*.¹¹⁷⁵ It was essential to win support for an aid package of sufficient magnitude to make a real difference to the Colombian state; otherwise, the Plan would fail, as so many previous such plans had done in the recent past.

Lacking the kind of professional diplomatic establishment enjoyed by developed nations – so unlike the Colombian foreign office, or *Cancilleria*, a main prize in Colombia’s archaic political ‘spoils system’, – the inner circle of Pastrana’s personal advisors would have to craft a joined-up strategy by themselves. It would have to deploy very limited resources in such a

¹¹⁷³ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002).

¹¹⁷⁴ Ruiz, *The Colombian Civil War*.

¹¹⁷⁵ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).

way as to yield maximum impact. This they managed to bring off better than anyone could have foreseen, as the first part of this chapter attests.

The Capitol Hill subway-riding tactic

Once determined on their strategy of lobbying the persons not the institution, Moreno and Orduz went about it in the best Colombian folk tradition – just ‘showing up’ (unannounced!) on Capitol Hill, as if they were about some important business, while *creating* ‘spontaneous’ encounters, as if by chance they had ‘bumped into’ Senators and Representatives who were about their own workaday business. The very idea of showing up unannounced would strike seasoned diplomats and well-versed lobbyists as incompetent. Yet to the Colombians, who may have decided this strategy as early as September 1998 (the evidence is ambiguous on this point), it made perfect sense. Their specific tactic consisted of arriving on Capitol Hill just before or after an important session and hopping aboard the ‘US Capitol Subway’, the underground electric train that moves people between the chambers of the Senate and House of Representatives.¹¹⁷⁶ The Colombians would then ‘accidentally on purpose’ run into various and sundry Congressmen, whom the Colombians would ‘buttonhole’ to put their case to, face to face and one on one.¹¹⁷⁷

Although now off limits due to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, at that time the Capitol Subway was still open to the public, and executing this tactic was quite feasible. The Colombians went at it with a will, introducing themselves personally to a very large number of Congressmen, and telling them as much as they were willing to hear about Colombia; Moreno taking charge of telling the ‘big story’. Time was very limited, as the ride only lasted for about 90 seconds; Moreno and Orduz had to formulate very carefully in advance what are known in the trade as ‘talking points’.¹¹⁷⁸ Diplomatic observers agree that, compared with other nations’, America’s policy makers tend to be pragmatic not ideological, preferring matters to be stated directly and to the point. Orduz himself confirmed this in an interview with the author: his personal experience of Americans led him to believe not only that Congressional policy makers would be non-ideological for the most part, but also more easily persuaded if they

¹¹⁷⁶ "The United States Capitol Subway System," <http://www.belowthecapitol.org/capitol/>.

¹¹⁷⁷ Interview by Author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002)

¹¹⁷⁸ Orduz.

could ‘look you in the eye’ (Orduz’s words) to gauge your sincerity.¹¹⁷⁹ Moreno and Orduz encapsulated all they had to say ‘in a nutshell’, as the strategy of Plan Colombia had to be condensed to a ‘spiel’ that could be played back again and again in under three minutes.¹¹⁸⁰

The rope-a-staffer tactic: free salsa lessons at the Embassy

In the same interview Orduz reminisced, too, about their targeting of Congressional staffers, who play a pivotal role in all the legislative business of the US government. He noted how little time Congressmen have for fathoming the merits of most legislative bills before them, even for figuring out whom they would need to confer with about which bills. Most of the hard thinking is done for them by their staff, who thus wield enormous (but largely untapped) leverage in any campaign to lobby Congress over policy. Taking this home truth to heart, the Colombians found in Capitol Hill staffers a crucial point of access to important members of Congress. Orduz recalls befriending a staffer inside the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence who became a prime asset to his effort, keeping him informed in great detail of what was slated to happen, when. This inside information enabled Orduz and Moreno to improvise tactics to allay the doubts of a given Congressman at a given time.¹¹⁸¹

This sophisticated procedure came into its own with the campaign of Moreno and Orduz. One of the tactics the Colombians invented for reaching out to staffers – whom they knew to be younger on average than the politicians they served – was to offer free salsa dancing lessons at the Colombian Embassy. The lessons would often be followed by parties at the Embassy.¹¹⁸² Once the lessons and the parties had ‘roped’ the staffers in, they seemed as if by magic to find more of an interest in Colombia and its fate.

A gala party—Colombian style

The success of this tactic culminated on Saturday 4 December, when the Colombian Embassy hosted the Annual National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) Ball, a party traditionally hosted by a foreign Embassy in Washington. But this was only the second time in history that a South

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁰ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).

¹¹⁸¹ Interview by Author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002)

¹¹⁸² Interview by author with Adrienne Foglia (Pastrana Foreign Press Secretary: 1998-2002), 22 August 2008.

American country had done so (Chile having been the first such in 1989).¹¹⁸³ The event was a smashing success; well attended by movers and shakers from all over Washington, including World Bank President James Wolfensohn, Supreme Court Justice Sandra O'Connor, Under-Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, Assistant Secretary of State Peter Romero, Rep. William Delahunt, and Clinton Advisor Vernon Jordan.¹¹⁸⁴ Ruiz remembers that the party was also attended by key players in Congress and was used as the perfect opportunity to mingle and do what they knew best—buttonholing the guests and inviting them to Colombia.¹¹⁸⁵ It was later reported that guests who stayed 'into the wee hours agreed it was the best NSO ball in years'.¹¹⁸⁶

US Congressmen visit Colombia: carefully crafted tours

The lobbying campaign thus did not stop at Capitol Hill or the Colombian Embassy, but led all the way back to Colombia herself. Pastrana and Moreno – in independent interviews with the author separated by years of time – corroborated each other's testimony, that from August 1998 to the summer of 2000, about 120 members of Congress travelled to Colombia at the invitation of the Colombian State.¹¹⁸⁷ Orduz pointed out how impressive this number was, as it represented almost a fifth of the total number of Congressmen (535).¹¹⁸⁸

Even more thought-provoking is that, before this, many of these Senators and Representatives had had nothing to do with Colombia – in Orduz's wry words, some of them 'had never even heard of Colombia' – e.g. politicians hailing from 'deep in the heartland' of America and/or serving on obscure committees unconnected with the process of 'moving the bill to the floor' (bringing the draft Plan Colombia to a vote of the plenary).¹¹⁸⁹ This estimate of numbers was

¹¹⁸³ Kevin Chaffee and Ann Geracimos, "Symphony Ball sizzles in magical Latin setting," *The Washington Times*, 6th December 1999.

¹¹⁸⁴ Sergio Gomez Maseri, "Una fiesta con sabor Colombiano," *El Tiempo*, 5th December 1999.

¹¹⁸⁵ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

¹¹⁸⁶ Chaffee and Geracimos, "Symphony Ball sizzles in magical Latin setting."

¹¹⁸⁷ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹¹⁸⁸ Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002).

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

also backed up by Fernandez de Soto.¹¹⁹⁰

Congressional records also corroborate it – even if not all of the trips to Colombia by staffers and Congressmen were properly documented (some expenditures may have been covered by private donors).¹¹⁹¹ Confidential cables from the US Embassy in Bogota, recently released, also make mention of Congressional delegations and the VIP treatment they were given.¹¹⁹² Finally, in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Julia Sweig reported that the Pastrana Administration brought ‘dozens of US Legislators and their staffs to Colombia for carefully packaged tours’.¹¹⁹³

Whatever the exact figures may be, one thing is clear: the Pastrana Administration hosted so many guests from Capitol Hill in those days that they were able to establish a routine. Either Moreno or Orduz would fly in from Washington to Bogotá a few days (roughly two days, as Orduz recalls) before the guests’ arrival.¹¹⁹⁴ One can reach Bogotá from Washington in about seven hours. Moreno or Orduz would then see to the specifics of each visit, tailoring each one to their guests’ personal profiles (*e.g.* degree of familiarity with Colombia).¹¹⁹⁵ They carefully orchestrated the Colombian end of the visit, briefing both the main actors and the bit players about how to treat each visitor (*e.g.* a Congressman concerned with human rights might be steered to key civil society actors who would tell him how human rights were being upheld). As Orduz himself described it, his practice of acting as advance-agent for each and every trip provided the key players in Colombia an ‘x-ray’ of the visitor, making the lobbying campaign far more effective.¹¹⁹⁶

¹¹⁹⁰ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (*Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002*). and Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (*Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005*).

¹¹⁹¹ US-Congress, "Expenditure reports concerning official foreign travel," in *Congressional Records H2647-H2653* (2000).

¹¹⁹² Curtis W. Kamman, "GOC Extends Red Carpet to CODEL Ballenger," in *National Security Archives* (2000).

¹¹⁹³ Sweig, "What Kind of War for Colombia?."

¹¹⁹⁴ Interview by Author with Juan Esteban Orduz (*Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002*)

¹¹⁹⁵ Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (*Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005*).

¹¹⁹⁶ Interview by Author with Juan Esteban Orduz (*Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002*)

Riding the Capitol subway all the way to Colombia

On 11 September 1999 a report titled 'Hastert Leads the Charge in Colombia Drug War' was published by the *Weekly* edition of the *Congressional Quarterly*.¹¹⁹⁷ It implied that the Pastrana Administration's intense efforts at lobbying Congress since August 1998 had resulted in such close and dense relations, that in dealing with Colombians Congressmen had dispensed with the normal diplomatic protocol of addressing foreign dignitaries *via* the State Department, but instead had formed a habit of addressing them directly. Only a few analysts have properly credited Colombian diplomats, 'who mounted one of the most sophisticated and effective lobbying campaigns of any foreign country in years',¹¹⁹⁸ with shepherding Plan Colombia through Congress.

The Senators visit Colombia

Some 'case studies' might suffice to illustrate the points just made. Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Jack Reed (D-RI) visited Colombia on 30 August 1999 at the invitation of the Pastrana Administration. They went to Bogota 'to see the drug-fuelled crisis first hand'.¹¹⁹⁹ Whilst in Colombia they also met with members of the Colombian Congress to express their concern over the continuing rapid growth of illegal trafficking of cocaine out of Colombia. They sincerely believed that an exaggerated emphasis on the peace process with the FARC was opening the door to an increase in the smuggling of illegal drugs.¹²⁰⁰ According to Reed, 'Upon my return, Senator DeWine, Senator Grassley, and I introduced an assistance package, the Alianza Act, in October 1999. The Alianza Act authorized \$1.6 billion over 3 years to support antidrug efforts, the rule of law, human rights and the peace process in Colombia and neighbouring countries. This was in my view, a balanced and comprehensive approach to the crisis in Colombia'.¹²⁰¹

Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) also visited Colombia, on 18 December 1999. Once arrived in Bogota, he attended a classified briefing at the US Embassy on the political situation of the

¹¹⁹⁷ Miles A. Pomper, "Hastert Leads the Charge in Colombia Drug War," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*(1999), Date Accessed: 2012/02/06.
<http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹¹⁹⁸ Sweig, "What Kind of War for Colombia?." p. 130.

¹¹⁹⁹ US-Congress, "Congressional Record-Senate June 21, 2000.." p.11658.

¹²⁰⁰ "Pillaos." *El Tiempo*, 5th September 1999.

¹²⁰¹ US-Congress, "Congressional Record-Senate June 21, 2000.." p.11658.

country, with a special focus on the peace process, extradition, and narco-trafficking. Specter discovered that Peru and Bolivia had seen a decrease in cocaine production, but that this had been offset already by a corresponding increase of cocaine coming out of Colombia. Specter was surprised to hear that Colombia was then suffering the 'highest unemployment in Latin America'.¹²⁰² After the Embassy briefing Senator Specter, accompanied by Deputy Chief of Mission Barbara Moore, was taken to meet President Pastrana. Pastrana took time personally to get to know Specter, believing it an essential part of his lobbying efforts for Plan Colombia in Congress.¹²⁰³ They discussed issues ranging from journalism, through the peace process and the judiciary, to the assassination of the American missionaries earlier in February. Pastrana assured Specter of his commitment to peace and his determination to build a better Colombia; promising Specter that respecting the FARC assassinations 'he would do everything in his power to bring these criminals to justice and to bring a conclusion to this case'.¹²⁰⁴

US Reps. visit Colombia: the first Congressional delegations of the new millennium

Turning now to the US House of Representatives,¹²⁰⁵ its foreign travel records also chime with reports by Colombia's main newspaper *El Tiempo* concerning official visits; evidencing that a Congressional delegation did visit Colombia between 7 and 10 January 2000. Invited by the Colombian government, it comprised seven members of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee,¹²⁰⁶ both Republican and Democrat, and two senior Congressional staffers, who met with President Pastrana and other high ranking Colombian government officials.¹²⁰⁷ The trip had been sponsored by Ambassador Moreno from his post in Washington.

On 17 January 2000 six senior advisers to the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee travelled to Colombia on a fact-finding mission, led by Congressional staffer Glenn Schmitt.

¹²⁰² US-Congress, "Trips Made Over the Recess Period." p. S63.

¹²⁰³ *Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).*

¹²⁰⁴ US-Congress, "Trips Made Over the Recess Period."

¹²⁰⁵ US-Congress, "Expenditure Reports Concerning Official Foreign Travel," in *Congressional Record H3805-H3811* (2000).

¹²⁰⁶ US-Congress, "Expenditure reports concerning official foreign travel."

¹²⁰⁷ "Los Representantes," *El Tiempo*, 8 January 2000

They came to inspect personally the counter-narcotic operations of the US DEA in the port of Cartagena.¹²⁰⁸ At the end of their trip Schmitt told the Colombians that the more information they had, the more reasons the US Congress would be able to muster in support of aid to Colombia.¹²⁰⁹

Pastrana himself rolls out the 'red carpet' Representative Cass Ballenger (R-NC) led a delegation to Colombia on 18 January 2000 that included Representatives William Delahunt (D-MA), Sam Farr (D-CA) and Mark Souder (R-IN) as well as International Relations staffers Vince Morelli, David Adams and Sean Carroll. According to a recently declassified cable from Ambassador Kamman to Washington titled *GOC Extends Red Carpet to CODEL Ballenger*, the delegation assured Colombian officials that 'they were optimistic about eventual passage'¹²¹⁰ of Plan Colombia.

Nancy Pelosi in Bogota and Cartagena

Three more important members of the House of Representatives travelled to Colombia on 18 February to meet with senior Colombian officials: two ranking Republican members of the House, Sonny Callahan (R-AL) and Terry Everett (R-AL), and ranking Democrat Nancy Pelosi.¹²¹¹ It was to be an important visit because Callahan was chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs of the House Appropriations Committee, Plan Colombia's first port of call in Congress.¹²¹² It has been reported (unofficially) that the delegation travelled to Cartagena on 19 February for one of Pastrana's lobbying tours, carefully prepared to have the calculated impact on members of Congress and show them a different face of Colombia.¹²¹³ The meeting in Cartagena was hosted by Pastrana himself.¹²¹⁴

A recently declassified cable from the US Embassy in Bogota reveals that Pelosi was the

¹²⁰⁸ "Visto bueno a puerto Cartagenero," *El Tiempo*, 19 January 2000.

¹²⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹²¹⁰ Kamman, "GOC Extends Red Carpet to CODEL Ballenger." p. 2.

¹²¹¹ US-Congress, "Expenditure reports concerning official foreign travel."

¹²¹² Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²¹³ "Colombia-Aid U.S. Congressmen to review 'Colombia Plan' in Cartagena ", *EFE News Service* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹²¹⁴ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

most critical of all in the Congressional Delegation, and held private meetings in Bogota with persons who were not necessarily on board Pastrana's Plan. One of them was Colombia's Prosecutor General, Alfonso Gomez Mendez, who complained to Pelosi that he had not been consulted at any stage in the drafting of Plan Colombia. She later stated that any US programme would have to fund the Prosecutor's General office to rehabilitate the judiciary and give 'the American People confidence that Plan Colombia [would be] balanced and well directed'.¹²¹⁵

Even the FARC contribute to Pastrana's lobbying campaign

Throughout their campaign of lobbying Congress Pastrana and his team had had to strive against the current of bad news about the insurgents, which tended to discredit rather badly the whole idea of holding peace talks. Finally, in mid-July 1999 the Colombian Government got a 'break'. The FARC launched an offensive in which they 'conducted attacks in various parts of the country, but were overwhelmingly defeated for the first time in four years by the Colombian Army'.¹²¹⁶ Some analysts opine this victory resulted from increasing US-Colombia collaboration on security issues, especially the new information-sharing policies established in March 1999. SOUTHCOM Commander Wilhelm kept in touch with the Colombian military throughout its counteroffensive. The FARC's misconduct and their interrelated failure to agree such basic 'housekeeping' matters as the composition and remit of an international verification commission for the DMZ led the government to adjourn its peace agenda indefinitely. 'Pastrana tells FARC he wants peace but is preparing for war' was the headline.¹²¹⁷ At this point, with negotiations between the government and both rebel groups suspended indefinitely, it seemed that Pastrana's peace initiative had definitively failed.

THE LEGISLATIVE JOURNEY BEGINS

What the following legislative history shows beyond cavil is that the bill that became Plan Colombia was highly controversial and hotly debated. It would not have taken all that much to defeat it. This being the case, the question arises as to whether such a process can be

¹²¹⁵ Curtis W. Kamman, "Representative Pelosi's Meetings in Bogotá," in *National Security Archives* (2000).

¹²¹⁶ Beare, *Critical reflections on transnational organized crime, money laundering and corruption*. p. 229.

¹²¹⁷ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia."; p. 373.

believed to reliably support ‘hegemony’ and ‘imperialism’. What kind of hegemony is it that hangs by a thread? Plan Colombia just managed to survive in the 106th Congress—a Congress overwhelmingly Republican after the seismic partisan realignment of 1994. This massive swing of 54 seats from the Democrats to the Republicans gave the latter a majority for the first time since 1954.¹²¹⁸ Given the strength and ferocity of Democrat opposition to Plan Colombia, the bill would probably have met defeat in the 103rd Congress of 1993-94, when the Democrats still enjoyed a comfortable, seemingly permanent majority.¹²¹⁹ The single-minded ruthlessness supposed to characterise a ‘hegemon’ – at least the kind that people have reason to object to (the original Greek simply meant ‘leader’) – is conspicuous by its absence from the story of Plan Colombia’s passage through Congress. Even President Clinton, who became a great friend of Pastrana’s and a mover of Plan Colombia, had to do a great deal of lobbying to convince his own party.¹²²⁰

The other great moral of this story is the agency of the weak state and the role this played in the passage of Plan Colombia. An International Relations theory that casts weaker states in the role of hapless victims, discounting their agency at practically ‘100 cents on the dollar’, is but a caricature—and possibly a dangerous one. In this case, had the hapless victim not been pushing the Great Hegemon from behind with all of its might, it might well have forfeited its best chances of being victimised. It is also relevant to note the near-unanimity with which the people of Colombia desired the same thing. Disconnect and even alienation there may have been between Colombia’s traditional *criollo* elites and its *mestizo* masses – no one will deny that; – but on *this* point elites and masses were at one. Few doubts can survive the lopsided poll results cited above that show 66% of the public favouring US intervention—exactly what their elite masters in Washington were so assiduously angling for.¹²²¹

The story begins where the legislative appropriations process of the US Congress begins—with the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, which the draft Plan Colombia reached on 9 March 2000, as it was debating H.R.3908, the 2000 Emergency Supplemental

¹²¹⁸ Philip D. Duncan and Brian Nutting, eds., *Politics in America 2000: The 106th Congress* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1999).

¹²¹⁹ Philip D. Duncan, ed. *Politics in America 1994: The 103rd Congress* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1993).

¹²²⁰ *Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007).*

¹²²¹ "Mayoria De Encuestados Apoyarian Intervencion." *El Tiempo*, 20th July 1999.

Appropriations Act.¹²²² This bill contained a number of ‘mid-year additions to the federal government’s 2000 budget to be paid for with the anticipated surplus, among them ... the “Plan Colombia” aid package’¹²²³. This was the first legislative step taken on Plan Colombia in the US Congress. During debate quite a few amendments to the Plan Colombia bill were proposed, which is surely evidence of the many doubts about it that Congress harboured.¹²²⁴

Initial opposition to Plan Colombia

The opening gambit was Rep. David Obey’s (D-WI), who proposed delaying the military aid until the end of July, so that Congress would be forced to vote on it separately. He believed it necessary to avoid rushing into any financial commitment without knowing what all was needed to win the war on drugs in the southern part of Colombia.¹²²⁵ Obey also compared Colombia with Vietnam, expressing fears that the Colombian situation could lead the US to get involved militarily in an internal conflict: a ‘confluence of events ... could lead to that’.¹²²⁶ He disliked most analogies with Vietnam as being inaccurate, but in this case, he said, Colombia reminded him ‘very much of Vietnam’.¹²²⁷ In the end his amendment was defeated 20-36.¹²²⁸ Critics like Obey noted that the Clinton Administration (especially Defense Secretary Cohen) were quick to dismiss direct US military involvement in Colombia, yet were ‘amazingly inept at responding to the frequent comparisons between Colombia and Vietnam’.¹²²⁹

One of the strongest critics of the whole package was Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), who offered an amendment diverting the entire appropriation from Colombia to her own plan for drug rehabilitation and treatment inside the US. Her amendment failed 31-23.¹²³⁰ In another

¹²²² US-Congress, "2000 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act," U.S. House of Representatives (2000).

¹²²³ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000." p.3.

¹²²⁴ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²²⁵ Elizabeth Becker, "House Panel Approves Aid to Bolster a Faltering Colombia," *The New York Times*, 10th March 2000.

¹²²⁶ Ibid.

¹²²⁷ Fritz, "Responses to Colombia concerns aren't reassuring."

¹²²⁸ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²²⁹ Fritz, "Responses to Colombia concerns aren't reassuring." p. 3A.

¹²³⁰ Crandall, *Driven by drugs : U.S. policy toward Colombia*.

instance of an amendment reflecting serious reservations, Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA) moved that the State Department include the AUC (the Colombian paramilitary umbrella group) on its list of terrorist organizations, while proposing an amendment that would have obligated the Colombian government to return every helicopter which should have been found to have been used in committing a human rights violation.¹²³¹ These two were eventually the only amendments passed by the Committee before the mark-up bill was sent to the House floor for approval.¹²³²

Near the end of the 9 March 2000 debate, Rep. Farr proposed three more amendments. The first would have conditioned military aid on certification by the Secretary of State that the Colombian government and army had taken concrete steps to improve their human rights record, and had deployed legal mechanisms to roll back the existing complicity between elements of the Colombian army and the paramilitaries. Another last-minute amendment would have appropriated \$50 million more for displaced persons and for alternative development, with \$6.5 million of that channelled via the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The third would have redirected funds earmarked for military aid to economic development and 'reform' programmes, in case the peace process with the FARC should succeed.¹²³³

The Farr amendments were censured by the Republicans. Representative Sonny Callahan (R-AL), for example, read out a letter written by General McCaffrey pointing out that the human rights conditionality demanded by Farr would be unworkable, as it would require Colombia to change its constitution. Rep. Callahan had been to Colombia personally a month earlier, and was convinced that the aid was essential to US interests. McCaffrey's letter also opposed US financing of UNDCP development programmes, as the White House was considering its own development programmes in the DMZ and opposed any sort of assistance reaching the FARC, a listed terrorist group.¹²³⁴ Farr ended up withdrawing his amendments; it would be

¹²³¹ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000."

¹²³² Nina Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)," (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress, 2001).

¹²³³ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²³⁴ *Ibid.*

more effective to introduce such sweeping changes to the Plan where they would be more visible to the public, on the floor of the House.

Committee Approval

After a long day of debates, the Appropriations Committee finally approved the aid package to Colombia by a wide margin of 33 to 13, with the challengers complaining that the money would go to an army with a poor record of defending human rights.¹²³⁵ From there the bill was moved for consideration on the floor.¹²³⁶

Trouble in the Senate

While the mark-up bill waited to be debated in the House floor, stiff opposition arose in the Senate. Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) denounced it not as aid to Colombia, but because he believed it had become ‘a magnet for pork-barrel spending’.¹²³⁷ The bill had been attached to a ‘\$9 billion dollar emergency supplemental mega bill’.¹²³⁸ For accountability’s sake, Lott wanted it re-considered and debated in the regular legislative process, not as an emergency bill.

Speaker of the House Hastert eventually met with Lott to discuss Plan Colombia, and agreed to break up the bill and move it into the regular order.¹²³⁹ This news discomfited Pastrana’s team with a feeling of *déjà vu* derived from their experience with the *Alianza Act* in 1999, which had failed in Congress. Pastrana ordered intensified lobbying to warn Congress that Colombia stood on the brink of massively repercussive state failure.¹²⁴⁰ Moreno, wanting no further delays, was particularly keen to avoid the vote being moved to October, when he knew attention would have shifted irrevocably from Colombia to the Presidential elections in November 2000.¹²⁴¹ The White House did not react as strongly, perhaps more aware that this

¹²³⁵ Becker, "House Panel Approves Aid to Bolster a Faltering Colombia."

¹²³⁶ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²³⁷ Eric Schmitt, "Senate Fights Snags Aid Bill for Kosovo and Colombia," *The New York Times*, 22 March 2000. p. A5.

¹²³⁸ Charles Roberts, "Immediate Needs of counter-drug forces " *The Washington Post*, 22nd March 2000. p. A14.

¹²³⁹ *Interview by author with Rep. Dennis Hastert (59th Speaker of the US House of Representatives: 1999-2007).*

¹²⁴⁰ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

¹²⁴¹ *Interview by author with Luis Alberto Moreno (Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2005).*

was how Congress normally worked. A Clinton spokesperson simply said it was essential for Congress to act during the current session and not later in the year.¹²⁴²

Observers noted that Lott was also accommodating criticism that the aid bill had been prioritised over the domestic funding needs of important bureaucratic players in the war on drugs, like the US Coast Guard, which needed ‘approximately \$200 million to cover fiscal 2000 immediate anti-drug emergency readiness ... the Drug Enforcement Administration [too was] in desperate [need of] parallel funding, especially for personnel and intelligence... U.S. Customs [was also] in dire straits when operating internationally, and [needed] at least \$400 million to cover Plan Colombia-related needs’.¹²⁴³ It is notable that confirmation of these needs came from other Andean countries like Peru, who had contacted Lott to alert him to the need to upgrade US Customs radar systems and spy planes in the region, lest the aid to Colombia harms the rest of the region.¹²⁴⁴

Lott’s move provoked an immediate reaction from other Congressmen, who presumed he planned to bottle up the bill. Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) reacted sternly, warning that delay would heighten its ‘chances of failure’.¹²⁴⁵ Speaker Hastert, too, who had decided to make Plan Colombia a ‘top foreign policy goal’, reacted badly to Lott’s criticism,¹²⁴⁶ even to scheduling a meeting with Lott on 22 March to sort out their differences.¹²⁴⁷

Lott’s manoeuvre underscored how tricky it might prove to pass the aid bill, and exposed all the more the sharp differences of opinion—some in favour but many against the aid even within the same party. Rep. Dick Armey (R-TX), House Majority Leader, argued the urgency of the aid,¹²⁴⁸ but other Republicans were less keen. Rep. Tom Coburn (R-OK), for example, rejoined that Plan Colombia should enjoy lower priority than his own proposals for domestic

¹²⁴² Robert Pianin, "Drug War funding faces delay; Hastert agrees with Senate Holdup of Colombia, Kosovo aid.," *The Washington Post*, 27th March 2000.

¹²⁴³ Roberts, "Immediate Needs of counter-drug forces ". p. A14.

¹²⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁵ Schmitt, "Senate Fights Snags Aid Bill for Kosovo and Colombia."

¹²⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁷ Pianin, "Drug War funding faces delay; Hastert agrees with Senate Holdup of Colombia, Kosovo aid."

¹²⁴⁸ Schmitt, "Senate Fights Snags Aid Bill for Kosovo and Colombia."

projects like NASA programmes and environmental clean-ups in Ohio and Kentucky.¹²⁴⁹ The hegemon was of two minds on the issue of Colombia.

The elite speaks: the Interim Report of the CFR

On 23 March 2000, in the midst of the controversies swirling around Plan Colombia, a panel of experts published a report titled *First Steps Toward a Constructive U.S. Policy in Colombia*.¹²⁵⁰ The report was the work of an independent Task Force set up in November 1999 by Inter-American Dialogue and the Council on Foreign Relations to provide expert advice on US foreign policy in Colombia.¹²⁵¹ The report recommended approval based on two main arguments. The first was the urgent need of the Colombian state for aid, as it was facing 'rising [levels of] violence and drug production' spiralling out of its control.¹²⁵² The report warned that delay would weaken Colombia far more. The second basis for approval was the essentialness for the US 'to signal [its] commitment to help a troubled country in a critical moment'.¹²⁵³ Michael Shifter, one of the report's authors, insisted his findings were apolitical, Sen. Graham's sponsorship notwithstanding, and merely intended to promote healthy US foreign policy.¹²⁵⁴ The report also recommended amendments to the aid bill that would have moved it toward a more regional approach which would plan aid to the region over the long term and not just to Colombia for FY2000.¹²⁵⁵

Important publicists support Plan Colombia

It might be argued that the foregoing and the following were the voices of US hegemony if anyone was; what is clear nevertheless is that these were just some few amongst a discordance of voices being raised both *pro* and *con*. It would be difficult to gauge their actual influence, and all too easy to overestimate it.

¹²⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁵⁰ Bob Graham, Brent Scowcroft, and Michael Shifter, *Toward greater peace and security in Colombia : forging a constructive U.S. policy* (New York ; [Great Britain]: Council on Foreign Relations, 2000).

¹²⁵¹ Ibid.

¹²⁵² Christopher Wilson, "Colombia aid package hits roadblock in US Congress," *Reuters News*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹²⁵³ George Gedda, "Panel urges quick passage of Colombia aid," *Associated Press* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹²⁵⁴ *Interview by author with Michael Shifter (President Inter-American Dialogue).*

¹²⁵⁵ "Panel Backs US Aid Package for Colombia; Urges Ammendments," *Dow Jones Newswires*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

On 28 March, two days before Plan Colombia was put to a vote on the floor of the House, Francis Fukuyama seconded the Task Force report by publishing an article in the *Wall Street Journal* in support of Plan Colombia, and arguing that Colombia indeed deserved US help.¹²⁵⁶ On 26 March the *Washington Post* chimed in with an editorial titled ‘Urgent Aid’, which argued that Congress should pass the bill approved by the Appropriations Committee on 9 March.¹²⁵⁷ The editorial was critical of Majority Leader Lott for opposing the bill. Lott, however, rejoined that ‘he [preferred] that the funds for Colombia be considered under the regular appropriations process rather than as an emergency bill’.¹²⁵⁸ This meant that the process would be delayed until October 2000.¹²⁵⁹

The State Department weighs in

The idea that the US might be drawn into a counterinsurgency war amid the Andes mountains was powerful enough to deter even supporters from voting in favour of the plan. This became such a problem that the State Department felt obliged to publish on 28 March a fact sheet titled ‘Why Colombia is Not the Next Vietnam’.¹²⁶⁰ This may have been a reaction specifically to the reasoning of Rep. Obey at the 9 March 2000 debate in the Appropriations Committee. Gen. Wilhelm testified to much the same effect before the House Armed Services Committee on 23 March.¹²⁶¹

COLOMBIA SEEKS AID IN BUT ALSO BEYOND THE U.S.

On 24 March 2000 the government of Colombia arrested a FARC member suspected of complicity in the murder in March 1999 of the three US missionaries who had been working with the Uwa Indians.¹²⁶² Given the state resources required to identify and pinpoint the

¹²⁵⁶ Francis Fukuyama, "Colombia Deserves U.S. Help," *The Wall Street Journal*, 28th March 2000.

¹²⁵⁷ "Urgent Aid," *The Washington Post* 2000.

¹²⁵⁸ "US-Colombia Washington Post Editorial Backs Aid to Colombia," *EFE News Service* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹²⁵⁹ Alan Farm, "Lott opposing \$9 billion for Kosovo, Colombia involvement," *Times-Picayune*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹²⁶⁰ Buckwalter, Struckman, and Gvosdev, "Continuity and Change in U.S. Policy toward Colombia, 1999–2009." p. 20.

¹²⁶¹ Wilson, Christopher. "Colombia Aid Package Hits Roadblock in Us Congress." In, *Reuters News* (2000). Published electronically 23rd March. Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹²⁶² "Cayò Gonzalez," *El Tiempo*, 24th March 2000.

whereabouts of individual agents in a nation of millions, and the scarcity of such resources in Colombia at that time, no one could doubt after this that the Colombians were making every effort to win American acceptance of their invitation to soft intervention. At the same time, the Colombian state's need of helpful outside intervention had become so urgent that the Pastrana team was actively exploring all conceivable sources of such help beyond Washington. Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto was travelling to Japan to that end on the same day (24 March) to meet with Japanese PM Obuchi.¹²⁶³ Pastrana had already met Obuchi once, a year earlier, and had hoped then to secure financial and moral support. The initiative in Plan Colombia was at all times with the Colombians; they were passionately inviting the intervention of those foreign states which *both* had the needed resources and could be trusted to respect their sovereignty in the long term.

Pastrana goes to Europe

Accordingly, a few weeks later, on 13 April 2000, Pastrana himself visited London in hopes of winning support from the EU for Plan Colombia. He met with Tony Blair to request Britain's help with money laundering controls. He gave a speech in Canning House stressing the fact that drug-trafficking was not a Colombian problem only, and noting that many ingredients for manufacturing cocaine were produced and by the drug lords purchased in Europe. Pastrana highlighted the social element of Plan Colombia, arguing that of the US\$7.5 billion projected for Plan Colombia, '\$900m would go towards social spending for the poorest Colombians'.¹²⁶⁴ An important outcome of this meeting was that the UK decided to mobilise support within the EU for Pastrana's peace process with the FARC and ELN. The UK also agreed to host a meeting with them later in June.¹²⁶⁵ This took place on 19 June, when Pastrana and members of his Administration met in London to preliminarily discuss the involvement of the EU in Plan Colombia and to prepare a formal meeting in Madrid about it in the first week of July.¹²⁶⁶ Pastrana divulged that he would be seeking US\$1 billion in aid

¹²⁶³ "Obuchi says Japan supports Colombia's peace efforts," *Japan Policy & Politics* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/Inacademic>.

¹²⁶⁴ Paul Sullivan, "Colombia turns to Europe in aid call," *Financial Times*, 14th April 2000.

¹²⁶⁵ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia."

¹²⁶⁶ "La Antesala del Plan Colombia," *El Tiempo*, 10th May 2000.

from Europe.¹²⁶⁷

Colombian officials in Washington

Mauricio Cardenas, Director of *Planeación*, travelled to Washington on 30 May to discuss with IMF Director Horst Köhler. Colombia's need for foreign aid from all quarters. While in Washington he also met with the Presidents of the IDB and the World Bank,¹²⁶⁸ to whom he stressed the importance of Plan Colombia if development were to reach the lowest classes of Colombian society. He lobbied their support for the July meeting in Madrid, where Colombia hoped to win aid from various European countries toward the estimated total cost of (greater) Plan Colombia of US\$7.5 billion.¹²⁶⁹ The IDB, the World Bank and the UN had already been instrumental in lobbying various European officials to attend the 13 April meeting in London, also attended by non-European officials from Japan, Canada and the US, and by a few NGOs like Amnesty International.¹²⁷⁰ The Colombians' optimism at this point¹²⁷¹ about the prospects of winning aid from Europe was doomed to be dashed: the Europeans never followed through on their well-wishing with more than token amounts of material assistance. The Colombians' tireless energy in pursuing these mirages of hope evidences nonetheless that the initiative was always theirs in inviting the soft intervention of more powerful states in Colombia's internal affairs, including but definitely not limited to the Unipolar Hegemon.

THE END-GAME: DEBATES IN THE U.S. CONGRESS

By 28 March it had transpired that the Hastert-Lott agreement was not going to block aid to Colombia. It was reported that Lott had said, 'Congress will probably work on those bills into the fall ... he [hoped] money for Kosovo and Colombia can be provided in one of them and approved within the next two months'.¹²⁷² This suggests he favoured the aid itself, merely

¹²⁶⁷ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (*Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002*).

¹²⁶⁸ "Colombian Planning Director to Discuss Politics Aid with IMF".

¹²⁶⁹ Interview by Author with Mauricio Cardenas (*Director of the National Planning Department of Colombia: 1999-2000*).

¹²⁷⁰ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (*Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000*).

¹²⁷¹ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (*Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002*).

¹²⁷² Farm, "Lott opposing \$9 billion for Kosovo, Colombia involvement".

baulking at the omnibus \$9billion pork barrel.¹²⁷³ Given the opposition in both Houses of Congress to any expenditure increases at all for Fiscal Year 2000, H.R.3908 did not reach the floor right away after being voted out of the Appropriations Committee. Three weeks passed before it could be timetabled for consideration on 29 March 2000. The day before the debate, the House Committee on Rules had decided that only amendments purporting to alter the amount of funds appropriated by the bill would be in order, with the exception of amendments specially permitted.¹²⁷⁴ It did not appear that Congress was giving hegemony any great priority.

Highlighting the scepticism with which Plan Colombia was then viewed in Congress, a total of nine cost-cutting or specially permitted amendments were offered at this stage. Representatives Obey (D-WI), Paul (R-TX), Ramstad (R-MN) and Taylor (D-MS) each proposed an amendment to curtail or condition the aid package. Representatives Delahunt (D-MA), Farr (D-CA), Gilman (R-NY) and Goss (R-FL) offered amendments to impose specific conditions respecting the human rights section of the bill. The ninth amendment, proposed by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), would have reduced the sums earmarked for military aid.¹²⁷⁵

The amendments proposed by Pelosi, Obey and Ramstad – some of the harshest, most outspoken critics of Plan Colombia – were also the most drastic. Pelosi's would have eliminated a centrepiece of the aid package—the \$51 million to the Colombian military for its Push into Southern Colombia. This amendment was viewed as a mere rehash of her previous one to divert the money in the bill to her own drug rehabilitation programme, an idea that had gained little support in committee. The Rules Committee had sought to forestall this in a way fair to the other members of the House by prohibiting only amendments that would divert the aid appropriations altogether, but Pelosi exploited this loophole so as to 'open-up the debate on the House Floor, allowing twenty-two Representatives to make speeches supporting [her] amendment'. After four hours of speeches, Pelosi's amendment was stricken by voice vote. Had the Democrats still had a majority, things might have turned out differently.

Rep. Obey reintroduced his amendment delaying a vote on the military aid package until July, to cause it to be considered apart from the emergency supplementary appropriations bill

¹²⁷³ Ibid.

¹²⁷⁴ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²⁷⁵ Ibid.

then being debated. This was defeated along partisan lines 239-186.¹²⁷⁶ Rep. Ramstad's proposal, the most drastic, 'would have cut the entire \$1.6 billion of counternarcotics aid',¹²⁷⁷ but was voted down 262-159. Although both amendments failed, the yea votes – 186 and 159, or 43% and 37% of the total, respectively – sent a message that could not have been lost on Plan Colombia's principals and sponsors: its approval was not to be taken for granted. It had been assumed at the start of 2000 that the bill might meet some resistance but would pass fairly easily.¹²⁷⁸

House of Representatives approves \$1.7 billion for Colombia

After two full days of deliberations, on 30 March the House voted 263-146 to enact the 2000 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act,¹²⁷⁹ a US\$12.7 billion appropriation of which Colombia's share was US\$1.418 billion.¹²⁸⁰ Amendments had reallocated more money to displaced persons—\$50 million instead of the original \$39.5 million. It also imposed the lower cap of 300 on the number of US military personnel permitted to operate on Colombian territory at any one time.¹²⁸¹

US Senate considers Plan Colombia

It took more than a month for the Senate to consider a bill appropriating funds for Plan Colombia, partly owing to Senator Lott's control of the legislative calendar. He was reluctant to consider an emergency appropriations bill, suspicious that the House was manoeuvring to 'bust the budget'.¹²⁸² In the end, Lott agreed to consider the bill as an attachment to the 2001 budget, but only if divided between two separate appropriation bills: the Foreign Operations Appropriation Bill (S.2522) and the Military Construction Appropriations Bill (S.2521).¹²⁸³

¹²⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷⁷ Crandall, *Driven by drugs : U.S. policy toward Colombia*. p. 151.

¹²⁷⁸ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²⁷⁹ Eric Schmitt, "House passes Bill to help Colombia fight drug trade," *The New York Times*, 31st March 2000.

¹²⁸⁰ Serafino, "Colombia: U.S. Assistance and Current Legislation."

¹²⁸¹ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000."

¹²⁸² Ibid.

¹²⁸³ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

Plan Colombia in the Senate Appropriations Committee

On 9 May 2000 the Senate Appropriations Committee began to consider aid to Colombia. After three hours of deliberations, the aid was approved 23 to 3 but not before undergoing severe cuts,¹²⁸⁴ from the US\$1.3 billion passed by the House earlier in March to US\$934 million.¹²⁸⁵ Most of the cuts ‘came from a change in the type of helicopters that would be delivered to the new battalions’,¹²⁸⁶ cheaper Hueys having been substituted for the 30 Blackhawks.¹²⁸⁷

Limitations Placed by the Senate Appropriations Committee on 9 May

Apart from cutting the amount appropriated, the Committee imposed four limiting conditions on expenditure. First were human rights strictures, ‘conditioning’ aid on the performance of the Colombian security services in respecting human rights. It required the Colombian state to try military personnel accused of human rights violations in civilian courts, to guarantee objectivity and fairness. The State Department was tasked with decertifying Colombia if the transfer to civilian courts did not happen as required, or if the state demurred to prosecute violators inside its security forces and the paramilitaries.¹²⁸⁸

The second limiting condition restricted aerial fumigation of coca plantations with a view to protecting Colombian peasants from hazardous chemicals. The use of appropriated funds for fumigation was specifically prohibited ‘unless the Surgeon General [shall have reported] to the appropriate congressional committees that the herbicide [is] safe and nontoxic to human health, and the Environmental Protection Agency [shall have reported likewise] that it [does] not contaminate water or leach in soil’.¹²⁸⁹

The third and fourth conditions were both sponsored by Senator Byrd of West Virginia. One imposed a cap of 250 on the number of US military personnel deployable to Colombia at any one time (excluding soldiers assigned to the diplomatic mission); and 100 on the number of

¹²⁸⁴ "Ayuda de E.U., a un debate," *El Tiempo*, 10th May 2000.

¹²⁸⁵ Schmitt, "Senate Fights Snags Aid Bill for Kosovo and Colombia."

¹²⁸⁶ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000." p. 4.

¹²⁸⁷ David Rogers, "Senate Panel Backs 2001 Cutoff for Kosovo troop funding," *The Wall Street Journal*, 10th May 2000.

¹²⁸⁸ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 9.

US civilians working under contracts paid-for under Plan Colombia. The Bill authorised the President to seek a waiver from Congress if he deemed it necessary to national security.¹²⁹⁰

The other was that ‘future appropriations for counter-drug activities in Colombia [were] to be authorized as well as appropriated’.¹²⁹¹ This meant that every year any funds appropriated for aid to Colombia would have to be ‘authorized’ or approved all over again. Attached to the Military Construction Appropriations Bill (S.2521), aid for counter-narcotics from that Bill was limited to \$45 million. This could be waived by joint resolution of Congress. The actual amount approved by the full Senate on May 18 coincided with this funding almost exactly, giving Colombia \$48.4 million.¹²⁹²

The committee considered a fifth condition sponsored by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), who sought to cap the sum total of appropriations over the whole life of the Plan to \$100 million, effectively killing it, but this was voted down 11 to 15.¹²⁹³ The slimness of this vote indicated that serious opposition could be expected in the days ahead,¹²⁹⁴ giving both Administrations worries about what might happen once the two appropriations bills reached the Senate floor.

Colombia reacts to the Senate

Officially Colombia reacted with cautious optimism to this news, but behind the scenes Pastrana worried that the Plan might be gutted for practical purposes on the floor of the Senate.¹²⁹⁵ The White House was also dissatisfied that the conditionality disallowed the national security waiver that could avoid urgently needed aid being held up by human rights activists.¹²⁹⁶ In the past conditionality attached to aid to Colombia had always been waivable. Pastrana instructed Moreno to inform the Clinton Administration unofficially that they were disappointed, that something needed to be done to restore the sums originally requested.¹²⁹⁷

¹²⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹²⁹¹ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000." p.5.

¹²⁹² Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹²⁹³ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000."

¹²⁹⁴ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹²⁹⁵ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹²⁹⁶ Richard O'Connor, (2007. Interview by author. Washington, DC, April, 10).

¹²⁹⁷ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

Pastrana then asked Pickering for further consultations; two days later, Pickering arrived in Cartagena for yet another *tête-à-tête* with Pastrana.¹²⁹⁸ He was joined by Romero and Beers on this trip.

Pickering, Romero and Beers in Colombia again—meeting Pastrana in Cartagena

Pickering met with Pastrana on 12 May 2000 to review what the Senate Appropriations Committee had done to the aid package.¹²⁹⁹ Perceived as essential to winning over Congress, Pickering's presence in Colombia was an important event. At this point the Colombians probably knew they had the Permanent Bureaucracy of the State Department fully on board. But bureaucrats acting alone rarely wield the political clout to see legislation through Congress. Pastrana may have felt the White House had been too reticent and should handle the affair more robustly, confronting Congressmen about their 'delinquency'. Pickering's visit was an opportunity to rekindle momentum, as he had access to key appointees like Secretary of State Albright. It was clear that Clinton himself, preoccupied with the Presidential election in November, could not prioritise Plan Colombia. Pickering and company were publicly addressing whomever it might concern in the US that Colombia was deeply committed to the war on drugs. Pastrana used the occasion to announce that 150 clandestine laboratories had been destroyed in just one week in Catatumbo, and simultaneously that one of the biggest narco-trafficking gangs, the Bogotá Cartel, had been taken down.¹³⁰⁰

Fernandez de Soto in an interview with the author said that this announcement was meant to persuade Americans that Colombia was still managing by dint of sheer effort to be effective against drug-trafficking, but without additional aid, the effort would prove futile in the end.¹³⁰¹ He recalled telling Romero and Beers in the Cartagena meetings that the delays in Congress were directly impacting implementation of the latest counter-narcotic strategies.¹³⁰²

This was to be reiterated, as stopping the flow of drugs drove US policy. 'Plan Colombia was

¹²⁹⁸ "Fugaz paso de Pickering," *El Tiempo*, 10th May 2000.

¹²⁹⁹ "Colombia y E.U. afinan estrategia," *El Tiempo*, 13th May 2000.

¹³⁰⁰ "Coincidencia o Calculado," *El Tiempo*, 14th May 2000.

¹³⁰¹ *Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).*

¹³⁰² *Ibid.*

presented in the United States as a key component of a counter-narcotics strategy'.¹³⁰³ Here lay *terra firma* common to Bogotá and Washington. A signal part of Colombian strategy was to speak a language that would be understood in the US.¹³⁰⁴ Simultaneously, however, the Colombians were showing Europe the other Janus face, presenting their Plan 'as a means of furthering the peace negotiations and economic reconstruction'.¹³⁰⁵

On 14 May Pickering went on to Bogota for meetings with the Colombian security apparatus, and heard the sore discontent in the Colombian army that the Senate Committee had switched Huey helicopters for Blackhawks, deeply damaged the goal of rehabilitating the army. Hueys were not designed for Colombia's difficult terrain.¹³⁰⁶ While in Bogota, Pickering reiterated the Clinton Administration's staunch commitment to Plan Colombia, and promised to help formulate a strategy for convincing the Europeans that their aid was also badly needed.¹³⁰⁷

Clinton appeases Colombia, urging Congress to act

Pickering returned on May 15 to brief Clinton on his latest findings. Pastrana recalled that he had promised to keep prodding Congress despite fierce opposition.¹³⁰⁸ The Cartagena meeting occasioned a refocus of the joint lobbying strategy, as the next day Clinton himself came out publicly to urge Congress to act more promptly and constructively on his aid package for the sake of national security:¹³⁰⁹ 'Colombia is in crisis, and every day that aid is delayed costs lives down there and up here'.¹³¹⁰

¹³⁰³ Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian labyrinth: the synergy of drugs and insurgency and its implications for regional stability*.p.64.

¹³⁰⁴ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).

¹³⁰⁵ Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian labyrinth: the synergy of drugs and insurgency and its implications for regional stability*.. p.64.

¹³⁰⁶ Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).

¹³⁰⁷ "Pickering, el centro delantero del plan."

¹³⁰⁸ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹³⁰⁹ "Clinton says delays in aid to Colombia a mistake," *Reuters News*(2000).

¹³¹⁰ Tom Carter, "Funding for war on drugs delayed," *The Washington Times*, 16th May 2000. p. A14.

Pastrana goes on the offensive

On 18 May Pastrana announced that his security forces had seized the biggest shipment of cocaine *en route* so far in the year 2000: 5.2 tons destined for the US.¹³¹¹ Pastrana highlighted that its street value was approximately \$1.2 billion – equal to the amount he had requested in aid from the US.¹³¹² He warned, however, that the seizure had barely been possible due to the Colombia's precarious fiscal state, and appealed to the international community to help.¹³¹³ He pointed out that the seizure had saved the US and Europe millions of dollars in interdiction, prevention and borders securitisation costs.¹³¹⁴ Two days later, on May 20, while speaking at the Colombian Naval Academy, he announced the seizure of 1.2 more tonnes of cocaine that very morning, advertising that in the course of that year so far, Colombian security forces had destroyed 43 laboratories processing 476 tonnes of coca leaf with 9700 gallons of coca base; more than 30,500 coca plants; and had seized more than 10.4 tonnes of cocaine.¹³¹⁵

The full Senate swings into action

After days of disagreement over how to deal with the appropriations bills containing aid for Plan Colombia, one of them (S.2521) was slated for floor debate on 18 May 2000. The first motion was to remove aid to Colombia from the larger appropriations bill that included monies for peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. The Senate voted '53 to 47 to remove the measure [Plan Colombia] from the larger bill'.¹³¹⁶ Fearing the result might become narrower, Clinton asked Vice-President Gore to preside over Senate proceedings to break any tie votes.¹³¹⁷

It had transpired that not only did major disagreements subsist between House and Senate, as

¹³¹¹ Eduardo Char Mutis, "Cargamento vale lo del Plan Colombia," *El Tiempo*, 18th May 2000.

¹³¹² Ibid.

¹³¹³ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).

¹³¹⁴ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*.

¹³¹⁵ Cancilleria-Colombiana, *Palabras del presidente de la República, Andrés Pastrana Arango, con motivo del zarpe del Buque Escuela Armada de la República de Colombia "Gloria" (Mayo 20 del 2000)*.

¹³¹⁶ "Urgent--US Senate defeats motion to cut off Kosovo spending," *Agence France Presse*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/06. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³¹⁷ Ibid.

witness the scrimmage between Lott and Hastert, but also inside the Senate. Bitter reproaches had been exchanged between Lott and Minority Leader Daschle (D-SD).¹³¹⁸ Congressional observers pointed out that, as this concerned an appropriations bill, which must originate in the House under the Constitution, the Senate only being allowed to amend the bill, Democrat Senators might finesse Rule 16 ‘barring non-germane amendments to appropriation bills’ to impose their own language on a bill that had enjoyed strong Republican support,¹³¹⁹ to ‘show’ Republicans their unwillingness blindly to support the majority bloc.¹³²⁰

In the end the Senate approved the Military Construction Bill by 96-4 with no changes to the conditions or the sums approved by the Appropriations Committee, including the \$45 million cap on the Colombian government.¹³²¹ The Senate also approved S.2521 appropriating a total of US\$202.2 million, with most the funds – US\$153.8 million or 76% – actually going to US agencies. Of the latter sum US\$116.5 million was allocated to US agency regional operations in known trafficking and production areas like Ecuador and Aruba; the other US\$37.3 million was appropriated for interdiction operations by US Customs and DEA.¹³²²

Of the 34% of appropriations left, US\$48.4 million was given to Colombia of which US\$30.4 million was for counternarcotics training under the Push into Southern Colombia Program.¹³²³ The other US\$18 million was appropriated for interdiction efforts by the Colombians: US\$5 million for radar operations; US\$8 million for aircraft upgrades and air support; US\$5 million for ground interdiction.¹³²⁴ Lott tried to ‘move quickly to the foreign operations appropriations bill (S.2522) [but] was blocked by Democrats’.¹³²⁵ The skirmishing seemed never-ending.

¹³¹⁸ Matthew Tully and Sumana Chatterjee, "Senate Business breaks down amid acrimony," *Congressional Quarterly Daily Monitor* (2000).

¹³¹⁹ Ibid.

¹³²⁰ Ibid.

¹³²¹ Jim Abrams, "Administration prevails in vote on Kosovo," *Associated Press* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/06. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³²² Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹³²³ Ibid.

¹³²⁴ Ibid.

¹³²⁵ Tully and Chatterjee, "Senate Business breaks down amid acrimony."

Clinton keeps pushing Plan Colombia

Clinton nonetheless maintained the offensive. On 22 May 2000, while delivering a commencement address at the US Coast Guard Academy, he said most of the hard drugs consumed in the US originated in Colombia, with ‘ninety percent of the cocaine consumed in America, two thirds of the heroin seized on our streets comes from or through just one country, Colombia’.¹³²⁶ Clinton demanded the Senate passes his original bill of US\$1.6 billion in aid for Colombia without more delay; ‘it is a national security issue’,¹³²⁷ he asserted. The sum requested was but a fraction of Pastrana’s greater Plan; passing it would impact the US budget negligibly but defeating it would damage the US. Colombia was not fighting for its own stability only, but to preserve the ‘lives of our kids too’.¹³²⁸ To link drugs to national security and the welfare of youth was to goad Congress, above all Senators facing re-election who could not afford to be perceived as soft on drugs. Earlier in May, Gen. Wilhelm had also lobbied Congress, pointing out that the FARC was the only known insurgency with self-sustaining capabilities – producing more than ‘1 million [dollars] a day from its criminal enterprises’.¹³²⁹

Summer in the Caribbean: more US Senators travel to Colombia

On 31 May Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) travelled to Colombia to confer personally with Pastrana over the condition of human rights in Colombia.¹³³⁰ In a Congressional hearing in March 2000, he expressed concerns ‘about Colombia’s failure to prosecute crimes committed by paramilitary groups ... those gunmen had taken on the military’s “dirty work”’.¹³³¹ After meeting with Pastrana and seeing the situation first hand, he was finally ‘convinced the aid is necessary’,¹³³² stressing how surprised he had been to discover the level of sophistication

¹³²⁶ William J. Clinton, "Commencement address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (WCPD)* 36, no. 20 (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/21. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹³²⁷ Ibid.

¹³²⁸ Ibid.

¹³²⁹ "Help for Colombia," *The Gazette* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/06. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³³⁰ "U.S. Senator Studies Aid for Colombia," *Xinhua News Agency*(2000).

¹³³¹ "U.S. Senate skeptical on Colombia drug aid package".

¹³³² Mary Beth Warner, "Launtenberg Backs Aid Package to Colombia," *The Record*, 9th June 2000.p. A08.

drug producers had attained, and the vastness of their resources that rendered them more powerful than the Colombian state. He called for the appropriations to be quickly passed.¹³³³

Senators Reed and Durbin in Cartagena

Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), arriving in Cartagena on 16 June, were also won over by the royal treatment by Pastrana and his inner circle. Meeting with Defence Minister Luis Fernando Ramirez and other senior figures in the government, the two Senators were taken on a tour of areas where narco-trafficking was being targeted by the Colombian army.¹³³⁴ After their brief visit to Colombia, Senator Durbin stated that he had been persuaded to support the bill,¹³³⁵ although voicing doubts whether it sufficiently protected human rights. He would continue to support the amendment he had proposed obligating the Colombians to prosecute in civilian court soldiers who commit human right violations.¹³³⁶ Senator Reed also had a positive experience, returning to Washington to support procurement of Blackhawks instead of Hueys.¹³³⁷ With such 'higher junkets' to Colombia Pastrana's team were 'ploughing the fields' to prepare for the debates in the Senate; just as they had been doing all along.

Plan Colombia on the floor of the Senate

On 21 June 2000 the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill (S. 2522) arrived on the Senate floor for consideration. Some analysts claim the delays prompted by Sen. Lott facilitated lobbying by three powerful interested parties: 'oil companies, helicopter manufacturers, and the Colombian government'.¹³³⁸

Defeated amendments

The first day of the consideration was dedicated to opponents who would offer amendments to S.2522. It was their best shot at bringing down Plan Colombia on the floor of the Senate. Three such amendments in particular testify to the dissent deep in the heart of the hegemon, if

¹³³³ Ibid.

¹³³⁴ US-Congress, "Congressional Record-Senate June 21, 2000.."

¹³³⁵ Deidgre Shesgreen, "Durbin will back anti-drug aid deal for Colombia; visit persuades Senator to support \$1.6 billion plan," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 20th June 2000.

¹³³⁶ Ibid.

¹³³⁷ John E. Mulligan, "Political Scene-Licht hits the airwaves for Senate nod," *The Providence Journal*, 26th June 2000; *ibid*.

¹³³⁸ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000." p.5.

not indeed to fear of 'acting hegemonic'. The first was Senator Dodd's (D-CT), concerning helicopters unsurprisingly. He was being intensely lobbied by Sikorsky-United Technologies Company, makers of the Blackhawk based in his home State of Connecticut.¹³³⁹ It would have mandated a *floor* of \$110 million under the sum to be spent on helicopters, enough for at least 15 Blackhawks.¹³⁴⁰ The amendment also vested discretion in the Pentagon (as experts) to advise their Colombian counterparts which helicopters were best procured.¹³⁴¹ Dodd was well aware the Colombian army had no use for any helicopters besides Blackhawks, but they were significantly more expensive than Hueys.¹³⁴² Dodd's amendment was narrowly defeated 47-51. Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska – a Republican – led the opposition, calling the Blackhawks 'the tip of the sword going into another Vietnam'.¹³⁴³

The second bill-killer was proposed by Senator Wellstone (D-MN) to divert US\$225 million of the appropriation to domestic demand-side programmes providing addiction treatment and psychiatric services.¹³⁴⁴ The US should focus on domestic programmes. The Colombian army was notorious for its ties with the paramilitaries; helping it would only make matters worse. The amendment was itself 'killed 89-11'.¹³⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that Senator Durbin had been a co-sponsor of the Wellstone amendment until his visit to Cartagena, which had changed his mind completely.¹³⁴⁶

¹³³⁹ David Lagesse, "Texas Lawmakers Push Forth-Worth Made Helicopters for Colombian Aid," *Knight Ridder Tribune Business News (KRTBN)*(2000).

¹³⁴⁰ Jim Lobe, "Politics-US: Colombia Drug Package Moves Closer to Passage," *Inter Press Service*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³⁴¹ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹³⁴² *Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).*

¹³⁴³ Lobe, "Politics-US: Colombia Drug Package Moves Closer to Passage".

¹³⁴⁴ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹³⁴⁵ Miles A. Pomper, "Leader Settle on \$1.3 Billion for Colombia's War on Drugs," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/06. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³⁴⁶ Shesgreen, "Durbin will back anti-drug aid deal for Colombia; visit persuades Senator to support \$1.6 billion plan."

The last killer was the most radical. Offered by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), it would have capped the total appropriation over the life of Plan Colombia, this time at US\$200 million.¹³⁴⁷ The amendment addressed fears that Colombia would prove another Vietnam and that the aid would end up feeding a civil war: 'I wonder how long would it be until we read the first news story of this [aid] showing up in the hands of rebels'.¹³⁴⁸ His bid to cut US\$734 million out of the Plan was overwhelmingly defeated 79-19.¹³⁴⁹

These defeats confirmed that the Senate was on track to support Plan Colombia with US\$936 million for FY2000 and FY2001,¹³⁵⁰ which, however, did not mean it would pass immediately with no additional changes. At this point a number of Senators took the opportunity to voice support for the bill. Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), for instance, spoke in favour of Colombia, praising President Pastrana for putting himself on the line of fire, 'because he [understood] what the stake [was] for his country'.¹³⁵¹ Biden had met Pastrana on a junket earlier in April, becoming convinced that aid was essential to bring their state back from the brink.¹³⁵² Biden's admiration of Pastrana was seconded by Senators Durbin and Reed back from junkets of their own.¹³⁵³ Majority Leader Lott also expressed support:¹³⁵⁴ despite his earlier, tactical opposition to the bill, he had been convinced all along, and had pledged to Pastrana in January 2000 that he would support the Plan in the end.¹³⁵⁵ Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH), in October 1999 one of the *Alianza Act's* sponsors,¹³⁵⁶ voiced support

¹³⁴⁷ Christopher Marquis, "Bankrolling Colombia's War on Drugs: House and Senate Will now Reconcile Bill," *The New York Times*, 23rd June 2000.

¹³⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p.A11.

¹³⁴⁹ "Senate set to Approve Foreign Ops Bill; House OKs VA-HUD," *National Journal's Congress Daily* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵¹ Pomper, "Leader Settle on \$1.3 Billion for Colombia's War on Drugs".

¹³⁵² *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

¹³⁵³ Mulligan, "Political Scene-Licht hits the airwaves for Senate nod."

¹³⁵⁴ Pomper, "Leader Settle on \$1.3 Billion for Colombia's War on Drugs".

¹³⁵⁵ "Congreso Respald a Pastrana."

¹³⁵⁶ US-Congress, "Alliance with Colombia and the Andean Region (ALIANZA) Act of 1999".

while bashing the Clinton Administration for doing too little in the past to support Colombia.¹³⁵⁷

Amendments approved by voice vote

Some amendments passed by voice vote, which meant they encountered too little opposition to justify tallying and recording the yeas and nays.¹³⁵⁸ The Congressional Record records five such amendments. First, the Shelby amendment inserted a national security waiver regarding the number of US military personnel allowed in at any one time.¹³⁵⁹ This was supplemented by an amendment of Senator Byrd (D-WV) to relax ‘conditions and limitations on funds for and personnel in Colombia’.¹³⁶⁰ Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) brought a third amendment that condemned the FARC’s involvement in kidnapping. It recalled the January 1993 kidnapping of three Catholic missionaries who by then would have become if still alive the ‘longest-held Americans hostages’ ever.¹³⁶¹ Though presumed dead, the amendment enabled Inhofe to state on the record that US aid to Colombia shall not be construed because of the peace process as condoning the FARC’s misdeeds, and that the US was aware of their illegal enterprises.¹³⁶²

A fourth amendment proposed by Senator Larkin (D-IA) clarified the purposes of the money appropriated for child soldiers.¹³⁶³ Larkin specifically wanted to ensure that the statute would specify deadlines and minimal sums for ‘demobilizing and rehabilitation activities’.¹³⁶⁴ The fifth amendment of Senators Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) was for ‘adding and clarifying reporting and certification requirements’.¹³⁶⁵

¹³⁵⁷ Pomper, "Leader Settle on \$1.3 Billion for Colombia's War on Drugs".

¹³⁵⁸ Walter J. Oleszek, "Voting in the Senate: Forms and Requirements," (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service 2008).

¹³⁵⁹ US-Congress, "Shelby Amendments Nos. 3514-3515," in *Congressional Records-Senate S5561-S5580*, U.S. Senate (Washington, DC2000).

¹³⁶⁰ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)." p.10.

¹³⁶¹ US-Congress, "Inhofe Amendment No. 3528," in *Congressional Records-Senate S5561-S5580*, U.S. Senate (Washington, DC2000). p.5568.

¹³⁶² Ibid.

¹³⁶³ US-Congress, "Harkin Amendment No. 3499," in *Congressional Records-Senate S5561-S5580*, U.S. Senate (Washington, DC2000).

¹³⁶⁴ Ibid. p.5564.

¹³⁶⁵ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)." p.10.

US Senate approves Plan Colombia

On 22 June the US Senate approved US\$936 million for Colombia by a 95-4 vote.¹³⁶⁶ The aid package was added to the same H.R.4425 that on 18 May S.2521 had been added to.¹³⁶⁷ All in all, in conjunction with the Military Construction Bill (S.2521), the amount appropriated by the Senate totalled ‘\$1.138 million in FY2000 emergency supplemental funds’.¹³⁶⁸

The major changes made by the Senate meant that a conference committee of members from both Houses had to be convened to iron out the differences.¹³⁶⁹ This Congressional procedure is often criticized as the ‘least transparent step of the process’¹³⁷⁰ because of the lack of public access to the details of internal negotiations. Senate’s approval prompted President Clinton to urge the committee to reach an agreement promptly to show the world the US was committed to ‘fighting the drug wars in Colombia and to strengthening the oldest democracy in Latin America’.¹³⁷¹

The bicameral Conference Committee (29-30 June)

A consensus between influential members of both Houses was reached allowing outstanding issues to be resolved before the 4 July legislative break.¹³⁷² The conference settled on a sum of US\$1.289 billion for the FY ending on 30 September 2001¹³⁷³ was a compromise between the Clinton Administration’s 7 February proposal of US\$1.272 billion, the House’s version of 30 March of US\$1.418 billion, and the Senate’s two bills of 18 May appropriation of US\$1.138 billion.¹³⁷⁴

The total amount earmarked for Colombia ended up only US\$860.3 million, or 66.7% of (and

¹³⁶⁶ "US Senate approves Colombian anti-drug aid package," *Agence France Presse*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/07. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³⁶⁷ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p.8.

¹³⁶⁹ Julian Borger, "US Senate clears way for Bogota drugs-war aid," *The Guardian*, 23rd June 2000.

¹³⁷⁰ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000." p.6.

¹³⁷¹ Borger, "US Senate clears way for Bogota drugs-war aid." p.16.

¹³⁷² Alan Fram, "House OKs \$11.2 billion for Colombia, disasters, Pentagon," *Associated Press* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³⁷³ US-Congress, "106th Congress Public Law 246," U.S. Congress (2000).

¹³⁷⁴ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

US\$160.3 million less than) the amount Clinton had requested.¹³⁷⁵ Almost half of that amount, US\$416.9 million, or 48.4%, was for 'helicopters, training, and other [military] assistance to three Colombian Army counternarcotic battalions'.¹³⁷⁶ Ultimately the sum of US\$1.289 billion agreed by the bicameral conference was US\$17 million more than the US\$1.272 billion that President Clinton requested back on 7 February.¹³⁷⁷

The conference agreed four limitations holding the Colombian army to certain standards as a condition for the aid.¹³⁷⁸ First, any helicopter suspected of being used to support guerrillas or paramilitaries must be returned to the US.¹³⁷⁹ Second, the State Department was prohibited to issue visas to any Colombians for travel to the US *e.g.* for training and/or procurement if they were suspected of links with the FARC, ELN and/or AUC.¹³⁸⁰ Third, it kept the cap of US\$45 million on funds given the DoD, and mandated that aid given by the DoD within the US\$45 million limit must be for non-lethal equipment like navigation or radar.¹³⁸¹ Finally, it imposed a maximal limit of 300 civilians and 500 soldiers on the number of US personnel authorised to be operative in Colombia at any one time, unless US forces came under attack.¹³⁸² Critics objected that while the final bill upheld human rights in theory, it undermined this in practice by authorising the President to waive these requirements for the sake of national security.¹³⁸³ On 29 June 2000 the House passed the conference bill by 306

¹³⁷⁵ Serafino, "Colombia: Conditions and U.S. Policy Options."

¹³⁷⁶ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)." p.11.

¹³⁷⁷ Serafino, "Colombia: U.S. Assistance and Current Legislation."

¹³⁷⁸ Vaicius, "El Plan Colombia: el debate en los Estados Unidos."

¹³⁷⁹ US-Congress, "Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2001."

¹³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸¹ Serafino, "Colombia: Plan Colombia Legislation and Assistance (FY2000-FY2001)."

¹³⁸² *Ibid.*

¹³⁸³ Vaicius and Isacson, "Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000."

110.¹³⁸⁴ Rep. David Obey expressed discontent, calling the bill ‘a profound mistake’.¹³⁸⁵ On the following day, the Senate passed it by voice vote.¹³⁸⁶

Victory in Washington, trouble in Bogotá

While the bicameral conference was still negotiating the compromise bill that would become the aid package to Colombia, the Pastrana Administration’s Janus face presented to the voters on the domestic scene was becoming badly tarnished for lack of concrete results. The rebels, out of touch with reality, prevented the peace process from advancing toward any material achievements. Pastrana had striven to get the Europeans not merely to donate money but also to participate with the Colombian State in building peace – so far in vain.

Pastrana’s domestic popularity keeps falling

Even as he and his team celebrated their victory in steering Plan Colombia through Congress, Pastrana’s own popularity at home was in steep decline; his ‘standing [was] sinking and even his supporters [feared] that his position [would] continue to deteriorate’.¹³⁸⁷ The problem was manifold: he had invested all his ‘cards’ on lobbying the US Congress; the peace process was moribund; the rebels had if anything redoubled their outrages; the economy was in recession; finally, accusations of corruption in his Administration had been publicised.¹³⁸⁸ The situation in Colombia was sombre to the point that *Semana*, the most widely circulated weekly current affairs magazine in the country, called it ‘a crisis without precedent’.¹³⁸⁹

At this point certain members of Pastrana’s team, including some who had played a key role in promoting Plan Colombia in Washington, came out with public acknowledgements that the counter-narcotics strategy would likely fail so long as US consumers demanded such a huge volume of cocaine. General Rosso Jose Serrano, after leaving office as Police Commander at the end of June, stated in an interview that Colombians would ‘rather see drug consumption

¹³⁸⁴ Fram, "House OKs \$11.2 billion for Colombia, disasters, Pentagon".

¹³⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁸⁶ Lisa Epatko, "Appropriations/Defense/Energy and Water," *Environment and Energy Daily* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://www.lexisnexis.com.library3.webster.edu/hottopics/lnacademic>.

¹³⁸⁷ Larry Rohter, "U.S. Helps Colombian Leader, But His Woes Pile Up at Home," *The New York Times*, 2nd July 2000.

¹³⁸⁸ *Interview by Author with Adrienne Foglia (Pastrana Foreign Press Secretary: 1998-2002)*, 22 August 2008.

¹³⁸⁹ Rohter, "U.S. Helps Colombian Leader, But His Woes Pile Up at Home."p.8.

drop than get any of this aid',¹³⁹⁰ an opinion widely shared in Pastrana's inner circle. But up to that point it had been essential to maintain a façade of solidarity with the US lest they queer their chances of getting aid,¹³⁹¹ which was really vital to the long-term rehabilitation of the state not a panacea for the illegal production of drugs. The significance of Plan Colombia for many Colombians was summed up by General Tapias, who described it as palliative medicine for a terminally ill patient.¹³⁹²

Re-engaging with the FARC

On 3 July 2000 the new High Peace Commissioner Camilo Gomez (Ricardo having resigned in the meantime) held a meeting with the FARC in the DMZ to exchange ideas about how to bring the four-decades-long conflict to an end, but the two sides ended up quarrelling. Manifestly, very generous compromises by both sides would be needed to bring the peace process off.¹³⁹³ Pastrana had been hoping to prove to the Europeans that the Colombian state was in earnest about bringing peace and stability to Colombia in hopes of involving them.¹³⁹⁴ The Colombian public, however, had lost all faith in the sincerity of the FARC, and was starting to demand a tough hand from Pastrana to punish their crimes. It was widely suspected that the FARC were using the DMZ as a safe haven to conduct illegal activities.¹³⁹⁵

On their side, the rebels wanted the state to fund alternative economic development in order to address the 'demands set forth by farmers from areas where illicit crops [were] grown, for sustainable and profitable alternatives, and solutions for the problems posed by the eradication of their illegal crops'.¹³⁹⁶ For this Pastrana was counting on money from European pockets; it was crucial to keep the talks going until the European Union could be

¹³⁹⁰ Justine Brown, "USA, Will Military-Style Tactics Work?," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 3rd July 2000.

¹³⁹¹ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

¹³⁹² *Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002).*

¹³⁹³ Jose Ramos, "Colombian government, FARC exchange peace proposals ", *Agence France Presse* (2000).

¹³⁹⁴ *Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).*

¹³⁹⁵ *Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).*

¹³⁹⁶ Yadira Ferrer, "Drugs-Colombia: Foreign Delegates sit down with Rebel leaders," *Inter Press Service*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/02/29. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

convinced of the importance of their participation in greater Plan Colombia.¹³⁹⁷

Pastrana is asked to get tough on the FARC

After endless rounds of negotiation, Colombian society was thoroughly fed up with guerrillas whose growing not declining violence terrorised ordinary people, especially the kidnappings extorting money from business owners.¹³⁹⁸ On 6 July 2000 the business community issued a strong statement calling on the Pastrana Administration to suspend peace talks until the FARC 'stop kidnapping civilians'.¹³⁹⁹ This followed reports that kidnap victims, including children, were being held in the DMZ. The peace process had proved illusory. As Ambassador James F. Mack explains, '[I]n effect [unmasking the FARC] is what he did ... whether that was his intent, I don't know ... [the FARC] were not sincere counterparts in that negotiation'.¹⁴⁰⁰

CLINTON SIGNS PLAN COLOMBIA INTO LAW

President Clinton signed Plan Colombia into law on 13 July 2000. Its enactment occasioned denunciations in Europe over its military emphasis seen as just another instance of American imperialism.¹⁴⁰¹ It was also denounced in Colombia, particularly by Pastrana's former rival for the Presidency, Horacio Serpa, who blamed Pastrana for wasting two years on diplomacy that produced US intervention rather than cooperation.¹⁴⁰² The FARC accused Pastrana of forging a military alliance with Washington that could only lead to more violence.¹⁴⁰³

Pastrana himself dismissed these reactions, asking critics to base their arguments on facts, not anti-American rhetoric. He spurned the claim that Colombia would become the next Vietnam, and reiterated that US aid was part of a larger scheme in which the main donor was Colombia

¹³⁹⁷ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (*Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000*).

¹³⁹⁸ Rohter, "U.S. Helps Colombian Leader, But His Woes Pile Up at Home."

¹³⁹⁹ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia."

¹⁴⁰⁰ Interview by author with Ambassador James F. Mack (*US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 2000-2002*).

¹⁴⁰¹ Stokes, *America's other war: terrorizing Colombia*.

¹⁴⁰² "Liberal leader Serpa criticizes military component of Plan Colombia," *BBC Monitoring Service: Latin America*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/03/04. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁴⁰³ "Pastrana Thanks U.S. Contribution to Plan Colombia," *Xinhua News Agency*(2000), Date Accessed: 2012/03/04. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

herself, investing US\$4 billion of its fiscal revenues into it.¹⁴⁰⁴ Pastrana was not worried about ‘militarism’. He had achieved the astonishing goal of making Colombia the largest recipient of US aid in the Western Hemisphere and third largest in the world after Israel and Egypt.¹⁴⁰⁵ ‘Who cares if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice?’, as he was fond of saying.¹⁴⁰⁶ This proverb of Deng Xiaoping had informed the lobbying efforts of Pastrana’s team from the very beginning.¹⁴⁰⁷

The Economist Intelligence Unit published a piece on the passage of Plan Colombia praising it as an example of ‘the *president’s* success in forging better relations with the U.S. [emphasis added]’.¹⁴⁰⁸ A few days earlier, on 23 June, *The Wall Street Journal* also published an article crediting Pastrana with wooing the US to intervene, and pointing out that narcotics, though one of the primary motives for US involvement in Plan Colombia, was not by itself sufficient to justify such a big commitment. The author credited ‘the sophistication that Colombia’s government and its president [Pastrana],¹⁴⁰⁹ showed with their strategy of lobbying Congress, calming their fears that Colombia would be the next Vietnam.

Clinton visited Colombia to ‘announce Plan Colombia’ on 30 August 2000. He would ‘pay a ten-hour visit to Cartagena ... to demonstrate US support for peace process and Plan Colombia. FARC maintain[ed a] high-level of attacks both before and during Clinton’s visit’.¹⁴¹⁰ A week ahead of this trip, on 23 August, President Clinton would ‘sign a waiver allowing the distribution of \$1.3 billion in aid to Colombia’.¹⁴¹¹ This was necessary because Colombia had failed to meet ‘human rights standards and implement drug-fighting measures

¹⁴⁰⁴ "Clinton Signs Colombia aid package, boost funds for Kosovo troops".

¹⁴⁰⁵ Gabriel Marcella, 2006. Interview by author. Carlisle, PA, April 2.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Pastrana Arango and Gómez, *La palabra bajo fuego*. p. 209.

¹⁴⁰⁷ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002)*.

¹⁴⁰⁸ "Colombia politics - US anti-drug aid could heighten armed conflict.," *Economist Intelligence Unit-Viewswire* (2000), Date Accessed: 2012/01/18. <http://global.factiva.com.gate2.library.lse.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx>.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Carla Anne Robbins, "Fields of Battle: How Bogota Wooed Washington to Open New War on Cocaine," *The Wall Street Journal*, 23rd June 2000.

¹⁴¹⁰ Foreign Office, "Briefing Kit for Government of the United Kingdom & Colombia."

¹⁴¹¹ "Clinton Clears Way for Aid to Colombia.," *The New York Times* 22nd August 2000. p. A10.

before aid dollars and equipment can be released. Colombia [was] certified as a partner in the war on drugs'.¹⁴¹²

CONCLUSION: THE ISSUE OF COLOMBIAN AGENCY

The evidence presented in this chapter and this phase of the narrative of Plan Colombia has shown the real impact of the agency of all parties in the international system, when brought to bear on the thesis that the agency of even the weakest states often does determine outcomes, notwithstanding every general tendency in favour of the hegemony of the great power(s). The Colombians steered the United States toward a larger scale of 'soft' intervention in their domestic affairs than otherwise the United States would have ventured on its own, owing to both their skills at planning and at executing their foreign policy. Skill at least has much to do with the success of agency, over and above structural influences like state size; as does sheer determination. Had the Colombians been less skilful or determined, Plan Colombia would likely never have become anything more than what it started out being – the daydream of one man. It may be true oftener than is realised by IR theory that the great powers and hegemons are at their 'wit's end' in many circumstances, and may even prove grateful for the guidance of lesser mortals.

Thus, the agency of the weakest, smallest state, even one verging upon failure, may avail to influence the greatest power in the international system under the right circumstances. It may even be the case that the smallest of states is nonetheless 'too big to fail' from the viewpoint of the big states on whom responsibility for the international system has been thrust. This is all the more true when the weak state is inviting the intervention of a great power in internal affairs in which the great power has some interest – indeed, such an invitation may be an act which *per se* must engage the stronger party's self-interests on *some* level. Beyond doubt, the Colombian state was obliged at every turn to modify and scale back its grand strategic ambitions for a new 'Marshall Plan' for itself, so as to accommodate the preferences for scale of intervention which its colossal patrons on both sides of the Atlantic were willing to commit to. Moreover, without exceptional contingent circumstances, such as coca cultivation in the Andes causing mayhem on the streets of nations and peoples far afield, or the 'romantic', generations-long rebel insurgency and its appeal to certain parties in the world

¹⁴¹² Holmes (2005) p. 36

system metropolises, each and every one of the Colombian government's best-laid plans to invite the intervention of powerful (yet relatively ethical) friends might well have come to nothing. The Colombians at this juncture in their history were extraordinarily lucky, but they also knew how to recognise their best chances and how to exploit them while they lasted.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

WHAT THIS STUDY REPRESENTS

Although not the focus of this study, it is widely agreed that Plan Colombia, when implemented after enactment on 13 July 2000, has brought Colombia back from the brink of possible state failure, notwithstanding its admitted shortcomings.¹⁴¹³ A comprehensive study by the *Center for Strategic and International Studies* that examined Colombia's situation from 1999 to 2007 found that the most fundamental 'achievement since the start of Plan Colombia ... has been Colombia's progress in strengthening legitimate state authority and restoring a much higher degree of security to the daily lives of most Colombians'.¹⁴¹⁴ Moreover, the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* showcases Colombia as a key example of a country that has succeeded in restoring its security, as documented in the section titled 'From violence to resilience: Restoring confidence and transforming institutions'.¹⁴¹⁵

Plan Colombia is seen *now in retrospect* as a nation-building exercise, but at the time of enactment it was seen very differently—certainly in the US—mainly as drug-interdiction effort. But nowadays Colombia is seen as one of the most potent of the rising developing nations, a defining component of CIVETS, the archetypal group of model, small to mid-sized developing countries (*viz.* Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa).¹⁴¹⁶

This dissertation, once again, was focused on the negotiating process that led to Plan Colombia and the agency behind it. The research necessary has spanned three continents (Europe, North America and South America), with interviews taking place in Bogotá, Washington, New York, Carlisle PA, The Hague, Paris, London, Bristol UK, and Miami.

¹⁴¹³ Shifter argues that evaluating the success of Plan Colombia is not that straightforward, see: Shifter, "Una década del Plan Colombia: por un nuevo enfoque".

¹⁴¹⁴ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, "Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999–2007." p. 51. For a good evaluation of how Plan Colombia has restored security and order to Colombia see: Bob Killebrew and Jennifer Bernal, "Crime Wars: Gangs, Cartels and U.S. National Security," (Center for a New American Security 2010).

¹⁴¹⁵ World Bank, *World development report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011). p. 99.

¹⁴¹⁶ John Greenwood, "After BRICs, CIVETS?," *The Wall Street Journal*, 19th September 2011. Also: Margolis Mac, "Colombia Unleashes the CIVETS," *Newsweek* 156, no. 2 (2010).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The evidence gathered from multiple sources, especially from elite interviews, and presented herein not only supports the original thesis and corollary, but also a host of other theses, with their premises, that transpired in the course of research. As noted in the introduction, it was intended to do more than verify or falsify the theses; formally or informally, exploration is probably a natural part of every empirical study.

This dissertation began with the positing of a thesis and corollary, that Colombia invited US ‘soft’ intervention, lacking the state capacity to reverse its slide toward failure; and that Plan Colombia was sought by Colombians for fundamentally different purposes than for the US. The evidence laid out in the foregoing story of Plan Colombia proves this thesis conclusively. This and other conclusory theses were inferred from that story and are set forth below. Arrayed under each one are intermediate inferences derived from this study as well, upon which they are respectively premised.

1. *Colombian history thoroughly determines Colombian politics today*
 - a. Colombia has historically been a weak state even inside its own territory
 - b. Regions peripheral to Bogotá have historically tended toward secession
 - c. Elite polarisation recurrently leading to violence has rendered violence normal
 - d. Bogotá has historically ‘survived’ by inviting intervention in its internal affairs
2. *The Colombians pursued their own strategic vision in Plan Colombia*
 - a. To the Colombians, Plan Colombia was primarily about state rebuilding
 - b. The Colombians’ original concept exceeded the US aid package
 - c. The Colombians specifically requested *military* aid
 - d. The Colombians’ representation of themselves was ‘Janus-faced’
 - e. Pastrana pursued peace with the guerrillas at the risk of alienating the US
3. *Colombian entrepreneurship chiefly drove Plan Colombia*
 - a. Colombian agency was entrepreneurial
 - b. Plan Colombia originated with the Colombians
 - c. Plan Colombia was in existence well before Pickering supposedly dictated it

- d. The Colombians proactively invited US intervention
 - e. Colombia waged one of the best lobbying campaigns in recent history
4. *The US strategic role in Plan Colombia was inertial and reactive*
- a. The Colombians more often than not acted while the US reacted
 - b. The war on drugs excepted, the US never domineered an unwilling Colombia
 - c. The guerrillas sabotaged US participation in the peace process
 - d. The US was ambivalent and even conflicted over the Colombian invitation
 - e. The Colombians had to adjust to the very real constraints on American power
5. *US and Colombian Executive elites informally 'fused'*
- a. Colombian, US and European elites form an integrated transnational elite class
 - b. US foreign policy councils accepted the Colombians as 'one of their own'
 - c. The terms of intervention were negotiated between both countries as peers

Each of these points will now be discussed in turn.

Colombian history thoroughly determines Colombian politics today

Plan Colombia sprang from a historically determined causal matrix that has produced a state with a chronic incapacity to project its sovereignty over the whole of the territory nominally subject to it, or to maintain civil peace within that territory. These circumstances have driven the strategic behaviour of Colombia's political elite toward, and determined the Colombian state's approach to the bilateral relationship with the United States. In general, Colombia's politics long ago became dependent on US intervention, in one form or another, to make up at least some of the Colombian state's defects.

Colombia has historically been a weak state even inside its own territory

There are weak states, and then there are weak states; some manage to keep tight control over the whole of their territory despite their weakness in relation to the great powers. The case of Colombia is different: its very difficult topology impeding communication between its manifold regions, combined with the sheer geographical remoteness of Bogotá¹⁴¹⁷ (originally an Andean gold-mining camp!), means that Colombia's political centre has historically been

¹⁴¹⁷ Bushnell, *The making of modern Colombia: a nation in spite of itself*.

out of touch with pivotally important areas, unable to project its will there.¹⁴¹⁸ The *locus classicus* is Panama, wherein Bogotá was rarely able to maintain civil order,¹⁴¹⁹ from its annexation to Gran Colombia in 1821 through to the 1903 secession.¹⁴²⁰ Colombia's economic development lagged, and the insufficient surplus and the resultant chronic state incapacity has exerted enormous repercussions on Colombian political culture and tradition, both internal and external. This matrix has yielded the patterns of political behaviour into which Plan Colombia neatly fits.

Regions peripheral to Bogotá have historically tended toward secession

This is a tendency that runs back to the founding period, and includes nearly every region of contemporary Colombia; Panama is only the most conspicuous case.¹⁴²¹ Indeed, Gran Colombia originally comprised Ecuador and Venezuela in addition to (contemporary) Colombia, but the former two seceded within a few years of the Founding.¹⁴²² Panamanian secession fever indeed also dates back to the Founding era, and continued practically unbroken until final success in 1903.¹⁴²³ The centrifugal tendency toward actual territorial secession came to an end after the Thousand Days War and the Panamanian secession.¹⁴²⁴ The centrifugal tendency of Colombia's internal politics simply took on more subtle forms, such as control of the countryside by forces hostile or indifferent to the political centre: guerrillas, paramilitaries, and drug cartels.¹⁴²⁵

Elite polarisation recurrently leading to violence has rendered violence normal

The history of Colombian politics since the very beginning is largely a history of civil war: there have been 40-something instances of intra-state war since the Founding versus only 3-4 instances of inter-state war in the same period. These circumstances of Colombian life have given rise to a political culture that accepts violence as a normal way, perhaps the preferred way of settling disputes. Ever since the elite compact which the US brokered in the wake of

¹⁴¹⁸ Marcella, *The United States and Colombia: the journey from ambiguity to strategic clarity*.

¹⁴¹⁹ Conniff, *Panama and the United States: the forced alliance*.

¹⁴²⁰ Roosevelt, "I Took Final Action in 1903."

¹⁴²¹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

¹⁴²² Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. and Lauderbaugh, *The history of Ecuador*.

¹⁴²³ Conniff, *Panama and the United States: the forced alliance*.

¹⁴²⁴ Palacios, *Between legitimacy and violence: a history of Colombia, 1875-2002*.

¹⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

the Thousand Days War, however, Colombia's elites although remaining polarised have taken to resolving their differences not by actually peaceful means, but through violence *by proxy*—allowing or instigating the lower classes to commit the violence in lieu of the elites themselves doing it.

Bogotá has historically 'survived' by inviting intervention in its internal affairs

Specifically, Bogotá has depended repeatedly throughout Colombia's history on external intervention for maintaining civil order on Colombian territory. Surprisingly, this dependency has not been limited to the US or other great powers, but includes even other small states like Ecuador, which was invited by Bogotá to suppress a secession crisis in Pasto Province in the mid-1840s!¹⁴²⁶ Perhaps the most notorious instance of this pattern was the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1846, by which the US became the guarantor of Colombian sovereignty over the Isthmus of Panama,¹⁴²⁷ in exchange for the right to intervene to keep order in the province.¹⁴²⁸ Plan Colombia's 'soft' US intervention was but the latest instance of this pattern, whereby the US has supplied whatever Bogotá needed to regain and reassert its sovereignty.¹⁴²⁹

The Colombians pursued their own strategic vision in Plan Colombia

The evidence overwhelmingly shows the Colombians resolutely pursuing a comprehensive strategic vision of their own from which they never swerved, except tactically in order to win needed US cooperation. Out of this background reality Plan Colombia emerged as a *modus vivendi* between the Colombian political elite's strategic priority of state rehabilitation and the US priority of interdicting the supply of Andean cocaine. The Colombians found a way of hitching their own strategic cart to the American horse, as it were.

To the Colombians Plan Colombia was primarily about state rebuilding

President Pastrana inherited one of the most difficult and dangerous situations for the central government in Bogotá in Colombia's long history. As Brownfield stated it, in 1998 the

¹⁴²⁶ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: fragmented land, divided society*.

¹⁴²⁷ Maurer and Yu, *The big ditch: how America took, built, ran, and ultimately gave away the Panama Canal*.

¹⁴²⁸ Conniff, *Panama and the United States: the forced alliance*.

¹⁴²⁹ Interview by author with Ambassador Thomas Pickering (US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs: 1997-2000).

President-elect faced ‘three crises [of governance] simultaneously’.¹⁴³⁰

an *existential crisis* of the Colombian state that had the world asking itself if the 40-year-long guerrilla insurgency was about to win; according to Coomer, the Colombian state disposed of an insufficient coalition of interest to oppose the FARC, which was accelerating the security crisis in the countryside, where entire army battalions were being annihilated.¹⁴³¹

a *drug-money corruption crisis* that saw organised criminal penetration of government at all levels on a scale that risked turning Colombia into the world’s first narco-state; between them, the guerrillas and paramilitaries probably had more disposable income than the Colombian state, due to their takeover of coca processing and trafficking after the demise of the cartels.¹⁴³²

a consequent *economic crisis* due to the ‘absence’ of the state from huge swathes of Colombian territory, and the flight of foreign direct investment capital away from the rising tide of violence that had resulted: ‘deterioration in the security situation [had] become an explicit development constraint for Colombia’¹⁴³³

Very many astute observers of the Colombian scene believed that the Colombian state was heading toward probable failure, and it had become clear that Colombia’s political elite were powerless by themselves to halt their state’s slide into incapacity.¹⁴³⁴ The state already suffered from a chronic debility with deep historical roots, but the confluence of all the above factors at this juncture had precipitated an acute crisis of historic proportions. As for preconceived US agendas, the Colombians were openly sceptical of the counter-drug strategy: Pastrana was on record asserting eradication efforts alone had failed—contemporaneously with US Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey’s reassertion that it remained the

¹⁴³⁰ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

¹⁴³¹ Interview by author with Mark Coomer (Former Associate Deputy Director Office of National Drug Control Policy).

¹⁴³² Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

¹⁴³³ Development., *Investment policy review: Colombia*.

¹⁴³⁴ See: Marcella and Schulz, *Colombia’s Three Wars: U.S. Strategy at the Crossroads*. Also see: McLean, "Colombia: Failed, Failing or Just Weak."

cornerstone of US policy.¹⁴³⁵ It follows that Plan Colombia is best understood as a concrete Colombian reaction to their own concerns, rather than as an American Grand Design.

The Colombians' original concept exceeded the US aid package

This is clear from Pastrana's Presidential campaign speeches, in which he advocated to the people of Colombia – and later to the international community – not just a Marshall Plan for Colombia but an integrated solution to the full spectrum of Colombia's ills that rested on five main pillars: first, the peace process; second, economic development; third, the war on drugs (including a military build-up); fourth, reform of the justice system; and finally, fifth, aid for social and democratic development.¹⁴³⁶ Pickering's August 1999 kernel was a real contribution, but no more than a contribution to this, Pastrana's grand strategy, which in Colombia was called *Cambio para Construir la Paz*.¹⁴³⁷ Long before Pickering, Pastrana had announced, in his September 1998 speech to the UN General Assembly, creation of an International Investment Fund for Peace, instituting a bid for international aid contributions to this Marshall Plan for Colombia. The fund was up and running as early as October 1998.¹⁴³⁸

The Colombians requested specifically military aid

Pastrana himself managed a shift toward the Colombian army in the distribution of US anti-drug aid, which up till then had been given almost exclusively to the Colombian National Police; contending that it was 'impossible to combat drugs without helping those fighting the guerrillas'.¹⁴³⁹ The Colombians so modified US policy as to serve simultaneously the Colombian political elite's own interest in rehabilitating their state. Pastrana's Administration was beyond doubt keen to militarily re-capacitate the state, as witness Defence Minister Lloreda's announcement on 18 August 1998 just days after Pastrana's inauguration, of 'Plan 10,000', an ambitious army professionalisation programme to train 10,000 new soldiers *per year*—specifically in counterinsurgency.¹⁴⁴⁰ When it was found that the treasury was bare,

¹⁴³⁵ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁴³⁶ Colombia. Departamento Nacional de Planeación., *Cambio para construir la paz: 1998-2002 bases*.

¹⁴³⁷ Colombia. Departamento Nacional de Planeación., *Cambio para Construir la Paz: Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 1998-2002*.

¹⁴³⁸ "Colombia Marshall-type plan aims to end civil strife: half of \$5.4-billion plan to be financed through loans, further raising the cost of debt servicing."

¹⁴³⁹ Bajak, "Southern Command chief: US military aid strictly anti-drug".

¹⁴⁴⁰ Bustos, "Otros 10.000 soldados contra la insurgencia."

Pastrana turned to the US to fund the training.¹⁴⁴¹

The Colombians' representation of themselves was 'Janus-faced'

This evidences the shrewdness and initiative of Colombian entrepreneurship. To the US Congress the Plan was represented as a supply interdiction operation in the war on drugs; to the Colombian people it was represented as an internal peace and development plan; to the Europeans it was represented as a process of accommodating romantic revolutionaries within the Colombian polity. The Colombian elites represented the Plan to themselves as a state building and rehabilitation project. The Pastrana Administration was thus endeavouring to engage the support of stakeholders everywhere while avoiding the fallout from their (potentially) adversarial interests. This perhaps explains why so many academic analysts have fallen short of understanding Plan Colombia or the role of Colombians therein; they see only the face that was presented to the US; its other faces remain hidden (from *their* view). This is *not* quite the same thing as Putnam's two-level game theory of foreign policy making, in that Janus faces are more instrumental and less transparent.¹⁴⁴² Putnam's is a forthright if complex bargaining process; Janus faces are meant politely to mask an unvarnished truth. The Janus-facedness of social representations is an undertheorised dimension of international relations and foreign policy analysis; it is, in the author's opinion, potentially important enough to repay closer investigation.

Pastrana pursued peace with the guerrillas at the risk of alienating the US

Regardless whether the Colombians succeeded in masking the whole truth or not, they maintained an independent line throughout. Their agency in charting their own foreign policy course, with or without US approval, and skill at managing the repercussions, was constantly on display. In January 1999, just 2 months after his State Visit to the US, Pastrana paid a State Visit to Cuba to consult Castro about his peace process; in Pastrana's version, Castro told him 'all [other Colombian Presidents] come when they only have six months left [in office] ... to have a picture taken with me; you are the only fellow who had the *cojones*'¹⁴⁴³ to visit at the beginning of his term. The peace process was the most comprehensive attempt

¹⁴⁴¹ Interview by author with Michael Shifter (*President Inter-American Dialogue*). This was also confirmed in: Interview by author with General Fernando Tapias (*General Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces: 1998-2002*).

¹⁴⁴² Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988).

¹⁴⁴³ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (*President of Colombia 1998-2002*).

at reconciliation with an insurgency in Colombian history; it met with vehement opposition in the US Congress. Pastrana nonetheless proceeded to stake his political fortune on it, even to the extremity of designating a de-militarised zone for the guerrillas. Ruiz admitted that this alienated Congress to such an extent that the ‘delicate [Plan Colombia] initiative’ was put at risk; yet Pastrana never renounced this course of action until the process failed of itself.¹⁴⁴⁴

Colombian entrepreneurship chiefly drove Plan Colombia

Contrary to the assertions of most theorists who have written on Plan Colombia, this study has found little evidence that US Andean strategy was already moving in the direction of Plan Colombia, as well as little evidence that systemic pressures and influences exercised anything except a restraining effect on Plan Colombia; but much evidence that the Plan would never have come about but for the proactive agency of Colombia’s core executive. The agency of small states is rarely taken into account in IR theory, a grave oversight in need of correction. The Pastrana Administration *both* invited US intervention *and* contributed much toward US acceptance of it.

Colombian agency was entrepreneurial

The Colombian elite exhibited not only agency but ‘entrepreneurship’ (agency at its most proactive and indispensable) in relation to the United States. A political entrepreneur seeks to gain certain benefits for providing public goods, including foreign- and domestic-related public policy.¹⁴⁴⁵ Benefits may involve voter support, and/or public recognition and popularity. Pastrana did just this in standing for the Presidency on a platform featuring a ‘Marshall Plan for Colombia’; campaign manager Victor G. Ricardo recounted how they won the second electoral round by recasting their message to include a visionary peace process.¹⁴⁴⁶ Brownfield attests, ‘in some of my earlier conversations with [the Colombians] I said ... is this what we’re looking for eventually? And the response ... was first, this is not ambitious enough; second, we have other issues ... and third and most emphatically, we will develop a Colombian strategy to deal with Colombia. And it wasn’t said arrogantly [or] defensively

¹⁴⁴⁴ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana’s Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

¹⁴⁴⁵ Choi Taewood, "Promoting a Northeast Asia Economic Integration Policy," *Korea Focus* 12, no. 2 (2004).p.83. For a more detailed definition of this concept and its application to foreign policy see: Rousseau, *Identifying threats and threatening identities: the social construction of realism and liberalism*.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Interview by author with Victor G. Ricardo (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace: 1998-2000).

[but] as people who were perfectly comfortable with what they are'.¹⁴⁴⁷ The Colombians showed an enterprising spirit even amid very perilous circumstances. (On the other hand, the international system if anything worked to constrain not empower US intervention; to say nothing of the Vietnam Syndrome—which the Colombians were at pains to circumvent!)

Plan Colombia originated with the Colombians

Plan Colombia was a Colombian concept and initiative, albeit one by its nature dependent for ultimate success on the interplay between the Colombian gambit and the interests and the resources of political actors external to Colombia in *and beyond* Washington. Brownfield appraised Plan Colombia as being bespoke: 'It was a new approach both to the problems of Colombia and to the bilateral relations between Colombia and the United States ... [Pastrana's] strategic approach ... was different from the others [like Bolivia and Peru]'.¹⁴⁴⁸ The research undertaken for this dissertation has documented that Andres Pastrana had a plan for peace and development that included but was not limited to US soft intervention on the scale of the Marshall Plan *before* he stood for the Presidency, and that he had begun to scour the whole international community for support *before* he was elected; testifying to its Colombian not American origin. Moreover, Pickering acknowledged that '[t]he approach that we had ... [was] that most if not all the elements of the Plan were already in place, and that what we [Americans] needed to do [was] to ... be a catalyst for integration and ... [supply] essential items which were not available to Colombia on their [*sic*] own'.¹⁴⁴⁹ Ruiz notes that Pickering's proposal was so integrable within Pastrana's overall vision that his team had already by then completed a great part of the preparatory work that Pickering's proposal called for.¹⁴⁵⁰

Plan Colombia was in existence well before Pickering supposedly dictated it

Pastrana inaugurated his vision of 'greater Plan Colombia' in a speech at Puerto Wilches in December 1998, directly after the visit of Romero to Bogotá in November 1998, when the joint brainstorming between US and Colombian officials over Plan Colombia first began. By then Pickering had already been assigned to liaise between the two governments (but had

¹⁴⁴⁷ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

¹⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Interview by author with Ambassador Thomas Pickering (US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs: 1997-2000).

¹⁴⁵⁰ Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).

delegated it in practice to Romero). It transpires that Pickering became personally involved only in mid-1999, after the Colombians' own lobbying effort on Capitol Hill had stalled and the State Department had taken alarm. Pickering himself did not visit Colombia until August of that year to offer a larger than expected aid package and to give assurances the Clinton Administration was committed to seeing it through Congress. The main features of the package had been hammered out jointly between the two governments. The empirical evidence noted here and elsewhere herein is conclusive that Pickering did not impose or offer a different Plan Colombia to the one already substantially worked out.

The Colombians proactively invited US intervention

Colombia's political elite, facing imminent and (for them) catastrophic state failure, did not acquiesce in but actually *invited* an extraordinarily high level of intervention by the US in Colombia's internal affairs. Then there were documented the many creative ways invented by Colombians to try to influence the US to accede to at least some of their invitations to participate in the Plan. If Pastrana and his team did not succeed in winning US intervention on the scale of the Marshall Plan, it was not for lack of trying proactively, creatively. Brownfield stated, '[T]he invitation was by the Government of Colombia; yes, there was dialogue ... but I will tell you, there was never a moment to the best of my knowledge ... where we were adamant that we had to have [anything] that the Colombian government did not specifically want and request'.¹⁴⁵¹

Colombia waged one of the best lobbying campaigns in recent history

The Pastrana Administration in particular became exceptionally sophisticated at lobbying the US foreign policy establishment. Their overall approach was diplomatically unorthodox in its personalism, embodying the Colombian proverb 'The saint's face is what makes the miracle'. The Colombians showed their face in as many venues as possible, both in Washington and in Colombia. The creative techniques ranged from riding the US Capitol subway, 'buttonholing' Congressmen in person, to giving free Salsa dancing lessons to Congressional staff, to flying multitudes of Senators and Representatives to Colombia to see the situation on the ground for themselves. Eschewing impersonal modes of communication, they by-passed diplomatic protocol so completely that one Senator joked that Congress would soon have to open up an

¹⁴⁵¹ Interview by author with US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

office for Colombians on Capitol Hill.¹⁴⁵² (Little lobbying ran the other way, of course.)

The US strategic role in Plan Colombia was inertial and reactive

Interdiction of the supply of drugs is a long-standing US strategic goal in the Andean region; this did not change under Plan Colombia. It is not pretended that the US passively suffered Colombian agency; yet it would be fair to say that the US continued in its usual groove. What the Colombians did was to modulate and redirect US strategy to accommodate and to serve Colombian strategic goals at the same time. Put in terms of a legal analogy, the Colombians were the offerors of a contract, which the US accepted. This was not of course a ‘contract of adherence’ (‘take it or leave it’), but a bespoke-bargained one; nevertheless, contrary to the widespread presumption, it was the US which accepted Colombia’s offer not *vice versa*.

The Colombians more often than not acted while the US reacted

As noted in Chapter 4, President-elect Pastrana made contact first, specifically requesting to meet with President Clinton as early as 3 August 1998.¹⁴⁵³ Clinton *responded* to, he did not summons Pastrana. During the same visit the US *facilitated* the President-elect’s wish to meet with the IDB Chief, also a reactive move. Even on the most controversial part of Pastrana’s strategy, the US followed or acquiesced in Colombian leadership: ‘Despite [reassurances] the establishment of the De-Militarised Zone never ceased to worry the US, especially Republicans who perceived it as advantageous to FARC. Nevertheless, they learnt to respect the Colombian [peace] process. To get them to understand that it was indispensable for peace required a huge diplomatic effort on our part’.¹⁴⁵⁴ To raise the ‘American hegemony alarm’ in the teeth of such evidence, one should have to interpret every move made by all parties as one vast conspiracy to deceive the world with a perfectly orchestrated appearance of Colombian agency. Immediate doubts arise about such cowardly sneaking-about: who or what should an almighty hegemon fear so badly as to make a charade necessary? Amazingly, given hegemonic theory (if still taken seriously), it was Colombian Defence Minister Lloreda who was obliged to certify ‘officially’ that the guerrillas were involved in drug trafficking (even though the US already ‘suspected’ it), so as to justify US aid in the framework of the war on drugs and thus allay the Vietnam Syndrome; otherwise, the US would have been embarrassed

¹⁴⁵² Interview by author with Juan Esteban Orduz (Deputy Colombian Ambassador to the US: 1998-2002).

¹⁴⁵³ Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).

¹⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

by the lack of a 'suitable pretext' (begging the question why a world-besriding colossus should need one).¹⁴⁵⁵ The conclusion must be that Colombian initiative was Plan Colombia's overall *sine qua non* to which the US only reacted, albeit in essential ways.

The war on drugs excepted, the US never domineered an unwilling Colombia

Colombia's masses no less than its elites favoured US intervention into their dire straits. Colombian and American polls both showed that enormous majorities of Colombians supported even direct US military intervention;¹⁴⁵⁶ the American polls having been classified until recently—proving by-the-by they were not concocted for public relations purposes.¹⁴⁵⁷ Pastrana denies hegemonic intervention categorically, stating that when Pickering arrived in Colombia in August 1999, 'to our pleasant surprise [he] proposed the possibility of seeking US support not just for one year, but for all three years of office remaining to me [emphasis added]'.¹⁴⁵⁸ It has been assumed by many publicists on Plan Colombia that Pickering flew to Bogotá in August 1999 to deliver a dictate or an ultimatum;¹⁴⁵⁹ the testimonial evidence is both superabundant and conclusive that it was neither. Pickering personally intervened only after Defence Minister Lloreda's resignation stirred up a hornet's nest of anti-Pastrana feeling in the US Congress that directly risked Plan Colombia. His goal was to help the Colombians deal with Congress, not dictate as on Congress's behalf. Even when more sober elements in the US 'establishment' strongly disliked the Colombians' conduct, they did not domineer; the testimony of Pastrana's Chief of Staff Jaime Ruiz is proof: 'Despite being concerned with Colombia's drug production, [the US Administration] did not impose the issue but said, "Do you want to have a peace process? Fine!" They were respectful of our peace process, which was quite surprising'.¹⁴⁶⁰

The guerrillas sabotaged US participation in the peace process

Representatives of the Clinton State Department followed the Colombian lead and agreed to meet with the FARC clandestinely in Costa Rica in December 1998, even though Americans

¹⁴⁵⁵ "Minister says FARC rebels "make a living from drug trafficking" ".

¹⁴⁵⁶ "Mayoria de encuestados apoyarian Intervencion."

¹⁴⁵⁷ Romero, "Colombians Dissatisfied with Democracy, Welcome U.S. Help against Counternarcotics."

¹⁴⁵⁸ *Interview by author with Andres Pastrana (President of Colombia 1998-2002).*

¹⁴⁵⁹ See section on the 'Origins of Plan Colombia' in Chapter One of this thesis.

¹⁴⁶⁰ *Interview by author with Jaime Ruiz (Pastrana's Chief of Staff: 1998-2002).*

had been victims of FARC terrorism before.¹⁴⁶¹ When news of this meeting was leaked to the press, the ensuing storm of controversy precluded any follow-up. But in addition, the guerrillas themselves committed outrages that seemed designed to alienate the US and thus eliminate it from the peace process. Shortly after the peace negotiations were inaugurated on 7 January 1999, the FARC reactivated their war against the Colombian State. On 25 February they kidnapped three US citizens working with indigenous tribes in the Arauca region.¹⁴⁶² The missionaries were found dead on Colombian territory near the border with Venezuela on 3 March. These wanton killings killed all US involvement in the peace process.¹⁴⁶³

The US was ambivalent and even conflicted over the Colombian invitation

Many high-ranking US politicians, especially in Congress, still feared involvement in Colombia's internal civil conflicts. Cautiously, they moved in the direction indicated by the Colombians, who took the lead in lobbying Congress and allaying its fears. It is true that the State Department intervened to push Plan Colombia through Congress, but became involved only after the Colombians' own efforts flagged; as Romero attested, he became 'increasingly worried that Pastrana and his key plan were not seemingly getting anywhere, and the need to do something' with Congress had become evident. Opposition to Plan Colombia from both parties was substantial enough to have derailed it, had not both Administrations joined forces to prevent that. This is why after a year (August 1998-August 1999) of frantically signalling their invitation to the US to intervene in their internal affairs, the Colombians could point to no concrete result. Congress's resistance is some of the best evidence that Plan Colombia was a Colombian idea; even its partial coincidence with US foreign policy goals was not enough by itself to elicit the funds the Colombians were counting on.

The Colombians had to adjust to the very real constraints on American power

The Colombians were obliged to scale back *their own* ambitions for US intervention—(not the other way around)—to accord with the far more modest degree of 'soft' intervention that was doable in Washington, under the aegis of the war on drugs. This scaling-back of course does not refer to the sums of money appropriated by Congress, which exceeded Colombia's expectations (if not hopes). What was scaled-back was not the depth of the US fiscal purse

¹⁴⁶¹Bureau of Diplomatic Security, "Significant incidents of political violence against Americans," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1998).

¹⁴⁶²Crandall, *Driven by drugs: US policy toward Colombia*.

¹⁴⁶³Aranson et al., "The Peace Process in Colombia and U.S. Policy."

but the breadth of US participation in the Plan. Though elements inside the State Department and certain high-placed Congressmen like Rep. Hastert surely understood and seconded the Colombian strategy, the US *as a whole* remained resolutely focussed on the supply of drugs and little else; the Colombians had to be creative within that framework.

US and Colombian Executive elites informally 'fused'

The Pastrana Administration accomplished its purposes by becoming so tightly knit (in the making of Plan Colombia) with relevant elements of the Clinton Administration as to 'fuse', in a sense roughly analogous to the first phase of informal practices of the fusion theorised by Wessels in the context of Europeanisation,¹⁴⁶⁴ especially regarding the Colombians' principle of shared responsibility (for the drug problem) and their internationalisation of the making of anti-drug policy. Although one could speculate that Plan Colombia might be one instance of a tendency toward regional integration outside formal structures like the OAS, it is not claimed that the informal 'fusion' observed is more than temporary or is becoming institutionalised.

Colombian, US and European elites form an integrated transnational elite class

The class- and racial stratification of Colombian society is a time-honoured fact. Recent trends toward modernisation have if anything reinforced the social hierarchy, especially the rise of a transnational class of socioeconomic elites. The author is a participant observer in the cultural, educational and international-political integration of Colombian elites in a transnational network of influence. He admits that this serves to alienate the elites from the masses, but notes that this alienation is now universal all over the world, and results directly from the transnational integration of elite power and the formation of elite consensus across a range of fundamental policy choices—with which the masses in many (maybe most) nations may profoundly disagree. If anything is 'hegemonic', it is rather this social class than any nation state as such. (Academics are part of this trend, and as alienated from the masses as other elites.)

US foreign policy councils accepted the Colombians as 'one of their own'

In the words of Romero, 'During his time we had a wonderful relationship with Colombia; I had as close a relation with Moreno as with any other ambassador in the region. We were working hand in glove on everything. They had asked me to send a team to meet with [FARC

¹⁴⁶⁴ Wolfgang Wessels, "An Ever Closer Fusion? A Dynamic Macropolitical View on Integration Processes," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 35, no. 2 (1997).

foreign affairs liaison] Raul Reyes in Costa Rica ... They trusted us, we trusted them. It was better than any relationship I have ever had as a diplomat with a foreign government, ever. [Moreno] had close relationships with Pickering and everybody'.¹⁴⁶⁵ It was the Colombians who took the lead in creating this *rapport* after years of alienation, urging on the US the necessity of inter-agency coordination between the Colombian Foreign Ministry and the State Department.¹⁴⁶⁶ This was to become one of the unsung hallmarks of Plan Colombia and a key to its success. It was suggested by Colombian Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto in a meeting with Romero as early as November 1998, so as to re-establish trust between Washington and Bogotá.¹⁴⁶⁷

The terms of intervention were negotiated between both countries as peers

The power asymmetry between Bogotá and Washington hardly affected the negotiation of the terms of intervention. The Colombians were treated as peers both on the state- and on the individual levels. Rand Beers attests, 'We talked to the government of Colombia about what our general notion was and that we needed to do this together; it could not just be a US plan. They had been thinking along these lines anyway, but had not really had a way to figure out how [in a matériel sense]'.¹⁴⁶⁸ Romero corroborates that the purpose of his November 1998 whirlwind visit was mainly to 'brainstorm' (his word) about how Washington might assist Bogotá to 'resolve its internal conflicts'.¹⁴⁶⁹ Pastrana requited Romero's expressed wish to work in partnership; it was agreed to continue 'close coordination plus informal brainstorming and feedback'.¹⁴⁷⁰ The Colombians then developed 'talking-points' for every meeting, or in the words of Foreign Minister Fernandez de Soto 'a perfectly built script based on what [Bogotá] needed'; thus, the Colombians participated in all planning sessions

¹⁴⁶⁵ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

¹⁴⁶⁶ Kamman, "Acting A/S Romero's Visit to Bogotá, Nov. 8-10, 1998."

¹⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Interview by author with US Undersecretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers (US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: 1998-2002).

¹⁴⁶⁹ Interview by author with Ambassador Peter Romero (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs: 1999-2001).

¹⁴⁷⁰ Kamman, "Acting A/S Romero's Visit to Bogotá, Nov. 8-10, 1998." p. 3.

knowing in advance exactly what they wanted.¹⁴⁷¹ Stuart Lippe, a senior State Department Official who witnessed the creation of Plan Colombia first-hand, corroborates this, ‘because Jaime Ruiz wrote the Plan in English ...everybody [mistakenly] refers to it as the US Plan for Colombia [but] it was not, it was our [US] support to [Pastrana’s] Plan Colombia ...the name was simply easy shorthand *both for what Colombia wanted to do and what we wanted to do* [emphasis added]’.¹⁴⁷² The many friendships that were formed between the US and Colombian teams during that process have already been noted (see Ambassador Mack’s attestation on page 178 above).

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This dissertation concludes that, as one of the more successful interventions in the annals of US-Colombia relations, Plan Colombia is exceptional; and that its exceptionalism is precisely owing to the power of personal agency to ‘rise above’ systemic effects like the constraints and imperatives of the international system. The Plan succeeded because the two sides drove a bargain which balanced aspiration with a realistic sense of the possible. It demonstrated that systemic anarchy can sometimes be nothing more or less than what agency makes of it. The international system undoubtedly exercises vast constraining and compelling effects on all states, from the humblest to the mightiest. But systemic effects are not distributed uniformly throughout all space and time; the system contains equally far-flung ‘interstices’ within which agency is far less compelled or constrained.

Systemic indeterminacy

In the case of Plan Colombia, nothing in the System could have compelled or constrained the American public’s strong moral disapproval of drug addiction and Communist revolution. On the other side, the initiative of Colombian diplomatic entrepreneurs in dealing directly with the US Congress and its domestically rooted concerns in effect bypassed or at least greatly attenuated the second level of Putnam’s two-level bargaining structure.¹⁴⁷³ It is not claimed that Plan Colombia refutes Putnam’s model, merely that it shows once again that the

¹⁴⁷¹ Interview by author with Guillermo Fernandez de Soto (Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1998-2002).

¹⁴⁷² Interview by author with Stuart Lippe (Colombia Specialist, Office of Andean Affairs, U.S. Department of State), 14th March (Washington, DC) 2012.

¹⁴⁷³ Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games."

international system, while pervasive and powerful, is not all-pervasive nor all-powerful; rather, it leaves to agency surprisingly much room for free and innovative manoeuvre. This interstitial room (to coin a word) has been poorly understood and theorised in IR, and surely warrants further empirical investigation.

It is theorised that the influence of the international system as such is in at least some cases of bilateral international relations merely a background constraint. For example, the ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ resulted from the general situation of the United States in that system, plus certain concrete experiences of policy failure, neither of which arose from the US-Colombia bilateral relation. Moreover, it could be conjectured that in an imaginary world in which the US and Colombia were the only two states in existence, the US might well have simply invaded Colombia to solve its domestic drug addiction problem; an outcome the international system surely prevented being even considered. Yet even if it is conceded that such background conditions – in the sense of ‘*but for*’ constraints exercised by the international system on the US – bore in on the bilateral relation, never did structural causes of this kind either impel or compel the aid package known as Plan Colombia. To find causal factors sufficient to explain an exceptional *demarche* like Plan Colombia, one must look to ‘entrepreneurial’ agency within the *domestic* arena.

What is more, in the case of Plan Colombia at least, it was necessary to look to the domestic arenas of *both* countries before sufficient cause could be found; in other words, domestic agency in neither country alone could have brought about the observed result.

Mutual domestic spillover

The US and Colombia discovered that their domestic affairs spilled over into each other’s territory in much the same way as ecological issues. A surprising and original insight of this dissertation is that Plan Colombia was driven by domestic politics; ‘foreign policy’ – (even US foreign policy, it would seem) – was a secondary if non-negligible factor, while the international system constituted a marginal influence, including the role assigned to the US as hegemon.

The mere existence of spillover, however, does not guarantee any particular result; spillovers happen all the time without causing any reaction at all, let alone any predictable reactions. It is important to consider exactly what agency, delivered by whom, was decisive in the case of Plan Colombia, especially on the US side, where local politics was possibly decisive—mediated by Congress of course. On the Colombian side the imminence of state failure was

obvious and is assumed to have amounted to sufficient reason to invite soft intervention; but on the other side sufficient reason to accept such an invitation is slightly more enigmatic.

Janus-faced agency

The Colombians' Janus-faced approach to the marketing of Plan Colombia is by itself a clue to the enigma—quite apart from the direct evidence gathered by the author from elite interviews in the US. Of course, the US domestic drug problem is *a* motive for accepting the invitation to intervene, yet neither is this sufficient reason in foreign policy (especially given the constraints of the international system). The US has had such a motive for intervention for decades, but there was no invitation to accept. On the other hand, the mere existence of an invitation (or other clear opportunity) and a reason to accept (or exploit) it do not necessarily succeed in actually motivating acceptance, or else American intervention would be never-ending. Even if the policy issue is restricted to the war on drugs, the US has had the motive and surely plenty of opportunity to intervene in many other parts of the world, yet has not done so. What the Colombians on Pastrana's watch did was *both* to provide the invitation *and* to contribute substantially toward motivating its acceptance.

'Too big to fail'

Weak states are perhaps never so powerful as when they are nearest to failure. To a greater extent than even multinational banks, the weakest nation states ought to be considered, and by and large are considered 'too big to fail'. It devolves upon hegemony, then, if it devolves upon anyone, to come to the rescue with a 'bail-out'; as may be seen contemporaneously in the euro-zone where Germany is under enormous pressure to bail out Greece so as to hold the euro together. Too-big-to-fail logic will no doubt tempt theorists to contest the probability of US intervention *without* invitation, had Colombia passed the point of no return; and indeed, many theorists reason about Plan Colombia as if this had actually been the case. However, it is to be noted that (1) counterfactual reasoning is both irresolvable in itself, as nothing of the sort actually happened, and well beyond the scope of this dissertation; the truth of which (2) is not touched by any speculative conclusion theorists may reach. It matters not what the US might have done; the crisis was managed by what the Colombians themselves did do. Maybe they acted as they did so as to forestall hegemonic intervention on hegemonic terms at a later date; they acted none the less, and their agency was pivotal in eliciting a mutually acceptable reaction from the US.

The inadequacy of first approximations in IR

The empirical orientation of this dissertation was motivated by considerations of the explanatory insufficiency of IR theory, and the excessive reliance in the field on paradigms the connexion to reality of which is subject to grave doubts. It might be said of the theory of hegemony, for example, in which only the agency of hegemon is counted while small states' agency is theoretically invisible, – (and indeed, something similar might be said of Realist or Marxist schools of thought in general, whence so many such theories are derived) – that it is a 'first approximation' in the lingo of science and engineering. To illustrate just how crude first approximations can be, according to Nigel Stork,¹⁴⁷⁴ to a first approximation all multicellular species on earth (including all animals) are insects. To a first approximation, then, mankind does not exist.

Too often IR theorists seem unaware of the crudity of theory, or that their first approximations may be applicable to whole systems but *not at all* to individual cases like the US-Colombia bilateral relationship. It has been the purpose of this thesis to inquire into the existence in international relations of organisms besides 'insects' (as it were); to investigate second- and third-order approximations of *this* bilateral relationship in the specific case of Plan Colombia and its origins.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In addition to the remarks above on the value of future research into social representations in international relations and foreign policy analysis, this dissertation has found that the field of international relations generally is poor in empirical studies *to the proper depth*. It has yet to be sufficiently acknowledged that IR theory generally is only a *first approximation* to reality and, as such, all too often a serious distortion of the actual facts on the ground in any concrete situation such as Plan Colombia.¹⁴⁷⁵ Many IR analysts appear to have grown up in the habit of spanning the gaps in their factual knowledge with deductions from theoretical paradigms, but 'there is a wide gap between academic theories of international relations and the [actual]

¹⁴⁷⁴ Nigel E. Stork, "Biodiversity: world of insects," *Nature* 448(2007).

¹⁴⁷⁵ This edited book provides some interesting insights on the nexus of empirical research and IR theory: Miroslav Nincic and Joseph Leggold, eds., *Being useful: policy relevance and international relations theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

conduct of foreign policy'.¹⁴⁷⁶ Thus, the IR field needs more empiricism; theory is of more limited utility than is generally recognised for scientific purposes like prediction and formulation of testable hypotheses.

More particularly, the agency of small states, while perhaps sufficiently theorised for the time being, stands in need of more empirical studies in the process-tracing vein, to find out exactly how small states manage their relations not only with great powers but also with each other. A very large role for entrepreneurship in the making of foreign policy and conduct of foreign relations was discovered; indeed, it appeared pivotal to the success of Plan Colombia. In this context, the personality of individual entrepreneurs was observed to have had a major impact on the success (and presumably the failure) of IR entrepreneurship—although due to time and resource limitations, this aspect could not be pursued to sufficient depth in this study. It may well be that individual personality has as much impact as systemic pressures on IR outcomes; further research into the matter is called for, no matter how problematic—if anything precisely for how problematic it may be—for all existing IR theories.

Hobbes famously said that 'in matter of government, when nothing else is turned up clubs are trumps'.¹⁴⁷⁷ Like all first approximations, systemic anarchy, game theory *etc.* may indeed tell us what happens in matter of IR if nothing else is turned up. On the other hand, the interesting contingencies (maybe the only interesting ones) happen when something else *is* turned up. One of the goals of this study has been to provide at least one instance of that.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Stephen M. Walt, "The Relationship between Theory and Policy in International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 8(2005). p. 25.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan : or, The matter, forme, & power of a common-wealth ecclesiasticall and civill* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2004). p. xxiv.

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