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Are the Guerrillas Gone?: a historical political economy and social analysis of the rise and demise of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Columbianas (FARC), 1964-2010

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

ARE THE GUERRILLAS GONE? A HISTORICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE RISE AND DEMISE OF THE *FUERZAS ARMADAS REVOLUCIONARIAS COLOMBIANAS* (FARC), 1964–2010

by

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December 2009

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

This thesis looks at how the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was able to survive and control significant parts of Colombia until relatively recently. It also explains the decline of the FARC as a significant insurgency (and as one of the last, if not the last significant guerrilla organization in the region). While a historical political economy and social analysis of the rise and demise of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas* (FARC) between 1964 and 2010 tells us a great deal about the modern nation-state of Colombia, we also ask what the history and contemporary character of Colombia tells us about the rise and fall of the FARC?. More specifically, what are the future prospects for the FARC? Are the guerrillas gone? Furthermore, what are the implications of the decline of the FARC for Colombian politics? Finally, what are the Counterinsurgency (COIN) and other policy lessons, for Colombia and beyond, which we can derive from a thorough assessment of the rise and apparent demise of the FARC as a major guerrilla organization? We conclude that the dramatic weakening of the FARC in Colombia is part of a wider trend in the region. Despite the continued presence of social inequality and uneven economic development, the general opening of the political process in Colombia and elsewhere combined with the success of various counterinsurgency campaigns and/or the self-destruction of some insurgencies marks the dawn of a new era. Colombia is ultimately an example of the fact that major insurgency and counterinsurgency operations may have passed permanently from the Latin American stage.

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RISE AND DEMISE OF THE *FUERZAS ARMADAS REVOLUCIONARIAS*
***COLOMBIANAS* (FARC), 1964–2010**

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This thesis examines how the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was able to survive and control significant parts of Colombia until relatively recently. It also explains the decline of the FARC as a significant insurgency (and as one of the last, if not the last significant guerrilla organization in the region). While a historical political economy and social analysis of the rise and demise of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas* (FARC) between 1964 and 2010 tells us a great deal about the modern nation-state of Colombia, we also ask what the history and contemporary character of Colombia tells us about the rise and fall of the FARC?. More specifically, what are the future prospects for the FARC? Are the guerrillas gone? Furthermore, what are the implications of the decline of the FARC for Colombian politics? Finally, what are the Counterinsurgency (COIN) and other policy lessons, for Colombia and beyond, which we can derive from a thorough assessment of the rise and apparent demise of the FARC as a major guerrilla organization? We conclude that the dramatic weakening of the FARC in Colombia is part of a wider trend in the region. Despite the continued presence of social inequality and uneven economic development, the general opening of the political process in Colombia and elsewhere combined with the success of various counterinsurgency campaigns and/or the self-destruction of some insurgencies marks the dawn of a new era. Colombia is ultimately an example of the fact that major insurgency and counterinsurgency operations may have passed permanently from the Latin American stage.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Two decades after the end of the Cold War, the insurgency led by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known by their acronym as FARC) appears to have finally lost in its struggle against the Colombian government. Recent events have demonstrated that the FARC is now a marginal and irrelevant political and military force. To the surprise of its supporters and its opponents, the FARC is clearly a shell of what it had been at the start of the 21st century. It no longer represents a serious threat to the State of Colombia. That said, the FARC could still pose a threat to the citizenry of Colombia if the government does not address the social and economic problems that gave rise to the organization in the first place. Despite the continued presence of social inequality and uneven economic development, the general opening of the political process in Colombia and the demise of the FARC represents an opportunity to bring an end to insurgency as we knew it in Colombia and across the region. This work will examine the history of the rise and fall of the FARC and its interaction with the Colombian state over the years, and make recommendations to further limit, or eliminate, the type of threat that the FARC posed to Colombia between the 1960s and the early 21st century.

Elsewhere in Latin America, Marxist inspired insurgencies disappeared or dwindled to relative insignificance, or reinvented themselves as more or less non-violent social and political movements, such as the Zapatistas in Mexico, within the first decade after the end of the Cold War. To begin we seek to understand why the FARC did not follow this same trend until very recently. As part of this effort, Chapter II provides a historical account of the origins of the FARC and its initial interactions with the state. The FARC, originated out of the self-defense organizations that emerged in the 1950s, in large part due to the period known as *La Violencia* from 1948 to 1958 (although such organizations predated the 1940s). In 1964, its leadership formally established it as a Marxist revolutionary

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guerrilla organization. At the same time, the FARC's ability to mobilize the population remained limited until the 1980s, as Figure 1 demonstrates. It is generally accepted that the primary reason the FARC was able to sustain itself from the 1960s onwards was because of the exclusionary power sharing arrangement (known as the National Front) developed between the country's two elite political parties down to the 1980s. This arrangement ensured that the FARC leadership was able to position itself in opposition to the monopoly on political power by the country's elite. While the FARC represented a challenge to the state, it never gained sufficient support or obtained the necessary resources to overthrow the government at any point during this period, despite an, at times, considerable military and political presence across the country.
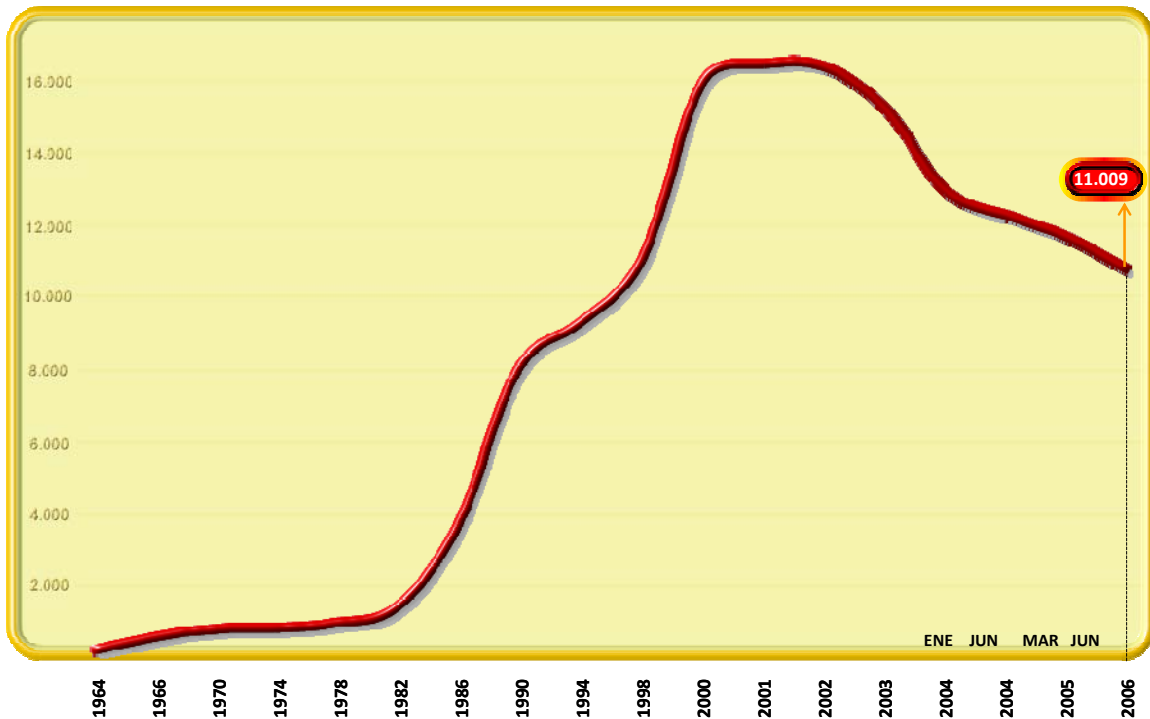

Figure 1.   FARC Membership 1964–2006
(*From: Colombian Army Intelligence Estimate)

The third chapter examines the various refinements in the FARC's mobilization efforts and looks at how the strengthening of its resource base ensured that by the 1980s the Colombian state had begun to reevaluate the threat the organization represented. The Colombian state toyed with two different

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strategies (moving back and forth between peace negotiations and bringing the FARC into the political process on the one hand and conducting major military operations against the organization on the other hand) to deal with the guerrillas. It is clear that by the 1980s the inconsistent policies pursued by the Colombian state, as reflected in the various peace processes, reinforced by the FARC's growing military capability created the conditions necessary for the consolidation of the guerrilla organization's power and reach as the Cold War came to an end (Figure 1).

During the 1990s, the FARC expanded its presence in territorial terms, and the number of internal units ("fronts") increased at a rate that almost pushed Colombia to the tipping point. Chapter IV demonstrates that this expansion was made possible in significant measure because the Colombian and U.S. governments were too focused on the issue of illicit drugs (cocaine). In fact, the growth and expansion of the cocaine trade created conditions that financed the further expansion and relative independence of the FARC in the context of the continued and growing significance of the cocaine trade for the Colombian economy as a whole. Colombian peace negotiations in the 1990s were futile and counterproductive because the FARC was for the first time in a position of relative power and had nothing to gain from a negotiated settlement.

The Colombian Presidential election of 2002, meanwhile, proved to be a pivotal event for Colombia. It ushered in a new era in relation the FARC's forty-year insurgency and the violent conflict that has plagued Colombian history. As Figure 1 demonstrates, 2002 marked the end of the FARC's growth as a political and military force. Chapter V outlines how this historic event changed the established pattern of interaction that had developed between the Colombian State and the FARC. Also examined is the nexus between the insurgency and the illicit drug trade, which has proven to be a double edge sword for the FARC. While the illicit drug trade provided the resource independence that enabled them to break away from the pattern followed by other insurgent groups in Latin America, it also provided a strong strategic framing tool for the Colombian state

in its battle against the FARC. Some of the challenges that remain and, under the right set of circumstance, could slow or even reverse recent trends in relation to the loss of power and capability by the FARC are also discussed in Chapter V.

Some writers argue that the FARC is 'gone' and will only 'come back' if Colombian politics are so badly mismanaged as to allow for a renewed insurgency. As elsewhere in the region, it is unlikely that Colombian politics will again provide fertile ground for guerrilla insurgencies. Both in Colombia and across region, the political systems are now more open and social movements and neo-populist political parties have more or less completely displaced the major guerrilla insurgencies of an earlier era. The guerrillas that do exist are the exceptions that prove the rule. This may be the case both in broad terms across the region and in relation to Colombia specifically; however, it is too soon to assume that the "guerrillas are gone" for good in Colombia. The right set of circumstances could provide the setting for the renovation of the FARC's organizational capacities. This coupled with the resource independence that this group achieved through illicit drugs, kidnapping, extortion, and other criminal activities suggests that if the underlying social and economic problems are not addressed the FARC may be more or less gone, but not forgotten. As of late 2009, the Colombian government needs to further reduce what remains of the FARC's organizational capabilities and redirect any remaining support the guerrillas have among the Colombian population. To this end, our concluding chapter summarizes our overall findings and provides recommendations to ensure that the FARC or similar guerrilla organizations disappear from the Colombian political landscape for good.

II. COLOMBIA HISTORY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE FARC

Violent conflict has repeatedly engulfed Colombia since its emergence as an independent republic in the early nineteenth century. The reasons for this violence have varied from social conflict over the possession of land to labor disputes associated with industrialization and commercialization. There are also a host of other issues related to the government's inability to monopolize force and effectively control Colombian territory in a fashion commensurate with the ideal, if not the practice of a sovereign nation-state. Despite the different manifestations of violence over time, the roots of the violence lie to a significant degree in the rivalry between the two main political parties, the Conservatives and Liberals, which have dominated Colombian politics since independence.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief history of political violence in Colombia from the nineteenth century to the early 1960s, which helps explain the eventual emergence of the FARC and the formation and character of the Colombian state. We will examine seven major historical episodes, all of which provide important insights into the origins of the FARC and all of which still have relevance today, even as it appears that the FARC is departing the Colombian political stage. These major episodes were the establishment of the new republic in Colombia (1810–1819); the establishment and rise of the Traditional Political Parties (1848–1849); the war of a thousand days and the loss of Panama (1899–1902); the massacre of the United Fruit Company's workers (1928); the violence between 1948 and 1958 precipitated by the assassination of the Liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán; the military government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953–1957) and the era of National Front "Frente Nacional" (1958–1974). It was during the latter period that the FARC came into existence as a guerrilla organization.

A.   ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW REPUBLIC IN COLOMBIA

The emancipation from Spain occurred in Colombia between 1810 and 1819. On 20 July 1810 in Santa fé de Bogotá, a group of native Colombians, asked for the loan of a vase from the Spaniard Jose Gonzalez Llorente. Gonzalez Llorente refused to loan the vase. The Creoles in turn broke the vase to provoke the Spanish. The latter reacted in a repressive fashion, providing the Creoles with the justification they wanted to call for rebellion against Spanish rule. During the ensuing struggle for independence, two competing ideological currents arose: federalism and centralism. A military confrontation between the proponents of federalism and centralism in 1814 allowed the Spanish commander on the ground, Pablo Morillo to retake control of the territory it had lost. These events served to radicalize the independent movement and gave rise to the liberation campaign commanded by Simon Bolívar. On 7 August 1819 at the "Battle of Boyacá" Bolivar led the Creole forces to victory and won definitive independence from Spain. Apart from Bolivar's political and military leadership, the writings of other Creole intellectuals espoused republican ideas, the principles of freedom and equality and independence from Spain. Among them were Antonio Nariño, Francisco Miranda and Camilo Torres. With the victory against Spain, Simon Bolivar was declared president of the Republic of Gran Colombia and Francisco de Paula Santander, who fought actively in the campaign, was appointed vice-president. Between 1819 and 1830, Bolivar established Gran Colombia out of former Spanish administrative units centered on but not exclusive to the Viceroyalty of New Granada, while also reaching southwards into the Viceroyalty of Peru. Gran Colombia at its height encompassed, at least on paper, the five modern day nation-states of Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. In 1830, Simon Bolívar resigned the presidency because of illness, and died shortly thereafter. With his death, the dream of Gran Colombia also passed into history, breaking into the smaller republics that have survived down to the present.

B. ORIGIN OF THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN COLOMBIA

By the middle of nineteenth century, the struggle for political power in the independent republic of Colombia was primarily an ongoing rivalry between two political parties. The Liberal party first appeared in 1848 headed by Ezequiel Rojas. A year later Jose Eusebio Caro and Mariano Ospina Rodriguez established the Conservative party. The second half of century represented a major break with the colonial socioeconomic structure. In particular, the Constitution of Rionegro (1863–1886) represents the triumph of the Liberals and their supporters and the political consolidation of individual liberties. While, these principles lead to a reframing of the ideological bases of the State, the Conservatives eventually gained ascendancy and consolidated a protectionist economic system with the Constitution of 1886. The latter lasted for more than 100 years and included a rigid commitment to centralized government and ample executive authority. The Constitution established the suffrage for all the men; women would not receive this right until 1957.

C. WAR OF A THOUSAND DAYS AND THE LOSS OF PANAMA

The civil war of a thousand days took place from 1899 to 1902 (De La Pedraja Tomán, 2006). The causes of this war are rooted in the instability of the nineteenth century, particularly the incessant competition between the Conservative and Liberal parties. The conflict started as a form of protest against Conservative President Manuel Antonio Sanclemente. More specifically the Liberal party claimed that the 1886 Constitution was too centralized. In their view, it did not take into account the 1863 Constitution that had called for a series of cultural and socioeconomic reforms that decentralized the power of the national government. The violence that sprang out of this disagreement between the Conservative and Liberal parties spread throughout Colombian territory with the exception of the departments of Antioquia, Santander and Panama: the latter was still part of Colombia at this time (Simons, 2004).

During the War of a Thousand Days, the Liberal and Conservative parties both divided into distinct sub-factions. The Conservative party split into the Historical Conservatives and the National Conservatives, which led to the ouster of President Sanclemente, on July 29, 1901, and his replacement by another Conservative, President José Manuel Marroquín. This action resolved some of the major differences between the two Conservative factions and a more united Conservative party emerged. The Liberal parties factional divisions, by contrast remained deep and weakened their military capacity in the civil war. The Liberals continued to suffer a number of military defeats at the hands of the Conservatives, until General Rafael Uribe surrendered and signed a treaty to end the war in October 1902 (Oquist, 1980).

While Colombia's two dominant political parties were preoccupied with the War of a Thousand Days, the Department of Panama proclaimed its independence with the support of the United States. In fact, the separation of Panama from Colombia warrants further examination. Significantly, in 1878, the Colombian government had signed a contract with a French company to build an inter-oceanic canal in Panama. Two decades later, with the canal unfinished, the French company went bankrupt, and the work was suspended. The original French company was liquidated in 1899, and then a new French corporation was created to sign a new contract with the Colombian government to complete the canal. While all this was happening, the United States government was becoming more interested in the waterway through Panama. Earlier the U.S. government had looked favorably on a private American initiative to build a canal across Nicaraguan territory, a venture that never got past the planning stage. With the failure of the French company in Panama in 1899, the U.S. saw an opportunity to gain control over an increasingly important strategic and commercial canal the construction of which had already begun. Moreover, the Panamanian independence movement nicely coincided with the expansionist policies of the United States. Washington thought that this newly independent government would be more willing to accept the U.S. control of such an essential

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waterway alongside its territory. Meanwhile, the U.S. government soon found that the French company and the Colombian government were open to negotiations. Colombia undertook to sell to the United States the strip of land where the French had initiated the construction of the canal. Representatives of the U.S. and Colombian governments signed the Herran-Hay Treaty in 1903. It was later approved the U.S. Congress; however, the Colombian Senate never accepted it (Miner, 1966; 1940).

Prior to these events Panama had tried to secede from Colombia at least four times over the course of the nineteenth century: in 1830 and then in 1831; again in 1840 and then in 1860. However, it was not until November 3 1903 that the events surrounding the transfer of control of the Canal Zone from the French to the United States provided an opportunity for a group of people interested in Panama's independence to consolidate their power and proclaim the independence of Panama. The U.S., despite its recent treaty with Colombia, used its naval and military power to prevent the landing of Colombian forces in Panama to quell the independence movement. The new government of Panama signed a treaty with the U.S. and gave it sovereignty over the Canal Zone.

D.   THE UNITED FRUIT COMPANY'S WORKERS STRIKE OF 1928

Meanwhile, the United Fruit Company (UFC)—a U.S.-based company— set up operations in the Colombian banana-growing area of Magdalena in the early twentieth century. In November 1928, one of the trade unions of which a number of the UFC's workers were members began a strike to press for the solution to some social problems. The UFC refused to negotiate with the trade union and rejected their demands that the company bring its operations in line with Colombian law. Among other things, the union wanted the UFC to provide compulsory group insurance for accidents in the work place, increase salaries by fifty percent, cease the use of company-operated commissaries and pay-advance vouchers, switch to a weekly payment system, allow for collective bargaining and build more hospitals. The only item the UFC was willing to accept

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was the provision of weekly pay. The UFC and the Colombian government regarded the rest of the demands as unacceptable and/or illegal. Serious demonstrations occurred in Cienaga Magdalena, where the workers blocked and sabotaged the railway, telegraph lines and roads (Bucheli, 2005). In response, on December 5, 1928, the Colombian government issued Decree No. 1, declared a state of siege in the area and appointed the Army General Carlos Cortés Vargas as the civil and military head of the region. General Cortés took charge quickly and on the same day ordered immediate to dissolution of "any meeting with more than three people" and threatened to shoot over the heads of any crowd if necessary. At 1:30 AM on December 6, after reading the decree and ordering the crowd to leave, General Cortés informed the protestors in Ciénaga Magdalena that they had five minutes to disperse or suffer the consequences. A slaughter followed (the number of people killed remains a matter of dispute), but within days Cortés had ended the strike. For Cortés Vargas, the strike in the banana-growing area was a subversive act prompted by communist agitators and anarchists. An alternate theory provided by Vargas and Soto argues that the military's extremely violent reaction was a response to the fact that some of the troops from the northern region were beginning to align themselves with the strikers, and military did not want to lose control. Finally, the crowds were threatening the lives of government staff and destroying both government and private property (Corté Vargas, Carlos 1979)

The UFC strike was undoubtedly a complex affair. It is clear that the relatively new Communist Revolutionary Party (PCR) had links to some of the UFC workers. More broadly, the 1920s and 1930s saw an upsurge in the power of labor and socialist ideas and organizations. In the wake of the violent repression of the UFC strike, the Liberal l party came to power, with the aim of modernizing labor laws and the system of land ownership, along with a renewed emphasis on industrialization by the start of the Second World War (Call, 1995). Meanwhile, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) was established in 1924; In July 1930, it changed its name to the Colombian Communist Party (PCC)

(Rangel, 1998). As with other communist parties, the PCC wanted to take power via some form of political-military revolution. According to sociologist Eduardo Pizarro, the origins of the FARC are to be found, in part, in three stages of political development that get underway in the 1920s and 1930s (Pizarro, 2004). The first stage was the era of armed resistance, inspired by the Colombian Communist Party (PCC), in the form of peasant self-defense, and the emergence of the first guerrilla nuclei. The second stage was the conversion of these nuclei into agrarian movements and the subsequent revival of these nuclei as guerrilla movements. The last stage was the formation of "independent republics" at the beginnings of the "Frente Nacional" in the late 1950s and the appearance of the FARC in 1964.

E. LA VIOLENCIA 1948 TO 1958 I: THE BOGOTAZO 1948–1953

The decade (1948–1958) was one of the most violent periods in Colombian history, with heavy fighting between the supporters of the Liberals and the Conservatives. The spark that ignited "La Violencia" was the assassination of Liberal leader, Jorge Eliecer Gaitán on April 9, 1948 (Braun, 1985). The disturbances that followed became known as the Bogotazo and concluded with a power sharing agreement between Liberals and Conservatives called the "Frente Nacional," National Front (Henderson, 1985). Eliecer Gaitán, a liberal, progressive and populist leader had been expected to win the upcoming presidential election. His death precipitated a spontaneous popular uprising that led to a series of riots and a wave of looting and destruction in the capital of Colombia (Braun, Herbert, 1985). President Ospina Pérez (1946–1950) imposed a state of siege throughout the country. On November 7, 1949, in response to the chaos, the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) ordered its members and supporters to engage in mass self-defense of the zones in their strongholds in Tequendama Sumapaz, Lebanon, Tolima, and San Vicente de Chucuri. These regions had had a long tradition of agrarian conflict (Henderson, 1985). Meanwhile, the Liberal Party scheduled a general strike for November 27 1949,

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by which time violence was widespread throughout the country. The PCC had installed its own self-defense groups in several regions of the country including Viota and southern Tolima, and Chaparral. In four years (1948–1952) Communist and Liberal nuclei grew and increased their territorial control. They distributed productive lands and established mechanisms that provided support for the armed branches of their organizations (Oquist, 1980).

F. LA VIOLENCIA 1948 TO 1958 II: LIEUTENANT GENERAL GUSTAVO ROJAS PINILLA 1953–1957

On June 13, 1953, in the face of widespread chaos, the Liberal and Conservative parties empowered Lieutenant General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, to restore order and establish peace. Rojas Pinilla promised an amnesty to guerrillas who would surrender their weapons. Between June and November l953 the majority of the guerrillas of Meta, Antioquia, and Santander laid down their arms. In 1954 pardons and amnesty were granted under Decree # 1823 and # 2062 (Lasso Vega, 2005). The PCC and its guerrillas were dominant in the departments of Cundinamarca, Tolima, Santander, Antioquia and Huila. They were suspicious of Rojas Pinilla's amnesty and refused to surrender their weapons. Their response was to continue to grow, consolidate and capture territory through force. In turn, General Rojas Pinilla's reaction was to launch military operations in the region of Villarica to try to eliminate the communist revolutionary forces (Ardila Galvis, 2000).

In 1955, the significant increase in armed Communist guerrillas in the region of Villarrica, led to military operations by the national government in the region of Tolima and Sumapaz. According to General Rojas Panilla, it was mandatory for the government to take actions immediately because the situation was out of control and continued to worsen. The Communists in turn engaged in the organized mobilization of peasants to neutralize the military's actions (Rojas, 2002). After three years, the Communist Party leadership decided to organize the civilian population in to columns. These columns where then moved to remote

and forested areas. Their main objective was armed colonization of the region of El Pato (Caquetá) The Guayabero (Target), the High Sumapaz. Armed guerrillas, who killed or sent into exile the settlers who were already in these regions, accompanied the agrarian movements (Simons, 2004).

Meanwhile, in 1957, General Rojas Pinilla decided to resign the presidency in favor of a military junta. There was an agreement between the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties to ensure that the country would regain its status as a representative democracy. The heads of the Liberal and Conservative parties signed an agreement to guarantee the stability of the parties, through the establishment of a pact called the "National Front"..

G. "FRENTE NACIONAL" (NATIONAL FRONT) 1958 TO 1974

Through the "National Front" agreement, both parties agreed to support a single presidential candidate by alternating the office of the presidency every four years between the parties and sharing legislative power equally (Call, 1995). The "National Front" (1958–1974) was a non-aggression pact between the two main political parties to ensure equality in the allocation of positions and jobs in the government. The agreement sought to strengthen political institutions and provided political stability for sixteen years, but it also led to the decline of state control. There was a growing absence of civil and military authority in many places and this allowed guerrilla groups to grow in numbers and territory. This agreement also excluded third party political voices, so the ranks of the guerrillas attracted individuals and groups marginalized by the Liberal and Conservative monopoly of political power (Call, 1995). The Colombian presidents during the period of the National Front were: Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958–1962), Guillermo León Valencia (1962–1966), Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966–1970) and Misael Pastrana Borrero (1970–1974).

The Communist influence during the 1960s added a different character to the internal Colombian conflict. Through force or choice during this time thousands of families left their lands and moved to rugged areas where many

armed groups were set up to govern communist enclaves. Of these communist groups the oldest, most active, and most effective was the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The National Liberation Army (ELN) also arose, inspired by the Cuban revolution, the ideas of Che Guevara and liberation theology (Katz, 2004). Although first established in 1964, the FARC did not take the name of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia until April 1966 (Molano, 2000) at which time they decided to be more mobile and to go to other areas of the country. By their Second Guerrillera Conference, when they formally adopted the FARC as their name, the group had developed six new corps of guerrillas. They also agreed on the strategy of reactive defensive operations directed at long-term conflict with the ultimate goal being the seizure of state power (Pizarro Leongómez & Peñaranda, 1991). The Third Guerrillera Conference was in March 1969 (Molano, 2000) in the region of Guayabero. At this meeting they discussed the training of new cadres and also designated the Magdalena Medio as the fourth general region of the FARC (Mackenzie, 2007). The fourth Conference took place at El Pato, in April 1971 (Molano, 2000). At this meeting the leadership addressed new perspectives for increased personnel and the acquisition of weapons. They set up a new front in Urabá close to Panama. At this time, the FARC still only had approximately 780 men. The Fifth Conference took place in Meta, in September 1974 (Molano, 2000). After this fifth conference, the FARC continued to grow very slowly, with the support of the peasants who inhabited the land on which the national government had no presence.

H.   CONCLUSION

The origins of the FARC cannot be separated from the political violence that affected Colombia in the forties and earlier. Colombia, like many Latin American countries, never experienced major international conflicts, but had been in an almost permanent state of civil unrest since independence. The country's elite sought stability via the creation of the National Front, a power

sharing agreement negotiated in 1958 between Liberals and Conservatives that prevailed for the next 16 years. Meanwhile, self-defense groups, taking advantage of the absence of the government in some parts of the country created the zones known as "Independent Republics." By 1964, the FARC, along with other communist groups had emerged out of these regions and expanded their influence slowly over the next decade. The gradual rise of the FARC also involved the integration of students and middle-class intellectuals into an insurgent movement typical of the Cold War era. Its strategy reflected the revolutionary euphoria of the 1960s. At the same time, the FARC (as we have seen) also emerged out of the longer, complex and violent political history particular to nineteenth and twentieth century Colombia.

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III. 1975–1991: THE GROWTH OF THE FARC THROUGH THE FIRST PEACE PROCESS

The FARC, as we have seen, grew gradually from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. Then, in the early 1980s, as Lair & Sánchez (2004) make clear the number of "strategic disruptions" carried out by the FARC increased dramatically. The number and size of its various fronts grew in this period, along with a huge new financial capacity, which enabled expansion into areas of great strategic value. Similarly, the FARC increased its military capability and with it, important achievements in the military field against government military forces, where the FARC demonstrated a new more sophisticated attack capability (Pardo Rueda, 2004). The FARC also managed to grow in cities through the "Bolivarian militias." Finally, the FARC created new "columns" of highly mobile units capable of attacking and destroying military bases and defending strategic territories, as approved at its Eighth Conference in 1993 (Ferro & Uribe Ramón, 2002). This chapter will summarize an important period in the FARC's development, in relation to President Belisario Betancourt's Peace Process and subsequent rounds of peace negotiations (Bejarano, 1995) (Corporación Observatorio para la Paz, 1999) (Pardo Rueda, 1996) (Torres Diana, 2008).

A. PRESIDENT BELISARIO BETANCURT'S PEACE PROCESS

On August 7, 1982, Belisario Betancourt became president of the Republic, after an election campaign where the issue of peace was the main differentiating feature among the various contenders. After his inaugural ceremony, Betancourt invited the rebels to dialogue. The government was initially receptive to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the April 19th Movement (M19), then the Liberation Popular Army (EPL). The National Liberation Army (ELN) meanwhile, rejected Betancourt's proposal for peaceful dialogue, although this did not preclude them from government initiatives (Pardo Rueda, 1996). This was the context in which, on November 19, 1982, the

President approved law # 35, which established amnesty and issued standard rules to restore and preserve the peace. The document contained ten articles on granting general amnesty to the perpetrators, accomplices or supporters of acts constituting political crimes committed prior to the passing of the law. The amnesty meant freedom for most prisoners, from the EPL, ELN, FARC, M-19, PLA, and ADO (Pardo Rueda, 1996) (Torres Diana, 2008) (Villamarín Pulido, 1992).

At the same time, Belisario Betancourt organized a new peace commission, composed of thirty-six members from all sectors of the government. After that, the Commission contacted the FARC announced a communication "greater understanding", issued as Decree 240 of 1983, which named three persons to serve as links to the government, the peace commission and those who benefited from the amnesty. (Cornell, 2005) Corporación Observatorio para la Paz, 1999). On March 28, 1984, after more than a year of conversations between the FARC and the government, in the midst of a serious deterioration of public order, the Peace Commission and the FARC signed an agreement. The document highlighted eleven points including a cease-fire set to start on May 28 1984, and the launching of the National Peace Commission designated by the president (Gaitán, 2002). In the most important section of the Agreements, the FARC expressed the wish to demobilize its military structure and begin its transition to a legal political movement; they created a political party named the Patriotic Union (UP.) (Echandía Castilla, 2006) (Matta Aldana, 2002) (Pardo Rueda, 2004).

B.   THE PATRIOTIC UNION (UP)

The whole country believed and hoped for a political solution to the conflict with the signing of the ceasefire, truce and peace accord between the government and insurgent groups. The FARC founded a political movement named the Patriotic Union UP (Pataquiva García, 2009). The UP was involved in the 1986 elections. Of the UP candidates that ran for government office, six were

elected as senators, nine as representative in departmental assemblies, as well as 335 as councilors in 187 municipalities across the country. In the presidential election, the party received about 350,000 votes, at that time the most votes in the history of any leftist group in Colombia (Pataquiva García, 2009). The UP had become an efficient tool for the dissemination of regional interests and revolutionary principles, mass organization and territorial expansion especially in areas dedicated to the cultivation and processing of cocaine, the same areas where the UP won the majority of offices, in Putumayo, Nariño, Caquetá and Meta. On June 16, 1987, the FARC's groups, called fronts of war XIV and XV, ambushed a company from a regular infantry battalion leaving twenty-six soldiers and one civilian murdered, so President Virgilio Barco declared the peace process broken in that region (Pardo Rueda, 1996).

The UP candidate, Bernardo Jaramillo, was assassinated during the 1990 presidential election campaign, as was the Liberal candidate Luis Carlos Galan and the candidate representing the Democratic Alliance M19, Carlos Pizarro Leongomez. This situation and the natural death of Jacobo Arenas, founder of the FARC, encouraged the FARC to embark on a major offensive operation against the government in the early 1990s (Guaraca & Matta Aldana, 1999) (Pizarro Leongómez, 2004) (Villamarín Pulido, 1992). During the first year of President Cesar Gaviria's government (1990–1994), the FARC abandoned the peace process. Then, on May 15, 1991, the FARC and the government again began to talk peace. Meanwhile the FARC was part of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating (CGSB) organization created in 1987 with the intention of unifying all guerrilla movements in Colombia (Ferro & Uribe Ramón, 2002) (Guaraca & Matta Aldana, 1999) (Pataquiva García, 2009) (Villamarín Pulido, 1996).

C.   THE SIMON BOLÍVAR GUERRILLA COORDINATING (CGSB)

To set up the CGSB, the leaders of the FARC, M-19, EPL, ELN, PRT and the Quintin Lame held a meeting in La Uribe (Meta). To the government this

agreement among guerrilla groups was a problem because the government had to negotiate with the CGSB both as a coordinated group and individually. In October and November 1990, the FARC and the ELN launched their alliance. They made several attacks on military installations, killing soldiers and civilians (Pardo Rueda, 2004) (Ortiz, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales, & Fundación para la Investigación y la Cultura, 2004) (Ejercito Nacional de Colombia, 2009). The violent attacks of the CGSB encouraged President Cesar Gaviria to order members of the Colombian army to carry out "Operation Colombia" on "Casa Verde," where the Secretariat of the FARC had been located for more than twenty years (Guaraca & Matta Aldana, 1999) (Alape, 1994). This military operation eliminated any possibility of negotiation with the group, as a whole, although negotiations with the FARC would continue.

Cesar Gaviria's government had made further institutional progress to improve the government's leadership, creating the office of National Security Counselor, and appointing a civilian, for first time in Colombia's history, as Minister of Defense. Meanwhile, the government continued to carry out peace talks with the FARC. The latter demanded an area of the country without government presence or control, and twenty offices in the National Constitutional Assembly (ANC), while retaining their military capacity and the constant threat of attacks on the country's electrical infrastructure. The government responded with the continued use force (Arenas et al., 1990) (Bejarano, 1995) (Corporación Observatorio para la Paz, 1999). Then, in 1991, after the promulgation of the new Colombian constitution, the government accepted attempts to negotiate in Caracas, Venezuela, and Tlaxcala, Mexico.

D.   THE PEACE DIALOGUES IN CARACAS AND TLAXCALA

The talks in Caracas beginning on June 3, 1991 involved two rounds. In the first round, the topics addressed included the possibility of a ceasefire agreement between the CGSB and the Military Forces. This was to be a bilateral

cease-fire without preconditions and mechanisms for oversight by national or international levels. The government also proposed locating the guerrilla groups in restricted geographical areas, while emphasizing the need to negotiate the terms of integration into the country's politics, and establishing the conditions for demobilization. The second round began after a temporary suspension, agreed on between the two parties, to allow consultation by the respective bargaining committees of the CGSB and the Government. (Pataquiva García, 2009). The dialogue in Caracas was again suspended, after an attack by the FARC against the liberal politician Aurelio Irragorri. Meanwhile, on March 10, 1992, after a five month hiatus, the negotiations in Tlaxcala, started again. The CGSB posed "twelve strategies to build" peace, which indicated its views on major national issues such as the implementation of a neoliberal economic policy, the exploitation of natural resources in the country, administrative corruption, and the militarization of national life and human rights. With the death of Senator Argerino Durán Quintero, kidnapped months before by the EPL, the government, on May 4, 1992, again officially suspended the dialogues (Arenas et al., 1990). After, in a public statement, the parties expressed their intention of resuming the talks no later than October 31, 1992.

E.   CONCLUSIONS

From its origins to 1980, the FARC's political goal was to implement a communist system in Colombia, through armed revolution. The takeover was to be the end of the armed struggle. Beginning in the 1980s, the FARC reworked its political strategy, exemplified by the creation of the UP. This process failed and the FARC attempted to return a primarily insurgent posture and to the search for regional territorial autonomy. President Belisario Betancourt (1982–1986) first initiated the peace process. He began the National Rehabilitation Plan (PNR) as a response to more than thirty years of fighting between the regular forces of the state and the insurgents. A Peace Committee, the promise of a general amnesty, and reconstruction of areas ravaged by the conflict were the highlights of the

PNR. The upper classes (large business groups, traditional political and congressional conservatives) did not accept the concessions to the insurgents defended by Betancourt. The plan did not work in the end, but it did lead to the birth of the Patriotic Union UP, the political arm of the FARC and the country's third democratic force at that time. Despite setbacks, Betancourt's successors, Virgilio Barco (1986–1990), and César Gaviria (1990–1994) continued to pursue peace and a political solution to the country's violent insurgencies. The guerrilla groups; 19 April Movement M19, the Liberation Popular Army EPL, and the Revolutionary Party of the Workers PRT left their criminal ways, gave up their weapons to form the political party Democratic Alliance M19 ADM19, and the Armed Movement Quintin Lame MAQL became the Social Indigenous Alliance ASI. On May 15, 1991, meanwhile, an approach between the FARC and government began. As we have seen, at the time FARC was part of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating (CGSB) organization created in 1987 with the intention to unify all guerrilla movements with the insurgents in Colombia in order to have more options in military and political ways. By the end of this period 1980 to 2000, (what some observers regard as the best twenty years in the history of the FARC) the guerrillas had 18,000 men under arms.

IV. 1992–2002: A TRANSITION TO A WAR OF MOVEMENT

With Colombia's new constitution of 1991, a peace deal with the M-19, President Gaviria's successful operations against Pablo Escobar (1993), and the destruction of the Medellin Cartel (1993–94), many observers seemed to think that Colombia was on the verge of turning the tide in its efforts to find peace and stability. One of the main beneficiaries of political developments in the 1990s would be the FARC. With the election of President Ernesto Samper (1994–1998) and the ensuing political scandal, structural changes in the government set the stage for increased competition for resources among the country's illegally armed groups. This, combined with the limited approach taken by the United States towards Colombia, and the reorganization of the illicit drug market, contributed to the FARC's ability to transition to a war of movement against an underprepared Colombian security force. The election of President Pastrana (1998–2002) marked the return of political respectability for the government of Colombia. President Pastrana won the election primarily because of his endorsement of a policy that called for peace negotiations with the FARC. Pastrana fulfilled this mandate to conduct peace negotiations with the FARC, and went to extraordinary lengths to demonstrate that the Colombian government was sincere in this effort. Pastrana also seemed to have a strong understanding of the fact that the FARC would only negotiate from a position of strength. At the outset, this policy gave the Colombian security forces room to adjust to the new threat that the FARC posed, and allowed for the introduction of Plan Colombia in 1999.

A. DRUGS, MONEY, AND POLITICS—THE SAMPER ADMINISTRATION

While engaged in a very close presidential campaign against Andres Pastrana, Ernesto Samper's campaign received some much needed funding, which ultimately assisted him in gaining a slim victory, but would also permanently tarnish his reputation. A scandal broke out almost immediately after

the election. The legal case against key members of President Samper's government became known as the, "Processo 8000 case and before it was over, Samper's attorney general, defense minister, and campaign treasurer, along with several legislators were convicted of drug money-related crimes" (Crandall, 2001, p. 103). This case clearly limited President Samper's ability to govern. The Samper administration's ineffectiveness as Bagley argues was accentuated by a regional economic slowdown, Samper's political style, poor economic policy decisions coupled with the aid decertification of Colombia by the U.S. that combined in Colombia experiencing, "…its worst economic recession in 70 years**…"** (Bagley, 2001, p 21, 22). This scandal and the President's ineffectiveness across a broad spectrum of issues, including the economy, clearly lessened the legitimacy of the government and strengthened the positions of the FARC.

The U.S. government's response to the election of Samper was to push his administration to step up the fight against drug trafficking cartels, support coca-spraying operations in the south, and replace the National Police commander General Octavio Vargas Silva. President Samper agreed to these demands, "Thus Samper's "narcocompromised" presidency ended up, whether he liked it or not, being Washington's reliable and predictable ally in the drug war" (Crandall, 2001, p. 104). The appointment of General Serrano as the new head of the police allowed the U.S. government to work directly with him in its fight against drugs, basically bypassing President Samper (Crandall, 2001, p. 104). But, the U.S. government was still frustrated with it lack of success in combating the Cali drug cartel, and in 1995, the Colombian government was decertified, although it was granted a national security wavier to continue to receive aid. In response, the Samper administration, "…sent three thousand soldiers on a drug lord mansion raid, successfully confiscating a multitude of computers and cellular telephones believed to be integral to the dictate's communications network…..By August, six of these fugitives were behind bars, including the infamous Rodriquez Orejuela brothers" (Peceny and Durnan, 2006, pp. 105–106). Interestingly

enough, the Clinton administration still decertified Colombia from receiving all assistance because the Samper administration had not done enough to fight the drug problem. The U.S. dissatisfaction with the Samper administration was made public when President Samper became only the second democratically elected head of state to lose his U.S. visa (Peceny and Durnan, 2006, p. 105).

Samper's efforts to destroy the Cali cartel had additional unintended consequences for the growth of the resource base for the FARC. Peceny and Duran point out that: "The decapitation of the Cali cartel left a power vacuum soon filled by small-scale competitors…the drug industry's increasingly diversified entrepreneurs without the capacity to import mass quantities of coca leaves….Thus the transformation of the drug business into an increasingly fragmented and small-scale industry made it substantially more vulnerable to taxation by the FARC (Thoumi 2003, 135–136)" (Peceny and Durnan, 2006, p. 106). As Russell Crandall (2001) argues, "When this revenue is combined with the revenues from 'revolutionary taxes,' kidnappings, and other illicit activities, it is clear that the guerrillas possessed a formidable war chest estimated up to US$500 million annually. This enabled the guerrillas dramatically to expand their influence throughout Colombia…in 1995 the figure had risen to 59.8 percent of municipalities and has continued to grow since" (Crandall, 2001, p.111). The FARC's expanded connection to the drug trade because of this vacuum in power did not only include additional tax revenues. Alain Labrousse (2005) details how the FARC also during this time introduced poppy into areas of the country and eliminated middlemen (Labrousse, 2005, p. 178).

With each rebuff by the U.S. administration, it seemed that Samper tried even harder to show that he was fighting drugs, even to include changing the Constitution so that drug leaders could be extradited to the United States. Samper also seemed to be willing to support the U.S. fumigation program; although, it was met with great concern among his populace, and may have actually contributed to the social base of the FARC. Ricardo Vargas Meza (1998) states, "In mid-1996, over 200,000 farmers and peasants from the coca-growing

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regions of the country, located principally in the south, marched on their state capitals, protesting the fumigations and demanding viable economic alternatives to illicit crop cultivation. The magnitude of these peasant protests, combined with simultaneous guerrilla attacks on military bases in the neighboring departments…convinced authorities that the protests were an expression of the political and military strength of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)" (Vargas, 1998, p.1). These extraordinary efforts taken by the Samper administration seemed to demonstrate it was willing to place Colombian interests below the U.S. priorities.

The U.S. policy in Colombia during the Samper administration clearly had dramatic effects on Colombian domestic policy. However, it seems clear that many of the efforts undertaken by the U.S. myopic anti-drug focus did little to stop the drugs, and its policies may have actually contributed to the power and resources of the illicit drug problem being directed to a more dangerous foe than the cartels. The case of the U.S. strategy of aerial fumigation seems to have been one of the longest lasting continual failures. This policy began under the Andean Ridge initiative during the George H. Bush administration in 1989 (Crandell, 2001, p. 101). Numerous studies have shown that these efforts have not lowered the amount of acreage used to cultivate illicit drugs, have not raised the prices or availability of these illicit drugs in the United States (Tickner, 2003, p. 2). The Clinton administration recommended a pull back on this strategy for these very reasons in 1992, but U.S. conservative domestic pressure not only reversed this decision, but also actually increased the resources devoted to this effort (Crandall, 2001, p. 101). Beyond the apparent ineffectiveness of the fumigation efforts in lowering the amount of drugs in the U.S., it also served to increase the popular appeal of the FARC. Richard Vargas Meza (1998) points out that the fact that many of the coca growers were able to stage mass protests in 1996 and boycott the elections of that year was a direct reaction to the U.S. led eradication efforts and ultimately, "…generates more support for the guerrillas" (Vargas, 1998, p. 4).

The resources dedicated to fight the problem were also almost solely devoted to the National Police (Tickner, 2003, p.4). This policy did seem to have aided the National Police in becoming a more professional and less corrupt force than many of its Latin American peers. This has been essential to establishing legitimacy of the government in the long run, but the timing of allocation of resources to the police may have been inappropriate when assessing the capabilities of FARC versus the capabilities and mission of the National Police. It seems likely that the military would have been a more appropriate force to combat the serious threat that the FARC had evolved to be. Critiques at the time were vehemently opposed to any strategy to support the military because of the military's connections to the paramilitary groups (Bagley, 2001, p. 24). However, this thesis argues that allocating more training and resources to the military would have been instrumental in cutting the ties between the military and paramilitary groups. First, it could have provided resource- based incentives tied to compliance with human rights standards. Second, it could have provided the types of equipment and training that would have made the military force more effective, and in the process, less likely to need assistance from illegally armed groups. This is not to say that all ties between military and civilian actors can be eliminated because historically, during insurgencies, both police and military forces have relied on local security elements to provide intelligence and local security (Marks, 2003, p. 94). However, with increased military capability, the military's relative strength would have made it the dominate actor in the relationship and it would have been able to curb the abuses if given the proper incentives.

The 1991 Constitution mandated a decentralization of resources available to the local level. According to Fabio Sanchez and Maria del Mar Palau(2006) in the their work *Conflict, Decentralization and Local Governance in Colombia, 1974–2004*, the intent of this decentralization was, "…aimed at reducing poverty, increasing political participation and enlarging social service…" (Sanchez and del Mar Palau, 2006, p.13). Sanchez and Palau carried out a detailed quantitative

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study of violence in Colombia and concluded that, "…on the one hand, local governments have less repressive capacity than the central government so local leaders are more susceptible to intimidation, and on the other, as more resources are transferred to local governments the 'pot' available for plundering increases" (Sanchez and del Mar Palau, 2006, p. 13). They further determined that the illegally armed groups in Colombia, "…have redefined the strategic objectives of the illegal groups….and the decentralization process that turned the conflict into a dispute for local power" (Sanchez and del Mar Palau, 2006, p. 34). This hypothesis is particularly interesting in terms of the FARC because it assumes that the FARC had the original objective of destroying the state, but when the state changed, the FARC redefined their strategy. The FARC then found the goal of influencing local government more attainable. This argument fits interestingly with another unrelated argument by Roman Ortiz (2002) presented in the work *Insurgent Strategies in the Post Cold War: The Case of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia* where the author argues that the FARC's success has been in part due to a flexibility when abandoning their Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and embracing a Bolivarian ideology. This is especially pertinent in that the group has "heightened the critique of the government's incompetence in dealing with the country's biggest problems (social inequality, crime, and deficient public services), while presenting themselves more and more as a credible alternative for the 'good government'…has gone from criticizing the legitimacy of the origin of the state to questioning its functional legitimacy" (Ortiz, 2002, p. 130). Ortiz then also identifies the FARC's strategy, "…throughout the 1990s the FARC gave special importance to gaining a share of power at the municipal level within the state, where it is more visible in an administrative capacity" (Ortiz, 2002, p. 133). The constitutional changes clearly presented an opportunity to the FARC, and they have actively engaged in a strategy to compete for local resources and it can be assumed that this has further strengthened their position in terms of wealth and legitimacy.

The FARC's connection to drugs is a subject of ongoing debate. Whether they are driven by greed or grievance is an interesting area of study. However, it is clear, no matter what its motives the FARC dramatically increased its connections to the illicit drug trade during the early 1990s (Tickner, 2003, p. 2). This increased connection to drugs as a source of revenue to fund military capability was first authorized during the 7th Conference of 1982 (Labrousse, 2005, p. 177). But, as previously stated, the weakening of the drug cartels lessened competition in this area, and for the first time in the early 1990s the FARC revenues were substantially increased. The FARC's realization of the potential profits led them to pursue many other forms of taxation, and further integration into other facets of the illicit drug industry to include airfield security and drug refinement (Ortiz,2002, p.137). The FARC's vast increase in revenues was then used to field a larger force, and much of the profits were reinvested in the economy, both legal and illegal (Rangel,2000, p. 582). The connections made during the integration into the illicit drug world also served the FARC by granting them better access to the illicit weapons market, as well as additional training from criminal and terrorist groups like the IRA (Miller, 2002, p. 2). The FARC's increased capacity in terms of personnel, training, and armament led them to the realization that they could now confront the military directly in battle. The decision to move to a war of movement was cited in the 8th Conference of 1993 where they approved the formation and tactical implementation of mobile columns (Ferro & Uribe Ramón, 2002).

The FARC's tactical transition to a war of movement initially caught the security forces off guard. Both the military and the National Police in the early 1990s were still using strategies and tactics that were oriented towards the FARC's old strategy of guerilla warfare. The military's first major loss was credited to an attack at Las Delicias in 1996, where an army base was overrun and over 60 soldiers were taken captive (Molano,2000, p. 4). The FARC's strategy was a well-conceived strategy that they had borrowed from the Vietnamese and FLMN (Marks, 2003, p. 92). The FARC would conduct

numerous coordinated small scale guerrilla attacks across a broad area and then, when the security forces would react to these attacks, the FARC would mass forces on the real objective that was separate from those of the guerilla attacks. These tactics were used a number of times before the military realized that tactical patience was the key, and that it should wait until the enemy's primary objective was identified before sending in reinforcements. The military then began a series of operations to deny the FARC mobility corridors, and this can be seen as the military's first acceptance that the FARC was in a war of movement (Marks, 2003, p. 83).

B. PLAN FOR PEACE WHILE PREPARING FOR WAR—THE PASTRANA ADMINISTRATION

President Pastrana was swept into office in 1998 on a ticket that promised to conduct negotiations with the FARC. Pastrana took this mandate seriously and arrived at the negotiations prepared to see if peace could be negotiated. However, from the beginning, the FARC did not seem to be prepared or willing to negotiate peace. First, it seemed that the FARC were demonstrating that they were negotiating from a position of power by launching a large attack across the country during President Pastrana's inauguration (Murillo, 1998, p. 1). The very first scheduled meeting found the President at the conference and the FARC's leader Manuel Marulanda Velez (a.k.a Tirofijo) a "no show" (Villamizar, 2003, p. 29). The FARC legitimately cited fear that the government could not control the paramilitary groups and guarantee their security. The experience from the U.P. in the 1980s still clearly was a legitimate obstacle to any negotiations. The paramilitaries groups, by this time, consolidated much of their power in the north of the country and were even more of a threat than in the 1980s.

President Pastrana then took a large step to try to prove that the government was willing to work around the problem of security for the FARC by granting the FARC a security zone where no government operations would take place. This area became known as the "despeje" on November 7, 1998 (Shifter,

1999, p. 119). It was roughly the size of Switzerland and was located in the southern area of the country. The Pastrana administration also took a previously unprecedented action of allowing third parties to take part in the negotiations. Representative from the Catholic Church and representative from the U.N. were brought into the negotiations. The United States even conducted secret talks with the FARC on an alternative development for illicit crops (Bagley, 2001, p. 22). However, it became clear to many observers that the FARC were still in a position of strength and there was very little hope for a negotiated settlement of the conflict. The FARC's actions during this time, including continued attacks and an expanding illicit drug industry in the "despeje," seemed to show that the FARC were content with the status quo and would do nothing to change it (Forero, 2002, p. 4). Some critics would also point out that one key aspect that the government did not address was, "Despite Pastrana's demonstrable commitment to peace, Bogotá never mounted a sustained offensive against the paramilitaries…" and the paramilitaries tripled in size (Sweig, 2002, p. 4).

"Plan Colombia" was the response that the Pastrana administration developed as it became apparent that peace talks were futile. In 1999, Pastrana began a sophisticated campaign to push for increased U.S. support, international support, and even called on the rich of Colombia to strengthen the security apparatus of Colombia under Plan Colombia.. The plan was very ambitious and its cost was to be around $7.5 billion U.S. dollars, with the U.S. providing $2 billion, Colombia $4 billion and the international community $1.5 billion (Bagley, 2001, p.23). The plan had a panacea of objectives—economic development, fighting corruption, and development of the security forces being the primary objectives. Pastrana was able to secure new taxes to meet the Colombian commitments and the U.S. was able to secure nearly all of the $2 billion. One very distinctive facet of the U.S. portion of the money was that for the first time military assistance took priority over police assistance (Sweig, 2002, p. 4). Most of the international funding for the plan was never secured and it seems that many of the development initiatives were limited because of this. Of the money

that was secured, the majority was directed to the development of the capabilities of the security forces. This led many critics to question the effectiveness of "Plan Colombia" (Peceny and Durnan, 2006, p. 110).

It has also been argued that the FARC used the end of the peace process and the "despeje" to prepare for a final showdown with the government. Many observers point to the massive amounts of arms being smuggled in the area, "In mid-January 2000…the FARC acquired more than 20,000 East German assault rifles along with grenade launchers, mortars, SAM-12 surface-to-air missiles, sophisticated electronic communication equipment, and their own small but growing air force" (Bagley, 2001, p. 12). The FARC also used the zone as a base of operations to stage attacks throughout the country (Cala, 2000, p. 59). Their complete takeover of the illicit drug activities in the "despeje" from cultivation, to refinement, and transshipment also was identified as FARC's opportunity to build a war chest of funds (Robinson,1999, p. 69). They attempted to gain international recognition and legitimacy during this time, but this effort was largely considered a failure when both the E.U. and Canada placed them on terrorist lists (Forero, 2002, p. 4).

The attacks on U.S. aid workers, the hijacking of a commercial airliner, and the kidnapping of a Colombian senator in late 2001 and early 2002 finally prompted the Pastarana administration to end the peace negotiations and begin a military campaign to rescuer the "Despeje" (Isacson, 2002, p. 1). In late February 2002, President Pastarana gave the rebels a 48-hour deadline to clear the zone and then began a military offensive to clear the area (Miller,2002). This offensive was backed by Washington and it seems that the U.S. had finally abandoned the counter-productive drug policy for a counterterrorism/ counterinsurgency policy (Isacson, 2002, p. 1). Sharing intelligence and providing additional training and resources proved this shift in strategy. The Colombian security forces relatively quickly secured a large portion of the "despeje" and limited the mobility corridors of the FARC (Marks, 2003). The military then began to conduct operations that focused on destroying rebel bases. The FARC were

unable to defend these areas and the tactics of the FARC slowly changed to smaller scale operations. The military effectiveness demonstrated that the FARC had misjudged their relative strength and the conditions that were necessary for a guerrilla movement to conduct a "War of Movement."

The Colombian people believed that the motives behind Pastrana's actions were good, but many thought that he was too slow at recognizing the FARC's true intentions. Many observers still feel that because the FARC had been granted this area for three years, they were able to grow to a level would make them a legitimate threat for generations. The FARC also recognized that the government was underprepared to deal with the displaced persons after the "despeje" was eliminated, compounding a problem that already made Colombia have the largest number of displaced citizens in the world(Bagley, 2001, p. 18). While the military enjoyed success during the campaign to retake the "despeje," the government's lack of a combined coordinated effort further damaged the government's legitimacy in terms of providing good governance to the newly secured areas (Marks, 2003).

C.   CONCLUSIONS

During President Samper's administration, Colombian democracy reached a low point in terms of legitimacy. The "Processo 8000" case not only lessened the legitimacy of the government by connecting drug traffickers to the election, but more importantly, it seemed to plague the Samper administration's ability to develop any type of independent policy to focus on Colombian priorities. With the election of President Pastrana, the Colombian democracy was able to begin to place Colombian interests as the priorities of its policy. President Pastrana's entrance into the negotiation process with the FARC may be questioned when considering the FARC's relative strength and maturity as an insurgent group. However, the policy of negotiating with the FARC can also be seen as a return of good governance because President Pastrana was elected on a national mandate from the people he hoped to govern calling for these negotiations. The

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Pastrana administration's development of "Plan Colombia" further demonstrated that Colombian priorities were being addressed. Plan Colombia addressed a myriad of Colombian problems which may have been its biggest weakness. If Plan Columbia it did not correct all of the problems, critics could point to its failures. However, it is clear that the Pastrana administration did have as a priority strengthening the security forces (primarily the military), so that the government could first secure the population. This prioritization seemed to be the true strength of Plan Colombia and set the conditions for the success of future administrations.

U.S. policy during the Samper administration seemed to lack an understanding of the problems that illicit drugs presented to Colombian and U.S. interests. The elementary and very limited focus of implementing policies that were focused on reducing the production of illicit drugs may have actually been counterproductive in terms of fighting the drug problem and clearly did little to assess how these policies would affect power relationships within Colombia. It seems that these policies would not accept that without cutting the demand, the production of illicit drugs would continue. Clearly the U.S. could assisted in eliminating the power brokers that controlled the industry, but the power simply shifted to another dangerous foe. With the destruction of the Medellin and Cali Cartels, power over the illegal drug trade was then controlled by the FARC and the AUC. The U.S. concern for human rights abuses clearly did not benefit the empowerment of either the FARC or the AUC. The U.S. human rights concerns also led to the development of a policy of supporting only the national police. This policy would be beneficial in the long run, but the national police clearly were not and should not be the force to confront a mature guerrilla organization able to conduct a war of movement type operations. AU.S. policy that had not been so limited in its assessment of the capabilities and the threat that the FARC posed during this period, would have most probably led to a policy that supported the

military. After the September 11 attacks, U.S. policy finally exhibited that it must increase support for the military under Plan Colombia as President Pastrana proposed.

A myriad of developments during this time clearly benefited the FARC's ability to obtain the resources necessary to train, equip, and field a force that was capable of confronting the Colombian security forces in traditional battles. The FARC demonstrated a considerable amount of competence in conducting these types of operations in conjunction with simultaneous guerrilla attacks. The FARC also demonstrated that they had the flexibility and discipline necessary to further integrate into the illicit drug business while still maintaining the focus of a traditional guerrilla organization. It would be a mistake to consider the FARC as solely drug criminals during this period, but it would also be foolish to consider them as a completely ideological organization. This debate continues to this day, but it is clear that this strategy has also exposed a potential weakness for the FARC. It has contributed to a negative image in the populace of Colombia and has helped justify the U.S. interests in combating the group. However, the most fatal mistake that the FARC may have committed during this time was moving to the war of movement stage of revolution before it should. Clearly, the FARC was well equipped and had effective fighters, but the disparity in strength between the FARC and government security forces may have actually increased during the time of the "despeje."

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V. 2002–2009—PRESIDENT URIBE AND SECURING THE NATION

A. INTRODUCTION

The institutions of national power and the strength of democracy in Colombia have undergone vast changes in recent years. These changes have been most prevalent in terms of increased opportunity for alternative groups to attain political success, the opening of a strategy that allows for peaceful resolution to Colombia's conflict alongside the strengthening and development of the security forces. The illegally armed groups in Colombia, as a result, have experienced a major loss of relative power. The population as a whole has seen economic opportunities increase, and the people seem to have found an issue that inspires some national unity. While these changes all appear to bode well for the future of Colombia as a nation state, there have been many injustices associated with this process and certain forces still present a sustained threat to the nation of Colombia.

B. POLITICAL SPACE

The opening of the political space for voices outside of the Liberal and Conservative parties may be directly attributable to the 1991 peace arrangement and the revised constitution that it produced. According to a leader of the M-19 movement who helped write the new constitution and became a successful senator, Antonio Navaro Wolff, "In the land of political pluralism the work of 1991 also produced lasting changes. The bipartisanism has been closed and the exclusion of 140 years has disappeared. Today it is impossible to think of Colombian society without an amplitude of political parties, seemingly exaggerated at times. Colombia must better channel the exercise of the policy, but the time in which a handful of liberal and conservative heads handled their parties as a property will never return." (Translation by the authors.) (Navarro,

2009). The effectiveness of the new constitution was proven in the 2002 Presidential election of an independent candidate, Alvaro Uribe. From 1991 until 2002, the sheer numbers and fragmentation of parties had allowed the traditional parties' organizations to prevail and continue their domination of Colombian politics. While some 80 different parties were officially recognized, their individual successes had been limited to small numbers of congressional, provincial, and municipal victories (Moreno, 2004). The election of an independent candidate to the Presidency signaled the maturation of these 80 parties. Their ability to organize coalitions dramatically changed the course of Colombian politics. In so doing, these parties have forced all parties and groups to rethink politics.

President Uribe seized on the discontent created by the traditional parties' inability to improve the country's security situation. Indeed, a common public belief was that, as Swieg contends, the Liberal and Conservatives seemed to conspire to keep the keep the military weak so that they could profit from the situation (Swieg, 2002), or as Vanessa Joan Gray contends, "that Colombian weak state capacity stems from stalemated intra elite conflict…"(Gray, 2008, p. 77). Uribe put forward a simple plan to deal with the security issues that dominated the public's attention. As Colonel Alberto Mejia suggests, "he offered a vision, a coherent plan and the necessary resources to save Colombia called Democratic Security and Defense Policy (DSDP)" (Mejia, 2008, p. 9). The DSDP,"… focused on regaining control of areas close to large urban centers, highways and infrastructure" (International Crisis Group, 2009, p.21).

In 2002–2003, security forces launched a series of offensives that pushed the FARC out of strategic locations in Cundinamarca and Antioquia departments (International Crisis Group, 2009, p.21). It must be acknowledged that a number of human rights violations during this campaign were later brought to light. Uribe's plan called for a continuation of the Plan Colombia that his predecessor Pastrana had developed, but he took the increased military spending a step further by proposing taxes to increase the overall size of the military. This was a radical shift from Pastrana's government, which had spent 1.35 percent of GDP

(Sweig, 2002), Uribe's government spent 4.36 percent of GDP in 2003 (Defense Spending, 2009). Uribe's DSDP was not limited to military and security force actions, but there can be no denial that they were the main effort in the first phase of the plan.

The hard line that President Uribe offered was simply that only if an illegally armed group agreed to a unilateral cease fire and stopped illegal activities would the group then be able to start peace negotiations. This was a clear line drawn by President Uribe. The real point to this was that for the first time the debate had shifted from who was going to be in charge, to the issue of what should be done about the country's critical security situation. Under Uribe's model of the DSDP, the increased security would create, "a climate of confidence and stability that would attract private investment and economic growth. This economic recovery would guarantee better state revenues and would foster social investment" (Mejia, 2008, p.24), which Colonel Mejia claims were based on Uribe's past experience as a Governor. This simple message resonated with the public and Uribe was able to organize a coalition of political parties that would become a new force in Colombian politics.

Alvaro Uribe began his political career as a member of the liberal party, and the son of a land owning cattle rancher in the Antioquia Department of Colombia. As his resume states on the official web page of the Office of the Presidency of Colombia, he served as a Mayor of Medellin, Secretary General for the Labor Ministry, Director of Civil Aviation, a legislator from the area, and the Governor of Antioquia (Cirriculum Vitae, 2009). By official accounts, he was a very successful legislator and politician. But, the geography of President Uribe's background seems to have proven to be one his largest liabilities that have promoted a number of accusations against his presidency:

> Uribe built his political career in Antioquia, one of Colombia's most populous, prosperous and violent departments, infamous as home of the Medellin drug cartel. As governor, his "efficient government" program focused on privatization of public services and on political reform. Uribe has long advocated more civilian participation in

military operations-plans that critics fear could strengthen the paramilitaries. During his tenure as governor, he was an enthusiastic supporter of rural security cooperatives known as Convivir. These groups essentially legalized the paramilitary activity that had been outlawed in 1989, allowing civilians to carry out armed patrolling and intelligence functions under the control of local military commanders. The Convivir were widely criticized by human rights groups for involving the civilian population in the conflict, committing abuses and working with established illegal paramilitary forces.... Uribe has also been accused of having had links with drug trafficking in the 1980s, accusations that he vigorously denies. He maintains that his connections to the infamous Ochoa drug trafficking family were limited to thoroughbred horse shows, a popular upper-class sport in Antioquia for which the Ochoas were famous. He also denies allegations that part of his campaign funds originated in Pablo Escobar's neighborhood development project, Medellin without Slums. (Tate, 2002)

The accusations have never resulted in any legal action being taken against President Uribe, but they have undoubtedly colored his presidency in the eyes of many of his detractors. Even with these accusations, Uribe was able to break away from his traditional Liberal party and win the office of the Presidency in 2002, as an independent candidate, with a simple hard line plan to deal with the security issues of the nation.

The success of Uribe's plan, in terms of the implementation of the DSDP in the form of the military Plan Patriota,"a campaign to recapture FARC-held territory, began operations to secure the capital and environs of Bogotá from FARC attack. This phase was largely seen as successful, based on the decrease in kidnappings and roadblocks in the region" (Veillette, 2004, p. 12). With this beachhead of security obtained by the military, operations of Plan Colombia began to move to other area of the country including the traditional home base of the FARC. Between 2004–2006, the focus of the plan shifted to the south and east, but it seemed to stall around election time (International Crisis Group, 2008, p. 21). By this time, Uribe had developed a new coalition of supporters amongst the various independent parties. This coalition would become known as the Primero Colombia. The coalition's organization and the popularity of President

Uribe resulted in both a Constitutional change to allow him to run for a second term and a landslide victory in the polls; however, the party soon lost steam and was reinvented as the party of the U shortly after the election ("Elecciones 2006," 2006).

Uribe's victory was in large part due to the improved security situation, but also due to the populist stance that Uribe had adopted which focused on bringing the government to the people. This is exemplified in President Uribe's continual travel to all areas of the country to conduct town hall types of meetings called called "Consejos Comunitarios" where he listened and proposed solutions to the local problems (Latorre, 2003). This populist type of politics was a change in tactics and has proven to be effective against the traditional parties that were not accustomed to it and which often criticize Uribe for it. The aforementioned changes in style, the change in results in terms of security for the citizenry, and the success of an independent party that runs as a part of a coalition, all seemed to have truly marked a change in Colombian politics, opening the system in a manner that will make it hard for a return to the status quo.

This is not to say that President Alvaro Uribe has solved all of Colombia's problems. Colombian democracy is faced with many additional challenges. Also, a number of the challenges that face the country have been brought about through the actions of the current government. One of the most disturbing issues brought to light was the scandal involving members of the Departmento Administrivo de Suguridad (DAS), which is comparable to the FBI in the United States. They were accused of using electronic surveillance on opposition political parties. Over thirty agents and high-ranking officials were dismissed and are currently being prosecuted (Comfirma-DAS, 2009). While no ties have been directly attributed to President Uribe, this issue has called into question whether or not political forces are trying to close the political environment to open competition. President Uribe's actions after this event have also been called into question because the judicial branch of the government has claimed that the President's office has obstructed the investigation, as well as testimony by

demobilized AUC members' against political allies of Uribe (Colombian Politics, 2008). An additional challenge to the openness of Colombia's political system would have to also include Uribe's party sponsoring a law that would exclude the Judiciaries' ability to investigate and try elected officials. In late August 2008, the government proposed to Congress a series of judicial reforms that would end a Supreme Court investigation and prosecution of public officials accused in the para-political scandal. Uribe's supporters eventually withdrew this legislation, but the challenge to the judiciary was clear (Institutional Crisis, 2009).

The most recent possible challenge to the openness of Colombian democracy, as the *Wall Street Journal* paraphrased in the Colombian newsweekly *Semana* in its opposition to a third proposed presidential term, "Its main argument was that the checks and balances in the constitution are designed for a four-year presidential term and that an erosion of the separation of powers under Mr. Uribe would be aggravated by a third term"(Cordoba, 2008). But, to be fair, President Uribe seems to be troubled by the decision. To date, he has not publicly declared intentions to run for a third time.

While Uribe's coalition of political parties has proven that the traditional liberal and conservative parties can be successfully challenged at the national level, the positive effects and successes of other parties should not be discounted. The leading opposition parties include the Polo Democratico Alternativo (PDA) and Partido de Cambio Radical (PCR), along with a large number of minor parties that often champion specific causes such as indigenous people's rights, religious ideas, and environmental concerns. But, 2002 legislation has limited the growth of new political parties by requiring them to receive at least two percent of national support to be officially recognized (Moreno, 2004).

The Polo Democratico Alternativo's success at all levels of the government has provided a much-needed voice to the left. These left parties have also demonstrated an aptitude for forming coalitions; the Polo Democratico Alternativo is actually a coalition of two parties, the Independent Democratic Pole

and the Democratic Alternative. In 2006, the PDA candidate for president won 22 percent of the vote and 10 of the 100 senators seats (Registraduria Nacional del Estado Civil, 2006). The FARC and the ELN have not been willing or able to promote any party, still claiming that they have learned their lesson from the government and AUC violence against the Union Patriotica (UP). This disengagement from the political process has alienated most left leaning parties from any type of support for the FARC or ELN. The results of this disengagement have seemed also to further delegitimize the FARC and ELN, often equating to a belief that the FARC and ELN have limited, if any, positive ideological value to add to the process of the Colombian political system. This limited ideological contribution of the FARC, as stated by James F. Rochland, in *Vanguard Revolutionaries in Latin Ameri*ca, is that, "...the FARC has transformed into a formidable criminal-military machine with a feeble ideological basis, and with little political legitimacy or credibility" (Rochlin, 2003).

The diversity of Colombia's political landscape has opened many new possibilities for the country's future success. The opportunity for groups to organize and have their voices expressed through political means seems to be one of most promising developments that could contribute to ending the protracted conflict in Colombia, where violence has become an expectable expression of political desires. The government must ensure that while they attempt to regain security and obtain a governmental monopoly on violence, they do not in the process close political avenues of expression and force groups to revert to violence. The continued U.S. support for strengthening institutional checks and balances in the legislative and judicial branches may help alleviate future problems. But, the strength of these institutions and a free press may have already been proven by bringing scandals to light and forcing political changes.

C.   DEMOBILIZATION

In 2002, the majority of the Auto Defensas de Colombia agreed to a unilateral cease-fire with the government of Colombia to conduct negotiations for

their demobilization. The resulting agreement was a monumental step forward for President Uribe's DSDP and for Colombia as a whole. Clearly, this agreement was flawed at a number of levels, possibly with even less then admirable intentions, but the precedent it set has allowed for refinement and improvement of the process of demobilization. More importantly, it showed that the government's hard line strategy could work. The current government's demobilization efforts should be examined in three different phases. Phase One being the original agreement to demobilize the AUC in 2002 and 2003. Phase Two the refinement of the demobilization of AUC members under the Justicia y Paz legislation of 2005. The third phase is a newly developing phase where the FARC have increasingly been allowed to and are seeking out personal demobilization under the Justice and Peace legislation.

Before examining each of the proposed phases, it is necessary to place these events in an historical environmental perspective in which these decisions were made. First, the Cesar Gaviria government agreed to lenient terms with the M-19 and other guerilla groups not because the guerillas were principled freedom fighters (Navarro, 2006). Rather, it was an opportunity to settle the problems with one of many threats during a period when Colombia was seriously close to becoming a failed state. With the government's "back against the wall" they agreed to terms that were accommodating to the point of little to no jail sentences for men who had killed or ordered the killings of innocent Colombians (Navarro, 2006). The government even went so far as to accept the guerillas' demand for constitutional changes. These decisions surely infuriated some individuals because the guerillas had violated their human rights. However, the overall improvement in the security situation for the government and the people as a whole can be seen as a success. The contribution that these guerillas made to the government, after the process, should also be recognized.

From 1991 until 2002, the government's ability to influence its opponents did not change significantly in terms of growth of national power. With the 1991 peace deal precedent set, and the government's inability to force groups into

demobilization, it became apparent that the illegally armed groups would not be willing to accept harsh terms for demobilization. This suggested that the demobilization would have to be initiated at the behest of the illegally armed groups. The reason for a desired demobilization could be attributed to many factors, but one that seems relevant because of the protracted nature of the conflict in Colombia is simply that the combatants had become war weary. If fatigue of war was indeed one of the main motivations for demobilization, the government's position could not have been very aggressive because the guerillas would simply have returned to the fight.

With this historical and logical framework in mind, it is no surprise that the negotiations between the government and the AUC seemed to have a decidedly advantageous slant towards the AUC. Human rights groups and much of the international community vehemently opposed this negotiated agreement. The OAS commission on human rights states, "...that those who been have involved in the commission of constituent conduct of atrocious acts of barbarism, terrorism, kidnapping, genocide and homicide , or the inhibiting resolution by the fact to participate in a demobilization process will not be able to benefit....the members of the AUC accused or condemned by the commission of violations of human rights cannot benefit from the mechanisms of extinction of the effective legal plan established within the framework for individual and collective demobilizations" (Translation by the author) (OAS, 2004). However, it also has to be questioned whether these groups are ignoring the historical realities in Colombia. Are they taking into account the possible benefits to future human rights with a demobilized AUC, or do they have a tendency to agree with left-wing guerillas and disagree with right-wing illegally organized groups? The most relevant critique provided by NGO and human rights organizations was not that these individuals be held accountable, but that this agreement did little to destroy of the organization of the AUC. This flaw has been proven true through the resurgence of former AUC members who never agreed to demobilize, and are now being called the "Agulas Negras." However, the Colombian government has

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seemed to be aggressively treating these groups as criminals. As an exchange officer in Colombia, the unit of one of the author's successfully mounted numerous operations that targeted "Agulas Negras.".

In 2005, the Colombian Congress took a strong step to rectify some of the problems with the negotiated settlement of 2003. The law of Justice and Peace required full disclosure of all acts and if the demobilized individual was found to have not complied they would be prosecuted (Congreso De Colombia, 2003). This legislation, however, seems to have done little to break the organizational structure and ties of the demobilized AUC members. Yet, the one government strategy that seems to show progress is the further development of programs to reintegrate demobilized AUC members. The government's initial program, "Back in 2002, when the government first tried to socialize hardened fighters, its approach was to issue monthly checks to meet subsistence costs and, in essence, wish the participants "buena suerte" (good luck) in reentering a world they were ill-equipped to cope with"(Krual, 2009, p. 23). However, in 2005 and 2006, pilot programs in Medellin showed a much lower rate of criminal recidivism. This program became a national program in late 2006 in which the demobilized illegal group members receive financial support, vocational training, and counseling. They are required to attend these programs on a regular basis tracked through use of magnetic identifications cards. But, like all well-designed programs, if they are not properly funded and resourced with skilled professionals, their success will be dramatically reduced. Until now, a number of issues have been raised about the funding and staffing of these plans (Morgenstein, J., 2008).

While these programs were originally intended for the demobilization of the AUC, the effectiveness and the positive benefits of the program were soon recognized by the FARC and Colombian security forces alike. This program was originally used on an informal basis for individuals that surrendered to security forces, but it soon was institutionalized and promoted by the government in an aggressive campaign to demobilize FARC and ELN soldiers. The government's

extensive media campaign touting this opportunity to demobilize has clearly been, "Last year, 2,940 FARC fighters deserted. By the end of April of this year, there had been 544 desertions" (Brodzinsky, 2009). While these programs may never provide a solution to the problem of the FARC, it seems to have greatly diminished the FARC's capability to sustain large numbers of insurgents and the FARC have been forced to recruit younger members.

With a realistic appreciation for the historical environment in terms of each actor's comparative strength, it seems clear that the demobilization process was necessary; even if the results seemed initially to favor individual perpetrators of human rights violations. The refinement of this process as the government's relative strength grew did not exactly keep pace with this change in strength, but it did show a more favorable outcome for the government and the Columbian population. The Colombian government's further increases in relative strength should continue to show more harsh results for the perpetrators of human rights violations. But, punishment should not become so punitive that it closes the door on a strategy that could result in lower numbers of illegally armed fighters, and in turn lower the probability of violations of human rights in the future. This is not to say that when collusion to protect these illegally armed groups can be proven that they should not be prosecuted, but this reintegration strategy seems to offer a peaceful mechanism to strengthen the government's position and weaken the position of illegally armed groups.

D. SECURITY FORCES (TWO STEPS FORWARD AND ONE STEP BACK)

The Colombian National Police (CNP) has undergone an extremely dramatic transformation since the late 1980s. Many of the first initiatives that began this transformation have to be credited to both the Pastrana government and an internal movement for professionalization and adaption of a new strategic mindset. The National Police had decided that they must not become the military and must not adopt purely military approaches when developing and implementing plans. The police organization is to focus on criminal behavior and

not on warfare. This encouraged the police to reorganize in a number of different ways that encouraged more civilian interaction and participation. Only the units that were to be organized under the special operations command would focus on paramilitary tactics and strategies. One of the author's personal experiences with the CNP has proven that, in general, this different mindset is institutionalized into the National Police's personnel on a whole. Generally, the police do not consider the FARC or any other illegal armed group so much as the enemy but rather as a problem of delinquency. This institutionalized thought promotes plans and tactics that are often far from military equivalents. That is not to say that they do not observe certain military tenets such as security and fire power, but they often look for indirect ways of confronting problems.

In recent years, the capacity of the police has continued to be further developed. According to the Global Security website(2009), the number of CNP personnel numbered around 55,000 in 1989 (National Police, 2009); however, according to Anne W. Patterson's testimony to the U.S. Senate, CNP numbers increased to 97,000 in 2002, to 134,000 in 2007, and under new plans the number will increase by 20,000 by 2013(Patterson, 2007). The police have also received large amounts of funding for equipment and training through "Plan Colombia." This assistance has been provided through the national anti-narcotics section (NAS) in the American Embassy as well as a number of justice department and DOD assistance efforts. The increase in force size has also translated into further state presence throughout the country, "We have helped fund the establishment of police units in 158 new municipalities, many of which had not seen any government presence in decades. Today, for the first time in the country's history, all 1,099 of Colombia's municipalities, equivalent to county seats, have a permanent government presence, an important step forward for the people of Colombia. To enhance the rule of law, USAID projects have assisted the Government of Colombia in establishing 45 Justice Houses, which provide access to justice and social services for poor Colombians" (Patterson, 2007).

The Colombian government's efforts to professionalize its police force have also been extensive in that they have sought assistance and cooperation from many other international partners to increase their capacity. The government of Colombia has also sought to discourage corruption inside of the force by providing relatively good salaries to the CNP, and developing internal measures to check for fraud. Of the 100,000 police, 6,500 were removed under suspicion of corruption during the 1990s (Darling, 2000).

The CNP's increased capacity has provided the country with a level of security that Colombia has not seen for decades. Police have secured most major routes and overland travel has once again become common for ordinary citizens. According to the Colombian government, public opinion polls have had, "a similar rise in public approval for the National Police in the past 10 years. In 1993, 21 percent of Colombians trusted the police. Now this figure has risen to 59.7 percent" (Surprising Colombia, 2009). Overall, violent crime statistics are down dramatically. The CNP has also been seen as particularly competent at developing human intelligence. Many of its high profile police actions to capture paramilitaries, drug traffickers, ELN and FARC guerrillas have been extensively reported on. Some of the most notable operations include participation in the operations such as the freeing of Colombian and American hostages in July 2008, the operation that killed Raul Reyes (Number 2 in the FARC), and the capture of numerous other mid level FARC leaders (Betancourt freed, 2008).

However serious allegations have been leveled against the CNP which diminish the value of much of its progress. The most serious allegations have been directed at the CNP and the Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS) two separate investigative agencies:

> Initial reports suggest that CNP agents have been monitoring email correspondence and telephone calls of opposition leaders, Supreme Court judges, journalists and members of the government…Intelligence officials are accused of selling intercepted information to a range of illegal actors, including drug traffickers, paramilitary groups and left-wing guerrillas. The DAS has been implicated in several scandals under President Alvaro

Uribe's administration, revealing senior intelligence officials' involvement with narcotics traffickers, extra-judicial killings and illicit surveillance. (Wiretapping, 2009)

These accusations have been proven true in many cases. However, both the police and government have taken strong steps to punish the guilty and reform processes that should protect the people of Colombia from further police corruption. The head of CNP was forced to retire and is currently under investigation by the judiciary. This is not to say that the CNP will not continue to be vulnerable to corruption, but all police organization face this challenge and the measure of a strong police organization should be that it can identify this problem and take swift action to correct it. The CNP's staggering growth rate should be taken into account when evaluating these scandals. The growth has been essential for securing ungoverned spaces in Colombia, but not surprising, the organizational processes have not kept pace with a force that has more than doubled in size. Efforts like Microsoft's teaming with the CNP to create Web based organizational efficiencies and interaction with the community show promise for the future of the transition of the CNP ("Digital Police", 2009), along with extensive use of Facebook and YouTube by the CNP.

The growth of the military has also has been similar to that of the CNP. In 2001, the military forces numbered 181,000 and under the Uribe administration have grown to 251,000, with planned growth of an additional 16,000 by 2013(Patterson, 2007). The military has also received large portions of the resources provided under "Plan Colombia," but more importantly the Colombian government has spent nearly seven billion dollars on the military from 2000–2005 (Patterson, 2007) with an additional four billion dollar upgrade in military hardware planned for the next ten years in an agreement between Colombia, the United States, France, and Israel (Wells, 2009). The Colombian money has been raised by the Uribe administrations' two separate wealth taxes.

The professionalization and capacity development of the Colombian Military in terms of training and organizational growth has also been impressive.

The assistance training and educational assistance provided under "Plan Colombia" has been instrumental in the professionalization of a military that even critics admit has been substantial. The Colombian public has also recognized this increased professionalization, "While in 1993, public approval of the Armed Forces was 49 percent, but 12 years later it reached 79 percent." (Suprising Colombia, 2009), and has probably even increased due to last year's successful operations. The most prominent of these operations were Operation Jaque (hostage rescue of Ingrid Bentoncourt, four Americans, and twelve other Colombians), and the killing or capture of a number of high ranking FARC members. Extortion, homicide, and kidnappings have been greatly reduced to levels that seem to correlate with the military and police growth and their expansion throughout the country.

The development of civil affairs and psychological operations units, along with implementation of community development programs by the military, have demonstrated that at least some elements in the military recognize that counter-insurgency cannot be won through force alone. The military has had a tradition of basing promotions on results and the traditional metric of measurement for the military was the number of enemy killed. The government and military have officially stated that this metric would not be used, but it is one author's contention, through interaction with the Colombian military, that a prevailing cultural belief persists that still relies on a body count. Evidence of human rights violations due to extrajudicial killings has been presented by Human Rights groups and the U.N., and last year:

> The Colombian military recently announced that an internal investigation revealed that several army units were responsible for murdering civilians to inflate the body count of dead guerrillas…Continuing investigations in the Department of Defense and Prosecutor General's office will likely reveal that these deaths were not isolated incidents nor limited to the army. Over 100 claims of civilian deaths at the hands of security forces have emerged in recent weeks from nine areas in Colombia. (Penhaul, 2008)

Development of a new metric for success is crucial if the Colombian military is to avoid a repeat of these damaging actions. It is not sufficient to say that a body count is not a metric of success, because without a clearly defined metric, some members of the military will revert to this simple although inaccurate metric. The new metric should not be used to discourage aggressive military action; rather, to reward actions that result in strengthening public support.

The quantitative and qualitative growth of the security forces in Colombia have clearly enabled much of Colombia's development and worsened the prospects of success of the country's illegally armed groups. However, with this growth these government forces have struggled to reform organizationally and culturally to fully utilize their increased capacity. This has often also resulted in human rights violations that have degraded their ability to win the support of the populace and maintain a monopoly on force within Colombia. It is unrealistic to say that the security forces will ever be free from corruption and abuse, but it is important to note that many of these faults have been identified within the Colombian government and security forces. Their actions of identification and correction seem to point to a healthy system that has many of the checks and balances essential to a security apparatus.

E.   FARC (TWO STEPS BACK AND ONE STEP TO THE SIDE)

FARC losses have been reported across many different fronts. According to the EUI (2008) view wire,"… the FARC's financial position is debilitated, with its income estimated to have fallen by 40 percent. Although the guerrillas are actively involved in the illicit drug trade, the bulk of the profits remains with dealers in transit countries like Mexico. Revenue from kidnapping and extortion has declined, reflecting improved policing and military control by the government…The FARC's loss of territorial control as measured by the number of attacks against the Colombian armed forces is down by 40 percent. The ability of the guerrillas to communicate internally is being hindered by improved army

intelligence and surveillance. FARC morale is low and this will accelerate the pace of desertions and could result in some of it fronts seeking to start regional peace talks with the government" (Colombia Politics, 2008). Another report from Sibylla Brodzinsky (2009) states that the losses in personnel have also been staggering during the Uribe years, "From a peak of an estimated 18,000 fighters in 2002, the FARC now is believed to have only 9,000….The ranks have diminished through combat casualties, captures, and desertions. As a government strategy, encouraging desertions by offering leniency, protection, and vocational training has been at least as effective as military offensives against the FARC. Last year, 2,940 FARC fighters deserted" (Sibylla Brodzinsky, 2009). The reports from the Colombian and U.S. governments, along with many independent organizations, show similar findings. These reports have also suggested that because of its losses the FARC has had to move into primarily defensive strategies with offensive operations limited to low exposure types of attacks like using IED and snipers.

Losses in personnel, income, territorial control, politically valuable hostages, and public support have dealt significant blows to a guerrilla organization that was on the verge of entering into the war of movement phase of insurgency. However, the question remains to be answered if the FARC can survive these losses. The FARC have demonstrated that the group possesses an organizational structure and ability to change tactics according to its environment and which historically has been sufficient for its survival. But this time, the aforementioned improvement in the political system, government, and security forces seem to be permanent and allows little chance for the FARC to ever return to its apex.

The FARC have demonstrated that they have the organizational capabilities to replace key leaders. Last year, Alfonzo Cano was named as the new head of the FARC because Manuel Mirlanda had died of a heart attack(Farah, 2008). There is also growing evidence that the FARC has changed strategies, and that it has reinforced efforts in different areas of the country such

as the Nariño and Chocó to focus on income protection of drug production (Romero, 2008). The FARC's migration to border areas in Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, and Panama has been well documented. This strategy is particularly troubling because of reports that claim some countries (Venezuela) are not resisting their presence and are possibly unofficially sanctioning their actions (Cordoba, 2008). These tactics may indeed allow the FARC to survive, but the possibility of resurgence seems limited because the FARC will not be able to attain popular support when they are not among the population. Resurgence also seems unlikely in terms of support from a small number of farmers in isolated provinces, because the demographics of Colombia have become much more urban than in the 1960s when a rural movement would have been more profitable..

Sibylla Brodzinsky (2009) of the *Christian Science Monitor* recently reported that in Colombia, The FARC Rebels Strike Back, "But with a new leader and leaner ranks, the FARC seems to be retaking the offensive. In early May, the FARC attacked government forces from a variety of different areas of the country, killing at least two dozen soldiers and police officers. In a single day, in fact, the FARC launched attacks in at least four areas, killing six servicemen. Since the start of the year, government forces have clashed with rebels 488 times" (Brodzinsky, 2009). Based on discussions with both U.S. and Colombian military officers, this type of reporting may be very misleading. They claim that they have not seen any evidence of a broad new offensive and that the majority of these contacts occurred because the government forces initiated them. Their belief is that the FARC has reverted to defensive tactics. These types of reports on offensive resurgence of the FARC should be viewed skeptically because, as Peruvian history suggests, there may be some groups that will utilize the fear of the FARC for self-serving reasons. This is not to say that the FARC has fallen apart like the Shining Path and are not a major threat. Rather, the FARC are dangerous but over inflation of their capabilities can lead to ineffective strategies that run the risk of alienating the populace.

F.   CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

The importance of an economic boom during the Uribe years cannot be underestimated in its effects on the growth of the government's capacity and the deteriorating situation of the FARC. President Uribe's neoliberal approach to economic development through privatization of the petroleum industry and his aggressive policy to enter into free trade agreements seems to have helped fuel this boom (Country Briefing, 2008). According to *CRS-11 Plan Colombia: A Progress Report*, "Colombia had the best performing stock market in the world in 2004" (Beittel and Ribando, 2005). The GDP growth in 2006 was 7.0 percent and in 2007 was 8.4 percent (Country Briefing, 2008). The Colombian government has had to adjust for lower numbers due to the world's economic downturn. This downturn will curtail the government's capability to generate revenue. However, the timing of the earlier economic boom clearly assisted the government in growing its capacity. If the Colombian government is able to maintain these capacities it will continue to be effective against the illegally armed groups. It remains to be seen, however, if this boom has been translated into growth of the middle class and the lessening of poverty in rural areas. Should this be the case, it will surely curtail the recruitment of illegally armed groups like the FARC. The Colombian and international strategies of development assistance to these rural areas seem to be very promising in that their effects appear to be long lasting.

National unity amongst the populace, according to James F. Rochelin, has been non-existent and has contributed to many of the country's problems due to, "…Colombia's ambience as a collection of warring city-states rather than a nation-state with a common identity" (Rochlin, 2003, p. 261). However, recent events have shown that an almost universal rejection of the FARC may provide an issue that inspires more unity and the common identity of a nation-state. The February 2008, civilian (organized through Face book), protests against the FARC were extraordinary to say the least. Citizens in every major city and many of the smaller cities in Colombia organized massive protests. Protests were also organized in many major cities around the world. These protests were focused

on two major ideas, first that the FARC should release the hostages, and second that the FARC should disband. While this was a onetime event it seemed to epitomize the Colombian rejection of the FARC because according to the Colombian government," Opinion polls consistently indicate that popular support for does not exceed for FARC group 6 percent and for ELN group 5 percent" (Surprising Colombia, 2006). Polls that are more recent show around 2 percent to 4 percent approval ratings for the FARC. Clearly, these numbers probably underrepresented the opinions of isolated rural area populations, but with the change in demographics in Colombia to a more urbanized population, the relevance that the rural population has on the unity of the nation-state of Colombia has changed.

G.   CONCLUSION

This chapter intentionally omitted the FARC and Colombian government's efforts in terms of illicit drugs, because there has been little change on this front. As long as the demand continues at such high levels it seems unlikely that any strategy will ever lower the importance of this economy in Colombia. This is not to say that the Colombian and U.S. strategies to fight drugs are not valuable, but their value is that they provide a way to limit the revenues of an insurgency: counter drug operations enable the primary mission of weakening the insurgency, but do not necessarily lead to curbing the illegal drug trade. We may indeed be writing the eulogy of the FARC. However, without further efforts to refine successes and curb failures by the government, Colombian society, and the international community along with the omnipresent force of the drug economy in Colombia may give rise to another dangerous group that can threaten democracy, freedom, and human rights in Colombia. Continued efforts to maintain the improved political system in Colombia should remain a priority. This shift has clearly created an outlet for disagreements that has carried Colombian society beyond the cycle of violence. The demobilization process also seems to offer an effective strategy that requires concessions by both sides. The security forces should obviously retain their operational capacity, but they should transition to a supporting role in many cases, and the emphasis should be on solving security issues through indirect, non-violent means.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors of this thesis spent a lot of time debating exactly what lessons and policy recommendations could be drawn from an historical evaluation of the FARC and its interactions with the Colombian State. During this debate, it was clear that a condensation and reiteration of the analysis was necessary to highlight the point that the FARC's origins, growth, and ultimate decline have all been heavily influenced by policies of the Colombian government. The FARC in the past and in the future will be able to take actions that will affect their own fortunes, primarily because of organizational maturity and resource independence. However, it is clear that ultimately the biggest factors that will influence the future of the FARC are the policies that implemented by the Colombian State and its strongest allies the United States.

A. CONCLUSIONS

The origins, growth, and ultimate decline of the FARC detailed in this thesis will be condensed and reiterated here. This reiteration of the key historical events and trends seems to demonstrate that the future of the FARC is primarily in the hands of the Colombian government and subject to the policies they pursue. The government's lack of synchronization of efforts has been the most debilitating aspect of Colombia's attempts to combat the conflict that has terrorized Colombia for the time period we have studied. The FARC rose to level of power that few guerilla organizations have ever attained without toppling a government. However, its meteoric rise was only possible because of the government's incoherent strategies or lack of strategy. During the early years of the FARC, the government conducted little to combat the insurgency problem, and clearly the government's particular political system gave the FARC a legitimate basis for mobilization. However, the FARC remained a very limited threat to Colombia because it had a small resource base and little external support.

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During the early 1980s, the FARC were able to capitalize on the growth of the illicit drug market in Colombia. Their capitalization on this growing market was initially very well suited to allow them to remain an ideological group because it was able to tax without the stigma of traditional drug organizations. The government of Colombia, during the 1980s, attempted to negotiate with the FARC. But, the FARC's new found economic strength and organizational structure obtained through 30 years of existence would make peace negotiations impractical. That is to say, the government of Colombia had new "carrots" of value to offer an organized and well funded FARC. The government of Colombia had even newer "sticks" to threaten with. As Julia Sweig (2002) argues, the reason for the lack of sticks was, "…no accident that Colombia lacks a state apparatus or effective institutions outside its principal cities. Neglecting such development was a conscious decision by the country's ruling class, which realized long ago that limiting the reach of the army and the police was the best way to guarantee that the elite could exploit the country's riches" (Sweig, 2002). The government's impotency led to years of protracted negotiations in which the FARC increased capabilities to secure resources and mobilize followers. The government of Colombia was presented with an opportunity to legitimize the FARC, by moving them into the political sphere and out of the shadows of insurgency, with the formation of the Union Patriaticio. However, again, an unsynchronized and ineffective government was not able to protect the U.P. Indeed parts of the segmented government even targeted the U.P. with the consequence of encouraging the groups to strengthen their militaristic approach.

The Betancourth and Gaviria administration's efforts to negotiate peace were clear evidence that the government of Colombia did not and would never have the carrots needed to induce the FARC to accept a peacefully negotiated settlement to the conflict. This peace process went so far as to rewrite the constitution drawing other organizations, like the M-19, into the agreement. The ideologically driven M-19 clearly had a capable organization comparable to the FARC in terms of organization, but it lacked the resources and independence

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that the FARC had due to its illicit drug connection. Therefore, it seems that the FARC's independence and resources precluded or severely limited the group's motivation to come to a negotiated settlement. The lack of synchronization on the part of the Colombian government was exemplified under the Samper administration, and which was further compounded by U.S. policies towards drugs and Colombia. The FARC were able to take advantage of this situation by aggressively becoming more involved in the illicit drug market as the cartels were "taken down". With the fall of communism in Europe, the FARC was confronted with other challenges. The FARC's new Bolivarian ideology quickly revealed weaknesses. The new ideology was centered on the idea of alternative, more legitimate governance. However, during the years of the "despeje" the FARC had little success proving that they provided better governance to the people of the "despeje." The FARC's reliance on militaristic dominated strategies, financed through illicit drug money, almost completely delegitimized their social base other than in the coca cultivation areas. The Pastrana administration's attempts to negotiate with an even stronger FARC, granting the FARC concessions that further strengthened the group's position seemed counterproductive. However, this exhaustive and dangerous process may have been beneficial to Colombia in the long run because it had become more and more evident that the FARC would never negotiate from its position of strength. President Pastrana's realization of the fact that the FARC would not accept concessions to make peace resulted in the development of Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia was a large step forward for the development of a synchronized Colombian plan to deal with the FARC.

Plan Colombia, however, was not the "silver bullet" to all of Colombia's problems. Clearly, the synchronization of efforts both of Colombia and U.S. was not always efficient, and at times the efforts were misdirected. The misdirection was often due to Colombian and U.S. perspectives that drugs were the root of the problem. Author Tom Marks provides a strong argument that, "Drugs, to repeat, are not the central element of Colombia's problem. That is state fragmentation. We can talk of nothing until the government actually exercises its

writ within its national territory" (Marks, 2003). However, Plan Colombia did offer a level of synchronization of effort that had been missing during all other efforts.

President Uribe's election to office in itself also weakend the FARC's original grievance because, he was able to win the highest office as an Independent. Success of parties such as the left-leaning Polo Democratica are also seen as evidence of an opening political system that further deteriorated the original ideological basis of the FARC. Under the Politica de Consolidacion de la Seguridad Democratica (PCSD), President Uribe was able to further refine synchronization of government efforts by focusing on security forces retaking control of national territory. The success of the Uribe administration was then deepened by efforts to demobilize the AUC, limiting the number and influence of advisories in the conflict. Plan Patriota further strengthened the security forces present in areas that were once controlled by the FARC. The government's efforts were particularly successful in terms of killing, capturing, or inducing many of the individual FARC members to demobilize. However, the FARC still retained a strong organizational structure that has proved resilient to a decapitation campaign, and it is still well funded by its illicit activities. The FARC's recruitment capabilities also give the FARC a powerful tool to demonstrate strength, but the FARC's child recruitment policies do provide the government with an opportunity to capitalize on through aggressive Information Operations campaigns. The popular of appeal of the FARC has been reduced to extremely low levels, in part due to effective information operations of the government, frustration with FARC terrorist tactics, and a growing legitimate economy. These conditions have led the writers of this work to the conclusion that through a more complete understanding of the situation, policies can be developed to further refine government efforts and ultimately relegate the FARC to a position of limited threat.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The FARC have survived the test of time and along the way have developed an organizational capacity and strategies that will make complete destruction improbable. A negotiated peace settlement that is acceptable to the government of Colombia is also unlikely. However, history has also demonstrated that the FARC can be relegated to relative obscurity and to a position of limited threat capacity. Although the government of Colombia has enjoyed many successes over the last few years, without additional refinement of strategies and coordination of efforts, the FARC will continue to remain a legitimate threat to the government of Colombia. Democracy and bureaucratic aspects of government will always create inefficiencies, but do not preclude the government from setting out a strategy that is very synchronized and effective at reducing the threat of the FARC. This strategy may not be perfectly adhered to, but if endorsed at the highest levels, any deviation would be vulnerable to public scrutiny. Therefore, it is recommended that the first step in any efforts must be the development and dissemination of a single plan across a wide number of government offices and agencies. It is clear that bureaucratic competition between different agencies can be limiting, but with effective incentives and acceptance of a single public strategy, these problems may be limited.

The constraints placed on the government because of resource limitations have led to a development of a plan that focuses on four issues for the government in the immediate term and four secondary issues; however, the secondary issues should be simultaneously, even if at reduced levels. With time and reevaluation of conditions, it is believed that the focus of efforts then should shift to the final four aspects based on the threat of the FARC.

The primary focus should be on the synchronization of efforts in the areas of police, justice system, military, and rural economic development. The secondary efforts are to be in the area of Information Operations, demobilization programs, attention to displaced persons, and overall economic development.

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The National Police of Colombia are particularly crucial to the success of this multi-phase strategy. All other efforts will only succeed if the police can provide the depth of the government writ of control through the geographically diverse and dispersed population of the State of Colombia, down to the level of the individual citizen. Therefore, it is recommended that while the National Police organization is already considerable in numbers, it should be increased to a military company-sized police force that operates in the all medium-sized towns and platoon-sized forces in all small towns. Large cities appear to have sufficient police presence. One possible recommendation to help increase the size of the police force is to develop a program where military personnel, in particular professional soldiers, can be retrained to serve in this police force. Another, proposal for the recruitment of quality police officers is the development of a program similar to the G.I. Bill program where, after a certain number of honorable years of service with the police, the individual would be eligible for education or trade skills training. The incentive of retraining after honorable service could also be used to curb corruption and keep these individuals from using their skills in nefarious activities after leaving police service.

The Microsoft's efforts with the police to increase communication and coordination should be further emphasized and supported by both the Colombian and U.S. efforts. All other agencies, particularly the military, must also increase communication and coordination efforts.

The military's successful operations of clearing an area must be secured through a police presence that can retain order in that area. Military and police coordination is essential and support efforts must be reciprocal. Historically the military and police have not had a particularly complementary relationship because of bureaucratic competition. We, therefore, also encourage the administration to force joint operations and strategies by reorganizing many of the forces so that they will become accountable to the opposite organization, i.e., joint billets and staff, where individual officers will be rated by both military and

police. This strategy was effective at reducing organizational competition when Joint Task Force Omega was created and is likely to work if the police are also integrated.

Finally, the police must make fighting the FARC's ability to recruit a primary mission, especially when child soldiers are involved. The police must develop programs to control and eliminate forcible abduction of children to the FARC through a number of strategies. At a minimum, the police must provide a legitimate force that can be called upon at local levels. They must also develop other programs to confront other of the FARC's recruitment strategies in communities. Curtailing FARC recruitment must be a metric of determining police success.

The legal system of Colombia is said to be well developed in terms of the number and types of laws. The authors do not claim to be legal experts, but it is clear that the justice system is not fast, nor is it accessible to the whole population. We recommend that the Colombian government make great efforts to improve the speed and accessibility of this system to all of its citizens. The number of displaced person in Colombia provides a clear example of the judicial system's failure to provide legal recourse to millions of Colombians. The U.S. efforts in areas like witness protection must be increased. The U.S. can also provide assistance when the Colombian Justice system requests assistance. The Justice system has proven to be fiercely independent and a reasonably effective check in the political system. However, we encourage that the justice system develop additional anti-corruption units to ensure that the military, the police, the political system, wealthy individuals, and illegally armed groups are held accountable when violating the law. U.S. extradition is appropriate when Colombia and U.S. interests align, but future U.S. investment in the modernization of Colombian prisons and prison staff training assistance may be beneficial to both states in the long term. Finally, the Justice system must place a

priority of tax adherence. Without effective prosecution for tax evasion, the government will be deprived of resources that are essential to the overall reform effort.

The Colombian military should be proud of its recent successes, but must be made very aware of its costly mistakes. Both the Colombian efforts and U.S. efforts still need to ensure that the military increases its mobility and lethality. Therefore, modernization of equipment will continue to be a key area of development. However, both the Colombian and U.S. governments should expend additional effort in the development of the military's information operations capabilities so that the military has the tools to begin to focus on non-kinetic operations. This focus must be driven from the top down within the Colombian government, not asking the military to become police, but encouraging free thinking regarding the metrics of success that are positive in this counter insurgency. The U.S. can assist by providing additional training assistance with P.O.I. that focuses on non kinetic operations. These types of training and assistance may assist the military in developing effective metrics of success that do not encourage human rights abuses. The military still should be the force of choice when combating the FARC on the battlefield because the FARC is still a legitimate military threat; however, as stated before, the military need to have better communication and coordination with the police to ensure that hard fought victories are not lost. The police should provide planners to all division brigade-sized operations and the military should provide an effective system of assistance for the police in the newly cleared areas.

Finally, while it is not thought that the military need to be increased by significant numbers, the development of a G.I. Bill type of program for military service should be implemented. Again, if accompanied by appropriate incentives, this program could help curb corruption and disregard of human rights issues. This program would also keep well-trained personnel from using their skills in a criminal manner, because they will have legitimate skills for earning a living.. Because military service is mandatory unless it can be "paid out," the new

training options may reduce some of the problems associated with mandatory military service and will likely help develop human capital in Colombia.

Targeted economic development in rural areas, especially those recently cleared by the military and secured by the police is of great importance. This strategy of clear, hold, build is nothing new, but if the Colombian government and U.S. assistance can develop innovative synchronized small-scale economic development coupled with the return of police protection and an effective legal system, many of these communities may be able to free themselves from the FARC. No specific types of targeted economic development are recommended because each program should be tailored to the specific conditions of the area. However, it is recommend that the government work to build key infrastructure in these areas to include roads, water, and electricity. The efforts should also encourage tax relief for small and medium-sized businesses, along with grants and loans to small businesses to provide employment and services in these areas. The coordination of church and NGO efforts will also help legitimize and encourage the government's strategies for development.

The secondary areas of emphasis recommended are increasing coordination and effectiveness of all government agencies' information operations, so that the government's successful efforts are accentuated and the FARC's and other illegally armed groups' actions are available for public scrutiny. The demobilization programs that have had success should also be promoted, with consideration of what the NGO and church organizations can add to these programs. The government should be creative in approaches of employing demobilized personnel to support the government's efforts across the spectrum of its efforts. An example of this would be police and military employing demobilized personnel to work in anti-recruitment efforts or information operations campaigns.

Overall economic development is a primary goal of any country. This thesis puts this at the forefront primarily because the U.S. can prove its commitment to this strategy by implementing the free trade "deal" with Colombia.

Colombia itself must also continue its coordinated economic development efforts, so that economic development can benefit the rural areas in particular, always attempting to destroy the base of the FARC's threat.

Finally, the displaced people of Colombia are of great concern, not only in human terms, but also because it is clear they are vulnerable to coercion from illegally armed groups. Improved police services and an efficient legal system will clearly provide the most effective and long lasting counter measures to this problem. However, the scale of this situation does require that the government take two additional measures. First, a government truth commission with church and NGO participation will help assist the country as a whole to acknowledge and deal with the problem. Second, the government may not be responsible for reparations for these individuals, but clearly in its clear, hold, and build strategy, it may be considered a matter of public good to provide land redistribution in these areas to displaced people.

The thesis suggests that U.S. efforts should first be multilateral development of these strategies. It is our recommendation that the U.S. immediately stop the eradication efforts that have shown little success and have detracted from other successful strategies in Colombia. This money can be redistributed to assist in any of the other eight areas of recommendation, or to place more emphasis on the demand side of the problem in the United States. Finally, the U.S. efforts should also be well thought out to ensure that all assistance is given proper incentives for success. Clearly, these incentives can be created in a manner that encourages the respect of human rights and works against corruption. Done effectively further assistance can also encourage and deepen relations with one of the United States' closest allies in this hemisphere.

It is our contention that the FARC are indeed gone as an insurgent group that has legitimate capability to displace the Colombian government. In the short term, the intensity of its terrorist type actions against the population may even increase as the FARC struggles for survival and identity, but most likely these acts will just further alienate them from the population. Only the mismanagement

of the Colombian government and U.S. policies can provide the FARC with an opportunity for resurgence. Through effective governance and the smooth coordination and proper calibration of U.S. policy towards Colombia, we can ensure that the guerrillas are gone.

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