

Prospects for Peace: The Projected Impact of Plan Colombia



Photo courtesy of Katie Knight

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Introduction

Throughout the process of research and writing, I have attempted to expose the questionable policies of “democracy” and “progress” in Colombia. My goal is to reveal the historical and sociopolitical factors that are the true source of conflict in Colombia, to discuss the motives for Plan Colombia, the US-backed foreign aid package, and to highlight the issues that prevent progress in Colombia. In result, I will critically evaluate the problems of US involvement and foreign aid to Colombia and provide possible alternatives to military aid. Summarily, I will show that Plan Colombia not only neglects to address the core issues in Colombia, but also worsens the conflict and ensures the continuation of violence and corruption.

Plan Colombia, in the words of its authors, is an initiative to secure democracy and fight the war on drugs. The plan totals \$1.3 billion over the course of two years and while the United States and Colombia have been entangled in a "War on Drugs" for nearly two decades, this aid surpasses any previous amount given by the United States. The package intends to secure the coca-growing regions of Colombia through funding of the Colombian military and the use of U.S.-made herbicides, thereby cutting the flow of drug money to the guerrilla groups. Yet, with the environmental and human health concerns of crop fumigation, Colombia's refugee crisis and the questionable human rights record of Colombia's own military, Plan Colombia might only worsen the strife of a country that is already scarred by civil conflict and social stratification.

This exploration is a policy analysis, an advocacy for human development in Colombia, an appeal for responsible U.S. foreign policy and an introduction through which one may begin to understand Colombia's sociopolitical climate. The issues that are at the root source of the “Colombian Crisis” have a long and complex history. Colombia has been at war for over four decades and the residual issues have a tremendous impact on the potential success or failure of

Plan Colombia. Hence, I find it important to provide a historical background in which to understand the current issues. I will outline the political turnover in the past 100 years, discuss the evolution of the Unión Patriótica and evaluate the efforts at land reform and political consensus. Before I begin to discuss the historical background of Colombia's current problems, however, it is essential that I outline the four central problems of Plan Colombia:

The use of the term “War on Drugs” to describe U.S. motivations underscores the true complexity of U.S. involvement. The “War on Drugs” is obviously a vital issue for the social and economic well being of the U.S. and Colombia, but this issue is, in itself, much more complicated than the parameters of Plan Colombia. The United States is overlooking the need to fight drug addiction on its own soil, it is ignoring the prevailing connection between drugs, corruption and politics in Colombia and it neglects to acknowledge other US motivations- free trade, investment interests and oil exploration. In sum, the neat and tidy phrase “War on Drugs” misleads the public into approval for military support. There may be more public scrutiny of increased U.S. aid if the key phrase instead referred to the impoverished peasants who depend on coca and guerrilla protection to feed their families; the guerrilla groups who control 30% of the land with money from kidnappings, extortion and farmers' tax; the paramilitaries who commit 78% of Colombia's human rights infringements and who are linked to both the Colombian military and U.S. oil companies; the investment interests of US and Colombian oil companies, or the corruption and inefficiency of the Colombian Government.¹

The fight against illicit drug crops in one geographic area has consistently resulted in a boom of drug production in another region; in other words, the way to fight drugs is not to eradicate drug crops, but to lessen the demand for drugs and the economic conditions that fuel

their production. As efforts were made in Eastern Europe and the Middle East to cut heroin and cocaine production, the trade began to emerge in Mexico, The United States and South America. Likewise, as production was cut in Peru, it began to boom in Colombia- and it will most likely move to a new area if production is stifled in Colombia.² In the case of Colombia, aerial fumigation campaigns are devastating the soil quality along with destroying legitimate food crops, making legal crops a futile effort while forcing peasants to push further into the Amazon. In these secluded lands, peasants will be forced to live the same life they always have: with no political participation or representation, with no roads or communication systems to express their need for legitimate markets, and with no place to turn but “into the arms of guerrillas”.³ Additionally, a 1999 General Accounting Office (GAO) report on U.S. fumigation in Colombia reveals that “despite two years of extensive herbicide spraying, . . . net coca cultivation actually increased 50 percent.”⁴ If The United States hopes to win the “war on drugs”- indeed, if we wish to achieve any long-term success- treatment, prevention and economic development must be at the forefront of both domestic and international policy.

Plan Colombia has become an illustration of the burgeoning relationship between the war-making state and the corporate community. Colombia holds a key strategic position for trade and economic expansion in South America; it is the only South American country with both Pacific and Atlantic shores, it is the only land passageway between North and South America, and it is surrounded by (and holds) major oil interests for both Colombia and the

¹ These arguments will be expanded and specifically cited in the following paper. The three greatest resources for these arguments came from the Human Rights Watch World Report 2000, the Resource Center of the Americas, the Colombian Labor Monitor and the DEA Congressional Testimony of February 26, 1998.

² (Bushnell, David. *The Making of Modern Colombia.*) and (Gomes, Kristy. “Anti-Drug Aid Package Briefing Paper” Criminal Justice Policy Foundation. <http://www.cjpf.org/pubs/ColombiaPaper.htm>. Retrieved 3/14/2001.)

³ Chernick, Marc. “The Crisis of Human Rights in Colombia” LASA Forum 1997. p4. <http://www.lasa.international.pitt.edu/chernick.htm>. Retrieved 09/20/2001.

⁴ Quoted in Tate, Winifred. “Repeating Past Mistakes: Aiding counterinsurgency in Colombia”. *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Sep/Oct 2000. p17.

United States. Of a total \$11.5 billion in Colombian exports in 1999, \$3.7 billion was in oil.⁵ With 32% of their export earnings in oil, this industry is vital to Colombia's total wealth and, therefore, Colombia's stability. Several U.S. companies who will make millions of dollars off of Plan Colombia were also some of the most aggressive lobbyists for the policy and in the case of aerial fumigation, human health and ecological vitality have become a tragic fatality of such influence.⁶ Corporate influence was readily visible during the Senate hearings on Plan Colombia and I will discuss in Section V how this encouraged the militarization of the original Plan Colombia drafted by Colombian President Andres Pastrana. This move furthered the neglect of humanitarian needs in exchange for economic interest and while U.S. corporations reap the economic benefits of increased militarization, the true sources of the conflict- the need for land reform, viable markets and infrastructure; the persistence of poverty; and the internal corruption and inefficiency of the Colombian judicial system- remain untouched.

The humanitarian disaster of El Salvador in the 1980s provides a glimpse into what Plan Colombia may offer rural Colombianos in the twenty-first century. In Colombia, the U.S. Government is offering support to government military forces with horrific human rights records including covert support of paramilitary forces that commit 78% of Colombia's political murders.⁷ These murderers target innocent peasants to try to scare them from supporting labor unions, social service organizations and guerrilla forces. The paramilitaries are known to pull peasants from their homes and leave the mutilated bodies as a reminder for the families.⁸

Similarly, during the Salvadoran crisis, U.S.-supported Salvadoran troops rampaged villages,

⁵ CIA World Factbook 2000.

Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. "Oil Rigged: There's something slippery about the U.S. drug war in Colombia" Resource Center of the Americas. February 2001. p5. Available at: <http://www.americas.org>.

⁶ Szamuely, "Whore on Drugs", *George*. Aug 30-Sept5, 2000. New York Press, p17.

⁷ Human Rights Watch 2000 Report

murdering civilians, setting fire to their homes and committing acts of torture such as cutting open the stomachs of pregnant peasant women and removing the fetus- and all with the support of U.S. foreign aid and intelligence.⁹ Since the war in El Salvador, the U.S. government and a UN-appointed Truth Commission have acknowledged their ill-fated and dehumanizing role in El Salvador.¹⁰ Today, there is increasingly more opposition to Plan Colombia because of its numerous oversights, the lack of accountability and the absence of open conversation about its calculated impact; unfortunately, the influence of investment opportunities and a paranoid desire to fight the “War on Drugs” has ensured that the U.S. and Colombia will repeat our past mistakes in a new countryside.

Colombia will attain a secure democracy if only the government finally addresses three crucial issues: land reform, poverty and judicial reform. As long as the people are struggling to feed their families, living without communication or transportation systems, and unable to find protection within the state, the people will turn to other means to survive whether it is through growing illicit drugs, supporting leftist guerrilla forces or joining paramilitaries. The countryside’s needs are the true source of strife, and until these needs are properly addressed, the war will persist.

I will move on to substantiate these arguments by first outlining the history of power, poverty and justice in Colombia. This will provide the proper background to discuss the presence of the two central warring groups, the FARC guerrillas and the AUC paramilitaries. I will then break down Plan Colombia, evaluate its components, and explore the possible

⁸ Radu, Michael. “The Perilous Appeasement of Guerrillas” *Orbis*. Summer 2000. p377. See Appendix A for reports on paramilitary violence.

⁹ Cassidy, Esther (Producer and Director). *Enemies of War* [Documentary]. PBS.

¹⁰ Former President Bill Clinton gave a formal apology during his presidency to El Salvador for the United States’ role in the civil war; soon after, lobbying for Plan Colombia began. Resources: Cassidy, Esther (Producer and Director). *Enemies of War* [Documentary]. PBS.

motivations for a militarized aid package. In this, I will untangle the messy web of influence that led to its creation and suggest what should have been done to truly tackle drug production. In closing, I will examine the prospects for successful resolution and progress in Colombia and discuss some of the current movements to promote social reconstruction.

Power, Poverty and Justice in Colombia

The last half of the 20th century has unleashed an unimaginable amount of fear, violence and greed into Colombian politics and its accompanying social sector. The violence that we hear of today is not new; it is not a symptom of the drug trade and it cannot be resolved by pushing out coca production. Rather, the drug trade has become a tool, a weapon, through which the fighting sectors have inflated their income and through which the rural poor have become laboring pawns. Abraham Lowenthal, a reputable Latin American scholar, explains that, “Colombia’s fundamental problem is a crisis of authority, legitimacy and governance; the drug trafficking, the guerrilla insurgencies, and the paramilitary violence are more effects than causes of Colombia’s underlying difficulty.”¹¹ Professor Marc Chernick of Georgetown University adds that, “the drug trade may have heightened and accelerated the violence; it did not cause it.”¹² This is not to say that the drug trade has not influenced or altered Colombia’s conflict- it is by no doubt a key factor that must be dealt with and considered in any Colombian policy- but there are core issues at the heart of Colombia’s crisis and my goal is to reveal these.¹³

The true source of the conflict can be found only by delving deeper into Colombia’s history and looking at the patterns of violence. What appears is persistent poverty, decades-old political conflict, ideological battles that have turned into gruesome civil wars and a drastic need for infrastructure and state-presence. The only way that we can analyze our own policy (that being the US-made Plan Colombia) is if we first have the basic facts; for this paper, those facts will surround Colombia’s political history, the fight for land reform, the countryside’s crippling

¹¹ Quoted in Nagle, Luz Estella. “The Search for Accountability and Transparency in Plan Colombia: Reforming Judicial Institutions- Again.” U.S. Strategic Studies Institute: 2001. p7.

¹² Chernick, Marc. p4.

¹³ Chernick, Marc. “Legal Versus Illegal Export Booms: Researching the Drug Trade and Its Influence on Politics in Latin America” Andean and Amazonian Studies Project. P 5.

<http://www.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/clas/profs/chernick/drugs.htm>. Retrieved 09/20/2001.

poverty and the floundering judicial system. With this background, we can begin to interpret the ongoing civil war, our own “War on Drugs”, and, ultimately, the projected impact of Plan Colombia.

Suppression and Violence as a Political History

A constant flux of leadership and restrictive party recognition characterizes Colombia’s political history. From the time of its 1810 independence from Spain until 1903, Colombia endured 27 civil wars between the liberal and conservative parties, one of which took the lives of 100,000 people. The military remained relatively apolitical until the 1940’s when tensions between the people and the government grew to an unprecedented level. Tensions climaxed in 1947 and civil war broke out following the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the leader of the leftist Liberal Party. Referred to as *la violencia*, the civil war continued for the next ten years as a bloody battle between the Liberals and the Conservatives. More importantly, as the scholar Harvey Kline points out, the war became centralized in areas of obvious land pressures and gave rise to leftist guerrilla movements that would persist into the 21st century.¹⁴

At this time, the need for land reform became a central issue of Colombian violence. Land demands received scant support, however, and even the Catholic Church (which had strong political ties to the Conservative Party in the early 1900s) fought vigorously to block land reform efforts. The Catholic Church had considerable land-holdings and often worked against the common good to protect these interests. The church threatened to ex-communicate anyone who supported Liberal efforts and the church sometimes even refused burial to Liberals during *La Violencia*.¹⁵ Neighborhoods, villages and communities with a strong party identity became the targets of the worst violence in Colombian history until the present crisis. Today those ideas of

¹⁴ Kline, Harvey F. “Colombia: Modified Two-Party and Elitist Politics” p 257.

¹⁵ Kline, Harvey F. p 262.

community identity continue to plague the countryside, charging the most horrific massacres that take place against innocent communities. Paramilitaries target communities that they suspect of supporting the *guerrilleros*, or they use that claim to try to legitimize their horrific crimes.

In the midst of *La Violencia*, there was little hope for reconciliation without drastic measures and Colombia witnessed its first political coup since 1900.¹⁶ On June 14, 1953, the military seized the government and established General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla as President of Colombia in hopes of resolving the biting disharmony between Conservatives and Liberals. On the day of the coup, the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* declared Colombia's military as the "maximum expression of democracy," but the future was less ideal.¹⁷ Ineffective and unsure as a leader, Pinilla depended upon military strength to control the country- control that proved to be brutal and explosive.¹⁸ The armed *guerrilleros* of Colombia denied the coup's legitimacy, infuriating Pinilla. Pinilla eventually ordered military control in the rural areas thought to house guerrilla forces, prompting a new era of brutality against innocent citizens. Four years later, in 1957, the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties conspired to overthrow Pinilla, creating a coalition of the parties' elite and developing the "most dramatic case of bipartisan coalition government in Colombian history"¹⁹.

After Pinilla's ouster, a military junta took power until the nation could devise a system of rule that would unite the Liberals and Conservatives. The system that emerged was known as the National Front and, while restricting some political liberties, it enabled a rare period of calm. A system of prescribed democracy designed to last for 16 years, the National Front hoped to balance political qualms. Presidents served four-year terms and each term alternated between the

¹⁶ Brushnell, 215.

¹⁷ Johnson, John J. *The Military and Society in Latin America* Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1964. p160.

¹⁸ Johnson, John J. p5.

¹⁹ Kline, Harvey F. p257.

Liberal and Conservative parties. Thus, while each election offered a selection of candidates, it represented only one party. All third parties were banned from office but many people who normally aligned with a third party did still run under either the Liberal or Conservative name. The cabinet and all of the representative seats were equally split, decreasing the potential for politically motivated killings. In addition, the Catholic Church supported the National Front and began to support the Liberal Party as a legitimate political force.²⁰ Overall, a feeling of controlled order prevailed and efforts for progress and freedom resurfaced in Colombian society.

In spite of its appreciated, albeit limited, achievements, the National Front did nothing to encourage broad political involvement. Ten years after the closure of the National Front, the FARC created the Unión Patriótica (UP), a new political party that would unite leftists, guerrilla members and the Communist Party in a legal pursuit of political power.²¹ This effort offered a legitimate venue in which to vent the frustrations of the rural population, but the residual tensions of the political environment once again led to violence. In the first five years of the UP, from 1985 to 1990, more than one thousand members of UP were assassinated, in addition to numerous UP candidates.²² It appears that the violent attacks on the UP have stifled FARC efforts to work with the Colombian government and they have returned to violent protest of the Colombian government's legitimacy.

Today's political climate is still controlled by the Liberal and Conservative parties and there has been little acceptance of third parties since the UP disaster. Scholar Harvey Kline describes modern Colombian politics as "elitist, patrimonial, civilian, modified two-party, classist," and that is gracious in comparison to Father Javier Giraldo's term "genocidal

²⁰ Kline, Harvey F. p262.

²¹ Bushnell, David. p258. Symmes, Parick. "Miraculous Fishing: Lost in the swamps of Colombia's drug war" *Harper's Magazine*. December 2000. p66.

²² Bushnell, David. p266.

democracy”.²³ The persistence of elitism in Colombian politics has prevented solid political or social progress since *La Violencia*. Politicians have neglected to actively tackle the issues of land reform and underdevelopment while the people who are affected by these issues- the farmers and the rural poor- continue without appropriate political representation. In addition, the movement of narco-traffickers into the jungles of Colombia diverts political attention to drug production rather than to the peasants’ needs; hence, we have a “War on Drugs” and a “War on Terrorism” while the Wilsonian “War on Poverty” has been long forgotten. The lawlessness of Colombia’s countryside has prompted the government to focus on “securing democracy” rather than promoting education, land reform or rural development- and yet it is this neglect that perpetuates the demise of democracy in Colombia.

The Colombian government could support rural infrastructure development, thus improving its relationship with the rural population and eliminating the need for guerrilla protection or support. The government, however, has achieved nothing by way of making Colombian politics inclusive or participatory. The current Colombian President Andres Pastrana was elected largely on his commitment to the peace process between the government of Colombia, the guerrillas, the paramilitaries and the Colombian military. This process has been unsuccessful over the past two years and the final format of Plan Colombia infers that infrastructure and social development will continue to be ignored in the coming years.

The original format of Plan Colombia (written by President Pastrana) was focused primarily on economic development, human rights and judicial reform. It was a prospect of change for Colombian civil society and an ambitious attempt to dig to the root of Colombian’s strife. Given the quick abandonment of the plan, it is important to ask two questions: 1) Why has

²³ Kline, Harvey F. p269. Also note Father Javier Giraldo’s book, Colombia: Genocidal Democracy.

change been a seemingly impossible task in Colombia? and, 2) Why did the Colombian government accept the militarized American version of Plan Colombia?

The Colombian government has excused the failure of the peace process on several occasions due to the “complex social and political conditions” of Colombia, shaping the country as a victim of its own circumstances.²⁴ It is a desperate attempt to legitimize the plagues of the state- internal corruption, human rights abuses, concessions to guerrilla forces and tolerance of paramilitary death squads- but there is also good reason for desperation within the Colombian government. Prof. Chernick has proposed that the “failure to reach peace in the 1980s has led to a more atomized society, a weaker state and several new armed challengers, all of which make the goal of reaching a durable peace immensely more complicated.”²⁵ Luz Estella Nagle, a professor and former judge in Medellín, concurs that “there is no question that Colombia suffers from the problems of a state yet to consolidate its power,” noting the lack of confidence and credibility in all levels and branches of the government.²⁶

The Colombian government, because of its lack of cohesion or power, is unable to deal with the messy web of social problems and, while Colombia’s countryside is collapsing at an unprecedented speed, government and community leaders who try to inspire change are either assassinated, forced into hiding, or compelled to seek asylum. Thus the problem grows while there are fewer educated and knowledgeable leaders to deal with the problems. In addition, it is difficult to ascertain what the goals and demands are of the forces at war, just as it is difficult to pinpoint how to eradicate the deeply rooted hostilities- and as long as those tensions persist, so too will the war. The Colombian Government may be ill equipped to deal with these issues, but

²⁴ Chernick, Marc. “The Crisis of Human Rights in Colombia”. p1. <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/chernick.htm>. Retrieved 09/20/2001.

²⁵ Chernick, Marc. “The Crisis of Human Rights in Colombia”. p1.

²⁶ Nagle, Luz Estella. p3.

it must be held accountable for its own failures and pressed to persevere until a suitable alternative to social violence is found.

Colombian approval of the militarized American version of Plan Colombia is most easily understood given the pressure of politics and economics in the global system. In its original version, Plan Colombia was dependent upon funds allocated by the United States and the European Union. When the United States presented their version as an ultimatum for support of Plan Colombia, the Colombian government had little choice but to accept the plan. As Sanho Tree, a senior fellow of drug policy at the Institute for Policy Studies, explains, Plan Colombia was nothing without the economic backing of the United States and Colombia would have risked crucial World Bank loans and U.S. economic assistance had they denied the American version.²⁷ This international pressure apparently overran much of the in-house deliberations that should have taken place; Plan Colombia largely escaped public debate, governors claim that they were never consulted regarding its formulation and a Spanish version wasn't available until "months after a revised English version was already in place."²⁸

Tree also explores the possibility that, among those in Colombia who did know of the plan, there was not resounding support for the original version. As a crucial and controversial topic, there must have been pressure from various sectors within Colombia to use military pressure on both the drug trade and persistent guerrilla forces. In addition, Pastrana's establishment of the DMZ, and the barrage of criticism that followed it, may have left many government officials weary of taking a soft approach to fighting the insurgents. Unfortunately, Plan Colombia's impact is shrouded in just as much mystery as its evolution and, as we will

²⁷ Personal interview with Sanho Tree. 12/06/2001.

²⁸ Nagle, Luz Estella. p10.

discover in the following section, it continues to ignore the factors that have enabled the progression of violence and drug cultivation.

The Politics and Negligence of Land Reform

Nowhere To Go. Today's rural *Colombianos* are subjected to an increase of civil violence and a state that is unable to provide fundamental protections for its people, but their problems did not begin with the drug trade. Population growth, lack of infrastructure and land pressure have aggravated social unrest for decades and the drug trade has seized upon this vulnerability to create a haven for drug production. Despite the absence of discussion of these factors, they are central to understanding the unfolding of rural Colombia.

The CIA World Factbook estimates that twenty-seven percent of Colombians (mostly mulatto, black, Black-Amerindian and Amerindian) live in rural areas that depend heavily on agriculture while only four percent of the land is arable. More than fifty percent of the rural land is dense rainforest with poor soil quality and, much to the rural poor's disadvantage, a disproportionate amount of the arable land is concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy landowners. As of 1999, forty-five percent of the arable land was concentrated in the hands of just 0.3% of the nation's landowners. Twenty percent of the arable land belongs to 2.3% of the nation's landowners and the remaining thirty-five percent of the land belongs to 97.4% of the nation's landowners.²⁹ As a result, while Colombia's average population density as of 1998 was at thirty-nine people per square kilometer, rural areas were at a stifling 529 people per square kilometer. The United States has a comparable average population density of thirty people per square kilometer, but only thirty-six people per square kilometer in rural areas.³⁰

²⁹ Ferrer, Yadira. "Colombia: Armed Conflict as Agrarian Counter-Reform" *The Progress Report*. <http://www.progress.org/land21.htm>. Retrieved 2/13/01.

³⁰ *World Development Indicators* database. <http://devdata.worldbank.org/data-query/SMResult.as>. Retrieved 4/07/01. WDI defines rural population density as the following: "Rural population density is the rural population

The high concentration of people in rural areas perpetuates a number of problems including deforestation, poverty and unemployment. Because of the intense land pressures and stratified economic system, rural peasants are often forced to slash and burn rainforest to obtain their own land and earn their livelihood. Today, thirty-nine percent of the land is permanent pasture, four percent is arable land, one percent is permanent crop and forty-eight percent is forest and woodland; of this land, more than 100,000 hectares are coca cultivation sites.³¹ The peasants grow crops such as coffee, cut flowers, bananas, rice, tobacco, corn, sugarcane, coca beans, oilseed and vegetables, but not one of these crops can rival the economic value of coca, the plant used to make cocaine. Many farmers are reliant on coca income to support their family and, in a country where the GDP per capita is only \$2250US and twenty percent of the population is unemployed, it is difficult to wean farmers from this lucrative crop.³²

Even if a farmer has a decent plot of land and earns enough on legitimate crops to support his/her family, the civil violence and aerial fumigation that is sweeping through the countryside makes it nearly impossible for farmers to maintain their lifestyle. Paramilitaries, guerrilla groups and the Colombian Armed Forces were responsible for displacing 288,127 people in 1998 and fifty-nine percent of the displaced households included farmland.³³ Farmers who are left to remain on their land are often forced to start growing coca so that guerrillas can tax the crop or paramilitaries can use the coca in their processing labs. In addition, paramilitary forces carry out an average of one massacre a day and a grossly disproportionate number of these victims are innocent farmers and peasants.

divided by the arable land area . . . arable land includes land defined by the FAO as land under temporary crops (double-cropped areas are counted once), temporary meadows for mowing or for pasture, land under market or kitchen gardens, and land temporarily fallow. Land abandoned as a result of shifting cultivation excluded.”

³¹ CIA World Factbook 2000.

³² CIA World Factbook 2000. *World Development Indicators* database. <http://devdata.worldbank.org/data-query/SMResult.as>. Retrieved 4/07/01.

³³ Ferrer, Yadira.

As if the displacement and violence wasn't enough to destroy the fabric of the countryside, the spraying of herbicide threatens to wipe out the ecological vitality of the soil and the sole source of sustenance for Colombian farmers. In a report released to the Colombian Support Network, farmers in the Municipio Valle Del Guamuez of Putumayo have experienced severe losses in direct result of the coca crop fumigations. The affected plot sizes range from 1.5 hectares to 60 hectares and the reported losses were as meager as one *pavo* (turkey) to substantial losses of 115 *gallinas* (chickens) or 5000 *cachamas* (see Appendix B for a list of destroyed agriculture and animals; the complete report is available from the Colombia Support Network).³⁴ These numbers are atrocious, yet they don't even touch on the human impact of fumigation. In a presentation given by a recent Colombian Support Network delegate, respiratory problems, skin conditions and fetal disfigurement are common among those who have been subjected to aerial fumigations.³⁵ Despite complaints about these conditions and questionable research that Monsanto performed on human impact, the spraying continued for several months before fusarium was finally taken out of the fumigations. It hardly suffices to say that the current pressures on the rural population are tremendous, and there is little support for those who are the victims of the National Police, the paramilitaries, the guerrillas or the fumigations. The policy is working in direct opposition to the rural poor and, consequently, in opposition to the professed goals of peace, democracy and development. If it continues in the same manner, Plan Colombia will either annihilate or alienate a quarter of the Colombian population, pushing them to continue their lives outside of the political sphere.

The rural poor who are forced off of their land generally have three options: move into the urban slums where there is no employment, water systems or sewage; join the paramilitaries

³⁴ "Inspeccion de Policia Municipal" Personas Afectadas por la Fumigación, Departamento del Putamayo.

³⁵ Lecture given by Katie Knight of Colombian Support Network. University of Montana, Missoula. Oct. 11, 2001.

or guerrillas in violence and terror; or relocate deeper into the rainforest, where the cycle of impoverishment and environmental destruction continues. Colombia's rural poor will be forced to choose one of these paths as long as the violence continues and rural reform and infrastructure are neglected. The point is that Plan Colombia is not going to stop, nor is it even going to significantly lessen, drug production in Colombia. Production change is 23 times less effective than demand change in lessening drug production and distribution; therefore, the problem lies within the demand for drugs, not the peasant cultivation.³⁶ If anything, eradication will force peasants, guerrillas and paramilitaries to move further into the Amazon, further into a fragile and priceless ecosystem and further from state controls. The civil war will continue, poverty will continue, drugs will continue, and innocent civilians will continue to suffer because of irresponsible policy.

The Creation of Land Reform Policy. In order for the United States to develop responsible policy, we must utilize a clear understanding of the region. There have been past efforts at land reform, but there were many misunderstandings of the people and the region and the obstacles that emerged as a result were too great to propose effective answers. A look at these efforts and the reasons for their failure will hopefully provide answers as to what direction development must move and what factors must be taken into consideration.

During the 1960s, Colombia attained limited improvements in rural development and health care, but land reform measures were implemented very slowly, in part due to continued opposition led by large landholders.³⁷ Colombia attempted its first land reform campaign in 1961 under the Agrarian Reform Law. This system of tax redistribution was a noble but ultimately unsuccessful restructuring of agrarian economic needs. While the reform did attempt

³⁶ Rydell, C. Peter and Susan S. Everingham. "Controlling Cocaine: Supply Versus Demand Programs", RAND Corporation, 1994. (quoted in: Gomes, Kristy).

to achieve a more equitable distribution of income by relieving the poor of much of their tax burden, it ignored the prevailing problems of the countryside that were the true source of poor economic progress: high land concentration in the hands of the few, violence and the meager size of plots maintained by peasant families.³⁸ Most farmers owned plots of land too small (referred to as *minifundismo*) to sustain life in the legal market economy- a problem that is still apparent in the modern economy (see pages 10-11 and footnote 19 on page 11). While the statistics from 1999 may show limited progress since 1980 and earlier, farmers are no longer able to earn enough in the markets to sustain their families and much of the land that could be used for agricultural expansion is either impenetrable, cleared for cattle or oil or privately owned.³⁹

In the prevailing eight years after land reform efforts, only 4% of Colombia's farmers had benefited from the reform and only 10.4% of the land had been distributed or confirmed.⁴⁰ There were additional reform efforts, such as former President Carlos Lleras Restrepo's 1966 allotment of 40-acre farm plots to 75,000 Colombian families. This was done under the newly created Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute (INCORA) that has been criticized for doing little more than furnishing jobs for the middle class.⁴¹ Isolated progress was attained, but the continued instability of the region and the boom of illicit drug production have prevented solid progress. The rapidly increasing coca cultivation presents an additional hurdle for reform measures- one that we will explore later in the discussion.

³⁷ Kline, Harvey.

³⁸ Bushnell, p233

³⁹ As of 1980, seventy percent of the farmers in Cauca Valley owned plots of land of less than 25 acres and seventy percent of the total land suffered as poorly managed mass plots. The 1999 statistics reveal that 97.4% of the farmers own plots of less than 100 hectares (250 acres), but the exact distribution is unknown. (Sources: Crow, John A. The Epic of Latin America, 3rd Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. p784. and Ferrer, Yadira.)

⁴⁰ Eckstein, Susan. p291.

⁴¹ Edt. Kline, Harvey and Howard J. Wiarda. Latin American Politics and Development London: Westview Press. 2nd Edition. p 267.

John Johnson, a scholar of Latin American Studies at Stanford University, has identified three reasons for the failure of past land reform efforts in Latin America. According to Johnson, reform efforts require attention to three spheres: the social, economic and political. Unfortunately, past efforts have ignored the innate complexities of land reform and have thus been unsuccessful. Johnson found that family and village ties discourage mass relocation, making cultivation on distant public lands impracticable and ill suited for the social structure. Johnson also found numerous economic oversights, such as the need for incentives, training and proper technology. In face of these hiccups of reform, the political sphere has been the greatest barrier to progress. Attempts to satisfy both the peasants and the landholders proved impossible, inevitably dissatisfying one of the parties. This problem persists in Colombia as investment interests continue to carry more political weight than poor rural farmers. Corporate leaders who live in urban areas and have the wealth to travel have the opportunity and resources to fraternize with and offer concessions to politicians and policy makers. On the other hand, rural farmers are lucky if they even have a road to travel on to reach urban centers. This creates a political bias towards privatization and corporatization and, essentially, it encourages the “wealth of the few [to] trump the welfare of the many”.⁴²

Sociologist Ernest Feder expands Johnson’s critique of land reform in his evaluation of INCORA, the Colombian Institute for Land Reform. Reform must achieve a true redistribution of power and land and, most importantly, this process must be guided by the people and by the judicial system. According to Feder, a “rational reform” must provide the following three securities: 1) An expansion of laws to protect the rights of workers who lack economic power; 2)

⁴² Szamuely. “Whore on Drugs”. *George Magazine*, (August 30- September 5, 2000) p17.

Protection of the right to join unions and co-operatives; 3) Assurance that the police and courts will protect the citizens regardless of status or wealth.⁴³

Both Johnson and Feder have illuminated the frustrations of land reform and, as we look back at the past century, we see why land problems remain unresolved and why it is not sufficient to merely hand over plots of land with no other political reforms or social adjustments. It is especially important to note the three securities that Feder highlighted in 1965, just four years after the first land reform effort; thirty-six years later, the Colombian government still has not guaranteed these securities. This is a blatant disregard for the security and rights of the rural people. Such neglect has perpetuated a forty-year civil war that has now evolved into a struggle of land, drugs, corruption, murder and power. Simply said, the importance of land and development is at the core of understanding and resolving much of Colombia's strife.

The Pressures of Poverty and Population Growth

Land reform is a viable solution to Colombia's problems, but the task is daunting at best. Poverty in Colombia is prevalent in both the rural and urban areas, but it is experienced very differently. Rural Colombia is poorly developed and many people live without access to roads or communication systems. Proper infrastructure and farmer subsidies could offer alternatives to coca cultivation, but the government has yet to create incentives for farmers to live a legitimate lifestyle. Instead, rural populations continue to cultivate coca for lack of profitable agricultural markets as paramilitaries and guerrillas fight for the land that surrounds them, discouraging foreign investment and obstructing natural resource extraction. Therefore, even if alternatives to coca are sought out, trade is still a challenge for farmers who are simply unable to transport their

⁴³ Feder, Ernest. "When is Land Reform a Land Reform? *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, (April 1965) 24.2. p113-34.

produce to the nearest market. Without this infrastructure, there is also limited access to medical care, education and sanitation, prompting a number of concerns for rural health and safety.

As the pressure of the war prompts families to flee from the countryside, many people are now moving to Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, in search of economic opportunity and solace from the fear and fighting. When they arrive in the urban slums, however, they find the second highest murder rate in the world, persistent unemployment and kidnappings, corruption and remnants of the drug trade. In the slums, people suffer from horrible sanitation because of the tight living quarters. They have no land to cultivate and the rate of unemployment often reaches 50%.⁴⁴ With 2 million displaced persons since 1990 and a population growth rate of nearly 2.5%, the country's population of roughly 40 million will double to 80 million within 28 years.⁴⁵ With such a growth rate, how will Bogotá continue to hold its working population, not to mention the growing slum dwellings of the displaced and unemployed? In 2001, eight million people- **twenty percent of the population**- were reportedly suffering from malnourishment.⁴⁶ Where will people turn, what will they eat, and how will this impact the already rampant violence in the countryside? Colombia is in the midst of a population and poverty crisis with little chance for improvement unless drastic changes are made to Colombia's political and economic systems.

Colombians have been calling for political and economic reform for decades, but the political atmosphere has been unresponsive, possibly because of the intrinsic complexities of tackling such problems or because of pressure from land holders, investors, and other members

⁴⁴ Colombian Population Statistics, Database: World Development Indicators. <http://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 4/2/01.

⁴⁵ Population Text p131.

⁴⁶ Colombian Population Statistics, Database: World Development Indicators. <http://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 4/2/01.

of the status quo. As of 1974, the richest 20% of the nation's people held 60.2% of the total national income, while the poorest 20% held only 3.6% of the total income.⁴⁷ Today, this stratification continues and Colombia now has the highest rate of unemployment in Latin America (20% is the conservative estimate), making a bleak future for the people of Colombia.

Fear and Corruption within the Judicial System

While the aforementioned topics discuss the substantive human rights issues in Colombia, the remaining topic- judicial reform- represents the most urgent procedural human rights issue for all Colombians. Without a reliable and honest system for interpreting and enforcing policy, reform efforts are futile. There must be legal pressure to adhere to policy, there must be a reason to trust the acts of the state, and judicial reform remains the sole method in which to achieve these ideals.

The Colombian and U.S. governments are in the habit of claiming small measures of success (i.e. the prosecution of a handful of military human rights abusers) as evidence of reform in the Colombian military and judiciary as a whole. There remain, however, the fundamental problems within the Colombian judiciary: the power of the military to intervene in jurisdictional boundaries, unwarranted rates of impunity, an outrageous backlog of cases, violence, bribery, lack of public access and persistent turnover. These problems have enabled the de-democratization of the judicial institution- prompting clientelism, corruption and

⁴⁷ Eckstein, Susan. Edt Jack A. Goldstone. "The Impact of Revolution on Social Welfare in Latin America", Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, Publishers. 1968. p294.

privatization.⁴⁸ Suffocating under these immense pressures, the courts are no longer able to serve as an “agent of accountability”, nor are they able to operate with institutional autonomy.⁴⁹

The notion of institutional autonomy or judicial independence is particularly important when speaking of Colombia; Alexander Springer of the University of Vienna has noted that “[in Latin American democracies] there still exists the serious possibility that the historically dominant executive branch will continue its hitherto largely successful efforts to circumvent, undermine or prevent independent judiciaries from supervising governmental conduct and sanctioning eventual abuses.”⁵⁰ Executive control over the courts have kept the judiciary impotent while the executive branch and the military create their own rules, serving their own system and their own particular needs. The question arises, therefore, as to what those needs may be. Scholars have proposed a number of options: that retired military officers with land holdings have tried to exert their influence to protect the “political economy of war”; that the military fears international investigation of human rights abuses and the military involvement in massacres; and that the status quo is trying to hold onto their political power.⁵¹

There were attempts in the years following the National Front to strengthen the judiciary, but the early 1980’s soon began to chop away at the courts’ cohesion. Evidence of this phenomena began when President Julio César Turbay adopted a statute that “gave the military wider powers of arrest . . . and turned a number of crimes over to the military courts.”⁵² Springer also attributes the influx of military judicial power to the M-19 takeover of the Palace of Justice when the military caused over 100 casualties of justices, civil servants, guerrillas and civilians-

⁴⁸ O’Donnell, Guillermo. “The State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems” in Latin American Political Economy in the Age of Neoliberal Reform. Eds. William C. Smith, Carlos H. Acuña & Eduardo A. Gamarra. Boulder: Lynne Rienner. p157-180.

⁴⁹ Springer, Alexander P. “Political Justice? Assessing the Role of the Colombian Courts.” University of Vienna: 1998. p2. <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~caguirre/springerpr.html>. Retrieved 9/20/2001.

⁵⁰ Springer, Alexander P. p4.

⁵¹ Richani, Nizah. “The Paramilitary Connection” *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Sep/Oct 2000. p41.

an act that “clearly demonstrated that the judicial branch was not inviolable for [the armed forces].”⁵³ Then, on August 13, 2001, President Pastrana signed into law the National Defense and Security Bill (Law 684). According to the Washington Office on Latin America, the law contains provisions that grant the military the authority to “investigate cases, conduct exhumations . . . arrest civilians without warrants, and interrogate suspects and witnesses.”⁵⁴

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also reported that the Attorney-General’s office has passed numerous human rights cases onto the military judiciary even though cases of human rights are supposed to be handled by civilian courts. Given the military’s well-documented corruption, their long ties to paramilitaries and their own indictment in numerous human rights cases, Law 684 is far from being a step towards peace or justice. Instead, it only perpetuates the ability of the military to ignore civilian court jurisdiction in human rights cases and it further pushes the judicial system into paralysis.

This paralysis has resulted in a score of meaningless reports, cases and warrants, giving cause to the civilian distrust of the judicial process. In 1996, the impunity rate for political assassinations was 100 percent and today the impunity rate for all crimes is 97 percent.⁵⁵ In a nation where Carlos Castaño has 23 warrants for his arrest (including the assassination of a senator) while he conducts prime time television interviews and writes editorials for *El Tiempo*,

⁵² Springer, Alexander P. p7.

⁵³ Springer, Alexander P. p7.

⁵³ Amatangelo, Gina and Tina Hodges. “New National Security Law Expands Powers of the Military at Expense of Human Rights.” Sept 24, 2001. http://www.wola.org/colombia_security_law.htm. Retrieved 12/06/2001.

⁵⁵ Chernick, Marc. “The Crisis of Human Rights in Colombia”. 1997. p2. <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/chernick.htm>. Retrieved 9/20/2001.

there is an obvious need for substantive reform in the judicial process.⁵⁶ Those who are willing to attempt change are quickly targeted, however, by violence and intimidation.

In the years of 1985-88, 80 members of the judiciary were murdered and, in 1989, one massacre alone took the lives of 12 jurists as they were traveling to investigate a paramilitary crime.⁵⁷ Justices are forced to deal with intimidation, bribery and internal challenges that surely aggravate their persistent turnover rate. In addition, the system is strained with an immense backlog of cases, presenting a discouraging picture of justice. As of 1995, there were 800,000 new cases to join 1.5 million cases pending from the previous year and only 2.8 percent ever reach a trial.⁵⁸ It is not possible for Colombia to be able to do right any every case that has ever been done wrong, but the continual neglect of judicial reform is stifling progress further yet. Justices must be given the sovereignty, security and jurisdiction to fully perform their duties. Until this occurs, law will continue to be in the hands of guerrillas and death squads and the state will flounder in its own violence and corruption.

⁵⁶ Chernick, Marc. "Elusive Peace: Struggling Against the Logic of Violence" *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Sep/Oct 2000. p32.

⁵⁷ Comisión Andina de Juristas. "Violencia contra jueces y abogados en Colombia" Justicia para la Justicia. Comisión Andina de Juristas: Bogotá. 1993.

Key Players in the Struggle for Power

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Colombia has been the victim of constant unrest and upheaval, resulting in horrifying violence, persistent economic stratification and the emergence of several armed insurgency groups. The key players in the current civil war are leftist guerrilla groups, the most powerful of which is the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), right-wing paramilitaries (predominantly the AUC), the current government under President Andres Pastrana, the military and national police, and a number of corporate interests that seek to expand trade and natural resource extraction in Colombia. The individual ideologies of and the web of connections among these key players are complex and often disputable. In order to understand the rural conflict, it is important to first understand the origins of the armed civilian groups (the guerrillas and the paramilitaries), their ideologies and their current role in rural Colombia.

Evolution of the FARC Guerrillas

Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) was formally organized in May 1966, declaring a “war of national liberation” to free Colombia from U.S. imperialism.⁵⁹ Most of the leaders and followers had been part of guerrilla or bandit groups that had formed during *La Violencia*, and their goals were based on the needs of the rural population, the greatest of which was land reform. Many members were initially attracted to the FARC because of their concern about the political and economic elitism in Colombia. Simón Trinidad, one of the most well known commanders of the FARC today, transformed from banker and professor to active guerrilla after observing the high concentration of wealth on Colombia’s valuable coastline. Trinidad was a professor of economics at Jorge Tadeo Lozano Universidad in Bogotá for 10

⁵⁸ Springer, Alexander P. p10.

⁵⁹ Bushnell, David. p27.

years before joining the FARC 16 years ago. He began speaking publicly about the need for land reform which “[turned him] into an enemy of the powerful people on the coast.”⁶⁰ After numerous assassination attempts on his life, Trinidad fled Bogotá, joined the FARC, and now provides much of the ideological backbone of the guerrilla movement.

Trinidad claims that the FARC is “by principle Communists”, but also “patriots” and “nationalists”.⁶¹ Socialist revolutionaries such as Karl Marx, Fidel Castro and Simón Bolívar certainly influenced the direction of FARC, but this has not made the FARC into a mere pawn of the greater socialist powers in Latin America.⁶² Manuel “Sureshot” Marulandas, the leader of FARC, allegedly has a “frosty” relationship with Fidel Castro and, as Commander Trinidad brags, the FARC has had many more years than the Cuban Revolutionaries to refine its character.⁶³ The FARC became aligned with the Colombian Communist Party in the early 1980s and in 1985 they worked with labor unions and other disenfranchised leftists to create a legal political party, the Unión Patriótica (UP). These collaborators are all a part of the “Bolivariano Movement,” to which Trinidad accredits the leaders of the UP for establishing. Trinidad explains the evolution of the movement in the following interview:

. . . at this moment was born the idea for the political movement. A political movement that works to recover Colombian society in secret, a movement that's militant and clandestine. There will be campesinos, students, workers, women and intellectuals who will fight the political confrontation without saying they belong to the Bolivariano Movement. They will not participate in elections because there are no guarantees and conditions that they will not be killed.⁶⁴

The undue violence toward the UP (note page 9) obviously discouraged the political voice of the FARC and other leftists. The UP is still in existence and is cited in the CIA World Factbook

⁶⁰ Symmes, Patrick. p64.

⁶¹ Symmes, Patrick. p64.

⁶² Michael Radu’s article, “The Perilous Appeasement of Guerrillas”, presents a clear view of the socialist nature of FARC and the limitations of such guerrilla movements in Latin America.

⁶³ Symmes, Patrick. p64.

2000 as a functioning political party, but its ties to the FARC appear limited and indirect. As Raúl Reyes, a spokesman for FARC, has said, “we [the FARC] are revolutionaries, not electorates,” and it is unknown how the FARC will determine their future political role in Colombia.⁶⁵

Recent acts of terror and violence towards civilians discredit FARC claims of being “*por el pueblo*”, but the FARC does supposedly follow a mission statement that they share with the Colombian Communist Party (see the FARC-EP Agenda in Appendix C).⁶⁶ The FARC-EP agenda is driven by Colombia’s prevailing economic stratification, political elitism, poverty and need for land reform, and it is likened to a socialist structure of wealth and property. The FARC requests democratic freedoms such as full political and social rights of opposition parties, freedom of the press, the right to unionize and an independent electoral branch; on the other hand, the FARC also demands that the State protect and utilize domestic markets and resources for the benefit of the Colombian population, that the State own all energy, transportation, communications and development endeavors, and that the State uses fifty percent of the budget for social well being and development.⁶⁷

Critics of the guerrilla group suggest that the modern FARC has abandoned their political and social agenda- that they have become entirely lawless and no longer seek true progress in Colombia.⁶⁸ Indeed, the future direction of FARC is hazy at best; they are plagued by internal contradiction, there is no plan for achieving their aforementioned agenda, nor are they seeking to

⁶⁴ Trinidad, Simón. “An Interview with the FARC” *Colombia Report*. Published by Gary Leech. June 25, 2000. Available at <http://www.colombiareport.org>.

⁶⁵ Radu, Michael. p372.

⁶⁶ “Por qué ingresó a la guerrilla?” FARC-EP homepage. Available at: <http://www.farc-ep.org/Revista/Resistencia25/Html/guerrilla.html>. Retrieved 1/3/01.

⁶⁷ FARC-EP Proposed Agenda. Center For International Policy. <http://www.cip.org>.

⁶⁸ Radu, Michael.

create a model of Colombia in their area of control, the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone).⁶⁹ Today, the FARC faces their greatest challenge as Plan Colombia pro-actively seeks to wipe them out by targeting the southern regions of guerrilla influence and coca cultivation where the FARC allegedly earn their income.

Soon after the proposal of Plan Colombia, Commander Reyes extended an invitation to the United States to visit the DMZ so that the guerrillas may prove that they are not connected to narco-traffickers.⁷⁰ Later statements were not as cordial; Commander Trinidad declared in July of 2000 that, “If the people of Colombia are threatened, we will confront the aggression” and Commander Reyes “declared war on the United States” in protest of the plan.⁷¹ The FARC are obviously determined to continue the battle in Colombia and Commander Trinidad has vocally defended the FARC’s interpretation of Plan Colombia:

With the riches in this country and after 180 years of republic living, Colombians must live better. We'll make better use of the natural resources and provide jobs, healthcare, education and housing so 40 million Colombians can live well. Who are those that are opposed to these social, economic and political changes? They are the people who monopolize the riches and resources in Colombia. A small group that monopolizes the banks, the industries, the mines, agriculture and international commerce, including some foreign companies, especially North Americans. For these reasons we are the principal target in the war against narco-traffickers. The intent of Plan Colombia is to eliminate the FARC in order to preserve the political and economic status quo that has served the Colombian elite and foreign business interests so profitably throughout Colombian history.⁷²

The FARC views Plan Colombia as a direct threat to the goals of their larger movement.

The guerrillas have seen how the import of agricultural goods and international economic agreements have devalued local farmers, leaving rural people without land or livelihood, and

⁶⁹ Symmes, Patrick. p65.

⁷⁰ Emanuelsson, Dick. “Guerrilla Colombiana Invita a Estados Unidos” <http://www.home.swipnet.se/~w-34817/invitacion-america.htm>. Retrieved 1/3/01.

⁷¹ McInerey, Andy. “Colombian Revolutionaries Vow to Confront Agression” *Workers World News Service*. <http://www.workers.org/ww/2000/colombia0706.htm>. July 6, 2000. Retrieved 03/14/01.

⁷² Original quote in “Rebelión.” Available at <http://www.eurosur.org/rebelion/internacional/farcgueah.htm>.

they seek to protect those people who are vulnerable to the whims of the elite. Unfortunately, the web of money, power and violence has disfigured this noble vision and they are no longer the protectors of the people, but the perpetrators of violence and fear.

While the FARC allegedly oppose the methods of natural resource extraction because foreign companies and the elite are reaping most of the benefits, the FARC has consented to drilling that is opposed by the U'wa indigenous group and they admitted to killing three U'wa activists in February 1999.⁷³ According to the Resource Center of the Americas, ransom money from oil field kidnappings provides a considerable income for the FARC, and this was perhaps the reasoning for both the consent to the oil field and the murders. Cases of FARC massacres are isolated and few, but the Human Rights Watch 2000 reported that guerrilla forces commit twenty-two percent of the human rights abuses in Colombia, which is reason enough to fear and loathe the power of FARC in Colombia.

⁷³ Radu, Michael. p372.
Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p4.

Plan Colombia hopes to deplete the power of the paramilitaries and the FARC by taking away their source of income, presumably the drug trade. However, the FARC only receive thirty percent of their funds from coca and this is through taxation of peasant coca farmers.⁷⁴ A mere ten to twelve percent of the total coca cultivation takes place in the DMZ and so fumigation will not be concentrated in this area; at the same time, however, this zone is seen as a dangerous concession to the guerrillas.⁷⁵ Numerous critics have raised serious questions as to how the Colombian Government will gain control over the FARC. One Congressperson raised the following concern during the initial debate of Plan Colombia :

. . . 30% of the guerrillas' income comes from the drug trade. This raises questions about the effectiveness of a strategy that intends to defeat the guerrillas by eliminating their income from drugs through a massive eradication campaign. If the guerrillas only derive 30% of their income from the drug trade, their strength may be diminished by its elimination, but surely the 70% of their income that comes from other sources will still fund a formidable military force.⁷⁶

There is no plan for reclaiming or establishing order in the DMZ and until the Colombian Government tackles the socioeconomic problems that give rise to guerrilla activity, the FARC will enjoy continued success and participation.

The Reactionary Force of the Paramilitaries.

The paramilitaries, like the guerrillas, have their origins in *La Violencia*, but their formal development has been hand in hand with the Colombian government and military. In 1965, the Colombian government established an ordinance that enabled the military to arm civilians, prompting the emergence of anti-guerrilla paramilitaries. According to Nazih Richani, a visiting scholar at George Washington University, "...this law was inspired by the National Security

⁷⁴ Statement by Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering. Joint Hearing on Supplemental Request for Plan Colombia. Y4.AP 6/2:S.HRG.106-621. p17.

⁷⁵ Statement by General Charles Wilhelm. Joint Hearing on Supplemental Request for Plan Colombia. Y4.AP 6/2:S.HRG.106-621. p27.

Doctrine, a Cold War policy developed by the U.S. government for use in training programs at the School of Americas”- the same school that, from 1996 to 2000, prepared 557 Colombian students to enter the Colombian military.⁷⁷ In 1987 the Minister of Government identified 128 paramilitary groups and while the legislation was overturned in 1989, it reappeared in 1994 under President Ernesto Samper. This time the legislation created armed “cooperatives” known as *Convivir* and these groups remain “openly and directly linked to the state.”⁷⁸

In the early 1980s, while Carlos Castaño and his brother were forming the Peasant Self-Defense Units (ACCU) and drug cartels were creating formal hit squads, ranchers, army officers, oil companies and politicians were also joining forces in the anti-guerrilla movement. In 1981, these sectors (including representatives from the Texas Petroleum Company) formed a paramilitary organization known as Death to Kidnappers (MAS) that helped establish the “emerging alliance among drug traffickers, large landowner, cattle ranchers, local political bosses and the military”.⁷⁹ Over the next ten years, these paramilitary forces slowly consolidated to form the United Self-Defense Units of Colombia (AUC) with the help of the Bomboná military battalion. Apparently, in return for intelligence assistance and other services that the Casaña brothers provided for the battalion, the army “helped link the Castaños with other paramilitaries, and proceeded to launch a major counterinsurgency against the guerrillas.”⁸⁰ Since that time, formal paramilitaries have grown in response to the “state’s failure to maintain

⁷⁶Leech, Garry M. “Plan Colombia: A Closer Look” Colombia Report. *A Report by the Information Network of the Americas (INOTA)* July, 2000.

⁷⁷ Richani, Nazih. p40.

“U.S. security assistance to the Andean region, 2000-2001”. *Center for International Policy*. p16. <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/co.htm>. Retrieved 4/13/2001.

⁷⁸ Chernick, Marc. “The Crisis of Human Rights in Colombia”. 1997. p2.

⁷⁹ Richani, Nazih. p38-39.

⁸⁰ Richani, Nazih. p39.

law, order, and its own credibility” while also enjoying the state’s permissibility of paramilitary crimes.⁸¹

Led by the infamous Carlos Castaño, the *Aúto-defensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) now reigns as the largest right-wing anti-communist force in Colombia, claiming between 5,000 and 7,000 active members. They earn a substantial income from protecting oil company pipelines and, according to a statement by Castaño himself, narco-trafficking finances 80 percent of his forces.⁸² Castaño has proved to be savvy in public relations and has created for some a justified public image of the paramilitaries. Castaño has appeared in a prime-time two hour television interview in Colombia, he often writes editorials for major Colombian newspapers such as *El Tiempo*, he has been referred to as a “talented political organizer and military strategist” and he is widely seen as a legitimate military might- even though his mightiest achievements have all been horrendous acts of violence and intimidation.⁸³

Despite Castaño’s apparently public lifestyle, he is wanted on twenty-two outstanding arrest warrants for alleged participation in massacres, killings, and the kidnapping of human rights defenders and a Colombian senator, among other crimes.⁸⁴ In just one incident, a paramilitary group bashed the skulls of 25 unarmed peasant men with rocks and sledgehammers in front of their families and neighbors; the response from leader Carlos Castaño was that they

⁸¹ Radu, Michael. p377.

⁸² Statement by General Wilhelm. Joint Hearing on Supplemental Request for Plan Colombia. Y 4.AP 6/2:S.HRG.106-621. p26.

Radu, Michael. p377.

Leech, Gary M. “An Interview with the AUC.”

Richani, Nazih. p38-41.

⁸³ Radu, Michael. p377.

Chernick, Marc. 2000. p32.

⁸⁴ Colombia Human Rights Certification II, January 2001. Prepared by: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA).

would investigate to see if some of the deaths were “unnecessary” and no action was taken by the Colombian National Police or judiciary.⁸⁵

Castaño has acknowledged AUC responsibility for several massacres and yet he and his forces continue to run free with impunity. In addition, his followers still claim that they are working to “protect” their fellow *campesinos* even though they are the most lethal force in the countryside. In truth, the paramilitaries commit approximately nine murders every day.⁸⁶ The Colombia Human Rights Certification II of January 2001 found that the paramilitaries commit 78% of the human rights abuses in Colombia, and these often occur as systematic massacres that target unarmed peasants.⁸⁷ When a young paramilitary soldier was asked why he joined the paramilitaries, he replied:

Why did I join the self-defense forces? Because we are not paramilitaries! Paramilitaries are people sent by the government. We are the Self-Defense Forces of Colombia! I joined because the government wasn't able to protect our rights and goods. If I had a farm with goats, I wouldn't accept the guerrillas coming and taking away all of my goods. I would have to find a way to defend myself, my things and my fellow campesinos because we are the lowest class in the country. For that reason, we are the self-defense forces. The self-defense forces were not created because the guerrillas existed, they were created because the government couldn't defend the people's rights.⁸⁸

Unfortunately, this “defense” of the people's rights has turned bloody, and people who were once common peasants are now criminals at large. The Colombia Human Rights Certification has reported that “80 percent of the arrest warrants issued by the Attorney General

⁸⁵ Qtd in Joanne Mariner, Find Law's Legal Commentary, Feb 8, 2001. <<http://writ.news.findlaw.com/mariner/20010208.html>>

⁸⁶ This number can be calculated by dividing number of annual political numbers by 365 and then multiplying it by 0.78, the percent of paramilitary human rights abuses.

⁸⁷ Colombia Human Rights Certification II, January 2001. Prepared by: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). See Appendix A for reports of paramilitary violence.

⁸⁸ Leech, Gary M. Qtd. in “An Interview with the AUC” Colombia Report. <http://www.colombiareport.org>. March 5, 2001.

against paramilitaries have not been enforced. This is largely due to inaction by the military. Paramilitary leaders remain at large and collect warrants like badges of honor.” The apathy of the military to pursue paramilitary criminals is not shocking; the Human Rights Watch 2000 report found that an astounding **fifty percent** of Colombia’s army brigades are linked to paramilitaries, and paramilitary forces are often seen utilizing U.S. military supplies or collaborating with military officials. Paramilitaries have been spotted eating U.S. MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and “...witnesses have reported that paramilitaries cross through local army roadblocks frequently, and have even been seen unloading supplies at the airport with the help of local police and members of the Colombian Air Force.”⁸⁹ Evidently this phenomena is not new; on May 22 of 1990, PBS aired a segment entitled “Inside the Cartel” and one of the topics pursued was the role of local army commanders in enabling paramilitary massacres. In just one of the cases, 43 people were murdered in the town of Segovia- not one of them members of guerrilla forces.

The military continues to refuse responsibility for their own human rights abuses, the most horrific case of which concerns a recent attack on a group of school children in Pueblo Rico. The Colombian military opened fire on the dozens of children for nearly half an hour, killing six and injuring four. The military defended the event by saying that nearby guerrillas were using the children as human shields. Teachers who survived the incident, however, claimed no knowledge of any guerrilla activity or presence.⁹⁰ This case is documented by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the 2000 report and since then it has become just one of many Colombian tragedies.

⁸⁹ Leech, Gary M.

⁹⁰ Chernick, Marc. 2000. p33.

The relationship between the Colombian military and the paramilitaries was brought to the attention of U.S. policymakers during Senate hearings before the Joint Hearing on Supplemental Aid for Plan Colombia. Amnesty International testified on the military-paramilitary relationship and human rights abuses, generals discussed to the impossibility of dominating the FARC, and candid conversation occurred regarding the persistence of drug cultivation and demand despite fumigation practices. In spite of this, the United States continued with the plan and their support of the armed forces of Colombia. The Colombian military can thus continue without threat of losing power, without fear of prosecution of human rights abuses and without the burden of reform stifling their own agenda.

The Components of Plan Colombia

Will a Military Package Achieve Social Reform?

Plan Colombia is an extraordinary aid package by two measures: first, by its comparative size and, second, by its emphasis on U.S. exported goods and services. In 1999, the total amount of aid received by Colombia from the United States totaled \$210 million; over the course of two years, Plan Colombia will total \$1.3 billion, well exceeding previous spending and placing Colombia as the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid after Israel and Egypt. Of the \$1.3 billion, \$860.3 million will go to Colombia and the remaining \$439.7 million will go to neighboring countries, particularly Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.⁹¹ Colombia will also continue to receive \$300 million that was previously allocated for Colombian military and police assistance, totaling a hefty \$1.160 billion for two years.⁹² In 1999, Colombian military expenditures totaled \$3.4 billion, meaning that Plan Colombia will increase the Colombian military budget by an astounding 28% over the next two years.

The composition of Plan Colombia (Table 1) reveals a fundamental problem for solving a conflict that is rooted in a long history of political and social violence. An astounding 80% of the aid, totaling \$687.3 million, will go to Colombia's armed forces under military and police assistance and law enforcement. As fumigation continues to destroy agriculture and livestock and as tensions flare between the various armed factions, the rural poor will be faced with few options to protect their families or livelihood. The FARC expect the resulting pressure on rural populations to increase their membership to nearly twice the current size. This movement of civilians into guerrilla or paramilitary groups will simply feed the fire of violence; the United

⁹¹ "The Contents of the Colombian Aid Package". *Center for International Policy*. January 26, 2001. <http://www.cip.org>.

⁹² "The Contents of the Colombian Aid Package". *Center for International Policy*. January 26, 2001. <http://www.cip.org>.

States will escalate a civil war that does not appear anywhere near an end and the U.S. will undoubtedly be locked into Colombia both financially and politically as the war drags on.

Table 1.

Military assistance	\$519.2	60.35 %
Police assistance	\$123.1	14.31%
Alternative development	\$68.5	7.96%
Aid to the displaced	\$37.5	4.36%
Human rights	\$51.0	5.93%
Judicial reform	\$13.0	1.51%
Law enforcement / rule of law	\$45.0	5.23%
Peace	\$3.0	.35%
Total	\$860.3	100%

Aid to Colombia under Plan Colombia.⁹³

The military emphasis of Plan Colombia and the lack of specific protections for the rural population ensures that the plight of the poor is going to worsen considerably. Even if the military does put equal pressure on the paramilitaries and guerrillas, the rural population is still thrust into the middle of a vicious battleground in which their crops will be destroyed, their lives threatened and their homes lost. Plan Colombia offers \$37.5 million to aid displaced persons and \$68.5 million to alternative development and crop substitution programs, but details regarding the implementation of this aid is difficult- if not impossible- to find. According to Sanho Tree, government officials may be able to answer who is responsible for administering the services,

⁹³ “The Contents of the Colombian Aid Package”. *Center for International Policy*. January 26, 2001. <http://www.cip.org>.

but there is little evidence of the aid in action. There is no concrete method to how these services will be monitored, nor is there an available database of what region or who specifically has benefited from the aid.⁹⁴

According to the Plan Colombia Semi-Annual Obligation Report, human rights and judicial reform (noted as HR) payment obligations have been met at a much slower rate than other program elements. HR funds were obligated for the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2001 at a rate of twenty-four percent while the total average for all sectors was fifty-nine percent. This means that of the total \$122,000 designated for HR, only \$28,860 had been dispersed by the end of the second quarter. The report took careful measure to explain this shortfall, however, in the following excerpt:

In one area, Support for Human Rights and Judicial Reform, obligations during the first half of FY 2001 fell below the rate of obligations for Plan Colombia as a whole. Subsequent action should have remedied this shortly after the end of the reporting period, and significant delays in planning, coordination, or initial implementation of the individual projects did not result . . . Shortly after the close of the reporting period covered in this report, the Department of State, through a series of reimbursable agreements, released nearly all of the \$88 million in emergency supplemental assistance earmarked for the Plan Colombia Justice Reform Program.⁹⁵

We cannot ignore that, according to this statement, nearly the full HR obligation was met shortly after the 2nd quarter reporting period, but there is a fundamental problem of Plan Colombia that is reflected here. Plan Colombia is, without doubt, a military package. Its focus is on training, filling and arming military units and intelligence, yet its goals are supposedly to “protect democracy” and “promote freedom”. Violence, impunity and corruption in the military, courts and cabinet are the original impediments to democracy and freedom in Colombia. This

⁹⁴ Personal interview with Sanho Tree. 12/6/2001.

⁹⁵ Plan Colombia Semi-Annual Obligation Report, 1st and 2nd Quarters, Fiscal Year 2001. Office of National Drug Control Policy. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington: 2001.
<http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/072701.htm>. Retrieved 11/14/2001.

has caused a breakdown of the state, of the freedom to speak and of full political participation. It is a problem that stems from within the judicial system and from the repudiation of human rights in Colombia- so what better way to fight these problems than by funding judicial reform and human rights enforcement and training?

Critics and politicians have argued that the United States is supporting human rights and judicial reform in Colombia simply by appropriating funds for such endeavors. I argue that the United States does not hold this as the priority we should be- nor or we supporting these efforts in a well thought out manner. By waiting until the end of the second quarter to obligate HR funds, we have waited until the situation is further aggravated with rural displacement, paramilitary violence and intimidation of civil leaders. According to Dr. Marc Chernick, “U.S. emphasis on military solutions in the early 1990s were not only ineffective, but also misguided, failing to stop the flow of drugs into this country while potentially destabilizing already violent national situations.”⁹⁶ Winifred Tate, a Senior Fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), adds that “Counternarcotics operations . . . have also pumped up abusive militaries, weakened democratic reforms, and exacerbated existing social tensions in Latin America.”⁹⁷

Over the past 40 years, military pressure has failed to promote safety, security or state integrity. We have been given the opportunity to invest in reform and education, to try a new route for progress in Colombia, and we have failed to even test that option before intensifying the region’s militarization. This negligence will undoubtedly put a horrible strain on the rural people who are caught in the crossfire. In the meantime, more communities will be destroyed by

⁹⁶ Chernick, Marc. “Legal Versus Illegal Export Booms: Researching the Drug Trade and Its Influence on Politics in Latin America” Andean and Amazonian Studies Project. p2-3.

⁹⁷ Tate, Winifred. “Repeating Past Mistakes: Aiding counterinsurgency in Colombia”. *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Sep/Oct 2000. p16.

massacres and intimidation, civil leaders will die for promoting social justice and government leaders will be forced to leave the country for fear of their life.

Privatization of War: The Questionable Use of Dyn-Corp Personnel in Plan Colombia

In stark contrast to aid for human rights and judicial reform, the military component of Plan Colombia is well defined, contracts have been drawn and the Colombian Military has already received and utilized the helicopters, herbicide and military training.⁹⁸ Until now, the Colombian Military had few helicopters and an obvious lack of soldiers and training. Plan Colombia will allow battalions to move from ground movement to air patrol and surveillance, it will beef up the number of military troops and it will do much of this with the assistance and expertise of private contractors such as DynCorp and Military Professional Resources International (MPRI).

Retired military personnel and former army intelligence make up the DynCorp and MPRI forces. These contractors are used for “training Colombian personnel, helping to reform Colombia’s military, and ...flying the helicopters that will transport the counter-narcotics battalions”; meanwhile, DynCorp alone “maintains forty-four permanent and sixty-five rotating temporary staff in Colombia,” totaling \$36.8 million in costs in 1998.⁹⁹ St. Petersburg Times also reports that “these military consultants keep in close contact with Pentagon officials while advising Colombians on efforts to improve the Colombian army and even advise on the passage of new laws to help make the Colombian military more professional and effective.”¹⁰⁰ General Wilhelm and Brian Sheridan of the Pentagon have defended the use of private contractors by

⁹⁸ (Penhaul, Karl. “Making a deal with the devil” *U.S. News & World Report*. April 16, 2001. p28.) and (Garza, Paul and David Adams. “Military aid . . . from the private sector” *St. Petersburg Times*. December 3, 2000.)

⁹⁹ “U.S. Security Assistance to the Andean Region” Center for International Policy. p8.

<http://www.ciponline.org/facts/co.htm>. Retrieved 4/13/01.

¹⁰⁰ Garza, Paul de la and David Adams. “Military aid . . . from the private sector”, *St. Petersburg Times*. Dec. 3, 2000. p2.

arguing that MPRI has the expertise and manpower to fully carry out a mission that the U.S. military would not be able to conduct on its own.¹⁰¹

Perhaps it is true that the United States would not be able to fully equip this plan without the assistance of private corporations, just as the Colombian government would not be able to fully fund Plan Colombia without the aid of the United States- but the motivations and benefits of outsourcing military operatives are much more complex. First, there is the Congressional cap on military personnel allowed in a country without a declaration of war; originally, no more than 500 military personnel were allowed. With the surge of private contractors, however, an adjustment has been made to allow up to 300 contractors in Colombia at any given time. This more than doubles the manpower of the Pentagon while the U.S. military does not have to claim responsibility for those personnel, no government agency must oversee their actions, congress has no control over their involvement and journalists are given limited information on the nature of their presence. In sum, the U.S. military has increased its power without increasing their responsibilities.

There is no clear picture as to whom DynCorp must report, how they will be monitored or held responsible for their performance, or what type of jurisdiction they have as a private corporation performing military operatives. Their muddled identify is sure to present serious issues for both the U.S. and Colombian governments and we are already getting a taste of the complexities and scandals they are sure to create. In a recent article in *The Nation*, journalists reported the following:

According to a monthly DEA intelligence report from last year, officers of Colombia's National Police force intercepted and opened, on May 12, 2000, a US-bound Federal

¹⁰¹ United States House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, March 23, 2000. Quoted in "U.S. Security Assistance to the Andean Region" Center for International Policy. p9.

Express package at Bogota's El Dorado International Airport. The parcel contained "two small bottles of a thick liquid" that ... "tested positive for heroin."¹⁰²

The package belonged to an unnamed employee of DynCorp and once inquiries of the seizure began, no one at DynCorp, the Colombian National Police, State Department, DEA or U.S. Embassy seemed to be claiming responsibility for this incident. DynCorp created an excuse about faulty testing equipment and misinterpreting test results, while the embassy claims they don't even know what happened of the confiscated vials. The case appears to be at a standstill if not entirely dead; meanwhile, neither Congress nor military tribunals are able to pursue any course of legal action.

This incident clearly displays the danger of outsourcing; unrestrained power and irresponsible behavior, such as in this case of DynCorp, breeds corruption and waste. How is the United States supposed to uphold an image of progress in Colombia when we cannot keep track of our own personnel or hold them responsible for damaging or illegal actions? Plan Colombia is not the first forum in which DynCorp and MPRI services have been utilized, but this forum is exciting much more discussion about the ethics of using a private outfit for state military operations. Colonel Bruce D. Grant wrote in 1998 that, "This dangerous trend [of private militarization] removes military expertise from public accountability and corrupts our military", citing the lack of congressional control and the concept of private mercenaries as central problems to privatization.¹⁰³ Evidently the military community is divided on this issue and we should hope for much more debate on this private militarization in the future.

¹⁰² Vest, Jason. "DynCorp's Drug Problem", *The Nation*. July 16, 2001. <http://www.thenation.com>. Retrieved 11/4/2002.

¹⁰³ Garza, Paul de la and David Adams. p7.

The use of private military operatives is also causing a theoretical breakdown of the authority of state military. The citizenry has given the state the authority to administer necessary force and by acknowledging such power, it has created a legitimate institution. When all of an institution's transparency is clouded, however, and the public- even the Congressional leaders- have been excluded from the process, a part of its legitimacy has been worn away. The American public should be informed that military operatives are being contracted out to private mercenaries, that they can evade certain military and international laws and standards, and that they are filling influential roles that will be laying groundwork for future policy. Military operatives have always been influenced by the marriage of industry and war, but this next turn into diplomacy and human rights concerns brings an entirely new set of questions and debates. The American public, legislation and judiciary should be given the right to decide whether outsourcing is constitutional and whether there is any more room for privatization within the U.S. military.

The Motivations and Complexity of U.S. Involvement

The assumed goals of Plan Colombia, to “revive Colombia’s battered economy, to strengthen the democratic pillars of the society, to promote the peace process and to eliminate ‘sanctuaries’ for narcotics producers and traffickers,”¹⁰⁴ embody important values and key interests of the United States. These helpful soundbites sold the package to the U.S. Senate and the American public without questioning the methods utilized, the actors involved or the potential repercussions. The actual method and impact of Plan Colombia, however, is a betrayal to these esteemed goals. Upon close examination of Plan Colombia, most readers would likely be appalled at having funded such a colossal and destructive policy. Ultimately, Plan Colombia exists because of misinformation and at times an absolute lack of information. It is unlikely to achieve any of its aforementioned goals while drug abuse and rural poverty continue to worsen.

The Reality of Drug Enforcement Efforts

Drug abuse is a costly social ill in the United States, amounting to \$110 billion lost each year due to health costs, accidents and lost productivity.¹⁰⁵ Hence, it is not surprising that the United States has an eye on Colombia, the producer of 80% of the U.S. cocaine supply. The failure of U.S. anti-drug programs such as D.A.R.E. have puzzled the public and law enforcement while few alternate programs have been proposed or properly funded.¹⁰⁶ There is sufficient research that provides analysis of drug control methods, but drug enforcement officials have yet to heed to the advice of social scientists or to the wisdom of history.

¹⁰⁴ Statement by Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering, Joint Hearing for Supplemental Request for Plan Colombia, Y 4.AP 6/2:S.HRG.106-621.

¹⁰⁵ Statement by Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering.

¹⁰⁶ The Drug Policy Research Center of RAND has further information regarding the status of drug programs in the United States. A study of ten federal agencies revealed that seven of the agencies were using arbitrary assumptions and outdated information to assess their drug control programs and budgets. The estimated waste for just three of these agencies totaled \$1.2 billion- over 20% of the total budget for federal prevention and treatment programs.

The RAND Institute discovered in 1994 that, despite the modest success rate of drug treatment (thirty percent success rate), “domestic treatment is 23.03 times more effective than source-country drug control efforts. In order to reduce cocaine consumption in the U.S. by 1%, it would cost \$34 million in treatment, \$783 million in source-country control (i.e. crop eradication), or \$336 million in interdiction efforts (cocaine seizures by the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army and the Immigration and Naturalization Service).¹⁰⁷ Plan Colombia can thus expect to reduce cocaine consumption by less than one percent while \$1.3 billion in domestic treatment and prevention programs could theoretically reduce cocaine consumption by forty-one percent. This information comes at a crucial crossroads; while the U.S. is giving \$1.3 billion to Colombia and surrounding countries to thwart drug production, the argument over drug treatment in the United States is heating up. An increasing number of state officials would prefer to focus on drug treatment rather than incarceration, but it seems that many states are confronted with two major obstacles: federal hesitancy and lack of funding.¹⁰⁸ In light of this information, the quip “War on Drugs” seems more like a dying retreat than it does a bold call to battle. No state should have to struggle to provide treatment for willing citizens when U.S. tax dollars are wastefully thrown into a conflict that we cannot properly define.

Corporate Imperialism in the “War on Drugs”

Now that the “War on Drugs” appears to be fought in vain, we can explore other possible intentions that we have for involvement in Colombia. Just as the Colombian Government seeks to promote democracy in their lawless countryside, the United States seeks to strengthen free trade and investment opportunities. The U.S. has had a long-standing interest in the development of Colombia, beginning with the 1961 U.S.-Colombian policy the Alliance for

¹⁰⁷ Rydell, C. Peter and Susan S. Everingham. “Controlling Cocaine: Supply Versus Demand Programs”, RAND Corporation, 1994. (quoted in: Gomes, Kristy).

Progress, a ten-year social and economic development plan. Its primary focus was agrarian reform with the hope that the 1960s would be Colombia's, and in result, South America's, "decade of progress".¹⁰⁹ It encouraged private enterprise, production expansion and increased land settlement- presumably to assist the rural population but also to encourage trade and investment between the two nations. Unfortunately for the *campesinos*, war has become a form of investment and a time for politicians to gain points for landing contracts for constituents- and as we will see, weapons manufacturers stand to benefit greatly from Plan Colombia.

Intervention as an investment opportunity. This development-driven language and ideology has become the backbone of U.S. interest in Colombia. The terms "secure democracy", "promote progress" and "national security" are used to describe Plan Colombia's two central themes: suppression of leftist insurgent movements and protection of U.S. investment interests. According to Garry M. Leech of the Colombia Report, "The helicopters, radar systems, as well as other weaponry and the training of Colombian troops by U.S. Special Forces will all be used against the guerrillas in the hope of providing a more favorable environment for U.S. corporations to conduct their business," an allegation that is readily substantiated by the presence of U.S. oil companies and weapons manufacturers in lobbying for Plan Colombia.¹¹⁰

Congressional lobbying presents an important and perhaps dangerous venue for industry to promote their business and shape relevant policy. Corporations have the money, time and prestige to have a constant hand in politics while the consumers, citizens and laborers rarely have the opportunity, or perhaps simply do not know how to, exert direct influence on policy makers. The concept is known as association theory within the field of political sociology and it reveals the pressing conflict between public interest and corporate interest. Does corporate lobbying

¹⁰⁸ Roane, Kit R. "A new deal in the drug war, sort of," *U.S. News & World Report*. 21 May 2001. p27.

¹⁰⁹ Information Service. Colombia. New York: Pan American Union, 1971.

result in irresponsible or damaging policy? Should lobbying restrictions be placed on private corporations? Would such restrictions even prevent corporate influence on policy? The only sure fact is that business interest was undeniably present in the Plan Colombia hearings.

According to scholar and journalist Winifred Tate:

During the House hearings on Colombia, Occidental Petroleum Vice President Lawrence Meriage was one of very few non-governmental witnesses to testify before Congress. As a leader of the U.S.-Colombia Business Partnership, founded in 1996 to represent U.S. companies with business interests in Colombia, Meriage led business-sector support for the package.¹¹¹

Due to successful lobbying and political connections, several manufacturers of military equipment are benefiting greatly from Plan Colombia. According to The Colombia Report, the direct corporate earnings for Plan Colombia military equipment are: United Technologies, \$234 million for 18 Sikorsky Black Hawk helicopters; Textron of Texas, \$84 million to upgrade Vietnam-era Huey helicopters; Lockheed Martin, \$68 million for early warning radar systems.¹¹² The military-industrial complex is certainly one of the most profitable industries- but only if there is a need for their equipment, and many critics would argue that this “need” is constructed by the corporations themselves.¹¹³ In addition, this need has possibly been influenced by the \$2.4 million United and Textron gave in campaign contributions over the past two elections.¹¹⁴

Lockheed Martin, one of the major benefactors of Plan Colombia lobbied for their own anti-drug military equipment when they “approached the Clinton administration with a poll it had commissioned, showing a majority of the public believing drug use to be on the rise, with

¹¹⁰ Leech, Garry M. “Plan Colombia: A Closer Look” Colombia Report. <http://www.colombiareport.org>.

¹¹¹ Tate, Winifred. p18.

¹¹² Leech, Garry M. “Plan Colombia: A Closer Look” Colombia Report. <http://www.colombiareport.org>

¹¹³ U.S. corporations have been criticized for exaggerating claims of effectiveness and need in order to sell anti-drug military equipment that is more expensive and supposedly more “advanced”. Source: Gilmore, Jim and Joe Rosenbloom III (Producers). “What Happened to the Drug War?” (documentary). PBS. 1993.

¹¹⁴ Tate, Winifred. p18.

Democrats, not Republicans, being held responsible.”¹¹⁵ Did this poll make the Clinton administration afraid to appear “soft on drugs” and more willing to commit to a foreign aid package that obviously had many questionable entanglements? It is possible that the Clinton administration, facing an election year and feeling a crunch to reestablish the “War on Drugs”, was persuaded by the poll to approve the revamped version of Plan Colombia- and, if so, Lockheed Martin undoubtedly achieved their mission.

Tapping into Colombia’s fragile earth. The second group of benefactors of Plan Colombia will be the U.S. investment interests in Colombia- namely, the oil industry. Colombia is currently the seventh largest exporter of oil to the U.S., so there already exists a substantial economic investment in Colombia, but this investment is at risk as long as the free trade ideals of capitalism and democracy are threatened by civil war.¹¹⁶ According to the Resource Center of the Americas:

In 1998, Gen. Charles Wilhelm, then head of the U.S. Southern Command, told Congress that oil discoveries had increased Colombia’s strategic importance. Last April, Sen. Bob Graham (D-Florida) and former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft warned in a Los Angeles Times editorial that Colombia’s reserves would remain untapped unless stability is restored.¹¹⁷

While tapping into untouched reserves will expand the already booming industry, companies that are currently in Colombia need protection from the guerrilla groups in order to continue smooth production. In 1999, Los Angeles-based Occidental Oil Company endured 79 attacks on their Colombian oil pipeline and several other oil companies have been the victims of violence, kidnappings, sabotage or threats from guerrilla leaders.¹¹⁸ Threats and acts of vandalism force

¹¹⁵ Szamuely.

Tate, Winifred. p18.

¹¹⁶ Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa.

¹¹⁷ Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p3.

¹¹⁸ Szamuely.

oil companies to temporarily shut down or pay hefty ransoms, putting a substantial financial stress on the companies. While their earnings are still robust (oil represents 38% of the total export earnings), oil companies are losing profit because of the conflict and many have turned to the U.S. Government to protect their business ventures.

According to the Resource Center of the Americas, “Lawrence P. Meriage, Occidentals public-affairs vice president, not only pushed for Plan Colombia last year but urged a House subcommittee to extend military aid to the nations north to augment security for oil development operations”, and in 1996, three major oil companies sponsored a full-page ad in the *Houston Chronicle* that showed a picture of a gas pump with the slogan: “a powerful new weapon . . . in the war against drugs.”¹¹⁹ Evidently, it didn’t take long for oil companies to realize that the “War on Drugs” was an opportunity to legitimize involvement in Colombia’s civil war, thereby securing access to oil reserves and protecting oil pipelines.

Oil companies have not worked alone to advocate for Plan Colombia, and this strategy has created an insurmountable voice in U.S. politics. U.S. and European oil companies such as Occidental, Enron and BP Amoco are united as the U.S.-Colombia Business Partnership, and critics are touting the partnership as one of the “most ardent advocates of American military involvement” in Colombia- and one of the most insistent Congressional lobbyists.¹²⁰ The partnership also includes business interests in information technology, law, coal and other natural resources, medical services, airlines, retail and telecommunications- and dozens of

Leech, Garry M.

Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p4.

¹¹⁹ Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p3.

¹²⁰ Szamuely.

representatives from the partnership met with Former President Bill Clinton in September of 2000 when he made an abbreviated visit to Colombia.¹²¹

There are also many politicians who have personal connections to the oil industry; for example, Al Gore owns \$1 million in stock in Occidental Oil Company and his father served as the company's vice president.¹²² In addition to President George W. Bush's own background in the oil industry, the largest campaign contributor for both his presidential and gubernatorial races was Enron Oil Company, which is one of the oil companies that lobbied for Plan Colombia.¹²³

Other presidential cabinet oil interests include:

Vice President Dick Cheney, former CEO of Halliburton Company, a Dallas-based oil services leader; Commerce Secretary Don Evans, former chairman of the Denver-based oil firm Tom Brown, Inc; and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, a former member of San Francisco-based Chevron Corporation.¹²⁴

The connection between oil and politics may not directly determine any one person's regards towards Plan Colombia, but the relationship certainly does impact a person's priorities and values, and these are usually reflected when making political decisions. Corporations have the money to support political campaigns and professional lobbyists, allowing them to have a louder, or perhaps more persistent, political voice. The significant profits that are expected from Plan Colombia have possibly encouraged corporate interests to distort the "needs" and intentions of the United States, convincing policy makers that oil and industry is unilaterally synonymous to democracy and freedom.

Neglect of the true drug problem. One has to further question the intentions of the "War on Drugs" after looking at former U.S. President Bill Clinton's pardon of Carlos Vignali, a

¹²¹ Leech, Gary M. "U.S. Aid Adds to Corporate Welfare" *Colombia Report*. September 3, 2000. <http://www.colombiareport.org>.

¹²² Leech, Gary M. "Aid to Corporate Welfare" *Colombia Report*. September 3, 2000. <http://www.colombiareport.org>.

¹²³ Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p7.

convicted leader of a major Minneapolis cocaine ring. President Clinton commuted the sentence of Vignali, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison, after serving only six years. Vignali's father, Horacio Vignali, is a Los Angeles-based political contributor who gave \$160,000 to the Democratic Party and \$200,000 to Hugh Rodham, Hillary Clinton's brother, in the past few years for campaigns and legal fees. Since the release of Vignali, Clinton has been criticized for supporting a drug kingpin, and many critics feel that Horacio Vignali's political connections provoked his son's sudden pardon. This decision counteracted any progress that Capitol Hill had made to convince skeptics that they were truly out to fight drug abuse and distribution. It was simply proven once again that money and influence are more important than social progress and law enforcement, and the current administration has done little to repair this image.

The United States has yet to improve enforcement and prosecution of drug interdiction and distribution, making it easier for the "drug kingpins" to walk free while Colombian peasants are held with a double-edged sword at their throat. President Clinton sent a message to Colombia that neither the 4,000 Colombians who die each year at the hand of political violence, nor the scores of Americans who face serious drug addictions, nor the thousands of rural peasants who have to turn to coca for subsistence are important enough to take a serious role in the "War on Drugs".

Is there room for ethics in business? The United States, in its pursuit of "progress" and "development," now faces a moral crisis that has pitted investment interests against human rights and freedom. Oil companies are in the epicenter of this crisis, enlisting paramilitary forces to protect their pipeline from sabotage. The companies pay what is known as a "war tax" to the paramilitaries, totaling \$2 million annually and accounting for a substantial portion of their

¹²⁴ Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p7.

income.¹²⁵ These are the same paramilitary forces who massacre and torture unarmed citizens, commit 78% of Colombia's human rights abuses and openly receive 70% of their earnings from the drug trade. These companies evidently do not have qualms about meddling in civil warfare and the U.S. has yet to enforce any regulations against such contracts with the paramilitaries.

This partnership has already created a horrendous crisis for the rural poor and indigenous groups of Colombia. The U'wa indigenous group, the most well known example of indigenous rights in Colombia, is currently locked in a vicious battle over land and oil with the U.S.-based Occidental Petroleum Company. According to the Colombia Support Network (CSN):

The U'wa have been in battle with OXY since 1992 when the oil company was given a license to explore for oil in U'wa territory- a violation of indigenous rights laws passed in Colombia in 1991. In 1995 . . . [the U'wa] successfully appealed to the Colombian courts to stop OXY's oil exploration. On May 15, 2000, the Colombian Government overturned the decision, granting the OXY Corporation permission to begin drilling.¹²⁶

The U'wa are now targets of the guerrillas and paramilitaries, the Colombian military has militarized the entire region and many U'wa have been forcibly removed from their land.¹²⁷ As time passes and the United States continues to support the actions of oil companies and the mission of the Colombian Military, their plight can be expected to worsen.

The U'wa have posed a direct threat to the continuance of oil drilling and they are therefore seen as a threat to Colombia's modernization and development. They are just one of many resounding voices against corporate takeover of Colombia, for land reform or for political equality that have unfortunately been lumped together as an opposition to "democracy" and "progress". Some groups are labeled as "fascist" or "guerrilla" because of their progressive

¹²⁵ Szamuely.
Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa. p4.

¹²⁶ Downing, Jackie. "U'wa Leaders, Berito and Buruchuwa Kuwaru'wa, visit the United States" *Action on Colombia*. Published by the Colombia Support Network. Summer 2000. p3.

¹²⁷ Downing, Jackie.
Dunning, Thad and Leslie Wirpsa.

views, which is, in the words of Kate McKoy of CSN, a “green light for the death squads” to take action against unarmed civilians.¹²⁸ Until the rural people of Colombia have proper political representation and until foreign powers require full accountability of the Colombian Government, such abuses will only continue.

¹²⁸ Interview with Kate McKoy. March 14, 2001.

Prospects for Peace and Rural Development in War-Torn Colombia

Security and Support for the Rural Poor

In reaction to the violence and poverty of Colombia, 822 Colombians are leaving their country each day.¹²⁹ This is a 30% increase in emigration from 1999, and the lines for U.S. visas continue to grow. People have become desperate for U.S. Visas and, until now, have found ways to get them in a shorter amount of time. Until recently, a Visa was not needed for short-term travel through the U.S., allowing people to apply for citizenship or asylum as they pass through the U.S. during other travel arrangements. While this loophole could have provided a safety net for Colombians in immediate danger, U.S. President George Bush II has cut off that safety line by ordering that Colombians must have a U.S. Visa before ever crossing the U.S. border, even if only to pass through. This policy change is not entirely peculiar as U.S. foreign intervention campaigns have historically offered little or no support for people in exile. While this may be a common trend in U.S. politics, it is by no means conducive to human rights or the protection of democracy- two of the theoretical agendas of Plan Colombia. There must be more support for unarmed citizens seeking a secure life and livelihood, and the United States has yet to take its due part in the protection of Colombia's citizens.

Insufficient direct aid and support for refugees of the war ensures the continuance of fear, violence and civil unrest in rural Colombia. Guerrilla and paramilitary groups persistently question the peasantry's allegiance and often torture and intimidate the peasantry if they are suspected of supporting or assisting the opposite group. This pressure pushes innocent civilians into the hands of these warring groups because, ironically, they are also the only forces that will protect the peasants.

¹²⁹ Penhaul, Karl. "The Lure of a Better Life: New efforts try to keep Colombians from leaving", *USNews and World Report*. Jan 8, 2001. p28

The state provides minimal (if any at all) protection from paramilitary and guerrilla violence and as the conflict heightens, their inaction ensures the continuance of violence. The movement of unarmed citizens into armed battalions is likely to increase as the conflict itself intensifies; as three new U.S.-created battalions further the push into the southern region of Putumayo, the paramilitaries on the northwest, the military on the northeast and the guerrillas on the south will essentially lock the rural people into the region. As this occurs, it is projected that the FARC, the most predominant guerrilla group in the region, will double in size from 15,000 to 30,000 members.¹³⁰ As for the other 35,000 displaced persons of Putumayo, they will most likely join the paramilitaries, flee to urban slum dwellings or be killed before they are able to escape the area.

Is There Potential for Resolution?

The greatest barriers to compromise between the insurgent groups and the acting government are economics and ideology. The socialist undertone of the leftist ideology (not just of guerrillas, but of indigenous and rural reform organizations)- an undertone of which the government wants no part- asks that the government take care of the rural populations before profit and privatization. This contrasts greatly with the acting governments efforts to increase modernization and development and, as previously mentioned, some of the greatest areas of conflict in Colombia can be traced to areas of investment interest and abundant natural resources.

The officers of the paramilitaries and Colombian military are often referred to as “superpatriots”- the greatest supporters of anti-Communism, and are thought to primarily “protect the oligarchy from the people at large”.¹³¹ This has encouraged a power structure in Colombia that puts the rural people- the people with no power and little land- at the whim of the

¹³⁰ Interview with Francisco Ortega. March 11, 2001.

¹³¹ Crow, John A. p868.

military and the landholding elite. The government (possibly because of the political influence of the major land-owners) fears that land reform will cause disorder and revolution, a drop in foreign exchange earnings and the stifling of modernization.¹³² At the same time, however, it is the unrest caused by the need for reforms that is making outside investors weary of ventures in Colombia, thus limiting the Colombian economy. As Colombia strives to achieve a role in the world economy, reform appears to be its greatest challenge but also its key to any substantial progress.

In all of its complexities, Colombia is often referred to as one of the “exceptions” of Latin America. Colombia has not followed the same sociopolitical path of the “developed” Latin American countries, but it holds on to the possibility of industrial and technological maturity. One of the greatest signs of this progress is displayed by export trends. In 1955, coffee claimed 84% of the total exports. By 1975, that percentage had decreased to 46% of total exports. This decline shows that Colombia was attempting to broaden its economic base. However, non-agricultural products increased by only 3% during this time, showing us that, while Colombia was attempting to expand, it was still slow at modernization. Colombia could very well join the economic ranks of Chile or Argentina in the future, but its current civil war will determine when this goal may finally be realized.

The Colombian military has at times been able to act as an intermediary between various dueling political parties, but what is the future of military power? Kline suggests that their power might still be used to restore peace to the countryside:

Evidence is slight and speculative, but it appears that the military has certain “moderating power predispositions”, shown clearly in the case of the 1953-1957 government of Rojas, which came in a most dramatic instance of the civilians not being able to rule. If civilian governments fail to carry out what military officers feel are necessary reforms, it seems

¹³² Johnson, John A.

quite possible that the officers might take over, in spite of the civilian mystique of 150 years . . . (263-64).

It may be reasonable to say that the military has achieved efforts of mediation and development in the past, but it no longer appears to be a priority for Colombia or the United States. With U.S. assistance, the military is utilizing force rather than diplomacy and they are targeting a population of people (the rural poor and the *guerilleros*) who have been violently excluded from the political process.

President Pastrana's efforts of diplomacy have yet failed to achieve peace and, as he grapples for control in the countryside, he increasingly relies on military strength, just as Pinilla did during his four years in office. Even though Colombia may be led by a civilian president, we are seeing an overthrow of the "civilian mystique", partly because of the unruly actions of the military and partly because of the role taken by the United States in shaping Colombian policy. Pastrana has allowed room for the United States to exercise an extraordinary amount of influence and as Rodrigo Pardo, a former foreign minister, stated, "Pastrana seems to be a lame duck now . . . Plan Colombia in its widest sense is only in the president's head. It is really only now the contribution of the United States."¹³³ The United States is in an exceptional position to influence Colombia, but its reactionary tactics will do nothing to better the development, safety or well being of Colombia's countryside- and thus do nothing to solve Colombia's central issues.

The First Step to Progress

Rectification of U.S. policy. The United States needs to re-evaluate corporate interests and their position with the Colombian Military before Plan Colombia will ever be a true quest for democracy and freedom. The military-industrial complex and burgeoning investment interests

¹³³ Penhaul, Karl. "Colombia's drug war" *US News and World Report*. Feb. 12, 2001. p35.

are perverting U.S. foreign policy in Colombia; Plan Colombia offers growth in the armament industry, job security for the Southern Command and a lifetime of warfare for rural Colombians. Conversely, it offers insufficient funds for social development, minimal intelligence and training on how to negotiate a peace with the guerrillas. There are several alternative venues for aid which could improve the social, economic and political environment of Colombia: domestic treatment and prevention to lower the demand for drugs, infrastructure and trade development programs to give peasants an alternative to the guerrillas and growing coca, human rights training and enforcement to ensure that the Colombian police will adequately protect rural areas and judicial reform to reduce the rate of impunity of military human rights abusers, drug manufacturers and paramilitaries. A quick fix for Colombia is not possible when tensions and corruption have been building for over four decades, nor when the United States has developed such high demand for recreational drug use. Simply put, the United States will have to accept slow progress- and a few changes in our domestic culture and policy- if we aspire to achieve any change at all.

Reconstructing Colombia's social fabric. Changes within U.S. policy will certainly alleviate pressure from Colombia's rural population, but total success is absolutely dependent on changes within Colombia's own internal systems and manner of thought. In order for Colombia to attain true social progress, there are four major reforms and social changes that must occur:

- The use of political violence must no longer be tolerated as a means of social control. The burgeoning peace movement with the slogan *¡No Más!* is a signal that Colombians are ready to demand an end to violence and intimidation. This is a key step towards higher accountability of the Colombian Government and
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Military, acceptance of third party candidates, and greater civic and political involvement. Many scholars and journalists are beginning to speak out on the importance of civil society in the peace negotiations, peace vigils are common sights on the streets of Bogotá and groups such as the OFP (Organización Feminina Popular) are gaining wide-spread support for their role in the peace movement. As Ana Teresa Bernal, the National Coordinator of *Redepaz*, wrote, “Just as citizen mobilization contributed to the decision to initiate negotiations, active citizen participation is necessary to maintain, broaden and strengthen the process. Peace in Colombia will only be possible if peace, human rights and democracy organizations succeed in establishing a common strategy.”¹³⁴

- An adequate judicial system must be developed in order to ensure proper prosecution of human rights offenders. A long history of military involvement in the courts has made prosecution of government and military offenders nearly impossible in Colombia. Despite claims of progress, according to the Colombia Human Rights Record, the military has yet to show full cooperation with civilian judicial officials and military commanders are known to “prevent civilian investigators from gaining access to relevant information, implicated military personnel and official records.” The people of Colombia need to know that a fair judicial system functions for their benefit; without this, distrust and suspicion will continue to grow and further degrade the state- and without a sound government and the support of the citizenry, the peace process is intangible. Only with a fair

¹³⁴ Bernal, Ana Teresa. “Bringing Civil Society in to the Negotiations” *Building Peace in the Midst of War: Civil Society Initiatives in Colombia*. 2000. p2. http://www.wola.org/colombia_pubs_csinitiatives. Retrieved 12/6/2001.

and reliable judicial system will the people be able to utilize the justice system to ensure safety and security in their own lives.

- Adequate protection must be provided for those who work for social justice in Colombia. The Human Rights Watch recently found that since 1995, “. . .dozens of prosecutors have been forced to either abandon these cases [of social justice advocates], leave the institution, or go into exile because of threats from active-duty officers and paramilitaries.” Additionally, scholars and politicians who encourage discussion of these issues are often forced to leave Colombia because of threats on their life. Most recently, the Greens Party presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt, was forced to relocate her family to New Zealand only to then be kidnapped while traveling to a Colombian community. Speaking of reform, peace and alternative policy made her a target in Colombia, and as long as the state neglects to protect such voices, there will be no alternatives to the present conflict. The educated and active citizens will continue to be attacked or forced into exile, resolution will become increasingly difficult and Colombia’s social development will have no groundwork on which to grow.
- Politicians, economists and social reformers need to begin to address the core problem behind many of Colombia’s current issues: poverty and population pressures. The incredible growth rate of Colombia’s population, coupled with the existing land pressures and failing markets, creates a pressing situation for future generations. The dynamics of demographic change and economic transition will likely determine Colombia’s livelihood and well being, and the greatest way to keep stability in Colombia will be by finally addressing the needs of its rural

citizens. These issues that were thoroughly discussed in Section II are the fuel to this conflict that refuses to quit. If Colombia continues to allow military and foreign pressure control policy and reconstruction, these issues will not be tackled, addressed, or even acknowledged.

The future of Colombia is ultimately dependent upon the will of the general public to demand and cultivate social change. In the face of such powerful business interests- such as oil companies and the U.S. military-industrial complex- and powerful armed civilian groups, Colombia has no choice but to embrace reform, discussion and compromise- and yet these steps will not be possible as long as the United States is providing ideological and material support to the makers of war and violence. The first step will be to separate politics from the war-making state and the corporate community. Thus, if the United States truly wants to achieve any of its aforementioned goals in Colombia, change must first occur within. Only then will our priorities in Colombia change to make room for social development, land reform and strengthening the judiciary and human rights.

Appendix A.

Reports of Paramilitary Violence

Easterbrook, Michael. "Machete Attack Kills 25 in Colombia" Associated Press. January 17, 2001. Available from Colombian Labor Monitor (email: xx738@prairienet.org).

Bogota- Suspected right-wing paramilitary gunmen with machetes hacked to death 25 men in northern Colombia on Wednesday before burning dozens of homes to the ground, police said.

Survivors told police that about 50 heavily armed men dressed in military uniforms converged on the town of Chengue at about 3 a.m. Wednesday and rounded up 25 villagers they accused of working with leftist guerrillas, Sucre state police Lt. Alexander Collazos told the Associated Press.

The victims, all men between the ages 22 and 65, were removed one by one from their homes, surrounded and killed with machete blows to the head and neck. The attackers apparently accused the men of working with leftist guerrilla groups.

The attackers then set fire to about 30 homes in the village and carried off seven other men as hostages, police said.

After the attack, many villagers fled for neighboring hamlets. Chengue is home to about 1200 people and is about 370 miles north of the capital Bogota. Red Cross workers were traveling to the region Wednesday.

Witnesses told police that the attackers were members of right-wing paramilitary groups, but police couldn't confirm those reports.

Police say members of the landowner-backed AUC have killed about 100 people in Colombia this year after accusing them of sympathizing with leftist guerrilla groups. Paramilitaries are responsible for the majority of human rights abuses committed in Colombia, according to human rights groups.

"Army watched gunmen kill Colombia peasants' group" Reuters. July 10, 2000. Available from Colombian Labor Monitor (email: xx738@prairienet.org).

Bogota- Hooded gunmen from a suspected ultra-rightist death squad killed six peasants in a village square in northwest Colombia as an army helicopter hovered overhead and soldiers patrolled nearby, a church group said on Monday.

The massacre took place on Saturday afternoon in a hamlet near the village of San Jose Apartado, which declared itself a "peace community" three years ago in an effort to escape the cross-fire of a long-running conflict pitting Marxist rebels against paramilitary gangs and state security forces.

An interdenominational church group that aids the peace community condemned the killings as the latest sign of complicity between outlawed death squads and the military in a "dirty war" against suspected leftists. Amnesty International joined in the condemnation.

It is said that members of La Union's 63 families were ordered into the village square. Shouting harangues against them and accusing the community of becoming a haven for Marxist rebels, the gunmen singled out six men, who were summarily executed.

Gordillo, Enrique Rivas. “The number of victims of the Naya Massacre amounts to more than 130” (Trans. By *Nizkor International Human Rights Team*), *El Espectador*. April 18, 2001. Colombian Labor Monitor (email: xx738@prairienet.org).

The number of victims of the Naya Massacre amounts to more than 130, though the method used by the paramilitaries makes it possible for the military to affirm that only 17 corpses have been recovered.

After their sinister rampage of twelve localities over Easter, the paramilitaries were toasting with champagne. There were people who were miraculously saved. In Timba (Cauca), widows and orphans are waiting for someone to go to look for the bodies of those who didn't survive . . .

Jose Leandro Guetio, 37 years old, remembers that on the Tuesday of Easter week in the locality of El Sedal, they killed a young woman. “Then, they went onspilling blood in Patio Bonito, La Mina, Rio Mina, Altosorona, Aguapanola, La Paz, El Placor, El Porvenir, La Silvia, Palosolo, El Saltillo and El Playon, among other localities. “I saw them when I came down from La Silvia. They asked if we had seen guerrillas and we said no. Then they let us go on and now we are waiting for the government to help us,” added Jose Leandro, an indigenous paez that is organizing the rest of the victims, Afrocolombians and settlers. . .

Pedro Diaz, another that managed to escape the bloodshed, also remembers the incident vividly. “A neighbor attacked a paramilitary man that was going to shoot him and grabbed the weapon, with such bad luck that he took the gun and didn't know how to fire it. They took him, tied him, cut him open with a mechanical saw and chopped him up,” . . .

The National Ombusman, Eduardo Cifuentes, placed responsibility for the massacre that took place during Easter week by paramilitary forces in El Cauca on the state. “The massacre was announced,” he stated, and pointed out that the peasants of Alto Naya had been clamouring for official protection since December. “When one is presented with a situation of this nature, a massacre of people who have been displaced, obviously there is a shortcoming in the action of the state and for this reason we demand a permanent and active presence of all the institutions of El Cauca,” . . .

Appendix B.

Personas Afectadas por la Fumigación

<u>Cultivos Afectados</u>	<u>Animales Afectados</u>
Maiz	Ganado
Pasto	Caballos
Yucca	Gallinas
Platano	Patos
Chiro	Pavos
Caña de Azucar	Ganzos
Arboles Frutales	Curies
Mani	Picinas
Fruol	
Profrero	
Arboles de Madera	

Banano
Chontaduro

Appendix C.

FARC-EP Proposed Agenda

A political solution to the grave conflict affecting Colombia.

1. Establishment of a “bolivarian” doctrine for the military and the defense of the State. The Liberator (Simón Bolívar) said: “the army’s purpose is to safeguard the borders. God forbid it should ever turn its weapons against the citizenry”.

The armed forces shall be the guarantors of our national sovereignty ñ always respecting human rights - and the size and budget of the armed forces should be proportionate to that of a country that is not at war with its neighbors. The national police force shall be a dependency of the Ministry of Government, reorganized to better serve its preventative function, instructed in ethics and human rights

2. Democratic participation on the national, regional and municipal levels when making decisions concerning the future of Colombian society. Strengthening of popular supervisory mechanisms. The attorney general’s office shall be an independent branch of the government, and the Attorney General shall be elected by the people.

The parliament shall be a single chamber (unicameral).

The opposition and minority parties shall possess full political and social rights, and the State shall guarantee their access to mass media.

There shall be freedom of the press.

The electoral branch shall be independent.

The Supreme Court, The Constitutional Court and the Judiciary Council shall be elected by direct vote of all the nation’s judges and magistrates.

The moral standards shall be raised in public administration and the State’s civic and military institutions.

Economic development and modernization shall be achieved along with social justice.

The State shall be the main owner and administrator of all the strategic sectors: energy, communications, utilities, roads, ports and natural resources, to benefit the balanced socio-economic development of the country and the region.

Economic policy shall place special emphasis on the expansion of the domestic market, self-sufficiency of the food industry, permanent economic stimulus to aid production in small, medium and large private enterprises, to increase autonomy and economic solidarity.

The State shall invest in strategic sectors of national industry and develop a protectionist policy concerning them. Efficiency, ethics, productivity and high quality shall characterize the government economic administration. Unions, trade organizations, popular organizations, academic and scientific organizations shall all be part of the decision making in public policy regarding economy, social issues, energy and strategic investment.

As a matter of national policy, 50% of the budget shall be invested in the social well-being of the Colombian population: employment, salaries, health, housing, education and recreation, taking into account our democratic cultural traditions, and seeking a balance between society, nature and the environment. 10% of the national budget shall be invested in scientific research

In order to have an effective redistribution of wealth, taxes shall be in proportion to the taxpayer's wealth. Value Added Tax (VAT) shall only be applied to luxury goods and services.

Agricultural policy shall democratize credit, technical assistance and marketing.

There shall be integral fostering of the agricultural and livestock industries.

There must be State protectionism to ward against unfair international competition.

Each region shall have its own development plan, designed in conjunction with community organizations. This will entail splitting large states to redistribute the land, defining agricultural boundaries that rationalize development and preventing the loss of our reserves.

Permanent assistance for domestic and international marketing.

The exploitation of natural resources such as gas, coal, gold, nickel, emeralds among others, to the benefit of the country and its regions.

Re-negotiation of agreements with multinational companies in those cases in which the agreement has been detrimental to Colombia. In conjunction with the State, the workers and the regions, The National Energy Commission shall perform the planning of energy policy.

New refineries must be built and the petrochemical industry must be developed.

The government will report, with complete transparency, the terms of the agreements for the exploitation of the Cusiana oilfield. Just the 5 billion barrels of oil in reserve, at today's prices, would produce 80 trillion pesos, a sum greater than six times the 1999 National Budget. Colombia as a whole shall know how and at what pace the Cusiana oilfield will be exploited and how the revenues will be integrated into the overall development plans. We have to "sow the oil" for generations to come, since the oil belongs to all Colombians and so do its benefits.

Diplomatic relations with all other countries shall be guided by the principle of the people's self-determination and mutual benefit.

Regional and Latin American integration shall be given priority.

Political agreements made by the State with other countries shall be honored.

A complete review shall be undertaken of military agreements and foreign intervention in our internal affairs. A renegotiation of our foreign debt shall attempt to seek terms of no less than a 10 year grace period in interest payments.

A solution shall be sought to the production, commercialization and consumption of drugs and hallucinogens, under the premise that this is a serious social problem that cannot be confronted militarily, that domestic and international agreements are needed, along with the participation of the world's super-powers who are the main worldwide consumers of narcotics.

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