



The Impact of US Foreign Policy on the Colombian Conflicts

Egill Örn Þórarinnsson

Lokaverkefni til BA-gráðu í stjórnmálafræði

Félagsvísindasvið



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

The Impact of US Foreign Policy on the Colombian Conflicts

Egill Örn Þórarinsson

Lokaverkefni til BA-gráðu í stjórnmálafræði

Leiðbeinandi: Alyson J. K. Bailes

Stjórnmálafræðideild

Félagsvísindasvið Háskóla Íslands

Júní 2011

Ritgerð þessi er lokaverkefni til BA-gráðu í stjórnmálafræði og er óheimilt að afrita ritgerðina á nokkurn hátt nema með leyfi höfundar.

© Egill Örn Þórarinsson 2011

Hafnarfjörður, Ísland 2011

Abstract

The internal conflict in Colombia has been going on for nearly half a century but the last decade the media attention has faded away, as the world's interest has shifted its focus, towards covering news about war on terror. This lack of media interest has caused the drug trafficking to thrive. The US however has not lost interest in their strongest ally in Latin America, and introduced "Plan Colombia" in 1999, in order to fight the guerrillas and other paramilitaries groups. The aim of "Plan Colombia" was to fight the violence and the growing of the coca plant. The results of implementing this plan have shown amazing reduction in number of guerrilla fighters and coca cultivated for cocaine production. While the situation in Colombia is getting better, the conflicts and drug trades are moving up towards the north, all the way to US own backyard. However we might ask ourselves, can US take all the credit for the changes in Colombia or were the Colombia authorities with President Álvaro Uribe in charge, accountable for the positive changes in Colombia?

Contents, Tables and Figures

Abbreviations: Main Conflict Actors.....	5
FARC	5
AUC	5
ELN	5
M-19	6
UP	6
PL and PC	6
I. Introduction	7
II . The Colombian Conflicts	9
Figure 1: Armed Conflict in Colombia 1997-2002.....	9
II. 1. When did the conflicts start and why?	10
II. 2. The General Economic Impact on Colombia and Spillover to Neighbors	12
Table 1: Colombian key economic indicators 2000-2009.....	14
II. 3. Uribe's mandate.....	14
III. US Foreign Policy: Background and Development	16
III. 1. Plan Colombia	17
Table 2: Estimated Annual Coca Cultivation (in hectares)	18
Figure 2: Program Assistance Objectives in Colombia, 2000 – 2013	20
III. 2. Regional implications.....	21
IV. The US Impact.....	22
IV. 1. What were the US goals?	23
IV. 2. How did the US manage to reduce the flow of illicit narcotics and improve security?	24
Figure 3: Global cocaine seizures (unadjusted for purity), 1990 – 2008	25
Table 3: Estimated Annual Coca Cultivation (in hectares)	26
Table 4: Fumigation in Colombia (in hectares).....	26
Table 5: Military expenditure by country as percentage of gross domestic product	27
IV. 3. How did the US manage to promote social and economic justice?..	28
IV. 4. How did the US manage to promote the rule of law?	31
V. Summary and Conclusions.....	32
Bibliography.....	36

Abbreviations: Main Conflict Actors

To make the essay more accessible and easier to read, the abbreviations used for the main groups engaged in the Colombian conflict will be explained here.

FARC

FARC are known as The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) They are the largest guerrilla group in Colombia and are considered to be “the most powerful and successful guerrilla army in the world” (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2003; 32). The best way to describe FARC is that they are a revolutionary army with Marxist-Leninist principles, which was established after the Communist party was banned following a violent period in Colombian history in the 1940-50s. They mainly finance themselves with drug trading and kidnappings (Insight on Conflict, 2010; Congressional Research Service, 2008, 6-9).

AUC

AUC or The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) is an umbrella organization for several paramilitary groups. Their aim is to push back ELN and FARC. AUC was founded in 1997 and disbanded in 2006. However many former members have established small drug cartels around Colombia. Like FARC, they financed themselves with the drug trade and kidnappings (Insight on Conflict, 2010; Congressional Research Service, 2008, 9-10).

ELN

ELN or the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN) is a Marxist guerrilla group inspired by the ideas of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. They mainly work in the rural areas of Colombia and their main targets are the country’s infrastructure. Like FARC, ELN was established in 1964 and has the same financing methods as AUC and FARC (Congressional Research Service, 2008, 9).

M-19

A left-wing guerrilla movement with nationalism and bolivarianism as its ideologies, also known as the 19th of April Movement. M-19 was demobilized after transforming into a political party in 1990 (International Crisis Group, 2009).

UP

The political arm of FARC, known as the Patriotic Union Party, was formed in 1985. Death squads are claimed to have killed thousands of UP members in late 1980s. After their presidential candidate was assassinated, FARC withdraw from mainstream politics (International Crisis Group, 2009).

PL and PC

Partido Liberal and Partido Conservador were the two political parties that formed the “National Front”, a power-sharing union that excluded other political players, in 1958 after a civil war known as the period “La Violencia” (International Crisis Group, 2009).

I. Introduction

The internal conflict in Colombia is one of the most long-lasting in the world, starting in the 1960s, and it still claims many lives. It is rarely reported in the foreign media these days, and may not be well known to the new generation, even of well-educated people. Are the media less interested now, perhaps because of the length of the conflict, or because the coverage of the Colombian story does not suit the media anymore? Another option is that the media does not want to cover the story because there is nothing new coming forward, given the failure of the Colombian government to make decisive headway against the guerrilla groups. The true reason may be a mixture of all these.

Even so, there is still good cause for the outside world to take an interest. The guerrilla group FARC, is today defined as a terrorist group by the US and EU, which makes FARC a target for international anti-terrorist measures (Sköns et. al, 2004, 331). FARC is particularly accused of smuggling drugs and kidnapping people to finance their battle against the Colombian government. The drugs are largely destined for the North American market, and this helps to explain why the US government is supporting the battle against FARC and other paramilitary groups in Colombia by supplying military supplies, intelligence data and manpower to the Colombian forces. This US intervention is different from normal international “peace missions” in that it is carried out bilaterally and is clearly motivated by something that Washington sees as its own national security interest, not just by a wish to help Colombia. What exactly has the US been trying to achieve by this action? Has it been successful, and has it actually helped the Colombian authorities in their own struggle?

This thesis will start with two background chapters; in the first chapter there will be a factual narrative on the conflict, looking into why the conflict started in the first place with a chronology from the time Colombia got its independence from Spain to today’s events. Statistics will be provided on how the conflict has developed, economic indicators will be examined, and the impact on

Colombia's neighboring states will also be discussed. Finally, this chapter will show how the recent Uribe government in Colombia handled the situation and what they have done to improve matters. The second background chapter will mainly focus on US foreign policy, starting from the time when President Richard Nixon started the war on drugs in the early 1970s and showing how it developed until "Plan Colombia" was introduced by Clinton's administration in 1999. That plan and its implications will be examined, including developments under the subsequent presidencies of George W. Bush.

The next chapter will analyze the US impact on the conflict, noting among other things the different approach US took in the Colombian case, compared to Panama where they sent in armed forces. The main question asked will be whether the US impact made any difference and if so, whether the effect was good or bad for Colombia. However, it will also be necessary to look into the broader picture of US relations with Colombia and other countries in the region today and to ask whether the US intervention in Colombia has had any influence on other Latin American countries.

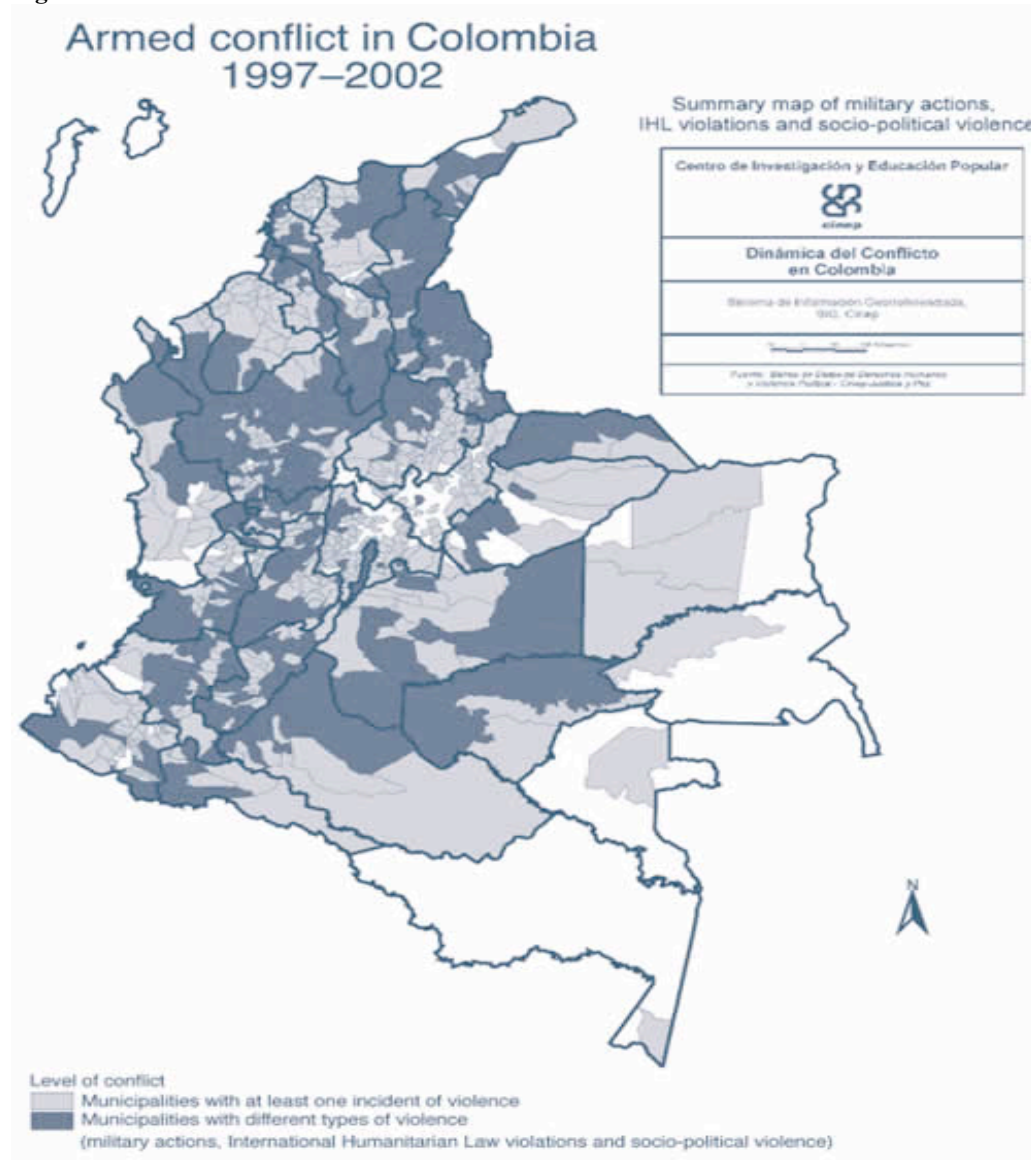
The summary and conclusions chapter will review the conflict up to the present, its evolution through time and the impact it has had on Colombia and its neighbors. The next possible steps in the conflict and US-Colombian relation will be discussed and where they are heading since both countries recently voted in new presidents.

The thesis will be mostly based on books written about the subject, news articles available online, journal articles by academic experts and reports from US government agencies which are also available online.

II . The Colombian Conflicts

In this chapter the issues of when the Colombian conflicts started and why, and how the conflicts are affecting the country as an economic zone and a place to live, will be explored. This chapter will also shed light on the question of whether, or to what extent, cocaine is causing the conflicts between the Colombian government and guerrillas.

Figure 1: Armed Conflict in Colombia 1997-2002



Source: Conciliation Resources, 2004

II. 1. When did the conflicts start and why?

Conflicts of the magnitude of those occurring in Colombia are hard to understand, and this text is meant to give a little insight to the conflicts, when they started, and what the future trend may be.

Colombia gained its independence from Spain in 1819 almost 300 years after the Spanish conquest. In 1849 the Conservative and Liberal parties were founded and after that civil wars became frequent, with two more notable than others: the Thousand Days War from 1899 - 1903 and then a period known as “La Violencia” from 1948 – 1957. That period started after Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a radical liberal party leader and a potential presidential successor, was assassinated in Bogotá in 1948. After more than ten years of civil war, and an estimated 250.000 - 300.000 death toll, the Liberal and Conservative parties formed a power-sharing alliance in 1958 under the name “National Front”. The coalition concentrated on power elites and excluded other parties, mainly left wing parties, such as the Communist party and other extremists on the left wing. As expected the ban did not work and in 1964, FARC and ELN were established. In 1974 the April 19 Movement (M-19) announced itself, in order to protest against a controversial presidential election in 1970, when Misael Pastrana was elected president. The following years were followed by disputes between M-19 and the government and killings and kidnappings of high profile politicians and their families. In 1984 FARC agreed to an armistice that lasted for six years, but meanwhile M-19 seized the Palace of Justice and eleven justices were killed when the army retook the building. After M-19 assassinated Luis Carlos Galán, a presidential candidate, M-19 became a legal party following peace agreements with the government. Leftist groups led by FARC formed the Patriotic Union Party (UP), but right wing paramilitary groups and drug-lords killed thousands of UP party members. In the next years the UP leader was assassinated, and before the 1990 presidential election the UP presidential candidate was also assassinated along with two other candidates, which led to UP and FARC withdrawing from

mainstream politics. The armistice between the government and FARC ended with the attack on Casa Verde.

In 1991 a new constitution was introduced with support from M-19, the social movements and traditional parties. Ernesto Samper was elected president in 1994, but his legitimacy was questioned after it was discovered that drug lords financed his campaign. Then AUC was formed in 1997. Andrés Pastrana was elected president in 1998, and aimed to end Colombia's insecurity by agreeing on a demilitarized zone with FARC and starting peace talks with them. The US along with Andrés Pastrana government started the "Plan Colombia" in 1999, which aimed at social investment and ending the flow of cocaine, but ended up mainly involving US funding for the military fight against guerrillas, which led to the break-up of peace talks in 2002, when Álvaro Uribe was elected as he launched an offensive campaign against FARC. Later that same year a PL independent candidate, Álvaro Uribe, was elected president in the first round. He promised a crackdown on FARC. He began by strengthening the formal security structure and network of informants, who were supposed to inform government about the FARC activities in their region. Then he began a formal peace negotiation with FARC, ELN and AUC. The negotiations with ELN failed to produce a breakthrough; however, ELN activity has been reduced significantly and is now limited to just southwestern Colombia and the border regions with Venezuela. The negotiation with AUC led to the demobilization of over 32.000 AUC members. Unfortunately a smaller part of AUC formed another organization that took over the role that AUC used to fill in drug trafficking.

After Uribe was elected in 2002 violent incidents declined overall, but FARC maintained its sporadic attacks on Colombian infrastructure. Uribe's government launched the plan "Plan Patriota" in 2004, which continued the "Plan Colombia". This was supported and financed partly by the US with the hope of tearing down the guerrilla structure in Colombia. The government also released 50 FARC guerrillas from prison in exchange for 60 hostages. In 2005 Uribe's government introduced a new justice law with the main purpose of getting former

guerrillas to turn themselves in, without hard punishment provided that they handed over illegal assets and their arms. FARC for its part launched the “The Plan Resistencia” in 2006 to counteract official military activities and disturb the presidential election that same year. Uribe nevertheless won the election in 2006, after repealing the constitutional ban on presidents serving more than one term in office. After his re-election Uribe kept on the same track with a tough policy against guerrillas. However he still supported peace talks with them, and negotiations with the guerrillas and preliminary peace talks between the government and ELN took place in Cuba in 2008.

In 2008, Colombian cross-border strike was made into Ecuador to kill high-level members of FARC, including Raúl Reyes, one of the highest ranked leaders. This started a diplomatic crisis between Colombia and Ecuador, and thereafter with Venezuela, which had been accused on some occasions of giving shelter to members of FARC and financing them. Later that same year the military was accused of going into slums and killing civilians to inflate the statistics on deaths of left-wing rebels and paramilitaries. That led to the conviction of some army leaders. In 2009 Colombia signed a military cooperation agreement with the US, allowing the latter to use at least seven Colombian military bases. Other countries of Latin America criticized Uribe and his government for this. Venezuela suspended trade with Colombia. In 2010, Jose Manuel Santos, a former Minister of Defense in the Uribe government was elected president (Kirk, 2003; International Crisis Group, 2009; Insight on Conflict, 2010).

II. 2. The General Economic Impact on Colombia and Spillover to Neighbors

Everyone can probably agree that conflicts are normally not good for the nations affected, even if there may be exceptions. The long-running nature of the Colombian conflict has certainly had its effects on Colombia as a place to live, and as an economic entity, and also on the neighboring countries and Colombia's relations with them. These effects will be explored in the present section.

The impact on the Colombian economy is clear: see table 1, which shows a high percent of the working class unemployed, a budget deficit and high inflation. Under Uribe's first administration the economy showed improvement, although still with a remarkably high number of people unemployed. There was a smaller budget deficit, lower inflation and all those indicators showing that the wheels were starting to run again, and this time under Colombian government control. Table one reflects this general improvement of performance under Uribe's leadership. As the economy performed better, other indicators were also showing improvement, as murders and kidnappings were down by 30% (The Economist, 2004a). In Uribe's second term there were not the same improvements. The economy did slightly better in the first two years of his second term, but in the second part of the term it started to worsen again, perhaps due to global recession and less US aid.

Normally when a country has an internal conflict there is a flow of refugees escaping the conflict zones to find a hopefully better life. Colombia is no exception here, with at least 50.000 civilians who have died since the conflict started (Insight on Conflict, 2010) and up to four million people who have been displaced due to the conflict (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2010). This has generated a spillover to the neighbor countries, with the flow of refugees heading mainly to Ecuador where they have hoped to start a new and better life.

The conflict was also extended to involve Ecuador and Venezuela after the Colombian air-force made a cross-border air strike on a FARC base in Ecuador in 2008 and killed Raúl Reyes, one of the FARC's top commanders along with other members of the guerrilla group. This led to more tension in the area as Colombia sent troops to the borders and put its forces on a war footing. The same story applied in Ecuador, where tension at the borders was tremendous, and in addition Nicaragua broke diplomatic relations with Colombia in support of the Ecuadorian people (CNN, 2008).

Table 1: Colombian key economic indicators 2000-2009

Key Indicators	Inflation (%)	Unemployment (%)	Budget balance (% GDP)	GDP growth (%)
2000	9.2*	20.5*	-2.14**	4.1*
2001	8.0*	14.5*	-2.4**	1.5*
2002	6.4*	15.7*	-2.77**	1.9*
2003	7.1*	14.1*	-1.87**	2.7*
2004	5.9*	13.7*	-0.96**	4.1*
2005	5.0*	11.5*	-0.16**	3.6*
2006	4.3*	12.7*	-0.89**	4.0*
2007	5.5*	10.9*	-1.15**	3.9*
2008	7.0*	11.7*	0.09**	1.7*
2009	4.2*	n/a	-3.21**	-1.9*

Source: World Bank, 2010a,b,c and International Monetary Found, 2010

*World Bank data

** IMF Data, GDP is calculated in current prices

II. 3. Uribe's mandate

It is hard to discuss the Colombian conflict since George W. Bush took office as President of the USA without discussing Álvaro Uribe, both as a person and in terms of his mandate.

As already mentioned Álvaro Uribe entered office in August 2002, succeeding Andrés Pastrana after receiving 53% of the votes in the May elections

that same year (The Economist, 2002a). Uribe was born in 1952 and raised in Medellín, a city which is probably best known in the whole world for being the center of the drug trade when Pablo Escobar lived there and ruled his drug empire from there (The Economist, 2002b). Uribe became briefly mayor of Medellín in the 1980s and before running for the presidency also served as a governor of Antioquia from January 1995 to December 1997. At the end of his first presidential term in 2006 Uribe was re-elected following constitutional reforms that allowed him to serve more than one term, making him the first president to win re-election since 1892. Uribe was extremely popular among the Colombian public and won his second election by receiving 53% of the popular vote, even more than in his first term (Forero, 2006).

After Uribe entered office in 2002 he started by strengthening Colombia's security policies and took a tough stand against right-wing paramilitary groups and left guerrillas groups, such as ELN, AUC and FARC, which had been linked to a number of massacres and kidnappings. Uribe's term started well and the budgets for the army and police were increased. It did not take long before the results became visible. In 2004 the annual rate of arrest of suspected terrorists and paramilitaries had increased by 133%. Around 5000 members of guerrilla groups had been demobilized, far more than in previous peace talks. The murder rate fell by 22% and kidnapping by 27% compared to previous years (The Economist, 2004b). In 2008 FARC had somewhere around 6.000–10.000 fighters, down from around 16.000 in 2001, shortly before Uribe took office. The murder and kidnapping rates steadily declined and in 2007 those rates were down by approximately one third since 2000. These statistics seem to be quite accurate and show that Uribe's tougher security measures made a good impact in the war against guerrilla groups and crimes in Colombia. Some human rights groups have however criticized these numbers, as many civilians have died in the combat and some of them were killed by the military (Perlo-Freeman, et. al, 2008, 61-68). These figures unfortunately do not tell us anything about the possible effort made

against the coca cultivation but give a clear impression of what the Colombian government was capable of doing.

III. US Foreign Policy: Background and Development

After the end of the Cold War, the US was often described as the only remaining superpower, in contrast to the previous bi-polar system with the Soviet Union and an earlier multi-polar system. This status led to some unreasonable US behaviour, according to certain countries that were dependent on the US and felt that they just had to obey the orders that came from Washington. This attitude has caused many countries and leading political figures in other countries, both allies and enemies, to reduce their faith in US power and take nothing for granted in their communication with the US. With Colombia there is a difference, at least for now, as the US has stayed on their side since the war on drugs started. It will however be interesting to see whether the US will stay on the Colombian side as long as necessary, or if they will leave when they think Colombia can stay on its own feet.

US foreign policy towards Latin America has a long history and goes all the way back to the foundation of the United States of America. While the Latin American countries were becoming independent one after the other, mainly inspired by their liberty hero Simon Bolivar, the European colonizing countries were focusing on how to gain power in Latin America again in order to control the region's huge natural resources. The US president of that time, James Monroe (1817–1825), was concerned to establish a good relationship with the US's neighbors. Monroe was opposed to Europe's intervention in Latin America and said the nations there should be left alone and given a chance to develop as states. He therefore developed the principle that Europe should not interfere in the Western hemisphere and the US would in return not interfere with other European colonies. This was a strategic move to prevent Europe's interference and ensure that the US would be the biggest actor in the trade with Latin American countries. This theory is often named the Monroe doctrine after James Monroe and it helps

to explain many subsequent US interventions in Latin America, including Washington's assumption that it had a right and duty to protect its own interests in responding to the Colombian conflicts.

III. 1. Plan Colombia

By the late 1980s, drug problems in the US were overstraining the authorities in many regions of the country. The government stood almost helpless in the battle against drugs and crimes related to them. The majority of US public considered drugs to be the principal challenge facing the US, and more people thought that authorities should give precedence to this issue over the anti-communist struggle. In face of such new challenges, the authorities in Washington were pressed to focus their attention down south instead of just pursuing an arms race against the Soviet Union. And they did, with a tremendous increase of US aid from \$18 millions to more than \$750 millions in 2003 for the counter-narcotics battle after President George H. W. Bush (1989–1993) announced the “Andean Strategy”. This strategy also mentioned “war on drugs” which implied attacking the drug lords at their source – including in Colombia where much of the coca was grown - instead of attacking the problem by running propaganda against drug use back home. George H. W. Bush and his administration decided that going to the root of the problem would be the best way to prevent drugs flowing to the US, and they accordingly poured money into Colombian economy and supported Colombian law enforcement to fight the drug barons (Tate, 2004).

During the Clinton administration (1993–2001) the anti-drug plan was reduced at the same time as the corrupt Colombian president, Ernesto Samper (1994–1998), significantly reduced cooperation with the US. Samper's decision to cut costs and reduce the forces fighting the paramilitary groups, guerrillas and drug traffickers was a controversial decision and unpopular with the authorities in Washington, as the drugs were having an extreme effect on the standard of living back home (Crandall, 2001, 100). When Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002), who was considered to be a strong ally by the Clinton administration, took office the

harvest of coca crops had more than doubled and Colombia had gone from being the third biggest cocaine producer in the world to being the by far the biggest producer with 48% of the world harvest (U.S. Department of State, 2002 IV-29). The US government had great expectations of president Pastrana's government work and the Colombian military. With a right political approach to the conflict, a good training and equipment, Colombian authorities would be capable of defeating the FARC guerrillas, according to US officials (Tate, 2004).

The table below shows the development in coca growing in the three biggest producer countries. In Peru and Bolivia some of the crop goes to the native people for chewing as a cultural heritage from the Inca legacy, as chewing the leaves helps miners, truck drivers and other workers to get through the day in the extreme altitude in those two countries. However the increase of the Colombian coca crops helps explain the decline in the Peruvian coca crops and the shifting in the production of cocaine from Peru to Colombia.

Table 2: Estimated Annual Coca Cultivation (in hectares)

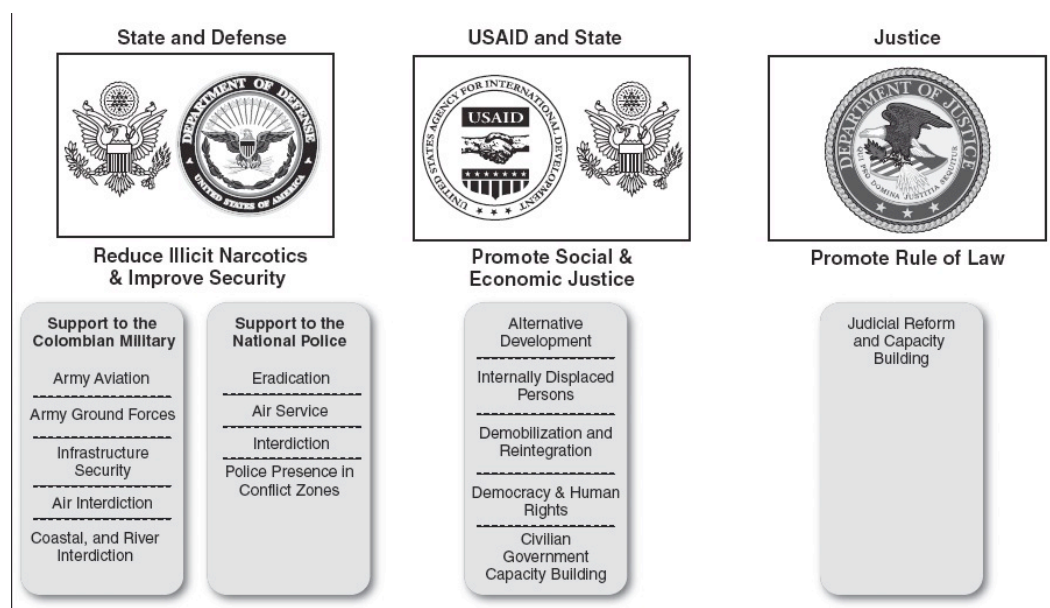
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Change 93'-98'
Peru	108.800	108.600	115.300	95.659	72.263	58.823	-49,5%
Bolivia	49.597	49.158	54.093	55.612	52.826	49.621	-0.0004%
Colombia	40.493	49.610	59.650	72.800	98.500	101.800	+60,22%

Source: U.S. Department of State, 2002 IV-29

In the 1990s, the United States considered that Colombia was on the edge of becoming a failed state and possibly a drug state, hosting guerrillas and paramilitary groups that would control the country. This would mean a continuing risk for US national security, despite all the US military assistance and financial aid given since the early 1970s (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 1). It was partly to prevent this from happening that – as already noted - George H. W. Bush's administration started an international war on drugs,

following up President Richard Nixon's (1969-1974) earlier war on the use of illegal drugs in the United States, and their supply from abroad (The Economist, 2003). With presidential changes in Colombia and the local government's lack of interest in solving the conflict, the problem only grew bigger. By the time that President Pastrana took office and Bill Clinton's administration started the "Plan Colombia", the main goals for Colombia were defined as to: 1) Reduce the flow of illicit narcotics and improve security, 2) promote social and economic justice, and 3) promote the rule of law. The two latter objectives were maybe not designed to confront the narcotics problem and improve security directly. They were however meant to broadly facilitate these goals by addressing the economical and social factors that could eventually create social order and economic stability if the drug traffickers and guerrillas were brought to justice (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 11). The US concept for assisting Colombia at this stage was not just about pouring money into the economy, sending military personnel to do all the work and then leaving. Their mission was state building on the highest level, and US officials have claimed that state building in Colombia was one of the most successful efforts in the history of such policies. Figure 2 below shows how U.S. agencies helped the Colombian government to rebuild the court system, provide security and promote social and economic justice.

Figure 2: Program Assistance Objectives in Colombia, 2000 – 2013



Source: United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 12

With the policy changes in the US when President George W. Bush took office and with US global war on terror after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the goals and methods of “Plan Colombia” started aiming more directly at the guerrilla groups than before, while not decreasing support for measures against coca cultivation (Forrero, 2002). President Bush made clear that his administration was prepared to stick to the Plan as a new president took office in Colombia, and that the US did not intend to abandon Colombia despite the new burdens of the war in Afghanistan from 2001 and the other war against Iraq starting 2003.

Because of “Plan Colombia” Colombia was the biggest recipient of US aid in the western hemisphere, and the fifth largest in the world, in the years between 2000 and 2004, receiving about \$3.3 billion over this five-year period. The aid was mostly earmarked for military purposes, and around 82% of the assistance went to the military and the police for training and to provide equipment for military operations. The remaining portion of the aid was for non-military purposes, such as promoting social and economic justice, along with promoting rule of law as seen in figure 2 (Sköns et. al, 2004, 334-335).

III. 2. Regional implications

A country as big and powerful as the US often acts in what may seem an unreasonable and dominating way towards smaller states. Given the US history of supporting militaries or paramilitary groups to carry out coups d'états, some neighboring states are frightened to work with the US or even deny working with them. However, it is likely that US leaders will not be deterred by such concerns from intervening in Latin America, if they believe it will help secure their position and destroy all possible enemies.

Colombia has remained one of the strongest US allies in Latin America over the years. Some critical voices have been heard against this policy stance, both in Latin America and in Colombia: for example from Rafael Correa, president of Ecuador, after the Colombian army crossed the borders to attack a FARC base in Ecuador. Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela, also stated that Colombian authorities and Álvaro Uribe were handcuffed due to the political pressure from US policy makers if they wanted to keep receiving the US aid. Chávez even went so far as to call Colombia the Israel of Latin America, referring especially to the way Colombian forces crossed the Ecuadorian borders to achieve their goals (El Mundo, 2008a; El Mundo, 2008b). This criticism, especially from Chávez, could be explained by the data found on laptops in the FARC base in Ecuador, linking him to the guerrilla group by the supply of financial and other support (The Economist, 2008). Also part of the criticism could be explained by where the presidents stand in the political spectrum: Chávez and Correa on the far left, while Uribe stands on the right.

In Colombia, Uribe has also been criticized by former high profile politicians and journalists, mainly for his attempt to change the constitution so he could run for his third term, but also for how he used the army and cooperated with the US. All of these were seen by Uribe's opponents as a direct attack on Latin America's oldest democracy and as showing a behavior of a dictator (Calderon, 2009; Hommes, 2009; Rueda, 2009). Despite these accusations, as

already noted, approval ratings showed Uribe's extreme popularity among the Colombian citizens, partly due to his successes in dealing with FARC and other guerrilla groups which was something that other recent presidents could not brag about.

The theories about the Colombians being U.S. puppets increased in credibility when they became the only country in Latin America that supported the Iraqi war directly and were ready to send troops to Iraq. Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras and El Salvador were only willing to be part of the "coalition" but not to send manpower to Iraq, which is up to some point not very strange, as Costa Rica and Panama do not have an army. It looks rather strange to have countries with no military capabilities support one of the biggest military attacks in recent years.

Even though Colombia has remained one of the US's strongest allies in the world and the strongest one in Latin America, showing its loyalty towards the land that supported and supplied it, the authorities in Washington have more than once become frustrated with how slowly things were going in Colombia, with little or no process made especially in stemming the drugs trade. One period of apparent backsliding led to the launch of "Plan Colombia" as explained above. Thanks to that plan and Colombian leaders who were ready to tackle the problem, everything seemed to be working until the impacts were measured. The actual results and the impact of US policy and counter-narcotics work in Colombia will be shown in the following section.

IV. The US Impact

After almost half a century and after billions of dollars spent, bullets fired and hundreds of thousands of lost lives, all because of some white powder, people have started to ask themselves if the war on drugs is returning anything good for society or whether it will just create more enemies for the US in the end. In this section the original US goals in Colombia will be discussed and questions asked

about how far they were met and what kind of strategies were used. Finally there will be a discussion of the US / Colombian relationship today.

IV. 1. What were the US goals?

When Richard Nixon put forward the idea of a war on drugs back in the 70s, the US started focusing on Latin America as a battleground. When Washington looked closer, the Colombian authorities seemed to be a good choice to work with in reducing illicit drug production and trafficking activities. Despite all the assistance then given, however, Colombia went on to become the world's leading producer of cocaine and also the major source for heroin in the U.S. The Clinton administration's "Plan Colombia", as noted, was launched in response as a six-year strategic program with two main goals, the first being to reduce the cultivation, processing, and distribution of illicit narcotics in Colombia by 50 percent over the six-year period. The second goal was to improve the security climate in Colombia by reclaiming control of areas held by a number of illegal armed groups, which in the last decade had financed their activities largely through drug trade profits (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 1). When the plan started operating, however, three main goals were introduced, not as specific as the two aforementioned. They were: to reduce the flow of illicit narcotics and improve security, promote social and economic justice, and promote the rule of law (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 11). By taking responsibility for these goals, the US government was committing itself to help the Colombian authorities in the battle against the guerrillas and their drug activities, at a time when it was no secret that the Colombian authorities were almost giving up on a battle already waged for decades. Specialists from both countries worked together on this plan, and needed close cooperation and trust in order for the plan to succeed. The outcome was a 7.5 billion plan linked to the three goals mentioned above.

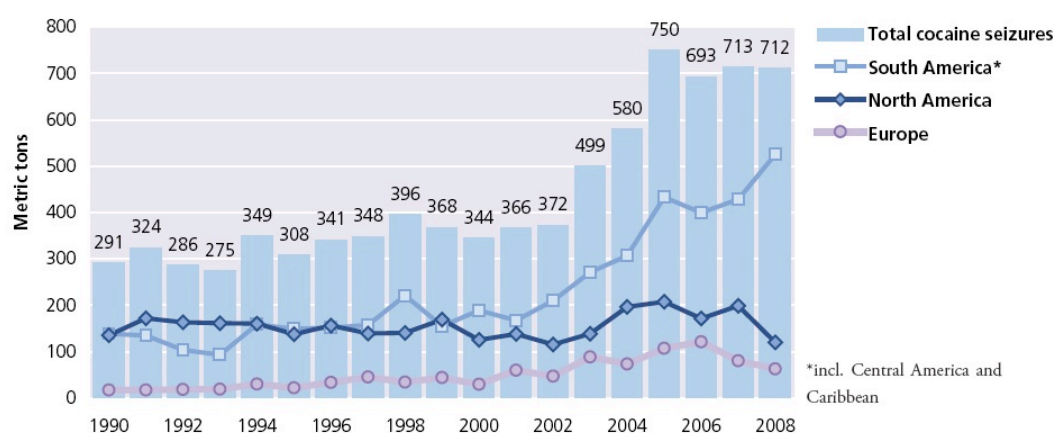
IV. 2. How did the US manage to reduce the flow of illicit narcotics and improve security?

The most important means to achieve this goal for both the US and Colombia was to restructure the military and the national police of Colombia so they would be prepared to fulfill their tasks within the plan. The biggest single element of expenditure involved equipping the air force and giving them secure training on the equipment they had received in order to fight the guerrillas successfully. The relevant deliveries were made in three steps by providing fighter jets, helicopters, spy planes and other aircraft that could be used to fumigate the coca and opium crops. With this assistance, Colombia became the biggest receiver of US military and police aid in the Western hemisphere. It had already been the biggest before the plan started, but not on the same scale as after the “Plan Colombia” started (Sköns, et.al, 2004, 331-332; Below the Radar, 2007).

If the flow of illicit narcotics is examined, the goal to reduce the flow seemed to have failed as demand and supply to US remained steady from 1999 to 2002. At that time there were about 100 metric tons shipped to US from the Andean Region with the biggest proportion coming from Colombia: the cocaine was then smuggled mainly through the Caribbean and then Mexico. In the years 2002 to 2005 the amount of cocaine shipped to the US rose as high as 200 metric tons until 2006, when the demand and supply decreased for one year before going up again for another year and finally reducing again to 100 metric tons, as seen in figure 3. Europe’s pattern is similar, even though the consumption of cocaine is slightly less in metric tons over the whole continent. It is interesting to compare this recent decline in US and European consumption with the numbers for South America, where the consuming of cocaine started to peak back in the 2002 and has risen dramatically ever since, with a peak of consumption slightly over 500 metric tons in 2008 – close to 70% of the total world consumption (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010, 65-71). The decline in the US and Europe could maybe be explained with better government propaganda against drug use, but it is also interesting to note that the cutback in cocaine consumption

from the year 2007 to 2008 came at the same time as the global finance crisis started, so possibly the majority of the cutback could be explained by the worsened economy in the US, rather than propaganda by the government.

Figure 3: Global cocaine seizures (unadjusted for purity), 1990 – 2008



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010

The US government applied aerial fumigation of coca crops in Colombia as one of the ways to deal with the problem that the coca farmers were causing with their crops. It is impossible to leave out this angle when considering the effort made against the drugs and guerrillas in Colombia, and it would be very interesting to see if there is any correlation between the fumigation of Colombian coca crops and any decrease in net cultivation achieved during “Plan Colombia” Table 3 shows cultivation figures from Peru, Bolivia and Colombia from 1999-2007. Manual eradication without any chemicals or spraying agents was used in Peru and Bolivia without showing much result. Meanwhile, in contrast, fumigation showed remarkable results in Colombia, where both chemicals and spraying airplanes were used over an increasing area as shown in table 4. A comparison of the two tables can be used to consider how far the actual cultivation was affected by planned government measures. It suggests that the fumigation by air did succeed to some extent as there was a big cut in estimated coca cultivations from 162.000 hectares in 1999 down to 78.000 hectares in 2006, before going up again in 2007 when the fumigation was decreased. The figures also raise the question of why in some years the fumigation can be shown as

covering nearly twice as many hectares as were cultivated. The main explanation is that it was necessary to fumigate some areas twice or three times because of heavy rain that came shortly after the fumigation, washing the chemicals away without harming the crops, and the fact that the land is ready to be re-planted and harvested only 6–8 months after fumigation (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007, 52, 93-98, 134; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008, 52-53, 97-102, 131-132).

Table 3: Estimated Annual Coca Cultivation (in hectares)

	Peru	Bolivia	Colombia
1999	49.000	21.800	160.000
2000	43.400	14.600	162.000
2001	46.200	19.900	145.000
2002	46.700	21.600	102.000
2003	44.200	23.550	86.000
2004	50.300	27.700	80.000
2005	48.200	25.400	86.000
2006	52.400	27.500	78.000
2007	53.700	28.900	99.000

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008

Table 4: Fumigation in Colombia (in hectares)

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
47.371	84.251	122.805	132.817	138.555	138.775

Source: Below the Radar, 2007

The fumigation by air with chemicals has been controversial, and will probably remain that way as there is always a way to find arguments both for and against it. The arguments provided both by humanitarian organization and local government are that the chemicals used do not only destroy the coca crops, but also crops from

innocent farmers who are not cultivating coca but just trying to make a livelihood for themselves and their families, and that this causes a major problem for these farmers and the local communities. The concerned US government agencies have denied this problem and the Colombian authorities have been reluctant to admit it. Some local governments have however claimed that the fumigation has not worked at all and has only made farmers task why they stopped growing coca in the first place if they are still being fumigated (Isacson, 2007a; Isacson, 2007b; Isacson, 2007c; Below the Radar, 2007).

The next question to ask is whether the US helped to improve general security in Colombia with their actions, considering the large effort they made in this respect through military aid, which quadrupled between the years of 1999 and 2000 (Sköns, 2004, 307). Colombia increased its own military spending (in US dollars) significantly during this time, exceeding all the neighboring countries except Brazil. Colombia had one of the highest levels of military expenditure as a percentage of GDP in the Latin American region with only Chile spending more in GDP terms, as seen in table 5 (Perlo-Freeman, 2009, 227, 234). This effort was no doubt important in giving the government a greater military edge over the guerrillas; but it could also be argued that other elements in Uribe's and the US's strategy, such as amnesties and the internal reform efforts discussed below, were equally if not more decisive.

Table 5: Military expenditure by country as percentage of gross domestic product

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Brazil	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Chile	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.5
Colombia	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.7

Source: Perlo-Freeman, 2009, 234

IV. 3. How did the US manage to promote social and economic justice?

The aid that the US provided through “Plan Colombia” also had important non-military elements. As explained earlier, one of its main aims was to tackle the deeper sources of conflict by promoting social and economic justice. This included the US helping Colombian authorities in the judicial reform that was needed to deal with this, in the resettlement of internally displaced persons, in the promotion of alternative development projects and of democracy and human rights (U.S. Department of State, 2009).

One of the biggest problems that the Colombian government faced regarding the judicial system was the incapability to handle the flood of cases that the courts would need to handle if all members of the guerrilla groups were captured and charged with being part of the conflict. Uribe’s government perhaps showed great cleverness by letting 30.000 members of AUC go during their peaceful disarmament: but it could also be considered as remarkable negligence to let so many guerrillas go back into society without knowing what they were capable of doing. It was thought likely that Washington would disapprove of this method of disarmament because of their policy of no negotiation with terrorists. If, nevertheless, no major sign of displeasure came from Washington, the reason is believed to be because the US trusted Uribe to execute the program on the behalf of Colombia.

Generally the Colombian public, the US government agencies, and the Colombian authorities say that Colombia is a better place to live in now than ten years ago when “Plan Colombia” was first implemented and before Uribe took office. The economic indicators in table 1 show that the unemployment rate is down by almost 50% since the year 2000, and even though Colombia is facing inflation and budget deficit, the Colombian legal economy is doing better in general. One of the many reasons for that is the side effect of the fumigation of the coca crops. The fumigation of known areas led to the drug lords and the guerrillas moving to other areas further outside government control to cultivate

the coca. That leaves the farmers with the choice of keep growing coca and risk having their fields fumigated or start growing something to provide their families and society with vegetables and fruits. By changing their cultivation into something that is considered legal by the government, the farmers start to make a profit and increase the value of their land. This example is, however, not as simple as it seems, because when the farmers achieve the status of cultivating something legal, they are flying below the radar of the government, which is not monitoring them in the same extent as before. This attracts the guerrillas again who make them start cultivating coca again. For the government this means that they have to provide lasting security for the farmers and their communities: if not, they will fall back into the same problem in no time. By providing these opportunities for the farmers the US and Colombian authorities are providing an important base for the future Colombian economy (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 46 – 52, Isacson, 2009a)

Other challenges for social and economic development included how to deal with the flow of displaced persons. With US aid, the Colombian authorities started to train those groups that were displaced in order to have them eligible and capable of going back to the labor market. Despite the US aid the work has not made as much progress as officials and humanitarian organizations hoped for: there are still displaced persons fleeing over to Ecuador and demanding a shelter as refugees, and from Ecuador they get asylum in other countries through the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations, but also there are refugees returning to other areas of Colombia, that are considered safe now (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 52 – 54; Kuerhr, 2010; UNHCR, 2010). Former members of AUC who voluntarily demobilized and some former FARC members (not so common) received pardons for their crimes against the Colombian state. However, not all of them are eligible for the pardons and many of them are serving a jail sentence or other alternative sentences. Others can enter job training, register for health services, education and etc. With Colombia's state support and the demobilization, crime rates have gone down. On the other hand,

crime rates for murders, rapes and other violence crimes are still uncomfortably high, which can partly be explained by some of the demobilized soldiers returning to their previous acts and starting to break the law again (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 54 – 56).

Over the last decade democracy and human rights have improved in Colombia and the foundation has never been better according to Colombian authorities and US aid officials. The judicial reform described in the next section is believed to be one of the biggest factors in that improvement. With the right equipment, training and bulletproof vests, journalists, union leaders, aid workers and other people who tend to be the targets of guerrillas groups, are now safer than before and can attend their work in tranquility without being shot or kidnapped. The Colombian government created, after US consultation, 45 new justice sectors and trained over 2000 conciliators, who help in solving the cases and ease the pressure on the Colombian over-filled court system (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008, 57 – 59)

A different view of the reality is provided by Transparency International, an NGO that has rated governments and the public sector to see how corrupted they are and where they stand among other countries in the “Corruption line”. Given the positive official reports on how the Colombian government and US aid have performed in judicial and anti-crime and anti-terrorism work, it might be expected that Colombia would have rocketed sky high in the Transparency International ratings. In fact their rating slightly went up from the start of “Plan Colombia” until the end of the plan, before it dropped again after the plan, even though Colombia was working with the US authorities on new plans. Despite the slight increase in Colombia ratings, they have dropped down on the list compared to other countries; Colombia is currently ranked in 78 place on the corruption index, with the grade 3.5 out of 10. This raises the question whether the Colombian government and US aid are really performing as well as they claim (Transparence International, 2010).

IV. 4. How did the US manage to promote the rule of law?

The third and last of the US's goals in cooperation with Colombian government was to promote the rule of law through improvements in the justice system aiming at both efficiency and fairness. The Justice Department had the complex goal to build up the court system from the beginning, train judges and their assistants, and also to train criminal investigators and equip them. By spending over \$114 million from the year 2000 through 2007, the US government and Colombian authorities believe that they succeeded with the improvement by training over 40.000 judges, prosecutors, investigators and forensic experts. One of the biggest improvements was, for example, that a trial that once took about five years now takes about one year instead, which caused a boom in convictions in the first years. This included convictions among the former AUC leaders after a forensic investigation and comparing their DNA with remains of bodies that had been brutally murdered.

However forensic experts and investigators claim that they have still not received enough support from the government in their investigations, as they need to go to more remote areas in Colombia to investigate murders and mass murders that happened deep in the jungle. Therefore they need helicopters from the police and air support from the military and the police's special forces to be safe during their investigations. However, of all the flight hours scheduled in the years 2005 – 2007, none of them was scheduled for the investigations of these cases. There have also been complaints about the continuing shortage of investigators and forensic experts and the government's lack of interest in the problem. Prosecutors have also complained about the lack of personnel to execute all the assignments which they are allocated. The fact that only 45 prosecutors have been assigned to over 4000 cases, which have only led to less than 400 convictions, has caused tremendous delay in other cases and left thousands of graveyards uninvestigated and unknown for the present.

V. Summary and Conclusions

The question of how well someone did in a war on drugs and guerrillas, whether it was an individual, the army or some agency, is extremely hard to answer. What is certain is that Colombia has suffered from long-lasting and deep-rooted internal conflicts, drug production, corrupted politicians and a bad economical situation, to some extent during the whole time that the country has been independent. What is also clear is that amazing things have been achieved since Colombia was on the edge of becoming a failed drug state, mainly controlled by drug traffickers and criminals, in the 1990s.

Even though many people in Latin America are skeptical about US aid in the region and some people are against the US in general because of their history in the region, the US aid in Colombia has been helping local authorities fight the drug war, the guerrillas, paramilitary groups and other criminals. This combined effort has shown remarkable results in combating the problem at its roots, resulting in Colombia having regained much of its status among other nations. That it is now safe to travel to Colombia, the country has a booming tourist industry, and people feel safe again shows the success that the Colombian authorities have achieved in securing the country.

The US aid did not, however, achieve such fine results from the outset. By using wrong methods, the coca cultivation increased among other problems as the guerrillas gained more and more power. This changed when the US introduced the revolutionary “Plan Colombia” designed to free Colombia from its chains of poverty and from the hands of the guerrillas. The results, which are presented in the relevant chapters above, do not lie. They reflect a unique historical achievement in a country facing all the problems that have been described here. With a tough president, who wanted Colombia free, the way was opened for this possibility. Colombia, however, did not have enough power to fight the guerrillas and therefore the US had to step in as they also had great interest in the region,

although reflecting their own rather different priorities about combating the drug problem as the drugs were causing great problems in the US itself.

With both parties involved great things happened on the way to Colombia's future. The US chose to help improve security conditions by strengthening the military and the police instead of invading and probably causing another Vietnam, while the local forces improved security in many regions in Colombia. The US plans succeeded in establishing better methods for combating the guerrillas, and, in general, better security in the country. The goal of reducing the flow of illicit narcotics by 50% was not met, which was a disappointment but some reduction was made and process in future eradication. The other goals such as promoting social and economic justice and the rule of law refer to areas where the US did help Colombia improve during the time of "Plan Colombia", but these improvements were something that the US did not focus on to the same extent as before. For example, the Colombian economy is doing much better now than it did before, and people have better economic and social conditions. The reform of the justice system, however, is something that did not go as well as hoped for, as the lack of investigators and flood of cases continued to cause difficulties. Despite some mistakes, which someone might say, that happened and the Colombian leaders and the US plan were not sufficiently recognized for the good process they made, and therefore Colombia is doing extremely well today and is a much better place to live in than in the 1990s.

Some would argue that the "Plan Colombia" has demonstrated the good impact the US authorities have made on Colombia and that they should think of implementing a similar plan in Afghanistan, following the invasion in 2001, to prevent further opium production and to fight the Taliban more effectively as these problems are similar in both countries. Aforementioned countries have had long lasting conflicts, drug problems and the general need for an infrastructural change; both are often viewed as widely corrupted states which is a factor in the aforementioned problems; and both have massive security problems damaging their own citizens' economic conditions and motivating them to flee the country,

while no-one wants to visit. The US, however, decided to seek assistance from NATO in pursuing the conflict and stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan, as the US needed to focus on Iraq. The situation in Afghanistan has not progressed as the US and NATO hoped for, so the idea of learning lessons from Colombia to design a similar project to Afghanistan is maybe not a foolish one (Isacson, 2009b). Even Iraq is looking towards Colombia and the ideology and methods used by Colombian leaders in rebuilding the country in the aftermath of the conflict, including Colombia's amazing job in building up the tourist industry. However, Iraq has a long way to go in improving security if it wants tourists to start visiting the country as in Colombia, and before it can start promoting the country as a safe and compatible destination (Dickinson, 2009).

These two examples from two countries in the Middle East/West Asia that the US invaded in 2001 and 2003 make clear that the Colombian solution – with all its limitations - was a better approach than the US has adopted in other parts of the world. It has to be taken into account, of course, that Afghanistan and Iraq were countries ruled by dictators that did not want to cooperate with the US, but after the invasions there was the possibility to adopt similar plans instead of relying primarily on US, British and NATO forces in the aftermath. Even with the incredible success of US aid in Colombia, the plan was extremely controversial, but examining how well Colombia has done raises the question whether the US impact elsewhere was as good as it possibly could have been.

Despite all the effort that has been made in Colombia, the war is far from over, both in Colombia and in Latin America. Now the US's main concern in Latin America is its neighbor Mexico. The center of drug trafficking has moved up towards the north, and with that transformation, crime rates in Mexico have risen sharply over the past years. Now the problem is so big that even the Mexican army can not handle the situation. This alarming new threat facing the US is President Obama's biggest concern for Latin America, and how he tackles the problem will be a touchstone for his management skills in foreign relations with the US's closest neighbors. Whatever Obama chooses to do, intervention or some

kind of cooperation with Mexican authorities is necessary, because if he does nothing, the conflict in Mexico will spread across the borders as it did in Colombia, with refugees, and other kinds of conflicts arising with neighboring states.

After examining the conflicts in Colombia, answering this paper's original question about whether the US impacts were “good” or “bad” remains extremely difficult. During the war on drugs some awful decisions were made, concerning the guerrillas and terrorism threat, and other brilliant decisions taken at the same time. In general, however, it can be concluded that the impact will have a good influence on Colombia in the long run; the country just needs some time to recover after decades of internal conflicts. Even if the “Plan Colombia” agreement has ended, the conflict and the related US aid have not. Yet the authorities have already had great success and there is reason to believe that Colombian authorities will manage to end the internal conflicts in the next ten years. The drug trafficking will probably still be there, but not on the same scale as before, if Colombian and US plans will succeed.

Bibliography

- Below the Radar, 2007. U.S. military programs with Latin America, 1997 – 2007 [online] Available at: <http://justf.org/files/pubs/below_the_radar_eng.pdf> [Accessed 27 December 2010].
- Calderon, E. S., 2009. “Aunque Cueste Trabajo Creerlo” *El Tiempo*, [online] 5 September. Available at: <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-6028418>> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- CNN, 2008. *Nicaragua breaks diplomatic relations with Colombia*. [online] Available at: <<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/03/06/nic.colombia/index.html#cnnSTCText>> [Accessed 31 October 2010].
- Conciliation Resources, 2004. *Civilian peace initiatives in Colombia 1979 – 2002*. [map online] Available at: <<http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/colombia/civilian-initiatives-map.php>> [Accessed 10 October 2010].
- Congressional Research Service, 2008. Colombia: Issues for Congress [online] Available at: <<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/110769.pdf>> [Accessed 6 January 2011].
- Crandall R., 2001. *Explicit Narcotization: U.S. Policy toward Colombia during the Samper Administration*. [e-journal] 43 (3), 95-120. Available through Jstor database [Accessed 23 October 2010].
- Dickinson, E., 2009. “Memo to Iraq, from Colombia” *Foreign Policy*, [online] 19 February. Available at: <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/02/18/memo_to_iraq_from_colombia> [Accessed 29 December 2010].
- The Economist, 2002a. “Uribe’s hour; The new president has a strong mandate, for war and peace” *The Economist*, [online] 30 May. Available at <<http://www.economist.com/node/1157528>> [Accessed 23 October 2010].
- The Economist, 2002b. “The battle of Medellin; A paramilitary takeover of the cities”, *The Economist*, [online] 11 July. Available at <<http://www.economist.com/node/1224462>> [Accessed 23 October 2010].
- The Economist, 2003. “Drugs and Latin America; High in the Andes.” *The Economist*, [online] 4 September. Available at: <<http://www.economist.com/node/2034987>> [Accessed 23 October 2010].

- The Economist, 2004a. "Colombia", *The Economist*, [online] 17 november. Available at: <<http://www.economist.com/node/3352602>> [Accessed 23 October 2010].
- The Economist, 2004b. "Uribe's barrage; Measuring a glass half-full." *The Economist*, [online] 18 March. Available at <<http://www.economist.com/node/2523843>> [Accessed 23 October 2010].
- The Economist, 2008. "The Uribe Temptation" *The Economist*, [online] 17 April. Available at: < <http://www.economist.com/node/11053186>> [Accessed 20 October].
- El Mundo, 2008a. "Chávez cierra la embajada de Venezuela en Bogotá y moviliza tropas en la frontera" *El Mundo*, [online] 2 March. Available at: <<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/03/02/internacional/1204480422.html>> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- El Mundo, 2008b. "Chávez dice que la muerte de Raúl Reyes es un 'duro golpe al proceso de acuerdo humanitario'". *El Mundo*, [online] 2 March. Available at: <<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/03/02/internacional/1204421198.html>> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Forero, J., 2006. "Colombian president wins 2nd term." *The New York Times*. [online] 29 May. Available at <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/29/world/americas/29iht-web.0529mexico.html>> [Accessed 23 October 2010].
- Forrero, J., 2002. "Shifting Colombia's aid: U.S. Focuses on Rebels" *The New York Times*, [online] 10 August. Available at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/10/world/shifting-colombia-s-aid-us-focuses-on-rebels.html?ref=alvarouribe>> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Hakim, P., 2006. "Is Washington Losing Latin America?" *Foreign Affairs*, [online] January/February. Available at: <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61372/peter-hakim/is-washington-losing-latin-america>> [Accessed 22 October 2010].
- Hombres, R., 2009. "¿A Dónde Iremos A Parar?" *El Tiempo*, [online] 3 September. Available at: <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-6012587>> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Insight on Conflict, 2010. *Colombia, Conflict Profile* [online] Available at: <<http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/colombia/conflict-profile/>> [Accessed 20 October 2010].

- Insight on Conflict, 2010. *Colombia, Conflict Timeline*. [online] Available at: <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/colombia/conflict-profile/conflict-timeline/> [Accessed 20 October 2010].
- International Crisis Group, 2009. Colombia Conflict History. [online] Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/key-issues/research-resources/conflict-histories/colombia.aspx> [Accessed 20 October 2010].
- International Monetary Fund, 2010. *World Economic Outlook Database*. [online] Available at: http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/02/weodata/weorept.aspx?pr.x=59&pr.y=3&sy=2000&ey=2010&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&c=233&s=NGDP_R,NGDP_RPCH,NGDP,NGDPD,GGR,GGR_NGDP,GGX,GGX_NGDP,GGXCNL,GGXCNL_NGDP,GGXONLB,GGXONLB_NGDP,GGXWDN,GGXWDG,GGXWDG_NGDP,NGDP_FY&grp=0&a=> [Accessed 5 December 2010].
- Isacson, A. 2007a. “*Fumigation hasn’t worked at all*”. Speech made at Capitol Hill, May 8 2007 by Eduardo Zúñiga, governor of Nariño, Colombia. [video online]. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3q3ulMouyQM&feature=player_embedded [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Isacson, A. 2007b. *Putumayo, Colombia: “All of this was fumigated”*. [video online] Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1POicA9xiYc&feature=related> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Isacson, A. 2007c. *Putumayo, Colombia: “If we are being punished anyway...”*. [video online] Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atLNs55Hpg0&feature=related> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Isacson, A. 2009b. “Lessons from America’s Other Counterinsurgency”. *Foreign Policy* [online] Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/12/16/lessons_from_americas_other_counterinsurgency?page=full [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Isacson, A., 2009a. “Uribe Falls to Earth”. *Foreign Policy*. [online] Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/03/uribe_falls_to_earth [Accessed 23 November 2010].
- Krik, R., 2003. *More Terrible Than Death: Violence, Drugs and America’s War in Colombia*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Kuehr, M., 2010. “15,000 Colombian refugees to return from Ecuador” *Colombian Reports*. [online] Available at:

- <<http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/12932-15-000-refugees-return-from-ecuador.html>> [Accessed 6 January 2011].
- Perlo-Freeman, S., et. al., 2008. Military Expenditure, in SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, Oxford University Press: London.
- Perlo-Freeman, S., et. al., 2009. Military Expenditure, in SIPRI Yearbook 2009: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, Oxford University Press: London.
- Petras, J., and Veltmeyer, H., 2003. *System in Crisis: The dynamics of free market capitalism*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.
- Rueda, M. I., 2009. "Conmigo No Cuenten" *El Tiempo*, [online] 5 September. Available at: <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-6028417>> [Accessed 28 December 2010].
- Sköns, E., et. al, 2004. *Military Expenditure*, in SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security, Oxford University Press: London.
- Tate, W., 2004. No room for peace?: United States' policy in Colombia. *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives*, 14, pp. 70-73.
- Transparency International, 2010. "Corruption Prediction Index". [online] Available at: <http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table> [Accessed 3 January 2011].
- U.S. Department of State, 2002. *South America*. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report. [online] Available at: <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/8695.pdf>> [Accessed 1 December 2010].
- U.S. Department of State, 2009. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Colombia. [online] Available at: <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119153.htm>> [Accessed 6 January 2011].
- UNHCR, 2010. "UNHCR chief returns to spotlight the displaced in Colombia and Ecuador. [online] Available at: <<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=4d121ce76&query=Colombian%20refugees>> [Accessed 6 January 2011].
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2010. *Internal displacement - Facts and figures* [online] Available at: <<http://ochaonline.un.org/OCHAHome/InFocus/InternalDisplacement/Facts>>

andfigures/tabid/5895/language/en-US/Default.aspx> [Accessed 31 October 2010].

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007. Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region; A survey of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru [online] Available at: <http://www.unodc.org/pdf/andean/Andean_report_2007.pdf> [Accessed 27 December 2010].

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008. Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region; A survey of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru [online] Available at: <http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Andean_report_2008.pdf> [Accessed 27 December 2010].

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010. The global cocaine market [online] Available at: <http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/1.3_The_global_cocaine_market.pdf> [Accessed 27 December 2010].

United States Government Accountability Office, 2008. *Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate: Plan Colombia, Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance*. [Online] Available at: <<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0971.pdf>> [Accessed 5 December 2010].

The World Bank, 2010a. *Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)*. [online] Available at: <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG>> [Accessed 4 December 2010].

The World Bank, 2010b. *GDP growth (annual %)*. [online] Available at: <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG/countries/1w?display=graph>> [Accessed 4 December 2010].

The World Bank, 2010c. *Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)*. [online] Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?order=wbapi_data_value_2001%20wbapi_data_value&sort=asc> [Accessed 4 December 2010].