

Plan Colombia and its Aftermath: Contextual Factors and the Evolution of Strategy

by

Lieutenant Colonel Richard H. Pitchford
United States Marine Corps

Under the Direction of:
Dr. Christian Keller



United States Army War College
Class of 2017

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release
Distribution is Unlimited

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2017		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Plan Colombia and its Aftermath: Contextual Factors and the Evolution of Strategy			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Richard H. Pitchford United States Marine Corps			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Christian Keller			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. To the best of my knowledge this SRP accurately depicts USG and/or DoD policy & contains no classified information or aggregation of information that poses an operations security risk. Author: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 7954					
14. ABSTRACT Plan Colombia was a multilayered strategy to bolster the Colombian economy, enhance the armed forces, disrupt drug trade, restore territorial control, and strengthen the rule of law. Dr. Gabriel Marcella, a regional expert and former professor at the U.S. Army War College, described the undertaking as "nothing less than a grand strategy for the remaking of the nation." Moving forward nearly twenty years, it is possible to evaluate the execution and effectiveness of this strategy. Although the progress in Colombia is undeniable, much of the success is owed to factors beyond the scope of the original strategy. In the end, what occurred in Colombia can be most accurately attributed to the evolution of strategy combined with key contextual factors--including popular support, inspired leadership, technological advantages, and timing--that were beyond the scope of the original plan. Examining the plan along with these key contextual factors reveals the true seeds of progress and valuable insights into the nature of strategic success in counterinsurgencies.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Counterinsurgency, Counter-narcotics, Strategy, Building Partner Capacity, Plan Colombia					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 35	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

Plan Colombia and its Aftermath: Contextual Factors and the Evolution of Strategy

(7954 words)

Abstract

Plan Colombia was a multilayered strategy to bolster the Colombian economy, enhance the armed forces, disrupt drug trade, restore territorial control, and strengthen the rule of law. Dr. Gabriel Marcella, a regional expert and former professor at the U.S. Army War College, described the undertaking as “nothing less than a grand strategy for the remaking of the nation.” Moving forward nearly twenty years, it is possible to evaluate the execution and effectiveness of this strategy. Although the progress in Colombia is undeniable, much of the success is owed to factors beyond the scope of the original strategy. In the end, what occurred in Colombia can be most accurately attributed to the evolution of strategy combined with key contextual factors--including popular support, inspired leadership, technological advantages, and timing--that were beyond the scope of the original plan. Examining the plan along with these key contextual factors reveals the true seeds of progress and valuable insights into the nature of strategic success in counterinsurgencies.

Plan Colombia and its Aftermath: Contextual Factors and the Evolution of Strategy

Recent attacks against the military, economy, and civilian populace are creating havoc for Colombian leaders and citizens; combat operations have averaged two encounters daily for a year. Although the guerrillas lack the military strength to topple the government, their destructiveness has the potential to destabilize Colombia's political institutions. Colombia could, in fact, collapse as a nation. Government institutions are weak, especially in the areas occupied by the guerrillas and drug cartels. Breakdown is already occurring in several areas where government presence is negligible. Anarchy could set in if reforms to strengthen national institutions are not implemented soon, and the government might begin a "dirty war" to preempt the disintegration of Colombia.¹

The bleak outlook described in the above paragraph provides a surreal reminder of the Colombian reality in 1997. By all accounts, the second oldest democracy in the western hemisphere was on the verge of becoming a failed state. After decades of battling insurgencies, drug cartels, and internal corruption, Colombia was fractured and desperately holding on to sovereignty. Yet less than twenty years later, the situation has dramatically improved. Colombia now has a growing and stable economy, the security situation has vastly improved, and the government has recently negotiated a peace agreement that promises to end more than fifty years of fighting against the communist insurgency known as the FARC or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Spanish: Fuerzas Armadas Revolutionaries de Colombia).

The turnaround has been so successful and dramatic that it has been hailed as a ray of hope in an era of failing states and unending terrorism. Military historian and author, Max Boot, dubbed it "the Colombian miracle" in his article that compared Colombian progress to that of the simultaneous efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.² Although the gains in Colombia are far from cemented, the contrast and promise highlighted by Boot compels greater scrutiny. How has Colombia succeeded while

others have stalled or failed? What can be learned from the “miracle” and can it be applied in other efforts, especially those currently pursued by the United States and its allies in other parts of the world?

The beginning of the turnaround in Colombia can be linked to strategy. In 1998, Colombian President Andrés Pastrana’s administration developed a comprehensive plan to address the security challenges his country was facing. In developing this plan, the Pastrana administration sought U.S. support and worked closely with President Clinton’s administration and members of Congress. The result, known as *Plan Colombia*, was a multilayered strategy to bolster the Colombian economy, enhance the armed forces, disrupt drug trade, restore territorial control, and strengthen the rule of law.³ In his 2001 analysis of the plan, Dr. Gabriel Marcella, a regional expert and former professor at the U.S. Army War College, described the undertaking as “nothing less than a grand strategy for the remaking of the nation.”⁴ Moving forward nearly twenty years, it is now possible to evaluate the execution and effectiveness of this “grand strategy.” While the progress in Colombia is undeniable, much of the success is owed to factors beyond the scope of the original strategy. Plan Colombia was ambitious and certainly served as a point of departure, but it fell short in many aspects. In the end, the progress in Colombia can be most accurately attributed to the evolution of strategy combined with key contextual factors--including popular support, inspired leadership, technological advantages, and timing--that were beyond the scope of the original plan. Examining the plan along with these key contextual factors reveals the true seeds of progress and valuable insights into the nature of strategic success in counterinsurgencies.

Background

Geography and demographics are important when considering Colombia's struggle for peace and prosperity. Colombia is unique among South American countries as it serves as the gateway to Central America by way of its border with Panama. It is the only South American country that features vast coastlines on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. As the northernmost country on the continent, it is bordered by Ecuador and Peru to the south, and Brazil and Venezuela to the east. Covering an area nearly twice the size of Texas, Colombia is bisected by the equator and in 2016, was home to over 47 million people.⁵ The Andean mountains, which run southwest to northeast, are the dominant terrain feature in the country. While their elevation provides the population relief from the tropical heat, they also form a natural boundary that separates the densely populated northwest from the sparsely populated jungles and savannahs of the south and east.⁶ Historically, the government in Bogota largely ignored the less populated areas east of the Andean ridge, making it a desirable location for bandits, outlaws, and others seeking refuge from civilized society.⁷

Following World War II, Colombia experienced a political civil war that claimed over 200,000 lives. In the aftermath of the period known as *La Violencia*, a democratic government remained in power and the remains of Maoist insurgencies retreated to the ungoverned portions of eastern Colombia. The Soviet-backed FARC and the Cuban-backed Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) or National Liberation Army, made use of this terrain as they worked to sustain their movements.⁸ While mostly dormant during the 1960s and 70s, these guerrilla forces eventually gained much needed financial resources from a symbiotic relationship with the other occupants of the ungoverned spaces, the drug cartels.

In the 1970s, successful counternarcotic operations in neighboring countries gave rise to the cultivation and processing of coca in the ungoverned portions of southern Colombia. While the cities of Medellin and Cali became home to drug cartel leadership, the acidic soil and lawless nature of southern Colombia proved to be perfect for cocaine production. Although initially opposing the cartels as mechanisms of capitalism, the FARC eventually developed security cooperation arrangements with the cartels and collected “taxes” in exchange for protection.⁹ These taxes fueled growth and activity in the previously dormant insurgencies. With new resources the FARC increased recruiting, outfitted new units, and launched new attacks against the Colombian government.

The partnership between the cartels and the FARC continued to evolve in the 1980s. In the U.S., the Reagan administration took notice as the flow of drugs from Colombia increased and acts of narcoterrorism shocked the international community and further destabilized the Colombian government. Acts of violence against judges, police, and other government officials were common place as the cartels ruthlessly targeted anyone who sought to interfere with the lucrative drug trade. The activities of the Medellin Cartel and its notorious leader, Pablo Escobar, among others, stirred the Reagan administration to action.¹⁰ In 1986, President Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive 221 (NSDD 221). The now declassified document declared illicit drugs as a direct threat to U.S. national security and prescribed a whole of government effort to “halt the production and flow of illicit narcotics, reduce the ability of insurgent and terrorist groups to use drug trafficking to support their activities, and strengthen the ability of individual governments to confront and defeat this threat.”¹¹

Beyond the lofty ends articulated in NSDD 221, the document is significant for several additional reasons. First, it clearly establishes international drug trade as a threat to U.S. national security.¹² Next, it confirms and highlights the threat posed by the nefarious nexus between drug cartels and insurgencies.¹³ Finally, it directs action from multiple departments and agencies, eliciting a whole of government approach to addressing the problem. In sum, the directive foreshadows events to come and serves as a precursor to the broader and bilateral *Plan Colombia*.

President Bush picked up the fight after taking office in 1989. In the fall of that year, the White House issued the *National Drug Control Strategy*. This comprehensive plan looked beyond the cartels of the Andean region and sought to tackle both the supply and demand aspects of the drug problem in a \$7.8 billion dollar initiative.¹⁴ Of that figure, over \$1 billion was allocated to support counternarcotic law enforcement and military operations in the Andean region.¹⁵ As comprehensive as this plan was, it ignored the collusion between revolutionary insurgent groups and the drug cartels. Consequently, the aid that flowed to Colombia came with caveats. It focused on police and military efforts against drug trafficking, but denied support to Colombian efforts against the FARC and other insurgencies. These restrictions were purposeful and intended to keep the U.S. out of a bloody counterinsurgency fight, but they had the unintended effect of strengthening the FARC while weakening the cartels. Unfortunately, future iterations of U.S. policy, to include the original *Plan Colombia*, would contain similar restrictions.

In 1993, the efforts against the cartels achieved a major victory as Colombian Police (heavily supported by U.S. efforts) conducted a raid in Medellin that killed the

infamous drug lord, Pablo Escobar. In hindsight, this event served as a turning point for the U.S. government and the FARC. In the coming years, the Clinton administration gradually reduced support to the Colombian military. In 1996 and 1997, the administration decertified the Colombian military and withdrew support based on reports of human rights abuses.¹⁶ Simultaneously, the FARC was building capacity and changing their tactics. Noted counterinsurgency expert, Dr. Mark Moyar, suggests that the FARC was following Mao Zedong's revolutionary warfare playbook. As evidence, Moyar points to the large conventional style attacks executed by the FARC in 1996. He asserts that this was indicative of the FARC's growing strength and a shift to the third and final stage of Mao's revolutionary warfare model.¹⁷ Beyond following Mao's manual, it is clear that the FARC was now filling the void left by the decline of the cartels and exploiting the vulnerabilities of an under-resourced Colombian army. Under these conditions the FARC prospered and the stability of Colombia further deteriorated.

The growing violence and rise of the FARC led to changes in the late 90s. In March of 1998, FARC forces ambushed a mobile infantry brigade at El Billar, killing or capturing more than 100 Colombian soldiers. In November, a large FARC force decimated a local police force and seized control of Mitu, the capital city of the southeastern Vaupés department. Amid the surge in FARC violence, Colombia elected a new president. President Andres Pastrana took the office in August of 1998 as the government was reeling from the FARC's persistent attacks. In his first few months in office, Pastrana worked to get the FARC to the negotiating table. As part of the pre-conditions for negotiations, Pastrana granted the FARC a 42,000 km² "demilitarized zone" in south central Colombia.¹⁸ After nearly a year of failed negotiations, violence

increased in the summer of 1999. In Washington, the Clinton administration was growing more concerned. In the late summer, the National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, phoned the Undersecretary of State, Thomas Pickering, and requested that he head a National Security Council (NSC) Executive Committee to “pull together the U.S government and see what they could do about [Colombia]”.¹⁹ According to Pickering, that was the beginning of *Plan Colombia*.

Plan Colombia

Although the term, “*Plan Colombia*” is often used to describe the U.S. foreign aid package designated for Colombia in 2000, it is important to understand that *Plan Colombia* was a holistic, multilateral plan, written and driven by the Colombian government. Dr. Marcella makes this clear, noting that “contrary to speculation in the media” the plan was authored by President Pastrana’s Chief of Staff, Jaime Ruiz.²⁰ Thomas Pickering also hints at this important aspect, noting “the fact that the first draft of the joint plan was produced in Colombia by Colombians facilitated their buy-in”.²¹

The true origins of the plan can be traced to President Pastrana. In June of 1998, candidate Pastrana proposed the effort at a campaign rally, stating that, “developed countries must help us execute a kind of Marshall Plan for Colombia, that will allow us to undertake large investments in the social, agricultural and infrastructure field, to offer our peasants different alternatives apart from illicit crops.”²² Later that year, after taking office, President Pastrana first used the term “*Plan Colombia*” in a December speech given in Puerto Wilches.²³

Having evoked memories of the Marshall Plan and having established an appropriate name for the grand strategy, Pastrana turned to the U.S. for assistance. Over the next several months the Colombians refined their plan, while Under Secretary

of State Pickering honed the U.S. portion that would go to Congress for supplemental appropriation. In October of 1999, the Pastrana administration published *Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State*. The plan promised \$4 billion in Colombian support and broadly outlined ten areas for action:

- Economic recovery
- Fiscal and financial reform
- Peace negotiations for a settlement with the guerrillas
- Strengthening the armed forces and the police
- Judicial reform to reestablish the rule of law
- A counter-narcotics strategy supported by partnered nations
- Agricultural development to provide legal alternatives for coca farmers
- Increased presence and accountability of local government
- Social programs, for health, education, and alleviation of poverty
- Mobilization of the international community to participate in the Plan²⁴

Roughly ten months later, and after significant debates in Congress, President Clinton signed Public Law 106-246 in July of 2000. The supplemental appropriations law provided \$1.32 billion to the Andean region with \$862.3 million in additional aid to Colombia. The increase in funding pushed Colombia over the billion dollar threshold for 2000 and 2001, making it the largest recipient of U.S. aid in the western hemisphere and the third largest recipient in total U.S. aid behind Israel and Egypt.²⁵ Of the \$862.3 million, \$624.3 million went to the Colombian military and national police, while the remainder (\$218 million) funded economic development, judicial reform, displaced persons, and human rights initiatives.²⁶

The majority of the U.S. military and police aid came in the form of aviation assets. Prior to the funding, the Colombian Army (COLAR) lacked the air mobility necessary to influence remote jungle locations in the southern portion of the country. To remedy this, the aid package provided funding for three Counter-Narcotics (CN) battalions and outfitted them with sixteen UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and thirty UH-

1H Huey helicopters. Additionally, the National Police received two Blackhawks and twelve Hueys. This massive expansion of air mobility assets, coupled with dedicated training packages provided by the U.S. Army's 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (7th SFG(A)), greatly increased the capabilities of the COLAR and the National Police. With the considerable addition of assault support helicopters, Colombian forces could now rapidly move to remote narcotic growing and processing sites and execute coca eradication operations.

Although representing a significant increase in funding and capabilities, the law generally limited U.S. support to the counter-narcotics effort and denied support to Colombia's counterinsurgency fight. While plan architects in the State Department and the Defense Department pushed for a plan that addressed the FARC and ELN, some members of Congress feared a Vietnam-like quagmire and built in constraints designed to keep the U.S. out of counterinsurgency efforts.²⁷ In this vein, the U.S. plan also limited the number of U.S. personnel assigned to support Colombia to 800. Along with the caps, a number of human rights-related stipulations were written into the law, to include measures that withheld funding and support to units that were suspected of human rights abuses. Collectively, these measures limited the initial effectiveness of the U.S. contribution to *Plan Colombia*.

Progress and Critical Factors

In the past seventeen years, the security environment in Colombia has dramatically improved. In 1999, the homicide rate was nearly 60 per 100,000. The country suffered nearly 2,000 terrorist attacks, more than 3,000 kidnappings, and the FARC numbered an estimated 18,000. Roughly half of Colombia's national territory lacked a government security presence.²⁸ Between 2002 and 2009, the number of

kidnappings went from over 3,000 annually, to just over 200. In the same period, the size of the FARC was cut in half from an estimated high of 20,000 to 10,000 members. The government now has a presence in all areas of Colombia and homicides and other acts of violence have been significantly reduced. In examining this turn around, it is easy to give credit to *Plan Colombia* and applaud its architects for what appears to be a monumental achievement in nation building. The problem in doing this, is that it ignores all the contextual realities and other critical factors that have shaped Colombia in the last fifteen years. Certainly, Colombia has drastically improved and these improvements coincided with the implementation of *Plan Colombia*, but that is only part of the story. The plan evolved significantly over the years and the gains made to date would not have been possible without these changes and a number of factors that are outside the scope of the original plan. The next section will examine five critical factors that truly enabled and facilitated the progress in Colombia.

People and National Will

Colonel William F. Pérez of the Colombian Army noted that the attitude of the Colombian people relative to the communist insurgencies greatly evolved over time. He described three distinct attitudinal periods: Indifference in the 1960s and 70s, Coexistence in the 80s, and Rejection in the 1990s. Pérez's notion that "civil society changed from disinterest to a decisive desire to support an initiative that confronted" the revolutionaries is key to considering the progress in Colombia.²⁹ Most strategic theorists, such as Carl von Clausewitz, David Galula, and Anthony Joes, suggest that the population is the center of gravity in a counterinsurgency fight.³⁰ In October of 1999, an estimated thirteen million Colombians marched in major cities in the "No Mas!" movement to protest rising violence. If the population is indeed the center of gravity, by

2000 it was leaning away from the FARC and in favor of the government and the rule of law.

Early in that year, the initial efforts of Plan Colombia seemed to be having an effect on the FARC. Having suffered several military defeats, the FARC backed away from their large conventional attacks and relied more and more on terrorism—especially in the towns and cities--to achieve their objectives.³¹ Evidence of this changing tactic became rather public when the Colombian government apprehended Irish Republican Army trainers in Bogota.³² Beyond the increase in urban terrorism, the FARC escalated their kidnapping program, most notably with the high profile abduction of presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt.³³ Dr. Moyar points out that, while the FARC believed these tactics would force the government to meet their demands during negotiations, the increase in violence further enraged the public and convinced voters that the FARC had no real desire for a negotiated settlement.³⁴ In May of 2002, this public outrage translated into a landslide victory for Álvaro Uribe, an independent candidate who promised to contain or defeat guerrilla organizations.³⁵

The angry sentiment that ushered Álvaro Uribe into office also fueled support for an increase in taxes levied to strengthen the military. Early in his first term Uribe proposed a tax increase to pay for a military buildup. Despite some concern about the long term sustainability of the effort, the majority of the population, to include the most profoundly-impacted wealthy elites, supported the measures.³⁶ The increased revenues fed Uribe's updated version of *Plan Colombia* and helped grow the National Police and the military. One of the facts that is often lost in discussions of *Plan Colombia* is the size of the Colombian buy-in. While some reports have focused on the more than \$10 billion

provided by the U.S. taxpayer since 2000, the Colombian people contributed more than nine times that amount to the plan. Indeed, the will of the Colombian people is a critical factor that cannot be overlooked when examining strategic progress in Colombia. Perhaps Col Perez said it best when he noted, “after decades of resisting all kinds of cruelty and pain, one truth has been demonstrated: the character of the Colombian people is above the capacity of its enemies to destroy.”³⁷

Leadership

The power of leadership in trying times cannot be overstated. Whereas the will of the population is critical to success, it is the leaders that translate that will into action via strategy and policy. Prior to 1998, Colombia was suffering from a lack of leadership at the highest levels. President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) was largely ineffective as a leader. Among other allegations, Samper was accused of taking funds from the Cali cartel during his 1994 presidential campaign. Based on human rights abuses and allegations of rampant corruption, the U.S. decertified Colombia and withheld aid in 1996 and 1997.

For Colombia, the leadership pendulum started to swing the other way with the election of Andres Pastrana in 1998. Having attended Harvard as an international fellow, Pastrana was esteemed among U.S. diplomats and viewed as a breath of fresh air in Colombian political leadership. Though sometimes criticized for his failed attempts to negotiate with the FARC, Pastrana provided the initial vision behind *Plan Colombia* and acted decisively to institute change within the Colombian armed forces.³⁸

Among other aggressive actions, Pastrana fired corrupt or ineffective military leaders and replaced them with well-respected ones. These changes at the top had a cascading effect as the new leadership revealed ineffective subordinates and replaced

them with aggressive and competent young talent.³⁹ The infusion of this new energy and skill at all levels of command precipitated a renaissance in the Colombian armed forces. These new leaders revised army doctrine and tactics, improved combat performance, and reduced instances of human rights violations.⁴⁰ As noted previously, the new successes of the Colombian armed forces impacted the FARC and forced them to retreat from their large scale conventional tactics (Mao's third phase) and return to guerrilla actions and terrorism. Ironically, Pastrana's leadership success against the FARC triggered the unintended uptick in terrorism that ultimately ushered in his successor, Álvaro Uribe.

Candidate Uribe ran on a platform that promised to take the fight to the FARC. For him, the issue was personal. In 1983 the FARC killed his father during a failed kidnapping attempt. From this tragic event, Uribe drew strength. As one author described it, Uribe made destroying the FARC his "lifelong mission".⁴¹ Channeling this emotion and feeding off of the public's growing disdain for the FARC, Uribe easily won the election in 2002 and assumed office in August.

Shortly after his inauguration, president Uribe implemented a new strategy that departed from the conventional wisdom espoused by Colombia's political elites in the previous 20 years. Earlier policymakers contended that Colombia's violence stemmed from economic inequality, and thus the majority of government efforts went towards social and economic programs. Uribe viewed the problem differently, and believed economic development could only succeed if the environment was secure.⁴² While this may seem to be a subtle adjustment of priorities along a hierarchy-of-needs continuum,

the operationalization of this policy moved Colombia's armed forces and police in a dramatic new direction.

In rolling out his new strategy, Uribe displayed key strategic leader competencies as he provided a vision for change and communicated this vision to the public. This communication effort influenced the will of the people, and as noted earlier, provided new resources in the form of tax revenues, while reinforcing public support for an aggressive stance against the FARC and ELN.

To implement his change in strategy Uribe embarked on a comprehensive effort to build depth and capacity in the military and in the national police force. Utilizing increased tax revenues, Uribe grew the police force by nearly 47,000 and added nine new mobile brigades to the Colombian Army.⁴³ In addition to this growth, Uribe created local guard units that, to some degree, resembled the U.S. Army National Guard concept. These small forty-man platoons, known as *soldados campesinos* (peasant soldiers), were comprised of local conscripts that served exclusively in their home towns. They attended a consolidated basic training, and upon completion, returned to their home towns to provide security in remote regions of the country. By 2006, Uribe's government had trained more than 20,000 *soldados campesinos* and organized them into nearly 600 dispersed platoon sized units.⁴⁴ Collectively, these efforts to grow the nation's security forces gave Uribe new tools and enabled him to influence security in remote, and previously ungoverned, areas of the country.

Beyond leading the growth of his security forces, President Uribe displayed tireless efforts when it came to employing, supervising, and improving these forces. In 2003, he launched "*Plan Patriota*," a comprehensive military operation to retake

strategic terrain throughout the country. The first portion of the operation, named *Libertad I*, broke guerrilla forces' long standing encirclement of Bogota. Whereas past operations had failed to provide anything more than temporary relief, *Libertad I* was focused and persistent. With more than 11,000 troops involved in constant operations, the Colombian Army destroyed FARC and ELN elements and forced the insurgents to retreat from their traditional positions surrounding the capital. As with many military successes of this period, President Uribe was firmly and completely involved. In addition to envisioning this plan, Uribe displayed a knack for detail and passion for achieving results. The President consistently traveled to remote areas and exposed himself to dangers in order to provide a leadership presence. When not directly present, Uribe was known to call brigade and battalion commanders to check on their progress and provide guidance. While likely not appreciated by all subordinates, this unprecedented level of involvement from the highest office in the country set a clear tone and achieved unparalleled results.⁴⁵

In addition to leading internally, President Uribe was able to sell his vision and revised strategy for Colombia in Washington, D.C. In September of 2002, President Uribe visited President Bush. The two held a joint press conference and discussed broadening the effort to counter terrorist organizations in Colombia. A month later President Bush signed an order that authorized the expanded use of U.S. aid in Colombia. The new order, which was supported by similar congressional action, eliminated the counternarcotic constraints of the original *Plan Colombia* and allowed U.S. aid to be used in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts. While the post-9/11 climate in D.C. enabled this change, President Uribe's leadership must receive

credit as well. In his remarks regarding Uribe, President Bush said “I have been incredibly impressed by his vision for a peaceful Colombia and a prosperous Colombia. He's a man who told the people of his country that he would work to eradicate terrorism and narco-trafficking. The Colombian people believe him, and so do I.”⁴⁶

Towards the end of his term in office, President Uribe's approval rating exceeded 70 percent and all indications were that Colombia was on the right path. In Washington, the Bush administration and Congress took notice and pledged to extend the U.S. commitment to *Plan Colombia* for three years beyond the original expiration year of 2005. The new deal, dubbed “*Plan Colombia Consolidation Phase*” increased aid, from \$718 million in 2005 to \$728 million in 2006 and \$739 million in 2007.⁴⁷ That same year, Uribe received additional good news when Colombia's Constitutional Court broke with tradition and approved an unprecedented measure that allowed presidents to run for a second term. In 2006, Uribe easily won re-election and became the first Colombian President to serve more than four years. In his second term, he continued to shape Colombia with the same charisma, vigor, and purpose that he displayed during his first term. His policies established security in previously ungoverned portions of Colombia and wreaked havoc on the FARC and ELN.

In 2010 Uribe's second term came to an end. While the Constitutional Courts denied him an opportunity to run for a third term, Uribe's former Minister of Defense, Juan Manuel Santos, was elected with ease. Santos ran on a platform that promised to continue Uribe's policies, but his administration received criticism for their prosecution of the war. With gains against the FARC leveling off, some critics, to include Uribe, accused Santos of focusing too heavily on body counts and missions to kill or capture

insurgent leaders.⁴⁸ In August of 2012, with the war seemingly at stalemate, Santos announced that the Colombian Government had engaged in initial talks with FARC and was seeking a negotiated end to the conflict.

Technology & Critical Capabilities

In President Uribe's first term (2002-2006), the Colombian police and armed forces made great strides, but they still required key capabilities. The new, larger force was able to occupy more territory, but they generally lacked the ability to accurately locate and destroy FARC forces. Even with the mobility gained from Blackhawk helicopters, Colombian raids into remote jungle locations rarely achieved surprise and often found little more than abandoned guerrilla camps. This frustrating trend started to change in 2006. In the early summer, President Uribe and his Defense Minister, Juan Manuel Santos, visited Washington. In conversations with President Bush, Uribe noted the recent killing of al-Qaeda's Abu Musab al-Zarqawi via smart bombs and requested a similar capability.⁴⁹ In meetings with Donald Rumsfeld, Santos was more specific. Having learned of an inexpensive GPS guidance kit that turned a 500-pound dumb bomb into a Precision Guided Munition (PGM), Santos asked Rumsfeld for assistance in acquiring this unique piece of technology.⁵⁰

Over the next several months, U.S. experts worked with Colombian officials to mount and test Raytheon's *Enhanced Paveway II* smart bombs on Colombian, Cessna A-37 Dragonfly light attack aircraft.⁵¹ To compliment this new weapon system, the U.S. increased intelligence-sharing efforts and created intelligence fusion cells to bring the full range of U.S. intelligence capabilities (primarily human and signals intelligence) to bear.⁵² By the summer of 2007 the pieces were in place to execute a strike. In September Colombian pilots took off in the dark of night and dropped several Paveway

It smart bombs into a remote jungle location believed to be the camp of Tomas Medina Caracas, commander of the FARC's 16th Front. Ground forces inserted after the bombing recovered body parts and DNA tests confirmed the identity. The new system worked exactly as advertised, penetrating triple canopy jungle and exploding precisely on target. Upon receiving the news of the initial success, William Scoggins, a senior USSOUTHCOM counternarcotic program manager, called the new capability a "game changer."⁵³

Over the next six years Colombia used this lethal combination of intelligence and PGMs to bring the FARC and ELN to their knees. With continued U.S. support, Colombia conducted numerous precision strike operations, killing forty-eight FARC and ELN senior leaders.⁵⁴ The most notable and controversial use of this capability occurred in 2008. U.S. intelligence helped pinpoint the location of the FARC's number two leader, Luis Edgar Devia Silva, aka Raul Reyes, just across the Colombian border in Ecuador. On March 1st, Colombia launched a strike that killed Reyes in his sleep.⁵⁵ While Colombian pilots never violated Ecuadorian Airspace, the cross-border bombing rattled South American relationships. Ecuador and Venezuela positioned troops on their borders and Nicaragua severed relations with Colombia. In the aftermath, President Uribe apologized for the incident in order to ease tensions, but continued to target key FARC and ELN leadership.

After his election in 2010, President Santos increased key leader targeting operations. In 2012, the same year he announced initial renewed efforts to negotiate with the FARC, the Colombian military killed twenty key leaders using precision strike capabilities.⁵⁶ Inside the FARC and ELN this new capability wreaked havoc. Successful

strikes ravaged entire FARC units, causing some to collapse and others to suffer mass desertions.⁵⁷ Senior guerrilla leaders, now vulnerable for the first time, were forced to take refuge in neighboring countries. The separation of leaders from the ranks compounded command and control related problems while greatly hindering FARC and ELN recruitment efforts.⁵⁸

To understand the full effect of this capability and what it was doing to insurgent forces, it is helpful to reflect on the Pastrana administration's failed negotiations that took place between 1998 and 2002. Despite well-intentioned efforts and multiple concessions, Pastrana was unable to achieve a settlement with the FARC. For their part, the FARC controlled an area the size of Switzerland in Southern Colombia and routinely violated cease-fire agreements. Scholars point out that the FARC was negotiating from a position of strength, while the Colombian government was on its heels. Ten years later, the tables had completely turned. The FARC was significantly battered and more than willing to adhere to cease-fire arrangements while negotiating for a settlement. While this turning point must be credited to more than just the U.S. supported key leader targeting campaign, there is little doubt that this lethal combination of intelligence and PGMs played a large part in bringing a much weakened FARC back to the negotiating table.

Information Operations

In 2008 then Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, rather famously remarked that the U.S. could not "kill its way to victory" in the war on terror. While Colombia was achieving new levels of success in targeting the FARC and ELN with their new smart weapons, they very much understood the truth behind Gates' remarks and were quietly becoming masters of the cognitive domain. U.S. Joint Doctrine defines Information

Operations (IO) as the “integrated employment of information-related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of adversaries.”⁵⁹ One of the key components of IO is Psychological Operations, or as they are now termed, Military Information Support Operations (MISO). Colombia looked beyond the ranks of its improved military force to develop a sophisticated and effective MISO capability. In a remarkable display of initiative and imagination, the Ministry of Defense reached out to a Colombian ad agency executive, Jose Miguel Sokoloff, for assistance.⁶⁰ The request was rather simple: develop an ad campaign to “demobilize as many guerillas as possible.”⁶¹

With this simple guidance, Sokoloff embarked on a multi-faceted campaign that further destabilized guerrilla forces. In December of 2010, the ad agency worked with Colombian Special Operations Forces (SOF) to develop *Operation Christmas*. In this imaginative effort, ad agency members and SOF moved into rebel-held territories, found nine, 75-foot trees in each, and decorated them with lights and banners. The banners read, “If Christmas can come to the jungle, you can come home. Demobilize. At Christmas, everything is possible.”⁶² From this effort, 331 guerrillas left the jungles and turned themselves in.⁶³ The following Christmas, Sokoloff launched *Operation Rivers of Light*. In this creative effort, Sokoloff used the vast Colombian river systems to float messages to guerrilla forces. His team collected nearly 7,000 gifts and messages of hope from locals, sealed them inside glow-in-the-dark capsules, and released them to float into rebel territory. In 2013, Sokoloff’s team developed *Operation Bethlehem*. He found twenty-seven mothers of guerrillas and recruited their assistance. The mothers contributed messages and childhood photos that were made into flyers and placed

throughout the jungles. The message, affixed below family photos, stated simply, “before you were a guerrilla, you were my child. So come home because I will always be waiting for you at Christmas time.” Another 218 people deserted guerrilla forces after this effort.⁶⁴

To complement these seasonal efforts, Sokoloff executed a persistent campaign that produced dramatic results over multiple years. Among the most notable efforts were those that were ingeniously tied to Colombia’s favorite sport, football. In 2011, when Colombia hosted the Under-20 World Cup, fans and celebrities signed thousands of soccer balls. The balls were thrown out of helicopters over the jungle with a simple message affixed to them: “Demobilize. Let’s play again.”⁶⁵ Although it is impossible to attribute direct cause and effect, this psychological shelling certainly impacted insurgent forces. In 2012, during renewed peace talks, FARC leaders asked the government to end Sokoloff’s ad campaign. In the eight years of this IO effort, 18,000 guerillas put down their weapons and returned to society.⁶⁶

Time & Timing

Of all the factors that have contributed to the progress in Colombia, time and timing are perhaps the most important. Starting with the aspect of time, it is apparent that the length or duration of efforts to effect change are significant. As noted before, U.S. support for Colombia predated *Plan Colombia* by many years and the true beginnings of progress can be linked back to the Reagan administration. Reagan’s 1986 NSDD 221 correctly identified the nexus between insurgencies and drug-trafficking organizations while directing a whole-of-government effort to support Colombia.⁶⁷ In 1989, President George H.W. Bush furthered this effort by signing the National Drug Control Strategy that greatly expanded the military and interagency

efforts to assist Colombia. In his examination of SOF efforts in Colombia, Dr. Moyar gives significant credit to the persistent presence and training efforts of the U.S. Special Forces that began in 1989, under President Bush.⁶⁸ Given this evidence of early action in Colombia, it would be unfitting and shortsighted to view the 2000 implementation of *Plan Colombia* as a starting point for progress. A better measure of time and effort starts with Reagan and makes the concerted U.S. stabilization effort a thirty-year old endeavor.

The Constitutional Court decision to allow Presidents to serve two terms provides another example that highlights the importance of time. Prior to President Uribe, no Colombian President had been allowed to serve more than one, four-year term. Under the old policy Colombia frequently suffered the directional changes and dips in continuity that accompany a change in political leadership. Starting with Uribe, Colombia benefitted from sustained quality leadership over an expanded chronological period. Uribe had the time during his two terms to implement and refine his strategic vision for the country. Similarly, President Santos has used his second term to finalize efforts initiated in his first term. In 2016, he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to reconcile with the FARC, efforts he started in 2012 during his first term. When considering the impact of these two leaders, the relationship of time relative to change and progress is clear; time is absolutely critical.

Moreover, the saying “timing is everything” could not be more true in the case of Colombia. Whereas the duration of an effort is critical to achieving change, the timing of certain events relative to others is equally, or perhaps more important. In assessing Colombia’s progress, it is evident that timing (even if unplanned) was critical. The

clearest example can be seen by assessing how the events of September 11, 2001, impacted policy and strategy for Colombia.

In 2000, fearing a “Vietnam-like quagmire”, members of Congress fought hard to limit U.S. participation in Colombia and only approved support for counternarcotic initiatives. While this support was somewhat helpful, it ignored the fact that insurgent forces were the biggest threat to stability and were inextricably tied to cocaine production. After September 11th, Congress and President Bush removed the restrictions on U.S. support for Colombia and paved the way for new levels of progress in the fight against insurgencies and terrorist organizations.

Beyond U.S. policy towards Colombia, the events of 9/11 undoubtedly shaped Colombia’s internal strategic landscape. President Uribe’s priorities in 2002 differed greatly from Pastrana’s in 1998. Whereas Pastrana called for a “Marshall Plan” of economic investment, Uribe made security and countering the FARC the top priorities ahead of development. This change in strategy was easily accepted by the Colombian people who were fed up with the FARC and acts of terrorism. Moreover, the Bush Administration was more than willing to assist in the effort and responded favorably to Uribe’s 2006 request for enhanced intelligence and PGM capabilities.

While the Colombian Government was benefitting from fortunate timing, the FARC was suffering from miscalculations, poorly timed actions, and bad luck. In February 2003, the FARC captured three American Northrup Grumman contractors whose plane crashed during a cocaine eradication reconnaissance flight. The three were kept in captivity along with the captured Colombian politician, Ingrid Betancourt. While kidnapping was a common tool for the FARC and ELN, the holding of U.S.

hostages was poorly timed and proved to be a miscalculation. With the lives of U.S. citizens at stake, the Bush Administration poured resources into Colombia and leveraged the full capabilities of the intelligence community and U.S. SOF. During the five years of captivity, intelligence and tactics sharing increased as part of the mission to bring the hostages home.

After numerous close calls over the years, the hostages were finally rescued in July of 2008. In what has become known as a daring and brilliant ruse, the Colombian government freed the hostages without firing a shot. *Operation Jaque*, or *Check*, employed human intelligence and electronic warfare capabilities to deceive the hostage caretakers. On July 2nd, FARC guards, who thought they were following orders, moved the hostages to a landing zone and loaded them into Mi-17 helicopters they believed belonged to a friendly Non-Governmental Organization.⁶⁹ Once in the air, the captors were subdued and the hostages were told they were safely in the hands of the Colombian Army.

Operation Jaque dealt a crushing blow to an organization that was already in disarray from the effects of Colombian pressure and unfortunate timing. Luis Edgar Devia Silva, aka Raul Reyes, was killed in the airstrike on March 1st. Twenty-six days later, the FARC's senior commander, Manuel Marulanda, collapsed and died of a heart attack. Less than one-hundred days after that, the rebel organization was tricked into surrendering their most prized hostages without a struggle. In the aftermath of *Operation Jaque*, FARC forces retreated to the far reaches of the Colombian jungle and tried to salvage their beleaguered insurgency. Had FARC leadership known how this hostage situation would end, they would have never held these high profile individuals.

In this endeavor, the FARC completely miscalculated and suffered the consequences of poor timing.

Insights and Conclusion

In November of 2016, the Colombian government and the FARC signed a peace accord to end fifty-two years of fighting. While it is too early to evaluate the longevity and strategic wisdom of this peace agreement, it appears to be another milestone in Colombia's climb towards peace and prosperity. In recognition of the progress, a number of published accounts have surfaced linking this moment to the 2000 implementation of *Plan Colombia*. Unfortunately, these linkages fall short of revealing the real seeds of strategic progress. Although *Plan Colombia* achieved some success and served as a rallying point for renewed effort, other factors, to include the evolution of Colombian strategy and other contextual issues, deserve more credit. The five critical factors examined in this paper--National Will, Leadership, Technology, Information, and Time/Timing--coupled with the change in strategic direction under President Uribe, illuminate the true engines of positive change in the counterinsurgency effort in Colombia. Given these factors, a number of strategic insights emerge that policymakers, particularly in the U.S., should note.

First, change during an intrastate conflict is difficult and depends almost completely on contextual factors that belong solely to the nation that is embroiled in that conflict. Despite the best intentions of the U.S and other concerned nations, only Colombia could muster the national will necessary to foment change. In terms of leadership, no amount of external assistance could have provided the strategic leadership that Presidents Pastrana, Uribe, and Santos provided. Today, as the U.S. and its allies continue to struggle to create a peaceful Middle East, the criticality of

strong, native leadership and popular support of that leadership will similarly come to the fore. Long-term strategic success in the region may well depend on these factors, regardless of the financial and military assistance of the West.

The second insight may be more helpful in that it describes how a partnered country can contribute to help a fractured state recover from insurgency. Colombia's leveraging of U.S. training and technological capabilities (PGMs, Aircraft, and Intelligence) helped turn the tide against the FARC and ELN. Whereas Colombia had the money and the will to move forward, they lacked specific capabilities and the training to be completely effective in a counterinsurgency fight. Despite the counternarcotic limits of the original *Plan Colombia*, the U.S. eventually removed the restrictions and provided new technologies for the counterinsurgency effort. The results were dramatic and part of what eventually brought the FARC back to the negotiating table.

The third take-away emanates from Colombia's IO effort. In this imaginative campaign to influence minds, Colombia humanized both sides of the conflict and generated unity and hope from despair. The execution of this campaign, in concert with lethal efforts, put enormous pressure on the FARC and ELN. Like the other intangibles of leadership and will, only the host nation can rightly implement a program that draws on common culture and calls for reconciliation. This reality should serve as a clarion call for the U.S. and its allies currently involved in stabilizing Iraq, Afghanistan and other weak states: certain cultural factors may be leveraged to help win a counterinsurgency or defeat an internal rebellion, but many of these informational power-related efforts will have to be initiated by the host government itself.

The fourth insight is quite basic, but often eludes strategic planners: the centrality of time and timing. As with all counterinsurgencies, nothing lasting can be achieved rapidly. The American military training partnership with Colombia, in particular the steady efforts of the U.S. Army Special Forces, predated *Plan Colombia* and was only briefly interrupted when the Clinton Administration decertified Colombia and restricted aid in 1996-97. This persistent partnership of more than two and a half decades made a significant difference as U.S. Forces trained countless numbers of Colombian soldiers and police officers. Insights relative to timing are more difficult to discern because timing involves the overlap and impact of predictable and unpredictable events. Nonetheless, senior military leaders and policymakers must always consider timing and elements of chance. The rescue of the U.S. hostages hints at the importance of timing. Although it is impossible to prove, it is likely that the FARC's loss of key leaders in the months prior to the rescue greatly impaired their ability to coordinate and communicate orders. With their leadership in disarray, the timing of the ruse and rescue was impeccable.

Finally, a review of the evolution of the Colombian counterinsurgent strategy from both the U.S. and Colombian perspective yields important insights for the future. Starting with Colombia, it is apparent that President Uribe's "security first" strategy was more effective than that of his predecessor. While Pastrana must receive credit for his vision and efforts to craft a "Marshall Plan" for Colombia, Uribe understood that economic development is impossible without first ensuring a secure environment. When put into action this policy difference made a huge impact. In the same vein, the evolution of U.S. policy provides lessons. Although the Reagan administration identified the critical linkage of insurgent organizations and drug trafficking, U.S. policy prior to

2002 focused solely on attriting drug flow and narco-trafficking organizations while ignoring the bigger problem of the insurgency. The Bush administration's 2002 lifting of the restrictions and subsequent efforts to provide greater personnel and technological assistance for the kinetic fight against the FARC and ELN marked a turning point in the long-running counterinsurgency. Today, as the U.S. and its allies continue the long war against fundamental Islamist extremism around the world, policymakers would do well to keep in mind—and should be advised properly by those in uniform—that without physical security, populations caught in intrastate conflict cannot begin to develop economically and move beyond the fear and violence that insurgencies create.

Examining Colombia's struggles and remarkable turnaround reveals important lessons. In reviewing the critical factors that facilitated this progress, it is clear that the intangibles of national will, leadership, timing, and sound strategy are essential. While the U.S. and other nations in the world community may want to assist, the drive to change must be rooted in the host nation population and cultivated by native strategic leaders. Foreign aid can help close specific gaps, but no amount of aid, intelligence, or special weaponry can guarantee success. In the end, multiple instruments of power must be employed over extended periods of time by both the host government and its external allies in an integrated manner to resolve counterinsurgencies and other violent intrastate conflicts.

Endnotes

¹ James L. Zackrison and Eileen Bradley, *Colombian Sovereignty under Siege*, Strategic Forum, no. 112 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997), 1.

² Max Boot and Richard Bennet, "The Colombian Miracle: How Alvaro Uribe with Smart US Support Turned the Tide against Drug Lords and Marxist Guerrillas," *Weekly Standard* 15, no. 13 (2009): <http://www.weeklystandard.com/article/272306> (accessed January 15, 2017).

³ Juan Carlos Pinzón, "Colombia Back from the Brink: From Failed State to Exporter of Security," *Prism* 5, no. 4 (2015): 2, http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_5-4/Columbia%20Back%20from%20the%20Brink.pdf (accessed January 15, 2017).

⁴ Gabriel Marcella, *Plan Colombia: The Strategic and Operational Imperatives* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2001), 8.

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, "Colombia," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html> (accessed January 15, 2017).

⁶ Mark Moyar, Hector Pagan, and Wil R. Griego, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, No. JSOU-R-14-3 (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2014), 3.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Carlos Alberto Ospina Ovalle, "Colombia: Updating the Mission?" *Prism* 2, no. 4 (September 2011): 53-54.

¹⁰ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 7.

¹¹ Ronald Reagan, *National Security Decision Directive 221-Narcotics and National Security* (Washington, DC: The White House, 1986).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ George H.W. Bush, *National Drug Control Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, September 1989), 13.

¹⁵ Juan L. Orama, *U.S. Military Evolution in Counternarcotics Operations in Latin America* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2001), 8-19.

¹⁶ Robert D. Ramsey III, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experience, 1998-2008* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center), 21-26.

¹⁷ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 23.

¹⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹⁹ Thomas R. Pickering, "Anatomy of Plan Colombia," *The American Interest* 5, no. 2 (2009): 71-77, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2009/11/01/anatomy-of-plan> (accessed January 20, 2017).

- ²⁰ Marcella, *Plan Colombia*, 8.
- ²¹ Pickering, *Anatomy of Plan Colombia*, 71-77.
- ²² Andrés Pastrana, "Una política de paz para el cambio," *Presidencia de la Republica de Colombia, Hechos de paz* 6 (June 8, 1998), 29-41, 21.
- ²³ Winifred Tate, *Drugs, Thugs, and Diplomats: US Policymaking in Colombia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 144.
- ²⁴ Angel Rabassa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2001), 61-62.
- ²⁵ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 16.
- ²⁶ Rabassa, *Colombian Labyrinth*, 62.
- ²⁷ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 16.
- ²⁸ Michael Shifter, "Plan Colombia: A Retrospective," *Americas Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (2012): 36, <http://www.americasquarterly.org/node/3787> (accessed January 29, 2017).
- ²⁹ William F. Perez, *An Effective Strategy for Colombia: A Potential End to the Current Crisis* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2004), 2.
- ³⁰ Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: the History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 105; David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 40; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 571.
- ³¹ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 23.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 25.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 2.
- ³⁶ Juan Forero, "Burdened Colombians Back Tax to Fight Rebels," *The New York Times Online*, September 8, 2002, 8, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/08/world/burdened-colombians-back-tax-to-fight-rebels.html> (accessed January 30, 2017).
- ³⁷ Perez, *An Effective Strategy for Colombia*, 1.
- ³⁸ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 20.
- ³⁹ Thomas Marks, *Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), 11.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁴¹ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 25.

⁴² David Eric Spencer, *Colombia's Road to Recovery: Security and Governance 1982-2010* (Washington, DC: Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University, 2011), 55.

⁴³ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 26.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ George W. Bush, "President Bush and Colombia President Uribe Discuss Terrorism," September 25, 2002, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020925-1.html> (accessed February 10, 2017).

⁴⁷ Moyar, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 35.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁹ Dana Priest, "Covert Action in Colombia: US intelligence, GPS Bomb Kits Help Latin American Nation Cripple Rebel Forces," *Washington Post Online*, December 21, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2013/12/21/covert-action-in-colombia/?utm_term=.5fd7ab0b8522 (accessed February 10, 2017).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Information Operations*, Joint Publication 3-13 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 27, 2012), ix.

⁶⁰ Lara Logan, “How Unconventional Thinking Transformed a War-Torn Colombia,” *60 Minutes*, December 11, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-minutes-colombia-after-civil-war-lara-logan/> (accessed March 2, 2017).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Reagan, *National Security Decision Directive 221*.

⁶⁸ Moyer, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, 8.

⁶⁹ Wade Goodwyn, “Details of the Colombian Hostage Rescue Operation,” *NPR*, July 4, 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92236765> (accessed February 20, 2017).