

GUERRILLA GROUPS IN COLOMBIA:  
PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
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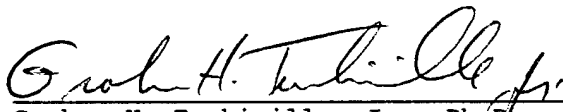
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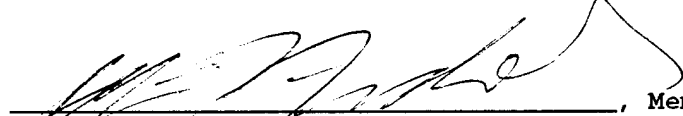
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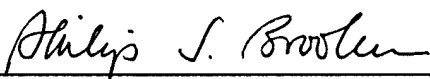
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# ABSTRACT

Guerrilla Groups in Colombia: Prospects for the Future by Major  
Elisabeth J. Bilyeu, USA, 79 pages.

This study assesses the evolution of the Colombian insurgency and drug trafficking situation, through 1994. The Colombian government's efforts to meet both challenges are detailed and analyzed in order to conclude if a peace between the government and the guerrillas--and a disbandment of the Colombian drug industry--is probable. Also, the abundant circumstantial evidence is evaluated to describe the relationship that exists between the guerrillas and drug traffickers.

The findings reveal that there is an inconsistent and ever changing relationship between the guerrillas and the drug traffickers and that the main guerrilla organizations are involved in various aspects of the drug industry and are in part financed from that involvement.

The study concludes that as the guerrillas' finances and accompanying influence grow, the harder it will be for the Colombian government to negotiate a peace agreement. Furthermore, the counter-drug actions of the United States and Colombia alone will not dissolve the drug industry in Colombia. For the drug industry to feel the counter-drug impact, sustained countermeasures must be a coordinated worldwide effort.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Running drugs is one sure way to make big money in a hurry. Moreover, the directions of the flow are ideologically attractive. Drugs go to the bourgeois countries, where they corrupt and where they kill, while the arms go to pro-Communist terrorist groups in the Third World.<sup>1</sup>

President's Commission on Organized Crime,  
Report to the President and the Attorney  
General: America's Habit: Drug Abuse,  
Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime, 1986

#### Thesis topic

The thesis topic is "Guerrilla Groups in Colombia: Prospects for the Future."

#### Primary Question

The primary research question that this thesis will address is:  
How has the Colombian illicit drug industry affected prospects for resolving the guerrilla conflict in Colombia?

#### Secondary Questions

1. Has there been a change in the relationship among the Colombian government and drug cartels that influences the government and guerrilla conflict?
2. What is the relationship among Colombian guerrillas and the Colombian drug cartels?
3. How has the involvement with the Colombian cartels influenced/changed the fundamental ideological beliefs of the Colombian guerrilla groups?

## Definitions

The preliminary research for this thesis quickly revealed that the definitions of relevant words and concepts vary from author to author and publication to publication. Many words are used interchangeably (insurgent, terrorist, bandit, guerrilla) from source to source. Terms used in this thesis, however, are used in the context as defined below.

Drug trafficking. The cultivation, production, processing, transportation, and distribution or sale of illicit drugs.<sup>1</sup>

Drug cultivation. The planting and harvesting of the plant from which a drug is produced (i.e., opium poppies, coca plant).

Guerrilla. A combat participant in guerrilla warfare.<sup>2</sup>

Guerrilla warfare. Hostilities conducted by lightly armed indigenous forces operating in an area controlled by a hostile central government or an occupying foreign power.<sup>3</sup>

Insurgency. An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion or armed conflict.<sup>4</sup>

Terrorism. The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to attain political, religious, criminal, or ideological goals. It involves a criminal act that is often symbolic and intended to influence an audience beyond its immediate victims. May be a method used by an insurgency or a drug trafficking organization.<sup>5</sup>

Narco-Terrorism. A relatively new term linking drug trafficking with terrorism and insurgency. "Narco-terrorism occurs when politically motivated terrorist activities that is, assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings (or the threats of these activities) become tangled with the narcotics trade."<sup>6</sup>

Drug Cartels. For the purposes of this paper a cartel is defined as an extensive organization, whose purpose is to profit from illegal trafficking in drugs. Initially the Colombian drug cartels dealt heavily in cocaine, but have since branched out into heroin trafficking. Two cartels are expanded on below.<sup>7</sup>

Cali Cartel. This Cartel is named after the city of Cali, Colombia. It is now the most powerful cocaine trafficking organization in the world and is responsible for a high percentage of the cocaine coming into the United States.

Medellin Cartel. This Cartel was Once the largest and formerly the most powerful cartel in the world. Its base of operations is in the city of Medellin, Colombia. The more violent of the two cartels, the Medellin Cartel uses assassinations, bombings, intimidation, etc., to maintain control and to deal with the Colombian government.

Guerrilla Groups. The Colombian guerrilla groups continue to go through reorganizations and changes, causing splinters of the major organizations. The major groups currently operating are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), both under the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator (CGSB) umbrella, as well as the other smaller guerrilla organizations. The major groups are described as follows.<sup>8</sup>

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). This is the largest, most militant, best equipped, and best trained of the groups. Dominated by Marxists, it is an armed wing of the Colombian Communist Party. Its stated goal is to destroy the existing social and economic order and establish a Marxist-Lenist state.

National Liberation Army (ELN). The ELN uses kidnapping, sabotage, and extortion to finance its operations. A favorite target for its sabotage efforts is oil and gas pipelines. The group is small with less than 1,500 members and is a communist, pro-Cuban movement.

Movement of April-19 (M-19). The M-19 was a major guerrilla group in the 1970s and 1980s. The M-19s most well-known act was its attack in 1985 on the Colombian Supreme Court, the Palace of Justice. In 1990 they were accepted by the Colombian government as a legal political party and now call themselves the M-19 Democratic Alliance.

Popular Liberation Army (EPL). The EPL was similar to the ELN, but initially Maoist oriented. The EPL, like the M-19, was legally accepted by the Colombian government in 1991.

Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator (CGSB). An alliance formed in 1987 between the ELN, EPL, and M-19. The CGSB is now a 2,500+ coalition comprised of the FARC, ELN, and EPL dissidents.<sup>9</sup>

#### Limitation

Much of the pertinent documentation/publications written in Spanish and pertaining to the topic have not been translated into English.

#### Delimitations

1. The research focused primarily on the two major drug cartels, the Medellin and Cali, and their relationships with the FARC and ELN guerrilla groups.
2. Though a historical background on the major drug and insurgency events leading up to 1990 is provided, the major part of the research was restricted to the past four years.

#### Background

Colombia is a country with many internal problems. Chief among those is organized political and criminal violence. The United States has a great interest in the country in relation to its own strategic goals. Nevertheless, Colombia is the hub in South America for narcotics trafficking and therefore remains a focal point for United States counterdrug interests. The United States' 1994 National Security Strategy identifies drug trafficking as a "serious threat" to democracy and the security of the United States. To counter this threat the United States has shifted its strategy to reduce its emphasis on interdicting drugs in transit and in the transit countries. More emphasis is now placed on reducing demand and assisting governments of drug producing countries in their attempts to fight drug trafficking.<sup>10</sup>

Colombia is an agricultural and mining country with a diverse climate and geography. The geographic location is a prime reason why Colombia is the preferred country for drug trafficking activities. Located in the northwestern corner of South America, it is the fifth largest Latin American country in area. Colombia borders Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela, and Panama and has coastlines along the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Its largest land feature is the Andes Mountains in the west, which are divided into three ranges running north to south and divided by river valleys. The eastern part of the country is characterized by plains of grasslands and jungle. The nearly inassessable land in much of the country is ideal for covert drug laboratories, airstrips, and border crossings.

Probably the most violent period in Colombia's history was *La Violencia* (1949-1953). The brutal violence claimed approximately 150,000 lives during these years, for a total of an estimated 200,000 by the end of *La Violencia* in the mid-1960s.<sup>11</sup> The catalyst to *La Violencia* was the assassination of the Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan in 1948. Eliecer Gaitan was supported by the working class, who, with the Liberal landowners, now rose up against the Conservative government. A Conservative, Laureano Gomez, became Colombia's President in 1950. His Conservative regime took repressive measures against its Liberal opponents, thus intensifying terror and violence. A vigilante group who supported the Conservatives emerged-- *Los Pajaros*. *Los Pajaros* assassinated, tortured, and terrorized Liberals of all social categories. Recruited Liberal peasant-guerrillas responded in kind.<sup>12</sup> Most of the killing and fighting occurred only in specific regions, such as the coffee-producing areas.

Violence, Liberal against Conservative, became a preferred tool with which to settle old debts and to gain power, land and affluence. As the guerrillas' demands grew, the Liberal and Conservative landowners began breaking with the guerrillas. The guerrillas then began forming their own localized guerrilla forces, some with communist sponsorship.

In 1952, the previously unbridgeable political differences between the Liberal and Conservative parties were put aside when both parties supported the government takeover by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla and his establishment of a military government.<sup>13</sup>

General Rojas Pinilla's tenure as President was viewed as an intermediary period by the parties. One of his chief aims was to defuse the guerrilla situation. He was partially successful when many of the guerrillas responded to his offer of amnesty. A year after amnesty was granted to the guerrillas, however, Rojas Pinilla also gave amnesty to those who had supported the former Conservative government of Laureano Gomez, many of whom were affiliated with the group of *Los Pajaros*. The newly released *Pajaros* resumed fighting the guerrillas with unofficial approval of the Colombian Intelligence Service. The guerrillas quickly began to reorganize and take up arms again as the partisan violence resurged.<sup>14</sup> Rojas Pinilla tried to cope with the renewed violence through censorship and repression. His efforts to begin his own political party, increase coffee taxes and enforce general repression of the populace eventually led to his alienation from the public, church, economic sectors, and the Liberal and Conservative parties. He was forced to resign in 1957 under pressure of a widespread strike, the Church, and economic interest groups.<sup>15</sup> A military junta ruled in the interim year following General Rojas Pinilla's forced resignation and was replaced in 1958 with elected president Alberto Lleras Camargo. Lleras Camargo was the first President of the newly formed National Front (FN), a coalition of the Conservative and Liberal parties that was to last until 1974.

A second phase of violence occurred from 1958-1965. The FN offered the organized guerrillas amnesty. Though some guerrillas accepted the amnesty, many did not and it did not work. Those who did not accept it or recognize the party pact of the FN resorted to banditry. No longer supported by the Liberal Party, these groups looked to local politicians for leadership, while rejecting the ruling class

and national politics. Basically radical Liberals, many of these guerrillas threw their support behind a new Liberal Party faction, which had communist leanings, the Revolutionary Liberal Movement (MRL).<sup>16</sup> This, and the guerrillas' increased demands for money and power caused many local politicians, many loyal to the Liberal Party, to step back from their support of the guerrillas. The guerrillas retaliated and resorted to extortion, kidnapping, and murder to intimidate the landowners and proprietors into providing continued support. The MRL opposed the FN, but when in 1962, due to its increasing political power, the FN offered to include them in the government, the MRL accepted. The MRL then renounced further dealings with the communists and distanced itself from the remaining guerrillas as it reestablished itself within the Liberal Party.<sup>17</sup>

Stranded by local politicians and the MRL and confronted by a United States-assisted Colombian Army, the guerrillas evolved into organized communist-oriented groups. Up to this time, guerrilla violence was primarily village against village, peasant against peasant, Liberal against Conservative or peasant against landowner.<sup>18</sup> The United States gave Colombia \$60 million in military assistance and \$100 million in military equipment between 1961 and 1967 for counterinsurgency.<sup>19</sup> The war between the Colombian government and the guerrillas accelerated as the Colombian Army carried out aggressive, offensive operations against the guerrillas. The guerrillas were linked with communism and the United States, and Colombia saw the counter-insurgency operations as a step in fighting the spread of communism.<sup>20</sup>

Following United States military counsel and guidance on how to fight insurgency, the first objective of the Colombian Army's counter-insurgency plan was to break the ties between the guerrillas and peasants. This included improving the Colombian Army's image with the peasants and discolored their positive view of the guerrillas. In conjunction, many guerrilla leaders and supporters were killed or arrested by the Army.

The surviving groups joined forces. They held a conference in 1964 and another in 1966, from which the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the armed wing of the Colombian Communist Party, was established. The FARC spread its influence by offering small farmers and ranchers protection from the takeover attempts of the larger cattle ranchers. In many areas where an infra-structure did not exist, it organized basic services and provided law and order.<sup>21</sup> The FARC portrayed itself as a protector of the peasants and maintainer of law in many rural regions. Its roots were with and for the people, and it was able to survive when other guerrilla groups were diminished.

The FARC was followed in 1964 by the emergence of another group, the Army of National Liberation (ELN), which operated in northeastern Colombia. The occurrence of the Cuban revolution played a major role in the ideological beliefs of this newly formed guerrilla organization. Short-lived support for the ELN was generated when a charismatic priest, Father Camilo Torres Restrepo joined the group in 1965. Interestingly, Father Torres Restrepo was the cousin of the then current Colombian President, Carlos Lleras Restrepo. His vision was to bring all the people who opposed the National Front under one umbrella; a common revolutionary platform.<sup>22</sup> He was killed in February 1966, just four months after joining the ELN, while participating in an ELN armed action. The ELN organization eroded over the following years. The organization was plagued with internal disputes over organizational objectives. The leaders could not agree on whether to orient their efforts in the urban areas or on the rural peasantry. Little work was done to establish a political party, or to organize or generate populace support. The virtual demise of the organization occurred in 1977 when the Colombian Armed Forces moved against them in the largest counter-insurgency operation to that date. The ELN did not reemerge until the 1980s.

The Popular Liberation Army (EPL) appeared in 1965 as the armed wing of the Communist Party-Marxist Leninist, and was formalized as an

organization in 1967. The EPL had peasant support in the northwestern area of the country, in which it operated, but was eventually devastated by internal strife and the actions of the Colombian Army.<sup>23</sup>

Rojas Pinilla, deposed in 1957, formed the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO) in the 1960s. The ANAPO lost a very close election to the National Front on 19 April 1970. The Movement of April-19 (M-19) was founded in 1972 when the socialist sector of the ANAPO joined an offshoot of the FARC and a third group expelled from the Communist Party. This organization was Marxist, but had close ties and support from Cuba. It wanted to lead the country militarily towards a nationalistic government of the people. The M-19 strategy was to gain recognition by executing media-grabbing public events. It stole national symbols, kidnapped for ransom, assassinated public figures, and stormed buildings. The M-19 strategy moved the guerrilla from just fighting the Army to, through acts of violence and terror, fighting the government. The government now had to consider options other than the annihilation of the guerrillas, such as negotiations and political concessions, for dealing with the guerrillas.<sup>24</sup>

The 1970s also saw the emphasis of the illicit drug industry shift from marijuana to cocaine. The United States had worked closely with the Colombian government to stamp out the marijuana plant, but now faced a greater threat to U.S. security interests--cocaine. Initially, Cubans were heavily involved with the drug industry in the United States, but by the late 1970s they were replaced by the rapidly growing Colombian cartels. These cartels quickly penetrated the industry, spreading their control laterally and vertically.<sup>25</sup> Eventually the Colombian cartels controlled 75-85 percent of the cocaine market, and Colombia was soon the hub for cocaine trafficking worldwide.

Two of the cartels that emerged in the 1970s were the Medellin Cartel and the Cali Cartel. The largest cartel in the 1970s and 1980s was the Medellin Cartel. Key members of this cartel were Carlos Lehder, the Ochoa family, and Pablo Escobar family. The Medellin Cartel not

only controlled an overwhelming amount of the cocaine coming into the United States, but had also formed an armed, antiguerrilla, death squad wing. This group, the MAS (Death to Kidnappers), was initially formed to deal with the M-19 kidnapping for ransom of a daughter from the Ochoa family. After dozens of assassinations of M-19 connected people, attributed to the MAS, were carried out, the daughter was released without ransom.<sup>26</sup> The MAS quickly became a favored tool of the Medellin Cartel and was used to carry out the assassinations of fierce competitors, guerrillas who interfered with operations, and outspoken, antidrug journalists and political/government opponents.<sup>27</sup> Though the Medellin Cartel controlled the cocaine market in Miami, the Cali Cartel dominated it in New York City. The Cali Cartel was not as violent, nor showcased their ill-gotten wealth as overtly as members of the Medellin Cartel.

Attempting to fight the drug problems and cartels, Colombia and the United States agreed in the late 1970s to an Extradition Treaty. In addition to signing the treaty, Colombian President Julio Cesar Turbay intensified the government actions against the drug traffickers. It was not long, however, much to the dismay of the United States, that the focus was changed to deal with the increasingly violent guerrillas. The extradition of Colombian drug traffickers was also suspended.<sup>28</sup>

In 1982, Belisario Betancur Cuartas became President. He initially opposed extradition, but with his Justice Minister, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, he renewed operations against drug trafficking. Lara Bonilla's success in fighting the cartels led to his assassination in 1984 by a cartel hit man. President Betancur responded by embracing a policy of extradition. The drug cartels and guerrillas reacted violently to the change in policy. Between the violent efforts of Colombian guerrilla groups and drug cartels, numerous government and judicial officials were killed.<sup>29</sup> Probably the most remembered and tragic event was the M-19 assault on the Palace of Justice, Colombia's Supreme Court, in 1985. The bloody ordeal ended only after the deaths

of eleven Supreme Court Justices and numerous other civilians, military members, and guerrillas.<sup>30</sup>

A new President, Virgilio Barco Vargas, was elected in 1986. He endorsed the extradition policy by signing the treaty in December 1986, and thereby continuing the extradition of drug traffickers to the United States. The Medellin Cartel reacted with more bombings and assassinations. Even the capture and extradition of Carlos Lehder Rivas, a key Medellin Cartel member, did little to stem the violence. By the end of Barco's term as President, though aided and supported by the United States, he was losing ground in the fight against drug trafficking.

In 1990, Cesar Gaviria Trujillo became President and the Colombian government changed its methods of dealing with, among other groups, the drug traffickers. The United States heavily criticized the new methods, which included reduced penalties for drug traffickers and others who surrendered to the Colombian authorities and confessed their crimes. Concurrently, a ruling by the Colombian National Constituent Assembly resulted in the nullification of the Extradition Treaty. Colombia's new measures, though, resulted in the surrender of drug cartel members and a renewed peacemaking process with the guerrillas.<sup>31</sup>

The ensuing years have seen many changes. An on-again, off-again peace continues between the government and the guerrilla groups. The major groups left are the FARC and the ELN under the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator (CGSB) umbrella. Even the dominance of the cartels has changed to currently favor the Cali Cartel. This shift of power was due mainly to the deaths and surrenders of key cartel members, culminating in that of the Medellin Cartel kingpin, Pablo Escobar. Escobar was probably the most powerful drug trafficker at the time of his surrender to the Colombian authorities in 1991. He continued to run his "business" from a "prison" he had built himself. He escaped from the "prison" in June 1992 upon hearing a credible report that authorities were about to transfer him to a real prison. By the time of

his death in December 1993, the Cali Cartel had already surpassed the Medellin Cartel in power and dollars. These years, events, and horizontal infrastructure of the cartels will be more fully detailed and analyzed in subsequent chapters.

#### Importance

Colombia's main cash export and agricultural livelihood is coffee, though the profits from the illegal transshipment and marketing of coca and poppy have since overshadowed the coffee bean. Colombia is the major center through which drugs travel. This directly affects the United States and our war against drugs as the drugs cross our borders and into the country.

A growing body of evidence suggests that the Colombian guerrilla groups and drug cartels assisted each other in carrying out their overlapping agenda, during the years that the extradition treaty was in effect. For instance, the cartels did not wish for extradition to the United States and the guerrillas did not agree with it in principle. There is also evidence to suggest that the relationship has broadened and that some guerrillas are directly or indirectly involved in drug trafficking.<sup>23</sup> This concept will be analyzed more fully in later chapters.

The extent of this relationship and its impact on the United States and the Colombian governments is important. The largest threat within Colombia to the national security of the United States is the drug cartels with their massive vertical and horizontal infrastructure. This infrastructure was penetrated many facets of the Colombian political and legal systems and the legitimate international business community. Cooperation between the guerrillas and the drug traffickers will make fighting the drug organizations that much harder and may affect the peace that the Colombian government is trying to establish with the guerrillas.

### Summary

This chronological history of Colombia from 1949 detailed the violence and the insurgency versus government conflict that have haunted Colombia through much of her existence. Towards the end of the 1970s, the guerrilla groups were reorganizing and the drug traffickers were quickly expanding their operations and networks and accumulating money and influence. Chapter Two will now describe the increasing strength/power of the drug traffickers and the guerrillas through the 1980s and the steps the Colombian government took to counter the influence and existence of these groups.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>President's Commission on Organized Crime, Report to the President and the Attorney General: America's Habit: Drug Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), 162.

<sup>1</sup>President's Commission on Organized Crime, Report to the President and the Attorney General: America's Habit: Drug Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), 5.

<sup>2</sup>Tsouras, Peter, ed., The United States Army: A Dictionary (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 299.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 823, 824.

<sup>6</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, Mountain High. White Avalanche: Cocaine and Power in the Andean States and Panama (New York: Praeger Pub., 1989) 10.

<sup>7</sup>United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. Drug Intelligence Report: The Illicit Drug Situation in Colombia (Washington, D.C.: Drug Enforcement Administration, 1993), 12, 14, 15.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>9</sup>Ehrenfeld, Rachel, Narco-terrorism (Basic Books, Inc., 1990), 84.

<sup>10</sup>The White House. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 9, 24 & 25.

<sup>11</sup>Jenny Pearce, Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 52.

<sup>12</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1992), 87-91.

<sup>13</sup>Jenny Pearce, 60.

<sup>14</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 108 & 109.

<sup>15</sup>Jenny Pearce, 60 & 61.

<sup>16</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 175.

<sup>17</sup>Jenny Pearce, 62 & 63.

<sup>18</sup>Robert H. Dix, Politics of Colombia (New York: Praeger, 1987), 39 & 40.

<sup>19</sup>Jenny Pearce, 63.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 167 & 168.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>23</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 179.

<sup>24</sup>Jenny Pearce, 171, 172, 174, 175.

<sup>25</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 19, 20 & 23.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>27</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, The White Labyrinth (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 117 & 118.

<sup>28</sup>Arnaldo Claudio, United States--Colombia Extradition Treaty: Failure of a Security Strategy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 1992), 70.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 71 & 72.

<sup>30</sup>Ana Carrigan, The Palace of Justice: A Colombian Tragedy (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1991), 13.

<sup>31</sup>Arnaldo Claudio, 70-73.

CHAPTER TWO  
COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKING  
AND  
INSURGENCY IN THE 1980s

Insurgency  
(1980-1986)

In the 1970s and early 1980s Colombian government actions seemed to benefit the large landowners and adversely target the peasant colonists. Lands initially cleared and farmed by the colonists were slowly taken over by the large and politically influential landowners. These conditions helped to set the stage for the strong reemergence of the insurgents, who were supported and, in some cases, joined by the colonists. The insurgents backed and defended the colonists from the infringement efforts of the landowners and developed economic, social, and political organizations in many communities.<sup>1</sup> In the outlying areas in which they had control, the guerrillas exploited and demanded taxes/ protection money from not only the cocaine industry, but also from other types of revenue producing businesses.<sup>2</sup> The government tried to counter the growing guerrilla insurgency with military force. The violence escalated and Colombia ushered in the 1980s to a renewed period of intense conflict as the Colombian government and Army tried to counter both the guerrillas and drug traffickers.

The decade opened with the February 1980 seizing of the Dominican Republic embassy in Bogota by M-19 members. The guerrillas demanded a 50 million dollar ransom, safe passage to Cuba, and the release of imprisoned guerrillas. Upon receiving a 1.2 million dollar ransom and passage to Cuba, the guerrillas released their eighteen diplomat captives in April. They failed, however, to secure the release

of their comrades from prison. Events ended more tragically in 1981 with the M-19 murder of Charles Bitterman, an American missionary, after neither the United States nor Colombia would give in to all the M-19 release demands.<sup>3</sup>

During the short time some of the M-19 members were in Cuba, there was an attempt, initiated by the Cubans, to join the forces of the M-19, FARC, and ELN and to coordinate their efforts against the Colombian government. Though the merging of the groups did not occur, a fledgling sense of cooperation between the groups was established. Cuba also trained and equipped M-19 guerrillas with the intent that the guerrillas would return to Colombia and establish a rural versus urban-based insurgency. The project climaxed in February 1981, when, supposedly with the assistance of Panama's intelligence agency G-2 Chief, Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Antonio Noriega, two hundred M-19 guerrillas landed on the Pacific coast of Colombia. Unfortunately for the guerrillas, the Colombian Army was aware of the impending landing and proceeded to capture or kill the landing guerrillas. One survivor, Rosenberg Pabon, was to strike back a few years later as part of the 1985 M-19 takeover of the Palace of Justice.<sup>4</sup>

The FARC continued to expand in the 1980s and by the end of 1983 had a total of 27.<sup>5</sup> The number of members per front differed widely from a low of about 40, to a high of 150, with the norm being 80 to 100 members.<sup>6</sup> The ELN regrouped and focused on gaining political sympathy and building support among the populace. During the first few years of the 1980s the EPL also worked on revival. They broke with Maoism and the idea of a long popular war and worked on recruiting the working class and intellectuals.<sup>7</sup>

Newly elected President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) offered the guerrillas an unconditional amnesty and cease-fire in 1982 and released hundreds of imprisoned, to include top leader, guerrillas. The FARC and M-19 were interested in the peace prospects, but the ELN and initially the EPL condemned the peace negotiations.

After much dialogue, the FARC eventually signed a cease-fire with the government in 1984. The M-19 and EPL followed suit a few months later. The truce did not call for the guerrillas to surrender weapons, thus the guerrillas maintained their military potential. The groups were, however, to cease their violent actions and in return were allowed to participate in the government political process. They were given legitimate political recognition and the opportunity to pursue their objectives for national dialogue and democratic reforms.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, the peacetalks, amnesty and truce were not unanimously welcomed. Some landowners, ranchers, political elites, members of the Army and rightists were opposed to the government peace initiatives with the guerrillas.<sup>9</sup> On the way to sign the peace agreement in 1984, M-19 leader, Carlos Pizarro, was ambushed and wounded by police. With blood still flowing from his wounds, he still made it to the meeting and signed the agreement. The Army continued to take offensive actions against the guerrillas. An army brigade attacked the EPL only one month after the organization had signed the peace agreement.<sup>10</sup> The Army has been accused of attacking guerrilla camps and assisting paramilitary groups, specifically the Death to Kidnappers (MAS)--linked to the Medellin Cartel, in eliminating guerrillas, guerrilla sympathizers and guerrilla-linked political candidates and elected officials.<sup>11</sup> The drug barons, sectors of the Army, people from the business and political communities, and landowners had formed a type of alliance to combat the guerrillas and leftist sympathizers.<sup>12</sup> The Army established a presence in rural regions to counter and combat the guerrillas and to protect the landowners and ranchers from guerrilla kidnapping, extortion and robberies. In some of these regions, sectors of the Army became the law enforcer and were paid by the landowners and ranchers for protection. Many of these army units have been accused of human rights abuses, and corruption, such as cooperating with and accepting payoffs from drug traffickers.<sup>13</sup>

The FARC established the Patriotic Union (UP), their legal political arm in 1985. Through the 1980s the UP had minimal success with few UP candidates elected to Congress, council or as mayor. Affecting the Patriotic Union were the assassinations of elected members and the UP President, Dr. Jaime Pardo Leal. Speculation as to whom to attribute responsibility for the murders varied to include drug traffickers, rival guerrilla groups, rightist paramilitarists and even Colombia's own military.<sup>14</sup> In any case, the FARC, while ostensibly observing the cease-fire agreement, continued their expansion activities. They continued recruiting, training, kidnapping, demanding extortion and ransom money, and carrying out offensive military actions.

The EPL also used the cease-fire period to expand and reorganize. Like the FARC, it did not cease its kidnapping or other violent activities. The organization withdrew from the cease-fire agreement in late 1985 following the murder of its Communist party-Marxist Leninist (PC-ML) political commissar.

The M-19 also did not abandon violent actions, but at the same time began building up political support and establishing itself among the urban working class.<sup>15</sup> A blow to the M-19 organization occurred in 1983 with the death of its leader, Jaime Bateman. The guerrillas became increasingly disillusioned as the violence between the guerrillas and Army escalated and the promised government social, political and economic reforms did not materialize. Additionally, the M-19 started to lose its top leaders in 1985 as paramilitary groups systematically killed the guerrillas and their sympathizers and the Army conducted major counter-insurgency operations.<sup>16</sup> By the middle of 1985 the organization had taken its toll of killed members. Angered by the national state of siege declared by President Betancur following a guerrilla attack on Florencia, the capital of Caqueta and the assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, the M-19 decided to break with the ceasefire.<sup>17</sup> The M-19's credibility with the public and its access to the media, however, had diminished and the

organization needed a major event to thrust it back into the limelight.<sup>18</sup>

The ceasefire agreement deteriorated in 1985 and ultimately came to an end in November 1985 after members of the M-19 attacked the Palace of Justice. Armed with various weapons, over forty guerrillas assaulted and gained control of the building. Holding about seventy hostages, including Supreme Court Justices, the guerrillas demanded that President Betancur personally meet with them to discuss the government's noncompliance with the cease-fire truce. President Betancur refused and turned the affair over into the hands of the Army. A 28 hour siege by the Army ensued ending in the death of all the guerrillas, soldiers, eleven of the country's twenty-five Supreme Court Justices and some civilians.<sup>19</sup>

Except for the FARC with its political party, the UP, President Betancur's peace initiatives and truce with the guerrillas collapsed in 1985. Many factors contributed to the failure of the peace process. Neither the Army, political opposition groups nor Colombia's elite backed the President in his peace endeavors. For his part, President Betancur, with the strong opposition from within his own political party, was unable to bring about the social reforms desired by the guerrillas.<sup>20</sup>

#### Drug Trafficking (1980-1986)

By the end of the 1970s Colombian drug traffickers had changed from trafficking mainly in marijuana to cocaine. This switch can be attributed to the successful marijuana eradication campaign of President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala (1978-1982), the increasing amount of home-grown marijuana in the United States, and the more lucrative profits to be made from cocaine trafficking.<sup>21</sup>

In Colombia there were two major drug coalitions, the Medellin and the Cali Cartels. The cartels were named after the cities whence they originated. Through much of the 1980s the larger and more violent

of the two cartels was based in Medellin, with the other, relatively low-key one, in Cali. The key men behind the Medellin organization were Pablo Emilio Escobar Gaviria, Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha.

Pablo Emilio Escobar Gaviria shared the Medellin Cartel power mainly with Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez. Pablo Escobar learned early on how to deal with judicial and police problems. He was arrested in 1974 on stolen car charges. The drawn out judicial investigation and case came to a close in 1976. The charges were dismissed in 1977 after both star witnesses for the prosecution were murdered on the same May day in 1976. The court records were then burned in 1983 by five heavily armed men following a renewed interest in Pablo Escobar's background and the stolen car incident by newspaper reporters.<sup>22</sup>

During the same time, the Director of the National Police investigative agency in Antioquia, Carlos Gustavo Monroy Arenas, managed to arrest Pablo Escobar for drug trafficking and attempted bribery. Subsequently, the two undercover detectives involved in the arrest were murdered, the threatened court judge withdrew from the case, and in 1981 Monroy Arenas was assassinated. The new court judge released Pablo Escobar.<sup>23</sup>

The core element of the Cali Cartel was made up of two brothers, Gilberto Jose and Miguel Angel Rodriguez Orejuela, and Jose Santacruz Londono. By the mid-1970s they were involved in drug trafficking. Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela laundered his drug money through the First Interamericas Bank in Panama, of which, along with Jorge Luis Ochoa (Medellin Cartel), he was part owner. The Panama bank's license was ultimately cancelled in the mid-1980s.<sup>24</sup>

Though there is intense competition between the two cartels, they occasionally cooperated to protect their businesses, conduct joint business operations and eliminate adversaries.<sup>25</sup> The rise and the power of the cartels have influenced Colombia socially, economically and politically. The vertical and horizontal network and influence of the

drug traffickers touch all sectors from sports clubs and the arts to real estate, the media, business establishments and even the government, to include its military and judicial systems. An estimated 300,000 created jobs are credited to the cocaine industry, jobs that perhaps offered an opportunity to people who would otherwise have been unemployed. The industry is, unlike the government, able by its wealth to make significant contributions to the country's economy.<sup>26</sup> Though the business of cocaine trafficking has increased Colombia's employment, many of the created jobs are considered illegal. Drug related employment opportunities range from bodyguard, servant and assassin to drug processor and illicit cash crop grower.<sup>27</sup>

As the power and influence of the cartels rose, more and more prominent politicians to include congressmen, cabinet and defense ministers and even President Turbay Ayala were allegedly linked to the drug business. Bribery and intimidation convinced judges to dispose of drug related cases in favor of the traffickers. Medellin police were known to have been on the payroll of the Medellin Cartel. There was also the 1983 incident of an Army unit moving an entire drug laboratory in Air Force planes before it could be raided by authorities.<sup>28</sup> Pablo Escobar, a major Medellin Cartel figure was even elected to Congress as an alternative representative from Antioquia in 1982.

The Extradition Treaty between Colombia and the United States was to come into effect and the drug traffickers were imposing their influence to fight against its implementation. The drug barons disliked the Extradition Treaty because if arrested and extradited to the United States, their ability to influence the judicial outcome by bribery and the threat of violence would diminish.<sup>29</sup>

For the next two years President Betancur resisted signing the treaty, though he continued offensive actions against the drug traffickers. His Minister of Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, was adamantly and actively opposed to drug trafficking. He publicly attacked the illicit drug industry, alleged cartel involvement in

Colombia's professional soccer teams and also vocally supported the implementation of the Extradition Treaty. With the assistance of the head of the National Police's narcotics unit, Colonel Jaime Ramirez Gomez, intelligence information provided by the United States and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials, he struck a severe blow to the drug traffickers in 1984. They located, raided and destroyed the largest cocaine-processing laboratory in the world at Tranquilandia in 1984.<sup>30</sup> Supposedly the raiding force confiscated \$1.2 million in cocaine and seized, among other things, 7 aircraft, 19 processing laboratories, and 4 electrical plants. Most of the people escaped by helicopters and boats and no key personnel were arrested.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the security force protecting the complex was reported to have been comprised of FARC members. If true, this was probably the first substantial indication that some type of agreement and cooperation existed between the guerrillas and drug traffickers.<sup>32</sup> The author of The White Labyrinth, Rensselaer Lee, questions FARC involvement at Tranquilandia, though clear evidence of the FARC was found during a later laboratory raid, 75 km distant, at La Loma.<sup>33</sup>

Not even two months after the raid, Lara Bonilla was assassinated. The killing was attributed to the efforts of the Medellin Cartel kingpins. In fact, Pablo Escobar was indicted as the mastermind behind the murder by a Superior Court Judge, though the indictment against Escobar was later dismissed in 1987.<sup>34</sup> A formal investigation into the assassination supposedly revealed that the Medellin Cartel drugpins had attended a meeting at the country estate of Gustavo Restrepo, the brother-in-law of Lara Bonilla, and had paid \$486,000 for the killing. Galvanized, President Betancur restated his commitment to fight terror and drugs and began enforcing the Extradition Treaty.<sup>35</sup> Fleeing the threat of extradition, the Medellin Cartel leaders took refuge in Panama. From Panama they tried to negotiate a deal through the Colombian Attorney General, Carlos Jimenez Gomez. Their proposal, which in part was, allegedly, an offer to basically pay off Colombia's

foreign debt and cease their drug related operations in return for extradition treaty concessions, was refused by President Betancur.<sup>36</sup>

Slowly the drug kingpins quietly returned to Colombia and retaliated against the government crackdown through the use of bribery, intimidation and prominent figure assassinations. Drug connected activities included an exploding car bomb in front of the United States embassy, the compilation of hit lists, and death threats. United States government officials were not exempt from the targeting. Reportedly, there was even a \$350,000 kidnapping contract out on the DEA head, Francis Mullen.<sup>37</sup>

Events culminated in November 1985 with the M-19 attack on the Palace of Justice in Bogota. Supposedly, the guerrillas were paid between \$1,000,000 and 8,000,000 in drug money for conducting the attack, killing those Supreme Court Justices who supported extradition, and destroying extradition records.<sup>38</sup> Four magistrates involved with the Tranquilandia case were killed in the attack with a fifth, who had survived the Palace of Justice, killed later in July 1986.<sup>39</sup> However, a special investigation committee and separate inquiry conducted by Colombia concluded that there was no Medellin involvement and that the M-19 guerrillas acted alone. Even with the results of the investigation to the contrary, it is widely believed that the assault was a joint drug and guerrilla coordinated action.<sup>40</sup>

#### Insurgency (1986-1990)

Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) was elected President in 1986 and the violence between the guerrillas and Army continued. Paramilitary violence against the guerrillas, with suggested Army support, resulted in 691 people killed in 1988 alone. By 1989 there were 140 known death squads and the country was in a state of repression.<sup>41</sup>

Several movements to include the ELN, EPL and M-19 joined in 1986 to form a new guerrilla organization called the National Guerrilla Coordinator (CNG). Still adhering to the cease-fire agreement with the

government, the FARC did not participate. Conflicts arose between the FARC and the coalition guerrilla organizations through much of 1987, however, differences were put aside in late 1987 with the formation of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator (CGSB), a union of the FARC and CNG.<sup>42</sup> The CGSB was successful in coordinating joint guerrilla ventures and attacks, though through much of 1988 the various guerrilla organizations continued with their independent actions.<sup>43</sup>

Following the Palace of Justice event, the M-19 tried to reorganize and recover from the deaths incurred during the attack. Over the next year, however, key leaders of the organization continued to be killed by the police and the movement was unable to gain back its lost public support. Still, the M-19 was able to carry out small scale operations during 1987, though by 1988 the movement was ready for peace. In early 1988 the M-19 tried to negotiate another cease-fire with the government. Its offer to initiate a six-month ceasefire in exchange for the resumption of peace talks with the government was repeatedly rejected by President Barco. Hoping to force President Barco's cooperation, the M-19 carried out its first major activity since the Palace of Justice attack. In May 1988, M-19 members kidnapped Alvaro Gomez Hurtado, a former presidential candidate.<sup>44</sup> Gomez Hurtado was eventually released on the condition that various business leaders, political representatives and church members would enter into a peace dialogue with the movement. The government finally joined in the endeavor to establish a peace with the M-19 guerrillas. Even with this truce some members of the M-19 continued to be killed by the police, but in the fall of 1989, the guerrillas agreed to lay down their arms and they formed a political party.<sup>45</sup>

The ELN, who had not responded to President Betancur's peace initiative, rapidly grew between 1985 and 1989, absorbing an off-shoot from the EPL. It was the second largest guerrilla organization with 17 guerrilla fronts fielded by the end of 1988.<sup>46</sup> In 1986 the ELN stepped up its strategy of blowing-up oil pipelines along the Colombian-

Venezuelan border, causing millions of dollars in damages and lost oil revenues. The guerrillas also kidnapped foreign oil executives and were able to blackmail the oil companies into improving the social conditions in the areas in which the companies operated. One of the movement's objectives was to force the government to reduce its reliance on foreign oil companies and to bring the issue to public debate.<sup>47</sup> Oil exploration and mining had replaced manufacturing in the 1980s as the main emphasis for foreign investment.<sup>48</sup> In exchange for various oil related resignations and an agreement by the government to chair an energy forum, the ELN agreed to stop targeting oil pipelines in 1989.

The FARC recruited and rearmed during the ceasefire and strengthened its political party, the UP. As Colombia's largest guerrilla organization and the most aggressive, the FARC was not only very active during these years, but also the subject of numerous assassinations. In 1987 FARC members ambushed an Army convoy and killed or wounded approximately 70 men. In 1988 they made an attempt on the life of the Defense Minister. Though injured, he was able to escape, but three of his bodyguards were killed.<sup>49</sup>

In the 1986 elections, the UP won five House and three Senate seats, which was a little over four percent of the total.<sup>50</sup> Even though the UP had begun to distance itself from its armed and violent wing, the FARC, its members were still targeted for assassination.<sup>51</sup> During the 1988 election campaign for mayoral campaign the assassinations increased, with the majority of victims being UP candidates. Seven UP candidates were killed months before the elections. The UP succeeded in winning sixteen of the 1,009 mayor seats and participating in coalitions that won an additional 120 seats. The violence continued in the year after the election with over half of the murdered 327 politicians and party activists being UP affiliated.<sup>52</sup> The UP claimed that over 600 of its members were assassinated in the 1980s. Assassinated members included four congressmen, two mayors, and 22 council members. The President of the UP, Jaime Pardo Leal, was also killed in 1987 and his

assassination was linked to Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, a known drug trafficker of the Medellin Cartel inner circle, though a jury exonerated him, posthumously, in January 1990. No convictions resulted from any of the assassinations.<sup>53</sup> The UP under the leadership of Bernardo Jaramillo moved away from the Communist Party in 1989 and firmly established itself as an opposition party to the traditional bi-partisan government.<sup>54</sup>

The EPL continued to have leadership problems after the murder of its political commissar in 1985. In 1987 the National Police killed Jairo de Jesus Calvo Ocampo, the leader of the EPL. Even with its problems, the movement succeeded in growing to five urban and ten rural fronts by 1989.<sup>55</sup>

#### Drug Trafficking (1986-1990)

The drug traffickers continued to show their dissatisfaction with those who worked against them and those who supported the extradition treaty. They turned to the MAS and other paramilitary groups to do their bidding. These groups were initially used to defend the interests of the drug industry, but eventually evolved into the industry's own right-wing armies.<sup>56</sup> Because he was involved in revising the Extradition Treaty, Supreme Court Justice Hernando Baquero Borda was assassinated in July 1986. Nine other judges were killed during the year. Additionally, Colonel Jaime Ramirez Gomez, commander of the 1984 Tranquilandia raid and other anti-drug campaigns was killed. In December 1986, an outspoken opponent of the drug industry and newspaper editor, Guillermo Cano Isaza, was murdered following the publication of a critical U.S. report on the drug kingpins.<sup>57</sup> Before suspension of the 1979 Extradition Treaty at the end of 1986 by the Colombian Supreme Court, eighteen people had been extradited to the United States on cocaine charges. Carlos Enrique Lehder Rivas was the only major cartel member extradited. Some people attribute his arrest and extradition to a falling out with the other members of the Medellin Cartel.<sup>58</sup>

Carlos Lehder had been imprisoned in the United States from 1974 to 1976 on various charges. Upon his release and deportation back to Colombia, he began to do business with the Medellin Cartel. He smuggled tons of cocaine into the United States, transshipping through the Bahamas. DEA and Nassau police eventually raided his Bahamas operations, but he evaded capture and returned to Colombia. The United States issued a 39-count indictment on Lehder in 1981, but he remained in Colombia, living flamboyantly. He established a three million dollar resort, set-up a corporation, and in 1983 established his own extreme right-wing political party, the Latin Nationalist Movement (MLN). Lehder modeled his movement after Hitler's National Socialists. He advocated the right to possess small amounts of cocaine, the "socialization of the Latin American economies, the Latin peso, the Latin bank, a United Latin America Nations, nationalization of the Latin American bank, and cancellation of the external debt", and total opposition to the extradition treaty.<sup>59</sup> The MLN won twelve percent of the Quindio regional electorates in March 1984, but by 1986 had lost much of its support and did not do well in the elections that year.<sup>60</sup>

For the most part, the drug cartel bosses were right-wing and anti-communist. They sought to work within the government and to gain social respect. Here Lehder was at political odds with the other cartel members. He disagreed with and wanted to get rid of the oligarchy of the two-party system and establish a new government. In pursuing his beliefs he established ties with the M-19 guerrillas.<sup>61</sup>

In 1983, Lehder publicly admitted to his involvement in the drug trade and, in 1985, to supplying the M-19 guerrillas with weapons and supplies.<sup>62</sup> Colombian police reports state that, at times, M-19 guerrillas comprised part of Lehder's personal guard force. His political party also backed UP candidate, Jaime Pardo Leal, for the 1986 presidential election.<sup>63</sup> Though it has not been proven, some people believe that Lehder may have financially backed the M-19 Palace of Justice attack.<sup>64</sup>

Lehder shot and killed one of Pablo Escobar's bodyguards during a Christmas party in 1985 after the guard would not submit to his advances. In 1987 he was caught and arrested by Medellin police. Later during his trial, Carlos the Madman, as called by the other cartel members, accused Pablo Escobar and other Medellin members of betraying him.<sup>65</sup> The United States request for Lehder's extradition had been approved in 1983 and he was now quickly extradited to the United States. Carlos Lehder was sentenced in July 1988 to, among other things, life in prison without parole.<sup>66</sup>

The power behind the Medellin Cartel belonged to the Ochoa family and was shared with Pablo Escobar. The patriarch of the family was Fabio Ochoa Restrepo, but it was his son, Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez who basically headed the business. By the 1980s the Ochoa family along with the other members of the Medellin Cartel were smuggling tons of cocaine into the United States. Fleeing Colombia after the murder of Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla and the possibility of extradition, Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez underwent plastic surgery and moved to Spain in 1984. Once in Spain, he began to set-up an European drug distribution network in concert with Gilberto Jose Rodriguez Orejuela. Rodriguez Orejuela belonged to the Cali Cartel and had also fled to Spain to avoid extradition. Both men were arrested by Spanish authorities in November 1984 and returned to Colombia in July 1986 to stand trial.<sup>67</sup>

Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela spent a year in jail, but was finally acquitted of all charges in July 1987. Convicted of smuggling bulls into Colombia from Spain, Jorge Ochoa Vasquez was sentenced to twenty months in prison. Pending appeal, Ochoa Vasquez was then released on \$11,500 bond and on the condition that he would report to the court twice a month. He jumped bail and was never brought to trial on the drug charges. Over a year later, in November 1987, he was recaptured and jailed on a parole violation charge despite his efforts to bribe his police captors. Pressured from the Ochoa family and Pablo

Escobar, a Medellin judge, unfortunately for the government, issued a ruling that led to the release of Ochoa Vasquez a month later on a writ of habeas corpus.<sup>68</sup>

Other members of the Ochoa family sustained the family drug business during Jorge Ochoa Vasquez' misfortunes with the authorities. Within the Medellin Cartel, Jorge Ochoa Vasquez was second only to Pablo Escobar in wealth. His estimated two billion dollar fortune made him one of the fifteen wealthiest men in the world in 1988.<sup>69</sup>

The Attorney General, Carlos M. Hoyos, had the Jorge Ochoa incident investigated and the findings resulted in the dismissal of two judges and four officials involved in the case. Hoyos Jimenez additionally changed his initial extradition opposition position and began to publicly support the treaty. The Medellin Cartel dealt with him quickly. In January 1988, Hoyos and two of his bodyguards were assassinated.<sup>70</sup>

The March 1988 mayoral elections concluded with anti-drug candidates winning in Bogota and Medellin. Andres Pastrana, who had won in Bogota, had earlier been kidnapped by the Medellin members and held for ransom. During the search for the killers of Carlos Hoyos Jimenez, he was rescued. A kidnapping attempt of Juan Gomez, the winner in Medellin, had also been carried out in November 1987, but had failed.<sup>71</sup>

In 1988, the United States issued two new indictments against Pablo Escobar. He narrowly missed capture in March 1988, when his estate was raided by the Army and the police. By 1989 he was constantly on the run from authorities and watchful of plots from rival drug traffickers, specifically from the Cali Cartel.<sup>72</sup>

Rivals from the beginning, the Cali and Medellin Cartels violently clashed in 1988 over drug markets in the United States and Europe. The heightened conflict between the organizations is speculated to have developed following the November 1987 capture of Jorge Ochoa Vasquez. The Cali Cartel was thought to have provided authorities with the information leading to his arrest. The depressed cocaine market in

the United States by 1988 probably also contributed to this newest clash, as well as the takeover attempt by the Medellin Cartel to control the New York City cocaine market.<sup>73</sup> The price for one kilogram of cocaine in the United States had fallen \$50,000 from a one time high of \$60,000 to about \$10,000.<sup>74</sup> The Cali Cartel, according to authorities, was also behind the 1988 bombing of Pablo Escobar's residence in Medellin.<sup>75</sup> The Cali Cartel hired mercenaries to eliminate Pablo Escobar and also covertly assisted the government in its actions against the Medellin Cartel.<sup>76</sup> In response, Pablo Escobar supposedly sent his own men to Cali to kill the key Cali members. The Cali and Medellin conflict resulted in at least 150 dead during 1988.<sup>77</sup>

The Cali Cartel members were not as actively hunted down by authorities as were the members of the Medellin Cartel. The Rodriguez Orejuela brothers owned, by the late 1980s, soccer teams, race tracks, a chain of pharmaceutical laboratories and drugstores, restaurants, and the sole Alka Seltzer producing laboratory in Colombia. Supposedly, one Minister of Defense had even approved the existence and partial official subsidization of a private armed unit to assist in safeguarding the Rodriguez Orejuelas' financial empire.<sup>78</sup>

A new party, the Movement of National Restoration (MORENA), emerged in July 1989. The extreme right-wing party was reputed to have the backing of major Medellin Cartel members and represent the anti-communist beliefs of the paramilitary forces.<sup>79</sup>

The Medellin drug traffickers continued to eliminate their adversaries. In July and August of 1989 the following, among other, cartel driven assassinations were executed: Antonio Roldan Betancur (Governor of Antioquia), Judge Maria Diaz Perez (she had ordered the arrest of Pablo Escobar and others involved in the Uraba murders), Carlos Ernesto Valencia (a magistrate, who called for the trial of drug barons), Colonel Franklin Quintero (Commander of the Antioquia police), and Luis Carlos Galan (1990 presidential candidate).<sup>80</sup>

Luis Carlos Galan had supported the extradition of drug traffickers to the United States. He had had a good chance of being elected President and as such would probably have revived the government's fight on drugs. Following his death, the Barco government decided to once again honor the Extradition Treaty, though no major drug kingpins were extradited, and to initiate a new aggressive offensive against the drug traffickers. In the first weeks of the offensive, over 11,000 low level drug associated individuals were arrested, laboratories and properties were raided, over 900 vehicles and aircraft were seized, and over 1,200 weapons were captured. Many of those arrested were later released and much of the confiscated property was returned.<sup>81</sup> The government did score a victory in December 1989, however, with the killing of Rodriguez Gacha, a major Medellin Cartel druglord.

The United States assisted the government's new resolve by sending more military advisors, and increasing its monetary allocation to the country. Its initial allocation for 1989 was \$24.5 million, which in August 1989 was increased to \$65 million.<sup>82</sup>

The drug traffickers fought back. They issued death threats, and bombed banks, party headquarters, schools and commercial centers. In late November 1989, a bomb exploded aboard a jet killing 107 people. In December, one exploded in a bus killing or injuring over 500 people. The bombings were attributed to the drug traffickers.<sup>83</sup>

By the end of the 1980s, the drug cartels had infiltrated every aspect of Colombia life with the help of their financial and logistical resources. Their drug money had bought or financed elections, paid for cooperation, and financed numerous business and real estate dealings.

#### The Connection

Certain events during the 1980s suggest that the drug traffickers and various guerrilla organizations found it useful to cooperate and to develop loose working relationships. As early as 1981

a link appeared. Jaime Guillot Lara, a drug smuggler of the Medellin Cartel, used his drug ships, the *Karina* and the *Monarca*, to transport arms from Cuba to M-19 guerrillas in Colombia. The Colombian Navy discovered the ships and sank the *Karina* with about a hundred tons of weapons on board. The Navy then seized the *Monarca* only to find that she had already delivered her load of weapons to the M-19 guerrillas.<sup>84</sup>

An initial tacit or incidental cooperation existed between the drug traffickers and guerrillas. The armed guerrillas controlled much of the area in which the drug traffickers operated. In exchange for their cooperation and maintenance of law and order, the guerrillas received a percentage of the illicit drug earnings from all who shared the profits. The guerrillas also for their part ensured that the peasants were paid in cash and not crack. The guerrillas possessed the men and organization, while the drug traffickers provided the money, logistical support, and corruption of the law enforcing and judicial officials. Money collected by the guerrillas went to buying arms, paying salaries, and raising their standard of living, resulting in their social and military strengthening.

On the other hand, the key drug traffickers also earned the gratitude of the local populace for their community improvements. They used their money to build roads, schools, housing projects and generally improved the standard of living in various regions and towns.<sup>85</sup> Pablo Escobar, for example, built a "free admission" zoo, distributed 5,000 toys annually at Christmastime to needy children, built eighty sports arenas in the Antioquia region, and financed a 500 unit housing project for the poor. The positive impact of the drug capital on civil and social works for local communities undermined support for and emphasized the failings of local and national government.<sup>86</sup>

Of the guerrilla organizations, the FARC probably has had the longest and most active inconsistent relationship with the drug traffickers. The FARC operates largely in the drug cultivation areas and as early as the late 1970s protected parts of the drug industry from

military anti-drug probes and operations. FARC members have publicly stated their intentions to secure drug operations and to "lend support" to coca growers.<sup>87</sup>

Allegedly the price for FARC security in 1983 was sixty-six dollars per hectare of cocaine and sixty dollars for each processed kilogram. Drug traffickers reportedly even paid one front a \$3.8 million monthly fee. By late 1983, guerrillas assisted drug traffickers in the security of airfields, camps, and laboratories. They were basically involved in some way with all phases of the trafficking process in Colombia and their base camps were occasionally found by authorities in the vicinity of a discovered drug laboratory.<sup>88</sup>

A military patrol discovered FARC members at Los Lomas, a drug trafficker's estate in April 1984. The guerrillas fled. In the fall of that year authorities returned and were attacked by FARC members providing security for an adjacent airstrip and area laboratories. In the years that followed there were numerous drug-related incidents involving authorities and the FARC guerrillas.<sup>89</sup>

In some of the Department of Bolivar jurisdictions the ELN controlled drug plantings, for which they also assessed a fee. Members of the ELN were reported in 1984 to have been arrested with 150 metric tons of marijuana. In 1988, a newspaper quoted the ex-chief of ELN finances as saying ". . . cocaine recently is giving better results than kidnapping".<sup>90</sup>

The EPL operated chiefly in the Uraba region and taxed farmers and landowners for a share of the drug profits. As the drug traffickers in the area began to buy large tracts of land themselves, they soon tired of paying the demanded taxes. In April 1988, the *Los Magnificos*, a right-wing paramilitary group linked to drug traffickers and landowners killed 38 peasants in the northern region of Uraba on the Caribbean coast. A small group of 25 banana workers were killed in the same area just a week or so earlier. Some of the banana workers were tied to trees and shot while others were fed to sharks. These murders

followed the previous month's brutal Uraba killings of over 25 banana workers. The assassinations were believed to have been conducted in order to disrupt the support in the area for the EPL guerrillas and to show the landowners' and drug traffickers' unwillingness to continue the payment of protection money to the EPL guerrillas.<sup>91</sup> Fidel Castano, a drug trafficker was accused of orchestrating the murders and there were even accusations of military involvement. No one was ever convicted in the murders.

The irregular cooperation between the guerrillas and the drug traffickers was volatile in the 1980s. A natural antagonism existed between the two organizations stemming in part from their vastly differing ideologies. The drug traffickers are capitalists with the objectives of building their individual fortunes and protecting and expanding their businesses and networks. They wished to be legitimized and accepted into society. Politically, through the 1980s, the drug traffickers were interested and involved in government politics only in so far as to protect their illicit businesses and combat the threat of extradition. Ideologically the drug traffickers were, for the most part, on par with the traditional political parties.

In 1983 a dispute arose between Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha (Medellin Cartel) and Jacobo Arenas, the FARC political Secretary. Jacobo Arenas refused to acquiesce to the construction of an airstrip adjacent to the FARC Secretary's central camp for fear of drawing unwanted authority attention to the area. The cooperation between Rodriguez Gacha and the FARC guerrillas dissolved, especially after FARC members stole money, cocaine and weapons from one of Rodriguez Gacha's camps in November 1983. Seeking protection from the guerrillas, Gacha and another trafficker, Rivera Gonzalez, began to establish ties with susceptible military officials. Many murders resulted from the conflict, and, as mentioned earlier, Rodriguez Gacha was linked to the assassination of UP President, Jaime Pardo Leal.

In 1984, the FARC guerrillas continued with their tactics of seizing cocaine, money and arms. One time they even took over a runway and only released captured drug traffickers upon receipt of \$25,000.

Though guerrilla forces still dominated much of the cocoa-growing regions, some large sectors succumbed to narco-control as drug traffickers became landowners themselves. The new landowners organized the local ranchers and farmers and, tired of the guerrillas' money demands, refused to pay the protection money or the taxes demanded by the guerrillas. The drug traffickers formed local self-defense organizations and supported right-wing paramilitary forces. Backed by the local landowners, politicians and elements of the Army these organizations began eradicating the unwanted guerrillas. These organizations and not the Colombian military or police forces were probably responsible for the majority of guerrilla deaths/murders in several departments in the 1980s. The drug traffickers' power and money succeeded in eroding the local and political support for the guerrillas in some areas.<sup>92</sup>

Medellin Cartel members conveyed their displeasure with the protection money demands by murdering EPL guerrillas and supporters in the Uraba region. Still, the drug traffickers continued cooperating with other guerrilla organizations and even with EPL guerrillas in other parts of the country, and despite the ongoing Gacha-FARC dispute cooperation still existed between FARC guerrillas and other cartel members in other areas.<sup>93</sup>

#### Summary

The 1980 decade ended with a determined Colombian administration resolved to combat drug trafficking and with the Medellin and Cali Cartels in bitter dispute. Successes against drug trafficking in the decade included the Tranquilandia raid, the extradition of Carlos Lehder to the United States and his subsequent sentence of life in prison, and the death of Rodriguez Gacha in 1989.

By the end of 1989, the M-19 guerrillas had laid down their arms and joined the legal political process. The FARC had broken its cease-fire with the government, though the UP remained a part of the government. The ELN had never entered into any type of peace process with the government in the 1980s and had grown into the second largest guerrilla organization. By the end of 1989, however, it had agreed to cease its destruction of oil pipelines. The EPL had leadership problems throughout the 1980s, but still managed to expand. Guerrilla activities, through the coalition of the CGSB, had also become better coordinated and a resemblance of cooperation emerged.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1992), 208-210.

<sup>2</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, The White Labyrinth: Cocaine and Political Power (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Pub., 1989), 167.

<sup>3</sup>Craig R. Firth, "Colombian Guerrillas and the Drug Cartels: Cooperating or Colliding?" MMAS, Thesis, CGSC, 1989, 128 & 129.

<sup>4</sup>Rachel Ehrenberg, Narco-terrorism (Basic Books, 1990), 81 & 82.

<sup>5</sup>Jenny Pearce, Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 173.

<sup>6</sup>Craig R. Firth, 104-114.

<sup>7</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 180.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>9</sup>Jenny Pearce, 177.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>11</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 233.

<sup>12</sup>Jenny Pearce, 195 & 196.

<sup>13</sup>Robert H. Dix, Politics of Colombia (New York: Praeger, 1987), 138.

<sup>14</sup>Craig R. Firth, 100.

<sup>15</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 233.

<sup>16</sup>Jenny Pearce, 180.

<sup>17</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, Mountain High, White Avalanche: Cocaine and Power in the Andean States and Panama (New York: Praeger Pub., 1989), 30.

<sup>18</sup>Ana Carrigan, The Palace of Justice: A Colombian Tragedy (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993), 80-83.

<sup>19</sup>Craig R. Firth, 131 & 132.

<sup>20</sup>Charles W. Bergquist, 233 & 279.

<sup>21</sup>Jenny Pearce, 110 & 111.

<sup>22</sup>Craig R. Firth, 169 & 170.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 170 & 171.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 182, 184, 186.

<sup>25</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 99 & 100.

<sup>26</sup>Christopher P. Moosmann, "The Role of Security Assistance in the Andean Initiative," MMAS, Thesis, CGSC, 1992, 39 & 40.

<sup>27</sup>Jenny Pearce, 110 & 111.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 193.

<sup>29</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 35 & 36.

<sup>30</sup>Jenny Pearce, 171, 172, 174 & 175.

<sup>31</sup>Craig R. Firth, 197 & 198.

<sup>32</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 31.

<sup>33</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 170-172.

<sup>34</sup>Craig R. Firth, 174.

<sup>35</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 36.

<sup>36</sup>Craig R. Firth, 200.

<sup>37</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 122.

<sup>38</sup>Craig R. Firth, 201.

<sup>39</sup>Jenny Pearce, 194.

<sup>40</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 173-175.

<sup>41</sup>Jenny Pearce, 217.

<sup>42</sup>Craig R. Firth, 63 & 64.

<sup>43</sup>Rachel Ehrenfeld, 83 & 84.

<sup>44</sup>Craig R. Firth, 134.

<sup>45</sup>Jenny Pearce, 284 & 285.

<sup>46</sup>Craig R. Firth, 75.

<sup>47</sup>Jenny Pearce, 283 & 284.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 100.

<sup>49</sup>Craig R. Firth, 97.

<sup>50</sup>Rachel Ehrenfeld, 84.

<sup>51</sup>Jenny Pearce, 198.

- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., 227 & 228.
- <sup>53</sup>Craig R. Firth, 99.
- <sup>54</sup>Jenny Pearce, xv.
- <sup>55</sup>Craig R. Firth, 118 & 119.
- <sup>56</sup>Jenny Pearce, 196.
- <sup>57</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 45.
- <sup>58</sup>Jenny Pearce, 194.
- <sup>59</sup>Craig R. Firth, 159-163.
- <sup>60</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 138.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid., 175.
- <sup>62</sup>Craig R. Firth, 166.
- <sup>63</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 115.
- <sup>64</sup>Craig R. Firth, 174 & 175.
- <sup>65</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 14.
- <sup>66</sup>Craig R. Firth, 175-177, 186.
- <sup>67</sup>Ibid., 175-177, 186.
- <sup>68</sup>Ibid., 178.
- <sup>69</sup>Ibid., 179.
- <sup>70</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 46.
- <sup>71</sup>Ibid., 47 & 48.
- <sup>72</sup>Craig R. Firth, 174 & 175.
- <sup>73</sup>Ibid., 155.
- <sup>74</sup>Ibid., 207.
- <sup>75</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 111 & 112.
- <sup>76</sup>Jenny Pearce, 268 & 273.
- <sup>77</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 112.
- <sup>78</sup>Craig R. Firth, 186 & 187.
- <sup>79</sup>Jenny Pearce, xvi & 3.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 265.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 2, 3, 266, 269, 273.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 271 & 272.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 273.

<sup>84</sup>Dennis Rowe, ed., International Drug Trafficking, Chicago, IL: Office of International Criminal Justice, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1988), 22

<sup>85</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 116.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 133-135.

<sup>87</sup>Craig R. Firth, 277.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 278.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 281 & 282.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 283.

<sup>91</sup>Scott B. MacDonald, 47 & 48.

<sup>92</sup>Rensselaer W. Lee III, 118.

<sup>93</sup>Craig R. Firth, 205 & 281.

CHAPTER THREE  
COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKING  
AND  
INSURGENCY IN THE 1990s

Drug Trafficking

In the early 1990s, many reports appeared that suggested a growing relationship between the Colombian cartels and Southwest Asian drug organizations. Trafficking in opium poppies and heroin was on the rise. Good indications of Colombian drug traffickers moving towards the cultivation and processing of opium poppies came in the 1980s. Colombian National Police destroyed about 35,000 poppy plants in 1984, and in 1988 the security agencies discovered and destroyed about 450,000 plants. Opium, morphine, and heroin laboratories were also found, but the key illicit drug of the 1980s remained cocaine. In 1990, ten million dollars worth of heroin paste, believed to have belonged to the Cali Cartel, was seized in the vicinity of Cali.<sup>1</sup>

The intense rivalry between the Medellin and Cali Cartels moved into the 1990s with the Cali Cartel eventually supplanting the Medellin Cartel's cocaine dominance. In September 1990, the farm of Francisco Helmer "Pacho" Herrera, a Cali Cartel associate, was attacked by Medellin gunmen. Though Herrera escaped, nineteen of his people were killed. The government's new strategy for dealing with drug traffickers, combined with the deaths and surrenders of key Medellin figures contributed to the virtual Medellin Cartel collapse by 1994.<sup>2</sup>

Cesar Gaviria Trujillo replaced assassinated Luis Carlos Galan as the Liberal Party presidential candidate and became the new President of Colombia in 1990. Within a year after Gaviria took office a new plan went into effect that changed the way authorities handled drug

traffickers. The new strategy included reduced penalties for drug traffickers if they turned themselves into authorities and confessed to their crimes.<sup>3</sup> The extradition of Colombians was also prohibited by the country's National Constituent Assembly in May 1991.

By the end of June 1991, twenty Medellin Cartel traffickers had surrendered and were imprisoned under the terms of the new government plan. Key imprisoned Medellin figures included Pablo Escobar and his brother, and Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez and two of his brothers. Jorge Luis Ochoa received a twenty year sentence for his crimes, which was reduced, in June 1993, to eight and a half years. His brothers, Fabio and Juan David Ochoa Vasquez, ultimately received sentences of eight and a half years and six and a half years, respectively. Many analysts liken the living conditions of these imprisoned leaders with living at and conducting business from a resort. In August 1992, former Minister of Justice, Fernando Carrillo, described the prison as a country house enclosed by barbed wire.<sup>4</sup>

The imprisonments, the eventual death of Pablo Escobar, and the intensity with which the government sought out the Medellin leaders led to an increasingly more disorganized Medellin Cartel. The gap in drug trafficking, which the fall of the Medellin Cartel had created, was quickly filled by the Cali Cartel and other enterprising groups. In any case, even with the Medellin Cartel losing its grip on the drug industry, the drug flow to the United States, Europe and other markets continued unabated, with the horizontal expansion of the Cali Cartel.

The Cali Cartel operates differently than did the Medellin Cartel. It is a decentralized organization headed predominantly by the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers. Independent traffickers form a loose confederation and, like any successful big business corporation, they perform and add their small parts or services to achieve the final product or goal. In 1993, *Semana*, a Colombian newsmagazine, reported that about 200 drug associated suborganizations exist with seventy associated with the Cali Cartel, sixty with the Medellin Cartel and ten

with the Northern Valley Group. Even with only seventy suborganizations, the Cali Cartel is still responsible for over 80 percent of the drug exports.<sup>5</sup>

The smuggling methods between the two Cartels also differed. The Medellin Cartel smuggled smaller amounts of drugs using speed boats and light planes. The Cali-associated smugglers hid large amounts in products transported aboard ocean-going freighters.<sup>6</sup> In 1990, tons of Cali cocaine were seized by Dutch officials. The cocaine was hidden in drums of passionfruit juice on a Swiss-flag freighter and at that time was the largest seizure of drugs in Europe.<sup>7</sup> In November 1991, authorities discovered twelve tons of cocaine inside a load of cement fence posts.<sup>8</sup>

For the most part, Cali Cartel associated members are low-key and far less overtly violent when compared against the Medellin Cartel. The Cali Cartel members wish to be thought of as legitimate businessmen and not as drug traffickers. To this end they invest their drug profits into legal businesses. During Operation Belalcazar III, in September 1993, the Judicial Police and Investigation Directorate (DIJIN) seized a document which detailed the cooperation of guerrilla groups in the transport of drugs. The investigation revealed the financial control that Cali Cartel members have in the city of Cali and their money laundering methods. It confirmed the investment of drug money into such legal businesses as pharmaceutical, clothing, and grocery stores, banks, and various companies and factories.<sup>9</sup> Unlike Medellin Cartel members, the Cali Cartel did not participate in the new Gaviria government plan in 1991 calling for drug traffickers to surrender.

Increased reports of poppy cultivation and processing were received in 1991. One taped conversation supposedly between a reporter and peasant in the western part of Colombia indicated that the FARC and ELN guerrillas were protecting the poppy crops and controlling the crop earnings.<sup>10</sup> The prime area for poppy cultivation is in northwestern Colombia in the department of Valle del Cauca. A conflict between the

Northern Valley Group and the key figures behind the Cali Cartel, the Rodriguez brothers and Jose Santacruz Londono, appeared to develop. The leadership behind the Northern Valley Group, allied with the Cartel in cocaine trafficking, wanted to control and dominate the lucrative heroin business.<sup>11</sup> The two seem, however, to have since reached a working agreement. Interpol priced a kilogram of cocaine sold in the United States at about \$20,000 and a kilogram of heroin at \$150,000.<sup>12</sup> Security organizations supposedly confirmed, in October 1994, that the FARC was the largest heroin producer in Colombia.<sup>13</sup>

Pablo Escobar escaped from La Catedral prison in July 1992. A "campaign of rewards" for information leading to the capture of drug kingpins, in particular Pablo Escobar, and a new technique of "searching house by house" was initiated. On the run from authorities and the paramilitary force, "Pepes," led by Fidel Castano, a former ally turned probable Cali "enforcer," Escobar was finally killed sixteen months later by the National Police.<sup>14</sup> Also under the new reward incentive key Medellin Cartel leaders were captured, such as John Jairo Posada Valencia, alias Titi, in December 1992, and Leonardo de Jesus Rivera Rincon in February 1993.<sup>15</sup> After the death of Pablo Escobar, the next major drug trafficker death by police was that of Juan Camilo Zapata. An alleged drug trafficker, he was reputed to have been one of Colombia's richest men and had previously worked with the now deceased Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha.<sup>16</sup>

Ivan Urdinola Grajales, the main leader of the Northern Cauca Valley Group, turned himself into authorities in December 1992. Upon his acceptance of President Gaviria's voluntary surrender terms and his subsequent imprisonment, the violence in the Northern Cauca Valley diminished. Ivan Urdinola and his brothers were known for killing their opponents and the local peasants and then dumping the bodies into the rivers. Supposedly, one body was recovered daily from the river.<sup>17</sup> Ivan Urdinola had received seventeen and one-half years for his crimes, but it was reduced to only four years and seven months. Upon the

reduction of Ivan Urdinola's sentence, Hernando Angel Wagner, another key leader of the Northern Cauca Valley Group surrendered anticipating a light sentence.<sup>18</sup>

An increase in the illegal drug industry was seen in 1993. An estimated 10-20,000 hectares of opium poppy were under cultivation and marijuana cultivation was on the rise.<sup>19</sup> At the end of 1994, an *El Tiempo* article reported that the number of planted coca hectares in Colombia doubled since 1992 from 40,000 to 86,000.<sup>20</sup> However, the government continued in its efforts to counter the drug industry. In March 1993, the National Police destroyed thirty cocaine-processing laboratories. Authorities delivered more blows to the drug traffickers, in April 1993, when they seized 800 kilograms of cocaine and 200 tons of marijuana, and destroyed a sophisticated laboratory in the Northern Cauca Valley area. Authorities seized another 800 kilograms of cocaine in October 1993 from a camp, which they stated had been guarded by FARC guerrillas, and 600 kilograms from a parked Bolivian-registered plane.<sup>21</sup> General Jesus Maria Vergara, Commander of the 3rd Army Division, also confirmed in October 1993, that the drug traffickers had expanded their operations to the coffee producing region surrounding Pereira. Large drug laboratories had been discovered in the area throughout 1993, as well as FARC guerrillas protecting and cultivating poppy plantations.<sup>22</sup>

In November 1993, the Colombian Congress gave the Prosecutor General the authority to offer plea bargains to drug traffickers. Gustavo de Greiff, the Prosecutor General, met with the top Cali members in January 1994 and offered them appealing and controversial surrender terms. De Greiff supposedly offered imprisonment for less than a year and the authorization to keep their drug profit-built fortunes in return for shutting down their drug businesses. An important Cali member, Jaime Orejuela Caballero, was arrested in February 1994. In March 1994, Julio Fabio Urdinola and Joyner Ospina Monyoya, from the Northern Cauca Valley, turned themselves into authorities and are the only major Cali members, to date, to have accepted de Greiff's surrender terms. The

other key figures, Pacho Herrera, Gilberto Rodriguez and Santacruz Londono, have shied away from confessing to involvement in drug trafficking. They wanted de Greiff's concession to house arrest instead of incarceration in Palmira Prison. Many top Colombian and U.S. government officials were angered by de Greiff's actions and plea bargain. The U.S. government, upset by the lenient attitude taken by de Greiff towards the traffickers and worried that sensitive drug enforcement information was being leaked to the Cali Cartel, suspended for a short time its evidence-sharing agreement with Colombia.

Citing the war on drugs a failure, de Greiff favored and pushed for the legalization of drugs for personal use. In May 1994, the Constitutional Court legalized the possession of one gram of cocaine, five grams of hashish and twenty grams of marijuana.<sup>23</sup> The Court's decision did not further U.S. and Colombian relations and was not even endorsed by President Cesar Gaviria or his replacement Ernesto Samper Pizano. In June 1994, President Gaviria's government banned the use of drugs in various public areas in order to minimize the impact of the Court's decision.

Ernesto Samper Pizano took over the Presidency in August 1994 amid the "narcocassettes" controversy. Taped conversations emerged in June 1994, that supposedly pointed to Cali drug money backing the presidential campaigns of Ernesto Samper and Andres Pastrana. However, the Prosecutor General's Office ruled in August, that the investigation was closed and that there was no evidence of drug money used in the campaigns. Questioned about the existence of the cassette tapes, de Greiff replied that "the tapes were illegally recorded, because no authority ever ordered the phone taps."<sup>24</sup>

Gustavo de Greiff was replaced in September 1994 with Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso. His office issued arrest warrants for Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela in October 1994. These were the first warrants issued against the two brothers on drug trafficking charges.

One of the largest cocaine processing laboratories in southeastern Colombia was discovered in October 1994. The compound was spread over ten hectares and was capable of processing around four tons of cocaine weekly. Another modern and large cocaine laboratory was found a few weeks later in Tolima. There, the authorities confiscated over 300 kilograms of prepared coca and ten tons of processing supplies.

In November 1994, an intelligence agency document was leaked that linked forty newly elected mayors to drug trafficking or guerrillas. The document was dismissed by the Interior Minister as a preliminary investigation without official endorsement.<sup>25</sup>

### Insurgency

The counter-guerrilla effort by the government intensified in the 1990s and realized some success. While the CGSB sought peace with the government for the FARC and ELN, these guerrilla groups continued with their kidnapping and extortion activities. In January 1990, Government Minister Carlos Lemos Simmonds described the ELN as an organization that had "gone from a political struggle to common crime."<sup>26</sup>

The UP continued with its pursuit of election votes and government seats. A huge setback occurred in March 1990, however, when its presidential candidate, Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, was murdered. Then, Manuel Cepeda Vargas, the sole UP senator elected in the 1994 March elections was assassinated in August 1994. Another blow was struck to the party when in November 1994 the National Electoral Council annulled the legal status of several political parties, the UP included, which had not received the required 50,000 minimum votes or a substantial Congress representation in the March 1994 elections.<sup>27</sup>

The M-19 guerrilla organization ended its armed struggle with the government in March 1990. The M-19 put Carlos Pizairo Leongomez forward as its 1990 presidential candidate. His candidacy did not last long for he was then murdered in April 1990. He was replaced by Antonio

Navarro Wolff, who was the 1994 AD/M-19 presidential candidate. It was widely speculated that the Medellin Cartel had been behind both the murders of Pizairo Leongomez and Jaramillo Ossa.<sup>28</sup>

About twenty members of the AD/M-19 peacefully entered and occupied the Costa Rican Embassy in Santa Fe de Bogota on 26 August 1992. They took no hostages, but demanded that the government honor the promises it had made to the guerrillas who had rejoined civilian life, and release Marcos Chalita and other arrested members. The government had been pursuing proceedings against M-19 leaders, who had been involved in the 1985 Palace of Justice incident. The former guerrillas finally vacated the embassy on 28 August after the government promised to adhere to its earlier agreements with the guerrillas.<sup>29</sup>

The EPL, operating in the Uraba banana producing area, continued to work towards a peace with the government and in May 1990 signed an initial peace plan with the government. Finally in January 1991, the EPL and the government favorably concluded their dialogue and signed a peace agreement. The EPL disbanded in February 1991 and, undertaking legal political activity, formed a political group called Hope, Peace and Liberty (EPL in Spanish). In August 1991, former EPL members were granted a pardon for political crimes such as rebellion, sedition, and conspiracy as long as the member had since shown his willingness to return to civilian life.<sup>30</sup> The legal status of twelve political parties, to include the Hope, Peace and Liberty Movement, was annulled in August 1992, by the National Electoral Council (CNE). The action was confirmed in November 1992, but the CNE stated that it would recognize any party/movement that proved its existence by acquiring at least 50,000 votes in an election.<sup>31</sup>

In March 1993, the political leader of the Hope, Peace and Liberty Movement, Jesus Alirio Guevara, was kidnapped and murdered by FARC guerrillas. Subsequently, in the Uraba region, the guerrillas killed banana farm workers associated with the Movement. Over a hundred and seventy people of the Hope, Peace, and Freedom Movement had been

killed since its organization. In the last two months of 1993, over a hundred workers were murdered in the Uraba region. Just in one December day, seventeen banana workers were shot in front of their co-workers and their bodies hung on the hooks used to move the bananas. Thirty-five more people were then killed in January 1994 when FARC guerrillas opened fire into a group of Hope, Peace and Liberty supporters.<sup>32</sup> Though these numbers do not compare to the numerous people killed during the massacres of the *La Violencia* era, they were unusual for the 1990s.

The CGSB while appearing to negotiate for a joint FARC and ELN peace agreement with the government, coordinated and conducted various terrorist-type activities. The FARC, ELN, and a dissident faction of the demobilized EPL have operated, in some cases, separately and at other times jointly under the CGSB. The CGSB ensures that an action can be executed by a joint front comprised of any of its components and for which it can claim credit.<sup>33</sup> From January 1991 to mid September 1991, the CGSB had reportedly conducted about 1,124 terrorist acts.<sup>34</sup> In July 1991, the CGSB was reported to have attacked the country's electrical infrastructure by blowing up electrical towers in the Caribbean coast area that supplied electricity to seven of the region's departments.<sup>35</sup> A few days later, they blew up another power tower in the Antioquia Department, which left nine municipalities without electricity. In the same month, as confirmed by police authorities, a CGSB commando unit had damaged the Rafael Nunez International Airport's main airstrip causing flights to be suspended.<sup>36</sup>

The FARC also continued its vicious kidnapping, destruction, extortion, and murder activities in the 1990s. Stepping up attacks and actions in November 1992, members of the FARC, under the CGSB umbrella, ambushed and murdered twenty-five policemen guarding an oil complex, and blew up a copper mine, which destroyed the livelihood for thousands of Colombians. They created a national crisis by attacking oil pipelines, detonating bombs throughout Santa Fe de Bogota, and in one morning, attacking over thirty banks in the country.

The government took measures to combat the increased guerrilla attacks and declared a state of internal disturbance. Measures taken included rewards offered for the capture of guerrilla leaders and a beef-up of the number of troops in the Armed Forces. Rewards were reportedly as high as 100 million pesos for FARC leader Manuel Marulanda Velez, alias Tirofijo, and ELN leader Father Manuel Perez.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the government took steps to target the guerrillas' supply networks, which it reported were financed through cocaine production and kidnapping.<sup>38</sup> The new aggressive government measures began to pay off with the capture of a prominent ELN leader known as Francisco Galan in December 1992, and another ELN leader, Humberto Javier Callejas, in January 1993. A major blow to the ELN was the capture of Martin Julio Restrepo Arango, alias El Maestro, who worked directly under ELN leader Father Manuel Perez. The government's successes continued through 1994 with other major ELN captures, to include Carlos Arturo Velandia, who was thought to have been responsible for the January 1994 attack on Finance Minister Rudolf Hommes Rodriguez.<sup>39</sup>

In November 1993, the EPL dissidents were also dealt a blow with the capture of their leader Ramon Argumedo and his bodyguards. More EPL dissident leaders, Francisco Caraballo and Carlos Humberto Rojas Sanchez, were captured in June 1994. Francisco Caraballo was the military and political leader of the EPL dissidents. Documents found on him at the time of his arrest, revealed that he managed over five billion pesos in various accounts. The accounts were frozen, which seriously hurt the financial status of the EPL dissidents.<sup>40</sup> If Francisco Caraballo controlled this large sum of money, one can imagine the sums of money in the larger and more active FARC and ELN organizations.

The FARC leadership did not suffer as many setbacks, though Eladio de Jesus Gracian Higueta, the chief of the 43rd FARC front, was captured in August 1993. According to Colombian press reports, Gracian Higueta had also worked for Carlos Lehder Rivas as his chief of

security. The reports further stated that Gracian Higueta was involved in arms trafficking and tied into the drug trafficking networks;<sup>41</sup> a classic narcoguerrilla.

In November 1994, ELN and FARC guerrillas ambushed military trucks and a schoolbus in the Cauca region. Eleven policemen and one boy were killed, and one teacher and more than fifteen students injured.

One of the areas in which the FARC guerrillas operate is in the Valle Del Cauca, where the majority of poppy plants are cultivated. As with the coca plantations, the FARC now patrols and protects the poppy fields. Many speculate that some FARC members also cultivate the plants and in some areas even operate the laboratories.<sup>42</sup> An *El Tiempo* article disclosed in November 1992 that according to a high level government report there were at least twelve confrontations in 1992 between the Armed Forces and guerrillas protecting poppy and coca plantations. Some incidents mentioned in the report were an attack by guerrillas on a helicopter fumigating a poppy field, a clash between a FARC front, which was growing ten hectares of poppies, and Army units in the Meta Department, and clashes between guerrillas and authorities, as authorities destroyed guerrilla camps which contained processing supplies and kilos of cocaine. The report stated that the guerrillas protect the fields of the drug traffickers, control their own poppy and coca fields, and collect taxes from independent growers.<sup>43</sup>

In September 1993, the FARC, ELN and EPL dissidents, under the CGSB, attacked oil pipelines causing ecological damage, killed over thirty soldiers and police, and torched thirty-six buses. In November 1993, the ELN assassinated Senator Dario Londono Carmona, the Vice President of the Colombian Senate and a supporter of the Public Order Bill. The Bill established guidelines for aggressive actions against the guerrillas and drug traffickers, and was passed a month later. In December 1993, ELN guerrillas then made more attacks on oil pipelines causing the spillage of thousands of barrels. In one incident during the month, FARC guerrillas conducted attacks along the Colombian-

Ecuadoran border killing Ecuadoran soldiers in the process. Allegedly, the guerrillas and drug traffickers conduct joint operations along the Amazon jungle Colombian border stretch. In January 1994, ELN guerrillas, under the CGSB, attempted to assassinate Finance Minister Rudolf Hommes Rodriguez. The next major ELN action came in June 1994, when they created more environmental damage by blowing up more oil pipelines. Oil spilled into rivers, streams, and marshes.<sup>44</sup> Just during the first seven months of 1994, the ELN guerrillas had attacked the Can Limon oil pipeline over forty times.

Through the 1990s, the ELN has continued on a rampage of kidnapping, killing, and sabotaging petroleum pipelines and facilities. Oil pipeline and facility sabotage is the penalty for those contractors not paying the ELN about fifteen percent of their contracts' value. The primary source of revenue for the ELN, however, is probably still kidnapping ransoms. The ELN ransom demand is about fifty percent more than that of the FARC, according to seized ELN financial documents.<sup>45</sup> A government report, according to *El Tiempo*, revealed that ELN guerrillas control drug processing laboratories and plantations. The report states that, furthermore, the authorities have destroyed laboratories and hectares of coca plants and have confiscated arms and drug processing chemicals in the municipalities, in which the guerrillas operate.<sup>46</sup>

The Socialist Renewal Movement (CRS), an ELN dissident faction broke with the CGSB and Father Manuel and began to seek a peace agreement with the government. The dissident ELN leader, Jacinto Ruiz, attributed the break to the faction's differences with the ELN and CGSB kidnapping, collection of protection money, and terrorist activities. Jacinto Ruiz elaborated in September 1991 that the guerrillas "cannot continue to follow a thirty-five year old plan or wage an armed struggle that no longer represents what it did in the sixties and seventies." He stated that the culminating point for that seventies ideal was the demise of communism in Eastern Europe. He further remarked that the CRS believes that its actions should not hinder the civilian population and

that "the destruction of oil pipelines is not a revolutionary strategy."<sup>47</sup> The CRS and its over four hundred members agreed in January 1994 to demobilize. In April 1994, they signed a peace agreement with the government and demobilized, with the surrender of their weapons.<sup>48</sup>

If a legal enterprise, the guerrillas would rank financially among the top hundred legal companies in Colombia. With all of the guerrilla derived income taken into account, the FARC in 1992 would have ranked 23rd, and the ELN 45th. The CGSB with the combined FARC and ELN incomes would have ranked thirteenth. The surplus money remaining after operational expenses is believed to be used to buy transport companies, gold and coal mines, real estate, and is kept in foreign banks.<sup>49</sup>

#### The Connection

Many analysts and agencies do not accept a "guerrilla-drug trafficking" connection. In 1993, the DEA concluded in a report that neither the FARC nor the ELN has been entangled in distributing or marketing drugs in the United States or Europe. The report also refuted the idea that the FARC and ELN leadership directed guerrilla involvement in the production or distribution of drugs. It found though, that some FARC fronts were involved in extracting taxes on opium poppy cultivation, protected or controlled marijuana sites, and regulated the sale of morphine base to drug traffickers.<sup>50</sup> The DEA assertion must be weighed against the events and investigations that have occurred in Colombia in the last four years.

An investigation supposedly conducted by the Colombian military was revealed, by an *El Tiempo* article, as stating that guerrilla activities in respect to drug trafficking include planting and protecting fields, collecting taxes, and contracting out some parts of the business to drug traffickers. In some areas the guerrillas have pushed out the traditional drug traffickers and taken control of the entire planting, processing, and exporting drug operation.<sup>51</sup>

Another report stemming from captured ELN documents states, that though the organization's leadership supposedly wants its units disassociated with drug trafficking, at least six ELN groups are involved in at least crop protection.<sup>52</sup>

Army Commander, General Manuel Alberto Murillo, stated in January 1992 that the guerrillas receive many of their weapons through cooperation with drug traffickers, whose drug planes help smuggle the weapons into the country. Released Colombian military intelligence reports reiterated that cocaine was the biggest source of income for the guerrillas. Weapons purchased normally through drug trafficking middlemen are paid for with drugs or in dollars.<sup>53</sup> Government evidence of guerrilla gunrunning while purportedly seeking peace, once again begs the question of what the guerrillas' *raison d'etre* and objectives are now.

An August 1993 *El Espectador* report suggests that the guerrillas, in particular, the FARC, are interested in training their own pilots. Though they own a small number of planes, they have minimal trouble borrowing, stealing, or coercing what they need.<sup>54</sup> This could be an indication of their intentions to expand their expected drug trafficking role across Colombia's border and into the international sphere.

Both the drug trafficker and guerrilla prefer operating in inaccessible areas that are not controlled by government authorities. Thus, the guerrilla and drug trafficker operate in much the same geographical area. Many argue that this co-existence leads to a very possible loose working relationship between the two groups and further strengthens the case of an existing connection.

With the demise of communism and the fall of the Soviet Union, the guerrilla groups needed a way to financially survive. Though kidnappings and extortion levied on businessmen, industrialists, gold, coal and emerald mines are a source of income, it is believed through the analysis of seized FARC documents, that seventy percent of FARC

income comes directly from taxes levied on drug production and cultivation and its actual involvement in the drug industry.<sup>55</sup> It has become a needed financial survival necessity. Some, to include the prior Colombian President, Gaviria Trujillo, believe that they have even evolved into a third drug production cartel.<sup>56</sup> On 25 November 1992, President Cesar Gaviria made the following statement:

The guerrillas have become the third drug cartel in Colombia. The participation of the terrorist FARC and ELN guerrillas in drug trafficking has taken different shapes. In some cases, they produce coca leaves and poppy flowers. Since the train of history has left the guerrillas behind they have lost all ideological or political justification, they seem to want to become Colombia's new drug lords.<sup>57</sup>

In March 1993, Army Commander General Hernan Guzman and the Administrative Department of Security Director Fernando Brito stated that the FARC had begun to export drugs to the United States. They remarked that in some areas there is conflict between the guerrillas and drug traffickers due to the guerrillas' takeover and control of the drug production. Hernan Guzman also referred to the FARC as Colombia's third drug cartel.<sup>58</sup>

As mentioned, the guerrillas are in narcotics trafficking, but have their hands in other illegal income-generating activities as well. They have become a large profitable criminal organization involved in organized crime of many types. Capital gain appears to have overcome the here-to-fore primary importance of ideological ideals.<sup>59</sup> Is it any wonder then that the areas from which the guerrillas operate are also the centers for coca, poppies, oil, gold, emeralds, coal or bananas?

The fact that the FARC and ELN extort money from drug cultivation and gold mining was further substantiated by the army's 2d Mobile Brigade which had operated in Serrania de San Lucas. In August 1992, the Commander of the 2d Mobile Brigade, Brigadier General Fernando Tapias Stahelin stated:

The ELN and the FARC no longer speak of ideologies. They now speak of finances. They do not have political goals. They are committed fully to banditry, they are out to get money. They are simply a mafia. . . . The subversive groups, especially the ELN, are now dedicated to piracy on land.<sup>60</sup>

General Tapias Stahelin estimated that the ELN keeps at least twenty percent of the area's gold profits. If so, that is about 12 billion pesos, based on the official statistic that 230,000 troy ounces of gold or 60 billion pesos worth of gold is produced annually. Tapias Stahelin also submitted that the ELN dealt more in the gold and the FARC in the drugs.<sup>61</sup>

In February 1993, officials discovered a hundred and ninety kilograms of cocaine at a bus terminal. The bus that was to transport the drugs to a seaport for further distribution was known to have previously transported weapons for the guerrillas.<sup>62</sup>

As part of the United States' fight against drugs and in the interests of the nation's National Security, the United States has provided needed counternarcotics support to Colombia. The support, in the form of dollars, training, and intelligence, has enabled Colombia to improve its counterdrug operations. Encouraged by the United States, Colombia has stepped up poppy and coca plant eradication, and has begun to tackle the Cali Cartel.

#### Summary

President Ernesto Samper Pizano has taken up the struggle against drug trafficking. During the initial few months of his administration, authorities reportedly seized over 17,800 kilograms of cocaine compared to a reported 7,200 kilograms seized during the first half of the year. He also has stated his opposition to the legalization of now illicit drugs. The President is also committed to establishing a peace process with the guerrillas. He is taking various measures to hopefully further that process and open a meaningful dialogue between the guerrillas and the government.

Most of the key Medellin Cartel members have surrendered to the government under President Cesar Gaviria's strategy to combat drug trafficking and have received reduced prison sentences. Pablo Escobar was killed in December 1993, but it appears that new people and

organizations have emerged to fill the gaps left by the old Medellin Cartel. No major actions to date have been taken against the Cali Cartel, though President Samper's administration claims to be devoted to pursuing the key leaders of that organization.

Thus far in the 1990s, the guerrillas have continued with their violent terrorist actions and have pursued the accumulation of financial assets through criminal activities, such as extortion, ransoms, drug trafficking and theft.

Many guerrilla leaders have been captured, but the EPL dissident group has taken the largest hit. Probably the two most important captures were those of Francisco Galan (ELN) and Francisco Carabello (EPL dissidents).

Five guerrilla organizations signed peace agreements with the government thus far. The main groups were the M-19, the EPL, the People's Revolutionary Party (PRT), the Quintin Lame Indians Movement and the CRS.

The next chapter is an analysis of Colombian events from 1980 to 1994 as they relate to illicit drug trafficking and the guerrillas. The analysis concentrates on the probable and inconsistent relationship that exists between the drug traffickers and guerrillas and the likely reasons for the existence of such a relationship.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Arnaldo Claudio, Heroin: The Colombian Cartels Diversify (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), 3, 5 & 6.

<sup>2</sup>Robert T. Buckman, The Cali Cartel: An Undefeated Enemy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994).

<sup>3</sup>Arnaldo Claudio, United States--Colombia Extradition Treaty: Failure of a Security Strategy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), 73.

<sup>4</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information System (FBIS)-Latin America, 31 August 1992, 48.

<sup>5</sup>Robert T. Buckman, The Cali Cartel: An Undefeated Enemy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Clare Hargreaves, Snowfields: The War on Cocaine in the Andes (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1992), 9.

<sup>8</sup>Robert T. Buckman, The Cali Cartel: An Undefeated Enemy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994).

<sup>9</sup>FBIS-LAT, 30 September 1993, 30 & 31

<sup>10</sup>FBIS-LAT, 10 September 1991, 39.

<sup>11</sup>Arnaldo Claudio, Heroin: The Colombian Cartels Diversify (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), 4 & 8.

<sup>12</sup>Robert T. Buckman, The Cali Cartel: An Undefeated Enemy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994).

<sup>13</sup>FBIS-LAT, 21 October 1994, 44.

<sup>14</sup>Gustavo A. Porres-Amaya, Other Unknown Cartels of Cocaine (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC, 1994), 18.

<sup>15</sup>FBIS-LAT, 4 January 1993, 26; 8 February 1993, 32 & 33.

<sup>16</sup>FBIS-LAT, 29 November 1993, 71; 17 December 1993, 34.

<sup>17</sup>Robert T. Buckman, The Cali Cartel: An Undefeated Enemy (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994).

<sup>18</sup>FBIS-LAT, 23 December 1992, 30 & 31.

<sup>19</sup>Geoffrey Demarest, Narcotics Trafficking and the Colombian Military (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994), 8.

<sup>20</sup>FBIS-LAT, 20 October 1994, 47.

<sup>21</sup>FBIS-LAT, 18 October 1993, 60.

<sup>22</sup>FBIS-LAT, 7 October 1993, 28.

- <sup>23</sup>FBIS-LAT, 9 May 1994, 44.
- <sup>24</sup>FBIS-LAT, 17 August 1994, 39.
- <sup>25</sup>FBIS-LAT, 14 November 1994, 56 & 57.
- <sup>26</sup>FBIS-LAT, 8 January 1990, 60.
- <sup>27</sup>FBIS-LAT, 22 November 1994, 38.
- <sup>28</sup>FBIS-LAT, 9 May 1990, 39.
- <sup>29</sup>FBIS-LAT, 27 August 1992, 31 & 32; 31 August 1992, 47.
- <sup>30</sup>FBIS-LAT, 13 August 1991, 28.
- <sup>31</sup>FBIS-LAT, 28 August 1992, 24; 24 November 1992, 39.
- <sup>32</sup>FBIS-LAT, 8 March 1993, 31-33; 21 April 1993, 47; 10 December 1993, 27; 28 December 1993, 29 & 30; 24 January 1994, 68.
- <sup>33</sup>FBIS-LAT, 22 October 1992, 30.
- <sup>34</sup>FBIS-LAT, 23 September 1991, 40.
- <sup>35</sup>FBIS-LAT, 23 July 1991, 25.
- <sup>36</sup>FBIS-LAT, 26 July 1991, 34.
- <sup>37</sup>FBIS-LAT, 10 November 1992, 31; 15 December 1992, 22.
- <sup>38</sup>FBIS-LAT, 10 November 1992, 32.
- <sup>39</sup>FBIS-LAT, 9 December 1992, 36; 4 January 1993, 26; 3 May 1993, 48; 18 November 1993, 59; 30 June 1994, 20.
- <sup>40</sup>FBIS-LAT, 18 October 1994, 55 & 56.
- <sup>41</sup>Geoffrey Demarest, 45.
- <sup>42</sup>Arnaldo Claudio, Heroin: The Colombian Cartels Diversify (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), 8.
- <sup>43</sup>FBIS-LAT, 20 November 1992, 44.
- <sup>44</sup>FBIS-LAT, 15 September 1993, 24; 18 November 1993, 58; 22 November 1993, 41; 20 December 1993, 50-52; 27 December 1993, 48; 18 January 1994, 66 & 67; 3 June 1994, 36.
- <sup>45</sup>Robert T. Buckman, trans, The Big Guerrilla Business (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), The ELN and the Budget.
- <sup>46</sup>FBIS-LAT, 20 November 1992, 44.
- <sup>47</sup>FBIS-LAT, 30 September 1991, 30.
- <sup>48</sup>FBIS-LAT, 30 September 1991, 30; 22 March 1993, 30; 18 January 1994, 68; 4 April 1994, 30.

<sup>49</sup>Robert T. Buckman, trans, The Big Guerrilla Business (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), The ELN and the Budget.

<sup>50</sup>Geoffrey Demarest, 20 & 26.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 21; FBIS-LAT, 12 October 1993, 64 & 65.

<sup>52</sup>Geoffrey Demarest, 22.

<sup>53</sup>FBIS-LAT, 8 January 1992, 22 & 23.

<sup>54</sup>Geoffrey Demarest, 23.

<sup>55</sup>Robert T. Buckman, trans, The Big Guerrilla Business (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1992), The Diversification of the FARC.

<sup>56</sup>Gustavo A. Porres-Amaya, Other Unknown Cartels of Cocaine (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC, 1994), 18.

<sup>57</sup>FBIS-LAT, 27 November 1992, 24.

<sup>58</sup>FBIS-LAT, 22 March 1993, 30 & 31.

<sup>59</sup>Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., Operations Other than War: Organized Crime Dimension (Fort Leavenworth, KS: FMSO, 1994), 40-42.

<sup>60</sup>FBIS-LAT, 5 August 92, 33

<sup>61</sup>FBIS-LAT, 5 August 1992, 33.

<sup>62</sup>FBIS-LAT, 16 February 1993, 31.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS

### AND

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Key Judgements and Conclusions

The changed relationship among the government and drug cartels, which has also affected the guerrillas, was the aggressive new approach by the government, starting in 1989, to seek out and capture the drug leaders. The government's policy of offering monetary rewards leading to the capture of key drug leaders was so successful that it was expanded to include information on guerrilla leaders. Whatever tactic was found to be effective against the drug network was soon applied to the guerrilla problem, resulting in the captures of key guerrilla leaders and, thus, disarray of the organizations' leadership, especially the EPL dissidents.

Since 1980, the Colombian government has been more determined and aggressive in its efforts to counter the influence of drug traffickers and the spread of drug trafficking in Colombia. Though, the intensity and manner with which the Colombian government has pursued the threat of drug traffickers has depended on the government and personalities in power. President Barco's administration began a stepped-up campaign against the Medellin Cartel in the latter years of his presidency. Following the lead, President Gaviria continued the process and was successful in disrupting and disorganizing the Medellin Cartel. His administration sought agreements with the major cartel members and reduced prison sentences in exchange for their surrenders and the dismantling of their drug operations. Though the key Medellin Cartel kingpins accepted the terms, it proved to be a hollow victory for

the government. The Cali Cartel and others stepped into the vacuum created by the demise of the Medellin Cartel and took over that share of the drug business. This willingness of others to quickly fill the vacuum and continue the lucrative drug business does not hold out much hope for a successful conclusion to the war on drugs. Prosecutor General Gustavo de Greiff was correct in July 1994 when he stated that the cartels are not monolithic and that there is always another organization or person ready to take over the drug business. He further observed that the death of Pablo Escobar did not diminish drug trafficking in Medellin or Colombia. Imprisoned Medellin kingpins still influenced Cartel activities from within the prison walls. To date, the Cali Cartel has not reached any agreements with the Colombian government. An agreement had seemed possible during the 1994 controversial dealings between Prosecutor General Gustavo de Greiff and Cali kingpins, but it never materialized.

Elected in 1994, President Samper's campaign was thought to have been financed in part from drug money. Even if it were, President Samper's government appears to have taken a tough stand against drug trafficking. He and his new Prosecutor General, Alfonso Valdivieso, are not bargaining and offering the reduced prison terms of the Gaviria administration. Instead, they are conducting numerous counter-drug operations and have stepped up the drug plant eradication program. President Samper and his Prosecutor General are also opposed to drug legalization and have indicated their desires for the Constitutional Court to reverse its earlier decision, which legalized small quantities of drugs for personal use.

The vast wealth of the drug traffickers has enabled them to infiltrate just about all echelons of the government. Their money has been used to bribe judges, mayors, policemen, prison guards, and many others. Their other tools of influence are intimidation, violence and elimination. These latter tools were especially used by the Medellin Cartel. The government has reformed its judicial system in order to

deal with the drug traffickers' influence. For example, anonymous judges are used to deliver sentences on key drug traffickers. President Samper's government has increased drug plant eradication, issued arrest warrants against, the previously untouchable Cali kingpins and appears to have taken a firmer stand against drug traffickers than the previous administrations, though the President has not endorsed extradition. He also does not appear willing to bargain, as Gaviria was, with the drug traffickers.

The relationship between the government and the guerrillas has changed with the turnover of every administration. President Betancur tried to establish a peace with the guerrillas, but ultimately failed. Neither his administration, between 1982 and 1986, nor the nation was prepared to concede to the peace demands of the guerrillas or to allow them to form a legal political parity. As for the guerrillas, they used the Betancur years to reestablish, rearm, and expand.

The Gaviria administration attempted to conclude a peace agreement with the various guerrilla organizations and did in fact succeed with five guerrilla groups, the main two being the M-19 and the EPL. It carried out negotiations with the CGSB, under whose umbrella the FARC, ELN, and EPL dissidents fall. Concurrently, the government countered the guerrillas' mounting violent activities. As it had done in countering drug traffickers, it now offered monetary rewards for information leading to the capture of key guerrilla leaders. The Gaviria government's effort was successful in capturing key leaders of the EPL dissident and ELN organizations and disrupting their leadership. As guerrilla activities escalated, President Gaviria and others concluded that the CGSB guerrillas were not serious about laying down their arms and reaching a peace agreement. Negotiations between Gaviria's administration and the CGSB broke down. President Samper and his new administration, however, appear willing to reopen the talks and to again work towards a peace.

The relationship between the Colombian insurgents and Colombian drug cartels is a inconsistent co-existence to the benefit of both groups. The drug traffickers benefit by dealing with an established organization, which is able to centrally control the peasants and the farmers who grow the coca, poppy and marijuana plants. The drug traffickers, thus, do not have to worry about recruiting and controlling the large amount of personnel required to deal with the thousands of drug-connected peasants and farmers in the numerous drug affected regions. Additionally, the guerrillas are a ready made, trained and disciplined armed group who can protect the crops and the processing laboratories and free the drug traffickers from those manpower-intensive responsibilities. The destabilizing effect of the guerrillas on the country's economy and government regime is an added bonus, as it requires the government to dedicate resources, which might otherwise be directed against the drug industry, to counter the guerrillas. President Gaviria's administration, however, appeared able to coordinate its efforts and resources and to target and disrupt both the Medellin Cartel and the leadership of the three main guerrilla organizations.

For the guerrillas, the benefit in the relationship lies in its financial rewards. The demise of the Cold War and the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe resulted in the guerrillas' loss of external financial aid and, thus, the need for their involvement in the drug trade. The drug money pays for the guerrillas' expensive small arms, supplies, information, and operation costs. If the main goal of the guerrillas--central to their planning over forty-five years--is to still defeat the democratic and capitalist Colombian government, the economic destabilization effect of drugs on Colombia and other capitalist countries is in their interests.

There is an abundance of evidence that points to the guerrillas' involvement in drug trafficking. Whether circumstantial or not, the guerrillas and drug traffickers operate geographically in much the same areas, which include the poppy, coca, and marijuana growing

regions. In addition, many documents have been seized that outline the financial workings of the guerrillas. The documents reveal that both FARC and ELN fronts are financially supported in part from their involvement in the drug trade. This involvement, though primarily in the form of protection and the levying of taxes, appears to recently have evolved, though evidence is sketchy, to some fronts directly participating in the entire drug process. Through the years there has been ample evidence, as outlined in this paper, to connect the guerrillas to drug trafficking. Official Colombian and U.S. reports, observations made by counter-drug and counter-insurgency personnel, captured documents, and recorded peasant/farmer interviews all combine, time and time again, to confirm the link. Army and counter-drug units have come upon guerrillas guarding processing laboratories and plantations, and drug traffickers, as middlemen, have assisted the guerrillas in acquiring weapons with the use of their transport assets, contacts, or supply routes. The Karina event in 1981 was the earliest documented occurrence of such a relationship that this author found.

The drug traffickers and guerrillas do not share the same professed goals except, perhaps, to paralyze the judicial and political apparatus in order for each to continue unopposed in their pursuits. Drug traffickers, for the most part, are right-wing nationalists and anti-communist in their beliefs, while the guerrillas generally espouse non-capitalist beliefs and are aligned closely to the left and wish to see major governmental changes and reforms.

Many prominent people have labeled the guerrillas, especially the FARC, as a third drug cartel. In the manner in which one thinks of the Medellin or even the looser configured Cali Cartel, this author does not believe that the FARC, ELN, or CGSB can be labeled a cartel. There does not appear to be a centralized core within these organizations that specifically directs the fronts in their drug trafficking ventures. If a label is to be attached to the 1990-era guerrillas, this author would suggest that the guerrillas have evolved into an organized crime,

mafia-type organization. Drug trafficking is only a portion of their illegal money-making enterprises. Others, discussed above are kidnapping and extortion in the form of taxes levied on the various mining businesses.

The remaining three main guerrilla groups, the FARC, ELN, and EPL dissidents, are in the 1990s less concerned with furthering ideological beliefs than they are in accumulating wealth. Though the guerrillas make peace overtures to the government in alleged attempts to seek a peace, their continued terrorist actions belie them. There is no incentive for them to make peace with the government. The organizations are strong and, as revealed by captured documents, they are among the most financially powerful organizations in the country. Though the guerrillas may still purport to believe their ideological rhetoric, it is becoming increasingly more of a way to legitimize their activities to the local populace, while simultaneously pursuing their income generating criminal practices.

Conflict among the guerrillas has appeared with probably the most obvious being within the ELN. ELN dissidents under Jacinto Ruiz broke away from Father Manuel Perez' ELN organization citing ideological differences. Chief among the differences was the ELN's penchant for terrorist activities and the collection of protection money/taxes, both which ultimately hurt the local populace. This dissident group, the Socialist Renewal Group, seeking a political versus the CGSB militant solution to their differences with the government, eventually signed a peace agreement with the government in April 1994.

The guerrilla organizations--the FARC, ELN, and EPL dissidents, that fall under the CGSB umbrella--seem to agree on the use of terrorist tactics and on the ways and means to fund their causes. Of the three groups, however, the ELN leadership appears to be the least supportive of those activities with direct drug trafficking involvement. This lack of all-out support, though, has not prevented ELN cells from profiting from the drug trade.

Support for the guerrillas has diminished overall. In the Uraba region, especially, the terrorist activities and murders carried out by the guerrillas against sympathizers of the Hope, Peace, and Freedom Group have lost them support. Furthermore, their terrorist and intimidation activities; murders, indiscriminant bombings, and the disruption of utilities and businesses have resulted in the additional unneeded hardship and the loss of wages for the local populace. The guerrillas have eroded their populace support base as they have moved away from their political ideologies and more towards terrorist organized crime activities.

The guerrillas finance their organization through various activities that can basically be categorized as organized crime enterprises. As discussed above, their main income undertakings include taxes/extortion levied on the legal gold, emerald, coffee, cattle, and oil businesses, kidnapping ransoms, and the illicit trafficking in drugs.

In conclusion, indicators to foster an optimistic view for an agreed upon solution or peace between the Colombian government and the FARC and ELN do not exist. The desire for--and the enticing power of--wealth has probably supplanted the original ideological objectives of the guerrillas. They are not fighting for better conditions, rights, or an improved status for the populace, but are in contrast, hurting the common folk. The populace feels the negative impact of the blown-up oil pipelines and electrical plants. The end result for them is the loss of electricity and income.

President Samper's aggressive eradication program has been resisted by the peasants. Drug plants are the largest cash crops in Colombia and a lucrative source of income for the peasants. Though they only realize a minimal amount of the crops' value, it is enough to raise their standards of living. Thus, it should be no major surprise that, supported by the guerrillas, the peasants have actively, through

demonstrations, shown their displeasure of President Samper's efforts to destroy the crops.

The guerrillas wealth, increase in firepower, links to drug trafficking, and organized crime enterprises make it very difficult to assume that the government political concessions will entice the CGSB guerrillas to lay down their arms and be repatriated into the general society. In order to just maintain the status quo, the government will need to continue its counter-drug and counter-insurgency operations simultaneously.

To initiate this legitimization, the government needs to first assess and then make sweeping social and economic reforms. The historic failure of past Colombian administrations to implement these changes, which would benefit all the people and not just the elite, has been the catalyst for the rise and growth of insurgencies.

Secondly, the Samper and future governments must continue to honor agreements made with those guerrilla groups, which had already laid down their arms--AD/M-19, EPL, and others--in order to establish the government's credibility in the eyes of the guerrillas. This credibility has historically been eroded. Time and time again, Colombian governments have reneged on promises/concessions made to repatriated guerrillas. Its credibility was called into question again in 1992 and led to the occupation of the Costa Rican embassy by AD/M-19 members seeking assurances. Even if the government does establish its legitimacy and credibility, it may be too late to repatriate the FARC and ELN guerrillas due to the seductiveness of the organizations' mounting wealth gained through illegal operations.

Counternarcotic support from the United States assists and encourages the Colombian government to aggressively go after and prosecute the drug traffickers. As long as Colombia shows the will to aggressively fight drugs, the United States will be compelled to continue its support. The future does not hold much hope, though, for an end to the drug problem in the Colombia, the United States or

elsewhere. Drug traffickers and users crisscross the world. The solution to the drug problem hinges on worldwide governmental cooperation and commitment to counter the use of drugs and to attack and destroy the industry.

APPENDIX  
RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology

The research for this thesis has been done in three parts and is a combination of methods, the chronological and the cause and effect. The first part was done in order to set the stage and bring the reader to a common starting point, from which the rest of the paper follows. The research initially focused on Colombia's history from 1948 to 1980, and on establishing the evolution of the modern Colombian guerrilla groups and cartels. The resulting product of this research was the substance of the Background section in Chapter One.

The second part of the research concentrated on Colombia in the 1980s. The primary intent of this part was to chronologically follow the history of the Colombian guerrillas and cartels into the present decade. The focus was to detail major activities, developments (growth/decline), and the relationships of the guerrillas and cartels with the Colombian government, populace, and each other. Another important relationship that was included is the one between the United States and Colombia. The outcome of this research is Chapter Two of the thesis.

The final and third part of the research centered on Colombia from 1990 to 1995. The core of examination was on the dynamics of the guerrilla groups and cartels, any actions that connected the two, and any ongoing negotiations between the Colombian government and the latter two groups. This recent and volatile period is presented in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Three, the cause and effect methodology is used in conjunction with the chronological. This combination shows the effect,

if any, that the Colombian government strategy, for fighting/dealing with their guerrilla and drug cartel problems, has on the United States' national security policy towards Colombia.

Once the research was completed, the data compiled, and Chapter Three written, the ongoing data evaluation and analysis was finalized. Chapter Three was the primary basis for the final analytical conclusions detailed in Chapter Four.

#### Layout

Chapters 1-3 are a chronological history of Colombia from 1949 to 1995. The historical overview leads the reader from the organized beginnings of the guerrilla groups and the cartels to their status as of December 1995. The majority of analysis is found in Chapter Four along with analytical responses to the pyramid of questions. Collectively, the analysis of the information in Chapter Three and the answers to the pyramid of questions, listed below, were used to assess the effect that the Colombian drug industry has on Colombian guerrilla groups.

#### Question Pyramid

How has the Colombian illicit drug industry affected the prospects for resolving the guerrilla conflict in Colombia?

A. Has there been a change in the relationship among the Colombian government and drug cartels that influences the government and guerrilla conflict?

1. What power/influence do the cartels have within the government?

2. How has the relationship of the Colombian government and the drug cartels changed over time?

3. What is the relationship among the government and guerrilla organizations?

B. What is the relationship among the Colombian guerrillas and the Colombian drug cartels?

1. Is there evidence to suggest that the guerrillas are actively involved in any part of drug trafficking? If so, to what extent?

2. Do the guerrillas and the cartels have common political goals?

3. Have the guerrillas evolved into a third major cartel?

C. How has the involvement with the Colombian cartels influenced/changed the fundamental ideological beliefs of the Colombian guerrilla groups?

1. Is there conflict among the guerrillas due to differing ideological views or methods?

2. Is there local populace support for the guerrillas? Has it diminished or increased?

3. How are the insurgents financed?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are so many books, reports, studies and other unclassified publications written on the drug cartels and the guerrilla groups of Colombia that only those most useful to the research of this thesis topic are highlighted below. Much literature has been published just in the last four years and it is those publications that will form the foundation for this thesis.

The thread that links Jenny Pearce's, Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth, Violence in Colombia, edited by Bergquist, Penaranda and Sanchez, and The Politics of Colombia by Dix is the common structures of the books. Each provides the reader an overview of Colombia's history and endeavors to portray the linkages between Colombia's economics, politics, violence, guerrillas and drug traffickers. They show how the various factors affect each other and have done so through the history of Colombia.

The books The White Labyrinth by Rensselaer Lee III, Snowfields by Clare Hargreaves, Cocaine Politics by Scott and Marshall, Narco-terrorism by Rachel Ehrenfeld, Mountain High, White Avalanche by Scott MacDonald and the International Drug Trafficking published by the Office of International Criminal Justice, all center around cocaine trafficking, but in varying aspects. Snowfields primarily looks at cocaine trafficking from a Bolivian perspective through factual narrative and interview monologues. Of interest to this thesis is the accounting of how the Colombian government crack-down on drug traffickers in the late 1980s and 1990s affected the drug trade in Bolivia. The White Labyrinth and Mountain High, White Avalanche discuss the drug trade in Colombia and other Andean countries. These two books as well as Narco-terrorism and International Drug Trafficking look at

the narco-guerrilla connection, but The White Labyrinth expounds more on the extent of a connection between Colombian cartels and guerrillas. All these drug trafficking based books except for International Drug Trafficking conclude with a chapter focused on the drug problem and the anti-drug policies of the United States. The White Labyrinth more specifically reviews the inter-relationship between the economic and political factors of Andean nations and cocaine trafficking. Mountain High, White Avalanche also touches on this inter-relationship, but is more focused on describing the spread of cocaine through the Andean nations to include Venezuela, Chile, and Ecuador and the connection Panama and Manuel Noriega had with the drug traffickers. Cocaine Politics details the connection between drug traffickers, the Nicaraguan contras, and elements of the United States government. The accounting of this connection involves Colombian cartels and guerrillas and the policy changes of the United States executive branch. Narco-terrorism describes the pairing of drugs and terrorism and their spread across the globe with a stop to look specifically at Colombia. The authors of Cocaine Politics and Narco-terrorism cite excerpts from Lee's The White Labyrinth.

The proliferation of information continues with up-to-date magazine and newspaper articles. The Foreign Broadcast Information System (FBIS) provides excellent translations of major news items from prominent Colombian newspapers such as *El Tiempo*. Though many of the magazine and newspaper articles report the current news items, they do not endeavor to conduct an extensive research and analysis of the drug trafficking and guerrilla problems facing Colombia. This gap is in part covered by the many excellent scholarly articles out of the Foreign Military Studies Office. These articles cover various topics and regions/countries, however, quite a few relate specifically to Colombia and the drug and the guerrilla problems of that country. Chief among these articles are Heroin: The Colombian Cartel's Diversity and United States-Colombia Extradition Treaty: Failure of a Security Strategy by

Arnaldo Claudio and Operations Other Than War: Organized Crime Dimension by Graham H. Turbiville, Jr. Two especially good articles are The Cali Cartel: An Undefeated Enemy and Narcotics Trafficking and the Colombian Military by Robert Buckman and Geoffrey Demarest, respectively. The Cali Cartel provides the reader an excellent update, through June 1994, on the status of the Colombian drug cartels and the progress made against them by the Colombian government. The author focuses on describing the Cali Cartel organization, its key members, and its apparent move from a relatively prior non-violent nature to an increasingly more violent one. He addresses Colombian government and Cartel negotiations and the effect of those negotiations on Colombian - United States relations. The article concludes with various pausable scenarios detailing the future prospects of the Cali Cartel. Equally informing is Narcotics Trafficking and the Colombian Military which focuses on the relationship between the drug traffickers and the Colombian Army, and the impact of drug trafficking on Colombia in terms of money, politics, corruption and violence. Like the article *The Cali Cartel*, it also addresses the consequences the Colombian government and drug trafficking relationship has on Colombian - United States relations.

This thesis relied heavily on these articles to provide as current a picture as possible of the drug trafficking and the guerrilla situation in Colombia and to assist in answering the primary research question of this thesis which is, "How has the Colombian illicit drug industry affected the prospects for resolving the guerrilla conflict in Colombia?"

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