

DEMOCRATIC SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY: A SUCCESSFUL
COUNTERINSURGENCY MODEL

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by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

DEMOCRATIC SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY: A SUCCESSFUL COUNTERINSURGENCY MODEL, LTC Juvenal Diaz Mateus, 103 pages.

The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) reached its highest point in military capabilities by 1998. In 2002, this insurgent group was a threat to the Colombian political system. The government of Alvaro Uribe designed and implemented the Democratic Security and Defense Policy (DSDP). After eight years of application, the DSDP was successful in reducing the FARC political and military capabilities to a point where today, the FARC is still a threat to the country's security, but its chances of changing the political system has disappeared.

Two aspects made the policy successful: first, the design of the DSDP, which adapted different Counterinsurgency (COIN) principles to the Colombian environment; and second, the implementation of the DSDP, which includes the unique leadership style of Uribe, the creation of an interagency organization, the development of special operations capabilities, the periodic publicity of statistics and achievements, and the long-term application. The policy had some downsides as well; which when analyzed with the above factors valuable lessons are offered which can contribute to improving the ongoing COIN strategy in Colombia. Furthermore, it can serve as a base model for implementation in other regions of the world.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
TABLES	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Background	2
Primary Research Question	8
Secondary Research Questions.....	9
Assumptions.....	9
Definitions of Terms	9
Delimitations.....	11
Scope and Limitations	11
Significance of Study.....	11
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Insurgency and COIN Theory.....	13
Insurgency Theory	13
COIN Theory	17
Previous Analysis of the DSDP	19
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	25
CHAPTER 4 FARC’S STRATEGIC APPROACH AND COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS 1962-2002	27
The Genesis of FARC and Government COIN Approach (1962-1966)	27
COIN Strategy Targeting FARC’s Root, FARC Reaffirming its Communist Ideology (1966-1970)	31
Colombian Government Investing in Conventional Capabilities, FARC Outlining its First Strategic Plan (1970–1974)	33

COIN Effort Attacking the Root Cause of the Problem, the FARC Spreading their Influence throughout the Country (1974–1978).....	36
Turbay’s Military COIN Approach, FARC’s Remaking its Strategic Plan (1978–1982).....	38
Government Offering a Political Solution to the Conflict, FARC Taking Advantage of It (1982-1986)	39
Government Facing Different Threats, FARC Shifting to Combination of All Forms of Struggle (1986–1990).....	40
Government Trying the Political Solution One More Time, the FARC Negotiating to Win without Fighting (1990–1994)	42
Government Continues Looking for a Political Solution to the Conflict, FARC Achieving the Strategic Stalemate Phase (1994–1998).....	45
The Government’s Big Bet for Peace, the FARC in the Strategic Offensive Phase (1998-2002)	46
CHAPTER 5 THE DSDP (2002–2010).....	49
The Analysis of DSDP	50
The Design of the DSDP.....	50
The Implementation of the DSDP.....	55
Comparing the Colombian Situation Before the DSDP (2002) and After its Application (2010).....	63
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	77
Conclusions.....	77
Recommendations.....	85
To Improve Colombian COIN Policy.....	85
For Future Research.....	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	93

ACRONYMS

CCAI	Centro de Coordinacion de Accion Integral
CCOPE	Comando Conjunto de Operaciones Especiales
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DSDP	Democratic Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FM	Field Manual
HVT	High Value Target
JP	Joint Publication
LOE	Line of Effort
PCDS	Policy of Consolidation of Democratic Security
UN	United Nations
UP	Union Patriotica

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Location of the First FARC Guerrilla Conference	5
Figure 2. The South Block Area.....	30
Figure 3. FARC Organization in 1974.....	35
Figure 4. FARC's Fronts at the End of 1978	37
Figure 5. Reorganization of the FARC after Eighth Conference	43
Figure 6. FARC Areas of Responsibility after the Eighth Conference	44
Figure 7. "If the Presidential Election Were Held Tomorrow, for Which Candidate Would You Vote?	48
Figure 8. Indicators of Achievement of State Control Throughout the Country	67
Figure 9. Protection of the Population.....	69
Figure 10. To Gain Support from the Population.....	70
Figure 11. Performance of the Economy.....	73
Figure 12. To Strengthen Security Forces.....	74
Figure 13. Colombian Military Men Killed or Wounded in Action	75
Figure 14. Evolution of FARC Strength	76

TABLES

	Page
Table 1. COIN Principles.....	19
Table 2. U.S. Assistance to Colombia 2002 to 2007	23
Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Colombia 1995 to 1998	23
Table 4. HVT Intelligence Process Duration	61
Table 5. Origin of the COIN Objectives for the DSDP Analysis	64
Table 6. Objectives, MOPs, MOEs, and Indicators to Compare the Colombian Situation in 2002 with 2010.....	65
Table 7. Colombian Government COIN Approaches and Their Results.....	79
Table 8. Evolution of FARC by Presidential Periods	80
Table 9. Validation of COIN Principles by DSDP	84

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Colombia has been waging a war against insurgency since 1962 and against the FARC (Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces) insurgency since 1966.

Counterinsurgency strategy in Colombia has changed from originally not having one, to treating guerrillas as bandits, to treating them as a political problem; to an approach toward a more military, security oriented strategy. The lack of a coordinated counterinsurgency strategy allowed the FARC to grow gradually in arms, weapons, and capabilities, to the point that, in 2002, the population perceived it as a real threat to Colombian security and the government. However, that year the government applied a counterinsurgency strategy, the Democratic Security and Defense Policy (DSDP), synchronizing the efforts of all the elements of power of the state. It reduced the FARC's capacity to threaten the government to the extent that, in 2010, the population still perceived the FARC as a security problem, but no longer as a threat to the government. Examination of this seemingly successful campaign could determine the factors that contributed to the success of this counterinsurgency strategy. In addition, the results of the research might yield suggestions for changes to the ongoing counterinsurgency strategy in Colombia, which will make it more effective in attaining the political end state. Furthermore, this will permit validation of FARC's strategic approach and Government COIN effort against existing theories.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine which factors contribute to making the Colombian Government's counterinsurgency strategy 2002 to 2010 successful in diminishing the FARC capabilities to overthrow the government.

Background

Colombia has the oldest continuous guerrilla movement in the world. Manuel Marulanda Velez,¹ known by his nickname Sure Shot (Tiro Fijo), founded the FARC guerrillas in 1966. However, the origins of this group date back to 1926, when the workers of the large plantations organized armed groups to fight the land owners and their supporters, the government organizations. In 1936, a liberal government passed agrarian reforms that did not work due to the opposition of the large land owners and one faction of the liberal party that defended the interests of the rich people. This situation created the conditions in 1944 for the emergence of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan,² a young liberal political leader who promised to improve conditions for workers and farmers. Although he lost the presidential election in 1946, again to the conservatives, his popularity continued to grow. Therefore, he had popular support for the presidential election in 1950.³

¹Pedro Antonio Marin Velez (b.ca.1930–d.2008) assumed the nom de guerre Manuel Marulanda Velez.

²Jorge Eliecer Gaitan Ayala (b.1903-d.1948).

³Eduardo Pizarro and Ricardo Peñaranda, *Las FARC (1949-1966): de la Autodefensa a la Combinación de Todas las Formas de Lucha* (Bogotá, Colombia: Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1991), 30-38.

The conservative party, in office since 1946, officially began a violent campaign to eliminate the liberal party. The liberals responded in two ways. They organized civilian resistance and created guerrilla groups. Because of this political environment, Gaitan was assassinated on 9 April 1948 by unknown assassins. This exacerbated the ongoing violence between the conservative government and the liberal guerrillas. This epoch is known as the Conservative-Liberal violence period (La violencia).⁴ This violence, along with President Laureano Gomez's medical problems, led General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla to seize power from 1953 to 1957.

To end this political instability and try to end the violence, the military and the two main political parties agreed on the "National Front." It established that from 1958 to 1974 the two parties would rotate the presidency every four years.⁵ While this certainly contributed to stability, the liberal guerrilla groups continued to fight. Worse still, new groups of communist guerrillas organized. The former aimed to foster the liberal ideas; the latter aimed to establish a communist government.⁶

Throughout this era, the government did not develop a counterinsurgency strategy to defeat these groups. Therefore, the Communist and Liberal guerrillas concentrated in Marquetalia, a county located 300 kilometers south of Bogota, and organized their own government, including law enforcement and a "judicial system." In 1961, the

⁴Ibid., 40.

⁵Dennis M. Hanratty and Sandra W. Meditz, *Colombia a Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1990), 300-307.

⁶Ibid., 46-88.

conservative political leader, Alvaro Gomez Hurtado, denounced the situation in Marquetalia, calling it “The independent republic of Marquetalia.”⁷

In 1964, the government launched the first large-scale counterguerrilla attack against the “Independent Republic of Marquetalia.” The Colombian Military Forces, with helicopters, T-33⁸ fighter aircraft, seven infantry battalions, and the assistance of United States (U.S.) military advisors, failed to capture the guerrilla fighters. Instead, the guerrillas spread throughout the country, and communist ideas with them. In late 1965, these groups held the first Guerrilla Conference known as “the Marquetalia Guerrillas”⁹ (see figure 1). It was here that the movement took the name Bloque Sur or “Southern Block,” and set in action plans in the form of propaganda, education, and organized campaigns. The second guerrilla conference took place at the end of 1966. “Tiro Fijo” assumed the role of a national leader and the movement took the name of FARC.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., 150–184.

⁸Originally the U.S. P-80/F-80 “shooting star.”

⁹The location was in the Caldas state.

¹⁰Ibid., 186–200. Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia or “Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces.”



Figure 1. Location of the First FARC Guerrilla Conference

Source: Booking Box, “Colombia,” <http://www.bookingbox.org.uk/colombia/english/travel-club-caldas-general-information.html> (accessed 13 May 2012).

At this point, the FARC was only one of many insurgency groups around the world aiming to overthrow a government and replace it with a communist regime. In many respects, Colombia was another place where the U.S. and the Soviet Union fought the Cold War, the former supporting the government, and the latter the FARC.¹¹

From 1966 to 1990, the FARC conducted its protracted war, slowly increasing its manpower and weapons. The government’s approach against them facilitated this because they did not have a consistent approach, sometimes using military means, and

¹¹Centro de EstudiosMiguel Enrique (CEME), “Las Conferencias de FARC,” http://www.Archivochile.Com/america_latina/doc_paises_al/co/farc/al_farc0003.Pdf (accessed 24 September 2011).

other times negotiating. Meanwhile, the FARC continue to grow, beginning in 1966 with 350 men and increasing to 5,800 men by 1990.¹²

The FARC's finances at this time were based on support from communist countries, and income produced by kidnapping and extortion. In 1991, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the FARC delved more deeply into drug trafficking; a business in which they had timidly become involved since 1980.¹³ Indeed, according to the Colombian Prosecutor's Office, in the first part of 1995, the FARC made \$647 million, which by the end of 1995, was more than enough money to manage a force of only about 6,800 men.¹⁴

The drug money considerably augmented the FARC's income and, correspondingly, it's recruiting and weapons acquisition. In 1998, according to the Colombian Government, the FARC had grown to approximately 10,560 men.¹⁵ Money and manpower gave the FARC the ability to seize cities,¹⁶ kidnap politicians, set up

¹²Jesus M. La Rotta, *Las Finanzas de la Subversión Colombiana* (Bogotá, D.C: Ediciones Los Últimos Patriotas, 1996), 94.

¹³*Ibid.*, 89-90.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 73, 200.

¹⁵Colombian Government, "National Development Plan," <http://www.dnp.gov.co/PortalWeb/Portals/0/archivos/documentos/GCRP/PND/PND.pdf> (accessed 24 September 2011).

¹⁶For example, Mitu, the Capital of the Vaupes department (state), was attacked and seized by the FARC on the morning of 1 November 1998. At that time the city had approximately 15,000 inhabitants.

illegal roadblocks across the country, and destroy platoon and company sized military units.¹⁷

The public was desperate and saw in Andres Pastrana¹⁸ a possibility to end the conflict through a peace process. Elected President in 1998, he immediately began a dialogue with the FARC. To facilitate this, Pastrana demilitarized a zone of the country about the size of Switzerland and gave control to the FARC. However, the FARC did not show signs of wanting peace. Instead they continued to recruit, train, and launch attacks on towns outside the border of the demilitarized zone. The “Colombian National Development Plan” assessed the FARC strength at 26,000 men by 2001.¹⁹ Consequently, the government ended the demilitarized zone and the peace process that same year.

By 2002, public opinion favored a more military approach against the FARC and elected Alvaro Uribe²⁰ as Colombian President. For the first time, the Colombian government issued a policy that integrated all the elements of state power to achieve the end “to strengthen and guarantee the rule of law throughout Colombia, through the reinforcement of democratic authority. That is, through the free exercise of authority by democratic institutions, the effective application of the law and the active participation of the citizen in matters of common interest.”²¹

¹⁷El Tiempo Digital, Sección Justicia, “El Billar,” El tiempo.com, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4129924> (accessed 26 August 2011).

¹⁸Andres Pastrana Arango (b.1954), President of Colombia from 1998 to 2002.

¹⁹Colombian Government, “National Development Plan.”

²⁰Alvaro Uribe Velez (b.1952), President of Colombia from 2002 to 2010.

²¹Colombian Government, *Democratic Security and Defense Policy* (Bogota, Colombia: Ministerio de Defense, National Printing), 3.

By the end of 2006, as a result of the implementation of the first period of DSDP, the security improved, the government increased control of the territory, and in comparison to 2002, the criminal indicators dropped sharply. For instance, kidnapping incidents decreased from 2,882 to 600; and terrorist attacks from 1,645 to 646.²² As a consequence, Alvaro Uribe won reelection in the first round for 2006 to 2010.

At the end of the eight-year period, people still approved of the DSDP.²³ However, the constitution did not allow Uribe a third term. As a consequence, Juan Manuel Santos²⁴ was elected to continue the job started by Uribe. Once Uribe was out of office, the FARC intensified their attacks on towns and police and military units. This opened the debate of the real effects of the DSDP. This study will examine the design, application, and results of the policy to determine which factors contributed to its success or failure. The conclusions will lead to suggested improvements to the strategy for the ongoing counterinsurgency in Colombia.

Primary Research Question

What factors made the Colombian government's use of Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic means, the DSDP, successful in diminishing FARC capabilities?

²²Ministerio de Defensa Colombia, "Resultados Política de Seguridad Democrática," Mindefensa.gov.co, http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info_estadistica/Logros%20de%20Politica%20CSD%20Junio%202010.pdf (accessed 27 August 2011).

²³The Colombian daily newspaper, *La Patria*, cited a survey that gave Uribe 63 percent of vote intention at the end 2009, after seven years in power.

²⁴Juan Manuel Santos Calderon (b.1951), President of Colombia since 2010.

Secondary Research Questions

To answer the primary question, this study will address and answer the questions listed below. This will help in understanding the environment at the time the strategy was developed, how it was outlined, and its results. :

1. What are some world insurgency schools of thought related to the FARC?
2. Which are some existing world counterinsurgency strategies theories related to the DSDP applied by Colombian government?
3. What has been the strategic approach the FARC follows?
4. How well did the Colombian government counter the FARC before 2002?
5. What were the Colombian Security statistics at 2002?
6. How was the Colombian strategy outlined in terms of ends, ways and means at 2002?
7. What were the Colombian security statistics at the end of 2010?

Assumptions

This study makes the following assumptions: the FARC is still a threat to the Colombian security, but its capabilities are not the same as in 2002; the DSDP is still the core of the Colombian Counterinsurgency against the FARC; after eight years of application of the DSDP the popular perception is that it was successful in diminishing the FARC capabilities to overthrow the Colombian Government.

Definitions of Terms

To understand the DSDP and the factors that made it successful, the study needs to define some key terms. The research will use these words in the same manner as

governments, militaries, and academic communities do when they discuss historical and ongoing counterinsurgency strategies.

Counterinsurgency (COIN): A comprehensive civilian and military effort taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances.²⁵

Democratic Security and Defense Policy (DSDP): Refers to the defense policy applied by Alvaro Uribe's government during the period 2002 to 2010.

FARC Organization: The statutes of the FARC established the structure of the FARC-EP as follows:

Squad: Is the FARC's basic unit. It consists of 12 men.

Guerrilla: It consists of two squads. It has 24 men.

Company: It consists of two Guerrillas, a total of 48 men.

Column: It consists of two or more companies, approximately 96 men or more.

Front: It has more than one column, a total of 150 men or more.

Block Front: It consists of five or more fronts. It has more than 500 men and is in charge of developing the Strategic Plan in a specific region of the country.

Insurgency: There are different definitions of insurgency. FM 3-24 is the one that relates more to the Colombian situation. Consequently, the definition that this study will use is: "Insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict."²⁶

²⁵Ibid., 82.

²⁶Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), 170.

Delimitations

This study is limited to the Colombian Counterinsurgency Strategy from 2002 to 2010. The research will be conducted during the Intermediate Level Education Course, thus it will end on 8 June 2012. Access to the resources is limited to unclassified books, articles, government documents, statistics, and surveys. The author will assume the expenses for the study. The investigator is an officer from the Colombian Army who has fought the FARC guerrillas over the last 20 years, and therefore could be influenced by his personal experience. Lastly, the research will not consider other actors that affect the Colombian security situation but are out of the scope of this study.²⁷

Scope and Limitations

The thesis will assess the success of the counterinsurgency strategy applied by the Colombian government to combat the FARC guerrillas during the stated period. The purpose will be to determine the factors that made it successful or unsuccessful, and how the ongoing counterinsurgency in Colombia can be enhanced.

The paper will not consider other guerrilla groups which Colombia faces, such as the National Liberation Army (ELN), the self-defense groups (AUC), and other drug cartel groups that challenge the Colombian security.

Significance of Study

The study is significant because it will analyze the Colombian Democratic Security and Defense Policy (DSDP) against some Counter nsurgency (COIN) principles.

²⁷For example, the international relations of the FARC, other small insurgency groups such as the National Liberation Front (ELN), the self-defense groups, and the drug cartels.

The analysis will cover the development and application of Colombian strategy. It will determine the factors that made it successful in reducing the FARC capabilities of overthrowing the government and establishing a communist political system. The study will generate recommendations for making changes in ongoing Colombian counterinsurgency strategy, and for comparing the FARC strategy and the Colombian strategy with current insurgency and COIN theories. Furthermore, it will show how DSDP validates the COIN principles established in Trinquier and Thompson writings, and in U.S. Joint Publication JP 3-24.

The next chapter will cover the literature review related to the subject, which will serve as a base for the analysis of the DSDP.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that made the Colombian counterinsurgency strategy of DSDP successful in reducing the FARC threat to the government. For that purpose a review of the literature is necessary and will be covered in three parts.

The first part will review insurgency schools of thought, allowing analysis in chapter 4 of which theory the FARC follows to conduct its insurgency effort and if whether or not they have developed a new approach. The second part will scrutinize the COIN theory related to the Colombian situation. The purpose is to set the stage for analysis of the factors that made the DSDP successful. Finally, the third part will review previous analysis of the DSDP (2002 to 2010).

Insurgency and COIN Theory

Insurgency Theory

There are thousands of books and articles written about insurgency. This study will consider three authors whose theories relate to the FARC insurgency model: Mao Zedong, David Galula and his outline of Mao Zedong theory, and Ernesto “Che” Guevara. The purpose will be to determine which of these insurgency strategies the FARC is following, or if indeed the FARC has developed a unique model to pursue its aims. It will help to assess Colombian counterinsurgency strategy. Furthermore, it may provide suggestions on how to improve Colombian counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine.

Mao's theory consists of three sequential phases, the difference between each one relates to the correlation of forces with the ruling government: (1) strategic defensive, (2) strategic stalemate, (3) strategic offensive.²⁸ The "strategic defense" phase is when the guerrillas begin to build their political and military apparatus. The attacks are carefully selected for a sure success. The insurgency organization is weak, so special attention is paid to maintain a low profile. A strong reaction from the government can defeat the new insurgency movement. The "strategic stalemate" phase is characterized by "guerrilla warfare." At this point the insurgency movement understands the weaknesses of the country and the internal and external political environment. The last phase "strategic offensive" is when the insurgency has the capability of conducting massive conventional attacks that cause a psychological effect on the population and the officials, leading to the collapse of the government.²⁹

In his book, *Counterinsurgency Theory and Practice*, David Galula established two historical patterns of insurgencies. The first one was based on Mao Zedong's methods that led to the communist victory in China in 1949. In this pattern, the working class must lead a national front in which all the social classes oppose imperialism. For Mao, the communist party must be at the center of this nationwide front. It must profess the Marxism-Leninism theory, understand strategy and tactics, practice self-criticism and strict discipline, be closely linked to the masses, and the communist party must lead a

²⁸Bard E. O'Neal, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 1990), 31-52.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 31, 37.

national army because armed struggle is the main form of resistance for the national liberation struggles of many colonies and semi-colonies.³⁰

An adaptation of Mao's method forms the first pattern of insurgency. According to Galula this consists of five steps. The first step is creation of a communist party as a center for the next step. Second is to establishing a united front with all the organizations that oppose the imperialism or the ruling government. The third step is using guerrilla warfare to conduct attacks in different parts of the country and weaken the governmental control. Fourth is using maneuver warfare to help the guerillas evolve into conventional forces able to seize and control territory. The fifth and final step is to fight a campaign of annihilation to destroy the governmental organizations. The scope and scale of the insurgent's attacks will increase rapidly. The aim is the complete destruction of the enemy. This pattern advises that at any time during the process, the insurgent may offer peace with the purpose of gaining more by negotiating than by fighting.³¹

The second pattern Galula identified is known as the Bourgeois-Nationalist pattern; a shortcut. The goal in this case is to seize power. To that end only a small group of insurgents is necessary. They must rapidly organize a revolutionary party. Galula stated that this pattern follows two steps. First is blind terrorism with the purpose of making the movement and its cause notorious, and attracting other supporters. Second is selective terrorism with the objective of isolating the government from the counterinsurgent, to get the population to participate in the struggle, and to obtain at least

³⁰David Galula, *Counterinsurgency, Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 1964), 43.

³¹*Ibid.*, 44-57.

its passive complicity. Killing as many government officials as possible in different parts of the country is the key. The movement must destroy all links between the population and the government and its potential supporters. When the government is seized by the insurgents the pattern will link with the other steps of the orthodox method.³²

One year after the success of the Cuban revolution in 1960, Ernesto “Che” Guevara³³ proposed a similar approach to the “shortcut.” He used the Cuban revolution as a model to extract the tenets for any Latin American nation to win a guerrilla war. He summarized it in three basic principles: (1) popular forces can win a war against the army; (2) it is not necessary to wait until all the conditions for making the revolution exist; and (3) the insurrection can create them.³⁴ However it was successful in Cuba, because while the revolutionary infrastructure did not exist, the political situation was such that a small group could have great effect. This was not the case elsewhere, such as in Bolivia.

In Bolivia, Ernesto Che Guevara tried to apply the foco model. He told the Bolivian insurgents that the Cuban advisers acted as a fulminant to initiate the detonator. The detonator “are you” (he told the Bolivians), and the charge is the social-economic conditions in Bolivia at that time. The charge did not explode because the government

³²Galula, 58–59.

³³Ernesto Guevara (b.1928–d.1967).

³⁴Joshua Johnson, “From Cuba to Bolivia,” *Innovations: A Journal of Politics* 6 (2006), <http://www.ucalgary.ca/innovations/files/innovations/Johnson%20Cuba%20to%20Bolivia.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2012).

reacted in a fast and decisive way that succeeded in destroying the guerrilla movement and led to the death of Che Guevara.³⁵

These are some concepts of the insurgency theorists that the essay will use to analyze the FARC strategy approach. Now the essay will describe some of the counterinsurgency theories that exist in the world.

COIN Theory

Roger Trinquier, a French colonel, analyzed the French Indochina and the French Algerian wars, concluding that in order to be successful against an insurgency two principles are vital: the government has to identify the adversary exactly (intelligence); and the territory must be defended. The purpose of the latter is to protect the population by applying two measures: the inhabitant's organization to defend themselves; and a countrywide intelligence net to avoid infiltration and growth of insurgency.³⁶

Robert Thompson, a British colonel, wrote the book *Counterinsurgency*. He took into consideration his experience in the Malaya Emergency from 1948 to 1960, and the time he spent in a British advisory mission in South Vietnam from 1961 to 1965. After studying communist subversion (initial stage with the purpose to rise up different social organizations and overthrow the government supported mainly by terrorism), and the

³⁵Carlos Soria, "El che en Bolivia: Documentos y Testimonios," Pensamiento Bolivariano, http://www.chebolivia.org/phocadownload/Che_t5.pdf (accessed 29 March 2012)

³⁶Galula, 29-40.

communist insurgency (the armed struggle). He outlined five basic principles of counterinsurgency³⁷ (see table 1).

U.S. Joint Publication 3-24 reviewed historical principles applied in counterinsurgency from the point of view of U.S.' support to other countries. Consequently, its thirteenth principle refers to U.S. forces committed to supporting COIN efforts of the host nation. Table 1 presents the thirteen principles outlined in that publication.³⁸

The research had so far described the existence insurgency and counterinsurgency theories that will serve as a base for the analysis of the DSDP, from this point the essay will give a look to some articles written about the DSDP.

³⁷Galula, 29-40.

³⁸Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006), 1-20, 1-24.

Table 1. COIN Principles

No	Roger Trinquier	Robert Thompson	JP 3-24
1	The government has to identify the adversary exactly (intelligence).	The government must have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable.	Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Operational Environment, including the political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, and other aspects of the nation.
2	The defense of the territory with the purpose of protecting the population by applying two measures: the inhabitant's organization to defend themselves.	The government must function in accordance with the law.	Legitimacy Is The Main Objective. Governments use a combination of cohesion and coercion rules, legitimacy refers to the populace acceptance of both of them.
3		The government must have an overall plan.	Unity of Effort is Essential. It refers to the adequate coordination among all the agencies participating in a COIN effort.
4		The government must give priority to defeating political subversion, not the guerrillas.	Political Factors are Primary. Military actions support the political objectives; the military objectives seek to create conditions for effective application of the political actions.
5		In the guerrilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base areas first.	Intelligence Drives Operations.
6			Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support.
7			Security under the Rule of Law is Essential. It is an essential condition to achieve legitimacy.
8			Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment. Insurgencies are protracted by nature, and history demonstrates that they often last for years or even decades.
9			Manage Information and Expectations. The COIN leadership must create and maintain a realistic set of expectations among the populace, friendly military forces, and the international community.
10			Use the Appropriate Level of Force. The purpose is to avoid collateral damage.
11			Empower the lowest levels.
12			Learn to adapt.
13			Support the Host Nation. U.S. forces committed to supporting COIN are there to assist a HN government.

Source: Created by author.

Previous Analysis of the DSDP

Many researchers have analyzed the DSDP. This thesis considers three them:

Colombian National Security Strategy, written by Colombian Brigadier General Alberto

Mejia Ferrero; *From el Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experience 1998-2002*, written by Robert D. Ramsey III; and *Colombia's Road to Recovery: Security and Governance 1982–2010*, written by David E. Spencer. Each of these represents a different point of view. Colonel Mejia's research presents the point of view of a Colombian high ranking military officer, while Ramsey analyzed the policy from the U.S. perspective giving great emphasis to the Colombian military forces strengthened. Finally Spencer emphasized the political aspects.

In 2008, Colombian Army Brigadier General Alberto Mejia (then, a student at the U.S. Army War College), conducted research on the DSDP. He began by analyzing the FARC's strategic approach. First, Brigadier General Mejia explained how the FARC develops its strategy using the national guerrilla conferences. This is where they select their objectives and the actions and lines of operations that will lead the organization to achieve the end state, which is to establish a communist government in Colombia. The FARC follows the conclusions from this conference until they are able to conduct the next conference.³⁹

Next, Brigadier General Mejia explained why the FARC strategic approach follows the Maoist theory of three sequential phases: strategic defensive; strategic stalemate; and strategic offensive. He believed that the FARC conducted a strategic defense phase from 1964 to 1982. He demonstrated how during that period, the FARC gradually expanded its influence in the majority of the country's territory. Brigadier

³⁹Alberto J. Mejia, *Colombian National Security Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2008), 3-7.

General Mejia concluded that for two decades the FARC was mainly in the strategic defense phase. Thus, their leadership created a structure to support the “revolution.”⁴⁰

Brigadier General Mejia suggested that the FARC’s seventh Guerrilla Conference in 1982 marked the beginning of its strategic stalemate phase. Using O’Neal to explain why, he mentioned that this phase was the second and largest phase of FARC. Its main characteristic is guerrilla warfare, but: “If the guerrillas face significant opposition, they have the option of reverting to stage one.”⁴¹ He analyzed how the FARC slowly increased guerrilla activities, and at the same time expanding the number of men and fronts. He proposes that 1998 was the date when this phase ended, because the FARC thought the conditions were ripe for them to go into the final phase of the people’s war construct; the “strategic offensive.”⁴²

Brigadier General Mejia used Galula’s definition of “strategic phase” as a base to continue his analysis of FARC. “The insurgency moved from guerrilla warfare to mobile conventional attacks on a large scale, and the political and psychological effects of the insurgent victories led to the collapse of the government.”⁴³ In accordance to Brigadier General Mejia by 1998, the FARC had masterfully applied Mao’s theory. That year, the FARC conducted massive attacks on platoon, company, and even battalion size units. As examples, he mentioned the attacks over the military bases of Patascoy, Las Delicias, and

⁴⁰Mejia, 3.

⁴¹O’Neal, 31-52.

⁴²Mejia, 4.

⁴³Ibid., 6.

Miraflores. He added that for the first time, more than 15 FARC fronts surrounded the capital city of Bogotá.⁴⁴

Next he analyzed how during that period the government of Colombia allowed the FARC to achieve the “strategic phase.” He blamed them for the lack of a coherent military strategy. To him the strategy was the product of improvisation and urgency. He concluded that DSDP is the first strategy that coordinated political end states with military objectives, and prioritized and coordinated resources and efforts among all the government and non-government organizations to achieve the end state.⁴⁵

In 2009, Robert D. Ramsey III wrote an occasional paper in which he assessed the Colombian situation prior to 2002. He then delved into an analysis of the DSDP. He concluded that two aspects were key to the improvement of the Colombian security situation during Uribe’s period. The first aspect was the leadership of Uribe. He highlighted the ethical work of Uribe and his demand for results. Ramsey acknowledges Uribe’s “strong energetic and capable leadership,”⁴⁶ and how he made security his first priority. The second aspect was U.S. support through training, equipment, and advice. Ramsey noted that from period 2002 to 2010, U.S. aid to Colombia maintained an average of \$725 USD million per year (see table 2). This was a considerable change to previous annual average of \$88.5 USD million dollars (see table 3).

⁴⁴Mejia, 6.

⁴⁵Ibid., 8-17.

⁴⁶Robert D. Ramsey III, *From el Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experiences 1998-2008* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institutes Press, 2009), 156.

Table 2. U.S. Assistance to Colombia 2002 to 2007

Dollars in Millions	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 03 (Est.)	TOTAL
Promote Social Justice and Economic Justice	125.7	126.4	124.7	130.4	139.8	194.4	841.4
Alternative Development	60.2	59.8	70.7	72	68.2	119.7	450.6
Internally Displaced Persons	41.5	42.6	32	30.7	31.1	35.3	213.2
Demobilization/Reintegration				8.9	15.7	18.3	42.9
Democracy and Human Rights	24	24	22	18.8	24.8	21.1	134.7
Promote Rule of Law-Judicial Reform and Capacity Building	27	9	7.3	10.5	7.8	39.4	101
Eradication	63.7	44.2	82.5	81.7	82	66.5	420.6
Air Service	62.3	71.2	70	70.5	69	52.5	395.5
Interdiction	21	41	16.9	16.5	16.5	16.5	128.4
Police Presence-Conflict Zones	15.5	13.8	20.1	19.4	18.7		87.5
Other	2	2	1.4	16.4	31.5	19.5	72.8
COLMIL Counterdrug	203.3	268.1	249.9	213.4	222.4	182.2	1339.3
Air Interdiction	8	7.1		4.6	18.8	10	48.5
Coastal/River Interdiction		26.2	11.8	19.1	19.2	13	89.3
Counterdrug Funding	195.3	234.8	238.1	189.7	184.4	159.2	1201.5
Colombian Army	240.1	177.3	144.9	169.4	151.3	86.1	969.1
Aviation	140.8	155.2	127.5	143.2	129.6	69.7	766
Ground Forces	6.3	18.1	13.4	22.2	17.7	16.4	94.1
Infrastructure Building	93	4	4	4	4		109
TOTAL	760.7	753	717.7	728.2	739	657.1	4355.6

Source: Robert D. Ramsey III, *From el Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experiences 1998-2008* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institutes Press, 2009), 156.

Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Colombia 1995 to 1998

Dollars in Millions	1995	1996	1997	1998	TOTAL
Economic	1.3	.6		.5	3.4
USAID				.5	.5
Food Aid Grants					
Other	1.3	.6			2.9
Counternarcotics	18.5	22.6	56.5	99.1	196.7
DOS International Narcotics Control	16	16	33.5	46.3	101.8
DOS Air Wing	2.5	6.6	10.9	37.8	57.8
DOS Sec 1004-CD/Police			10.3	11.8	22.1
DOS Sec 1033-Nonlethal Riverine				2.2	2.2
Administration of Justice			1.8	2	3.8
Military	10.6			.2	10.8
IMET	.6			.2	.8
FMF Grants	10				10
Drawdowns		14.5	9.4	18.8	42.7
DOD Sec 506-Nonlethal Excess		14.5	9.4	18.8	42.7
TOTAL	30.4	37.7	66.6	119.6	256.3

Source: Robert D. Ramsey III, *From el Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experiences 1998-2008* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institutes Press, 2009), 156.

David Spencer assessed the DSDP in 2011 describing its main aspects. He highlighted that DSDP was successful for different reasons. The first was the application of what President Uribe called “macro ideas” and “micro execution.” Uribe felt that the strategic ideas must be developed in the highest spheres of the government and military, but that it is necessary to follow up on execution of the ideas at the lowest tactical level.⁴⁷ Second, the DSDP clearly made security a concern for all elements of the state. The effort must not only be from the military. Third, Uribe strengthened the security institutions, which was not accomplished at the expense of social investment. According to Spencer, for every peso spent on security, the government spent 3.1 on social investment in 2002. By 2010 that amount had increased to 3.7.⁴⁸ Spencer concluded that a critical moment in Colombia’s history five aspects converged to bring the country from crisis to stability. They were: leadership; political consensus; institutional strength; U.S. assistance; and the inability of irregular threats to meaningfully counter government strategy.⁴⁹

To this point, the research has established the framework of the literature that will support the analysis of the DSDP. In the next chapter, before delving into the analysis, the study will outline the methodology it will use for the research and analysis of the information.

⁴⁷David E. Spencer, *Colombia’s Road to Recovery: Security and Governance 2002-2010* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2011), 64.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 105.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

This is an exploratory study with the purpose of identifying the factors that made the Colombian counterinsurgency strategy of democratic and defense policy the DSDP successful in diminishing the FARC capabilities of threatening the government of Colombia. To examine this issue the research will use both qualitative and quantitative data. It will include official and unofficial documents, books, surveys, and statistics. This will allow the evaluation of the main aspects of the DSDP, its application against its overall results, and its effects on the FARC. The research will conduct analysis in three parts.

The first part of the research (chapter 4) will analyze the FARC's strategic approach against the government COIN efforts from 1962 to 2002. It will have two purposes: first to validate FARC's strategic approach to change the Colombian political system; and second to assess the effectiveness of the Colombian government COIN strategy until 2002. To that end, the research will use as a framework each four-year Colombian presidential period beginning in 1962. At the end of each presidential period, the research will assess the FARC situation to determine which insurgency theory the FARC is seemingly following, and the effectiveness of the strategic approach that each president took against this group. The FARC's situation at the end of each presidential period will be measured in terms of number of men and number of fronts. The overall objective of chapter 4 is to determine the reasons that made either strategy superior to the other. This will help later in the analysis to identify the factors that made the DSDP successful in reducing the FARC's capabilities.

The second part of the research (chapter 5) will analyze the DSDP in relation to the COIN principles outlined in chapter 2. It will be covered in two sections. The first section will examine the design of the DSDP. For that analysis the research will use the original documents that the government used to issue the DSDP. The analysis will include its strategic end state, the objectives, and the Lines of Effort (LOEs). The second section will look into implementation of the DSDP. During this analysis the research will highlight the factors that were fundamental for the success of the DSDP.

The third section will compare the situation when the DSDP began in 2002 to the situation in 2010. For the comparison the study will consider security statistics published by private companies and the government. For the analysis, the research will use COIN objectives as a framework. They could be extracted from the DSDP document, deducted from it, or added by the author due to its importance for the comparison. To measure the effectiveness of the DSDP the study will employ indicators related to COIN Measure of Effectiveness (MOE) and Measure of Performance (MOP). The comprehensive list will be determined after the analysis of the DSDP.

Finally, the research will put together all of the above elements to conclude which factors made the DSDP successful, which insurgency strategy the FARC is following, and which COIN principles the DSDP validated, contradicted, or innovated. Finally, the study will provide recommendations to improve the Colombian counterinsurgency strategy, and suggest areas for future research on the subject.

CHAPTER 4

FARC'S STRATEGIC APPROACH AND COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS 1962-2002

This section analyzes the counterinsurgency approaches the Colombian government took to counter the FARC beginning in 1962. Since Colombia has presidential terms of four years, this is the timeframe used to weigh the results of Colombian counterinsurgency strategy against the FARC. At the end of each period, the research will look at the outcomes. This examination establishes the basis for the analysis beginning in chapter 5 and will determine why the DSDP was more effective than the preceding government strategies.

As described in chapter 1, “la violencia” was a war between Colombian political factions disputing land distribution. It originated with armed groups fighting the government, and although none was an insurgency as we know it today, it was the seed for the creation of the FARC as a communist insurgency.

The Genesis of FARC and Government COIN Approach (1962-1966)

Guillermo Leon Valencia⁵⁰ assumed the presidency of Colombia on 7 August 1962. He was the second president of the National Front.⁵¹ The analysis of Leon Valencia's COIN approach demonstrates his government used independent political, economic, and military efforts to defeat the FARC. In September 1962, Colombia and the

⁵⁰Guillermo Leon Valencia (b.1909-d.1971).

⁵¹The National Front was an agreement between the liberal and conservative party to alternate the presidency for 20 years, beginning in 1958.

U.S. signed “plan lazo,” a plan with extensive U.S. support, to implement civic action as a means to improve internal security throughout the countryside. It included rural development projects to alleviate factors contributing to violence, efforts to open areas to greater pacification efforts by security forces, and efforts to project state power into regions long ignored by successive governments in Bogotá.⁵²

In addition to the soft measures mentioned above, the Colombian government took military action against the “republicas independientes.” In May 1964 the army conducted operation “Marquetalia.” Its end state was to take some areas of the country out of the control of the communists and agrarian organizations. In the end, the government temporarily regained control of the territory, but the leaders of the guerrillas fled with almost all their comrades.⁵³ They would become the seed for the creation of the FARC.

On the insurgency side, on 10 July 1964, Manuel Marulanda Velez, although he was not yet the FARC commander, issued the guerrilla agrarian program, which contained petitions which the existence guerrillas made to the government in order to cease the fighting. Later, the FARC would assume this as its ideological platform. It consisted of an agrarian reform, which aimed to distribute the land among the peasants, and other measures to enable them to work it. For example it contemplated that the

⁵²M. Denis Rempe, “The Past as Prologue? A History of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in Colombia, 1958-66,” Strategies Studies Institute, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub17.pdf> (accessed 20 December 2011).

⁵³*Ibid.*, 68.

revolutionary government will guarantee to keep the basic prices for agricultural products.⁵⁴

One year later in 1965, the leaders who fled from the “Republica Independiente de Marquetalia” met in the first guerrilla conference. They evaluated the results up to that point, and outlined military, political, organizational, educational, and propaganda revolutionary actions. At that meeting the movement adopted the name “Southern Bloc,” because it was located in southern Tolima, at the confluence of the departments of Huila, Cauca and Valle (see figure 2).⁵⁵

Another important FARC action during Leon Valencia’s term was the “Second Guerrilla Conference.” Between 25 April and 15 May 1966, the conference was held in the Duda Region in the department of Meta. As a result of this conference, the organization changed its name from “Southern Bloc” to “Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia” (FARC); established mobility or guerrilla warfare as its strategy; and chose Manuel Marulanda Velez, “Sure Shot” as the commander. They established the strategic objective of opening a new guerrilla detachment; and most importantly, they created a council to outline the strategic direction of the insurgent movement.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia, “Programa Agrario de los Guerrilleros de las FARC,” Mbolivariano.blogspot.com, <http://mbolivariano.blogspot.com/2007/12/programa-agrario-de-los-guerrilleros-de.html> (accessed 13 November 2011).

⁵⁵Colombia.com, “Movimiento Guerrillero FARC-EP,” <http://www.colombia.com/especiales/2002/farc/historia/> (accessed 16 October 2011).

⁵⁶Colombia.com Later, in the third conference the name of detachment evolved to “front.”



Figure 2. The South Block Area

Source: Businesscol.com, “Colombia,” <http://www.businesscol.com/comunidad/colombia/colombia05.html> (accessed 22 February 2012).

Analysis of FARC’s actions during Leon Valencia’s period demonstrates that at this stage the FARC were apparently conducting what Mao called the “strategic defensive phase.” In the 1966 second guerrilla conference, the FARC ordered the creation of a new detachment whose purpose was to increase their influence in the country’s territory gradually. Furthermore, in the second conference, they adopted “guerrilla warfare” as its military strategic approach to obtain their objectives.

In the end, Leon Valencia's COIN approach regained control of the territory of "Replicas Independientes," but failed to defeat the guerrillas decisively. The FARC mutated to a Communist guerrilla movement, improved their organization by appointing a leader and a staff who would seek to expand the movement throughout the country. The number of men grew from 50 to 350 men by the end of this presidential period.⁵⁷

COIN Strategy Targeting FARC's Root, FARC
Reaffirming its Communist Ideology (1966-1970)

In August 1966, a new government was in place in Colombia. The liberal, Carlos Lleras Restrepo,⁵⁸ was the third president of the National Front. The government of Lleras made the same mistake as the previous administration, not integrating military and political efforts. He tried to defeat the FARC by attacking the root of the problem. He created the "Asociacion Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos" (ANUC by its acronym in Spanish), an organization that grouped together all the farmers in Colombia. The ANUC was a good initiative to remove the cause of the FARC insurgency, but it was not accompanied with a corresponding military effort. Therefore the FARC and the communist party, taking advantage of the government's inability to control the territory, infiltrated the ANUC and spoiled the government's efforts to attack support base of the insurgency.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Maria Agustini, "Conflicto Colombiano, in Observatorio Colombiano No. 1, Año 1, <http://www.caei.com.ar/es/pfp/colombia/colombia1.pdf> (accessed 13 February 2012).

⁵⁸Carlos Lleras Restrepo (b.1909-d.1994).

⁵⁹Anders Rudqvist, "La Organización Campesina y la Izquierda ANUC en Colombia 1970-1980," <http://www.scribd.com/doc/29078485/La-Organizacion-Campesina-y-la-izquierda-ANUC-en-Colombia-1970-1980> (accessed 13 May 2012).

With the purpose of filling this gap, the Congress passed Law No. 48 of 1968. The law permitted the to create self-defense groups (purely defensive), equipped and trained by the army. These were to be used especially in regions where the remains of the guerrilla presence stood out among other regions like Guayabero, Tolima, Santander, and Meta.⁶⁰

Lleras Restrepo's government made a military effort as well. The army began to gather intelligence against the FARC, and conducted a surprise attack on Ciro Trujillo Castaño at the end of 1966.⁶¹ The second most important guerrilla leader after "tiro fijo," Trujillo summoned all detachments with the exception of Joselo's⁶² and Marulanda's, and concentrated forces in the Department of Quindío. Soon the army detected the concentrated guerrilla forces, and launched a quick attack against them. As the guerrillas did not have a military plan for employment of a concentrated force, it lost many men and 70 percent of their weapons.⁶³

During Lleras' mandate, the FARC's third conference took place at the Guayabero (department of Meta) from 14 to 22 April 1969. It analyzed the international situation, the national situation, and the organizational structure. The conference drew three important conclusions: first, the FARC would fight U.S. imperialism; second, the strategy of guerrilla warfare would be reassured; and finally, that the FARC gave priority

⁶⁰Augustini.

⁶¹Ciro Trujillo Castaño (b.1928-d.1968).

⁶²Rigoberto Lozada was another important FARC guerilla leader ((b.1928-d.1992).

⁶³FARC International Comisión, "Esbozo Histórico de las FARC," Cedema, http://www.cedema.org/uploads/esbozo_historico.pdf (accessed 19 November 2011).

to the establishment of a communist party, ordered the creation of the ideological school, and authorized the staff to edit and published the FARC's doctrine.

President Lleras Restrepo's administration was ineffective in stopping the FARC's developing "strategic defense phase." Although there was a successful attack on Trujillo's detachment at the beginning of this government, the absence of a continuous government strategy allowed the FARC to achieve the formation of four detachments with 450 men. These detachments were located in the departments of Guaviare, Meta, Caquetá and Cundinamarca. The FARC was also held the Third Conference Guerrilla Chiefs in the region of Guayabero, created a magazine which they called "resistance," promulgated a series of organizational rules for the consolidation of the armed group, and ended with a clear political manifest, "the agrarian reform."⁶⁴

Colombian Government Investing in Conventional Capabilities,
FARC Outlining its First Strategic Plan (1970–1974)

In August 1970 Misael Pastrana Borrero won election as a member of the conservative party. Some of Rojas Pinilla's followers disputed the election. This led to the creation of the insurgent movement, M-19.⁶⁵ It is clear that Pastrana Borrero did not have a COIN approach to attack the FARC. Pastrana Borrero named his governmental program "el frente social," which emphasized the construction of houses for every

⁶⁴Agustini.

⁶⁵The M19 (19 April movement) was created after the elections of that year. They did not agree with the victory of Misael Pastrana and claimed tha the winner was general Rojas Pinilla. Their argument was based on the fact that when the vote count stopped at midnight, Rojas Pinilla was winning. When it opened early in the morning, the winner was Misael Pastrana. This group was militarily defeated by the Colombian Military Forces and as a consequence signed a peace treaty with the Colombian government.

Colombian.⁶⁶ On the military side, his government acquired Mirage fighters and German submarines. This was suitable for a conventional conflict, not for the internal conflict.

During this presidency, the armed forces focused on strengthening their organization and dealing concurrently with the FARC, the ELN, the EPL and the M19. There were significant intelligence operations, troop training, and combat operations, but none was sufficient.⁶⁷

On the other side, the FARC continued improving its political and military organization. They conducted the Fourth Conference from 20 to 29 April 1971 in the region of “el Pato” (department of Meta). They concluded that the FARC must organize a fifth front in the area of URABA, in the northeast region of the country, with the purpose to expand the fighting to that wealthy region of Colombia. The organization called for the unity of action between the armed groups, and issued the first expressions of the strategic order to attack Colombian government basic support: the armed forces, the economy, and the transportation and communications systems (see figure 2).

Later, the FARC conducted the fifth conference from 4 to 10 September 1974 at the region of el pato. At that time there were better conditions, accumulated experience, new ideas on how to operate, and guidelines related to the need to contribute politically to the armed struggle. This would allow the mass movement, support to the guerrillas, and the political elevation of the organization. This context set up the conditions to improve

⁶⁶Francisco Leal Buitrago, “El Estado Colombiano: ¿Crisis de Modernización o Modernización Incompleta? Banco de la Republica. <http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/historia/colhoy/colo14.htm> (accessed 22 January 2011).

⁶⁷Agustini.

the military-political conception of the movement.⁶⁸ This brought about two main conclusions. The first restated the FARC's agrarian program using the text of the 1964 statement by Manuel Marulanda Velez, while the other changed the FARC staff organization to thirteen main comrades and five alternates⁶⁹ (see figure 3). The conference drew other conclusions as shown in table 4.

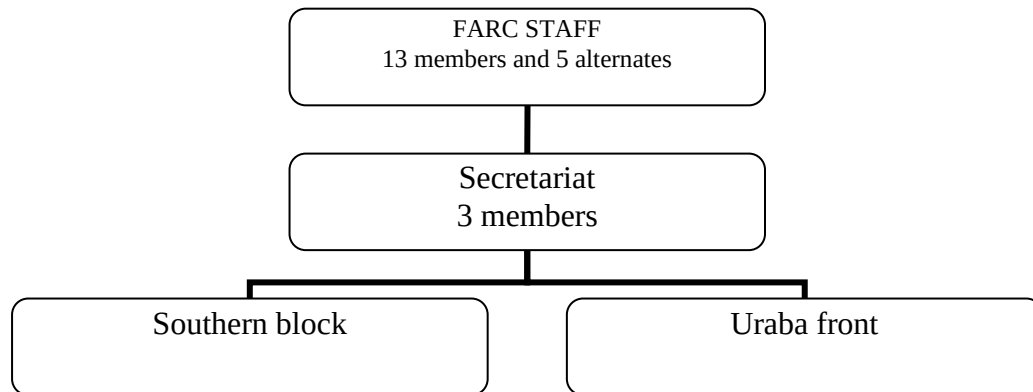


Figure 3. FARC Organization in 1974

Source: Created by author.

In 1974 at the end of Misael Pastrana's term, the FARC was stronger than in 1970, and had recovered from the losses suffered in the attack on Joselo's group back in 1965.⁷⁰ The FARC had three important achievements during this period: the realization of the fourth and fifth guerrilla conferences, where they outlined their strategic plan; the

⁶⁸Agustini.

⁶⁹The secretariat would end up being the most important strategic direction guider for the FARC's organization.

⁷⁰Manuel Marulanda Velez stated this in the fifth conference.

creation of the fifth guerrilla detachment in Antioquia; and the establishment for the first time of a *modus operandi* for the organization, enabling them to execute their actions in a more professional and organized way in terms of material and human resources. The number of the FARC guerrillas had grown to 1,200 members grouped in nine fronts.⁷¹

COIN Effort Attacking the Root Cause of the Problem, the FARC
Spreading their Influence throughout the Country (1974–1978)

In August 1974, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen⁷² assumed the presidency of Colombia. He did not develop measures related directly to counter the FARC, but he tried to reduce the source of recruiting and support to the FARC by attempting to “close the bridge between the rich and the poor.” He created the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCORA by its acronym in Spanish). One of the purposes of this institute was to strengthen the internal conditions of the rural economy to retain the population in its environment. Among the achievements in this field are the increase of 16 percent in agricultural production, the granting of 986 land titles, the allocation of 4,700 contracts to work the land, and the provision of \$21 billion pesos for agricultural credits.⁷³ For Lopez, the insurgency was the problem of the military and he did not develop a national strategy to counter it. This gave the FARC the opportunity to continue growing and spreading its influence throughout the country.

The FARC conducted the sixth guerrilla conference at the region of “Duda” (department of Meta) from 18 to 25 January 1976. They determined each guerrilla front

⁷¹La Rotta, 46.

⁷²Alfonso Lopez Michelsen (b.1913-d.2007).

⁷³Buitrago.

must split with the purpose of achieving one guerrilla front per state.⁷⁴ The southern block was to be divided to create guerrilla Fronts 1, 2, 3, and 6. The FARC must work with other insurgencies (ELN, M-19) to conduct attacks against the government. Finally, they gave guidance to increase recruitment. Subsequently, FARC guerrilla activity increased during the Lopez administration,⁷⁵ maintaining 1,800 men and 14 fronts, while financing its activities with extortion (see figure 4).



Figure 4. FARC's Fronts at the End of 1978

Source: Carlos Padilla, "The FARC and Hugo Chavez is Contemporary Venezuela, A Threat to Colombia?" LinkedIn, <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=11047> (accessed 13 May 2011).

⁷⁴Colombia has 29 states.

⁷⁵U.S. Library of Congress, "The Liberal Tenure," <http://countrystudies.us/colombia/29.htm> (accessed 22 January 2011).

Turbay's Military COIN Approach, FARC's
Remaking its Strategic Plan (1978–1982)

Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala⁷⁶ assumed the presidency of Colombia in August 1978. In response to an increase in guerrilla activity from the 19 April Movement (M-19) and the FARC, he issued and implemented the decree known as the Security Statute. It gave the military an ample degree of freedom of action, especially in urban areas, to detain, interrogate and eventually judge suspected guerrillas or their collaborators before military tribunals. Human rights organizations, newspaper columnists, political personalities, and opposition groups complained about an increase in the number of arbitrary detentions and acts of torture as a result. The Security Statute assisted in the defeat of the M-19 urban guerrillas, and forced it to negotiate with the government in a peace process. It did not work the same way with the FARC's rural guerrillas.

Taking advantage of the security forces focusing on defeating the urban M-19 and the lack of a COIN strategy from the highest political direction, the FARC completed its strategic defense phase. Between 4 and 14 May 1982, the seventh guerrilla conference took place somewhere in the state of Meta. During the seventh conference FARC decided to add the words “Ejercito del Pueblo” (Peoples Army) to its FARC name. In addition, the conference elaborated the strategic plan to seize power. The duration of the plan was eight years and was to be conducted in three phases: the general offensive; the establishment of a government; and the defense of the revolution. The strategic goals for the FARC organization were to create the agrarian union in all the regions of the country, to grow from 4,200 to 28,000 men in eight years grouped in forty eight fronts, to apply

⁷⁶Virgilio barco Vargas (b.1916-d.2005).

the strategic plan for seizing power, and to get 4 million dollars to finance the strategic plan.

The FARC strategic plan considers the Colombian east cordillera as the center for its strategic deployment. The reason for this is that nine Colombian cities are located along that cordillera. The purpose was to take control of these cities in preparation for the general offensive to seize power. This purpose would facilitate the FARC to begin creating the urban fronts. At the end of Turbay's presidency the FARC increased their fronts to 17, and its force grew to 3,000 men on weapons.⁷⁷

Government Offering a Political Solution to the Conflict,
FARC Taking Advantage of It (1982-1986)

In August 1982 Belisario Betancourt Cuartas⁷⁸ began his presidency with pacification of Colombia through dialogue with the insurgents and the reintegration of guerrillas into civil society as one of the main pillars of his plan to end the conflict. It seems that every political actor wanted to distance himself from the repressive strategy applied by Turbay, who had been effective in combating urban guerrillas, but ineffective against the FARC.

Betancourt conduct sociological analysis of the political violence. According to him, the violent groups originated in poverty, illiteracy, and other drastic barriers; "only when we have succeeded in eliminating these agents' objectives, idealists, because the

⁷⁷La Rotta, 47.

⁷⁸Belisario Betancour Cuartas (b.1923).

guerrillas are idealistic, they will put down the weapons,” he argued.⁷⁹ He brokered a cease fire with the FARC guerrillas and made reforms to undermine the political claims of the FARC. For example, he established the democratic election of mayors.⁸⁰

The FARC took advantage of Betancourt’s desires for peace, and the cease fire, by increasing its strength to 4,000 and to thirty two fronts, and created the “Union Patriótica” (UP by its abbreviation in its Spanish).⁸¹ At this stage the FARC continued with its strategic stalemate phase.

Government Facing Different Threats, FARC Shifting
to Combination of All Forms of Struggle (1986–1990)

In August 1986 Virgilio Barco Vargas⁸² replaced Betancourt. He continued the efforts to gain peace with the different insurgent groups. He was successful in obtaining peace with the weak M-19 group, but failed to do so with the FARC. In general, narco-terrorism from cartels was the most disturbing problem for Barco. The government combined their investment with the strengthening of the armed forces to improve the conditions of the socially depressed. To overcome the problems created by the low state investment in certain regions and social sectors, the Barco administration continued to

⁷⁹Centro de estudios internacionales de Barcelona, “Belisario Betancur Cuartas,” Biblioteca Digital, http://www.cidob.org/es/documentacion/biografias_lideres_politicos/america_del_sur/colombia/belisario_betancur_cuartas (accessed 22 January 2012).

⁸⁰To that point the president appointed the governors and mayors. Now, people would elect mayors while the president retained the authority to name governors.

⁸¹Many members of the UP were killed, and the organization disappeared from the Colombian political spectrum.

⁸²Virgilio Barco Vargas (b.1921-d.1997).

promote the National Rehabilitation Plan (PNR) and launched a Plan to Combat Poverty.⁸³

In the meantime, the FARC continued their gradual increase of their political and military strength. In 1989 they conducted an expanded plenum, which designed the “Campaña Bolivariana por una Nueva Colombia” (Bolivarian campaign for a new Colombia), updated the communist speech, and changed the FARC political discourse. From this point, the FARC began to consider the possibility of overthrowing the government by using all forms of struggle. The FARC accepted that victory is not only obtainable through military means and total annihilation of the enemy, but also using political means such as co-government or the political concertation with the regime.⁸⁴

At the end of Barco’s period, the Colombian Army had approximately 90,000 men, and the Colombian Air Force acquired the Mirage airplanes, which were well suited for conventional operations. The FARC organized the Block of fronts for the first time. This consisted of grouping the existing fronts into a regional command organization. They created the South Block front and the East Block front. They grouped different fronts with the purpose of getting better synchronization of guerrilla activities and finances. The number of fronts increased to forty eight, and the number of men to 5,800.⁸⁵ At this point the FARC seemed to finish the “strategic defense” phase.

⁸³Martha Herrera, “Virgilio Barco Vargas,” <http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/biografias/barcvirg.htm> (accessed 6 March 2012).

⁸⁴Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia.

⁸⁵La Rotta, 62.

Government Trying the Political Solution One More Time, the
FARC Negotiating to Win without Fighting (1990–1994)

In August 1990 Cesar Gaviria Trujillo became President of Colombia for the period of 1990 to 1994. The main action of Gaviria's government was to conduct a constituent National Assembly.⁸⁶ The purpose of the constituent National Assembly was to create the conditions for peace with all the guerrilla groups. The FARC agreed with the Assembly. At that point all the guerrilla groups were joined at the "Coordinadora Guerrillera Simon Bolivar"⁸⁷ (CGSB by its abbreviation in Spanish). The government offered the CGSB seven seats out the seventy available for the assembly. The CGSB considered this insufficient. Despite this difference, the Government and CGSB met in Caracas for peace talks. As a result, they agreed to a cease fire and an end to hostilities. To continue the negotiations, the guerrillas asked for 200 demilitarized municipalities; the government offered sixty.⁸⁸ Finally, the government broke negotiations because of the FARC assassination attempt on Aurelio Irragori, the acting Colombian congress president at that time. The conversations reinitiated in a context of guerrilla attacks against the oil pipelines, kidnappings and seizures of villages and police stations. Consequently, the government and the guerillas agreed to stop negotiations. The constituent National Assembly issued the new constitution on 4 July 1991. Another attempt to begin negotiations took place in Tlaxcala Mexico. This time, the government

⁸⁶This is one of the methods of changing the constitution in Colombia.

⁸⁷The "Coordinadora Guerrillera Simon Bolivar" grouped the FARC, National Liberation Front, M-19, and other small groups with the purpose of negotiating with the government.

⁸⁸Alfredo Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC," <http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/molano.htm> (accessed 6 March 2012).

broke the talks because of a kidnaping by the EPL, and the death in captivity of the conservative politician Aurelio Irragori.

During this period the FARC seemed to end the strategic defense phase and shift into the strategic stalemate phase. They conducted the eighth conference on 2 April 1993 with the purpose of revising the strategic plan outlined in 1982, and designing a new strategic plan for seizing power. The main conclusions included an increase in the number of the FARC staff members to twenty five, and the secretariat to seven principals and seven replacements (see figure 5). The conference approved the FARC proposal for a government of national reconciliation and reconstruction, and reassured the FARC commitment to its agrarian program.

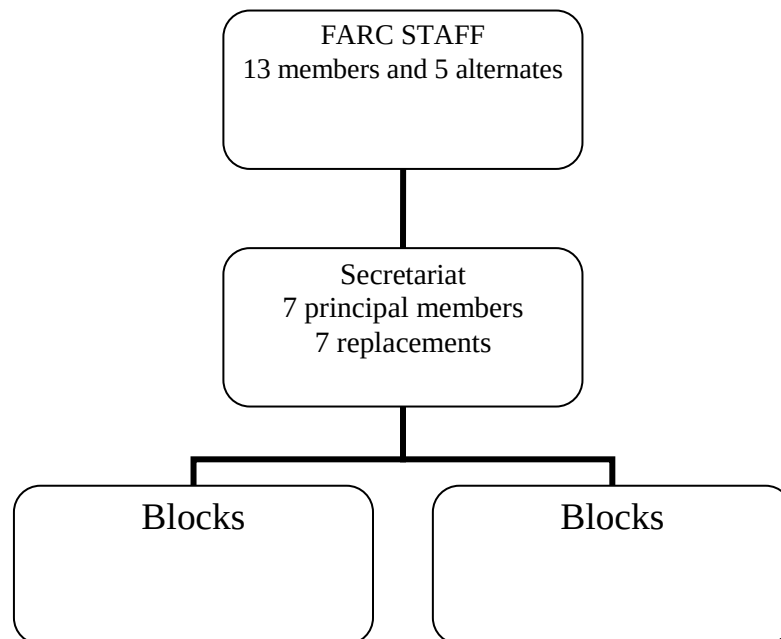


Figure 5. Reorganization of the FARC after Eighth Conference
Source: Created by author.

In addition to the reorganization of the staff and secretariat the FARC reorganized the geographical areas for the seven fronts they had at that time (see figure 6).

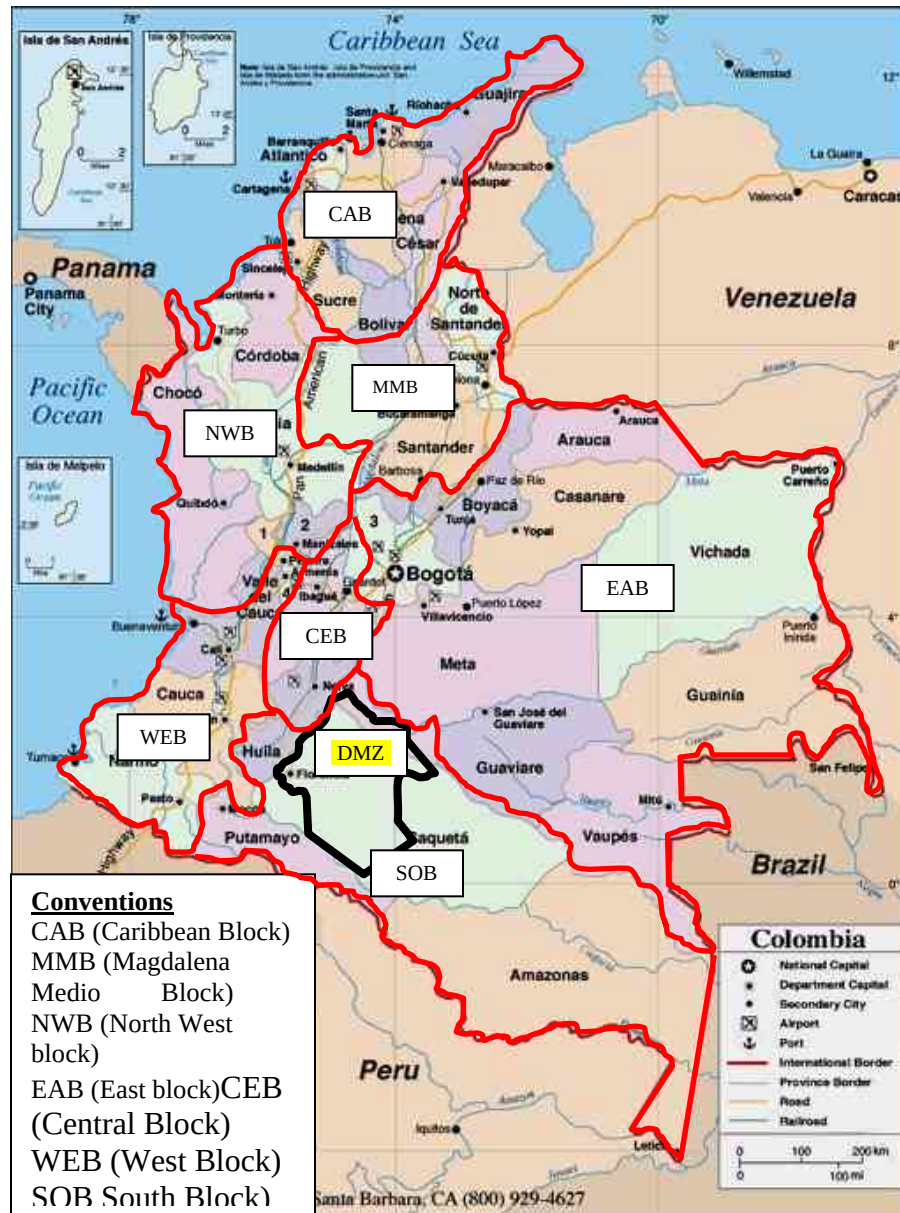


Figure 6. FARC Areas of Responsibility after the Eighth Conference
 Source: Businesscol, "Colombia," Businesscol, <http://www.businesscol.com/comunidad/colombia/colombia05.html> (accessed 22 February 2012).

At the end of Gaviria's administration the army had 120,650, and the Air Force and National Police obtained utility helicopters, which increased their mobility and ability to react to FARC's attacks. The FARC lost the sanctuaries of "casa verde" the green house, and had to disperse the secretariat through the country due to the pressure of the armed forces. However, the number of men increased to 6,800.⁸⁹

Government Continues Looking for a Political Solution to the Conflict,
FARC Achieving the Strategic Stalemate Phase (1994–1998)

Ernesto Samper replaced Cesar Gaviria. The FARC put in place conditions for resuming the peace talks: military withdrawal from the FARC-dominated municipality of La Uribe, in the department of Meta; demobilization of paramilitary groups; and suspension of government rewards for identifying FARC kidnappers. Samper accepted the withdrawal, limiting it to the rural areas of La Uribe. He publicly recognized the political character of the conflict by denying that the guerrillas were simply a band of drug traffickers, and he suspended the rewards for the FARC leaders. Samper's concessions were opposed by the army, the U.S. Ambassador, Colombia's Archbishop Primate, the Conservative political party, the retired military officers, and business associations.⁹⁰

By the end of 1998, the army had 131,021 men. On the other side, the FARC had an effective military ability to seize military bases and villages, and ambush army patrols. For example in August 1996, they destroyed the army base at Las Delicias in Caqueta and kidnaped sixty soldiers. The FARC received augmented international recognition as

⁸⁹La Rotta, 72.

⁹⁰Molano.

well. The release of Delicias' kidnaped soldiers in exchange for the army's withdrawal from the Caguan gave them the publicity they needed to show the world they had the military capability of overthrowing the government(see figure 6)⁹¹ The FARC increased their numbers to 16,000 men.

The Government's Big Bet for Peace, the FARC
in the Strategic Offensive Phase (1998-2002)

Andres Pastrana Arango was elected President in 1998. Upon taking office, he met with "tiro fijo" and agreed on the basis for peace negotiation. The most controversial of these was the withdrawal of military authority and police forces from five municipalities in the zone of "el caguan" the formation of an unarmed civic corps to keep local order in the demilitarized zone; the dismantling of the paramilitary groups; decriminalization of popular protest; and the participation of the international community.⁹² Pastrana did not restrict the nation to the political solution, at the same time he began a process to professionalize the army and agreed to work with the U.S. to counter the drug production.

The FARC took advantage of the demilitarized zone to discuss its future and strategy. They called it the "expanded plenum." It was called "Con Bolívar por la Paz y la Soberanía Nacional."⁹³ The plenum approved the FARC policies, the rules to create the

⁹¹The exchange took place in July 1997, and the International Red Cross acted as the guarantor.

⁹²Molano.

⁹³ With Bolivar for Peace and National Sovereignty."

clandestine political party which the FARC named “Movimiento Bolivariano por una nueva Colombia,”⁹⁴ and issued FARC Law 002⁹⁵ and FARC Law 003.⁹⁶

The peace process between the FARC and the government of Pastrana ended in February 2002. That day, members of the FARC hijacked a commercial airplane in flight, and forced it to land on a rural highway. In that action, they kidnapped Colombian Senator Jorge Gechen Turbay, president of the Colombian Senate’s peace commission. This would be the last action of the FARC in the demilitarized zone.

The Pastrana presidency ended with an army of 203,283 men, and a police of 110,123 men. Plan Colombia, which was initially designed to provide resources for the National Police to combat the cocaine production process, ended up supporting all the military services. On the FARC side, they had lost international credibility, and were out of the demilitarized zone they had controlled, but they were much stronger in terms of money and men. The number of armed men at the end of 2002 was between 18,000 to 20,000.⁹⁷

It was at this time that Uribe won the election for president in the first round in August 2002. He had the political muscle to apply a military approach to combat the

⁹⁴“Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia.”

⁹⁵In 2000, the FARC-EP issued a directive called “Law 002” which demanded a “tax” from all individuals and corporations with assets worth at least \$1 million USD, warning that those who failed to pay would be detained or killed by the group.”

⁹⁶Law 003 declared a “war on corruption.”

⁹⁷Revista Semana, “La Revista Semana Detalla lo que Queda de las FARC,” <http://www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/15059/la-revista-semana-detalla-lo-que-queda-de-las-farc/> (accessed 8 March 2012).

FARC. Figure 7 shows the evolution of favoritism of Alvaro Uribe Velez as candidate for the Colombian presidency. Now the research will shift into the analysis of the DSDP.

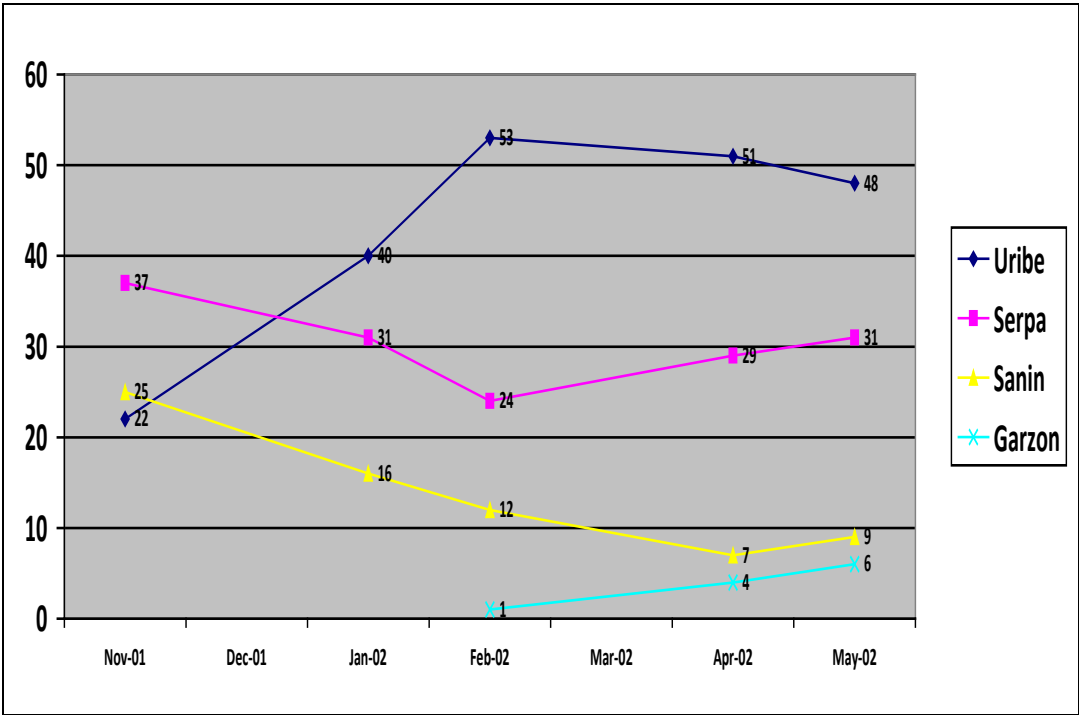


Figure 7. “If the Presidential Election Were Held Tomorrow, for Which Candidate Would You Vote?”

Source: Created by author.

CHAPTER 5

THE DSDP (2002–2010)

When Uribe took office in 2002, the security situation in Colombia was at its lowest point in history. Susan E. Rice, when writing about failing states in November 2002, defined Colombia as a country with a “relatively strong central government but a cause for concern, due to its lack of control over parts of their territory.”⁹⁸ Robert I. Rotberg had a harsher view of the country:

What about Colombia? An otherwise well-endowed, prosperous, and ostensibly stable state controls only two-thirds of its territory, a clear hint of failure. Three private armies project their own power across large zones carved out of the very body of the state. The official defense and political establishment has renounced or lost authority in those zones to insurgent groups and drug traffickers. Moreover, Colombia is tense and disturbed.⁹⁹

At this stage Uribe issued the DSDP, the first COIN strategy to be put into writing in Colombian history. At this point the research will analyze the DSDP by examining the accomplishment of tasks, analyzing the DSDP design and application; and comparing the Colombian situation in 2002 with the situation in 2010. This chapter will consider those two aspects separately.

⁹⁸Susan E. Rice, “U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States,” Brookings, http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2002/1125poverty_rice.aspx (accessed 10 May 2012).

⁹⁹Robert I. Rotberg, “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators,” Wilson Center, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/statefailureandstateweaknessinatimeofterror.pdf> (accessed 10 May 2012).

The Analysis of DSDP

The Design of the DSDP

This section will analyze the DSDP in terms of its structure to include the elements of assessment of the threats, strategic end state, intermediate strategic objectives, and LOEs. The research will analyze each element in relation to the COIN principles defined in chapter 2, table 1.

The DSDP began by assessing the threat in 2002 and determined that the country faced threats from terrorism, illegal drug trade, illicit finance, arms, ammunition and explosives trafficking, kidnapping and extortion, and homicide. It said that the FARC contributed to all of these. The DSDP assessment demonstrated the application of Trinquier's number one COIN principle, "the government has to identify the adversary," and JP 3-24's primary COIN principle "Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Operational Environment." However, when the DSDP assessment of threats is analyzed, it shows that the DSDP identified some aspects that are fundamental for a COIN effort, and are not included in the general COIN principles considered in chapter 2 of this work.

The assessment defined terrorism as the first threat, which was used by the unlawful armed groups as the principal way of destabilizing Colombian democracy. The DSDP refers to the United Nations Secretary General's definition. He said: "The only common denominator among different variants of terrorism is the calculated use of deadly violence against civilians for political purposes."¹⁰⁰ By identifying terrorism as the first threat, and the FARC as a terrorist group, the DSDP sought to gain international

¹⁰⁰Democratic Security and Defense Policy, 23.

support for its COIN effort. This aspect “international support” was not covered by any of the COIN principles established by the authors examined in this work.

The illegal drug trafficking was the second threat considered by the DSDP. This threatened the Colombian economy and served as fuel for the FARC war effort against the Colombian government. Isolation of the insurgents from their cause and support is JP 3-24 sixth principle. The support includes the source of financing for an insurgency organization. In the case of Colombia, the FARC’s finance derives mainly from drug trafficking. In addition, the DSDP identification of this threat and the FARC’s links with it helps to increase international support of the COIN effort.

The third threat is illicit finance, which is considered as a connector “to a whole range of criminal activities which go beyond the illegal drugs trade, but which also finance terrorism: kidnapping, extortion, the theft of hydrocarbons, and contraband.”¹⁰¹ The FARC received financing from all of these illegal activities. By default this affected the people’s perception of the government’s ability to protect them. Furthermore, by attacking the infrastructure the FARC inflicted damage to the country’s economy; thus the worse the economy, the less capable the government was of allocating resources for the COIN effort.

The fourth threat was the traffic of arms, ammunition, and explosives. This was linked to the drug trafficking and the FARC, because they exchanged drugs for arms. As a result, these two illegal activities benefited the FARC. By highlighting this threat the DSDP called the attention of the international community to the negative effect on the

¹⁰¹Ibid.

government's ability to fight the FARC because of the illegal activities taking place in other countries.

The fifth threat was kidnapping and extortion. The document stated the FARC received financing from these activities. The inability of the government to prevent these threats affected its credibility. In fact, the population felt the government was unable to protect them. In 2002, there were 698 reported cases of kidnapping; more than 90 percent were committed by the FARC. It included the three American contractors, and the Colombian presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt.

The sixth threat was homicide, not only committed by the FARC, but by other groups such as the Self Defense Groups and drug cartels contributed to increasing the statistics of homicide in Colombia. By including this threat the DSDP recognized these activities affected the people's trust in the government and in the security forces.

Those were the Threats considered by DSDP assessment. It demonstrated a comprehensive analysis of the Colombian situation and set up the conditions for the design of the other elements of the DSDP.

Within that assessment, the policy established the end state "is to strengthen and guarantee the rule of law throughout Colombia, through the reinforcement of democratic authority. That is, through the free exercise of authority by democratic institutions, the effective application of the law and the active participation of the citizen in matters of common interest."¹⁰² Thompson's COIN principle number one, "the government must have a clear political aim," is clear in the DSDP.

¹⁰²Democratic Security and Defense Policy, 31.

To achieve this, DSDP established pursuit of five intermediate strategic objectives. They aimed to attack all of the threats determined in the initial assessment, however this paper will concentrate on the ones related to the FARC. Out of these five objectives, four were directly related to the COIN effort. The fourth “maintenance of a deterrent capability,” was designed for creating a conventional capability. The five objectives are:

1. Consolidation of the state control throughout Colombia.
2. Protection of the population.
3. Elimination of illegal drugs trade in Colombia.
4. Maintenance of a deterrent capability.
5. Transparent and efficient management resources.

The DSDP sought to achieve the strategic end state and the strategic intermediate objectives through six courses of action which could be defined as LOEs.

1. Coordination of the state action.
2. Strengthen the state institutions.
3. Consolidation control of national territory.
4. Protection the Colombians’ rights and the nation’s infrastructure.
5. Cooperation for security of everyone.
6. Communication of the state policy and action.

In any case, what it shows is that the DSDP established the conditions for achieving unity of effort and unity of action. This is a COIN principle suggested by JP 3-24; which refers to “unity of effort” as essential in a COIN campaign. The first LOE was to coordinate the state action. The DSDP assigned the responsibility for coordination to a

body comprised of the president, the minister, the commander of the Armed Forces, and the director of National Police.

The second LOE was to strengthen the state institutions, to include the judicial system, the Armed Forces, the National Police, the intelligence, and the state finances. The third LOE was to consolidate control of national territory. It included the recovery of state control over territory and consolidation of state control over territory, rehabilitation and consolidation of zones, increasing urban security, elimination of the illegal drugs trade, and dismantling the financial structures of terrorists and illegal drugs traffickers. The fourth LOE was to protect the rights of Colombians and the nation's infrastructure and other vital needs. It included the protection of people at risk, the protection of victims of forcibly displacement, protection against terrorism, kidnapping and extortion, protection for the demobilized and child combatants, protection against recruitment of children and adolescents by the illegal armed groups, protection of the economic infrastructure, and protection of the roads. The fifth LOE referred to getting cooperation for security of everyone. It included the security of solidarity program, the cooperation networks,¹⁰³ the reward program, and the international cooperation. Finally, as the sixth LOE, the DSDP established communication of the state policy and action. The purpose of it was to keep the public informed of the developments of DSDP in order to forge confidence and encourage citizen cooperation and solidarity.

The design of the DSDP was made, in colloquial terms, "by the book." It considered all the elements that a strategy should have. These included the assessment,

¹⁰³It was a network of citizens who communicated to the authorities all suspicious activities in their neighborhood.

political strategic end state, intermediate objectives, and LOEs to synchronize all the stakeholders' action. When the policy is analyzed against the COIN theories, it shows that the DSDP goes along with most of the principles suggested for a COIN effort. It clearly fit the two principles of Colonel Trinquier, intelligence to identify the adversary and defense of the territory. In the case of the Thompson principles, the design of the DSDP followed all of them with the exemption of the fourth, which is "the government must give priority to defeating political subversion, not the guerrillas." The DSDP gave priority to defeating the FARC armed organizations, and then the other government organizations would follow. With respect to JP 3-24, the DSDP incorporated all of them. Finally, the analysis of the design of the DSDP suggests that "to increase international support to the COIN environment" could be a principle to apply in a domestic insurgency.

With this analysis this is now appropriate to analyze the implementation, a factor fundamental for any policy to success.

The Implementation of the DSDP

In addition to the appropriate design of the DSDP, its implementation was vital to make it suitable and feasible. Using the the COIN principles outlined in chapter 2, the research will explain five factors which made the DSDP successful in diminishing the manpower and capabilities of FARC: the leadership of President Uribe Velez; the creation of an appropriate interagency office; the development of special operations capabilities; the elaboration and publicizing of statistics; and the long term application of the DSDP.

Appropriate leadership is an obvious factor for any policy to be successful. However, Uribe's leadership demonstrated some characteristics that made it singular and perhaps appropriate for a COIN environment. The first characteristic was ideology which led him to make security his first priority, a position none of his predecessors assumed. Uribe had the ability to design a coherent COIN strategy then translate it into action. To fund the strategy, he used political capital to enact laws taxing the rich to obtain the resources needed to implement DSDP, in other words "strategy drives resources." For example, the "wealth tax," made every person or company in Colombia who owned more than one million dollars had to pay 1.5 percent of it to support the application of the DSDP. In addition, Uribe took support from the international community. The U.S. increased its support to Colombia during Uribe's term an average of \$645 million dollars per year, in comparison with previous years, demonstrating the importance of international support to a domestic COIN environment.

The second characteristic is his management style. Uribe used gave instructions at the highest strategic level and then inspected its actual execution in the tactical level. It was not unusual to find the president calling a battalion commander to ask him about a specific problem in a region. This forced commanders at all levels to have a clear situational understanding. This style could be framed as micromanagement; however, in the case of Uribe Velez it acted as a motivator for all the levels of government to achieve results, and unity of effort, which led to achieving the DSDP end state. Uribe's management style suggested a different application of JP 3-24's twelfth COIN principle "empower the lowest levels." It poses the question of whether or not this kind of

management leadership is the most appropriate for waging a COIN campaign in an environment similar to Colombia.

The third characteristic was his work ethic which he translated into the realization of the *consejos comunales*. On Saturdays, Sundays or holidays Uribe would go to small towns, especially where there were security problems, rally the majority of the population, and listen to them for six to ten hours. This direct communication with the population erased the guerrilla's claims of a bourgeois government unconcerned with the problems of the poor. At the same time this gave the impression of government control of the territory. There was no place where the president declined to go due to security reasons. During his eight years, Uribe completed 305 *consejos comunales*, which is an average of one every nine and a half days.¹⁰⁴ As a result of a *consejo comunal*, the decision to create a new battalion or special unit could be made. It was popular and most of the time effective in winning the people's hearts, while limiting the freedom of action for the FARC. However, it was not without problems; it could bring improvisation and cause conflict with other institutions in charge of planning and identifying, and prioritizing the investment of resources. Thus, Uribe's leadership constitutes the first factor in contributing to the success of the DSDP.

The second factor relates to the organization. The DSDP created the Coordination Center of Integral Action (CCAI for its abbreviation in Spanish) to coordinate the actions of the different agencies of the government at national, state, and local level, with the

¹⁰⁴Colprensa, "Presidente Uribe se Despidio de los Consejos Comunales," *Periodico el Colombiano* (25 July 2010), http://www.elcolombiano.com/Banco_Conocimiento/P/presidente_uribe_se_despidio_de_consejos_comunales/presidente_uribe_se_despidio_de_consejos_comunales.asp. (accessed 23 April 2102), 1.

military, The CCAI had a national organism in charge of identifying, planning, and executing the actions with a strategic effect. Below this national body, local committees were in charge of coordinating the actions with the regional authorities. In all these organizations, there was a representative of the military. The way the CCAI functions can be easily explained. The battalions at the tactical levels identified the infrastructure needed to improve the economic development of the towns. Then they sent it all the way up to the divisions, where the regional CCAI searched the resources, planned the work, and contracted its execution. If the cost of the work was too high, the request would be sent to the national level. The CCAI organization fostered Unity of effort for the DSDP, which is a confirmation of the validity of JP 3-24's third COIN principle.

Two problems arose for the CCAIs. One was that there was a conflict between the CCAIs process and the results of the *consejos comunales*. Sometimes the planning for a region by the CCAI was interrupted because the president decided in *consejo communal* to create a new battalion or build a road. No doubt that the latter would have the priority. The other problem was the lack of an appropriate number of people to function. Normally, the CCAI had one lieutenant colonel in charge of two or more regions. This was due to the improvisation in the creation of units that left the army short of personnel for these tasks.

The third factor referred to the creation of special operations capabilities. For that purpose, the government used the resources obtained from the wealth tax. On one side, Colombia military forces with the support of the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Special Forces, patiently created a carefully selected, well trained, highly mobile unit with the capability of conducting special operations in the deep of the jungle (CCOPE for its

abbreviation in Spanish).¹⁰⁵ On the other side, the Colombian Air Force modernized its equipment and acquired precision aircrafts and equipment to bomb guerrilla camps and gather intelligence. Finally, the intelligence was organized in *burbujas*, each one in charge of collecting information on a member of the secretariat, High Value Target (HVT). The purpose of it was to concentrate the information of a secretariat member on his respective *burbuja*. If a *burbuja* obtained information on a member of the secretariat different from the one assigned to it, it was obliged to send it to the appropriate one. In addition, at the beginning of 2007, the *burbujas* received special equipment with which to function. For example, the intelligence services acquired technological equipment to locate targets. The process worked this way: once *the burbuja* had the exact location of their target,¹⁰⁶ they went to the appropriate authority for authorization. Most of the time it was the chairman of the military, in some cases it was the minister of defense, and occasionally it was the president. That was the case of operation “Fenix,” which was conducted to kill Raul Reyes when he had his compound in Ecuador. These changes in intelligence organization and process seemed to confirm the importance of accurate intelligence for COIN operations. Trinquier’s first COIN principle of “identify the adversary with precision,” and JP 3-24’s fifth principle, “intelligence drives operations,” played out in this.

There were downsides to the creation of special operations capabilities. One was the cost of having a special operation unit waiting for the intelligence to have intelligence

¹⁰⁵Ramsey, 119.

¹⁰⁶The author witnessed some of the techniques used, but they are not going to be presented in this work because they are classified as “secret.”

for the HVT which can be acted upon. The process of locating an HVT could last more than eight years. That was the case of the intelligence process to pinpoint HVTs such as, el “Mono Jojoy” or “Alfonso Cano.” Table 4 shows the duration of the process and indicates that on average the army conducted a special operation approximately every fifteen months. However, once technology advances were incorporated into the intelligence process in 2007, the average drops to one every eight months, which was still a long period of inactivity for these specialize forces. The other downside was that tasking the *burbujas* with the guerrilla “leaders” objectives led to concentrating the scarce resources on those HVTs. It left the rest of security forces with fewer resources to fight the guerrilla structures (companies, fronts). For example, the *burbuja* in charge of Negro Acasio was successful in providing the intelligence to kill him. Conversely, his structure (16th Front) remained in the area, appointed a new leader, and continued the fight and the drug business. Finally, while the special operations units acquired high technology equipment and the capability to operate in any terrain and environment, the regular units in charge of fighting the rest of the structures, stayed far behind it. In the end, it allowed the FARC to recover from the impact of losing their leaders.

Table 4. HVT Intelligence Process Duration

HVT	Service in charge of the “burbuja”	Beginning of process	Date of killing	Duration of the process in months
Negro Acasio	Colombian navy intelligence	September 2002	1 September, 2007.	71
Martin Caballero	Colombian navy intelligence	September 2002	25 October, 2007	59
Raul Reyes	National Police	September 2002	1 March, 2008	66
Operation Jaque	Colombian Army intelligence	September 2002	2 July, 2008	70
Mono Jojoy	National Police	September 2002	22 September, 2010	96
Operation Camaleon	Colombian Army intelligence	September 2002	13, 14 June, 2010	93
Alfonso Cano	Colombian Army intelligence	September 2002	4 November, 2011	109

Source: Created by author.

A fourth factor that contributed to the success of the DSDP was the elaboration and publicity of statistics. The Uribe’s government carefully compiled statistics over all the objectives of the DSDP and presented them to the press and the public in the *rendicion de cuentas*. It was an activity in which the government of Uribe, with all the ministers and police and military commanders answer questions from the people. The *rendicion de cuentas* was broadcasted live by radio and television, and took place almost every year. However, Uribe made the *consejos comunales* a permanent *rendicion de cuentas* to the public. The statistics diminished the government critics and showed the population, the press, and the international community, that the DSDP was working well. In this aspect the DSDP reaffirms the validity of JP 3-24 number nine, “Manage Information and Expectations.”

The last factor related to the success of the implementation of the DSDP is the long term application of it, which coincides with JP 3-24's eight COIN principle. The success of the Uribe Velez government in his term (2002 to 2006) led to a change in the Colombian constitution to allow an acting president, or ex-president, to run for another term. Under this new law he was reelected, winning again in the first round. Although the DSDP was successful in reducing the FARC strength in the first period, the most important operations took place in his second term, for example operations Fenix and Jaque.¹⁰⁷

At the beginning of his second term, Uribe issued the Policy of Consolidation of the Democratic Security (PCDS), aiming to continue the efforts of the DSDP. It assessed the scenario and considered that the DSDP was successful in weakening the FARC. It said however, that "in the case of the FARC, this group continues to insist on terrorism and drug trafficking." It added that the FARC dedicated a large portion of its armed efforts to defending what it considered to be its strategic assets-its illicit crops, its kidnap victims, and its leaders.¹⁰⁸ The long term application of the DSDP changed the strategic environment for the FARC. For more than forty five years the FARC escalated its terrorist attacks during the time between the end of a presidential period, and the beginning of the next. It usually caused the new president to offer the FARC some type of negotiations. The reelection of Uribe set up new conditions for the FARC. This time

¹⁰⁷During Operation Fenix the Colombian military forces killed Raul Reyes in Ecuadorian territory. Operation Jaque freed the three Americans and Ingrid Betancourt who had been kidnapped by the FARC.

¹⁰⁸Colombian Government, "Democratic Security and Defence Policy," 21.

they would have to deal with a long term strategy. Even worse for them, it was a strategy that had been successful in reducing its capabilities.

This section describes the importance of some factors for the implementation of a policy. In the case of the DSDP the leadership, organization, development of special operations capabilities, communication of the policy and achievements, and the long-term application of it, were factors that added to the adequate design of the DSDP, and contributed to the achievement of its objectives. The next section compares the Colombian situation in 2002 with that in 2010.

Comparing the Colombian Situation Before the DSDP (2002) and After its Application (2010)

The following analysis will compare the Colombian situation in 2002 with that of 2010 using the DSDP strategic objectives as a framework. They are the result of the analysis of the DSDP objectives in relation to COIN. Some of them are explicitly mentioned in the DSDP. Others are deduced from the rest of the document, for example from the DSDP courses of action. The last category corresponds to COIN objectives selected by the author due to their importance for a COIN campaign (see table. 5). They are: to increase the state control throughout Colombia and protection of the population; to gain support from the population; to obtain international support; to improve the performance of the economy; to strength the security forces; and to reduce the strength of FARC. To measure them the researcher will use the indicators indicated in table 6.

Table 5. Origin of the COIN Objectives for the DSDP Analysis

COIN objectives for the DSDP analysis	Origin of the objective
1.To increase the state control throughout Colombia and protection of the population.	This strategic objective is explicitly mentioned in page 31 of the DSDP document.
2.To gain support from the population.	This objective was added by the author due to its importance for measuring the success of the COIN strategy.
3.To obtain international support.	This objective was deducted from DSDP course of action (referred as LOE in this work) “cooperating in the security of all” (page 47)
4.To improve the performance of the economy	This objective was added by the author because is an indicator of the effectiveness of the COIN campaign.
5.To strength the security forces.	This objective was deducted from DSDP course of action (referred as LOE in this work)”strengthening state institutions.
6.To reduce the strength of FARC.	This objective was added by the author because is an indicator of the effectiveness of the COIN campaign.

Source: Created by author.

Table 6. Objectives, MOPs, MOEs, and Indicators to Compare the Colombian Situation in 2002 with 2010

Strategic objective	MOPs	MOEs	Indicators
1. To increase the state control throughout Colombia and protection of the population.	• Presence of the armed forces and the National Police in all municipalities. • Application of judicial actions against crimes of high social impact. • Strengthening and extension of the administration of justice and state institutions in areas where state control has been strengthened. • Reduction of Human rights violations.	• Reduction of Kidnapping and extortion. • Reduction of Homicide. • Reduction of FARC attacks on towns. • Reduction of FARC's terrorist attacks.	• Number of: - o Towns without security forces. - o Drug dealers extradited to U.S. - o Reported Human rights violation cases. - o Kidnapping cases related to the FARC. - o FARC attacks to towns. - o Politicians killed by the FARC. - o Pipelines blowout mainly by the FARC. - o Electricity piles Blown up.
2. To gain support from the population.	• Security forces conduct operations in accordance to the law.	• Political support to the COIN effort. • People's confidence in the security forces.	• Percentage of people who perceives that things are going well in the country. • Percentage of people trust in the Colombian security forces. • Percentage of people that support the FARC.
3. To obtain international support.	• Colombian diplomacy actions to show the FARC as terrorist group.	• International increase or decrease to FARC support.	• Resolutions and actions that shape the international environment. • Number of countries that support COIN effort.
4. To improve the performance of the economy	• Colombian government actions to improve the economy of the country.	• Reduction of unemployment. • Increasing in the economy growth. • Foreign investment in the country.	• Percentage of unemployment. • Rate of economic growing annually. • Millions of dollars invested in Colombia by other countries by year.
5. To strength the security forces.	• Increase in manpower and capabilities of Colombian security forces.	• Increase in the effectiveness of the military forces.	• Number of: - o Colombian Military Forces Men. - o National Police Men. - o Special operations conducted by security forces. - o Number of helicopters assigned to the security forces. - o Member of armed forces killing action mainly by the FARC. - o Member of armed forces wounded in action mainly by the FARC.
6. To reduce the strength of FARC.	• Security forces operations to combat the FARC.	• Reduce of FARC strength and capabilities	• Number of - o FARC men on weapons. - o FARC members that reintegrate into society (Demobilizations). - o Reduce of cocaine cultivated hectares.

Source: Created by author.

In terms of the first COIN objective selected for the DSDP analysis, “to increase state control throughout Colombia and protection of the population,” the indicators of state control show that the government was losing control of some aspects important for the state to function (see figure 8). The reason for that was mainly that the Colombian government gradually began to withdraw security forces from the places attacked by the FARC. As a consequence, the FARC was gaining control of those areas, and the government was losing the control and support of the population. In 2002, 168 towns (15 percent of the Colombian total) did not have any kind of security forces.¹⁰⁹ It led to a peak in human rights violations, not only committed by the FARC, but by other illegal groups. The amount of cases reported in 2002 reached 1,100.¹¹⁰

The lack of government control of the territory made it difficult for the authorities to apply legal instruments to assure that criminals were prosecuted and condemned. For example, during the period of 1990 to 1998, the government of Colombia performed only 129 extraditions, mainly to the U.S.¹¹¹ Extradition is an effective tool in condemning drug dealers because they do not have the chance to influence judicial decisions or threaten the judges.

¹⁰⁹Colombian Embassy in the U.S., “The Importance of Democratic Security,” <http://www.colombiaemb.org/english/colombia-a-success-story-mainmenu-94/democratic-security-mainmenu-236> (accessed 6 May 2012).

¹¹⁰Council of Hemispheric Affairs, “Overview of the Colombian Conflict from a Human Rights-Based Methodological Perspective,” <http://www.coha.org/overview-of-the-colombian-conflict-from-a-human-rights-based-methodological-perspective/> (accessed 30 April 2012).

¹¹¹Fundacion Ideas para la Paz, “Research Series: Use and Abuse of Extradition in the War on Drugs,” http://www.ideaspaz.org/portal/images/policy_brief_3_ingles.pdf (accessed 30 April 2012).

After eight years of DSDP application, the government managed to bring security forces to all Colombian towns,¹¹² reduce the reported human rights abuses to 100 cases per year during that eight year period,¹¹³ and in order to assure justice, extradite 900 criminals, mainly to the U.S.¹¹⁴ These indicators illustrate how government control of the territory improved after the DSDP application.

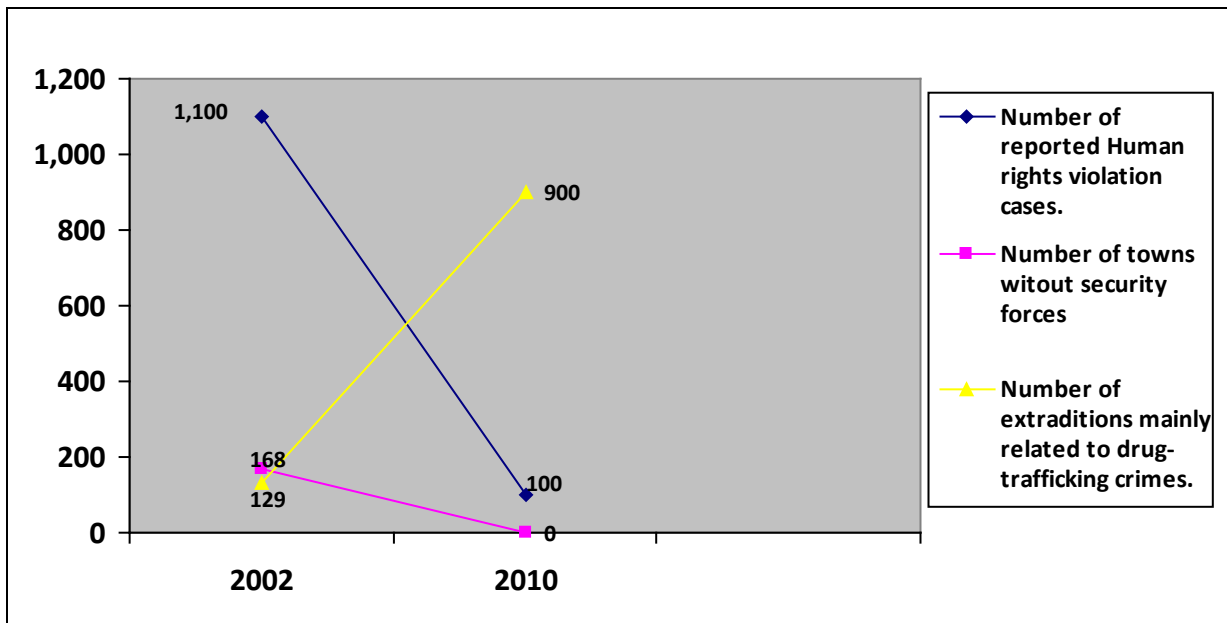


Figure 8. Indicators of Achievement of State Control Throughout the Country

Source: Created by author.

The second part of this objective, protection of the population, indicates that in 2002, the government of Colombia was ineffective in protecting its people. At that time it

¹¹²Colombian Embassy of the U.S.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Fundacion Ideas para la Paz.

was not safe to travel Colombian roads. At any point the FARC could establish illegal road blocks, search the people and kidnap those they found economically or politically valuable. There were 698 kidnappings related to this illegal activity reported that year. The attacks on towns and military units were “routine” in the country. During that year, the latter occurred in the country 209 times, which illustrates that almost every other day, the FARC attacked a town. The politicians did not have freedom to conduct their campaigns; the FARC killed 99 politicians in 2002. Finally, the economic infrastructure of the country was another target for the FARC. The FARC blew up eight pipelines, and 483 electricity piles in 2002 (see figure 9).

The DSDP had an effect in the protection of the population and brought the indicators of security to acceptable levels. For example, the kidnappings as a result of the FARC illegal roadblocks were reduced to zero, the FARC attacks on towns to two, the assassinations of politicians to two, and the FARC terrorist attacks on pipelines and electricity piles to thirty ones and thirty nine, respectively. This overall result indicates diminishing FARC capabilities and raised the people’s perception of the government’s ability to defeat the FARC militarily (see figure 9).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Colombian Minister of defense. Estadísticas de la seguridad democrática. http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info_estadistica/Logros_Politica_IDSP_Mar_2011.pdf (accessed 15 April 2012).

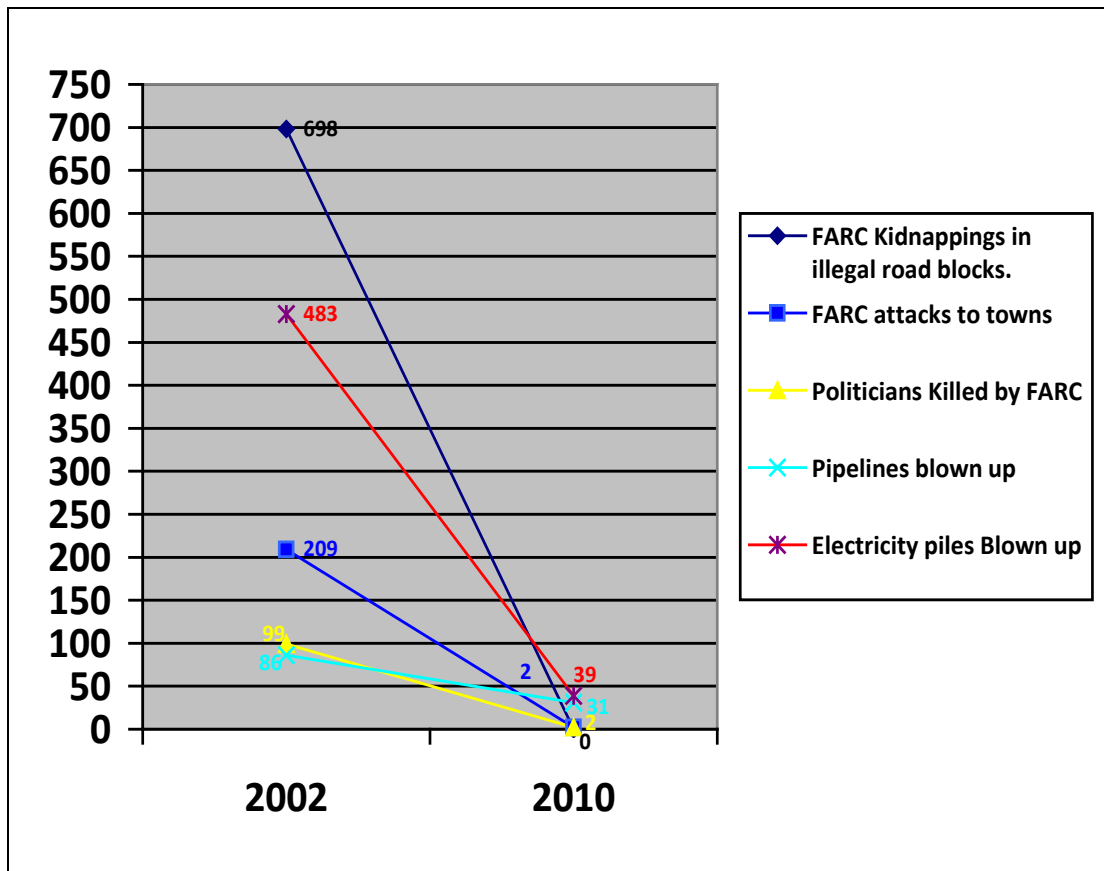


Figure 9. Protection of the Population

Source: Created by author.

The second strategic objective, to gain support from the population, is measured with three indicators. The first indicator shows that the number of people that thought that things were going well in the country increased by 35 percent from 2002 to 2010. The low optimism in 2002 reflects the frustration of the population with the FARC peace negotiations; the high optimism of the population reflects the success of the DSDP. The second indicator which is confidence in the Colombian military forces, increased 10 percent. Apparently it is not congruent with the DSDP success. However, the rate of approval for the Colombian military forces had been high, and 10 percent increase over

70 percent corresponds to approximately 4,500,000 Colombians, a considerable increase. The third indicator is more interesting. The FARC had a rate of approval of the people of 2 percent in 2002. Eight years later, and after being reduced by the DSDP, their rate of approval rose to 6 percent. A likely explanation for this could be that in 2002 the survey extended to the rural areas, where the FARC had organized a clandestine political movement; and also where the fighters had their relatives (see figure 10).¹¹⁶

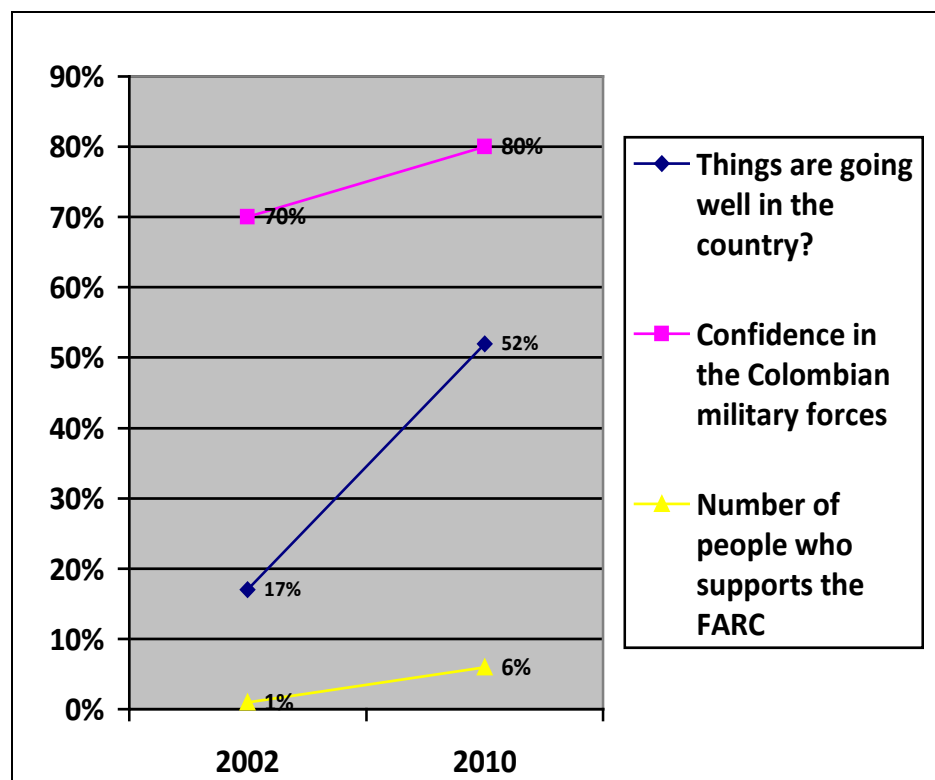


Figure 10. To Gain Support from the Population

Source: Created by author.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

The second objective, to obtain international support, shows that before 2001 the international environment was in favor of the COIN effort. In 1996 and 1997, William J. Clinton's administration decertified Colombia, leaving the country without important resources for training and equipment, and without a plan to work in a synchronized way to combat the illegal drug business. This situation helped the FARC because they were receiving millions of dollars from it the drug business.¹¹⁷ Even worse, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) ignored the Colombian crisis; on the contrary, the FARC had supporters in most of the countries of the Western Europe.

By 2002, the international political environment changed and favored Colombian COIN interests. Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the UN passed Resolution 1373 against terrorism, and declared: "Decides also that all States shall refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts."¹¹⁸ In addition, following the UN Resolution, the EU declared FARC a terrorist group as well, leaving this group in international political isolation. Before 2001, the FARC had an open "diplomacy" network around the world, especially in Europe. In fact, the files found in the computer confiscated from Raul Reyes,¹¹⁹ known as the chancellor of the FARC, during the raid on its compound, showed evidence that FARC

¹¹⁷Conflict and Cooperation in the War against Drugs," *Banco de la Republica* (April 1998), http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/tesis/colfuturo/usa_colombia.pdf (accessed 26 August 2011), 82.

¹¹⁸United Nations, "Security Council Resolution 2001," [un.org, http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/2001/sc2001.htm](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/2001/sc2001.htm) (accessed 26 August 2011).

¹¹⁹Raul Reyes was the most important political leader of the FARC. The government bombed him on March 1st in Ecuadorian territory. It caused a diplomatic issue between the two countries.

had supporters in Spain, United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany and Turkey.¹²⁰ After the EU declaration, these countries initiated a crackdown on FARC supporters. For instance, the Supreme Court of Denmark condemned five Danish man accused of collecting funds for the group by selling shirts with FARC logos. However, some countries in South America refused to call the FARC a “terrorist group,” among them were Venezuela and Ecuador. In 2010, although these two countries did not consider this to be a terrorist group, they no longer offered support, and on the contrary, they have publicly called on the FARC to stop the armed struggle.

The fourth strategic objective, to improve the performance of the economy, is composed of three indicators. Unemployment, economic growth, and foreign investment. This is important because it is directly related directly to the security situation, and a poor rural economy might favor the insurgency war. The unemployment rate reduced four points in the period 2002 to 2010. The economic growth increased to 4.3 percent, a successful performance due to the world economic crisis. However, the best indicator of the improvement of security was foreign investment. When multinational and other corporations want to invest their money in one country it was because they find it secure politically, judiciary, and militarily. In Colombia the foreign investment grew 200 percent in the DSDP period (see figure 11).¹²¹

¹²⁰Semana, “The World of the FARC (Part I: Europe),” Semana International, <http://www.semana.com/print-edition/the-world-of-the-farc-part-europe/119342-3.aspx> (accessed 25 August 2011).

¹²¹Colombian Government, “Estadísticas de la Seguridad Democrática.”

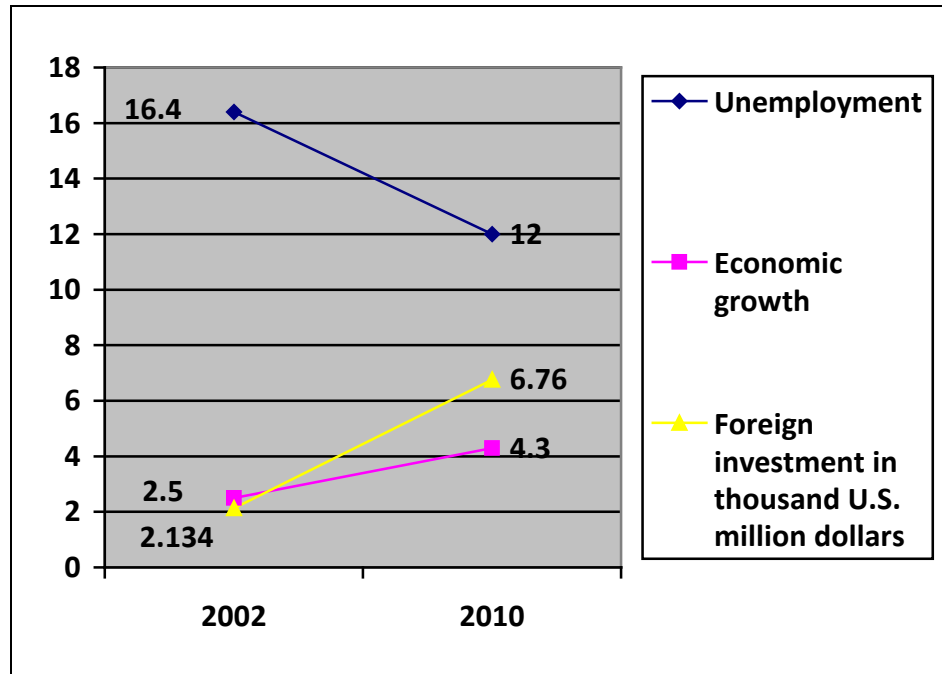


Figure 11. Performance of the Economy

Source: Created by author.

Using fifth strategic objective, strengthening security forces, shows that the Colombian security forces increased their size, and therefore their capabilities during the DSDP application. The number of men in the military forces grew 38 percent, and the number of policemen 62 percent. The increment in the police manpower is important because in Colombia the National Police plays a counterinsurgency role similar to the Army (see figure 12).¹²² The increase in the size of the military forces was necessary to accomplish strategic objective one, control of the territory and protection of the population.

¹²²Colombian Government, “Estadísticas de la Seguridad Democrática.”

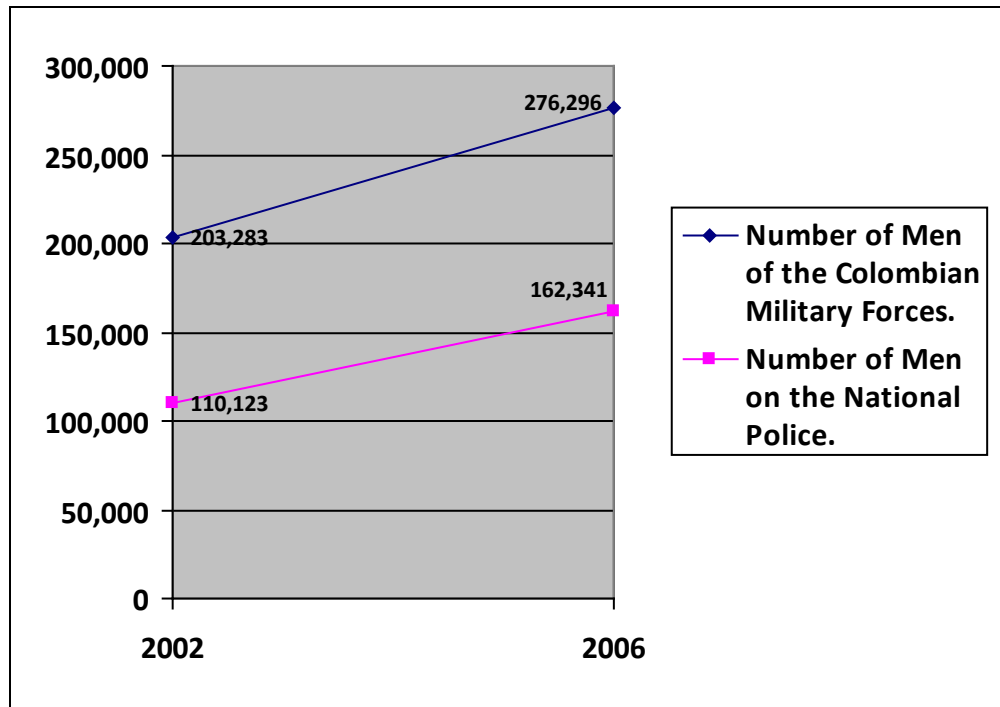


Figure 12. To Strengthen Security Forces

Source: Created by author.

Figure 13¹²³ indicates that the number of security forces killed in action decreased, while the number of wounded increased. It was mainly due to a change in the FARC strategy. Alfonso Cano ordered all the fronts to surge the use of improvised explosive devices (IED). This indicator suggests the DSDP failed to learn and adapt, the eleventh COIN principle suggested by JP 3-24. The creation of a research center dedicated to analyzing the IED technique applied by FARC would be a positive lesson learned from this difficult experience. They should also adapt their security to the challenge the FARC is posing with indiscriminate employment of IEDs.

¹²³Colombian Government, “Estadísticas de la Seguridad Democrática.”

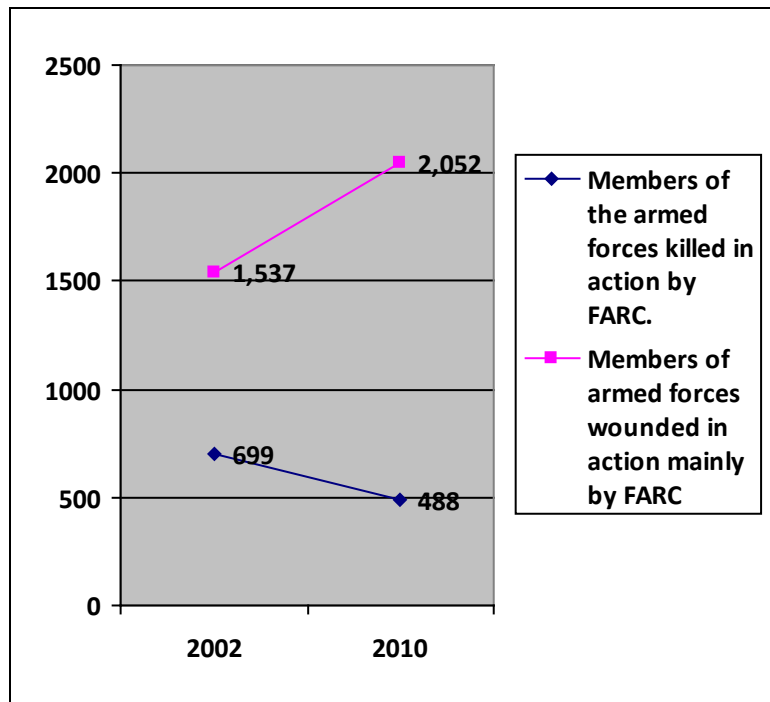


Figure 13. Colombian Military Men Killed or Wounded in Action

Source: Created by author.

The sixth strategic objective, to reduce the strength of the FARC, is a result of the effectiveness in reaching the above objectives. The DSDP reduced the FARC manpower by 50 percent and consequently, the FARC abilities to conduct terrorist attacks and kidnappings was reduced. The reduction of cultivated cocaine crops affected the FARC's capabilities because the FARC obtained finances from this illegal activity. In 2010 the number of cultivated cocaine hectares reduced to 34,046 (see figure 14).¹²⁴

¹²⁴Colombian Government, "Estadísticas de la Seguridad Democrática."

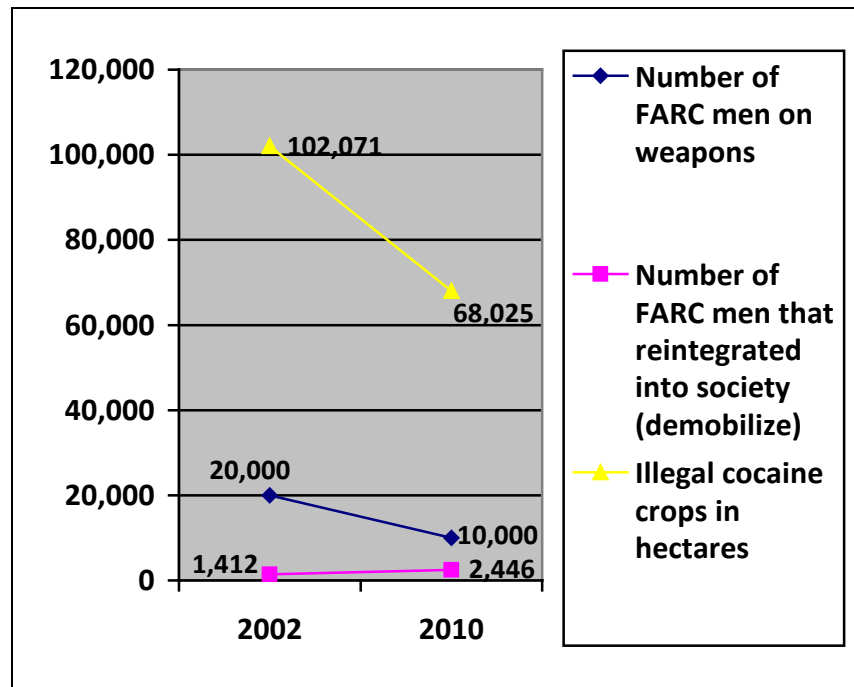


Figure 14. Evolution of FARC Strength

Source: Created by author.

This section showed the effectiveness of the DSDP in reducing the FARC manpower and capabilities, and the consequences in the economy and security of the Colombia. The next chapter will offer research conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter offers conclusions on the FARC strategic approach; the Colombian government COIN approach (1962 to 2002); factors which led to DSDP success; and COIN principles validated by DSDP design, implementation, and achievements. Furthermore, it will present some recommendations for improving Colombian COIN policy, and topics for future research in this domain.

Conclusions

The overall conclusion reached by this research indicates that the lack of a comprehensive COIN strategic approach by the Colombian governments during the period 1962 to 2002 permitted the FARC to gain the initiative and to reach its highest levels of power. In 2002, the government designed and implemented the DSDP to defeat the FARC and bring the country to an acceptable level of security. The DSDP was successful due to factors relating to its design and implementation. In the design field, DSDP embraced most of the COIN principles, contradicts some of them, and suggests that new principles could be considered for inclusion in a domestic COIN environment. In the implementation realm factors related to appropriate leadership, effective organization, special capabilities, innovation in intelligence, and the long-term application of the policy were crucial for the success of DSDP. This section will elaborate on each of these aspects.

The first is that the FARC is an organization that has evolved to adapt to the environment, but always maintained its political nature and its objective of seizing power

in Colombia. From the beginning, the FARC fought to get land to the farmers and then accepted the communist party's political support. When the communist party disappeared in Colombia, the FARC created the UP during the peace negotiations with Betancourt (1982 to 1986). Finally, during the demilitarized zone period (1999 to 2002), they created the "Movimiento Bolivariano por una nueva Colombia," a clandestine political organization to support the FARC struggle for power.

The second is that the FARC has followed generally a people's war approach to pursue its objective of seizing power. Analysis of FARC's history showed that they have accomplished phase one and two of Mao's approach, but failed to reach phase three. First, the strategic defensive phase from 1964 to 1990, when they gradually expanded influence in the majority of the country's territory. Then they went into the strategic stalemate phase from 1990 to 1998, when they slowly increased guerrilla activities, and at the same time expanded the number of men and block fronts; 16,000 and seven, respectively. At this point they attempted to go into the last phase, the "strategic offensive." Although they had the ability to commit massive attacks on platoon, company, and even battalion size units, the FARC neither achieved superiority over the Colombian military, nor was able to seize territory.

The third aspect was that until 2002 the governments in Colombia assumed various incorrect strategic approaches to counter the FARC. These governments did not have a coherent military strategy, and allowed the FARC to grow to the point where they believed they could launch a strategic offensive to seize power. Each government took one of the following approaches to combat the FARC and end the conflict: a combination of unsynchronized political and military actions; an over-emphasized political approach;

and an over-emphasized military approach (urban oriented). In the case of the first approach, the governments of Leon Valencia (1962 to 1966) and Lleras Restrepo (1966 to 1970), lacked unity of action and allowed the FARC to grow marginally during this eight year period. The government of Turbay (1978 to 1982) falls into the second category. He developed an approach with an emphasis on military, but was oriented toward the urban guerrilla. At the end, his government weakened the M-19 while the FARC continued to grow in the rural areas. The remainder of the governments fall into the third category: the presidencies of Betancourt (1982 to 1986), Gaviria (1990 to 1994), Samper (1994 to 1998), and Pastrana (1998 to 2002). They stand as those that highly emphasized a political solution. At the same time, these were the periods when the FARC grew more; from 3,000 men in 1982, to 20,000 in 2002 (see table 7).

Table 7. Colombian Government COIN Approaches and Their Results

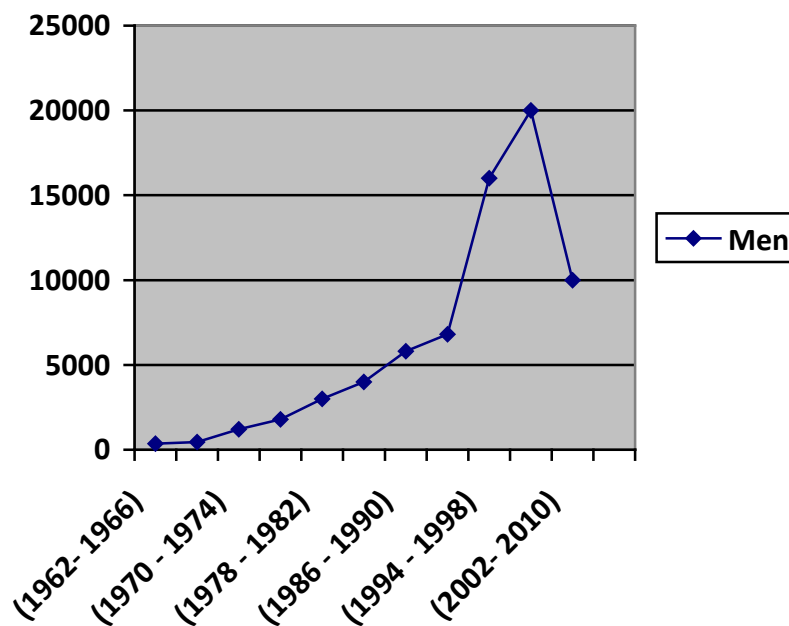
Presidential period	Combined unsynchronized political/military	Emphasized political	Emphasized military (Urban)	FARC's strength at the end of each presidential period	
				Men	Fronts
Leon Valencia (1962 – 1966)	x			350	1*
Lleras (1966 – 1970)	x			450	4*
Pastrana B. (1966 – 1970)		x		1,200	9
Lopez M. (1974 – 1978)		x		1,800	14
Turbay (1978 – 1982)			x	3,000	17
Betancourt (1982 – 1986)		x		4,000	32
Barco (1986 – 1990)		x		5,800	48
Gaviria (1990 – 1994)		x		6,800	48
Samper (1994-1998)		x		16,000	60
Pastrana (1998 – 2002)		x		20,000	72

Source: Created by author.

* At that time the FARC called it detachments.

The fourth aspect is that the DSDP stopped the FARC to achieve the “strategic offensive” phase. When the FARC tried a general offensive, the DSDP forced them back to an earlier “strategic stale mate” phase, and in some regions to the beginning strategic defensive phase (see figure 15). The primary factor in the success of the DSDP was its design in accordance with the COIN principles examined here in this research. The DSDP was the first government policy that correlated political end states with military objectives. It prioritized and coordinated resources and efforts among all government and non-governmental organizations to defeat the FARC. By design the DSDP has a clear political end state, intermediate objectives, and LOEs to achieve unity of action among all the stakeholders in the Colombian government and its supporters.

Table 8. Evolution of FARC by Presidential Periods



Source: Created by author.

The second factor in the success of the DSDP was Uribe's leadership, which was crucial for its implementation. Appropriate leadership is an obvious factor in the success of any policy, however, in the case of Uribe Velez, there were some characteristics that made his leadership singular and likely to be appropriate for a COIN environment such that in Colombia in 2002. First, he made security his priority and used the remainder of the governmental elements of power to support its military strategy. For example, he established the "wealth tax" to finance the strengthening of the Colombian security forces. Second, he achieved unity of command and unity of effort using a "micromanagement style" that motivated and assisted all levels of the government in achieving results quickly. Third, his work ethic kept him in direct communication with the population. It enabled him to listen to, and deal with the people's problems; thus they experienced a responsive administration, which gave them the sensation of a Government that cared about its people, and controlled the territory.

The third factor in the success of the DSDP was the establishment of an appropriate and effective organization for implementation of the policy. It created the CCAI as the national organization that institutionalized the process to identify, plan, and execute actions in support of the military effort of the Colombian COIN operations. This raised the government's credibility and reduced the guerrillas' and politicians' ability to manipulate the people. The FARC could not claim that the investment in the regions was a consequence of their insurgency activities, and the politicians could not use the budget to build infrastructure that favored their personal electoral interests.

However, the CCAI had two problems. First, there was a duality between the decisions made in regards to the "*consejos comunales*" and the CCAI planning. During

the “*consejos comunales*,” the President and his ministers made decisions based on the requests of the people. For example, during a “*consejo communal*” the President might order a school or a hospital be built. It had a great political effect, but created ripple in the CCAIs planning process and the decisions of “*consejos comunales*.” Second, the CCAI lacked the appropriate staff to do its job. For example, the military forces and the national police were reluctant to allocate people in those positions. They argued that the officers were needed in brigades and battalions to direct the war.

The development of special operations capabilities was the fourth factor in the success of the DSDP. It was significant in eliminating the FARC “leaders,” but not in destroying the structure of their fronts. The special operations capabilities developed in only a very small part of the army. Meanwhile, the majority of the army continued to operate with low quality equipment and very little mobility. Therefore, after eight years of DSDP, only the leadership of the FARC was eliminated, but not its structures and then new leaders arose within them.

The fifth factor in the success of the DSDP was the continued communication of achievements and results to the population and international community. It fostered support for the COIN strategy. Uribe constantly communicated the objectives and achievements to the people. He used “*rendicion de cuentas*” and “*consejos comunales*” to show progress with security. It empowered him to create new taxes to fund the COIN strategy, and to take personal responsibility for actions where the guerrillas caused damage to the government, the security forces, or the population.

The final factor in the success of the DSDP was its long-term application. Before 2002 the presidents rushed to get results. This led them to make concessions to the

FARC. The FARC knew that and they played the game. At the end of a presidential term they escalated the terrorist attacks so that the next president would try to make a peace deal and give them more concessions. The intention was to create conditions for negotiations. It happened to Betancourt, Gaviria, and Pastrana. In all of these cases, the FARC won without fighting and grew politically, economically, and militarily. When Uribe was reelected, the FARC found themselves facing a long-term strategy, the DSDP. That forced them to abandon the “strategic offensive” phase and return to the “strategic stalemate” phase, and in some areas to the “strategic defense” phase. These are the factors that made the DSDP successful. Now the paper will return to the elaboration of the main aspects of the conclusions.

The fifth aspect is that the international support to the COIN strategy is paramount in today’s strategic environment. Before 2001, the international environment favored the FARC. After 9/11 that changed and the government was favored. Colombia benefitted from the international community’s rejection of terrorist groups. It allowed Colombia to gain access to more technological, materiel, and political support. Technology favored intelligence capabilities. On the materiel side, the security forces increased their number of helicopters, augmenting mobility. Politically, the government received support of countries and international organizations for its COIN strategy. Operation Fenix, the attempt to kill Raul Reyes, shows how these three aspects converged to increase the efficiency of security forces. During this operation, in March 2008, Colombia bombed a FARC guerrilla compound in Ecuador territory. It caused some complaints from the Ecuador and Venezuela governments. However, the majority of the international community supported it, or at least did not condemn it. The question

is: What would have happened if the bombing of Ecuadorian territory would have occurred before 2001?

Finally the research showed that the design of the DSDP validates the majority of the COIN principles examined in this work, contradicts a few, and suggests that some can be added to a domestic COIN environment. Table 7 below compiles these principles.

Table 9. Validation of COIN Principles by DSDP

No	U.S. JP 3-24	Robert Thompson	Roger Trinquier	Suggested by the DSDP, not include by Thompson, Trinquier or U.S. JP 3-24.
1	Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Operational Environment. (V)	The government must have a clear political aim. (V)	The government has to identify the adversary exactly (intelligence). (V)	The government must take all necessary actions to increase international support to the COIN effort.
2	Legitimacy is the main objective. (V)	The government must function in accordance with the law. (V)	The defense of the territory with the purpose of protecting the population. (V)	
3	Unity of Effort is Essential. (V)	The government must have an overall plan. (V)		
4	Political Factors are Primary. (V)	The government must give priority to defeating political subversion, not the guerrillas. (C)		
5	Intelligence Drives Operations. (V)	In the guerrilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base areas first. (V)		
6	Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support. (V)			
7	Security under the Rule of Law is Essential. (V)			
8	Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment. (V)			
9	Manage Information and Expectations. (V)			
10	Use the Appropriate Level of Force.			
11	Empower the lowest levels. (C)			
12	Learn to adapt. (V)			
13	Support the Host Nation. U.S. forces committed to supporting COIN are there to assist a HN government. (V)			

(V) = validated by DSDP, **(C)** = contradicted by DSDP, **(NA)** = not applied by DSDP.

Source: Created by author.

Recommendations

To Improve Colombian COIN Policy

One of the fundamental factors in the success of the DSDP was its long-term application. This was the first time the FARC had to face a continuous effort against them. Consequently, one recommendation is that the government should look for consensus among the different political parties and maintain the DSDP objectives as a state policy. This will guarantee that the effort against the FARC does not slow down or that a new president will change the approach and give the FARC the opportunity to recover from the losses they had in Uribe's terms in office. That policy must enforce the coordination of all the elements of power toward the COIN objective, and especially for any type of conflict Colombia could face in the future.

Another factor that contributed to the success of the DSDP is the creation of the CCAI. It was an organization that linked the military strategy with the people needs. The CCAI facilitated the planning, resourcing, and executing of works that were fundamental for winning the people's hearts and minds. Another recommendation is to improve this organization by increasing its sized in order to be able to fulfill the role of the "*consejos comunales*", in other words in instead of waiting for the President to go to a town, the CCAI can be permanently doing this job.

The third recommendation is that the government of Colombia should establish a formal structure and procedure to develop security policy. It will depersonalize the process of making policy decisions and foster the conditions for adequate planning, resourcing, and executing policy. To that purpose, mechanisms like the U.S. National

Security Council could serve as a model for studying and adapting to the Colombian political, economic, informational, and military environment.

The DSDP was applied mainly by the Colombian security forces. Among them, the military forces are the ones that have the organization and capability of producing doctrine. Another recommendation is that they include the DSDP design, application, and lessons learned in their doctrine. This will ensure that the lessons learned from this process will remain available for future generations of officers to study. Thus, the officers will have a point of departure to develop a COIN policy and make the proper adaptations to fight the future threats the country could face. It will also ensure that the government point of view about the DSDP remains for historical purposes. This will deflect the prevalence of enemy interpretations of the DSDP.

On the intelligence side, the organization of the “*burbujas*” was crucial in eliminating the FARC leadership. A recommendation is to keep and increase the number of the “*burbujas*”, but instead of tasking them with concentrating on FARC “*leaders*”, task them with focusing on FARC structures. The intelligence process will be complete when it is permitted to plan and execute a military campaign to destroy the entire guerrilla structure of an area, not only their leaders. In other words the “*burbujas*” must provide the intelligence necessary to attack the FARC political, military, and economic organization.

Finally, the units with special operations capabilities should be maintained. However, these capabilities should be expanded to the remainder of the military forces. One way to make this happen would be to create joint regional task forces at brigade level. These regional joint task forces would allow quick coordination between the Army,

Navy, Air Force, and National Police. It shortens the intelligence process, and offers a quick and effective response to the FARC attacks and intentions.

For Future Research

The effects of President Uribe's character and management style on the design and implementation of DSDP was fundamental to its success. Uribe's direct communication with the people and decision making at the lowest level fostered a chain reaction that led all the agencies of the state to double their efforts in order to attain the DSDP objectives. For that reason, it would be worthy to analyze other COIN case studies with characteristics similar to those of Colombia. The purpose would be to determine if a "micromanagement" leadership style is paramount to design, resource, and implementation of a successful COIN strategy in an environment similar to the one Colombia experienced in 2002.

To a great extent, the design and implementation of the DSDP was linked Uribe's leadership. The process has to be institutionalized to identify a plan that works to solve the needs of the people at the regional level. That constitutes another future research field. Research can be conducted to analyze how other countries develop security policy. The purpose would be to develop an organization and process to develop security policy in the Colombian environment. To that end, institutionalized procedures like the one established in the U.S. by the National Security Council can be considered. This model, with the appropriate adaptation to the Colombian situation, can lead to development of a method acceptable to the Colombian leadership and effective in the Colombian environment.

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