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An Analysis of Plan Colombia as it Meets Criteria for Protracted Military Intervention

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An Analysis of Plan Colombia as it Meets Criteria for Protracted Military

Intervention

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Political Science

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Sarah Roper

July 2000

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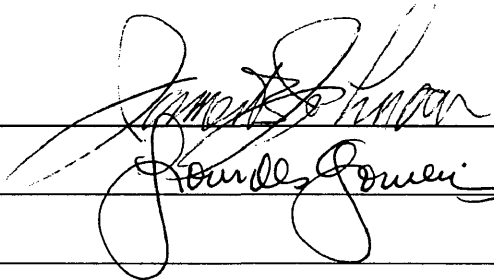
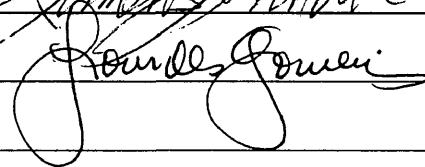


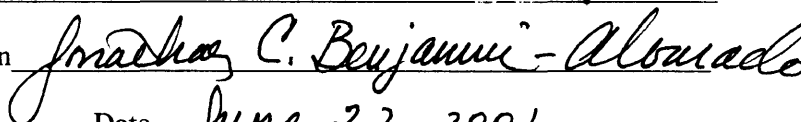
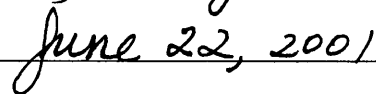
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AN ANALYSIS OF PLAN COLOMBIA AS IT MEETS CRITERIA FOR
PROTRACTED MILITARY INTERVENTION

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University of Nebraska, 2001

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For over thirty years, the conflict in Colombia has wrecked havoc on the country's civil society, political order, military capabilities, and the stability of the entire region. Born of drug cartels and exacerbated by police and military corruption, rebel guerrilla groups, and ineffective international policy, drug trafficking and the consequences thereof pose a critical threat to policy makers worldwide.

Consequently, the Colombian and United States governments committed, in February 2000, to new legislation, entitled Plan Colombia, aimed at reducing narcotics cultivation, processing, and distribution by fifty percent by the year 2006. While the plan is ambitious, it is riddled with dangerous and ineffective military measures, which threaten not only the effectiveness of the legislation, but also the security of American troops. This research attempts to prove that, contrary to strategic and theoretical goals, Plan Colombia—and the international aid mandated therein—will only exacerbate the civil conflict in Colombia.

In search of credible evidence that Plan Colombia will only heighten tensions in South America, I have adopted a research strategy based on causality and path dependency.

Ariel Levite, Bruce Jentleson, and Larry Berman's *Foreign Military Intervention* (1992) provides several case studies of protracted foreign military intervention. From their research, I have extracted general criteria for future cases of protracted foreign military intervention. Next, I apply the tenets of Plan

Colombia and the context of the Colombian conflict to these criteria and explain the manner in which the legislation parallels Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's case examples. After a brief discussion of the caveats in this application, I conclude that Plan Colombia is likely to lead the United States into a situation of protracted foreign military intervention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Nineteenth-century poet, Ethyl Lynn Beers, in her most celebrated work, "All Quiet Along the Potomac," wrote: "Defend me from my friends, I can protect myself from my enemy." Throughout history, the wisdom of Beers' words has surfaced in times of war. Indeed, while the international system of war-time alliances has often been an integral part of peace-making, in some situations it is also responsible for escalations of the very conflict it was designed to prevent or resolve. From the First World War to the Vietnam conundrum, certain aspects of the United States' international involvement—although well intentioned—have carried substantially counter-productive consequences.

Modern times are no different. As the country of Colombia finds itself embroiled in a civil war which centers around (and is perpetuated by) such massive obstacles as drug trafficking, guerilla warfare, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary terrorism, and the blatant neglect of human rights, the United States has pledged over \$1 billion of foreign aid. This aid will help complete Plan Colombia, the Colombian government's answer to its internal strife. Introduced by Colombia's President Pastrana in February of 2000, the plan's chief aim is to reduce the cultivation, processing, and distribution of narcotics by fifty percent in six years (Ford 2000, 2), and (claiming a diplomatic goal of mutual partnership, peace, and prosperity) the United States has pledged to aid Colombia in the implementation and enforcement of Plan Colombia.

Rafael Pardo, in "Colombia's Two-Front War," explains the significance of Colombia's strife:

In the last 15 years, 200 bombs as large as the one used in
Oklahoma City have blown up in Colombia's cities; an entire

democratic leftist party was eliminated by right-wing paramilitaries; four presidential candidates, 200 judges and investigators, half of the Supreme Court's justices, 1,200 police officers, 151 journalists, and more than 300,000 ordinary Colombians have been murdered. (Pardo 2000, p.65).

Certainly, Pastrana's prescribed cure-all, Plan Colombia, warrants thorough analysis. Quite contrary to strategic and theoretical goals, Plan Colombia—and the international aid mandated therein—will only exacerbate the civil conflict in Colombia. After carefully examining both the history and current status of Colombia's internal strife, reviewing the Colombian and American objectives under Plan Colombia, and finally, analyzing the contradictions of the package, it will become clear that perhaps the cure—Plan Colombia—is more dangerous than the disease.

Initially, however, a thorough analysis of Plan Colombia requires an understanding of the Colombian conflict itself. The complex situation in Colombia today began to take shape over thirty years ago, and now revolves around three fundamental factions: the government, left-wing guerillas, and right-wing paramilitaries—all three of which share an involvement in Colombia's illegal drug trade. In fact, illegal drug trafficking underlies the entire Colombian conflict.

In light of rising international demand during the 1970s, Colombian drug traffickers decided to capitalize on the country's traditional Andean coca crop. Drug interests financed years of experiments until, finally, an acceptable form of cocaine was created deep in the jungles of Colombia. This cocaine was then shipped to the United States and sold for up to \$30,000 per kilogram (Pardo 2000, 66). The quicker, more profitable cocaine trade began to breed drug cartels, which

specialized in certain areas of the drug economy, including distribution, money laundering, transportation, and processing. Gradually, the drug trade in Colombia was becoming more specialized, more streamlined, and ultimately, more successful:

The growth of cartels turned Colombia upside down. In 1978, Colombia's drug revenue was \$2 billion. By 1985, that flow had increased to \$3 billion—an astronomical figure, given that Colombia's GNP was then only \$40 billion. The wealth was grabbed by a few hands and invested in such safe sectors as urban real estate and huge rural haciendas. (This helped create the coalition between landowners and drug traffickers that now finances the paramilitaries. (Pardo 2000, p.66)

As Colombia's judicial system buckled under the weight of corruption and violence sparked by this newly evolved industry, the Colombian government finally attempted to address the problem. An extradition treaty signed by the United States and Colombia in 1979 allowed Colombian nationals to be tried in US courts but it was met with a wave of violence from these drug traffickers. A terrorist group of these traffickers, the Extraditables, organized and launched an armed campaign against the treaty. The Extraditables assassinated a Colombian Supreme Court Justice, as well as journalists, politicians, police officers, and even civilians. Pardo (2000) summarizes:

Lawlessness spread uncontrollably not because of a lack of controls or laws but because the combination of drugs, corruption, and insurgency makes any type of control ludicrous. Colombia has one

of the most sophisticated legal systems in the hemisphere and every conceivable law in the book, but 70 percent of all crimes remain unsolved, and it ranks among the top three most corrupt countries in the world according to Transparency International.

(p.67)

By the end of the 1970s, therefore, the illicit drug trade had fully taken root in almost every sector of Colombian society: the economy, the judicial system, the agricultural arena, and even amongst civilians.

After receiving additional aid from the US under President Bush's multilateral approach, the Colombian government today has effectively eliminated its two largest drug cartels. It seems, however, doomed to acknowledge the strength of a new social class—a class that grew rich through drug trafficking, that is not afraid to use violence, terrorism, and corruption, and that is quite willing to fight to keep its business alive and thriving.

Jess T. Ford (2000), Director of International Affairs and Trade, in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources summarizes the explosive rate of Colombian drug production today:

...starting in 1997, Colombia surpassed Bolivia and Peru as the world's largest cultivator of coca. Since 1995, the area under coca cultivation in Colombia expanded by over 140 percent to over 300,000 acres in 1999. Most of this increased cultivation took place in the areas of southern Colombia that are controlled by insurgents and paramilitary groups. Moreover, the amount of cocaine

produced in Colombia has increased by 126 percent since 1995, from 230 metric tons to 520 metric tons in 1999. Finally, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Colombia has become a major source of the heroin consumed in the United States, producing about 6 metric tons annually. (p.5)

Just as germane to an examination of the root of Colombia's conflict is a comment on the three warring factions of Colombian society. During the 1960s—while the rest of the global community remained in the icy grips of the Cold War—Colombia began developing its own variation of the conflict. Anti-government peasant groups in Colombia's rural regions (consisting mostly of citizens who had rebelled against the government in the 1950s) gradually gained power in the country's mountains and jungles. While they did cause some harm, these groups were not yet significant enough to threaten Colombian society (Pardo 2000, 68).

As Colombian drug traffickers became more aggressive, these peasant groups which had now officially assumed the name the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC) took advantage of the situation: they settled into drug-producing areas of Colombia and began charging "protection" fees to the drug traffickers. In this way, FARC found a strong source of independent financing. Over time, in fact, FARC assumed control of the crops and hoisted its annual income to more than \$600 million a year, making it quite possibly the richest insurgent group in history. Weaknesses in the Colombian army's infrastructure allowed various paramilitary forces (organized to combat FARC) to develop. Micheal Shifter (1999), in "Colombia on the Brink: There Goes the Neighborhood," elaborates:

But the most disturbing symptom of the failure of Colombia's institutions has been the exponential growth of paramilitary forces, now estimated to number 4,000 to 5,000 combatants. These militias, frustrated by the country's demoralized and debilitated security forces, seek to counter insurgent advances. They have grown more sophisticated over the years since the army and landowners first organized them as self-defense units in the 1980's. In some cases, they have developed right-wing political identities and agendas and have shown a keen interest in Colombia's political game. (p.16)

Since 1996, these groups have assumed an anti-guerilla rhetoric and employ military tactics that mirror those of the Colombian military. Thus, while there is no formal link between the Colombian military and paramilitary groups, suspicions of an alliance are prevalent and well founded.

The United States' Congress' "Human Rights Watch, Colombia: Human Rights Developments" (2000) explains that these paramilitary groups are responsible for most of the human rights violations in Colombia:

Paramilitary groups working in some areas with the tolerance and open support of the armed forces continued to massacre civilians, commit selective killings, and spread terror. . . . In 1999, paramilitaries were considered responsible for 78% of the total number of human rights and international humanitarian law violations, according to the Colombian Commission of Jurists

(Comision Colombiana de Juristas, CCJ), a human rights group.

(United States. Congress. 2000)

Today Colombia stands torn between its government, guerilla groups, and paramilitary forces—and its citizens are the ultimate victims.

The proposed solution to this conflict is President Pastrana's Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia will cost approximately \$7.5 billion to fully implement. While Colombia will provide \$4 billion, the US has committed \$1.3 billion of the remaining \$3.5 billion. According to the Center for International Policy's "The Peace Process in Colombia," (2000) the country already receives more US police and military assistance than the rest of Latin America, and the Caribbean combined. In fact: "With nearly \$300 million in new weapons, equipment, training, and services, Colombia was the world's third-largest recipient of grant US security assistance in 1999" (United States. Center for International Policy. 2000).

The Colombian government has outlined six strategic objectives of Plan Colombia. According to the United States Institute of Peace Library, they are: to strengthen the fight against drug trafficking and dismantle the organizations through an integrated effort by the armed forces; to strengthen the judicial system and combat corruption; to neutralize the drug trade's financial system and seize its resources for the state; to neutralize and combat violent agents allied with the drug trade; to integrate national initiatives into regional and international efforts; and to strengthen and expand plans for alternative development in areas affected by drug trafficking.

For its part, the United States has outlined five strategic objectives. As reported in "Fact Sheet: Colombia," as released by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (2000), they are: to increase support for human rights and

judicial reform (\$122 million), to pursue the expansion of counter-narcotics operations into southern Colombia (\$390 million), to develop alternative economic development (\$81 million) and similar programs for Bolivia and Ecuador (\$93 million), to instigate increased interdiction efforts (\$129.4 million), and to provide assistance for the Colombian National Police (\$115 million). Ultimately, the US hopes to bolster the peace process, ensure human rights, and provide aid to the 300,000 Colombians displaced by violence.

Although the stated objectives of Plan Colombia are certainly worthwhile, the package itself is riddled with contradictions. According to a release issued by The Center for International Policy entitled “The Peace Process in Colombia” (2000), approximately \$21-24 million of the US monies will be designated for the Colombian Navy’s five-battalion Riverine Brigade. The United States also plans to increase funding for Colombia’s Air Force, specifically on runway improvements. At the same time the US will continue encouraging Colombia’s Air Force to adopt a policy of forcing down suspected drug-smuggling aircraft by supplying it with American military equipment (specifically, Blackhawk Helicopters) distinctly for that purpose. So far, however, these plans have proven anything but successful. As Jess T. Ford (2000, p.7) explains:

At the same time State agreed to purchase the helicopters, it had not included the funds necessary to produce, refurbish, and support them in its fiscal year 1999 and 2000 budgets. As a result, the helicopters could not be used for conducting counternarcotics operations and 17 of the 24 contractor pilots trained to fly the 18 UH-1Ns were laid off beginning in May 2000. . . .According to State and US Embassy officials, it will take about 3 months for the

counternarcotics battalion to commence operations with helicopters—nearly a year after the original date to begin operations. (Ford 2000, p.7)

Additionally, US agencies will attempt to improve the historically unsuccessful information-sharing practices between Colombia's military and police forces. The United States itself recently altered its policy and, for the first time, will participate in such practices as well. The Center for International Policy's "The Peace Process in Colombia" (2000, p.5) notes:

Citing guerilla involvement in the drug trade, however, the United States has loosened restrictions on intelligence sharing. In March 1999 the US government issued new guidelines that allow sharing of intelligence about guerilla activity in Colombia's southern drug-producing region, even if the information is not directly related to counter-narcotics. (United States. Center for International Policy. 2000)

Today Colombia is already among the Western Hemisphere's top three customers for US weapons, but Plan Colombia will designate additional sales of military equipment. However, this procedure has so far been disastrous:

As in the past, State and DOD [Department of Defense] will have to request additional funding to support U.S.-provided equipment. Officials from State and DOD recently testified that they do not know if sufficient funding is available to procure the number of

helicopters mandated by the Congress because they have not determined how the helicopters will be equipped and configured. According to State, the funding proposed by the administration and approved by the Congress was not intended to support the equipment scheduled to be provided through the 6-year life of Plan Colombia. (Ford 2000, p.9)

Indeed, Colombia itself is not fully prepared to receive US military assistance. Ford (2000) maintains that the US will provide the Colombian National Police with training, aircraft, and other support needed to develop an infrastructure to enhance their overall abilities to eradicate coca leaf and opium poppy. However:

According to Embassy personnel, the [Columbian] National Police have not formally approved the plan, and State has not approved the funding needed to begin the phase-out. Now, according to State officials. . .they do not know when the phase-out will be approved. (Ford 2000, p.8)

Even in the broadest categories, Plan Colombia has proven itself poorly planned. Despite the fact that the Colombian government has pledged \$4 billion for Plan Colombia, State and Colombian government officials were pessimistic about Colombia's ability to obtain much new money without cutting other government programs. It would seem both governments are falling short in their duties. For example, the Colombian government has not yet developed the detailed implementation plans necessary for funding, sequencing, and managing activities included in Plan Colombia (Ford 2000, p.11).

Finally, the most dangerous tenet of Plan Colombia is the creation of a high-level Bilateral Working Group, which will meet bi-annually to coordinate US-Colombian military cooperation and assistance. As the United States pledges money, troops, and equipment, critics of Plan Colombia cannot help but draw a parallel between the United States' future role in Colombia and its involvement in Vietnam. Fears are indeed legitimate.

Despite pledges to remain completely uninvolved in the Colombian counter-insurgency movement, the United States' involvement in Colombia's territorial wars appears to be inevitable. In October 2000, the US began an offensive attack against the drug trade through a series of ground level military exercises in Putumayo (southern Colombia), and civilians are already paying the price. Indeed, local residents of this most volatile region face violence from the FARC, paramilitaries, and government forces. The FARC have instituted a transportation strike and have burned any cars or buses that defy this order. Terrorists have cut the electric lines and gasoline supplies are dwindling, while food is becoming increasingly scarce in Putumayo (LaFrachi 2000, p.7).

The US objective in Putumayo is to eventually replace the area's coca crop with alternatives so that coca farmers and laborers will not be displaced. But even this seemingly legitimate goal will be difficult. Because the region's land and communications are of very poor quality, most goods must be transported by river (which significantly limits the scope of possible replacement crops).

Additionally, even if the aerial eradication methods are successful, removing coca from Putumayo would only put a dent in Colombia's drug trade—determined FARC leaders could easily relocate to more secluded regions of Colombia's jungles. In fact, critics of Plan Colombia fear that: “any shortfall in the FARC's revenues from taxing the drug trade is likely to be offset by an increase in

kidnapping and extortion” (“Putumayo’s Tense Wait ” 2000). Keeping in mind the potential for disaster in Putumayo, the success of Plan Colombia is questionable at best.

In addition, Plan Colombia could actually escalate human rights violations in Colombia. Current US foreign aid policies are guided by a series of regulations known as the Leahy Amendments, which deny a country’s military any US assistance if its members face credible evidence of gross human rights violations. Even so, Colombia does not face thorough scrutiny from the United States. The Center for International Policy’s “The Peace Process in Colombia” (2000) reports:

. . .the Colombian Army today is the hemisphere’s worst abuser of human rights and international humanitarian law. . . .the Clinton Administration and the human rights community view Colombia as a chief test case for the Leahy Law’s implementation. A vetting procedure, within the framework of an August 1997 End-Use Monitoring agreement between the US Embassy and Colombia’s Defense Ministry, screens unit members for past corruption or human rights abuse. The agreement also requires Colombia’s Defense Ministry to submit every six months a certification listing ongoing formal investigations or prosecutions of unit members for gross human rights violations. . . .Under the administration’s current interpretation of the Leahy Law. . .US programs offer training to individuals with clean records even if they belong to units that are prohibited from receiving assistance. (United States. Center for International Policy. 2000)

The United States has essentially bypassed the Leahy Amendments to de-link foreign aid and human rights conditions for Colombia. Considering the well-documented history of human rights violations committed by Colombia's military, activist groups like Amnesty International worry that increased foreign aid granted under Plan Colombia will propel "an existing human rights crisis into a humanitarian catastrophe" (Miller 2000, 1). Clearly the potential effects of Plan Colombia on human rights are the most counter-productive—and the most costly.

After explaining the current Colombian crisis, reviewing the Colombian and US objectives of Plan Colombia, revealing the contradictions of the package, and predicting some dire consequences of its implementation, it is obvious that Plan Colombia is a far cry from the panacea it was initially perceived to be. Quite contrary to its stated strategic and theoretical goals, Plan Colombia—and the international aid mandated therein—will only exacerbate the civil conflict in Colombia. The poetic truth of Ethyl Lynn Beers' words is surfacing again today. Colombia must remember that sometimes even its friends can be as dangerous as its enemies.

Chapter 2: Justification of Model and Research Tactics

Justification of Model

Although the Colombian scenario is certainly unique, it is by no means the first time the United States has made the decision to intervene in another nation's civil conflict. Ariel Levite, Bruce Jentleson, and Larry Berman, in *Foreign Military Intervention* (1992) provide a broad survey of other examples of foreign military intervention: the United States in Vietnam, the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Syria in Lebanon, Israel in Lebanon, and India in Sri Lanka. The authors examine each of the cases to formulate several generalities about foreign military intervention. Across the spectrum of the cases studied, certain criteria remain consistent, specifically, the intervener's assessment errors in the decision to intervene, military and political miscalculations, the probable escalation of intervention, the problem of strategic balance, and the likelihood that intervention will continue. These criteria may be applicable to Colombia as well. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992, vix) note:

Despite the obvious profound differences among the United States, the Soviet Union and Israel, we observed some commonalities in the dilemmas and outcomes associated with these cases. We saw similarities in the patterns and dynamics of the process leading to and expanding upon the original political commitment whereby the intervening power sought support from an indigenous ally in order to stabilize or change an existing regime. These apparent similarities in what otherwise might seem sui generis cases proved sufficiently intriguing to stimulate our interest in looking at the phenomenon more systematically and analytically by posing several

key questions. How did political-military intervention come about, proceed, and end? What could be learned from the phenomenon itself and from the several candidate cases we have identified? These all seemed issues worthy of deeper and more systematic comparative study.

This Masters thesis will apply Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) questions to Plan Colombia. This is an appropriate choice of models, because as Bennett (1999) notes, working with a specified sub-class of the general phenomenon has proven to be an effective strategy for theory development Bennett (1999) further explains that rather than trying in one study to develop a general theory for the entire phenomenon (in this case intervention), the investigator should think instead of formulating a typology of study. Bennett suggests several such typologies, including: “protracted” interventions, interventions by various instruments, interventions on behalf of different goals, or interventions in the context of different alliance structures or balances of power. The result of such this study, as predicted by Bennett will be one part of an over-all theory of intervention (Bennett 1999, p.2).

The study of foreign military intervention in Colombia is appropriate as it expands the research of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) to a future, hypothetical case. The authors touch on the relevance of future incidents:

What does the future hold? Is there really some “new world order” emerging, which will make foreign military interventions obsolescent? If so, than [sic] a study such as this could be considered useful as analytic history, and not much more.

However...while particularly frequent during the Cold War, foreign military interventions are neither a new international phenomenon, nor are they tied necessarily to any particular international system structure. While no definitive answer can obviously be given to what the post-Cold War era will bring, there does not appear to be any reason to believe that the future will be fundamentally different from the past. Five crucial factors conducive to foreign military intervention—opportunities, incentives, capabilities, weak prohibitions, and limited alternative strategies—are likely to persist, and potentially even be exacerbated, in the years ahead. (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.320)

Thus the model provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) is certainly fitting for an application to Plan Colombia.

While particular attention is paid to the model devised by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992), a second model also influenced the direction of this research. In assessing the military strategies underlying foreign military intervention, I turned to Carl Clausewitz in *On War* (1943). Clausewitz focuses on the conduct of war by asking whether separate campaigns or battles should be viewed as a kind of cumulative game (in which an overall balance of success or failure emerges) or if the only campaign that matters is the last one and that battles are discrete enemies. To predict the success or failure of Plan Colombia, I evaluate the United States' military strategy against the backdrop of Clausewitz's questions. This is further explained in Chapter 5. Clausewitz's model proved useful in the assessment of military tactics in Plan Colombia. However, because his research is somewhat dated and limited in its nature to just one of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's (1992)

criteria, his work is not used consistently throughout this research.

Research Tactics: Causal Inference in An Analysis of Plan Colombia as it Meets
Criteria for Protracted Military Intervention

This research employs a case-study technique. In an attempt to demonstrate causality through path dependency, Plan Colombia will be applied to generalizations clarified in *Foreign Military Intervention* (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992).

Causal inference will be the method employed to examine Plan Colombia.

Evidence of causality in Plan Colombia and the case studies provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) is based on temporal succession, contiguity, and the relation to existing bodies of knowledge.

Andrew Bennett, in “Causal Inference in Case Studies: From Mill’s Methods to Causal Mechanisms,” (1999) clarifies the relevance of temporal succession:

[T]he order in which variables assume certain values may have effects as important as the values of the variables themselves, and the effects of some processes may vary greatly depending on the path-dependent effects of slight differences in initial conditions....When path dependency is present, process tracing may provide a strong historical explanation for a particular case, and it may even allow for limited generalization to other cases following a similar sequential path. (Bennett 1999, p.16)

In other words, proof of path dependency depends heavily on temporal succession. When two similar outcomes occur as the result of two different paths, researchers

must assume that initial conditions in both situations were similar.

Temporal succession is germane to the examination of Plan Colombia as the events preceding, the process of, and the likely results following military intervention will parallel those found in case studies provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992).

Process tracing is only valuable, however, after the sequential path has been determined. In fact, there is no path to speak of (in any intervention) unless events can be linked causally. To do so, Bennett (1999) suggests that contiguity is necessary:

Events are linked via a causal chain through which energy is transmitted from one entity to another, and the causal chain connecting X and Y is only as strong as its weakest link; if one link in the chain cannot be made, the explanation is incomplete. Clearly, this source of inference also fits well with the method of process tracing, which seeks to establish a continuous chain of events along hypothesized a causal path in an historical case (Bennett 1999, p.16).

In the examples given by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) and in the projected succession of Plan Colombia, the following path will be studied:

GOALS>ASSESSMENT>STRATEGIES>OBSTACLES/MISTAKES>OUTCOME

. Contiguity is crucial in this succession as it provides the basis for the argument that, although the cases may involve different players and may take place in different contexts the pattern of path dependency is similar, thus, a comparison between the case studies and Plan Colombia is credible.

Equally important in qualitative research is the relation to an existing body of knowledge. Bennett (1999, 17) notes: “If we find a case in which all of the extant theories predict outcome Y, only one theory predicts outcome Z, and the actual outcome is Z, then the theory that correctly predicted Z has survived a ‘tough test’ and deserves greater confidence.” The research presented in this thesis attempts to present a generalization of foreign military intervention that predicts outcome Y (protraction), and predicts a hypothetical scenario which could account for outcome Z (non-protraction).

Although these three techniques will prove sufficient as research strategies, the nature of the case study does require the neglect of several other valid methods. Covariation cannot be applied to the analysis of Plan Colombia, because, as Bennett notes, comparative case studies contain a small number of cases that are not necessarily chosen to provide a ‘representative’ sample of some population, and thus are much weaker at establishing covariance between independent and dependent variables (Bennett 1999, 14). Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) argue that the cases provided in *Foreign Military Intervention* are representative of a subset, particularly protracted foreign military interventions. As a comparative study, the authors identify patterns rather than just single-case phenomenon. The existing body of empirical research is rich in single-case studies with considerable virtues (especially depth and richness of detail) but for purposes of theory-building, single-case studies also suffer from profound limitations. Most prominently, single-case studies often overemphasize the unique features of each case. In contrast, Levite, Jentleson, and Berman’s

1992 study takes a broadly based comparative perspective (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.15).

While Levite, Jentleson, and Berman do provide a representative sample of protracted foreign military interventions, this research would require a representative sample within all foreign military interventions for covariation. Thus covariation, because of its limited single-case nature, is inapplicable to the research.

Additionally, congruity and manipulability will be neglected. Congruity is measured using a model with a defined functional form in the hopes of establishing partial correlations among variables. Bennett (1999) argues that statistical techniques are generally superior to case study methods in establishing such partial correlations. Because the analysis of Plan Colombia is based on qualitative research (rather than statistical), congruity is not possible. Similarly, manipulability (or the power of the researcher to alter independent variables) is inappropriate for this research. Although a powerful source of causal inference, manipulability cannot be used in the methods of the study, as the research is social and qualitative, and the researcher has no power to manipulate the independent variables.

Finally, Mill's methods do not apply to the study. Bennett (1999) explains the premise behind Mill's Methods. Mill's methods of agreement require the investigator to look for the potentially causal antecedent conditions that are shared by two cases with the same outcome. Ideally, these would turn out to be necessary conditions. Mill's methods of difference require the investigator to look for antecedent conditions that differ between two cases that have different outcomes. The conclusion in that case would be that those antecedent conditions that were the same despite differing outcomes could not be sufficient to cause either outcome (Bennett 1999, p.18).

Mill's methods can work well at identifying underlying causal relations only under three very strong conditions. First, the causal relations being investigated must be deterministic regularities involving conditions that are either necessary or sufficient for a specified outcome. Second, all causally relevant variables must be identified and included in the analysis. Third, there must be available for study cases that represent the full range of all logically and socially possible causal paths (Bennett 1999, 17).

The first condition necessary for Mill's methods is not met, as the causal relations examined in this research are probabilistic, not deterministic. Also, the third condition of Mill's method cannot be satisfied because Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) explore only one given path and only one outcome in their case studies.

Despite the inability to use all potential methods, causal inference as demonstrated by temporal succession, contiguity, and relation to an existing body of knowledge will prove an adequate research method for the analysis. It is not, however, sufficient for a thorough study. With that in mind, further tactics must also be utilized.

Research Design

The type of case study used in this research is a hybrid of the "building block" and "disciplined configurative" types. Bennett and George, in "Research Design in Case Study Methods," (1997) define these two types. Building block case studies identify common patterns for a heuristic purpose. These can constitute component parts of larger contingent generalizations and typological theories. Disciplined configurative case studies use established theories to explain a case. The emphasis may be on explaining an historically important case to exemplify a

theory for pedagogical purposes. Using the work of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992)—which is essentially a series of disciplined configurative case studies—the study will construct a framework of analysis. By extending generalizations to Colombia, the building block method will be used as well.

A second component of defining research objectives is to identify a subclass. Bennett and George (1997) argue that better results will be achieved if the “class” of the phenomenon to be investigated (e.g. intervention) is not defined too broadly. Most successful studies, they contend, have worked with a well-defined, smaller scope sub-class of the general phenomenon. The research undertaken here will be limited by focusing specifically on protracted military intervention.

Specification of Variables

The second task of determining a research strategy is the specification of variables (Bennett and George 1997). This involves answering three basic questions. First, what is the dependent (or outcome) variable to be explained or predicted? Second, what independent (and intervening) variables comprise the theoretical framework of the study? Finally, which of these will be held constant (or serve as parameters) and which will vary across cases in the comparison?

The “outcome” variable in the study of Plan Colombia will be the success (as predicted by the likelihood of protraction) of military intervention mandated by Plan Colombia. The intervening variables which comprise the theoretical framework of the study are numerous. They include: sources of involvement (military and ideological), the amount of support for the intervention (both indigenous and exogenous), and the intervener’s goals and expectations. As independent variables, the decision to intervene will be held constant and the

goals/expectations will vary across the cases in the comparison. These variables are inherently difficult to quantify, and as such, measurement of each variable will be done in a comparative context. Specifically, I will examine each variable of Plan Colombia in comparison to the corresponding variables in case studies provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman.

Describing Differences in Variables

The third component of research is the description of differences in variables (Bennett and George 1997). Realizing that there will be a substantial amount of difference in the variables shared by cases provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) and Plan Colombia, the study will (for the sake of time) focus on qualitative differences, specifically, the contrast between prevailing ideologies. The majority of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's interventions were sparked by an anti-Communist Cold War mentality, whereas the ideology behind Plan Colombia is, for the most part, an anti-drug, economically motivated sentiment.

Formulation of Data Requirements

The fourth and final task of the research strategy is the formulation of data requirements (Bennett and George 1997). Among the parallels highlighted by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992), this research will examine the following as they apply to foreign military intervention: the objectives of military intervention, the setting for military intervention, the overarching goals of the intervention, the intervener's discrete military objectives, the intervener's assumptions at the time of intervention, domestic factors in both the target and the intervening state that shape the intervention, the doctrinal aspects of the intervention, and problems with the local ally.

Based on the following generalizations, which were first discovered by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman, the study will predict the success of Plan Colombia: the intervener's assessment errors in the decision to intervene (defined as the intervening state's initial decisional flaws which ultimately led that state to pursue the military intervention), military and political miscalculations (defined as those misassessments of military and political stability in the target state which hindered the success of the intervention), the probable escalation of intervention (defined as the conditions which would lead an intervention to protraction rather than create an atmosphere conducive to a quick-decisive intervention), the problem of strategic balance (defined as those conditions that made the stability and success of the intervention difficult, particularly similarity of goals and communications between the intervening and the target state), and the likelihood that intervention will continue (defined as the chances that the intervention would achieve its goals and the chance that the intervening state would be able to withdraw as planned after the intervention). Furthermore, this research will extend those generalizations to Plan Colombia to determine if Colombian and United States actions remain consistent with past experiences.

Setting the Stage for Comparison: Similarities Between Asian and Latin American Regions and the Implications of Such for Comparative Analysis

The application of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's (1992) for foreign military intervention to modern-day Colombia presupposes several crucial factors, not the least of which is a parallel between the internal conditions of Asian countries and the conditions found in Latin America. Archival research is undoubtedly the most appropriate method by which to compare these contexts. Russell A. Jones, in

Research Methods in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, (1985) explains:

Archival research utilizes the vast store of records generated in any literate society...to examine systematically questions and hypotheses of current interest....Working with such sources of data has a distinct advantage....In that sense, the use of preexisting records and texts is relatively nonreactive or unobtrusive....With a little ingenuity and a little careful thought about what data are there, archives can also help you tremendously in the search for the explanations of behavior, for understanding why people do the things they do.

(Jones 1985, p.104)

The search for such justification begins with the World Data 1995 Data set provided by SPSS (the most recent data set available). This data set includes the following countries in Latin America: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The following countries are included under the Pacific/Asia category: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. I consider those facets of Asian and Latin American countries that appear to be the most salient to foreign military interventions—factors which ultimately indicate internal stability. Perhaps the most telling contributors to a region's stability are its development, education, income, and health conditions.

Urbanity (operationally defined as percent of people living in cities) and gross domestic product/per capita serve as indicators of development and/or wealth. Literacy (percent of people who read) signifies a population's level of education. Daily caloric intake, birth to death ratio, and infant mortality are all operationally defined reflections of the health conditions in Asia and Latin America.

An Independent Samples T-Test was used to compare these conditions.

Table 2.1 summarizes this comparison.

Table 2.1**Independent Samples T-Test**

Variables	Region	N	Mean	T	Df	Significance (2-tailed)
People living in cities (%)	PA	17	44.76	-2.09	25.7	.047
	LA	21	61.38			
People who read (%)	PA	17	72.94	-1.44	23.3	.165
	LA	21	82.67			
Gross domestic product/capita	PA	17	4263.00	1.452	17.442	.164
	LA	21	1997.67			
Daily calorie intake	PA	11	2514.27	.109	28	.914
	LA	19	2500.16			
Birth to death ratio	PA	16	3.18	-2.06	35	.047
	LA	21	4.10			
Infant mortality (deaths per 1000 live births)	PA	17	53.88	1.18	23.10	.248
	LA	21	39.11			

The findings of the t-test for equality of means show similarity between Latin America and Asia in four of the six areas. There is no significant difference in literacy levels ($p=.136$), gross domestic product/per capita ($p=.118$), daily caloric intake ($p=.914$), or infant mortality rates ($p=.216$) between Asian and Latin American countries. There are, however, differences in the urbanism ($p=.04$) and birth to death rates ($p=.05$) of these countries. For all six of the variables, Colombia's mean is less than one standard deviation from the regional averages of Latin America, indicating that Colombia is "typical" of this region.

Based on these t-tests, Latin America and Asia can be considered (for the purpose of research comparison) similar in regard to wealth (GDP/per capita), education (literacy rates), and health conditions (infant mortality and caloric intake). While some important differences do exist, there are enough similarities in the development, education, income, and health conditions of the two regions to justify further comparison.

Considering that important internal conditions of the Asian and the Latin American regions are reasonably similar, one may logically expect similar reactions in both areas to foreign military intervention. Unfortunately, foreign military intervention is never that simple. Differences in the context of the intervention (i.e. goals, strategies, and tactics), technology (type of warfare), and the international environment all create a strong chance that interventions in Asia and interventions in Latin America will differ significantly. That notwithstanding, the independent samples tests remain valuable because they give some credence to the an argument that any differences in outcomes are due to variations in strategies used by the intervener (the U.S.).

Chapter 3: Foreign Military Intervention and its Applicability

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman define intervention as: “to interfere usually by force or the threat of force in another nation’s internal affairs” (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 5). Essentially, intervention is an effort to change the domestic affairs of the state. The authors continue:

In foreign military interventions the objective is less to control the territory than shape... ‘the political authority structure’ of the target state. This is to be done in large part coercively, but nevertheless indirectly, through a local ally who is to be assisted in gaining or maintaining power. (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.6)

The objectives of Plan Colombia certainly conform to the authors’ definition of military intervention. According to the United States Institute for Peace Library’s text of Plan Colombia, the United States’ objectives in Colombia are: to increase support for human rights and judicial reform, to pursue the expansion of counter-narcotics operations into Southern Colombia, to develop alternative economic development programs and institute such programs in Ecuador and Bolivia as well as Colombia, to instigate increased interdiction efforts, and to provide assistance for the Colombian National Police (United States. Institute for Peace Library. 2000).

Granting, then, that Plan Colombia is a prime example of foreign military intervention, it is also crucial to distinguish between two types of such interventions: quick-decisive and protracted. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) clarify the distinction between protracted and quick-decisive military interventions. The discrepancy can be operationalized in terms of three descriptive factors. First, the

duration of military intervention (as measured from the introduction of combat troops to their final withdrawal or draw-down to pre-intervention levels of noncombat stationed forces), second, the severity of the intervention (as measured by casualties suffered by the intervener), and finally, the net outcome (in terms both of the intervener's intended vs. realized objectives, and of the costs he incurred) (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.10).

At this point it is important to note that an analysis of Plan Colombia as it meets criteria for foreign military intervention is a highly qualified study. Since the plan's intended duration is six years, conclusions drawn concerning its efficacy and the likelihood of its becoming protracted will be based on its progress to date and in comparison to case studies provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman.

Broadly speaking, the study of foreign military intervention is worthwhile for several reasons. The authors note that the rationale for studying foreign military intervention is essentially twofold. The salience of the phenomenon is the first reason to study foreign military intervention. When foreign military interventions become protracted they tend to be seminal events, involving considerable investment of human and material resources and affecting the fate of individual leaders as well as the political, social, and economic fortunes of both the intervening and target countries. Second, quite often their consequences transcend bilateral context and reverberate throughout the regional and even international setting (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.11).

A study of Plan Colombia's potential for protraction is especially valuable. Foreign military intervention has persisted over time despite the widespread belief that it was strictly a phenomenon of the Cold War era. While several studies have proven that foreign military interventions were undertaken with remarkable frequency during the Cold War period, this can only be partially attributed to certain

specific characteristic of that era. For example, the nuclear balance is often cited as an instigator and facilitator of military intervention (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 13). Another factor was the end of colonialism and the creation of new nation-states. As the number of nation-states grew, so too did the number of opportunities for intervention. Additionally, the difficulties inherent to the beginning stages of nation-building (including economic development, the establishment of infrastructure, and the effort to eradicate poverty) translated to instability for those new nations. This instability, in turn, made them especially vulnerable to intervention (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 13). Yet despite the atmosphere of the Cold War, which seemed to breed opportunities for foreign military intervention, the phenomenon is not strictly limited to the past. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman argue its universality. According to the authors, foreign military interventions qualify as those phenomena endemic in the quasi-anarchic nature of the international system, irrespective of its particular structure and the particular types of domestic political systems of its major actors. And while no definitive answer can be given to the question of the frequency at which foreign military interventions might recur now that the Cold War is finally over, there does not appear to be sufficient reason to believe that the future will be any different from the past. They have more to do with the capabilities to intervene, which always have been there and are likely to increase in the future, and with opportunities to do so. Both have been present within all past system structures—and...are likely to be so within any future system structure (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.15).

More importantly, a study of foreign military intervention is both generalizable and applicable to Plan Colombia. In the scenarios they examine, Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) provide patterns of foreign military intervention, inclusion with variation, and structure and focus.

First, as a comparative study, the authors are able to identify patterns rather than just single-case phenomenon. The existing body of empirical research consists mainly of single-case studies. While these may have considerable virtues (most notably depth and richness of detail) they suffer from profound limitations. For the purposes of theory building, single-case studies tend to overemphasize the unique features of each case (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 15).

Second, the cases Levite, Jentleson, and Berman examine are limited in their type to protracted military intervention but inclusive of substantial variations in regard to the who, what, where, why, and how (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 15). Thus the case studies maintain a degree of uniformity while simultaneously encompassing a broad spectrum of unique situations.

Finally, there is both a structuring and a focusing to the design of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's (1992) study. The authors structure their study using three analytic stages—getting in, staying in, and getting out. The focusing centers around a common set of questions asked of each case at each stage of three levels of analysis: the international system, the domestic context of the intervening state, and the 'indigenous terrain' of the target state (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.16).

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman provide a credible model of protracted foreign military intervention with which to analyze Plan Colombia. Using the criteria extracted from their generalizations (goals, assessments, strategies, obstacles, and outcomes), we may begin our application of Plan Colombia to these tenets.

Chapter 4: Criteria

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) provide three criteria with which to classify foreign military intervention: the intervener's goals, the elites' assessments, and the military strategy. Each criterion is further divided into subcategories. We begin our application of Plan Colombia to the model of foreign military intervention with an examination of the United States' goals.

Goals

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) structure their analysis to examine the overarching goals of the intervening state along two dimensions. First, the authors determine whether the goals were reputational (stemming from a state's desire to project an image of resolve into the international community) or intrinsic in nature (stemming from a state's primary security concerns—the safety of its borders, the stability and political orientation of neighboring states, and the maintenance of a non-threatening regional environment). Second, Levite, Jentleson, and Berman classify the goals as either defensive or offensive in orientation. Defensive goals are aimed at preserving the status quo in the target state; offensive goals, at altering the status quo in the target state (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.248).

A look at the strategic objectives of Plan Colombia reveals that the United States has both intrinsic and offensive goals. Adam Isacson (2000), in "Getting in Deeper: The United States' Growing Involvement in Colombia's Conflict," vocalizes the opinion of a strong anti-intervention faction of U.S. and Colombian citizens. According to these groups, the new assistance will arrive in a country fighting one of the world's longest, most complicated, and most brutal conflicts. In Colombia, violence is generalized across many zones, many combatants and an overwhelming civilian death toll exists. Yet the United States is headed right into

the thick of this war. Isacson maintains:

Totaling about \$65 million in 1996, assistance more than quadrupled by 1999 to just under \$300 million and will reach about \$1 billion in 2000. The aid is undergoing a qualitative change as well, from a focus on Colombia's national police to an approach centered on the armed forces....The proposed new aid would intensify all these efforts, with the largest set of initiatives—categorized as “the push into Southern Colombia coca-growing areas”—designed to prepare the U.S. created army battalions to operate in a known guerrilla stronghold.

(Isacson 2000, p.2)

Clearly the United States is focused on creating and maintaining a non-threatening regional environment. Rafeal Pardo (2000), in “Colombia's Two Front War,” highlights the volatility of Colombia's crisis for the entire region: “[I]n addition to battling the government, the guerrillas kidnap neighboring Venezuelans and Ecuadorians; the paramilitaries smuggle weapons from bases along the Panamanian border; and hundreds of citizens from foreign countries are taken hostage annually” (Pardo 2000, 64). An inherent intrinsic goal of Plan Colombia is to stabilize all of Latin America. Moreover, there is a growing fear, even among Colombia's government officials, that the crisis could spread to the surrounding countries. These nations (specifically Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela, and Panama) are all newly established democracies and cannot afford to risk their fragile democratic infrastructures as insurgencies continue in Colombia (“Hard Questions About the Coming War in Colombia” 1999, 1).

Of course, the United States' interest is not purely global in its nature. The US has, as a priority, its own security concerns—specifically as they relate to the rising level of drug trafficking. Plan Colombia mandates an elimination and replacement of coca crops. The ultimate goal of the US, is of course, decreased levels of drugs entering the United States, and consequently, a decline in the amount of drug use among US citizens. The Center for International Policy's "Just the Facts: Colombia Project" (2001) explains the U.S.'s objectives:

In response to Plan Colombia, and in consultation with the Colombian Government [sic], President Clinton has signed legislation providing a \$1.3 billion package of assistance to Colombia. Adding to previously approved U.S. assistance to Colombia of over \$330 million, the legislation provides \$818 million as an emergency supplemental for Fiscal Year 2000 and \$256 million in additional funding for Fiscal Year 2001. The U.S. assistance package will help Colombia address the breadth of challenges it faces—its efforts to fight the illicit drug trade, to increase the rule of law, to protect human rights, to expand economic development, to institute judicial reform, and to foster peace. (United States. Center for International Policy. 2001)

Because the United States has drafted and approved Plan Colombia with intrinsic goals in mind, the likelihood of protracted foreign military intervention is great. Isacson (2000) argues that although the more distant future is impossible to predict, one depressing trend seems certain: no matter what happens in Colombia, the amount of military aid is very likely to increase. He proposes that as the United

States becomes more involved, either success or failure can be used to justify greater aid and greater involvement. If coca cultivation drops, he argues, U.S. officials will call for an intensification of the successful strategy. If drug production grows or the counternarcotics battalions suffer defeats, Washington's drug warriors will call for a redoubling of efforts. If current trends continue, Colombia heads the list of candidates for the first U.S. military quagmire of the twenty-first century (Isacson 2000, 11). This is particularly true because the intrinsic goals of Plan Colombia are so difficult to achieve.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) suggest the inherent dangers of intrinsic goals, as illustrated by other cases of foreign military intervention. The authors found that, in the other cases they studied, the initial decision to intervene was based primarily on intrinsic interests. The South Africans, Indians, Soviets, Syrians, and Israelis were all seeking to address security problems stemming from continuing conflicts in neighboring states, and while reputational concerns were by no means absent, but they did not assume importance until after military operations had begun. As dominant regional powers, each of these states was concerned about demonstrating its will and ability to influence the outcome of local conflicts. As is often the case in foreign policy, once the commitment to secure a specific outcome had been publicly set forth, fulfilling that commitment became an end in itself (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.248). Thus, the United States' military involvement in Colombia may well become a matter of reputation as well as achieving its intrinsic goals.

Equally important are the United States' offensive goals (or those which are aimed at altering the status quo in Colombia). The second of the U.S.'s six stated objectives in Plan Colombia is designed to significantly change the country's infrastructure via reform of the justice system and protection of human rights. As

stated in the text of Plan Colombia, Colombia and the United States are committed to building a fair and effective justice system. Reforms will ensure that it is transparent, accessible, and independent, as effective reform is a key element in restoring public confidence in the state. The government will ensure that these increased efforts to combat drugs and armed groups will not be undertaken at the expense of the protection of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. In order to address this priority, Colombia will strengthen domestic and multilateral law enforcement initiatives, including multilateral investigations and joint training, and effective protection for witnesses and judicial officials: extradite international criminals in accordance with domestic and international law, improve the prison system to meet international security standards (including adequate facilities and a well-trained and professional staff): and extend multilateral initiatives to control and seize shipments of chemical precursors.

Under the guidance of the United States, Colombia will also work toward the promotion, respect and protection of human rights. Colombia's government has pledged, under the coordination of the office of the Vice-President, to make a total commitment to the protection and materialization of fundamental rights, in accordance with its obligations under international treaties and pacts. As stated in the text of Plan Colombia, the government is complying with its international commitments by inculcating a deeper understanding of human rights through the media, and through the application of an educational model for use in the Armed Forces, with political and material support for the work of the human rights units and training for journalists in human rights and International Humanitarian Law. Moreover, the Colombian government is working in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia. One tangible effect of this collaboration is that the government has embarked on a strategy against

impunity. Various inter-institutional committees have been created in the last year to press for the investigation and punishment of the most severe cases of human rights abuse. In 2000, the government established a Standing Commission on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Even more, the Colombian government has already presented bills to Congress, which will legislate against disappearances and crimes against humanity and ratification of the International Criminal Court. Finally, there is a strategy to protect those who work in defense of human rights through the support of the Witnesses and Threatened Persons Program, and a Presidential order requires that all public officials protect human rights workers and support their work and that of NGO's (United States. Institute for Peace Library. 2000)

"The Peace Process in Colombia," an overview of Plan Colombia published by the Center for International Policy (2000) further explains that Plan Colombia would require the Secretary of State to notify Congress about, and to cut off funding for, Colombian military units that provide material support to paramilitary or narco-trafficking groups, even if gross human rights violations are not a direct result. It would also authorize \$100 million to assist Colombia's judicial system, government human rights institutions, non-governmental human rights organizations, and internally displaced populations (United States. Center for International Policy. 2000.).

A brief synopsis of the objectives in Plan Colombia reveals both an attempt to stabilize that region, protect American interests, and to alter the internal environment of Colombia. In short, the United States' goals, as expressed in Plan Colombia are both intrinsic and offensive. Thus, Plan Colombia meets the first requirement of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's protracted foreign military intervention model.

Elite Assessments

The second criterion supplied by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman in *Foreign Military Intervention* (1992) is the elites' assessments. The authors maintain that a state's decision to intervene is based upon several key projections about how the conflict is likely to proceed. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman focus on a set of initial assumptions held by elites when they make the critical decision to engage their own military forces. Drawing on the experiences in other examples of foreign military intervention, the authors distinguish three crucial elite assessments: that the balance of power would favor the intervening state, that the local ally would serve as a reliable political and military partner, and that the intervention would not fundamentally alter the political landscape in the target state, except as intended by the intervener (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 256).

The first assumption is as follows:

Given that the intervention, by definition, occurs on the adversary's territory, it is somewhat surprising that the intervening state regularly considered the balance of resolve to be in its favor. Intuition suggests and the case studies confirm that resolve usually favors the side defending its own territory. (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.256)

This first assumption is particularly relevant as the United States has begun what it calls the "push into Southern Colombia," a targeted approach of aerial eradication programs and troop deployment to Putumayo (in Southern Colombia). Putumayo is, arguably, one of Colombia's most volatile regions—it is a stronghold

of the FARC. The Center for International Policy Report (2000) notes that the goal of the new Colombian Army counternarcotics battalions is to establish the security conditions necessary for the implementation of counter-drug programs such as fumigation and alternative development in Putumayo. One can expect that “establishing security conditions” will involve the first major armed confrontations between the new U.S.-aided military units and the FARC guerrillas. As such, administration officials have sought to ease concerns that the “push into southern Colombia” will inadvertently involve the United States in Colombia’s civil conflict. In several congressional hearing statements during the spring of 2000, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict Brian Sheridan asserted that the Pentagon would not cross the line into an anti-guerrilla mission. Yet, many remain concerned that this aid package represents a step over the line—an encroachment into the realm of counterinsurgency in the name of counternarcotics. Consider that armed groups’ resistance to the U.S.-funded strategy is nonetheless likely, and Colombia’s FARC guerrillas have already declared U.S. trainers to be “military targets.” In fact, the move has already proven more dangerous than initially thought. In November 2000, U.S. and Colombian officials decided to delay the launch of the “push into southern Colombia” from December 2000 to January 2001, contributing to concerns that security conditions in Putumayo were worse than planners had anticipated. Critics like House International Relations Committee Chairman Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-New York) warn that the U.S.-funded battalions may fail in the face of guerrilla resistance (United States. Center for International Policy. 2000).

As recent events in the heavy coca-growing Putumayo area in the south of Colombia show, it is evident that the Colombian army is incapable of controlling any of this guerilla and coca-infested territory now, or anytime soon. Certainly,

three new U.S. trained counter-narcotics battalions (as mandated in Plan Colombia) will not change this major imbalance on the battlefield. It is easy to predict that the start of army-supported eradication operations there will continue to be interminably delayed or that these operations will be reduced in scope to only small “showcase” interdiction or manual eradication operations with no real aerial eradication against the industrial-size coca plots (United States. Center for International Policy. 2000).

Nonetheless, Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) explain that because often the intervening state (in this case, the United States) has as a goal to neutralize—and not destroy—the adversary (in this case, the FARC), elites consistently assume that their forces would be capable of outlasting the enemy: “If the intervener believes that he has superior resolve, and identifies breaking the will of the adversary as his goal, he also believes that military victory will be attainable” (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 256). It is this assumption which drives the United States military support for Plan Colombia.

The second elite assessment is an assumption that the local allies would serve as reliable political/military partners. In this case, the United States’ policy-makers are predicated Plan Colombia on the assumption that the Colombian National Police and the Colombian Armed Forces will act as reliable political and military partners. The U.S. assistance package includes \$115.6 million to support the Colombian National Police. A breakdown of those funds provided by the Center for International Policy (2001) allots \$26 million for procurement, training and support for two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters; \$20.6 million for 12 UH-1H Huey II helicopters; and \$20 million for the purchase of Ayers S2R T-65 agricultural spray aircraft and OV-10 aircraft. Additionally, funds are designated for ammunition, spare parts, training, and logistical support. The following pages provide charts of the designation of U.S. funds, as mandated by Plan Colombia:

TABLE 4.1

Appropriations of Foreign Grant Monies as Mandated in Plan Colombia, 1996-

2000

Program	1996 actual	1997 actual	1998 actual	1999 actual	2000 actual
<u>International Narcotics Control</u>					
Funding of equipment, training, eradication and other programs of the State's Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL)	\$16,000,000	\$33,450,000	\$57,000,000	\$205,860,000	\$894,429,000
<u>International Military Education and Training</u>					
Funding for courses given both in the U.S. and in-country by U.S. personnel	\$147,000; 32 students	\$0; 0 students	\$885,000; 261 students	\$917,000 611 students	\$900,000 763 students
• <u>Expanded IMET</u> A subset of IMET, pays for training in non-combat topics	\$50,679; 3 students, 0 civilians	\$0	\$316,814; 163 students		
<u>Emergency Drawdowns</u>					
Presidential authority to grant defense equipment from U.S. arsenal	\$40,500,000	\$14,200,000	\$41,100,000	\$58,000,000	\$0
<u>Section 1004 Counterdrug</u>					
Training, equipment upgrades and other services provided by the Department of Defense for counternarcotics		\$10,321,000	\$11,775,000	\$35,887,000	\$85,900,000
<u>Section 1033 Counterdrug</u>					
River-based counternarcotics training, equipment and other services provided by the Department of Defense	\$0	\$0	\$2,172,000	\$12,623,000	\$24,630,000
<u>Excess Defense Articles</u>	\$7,591	\$91,950	\$1,208,634	\$23,565	\$641,604
Used and surplus arms and equipment					
<u>ONDCP discretionary funds</u>					
Counternarcotics support from the White House's Office for National Drug Control Policy	\$0	\$500,000			

<u>Foreign Military</u>	\$70,000 pre-1992 MAP funds;			
<u>Financing</u>	\$7,131,000 counternarcotics FMF.			
Grants and loans for	Note: A <u>special presidential waiver</u>	\$0	\$440,788	\$24,524
defense articles, training	in August 1997 released unspent			
and services.	FMF valued at up to \$30,000,000.			

Approximate total police and military aid	\$86,562,950	\$110,232,000	\$305,777,788	\$797,884,524
Approximate number of trainees		At least 1,214	2,476	

Source: Center for International Policy, <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/co.htm>, 2000

TABLE 4.2**Appropriations of Military Sales as Mandated in Plan Colombia, 1996-2000**

Program	1996 actual	1997 actual	1998 actual	1999 actual	2000 esti
<u>Foreign Military Sales</u>					
Government-to-government sales	\$10,056,000	\$74,987,000	\$8,653,000	\$3,420,000	\$252,000,
of defense articles, training and					
services	<u>\$45,822,000</u>	<u>\$21,155,000</u>	<u>\$68,226,000</u>		
	\$9,146,000	\$0	\$2,034,000	\$1,099,000	\$100,000,
	<u>\$19,425,000</u>	<u>\$6,935,000</u>	<u>\$8,748,000</u>		
	(Deliveries)	(Deliveries)	(Deliveries)		
	<u>\$27,934,542</u>	<u>\$46,661,336</u>	<u>\$79,808,925</u>		
	(Licenses)	(Licenses)	(Licenses)		
<u>Direct Commercial Sales</u>					
Sales from U.S. companies					
licensed by the U.S. government	\$5,536,000	\$39,174,331	\$5,216,867	\$996,000	\$10,458,0

Source: Center for International Policy, <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/co.htm>, 2000

TABLE 4.3
Appropriations of Foreign Training Programs as Mandated in Plan Colombia,
1996-1999

Program	Training Institutions			
	1996 actual	1997 actual	1998 actual	1999 actual
School of the Americas				
The U.S. Army's Spanish-language training school for Latin American militaries	139 students; 15.2% of total	99 students; 11.6% of total	67 students; 8.2% of total	150 students
Navy Small Craft and Technical Training School				
The U.S. Navy's Spanish-language training school for Latin American militaries			13 students	
Inter-American Air Forces Academy				
The U.S. Air Force's Spanish-language training school for Latin American militaries	92 students; 14.6% of total	128 students; 14.5% of total	98 students; 10.8% of total	
Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies				
Defense Department initiative to improve civilians' defense planning and management skills	0	0	7 students	6 students

Source: Center for International Policy, <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/co.htm>, 2000

Judging by the allotment of military aid, the United States is certainly making the assumption that Colombia's Armed Forces and the Colombian National Police are viable allies. According to the Center for International Policy's "Just the Facts: Colombia Project" (2001), the International Narcotics Control (INC) Program is the largest single source of U.S. assistance to Colombia. The program's budget totaled approximately \$203 million in 1999, with about \$195 million designated for Colombia's security forces. Specifically, the Colombian National Police (CNP)—particularly, its Anti-Narcotics Directorate (DANTI)—has been the United States' chief partner on eradication and other anti-narcotics missions. Support for the DANTI is "the primary focus" of the INC program. Additional recipients of INC aid include other CNP elements, the National Narcotics Directorate (DNE), the National Plan for Alternative Development (PLANTE), elements of Colombia's military that are involved in counternarcotics, and other Colombian government entities, such as the Civil Aviation Administration (United States. Center for International Policy. 2001).

The assumption that Colombia's National Police and the Colombian Armed Forces will act as responsible and capable allies is, in fact, a dangerous one. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) found that in their cases elites in the intervening state believed that the ally would consolidate its political position once the military threat had been neutralized. They failed to see that the ally's instability was chronic, and not simply a function of the ongoing civil strife (Levite et al. 1992, 256). A similar situation may well arise in Colombia. This begs the question: have insurgent groups crippled what would otherwise be adequate forces or has the CNP been unsuccessful in its previous attempts at anti-narcotics measures because it is organizationally inept? The following chapter will shed light on this question.

The third and final criterion provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman is an elite assumption that the intervention would not fundamentally alter the political landscape, except as intended by the intervener (1992, 256). Clearly, Plan Colombia is broad in its scope—it is an attempt to drastically change Colombia’s internal environment, while simultaneously maintaining and strengthening the existing political infrastructures.

Unfortunately, more often than not, the assumption that this is possible is simplistic at best. After examining the recovery period in several case studies of foreign military intervention, The researchers found that the target states had undergone far more changes than those initially anticipated, including undermining the confidence of the citizens in their government, and establishing the legitimacy in military capability of the destabilizing group (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.257). The authors provide, for example, the case of South Africa. The country’s reputation in “Black Africa” made its intervention in Angola rather risky. When Indian troops intervened in Sri Lanka (to disarm Tamil militants), they ended up fighting against Sinhalese troops—a completely different faction who had come to resent the Indian presence in Sri Lanka. In all of these cases, the researchers conclude, the intervener failed to appreciate the effect that its presence would have on the ongoing domestic turmoil (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 257).

The United States’ goals to alter the landscape in Colombia are lofty. The five components of U.S. assistance are: support for human rights and judicial reform, expansion of counter-narcotics operations into Southern Colombia, alternative economic development, increased interdiction efforts, and assistance for the Colombian National Police and Colombian Armed Forces (United States. Center for International Policy. 2001).

The first alteration, support for human rights and judicial reform, is premised on the hope of strengthening the rule of law in Colombia. A Fact Sheet released by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (2000) states:

Specific initiatives include protecting human rights non-governmental organizations (\$4 million), strengthening human rights institutions (\$7 million), establishing human rights units within the Colombian National Police and the Fiscalía (\$25 million), training judges and prosecutors (\$7.5 million), as well as funding to train and support Colombian law enforcement personnel in anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, and anti-kidnapping measures. (United States. Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs. 2000)

The second element of Plan Colombia, expansion of counter-narcotics operations into Southern Colombia, includes important humanitarian assistance and development components. Approximately \$15 million will be allotted to help persons displaced by conflict in the region. This funding is in addition to funds previously provided by the U.S. government to international organizations (the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to assist internally displaced persons in Colombia. This component of the funding provides \$10 million for developmental assistance, including technical and agricultural assistance to farmers in Southern Colombia (United States. Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs. 2000).

A third element of Plan Colombia is alternative economic development programs. The U.S. assistance package will provide \$81 million to assist small

farmers who now grow coca and opium poppies make the transition to legal economic activity as interdiction and eradication make narcotics farming less profitable. The funds bolster monies provided for alternative development by the Colombian government's "Push into Southern Colombia." The breakdown of funds is as follows: \$22.5 million to assist internally displaced persons, \$12 million in assistance to local governments, \$30 million for voluntary eradication programs, and \$2.5 million for environmental programs to protect watersheds and fragile lands. Additionally, funds have been made available for alternative and economic development in Bolivia (\$85 million) and Ecuador (\$8 million) (United States. Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs. 2000).

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (2000) explains the fourth alteration in Plan Colombia, increased interdiction efforts. The assistance package provides \$129.4 million to enhance U.S. and Colombian narcotics interdiction efforts. Approximately \$68 million, the majority of the funds, are dedicated to upgrading the radar systems in four U.S. Customs Service P-3 airborne early warning interdiction aircraft which are used to detect and monitor suspect targets destined for the United States from cocaine source zones. About \$16.9 million has been made available to upgrade the Colombian air interdiction programs, while \$14 million is devoted to support and provision Colombia's riverine interdiction program, and \$1 million to support the Colombian Navy's counternarcotics intelligence infrastructure. In addition, \$18 million has been made available to support interdiction programs in other countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean, as well as Bolivia and Ecuador. (United States. Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs. 2000)

The fifth and final component of Plan Colombia is assistance for the Colombian National Police and the Colombian Armed Forces. Before 1999, when

Ernesto Samper was Colombia's president, about 90 percent of U.S. assistance went to the Colombian National Police. The mid-1998 election of President Andres Pastrana resulted in closer relations between Washington and Bogota. A by-product of those new relations was greater collaboration with Colombia's troubled military, an institution plagued by battlefield defeats and far more allegations of corruption, impunity, and human rights abuse than the Colombian National Police. Adam Isacson (2000), in "Getting in Deeper: The United States' Growing Involvement in Colombia's Conflict," reports:

A December 1998 meeting between U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen and his counterpart at the time, Colombian Defense Minister Rodrigo Lloreda, laid the groundwork for the expansion in U.S.-Colombian military cooperation. The best known (and most expensive) part of this effort is the creation of three 950-man "counternarcotics battalions" within the Colombian Army, though cooperation also includes a riverine program for the Colombian Navy and a series of aircraft and base improvements for the Air Force. The United States has also liberalized guidelines for sharing intelligence with the Colombian military, and is assisting a military reform effort. The proposed new aid would intensify all these efforts, with the largest set of initiatives—categorized as "the push into Southern Colombia coca-growing areas"—designed to prepare the U.S.-created army battalions to operate in a known guerilla stronghold. (Isacson 2000, p.2)

Plan Colombia will further increase efforts at military reform. The U.S. Southern Command (SouthCom) is attempting to help restructure Colombia's army. These reforms, according to SouthCom's General Wilhelm, will help to "transition the Colombian Army from its defensive mindset, forge a better union with the National Police, and improve its overall CD [counter-drug] capabilities" (United States Department of Defense. 1998). The U.S. sends deployments—Military Information Support Teams (MISTs), Joint Planning Assistance Teams (JPATs), and Operational Planning Missions (OPMs)—in addition to consultation and informal advice with Southcom and the country team at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota to offer management advice, planning, and intelligence assistance—all of which are designed to make the army more effective.

Plan Colombia entails a broad spectrum of goals for the country's internal landscape—from human rights reform, to military assistance, to crop eradication and replacement. Certainly, the U.S. hopes to alter Colombia's political landscape. The implications of these changes, however, will undoubtedly be far-reaching, if not unexpected.

Strategy

The third and final criterion provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) of protracted military intervention is military strategy. The author's define strategy as: "the preparation and use of military power to serve political ends" (265). Strategy is further divided into three tasks: understanding performance, assessing relative strength, and determining the larger purpose for which military forces are being used.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman explain the first task of strategy. The first and foremost problem faced by military organizations is understanding their

performance. It is important to remember that military effectiveness is a matter of relative, not absolute capabilities. Some military organizations may be more adaptable than others, but it is rare to find an army that is omniscient. As an example, if a force has been equipped and trained for intense armored warfare in Europe it is probably not as ready for guerrilla warfare in the jungle, and vice versa. And, in fact, in the cases that the authors examined, conventional forces were often being used in fighting that turned to guerrilla-style conflict for which they were ill-suited (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.266).

The second task of strategy is assessment of the forces' relative strength. This can be a particularly difficult job, as the two sides involved in the conflict are new opponents. That notwithstanding, the first battles of a military are of particular importance because they compose the crucial point at which an effective military must evaluate its tactics. In peacetime, fundamental flaws in training, officer selection, tactics, or the style of command can be concealed or underestimated. War, of course, is the most honest audit of any military force:

For this reason the first battles of a military intervention are of particular importance, at least if an army is capable of looking at itself and adapting to what it finds....Occasionally, however, an initial performance may be misleadingly good—making an army think that its prewar tactics and command system are better suited to war than they really are....First battles have a way of creating impressions on both sides in a war that can last a very long time. But it is important to understand just how variable military effectiveness may be over time and unit types. (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.269)

Making firm judgments about an opponent on the basis of initial engagements, then, is inherently dangerous. It is almost impossible to measure strategic effectiveness in the early stages of battle because the performance of military organizations in combat may be much harder to assess than is often thought.

Determining the larger purpose for which military forces are being used presents an even more serious problem. While most strategic analyses hold the political objective as a constant (e.g. to force acceptance of another states' independence, to cease armed resistance, or to evict an opponent from given territory), objectives are inherently ambiguous, dynamic, and complex (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 269). This is particularly true in foreign military intervention because unlike classical confrontations between two states, wars of intervention create particularly complicated sets of political objectives for the intervening power. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman note that in many cases they mandate goals that are difficult to put into operation (e.g., the creation of a stable government) and have a peculiarly open-ended quality. As previously discussed, the authors found that for any intervening power, one political objective that usually insinuates itself into war was prestige, the desire to come out of a conflict with its reputation for effectiveness as a power still intact. In addition, if casualties were suffered, it became necessary to justify the losses of those who have borne the battle (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.269).

While this will not prevent a country from liquidating an expensive military commitment, it will shape the kind of destruction inflicted in the latter stages of conflict, the willingness to maintain lower levels of commitments of personnel and resources even after the fighting has ended, and the general conduct of a war. Thus, even if the end game (the liquidation of the intervention) becomes known, its nature

is heavily influenced by the progress of the middle game (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 269).

In short, an evaluation of wins and losses under the lens provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman is almost impossible. The authors argue that the closer one looks at any given intervention, the more he/she finds nuanced, complicated, and difficultly-defined political objectives. Rather than drawing conclusions on the strength of forces too early in the military game, the researchers suggest analysts should focus on the amount of time that elapses before a client caves in, the amount of damage that appears to be inflicted on an opponent, the degree of losses suffered, and/or the dignity (or lack thereof) in withdrawal during the latter phases of an intervention (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 270).

While giving the proper credence to the recommendations of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman, an initial evaluation of the U.S. military strategy in Colombia remains valuable. The key components of this strategy include: U.S. operational presence in Colombia, aerial eradication, counternarcotics battalions, a riverine program, airforce assistance, intelligence-sharing, training and exercises, and arms transfers. The Center for International Policy's "The Peace Process in Colombia" (2000) expounds on each tenet:

Operational Presence in Colombia

Approximately 250 to 300 military personnel—mostly Special Operations Forces—are in Colombia on any given day. The Department of Defense maintains that they do not accompany Colombian forces in military operations against armed groups or drug traffickers. Instead, these forces carry out training or fulfill counter-drug detection, monitoring, and intelligence-gathering missions, most of them confidential.

Aerial Eradication

The International Narcotics Control (INC) program supports a large aerial eradication program under the management of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). United States contractor pilots fumigated over 65,000 hectares (160, 618 acres) of coca in 1998 through the use of State Department-owned T-65 and OV-10 "Bronco" spray planes. Approximately between eighty and ninety percent of contract personnel are stationed in Colombia either temporarily or permanently. This aerial eradication program is estimated to have cost as much as \$68 million in 1999, which is an increase of about 350 percent over the \$19.6 million spent in 1996. Colombian guerilla groups are present in most of the areas being fumigated, and as such, the program involves some risk. General Barry R. McCaffrey, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (1999) reported that aircraft on spray operations were hit by hostile fire, most of it small-arms fire, fifty-one times in 1997 and forty-eight times in 1998 (United States. Senate. 1999d). For their protection, U.S.-funded Colombian police plains and helicopters now escort the contract pilots on their spray missions.

Counternarcotics Battalions

U.S. funding helped the Colombian Army to create, equip, and train a 950-man mobile counternarcotics battalion in 1999. General Wilhelm of the U.S. Southern Command described the Colombian Army's First Counternarcotics Battalion at a June 1999 Senate committee hearing:

This battalion is a highly mobile unit, designed from the ground up to work with the Colombian National Police, or other Colombian Army units, or independently, taking the fight to traffickers in the

safe havens of southeastern Colombia where the majority of cocaine production takes place. SouthCom is working closely with the Colombian Armed Forces providing them guidance, advice, and training, as they develop these new, important and very relevant capabilities. (United States. Senate. 1999c)

According to a June 1999 report by the General Accounting Office of the U.S. Congress, SouthCom predicts that this troop would require more than \$70 million worth of equipment and training to become fully operational. The battalion is set to receive eighteen UH-1N utility helicopters which the United States recently repurchased from Canada.

The unit's training was estimated to cost 3 to 4 million dollars in 1999, and is carried out by the U.S. Army's Seventh Special Forces Group at the Tolémaida garrison in the Tolima department. Including among training topics are intelligence, reconnaissance, indirect fire, light infantry tactics, medical skills, and human rights.

A provision that allows for the Pentagon to use its own budget to offer some forms of counternarcotics assistance (authorized by Section 1004 of the 1991 National Defense Authorization Act) pays for most of the battalion's counternarcotics training and other Colombian military units. Over thirty military teams, composed mostly of Special Forces, were deployed to Colombia in 1999 to train more than 1,500 members of the Colombian Armed Forces. This training included light infantry training for counter-drug field operations, riverine craft handling and safety, and helicopter familiarization.

Over the next few years, U.S. funding will pay for additional counternarcotics battalions. Plan Colombia includes further funds for two more battalions. General Wilhelm of SouthCom said in September 1999 that he will

“encourage Colombia’s military leaders to expand the concept and create a counter-drug brigade. The average Colombian army brigade has eight battalions” (United States. Senate. 1999c).

Riverine Program

As authorized by Section 1033 of the 1998 National Defense Authorization Act, a riverine counter-drug program will use defense budget funds to improve the Colombian Navy’s ability to control traffic on rivers. This program (which will run from 1998 to 2002) works mainly in the Amazon basin area of Southern Colombia, where coca is grown and guerillas are numerous.

The program pays for spare parts, infrastructure improvements, and training for Riverine Combat Elements (RCEs). Additionally, it has helped the Colombian Navy create a new Riverine Brigade. In 1998, President Pastrana personally activated the new Riverine Brigade and its five battalions. Earlier, the Colombian Navy launched its first indigenous support or “mothership.” The program spent approximately \$11 million in Section 1033-authorized funds.

Navy Assistance

One element of U.S. support for Colombia’s Air Force is a program to upgrade its fleet of A-37 “Dragonfly” intercept aircraft. The Dragonfly, according to a U.S. Air Force website, is “intended for use in counterinsurgency operations” (United States. Air Force. 2001). The State Department INC program contributed \$14 million in “Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act” funds to the A-37 upgrade effort in 1999. According to the Pentagon drug policy director, Brian Sheridan, the Defense Department spent an additional \$7 million in 1999--\$5 million in upgrades and \$2 million on A-37 training for Colombian pilots (United States. Senate. 1999b).

Intelligence Sharing

The United States supported the establishment of a Colombian Joint Intelligence Center (JIC), which is based in Tres Esquinas alongside the Army counternarcotics battalion, in an effort to improve information sharing between Colombian police and military units. Personnel for the center underwent training and the facility became operational in December of 1999.

Certain circumstances dictate that the U.S. may share intelligence with the Colombian military and police. Previously, United States officials avoided transferring intelligence about guerilla activity unless it directly pertained to counter-drug operations: a June 1998 guidance allowed U.S. personnel to share intelligence about guerrilla capabilities and activities only if directly related to approved counternarcotics operations.

U.S. officials have recently loosened guidelines, however, citing guerrilla involvement in the drug trade. The U.S. government issued new guidelines in March 1999 that allow U.S. personnel to provide intelligence about guerrilla activity to military and police units in Colombia's southern drug-producing region, even if the information is not directly related to counternarcotics operations.

Training and Exercises

Colombian Armed Forces participated in several Sponsored-sponsored training exercises and seminars in 1998 and 1999, including Fuerzas Aliadas Chile, Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarian, UNITAS, and United Counterdrug. A Medical Readiness Training Team (MEDRETE) offered health services in the town of Honda in the Tolima department in September 1999.

Arms Transfers

Colombia's security forces also receive grants of weapons and equipment through emergency counternarcotics drawdowns. A drawdown in September 1999

included \$58 million of spare parts, equipment, fuel, weapons, and ammunition for the Colombian military and police (United States. White House. 1999).

Colombia is among the hemisphere's top three customers for U.S. weapons through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, and the top five customers for Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) purchases. The country recently purchased eleven UH-60 "Blackhawk" and twelve "Sioux" training helicopters, small arms, spare parts, vehicles and ammunition. In an unusual move, the Export-Import Bank of the United States debated financing \$20 million for the sale of fourteen Blackhawk helicopters and several different weapons and spare parts (United States. Department of Defense. 1999).

Undoubtedly, the United States military strategy is a comprehensive one. While it encompasses a broad scope of tactics and missions, the efficacy of this strategy is contingent upon cooperation from the Colombian National Police and the aerial eradication efforts, counternarcotics battalions, riverine programs, navy assistance, intelligence sharing, training and exercises are all attempts of the United States to meet its three tasks: to understand performance, to assess relative strength, and to determine the larger purpose for which military forces are being used. Thus, the military strategy in Plan Colombia fits the third and final criterion of protracted military intervention.

Chapter 5: Dangers of Plan Colombia as it Meets Said Criteria

Considering the previous criteria, and the manner in which Plan Colombia fits those conditions for protracted military intervention, one may logically assume that the United States' intervention in Colombia will not be a short-lived, neat intervention. Rather, the United States' is likely to find itself involved in several aspects of Colombia's internal turmoil. In this case, the intervening state and the target state both fit general models of protracted military intervention. There are, however, even more dangerous situations in Colombia that exacerbate the likelihood of protraction and the degree of damage that may be wrought on both countries during the implementation of Plan Colombia. Among these conditions are ambiguous goals and objectives, instability in the target state, and a lack of military effectiveness.

Ambiguous Goals

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) argue that one of the key difficulties facing elites in intervening states was the task of translating political goals into military objectives. Defining concrete operational objectives which would enable the intervener to achieve its broader political goals proved especially difficult because military force to attain military objectives is far more realistic than using military force to achieve political objectives. The objectives in Plan Colombia are broad, ambiguous political goals.

The first objective--to strengthen the fight against drug trafficking and to dismantle the trafficking organizations through an integrated effort by the armed forces--includes plans to combat illicit cultivation through continuous and systematic action of both the military and police forces, to establish a military control of Southern Colombia for eradication, and to establish government control over key drug production areas.

The second objective—to strengthen the judicial system and combat corruption—encompasses more narrow goals of strengthening the institutions of the Prosecutor's office, the courts, public defenders and human rights units, reinforcing and training the police investigating corps, supporting the anti-corruption groups responsible for the investigation of civil servants, reforming the prison system, applying extradition laws, and obtaining a proposal for oral trials in criminal cases (in the meantime, drafting regulations for the present criminal procedures of public trials).

Neutralizing the drug trade's financial system and seizing its resources for the state compose the third objective in Plan Colombia. Specifically, Colombia hopes to strengthen counter-smuggling efforts, carry out a vigorous asset seizure program, and freeze and interdict bank accounts and assets in Colombia and abroad.

The fourth objective—neutralizing and combating violence agents allied with the drug trade—includes plans to increase security for citizens against kidnapping, extortion, and terrorism, and to halt the acquisition of arms by those groups that profit from drug trafficking through a concerted international effort.

Objective five—to integrate national initiatives into regional and international efforts—serves as an umbrella for the more narrow goals of sharing information and intelligence with other agencies in the country, and contributing to and coordinating with regional and international operations and efforts.

Finally, the sixth objective—strengthening and expanding plans for alternative development in areas affected by drug trafficking—includes plans to provide job opportunities and social services to people living in the cultivation zones and to promote public information campaigns on the dangers of illegal drugs.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992), explain the dangers of these ambiguous goals. While the beginning phases of the intervention were usually

guided by narrow, concrete objectives that served as the focal point for operations, these objectives did not sustain the intervention. As the conflict dragged on military objectives became more amorphous and less narrowly specified. When initial setbacks occurred, the intervener, rather than focusing on the protection of key cities or strategic points, tended to redefine its mission as destroying the will of the adversary, convincing him that victory was not attainable. It was this objective which played a key role in convincing the intervening state to switch from defensive to offensive tactic and to increase its commitment of combat personnel. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) conclude that in combination with the rising importance of reputational goals, this dynamic provided a key source of escalatory pressure (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.250). The United States and Colombia may also find pressure building as they will undoubtedly have trouble attaining the broad political objectives outlined in Plan Colombia through military force. The Center for International Policy's "Just the Facts: Colombia Project" (2001) notes:

Several members of Congress have questioned what they perceive as a lack of clear, measurable objectives for the new assistance to Colombia and its neighbors. Solid benchmarks for determining the program's success remain elusive....By October, the White House could still only report that specific, quantifiable objectives were being negotiated with the Government of Colombia. According to the GAO [General Accounting Office], the Colombian government bears much of the blame for the lack of clarity about goals.

(United States. Center for International Policy. 2001)

Even U.S. officials realize the amorphous nature of Plan Colombia. In a hearing of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Edward Jurith, Acting Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (2001) attempted to justify the ambiguity of Plan Colombia:

It's a dynamic process [policy-making]. We have had successes.... at the same time we need to be just as robust and flexible in terms of what we do in the source countries and in the transit zones. We are seeing success we believe in our operations in the Andes, reducing the overall level of production in the Andean region. Again, the bottom line I think is it's not a question of winning or losing; it's a question of how do we adapt to the threat? How do we adapt to the changes in both drug consumption and drug trafficking patterns? (United States. Senate. 2001)

Unless the United States and Colombia both take Mr. Jurith's advice and treat the political objectives of Plan Colombia as the inherently ambiguous goals that they are, both countries will fall prey to frustration and pressure, which may ultimately increase the likelihood of protracted conflict.

Colombian Accountability

Additionally, as noted by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) the internal stability of the target state is a crucial variable in the success or failure of any military intervention (1992, 256). The mistaken assumption that Colombia is sufficiently stable to withstand and cooperate in Plan Colombia could very well doom military operations in the region.

Several indications of the country's instability have been ignored by policy-makers who support Plan Colombia. A Capitol Hill Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on October 6, 1999 contains the testimony of Thomas Pickering, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, wherein he claims that Colombia's internal conflict (which has been the longest-standing in the hemisphere) has its roots in civil strife going back to the 1950s and has developed over the nearly 40-year period into a broad scale conflict (1999). Representative Patsy Mink (D-HI) best summarized Colombia's instability in a Hearing of the Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Government Reform Committee on October 12, 2000:

At the same time, armed insurgent groups are increasingly involved in the drug trade, and the government doesn't have control over almost half of the country. All of this is against the backdrop of a country that has been fighting a civil war for decades, a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced over a million. Media accounts of human rights abuses, kidnappings, and internal refugees in Colombia have become all too common.

(United States. House. 2000)

Colombia's internal strife is already hindering the success of Plan Colombia. As Jess T. Ford of the General Accounting Office National Security and International Trade Division noted in the same House Hearing, the Colombian government has not yet shown that it has the detailed plans and funding necessary to achieve the goals of Plan Colombia (Ford 2000). Colombia faces continuing challenges associated with its political and economic instability fostered by the

long-term, long-standing insurgency and the need for the police and the military to comply with human rights standards. Moreover, the U.S. Embassy has made no significant progress in the implementation of a plan to have the Colombian National Police assume more responsibility for the aerial eradication program. Embassy officials have expressed concern that the CNP have not always provided documentation to show the use of some of the assistance. Overall, the U.S. and Colombian governments face a number of challenges in management and financing of Plan Colombia over the next six years. Although both governments are taking actions to address the challenges, at this point the total cost in activities required to meet the plan's goals remains unknown, and significantly reducing drug activities may take several more years than additionally thought (Ford 2000).

Colombia's internal instability contradicts the United States' assumption that the region will act as an ally and consolidate its political position once the military threat of guerilla groups is neutralized. In fact, Colombia's position is quite to the contrary. Colombian and United States officials are hoping that Plan Colombia will create and maintain internal stability. President Pastrana believes and the United States government agrees that ending civil conflict and eliminating all of that conflict's harmful side effects is a central issue in solving Colombia's multifaceted problems. The idea is that Plan Colombia would stabilize the nation by helping Colombia's economic recovery, allowing for further improvements in the protection of human rights, and further easing efforts to deal with the narcotics problem. In a perfect situation, Plan Colombia would also restore Colombian government authority and control in the now vacated coca-growing regions.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) note that internal stability is a necessary prerequisite for successful intervention. Given the fact that Plan Colombia touts stability as an end goal (not a precursor) of the intervention, the

probability of protraction is higher than it might otherwise be. In fact, because Plan Colombia is a joint effort between the United States and Colombia, the United States is reliant on Colombia to meet its outlined goals—otherwise, the intervention will surely fail. Recall that, as Ford testifies, the Colombian government has yet to develop the detailed implementation plans necessary for funding, sequencing, and managing those strategies included in Plan Colombia (Ford 2000, 11). What is more, the Colombian National Police have not yet formally approved the phase-out aspects of Plan Colombia (Ford 2000, 8). Clearly, the chance that Colombia may fail to meet the expectations mandated in Plan Colombia is viable.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) argue that an effort to reshape the body politic of a nation is a broad, ambitious, and open-ended undertaking. This involves installing or maintaining in power favored leaders, yet, even if successful, this is not a sufficient basis for achieving the principle objectives in the intervention. This, is where the “hearts and minds” problem of translating political goals into military objectives becomes problematic. As such, there is a greater need for the local ally to have an independent base of power and an indigenously credible basis of legitimacy and political appeal to his own people (Levite, Jentleson, Berman 1992, 317).

Without the cooperation of Colombia, the United States’ efforts to reduce drug trafficking and to institute internal stability are futile. The nature of Plan Colombia dictates a joint effort between the intervening state and the target state. Attempts at massive internal reforms demand the full cooperation of the Colombian government and the Colombian National Police—in instituting those changes, enforcing the new laws, and maintaining an environment conducive to reform. Again, without this support, Plan Colombia will fail.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman expound on the historical examples of instability in the target state and the results that instability effected. The authors found that in quite a few cases, the local ally was unreliable in the first place, that appealing for external assistance was an attempt to make up for a lack of domestic political support and military weakness. In other cases, the local ally may have had some credibility and reliability at the outset of the intervention, but it increasingly lost those in the process of the intervention—either because the association with an outside power discredited the target state, or because the target state was inclined to brutality or complacency once it had secured the commitment of an outside intervener. The authors conclude that this is just another version of the United States’ “free rider” problem (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 309).

Military Ineffectiveness

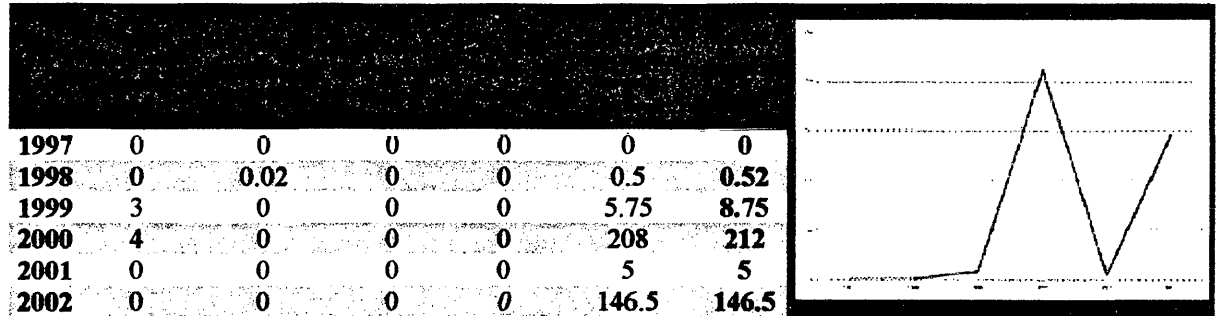
A third telling factor in the likely failure of Plan Colombia is the lack of military effectiveness—both in Colombia’s armed forces and the United States military assistance tactics. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) re-examined the strategic assumptions in their set of case studies to formulate three dimensions in which the intervening state often miscalculated its military effectiveness. Initially, intelligence communities demonstrated a glaring inability to gather accurate and reliable information about political, as opposed to military, variables. As a result, the intervening states were stymied not by an inadequacy of force but by political developments—involving both the local ally and adversary—that undermined their broad political/military strategy. Next, elites in intervening states consistently overestimated the value of superior firepower. They assumed that military superiority would allow them to overwhelm the adversary and destroy his willpower. To their surprise, however, guerrilla tactics repeatedly offset numerical and technological advantages and took their toll on the willpower of the

intervening army. Even successful military campaigns could not translate into stable political outcomes. Even military force was ineffective at altering domestic alignments. The authors note: "In all of our cases, the complexities and intractable nature of civil war left even the most powerful of foreign interveners strangely impotent" (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 258). Finally, elites consistently failed to recognize the effect domestic politics would have on their behavior.

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman found that as the operation dragged on and the financial and human toll mounted, domestic costs played a key role in hampering the prosecution of war (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.258).

For its part as the intervener, the United States has already made several of these same mistakes. Initially, efforts to bolster intelligence sharing do not guarantee that the information will be reliable, accurate, or appropriate. Under certain circumstances, personnel from the United States share intelligence with the CNP and the Colombian Armed Forces. Although the U.S. has, until recently, avoided transferring intelligence about guerrilla activity that was unrelated to counternarcotics operations, the U.S. helped found a new Colombian Joint Intelligence Center (JIC), based at Tres Equinas. Adam Isacson proposes, in "Getting in Deeper: The United States' Growing Involvement in Colombia's conflict," (2000) that this policy owed not to discomfort with such direct involvement in the conflict, but also to concern about recipients' use of the information. It could, for example, be passed on to paramilitary groups for actions against civilian populations (2000, 6).

Second, proponents of Plan Colombia believe that U.S. equipment is both sufficient and necessary for counternarcotics missions. The Center for International Policy provides the following U.S. aid proposals for 2002:

TABLE 5.1**Colombia's Social and Economic Aid, Proposed for 2002**

Source: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/aid02.htm>

TABLE 5.2**Colombia's Military and Police Aid, Proposed for 2002**

1997	33.45	30	0	14.2	10.32	0	0.5	0.09	88.56
1998	56.5	0	0.89	41.1	11.78	2.17	0	0	112.44
1999	200.11	0.44	0.92	58	35.89	13.45	0	0	308.81
2000	686.43	0.4	0.9	0	85.9	24.63	0	0	798.26
2001	43	0.42	1.04	29	60.9	19.04	0	0	153.40
2002	252.5	0.42	1.18	29	60.9	19.04	0	0	363.04

Source: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/aid02.htm>

As illustrated by tables, the United States is devoting massive amounts of monies to aid Colombia. Whether this aid takes the form of social, economic, military, or police programs, American dollars are projected to further increase in the upcoming years. Recall the work of Clausewitz in *On War* (1943), in which he argues that the fog of war—the sheer difficulty of figuring out what is really happening in wartime—is the most pressing challenge for policy-makers. A review of the proposed aid (economic, social, military, and police) indicates that the United States is indeed “getting in deeper.”

This is reminiscent of Clausewitz’s argument: as Plan Colombia progresses, the U.S. is becoming more and more involved in the middle game. The fog of war has made it increasingly difficult for the U.S. to objectively determine the probable escalation of its involvement.

At this point, a criticism of the U.S. policy from the standpoint of policy design and implementation is also warranted. The delivery, use, and maintenance of this military equipment to date have proven disastrous. Representative John Mica (R-FL) noted in a Hearing of the Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Government Reform Committee on October 12, 2000:

This administration has also resisted congressional efforts to ensure that needed drug-fighting equipment makes it to Colombia in a timely manner. The administration has fought the Congress for years on the Blackhawk utility helicopters for the Colombian National Police and has a pathetic track record for delivering this type of assistance. And that type of assistance, incidentally, is the main part of the package, the \$1.3 billion package, at least

the anti-narcotics portion of it. In fact, even three helicopters, which accounts for the bulk of aid dollars in Fiscal Year 1999, when finally delivered to the Colombian National Police, sat idle for lack of proper floor armoring and ammunition. (United States House. 2000)

Moreover, Jess T. Ford (2000), Director of International Affairs and Trade in the General Accounting Office, maintains that some of the problems that have arisen with the transfer of military equipment. While the Department of Defense agreed to provide \$3.1 million worth of spare helicopter parts, for instance, only \$378,000 worth had been delivered as of September 1, 2000. Department of Defense officials did not know when they would deliver the remaining parts. Furthermore, while the State Department agreed to purchase 33 UH-1N helicopters for Colombian counternarcotics battalions, it had not included the funds necessary to procure, refurbish, and support the equipment in its fiscal year 1999 and 2000 budgets. As a result, the helicopters could not be used for conducting counternarcotics operations and 17 of the 24 pilots trained to fly the 18 UH-1N's were laid off in May 2000. In 1996, the Department of Defense agreed to provide the Colombian military and CNP with 90 secure radios and supporting communications equipment from its inventories, but this equipment was never made available. Finally, the United States Embassy has developed a plan to have the Colombian National Police assume increased operational control over the aerial eradication program. This was to be accomplished by providing the CNP with training, aircraft, and other support needed to develop an infrastructure to enhance their overall eradication capabilities. According to Embassy personnel, however, the National Police have not yet formally approved the plan, and the State

Department has not approved the funding needed to begin the phaseout. Ford concludes: "According to U.S. Embassy officials, despite extensive training and other efforts to have the National Police develop a management program that would ensure a more effective aerial eradication program, little progress has been made" (Ford 2000, 8).

That notwithstanding, even if the military equipment had been delivered as planned and troops were adequately prepared to assume military responsibility, the assumption that counternarcotics missions would be successful would still be hasty. As Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992, 258) note, guerrilla warfare repeatedly counteracts technological advantages. The Center for International Policy's "Just the Facts: Colombia Project" (2001) contains the testimony from House International Relations Committee Chairman, Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), who warns that the U.S. funded counternarcotics battalions may fail in the face of guerrilla resistance:

As recent events in the heavy coca-growing Putomayo (sic) area in the south of Colombia show, it is evident that the Colombian army is incapable of controlling any of this guerrilla and coca-infested territory now, or anytime soon. Certainly, three new U.S. trained counter-narcotics battalions of the Colombian army alone, will not change this major imbalance on the battlefield....[O]ne can easily predict that either the start of army-supported eradication operations there will continue to be interminably delayed, or that these operations will be reduced in scope to only small "show case" interdiction or manual eradication operations (with no real aerial eradication against the industrial-size coca plots). (United States.

Center for International Policy. 2001)

Undoubtedly, the United States is guilty of several military assessment errors which will profoundly influence the progress of Plan Colombia.

As a matter of fact, there is good reason to believe that the United States intervention in Colombia, as mandated by Plan Colombia, will result in a protracted foreign military intervention. The objective of the Colombian Army counternarcotics battalions is to establish the security conditions needed to implement counter-drug programs such as fumigation and alternative development in Putumayo. Critics of Plan Colombia firmly believe, however, that efforts to eradicate crops which are maintained by guerrilla forces (specifically the FARC) will propel U.S. forces into a counterinsurgency mission. Experts maintain that the establishment of security conditions will involve the first major armed confrontations between the new U.S.-aided military units and FARC guerrillas (United States. Center for International Policy. 2001). In an effort to ease concerns that United States forces will be lured into Colombia's counterinsurgency violence, the United States has hired civilian contractors to carry out dangerous eradication missions. At the same time, however, U.S. military personnel are in Colombia to carry out training, intelligence-gathering, and technical assistance missions. In 1999, the monthly United States troop strength in Colombia was approximately 209 soldiers. This number has jumped in late 2000 and early 2001 due to the ongoing effort to train counternarcotics battalions and to implement other initiatives foreseen in the aid package. The Center for International Policy (2001) explains this strategic use of civilian contractors and military personnel. The supplemental budget does not provide funds for the assignment of U.S. military personnel or civilian contractors to Colombia unless their assignment mandates less than 500 troops or

300 contractors to be present at one time. This “troop cap” is inapplicable, however to other funds (for example the Defense Department’s budget or regular counternarcotic operations in Colombia). Another caveat remains in that the cap may be exceeded for ninety days if U.S. military personnel are involved in hostilities or if circumstances indicate that their involvement in hostilities is imminent (United States. Center for International Policy. 2001). Critics worry that, because they are not official representatives of the U.S. government in Colombia, the contractors are less accountable than uniformed military personnel. Consequently, there is concern that contractors may come to fill roles that go beyond the narrow counter-drug mission, and that since contractor casualties would be less controversial, they may be called upon to perform tasks and operate in zones that would be off-limits to regular government or military officials (United States. Center for International Policy Country Report. 2001).

A press release from Representative Janice Schakowsky (D-IL), on April 25, 2001 (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c107:1:/temp/~c107zpRN6C::> 2001) claims that currently taxpayer funds are used to pay private companies millions of dollars to fight the war on drugs in the Andean region. Schakowsky claims:

The American taxpayers are funding a secret war that could suck us into a Vietnam-like conflict. Those private military contractors are not held accountable for their actions, and may draw the U.S. deeper into regional conflicts and civil wars. The public has a right to know that the Defense Department is outsourcing dangerous missions to private armies that operate free from public scrutiny. Is the U.S. military privatizing its missions in order to avoid public

controversy or embarrassment? Is it to hide body bags from the media and thus shield them from public opinion? (United States. The Center for International Policy. 2001)

Whatever the motivations behind this outsourcing, Schakowsky and other members of Congress have taken legislative action to prevent what they see as the first steps in protraction. Schakowsky introduced House Resolution 1591 on April 25, 2001 to prohibit the United States from providing financing for nongovernmental organizations or individuals to carry out military, law enforcement, armed rescue, or other related operations in the countries of the Andean Region, including any operations relating to narcotics control efforts (the text of the bill, which has currently been referred to the House Committee on International Relations, can be found in the appendix immediately following Chapter 7). HR 1591 demonstrates the rising public sentiment that the United States is quickly heading toward protracted military intervention in Colombia, and it represents one of those “domestic factors” that Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) argue may shape the nature of a foreign military intervention..

Having defined the criteria of protracted military intervention and showing that Plan Colombia meets those criteria, it is logical to conclude that the United States is entering into an historically dangerous situation. Several external factors (i.e. ambiguity of goals and objectives, internal instability, and military miscalculations) only heighten the chance of the United States’ inevitable military involvement in Colombia’s counterinsurgency missions—and such involvement equates, in simple terms, to protraction.

Chapter 6: Caveats

This thesis would not be complete without a discussion of the caveats in research methods and in the application of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's model. A comprehensive examination of the research strategies reveals certain complications that, because of Plan Colombia's extended duration, must be considered thoroughly.

Initially, one must remember Andrew Bennett's (1999) argument:

...the order in which variables assume certain values may have effects as important as the value of the variables themselves, and the effects of some processes may vary greatly depending on the path-dependent effects of slight differences in initial conditions. This poses particular difficulties for most forms of statistical analysis. The process tracing method in case studies is better able to deal with path dependency through historical analysis. (Bennett 1999, p.16)

Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) show a general chain of causality in their examination of various cases of foreign military intervention. The goal of the present research is to determine the following chain in the cases examined by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman. The authors reveal that the cases of the United States in Vietnam, the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Syria in Lebanon, Israel in Lebanon, and India in Sri Lanka share this chain of causality:

GOALS>ASSESSMENT>STRATEGIES>OBSTACLES/MISTAKES>OUTCOME

The study of Plan Colombia under this lens reveals that the United States is heading down a strikingly similar path in its Colombian intervention. Specifically, the

following criteria were present in all of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's cases, and are present in Plan Colombia:

Let us review the United States' goals in Plan Colombia as they serve to further Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's (1992) model. They are: to strengthen the fight against drug trafficking and dismantle the organizations through an integrated effort by the armed forces, to strengthen the judicial system and combat corruption, to neutralize the drug trade's financial system and seize its resources for the state, to neutralize and combat violent agents allied with the drug trade, to integrate national initiatives into regional and international efforts, to strengthen and expand plans for alternative development in areas affected by drug trafficking, to increase support for human rights and judicial reform, to pursue the expansion of counter-narcotics operations into southern Colombia, to develop alternative economic development and similar programs for Bolivia and Ecuador, to instigate increased interdiction efforts, and, finally, to provide assistance for the Colombian National Police. Clearly, several (if not all) of these goals stem from the United States' primary security concerns—making them intrinsic in nature. Additionally, because the attainment of these goals would alter the status quo in the target state, Colombia, they meet Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's definition of offensive goals.

Moreover, the United States, as the intervening nation, has made several assessments regarding Colombia's capabilities as an ally and about the course of the intervention itself. Those include the following: Colombia is a viable political ally, Colombia is sufficiently stable to endure United States intervention, United States intervention is the key mechanism by which to attain Colombian and United States' goals, and the United States involvement in Colombia's counternarcotics operations will not lead to involvement with Colombia's counterinsurgency war.

To achieve the stated and implied goals of Plan Colombia, the United States

and Colombia are employing both military and political strategies. A brief review of these strategies entails the following tactics: Colombia requires United States military and financial aid to enact Plan Colombia, military equipment from the United States will be effectively used in crop eradication, and Colombian Armed Forces and the Colombian National Police require training and assistance from United States military and contracted personnel.

As discussed earlier, however, these strategies will not effectively ensure that the goals of Plan Colombia are met. Even further, there are significant obstacles that stand in the way of the plan's success. For example, the goals of Plan Colombia are inherently ambiguous, as such, it is difficult to measure the relative success of the plan's progression. Additionally, Colombian society is wracked by thirty years of civil conflict--the government has lost control of over more than 25% of the country, as such, Colombia lacks the internal stability to endure United States' intervention. Furthermore, Colombian policy-makers are relying on U.S. intervention to institute stability. In fact, the United States has made several misjudgments concerning its military effectiveness in Colombia. Contrary to our assessments: intelligence sharing could fall into the hands of rebel groups, the delivery and maintenance of military equipment has not met designated standards, U.S. technology could very likely fail in the face of guerrilla warfare (such as the types employed by Colombian rebel groups), there is little accountability for the contracted troops in Colombia, and finally, there is legislation in the United States opposing the funding and implementation of Plan Colombia.

Keeping in mind all those factors which work against the success of Plan Colombia, an estimation of the intervention's outcome is not difficult. Considering that the United States is guilty of numerous assessment errors, and that the success of Plan Colombia is inherently difficult to judge, the United States military

involvement is likely to become protracted.

Thus, Bennett's (1999) process tracing method in an analysis of Plan Colombia is better able to deal with path dependency through historical analysis of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's examples.

The glaring caveat of this method is, as Bennett notes, that some processes may vary greatly depending on the path-dependent effects of slight differences in initial conditions (1999, 16). The conclusion that Plan Colombia fits the model of protracted military intervention is, by its nature, hypothetical; only future events will provide proof. One cannot ignore Bennett's warning regarding "slight differences in initial conditions." Certainly, the context of the Colombian conflict is unique and conditions surrounding U.S. intervention are case specific.

Even so, Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) make a strong case for their model's generality. With this in mind, a hypothetical application of Plan Colombia to the model of protracted foreign military intervention based on path dependency is acceptable.

A second caveat to the research is that some aspects of social opposition to Plan Colombia have been intentionally neglected in this research. Specifically, the human rights advocacy movement, while pertinent to a study of the plan, has not been thoroughly examined. The rapid growth of aid to Colombia has raised concerns about its possible contribution to human rights abuses. Today, Colombia's Armed Forces are the hemisphere's worst abusers of human rights and international humanitarian law (Isacson 2000, 8).

The foreign aid and defense-budget appropriations bill contain a set of criteria known as the Leahy Amendments. These regulations prohibit units of a country's security forces from receiving assistance if their members face credible evidence of gross human rights violations and allow units to receive aid through

foreign operations-funded programs if “effective measures” are taken to bring the accused unit members to justice. The regulations also allow a unit to receive aid through defense budget-funded programs under the condition that corrective steps are taken (Isacson 2000, 8). The text of the Leahy Law and its accompanying appropriations act may be found in the appendix following Chapter 7.

The law’s ambiguity has created a difficult situation for the State and Defense Departments, which are trying to resolve basic questions like “what is a unit,” and whether a unit that simply transfers offending members out of service (rather than bringing them to justice) deserves aid. Isacson (2000) notes, because of the lack of specificity, the United States and Colombia have found two ways to work around these regulations:

The first is the creation of new military units from scratch, like the new counternarcotics battalions. All candidates for the new units have their names run through databases of past crimes or human rights abuses. In Colombia, where the military is planning a rapid expansion, it seems to be proving easier to create new, vetted units than to bring abusive officers in the old units to justice. Creating new units not only evades the law’s intent, it risks creating an “army within an army” that is better equipped and trained than the rest of the institution. (Isacson 2000, p.9)

The second manner of evading the law, Isacson (2000) notes, has to do with the definition of “unit.” The State and Defense Department have determined that a soldier from a banned unit may still receive aid if his individual record is clean. Consequently, the Leahy Law only applies to an entire unit when weapons are part

of the assistance package. Training for a unit guilty of human rights abuses may be granted by excluding the unit's abusive members from training activity.

Isacson (2000) explains the cause for alarm in human rights activists. The "units to be trained" issue creates a problem because the Leahy Law was originally intended to encourage foreign militaries to stop protecting rights abuses. The "unit to be trained" loophole is more of a creative shortcut than a legitimate provision to the law. Isacson (2000) notes that it should be alarming that the Colombian military receives heavy U.S. assistance despite the fact that it is not willing to punish criminals within its ranks (Isacson 2000, p.9).

While human rights concerns are thus justified, this analysis focuses on the strategic military tactics involved in intervention. For the sake of time, these humanitarian issues must be considered only in the context of background influences. The model provided by Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) focuses on the manner in which military assistance is distributed considering military risk, with no weight given to the risk of backlash from outside organizations. As such, this analysis was limited to an assessment of military success or failure, not a justification of military assistance.

A third caveat to this application is the neglect of outside factors which may also lead the United States' intervention to protraction. If history serves as an adequate teacher, it is clear that U.S. intervention in Colombia is likely to become protracted. All of the requisite conditions are present and met for protracted foreign military intervention. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) extend their study, however, to include conditions which may be responsible for escalation of protraction: military surprise, physical environment, ineffectiveness of intelligence, and anti-war sentiment. Although such factors are not considered central to the present argument, these conditions certainly warrant brief discussion.

Military intervention poses a host of novel military challenges to which the intervening power must adapt....Even when intervention is ultimately unsuccessful, a military organization may adapt to its problem fairly well. Since...it is difficult to define ultimate "success" in any simple way, and since the outcomes of most interventions are mixed, how well armies adapt to the wars in which they find themselves can be of tremendous importance. (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.278)

Intervening armies must be prepared to face several unexpected military and political conditions. Initially, intervening armies confront technological surprise. Particularly in guerrilla warfare, the intervening army often finds itself unprepared for battle. For example, suicide car and truck bombers in Lebanon baffled the Israeli Defense Forces. Soviet troops--well equipped with helicopter gunships--were startled by relatively simple machine guns in the hands of Afghan guerrillas (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 278). The United States could easily find itself unprepared to tackle guerrilla tactics employed by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. While Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) note that these challenges are typically controllable, they may very well undercut an army's belief that superior technology equates to superiority across the board (279).

A second reality that the U.S. contracted and military personnel must take into account is the unique physical environment in which war takes place. The shock of different terrain can be quite significant for interventions that take place across continents. Modern military interventions are particularly susceptible, as differences in climate and terrain are usually important for their effect on tactical

adequacy (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 279). The intervening forces in Colombia must be prepared to encounter new terrain: especially as they push into the forest-laden, southern portions of Colombia--else they risk falling prey to military defeat.

Furthermore, intelligence-sharing strategies do not always work. Because interventionary warfare poses unusual intelligence requirements, the United States may find usually helpful sources of information (e.g. photographic reconnaissance and signal intelligence) less helpful than expected. This difficult lesson was learned in the Gulf War, as the United States deployed vast imagery and signal intelligence to monitor the Iraqi military, but was still left with glaring holes in its intelligence analysis (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 280).

A final consideration that the U.S. must realize is the degree of anti-war sentiment it may face:

One group that invariably emerges during...domestic debates [over foreign involvement] consists of what one might call "anti-war hawks"--a faction that has no compunctions about the use of force, or about the justice of a given war, but believes that the costs of the war exceeds its benefits [sic]. Sometimes a large part of the public adheres to this view as well, as appears to have been the case of the American public in Vietnam. And characteristically it takes a well-known hawk to begin the process of winding these wars down (Richard Nixon and Yitzhak Rabin are good examples of this). (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.282)

Although this analysis does not focus on the anti-intervention movement, it could

very well play an important role in the escalation of American involvement. Recall the human rights advocacy movement discussed earlier, coupled with the pending legislation, which deride American involvement in Colombia. The United States' public has become much more cynical since the Vietnam conundrum.

Consequently, policymakers must grapple with legislative decisions under the careful watch of a constituency that is all too familiar with the costs of a protracted intervention. This will undoubtedly shape the nature of the intervention so that if it is to become protracted, the probability that it will escalate into a full-blown war (similar to that in Vietnam) is slim.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications

Military intervention mandated in Plan Colombia has a strong likelihood of becoming protracted, and, consequently, it is necessary to review some implications of protracted foreign military intervention. A consideration of the generalities that Levite, Jentleson, and Berman found true across the spectrum of their studies will help policy makers and scholars predict the outcome of Plan Colombia. Specifically: foreign military intervention is dynamic, there is a high degree of uncertainty to undertaking foreign military intervention, foreign military intervention is complex, extensive destructiveness is wrought by foreign military intervention, and there exists a lack of comparative thinking in the decision to intervene.

The inherent dynamism of foreign military intervention creates a constant need for reassessment of goals, objectives, tactics, and strategies. Yet, as Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) note, this is a need which (for reasons of capability and disposition) policy makers have difficulty meeting. The major pressures that the intervener faces once troops have been committed call for the intensification of military activity, rather than an evaluation of tactics or a reassessment of political objectives. At all three stages of the intervention (getting in, staying in, and getting out) decision-making happens too little, too late (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, p.304)

The high degree of uncertainty inherent to undertaking foreign military intervention further complicates the dilemma. While criticisms of poor intelligence, flawed or biased decision-making, and other controllable factors are worthwhile, the degree of uncertainty lies mainly within the ability to differentiate between that which could have been known but was not. In other words, even if intelligence agencies behaved optimally, decision makers used the intelligence effectively, and

there was no bias in the decision making process, uncertainty concerning the final outcome of the intervention would still prevail (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 304).

Third, the complexity of the phenomenon is certainly noteworthy. By nature of the enterprise, interveners face massive tasks. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) contend that sending troops into states which are ridden by deep divisions and torn by violent conflicts is paramount to taking on goals and objectives of great magnitude and complexity. This involves not just restraining or otherwise changing the behavior of another state, but remaking the essential nature and structure of the domestic political order as well. The authors surmise: "Winning over hearts and minds of a people is a much more complex undertaking than defeating an opposing army" (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 305). Certainly, this generality must be considered as the United States attempts to restructure Colombia's political landscape.

Fourth, the destructiveness described in all of Levite, Jentleson, and Berman's case studies (1992) should serve as a precaution to country's contemplating intervention. The authors found that the longer the intervention lasts, the greater the volume of destructiveness it wreaks, "not merely as a mathematical function of the duration of the fighting, but also due to the self-feeding dynamic of the intervention itself which requires or legitimizes...less restrictive use of force on all sides to get results" (305). As such, the United States should carefully weigh the proposed time frame of Plan Colombia. In six years of operations, there will be countless opportunities to further protraction.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) observed in all of their case studies a lack of comparative thinking, which resulted in limited learning by interveners. The authors explain that policy makers

and elites may very well recall past experiences of intervention--both successful and disastrous--but they do not often act on these recollections:

That policy makers may not draw on lessons or make the analogies effectively, and otherwise misuse historical analysis, is a separate point. They also show a tendency to feel bound by earlier decisions pertaining to the country in question, whether made by themselves or their predecessors. Yet there is little evidence in any of the cases, whether because they deemed them irrelevant and/or for lack of knowledge, about questions asked or analyses posed based on other countries' experiences. (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 306)

Thus, the United States appears to be victim to a trend that Levite, Jentleson, and Berman discovered true in all of their case examples: deciding to intervene without giving proper consideration or weight to historical experiences.

A final observation which deserves attention is the international context of the intervention. As mentioned earlier, stability in Latin America is not a guarantee. The waves stirred by Colombian conflicts have already reached the shores of neighboring countries, none of which can afford additional turmoil. Peter Hakim, in "The Uneasy Americas" (2001), notes that in Peru, the government of Alberto Fujimori grew increasingly autocratic and corrupt until it finally imploded in 2000. Now Peru must face the task of rebuilding its institutions. At the same time, Colombia's elected government is losing control while democratic institutions are being battered by a relentless guerrilla war, horrendous human rights abuses, and pervasive criminal violence. Ecuador recently suffered South America's first successful military coup in 24 years, and furthermore, in Venezuela, political power

is being concentrated in the hands of President Hugo Chavez, who scorns representative democracy. Even in those Andean countries where democracy has been established and maintained, political institutions (parties, legislatures, and courts) perform dismally (Hakim 2001, 49). Thus policy makers must be especially cautious in the implementation of Plan Colombia—undoubtedly, there will be international consequences.

These generalizations create a critical implication for the United States' intervention as it is mandated in Plan Colombia. The value of comparative thinking is considerable, as Levite, Jentleson, and Berman attempt to argue. It can be used to sensitize analysts as well as policy makers and their advisors to the features and dilemmas inherent in the nature of foreign military intervention. If the United States and Colombian policy makers convert to a strategy of narcotics control based on a comparative perspective of intervention, it would be easier to devise an integrated politico-military strategy for intervention that takes into account the complications that are likely to arise along the way. Additionally, this comparative perspective could result in a conscious choice to forego military intervention and pursue some alternative strategy (Levite, Jentleson, and Berman 1992, 307). The authors of *Foreign Military Intervention* desire to influence decision makers to adopt a comparative perspective in the hopes that foreign military intervention may, in the future, be abandoned for alternative strategies. Colombia is a key test case for this objective—but only if policy makers begin to think in a comparative frame.

Ethyl Lynn Beers wrote: "Defend me from my friends, I can protect myself from my enemies." Certainly, her words carry weight in the sphere of global politics and interventions. Levite, Jentleson, and Berman (1992) supply their readers with several studies of foreign military interventions in which friendly action resulted in disastrous results. The commonalities of all these cases include

ambiguous goals, misassessments, military ineffectiveness, and outside obstacles. Consequently, each case resulted in protraction of the intervention and frequently, outright failure of the intervention.

The application of these criteria to Plan Colombia reveals that the United States is hurdling down a dangerously familiar path. In fact, contrary to strategic and theoretical goals, Plan Colombia—and the international aid mandated therein—very likely will only exacerbate the civil conflict in Colombia. Unless United States and Colombian policy makers adopt a more cautious and comparative frame of thought in the implementation and amendment of Plan Colombia, both countries may find themselves at a startling loss. As history has shown, and is continuing to show today, sometimes friends can be one's worst enemies.

Appendix

HR 1591: The Andean Region Contractor Accountability Act

A BILL

To prohibit the United States Government from providing financing for nongovernmental organizations or individuals to carry out military, law enforcement, armed rescue, or other related operations in the countries of the Andean Region, including any operations relating to narcotics control efforts.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This act may be cited as the ‘Andean Region Contractor Accountability Act.’

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

Congress finds the following:

- (1) Hundreds of civilians, including many United States citizens, are working with the military and police forces of the Republic of Colombia and other countries of the Andean region under contracts between the United States Government and several private corporations. The duties of such individuals include piloting drug-crop fumigation aircraft, flying helicopters transporting army battalions, serving as mechanics and logistics personnel, assisting the reform of the security forces, performing armed search-and-

rescue missions, and gathering aerial intelligence, among others.

- (2) On February 18, 2001, United States contractor personnel on a search-and- rescue mission in the guerrilla-held zone of Curillo, in Colombia's Caqueta region, were involved in an exchange of fire with members of Colombia's FARC guerrilla groups, raising concerns about force protection and proximity to Colombia's conflict.
- (3) According to the Inspector General of the Department of State, three United States contract personnel have died while piloting spray planes over Colombian territory since 1997.
- (4) Contract personnel are being employed in circumstances and locations in Colombia which, for force protection reasons, would generally be off-limits to uniformed United States personnel.
- (5) Increasing use of private contract personnel raises questions of accountability and transparency in the management of United States policy toward Colombia and other countries of the Andean region.
- (6) On April 20, 2001, a plane operated by innocent United States civilians conducting missionary work was shot down in the

airspace of the Republic of Peru. The plane was targeted as a result of intelligence sharing between Central Intelligence Agency-contracted private military personnel and Peruvian authorities. As a result, Veronica 'Roni' Bowers, and her 7-month old daughter Charity were killed.

- (7) Basic information about the extent of activities of private military contractors in Colombia and in other countries of Andean region is generally unavailable to the public.

SECTION 3. PROHIBITION ON FINANCING OF PRIVATE MILITARY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, OR ARMED RESCUE OPERATIONS IN ANDEAN REGION COUNTRIES.

(a) PROHIBITION-Notwithstanding chapter 8 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law, no officer or employee of the United States Government may enter into a contract or other agreement under which the United States Government provides financing, in whole or part, for a nongovernmental organization (including a corporation or other business entity) or individual to carry out military, law enforcement, armed rescue, or other related operations in the countries of the Andean region, including any operations relating to narcotics control efforts.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION-Nothing in subsection (a) shall be construed to prohibit the financing, in whole or part, for a nongovernmental organization (including a corporation or other business entity) or individual to carry

out humanitarian activities, including the delivery of food, in the countries of the Andean region.

SECTION 4. DEFINITION

In this act, the term ‘countries of the Andean region’ means the Republic of Bolivia, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Ecuador, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Panama, the Republic of Peru, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Source: (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c107:1:/temp/~c107zpRN6C::>)

Leahy Law

Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000:

Section 564

None of the funds made available by this Act may be provided to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights, unless the Secretary determines and reports to the Committees on Appropriations that the government of such country is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice:

Provided, that nothing in this section shall be construed to withhold funds made available by this Act from any unit of the security forces of a foreign country not credibly alleged to be involved in gross violations of human rights:

Provided further, that in the event that funds are withheld from any unit pursuant to

this section, the Secretary of State shall promptly inform the foreign government of the basis for such action and shall, to the maximum extent practicable, assist in the foreign government in taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces to justice.

Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000

Section 8098.

- (a) **Prohibition**—None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to support any training program involving a unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of Defense has received credible information from the Department of State that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, unless all necessary corrective steps have been taken.
- (b) **Monitoring**—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall ensure that prior to a decision to conduct any training program referred to in subsection (a), full consideration is given to all credible information available to the Department of State relating to human rights violations by foreign security forces.
- (c) **Waiver**—The Secretary of Defense, after consultation with the Secretary of State, may waive the prohibition in subsection (a) if he determines that such waiver is required by extraordinary circumstances.
- (d) **Report**—Not more than 15 days after the exercise of any waiver under subsection (c), the Secretary of Defense shall submit a report to the congressional defense committees describing the extraordinary circumstances, the purpose and duration of the training program, the United States forces and the foreign security forces involved in the training program, and the information relating to human rights violations that

necessitates the waiver.

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