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Colombia's Rural Communities: Displacement, Plan Colombia and Alternative Models

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COLOMBIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES: DISPLACEMENT, PLAN COLOMBIA AND
ALTERNATIVE MODELS

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

arts
Masters^{arts} in Sociology

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Jasney Cogua

December, 2003

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree MA in Sociology,
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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COLOMBIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES:
DISPLACEMENT, PLAN COLOMBIA AND
ALTERNATIVE MODELS

Jasney Cogua, MA

University of Nebraska, 2003

Advisor: Lourdes Gouveia

The objective of this thesis is to determine whether or not Plan Colombia effectively addresses the problems and needs of rural Colombia.

The classical views of Marx, Lenin and Chayanov, the Theories of Development and the postulates of neoliberal ideology are discussed as the theoretical context within which Plan Colombia emerged. This thesis was derived through a process of archival research, interviews (N=8) and direct observation and participation in peasant demonstrations, which occurred primarily during the summer of 2002.

A general review of Colombian rural development models (haciendas, plantations, Import Substitution Industrialization, agrarian reform, Export Promotion Strategies and neoliberal postulates) is made. Additionally, an analysis of the socio-political events ("La Violencia," the National Front, paramilitary and guerrilla groups), and the drug economy is included. This historical analysis frames the background that allowed the creation of Plan Colombia.

Plan Colombia originated as an investment initiative designed to achieve peace by improving the economic, social and environmental conditions of Colombia. However, the Plan was altered by the Clinton administration and again by the U.S. Congress. The Plan was implemented as an antinarcotics and counterinsurgency strategy supporting neoliberal postulates. The U.S. approved \$1.3 billion for this version of the Plan.

The programs addressing illicit crop production include strategies for the forced eradication of illicit crops, the voluntary eradication of illicit crops, and options for alternative development. Other programs include: Families in Action, Works for Peace, Forest Ranger Families, Humanitarian Attention, Human Rights and IHR, etc. Even though a discussion of the military component of Plan Colombia is beyond the scope of this work, it is mentioned briefly because of its profound impact on the rural communities.

Plan Colombia is an ineffective response to Colombia's rural problems and needs as it addresses the symptoms of these difficulties rather than the problems themselves. In fact, some of these strategies are producing a negative effect on the rural communities, as exemplified by the increase in the levels of population displacement.

There are several alternatives or modifications to Plan Colombia being considered by various groups in Colombia. These alternatives include "Paz Colombia," as well as efforts to modify the free trade agreements now under discussion.

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Colombia's Rural Communities: Displacement, Plan Colombia, and Alternative Development Models

Rural Colombia today is the result of a myriad of economic development programs and strategies of capitalist modernization which were adopted throughout the country's colonial past. From the *encomienda*¹ system and plantation economy of colonial times, to the largely ineffective agrarian reforms of more recent decades, these modernization attempts despite some successes, have often exacerbated the economic and social fragmentation of Colombia's rural communities. Among other things, these models have failed to address the root cause of the country's highly uneven distribution of land, high levels of rural poverty, poor quality of life, and political disenfranchisement. It is these conditions that lie at the root of the violence, human displacement, cultivation of illegal crops (mainly coca and opium poppies), and environmental degradation that characterizes Colombia's rural society today.

By the year 2000, rural Colombia made up thirty-one percent of the country's population, of which almost eighty-five percent was below the poverty line (Fajardo, et al, 2002). These 15.6 million rural people have been mired in a wave of violence for the last forty years, which has intensified since the second half of the 1990s. Confrontations between guerrilla and paramilitary groups² feuding for control of territory and illegal crop production have led to an erosion of state power. Fearing for their lives, peasants and other rural dwellers have created a massive exodus toward the cities, where their employment opportunities are severely limited. Those who stay behind join producers of coca and opium poppies as a strategy for economic survival. Land initially dedicated to the production of food is increasingly converted into drug production.

The most recent response from the Colombian government to these destructive trends has been the formulation of the so-called "Plan Colombia." Plan Colombia's principal goal, however, was not to

address land reform or rural development issues, but to combat drug production and insurgency in the countryside. Nevertheless, the Plan has become the de facto model of rural and agricultural development. The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of "Plan Colombia," as a Colombian rural model, as well as its capacity to address the roots of the Colombian conflict, the strength of the drug economy and the negative effects of global policies upon which it is constructed. I begin with an historical review of Colombia's rural transformations and development models leading up to Plan Colombia. Then I analyze the evolution and implementation of Plan Colombia, focusing on the role of external forces in its creation and the implementation of the Plan's specific rural programs. I conclude with a review of alternative models of development which, based on principles of democratic participation and equitable access to resources, may overcome some of the constraints found in previous models. While much has been said about the military component of Plan Colombia, I am most interested in the social consequences of the Plan, especially those associated with the process of eradication of coca and opium poppies and the alternative development programs the Plan delineates. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following question: To what degree is Plan Colombia an effective response to the economic and social needs of rural Colombia?

I argue that Plan Colombia has become a de facto plan for rural development based on a careful examination of each of the strategies contained in the Plan, which I outline in more detail later in the text. A review of these strategies reveals four basic insights. (1) Actions under the Plan take place primarily in the rural sector, and their impact will be felt most heavily in the agricultural and rural sector. The latter is due to the fact that the rural population resides where cultivation of illicit crops, and associated violence is most prevalent, and also where the weakening of the state is most severe. (2) Plan Colombia contains a strategy for illegal crop eradication in combination with a strategy for their substitution by legal products. This substitution would be accompanied by other offers to support peasant production (i.e. agrarian alternative farming methods, technical assistance, infrastructure development, etc.). I should be recognized that

twenty-five out of the thirty-two Colombian provinces contain illegal plantations of coca and opium poppies. (3) The Plan contains a series of strategies aimed, not at agricultural production per se, but at quality of life issues in selected rural areas. These include strategies to establish peace and social participation, to improve health and education services, and to increase rural employment and infrastructure in the areas with the most conflict. (4) The plan includes a strategy focused on combating insurgents and drug traffickers whose methods may bring uncalculated risks and consequences to the entire rural population living in these areas. Some of those results include population displacement to urban and cross-border areas in Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador, increased violence, and long-term environmental damage.

The organization of the thesis is straightforward. The introduction provides an overview of the Colombian problem and presents the topics explored in detail in subsequent chapters. Additionally it contains the theoretical foundation and methodology used in the construction of the thesis. The theoretical foundation includes a review of the main classical theories and debates associated with the literature on rural development. Chapter One reviews the literature on Latin American rural development (with an emphasis on Colombia) in order to analyze the general strategies of rural capitalist modernization. Then, an examination of the emergence of neoliberal ideologies is exposed as the basis for the creation of Plan Colombia. Also, in this chapter an analysis of some of the additional forces shaping Colombia's rural structure (i.e., "The Violence" period and the drug economy) are related as factors that must be analyzed in the process of framing the Colombian current conditions. Chapter Two contains a detail explanation of the creation and evolution of Plan Colombia, highlighting the role of external forces in this process. Also a complete summary of the Plan's major components and elements are reviewed in this chapter. Chapter Three contains the analysis of the implementation of Plan Colombia's programs, focusing on those specifically developed for the rural communities in Colombia. The thesis conclusion (Chapter Four) emphasizes the need for delineating and proposing a renewed model of rural development that

comprehensively addresses the rural realities, conditions and opportunities, as well as the need to assess the drug problem and violent confrontations from within the country itself.

Theoretical Framework

Classical theories of rural development³

Classical theories of rural development focus primarily on the need to address the social and economic transformations of the peasantry in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Marx saw capitalism as a historically progressive force, the most developed stage in the historical evolution of modes of production from feudalism to capitalism, and a necessary step toward the development of socialism. Marx himself did not see a lengthy survival of the peasant class in the capitalist system. Rather, he argued that the peasantry's survival was only attained with limited development of industrial capitalism and insisted that, in the long run, the peasantry would be destroyed through impoverishment. Marx assumed that the peasantry would be progressively squeezed until they were forced into the ranks of the proletariat (Gledhill, 2001).

According to Gledhill (2001), Lenin's analysis ⁴ is founded on Marx's ideas, but Lenin goes further by arguing that peasants were destined to fall into one of the two classes of capitalism: the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Therefore, Lenin did see a place for bourgeois peasants as part of the industrialization of agriculture and, like Marx, Lenin believed there was no room for peasants as a separate class within the capitalist system. From Leninist and Marxist perspectives, there are at least four different ways in which the agricultural sector may contribute to the development of industrialized capitalism: 1) peasants are forced to join the mostly urban "free wage labor" because of limitations placed on their capacity to sustain themselves as farmers. This is what Marx saw as the squeeze that would lead to proletarianization; 2) rural proletarianization becomes an integral part of capitalist agriculture, via increased productivity of wage labor and because small self-subsistence farmers are unable to produce a marketable surplus; 3) the

development of the home market in which proletarians, unable to maintain their previous household self-sufficiency (based on crafts and farming petty trade), must find the primary needs of sustenance in the market; and 4) the creation of a peasant bourgeoisie also opened the space for new markets such as equipment, wage labor, and the increase of personal consumption in general.

The major challenge to Lenin's theory came from the Russian agronomist Alexander Vasil'evich Chayanov⁵ and his followers. The starting point of Chayanov's theory of the peasant farmer structure is conceptualized as a unit of consumption as well as a unit of production through the use of family labor. Based on this premise, Chayanov argued that peasants had their own economic strategies and distribution systems, which did not fit into the framework of capitalist economics (Chayanov, 1925). He argued that peasants should not be seen as adversaries in the evolution of capitalism to socialism. He gave as an example the support that they were given in the construction of the Soviet Union socialist system. Therefore, peasants should be supported as individual family farmers and important components in the creation of cooperatives.

One of Chayanov's strongest arguments was related to the *consumption-labor balance* in which the peasantry's objective is that of producing up to the point of providing a minimal standard of livelihood for the family, and stopping production when this objective is met. This process could involve some types of markets and land tenure, but not with the purpose of increasing profits. What peasants were looking for, through these transactions, was the use-value of products, not accumulating profit, as would be the case in a capitalist system. The minimal standard of consumption includes: 1) securing conditions for future production; 2) the social relationships which required an extra effort (production) in order to fulfill their social responsibilities (termed "social reproduction"); and 3) in the cases in which peasants are obligated to pay taxes or rent, they must produce enough to cover these expenses. All of this, of course, is in addition to the natural maintenance of the family.

Chayanov also highlighted self-exploitation as an alternative solution for survival in a market depression. Self-exploitation may be realized when a peasant produces more of a crop, despite low market prices or reduces consumption in order to receive a normal income. However, he also showed that in the case of a land shortage, the willingness to use rented lands was always an option as long as that extra production resulted in at least a little bit more than the rent cost in order to meet minimal living standards or requirements. These strategies demonstrate the different ways that Chayanov conceived the survival tactics of the peasantry in difficult economic conditions (Thorner, 1986).

Chayanov also theorized about the effect of capitalism on peasant agriculture. He argued that first, capitalism would intensify the relations between borrower and lender of capital needed for the production cycle. Therefore, lenders may ask the borrowers (the peasants) to pay back even double the amount lent, which, in some cases, might be their entire harvest. Secondly, he foresaw the advance of developed agribusiness utilizing the peasants as contract farmers. Third, he envisioned the use of peasant farming in the production of mere raw materials, taking from them the possibility of generating any value added to their products (Shanin, 1986).

Chayanov's theory is based mainly on socio-economic differentiation in terms of demographic variation. In other words, Chayanov argued that the development of the peasantry would depend on the cyclical development of the family and the number of people in each unit. Therefore, what really matters is to reach the point of minimum standard of living possible without expanding production after family needs have been met. Chayanov, contrary to Marx or Lenin, did not see the disappearance of the peasantry as a social organization. He saw the peasantry as an independent class able to create its own non-capitalistic economic alternatives based on family-labor and a constant search of the minimum standard of living. To Chayanov, the preservation of the peasantry depends on demographic cycles, rather than on the emblematic class antagonism.

These classical theorists shaped the Latin American debate on rural change and the expected fate of the peasantry which, in turn, have informed policy responses dominant until the late sixties and mid seventies. Two competing perspectives or peasant “roads” to capitalist incorporation framed the Latin American debate in the so-called “agrarian question”. These roads are generally known as the peasantist or “campesinista” and the proletarian depeasantist or “decampesinista” road.

On the one hand, the *peasantist* perspective is informed by Chayanovian views that speak to the independence and resilience of the peasantry in the presence of a capitalist system. Peasantists argued, and continue to argue, for the endurance of peasant farming. They reject the formation of a generalized wage structure in the countryside (i.e. proletarianization), and the subsequent disappearance of the peasantry (Kay, 1995). Zamosc (1986) refers to this road as the “peasant path”, and he views peasant’s access to land as the most important factor. He believes the large numbers of small holders allow peasant farming to be based upon family labor creating a structure in which production and consumption are generated within the family units. In such a structure, producers maintain and control labor and production is for use-value instead of profit. For supporters of this alternative, the peasantry possesses a specific mode of production, which will remain in existence as a social category under the capitalist system (De Janvry, 1981).

On the other hand, Marxist and Leninist theories largely inform the depeasantist perspective. Those who subscribe to this perspective argue that the peasants’ form of production is economically unviable in the long run, and the development of capitalism will eventually transform the majority into proletarians and a few capitalized peasant farmers (Kay, 1995). The high concentration of land ownership favorable for a capitalist agriculture is based upon wage labor and large-scale production, which is why this view is also called “the landlord path” (Zamosc, 1986). De Janvry (1981) in a classic work “*The agrarian question and reformism in Latin America*” argues that depeasantization produces the disappearance of the

old patriarchal peasantry and the emergence of two new social classes: The rural bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat.

Today, most authors writing about the structure of production in rural Latin America argue that a semi-proletarianization of the peasantry, which consists of a combination of family farming and wage labor, is the most common pattern characterizing this sector. The analysis of the agrarian question in Latin America is still ongoing. The significance of this observation for rural Latin America is underscored by Zamosc (1986: 7) when he argues that “the socioeconomic structure of the countryside shapes the conditions for economic performance, defines the relative strength of the rural social classes, and sets the stage for their participation in the political processes linked to the development of capitalism.”

In summary, classic theories of rural development influenced the debate on rural Latin America generating the peasantist/depeasantist debate. This debate has shaped or legitimized the various state policies aimed at dealing with the peasant question as well as critiques of such policies throughout the region's history. This suggests that rural and agrarian structures should be analyzed as the confluence of different alternatives and actions, based upon the economic and political conditions of each community.

Research Methodology

The data collection consisted of:

1. Archival research among government and non-government documents, newspapers, books, journal articles, and general publications from both Colombia and the United States. These articles provided information regarding the historical transformation and current state of rural Colombia; precedent and current models of rural development at the national and local levels as well as their rates of failure and success; the emergence, implementation and impact of “Plan Colombia;” the direct effects of the Plan on

the rural sector; several opinions held from different organizations regarding the Plan; and any alternative of development and vision for the future of the rural communities.

2. Open-ended interviews with key Colombian and Non-Colombian governmental and private organizations' representatives. During my visit to Santafé de Bogotá in July of 2002, I made initial contacts and conducted interviews with several individuals in academia and key organizations (an ex-guerrilla member, a labor union leader, an NGO representative, a retired military officer, a rural high-school teacher, and a university professor). Unfortunately, by that time, there was a change of administration of the government and I was not able to interview a government representative because they seemed guarded about what changes were coming. However, upon my return, I was able to contact some of these government representatives, who by presidential mandate are obligated to respond to any citizen request, and I have therefore been communicating with them via e-mail.

3. Direct and indirect observation of peasant's marches and protests. In my visit to Santafé de Bogotá, I had also the opportunity to observed three different public demonstrations from peasants and women's organizations that offered a concrete perspective of the effects of Plan Colombia over their communities and economic systems. Additionally, I followed new marches and demonstrations via Internet and television.

Chapter I

Colombia's Rural History and Current Conditions

This chapter looks primarily at the historical process of capitalist modernization in Latin America, focusing on Colombia's rural development models and policies. First I recount this process from the hacienda model up to the imposition of Export Promotion Strategies during the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Then, I continue with the analysis of the emergence of neoliberal ideologies and policies. I conclude the chapter with an examination of the violent conflict and the drug economy as additional factors that contributed to Colombia's current rural conditions. By the end of the chapter an understanding of the socio-economic framework within which Plan Colombia has been delineated and established will have been achieved..

1. From Haciendas to Export Promotion Strategies

The configuration of agrarian society during the colonization period was organized into three main socio-economic structures and land tenure systems: First, the haciendas: medium-size parcels of land in which landowners (hacendados) employed people as seasonal workers, in peonage, etc., with the purpose of fulfilling the needs of the domestic market. Second, the plantations, which were large-size parcels in which wage-laborers, were primarily used for export-oriented production. Third, communal lands, which were relatively small-size plots of land used for collective exploitation and self-consumption. These were generally located in indigenous reservations or tight peasant communities (Kay, 2000; Bakewell, 1998).

The period between 1830 and 1930 was known as the "Golden Age of the Hacienda." Guided predominantly by Spaniards or their native-born male descendants, the dominant presence of these haciendas led to a large regional economic transformation in which these units were frequently converted into expanded, export-oriented institutions known as plantations.

The plantation system produced a substantial degradation of the peasant's quality of life, reducing their chances of access to land. Therefore, this exacerbated the process of proletarianization, as the peasants had no option other than to either become wage laborers or to migrate (Zamosc, 1986; Kay, 2000; Wiarda and Kline, 2001). A few peasants kept their land, while others occupied new lands, transforming themselves into "semi-proletarians." The latter represented those who had access to land but who still needed to sell their labor-power to the large landowners (Deere, 2000; Kay, 1997). This period resulted in a highly unequal distribution of land, producing an excess of landless peasants and a small number of land-owning hacendados.

In Colombia, the weather and the geographic conditions allowed for the cultivation of commercial crops such as tobacco, quinoa, cotton, rice, sugar, soybeans, sorghum, bananas and coffee by large scale plantation owners. They targeted their production primarily towards international markets, while small peasant farms produced most of the foodstuff consumed internally. Coffee production grew exponentially, and became the main Colombian export. This remarkable growth of the external sector made many landowners and merchants wealthy, and they began to import machinery for new industries. Simultaneously, several improvements in transportation and infrastructure were developed. However, such improvements did not cover the whole national territory. These improvements included almost exclusively the coffee zones comprising by the provinces of Antioquía, Caldas, and the northern portions of Tolima and Valle (Diaz-Callejas 2002; Le Grand 1984, Zamosc, 1986). Thus, as we will see, these state policies produced an uneven development of Colombia's rural areas that permitted the deterioration and segregation of different regions that will later in history hold illegal plantations.

According to Le Grand (1984), during the period between the late 1850s and the late 1920s public lands were readily available, and thus, there was a high level of peasant colonization. This colonization took place mostly in the middle altitudes, which were appropriate for the cultivation of coffee and bananas. This was known as the "Colonización Antioqueña. At the same time, this caused stagnation and contraction

in the highlands. However, this colonization process did not represent the interests of large landowners who relied on wage labor. Thus, they resorted on property titles, which most of the new peasants settlers lacked, as the entitling costs were economically out of reach. Therefore, "with the growth of the Colombian export economy came a concentration of landholding that occurred through the cumulative dispossession of thousand of frontier squatters" (LeGrand, 1984).

The transformation of rural communities, from the colonial semi-feudal period through the capitalist implementation of plantations for international trade using primarily wage labor, did not protect all the peasantry nor modify the agrarian structures. As the various capitalist forms of production penetrated Latin America's rural and agricultural sectors, the claims of both the peasantists and depeasantists were validated, as small holders continued to work and exist alongside the emergence of large landowners. The constitution of the Colombian Land Company, transitory name adopted by the well-known U.S. United Fruit Company in Colombia, by the end of the nineteenth century, plus the emergence of the coffee business in the 1900s, are the greatest examples of the implementation of plantation systems. At the same time, only 6.06 (0.46%) of 1,301,122 hectares were owned by small farmers by the end of the nineteenth century⁶. This may reflect the permanence of the two production systems (the plantations and the small peasant farms) co-existing side by side.

From the late 1930s to the 1970s, the Import-Substitution-Industrialization (ISI) program, adopted by most Latin American governments, tended to reverse the advancement of export-oriented plantations. The ISI project was specifically focused on internal development, stressing industrialization and domestic markets, through the intensification of the state's role in economic development. However, support and assistance from the government was generally granted to large landowners pursuing the industrialization of agriculture. Peasants and small landowners were largely neglected because of their precarious contribution to the industrial system and their lack of means to implement new production techniques (Deere, 2000; Barraclough, 1973).

The Colombia ISI program gained momentum during the 1930s and 1940s. With the creation of the Caja Agraria⁷ in 1932, the state showed its first real attempt at assuming the role of primary provider of credit to the agricultural sector (Grindle, 1986). By the 1940s, more active stimulation to the modernization of agriculture was reflected in the creation of protective tariffs, specific taxes, import restrictions, cheap credit, the development of basic infrastructure, and the improvement of marketing facilities. These measures were created in order to favor domestic products and reduce the country's dependence on foreign investors and bankers (Cockcroft, 1998). "The purpose of the state in supporting the agricultural industry was emphasized by the intent of turning landowners of all sizes into capitalist entrepreneurs" (Kalmanovitz, 1979:28 in Grindle, 1986:68). While this did materialize for some, it created general impoverishment for the common peasant population. The ISI program was successful to the extent that it satisfied a higher proportion of internal consumption, and moderately increased exports of a larger variety of traditional agricultural products such as cotton, sugar and corn, among others. Nevertheless, this state policy almost exclusively stimulated large plantations and massive production, essentially ignoring small farmers and peasants. This also generated the displacement of hundreds of thousands of peasants from the country's developed zones to the East Plains, Putumayo, Caquetá and the Amazon forest in Colombia searching for affordable land (Diaz-Callejas, 2002). At the same time, Colombian Peasant Leagues took form, identifying themselves with left-wing political parties and creating a rural protest ideology, centered on the public land issue (Le Grand, 1984; Molano, 1984). The above mentioned zones are still identified as having insufficient levels of infrastructure and a low level of agricultural development of legal products. This period of strong support for large scale agricultural development was interrupted by the period known as La Violencia (to be explored further in the following section). However, in the late 1950s, the state became concerned with efforts to modernize the agricultural sector once again and a new era of state intervention began.

Faced with the potentially explosive environment of extremely unequal distribution of land and the impoverishment of entire rural regions, and pressured by strong peasant movements and international forces, some Latin American states opted to implement an agrarian reform. The purpose of the agrarian reform was to reduce the number of landless peasants, to improve the conditions of production in order to strengthen the peasant economy, and to attend to socioeconomic and ethnic-cultural necessities (Zamosc 1986). In some countries, the agrarian reform worked (i.e., Cuba, Bolivia, Mexico) by creating more opportunities in the countryside and generating internal displacement of peasants to rural government and private farming activities. "However, most of the governments were too politically and economically weak to implement a substantial agrarian reform, or had the underlying intention of promoting capitalist farming" (De Janvry 1981 in Kay, 2000:129). The agrarian reform also contributed to the solidification of social movements such as syndicates, collective organizations, unions, and cooperatives (LeGrand, 1984; Zamosc, 1986).

After several attempts to establish an agrarian reform⁸ in Colombia, the government signed Law 135 "La Reforma Agraria Integral" in 1961 (Colombia, 1961). The purpose of the law was essentially to redistribute land, therefore empowering landless people and small farmers that were unable to work. The law's additional objectives were i) to regulate the use of unexploited land, ii) to increase the productivity of farming and livestock, iii) to protect and guarantee the rights of rural workers by offering better living conditions, iv) to provide economic capital in order to protect natural resources, and to v) establish peace and security in the Colombian countryside (Colombia, 1961). However, according to many authors (De Janvry, 1981; Le Grand, 1984; Machado, 1998; Molano, 1984; Vargas del Valle, 1994; Zamosc, 1986), the agrarian reform did not constitute an effective land reform. The ambiguity of the law allowed wealthy landowners to protect their interests and undermine the positive aspects of the law, including the betterment of landless peasants and the development of agriculture. Fearing the expropriation of their land (which was contemplated in the law if the lands were not productive), big landowners intensified their

production systems, mostly in the provinces of Cordoba, Cesar, Valle, Tolima, Antioquía, and the East Plains. At the same time, and as a by-product of this “modernization and extension” of big plantations, large landowners were also expelling peasants from their lands, thereby increasing the process of colonization of less developed provinces such as Caquetá, Guaviare and Putumayo, among others. The official deceleration of the reform occurred in the 1970s with the approval of Law 4 of 1973 (El Pacto de Chicoral) in which a complete rejection of agrarian reform was justified on technical grounds, and the expansion of large scale capitalist agriculture was championed as a rational means to achieve national development (Grindle, 1986; Vargas del Valle, 1994).

Thus, the ISI model and the attempts at an agrarian reform signified the reverse of the models of development implemented earlier. These models produced contradictory results. ISI was implemented as a national industrialization and development program, which did not put into action sufficiently effective social policies or strategies that would lead to the overall improvement of the poorest sectors, (landless peasants and small landowners). The most important effect of the agrarian reform law was not the modification of the unequal tenure system, but the intensification of production and use of the land, which brought significant economic growth for some. Unfortunately such growth was based on the development of mostly large plantations accompanied by a highly uneven distribution of land and massive disparity between rural and urban incomes. Therefore, the favoritism for industrialization and the lack of support for social development under these models are clear obstacles to rural development, understood as the economic and social improvement of all sectors. Strengthening of large landowners and the constant colonization of relatively infertile lands in lightly-developed areas of Colombia created even more disparity and narrowed the opportunities for those migrating in the search for a better life.

In Colombia, from 1967 to 1980, a strong export promotion strategy (mainly coffee) generated relative stability and growth. From 1955 to 1980, coffee production increased from 5.5 million to 12.7 million sacks of beans (Diaz-Callejas, 2002:160). Export earnings allowed the country to buffer the impact of the

1981 global recession. In fact, Colombia was the only Latin American country not to default on or restructure its foreign debt during the 1980s. During the 1980s the export base was diversified, and this led to increased export revenues, mainly from non-traditional exports, especially flowers. The exportation of flowers alone represented a growth rate of 46.51% between 1970 and the end of the 1980s (Ministerio de Agricultura, 2002). In addition to this state policy, the marijuana and cocaine boom also supplied new resources of revenue that strongly helped in the stability and economic growth of Colombia during this period. Despite these generally favorable economic conditions, social and economic inequality remained. Indigenous communities and peasants in small farms, (i.e., those generally outside of this new export-led agriculture) were the groups most affected by the economic recession (Coulter, 2002). In fact, the land distribution during the 1960s to 1970s showed an increase in the number of estates between 20 and 500 hectares and a decrease in the number of estates smaller to 10 hectares⁹, thus it illustrates the high concentration of rural property ownership in the hands of big landowners (Machado, 1998). It was precisely upon this foundation of inequality and political repression that the highly profitable illicit drug trade emerged, which has brought about much social and economic destabilization.

2. The Neoliberal Period

In the aftermath of the Latin American debt crisis in the 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank implemented a series of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). These programs were designed to aid in the recovery of the Latin American economies and to provide the means for them to repay their foreign debt. The implementation SAPs was one of the first programs instituted in the so-called neoliberal period. Neoliberal ideology is understood as the return of market fundamentalism initiatives. These initiatives included notions such as free markets and laissez faire economics, which were prominent during the “liberal period” of the 1800s. Multilateral organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank would now play a key role in disciplining countries that failed to adopt standard fiscal, financial, and

state reforms to conform to the neoliberal dictum (Cockcroft, 1989, McMichael, 2000, Stiglitz, 2002). Neoliberal postulates promote an export-oriented model based on “comparative advantages” as well as market liberalization, a high reliance on imports to be purchased with export revenues, the elimination of subsidies for producers and consumers, the removal of trade-tariffs and licenses, minimal state involvement, and the privatization of public entities.

With the development ideology now grounded in a neoliberal perspective, the ISI project was reversed. Land distribution became even more unequal due to the drive of privatization and the decollectivization of rural lands (McMichael, 2000; Kay, 2000). In Colombia there was an important decomposition of the large properties, the consolidation of medium size properties (those of 20 – 100 hectares), and the increase of the minifundio. This was due to the processes of inheritance, the levels of rural and urban unemployment and the tributary laws (Machado, 1998). The “agrarian question”, under the neoliberal perspective changed from being a structural problem of land distribution and insufficient governmental support to being a problem of efficient competition in the markets. The key was the ability to successfully compete in the international market. Thus, neoliberal measures tended to favor a depeasantist perspective in which the support for a competitive and open market shaped policies to the detriment of small farmers, while increasing the partial or complete proletarianization of rural communities. Consequently, today small farmers and peasants have few options other than to become wage-workers, or as in the case of Colombia, to join illegal armies, cultivate illegal crops, to move to the cities, other rural areas or even abroad.

Neoliberal strategies acquired full form under the government of Cesar Gaviria (1990–1994). Colombia became an importer of food and agricultural commodities such as corn, rice, potatoes, beans, sorghum, cotton, eggs, chicken meat, and vegetable oils that had been produced internally since the beginning of the twentieth century. Non-state intervention, a central concept in neoliberal dogma, translated into the relative abandonment of the peasantry, as evidenced in the reduction of economic and technical

assistance to small holders that otherwise would find it impossible to compete in the global market. From 1990 to 1998, a total of 700,000 hectares were abandoned and food imports grew from 800,000 to 5,800,000 tons (Diaz-Callejas, 2002). Concurrently, the increase in the acquisition of lands by the narcotraffickers created what has been called a “neolatifundio” supported by the appearance of private security forces. Additionally, a decrease in the medium and small size (minifundio) plots emerged due mostly to the violence and the displacement of people (Machado, 1998). As a consequence of this model, unemployment and poverty soared, as did the cultivation of illegal crops (coca and opium poppies). During the Samper administration (1994–1998), economic woes continued and the growth rate fell from 6% to .06% (Coulter, 2002). Unemployment and the growth of an informal economy, including illicit drug production, became unmanageable (Machado, 1998). At the same time, neoliberal policies accomplished the goal of opening markets, increasing competition for internal producers and, concomitantly, the availability of cheap labor.

While peasantist and depeasantist perspectives were indirectly reflected in most of the rural policies until the mid -1970s, the latest theory of rural development is framed within the neoliberal ideology and uses relies on the principle of market fundamentalist. This brings about a new historical and ideological momentum that produces, in the context of rural development, different types of alternatives to peasants' survival strategies, as well as new and different government responses such as Plan Colombia.

3. Forces shaping Colombia's rural structure: “La Violence” and the drug economy

Two sets of forces are intrinsically tied to the rural communities that are shaping the current conditions of rural Colombia today: 1) “La Violencia” and 2) the drug economy. I examine the most critical aspects of this lethal combination and discuss how that became the backdrop upon which Plan Colombia emerged.

a. La Violencia

“La Violencia” (1948–1958) was the name given to an intense inter-party struggle between the repressive, reactionary projects of the Conservative Party, and the revolutionary social democratic platforms of certain factions of the Liberal Party in rural areas. The Conservatives, the party control at the time¹⁰ (1943 – 1962), controlled the armed forces, which they used to brutally attack those loyal to the Liberals. In response, the Liberals organized equally brutal guerrilla armies, generating the first signs of today’s guerrilla movements (Sanchez, 1992). In 1958, the two parties promoted a strategy aimed at ending the conflict. This strategy was called The National Front, a governmental resolution in which the leaders of the two political parties were committed to sharing political power, alternating the presidency and neatly dividing all posts, including the cabinet, the judiciary, and legislative bodies. This negotiated settlement ended the official war between the two parties. However, violent conflicts between the different armed factions have never been fully resolved because the fundamental roots of the conflict (such as the social inequalities and the poor economic conditions), under which many rural Colombians continued to live, were never adequately addressed. Political repression and the exclusion of emergent political parties (communist, socialist, new-liberals) was even more visible with the establishment of this “inter-oligarchical” agreement between the conservatives and the liberals of the National Front (Cockcroft, 1998; Coulter, 2002; Sanchez, 1992).

This governmental structure, in which democratic principles were so weak and the real needs of the average Colombian people were not addressed, only served to strengthen guerrilla movements during the 1960s. Thus, in 1964 the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as well as the Army for National Liberation (ELN) were officially born. These two and many other subsequent armed groups challenged the political authority of the two parties and were motivated not only by the national conditions but by the triumph of the Cuban Revolution (Sanchez, 1992). The National Front ended in 1974, and the country returned to the system of free elections. However, the political system was already unpredictable

and highly corrupt. Since then, the guerrilla movements have increased the level of violence in rural communities. Today, the FARC operates in seven "blocks," which are subdivided into a total of 62 units called fronts. They operate in the provinces of Antioquía, Arauca, Bolívar, Boyacá, Caldas, Caquetá, Casanare, Cauca, Cesar, Choco, Córdoba, Cundinamarca, Guainía, Guajira, Guaviare, Huila, Magdalena, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Quindio, Risaralda, Santander, Sucre, Tolima, Valle, Vaupez, and Vichada. On the other hand, the ELN operates in 41 fronts in a total of 5 blocks in the provinces of Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, Boyacá, Casanare, Caldas, Cauca, Cesar, Choco, Cundinamarca, Huila, Magdalena, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Santander, Sucre, Tolima, and Valle (Programa Presidencial de los Derechos Humanos, 2002).

Additionally, the creation of right-wing paramilitary groups in Colombia added one more element to equation of violence in Colombia. The paramilitary groups in Colombia were born as a confluence of drug traffickers, large landowners, cattle ranchers, local political bosses, and the military as a strategic move to protect themselves and their lands against the guerrillas (Richani, 2000). These groups were also formed to preserve Christian values and capitalist property rights and to rid society of undesirable leftist ideologies and socially unwanted prostitutes, homosexuals, indigents, drug addicts and drug pushers (Bergquist, 1984). The official emergence of a national paramilitary organization called Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self Defense Groups of Colombia - AUC) occurred in 1997 under the leadership of Carlos Castaño. Today, the paramilitary groups operate in the provinces of Antioquia , Bolívar, Caquetá, Cauca, Choco, Córdoba, Cundinamarca, Guajira, Guaviare, Magdalena, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Sucre, Tolima, Valle, and Vichada (Programa Presidencial de los Derechos Humanos, 2002).

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the levels of violence reached record proportions. Violent activities included the systematic sabotage of major oil pipelines, kidnappings for ransom, murders of scores of high-level public officials, political leaders and general citizens (Berquist, 1984,; Berquist et al,

2001). The latter is due to the growing strength of guerrillas and paramilitary groups not only because of their political gains through the possession and control of strategic zones, but also because of their access to drug profits. The use of drug profits allows the illegal armed forces to acquire high-level military hardware and to offer monetary incentives to young recruits from among the urban poor and unemployed (Berquist, 1984; Molano, 1984; Diaz-Callejas, 2002).

b. The Drug Economy:

The Colombian drug industry has undergone major expansion during the last three decades. Colombia has a long history of cocaine smuggling. Since the late 1970s, Colombia began to assume an important role in the cocaine business through the development of an efficient system for transporting cocaine to the U.S. This system was instituted and guided by the Medellín and Cali cartels, which, controlled most of the international cocaine trade by the 1980s (Smith, 2000; Kawell, 2002). Coca leaves produced in Perú and Bolivia were shipped to laboratories hidden in Colombia's dense tropical rain forest, where the leaves were processed into coca paste or cocaine and shipped to the international market (Buchsbaum, 1993). Not until the mid-1990s did Colombia start massively producing coca leaves. This was a result of the U.S.-funded enforcement program that indirectly helped relocate the coca production from Perú and Bolivia to Colombia. At the same time, Colombian producers were entering into the business of opium poppies. The death or jailing of many top Medellín and Cali leaders led to the near downfall of these cartels in the 1990s. However, they have been replaced by dozens of smaller organizations in charge of production and trafficking as well as by the illegal armies in Colombia (Coulter, 2002; Diaz-Callejas, 2002; Kawell, 2000). Also, the involvement of guerrillas and self-defense groups in the drug business is encouraging and accelerating the expansion of coca and poppy plantations in Colombia. The increasing trend of concentration of land ownership is demonstrated by examining the incredible investment in land by drug-lords and their associates. The land concentration is manifested in areas of traditional agricultural

production (north and west), as well as in the growing deforestation by coca-growing small holders on the agricultural frontier (south and east) of Colombia (Sanchez, 2001; Diaz-Callejas, 2002; Machado, 1998).

The drug business and the incredible profits it generates are feeding the international markets and financing Colombia's violent conflict. At the same time, small peasant and indigenous producers often see the cultivation of these crops as the only viable strategy for survival in this new nexus of neoliberal policies, and thus, to avoid displacement into large cities which do not offer viable economic alternatives. Presently, eighty percent of the Colombian provinces produce illicit crops. This accounts for more than 145,000 hectares, and more than 200,000 families supplement their income with revenues generated by the production of illicit crops (Restrepo-Cañon, 2002).

The constant exodus of people from rural areas to increasingly large urban locations is indicative of the desperate situation throughout much of the country. Approximately 2,027,509 people were displaced from 1985 to the first half of 2002 (Observatorio de Derechos Humanos, 2003). The increase in illegally armed groups, together with the notorious illicit drug trade, and the severe economic recession in 1999-2000, has earned Colombia an international reputation as a volatile country (Coulter, 2002).

The various attempts at capitalist modernization in Colombia have transformed rural communities in the ways outlined and analyzed here. The combination of factors I highlighted in preceding pages (capitalist-economic policies, the emergence of violent confrontations, and the drug economy) provide a substantial basis for the contemporary conflict in Colombia while simultaneously providing justification for governmental neoliberal projects such as "Plan Colombia." What rural Colombia represents today is a deterioration of the agrarian structure, due to the loss of territorial dominion on the part of the authorities, and of the accentuation of a patrimonial state in which the private interests take priority over the community. This exists in a rural sector that produces little legal output, demonstrates an increasing level of violence, and increases colonization for the cultivation of illicit crops. Plan Colombia represented, at least in theory, an option for the development and improvement of this situation in the rural community. Therefore,

the following chapters will focus on the emergence, approval and implementation of Plan Colombia and its effects on the rural communities.

Chapter II

The Making of Plan Colombia: A Moving Target

“No two countries have harmed each other so severely while maintaining friendly governmental relations as the United States and Colombia have done by buying and selling cocaine” (Robert Drexler, 1997.)

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the degree to which “exterior forces” infringe upon Colombia's autonomy in the creation of national policies. Specifically the chapter examines the infringement of external forces such as U.S. geopolitical and economic interest, which may distort its initial goals and weakening the Plan's ability to respond to the problems and needs of rural Colombia. Following Llambí and Gouveia (1994), I would suggest that there are two fundamental and complementary arguments that are particularly useful in the proposed examination. The first perspective points to the gradual erosion of national regulatory mechanisms paralleled to the emergence of “supranational” forms of global regulation. Among such supranational entities, it is the World Bank and the International Monetary Found (IMF) the most relevant to this thesis. This process does not imply the extinction of the nation, but rather a reduction in the states' capacity to shape its own economic, political, and social policies. This reduction of the state's role is due to the empowerment of those supranational entities, which the facto allows these bodies to discipline the nation-states via the creation of global regulations, and policies to which such states must adhere here.

The second perspective also recognizes the intensification of supranational forms of power that reduced the capacity of domestic state institutions and imposed new regulations. However, they see a “logical” and / or “historical” necessity for the emergence of such supranational forms for the benefit of transnational corporations and the subordinated classes. From this perspective, the supranational entities take the role of the state regulating the economy and responding to the state's social responsibilities (e.g.,

education, health, housing, etc.). The first perspective includes discussions from authors such as McMichael (1991, 1992, and 1993), McMichael and Myhre (1992), and Vacs (1992) while the second one includes authors such as Friedland (1991) and Bonanno (1992, 1993).

In this chapter I include a careful analytical examination of the historical development of the Colombia - U.S. relationship, in order to understand the U.S.' current involvement in the development of Colombia's national policies. First, I will recount a brief history of the Colombia - U.S. relationships from the post Cold-War period to the late 1990s. This will frame the variety of approaches used by the U.S. to achieve regional domination and the specific context within which Plan Colombia was framed. Second, I will describe the origins, strategies, and purposes of Plan Colombia, from the perspective of each of the states involved. This will clarify each country's rationale and particular interests behind the creation of Plan Colombia. Therefore, I hope to illustrate how U.S. government, as an exterior force, molded Plan Colombia in a particular and self-interested way. In effect, this amounted to bypassing Colombia's governmental structure and is in a consistent manner with the neoliberal model of globalization.

1. Colombia – U.S. Relationship: Creating Hegemony By Connecting The “War On Drugs” And Economic Policies.

In order to place the emergence of Plan Colombia in its proper context, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the two countries over time and, more specifically, to examine their “common” economic interests with respect to the production, commercialization and consumption of illegal drugs.

In light of the Cold War, during the 1960s, the U.S. instituted the “Alliance for Progress” program for which Colombia became the model country. This program was instituted as a strategy to prevent or combat the emergence of communist ideologies and governments throughout Latin America. The goals of the program were to promote economic growth, social development and political democracy.

Unfortunately, the \$1.5 billion in U.S. aid in loans and grants to Colombia, between 1960 and 1975, were

more coherent with U.S. economic interests than with the social and political development needs of the country as stated in the program's goals (Cockcroft, 1996; Drexler, 1997; Smith, 2000; Schoultz, 1998.)

In general, the U.S. did not perceive a significant threat of Communism in Colombia but, on the other hand, a growing concern over drug production produced a change in the U.S. international policies. Therefore, since the 1970s, the U.S. started to promote consistently campaigns and efforts to destroy the production of illegal drugs throughout the Western hemisphere. In order to accomplish such goals, the U.S. government used two approaches. The first approach was the elimination of the sources of supply, by destroying crops and laboratory facilities. Second, the interdiction of shipments bound for the U.S. market, by conducting surveillance at the border and on the high seas. The ultimate goal was to reduce the flow of illicit drugs into the U.S., drive prices upward, harass the traffickers, and discourage consumption (Smith, 1992: 7).

Considering "drugs" as the major threat to the U.S. national security during the 1980s, the Reagan - Bush administrations chose to declare the "War on Drugs." Initially, and for a long-time hence, the regular approach to the "War on Drugs" was to focus on supply control. The different anti-drug strategies toward the Andean countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Perú, despite requests from these nations for economic development aid and trade incentives, primarily provided funds for military and police activities, as well as military supplies such as helicopters, patrol boats, ammunition and radar equipment. U.S. Special Forces advisers were also sent south to train Andean troops, but maintained a discreet presence in the Andean countries in an attempt to avoid anti-American sentiment. They were, accordingly, forbidden to accompany host nation forces on anti-drug operations (Bewley-Taylor, 1999:191). In particular, the aims of the "War on Drugs" were 1) to stop the drug production in the Andean countries and 2) to eliminate Colombia's drug production and trafficking cartels. The campaigns of the 1980s of drug production elimination were partially successful with respect to marijuana¹¹, but had little impact on coca leaf production. The second aim of this war was supported by a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimate that, by the early 1980s, some 80

percent of all cocaine and 70 percent of all marijuana entering the U.S. was being smuggled from Colombia (Cockcroft, 1996). Therefore, the Colombian cartels were positioning themselves in the U.S. drug market generating once again what the U.S. government called a threat to national security. Despite government promotion of the "War on Drugs," annual sales in the United States increased, as did the level of drug-related accidents, and the number of children born to drug-dependent mothers (Smith, 2000).'

During the late 1980s, the U.S. "War on Drugs' Andean Strategy" approach had moderate success in the reduction of coca leaf production in countries such as Bolivia and Perú. However, at least two unintended and contradictory effects were also evident: 1) the relocation of the illicit plantations and displacement of people to neighboring countries (especially to Colombia), 2) the greater availability of drugs in the U.S. market which in turn led to lower prices¹², and a subsequently higher demand. The most obvious impact of the relocation of production to neighboring countries such as Colombia was the consolidation of the drug business (from cultivation to trafficking) into one single country. Therefore, since the 1990s in Colombia, an increasing amount of land has been used in the production of coca leaf which, at the same time has facilitated the production of coca paste and cocaine and its subsequent trade. As Smith (2000) noted:

"While the U.S. sponsored drug wars failed to achieve the goals of reducing supply and raising prices for illicit drugs in the American market, they had serious effects on Latin American society and politics... increasing the levels of violence and intimidation, exposing national institutions to corruption, increasing autonomy and authority in the hands of the Latin American armed forces... placing substantial threats to still-fragile democracies throughout the region" (Smith, 2000: 292).

During the presidential period of Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994), drug related successes were rather minimal, despite the disbanding of the Medellín Cartel, through the incarceration and later assassination of its leader Pablo Escobar in 1993 as mentioned on Chapter 1. However, President Gaviria was fully supported by the U.S. because of his movement toward the liberalization of Colombia's economy¹³. These policies responded to the desire of the U.S. to implement free trade economic policies and agreements in

Latin America. Thus Gaviria's un-impressive success with the "War on Drugs" did not result in significant penalties or deleterious consequences in terms of the Colombia - U.S. economic relationship, as was the case with the Samper administration, as we shall see next.

Colombian President Ernesto Samper (1994 – 1998) faced the most stressful relations that any Colombian president had ever endured with the U.S. government, which generated the deterioration of Colombia's society and economy. In 1994, President Samper was accused of taking funds from the drug cartels for his presidential campaign, which produced a national and international scandal (Drexler, 1997). These accusations resulted in the deterioration of Colombian – U.S. relationship while simultaneously exerting tremendous pressure on the President and his administration to take some action against the traffickers. Consequently, for the next few years, significant successes in the "War on Drugs" were registered by the Samper administration. Among these are: 1) an anticorruption law (Case 8000) that sought to combat trafficking, money laundering, illegal enrichment and embezzlement of public monies, 2) the arrest or surrender of seven of the most notorious of the Cali cartel's leaders¹⁴, 3) additional drug interdiction operations, and more than 29,000 counter-narcotics operations. Nevertheless, these successes were not enough for the Clinton Administration, who revoked Samper's U.S. visa, refused to certify (1996, 1997) or only partially certified (1998) Colombia as a reliable partner in the fight against drug trafficking¹⁵, and labeled the Colombian government as a narcodemocracy (Menzel, 1997; Drexler, 1997). On the other hand, President Samper instituted several social programs (e.g., Red de Solidaridad Social (Social Solidarity Network), Sistema de Selección de Beneficiarios para Programas Sociales –SISBEN- (Selection system of social programs' beneficiaries), that were not aligned with the reduction of the state or diminution of state welfare programs among other guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, generating even more discontent among the international lenders and the U.S.

The certification process was an annual process, mandated by congress aid, by which the U.S. president certifies that foreign countries are cooperating in counternarcotics efforts. Poor performance was

penalized with a reduction or cancellation of U.S. economic assistance, removal of trade concessions under the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), and U.S. opposition to favorable credit reviews by multilateral lending organizations. A partial certification avoided any sanction while still demonstrating dissatisfaction (Clawson and Lee III, 1996; Menzel, 1997; Smith, 2000). Decertification (full or partial) doubtless produced negative international publicity and also placed some of Colombia's cherished commercial enterprises in jeopardy. An example was the loss of all tariff exemptions by the flower export industry, which was forced to pay U.S. Custom duties and thereby reduced its competitive position in the U.S. market.

By the end of Samper's presidential period, the Colombian government struggled with its new status of narcodemocracy, its negative economic growth, and a poor international image. This image reflected the unenthusiastic bilateral relations between Colombia and the U.S. as well as dwindled confidence levels on the part of the U.S. (Tickner, 2001).

Colombian president Andres Pastrana (1998 – 2002) inherited the societal, political, and economic problems which Colombia had faced for decades (i.e., violence, displacement, corruption, illicit trade, etc.). Nonetheless, Pastrana came into office with a positive international image with regard to the Colombia peace process and the fight against drugs. His international charisma and his strong relationship with the U.S. government allowed Pastrana to obtain the necessary support for his governmental initiatives, which were centered on Plan Colombia.

“President Pastrana's inauguration in August 1998 brought to Colombia a new spirit of hope –for deeper democracy, for broader prosperity, to an end to that country's long civil conflict (Statement by the president of the United States, January 11, 2000 in Biden, 2000)

Additionally, after a period of “apparent” disinterest during the Samper administration in following the international postulates of neoliberal globalization (and, on the contrary, adopting social welfare policies), the Pastrana administration planned and took a number of concrete steps to promote open trade

and investment ¹⁶ (U.S. State Department, 2000). Colombia's high poverty rates, drug-related issues, internal armed conflict, critical economic crisis, poor political representation, and the inefficiency of the measures adopted previously, revealed the urgent need of the Colombian government to propose an alternative solution that would address most of these issues. Pastrana's alternative was called Plan Colombia. Regardless of the real origin and purposes of the Plan (to be analyzed later in this chapter) it represents the latest state effort led to address the critical situation in Colombia.

The evolution of the Colombia – U.S. relationships during the last decades has been strongly aligned with the achievement of hemispheric hegemony¹⁷, especially during and after the Cold War. The “Cold War” approach preserved the economic dominance of the U.S. and its superior political position. When the Soviet Union disappeared and U.S. security interest no longer required the same level of dominance, Washington identified drug trafficking as one of the new national security threats¹⁸. Therefore, in the post-Cold War period, the drug war kept its important function as an instrument to expand U.S. economic and political objectives in the hemisphere (Bewley-Taylor, 1999; Schoultz, 1998).

Throughout history, U.S. policy has consistently intended to serve its own interests whether related to national security, to particular domestic politics, or to economic development by controlling the behavior of weaker neighbors (Smith, 2000; Bewley-Taylor, 1999). This control is achieved not only by inter-governmental relations, but also by the influence of U.S.-based companies. The hegemonic process that the U.S. developed throughout its anti-drug campaigns became more evident with the implementation of the “certification process” as a cross-conditionality tactic. Within this cross-conditionality tactic, the successes of the “War on Drugs” would determine whether the U.S. support would continue or not. However, such conditionality was overlooked when the economic policies implemented in the country were aligned with U.S. desires, and despite the part that the successes on the “War on Drugs” were not as profound. In other words, the U.S. economic and anti-drug policies toward Latin America are tightly

intertwined and therefore these allow the perpetuation of U.S. power and the uneven (though often contested, Latin American submission to such power.

2. Plan Colombia: A U.S. – Sculpted Plan

In order to study Plan Colombia, it must first be noted that several versions of the Plan exist and that they have been selectively deployed in order to achieve multiple objectives. For the purpose of this study I will discuss three different versions of the Plan: a) the Colombian version, crafted by the Pastrana administration and approved by the Colombian Congress in 1999, b) Clinton's version contained in the Aid Proposal presented to the U.S. Congress, and c) the final version, the product of the U.S. Congress, approved in June 2000.

a. Colombian Version

The Colombian version of Plan Colombia was contained in Pastrana's Development Plan "Cambio Para Construir Paz 1999 – 2002" (Change to Build Peace) submitted to the Colombian Congress for approval in 1999. The original text was presented as a complement to the "Comprehensive Peace Initiative" proposed by Pastrana.

Plan Colombia was described as an investment initiative oriented to the improvement of the economic, social, and environmental conditions of particular areas and their population, through specific actions and investments. The Plan revolved around five strategic focal points: 1) the creation of productive participatory projects, 2) the promotion of human capital and humanitarian assistance via training and economic support, 3) the development of physical infrastructure, 4) the institutional improvement and strengthening of social capital through the offering of educational campaigns, economic legal alternatives, employment opportunities, etc and 5) the promotion of environmental sustainability (Colombia, 1999).

The objectives of the Colombian version of the Plan are essentially delineated in its strategic focal points. In general, the Colombian government was aiming at generating a "Comprehensive Peace Alternative" focused on the development of the most affected regions, promoting:

- The implementation of participative alternative cultivation projects
- The improvement of social capital, paying special attention to rural people affected by the conflict
- The establishment of humanitarian programs directed especially toward displaced people, widowers and orphans
- The creation and expansion of infrastructure (such roads or sewer systems) that could allow access to market centers from rural communities
- The institutional improvement of national, regional and local government agencies related to the development of these communities
- The promotion of environmentally sustainable projects in order to protect Colombia's ecosystem

The above version of the Plan was the one approved by the Colombian Congress through Law 508 in 1999. Plan Colombia was oriented to the development of the different Colombian regions, not exclusively the zones of illicit crop production. It was a Plan based on a methodology of participatory democracy, commitment to a peace process and development. Thus, this version of the Plan was envisioned as part of a peace initiative, not as part of an anti-narcotics platform as it turned to be in the Clinton's Version.

b. Clinton's Version

In January 2000, President Clinton presented a \$1.6 billion aid proposal to the U.S. Congress that already contained a different perspective for the Plan. It was no longer presented as a part of a peace project, but rather as an antinarcotics plan that would also help Colombia achieve peace, prosperity and democracy.

"Strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia, and fighting the drug trade there, is in our fundamental national interest. So, with President Pastrana and with our Congress, we must and we will intensify this vital work" (statement by the President of the United States, January 11, 2000 in Biden 2000).

The Clinton Administration, in the process of approving a law to support Plan Colombia (now couched in terms of the Colombian government's commitment to fight drugs), held several hearings and produced several reports in order to underscore the importance of the Plan. Senator Joseph R. Biden, who authored the report called "Plan Colombia: The Time for Assistance is Now," summarized the need for Plan Colombia as a great and strategic opportunity to eradicate drug trafficking at the source. As he put it, "never before in recent history has there been such an opportunity for the international community to strike against the bulk of the narcotics industry at the source" (Biden, 2000:2). Biden categorized Colombia as the primary source of raw materials for drug production, the site of major laboratories and the headquarters for the leading trafficking organizations. He offered point-by-point explanations of the need to support the Plan. Senator Biden did not guarantee the success of the Plan, but manifested great confidence that it would achieve its purpose. Senator Biden's stance linked support for Colombia to U.S. and regional security national interests, and most specifically, linked the latter to the spread of guerrilla insurgency beyond Colombia's borders. Biden speaks to the soundness of Plan Colombia with respect to drug eradication and the stabilization of the region. At the end of Senator Biden's reports, one can find the detailed budget request submitted by the Clinton administration.

c. The Final Version

The final version was the result of internal discussions of the U.S. Congress. Clinton's aid proposal was revised and changed by the House of Representatives and the Senate which ultimately approved a final version. It is important to illustrate¹⁹ how the U.S.' final and approved version of the Plan was the result of several revisions to the Clinton administration's version²⁰, the House of Representative's version, and the Senate's version. The House of Representatives²¹ made three substantial changes to the Clinton's version:

- Human rights, and other conditions placed on the receipt of military aid, can be waived if "extraordinary circumstances" apply

- A requirement that at least \$50 million of the aid package be used to assist displaced persons in Colombia
- A requirement that funds in the bill cannot be used to keep more than 300 U.S. military personnel in Colombia at any given time.

The Senate's²² version requested the following changes to the two previous versions:

- The thirty UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopter foreseen in earlier versions were removed, and replaced with much cheaper upgrades to UH-1H "Super Huey" helicopters
- Several other military aid categories were reduced by removing funding for their second year
- Funding for human rights conditions were added to the military and police assistance
- Numerous reporting requirements were added

The final version of Plan Colombia contained changes related to the above as follows:

- A different mix of helicopters: 18 UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopters and 42 UH-1H "Huey" helicopters. Twelve of the Hueys were designated for use by the Colombian National Police
- A combination of the House and Senate human rights conditions, but with a waiver allowing the Secretary of State to skip the human rights certification if doing so were in the "national security interest"
- Cuts in funding for alternative development and aid for displaced persons
- Removal of the Senate's environmental conditions on herbicides
- Removal of a House provision increasing funding for internally displaced persons

There was also a confluence of interests that played an important role in the approval of the U.S. support for Plan Colombia (Allman, 2002; Delacour, 2000; Tate, 2000; Bigwood, 2001). Several U.S. and international companies and organizations represent such interests:

- Helicopter producers: United Technologies and Bell Helicopter Textron
- Radar device industries: Lockheed Martin

- Oil companies with various projects in Colombia: BP-Amoco, Occidental Petroleum
- US energy groups: ENRON
- Chemical industry: Monsanto

U.S. political interest also played a role in the molding of Plan Colombia given the proximity to the presidential election and voters' concerns with the drug problem. Therefore, representatives of the two main political parties twined Plan Colombia into their antinarcotics strategy. In addition, a fact sheet written by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, "Why Americans Should Care About Plan Colombia" (February 21, 2001), lists the United States' reasons to assist Colombia financially. Some are "traditional" drug related reasons (i.e., Colombia as the world's leading coca producer, the failure of counter-narcotics programs in Peru and Bolivia, which served to move the production to Colombia and the duplication of overall illegal crops production). Others, however underscore U.S. interests in the stability of the armed forces because military stability brings a strong rule of law and can address problems in a region of constant and growing instability. The following statements from the fact sheet clearly illustrate how U.S. support for Plan Colombia went beyond concerns with a war on drugs: *"Colombia, along with Venezuela and Ecuador, represent 20% of U.S. crude oil imports"* (pg.1); *"Colombia being the supplier of two-thirds of the U.S. fresh-cut flowers, and other products such as coffee, fruits and leather goods"* (pg.1).

In July 2000, the U.S. Congress approved, and President Clinton signed into law, an aid package of \$1.3 billion for Colombia, its neighbors, and U.S. anti-drug agencies. The objectives contained in each of the versions of Plan Colombia are considerably different. They represent the differing outlooks of the governments of Colombia and the U.S. in the implementation of the Plan. The initial strategic points of the Colombian version were changed in the final version into five specific comprehensive requirements designed to improve Colombia's social, economic and political structures: 1) the peace process, 2) the economy, 3) the antinarcotics strategy, 4) the judicial system and human rights, 5) social development and

democratization. The approved Plan (Colombia, 2000) took into account important subjects that needed urgent attention such as:

- Macroeconomic stabilization
- The establishment of a negotiated peace process
- The reestablishment of governmental representation over the entire national territory
- The creation of social and economic alternatives for the most vulnerable populations
- The optimization of an efficient counternarcotics approach
- The involvement of the international community in the subject of drug consumption

However, several authors (Arcanos 2000; Contraloría General de la República- Colombia, 2000; Delacour, 2000; Estrada 2001; Gonzales, 2001; Ossa 2000, Sarmiento, 2000) and the general Colombian population agree that the plan was, at the end, changed into simply an antinarcotics plan that pursues:

- Massive eradication of illegal crops (poppy seed and coca leaf) by aerial fumigation of chemicals
- Extinguishing any productive industry linked to the illicit drug production and distribution
- The augmentation of the Colombian army and police equipment and training
- The acceptance of the direct relationship between the irregular armed forces and the narcotics industry

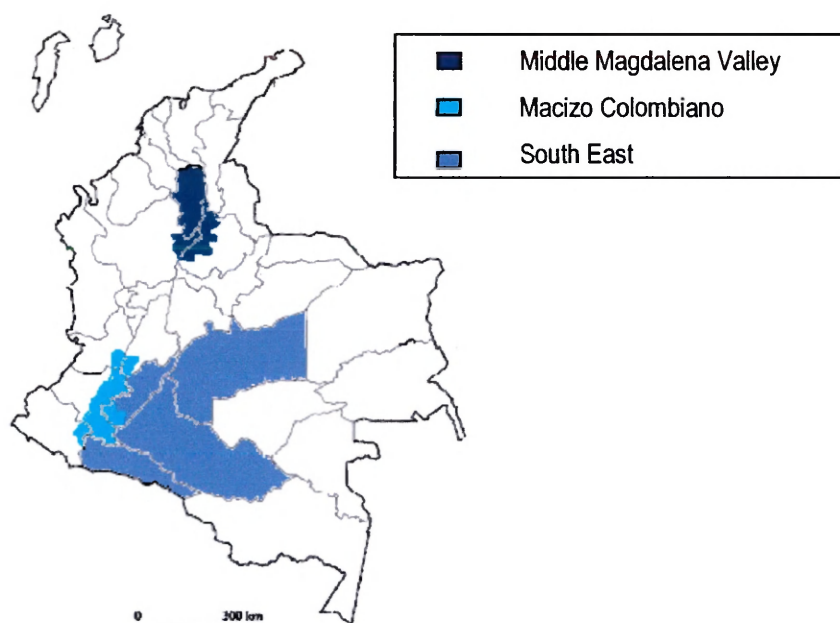
The approved and implemented Plan Colombia is founded on ten central strategies and contains five strategic points²³. Throughout these strategies, the importance of the role of international communities in the solution of Colombia's current situation is clear. In a sense, these initially "ideal" foundations for Plan Colombia were strongly based on the relationship of irregular armed forces and narcotics as fundamental causes of the present conditions in Colombia, with the obvious need to eliminate these sources of trouble. These strategies are as follows:

- 1) An economic strategy intended to solve problems related to, among other things, unemployment, the collection of tax revenues, expansion of international trade, access to foreign markets, and the implementation of free trade agreements
- 2) A fiscal and financial strategy that includes tough austerity and adjustment measures, in order to boost economic activity and recover the reputation of Colombia in international financial markets
- 3) A peace strategy that aimed at a negotiated peace agreement with the guerrillas on the basis of territorial integrity, democracy and human rights, which should further strengthen the rule of law and the fight against drugs
- 4) A national defense strategy to restructure and modernize the armed forces and the police, so that they will be able to restore the rule of law and provide security throughout the country, to combat organized crime and armed groups, and to protect and promote human rights and international humanitarian law
- 5) A judicial and human rights strategy to reaffirm the rule of law and assure equal and impartial justice to all
- 6) A counter-narcotics strategy, in partnership with other countries involved in some or all of the links of the drug production – consumption and distribution in order to combat all the components of the illicit drug cycle and to stop the flow of drug money to insurgent and other armed organizations
- 7) A strategy of alternative development, creating more agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities for peasant farmers and their families. At the same time, this strategy contains economically feasible environmental protection sub-programs, designed to conserve the forest areas and the areas of rich bio-diversity, which are of vital importance to the international community. Within this framework, the strategy includes sustainable, integrated, and participatory projects combined with development of the necessary physical infrastructure. Particular attention is paid to regions that combine high levels of conflict

with low levels of State presence, fragile social capital, and serious environmental degradation, such as the Middle Magdalena Valley, the Macizo Colombiano and the South-West (see map 2.1)

8) A social participation strategy aimed to raise collective awareness. This strategy seeks to develop more accountability in local government, community involvement in anti-corruption efforts, and continued pressure on the guerrillas and other armed groups to end kidnapping, violence and the internal displacement of individuals and communities.

MAP 2.1
Plan Colombia's focused regions.



This strategy also includes cooperation with local business and labor groups in order to promote innovative and productive models in the face of a more globalized economy, and thus strengthen Colombia's agricultural communities and reduce the likelihood of rural violence. In addition, this strategy seeks to strengthen institutions, both formal and informal, to foster changes in the cultural patterns through which violence develops and reinforces itself. It includes the promotion of mechanisms and educational programs to increase tolerance, (the essential ingredient for peaceful co-existence) and the participation of the civil society.

9) A human development strategy to promote efforts to guarantee, within the next few years, adequate education and health, to provide opportunities to every young Colombian, and to help vulnerable groups in Colombia's society, including those affected and displaced by violence and living in conditions of extreme poverty.

10) An internationally-oriented strategy reaffirms the principles of shared responsibility, integrated action, and balanced treatment of the drug issue. The role and support of the international community is also vital to the success of the peace process, provided that it conforms to the terms for international law and is requested by the Colombian government.

The following is an analysis of the above strategies. Strategies number one and two denote clear proclamations of macroeconomic policies that under normal conditions are referred to the Colombian Congress to approve and in some cases even to define. The insertion of macroeconomic issues such as unemployment, tax collection, international trade, etc into Plan Colombia serves as a clear example of the U.S. imposition of economic strategies that are closely tied to the larger set of neoliberal recipes introduced by supranational organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF. Additionally, it seems that this inclusion surpasses Colombia's government authority in defining its own economic policies.

Strategy number three exposes how the initial intentions of a negotiated peace process become merely one of the strategies, while in the original proposal it was the fundamental goal of the entire Plan. Strategies number four, five and six, regarding military assistance and antinarcotics methods (forced and voluntary eradication and interdiction of illegal crops), were incorporated by the U.S. as essential elements of the Plan while the original version, as stated previously, was focused on the negotiated peace project, not on counterinsurgency or antinarcotics processes. Strategies six and seven are most directly aimed at the improvement of production systems of the rural sectors as they seek the eradication of coca production (among other phases of the drug business), and the creation and implementation of alternative development strategies of production. Another set of Plan Colombia's direct effects over the rural

communities is contained in strategies number eight and nine which are related to improvement in social conditions of rural communities.

In addition, Plan Colombia today includes several programs financed with a combination of international loans and national public funding. These programs are: Countryside in Action, Employment in Action, Families in Action, Youth in Action, Infrastructure for Peace, Human Rights, Humanitarian Assistance, and Communitarian Administration²⁴.

The approved Plan Colombia transformed the Plan's initial approach from that of a peace project to one that included several macroeconomic strategies as well as the antinarcotics and counterinsurgent tactics (Arcanos, 2000; Fazio, 2001; Gonzalez, 2001; Gonzalez F.E. 2000; ODHACO, 2000; Tickner, 2001; Romero, 2001; Salgado Tamayo, 2000). While this outcome reflected the impact of "external forces" on the molding of Plan Colombia and the weakening of the Colombian state, the implementation of the above strategies surpassed the ability of the U.S. to directly control the implementation process and required the intervention of the Colombian government. Accordingly, it shows a paradoxical situation in which, in a sense, the U.S. removes the Colombian state from some of its most important decision-making functions by approving a Plan not even supported by the Colombian Congress, while at the same time demanding a strengthening of governmental institutions and the reimplementation of national representation. Therefore, the Colombian state finds itself in a position in which it has to respond to conflicting international demands and national realities.

As mentioned previously, the U.S. Congress approved an aid package of \$1.3 billion. Table 2.1 shows the general distribution of the aid, and table 2.2 shows the allocation of the aid that went exclusively to Colombia.

Table 2.1
Total Aid Package

	Million	Percentage
Aid For Colombia	\$860.3	65%
Aid To Other Countries (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Others)	\$180.0	14%
Increases For U.S. Agencies*	\$223.5	17%
Classified (Defense Department Intelligence Program)	\$55.3	4%
Total Aid Package	\$1,319	100%

* Comprising: upgrades to U.S. overseas "Forward Operating Locations," Defense Department Andean ridge intelligence gathering, radar upgrades for U.S. Customs Service P-3 aircraft, Treasury Department "Drug Kingpin" tracking program, Defense Department "Airborne Reconnaissance, Low" aircraft.

Source: Public Law 106-246 June 29, 2000 and "The Contents of the Colombia Aid Package" at www.ciponline.org/Colombia/aidcompare.htm.

Table 2.2
Colombia's Aid Package

	Millions	Percentage
Military Assistance	\$519.2	61%
Police Assistance	\$123.1	14%
Alternative Development	\$68.5	8%
Aid to the Displaced	\$37.5	4%
Human Rights	\$51.0	6%
Judicial Reform	\$13.0	2%
Law Enforcement / Rule of Law	\$45.0	5%
Peace	\$3.0	0%
Total	\$860.3	100%

Source: Public Law 106-246 June 29, 2000 and "The Contents of the Colombia Aid Package" at www.ciponline.org/Colombia/aidcompare.htm.

"U.S. support for 'Plan Colombia' is an integrated response to this comprehensive strategy. Both Plan Colombia and U.S. assistance are multifaceted approaches that include alternative development and assistance to displaced persons; improved governing capacity and protection of basic human rights; support for the peace process in Colombia and cooperation with Colombia's neighbors; illicit crops eradication; and interdiction of illicit narcotics" (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2000; U.S. Department of State, 2002.).

The political rhetoric in the above quote, suggests that the Plan was focused on a comprehensive approach. In reality, as Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show, a large allocation of money went to military support. Conversely, a rather insignificant amount of money was designated for the development of the impoverished and affected population. Although the economic aid for alternative development, displaced families, human rights and peace appears to represent a significant amount (\$160.0 million), it is restricted to short-term solutions, overlooking problems of sustainability and support in the long term. However, it could be argued that although the amount is not nearly enough to address the socio-economic needs, it has represented a partial relief for the most needy. "If we compare these quantities to the Colombian problems of poverty, abandonment and unemployment, Plan Colombia represents only the first step on a long journey" (El Tiempo, October 13, 2002).

At this point it is important to clarify that only a small portion of Colombian government officials took part in the negotiations leading up to the actual approval and implementation of the Plan. In fact, the most sensitive discussions were held behind closed doors. Thus, the Colombian version of the Plan underwent a major transformation without approval of the Colombian Congress or the general population, who remained even more marginal to the process (Carrigan, 2001; Crandall, 2002; Contraloría General de la República, 2000; Sanguino - Paez, 2000; Vargas Meza, 2000.) Only a handful of Colombians enthusiastically embraced the Plan's objectives and the ideological discourse within which it was framed.

In summary, the Colombian version of the Plan that was a peace alternative with a strong focus on economic and social development was transformed in the Final Version into an antinarcotics strategy with a highly military approach and the inclusion of neoliberal economic strategies.

3. The effects of September 11, 2001 on Plan Colombia.

After the events of September 11, 2001 when several terrorist attacks happened in the World Trade Center, in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., the U.S. international policy changed in significant ways, and Plan Colombia was not exempt from those changes. A heightened concern with

terrorism served to justify a new approach towards the irregular armed forces, and created an opportunity for the U.S. and Colombia's governments to reframe Plan Colombia within the new boundaries set by the so called "War on Terrorism." The U.S. government had been searching for Colombian cooperation in the construction of a political-military strategy that would justify the allocation of additional resources to fight terrorist. This was, however, couched in terms of national security, economic reform, respect for human rights and a consistent campaign against drugs (Crandall, 2002; El Tiempo, November 13, 2002; Hagen, 2002; Isacson, 2003; Leech, 2003). Moreover, in January 2002, President Pastrana suspended the three year-long peace talks with the FARC, arguing their bad faith at the negotiation table. At the same time, Pastrana requested the U.S. for the authority to utilize Plan Colombia's military assistance, originally targeted to fight narcotraffic, to combat the guerrilla movements (Ensor, 2002; Isacson, 2002; Wilson, 2002; El Tiempo 01/16/2002). The U.S. Congressional session beginning on January 23, 2002 discussed Colombia's request. In fact the transcripts of the hearing titled, "*International Global Terrorism: Its links with illicit drugs as illustrated by the Irish Republican army (IRA) and other groups in Colombia,*" focus on the need to treat Colombia's counterinsurgency groups as terrorists, not only due to their violent acts, but also because of their "direct" relationship with the drug business. Colombia's counterinsurgent and paramilitary groups were now a component of the U.S. anti-terrorist vision, according to which they were viewed as a regional danger, raising the insecurity levels of the hemisphere and endangering the national security of the U.S. Therefore, the "War on Terrorism" found in Plan Colombia the perfect mechanism to expand its objectives throughout Colombia and from it to the whole region.

Thus, Plan Colombia was re-evaluated in order to reinforce the military component to be used against the Colombian sources of international terror. A complete re-analysis of the objectives of Plan Colombia began whereby guerrillas and drugs were to become increasingly and inexorably linked. " President Bush remains committed to continuing the U.S. support of Colombia in its fight against terror, terror which the world now knows is funded to a large extent by drugs" (New York Times, March 26, 2002).

The use of the resources of Plan Colombia to combat the irregular armed forces, appearing for some as direct U.S. intervention in Colombia, brought back memories of Vietnam, even though several of its promoters and representatives have tried to highlight the antinarcotics component above all. "Without the rhetoric of fighting drugs U.S. officials would have to admit to the American public that we are intervening in another country's civil war, bringing back memories of Vietnam and other disastrous failures of U.S. foreign policy" (Morris 2001: 52). Under the current "War on Terrorism," Colombia's armies (legal and illegal) perfectly fit the requirements for that war. Therefore, Plan Colombia after September 11, 2001 was transformed into the perfect scenario to "show the world" what an antiterrorist war should look like. Without a doubt, resistance to the Plan's new focus has emerged. Such resistance highlights the lack of considerations on the part of both the Colombian and U.S. governments, for the real causes of the Colombian conflict: the strength of the international narcotic business and the social issues that contribute to the existing situation.

Finally, it is also important to clarify that, in Colombia, the initial idea of a negotiated peace process was openly received. However, the way Plan Colombia was implemented produced intellectual resistance and the emergence of several alternate proposals of development. Various groups of politicians, academics, community leaders, and associations, etc. created the "Paz Colombia" (Peace Colombia) movement. This movement, as well as numerous others²⁵ illustrates the increasing involvement of civil society in the creation of other options for the resolution of the armed conflict, the construction of peace and the creation of legal economic alternatives. These groups have created different proposals recognizing that the Colombian situation needs urgent alternatives in several spheres but ones framed within more democratic, non-military and environmentally friendly ideologies and measures. Even though such viable alternatives are actively being discussed, the discussions have not reached the critical mass necessary to implement a real change.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to evaluate the extent to which the U.S. as an external force affected, changed or distorted Colombia's government decision-making and policy formation process, specifically with respect to the creation of Plan Colombia. In order to reach a conclusion, historical examinations of the following were described and analyzed: 1) the relationship between the U.S. and Colombia prior to Plan Colombia, 2) the specific evolution of the Plan, and 3) the involvement of the two countries in such evolution.

By carefully analyzing the contemporary history of the relationship between Colombia and the U.S., this thesis supports other studies' conclusions that the goal of these relationships is the U.S.' achievement of political and economic hegemony. The analysis of specific relations between the two countries illustrates how the U.S. approach to the "War on Drugs" has been used to both press and control the Colombian government's economic policies. Such is the clear case of Gaviria's lauded economic liberalization policies, which quietly sidestepped poor results on the "War on Drugs" during the early 1990s. By the same token, the suspected ties of Samper with drug traffickers (and regardless of the important successes of the anti-narcotics strategies) strongly affected the relationship between the countries, producing even more economic imbalances and negative social reactions. This use of a single policy, the "War on Drugs" to serve a hidden purpose, as previously stated, correlates perfectly with the U.S. interests of consolidating and legitimizing its own hegemony.

Colombia's fragile conditions, plus the cooperation of a tactical supporter (President Pastrana), formed the perfect environment for a U.S. infringement on Colombia's government. The U.S. found in Plan Colombia the situation that allowed it to impose its economic and political practices, thus giving them the opportunity to establish their own rules and conditions. The change and approval of Plan Colombia then, supports the theoretical ideas of McMichael (1991, 1992, and 1993) and other theorists in which the emergence of supranational forms of power lead to an erosion of national regulatory mechanisms.

At this point it would be hard to deny the fact that the U.S. intervention in the creation of Plan Colombia trespasses on Colombia's autonomy in the development of its own policies. The changes on Plan Colombia se changes exemplified not only the U.S. involvement in the design and implementation of national policies but also the constant demand for internal governmental changes for "national strengthening."

As I hope to have shown in this chapter, the creation of Plan Colombia was, in reality, the product of a combination of multiple external and internal approaches. These products exhibited a preponderance of the U.S. (as an external force) and dismissed what would be in the best interest of the Colombians. The transformation of Plan Colombia into a different Plan (one emphasizing counternarcotics and counterinsurgency measures) was not the result of ignoring the lessons of history, but rather by not following an analysis of the needs of the region. On the contrary, the absence of such an analysis demonstrates that powerful self-interests are the leading motives under which Plan Colombia was reshaped and manipulated.

Whereas this chapter is focused on the origins and approval of the Plan, the next chapter explores the implementation process and tools of Plan Colombia in order to reveal its short-lived accomplishments and its adverse consequences for the population, the economy, and the environment.

Chapter III

Plan Colombia's Programs: The More Things Change...

This chapter contains an analysis of the implementation of Plan Colombia, focusing on the programs pertaining to rural communities in Colombia. This section seeks to measure the results of such programs in terms of their coverage, efficiency, limitations and consequences. This chapter contains archival and bibliographical research as well as transcripts excerpted from several interviews and conversations conducted during the summer of 2002 in Bogotá, Colombia with peasants and individuals in academia and several key organizations.

I begin with a description and analysis of the programs intended to result in the eradication of illegal crops (coca leaves and opium poppies) and the implementation of alternative development projects. Then, I examine programs that are designed to overcome quality of life issues in selected rural areas. I conclude by exploring the outcomes that resulted some of these programs.

1. Programs related to the eradication of illegal crops

A key strategy of Plan Colombia, explained in Chapter Two, was a counter-narcotics strategy enforced through the strengthening of previous eradication programs. These programs are: 1) forced eradication through aerial spraying of toxic chemicals, 2) accords of voluntary manual eradication between the government and peasant/indigenous communities, and 3) interdiction. The latter does not affect directly the rural communities therefore it is not part of this analysis.

a. Forced Eradication of Illegal Crops: Aerial Spraying

Forced eradication of illegal crops under Plan Colombia is put into practice through the intensification of aerial fumigation of highly toxic chemicals over the zones cultivated with coca leaves and opium poppies. The purpose of this Plan Colombia's strategy is to eliminate one hundred percent of the illegal crops within five years (Clawson and Lee 1996; Vargas 2000 in Peterson, 2002). This strategy

involves spraying the coca plants and opium poppy producing areas of Colombia, which would require the fumigation of over seventy percent of Colombia's territory (Garcia and Mejia, 2001). The types of chemicals that are being sprayed are primarily glyphosates and mycoherbicides.

Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide. That is, it is not designed to protect a single type of plant but rather attacks all broad leaf plants. It is highly toxic and is well known in the market as Ranger or Roundup. It is marketed by the U.S. Monsanto Company. The known effects of this herbicide range from animal cancer to damage to the human kidneys and liver. The fusarium oxysporum (a mycoherbicide) is a fungus also, characterized by its high toxicity levels. The human and environmental effects of the mycoherbicide are unknown (Garcia and Mejia, 2001, Streatfeild, 2001).

Forced eradication of illegal crops has been used in Colombia for over fifteen years, since the beginning of the "War on Drugs." During that time the number of hectares fumigated has grown, especially since the implementation of under Plan Colombia, as shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1
Number of hectares fumigated 1998-2001

Year	Sprayed Hectares
1998	69,123
1999	51,554
2000	67,327
2001	96,767*
2002	130,000**

Source: Dirección Nacional de Estuperficientes, "Cultivos ilicitos, erradicación e impacto ambiental," Junio de 2000 y Actividades Antinarcóticos en Colombia, 1990-1999" in Contraloría General de la República, 2001b.

* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Colombia Annual Cultivation Survey 2001.

** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Colombia Coca Survey for 2002.

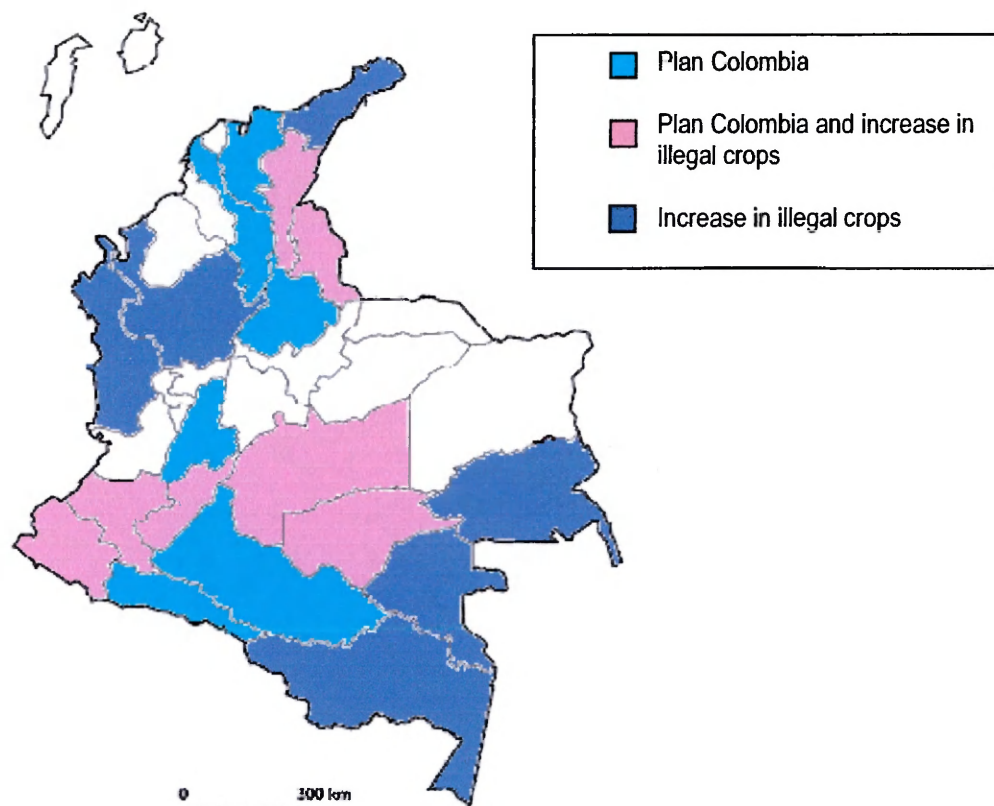
One could expect a reduction in the production of illicit crops when considering this increase in the number of hectares fumigated. However that is not entirely the case in Colombia. In fact, illegal production has increased dramatically during the last several years. In 1995 the production of cocaine was 224,382 kilograms while in 2000 it was 1,186,020 kilograms (Contraloría General de la República, 2002).

Current discrepancies in the results of Plan Colombia's fumigation strategy exist between the analysis made by the U.S.' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Colombia-United Nations Survey Program. Despite such discrepancies, the Colombian government is proclaiming that during the last two years this strategy has produced some of the desired effects. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported an 11.3% fall in Colombia's coca area in 2001 (UNODC, 2002) while according to the CIA the cultivation of illegal crops increased 25% in 2001 (Kratz, 2002,). In general, it appears that the illicit production was contained but it was not significantly reduced. In other words, although the number of hectares cultivated actually decreased, the amount of illicit production remained essentially unchanged (El Tiempo, October 12, 2002). In 2002, according to the UNODC report, the cultivation of illegal crops declined by 29.5% resulting in the strategy being described as a "very successful." However, the UNODC (2003b) reported the introduction of high-yield varieties of coca plants, which maintain relatively the levels of productivity and supply.

At the same time, the UNODC reports (2002, 2003b) reveal the emergence of illegal production in remote zones not traditionally used for growing illicit crops such as the provinces of Amazonas, Cesar, Cordoba, Guainia, Guajira, Vaupéz, and parts of the Atlantic coast, the coffee growing zone and the Andean region. The relocation and increase of production in several Colombian provinces is shown on Map 3.1.

The map also reveals the ineffectiveness of this strategy in that it shows the increase in the amount of land cultivated with illegal crops in those provinces that are being fumigated. Furthermore, the production is not only being relocated but it is also spreading to smaller plots in order to avoid fumigations (Contraloría General de la República, 2001b, 2002; UNODC, 2003).

MAP 3.1
Relocation and increase of illicit crops cultivation



By the same token, this relocation is not only found within Colombia's borders. Since production is being so strongly combated in Colombia, it is pushed out to Colombia's neighbors, reversing previous "successful" results of the "War on Drugs" in countries such as Bolivia, Perú and Venezuela (Van Dongen, 2003; Economist, 2002, 2003, 2003b).

This type of eradication strategy has not only not produced the expected results but it has generated more negative than positive side effects. The principal apparent effects are: i) increased deforestation, ii) impoverishment of the soil, iii) environmental pollution and deterioration of human health conditions.

The first effect of this strategy is the high level of deforestation cause by the coca and opium producers in order to escape the fumigations and so as to obtain minimum levels of subsistence. Around 5.2 million hectares were deforested in the Amazons basin. Most of this land was not appropriate for cultivation; therefore the destruction of a very rich environment is evident (Agencia de Noticias Nueva Colombia, 2002; Contraloría General de la República, 2002; Economist, 2001). In Kratz' (2002) words the "rainforest clear cutting--for coca fields and landing strips for drug-trafficking planes--has destroyed 'an area twice the size of Yellowstone National Park'." Table 3.2 indicates the quantity of hectares deforested since 1998 and reflects a clear increase of these environmentally negative trends.

Table 3.2
Deforestation of Colombian Forest for the Cultivation of Illegal Crops

YEAR	HECTARES
1998	338,675
1999	659,726
2000	672,244
2001	659,955

Source: Contraloría General de la República, 2002.

The second effect is the contamination of fertile lands, natural forests, and water resources, destroying the quality of the land and its productive potential (Contraloría General de la República, 2001, 2001b, 2002; El Tiempo October 1, 2002; Garcia and Mejia, 2001). The Colombian and U.S. governments claim that the risk of contamination is low when using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology, which is designed to precision-target the crops to be sprayed. However, applying the chemicals by plane increases the risk of inaccurate spraying which poisons non-targeted vegetation, water and animals. The herbicide can drift at least half a mile from its intended target. For instance, Ecuador, which shares part of the south border with Colombia, has requested a six-mile no-spray zone to protect its own people and

rainforests (Kratz, 2002). The following quotes are an example of the realities of the rural people affected by this strategy:

“The small crop-duster airplanes and helicopter that spray chemical herbicides in Colombia often fly too high to accurately target the drug crops. For instance, a small plane flying at 65 feet is subject to the common 15-45 foot-high crosswinds that characterize rainforest ecology. These winds easily blow or ‘drift’ the herbicide to non-target areas producing the destruction of other crops, rainforest or bodies of water” (Bigwood, 2001).

“The only things I am getting from “Plan Colombia” are sorrows. After they sprayed over my little plot everything, but everything got dry, even the creek near my place got dirty, the animals I had used to drink that water, I already lost a cow and all the other ones are sick....” (Interview July 2002).

“Plan Colombia is understood not as an alternative to substitute but to devastate the illegal crops. OK, they devastate such crops, but they also devastate the land, they devastate the peasantry, they destroy the legal and illicit products...Do you think it is an alternative then?” (Interview, July 2002)

The third effect is related to the health issues associated with the sprayed chemicals. Frequent health complaints contained in medical reports from the zones of aerial eradication include dermatitis, abscess, abdominal pain, diarrhea, acute respiratory infection, skin and eye irritation, nausea and bronchitis (Contraloría General de la República, 2002; Centeno, 2001; Panetta, 2002). The following are only few of the hundreds of declarations contained in newspapers articles, NGO reports, internet web pages, etc. in which local officials, scientists, intellectuals and peasants declare that fumigations has poisoned thousands of acres of food crops and pastures, devastated the coca economy and sown deep resentment among rural poor.

“Colombia’s human-rights ombudsman claims that additives in Roundup designed to make it stick to plants are damaging to health” (Economist, 2001b).

“Peasants are abandoning their lands because of the respiratory illness produced by the chemicals fumigated over their already substituted crops” (Leandro Romo, Ombudsman of Valle del Guamez, Putumayo in El Tiempo, September 6, 2002).

“This semester, the school won’t be able to provide free lunches for the poorest students because the kitchen garden of the school was destroyed. Students have complained of skin rashes,

headaches, and vomiting after exposure to the clouds of glyphosate, the weed killer used in aerial eradication" (Principal of one of the biggest schools in Mocoa - Putumayo in Hodgson, 2001).

"The situation being generated here is chaotic, one should hope that the governments of Colombia and the U.S. are taking note of it" (El Tiempo, September 6, 2002).

"This is an epidemic. Since the fumigation over the indigenous reservation of Aponte in the province of Nariño, eighty percent of the children from the community are sick.... this is a medical drama: rashes, fever, diarrhea, and ocular infections... Before the fumigations only ten percent of the children were sick with normal condition such as flu and mumps" (Physician in charge of the reservation's Medical Center in Van Royen, 2000).

It is evident that the aerial spraying with glyphosates and mycoherbicides over the environment deleteriously affects the quality of life and the health of the population at large. The polluting impact of the glyphosates over the aquatic bio-diversity as well as over the population and the public health is immeasurable (Folman, Sanders and Julin, 1979 in Palacio, 2000). The governments of Colombia and the U.S. declare such chemicals to be harmless to human beings and animals:

"There are no risks of concern for glyphosate by itself, from dermal or inhalation routes of exposure, since toxicity is very low... At the concentration used in the spray mixture and the methods used to apply it, glyphosate is highly unlikely to harm farm animals, even if an animal were directly exposed to the spray... Glyphosate enters a plant through contact with its leaves and only kills plants that are above ground at the time of spraying" (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2003).

Nonetheless, even Monsanto's own warnings point to high toxicity:

"Roundup will kill almost any green plant that is actively growing. Roundup should not be applied to bodies of water such as ponds, lakes or streams as Roundup can be harmful to certain aquatic organisms. After an area has been sprayed with Roundup, people and pets (such as cats and dogs) should stay out of the area until it is thoroughly dry. We recommend that grazing animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits, tortoises and fowl remain out of the treated area for two weeks. If Roundup is used to control undesirable plants around fruit or nut trees, or grapevines, allow twenty-one days before eating the fruits or nuts" (Bigwood. 2001).

Furthermore, officials from both countries insist that Roundup and Roundup Ultra, the glyphosate-based weed killer is harmless and is widely used on American farms (El Tiempo, September 5, 2002; El Tiempo, September 6, 2002b). However, these government officials have not disclosed that the product in

use in Colombia contains ingredients that, some claim, have never been tested for safety in combination. That solution contains: Water (55%), glyphosate (44%), and Cosmo-Flux 411F (1%). "This mixture has never been scientifically evaluated nor had the public, either in the U.S., or in Colombia, been informed of this practice" (Bigwood, 2001). Besides, "there are no systematic studies of the impact of massive amounts of Roundup released by aircraft in tropical, humid, species-rich, ecosystems (Palacio, 2000).

b. Accords of voluntary manual eradication

The program of voluntary eradication of illegal crops consists of the commitment of peasant and indigenous communities to manually remove coca and opium poppy plants and to convert this land into legal systems of production. The entity responsible for these processes of eradication is the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Alternativo (National Plan of Alternative Development), (PNDA). In general, these accords of voluntary eradication reinforced an existing strategy in which the PNDA offered alternative programs to those peasants that cease illegal crop production. (Contraloría General de la República, 2001).

Plan Colombia delineated a parallel program called "The Countryside in Action." This program's purpose was to support agricultural, livestock, and environmental production projects that were conceived in a comprehensive way, and that contributed to the social and economic development of a region (Colombia, 2000). However, this program was also merged with the PNDA, centralizing the complete strategy of voluntary eradication and support to rural communities in a single institution. "The programs of: "The Countryside in Action" and the PNDA were unified and now they represent the components of alternative development of Plan Colombia" (Jose Guiller Patiño, Assessor of the Program of Alternative Development – Rural Communities I Action, e-mail communication February 18, 2003).

The director of PNDA, Maria Restrepo-Cañon (2002) defines the process of voluntary eradication as the program through which small coca leaf and opium poppy producers, primarily peasants and indigenous communities, agree with the State to remove such crops. In exchange, the national government offers to provide the resources for the development of productive legal projects, as well as for the

improvement of the social and economic infrastructure. Thus, the process of voluntary eradication of illicit crops is accomplished through agreements between the interested communities and the national government. It is important to note that according to a research conducted by the Colombian Andes University (Zorro, 2002), the disposition of Colombian coca producers to substitute their illegal harvest was considerable larger in 2002 than what it was ever before. By the beginning and mid 1990s producers of illegal crops requested alternatives that would provide the same level of economic productivity that coca crops offers. Such alternative apparently does not exist. However, these producers currently agree to substitute their crops for a sustainable product that will allow them to live in dignity in the long term.

In theory, as these agreements are developed in a collective way from the community supported by the government, these projects demonstrate a clear mechanism of participation that promotes dialogue and coordination between the peasantry and the government. At the same time, these programs create the means for community socialization, integration and organization (Restrepo-Cañon, 2002). However, as several media reports show, there is a high rate of breach of these agreements by the government that produces the contrary effect (Contraloría General de la República, 2001b). Some of the people I interviewed had a reveal an optimistic image of this program when it is tied to the development of programs of crop substitution:

“The alternatives of voluntary eradication are the best tool to positively engage producers of illicit crops in a real and viable option for the elimination of such destructive products” (Interview, July 2002).

“For the environment, the health of our peasants and the elimination of coca and poppies, we better promote manual eradication, of course with a workable offer of crop substitution” (Interview, July 2002).

“Manual eradication could be the best option for the coca producers only if it is accompanied by the strengthening of productive projects, technical assistance and educational training campaigns for the peasants” (Interview, July 2002).

“Just think what would be our future if we (peasant farmers) keep being sprayed, without substantial alternatives for economic development? Quite the opposite to what would be if we are

part of the solution and it is offering us an alternative for leaving! Believe me, all the future Colombians would feel and live the difference" (Interview, July 2002).

"Look, I know that these project of manual eradication are very difficult to implement in guerrillas or paramilitary zones, however, it is not impossible, we only need to be more organized and the cooperation from the different entities in charge of these projects" (Interview, July 2002).

As shown previously, this strategy is closely tied to the Program of Alternative Development. This is why the evaluation of coverage, limitations and consequences are included in the following section.

2. Program of Alternative Development

The strategy of Alternative Development under Plan Colombia is formulated, controlled, and implemented, as mentioned before, by the PNDA. The main objective of the Alternative Development Program is "to assist small farmers who grow coca (three hectares or less) to obtain a licit income from agricultural, forestry, or livestock production and marketing" (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2001b). This program also helps in the "consolidation of competitive and sustainable processes of rural development which ensure the welfare of the population, the exercise of democracy and the integration of those areas of rural economy affected by illegal crops into the dynamics of regional and national development" (Colombia, 2002).

In theory, the program of alternative development provides the option of rural transformation that allows the establishment of economic processes based on equality and fair distribution of profits, rather than simple economic growth. The goal of this model of development is to remain constant in specific regions independently of the national model of development in place. This allows the strengthening and sustainability of such programs for the collective benefit, independent of national politics and international pressures. In general an alternative program of development must be integral, participative, profitable, and sustainable (Weaver, Rock and Kusterer, 1997; Cano, 2002, UNODC, 2003).

In the Colombian zones of coca and poppy production, alternative development projects refer to the substitution of such crops. These programs include community participation in the processes of

identification, design and execution of the projects. The management model corresponds primarily to cooperatives and alliances with private sector and "peasant" producers.

The process of voluntary eradication and their substitution with alternative development projects is as follows: First, the indigenous community or peasant association who wishes to participate in the substitution of their illegal crops signs an agreement with local government representatives. Such agreement obligates peasants to eliminate the crops in a period no longer than twelve months. PNDA proposes projects in which the interested group of peasants or indigenous work in it as farmers. These projects are generally agricultural. These projects contain economic support and offer technical training to the community. The goal of these projects is to produce new crops within specific standards of quality and competitiveness that could serve as the seeds to generate the establishment of agricultural enterprises. Once the project is established and peasants have demonstrated the minimum requirements needed to be able to manage and own these enterprises they become the owners and the government withdraws its direct support (Colombia, 2002).

Doubtless, this strategy generates employment and legal sources of income. In some cases these processes increase the technical knowledge of the peasants, but the program is not designed to respond to the deficiencies in their administrative abilities. This serves to diminish the possibility, in the long term, of the peasants becoming owners (Zorro, 2002). This permits the perpetuation of expanded territories (latifundios) controlled by large landowners with abundant sources of labor.

This strategy promotes the production of mainly agricultural products with the potential of being traded in national and international markets. Thus, this strategy primarily endorses the production of cocoa, rubber, tobacco, plantains, sugar cane, fruits, coffee, chili peppers, rice, and yucca. It also supports the development of agro-chains production such as cotton-textiles-tailoring, wood-paper, milk-dairy, palm-oil, horticulture, potatoes, and lobsters (www.plancolombia.gov.co). There are multiple alliances with the private sector that allow the increase of invested capital and a greater likelihood of commercialization of the

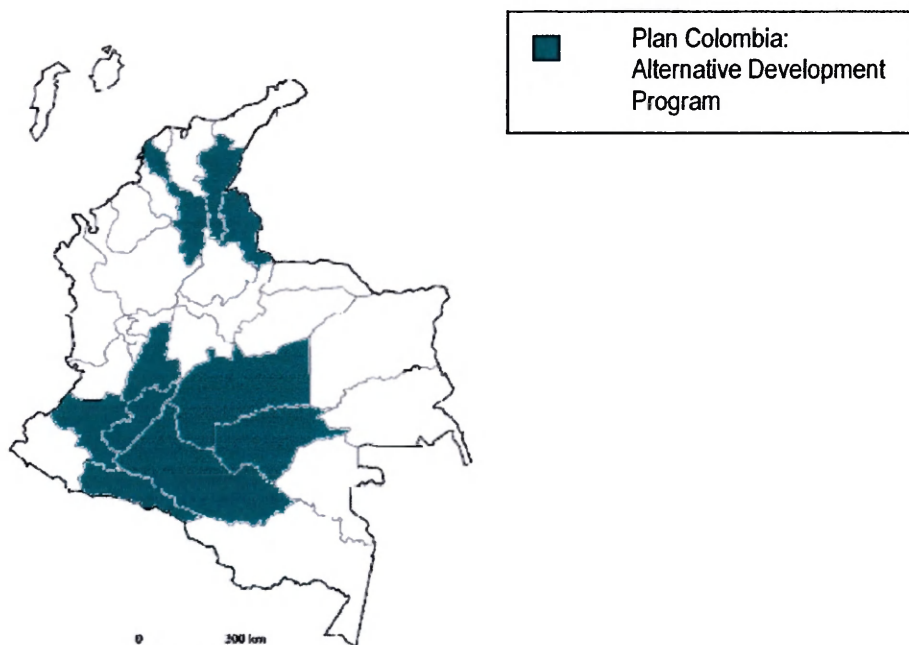
products. Some of the private sector companies are: Carrefour, Alkosto, Compañía Nacional de Chocolates, Fedecacao, Nestlé, Industria Antioqueña del Caucho, Good Year, Michelin, Almidones Nacionales, Hacienda las Flores, and Expocafé. Nonetheless, these productive and legal economic alternatives and alliances respond to neoliberal postulates as informed by the IMF and the World Bank, with its emphasis on open markets, agro-chain production, competition, etc. However, due mostly to the neoliberal postulates imposed since the beginning of the 1990s, the Colombian peasants are facing a great crisis in the production of traditional agricultural products, as well as minimal support from the state. That is to say that these alternative development programs are not alleviating the situation of the rural community because of the intrinsic contradiction of the program and the neoliberal restrictions within which they have to operate.

The plan-specific areas of action are the Middle Magdalena Valley, the Macizo Colombiano and the Southwest, with a total of 13 provinces: Antioquia, Bolivar, Caquetá, Cauca, Cesar, Guaviare, Huila, Magdalena, Meta, Nariño, Putumayo, Santander and Tolima (see Map 3.2.). These areas were defined based on characteristics of marginality, insufficient physical infrastructure, difficulties accessing markets, low governmental representation, vulnerable ecosystems, low economic development, weak social organizations, conflict and violence (PNDA 2002).

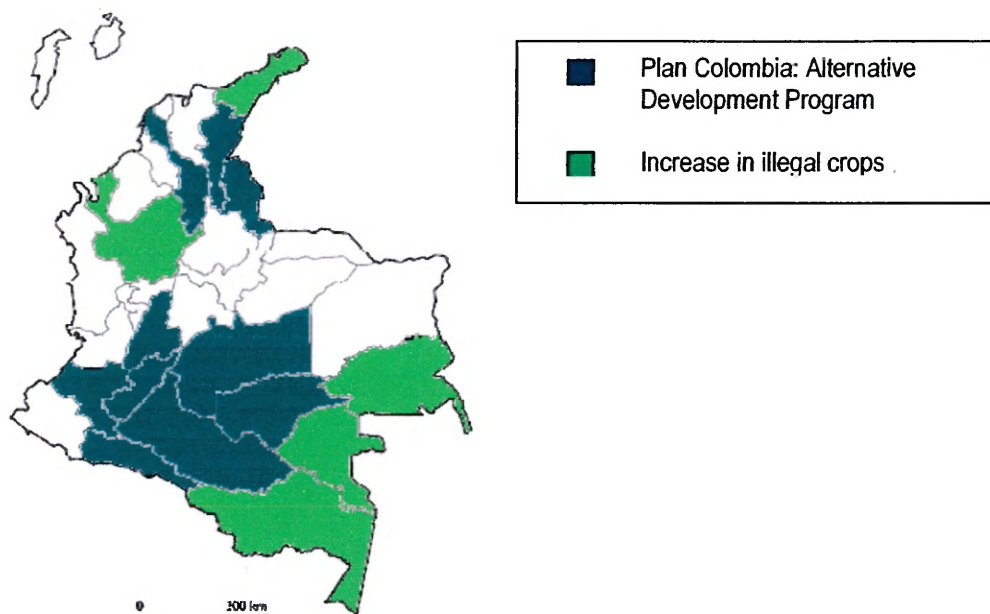
These traditional zones of coca and opium poppy production are the only ones on target. Therefore, an inconsistency is observed when taking into account the fact that the provinces to where the illegal crops are being relocated are not part of this strategy, as shown on Map 3.3. However, the PNDA explains this inconsistency in the inflexibility and restriction of the Plan's intervention areas. This is impeding an understanding of the full extent of the problem. Unfortunately, because of bureaucratic procedures and miscommunication between national entities, this obstacle has not been effectively addressed (PNDA, 2003)

By 1999, 26 out of the 32 Colombian provinces were producing illicit crops in 250 municipalities, which means that around 200,000 families were deriving or supplementing their income with the proceeds of illicit crop production (Colombia, 2002). Unfortunately, by 2001 Plan Colombia's alternative development strategy was covering only 10 provinces, 96 municipalities or 55,800 families (Restrepo-Cañon, 2002) as shown in Table 3.3. The alternative development program has not even covered the targeted population in 1999. There is no public official record of the coverage for the year 2002 and 2003. Nevertheless, in July 2002 through the Decree No. 1374, the Ministry of Property and Public Credit indefinitely postponed the use of the PNDA resources producing a decrease of investment resources by 99.93%. This postponed almost completely stopped the implementation of projects already agreed upon with the communities (PNDA, 2003b).

MAP 3.2
Plan Colombia Alternative Development Areas



MAP 3.3 Alternative Development Zones and Relocation Areas



The paucity of these official statistics and the lack of real interaction between the national entities hide the significance of the problem since illegal crops have been relocated, and the increasing need for financial and technological support is being ignored. Undeniably, the resources are needed for the betterment of the entire community, as stated by one of the peasant producers I interviewed:

"If we could only use the resources of Plan Colombia to technify the production, if it were possible to create big industry, but industry in which we could buy the peasants' products, where we could employ some of the boys instead of having them in the guerrillas, believe me we would be better off (interview July, 2002).

Table 3.3
Estimates vs. Actual Coverage of the Alternative Development Strategy

	1999 Target Estimates	2001 Governmental Coverage
Provinces	25	10
Municipalities	250	96
Families	200,000	55,800

Source: Restrepo-Cañón, María Inés. 2002. *La Política de Desarrollo Alternativo en Colombia y sus Perspectivas*. Retrieved February 24, 2003. http://www.desarrolloalternativo.gov.co/html/contenidos/boletin/discurso_final.html.

The combination inefficiency in the program of alternative development and the fact that the crops are then fumigated lead to even greater negative consequences. As the aerial fumigations include most of the national territory, including those zones in which agreements of voluntary eradication and substitution are in place, the result is that alternative crops are also being sprayed. These overlapping strategies exemplify the lack of planning and communication between Plan Colombia's organizing entities, thus turning these policies into contradictory pieces of legislation and creating distrust. It is important to indicate that there is also a historic mistrust between the peasantry and the government. Multiple changes to the agreements, and a lack of responses from the government in earlier accords, generates resistance from the peasantry to implementing letdown voluntary accords. Unfortunately, the fumigation of legal crops produced under the support of the PNDA amplifies such mistrust among the peasants and indigenous communities, and therefore weakens the relation between the government and the rural population. However, peasants and indigenous communities are still willing to participate in these programs in order to avoid the violence linked to the production of illegal crops, and to be able to hope for a better future.

Interviews I conducted with several of them as well as testimonies collected by others illustrate this well:

"I had my little plot of corn. We were growing it as the result of an agreement with the government. However, they came and fumigated our crops; it is all *burned*. We couldn't save any of the plants; they are all ruined.... The people from the Mayor's office said that it was not their fault and they cannot take responsibility for that "inconvenience." What am I suppose to do now? Start all over again hoping that the land will be productive, or move away and plant some coca to support my family and pay everything I owe?" (Interview, July 2002).

"I really do not understand these policies. On the one hand, they are giving the peasantry the 'opportunity' to grow food, to grow licit crops that in the first place are not being sold because of the characteristics of the market. But then the government is fumigating those same projects they are promoting..." (Interview, July 2002)

"Some 7,000 hectares of food crops have been damaged by a campaign of aerial herbicide spraying in Colombia" (Ecologist, 2002).

"The National Ombudsman holds 6,553 complaints from people who allege that their legal crops were affected" (El Tiempo, October 12, 2002b)

“The effects have been catastrophic. They spray coca, but they also killed all our food crops” (Hodgson, 2001).

“It is hard to keep the confidence when they (the Colombian government) promise things that does not work” (El Tiempo, October 13, 2002b).

The inefficient and underfunded programs of alternative development offered under Plan Colombia to rural communities are not a real option for peasants engaged in the process of eradicating illegal crops. Even though these programs have been coolly received, they do not represent a true alternative to what has been attempted prior to Plan Colombia. The difficulty in growing alternative crops, the unpredictability of their economic return, and the failure of the government to fulfill its obligations all combine to results in the relocation of peasants and their recidivism in the cultivation of illicit crops.

3. “In Action” Programs

The “In Action” programs are primarily social programs aiming, not at the elimination of illicit crop production, but rather at quality of life issues such as strategies to establish peace, enhance social participation, improve health, education services, and employment, and build infrastructure in the most conflicted areas (Colombia, 2000; Contraloría General de la República, 2002). The following is a general description of each program. Due to the lack of data available to analyze the effectiveness of these programs on the rural communities, I relate secondary sources of analysis.

Families in Action: The objective of this program is to provide monetary aid directly to families that are determined by the government to be the most vulnerable and underprivileged. This program grants them a subsidy for complying with health and education commitments (Plan Colombia, <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/ingles/programs/familias/index.html>). The commitments consist of active participation in health drives and informational meetings as well as the children’s continuous participation in the educational system. The economic support is given in the form of subsidies for nutrition and education. The nutrition subsidies cover children seven years old and under, and the educational subsidies cover

children between seven and 18 years old. The program guarantees nutritional subsidies for twelve months and educational subsidies for ten months. The goal is to reach 500 municipalities in a total of 26 provinces (Colombia, 2000; Fondo de Inversion para la Paz, 2003).

The last evaluation report from the Contraloría General de la República (General National Controller) (2002), describes several inconsistencies in this program, such as: 1) inaccuracy in the identification of the most needed beneficiaries, 2) the exclusion of children due to the restriction of having their mothers as the only legal representative, and 3) the consistent complaint from the beneficiaries of the lack of payment of the promised subsidies. Also, the aid vouchers for schools and families do not arrive with any regularity and consistency (Contraloría General de la República, 2002). Additionally, the initial requirements for the implementation of the program are contradictory if the purpose of the program is to cover the poorest municipalities while at the same time requesting an adequate system of health and education and the existence of a bank. Therefore, the program does not cover the most disadvantaged children from the poorest municipalities (Colombia, 2000; Contraloría General de la República, 2002).

Works for Peace: The primary goal of this program is to generate physical infrastructure works (electrification, basic maintenance of aqueducts and sewer systems, irrigation systems, and construction of schools) in depressed zones with high indexes of poverty, illegal crops production and the presence of irregular armies (Plan Colombia, <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co.co/ingles/programs/obras.index.html>). This program was initially implemented in the provinces of Putumayo and Bolivar with the intention of expanding into even more provinces. Unfortunately, in 2002 only the provinces of Putumayo, Bolivar and Caquetá were covered (Colombia, 2000; Fondo de Inversion para la Paz, 2003). The report of the Contraloría General de la República (2002) states that there have been delays in the execution of the contracts because the initial analyses were based on dated information, which generated, in most cases, projects that did not respond to the people's needs. Also, a reduction of the goals initially proposed is becoming evident. In reality, the social benefits of the programs designed to improve the

infrastructure are less than they should be. This is due to the fact that the works are of short duration and the generated is temporary (Contraloría General de la República, 2002).

Forest Ranger Families in Action: This program provides consistent income to peasant families from areas with illicit crops. To qualify for this funding, the families are required to forgo illicit crop production and reforest and conserve the ecosystem. Each family receives \$5 million pesos per year (about \$2,000 dollars), until the year 2006 (Colombia, 2000; Fondo de Inversion para la Paz, 2003). Obviously, a program of reforestation is a long-term strategy, and the resources and time period stipulated by the program are insufficient. However, because this program is relatively new (it was created in 2002) it is unfeasible to analyze its results.

Humanitarian Attention: This program provides for the humanitarian needs of people displaced as a consequence of the armed conflict as well as to in-danger populations through humanitarian assistance and credit funds (Plan Colombia, <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/ingles/programs/atencion/index.html>). The emergency aid to the displaced population and those affected by the eradication of illicit crops is received for a three month period, during which time the stabilization of the displaced families is improbable, creating both malaise and discontent (Colombia, 2000; Fondo de Inversion para la Paz, 2003). The resources from the U.S. towards this strategy are only used to support families from the provinces of Putumayo and Caquetá (Contraloría General de la República, 2002). As we shall see later in this chapter the number of people displaced is, unfortunately, growing. Therefore, the resources and mechanisms of this strategy are insufficient and shortsighted.

Human Rights: This program economically supports and administers sub-programs and projects focused on the implementation of the policies of human rights and international humanitarian rights. This support is primarily through information dissemination and training campaigns. They also seek the protection of at-risk and vulnerable populations from the various government organizations (Plan Colombia, <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/ingles/programs/derechos/index.html>). These educational efforts seem

unproductive. For instance, during the last 3 years, (as we shall see later in this chapter), the increase in violent confrontation and military support has decreased the possibilities for the respect of human rights by increasing the numbers of kidnappings, indiscriminate bombings, massacres, attacks on the civil population, displacement, etc.

The next four programs have been primarily implemented in the cities. Therefore, since the focus of this thesis is on the rural population, I am only going to describe them. However, it is important to note that the rural communities could benefit from the implementation of these programs, especially those dealing with employment and the development of the youth population.

Community Administration: This program assists community engagement in peace processes and its maintenance in order to improve the quality of life of people from marginal zones, those from rural Colombia.

Transparency and Coexistence: These are projects intended to guarantee democracy and transparency in the assignment of public funds in order to generate conditions of peace and coexistence and to legalize the ownership of vacant lands or wastelands associated with the eradication of illicit crops.

Employment in Action: This program was designed to create temporary employment to 300,000 Colombians in order to develop urban infrastructure such as aqueduct and sewer systems, sidewalks, pedestrian roads, schools, communal areas and childcare facilities (Plan Colombia, <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/ingles/programs/empleo/index.html>)

Youth in Action: This program aims at the betterment of employment opportunities for unemployed youths (18 to 25 years old) through training programs (Plan Colombia, <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/ingles/programs/jovenes/index.html>). The program offers training for semi-skilled types of jobs for six months, three of which consist of theoretical instructions and three for practical guidance. The students receive economic support for food, transportation and insurance. This program was designed for a duration

of three consecutive years starting in 2001. Unfortunately, this program's coverage is limited to the cities, and excludes the rural youth (Colombia, 2000; Fondo de Inversion para la Paz, 2003).

In general, the "In Action" programs are intended to gain popular support, and to buffer the effects of the intensification of military encounters in the critical zones of the armed conflict. These programs are also characterized as being a short-term alternative, which will favor the community now, but represents inconsequential improvement in the quality of life of the general rural population. Some of the people interviewed manifested disagreement regarding the development of these "In Action" programs:

"I think that the Plan's social programs are poorly focused. It is said to be a solution for the poor but not even with what they are "receiving" is there the remotest possibility of a better future for their kids" (Interview July, 2002).

"What it is really needed is real education for all... is technical support, is agrarian reform. But not reducing the budget. On the contrary, how about if instead of feeding it, they reduce the military budget? (Interview July, 2002).

"The investment in education should be greater, we should be educating the farmers, the peasant teenagers. We should create the mechanisms to generate more employment. Colombia's rural communities and characteristics are like a gold mine, we need to exploit it, that's were we need to start...(Interview July, 2002).

"Unfortunately, the social ingredient of the Plan represents little in terms of money, it does not try to solve any rural problems, or to promote rural development. The only thing Plan Colombia is focused on is in eliminating the sources of drug production" (Interview, July 2002).

"For example, let's look at the policy towards displaced people... the displacement trend should be seen as a national reality and not only as a problem of some areas in the country. The program of Humanitarian Attention reflects the conscious effect foreseen IN the Plan's general strategies. However, the displacement problem was not only developed in the zones predetermined by the U.S. and in which the aid is focused; the displacement is distributed all over the country and the Plan is not proposing any real help..." (Interview, July 2002)

Because of the ubiquity of the military component among the programs related above, it is important to briefly analyze the Plan's military strategy. Initially, as mentioned in Chapter Two, the military assistance (75% of the Plan Colombia's monies) was contained specifically in the antinarcotics strategy. Aiming at the elimination of the drug business and considering illegal armed forces as the protectors and principal benefactors of these crops and their profits, the antinarcotics strategy embraces a strengthening

of the national armed forces in order to better combat these illegal armies and reduces the production of illegal crops. Consequently, Colombia's armed forces are being fortified via training, military hardware (such as arms, aircrafts, ammunition, and intelligence) and other military assistance.

After the events of September 11, 2001 the military support was extended to combat illegal armies considering since they were considered international terrorists. The Colombian Presidential Program of Human Rights in its October 2002 publication, reported that the national armed forces have increased the intensity of the violent conflict, especially in the last two years, as they are getting stronger. Also illegal armies have changed their strategies in that rather than attacking a stronger foe, they are now focusing on outlying rural areas in which they terrorize and attack the few police officers and defenseless population, thereby scoring political and territorial gains. As these indiscriminate confrontations take place, on time or not, the armed forces reinforcements arrive and engage the illegal combatants, catching innocent men, women, children, and the elderly, the true victims of the conflict in the middle (Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos y DIH, 2002).

As showed in this thesis, Plan Colombia is a far-reaching, multi-faceted program. The sums of its facets are by and large aggravating the conditions of rural populations. A clear illustration of this is the incredible escalation the of displacement of people. During the last decade, Colombia has been facing high levels of displacement of rural people towards the cities. However, during the period that Plan Colombia has been in place, the statistics of displacements have grown exponentially.

As shown in Table 3.4, the average number of displaced families in 1999 was 7,230 while for 2002 it was 82,912 families (Red de Solidaridad Social, 2003), which means an average of 1,036 displaced people per day. The Red de Solidaridad (Social Solidarity Network) (2003b) is the governmental institution in charge of taking care of the urgent necessities of the poorer and vulnerable groups of population of the country and to facilitate its participation in social programs. According to this organization 90 percent of

displaced population are rural or semi-rural inhabitants, 50 percent are women, and 42 percent are children.

Table 3.4
Families Displaced in Colombia 1995-2002

Year	Number of Families Displaced.	Number of People Displaced
1995	60	285
1996	596	2,468
1997	2,267	10,543
1998	9,007	32,831
1999	7,230	25,802
2000	57,219	267,248
2001	69,004	327,535
2002	82,912	378,479
TOTAL	228,295	1,045,191

Source: Red de Solidaridad Social. Sistema Único de Registro S.U.R. Retrieved October 21, 2003.
http://www.red.gov.co/Download/Files/Registro_SUR/Registro_SUR_Sept_30_03_Acum.htm

Also as shown in Table 3.5, in the year 2000 the number of affected municipalities was 480, 819 in 2001, and 890 in 2002 (Observatorio de Derechos Humanos y DIH 2003). Table 3.4 and 3.5 show how during the last three years not only the quantity of displaced people is growing but also the number of affected municipalities is growing. This represents an advancing geographic redistribution of the communities affected. This situation has developed in parallel with the implementation of Plan Colombia. The term "displaced person" applies to everyone who has been forced to migrate within the national territory, leaving his or her locality of residence or habitual economic activities, because their life, their physical integrity, their personal security or freedom has been harmed or directly threatened (Codhes, 2002). Plan Colombia's programs and strategies are directly or indirectly provoking such displacements of people.

Table 3.5
Municipalities Affected by Displacements

Year	Municipalities affected
2000	480
2001	819
2002*	890

Source: Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2003 Colombia. Dirección de Justicia y Seguridad, Cifras de Violencia 1996-2002

*Observatorio de Derechos Humanos y DIH. Indicadores sobre la situación de Derechos Humanos y DIH en Colombia, Julio 2003. Retrieved October 21, 2003

<http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio/modules.php?name=informacion&file=article&sid=90>

The most evident source of this trend is the increase of the warfare throughout the time of Plan Colombia's strengthening of the government armed forces. The consequent magnification of the political violence regularly involves the innocent civilian population or, what is worse, an increase in the number of actions taken against the civil population by the armed groups, whether legal or illegal. For the survivors, this situation creates an atmosphere of fear and terror that influences the relocation decisions of the communities. Some of the interviewed people manifested this concern:

"The displacement is promoted by not only the military fighting of the guerrilla and paramilitary groups but also by the state armies. The national armies are now feeling stronger. They are directly combating the illegal armies including, "mistakenly," civilians. Then, the most affected are the farmers, the peasants, the little kids" (Interview, July 2002).

"The military component of Plan Colombia, is only making things worse... The displacement of whole families is generating social problems, increasing the violence, creating more unemployment, and of course that is not what Colombia needs" (Interview, July 2002).

"Plan Colombia was converted into a Plan of War; peasants are caught in the middle. A Plan in which most of the money goes to the army is only calling for a war, and as you may know in a war the real victims are those who are not seen" (Interview, July 2002).

"Yes, the strengthening of the government has increased the intensity of the conflict, but the government is not attacking the general population. It is the guerrillas who in a desperate attempt to maintain power are increasing the violence against the general population. However that strengthening is needed to achieve security in Colombia" (Interview, July 2002).

However, it is not only the military component of the Plan that is causing the displacement of people. The overlapping of the Plan's programs is also, as discussed previously, an important factor that influences and triggers the desire of these people to leave (CODHES, 1996, 2002 and 2003; El Tiempo Marzo 25 and April 28, 2003; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003; Red de Solidaridad Social, 2003b; Romero-Medina, 2001). The aerial fumigations generate several health concerns that affect the physical integrity of the population, especially children. Furthermore, these fumigations create an environment of economic uncertainty in which the lack of sources of employment, the loss of crops and harvest, and the consequent loss of a secure source of food become powerful reasons in the relocation decision.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to critically analyze the implementation of Plan Colombia's programs, specifically those related to the rural communities. In order to better understand the Plan's programs I have categorized them into three groups. The first group is composed of the programs linked to the eradication of illegal crops (i.e. forced eradication and voluntary manual eradication of illegal crops).

The forced eradication approach covers approximately 70 percent of the Colombian territory. The program has resulted in an "efficient strategy" since the number of hectares cultivated with illegal crops has decreased. Even though the government claims as this reduction as a victory, the producers have established other strategies such as the relocation of crops, the reduction in the cultivated plot sizes, the use of more productive seeds, etc. that allow a consistent level of production. Additionally, the chemicals sprayed to eradicate the illicit crops and the techniques used in this process have caused negative effects (e.g., deforestation, contamination of lands and water supplies, pollution, deterioration of human and animal health). In sum, this strategy appears to be an ineffective approach to eradicating illegal crops and, on the contrary, has produced environmental damage, affected the quality of life and health of the population.

The program of voluntary manual eradication has had a positive reception among the rural communities. Because they are closely related, the implementation of this program has merged with the program of alternative development.

The program of alternative development is the category of programs. These programs, unfortunately, are not designed to offer an opportunity to all the peasants and indigenous communities willing to participate. Moreover, the lack of government perspective, along with institutional miscommunication and poor planning has led to lackluster results. At the same time, the fumigation of deadly chemicals over these legal crops creates an environment of frustration and confusion on the part of the peasants and indigenous communities with regards to the government proposals and alternatives. This narrows the possibilities of real alternatives of rural development. Unfortunately, on paper these projects appear promising, but in reality (and taking into account the neoliberal framework within which these projects are elaborated), the final results of a "successful" project of alternative development become unrealistic when entering into the "real world" of competitive markets.

The third group of programs is composed of the "In Action" programs, which are focused on quality of life issues. Some of these programs are specifically directed at the rural communities, others are not. Regrettably, there is not enough clear and objective data for these programs to be analyzed. However, these programs are characterized by a failure to make good on promises, implementation delays, unrealistic goals and contradictory objectives. Additionally, those programs that have not been implemented in the rural communities are programs that are urgently needed and could be helpful in the resolution of the rural conflicts.

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, the purpose of this study is not the analysis of the military strategy of the Plan. However, it was briefly discussed because of its influence and consequences for the general rural population. This strategy has caused an increase in the levels of violence as well as contributed to confrontations between the government and the illegal armies and between the illegal armies

themselves. These confrontations have repeatedly caught civilians in the middle, killing them and a creating a general sense of panic and fear among the population.

Even though I did not conduct a systematic evaluation of the relationship between the outcomes of the different programs and the increase in the numbers of displaced people, this chapter's results reveal that the displacement of people is the major outcome of the implementation of Plan Colombia's programs.

Chapter IV Conclusion

This thesis discussed whether or not Plan Colombia was an effective response to the problems and needs of rural Colombia. By exploring the history of rural Colombia, the evolution of the Plan, and the programs it promotes this study suggests that Plan Colombia is not an answer to the economic and social needs of rural Colombia.

First of all, Plan Colombia was changed from being a plan for peace development to one involving antinarcotics, counterinsurgency, and neoliberal policies. As the Plan was initially elaborated, it contained sufficient tools to start a process of change for the improvement of rural communities. Unfortunately, the pressure of external forces, in this particular case, the pressure of the U.S. (as the main economic supporter of the Plan), permitted the manipulation of the Plan and converted it into a strategy that clearly assisted the U.S.' national interests. Such manipulation and transformation of the Plan embodied the infringement upon the Colombian government authority in the creation of its own socio-economic policies. This is due to the implementation of a Plan that denied and ignored the initial focus and goals of the Colombian initiative, in addition to the imposition of policies that served the U.S. interests.

The results of this study suggest that Plan Colombia was instituted because drugs and illegal armies were considered the root of the Colombian problem. Certainly one cannot deny that drug-related issues are important to understanding Colombia as a whole; neither can one ignore the presence of illegal armies as an important factor as well. However, current Colombian conditions have much deeper historical roots, which Plan Colombia, as it was implemented, ignored. Colombia's rural structure has historically shown a lack of adequate land distribution, insufficient and unsuitable social services (e.g. education, health, etc.), limited economic opportunities, inefficient technologic support, and ineffectual government representation. An examination of the different rural alternatives instituted demonstrates how such programs failed in efficiently addressing the issues mentioned here, and in most of the cases, these

programs either aggravated the situation of the rural communities or allowed the generation of different problems that needed to be addressed. Drugs and violence are only symptoms of the historical diseases that were never alleviated by the Colombian government. Therefore, to implement a "Plan" that does not take into consideration the historical realities cannot represent other than a tepid manner of dealing with the conditions of the Colombian rural communities.

Secondly, even when considering the reduced scope of the Plan, the results are still not substantial. The Plan's antinarcotics strategies represent an "improvement" on the approaches already in place. For example, the effects of the aerial spraying of toxic chemicals used in the process of forced eradication of illegal crops have been contradictory. This strategy seems successful in reducing the amount of hectares cultivated with illegal crops. Nonetheless it is also spawning the relocation of these crops into smaller plots in order to reduce the chance of being sprayed, and using more efficient varieties of these plants, thus increasing their productivity. Therefore it is essentially not affecting the final supply in the international market. This relocation of crops also supports deforestation processes that are devastating the natural resources of the Amazon forest. Even worse, the chemicals used in this process are affecting human and animal health conditions. However, the Colombian and U.S.' governments keep proclaiming the safety of the chemicals, ignoring medical reports and the claims of several ombudsmen and civil organization representatives. Additionally, these chemicals are creating environmental concerns such as the contamination of water sources, the destruction of non-targeted vegetation and the general devastation of potentially productive lands. This strategy is evidently weakening the quality of living conditions, reducing the possibilities of legal economic alternatives and affecting the personal safety of rural communities.

The Plan's accords of voluntary eradication, which are tied to the programs of alternative development, represent a theoretical alternative to those communities that choose to eliminate their coca and poppy plants. Nonetheless, some of the alternatives promoted by the government are only supported

(economically and technology-wise) in the short term. Additionally, the lack of physical infrastructure, the insufficient technological support and the fiscal and financial restrictions that characterize these communities do not offer a clear chance picture for long-term success. Unfortunately, the program of alternative development is frequently contradictory and in some cases ignored when making decisions and implementing other strategies. The lack of coordination between and within national and international entities in charge of the different strategies perpetuates the inconsistencies of the programs, undermines the state's power of delivery and closes windows on future arrangements. Therefore, alternative development programs in Colombia have become just one more tool to "pacify" peasants and politicians that support these programs. It is not a program signed to create better economic conditions that would motivate peasants to move voluntarily and peacefully away from the different stages of drug production.

Most of the projects offered by the government are primarily monocultures that only increase the supply of raw materials, and do not include appropriate compensation from the landowner to the peasant-worker. The "alliances" with private organizations offered in the implementation of alternative programs, in which peasants and indigenous people take part as worker-partners could expose these workers to undue risk, because there would be no obligation to pay them the same wages, overtime or even benefits. This translates into the formation of more and cheaper available workers. Overall, for those who manage to own and administrate their project, the Plan Colombia strategy is successful, but for those that do not (the majority), it represents another failure of the government strategies that increases the already low confidence levels in the government, and increases their need of continuing to work under poor conditions or to return to the illegal crops as methods of subsistence.

Conversely, the emphasis on neoliberal ideology and the implementation of its policies does not allow one visualize a better future for rural communities. This is due to the unequal and contradictory effects of such policies and the few resources that these communities have to compete openly in the market (at least without governmental support or special market treatment). Furthermore, each of the

limited tools that Colombian peasants have access to (that are designed to protect their economies) are being negotiated by the government under free trade or bilateral agreements the results will be very contradictory and unfavorable to the Colombian producers.

The "In Action" programs represent shortsighted initiatives. In fact, some of them have by now already expired. These programs served to placate the general population and the government, which was itself facing the intrusion of the U.S. in its powerful economic, military and antinarcotics offensive. Even though the programs were never more than palliative, they did not fulfill even their limited goals. This helps us to realize how Plan Colombia does not offer opportunities to improve conditions in the country. Instead, this highlights the neoliberal, antinarcotics, and counterinsurgency focus of the Plan. Unfortunately, this approach is not going to alleviate the problems in Colombia. Instead, it may actually exacerbate them and even spread them to the entire region.

Additionally, the Plan's military strategy produces an escalation in the violent confrontations, not only between the government and the illegal forces, but also between the illegal forces themselves. These confrontations, unfortunately, involve peasants, indigenous communities and in general, the defenseless rural population. The increase in violent confrontations generates terror and fear among rural people, who, in the search for better and safer living conditions, migrate to other areas, or even leave the country.

Finally, if the production of illicit crops is being reduced then the question remains: What alternative do these peasants, who have abandoned their crops, have? Is the government offering them alternative economic solutions? Are they migrating internally or abroad in order to grow illegal products? Is the government incorporating them into the military conflict as part of the legal or illegal forces or is it simply killing them? One might hope that the peasants would be taking advantage of the programs of alternative development that the same government offers, however, the failure of those programs as related in this thesis suggests that this is not the case. In reality, Colombian peasants are adopting to the new conditions that are anything but favorable. Therefore, they are indeed growing illegal crops in Colombian and non-

Colombian lands; they are becoming more and more part of the armed conflict whether by joining the armed forces or as victims. Plan Colombia, which initially was focused on the creation of a better Colombia, is emptying the countryside, massacring the population, destroying ecological diversity and yet has not staunched the illicit drug supply nor alleviated the terrorist "problems."

The most evident effect of the Plan on the rural population has been the astonishing increase in the numbers of displaced people. The increase in the displacement serves to illustrate the true outcome of the plan. Once again, the central objective of the Plan was never the development of the Colombian communities. It is no wonder then (as witnessed by several demonstrations in Colombia during the last three years) that peasants continue to feel that the government's priority is the eradication of coca rather than the improvement of their economic welfare. If their economic issues were addressed, peasants would consider abandoning such survival strategies as the production of illicit crops and enlistment into the armed forces.

At this point it is evident that Colombia either needs to institute clear program guidelines or to devise creative alternatives for the development of its rural population. Of course there is a need to eradicate illicit crops, but not at the expense of human health and the environment and not without providing alternatives for economic improvement. The international community should view the Colombian crisis not simply as a drug production problem or as an internal armed conflict. It should be addressed as an issue of inequality and social injustice that evolved from a lack of alternatives. The development of the Colombian rural areas should be addressed as an issue in its own right, rather than as an adjunct to a program designed to achieve other objectives. Also, a model should be developed within national boundaries, rather than be imposed from without by a body such as the IMF or the World Bank. These organizations tend to use a "cookie cutter" approach to development models, without consideration of the idiosyncrasies and differences within a country. Rural communities need to establish policies that address

future needs, are in harmony with global farming trends, are socially just and equitable, are environmentally sustainable, and are connected to other economic sectors.

Currently, the international economy, through the process of globalization, is becoming stronger and more powerful. It would be foolish to think that Colombia could address its rural issues by itself, and even more so to ignore the fact that the Colombian rural future depends on the alternatives that free trade agreements offer. This is especially true with respect to the ongoing "negotiations" of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). However, before entering into any type of bilateral or multilateral agreement on behalf of the rural community, Colombia needs to address its land tenure issue. An agrarian reform must be comprehensive in that it not only involves a process of land redistribution, but is also accompanied by adequate funding and strong technical support. Furthermore, the violent conflict must be addressed via peace negotiations and by reducing the fighting and the involvement of the innocent rural population.

Contrary to completely opposing free trade agreements, it is important to recognize the power of their tools, resources and mechanisms and to use them for the benefit of the population. Andean countries cannot fully resist the forces of free trade, but this does not mean that they cannot fight in order to protect their own interests. If what the promoters of the agreements want is to be able to compete in the markets "openly and freely," Andean countries need to implement and obtain the required tools to be able to participate. In light of the apparent disadvantages of rural producers in the Andean region, it is clear that the countries need extra support until they can attain the same level of production as more mature economies. In other words, Andean countries should seek to convert the negative effects of these agreements into positive results for their own communities.

The Andean region needs to implement new alternative development programs by evaluating these programs in terms of their purposes, methods, tools and goals. This means that they need to implement programs based on the specific social and economic structures of the communities to which

they are going to be applied rather than continuing to use external models and tools that are not appropriate. It would be wise to apply the same system of production implemented by “illegal crop promoters” in which comprehensive support is given to the producers. For example, the Andean countries, in order to be able to promote sustainable farming, need to provide for technical assistance, seeds, agrochemicals, financial support, timely payment for harvest, personal protection, and the opportunity for upward mobility.

In order to benefit the global community (in terms of drug production and consumption), the FTAA and bilateral agreements (Colombia – U.S.) that are already under discussion should recognize the rights and needs of rural people and the effects on those communities that such agreements might represent, rather than imposing contradictory policies and accords. It is important to recognize that the drug supply issue is not just Colombian as it was not a purely Peruvian or Bolivian issue during the 1980s. Therefore, any policy designed to eradicate illicit crops should have a regional impact, and multilateral agreements could be an option. However, these agreements must be well managed and negotiated to reach these zones, which are rife with poverty, violence and a lack of opportunities. Nonetheless, free trade agreements are not the only resources Andean countries have to promote the improvement of the conditions of rural communities; there are also campaigns of “Organic Production” and “Fair Trade²⁶.” These campaigns promote equitable social and economic relations that allow the development of communities that produce agricultural and non-agricultural products under environmentally friendly and socially sensitive conditions.

It is easy to view Colombia's situation as isolated, as one small region of suffering, hopelessness, and despair. However, Colombia's situation does not exist in a vacuum. The forces of globalization effecting Colombia are also being perpetuated around the world. The conditions in Colombia today may be the conditions of the world tomorrow unless definitive steps are taken to reduce the trend.

Although the picture for Colombia's future may appear dim, there is much reason to hope. There are a number of organizations working tirelessly on the specific problem of Colombia's rural conditions and

there are several encouraging development models that could not only provide assistance in this region, but could serve as models in other areas of the world where tragedies like this exist.

Worldwide, there is a heightened awareness of the pitfalls of globalization. Protests in Seattle, Cancun, and Miami and increased media coverage of this formerly arcane topic demonstrate the heightened sense of social responsibility and the strengthening of human agency that these complex and challenging problems demand. The fact that members of even the most privileged society in the world have taken an interest in a situation that for the most part effects the lives of unseen, unknown, and uncelebrated people in distant lands is reason enough for hope.

Indisputably, there is a need for future research that ties together the needs of rural communities and the realities of the global economy. This research could formulate alternatives for the Andean countries that would not infringe on the autonomy of the states while at the same time recognize the need of a multinational approach to the problems. The goal of these alternatives would be to help eliminate the sources of poverty and the lack of opportunities for dealing with the difficult geographies and ethnic enclaves that ultimately lead to illegal crop production, as well as to provide better living conditions to the people that suffer the most in the world of drugs.

Endnotes

¹ The encomienda system was one of the most common forms of exploitation from Spanish and Portuguese settlers and conquerors. In this system, natives were legally obligated to pay tribute in labor service or in kind to the elite settlers in exchange for protection and religious instruction in general. For a general discussion of this system see De Janvry (1981) Chapter 2.

² The main guerrilla groups are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army- Camilist Union (UC-ELN). The paramilitary forces are the United Self- Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC) and the United Self Defense Groups of Cordoba and Uraba (ACCU). These groups are explained in detail further in the text.

³ This data was taken from Diaz-Callejas Apolinar (2001) p. 69, 160 – 162. Jose Botero Villa and Salomon Kalmanovish produced the original data-chart titled: Land Adjudication of Waste Land until 1981.

⁴ The Caja Agraria was a state financial organization created with the purpose of serving as a banking institution for the rural community, as well as to finance agricultural, cattle, forest, and agro-industrial opportunities; and to take care of the financial needs of rural organizations.

⁵ President Enrique Olaya Herrera and several government representatives attempted to legalize a project of law regarding the possession and control of land in 1933. Later in 1936, President Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo signed the Law 200 "Law of Lands" which represented the real first attempt to redistribute lands among peasants. Unfortunately neither of these two materialized into real changes on land distribution for the betterment of the peasants.

⁶ Even though the statistics regarding land possession in Colombia since the 1960s are comparable when conversions are used, they do not offer clear ideas regarding the concentration of the

land due to the impossibility of the consolidation of lands of a single owner, much less considering lands owned by narcotrafickers and emeralds lords (Machado, 1998)

⁷The conservative party during this period was represented under the administrations of: Mariano Ospina Pérez (1943 – 1950), Laureano Gómez (1950 – 1951), Roberto Urdaneta (1951 – 1953), Laureano Gómez (1953), Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953 – 1957), Military Junta: Gabriel Paris, Rubén Piedrahita, Deogracias Fonseca, Luis Ernesto Ordóñez, Rafael Navas Pardo (1957 – 1958), Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958 – 1962)

⁸ "It is to be observed that the U.S. produced at least one third of the marijuana consumed in the U.S by the early 1990s"(Smith, 2000 p. 287).

⁹ For a detail description see Smith, 2000 Chapter 11.

¹⁰ The liberation consisted mostly of tariff reductions, financial deregulation, privatization of stated-owned enterprises, and adoption of a more liberal foreign exchange regime (U.S. Department of State, 2000)

¹¹Ivan Urdinola, brothers Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela, Jose Santa Cruz Londoño, Helmer Herrera Buitrago, Victor Patiño, and Phanor Arizabaleta.

¹² Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. 1996. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) 1995. Washington D.C.: Department of State. Pp.xxv – xxvi in Menzel, 1997:150.

¹³ Some of those steps were: the signing of and agreement with the U.S. government establishing periodic trade, efforts to improve oversight of the television sector and reduce cable and satellite signal piracy, pressed for an amendment repealing an article in the 1191 Constitution which allowed expropriation of foreign investment without compensation, the privatization of the remaining profitable public enterprises, including two electricity generating companies, fourteen electric distributors and the fifty percent government-owned share of Carbocol mining company. (U.S State Department, 2000)

¹⁴ Hegemony, understood as “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (Gramsci, 1971: 12)

¹⁵ “These administrations argue, for example, that illicit drug use underlies a broad array of U.S social problems, making their schools unsafe and converting our urban neighborhoods into free-fire zones. It is not difficult to see why many officials believe that it is just as important to prevent drug production as it was to stop communism (Schoultz, 1998: xiv)

¹⁶ This illustration contains information and references from the Center of International Policy's Colombian Project at: www.ciponline.org/colombia/aid0001.htm. The documents reviewed are: U.S Military and Police Aid, The 2000-2001 Aid Packages; The Contents of the Colombia Aid Package, and the Aid Legislation, a chronological review. All these documents were carefully examined and analyzed to match the general conclusion of the same web page.

¹⁷ “The Clinton administration's original aid proposal” Text of a document circulated by the White House, no letter-head, dated February 3, 2000 at <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/aidprop4.htm>

¹⁸ H.R. 3908, 2000 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act. At: <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/031401.htm>

¹⁹ S. 2522, Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2001 June 22, 2000. At: <http://ciponline.org/colombia/051101.htm>. And S. 2521, Military Construction Appropriation Act, 2001 at <http://ciponline.org/colombia/051102.htm>

²⁰ Colombia. 2000. *Plan Colombia*. Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia. Presidencia de la República. Retrieved February 19, 2001. (http://www.presidencia.gov.co/plan_colombia.htm)

²¹ These programs are examined in more detail when evaluating specific tools and instruments of the Plan, in the following chapter.

²² Consejo Nacional Campesino (CNC), Consejería para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES), Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC), Red Nacional de Iniciativas Ciudadanas por la Paz (REDEPAZ), Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP).

²³ For more information see www.maketradefair.com; www.fairtradefederation.com; www.fairtrade.org.uk; www.transfairusa.org; www.globalexchange.org; etc.

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