

# U.S. Human Rights Policy toward Colombia

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COLOMBIA FACES A GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, the most dire in the hemisphere. The country's internal conflict claimed the lives of more than thirty-five thousand Colombians during the 1990s and displaced a staggering two million. According to the United Nations, Colombia has the third-largest displaced population in the world, following Sudan and Angola. Some twenty-five thousand Colombians die each year from diverse acts of violence, including common criminal acts unrelated to the conflict, and at least half of the world's kidnappings occur in the Andean nation. Whatever the source—nongovernmental or governmental—the human rights data are profoundly troubling.

Colombia's deep human rights crisis stems primarily from a complex internal conflict involving the state and three main violent groups—two on the left and one on the right. The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the ELN (National Liberation Army) are two of Latin America's longest-standing insurgencies; both trace their roots to the 1960s. The FARC is the stronger and larger of the two, with some seventeen thousand combatants, whereas the ELN is estimated to number roughly four thousand. Both groups derive a significant share of their income from criminal activity, including kidnapping, extortion, and (the FARC particularly) the drug

trade. In this regard, one of the FARC's most common methods includes "taxing" coca farmers and drug traffickers in exchange for protection. Though these groups enjoy very little popular support, they have become increasingly powerful both financially and militarily in recent years.

Exacerbating Colombia's already explosive conditions are formidable paramilitary forces—the third group—that emerged several decades ago in response to the government's lack of authority and the incapacity of security forces to combat the leftist insurgencies. These paramilitary groups or militias—until July 2002 centrally organized under the umbrella AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) and numbering around twelve thousand combatants—are responsible for the bulk of political killings in Colombia. According to credible governmental and nongovernmental reports, these paramilitary forces have some links, at some levels, with the Colombian military. Using "taxing" methods similar to those of the FARC, the paramilitary forces also derive most of their funding from the drug industry. In fact, in a TV interview conducted in 2001, Carlos Castaño, the leader of the AUC, acknowledged that his organization obtained some 70 percent of its income from the drug trade. Adding to the mix of violence are drug traffickers, no longer organized in large cartels of Medellín or Cali, but rather increasingly fractured and spread out, making them even more difficult to control.

How has the United States responded to this alarming situation? Without question, human rights concerns have in part motivated U.S. policy toward Colombia over the past several decades. The U.S. government has applied pressure, imposed conditions on U.S. aid, and provided some assistance to Colombian institutions responsible for promoting human rights guarantees.<sup>1</sup>

But U.S. policy responses to the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian conditions in Colombia have also been substantially shaped and constrained by the U.S. interest in combating illegal narcotics. The drug issue—of such enormous domestic political salience in the United States—has long overridden other interests, including human rights. To the extent that the United States has succeeded in positively influencing the human rights conditions in Colombia, it has done so within a framework focused on fighting drugs. Indeed, while

the drug connection in Colombia may be the principal hook commanding the attention of key policymakers, this emphasis has also resulted in significant policy distortions and contradictions, as well as the subordination of human rights as a second-tier issue in the bilateral relationship.

In recent years U.S. policy toward Colombia has more often been the product of default than of conscious, deliberate decisions made at the highest level of the U.S. government. A formula for fighting drugs, made up of three essential elements—eradication, interdiction, and extradition—has largely framed U.S. policy over the past several decades. But the policy toward Colombia can most fruitfully be understood as the reflection of competing domestic interests and agendas. While many actors have found counternarcotics policy to be the most compelling, and most politically rewarding, issue, other interests and agendas—human rights included—are promoted by domestic political leaders and play an important role in the formulation and implementation of U.S. policy. The result has been an unusually personalized policy, in which the role of individual actors in supporting a particular interest or agenda matters a great deal. U.S. Colombia policy has also been marked by a high degree of “parallel diplomacy,” in which key actors and institutions take up different issues tied to a set of common goals and perform critical functions to advance them. In the case of Colombia, this can be seen within the executive branch itself, the U.S. Congress, and nongovernmental groups. The role of such actors and institutions is hardly new and in fact characterizes most important policy questions, but it has arguably become more pronounced in the absence of an overarching foreign policy framework and strategy.

## BACKGROUND

Throughout the Cold War—indeed, throughout much of the twentieth century—the United States and Colombia enjoyed close and friendly relations. This was due in some measure to Colombia’s exemplary economic management and its adherence to civilian, constitutional government since the early 1960s. For many years Washington held up Latin America’s third-largest country as a model of good

governance and a reliable partner in President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress aid program.

In the early 1970s, however, the drug issue (Richard Nixon had coined the phrase "war on drugs" in 1968) began to influence U.S. policy toward Colombia. Since human rights abuses during that period were not as extensive as they would subsequently become, such concerns did not then significantly influence U.S. policy decisions. In 1973 the U.S. government began to provide Colombia with counternarcotics assistance, approving a four-year, \$6 million aid package that would train six hundred Colombian law enforcement officers.<sup>2</sup> Despite this new counternarcotics assistance, the drug issue remained a relatively minor piece of the overall bilateral relationship throughout the 1970s. As former U.S. ambassador to Colombia Viron Vaky has noted, "We had DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] guys in the embassy but it was not a central element of our policy."<sup>3</sup>

With the election of Colombian president Julio César Turbay in 1978, the drug issue acquired greater prominence. In his inaugural speech, Turbay announced that counternarcotics efforts (at that time directed principally at traffickers and marijuana production) would be a top priority of his administration. He stressed that Colombia's success in this area would depend largely on the United States' willingness to provide financial assistance to the Andean nation as well as to address its own problem on the demand side.<sup>4</sup>

The Carter administration welcomed Turbay's commitment to the fight against drugs and worked to foster greater cooperation between the two countries.<sup>5</sup> The two presidents negotiated a bilateral extradition treaty in 1979, which greatly pleased U.S. officials.<sup>6</sup> Further, at the United States' suggestion, Turbay directed the Colombian armed forces to play a greater role in counternarcotics efforts.<sup>7</sup> He instructed the army to focus on drug cultivation in the Guajira Peninsula, where some ten thousand troops seized more than six thousand tons of marijuana over a two-year period.<sup>8</sup>

However, Turbay's determination to restore law and order to Colombia led him to carry out a variety of authoritarian measures that ran counter to the Carter administration's fundamental concern with human rights. In 1978, for example, Turbay issued a "Security Statute" (or Decree 1923), which gave greater authority and autonomy

to the military,<sup>9</sup> identified new, vaguely defined crimes such as “disturbing public order,” and restricted press freedom.<sup>10</sup> The statute was directed at drug traffickers as well as the country’s growing insurgent groups. An investigation conducted by Amnesty International uncovered multiple cases of human rights violations—including disappearances and torture—committed by military officers acting under Decree 1923.<sup>11</sup>

Such reports troubled Jimmy Carter, who had stated in his inaugural address that “our commitment to human rights must be absolute.”<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, his administration was pleased with Turbay’s counternarcotics efforts. At the urging of Diego Asencio, the U.S. ambassador to Colombia, the United States rewarded the Colombian president with \$16 million in additional antidrug assistance<sup>13</sup>—despite his military’s poor human rights record. As Bruce Bagley pointed out, however, Congress later prohibited the use of those funds for aircraft, radar, and communications technology, concerned that U.S. assistance might finance counterinsurgency activities.<sup>14</sup>

The next several years would witness the deterioration of Colombia’s human rights situation, as drug traffickers and private citizens armed themselves against the guerrilla groups waging war in the country. December 1981 was a turning point, as more than two hundred drug traffickers created a new organization, Muerte a Secuestradores, or Death to Kidnappers (known by its Spanish initials as MAS), to combat the insurgents.<sup>15</sup>

The creation of MAS had considerable impact. Many outside the drug trade viewed the group as a model of effective organization against the guerrillas. In fact, following MAS’s example, the Colombian army’s *Bárbula* Battalion in Puerto Boyacá, Santander, and the military mayor of the town, Oscar de Jesús Echandía, provided civilians with arms, uniforms, and money to fight the insurgents. The Colombian military offered tactical support and advice. This new, legally constituted paramilitary group chose the same name as that used by the drug traffickers: MAS. The organization’s initial objective—to free the region of insurgents—soon expanded to include attacks on any person or organization that resisted it. Within two years MAS was participating directly in extrajudicial killings carried out by members of the Colombian armed forces.<sup>16</sup>

It was against this backdrop that Colombian president Belisario Betancur took office in 1982. Vice President George Bush represented the Reagan administration at Betancur's inauguration in Bogotá. Within the context of the ideological conflict that dominated the Cold War (and especially the Central American conflicts), Bush concentrated on the guerrilla rather than the paramilitary phenomenon, suggesting that the United States build a military base in Colombia to monitor the country's insurgents. Betancur, unwilling to accept such a strong U.S. presence, declined the offer. He did, however, allow the Reagan administration to install radar surveillance stations in Colombia to hinder the drug traffickers' efforts to transport raw coca leaf from Bolivia and Peru to Colombia.<sup>17</sup>

Yet Betancur remained deeply concerned about the rise of paramilitary activity, in light of reports that MAS had committed nearly 250 assassinations since its creation. He directed Attorney General Carlos Jiménez Gómez to conduct an investigation—which concluded that 59 of 163 individuals linked to MAS were police and military officers in active service. Though Jiménez sought to broaden his investigation, Colombia's Disciplinary Tribunal determined that the case fell under military jurisdiction. Key officers spoke on behalf of the paramilitary group, arguing that its members sought only to defend themselves against the guerrillas. Not surprisingly, the officers identified by Jiménez were never reprimanded or prosecuted for their participation in the extrajudicial killings carried out by MAS. The Reagan administration had little to say in response to the findings.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, Betancur pursued peace talks with the Colombian guerrillas. Seeking a way to end the conflict, the Colombian president took the controversial step of offering the insurgents amnesty without requiring disarmament as a precondition. This strategy was at sharp odds with the Reagan administration's approach to guerrilla movements in the region and created some tension between the two governments.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the U.S. government found the Betancur administration insufficiently attentive to the drug issue and particularly uncooperative when it came to the question of extradition.<sup>20</sup> The Colombian president refused to implement the bilateral treaty negotiated between Carter and Turbay in 1979.<sup>21</sup> This frustrated Ronald

Reagan, who viewed extradition as an essential element of his administration's antidrug strategy.

Betancur's stance on extradition took a sharp turn following the 1984 assassination of Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, who had pursued Colombia's *narcotraficantes* in collaboration with U.S. drug enforcement agents. Betancur declared "war without quarter" on the drug traffickers and abandoned his previous position on extradition.<sup>22</sup> Over the next two years, he extradited ten Colombian citizens and three foreigners to the United States, expanded illicit crop eradication programs, and seized record-breaking quantities of illegal drugs.<sup>23</sup> In response to Betancur's actions, by 1985 U.S. counternarcotics aid for Colombia had tripled from its 1983 level.<sup>24</sup>

The United States' unwavering insistence on extradition—and the Colombian government's cooperation on that question—would take a heavy toll on Colombian society. Between 1981 and 1986 drug lords opposed to extradition assassinated more than fifty judges (including twelve Supreme Court justices).<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, Betancur's efforts on the peace front seemed to pay off, as the principal guerrilla group, the FARC, agreed to a cease-fire in 1984 and created a new political party, Unión Patriótica (UP), or Patriotic Union.<sup>26</sup> But over the next few years, paramilitary forces assassinated more than one thousand UP party members.<sup>27</sup> The systematic killings, and the government's inability to stop them, deepened the FARC's distrust toward the Colombian government and have severely impacted subsequent peace negotiation efforts.

Another important dimension was introduced into U.S. policy on Colombia when, for the first time, in 1984 the State Department publicly acknowledged the existence of Colombian paramilitary forces in its human rights report. The report attributed a series of assassinations, disappearances, and cases of torture to these self-defense units. Nongovernmental human rights organizations had criticized the State Department's previous reports, arguing that they presented violations committed by armed actors in Colombia in a way that downplayed their relationship with state forces.

In April 1989 Colombian president Virgilio Barco responded to the growing human rights crisis in Colombia, calling the paramilitaries

“terrorist organizations” and noting that their victims included primarily unarmed civilians, not guerrilla combatants. His government took steps to locate and bring to justice the paramilitaries’ leaders and declared their organizations illegal. Barco removed two military officials associated with MAS from their posts, dismantled several training centers, and organized a special police unit to pursue the paramilitaries.<sup>28</sup>

He also issued Decree 815—which stated that only the president had the authority to establish “self-defense” groups, subject to the approval of his ministers of defense and government—as well as Decree 1194—which created criminal consequences for civilians and military officers who helped train, finance, or organize paramilitary organizations.<sup>29</sup> Despite these actions, Colombia’s self-defense groups continued to grow, with sustained support from parts of the military.<sup>30</sup>

While Barco devoted most of his energies to Colombia’s internal conflict, the U.S. government had turned its attention even more sharply to drugs. In the spring of 1986, Reagan issued National Security Directive (NSD) 221, which identified illegal narcotics as a “lethal” threat to the United States.<sup>31</sup> The State Department mentioned the drug trade for the first time since the late 1970s in its 1987 Human Rights Report, which identified traffickers as the principal threat to human rights in Colombia.<sup>32</sup>

From 1989 on, drugs would remain the central—and, at times, virtually the only—component of U.S. policy toward Colombia. That year, President Bush, free to take on a new battle with the Cold War finally over, announced his Andean Initiative, a five-year, \$2.2 billion plan designed to heighten the United States’ war on drugs. The program—intended to attack drugs at their source—aimed to wipe out coca cultivation, eliminate processing labs, and halt the delivery of precursor chemicals by offering greater military and economic assistance to Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru.<sup>33</sup>

President Bush’s increased emphasis on the drug issue was accompanied by an even greater militarization of counternarcotics efforts pushed by both Congress and the White House. In 1989 Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which identified the Pentagon as the “single lead agency” for the detection of illicit narcotics shipments to the United States.<sup>34</sup> In August of that year, the U.S. president authorized \$65 million in emergency counternarcotics

assistance for the Colombian armed forces and police.<sup>35</sup> The aid package, developed at President Barco's request, included equipment, aircraft, and helicopters, as well as some military training. "We intend to work closely with the Colombian government to bring justice to those responsible for the scourge of drug trafficking," Bush said.<sup>36</sup> While Barco supported this aid package, his request for technical assistance for the judicial system went unanswered.<sup>37</sup>

Also in 1989 Colombia became Latin America's top beneficiary of the United States' International Military Education and Training (IMET) program.<sup>38</sup> More than two thousand military and police received training in U.S. schools over the next several years. This policy was not, however, without its critics. In fact, Human Rights Watch warned, "U.S. officials insist that the United States tracks these students through military-to-military contacts, but it is doubtful that the involvement of U.S.-trained personnel in human rights abuses comes to light in any but the most egregious cases."<sup>39</sup> As Peter Zirnite noted, "Militarization of counternarcotics efforts in Latin America undermines recent trends toward democratization and greater respect for human rights while threatening regional security."<sup>40</sup>

Despite serious concerns about the impact of U.S. assistance on human rights conditions in Colombia, the United States provided \$504 million in aid to Colombia between 1990 and 1992 under the Andean Initiative. Of the total amount, \$397 million went to military and law enforcement assistance. The remaining \$107 million included economic aid intended to address Colombia's balance of payments problems, strengthen its judicial system, and support the Colombian National Police's poppy eradication programs.<sup>41</sup>

During this period the United States took a number of controversial steps as part of its efforts to fight the drug war and implement the Andean Initiative. For example, seeking to enhance the effectiveness of the Colombian military's counternarcotics operations, the U.S. government focused on the armed forces' intelligence capabilities and formed an advisory commission of Pentagon and CIA officials to develop a set of recommendations for Colombia's Ministry of Defense.<sup>42</sup>

In 1991 the Colombian government adopted the commission's recommendations in the form of Order 200-05/91, which laid out a plan for reorganization of Colombia's military intelligence networks.

Despite the Bush administration's stated objective—better equipping the Colombian military to fight the drug trade—Order 200-05/91 had minimal, if any, relation to counternarcotics. According to Human Rights Watch, the document did not so much as mention drugs in its sixteen pages and appendices. The central focus was on fighting the insurgents.<sup>43</sup>

Operating under Order 200-05/91, the Colombian armed forces incorporated paramilitary organizations—which President Barco declared illegal in 1989—into their intelligence apparatus, directing these armed civilians to carry out surveillance of opposition leaders and attack individuals selected by the army's high command.<sup>44</sup> In Barrancabermeja, for example, a paramilitary-military network organized by the Colombian navy committed dozens of killings.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, there was heightened concern regarding the impact of U.S. assistance on human rights conditions in Colombia. In September 1991 the U.S. General Accounting Office issued a report warning that U.S. officials did not “have sufficient oversight to provide assurances that [U.S.] aid is being used as intended for counternarcotics purposes and is not being used primarily against insurgents or being used to abuse human rights.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, as Human Rights Watch noted, the sheer number of U.S. programs that channeled funds to Colombia made effective oversight a serious problem.<sup>47</sup>

But even when Colombian military officials explained to congressional staff members their intentions to use the bulk of U.S. aid provided under the Andean Initiative to launch a new offensive (“Operation Tri-Color 90”) against the guerrillas, the U.S. government did not react negatively.<sup>48</sup> Thomas McNamara, U.S. ambassador to Colombia at the time, stated, “I don't see the utilization of the arms against the guerrillas as a deviation. The arms are given to the government in order that they may use them in the anti-narcotics struggle . . . but this is not a requirement of the United States.”<sup>49</sup>

Such a policy was being carried out despite the fact that the State Department's own 1991 human rights report implicated some members of the Colombian armed forces in human rights violations and took note of the high levels of impunity that protected them from prosecution. Moreover, despite growing evidence of human rights violations by the armed forces, between 1989 and 1993 the State

Department granted thirty-nine licenses to U.S. companies for the export of arms to Colombia.<sup>50</sup>

In 1993 the General Accounting Office (GAO) issued another critical report, noting that the State Department had not yet established end-use monitoring procedures to ensure that U.S. aid did not go to Colombian military units implicated in human rights violations. The GAO found “two instances where personnel who had allegedly committed human rights abuses came from units that received U.S. aid.”<sup>51</sup>

Political affairs officer Thomas P. Hamilton defended the U.S. government’s commitment to human rights, explaining that “throughout the year the Ambassador and other representatives of the Embassy pursue our human rights policy through private diplomatic channels.”<sup>52</sup> But, as Human Rights Watch argued, “Elsewhere in Latin America . . . experience has shown that quiet diplomacy means no diplomacy as long as the armed forces feel assured of an uninterrupted stream of military aid.”<sup>53</sup>

It was during the administration of César Gaviria that the United States began funding substantial judicial reform efforts in Colombia, with the aim of complementing and reinforcing antidrug policies. In 1991 the U.S. government agreed to provide Colombia with \$36 million over a six-year period in support of Colombia’s Public Order Courts. Many human rights organizations viewed the courts, with their anonymous judges, prosecutors, and witnesses and secret proceedings, as part of a wider system that routinely violated the rights of Colombian citizens. According to the Lawyers Committee on Human Rights, for example, “the special procedures which [the Public Order Courts] employ impinge on basic due process rights guaranteed under the Colombian constitution and international law. Most notably, the right to a public trial, to confront one’s accusers, and to petition for judicial review of detention have all been compromised by Colombia’s unorthodox approach to certain criminal prosecutions.”<sup>54</sup>

The U.S. government’s moments of greatest irritation with the Gaviria administration can best be understood through the primacy of the illegal narcotics question. To cite the two most problematic instances: in 1992 drug kingpin Pablo Escobar escaped from prison (though he was subsequently killed by security forces trying to

apprehend him); and two years earlier, extradition had been banned in the country's 1991 constitution (although legislation in December 1997 overturned the ban).

Yet, even with its predominant emphasis on the drug issue, the U.S. government took a number of important steps in the early 1990s in response to Colombia's worsening human rights conditions. Recognizing that the Colombian army remained focused on counterinsurgent rather than counternarcotics operations, the U.S. government redirected most aid in 1992 from the army to the police, navy, and air force.<sup>55</sup> The kidnapping and presumed deaths of three U.S. missionaries by the FARC in 1993 prompted action on the U.S. policy side as well. That year Congress asserted a stronger role in the policy-making process. It included language in the foreign assistance appropriations bill that prohibited the administration from providing security or economic support to Colombia without notifying two congressional committees with authority to block the aid.<sup>56</sup> Although this shift was encouraging and generally welcomed by human rights organizations, it added yet another twist and complication to the Colombia policy puzzle, further highlighting the contradictions and complexities that have long made it difficult for the U.S. government to devise a coherent and constructive strategy.

At the same time, however, despite increased concern for human rights abuses, in 1994 the United States provided more training and equipment for a string of Colombian military brigades involved primarily in combating insurgents, not narcotics.<sup>57</sup> Most of these brigades have since been implicated in human rights abuses. As the executive director of Amnesty International stated that year, "There is now good reason to believe that the United States has been a collaborator in the charade, that much of the U.S. aid intended for counternarcotics operations has in fact been diverted to the killing fields."<sup>58</sup>

## **TURN FOR THE WORSE**

With the inauguration of Ernesto Samper in 1994, U.S.-Colombian relations reached unprecedented levels of tension and mutual distrust. In 1995 the Colombian president was accused of accepting

\$6 million from the Cali drug cartel during his presidential campaign. As a result, the State Department revoked Samper's visa and "decertified" Colombia in 1996 and 1997 for lack of cooperation in the war on drugs. The decertification policy, which subjected Colombia to aid sanctions, did little to bolster the government's credibility and legitimacy. An enfeebled government only enabled the violent, nonlegitimate forces—the guerrillas, paramilitary groups, and drug traffickers—to advance and gain the upper hand in multiple conflicts, with severe consequences for human rights throughout the country.

Despite the strained relations between the United States and Samper, it was precisely during this period when the question of human rights in Colombia acquired greater importance in the bilateral relationship. President Samper himself took some positive, noteworthy steps in the area. For example, he established the General Administrative Special Directorate for Human Rights within the Ministry of the Interior; accepted the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (at the time, the only such office in all of Latin America); adopted Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions; and approved legislation that compensated victims of human rights violations in cases brought before international tribunals.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps most significant, in 1995 Samper acknowledged the findings of a commission established under the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and accepted Colombia's responsibility for the murders of more than one hundred people in Trujillo between 1989 and 1991.<sup>60</sup>

But Samper also resorted to some hard-line measures to deal with Colombia's human rights problems. He twice declared a state of "internal commotion"<sup>61</sup> and his Decree 0717 passed over the civilian authorities, allowing the military's high command to request that the president declare "special public order zones" where fundamental rights would be suspended.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, Samper authorized civilians to form the controversial rural security cooperatives. Through these organizations, referred to as CONVIVIR, private citizens would monitor guerrilla activity and provide intelligence to military personnel in their regions. Members' identities would remain secret and CONVIVIR would keep close ties with both police and military commanders.<sup>63</sup> Human rights groups protested that these government-sponsored

self-defense groups involved civilians directly in the country's internal conflict, making them increasingly vulnerable to guerrilla attack.<sup>64</sup>

Also, responding to mounting concerns from nongovernmental organizations and constituents about the human rights situation in Colombia, the United States suspended all aid to the country's military in 1996, directing assistance instead to the Colombian police.<sup>65</sup> This marked a redirecting of its more than twenty-year policy of military aid for counternarcotics. Further, in September of that year, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) proposed a ban on U.S. assistance for any foreign military units implicated in gross human rights abuses, unless effective measures had been taken to bring those responsible to justice. The so-called Leahy Amendment applied to counternarcotics aid controlled by the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and was passed by the U.S. Congress as part of the Fiscal Year 1997 Foreign Aid Spending Bill. To the extent that it has been applied, this U.S. instrument had a positive effect on human rights conditions in Colombia. In 1998, for example, it helped bring about the dismantling of the Twentieth Intelligence Brigade, a group credibly charged with committing grave abuses. In addition, the State Department delivered a sharp message to the Samper administration by issuing highly critical human rights reports on Colombia in 1996 and 1997. Such reports, together with those issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch, pointed to and condemned the ties between Colombian security forces and paramilitary organizations.

Whatever the merits, making U.S. policy toward Colombia contingent on improved human rights and curbing the drug problem has been the result of a complex web of different U.S. domestic agendas and interests seeking to shape policy. It would be difficult to argue that the U.S. stance toward Colombia derived from a clear and coherent policy that reflected sustained and serious high-level political attention. Rather, U.S. Colombia policy can most usefully be interpreted as an attempt to fill the vacuum formed precisely by the absence of such attention. As a White House official acknowledged to the *Washington Post* on December 27, 1998, "Colombia poses a greater immediate threat to us than Bosnia did, yet it receives almost no attention. So policy is set by default."<sup>66</sup>

## A NEW BEGINNING?

When Andrés Pastrana became Colombia's president in August 1998, many saw an opportunity to build a more constructive and balanced bilateral relationship. Many U.S. officials, who hoped to get the relationship back on track, viewed Pastrana, unlike his predecessor, favorably. The new president appeared committed to working with the United States, pursuing a negotiated settlement to Colombia's internal conflict, and addressing the grave human rights situation facing his country.

From the outset, however, it was clear that wiping the slate clean after several years of mutual antagonism would not be easy. The cumulative effect of Colombia's pariah status was to encourage various expressions of "parallel diplomacy," particularly between key Republicans in the U.S. Congress (who had assumed control of that body in 1995) and the head of Colombia's antinarcotics police, General José Serrano. The irony, in fact, was that during a low point in the bilateral relationship—when President Samper was denied a U.S. visa—Colombia nonetheless received an increased level of counternarcotics assistance.

In 1999 the United States provided \$289 million in such aid to Colombia, which was three times the 1998 amount.<sup>67</sup> As a result, Colombia ranked third in the world, after Israel and Egypt, as a recipient of U.S. security assistance.<sup>68</sup> (The amount of security assistance to Colombia would reach even higher levels the following year after the approval of Plan Colombia legislation.) Although the bulk of the money appropriated in 1999 went to Colombia's national police, the country's military received about \$40 million, chiefly for equipment and the training of an elite counternarcotics force.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs directed toward reforming the judicial system, strengthening the enforcement of human rights, promoting civil society activity, and supporting alternative development activities received only \$3.3 million in 1998.<sup>70</sup> Although the amount increased to \$6.3 million in 1999,<sup>71</sup> the disparity between USAID funding and the financial support received by Colombia's security forces reveals the overwhelming thrust of U.S. policy toward Colombia. Additionally, roughly two hundred U.S. military

advisers and trainers continued to rotate in and out of the country.<sup>72</sup> And, according to a report issued by the General Accounting Office in June 1999, the U.S. government had been sharing intelligence on antinarcotics and guerrilla activity with the Colombian military since March 1999.<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, in 1999 it appeared that U.S. policy toward Colombia might begin to take more definite shape and firm direction. High-level attention unquestionably intensified. The focus stemmed in large measure from a pervasive apprehension about the deteriorating conditions in Colombia and President Pastrana's disappointing attempts—chiefly through a peace process with the FARC—to reverse them. As tempting as it may have been to do so, Colombia became nearly impossible to ignore.

Few events are as powerful in mobilizing political and bureaucratic resources in the United States as the deaths of its citizens. The kidnapping and presumed deaths of three U.S. missionaries in 1993, reportedly at the hands of the FARC, already weighed heavily on U.S. policy toward Colombia. The brutal killing of three U.S. human rights workers in March 1999, which the FARC acknowledged had been carried out by its forces, proved to be a turning point. The murders effectively constrained a U.S. role in any peace effort, since the incident made further meetings between State Department officials and FARC representatives (which had taken place in December 1998) politically impossible. The assassinations aroused substantial concern among key members of Congress, as did the deaths of five Americans in July, when their plane crashed during a United States Air Force antidrug reconnaissance mission (the full details of which remain unclear).

Just a month after the March 1999 assassinations, Harold Koh, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights, and labor, delivered the Clinton administration's most forceful message on human rights in Colombia at a Medellín conference.<sup>74</sup> He especially urged the Colombian government to sever "any and all remaining ties between the military and paramilitaries."<sup>75</sup> Although it is unclear whether Koh's speech, lauded by human rights groups, had any effect, the State Department's 1999 human rights report on Colombia recognized that the Pastrana government had dismissed four army generals

under investigation for alleged links to paramilitary groups. Still, the State Department continued to point to high levels of impunity and continuing collaboration between some members of government security forces and members of paramilitary groups.<sup>76</sup>

The sheer brazenness and growing brutality of the conflict also helped bring Colombia into high-level focus. While President Pastrana's peace initiative struggled to gain traction, Colombians were appalled at the savagery occurring in their country. A record number of FARC and paramilitary atrocities were carried out, and some of the most spectacular kidnappings were the work of the ELN and the FARC. Colombians were left wondering if any place in their country could still be considered secure. In addition, the media, especially CNN, increasingly publicized the humanitarian and human rights crises, particularly the plight of the country's displaced people. A number of community groups in the United States—many with ties to various churches—also began to organize in response to the humanitarian crisis.

Responding to such a critical situation, the U.S. government, chiefly through USAID programs, expanded support for judicial reform efforts, as well as initiatives related to human rights. Training programs have sought to improve the capacity of Colombian investigators and prosecutors of rights violations committed by all armed actors in the country's conflict. USAID also joined with the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to develop a program of some \$23 million for Colombia's internally displaced.<sup>77</sup>

The growing regional and international dimensions of Colombia's crisis also helped account for Washington's more intense focus on Colombia. Emigration had been on the rise, to a considerable degree related to the country's worst economic problems in nearly seven decades. After many years as the region's steadiest economic performer, Colombia had been reeling, with unemployment reaching 20 percent and a sharp decline in real gross domestic product (GDP). According to an August 20, 2002, BBC News report, more than 1.2 million Colombians have left their country since 1997, most of them going to the United States. There were also increasing concerns about regional instability as violence from Colombian paramilitary and guerrilla groups began spilling into bordering countries.

Finally, in addition to the human and geopolitical consequences of Colombia's crisis, the matter of drugs continued to concentrate Washington's attention. Despite increased assistance to Colombia for counternarcotics efforts, the drug problem only worsened. In 1998 production of coca, which supplies the raw material for cocaine, was up by 28 percent<sup>78</sup>—three times the 1994 level.<sup>79</sup> Pressure mounted for government officials at the highest levels to make Colombia a priority and fashion a more productive policy.

### THE U.S. RESPONSE AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

One of the main impulses in the United States has been to react to deteriorating conditions by getting tough and calling for increased security assistance. Such an impulse was plainly on display during the debate that took place within the U.S. government at the beginning of the Pastrana administration. Leading congressional Republicans, most notably Benjamin Gilman of New York, the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, pressed for more support for the national police. At the same time, General Barry McCaffrey, who headed the United States' antidrug efforts under President Bill Clinton, and General Charles Wilhelm of the United States Southern Command, urged higher levels of assistance to Colombia's military for counternarcotics programs (including the formation of additional elite battalions).

Others, worried that the United States might get sucked into a Vietnam-like quagmire, were far more reluctant to advocate greater involvement. Those holding this view included the human rights community, some members of the Defense and State Departments, and select Republican congressional figures who had previously questioned the U.S. role in Bosnia. Many congressional Democrats shared the concern about a potential "slippery slope" in Colombia and argued that greater resources should be directed toward domestic efforts to reduce demand and consumption of illegal narcotics. Thus, increased attention to the Colombia policy issue tended mainly to muddy the political picture.

Against this backdrop, President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had little choice but to deal more directly with

the Colombia question. In September 1999 the Colombian government unveiled "Plan Colombia," a document created at the urging of high-level U.S. government officials. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, under secretary of state for political affairs, played an especially prominent role in shaping the policy framework. Plan Colombia addressed the full gamut of Colombia's major problems—from illegal narcotics and political violence to social development, economic stability, and broad, institutional reform—and outlined possible solutions. President Pastrana announced that implementing the plan would cost \$7.5 billion over a three-year period, and that Colombia would contribute \$4 billion. The remaining \$3.5 billion would come from the international community: the multilateral financial institutions, the European Union, other supportive governments, and, of course, the United States. The Pastrana administration hoped that the United States would provide between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion of that amount.

In July 2000, after a year of intense debate and political bickering, Congress finally passed legislation supporting Plan Colombia. Reduced from Clinton's original \$1.6 billion proposal to \$1.3 billion, the aid package received strong bipartisan support. Approximately two-thirds of its funds were designated for military and police counter-narcotics activities. However, owing in large part to the growing, and increasingly publicized, concerns of critics of the policy's excessive security emphasis, the package included \$81 million for alternative crop development and \$122 million for both human rights support and the judicial system.<sup>80</sup>

The legislation contained human rights conditions—chiefly concerning the reported links between the Colombian armed forces and paramilitary groups—that needed to be met before funding could, in principle, be released. Yet at the first opportunity President Clinton waived those requirements by declaring the situation in Colombia a national security interest. That decision, and the waiver issue more generally, has become one of the strongest areas of concern among many in the U.S. human rights community who maintain that permitting the signing of a waiver essentially undermines the strength of human rights conditionality as an effective policy tool. The subsequent removal of the waiver provision did little to solve the problem, however. Cutting off U.S. security aid would be likely to make Colombia's

human rights situation even more critical. At the same time, Plan Colombia introduced more regular consultations between nongovernmental human rights organizations and relevant U.S. government officials about the country's progress in addressing human rights problems.

Still, even with the provisions for economic development and the strengthening of the rule of law, one of the main reservations about Plan Colombia remained that it was heavily skewed toward the military. It was also overwhelmingly an antidrug program, with a marked emphasis on the "push into southern Colombia," especially the Putumayo region, where coca production is highest. Not only did human rights organizations such as Amnesty International criticize the U.S.-backed plan, but so did the European Union, Colombia's neighbors, and some of the country's own citizens. A common complaint among Latin American governments and an array of Colombian nongovernmental organizations was that the Pastrana government failed to consult adequately with them beforehand and get their input in the process of policy formulation.

Even as Plan Colombia started to be implemented and bilateral relations grew significantly closer, President Pastrana's peace process with the FARC faltered. Pastrana's decision in November 1998 to cede a demilitarized zone (or *zona de distensión*) to the FARC as a way to advance peace negotiations ultimately proved unsuccessful. The FARC was accused of using the zone as a resupply-and-training area for combatants, and—amid rising violence—growing numbers of Colombians began wondering whether the country's strongest insurgency was really prepared and willing to negotiate in good faith. In February 2002, at the beginning of his last year in office, Pastrana, facing growing pressure, decided to take back the demilitarized zone and officially end the peace process.

The collapse of the Colombian peace talks with the FARC took place within a changed international context. The election of George W. Bush in November 2000 raised questions among many observers about how U.S. policy toward Colombia might change. In essence, though, there was more continuity than change. In an effort to counter some of the strong controversy that had been generated by Plan Colombia, especially among European and Latin American governments, the Bush administration in 2001 proposed the Andean

Regional Initiative, a \$731 million proposal, of which \$625 million was approved by Congress. This initiative, already contemplated under the Clinton administration, was more geographically balanced than Plan Colombia and directed a higher share of resources to Colombia's neighbors to help them deal with the "spillover effects" of the spreading conflict.

That the funds designated were more evenly distributed for both military and nonmilitary purposes also alleviated some of the sharp criticism that had been leveled against Plan Colombia. The final details of the package revealed considerable sensitivity and concern with human rights questions, as conditionalities of U.S. aid remained at the forefront of the public debate. Nonetheless, for most of 2001 U.S. policy toward Colombia remained squarely focused on the drug issue, as U.S. officials proposed various combinations of instruments and levels of resources to address the serious problem.

## 9/11 AND COLOMBIA

The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, brought about a significant shift in the way that the United States viewed the Colombian conflict. Security concerns became paramount, and politically it became easier to make the case that U.S. resources should not be limited strictly to fighting drugs but instead could be used more broadly to assist the Colombian government contain the violence. In fact, just over a month after the attacks, U.S. ambassador Anne Patterson, invoking the discourse that especially resonated in Washington, characterized Plan Colombia as an "anti-terrorist" policy. Indeed, even though before September 11 the FARC, ELN, and AUC appeared on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations (the AUC was included on September 10), the "anti-terrorist" rationale had not dominated the U.S. policy justification until the attacks.

The antiterrorist justification for U.S. Colombia policy acquired even greater importance and momentum in light of the deteriorating security conditions within Colombia itself. Immediately after the collapse of talks between the Pastrana administration and the FARC on February 20, 2002, the Colombian president for the first time began

to invoke the term “terrorist” to describe the insurgents. Before then, while peace talks were still alive, such a designation was deemed to be inappropriate. With Pastrana’s changed rhetoric, and heightened frustration among most Colombians with the FARC’s intransigence, many—even including some European governments—began to slowly accept the new discourse to describe Colombia’s violent actors.

The striking coincidence of these developments both in the international context and within Colombia itself opened up an opportunity to shift the terms of U.S. aid to Colombia. As a result, the distinction between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency aid—a distinction that had long been drawn for political purposes but that had, in practice, become increasingly blurred—was essentially jettisoned. In a noteworthy departure in U.S. Colombia policy, in August 2002 Congress passed an emergency supplemental appropriations bill that lifted restrictions on U.S. security assistance and allowed the Colombian government to use funds directly in the armed conflict, to combat the FARC, ELN, and AUC. Even though human rights conditionality on the aid has been strictly maintained—and the Leahy Amendment still applies—many human rights groups have expressed serious concerns about such a policy shift, in light of the Colombian military’s problematic human rights record and documented links with some paramilitary organizations.

Nonetheless, despite such reservations, the environment both in the United States and Colombia has, in the wake of the disappointments and frustrations with President Pastrana’s fruitless peace effort, become increasingly hospitable to a stronger focus on the question of security. On August 7, 2002, Álvaro Uribe assumed the presidency in Colombia, buttressed by an overwhelming mandate to combat the country’s violent actors. President Uribe has promised to deal with Colombia’s insurgents and paramilitaries with a firm hand but in keeping with democratic principles and practice. His discourse has been favorably received by most Colombians, as well as by the U.S. government. Uribe’s public support for the U.S. position in the Iraq war in March 2003—the only major South American leader to offer such support—further enhanced his stature in Washington.

To be sure, there are a number of important human rights concerns surrounding Uribe’s proposals. His idea to set up a civilian force

of one million Colombians, possibly armed, to cooperate with the military and police has generated the greatest controversy and will no doubt be subjected to considerable scrutiny. There is substantial nervousness that Uribe's state-of-emergency measures may disguise antidemocratic practices. The concern is that security issues will increasingly join drugs to further trump Colombia's compelling human rights agenda. In some sectors there is now a growing appetite for greater U.S. military support for Colombia on more flexible terms than prevailed in previous years. At the same time, however, among some other nongovernmental rights groups and members of the U.S. Congress, there is deepening concern about the direction of U.S. Colombia policy.

Despite his tough stand on Colombia's security challenges, Uribe has also called for the United Nations to play a role in mediating an end to the country's conflict. His objective is to create the conditions on the battlefield to make serious negotiations more likely. Though the United States continues to assist Colombia through considerable levels of aid, it is unclear to what extent there is an overall strategy aimed at supporting President Uribe's efforts to move toward greater security and peace. Such a strategy, together with applying the necessary pressure to keep human rights concerns high on the bilateral agenda, is essential. Despite a change of administration in Colombia and a new international climate shaped by September 11, mounting pressures and political activity mean that human rights issues will, of course, continue to influence U.S. policy on Colombia. The task is likely to be chiefly defensive, concentrating on questions of conditionality and monitoring the use of U.S. assistance.

## POLICY CONTRADICTIONS

The rapid succession of developments in Colombia since the beginning of the Pastrana administration has resulted to a large extent in more lucid diagnoses, deeper concern, and greater attention among key United States government officials. Yet such concern and attention, however laudable, have not led to greater coherence in U.S. policy toward Colombia, and a political consensus for that policy does not seem any closer to being forged. In fact, developments in Colom-

bia since 1999 appear to have led to sharply conflicting policy proposals and prescriptions.

Despite congressional approval of Plan Colombia and the Andean Regional Initiative, there still appears to be little agreement on a set of fundamental questions: Where does Colombia fit among the diverse foreign policy challenges facing the United States? What can the United States realistically do to help Colombia? How far is the United States prepared to go in backing the Uribe administration's approach to ending the country's decades-long conflict? How long will it take and how much will it cost? These are the basic questions about the role the United States should play in the new world that is being significantly shaped by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. To date, however, there have been few convincing answers to such questions.

At a more immediate, practical level, United States officials and lawmakers must soon deal with a host of issues related to military aid and drug policy. Where do human rights fit into support for Colombia's military? Will the underlying purpose of security support be posed in terms of strictly "winning the war" or in terms of professionalizing the country's armed forces with the longer-term aim of reaching a political settlement? And should the United States continue to insist on three key instruments—eradication, interdiction, and extradition—in dealing with the drug challenge, or should more serious attention be given to broader security, or development, aims, within a multilateral framework? What are the human rights implications of such choices?

The U.S. government also must confront the manner in which it deals with an international community increasingly concerned about Colombia but unsure how best to act, if at all. It is noteworthy, but hardly surprising (in light of the marked legacy of U.S. intervention and the recent involvement in the Balkans), that many Latin Americans appear to be as worried about what the United States is planning to do as they are about the deteriorating conditions in Colombia itself. The 2003 Iraq war has only further heightened such concerns.

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan's appointment in December 1999 of a special envoy for Colombia and President Uribe's call for UN mediation in 2002 add another interesting element to the mix, posing an important challenge for the United States. If the United States becomes even more involved in Colombia, will it be inclined

to act unilaterally or in conjunction with the relevant international organizations and its hemispheric neighbors? Experience and logic suggest that the efficacy of U.S. policy generally—and particularly on human rights questions—would be greatly enhanced through more coordinated, multilateral efforts with Colombia's neighbors.

For U.S. support to make a difference will require a much broader, longer-term strategy toward Colombia, one that goes substantially beyond the current emphasis on counternarcotics and, most recently, counterterrorism. A strong case can and should be made to the American people about why the United States needs to assign the Colombia issue highest priority. The risk is that whatever legislation is adopted in the short term will be viewed as having in some way “taken care of” the Colombia policy challenge—without facing the longer-term, higher-level responsibilities associated with such engagement. Stronger leadership, and a clearer articulation of what the United States hopes to achieve in Colombia, are crucial.

Further, for U.S. support to be effective will also require a clear demonstration of Colombians' will and commitment to do their part in carrying out policies aimed at improving the country's conditions related to security, human rights, narcotics, and the economy. Moreover, institutional corruption needs to be squarely and vigorously addressed. The election of Álvaro Uribe and his repeated commitment to addressing these issues open a window of opportunity in this regard. At the beginning of his term, Uribe commanded widespread support, and the levying of a “war tax” on wealthy Colombians appears to be a good sign in this direction. There is an opportunity for the U.S. government, together with Colombia's neighbors and international organizations, to play a more constructive role in attempting to shape the will and build the national commitment necessary to make progress on questions related to peace.

There is no question that in Washington, and throughout the United States, there is growing understanding of Colombia's multiple and immensely complicated problems. There is also ample goodwill and a disposition to help. It would, however, be a serious mistake to interpret the mere lifting of restrictions on U.S. aid or the passage of future assistance packages as reflecting a sufficiently clear consensus about how the United States can most productively engage

Colombia. More will be involved in successfully advancing national interests and goals such as the protection and promotion of human rights. There is, after all, a critical difference, too rarely recognized, between *instruments* of policies and the policies themselves.

The fundamental truth is that a lot more will unquestionably be required, not only from Washington and Bogotá, but also from European and other Latin American capitals. It is hard to see how progress can be made in dealing with Colombia's human rights and humanitarian crises without such collective and constructive engagement by external actors.

## NOTES

1. Indeed, in accordance with section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, delivery of U.S. foreign assistance is subject to approval based on a recipient country's human rights record. As such, three principles condition delivery of U.S. foreign assistance: first, aid must serve to increase the observance of internationally recognized human rights; second, no security assistance will be provided to any country that engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights; and third, the United States will fund only international security assistance programs that promote and advance human rights, thereby avoiding identification of the United States with governments that deny internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms to their people. An annual review process headed by the secretary of state, with assistance from the coordinator of human rights affairs and nongovernmental organizations, identifies countries that meet the three conditions.

2. Bruce M. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," *Foreign Affairs* (fall 1988): 78.

3. Russell Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy toward Colombia* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 26.

4. Stephen J. Randall, *Colombia and the United States: Hegemony and Interdependence* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 247.

5. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," 79–80.

6. Crandall, *Driven by Drugs*, 28.

7. *Ibid.*, 27.

8. *Ibid.*; Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," 79.

9. Francisco Leal Buitrago, *Estado y Política en Colombia* (Bogotá: Siglo Veintiuno de Colombia, 1984), 266.

10. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 16.
11. Leal Buitrago, *Estado y Política en Colombia*, 270.
12. President Jimmy Carter, inaugural address, January 20, 1977.
13. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," 80.
14. Ibid.
15. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 17.
16. Ibid., 17–18.
17. Juanita Darling and Ruth Morris, "Colombia: Concerns Grow about U.S. Military Aid to Colombia," *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1999.
18. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 18–19.
19. Randall, *Colombia and the United States*, 252–253.
20. Ibid., 253.
21. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," 81.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 83.
24. Crandall, *Driven by Drugs*, 29.
25. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," 83.
26. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 20.
27. Crandall, *Driven by Drugs*, 33.
28. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 23–24.
29. Human Rights Watch, *The "Drug War" in Colombia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1990), 13–14.
30. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 25.
31. John P. Sweeney, *Tread Cautiously in Colombia's Civil War*, Backgrounder #1264 (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, March 25, 1999), appendix.
32. María Margarita Malagón, "Los Derechos Humanos en las Relaciones Estados Unidos-Colombia (1977–1997)," in *Estados Unidos, Potencia y Prepotencia*, ed. Luis Alberto Restrepo (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1998), 123.
33. Sweeney, *Tread Cautiously in Colombia's Civil War*, appendix.
34. Ibid.
35. President George Bush, statement on U.S. Emergency Antidrug Assistance for Colombia (August 25, 1989).
36. Ibid.
37. Crandall, *Driven by Drugs*, 34.

38. Human Rights Watch, *State of War: Political Violence and Counterinsurgency in Colombia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993), 131.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Peter Zirnite, "Militarization of the U.S. Drug Control Program," *In Focus* 3, no. 27 (September 1998).
41. "The Drug War: Colombia Is Implementing Antidrug Efforts, but Impact Is Uncertain," statement of Joseph E. Kelley, director-in-charge, international affairs issues, National Security and International Affairs Division, GAO/T-NSIAD-94-53 (October 5, 1993).
42. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 27.
43. *Ibid.*, 28.
44. *Ibid.*, 29.
45. *Ibid.*, 3. In 1991 the United States increased its arms shipments to Colombia. The United States provided the Colombian military with 10,000 M-14 rifles; 700 M-16 rifles; 623 M-79 grenade launchers; 325 M-60 machine guns; 26,000 60 mm rifle grenades; 20,000 40 mm rifle grenades; 37,000 hand grenades; 3,000 Claymore mines; and approximately fifteen million rounds of rifle ammunition. *Ibid.*, 4.
46. U.S. General Accounting Office, quoted in Human Rights Watch, *State of War*, 133.
47. *Ibid.*, 134.
48. *Ibid.*, 132.
49. Thomas McNamara, quoted in Washington Office on Latin America, *Clear and Present Dangers: The U.S. Military and the War on Drugs in the Andes* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America, October 1991), 52–53, and in Human Rights Watch, *State of War*, 132.
50. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 90. Weapons sales by U.S. firms included AR-15 rifles built by Colt Manufacturing Company in West Hartford, Connecticut. According to Human Rights Watch, those rifles had been used on a regular basis by paramilitary units in Colombia, even though the Colombian government had declared their use by civilians illegal.
51. U.S. General Accounting Office, *The Drug War: Colombia Is Undertaking Antidrug Programs, but Impact Is Uncertain* (Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, August 1993), 6.
52. Thomas P. Hamilton, counselor for political affairs, letter to *Americas Watch*, September 27, 1993, quoted in Human Rights Watch, *State of War*, 138.
53. Human Rights Watch, *State of War*, 138.
54. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Colombia: Public Order, Private Injustice* (Washington, D.C.: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, February 1994).

55. Human Rights Watch, *State of War*, 131.
56. *Ibid.*, 138.
57. These included Mobile Brigade One and the Fourth Division in Meta; Third Brigade in Cali; Fourth Brigade in Medellín; Sixth Brigade in Ibagué; Eighth Brigade in Armenia, Valle; Ninth Brigade in Neiva; Eleventh Brigade in Antioquia; Sixteenth Brigade in Yopal and Arauca; and three Special Forces units. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 88.
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60. Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks*, 76–77.
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62. *Ibid.*, 46.
63. *Ibid.*, 44.
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71. *Ibid.*
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