

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY IN OLMOUC

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

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**Political Violence in Colombia with the
Emphasis on the Current Situation**

Bachelor thesis

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Olomouc 2010

I declare in lieu of oath that I wrote this thesis myself. All information derived from the work of others has been acknowledged in the text and in a list of references given.

Olomouc, 1. 5. 2010

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Signature

Acknowledgement

I am heartily thankful to my thesis supervisor RNDr. Miloš Fňukal, Ph.D. for his patience, guidance, support and helpful advice.

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

Přírodovědecká fakulta

Akademický rok: 2008/2009

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Jana ŠRÁMKOVÁ**
Osobní číslo: **R07632**
Studijní program: **B1301 Geografie**
Studijní obor: **Mezinárodní rozvojová studia**
Název tématu: **Political Violence in Colombia with the Emphasis on the Current Situation**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra rozvojových studií**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

The aim of the thesis is to analyze armed political conflicts in Colombia with the emphasis on the left-wing guerrilla movements (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia FARC, National Liberation Army ELN) and right-wing paramilitary groups (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia AUC). Authoress will focus especially on the current situation.

Structure of thesis:

1. Introduction
2. Aim of the thesis
3. Methodology
4. The conflict in historical perspective
5. Actors of the conflict
6. Foreign involvement
7. Peace negotiations
8. Situation during the Uribe's presidency
9. Conclusion
10. Summary
11. Bibliography

The bachelor thesis will be processed in these controlled phases:

Compilation of bibliography (May - June 2009), processing chapter 1.-3. (May - November 2009), processing chapter 4. (December 2009), processing chapter 5.-7. (February 2010), processing chapter 8. (March 2010), processing chapter 9. and conclusion (April 2010), creation Annexes (continuously), completion and submission of work (May 2010).

Rozsah grafických prací: **dle potřeby**
Rozsah pracovní zprávy: **10 - 15 tisíc slov**
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Seznam odborné literatury: **viz příloha**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **RNDr. Miloš Fňukal, Ph.D.**
Katedra geografie

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **7. května 2009**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **30. dubna 2010**

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V Olomouci dne 29. března 2010

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List of Abbreviations

ADO	<i>Autodefensa Obrera</i> (Workers' Self-Defense)
AFEUR	<i>Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas</i> (Urban Counter-Terrorism Special Forces Group)
AUC	<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i> (United Self-Defense Forces)
CFC	<i>Comisión Facilitadora Civil</i> (Civil Facilitation Commission)
CCN	<i>Comisión de Conciliación Nacional</i> (National Conciliation Commission)
CGSB	<i>Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar</i> (Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Board)
CNG	<i>Coordinadora Nacional Guerrillera</i> (National Guerrilla Coordinating Board)
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
ELN	<i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</i> (National Liberation Army)
EPL	<i>Ejército Popular Liberación</i> (Popular Liberation Army)
EU	European Union
FARC	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i> (Revolutionary Forces of Colombia)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
MAQL	<i>Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame</i> (Quintin Lame Armed Movement)

MOEC	<i>Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil Campesino</i> (Peasant Student Workers Movement)
M-19	<i>Movimiento 19 de Abril</i> (19 th of April Movement)
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of the Human Rights
UNDOC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UP	<i>Unión Patriótica</i> (Patriotic Union)
U.S.	United States

Abstract

The Thesis disserts on the long-term intranational political conflict situation in Colombia. It analyses the historical development of the conflict, as well as the structures and impingement of the principal parties, which are the national government and non-state illegal armed groups. The work neither neglects the ulterior, both intrastate and foreign actors that have been involved in the conflict over time. The study is particularly engaged in the conflict's present continuance, with all its political and security aspects and the controversy associated with the current government strategies.

Key words

Colombia, conflict, guerrilla, FARC, AUC, ELN, Uribe, paramilitaries

Abstrakt

Práce se zabývá situací v Kolumbii postiženou dlouholetým vnitrostátním konfliktem. Analyzuje jeho historický vývoj, stejně jako strukturu a postupy hlavních stran tohoto konfliktu, kterými jsou kolumbijská vláda a nestátní ilegální ozbrojené skupiny. Práce však neopomíjí ani vedlejší vnitrostátní a zahraniční aktéry, kteří se konfliktu v průběhu času účastnili. Autorka se zvláště zaměřuje na současný vývoj situace v celkovém politickém a bezpečnostním kontextu s poukazem na kontroverze spojené se současnými vládními strategiemi.

Klíčová slova

Kolumbie, konflikt, guerilla, FARC, AUC, ELN, Uribe, paramilitární skupiny

1. Introduction

1.1 Topic outline and aims of the thesis

In Europe, unlike in Americas, Colombia's political violence is in not widely discussed topic. Colombia is often associated with drug trafficking issues, without being duly illustrated with the deeper context of the conflict situation in which it inheres. The country has the potential to become a prosperous country and successful tourist destination, given its location and natural resources. Yet it passes for a poor developing country with widespread human rights violations.

The main cause of this is to be found in decades-long conflict between the national government and left-oriented insurgent groups, dissatisfied with developments in the country, that started to emerge in the second half of the 20th Century. While becoming nationwide or, in some aspects, even international issue, with the expansion of drug trafficking offering these groups opportunity to grow significantly, the Colombian government is still reluctant to label the conflict a civil war, since it would thus recognize the parties and give the rebels war status, which would identify and limit the government's legal approaches. Nowadays, due to the continuing violence, Colombia has become a country with one of the largest populations of internally displaced persons.

The conflict has changed over time, as well as the actors involved and the approaches of Colombian governments to the possible resolution of the situation. This thesis analyses the continuance of the conflict, the individual parties involved and previous strategies for solving the problem. A considerable proportion is concerned with the controversies associated with the current Colombian government strategy for dealing with the guerrillas.

Using the existing knowledge of the problem, the study also attempts to review the genuine motivations of both internal and foreign actors in the conflict, which often differ considerably from their official statements.

1.2 Methodology

This thesis is a research-compilation work. The information for the study has been taken mostly from literature available in the English language. However, the study also stems from Spanish sources on a small scale, mainly due to the unavailability of other language sources regarding the discussed issue.

In order to ensure an unbiased statement, a variety of sources were used when evolving the thesis. The work is based on information from official governmental reports; international organizations, in particular the United Nations, International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch reports; and independent, mostly Colombian sociologist, journalist and political scientist and analyst works, from both book and internet sources. As regards the most recent information, the study draws on online articles from world periodicals. In addition, some observations, comments in the work and the conclusion also come from the author.

In the work, both direct and indirect quotations are used. The direct quotations are distinguished by the quotations marks. Text is written in the form of footnotes. The quote is never applied to the text longer than one paragraph. If no quotation appears in the paragraph, it is text by the author.

1.3 Chapter division

The work is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter, *Introduction*, introduces the main theme of the work including an explanation the conflict problem. It further explains and describes the structure of the thesis and sets its aims. The second chapter, *An Historical Perspective of the Colombian Conflict*, begins the main part of the thesis. It provides a brief outline of the historical development of the conflict. This passage is not deeply developed, since some of the information is further offered by the following chapter. Various parties to the internal conflict are presented in Chapter Three, *Actors of the Internal Conflict*, where their principal structures, development, motives and role in the conflict are described. The fourth chapter, *Foreign Involvement*, offers an international insight into the situation, understating Colombian international relations and their influence on the conflict development. Chapter Five, *Peace Negotiations over the Course of Time*, lists the various peace efforts and strategies undertaken by the Colombian government. Only the administrations since 1990 are detailed in

the chapter, since the study is focused rather on the present continuance of the conflict; nonetheless, some of the events from the earlier past are also briefly mentioned, in order to introduce the problem to the reader. Furthermore, this chapter deliberately excludes the last government, President Uribe's strategies, since those are detailed in the penultimate Chapter Seven, *Conflict during the Uribe Presidency*, which examines this period, between 2002 and 2010, in all of its political aspects. This chapter also deals with the Colombian current pre-election period. However, it is limited by the deadline of the thesis consignment. The whole problem is summarized and the author's comments are contained in the *Conclusion*, listed as Chapter Eight.

2. Historical perspective of the conflict

The beginnings of the Colombian civil conflict stretch back to the second half of the 19th Century. Two main Colombian political parties, Conservatives (founded in 1849 espousing Catholicism, centralism, and protectionism) and Liberals (founded in 1848 on an anti-clerical, broadly economically liberal and federalist platform), had been fighting over the governance. In 1948, the popular Liberal party leader and presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, known within his backing as “El Jefe”, was assassinated during his second presidential campaign.¹ This act aroused a wave of violence started with a riot called “Bogotazo”, when much of the Capital was destroyed, and over 2,000 people killed within just few hours.² The government was eventually able to contain the situation in Bogotá, however it could not control the violence that had spread through the countryside. The situation thus led to the ten years lasting brutal, mostly rural conflict between armed liberal and conservative combatants, who settled old political scores. During this period called significantly the “Violation” (*La Violencia*), over 200 thousand people on both sides of the conflict were killed³.

This violent conflict was ended in 1958 with an adoption of the agreement known as the “National Front” (*Frente Nacional*). According to this, the two parties were supposed to share the power by alternating the governance in 4-year intervals.⁴ Although this agreement pacified the current violence and contributed to the political stability of the country, it did not ensure sustainable peace and public satisfaction. This agreement did not mean a democratic system for Colombia. It implied a governance of only two parties, excluding any significant influence of other political parties. Because of the heterogeneity of National Front governance, the efforts of making certain agrarian reforms were not successful. Thus the middle and working class was not supported enough, whereas the local and regional elites profited much more from such situation. The social inequality was escalating and the agrarian crisis was coming, causing the peasants starvation.

As a result, certain left-wing guerilla movements started to emerge. The oldest one, “Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia” (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*

¹ BRAUER, GOMEZ-SORZANO, SETHURAMAN, 2004

² WANGARING, 2002

³ HEERES, 2005

⁴ Congress Country Studies, 1988

de Colombia) – FARC, was established as a military wing of the Colombian Communist Party that was excluded from the politics after National Front establishment in 1960's. Soon also other insurgent groups, such as the “National Liberation Army” (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) – ELN, the “Popular Liberation Army” (*Ejército popular del liberación*) – EPL and the “19th of April Movement” (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*) – M-19 came into existence.⁵

The decade of the 70's did not bring many changes and developments. There was still couple of insurgency groups in Colombian jungles, however, these neither had enough power to influence people living in cities, nor had a significant impact on the development of the country, since the groups did not have very broad member's platform. Nevertheless, at this time the guerilla's bands still had a wide support of the Colombian population.

Consequential turning point came with the expansion of coca growing during the 1980's. The production process of coca was initially under the influence of the newly appeared wealthy druglords. The guerillas did not participate at the drug trade at first. Instead of that, they were kidnapping the drug cartel family members, which led to the creation of a paramilitary group “Death to Kidnappers” (*Muerte a Secuestradores*) – MAS, who carried out number of assassinations and torture against the guerrilla members and their families, in order to protect the druglords and Colombian elites.⁶ Due to certain government's efforts, moderate FARC guerilla members formed a legal political party called the “Patriotic Union” (*Union Patriótica*) – UP. However, number of these politicians was assassinated by paramilitary groups, such as MAS. As a result, the party eventually withdrew from legal politics.⁷

During 1990's the M-19 signed a ceasefire with the government, and practically ceased to exist, whereas the FARC and paramilitary groups continued getting more tide to the drug trade. As an effect, 90's brought a significant growth of both of these non-state actors. By the end of the century, the FARC counted some 16,000 combatants,⁸

⁵ GONZALEZ, 2004

⁶ Latin America Security Program, 2004

⁷ DUDLEY, 2004

⁸ BBC, 2009

following the number of recently developed AUC membership, which counted over 30,000 paramilitaries⁹.

As all the negotiation efforts had appeared more or less unsuccessful, Alvaro Uribe, the newly elected president of Colombia, decided to implement contractive politics against the guerilla and paramilitary groups. Within his governing period, Uribe managed to disarm the AUC and to significantly decrease the number of guerilla's fighters. This period of Colombia history will be enlarged in the chapter 8, *Colombian conflict during the Uribe's presidency*.

⁹ Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005

3. The direct interstate conflict actors

3.1. Nonstate actors

3.1.1 Revolutionary Armed Forces in Colombia - FARC

FARC is designated by the European Union,¹⁰ and United States,¹¹ roster as a terrorist organisation. The roots of this insurgent movement stretch back to the period of *La Violencia* when it was just a small guerilla band situated in so called “Marquetalia republic”, which was the unofficial name for the area around one of the Colombian rural municipalities in Caldas province.¹² After the establishment of National Front, liberal and communist guerillas were drove back deeper to jungle areas along the Magdalena and Cauca Rivers at the Andean foothills (see figure 1).¹³

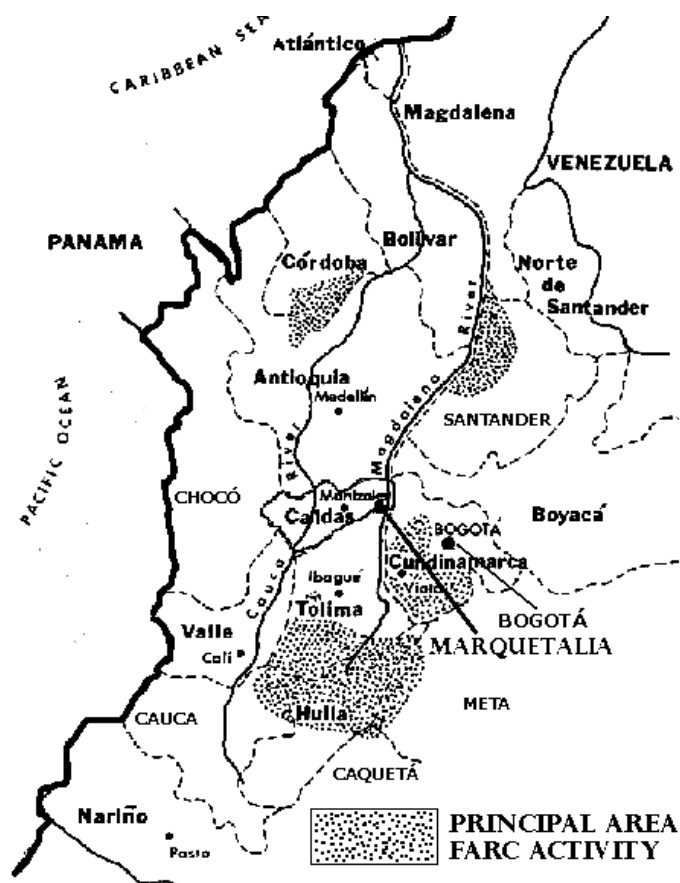


Figure 1: FARC presence in 1960's¹⁴

¹⁰ Council of European Union, 2003

¹¹ Office of the Coordinator for Countryterrorism, 2010

¹² HYLTON, 2006

¹³ see appendix 1

¹⁴ Modified from: Latin American Studies

< <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/colombia-guerrilla-maps.htm> >

In 1964 Manuel Marulanda aka “*Tirofijo*”¹⁵, originally a peasant liberal, at the times of la Violencia a part of column of guerilla fighters under the Communist party, together with the Marxist activist Jacobo Arenas, became top leaders of a rebel group, which was formed as a military wing of Colombian Communist Party. A year later, in 1965, this insurgent group got its name *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* FARC. It counted about 350 members¹⁶. Ideologically targeted and well educated Arenas was seen by both inside and outside Colombia revolutionaries as a hero, according to some of them even comparable to such an icons as Simón Bolívar or Hernesto Guevara. Thus the FARC was initially driven strictly by communist ideals with emphasis on the Che Guevara’s cult. It also carried a Marxist-Leninist elements and the need of justice society, and so the theoretical Marxist education was requested even within the ordinary members. Also the emancipation of women has been an important issue for this insurgent movement, therefore the share of women along the FARC members has always been around 30%.¹⁷

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, until the early 1980’s, the FARC had held aloof and focused on a local matters. However, in May 1982, *Seventh Guerilla Conference* was held by these insurgents. This conference initiated large restructuring in FARC system in order to extend the group’s influence to the urban areas. Also, the initials EP – “Ejército del Pueblo” (the People’s Army) were added to the organisation’s name.¹⁸ This conference was a turning point for the FARC, as it allowed them to optimize their plans for the future, and focus on military provision.¹⁹

In 1984 FARC’s restrained members along with members from civil movements with other aims established the forenamed Patriotic Union as a political wing of the guerrilla group. It was a result of peace negotiations within the guerillas and contemporary president Belisario Betancur.²⁰ This groupment begun to decline subsequently after the druglords and paramilitaries conducted consistent attacks on UP members. The Patriotic Union practically disbanded during the second mid 80’, after almost 3,000 UP members, including two presidential candidates and dozens of mayors and council

¹⁵ Spanish for sureshot – Marulanda got this name from his commanders because of his reputed accurate gunning

¹⁶ LEGRAND, 2003

¹⁷ BBC, 2002

¹⁸ The suffix EP can be used referring about FARC(-EP), however, henceforth the common acronym FARC will be used in the thesis

¹⁹ SANCHEZ, 2005

²⁰ RESTREPO, 2003

members were assassinated or disappeared.²¹ This besides other reasons was the event that determined the FARC to get so reluctant to accede to the peace negotiations.

During 1990's Colombian government continued with attempts of peace process, but it only led to a bigger FARC expansion. By the turn of 20th and 21st century, during the Pastrana's Governance, FARC enjoyed with its greatest prosperity with the membership of over 16,000²² guerilla fighters.

The setback for FARC came with the strict Presidency of Álvaro Uribe. Along with the "assistance" of AUC, his consequent interventions against guerilla groups, and only very rough attempts at peace negotiation, resulted between the years 2002 – 2009 in rapid fall of FARC's membership to an estimated 9,000 combatants.²³

FARC primarily did not want to participate in drug trafficking that started to emerge during 1980', however, it soon found this phenomenon highly profitable and accepted this business in order to finance itself²⁴. FARC is now considered to get annually about 500 to 600 million US dollars from drug trade. According to the Colombian government, over 65 from its 110 operational units are somehow involved in narco-trafficking²⁵. Another sources of FARC's funding are extortion, kidnapping ransom and intake from monthly fees, so called *Vaccines*, that peasants are duty bound to pay, to be safe from FARC's attacks and kidnappings. FARC also levy social taxes from local peasantry.²⁶

The FARC has been recently operating besides the Colombia also mostly in Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Panama and Ecuador, sporadically in Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia. The strength of the FARC is nowadays unknown, but is being estimated from 6,000 to 18,000 members.

3.1.2 Liberation National Army - ELN

The ELN was founded in 1965 by Cuban – trained Fabio Vásquez Castaño, who along with his brother and other relatives held an important position within the group consisted of some 30 members. The group was from the beginning strongly influenced by the liberal theology. The most significant impact on the ELN development had

²¹ Latinamerica Press, 2007

²² AZCARATE, 2003

²³ HESTER, 2008

²⁴ RABASA, CHALK, 2001

²⁵ CALVANI, 2008

²⁶ BOUDON, 1996

the entering of Father Camilio Torres Restrepo²⁷. This University teacher, although he died soon after he joined the group, remained the symbol and guru for the ELN members. This fact also catalyzed the further orientation of ELN that, unlike FARC, tried to stay long time clear of drug trafficking and concentrated on recruitment mostly from the lines of Catholics and university students, urban workers and disenchanted peasants, who had formed as the response to the Cuban Revolution the so called Movement for Workers, Students, and Peasants (*Movimiento de Obreros, Estudiantes, y Campesinos*) - MOEC.²⁸

During not very successful period of early 1970`s, right after it was seriously crippled by military operations, Father Manuel Pérez, a Catholic priest also known as “el Cura Pérez”, together with Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista alias “Gabino”, the current leader, joined ELN and directly after the Camilio Torres death in 1970 formed a co-leadership, which helped ELN to escape its destruction²⁹. Manuel Pérez gradually became the most significant leader of this insurgency group, as a man, who believed in the principle of “liberation theology”,³⁰ according to which the Catholic Church should be involved in the state politics where needed in order to ensure the social justice, better protection of human rights, and better outcomes for the poor. He destined the ELN`s ideology that stems from Cuban revolutionary theory and liberal theology, mixing rather peculiarly the communist and Christian demands for the society without corruption and poverty.

During the first ten years of its existence ELN focused on military operations, targeted bombings mainly on the power supplies, protesting against the government officials and also ideological and personnel support from the rural areas. Under the Pérez – Bautista co-leadership, the ELN grew from some 100 members to more than 3,000.³¹

Despite its educated and sophisticated base, ELN unfortunately has not eschewed the guerilla`s practices, committing kidnaps for extortions, attacks on the oil pipelines and other actions which did not avoid deaths of the civil population. ELN occasionally even operated with FARC, so there is no wonder it has been listed on the European

²⁷ SANCHEZ, 2005

²⁸ PEARCE, 1990

²⁹ MANWARING, 2002

³⁰ SAFFORD, PALACIOS, 2001

³¹ GALE, 2006

Union³² and United States' roster of Foreign Terrorist Organizations³³ in 1997 so like the FARC.

The ELN was not interested in being involved in the drug trafficking, however, nor did it care for the government peace efforts. It rather focused on its recovering, driving together required financing through the medium of terrorist actions. Nevertheless, as ELN held back from the narcotrafficking, it thus did not record that outstanding expansion in 1990`s as did the FARC. Still, ELN reached in the end of 90`s its peak, having a membership consisted of some 4,500³⁴ combatants.

ELN was not willing to join the peace negotiation until Alvaro Uribe was elected as a Colombian president for the term of office between the years 2002 – 2006 and than later 2006 – 2010. Uribe ensured some successful peace talks with ELN that have over the time resulted in decreeing the number of its followers to some 1500³⁵ nowadays.

3.1.3 United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia – AUC

Various paramilitary groups started to appear in Colombia as early as the insurgent movements. In 1964, the civil defense law allowed creation of self-defense units, in order to support the army against guerillas³⁶. These have got through large development since the 1970`s and 1980`s, as a response to guerillas attacks to protect the landowners in rural areas. As these paramilitary movements were initiated by squirarchy that got the armature from mercenary troops, these groups could have been initially considered as government armed forces. However, over time these groups happened to become uncontrolled violent organizations that impended and terrorized rural population just like the insurgent groups they were supposed to fight. These groups were outlawed in 1989.³⁷

In 1997, AUC was formed as an umbrella organization of regional paramilitary groups that were relatively independent on each other. AUC, led by Carlos Castaño, have supported the interests of drug cartels and thus got also involved in the drug trafficking,

³² Council of European Union, 2003

³³ Office of the Coordinator for Countryterrorism, 2010

³⁴ SANCHEZ, 2005

³⁵ ROCHLIN, 2007

³⁶ RABASA, CHALK, 2001

³⁷ RUIZ, 2001

as a financing source for their activities³⁸. They had been also obtaining a substantial amount of money from their supporters.

AUC asserted them as a counter-insurgency force, being the main enemy especially for the main Colombian insurgent groups – FARC and ELN. AUC were initially popular among the Colombian population, since they were seen as the protectors against brutal guerillas, and they grew significantly. “As examples, the number of small AUC groups had increased from 273 to more than 400, with an estimated total of up to 8,000 active combatants. Moreover, the paramilitaries have organized, trained, and equipped shock brigades that since 1996 have become capable of successfully challenging insurgent military formations. Finally, in 2001 AUC groups were estimated to have an armed presence in about 40 percent of the municipalities in the country..(The total number of AUC combatants before its disarmament counted over 30,000³⁹).”⁴⁰

Although these paramilitary groups had been successful dealing with insurgent combatants and lowering the number of guerilla members, in 2001 was AUC added to the European Union⁴¹ and United States⁴² list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, after its extremely brutal human rights abuses during the 2000, while kidnapping over 200 people and committing over 800 assassinations.⁴³

There had been large efforts made on demobilizing these groups during Uribe’s presidency. In May 2004, the AUC leaders and 400 of their bodyguard had been offered 368 km² safe haven around Santa Fe de Ralito in Cordoba department⁴⁴ for the further six months discussions.⁴⁵ In 2006 these peace efforts were declared successful and AUC announced that they had officially ceased to exist. However, there have been some more AUC activities noted afterwards. According to 2009 Human Rights Report, “The AUC demobilization led to a reduction in killings and other human rights abuses, but paramilitary members who refused to demobilize and new illegal armed groups continued to commit numerous unlawful acts and related abuses, including the following: political killings and kidnappings; physical violence; forced displacement;

³⁸ SPENCER, 2001

³⁹ SHIGETOMI, MAKINO, 2009

⁴⁰ MANWARING, 2002, p.11

⁴¹ Council of European Union, 2003

⁴² Office of the Coordinator for Countryterrorism

⁴³ ROCHLIN, 2007

⁴⁴ see appendix 1

⁴⁵ HART, 2008

subornation and intimidation of judges, prosecutors, and witnesses; infringement on citizens' privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of movement; recruitment and use of child soldiers; violence against women, including rape; and harassment, intimidation, and killings of human rights workers, journalists, teachers, and trade unionists.”⁴⁶

Very likely several former AUC units have been in a way cooperating with guerillas in order to continue with the cocaine trafficking since then. The former AUC groups have been also recently related to the so called Parapolitics scandal (*Parapolítica*), sometimes also referred to as a “paragate”, being compared to the Watergate scandal (see below).

3.2. Official State Actors

3.2.1 Colombian Government

Colombia is presidential representative democratic republic. The Constitution from 1991 characterizes the country as social juridical unitary and decentralized republic with partially autonomic regional offices⁴⁷.

The Colombian executive branch consists of the President of Colombia, currently Álvaro Uribe Vélez, who is both the chief and the head of state, followed by Vice President Francisco Santos and the Council of Ministers. The cabinet is appointed by president and consists of a coalition of three largest parties. Both the President and Vice President of Colombia are elected by popular vote for a 4-year terms. Until 2005 the reelection was not allowed. However, on 24th of September 2005 Colombian congress approved Electoral Guarantees Law (*Ley de Garantías Electorales*)⁴⁸ modifying the Constitution from 1991. Álvaro Uribe was thus allowed to serve his second term of presidency. Colombia is a multi - party state currently under the governance of the Conservative party with Liberals in opposition. President is the most powerful office in the country.

The legislature represented by Congress is bicameral composed of two chambers, the lower, the House of Representatives (*Cámara de Representantes*), consists of 166 members directly elected for a four-year term, and the upper chamber, the Senate

⁴⁶ HRW, 2009, p.1

⁴⁷ Colombian Institution, 1991

⁴⁸ El Abedul, 2005

(Senado) with 102 members also directly elected for four-year terms. The Senate also includes two senators representing indigenous people in specific areas.⁴⁹ In March 2010, National Unity Party, President Álvaro Uribe supporter, won the legislative election, and gained the majority in Colombian Congress.⁵⁰

In the domestic political situation the aspiration on implementing reforms in economical and political sphere and a struggle against illegal non-state groups is a serious issue. The government objective is so called “Democratic security policy”⁵¹ (*Política de seguridad democrática*), focused on social reforms, protection of civil rights, and also fighting the guerrilla movements.

Hereat, the Colombian government itself is struggling with corruption problems. The most significant and recent case is the affair mentioned above, the parapolitics scandal. Several congressmen and politicians, mainly allies of President Álvaro Uribe’s administration, including President’s cousin MARIO Uribe, have been arrested or investigated in connection with the colluding with former paramilitary members.⁵² “The Supreme Court and prosecutor general's investigations of links between politicians and paramilitary groups implicated 87 members of Congress, 15 governors, and 35 mayors, 66 of whom were detained at year's end. In total, 18 politicians (13 members of Congress, four governors, and one mayor) had been convicted for ties to paramilitary groups at year's end.”⁵³

3.2.2 National Army of Colombia

Colombian Army (*Ejército Nacional de Colombia*) is together with Colombian Navy and Air Force part of Military Forces of Colombia. Nevertheless, the Colombian Army is the main legal military component of Colombian civil conflict. It is led by the President of the state, and also directed by a four suns⁵⁴ General Freddy Padilla de León.⁵⁵

The military service is compulsory for all men aged 18 - 24 years except for students, lasting for 12 - 18 months. The estimated manpower fit for Colombian military service,

⁴⁹ EAST, THOMAS, 2003

⁵⁰ BBC, 2010

⁵¹ SCHRIEBERG, 2009

⁵² HAUGAARD, 2008

⁵³ HRW, 2009, p.1

⁵⁴ The Generals in Colombia wear a Sun as their shoulder strap insignia

⁵⁵ Escuela de Relaciones Civiles y Militares, 2010

which means men and women aged 16 – 49 years, was in 2009 according to the World Factbook 18,257,379.⁵⁶

Colombian Army is divided into many units, including Colombian National Army Special Forces Anti-terrorist Group (*Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas*) – AFEUR⁵⁷, specialized explicitly on counter-terrorist operations and hostage rescues. AFEUR is elite unit that is also in charge of VIP protecting.

Total amount allocated by the government for the purposes of the military forces of Colombia was in 2008 over 11.0229 billion USD, 6.5% of the total Colombian GDP.⁵⁸ The Colombian Army is being largely funded by the United States through the Plan Colombia (see chapter International approach to Colombian situation – United States).

As the thesis discuss in the first chapter, the official state military had initially cooperated with the paramilitary groups. After the outlawing of the paramilitaries, however, such relations have become impermissible and illegal. Despite that the Army has been repeatedly accused of being involved in number of scandals related to corruption and collaboration with these groups. Human Rights Watch reports and documents have proved continuing ties between the military and paramilitary groups in several Brigades.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ CIA, 2010

⁵⁷ Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas, 2009

⁵⁸ Ministerio de Defensa Colombia, 2009

⁵⁹ HRW, 2010

4. Foreign involvement

Although the Colombian conflict is primarily an interstate matter, there are outside actors that influence the situation in Colombia, whether it is in a good sense due to their help, support or their negotiation efforts, or in an involvement the government would not ask for, when the support is provided for the insurgent movements. The present situation in Colombia is unlikely to be solved without the involvement of some of the main outside-country actors and therefore also the common relations play an indispensable role for this matter.

4.1 United States of America

United States are for Colombia undoubtedly the most important foreign actor. The U.S. influence on Colombia has existed since 19th Century, however, its role has changed over time, getting more involved in Colombian politics with the expansion of the drug trafficking during the 90's, which has pushed the U.S. to widely support the Colombian anti-drug initiatives. Unlike the European Union, which assistance is directed mainly in the social and economic sector, and which sees the current Colombian hard policy as a cause of increasing human rights abuse in Colombia, the United States are primarily focused on the militarily targeted grants supporting such a politics.⁶⁰

Significant rapprochement of United States and Colombia came with the Álvaro Uribe's election. This right wing strongly pro American president, among South American left wing dominance became a major ally for USA and George Bush. Nowadays Colombia is after Israel and Egypt the third biggest recipient of U.S. foreign aid.⁶¹

On 13th of January 2009, the amity between these two politicians even eventuated in an expression of the esteem from the United States, when Uribe was awarded, along with Tony Blair and Josh Howard the highest civilian award, the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*. As the former President of The United States George Bush jr. in his speech expressed, Uribe deserved this appreciation for his work to improve the lives of Colombian citizens, for his efforts to promote democracy, human rights and peace abroad and of course for his actions in combating terrorism.⁶²

⁶⁰ Drug Enforcement Administration, 2010

⁶¹ DE SENA, 2009

⁶² BUSH, 2009

The U.S. aid to Colombia today lies still above all in the support of military and police assistance, which contains 62.1% of total grant aid, that was in 2009 in absolute numbers 400,4m USD, whereas the grant aid targeted on the economic and social development composed in the same year 37.9%, meaning 243,5m USD.⁶³ Whilst the amount of the US military and police aid has been rather decreasing between the years 2006 and 2009, the social and economic aid has raised slightly during the period⁶⁴, which could have been motivated by the more or less illusive improvement of the Colombian situation. These results, however, might be somewhat misleading, since the economic and social aid contains also rather disputable programs, such as the *international narcotics control economic aid*.⁶⁵

Even more significant progress within Colombian – U.S. alliance appeared with the agreement from the summer 2009, signed by the Colombian Cabinet without being approved by the Congress, which allowed the United States to play upon five Colombian military bases and seven international airports in the country.⁶⁶ This action caused large qualms within the relations with the neighboring countries, including Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, and especially Venezuela.⁶⁷ The agreement has also permitted American soldiers to enter and use other facilities and properties if needed within the quote of their military operation. Moreover missions of American air force can be joined by both Colombian and other country citizens.

4.1.1 Plan Colombia

In January 2000, Colombia received 1.3 billion USD⁶⁸ of mainly military assistance from the Bill Clinton Administration to assist the anti-drug component of Pastrana six-year strategy to end the insurgency, eliminate drug trafficking, and promote economic and social development. This initiative was called the Plan Colombia. The money accepted was also supposed to support human rights, humanitarian assistance, alternative development, and economic and judicial reforms. However, most of the total amount has been returning directly back to the U.S. economy, since it is being intended for

⁶³ Latin America Working Group Education Fund, 2010

⁶⁴ see appendix 2 and 3

⁶⁵ see appendix 3

⁶⁶ BOADLE, 2009

⁶⁷ see chapter 4

⁶⁸ CARTER, 2005

military assistance, for example for the purchase of the U.S. helicopters Huey and Black Hawk.⁶⁹

The motivation, objective and also the impact of U.S. aid to Colombia is markedly controversial. Whereas the official goals are claimed to be fighting and restraining the narco-trafficking, the fact, that the US aid is targeted mainly on fighting the FARC and ELN guerrillas, even though past DEA⁷⁰ (Drug Enforcement Association) reports have identified the insurgents as minor players in the drug trade suggests that the actual targets might not be exactly those mentioned.

Doug Stokes sees the real reason of the U.S. interest in the Northern Hemisphere competition to control and exploit Southern Hemisphere, in order to sustain a world capitalist order auxiliary to U.S. economic interests⁷¹. In late 80`s and early 90`s, several studies on how the armed forces directed on restraining local drugs supply heading for U.S. impact the production and profits of coca trade inside Colombia showed, that such a politics would actually have little or no effect on cocaine trafficking, and might, in fact, raise the profits of cocaine cartels and manufacturers.⁷² Due to the Plan Colombia coca fields have been eradicated radically during the last ten years in Colombia, however, it has not reflected on the coca trafficking, since the cultivation has been over the time simply relocated to other states, such as Peru and Bolivia (see Tab. 1). Therefore the problem itself has not been even remotely solved.

*Table 1: Coca cultivation in the Andean region*⁷³

STATE	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	*
Colombia	163	145	102	86	80	86	78	99	81	-18%
Peru	43	46	47	44	50	48	51	54	56	+4%
Bolivia	15	20	21	24	28	26	28	29	31	+6%
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>170</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>157</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>-8%</i>

Numbers are in thousand hectares

* % change 2007-2008

⁶⁹ Arms Control Association, 2002

⁷⁰ Drug Enforcement Administration, 2010

⁷¹ STOKES, 2005

⁷² CHALK, 2001

⁷³ UNODC, 2008 Drug Report

<http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2008/WDR_2008_eng_web.pdf>. ISBN 978-92-1-148229-4>

Moreover the U.S. has been repeatedly ignoring the human rights violation in Colombia, when in September 2009 the U.S. State Department for the first time under the administration of President Barack Obama certified that Colombia was meeting human rights conditions, and was declared as fit to receive aid. According to the Amnesty International “the Plan Colombia is a failure in every respect and human rights in Colombia will not improve until there is a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign policy.”⁷⁴

4.2 United Nations

In 1996, an agreement was entered between the government of Colombia and the Office of the United Nations (OHCHR).⁷⁵ Since then, through the offices in Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Bucaramanga, OHCHR has been implementing a comprehensive programme that includes observing and reporting on human rights and international law, as well as providing technical support and advises in these regions.

Kofi Annan, contemporary UN Secretary General, had been making constant negotiation efforts in Colombia through the medium of his Special adviser on Colombia Jan Egeland, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), since December 1999. Jan Egeland led the peace negotiations within the government, insurgent groups, civil institutions and international community. The role of the UN in the peace negotiations with both the FARC and ELN has been important, but loose. During the Pastrana Administration (1998 - 2002), UN intervention, offering a semi-formal role that was neither facilitation nor mediation, was accepted by all the parties. Because of the lack of definition of this intervention, Egeland’s efforts were betimes ignored during various breakdowns in the negotiations. In January 2002⁷⁶, he along with a group of ten countries representatives and the Catholic Church, helped to distract the abortion of peace talks between the government and the FARC. Due to further diplomatic efforts, collapse of the negotiations was warded off.

Right after his election, President Uribe asked the United Nations to intervene in the Colombian armed conflict by the means of Blue Helmets to protect the displaced population from the rigour of war. These recommendations did not receive positive

⁷⁴ Amnesty International, 2010

⁷⁵ OHCHR, 1996 - 2010

⁷⁶ Council of the European Union, 2006

response from the UN. Despite these difficulties, the UN continues supporting the peace treatment of the Colombian conflict. New special advisor James Lemoyne maintained contact with the FARC in order to organize a formal meeting, which did not happen, since the UN demanded that it would take place somewhere safe outside the country did not meet the FARC requests.

On 9 to 10 July 2003, a conference on the Colombian situation was held in London. It was attended by ten governments and six organizations, including EU, UN and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The conference resulted in so called “London declaration”, concluding the need to support the UN work in Colombia and its office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Also the support for the Colombian government’s hard fight against violence and drugs was decided. This approach was subsequently confirmed by the Guadalajara Declaration on 29 May 2004.⁷⁷

Nowadays, OHCHR in accordance to the agreement from 1996 continues to fulfill its mandate, which was renewed in 2007 for three years observing and promoting human rights, as well as advising and providing technical cooperation. Since 2009, several UN special rapporteurs on extrajudicial executions, on human rights defenders, and on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous persons, have visited Colombia.⁷⁸

4.3 Colombian neighbors’ involvement

Colombia's relations with neighboring countries have been very acute. These states have been the last two decades challenging cross-border effects of the Colombian conflict, particularly the intake of the refugees. Indeed, Colombia has one of the highest internally displaced person’s population in the world. Brazil and to a lesser extent Peru experienced problems with drug trafficking and guerrilla’s action. Ecuador, which has taken over 6 thousand refugees on its territory was repeatedly accused of supplying arms and ammunition to the rebellious groups. In addition, Ecuador has also provided the FARC sanctuary on its territory and permitted it to establish its base there. In the summer 2008, this resulted into the so called “South American diplomatic crisis”⁷⁹, when Colombian troops entered Ecuador and engaged on the guerrilla base located

⁷⁷ Council of the European Union, 2006

⁷⁸ UNDOC, 2010

⁷⁹ WALSER, 2008

some 1.8 km in the Ecuadorian territory. This materialized without the consent of the government of Ecuador, and although having been rather successful,⁸⁰ Ecuador broke diplomatic relations with Colombia. However, the most heightened are undoubtedly the Colombian relations with Venezuela, which has moreover become the main corridor of illegal trade and the destination of a number of injured guerrilla combatants.

4.3.1 Venezuela

Colombia and Venezuela as neighbors and former Spanish colonies have always influenced reciprocally. The break point in Venezuelan involvement came in 1999 with the electing of Hugo Chávez as a President of Venezuela. This left wing oriented politician, that sees his idol in the Cuban regime and Fidel Castro had from the beginning “closer” to the guerillas than the rather rightward Colombian government.

Hugo Chávez, although he is not what one would call Colombian biggest ally, ensured some considerable successful peace negotiations with Colombian illegal leftist groups, especially with the FARC. In 2007, president Uribe through his negotiator Piedad Córdoba asked Hugo Chávez to facilitate the humanitarian exchange negotiations of the prisoners for hostages between the FARC and the Colombian government due to his better bargaining position to the guerrilla as a leftist politician.⁸¹ The action was supposed to be governed by the terms defined by the Colombian government. Chávez could not have accepted a demilitarized zone for negotiations and for the actual release of the kidnapped and must have also insisted that the guerrilla released fighters will not return to the rebels. In addition, President Uribe set a clear time limit - the act must have shown a clear progress until the end of 2007. Subsequent development of the Chávez’ mediatory mission had only infinitely met the expectations and ideas of the Colombian government. Already in September that year, the Colombian side asked Chávez to limit the extent to which he speaks of negotiations with the FARC and the FARC themselves during his media output. Colombian government wanted above all to avoid excessive popularization of the FARC and their possible perception as a political player. First major crisis occurred in early November, when President Chávez met with the leading representatives of the FARC, with Rodrigue Grande and Ivan Marquez.⁸² This meeting

⁸⁰ Colombian soldiers managed to defuse 17 rebels, including the group's second in command Raúl Reyes, but unfortunately also one Ecuadorean soldier

⁸¹ Venezuela Information Office, 2008

⁸² CIVICO, 2009

was arranged in Venezuela, without prior informing the Colombian government. Colombian government, outraged by this step, however, allowed the continuation of the mission under the condition that Chávez will not interfere in the internal affairs of Colombia. Despite these warnings, President Chávez then contacted the supreme commander of the Colombian armed forces. Colombian response to this act was strict, when on 23 November the Chávez's mission was officially declared closed and Uribe announced the interruption of Chávez's and Córdoba's functioning as facilitators.

In the beginning of the on coming year 2008, Venezuela initiated the operation to liberate four more hostages, former senators kidnapped by FARC in order to pressure the Colombian government. The same year, after the South American diplomatic crisis, Chávez asked FARC to released hostages and end their war against the Colombian government. Also, he asked the EU to remove the FARC from its list of terrorist organizations. This Chávez' plea was, however, rejected.⁸³

Nonetheless, this Venezuela's "help" has not avoided difficulties. Speculations about the possibility that Chavéz subsidizes Guerillas by arms and thus supports and collaborates with the rebels, in order to extent and support his influence and communist ideology in conservative Colombia, has occurred. In the summer 2009, the Colombian government accused Venezuela of providing the FARC arms, particularly AT4 anti-tank rockets. Chávez claimed, that the rockets had been stolen in 1995 during the ELN terrorist attack, and in response to the accusation withdraw most staff members of the Venezuelan embassy in Colombia.⁸⁴

The tension between these two states even graduated when the new agreement between the USA and Colombia about the military bases mentioned above came into force Venezuela feels insecure about the U.S. presence on its neighbor territory and has called the step an *occupation*. There has been a significant threat of a military conflict, as Venezuela has been constantly threatening the Colombian government. The possibility of that was even stepped up by the evens on these two countries borders, when in the autumn 2009 over a hundred Colombians were arrested after penetrating on the Venezuelan territory, when there were nine death bodies of kidnapped Colombians

⁸³ Venezuela Information Office, 2009

⁸⁴ BRICE, 2009

found in Venezuelan borderland.⁸⁵ Hugo Chávez gave an espionage carried by Colombia against Venezuela as the reason for such responses.

⁸⁵ BBC, 2009

5. Peace negotiations in the course of time

Since the occurrence of first significant guerilla's activity till 2002, all the governments of Colombia had tended to solve appeared conflict through the peace processes. Especially after Belisario Betancur, Colombian president between the years 1982 – 1986, set up the “Peace Commission”, first considerable peace body.⁸⁶ For a long time, however, none of those was successful. Although the peace talks before the 1990 were partially effective and number of agreements were signed over the time⁸⁷, non of the dealing problems had been ever fully solved, and this era of negotiations even resulted in some significant walkovers, with the deterrent case from 1985, the so called Palace of Justice tragedy⁸⁸, when the abortive army's inroad to the court building with several judges captured by M-19 caused the killing of 95 hostages.

5.1 Official peace bodies

Through the times, the state has developed number of more or less successful peace bodies. These initiatives have played an important role in the peace process and there have been many peace talks led through the means of these. Below are listed some of the most significant official institutional peace actors established in last 30 years.

5.1.1 Peace Commission

This peace body was reorganized and expanded during the presidency of Belisario Betancur. It was formed of 40 members of different social and politic sectors. Its main mission was to initiate dialogues with different social groupings, including guerrillas, on social and political reforms. The Peace Commission managed to sign ceasefire agreements with FARC in March 1984, M-19, EPL and Self-defense workers group (*Autodefensa Obrera*) - ADO in August 1984. There was an agreement signed also with ELN in some sectors in December 1985.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ BOEKER, 1990

⁸⁷ see appendix 3

⁸⁸ HUDSON, 1995

⁸⁹ Conciliation Resources, 2004

5.1.2 National Rehabilitation Plan

This plan was established in 1983 also by President Belisario Betancur. Through out increasing the state's social investment, as well as its presence in rural regions, he wanted to achieve a diminution of the guerrillas support and to establish harmonious relations between the state and society.⁹⁰ However, although reactivated by president Barco in 1987, because of the fiscal problems and insufficient resources and the administrative capacity of the government, the National Rehabilitation Plan lost its importance as a component of peace policy.⁹¹

5.1.3 Council for Reconciliation, Normalization and Rehabilitation

The council, better known as the Peace Council, was established in 1986 by Barco Administration as the main subject of the governmental peace policy, whose incumbent was supposed to report directly to the President. The Peace Council, in contrast to the Betancur's Peace Commission, was led and represented by one president advisor in charge for the coordination of all the governmental programs leading towards reconciliation, normalization and rehabilitation.⁹² It has been responsible for several peace talks between the government and guerrillas since 1988, such as with Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordination Body (CGSB) and with M-19.

5.1.6 Commission of Personalities

This Commission, among the media known as Commission de Notables, but usually referred to as the *Comisión de Personalidades*, was created in late 1980s from the FARC initiative, consisting of two former Presidents, business leaders and representatives of the Church in order to mediate the negotiations with the government. Its principal aim was to create a report on how to reduce the intensity of the armed conflict and ways of advancing the peace process including recommendation of a bilateral six month truce and a commitment to respect human rights and accept international humanitarian law.⁹³

⁹⁰ BOEKER, 1990

⁹¹ HEGE, 2008

⁹² OSTERLING, 1989

⁹³ HEGE, 2008

5.1.4 Office of the High Commissioner for Peace of Colombian Presidency

The office was established as a part of the Samper's Presidency and does still operate. The High Commissioner is appointed directly by the president, and is supposed to assist the President in the development of an official peace policy, verify the real will of peace and demobilization amongst the rebels, facilitate the participation of all sectors of Colombian civil society and posture the governmental spokesperson in matters of peace. Newly the body also participates in the Council of Ministers and the Superior Council of Security and National Defense in order to facilitate the inter-governmental coordination.⁹⁴ The task description of this office has changed over time, whilst during the Patrana Presidency, the office led peace processes mostly with the guerrillas, especially with the FARC, major challenge for the authority during the Uribe's government became the negotiations and demobilizations of the paramilitary groups.

5.1.5 National Conciliation Commission (CCN)

This commission was established in 1995 during the Samper Administration in order to ensure the negotiations and offer "good offices" for the insurgencies and the illegitimate government (see below). It was composed of fifteen members, including journalists, businessmen, former Ministers and university scholars, forming an entity of prominent nongovernmental public figures from all vital sectors of the society. It continues to operate in peace building matters.⁹⁵

5.1.6 National Peace Council and National Peace Committee

The council and the committee were both created during the Samper Administration in 1998 conceived as a consensus-building arena between the state and civil society, to create a permanent peace policy and to coordinate different governing bodies. These institutions are comprised of both representatives of government institutions as well as civil society members. Three of seven members of the Committee are formed of the civil society. Even the army, if engaged in the peace process, may be included. It is convened and chaired by the president. It has been used only in the most critical

⁹⁴ HEGE , 2008

⁹⁵ Catholic Peacebuilding Network, 2010

moments of the peace processes, without being turned into a real instrument of government peace policy.⁹⁶

5.1.7 Exploratory Peace Commission

The Commission was established during the Uribe Administration in order to negotiate with the AUC paramilitary groups. It was comprised of six representatives of the national government, and its task was to establish contacts with the paramilitaries and determine the options for reaching national reconciliation.⁹⁷

5.2 César Gaviria Trujillo (1990 - 1994)

César Gaviria served his term from 7 August 1990 to 7 August 1994 as a Liberal party candidate. During the years 1994 to 2004, he was also Secretary General of the Organization of American States. During his presidency, Gaviria was partially successful fighting against the Cali drug cartel, and also Pablo Escobar, the top leader of Medellín cartel.⁹⁸ The critical issue of Gaviria Administration was animating the creation of National Constitution Assembly in 1991, which was convened in February the same year, and resulted in the development of the new constitution that replaced the Constitution of 1886. The constitution is known as the Constitution of 1991, and was promulgated significantly on 4 July.⁹⁹ The constitution contains key provision on political, economic, ethnic, social, cultural and gender rights.

The peace process during the Gaviria Administration brought successful negotiations with certain guerilla groups, such as with M-19, Quintín Lame Armed Movement (*Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame*) - MAQL and EPL, after offering those seats in Constituent assembly. Nonetheless, Gaviria's achievement was ultimately only partial, since the main guerillas did not participate in these talks. In the early 1990s, the FARC, ELN and EPL revived the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordination Board (CGSB) to work on developing a common position for negotiations. CGBS was reconstituted from The National Guerrilla Coordinating Board (*Coordinadora Nacional Guerrillera*) - CNG in 1987.¹⁰⁰ CGSB, however, initially refused to participate on the negotiations,

⁹⁶ Conciliation Resources, 2004

⁹⁷ HEGE, 2008

⁹⁸ Pablo Escobar was arrested in 1991, and later, in 1993, shot dead, after he escaped during the transfer to another prison in 1992

⁹⁹ Constitution of Colombia, 1991

¹⁰⁰ MENDÉZ, 1992

since it was offered for them insufficient seven seats in the assembly. The on and off negotiations then continued between the years 1991 and 1992 in Cravo Norte (Arauca)¹⁰¹, Caracas and in Tlaxcala (Mexico),¹⁰² where it finally broke down after the former minister died in EPL captivity.¹⁰³ After that Gavéria declared an “integral war” focused on strategic defeat of the guerillas. Consequently, the CGBS was disbanded.

The main issue of Gavéria’s governance and the new Constitution anyway was to deepen the democratic system, to bring about change in the political regime and structures in order to improve economic and social conditions.

5.3 Ernesto Samper Pizano (1994 - 1998)

Ernesto Samper, a Liberal party representative, served as the President of Colombia from 7 August 1994 to 7 August 1998. During his government he was involved in so called “8,000 process” (*Proceso 8.000*) scandal, a great drug money scandal linked to the presidential election that got its name after the case number issued by the Prosecutor General’s Office. Right after Samper’s election, he was accused by his opponent Andrés of a corruption.¹⁰⁴ Samper’s campaign provably received \$6 million US dollars from the Cali cartel. This scandal destined his administration from any serious peace negotiations with the insurgent groups, as it lost both the national and international legitimacy..

5.3.1 Samper’s peace process with the FARC¹⁰⁵

Samper put efforts on the peace negotiation with the FARC through his High Commissioner for peace, Carlos Holmes. Holmes initially appeared to make progress in talks with the insurgents in accordance of demilitarizing the municipality of La Uribe. Nonetheless, after the 8,000 process came out into the open, the political sectors including the military support became out of account, and thus the demilitarizing of the area could not have been ensured. Ultimately any considerable peace talks with the FARC did not succeed, and this guerrilla actually even increased the attacks on

¹⁰¹ see appendix 1

¹⁰² see appendix 4

¹⁰³ CEBALLOS, 2005

¹⁰⁴ Conciliation Recourses, 2004

¹⁰⁵ As the CGSB negotiations ended unsuccessfully and the common coordination board ceased to exist, since Samper’s administration it is preferable to deal with each peace process, the FARC and the ELN one, separately.

armed forces from 1996 managing to make some extensive gains across the country, while refusing to recognize the government as valid interlocutor for peace.¹⁰⁶ The incident led to resignation of Carlos Holmes, and after the appointment of Daniel Garcia-Pena, who just appeared to be the coordinator of the High Commissioner Office, than a serious initiator of any peace talks, on the post of High Commissioner, the Office partially lost its direct significance. In spite of that, the government peace body during this time managed to connect the society with the peace process, provoke it to take a number of social movements for peace.¹⁰⁷

As a reaction on the non-existence of any connecting body between the government and the insurgents, the National Conciliation Commission (CCN) was established to create a field amenable to talks. CCN, together with the International Red Cross published a document called “Peace on the Table” (*La paz sobre la mesa*), which outlines the conflict actors major positions and proposals hoping to systematically achieve a well-functioned dialogue and consecutively a peace agreement, promoting a culture peace, respect for international humanitarian law and human rights.¹⁰⁸

Also the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace was finally active in a moderate number of actual negotiations, such as the release of seventy soldiers captured by the FARC in 1997.

5.3.2 Samper’s peace process with the ELN

After the unsuccessful negotiations between Gaviria and CGSB, the CGSB lost significance and eventually dissolved. Consequently the ELN experienced a period of significant military growth. As the time passed, ELN started to incorporate the negotiation into its political thinking.

Ultimately The National Conciliation Commission facilitated an agreement between the ELN and the government mentioned as the Pre-Accord of Vianna (Spain) agreement from 1998. This agreement set the government’s recognition of ELN’s appeal to hold the National Convention¹⁰⁹.¹¹⁰ Later, during the bishop talks held in Germany between

¹⁰⁶ HEGE , 2008

¹⁰⁷ HEGE , 2008

¹⁰⁸ SOLIMANO, 2000

¹⁰⁹ The National Convention – Initiated by ELN in 1996, Convention will look to develop the basis of a political agreement on reforms and social changes, with a view to the democratization of the state and society

the ELN and representatives of the Colombian civil society, the “Door to Heaven¹¹¹” (*Puerta del Cielo*) accord, was ratified, bringing together the ELN, members of Colombian civil society and the National Peace Council, focused mostly on the role of civil society, standard for the conduct of warfare and the creation of the National Convention.¹¹²

5.4 Andrés Pastrana Arango (1998 - 2002)

Pastrana served as the Colombian President, such as his father did 28 years earlier, from 7 August 1998 to 7 August 2002. This first conservative candidate to win the presidential election since 1982 was ten years before his election kidnapped by the Medellín cartel as an act pressuring the Colombian Government not to extradite Pablo Escobar and other drug lords to the United States. He was rescued a week later by the National Police. Subsequently he was elected a Mayor of Bogotá, where he gained a reputation for reducing crime and strengthening security.¹¹³

5.4.1 The Pastrana’s peace process with the FARC

President Pastrana came into the office at a time, when the Colombian public was in great favor of the idea of ending the internal conflict by a peaceful means. In 1998 in order to facilitate the peace negotiations with the FARC without a prior cease fire, Pastrana established a demilitarized zone (DMZ) of 42,000 km² centered around the San Vicente del Caguán encompassing five municipalities in Meta and Caquetá departments, in Highlands, La Uribe, La Macarena, Villahermosa and San Vicente del Caguán (see figure 2).¹¹⁴ Victor Ricardo Piñeros was named as the High Commissioner for Peace Office, which subsequently gained significant responsibilities. Ricardo established with the FARC relatively square joints, which was not taken well by the paramilitaries, who criticized Ricardo of his recognition of the political nature the guerrillas. After Ricardo accused the paramilitaries of maintaining ties with two Army Generals,¹¹⁵ the relations

¹¹⁰ HEGE , 2008

¹¹¹ Door to Heaven - Agreement focused on an elaboration of the National Convention proposal as ‘a process with various spaces for dialogue, which allows for proposals from representatives of the state, society and those guerrillas which participate

¹¹² International CrisisGroup, 2002

¹¹³ BBC, 2002

¹¹⁴ AZCARATE, 2003

¹¹⁵ HEGE , 2008

between the government, military, paramilitaries and even the insurgents broke, and resulted in an overall slowing down of the peace process.

In May 1999, signing of the “Common Agenda for Change towards a New Colombia” on a meeting of the President Pastrana and the FARC leader Mannuel Marulanda produced the “Machacha Accord” that comprised issues such as human rights, agrarian reform, natural resources, models of social and economic development, judicial reforms, Armed Forces in a time of peace and international relations.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, it did not achieve any significant progress because of the FARC resistance to the creation of a Verification Commission for the DMZ.

In order to reverse the current development of the negotiations, the two sides agreed upon an establishment of one main negotiations forum between the government and the FARC, the “Public Audiences”, where the public would be allowed to present its ideas and proposals regarding the conflict solution. However, not even these efforts were ultimately effective, since, due to an excessively high number of participants, it appeared vast and slow, and since also the positive impact of this forum was questionable.¹¹⁷

After replacement of Victor Ricardo with the government’s head negotiator Camilo Gomez as the High Commissioner for Peace¹¹⁸, the FARC continues combat operations against the national army and the paramilitaries, and the process experienced even bigger setback, when the FARC hijacked an airplane and commandeered it towards the DMZ.

In 2001, the renewed version of the Commission of Personalities (*Comisión de Personalidades*) was established when Pastrana met directly with Marulanda reaching the consensus on a roadmap for the future of the process by signing the “Loz Pozos Accord”.(see pic. 2 below) The new commission, much smaller, then its predecessor published a report, which stated the impracticality of reaching any successful negotiations in middle of the war and called upon the parties to respect the international humanitarian law.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ AZCARATE, 2003

¹¹⁷ BLAND, 2002

¹¹⁸ MURILLO, 2004

¹¹⁹ AZCARATE, 2003



Figure 2: Andrés Pastrana and Manuel Marulanda meeting in Los Posoz¹²⁰

Even though the process resulted in concrete successes, such as the FARC's release of unprecedented 271 soldiers,¹²¹ this guerrilla did not completely cease from kidnappings and recruiting. FARC was moreover accused of using the DMZ to strengthen it militarily, launch attacks, hide prisoners and hostages and to carry out activities related to drug trafficking, in addition to violating the conditions agreed between the parties. The FARC on the other hand accused the government of using the dialogue process to implement Plan Colombia. The government then showed the public photographs with armed training camps set up by the FARC in the area, although this area was considered as a DMZ. Moreover the FARC made direct actions against civilians, as alleged poisoning of an aqueduct in the department of Huila days before the government finally ended with negotiations.¹²² As a result, the army took a military action in the DMZ.

On 20 February 2002, the "mobile column" of FARC's Teofilo Forero, hijacked a plane with Senator Jorge Gechem on board. The same day, the rebels released all passengers except the senator. Although Pastrana had extended the duration of the DMZ eleven

¹²⁰ CEET, *Las Farc al Desnudo*, 2008

<<http://www.google.cz/imgres?imgurl=http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/803/IMAGEN/IMAGEN-4675837-2.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/803/ARTICULO>>

¹²¹ HEGE, 2008

¹²² MARKS, 2002

times¹²³, this episode and the profound disagreements between the Colombian government and guerrilla forces regarding the control air, land and river in the demilitarized zone led as a consequence the government on February 21, 2002 to terminate the peace talks with the FARC and ordered the army to retake the FARC controlled zone.¹²⁴ Shortly after the ending of the talks, on 23 February, the FARC kidnapped Oxygen Green Party Presidential Candidate Ingrid Betancourt while she was travelling in guerrilla territory trying to reach the San Vicente del Caguan, ignoring the warnings of guerrilla presence in that area.

The unsuccessful Pastrana's peace process with the FARC is a widely discussed topic. It completely changed the whole preview of the possibility of peaceful resolution of the conflict. There are many reasons, why the peace process did not work out. Firstly, the governmental employees charged with the negotiations lacked both the skills and the experiences dealing with the FARC. They only dedicated to this process part time, and did not prepare sufficiently for the formal negotiations meeting. Also both the High Commissioners for Peace being in charge during the negotiations were not experienced dealing with insurgencies. Moreover, both sides used the continuation of the peace process as a mean to extract concessions from each other.

5.4.2 The Pastrana's peace process with the ELN

ELN stayed a little apart of the Pastrana's peace negotiations, however, after the German meetings, the Preparatory Committee of the National Convention defined the methodological and thematic aspects of the National Convention. In agreement with a member of Central Command, they later defined the following agenda for the National Convention process: International Humanitarian Law, human rights, impunity, justice, insurgency and conflict; natural resources and energy policy; Democracy, the state, armed forces and corruption; Economy and social problems; Culture and identity; nation-region; territorial reorganization; The agrarian problem and drug trafficking.¹²⁵

The National Convention process was ended up by several ELN kidnappings demonstrating its military capacity. Attacks were animated by the disagreement

¹²³ International Crisis Group, 2009

¹²⁴ UNHCR, 2002

¹²⁵ VARGAS, 2004

between ELN and the government during Caracas talks in early 1999, when the government refused to offer ELN the demilitarized zone for the peace talks, as it did to FARC.¹²⁶ ELN also criticized the government's management of the peace process and the U.S. impingement in the conflict.

In 1999, "Civil Facilitation Commission" (*Comisión Facilitadora Civil*) - CFC was established by the initiative of Colombians from variety of economic, political and social and academic backgrounds, who were knowledgeable about the ELN as response to a series of hijackings and kidnappings committed by the ELN.¹²⁷ Unlike the government, who opined, that such a small insurgent group as ELN could be defeated militarily, the CFC was able to build trust and served as the recognized intermediary.¹²⁸ The commission manifested its capability achieving some meetings, including the ELN, civil society and government meeting in Switzerland in 2000, or a "Summit for Peace" in December in La Havana.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ International Crisis Group, 2002

¹²⁷ International Crisis Group, 2002

¹²⁸ VARGAS, 2004

¹²⁹ AZCARATE, 2003

6. Colombian conflict during the Uribe's presidency

6.1 Uribe's first term 2002 - 2006

Álvaro Uribe Veléz has been serving in office since 7 August 2002, when he was for the first time elected a president as an independent candidate. His political career began in the department of Antioquia,¹³⁰ where he held position as Mayor, Senator and finally Governor, between the years 1982 and 1998.¹³¹ Álvaro Uribe's father is claimed to be killed in 1983 during the FARC's kidnapping attempt. This, besides other reasons, dictated Uribe's future hardline policy against the guerrillas.

Shortly after entering office, Uribe presented an action plan for the area of security, which was later drawn into the "Democratic Security and Defence Policy", published in June 2003.¹³² The main points of the entire program say that the lack of personal security is the foundation for social, economic and political problems of Colombia, and that this insecurity is caused by the absence of state power in extensive areas of Colombian territory. It follows that the efforts of all parts of the state power should be focused on eliminating the shortcomings of national integration.¹³³ As fundamental threats in the document were identified terrorism, drugs, dirty money, arms smuggling, kidnapping and murders.

Uribe proclaimed the "Plan Patriot" (*Plan Patriota*), reintroducing the old schema that only offered to agree with demobilization and reintegration based on military weakening of the insurgents,¹³⁴ at that time already declared terrorists and drug traffickers, as a necessary long-term strategic plan, in order to ensure effective action against the guerrillas. The Plan was based on the tactic of focusing on sectional areas in order to dispose the FARC presence, while securing areas under control of the g. For such a policy it was necessary to increase the cooperation of government armed forces, and also the number of troops. For the purpose of funding the expansion of the army, Uribe was bound to call Congress for raising a lump-sum "war tax", to provide 670

¹³⁰ see appendix 1

¹³¹ EAST, THOMAS, 2003

¹³² International Crisis Group, 2003

¹³³ MARKS, 2005

¹³⁴ HOLMES, 2009

million dollars to be allocated to the “Shock plan” (*Plan de Choque*),¹³⁵ document, which synchronized the strengthening of specialized components of the Colombian Army so that the pressure would maintain.

As an expression of his openness also for peace negotiations, besides the military resolution of the conflict, Uribe named Luis Carlos Restrepo, the former head of the “Citizen’s Mandate for Peace, Life and Liberty” (*Mandate por la Paz Mandato por la Paz*)¹³⁶¹³⁷, as the new High Commissioner for Peace, who appeared to be the most successful High commissioner in terms of demobilization since the Office establishment, having engaged all of the three Colombian main armed actors in dialogue.

It is issuable to what extant admit Uribe’s credit on the successes achieved during his administration, since it was Pastrana Government that started the modernization of armed forces and developed the key strategies against abduction or against coca cultivation. Uribe’s administration has subsequently refined the integration of the armed forces and formed their common coordinated policy. Moreover, Uribe proclaimed the pacification of the country the highest priority of his governance and subordinated all the state institutions to this priority¹³⁸. This was an important step, significantly affecting the ensuing development of Colombia.

In October 2003 was held referendum as a tool to make government more efficient and also to obtain some additional funding. It was supposed to ensure support for budget cuts, which would save an estimated thousand million dollars annually. Part of the saved money would cover the state budget deficit and the rest would be allocated to education and health sectors, and also to the armed forces. The referendum was part of Uribe’s election program and was considered as very important. Uribe won the support of nine-tenths of voters for his plan, however, the proportion of the people appeared at the polls was only 25%, which according to the Colombian constitution is not sufficient rate.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ UNHCR, 2008

¹³⁶ Citizen’s Mandate for Peace, Life and Liberty - a peace initiative launched in 1997 as a reaction to the dirty war, to demand solution to the conflict

¹³⁷ LIVINGSTONE, 2003

¹³⁸ MARKS, 2005

¹³⁹ International Crisis Group, 2003

6.1.1 Uribe's peace negotiations with the AUC

Since the ELN and FARC showed no interest into Uribe's narrow peace strategy, the President focused primarily on talks with the paramilitary AUC, who in 2002 responded with the unilateral declaration on truce and cessation of hostilities with effect from 1 December 2002.¹⁴⁰ In the beginning of 2003, for the purpose of this peace process, the government created the "Exploratory Peace Commission"¹⁴¹, which from January to June held meetings with the paramilitary leaders in northern department of Cordoba.¹⁴² The Commission in its report lately recommended continuation of the process with the emphasis on the cessation of hostilities and illegal activities and also a formal State policy in order to avoid any possible resurgence of paramilitary groups.¹⁴³

Talks with the government itself began in July 2003 in Santa Fe de Ralito¹⁴⁴, where the deadline for disarmament was stated for the 31 December 2005. Moreover, AUC espoused to the document known as "Colombia without drugs" (*Acuerdo de Santa Fe de Ralito*) signed between the paramilitaries and the High Commissioner Restrepo with the accompaniment of the Exploratory Peace Commission and the Catholic's Church Commission that had also been created in order to facilitate the peace talks.¹⁴⁵ According to the Accord, the paramilitaries were required to gradually demobilize in two phases. First the military apparatus would demobilize, and subsequently the network of drug traffickers and wealthy rural politicians, who basically gave arise to this problem, would dismantle.

Already in August 2003, the government presented "Peace and Justice Law" (*Ley de Justicia y Paz*), which was to create a legal framework for implementing the requirements of the AUC for small sentences and the avoidance of the extradition. However, due to both domestic and international criticism of the law, it failed in the Congress.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ ARNISON, 2005

¹⁴¹ see above

¹⁴² see appendix 1

¹⁴³ HEGE, 2008

¹⁴⁴ see appendix 1

¹⁴⁵ HRISTOY, 2009

¹⁴⁶ ARNISON, 2005

Despite few crises, in 2004, when the number of AUC reached its peak expansion (see figure 3), almost all paramilitary major commanders joined to the “Singular Dialogue Table” in the department of Cordoba.¹⁴⁷ Soon after that, in November 2003, the first official demobilization took place in Medellín, where 868 members of the group Cacique Nutibara Bloc (*Bloque Cacique Nutibara*) put down their weapons.¹⁴⁸ As the process appeared to progress quickly, in January 2004, the Organisation of America States signed an agreement to carry out a monitoring mission to verify the cease-fire, disarmament, and demobilization processes. By the end of 2004, approximately four thousand paramilitaries disarmed.

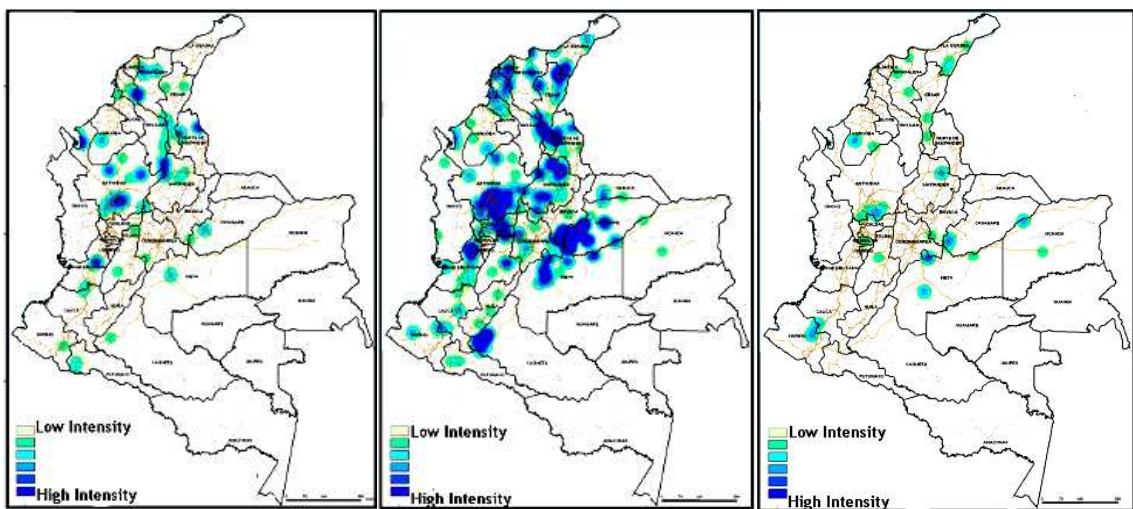


Figure 3: Intensity of AUC attacks in 2000, 2004 and 2006¹⁴⁹

Following the above mentioned, rather controversial “alternative punishment” law from 2003 promising the paramilitaries immunity for the crimes committed during their operations, in 2005 the Congress officially passed the renewed Peace and Justice Law as a slightly modified version of the previous document.¹⁵⁰ Although this new law had met with great dissatisfaction of the paramilitaries,¹⁵¹ demobilized AUC commanders were as the matter of fact ultimately protected from any serious punishment or extradition to the United States, while being guaranteed only reduced sentences of up to 8 years for the crimes they voluntarily admit.

¹⁴⁷ HEGE , 2008

¹⁴⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2004

¹⁴⁹ Figure modified from Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, 2010

<http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio_de_DDHH/mapas/090623/GEOGRAFIA%20DE%20LA%20PRESENCIA%20ACTIVA%20%20DE%20LAS%20AUTODEFENSAS.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ ARNSON, 2005

¹⁵¹ The modifications for example enabled Uribe to put 59 commanders to the jail in 2006

During the year 2005 there had been ongoing disarmaments, however, in October and November, certain cooling of relations appeared as AUC were feared that the Colombian government had planned to release one of AUC high representatives to the United States. As the result, AUC declared unilateral suspension of the disarmament process. Despite the Interior Minister Sabas Pretelt announcement in mid-November, which contained declaration about an agreement on further continuation of demilitarization, the original deadline was postponed.¹⁵² The full demobilisation was completed in March 2006, with an estimated 27,000 to 32,000 AUC members who laid down their arms.¹⁵³ This year also embodied the lowest number of AUC attacks since 2000 (see Figure 3).

Disarmament of the Paramilitaries entailed at two main questions. Firstly problem was how to integrate the paramilitaries into the society. The Demobilisation of the AUC has been by far the largest action of its kind, which had taken place in recent decades in Colombia. The experience of guerrillas return to normal life at the beginning of the nineties proved, that the rehabilitation is for men who were accustomed to fight, which is often their only ability, appears to be very difficult. Some of the paramilitaries might have got on the path of organized crime, not only in regions where they were disarmed, but also in cities such as Cali in Valle del Cauca and Medellín Antioquia department, where Uribe Administration has succeeded to significantly reduce crime¹⁵⁴ and by this the achievement could have been compromised.

The second question then was whether the government would manage to fill the “vacuum” that originated after the AUC had left their positions. AUC often operated in areas where they supplied the counterweight to the FARC. Therefore worries, that after their departure, the FARC could try to use their absence to extend their activities to these areas appeared. Such a situation would require the use of additional government military units, which have been, however, already employed by fighting with the FARC in other areas.

¹⁵² International Crisis Group, 2005

¹⁵³ ARNSON, 2005

¹⁵⁴ see appendix 1, 6 and 7

6.1.2 Uribe's peace negotiations with FARC and ELN

As already indicated above, Uribe's action against the guerrillas compared with the previous governments was unprecedentedly strict. It focused primarily on the FARC, which has represented the greatest threat to the integrity of the state. Attitude of the government and the FARC could be described as unrelenting, understandably due to Uribe's strategy. Under the Plan Patriot, the government armed forces have gradually, although very slowly, managed to gain control over areas which have not been under the government control for the decades. This fact can be induced from the decline of FARC armed attacks on the official components (see Figure 3)

Besides the hard-line approach, the government also tried to negotiate with FARC rebels on the exchange. For the peace talks Uribe requested a good office of the Secretary General of the United Nations and by the end of 2002 he authorized separate facilitation commission for a humanitarian exchange. Several meetings between the parties took place in Brazil, Colombia, and also in Switzerland, which in December 2004 led the government to unilaterally pardon 27 former FARC rebels captured by the military and police. The situation engaged also other European states including Spain and France, which offered their good offices in arranging talks mediated by the Catholic Church. In December 2003, as a response to the FARC request of a demilitarized zone of two municipalities, the government agreed to establish a provisional "encounter zone" instead.¹⁵⁵ However, despite the initial positive progress, the negotiations ended in failure and Uribe after the FARC announced the exchange unrealizable, after the FARC planted a bomb in the highest military academy in Bogotá.¹⁵⁶

The Uribe's process with the smaller guerrilla, the ELN, appeared more successful, resulting in the beginning of mutual dialogue under the mediation of the Civilian Facilitation Commission established during the Pastrana Presidency. Also among the public a peace process with the ELN was being received positively. The ELN gave out their demands for their own demilitarized zone and in 2004 accepted the former Mexican Ambassador to Colombia as the facilitator. However, the Mexican negotiations did not succeed and were officially ended in April 2005.

¹⁵⁵ UNHCR, 2007

¹⁵⁶ HEGE, 2008

The same year, nevertheless, the imprisoned ELN spokesman Francisco Galán was contemporary released in order to discuss with the civil society under the auspices of the Group of *Guarantors* within the frame of so called “Peace House” (*casa de paz*).¹⁵⁷ These discussions were followed by meetings in Medellín and La Havana, where besides the Colombian peace bodies also Norway, Spain and Switzerland participated as witnesses. During the second round of negotiations in February 2006, the government, besides the Francisco Galán, also fully recognized two other representatives of the ELN, Antonio García and Ramiro Vargas, as negotiators and political actors and enabled them to travel freely through Colombia and abroad.¹⁵⁸

6.1.3 Results of Uribe’s first term

Real results of Uribe’s first term are best illustrated by comparing the data of both his and Pastrana Government, and also by assessing each year of his presidency separately. Nevertheless, when comparing the Uribe and Pastrana Administration, it is important to point the fact that this is a comparison of two completely different periods when the policy of peace efforts was replaced by the politics of confrontation and therefore the number of armed confrontations increased.

The policy turnover was clearly reflected in the number of armed confrontations between the army and rebel groups. Whereas for the first three years of the Pastrana Government the military held 2,017 actions with a daily average of 1.8, during the Uribe’s term that number tripled in 6080 with an average of 5.6 a day. Nevertheless, during the Uribe Government period, the number of actions had not had an increasing trend. While the first year of Uribe Government marked the increase of these actions by 148% when compared with the third year of Pastrana Government, in the coming year the increase was in comparison with the previous year only 10% and in the third year it even dropped of 21%.¹⁵⁹ The radical increase in military funding and use of military means had markedly reflected on the decreed rate of homicide and other violent actions in Colombia. Although 38 murders per 100,000 populations in 2005 is still considered a high number, it was a Colombian minimum of the last 20 years. Moreover the

¹⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, 2006

¹⁵⁸ GIBBS, 2006

¹⁵⁹ CRAVAJAL, 2006

downward trend had been relatively rapid. From 23,523 killed in 2003, the number had declined by some 25% to 17,479 in 2006.¹⁶⁰¹⁶¹

These numbers, however, are mainly related to the reduction of crime in large cities such as Medellín and Cali.¹⁶² The regions with the major guerrilla activity on the contrary had experienced deterioration as a response to the increased activity of the government forces. In numerical terms the number of the guerrillas' actions increased from 924 during the first three years of Pastrana Administration to 1,525 during the years 2002 - 2005, which is from 0.8 to 1.4 actions per day. In the region of Putamayo,¹⁶³ due to the fighting this index rose by 54%. The FARC was reported as the one with the highest increase of the activity carrying out 122% more actions (see Figure 4).¹⁶⁴

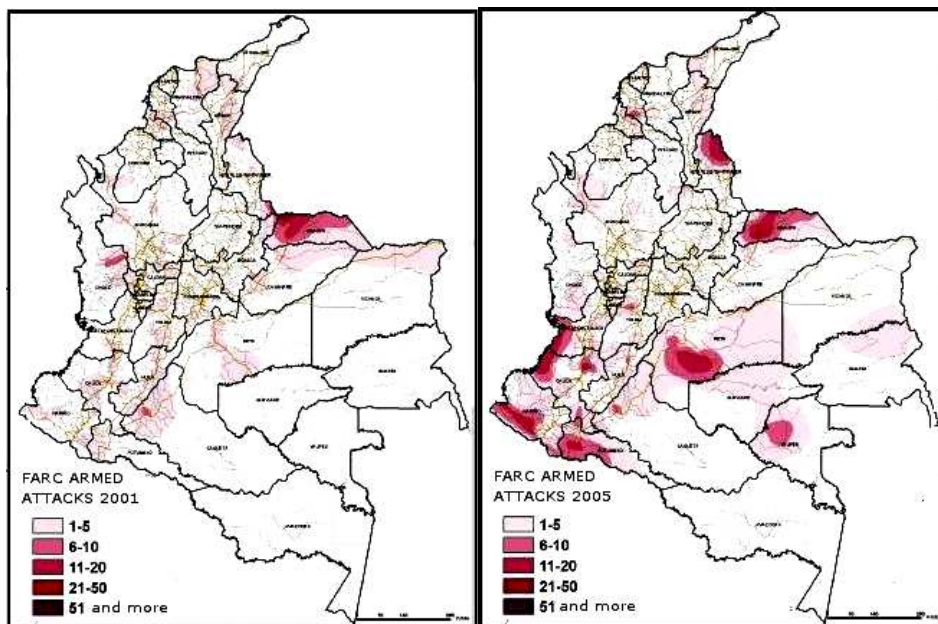


Figure 4: FARC activity in 2001 and 2005¹⁶⁵

Another success had been achieved in accordance to the number of terrorist acts, which decreed rapidly from 1,645 in 2002 to 646 in 2006. The Uribe's first administration has been also successful with decreeing the total number of abductions. While there were 10,151 kidnappings during first three years of Pastrana Government, during the same

¹⁶⁰ see appendix 4

¹⁶¹ Embassy of Colombia, 2009

¹⁶² see appendix 6 and 7

¹⁶³ see appendix 1

¹⁶⁴ CARVAJAL, 2006

¹⁶⁵ Modified from Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, 2010

<http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio_de_DDHH/mapas/>

period of time under the Uribe Administration, the total number dropped by about an half to 5,312 abductions.¹⁶⁶ Even more significantly is the decline apparent on the comparison of the border years from the beginning and end of Uribe Administration, when the acts of extortion kidnappings had fallen from 2,121 in 2003 to 687 in the end of Uribe's first term in 2006.¹⁶⁷¹⁶⁸

Unfortunately, unlike for the area expansion, there are no precise figures showing how significant was reduction of the FARC membership during the first Uribe presidency. Whereas some estimates assume that the loss of these insurgent members was more or less negligible, others believe that Uribe managed to eradicate several thousand of illegal armed group's members already during the first year of his presidency.¹⁶⁹

To sum up the first term of Uribe Government, the President managed to halt the increase in the membership of the guerrilla groups, especially the FARC, and most importantly to demobilize the AUC. From the territorial perspective the Colombian government had by the 2006 already controlled greater part of the land, including regions that had not been under its control for several decades. Uribe's action against the guerrillas was among the population highly popular. And on the onset of his second electoral term, Uribe Policy had the support of almost 70% of the Colombian society.¹⁷⁰

6.2 Uribe's second term (2006 - 2010)

6.2.1 Presidential election

In the May 2006 presidential election, President Álvaro Uribe Vélez became the first president in Colombia in 100 years to be re-elected, winning by a record majority of 62 percent, or 7.4 million votes in the first round.¹⁷¹ The Congress had to modify the Constitution to allow Uribe to run for a second term. As the president himself expressed, this initiative of re-election the democratic security was a condition for the suppression of the terrorism, not the President's personal ambition. Although he was accused by left-wing opposition, which in this context had almost zero chance to seize the presidency, of trying to commit a right-wing coup, the proposal was passed by both

¹⁶⁶ Embassy of Colombia, 2009

¹⁶⁷ see appendix 5

¹⁶⁸ Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, 2010

¹⁶⁹ DESHAZO, 2007

¹⁷⁰ DESHAZO, 2007

¹⁷¹ DPADM, DESA, 2007

the chambers and the Supreme Court. With this strong electoral mandate and a working majority in Congress, President Uribe began his second term in August 2006. His congressional alliance included independents and former Liberal Party members, as well as the Conservative Party. Candidate, who could have been seen as the Uribe's biggest challenger, Carlos Gaviria, obtained 22%, and ensured that way for the first time in country's history the democratic left party (*Polo Democrático Alternativo*) to be the main opposition.¹⁷²

The polling day went without any significant convulsion. The FARC kept its promise and did not interfere. The elections went surprisingly well even in the rural areas under the guerrillas influence, and the voting days were considered the calmest days of balloting in more than a decade. Still there were over 220,000 soldiers and police officers guarding the six presidential candidates and 26.7 million voters.¹⁷³

6.2.2 Run of the second term

Also in his second term, Uribe continued to successfully lower the number of civil homicides and kidnappings.¹⁷⁴ The administration focused on consolidating the results of democratic security policy, and especially the defeat of both guerrilla groups. The country further followed up with the economic growth from the last four years (see Figure 5).

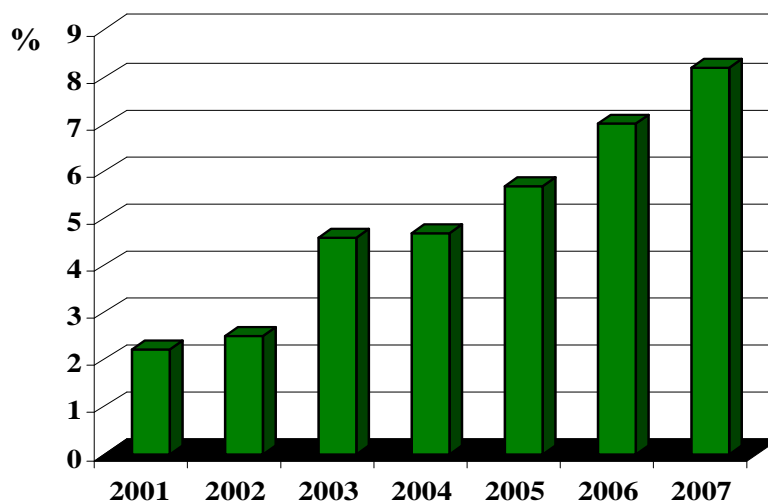


Figure 5: Colombia Annual GDP Growth rate (2001 – 2007)¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² BBC, 2006

¹⁷³ Herald Sun, 2006

¹⁷⁴ see appendix 5

¹⁷⁵ Figure based on data from Trading Economics

<<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/Economics/GDP-Growth.aspx?Symbol=COP>>

However, if some doubts related to the demobilization of paramilitary units, especially regarding the existence of relations between President Uribe and paramilitary units or controversial Peace and Justice Law, emerged during the first President's mandate, during the Uribe's second term of presidency, the scandals associated with his person and policies have become frequently discussed topic. There was suspicion that the president's re-election was supported and influenced by the paramilitary forces, that president's sons have been abusing their father's position to consolidate and develop their business career and that the Colombian intelligence service (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*) DAS, directly subordinated to the president, has tapped the opposition politicians, judges and journalists.¹⁷⁶

Moreover, the results of the second term were not that flourishing as it initially seemed. The AUC demobilization process has proved very complicated and concerns that many of the former members returned to the illegal armed activities, this time usually mentioned as "criminal groups" *Bandas emergentes*, have emerged, being accused of partially controlling the coca cultivation and trade in Colombia.¹⁷⁷ As shows the 2008 UN report, also the results in the fight against drugs trafficking had not been entirely satisfying, since the coca cultivation increased by a quarter in 2007 compared with 2006.¹⁷⁸ Although the numbers were according to the last year data much more satisfactory, as indicated above, this progress was rather controversial, as the loss of coca cultivated hectares in Colombia was partially substituted by the cultivation in the other coca growing countries in Latin America, including Bolivia and Peru.¹⁷⁹

However, the most controversial topic in the last year has become the Uribe's fight against terrorism, especially against the FARC. It is undisputable that the president's strategy has led to significant losses on the side of this oldest and so far strongest guerrilla organisation. Besides the mentioned military action against the guerrilla camps in Ecuador in summer 2008, where Raul Reyes, the contemporary FARC second in command, who was likely to replace the position of Manuel Marulanda¹⁸⁰, was killed, there have been also other Uribe's successes associated with the fight against the FARC. For instance earlier in 2008, in March, when Ivan Rios, another FARC prominent

¹⁷⁶ ROMERO, 2007

¹⁷⁷ HRISTOV, 2009

¹⁷⁸ UODC, 2008

¹⁷⁹ see table 1

¹⁸⁰ Manuel Marulanda died on March 26 2008 of a heart attack

commander was killed by his own security Pablo Montoya, aka Rojas, after the Colombian government promised reward for killing guerrilla members, including Rios.¹⁸¹¹⁸² Also the liberation of the former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, after her six year lasting captivity, along with 14 other hostages in July 2008,¹⁸³ is considered one of the most visible successes of second Uribe Administration.

6.2.3 Problematic of Uribe's policies

There are, however, also downsides of Uribe's "successes". The continuance of Alvaro Uribe in the office induced that a significant portion of the controlling authorities, such as the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Audit Office (Contraloría General), have been filled by the president's supporters, which significantly affects the Checks and Balances system¹⁸⁴. Also the corruption remains a significant problem in Colombia.¹⁸⁵

Moreover, Uribe's policies have mostly been criticized in connection with the human rights abuse. In Colombia have appeared cases known as "false positives" (falsos positivos), when army forces combatants, under the pressure to show results, or simply motivated by getting more holidays for each death guerrilla member, commit scandalous violation of human rights. In some cases a hundred civilians were killed, being reported as guerrilla fighters. United Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions Philip Alston, after his 2009 visit to Colombia noted, that "The sheer number of cases, their geographic spread, and the diversity of military units implicated, indicate that these killings were carried out in a more or less systematic fashion by significant elements within the military."¹⁸⁶ More and more controversial is getting the Uribe's dismissive position to the issue of humanitarian agreement with the FARC on the exemption of long-time captivated hostages. According to 2009 Human Rights Report to Colombia, following societal problems and governmental human rights abuses were reported in 2008:

"Unlawful and extrajudicial killings; insubordinate military collaboration with new illegal armed groups and paramilitary members who refused to demobilize; forced disappearances; overcrowded and insecure prisons; torture and mistreatment of

¹⁸¹ Pablo Montoya received for his act 2.5m USD

¹⁸² BBC, 2008

¹⁸³ BBC, 2008

¹⁸⁴ Checks and Balances – system, which guarantees that no part of the government becomes too powerful

¹⁸⁵ ROJAS, 2009

¹⁸⁶ ALSTON, 2009

detainees; arbitrary arrest; a high number of pretrial detainees, some of whom were held with convicted prisoners; impunity and an inefficient judiciary subject to intimidation; illegal surveillance of civilian groups, political opponents, and government agencies; harassment and intimidation of journalists; unhygienic conditions at settlements for displaced persons, with limited access to health care, education, or employment; corruption; harassment of human rights groups and activists, including unfounded prosecutions; violence against women, including rape; child abuse and child prostitution; trafficking in women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation; some societal discrimination against women, indigenous persons, and minorities; and illegal child labor”¹⁸⁷

There have been also other than humanitarian, but rather politic problem issues in the Uribe’s strict governance. As mentioned above, military successes of democratic security policies have had a significant impact also on the diplomatic and especially economic relations with the country’s neighbors. On the basis of military intervention in the territory of Ecuador in 2008, the country broke diplomatic relations with Colombia, and also imposed a special tax on the Colombian imports. These measures were accepted also by Venezuela¹⁸⁸ That is for Colombia significant restrain, because Venezuela has been one of its major trading partners. Furthermore, Venezuela does not negate possibility of using force in the case of a breach of its territorial sovereignty. The decision from summer 2009 about the U.S. military bases on the Colombian territory provoked concerns not only within the closest neighbors, but practically in all South American countries.

6.2.4 Second re-election referendum

Nonetheless, the main topic of recent political debates in Colombia has been a possibility of President Uribe second re-election and ensuring the continuation of democratic security policy. Rather than a serious debate, Uribe focused all efforts on promoting a referendum that would decide on the possibility of his unprecedented third mandate. However, this initiative has come across many procedural and contentual obstacles.¹⁸⁹ Although the referendum was approved by both chambers of Congress,

¹⁸⁷ UNHCR, 2009, p. 3

¹⁸⁸ WALSER, 2008

¹⁸⁹ International Crisis Group, 2008

the final decision was to be made by the Supreme Constitutional Court, regarding the investigation of irregularities occurred in funding and approval procedures used by the current administration and by coalition members.

The uncertainty about the potential Uribe's presidency was substantially also reflected in the profile of the candidates for president in upcoming elections. The continuance of democratic security policy is a matter-of course for all the pre-election programs, which practically eliminated the possibility of leftist success in the elections. The coalition parties would not nominate their candidates until President Uribe had made the statement about his candidacy.

Álvaro Uribe, as it was mentioned before is among Colombians greatly popular. His possible re-election yet provoked among the people different reaction. Some of them argued for the third term fearing Colombia without a strong and sharp governance, and pointed out the security and economic progress achieved during last 8 years, whereas others alerted to undemocratic meaning of such a consecution, and to the shades of Uribe's policies, particularly in relation with the too brutal government approach to the guerrillas, that may, as indicated above, affect also the unconcerned parties. Another argument often used was that the process of enabling a second consecutive re-election had been plagued by irregularities and allegations of corruption, and that a third term could result in continuation of a too narrow security strategy focused on elusive final military defeat of the insurgent FARC and ELN.

Discussion on the re-election has appeared rather populist and aimed at manipulating the public opinion. Colombian political system seemed unable to face the consequences of two terms presidency, considering the fact that the Checks and Balances system has been already severely disrupted. President has gained unlimited power, while the opposition and the judiciary were hardly able to significantly interfere with the decision of the re-election. As a consequence, the prospect was that the twelve-year Uribe's mandate could ultimately not solve the Colombian problem but instead become the problem itself.

6.3 Present political state

On 26 February 2010 the Constitutional Court made the decision over a possible President Uribe's third term, declaring the referendum unconstitutional, after finding

seven major objections in the law for a referendum, through which in Autumn 2009 Colombian citizens decided in the favor of Uribe in the matter of whether or not there should be the amendment of the constitutional measures on the second re-election of President Uribe.¹⁹⁰ Although these deficiencies had rather formal character, the Constitutional Court concluded that the law on referendum by significant means violates the essential principles of democracy. According to the court, the initiatives linked with submitting the law of the referendum act six times exceeded the limits set for funding.¹⁹¹ Moreover, debate on the bill in Congress started without the fulfillment of legitimate demands of the referendum being confirmed by the “National Registrar of Civil Status” (Registraduría Nacional dl Estado Civil)¹⁹². Also the question which was supposed to correspond to the citizens in the referendum was during the discussion amended, when the original wording did not allow Uribe to run for the third office until 2014. In addition, the debate on the bill was held in an abridged reading and its approval by the conciliation proceeding between the House of Commons and the Senate was successful due to two deserted congressmen.¹⁹³

The presidential campaign in Colombia began in April 2010, less than two months before the election. The main candidates were Antanas Mockus from Green Party, probably the most favored candidate, further the former Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos from National Unity Party, which on 14 March won the congressional election, and with a significant loss after them, Conservative Party candidate Noemi Sanín, former Colombia Ambassador for United Kingdom and the only considerable woman candidate, Germaán Vargas from Radical Change Party, Gustavo Petro of the Alternative Democratic Pole and Liberal Party Rafael Pardo.¹⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it is not likely that any of the candidates would win in the first election round. The question is, how much will Uribe involve in the following governance. He could hypostatically be appointed to certain prominent position that would allow him to stay in power. The winning of National Union Party could considerably help this possibility to become reality.

¹⁹⁰ BBC, 2010

¹⁹¹ International Pre-Electoral Observation Mission, 2010

¹⁹² Governmental Agency that controls and maintains the civil status records for all Colombian citizens

¹⁹³ BOTERO, 2010

¹⁹⁴ CAWTHORNE, MARKEY, 2010

The presidential elections are carried out on the 30th May 2010.¹⁹⁵ The Supreme Court not allowing the President Uribe to run for his third term as a president might be seen as a sign that Colombia is rather the state of law, than a state based on the public opinion. The decision certainly is an indication of the democracy in Colombia. The question is how this decision will affect the Colombian future, especially in the context of the security matter.

6.4 Future Prospects

Though Uribe's presidency has appeared successful in achieving the progress of security and the economic growth of Colombia, the conflict situation has not been solved by far. The number of unsuccessful peace processes has aroused the question, whether it is even possible to find an effective solution for the Colombian conflict. The historical experience could help to find it. It definitely will not be cheap, complete, or quick. Firstly, it will be necessary to revise and improve the models of negotiations and to develop a national constitutional pact. The new model would need the adoption of a programme of significant reforms for the country. The government should be fighting the guerrillas, but also making efforts to negotiate. It should continue to use the financial support from outside actors, especially the US, but this support should be used in an effective way, and not only for military purposes.

¹⁹⁵ CAWTHORNE, MARKEY, 2010

7. Conclusion

The Colombian conflict, since it came into being, has gone through considerable development. Whereas in the beginning it had rather a local character, where the principal role was played by small, ideological rebel bands, whose aims were to establish a just society, over a time the motivation has shifted to the more modern appearance. Nowadays, the ideological enthusiasm has been effaced by material desires, as evidenced also by betrayals among the guerrillas' own ranks, motivated by financial compensation. Furthermore, for a long time these insurgent movements have not represented the majority view of Colombian society. Although the state has more or less managed to dispose of the paramilitaries who emerged as opposition to the rebels, it did not eradicate the violence or human rights abuse. Moreover, considerable proportion of the abuses serves also the government itself.

Another divergence from the initial form of the conflict lies in the involvement of foreign actors. Formerly, these parties played a much less significant role. The significance of US support to Colombia is indisputable. However, the same does not stand for the motivation that brings it such a wide assistance. The declared fight against drug trafficking according to the pleas specified in the study is, most likely, merely a subordinate reason. The real motives should be therefore assumedly searched in rather topos U.S. urge to expand its strategic sphere of influence. The United States is not the only country to use its assistance as a mean of influence. The opportunity to interact with the guerrillas was also welcomed by the leftist Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, hoping to attach an ally in an otherwise adverse neighbor state.

Peace efforts and negotiations that have been applied for decades to solve the conflict by the governing bodies have not led to significant progress. However, the situation in Colombia appeared to improve during the last government of President Álvaro Uribe. This widely popular president in Colombian society achieved success by introducing a hard-line policy, which was reflected in an improvement of the Colombian economic and security situation, while weakening the guerrilla groups, especially the ELN and the FARC. However, the successes partially glose the dark side of Uribe's strict and peremptory approach, which has been resulting in continuing human rights violations.

The future of Colombia is doubtful. Now, when the incumbent President Uribe has not succeeded in asking for permission to run for a third presidential term, and his successor has not yet been chosen, it is hard to predict the subsequent development. Apart from who becomes the new president of Colombia, it is doubtless that this country still has a long way to go in its efforts to achieve a secure life for its population. The state will, in particular, have to eradicate corruption, ensure the adherence of human rights and deal strictly, but also by legal means, with the non-state illegal groups as well as individuals. These phenomena are interconnected, and success will not be achieved unless all the tasks are coped with, without exception.

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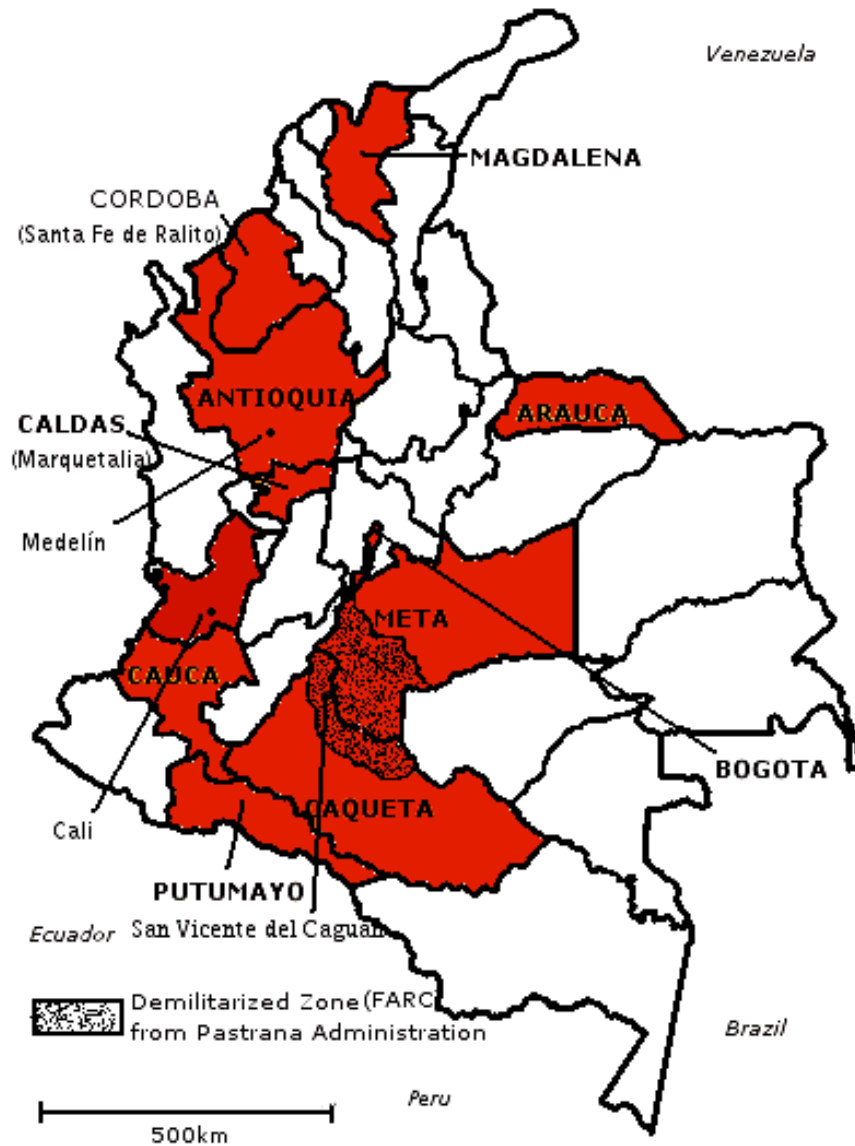
Appendices

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Appendix 1

MAP OF COLOMBIA



Source: draught on the base from: About com. geography, Free blank maps of Colombia.
< <http://geography.about.com/library/blank/blxcolombia.htm>>;with the data from: The National Counterterrorism Center, 2010 < <http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/farc.html>>

Appendix 2

US GRANT MILITARY AND POLICE AID TO COLOMBIA (2006 – 2010)

AID PROGRAM	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	350,248,000	386,869,000	223,124,500	228,239,000	199,950,000
Section 1004 Counter-Drug Assistance	132,980,000	112,046,000	<i>112,046,000</i>	<i>112,046,000</i>	<i>112,046,000</i>
Foreign Military Financing	89,100,000	85,500,000	52,570,000	53,000,000	55,000,000
Department of Defense Military Construction					46,000,000
NADR - Anti-Terrorism Assistance	5,176,000	3,395,000	3,288,000	2,750,000	4,395,000
Excess Defense Articles	137,000	9,569,000	110,849		
Non-Security Assistance - Unified Command	1,609,148	<i>1,609,148</i>	<i>1,609,148</i>	<i>1,609,148</i>	<i>1,609,148</i>
International Military Education and Training	1,673,000	1,646,000	1,421,000	1,400,000	1,695,000
NADR - Humanitarian Demining	300,000	691,000		400,000	2,000,000
NADR - Conventional Weapons Destruction		691,000	427,000	400,000	
Service Academies	<i>227,725</i>	<i>227,725</i>	<i>227,725</i>	<i>227,725</i>	<i>227,725</i>
Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program	<i>222,659</i>	<i>222,659</i>	<i>222,659</i>	<i>222,659</i>	<i>222,659</i>
Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies	96,750	<i>96,750</i>	<i>96,750</i>	<i>96,750</i>	<i>96,750</i>
Aviation Leadership Program	59,383	<i>59,383</i>	<i>59,383</i>	<i>59,383</i>	<i>59,383</i>
NADR - Counter-Terrorism Financing					100,000
Asia-Pacific Center	2,388	2,388	2,388	2,388	2,388
Total M+P Aid	581,832,053	602,625,053	395,205,402	400,453,053	423,404,053
TOTAL AID	724,787,053	752,349,023	646,675,402	643,953,053	675,444,053

All amounts are in US Dollars

Numbers in Italics are estimates, usually based on the closest year for which data are available

Source: *Just the Facts. U.S. Aid to Colombia, All Programs, 2006-2011.*

<<http://justf.org/Country?country=Colombia>>.

Appendix 3

US GRANT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AID TO COLOMBIA (2006 – 2010)

Aid Program	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Economic Support Fund			194,412,000	196,500,000	201,790,000
International Narcotics Control Economic Aid	139,982,000	139,166,000	39,428,000	40,000,000	42,250,000
PL 480 `Food for Peace`	2,973,000	4,858,000	10,630,000		
Section 1207 Security and Stabilization Assistance		4,000,000	5,000,000	<i>5,000,000</i>	
Migration and Refugee Assistance					8,000,000
Transition Initiatives		1,699,970	2,000,000	<i>2,000,000</i>	
Total E+S Aid	142,955,000	149,723,970	251,470,000	243,500,000	252,040,000
TOTAL AID	724,787,053	752,349,023	646,675,402	643,953,053	675,444,053

All amounts are in US Dollars

Numbers in Italics are estimates, usually based on the closest year for which data are available

Source: *Just the Facts. U.S. Aid to Colombia, All Programs, 2006-2011.*

<<http://justf.org/Country?country=Colombia>>.

Appendix 4

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS LISTED BY PRESIDENCY (1990 – 2003)

PRESIDENT	CEASEFIRE ACCORDS & HUMANITARIAN AGREEMENTS	AGENDAS & PRELIMINARY AND PROCEDURAL AGREEMENTS	FINAL PEACE AGREEMENTS
Gaviria		Cravo Norte, CGSB (May 1991) Caracas agenda (June 1991)	Final Accord, PRT (January 1991); EPL (February 1991); Quintín Lame (May 1991) Final accord, Comandos Ernesto Rojas (March 1992) Final accord, CRS (April 1994) & Frente Garnica (June 1994) Coexistence Accord, Medellín militias (May 1994)
Samper	Remolinos del Caguán humanitarian agreement, FARC (June 1997)	Palace of Viana Pre-Agreement, ELN (February 1998)	Final Accord, MIR-COAR (July 1998)
Pastrana	Humanitarian agreement, ELN (June 2000) Humanitarian agreement, ELN (October 2000) Humanitarian exchange agreement, FARC (June 2001)	Common Agenda, FARC (May 1999) Los Pozos Accord, FARC (February 2001) Conditions to establish an ELN zone (May 2001) Comisión de Personalidades report (September 2001) San Francisco de la Sombra Accord, FARC (October 2001) Accord for Colombia, ELN (November 2001) Accord timetabling future of peace process, FARC (January 2002)	
Uribe		Santa Fé de Ralito Accord, AUC (July 2003) Accord for participating in negotiations with Bloque Central Bolívar & Vencedores de Arauca paramilitary groups (November 2003)	

Sources: Conciliation Resources [online]. Typology of peace agreements by presidency. 2004. <<http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/colombia/key-texts.php>>.

Appendix 5

HUMAN RIGHTS FIGURES AND OPERATIONAL RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC FORCES

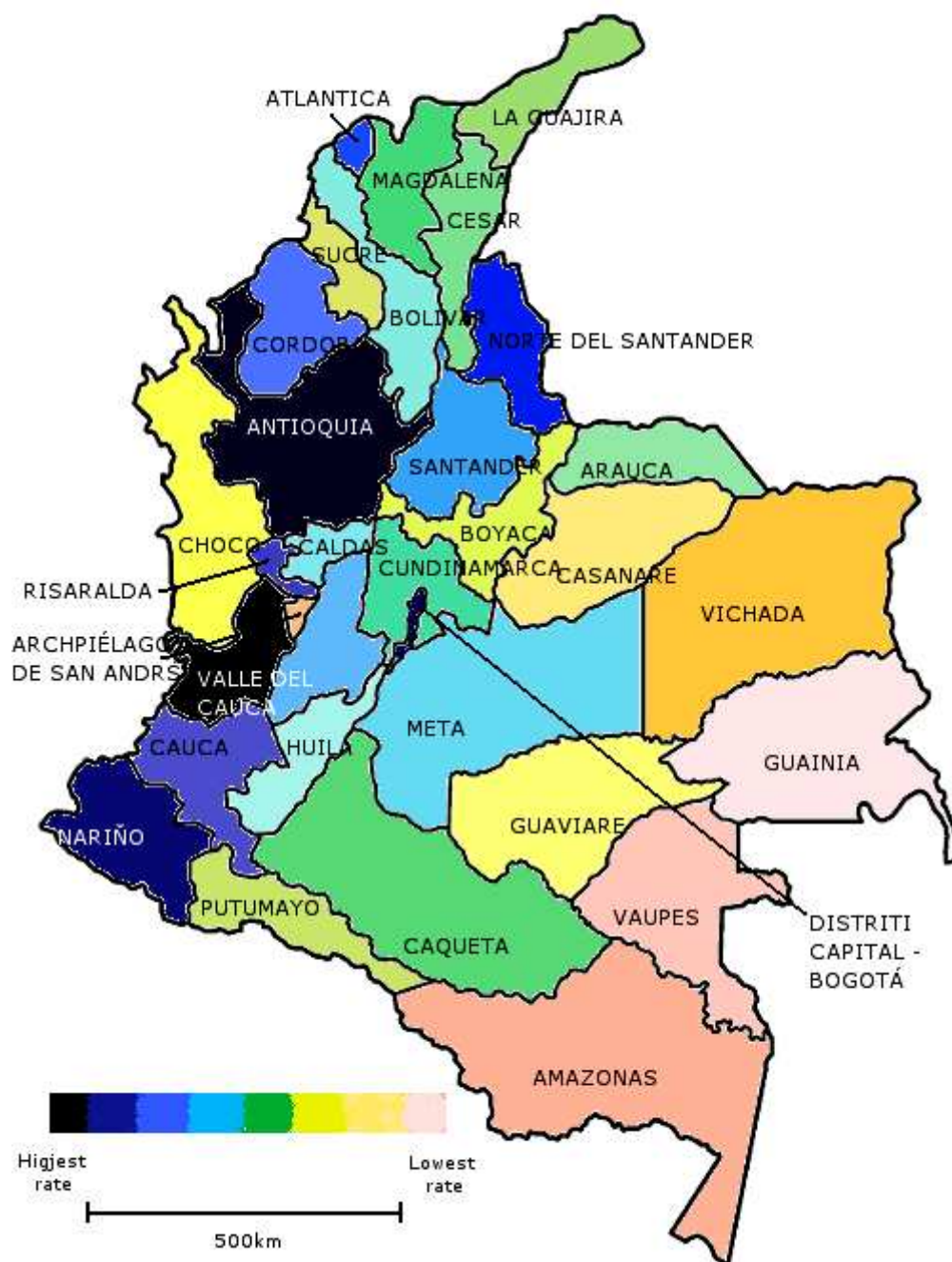
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of homicides	23,523	20,210	18,111	17,479	17,198	16,140
Cases of massacres	94	46	48	37	26	37
Victims of massacres	504	263	252	193	128	169
Homicides of (ex)mayors	11	15	6	5	1	3
Homicides of councilors	75	18	26	23	14	13
Homicides of journalists	6	3	2	3	2	0
Homicides of indigenous	171	79	56	46	40	71
Homicides of non union professors	--	20	17	20	5	9
Homicides of union professors	54	47	26	36	18	20
Homicides of other union members	47	42	14	25	8	18
Kidnaps	2,121	1,440	800	687	521	437
Forced displacement (expulsion)	243,420	225,148	263,488	280,306	325,031	294,138
Forced displacement (reception)	245,314	228,558	263,926	282,118	327,614	307,661
Intensity of confrontation	1,194	2,551	2,448	2,935	2,362	1,024
Armed combats	557	851	972	994	531	378
Armed clashes	637	1,700	1,476	1,941	1,831	646

Source: Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, Diagnósticos Estadísticos por Departamento 2003 – 2008.

< http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio_de_DDHH/diagnosticoestadisticoxdepto.asp>

Appendix 6

HOMICIDES RATE BY DEPARTMENTS 2009



Source: Draught on the base from: About.com. geography, Free blank maps of Colombia. <<http://geography.about.com/library/blank/blxcolombia.htm>>;with the data from Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, Indicadores sobre derechos humanos y DIH Colombia Año 2009. <http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio_de_DDHH/documentos/Indicadores/obs_indicadores_dic2009_100503.pdf> (For concrete data see appendix 7)

Appendix 7

HOMICIDES FIGURES BY DEPARTMENT (2003 AND 2009)

DEPARTMEN	2003	2009	% CHANGE 2003-2009
Valle del Cauca	3,959	2,997	-25
Antioquia	4,452	2,846	-36
Bogotá D.C.	1,605	1,327	-17
Narino	4529	647	-86
Risalada	814	579	-29
Cauca	401	575	+31
Norte de Santander	1,416	528	-63
Atlántico	793	512	-35
Córdoba	252	510	51
Santander	669	498	-25
Tolima	605	439	-35
Meta	783	438	-45
Caldas	822	390	-53
Bolívar	617	372	-40
Huila	611	371	-40
Cundinamarca	1,007	369	-64
Magdalena	681	321	-53
Caquetá	325	265	-19
Cesar	642	252	-61
Arauca	445	244	-45
Quindío	294	241	-19
La Guajira	408	212	-48
Putumayo	273	186	-32
Sucre	257	184	-29
Boyacá	333	150	-65
Chocó	94	142	+44
Guaviare	105	116	+10
Casanare	312	75	-76
Vichada	2	10	+80
Archipiélago de San Andrés	10	9	-10
Amazonas	13	6	-54
Vaupés	2	3	+33
Guainía	2	3	+33
TOTAL	23,523	12,534	-47

Source: Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, Diagnósticos Estadísticos por Departamento 2003 – 2008 and Indicadores sobre derechos humanos y DIH Colombia Año 2009.

<http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio_de_DDHH/documentos/Indicadores/obs_indicadores_dic2009_100503.pdf>

<http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio_de_DDHH/diagnosticoestadisticoxdepto.asp>