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U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

109TH CONGRESS
1st Session

COMMITTEE PRINT

S. PRT.
109–43

"PLAN COLOMBIA": ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

STAFF TRIP REPORT

TO THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

DECEMBER 2005

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations

Available via World Wide Web: http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
25–278 CC WASHINGTON : 2006

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

December 29, 2005.

Dear Colleagues:

The committee recently sent Mr. Carl Meacham of the professional staff to Bogotá, Colombia to assess specific aspects of "Plan Colombia." This six-year U.S. aid package, which was intended to eliminate Colombia's production of illicit crops and domestic terrorism, recently expired.

On September 23, 2005, the Government of Colombia (GOC) provided a draft proposal to the U.S. Department of State for an extension of Plan Colombia. The consultation process between the Department of State and the GOC is ongoing. With this in mind, I am pleased to share with you his trip report. I believe it provides significant insight and a number of important recommendations on drug eradication and interdiction, the demobilization of rightist paramilitary fighters, and progress regarding assistance to the GOC in advancing the defense and expansion of government presence in Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC paramilitaries) controlled areas.

I hope you find this helpful as the Committee on Foreign Relations considers its continued support for Plan Colombia. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues and welcome any comments you may have on this report.

Sincerely,

RICHARD G. LUGAR,
Chairman.

"PLAN COLOMBIA": ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

From December 11–14, 2005, a member of the professional staff from the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC) traveled to Bogotá, Colombia. During this trip, staff visited with Colombia's President, Alvaro Uribe, and members of his Cabinet. Staff also met with representatives of relevant multilateral organizations, foreign diplomats, an influential Colombian Senator, Rafael Pardo, *Ideas Para La Paz* President Sergio Jaramillo, and the Chief Editor of *Semana* magazine, Rodrigo Pardo. (See Appendix I for complete list).

At the request of the Chairman, the purpose of the trip was to examine three issues:

- Drug Eradication and Interdiction;
- Demobilization of rightist paramilitary fighters; and
- Progress regarding assistance to the Government of Colombia (GOC) in advancing the defense and expansion of ITS presence in Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC paramilitaries) controlled areas.

PAST AND PRESENT OF "PLAN COLOMBIA"

Plan Colombia (Public Law 106–246), which began in 2000, was developed by former Colombian President Pastrana (1998–2002) to end the GOC's long-standing armed conflict, eliminate drug trafficking, and promote economic and social development. The Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) is the primary U.S. program that supports Plan Colombia. In addition, Colombia receives assistance from the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program and the Department of Defense's central counternarcotics account. ACI funding for Plan Colombia from FY 2000 through FY 2005 totals approximately $2.8 billion. When FMF and DOD assistance is included, the total level of U.S. support to GOC is $4.5 billion.[1] The U.S. Congress will continue support for Plan Colombia beyond FY 2005 through ACI $469 million and FMF $90 million funding for FY 2006. Plan Colombia is also receiving $1.7 million for International Military Education and Training (IMET) and $4.1 million for Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining (NADR).

From Plan Colombia's inception, the objectives of the GOC and the USG have differed in some aspects, although there is a significant overlap of goals. The primary U.S. objective is to prevent the

[1] "Plan Colombia: A Progress Report," CRS Report for Congress, Connie Viellette, May 9, 2005.

flow of illegal drugs into the United States, as well as to help the GOC promote peace as it contributes to the regional security of South America. The three topics examined in this report are important to meeting USG objectives.

The GOC has not formally announced its plans for a follow-up program. However, on September 23, 2005, the GOC provided the U.S. Department of State with a draft document describing its proposed Plan Colombia Consolidation Phase (PCCP), which seeks continued U.S. assistance for 2006–2010.[2] The PCCP envisages four programmatic pillars that roughly correspond to the areas the USG supported through Plan Colombia (Pillars I-III), with the addition of the peace process (including demobilization and reintegration) as pillar IV. These pillars are:

- Fight Against Terrorism, Narcotics Trafficking, and International Organized Crime
- Strengthening Governmental Institutions and the Justice System
- Economics and Social Revitalization
- Process for Peace and Re-Integration

The USG has informed the GOC that it supports the broad priorities contained in the draft plan. The USG has not submitted a formal draft for consultation to relevant committees in the U.S. Congress.

Primary Recommendations:

1. In order to remain flexible, staff strongly recommends that USG support for Plan Colombia be extended on a year to year basis, working in the context of continued cooperation with the GOC to ensure rigorous implementation of relevant priorities, especially related to drug eradication and interdiction and the effective demobilization of the AUC, FARC, and ELN. Policies toward the GOC must be continually evaluated, given very fluid circumstances inside Colombia and its neighboring countries.

2. Staff strongly encourages the U.S Department of State to brief in a time sensitive manner and seek input from the relevant committees in the U.S. Senate and House on their consultations with the GOC regarding the PCCP. Failure to address Congress' concerns could weaken support for future extensions of Plan Colombia in the U.S. Congress.

OVERVIEW

Since President Alvaro Uribe's election in 2002, he has striven to build a close relationship with the USG. With the expiration of Plan Colombia this relationship has been subject to review in the following areas:

[2] United States Embassy—Bogotá, Colombia, Country Team Briefing, December 12, 2005

DRUG ERADICATION AND INTERDICTION

The lack of reliable evidence of well-documented progress in the war against drugs and neutralizing paramilitaries is disappointing considering the billions of dollars the U.S. Congress has appropriated to finance drug interdiction and eradication since 2000.[3]

In 2005 coca eradication broke the 136,000 hectare record and destroyed the equivalent of 160 metric tons of cocaine; and though cocaine seized in 2004 almost tripled to 325 metric tons of cocaine, and is expected to be larger for 2005,[4] Colombia continues to provide about 90 percent of the cocaine available in the U.S., in spite of the appropriated funds being earmarked for Department of State programs in Colombia to fight drug trafficking and terrorism through Plan Colombia.

The GOC claims to have made considerable progress eradicating drugs and interdicting drug shipments, as well as substantial progress in eliminating the internal terrorist threat. Both the United Nations (UN) Office on Drugs and Crime and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) lend credence to these claims in the form of glowing statistics indicative of Colombia's good work.

The General Accounting Office (GAO), on the other hand, has criticized all of these rosy reports. It says that ONDCP's assessments of the amount of cocaine entering the United States in 2004 are too broad in range to be "useful for assessing interdiction efforts."[5] Even some Colombian officials have cautioned that while the statistics presented by the UN and White House are encouraging, more time is needed to determine if current efforts will yield real progress. They refer, for instance, to the impact of possible drug warehousing in Venezuela and Mexico on price and supply. However, given the absence of a consensus from respected organizations on the success of Plan Colombia in stemming the flow of cocaine to the United States, this does not bode well for efforts to push for its extension, at least at its current funding levels, without policy changes.

The administration has incorporated existing programs in supplementing Plan Colombia's drug interdiction efforts. These efforts can be improved. Of particular importance to staff in this regard is the opinion of Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officials about the lack of Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) and rapid intercept capability for interdiction (at this time, the Colombians have no radar detection MPA or substantive helicopter intercept capability.) Without adequate MPA resources, it is impossible to detect and pinpoint drug-smuggling vessels in the open waters of Colombia's coasts. Although P-3 aircraft have been successfully utilized in the Caribbean, along with MPA provided by the U.K. Govern-

[3] More than $6 billion spent on Colombia and other countries (during FY 2000–2005) in the region for counter narcotics, alternative development, and judicial reform efforts. According to the report entitled "DRUG CONTROL, Agencies need to plan form likely declines in drug interdiction assets, and develop better performance measures for transit zone operations." Report to Congressional Committees by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), November 2005.

[4] United States Embassy—Bogotá, Colombia, Country Team Briefing, December 12, 2005.

[5] "DRUG CONTROL, Agencies need to plan form likely declines in drug interdiction assets, and develop better performance measures for transit zone operations." Report to Congressional Committees by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), November 2005.

ment, their use is being reduced and replacements are not available. As a result the DEA and North Coast Colombian police and/or military are unable to respond to intelligence on drug trafficking because of the lack of maritime patrol aircraft.

Therefore, our ability to respond to real-time information about smugglers and traffickers is seriously limited. This is a major concern since Plan Colombia's main purpose is to stop drug smuggling into the United States.

Recommendations:

1. It is strongly urged that additional Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) resources be acquired to support the maritime interdiction efforts on Colombia's North Coast and west into the Pacific Ocean.

2. It is strongly advised that the USG, particularly the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security, develop and coordinate reliable performance metrics to accurately measure the flow of cocaine into the United States. Once this is done, all parties will have accurate metrics on success or failure.

DEMOBILIZATION OF RIGHTIST PARAMILITARY FIGHTERS

This demobilization is closely linked to realizing Plan Colombia's goals on drug eradication and interdiction. The Uribe administration's own study on demobilization, prepared two years ago, concluded that paramilitaries are responsible for at least 40 percent of the cocaine trafficking in Colombia.[6] An effective demobilization would represent a victory in the war on drugs. The full demobilization process is scheduled to begin during the first quarter of 2006 with implementation of "The Peace and Justice Law," signed by President Uribe in July 2005, which attempts to establish a legal framework to neutralize the AUC.

Though the GOC reports that 13,592 paramilitaries have handed their weapons over, fulfilling the introductory phase of the full demobilization process, these efforts have been problematic, and success is dependent largely on the co-operation of terrorist groups, who must surrender their arms and agree to allow drug traffickers to face U.S. justice through extradition.[7]

There has also been some criticism of the "Peace and Justice Law" by Colombian government officials. The Peace Commissioner, Luis Carlos Restrepo, has stated that he knows full well that demobilization is a complicated "monster of four heads," specifically referring to problems with government coordination of reintegration, legal processing and monitoring of demobilized combatants, verification that ex-combatants are no longer involved in illegal criminal activities and victim reconciliation and reparations—the demobilization's four key elements. Staff's opinion is that the law will be ineffective because it relies on the AUC's willingness to co-

[6] Confidential assessment prepared for the president of Colombia on whether peace talks should begin with the nation's main paramilitary, as sited in *Washington Post,* June 23, 2003 news article entitled "Colombian Fighters' Drug Trade Is Detailed; Report Complicates Efforts to End War."

[7] "Colombia: Paramilitary Demobilization Update," Source: Department of State, U.S. Embassy Bogotá, Colombia, Dec. 2005.

operate in the implementation of its own demise. In addition the GOC has not built a strong framework for the law's implementation.

Recommendations:

1. Staff strongly recommends that the USG condition any funding support of the GOC's demobilization effort on its ability to improve the demobilization law's implementation, with special attention devoted to the reintegration, legal processing and monitoring of demobilized combatants, verification that ex-combatants are no longer involved in illegal criminal activities and victim's reconciliation and reparations. The USG should strongly encourage the GOC to name a "Demobilization Czar" to help make the implementation more effective.

2. Staff strongly recommends that the USG press the GOC to start acting immediately and much more aggressively in investigating and building up cases against paramilitary commanders and locating and confiscating their illegal assets. In this regard, the U.S. State Department and U.S Embassy in Bogotá should examine how best the USG can provide technical assistance to the GOC in its search for illegally obtained assets and land.

3. Staff strongly recommends that the USG ask the GOC to ensure that extradition arrangements with the USG not be weakened by the "Peace and Justice Law".

PROGRESS REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA THE (GOC) IN ADVANCING THE DEFENSE AND EXPANSION OF THEIR PRESENCE IN REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC) AND UNITED SELF-DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA (AUC PARAMILITARIES) CONTROLLED AREAS

At stake is the survival of a state that has been battered and undermined by leftist rebels, who have long controlled the countryside, rightist paramilitary armies, and an out-of-control drug trade that funds both sides (right and left) and fuels the cycle of chaos, violence and impunity. Experts say the burden is simply too much for Colombia to shoulder alone, but note that an important element of engagement with Colombia is strengthening its security and other institutions. In this regard, presently, Plan Colombia is the best structure in place to provide the framework for the Colombian government, working with the U.S. Military Group (MILGRP), to advance and facilitate social services in areas that have traditionally suffered from little state presence and pressure from illegal armed groups and at the same time strengthening the state. Plan Patriota, the GOC's military campaign to extend government control and security presence throughout the national territory, has made significant accomplishments, starting with the clearing of the Bogotá area in 2003. Today 17,000 Joint Task Force troops in south-central Colombian jungles have destroyed more than 380

FARC encampments, including many with guest houses for visiting narco-traffickers.[8]

At the time of the writing of this report, the Colombian Government had offered to demilitarize a small area of southern Colombia to begin peace negotiations with the FARC and also has recently begun peace negotiations in Cuba with the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Recommendations:

1. Staff strongly recommends that efforts by the GOC in advancing the defense and expansion of their presence in Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC paramilitaries) controlled areas should continue to be funded as necessary subject to review and with the appropriate oversight.

2. Though, skepticism exists regarding the FARC's response, these are positive developments and the Uribe Government should be supported. Staff believes that the GOC efforts demonstrate clear attempts to bring about peace and should be facilitated and supported by the U.S Embassy in Bogotá appropriately.

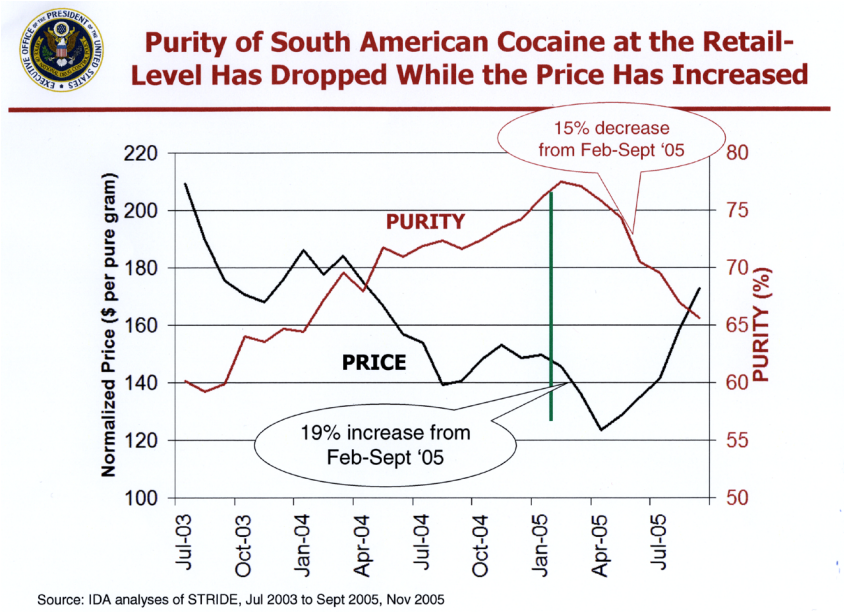
ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

DRUG ERADICATION AND INTERDICTION

As of November 2005, over 132,000 hectares of coca and 1500 hectares of opium poppy had been sprayed since the beginning of 2005. Ground fire against spray planes is well below 2003's record levels but remains problematic.

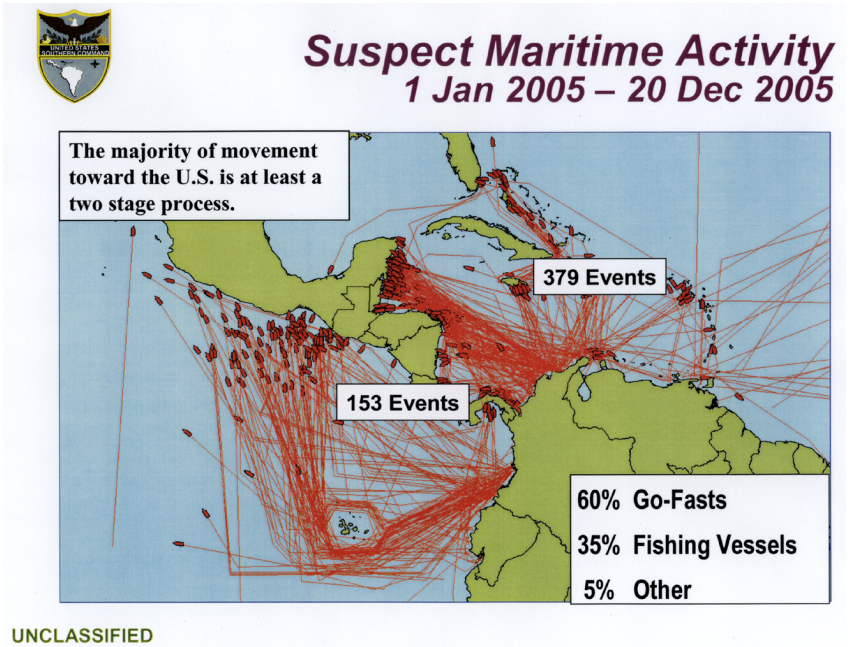
Interdiction operations are on target to match or exceed 2004's record seizures. Through July 2005, the Colombian National Police (CNP) had seized more than 65 metric tons of cocaine and coca base, and the Colombian navy had seized more than 75 metric tons of cocaine. In 2004 Government of Colombia forces seized 178 metric tons of cocaine and coca base. Cocaine seizures reportedly rose from 117 metric tons in 2001 to 196 in 2004. And just last month, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) head John Walters announced the price of cocaine rose 19 percent and purity declined 15 percent over a seven-month period this year—evidence to him that cocaine is getting scarcer.

[8] United States Embassy—Bogotá, Colombia, Country Team Briefing, December 12, 2005.



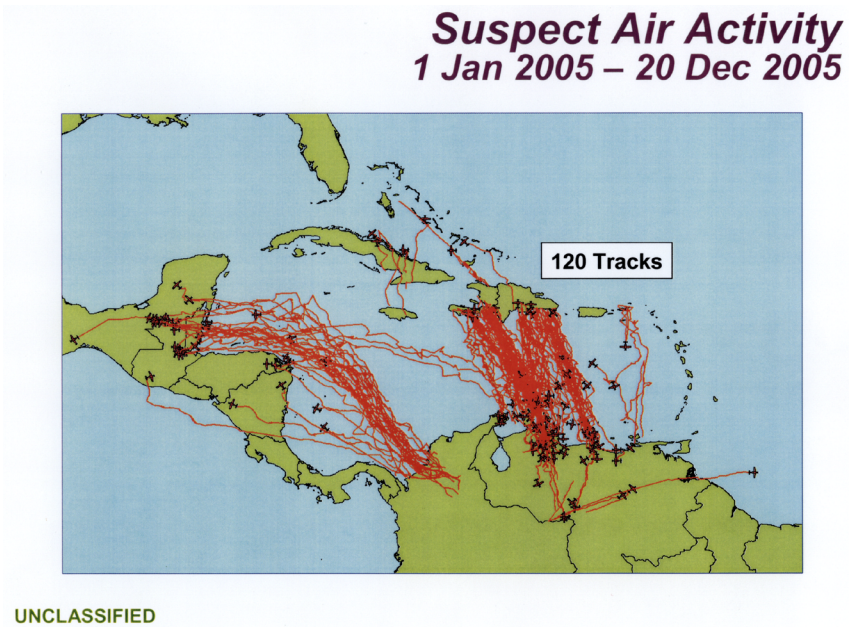
Nevertheless, a recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report on the reliability of key U.S. Government data on cocaine trafficking, price, and purity questioned these numbers and advised that the U.S. Government needs to do a better job at obtaining more reliable data. The ONDCP estimated that between 325 and 675 metric tons of cocaine entered the United States in 2004, a range that is too broad to be useful, the report added.

Although noticeable progress has been made regarding interdiction, with the exception of Operation Firewall, a cooperative U.S. and Colombian maritime interdiction initiative on the North Coast of Colombia, there are no other organized and capable partner nation maritime source or transit zone programs. This is an extremely important activity in the war on drugs, as it is estimated that approximately 70% of cocaine trafficking to the United States occurs by water transport.



Source: Department of Defense, Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South

In any event, Operation Firewall has achieved significant success with the direct and/or assisted seizures of approximately 32 metric tons of cocaine in FY 2004 and 47 tons in FY 2005. However, this program has been severely limited by the lack of Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) and rapid intercept capability mentioned above (at this time, the Colombians have no radar detection MPA or substantive helicopter intercept capability). Without adequate MPA resources, it is almost impossible to detect and pinpoint those drug-laden smuggling vessels in open waters. Although P-3 aircraft have been successfully utilized in air, especially given the increase in suspect air activity from Venezuela, their use is being reduced and replacements are not available.



Source: Department of Defense, Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South

Recommendations:

1. Staff recommends additional dedicated assets to support the Firewall program and to enhance coordinated interdiction efforts with Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) that is envisioned to compliment joint maritime activities. The importance of MPA to the Maritime Interdiction program (JIATF-South and Firewall) can not be understated.

2. Staff recommends a refueling platform to assist Maritime Interdiction vessels coordinated through JIATF-South operations to cover the eastern pacific coast of Colombia (EASTPAC).

DEMOBILIZATION OF "RIGHTIST" PARAMILITARY FIGHTERS

Colombia's demobilization will be a challenge. The "Justice and Peace Law" to govern the process falls short regarding the establishment of a strong framework for dismantling the paramilitary groups. The law lacks the effective enforcement structure necessary to ensure that paramilitaries disclose information about their groups' criminal operations or surrender their illegally acquired wealth. Under the law there is a very real possibility that Commanders convicted of atrocities will receive very short sentences, even if it becomes clear that they have lied to prosecutors, kept most of their illegal assets, drug labs and wealth, or continued to engage in illegal paramilitary activity after they have "demobilized." When these leaders re-enter society, their wealth, political power, and criminal networks will have remained intact, allowing

them to replace their weapons and troops with ease if they choose, or form their own laundered and "legitimate" narco-gangs.

Though President Uribe's record of extradition throughout his term (08/07/02 to 12/15/05) is excellent (at 315), of particular concern to the United States under the new "Peace and Justice Law" is its ambiguity regarding the extradition of paramilitary commanders who have been indicted in the United States. It appears they can escape extradition by serving reduced sentences for their crimes in Colombia and then claim double jeopardy.

Extraditions from Colombia to the United States

	Colombia	United States	Others	Total
Total Extraditions: From 1991 Through 8/6/1998				
Total extraditions by nationality, 7/4/91 through 8/6/98	0	7	8	15
Total Extraditions: Pastrana and Uribe				
Individuals extradited by nationality during the Pastrana administration, 8/7/98 to 8/6/2	51	4	9	64
Individuals extradited by nationality during the Uribe administration[1] 8/7/02 to 12/15/05	304	1	10	315
Total extraditions from 07/04/91 to 12/15/05	355	12	27	394
Total Extraditions: From 1/1/05 Through 12/15/05				
Total extraditions in 2005	131	0	3	134

[1] Note: The total of 315 includes ten (10) individuals that Pastrana approved for extradition but were extradited after Uribe took office.

Source: Department of State, U.S. Embassy Bogotá, Colombia, Dec. 2005.

Extradition provides President Uribe with an effective weapon, a symbolic sword, to deter paramilitary commanders from acting with impunity and encourages their adherence to agreements. Up to now President Uribe has used extradition with clear resolve. This sword must not be blunted by ambiguity.

State Department figures on the demobilization of the paramilitaries show that approximately 13,592 (as of December 15, 2005) paramilitary troops have handed over their weapons. That completes the introductory phase of the full demobilization process, which is to begin its full implementation through the "Peace and Justice Law" during the first quarter of 2006. Approximately 10,000 paramilitaries remain to demobilize.

COLOMBIA: PARAMILITARY DEMOBILIZATION UPDATE[1]

Demobilized Numbers: 22,218

- 13,592—paramilitaries have demobilized collectively, as of 12/15
- 8,626—illegal armed members have demobilized individually, as of 12/15
  - FARC 4,292, AUC 3,040, ELN 1,176, Dissidents 229

Demobilized CRO Registered, DAS Certified, Jailed, Deaths, SENA and Employed

- CRO: 8,973, 7 CROs (Medellin, Turbo, Monteria, Sincelejo, Cucuta, Antioquia, Cali) plus 2 mobile CROs
- DAS certified: 4,658; Jailed: 126; Deaths: 135; SENA: 3,223

  - Employed: Of the 8,618 demobilized that have registered at the CROs, 1,500 are working
- 14% fromal sector, 7% productive projects, 79% informal sector

Paramilitary Groups Left to Demobilize: 10,000

- Approximately 10,000 paramilitaries remain to demobilize
  - 3,000 from the North Bloc
  - 3,000 from the BCB (over 25 fronts)
  - Independent groups:
    - Elmer Cardenas Bloc with 800 members
    - Mineros Bloc with 2,000 members
    - Self-Defense Mid-Magdalena Bloc
    - Two remaining fronts from the Centauros Bloc
- Demobilization deadline: February 15 (According to Pretelt)

[1] Source: Department of State, U.S. Embassy Bogotá, Colombia, Dec. 2005

Recommendations:

1. Staff strongly recommends that the USG encourage the GOC to create strong regulations for the law's implementation (at the time this report was written implementing language had not been signed by President Uribe) and forcefully implement them.

2. Staff strongly recommends that the USG request that the GOC ensure that regulations provide an interpretation of the law's eligibility requirements (including turnover of assets, cessation of illegal activities, and release of hostages) that is as strict as possible, establish rigorous procedures for verifying that the requirements are met, and prescribe effective sanctions for those who fail to meet them.

3. To preserve the possibility for extradition, staff recommends that the USG request that the GOC ensure that regulations should prohibit the GOC's Attorney General's Office from bringing charges under the law for crimes with which demobilized individuals have been charged in other countries.

ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA IN ADVANCING THE DEFENSE AND EXPANSION OF THEIR PRESENCE IN FARC AND PARAMILITARY CONTROLLED AREAS

United States Government assistance to Colombia under Plan Colombia is premised on combating the interrelated issues of drug trafficking and terrorism and includes training, material aid, and guidance to the security forces and other institutions. Establishing a state presence throughout national territory lies at the core of bringing peace to Colombia. Increasing state activity in 2005 may have been responsible for keeping FARC violence localized and below 2004 levels. Nonetheless, the FARC attacked indigenous towns, electrical towers, rural highways, military and police outposts. While the attacks were partially directed at military targets, civilians were also indiscriminately killed. Reductions in violence, however, did occur and are due for the most part to the effective implementation of military policy:

Plan Patriota: Plan Patriota, the GOC's military campaign to extend government control and security presence throughout the national territory, is composed of two major phases: Phase 1, the planning and preparation for the forceful removal of armed groups; and Phase 2, which was divided into three components: 2A, 2B, and 2C, to implement Phase 2. Phase 2A, which took place from June to December 2003, resulted in the removal of the FARC from Bogotá and Cundinamarca Department. Phase 2B, which began in February 2004 and continues, includes Meta, Caqueta, and Guaviare Departments, involved the removal of the FARC from those areas. This is a large part of the area that comprised the "despeje," or the area President Pastrana had conceded to the FARC. Phase 2C, which is the forceful removal of FARC from Antioquia Department, was scheduled to begin late in 2005, but has been postponed.

Colombian Military Reports on Results for Joint Task Force Omega (in Charge of Phase 2B), 2004–2005

	2004	2005	Total
Battles	505	317	822
COLMIL Troops Killed	67	25	92
COLMIL Troops Injured	328	78	406
FARC Members Killed	264	204	468
FARC Members Captured	217	394	611
FARC Deserters	97	76	173
Materiel Captured			
Guns, Rifles, Support Arms	265	431	1,451
Explosive Devices	2,752	3,074	5,826
Explosives (KLS)	16,335	28,339	44,674
Grenades	4,440	5,962	10,402
Munitions	630,428	826,022	1,456,450
Communication Equipment	235	363	598
Mined Camps	206	88	294
FARC Camps	421	619	1,040
Caches	117	363	480
Cultivated Hectares	1,277	1,167	2,444
Coca Paste and Base	10,292	869	11,161
Laboratories	32	196	228
Vehicles	255	117	432

Source: Department of State, U.S. Embassy Bogotá, Colombia

The Colombian military claims that Plan Patriota has reduced the FARC ranks from 18,000 to 12,000 in the past year. Information provided by the Office of the Colombian President reports that 11 FARC-run villages were recaptured, more than 400 FARC camps were destroyed, 1,534 explosive devices and 323 gas-cylinder bombs were seized, 2,518 combatants were killed, and a large amount of ammunition and weapons were taken. FARC drug trafficking activities also were reduced. As of September 2004, the Government reported that the Colombian military had located and destroyed more than 47 tons of solid chemical supplies, 18,000 gallons of liquid precursors, half a ton of cocaine base, and $34,000 in cash.

In addition, with support from the U.S. Military Group (MILGRP), the Colombia Government formed an interagency center to facilitate social services in seven areas that have traditionally suffered from little state presence and pressure from illegal armed groups. The "Center for Coordinated Integral Action" focuses on providing immediate social services, including documentation and medical clinics, and establishing longer term projects, such as economic reactivation. Approximately 40,000 individuals have been enrolled in state health care, judges, investigators, and public defenders have been placed in all 16 municipalities of the Plan Patriota area, and a public library was recently opened in the town of San Vicente del Caguan, which had long been dominated by the FARC.

At the time this report was written, President Uribe and the GOC had accepted an "international commission" (representatives from France, Switzerland, and Spain) suggestion to establish a 65 square mile "security zone" in the Valle del Cauca to conduct hostage exchange talks with the FARC; and the GOC had begun conversations with the ELN in Cuba.

Regarding the FARC, the international commission handed the proposal to the GOC and the FARC on December 13. The FARC has not yet replied, and experts, including staff, viewed the likely response from FARC with some skepticism. Some 30 families live in the proposed security zone, a rural area that contains several small governmental facilities and a church. Uribe said the proposal contemplates 40 international observers in the security zone to verify that no armed actors are present, either GOC forces or guerrillas. The security zone would exist for seven days prior to any GOC-FARC meeting (to allow the FARC to get to the zone) and for seven days following the conclusion of the talks (to allow the FARC to leave). The International Committee of the Red Cross would observe the process, along with a committee representing the European facilitators. Colombian sovereignty and law would remain in effect in the security zone.

Regarding the ELN, the meeting between the GOC and the ELN in Cuba (which began in mid-December 2005) is the first formal encounter between them in almost four years. Few are optimistic success will come easily. The talks will be exploratory with an open agenda, assisted by Norway, Spain and Switzerland, the group of civil society guarantors of the "Casa de Paz" initiative, and other members of Colombian civil society. The first meeting will be in Cuba, primarily to schedule future sessions. Subsequent meetings would likely take place in Europe. The ELN leadership reportedly settled on Cuba rather than risk legal jeopardy in Europe, given their designated status as a terrorist organization. Cuba's role will be limited to that of host.

Recommendation:

> Staff strongly recommends that efforts by the GOC in bringing about peace and in advancing the defense and expansion of their presence in FARC and ELN areas continue to be funded as necessary subject to review and with appropriate oversight.

APPENDIX I

STAFF HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS IN COLOMBIA:

Colombian Government Officials

President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe
Minister of Defense, Camilo Ospina Bernal
Vice President of Colombia, Francisco Santos' Director for Human Rights, Carlos Franco
Prosecutor General, Mario Iguaran
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alejandro Borda Rojas
Vice Minister of Defense, Jorge Eastman
Vice Minister of Defense, Hernando Sanin
Presidential Counselor, Juan Lozano
Presidential Advisor, Jaime Bermudez
Dirección de Policia Judicial—(Dijin), Director, Gen. Oscar Naranjo
Attorney General of Colombia, Edgardo Maya

Colombian Government Legislative Branch

Senator Rafael Pardo

United States State Department, U.S. Embassy Bogotá, Colombia

U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William Wood (POL. PAS, NAS, AID, DATT, MILGRP, DEA, ORA Officers)

Diplomatic Community

Representatives from British, Canadian, Chilean, Swedish, Swiss, and Dutch Embassies

Multilateral Organizations

Michael Fruhling, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia
Juan Pedro Schaerer, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Head of Delegation in Colombia
Sergio Caramagna, Head of the Organization of American States (OAS) Mission in Support of the Peace Process

Think Tanks

Sergio Jaramillo, President, *Ideas Para La Paz*

Press

Rodrigo Pardo, Chief Editor, *Semana* Magazine

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