

The 'Intermesticity' of the US-Colombia Anti-Drug Strategy under Plan Colombia

Tatiana Suárez

Regent's University London, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4NS, UK.
suarezt@regents.ac.uk

Abstract: February 2018 marked seventeen years of Plan Colombia: the US-funded initiative aimed at combating the problem of production and trafficking of drugs in the South American nation. Although initially conceived as a counter-narcotics operation with a strong component of financial aid for development projects, Plan Colombia developed into a military plan to assist Colombia in its struggle against an armed insurgency, which brought the country to the brink of collapse almost twenty years ago. This article traces back the origins of the bilateral policy and explores the linkage between the domestic issues and the international affairs that generated the effective diplomacy surrounding the negotiation of the antidrug policy, as well as the compatible legislation that resulted from it. The negotiation of Plan Colombia will be analysed through the lens of an international relations phenomenon known as *intermesticity*, which refers to the internationalising of domestic affairs. In both the US and Colombia, domestic issues played an important role in shaping the scope, aims and level of participation of both countries in the bilateral policy. Despite the initial pragmatic approach of both governments, domestic issues and pressure from external forces prevented the pursuit of a development-focused approach and reverted to a previous doctrinal solution for the drug problem.

Key words: Plan Colombia, *Intermesticity*, bilateral anti-drug policy, US war on drugs, Colombia

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I. Introduction

The fifteenth anniversary of Plan Colombia (PC hereafter) was marked by the former US president Barack Obama's visit to Colombia in 2016. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos called the plan 'a very useful and effective instrument' (Cosoy, 2016). Similarly, on the US side, PC has been praised as a bilateral agreement that 'helped to transform a nation on the verge of collapse into a strong institutional democracy with historically low levels of violence' (Kerry, 2016).

However, the role played by the US in Colombia's internal conflict has been subjected to severe criticism. What was initially conceived as a counter-narcotics operation with a strong component of financial aid for development projects, developed into a military plan to assist Colombia's struggle against both drugs and the left-wing insurgency fueled by the drug trade. Detractors of PC argue that it reflected Washington's security concerns and had very little to do with Colombia's overture for international support for development. After the US Congress passed PC in June of 2000, former US ambassador to El Salvador Robert White, wrote: 'if you read the original PC, not the one that was written in Washington [...], there's no mention of military drives against the rebels' (Rozoff, 2009).

A recurrent topic in the literature about the US- Colombia anti-drug bilateral policy is the dynamics that created and shaped PC and whether its evolution reflects Colombia's priorities or those of the United States. For example, authors like Chomsky (2000) and Petras (2000), theorise that PC was a plot unilaterally imposed by the US based on its geopolitical concerns and economic interests. Conversely, Marcella (2001), DeShazo et al. (2009) and Méndez (2012) argue that the PC originated in Bogota, and conclude that the Colombian president at the time, Andrés Pastrana (1998- 2002), used the country's status as a 'weak state on the verge of collapse' as an instrument to invite US intervention. For Mendez (2012), Colombia was both autonomous in pursuing its own peace and development agenda outside Washington and very proactive in lobbying the US Congress when support for PC faltered. Other studies argue that PC struck a balance between Colombia's realities on the ground and what was politically feasible in Washington (Shifter, 2012).

Tracing back the origins of PC and its evolution requires an understanding of the inextricable connection between the domestic issues and the international affairs that generated the effective diplomacy surrounding the negotiation of the bilateral plan, as well as the compatible policy that resulted from it. In the field of international relations, the internationalising of domestic issues is known as *intermesticity*¹ (Prada, 2016).

This article explores the origins of PC and aims to answer the question of how did *intermestic* affairs in the United States and Colombia transform PC from a development aid package to a bilateral counter-narcotic/counter-insurgency policy? To address the question, this article considers contrasting views of scholarly debate on the origins and evolution of PC, and explores the notion shared by many mainstream academics such as Crandall (2008), Tickner (2002) and Tokatlian (2001) that PC was largely negotiated between the two governments, balancing tensions between ideology and pragmatism. The article begins by discussing the situation that preceded the Clinton-Pastrana rapprochement and the beginning of a new strategy in the bilateral anti-drug policy. Subsequently, it explores the *intermestic* interests in Colombia and the US that shaped PC during the first year of Pastrana's mandate. Finally, it

¹ Manning (1977) coined the term *intermestic*, an abbreviation standing for international and domestic. It is part of a school of thought but rather a strategic management approach in the field of international relations.

analyses the negotiation of the aid package in the US Congress and the active role of Colombia's ruling elites during this period.

2. Antecedents of Plan Colombia

By the end of the 1990's, Colombia was one of the most dangerous and unstable countries in the hemisphere. The country's international image, weakened by bloody internal strife and economic recession, was further aggravated by the US decision to decertify Colombia's drug control efforts. The US government also revoked President's visa (Ernesto Samper, 1994-1998) denying, for the first time in history, a Colombian Head of State the right to enter the US (Hinojosa, 2007). This impasse caused a crisis in bilateral relations not seen since the US-backed secession of Panama in 1903 (Guáqueta and Theis, 1998). During this period, the control of cocaine production and trafficking shifted from the notorious Medellín and Cali cartels to smaller organisations linked to guerrilla and paramilitary groups (Romero, 2003). In short, the poor legitimacy of the government, together with alarming levels of political and drug-related violence, as well as the absence of the state from large areas of Colombian territory led to mounting concerns, both domestic and international, that the country was about to become a failed state (McLean, 2002, Mason, 2001).

Aware of the very dangerous situation of the country, Andres Pastrana, leader of the opposition, started rallying for international aid during the presidential race (Pastrana, 2005). Pastrana won the elections in June 1998, and soon after he unveiled his plan to initiate peace negotiations with guerrilla groups and to obtain international support on the scale of a 'Marshall Plan' for development programmes in coca growing regions (Fajardo, 2003). Washington welcomed Pastrana's victory and diplomatic relations were reinstated soon after. However, public perceptions in the US that drug use was on the rise, coupled with old charges that Clinton was 'soft on drugs' raised alarmed voices in the US Congress, which pressed for a tougher stance on drug producing countries (Peavie, 2001).

Pushing for economic aid for development was unviable in a Republican-dominated congress, where a firmer stance on drugs was preferred. However, there were also concerns that military involvement would draw the US into Colombia's internal conflict (Vacious and Isacson, 2000). During the negotiations that led to the aid package, Clinton and his team had to exercise extreme caution in presenting it as being 'exclusively' destined for counter-narcotic operations and not to assist Colombia's struggle against the insurgents (Crandall, 2008). After all, many remembered too well America's ill-fated intervention in Vietnam. For almost a year, both administrations engaged in a lengthy and very dynamic negotiation process, in which each side had to balance tensions between the US and Colombian interests, and to deal with mounting criticism from the opposition in Congress, interest groups, the press and public opinion. By 2000, when the US Congress finally approved the aid package later known as Plan Colombia, Pastrana's initial overture for social development aid had been transformed into a comprehensive antinarcotic platform with a major focus on strengthening the Colombian armed forces and only a marginal fraction for alternative crops, peace initiatives and human rights protection (Vacious and Isacson, 2000).

3. The isolation years (1994-1998)

By the mid 1990's, Colombia had become the largest producer of cocaine in the region partially due to the success of eradication schemes in Peru and Bolivia that had pushed coca production into southern Colombia (Arnson and Tickner, 2010). The lucrative drug trade that gave the cartels the power to penetrate all levels of Colombian society during the 1980's and early 1990's had started to feed the expansion of the guerrilla and paramilitary organisations.

During his first term, Clinton's anti-drug policy had focused on domestic demand, diverging from his predecessors' focus on interdiction and production control (Hinojosa, 2007). However, in 1994 after

the Democrats' defeat at the midterm elections, and as a result of growing criticisms of Clinton's 'soft approach' on drugs, the administration had to review its anti-drug policy by paying more attention to what was considered the source of the problem, namely, drug-producing countries in Latin American (Walters, 1994).

Another event that hardened Washington's stance on drug trafficking and on Colombia was the allegation that Samper's presidential campaign in 1994 had been financed by the Cali Cartel. As the role of the elected president in the corruption scandal became more conspicuous, Washington's attitude became more hostile (Tickner, 2002). The US government decertified Colombia for insufficient cooperation in drug control in 1995 and for two more consecutive years (Rosen, 2012). During Samper's term in office, the drug-fuelled violence reached unprecedented levels, and the overall cocaine trade increased as the drug-business moved from the hands of drug barons to insurgents (Crandall, 2008). Ferro and Uribe (2002) argue that by the mid 1990's the oldest Colombian guerrilla group, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, (FARC) dominated the coca production in many parts of the country.

It can be argued that, from an ideological point of view, Washington's hard-line attitude towards Samper, served various purposes. Maintaining relations with a leader with alleged links to drug-cartels would have decreased the support and credibility of the US anti-drug efforts in Latin America. Granting Colombia full certification, even if deserved, would have caused a reaction by a Republican-controlled Congress against Clinton on an issue of national security (Crandall, 2008). From a pragmatic point of view, resuming fully functioning relations between the countries was desirable, though not politically possible whilst Samper remained in power (Buckwalter et al., 2010). As the next section will explain, the election of Andres Pastrana, Samper's successor, gave Washington an opportunity to normalise ties with his administration, and to replace its policy of isolation with heightened support for Colombia's fight against drugs.

4. Renewed Relations and the Genesis of Plan Colombia

When Pastrana decided to run for election in 1998, the situation in Colombia was dire, with severe problems threatening to destabilise the country's democracy. Not only was the country fighting a three-front war against insurgents, paramilitary organisations and drug traffickers (Marcella and Schulz, 1999), but it was also suffering from a worrisome flight of foreign capital caused by the precarious security situation. The UN Conference on Trade and Development reported that 'security issues have negatively affected Foreign Direct Investment inflows into Colombia' (2006).

During his campaign, Pastrana overtly stated his intention to seek international economic assistance in a type of 'Marshall Plan' that would help to address Colombia's internal crisis (Arnson and Tickner, 2010). Shortly after his inauguration, the newly elected president announced his intention to initiate peace talks with leftist guerilla groups, and unveiled a comprehensive drug policy that included, not just interdiction and eradication, but also illicit-crop alternatives and human development programmes, for which Colombia needed international funding. According to Méndez (2012), the president's diplomatic efforts clearly represented an invitation to foreign intervention in order to prevent state failure. It can be argued, however, that at this early stage the 'invitation' called specifically for economic support and not for direct intervention or military involvement.

Wanting to leave the Samper years behind, Clinton offered support to the new government's initiatives. Senior officials at the State Department, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) displayed great diplomacy in respecting the president's development and peace policies, even if not fully agreeing with them (Bustos, 1999). However, this initial pragmatic position would soon be worn down by heated debates within Congress. On one side,

there were those who favoured a fully-fledged military approach to the Colombian problem and, on the other, those who rejected it. Officials in Washington, who had grown increasingly sceptical about the peace process, especially about the demilitarisation of an area to hold peace talks with FARC, called for a revision of US policy towards Colombia. Simply put, many officials were opposed to the idea of backing negotiations with rebels that were shipping tons of cocaine into the US (Taylor, 2000). The *intermestic* issues that transformed US aid into military support will be explained in the next section.

4.1. US *Intermestic* Concerns

US drug policy in Colombia has been increasingly linked to *intermestic* affairs. When discussing PC it is more appropriate to talk about *intermestic* rather than purely domestic concerns because policy-making on problems such as the drug trade transcends national borders and involve different international and transnational actors.

For the Clinton administration, one *intermestic* issue that led to the militarisation of 'Pastrana's proposed 'Marshall Plan' was the distrust that the peace process generated inside the US Congress. The limited amount of real progress made on that front, with numerous suspensions of peace talks and extensions of the deadline for reoccupying the demilitarised zone, constituted a threat to Colombia's sovereignty (international concern) while the perception that the amount of insurgency-controlled cocaine flows entering the US was increasing, represented a national security problem (domestic concern).

At this point, it became evident that the drug trade in the Andean nation was so intricately connected with insurgent groups who controlled it, that the implementation of antidrug policies that included eradication and traffic control was likely to involve confronting guerrillas in coca-producing areas (Crandall, 2001). With this idea in mind, many US officials started to advocate military assistance as part of the drug policy. Drug czar Barry McCaffrey argued that if the negotiations with FARC collapsed and 'Clinton did nothing, [the US could] find itself engulfed in a blizzard of cocaine shipments' (Buckwalter et al., 2010). General Wilhelm, from the US Southern Command pressed for greater assistance to the Colombian army in the battle against drug production (Cook, 2004). In similar fashion, congressional Republicans and the State Department indicated that they would support an economic package for Colombia provided that it contained a tougher military approach.

Buckwalter et al. (2010) assert that although this rhetoric was initially downplayed in favour of diplomacy, with the advent of mid-term elections, Democrats worried that Clinton's drug policy towards Colombia could adversely affect voters' support for their congressional candidates and jeopardise the party's victory during the presidential elections in 2000. The shift from the development aid requested to the military scheme offered was one of the most important steps in shaping subsequent negotiations of PC. The fact that pre-election partisan concerns had repercussions on the administration's policy approach towards Colombia represents another example of *intermesticity*, namely, domestic issues spilling over into international ones.

4.2. Colombia's *intermestic* concerns

Rallying for international support for his PC at the UN General Assembly, Pastrana invoked the transnational nature of drug trafficking to justify his idea of 'shared responsibility'. He claimed that the driving force behind coca supply in countries like Colombia was the high demand in developed countries, so consumers had to take a bigger part of the burden borne by producers (Cardona, 2001). Buckwalter et al. (2010) argue that the comprehensive breadth of Pastrana's proposed PC allowed for different stakeholders to put emphasis on different aspects of the scheme. Europe was initially willing to provide aid for social development, the US focused on strengthening the country's counter-narcotic

capacity, while the Colombian government was committed to ending the conflict and regaining control over its territory for which it needed a stronger military.

However, economic constraints would soon emerge, revealing Colombia's incapacity to bear the cost of carrying out its own part of the agreement. Guerrilla groups had repeatedly overpowered the army in the battlefield, which attested to the need to invest in the Colombian Armed Forces' material and human resource (Rabasa and Chalk, 2001). Treasury Ministry officials announced that Colombia lacked the economic resources necessary for the modernisation of the armed forces (El Tiempo, 1998, Pastrana, 2005). Méndez (2012) contends that Pastrana's administration astutely claimed that a weakened army could not contain the power of the guerrilla organisations responsible for controlling the drug business in many parts of Colombia. The narcotisation of the Colombian conflict and the incapacity of the state to address such conflict effectively called for more US intervention in the form of military aid (Tickner, 2007). By June 1999, the ONDCP had prepared a report recommending US\$1 billion for Colombia (Crandall, 2008). Once again, it is possible to identify the overlapping of a domestic situation, namely the weakness of the security forces, with the international implications of US military aid for Colombia.

Although, there was still significant congressional opposition to military involvement, the killing of three humanitarian aid workers by FARC members, and a deadlock in peace negotiations reignited the debate, increasing doubts about the feasibility of a peace agreement with FARC (Arnson et al., 2000). US Secretary of State officials Thomas Pickering and Rand Beers cautioned Pastrana that he was risking further financial support if he continued making concessions to the guerrilla groups (Buckwalter et al., 2010).

By the end of Pastrana's first year, American newspapers had started to report that Colombia was not achieving much on most fronts (Ruiz, 2001). First, public opinion about the peace process, at home and abroad, grew increasingly negative. Second, Europe had not rushed to rescue Colombia with a 'Marshall Plan', and third, the prospect of heightened US support was uncertain (Diamond, 1999, Golden, 1999). The Colombian president's popularity was low, and resources were running scarce, so he had to scale down his ambitious state building plan and settle for what the US was prepared to offer. In September 1999, the Colombian Cabinet Office drafted the policy and expressly named it Plan Colombia, but the domestic developments of the previous year, both in Colombia and in the US, had transformed Pastrana's idea into a bilateral plan that would seek to accommodate both countries' interests. The US increased the amount of economic aid, but narrowed down the scope of its utilisation to fighting 'the war on drugs'.

It can be argued that the transformation of the original aims of PC to suit US interests is not simply a case of the asymmetrical relation of power between the two countries, but also reflects Colombia's dire need to secure support from its main ally in tackling a problem that the country alone could not solve: preventing state failure (Méndez, 2012). At this point the American contribution towards PC, only partially coincided with Pastrana's idea of a 'Marshall Plan', but it contained much-needed elements, the most important being the resources for the modernisation of the armed forces.

The Colombian president launched his initiative in September 1999, describing it as a US\$ 7.5 billion three-year program of which, US\$3.5 billion would come from international aid and the rest would be raised domestically (US State Department, 2000, Colombia, 2000). As the next section will document, the president continued to seek for international funds outside the US in order to finance the development side of his original comprehensive plan. This together with other decisions made in Bogota will illustrate the government's autonomy in pursuing its own peace and development policy, which contradicts overblown charges that '[PC was] *an American project to clean up its backyard*' (Chomsky, 2000).

5. The battle in Congress and Colombia's lobbying tactics

Despite the significant support for PC offered by the White House, the aid package was caught up in a heated debate between Democratic and Republican congressmen about budget allocations. As such, neither party wanted to be bear the responsibility of dipping into Social Security fund, raising taxes or to divert funding from other budget (Ruiz, 2001).

The Congress' inaction caused disappointment in Bogota, and contributed to the decline of Pastrana's approval ratings at home (Vacious and Isacson, 2000). In addition, the extremely volatile political and economic situation in Colombia and the urgency to rescue the country from total collapse was receiving increasing media coverage (Golden, 1999, Diamond, 1999). The National Security Strategy Report also stressed the US obligation to assist countries whose problems could jeopardise regional peace and security (US Department of State, 1999). Media and public opinion supporting an aid package for Colombia coincided with the pre-election mood. As explained earlier, Clinton had been criticised for his leniency on drug interdiction policies, so PC was an opportunity for the Democrat administration to counter such perceptions in time for the upcoming election (Buckwalter et al., 2010).

The turn of the century brought good news for Colombia. Clinton announced his goal to obtain a US\$1.6 billion aid package to fund PC (LeoGrande and Sharpe, 2000). According to the Washington Post, a senior Colombian foreign official summarised the three main areas that the proposed package would help to fund: "... combating narcotics, strengthening [Colombian] battlefield capabilities and economic issues" (Farah, 1999). The position of the Clinton administration, at this point, can be best described as fully engaged with Pastrana's plea. The White House and the State Department made a strong case that Colombia was a country in desperate need of assistance and resolutely tried to dismiss any comparisons between PC and US military involvement in Vietnam or Central America (Sweig, 2002).

Arguments by Stokes (2001) and Petras (2000) that PC follows a historical pattern of US military interventionism, and that Washington sought to replicate in Colombia the outcome of its plotting in Central America during the 1980s seem to rely on ideological grounds and excessive reliance on the theory of hegemony, in which the overriding power of the hegemon obscures the agency of weak states (Méndez, 2012). This radical rhetoric also tends to attach little importance to the spill-over into the US and Colombia of their domestic affairs, which created a series of *intermestic* issues played out during the drafting and passage of PC.

6. Opposition in Congress

The first stumbling block in the passage of the aid package was the concerns of US officials over the antidrug operations in the southern province of Putumayo, which involved equipping and training the Colombian army to expel local guerrillas (Bagley, 2001). The so-called *Ofensiva al Sur de Colombia* (Southern Colombia offensive) created grave misgivings of US participation in an operation that could involve human rights violations, destabilisation of the peace process and escalation of US military involvement (Miller, 2000). Officials from both houses, proposed various amendments such as limiting the military aid component, including human rights conditionalities and adding funds for displaced populations and alternative crop programmes (Vacious and Isacson, 2000).

In the meantime, Colombia's peace process had suffered severe setbacks. The reoccupation of the demilitarised zone had been postponed until mid-2000 and FARC had stepped up their attacks and kidnappings, eroding all credibility in their good intentions to find a political solution to the internal conflict (Farah, 1999). With the prospect of US aid on its way, Colombia's president travelled to Europe, Japan and Canada to recruit financial, moral and political support for PC, (Ferrer, 2000, Hodgson, 2000, Caracol, 2000). The president pointed out that '*the amount sought from the US represented only half of what was needed from the international community to finance PC*' (Méndez, 2012).

Pastrana's proactive economic diplomacy tour can be understood as the result of the president's conviction that funding PC was a 'shared responsibility' and that if the US was willing to provide military aid, other countries could invest in social development programs (Pastrana, 2005). Many authors argue that the president's desperate plea was, on the one hand, explicitly aimed to raise support (and funds) for his greater idea of PC and, on the other, implicitly driven by the gravity of the country's economic situation, with the worst GDP contraction of the last seventy years (Giugale et al., 2003).

PC had started its legislative journey and Pastrana and his team followed it closely with an intensification of diplomatic efforts. According to Sweig '*part of the credit for the passage of this U.S. aid package belongs to Bogota's diplomats in Washington, who mounted one of the most sophisticated and effective lobbying campaigns of any foreign country in years*' (Sweig, 2002). After six months of intense debate, both houses approved the aid package for Colombia. Although the Senate Appropriations Committee's bill draft reduced the amount by about \$300 million and included emphasis on human rights, by the time the bill made it to the Senate floor, the most vocal opponents of military aid had changed their minds (Ruiz, 2001).

Vacious and Isacson (2000) argue that domestic concerns during elections year swayed many legislators' votes in favour of a harder stance. In the end, the Conference Committee approved US \$1.3 billion in antinarcotic funding, a similar figure to the one proposed by Clinton more than six months before. The aid package for Colombia was signed into Public Law 106-246 on July 13, 2000.

7. Plan Colombia after Pastrana

Under Alvaro Uribe's first administration between 2002 and 2006, the US continued to back Colombia in pursuing the broad goals of PC within the framework of a long-term security strategy, which unified the campaigns against narcotics and terrorism (Embassy of the United States in Bogota, 2010).²

Although PC, as it was initially conceived formally ended in 2005, the antidrug plans that ensued were based on the same goals as the original policy. In 2007, a new strategy to consolidate gains under PC known as the National Consolidation Plan (PNC) was put forward. This strategy built upon successful PC programs to establish state presence in traditionally ungoverned spaces. PC continued to evolve through the years and for the next decade, American interests in Colombia were channelled through the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) a new approach that provided assistance across a full spectrum of activities under PC and its follow-on programmes (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

According to official reports, PC has produced a combination of successes and failures (Veillette, 2005). Seventeen years later, there is evidence that contradicts the official version of the virtues of PC. Several academics, human rights organisations and the American and Colombian press have documented some of the unexpected consequences during the implementation period of the bilateral plan. Examples of the reported effects of PC include, amongst others, an increase in the amount of land cultivated with coca (Isacson, 2016), the fragmentation of drug trafficking (Rojas, 2009) the resulting spill-over effect upon Mexico and Central America, (Hari, 2010) and health related problems caused by the fumigation of coca crops (The Guardian, 2015, Ospina, 2015, Ebus, 2015, Eventon, 2015, Kline, 2015).

However, the reported drawbacks of PC are not limited to the US-backed war on drugs, but they also touch upon aspects of Colombia's internal armed conflict. During the first years of PC there was an increase in the number of victims affected by the conflict between guerrilla groups, paramilitary organisations and national security forces (Pachón, 2009, Vargas Meza, 2009). Although in the five last years, the human rights situation has improved, mainly due to the peace process with FARC signed in

² In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. State Department designated Colombia's guerrilla groups, FARC and ELN (National Liberation Army) as foreign terrorist organisations.

2017, the militarisation of the strategy against insurgencies increased the attacks on civilians in conflict-torn areas during the first ten years of PC. The collaboration between Colombian security forces and paramilitary groups, abuses by the intelligence services, as well as unlawful killings such as the *falsos positivos* cases³ have been largely documented (Kline, 2015, Vargas Meza, 2009, Shifter, 2010, Pachón, 2009).

At the time of writing, the US administration is proposing to replicate PC in Central America's violent 'Northern Triangle', while recent released budget documents revealed a proposed reduction in foreign aid to Colombia for 2018, the first year of 'Peace Colombia', the re-named continuation of the PC program, which brought more than ten billion dollars to Colombia since 2000.

8. Conclusions

Washington describes Plan Colombia, during Andres Pastrana's administration (1998- 2002), as a 'response' to the Colombian Government's request for international support designed to increase Colombia's counternarcotic capabilities, strengthen the rule of law and provide funding for sustainable socio- economic development and human rights protection. A large body of literature supports the notion that US funding significantly changed PC from a broad development initiative to a military-focused counter-narcotic policy.

However, to characterise this bilateral agreement as a continuation of the US policies in Latin America during the 1980, runs counter to the overwhelming empirical evidence offering proofs of the agency of Colombian elites. The *intermestic* issues of PC, some of which have been discussed in this study, played an important role in shaping the scope, aims and level of participation of both countries. Criticism of the failed peace negotiations with the insurgency in Colombia, and the pressure for a hard-line stance on drugs in the US can be seen as influencing the militaristic approach of PC. Despite the initial pragmatic approach of both Pastrana and Clinton, external pressure prevented the pursuit of an alternative approach and reverted to a previous doctrinal solution for the drug problem. Although, the final version of the aid package seemed to accommodate the US war on drugs, the involvement in Colombia's internal conflict was something that many in the US opposed and tried to prevent. The fact that these opponents acquiesced can be attributed to domestic concerns and partisan strategic moves in the advent of local elections.

Colombia invited the international community to participate in the bigger PC and as it became clearer that the US was the only nation truly committed to supplying much-needed economic assistance, it accepted a scaled down version of the original plan. Consequently, it would be inaccurate to understand Colombia's role in the negotiations of PC as an act of submission to a powerful hegemon, or to unquestionably accept that PC was imposed by the US based on its geopolitical concerns and economic interests.

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³ Approximately 3000 civilians — often poor, disabled, or dependent on drugs — were murdered and dressed in guerrilla uniforms to boost combat statistics.

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