



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**USMILGP COLOMBIA: TRANSFORMING SECURITY
COOPERATION IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM**

by

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December 2006

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE December 2006	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: USMILGP Colombia: Transforming Security Cooperation in the Global War on Terrorism		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Christopher W. Muller			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release: distribution is unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) <p>The key to long-term success in the Global War on Terrorism involves maximizing the effectiveness of U.S. military aid to partner nations. The United States can not sustain long-duration deployments of thousands of troops. However, international crisis will not likely subside. The United States needs to encourage and better prepare its partner nations to take more active roles. As exemplified in Colombia, Security Assistance Organizations must build and increase the capabilities of our partner nations' militaries and be prepared to rapidly expand to support a partner nation's counter-insurgent/terrorist/narco-terrorist effort. Current world-wide SAO structures do not adequately support such robust ventures.</p> <p>The Government of Colombia has been fighting insurgents, international crime, and terrorism for the past five decades. <i>Plan Colombia</i> and post-911 expanded authorities have allowed the United States to provide substantial and increasing support to assist Colombia. U.S. support to the Republic of Colombia, may be considered a model for limited Joint support to a partner nation's CT/CNT fight. The current MILGP-Colombia restructuring plan provides a base model from which a flexible model for a more robust and responsive SAO. . . a <i>Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command (JSACC)</i>. JSACCs will allow the United States to succeed in supporting a partner nation in an environment that is neither war nor peace.</p>			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Colombia – Expanded Authority – MILGP – MILGP – Security Cooperation – Security Assistance – Security Assistance Organizations – Foreign Internal Defense – Plan Colombia – FARC – ELN – AUC – SOUTHCOM – USARSO – Narco-Terrorism – Counter Narco-Terrorism – High Value Targets – IMET – FMF – FMS – NAS – PATT- WIAS – TSCP – Supported/Supporting Command Relationships – El Salvador		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 119	16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

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**USMILGP COLOMBIA: TRANSFORMING SECURITY COOPERATION IN
THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM**

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

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ABSTRACT

The key to long-term success in the Global War on Terrorism involves maximizing the effectiveness of U.S. military aid to partner nations. The United States can not sustain long-duration deployments of thousands of troops. However, international crisis will not likely subside. The United States needs to encourage and better prepare its partner nations to take more active roles. As exemplified in Colombia, Security Assistance Organizations must build and increase the capabilities of our partner nations' militaries and be prepared to rapidly expand to support a partner nation's counter-insurgent/terrorist/narco-terrorist effort. Current world-wide SAO structures do not adequately support such robust ventures.

The Government of Colombia has been fighting insurgents, international crime, and terrorism for the past five decades. *Plan Colombia* and post-911 expanded authorities have allowed the United States to provide substantial and increasing support to assist Colombia. U.S. support to the Republic of Colombia, may be considered a model for limited Joint support to a partner nation's CT/CNT fight. The current MILGP-Colombia re-structuring plan provides a base model from which a flexible model for a more robust and responsive SAO. . . a *Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command (JSACC)*. JSACCs will allow the United States to succeed in supporting a partner nation in an environment that is neither war nor peace.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABD	Air Bridge Denial
ACCE	Air Component Coordination Element
ACI	Andean Counter-Drug Initiative
AFMIS	Air Force Mission
AFSOUTH	U.S. Air Force South
AMCITS	American Citizens
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ARMIS	Army Mission
ASCC	Army Service Component Command
ATO	Air Tasking Order
AUC	<i>Autodensas Unidas de Colombia</i>
C ²	Command & Control
CD	Counter Drug
CDOC	Counter Drug Operations Center
CENTCOM	see USCENTCOM
CI	Counter Insurgency
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)
CINC	Commander In Chief
CMO	Civil Military Operations
CNT	Counter Narco-Terrorism
COCOM	Combatant Command
COLAF	Colombian Air Force
COLAR	Colombian Army
COLMIL	Colombian Military
COLNAV	Colombian Navy
COM	Chief of Mission
CONUS	Continental United States
CSM	Command Sergeants Major
CY	Calendar Year

DA	Department of the Army
DA	Direct Action
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DAS	<i>Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad</i>
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency (U.S.)
DISAM	Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management
DLPT	Defense Language Proficiency Test
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	U.S. Department of State
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
DSP	Democratic Security Policy
DSS	Democratic Security Strategy
DVP	Distinguish Visitor Program
EDA	Excess Defense Articles
EIFC	Embassy Intelligence Fusion Center
ELN	<i>Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional</i>
ERB	Enlisted Record Brief
ESAF	El Salvadorian Armed Forces
ETSS	Engineering and Technical Services
ETSS	Extended Training Service Specialists
EUCOM	see USEUCOM
EUM	End Use Monitoring
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
FARC	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i>
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations (U.S.)
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FMF	Foreign Military Finance
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
FP	Force Protection

FPD	Force Protection Detachment
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organizations
G3	Operations Directorate
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GOC	Government of Colombia
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HCA	Humanitarian Civic Assistance
HN	Host Nation
HQ	Headquarters
HVT	High Value Targets
IACP	International Armaments Cooperative Program
IAW	in accordance with
IIT	Intelligence Integration Teams
IMET	International Military Education & Training
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JPATT	Joint Planning & Assistance Training Team
JSACC	Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command
JSOA	Joint Special Operations Area
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JTF	Joint Task Force
JUSMAG	Joint US Military Advisory Group
JUSMAG	Joint US Military Assistance Group
JUSMAG	Joint US Military Affairs Group
LNO	Liaison Officer
LOG SUP GRP	Logistics Support Group
LOGMIS	Logistics Mission
M-19	<i>Movimiento Revolucionario 19 de abril</i>
MAAG-V	Military Assistance & Advisory Group - Vietnam
MACOM	Major Command

MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MARFOR South	Marine Forces South
MDAO	Mutual Defense Assistance Office
MEDRETE	Medical Readiness Training Exercise
MILGRP	Military Group
MOD	Minister of Defense
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MSN	Mission
MTT	Mobile Training Teams
NAS	Narcotics Affairs Section
NAVMIS	Naval Mission
NAVSO	U.S. Navy South
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLO	Navy Liaison Office
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OCONUS	Outside Continental United States
ODA/B/C	Operational Detachment A/B/C
ODC	Office of Defense Cooperation
ODR	Office of Defense Representation
OMC	Office of Military Cooperation
OPATT	Operational Planning and Assistance Training Team
OPCON	Operational Control
OPG	Operational Planning Group
OPMS	Officer Personnel Management System
OPS	Operations
OPS SEC	Operations Section
ORB	Officer Record Brief
OSACOM	Operational Support Airlift Command
PATT	Planning Assistance Training Team

PBO	Property Book Officer
PC	Plan Colombia
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PEP	Personnel Exchange Program
PKO	Peace Keeping Operations
PN	Partner Nation
POL/ECON	Political/Economic Section (DoS)
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
RCC	Regional Combatant Command
RCC	Rescue Coordination Center
RDA	Risk Determining Authority
RMO	Resource Management Office
RSI	Rationalization, Standardization, Interoperability
RWS	Rotary Wing Section
SA	Security Assistance
SAAO	Security Assistance Augmentation Office
SAO	Security Assistance Organizations
SAO	Security Assistance Office
SAR	Search & Rescue
SATMO	Security Assistance Training Management Organization
SC	Security Cooperation
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SF	Special Forces
SMEE	Subject Matter Expert Exchange
SOCC2	Special Operations Command Command & Control
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOUTHCOM	see USSOUTHCOM
TACON	Tactical Control
TAT	Tactical Assistance Team
TCA	Traditional Commander Activities
TDY	Temporary Duty

TPS	Temporary Protected Status
TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Plan
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
U.S.	United States
ULSS-G	Unit Level Supply System – Ground
UN	United Nations
USARSO	U.S. Army South
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USDR	U.S. Defense Representative
USEMB	U.S. Embassy
USEUCOM	U.S. European Command
USG	U.S. Government
USLO	U.S. Liaison Office
USMAAG	U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group
USMILGP	U.S. Military Group
USMILGRP	U.S. Military Group
USMLO	U.S. Military Liaison Office
USMTM	U.S. Military Training Mission
USPACOM	U.S. Pacific Command
USSOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
VMOD	Vice Minister of Defense
WHINSEC	Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation
WIAS	World-Wide Individual Augmentation System

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I must thank my wife, Laura, who has not only supported me through this academic endeavor, but has continually supported me over the last 12 years. And my two daughters, Mallory and Mackenzie, who give me reason to serve.

Thanks to my thesis advisors, to Professor Robert O'Connell for encouraging me to expand my knowledge and capitalize on my experience in Colombia. And especially to Professor Douglas Porch for not only mentoring me through the thesis process, but also for working with me to use this thesis as a basis for a published work.

Thanks to the Pacific Grove Fire Department for allowing me to join their ranks as a Firefighter. Much of this thesis was completed at the station in between calls. The chance to serve with you has taught me service on a whole different level. I truly appreciate the opportunity to be part of Pacific Grove community and to work with such a dedicated group of professionals.

Thanks to the United States Military Group - Colombia for the opportunity to serve as a member of a very dynamic team, and for the invaluable contributions to this thesis through your astute observations and assessments. Especially former bosses and mentors LTC Mike Brown and LTC Erik Valentzas. Your combined experiences of over a decade in Colombia has been extremely insightful.

Thanks to those that took the time to read this thesis prior to publication to ensure the information was accurate and the concepts sound: BG Simeon Trombitas, LTC Mike Brown, LTC Erik Valentzas, LTC Carlos Berrios, LTC Darryl Long, LCDR Orlando Cubillos, LCDR Alberto Godoy, MAJ Rocky Burrell, Capt Jeff Field, CPT Bruno Zitto, Professor Jeanne Giraldo.

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DEDICATION

This effort is dedicated to Marc D. Gonsalves, Thomas R. Howe, and Keith D. Stansell; the three U.S. hostages that have been captive for over three years in the jungles of Colombia. To their families who patiently await their safe return. And to those who are working on bringing freedom to these patriots.

Least we not forget our fellow Americans that have fallen in Colombia

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!

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Any issue of the *Army Times* published during the past five years, gives the impression that the **Global** War on Terrorism, or what is now referred to as “The Long War,” should more aptly be named the “The War against Islamic Fundamentalists.” Traditionally, page seven consists of a world map with the current troop strengths deployed world-wide in support of counter-terrorist, peace-keeping, and disaster relief operations. The *Army Times* emphasizes the US military’s *main effort*, the USCENTCOM AOR, with little or no recognition given to the *supporting efforts* of the other Combatant Commands (COCOMs); especially U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). Although the four largest military support packages (Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and Egypt) go to countries residing in the USCENTCOM AOR, U.S. support to Colombia (which ranks 5th) has been our biggest success to date. “The Colombian armed conflict is one of the oldest in the world; it is only superseded in time by the Israeli-Palestinian and India-Pakistan conflicts, and is the only ongoing armed conflict in North and South America.”¹ However, this is not depicted on the *Army Times*’ map. The fight against terrorism in Colombia long predates that of Iraq and Afghanistan. The Government of Colombia has been fighting insurgents, international crime, and terrorism continually for the past five decades. During the last decade, the United States has provided substantial support, primarily through support for *Plan Colombia* (see Annex C), to allow the Colombian Government to finally make headway against a stubborn insurgency.

B. CONTEMPORARY COLOMBIAN HISTORY

Colombia’s history is one of endemic violence and conflict. The current internal security issues have plagued Colombia for more than half a century.

¹ Fabio Sanchez, *Conflict, State and Decentralization; from Social Progress to Armed Dispute for Local Control, 1974-2002* (London: Crisis States Programme, 2005), 2.

They began with the election of a conservative president in 1946 and exploded on the 9th of April, 1948 with the assassination of a populist liberal politician with presidential aspirations, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. His murder triggered the initial violence which killed 2,000 in Bogotá and eventually claimed 200,000 lives over the next 18 years in what became known as *La Violencia*.² Aside from the catastrophic number of deaths, *La Violencia* was also responsible for spinning off the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC*) as a by-product. Subsequently, several other guerrilla groups arose in Colombia. In 1964, the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN*) mimicked the revolutionary Marxists model created by Fidel Castro in Cuba. In 1974, the M-19, which mirrored the Tupamaros in Uruguay, formed after the former military dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla charged electoral fraud in the presidential election of April 19, 1970. In 1997, various illegitimate paramilitary groups came together to form the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*. These groups were originally created in the 1960's to provide security to large landowners and cattle ranchers, while other paramilitary groups provided security for the narco-traffickers.

Since 2002, when Alvaro Uribe became president, the Colombian Military (COLMIL) has taken the fight to the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC. In 2005, FARC strength was estimated at 11,445 fighters (reduced from a previous high of approximately 18,000) and the organization had an annual income of over US\$340 million.³ The current demobilization of the AUC has theoretically eliminated the once formidable paramilitary organization.⁴ However, various criminal organizations have grown from the pre-existing AUC networks and they now resemble a narco-trafficking organization in both organization and function.

² Department of the Army, *Colombia: a country study* (Washington, 1990), xxv.

³ Ejército de Colombia. "Counter-Insurgency in Colombia." Powerpoint briefing presented to NPS class SO 4850, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, by LTC Erik Valentzas (May 2006).

⁴ Ejército de Colombia. "Counter-Insurgency in Colombia." Powerpoint briefing presented to NPS class SO 4160, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, by LTC Erik Valentzas (May 2006).

The ELN numbers around 3,100 and is in the process of negotiating a peace with the Government of Colombia.⁵ These three groups are on the U.S. Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) list, the equivalent of America's Most Wanted for terrorist organizations. Their inclusion on this list allows Washington to fund a variety of programs in Colombia that target the activities of these groups.

C. U.S. – COLOMBIAN RELATIONS

Aside from a brief conflict at the turn of the past century over the independence of the Colombian province of Panama, Colombia and the United States have historically enjoyed cordial relations. Bordering five other countries and connecting Central America with South America, the Republic of Colombia occupies a strategic position in the Western Hemisphere. Together with its strategic geography, Colombia is also a fertile land replete with natural resources. Unfortunately, in an atmosphere of political fragmentation and lawlessness, those resources have been invested too often in violence. Colombia has become notorious for its illicit exports: cocaine, marijuana, and heroin. Estimates of Colombia's contribution to the world's cocaine supply ranges from 67% (United Nations) to 80% (U.S. State Department).⁶ What is not in contention, however, is that Colombia is also the largest producer of cocaine and heroin for the United States. Colombia supplies 90% of the cocaine consumed annually in the United States.⁷ Unfortunately, it is the high level of illegally smuggled drugs into the United States, rather than the production and trade of coffee, flowers, or the petroleum for which Colombia would prefer to be known, that has brought the two governments closer together.

⁵ Ejército de Colombia. "Counter-Insurgency in Colombia." Powerpoint briefing presented to NPS class SO 4850, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, by LTC Erik Valentzas (May 2006).

⁶ Connie Veillette, *Plan Colombia: A Progress Report* (Washington: Congressional Research Service-Library of Congress, 11 January 2006), 4.

⁷ William M. Arkin, *Code Names* (Hanover, 2005), 98.

D. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has stretched the United States military to its limits. The key to long term success involves maximizing the effectiveness of our military aid to partner nations. It has become evident that the United States will not be able to sustain long-duration deployments of thousands of U.S. troops. However, the work load will not likely subside. Therefore, the United States will need to encourage its *partner nations* to take a more active role. However, many are under prepared to face the present day challenges. Therefore, the U.S. military's security cooperation with partner nations must be able to help build and increase the capabilities of our partners nations' militaries. U.S. support to the Republic of Colombia over the past decade may be considered such a model for limited U.S. support to a partner nation's counter-insurgent, counter-terrorist, and/or counter-narco-terrorist effort.

Security Assistance for Colombia, which grew from just a counter-drug (CD) focus to a broader counter-terrorism (CT), has been largely successful in enhancing the capabilities of the Colombian military and meeting U.S. policy goals of increasing democratic stability. Although the overall effectiveness of U.S. efforts (especially aerial eradication) in recent years has been in question, a January 2006 evaluation of *Plan Colombia* stated: "measurable progress in Colombia's internal security has been made, as indicated by decreases in violence and the eradication of drug crops. . . prices⁸ for both drugs have increased, whereas purity and availability have decreased."⁹ However, a 19 August 2006 New York Times article contradicts these conclusions: "price, quality, and availability of cocaine on the U.S. streets remained virtually unchanged."¹⁰ Nevertheless, the United States has unquestionably empowered

⁸ Price, purity and availability are the common metrics used by both law enforcement and the U.S. government to measure progress on the War on Drugs.

⁹ Connie Veillette, *Plan Colombia: A Progress Report* (Washington: Congressional Research Service-Library of Congress, January 2006), 3.

¹⁰ Juan Forero, "Colombia's Coca Survives U.S. Plan to Uproot It" (New York, August 2006). <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/08/19/america/web.0819coca.php>. Last accessed 26 November 2006.

the Colombian Government to improve their security situation. Without a large scale deployment, the United States has been able to leverage consistently substantial funding levels¹¹ combined with tailor made support packages to increase the capability of the Colombian Military. The initial training of the *Brigada Contra el Narcotrafico* (BRCNA) - the Colombian Counter-Drug Brigade; the development of *La Escuela Conjunta de Aviación* - Colombian Armed Forces Aviation Center; and the *Sistema Integrado Logístico* (SILOG) – the Colombian Joint Logistics System serve as just a few examples of how U.S. military assistance has bolstered the Colombian security situation. Many different metrics have been used to measure the increase in Colombian security:

- The CNP now has a permanent presence in every municipality
- Kidnappings dropped 34%¹²
- Homicides dropped 15%
- Extortion dropped 49%
- Illegal Road Blocks dropped 62%¹³

The current Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) for U.S. Embassy Bogotá, Milton Drucker, fears that U.S. policy in Colombia might fall victim to its own success; “The problem with U.S. strategic policy, Drucker believes, is that we don’t fund success, we fund failures . . . the fact that we are succeeding here in Colombia gives me concern that we may experience reductions in our funding.”¹⁴ U.S Army tactical doctrine encourages reinforcement of success on the battlefield and disengagement of unsuccessful endeavors. Drucker’s contention is that U.S. strategic policy funds failing situations and is quick to withdraw funds

¹¹ USG funding for Colombia are the largest in Latin America at approximately US\$1 billion per year (including US\$170 million from DoD and FMF funding). However, that is relatively small level by USG-WOT standards, which funds several hundred billion to Iraq & Afghanistan annually).

¹² However, a 11 January 2006 CRS report for Congress claimed, “although the rate of kidnappings has decreased significantly, Colombia still has the highest kidnapping rate in the world.”

¹³ Government of Colombia - Ministry of Defense, “*Measures of Violence*” (Washington, January 2006), 9. From a CRS report “Plan Colombia: A Progress Report.”

¹⁴ Milton Drucker, Deputy Chief of Mission-U.S. Embassy-Bogotá. Interviewed by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (27 September 2006).

from ventures when they begin to show progress. Drucker's fear is that, Washington may withdraw funding from Colombia just when our efforts there begin to show progress.

As *Plan Colombia* officially ended in December 2005, the Government of Colombia (GOC) at present is writing a continuation document in concert with U.S. Embassy-Bogotá in order to improve the chances of eliciting further support from the U.S. Congress. Colombians are aware that U.S. resources are not infinite, especially in light of the current resource demands in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility (USCENTCOM AOR). As a result, the Colombian Military is weighing the possibilities and consequences of "nationalizing" certain U.S. support packages to mitigate the effects of an inevitable curtailment of the previous levels of U.S. support. The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá is developing, in conjunction with the Colombian Ministry of Defense, contingencies to mitigate potential funding changes. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Defense through the U.S. Military Group (USMILGP) in Colombia continues to provide a wide array of support to the Colombian Armed Forces.

E. RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of the official end of *Plan Colombia*, this research project will attempt to predict the future level and extent of U.S. support to Colombia based on information gathered from U.S. and Colombian officials.

F. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to explain and analyze the current USMILGP-Colombia reorganization proposal. It will make recommendations, as applicable; to create a model for a new type of expanded Security Assistance Organization (that will be referred to as Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command). The goal is to provide a blueprint for a broader Security Cooperation organization with the capability of taking on a potential FID and combat support missions to effectively assist a partner nation.

G. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

In 2005, USMILGP-Colombia began the process of reorganization. By May of 2006, the first “MILGP-COL Reorganization Paper” was complete, delineating all of the challenges with the existing structure. After staffing the paper and receiving guidance from the Commander of U.S. Southern Command, MILGP-Colombia sent an updated version of the proposal in a memorandum to the SOUTHCOM J3, BG Salvatore Cambria, entitled, “MILGP Reorganization.” This was not approved by General Bantz Craddock before changing command in October of 2006 due to non-concurrence by the SOUTHCOM J2 and the Joint Interagency Task Force – South (a subordinate of SOUTHCOM). The results of this thesis will be distributed to U.S. Southern Command and U.S. MILGP – Colombia.

H. METHOD & SOURCES

(1) Review of current doctrine for Security Assistance, Security Cooperation and Foreign Internal Defense to identify potential functions and missions of a Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command (JSACC).

(2) Case studies will examine the advisory organizations utilized in both Vietnam and El Salvador and their implications on Colombia today, as well as their implications for future organizations.

(3) Personal experience in Colombia combined with input and assistance from past and present MILGP Commanders, MILGP Executive Officers, Mission Chiefs, and various other DoD and DoS personnel stationed in Colombia serve as the strongest foundation and have kept this work grounded in truth and reality.

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II. THE DOCTRINE OF PARTNER NATION SUPPORT

A. INTRODUCTION

The United States Congress has detailed exactly how the Department of Defense can support a partner nation in building and improving its security capabilities. The Department of State decides annually the level of funding partner nations will receive and allows the Department of Defense to execute the security assistance programs paid for by those DoS dollars. But it is the Department of Defense that has created both the Joint doctrine and the appropriate service level doctrine to determine how to best support our partner nation's security needs. Those doctrinal concepts fall under many different titles, the most prevalent ones will be discussed in this chapter: Foreign Internal Defense, Security Assistance, Security Cooperation, and Security Assistance Organizations.

B. FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE

The United States Military defines Foreign Internal Defense (FID) as: The participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.¹⁵

Hence, FID is more than just a menu of U.S. military programs aimed at building the defense capabilities of a partner nation (PN)/host nation (HN).¹⁶ Frequently, U.S. sponsored security programs overshadow other ongoing social, economic, and informational programs that, to function properly, require a secure environment established by a credible, professional military in support of a legitimate government. American forces have supported partner nations by

¹⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 3-07.1 (Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense)* (Washington, April 2004), ix.

¹⁶ The terms "host nation" and "partner nation" have become synonymous over time. The former term was used in conjunction with Security Assistance during the Cold War. The later is a newer term that is used in conjunction with Security Cooperation.

building capabilities since the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. However, the concept of security building greatly expanded as part of the Truman Doctrine, which pledged a wide array of support to countries that were opposing Soviet-sponsored/supported insurgencies during the Cold War.

FID as we know it today grew out of the Nixon Doctrine of the 1960's, with the premise that Washington should support countries whose national security objectives align with those of the United States and who are willing to provide the manpower to resolve their own internal problems. The United States Department of Defense (DoD) is institutionally prepared to utilize three tools at its disposal to contribute to the U.S. Government's (USG) overall FID mission:

1. **Indirect Support:** Security Assistance, Exercises, Training, Personnel Exchanges: aimed at building the partner nation's self-sufficiency.
2. **Direct Support (not involving combat operations):** U.S. forces providing direct assistance with communications, intelligence, logistics, psychological operations, civil-military operations: immediately fulfilling partner nation's shortcomings.
3. **Combat Operations:** Strategically defensive in nature: immediately establishing security for the PN in order to stabilize the environment for other activities.

The majority of DoD's FID activities fall into the Indirect Support category, with Security Assistance (SA) as one of the primary tools. Security Assistance is the equipping, maintaining, and training of a partner nation so that they possess an ability to maintain a defense against internal and/or external threats. A key aspect of Security Assistance is the financial options available to the partner nation based on international agreements. Equipment, training, and maintenance can be sold, loaned, granted, or offset depending on the agreement

that the United States has with the partner nation. In order to receive security assistance, partner nations must provide the manpower to support the equipment/training, devote an adequate amount of their own resources to the program, and have a plan to eventually take over the program on their own to include long-term maintenance. Security Assistance, a concept developed in the Cold-War, is designed to foster long-term security relationships. It may take upwards of 2-3 years for equipment to actually get fielded to a foreign country depending on availability and priority.¹⁷ The contemporary criticism of Security Assistance is that it is not responsive enough to meet the evolving needs of our partner nations.

Vietnam left the nation averse to committing U.S. troops directly to combat for what was seen as primarily an internal fight, on the premise that direct U.S. intervention in combat bred dependency and over reliance on U.S. support. Whether U.S. troops are used in a combat role or not, FID is not an easy mission to accomplish and might take years to have a lasting impact. With a great deal of experience in planning, resourcing, and conducting FID missions in Latin America, LTC Mike Brown, U.S. Army Section Chief in Colombia, notes that, “going into a country, building a capability, and then stepping back leaving a self sufficient host nation force is not that easy to do. There are probably one or two cases where it has worked and probably more than 50 cases where it has failed.”¹⁸

C. SECURITY ASSISTANCE

The concept of Security Assistance originated in the post-World War II Truman Administration. President Truman’s inaugural address in January 1949 laid the foundation for the subsequent development of several programs which

¹⁷ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Assistance*, (Ohio, January 2005), 5-1.

¹⁸ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (30 April 2006).

are still in existence today.¹⁹ However, actual security assistance organizations as seen today originated in 1961 as part of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA). After, the U.S. experience in Vietnam, the U.S. Congress wanted to establish parameters on SAO activities, limiting them to tasks required to facilitate the security assistance mission. Eventually a Government Accounting Office (GAO) study led to the development of Policy Letter 97-113, amending Section 515 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The policy delineates the tasks authorized by the President of the United States to be undertaken by military members assigned to a foreign country:²⁰

1. Evaluation of HN military capabilities and requirements
2. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Case Management (EDA, FMF)
3. Training Management (IMET)
4. Program Monitoring (EUM)
5. Rationalization, Standardization, Interoperability (RSI)
6. International Armaments Cooperative Program (IACP)
7. Liaison functions (excluding advising and training)
8. Administrative support

The Defense Institute of Security Management Assistance (DISAM) educates and trains the officers that execute the SA mission world-wide. DISAM is part of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) which has oversight for larger Security Cooperation mission.

D. SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Security Assistance funding levels for various U.S. allies is set by the U.S. Department of State. However, the actual execution of Security Assistance (SA) programs, purchases, and training is orchestrated by the Department of Defense. To coordinate and facilitate the accomplishment of the Security Assistance

¹⁹ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Assistance*, (Ohio, January 2005), 5-1.

²⁰ Allan Stolberg. "Security Cooperation as a Tool of American Foreign Policy." Lecture to Foreign Area Officers, Defense Language Institute, Monterey, CA, (March 2006).

mission and the larger Security Cooperation, DoD established the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) on 31 October 2000 to “foster Security Cooperation programs vital to U.S. national security to build trust and influence in peacetime, to have access to regions of the world during times of crisis, and to ensure interoperability with coalition partners during times of conflict.”²¹ DSCA and its associated legislation allowed for the creation of the special military sections that work in foreign countries to execute the mission of security assistance. These organizations, called Security Assistance Organizations (SAOs), are unique within the Department of Defense and are separate from the Defense Attaches’ Office (DAO) which are also found in the U.S. Embassy but have a distinctly different mission. Defense Attaches are charged with providing military information and maintaining communications channels in order to facilitate service to service and DoD representational matters. Depending on the country, either the SAO or the DAO chief is designated as the United States Defense Representative (USDR).²² SAOs tend to be the USDR in the U.S. Southern Command AOR, while DAOs tend to be the USDR in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) AOR. The U.S. Pacific (USPACOM) and the U.S. Central Command tend to share the responsibility evenly between the two.²³ SAOs vary in size and structure and adopt a wide array of titles to express and define the relationship that exist between our partner nations and the United States. So, while there are 16 different titles for SAOs throughout the world, all essentially execute the same missions. Europe and African countries tend to have Offices of Defense Cooperation (ODC), while many Latin American

²¹ Defense Security Cooperation Agency. “*Strength Through Cooperation*,” (Ohio, July 2006). www.dsca.mil Last accessed 13 July 2006.

²² In 2002 a study of the feasibility of consolidating SAOs & DAOs in order to streamline communications and improve overall effectiveness was conducted. However, the heads of neither organization, DIA (DAOs) and the COCOMs (SAOs) were willing to have their organization work for the other for fear that a change in the command relationship would cause a loss of control. Regardless, both DIA and DSCA as they are currently structured are considered to be relics of the Cold War worthy of modernization.

²³ LtCol Kurt Marisa, “*Consolidated Military Attache and Security Assistance Activities: A Case for Unity of Command*” (Washington, December 2003), 8.

countries have U.S. Military Groups.²⁴ SAOs can vary in size from just a couple of military personnel augmented by a few local host nation hires, to several hundred U.S. military personnel supported by hundreds of host nation personnel and contractors. If a SAO has more than six uniformed service members, Congressional approval for the mission is required.²⁵ SAOs can be established with subordinate sections organized along service lines (Army, Navy/USMC, Air Force) or along functional lines (Administration, Training, Plans, Logistics) similar to an ordinary Army unit.²⁶

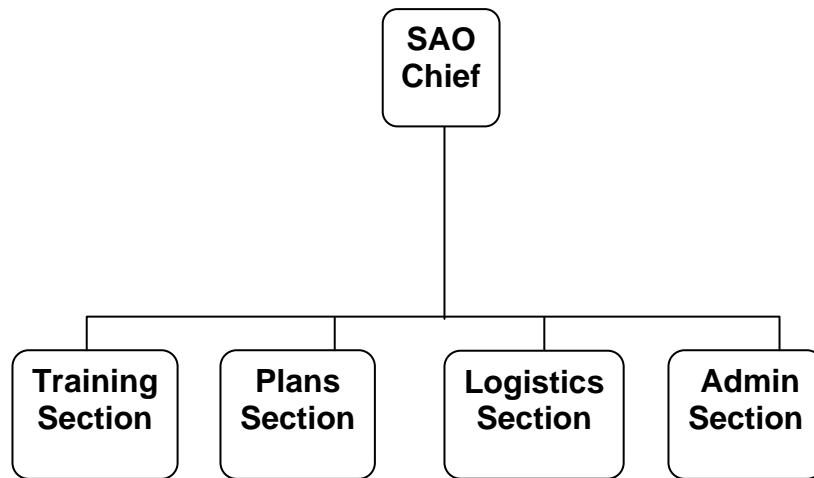


Figure 1. Typical Functionally Aligned SAO

²⁴ Marisa, *Consolidated*, 9.

²⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 3-07.1 (Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense)* (Washington, April 2004), II-13.

²⁶ *Ibid.* II-14.

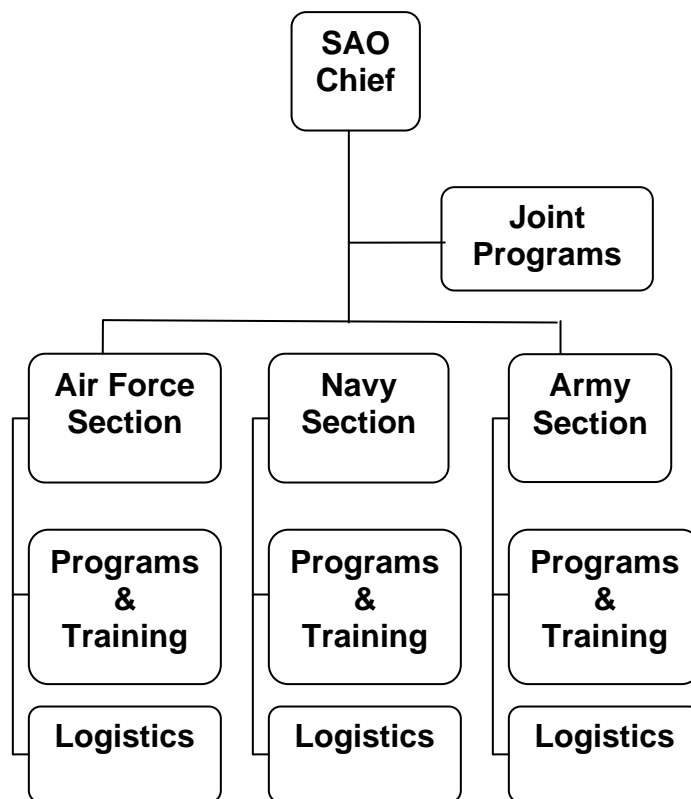


Figure 2. Typical Service Aligned SAO

Although the levels of support provided by a SAO are determined by funding, all SAOs are essentially capable of providing the same array of capabilities and service to the partner nation. The key is that the SAOs play an indirect and supporting role and are not designed to conduct operations or direct actions missions like that of a Joint Task Force (JTF).

As their name indicates, SAO's primary mission is to provide a means of interface with the partner nation on matters of security assistance. By law, the SAO is prohibited from actually training PN forces in tasks normally taught by other organizations²⁷, like the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security

²⁷ The exception is training which is paid for through CD, CT, or another funding source other than FMF, FMS, or IMET.

Cooperation (WHINSEC) or any U.S. Army service school.²⁸ Since security assistance funding is allocated by the Department of State and is administered by the Department of Defense, SAOs report and coordinate through the U.S. Ambassador, much in the same manner as any other non DoS Country Team member. On all other matters, the SAOs work for their respective combatant command and are often authorized to coordinate directly with the service components on specific service related matters. The degree to which the SAO is controlled by their RCC varies by Geographical Combatant Command. According to the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, “the SAO by law is under the direction and supervision of the U.S. Ambassador (also known as the Chief of Mission [COM]). Additionally, the SAO, by DoD policy, is under the command and supervision of the geographical combatant commander in matters that are not functions or responsibilities of the Ambassador.”²⁹ The fact that SAOs answer to two bosses simultaneously, one military and one civilian, make the organizations subject to potential conflict and confusion. Therefore, SAOs must juggle multiple responsibilities while simultaneously working for two different chiefs and coordinating with several different State-side organizations, all while working within the parameters of the partner nation’s culture. According to LTC Mike Brown, who has worked for US Embassy-Bogota for close to five years,

as the professional relationship between the RCCs and Ambassadors continue to mature, the SAO is now more easily able to raise disagreements to the COM and RCC. The SAO focuses on proposing potential solutions. This happens generally over policy issues which at a minimum are the forum of the CoM and RCC and often more senior officers.³⁰

²⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 3-07.1 (Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense)* (Washington, April 2004), II-13.

²⁹ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Assistance*, (Ohio, 2005), 34.

³⁰ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (19 December 2006).

The SAO, in coordination with the Embassy's Country Team, helps define and execute the Country Team Plan while simultaneously executing the National Military Strategy through the Regional Combatant Command's (RCC's) Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP).

E. SECURITY COOPERATION

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld took theater/security engagement a step further in the post-September 11, 2001 world by expanding the newer concept of "Security Cooperation." Engagement with foreign countries is done for political reasons, whereas cooperation builds capabilities to serve a U.S. interest. The Defense Department's Security Cooperation Guidance defines Security Cooperation (SC) as:

Those activities that are conducted with allied and friendly foreign defense establishments to build closer bilateral relationships that promote long-term American diplomatic, military, or economic interests in a given region. It is also directed towards specific states, with the intent of building allied and friendly capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations, and providing U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access and enroute infrastructure that can be used in support of ongoing military operations.³¹

In short, Security Cooperation:

- Builds security relationships to promote U.S. interests
- Builds PN capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations
- Provide contingency and peacetime access for U.S. forces

Whereas Security Assistance aims more narrowly to improve a partner nation's military capabilities, Security Cooperation treats partner nations as equals and attempts to gain common understandings and appreciations for international problems with the desire to develop joint solutions.³² Security Cooperation still

³¹ U.S. Department of Defense, "*Security Cooperation Guidance*" (Washington, 2005).

³² The switch from engagement to security cooperation can be seen as a corollary to President Bush's post 911 foreign policy of "you are either with us or against us," expressed in his speech of 6 November 2001.

seeks to develop a partner nation's military, but it also attempts to maximize advantages for the United States.³³ The gains from Security Assistance seldom equal the monetary value of the U.S. outlays, but the return on the investment should fall within the constraints and existing resources of the partner nation. Historically, this fact has led to the debate as to whether or not the United States receives a good return on its security assistance investment. Now that Security Assistance has become part of Security Cooperation and is one tool of many which can be implemented, there is less emphasis on the debate.

The advantages gained by the United States in return for the Security Assistance provided may include basing rights, permission to execute naval exercises or operations in the partner nation's territorial waters, or simply overflight rights. The deployments to Iraq in 2003-2004 of battalions from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic offer examples of a return on America's Security Cooperation investment in Latin America. El Salvador was the first country to make a commitment and to have troops on the ground.³⁴ As of October 2006, El Salvador was on their fifth 300-man rotation; which in total equates to over 10% of their overall force. All Latin American battalions did not provide the same level of capability for various reasons. Interestingly, the strongest contributor, El Salvador, demonstrated not only the capability, but also the resolve to work within the U.S. led Coalition. The Salvadoran success, in part, can be traced to the general level of Security Assistance provided to Salvador to combat a left-wing insurgency during the 1980's. However, aside from joining the coalition to support their long-time ally in gratitude for help rendered in previous decades, El Salvador has other motives as well. Apart from the experience, additional U.S. training, and increased security assistance, El Salvador gains tremendous political and economical dividends with the United States vis a vis continued Congressional support for

³³ National Archives, Speech by President Bush (Washington, 2001). <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wcomp/v37no45> Last accessed 26 November 2006.

³⁴ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (23 September 2006).

them receiving Temporary Protected Status (TPS). TPS gives Salvadorian aliens the ability to remain in the United States and gain employment, which in turn allows for the continuation of the historically large remittances that El Salvador's economy has become dependent on. Security Cooperation remains at its core a team concept, anchored in reciprocal agreements and commitments. A fundamental premise of Security Cooperation is that we have as much to gain from our partners as they do from us.

Security Cooperation is where the rubber meets the road, the interface between U.S. Foreign Policy and U.S. National Military Strategy. It serves several purposes: to maintain open relations; to facilitate the rapid deployment of U.S. forces to/through the partner nation in time of international emergency; to enhance partner nation capabilities; to maintain senior leader relations to facilitate problem resolution and coordinate combined military efforts during peace and war; to demonstrate how the U.S. military functions as a subordinate to a democratically elected executive; and to support national foreign policy.³⁵ The improvement of partner nation capabilities can serve two purposes: first it allows the partner nation to support U.S. security interests. Second, it lessens the need for a deployment of U.S. forces for something that could be accomplished by a well trained partner nation. The combined impacts of Security Cooperation make it the most powerful element of military power short of an actual use of force. U.S. Security Cooperation goals aim to ensure that our partner nations maintain their highest possible level of readiness and possess a competency which would allow them to confront common security challenges, thus minimizing the need for a U.S. troop deployment. Security Cooperation is a much more comprehensive and broader approach to working with partner nations than is Security Assistance. Security Assistance becomes one key component of the cooperation plan, which entails synchronizing a series of

³⁵ Allan Stolberg. "*Security Cooperation as a Tool of American Foreign Policy.*" Lecture to Foreign Area Officers, Defense Language Institute, Monterey, CA, (March 2006).

programs tailored to a specific partner nation's needs. Other elements of Security Cooperation include but are not limited to:

- **Combined³⁶ Counter-Trafficking Operations:** Counter-Drug (CD) Operations, US Support to Aerial Eradication, Air Bridge Denial
- **Combined Exercises:** Sponsored by the JCS, COCOM, or a Service Component, conducted either in the U.S. or OCONUS
- **Combined Education:** Educating foreign military personnel at U.S. schools both in the U.S. and OCONUS
- **Combined Training:** (other than exercises) U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), Mobile Training Teams (MTTs)
- **Combined Experimentation:** Bilateral or multilateral efforts to improve interoperability (i.e. communications, C², intelligence, etc.)
- **Defense/Military Contacts:** Distinguished Visitor Programs (DVPs), ship visits, bi-lateral/multi-lateral talks, regional conferences, Personnel Exchange Programs (PEPs), Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs)
- **Humanitarian-Civic Assistance (HCA):** Humanitarian relief, demining, medical readiness & training exercise (MEDRETE), disaster relief training
- **Peace Keeping Operations (PKO):** Exercises, seminars, agreements, and equipping through DoS Global PKO Initiative

USMILGP-Colombia has the lead from SOUTHCOM for implementing and synchronizing the various Security Cooperation programs and activities so that each one serves a specific purpose which contributes to the overall program's objectives. According to the former Commander of the Colombian Armed

³⁶ The doctrinal definition of "Combined" includes the participation of one or more partner nations (sometimes referred to as "multi-national"), whereas "Joint" refers to operations including two or more services of the same nation.

Forces, General Carlos Ospina Ovalle, “U.S. support to Colombia comes in various forms. The greatest contribution from the support comes from the integrated strategy that the Americans help implement.”³⁷

Security Assistance is a very important legal component of Security Cooperation. The legislation governing SA and the funding from DoS through DSCA (which comes from Foreign Military Finance/Foreign Military Sales [FMF/FMS]/International Military Education & Training [IMET] fees charged to participating countries) allows for the creations of SAOs. These SAOs, by default, handle much more than just Security Assistance, they have become defacto Security Cooperation Offices.³⁸ Without forward deployed SAO’s, the Regional Component Commanders would find it difficult to develop and execute their TSCPs. However, since SAOs are authorized and staffed depending on the level of Security Assistance they provide, RCCs often augment the SAOs with additional personnel in order to assist with the other tasks that are associated with the security cooperation mission.³⁹ The number of augmentees may reach into the hundreds, as in the case of MILGP Colombia. Because of all of the aforementioned factors and since the typical Security Assistance Organization does much more than execute Security Assistance transactions, SAO’s should more aptly be renamed. Due to the Joint nature of the organizations and important role of Security Cooperation, the name “Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command (JSACC) would be more appropriate to replace the traditional SAO titles (MILGP, MAAG, MLO, ODC, etc.).

³⁷ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (23 September 2006).

³⁸ Marisa, *Consolidated*, 9.

³⁹ In 2004, when USMILGP-Venezuela became virtually ineffective due to the political situation between the Venezuelan and U.S. governments, SOUTHCOM moved several billets (both civilian and military) temporarily from Caracas to Bogotá. This helped provide additional manning to USMILGP-Colombia, while retaining the flexibility to eventually move the billets back to Venezuela when the situation becomes more amenable to U.S. support.

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III. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A. INTRODUCTION

United States Military Group – Colombia (USMILGP-Colombia) is technically a Security Assistance Organization (SAO) within the United States Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM) Area of Responsibility. However, based on their current mission set they should more aptly be called a "Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command – Colombia" (JSACC-COL). Prior to construction and manning of the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, U.S. Embassy-Bogotá was the largest American Embassy in the world with the largest SAO (MILGRP) in the world. USMILGP-Colombia began to grow in 2000 with the implementation of *Plan Colombia*. By 2002 with the implementation of Expanded Authority that permitted the use of counter-drug resources for counterterrorism, the MILGP began to exceed the size of SOUTHCOM's other SAOs. With the initiation of *Plan Colombia*, U.S. Security Cooperation grew in Colombia and the FID mission expanded from just *Indirect Support* to also include *Direct Support (not involving combat operations)*.

B. HISTORICAL COMPARISON: VIETNAM

The two organizational comparisons that people often make with MILGP – Colombia are with the Military Assistance & Advisory Group (MAAG)/Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) of the 1960's and the Operational Planning and Assistance Training Team (OPATT) of El Salvador of the 1980's. The former comparison demonstrates how an SAO must be able to rapidly expand to meet the increasing level of U.S. support to a partner nation, the later example of El Salvador provides very useful insight as to how to effectively employ advisers. In Vietnam, the MAAG as an advisory group served as the antecedent for the present day Planning Assistance and Training Teams (PATTs). Similarly, the MACV was an early form of a SAO. The MAAG was the first organization on the ground in Vietnam in 1955. In May 1962, the MACV was

established to support the MAAG. The 746 man USMAAG-Vietnam provided combat training and field support to the South Vietnamese. In 1964, as the United States became more involved in Vietnam, the MAAG reached “a little over 2,000” men and eventually merged into the MACV as combat units began to arrive.⁴⁰ When the mission in Vietnam was limited to *Indirect Support* and *Direct Support (not involving combat operations)*, the MAAG proved capable of maintaining C². As combat units were introduced into the country and the United States began *Combat Operations*, the MACV increased its structure to allow what was a SAO to grow into a full Army Headquarters capable of commanding divisions. Although the scale of MACV was much greater than that of Colombia, MACV serves as a historical precedence for a SAO to grow into a combat command when it assumes all three components of Foreign Internal Defense, along with Security Cooperation. Vietnam demonstrated the challenge of being able to quickly expand a SAO in order to handle the ramp up of U.S. support and troops.

C. HISTORICAL COMPARISON: EL SALVADOR

In 1998, when the MILGP Commander in Colombia went to discuss a future increase in U.S. military support in the wake of *Plan Colombia*, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, Myles Brochette, declared, ‘I don’t want Colombia to become another El Salvador.’ The MILGP Commander replied, ‘but sir, didn’t we succeed in El Salvador?’⁴¹ U.S. military involvement in El Salvador (1984-1992) was closely monitored in light of America’s involvement in Vietnam. To prevent the United States from embarking upon another Vietnam-style “slippery slope,” Congress enacted a 55-man “*force cap*,” a maximum allowable number of uniformed personnel allowed in country. In Colombia, a 200-man force (later expanded to 400) was adopted based on U.S. experience in El Salvador.

⁴⁰ U.S. Army Center for Military History. *Vietnam* (Washington, 2006), 2. www.army.mil Last accessed 25 November 2006.

⁴¹ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (23 September 2006).

U.S. military support to Colombia also parallels the earlier experience with El Salvador in the evolution of the mission from training a partner nation; to training and supporting; to training, supporting and advising. The Combatant Command played similar roles in both instances by pushing staff support to the country as required. In 1983, SOUTHCOM (then based in Panama) deployed a 10-man team as a surge capability to help the Salvadorian JTF with their National Campaign Plan.⁴² This was very similar to SOUTHCOM's deployment of planners to assist with development of *Plan Colombia* more than a decade and a half later. The U.S. FID mission in El Salvador began as a traditional training mission for the El Salvador Armed Forces (ESAF). In time, the idea developed that, by employing advisors at the Brigade-level, the United States could help the ESAF "seize the initiative while improving its performance in regard to human rights."⁴³ The mission in El Salvador began with support from conventional Army elements and eventually migrated to a Special Forces (SF) mission. In Colombia, in contrast, U.S. Special Forces initially provided the preponderance of support *vis-à-vis* an Operational Detachment Charlie (ODC) with 1-2 Operational Detachment Bravo's (ODBs), and 6-9 Operational Detachment Alpha's (ODAs), In 2006, Colombia averages only 3 ODA's and the PATT program which was filled with SF officers is now filled primarily filled with officers from the conventional combat arms branches.⁴⁴ This is due to the fact that the continuing demands for special operations forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan dictates that an average of 85% of the United States' SOF elements are deployed to the CENTCOM AOR. The Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), General Doug Brown, claims, "We are missing a golden opportunity in Colombia right now. Since the situation in Middle East has prioritized an average

⁴² Cecil Bailey, "OPATT: The U.S. Army SF Advisers in El Salvador" (Ft. Bragg, December 2004), 20.

⁴³ Bailey, *OPATT*, 18.

⁴⁴ This switch in the SF manning paradigm came in the wake of OEF/OIF. The FID mission was actively sought out by the SOF community in peace time. However, with on-going combat operations ensuing in the Middle East, Special Forces Groups now focus their efforts on *direct action* (combat operations).

of 85% of our SOF forces to the region, we can no longer dedicate the large contingent of SF forces from 7th Group that has historically been deployed to Colombia.”⁴⁵ It has been recognized that Colombia needs more than just SOF elements to succeed. Air planners, intelligence, communications, engineer, and logistical experts have well complimented the SOF elements to provide a holistic approach in Colombia.

Unlike like the current Colombian PATT (and to a greater extent the USMILGP), the Operational Planning & Assistance Training Team (OPATT) in El Salvador was developed through an ad hoc system. In El Salvador, it quickly became clear that the SF Mobile Training Teams, which focused on individual and collective unit training, did not provide the advisory support nor the continuity needed for the Salvadorian Brigades. The SAO’s Engineering & Technical Services Specialist (ETSS) were expanded to fill the advisory roles for the Brigades because regulations allowed their personnel to be assigned for up to one year. Although challenged in the 1980’s to find individuals who were both professionally and linguistically qualified, the U.S. advisors in El Salvador had a positive impact on the ESAF over the duration of the program. One similar limitation, which is still to a degree controversial today in Colombia, was the restriction against U.S. military members accompanying ESAF units on operations was especially onerous to the advisers, who often cited the restriction as affecting not only their relationship with their counter-part but also their professional credibility. The restriction was rooted in the trainer vs. adviser issue and in the ongoing concern of the U.S. Congress about the advisory role being the first step onto the “slippery slope” toward a full engagement of American forces in a ground war in Central America.⁴⁶ But the restriction has benefits. In Colombia, it has kept the conflict Colombian, which is particularly important in a region that is becoming increasingly anti-American.

⁴⁵ GEN Doug Brown, Commander: USSOCOM. Interview by author, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. (7 November 2006).

⁴⁶ Bailey, *OPATT*, 24.

The ban on participating in operations is also in forced in Colombia. DCM Milton Drucker paraphrases Ambassador Wood's policy for avoiding combat: "if a U.S. soldier is present when shooting breaks out, he should run the other way!"⁴⁷ Drucker elaborates: "if U.S. troops have to do the fighting for the Colombians, we have lost. . . and if we lose a U.S. soldier, support for Colombia in the U.S. Congress will be destroyed."⁴⁸ The political implications of direct U.S. involvement in the Colombian conflict, along with the potential loss of American troops, is strongly echoed by the former Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces, General Carlos Ospina Ovalle: "I would love to have the U.S. advisors closer to our operations to observe, but we don't want to lose the lives of U.S. soldiers on Colombian soil. I am certain we would lose U.S. support [funding]."⁴⁹ Furthermore, such increased direct involvement would have both negative internal and external repercussions. Most likely manifested through an information operations campaign conducted by one of the several leftist regimes in South America and political opponents of President Uribe within Colombia boasting a "U.S. Intervention in Colombia."

The U.S. experiences in Vietnam and El Salvador offer a comparison for the U.S. military activities in Colombia, the latter more so than the former. It appears that the lesson learned in El Salvador with regards to the quantity, location, and rank of advisers are applied today in Colombia. However, the challenge of finding enough qualified advisers still persists. Due to increase commitments and the need to provide subject matter expertise in non-SOF skill areas, the military has institutionally realized that soldiers from the conventional Army can advise just as well as SOF elements. The Salvadorian model has limitations when applied to Colombia as the Colombian MILGP is much larger, with a much more diverse mission set, and more complicated command and

⁴⁷ Milton Drucker, Deputy Chief of Mission-U.S. Embassy-Bogotá. Interviewed by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (27 September 2006).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ General Carlos Ospina Ovalle, Former Colombian Armed Forces Commander. Interview by author in Spanish, (Bogotá, Colombia, 29 September 2006).

control issues. Unfortunately, some of the same political issues that were present in El Salvador in the 1980's, such as an aversion to the perceived loss of U.S. troops, are manifested through restricted movements and force caps in Colombia. These political constraints restrict the potential contribution of the MILGP to the fight in Colombia.

D. THE HISTORY OF U.S. MILITARY GROUP - COLOMBIA

U.S. military involvement in Colombia began in 1934 during the brief border war with Peru. In 1940, Washington engaged Colombia as part of the defense plan for the Panama Canal. The United States' first major impact on modernizing and professionalizing the Colombian military occurred during the Korean War. According to Colombian security expert, Andrés Villamizar, "one can affirm that the modern Colombian Army was born through its participation in Korea."⁵⁰ Colombians began implementing U.S. doctrine at both the tactical level (patrolling) and operational level (staff planning). By the 1950's, Colombia received more Security Assistance than did any other Latin American country.⁵¹ In 1955, the *Escuela de Lanceros* was founded in Tolomaida, modeled after the U.S. Army Ranger School.

The triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 allowed Bogotá to argue plausibly that the formless and only marginally ideological conflicts between Liberal and Conservative militias and assorted bandit gangs that had characterized *La Violencia* (1948-1958) had transmogrified in the 1960s into a communist insurgency orchestrated from Moscow via Havana. U.S. fear that the Cuban Revolution might contaminate Latin America stimulated the Kennedy administration to combine the president's Alliance for Progress (*Alianza para el Progreso*), a new regional development initiative, with counter-insurgency support for the Colombian military.⁵² In 1962, A U.S. assessment team

⁵⁰ Andrés Villamizar, *La Reforma de la Inteligencia*. (Bogotá, 2004), 61.

⁵¹ Russell W. Ramsey, *Civil-Military Relations in Colombia 1946-65* (Leavenworth, 1978), 8.

⁵² Doug Porch & Chris Muller, *Imperial Grunts Revisited* (Monterey, 2006), 5-6.

concluded that lack of planning, coordination, poor utilization of resources, lack of equipment, reliance on static outposts, sporadic collection and untimely dissemination of intelligence, patchy civic and psychological action programs, and poor Army-Police coordination, combined with the country's systemic problems of underdevelopment, put the Colombian military on the defensive. The U.S. response included a \$1.5 million security package, including vehicles, communications, and helicopters; Military Training Teams (MTTs) to instruct Colombians on counter-insurgency; training soldiers and police at the School of the Americas in Panama; a revamping of both the military and police intelligence structure; and the creation of special operations units.⁵³ These improved military capabilities helped the Colombian army to swell from roughly 6,000 soldiers in the 1940s to 65,000 by the 1960s. Sixty percent of the \$40 million that Washington gave to Colombia between 1964 and 1967 went to the military and forty percent to civic action.⁵⁴ These reforms culminated in *Plan Lazo*, a successful July 1962 offensive against the -- much depleted -- "independent republics" of the upper Magdalena valley, where the most ideological remnants of *La Violencia* had taken refuge.⁵⁵ "We had to separate the gangs from the peasants, who saw the government as the enemy, and these bandits as their army," former Army Chief-of-Staff General Alvaro Valencia Tovar remembered of *Lazo*. "We had to go after the leaders. Once these caudillos were killed, they were not replaced."⁵⁶ Psychological operations, *acción cívico-militar*, and intelligence were closely coordinated, while the military built health clinics, schools, water treatment facilities and linked isolated villages by road. The military offensive culminated in May 1964 with OPERATION MARQUETALIA,

⁵³ Doug Porch & Chris Muller, *Imperial Grunts Revisited* (Monterey, 2006), 5-6.

⁵⁴ Dennis M. Rempe, *Counterinsurgency in Colombia: A US National Security Perspective 1958-1966*, (Miami, 2002), 126, 131-32.

⁵⁵ The original name was LASO, for Latin American Security Organization, but became LAZO which means noose or snare. Information provided by Valencia Tovar.

⁵⁶ Rempe, 137-152.

aimed at Manuel Marulanda Vélez's "communist republic."⁵⁷ By 1966, the insurgents who remained had been driven to remote areas, and Colombia seemed to have acquired a false sense of stability.

By the 1980's, U.S. support at both the tactical and operational level began to focus on the infamous Medellin and Cali drug cartels. With the demise of the notorious narco-trafficker Pablo Escobar in 1993, and a subsequent government campaign against the Cali cartel, the two largest consortia of drug trafficking organizations shattered. However, the demand for cocaine continued to grow. The traditionally politically-motivated insurgent groups, which already provided security in exchange for funding to the drug cartels, began to participate directly in the drug trade. The result was a transition from politically motivated activities to full participation in all aspects of the drug trade not only to survive, but also to become among the richest criminal and insurgent organizations in the world.⁵⁸ The increase in the scale of the Colombian problem required a huge increase in MILGP-Colombia in order to manage support within the context of the Andean Counter-Drug Initiative and *Plan Colombia*.

E. U.S. MILITARY GROUP – COLOMBIA: 2000'S

Since the inception of Plan Colombia in CY2000, MILGP-COL has grown significantly in terms of its mission and personnel in order to support the Colombian Government's (GOC) fight against the narcotics trade itself, the terrorism it produces and an insurgency resourced by it.⁵⁹

MILGRP-Colombia was originally established along service lines with the exception of three functional sections (missions) – Training, Logistics, and the Planning Assistance Training Team -- that were added in 2003.⁶⁰ The former

⁵⁷ Richard Maullin, *Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia* (Lexington, 1773), 73-78.

⁵⁸ Miguel Posada, "Terrorism in Colombia" (Washington, January 2002). <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/latin.20020121.posada.terrorismincolombia.html> Last accessed 23 February, 2006.

⁵⁹ US Military Group–Colombia, *Reorganization Paper* (Bogotá, May 2006), 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 2.

(Training), was created for a finite period of time in 2004-2005 to improve on a few challenged areas, which took about nine months to correct.

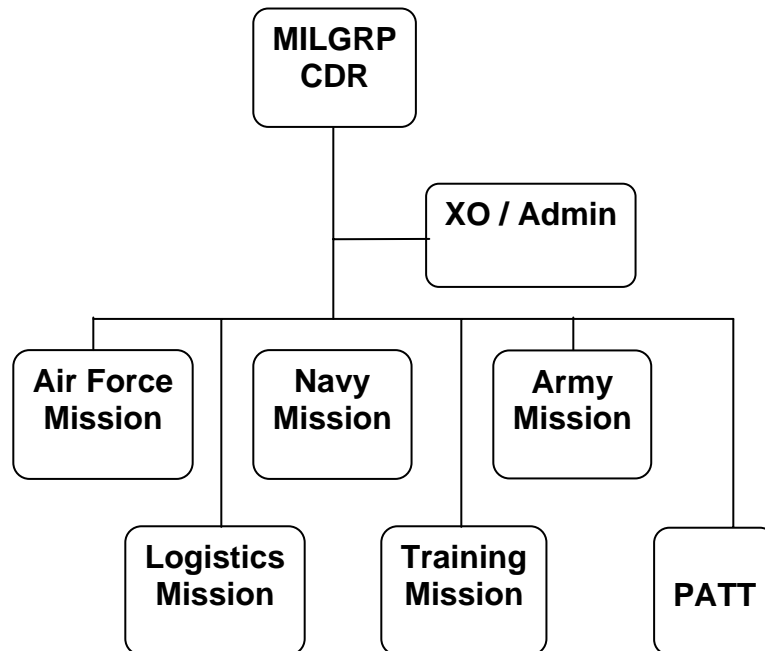


Figure 3. U.S. MILGP - Colombia 2003

Prior to September 11, 2001, the Commander of MILGP-Colombia was “able to exercise command and control of all its assigned and deployed organizations.”⁶¹ USMILGP-Colombia had been operating under Congressional scrutiny and with much of the same restrictions that led to the FAA of the 1960’s and the 55-man limit on advisors in El Salvador in the 1980’s. However, the events of September 11, 2001 allowed Bogotá to be embraced by the GWOT. The National Security Strategy written in 2002 recognized “the link between terrorist and extremist groups that challenge the security of the state and drug trafficking activities that help finance the operations of such groups.”⁶² As a result, legislation created “Expanded Authority” for Colombia which allowed counter-drug funds to be utilized for counter-terrorist operations, which broke

⁶¹ US Military Group–Colombia, *Reorganization Paper* (Bogotá, May 2006), 1.

⁶² U.S. Government. *National Security Strategy* (Washington, September 2002), 10.

down an artificial, and to soldiers, a frustrating separation between counter-narcotics interdiction and counter-terrorism operations existed. This separation limited the ways in which certain funds could be allocated. The Congressional cap on U.S. Military personnel/ contractors in Colombia previously set at 400/400 was raised to 800/600 in 2005. The increase not only marked a significant political gain in support for Colombia, but it also provided an opportunity to increase the level and quality of support the United States could provide the Colombian Military. However, current operational requirements in the CENTCOM AOR have made it difficult to fill all billets to the maximum authorized levels, so that the benefits of the cap increase were lost to a degree due to the competing operational demands of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Several different factors have contributed to the wide variety of changes in Colombia's politico-military situation which have served as the impetus for the subsequent expansion and reorganization of the MILGP over the years. The combination of the military stalemate in Colombia between 1999-2000 and the September 11th attacks on the United States paved the way for expanded U.S. support for Colombia. These events, which led to increased focus on the COLMIL's capabilities, infused both additional support programs and augmented the existing programs. Expanding programs usually take the form of additional dollars initially, while it can take several years for the personnel required to support the program to be authorized and deployed into the theater. Increased funding without the necessary additional personnel to manage and supervise it caused problems in property and fiscal accountability in 2002. These problems were discovered in 2003 when the new MILGP Commander arrived.

F. U.S. MILITARY GROUP – COLOMBIA: 2006

The current political and operational environment is overseen by the U.S. Ambassador, William Wood. Ambassador William Wood strictly enforces Washington policy that regulates the activities and locations of U.S. troops in Colombia. Currently, U.S. personnel can neither participate in nor even observe

Colombian combat operations and are restricted to “safe site locations” as determined by the MILGP CDR, the Ambassador, and SOUTHCOM. As a consequence some U.S. military personnel complain that the Embassy is “risk averse.” According to a senior U.S. officer in a non-attributional lecture at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), “if certain members of Congress knew what we weren’t doing in Colombia, I think they would be pissed.” His comment referred to the fact that U.S. military personnel are prohibited from becoming more directly involved in operations in an attempt to gain information and capabilities which could facilitate a rescue attempt on the U.S. hostages. With the long standing captivity of the three American DoD contractors (AMCITS) by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the Embassy fears that losing just one American soldier in the CNT fight might cause such an outcry in the United States that Congress might curtail U.S. support.⁶³ Perhaps, this argument held more validity prior to the invasion and occupation of Iraq. However, with losses in Iraq approaching 3,000, at the time of writing, it seems unlikely that the loss several U.S. lives in Colombia would affect overall U.S. support. In fact, the American public might not even notice. However, it might affect support in the U.S. Congress, especially if U.S. personnel exceeded their mandate in Colombia. Irregardless of the political sentiment in Washington, many members of both the DoS and the DoD agree that not becoming more directly involved in Colombia is the best policy decision for both the United States and Colombia. In essence, the prevailing sentiment in Congress and the Executive Branch is that Colombia must do its own fighting.

Since its creation, MILGP-Colombia has changed both in form and size to meet the evolving needs and scope of the U.S. security mission to the Colombian Military (COLMIL) and of U.S. foreign policy. Aside from the traditional Security

⁶³ On 13 February 2003, three U.S. government contractors (Marc D. Gonsalves, Thomas R. Howe, and Keith D. Stansell) were captured by the FARC after their Cessna 208 was shot down with small arms fire. Two other personnel (Thomas J. Janis [US] and Luis A. Cruz [Colombia]) on the aircraft were summarily executed. The captivity of these Americans has been quickly forgotten by the media, and they were referred to as the “Forgotten Hostages” on CBS 60 Minutes on 8 OCT 2003.

Assistance role, MILGRP-Colombia has taken on a myriad of other tasks to support the current Colombian counter-insurgency (CI) and counter-drug (CD) effort. Such missions extend well beyond the traditional scope of Security Assistance and further expand the relatively new concept of Security Cooperation. Unlike Iraq or Afghanistan, U.S. support to the COLMIL does not include Direct Action (DA). However, the MILGRP takes on many more missions than just training and equipping the COLMIL through traditional Security Assistance.

As of May 2006, MILGRP-COL had 12 subordinate sections which incorporated the various elements that were created over the years to provide the necessary functions successfully to support the COLMIL. In May 2006, MILGRP-Colombia had the following configuration:

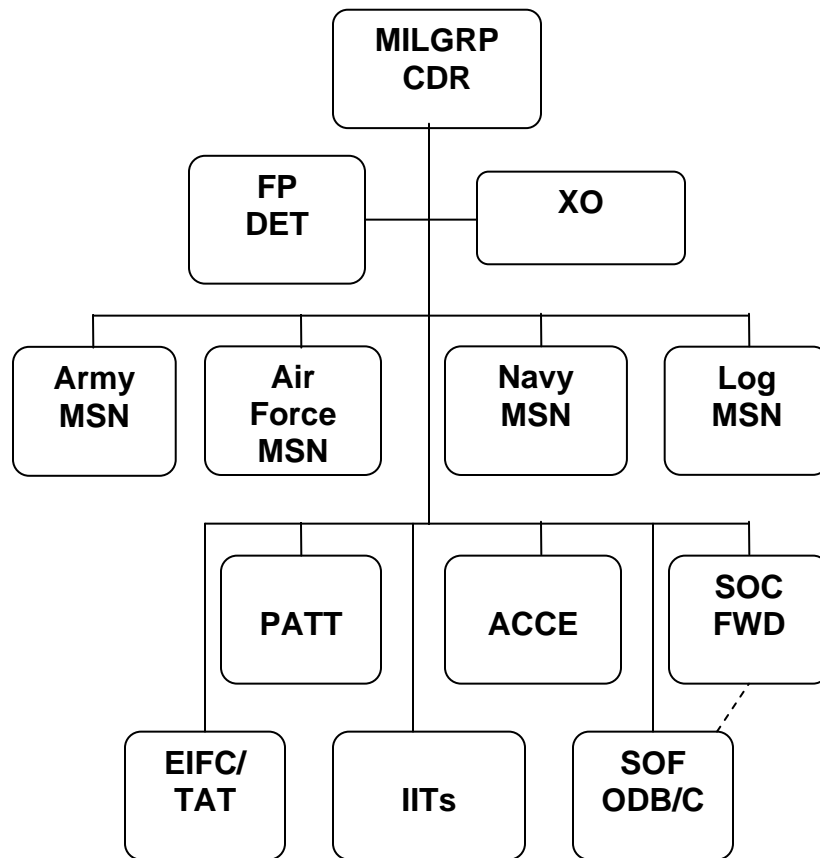


Figure 4. U.S. MILGRP - Colombia 2006

The expansion of the MILGP in the wake of *Plan Colombia*, together with “Expanded Authority,” has been accomplished by simply adding subordinate elements to the previously existing MILGP structure. Most often, when the situation allowed based on ranks structure, personalities, and mission, new elements became subordinates to the pre-existing missions. For instance, the Psychological Operations Element (PSE) was originally subordinate to the U.S. Army Mission and later reverted back to its traditional SOF C2 with the evolution of the SOC FWD Command Element. However, not all additional elements added to the MILGP in recent years have proved to be a good fit. For example, an unclear command and control relationship has undermined the ability of the MILGP to coordinate and synchronize the contributions of the Special Operations Forces deployed to Colombia and the Air Component Coordination Element (ACCE) to the overall Security Cooperation effort in Colombia. MILGP-Colombia C² proved inadequate to orchestrate this wide array of programs and missions that it is required to execute.

There is no developed Joint doctrine for such an effort. It is being created in places like Colombia. Current Joint doctrine that establishes command and control relationships approach it from a theater of war perspective - a perspective that fails to adequately address the unique USG interagency and combined nature of the security cooperation effort.⁶⁴

As new programs were added and additional missions undertaken, the need for other new sections grew to meet these changing and increased requirements of the COLMIL. Often these new sections received their initial fill of personnel and augmentation from either SOUTHCOM, one of SOUTHCOM’s service components, or a stateside organization that was directly related to that function (i.e. U.S. Air Force South filling billets for the Air Component Coordination Element). This manner of filling positions can create a stronger allegiance to the parent organization than to the MILGP and in the long-run result

⁶⁴ US Military Group–Colombia, *Reorganization Paper* (Bogotá, May 2006), 1.

in parallel chains of command within the SOUTHCOM military architecture.⁶⁵ As the doctrinal span of control (two to five subordinate elements) was exceeded, the C² for the MILGRP Commander became difficult and the problem was exacerbated.

In June 2006, MILGP-Colombia underwent a review of its structure and command relationships.⁶⁶ With the goal of better synchronizing operations (to include the increased intelligence and advisory roles) and providing the MILGP Commander with a better operational picture, a new organizational structure was proposed. As a consequence, the current MILGP Commander, COL Kevin Saderup, returned to the basic principals by re-defining the MILGP mission, “Coordinates, Integrates and Synchronizes SOUTHCOM Security Cooperation Effort by Shaping Security Environment:

- Strengthen COLMIL institutional foundation
- Build Warfighting capabilities
- Provide operational support to Campaign Plan
- Exercise TACON for FP (RDA) and function as USDR
- Conduct LNO support IAW other military activities
- Provide administrative support to other US military organizations as required”⁶⁷

To accomplish these goals, it was determined that the MILGP must be able to perform seven functions. These functions, in turn, should drive the subordinate components of the MILGP organization. The function are:

- Field Liaison – Training & Planning Assistance
- Security Assistance – Training & Equipping
- Logistics Support – Aviation Fuel, Riverine Fuel, Contract Airlift

⁶⁵ This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “stove piping.”

⁶⁶ The original 2005 “MILGP Reorganization Plan” was originally drafted by the MILGP XO (LTC Carlos Berrios) with guidance from the MILGP Commander.

⁶⁷ US Military Group–Colombia, *Command Brief* (Bogotá, October 2006).

- Institution Building – Colombian Armed Forces (COLMIL)
- Military to Military Engagement – Conferences, Seminars, Visits
- Intelligence Support – Operational Support & Dissemination
- Administration Support – FP, Contracting, Housing, Transportation⁶⁸

In August of 2006, a series of video teleconferences between the MILGP, SOUTHCOM, and the Service Components took place with the goal of rationalizing MILGP organization. Based on the proposed plan of June 2006, the SOUTHCOM Commander, GEN Bantz Craddock, provided the following guidance:

- “Support the MILGP Commander’s effort
- Do not degrade functional capabilities
- No personnel growth”⁶⁹

As of October 2006, the MILGP re-organization concept included seven subordinate sections: Operations, Air Mission, Naval Mission, Army Mission, Logistics Support, Field Liaison Group, and Intelligence. These elements are controlled by the MILGP Commander through the Deputy MILGP Commander, which is a newly created O6 position, that at the time of writing, has yet to be filled. The MILGP Executive (XO) will answer to the Deputy Commander and is responsible for five specific elements that are commensurate with the elements that a typical Brigade XO would control. Under the redesign, the traditional names of Army Mission (ARMIS), Navy Mission (NAVMIS), Air Force Mission (AFMIS), and Logistics Mission (LOGMIS), have subsequently been changed to Land Mission, Naval Mission, Air Mission, Logistics Support Group, respectively. Since the MILGP’s inception through the 2003 legislative expansion, the following is a comprehensive list of all of current MILGP-Colombia’s subordinate elements that were created to meet various Colombian military requirements.

⁶⁸ US Military Group–Colombia, *Command Brief* (Bogotá, October 2006).

⁶⁹ US Military Group–Colombia, “*MILGRP-COL Reorg*” memo (Bogotá, Sept. 2006), 1.

<u>Element</u>	<i>subordinate to</i>	<u>MILGP Section</u>
Airlift Scheduling		ACCE
Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP)		OPS CENTER
Army Post Office (APO)		XO
Civil Affairs (CA)		ARMY MISSION
Communications Center		OPS CENTER
Communications Support		LOG SUPPORT GROUP
Contracting		XO
Countermine/IED		ARMY MISSION
Embassy Intelligence Integration Center (EIFC)		INTEL
Force Protection Detachment (FPD)		OPS CENTER
Foreign Military Sales (FMS)		LOG SUPPORT GROUP
Information Operations (IO)		ARMY MISSION
Intelligence Integration Teams (IIT)		INTEL
JOINT MEDICAL SUPPORT		ARMY MISSION
Military Justice/Human Rights		AIR MISSION
Military Support to Public Diplomacy		NAVAL MISSION
Motor Pool		LOG SUPPORT GROUP
Operations Section		OPS CENTER
Operations Planning Group (OPG)		FIELD LIAISON GROUP
Personnel		XO
Planning Assistance Training Team (PATT)		FIELD LIAISON GROUP
Property Book Office		LOG SUPPORT GROUP
Protocol		XO
Traditional CINC Activities (TCA)		NAVAL MISSION
Resource Management (RMO)		XO
Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)		OPS SEC
Rotary Wing Section (RWS)		ARMY MISSION
Technical Assistance Field Team (TAFT)		ARMY MISSION

The following sections were also created to meet specific requirements, but in essence remain under the control of one of SOUTHCOM's Service Components and therefore, do not directly answer to the MILGP Commander:

- Air Component Coordination Element (ACCE) [AF SOUTH]*
- SOF Operational Detachment C (ODC)
- Special Operations Command Forward C² (SOCC² Fwd) [SOC SOUTH]

The proposed organizational structure remains a hybrid along both service and functional lines.

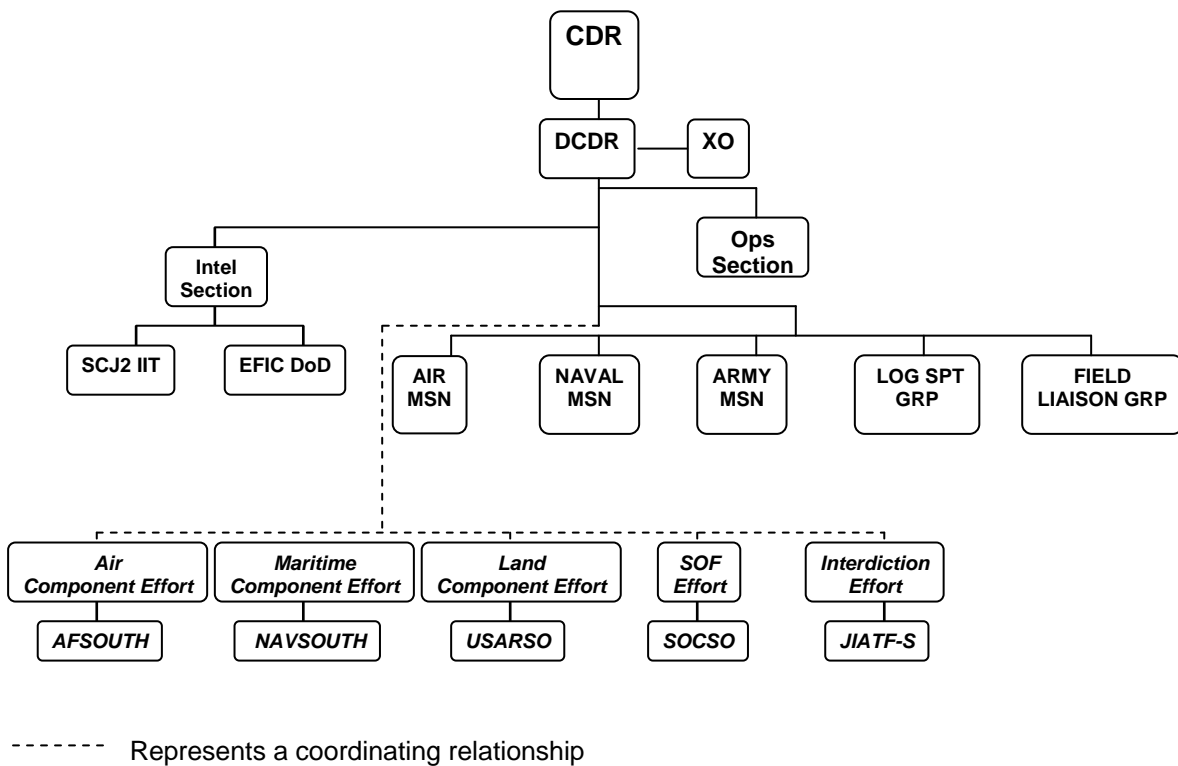


Figure 5. U.S. MILGP - Colombia Reorganization

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IV. ASSESSMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

MILGP Colombia has proven very effective in accomplishing its mission since the implementation of *Plan Colombia*. According the former Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces, General Ospina, “The U.S. Military serving in Colombia is very professional and wants to help their counter-parts. The MILGP is ready to do any job asked of them. They know what’s going on. They know the terrain. And they are along side of us.”⁷⁰ However, the MILGP has been inefficient from time to time in the support that has been provided. This lack of efficiency comes from the fact that as funding increased, the appropriate personnel increases needed to track the resources (program managers, operations officers, budget managers, contracting officers, property book officers, etc.) were not increased at a commensurate rate. MILGP-Colombia has habitually been undermanned considering the number of tasks undertaken by the MILGP at anyone time. Operations in the CENTCOM AOR have accelerated the situation. Physical workspace for the MILGP hasn’t increased to meet the expanding needs of the organization over the past 6 years. As the MILGP Executive Officer, LTC Patrick Doty, explains, “Physical space is a key issue.”⁷¹ The increase in the MILGP’s personnel has not lead to a commensurate increase in our work space. This problem is exacerbated by the inflation of the DoS ranks which has actually increased physical space requirements for the other interagency organizations.”⁷²

⁷⁰ General Carlos Ospina Ovalle, Former Colombian Armed Forces Commander. Interview by author in Spanish, (Bogotá, Colombia, 29 September 2006).

⁷¹ Currently, MILGP personnel are allocated 4.3 square meters of work space in the Embassy, whereas the other interagency members have between 7.6 and 14.1 square meters per person. The physical space shortage can appear at face value to be prestige issue, but the reality is the cramp quarters cause heat, safety, and health problems. This in turn leads to productivity losses.

⁷² LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (29 September 2006).

Both the shortage of personnel and lack of adequate work space are relatively easy issues to resolve. The greater challenges revolve around the ability to obtain and maintain quality individuals in the MILGP and command & control of subordinate MILGP assets. Fortunately, these challenges have not prevented MILGP-Colombia from accomplishing its missions, but they have led to a lack of expediency, duplication of effort, and unnecessary wasted time for both the MILGP Commander and his staff. But most importantly, the greatest factor that has caused MILGP Colombia to both succeed and suffer, has been leadership. The MILGP's key leaders, the MILGP Commander, the leadership exerted by SOUTHCOM and its service components have been responsible for accomplishing the miraculous, but also at times for contributing to ineffective bureaucracy.⁷³

B. PERSONNEL SELECTION

Efforts to screen personnel assigned to Colombia both on permanent change of station (PCS) and on a temporary duty (TDY) basis must improve. Because on-going operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have stretched the U.S. military, USMILGP Colombia does not always receive neither the necessary quantity nor quality of personnel it needs to sustain continuity and provide quality support to the COLMIL. The short duration TDY deployments of personnel to Colombia along with an overall lack of qualified personnel have hampered efficiency. Of the 296 total personnel assigned to the USMILGP – Colombia at the time of writing, 192 are active duty military and 104 are DoD civilians or contractors. Also, of the 296 total, 118 are permanent party (2-3 years) while the remaining 178 personnel are temporary duty personnel that are deployed from 3-12 months.⁷⁴ TDY personnel are provided through SOUTHCOM by the services with oversight by SOUTHCOM's service components. Active participation by the service component commanders (flag officers) to ensure that the MILGP billets

⁷³ "Key leader" is defined in this context as an officer in the rank of O5 (LTC/CDR) or higher.

⁷⁴ TSgT Charlotte A. Llonza. Personnel Specialist: US MILGP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (27 September 2006).

get filled by the services has reduced some of the problem. Unfortunately, not all service components are equally committed to resolving this problem. U.S. Army South (USARSO), under the leadership of MG Jack Gardner, made huge strides in 2003-2004 in improving the Army personnel situation for MILGP Colombia.

By maintaining bi-weekly direct communication with the MILGP Commander, COL Simeon Trombitas, MG Gardner kept abreast of not only the operations, logistics, and intelligence shortfalls of the MILGP, but also the personnel shortages by type and MOS. USARSO made it policy that each U.S. Army soldier deploying to Colombia as an individual augmentee (through the World-wide Individual Augmentation System [WIAS] system) had to pass through the Headquarters and personally meet with the commander. USARSO maintained a 3 person section in the Headquarters to track the individual augmentee process. This included TDY personnel filling both *Plan Colombia* and the Joint Planning Assistance & Training (JPAT) billets. The USARSO Commander used the opportunity informally to interview the candidates who were being deployed to Colombia to ensure that they fully understood the importance of their mission. However, by the time he interviewed each individual, they were practically getting ready to board the plane to Bogotá. Although the USARSO policy ensured that the administrative practices were enforced (theater/country clearance, shot records, weapons qualification), it did not afford the opportunity to reject an individual based on character, maturity, qualifications or allow enough time to find a replacement without having a significant gap for that position. Therefore, it appears clear that a personal interview (not necessarily conducted by a General Officer) should be undertaken early in the assignment process to ensure the best candidates are selected. This has since gotten worse as the Army no longer validates WIAS billets which have a Spanish language requirement. When requisitioning personnel, the Army Mission must state that Spanish is preferred but not required and hope that through the informal personnel selection process with USARSO that Spanish speakers are selected and deployed. “This is especially important due to the fact

that our LNOs and mission are physically embedded in the Colombian Army Staff and must coordinate directly with the partner nation daily,” claims the current Army Mission Chief.⁷⁵ “The Army staff, possibly as a result of the need to rely on translators in Iraq and as a result of severe personnel shortages, may be forgetting the value of direct communication with coalition counterparts.”⁷⁶

The Planning Assistance & Training Team (PATT) is a MILGP subordinate organization that can suffer when incoming personnel are not properly screened. PATT personnel are not assigned through the WIAS system as well, but they are coordinated through Security Assistance and Training Management Organization (SATMO) in lieu of USARSO. Until 2005, SATMO did not conduct an interview and a selection process, other than trying to ensure that incoming personnel meet the minimum language requirements (DLPT 2/2). However, the PATT in Colombia currently reviews each candidate’s ORB/ERB and calls each individual to conduct a telephonic interview. The telephonic interview is as crucial as ensuring that the language requirement is met. LTC Erik Valentzas, PATT Colombia Chief argues that, “by having my personnel chief talk with prospective advisors, we can quickly assess an individual’s mission focus, confidence in operating in a remote location, and determine if there are any major family issues that would hinder his performance. We also conduct part of the interview in Spanish to validate the individuals DLPT score.”⁷⁷ Interestingly, some individuals who score a 2/2 (listening/reading) in Spanish, lack the ability to speak or write in Spanish. Sometimes a native Spanish speaker, whose English is poor, will communicate better than a language school graduate who has scored a 3/3. This is a systemic deficiency with the DoD’s language testing system. On occasion, candidates will be rejected due to lack of qualification. LTC Valentzas went on to claim,

⁷⁵ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, (Bogotá, Colombia, 20 December 2006).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ LTC Erik Valentzas, PATT Chief: US MILGP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (22 September 2006).

In the past we either accepted the individual being offered to us, or gapped the position for several months until another qualified candidate was found. In most cases, it was better to have someone with less than optimal qualifications today, than to try and wait for a better candidate that might not have come along for another 6 months. Fortunately, we have gotten more pro-active and are able to find quality candidates in time so that positions do not need to be gapped.⁷⁸

The smaller an organization, the more important it becomes to recruit quality people. It is difficult for a weak performer to hide in a small organization and it is equally as difficult for the rest of the organization to pick up the slack of a sub-standard performer when there is only a hand full of personnel. When working with a partner nation in an advisory role, it is even more important to have individuals who will well represent not only their respective service, but also the United States of America. For many members of our partner nation militaries, the only personal contact they will ever have with the U.S. military is their one-on-one dealings with our personnel serving in advisory roles. Commenting from his advisory experience in Iraq, CPT Bruno Zitto, summarized the negative impact of sub-standard advisors on the overall reputation of the U.S. Military, “they will always remember the dumb ass advisor and believe that the rest of us that come along later are just like him.”⁷⁹

C. COMMAND & CONTROL

1. MILGP & MILGP Subordinates

By far, the command and control relationships within MILGP – Colombia pose the greatest organizational challenge. Command and control (C²) for the MILGP Commander has become a challenge due to increased size, different service doctrines, different service cultures, different authorities based on

⁷⁸ LTC Erik Valentzas, PATT Chief: US MILGP-Colombia. Interview by author, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, (29 April 2006).

⁷⁹ CPT Bruno Zitto. Interview by author. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA (30 October 2006).

funding, rating chains, and personalities. The relationship between the organic service missions and the MILGP HQ's vary depending on the service and individual personalities. Historically, there has not been a problem between the MILGP HQ and the Army Mission (ARMIS) for three reasons: First, the MILGP Commander is a U.S. Army 48B FAO O6 and the ARMIS Chief is a U.S. Army 48B FAO O5. Second, the MILGP Commander is a U.S. Army Officer 80% of the time (because Colombia is an Army centric operation).⁸⁰ Lastly, roughly seventy percent (70%) of the MILGP Executive Officers served in the ARMIS prior to serving in the MILGP. These factors fortify the MILGP-ARMIS relationship. The relationship between the MILGP Commander and the other services has at times been more complicated. Not only are both the NAVMIS and AFMIS Chiefs the same rank as the MILGP Commander, but they are also products of different service cultures as well. Ironically the mission with the largest FMF, CD and IMET budgets, along with the most robust Security Cooperation activities, is the only service mission run by a Lieutenant Colonel – the U.S. Army Mission.

2. MILGP & Service Components

SOUTHCOM and the MILGP enjoy the traditional senior/subordinate relationship. However, the relationships between the MILGP and the service components are a little different. SOUTHCOM's service components -- U.S. Army South (USARSO), U.S. Air Force South (SOUTHAF), Marine Forces South (MARFORSOUTH), U.S. Naval Forces SOUTH (NAVSOUTH) -- are commanded by a two-star general, four-star general, three-star general, and three-star admiral, respectively. Although the MILGP service components -- Army Mission (ARMIS), Air Force Mission (AFMIS), and Naval Mission (NAVMIS) -- don't work for SOUTHCOM's service components, there is a clearly an important relationship between them. Service components provide each service mission

⁸⁰ Sonia Castañeda Peralta, Executive Assistant: US MILGP-Colombia. Interview by author. Centro Administrativo Nacional, Bogotá, Colombia, (27 Sep 2006).

(or should provide each service mission) with the reach back capability to provide the expertise and surge capacity that is often not present in a MILGP. Much like the United States Army trains, equips, and serves as a force provider for the Joint Forces, SOUTHCOM's service components fulfill similar roles for their Combatant Command.

At times, service components will work special initiatives for SOUTHCOM through their respective service missions. For example, USARSO received mission guidance from SOUTHCOM to help professionalize the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps throughout Latin America. In Colombia, USARSO accomplished this by helping to establish a Colombian Sergeants Major Academy. This was a SOUTHCOM directive to USARSO that was worked through the ARMIS; and serves as an excellent example of how organizational synergy can accomplish the most daunting tasks.⁸¹

Each service component should ensure that its goals for each country are synchronized with those of SOUTHCOM, the MILGP, and the respective service mission. This is done through a service component review of the Theater Security Cooperation Plan. Aside from synchronizing long term programs, it is just as important to synchronize day to day operations. An example of where this has historically been problematic is the intelligence and air support arena. The relationship between 12th Air Force (AFSOUTH), SOUTHCOM, AFMIS-Colombia, ACCE-Colombia, and MILGP-Colombia are convoluted. If the MILGP has an intelligence requirement, or even an in country airlift request, the process is as follows:

1. MILGP subordinate develops an airlift requirement.
2. Request goes to MILGP's Airlift Coordinator (in ACCE) for scheduling.

⁸¹ The U.S. taught the first class to the COLAR, then the COLAR taught the second class under our supervision and had international students and other COLMIL services in attendance. Now SOUTHCOM just funds the program. This is an excellent example of providing a capability to a Partner Nation which they eventually institutionalize. Once the Colombians incur the costs, than the program will be truly nationalized.

3. Airlift Coordinator⁸² sends request to SOUTHCOM (Miami)
4. SOUTHCOM validates request.
5. Validated request sent to 12th Air Force (Tucson) for approval.
6. Approved ATO sent back down to the ACCE (Colombia) for execution.

This process is used to schedule all air assets, intelligence and the contracted air support provided by two small twin engine aircraft (*Evergreen Aviation* and OSACOM). The contracted air consists of a set amount of flight hours per month for a CASA 212 aircraft. The MILGP also has a set amount of hours for the OSACOM C-12. In essence, a theater-wide airlift management doctrine is being used to manage two small transport aircraft. “We are not a Theater of War. The U.S. Air Force is trying to apply a theater of war strategy to Colombia. The doctrine is interesting, but not relevant here in Colombia,” claims a mission chief who must endure this bureaucratic process everytime he conducts a COLMIL unit visit or sends one of his staff members to conduct an assessment or mission.

3. MILGP & SOF

The relationship between the MILGP and the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) – SOCSOUTH is complicated as well. An unnamed Embassy source claimed, “command and control of SOF elements can be the most difficult challenge for the MILGP.” The TSOCs receive Special Forces Operational Detachments (Charlie, Bravo, Alpha) to deploy in theater to conduct FID missions. These ODC/B/A’s are under the operational control (OPCON) of the TSOC from the 7th Special Forces Group.⁸³ When the Operational Detachments deploy into Colombia, they remain OPCON to the TSOC and fall under the Tactical Control (TACON) of the MILGP for force protection with OPCON further delegated to the SOC FWD in Colombia. TACON allows the MILGP Commander

⁸² The MILGP Airlift Coordinator was originally part of the Logistics Mission, but is now part of the ACCE.

⁸³ 7th Special Forces Group (7th SFG) is the Special Forces group that is aligned with the SOUTHCOM AOR.

to adjust the location of the ODA's, but not adjust the mission set. The MILGP influences the mission set executed in Colombia in advance via the Deployment Order process which requires MILGP and Ambassador approval as part of the staffing process. The MILGP Commander, as the Risk Determination Authority (RDA), has force protection responsibility for all elements both permanently and temporarily assigned in Colombia. The restrictions on movement that result from FP requirements are the biggest complaint for the SF elements in Colombia, many of which are accustomed to the freedom of movement they had while deployed in the CENTCOM AOR.

One concept that has been floated between the commands is to turn MILGP-Colombia into a Joint Task Force (JTF) or a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). Although the Colombians would not care as long as U.S. support did not languish, the idea is not acceptable to the Ambassador or the SECDEF, because primacy for the lead agency would change from the Department of State to the Department of Defense. A JTF is normally organized to direct combat operations, which the United States is not conducting in Colombia. Aside from not being politically acceptable, a JSOTF is even less justified since the number of Special Operations Forces has been reduced and the preponderance of support to Colombia is via conventional or non-SOF Security Assistance and Security Cooperation programs.

4. Supported/Supporting Commander Relationship

In an effort to streamline command and control within Colombia, SOUTHCOM is considering the implementation of a "Supporting/Supported Commander" relationship.⁸⁴ As defined, the Supported Commander would be the MILGP Commander and all other Commanders would be the Supporting Commanders. The MILGP believes that the Supporting/Supported Commander relationship "is the command relationship best suited to the complex and fluid joint environment in Colombia while preserving functional focus and providing

⁸⁴ The support provided by the former USARSO Commander and the command climate that he created in USARSO in 2003-2005 with regards to Colombia, exemplifies the supporting commander concept.

more effective C2 systems.”⁸⁵ This relationship structure is a step in the right direction, but its effectiveness will be dependent on the various commanders’ and mission chiefs’ personalities and attitudes. The intent of this relationship is to avoid the doctrinal debates over OPCON/TACON relationships and to ensure that all Security Cooperation activities are synchronized and coordinated properly with the partner nation.

D. LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a key aspect in any organization. Unlike conventional Army units which have a focus on a specific level of warfare (Battalion - Tactical Level, Corps/Division – Operational Level, Combatant Command - Strategic Level), the MILGP has subordinate elements that focus on all three levels. This forces the MILGP Commander to focus on tactical issues (logistical re-supply, tactical training of Colombian units, maintenance issues, etc.), operational issues (FMF, fostering intra-service cooperation, COLAF air support to COLAR, etc.), and strategic issues (CMO support to the Colombian Center for Integrated Action, increasing the role of the Office of the Vice Minister of Defense). This requires a versatile MILGP Commander who can not only focus on many things at one time (as expected out of all commanders), but also must be agile enough to jump back and forth between the levels for planning, advising, and decision making. LTC Mike Brown, US Army Mission Chief, explains, “Foreign Area Officers (especially MILGP Commanders) have to work with and balance the demands of three distinctly different customers: the partner nation, USG agencies, and the COCOM.” The ability of a Foreign Area Officer (FAO) to operate within this joint, inter-agency, multinational triangle will determine in the end his success or failure as a *Soldier-Statesman*.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ US Military Group – Colombia, “MILGRP-COL Reorg” Memo (Bogotá, September 2006), 1.

⁸⁶ *Soldier-Statesman* is the nickname given to the U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer (FAO) based on the nature of the mission they routinely execute.

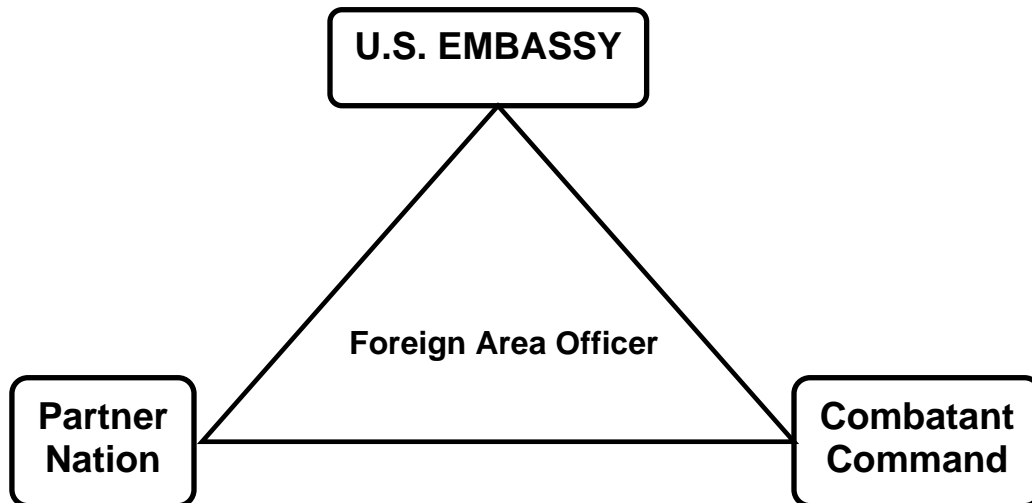


Figure 6. The Foreign Area Officer Triangle

1. MILGP Commander

The MILGP Commander's position is authorized a U.S. Army Colonel - Foreign Area Officer (O6-48B). However, the selection and approval authority for that specific billet resides with the SOUTHCOM Commander and therefore could be filled by whomever the COCOM Commander selects. In recent years it has been filled by both Foreign Area Officers (Operations Support), as well as Special Forces and Ranger officers (Operations). Success for past MILGRP leaders has not been a function of their branch or specialty, but rather a function of their experience and capabilities:

- Fluency in Spanish
- Prior SAO experience
- Prior experience working with the COLMIL and LATAM militaries
- Leadership experience
- Combined experience at Tactical, Operational, and Strategic levels
- Personality

The current selection process which includes direct participation by the Combatant Command has resulted in the choice of highly-effective MILGP

Commanders in recent years. However, due to the recently implemented Officer Professional Management System (OPMS), within 5-7 years it will be difficult to find an O6 Foreign Area Officer who has had tactical leadership experience above the Company Command Level. Conversely, it will also be difficult to find an Operator who has experience in an SAO.⁸⁷ This will present a challenge for the Army, which has become the model in the Joint community for producing well-rounded FAOs, to produce senior field grade officers with enough operational experience to lead a SAO that performs much more than just the traditional Security Assistance mission. Finding the right officers to lead a Security Cooperation organization that supports a country at war will become a huge challenge.

2. MILGP Key Leaders

The MILGP Commander retains responsibility for selecting his subordinate leadership. Ideally, SOUTHCOM provides several candidates which the MILGP Commander may interview and subsequently select based on their individual merit. This holds especially true for Mission Chief billets, but not necessarily of the other O4/O5 staff billets. But it is those Field Grade officers that make the preponderance of decisions and interact with the COLMIL on a daily basis. Therefore, their selection must be given special attention and only the most qualified and dedicated officers should be chosen.

3. Service Leadership

SOUTHCOM's leadership and that of its service components also play a crucial role in the success of the MILGP. First, component services must realize and accept their support role as a force and resource provider as one of the many responsibilities that they have. SOUTHCOM's Army Service Component

⁸⁷ OPMS 21 assesses an officer into the Foreign Area Officer functional area at their 5-7th year of service. Under the new regulations, officers assessed and trained by FAO branch will single track FAO assignments for the rest of their career. Under the previous system, officers would dual track between their basic branch (Infantry, Armor, Engineer) and FAO branch, alternating assignments between the two. This system produced Colonels that would become SAO Chiefs (MILGRP Commanders) with usually two assignments 4-7 years as a FAO and at least experience as a Battalion Executive Officer/S3 and even possible Battalion Command experience.

Command (ASCC), the United States Army South (USARSO), fully understood their supporting role which was instilled in the staff by their former commander, MG Jack Gardner. He maintained contact with the MILGP Commander an average of twice a month via telephone and several more times via email, as well as conducting quarterly visits. For fear of overburdening the MILGP, he was also willing to cancel his trips at the last minute should the MILGP deem his visit unnecessary or was overburdened with other competing priorities. MG Gardner made his staff responsive to the requests from the MILGP. This required a shift in priorities for USARSO and was the opposite of the stereotypical higher headquarters that demands answers, reports, and statistics from its subordinates while providing limited support. This was due to the fact that the USARSO Commander accepted the fact that his command, like all of the other service components, is a force provider and supporter for SOUTHCOM. With a greater emphasis on pushing support to the MILGP, USARSO was able to assist the MILGP by:

- Improving not only the number of personnel, but also the quality of personnel
- Improving intelligence support
- Streamlining logistical support
- Expediting the requisitioning and tracking of standard army items purchased through ULLS-G for the COLMIL
- Executing base support operations
- Managing Force Protection construction
- Establishing a Sergeant Major's Academy in Colombia⁸⁸

USARSO became a model of how a service component should aggressively push support as needed.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ United States Army South. *USARSO 5-Year Colombia Support Plan* (San Antonio, July 2004).

⁸⁹ This information was obtained first hand by the author while serving as the Aide de Camp for the Commanding General of USARSO from July 2004- October 2005.

At the theater strategic level, the U.S. Southern Command plays a crucial leadership role by implementing guidance and directives from the National Command Authority from the President through the Secretary of Defense. SOUTHCOM serves as the link between Washington's politico-military authorities and MILGP-Colombia. One of several key leadership task that SOUTHCOM has recently accomplished was to lobby successfully for the increase of military/civilian personnel ratio from 400/400 to 800/600, respectively.⁹⁰ However, as previously mentioned, competing requirements in the CENTCOM AOR have made Colombia a strategic economy of force. Therefore, the gains from SOUTHCOM's legislative victory as been somewhat diminished.

⁹⁰ Collen Cook, *Colombia: Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C: Library of Congress, 2006), 18.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. MILGP - COLOMBIA'S APPLICABILITY

Colombia's success goes hand and hand with U.S. support. In a world of constrained resources, we are forced to do more with less. MILGP Colombia serves as a model for a Security Cooperation Organization that executes Security Assistance, Foreign Internal Defense, and Security Cooperation missions. Moreover, the FID mission in Colombia includes both the doctrinal *Indirect* and *Direct Support (not involving combat operations)*. The magnitude of the Security Assistance mission combined with breadth of activities that fall into the FID category and Security Cooperation umbrella, make Colombia a unique case. Furthermore, it is likely that many other situations may arise in the next 10-20 years that will require a U.S response that is similar to that of the Colombian model.⁹¹

B. JOINT SECURITY ASSISTANCE & COOPERATION COMMAND

By implementing MILGP Colombia's reorganization proposal, along with a few modifications, we can develop the doctrinal bases for a *Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Command (JSACC)*. A JSACC, as an organization concept utilizes:

- A traditional Security Assistance Organization⁹² as a base
 - with service mission (ARMIS, AFMIS, NAVMIS)
 - with a more robust HQs (J1, J3)
- Augmented with functional missions as required
 - Advisory (like a PATT or OPATT)
 - Intelligence (TAT, Fusion Cell, ITT, etc.) – J2

⁹¹ The Philippines is the only other recent historic example that comes close to Colombia. The major difference is that the Philippines had a Joint Task Force because of the solid intelligence revealing Islamic fundamentalists ties to the AO. This distinction as a JTF alleviates the command and control issues because they are specifically defined.

⁹² Sometimes referred to as a Security Cooperation Organization. Can be any one of the organizations listed in Annex A.

- SOF (ODA/B/C, PSE, CA, etc.)
- Logistic – J4
- Hand selected leadership
 - JSACC Commander personally selected by COCOM
Commander
 - Given full authorities similar to a JTF Commander
 - Considered equivalent of an O6 level command
 - Mission Chiefs personally approved by JSACC Commander
 - Nominative position for which officers compete
 - Considered equivalent of an O5 level command

JSACCs must respect the partner nation's sovereignty and work within the political setting established by the Embassy. The JSACCs must be able to train (or coordinate for training), advise on operations, execute security assistance, be prepared to provide limited operational support (or coordinate for it), and execute the plethora of security cooperation tasks. JSACCs should be modular and able to rapidly grow to meet expanding needs of a partner nation during times of crisis. A JSACC should be stood up in a partner nation's country as many years ahead of a projected contingency as can be predicted. The JSACC should utilize the long range tools, such as MTTs, PEPs, DVPs, HCAs, along with Security Assistance funds to build capability, maintain access, and improve relations before a contingency ever arises. When the contingency does occur, our partner nations will be well prepared and can be supported by the JSACC utilizing the short range tools available; JCETs, Airlift Support, Intelligence Sharing, etc. DoD funding can then be leveraged to meet the immediate shortcomings of the partner nation in terms of non-lethal equipment. A JSACC may be an economy of force operation in the pre-contingency timeframe when conducting indirect support. The framework should allow for rapid expansion with the ability to command and control the various modules that may be added when the contingency occurs and direct support and direct support (not involving

combat operations) is required. JSACCs will give the U.S. military an efficient organization that can operate in the “gray area.” This “gray area” is best described by LTC Mike Brown: “We (the military) are not doing what we are doctrinally designed to do (in Colombia). U.S. doctrine is geared to war or peace. Colombia is in the middle somewhere between the two.”⁹³

C. RECOMMENDATIONS: MILGP - COLOMBIA

1. Rank Restructuring

MILGP-Colombia should downgrade the rank of the Navy and Air Mission Chiefs to O5 (Commander and Lieutenant Colonel, respectively) to match that of the Army Mission Chief, who currently runs a much larger program than that of the other two services. As a senior Air Force officer in the MILGP stated, “There is no need for an O6 Mission Chief. You have an Army O5 that runs a bigger program than the other services. Rank doesn’t seem to be a problem with his credibility with the partner nation.” The O6 Air Force billet should be used to fill the Deputy MILGP Commander position. This would create a more joint leadership environment. The Navy Mission Chief billet could be swapped with an O5 Naval billets at SOUTHCOM. This would give the SOUTHCOM an additional O6 billets in the HQs. By lowering grades the pool of potential candidates is also increased.

2. Unified Rating Chain

Section chiefs in Colombia are rated by the MILGP Commander and senior rated by the SOUTHCOM Deputy Commander. Those officers that do not work directly for the MILGP Commander (i.e. ACCE Chief) should have the MILGP Commander as the “Intermediate Rater.” Wire diagrams are great, but people respond to those who rate them or control their budget, regardless of what doctrine says. Such adjustments in the rating chains will only help enforce the Supported/Supporting Commander relationship.

⁹³ LTC Mike Brown, Army Mission Chief: US MILGRP-Colombia. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (29 September 2006).

3. PEP Re-alignment

One specific change to improve the current reorganization model and improve chances for continued success would be to move the operational Professional Exchange Program (PEP) positions from the various missions to the Field Liaison Group (FLG). The six current PEPs are supported by their respective missions (Army and Naval).⁹⁴ The AFEAU PEP (along with any operational-type PEPs that may be added in the future) should move under the control of the FLG (formerly known as the PATT). A more radical concept would be to move the remaining institutionally oriented PEPs under the FLG as well, however, this contradicts the current paradigm whereas each service is responsible for institution building. Consolidation under the FLG, whose sole focus is advising, would further synergize the institutional advice given to the COLMIL. The FLG has a robust enough personnel and operations section that they could easily manage the additional advisors. Furthermore, the PEPs would be able to go through the same thorough indoctrination that all of the PATT advisors experience. A consolidation of the PEP's would also reduce the current span of control, which is already been extended beyond its doctrinal limits.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS: USSOUTHCOM

1. Supported/Supporting Commander Relationship

SOUTHCOM must continue to support and enforce the Supported/Supporting Commander relationship within the MILGP. This can be facilitated by allowing the MILGP Commander the ability to interview and hand pick the future mission chiefs, especially the ones of commensurate rank (should Mission Chief positions not be downgraded to O5). First and foremost SOUTHCOM must ensure that all service components realize the importance of their supporting role for the MILGP. They must enforce the command

⁹⁴ The Army Mission currently has three PEPs (Lancero School, NCO Academy, and CT unit). The Naval Mission currently has three PEPs as well (Naval Academy, JTF Caribe, Covenas).

relationships and ensure that the Supporting Commanders are supporting the Supported Commander as specified.

2. Tour of Duty Lengths

Tour of duty lengths must be increased. Continue to improve on continuity by extending the quality individuals and seeking longer-term TDY/TCS/PCS assignments. Since Colombia is a hazardous duty location, currently permanent personnel are assigned for two years (with an option for an additional one year extension). The problem lies with the temporary duty personnel. The U.S. Army fills the PATT temporary change of station (TCS) positions for one year and the *Plan Colombia* and JPATT TDY positions for six months. The Navy fills temporary positions for four to six months and the Air Force fills for four months. Understanding the Air Force's concept of expeditionary manning, they must come to the realization that in four months, even the best airman can accomplish very little. This offers an example of how cultural differences between service personnel policies have a direct impact on a joint organizations' mission effectiveness. According to one of the Mission Chiefs, "based on my experience it takes 4-6 months for the average TDY person to become effective due to the non-traditional military environment."

SOUTHCOM should bring the service manning disparity, to include the drawbacks of the Air Forces's (4-month) Expeditionary concept, front and center to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Not only does the current disparity in deployment times cause friction and animosity between the services, it also detracts from the ability of a Joint organization to accomplish its mission. This is an opportunity for SOUTHCOM to exercise not only the leadership responsibility it has for MILGP-Colombia, but also it is an opportunity to raise an operational problem that is not only affecting SOUTHCOM, but all of the other COCOMs actively engaged in the GWOT as well.

3. Establish a JSOA

To mitigate the command and control issue with the TSOC, a Joint Special Operations Area (JSOA) should be delineated in the appropriate areas of

Colombia to allow the SOF community the unrestricted freedom of movement that they require in order to allow them more unfettered movement in order to support all types of SOF activities. This would eliminate the MILGP Commander's RDA responsibilities for only the SOF elements operating in the designated area. It would not mean, however, that the SOF element would have to control all U.S. elements in that area and that other MILGP elements could move through that areas as per SOP based on a CONOP approved by the RDA (MILGP Commander).

4. Delegation of Air Tasking Authority

The MILGP Commander should be given authorization to control the aircraft in his country. The ACCE should plan and task all air requirements based on the MILGP Commander's approval (approval authority should not be delegated any lower than the MILGP Commander). The ACCE should inform both SOUTHCOM and 12th Air Force of all requirements and the planned missions to support those requirements. Naturally, SOUTHCOM and 12th Air Force could influence missions that they don't see as valid based on exception.

5. MILGP Parity with DoS

SOUTHCOM leadership should engage the Ambassador in regards to the work space allocation for the MILGP within the Embassy compound. The disparity in average square footage of workspace should be sufficient justification to gain additional facilities. The fact that some military officers in the Embassy feel that the Embassy's senior leadership looks at the MILGP as a "red-headed step child," makes this a great issue for SOUTHCOM to work on the behalf of the MILGP. Resolving such parochial issues are exactly the type of interagency problems that must be dealt with to succeed in an environment such as a Colombia.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

1. FAO In-Country Training Positions

The Department of Army G3 (FAO Proponent), should allocate two In-Country Training positions for Colombia. These positions could be utilized by the MILGP to fill operations billets in the ARMIS or advisor positions in the PATT based on the MILGP's needs and the officer's operational skill sets. Based on the overwhelming requirements of the U.S. Army and fact that we have unfilled billets in commands that are supporting the GWOT, FAO proponent must re-allocate the traditional school-type billets in other Latin American Countries in order to fill operational needs in Colombia. One counter argument to this idea is that it may cause a political problem with another partner nation that may lose their ICT billet. The counter to that argument is that most countries realize that the United States is at war, so that the billet may remain unfilled temporarily. The United States could also allow that partner nation to continue to send personnel without the United States reciprocating. Another argument is that the FAO trainee will not receive the regional experience that ICT aims to provide. Therefore, after 10-12 months of ICT in Colombia, officers could be given a TDY budget and allowed 30-60 days to conduct regional travel. Creating ICT billets in Colombia will not only benefit the MILGP by providing additional ambitious young officers, it will give 48B FAO trainees the opportunity to experience SOUTHCOM's main effort, increase language skills by working with the COLMIL directly on a daily basis, establish long term personal relationships with one of SOUTHCOM's strongest partner nations, and help alleviate the personal shortfalls in the MILGP.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

1. Implementation of the JSACC Concept

The Department of Defense should consider the formation of Joint Security Assistance & Cooperation Commands (JSACCs) as an economy of force tool to help develop partner nations' capabilities, to establish and maintain

long term mil-mil relationships, and to set the conditions for success of potential U.S. operations in specific countries.

2. Develop Joint Security Cooperation Doctrine

Currently, U.S. doctrine exists on both ends of the spectrum; for combat operations and peacetime training and administration. DoD must follow suit after eliminating the organization gap by eliminating the doctrinal gap that exists by creating a comprehensive joint doctrine for providing the full-spectrum of assistance and support to a partner nation that falls in the “gray area.”

3. Increase Personnel to Colombia

DoD should leverage the increase in the Congressional mandated personnel cap. By doing so, DoD would be reinforcing success. With possible reduced troop deployments in CENTCOM, an additional 90 personnel (to include SOF) assigned to Colombia in the appropriate specialties and grades would provide much needed support. Because of the COLMIL’s increased competency and propensity to work with the United States, each individual working in Colombia can potentially accomplish much more when compared to their potential working with another partner nation.

SOCOM should deploy at least three more ODA’s back to Colombia, bringing the average in country to six ODA’s under an ODB. This should be the bare bones minimum. As the current SOCOM Commander admitted, “we are missing a golden opportunity in Colombia right now.”⁹⁵

4. Improve Service Personnel Augmentation Systems

Force the component services to develop an augmentation system that forces each service to search out the best personnel for specific jobs that require a language or experience with a specific country. The burden should be taken away from the MILGP and PATT to search out the best qualified candidates. Analyzing the U.S. Army’s system for providing personnel on a temporary basis to Colombia reveals a simple solution for increasing the quality of those

⁹⁵ GEN Doug Brown, Commander: USSOCOM. Interview by author, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. (7 November 2006).

deployed. Currently, MILGP – Colombia receives its Army temporary duty augmentees (TDY) through WIAS. WIAS selects personnel based on the names submitted by units tasked by the Army Staff. For instance, if the MILGP requests a Medical Logistics Specialist (91J30), WIAS will submit a tasking requirement to the Department of the Army G3, which in turn passes the requirement to U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM). FORSCOM then tasks a unit that has that specific MOS. That unit will hopefully find a volunteer with the language skills necessary to fill the billet, although by regulation they are not required to do so. However, there may be another Army unit that has a more qualified individual with the desire to deploy to Colombia. However, they remain uninformed due to the way the system functions. The positions should be advertised on a service website and open service wide to allow volunteers to submit their names through their Major Command (MACOM) to WIAS for selection. The billets in Colombia must be treated as a nominative position for which you must compete, much like a Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) opportunity.

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APPENDIX A. SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Title</u>		<u>Locations</u>			
JUSMAG	Joint US Military <u>Advisory</u> Group	1	Thailand			
JUSMAG	Joint US Military <u>Assistance</u> Group	1	Philippines			
JUSMAG	Joint US Military <u>Affairs</u> Group	1	Korea			
	US Military Assistance Advisory					
USMAAG	Group	2	Dom Rep	Peru		
MAP	Military Assistance Program	1	Jordan			
MDAO	Mutual Defense Assistance Office	1	Japan			
MILGP	Military Group	9	Colombia	El Sal	Argentina	
	(or					
MILGRP)			Ecuador	Guatemala	Honduras	
			Bolivia	Chile	Venezuela	
USMLO	US Military Liaison Office	7	Belize	Brazil	Caribbean	
			Haiti	Jamaica	Guyana	
			Trinidad & Tobago			
NLO	Navy Liaison Office	1	Bahamas			
ODC	Office of Defense Cooperation	43	Uruguay	(Europe & Africa)		
ODR	Office of Defense Representation	2	Costa Rica	Pakistan		
OMC	Office of Military Cooperation	5	Bahrain	Egypt	Oman	
			Yemen	Kuwait	Afghanistan	
SAO	Security Assistance Organization	1	Ethiopia			
	Security Assistance Augmentation					
SAAO	Office	5	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan	
			Uzbekistan	Turkmenistan		
USLO	US Liaison Office	5	Kenya	UAE	Qatar	
					Saudi	
USMTM	US Military Training Mission	1	Eritrea	Djibouti	Arabia	

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APPENDIX B. *PLAN COLOMBIA*

A. *PLAN COLOMBIA* DEFINED

Depending on whom you talk to, *Plan Colombia* has taken on several different meanings over the years. Defining *Plan Colombia* from the various aspects of the different actors involved is a difficult task in itself. An even more challenging task is assessing the effectiveness and impact of *Plan Colombia*, to include U.S. support for the program. With the official end of *Plan Colombia* in December 2005, the Colombians are currently working on a continuation strategy. The biggest question is the future level of U.S. support. Many factors will come into play as to the extent of support the United States will provide Colombia in the future.

Plan Colombia is the, “Colombian national plan designed by President Pastrana in 1999 to strengthen the State, achieve peace and prosperity, and fight against the illegal drug trade.”⁹⁶ The concept behind *Plan Colombia* was first introduced to the Colombian public in a speech made by President Pastrana on the eight of June 1998 at the Tequendama Hotel in Bogotá. Described by some as a sort of “Marshall Plan” for Colombia, “The Government of Colombia developed *Plan Colombia* as an integrated strategy to meet the most pressing challenges confronting Colombia today -- promoting the peace process, combating the narcotics industry, reviving the Colombian economy, and strengthening the democratic pillars of Colombian society.”⁹⁷ Although *Plan Colombia* is a well integrated national strategy, the focus has been on counter-drug operations. “When we worked on *Plan Colombia*, it had nothing to do with killing FARC, it had a counter-drug (CD) focus,” recalls PATT Chief, LTC Erik

⁹⁶ SOUTHCOM J5, “Synopsis of Plan Colombia” (Miami, January 2002). 1.

⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, “*Support for Plan Colombia*” (Washington, August 2006). <http://www.dos.gov> Last accessed 19 August 2006.

Valentzas.⁹⁸ However, international support for *Plan Colombia* has been weak from the beginning (see Section E).

A Colombian government attempt to negotiate with the FARC between 1998 and 2002, which included the concession of a “*Zona de Despeje*” (a territory the size of Rhode Island) to the guerrillas as part of the peace negotiations, failed when the FARC used the cease fire to procure arms, increase coca production, and take more hostages. After committing what at the time was considered by some as one of the greatest strategic errors ever in Colombian history, President Andres Pastrana redeemed himself and his administration with the development of *Plan Colombia*.⁹⁹ In 1999, the Government of Colombia implemented a six-year comprehensive plan to restore security, strengthen the justice system, eradicate coca cultivation, develop the infrastructure and economy, and restore social order and peace in Colombia (see Annex B for exact timeline). This plan became known as *Plan Colombia*.¹⁰⁰

B. FIVE PART INSTITUTION BUILDING PLAN

Six years after the implementation of *Plan Colombia*, many misperceptions about its origins, scope, and purpose still persist. First and foremost, *Plan Colombia* is not a U.S. plan. The GOC requested the assistance of USSOUTHCOM with the development and financing of the plan. But *Plan Colombia* is a Colombian plan, written and executed by Colombians. The United States agrees with goals of Plan Colombia, however, there has been a slight (but not wholly unexpected given the multinational nature of the effort) political

⁹⁸ LTC Erik Valentzas, former SOUTHCOM J5 Desk Officer. Interviewed by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (23 September 2006).

⁹⁹ In reality, the concession of the Despeje to the FARC bought Pastrana time and showed the international community that the FARC was not serious about negotiations. As a result, the FARC lost support in Europe and the United States realized that their support was truly needed. The biggest difference between those negotiations and those that may take place in the near future is the fact that the Colombian Government attempted to negotiate from a position of weakness, whereas future negotiations would be from a position of strength due to the recent success brought about through *Plan Patriota* and the counter-drug effort.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, “*Support for Plan Colombia*” (Washington, July 2006). www.state.gov Last accessed 15 July 2006.

disagreement between Colombia and the United States as to the priorities of the goals (see Annex C). A second misperception is that *Plan Colombia* is strictly a military plan to defeat the illicit drug industry or narco-terrorism. The current military campaign plan, *Plan Patriota*, which seeks to reclaim control of parts of the country currently occupied by guerrillas is of paramount importance to the success of *Plan Colombia*. But is only one element of a comprehensive strategic plan to improve the country as a whole. The simple truth is that security is a necessary pillar for successful post-conflict reconstruction, without which other social and economic programs cannot be achieved. This concept has been reinforced in Iraq where post-conflict nation building has been hampered by a lack of internal security.

Plan Colombia's comprehensive institution building strategy has five specific facets:

- Peace Process
- Economic Reform
- Counter-Drug Policy
- Democratization & Social Reform
- Justice Reform

1. Peace Process

The Peace Process recognizes the role that the international community as both a moderator and a potential source of financial support. But, aside from the United States, the international community has provided little financial support. A few countries, notably Cuba, have attempted to facilitate the peace process between the Government of Colombia and the AUC and ELN. However, the peace process has taken a back seat to the Colombian's emphasis on taking the fight to the guerrillas. In order for the peace process to succeed and negotiations to have a lasting impact, the Government of Colombia realizes that the must reduce the military capabilities of the guerrilla and re-establish territorial control in order to negotiate from a position of strength.

“The armed forces and police must continue to strengthen themselves.”¹⁰¹ This is a challenge for two institutions (the military and police) that both fall under the Ministry of Defense and compete for the same resources, to include U.S. funding. An on-going debate exists as to the actual impact of the exorbitant level of U.S. funding on the pre-existing wedge between the Colombian National Police (CNP) and the Colombian Military (COLMIL). Irregardless, the structural differences between the two services, which have led to many coordination problems at the tactical level and have caused fratricide on more than one occasion, undoubtedly need to be addressed. Former Armed Forces Commander, General Carlos Ospina Ovalle sees separate but complementary missions for the two services: “The police work for mayors, they defend people. They are very important for area control. But the police do not engage in community policing.”¹⁰² This paradigm will have to change when the war comes to an end. In fact, if the police cannot transform from a militarized force to a community focused force faster than the demobilized insurgents can transition from a guerrilla element to a criminal network, then many of the benefits of AUC demobilization will be wasted. A solution might begin with the transfer of the Colombian National Police from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of the Interior, once negotiations with the last remaining terrorist organization begin.

2. Economic Reform

Plan Colombia's economic component consists of fiscal restraint, macroeconomic stabilization, and the promotion of trade. Trade, to include a bilateral free trade agreement with the United States, is the cornerstone of Colombia's economic policy.

¹⁰¹ Government of Colombia, “*Plan Colombia*” (Bogotá, Colombia, 1999). http://www.usip.org/library/pa/colombia/adddoc/plan_colombia_colombia_101999.html Last accessed 26 November 2006.

¹⁰² General Carlos Ospina Ovalle, Former Colombian Armed Forces Commander. Interview by author in Spanish, Bogotá, Colombia, (29 September 2006).

3. Counter-Drug Strategy

The most controversial facet of *Plan Colombia* is the counter-drug section, which has six goals. The principle aim was to reduce coca cultivation by 50% by 2005. The other key objectives of the counter-drug strategy included:

- Integration through Jointness, professionalization, and modernization of the COLMIL
- Integration of a counter-drug strategy into regional and international efforts
- Neutralizing terrorist organizations' financial system
- Combating agents of violence and promoting respect for human rights
- Strengthening and expanding alternative development programs

Colombia has sought to accomplish these objectives through a three phase strategy that sought to regain territorial control of the country once the capital and major metropolitan cities were firmly in the government's hands. The three phases were geographically delineated and timelines set:

- I. Southern Region (Putumayo, Caqueta, Amazonas): 1-2 years
- II. Southern/Central (Guaviare): 2-3 years
- III. Country wide 3-6 years

The CD strategy attempts to define the roles and missions for the Armed Forces. The Colombian Military is responsible for pursuing illegally armed groups, the Colombian National Police is responsible for pursuing drug traffickers, while the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS) – the Colombian equivalent of a combined FBI, DEA and CIA investigates financial crimes.

4. Democratization and Social Development

The Democratization and Social Development component of *Plan Colombia* seeks to accomplish three main objectives, which in the end will apply pressure on insurgent groups. First, make the government, both federal and local, more accountable through anti-corruption programs. Second, emphasize

respect for human rights by both the government and by the insurgents. Finally, construct a national plan for alternative development that will allow for the voluntary abandonment of illicit crops. These programs will regain the support of the rural populace which has turned to groups like the FARC to market illicit crops because the alternatives are often non-existent.

5. Justice Sector Reform

Justice reform targets five objectives that will be accomplished through multi-agency cooperation that ensures fairness, accessibility, and restores public confidence. The five elements of justice reform include:

- Investigate and prosecute crimes and securely incarcerate convicted criminals
- Deprive criminals of illegal profits (asset seizure)
- Combat contraband & strengthen interdiction
- Eliminate corruption
- Reduce demand for illegal substances

Justice issues and an overall weakness in the Colombian judicial process have proven a source of tension in U.S.-Colombian relations. Due to weakness in the Colombian judicial system, Colombia and the United States established an extradition treaty in 1982. Although the 1991 Constitution banned extradition, this provision was changed in 1997. Since then, the biggest fear of Colombian narco traffickers and insurgents has been that of extradition to the United States for trial, where they know their freedom can not be bought.

C. PLAN COLOMBIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The Colombians courted international support by arguing that the drug problem was international and not Colombia specific. But to the dismay of Colombia, the Europeans reneged on their promise to provide substantial support. As one U.S. official in Colombia claimed, “the Europeans promised support to save face, they never had any intention of supporting Colombia with

anything significant.” The United States began to support *Plan Colombia* with multinational engagement and counter-narcotics operations not only in Colombia, but in neighboring Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, and Brazil. In the wake of 11 September 2001, U.S. support to *Plan Colombia* broadened after Congressional legislation allowed for “Expanded Authority to use counter-drug funds for counter-terrorism.”¹⁰³ The Expanded Authority legislation also removed any prior distinction between narco-trafficking and terrorist activities, leading to a more widespread usage of the newer term “*narco-terrorism*” to refer to the threat in Colombia.

Across the eastern border, President Hugo Chavez, the eccentric yet democratically re-elected president of Venezuela, claims that “*Plan Colombia* is the United States plan to build up the military might of Colombia in preparation for an all out cross-border attack into Venezuela.” While more level-headed Venezuelan military officials disagree with the possibilities of an all out invasion of their country, nevertheless they believe that *Plan Colombia* does serve as a destabilizing force in the region.¹⁰⁴

D. ASSESSMENT OF *PLAN COLOMBIA*

The following section assesses *Plan Colombia* by analyzing the results achieved by each of the five pillars. The results vary with the greatest success coming from the counter-drug strategy. The peace process initially made the least progress, but negotiations with the AUC in 2005 were extremely successful.

1. Peace Process

The Peace Process has made significant progress since the start of *Plan Colombia*. Colombia has a functioning individual demobilization program (rewards program) for those insurgents willing to turn themselves in accordance with the 2005 Justice and Peace Law. Former combatants are relocated (to include families), retrained in a civilian occupation, and reintegrated into

¹⁰³ Arkin, *Code Names*, 98.

¹⁰⁴ Omar Pina, “*Plan Colombia – How US Military Assistance Affects Regional Balance of Power*,” Master’s Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, (June 2006).

Colombian society. Over 40,000 members of the FARC, ELN, and AUC have participated in this program. The largest strides in group demobilization have occurred with the AUC. Colombia has demobilized 31,000 members (paramilitaries) affiliated with the AUC as of August 2006.¹⁰⁵ However, the Colombian Supreme Court has caused setbacks in the process by over riding Uribe's terms of punishment for former combatants. The Supreme Court, along with some NGO's, thought punishment was too light and safeguards too lax.¹⁰⁶ It may appear to the insurgents that the Colombian Government is reneging on its promises to the AUC. The AUC demobilization is very important in setting the conditions for potential ELN and FARC demobilization. Therefore, the issues with punishment for former combatants must be solved. Colombia has leveraged Cuba to broker talks between the Government of Colombia and the ELN, a sign of openness to the international community. Progress in starting negotiations with the FARC have been stalled by a series of bombings and attacks throughout Colombia in 2006.

2. Economic Reform

The progress made by both the Uribe and Bush Administrations towards an Andean Free Trade Agreement have been recently stalled in the United States by the 2006 elections, which gave control of the 110th Congress to the Democrats. "A group of senior Democrats this week called on Susan Schwab, the United States Trade Representative, to re-open negotiations . . . and insert new clauses that would toughen labor and union rights."¹⁰⁷ The failure of a Democratic Congress to pass a Free Trade Agreement with Colombia will hinder the economic recovery plan for Colombia. Ironically, after spending billions in aid for Colombia's security, the United States could potentially undercut their sunk costs by failing to support the economic programs which can now finally be achieved as the security situation finally begins to improve. However, the 10-

¹⁰⁵ Collen Cook, *Colombia: Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C: Library of Congress, 2006), 5.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 6.

¹⁰⁷ *The Economist*, "Snubs and Opportunities" (London, 1 December 2006), 37.

year strategic economic plan, which includes the expansion of trade, will only come to fruition if the security situation improves enough to calm the fears of foreign investors.

3. Counter-Drug Strategy

Although the counter-drug strategy for *Plan Colombia* set specific eradication goals and emphasizes counter-drug operations, it has served as the nucleus of a security strategy that has morphed into a larger counter-narco terrorism strategy. Combined U.S./Colombian eradication efforts continue to set record numbers every year, but some non-governmental organizations contend that U.S. counter-drug policy has been ineffective and that a lack of sustainable economic alternatives continues to hamper progress. With the growing acceptance of the idea that drug runners and guerrillas can be considered as one, *Plan Colombia's* counter-drug strategy also created objectives for increasing the capabilities of the Colombian Armed Forces (to include the National Police). The Armed Forces (to include the CNP) have expanded and strengthened significantly. However, work remains to be done to transform the COLMIL into a truly Joint force.

Plan Colombia specifically set out to reduce coca cultivation by 50% by 2005. The Government of Colombia claimed that by the end of 2004, they had eradicated 50.8% of the coca in Colombia, reducing crops from 160,120 hectares to 80,350 hectares.¹⁰⁸ This is not as straightforward of a metric as one might think. First, the United States, which uses remote sensing to count cultivated areas, has not consistently surveyed the same areas of Colombia on an annual basis. Second, hectares measured through remote sensing do not take into account the maturity of the coca plants. Mature plants can yield up to three harvest a year, whereas a new crop may only yield one crop per year. Third, measuring an increase or decrease of coca cultivation in Colombia doesn't account for the regional displacement to a bordering country. Therefore, to try and compare hectares of cultivation pre-Plan Colombia with 2005 would be

¹⁰⁸ Government of Colombia, *The Balance of Plan Colombia (1999-2005)* (Bogotá, 2006), 7.

difficult and in the end would probably prove meaningless. The better indicators of Colombia's success in the CD strategy would be progress made in the six other objectives that fall under this pillar of *Plan Colombia*.

The COLMIL has improved service integration through the establishment of two standing Joint Task Forces: JTF-Omega in the south and JTF-One (formerly JTF-Caribe) on the northern coast. Both have been successful endeavors despite the friction caused by divisional commanders who command divisions that own the territory that the JTF's operate within in accordance with the Colombian constitution. The COLMIL has made strides in professionalizing their forces. For example, a Joint Senior NCO Academy is furthering the education of the services senior enlisted personnel. The COLMIL is also modernizing their equipment, with large financial support from the United States, to include everything from aircraft, riverine boats, weapons, night vision goggles, and a wide array of other mission essential combat equipment.

Integration of a regional/international counter-drug effort has been limited. Colombia continues to participate in the Air Bridge Denial (ABD) program with Peru and the United States. This program detects, tracks, interdicts, and forces down (or shoots down) drug trafficking aircraft. The ABD program has resulted in the interdiction of between three and four metric tons of cocaine annually for the past couple of years. However, coordination for cross border interdiction has been virtually non-existent. The porous borders with Colombia's five neighbors have made ground and "brown"¹⁰⁹ water interdiction very difficult. Blue water maritime interdiction in coordination with other countries has been the most successful internationally coordinated interdiction effort.

Progress has been made in neutralizing the financial systems of the FARC, ELN, and AUC, though a great deal of work remains to be done. DAS has been able to freeze financial assets as well as capture some the FARC's key financial operatives. Colombia continues to work with the international

¹⁰⁹ "Brown water" is a naval term referring to the inland waterways and the littoral coast lines. This term is used in conjunction with "blue water," which refers to the open seas.

community to freeze assets abroad, but this has proven to be a greater challenge.

One of *Plan Colombia*'s biggest success has been the improvement in respect for human rights. This is based both on a reduction in the number of human rights violations, as well as the manner in which the Colombian Government and its agencies deal with investigating and prosecuting alleged violations. For example, the Colombian Army, which historically has had the most problems due to the nature of its operations and constant contact with both civilians and guerrillas, has made substantial improvements with regards to human rights. The COLAR conducts their own vetting process before units are submitted for vetting by the U.S. Department's of State through the Department of Defense.

With respect to the timeline delineated for the securing specific Colombian departments, the Government of Colombia is behind by approximately two years. *Plan Patriota* has been very effective in improving the security situation and re-establishing governmental control. Although the military role in a counter-insurgency is of paramount importance, it is only one part of an integrated strategy. As the former SOUTHCOM Commander puts it, "the problems affecting Colombia, like most countries in the AOR, cannot be solved solely by military means."¹¹⁰

4. Democratization and Social Development

Plan Colombia must balance the demands of both security and alternative development programs. The question now is: when will the country shift its focus from security to improving the socio-economic programs in the newly reoccupied areas of Colombia? But the sustainability of Plan Colombia is much more than just matching resources to objectives. According to the Colombian Government's study, *The Sustainability of Plan Colombia*, sustainability "is understood to be the ability to integrate social, political, economic, and

¹¹⁰ GEN Bantz Craddock, Testimony to U.S. Congress (Washington, March 2006), 7.

organizational factors to bring about results against drug trafficking, and guarantee their permanence.”¹¹¹

5. Justice Sector Reform

Justice reform has succeeded in improving three of the five objectives. First, the government has improved not only the speed with which investigations are carried out, but the thoroughness of the actual investigations. This was evident with the recent investigation of the former DAS Director, Jorge Noguera, based on allegations over his collaboration with the AUC back in 2004.¹¹² The ability of the government to securely incarcerate still leaves room for improvement. In 2005, a former FARC member incarcerated in a downtown Bogotá prison facility disappeared overnight and apparently was permitted to walk out.¹¹³

Justice reform has made mediocre progress in eliminating corruption, a problem that is endemic to Latin American in general, but exacerbated in Colombia by drug money. While Colombia retains only partial responsibility, they must continue to work with the United States to take steps to eliminate the production and transiting of narcotics. Likewise, Europe and Latin America, must work harder to reduce their significantly increasing demand.

E. THE DEMOCRATIC SECURITY STRATEGY

The Democratic Security Strategy drafted and implemented by President Uribe in his first term is the country’s counterinsurgency plan that serves as the umbrella document for the COLMIL supporting campaign plans (*PLAN PATRIOTA*, *PLAN VICTORIA*, and other subsequent campaign plans). The United States Government focus on *Plan Colombia* because it was a document designed specifically for the United States and the international community in

¹¹¹ Government of Colombia, *The Sustainability of Plan Colombia. Strategy for the Fight Against Drug Trafficking and Terrorism* (Bogotá, 2005), 7.

¹¹² Collen Cook, *Colombia: Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C: Library of Congress, 2006), 5.

¹¹³ Based on personal recollection while serving in Bogotá, Colombia from 15 October 2004 – 1 June 2005.

order to articulate a long-term Colombian strategy to deal with the wide range of illegal activities and to lay down a domestic and international fiscal plan to support it. A senior U.S. Embassy official claimed, “the DSS is brilliant in its simplicity and its recognition of the political history and demographics of Colombia that have resulted in the current IAG problem.

F. THE FUTURE OF *PLAN COLOMBIA*

Plan Colombia officially ended at the close of 2005. However, U.S. funding for the Andean Counter-Drug Initiative, which has no statutory end date, has continued. In January of 2006, the U.S. Congress tasked the State Department to look at a multi-year support strategy for Colombia while the topic of further support continues to be debated on the floor. Congress has called into question Colombia’s ability to take over the programs currently being provided by the United States.¹¹⁴ Commonly referred to as “*Plan Colombia II*” by some Americans in the U.S. Embassy, the Office of the Vice Minister of Defense has dubbed the work in progress, “the Consolidation of Plan Colombia.”¹¹⁵

Working from the premise that U.S. support might decrease in the future, the former Colombian Vice Minister of Defense (VMOD), Jorge Mario Eastman Robledo, began working on a strategy to sustain the support provided by the United States through *Plan Colombia*. The VMOD’s office has studied the feasibility of “nationalization” (*Colombianization*) of capacities currently provided by the United States (specifically rotary wing support) as a main component of the Consolidation Plan. The VMOD’s focus is on the government’s ability to assume costs currently being covered by the United States. According to one of Minister Eastman’s advisors, Luis Lorduy, “it took us [Colombia] over a year to actually determine all of the expenses, both the obvious and the not so obvious

¹¹⁴ A basic premise of U.S. support to a partner nation is that there should always be a clear endstate with a strategy to curtail support as the partner nation becomes more self-sufficient. The United States should not go into a country to help, without a clearly preplanned exit strategy.

¹¹⁵ Luis Lorduy Advisor to the Vice Minister of Defense. Interview by author in Spanish, Bogotá, Colombia, (28 September 2006).

costs associated with running the rotary wing program. It was much more than we had thought. And much more than what you guys thought.”¹¹⁶

1. **Nationalization**

For the past year, both the Colombian Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of State have been at a deadlock as to what nationalization should entail. The U.S. Government’s idea as articulated by the Department of State’s Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS), is to turn the aircraft over to the Colombians; they assume financial responsibility for training, maintenance, and operations and they continue to use the aircraft in support of eradication.¹¹⁷ The Colombian concept is that they are given the aircraft. They will attempt to fund most all of the associated costs, however, they will utilize the aircraft as they see fit.¹¹⁸ This undoubtedly means the Colombian Military (COLMIL) will use the rotary wing assets to pursue High-Value Targets (HVT’s).¹¹⁹

This deadlock between the Colombian Ministry of Defense and the U.S. State Department is based on erroneous assumption by both countries. First, it is presumptuous for the United States to think they can give something to somebody, make them pay for it, and yet retain the right to tell them what to do with it.¹²⁰ Second, the Colombians are too tied to their HVT strategy. Some COLMIL officials think that if several FARC HVT’s are captured, the FARC will fall in much the same way *Sendero Luminoso* fell in Peru when the Peruvian military finally caught Abimael Guzman. General Ospina clearly realizes that not to be the case, “I realize that capturing one or more HVT will not end the FARC and bring them down like when the Peruvians got Guzman. But we need to

¹¹⁶ Luis Lorduy Advisor to the Vice Minister of Defense. Interview by author in Spanish, Bogotá, Colombia, (28 September 2006).

¹¹⁷ Paul Mahlstedt, NAS Contractor. Interview by author, Bogotá, Colombia, (29 September 2006).

¹¹⁸ Luis Lorduy Advisor to the Vice Minister of Defense. Interview by author in Spanish, Bogotá, Colombia, (28 September 2006).

¹¹⁹ Both Mahlstedt (speaking for NAS) and Lorduy (speaking for the VMOD) concurred as to what nationalization meant to both Colombia and the United States.

¹²⁰ This would be analogous to someone giving a used car to a friend in need. The friend is barely able to afford to maintain the car and put gas in it, yet the donor demands that he only drive the car where and when the donor sees fit.

capture an HVT for confidence, to build confidence with the Colombian people.”¹²¹ Be that as it may, the amount of resources dedicated to the pursuit of HVTs must be balanced with eradication.

2. Reality

A U.S. Embassy official explains that *Nationalization*, “is really a Department of State plan to shift the costs of eradication to the GoC.” According to a retired Colombian National Police Officer, who now works as a NAS contractor for the U.S. Embassy, “nationalization sounds good for the services. Commanders want to have autonomy to use assets [helicopters] as they see fit. However, it probably will never happen. The Colombians have not come to grips with the actual amount that it costs to run the entire program.”¹²² In 2006, they began to incur some of the costs for aviation fuel for the *Plan Colombia* aircraft. “It is one thing to pay for fuel for the helicopters, it is another to incur the costs for [all other] expenses.”¹²³ The Government Accountability Office has expressed doubts as to the Colombian ability and desire to dedicate the necessary resources (funding) to self-sustain the U.S. programs. However, the former SOUTHCOM Commander, General Bantz J. Craddock, in his testimony to Congress in March of 2006, expressed, “Colombia’s 2006 national budget increased by 13 percent from last year. . .this increased defense spending emphasizes Colombia’s commitment to fighting and winning its war.”¹²⁴ Furthermore, since the overwhelming re-election of President Uribe on the 28th of May 2006 with 62% of the vote¹²⁵, officials in the Ministry of Defense have indicated that Uribe will most likely impose another war tax on the Colombian people. This type of fiscal management by crisis will not serve the Colombian

¹²¹ General Carlos Ospina Ovalle, Former Colombian Armed Forces Commander. Interview by author in Spanish, (Bogotá, Colombia, 29 September 2006).

¹²² Luis Salamanca, NAS Contractor. Interview by author in Spanish, (Bogota, Colombia, 22 September 2006).

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ GEN Bantz Craddock, Testimony to U.S. Congress (Washington, March 2006), 7.

¹²⁵ Uribe obtained 62% of the vote in an election with two other candidates; leftist Senator Carlos Gaviria (22%) and Liberal Party candidate Horacio Serpa (12%). Had there been only two candidates, Uribe would have easily obtained well over 70%.

Government well in the long run. However, it is very type of astute political strategy that Uribe has been utilizing that has made his administration a success. The real measure of his long term success will be whether he can replace the unpredictable taxation plan with an institutionalized taxation system that will provide the necessary resources for the long term.

3. Most Dangerous Course of Action

The most dangerous course of action for both the United States and Colombia would be for the United States to withdraw total support, or at least greatly reduce the large-level of support that has recently been provided. This in essence is the Drucker theory coming to fruition.

4. Most Likely Course of Action

Initial reports from some recent NAS studies have indicated that the security for the spray aircraft conducting aerial eradication operations was not marketably increased by the security forces on the ground prior to the operation. This calls into question the necessity for rotary-wing aircraft (paid for by *Plan Colombia*) to deploy COLMIL troops within a couple of kilometers of the coca fields prior to spraying. It is likely that aircraft dedicated to troops movement may be greatly reduced, if not eliminated altogether. This would not include an elimination of Search and Rescue (SAR) aircraft or aircraft used for logistical re-supply. If this were to happen, it might ameliorate the dispute between the State Department and the Colombian Defense Ministry over the use of the aircraft: more planes might be available for HVT missions without undermining drug control objectives.

U.S. support to Colombia is committed for 2007. Support for 2008 seems to be a sure thing and may actually increase by \$12 million. After 2009, no one is sure what U.S. support for Colombia will entail. Currently, the Colombian Military is not requesting additional resources from the United States: "we don't want more toys, we just want to be able to maintain what we currently have,"

argues Luis Lorduy.¹²⁶ LTC Carlos Berrios, a former MILGP Executive Officer now serving on the Joint Staff J5 Americas Division, best summarizes the Colombian situation,

The Government of Colombia must assume much more of the burden for security and consolidation of their country. As they are more successful, they must assume a greater financial burden. Therefore, our supporting funds can and must be gradually reduced (as they are beginning to). Now that I sit on the Joint Staff, I see an AOR that needs to attend to the needs of other countries with serious Transnational threats.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Luis Lorduy Advisor to the Vice Minister of Defense. Interview by author in Spanish, Bogotá, Colombia, (28 September 2006).

¹²⁷ LTC Carlos Berrios, MILGP Executive Officer (former). Interview by email. (22 December 2006).

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APPENDIX C. *PLAN COLOMBIA* TIMELINE

PLAN COLOMBIA TIMELINE

JULY 1989	U.S. announces CD support for Colombia
JUNE 8, 1998	Speech announcing the concept to <i>Plan Colombia</i>
SEP 17, 1999	Generally accepted start date (original Pastrana press release)
SEP 20, 1999	President Pastrana briefs UN and seeks international support
SEP 21, 1999	President Pastrana discusses joint support with President Clinton
AUG–SEP 2000	USSOUTHCOM team in Bogotá helps further develop the plan
JAN 11, 2000	Clinton announces “urgently needed 2-year funding package”
JAN 14-15, 2000	U.S. Secretary of State visits Bogotá to explain the U.S. package
FEB 20 2000	DoS INL, GEN Wilhelm, and Barry McCaffrey brief Congress
APR 9-11, 2000	President Pastrana visits D.C to lobby support
JUN 30, 2000	Congress approved (conference free) emergency supplemental
JUL 13, 2000	<i>PL 106-246</i> signed into law (strong bi-partisan support)
DEC 2005	Plan Colombia “technically ends”

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APPENDIX D. PLAN COLOMBIA GOAL COMPARISON

United States

1. Prevent the flow of illegal drugs to US
 - a. Conduct Aerial Eradication
 - b. Conduct Interdiction Operations
 - c. Modernize & Professionalize Military
 - d. Recapture Territory
 - e. Capture High Value Targets (HVTs)

2. Promote Peace

3. Promote Economic Development

Colombia

1. Promote Peace

2. Promote Economic Development

3. Increase Security (*Plan Patriota*)

- a. Recapture Territory
- b. Modernize & Professionalize Military
- c. Capture HVTs
- d. Conduct Interdiction Ops
- e. Conduct Aerial Eradication

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