

Drug Trafficking and Democracy in Colombia in the 1980s

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Observers both within and outside of Colombia are challenged to understand the nature of the current crisis in the country. That crisis is characterized by weakened state institutions, loss of effective state control over vast, though remote, areas of the country, and intense violence -generated by drug traffickers, guerrillas, the military and the police, shadowy death squads, and common criminals, with some 12,000 to 16,000 Colombians meeting violent deaths for each of the past several years. Paradoxically, and in contrast to much of the rest of the continent, the Colombian economy has remained comparatively healthy. And, the current administration of President Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) has unimpeachable democratic credentials and appears to be striving sincerely to confront the country's violence and polarization with measures of institutionalization and reform.

A central element in understanding the nature of Colombia's contemporary crisis, is the core topic of this book: drug trafficking (1). Some past Colombian economic bonanzas have been associated with a degree of violence and have generated massive accumulations of capital largely outside of state control. Yet, drug trafficking would appear to have several distinctive features: its illegality both domestically and internationally, which is central to explaining the astonishing profit margins and the international pressures it generates; the extent to which tactics not only of corruption and intimidation but of violence are employed against central state agents as well as others in society; the remarkably small volume of the product (particularly of cocaine) that is involved and the degree of concentration of benefits generated by the lucrative trade. Also noteworthy is the ability of drug traffickers to combine rudimentary methods with some of the most sophisticated technologies, especially in transportation and communications.

This paper focuses on the impact of drug trafficking on Colombian democracy by examining its effects in Colombian society, and on the state and the regime. Several of the difficulties of specifying this impact are so apparent that one almost hesitates to mention them. Hard data are often absent, estimates vary widely, and patterns can shift as methods and relationships among trafficking groups, state agents, local producers and other actors can all change quickly. Even if the analysis is correct, it may be about a situation that is no longer present. Furthermore, it is critical to understand the interactive effects between drug traffickers and different societal groups, domestically or internationally. In addition, when facts are obscure or obscured, perceptions -of revenues generated, the degree of power of drug traffickers, the extent and nature of links between them and guerrilla groups, their penetration of political parties, the intent and validity of actions by the United States, and so on- take on added meaning.

If disentangling "drug trafficking" is difficult, complications also revolve around the concept of "democracy". The Colombian political regime established in 1958 may be unproblematically characterized as a "democracy" by politicians, diplomats and

policy-makers, but its categorization has never been simple for analysts. As it finally emerged following approval of a 1957 constitutional plebiscite and a 1959 constitutional reform, the National Front agreement between the country's dominant political parties, the Conservative (now Social Conservative) and Liberal, stipulated that from 1958 to 1974 the presidency would alternate between members of the two parties, and that all cabinet offices, legislative and judicial posts and other government jobs not covered by civil service were to be divided equally between the two parties. In addition, most measures would require a two-thirds vote in Congress for approval. A 1968 Constitutional Reform was only able to program a partial dismantling of the agreement. The Reform reinstated a simple majority vote rather than by two-thirds in Congress. It also opened elections to all parties and eliminated parity in the legislative branch at the municipal and departmental level in 1970 and at the national level in 1974. Competitive presidential elections were held in 1974, although parity in the cabinet and public employment was extended until 1978. From 1978 on, the majority party has been required to offer "adequate and equitable" representation in the executive branch to the party receiving the second highest number of votes in the elections. From 1958 to 1986, when Conservatives refused participation in the newly inaugurated government of Liberal Virgilio Barco (1986-1990), Colombia had a political regime based on coalition rule (2).

Because of the sharp restrictions on majoritarian democratic practices imposed by the National Front agreement and because the country has been governed for most of the time since the late 1940s under a state of siege, most analysts have viewed Colombia since 1958 as a qualified democracy, using adjectives such as "controlled", "oligarchical", or "restricted" (3). Others have characterized the country from the other side of the democracy authoritarianism continuum as "inclusionary authoritarian" or as "in-between these two", in a lengthy, 30-year transition from dictatorship to democratic government, accelerated by democratic reforms enacted in the mid-1980s (4).

In my view, the best characterization of the contemporary Colombian political regime is that it has been a limited democratic consociational regime, currently in an uncertain process of transformation. It has been "consociational" because a return to civilian rule in 1958 was difficult to conceive without the extensive mutual guarantees between the two major parties embodied in the National Front agreement (5). Yet, the rigid consociational practices (relaxed in the post-1974 period and now in a further process of dismantling), combined with other restrictions, have limited the regime's democratic nature. In the 1980s, what has been increasingly at issue is not only whether the regime is able to transform itself in a more fully democratic direction, but whether the state can regain coherence and capacity to act. (6)

Two arguments, discussed in the next section, flow from these considerations. One is that Colombia would have had serious political turmoil in the 1980s even

without the violence and corruption generated by drug trafficking, including problems with guerrilla violence and with the efficacy of the country's judicial branch. Another is that this turmoil has been associated with efforts to redefine the political "rules of the game" of the Colombian political regime established in 1958, attempting to move the regime from a consociationalism no longer necessary to prevent inter-party violence toward a more competitive, more participatory and more responsive direction. In studying the impact of drug trafficking on Colombian democracy, then, one must examine its impact on society, on state structures and on political institutions, as well as on the efforts to reform, expand and modify these structures and institutions.

The second section below examines the evolution of drug trafficking in Colombia in recent decades, providing estimates of its magnitude and emphasizing its impact on Colombian society in the 1970s. The third section then reviews the negative impact of drug trafficking on Colombian societal groups and institutions, on state structures and on the political regime and institutions and on the efforts to reform them (7). The fragmentary evidence available suggests that the leading drug traffickers did not begin with a "political project" of their own, though their activities through the 1980s have led them increasingly to identify with anti-democratic rightist elements. Drug traffickers have desired to protect by whatever means necessary their ability to continue living in the country, while expanding their trafficking enterprises and enjoying their newly-purchased businesses and landed estates. They have also sought to possess a degree of social acceptance. This has led them, in response to state efforts to inhibit their activities, to form temporary alliances with a wide variety of actors and to ruthless tactics of assassination, violence and intimidation. These actions have helped to disarticulate efforts to reform the regime and have also further weakened the state, generating an environment in which other kinds of violence may also flourish. Other negative consequences, particularly in the late 1980s, include inhibiting effects on the mass media, concentration of land holdings, and, more speculatively, population-wide declines in trust and social and institutional solidarity and increases in cynicism and resentment by some and moral outrage by others, affecting regime legitimacy.

The negative effects of drug trafficking on democracy, with regard to society, the state and the regime are undeniable. Yet, as will also be explored in this section, poorly-crafted international pressure and incomplete state efforts to combat drug trafficking may threaten democracy as seriously as the phenomenon of drug trafficking itself. The former may help spawn a nationalist attitude that may be tolerant or even pro-narcotics, while the latter may help both demonstrate and accelerate state weakness, endanger the viability of the armed forces as an institution or strengthen support for guerrilla movements in rural areas where crop eradication efforts are undertaken. For these reasons, it is not surprising that bitter disagreements regarding the distribution of costs in the struggle against drug trafficking have emerged between Colombia and the United States and that calls for

consideration of legalization as an option that should be seriously considered continue to emerge (8).

DEMOCRACY, COALITION RULE AND POLITICAL TURMOIL

The current focus on the impact of drug trafficking in Colombia has led some, particularly certain U.S. policymakers, to gloss over complex features of Colombian politics (9). However, Colombia probably would have experienced political turmoil in the 1980s even without the additional violence, corruption and other social and economic effects of drug trafficking. The political model of coalition rule established in 1958 between the two traditional parties was in apparent need of redefinition and reaccommodation in the 1970s.

From the 19th century, Colombia inherited its two deeply entrenched parties (which divided the country politically while helping to integrate it nationally), strong regionalism, occasionally pandemic violence and a weak state and military. Indeed, Colombia has a long record of civilian, republican rule, punctuated by interludes of intense civil wars which on a number of occasions were resolved by inter-party accommodation (10). The last of these was known simply as la violencia (the violence). It began as local-level violence following the victory of the minority Conservative presidential candidate in 1946 aided by a split in the Liberal party, and then accelerated following the April 1948 bogotazo -rioting and demonstrations that erupted in Bogotá following the assassination of the Liberal populist leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and that spread to other cities.

The complex period ushered in by these events led to an estimated 200,000 casualties, a breakdown of the country's oligarchical democracy, a military coup and eventually negotiations between leaders of the two political parties to re-establish civilian rule (11). Given the immediate past history of intense violence between party faithful, a return to civilian rule without extensive mutual guarantees appeared inconceivable. At the same time, the consociational National Front regime was an elite response to a perceived crisis stemming from the fear of exclusion from power by a military government, potential revolutionary violence in the countryside and economic stagnation (12).

From 1958 to 1986, this political framework of two-party coalition rule accommodated vast social and economic change. The nature and functioning of coalition politics played a major role in explaining both the country's comparatively favorable economic performance during this period as well as its increasing problems in consolidating legitimate democratic rule. After thirty years, the country was transformed socially, economically and demographically with little political change. The country's population doubled, and it became far younger, better educated, and

more urban. Population growth rates declined dramatically over this period and industrialization advanced, though income distribution patterns, always terribly unequal, did not improve dramatically (if at all). These socioeconomic changes, combined with the National Front agreement itself -which twice asked voters of one party to elect a president from another- helped dismantle the sectarian party identifications which had spawned the violence of the late 1940s and 1950s and had been viewed as requiring the inter-party agreements that followed shortly thereafter. A floating electorate potentially mobilizable by different parties or movements began to emerge, especially in urban areas.

During the National Front period there was an important expansion in the technical capacities of the state, particularly with regard to the ability to monitor and process information. State capacity to intervene in and control the economy appeared to increase during this period, particularly during certain presidential administrations. However, the state presence in many remote areas of the country remained small as did its ability to control smuggling or contraband activities. Central state control and efficiency were also threatened by clientelism and by the consolidation of radical public sector unions in the face of low pay and poor working conditions. Viewed as interventionist, inefficient, even labyrinthine by the business sector, the Colombian state would nevertheless have to be considered a weak one even prior to the onslaught by drug traffickers.

The fear of sectarianism and a return to partisan violence continued to serve as the excuse for the need to sustain a political regime based on coalition rule long after it was really necessary. Coalition rule generated powerful incentives encouraging politicians of both parties to seek its continuance, even as it generally favored powerful economic interests. Access to patronage and brokerage was insured by coalition and viewed as essential given an electoral system of proportional representation, multiple party lists for legislative posts and high abstention. However, this also fostered further party factionalism and the parties became dominated increasingly by regional politicians in control of small captive electorates, with few links to mass organizations. The structuring of majority coalitions in Congress involved extensive issue-by-issue negotiations and the promise of short-term benefits. Furthermore, the parties largely failed to develop new organizations or methods to appeal to the country's growing urban population even as their penetration into rural areas was not very deep. Ironically, with the collapse of the populist ANAPO (National Popular Alliance) movement following the 1970 elections and with a return, to competitive elections during the decade, this made it more difficult for opposition parties to gain electoral representation even as the traditional parties were increasingly incapable of channelling dissent (13).

In this context, in the 1970s non-electoral opposition emerged or was strengthened. Labor organizations independent from the traditional parties and the

regime gained in strength, especially in the public sector and in manufacturing, even as the increasingly weaker traditional labor confederations also distanced themselves from the regime. In 1977, there was an unprecedented National Civic Strike supported by nearly all labor confederations. The sharp rise of civic movements and protests in the 1970s further reflected the economic frustration of urban groups, especially in smaller cities, and the declining role of the traditional parties as effective intermediaries. And, the 1970s also witnessed the growing strength of guerrilla groups. In addition to the guerrilla groups that emerged radicalized from the period of la violencia (principally, the FARC), and those that emerged in the 1960s (the Castroite-influenced ELN and the Maoist EPL), in 1972 the M-19 was established by figures from the FARC and the Communist Party and radicalized elements of the populist ANAPO (National Populist Alliance) (14). From stealing Simón Bolívar's sword from its museum display case in April 1974, the M-19 shifted to kidnappings and other often spectacular urban actions (such as the take-over of the Dominican Embassy with 14 ambassadors hostage in February 1980) before shifting to a rural strategy later in 1980. At the same time, the Colombian armed forces, less imbued with traditional partisan identifications than in the past, were becoming a more corporate, autonomous and professionalized body.

National political leaders recognized the need for political reform in order to revitalize the regime, but they met resistance from regional politicians and entrenched institutional and economic interests, as well as skepticism from groups seeking more radical changes. President Alfonso López (1974-1978) sought to establish a Constitutional Assembly in 1978 that was intended to carry out changes in two areas. One was a decentralization of the country's administrative structure, financially strengthening the departments and municipalities. The expectation was that this could encourage a more normal political process of government-opposition by reducing the country's suffocating centralization that led most politicians to want to participate in the executive, even as it could also reduce political irresponsibility at the local level as the central government would no longer be financially liable for local programs. Another was an overhaul of the country's archaic and increasingly inoperative civilian judicial system that had not expanded sufficiently with respect to the country's growing population and had not modernized its facilities, equipment or procedures. Underpaid jueces de instrucción (investigating magistrates) were overwhelmed by massive caseloads in which they were expected to compile evidence and determine if an accused should go to trial. The judicial system was perceived as easily subverted both by guerrillas and by the emerging drug traffickers (15). The proposal for the Assembly, though, was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and an important opportunity for political reform was lost (16).

In sum, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, political turmoil, dissent expressed outside of partisan political channels, factionalism and organizational weakness of the traditional political parties, serious flaws in the judicial system and guerrilla

violence were all accelerating problems. And, these would have been problems independent of the serious complications generated by the growing influence of drug revenues and drug traffickers and the increased pressure by the United States on the Colombian state to address the issue.

This does not mean that the Colombian regime suffered a "birth defect" as a consequence of the pacts that established it. Nor does it mean that the crisis -including the massive turn to violence throughout society, the collapse of the judiciary and the challenge to other state institutions- was in any sense inevitable due to the constraining features of the National Front or the changes generated within Colombian society over the past thirty years. The transformation of the regime would almost certainly have been traumatic, uneven and perhaps even sporadically violent. Yet, drug trafficking, by its de-institutionalizing impact on the state, its demoralizing effects on the regime, its diverse temporary alliances and its impact on a wide variety of other social processes, combined with the consequences of the attempted response to it, has helped provoke a more generalized crisis of state authority and a wave of violence whose consequences and whose termination are not clearly in sight (17).

THE GROWTH AND INITIAL EFFECTS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug trafficking emerged as a major economic phenomenon in Colombia in the mid-1970s. At first, it was largely not distinguished from multiple other illegal or questionable economic activities in the country, even as some of its effects -such as the generation of foreign exchange or of employment- were often viewed positively.

Although the cultivation of marihuana probably began expanding in Colombia in the mid-to-late 1960s, the Colombian marihuana "boom" did not occur until the mid-1970s. Until 1975, when the Mexican government began seriously eradicating crops, Mexican producers dominated the U.S. market. Estimates of the value of marihuana exports vary tremendously. One 1979 study estimated that US\$1,400 million dollars entered the Colombian economy in 1978 as a result of marihuana exports, of which US\$165 million came in through the central bank and the rest through other means (18) Yet, other estimates place the value of marihuana exports during this peak period much lower. A recent publication, based primarily on U.S. government estimates, places the foreign exchange value during the 1977-1981 period at no more than US\$250 million in any given year; not an insignificant amount, but only 18 percent of the earlier figure. This same source cites Colombia as supplying 52 percent of the United States marihuana market in 1977, a figure that climbed steadily to 79 percent in 1981 after which it began to decline, first as a consequence of a serious drought and then because of consumers switching to varieties produced elsewhere and eradication measures by the Colombian

government. By 1985, Colombia was supplying only 22 percent of the U.S. marihuana market, which itself had shrunk from an annual consumption of some 10,000 tons in earlier years to around 8,000 tons (19). To place these figures in perspective, it should be noted that the late 1970s was also a period of an incredible coffee boom in the country. Recorded coffee exports grew from US\$680.5 million in 1975, to US\$996.0 million in 1976, to US\$1,512.6 million in 1977 and to US\$2,026.8 million in 1978, even as coffee contraband may well have expanded during this period (estimated by the Colombian Coffee Federation at US\$184 million in 1976 and US\$135 million in 1977).

Marihuana came to be cultivated primarily along the Atlantic Coast. The relatively unpopulated Guajira Peninsula had been a center for smuggling for centuries. Estimates of the hectares planted in marihuana during the peak period of the 1970s also vary widely from 7,000-9,000 hectares to around 19,000 hectares (20), and estimates of employment generated by the cultivation thus also oscillate widely. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that the massive influx of money generated by the coffee and marihuana exports in the mid -to late- 1970s (and to a lesser extent, cocaine shipments) helped fuel regional bonanzas. One indicator was localized real estate booms that drove housing prices on the Atlantic Coast to levels higher than those in Bogotá in the late 1970s, before declining around 1980, when they began to escalate in Medellín, center of the cocaine traffic; another is the rise and decline of real rural wage rates on the Atlantic Coast during this period.

The revenues I generated by these activities helped fuel a growing "underground economy", which appears to have taken added importance due to government policies dedicated to financial liberalization and then to controlling the inflationary consequences of the legal coffee boom. The official exchange rate was effectively revalued and the black market dollar exchange rate actually fell below it, apparently serving as a powerful incentive for the smuggling of textiles and other consumer goods into the country. Combined with high interest rates, this helped spark an industrial recession. The call by the financial interest group ANIF for the legalization of marihuana appears related to concerns about the "assault on respectable stock companies" by the "underground economy" to which industrial firms increasingly turned for loans (21). Government deregulation of the now burgeoning financial sector, increased vulnerability of different industries, questionable loans of a number of banks to associated conglomerate firms and perhaps narcotics seizures in the United States all helped spark a crisis in the country's financial sector that erupted in 1982 during the final weeks of the Turbay administration (22).

The marihuana boom was at least partially accepted by the Colombian government even as it appeared to benefit already powerful land-owning families as

well as generate substantial new wealth and selected upward mobility. It benefited a region, the Atlantic Coast, that had always felt somewhat removed from and discriminated against by the country's Andean center. Prior to a visit to the United States in 1975, then President López Michelsen asserted that Colombia "is a victim of its privileged geographic position" (23). However, confronted with pervasive corruption in law enforcement agencies (especially DAS, the security police), he changed personnel seeking to curtail, if not uproot, the problem. And in 1977, in the face of continuing U.S. pressure, López took other steps particularly against cocaine, including the reorganization of the judicial police as an anti-narcotics force (24).

Even before Colombia's marijuana exports began their decline, however, cocaine trafficking, center in Medellín, overshadowed it. As U.S. demand for cocaine increased in the 1970s, Colombian traffickers increased their efforts to meet that demand. By the spring 1976, the United Nations had recognized Colombia as the center of the world cocaine traffic (25). As exports grew, the transportation of cocaine shifted from individual carriers or "mules" (whether on commercial airliners or ships) to private airplanes. And in the 1978-1981 period, the "Medellín drug bosses turned their attention to gaining control of wholesale distribution in the United States". A few years later, major Medellín drug figures, such as Pablo Escobar and Jorge Ochoa, were being listed among the wealthiest individuals in the world by Forbes (26).

Estimates of the value of cocaine trafficking to Colombia vary even more widely than do those of marijuana. The challenge is not only to determine the "costs" (including the extent to which coca base is brought in from Bolivia and Peru), the actual extent of exports and what percentage are seized or otherwise lost, but also how deeply into the U.S. wholesale (and retail) markets do the major Colombian traffickers extend and what percentage of the dollars generated are actually repatriated back to Colombia. Assuming a 50 percent penetration of U.S. wholesale markets, Gómez estimates that the value of cocaine trafficking for Colombia peaked in 1982 at US\$2,191 million, declining to US\$760 million in 1985 (with total tons of cocaine exported ranging from 50 to 100, depending on the year). The total contribution of marijuana and cocaine trafficking to the Colombian economy, then, also peaked in 1982 at 6.07 percent of GDP, declining to 2.36 percent in 1985. Although he does not provide precise figures, Gómez estimates that with the growth of cocaine exports to European markets (to around 30 tons), in 1988 the net income for Colombia due to drug trafficking may have been around US\$1,200 million. Caballero, based on much higher estimates of the total tons of cocaine exported to the United States and to Europe (270 tons to the United States and 40 tons to Europe), estimates net income to Colombian traffickers in 1988 at US\$4,000 million, of which he asserts probably no more than US\$1,000 million returned to Colombia. He also notes the number of hectares of coca grown in Colombia appears to have expanded from marginal amounts at the beginning of the decade to anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 hectares in 1988. Thus, it is quite conceivable that in the late 1980s

there were more hectares of coca in cultivation than there were of marihuana at its peak nearly a decade earlier. Bagley, in turn, estimates revenues derived by Colombia by the trafficking in both drugs at around US\$1,500 million in 1980, rising to US\$2,500 million to US\$3,000 million in 1985, where it remained for the rest of the decade (27).

For the purposes of this paper, the vast differences in these estimates may not matter that much. Even taking the lowest estimates, it is clear that we are talking about vast sums of new money, much more than was involved with the marihuana trade, heavily concentrated in the hands of very few people, though the expansion of coca cultivation has brought larger numbers of people into the trade (28). The main traffickers may have made the decision not to repatriate a substantial percentage of their money, but in theory they could bring some or all of it back at a later date if they so desired.

What were the social consequences of the eruption of this new wealth in Colombia in the 1970s? During that decade, it became commonplace to refer to the "emerging classes" (las clases emergentes), a phrase employed ambiguously in the 1978 presidential campaign. Julio César Turbay, the Liberal candidate, sought to employ the term to refer to those who had previously been excluded from power, whereas many, particularly elements of established wealth, viewed it as a euphemism for the drug mafia or others who had gained wealth suddenly and questionably (29). However, there was no perception that this was a qualitatively different phenomenon than other activities that traditionally fueled the "underground economy". The interaction of the many factors discussed here, including the revenues generated by drug trafficking, government economic policy, and unrealized expectations by urban middle and lower-sector groups generated by the sense the country was experiencing an economic "boom" (in coffee) even as their own wages deteriorated due to growing inflation, may all have exacerbated the nature of the country's crisis even in the 1970s. Accusations of corruption may well have led to a more cynical, relaxed attitude by some, even as it generated moral indignation and repulsion by others (30).

DRUG TRAFFICKERS, SOCIETAL GROUPS, STATE INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES

It has been in the long decade since 1978 that the impact of drug trafficking and the consequences of government efforts to constrain it have had their greatest impact on the Colombian polity. Beginning with the Turbay administration, Colombian governments have stepped up their eradication, interdiction and enforcement efforts, though unevenly, and traffickers have responded to prevent their arrest, defend their continuing trade, protect the enterprises and landed estates they have purchased

using drug profits and seek greater acceptance within society. How did trafficker activities and the cycle of government action and trafficker reaction help provoke the current situation of generalized violence, state weakness and perceived crisis?

The first intense actions against drug traffickers by the Colombian State were taken during the Turbay administration. Shortly after coming into office in August 1978, Turbay enacted a tough Statute on Security which was employed against guerrilla groups as well as drug traffickers. Negotiations also began for what became the 1979 Treaty of Extradition between Colombia and the United States, which permitted the extradition of nationals to the other country to face drug-related charges (31). In late 1978, the Colombian armed forces were sent into La Guajira in an aggressive effort to stem the flow of marihuana to the United States. Over the nearly two year period, 6,000 tons of marihuana were seized as well as 300 aircraft and boats. Yet, it would appear that the sharp decline in marihuana production during this period was generated by other factors: a serious drought in 1982 and a decline in the quality of Colombian marihuana even as U.S. growers were increasing production and quality (32). Furthermore, the Colombian army completed a withdrawal from La Guajira in mid-1980, to be replaced by a much smaller police force. The army was never comfortable with the anti-drug effort, which it saw as much more of a police function. It removed personnel and attention from what it saw as the much more significant struggle against left-wing guerrillas. By early 1980, it was also clear that the interdiction effort threatened to generate corruption within the institution.

If drug traffickers felt challenged by stepped-up government enforcement efforts and the extradition treaty, in November 1981 they discovered a threat from another source. In that month, the daughter of Jorge Luis Ochoa, a major Medellín trafficker, was kidnapped by the M-19 guerrillas who requested a \$1 million ransom. That event sparked the formation of the oldest of the current death squads, "Death to Kidnappers" (MAS), and helped bring together various major traffickers into what has become known as the Medellín Cartel (33). Notwithstanding this fact, the most publicized connection -to come in 1984- was of a "narco-guerrilla" link. By this point, Colombian societal groups and institutions, state structures, and political institutions appeared increasingly affected or penetrated by drug traffickers, in ways that increasingly threatened the country's limited democracy and the efforts to reform it.

Societal groups and institutions. Some of the consequences of drug trafficking on societal groups have had a direct, negative impact on democracy. The most immediate and obvious is by its promotion of violence. Drug traffickers have killed peasants, laborers, guerrillas, newspapermen, social and political activists, police and military, criminal investigators and judges, cabinet ministers and other high government officials. They have done so with impunity. And, they have encouraged others to do the same, sometimes directly by providing them with sophisticated

weapons or personnel, and other times, indirectly, by example. They have helped to foster a context of violence so severe that sicarios, individuals willing to kill for a fee, have emerged in numbers and with a brazenness that distinguish them from similar phenomena from Colombia's past. The collapse of state authority or respect for the rule of law have fueled diverse patterns of violence, with different goals and orientations, throughout the country (34).

Drug traffickers have also had a "chilling effect" on the media in Colombia. Targeted assassinations of reporters and editors include those of Raúl Echavarría Barrientos, assistant director of "Occidente" in September 1986 or of Guillermo Cano Isaza, director of "El Espectador" in December of that year. Yet, their impact on the media has been more generalized, as they have helped foster an environment of fear leading some journalists to flee the country and others to impose varying degrees of self-censorship.

No relationship of drug trafficking with societal groups has been more publicized, and just as often challenged, than the "narco-guerrilla" linkage. To the extent the police and the military are seeking to destroy traffickers or the coca crops they have promoted, traffickers share a common enemy with the guerrillas. To the extent the struggle against drug traffic or leading traffickers diverts resources or attention from the guerrilla struggle or leads traffickers to react in ways that further weaken the state presence in certain areas, the guerrillas may be assisted. And the nationalist, "anti-imperialist" rhetoric of drug traffickers fighting the extradition treaty resonated with nationalist strands of public opinion that resented U.S. pressures and the degeneration of Colombia's image around the world. All the guerrilla groups opposed the extradition treaty on nationalist grounds.

There were also more concrete reasons for linkages between drug traffickers and guerrilla groups. Through the 1980s, the cultivation of coca expanded into newly-colonized, remote areas of the country, where various fronts of different guerrilla groups, principally the FARC, have been operating. Yet, it is now not even clear that FARC guerrillas were protecting the Yari river cocaine complex occupied in March 1984, as initially alleged. Subsequently, however indicating how rapidly circumstances may evolve, it appears the FARC provided protection for cocaine laboratories, and may well have established some of its own. State destruction of coca plots, especially without adequate provision for alternative crops and the means to get them to market, is made much more difficult by these facts. Yet, rather than some "FARC-narc" connection, it might be more accurate to view the FARC as having served as "an armed trade union for Colombia's coca campesinos" (35), with an incipient interest in the late 1980s in production and marketing of cocaine directly itself. When cocaine prices were higher in the mid-1980s, accommodation among traffickers, peasants and the FARC may have been easier and profits could be generated for all three. However, in time, the tension between traffickers and the

FARC appears to have grown, whether due to higher "taxes" charged by the FARC, lower world cocaine prices, FARC interest in direct marketing of the drug, or some combination of these factors. That tension appears to have played a role in the October 1987 assassination of Jaime Pardo Leal, the presidential candidate of the UP in the 1986 elections. Regional points of collaboration may well still continue, even as the FARC may operate some cocaine laboratories, but the notion of an alliance is untenable.

In recent years, drug traffickers appear to have invested repatriated funds in purchasing vast expanses of land in different regions of the country, including the Magdalena Medio and Urabá. Supported on occasion by other landowners in the region and by elements of the military, they have responded brutally to guerrilla efforts to "tax" them and appear to have a hand in the massacres of union organizers and activists (36). Although drug traffickers may not initially have had a clear "political project" of their own, defense of their massive landed estates, the brutal management of relations with peasant organizers and union leaders, and targeted assassinations of leftist political leaders, increasingly place them on the anti-democratic right. Democracy is further challenged by the fact that the concentration of land ownership complicates even further the possibility of agrarian reform.

Two other consequences of drug trafficking on Colombian society are evident. One is a dramatic increase in the domestic consumption of drugs. In Medellín, e.g., the consumption of basuco grew dramatically in the early and mid-1980s (37). Another could well be one of the more significant consequences, though it is difficult to measure, that is the impact on values, on the extent, nature and durability of cynicism, callousness to violence and distrust in everyday exchanges generated as a form of self-protection in those regions of the country most affected by the growth of drug trafficking and of violence (38).

State Institutions. The state institution which has been most seriously affected by drug trafficking is almost certainly the judiciary. Over-worked, under-paid, with few resources, many Colombian judges have pressed on with drug cases as their consciences have dictated. Dozens of judges have been killed over the past 10 years (39). These examples, and threats of assassination against individual judges or their family members combined with promises of money have usually sufficed to insure that large numbers of captured traffickers are not incarcerated or convicted. Many others have successfully escaped from prison. Demoralization, corruption and extortion, turn-over of personnel and other factors have led to an essential paralysis of the judicial system.

Democratic reform or consolidation must build on the basis of a coherent state. At a minimum, that requires rebuilding the judiciary and regaining basic respect

for the rule of law. In this period, though, the country's homicide rate has climbed steadily as criminals have felt emboldened and their victims convinced they should take justice into their own hands, further fueling the cycle. According to one study, Colombia's homicide rate (per 100,000) fell from a high of 51.5 in 1958 to a low of 16.8 in both 1973 and 1975, steadily climbing to 30.2 in 1984 and then reaching 52.8 in 1987 (the U.S. rate in the early 1980s was around 11.3). The city with the most homicides in the 1979-1986 period was Medellín, with 9,590 (an average of 1, 199 per year) (40). Some 85-90 percent of national homicides during this period were not directly related to political, guerrilla or drug trafficking violence. However, the line between "political" and "non-political" violence can be blurry; regional patterns of polarized violence, "dirty war" massacres and disappearances have shown no sign of abating; and the extent of criminal violence, in itself, has represented an independent challenge to democratic norms. Few perpetrators have been captured or brought to trial. And, in cities with high crime rates, as many as 80 percent of all crimes may go unreported by a citizenry convinced it makes no difference.

Paradoxically, even as the capacity of the judiciary vis-a-vis society has declined precipitously, it has gained a new assertiveness within the state. Tensions between the judiciary and the executive had grown as a consequence of the declarations of unconstitutionality of López's Constitutional Assembly and of a Constitutional Reform approved under the Turbay administration (41). The judiciary then changed jurisprudence with regard to powers of the executive to legislate employing special powers such as the State of National Economic Emergency or State of Siege (42). Tensions undoubtedly increased even more following the death of 11 Supreme Court justices as President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) refused to negotiate as the military proceeded with a bloody recovery of the Palace of Justice in November 1985 following its take-over by M-19 guerrillas (a take-over funded, many Colombian have been convinced, by drug traffickers, though evidence for this view has been scarce).

The Barco administration suffered numerous setbacks from the courts. Various measures sought by President Barco under state of siege powers, including trials of civilians by military tribunals, emergency measures for the conflict-ridden area of Urabá and the creation of a special tribunal which the government hoped to employ to investigate political murders, were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court (43). In 1988, an attempt to improve the administration of justice and carry out other constitutional reforms by means of a referendum was found unconstitutional. This emerging jurisprudence, beneficial from the perspective of democratic theory seeking greater checks and balances among the various branches of government, has also constrained the strategy sought by the Barco administration to respond to the country's deteriorating situation of violence.

If the effects of drug trafficking on the judiciary have been both clear and

dramatic, how their impact on another major state institution, the military, affects democracy are much more controversial and uncertain. Continued guerrilla clashes, regional conflicts and increased levels of violence have broadened the appeal of simplistic authoritarian solutions, increased human rights violations on all sides and inevitably widened the scope of autonomous action by the armed forces. As in much of the rest of Latin America, the extent of institutionalized civilian governmental oversight of military activities is limited and a fully democratic model of civil-military relations does not exist.

The Colombian military have been fighting guerrilla groups since the 1950s, and there is little question they see these groups as the primary national security challenge. The experience in La Guajira apparently made at least some military wary of the distracting fight against drug trafficking. At the same time, however, blows against drug traffickers in Colombia by the military and police have occurred, and they have incurred numerous casualties in this struggle. In August 1986, Colonel Jaime Ramírez Gómez, who directed the March 1984 raid against a massive cocaine complex on the Yarí River, was assassinated. In early and mid-1988, the Army became more extensively involved in the fight against drug traffickers in the Medellín area (44).

Yet, there is no reason to believe some elements of the armed forces would not be tempted by the vast sums associated with drug trafficking. And as drug traffickers have occasionally clashed with guerrilla groups or have targeted leftist opposition groups or leaders, there is evidence that on some occasions they have been assisted by elements of the police and the military as well as by retired members of the security forces. President Betancur's Attorney General, Carlos Jiménez Gómez, in an investigation of MAS ordered by the president, identified 56 of 163 members as either past or current members of the armed forces or the police (45). Similar allegations surfaced following massacres of banana workers in the region of Urabá (46) Investigations of this incident as well as of others by General Maza of the DAS led to indictments as well as to forced retirements of several police and military officers in early 1989, as well as to a failed assassination attempt on Maza's life in May.

Indeed, the hubris of the leading drug traffickers in their attacks on the state is perhaps most apparent in their targeting of high government officials. On April 30, 1984, Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara was assassinated on the orders of Medellín traffickers. He had been unrelenting in his attacks on the presence of drug money in political campaigns and investments in various businesses and sports clubs. But the killing was probably precipitated by the March 1984 raid on the huge cocaine refining complex on the Yarí River, in which 27,500 pounds of cocaine were seized. The assassination provoked President Betancur to change his mind with regard to implementation of the 1979 extradition treaty; he had initially rejected on nationalist

grounds the notion of sending Colombian citizens abroad to face criminal charges. This was the moment -if there ever was a precise moment-when Colombians determined they could no longer presume that the narcotics issue was essentially a U.S. problem to be resolved by the United States (47).

The drug traffickers then sought to beat back the threat to them represented by the extradition treaty. From their safe haven in Panama, where they had fled, they attempted at first to negotiate with the Betancur administration. They talked first with ex-President López in May 1984 and then with the Attorney General. In return for immunity and a promise of no extradition, they promised to shut down their cocaine business, to assist in crop substitution and drug rehabilitation and to repatriate their vast wealth. However, there was simply no public support in Colombia for a deal with the drug traffickers (48).

Few realized how unrelenting the traffickers would be in their determination to protect themselves from extradition. The judge investigating the murder of Lara was himself assassinated after he charged Pablo Escobar with being the intellectual author of the crime; in July 1986, a Supreme Court Justice who had negotiated the extradition treaty was assassinated. And a hit squad was sent to Hungary in January 1987 in a failed attempt to assassinate Lara's successor as Minister of Justice, Enrique Parejo González, who had signed the extradition orders against leading traffickers. Changes of police commanders in Medellín and elsewhere followed that event, and, unexpectedly, Carlos Lehder Rivas, the most flamboyant of the Medellín traffickers, was captured and immediately extradited to the United States in February 1987. And in January of the following year, the Conservative candidate for the mayor's race in Bogota, Andrés Pastrana, was kidnapped by a group calling itself the "Extraditables". Days later, Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos was kidnapped and then killed -near Medellín where he had flown to investigate the questionable release of Jorge Ochoa in December; Pastrana was found unharmed that same day, apparently by military sent to look for Mauro Hoyos.

The extradition treaty fell in a complex and judicially dubious process and attempts to revive it as of mid-1989 were unsuccessful. In December 1986, the Supreme Court declared the extradition treaty with the United States null and void because it had not been signed by the President (who had been out of the country) but by the cabinet minister who had been acting as president. In June 1987, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the effort of President Barco to sanction the treaty by a new law following the first finding. And, efforts to employ an earlier treaty as a basis for extradition were rejected in April and May 1988 by the Council of State (49).

A "cost-benefit" analysis from a Colombian perspective, in retrospect, might challenge the wisdom of refusing to negotiate With the. traffickers and of going. along

with the U.S. "supply-side" strategy. Over the 1984-1988 period, Colombians increasingly came to ask themselves why so many of their own, judges, law enforcement officers, and high government officials were being killed by drug traffickers, in contrast to other Latin American and Caribbean countries, even as the country gained increased notoriety internationally and confronted continuing pressure from the United States. The brutal, and to date largely effective, counter-response to state enforcement efforts further eroded judicial capacity, respect for the rule of law and state legitimacy and presence. Rejecting "legalization" as an unrealistic option, it is not surprising the Barco administration is calling for a more multilateral, collaborative approach to the drug problem. At the same time, in early 1989 the struggle against drug traffickers and criminal investigations of the death squads that sometimes linked traffickers to members of the armed forces, continued, at great cost to those directly involved.

Political Structures: The country's political structures have not been immune to the impact of drug trafficking. The decentralized, factionalized nature of the political parties, their reliance on clientelism and machine-style politics to get out the vote, and the total absence of controls on campaign financing, all facilitated the entry of drug money into the political process.

Access, influence, information, protection and opposition to the extradition treaty, rather than a coherent ideological vision, appeared to be the principal motivations. Allegations of campaigns fed in part by drug money emerged in the late 1970s on the Atlantic Coast, a region where vote-buying practices have been most entrenched. Rumors of the presence of drug money in campaigns grew during the 1982 campaign. Pablo Escobar sought election to Congress on the lists of the reformist Galanista "New Liberalism" faction (of which Rodrigo Lara was a leader); however, Escobar was rejected because of his alleged drug connections. A separate Liberal list was established, and Escobar gained election as an alternate to the House of Representatives. He gained popular support in Medellín by donating money to build low-income housing and by contributing to church-run charities. As Minister of Justice, Lara led a campaign against Escobar, bringing his drug connections into the open and forcing him to withdraw from politics (50).

More flamboyant were the actions of Carlos Lehder during this period. He created his own political party, the Movimiento Cívico Latino Nacional (MCLN), and through his newspaper Quindío Libre promoted views that were vaguely nationalist and, somewhat fascist but clearly opposed to the extradition treaty. Subsequently, from hiding, he threatened to support the M-19 while continuing to praise Hitler (51).

Yet, it has been with regard to efforts to incorporate guerrilla groups into the political process of the country that various direct and indirect consequences of activities by drug traffickers have had most effect. This paper cannot analyze in detail

President Betancur's efforts to seek "peace" with the guerrillas, and many factors appear to have played a role in the failure of these efforts to stop the guerrilla violence and successfully incorporate these groups into the democratic process (52). Among these would be divisions within the state, with the military questioning the logic and appropriateness of various administration measures; an ambiguous negotiating strategy on the part of the administration; lack of unity among the guerrilla groups over whether to give up the goal of seeking state power; and, negative short-term economic circumstances. Yet another would clearly have to be drug trafficking: indirectly, by contributing to an atmosphere of violence and helping to provoke the collapse of the judiciary or the capacity of the state to investigate crimes successfully; directly, by its apparent targeting of left-wing political figures and social activists, sometimes alone and sometimes in collaboration with others, such as regional landowners or elements of the armed forces.

A central example has been the violence and intimidation of leaders and activists of the leftist opposition party, Patriotic Unity (UP). The UP was formed by the country's oldest and largest guerrilla group, the FARC, in March 1985 following the truce established with the Betancur government in 1984. It was intended to symbolize the willingness of the guerrilla organization to rejoin the political process through electoral means. Unlike what occurred with other guerrilla organizations, the truce between the Betancur government and the FARC was never formally broken. However, as tensions built anew the FARC began to claim it was organizationally distinct from the UP. The UP participated in the 1986 elections, winning a plurality or a majority of the votes in over a dozen municipalities and 12 congressional seats (including seats in coalition with Liberal party factions). From January 1986 to April 1988, 334 members of the UP and of popular organizations were assassinated, including their presidential candidate for the 1986 elections, 4 congressmen, 2 mayors and 11 mayoral candidates (53).

Some of the violence in early 1988 revolved around the upcoming elections, in which mayors were to be popularly elected for the first time. The popular election of mayors (combined with limited measures of fiscal decentralization) was the most important political reform approved during the Betancur administration. Joined with the move away from coalition-rule as Barco sought to establish a "government-opposition" system, it formed a key component of policies to reaccommodate the political regime, opening up the political process and seeking to integrate guerrilla groups and other groups into peaceful, electoral forms of struggle. Although election day was remarkably peaceful, the atmosphere of incredible violence and targeted assassinations of political activists that surrounded the elections unquestionably restricted their potential decentralizing, democratizing and incorporating impact (54).

A self-reinforcing cycle of polarization appeared to be operating whereby UP

leaders, lacking trust with regard to their personal safety and the democratic process, remained ambiguous with regard to the guerrilla option and the use of force; this in turn, helped right-wing groups (whether drug traffickers, landowners or members of the armed forces) to justify the use of the violence against them. Shadowy death squads, of which some 140 were identified by the government, have taken responsibility for many of the assassinations of UP activists and leaders. Over 1988 and 1989, they have also been involved in many larger-scale massacres. Given the serious threat to democratic institutions and democratic values represented by the violent alliances and actions of the country's major drug traffickers, primary supporters of many of these death squads, the Barco administration has continued to seek to stop their actions and bring them to justice. But, with a weak and penetrated state, its few successes have at best been partial and incomplete.

As the Barco administration continues committed to the struggle against drug traffickers and the violence they engender, other Colombian voices, some very respectable, suggest that if temporary accommodation, even if tacit or almost unintentional, is the price to pay to regain adequate judicial and institutional state coherence, it may be worth it. Yet, given the emerging antidemocratic alliances that are taking shape in part in reaction to past state efforts, it may be too late for such an approach.

CONCLUSION

The temptation to comprehend Colombia by assimilating events there to experiences in other countries, particularly by outside observers, is often great. Potential future scenarios for the country around images of "Argentinization" (repressive military rule) or "Salvadorization" (civil war), however, may play too great a role in interpreting contemporary events (55). From the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes of the Southern Cone, such as the ones Argentina experienced, comes the notion that professional armed forces, influenced by an ideology of national security and with direction and coordination from its top hierarchy, can carry out a brutal "dirty war" of extermination not only against insurrectionary groups but even against other individuals and organizations either perceived to be linked to them or viewed as dangerous to "society" for other reasons. From Central America, the primary image that is generated is that "restricted democracies" can exist in which a civilian facade disguises what is almost complete military autonomy to act with total and brutal impunity, either directly or through the formation of death squads that also can act freely with little concern for retribution.

Although these images may be useful in discerning trends in the country that could be magnified in the future, and their evocation may be part of a valid effort seeking to mobilize opinion to prevent further deterioration of an intolerable situation

of political violence in the country, they are far from representing a valid, undistorted picture of the contemporary situation in Colombia. They do not do full justice to the nature of the regime, the intentions of the administration, the current civil-military relationship or the distorting consequences of the presence of major drug-trafficking groups.

Colombia would almost certainly have confronted political turmoil in the 1980s. indeed, the language of "crisis" in speaking of the situation in Colombia preceded analytic consideration of drug trafficking by several years. Economists may differ on the costs and benefits of drug trafficking to Colombia, contrasting foreign exchange and employment, on the one hand, with inflation and the consequences of a rent-seeking mentality, on the other. But, it is difficult to argue that the consequences of drug trafficking and of government efforts to repress it have not come at a heavy cost to Colombian democracy, however one may wish to qualify it, and to the possibilities of its expansion and consolidation.

How might the Colombian political regime have fared in the 1980s without the impact of the drug trade? Politics would have been conflictive and occasionally violent. A successful reaccommodation of the regime, in a more competitive, open direction would not have been assured. But, the press would have felt freer and the judiciary would be in a poor state, but not in collapse. The various complex patterns of violence present in different cities and regions of the country may not have had their current dimensions or even, in some cases, have been unleashed at all. Efforts at political reincorporation might have progressed further, as those opposed to it within the state or from traditional sectors would have been missing a critical, even if at times only indirect, support. Guerrilla groups would have confronted a more coherent state, perhaps better able to enforce agreements and assure the physical integrity of political leaders, forcing them to define their own objectives more clearly, even as the financial importance of certain remote areas under their control would have been much less. Cynicism, corruption, resentment, the loss of trust in public institutions, and the breakdown of social solidarity would not have reached current heights.

Even as there is growing consciousness that if the route of reform and incorporation is not at least partially taken, the country now appears almost inexorably drawn into a continuing spiral of violence and of assorted polarized struggles in different regional contexts, all complicated by the influence of the drug trade.

NOTES

- (1) This paper was initially presented at the Conference on Drug Trafficking, Human Rights and Democracy in Colombia, held in Washington, D.C., March 1989. Comments by various conference participants are deeply appreciated. Revisions were completed in May 1989.

By "drug trafficking", I mean the activities of major individuals or groups involved in arranging the cultivation of marijuana or coca, the processing of coca into cocaine and/or the trans-shipment of marijuana or cocaine to consumer markets in the United States or Europe. Some of these groups have also been involved in the production and trans-shipment of other drugs such as methaqualone, and in other countries, the cultivation of opium poppies and the production of heroin are of greater significance. "Drug traffickers", then, need to be distinguished from peasant groups that actually cultivate the marijuana or coca, from small-scale distributors for local consumption of narcotics in Colombia, and from drug consumers within the country.
- (2) This language follows closely that of Jonathan HARTLYN: The politics of coalition rule in Colombia. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.4.
- (3) For the first term, see WILLIAMS, Miles: "El Frente Nacional: Colombia's Experiment in Controlled Democracy", Ph.D. Diss., Vanderbilt University, 1976 and BAGLEY, Bruce M.: "Political Power, Public Policy and the State in Colombia: Case Studies of the Urban and Agrarian Reforms During the National Front, 1958-1974", Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1979; for the second term, see WILDE, Alexander: "Conversations among Gentlemen: Oligarchical Democracy in Colombia" in: LINZ, Juan and STEPAN, Alfred (eds.): The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Latin America. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978; for the third term (democracia restringida) see LEAL BUITRAGO Francisco: Estado y política en Colombia. Bogotá, Siglo XXI, 1984, as well as the discussion of the emergence of this term by Colombian analysts beginning around 1980 in PÉCAUT, Daniel: Crónica de dos décadas de política colombiana. 1968-1988. Bogotá, Siglo XXI, 1988, esp. p. 369-376, who notes the use of the term even by President Belisario Betancur.
- (4) BAGLEY, Bruce M.: "National Front and Economic Development" in: WESSON, Robert (ed.): Politics, Policies and Economic Development in Latin America Stanford, Hoover Institution, 1984; and CHERNICK, Marc W.: "Negotiations and Armed Conflict: A Study of the Colombian Peace Process (1982-1987)", paper presented to the 13th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, 1988, respectively.
- (5) The consociational literature analyzes countries in which violent conflicts across major segments of societies have been resolved within the context of open political regimes by means of over-arching elite cooperation; for a review, discussion and explanation of how the Colombian political parties may be considered functional alternatives if not exact equivalents of the religious, linguistic, ethnic or other segments considered by analysts of other countries, see HARTLYN, J.: The politics of coalition rule, p. 1-27.
- (6) HARTLYN, Jonathan: "Colombia: The Politics of Violence and Accommodation" in: DIAMOND, Larry; LINZ, Juan and LIPSET, Seymour Martin (ads.): Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1989.
- (7) Seeking to draw a firm distinction between the "state" and the "political regime" would require a theoretical discussion far too lengthy and arcane for the purposes of this paper. At one level, one might wish to consider the armed forces and the judiciary as part of the "state", elements that would remain regardless of the nature of the regime, whereas the Congress and the role of party leaders as incumbents of key governmental decision-making positions are fundamentally dependent on the nature of Colombia's political regime. At the same time, given the fact that the role and impact of the armed forces and the judiciary could vary tremendously depending on the nature of the regime, one could view the political regime as a less abstract concept than the state, though more relevant to our particular analytic concerns here. See HARTLYN, J.: The politics of coalition rule, p. 4-8.
- (8) One of the most thoughtful discussions of the legalization option, weighing the social and political costs associated with making the trafficking in and consumption of narcotics illegal against the

potential public health costs of legalizing it, is NADELMANN, Ethan: "U.S. Drug Policy: A Bad Export", Foreign Policy, nº 70/spring 1988, p. 83-108. For a discussion of U.S. and Colombian perspectives on the distribution of costs of current anti-drug policies, see TOKATLIAN, Juan: "National Security and Drugs: Their Impact on Colombian-U.S. Relations" Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, vol. 30 (Fall 1989) p. 133-160.

- (9) Particularly in the aftermath of the take-over of the Colombian Palace of Justice in November 1985 by the M-19 and the military raid to recover it which led to nearly one hundred deaths, officials of the previous Reagan administration sought to link Cuba, Nicaragua, narcotics trafficking and terrorism in one grand conspiracy; see the excerpts of speeches by Secretary of State George Schultz and by President Reagan in SHANNON, Elaine: *Desperados: Latin Drug Lords. U.S. Lawmen, and the War America Can't Win*. New York, Viking, 1988, p. 174-175.
- (10) See HARTLYN, J.: The politics of coalition rule, p. 16-53; a summary of the country's major civil wars in the 1827-1910 period is on p. 21-24.
- (11) Useful English-language sources include: DIX, Robert H.: *Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967; MARTZ, John: *Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1962; OQUIST, Paul: *Violence, Conflict and Politics in Colombia*. New York, Academic Press, 1980 and WILDE, A.: "Conversations among gentlemen: Oligarchical democracy in Colombia".
- (12) On consociationalism and the establishment of the National Front, see HARTLYN, J., The politics of coalition rule, p. 54-74; see also DIX, Robert H.: "Consociational democracy: The Case of Colombia", Comparative Politics vol. 12/April, 1980, p. 303-321.
- (13) ANAPO was founded by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who governed from 1953 to 1957; in 1970, Rojas could maintain the ambiguous stature of populist opposition figure and candidate within the Conservative Party. Due to the requirement of alternation, voters in urban areas, predominantly Liberal, had no Liberal presidential candidate for whom to vote. Many were convinced that fraud assured the narrow victory of the official National Front candidate, Misael Pastrana, and the M-19 guerrilla movement takes its name from the date of these 1970 elections (April 19).
- (14) For a brief review of the establishment of the country's various guerrilla groups, see HARTLYN, J.: The politics of coalition rule, p. 191-194; see also PIZARRO, Eduardo: "La Guerrilla Revolucionaria en Colombia", in SANCHEZ, Gonzalo and PEÑARANDA, Ricardo (eds.): Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia. Bogotá, Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1986.
- (15) HARTLYN, J.: The politics of coalition rule, p. 208-210; see also LONG, William: "Law of Gun' Endangers Colombian Justice System", Los Angeles Times, February 5/1989.
- (16) The Court based its judgement in part on the failure of Congress to follow rigorously requirements for congressional quorum and voting majorities. Many political observers felt the Court may also have been influenced by its fear of potential changes to the judicial system. Under the existing system, judges of the Supreme Court, though limited by the requirement of political parity, replaced vacancies on the Court, themselves (known as cooptación) and elected judges of the lower court, who in turn elected the judges of the lowest courts (see HARTLYN, J.: The politics of coalition rule, p. 289 nº 12).
- (17) For an interpretation of the contemporary Colombian situation that shares certain similarities with the view expressed here, while stressing societal aspects more than political dynamics, see PÉCAUT, Daniel: Crónica de dos décadas de política colombiana. 1968-1988. Bogotá, Siglo XXI, 1988, p. 8-36, esp. p.30.
- (18) SAMPER PIZANO, Ernesto: "Marihuana: Entre la represión y la legalización" in ANIF: Marihuana: legalización o represión. Bogotá, 1979, p. 6. BAGLEY, Bruce: "Colombia and the War on Drugs", Foreign Affairs, vol. 67, nº 1 (Fall 1988), p. 73, writes that "(by) the early 1970s, Colombians had emerged as major U.S. suppliers, earning at least \$1 billion annually, although Mexican traffickers remained dominant". In a cover story: "The Colombian Connection", Time, January 29/1979

- claimed "(i)t is by far the largest business in Colombia, providing more revenue than coffee" (p. 23-24). TIRADO CARDONA, Nancy: "Impacto de una nueva actividad sobre el desarrollo de una región: el caso de la marihuana". Bogotá, Universidad de los Andes, Programa de Postgrado Planificación del Desarrollo Regional, 1978, dates initial crops in the 1963-1965 period and its proliferation beginning in 1974.
- (19) GÓMEZ, Hemando José: "La economía ilegal en Colombia: tamaño, evolución, características e impacto económico", Coyuntura Económica. 1988, p.94-97.
- (20) The first from GÓMEZ, "La economía ilegal," p. 96; the second from RUIZ HERNÁNDEZ, Hernando: "Implicaciones sociales y económicas de la producción de la marihuana en Colombia", in ANIF, Marihuana, p. 123. The country's Attorney General (Procurador) in 1979 asserted the government estimated there were some 70,000 hectares of marihuana under cultivation; see GONZÁLEZ CHARRY, Guillermo: "Marihuana, Mito y Realidad," in ANIF, Marihuana, P. 19.
- (21) SAMPER, Ernesto: "Marihuana" p. 6.
- (22) DONADIO, Alberto: Banqueros en el banquillo. Bogotá, El Ancora Editores, 1983, interviews.
- (23) Cited in CRAIG, Richard: "Domestic Implications of Illicit Colombian Drug Production and Trafficking", Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, vol. 25, n° 3/Summer 1983, p. 329.
- (24) BAGLEY, B.M.: "Colombia and the War on Drugs", p. 79.
- (25) CRAIG, R.: "Domestic Implications" p. 331.
- (26) BAGLEY, B.M.: "Colombia and the War on Drugs" p. 75-76 (quotation from p. 75); RICKS, Thomas E.: "The Cocaine Business: Big Risks and Profits, High Labor Turnover", Wall Street Journal, June 30/1986.
- (27) GÓMEZ, H.J.: "La economía ilegal", p. 102-103; CABALLERO ARGÁEZ, Carlos: "La economía de la cocaína, algunos estimativos para 1988". Coyuntura Económica. 1988, p. 179-183; BAGLEY, B.M.: "Colombia and the War on Drugs", p. 76. To provide a frame of reference, the value of Colombia's merchandise exports (in US\$ million) was: 2,970 in 1983, 4,273 in 1984, 3,650 in 1985 and 5,375 in 1986; from inter-American Development Bank, Economic and Social Progress in Latin America, 1988 Report. Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 376.
- (28) The revenues generated by cocaine trafficking are more heavily concentrated because the most labor intensive part of the operation, the growing of coca, is still concentrated in Bolivia and Peru. Marihuana, in contrast, generated proportionally more direct employment in Colombia.
- (29) See the discussion in CAMACHO GUIZADO, Alvaro: Droga y Sociedad en Colombia: El poder y el estigma. Bogotá, CIDSE, Universidad del Valle & Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1988, p. 92-98.
- (30) Indicators of the latter include the failed campaign of retired General Alvaro Valencia Tovar for the 1978 elections and the nature of some of the appeals of Luis Carlos Galán within the Liberal Party.
- (31) The treaty, particularly the measure permitting Colombian nationals to be sent to the United States to face charges, was hotly debated within the Colombian Congress. However, a law approving the treaty was finally passed in October 1980. The U.S. Senate then approved it in 1981 and the treaty went into effect in March 1982. For further details, including the legal arguments finally employed to declare the treaty unconstitutional in Colombia and the failed efforts of the Barco administration to revive it (through early 1988), see KAVASS, Igor: "Fin del Tratado de Extradición Colombia-Estados Unidos de 1979: Una Comedia de Errores?". Bogotá, Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Universidad de los Andes, Documentos Ocasionales n° 3/mayo-junio 1988.
- (32) GÓMEZ, H.J.: "La economía ilegal", p. 96; RICKS, T.E.: "The Cocaine Business"
- (33) EDDY, Paul; SABOGAL, Hugo & WALDEN, Sara: The Cocaine Wars. New York, W.W. Norton,

- 1988, p. 285-290; and SHANNON, E.: Desperados, p. 98-106.
- (34) SANCHEZ, Gonzalo et. al.: Colombia: violencia y democracia. Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987.
- (35) COLLETT, Merrill: "The Myth of the 'Narco-Guerrillas'", The Nation August 13-20/1989, p. 131,
- (36) COLLETT, M.: "The Myth", p. 132, cites research on a "triangle of terror" among ranchers, the military and MAS in the middle Magdalena valley. For a discussion of the situation in Urabá, including the polarization between drug traffickers, businessmen and ranchers, on the one hand, and guerrillas, banana workers and leftist political parties and groups, on the other, see BEJARANO, Ana María: "La Violencia Regional y sus Protagonistas: El caso de Urabá", Análisis Político, nº 4/Mayo-Agosto 1988, p. 43-54.
- (37) For estimates of drug consumption in Colombia, based on a nation-wide urban household survey, see TORRES DE CALVIS, Yolanda and MURRELLE, Lenn: Estudio Nacional sobre Alcoholismo y Consumo de Sustancias que Producen Dependencia. Medellín, Universidad de Antioquia, Facultad Nacional de Salud Pública, 1987.
- (38) For views on the impact of drug trafficking on Colombian values, see THOUMI, Francisco: "Some Implications of the Growth of the Underground Economy in Colombia", Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, vol. 20, nº 2/Summer 1987, p. 44-50.
- (39) Numerous examples, taken from the Colombian press, are cited in CRAIG, R.: "Domestic Implications", p. 336-337. A DEA perspective, that in Colombia the problem was more one of terror than of corruption is presented in SHANNON, E.: Desperados, esp. p. 91-97.
- (40) LOSADA LORA, Rodrigo y VÉLEZ BUSTILLO, Eduardo: Muertes violentas en Colombia. 1979-1986: Informe de investigación. Bogotá, Instituto SER de Investigación, 1988.
- (41) As word leaked out that 15 of 28 justices found the Reform unconstitutional, President Turbay sought to save the Constitutional Reform by decreeing that a three-fourths majority was necessary to declare constitutional reforms unconstitutional. Leading political figures and the Supreme Court rejected the effort to block the decision (El Tiempo, November 3 and 4, 1981)
- (42) President López had decreed a tax reform in 1974 employing special State of National Economic Emergency powers; although his use of such powers was controversial at the time, the courts upheld most of the decrees. However, a tax reform effort by President Betancur under similar circumstances was declared unconstitutional some eight years later.
- (43) See the analysis by VALENCIA VILLA, Hernando: "Vida, pasión y muerte del Tribunal Especial de Instrucción", Análisis Político, nº 2/September-December, 1987, p. 92-97.
- (44) For a portrait of Brigadier General Jaime Ruiz Barrera and his effort to disrupt the cocaine traffickers in Medellín, see ROSENBERG, Tina: "Colombia: Murder City". Atlantic Magazine, November 1988, p. 20-28.
- (45) See El Espectador, Feb. 20/1983; VÁZQUEZ CARRIZOSA, Alfredo: "Colombia entre la Esperanza y la Desesperación" in CEPEDA ESPINOSA, Manuel José: Estado de Sitio y Emergencia Económica. Bogotá, Contraloría General de la República, 1985.
- (46) There is evidence of the involvement of members of the Colombian military in "dirty war" tactics. Many groups employ such tactics, occasionally in apparent collaboration with members of the military, but at other times independently. See FELLNER, Jamie: "A Murderous Democracy", Commonweal, Jan. 15/1988, p. 7. Drug traffickers would appear to be one of those groups, and the deterioration of the country's judicial system, accelerated by their actions, has helped to stimulate the impunity with which all these different groups act.
- (47) Contributing to this perception at the time were the charges of a "narcoguerrilla" connection based on the fact that members of the FARC had been protecting the Yarí River cocaine site raided in

March. The charges were promoted by U.S. Ambassador Lewis Tambs and echoed by the Colombian military and leaders of certain interest groups. They built on the discovery of an apparent drugs-for-guns trade in which a Colombian drug trafficker had received safe haven in Cuba and had agreed to facilitate the delivery of weapons to the M-19. One ship, the Karina, was sunk by the Colombian Navy in November 1981, and a second one seized days later. Yet, the evidence for an "alliance", as opposed to occasional points of collaboration, remains tenuous. See SHANNON, E.: Desesperados, p. 142-47.

By linking drug trafficking to the guerrillas, though, the United States forced Colombia to view the narcotics issue as one of national security. And, by linking the guerrillas to drug traffickers, the image of the former as idealistic revolutionaries was tarnished. As discussed below, the "narco-guerrilla" charge further complicated President Betancur's efforts to negotiate a truce and political reincorporation of the guerrillas into the country's political process. See CAMACHO GUIZADO, Alvaro: Droga y Sociedad, p. 141-149, esp. p. 145 citing the views of CEPEDA, Fernando expressed in Semana, April 2-7/1984.

(48) SHANNON, E.: Desesperados, p. 166-168.

(49) See Office of the President. of the Republic: The Fight Against the Drug Traffic in Colombia. Bogotá, May/1988, p. 45-47.

(50) EDDY, P.; SABOGAL, H. and WALDEN, S.: The Cocaine Wars, p. 292-294.

(51) SHANNON, E.: Desesperados, p. 172.

(52) For a brief discussion, see HARTLYN, J.: "Colombia"; see also CHERNICK, M.W.: "Negotiations and Armed Conflict".

(53) During this time period, 149 Liberals and 83 Conservatives were also killed, including 5 congressmen, 11 mayors and 11 mayoral candidates. From De la ESPRIELLA, Adriana: "Panorama de los Derechos Humanos en Colombia", Bogotá, Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Universidad de los Andes, Documentos Ocasionales nº 4/Julio-Agosto 1988, p. 25, citing a document from the Presidency of the Republic. The government reported that 383 members of the armed forces or the police were killed in 1996, 408 in 1987, and 199 in the 34 months of 1988 combating guerrillas or drug traffickers (Office of the President, The Fight Against Drug Traffic, p. 29).

(54) For a valuable analysis of the process and the results of the elections, see GAITÁN, Pilar: «Primera Elección Popular de Alcaldes: Expectativas y Frustraciones», Análisis Político, nº 4/May-August 1988, p. 63-83.

(55) In HARTLYN, Jonathan: The politics of coalition rule, p. 234, I discuss these scenarios, as well as earlier concerns, apparently first expressed by Alfredo Vázquez Carrizosa, about "Uruguayization" (gradual military take-over) during the administration of Julio César Turbay Ayala (1978-1982); see also HOBBSBAM, Eric: New York Review of Books, November 20/1996, and TOKATLIAN, Juan Gabriel: "Introducción: En Busca de una Relación Compleja", Bogotá, Centro de Estudios Internacionales de la Universidad de los Andes, Serio Documentos Ocasionales, nº 5/Sept.-Oct. 1988.

Drug trafficking in the United States dates back to the 19th century. From opium to marijuana to cocaine, a variety of substances have been illegally imported, sold and distributed throughout U.S. history, often with devastating consequences. Early Opium Trade in the United States. During the mid-1800s, Chinese immigrants arriving in California introduced Americans to opium smoking. The trading, selling, and distribution of opium spread throughout the region. Another Mexican cartel, known as Gulf, started in the 1920s but didn't gain ground in the area of drug trafficking until the 1980s. Gulf became one of Sinaloa's main rivals in the 2000s. The Gulf Cartel worked with Los Zetas, a group made up of former elite members of the Mexican military. Colombian foreign policy in the 1980s: The search for the leverage. *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, 27(3), 27-62. Google Scholar. Beers, R. (2001, March 1). Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Colombia: Democracy under assault. New York: Westview Press. Google Scholar. Kline, H. F. (1999). *Statebuilding and conflict resolution in Colombia, 1986-1994*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. Google Scholar. Livingston, I. S., & O'Hanlon, M. (2009, January 21). Cocaine quagmire: Implementing the US anti-drug policy in the North Andes. Boston: University Press of America. Google Scholar. Munck, G. L. (2005). This paper focuses on the impact of drug trafficking on Colombian democracy by examining its effects in Colombian society, and on the state and the regime. Several of the difficulties of specifying this impact are so apparent that one almost hesitates to mention them. Hard data are often absent, estimates vary widely, and patterns can shift as methods and relationships among trafficking groups, state agents, local producers and other actors can all change quickly. In the 1980s, what has been increasingly at issue is not only whether the regime is able to transform itself in a more fully democratic direction, but whether the state can regain coherence and capacity to act. (6) Two arguments, discussed in the next section, flow from these considerations.