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14. ABSTRACT Through the end of 2002, security assistance to the Government of Colombia has been limited to Counterdrug-type training. NSPD/PDD-18 has made provisions to permit the use of available CD funds for supporting operations directed against U.S.-recognized terrorist organizations that have credible links to the illegal drug trade. This paper proposes taking this authority to operationally employ U.S. SOF deployed to Colombia in a balanced strategy of Counter-Drug and Counter-Insurgency operations that include the provision of allowing SOF to participate in an advisory role during combat operations.					
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Employing U.S. SOF in Colombia:
Updating Strategy to Achieve the Desired End State

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____
9 February 2004

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INTRODUCTION

For nearly the past four decades, Colombia has constantly faced an internal security threat in the forms of insurgency and the illegal drug industry. Both elements have thrived in a lawless environment that includes economic and social discord; corruption; and fear instilled in the political and judicial system, local governments, and the general public. In an attempt to assist the Government of Colombia (GOC) while simultaneously curbing the supply of narcotics into the United States, the U.S. Government has provided a substantial amount of resources in the form of counter-drug (CD) assistance to wipe out the illegal drug trade.¹ There appears to be limited progress, however, in Colombia's situation. She still faces a significant threat from rebel organizations, still has a booming industry in illegal drugs, and still has difficulty providing security to the critical infrastructure and people within her borders.² Eliminating a long-standing insurgency and an extremely lucrative industry in Colombia will undoubtedly take a significant amount of time. Yet the slow rate of progress may be in part due to the *manner* in which we employ U.S. forces for security assistance. U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) have, for the most part, been limited to conducting CD missions and, until 2002, were not authorized to address the Colombian drug industry's "significant other": Colombian insurgency.³ After briefly identifying the logic behind developing a purely CD-based strategy, this document will analyze, using a framework provided by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, a strategy that involves training host nation (HN) forces in counter-insurgency operations.⁴ Lessons learned from previous counter-insurgency (COIN) operations will follow this analysis to incorporate concepts recognized during conflicts in Vietnam and El Salvador when considering the following recommendation. The current CD-focused strategy for Colombia must expand to include the improvement of Colombian security forces' capabilities in Counter-insurgency operations.

BACKGROUND (or “Why have our operations been limited to CD Missions?”)

Since the end of the Vietnam war era, the rhetoric – while not always the deed – of our political leaders has consistently echoed Secretary Weinberger’s statement that we should only employ military force when our nation’s vital interests are at stake.⁵ In light of the criminal, medical, and social threat that drugs pose to our country⁶, providing assistance vis-à-vis Plan Colombia as part of the U.S. “War on Drugs” was relatively easier to sell to the American public, politically speaking, than anything related to COIN assistance. Yet even prior to Plan Colombia, a majority of U.S. SOF missions to Andean Ridge nations were resourced through CD funding that inherently dictated the operations of the deployed SOF unit.⁷ Unfortunately, the legal constraints associated with funding lines had strictly limited our assistance to internal threats that were drug related. Late in FY2002, however, U.S. Congress approved legislation specific to Colombia authorizing the use of CD funds to support operations against those rebel groups listed on the State Department’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations which have credible ties to the illegal drug industry.⁸ This landmark approval was the first time U.S. policy makers officially recognized the link between narcotraffickers and rebel groups: it acknowledged the use of drug money to fund terrorist or insurgent activities. This approval is quite significant when one considers that all three major rebel organizations in Colombia have credible links to the drug trade. The executive branch formalized this policy in National Security Presidential Decision/Presidential Decision Directive-18 (NSPD/PDD-18.)⁹ With the legal authority to use available CD funds to support operations against Colombia’s major rebel organizations, it is now feasible to consider implementing a security assistance strategy that addresses Colombia’s insurgency threat.

PROPOSED STRATEGY

The security assistance strategy for Colombia must include the training and advising of Colombian security forces in *both* counter-drug and counter-insurgency operations. COIN Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TT&Ps) will, to the greatest extent possible, incorporate Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) already in use by CD units to ensure maximum interoperability with limited supporting resources (e.g., fire support, air mobile platforms, transportation assets, or medical evacuation units) and will demonstrate strict observance of established human rights principles. As with any training or assistance provided to HN forces, the requirement for certification by the U.S. State Department that COIN units are free of credible allegations of human rights violations will help to maintain GOC legitimacy.¹⁰ Another aspect of maintaining GOC legitimacy is the need to keep our deployed force structure to a minimum to marginalize insurgency accusations that GOC leaders are becoming puppets of the U.S.¹¹ Maintaining a small “footprint” will also force the HN to assume responsibility for their own success: despite the broadening of our mission by including COIN activities, U.S. forces are not deployed to fight the Colombians’ fight.¹² This concept will be especially important in light of our potential involvement in combat operations, proposed next. To ignore this concept leads us to purchase a Colombian defeat that carries the price tag of large volumes of American blood.

To support these operations, the CD/COIN strategy should implement supplemental Rules of Engagement (ROE) authorizing SOF participation in combat operations. Not to be confused with a “free-for-all” or “shoot-‘em-up” environment normally associated with high-intensity conflict, SOF involvement in combat operations will remain sufficiently controlled through established command and control lines (e.g., under the tactical control (TACON)

usually exercised by the U.S. Military Group (USMILGP) Commander for force protection) to ensure U.S. forces are only involved in thoroughly-planned operations with competent HN forces sufficiently supported by medical assets and fire support units. In keeping with the spirit of requiring HN forces to assume responsibility for their own success, the Defense Secretary, Combatant Commander, or the approval authority for involvement in combat operations may prohibit U.S. forces from conducting unilateral operations.

Allowing U.S. SOF participation in combat operations will yield dividends at the various levels of command. At the tactical level, the advisor's participation in combat operations will contribute to HN success on the battlefield. His participation will also serve to advance his credibility as an advisor, confident in the abilities of the men he has trained, and as a warrior willing to share the risks faced by his HN counterparts. Just as important, however, will be the positive effects of the advisor's presence during combat operations. The accompaniment of U.S. forces with HN units conducting combat operations will serve to maintain our forces' awareness of the operational environment and, more importantly, will maintain our influence during the mission execution. This influence may yield positive, strategic rewards with regard to ensuring proper adherence to human rights principles. Credible reports of human rights violations by U.S.-trained HN forces could have devastating effect on the third major area in this proposal: the mobilization of popular support.

The greatest challenge in implementing this strategy will not be faced in the jungles of South America, but, rather, here in the United States within the Washington beltway. Matching the words "security assistance" with "counter-insurgency" will immediately conjure the specter of Vietnam with the always-associated-term "quagmire." One could expect the immediate barrage of questions to center on themes like "Can't we assist the Colombians without risking American lives?" or "Why are we willing to fight an 'elective

war’ when it is clearly not our nation’s ‘last resort’?” While possible alternatives will be discussed during the analysis portion, it is essential to identify political implications surrounding this strategy. Our political leaders will need to be forthright with the American public in their attempt to gain their understanding of the importance of our security assistance and prepare them for the possibilities of our nation sustaining casualties.¹³ If a sudden report of American deaths were to surprise an unknowing American public and result in a demand for the immediate pullout of our troops, the effects would be disastrous. In the political arena we would be deserting a struggling democracy and exposing frailty in our nation’s resolve. The impact on our military could prove deadly in the long run. Our move to withdraw forces would perpetuate the not-unrealistic perception that “if they can divide our national will at home, it will not be necessary to defeat our forces abroad.”¹⁴ Our political leaders will need to confront these challenges in public opinion directly and maintain an open and honest dialogue with the public.¹⁵ We will need to spend political capital up front to ensure the nation’s ability to persevere in the long term.

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED STRATEGY USING SECDEF FRAMEWORK

Is the proposed action truly necessary? If U.S. lives are going to be put at risk, whatever is proposed to be done must be in the U.S. national interest. If people could be killed, ours or others, the U.S. must have a darn good reason. All instruments of national power should be engaged before resorting to force, and they should stay involved once force is employed... Just as the risks of taking action must be carefully considered, so, too, the risk of inaction needs to be weighed.¹⁶

Colombia’s fight against insurgency concerns our nation’s interest on three counts. In the political realm, we must recognize the affect Colombia’s future has on stability in the politically-volatile Central and South American region.¹⁷ Our continued support for this struggling democracy is important to maintain strong ties to one of the four major South

American countries.¹⁸ As a drain on our national economy and a strain on our domestic security, we need to reduce the amount of narcotics provided to the United States by organizations that prosper in a lawless environment.¹⁹ Finally, as a stated objective in our nation's Global War on Terrorism, we must defeat known terrorist organizations world wide who threaten our nation's people or her interests.²⁰ The ability of the Colombian government to successfully counter its 40-year insurgency is clearly vital to our national interest. By the criteria of this first section, the employment of military forces is warranted; however, the other criteria will be applied to not only validate the employment of forces, but also to determine whether or not granting them the authority to participate in combat operations is appropriate.

Is the proposed action achievable? When the U.S. commits force, the task should be achievable – at acceptable risk. It must be something the U.S. is capable of accomplishing. We need to understand our limitations. The record is clear; there are some things the U.S. simply cannot accomplish.²¹

Figuring out whether or not proposed actions are achievable must begin with a review of policy guidance (National Security Strategy) and Department of Defense directives (National Military Strategy, Security Cooperation Guidance, Contingency Planning Guidance, among others) in order to identify a Desired End State (DES) and the Strategic and Operational Objectives.²² Our desired end state is improved stability in South America from a democratically-elected Government of Colombia free from internal threats and the illegal drug industry.²³ To provide the conditions necessary for achieving this desired end state, the strategic objective of our nation's military is to assist GOC efforts to defeat rebel organizations and dismantle the illegal drug industry by improving the capabilities of the Colombian security forces. Our operational objective thus far has been limited to training

HN military and police forces in CD TT&Ps in order to improve their abilities to destroy drug processing facilities, establish security for aerial fumigation operations to eradicate coca fields, and interdict lines of communications used to transport chemical precursors, raw materials, and finished narcotics. Under the strategy proposed here (adding COIN operations to our security assistance plan), the operational objective would be revised to include training HN military and police forces in COIN TT&Ps as well as providing a mechanism for U.S. SOF to expand its position of trainer to that of an advisor. A glimpse of what stands in the way of our achieving the DES will help one determine whether or not the proposed action is achievable.

The most prominent forces standing in the way of achieving our DES are the three major rebel organizations (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army [FARC-EP], National Liberation Army [ELN], and United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia [AUC]) and the illegal drug trade in which they have become involved. Using an analysis of insurgent movements by Steven Metz, the FARC and ELN both appear to be a, until recently, "defensive insurgency", characterized as "a subgroup within a state... [that] seeks autonomy or outright independence."²⁴ Within the past five years, however, these groups seem to have lost some of their political left-wing identity and appear more like what Metz classifies "commercial insurgencies." The AUC allegedly originated with the unification of drug cartel security forces and military personnel moonlighting to effect vigilante justice on perceived FARC and ELN members, and also displays the characteristics of a commercial insurgency. Metz describes a commercial insurgency as

an alliance of those for whom political objectives are pre-eminent and the criminal dimension simply a necessary evil, and those for whom the accumulation of wealth through crime is the primary objective and politics simply a rhetorical veneer to garner some support that they might not otherwise gain. [These descriptions are useful as they help to describe the

problems facing Colombia's internal security. Metz further states:] "most often, commercial insurgencies will not attempt to rule the state but seek a compliant regime that allows them to pursue criminal activity unimpeded. If that is impossible, they will use persistent violence to weaken and distract the state."²⁵

Popular contemporary thinking contends that the CD strategy will weaken the insurgency by reducing the rebel organizations' source of funding. The author disagrees on the basis that removing their modern source of funding will only lead to an increase in their time-tested means of revenue, namely the levying of "freedom taxes," kidnapping, and extortion.²⁶

Through our CD efforts, the HN will continue to make progress in gradually reducing the production and sale of illegal drugs, but cannot progress at a pace that will solve the insurgency problem. Even if the drug industry were to be eliminated tomorrow, the rebel organizations would still find a means of financial support. Simultaneously attacking both threats to internal security through a combined COIN and CD strategy, however, would yield better results by disrupting the symbiotic relationship between the narcotraffickers and the insurgents. Losses to insurgency forces brought about by COIN progress will reduce the lawless conditions that promote the security of drug shipping and trade (whether imports of chemical precursors/raw materials or exports of the finished product.) The greater vulnerability of drug shipments helps CD progress (which, in turn, creates the short-term financial loss for the insurgency) and the snowball effect sends the two outlaw institutions in a downward spiral spin. While still requiring a significant amount of time to achieve success over insurgencies that have survived over several generations and an extremely lucrative industry, this engagement strategy will produce faster results than its limited predecessor.

It is imperative to recognize that, as with any military solution, this proposal can only establish military/security conditions that will contribute to achieving the desired end state. It remains critically dependent upon the efforts of the GOC and U.S. interagency

coordination for its complete success. Even if both the drug trade and the insurgency were completely eliminated, unless the other primary sources of Colombia's problems (e.g., economic and social discord, government corruption, etc.) were corrected, a new set of narcotraffickers and rebels would surely spawn again.

Is it worth it? Public Support: If there is a risk of casualties, that fact should be acknowledged at the outset, rather than allowing the public to believe an engagement can be executed antiseptically, on the cheap, with few casualties... U.S. actions or inactions in one region are read around the world and contribute favorably or unfavorably to the U.S. deterrent and influence. Think through the precedent that a proposed action, or inaction, would establish.²⁷

Identifying the risks involved in the proposed strategy is the first step in determining whether or not the potential benefits outweigh the risks. Identifying risks will also help us figure out possible alternatives or modifications to the proposed strategy that provide risk mitigation.

As with any involvement in armed conflict, the immediate risk most easily identified is the risk to human life. War is an ugly business and truly the "scourge of God."²⁸ The loss of even one life cannot be taken lightly and truly warrants careful consideration.²⁹

Participation in combat operations undoubtedly raises the soldier's risk but will be offset to a degree by the greater situational awareness attained by accompanying HN forces into combat operations.³⁰ As an advisor, the SOF soldier will generally remain with the command and control element somewhat back from the forward-most positions to effectively influence the HN leadership's command and control of COIN or CD engagements. The first-hand observation of enemy TT&Ps, equipment, and detained personnel during combat operations will yield battlefield intelligence not attainable through debriefings or after-action reviews.

This information will assist in the development or revision of each SOF units' routine force protection measures.

From a callous and *realpolitik* perspective, authorizing participation in combat operations places high demand/low density troops (U.S. SOF) in jeopardy.³¹ Losses in properly trained, regionally oriented special operations soldiers might not be replaced as quickly as losses sustained by conventional forces. Regarding the psychological aspect of human loss, the American public's emotional scars from Vietnam are still far from being healed. The risk to human life invariably impacts the next topic that must be addressed: the risk of losing public support.

As mentioned earlier, the first question the American public will likely ask is if there are alternatives to the use of military force and the commitment of troops to combat. Criticism will point out that involvement in the conflict is not clearly a measure of "last resort," or that our shift to address COIN is a sign of mission creep.³² The introduction of COIN operations has the potential for Americans to feel we are losing the "moral high ground." No longer will we be fighting a "defensive" war on drugs to protect our society from the proliferation of "evil narcotics". Instead, many liberals will look past the fear and domestic strife created by Colombia's insurgency and accuse our forces of interfering in Colombia's civil war with a "hidden agenda... [of] pillage and uncontrolled rape of the land."³³ It is for this particular risk of losing public support that the need to spend political capital up front was identified as a key element in this proposal. If the participation of U.S. troops in combat operations becomes so politically contentious that it jeopardizes the adoption of this proposal, it is not integral to the introduction of COIN operations and may be dismissed. If necessary, U.S. forces would certainly be capable of executing this mission under the ROE followed by U.S. forces currently operating in Colombia.

A third significant risk to consider is the potential for HN forces to become dependent upon their American advisor. While the SOF soldier is dedicated to “working himself out of a job with the HN,” this particular risk will largely be mitigated by the personnel cap that shall remain in effect for U.S. forces in Colombia. With a limited number of SOF advisors rotating among a large number of HN security forces, the relationships will generally be temporary. They will be long enough for the advisor to become familiar enough with his host nation unit to identify strengths and weakness that must be exploited and mitigated during combat, but will be short enough to prevent a prolonged relationship that may result in dependency.

The greatest risk regarding U.S. involvement in Colombia is the risk of our inaction. In the words of Secretary Rumsfeld, “U.S. actions or inactions in one region are read around the world and contribute favorably or unfavorably to the U.S. deterrent and influence.”³⁴ NSPD/PDD-18 marks a big step in the right direction by recognizing our need to break the strictly-CD mindset. At the very least, avoiding direct conflict with the FARC, ELN, and AUC will permit them to outlast our nation’s interest in supporting the GOC administration. In the worst case, these State Department Foreign Terrorist Organization-listed rebel groups will survive long enough to strengthen ties with the global Al Qaeda terrorist network. It would be a mistake to dismiss the “Domino Theory” as strictly a Cold War era concept to worry about.

APPLICABLE HISTORIC LESSONS LEARNED

One of the most obvious “Lessons Learned” demonstrated by our counter-insurgency experiences in Vietnam and El Salvador is that COIN operations normally require extreme perseverance.³⁵ This concept will prove to be especially true as the adversaries in Colombia

have endured for nearly forty years. Hatreds have been passed through the ranks while, at the same time, public fear and government corruption have been handed down over the span of several generations. Many of the people living in the environment of insurgency have known of no other existence or prevailing condition. Such long-standing hatreds and fears will require a significant amount of time to overcome.

Another significant lesson drawn from the two conflicts is that unpopular personnel caps can serve U.S. influence incredibly well by forcing the HN to assume responsibility for their own success or failure. When the U.S. over-committed forces in Vietnam, the HN recognized that the political stakes were too high for the U.S. to withdraw without winning the war. As a result, they expected the war to be won for them and had little incentive to undergo much-needed social, political, and military reform.³⁶ In contrast, El Salvador's scant 55-man limit afforded the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces in a matter of hours with no loss of political "face" for the U.S.³⁷ In situations where the U.S. country team was forced to give the El Salvadoran leadership ultimatums to reform institutions or practices for the better, the HN somehow always managed to comply.³⁸ A second benefit reaped by strict adherence to a personnel cap was the inability of the El Salvadoran insurgency organization (FMLN) to make the case that the Government of El Salvador was merely a puppet government of the U.S.³⁹ FMLN attempts to declare the U.S. presence a threat to El Salvadoran nationalism would have carried considerably more weight had the number of U.S. forces deployed to the area been significantly greater.

A third major lesson learned was observed during the El Salvador conflict when forces recognized that the concept of observing human rights is, for a variety of reasons, an ideal worth genuinely pursuing. From an idealist perspective, it is critical that both the HN government and the supporting U.S. government enforce the military's observation of

established human rights principles in their performance of duties as an official representative of the legitimate HN government. From the realist perspective, the value of observing human rights was painfully clear when U.S. Vice President George H. W. Bush unequivocally declared that U.S. assistance would be terminated if the intolerable human rights violations and death squad assassinations were not ended immediately. Additionally, a pragmatic reason for enforcing the observation of human rights was manifested in the local citizens' passing of useful intelligence or in the capitulation or defection of insurgents to HN forces that demonstrated a high level of professionalism and commitment to observing fundamental human rights principles.⁴⁰

It should be no surprise that the positive lessons learned have largely been incorporated into this proposal while setting conditions for re-learning the negative lessons has been purposefully avoided. This proposal should not be misinterpreted as simply the duplication of an earlier, successful conflict. Each conflict has its own unique parameters that could make a successful decision in one case lead to certain demise when blindly applied to another. As expressed by practically every military theorist, each conflict requires its own analysis to avoid one's attempt at success through lock-step procedures or cookie cutter type solutions. One example of such a difference is this proposal's aim to allow U.S. SOF participation in combat operations.

Partly due to a distinctly different enemy force (the FMLN were a less sophisticated force not posing a direct threat to the United States' interests,) partly due to a difference in U.S. foreign policy (current Global War on Terrorism policy purports the aggressive use of force against recognized terrorist organizations and an overwhelmingly greater level of political and financial support for Colombia than was provided to El Salvador,) this strategy

is distinct from the El Salvador strategy by advocating the participation of U.S. forces in combat operations. Each conflict requires its own analysis.

CONCLUSION

With the dramatic change in U.S. Foreign Policy following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our nation has witnessed a greater application of military force against threats to our national interest. One might expect the political environment to be ripe for broadening the security assistance missions in Colombia to supplement host nation counter-drug training with training in counter-insurgency operations against U.S.-recognized terrorist organizations. Notwithstanding, America's bitter memory of involvement in counter-insurgency operations makes the need for political backing and honest dialogue with the American people all the more important for clearly conveying the importance of this mission and addressing the risks involved, especially given the provision to allow U.S. participation in combat to increase the effectiveness of host nation operations. By opening up training to counter-insurgency operations under the influence of U.S. advisors, our military contribution will more rapidly set the security conditions necessary, when combined with the genuine efforts of the Colombian government and the U.S. interagency, for achieving our nation's desired end state.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Department of State International Information Programs, "U.S. Support for Plan Colombia," 5 July 2000. <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ar/colombia/plancfunds.htm>
- ² Department of State International Information Programs, "Destruction of Oil Pipelines", <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/andes/pipe.htm>
- ³ President, National Security Presidential Directive-18, November 2002.
- ⁴ Donald H. Rumsfeld, "In Rumsfeld's Words: Guidelines for Committing Forces" March, 2001. New York Times' print on Oct 14, 2002.
- ⁵ Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power: Remarks Prepared for Delivery by the Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Defense, to the National Press Club, Washington, DC, Wednesday, November 28, 1984.
- ⁶ CIA, "The World Factbook – Colombia," 18 December 2003, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/co.html>, and Department of State International Narcotics Control, "Country Statement of Explanation: Colombia," International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, April 1994, pp. xiv – xv. For a human interest article regarding the evolution of the drug trade, see Banville, Lee, "Foundation for U.S.-Colombian Relations", Online NewsHour, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/colombia/usrole_war.html
- ⁷ Counter-drug funding budgeted/dispensed by SOOP (Special Operations Center for Operations, Plans & Policy), USSOCOM, in accordance with section 1004 of the 1991 National Defense Authorization Act.
- ⁸ Rowan Scarborough. "U.S. Helps Colombia Take Down Guerrillas," Washington Times, 8 December 2003, <http://washingtontimes.com/national/20031208-123627-3411r.htm>
- ⁹ Special Forces units have taken advantage of the provisions of NSPD-18 to train HN security forces in protecting critical infrastructure (e.g., Cano-Limon pipeline in north-east Colombia) and the article by Rowan Scarborough, above, mentions SF units' winning authority in 2002 to train the Colombian army in counterinsurgency operations; however, unclassified literature does not specifically address a USSOUTHCOM adoption of a combined CD-/COIN-based strategy.
- ¹⁰ Whether by design or coincidence, the human rights certification program may have influenced human rights awareness to the point that recently there have been no allegations deemed credible by the Department of State linking illegal paramilitary organizations to HN military officials. See Department of State International Information Programs, "Powell Certifies that Colombia Complying with Human Rights Criteria: Certification enables release of final 12.5 percent of U.S. Plan Colombia funds," 27 January 2004. <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=January&x=20040127122646ASrellim0.8823816&t=usinfo/wf-latest.html>
- ¹¹ Ernest Evans, "El Salvador's Lessons for Future U.S. Interventions," World Affairs, Summer 1997, pg. 46. http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc0.asp?docid=1G1:19638457&dtype=0~0&dist=&author=Evans%2C%20Ernest&title=El%20Salvador%27s%20lessons%20for%20future%20U.S.%20interventions.&date=06/22/1997&refid=ency_botnm
- ¹² Steven Metz, "Counterinsurgency: Strategy and the Phoenix of American Capability," 28 February 1995, U.S. Army War College, pg. 13.
- ¹³ In the words of the Honorable Mr. Weinberger, "only from a well-informed public can we expect to have that national will and commitment." See Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power."
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Terry Liittschwager notes how our government may be trying too hard to avoid connection with counterinsurgency. He cites Aaron Baronson, a Latin America investments manager who was the State Department's top official for the region during the first Bush administration, who stated "claims that Washington is not providing counterinsurgency aid are 'largely a fig leaf'." See Terry Liittschwager, "Andes: Ailing Andean Region Poses Challenge to U.S.," The Register-Guard, 9 September 2001, ©2001. <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v01/n1668/a04.html>
- ¹⁶ Rumsfeld, "In Rumsfeld's Words."
- ¹⁷ A brief overview of Colombia will provide a basis for understanding our nation's interest in ensuring the government prevails against its long-standing insurgency. Nearly three times the size of Montana (1.14M total sq km) with a population of approximately 41.7M people, the Republic of Colombia has been ruled under its current constitution since July 1991. With a GNP (purchasing power parity) of \$251.6B (\$6,100 per capita), unemployment is at 17.4% and the distribution of income (Gini index) lies at 57.1, with the highest 10% of the population enjoying 44% of Household Income. Colombia's leading (legal) exports are oil and coffee; however, the oil industry requires exploration to offset its decline in production, and coffee harvests and prices

are depressed. In contrast, Colombia's leading illegal exports, include nearly 2/3 of the heroin consumed on the United States' east coast and an estimated 765 metric tons of cocaine estimated to account for approximately 90% of the cocaine provided to the U.S.. See Department of State International Information Programs, "Fact Sheet: U.S. – Colombian Cooperation on Counterdrug Programs," August 2000, <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ar/colombia/fact3001.htm> and CIA, "The World FactBook – Colombia."

¹⁸ Economically speaking, the four major countries in South America are, in order of Gross Domestic Product, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia. See U.S. Agency for International Development Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, LAC Databook 2001/2002. Washington, DC: 2002. http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACS124.pdf, pg 48.

¹⁹ Originally established for growing and exporting marijuana, in the late 1970's the illegal drug industry shifted to refining cocaine paste imported from neighboring Andean Ridge countries like Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Capitalizing on the lawless environment created by an insurgency that began in the mid-1960s, narcotraffickers sent shipments with relative impunity. Despite U.S. and Colombian success against Medellin kingpin Pablo Escobar in 1993²³, the cartels have merely adopted a more decentralized system of distribution. Cocaine processing now includes domestically-produced cocaine paste. The finished product, cocaine hydrochloride, is exported primarily to the United States along with opium and heroin. Each year, "illegal drug abuse is linked to 52,000 American deaths and costs our society nearly \$110B in health care, accidents, and lost productivity." Between 1999 and 2000 cocaine accounted for "50% of all drug-related episodes in emergency rooms in our country." See DoS, "Country Statement of Explanation: Colombia," pp. xiv – xv; DoS "U.S. Support for Plan Colombia;" and Ashcroft, John, "Remarks at AUC Indictment Press Conference," 24 September 2002, <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/rm/2002/13663.htm>.

²⁰ The end of the 1990s witnessed a merging of narcotraffickers with Colombia's prominent rebel organizations. The symbiotic relationship provided narcotraffickers an armed capability to increase the security of their exports while simultaneously providing rebel organizations a lucrative source of income to finance their insurgency operations. Colombia's three major rebel organizations include the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – a left-wing Marxist insurgency with approximately 9,000-12,000 armed combatants), the ELN (Ejercito Liberacion Nacional – or National Liberation Army – a left-wing insurgency), and the AUC (Auto-defensas Unidas de Colombia – or United Self-Defence [Forces] of Colombia – a right-wing paramilitary organization claiming over 15,000 troops originally established to combat the FARC and ELN with vigilante-style justice initially alleged to have ties with the Colombian military.) Each rebel organization has been linked to the illegal drug trade and is included on the U.S. State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Additionally, the FARC has issued numerous directives to target U.S. forces operating in Colombia and currently holds three U.S. defense contractors captive. See FARC-EP Communique of 24 February 2003, http://www.farcep.org/pagina_ingles/comunic/feb2403.html

²¹ Rumsfeld, "In Rumsfeld's Words"

²² A review of the latest National Security Strategy and the Defense Secretary's Security Cooperation Guidance provides the U.S. policy basis for employing forces in Colombia. The NSS states that "parts of Latin America confront regional conflict, especially arising from the violence of drug cartels and their accomplices. This conflict and unrestrained narcotics trafficking could imperil the health and security of the United States. Therefore we have developed an active strategy to help the Andean nations adjust their economies, enforce their laws, defeat terrorist organizations, and cut off the supply of drugs, while – as important – we work to reduce the demand for drugs in our own country." The Defense Secretary reflects this strategy and alludes to Colombia's difficulties by directing Commander, USSOUTHCOM, to "support Andean Ridge Nations, especially Colombia, in their efforts to re-establish sovereignty over ungoverned spaces and improve security." The NMS was reviewed but not mentioned here because of its relatively outdated content. Released in 1997, the six year old document does not incorporate the emphasis placed on the Department of Defense in U.S. foreign policy following the attacks of 11 September 2001. And while not specifically citing the Contingency Planning Guidance or Geographic Combatant Commander's Theater Security Cooperation Plan due to security classification, this paper is consistent with the guidance provided by these documents. See President, National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002; and Secretary of Defense, Security Cooperation Guidance, 24 April 2003.

²³ The desired end state, strategic objective, and operational objective stated in this paper are the entirely the product of the author's analysis, applying concepts covered in the Naval War College's Joint Maritime Operations curriculum to available literature and personal experience. They do not represent a formal U.S. position nor were they derived from any classified DoD or USSOUTHCOM documents.

²⁴ Metz, "Counterinsurgency," pg. 17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 18

²⁶ FARC-EP, Law 02 Regarding Tributation, March 2000. <http://six.swix.ch/farcep/Leyes/ley002.html>

²⁷ Rumsfeld, "In Rumsfeld's Words"

²⁸ Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead."

²⁹ Interesting dichotomy expressed by Metz: "With the demise of the superpower competition, issues worth spilling American blood have become even rarer even while the U.S. military remains engaged around the world." Steven Metz, "Counterinsurgency," pg. 16.

³⁰ Risk of accidental fratricide by HN soldiers is a risk that is not addressed here. This risk would be evaluated and mitigated through the tactical chain of command.

³¹ Further reinforces the need to keep personnel caps and troop concentrations to a minimum. One of the basic "SOF Truths" is the assertion that SOF cannot be mass produced.

³² Interesting perspective by Richard Lock-Pullan, that one of the weakness of the Weinberger Doctrine is its failure to allow for adaptation of a plan where change was not foreseen. "This conceptualization says little about operational environments which develop and differ from what was initially planned due to the very presence of the intervening force, as the military and political aspects of an operation effect each other." See Richard Lock-Pullan, "Learning the Limits of Virtue: Clinton, the Army, and the Criteria for the Use of Military Force," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 24, No. 2, August 2003.

³³ Linda Panetta. "Plan Colombia... *Plan of Death*," <http://www.soawne.org/Pccrops.html>

³⁴ Rumsfeld, "In Rumsfeld's Words"

³⁵ Evans, "El Salvador's Lessons," pg. 46.

³⁶ John D. Waghelstein, "Ruminations of a Pachyderm or What I Learned in the Counter-Insurgency Business," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Winter 1994, pg. 372.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Evans, "El Salvador's Lessons," FMLN failure to make a strong case that U.S. presence was a threat to El Salvadoran nationalism "The unwillingness of the United States to commit large numbers of troops to El Salvador prevented the FMLN from capitalizing on the nationalism issue. Large commitments of foreign troops in an insurgency can allow the rebels to claim that the host government is a puppet of another nation, undermining its legitimacy. Given the widespread hostility to the United States in Latin American countries, sending large numbers of U.S. troops into El Salvador would have given the rebels an ideal issue to exploit."

⁴⁰ As summed up by Ernest Evans, "First, the El Salvadoran civil war demonstrated that in counterinsurgency campaigns, allowing the foreign and local military and security personnel to engage in systematic human rights violations such as the torture and killing of prisoners is *totally* counterproductive. The first and most obvious reason is that U.S. domestic public opinion will not tolerate military assistance to security forces that engage in such systematic violations; witness the severe restrictions that the U.S. Congress placed on U.S. military assistance to El Salvador following the 1980 murders of four U.S. churchwomen and the 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests and their two servants. Put differently, no matter how much the realist school of American foreign policy protests against what it sees as excessive American moralism in foreign policy, as a nation the United States is simply unwilling to support foreign security forces that systematically torture and kill their own populations."

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