Rediscovering Europe? The aid dilemmas during and after the Plan Colombia

Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín & Giovanny Rincón

Analysis

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This paper discusses a complex process of aid oriented towards taming the Colombian conflict. We show that, despite the grand declarations provided generously by all actors involved, there has been much strategic manoeuvring and inconsistency. We describe how Colombian decision makers made a transition from the intent of establishing peace as a nationalist programme to the effort of internationalising war. However, the transition interacted with—and was somewhat dampened by—the set of constraints they faced. A very important part of these constraints was related to the choice, when seeking key international partners, between the United States and Europe. Donors, at the same time, had their own objectives and constraints, and frequently promoted lines of action that were at odds with their stated objectives. At the same time, the analysis suggests that despite—and sometimes even because of—these limits some windows of opportunity for positive developments have been opened.

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Introduction

The principles that guide the offer of aid by the international community to countries in conflict are difficult to contest. Aid, it is asserted, should be the product of a transparent, cooperative undertaking between the donors and the recipient. This ideal type of relationship that, in theory, should be built between donors and recipients is captured by the principles of the Paris declaration[1] and prioritises ownership (all involved states assume co-responsibility and coordinate their activities); compatibility (donors base their contribution on the agreements, institutions, and procedures designed by the country where the crisis is taking place), transparency, accountability, collective action, and articulation of the Millennium objectives.[2]

The vision is one of co-responsible, transparent, cooperative states, coordinating their actions toward peace. This paper will show—unsurprisingly—that in Colombia this picture of aid during conflict is unhelpful and unrealistic. Less bleakly, it will suggest that precisely because of some of its shortcomings, 'real aid' *sometimes* works—in an awkward, incomplete, oblique, but effective manner. Countries have aid policies defined not only by interests but also by visible cues and traditions. For example, Canada emphasises human security, the United States institutional strengthening and European Countries human rights—but with different nuances. While Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the European Commission (the main European donors in Colombia in the 2002–2005 period, see Table I and Figure 1) privilege the interface with the state, others, like France, and Norway feel more comfortable supporting civil society activities. Sweden and Switzerland (a non European Union member) occupy an intermediary stance. The UK has chosen to support state building but not necessarily governmental policies.[3] The result is that pro-democracy and pro-peace international programmes are rather disperse and might lack focus. This can be seen as inefficient, but at the same time, it creates structures of opportunity for bargaining and innovation.

In particular, with regard to the Colombian case we suggest that:

(a) In many cases, including sensitive situations, the supply of aid is driven by the strategic interests of the main actors, according to a reasonably clearly established set of preferences, opportunities and constraints. Such interests do not necessarily match those of any of the parties in the recipient country.

Table 1. Official aid, 2002–2005 (US$)

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Austria	–	607,352	2.080,000	1,500,000	4,187,352
Belgium	1,998,181	2,135,397	2,138,500	2,024,423	8,296,501
Canada	2,500,000	3,084,280	5,684,127	9,190,884	20,459,291
Denmark	–	–	251,246	164,000	415,246
France	–	8,326,231	9,088,552	8,000,000	25,414,783
Germany	21,342,910	20,992,140	18,058,113	20,000,000	80,393,163
Italy	1,241,709	1,038,389	–	3,139,864	5,419,962
Japan	6,913,553	6,991,907	8,734,054	11,149,68	33,789,201
Netherlands	9,561,800	7,990,968	16,730,909	21,381,114	55,664,791
Norway	8,380,000	8,082,475	7,507,952	2,441,400	26,411,827
Spain	25,500,000	23,010,000	22,750,000	21,600,000	92,860,000
Sweden	7,502,328	11,469,452	16,171,470	15,000,000	50,143,250
Switzerland	6,570,000	8,250,000	9,658,080	8,355,380	32,833,460
UK	493,571	1,476,851	396,327	697,131	3,063,880
USA	125,508,594	117,900,000	125,000,000	126,931,216	495,339,810
EU	18,081,727	36,303,846	46,800,000	31,611,578	132,797,151

Source: Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social.
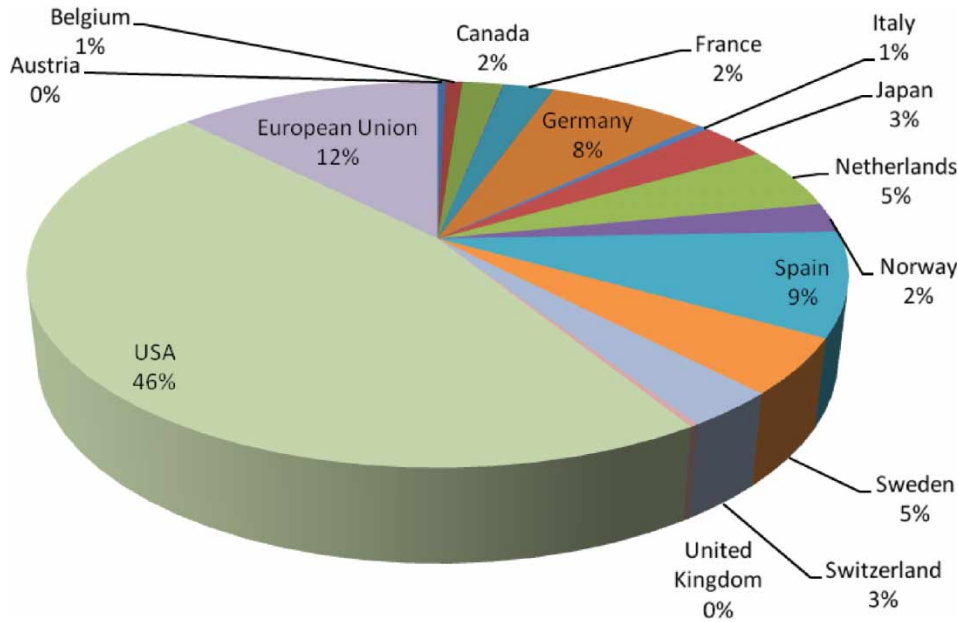
Figure 1. Official aid 2002–2005. *Source:* Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social.

(b) There is a divergence between the policy decisions donors take and actual practice: one example is the verbal support of democratic institutions coupled with the practice of short-circuiting those institutions in the process of implementing aid.

(c) None of the actors involved are unitary or stable in time, so the negotiation of aid is characterised by shifting involvements.

(d) Consequently, some terms such as 'the international community' are ambiguous and aid negotiations are riddled by problems of information.

(e) Precisely because of the lack of coordination and information, the negotiation of aid produces some beneficial outcomes (alongside some harmful ones).

Colombia is the scene of the longest internal armed conflict in the world, and the only one remaining in the Western Hemisphere. It has captured the attention of scholars, decision-makers, and practitioners and a steady, if not impressive, stream of aid has been forthcoming. At least five factors make Colombia's conditions particularly favourable for the implementation of the Paris principles.

First, there is no strategic blueprint to which the Colombian state or political elites adhere: peace and war, negotiation and military victory, and combinations of them, have

been tried by diverse governments. Second, Colombian governments have been permeable to exogenous influences. The Colombian state has engaged in a learning process.[4] In the 1970s, it condemned human rights activism as a communist conspiracy, in the 1980s, state agents started to accept the discourse of the international human rights community, but without accepting and internalising its norms. The last stage, full and genuine internalisation (the transit from a declaratory regime to one of effective application, to use the Donnelly's Scheme),[5] has never been achieved, but some sectors of the state have given human rights a treatment that goes beyond simple legitimisation purposes.[6] Others have understood the instrumental importance of human rights language. The third factor that augurs well for the implementation of the Paris Declaration is that, in contrast to other conflicts where political polarisation makes it difficult to bring the actors of the conflict to the negotiating table, in Colombia there is a long tradition of peace accords.[7] Naturally, such a long and poisoned conflict has given rise to confrontational attitudes, but experience has shown that these do not prevent a certain degree of policy flexibility, even by hardliners, as the experience of the last administration shows. Fourth, the pro-system forces have committed or permitted hideous crimes, but the formal political system is not particularly closed, and the country has very long democratic traditions. The fifth significant feature is that Colombia is a middle-income country, with a tolerably good bureaucracy and motivated and efficient technocrats. Despite these favourable conditions, structuring aid in Colombia has not been easy. Structuring aid should NOT be seen as a synonym of 'solving the conflict'—but rather as a process through which clear objectives and targets are set. In fact, several factors that make the Colombian conflict a tough nut to crack—drugs fuel the conflict and civil support for armed actors is very low—may facilitate aid structuring, because social wrongs are clearly identifiable and can become a focal point for matching international collective action and internal advocacy. This has not happened, and it is worthwhile reflecting why this is the case.

The focus of this article is the aid process in the last three administrations (from 1998) and it suggests that aid has been shaped by the following factors. First, the preferences of the Colombian state regarding aid: more is better than less, because aid is a resource in financial and political (enhanced legitimacy) terms. Aid has not always enhanced legitimacy, though, among other things because donors have the tendency to replace local institutions and act as the 'local authority'. Second, the 'special relationship' between Colombia and the United States makes Colombian politicians prone to value ties with Americans more highly that those with Europeans. This special relationship

is strengthened by key common interests (security, combating guerrillas). Colombian politicians have suffered the curse of over-adaptation: they sketch their policies to fit too tightly with existing international (mainly American) realities, and any change in the dominant constellation exacts brusque adaptation. Third, there is a principal-agent relationship between donors and Colombian actors. Donors are unaware of the complexities of the Colombian conflicts, and cannot link grand principles with operational decisions. They orient themselves by sketchy and partial information, and at the same time have to respond to their own national constituencies. So there is a mismatch between what they say they want, what they are made responsible for, and what their Colombian partners actually do. If the overall result is suboptimal, the situation is fluid and ambiguous enough to permit positive shifts of emphasis and (with a bit of optimism) sustained processes of learning by all actors, as the mutual rediscovery between the Colombian state and European donors shows.[8]

The article is structured as follows: it starts out by presenting the antecedents and the way in which the idea of internationalising peace and conflict evolved. It is in this context that the negotiation of aid should be understood. Then the Plan Colombia is examined, including the way in which it came to express US interests, as they were understood at the time. We show that the position of the Colombian state evolved from one of 'nationalising peace' to an effort of 'internationalising its conflict', passing through several intermediate stages. This has not been a linear evolution, and at any given moment, 'previous stages' can be revisited as the main mode of action. Be that as it may, in the process the Colombian state decision-makers had difficulties in fully profiting from European positions and voices. The article ends with the efforts made to take Europe back in. In the conclusions, we reflect on some of the limitations and potentials of aid.

The context

Antecedents

It is difficult to establish when the Colombian conflict started. Several authors have asserted that it has been ongoing since the mid 1940s.[9] This is contestable: in the 1960s Colombia had Marxist guerrillas, as did many other Latin American countries, but the conflict proper began only in the second half of the 1970s. The administrations of Alfonso

Lopez (1974–1978) and Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala (1978–1982) responded to the rebels with combinations of military repression and the offer of amnesties or pardon. The situation deteriorated through Turbay's administration. Turbay's reaction was heavy handed, severely limiting many core democratic liberties and denouncing criticisms of international agencies such as Amnesty International as communist.

In contrast, the following president, Belisario Betancur (1982–1986), implemented a pacifist (dovish, according to critics) response to the insurgents, employing a strategy that had at least two components. These were, a negotiation process that endeavoured to take on board the interests of the guerrillas,[10] and a nationalist stance: peace and war, it was posited, were Colombian issues. Betancur was inspired by the Central American processes, in whose design he had taken part,[11] and where he found that the United States had played an ambiguous, if not anti-peace, role. Betancur also developed a discourse designed to bring some of the main guerrillas, particularly the M-19,[12] into negotiations.

Betancur's effort to prevent 'negative internationalisation' (further US interference), failed and the subsequent administrations adopted a pragmatic position. Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) tried to combine military repression and containment with a pro-peace posture, but ultimately recognised that the political system was in crisis, and summoned a Constitutional Assembly to re-enact the socio-political compact. Cesar Gaviria (1990–1994) inherited the constitutional programme and brought it to its successful conclusion. All three presidents had to deal with a steep increase in the coca economy, which made major financial contributions to the insurgents and paramilitaries and was a destabilising factor in itself. By the mid-1980s, angered by the extradition treaty between the United States and Colombia—a key anti-drug institutional device—the Medellín Cartel had declared war against the Colombian state. Betancur (in his later period), Barco and Gaviria (at least to begin with) faced *two* global wars, one against subversion and the other against drugs. Betancur believed that peace would come because of the 'understanding between Colombians', and acted consequently, with quite a bit of idealism. His failure prompted a more pragmatic, though not clearly defined, approach.

The constitution of 1991 was explicitly conceived of as a peace accord and in nationalist terms.[13] It aspired to include the guerrillas, and at least implicitly the 'narcos' and the paramilitaries, although the main guerrilla group—the FARC—did not participate in the peace agreements that led to the constitutional assembly, and instead intensified hostilities. Barco and Gaviria did succeed though, in inviting many illegal actors into negotiations

or explicit accords, and two main guerrillas, a contingent of the paramilitary, and an important set of 'narcos' accepted at least verbally to engage in negotiations.[14] This did not end the conflict and their successor, Ernesto Samper, was hampered by a huge corruption scandal—related to the 'narco' funding of his electoral campaign—and operated under heavy US pressure. Under these conditions, his time and capacity to establish peace negotiations was limited, and the FARC eventually rejected him as an interlocutor.

NGOs and international aid

In the meantime, an NGO system had been developing in Colombia. The activities of NGOs in Latin America had been growing since the 1980s in the context of the implementation of the neoliberal model and of democratisation. Structural adjustment programmes focused on the new marginal populations.[15] This was typical of the pro-poor programmes of Barco. Colombia did not fit the new international donor priorities either economically (as it is a middle-income country) or geographically. The country received aid chiefly to combat narco-trafficking and terrorism, and to mitigate the consequences of its armed conflict; its challenge was to design a 'strategy for cooperation that links the international supply with the internal demand,'[16] and in doing so it accepted whatever was on offer.

The NGO system developed within specific domestic conditions. From 1982 (if not before) the Colombian state tolerated the growth of paramilitary groups, which in turn had close relationships with members of security agencies. These groups acted as punitive forces, and committed serious crimes with impunity. Repression was also a feature,[17] and despite the fact that the political regime did not become closed, in the military sphere regional elites were given a free hand to dispose of guerrillas and opponents. At the same time, elements of the left pursued a strategy of the 'combination of all forms of struggle', which meant that its cadres could act in the legal public realm and at the same time support illegal actions; this attracted a homicidal response from pro-system forces.[18] Finally, narco-trafficking penetrated all parties to the conflict; the intensification of the conflict was accompanied by an increase in corruption and a general deterioration of the public sphere.

NGOs adopted an adversarial position towards the state. Initially NGO personnel came from the left and many—especially those concerned with human rights—were attacked

and harassed by the government and paramilitary: NGOs have been eavesdropped systematically,[19] and they have suffered killings, threats, kidnappings and torture. On the other hand, NGOs have been criticised for focusing on the atrocities of the pro-governmental forces whilst overlooking the offences committed by the guerrillas,[20] and for disregarding the complexity of the conflict, presenting a simplistic and implausible picture.

Over time, several links were created between the state and NGOs. Frequent peace processes attracted key intellectuals to the state, as policy makers, advisors and technocrats.[21] These intellectuals and the NGO staff had a common language, and despite adversarial relations at times, they shared values, perceptions, traditions and skills. In addition, the rotation of personnel between NGOs or academia and the state was of mutual benefit and forged some indispensable relationships. The state found that the description of the NGO activity as a communist conspiracy was unpersuasive to international audiences, including—at least at times—important United States actors: NGOs had become mainstream actors in the international aid landscape. Furthermore, some themes that before had been observed with suspicion by some of the political elites—like the protection of the environment—were absorbed into the routine tasks of the state in 1991. The constitutional process also provided opportunities for mutual acknowledgement and old NGO workers from failing leftist undertakings were replaced by a new generation of human rights defenders, that could not be accused so easily of having sympathies with the guerrillas and that furthermore had learnt to criticise all sides in the conflict.

This account may be overoptimistic. Indeed, the process of creating a working relationship between NGOs and the government is limited and imperfect and it has not come to full fruition. The relationship necessarily has an adversarial aspect, and beyond that, further misgivings and misunderstandings remain. Old accusations persist, as is highlighted by the events that took place following the publication of the NGOs' human rights report on the first Uribe administration.[22] None the less, there has been an evolution since Turbay Ayala's time. Some government officials may *want* to represent the NGOs as an expression of a marginal leftist vision, but they cannot do it credibly. Some NGOs may *want* to take sides in the armed conflict, but they cannot do it openly. It is due to these restrictions that both have been able to find, still tentatively, a common operational language.

The origins and implications of the Plan Colombia

The internationalisation of peace

There is another factor that is crucial to an understanding of the dynamics between the state and NGOs: the state's long-term change of strategy. As was seen above, in the 1980s Belisario Betancur tried to *nationalise* peace efforts, not in the narrow sense of disregarding external aid and counsel, but by relying on endogenous forces in order to find bargaining space and develop a political language that the guerrilla leaders could understand and use. Nationalist peace was both a strategic and an ideological facilitator of an agreement with the guerrillas (and eventually with other violent actors as well).

By the mid-1990s, the nationalist peace position had faltered. There was strong participation by the United States in Colombia's security issues—not only narco-trafficking—during the Samper government. Andres Pastrana, the president from 1998 to 2002 closed the period of nationalisation of peace, and embarked on an effort to internationalise it. Pastrana's credentials as a peacemaker were not terribly impressive, but during the electoral campaign, he was able to establish a working relationship with the leadership of the FARC. The president intended not only to push forward the peace agenda but also to use it as a way to recapture the political initiative vis-à-vis several actors. From the early 1980s Colombia has been subject to a combination of aid and strong United States pressure,[23] and Pastrana expected to alter the dynamics by selling the idea of an 'international cooperation for peace' that would bring together key international actors in their support of the talks between the government and the FARC. This would also put pressure on the guerrillas, who were unlikely to be prepared to throw away their international legitimacy.

It is into this context that the Plan Colombia was born. The first version was explicitly conceived by the Colombian government as an equivalent to the Marshall Plan offered to Europe by the US after World War II.[24] It was supported in all phases—design, lobbying in the USA, gathering of funds—by Jan Egeland, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General for Colombia. The idea was—with Egeland playing an important role throughout the process—to outline a Central American scenario with a highly internationalised peace process, supported by Donor Tables. This would support the ongoing peace conversations between the government and the FARC and establish the basis for a viable post-conflict environment, through funding and the provision of technical support for development. Two strategies can be identified: the provision of support to security issues—such as the

struggles against narcotics and communism—in areas which were important not only for Colombia, but also globally; and a developmental offensive, conceived of in terms of aid for institutional strengthening.

According to Minear, Colombian officials described the Plan Colombia as 'an integrated strategy to meet the most pressing challenges confronting (the country) today—promoting the peace process, combating the narcotics industry, reviving the Colombian economy and strengthening the democratic pillars of the Colombian society.' Initially proposed by President Pastrana in 1999 but given a much more pervasive security angle during consultations with the Clinton administration, the $7.5 billion 'Marshall Plan' attracted $1 billion in US assistance, largely military, in 2000, making Colombia the third largest recipient of US aid. In 2001, its activities were expanded and folded into the Andean Counter-Drug Initiative. In 2002, following the events of 9/11 and the election of President Uribe, Plan Colombia placed an even heavier emphasis on Colombian national security, adding counter-insurgency to its counter-narcotics objectives. In the view of the US State Department, 'the total US interagency assistance package will help Colombia address the broad range of complex and inter-related challenges it faces—its efforts to fight the illicit drug trade, to increase the rule of law, to protect human rights, to expand economic development, to institute judicial reform, and to foster peace.'[25]

There is a contrast between the origins of the Plan Colombia and what it finally became—a military undertaking, that many of the country's neighbours watch with dread.[26] This transformation was the result of a combination of factors. The Colombian government[27] was interested in improving its relations with the United States, which had reached a historical low under the Samper administration. Accordingly, there was a strong lobby from Colombia's ambassador in the US to sell the Plan Colombia to the White House and the US congress, giving predominance to US interests in the proposal over those of European donors.[28] Initially, it was thought that the United States would contribute $1.6 million and Europe $1.4 million.[29] This envisaged a division of labour: the US was to fund the military component of the Plan and Europe would take care of the rest. The Europeans withdrew, though, partly because of the military turn the Plan had taken. In the absence of the Europeans, and the lack of any credible alternative for the Colombian government, the US was able to impose its priorities.

The Plan inclined strongly towards counter-insurgent and anti-narcotics elements, with these two dimensions capturing at least four to five times the amount of aid given to socio-economic development (Figures 2 and 3). This reproduces the general pattern of US
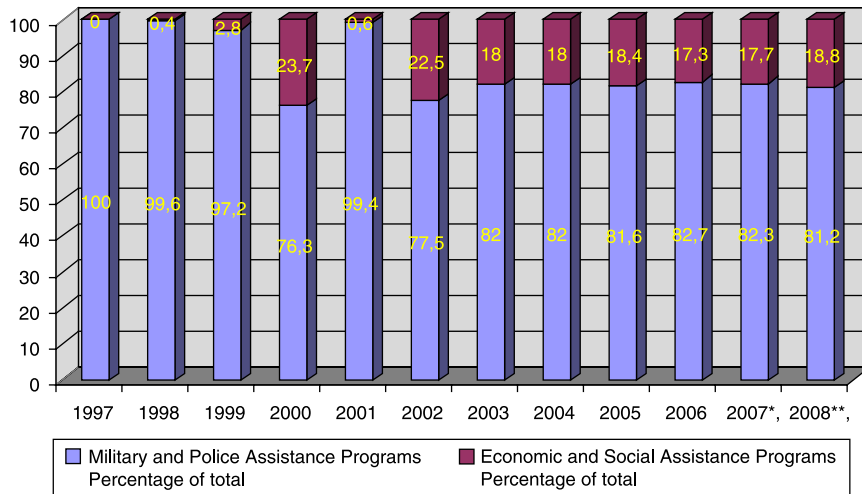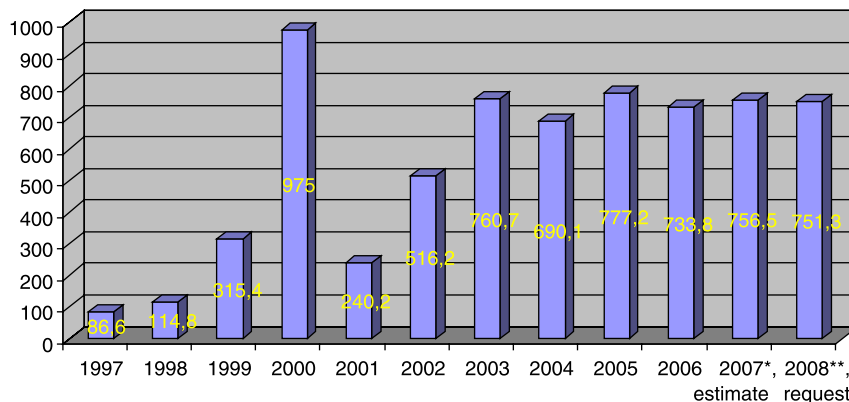
Figure 2. US aid to Colombia since 1997. *Source:* Center for International Policy.
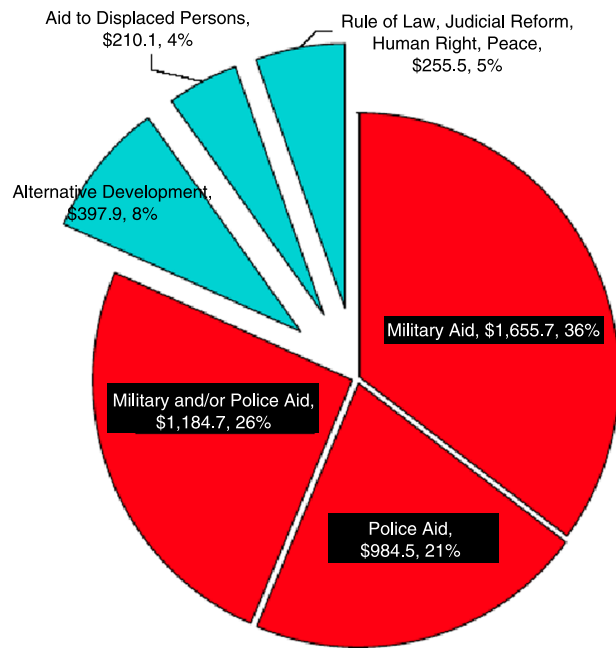
aid to Colombia (Figure 4). The Plan Colombia, from the original intention of being a sort of Marshall Plan to support the ongoing conversations with the FARC and an eventual post-conflict stabilisation, evolved into a military offensive that expressed US foreign policy concerns.

The internationalisation of war … and back to peace again

The military emphasis suited Uribe, Pastrana's successor, well. Uribe was an astute politician, who governed from 2002 with approval rarely falling below 70%. A substantial

Figure 3. US aid to Colombia since 1997 (millions of dollars). *Source:* Center for International Policy.

Aid to Displaced Persons,
$210.1, 4%

Rule of Law, Judicial Reform,
Human Right, Peace,
$255.5, 5%

Alternative Development,
$397.9, 8%

Military Aid, $1,655.7, 36%

Military and/or Police Aid,
$1,184.7, 26%

Police Aid,
$984.5, 21%

Figure 4. US aid to Colombia 2000–2006. *Source:* Center for International Policy.

part of his popularity was due to the perception of many citizens that he was able to deal with security issues: he acted as a hawk and he has been rewarded. Uribe was convinced that the main—perhaps the only important—reference point of Colombia's foreign policy was the United States, whilst eschewing many of the international standard practices and terminologies related to internal armed conflicts: he rejected the possibility of separating combatants and non combatants, at least in some contexts.[30] He aspired to internationalise the war during his first administration to obtain international support—including the use of UN troops—to end the terrorist threat.

In his second mandate, though, Uribe rediscovered the internationalisation of peace theme originally proposed by Pastrana and switched between the internationalisation of war and of peace themes. One key factor determining his position was the politics of the United States. Uribe came to power in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and his discourse matched Bush's position and general political opinion in Colombia and the US. By the beginning of his second mandate, though, many authorities held a much more ambiguous and—with the victory of the Democrats in both Houses in 2006—sometimes distant attitude towards him. In 2007, the possibility of a Free Trade Treaty between the US and Colombia was cast aside, and the Plan Colombia was cut and transformed.

A second key factor was the Colombian elections. Colombian officials had expected to weaken the FARC and undercut the Colombian supply to the international narcotic markets, but this did not happen. The results in the anti-narco field were unimpressive and this affected the US's evaluation of Uribe's strategy and forced the Colombian government to adjust it. On the other hand, the government gained significant successes in some critical areas such as security for the bulk of its citizenship and economic growth. It opened peace negotiations with the paramilitary, and with other groups (the ELN, and eventually even the FARC) to show that it was not biased in favour of counter-insurgents. This meant that peace re-entered, rather surprisingly,[31] the governmental agenda. This underscores the flexibility of different Colombian administrations, and their readiness to engage in peace talks, though not necessarily genuine; they can be pure posturing.

Over time, the government discovered that the one-sided focus on the US was counter-productive. Some European countries had interests in the Colombian conflict, an obvious example being France, one of whose citizens—Ingrid Betancur—was a candidate in the 1998 Colombian presidential competition[32] and was abducted by the FARC. Several issues between the country and its neighbours came to the fore, and the strength of Colombia's position depended on many factors, not only US support. The result was that the Colombian government started working with a double agenda—internationalisation of peace and of war—and discovered that it needed to diversify its diplomacy.[33]

The evolution of the Plan

In the meantime, the Plan Colombia evolved. In 2001, George Bush transformed it into a regional undertaking named the Andean Initiative against Drugs, with $676 million support, of which $380 million was given to Colombia. The rest was distributed among neighbouring Andean countries, a move which triggered huge waves of opposition. In contrast to Colombia, other Andean countries' legal forces had strong nationalist leanings and the Plan was not associated with the original pro-peace effort; the anti-drug stance—presented as a police problem—had significant political underpinnings that were ignored by the Andean Initiative policy makers[34] and already tense relations between Colombia and its neighbours were strained further.[35] In Colombia, successive governments aimed to maintain or increase aid, regardless of its specific allocations; under severe fiscal constraints, in the midst of an internal conflict, and with a political class in state

of permanent crisis, *any* aid was better than no aid. Additionally, no administration wanted to lose support from the US, as this would be seen as a sign of political weakness.

Neighbouring governments had to contend with public opinion and, in the case of Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador, with military establishments that have much stronger nationalist traditions than exist in Colombia. Furthermore, in Bolivia and to some extent Peru there are strong, legal movements of coca croppers. The Andean Initiative was perceived in these countries as the exportation of Colombian problems. Responses ranged from pragmatic—get whatever you can without being compromised—to adversarial— denounce it as undermining sovereignty.

In the US, the Republican position was to support the Plan to further the War on Drugs and against the guerrillas, so it received support, especially as Uribe's strategy could be translated into the language of the War on Terror. For Democrats, the position was more complicated. Electorally, the costs of presenting themselves as 'weak on crime' would be too high. The Clinton strategy had been to blend the anti-drugs and pro-human rights themes. This worked under Samper (1994–1998), as the Colombian government was embroiled in a corruption scandal and was committing human rights abuses, but when Pastrana became president, the situation changed. Pastrana was an ally and had no connections with narco-trafficking, but at the same time, he did nothing serious to improve the government's human rights record. In many areas, the situation deteriorated,[36] and Clinton had to produce a waiver to 'certify' the Colombian human rights performance in 2000.[37] The Plan Colombia was supposed to combat both subversion and narco-trafficking, and at the same time strengthen democratic institutions—it was the complement to the peace seeking efforts of Pastrana; but what now? Uribe was a man of the Republicans, but at the same time the only more or less palatable interlocutor in the Andean region. As Bush started to fall in the opinion polls, and Uribe was the target of the same type of accusations that had harried Samper, the Democrats increasingly distanced themselves from the Colombian government. The situation today is that, with regard to key decisions for the Uribe agenda—the Colombia Plan, approval of the free trade treaty—the Democrats have taken positions that range from the glacial to the hostile.

So, three main positions became significant. First, the Colombian official demand: more aid, independently of its allocation and constraints (with each administration signalling its preferences: Pastrana, development; Uribe, war, or a combination of war and peace proposals). Second, the Republican position: favouring more aid and directed at security. Third, the Democratic position: the quantity of aid should be given according

to performance evaluated by the United States, and the distribution more balanced. Typically, the settlement was the result of a compromise, according to power and bargaining skills. In 2004, the United States assigned $727 million to the Initiative, of which $463 million went to Colombia, and the Senate approved an increase of US military assistants who could operate in the country, from 400 to 800 (and of private contractors from 400 to 600). However, in 2007, when the Democrats dominated both Houses, the political landscape altered: military spending was slashed, as was funding to aerial fumigations, while there were increases in support to certain social sectors.[38]

Taking the Europeans back in

From the drafting stages of the Plan Colombia, other international actors, beside the US, had been present. In particular, the UN, through Jan Egeland, played a key role in establishing connections with Europe. Egeland advised the government in drafting the Plan to help Colombia, and to promote a pro-peace international agenda. As has been seen, the Plan Colombia had evolved towards a US engagement, but eventually at the Colombian government's request, and with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (BID) and the Spanish government, the European countries created a Table of Donors at the beginning of 2000. The Table's objective was to gather $1.4 million through donor and multilateral contributions. The funds collected would be allocated to social development and illicit crop substitution programmes, according to the first meeting of the Table of Donors that took place on 7 July 2000 in Madrid. Pastrana had an excellent working relationship with Spain's head of State at the time, Aznar, but Aznar soon lost power to the socialists. After a long delay, the Table reconvened in London in 2003, and in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2005. The process was intended to be more participatory and socially oriented than the Plan Colombia had been, although several obstacles were encountered. In the next section, the content and main themes discussed in those meetings are described.

Madrid

On 7 July 2000, delegates of 26 states and international institutions met in Madrid to consider the Colombian problem. There the Colombian government presented a first draft of the Strategy for Institutional Strengthening and Social Development that included

a rather baroque menu of initiatives that went from the promotion of the agricultural sector to the rebuilding of the social fabric in the regions most affected by the conflict.[39]

In the months that preceded the Madrid encounter, European officials held a series of preparatory meetings, while various Colombian delegations visited Europe. The Committee for Latin America (COLAT) of the Ministerial Council of the European Union held two sessions, in April and May, tried to reach a common position concerning the Plan Colombia, but several countries had objections and the majority of countries demanded more clarity over the Plan.[40] The Colombian government—apparently supporting the position of UK and Spain—wanted to build a 'European Colombia Plan' based on the best elements of the Plan, involving civil society and creating the necessary national consensus.

The Madrid meeting witnessed a confrontation between the government and NGOs. The Colombian NGOs created an Alternative Table that rejected the Plan arguing that it was a bellicose undertaking disguised as a peace plan that disregarded Colombian society and focused only on the interaction with the US; it asked the European Union if the social component was compatible with the military dimension funded by the United States. In conclusion, their recommendation was not to support the Colombia Plan but to help devise an alternative programme coordinated with Colombian civil society.[41] The activity of the Alternative Table resulted in the postponement of any formal decision by the European Union, and Spain, Japan and Norway funded—together with the UN—some initiatives in Colombia, with Spain's $100 million being the only major new funding.[42]

On 24 October 2000, in a meeting held in Bogotá, the European Union put forward a strategy of cooperation based on the modernisation and participation of civil society, and support to education, health, agriculture, fishing and human rights projects. This established European support for the peace process separate from the Colombia Plan, and was based on different mechanisms: the funds would not be delivered to the government, but to civil society and NGOs. The European contribution would focus on five main areas: the state of law, human rights, the struggle against the underlying causes of violence and support to the victims, protection of biodiversity and the environment, and consolidation of regional cooperation. Renaud Vignal, speaker for the European Union in the meeting, reiterated the support of the EU to the peace process, but toned down its operational dimensions, which were politically sensitive for the Colombian government.[43] The funds would be delivered after bilateral conversations, which implied that Europe would not act collectively. Vignal also underscored the potentially negative aspects that certain methods

of eradication of illicit crops might have; thus, the EU separated itself from the Plan Colombia without criticising it explicitly.

In the meantime, the peace process was breaking down, and allegations of the complicity of Colombian authorities with the paramilitary abounded. Finally, the European Parliament formally distanced itself from the Colombia Plan, declaring that it was a bilateral issue between Colombia and the United States, and that '[it] contains aspects that are opposite to the projects and strategies of cooperation with which the EU has already engaged, putting in danger its programmes of cooperation'.[44]

London

The Annual meeting of the IDB in Milan (2003) opened the door for the Uribe administration to present for the first time its ideas about cooperation priorities. The government declared that the interest in peace would be maintained, but that with respect to the preceding administration new emphases would appear (wars against terrorism and against drugs).[45] As the government itself recognised, this position was unsatisfactory for the donors, and this put in motion a process of reassessing the ways of interacting with them.[46]

Faced with this situation, the Colombian government proposed the creation of a new Special Table, comprising the cooperating countries, Colombian civil society (represented by Colombian NGOs), the Colombian government, and international NGOs. This Special Table would discuss the parameters of international aid for the country. The proposal was met with enthusiasm, even by those countries that had adopted an overtly critical stance in previous interactions. An agenda was drawn up that included several innovations, mainly a series of visits to Europe of delegations of both the Colombian government and civil society, which culminated in a session of the Table in London in July 2003.[47]

In the meantime, however, presidential elections were held in Colombia. As seen in the previous section, contrary to Pastrana's dovish stance *vis-à-vis* the FARC, the new incumbent, Álvaro Uribe, was a recognised hawk, who advocated the military defeat of the guerrillas and who, when pressed, denounced not only NGOs but also the past inertia of the political system towards the guerrillas. Uribe had won overwhelmingly—a feat he repeated in 2006—and perceived that he had a level of legitimacy and popular support that no previous president could claim. Furthermore, his foreign policy was even more US oriented than Pastrana's.

Initially, the Uribe administration responded to Pastrana's pacifist legacy with coolness, if not disdain, and did not put much stock in the conversations with the Europeans.

The London meeting took place at a time when the government and NGOs seemed to be heading towards open confrontation. In its prelude several Colombian NGOs had published what was read by the government as an oppositional manifesto, 'the authoritarian spell', which attacked Uribe's alleged war mongering and authoritarianism. Uribe responded with a harsh critique of the NGOs and of independent international agencies that had produced more nuanced evaluations,[48] suggesting that they were hypocrites and siding the guerrillas.[49] Was there any common ground between Uribe—cast as the author of the 'authoritarian spell'—and the Europeans—perceived by the president as being 'allies of terrorism'?

At first, it appeared not; Uribe was enjoying a wave of popularity and used radical and polarising tactics that were beneficial domestically. Internationally, though, he lacked the critical mass of support and found himself isolated. This contrast between internal legitimacy and international awkwardness was characteristic of Uribe's management of the Colombian conflict.[50] Meanwhile, several NGOs were lobbying to prevent European cooperation in a process that, they claimed, would simply foster war (they wanted Europeans to participate in a pro-peace, not a pro-war, effort).[51] This, together with Bush's falling popularity in the US forced the Uribe government to rediscover Europe, although he remains politically distant from neighbouring countries.

The London meeting was attended by the EU, multilateral institutions, and the United Nations. The Resident Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations facilitated preliminary discussions. The Colombian delegation included NGOs attached to different themes and political and intellectual leanings and traditions, and representatives from the Church, the private sector, social movements, and from some of the regions most affected by the conflict. The Colombian government presented its strategy as 'An International Coalition for Peace'.

Elements of civil society arrived at a common position following a series of difficult but valuable discussions, and they were explicitly acknowledged by the London Declaration. The Declaration expressed its support for the Colombian government in its fight against violence and drugs, and underscored the importance of the respect of human rights and international humanitarian law. The signatories affirmed their engagement with the Colombian peace process. A general commitment to revise the demand and supply of international aid to Colombia and to engage with the recommendations issued by the High Commissioner of the UN for Human Rights was agreed. As a result of the London meeting,

the Group of 24 was created to support Colombia in its way out of conflict,[52] along with a Commission for following up on the agreements.

The structure of the Table was crucial: the NGOs had to agree a common position—a process meditated by European NGOs—as the Table had to have a single 'civil society position.' Paradoxically, it was the summoning of both the state and the international community, which guaranteed a relevant, united participation of Colombian NGOs. This process, for instance, began strong discussions within the NGO community about the legitimacy of supporting the FARC and ELN. Eventually, the major NGOs distanced themselves from the idea that it was acceptable to use violence to change power balances in Colombia. Such debates, of course, did not come out of the blue, but related to previous trends (see Table 2).[53]

Cartagena

The representatives of civil society and the NGOs were diverse and included the national association of industrialists (ANDI) and several associations created to help the victims of the guerrillas (see Table 2).

The Colombian state drew several lessons from the London meeting. It discovered that, contrary to its dealings with US Republicans, the denunciation of adversaries as terrorists was not sufficient either for public opinion or for governments—not even in the UK, by then a staunch ally of the US in the War on Terror. Second, it found that it had to work hard to sell its new set of policies. In particular, whilst establishing negotiations with the FARC was energetically excluded by the Uribe administration, a new negotiation process was launched between the government and the paramilitaries. In contrast to the conversations between the government and the FARC, which were received with hope by the international community, this new process was fraught with distrust and uneasiness. The Colombian government misjudged the situation, believing that the bias towards conversations with the guerrillas was a product of misinformation, left-leaning European culture and clever subversive diplomacy.[54]

The notion, though, that the problem of the government-paramilitary peace talks with respect to the international community was informational proved incorrect, and the government was able to draw its own conclusions. The basic theory 'in the light of the correct information our position will prevail' remained, but the Uribe administration

Table 2. The civil society agencies that attended the London meeting

Transnational networks	OIDHACO, Grupo ABColombia (CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB, Save the Children Fund UK, Trócaire, SCIAF), Amnesty International, Caritas – Secour Catholique (Alianza de ONG Francesas), Civis Suecia, International Alert, Justice for Colombia, Justice Life, Misereor, Pax Christi, Peace Boat.
Local platforms of coordination	Diálogo Inter–Agencial (DIAL), Project Counsel Services (PCS), Diakonia, International Crisis Group, Plataforma de Organizaciones de Desarrollo.
Domestic civil society	ANDI, AFRODES, Confederación Colombiana de ONG, Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía, Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, CEPEI, Asamblea Permanente por la Paz, Redepaz, Indepaz, Planeta Paz, MINGA, Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, Codhes, ANUC Nacional, PPDMM, Ecofondo, CGTD, Consejo Evangélico de Colombia, Consejo Nacional Campesino, Constituyente de Mogotes, Coordinación Costa Norte, Coordinación Nacional Agraria, CUT, Escuela Nacional Sindical, FUNDECIMA, ONIC, Pastorial Social, Ruta Pacifica de Mujeres.

Source: Schönrock La Arquitectura De La Cooperación Internacional En Colombia, 2008.

learnt to yield in secondary aspects, and to manoeuvre. Several subtle aspects of the Cartagena meeting show that the Uribe government was learning to play the game. It also started to produce results in the security area, which turned the tables in its favour. In particular, it claimed to have reduced homicide rates (although this has been contested on technical grounds and needs clarification) (see Table 3).[55]

In the February 2005 Cartagena meeting the government made an effort to accommodate the language of all parties, and toned down much of its previous verbal aggressiveness. This new position seemed to pay reasonable dividends. Furthermore, the very fact that the event took place in Colombia, where Colombian NGOs had much less room to lobby with their international peers, was important. However, the Uribe administration's position was still radical in substance. In effect, Uribe declared that there was not an internal armed conflict in Colombia, but a democracy besieged by terrorism.[56] Since there was no conflict, the correct position was to put pressure on the terrorists so that they unilaterally ceased their actions. Correspondingly, Colombia was suffering no humanitarian crisis, so international cooperation should focus on the strengthening of the state rather than on the protection of human rights.[57] Uribe later withdrew from many of these ostensibly hawkish positions under the weight of political demand and evidence.[58] At Cartagena, though, the government's gingerly radical stance succeeded.

Table 3. Homicide rates 1994–2004

Year	Rate annual	Homicides	Annual variation
1994	70.88	26,828	−4.77%
1995	65.9	25,398	−5.33%
1996	67.8	26,642	4.90%
1997	63.35	25,379	−4.74%
1998	56.57	23,096	−9.00%
1999	58.57	24,358	5.46%
2000	62.71	26,540	8.96%
2001	64.64	27,841	4.90%
2002	65.79	28,837	3.58%
2003	52.79	23,507	−18.48%
2004	44.18	20,167	−14.87%

Source: Government of the Republic of Colombia. Informe de Derechos Humanos y DIH 2004.

However, the other Colombian partners succeeded in adopting a moderate, but not irrelevant, stance. The civil society coordination presented a consensual declaration—that included an historic agreement between the private sector and the human rights NGOs—in which both kidnapping and forced disappearances were condemned,[59] and this was taken on board by the Cartagena Declaration. The communiqué read by the president of the Association of the Industrialists (ANDI) stressed the rejection of terrorist actions, but at the same time recognised explicitly that Colombia was undergoing an armed conflict, and that the best option to overcome it was a negotiation that respected International Penal Law. Human Rights NGOs and the Church stressed the need to condemn the several violations of the cease-fire by the paramilitary, both those that were participating in the process and those who had adopted a strategy of wait and see.

Table 4 compares the London and Cartagena declarations. What this comparison reveals is that the Table of Donors ended up accepting the position of the Colombian government in many critical regards. Several of the alleged achievements of the government were recognised, some themes were muted, others stressed. According to the government, the output of the Table of Donors increased from $150 million in 2001 to $255 million in 2002, $294 million in 2003, and $200 million in 2004. In this year, more than 1270 development projects received support, which, according to governmental sources, was a boost on the developmental side as it coincided with the increase in 'social funding' by the Plan Colombia (see Figure 5 and Table 5)

**Table 4.** Comparison between the London and the Cartagena Declarations

London Declaration, July 2003	Cartagena Declaration, February 2005—Draft
The meeting welcomed and acknowledged the views of civil society which were presented by ABColombia and a representative of Colombian civil society.	Civil society is not named, and only the contribution of governmental actors is acknowledged
All Government representatives present expressed full support to the democratically elected Colombian Government and to all efforts to develop the fully functioning institutions of the democratic state throughout its territory, based on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and the welfare and safety of all citizens. The need to reform institutions was stated. The declaration expressed its support for the Colombian Government in its fight against conflict-related territory violence and illegal drug production and trafficking, underlining the need in so doing to respect the rule of law, human rights and, when applicable, international humanitarian law.	The representatives support the Colombian government, and its efforts to strengthen security and welfare for all its citizens, and to fight against terrorism and narcotrafficking. Recognizing the progressed that have been taking place in a democratic context, it pledges for an increased presence of the institutions, and the strengthening of control agencies to guarantee the rule of law and the respect of human rights in all the country's Recognition of the importance of the process of demobilization of the paramilitary. Underscored the need to complete the juridical framework to guarantee truth and justice.
They expressed deep concern about the humanitarian crisis in Colombia, particularly the plight of internally displaced persons, as well as the grave human rights and international humanitarian law situation.	Not named.
They voiced their strong support for the work undertaken by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia. They received with satisfaction the Colombian Government's pledge to implement the recommendations made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. They urged the Colombian Government to implement these recommendations promptly and to take effective action against impunity and collusion especially with paramilitary groups.	Advances in the effort to apply the recommendations of the High Commissioner were underscored.

Table 4—*continued*

London Declaration, July 2003	Cartagena Declaration, February 2005—Draft
The signatories welcomed the efforts of President Uribe to reform Colombian institutions in order to develop a fully functioning democratic state throughout its territory, based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, the safety and welfare of citizens, social and economic development. They emphasised the importance of such measures, especially in rural areas that have borne the brunt of the conflict, in helping to achieve a peaceful solution. They noted the significant role which the private sector could play in meeting some of these challenges.	The attainments of the government were recognised, the government was invited** to continue strengthening its presence throughout the national territory. The need to increase the protection measures of trade unionists, social society leader, and human rights advocates was stressed. The reference to the role of private sector was dropped.
They welcomed the Colombian Government's statement that it recognised and supported the role of civil society and non-Governmental organizations as important stakeholders in carrying out reform, implementing development programmes, defending human rights, and moving towards a negotiated settlement of the internal conflict. They further welcomed and underlined the importance of the Colombian Government's pledge to protect civil society leaders, including trade unionists.	Nothing is said about the role of civil society.
	The efforts of the government to improve the lot of vulnerable populations were recognised. Concern was expressed about the situation of the indigenous peoples, Afrocolombians, and IDPs
	The declaration highlights that it is a result of a process of consultation in which there was active participation of the Colombian civil society and other national and international actors. The values the readiness of the Colombian government to accept this process of democratic participation.

Table 4—*continued*

London Declaration, July 2003	Cartagena Declaration, February 2005—Draft
Finally, they agreed to review and refocus their cooperation programmes with particular emphasis on contributing to the strengthening of state institutions, the alleviation of the humanitarian crisis, the protection of human rights, environmental activities and the development of alternatives to drug production.	The signatories expressed their engagement in the process, and the need to push forward the strategy of international cooperation along the six main lines prioritised in Cartagena
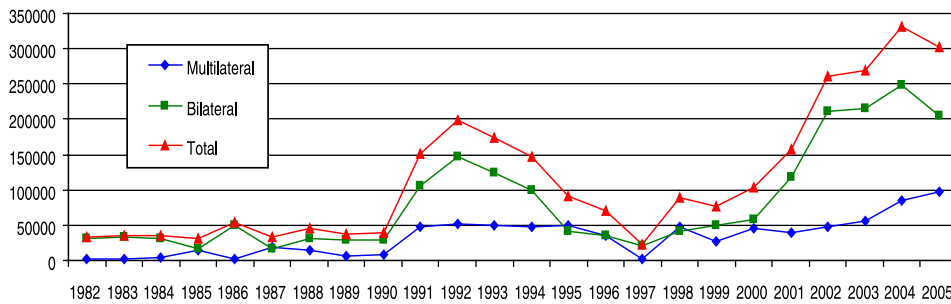
Figure 5. Evolution of the official aid to the development (thousands of dollars). *Source:* Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social

International actors seem to have accorded the Cartagena meeting unprecedented importance. For example, Javier Solana, High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security of the European Union, attended the meeting and was very active in the process of striking the basic accords. The Chancellor of the European Commission, Eneko Landaburu, attended and the president of the Chancellery of Foreign Affairs of the European Union, Benita Ferrero, sent a delegate; several countries sent ministerial level delegations (see Table 6)

Several NGOs were dejected by the governmental success, not understanding why the United Nations and the international community tolerated the attacks of the Colombian government on agencies of the EU, UN, and the international human rights community, or why they accepted the government's veto to the UN representative, James Lemoyne. Furthermore, the government had changed key aspects and expressions of the Plan of Humanitarian Action, like 'humanitarian crisis' to 'humanitarian situation', 'armed conflict' to 'violence', 'conflict victims' to 'violence victims', despite the fact that the Plan was issued by the UN; this apparently prompted no reaction.[60] Some NGOs noted 'a tendency of the EU and the governments that participated in the summit to share [with Uribe] the anti-terrorist re-interpretation of the Colombian conflict, which means sharing the main approach of his proposals.'[61] The Colombian press interpreted the Cartagena Declaration as 'the most important backing [that had been] given by the international community to President Alvaro Uribe' recognising how his priorities had been accommodated.[62] However, as this is not a zero sum game, it can clearly be seen that all sides improved their bargaining skills in Cartagena, refining their positions and learning to speak to ever-new audiences.

A social orientation

Regarding the peace process with the paramilitary, the Cartagena meeting took place at a critical moment. Contrary to Pastrana's experience, Uribe's conversations went through the Congress. Two bills were under consideration: one favoured by the High Advisor for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, and another supported by the pro-governmental senator, Rafael Pardo, and other colleagues. The former version was much more lenient with the paramilitary, and granted them generous judicial benefits without demanding full confession of their crimes. Which one would be supported by the government was not decided until the end of the Cartagena meeting, when everything had been put in place. Then, the administration backed the High Advisor for Peace bill, which was approved by the Congress with small modifications.

This created an air of suspicion and discomfort. Despite this, Sweden—at the time the president of the G24—made the outlay to support the process, and the other cooperating countries followed suit. The key themes that should organise international cooperation were, according to the Colombian government, forests and environment, strengthening of the rule of law, DDR, alternative development, regional programmes for peace and development, and support for IDPs.

This proposal was criticised for marginalising humanitarian issues, and emphasising DDR instead. At the same time, it showed a new approach to non-conflict aspects. As seen in Figure 6, the European Cooperation was much more oriented to social and developmental areas than the US aid. This is important, but does not signal a change in the conception of the conflict held by the Uribe government. Very pragmatically, as its predecessors, the government accepts nearly anything, not necessarily out of cynicism, but because it faces tough constraints. Uribe was explicit that he would accept whatever economic assistance the US offered for the fight against narco-trafficking, indicating that he would not 'look a gift horse in the mouth.'[63]

Conclusions

This paper has focused on a particular process of setting an agenda for aid. There are many others and in all of them the same tensions and the same painful iterated deliberating and

**Table 5.** Cartagena, Colombia. 2 February 2005. 132 NGOs participated, grouped in the following way

Alianza de organizaciones socials
Confederación Colombiana de ONG
Consejo Gremial Nacional
Consejo Nacional de Planeación
Federación Colombiana de Municipios
Fundaciones empresariales
Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral Social

Most representative Colombian NGOs (alphabetical order)
Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes por la Paz
Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz
ASFADES
Asociación Nacional de Estudiantes Universitarios ACEU
Asociación Nacional de Industriales ANDI
Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos ANUC
Central Unitaria de Trabajadores CUT
CINEP
CODHES
Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo
Comisión Colombiana de Juristas
Comité de Solidadridad con los Presos Políticos
Confederación General de Trabajadores Democráticas CGTD
Coporación Casa de la Mujer
Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris
Corporación para la promoción social Alternativa MINGA
Corporación Reiniciar
CREDHOS
Federación Sindical Agraria FENSUAGRO
Fundación Restrepo Barco
Fundación Social
Instituto de Estudios para la Paz INDEPAZ
Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativas ILSA
Instituto Popular de Capacitación IPC
Juventud comunista JUCO
Mandato Ciudadano por la Paz
Organización Femenina Popular
Organización Indigena Colombiana ONIC
País Libre
Planeta Paz
Red de Iniciativas contra la Guerra y por la Paz REDEPAZ
Red de Universidades por la Paz y la Convivencia
Red Nacional de Mujeres
Unión Sindical Obrera USO

Table 6. Delegates of the G–24 in Cartagena, Colombia

País	Jefe delegación
Alemania	Peter Scholz, Director de Asuntos de América Latina
Argentina	Rafael Antonio Bielsa, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Austria	Hans Peter Glanzer, Embajador
Bélgica	Jean Luc Bodson, Embajador
Brasil	Samuel Pinheiro Guimaraes, Secretario General de Relaciones Exteriores de Brasil
Canadá	Guillermo Rishchynski, Vicepresidente para las Américas de la Agencia Canadiense para el Desarrollo Internacional ACDI
Chile	Ignacio Walker, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Dinamarca	Bent Kiilerich, Embajador no residente de Dinamarca en Colombia
España	Juan Pablo de la Iglesia, Secretario General de la AECI
EE.UU	Andrew Natsios, Administrador General, USAID
Francia	Daniel Parfait, Director de América del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Francia
Gran Bretaña	Bill Rammel, Ministro del Estado Británico para América Latina
Japón	Mitsuo Sakaba, Director para América Latina
Italia	Giampaolo Bettamio, Viceministro de Asuntos Exteriores para América Latina
México	Miguel Jakim, Subsecretario de Relaciones Exteriores
Noruega	Sigurd Endresen, Encargado de Negocios
Polonia	Andrzej Zalucki, Subsecretario de Estado del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Portugal	Artur Monteiro de Magallaes, Encargado de Negocios
Países Bajos	Marian S. Kappeyne Van de Coppello, Directora del hemisferio Occidental
Suiza	Stephan Husy, Director para los derechos humanos y la politica de paz
Suecia	Annika Söeder, Secretaria de Estado
Banco Mundial	Alberto Chueca Mora, Representante del Banco Mundial en Colombia
BID	Enrique Iglesias, Presidente BID
CAF	Liliana Canalle, Vicepresidenta de Programa de Países CAF
ONU	Antonio María Costa, Director de la Oficina de Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Delito
PNUD	Alfredo Witschi Cestari, Representante del Programa de las Naciones para el Desarrollo/Coordinador
Residente del Sistema de Naciones Unidas	
Unión Europea	Eneko Landaburu, Director General Relaciones Exteriores de la Comisión
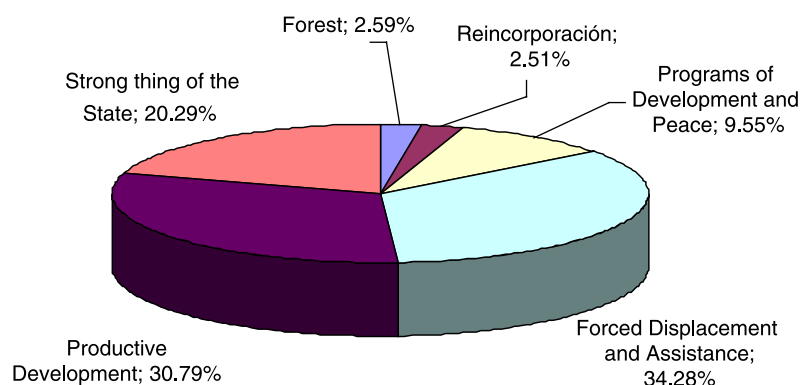
Figure 6. Distribution of the cooperation (2004–2006). *Source:* Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social.

bargaining between several parties—the Colombian state, Colombian NGOs and international actors—is seen.

We have suggested here that such aid wrangles cannot be seen exclusively as the result of a zero sum confrontation; in many ways, they helped both NGOs and the government. Indeed, the process considered here resulted in an increase in aid figures, and in thicker networks between both the Colombian state and NGOs with international actors.[64] Likewise, because of the Table meetings, the government and NGOs created structures to follow up on the agreements. Through the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI), the government built a 'Map of International Cooperation' and proposed a grand—at least in name—network of agencies called the National System of International Cooperation (SNCI). The SNCI is tasked with establishing the criteria and instructions to orient international cooperation; ordering and systematising supply and demand; adapting the Colombian discourse to the international supply to make it more attractive to donors, especially Europeans; following up and evaluation; and producing systematised information. Similarly, after London, the NGOs and several popular organisations created an Alliance for International Cooperation for Peace and Democracy comprising 132 organisations. The Alliance made a follow-up of the London accords and issued policy documents. Furthermore, as we have shown here, several interfaces between the state and NGO's were created or substantially strengthened. One of the immediate Cartagena meeting results was the summoning of NGOs by the government to discuss issues related to the discussions that had taken place. That some of them refused to participate[65] and that the interaction was

quite uneven and patchy[66] only stresses the complexities of learning processes between partners that have been along a rocky road, but does not deny they have taken place.

Lest we are tasked with being excessively optimistic, it should be remembered that, together with mutual learning and organisational build up, we also find the stubborn upholding of absurd positions to win time in the midst of serious deteriorations of some humanitarian dimensions.[67] Sometimes, bad faith bargaining, or simply posturing, became the predominant strategies. Of course, there is no linear progression from 'bad behaviours' to 'good ones'. Why? Simply, because contrary to Donnelly's naïve belief in the capacity of the international community to adopt the moral high ground the behaviour of international actors in the aid turfs that we have described here was quite muddled and unpredictable.

In other words, the Paris principles were not upheld by the participants in the Colombian aid discussion process. There are several reasons for this having happened. First, both recipients and donors have many things at stake besides solving the conflict. In the case of the United States and the Plan Colombia, this is just too obvious. The Plan Colombia confirmed the status of the country as the third recipient of US military aid in the world, but at the same time was instrumentalised to serve the purposes of the anti-drugs and anti-terrorist wars. However, in reality the point applies to all actors. The strategic, rational dynamics that underlie aid processes have already been highlighted in other contexts. In Arango's words, 'If a state delivers resources to another one, it inevitably starts to participate in the internal processes of the latter, and is co-responsible for the results of its intervention. This makes of aid a tool of foreign policy'.[68] Similar conclusions have been reached by others,[69] including Oxfam in an evaluation of aid in the midst of several crises in 2003, when it found that humanitarian aid allocated by donors was governed by political concerns and the media.[70] Schönrock has found that, in the Colombian case, it is not technical but political criteria that guide the donors.[71]

Beyond this, the debates we have discussed here reveal part of the fine grain of strategic dynamics related to aid. The Colombian government is in a situation of bargaining weakness, for three reasons. First, it has monotonous preferences: something is better than nothing. Second, it does not have the capacity to wait: today is better than tomorrow. Finally, aid is an exercise in *political signalling*: it cues relevant audiences on the strength of weakness of the government. In particular, since the Samper scandal it is probable that economic, media and professional elites in Colombia are hypersensitive to the risk of international isolation.

No government can expect to be lauded if it engages in conflicts with other governments—in this regard not even the ultra-popular Uribe administration has been spared.

These factors sealed the fate of the Plan Colombia, and gave it its militaristic and anti-democratic character. They also forced Uribe to rediscover the Europeans, after a time lag. Monotony (something is always better than nothing), specific conjunctures that created urgent needs, and the fear of isolation, helped bring the Europeans back in. However, such rediscovery shows that weak does not mean helpless: the Uribe administration behaved adaptively responding to heterogeneous signals produced by different audiences and sources, with a common general stance that had specific modulations tailored to each interlocutor and situation. The NGOs, for their part, are internally weak, politically isolated and can be repressed, and the real shield against a repressive drift is international awareness, so they also had to establish bridges with European partners.

Second, the interface between recipients and donors is extremely imperfect—it was structured in a haphazard fashion, but some biases may not be random, for example, the idea that Colombian 'civil society' would be represented by sector—that found its culmination in Cartagena—with total disregard for some of the main Colombian democratic institutions, including the Congress and the political parties. In other words, instead of transforming the state, the process has surrounded it, short-circuiting the system of checks and balances in the process. Indeed, it could be counter-argued that the Colombian congress and parties were the epicentre of a huge scandal of paramilitary infiltration, but at the same time in good measure, the scandal was initiated by the denunciation of specific congress and party members. In other words, as would be expected, the Colombian democratic institutions are on both sides of the equation, part of the problem but also part of the solution. Curiously, the call of international actors to strengthen democracy is backed by a set of actions and plans that in practice separate completely the aid process from the fabric of the country's democracy. In this, the Table of Donors and the Plan Colombia are almost identical.

Who decides who is part of the relevant 'civil society'? Indeed, crucial civil society agents—namely political parties—were factored out of the equation. Furthermore, civil society has a complicated structure. The idea espoused by many Colombian intellectuals and decision makers that the country's conflict is the result of the activity of armed apparatuses that besiege the population at large is untenable.[72]

There are other inconsistencies. Each aid objective has merits in its own right, but may not be simultaneously attainable. Aid revolves around good sounding objectives, but

political correctness can be extremely costly when a society has scarce resources and needs to solve a relatively small set of specific problems. The difficulties in establishing priorities are once again typical, and can be expected to continue in the future. Last, but not least, many of the main players of aid may not act by the principles they have formulated verbally, as we have shown in this narrative, because they feel the costs of being consistent are too high, or—equally likely—because they simply do not find the effort worthwhile, or they have 'forgotten'.[73]

Both sources of problems—strategic and inconsistent behaviour—have quite obviously given origin to serious deformations in the aid process, or worse. The obvious example is the Colombia Plan, initially proposed as a sort of Marshall Plan, and eventually implemented as yet another one sided military offensive, centred around US objectives. At the same time, they have created concrete spaces for bargaining. The Uribe administration would never have thought of going back once again to the Europeans if it were not affected by monotony, myopia, and fear of international isolation. This rediscovery was advanced through a complicated dance—the proverbial sequence of one-step forward, two steps backwards—that, none the less, ended in a formal interface that, in one way or another, limits the margin of manoeuvre of the government and gives incentives to maintain a dialogue with NGOs. The European ambiguity with respect to the war on terror maintained an open agenda, where donors left questions open for definition by the Colombian actors. However, they discovered that they would gain only if they were able to develop a language understandable to donors. Some of the best outcomes of this narrative—the joint declaration of human rights NGOs and the association of industrialists denouncing terrorism AND state violence, and the acceptance of the existence of an armed conflict in the country—are a product of this. Dialogue may improve if a third party is listening—even if this third party is absent-minded, self-regarding and a bit aloof.

Thus, through the interstices of strategic behaviour and inconsistencies, both governmental and non-governmental Colombian actors have been able to express their interests, compensate for some of the bargaining weakness, and find the pretext to develop a common political language. The overall evaluation of this trade-off is still pending.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

1. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability. 2005.

2. Millennium Goals.

3. For example, support to the office of the Ombudsman (Defensoría del Pueblo) and to the prosecutor (Fiscalía General). Interview with Ramón Navai, Segundo Secretario de Asuntos Políticos Embajada UK and with Juan Carlos Lozano, Cooperation Manager of the UK Embassy in Bogota, 14 January 2008.

4. Ramirez, *Intervención en conflictos internos*.

5. Donnelly, *Universal human rights*.

6. Welch, *NGOs and Human Rights*.

7. Aguilera, Amnistías e indultos.

8. Another example is the enhanced capacity of the Colombian state as a result of its interaction with advocacy leaderships. For example, the criticisms about human rights violations (homicides, displacements, etc.) gave rise to a set of agencies (in the Vice-presidency, in the National Department of Planning, etc.) that follow up and evaluate quantitatively these offences, and other indicators related to the armed conflict. In many cases (for example, displacement), there has been a permanent interaction between advocacy groups, the judicial, and the executive, which has produced some positive outcomes.

9. See, Fals Borda et al., *La violencia en Colombia*; and Sánchez and Meertens, *Bandoleros, gamonales y campesinos*.

10. Turbay had offered a limited and unilateral amnesty.

11. Garcia-Peña Jaramillo and Eisenstadt, 'Colombia'.

12. Ibid.

13. Typically, for example, the extradition of Colombian citizens was banned.

14. The M19 accepted the peace agreements; others adopted a more ambiguous and opportunistic stance.

15. Dumoulin, Les ONG latino-américaines après l'âge d'or.

16. Arango, La Estrategia de cooperación frente.

17. Krain, 'Contemporary democracies revisited'.

18. Valencia, *Adiós a la política, bienvenida la guerra*.

19. Rodriguez-Daviaud, Droits De L"Homme et Politique L".

20. Restrepo, 'Los equívocos de los derechos humanos'.

21. Sánchez, *Guerras, Memoria e Historia*.

22. Published by La Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, with human rights NGOs in Colombia, and coordinated by the Centro de Investigación para la Educación Popular CINEP. El Embrujo Autoritario (2003), Reelección del Embrujo (2004) y Mas allá del Embrujo (2005) are available at http://plataforma-colombiana.org/embrujoinicio.htm

23. Matthiessen.

24. Rojas, *Estados Unidos y la guerra en Colombia*.

25. Department of State Fact Sheet, 14 March 2001. Cited in Minear, 'Humanitarian Agenda 2015'.

26. Ramirez, 'Encrucijadas de la Cooperación Internacional en Colombia.'

27. Here we are taking the Colombian government and state as unitary actors, which at some relevant junctures may be inexact. See the Conclusions.

28. The first draft of the Plan was released in English. It did not pass through the Colombian Congress and it was not offered to Colombian citizens until 1998.

29. Interview with Daniel Garcia-Peña, Coordinator of the Office for the High Commission of Peace during the Samper's administration, 26 April 2007, Bogotá.

30. Uribe announced that the Government did not recognise violent elements as combatants but as terrorists, 16 June 2003, http://www.presidencia.gov.co/cne/2003/junio/16/08162003.htm

31. Interview with Daniel Garcia-Peña, 2007.

32. Since 1991, Colombia has allowed its citizens to hold double nationality.

33. In recent declarations, the Vice President Francisco Santos has left open the possibility of evaluating the 'alliance' with the EU, 10 May 2007, http://liberalcolombiano.blogspot.com/2007/05/desmarcarse-de-usa.html

34. The final version of the aid law is found at Conference Report 106–701, from the House-Senate conference committee, 29 June 2000. Relevant excerpts from House Appropriations Committee Report 107–142 on H.R. 2506, the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, 17 July 2001 and Excerpt from International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs Congressional Budget Justification, May 2001.

35. Ramirez, *Plan Colombia y la Internacionalización del Conflicto*.

36. Ramirez, *Intervención en conflictos internos*.

37. Presidential determination No. 2000–28 waiving human rights conditions in the aid package, 23 August 2000.

38. Revista Semana, *Nada es gratis*.

39. Schönrock, *La Arquitectura De La Cooperación Internacional En Colombia*.

40. Transnational Institute, Europe and Plan Colombia Drugs & Conflict debate documents, 1 April 2001. www.tni.org

41. Ibid. This was rather small, given the personal and political ties between Pastrana and Aznar.

42. Ibid.

43. Declaration by the EU on the European support of the peace process in Colombia, 24 October 2000. http://www.galeon.com/pazcolobia/efectdeclue.htm

44. European Parliament, Resolution B5-0087/2001 1 February 2001.

45. Ayuda de Memoria de la reunión celebrada en Milán el 22 de marzo de 2003, con el objetivo de tratar el tema de las 'Mesa de Cooperación Internacional' y en la cual participaron el Ministro de Hacienda (Roberto Junguito), el Viceministro Técnico de Hacienda (Juan Ricardo Ortega), la Asesora del Ministro de Hacienda (Maria Inés Agudelo), la Ministra de Cultura (Maria Consuelo Araujo), la Alta Consejera Presidencial para el Plan Colombia (Sandra Suárez), el Gerente para la Región III del BID (Ciro de Falco), el Director Ejecutivo por Colombia y Perú ante el BID (Luís Guillermo Echeverri), el Asesor del Director Ejecutivo por Colombia y Perú ante el BID (Iván Duque), la Directora de la ACCI (Maria Elisa Zambrano), el Embajador de Colombia ante Bélgica (Nicolás Echevarria), el Sub-Director de Crédito del DNP (Hugo Miguel Rangel) y la Asesora de la Dirección General del DNP (Carolina Soto). Taken from Schönrock, *La Arquitectura De La Cooperación Internacional En Colombia.*

46. Por otra parte, en la Reunión del BID se logró concretar importantes préstamos. El Ministro de Hacienda y Crédito Público de Colombia y el presidente del BID, firmaron los documentos correspondientes a un préstamo de emergencia social de USD1,250 millones destinado a ayudar al Gobierno de Álvaro Uribe a mantener la estabilidad macroeconómica y fiscal, protegiendo a la vez las inversiones y reformas sociales. En Europa Press 'El BID y Colombia firman un préstamo de emergencia social de USD1,250 millones', 2003.

47. Interview with Daniel Garcia-Peña, 2007.

48. In particular the *Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano* (PNUD, *Informe Nacional*).

49. Discurso con motivo de la posesión del nuevo general de la Fuerza Aérea Colombiana, 8 September 2003. 9 September 2003, El Tiempo, 'acusan en EU a ONG de lanzar campaña para bloquear ayuda militar a Colombia'.

50. See also, *The Economist* 'Trade, death and drugs'.

51. Interview with Daniel Garcia-Peña, 2007.

52. The members of the G-24 are: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Spain, United States, Finland, France, Greece, UK, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Mexico, Norway, Holland, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, and the nine new members of the European Union: Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and the Czech Republic. The following multinational insti-

tutions also took part: European Commission, UN agencies, Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF), InterAmerican Development Bank (BID), IMF and WB.

53. Orozco, 'Hacedores de Paz y Defensores de Derechos Humanos.'

54. See, International Crisis Group. Colombia: Towards Peace and Justice?; Rettberg, *Entre el Perdón y el Paredón.*

55. All calculations of homicidal rates are based on convenience, not representative, samples. Thus, statistical inferences stemming from them can be spurious. The problem can be circumvented by Multi-Systems Estimation. For careful explanations of the problem, see for example, Benetech's web site, http://www.benetech.org/about/

56. Intervention by Alvaro Uribe in setting up the Table for International Coordination and Cooperation, Cartagena, 3 February 2005.

57. Revista Semana, 'Álvaro Uribe sostiene que en Colombia no hay conflicto armado sino amenaza terrorista', 30.

58. For example, it is plainly absurd to deny the existence of a prolonged conflict.

59. Government of the Republic of Colombia. Presidential Programme for Social Action and International Cooperation, Strategy of International Cooperation for Colombia. Bogota, 2005.

60. Pérez Guzman, Diego: www.dhcolombia.info/spip.php 27 January 2005.

61. Arango, 'La Estrategia de cooperación frente al desplazamiento forzado en Colombia'.

62. Editorial El tiempo, 5 February 2005.

63. Caracol Noticas, 6 July 2007. http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/437436.asp?id = 437436

64. Schönrock, *La Arquitectura De La Cooperación Internacional En Colombia.*

65. Entrevista realizada a José Luis de Francisco, Coordinador de la Línea de Desarraigados de la Delegación de la Comisión Europea para Colombia y Ecuador, 25 de Enero de 2007.

66. Entrevista efectuada a Ana Maria Arango, Asesora de la Dirección de Cooperación Internacional de la Acción Social, Presidencia de la República. 3 de abril de 2007.

67. For example, it appears that extrajudicial executions have increased. See the report by the Defensoria del Pueblo, *Informe Anual del Defensor del Pueblo Ante El Congreso de la República*; and Office in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Informe Anual del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas.*

68. Arango, La Estrategia de cooperación frente.

69. Rey Marcos, *Informe propuesta para la elaboración.*

70. Bookstein, 'Beyond the headlines'.

71. Schönrock, *La Arquitectura De La Cooperación Internacional En Colombia.*

72. Gutierrez and Barón, 'Estado, control territorial para-
militar y'.

73. International agencies change their personnel, their
principles and priorities sometimes with dizzying
agility.

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