

JCC Battle of the Cartels, 1990: Medellín

Thomas Jefferson Model United Nations Conference

TechMUN XXXII



High School Crisis Committee

Chairs: Myra Joshi and Siya Bulusu

Director: Raghav Kasi

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

April 11th-12th, 2025

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the JCC Battle of Cartels, 1990: Medellín committee at TechMUN XXVII this April! This particular committee will be conducted in a two-way joint crisis committee format alongside the JCC Battle of Cartels, 1990: Cali committee, so expect an integrated crisis experience. To ensure smooth backroom logistics, TechMUN this year will be operating using a two-pad system. Each delegate will have one pad with them at all times, while the backroom team will read and respond to their other pad.

In regards to the types of delegates we're looking for, we want individuals who can bring creativity to the table and make a real impact, both in their speeches and behind the scenes in the backroom. Leadership matters, but we're more interested in leaders who can inspire collaboration, especially across committees, and fresh ideas. This conference is your chance to think outside the box and come up with innovative directives that can shape the direction of the committee. Don't be afraid to take calculated risks and explore new approaches. Lastly, no forms of harassment, bullying, or plagiarism will be tolerated.

No matter your background or experience level, our goal is to make sure TechMUN XXVII is a conference you'll remember. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us at Let's make this conference a memorable experience filled with creativity and teamwork!

Best regards,

Chairs & Directors

JCC Battle of Cartels, 1990: Medellín

Topic 1: Diversification of Operations and Political Infiltration Strategies

Background:

The Medellín Cartel has long been at the forefront of international narcotics trade, revolutionizing the cocaine industry and placing Colombia on the global economic map in a new, albeit controversial, light. Through innovation in logistics, enforcement, and territorial control, we have transformed what was once a fragmented operation into a multi-billion-dollar enterprise with transcontinental reach. However, with the increasing scrutiny of both foreign powers—primarily the United States—and domestic institutions, it has become essential to evolve beyond traditional methods of operation. Direct trafficking, while profitable, exposes the organization to high-risk interdiction efforts. The 1980s have seen significant hits to operations due to increased DEA activity, extradition treaties, and internal leaks. Thus, diversification and strategic infiltration of political systems are not merely optional pathways—they are vital mechanisms for the long-term survival and expansion of our influence. Expanding our operations into new sectors and consolidating control over key governmental, judicial, and military bodies must become core pillars of our next phase.

Current Situation:

The Medellín Cartel continues to maintain significant control over key production zones, smuggling routes, and enforcement networks. However, the organization faces mounting pressure from the Colombian government, which, under growing influence from foreign powers, particularly the United States, is implementing harsher counter-narcotics measures. The extradition treaty between Colombia and the United States poses a direct threat to cartel leadership, placing top figures at risk of foreign prosecution. Furthermore, increasing media scrutiny and political rhetoric against cartel activity have contributed to a growing public

backlash, complicating efforts to maintain legitimacy and local support. Despite the cartel's efforts to influence political actors through intimidation and bribery, such methods have proven to be inconsistent and short-term in impact. The organization's current reliance on a single commodity—cocaine—also presents long-term vulnerabilities due to potential market instability and escalating enforcement crackdowns. As a result, the cartel recognizes the urgent need to diversify its revenue streams and deepen its institutional influence. A more strategic, long-term approach is required to maintain dominance, reduce exposure, and secure a position of power that cannot be easily dismantled by external forces.

Possible Solutions:

To address these challenges, the Medellín Cartel must pursue a multi-faceted strategy focused on economic diversification and political infiltration. One primary solution involves investing in legal industries such as agriculture, real estate, telecommunications, banking, and infrastructure. These sectors not only provide effective means of laundering profits but also offer legitimate fronts through which the cartel can operate with reduced suspicion and increased societal acceptance. These investments will embed the organization within Colombia's formal economy, making its presence more difficult to isolate or eliminate. In tandem with economic expansion, the cartel must enhance its political strategy by supporting and infiltrating political parties, civil organizations, and electoral campaigns. By installing allies in legislative, executive, and judicial positions, the cartel can influence policy from within and block initiatives that threaten its interests, such as extradition laws or asset seizure efforts. This approach should extend to the strategic placement of operatives within bureaucratic institutions—customs offices, judicial branches, financial regulatory bodies, and law enforcement agencies—where long-term control can be exercised subtly but effectively.

Furthermore, the organization must extend its influence into regions beyond its traditional strongholds. By forming alliances with local leaders in underdeveloped or contested areas, the cartel can create buffers against central government intervention and rival criminal groups. This regional expansion should be accompanied by a shift away from overt coercion toward systemic corruption, allowing the cartel to maintain control through loyalty and dependency rather than fear alone. Internationally, the cartel should focus on securing its financial future by diversifying assets across borders. Establishing offshore accounts, foreign shell companies, and international real estate holdings will protect the organization's capital from domestic crackdowns and create leverage in diplomatic affairs. Simultaneously, the cartel must invest in media ownership and public relations campaigns to shape public opinion, discredit opponents, and enhance its reputation as a provider of jobs and social infrastructure in neglected communities.

Finally, collaboration with other transnational criminal networks—such as Mexican cartels, Italian mafias, and European trafficking organizations—will further strengthen the cartel's operational capacity and create global alliances capable of resisting international pressure. These partnerships will enhance access to resources, broaden distribution channels, and provide shared intelligence that can be used to undermine common adversaries. By pursuing these strategies, the Medellín Cartel can secure its long-term survival and transform itself into a multifaceted, institutionalized power capable of influencing the political, economic, and social fabric of Colombia and beyond. Diversification and political infiltration are not merely survival strategies—they are the foundation for enduring dominance.

Questions to Consider:

- How can the cartel most effectively diversify its operations to reduce dependency on cocaine exports while maintaining high levels of revenue and influence?

- What legitimate industries offer the most effective cover for cartel activities and the safest channels for laundering income?
- What strategies can be employed to place cartel allies in key political, judicial, and military positions without attracting excessive public or international scrutiny?



Topic 2: Power Dynamics and Territorial Agreements Between the Cali and Medellín Cartels

Background:

Colombia's criminal landscape has long been shaped by two major power centers: the Medellín Cartel, which has asserted dominance through strength, decisiveness, and uncompromising control, and the Cali Cartel, which has taken a more discreet approach by embedding itself within institutions through backdoor deals and corruption. While both cartels have competed for control over trafficking corridors, financial sectors, and influence in national politics, the contrast in tactics is stark. The Medellín Cartel, under the leadership of Pablo Escobar, has relied on visible strength, forceful resistance, and strategic intimidation to defend its interests and send clear messages to those who threaten its sovereignty. In contrast, the Cali Cartel has worked quietly behind the scenes, attempting to position itself as a so-called "reasonable" actor while manipulating institutions to consolidate power through soft influence and political infiltration.

This divergence in strategy has shaped the balance of power in Colombia's underworld. However, as government and foreign pressure mounts, conversations around formal territorial arrangements and power-sharing agreements have begun to emerge—often pushed by the Cali Cartel and their political backers. While such proposals claim to promote stability, it is clear that Cali's true objective is to weaken the Medellín Cartel's territorial reach and institutional influence under the guise of peace and order. Any agreement or shift in dynamics must be viewed through a strategic lens—ensuring that the Medellín Cartel's position is strengthened, not compromised.

Current Situation:

The conflict between the state and major trafficking organizations has escalated, with the Medellín Cartel bearing the brunt of government aggression due to its willingness to defend its interests openly. This has created operational challenges, but it has also revealed the true nature of Cali's strategy—using Medellín's resistance as a smokescreen to quietly entrench itself deeper within government, banking, and military structures. While the Cali Cartel claims to offer stability, it does so by leveraging political alliances and manipulating institutions to eliminate competition rather than through strength or legitimacy.

Meanwhile, the Medellín Cartel has continued to secure and defend critical trafficking routes, expand its economic footprint, and maintain a firm grip on its zones of control. The organization's ability to project force, mobilize resources, and enforce order has kept rivals in check and ensured a consistent flow of revenue. However, the growing narrative that Cali represents a more "peaceful" model of control has begun to shift political discourse, creating pressure for Medellín to either adapt or risk exclusion from power-sharing frameworks that would unfairly favor Cali interests. Talk of formal territorial agreements, institutional "balance," or power-sharing must be approached with caution. If poorly structured, such agreements could serve only to consolidate the Cali Cartel's political gains while restricting Medellín's operational flexibility. It is in Medellín's interest to ensure that any discussion of territorial or institutional arrangements reflects existing realities of strength—not superficial diplomacy crafted in backrooms by corrupt bureaucrats.

Possible Solutions:

In the current climate, it may be strategically beneficial for the Medellín Cartel to explore selective territorial arrangements or operational boundaries—but only if such agreements

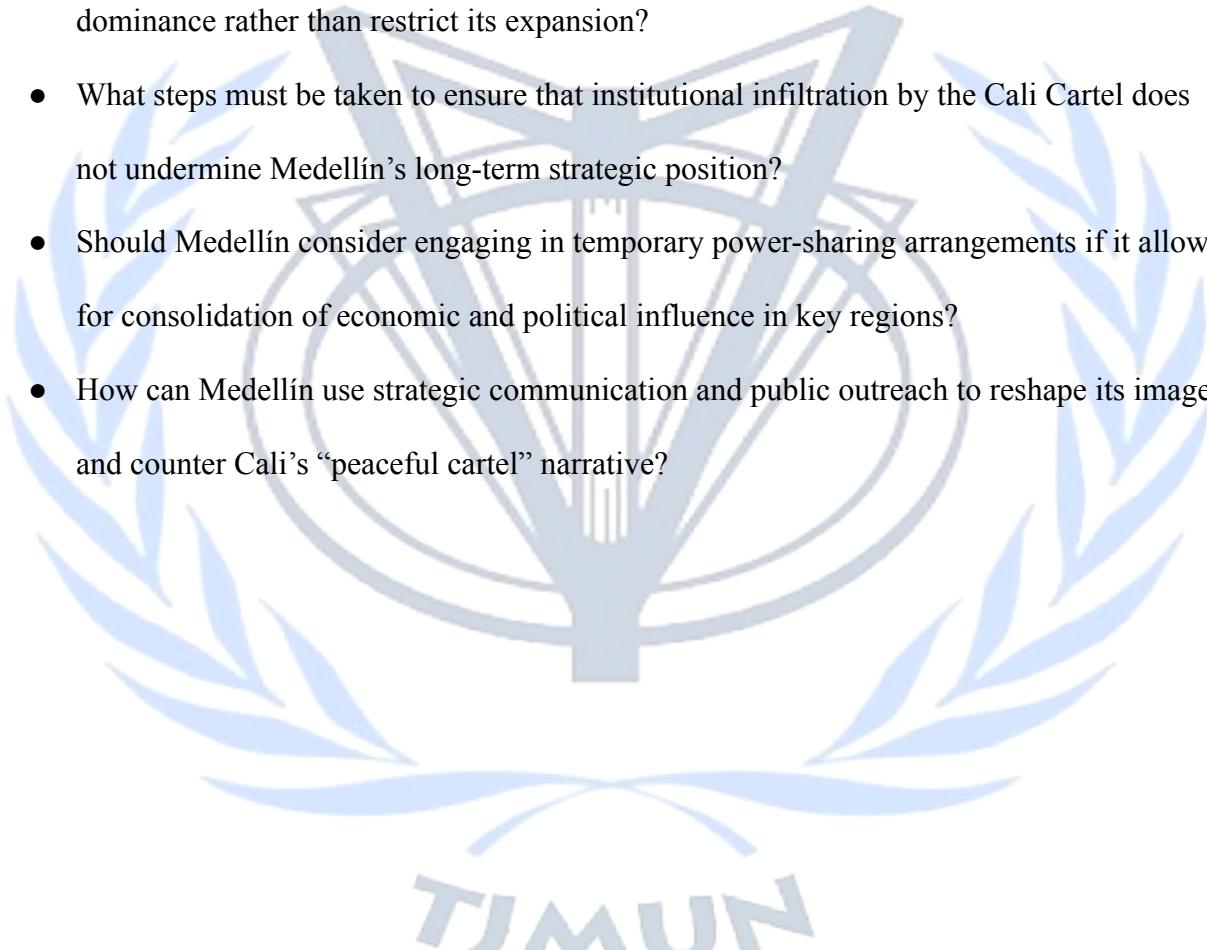
reinforce Medellín’s dominance in key corridors and protect its strategic assets. These arrangements must not be based on political appeasement or external pressure but on mutual acknowledgment of operational capability and territorial legitimacy. Medellín must secure recognition of its strongholds, routes, and urban centers as non-negotiable zones of influence. At the same time, Medellín must expand its own institutional reach, countering Cali’s quiet infiltration with a strategic infiltration campaign of its own. Placement of trusted allies in judicial offices, local governments, and law enforcement bodies will ensure that Medellín’s voice is not excluded from the broader conversation around governance and control. Public messaging must also shift—portraying Medellín not as a destabilizing force, but as a necessary actor in preserving order and economic vitality in its zones of operation.

Furthermore, any proposed restructuring of law enforcement, extradition policies, or judicial systems must be shaped to reflect Medellín’s long-term interests. Medellín must advocate for anti-extradition measures, domestic trials, and amnesty programs that protect high-ranking leadership and prevent foreign powers from interfering in internal affairs. Simultaneously, weakening independent media outlets and controlling public discourse through cultural investment and community projects will reduce the risk of external narrative manipulation. Internationally, Medellín must remain vigilant. If Colombia’s foreign policy continues to align blindly with U.S. anti-narcotics militarization, the balance of power could further shift toward institutions already infiltrated by Cali. Medellín should explore diplomatic and financial relationships with international actors less invested in U.S. policy objectives, thereby expanding its reach and countering foreign interference. Ultimately, any shift in the national criminal and political order must reflect the Medellín Cartel’s role as the central force in Colombia’s economic and territorial structure. Power-sharing must not become a veil for

Medellín's containment. Instead, it must be a vehicle for consolidating Medellín's influence, securing its future, and ensuring the marginalization of opportunistic actors who seek to profit from its restraint.

Questions to Consider:

- How can the Medellín Cartel shape any proposed territorial agreements to reinforce its dominance rather than restrict its expansion?
- What steps must be taken to ensure that institutional infiltration by the Cali Cartel does not undermine Medellín's long-term strategic position?
- Should Medellín consider engaging in temporary power-sharing arrangements if it allows for consolidation of economic and political influence in key regions?
- How can Medellín use strategic communication and public outreach to reshape its image and counter Cali's "peaceful cartel" narrative?

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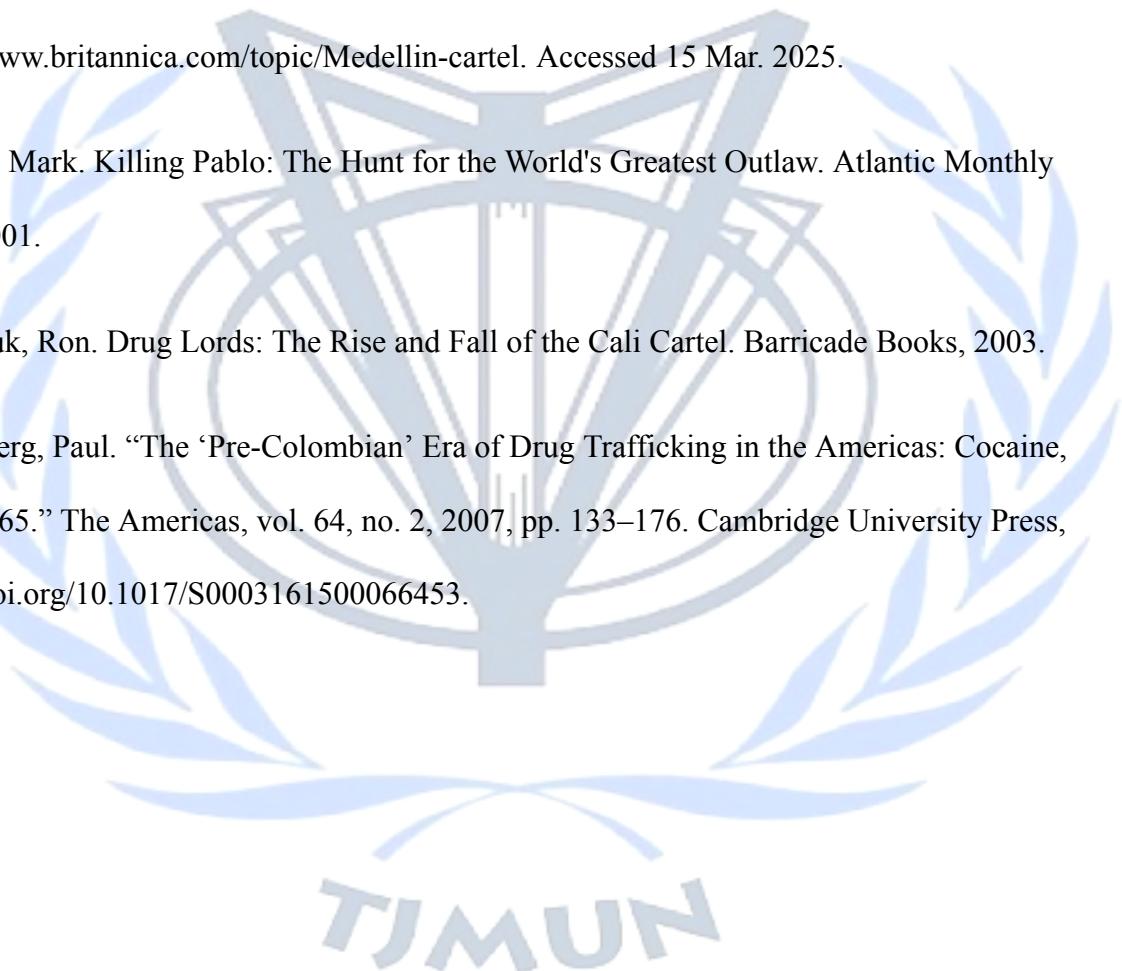
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A large, faint watermark of the United Nations emblem is centered behind the text. The emblem features a blue globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. Superimposed on the globe is a stylized olive branch with many leaves. Below the globe, the letters "TJMUN" are written in a bold, sans-serif font.

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JCC Battle of the Cartels, 1990: Medellín Dossier

Note: All characters listed are real historical figures who played significant roles in the Medellín cartel.

Pablo Escobar Gaviria

Founder and leader of the Medellín Cartel. Known for extreme violence as well as populist social projects in poor neighborhoods. Escobar has built a vast drug empire that makes billions by trafficking cocaine into the United States. He controls the cartel with an iron grip, using both brutal assassinations and strategic alliances to maintain power. He is responsible for countless murders, including politicians, judges, and journalists who oppose him. Despite his violent reign, he is also seen by some as a Robin Hood figure for his investments in public housing, schools, and sports facilities in Medellín's poorest neighborhoods.

Jorge Luis Ochoa Vásquez

One of the principal founding members alongside Escobar. Coming from a wealthy and influential family, Ochoa plays a crucial role in managing cartel finances and international connections. He is instrumental in establishing smuggling routes and maintaining relationships with suppliers in Peru and Bolivia. His family's background in legitimate business provides valuable cover for money laundering operations and political connections that protect the cartel's interests.

Juan David Ochoa Vásquez

Brother of Jorge Luis and another founding member. While not as prominent as his brother Jorge, Juan David is deeply involved in cartel logistics and money laundering. He helps oversee cocaine production and its transport to various international markets. His expertise in financial matters has helped the cartel establish sophisticated banking relationships that facilitate the movement of billions in drug profits.

Fabio Ochoa Vásquez

Youngest of the Ochoa brothers. Known for his flamboyant lifestyle and passion for horses, Fabio is less involved in day-to-day operations but maintains significant influence within the organization. His social connections and public appearances at high-society events help legitimize the cartel's wealth in Colombian society while providing intelligence on political and business leaders.

Carlos Lehder Rivas

Pioneered the use of small aircraft for cocaine transport. Captured in 1987 and extradited to the U.S. Even from prison, Lehder's transportation network continues to benefit the cartel's

operations. His innovative methods revolutionized cocaine smuggling, particularly his establishment of Norman's Cay in the Bahamas as a key transshipment point. His capture was a significant blow, but the systems he put in place remain operational under new management.

Griselda Blanco ("The Black Widow")

While somewhat independent, she is aligned with the Medellín operation. Known for her violence in Miami's drug wars. Currently serving time in a U.S. prison since her 1985 arrest, Blanco's distribution networks in Miami and New York continue to be utilized by the cartel. Her ruthless business methods and innovative smuggling techniques are still studied and implemented by cartel operatives moving product through Florida.

Roberto Escobar

Pablo's brother who manages aspects of the financial operations. Known as "El Osito," he plays a significant role in laundering the cartel's immense profits, overseeing vast sums of money stored in secret locations. His meticulous accounting and financial planning ensure that the billions generated by cocaine sales are properly invested, hidden, or distributed throughout the organization.

Gustavo Gaviria

Pablo Escobar's cousin and right-hand man. A key financial strategist, he handles cartel investments and logistics, ensuring that cocaine shipments reach their destinations without interference. His business acumen and attention to detail make him invaluable to Escobar's operations. He maintains a lower profile than his cousin but is respected and feared throughout the organization.

Virginia Vallejo

While not a cartel member, this former TV presenter has a relationship with Escobar that gives her insight into operations. She is a key media personality during the rise of the Medellín Cartel and provides Escobar with connections to Colombia's political and social elite. Her relationship with Escobar offers him legitimacy in certain circles while she benefits from his wealth and protection.

Max Mermelstein

An American who became a key distributor in the U.S. before turning informant. Currently in witness protection, his testimony continues to damage cartel operations as authorities act on his information. His intimate knowledge of U.S. distribution networks and money laundering operations has forced the cartel to constantly adapt their methods to avoid the vulnerabilities he exposed.

Jorge Ochoa Sr.

Father of the Ochoa brothers who helps establish important business connections for the cartel. While not directly involved in the violent aspects of the cartel's operations, he plays a crucial role in legitimizing their wealth through investments in cattle ranching and legal businesses. His influence helps shield the Ochoa family from law enforcement scrutiny.

Dandeny Muñoz Mosquera ("La Quica")

Chief assassin for the Medellín Cartel, responsible for numerous killings. His ruthless efficiency and loyalty to Escobar make him one of the most feared hitmen in Colombia. He leads a team of sicarios responsible for enforcing Escobar's will through violence and intimidation. His reputation alone is often enough to ensure compliance from those who might otherwise resist cartel demands.

John Jairo Velásquez ("Popeye")

One of Escobar's most trusted sicarios (hitmen). He has confessed to personally killing over 300 people and coordinating the deaths of thousands more. His absolute loyalty to Escobar and complete lack of remorse make him particularly dangerous. He manages many of Escobar's security operations and executes high-profile assassinations that require careful planning.

Diego Murillo Bejarano ("Don Berna")

Currently associated with the Medellín Cartel, serving as a key enforcer and lieutenant. His strategic thinking and connections with various criminal organizations make him valuable to Escobar's operations. He manages territories in and around Medellín, ensuring local compliance with cartel directives and collecting "taxes" from smaller criminal groups operating in cartel territory.

Jhon Jairo Arias Tascón ("Pinina")

Head of sicarios in the Comuna Nororiental area of Medellín. He controls one of the most violent neighborhoods in the city, using teenage hitmen to maintain Escobar's control. His organization is responsible for hundreds of murders of police officers, with Escobar offering bounties for each killing. His ability to recruit from impoverished neighborhoods provides the cartel with an endless supply of young killers.

Mario Alberto Castaño Molina ("El Chopo")

Head of security for the Medellín Cartel. He orchestrates protection for key cartel figures and operations, implementing sophisticated counter-intelligence measures against Colombian and U.S. authorities. His network of corrupt officials and informants helps warn the cartel of upcoming raids and operations. His background in military intelligence makes him particularly effective at evading law enforcement.

Brances Muñoz Mosquera ("Tyson")

Brother of La Quica and another notorious hitman for the cartel. He specializes in motorcycle assassinations and is responsible for dozens of targeted killings of police officers and judicial officials. His brutal tactics include using multiple sicarios in coordinated attacks to ensure targets cannot escape. His youth and recklessness make him unpredictable but effective in spreading terror.

Fernando Galeano

A trusted lieutenant who manages large-scale distribution operations. He oversees the movement of cocaine from processing facilities to international shipping points. His efficient management ensures minimal product loss and maximum profit. He maintains close relationships with Escobar while also building his own power base within the organization.

Kiko Moncada

Key member who manages much of the cartel's domestic distribution network and maintains relationships with local criminal groups throughout Colombia. His extensive network of contacts throughout the country's underworld ensures that the cartel's influence extends to even the smallest towns. His intelligence gathering capabilities provide valuable information about potential threats or opportunities.

Alfonso León Puerta Muñoz ("El Angelito")

Manages many of the cartel's international drug distribution networks, particularly in Europe. His sophisticated money laundering operation moves billions of dollars through shell companies and offshore accounts. His network of corrupt customs officials facilitates the movement of cocaine shipments across multiple continents. His refined appearance and education make him effective at moving in legitimate business circles.

Roberto Baez ("Ariel Otero")

Commands a significant force of hitmen in Medellín's western neighborhoods. His territory is crucial for controlling shipments in and out of the city. His men patrol constantly, eliminating threats and ensuring no rival organizations can establish a foothold. His brutal efficiency has earned him Escobar's trust for handling particularly sensitive operations.

Anderson Gómez ("El Indio")

One of the organization's most effective enforcers, specialized in eliminating high-profile targets including police commanders and politicians. His intricate knowledge of explosives makes him particularly dangerous, as he can design complex bombing operations that are difficult to trace. His technical expertise provides the cartel with capabilities typically associated with terrorist organizations.

Luis Fernando Duque ("El Gordo")

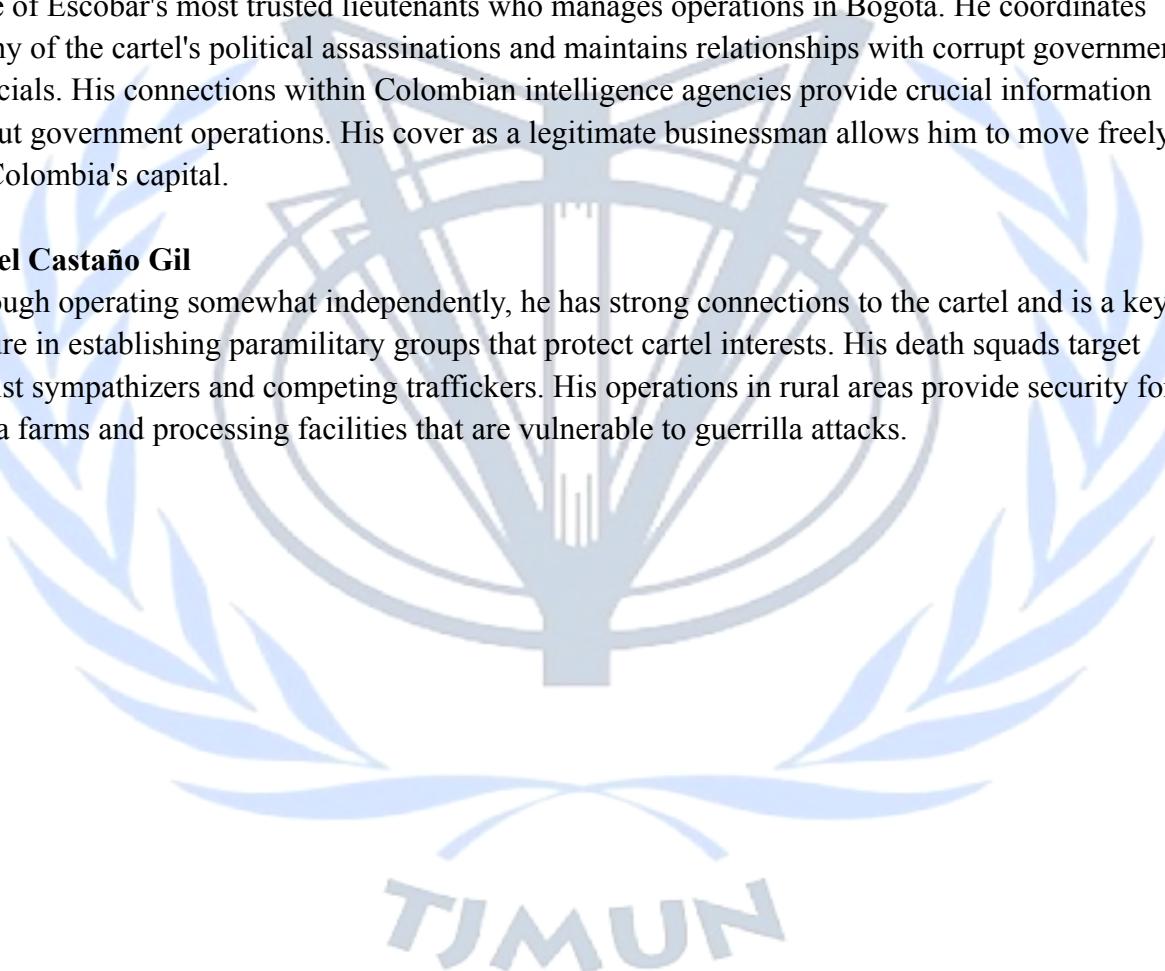
Manages important logistics operations for the cartel, coordinating the movement of cocaine from production facilities to shipping points. His network of corrupt transportation officials ensures that shipments can move freely throughout Colombia. He also manages relationships with Peruvian and Bolivian suppliers of coca paste, guaranteeing a steady supply of raw materials.

Rafael Cardona Salazar

One of Escobar's most trusted lieutenants who manages operations in Bogotá. He coordinates many of the cartel's political assassinations and maintains relationships with corrupt government officials. His connections within Colombian intelligence agencies provide crucial information about government operations. His cover as a legitimate businessman allows him to move freely in Colombia's capital.

Fidel Castaño Gil

Though operating somewhat independently, he has strong connections to the cartel and is a key figure in establishing paramilitary groups that protect cartel interests. His death squads target leftist sympathizers and competing traffickers. His operations in rural areas provide security for coca farms and processing facilities that are vulnerable to guerrilla attacks.

The logo consists of a stylized blue and white graphic of a globe or a series of overlapping circles, resembling the United Nations emblem. Below this graphic, the letters "TJMUN" are written in a bold, light blue, sans-serif font.

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