

.Chapter 7

Colombia and the United States: The Path to Strategic Partnership

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Introduction

In April 2015, Colombian and U.S. Presidents Juan Manuel Santos and Barack Obama offered a joint press conference at the presidential Summit of the Americas in Panama. Santos declared that relations between the two countries were at their “best level ever,” and that Colombia was “proud to be considered [a] strategic partner,” with a “very rich agenda” that went beyond “human rights, violence, terrorism, drugs”—the long-standing bilateral issues—to include education, technology, sports, “you name it.” For his part, Obama congratulated Santos on what Colombia had achieved economically and with respect to security, stating that the United States “played an important role in that process through Plan Colombia,” but that “ultimately the progress is due to the strength and commitment and determination of the Colombian people.”²

The moment was remarkable not for the warmth and mutual admiration between the two leaders—the United States and Colombia have been close partners for more than a decade-and-a-half and over multiple administrations. What stood out most was not just lip-service to, but the reality of a strategic relationship,³ something unprecedented for a South American nation and existing only with Mexico. In Colombia’s case it was marked by two important thresholds: the establishment in February 2102 of a bilateral High Level Strategic Security Dialogue (HLSSD), the heart of which was Colombia’s provision of security assistance and training to third countries, supported in part with U.S. funds; and the entry into force in May 2012 of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), originally signed in

2006 by both countries but held up for years by Democrats in the U.S. Congress and a lukewarm Obama White House.

Surrounding both of these developments in 2012 was the widespread, bipartisan sentiment in Washington that Colombia represented a “true success story, and a country where our joint efforts have made a real difference.”⁴ Indeed, between 1999 and 2015, the United States provided almost \$10 billion in aid to Colombia. Although dwarfed by the contributions of Colombians themselves, the military and economic assistance was one of the largest in the history of U.S. aid programs in the Americas, and, until surpassed by the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the third largest in the world after Israel and Egypt.⁵ Overall, the most concrete achievements of bilateral cooperation were in the realm of security— not only major battlefield victories over the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) but also the negotiated demobilization of right-wing paramilitary forces. Other indicators of violence and narcotrafficking that had long defined Colombia in the eyes of the world—homicides, kidnapping, and extortion—were vastly reduced and the cultivation of coca, the raw ingredient for cocaine, shrunk from 163,000 to 48,000 hectares between 2000 and 2013.⁶

Most of these security gains took place during the two terms of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), when Colombia’s internal armed conflict was subsumed under the global war on terrorism launched by President George W. Bush in the wake of 9/11. Bush and Uribe developed a close personal affinity. In addition to being one of a handful of international leaders invited to Bush’s private ranch in Crawford, Texas in 2005, at a White House ceremony scarcely seven days before leaving office in 2009, the U.S. president bestowed on Uribe the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest U.S. civilian honor, “in recognition of exemplary achievement, and to convey the utmost esteem of the people and the President of the United States.”⁷

And yet, Uribe's insensitivity to the human rights concerns of congressional Democrats, along with a series of domestic scandals—from the penetration of Colombia's political parties and institutions by paramilitary groups to the government's spying on domestic critics, to the army's murder of poor young men in order to boost the body count of "guerrillas" killed in combat—cost him the support needed to secure passage of the FTA, despite heavy personal lobbying. In addition, the Colombian leader's open embrace of and support for the Bush administration's war on terror distanced the country from others in the hemisphere, where governments of the left as well as regional public opinion became deeply critical of U.S. foreign policy, especially the war in Iraq.⁸ Colombia's regional isolation reached its apogee in 2008, when its armed forces staged a cross-border attack against a FARC camp inside Ecuadorian territory.

Uribe attempted to leverage his broad popularity inside Colombia to change the Constitution to permit a third presidential term, a bid ultimately rejected by the Constitutional Court. As a result, Juan Manuel Santos entered the campaign as the candidate of the *uribista* coalition. As Uribe's defense minister, Santos had presided over major military blows against the FARC and was expected to continue the policies of his predecessor. However, that did not happen, sparking growing enmity with his former boss, at the same time that Santos's approach to domestic and foreign policy opened up new possibilities in the relationship with the United States. The incoming president's strategy emphasized mending broken ties with Colombia's neighbors, maintaining warm but less solicitous relations with the United States, adopting measures to protect human rights and especially labor rights, and launching key domestic reforms to address the root causes of Colombia's armed conflict and provide restitution to its victims. In his first months in office, Santos embarked, at first in secret and then openly, on what would become the defining initiative of his presidency—the opening of peace talks with the FARC to end Latin America's longest and only remaining

civil war. This reformist agenda struck a deep chord within the Obama White House and with congressional Democrats, even as it sparked ferocious opposition and polarization within Colombia, led by Uribe himself. However, it was not until the Republicans regained control of the U.S. Congress that the FTA was finally approved, illustrating the enduring influence of domestic partisan considerations on foreign policy outcomes.

This chapter evaluates U.S.-Colombian relations during the presidencies of Álvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos (2010-), which correspond, albeit imperfectly, with those of George W. Bush (2000-2008) and Barack Obama (2009-2016).⁹ We trace how President Uribe's and Santos's starkly different postures toward Washington and the rest of the hemisphere led to the achievement of certain Colombian foreign policy goals while thwarting others, even as both actively sought to advance their country's interests in close alliance with the United States. The chapter illustrates how domestic politics and varying foreign policy objectives in the two countries helped define as well as limit presidential action and how changes in the regional security context, characterized by alarming levels of drug and organized crime-related violence in Mexico and Central America, gave bilateral relations increased traction and salience even as U.S. aid levels to Colombia decreased. Finally, we show that even in the face of unequal power, Colombia has exercised considerable autonomy that has been embraced rather than resisted by an administration in Washington that is both distracted by foreign policy crises elsewhere in the world and intent on redefining U.S.-Latin American relations on the basis of partnership and symmetry.

The Intensification of Bilateral Relations: Plan Colombia

The most important precedent for understanding contemporary U.S.-Colombian relations is the “war on drugs,” a term originally coined by the Nixon administration in 1972 to refer to domestic U.S. law enforcement as well as concerted efforts to keep illegal

narcotics from entering the United States.¹⁰ In the mid-1990s, successful suppression of coca crops in Peru and Bolivia began to push illicit cultivations northward into Colombia,¹¹ where they more than doubled between 1995 and 1999, making the country the world's largest producer of coca and source for over three-fourths of the world's cocaine supply. By 2000, 80 to 90 percent of the cocaine and 62 percent of the heroin consumed in the United States came from Colombia alone.¹² One southern province, Putumayo, accounted for half the coca grown and was controlled by the FARC.¹³

In addition, as the twentieth century came to a close, the chronic weakness of the Colombian state—characterized largely by its absence from vast expanses of the national territory—had brought the country to what many analysts in and outside Colombia feared was the brink of state collapse. Political violence worsened as illegal armed actors—guerrillas as well as paramilitaries—grew exponentially in size and territorial presence, largely by sucking resources from the drug trade. Guerrilla groups staged ever-more effective military attacks on the armed forces in remote rural areas and achieved virtual control over the major coca-growing areas in southern Colombia. By November 1997, the situation appeared so grim that the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) predicted that the guerrillas could defeat the government in five years unless the armed forces were restructured.¹⁴ Paramilitary groups also filled the vacuum left by an absent state, attacking the guerrillas and massacring civilians presumed sympathetic to them. Colombia's human rights and humanitarian crisis became one of the worst in the entire world.

Strengthening the state in its capacity to confront armed violence thus became—in addition to drugs—the principal issue in U.S.-Colombian relations. The rubric for the ambitious and unprecedented deepening of the bilateral relationship was Plan Colombia (officially, the “Plan for Peace, Prosperity and the Strengthening of the State”) unveiled by President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) at the United Nations General Assembly meeting in

New York on September 21, 1999.¹⁵ The Plan, hammered out in close cooperation with the administration of President Bill Clinton (1993-2000) was billed as a comprehensive strategy to combat narcotics, foster peace and human rights, build democracy, and further economic recovery and development.¹⁶ Its initial implementation was heavily skewed toward military equipment and training to fight the drug trade, which allowed various armed actors to attack the Colombian state with impunity.

When George W. Bush became president in January 2001, the basic contours of U.S.-Colombian relations did not change. Even after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks occasioned a dramatic reformulation of U.S. priorities, policy toward Colombia underwent only minor modification. This was reflected in Bush's foreign aid request to Congress in February 2002, which asked for \$98 million to train and equip Colombian troops to protect the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline, frequently targeted by the guerrillas. It was the first time in over a decade that U.S military aid was to be used in support of a limited mission other than counternarcotics, but fell far short of full-blown aid for the Colombian army's fight against the guerrillas.

The catalyst for a significant shift in priorities came in February 2002 with the collapse of a four-year peace process between the Pastrana government and the FARC. The talks had faltered almost from the beginning, with a loosely structured agenda and the concession to the guerrillas of a large demilitarized zone. Pastrana ended the process following the FARC hijacking of a civilian airplane and the kidnapping of a Colombian senator in February 2002, declaring in a televised address, "...no one can doubt that, between politics and terrorism, the FARC have chosen terrorism."¹⁷

Within weeks of the breakdown of peace talks, the Bush administration asked the U.S. Congress for authority to use aid previously appropriated for antinarcotics for counterterrorism purposes in Colombia.¹⁸ The Colombian government, too, began to actively

push the idea that the country's armed conflict constituted the major terrorist threat in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁹ By August 2002, Congress approved the Bush administration request, making hundreds of millions of dollars in previously approved military aid available to pursue the counterinsurgency war.

The move toward an enlarged counterterrorist as well as counter-drug alliance in U.S.-Colombian relations had important regional consequences. In its 2002 counternarcotics budget, the Bush administration had already jettisoned Plan Colombia in favor of a broader Andean Regional Initiative aimed at addressing the “spill-over” of its Colombian strategy in neighboring countries. However, portrayal of the armed conflict as an instance of terrorism also led Washington and Bogotá to put increased pressure upon Colombia's neighbors to support, at least indirectly, the Colombian counterterrorist effort. This tendency accelerated following President Álvaro Uribe's inauguration in August 2002. These two facets of U.S. strategy in the Andes were met with a tepid and sometimes even hostile reception, adding fire to already complicated relations between Colombia and its immediate neighbors.²⁰

Tough on Terrorism

The election of Álvaro Uribe as president in May 2002 signaled a profound shift in Colombian domestic politics. Following the collapse of the peace process, Uribe won a resounding victory by promising a more robust effort to combat the guerrillas. His hard-line message of restoring security resonated with a national public who was fed up with guerrilla violence and who held the FARC responsible for the failure of the peace negotiations.²¹

Upon taking office the president set out to delineate and execute a “democratic defense and security policy” (hereafter, DSP) that stressed the link between security and democracy.²² Its basic premise was that state weakness, in combination with the fragility of Colombia's democratic institutions, had created permissive conditions for the growth of

armed actors and the drug traffic, and that a necessary precondition for guaranteeing the rule of law was to strengthen state control over the national territory. While similar in key aspects to the Pastrana government's diagnosis of the country's crisis—which was also rooted in state weakness—the strategy set forth by Uribe could not have been more different. Although the strengthening and professionalization of the Colombian armed forces commenced during the Pastrana years (largely due to U.S. assistance provided through Plan Colombia), government policy had privileged the peace talks in the absence of a comprehensive strategy for achieving military control over the national territory.²³ One of the main lessons learned from this botched experience was that Colombia needed a full-blown security and defense strategy, with clear objectives and benchmarks, if the state was to consolidate its territorial control, extend the rule of law, and subsequently pursue economic and social development. DSP sought to fill this void.²⁴

President Uribe parted waters with the past even more dramatically by declaring an all out war against illegal armed actors, in particular the FARC, and by framing the Colombian crisis as an instance of terrorism rather than armed conflict.²⁵ His strongly worded anti-terrorist discourse resonated much better in the White House than Pastrana's talk of peace. In addition to a new shared goal—terrorism—the personal empathy that existed between Presidents Uribe and Bush buttressed the bilateral relationship even more. Uribe's DSP, and especially, the dual “war on terrorism and drugs,” became the cornerstone of Colombian politics in general, including its international relations. To the extent that a “special” relationship with the United States was seen to further the ends set forth by this policy, strengthening and deepening Bogotá's ties with Washington became the government's key foreign policy objective.²⁶ As a result of a perceived coincidence of interests between the two countries, coupled with U.S. willingness to commit significant resources, the United States became much more deeply involved in the country's internal conflict. This was mainly

through the transfer of new practices—combat techniques, intelligence gathering, resource management, and troop organization—that became crucial to changing the balance of power with the FARC.²⁷ To the degree that fighting terrorism overrode all other goals, this single, narrow lens, likewise determined Colombia's relations with the rest of the world, with only limited results.

Within a year of Uribe's taking office, in no small measure due to stepped-up U.S. support, Colombia's internal security situation began to improve. The armed forces recovered an offensive capacity in 2003 and the goal of establishing a police presence in all the country's 1,099 municipalities was achieved the following year. Key indicators of violence (homicides, kidnappings, and massacres, in particular) dropped and attacks against the civilian population decreased. Although the acreage devoted to the cultivation of coca experienced a two year descent between 2003 and 2004, coca crops increased again until 2008, when they began a longer downward cycle.²⁸

The reduction in massacres and homicides overall was due to another major facet of President Uribe's "clear and hold" security strategy—opening talks with the paramilitaries. In July 2003, the government and the principal paramilitary umbrella organization, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), signed the Santa Fe de Ralito Agreement, leading to a process whereby the AUC agreed to demobilize its forces and lay down its weapons by the end of 2005. Formal talks began in May 2004 and by 2006, more than 31,000 paramilitary combatants had been demobilized, although many independent observers considered the actual number of paramilitary fighters far below the official figure.²⁹

While the Bush administration officially supported the paramilitary demobilization, it was concerned by the number of AUC members for which the United States had already issued extradition requests, or who had been formally designated by the U.S. Treasury Department as drug-trafficking kingpins.³⁰ Uribe ordered the massive arrest of paramilitary

leaders in August 2006, following indications that their compliance with the Justice and Peace Law—a framework offering reduced sentences in exchange for confessions of crimes, asset forfeiture, and reparations—was wavering. Nearly two years later, as evidence mounted that the paramilitaries continued to direct illegal activities from prison, the Colombian president extradited thirteen AUC leaders to the United States.³¹ Although celebrated by the Bush administration, Colombian and international human rights organizations expressed dismay that the paramilitary leadership would be prosecuted for drug trafficking but not for its numerous atrocities.³² Extradition had been one of the thorniest issues in U.S.-Colombian relations, but it was widely embraced by the Uribe administration: between August 2002 and July 2009, over 900 Colombians were extradited to the United States, more than in all previous governments combined. The numbers included not only drug kingpins such as those from the AUC, but also several high-ranking members of the FARC as well as mid-level peripheral traffickers.³³

Colombian security gains, meanwhile, continued on a solid path. Plan Colombia underwent a process of gradual nationalization³⁴ alongside a government strategy that envisioned an integrated effort, combining military, police, judicial, and economic development programs that would in principle allow Colombia to move beyond the territorial “holding” stage and consolidate the rule of law. “The strongest thing you can do to the FARC,” said a senior Colombian defense official, “is to retake areas key to them and to the country and establish permanent control.”³⁵ The roll-back of the FARC achieved notable visibility on March 1, 2008, with the bombing of a FARC camp in Ecuador that killed a senior member of the FARC secretariat, Raúl Reyes. The raid also netted three laptop computers containing extensive information on FARC support networks, financing, and international contacts, including members of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian governments.³⁶ Only one week after the raid, another member of the FARC secretariat, Iván Ríos, was

murdered by a member of his own security detail. And at the close of the month, word leaked that the FARC's historic leader, Manuel Marulanda, had died of natural causes. Adding to these losses was a dramatic and bloodless rescue by the Colombian military of the FARC's most famous hostage, former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt. After years in captivity, Betancourt was rescued along with three U.S. defense contractors and a group of Colombian soldiers. The impeccably executed mission, *Operación Jaque*, constituted a major psychological victory for the Uribe government and, in the view of the Colombian armed forces the accumulation of victories in 2008 represented a "point of no return" in the war against the FARC.³⁷

Trouble in the Neighborhood

The Reyes bombing brought sub-regional tensions to a boiling point. Colombia had had uneasy relations with Ecuador and Venezuela for years pre-dating the Uribe government, mainly due to the regional effects of the Colombian armed conflict and counter-drug efforts, and the opposition of the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian governments to increased U.S. military presence stemming from Plan Colombia. Both countries (along with neighbouring Brazil, Panama and Peru) had adopted varying degrees of border militarization to contain and limit the war's "spill-over," whether measured in terms of refugee flows, the growing presence of armed groups (guerrillas as well as paramilitaries) in border areas, the environmental and public health effects of aerial fumigation, or simply the "balloon effect," by which successful counternarcotics operations in Colombia would cause cultivation and production to move elsewhere.³⁸ At the same time, the Colombian government decried what it viewed as neighboring countries' tolerance of a FARC presence in their territory, a subject of behind-the-scenes diplomacy and repeated warnings to Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia, in particular during the Uribe years.³⁹ Generalized disdain for the anti-terrorist

alliance between the Bush and Uribe administrations, and Uribe's conviction that Presidents Chávez and Correa were FARC allies, played off each other in cyclical episodes of mutual recrimination, conflict, and diplomatic rupture. Growing reports in Washington about Venezuela's central role as a transit point for cocaine leaving Colombia—given the Chávez government's reluctance to cooperate with U.S. counternarcotics programs⁴⁰--further entangled the rifts between Bogotá and Caracas.

In July 2009, revelations in the Colombian media⁴¹ about secret negotiations between Colombia and the United States to allow U.S. access to seven military bases sparked controversy domestically and added further to regional tensions. In addition to the “confrontationist” governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay condemned the U.S. proposal and what it signaled about U.S. military intentions, putting Uribe on the defensive and making common cause among Chávez, Correa, and more moderate left leaders in the region.

Free Trade: An Uphill Battle

The dynamic surrounding the negotiation and approval of a U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement unfolded fairly independently of the debate over Plan Colombia, and involved different sets of actors in both countries and overlapping but distinct objectives. During the Uribe years, however, the goals of combating narco-terrorism and deepening Colombia's insertion in the international economy via an FTA with the United States became entwined as never before. This was true because the president and members of his administration saw closer integration with the U.S. market and, hence, attractiveness to foreign investment, as an essential pillar of the democratic security policy. Although Colombian exports to the United States entered duty-free as a result of the Andean Trade Preference Act and its successors, designed to assist drug-producing nations in the Andean region to diversify their export base,

U.S. approval of an FTA took on profound symbolic value—as a stamp of approval and expression of confidence in Colombia as a U.S. ally in the wars against drugs and terrorism.⁴²

Unlike other foreign policy issues, including Plan Colombia, on which public debate in Colombia had been scant or nonexistent, the FTA with the United States sparked fierce resistance. The negotiation process had been widely publicized in the media, and criticism came from different business sectors that had benefited from high levels of protection, as well as from legislators, labor unions, academics, NGOs, and indigenous groups. Despite this opposition, and after a prolonged period of public consultation, the Colombian Congress approved the FTA in June 2007.

In the United States, the context for the FTA debate could not have been more inhospitable. Less than three weeks before the Bush and Uribe administrations signed the trade pact in 2006, mid-term U.S. elections returned both houses of Congress to Democratic control. In a context of rising economic insecurity in the United States, candidates blamed free trade agreements for taking jobs from American workers.⁴³ Rising partisan polarization in Washington eroded support for the FTA even further. The Bush White House and the Republican leadership routinely froze Democrats out of the discussions over trade issues.⁴⁴ The fact that Colombian officials felt emboldened by Uribe's privileged relationship with Bush also led their negotiating team to do a particularly poor job of engaging with the Democrats. One consequence of this lack of bipartisan consultation was that the Colombia FTA was presented to the U.S. Congress without the side agreements covering labor and environmental protections that had been cornerstones of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and crucial to Democratic support.

Once the Democrats regained control of Congress, the White House was forced to negotiate a bipartisan “New Trade Policy for America” containing labor and environmental

standards for pending free trade agreements with Colombia, Peru and Panama. Although the Uribe administration submitted the new protocols to the Colombian Congress, which approved them in August 2007, these changes were not sufficient to placate U.S. House Democratic leaders, who expressed “widespread concern ... about the level of violence in Colombia, the impunity, the lack of investigations and prosecutions, and the role of the paramilitary.”⁴⁵ The question of labor rights thus moved front and center in the FTA debate.

On the one hand were the claims of U.S. and Colombian human rights and labor rights groups: that Colombia was “the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist,” and that the rate of impunity for the 2,685 killings of trade unionists between 1986 and 2008 was 97 percent (similar to the rate of impunity for all crimes in Colombia).⁴⁶ Just as important, in this view, was that the Uribe government’s steps to protect trade unionists and investigate past abuses had only come about as a result of pressure from the U.S. Congress, while Uribe himself remained deeply suspicious of—if not openly hostile to—the human rights movement in Colombia and abroad.⁴⁷

On the other hand, supporters of the FTA countered that the Uribe government had established a special prosecutor’s unit to look into cases of violence against trade unionists, and that assassinations of trade unionists had fallen dramatically since Uribe took office. Deeply frustrating to Colombian officials was the refusal of congressional Democrats to articulate benchmarks for how much progress would be sufficient in order for the FTA to garner support. Equally troubling was a conviction widely held in Colombia as well as in other parts of Latin America that the U.S. emphasis on labor rights was a thin smokescreen for blatant—and growing—U.S. protectionism.

The waning months of 2008 and early 2009 did little to advance the FTA’s prospects. A number of domestic scandals in Colombia dominated media attention both there and in the United States and continued to cast doubt internationally on Uribe’s credibility on human

rights issues. These scandals included “para-gate” (*parapolítica*), in which investigations by the Colombian Supreme Court revealed a shocking level of collusion between the country’s political and economic elite and the paramilitaries; the infiltration by paramilitaries of the internal security agency, the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS), together with revelations that the DAS had been conducting illegal wiretapping and surveillance of members of the political opposition, journalists, scholars, civil society leaders, and Supreme Court justices involved in the para-gate investigations;⁴⁸ and the so-called false positives scandal, in which a long-standing practice by the Colombian army of assassinating young male civilians and presenting them afterwards as guerrillas killed in combat also exploded into the headlines. At least 3,500 civilians were murdered between 2002 and 2010, a 150 percent increase in comparison to the past.⁴⁹

Five months after Barack Obama took office, the Colombian government was successful in securing a visit with the new president. The June 2009 invitation confirmed that Colombia continued to be an important U.S. partner regardless of partisan considerations. Nevertheless, the ensuing joint press conference by Obama and Uribe was telling as much for what wasn’t said as for what was: Neither president uttered the words “terrorism” or “narco-terrorism.”. While Uribe emphasized issues of social cohesion and the steps the Colombian government was taking to address the most recent scandal at the DAS, Obama was visibly non-committal about a timetable for approval of the FTA and emphasized bipartisan concern “that the human rights issues in Colombia get resolved.” Finally, the U.S. president expressed less-than-subtle opposition to President Uribe’s bid for a third term, to which the latter’s body language gestured visible discomfort. It was a matter for Colombians to decide, he acknowledged, but then made reference to President George Washington, part of whose greatness lay in knowing when to step aside and return to civilian life.⁵⁰

Santos Turns the Tide

Upon taking office on August 7, 2010, Juan Manuel Santos, Uribe's former minister of defense, set out a course that was starkly different from Uribe's. In his inaugural address, the incoming president spoke of fighting poverty and unemployment and of access to education, health, and fair wages. He was categorical about the need to mend regional wounds: "one of my main goals as President will be to rebuild the foreign relations with Venezuela and Ecuador, to reestablish our confidence and to privilege diplomacy and prudence." Notably, and for the first time in recent history, the new Colombian president did not even mention the United States.

In referencing Colombia's frayed relations with its neighbors, Santos subtly downplayed terrorism while also lauding the armed forces and the contribution of Uribe himself to the country's progress. At the same time—and hinting at the issue that would define his presidency—he sent a message to Colombian armed actors that "the door to dialogue is not locked...It is possible to have a peaceful Colombia, a Colombia without guerrillas, and we are going to prove that! Either by reason or by force." Finally, Santos's positive references to human rights contrasted with Uribe's aggressive stance on this issue: defense of human rights was a "firm and indeclinable commitment..." not because of "external pressures or impositions," but due to "our profound democratic, ethical and human conviction."⁵¹

The discourse of presidential speeches was soon followed by concrete action. Within three days of taking office, Santos and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez met and agreed upon a blueprint for reinstating diplomatic relations that had been broken in the waning days of Uribe's presidency.⁵² Officials of both countries established working groups to address the payment of Venezuela's debt to Colombian exporters,⁵³ trade and economic integration, border development and infrastructure, and, most important of all, security. The latter was

premised foremost on securing Chávez's commitment not to tolerate the presence of illegal armed groups in Venezuelan territory. Shortly thereafter, and to the surprise and consternation of many, Santos began referring to the Venezuelan leader as his "new best friend."⁵⁴

For the Colombian government, the rapprochement with Venezuela had both military and diplomatic objectives. Security gains during the Uribe years—when Santos was defense minister—had pushed the FARC to Colombia's remote border regions, precisely the areas buttressing Venezuela and Ecuador. Senior Colombian officials viewed further military pressure on the guerrillas as depending on the cooperation of Colombia's neighbors and especially their intolerance of guerrilla sanctuaries in their own territory. This policy shift appeared to bear early fruits when in November 2010 Chávez extradited three guerrilla fighters—two from the FARC and one from the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN)—back to Colombia. By April 2011, in a statement that was ridiculed by Uribe and others, Santos declared the FARC camps that the government had identified in Venezuela "are no longer there."⁵⁵ In an apparent "tit-for-tat" to assure cooperation on security matters, Walik Makled, an accused drug trafficker also wanted by the United States, was extradited to Venezuela. Washington suspected Makled of having links with the Venezuelan government and military officials, and publicly expressed its disappointment with Santos's decision given the lost opportunity to further demonstrate the links between *chavismo* and the drug trade. However, little if any "punishment" was meted out to Bogotá.

The process of normalizing Colombia's relations with Ecuador began during Uribe's final year in office.⁵⁶ With the Carter Center and the Organization of American States acting as facilitators, a bi-national dialogue was initiated that culminated in the appointment of charges d'affaires in November 2009. Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa attended Santos's inauguration in 2010, and full normalization was achieved before the end of the year.

Mending the frayed relations with Colombia's neighbors was part of a wider diplomatic effort by Santos to diversify the country's foreign policy in a way that made Colombia "relevant" in the international sphere.⁵⁷ Elsewhere in Latin America, Santos enthusiastically embraced closer ties with Chile's center-right president, Sebastián Piñera, and Peru's president, Alan García, seeking economic integration that would lead in April 2011 to the launching of the Pacific Alliance, a much-publicized economic integration scheme linking Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.⁵⁸ Santos became more proactive in the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), too; testimony to the political dividends of improved relations with the sub-region, the former ministers of foreign relations of Colombia and Venezuela were elected in March 2011 to a joint term as UNASUR's secretaries-general. "We used to be UNASUR's ugly ducklings," Santos remarked, describing the change in fortune as "abrupt, but very positive."⁵⁹ With strong Latin American and international support, Colombia was also elected to a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council in October 2010. Finally, Santos's first state visit was to Brazil, further evidence of a determination to privilege Colombia's relationships in the hemisphere, not just with the United States.

When the Colombian president traveled to the UN General Assembly in September 2010, he conspicuously bypassed Washington, meeting instead with Obama on the sidelines in New York. Santos set the tone for future interactions by stating that Colombia and the United States would become "true allies" under his administration and that they would speak "*de tú a tú*".⁶⁰ While few details of the meeting are available, it appears clear in hindsight that he pushed for a broadening of the U.S.-Colombian relationship that included but went beyond security. "We have improved enough [in security] to be able to include other points in our bilateral agenda," Santos told the *Washington Post*. "Let's really be strategic partners, not in name but in practice... That means that Colombia can play a role in the region that

coincides with the U.S. interest, like for example helping the Central American countries and the Caribbean countries and even Mexico and other South American countries in the fight against drug trafficking.”⁶¹

Within a month of the New York encounter, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg traveled to Bogotá for a High Level Partnership Dialogue between the two countries. In the first of many such declarations by senior U.S. officials, Steinberg called Colombia “an ever-more vital strategic partner for the United States,” and announced the “beginning of a new chapter” in bilateral relations. The foundation for that change, he said, was “Colombia’s own success in overcoming internal security threats and shaping itself into a model of democratic development.”⁶² The two countries agreed to create bilateral working groups on issue areas as diverse as security; democracy, human rights and good governance; energy; social and economic opportunities; environmental protection; and culture, education, and sports.

One major irritation remained, however, and that was Obama’s reluctance to submit the FTA to the U.S. Congress for approval. Stubborn opposition from labor unions and members of the president’s own party prolonged the stalemate inherited from the Bush years. Colombian ambassador to the United States Gabriel Silva quipped that while the agreement was in the interest of both countries, Colombia “is not obsessed” with the FTA and “we cannot continue to wait.”⁶³ At the same time, the Santos administration set about to expand trade relations with China, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada and to begin free trade talks with a raft of countries, including Japan, Israel, South Korea, Canada, and the European Union. To drive home the point that Colombia was going its own way while Washington stalled, the Colombian Embassy in Washington peppered Capitol Hill with regular updates about the progress of other FTAs, highlighting, for example, agricultural trade with Canada, a sector in which U.S. exporters were losing market share. Prominent Republicans added to the pileup:

a report commissioned by Senator Richard Lugar, the senior Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, showed how Argentina had displaced the United States as the largest source of Colombian agricultural imports, arguing that inaction on the FTA left the United States at a “competitive disadvantage precisely when our economy requires solutions that promote job creation and growth.”⁶⁴

Two major factors broke the logjam, leading to congressional approval of the FTA in October 2011. The first was rooted in U.S. domestic politics: the return of the U.S. House of Representatives to Republican control in the 2010 mid-term elections. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a committed FTA opponent, moved into the minority. In January 2011 when the new Congress was sworn in, key supporters of the FTA moved into critical positions, including Speaker John Boehner and House Ways and Means Committee chair, Dave Camp. They and the U.S. business community pounded the White House to move forward, not only because it was considered the “right thing to do” for a staunch U.S. ally, but also because in its absence, U.S. exporters faced high tariff barriers in the Colombian market. In the Democrat-controlled Senate, opposition to the FTA was not as fierce; indeed, Max Baucus, from the agricultural state of Montana who chaired the powerful Senate Finance Committee, was one of the agreement’s strongest proponents, helping pave the way for Senate passage.⁶⁵

The second major change was the launching of an “Action Plan Related to Labor Rights” drafted by the Colombian government with strong input from U.S. officials. Santos visited Washington as president for the first time in April 2011 to unveil the agreement at a joint White House press conference with Obama. It laid forth steps to strengthen protections for labor leaders and more vigorously enforce Colombia’s labor laws, and included provisions—backed up by target dates—to create a new Labor Ministry,⁶⁶ increase the budget for hiring additional labor inspectors, and reform the criminal code to punish employers that discriminated against trade unions, among other measures.⁶⁷ By October, and after additional

skirmishes, both the House and Senate passed the FTA by wide margins. It entered into force in May 2012.

The Labor Action plan was one in a series of reforms to make Colombia a more democratic and inclusive society. In September 2010, the Santos government had introduced a historic Victims' and Land Restitution Law aimed at providing reparations to six million victims of the armed conflict and returning land to hundreds of thousands of *campesinos* forced off their plots, principally by paramilitary groups and drug traffickers in the 1980s and 1990s.⁶⁸ He dissolved the discredited DAS security force responsible for numerous scandals during the Uribe years. Other laws sought to share more broadly the fruits of the commodities boom that benefited Colombia along with other South American nations in the first decade of the 2000s. "President Santos...is at the forefront of a progressive and thoughtful agenda within Colombia," Obama said at their joint press conference in April 2011.⁶⁹ In the words of a senior U.S. official, the reforms underscored that the United States had "a different kind of partner" in Santos, someone committed to "real reform on core concerns." That created "a very different dynamic" in the bilateral relationship.⁷⁰

A Strategic Security Partnership

Following approval of the FTA, U.S. and Colombian officials inaugurated a High Level Strategic Security Dialogue (HLSSD) in February 2012, built on "a very justified sense of accomplishment in the respective security bureaucracies over the work they'd done together" over the previous years.⁷¹ For the United States, it was politically and culturally less fraught and also more cost effective to support Colombians in sharing their "hard-won security experience" with counterparts in such places as Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. In Washington's view, other countries "probably listen to Colombians more than to the U.S.; they can relate to what Colombia has been through, what Colombians themselves

have been through.” In consequence, having Colombians take the lead provided “the perfect Trojan Horse” to impart U.S. training, tactics, and human rights standards.⁷² This new reading of bilateral relations, which reflected an appreciation of Colombia’s successes on the security front, was also in line with the Obama administration’s “light footprint” approach to U.S. security and defense, in which capacity-building of local partners and their strategic deployment in third countries (instead of direct U.S. involvement) became fundamental.⁷³

From a Colombian standpoint, triangulated security cooperation with the United States offered similar benefits, including the preservation of a privileged relationship with Washington, international positioning and leadership as a security provider, and the development of new roles and missions should peace negotiations succeed and the counterinsurgency war come to an end. “Colombia is interested in offering its expertise,” said Colombia’s defense minister, Juan Carlos Pinzón. “We have lived through a reality that I am sure is useful to other countries facing security challenges, even transnational crime.”⁷⁴

By the time Obama and Santos met for a second time at the Sixth Summit of the Americas hosted by Colombia in Cartagena in April 2012, the language of partnership was fully ingrained in their mutual portrayal of bilateral relations. While Santos stated “our countries have moved from being just good friends and partners to become real allies,” Obama added “as Colombia grows stronger at home, it’s increasingly playing a leadership role across the region...where we’re deepening our partnership.”⁷⁵ In an “Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation” agreed to at the Summit, the two countries pledged to deepen their coordination in the fight against transnational organized crime throughout the hemisphere and in West Africa. Such joint efforts were already well underway in Mexico and Central America, funded through Plan Mérida and the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI).⁷⁶ Obama also promised to support Colombia’s bid to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) when Santos was ready

to seek it, and announced that visas for Colombians visiting the United States would be extended from five to ten years. And, though contacts between the Colombian government and the FARC to initiate a new peace process were still secret, the U.S. president reinforced Washington's commitment to standing "shoulder to shoulder" with Colombia to end the armed conflict.

To make triangulated cooperation operational, the two governments formed a Security Cooperation Coordination Group (SCCG) to design a yearly action plan, while an International Coordination Division was created within the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) division at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá to serve as liaison among U.S. diplomatic missions in countries where the Action Plan was being executed, officials of the host governments, and Colombian counterparts, mostly the Ministry of Defense and the National Police.⁷⁷ Between 2013 and 2014, the number of capacity-building programs included in the Action Plan grew exponentially, from 39 in 2013 to over 150 in 2014. The numbers were expected to rise to 205 in 2015 and increase again to the low 300s in 2016.⁷⁸

According to the Colombian National Police, between 2009 and 2013, police and military training was provided to 21,949 individuals from 47 different countries in areas such as ground, air, maritime and river interdiction, police testimony, handling of explosives, intelligence operations, psychological operations, and Jungla Command, the elite counternarcotics police program designed originally by the United States. More than one-third of those were trained in 2013 alone.⁷⁹ Although not all training corresponded to triangulation with the United States (much of Colombian cooperation with Mexico, for example, was bilateral), the majority of security cooperation has been concentrated in a small group of Latin American countries to which distinct problems related to illicit drugs and organized crime have migrated from the Andean region, including Mexico, Honduras,

Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. Many of these countries also top the list of U.S. security priorities in the Western Hemisphere.

Re-Thinking Hemispheric Counter-Drug Strategy

Contrary to triangulated security cooperation efforts, in which Colombia and the United States have largely seen eye to eye, since his early days in office Santos has been an active critic of the U.S.-inspired “war on drugs.” In November 2011, in an interview with the *Guardian*, he became the first acting president in the world to speak out publicly on the need for a new approach to illicit drugs and consumption. Although stating that he would support legalization, Santos countered that he would not “go it alone,” calling instead for a coordinated debate in which the entire international community shared responsibility.⁸⁰ Subsequently, Santos likened current counternarcotics policy to a stationary bicycle on which one exerts considerable effort peddling but gets nowhere. Given Colombia’s historical commitment to combating drugs and to the predominance of U.S.-devised strategies, the symbolic importance of the president’s statements could not be more profound.

In 2012, within the framework of the Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Santos spearheaded the conversation that led the OAS to prepare a major report analyzing existing drug strategies and proposing alternatives.⁸¹ Mexican and Guatemalan presidents Felipe Calderón and Otto Pérez Molina later joined Santos in a declaration to the United Nations in October 2012 criticizing existing counternarcotics policy and calling for an urgent debate, based upon existing scientific evidence and with an eye to creating a “new paradigm.”⁸²

During his March 2015 speech before the UN Drug Commission in Vienna, Colombian Minister of Justice Yesid Reyes reinforced these concerns in a strongly worded speech that declared the failure of existing policies, condemned repression of the illegal drug economy as insufficient, and called attention to the collateral damage of the drug war.⁸³ The

following month, Health Minister Alejandro Gaviria requested the suspension of aerial fumigation of coca crops for public health reasons, a proposal ultimately upheld by President Santos himself.

Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement William Brownfield and U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Kevin Whitaker attempted to preempt Santos's decision by claiming that the chemical used—glyphosate—was inoffensive and that fumigation to eradicate coca crops in Colombia had been the cornerstone of joint efforts by Colombia and the United States. But they ultimately supported the Colombian government's sovereign decision to stop the aerial fumigation of coca. Indeed, in an Op-Ed published on May 10, 2015, in *El Tiempo*, Whitaker conceded that whatever the Santos government's decision, "the United States had remained at Colombia's side before, even during difficult times, and would continue to have its back."⁸⁴

The Obama administration displayed a similar conciliatory attitude toward the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC, including those aspects related to illicit drugs and the narcotics trade. This was true despite the fact that the accord on illicit narcotics threatened to alter central tenets of U.S.-Colombian counter-drug cooperation. The agreement signed in May 2014 committed the government and the guerrillas to work together to eliminate coca and cocaine, and whenever possible to enter into voluntary pacts with coca cultivators, and to employ manual eradication rather than aerial fumigation. Secretary of State John Kerry welcomed the news of the accord while underlining the importance of keeping aerial eradication on the table as part of the counter-drug arsenal, a possibility thrown out one year later when Santos decided to suspend the use of glyphosate. Overall, top U.S. officials from President Obama to Vice President Biden to Secretary of State Kerry expressed unequivocal support for the peace talks underway in Havana, punctuated by the

naming of a U.S. special envoy, former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Bernard Aronson, at the Colombian president's request, in early 2015.

Extradition, however, represents an even more sensitive issue for the peace process, and may prove challenging for the United States and Colombia to reconcile their respective interests. As of March 2015, a dozen FARC members had already been extradited to the United States, while at least 60, including members of the senior leadership, had been indicted on drug trafficking, kidnapping, or terrorism charges.⁸⁵ FARC fears of mass extradition are not completely unfounded, given President Uribe's decision to turn over 14 paramilitary leaders to the United States in May 2008. And yet, throughout the peace process, the U.S. position was to avoid demanding publicly that Colombia fulfill U.S. extradition requests, especially when they involved FARC members.⁸⁶ In March 2015, Santos, too, stated that he did not think that any guerrilla would turn in his or her weapons only to be sent to die to a U.S. prison.⁸⁷

The Colombian Success Story: Its Reality and Limitations

While Colombia's international image up until the mid-2000s was predominantly that of a state on the verge of collapse—combating powerful armed actors and a burgeoning drug business and in desperate need of U.S. assistance—by the second Uribe government (2006-2010) policymakers in Bogotá and Washington, think tanks, international financial institutions, and the global media all began to refer to Colombia as a country that had come “back from the brink.”⁸⁸ Undoubtedly, the successful counterinsurgency paved the way for certain aspects of state-building, including: professionalized and modernized armed forces; reduced territorial control by and offensive and destructive capacity of the FARC; significantly decreased indicators for violence such as homicides and kidnappings (but not forced displacement); and increased state presence and greater state authority.⁸⁹ The

Colombian government, in tandem with the United States, also deployed a model for consolidating these gains with corresponding social and economic programs in key areas of the national territory. As a result, in 2009, then U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William Brownfield claimed that Plan Colombia “has been the most successful nation-building exercise that the United States has associated itself with perhaps over the last 25-30 years.”⁹⁰ Improvements in the country’s security situation underwrote a success story that has been at the root of the Santos government’s foreign policy strategy, U.S. understanding of its own role in Colombia, and triangulated security cooperation in third countries. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken summed it up well: Colombia’s “remarkable transformation” has made the country a leader and “a model for the entire region,” he said. “What we are seeing is quite extraordinary... We used to ask, ‘what can the United States do for Colombia?’ Now it is ‘what can we do with Colombia?’”⁹¹ The fact that President Santos has also been more conciliatory toward human rights and other non-governmental organizations than his predecessor, more active in condemning human rights violations, and more widely recognized by governments throughout Latin America, has made the transition to strategic partnership even smoother. Nevertheless, the chasm between official intentions and actual state capacity remained vast in many parts of the country. Attacks against community organizers and human rights and other activists, including those seeking the return of their land under the Victims’ and Land Restitution Law, approved in 2011, are ongoing.⁹² The implementation of the Victims’ Law got off to a painfully slow start, but has begun to accelerate. According to Human Rights Watch, of the approximately 68,000 claims received as of September 2014, rulings had been handed down for only 1,546;⁹³ Colombian government statistics indicate that by May 2015, 16,000 out of a total 79,607 land claims had been resolved and 27,000 more were being processed.⁹⁴ Moreover, Colombia’s humanitarian crisis has continued unabated. According to the official Victim’s Unit, of the 7,490,375

citizens that have registered as victims of the armed conflict, 6,213,989 are internally displaced people, the second largest population of displaced in the world after Syria.⁹⁵ Finally, as noted by the State Department in its annual review of human rights, Colombia's "most serious human rights problems were impunity, an inefficient judiciary, forced displacement, corruption, and societal discrimination. An inefficient justice system subject to intimidation limited the state's ability to prosecute effectively individuals accused of human rights abuses, including former members of paramilitary groups."⁹⁶

However necessary the issue of military and police strengthening has been to state building in Colombia overall, it is also the case that the major security gains have been against guerrilla organizations and less so against violent drug trafficking organizations. Although most paramilitary leaders are either dead or in prison, many mid-level former AUC members regrouped and have deepened their involvement in the drug trade, frequently in alliance with the FARC and ELN.⁹⁷ Dozens of a new generation of criminal organizations—coined BACRIM (*bandas criminales*)—generate horrific violence as they battle the state and one another for control of drug-trafficking corridors, deeply impacting the civilian population in the process. Finally, despite the investigations pursued in connection with the *parapolítica* scandal, paramilitary penetration of the political class, the economy, and the justice system in many regions of Colombia continues to threaten advances in the security arena and undermine the democratic legitimacy of the state.

In terms of institutional strength, the state still exhibits significant weaknesses. In particular, its territorial presence and institutional strength are highly disparate throughout Colombia, and decrease as one moves from the center of the country towards the border regions. According to the leading Colombian NGO *Dejusticia*, in 60 percent of Colombian territory, the administration of justice and local public administration are highly deficient, allowing distinct non-state actors, including guerrilla groups and BACRIM, to exercise para-

state functions.⁹⁸ As a result, and as highlighted in late 2014 by Green Alliance Senator Claudia López, one of the main challenges posed by guerrilla demobilization in a post-conflict scenario is how the state will fill the void left in Colombia's "war" zones, in which between 13 and 15 million inhabitants currently reside⁹⁹ and where demobilized combatants would legitimately fear for their safety.

Finally, growing calls to rethink current counternarcotics policy, including from Presidents Santos and Obama, suggest that longstanding approaches to fighting what is no longer even referred to as the "war on drugs" not only have failed to produce desired results but also have inflicted considerable and unacceptable collateral damage.¹⁰⁰ In particular, drug-related criminal violence has been spread throughout the Western Hemisphere as a result of the "balloon" and "cockroach" effects,¹⁰¹ underscoring the tremendous costs of Colombia's "success." No less important, following a five-year period (2008-2013) in which coca crops and cocaine production decreased in that country—but were partially offset by growth in Peru—both U.S. State Department and UNODC figures suggest that they rose again in 2014, pointing to the limitations of forced eradication as the mainstay of counternarcotics policy.¹⁰² To what degree existing Colombian know-how about counternarcotics can be adapted to the security needs and specific contexts of those countries receiving Colombian-U.S. triangulated cooperation requires further debate.

Colombia's economic relationship with the United States has remained close although the impact of the FTA on bilateral trade and investment is complex and ambiguous. The United States remains Colombia's largest trade partner (for both imports and exports), accounting for 25.7 percent of its exports and 28.4 percent of its imports in 2014, according to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE).¹⁰³ This represents a decrease, however, from the levels in 1995, when Colombian exports to and imports from the

United States amounted to 34.6 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively. Much of the change appears to be a reflection of Colombia's efforts to diversify its foreign economic relations.¹⁰⁴

From 1999 until 2012, the year the FTA was implemented, Colombia maintained a solid trade surplus with the United States, which reached its zenith in 2011 at \$8.99 billion. This is largely to be expected, given that the vast majority of Colombian exports entered the United States duty-free, while imports from the United States continued to face high trade barriers. Following 2012, the size of Colombia's bilateral trade surplus with the United States declined dramatically, moving into deficit by 2014, a trend that continued into 2015. It is difficult to isolate the effect of the FTA on this trend, however, given that Colombia's overall trade deficit burgeoned in 2014-2015 at a rate similar to the rise in the deficit with the United States. (In 2014, Colombia's largest deficit was with China, followed by Mexico, with the United States in third place.)¹⁰⁵ The dramatic fall in the price of oil, Colombia's principal export, was one of several factors that had a significant effect on its deteriorating terms of trade.¹⁰⁶

There is some evidence that the FTA helped Colombia to diversify the nature of exports to the United States. Although crude oil accounted for over 56 percent of Colombia's exports to the United States in 2014, followed by gold (9.5 percent), and coffee (6.4 percent),¹⁰⁷ non-traditional exports grew by almost 4 percent per year. According to the Colombian government agency Proexport, in the first two-and-a-half years after the FTA took effect, over 1,900 Colombian companies, virtually all of them small and medium-sized enterprises, exported to the United States for the first time, sending 434 new products.¹⁰⁸ In addition, the FTA appears to have had a marginal effect on U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) in Colombia. According to Colombia's Central Bank, the largest single increase (from \$1.26 billion to over \$2 billion) took place between 2004 and 2005, with the highest totals (just under \$3 billion) registering in both 2008 and 2013.¹⁰⁹ This suggests that the improved

security situation in Colombia, not the FTA, was the most important determinant of increased U.S. investment. In addition to security, Colombia's economic fundamentals remained strong throughout this period, although the country was not exempt from the economic slowdown affecting the entire region in 2014-2015. Between 2002 and 2013, Colombia's GDP grew by over 4 percent (higher than the Latin American average),¹¹⁰ poverty rates continued their steady decline (from almost 50 percent of the population in 2002 to approximately 30 percent in 2013), and the market-friendly policies of the Santos government led to a surge in foreign investment. Overall, total FDI in Colombia grew from \$2.4 billion in 2000 to some \$16 billion in 2013,¹¹¹ more than a sixfold increase, with the majority directed to the oil and mining sectors. By 2014, the World Bank ranked Colombia as the best place to do business in Latin America, besting Chile, which had long held the top slot.¹¹²

Conclusions

In this chapter we have argued that the distinguishing feature of U.S.-Colombian relations during the Obama and Santos governments has been the construction and institutionalization of a strategic partnership, characterized by common interests, values, and understandings, multi-dimensional and long-term interaction beyond the two countries' borders, and reciprocity. Although admittedly, a "strategic relationship" of sorts existed between Uribe and Bush, the nature of bilateral relations was quite different, mainly because Plan Colombia had not yet taken its course and because the anti-terrorist "glue" that bound the two governments together was one that contributed to Colombia's isolation vis-à-vis the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Also, the change in government from Bush to Obama, and of party control in the U.S. Congress from Republicans to Democrats, led to the articulation of distinct interests and priorities for which the Uribe government was particularly unprepared.

And yet, alongside the apparent cooling of relations between President Uribe and the Democratic White House and Congress, security cooperation between the two countries proceeded unimpaired, pointing to the existence of separate and somewhat autonomous bureaucracies with institutional ties and longstanding interests that transcend political considerations. As a result, when Uribe handed the presidency over to Santos in August 2010, the bilateral relationship was essentially poised for even further deepening.

Santos emphasized those very issues that had achieved greater salience in the view of the new occupants of the White House and U.S. Capitol, including human rights, democracy, and a sharing of the socio-economic pie, while also proving adept at courting the Republicans on matters such as trade and security. The incoming president also insisted on the need for greater parity (or lessened asymmetry) and, while striving to maintain excellent relations with the United States, stepped back from the active courting practiced by his predecessor. This was demonstrated *par excellence* in the “call me when you’re ready” attitude toward U.S. passage of the FTA; greater Colombian independence was also observable in the security realm (especially in relation to illicit drugs) and the peace process with the FARC.

Colombian foreign policy also shifted under the Santos administration in comparison to that of President Uribe. The latter’s regional and international strategy focused almost exclusively on the “war on terrorism” in Colombia and the implementation of the democratic security policy. Santos not only set out to mend damaged relations with Colombia’s South American neighbors, but also developed a more ambitious foreign policy in which he sought to carve out a more visible and proactive role for Colombia in Latin America and beyond. In foreign economic policy, through new bilateral trade agreements and through the Pacific Alliance, Colombia strove to diversify its trade and investment partners and craft new relationships with the rapidly growing countries of Asia.

That the Santos administration exercised greater independence while maintaining strong and positive relations with the United States is testimony to not only the political skills of Colombian officials but also the new attitudes in Washington regarding hemispheric policy. The Obama administration has attempted to build regional trust through an explicit emphasis on multilateralism, partnership, and respect for the growing influence and autonomy of Latin American governments. While these tendencies grabbed fewer headlines and were often interpreted in the region as an excuse for inattention, in fact, the principles granted significant latitude to Colombia to go its own way even while the fundamentals—most importantly, security cooperation—remained strong. In the United States, bipartisan “ownership” of the policies that had contributed to Colombia’s success (with all the important caveats mentioned above) cemented a relationship unmatched in the Western Hemisphere and, arguably, unique in U.S. relations with countries of the developing world. Colombia, meanwhile, retained a strong, albeit less exclusive orientation toward the United States. The fact that Bogotá and Washington did not always coincide actually strengthened a twenty-first century relationship grounded in the bedrock of many shared interests and values.

¹ The authors wish to thank Latin American Program assistants Bruno Binetti, Alejandra Argueta, Melissa Nolan, and Jessica Uy, and Universidad de los Andes Master’s graduate, Mateo Morales, for research support.

² Barack Obama and Juan Manuel Santos, “President Obama Meets with President Juan Manuel Santos,” April 11, 2015, Summit of the Americas, Panama City, Panama, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2015/04/11/president-obama-meets-president-juan-manuel-santos>.

³ Although the term has been used loosely in both the analysis and practice of international politics, “strategic partnerships” are distinct from “partnership” or “cooperation” because they are prioritized, long-term, and multi-thematic interactions that often extend beyond the borders of the countries involved, and they are based on common interests and values, shared understandings of issues, and reciprocity. For a discussion of the origins and diverse definitions of the concept, see Luis Fernando de Moraes y Blanco, “On the Uses and Functions of ‘Strategic’ Partnership in International Politics: Implications for Agency, Policy and Theory,” (PhD diss., Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, March 25, 2015) 54-65.

⁴ U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel Statement on U.S.-Colombia Relations,” press release, November 12, 2014, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/chairman-royce-ranking-member-engel-statement-us-colombia-relations>.

⁵ U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policies*, by Curt Tarnoff and Larry Nowels (April 6, 2001), 12. Colombia fell to ninth place by fiscal year 2008. For several years the U.S. embassy in Bogotá hosted the largest U.S. diplomatic mission in the world, until overtaken by Baghdad in the years following the 2003 U.S. military invasion of Iraq.

⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2015* (Vienna: UNODC, 2015), https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World_Drug_Report_2015.pdf; UNODC, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Surveys* (Vienna: UNODC, various years), <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crop-monitoring/index.html>; and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), *International Narcotics Drug Control Strategy Reports*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, various years), <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/>.

⁷ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “President Bush Honors Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients,” January 13, 2009, 1.

⁸ Colombia was the only South American country to endorse the war in Iraq, but it did not join several Central American and Caribbean countries in sending small contingents of troops, most likely because to have done so would have sparked domestic opposition over a decision to divert the Colombian armed forces from its own internal armed conflict.

⁹ For a fuller discussion of the bilateral relationship prior to these administrations, see our chapter in the first edition of this volume: Cynthia Arnson J. Arnson and Arlene B. Tickner, “Colombia and the United States: Strategic Partners or Uncertain Allies?” in *Contemporary U.S.-Latin American Relations*, ed. Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro (New York: Routledge, 2010), 164-196.

¹⁰ For an analysis of bilateral relations before the 1970s, see Stephen J. Randall, *Colombia and the United States: Hegemony and Interdependence* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1992).

¹¹ The reductions in coca cultivation in Peru and Bolivia and the increase in Colombia are outlined in a May 1998 declassified State Department document. See SecState WashDC to AmEmbassy Bogotá, “Colombia ‘98 Counternarcotics Initiative,” May 2, 1998, 1-24; United States Department of State, Case ID 200200368, March 27, 2002.

¹² U.S. General Accounting Office, *Drug Control: Narcotics Threat from Colombia Continues to Grow*, GAO/NSIAD-99-136 (Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office, June 1999), 10.

¹³ Cynthia J. Arnson, “The Peace Process in Colombia and U.S. Policy,” in *Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Colombia*, ed. Christopher Welna and Gustavo Gallón (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 150. See also, U.S. General Accounting Office, *Drug Control: Narcotics Threat from Colombia Continues to Grow*, 6.

Following the Colombian government's successful dismantling of the Medellín and Cali cartels in the mid-1990s, the power vacuum was rapidly filled by not only micro-cartels (*cartelitos*) but also paramilitary groups and the FARC. Self-described as *autodefensas* (self-defense groups), the paramilitaries grew in tandem with the expansion of the drug trade in Colombia during the 1980s. Although paramilitary groups had been authorized by the state in the 1960s, this new phase of paramilitary activity was financed by drug barons and wealthy land-owners in order to defend their land holdings from the guerrillas. Eventually, the paramilitaries evolved into independent organizations with offensive strategies and autonomous political aspirations. In 1997, the United Self-Defense Force of Colombia (AUC) was created as an umbrella organization to join disparate paramilitary groups operating throughout Colombia. It was under the AUC umbrella that paramilitaries entered into a negotiation process with the Uribe government in 2003 that led to their demobilization. See Mauricio Romero, *Paramilitares y autodefensas 1982-2003* (Bogotá: Alfaguara, 2004).

¹⁴ Douglas Farah, "Colombian Rebels Seen Winning War," *Washington Post*, April 10, 1998: A17, quoted in Cynthia J. Arnson, "Introduction," in *The Peace Process in Colombia and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Latin American Program, 2000), 8. For a discussion of the origins of this crisis, see also Michael Shifter, "Colombia on the Brink: There Goes the Neighborhood," *Foreign Affairs* 78, 4 (July-August 1999).

¹⁵ Office of the President of the Republic of Colombia, *Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity and the Strengthening of the State*, (October 1999), 9.

¹⁶ Prior to its announcement, Colombia had been what a former U.S. National Security Council official called "a protracted, vigorous debate within the U.S. government." On one side were "those favoring full-fledged counterinsurgency assistance to Colombia" to combat the FARC and ELN, and on the other were "those seeking to engage the new Colombian

government without engaging the Colombian military.” The debate ended in an “enlightened compromise” in which broadened U.S. assistance would be subject to the new government’s “development of a coherent national plan” to address the country’s various social problems. Chappell Lawson, “Engaging Colombia: U.S. Policy Toward the Pastrana Administration,” mimeographed, September 21, 1998, 1.

¹⁷ Televised statement of President Andrés Pastrana, Bogotá, February 20, 2002. When talks ended, it became clear that the FARC had used the zone to hide kidnapped victims, conduct arms transactions, and organize military attacks on neighboring areas. Soon after the collapse of the FARC process, on-again, off-again talks with the smaller ELN fumbled in Havana, leaving Pastrana with nothing to show for his massive political investment in the peace process.

¹⁸ The relevant language from the Fiscal Year 2002 supplemental aid request stipulated that “funds available to the Department of State for assistance to the government of Colombia shall be available, notwithstanding any other provision of law, to support a unified campaign against narcotics trafficking, terrorist activities, and other threats to its national security.”

U.S. Congress, “Requests for Emergency FY2002 Supplemental Appropriations, Communication from the President of the United States, 107th Congress, 2d Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002),

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CDOC-107hdoc195/pdf/CDOC-107hdoc195.pdf> All of Colombia’s three major armed groups—the FARC, ELN, and AUC—were on the official U.S. list of terrorist organizations, for acts including kidnapping, targeted assassinations, and massacres aimed at Colombia’s civilian population along with a small number of U.S. citizens. The FARC and ELN had been designated terrorist organizations in 1997. On September 10, 2001, the State Department added the AUC to the list, responding in part to

criticism that the United States exercised a double standard by condemning terrorism of left-wing guerrillas while ignoring that of right-wing paramilitaries.

¹⁹ Luis Alberto Moreno, "Aiding Colombia's War on Terrorism," *New York Times*, May 3, 2002: 23A.

²⁰ For a more detailed analysis of the role of U.S. policy in Colombia in larger Andean security dynamics, see Ann C. Mason and Arlene B. Tickner, "A Transregional Security Cartography of the Andes," in *State and Society in Conflict: Comparative Perspectives on Andean Crises*, ed. Paul W. Drake and Eric Hershberg (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 89-92.

²¹ During Pastrana's four years in office, the conflict widened substantially, leaving over 40 percent of Colombian territory in the hands of the FARC, AUC, or ELN, according to U.S. Defense Department estimates. Testimony of Assistant Secretary of Defense Assistant for International Security Affairs Peter Rodman before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, April 11, 2002, mimeographed transcript, 2; available at

http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa78682.000/hfa78682_0.HTM

²² República de Colombia, Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Política de defensa y seguridad democrática*, (Bogotá: Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003), <http://www.mindefensa.gov.2003>, 12. See also, Julia E. Sweig, "What Kind of War for Colombia?" *Foreign Affairs* 81, 5 (September-October, 2002): 122-141; and Ann Mason, "Colombia's Democratic Security Agenda: Public Order in the Security Tripod," *Security Dialogue* 34, 4 (2003): 391-409.

²³ For an incisive analysis of Colombian security and defense policy during the Pastrana government and the early years of the Uribe government, see Francisco Leal Buitrago, *La inseguridad de la seguridad* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2006).

²⁴ Arnson interview with Colombian Ministry of Defense official, Bogotá, April 22, 2009.

²⁵ This portrayal of the war in Colombia was disconcerting to both the international and national human rights communities, and to the European Union and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, because it implied immunity to international humanitarian law, while also denying the political and social origins of the Colombian conflict.

²⁶ See Arlene B. Tickner, “Intervención por invitación: Claves de la política exterior colombiana y de sus debilidades principales,” *Colombia Internacional* 65 (January-June 2007): 90-111; and Sandra Borda Guzmán, “La internacionalización del conflicto armado después del 11 de septiembre,” *Colombia Internacional* 65 (January-June 2007): 66-89.

²⁷ This argument is made by Francisco Leal Buitrago, *La inseguridad de la seguridad*.

²⁸ UNODC, *World Drug Report 2015*; UNODC, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Surveys*; and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), *International Narcotics Drug Control Strategy Reports*.

²⁹ For a critique of the demobilization process, see *Smoke and Mirrors: Colombia's Demobilization of Paramilitary Groups*, (Human Rights Watch, July 31, 2005), <http://www.hrw.org/report/2005/07/31/smoke-and-mirrors/colombias-demobilization-paramilitary-groups>.

³⁰ See Cynthia J. Arnson, ed. *The Peace Process in Colombia with the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia-AUC*, Woodrow Wilson Center Report on the Americas #13 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005). Throughout the peace talks and the demobilization and reinsertion process, and with the consent of the U.S. government, President Uribe froze all extradition requests, using them as a threatened “stick” to enforce paramilitary compliance with the accords. “Uribe amenaza con retirar beneficios a AUC,” *Semana*, August 14, 2006, .

³¹ Juan Forero, “Colombia Sends 13 Paramilitary Leaders to U.S.,” *Washington Post*, May 14, 2008, .

³² For one such opinion, see *Breaking the Grip? Obstacles to Justice for Paramilitary Mafias in Colombia* (Human Rights Watch, October 16, 2008), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/10/16/breaking-grip/obstacles-justice-paramilitary-mafias-colombia>,.

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³⁴ Report to Congress, U.S. Assistance Programs in Colombia and Plans to Transfer Responsibility to Colombia, Submitted to the Congress by the Secretary of State Pursuant to House Report 109-952 accompanying the Foreign Operations, Export, Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006 (P.L. 109-12), March 2006, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pcaab515.pdf.

³⁵ Arnson interview, Bogotá, April 22, 2009.

³⁶ See “Las principales revelaciones del computador de ‘Raúl Reyes’,” *Semana*, March 3, 2008, <http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/las-principales-revelaciones-del-computador-raul-reyes/91385-3>; and International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The FARC Files: Venezuela, Ecuador and the Secret Archive of ‘Raúl Reyes’*, IISS Strategic Dossier, May 10, 2011.

³⁷ Juan Manuel Santos, address commemorating the 100th anniversary of the *Escuela Superior de Guerra*, Bogotá, April 20, 2009, <http://cgfm.mil.co/documents/10184/24774/edicion+209.pdf/08ed91fe-1c20-459c-b50b-3c8be1da47cb>.

³⁸ For more in-depth discussion of the roots of Andean tension, see César Montúfar and Teresa Whitfield, eds., *Turbulencia en los Andes y Plan Colombia* (Quito: Centro Andino de Estudios Internacionales, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar-Corporación Editora Nacional, 2003); International Crisis Group, *Colombia and Its Neighbours: The Tentacles of Instability*, ICG Latin American Report No. 3, April 8, 2003; and International Crisis Group, *Colombia's Borders: The Weak Link in Uribe's Security Policy*, ICG Latin American Report No. 9, September 23, 2004.

³⁹ See the article by Colombian senator and former defense minister Marta Lucía Ramírez, "Colombia: Foreign Policy, Economy and the Conflict," *Diplomacy, Strategy & Politics* 9 (January-March 2009): 69-90.

⁴⁰ U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO), *Drug Control: U.S. Counternarcotics Cooperation with Venezuela Has Declined*, GAO-09-806 (Washington, DC: GAO, July 2009), <http://www.gao.gov/assets/300/292722.pdf>.

⁴¹ The Colombian magazine *Cambio* revealed the secret negotiations in its cover story, no. 835, July 2-8, 2009. Shortly after Santos took office in August 2010, the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled that the base agreement required congressional ratification. Tellingly, the new Colombian president opted instead to let the agreement languish. For a detailed analysis of the bilateral base negotiations, see Sebastian Bitar, *US Military Bases, Quasi-bases, and Domestic Politics in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

⁴² U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *The Proposed U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement: Economic and Political Implications*, by M. Angeles Villareal, RL34470 (July 27, 2009), 11-12.

⁴³ I.M. (Mac) Destler, "American Trade Politics in 2007: Building Bipartisan Compromise," Peterson Institute for International Economics Policy Brief Number PB07-5 (May 2007), 1-3;

and Sandra Polaski, "U.S. Living Standards in an Era of Globalization," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief 53 (July 2007),

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb_53_polaski__us_living_standards_final.pdf.

⁴⁴ Cynthia J. Arnson, "La agonía de Álvaro Uribe," *Foreign Affairs en Español* 7, 4 (2007): 51-60.

⁴⁵ Nancy Pelosi, "Pelosi, Hoyer, Rangel, and Levin Statement on Trade," press release, June 29, 2007, 2, <http://levin.house.gov/pelosi-hoyer-rangel-and-levin-statement-trade>.

⁴⁶ For a summary of arguments by Medellín's *Escuela Nacional Sindical* and the AFL-CIO, along with the views of the FTA's supporters, see <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-us-colombia-free-trade-agreement-capitol-hill-conversation>

[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1425&categoryid=34F7C805-A083-ABCF-](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1425&categoryid=34F7C805-A083-ABCF-C2F3CB646928E11E&fuseaction=topics.events_item_topics&event_id=397573)

[C2F3CB646928E11E&fuseaction=topics.events_item_topics&event_id=397573](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1425&categoryid=34F7C805-A083-ABCF-C2F3CB646928E11E&fuseaction=topics.events_item_topics&event_id=397573). See also, letter from Human Rights Watch Director Kenneth Roth to President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, May 2, 2007: 1-3; and Juan Forero, "Unionists' Murders Cloud Prospects for Colombia Trade Pact," *Washington Post*, April 10, 2007, A9, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/09/AR2007040901250.html>.

⁴⁷ Uribe's longstanding rift with the outspoken director of Human Rights Watch/Americas, José Miguel Vivanco, in which he accused Vivanco of being a FARC apologist and accomplice, illustrated a dangerous tendency to stigmatize human rights groups by publicly associating them with guerrillas or terrorists.

⁴⁸ See the February 21, 2009 edition of *Semana* magazine, which originally reported the story, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-das-sigue-grabando/100370-3>.

⁴⁹ Ernesto Cárdenas and Edgar Villa, "La política de seguridad democrática y las ejecuciones extrajudiciales," *Ensayos sobre Política Económica* 31, 71 (June 2013): 31-64.

⁵⁰ Barack Obama and Álvaro Uribe, “Remarks by President Obama and President Uribe of Colombia in Joint Press Availability,” Oval Office, June 29, 2009, 1-7, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-obama-and-president-uribe-colombia-joint-press-availability>. Uribe’s bid for a third term was ultimately blocked by Colombia’s Constitutional Court in February, 2010.

⁵¹ Presidencia, República de Colombia, “The time for Colombia is now!” August 7, 2010, http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2010/Agosto/Paginas/20100807_15.aspx.

⁵² Chávez broke diplomatic relations in July 2010, in protest over Uribe’s attempt to condemn the Venezuelan government in the OAS for alleged FARC presence in Venezuelan territory.

⁵³ By mid-2012, much of Venezuela’s outstanding debt, amounting to over US\$1.4 billion, had been paid back. But in light of Venezuela’s deep economic crisis and the lack of confidence of Colombian exporters, trade relations continued to decline. Martha Lucía Márquez, “Dilemas y perspectivas en la relación de Colombia con Venezuela durante la era Santos,” in *Colombia ¿una potencia en desarrollo? Escenarios y desafíos para su política exterior*, ed. Stefan Jost (Bogotá: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung-Colombia, 2012), 577-598.

⁵⁴ “Santos dice que Chávez es su ‘nuevo mejor amigo’,” *Semana*, November 8, 2010, <http://www.semana.com/mundo/articulo/santos-dice-chavez-su-nuevo-mejor-amigo/124284-3>.

⁵⁵ “Santos: los campamentos de las FARC en Venezuela ya no están ahí,” *Semana*, April 12, 2011.

⁵⁶ See Ana María Trujillo, “Dilemas y perspectivas de la relación de Colombia con Ecuador,” in *Colombia ¿una potencia en desarrollo? Escenarios y desafíos para su política exterior*, ed. Stefan Jost (Bogotá: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung-Colombia, 2012), 599-612.

⁵⁷ Santos quoted in Rogelio Núñez, “Colombia: los pilares de la nueva política exterior de Santos,” *Infolatam*, April 26, 2011. See also Socorro Ramírez, “El giro de la política exterior

colombiana,” *Nueva Sociedad* 231 (2011): 79-95; and Leonardo Carvajal, “Colombia: país puente en política exterior,” Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2012.

⁵⁸ “This will in a way counterbalance Brazil,” Santos said. “It’s not against Brazil; it’s to unite the region.” Quoted in Simon Romero, “Colombia Leader Seeks Wide-Ranging Changes, and Looks Beyond the U.S.,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2011, 9. For an analysis of the Pacific Alliance, see Samuel George, *The Pacific Pumas: An Emerging Model for Emerging Markets* (Washington, DC: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2014); and Adrián Blanco Estévez, *La Alianza del Pacífico: Un largo camino por recorrer hacia la integración*, (Washington, DC: Wilson Center Latin American Program, 2015), http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/AP_Blanco.

⁵⁹ Rogelio Núñez, “Colombia: los pilares de la nueva política exterior de Santos.”

⁶⁰ Presidencia, República de Colombia, “Colombia quiere ‘una relación totalmente nueva’ con Estados Unidos: Presidente Santos,” New York, September 24, 2010, http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2010/Septiembre/Paginas/20100924_17.aspx.

⁶¹ Juan Forero, “Santos: ‘Colombia Can Play a Role...That Coincides with the U.S. Interest,’” *Washington Post*, December 26, 2010.

⁶² James B. Steinberg, “Remarks at High Level Partnership Dialogue with Colombia,” remarks by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Bogotá, Colombia, October 25, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/former/steinberg/remarks/2010/169313.htm>.

⁶³ EFE, “TLC con EU es una propuesta, no una petición: Silva,” *Dinero.com*, November 18, 2010, <http://www.dinero.com/Imprimir/107833>.

⁶⁴ *Losing Jobs and Alienating Friends: The Consequences of Falling Behind on Free Trade with Colombia and Panama, A Report to the Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate*, 112th Cong., 1st Sess. (February 8, 2011), 8.

⁶⁵ Twenty-one Senate Democrats ultimately voted for the FTA, versus 31 who were opposed. In the House, the split was much deeper, with only 31 Democrats in favor and 158 opposed.

⁶⁶ Santos appointed as his first Labor Minister Rafael Pardo, a respected former defense minister, senator, and member of the Liberal Party.

⁶⁷ U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement: Background and Issues*, by M. Angeles Villarreal, RL34470 (April 27, 2012), 17-23.

⁶⁸ “Seis millones de víctimas deja el conflicto en Colombia,” *Semana*, February 8, 2014, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/victimas-del-conflicto-armado-en-colombia/376494-3>.

⁶⁹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by President Obama and President Santos of Colombia after Bilateral Meeting,” April 7, 2011.

⁷⁰ Arnson interview, senior U.S. official, Washington, DC, July 8, 2015.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Arnson interview, senior U.S. official, Bogotá, February 26, 2015.

⁷³ See Fernando M. Luján, *Light Footprints: The Future of American Military Intervention*, (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2013).

⁷⁴ Quoted in Andrés Schipani, “Colombian Security Industry Exports Its Expertise,” *Financial Times*, June 3, 2013: 16. See also, Arlene B. Tickner, *Colombia, the United States and Security Cooperation by Proxy* (Washington, DC: Washington Office on Latin America, March 2014), <http://www.wola.org/es/node/4402>.

⁷⁵ Barack Obama and Juan Manuel Santos, “Remarks by President Obama and President Santos of Colombia in Joint Press Conference,” Courtyard, Casa de Huespedes, Cartagena, Colombia, April 15, 2012.

⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, “Joint Press Release on the United States-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation,” press release, ßApril 15, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/187928.htm>.

⁷⁷ Tickner, *Colombia, the United States and Security Cooperation by Proxy*.

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⁷⁹ Tickner interview, Colombian National Police official, Bogotá, February 3, 2014.

⁸⁰ John Mulholland, “Juan Manuel Santos: Its Time to Think Again about the War on Drugs,” *Guardian*, November 12, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/13/colombia-juan-santos-war-on-drugs>.

⁸¹ Organization of American States (OAS), *The Drug Problem in the Americas* (Washington, DC: OAS, May 2013).

⁸² Joint Declaration, governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico, October 1, 2012, http://mision.sre.gob.mx/onu/images/dec_con_drogas_ing.pdf.

⁸³ Yesid Reyes, “Palabras Del Doctor Yesid Reyes, Ministro De Justicia Y Del Derecho De Colombia, Con Ocasión Del Segmento Especial Del 58 Periodo Ordinario De Sesiones De La Comisión De Estupefacientes,” remarks by del Ministro de Justicia y del Derecho de Colombia, Vienna, Austria, March 2015, <https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/Portals/0/Discurso%20Ministro%20de%20Justicia%20en%200Viena.pdf>.

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⁸⁷ Daniel Valero, “Santos hablará con EE.UU. para suspender extradiciones de FARC,” *El Tiempo*, March 3, 2015, <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/santos-pediria-suspender-pedidos-de-extradiciones-de-farc/15330355>.

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⁸⁹ República de Colombia, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Logros de la Política Integral de Seguridad y Defensa para la Prosperidad - PISDP* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2015).

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reports by UNHCR, both available at <http://www.unhcr.org>: “2015 UNHCR country operations profile—Colombia,” and “UNCHR Global Appeal 2015 Update.” See also “Las deudas de Justicia y Paz con las víctimas,” *VerdadAbierta.com*, April 9, 2015, <http://www.verdadabierta.com/justicia-y-paz/reparaciones-a-victimas/5702-las-deudas-de-justicia-y-paz-con-las-victimas>; and Amnesty International, *The Human Rights Situation in Colombia* (New York: Amnesty International, 2015), <file:///C:/Users/Usuario/Downloads/AMR2300042015ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁹³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015: Colombia*, (New York, Human Rights Watch, 2015), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/colombia>.

⁹⁴ Presidencia de la República de Colombia, *La restitución de tierras en Colombia: del sueño a la realidad* (Bogotá: Unidad de Restitución de Tierras, 2014), <http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/sitios/especiales/Documents/20150513-especial-restitucion-tierras/index.html>.

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⁹⁸ Mauricio García Villegas and José R. Espinosa, *El derecho al Estado: los efectos legales del apartheid institucional en Colombia* (Bogotá: Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad, Dejusticia, 2013).

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¹⁰¹ Bruce Bagley, *Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty-First Century*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2012), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/BB%20Final.pdf>.

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<http://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/comercio-exterior/importaciones>. The importance of other trading partners such as the European Union and Mercosur also declined between 1995 and 2014. The EU accounted for 17.2 percent of exports in 2014, compared to 25 percent in 1995, and 13.7 percent of imports in 2014, compared to 19.3 percent in 1995. Mercosur's share of total Colombian trade shrunk from 11.2 percent to 7 percent (exports), and 15.2 percent to 6.3 percent (imports). As in the case of other Latin American countries, Colombia's economics relations with China have grown considerably. While in 1995 that country accounted for a marginal percentage of total trade, in 2014 it was the source of 18.4 percent of Colombian imports, with exports trailing far behind.

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