COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF COLOMBIA, 1985

DELEGATE BACKGROUND GUIDE

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A Letter From Your Director...

Dear delegates,

I am delighted to welcome to UTMUN 2016! My name is Alejandra Bellatin and I will be your director for the Council of Ministers of Colombia 1985. Our team also consists of the vice-director Naz Arin Alkumru, the moderator Arthur Nelson and the crisis analysts Maryam Rahimi and Pranav Dayanand; we are all very excited to meet you for a weekend of debate this February.

I am a second year student majoring in Economics and International Relations, and potentially minoring in Latin American Studies. My main interests are economic development, international humanitarianism, and conflict resolution. Apart from UTMUN, I am also part of the G20 Research Group and the Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. In my spare time, I like to paint and my favorite book is One hundred years of solitude. I am originally from Peru and moved to Canada for university. Growing up, I always heard about the scars that cocaine trafficking and paramilitary groups similar to FARC had left in Peruvian society.

I began doing MUN in the 8th grade and continued debating for the rest of my high school years. I have participated and hosted a wide array of committees, but the mixture of formality and dynamism in Specialized Agencies makes it by far my favorite. Last year, I also took part in UTMUN as a Vice-Director for another committee. MUN is a great way to learn about foreign affairs and improve public speaking skills.
The Ministerial Cabinet of Colombia 1985 promises exhilarating debate, unexpected crisis updates, and controversial politics. You will have to think fast. You will have to make big decisions – and face their consequences. Our committee topics are particularly relevant now, as in 2016 the Colombian government signed a peace agreement with the FARC. However, in a referendum, the Colombian people voted against the peace agreement. The situation today can only be understood by analyzing events in the past. The mid 1980s were an incredibly contentious time period in Colombian history, with the growth of cocaine trafficking and paramilitary organizations. The government at the time was pressured to make key resolutions, as you will be in this committee, which haunt the present of Colombia today. Will you be able to learn from their mistakes and make better choices? My team and I will do everything we can to make sure this is the most exciting and action packed Model United Nations experience you ever have. As you prepare for the conference, please do not hesitate to message me with questions! I am looking forward to meeting all of you this February.

Best Regards,

Alejandra Bellatin
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Historical Roots of Conflict

LA VIOLENCIA (1948-1958) AND ITS CAUSES

Colombia has been a country torn by violence throughout the majority of its existence. It was once said that God made the land so beautiful that he inhabited it with a population of evil men. Its history is filled with bloodshed caused by class struggles, money, politics, and drugs. No historical period encapsulates this better than La Violencia, a civil war that started in 1948 with which many political consequences are still present today.

One of the major causes of tension in Colombia was the bipartisan political struggle between the Conservative and Liberal parties. Prior to La Violencia, confrontation between these two parties had already created turmoil during the infamous periods of the "War of a Thousand days" and the civil war of 1976. These civil wars left behind bounds of casualties and were structured by the elite. La Violencia, however, contained no such structure.[1]

Throughout the 1930's, Colombia had a Liberal majority government in power. During the election period of 1946 a Conservative authoritarian government led by Mariano Ospina Perez was voted into office. Conservatives were bitter about a decade of political sidelining and attacks by the liberal party. Two years after the 1946 electoral victory, Conservatives began to attack the Liberals in order to get retribution and solidify conservative control. The most distinct case of these reprisals was the murder of Left-wing leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in broad daylight in the streets of Bogota.

1 Lauren Picker, "The Effect of 'La Violencia' on Colombia's Political System," E-International Relations, last modified March 20, 2013, http://www.e-ir.info/2013/03/20/the-effect-of-la-violencia-on-colombias-political-system/

Gaitán had been against revolution but pro-social reform, and therefore was popular among masses of peasants and factory workers. The anger resulting from Gaitán's murder incited rioting, banditry, and general social unrest, in a period known as the Bogotazo. It resulted in the death of over 2000 people.[2]

Although order was restored in the capital and Perez regained control, peasant uprisings against the oppressive oligarchy and elites began to spring up throughout the rural areas. The sheer banditry of the rural uprisings characterized another part of the La Violencia conflict. For the rural population, La Violencia was a response to the inability of either party to bring about concrete socio-economic change.[3]

To combat the rural uprisings, Colombia experienced its first and only military dictator: Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953 – 1957). Rojas Pinilla used heavy financial means and force to suppress the peasant revolutionary tensions across the country and was in fact partially successful in the short term. However, his methods fell short as in many areas the peasant resistance was too well organized to be repressed. The Liberal and Conservative governments joined forces to become the National Front and to overthrow Pinilla from his dictatorial power. The agreement made between the two parties was that every four years they would switch presidents between the two parties and that any other political parties would be barred from running in the elections. This was an attempt by the elite to once and for all end La Violencia.

Yet the political parties had failed to comprehend the real reasons behind la Violencia or the peasants' dissatisfaction. The rural population continued to rage violence as the National Front primarily catered to the elite. With the new agreement barring any new political organizations from being formed, the peasants had no voice and therefore continued their raging insurgence against the powers of the elite. The National Front would eventually suppress these insurgencies with help from the United States; which would only add to the peasants' resentment.[4]

The causes and consequences of La Violencia bear nothing to the extent of the violence which occurred. Around 200,000 to 400,000 partisans died as a result of the peasant insurgencies and there was heavy banditry and near-anarchic violence for well over a decade. The display of dead carcasses or heads to send a message to enemies were a common sight in this era.[5]

What started out as a power struggle between the conservative and liberal parties, quickly turned into a class struggle – a revolution against the oligarchic structure pervasive in Colombian society. La Violencia was separated from other wars because it was separated into several disjoint conflicts. The nation was so ruptured as a result that to this day parts of Colombia remain outside the area of governmental control and are instead ruled by illegal militias.[6] Colombia may never truly recover from the violence and chaos that ruled La Violencia, as its violent culture still lives strong.

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2 "La Violencia, Dictatorship, and Democractic Restoration," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified November 9, 2016, https://www.britannica.com/place/Colombia/La-Violencia-dictatorship-and-democratic-restoration

3 "La Violencia in Colombia," Latin American Studies, accessed November 12, 2016, http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/colombia/la-violencia.htm

4 John Pike, "La Violencia (1948-66)," Global Security, last modified September 6, 2016, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/la-violencia.htm

5 Ibid.

6 "Colombia profile – Timeline," BBC, last modified November 15, 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19390164

Revolutionary Groups

FUERZAS ARMADAS REVOLUCIONARIAS COLOMBIANAS (FARC)
COLOMBIAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES

Famous for kidnapping, extortion and narcoterrorism, the FARC is one of the most feared guerrilla organizations in South America. Its roots can be traced to the period of La Violencia. Although the conflict started in Bogotá, it soon moved to the rural areas, where villages were targeted for political attachments.[7] During this period, Manuel Marulanda, the future leader of FARC, joined the Liberal party.

La Violencia ended in 1958. Communist survivors organized self-defense militias, called autodefensas.[8] Many settled in the countryside, where they created communities centered around the needs of the rural people. For example, Manuel Marulanda, formed a community in Marquetalia.[9] Although these communities were very small, they posed an ideological hreat to the government.

The first violent confrontation between the FARC and the Colombian military happened on May 27 1964, when the military attacked Marquetalia. After feeling under threat, on July 20th, Marquetalia representatives and other communities met in the First Guerilla Conference. The main outcome was the formation of the "Southern Bloc", a defense guerilla group that called for land reform and better living standards for the rural population. In May 1966, the Southern Bloc had a second meeting, where they adopted the name of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).[10]

During the Cold War, Cuba delivered training and financial help to the FARC. Although the FARC was created to defend rural population from military attacks, it soon branched out into other activities. Communities that were loyal to FARC were rewarded with education and health care services. The FARC also trained militants for combat, with its first training camp established in 1972. To finance its activities, the FARC kidnapped for ransom members of the elite. In the late 1970s, the FARC's main source of income became cocaine trafficking. This marked the start of the FARC's wealth and fast expansion.[11] On 1982, the FARC started taxing coca growers and cocaine laboratories that operated in its sphere of influence.[12] However, as narcotrafficking grew, large cocaine traffickers gained more influence in local politics and refused to pay taxes.

The FARC and the Colombian president Belisario Betancur engaged on their first peace talks on 1982. By May 1984, an agreement reached called for a ceasefire.[13] However, as of 1985, it is uncertain if the ceasefire will hold. The FARC, however, entered the democratic system by the formation of its party, Unión Patrótica (UP. Patriotic Union)[14]

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7 "FARC," Insight Crime, last modified August 15, 2016, http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/farc-profile

8 Ibid.

9 "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army," Stanford University, last modified August 15, 2016, http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/89

10 "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia" Stanford University.

11 Ibid.

12 "FARC," Insight Crime.

13 "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia" Stanford University.

14 "FARC," Insight Crime.

EJÉRCITO DE LIBERACIÓN NACIONAL (ELN)

The National Liberation Army was formed in 1964 and was Colombia's second largest revolutionary group. Like the FARC, the ELN wanted a leftist revolution to override Colombia's bipartisan democracy. Originally, the ELN was formed by leftist intellectuals inspired by the Cuban Revolution and Catholic radicals who believed in the theology of revolution. Its main founders were the brothers Fabio and Manuel Vasquez Castaño.[15]

For its first decade, the ELN had refrained from kidnapping for ideological reasons. Their main source of recruitment were radical priests, dissatisfied with the current political structure. However, in 1973, the government launched an offensive to eliminate the ELN: (Operación Anori), and killed 135 out of its 200 members.[16] The Vasquez Castaño Brothers were dead and the new leadership was given to Manuel Perez and Nicolas Rodriguez Bautista.[17] Under the new leadership, the ELN's main activities consisted of bank robbing,

kidnapping elites, and assassinating members of the military.[18] The discovery of oil in ELN areas of operations led to the entry of large multinational companies, an opportunity that the ELN exploited through the theft of their oil and kidnapping of employees.[19] Nevertheless, the ELN continued to stay away from narcoterrorism.

In 1984, the ELN did not sign the cease-fire agreement with the government. Instead, the ELN attempted to sabotage the peace talks between the government and guerilla organizations by kidnapping the President's brother. Nevertheless, Cuban leader Fidel Castro, long time partner of the ELN, disapproved this course of action. As a result, some of the ELN fronts reached a temporary cease-fire agreement.[20] [21]

Revolutionary Groups and Ideology

Both the ELN and FARC are leftist militias that aim to represent the large rural population. Moreover, they both oppose the growing influence of the US and multinational corporations in Colombia.[22]

During the FARC's starting years, its leader Manuel Marulanda was inspired by the work of Lenin, Marx, Bolívar and Mao.[23] Nevertheless, the ELN was always seen as a more ideologically-driven group than the FARC. The National Liberation Army started as a group of left wing Catholic intellectuals. One of their major sources of inspiration was the liberation theology, a religious movement sparked by the Catholic Church's more progressive stance in the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The liberation theology emphasizes liberation for the oppressed, and intellectuals linked such motivation to the gross inequality in Latin America.[24]

The second source of inspiration was the revolutionary government in Cuba, from which the ELN received military and financial support during its foundational years. The Marxist-Leninist group felt

15 "National Liberation Army (Colombia)", Stanford University, last modified August 17 2015, http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/87

16 Zach Edling, "Profiles: ELN," Colombia Reports, last modified October 22, 2012, http://colombiareports.com/eln/

17 "National Liberation Army (Colombia)", Stanford University.

18 Ibid.

19 http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/eln-profile

20 Edling, "Profiles: ELN," Colombia Reports.

21 Ariel Ávila and Naryi Vargas, "Qué es el ELN" El Espectador, last modified March 31, 2016, http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/el-eln-articulo-624698

22 Stephanie Hanson, "FARC, ELN: Colombia's Left-Wing Guerrillas, Washington Post, last modified March 12, 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/12/AR2008031202036.html

23 "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia" Stanford University.

24 Edling, "Profiles: ELN," Colombia Reports.

that it represented the majority of Colombia's interests and socio-economic grievances.[25] They also saw the US role in Colombia as anti-democratic. Originally, the ELN stayed away from kidnapping and narcotic trade due to ideological reasons; a path of action that the FARC instead, conversely took.

Revolutionary Groups and Geography

The FARC is strongest in the Colombia's Eastern provinces, near Venezuela. The FARC also has a strong influence in Western provinces of Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Chocó, Antioquia and Nariño.[26]

The ELN was founded in the province of Santander and continued to be overwhelmingly present in the Northeast region of Colombia. The ELN is not present in the Amazonas region and the area surrounding it.[27]

The Drug Trade

THE START OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT

Cocaine distribution followed the networks established for the marijuana trade, popular in the 1960s and 1970s. In Colombia, drug elites married into local prominent families, attempted to bribe officials at all levels, and bought up legitimate businesses to launder cash. Unfortunately, as production and profits surged, so did the violence as police and judicial institutions waned.

Political events in Chile also pushed the drug trade to Colombia. Chile became an important smuggling corridor after cocaine production in Peru was criminalized and Bolivia emerged as a center of coca production in the 1950s. Trade grew until the army, led by Augusto Pinochet, overthrew Salvador Allende in September 1973. Entrepreneurs from Medellín in Colombia seized the opportunity presented by the collapse of democracy in Chile and the elimination of Chilean smugglers. Leaders of drug trade in Medellín took drug transportation to new levels. In the mid-1970s, Carlos Lehder and Jorge Luis Ochoa transformed the trafficking of cocaine into huge airlift operations.

After consolidating control of the South American market, the traffickers in Medellín looked to control wholesale distribution in the highly profitable United States. As a result, Miami—the principal port of entry—became a virtual war zone, with a homicide rate of seventy per 100,000 in 1980.[28]

Almost all cocaine consumed across the globe comes from Colombia, Peru and to a lesser extent Bolivia. In these countries coca — the crop used for cocaine — has been common for centuries and is consumed legally by chewing the leaves or making tea.

25 "National Liberation Army (Colombia)", Stanford University.

26 "FARC," Insight Crime.

27 "National Liberation Army (Colombia)", Stanford University.

28 Stephen Hyland, "The Shifting Terrain of Latin American Drug Trafficking," Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective 4, no.12 (2011), http://origins.osu.edu/article/shifting-terrain-latin-american-drug-trafficking/page/0/0

ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN COCAINE PRODUCTION: A STEP-BY-STEP EXPLANATION

In Colombia, the coca used to produce cocaine is grown mostly in remote parts of the country where the state has long lacked control. Due to limited state control, most of the land is available for all kinds of illegal activity.[29] Colombian coca farmers use approximately an accumulated area of between 69,000 hectares (266.5 mi2) and 112,000 hectares (432 mi2) to produce the country's cocaine. The UN estimates that some 64,500 Colombian farming families, a population of more than 300,000 live off coca.

These families receive on average little less than $1,200 a month from selling coca, which sells at a little more than a dollar per kilo, depending on the region. To produce one kilo of cocaine some 125 kilos of coca is needed, which would cost a local drug lab $137.50. Once the lab has turned the coca leaves first into coca paste, then into coca base and ultimately into real cocaine, the value will have increased to $2,269. By the time it gets to the street, for example in the United States, that kilo of cocaine will provide $60,000 in revenue. In Australia this could be as much as $235,000.[30]

In three separate chemical processes, the coca is converted into coca paste, then coca base before it becomes real cocaine. The FARC, a left-wing rebel group, oversees much of this process, making sure coca farmers and drug labs are "taxed" for their activities. The revenue of these taxes has financed the guerrillas' war with the state for decades while providing effective protection for coca growers and smaller local drug trafficking clans. The drug labs are generally run by these local drug trafficking clans, individual guerrilla units, or collaborators of larger organizations with direct ties to the organizations that traffic the drugs to the US, Europe or the Southern Cone where local drug dealing organizations take care of street sales.[31]

Once the coca is processed to cocaine, it is trafficked by local drug traffickers, guerrillas and nationally operating groups to either one of the country's two coastlines, or one of the country's borders. A relatively small amount of cocaine is taken to airports.

The cocaine is hidden in trucks or cars if transported over land, or is moved in small boats through dense jungle areas where rivers provide the perfect corridors for almost unhindered illicit trafficking. Along these routes, the drug traffickers intimidate locals and bribe officials to prevent their routes and shipments from being exposed.[32]

This part of the trade is supervised by national criminal organizations with business relations to international cartels. In some cases, these groups have access to their own transnational routes. Most of Colombia's current drug trafficking organizations have their roots in the old Medellin and Cali cartels. They bribe security forces, politicians and judicial authorities to protect their routes, and secure the continuity of their business.[33]

Smaller amount of drugs are trafficked by air, in risky operations by "drug mules" who either swallow small amounts of drugs, or carry pounds or kilos of the illicit substance in their luggage. These drug mules generally work for Colombian organizations with a criminal partner organization in the destination country. Large quantities of drugs find their way out

29 Jeremy McDermott, "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer," Insight Crime, last modified December 23, 2013, http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/why-peru-top-cocaine-producer

30 Adriaan Asema, "Drug trafficking in Colombia," Colombia Reports, last modified August 2, 2015, http://colombiareports.com/drug-trafficking-in-colombia/

31 Ibid.

32 McDermott, "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer".

33 Asema, "Drug trafficking in Colombia".

of the country through the country's ports where corruption is very common.[34]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING IN COLOMBIA

By 1981, seventy percent of all marijuana and cocaine coming into the United States passed through South Florida. In 1976, between 14 and 19 metric tons of cocaine were smuggled into the U.S. That number jumped to nearly 45 metric tons annually by 1982. Colombian traffickers generated roughly $1.5 billion in revenue from the marijuana and cocaine trade in 1980 and almost $3 billion in 1985.

The 1981 kidnapping of the sister of Jorge Luis Ochoa, a prominent trafficker based in Medellín, by leftist M-19 guerrillas proved a critical moment in the evolution of Latin American drugs trafficking. The guerrillas demanded a $1 million ransom. In response, Ochoa called together the leading traffickers to meet at his family restaurant. There, they all agreed that their wealth made them targets of the guerillas and paramilitaries. Each trafficker offered up $7.5 million to form MAS, a Spanish acronym translating to "Death to the Kidnappers."[35]

This agreement started the Medellín cartel and effectively ended the cocaine wars that bloodied the streets of Miami. In addition, each trafficker donated money to build a massive cocaine lab on the Yarí River in southern Colombia.[36]

An In-Depth Look Into The Medellín Cartel

The Medellín Cartel was an organized network of drug traffickers that produced and distributed cocaine to countries all over the world, making a staggering amount of $60 to $70 million[37] per day while providing for 89% of the global cocaine market. Pablo Escobar, one of the founding members of the Medellin Cartel, was recognized as one of the most powerful and affluent drug lords the world has ever seen. Escobar and his associates intimidated and assassinated anyone who proved to be a challenge to their power, conducting narco-terrorist actions throughout Colombia and killing more than 3,000 people.[38]

After the "Death to Kidnappers" agreement, a division of labor soon emerged: Jorge Luis Ochoa and his two brothers oversaw the distribution networks in Florida and California; Carlos Lehder organized the air transport into the United States, using a Caribbean island as a stopover; The most infamous member of this cartel, Pablo Escobar, served as the muscle. It is believed that he employed 200 gunmen and established two assassin training schools.

Extradition

The far-reaching influence of these criminal groups in the Colombian bureaucracy and police force greatly undermined the efforts of any government that attempted to get rid of these criminal organizations. The greatest threat to Pablo Escobar's regime came with the

34 McDermott, "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer".

35 Hyland, "The Shifting Terrain of Latin American Drug Trafficking".

36 Ibid.

37 Sara Miller Llana, "Medellín, once epicenter of Colombia's drug war, fights to keep the peace,"The Christian Science Monitor, last modified 25 October, 2010, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2010/1025/Medellin-once-epicenter-of-Colombia-s-drug-war-fights-to-keep-the-peace

38 Fernando Ramos and Rafael Romo, "Colombia frees Escobar hit man who killed hundreds," CNN, last modified August 27, 2014, http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/27/world/americas/colombia-hit-man-released/index.html

enforcement of an extradition treaty between the governments of the United States and Colombia.

The Reagan presidency marked an increased involvement of the United States in Colombian internal issues, particularly the fight against major drug organizations. An important legal tool used was the extradition of drug traffickers from Colombia to US courts.[39] Extradition is the surrender of a criminal from one sovereign country to another.[40] Prison in the United States was a harsher punishment for drug traffickers, as they would be detached from their criminal organizations.[41] The United States and Colombia signed an extradition treaty in 1979. The treaty was approved by the Colombian Congress and incorporated into national legislation in 1980. Nevertheless, in the first years after the treaty, the government of Belisario Betancur (1982-present) would not extradite nationals as they believed it opposed national sovereignty.[42]

Drug traffickers feared extradition as it practically assured a US prison sentence. In an effort to pressure the government into denouncing the extradition treaty, the drug cartels conducted a series of kidnappings and murders that resulted in widespread chaos and instability in Colombia.

Pablo Escobar in Politics

Medellín traffickers attempted to expand their social and political sway in an attempt to normalize their business in Colombian society. Traffickers contributed to political campaigns. Several, such as Lehder, bought radio stations and newspapers. Escobar created a welfare program, gave alms to the poor, and built low-income housing in the slums. Escobar was promoting a Robin Hood figure as a means of achieving political power.

In 1982, Escobar was elected as a member of the Colombian Liberal Party to the national congress, but was forced to resign after the justice minister (Rodrigo Lara Bonilla) proved that he was involved in drug trafficking. In March of 1984, the Colombian police along with the DEA discover an enormous drug manufacturing facility linked to the Medellín Cartel, signaling the beginning of a bloody war on drug cartels. That same year, the Medellín Cartel arranged for the assassination of the Colombian Minister of Justice under President Belisario Betancur, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, in Bogotá. All in all, the illicit activities of the drug cartels resulted in the emergence of a new social class of criminals that would conduct business and make fortunes through the extortion and intimidation of other people.

DRUG TRAFFICKING IN LATIN AMERICA

At the same time, the trafficking in drugs supported many legal businesses throughout Latin America. For instance, Argentina experienced a surge in hydrochloric acid exports to Bolivia

39 Peter A. Greyshock, "Outsourcing justice: Colombia, the United States, and the extradition of paramilitaries," South Western Journal of Law 10, no. 1 (2013): 145. https://www.esl.eur.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/frg/arw/RILE/FRONT.pdf

40 Joshua H. Warmund, "Removing Drug Lords and Street Pushers: The Extradition of Nationals in Colombia and the Dominican Republic," Fordham International Law Journal 22, no. 5 (1998): 2380 https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/00a4/986f299ae375f1b69ce7ae69f96a7c0457f5.pdf:

41 Walter Rodriguez, "Mexico's Catch-22: How the Necessary Extradition of Drug Cartel Leaders Undermines Long-Term Criminal Justice Reforms," Boston College International and Comparative Law Review 38, no.1 (2015): 165. http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1739&context=iclr

42 Aurora Moreno Torres, "A critical reflection about extradition in Colombia as a weakness of the judicial and political system," Encrucijada Americana 5, no.1 (2012): 52. http://www.encrucijadaamericana.cl/articulos/a5_n1/3_Editado_UNA_REFLEXION_CRITICA_SOBRE_LA_EXTRADICION_EN_COLOMBIA.pdf

in the 1980s, an additive in the production of cocaine. (In the earlier part of this century, Argentina witnessed a similar surge in ephedrine exports to Mexico, a critical ingredient in the production of methamphetamines.) Other events in the early 1980s transformed the landscape of Colombian drug production and distribution. The extradition treaty between Colombia and the United States, which was signed in 1979 and enacted in 1982, provoked a spike in violent crime by the cartel.

In addition, a joint Colombian police-DEA raid on the Yarí River facility in March 1984 netted a seizure of fourteen tons of cocaine (with an estimated street value of $1.2 billion), seven airplanes, and some weapons and production materials. The cartel responded by assassinating the Colombian minister of justice.[43]

Colombia unleashed a crackdown on the Medellín cartel following the assassination, which forced Escobar and the Ochoa brothers to hide in Panama in May 1984. While there, these traffickers attempted to negotiate a settlement with the Colombian government. The men, who controlled three-quarters of the South American cocaine trade, offered to turn over landing strips and labs, promised to invest their capital into national industries, and proposed to pay $15 billion in cash, the equivalent of Colombia's foreign debt. The deal was refused due to pressure from the Reagan administration and Colombian popular resentment to negotiating with the cartel.

As a result of the Colombian government's refusal of their offer, the cartel began to make new connections with Central American traffickers who introduced the cartel to Mexican heroin, marijuana smugglers and Mexican authorities willing to be bribed. These ties opened Colombian cocaine to smuggling routes in the American southwest and set the stage for the rise of violent Mexican trafficking organizations.[44]

Following 1984, the Medellín cartel began to self-destruct, even as its power and attending violence grew. Yet, the connections made by the Medellín cartel with Mexican traffickers while in Panama in 1984 proved to be a turning point, with Mexican groups increasingly ascendant in the movement of drugs into the U.S.

Colombia-US Relations

THE COLD WAR: PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM

In the early years of the Cold War, the government of the United States identified South America as a region of paramount importance to national security. The U.S. saw the economic advantages of maintaining South American governments who subscribed to capitalist ideology and maintained open markets. The U.S. also recognized the continent was vulnerable to the spread of communism. Populist sentiments were rapidly spreading throughout developing countries, including Colombia. In response, the U.S. poured economic and military aid into the continent beginning in the 1950s. The policy was made official by John F. Kennedy in 1961 who named the program 'Alliance for Progress'.[45] The U.S. intended to stymie the spread of socialist movements that were gaining strong rural support.

Colombia was one of the benefactors of U.S. economic aid and military aid in an effort to

43 Hyland, "The Shifting Terrain of Latin American Drug Trafficking".

44 Ibid.

45 Russell Crandall, Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 21.

counteract the communist sentiments spreading throughout the country. The Colombian government was sympathetic to U.S. interests and remained firmly in the anti-communist camp. The U.S. government made Colombia a showcase for capitalist development and modernization.[46] By 1959, Colombia was the recipient of 400 million U.S. direct foreign investment, mostly in the oil sector.[47] The established government and elites of Colombia saw massive economic growth and profits but very little was directed towards rural and poor demographics.

The United States feared the threat that armed 'militias' and communist sympathizers posed to capitalism. The rising guerilla movements threatened the establishment of a pro-US, free enterprise democracy in Colombia.[48] In 1952 Colombia signed a Military Assistance Agreement with the United States. In response to rising concern in Washington, the U.S. sent military advisory teams comprised of counterinsurgency experts to Colombia between 1959-1962.[49] Their goal was to survey the military and policing capacities of the Colombian National Defense and the threat that communist "militias" imposed.

With U.S. encouragement, Colombia introduced Plan LAZO, a counterinsurgency policy that remained in effect until the 1980s.[50] Using U.S. military aid, it funded and organized government and civilian paramilitary groups to inhabit and exert control over many of the self-defended rural areas in Colombia. The objective was to quell the localized spread of communism but the use of force inspired the formation of FARC and other armed militias.

The United States continued to pursue a policy of funding counterinsurgent operations in Colombia. Between 1950-1957, Colombia received 18.3 million USD in military aid from the United States. By 1967, US Military aid had reached 160 million USD.[51] The U.S. established training operations for Colombia's police force through the International Police Academy (IPA). The IPA trained anti-communist regimes' police forces in counterinsurgency methods.[52]In 1984 alone, the U.S. sent 50 million USD worth of arms to Colombian national defense forces. Colombia remains dependent on the United States for military support and national security.[53]

Furthermore, Colombia relies heavily upon intelligence provided by the U.S. government. The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence community in the United States established networks throughout Colombia's citizen militias and police force. They recruited operatives through military training programs, especially the IPA. The U.S. intelligence operations in Colombia function through a system of informants, operatives and high-tech surveillance. The intelligence networks proved critical for combatting FARC, ELN and Cartels. However, the United States intelligence community has full discretion of what information they share with Colombia.[54] A U.S. monopoly on intelligence in the region has emboldened the United States to pursue unilateral covert action - often without consent of the Colombian government.

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46 Ibid., 23.

47 Dough Stokes, America's Other War: Terrorizing Colombia (Zed Books, 2005), 68-69.

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52 Martha K. Huggins, Political Policing: The United States and Latin America, (Duke University Press, 1998), 107.

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54 Bruce M. Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs," Foreign Affairs 67, no. 1, (Fall, 1988): 81-83.

US INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG WAR

Drug trafficking in Colombia threatens national security and the authority of the Colombian government. By 1978, drug syndicates had grown so powerful that Colombian forces were incapable of opposing them effectively.[55] However, the rapid rise of cartels and drug trafficking throughout Colombia in the 1970s was of little concern to the United States. Prior to 1973, the United States provided next to nothing in aid for narcotics control: six used vehicles and old equipment with a total value of approximately 45,000 USD. But in 1973, the U.S. government signed a bilateral treaty with Colombia and increased aid to 6 million over four years for training law enforcement officials. The United States continued to use their aid as leverage and pushed for a comprehensive extradition treaty between countries. President Turbay of Colombia agreed to a U.S.-Colombian extradition treaty in 1979. In return the U.S. increased funding by 16 million USD, about 40% of the U.S. foreign narcotics interdiction budget.[56]

Until 1980, the United States had remained relatively impartial to drug trafficking in Colombia, instead focusing on suppressing communist 'terrorist groups'. However, the Reagan administration began to turn its attention to the issue of drugs as cocaine and other narcotics began to flood the black market of the United States.[57] Colombia emerged as the principal country for refining cocaine and roughly 75% of the cocaine exported to the United States originated from Colombia.[58] The U.S. government pressured Turbay into increasing military interdiction in cartel controlled areas, and advocated for fumigation of drug crops. The United States sought to provide peasants and farmers with economic incentives to substitute drug crops like cocoa with other less profitable crops. They attempted to implement narcotics awareness and education programs.[59] The economic intervention proved to be ineffective and the United States turned to intervention through Colombian paramilitary and national defense efforts.

In 1982, the current President, Belisario Betancur, was elected and immediately pursued a policy of unilateral Colombian narcotics interdiction. He refused to honor the extradition treaty, at the threat of U.S. import tariffs, and negotiated a peace process with a number of Colombia's guerrilla organizations. The rising power of the cartels caused Betancur to establish a special anti-narcotics unit within the National Police.[60] Yet by 1984, the influence of the Medellín cartel had increased to such a degree that Betancur returned to relying on U.S. intervention, training and aid. In 1982, Colombia only received 2.8 million USD. By 1984, the U.S. was spending tens of millions on the "War on Drugs" in Colombia.[61]

Last year, March 10th, 1984, Colombian National Police, with the assistance of the DEA raided a Medellín production center on the Yari river, seizing cocaine evaluated at 1.2 billion USD.[62] It was the largest cocaine bust ever. In retaliation, the cartel assassinated the Minister of Justice a month later and fled to Panama to attempt to negotiate a peace deal with the Colombian government. The United States exerted enormous pressure against a peace agreement and Betancur rejected the cartels attempt at negotiations. Only a few days ago, at the very beginning of January, 1985, Betancur recommitted Colombia to an extradition

55 Crandall, Driven by drugs, 22.

56 Bagley, "Colombia and the War on Drugs", 78.

57 Crandall, Driven by drugs, 24.

58 Bruce M. Bagley, "The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 30, no. 1, (1988): 161-166.

59 Peter R. Andreas, Eva C. Bertram, Morris J. Blachman and Kenneth E. Sharpe, "Dead-End Drug Wars," Foreign Policy 85, (1991-1992): 108-120.

60 Stokes, America's Other War, 74-75.

61 Crandall, Driven by Drugs p. 23.

62 Ibid., p. 26.

treaty with the United States. The assassination of the Minister of Justice had pushed the Colombian government too far.

PRESENT DAY

As a Cabinet, you must guide Colombia to a stable and prosperous future. The United States is currently your strongest ally in the fight against the cartels, but they have begun to act unilaterally, conducting covert operations in Colombia and exerting political pressure on your government to follow their agenda. The U.S. intelligence operations in the country are providing actionable intelligence, but there are whispers that the C.I.A. is more directly involved in drug trafficking than originally anticipated. As a Cabinet you must decide exactly how dependent on U.S. foreign aid you want to be while still being able to combat cartels and guerrilla movements.

List of Characters

1. Minister of Government (in 1996 renamed Minister of Interior)
2. Minister of Finance
3. Minister of National Defense
4. Deputy Minister of Defense: Intelligence
5. Chief of National Police
6. Minister of Justice
7. Attorney General (Technically not created until 1991)
8. Minister of Foreign Affairs
9. Minister of Public Works and Transportation
10. Minister of Communications
11. Minister of Economic Development
12. President
13. Chief of Staff to the President
14. US Ambassador
15. Representative from CIA
16. Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism
17. DEA Representative
18. Minister of Health and Social Security
19. Minister of Agriculture
20. Minister of National Education

21. Minister of Mines and Energy
22. Minister of Labour
23. President of the Senate of Colombia
24. President of the Chamber of Representatives of Colombia

Structure and Modus Operandi of the Committee

Specialized agencies are hybrids of General Assemblies and Crisis Committees, and hence integrate elements from both. Delegates will be expected to write Resolutions, with its respective preambulatory and operative clauses. Resolutions serve to propose solutions to the overarching topics of the Committee: paramilitary revolutionary groups, cocaine trafficking, and drug trade with the United States.

Delegates are also expected to write directives for more specific immediate actions. Directives do not require perambulatory clauses. Individual delegates will not be able to pass directives unilaterally in the form of "secret powers". All directives must be discussed and voted on as a cabinet. The first committee session will commence on Jan. 10th, 1985.

In order to ensure that ministers (or other delegates) has some degree of authority over their area of jurisdiction, a directive cannot be passed if the respective minister votes against it. For example, the government cannot launch an offensive using the police force if the Minister of Defence – National Police vetoes the directive. Likewise, the Minister of Communications can block press releases from being issued. This however can be overridden with a two thirds majority vote of the cabinet.

Finally, a clarification on the role of the President within the committee. The delegate assigned the role of president has to submit directives and resolutions in the same way as other delegates. Moreover, when voting for procedural motions, the President's vote will count as just another vote. Nevertheless, in substantive issues (Resolutions or Directives) the President will have veto power. The president's veto can be overridden by a two thirds majority vote of the Cabinet. The same process applies to ministers who choose to veto certain legislation.

If you have any additional questions about the structure of the committee, please do not hesitate to email your director at: alejandra.bellatin@mail.utoronto.ca

Key Regional Agreements

In 1983, the foreign ministers of Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Mexico met in the Contadora Island. The four countries wanted to persuade Central American countries to negotiate peace with each other and with guerrillas within their countries.[63] They also expressed their concern over foreign intervention in Central American politics.

The Andean Community, formed in 1969, is a South American Organization founded by Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. Venezuela joined in 1973. The Andean Community aims to increase trade cooperation among its members.

63 Harold Dana Sims and Vilma Petrash, "The Contadora Peace Process," Conflict Quarterly, (1984): 5.

Timeline of Major Relevant Events[64]

Year	Event
1810	July 20, Colombia declared independence from Spain.
1819	January 17, Simon Bolivar the "liberator" proclaimed Colombia a republic
1946	Conservative government led by Mariano Ospina Perez voted into office
1948	April 9, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan Ayala was assassinated
1948-1958	La Violencia
1953	A domestic spy agency was created during the government of Gen. Rojas Pinilla.
1956	The Conservative and Liberal parties agreed to share power.
1960	Colombia's a domestic spy agency was reconstructed as the DAS by President
1964	Colombian army troops fought peasant militias of Marquetalia, the community of Manuel Marulanda
1964	The National Liberation Army (ELN) was formed
1966	The Southern Bloc reformed as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).
1973	Operation Anori: Government offensive against ELN
1978	Amazon Pact signed by Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Su-ri-name, and Venezuela to coordinate development of the Amazon.
1979	Colombia signed an extradition treaty with the United States
1980	Fidel Castaño founded anti-leftist paramilitary force
1981	March, guerillas kidnapped and executed American Bible translator, accusing him of being an undercover CIA agent.
1982	The FARC and the Colombian president Belisario Betancur began peace talks
1983	November, 181 died in a Colombian Avianca Airlines plane.
1984	March, Colombian police and DEA discovered a drug manufacturing facility asso-ciated with the Medellin Cartel
1984	Assassination of Minister of Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, orchestrated by the Medellín Cartel.
1984	May, agreement for a ceasefire between Colombian government and the FARC.
Jan. 5th, 1985	President Betancur agrees to reenter the extradition treaty between Colombia and the United States.

Suggestions for Further Research

The background guide is a good starting point for your research in this committee. Nevertheless, the background guide is just an overview of a wide array of topics, and you should do additional research. Try answering these questions:

1. What are FARC's and ELN's objectives? What action should the Colombian government take regarding those objectives?

64 "Timeline Colombia," Timelines of History, accessed November 9, 2016, http://www.timelines.ws/countries/COLOMBIA.HTML

2. How can the marginalized rural population be integrated into Colombian society?
3. What military strategies can be taken to defeat FARC and ELN? What about non-military strategies?
4. What military and non-military strategies can be taken to fight drug cartels, particularly the Medellín cartel?
5. How can you, as ministers, ensure that once the Medellín Cartel falls there will not be another cartel to take its place?
6. What kind of assistance should Colombia receive from the United States?
7. How involved should the US be in the fight of paramilitary organizations and the drug trade?
8. What solutions can be taken that concern the jurisdiction of your specific ministry or role?

Closing Remarks

You have made it to the end of the background guide! As you do additional research, keep in mind the interests of the government at the time. You will probably find information about events that happened after 1985. Although these events are realistic, and may give you a good understanding about the implications of the conflict, please don't let them influence too much your decisions in committee. Try to put yourselves in the position of the real ministerial cabinet. Although the first 10 minutes of the committee might follow the real 1985 chronology, I promise you that the rest will not be a rerun of history. Do your research, think of solutions, and be prepared to act fast. Always consider the long term effects of any action that you take, and compare costs with benefits. The future of Colombia and all of its citizens lie in your hands.

The staff of the Council of Ministers of Colombia 1985 is looking forward to meet you in February. Feel free to email me if you have any question. Until then, good luck!

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