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# Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia

Richard L. Maullin

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A Report prepared for  
ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY

**Rand**  
SANTA MONICA, CA 90406

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PREFACE

THIS REPORT examines the impact of prolonged guerrilla warfare on the missions and political roles of the Colombian military during the 1960s. Begun initially under corporate sponsorship, this study was completed as part of a broader analysis for the Advanced Research Projects Agency on the "lessons" of rebellion in the Third World. The study's central finding, that the uses of foreign assistance depend largely on the recipient military's doctrines and relationships to its own environment, suggests an important consideration for the planning of U.S. military and economic assistance programs so as to maximize their returns.

Richard L. Maullin is a consultant to the Social Science Department of The Rand Corporation. His research on Colombia has been informed by several field trips to that nation since 1965. In previous Rand studies he has recounted the career of a powerful guerrilla leader and regional political figure, *The Fall of Dumar Aljure, A Colombian Guerrilla and Bandit*, RM-5750-ISA, December 1968, and has analyzed *The Colombia-IMF Disagreement of November-December 1966*, RM-5314-RC, June 1967.

Related Rand research on political-military conditions in Latin America includes L. R. Einaudi and A. C. Stepan, *Latin American Institutional Development: Changing Military Perspectives in Peru and Brazil*, R-586-DOS, April 1971, and, on Colombia, Boris Kozolchyk's early study, *Legal Foundations of Military Life in Colombia*, RM-5172-PR, February 1967. Rand research on the Colombian economy during the 1960s led to a book by Richard R. Nelson, T. Paul Schultz, and Robert L. Slighton, *Structural Change in a Developing Economy: Colombia's Problems and Prospects*, Princeton University Press, 1971.



SUMMARY

COLOMBIA IS rare among Latin American countries in the length and bitterness of its civil strife. Guerrilla warfare, initiated by a variety of forces, has been an element of modern Colombian politics since the late 1940s, when rural partisans of the nation's two mass-follower parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, took up arms to settle political differences by violent means. Later, in the 1950s and 1960s, guerrilla activity continued as some members of the educated elite espoused development doctrines incorporating violent revolution. The shock waves of global East-West rivalries that have hit Colombia since the 1950s have also added to internecine strife.

This study seeks to elucidate simultaneously two important themes in Colombia's military institution and domestic politics: (1) the evolving internal security mission of the military in the 1960s and the techniques it has developed to counter insurgents, and (2) how the military's political roles have been affected by its norms of professional conduct and by the stresses of prolonged guerrilla warfare.

Since the creation of a modern military establishment in Colombia in 1904, military leaders have stressed professionalism, which would seem to require that the armed forces be nonpartisan in the nation's political contests. But the violence of Colombian politics has several times propelled the armed forces to the center of the political arena. And though military leaders have often attempted to remove the military from civil conflicts, a major portion of the responsibility for controlling the nation's political strife has devolved on that institution.

In the early 1950s the armed forces office corps supported a *coup d'état* led by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who thus hoped to

separate Liberal and Conservative antagonists engaged in a near civil war. Rojas' personalism soured this venture in military-led government, and the armed forces helped remove him from power in 1957. At that point, the formerly warring Liberal and Conservative parties joined formally in a political alliance, welcomed by the military, and established a system designed to eliminate the bitter political contests associated with electoral change. Their National Front governmental system, which continues under present law to 1974, requires the alternation of the presidency every four years between a Liberal and a Conservative and strict parity in the distribution of bureaucratic posts. In 1970, free competition in municipal council and departmental assembly elections initiated a gradual end to parity in Colombian legislative positions.

The National Front system eliminated the worst acrimony between the two largest parties but did not put an end to guerrilla activity, especially in certain rural areas. Politically related crimes continued in spite of the new alliance of Conservative and Liberal national leaders. Also, banditry and localized protest over social and economic conditions often replaced political motives as the causes of guerrilla activity.

The military gradually accommodated in a systematic way to the continuing task of providing for public order. In the long years of dealing with political and bandit violence, numerous armed forces officers acquired a sense of the main social and economic ills of the Colombian countryside. Toward the end of the 1950s, military theorists incorporated these insights into a concept of national defense that emphasized the need for economic development and social justice to enable the nation to defend itself against foreign and domestic enemies. In addition, counterinsurgent doctrines that included aiding civilian developmentalist efforts and new techniques to locate and destroy guerrilla bands grew in popularity. The advent of Castroism further spurred the Colombian military to intensify its counterinsurgent activities and to refine its rural operational doctrines. As a result, Plan Lazo was initiated in 1962. Under this civil-military strategy, the armed forces deployed nearly 70 percent of their troops in rural public order missions while engaging in ambitious programs of civic action, psychological warfare, and intelligence gathering. Militarily,

Plan Lazo appears to have been highly successful; the civic action program, however, has a more ambiguous record.

The development of the military's national defense outlook and internal security mission expanded the military's role in national decisionmaking. This in turn precipitated conflict between military leaders, such as Minister of War General Alberto Ruíz Novoa, and members of the civilian political elite. These tensions culminated in Ruíz's dismissal by President Guillermo Valencia in 1965 and a reduction in the scope of military counterinsurgent activities outside the strictly military sphere. The renewed emphasis on the military side of counterinsurgency coincided with an increase in the revolutionary and subversive character of the rural guerrillas.

The Colombian armed forces' prolonged involvement with insurgency problems has influenced their size and cost. Though these are not exceptional when compared in gross terms with other Latin American states, the Colombian military appears to spend proportionately more on army personnel and operations than do other Latin American states with sizable industrial establishments. Also, Colombia's navy is smaller than might be expected given the nation's long coastlines.

The development of Colombia's armed forces has been aided in important ways since 1952 by the United States Military Assistance Program (MAP). In the 1960s, Colombia was one of the first Latin American states to receive U.S. aid for internal security. That aid probably helped Colombia to avoid having to reduce investments in development in order to invest in security forces. The relative success of MAP in Colombia contrasts with tensions over similar MAP policies in Peru. The key variable seems to have been Colombia's greater receptivity to the expressed purposes of U.S. aid. Colombia's prior interest in internal defense dovetailed nicely with the MAP emphasis on internal security, while Peru's more conventional defense concepts conflicted with U.S. assessments of Latin American defense needs.

A favorable evaluation of MAP in Colombia depends ultimately on whether political, economic, or strictly military criteria are used. The program seems to have been most successful politically.

The record of economic achievement is more ambiguous partly because a sufficiently high level of funding was not sustained.

The conditions of guerrilla war in the 1960s have propelled the Colombian military into political positions that seem to run counter to their goal of *nonpartisan* professional excellence. By supporting the National Front against its insurgent opposition, the armed forces have implicitly endorsed its leaders as *the* legitimate political forces in Colombia. The partisan implications of this politicization have emerged in the current political debate. Ironically the most important opposition to the National Front in recent years has come not from the insurgent guerrillas of the left, of which the major groups are the Moscow-oriented FARC, the Havana-oriented ELN, and the Peking-oriented ELP, but from a populist nationalist movement led by former general and President Rojas Pinilla. The Rojas movement, ANAPO, has gained prominence, since its inception in 1960, by appealing mostly to urban social and economic protest sentiment. ANAPO competes in the election process (and in fact came close to winning the 1970 presidential election), but stands for the abrogation of the National Front and its sanction of Liberal and Conservative hegemony. ANAPO's success in the recent elections placed the armed forces in the uncomfortable position of watching the near-defeat of the political groups they had become committed to by a political leader they had helped unseat from power in the past. The potential for a military *coup d'état*, although dependent on many factors, increases as the fortunes of ANAPO or associated political instability rise.

This analysis of Colombian political-military history suggests the more general hypothesis that *where national political conflict is militarized or might well become so, the professionalization of the armed forces helps promote military involvement in partisan political matters*. In addition to improved fighting capabilities, military professionalism leads to concern for the origins of conflict and to the development of national security doctrines and social and economic perspectives that may serve as rationales for displacing faltering civilian governments. Professionalism thus does not always keep the military out of politics, as many theorizers of democratic government

have argued. Rather, under conditions of internal warfare, professionalism provides the armed forces with a strategic political good -- the capacity to influence fundamentally the outcome of internal political conflict -- and thereby promotes the partisan political involvement of the military.



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I am also indebted to Peter Morrison of Rand for advice on handling the data used in Tables 6, 7, and 8, and to Eve Savage and Geraldine Petty for their help in collecting and arranging those and other tabular data.

Naturally, responsibility for the arguments and conclusions remains mine.



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COLOMBIA -- POLITICAL DIVISIONS

1969

. . . I have always believed that the key to peace in Colombia lies in the military and police forces' not becoming partisan in favor of any political party. They [the military and police forces] are the tutelary entities of the Republic. . . .

-- Former President of Colombia Carlos Lleras Restrepo, in an obituary for General Ricardo Charry Solano, *El Espectador* (Bogotá), October 19, 1970.

. . . The mission of the Army is to protect the nation's frontiers, and this is now guaranteed by the OAS agreements. While at one time internal security made it necessary to have recourse to the Army, the idea was not then and is not now a good one. . . . It is time to think . . . about the complete abolition of the Ministry of Defense.

-- Antonio Panesso Robledo, a Liberal Party journalist, in his daily column in *El Espectador*, May 19, 1966.

I. PROFESSIONALISM, POLITICS, AND GUERRILLA WAR

WITH A LONG HISTORY of politically related guerrilla violence in Colombia, the armed forces could ill-afford being simply a parade ground force. Professionalism has been necessary as an institutional goal in order for the military to deal with the guerrillas. This study focuses on the concept of military professionalism as it relates to internal political violence in Colombia and as a factor in the Colombian military's political behavior.

A sizable body of literature exists on the various factors influencing the political behavior of military institutions. General and theoretical studies since the early 1960s, such as Samuel Finer's *The Man on Horseback* and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier*, have focused attention on the political ramifications of the social characteristics of military institutions,<sup>1</sup> including the social backgrounds and educational experience of officers. Other scholars, including Samuel Huntington, have stressed the importance of institutional factors, such as training and bureaucratic practice, and institutionalized norms such as military professionalism, as variables affecting the military's role in the political process.<sup>2</sup> These and other general works<sup>3</sup> have spawned more specialized treatments of the roles military institutions play in countries changing from basically agricultural to industrial economies, as are several Latin American countries including Colombia.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Finer, *The Man on Horseback* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962); Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Huntington, *Soldier and State* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1957).

<sup>3</sup>A valuable recent synthesis and source book is Jacques Van Doorn, *Armed Forces and Society* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).

<sup>4</sup>Some analysts of the military in Latin America have made the

The most pervasive theme in treatments of the Latin American military is that the military's political roles are conditioned simultaneously by structural changes within the society at large and within

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critical point that Latin American states ought not to be lumped automatically with numerous African, Middle Eastern, and Asian states simply because they are economically less developed relative to North America, Europe, and Japan. The key difference is the long tradition of political independence and the sociocultural autonomy of Latin American states. The militaries of most African and Asian states and some Middle Eastern states are not long removed from the era when decolonization created dramatically new political environments in which military organizations could exert themselves. Patterns of civil-military relations have only begun to stabilize in many of these states. In contrast, Latin American militaries, by and large, have long histories of both internal institutional development and structured relationships to other politically relevant social forces.

The importance of Latin America's longer-lived political institutions as a variable in the civil-military relations of economically less developed states is discussed, in U.S. academic research, in José Nun, "A Latin American Phenomenon: The Middle Class Military Coup," *Trends in Social Science Research in Latin American Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Berkeley Institute of International Studies, 1965), pp. 55-65, and Lyle N. McAlister, "Recent Research and Writing on the Role of the Military in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. II, No. 1, Fall 1966, especially pp. 13-16. More detailed case studies in English of civil-military political relations in Latin America are Luigi Einaudi, *The Peruvian Military: A Summary Political Analysis*, The Rand Corporation, RM-6048-RC, May 1969; Anthony Maingot, "Colombia: Civil-Military Relations in a Political Culture of Conflict" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1967); Lyle N. McAlister et al., *The Military in Latin American Socio-Political Evolution: Four Case Studies* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Research in Social Systems, 1970); Robert A. Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969); and Alfred C. Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), especially Parts I and II. Some of the best of the numerous historical, sociological, and bibliographic studies of Latin American military-political relations in Spanish are found in the periodicals *Aportes* (Paris), *Estudios Internacionales* (Santiago de Chile), *Nuevo Mundo* (Paris), and *Revista Latinoamericana de Sociología* (Buenos Aires). The political roles of African militaries are discussed in J. M. Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order* (New York: Praeger, 1969), and John J. Johnson, ed., *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962) contains useful contributions on civil-military relations in Asia. Middle Eastern civil-military relationships are described in J. C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension* (New York: Praeger, 1969) and Eliezer Be 'Eri, *Army Officers in Arab Politics and Society* (New York: Praeger and Pall Mall, 1970).

the armed forces themselves. More specifically, the political attitudes of Latin American military men seem to be greatly affected by (1) the professionalization of officer corps and the increasing recruitment of officers from the middle classes, (2) foreign influences, predominantly from the United States and Western Europe, on training and doctrine, and (3) the actual and potential roles of the military in economic modernization and social integration.<sup>5</sup>

The Colombian armed forces' political postures are undoubtedly influenced by all these factors. But among these, according to the most thoughtful analyses of the Colombian military available, what has had the most telling effect on the political behavior of the armed forces is their drive toward nonpartisan and professional officer and noncommissioned officer corps.<sup>6</sup>

With Colombia's history of extended periods of domestic political violence, nonpartisanship has become vital to the maintenance of military institutional and professional integrity. Thus the quest for professionalism has not been an abstract intellectual effort in Colombia, but has been necessitated by the nation's political history and the types and intensity of military action seen by Colombian soldiers. In Colombian military thinking professionalism means adherence to a code of ethics and a desire to preserve the autonomy and integrity of

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<sup>5</sup>McAlister, "Recent Research and Writing on the Role of the Military in Latin America," *passim*.

<sup>6</sup>Anthony Maingot, "Colombia," in McAlister et al., *The Military in Latin American Socio-Political Evolution*, abridging his doctoral dissertation, is the most thorough scholarly treatment of the history of Colombian armed forces published in English. Hereinafter it is referred to as "Colombia" (abridgment). The standard reference in Spanish is Tomás Rueda Vargas, *El ejército nacional* (Bogotá: Camacho Roldan, 1944). Two unpublished papers by Captain (USA) Juan Child, *Historia política del ejército colombiano, 1904-1958*, and *Vigencias militares colombianas 1904-1964*, both copyright 1967, are scholarly and rich with the insight of a military professional. The analysis in this section has benefited also from discussions in June 1967 with Captain Child, who was a U.S. Army Foreign Area Fellow studying in Bogotá in 1966-1967, and from correspondence in December 1970 with Lt. Col. John R. Shaffer, USA (Ret.), who was a U.S. Army Foreign Area Fellow studying in Bogotá in 1963-1965 before becoming an advisor to military and civilian agencies in Venezuela in 1965-1968.

the institution vis-à-vis other politically important social and bureaucratic groups. The Colombian spirit of professionalism involves the pursuit of honor, discipline, and technical proficiency, and since the early twentieth century has included a rejection of identification with the partisan interests of either of Colombia's two traditional political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives.

The history of efforts to create professional standards for the Colombian armed forces dates from the late nineteenth century. Effective professionalization really began, however, with the *reforma militar* of 1904, when President Rafael Reyes reorganized the military to depoliticize it. Prior to 1904, the army had frequently been involved as one of the military forces in civil conflicts. The War of a Thousand Days, a civil war between Liberals and Conservatives at the turn of the century resulting in more than 100,000 deaths, had oriented the officer corps towards the winning Conservative side. In order to lower the potential for renewed hostilities, Reyes, himself a leading military caudillo within the Conservative Party, decreed the reorganization of the army and championed the adoption of European standards of professional discipline and technical skill. These standards emphasized service to a more abstract national purpose (or "The Fatherland") and the study of classical European theory and field tactics.<sup>7</sup> Thus the drive toward high professional standards included the expressly political purpose of removing the military from politics and neutralizing the army as a political force by turning its attention to foreign military doctrines and strategy.

The attempt to professionalize the officer corps has served social purposes as well. Military men have seen in professionalism a way to raise the social prestige of their profession in Colombia.<sup>8</sup> From

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<sup>7</sup>Child, *Vigencias militares colombianas*, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Maingot argues that the military profession is held in relatively low esteem in Colombia. Citing a survey he conducted with James Payne and Mauricio Solaun among university students in 1965, he notes that the occupation of army officer was ranked nineteenth in prestige among 31 occupations, and nearly 70 percent of the student sample thought that the military had enough or should have even less social prestige accorded it. Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), pp. 169-171. Maingot's conclusions should be treated with caution, however, because

the perspective of its advocates, the attributes of professionalism are prerequisites for being taken seriously in Colombian society.

The political and social purposes of professionalism, however, are not all that defines the outlook or determines the political behavior of the Colombian armed forces. The military has been fighting guerrillas since the end of the 1940s, with military activity varying in intensity.<sup>9</sup> Yet, while the tactics of the guerrillas have remained similar, their composition and political relationships have changed. Experience in combatting complex guerrilla-insurgent organizations over the last two decades has heavily affected the political outlook of military officers and the roles the armed forces play in Colombian public life. The nature and extent of guerrilla warfare in Colombia, in effect, has interacted with the notion of professionalism as it has developed since 1904, especially in providing a prolonged test of professionalism's components--honor, discipline, technical skill, and aloofness from partisan interests--*in a process that is essentially political*. The qualities of military professionalism, despite their original nonpartisan political and social purposes, seem to enhance the importance of the Colombian military for political conflict, so long as that conflict tends toward widespread and systematic violence.

The Colombian military's political experiences hold considerable relevance for more general theories of civil-military relations. Analysis of these experiences suggests the following hypotheses.

1. The military's professionalism may be independent of nonpartisan behavior in political affairs, with the latter quality depending in large measure on the extent of consensus in the political system.

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a sample of Colombian students may show a special bias against the military. This bias might have been especially strong in Colombia during 1965, when the army was on a campaign against a student-connected insurgent group, the ELN.

<sup>9</sup>Since the late 1950s, counterinsurgency in the Colombian military has included four activities: military intelligence; military civic action; psychological warfare; and counter guerrilla operations (repression). In everyday language, the Spanish terms *contra guerrilla* and *contrainsurgencia* are often used synonymously. But as later sections will show, military theorists in Colombia generally distinguish between the two terms.

2. Where political consensus breaks down to the point that violent partisan conflict becomes endemic, the armed forces are likely to become partisan political actors even while increasing their level of military professionalism.
3. Under conditions of internal war, not only does the professionalization of the military not impede its partisan involvement in the polity, but professionalism may in fact promote the involvement of the armed forces in partisan political affairs.

In addition to suggesting these hypotheses, this analysis seeks answers to two other general questions:

1. How does the nature of the internal enemy affect the military's partisan and nonpartisan roles?
2. In what ways does professionalism affect the military's conduct in waging war against violent groups in its own society?

The following sections address these questions and hypotheses by examining the nature of insurgency in Colombia, the missions, strategy, and certain institutional characteristics of the Colombian military under the impact of prolonged guerrilla warfare.

## II. INSURGENCY IN COLOMBIA

INSURGENCIES in Colombia, since the mid-twentieth century, have been carried out by organizations that have varied origins, purposes, and social characteristics. A rather complex set of groups has been involved in violent political protest or attempts to seize power. Colombian governments and other political participants have responded to these challenges in equally varied ways. This reflects not only the different ideological characteristics of Colombian governments since 1946, but also the government's varying perception of the composition and motivation of the guerrillas.

As a contemporary form of political action, insurgency in Colombia has been most affected by the historical use of violence in the competition between Colombia's two political parties with large mass followings, the Liberals and the Conservatives. Lesser but still notable influences on the character of contemporary insurgency have come from ideological disputes related to Colombia's efforts to speed industrialization and to promote modern agriculture and from the effects of economic modernization themselves. In addition, the strategic interests of the United States, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and China have both affected the government's dealings with, and have given rise to, guerrilla insurgent groups.

### Traditional Violence

Violence between the Liberals and Conservatives dates from the time these parties were formed in the mid-nineteenth century as warring

sectors of the post-colonial social elite. This elite was divided, as most Latin American elites were, between anti-clerical rationalists and pro-clerical defenders of Church prerogatives, which became Liberals and Conservatives, respectively. Local as opposed to central control of political patronage and economic favor also became an issue in the Liberal-Conservative struggles, although advocacy of centralism or federalism shifted from party to party over time.

The several major and numerous minor civil wars during the last half of the nineteenth century extended partisan identification to peasants and lower-class town dwellers recruited or impressed into the Liberal and Conservative militias or under the control of politicized local leaders. By the end of the nineteenth century, violence between Colombia's two dominant political parties had acquired regular patterns, with definitions for victory and defeat and with conditions stipulated for armistice and limited interparty cooperation.

Throughout these civil wars, the prime goal was control of the presidency. After 1886, when the Conservatives imposed a centralized political system in Colombia, the strategic importance of the presidency increased. Because government was centralized, the president could make appointments to all the crucial administrative posts at the national, departmental, and local levels. Nearly total political patronage, up to the mid-twentieth century, gave tremendous economic and social-status rewards to the victors in the struggle for the presidency.<sup>10</sup>

Colombia experienced forty-five years of relative but uneasy peace between Liberals and Conservatives, starting in 1902, after the Conservatives emerged victorious from a three-year civil war. But politically motivated violence again emerged as a consequence of the 1946 presidential and congressional elections. In brief, the majoritarian Liberals--who had won the presidency because of divisions in Conservative ranks in 1930 and then had retained control of the executive

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<sup>10</sup>For a valuable (and controversial) attempt to explain Colombian political conflict in terms of the pursuit of public and private status, see James Payne, *Patterns of Conflict in Colombia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

for sixteen years--divided in 1946 into two factions. The Conservatives, united behind a single presidential candidate, were able to win the presidency with a plurality.

As Conservative *alcaldes* (mayors) replaced Liberals in local government, violent altercations broke out in several departments between followers of the two parties. The scale of attack and counterattack by Liberal and Conservative civilians, as well as police intervention on the side of the Conservatives, increased after the 1947 congressional election and set the mood for the Bogotá riot of April 1948. Violence against Liberals became even more vicious after the 1949 Conservative presidential victory. By 1950, Liberal guerrilla squads were operating in the Llanos (plains east of the Andes) and elsewhere to retaliate against Conservative farms and villages.

It is estimated that 20,000 men bore arms in the Liberal guerrilla formations between 1949 and 1953. In some areas the Moscow-oriented Colombian Communist Party (CCP) attempted to organize these Liberal groups, as well as its own members, for guerrilla warfare, thus bringing an additional ideological dimension to the political violence of the period. Conservative civilians also organized armed groups to defend against Liberal marauders, or, in many cases, simply to attack Liberals.

Many of these Liberal and Conservative irregulars have retired, taking advantage of amnesties offered by national governments since 1953. Others, however, did not retire from the violent life. Numerous individuals and groups drifted into banditry after 1953, surviving up to the present in the difficult terrain of a communications-poor country. Some of these established virtually autonomous regions, occasionally maintaining *sub-rosa* political relationships with major figures of the legitimate government and opposition involving the trade of votes, hatchet jobs, and influence.

In 1958 the main factions of the Liberal and Conservative parties joined in initiating the current National Front arrangement by amending the constitution to alternate the presidency every four years between a Liberal and a Conservative and to share equally all bureaucratic and legislative posts. The constitutional provisions creating presidential alternation and bureaucratic parity, which continue in effect

through 1974, are primarily an effort to curb partisan violence and its consequences in national political life. Thus, it has been only thirteen years since the National Front constitutional amendments have, in Solomonic fashion, divided the spoils of the national executive equally and exclusively between the Liberals and Conservatives and instituted a nonpartisan civil service.

The National Front has largely checked interparty electoral violence but has not eliminated all the forces that participated in it in the preceding decades. Of the estimated 129 guerrilla and bandit groups active since an intensification of political violence in 1949, 47 (33 percent) still existed in 1963, and 22 (13.8 percent) were considered to be actively engaged in some form of illegal and violent activity.<sup>11</sup> Between the establishment of the National Front government and the appearance in 1964 of a left revolutionary insurgent movement involving participants in the Liberal-Conservative violence, there were approximately 1108 incidents of violence suspected to have some relationship to the Liberal-Conservative feud of a few years before.

Some of the guerrillas active in portions of Cundinamarca, Tolima, Huila, Caldas, Valle, Cauca, and Quindío Departments, and engaging in banditry, the exercise of squatters' rights, and local empire-building, came under the tutelage and financial support of the CCP. This relationship stabilized, roughly in 1964, with the formation of the Southern Guerrilla Bloc, a revolutionary insurgent movement, which, while aided by the CCP, was directed in the field by guerrillas active in the previous period of Liberal-Conservative violence. In mid-1966 the Southern Guerrilla Bloc became the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (FARC), one of the three major guerrilla insurgent groups currently operating in Colombia.

A number of factors weigh against a recurrence of widespread violence between rural supporters of the Liberal and Conservative parties. The endurance of the National Front testifies to its

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<sup>11</sup>These data are elaborations of information appearing in German Guzmán, Orlando Fals Borda, and Eduardo Umaña Luna, *La violencia en Colombia* (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1964), Vol. II, Part III.

effectiveness as a mechanism for reducing interparty violence to a point where it does not threaten the ongoing governing process. However, though Liberal-Conservative violence may be dormant, there are indications -- especially during election periods -- that this form of political violence may flare up again. Partisan identification still serves as a motive or pretext for violence. Furthermore, national leaders do not always exercise close control over grass-roots caudillos, whose quasi-ideological followers sometimes act in violent disregard of national party directives.

In short, partisan violence between Colombia's two traditional parties has generated a good portion of those guerrillas and bandits active as FARC insurgents. The use of violence has also established a precedent for the use of guerrilla tactics, which the traditional parties themselves initiated and could return to under certain circumstances.

The main effect of traditional party violence on the Colombian military has been to orient the armed forces to an internal security mission. Consciousness of that mission antedates the interest in counterinsurgency that developed in other countries after the advent of Fidel Castro and the intensification of the war in Vietnam.

Colombia's peculiar constitutional arrangements for absolute parity in representation between Liberal and Conservative candidates, generated in the painful national experience of partisan civil violence, persist even though all elections for legislative bodies since 1958 have shown that the Liberals are the majority party nationally and, most important, that the political contenders include not only Liberals and Conservatives but other potential parties as well.<sup>12</sup>

This constitutional constraint on organized political activity raises the question whether the Conservative and Liberal parties are perceived by Colombians to have legitimate ideological and leadership capabilities for an industrializing society. Elements of Colombia's

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<sup>12</sup>Until 1970, the National Front system required all candidates for national and local legislative office to campaign as registered Liberals or Conservatives in order to hold office. This restriction was lifted for local and departmental elections in 1970.

educated and economically advantaged classes, sensitive to the impact of modern technology, claim that they do not. And the intellectual justification for this claim serves as an argument for revolutionary and insurgent politics.

#### Insurgency and the Political Urgency of Economic Development

It is clear enough from the commonly referred to indicators of industrial growth that the partisan violence of 1946 and 1953 did not deter progress toward major industrial development. Until thirty years ago, Colombian society was overwhelmingly agricultural and pastoral, but in the late 1940s and 1950s, significant changes took place in the method of generating and distributing wealth. In effect, an industrial sector grew from infancy to robust youth, especially during the last violent confrontation between the Liberals and Conservatives during the 1950s. In turn, this industrialization provided a new basis upon which to reconstitute the rules of the traditional political game.

An important and unintended consequence of the Liberal-Conservative violence of that period was the creation of a new political climate in which promises to satisfy mass consumer demand could be used to challenge seriously the two traditional parties' domination of political allegiance. Today, appeals for popular support by promises to raise the urban standard of living have come to have as much weight as those relying merely on traditional party symbols and personalities.

This process of political change was greatly accelerated by an armed forces *coup d'état* in June 1953, which led to an attempt to separate Liberal and Conservative antagonists. The new government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, leader of the *coup*, needed to survive in the traditional two-party political environment. Heretofore, only the Liberals and Conservatives had had mass popular allegiance, and they had provided the sole legitimate source of national leaders. The strategy Rojas employed to compensate for the strength of the two parties and to legitimize his regime was to favor expanding urban

working and lower-middle classes in his rhetoric and governmental programs. Rojas' model for realizing his political goals was the contemporary Perón regime in Argentina.

Rojas was able to bring some short-range benefits to his new clientele. But when a foreign exchange crisis crippled his largess, Rojas' popular support dissipated and his Liberal-Conservative opposition mounted a successful coalition effort to topple him in May 1957. Rojas, nevertheless, was the first president to advocate government-promoted industrial development and social welfare as a political strategy at a time when a significant urban clientele in fact existed.<sup>13</sup> His motivation seems to have been much less ideological than that of contemporary reformists in the Liberal Party and more the product of populist feeling and personal political necessity.

Regardless of its motivation, however, the Rojas regime accelerated the shift toward social and economic issues in national debate. Both major parties and all subsequent Colombian governments have had to devote considerable resources to "revolution," defined as hastening the social and economic benefits of industrialization. Rapid economic modernization--not necessarily of an egalitarian and democratic nature--has become a major goal of the political process for a fair portion of the national political elite as well as for other national elites such as big business, university students, and scientifically oriented professionals. Politics has moved away from the simple distribution of fixed assets--political patronage and personal status rewards emanating from the presidency and financially rewarding legislative posts--towards economic development and the purposeful redistribution of wealth--expansion of industry and scientific agriculture and increased access for more social classes to the material and social benefits thus gained. This shift in emphasis among the major political

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<sup>13</sup> Colombia's first modern social welfare-oriented government, led by Liberal President Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-1938) faced a much less urbanized nation. The 1938 census showed 11.3 percent of the nation's population in cities of over 20,000. The 1951 census, in contrast, found 20.4 percent in cities of over 20,000 and showed a marked tendency toward the concentration of urban dwellers in Colombia's four largest cities.

issues has made the political strategy and tactics of rapid socio-economic transformation the most important elements of the national political process.

Since the demise of the Rojas government, competing developmental models, some promising rationalistic, radical, and rapid steps to industrialization, greater national wealth, and social justice, have come into vogue. In both traditional political parties, for example, one finds adherents of West European capitalism, where the public sector has major investment, planning, and regulatory roles. This is especially true among those politicians and professionals closely allied with Colombia's recent Liberal President, Carlos Lleras Restrepo. Much further to the left, but still part of the intellectual tradition seeking to apply a rationalistic theory of socioeconomic transformation to Colombian society, are orthodox Marxist-Leninists and the more radical and eclectic proponents of a Cuban-style revolution, found mainly among students and parts of the urban intelligentsia.

The most important point of political analysis made by proponents of a Cuban-style revolution in Colombia is that true socioeconomic revolution can only begin by a violent break with the existing corrupt and corrupting political process. A complete break is achieved through the purifying violent conquest of political power by a self-conscious, goal-oriented revolutionary group. Such a group, with national political power in hand, can then proceed towards rapid and egalitarian economic development. In contrast to revolutionary experiences in Algeria, Vietnam, and China, this strategy for revolution emphasizes the heroic, or violent, aspects of the struggle, rather than deliberate administrative preparation by a revolutionary party before attempting to seize power by force. The *guerrilla*, or operational fighting group, and the potential revolutionary leadership are combined, theoretically at least, in the same man or basic group.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>In contrast, modern professional soldiers have rejected this explicit combination of military and political roles until quite recently. Military governments in Greece, Brazil, Peru, and Argentina, however, indicate that military activities and politics are not always separated.

The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), organized in 1963-1964, has sought to be this kind of insurgent group in Colombia. Originally, the ELN was basically a student organization that used isolated jungle and mountain areas in northern Colombia as a Colombian Sierra Maestra. Later, however, it was joined by some local peasants and outlaws, who, in swelling the ranks of the ELN, have also increased the organization's ideological and class diversity.

Big-Power Conflict, Soviet-Cuban-Chinese Rivalries,  
and Colombian Guerrillas

To the overlapping effects of partisan violence between Liberals and Conservatives and the political urgency of socioeconomic change has been added another factor in the causes of current insurgency in Colombia. In the late 1950s and the early 1960s, Colombia's economic and political situation presented what seemed to be ripe opportunities for would-be external sponsors of revolution along Marxist-Leninist lines: the national economy had both developed and underdeveloped sectors, and the distribution of wealth was highly unequal within both modern and traditional economic communities. The nation's internecine political strife had spawned a class of men who lived by the gun, which offered a reservoir of recruits for future political efforts requiring violence.

Moreover, Colombian ideologues of socioeconomic change often looked to and had contact with the Soviet Union, China, and the United States, and after 1959, with Cuba and other centers of new political thought. The existence of Colombian reformers and revolutionaries allowed each of the major exporters of revolutionary and reformist views to cultivate local political forces and to use them, often as proxies, in their own global rivalries.

The advent of Fidel Castro and the beginning of Soviet support for national liberation movements gave Colombian guerrillas and advocates of revolution unprecedented opportunities for material and moral support from outside sources. The revolutionary movements of

the left probably had the motivation and capability to develop on their own, but there is substantial evidence that Cuba and the Soviet Union have made financial contributions and have given advice to them. Although the aid relationships have not always been clear, especially in the mid-1960s, it seems that Cuban aid has concentrated on the ELN, and Soviet aid has gone mainly to the FARC. Less conclusive evidence exists for Chinese Communist support of Colombia's third major insurgent group, the Ejército de Liberación Popular (ELP).

The effectiveness of this aid for revolution appears to have been limited, and even when the aid was greatest, between 1963 and 1968, it may never have reached a level of major military significance. In aiding the FARC, the Soviets may have hoped merely to keep alive an insurgent option rather than to enable a meaningful revolutionary offensive. It is also possible that neither the FARC nor the ELN had the capacity to absorb the type of aid necessary to wage effective revolutionary war.

In its turn, the United States stepped up counterinsurgent aid to the National Front governments, beginning in 1961, to offset the real and assumed effects of the external support for leftist revolution.

#### The Insurgents of the 1960s: The FARC, the ELN and the ELP

Through the 1960s Colombia has known various revolutionary insurgent groups. The FARC, the ELN, and the ELP have survived the longest. Although efforts seem to have been made from time to time to unite these forces in a single revolutionary front, important differences between them have prevented their unification.

Each of the insurgent movements tends to be geographically and sociologically distinct. And each seems to have a different principal foreign source of aid and encouragement. In addition, each has a somewhat different political strategy in spite of their common use of rural guerrilla tactics.

The FARC is rooted in Colombia's south-central departments and originally comprised both noncommunist and communist peasant guerrillas and bandits, many with backgrounds in the earlier Liberal-Conservative

conflict. It started out as a confederation of bands in nominal or real control of isolated rural areas. Only after two years of intensive work by Communist Party agents did the FARC come together under a single command in the field and speak with a single, Colombian Communist Party-oriented voice in national politics. The FARC did not publicly announce a political-military plan for conquering national power until 1966.

As a national political force the FARC seems most responsive to the CCP and the interests of the Soviet Union in Colombia. Thus, after the Soviets established diplomatic relations with Colombia in January 1968, the intensity of guerrilla activity by some FARC units sharply diminished. The FARC's 1966 formula for the conquest of power was shelved in favor of a more defensive strategy as the CCP began to advocate "two simultaneous roads to socialism" -- mass popular agitation and electoral participation nationally, and armed defense of guerrilla enclaves and units locally.

Nevertheless, the FARC has not disappeared. Though it is possible that the CCP and the Soviets want to keep it on ice for future use, the now looser-knit organization may be reasserting its independence from Moscow in engaging in sporadic banditry and peasant protest.

The FARC's birth was facilitated by the localized social, economic, and political disruption caused by partisan violence in the 1940s and 1950s. With the CCP now hedging on its support for armed struggle to achieve a Marxist-Leninist revolution, the FARC seems to have revived its original local political and economic motives alongside those of revolution.

In contrast to the FARC, the ELN has always been more consciously oriented towards national politics. Its pronouncements have generally related to national rather than local goals. As in the case of the Cuban revolutionary movement, its military leaders have also been its political spokesmen. Regular CCP members have not been prominent as ELN members. The ELN's social base has been predominantly students and other urban lower-middle- to upper-middle-class advocates of a revolutionary scheme similar to Cuba's. The ELN has attracted some rural followers, but only a few men with experience in previous Liberal-Conservative battles have joined its ranks.

Geographically, the ELN has operated mainly in rural regions of the northern departments of Santander, Antioquia, and Bolivar, although it has urban logistical units in other regions. This regional focus owes partly to the ELN's origin in university strikes in the capital of Santander.

The ELN early developed important links to Cuba. Prior to 1968, when Cuba was most active in its aid program for Latin American revolutionary movements, the ELN received money and training from the Cubans. When Havana attempted to organize its own "International" of revolutionary groups at conferences in 1966 and 1967, the ELN was the insurgent organization from Colombia that Cuba favored.

Attempts to unite the ELN and the FARC prior to 1968 floundered in part because these insurgent groups looked to different external sources of aid, which tended to act as rivals for influence over Latin American radical groups. Another hindrance to unification was that the ELN has been a northern group composed largely of urban radicals who are not Communist Party members, while the FARC has been more southern, peasant, and CCP-influenced.

Following a number of severe reverses in 1967, the ELN has disintegrated into rival, and sometimes warring, factions that reflect personality and ideological differences. Thus, though the ELN began as a much more coherent national political group than the FARC, several hard years of action have shaken the ideological faith of some of its members and have hastened the breakup of the ELN into autonomous groups similar to the remnants of the FARC.

Much less is known about the ELP than either the FARC or the ELN. A more recent organization, it first attracted attention in 1967. The ELP's area of operations includes portions of Antioquia and Cordoba, where problems of land title dispute and physical isolation from the rest of Colombia provide seedbeds for revolutionary activity. Chinese Communist interest in the ELP is evidenced by the attention paid to ELP exploits on Radio Peking. In addition, China-oriented dissidents who broke away from the CCP in 1965 are rumored to have contacted old colleagues and remnant guerrillas from the Liberal-Conservative feuds to organize a China-oriented anti-Moscow guerrilla

front. Along with these interpretations of ELP activity have come suggestions that banditry, squatters' rights, and resentment over poor agricultural working conditions and wages are also at play. Like the other major insurgent groups, the ELP is geographically confined, in fact even more so than the other two.

As a political force, the ELP seems to combine characteristics of both the ELN and the FARC. Its leadership, because of its supposed link to Communist China and genesis in a CCP schism in 1965, may be highly ideological and attuned to the rivalry of Cuba, the Soviet Union and China for leadership of Third World revolutionary movements, like the ELN. On the other hand, the relationship between leaders and followers may resemble that of the FARC, where a local rather than national perspective on guerrilla activity is primary.

These three insurgent groups form the political-military opposition to Colombia's National Front governments and the political, economic, and social forces that sustain them. Although the guerrilla insurgents in the FARC, ELN, and ELP have posed little threat to the conduct of political and economic life in Colombia, their very existence as an organized, irritating, and potentially dangerous enemy has placed the armed forces on a war footing for a prolonged period.

The analysis now turns to an examination of the development of the Colombian military's internal defense mission and its civil-military strategies under such conditions of prolonged, political internal conflict.

III. THE IMPACT OF PROLONGED GUERRILLA WARFARE ON THE  
MILITARY'S DOCTRINES OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

Development of the Armed Forces'  
National Defense Missions

THE ARMED FORCES have gone through three phases in their effort to defend the Colombian state from armed enemies, abroad as well as within. In the first, starting with the reorganization of the armed forces under the *reforma militar* of 1904 and continuing for thirty years, European models of military organization and defense preparation served as the guide. President Rafael Reyes initiated this Europeanization less to prepare the military for war than to reduce the national army's involvement in partisan politics.

Not only did President Reyes seek to depoliticize the army in 1904 by giving the officer corps European professional norms, but he also occupied them in public works projects. The political objective of this early venture in military civic action was twofold. First, it was supposed to give the army a national as opposed to a partisan purpose.<sup>15</sup> Second, it was imperative after the War of a Thousand Days to repair Colombia's war-ravaged economy. The dispatch of army units on public works projects was an integral, if minor, element in Reyes' economic rehabilitation and development effort.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>This could be seen, for example, in Reyes' farewell to the infantry and artillery troops leaving for work on roads and bridges in January 1905. After issuing them tools to replace their weapons, Reyes told the troops, "Go with tranquil and satisfied hearts because you go not to kill brothers [as in the destructive Liberal-Conservative civil war ended in 1902] but to irrigate the country's workfields with your sweat." Child, *Historia política del ejército colombiano*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup>In his economic policy, Reyes sought to stimulate investment in Colombian industries by adopting protective tariffs. As a consequence,

Reyes' professionalization of the officer corps was formally initiated in mid-1907, with the arrival of a Prussian-trained Chilean mission to staff the Escuela Militar, the army's cadet school. This three-man mission made the study of European wars and, to a lesser degree, wars for Latin American independence the basic material for military science in Colombia. Its members also wrote plans and regulations for the different branches of the army. A second Chilean mission, arriving in 1909 and staying for two years, organized the Escuela Superior de Guerra (Higher War School), thus establishing the precedent of continuing professional education as part of military career advancement.<sup>17</sup>

Reyes was forced out of the presidency in 1909, but the *reforma militar* survived his demise and took hold despite attempts to scuttle it by older officers with civil war experience. In Child's view, the Colombian style of officer professionalization produced an introspective army, its military concepts quite isolated from the social, economic, and political realities of Colombia. Because of this isolation, the army remained relatively stable in size (five to six thousand men) for 20 years after Reyes' ouster, and its public importance and proportion of the national budget declined.<sup>18</sup> The army did seem to be removed from Liberal and Conservative conflicts, thus superficially assuming

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consumer-oriented industries such as food processing and textile production were founded to provide substitutes for previously imported goods. To provide for political harmony, Reyes closed the regular Congress; handpicked a constituent assembly, which, in 1905, issued a legislative act guaranteeing political minorities elected representation; and brought important members of the defeated Liberal Party into government service. A son of General Rafael Uribe Uribe, the leading Liberal military and political leader, even entered the Escuela Militar. Useful accounts of Reyes' presidency are included in Milton Puentes, *Historia del partido liberal* (Bogotá: Editorial Prag, 1961) and Eduardo Santa, *Rafael Uribe Uribe* (Bogotá: Editorial Iqueima, 1962).

<sup>17</sup>Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), p. 150. Chile's earlier importation of Prussian advisors gave its armed forces a reputation for discipline and a scientific approach to warfare.

<sup>18</sup>Child, *Vigencias militares colombianas*, p. 4. According to data reported in Colombia's *Anuario general de estadística*, the military portion of the national budget declined from 7.4 to 6.4 percent between 1924 and 1928.

the nonpartisan character Reyes had sought to give it. But the officer corps, like the governments of the two decades following Reyes, was predominantly and consciously Conservative in political affiliation.

Preoccupation with European strategic theories and tactics came to an abrupt end when war broke out between Colombia and Peru in 1932 over control of the rubber-rich Amazon-Putumayo River region along their sparsely populated common border. A new national defense outlook rapidly developed, and the territorial defense doctrines that resulted from the Peruvian conflict held sway until the 1940s, leaving their mark even to the present.

The confrontation with Peru was initially disastrous for Colombia's armed forces. Although the army had its professionally trained officer corps as a nucleus for a war-fighting force, military professionalism did not seem to have prepared the army for battle in the jungle of its nation's own backlands. The lack of plans, logistical facilities, and previous maneuvers in the inhospitable Amazon region created incredible hardships, especially for the recruits who had swelled the army's ranks in a flush of romanticized patriotism.<sup>19</sup> The norm of professional military service to the nation appears to have been strong enough, however, that partisan and class differences still existing among officers and men failed to impair seriously the armed forces' military mission.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> One of the most fascinating documents of the interplay of partisan politics, army professional norms, and the demands of the Peruvian war on the army as an institution can be found in Jorge Tobón Restrepo, *Sur* (Medellín: Martel, 1965). In recounting his personal war experiences, the author describes the wave of patriotism that gripped the urban population and the importance of class and party identification in the selection of noncommissioned officers for the expanded army. Tobón was a sales representative of lower-middle-class status when the war began. During his 12 months of active service he was promoted to sergeant. After discharge, Tobón entered the National Police, serving as an inspector (a politically appointive post) in Liberal Party-dominated areas of Santander. Tobón recounted much of the detail given in *Sur* in a personal interview with the author in Medellín, May 1966, where Tobón acted as party organizer for the MRL faction of the Liberal Party.

<sup>20</sup> Child, *Vigencias militares colombianas*, p. 5.

Aided by favorable diplomatic maneuvering, perseverance, and the ineptness of Peru's armed forces, the Colombian army ultimately managed to protect Colombia's territorial interests successfully. The armed forces emerged at the war's end in 1934 a strengthened institution. For example, the officer corps was enriched by the return to active service of several competent men trained by the Chilean and Swiss missions and by the enhanced popularity of the Escuela Militar among families of higher social standing.<sup>21</sup> Many of the most capable leaders of the army during the politically troubled 1950s and 1960s were in fact recruited into the army at the time of the difficulties with Peru.<sup>22</sup>

The war altered the Colombian military's defense postures. It validated the views of officers in military intellectual circles who advocated a nationalist concept of the institution and who opposed both the extreme Europeanists as well as those favoring military involvement in partisan issues. Field experience in the Amazon and Putumayo jungles revealed failings in defense preparations and forced the army to reorient its training, logistical needs, and deployment to accord more with Colombian realities. European theories faded into the background as Colombian military men found their own experiences important for military science. The armed forces gradually shed their European tutors. The Swiss left in 1934, and German pilots were eased out of influence in civil and military aviation by the end of the 1930s. In 1940 the Colombian government accepted a military mission from the United States. (The French also sent a mission in 1940, but it was short-lived.) With its own war experience as recent reference, the Colombian army was in a relatively good position to assume the defense of its own borders and to consider participating in the defense of the Panama Canal.

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<sup>21</sup>Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), p. 156. Careers in the armed forces are still common for some prestigious Colombian families, and certain surnames appear with regularity in military leadership circles.

<sup>22</sup>For example, former Ministers of National Defense, Generals Alberto Ruiz Novoa and Gerardo Ayerbe Chaux, the most significant military leaders of the 1960s.

The Peruvian war affected civil-military relations into the late thirties and early forties. With the army so recently involved in the defense of the nation's interests, the civilian governments, led by Liberals after 1930, could not ignore the armed forces' demands for budgetary resources. Border defense, for example, was not only recognized as the primary mission of the army but was also provided for by budgetary support from the government.<sup>23</sup>

As the military gained in popular prestige and increased visibility, army leaders were able to assert themselves more successfully in the protection of their institutional interests. Thus, indirectly the war made the armed forces a bigger factor in national politics, although less so as a partisan group than as a public bureaucracy with its own definition of national interests.

After hostilities with Peru ended, the expanded armed forces, with their larger share of the national budget, became an object of political controversy. To many Liberal leaders during the 1930s the armed forces still represented a hostile partisan force. When Liberal President Alfonso López Pumarejo was elected in 1934, relations between civilian leaders in the Liberal Party and the officer corps deteriorated sharply. López ordered the war-inflated army to colonize distant frontiers, probably with the intention of absorbing the armed forces' energies and applying their newly acquired command of human and material resources to socioeconomic development. Many officers considered this call to farming inappropriate for a recently successful professional military force. Some may have suspected, given López's thinly veiled antipathy to the basically Conservative officer corps, that the colonization scheme was merely an excuse to reduce the new importance of the military.

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<sup>23</sup>The military budget increased greatly as a consequence of the Peruvian conflict, and its portion of the national budget rose from 6.9 percent in 1930 to 32.5 percent in 1934. In 1938, four years after hostilities ceased, the military claimed 15.2 percent of the national budget as compared with 6.4 percent ten years earlier. That increased military expenditures took a politico-economic toll is suggested by the fact that the portion of the national budget dedicated to public works, a major form of political favor, fell from 53.9 percent in 1928 to 10.6 percent in 1934. Data derived from *Anuario general de estadística*, 1924-1938.

Relations between the Liberal President and certain Conservative military officers worsened to the point that several officers organized an unsuccessful conspiracy against López in 1936. The coolness of relations between Liberal Party politicians and the armed forces continued in the administration of another Liberal President, Eduardo Santos, elected in 1938.

Santos, like many Liberals of his generation, was sympathetic to the regime of Franklin Roosevelt and was eager to give Colombia a pro-democratic international position in the event of war in Europe. He also wanted to avoid a repetition of the affair between López and the conspiring army officers. Santos' tactic for lowering tensions between Liberal politicians and the military was to demonstrate his interest in the military's technical proficiency and professional stature.

When the possibility of a United States mission arose as part of U.S. efforts to organize Western Hemisphere defenses, Santos found a way to de-fuse the army's potential disruption of civilian party politics. The new foreign mission, which came to Colombia in 1940, offered useful military advice and training. By thus cultivating the armed forces' interest in improving professional skills, Santos warmed relations with the military and simultaneously moved the armed forces toward the pro-democratic international stance favored by the Liberals.

Nevertheless, military-civil relations worsened with the reelection of Alfonso López to the presidency in 1942. López was again the target of an unsuccessful military coup in July 1944. According to Child's analysis, based on interviews with several participants, the conspiracy involved collusion between military officers and Conservative Party leaders. The failure of the coup rested in part on the resistance of a portion of the officer corps to an increased partisan political role for the military. Apparently there was fear that the removal of the President would precipitate a violent reaction by López's civilian following that would impair the military's ability to function under world war conditions. Liberal leaders were quick to characterize the coup as a conspiracy of individuals while lauding the military's professional attitude and rejection of political intrigue.<sup>24</sup> It appears, then,

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<sup>24</sup>Child, *Historia política del ejército colombiano*, pp. 16-19.

that the increasing use and validation of professional standards of conduct, combined with threatening international affairs in the 1930s and 1940s, served to deter the military from acting as an instrument of the Conservative Party, in spite of the predominant Conservative affiliation of the officer corps.

The armed forces' carefully nurtured nonpartisan professionalism was severely tested, however, by the outbreak of violence between some rural civilian followers of the Liberal and Conservative Parties after the 1946 presidential election. This violence eventually led to the military's again changing its defense orientation. In this third phase, which continues today, the military considers its primary mission the maintenance of internal public order.

For several months following the election of Conservative Mariano Ospina Pérez in 1946, violence remained essentially a police problem. But as preparations for the 1947 congressional elections began, the number and intensity of attacks by partisans against each other increasingly drew the National Police into the center of the political arena. In many areas the police were unable to protect lives and property; in others they aided Conservative persecution of Liberals.<sup>25</sup>

As matters worsened in the rural regions of several departments, army men were called upon to be the *alcaldes* of numerous *municipios*. According to the war minister's annual report to Congress in mid-July 1946, nearly a quarter of Colombia's *municipios* were governed by military men.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>The National Police, under the direction of the Minister of Government in this period, were highly subject to political influence by Liberal as well as Conservative governments. For example, earlier in the 1940s, Liberal President López bolstered its forces and equipment as a means of countering the Conservative-dominated army. In addition to being directed by the highly political Ministry of Government, the police were also subject to influence by departmental governors, who selected the local inspectors of police. The manipulation of key commands in order to promote Conservatives starting in 1946 compromised the neutrality of the police and led to partisan acts of persecution against Liberals in numerous locales. In addition to being heavily oriented toward the Conservatives, the National Police simply were not trained, equipped, or organized to handle the complex military and social problems raised by interparty strife.

<sup>26</sup>Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), pp. 176-177.

Violence intensified in 1948, when the famous Bogotá riot of April 9-11 followed the assassination of Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, and again near the end of 1949, when Laureano Gómez won the presidency in an election that the Liberal Party boycotted. Two weeks prior to this election, President Ospina closed the Congress, in which the Liberals held the majority, because of continual turmoil following a shoot-out in its chambers. These events seemed to end attempts by party elites to cooperate with each other or to moderate their followers. Liberal leaders who had been participating in Ospina's administration resigned and, although direct evidence is lacking, came to condone if not to organize the guerrilla activity of rural Liberal partisans just as Gómez was elected.<sup>27</sup>

Gómez came into office determined to suppress the Liberal guerrillas partly because of his own Falangist ideology and partly because of the worsening guerrilla situation itself.<sup>28</sup> In his view, these armed bands were not partisans in a feud with Conservative citizens but subversives attempting to destroy the Colombian state and Christian society. Thus, Gómez felt justified in using the armed forces more directly against the Liberal guerrillas. Military expenditures were increased 81 percent in Gómez's first two years in office, and

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<sup>27</sup> An important source for the events of this period by a distinguished participant is Carlos Lleras Restrepo, *Hacia la restauración democrática y el cambio social* (Bogotá: n.p., 1963). Also see Jorge Villaveces, *La derrota* (Bogotá: Editorial Jorvi, 1963). Villaveces, a publicist and political gadfly, was a follower of the assassinated Liberal leader Jorge Gaitán and is currently allied with former President General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. His accounts of the 1946-57 period often provide a corrective to other Colombian sources.

<sup>28</sup> Useful discussions of Laureano Gómez's political views are found in Robert Dix, *Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change* (New Haven and London: The Yale University Press, 1967), Chap. 13; Vernon Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1957), passim; Abelardo Patiño B., *The Political Ideas of the Liberal and Conservative Parties during the 1946-1953 Crisis*, Ph.D. dissertation, American University, Washington, D.C., 1954), Chaps. 5-7. Dix notes that estimates of the number of guerrillas during the 1946-1953 period vary between twenty and fifty thousand men.

the military's share of the national budget rose from 15.7 to 19.8 percent.<sup>29</sup>

The behavior of the army under Gómez and his presidential designate (Vice President), Roberto Urdaneta, was often harsh and punitive. Observers such as Guzmán, Dix, and Patiño have cited instances in which officers and troops killed and robbed in a clearly illegal and even sadistic fashion. In recent years some army men have pointed to these instances as examples of how a professional army should *not* behave in the field.<sup>30</sup>

Gómez tended to equate fidelity to the state with support for the Conservative Party, and the army became increasingly subject to tests of its partisan political loyalty. Gómez shuffled commands to insure an army leadership more sympathetic to his anti-Liberal politics; he removed "unreliable" officers from sensitive positions; and he required troop commanders to report on the political affiliation of their troops. As a result, some Liberal officers and troops deserted

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<sup>29</sup> Figures derived from Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), p. 163. The percentages do not include the National Police or discriminate for any additional costs incurred by Colombian troops preparing for Korean action. Although the United States equipped and trained Colombia's Korea-bound troops, the Colombian budget supported the contingent's personnel costs. Aside from Gómez's desire to use the armed forces in a more partisan way, the professional military's training, equipment, and organization were already more suited for the counter guerrilla role. Thus, even before Gómez's accession to the presidency, the military had begun to supplant the National Police in the suppression of guerrilla activity.

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Lt. Col. Alvaro Valencia Tovar, "Un criterio militar ante el problema de la violencia en Colombia," *Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas* (hereinafter cited as *RFA*), Vol. III, No. 8, June 1961, pp. 263-270, and Capt. Fabio Guillermo Lugo, "Acción contra la violencia," *RFA*, Vol. III, No. 9, August 1961, pp. 491-500. Valencia Tovar, currently a Brigadier General, has been one of the most important intellectual forces in the Colombian military. In his novel, *Usheda* (Bogotá: Canal Ramirez, 1969), Valencia returns repeatedly to the military's difficulties in attempting to maintain public order in an atmosphere of political violence. Undoubtedly drawing upon his personal observations, he does not spare the armed forces from important criticisms about its handling of the violence during the 1940s and 1950s.

or collaborated with the Liberal irregulars. Even the Escuela Militar, the bastion of professional training and nonpartisanship, became heavily politicized, and political endorsement was an unofficial but indispensable prerequisite of admission.<sup>31</sup>

The politicization of the army's public order mission disturbed many military men who had previously been able to draw the line between the national interest in that mission and Gómez's intention to use the military for his partisan ends. Gómez's aggressiveness generated severe tension between the values of nonpartisan professionalism and compliance with legally elected presidential authority. This tension was potentially dangerous for Gómez, but he sidestepped by using the Korean War to distract the armed forces with a more strictly military task.

Gómez committed roughly three thousand army men--nearly 20 percent of the active-duty forces--and a naval unit to the United Nations forces in combat in Korea. The army contingent began training in Bogotá's army schools in January 1951 and embarked for further training in the United States five months later. The Colombian units were relieved four times, allowing for the rotation of a fair number of army officers. Actual combat in conventional large-force operations gave Colombian officers practice with military skills they theretofore had only read about.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, the politicization of the army's domestic peacekeeping finally led to a break between the President and the armed forces senior leadership. Lieutenant General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla carried out a coup on June 13, 1953, when Gómez attempted to remove him from his post as Commander of the Armed Forces. Although an act of torture in which Rojas was implicated was the immediate cause of the rupture

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<sup>31</sup>The penetration of partisan issues into the thinking of the military leadership and its response to Gómez's policies are documented in Guzmán et al., *La violencia en Colombia*, Vol. I, pp. 263-270.

<sup>32</sup>A useful anecdotal account of the first Colombian army contingent in Korea is Capt. Francisco A. Caicedo Montua, *BANZAY, diario en las trincheras coreanas* (Bogotá: Imprenta y publicaciones de las Fuerzas Militares, 1961). Caicedo's description reveals the eagerness of his fellow officers to prove themselves in combat and the strength of anti-Communist and patriotic sentiment as morale factors.

between Gómez and Rojas, widespread sentiment in favor of a *coup d'état* had been building for over a year. Rojas' action was welcomed by both Liberal and Conservative elements, who increasingly opposed Gómez's arbitrary style of leadership.<sup>33</sup>

While Gómez's extreme partisanship and his effort to politicize all public institutions contributed importantly to his overthrow by the armed forces, his anti-guerrilla strategy left a mark on the military's dealings with guerrillas and insurgents that is evident to the present day. First, he caused the army to become the mainstay of public order, supplanting the police, so that by the early 1960s the police came under the direct control of the Ministry of National Defense. Second, he greatly increased the contact of army men with the realities of rural life, thus laying the foundation for future debate within the military as to the correct strategy to be taken against guerrillas.

Finally, Gómez precipitated the direct assumption of political authority by military figures, thus providing the precedent for a type of military political behavior unseen in Colombia since the turn of the century. The Rojas coup against Gómez and the subsequent experience of the Rojas government showed that under conditions approaching civil war, especially when antagonistic elites have substantial and reliable backing among the mass public, the military will assume a political role both as an arbiter between political forces and as a potential independent political force. In this respect, Colombia's military men can be compared to their Argentine colleagues, who must deal with highly antagonistic and relatively broad-based civilian political forces.<sup>34</sup>

The Rojas coup climaxed the military's transition from an emphasis on protecting Colombia's borders from external threats to that of combatting internal threats to Colombia's political and social institutions.

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<sup>33</sup>There is some historical analogy between Rojas' coup in 1953 and the Brazilian military coup in 1964. In both cases a civilian president's tampering with military institutional discipline set off the military takeover. However, the civilian politicians who sanctioned the coups in each case wanted the president out of office for different reasons.

<sup>34</sup>A valuable commentary on the Argentine military's relations with contending civil political forces is Ramiro de Casasbellas, "La unidad de ejército," *Primera Plana*, Año VII, No. 345, August 5, 1969.

The isolation from domestic social and political problems that earlier years of professional training had nurtured, and that Gomez tried to recreate in enlisting the armed forces in the Korean anti-Communist war, was ended by the prolonged guerrilla activity that started in 1946 and continued through the 1960s.

That is not to say that a territorial defense mission and concern for international issues have disappeared. Since the Korean War, Colombian military units have participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions as well as U.S.-sponsored Western Hemisphere defense maneuvers.<sup>35</sup> And although details are scanty, Colombian military planners are obviously concerned over the current situation at the Colombian-Venezuelan border, where illegal Colombian migration to Venezuela and a jurisdictional dispute over oil-rich offshore waters have seriously strained relations between the two nations. Nevertheless, the intensity of internal warfare over the last two decades has focused the Colombian armed forces more directly on military activities relating to domestic political, economic, and social matters. Colombia's defense concepts and military budget since the early 1950s suggest a preoccupation with a complex internal military threat.

Developmentalism and Law and Order:  
Counter guerrilla Political-Military Strategy Since 1953

Precedents from the 1950s

The armed forces have drawn upon the period before the Rojas coup for important precedents in their continuing effort to exterminate guerrillas, revolutionary insurgents, and bandits. But the military's experiences under Rojas have provided still more important instruction in exorcising politically related internal violence from Colombia.

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<sup>35</sup> U.S.-led hemispheric defense efforts may actually have contributed to the Colombian military's tendency to focus on internal issues. The active presence of U.S. military power in the Latin American region, especially in an era of nuclear superpowers, probably provided a sense of futility as well as security for Latin Americans wishing to affect the global military situation.

Beginning in 1953, the armed forces have committed themselves to ending violent Liberal and Conservative feuding. This has meant a commitment to a social and political goal above commitment to any particular leader or commander. Initially, upon Rojas' assumption of power, the army tended to view guerrillas as participants in a violent partisan struggle in which the armed forces were neither antagonist nor protagonist but one of the principal arbiters. Later, after Rojas' fall in 1957, the armed forces moved from being an arbiter to being "the prop and prod" of the National Front coalition.<sup>36</sup>

With Rojas as soldier-president, the arbiter role of the armed forces was welcomed by most Colombian political groups except diehard supporters of Gómez, who wanted the army to continue as the military instrument of their political views, and a scattering of others who were skeptical of the armed forces' allegedly nonpartisan involvement in any domestic political affairs.

Rojas took important political steps, through three presidential decrees, to rehabilitate a large number of the combatants by offering amnesties and pardons. The second of these (No. 2184, August 1953) reinstated military officers who had been retired from the service because of involvement in the attempted coup against President Alfonso López in 1944. Rojas took this move, it seems, to shore up his position within the military by coming to the aid of important military figures. The other two decrees, Nos. 1546 (June 1953) and 1823 (June 1954), focused primarily on the civilians engaged in political violence. They set up procedures and time limits under which guerrillas could apply for amnesty for several categories of crimes committed in the Liberal-Conservative warfare. Most crimes and combatants were included in the decrees' provisions, with the exception of soldiers who had deserted the ranks to join bandit or political *guerrillas*. This exception, like the decree absolving the conspirators of 1944, seemed to be another Rojas attempt to bolster his support among fellow officers by upholding army discipline.

It may appear extraordinary that several thousand lawbreakers would be excused for their crimes, but Rojas' initiation of amnesty and pardons

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<sup>36</sup>For a good résumé of the armed forces' political position immediately after Rojas' ouster, see Dix, *Colombia*, pp. 301-305.

had legal precedent. According to one Colombian legal commentator, "There exists in Colombia a long tradition of general amnesties and pardons since the beginning of the republic."<sup>37</sup> And the constitution of 1886, as amended, recognizes the right of the Congress in general and the President under special circumstances to issue amnesties and pardons for "political crimes."<sup>38</sup>

Rojas gave the armed forces an important role in the administration of amnesty and pardon procedures. But even before the machinery of these decrees went into operation, the army commander in the eastern Llanos, Brigadier General Alfredo Duarte Blum--later to aid in Rojas' downfall--guaranteed liberty for guerrillas, pending the outcome of proceedings against them, if they would surrender. In response to General Duarte's appeal, over three thousand laid down their arms in August and September 1953.<sup>39</sup> Military courts were then established to process the applications for amnesty and pardon and to help resolve questions of land title, a long-standing social and economic problem whose complexities were compounded by violence-induced rural migrations and politically related land seizures.<sup>40</sup>

While the military was shifting from war to truce with the guerrillas, the Rojas government established social agencies to aid the

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<sup>37</sup>Eduardo Umaña Luna, "Sociología de la violencia," in Guzmán et al., *La violencia en Colombia*, Vol. I, p. 347.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>39</sup>Guzmán et al., *La violencia en Colombia*, Vol. I, pp. 100-101.

<sup>40</sup>Several observers of Colombia's rural economics, sociology, and politics have noted the interaction between land tenure and other agrarian issues and the course of political and bandit violence. Dix, *Colombia*, pp. 366-373, for example, argues that political violence was in revenge for economic crimes, including land seizures. Guzmán et al., *La violencia en Colombia*, Vol. I, pp. 100-102, makes a similar point. Albert O. Hirschman, *Journeys Towards Progress* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1963), pp. 97-105 and passim, and T. Lynn Smith, *Colombia* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), pp. 85-88 and passim, argue that rural economic issues, including confusion over land titles, squatters' invasions, and primitive working conditions, contributed significantly to guerrilla violence in Colombia. Both view violence as a major stimulus for Colombia's thirty-five-year quest for adequate agrarian reform programs, as well as a principal constraint on their effectiveness.

reintegration of guerrillas into normal social and economic activities.<sup>41</sup> On the political front, besides seeking and winning the tacit endorsement of many Liberal and Conservative leaders, Rojas invited Liberals into the Constituent Assembly left over from Gómez's regime.<sup>42</sup> Thus, both military and civilian institutions made attempts to restore peace between Liberals and Conservatives.

As to the success of these peace-seeking measures, the surrender of roughly seven thousand guerrillas in the first ten months of Rojas' regime and the government claim of a reduction in incidents of violence indicate that these measures began to achieve their purpose. But two qualified observers, Guzmán and Umaña Luna, argue that the rehabilitation efforts were under-financed and that population resettlement and adjudication of land claims did not have wide enough effect.<sup>43</sup> Also, the administration of justice, partly military and partly civilian, soon became chaotic under the weight of voluminous claims for amnesty, pardon, and official decisions on land issues.<sup>44</sup>

In retrospect, the political quarrels of the Rojas regime also contributed heavily to the failure of the rehabilitation program. Within a year after assuming office, Rojas became involved in intense conflict with the leadership of the two previously warring parties. Supported by military men in several key national and departmental posts, and with several ideologically oriented and willful people around him, Rojas began using his position as President more in the manner of a politician than as a soldier-president attempting to arbitrate the disputes of politicians. Under the banner of "The People's-Armed Forces' Binomial," he aimed, it seemed, to build the kind of personal political support enjoyed by his contemporary in Argentina, Juan Perón. When it became apparent that this goal was for personal aggrandizement and that it threatened the popular support of the traditional parties, the tenuous and limited cooperation between Rojas and a majority of the leaders of both parties ended amid a cross fire of mutual personal recriminations.

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<sup>41</sup>Guzmán et al., *La violencia in Colombia*, Vol. I, p. 102.

<sup>42</sup>Villaveces, *La derrota*, pp. 57-72.

<sup>43</sup>Guzmán et al., *La violencia en Colombia*, Vol. I, p. 102.

<sup>44</sup>Umaña Luna, "Sociología de la violencia," pp. 340-350.

At this point, Rojas' attention seemed to shift away from pacification efforts towards protecting his political position. Near the end of 1954, Rojas focused attention on cultivating his potential clientele in Colombia's urban areas. He left the elimination of rural violence to the army and to the haphazard application of the measures decreed in the first year of his regime.

In short time the army, the police, and guerrilla bands of various motives and political colorations resumed hostile activities. In some cases, the guerrillas seem to have been motivated to attack the army because it stood for Rojas' regime, now the enemy of both Liberal and Conservative political interests. Liberal-Conservative feuding was also renewed, and banditry and arbitrary police repression increased. The army in the field, accustomed to acting with impunity in the defense of partisan or personal interests, was not always given to moderation toward guerrillas or civilian populations who continued to be hostile to the institution.

As Rojas' regime moved through the 1954-1958 presidential term, the armed forces continued to fulfill a pivotal role in national politics. Rojas' "Government of the Armed Forces" had originally thrust the military into a neutral position between the predominantly Liberal guerrillas and the Conservative forces removed from power. The army continued to combat some guerrillas, but its goal was to establish public order and to avoid being a *de facto* armed partisan force, as was the tendency under Gómez. But as conflict deepened between Rojas and the leadership of both parties, the military found itself protecting not only public order but also the fortunes of a partisan regime. In the field, support for the regime and maintenance of public order tended to merge. But in fact the armed forces had to define their guerrilla enemy in the emerging context of a national political battle between Rojas and the national elites of both Liberal and Conservative Parties.

The issue of definition had major implications not only for the guerrillas but also for the army. To define the guerrillas as subversives, that is, as enemies of the state,<sup>45</sup> would support Rojas' politics

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<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Lt. Col. Guillermo Rojas, *Estudio sobre las tácticas comunistas empleadas en Colombia por elementos subversivos (Bandoleros de las diversas regiones del país)* (Bogotá: Imprenta del

because it would deny legitimacy to the guerrillas or their links with traditional-party leaders. To define the guerrillas as the armed expression of the two traditional political parties, on the other hand, would confer on them some of the legitimacy of the parties and also the benefits of the amnesty decrees.<sup>46</sup> As for the army, acceptance of the latter definition would imply its independence of Rojas' political maneuverings and would support its role in reducing tensions between the nation's political forces.

Legally, at least, the second definition was the operative one in the decrees issued by Rojas to bring peace between Liberal and Conservative followers. Those decrees tended to lump together the subversive attacks against the institutions of state and elements of the non-subversive Liberal-Conservative contest. For example, Decree 1823, the principal instrument setting up procedures for the amnesty, said:

For the purposes of this decree, political crimes are understood as all those committed by Colombian nationals whose motive has been (1) attack against the government, or (2) may be explained as excessive support or adhesion to the latter, or by (3) political aversions and sectarianism.

The intent thus seems to have been to place all politically motivated crimes into a single class, but the intent broke down under the politicization of Rojas' government.

This definitional dilemma also bore heavily on the military strategy for eliminating guerrillas. In a sense, effective counter guerrilla doctrine depends on the accurate definition of the causes of guerrilla activity. That is, to eliminate guerrilla violence, not merely to deal with its symptoms, its causes must be understood. Under Rojas, the Colombian armed forces faced two types of internal political war: one aimed at the government, which the military was sworn to protect, and the other pitting two legitimate political entities against each other in an extra-legal competition. During Rojas' last year in office, it seems that the majority of the armed forces' ranking officers avoided either legitimizing the guerrillas or rejecting the anti-regime politics

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estado mayor de las fuerzas armadas, 1954). In this, his thesis for promotion to Colonel, Rojas asserts that the Liberal guerrillas were ready to support any Communist attempt to seize power.

<sup>46</sup> See Umaña Luna, "Sociología de la violencia," p. 349.

inherent in the recrudescence of guerrilla activity in late 1954. The issue was temporarily resolved when important army men joined the movement to depose Rojas Pinilla and restore elected civilian governments. But the problem of defining the guerrillas has haunted the military to the present.

Rojas' downfall was closely related to his economic policies and personal character as well as to political conflicts. To the military, he seemed to have become an acute embarrassment. Many officers still believed strongly in the original pacifying and nonpartisan mission that brought Rojas to power, and they objected to the rise of a clique of officers who had Rojas' favor and used it for personal gain.<sup>47</sup> Political opposition to Rojas among civilian elites had formed as early as late 1953, when important Liberals chose not to cooperate with Rojas. But opposition among military men seemed to crystallize only as the presidential election of 1958 approached.

In late March 1957, the top Liberal and Conservative leaders reached agreement on their opposition to Rojas and on the basis of post-Rojas cooperation between the political parties. Rojas' behavior towards this alliance became vicious, including threats of assassination. Deeply troubled by Rojas' arbitrary behavior and the buildup of political tensions, several important military men asked Rojas to step down from the presidency for one year and to remove his daughter, María Eugenia, and his son-in-law, Samuel Moreno Díaz, from his circle of advisors. Rojas paid no heed. Soon afterward, he changed the membership of the National Constituent Assembly, and on May 8, 1957, he bid that body elect him President for the next four-year period. Within two days of this move, Rojas' civilian opposition mobilized union, business, religious, and student groups for a massive general strike, which threatened major violence in urban areas.

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<sup>47</sup> In Rojas' last year of office, personal favoritism began to undermine military discipline. Access to Rojas became more important than normal career progression, and favored colonels seemed to carry more weight than their superiors. Nearly a year after Rojas' fall, several military men were implicated in an alleged attempted coup against the military junta succeeding Rojas. The motive apparently lay in the highly partisan Conservative orientation of its participants, who represented the scheduled inauguration of Liberal Alberto Lleras Camargo as President in 1968. See Umaña Luna, "Sociología de la violencia," pp. 376-377.

At this juncture, when compromise between Rojas and the united Liberals and Conservatives was no longer possible, the military leadership was compelled to determine where its interests lay. To support Rojas in the face of the overwhelming show of opposition from nearly all sectors of organized public opinion would have irrevocably committed the armed forces to a regime whose behavior over the years added up to an incitement to the political violence it originally sought to end. The assumption underlying Rojas' coup had been that a government led by the chief of the armed forces could pacify the country by removing excessive partisanship from the institutions of state, including the armed forces. By later attempting to perpetuate his rule, Rojas had become a partisan force stimulating violence. Ironically, Rojas' politicization achieved what his original intentions of neutrality and conciliation failed to realize: cooperation and mutual guarantees between Colombia's traditional political parties.

On May 10, 1957, the armed forces made their decision: a five-man military junta representing the highest commands removed Rojas from office.<sup>48</sup> The Junta Militar assumed power, much as Rojas had in 1953, in the name of the armed forces, for the remainder of a legally prescribed presidential term, and for the purpose of restoring normal constitutional processes. Unlike Rojas, however, the Junta did not seek to extend the period of custody of it or its president, Major General Gabriel París, as the nation's executive. Instead, it encouraged the leaders of the two traditional parties jointly to work out plans for a plebescite to reinstate elected civilian government.

The Junta's approach to the guerrillas returned to Rojas' early policy of reconciliation. A year after taking power, the Junta established a National Investigative Commission Into the Current Causes of Violence. That commission included representatives from the clergy, the political parties, and the armed forces. Its most notable accomplishment, during the eight months of its existence, was to arrange for the surrender of important guerrilla groups and the conditions for co-existence between others.

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<sup>48</sup>Guzmán et al., *La violencia en Colombia*, Vol. I, pp. 107-120.

The Liberal-Conservative cooperation that the Junta encouraged bore fruit in the establishment of the National Front government in 1958, with Alberto Lleras Camargo inaugurated on August 7 as its first elected head. Reconciliation and rehabilitation programs were continued. President Lleras kept the Investigative Commission for another few months and then had it replaced by a Special Rehabilitation Commission. According to Guzmán et al., the Commission was funded at 128.3 million pesos during its year and a half lifetime (3.9 percent of total government expenditures for 1958 and 1959).<sup>49</sup> It handled 20,209 cases of individuals seeking public aid as a consequence of the violence of previous years. Of these cases, 44 percent were related to securing employment and 17 percent to land tenure and title problems, indicating the important economic and legal disruption caused by partisan and bandit violence.

These rehabilitation efforts appear to have been only partially successful. One scholar points out that opposition to rehabilitation programs arose because some Conservatives felt they were a payoff to former (Liberal) criminals.<sup>50</sup> Amid congressional and party criticism, the Commission's work was terminated in 1959. However, some of its programs were incorporated the following year into Acción Comunal, a locally controlled self-help effort for community improvement, which survives to the present.

Apart from such efforts at direct social assistance, the Lleras government resorted to the use of amnesty much as Rojas did in 1953 and 1954. Lleras issued his amnesty in Legislative Decree 328 of 1958 (November 28) in the hope of checking guerrilla activity, especially in Caldas, Cauca, Huila, Tolima and Valle Departments, where a state of siege was in force.<sup>51</sup> Uniquely, that amnesty explicitly recognized that violence was being committed by politically motivated groups organized

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<sup>49</sup>The data collected by this commission and its predecessor provided much of the material for the Guzmán, Umaña Luna, and Fals Borda study, *La violencia en Colombia*.

<sup>50</sup>Dix, *Colombia*, p. 377.

<sup>51</sup>See Umaña Luna, "Sociología de la violencia," p. 361, for an extended discussion of this decree.

by political leaders, and that public authorities or their employees, as well as private citizens, were engaging in politically motivated criminal acts. The amnesty applied to crimes committed before October 1958, thus covering the groups that went back to war after Rojas' pacification effort wilted.

The Armed Forces' Perspective on National Problems  
Under the National Front System

The National Front system has helped the armed forces regain some of their former nonpartisan character by freeing the military from use as an instrument for either party and by allowing it to conduct an internal war against subversive rather than partisan guerrillas. First of all, the National Front has fostered the Conservative and Liberal cooperation that many in the armed forces had hoped for from the Rojas administration and from the amnesties that recognized the partisan, rather than the subversive, nature of guerrilla violence. Since Rojas' downfall, moreover, the national elites of the two major parties have condemned violence for partisan ends and have largely repudiated those who engage in or sponsor it. Thus, the guerrillas and bandits who persisted after the National Front's creation have not been able to make strong claims for legitimacy in the context of Liberal and Conservative Party struggles. As a result, the remaining guerrilla bands have been cast into roles as subversives or bandits that threaten the existence of the reconstituted state or are a menace to internal law and order, respectively. The definitional problem has eased, and repression of these bands has therefore carried less political risk and has received bipartisan support.

The continuation of guerrilla activity and other less organized manifestations of violence after the formation of the National Front, however, presented the military with a perplexing issue. If politics could no longer explain violent acts, why did assassinations and armed assaults continue in many rural areas? The armed forces were impelled to find better answers for the violence they especially had to confront-- in short, to define more accurately the nature of guerrilla violence.

In its search for motives and sources of violence beyond the excess of political passion acknowledged in the amnesty decrees of 1954 and 1958, the military was greatly aided by its participation in the administration of programs for rehabilitation and settlement of land claims, and by its role in the research-oriented National Investigative Commission Into the Current Causes of Violence. Many officers thus became more aware of the great disparity between the urban areas burgeoning with growth and new wealth, and the rural sectors beset with forced land abandonment, squatter invasions, and widespread distrust of government officials. These experiences also established a basis for a sociological view of the guerrilla problem and led the military leadership to reflect on the connection between guerrilla activity and rural economic and social conditions.<sup>52</sup>

To many military leaders, it seemed that progress toward a strong industrial nation--always the dream of a technologically oriented bureaucracy such as Colombia's professionally educated armed forces--would be inhibited so long as political violence, economic dislocation, and social delinquency debilitated important rural areas. This view of the guerrilla problem emerged in well-articulated formulations in a bimonthly journal of opinion, *Revista de la Fuerzas Armadas (The Review of the Armed Forces)*, published beginning in April 1960 by the General Command of the Military Forces.<sup>53</sup> The published views of armed

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<sup>52</sup>A good example of this kind of analysis by military writers is contained in the first chapter of *De la violencia a la paz, experiencias de la VIII brigada en la lucha contraguerrillas* ([Manizales?]: Imprenta Departamental de Caldas, 1965), a compilation of analyses of guerrilla activity and descriptions of anti-guerrilla strategy and tactics contributed by members of the Army VIII Brigade (this source is hereafter cited as *VIII Brigade*). After detailing the "painful and cruel bleeding of the nation because of varied, complex and multiple partisan battles," the authors point out that "economic aspects have also powerfully influenced" the development of guerrilla activity since 1948. "In addition," they continue, "political and economic violence brought social decomposition that nearly ruptured the moral values of the community." See pp. 15-27. Although a fictionalized account, Brig. Gen. Alvaro Valencia Tovar's novel *Uisheda* is another powerful sociological analysis of Colombia's political violence by a military writer.

<sup>53</sup>The new journal raised the quality of published military opinion by integrating, in a single "national defense"-oriented publication, views that had previously been diffused in other service journals such

forces leaders reveal that by 1960, concepts of national defense and military professionalism had been amended so that the military took a much broader view of its role in Colombian society. In the exercise of its main peacetime functions of eliminating guerrillas and preparing against external threats, the military recognized a new responsibility to aid civilian efforts to promote industrialization and modern agriculture, and to repair social institutions damaged in the long period of political violence.<sup>54</sup>

#### Counter guerrilla War and the Concept of National Defense

Further development of counterinsurgency doctrine was stimulated by the revival of the Higher Council of National Defense, Consejo Superior de Defensa Nacional, in February 1960. The Consejo integrated the armed forces' higher command with other ministries whose functions reflected the National Front government's concern to promote economic development while maintaining public order.<sup>55</sup> By explicitly relating

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as *Revista Militar del Ejército (Army Military Review)*, and *Revista de la Policía Nacional (National Police Review)*. The format of the new journal itself reflected the growing popularity of views that linked the military's functions closely with national social and economic policies. Since 1960, each issue has had sections dedicated to economic, social, legal, and historical thought, with articles provided by both civilian and military writers, including some non-Colombians.

<sup>54</sup>See Brig. Gen. Alberto Rueda T., "Nuestras fuerzas armadas y la defensa nacional"; Brig. Gen. Alberto Ruíz Novoa, "Doctrina de guerra"; and Lt. Col. Armando Vanegas M., "Frente económico y defensa nacional," *RFA*, Vol. I, No. 1, April 1960, pp. 33-37, 25-31, and 109-110 respectively. These three articles develop the notion of national defense as the product of interrelated domestic political, social and economic factors. Such thinking continued in later years; see Capt. Diego Manrique P., "Relaciones de la fuerzas militares con la comunidad civil," *RFA*, Vol. XIV, No. 41, November-December 1966, pp. 187-199.

<sup>55</sup>For a description of the Consejo Superior de Defensa Nacional, its origins and rationale, see Lt. Col. Ernesto Beltran R., "El consejo de defensa nacional," *RFA*, Vol. I, No. 1, April 1960, pp. 53-55; and Brig. Gen. Cesar Cabrera F. (then Director of the Escuela Superior de Guerra), "El consejo superior de la defensa nacional y la seguridad interna," *RFA*, Vol. III, No. 8, June 1961, pp. 251-258. It appears that the Consejo concept was encouraged by President Lleras Camargo but was less favored by his successor, Guillermo León Valencia, and his Minister of War, General Alberto Ruíz Novoa. After Ruíz left office in

the conduct of foreign policy, the development of domestic political policy, and the discharge of military functions with economic and social policy, the Council tended to promote the views of military men who saw the armed forces as a developmentalist national agent.<sup>56</sup>

The revival of the Higher Council of National Defense did not resolve the question of how to confront the guerrillas, however. As guerrilla violence continued into the 1960s, increasing somewhat in the year prior to the 1962 elections, the principal issue for Colombian military leaders remained how to translate into operations the relationship of the military's counter guerrilla mission to the government's attempt to eradicate the causes of political and bandit violence and to promote economic growth. The issue was compounded by the simultaneous radicalization of Fidel Castro's regime in Cuba to champion socio-economic revolution by guerrilla warfare, which fascinated the anti-establishment (anti-National Front) sector of Colombia's intelligentsia. The military feared--and the anti-National Front leftist groups hoped--that the guerrillas and bandits of the 1950s might become the troops of the Colombian revolution in the 1960s.<sup>57</sup> Both groups began recasting the interpretation of guerrilla and bandit violence to accord with their perspective on this possibility.

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1965, the Consejo was reorganized to improve civilian-military policy coordination. The details of this move are found in Brig. Gen. Miguel Peña B., "La defensa nacional," *RFA*, Vol. XII, No. 36, January-February 1966, pp. 321-323.

<sup>56</sup>See, for example, then Assistant Director of the Escuela Superior de Guerra Col. Jorge Quintero, "La organización militar y la economía," *RFA*, Vol. I, No. 2, June 1960, pp. 333-345, and Gen. Alberto Ruiz Novoa, "La acción cívica en los movimientos insurreccionales," *RFA*, Vol. VII, No. 21, July-August 1963, pp. 491-495. In these articles, the special resources of the armed forces, such as relatively highly trained and disciplined personnel and high dedication to national purpose, are discussed as justifying a significant military role in national development schemes.

<sup>57</sup>The clearest exposition of the military's view of this eventuality prior to Cuba's active support for revolutionary insurgents is Cabrera F., "El consejo superior," especially p. 255. General Cabrera wrote, "Given Cuba, Soviet strategic interests, and Colombia's geography, we say that the date of Colombia's difficulties [with revolutionary insurgency] are not far away."

Several intellectuals argued as well that guerrillas and bandits existed because of the deprivation and exploitation of Colombian peasants.<sup>58</sup> Having been in the field so long, and presumably aware of the gap between rural realities and the promises of economic modernization heard in Bogotá, the military assimilated much of this analysis into its cumulative knowledge of guerrillas as instruments in partisan political battles.

General Alberto Ruíz Novoa, whose name became publicly identified with these views, became Minister of War in August 1962. A highly controversial character, as his later career was to prove, Ruíz capitalized on the analytical work of subordinates such as then Col. Alvaro Valencia Tovar to appear as the moving force behind a counterinsurgent doctrine that gave operational expression to the intellectual abstractions current in the Higher War School and in military journals. In his public statements (disseminated by his own personal press agent), Ruíz characterized the armed forces as agents to mend the national social fabric and to develop the social and economic infrastructure.

In brief, Ruíz argued that the army must not only destroy guerrillas, once they were raised in arms, but must also attack the social and economic causes as well as the historical political reasons for their existence.<sup>59</sup> Ruíz strongly supported the National Front political

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<sup>58</sup>See for example Eduardo Santa, *La sociología política de Colombia*, 2nd ed. (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1964). Santa argued that the traditional political parties in Colombia spawned the guerrillas but failed to produce programs to bring economic development and social justice to the rural areas. In the early 1960s, Santa was an occasional contributor to the *REA* and a lecturer at the Escuela Superior de Guerra. Other influential commentators who argued that a relationship existed between guerrilla activities and the plight of Colombian rural populations include Guzmán, Fals Borda, and Umaña Luna, whose works have been cited above.

<sup>59</sup>The best single source for General Ruíz Novoa's views on the military and its relation to Colombian society is his book, *El gran desafío* (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1965), which contains several of his most important speeches and articles. See pp. 53 and 85-88 for the clearest exposition of his views on social justice as "the national purpose," and his rationale for military contributions to national development through civic action. Ruíz's critics claim that much of what Ruíz propounded was motivated by his intense personal ambition and that he was merely saying what seemed to be politically advantageous.

arrangements for combatting the historic causes of Liberal-Conservative violence, and championed "social justice" as Colombian society's most important national purpose.<sup>60</sup> While he was Minister of War, officer training broadened to include an economics curriculum and courses in the social sciences, and more enlisted personnel were encouraged to participate in programs of the national manpower training agency SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje), literacy training, and agricultural schooling.<sup>61</sup>

Ruíz and other military leaders directed the armed forces to use their manpower to build and maintain social infrastructure--schools, health posts, etc. The Colombian military plunged into numerous public works projects designed to integrate isolated areas more fully into the national economy and communications network. The War Ministry's arms and munitions manufacture also expanded to an industry of major proportions.

These military-civic activities seemed to have several purposes. First, they were intended to better conditions in violence-prone areas, thus reducing discontent, which was thought to be conducive to armed social protest. Second, they facilitated military operations against the guerrilla-bandits who terrorized remote populations into submission and support. Third, and most important politically, they gave the military influence in government reform programs and allowed it to refute

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<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Ruíz's statement for *Life en español*, January 4, 1965, p. 8, reiterating his "support and loyalty to the legitimate government, the Constitution and the law." Shortly after this article appeared, however, Ruíz is said to have circulated a memorandum to the armed forces with strong anti-National Front overtones.

<sup>61</sup> For an account of reforms in military education during Ruíz's tenure, see Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), pp. 152-154. For a detailed description of the economics curriculum in the Escuela Militar de Cadetes, see Dean of the Economic Faculty Jaime González S., "La enseñanza de la economía y las fuerzas militares," *RFA*, Vol. XIV, No. 42, January-February 1967, pp. 453-460. González begins by insisting that the military's public order mission calls for more than simply military measures. For descriptions of the military's concept of its contribution to human resources development, see Maj. Jesús Narvaéz G., "El sena y las fuerzas militares," *RFA*, Vol. VIII, No. 24, January-February 1964, pp. 519-531, and Lt. Col. Hernando Medina P., "El servicio militar obligatorio ante el orden social y la defensa nacional," *RFA*, Vol. IX, No. 25, March-April 1964, pp. 25-29.

arguments that the military was an unproductive, costly waste for a poor country. Finally, civic action gave the military leverage over civilian ministries. For example, if the army built schools, roads, and health posts, it in effect committed the civilian government to maintaining these projects. Not to do so could have alienated the affected populations as well as the military units involved. All of these programs and changes, it is important to note, took place before the organization of any of the insurgent movements that after 1964 became the target of the military's internal-security activities.

The operational version of the armed forces' counterinsurgent doctrine as it developed under General Ruíz's tenure was "Plan Lazo." Initiated on July 1, 1962, to eliminate the principal bandits and the guerrillas controlling "independent republics," it was designed by Generals Gabriel Rebeiz and Jaime Fajardo and Col. Alvaro Valencia, in consultation with U.S. counterinsurgency planners. The basic counter-guerrilla strategy followed by Plan Lazo was repression first of bandit-guerrillas and then of the "independent" enclaves controlled by anti-government caudillos.<sup>62</sup>

Plan Lazo continued through 1965, and its record of achievement, as with many complicated governmental programs, is ambiguous. It did not eliminate all guerrillas from Colombia, nor did it rapidly transform areas where government authority was weak into centers of support for the National Front. Some critics have argued that Plan Lazo propelled several guerrilla groups toward cooption by the Colombian Communist Party, thus stimulating the Communist-influenced insurgency that Plan Lazo sought to prevent.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, many of the most notorious

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<sup>62</sup>A more detailed description of Plan Lazo's organization and objectives is found on pp. 52-64 above.

<sup>63</sup>Orlando Fals Borda and Vicente Laverde Aponte, "Mano fuerte, única solución contra la violencia?" *Acción Liberal* (Bogotá), No. 1, August 1965, complained that as Plan Lazo progressed, the armed forces and President Valencia exceeded the original intent of the Plan and launched operations in areas where relative peace had reigned. The effect, they claimed, was to stimulate irreconcilable opposition from some guerrillas such as Tiro Fijo, later commander of the FARC. It is possible that Plan Lazo's critics failed to grasp the scope of the Plan's two phases. However, the military itself was never too explicit on that point in its public descriptions of counterinsurgent planning.

bandit and guerrilla groups were eliminated under Plan Lazo, and government authority was brought to many areas where it had not been in evidence for many years.<sup>64</sup>

On one point both critics and supporters would agree: though the armed forces could not eradicate all of the conditions helping to perpetuate the guerrillas, they greatly affected political, economic, and social conditions in some localities by marshalling their own forces and resources. This in turn seemed to have repercussions of national import, such as the creation of new pressures on the distribution of public expenditures.

As Plan Lazo progressed, General Ruíz seemed to become more convinced of the need for a developmentalist orientation for the military. Undoubtedly this owed partly to the effort by the Colombian Communists to organize several of the guerrilla groups at large in 1963-1964 into the insurgent force that became the FARC. For military men this was proof, even if of a self-fulfilling-prophecy type, of the threat posed by both the Communists and the guerrillas and of the necessity of cutting off their popular support. Another influence was the thinking of Colombian and other Latin American socialist, Catholic, and nationalist intellectuals who cited the feuds of the traditional political parties as a cause of social misery and national weakness.<sup>65</sup> A third influence seems to have been the notion of integrated national defense popular in the United States, France, and Israel, which emphasized high economic productivity and a modicum of social justice as important attributes of societies capable of successful national defense against internal as well as external enemies. This view reinforced Ruíz's own analysis of Colombia's guerrilla situation by offering examples of, or, as in

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<sup>64</sup>*Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, July 20, 1966, p. 3, makes this claim for Plan Lazo and gives statistics.

<sup>65</sup>See Footnote 58. In addition to Santa, another civilian intellectual of consequence who seemed to have influence in Colombian military circles during this period was Osiris Troiani, an Argentine publicist with strong nationalist views. Troiani contributed articles to the *RFA* in 1960 and 1961 while teaching at the *Escuela Superior de Guerra*, and is reputed to have had a considerable impression on Ruíz Novoa.

the case of the United States, by providing material aid for, counter-insurgent schemes such as Plan Lazo.

The developmentalist concept of the armed forces espoused by Ruíz raised sensitive issues in Colombian politics. Evidently Ruíz saw civic action as more than a palliative for restless and resentful populations or a mop-up task to follow military encounters. In Ruíz's view, guerrillas, whether motivated by political or socioeconomic reasons, impaired Colombia's capacity to survive and prosper in a world dominated by industrial forces and subject to Cold War ideological conflict. The armed forces were obliged by both the constitution and national tradition to defend Colombia's present and future well-being, and this required them to aid in Colombia's economic development. From this perspective, therefore, the armed forces should not only intensify their repression of guerrillas but should also combine their resources with those of other sectors of society in a patriotic drive towards greater economic and social strength. Apart from this "national mission" rhetoric, civic action gave the ambitious Ruíz entrée into national political debate.

Ruíz's enthusiasm for his views led him into bitter political conflict with civilian National Front politicians. His views on the desirability of integrating civilian and military national defense efforts were reinforced by his trip to Israel. Shortly afterwards, in the presence of President Valencia, Ruíz publicly criticized the government for a lack of national purpose. Valencia, who was not scheduled to speak, followed Ruíz to the podium and rejected much of Ruíz's criticism, but reaffirmed his personal support for Ruíz's efforts as Minister of War.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, Ruíz's challenge remained. In effect, Ruíz's demands for government performance in social and economic spheres outstripped the capabilities of the National Front government, working as it was under the constraints of maintaining the delicate Liberal-Conservative alliance and attempting to breathe life into a stagnating, inflation-ridden economy.

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<sup>66</sup>The texts of both General Ruíz's and President Valencia's remarks, made before the Sociedad de Agricultores, May 27, 1964, are reprinted in *RFA*, Vol. IX, No. 28, September-October 1964, pp. 237-253.

Complaints arose from politicians that under Ruíz's direction the army was not pursuing the guerrillas with the same vigor it was promoting activities that were properly the concern of other government agencies or the domain of pork-barreling legislators and local political leaders. At the cabinet level and in the press Ruíz tended to place his priorities in social and economic fields in opposition to those of civilian planners and politicians. Inevitably, there were conflicts.

Even before his inauguration, President Guillermo Valencia had attempted to fend off complaints about Ruíz coming from other politicians. Valencia shared Ruíz's desire to eliminate political violence of any kind and generally endorsed the armed forces' interest in distinguishing between causes and manifestations of violence and contributing to national development. But finally, towards the end of 1964, Valencia came to see Ruíz's activism and now-obvious political ambition, as well as his outspoken demands for more government action, as a criticism and political threat. Ruíz was forced to resign on January 27, 1965.<sup>67</sup>

Ruíz's resignation was facilitated by an echo of the politicians' complaint within the armed forces themselves. Some leading officers, while sharing or having helped formulate Ruíz's basic analysis of the causes of violence, nevertheless preferred the armed forces in a more restricted role.<sup>68</sup> Some officers thought Ruíz had become a demagogue, exploiting the armed forces for personal ambition. To these officers, developmental programs were the province of several important civilian

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<sup>67</sup> Ruíz has slipped into obscurity since his resignation. Momentary interest in him by neo-fascist nationalist students evaporated when as a presidential candidate in 1966 he expressed willingness to declare himself a Liberal, to comply with that year's National Front election law.

<sup>68</sup> An early example of this less ambitious view of the armed forces can be found in Col. Guillermo Plazas Olarte, "Nuestra patria Colombia," *RFA*, Vol. IV, No. 12, February 1962, pp. 391-395. In this editorial, Col. Plazas, an author as well as soldier, asserts that physical elimination of the guerrillas is the army's primary task. After Ruíz's resignation, several articles appeared in *RFA* calling for the armed forces to keep to their more traditional professional sphere of activity. See, for example, Brig. Gen. Darío Santacruz A., "Qué somos y qué representamos?" *RFA*, Vol. XI, No. 32, May-June 1965, pp. 165-167. Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), p. 178, remarks that officers he interviewed in 1965 told him of conspiracies against Ruíz within the armed forces.

agencies created by the National Front governments. To engage in non-military aspects of government would, as the complaints about Ruíz showed, involve the military in partisan politics. This would endanger the counterguerrilla effort.

These officers could point to the fact that the military's civic action programs had been substantially supported not by the Colombian Congress but rather by the U.S. AID and Military Assistance programs. This foreign assistance could (and eventually did) diminish for reasons beyond the control of Colombia's military. But expansion of the armed forces' civic action programs to realize Ruíz's developmentalist goals seemed to run the risk of (a) perpetuating a politically sensitive mission that affected the prestige of the armed forces and was dependent on U.S. financial sponsorship, (b) requiring the curtailment of strictly military programs, or (c) incurring hostility from an unsympathetic Congress in trying to wrest more funds from it. To the majority of high Colombian officers in command at the time of Ruíz's resignation, large-scale *developmentalist* civic action accompanied by strong political rhetoric apparently involved political and institutional costs higher than its worth. By no means, though, did civic action end with Ruíz's resignation. As *an element of counterinsurgency* it remains an active program that many military officers genuinely support.

Ruíz's downfall coincided with an acceleration of the shift in guerrilla activity from localized banditry without well-developed revolutionary goals to the more coherent and nationally oriented revolutionary activities of the ELN and the FARC. This change has affected the military's counterinsurgent doctrine. Under Ruíz, this doctrine was concerned with exterminating both the groups known to have bandit-economic motives and connections with the traditional political parties, and the groups with left-revolutionary purposes. Before 1964, the former were more numerous and threatening than the latter. The overall character of counterinsurgent doctrine has not changed appreciably since Ruíz's dismissal, but the changing character of the most active guerrilla groups has pulled the armed forces even further away from the grandiose developmentalist views associated with General Ruíz. With an enemy more

clearly linked to "alien ideologies"--"international communism," Castroism, Maoism--and better organized militarily, a greater emphasis on strictly military operations has emerged. Accordingly, Ruíz's successors through mid-1970, Generals Gabriel Rebeiz Pizarro (who died in office in early 1967) and Gabriel Ayerbe Chaux, called for better military command coordination.

Moreover, in 1967-1968 a somewhat harder-line "law-and-order" attitude emerged in the army under army commander Major General Jaime Pinzón Caicedo. Pinzón--who was forcibly retired in early 1969 after a dispute with President Lleras over procedures for designing and auditing the army's budget--ordered the army to ignore the ties that certain ex-guerrilla fugitives maintained with figures in legitimate politics who shielded them from military justice.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Pinzón went out of his way to scotch rumors that a general amnesty or pardon for FARC members was being discussed within the Lleras Restrepo administration. These developments reflected stricter adherence to the notion within the military that, under the National Front, partisan violence for traditional or revolutionary party purposes was finished and that the guerrillas who remained in Colombia were not partisans or patriots but were subversives or outlaws.

In summary, developmentalism and law and order have been two central goals of the military's counterinsurgency mission. These goals have had important ramifications for the military's political affairs, and their means of realization and relative priorities have been subjects of considerable debate within the military. It would be an oversimplification, however, to characterize current differences within the military leadership over counterinsurgency as representing poles of opinion. That the sociological interventionism and national-defense thinking that General Ruíz popularized still exist is evidenced by the reorganization of the Ministry of National Defense in December 1965 and by the continuation of civic action as an integral and supportive, if

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<sup>69</sup>For one such case, see R. L. Maullin, "The Private War of a Guerrilla," *Trans-action*, Vol. VII, No. 5, March 1970, pp. 45-54.

not the main, element of counterinsurgent operations.<sup>70</sup> But they are moderated by an emphasis on what the military profession is supposed to do best: exterminate the enemies of the state, as identified by responsible political authorities. They are further constrained by the continuing and accelerated reduction of U.S. assistance for military civic action, and the failure of the Lleras government--perhaps by design--to finance civic action beyond a level that serves operational military needs for logistics or local palliatives. What is striking is that the Colombian military's counterinsurgent mission predated *fidélismo* but was easily adapted to the opposition of guerrilla revolutionaries after the rise of insurgencies of the left.

The next section looks more closely at the operational integration of developmentalism and law and order in the counterinsurgent campaigns of the 1960s.

#### Plan Lazo and the Counterinsurgent Campaigns of the 1960s

The military's counterinsurgent campaigns of the 1960s have had two operational benchmarks: the implementation of Plan Lazo beginning in July 1962 and the reorganization of the Ministry of War in December 1965. Plan Lazo reflected the ascendancy of counterinsurgent doctrine as conceived by officers such as Colonel Valencia Tovar and Generals Fajardo, Rebeiz, and Ruíz. The reorganization of December 1965 reflected the military's adjustment to both Ruíz's dismissal and the shift towards more explicit relationships between guerrillas and bandits and left revolutionary causes.

Under Ruíz's guidance, with the support of most important military leaders, Plan Lazo proposed to eliminate guerrillas by:

- o Tightening and integrating the command structure of all forces engaged in public order missions to clearly establish military responsibility for all operations.

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<sup>70</sup> It is notable that Brigadier General Alvaro Valencia Tovar, who has consistently maintained that the army must deal with the social and economic causes underlying political violence, and who was attacked for his views by a hostile Congress in 1962 and 1963, became the commander of the V Brigade, the principal unit confronting the ELN after Ruíz's resignation.

- o Creating more versatile and sophisticated tactical units capable of successful unconventional warfare operations.
- o Expanding the military's public relations and psychological warfare units to improve civilian attitudes toward the army's public order mission.
- o Employing the armed forces in tasks intended to contribute to the economic development and social well-being of all Colombians, especially those subjected to guerrilla-bandit activity.<sup>71</sup>

In the Plan's first phase, roughly July through September 1962, its developers concentrated on training the armed forces for the new anti-guerrilla campaign. The Colombian ranger school, Escuela de Lanceros, founded in 1955, played an important role by providing both unit and individual training.<sup>72</sup>

Also, research was done on the causes of guerrilla violence. It attempted to sort out the roles played by partisan political feuding, banditry and other economic crimes, and "social decomposition." Much of this analysis was carried out after military leaders concluded that the training and operations of the armed forces were hampered by a lack of systematic information with which to evaluate the complex phenomenon of persistent guerrilla activity and the military responses to it. As one army captain wrote:

We never knew if those whom we were fighting [in the 1950s] in the *llanos orientales*, Tolima, Magdalena, etc., were guerrillas or bandits because their acts were at once mixed barbarism and subversion, and on many occasions they made it look like one thing while it was really another.<sup>73</sup>

To remedy this problem, Plan Lazo called for a continual assessment of the effectiveness of its various operations. The Plan's framers

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<sup>71</sup>The objectives and basic methods of Plan Lazo are summarized in *Memoria del Ministro de Guerra*, July 20, 1963, p. 67.

<sup>72</sup>The difficulty of training conscript troops in counterinsurgency has been a continuing problem. It has been met by special training programs with only partial success. See *VIII Brigade*, p. 56, for an evaluation of counterinsurgent training for troops.

<sup>73</sup>See Captain Fabio Guillermo Lugo P., "Acción contra la violencia," *RFA*, Vol. III, No. 7, August 1961, pp. 491-500.

thus envisioned the use of some sort of systematic program analysis to increase effectiveness,<sup>74</sup> suggesting that the armed forces, as a bureaucratic hierarchy, approached their work with a degree of "modern management" sophistication.

Analysis and operations initially focused on the guerrilla-infested regions of southwestern Colombia, especially the Quindío region of southern Caldas and northern Valle Departments; northern Tolima; northeastern Huila; and northeast Cauca. Also included were northeastern regions such as the Puente Nacional area in Santander Department and Santa Rita in Vichada.

As regards military operations in guerrilla-affected zones, Plan Lazo ordered the army and small marine units to deploy from patrol bases and military posts as reaction forces. In Quindío, a key coffee-producing guerrilla-infested area, a new brigade was formed that included infantry, artillery, engineers, and special units such as ranger, intelligence, and psychological warfare companies.<sup>75</sup>

The army was not the only service to enlarge its forces or to take on new tasks. Navy commanders were given responsibility for certain coastal areas, and surveillance against illegal landings on the Colombian coast was increased. More important, the air force acquired several types of helicopters from the United States, first through the Military Assistance Program, and later, independent of foreign assistance, for use in counter guerrilla missions. In 1966 these craft flew 4,855 hours--62 percent of all hours for all types of aircraft in public order missions--conveying troops, evacuating 115 dead and wounded, and providing rapid transport for top military commanders.

The importance of these helicopters for counter guerrilla operations was underscored in March 1967, when Colombia signed an agreement with

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<sup>74</sup>*VIII Brigade*, a major source for this section, reflects the framers' desire to evaluate Plan Lazo's operations by reference to its goals and their willingness to modify operations when results did not meet expectations. The indices of the Plan's effectiveness that are used in that work, however, are either activity indicators such as the number of men employed or wells dug, or body counts of dead guerrillas. Whether these are meaningful measures is open to question.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.

the Hughes Tool Company to buy twelve helicopters with other than U.S. military assistance funds, even though Colombia was experiencing a foreign exchange crisis. Although Colombia was considered through the 1960s to have small and antiquated inventories of most major military equipment, its helicopter inventory was rated "average" by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.<sup>76</sup>

Within a year of Plan Lazo's initiation, the armed forces reported that 154 patrol bases and 196 military posts were in operation in guerrilla zones, and that 70 percent of all military forces were deployed in public order missions.<sup>77</sup> An effort was also begun to subordinate all public order forces--the military, the National Police, national detective forces, and internal revenue agents--under a unified military command. Initially, this move generated inter-service jealousies and competition among civilian leaders at the departmental and local level who had some control over the various civil police forces. However, as Plan Lazo continued, military commanders were able to assert themselves, and incidences of duplication of work, especially intelligence work, and the mistaking of troops for guerrillas diminished.

Toward the end of 1964, the commanders in certain areas such as Quindío concluded that control had shifted in their favor. The army then organized civilian self-defense units (*autodefensas*) and directed them to relieve army units of some patrolling and local garrisoning.

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<sup>76</sup> For details of helicopter use in public order missions, see *Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, July 20, 1967, p. 180. The helicopter purchase was reported by Agence France Presse, Lima, March 9, 1967. For a comparison of Colombia's military inventories with those of other countries, see Amelia C. Leiss, *Changing Patterns of Arms Transfers* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Center for International Studies, 1970), pp. 130-140. For descriptions of Colombia's foreign exchange difficulties and their implications, see Richard R. Nelson, *The Effective Exchange Rate, Employment, and Growth in a Foreign Exchange Constrained Economy*, The Rand Corporation, RM-5680-AID, November 1968; Richard L. Maullin, *The Colombia-IMF Disagreement of November-December 1966: An Interpretation of Its Place in Colombian Politics*, The Rand Corporation, RM-5314-RC, June 1967; and John Sheahan, *Imports, Investment and Growth: Colombian Experience Since 1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1966).

<sup>77</sup> *Memoria del Ministro de Guerra*, July 20, 1963, p. 67.

A similar program was begun in the cities, where in 1965 a wave of kidnapping had created apprehension among the wealthy.

Perhaps the most notable military aspect of Plan Lazo was the adoption of counterinsurgency warfare techniques that were highly dependent on sophisticated intelligence-gathering and analysis. Counterinsurgency warfare means dealing with small guerrilla groups that operate sporadically and that avoid meeting the army, unless to ambush, at all costs.<sup>78</sup> Army tactical units acquired a "*comando localizador*," or unconventional warfare shock group, which clandestinely killed or captured guerrilla and bandit leaders. In addition, Mobile Intelligence Groups (*grupos móviles de inteligencia*) were attached to all major operating units. Their activities seem to have included counterinsurgency work similar to the *comando localizador*, as well as information-gathering. These units have since been integrated with police and detective service intelligence teams in a Brigade Intelligence Net. The Brigade Intelligence Net also used paid informants and cash rewards as a major part of its information-gathering and analysis.<sup>79</sup>

As an adjunct to the expanded intelligence operations, psychological warfare and public relations units attempted to inspire confidence and cooperation in the civil population. Their problem as Plan Lazo began was twofold. First, in many regions the army's reputation had suffered badly in earlier counterinsurgency campaigns, especially where the army had treated local populations as enemies. Because of this, there

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<sup>78</sup>In this respect it is interesting to note that the *Memoria del Ministro de Guerra*, July 20, 1964, p. 69, remarks that "the army had innumerable encounters, raids, ambushes and minor actions common in guerrilla war," as well as "34 major combat actions in which the organized bands faced the army's troops."

<sup>79</sup>*VIII Brigade*, p. 42, and *Memoria del Ministro de Guerra*, July 20, 1963, p. 67. Complaints and evidence of torture, frequently part of insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare, have appeared periodically during the 1960s. It is impossible to assess the extent to which torture has been employed in Colombia; but it is noteworthy that torture has not become a major political issue between critics and supporters of the National Front governments as it has in other Latin American countries with insurgent politics. Nevertheless, numerous reports of brutality punctuate the record of Colombia's guerrilla and counterinsurgency operations.

was some popular support for the guerrillas. Second, in the same areas, guerrillas and bandits had terrorized the population to the point that even when people wished the return of government authority, they had no confidence in the army's ability to protect them.

The work of the psychological warfare and public relations units was coordinated closely with civic action (*acción cívica*) and military-civil action (*acción cívico-militar*), the other major components, besides military operations, of the armed forces' counterinsurgent campaign. Civic action under Plan Lazo meant the use of military resources in physical and social projects to raise living conditions to an "indispensable subsistence minimum."<sup>80</sup> Civic action included the construction of health posts, schools, electric plants, water systems, penetration roads and major highways. As noted before, some of this work had direct military application. But to a significant degree it represented a new developmentalist thrust within the Colombian military that was intended to regain lost prestige for the institution while helping to create a strong modern society.<sup>81</sup>

Military-civil action had more of a palliative and public relations aspect. Under it the military mobilized a town's or a region's professional and business elements for day-long donations of services. Since 1963, the annual reports to Congress of the Minister of War (after

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<sup>80</sup> *VIII Brigade*, p. 85.

<sup>81</sup> In describing civic action, *VIII Brigade* begins:

Two words, civic action, were until just three or four years ago [1961] almost impracticable in the life of the National Army. . . . The fratricidal struggle between the nation's traditional parties, on the one hand, and then other factors of a moral [and] economic . . . character were leading Colombia to the greatest abyss that a state might confront. The Armed Forces . . . suffered great losses in all ways because of this armed struggle. Thus it has become necessary to regenerate the great masses in the rural areas and to bring to their attention the constitutional principle that the Armed Forces of the nation are here not only to defend national sovereignty, but also the life, honor and goods of its fellow citizens, and to recoup in this manner the faith that good people had lost in their men of arms.

1966, National Defense) have provided an impressive but somewhat bewildering statistical breakdown of the number of haircuts given and teeth filled under military auspices. The intention, of course, was not only to improve social conditions but also to win the goodwill and confidence of the civilian population.<sup>82</sup>

Plan Lazo was very much the creature of its sponsors, the armed forces under the leadership of General Ruíz Novoa and the national executive led by President Guillermo León Valencia. With their passing from authority in 1965 and 1966 respectively, the character of counter-insurgent operations changed sufficiently to permit some reflection on Plan Lazo's accomplishments to that time. However, the Plan is difficult to evaluate. This is so, first, because in practice it tended to confuse one goal, the repression of guerrillas and rural bandits, with another, the promotion of social and economic change in a variegated rural environment. Second, underlying it were largely untested reformist assumptions about the relationship between violence and human and environmental conditions. Third, it is difficult to isolate the impact of the military in affairs outside the disciplined use of arms where other powerful forces are also at work.<sup>83</sup>

The basic assumption of Plan Lazo was that mere physical repression of existing guerrillas and bandits would not eradicate violence in Colombia unless the underlying political, social, and economic causes of violence were also eradicated. This assumption gave Plan Lazo an enormously ambitious scope. In effect the Plan became an important

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid. notes, p. 86, that as the number of guerrillas was reduced between 1962 and 1965 in the Quindío region, it became increasingly difficult for the army to elicit the cooperation of businessmen and professionals for military-civic action work days. Perhaps this was so because fewer guerrillas provided less stimulus for countermeasures. In any case, such waning enthusiasm at the local level seems to have been a premonition of the lessening enthusiasm for civic action that was shortly to manifest itself at the national level.

<sup>83</sup>A Guatemalan counterguerrilla program, Plan Piloto, undertaken in 1967 and similar to Plan Lazo in many respects, presents many of the same problems for evaluation. A forthcoming study of the Guatemalan army by Caesar Sereseres, of the University of California at Riverside, will provide useful comparative data.

instrument of comprehensive reform policies that seemed to imply knowledge of the threshold at which social and economic deprivation would produce violence.

It becomes easier to see Plan Lazo's effects if the more strictly military goal of killing or incarcerating guerrillas is separated from the developmentalist aspects of counterinsurgent operations. For example, in Quindío, from which the fullest statistics are available, the army claims to have eliminated all but one of the thirty guerrilla and bandit groups thought to have been active from September 1962 through May 1965.<sup>84</sup> In the same region, the monthly civilian death toll attributed to the action of guerrillas and guerrilla-style bandits dropped from 54 in 1963 to 36 in 1964. Operations were successful enough in Quindío by 1963 that the army felt ready to attempt sweeps using Plan Lazo techniques in the more explicitly political "independent republics" of Riochiquito, Pato-Guayabero and Marquetalia, the spawning grounds of the FARC. By July 1966, Ruiz's successor as Minister of National Defense, General Gabriel Rebeiz Pizarro, could declare that all of Quindío as well as major portions of Tolima, Valle, and Santander Departments were "totally pacified." In the independent republics, Rebeiz reported the "virtual disappearance of the armed bands that tried to eliminate the authority of the state. . . ."<sup>85</sup> The claims were repeated by General Gerardo Ayerbe, Rebeiz's successor, in following years.<sup>86</sup>

In spite of such claims of nearly total pacification, Quindío and other regions continued to have guerrilla activity. Figure 1, for example, indicates that insurgent violence solely in FARC areas of activity, including Quindío, occurred at the rate of 3.68 incidents per

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<sup>84</sup>*VIII Brigade*, pp. 266-267. This report states that approximately 379 guerrillas and bandits were active in these bands in 1962 and that approximately 10 percent were still at large in 1965. The remaining guerrilla group active in mid-1965, the Zarpazo gang, was finally eliminated in an armed encounter in Meta Department, far removed from Quindío, nearly two years later. Zarpazo's career, as well as a wealth of detail on the field operations of the army's Mobile Intelligence Groups, is given in anecdotal form in Sgt. 2nd class Evelio Buitrago Salazar, *Zarpazo* (n.p.: 1967?).

<sup>85</sup>*Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, July 20, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, July 20, 1968, p. 3.

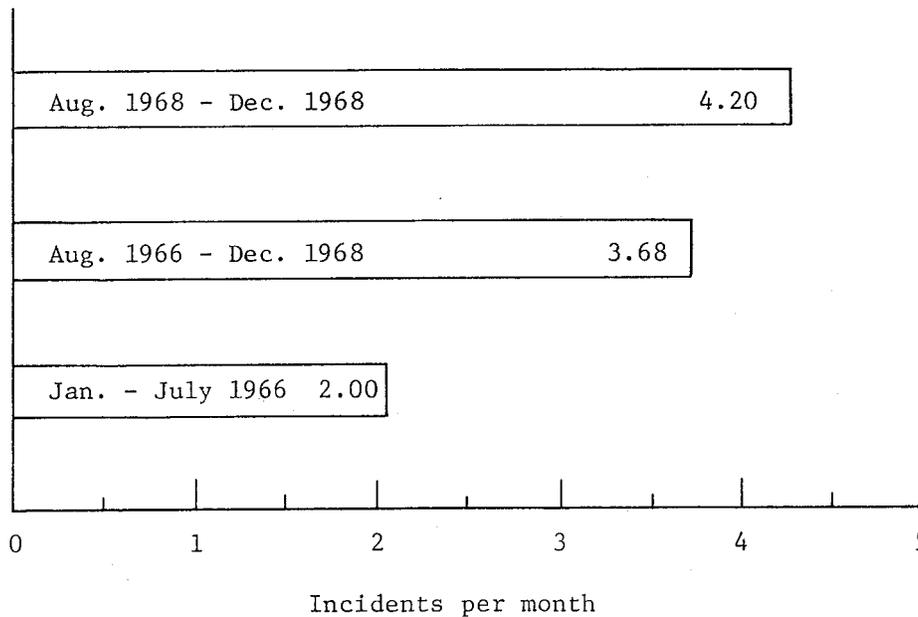


Fig. 1 -- Incidents of FARC-related violence in eight Colombian departments, 1966-1968

NOTE: The eight departments are Caldas (including the departments of Quindío and Risaralda, which were formed from Caldas between 1966 and 1968), Cauca, Caquetá, Cundinamarca, Huila, Meta, Tolima, and Valle. FARC violence here includes any act of armed violence reported in the news media and attributed to or involving the FARC.

SOURCES: *El Espectador*, *El Siglo*, *El Tiempo*, and *La República*, all published in Bogotá, 1966-1968, and reports of electronic news-media broadcasts cited in the *Daily Report* of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce.

month from August 1966 through December 1968. This period began with the inauguration of President Carlos Lleras and ended with the first year of post-Cold War Colombian diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. When Lleras established relations with the Soviets in January 1968, there was much speculation that he expected the Soviets to tell the Moscow-leaning Colombian Communists to reduce support for and temper the FARC guerrillas. But the monthly incident rate was higher as Lleras started his third year in office, August 1968, than it was from January through July 1966, during which the FARC issued its first statement of national revolutionary intent and achieved its highest degree of political-military organization.

Military and police forces, as well as civilians, continued to suffer casualties, but at decreasing rates, as time went on. The armed forces lost nearly 6 men per month in 1965-1966 and slightly more than 2 per month in 1967-1968. Total deaths in Colombia attributed to guerrillas averaged 75 per month in 1965-1966 and 40 per month in 1967-1968.<sup>87</sup>

Still, the claim of Generals Rebeiz and Ayerbe had a great deal of substance. A defense minister presenting his yearly report to Congress and asking for increased appropriations is not likely to minimize the threat facing his forces or make excessive claims for success when the congressmen from the affected areas can easily verify his assertions.

In retrospect, it seems that Plan Lazo did repress the activities of numerous guerrilla squads and did deny them the territories in which they had roamed with near impunity for years. However, as the activity of the FARC, the ELN, and the ELP through 1970 testify, Plan Lazo did not eliminate all bands. Guerrillas have enjoyed limited support, often in urban as well as rural areas, from both Communist and non-Communist sources. The inaccessibility of certain corners of the Colombian republic favors the guerrillas (as well as limits their effectiveness). Thus, some guerrillas in Plan Lazo's target areas still remain at large.

The evaluation of Plan Lazo's developmentalist civic-action programs depends largely upon what type of measuring device is used. The Ministry of National Defense has tended to publish general indices of economic and social activity for given departments and numerous tables detailing the number of projects undertaken in a given period. The problem with the first is that they give some sense of economic or social output but no indication of the strictly military inputs or the relationship, if any, between military inputs and socioeconomic outcomes. Civic action may well have contributed to "economic growth" and "social development." But the degree to which it did remains obscured in the highly general rhetoric of Plan Lazo's creators and by the difficulty of finding enough public data to measure *the military's*

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<sup>87</sup> Calculated from *Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, 1966, p. 79; 1968, p. 68.

contribution to given development goals. Nor do the armed forces' lists of projects provide a real answer. These projects might have been undertaken by civilian agencies, in any case. The available data merely provide evidence of military activity in normally civilian spheres of responsibility. They say little about the contribution of that activity to "development," whether defined as (a) levels of socioeconomic activity thought to lower meaningfully the threshold of guerrilla-band formation and subsequent violence, or as (b) the socioeconomic qualities of a strong nation-state able to defend itself. The real problem in evaluation, moreover, may lie ultimately in Plan Lazo's assumptions about violence and development. To put it simply, do guerrillas ambush because a town lacks sanitary water? Do they stop simply because pathogenic amoebas are gone? In Colombia's case, the answers seem to be both yes and no. Political motives such as the exercise of power based on violence or the unwillingness to make peace with former enemies may deny reformism its efficacy.

One unintended and unexpected result of Plan Lazo's developmentalist civic action was the weight it added to military opinion on politically sensitive issues relating to social change and economic development. Over the short term, Plan Lazo and its developmentalist programs provided General Ruíz Novoa with a vehicle on which to ride to national political prominence. Over the long term, they increased the public's expectation of, and created bureaucratic mechanisms, for, the military's presence to be felt in time of national political tension.

Like many programs during the armed forces' long history of confronting guerrillas, Plan Lazo did not die in 1965, even though the man it was associated with most, General Ruíz Novoa, exited from power. Elements of Plan Lazo survive in current counterinsurgency doctrine and operational techniques. After Ruíz's forced resignation, a retrenchment occurred within the military, its leading officers anxious to shield the institution from political attack. This coincided with the final months of Valencia's presidency and the definite emergence of a new kind of guerrilla, the revolutionary insurgent.

The new political climate called for revision of operational priorities for the armed forces, and reorganization of the Ministry of War

was chosen as the means of doing it. Legislative Decree 3398, December 24, 1965, changed the name of the Ministry of War to the Ministry of National Defense. It also reestablished coordination of national defense planning at the top national level through the Consejo Superior de Defensa Nacional. Apparently, during Ruíz's and Valencia's tenure, this civil-military body was not given the prominence it had under President Lleras Camargo.<sup>88</sup> The intent of the new decree was to provide a regular and legitimate channel for the military to express its views on policy matters so as to avoid open political advocacy by a Defense Minister, as Ruíz had done.

Since this reorganization took effect, the armed forces have concentrated primarily on the military and intelligence aspects of counter-insurgent warfare. Military operations of the Plan Lazo type were conducted between 1966 and 1968 in the southern departments, where the ELN has continued the attacks it initiated in early 1965; and most recently in Cordoba, where the ELP operates. Since 1966, the army has retained approximately 60 percent of its forces in public order missions, with some 270 tactical units in the field.<sup>89</sup>

Civic action continues to be used in current operations, as a means both to gain civilian cooperation with the army and to improve material and social conditions in guerrilla-affected rural areas. Recently, for example, the military has promoted Plan Andes, under which high school and university-trained youth are brought into the army for deployment as a technical and social assistance youth corps in violence-prone areas.<sup>90</sup> What is perhaps most significant about civic action programs

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<sup>88</sup>For example, an editorial in the *RFA* shortly after Ruíz's downfall argued strenuously that the way to reestablish communication between military and civil sectors was to "give permanent life" to the Consejo. Brig. Gen. Miguel A. Peña B., "Pueblo, fuerzas armadas," in *RFA*, Vol. XI, No. 31, March-April 1965, p. 8. To enhance the Consejo's capabilities for national defense planning, the Lleras Restrepo government created a National Intelligence Board (Junta de Inteligencia Nacional) with regional subdivisions, as an auxiliary to the Consejo. This body coordinates all national intelligence-gathering and analysis. See *Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, July 20, 1967, p. 77.

<sup>89</sup>*Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, July 20, 1967, p. 107.

<sup>90</sup>*Memoria del Ministro de Defensa Nacional*, July 20, 1968, pp. 77-81.

since 1966, however, is their more careful integration into a counter-insurgent effort that emphasizes *the physical repression of guerrillas as the primary task of the armed forces.*

From the perspective of counter guerrilla forces, information about how guerrilla activities are sustained, both materially and ideologically, has assumed increasing operational importance. Currently the Colombian armed forces appear to be more concerned about knowing which and how ideologically motivated persons might exploit rural economic and social conditions than about using the army as the main tool to transform those conditions.

The emphasis on intelligence can be seen clearly in each of the several major blows the armed forces have dealt the FARC and the ELN since mid-1967. In the breaking up of an ELN urban support network in June-July 1968, for example, armed forces intelligence agents analyzed the statements and photographs of Mexican journalist Mario Menéndez Rodríguez, who had visited the ELN while it staged a particularly bloody train robbery to learn about ELN operations for a magazine article.<sup>91</sup> That detective work led to the recognition of Manuel Marulanda Albornoz, alias "Rubén," who was then allegedly acting as a courier between Cuba and the ELN and as a key coordinator of Fabio Vazquez's ELN urban support network. "Rubén" was located and captured, and he apparently provided detailed information about his contacts. This information led to the destruction of an ELN guerrilla squad that had just formed in rural Lebrija municipio in Santander, and to the arrest of ELN urban support members in Cali, Bucaramanga, and Bogotá. By this operation the armed forces reduced the capacity of a major ELN faction to sustain operations, especially those that would, because of the psychological value of their success, enhance the prestige and fear accorded this revolutionary group. The intelligence work in the "Rubén" case may well have speeded the surrenders to the army and the intensified factionalism within the ELN that followed, further reducing the group's political effectiveness. The military's handling of the "Rubén" case is representative of the methodical approach it has taken in the grim contest with its revolutionary adversaries.

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<sup>91</sup>*El Siglo*, July 7, 1968, and *El Espectador*, July 13, 1968.

IV. THE IMPACT OF COUNTERINSURGENT WARFARE ON THE  
MILITARY AS AN INSTITUTION

PROLONGED GUERRILLA WARFARE in the 1960s has affected the Colombian military's budget and the size and character of its forces. These effects in turn have had repercussions in Colombia's domestic political life and international affairs. This section attempts to clarify the relationship between fighting, institutional forms, and the military's national and international political roles in Colombia. It discusses certain institutional changes in the armed forces during the 1960s, comparing them with other Latin American militaries. It considers the Colombian military budget under guerrilla war conditions. And finally, it characterizes the role of the United States in support of Colombian counter-insurgent operations.

The Size and Budgetary Cost of Colombia's Armed Forces

Table 1 shows estimates of the size of the Colombian armed forces since 1945.<sup>92</sup> Towards the end of the 1960s these forces were estimated at 54,000-64,000 men.<sup>93</sup> The army is overwhelmingly the largest military service, with 45,000-50,000 men, and the navy and air force account for 5,000-7,000 and 3,350-6,000, respectively. The army has predominated,

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<sup>92</sup>The exact size of Colombia's military establishment appears to be secret. Although the Ministry of National Defense publishes the numbers of the annual decrees fixing force levels, the texts of those decrees do not appear in the *Diario Oficial*, Colombia's official gazeteer.

<sup>93</sup>Technically under the Ministry of Defense since 1952, but not included in these data unless otherwise specified, are the National Police, a paramilitary force numbering approximately 34,000 in the late 1960s.

Table 1

GROWTH OF COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES, 1945-1969

Year	Estimated Force Size (Source)	Year	Estimated Force Size (Source)
1945	10,820 (1)	1960	17,900 (Coward, in 2)
1946	10,820 (1)		20,800 (1)
1947	15,060 (1)		23,000 (2)
1948	15,060 (1)		37,000 (Barber & Ronning, in 2)
1949	15,060 (1)	1961	20,800 (1)
1950	14,660 (1)	1962	22,800 (1)
1951	14,660 (1)	1963	22,800 (1)
1952	15,660 (1)	1964	22,800 (1)
1953	15,660 (1)	1965	37,000 (Barber & Ronning, in 2)
1954	15,660 (1)		40,000 (2)
1955	11,700 (2)		47,800 (Ewing & Sellers, in 2)
	16,589 (1)		
1956	16,589 (1)	1966	53,500 (3)
1957	20,800 (1)	1967	52,000 (3)
1958	20,800 (1)	1968	64,000 (1)
1959	20,800 (1)	1969	64,000 (1)
			54,000 (3)

SOURCES: (1) *The Statesman's Yearbook, 1947-1969*. This source gives a figure of 12,000 to 15,000 for the army from 1947 to 1967. It gives no data on air force personnel before 1968, but includes data on naval personnel beginning in 1947. The estimates drawn from this source include an increase of 1,000 men every five years over the lowest report for army personnel in 1947 -- 12,000 men -- to adjust for an assumed but unreported growth in army manpower. The estimates are thus the sum of this adjusted figure and the report of naval personnel (and, beginning 1968, air force personnel).

(2) Joseph E. Loftus, *Latin American Defense Expenditures, 1938-1965*, The Rand Corporation, RM-5310-PR/ISA, January 1968.

(3) Miscellaneous unpublished estimates by informed observers.

in spite of Colombia's potential as a naval power, with both Caribbean and Pacific coastlines. In 1960 the officer corps consisted of approximately 1,000 men. Assuming a similar ratio of officers to enlisted men the 1969 officer corps had roughly 2,500 men.

Data from Table 1 indicate that military manpower increased dramatically during the two surges of politically connected violence since 1945. Between 1946 and 1953 -- when Liberal and Conservative feuding was most intense -- these data show that the armed forces' manpower increased by 45 percent. Similarly, between 1960 and 1968 -- when Liberal and Conservative violence receded while guerrilla banditry and revolutionary insurgency grew -- the armed forces expanded by 73 percent, according to the highest estimate for 1960, and 258 percent, according to the lowest estimate for 1960. Whichever of these latter figures correspond most closely to fact, the total picture suggests significant growth in military manpower during periods of politically related violence. In contrast, armed forces manpower appears relatively stable between 1957 and 1961,<sup>94</sup> when the National Front was generally accepted as a preferable alternative to Liberal-Conservative feuding.<sup>95</sup>

Interestingly enough, this growth in manpower is not matched by a correspondingly large increase in the military's portion of the national budget. Table 2, which shows the military budget according to three sources, indicates that the military's portion increased 17.1 percent between 1945 and 1950 but may have decreased slightly between 1960 and 1965. These variations have not, however, been sufficient to push the military's share of the national budget out of the relatively narrow range of 10 to 16 percent since the end of the war with Peru.<sup>96</sup> The growth

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<sup>94</sup>The armed forces expanded by 32.8 percent from 1954 through 1957, during the somewhat less violent Rojas Pinilla administration.

<sup>95</sup>This statement is made with some reservations. The data for 1957-1961 in Table 1 (note especially the wide variance in the estimates for 1960) may be insufficient to judge by.

<sup>96</sup>The term "narrow" is relative at best. For the sake of comparison, from data in the *Anuario general de estadística* and the *Anuario estadístico*, 1924-1963, the roughly 6-percent range in military expenditures (excluding the National Police) is smaller than the 9.9-percent range in educational expenditures (low, 4.4 percent in 1948; high, 14.3 percent in 1963) and the 20.7-percent range in public works expenditure (low, 14.7 percent in 1940; high, 35.4 percent in 1948), and is equivalent to the 5.5-percent

Table 2  
MILITARY AND POLICE PORTIONS OF THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL BUDGET, 1924-1969  
(Estimates; in percent)

Year <sup>a</sup>	National Police (1)	Military Forces (1)	Total (1)	Total (2)	Total (3)
National Police Separate from the Ministry of War					
1924	10.8	7.4	18.2	--	--
1926	8.3	6.8	15.1	--	--
1928	7.6	6.4	14.0	--	--
1930	10.8	6.9	17.7	--	--
1932	10.8	8.2	19.0	--	--
1934	7.7	32.5	40.2	--	--
1936	11.3	19.5	30.8	--	--
1938	9.7	15.2	24.9	--	16.2
1939	--	--	--	--	16.9
1940	9.1	13.4	22.5	--	11.6
1941	--	--	--	--	13.7
1942	--	--	--	--	10.4
1943	--	--	--	--	8.8
1944	--	--	--	--	12.4
1945	7.8	13.4	21.2	--	13.4
1946	8.1	10.2	18.3	--	10.4
1947	--	--	--	--	13.5
1948	4.1	13.8	17.9	--	14.3
1949	--	--	--	--	17.7
1950	4.6	15.7	20.3	15.7	15.7
1951	--	--	--	15.5	17.9
1952	--	--	--	19.8	23.3
National Police Under the Ministry of War <sup>b</sup>					
1953	--	--	--	22.5	25.4
1954	--	--	27.8	24.4	26.3
1955	--	--	--	19.9	17.1
1956	--	--	27.1	21.1	23.2
1957	--	--	--	20.5	23.2
1958	--	--	20.4	18.4	19.5
1959	--	--	--	17.2	17.3
1960	--	--	21.1	15.9	14.5
1961	--	--	--	13.2	12.9
1962	--	--	--	--	25.8
1963	--	--	25.4	--	23.0
1964	--	--	--	--	23.3
1965	8.0	13.0	21.0	15.1	24.9
1966	5.6	12.0	17.6 <sup>c</sup>	--	--
1967	5.0	13.0	18.0 <sup>c</sup>	--	--
1969	--	--	21.0 <sup>c</sup>	--	--

SOURCES: (1) Republic of Colombia, *Anuario general de estadística*, issued annually through the Contraloría General de la República (1924-1957) and the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE) (1958-present). National Police budget estimates before 1953 are reckoned at 75 percent of the budget of the Ministry of Government, under which the Police were subsumed. Percentages entered under "Total" reflect military and police forces combined.

(2) Anthony Maingot, "Colombia," in Lyle M. McAlister et al., *The Military in Latin American Socio-Political Evolution: Four Case Studies* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Research in Social Systems, 1970). Maingot draws from *Análisis económico del presupuesto*, 1960 (Bogotá: DANE, 1960), and these data apparently exclude the National Police.

(3) Joseph E. Loftus, *Latin American Defense Expenditures, 1938-1968*, The Rand Corporation, RM-5310-PR/ISA, January 1968, p. 36. Loftus' data are derived from the *U.N. Statistical Yearbook*, *The Statesman's Yearbook*, and *América en Cifras*. These data may not reflect the fact that the National Police were separate from the Ministry of War before 1953. The noted tendency toward a larger military budget beginning in 1952 may owe in part to that addition to the Ministry of War's budget.

<sup>a</sup>Entries are given only for the years for which figures are available.

<sup>b</sup>Ministry of National Defense after 1965.

<sup>c</sup>These figures do not reflect the supplemental budget appropriations normally added by the Congress. Such "extraordinary budget" supplements enlarged the War Ministry's budget by an average of 31.9 percent between 1961 and 1964. See Boris Kozolchyk, *Legal Foundations of the Colombian Military*, The Rand Corporation, RM-5172-PR, February 1967.

in military manpower is not clearly revealed in the military's percent of the national government's budget probably because of the continued absolute growth of overall national government expenditures while military pay increases tended to lag behind.<sup>97</sup>

Intensification of guerrilla warfare thus has coincided with growth in military manpower and probably with shifts in the military portion of the national budget. The question arises whether Colombia's armed forces might be disproportionately larger than those of other Latin American states of large to medium populations and economic capacities. Table 3 indicates that the Colombian armed forces, in spite of their expansion to deal with guerrillas in the early 1960s, currently rank only fifth among the seven largest military establishments in Latin America as measured by the number of military personnel per 100,000 population.

Table 3

PROPORTION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE POPULATIONS  
OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, 1969

Country	Military Personnel Per 100,000 Population
Chile .....	667.7
Argentina .....	557.8
Peru .....	434.8
Venezuela .....	363.3
Colombia .....	332.6
Brazil .....	205.9
Mexico .....	152.5

SOURCES: Population figures: *Times* (London),  
September 29, 1969; armed forces figures: *The  
Statesman's Yearbook*, 1969-1970.

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range in health expenditures (low, 4.3 percent in 1956; high, 9.8 percent in 1950). Loftus (see Source #2, Table 1) argues that Colombian defense expenditures fluctuate greatly but that a secular rise can be observed. His perception of a secular rise may owe in part to his inclusion of police expenditures in his calculations of military expenditures after 1953.

<sup>97</sup>Maingot, "Colombia" (abridgment), p. 160, notes that a 1959 pay raise for officers that nearly doubled their salaries was the first pay increase since 1941. Since then, however, officer pay increases have been more regular: pay doubled between 1960 and 1965, and there was another raise in 1968.

Colombia's rank in military expenditures as a percent of GNP and total government expenditures, however, indicates that it has recently spent proportionately more on its military than have three other Latin American states with higher per capita GNP and higher military manpower-to-population ratios. Table 4 shows that in 1963 Colombia spent more for its armed forces than might be expected of a state that ranked fifth in per capita GNP among the seven countries in Latin America with substantial industrial sectors.

Table 4

DEFENSE PORTIONS OF GNP AND TOTAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES  
FOR LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, 1963

Country	Per Capita GNP (1) (US\$)	Defense Expenditures as % of GNP (2)	Defense Expendi- tures as % of Total Govt. Expenditures (3)
Argentina	566	2.5	17.3
Brazil	300	2.1	15.2
Chile	327	1.8	10.1
Colombia	309	2.3	16.0
Mexico	386	0.7	7.8
Peru	236	2.7	16.3
Venezuela	768	2.2	10.2

SOURCES: (1) *Statistical Abstract of Latin America, 1967*  
(Los Angeles: Latin American Center, UCLA, 1968).  
(2) Loftus, *Latin American Defense Expenditures*, p.49;  
*Memoria del Ministro de Guerra*, July 20, 1964, p. 18.  
(3) Loftus, p. 36; *Memoria* (1964), p. 18.

Colombia's relatively high military expenditure is also apparent in a comparison of defense expenditures per person in the armed forces among the larger Latin American states. As Table 5 indicates, Colombia ranks fourth but close to Chile and higher than Argentina, even though Chile's and Argentina's per capita GNP are by 1969 respectively nearly two and three times that of Colombia.

Table 5

DEFENSE EXPENDITURES PER PERSON IN THE ARMED FORCES,  
LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, 1965  
(In U.S. dollars)

Venezuela .....	\$5911
Mexico .....	2345
Chile .....	2144
Colombia .....	2126
Argentina .....	2114
Brazil .....	1363 (1964)
Peru .....	811 (1964)

SOURCES: All countries except Colombia, Loftus, op. cit., p. 59; Colombia calculated from data in Loftus, passim, and *Memoria del Ministro de Defensa*, July 20, 1966, p. 16.

Tables 6, 7, and 8 show the relationship of military size -- as measured by the number of military personnel per 100,000 population -- and the military budget as a percent of GNP and the national budget to five indicators of modern socioeconomic conditions for most Latin American countries during the 1960s.<sup>98</sup> There is a positive relationship between

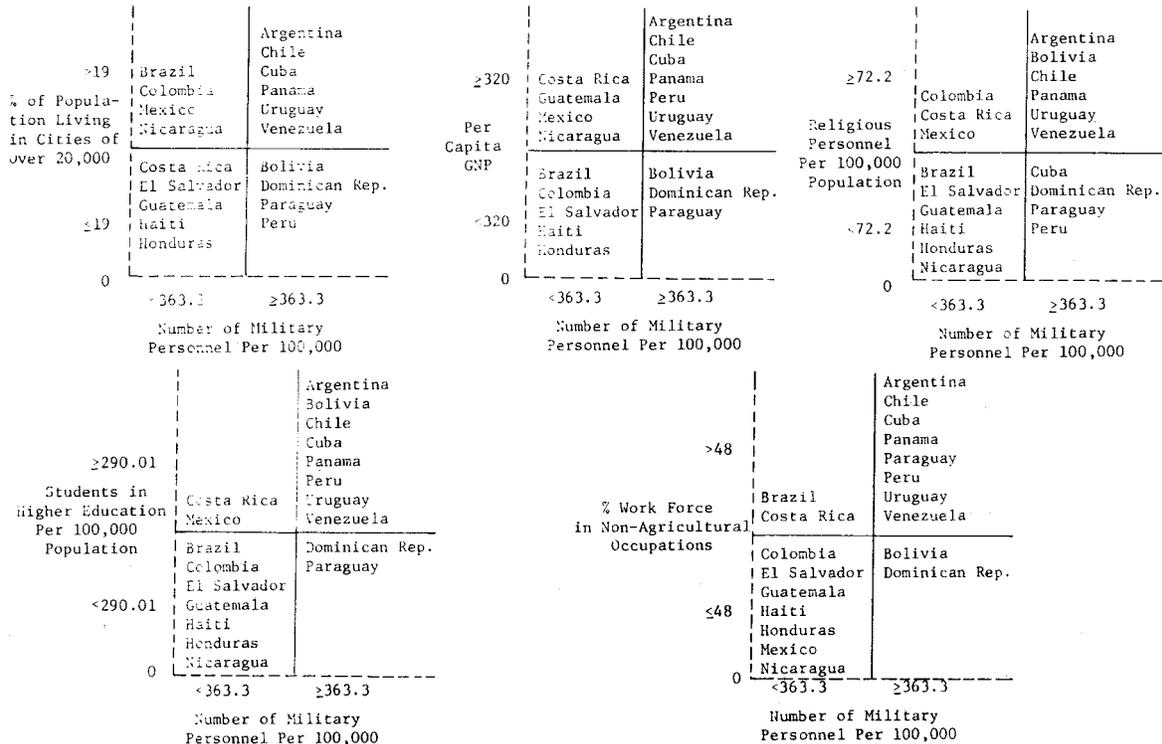
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<sup>98</sup>The data in these tables must be treated with great caution, as numerous collection and reporting problems exist. Primary among these is the unreliability of reports by national statistical and accounting agencies and the difficulty of international comparisons in the absence of standard collection and analysis techniques and definitions. Nevertheless, the data are useful in relating military factors to indicators of social and economic development. As both data collection and analysis improve in Latin America during the 1970s through the use of more sophisticated electronic data processing, this relationship can be investigated more rigorously by statistical means.

The continuing development of Colombia's data collection and analysis agency, the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), is a case in point. A post-World War II government agency, it was little supported financially or politically until the regime of President Carlos Lleras Restrepo. Lleras' interest in national economic planning required that he and the national planning agency have more extensive and reliable data on social and economic activity throughout the country. Accordingly, DANE greatly expanded its activities, acquiring both more sophisticated hardware and personnel. DANE's capabilities in the 1970s, therefore, will greatly exceed those of the 1960s. For a brief history of DANE's

Table 6  
PROPORTION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN LATIN AMERICAN POPULATIONS AND FIVE SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS  
(c. mid-1960s)

Country	Number of Military Personnel Per 100,000 Population (1)	% of Population Living in Cities of Over 20,000 (2)	Per Capita GNP (3) (US \$)	Number of Religious Personnel Per 100,000 Population (4)	Number of Students in Higher Education Per 100,000 Population (5)	% Work Force in Non-Agricultural Occupations (6)
Argentina	557.8	48	780	88.2	1057.83	81
Bolivia	545.0	19	160	72.2	335.65	30
Brazil	205.9	27	240	61.1	181.14	49
Chile	677.7	45	510	112.6	484.53	73
Colombia	332.6	21	280	136.0	197.16	48
Costa Rica	120.0	15	400	74.1	361.45	54
Cuba	1512.5	37	320	6.8	381.70	59
Dominican Republic	487.5	12	250	51.8	165.15	40
Ecuador	--	17	190	106.4	256.58	46
El Salvador	150.0	18	270	57.8	120.90	41
Guatemala	170.0	11	320	29.7	153.46	36
Haiti	133.7	5	70	26.8	32.14	17
Honduras	185.0	12	220	19.6	128.90	35
Mexico	152.5	23	470	73.1	290.01	47
Nicaragua	345.5	20	330	47.9	128.90	42
Panama	470.0	33	500	72.2	599.40	56
Paraguay	615.0	14	200	58.2	189.10	49
Peru	434.8	13	320	67.6	386.11	52
Uruguay	461.6	45	570	107.4	569.56	82
Venezuela	363.3	47	850	91.9	520.27	68

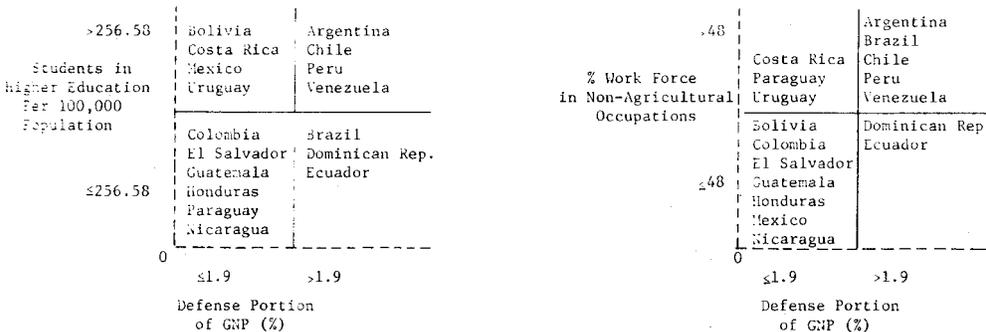
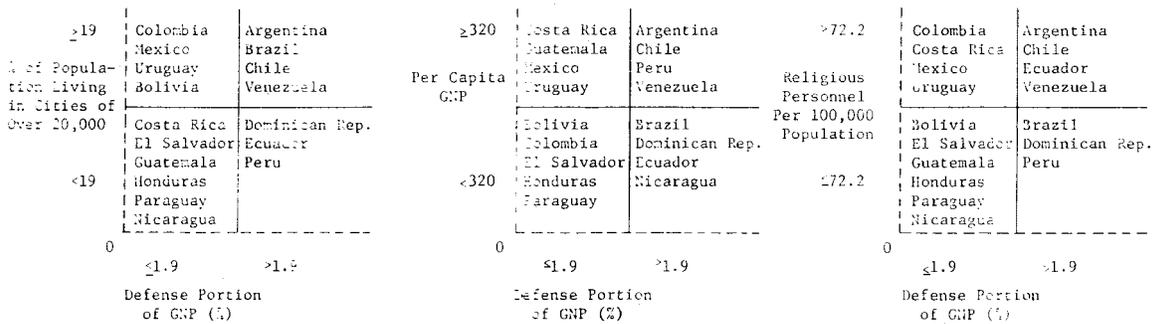


SOURCES:

- (1) *Times* (London), September 29, 1969; *The Statesman's Yearbook*, 1969-1970.
- (2) Bruce M. Russett et al., *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).
- (3) *Times* (London), September 29, 1969.
- (4) Luigi R. Einaudi et al., *Latin American Institutional Development: The Changing Catholic Church* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, RM-6136-DOS, October 1969).
- (5) *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, 1968 (Los Angeles: Latin American Center, 1969).

Table 7  
 DEFENSE PORTION OF GNP AND FIVE SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES  
 (c. mid-1960s)

Country	Defense Portion of GNP (1) (%)	% of Population Living in Cities of Over 20,000 (2)	Per Capita GNP (3) (US \$)	Number of Religious Personnel Per 100,000 Population (4)	Number of Students in Higher Education Per 100,000 Population (5)	% Work Force in Non-Agricultural Occupations (6)
Argentina	2.5	48	780	88.2	1057.83	81
Bolivia	1.2	19	160	72.2	335.65	30
Brazil	2.1	27	240	61.1	181.14	49
Chile	2.0	45	510	112.6	484.53	73
Colombia	1.7	21	280	136.0	197.16	48
Costa Rica	0.5	15	400	74.1	361.45	54
Cuba	--	37	320	6.8	381.70	59
Dominican Republic	4.5	12	250	51.8	165.15	40
Ecuador	2.1	17	190	106.4	256.58	46
El Salvador	1.3	18	270	57.8	120.90	41
Guatemala	0.9	11	320	29.7	153.46	36
Haiti	--	5	70	26.8	32.14	17
Honduras	1.5	12	220	19.6	128.90	35
Mexico	0.7	23	470	73.1	290.01	47
Nicaragua	1.8	20	330	47.9	128.90	42
Panama	--	33	500	72.2	599.40	56
Paraguay	1.7	14	200	58.2	189.10	49
Peru	1.5	13	320	67.6	386.11	52
Uruguay	1.0	45	570	107.4	569.56	82
Venezuela	2.1	47	850	91.9	520.27	68

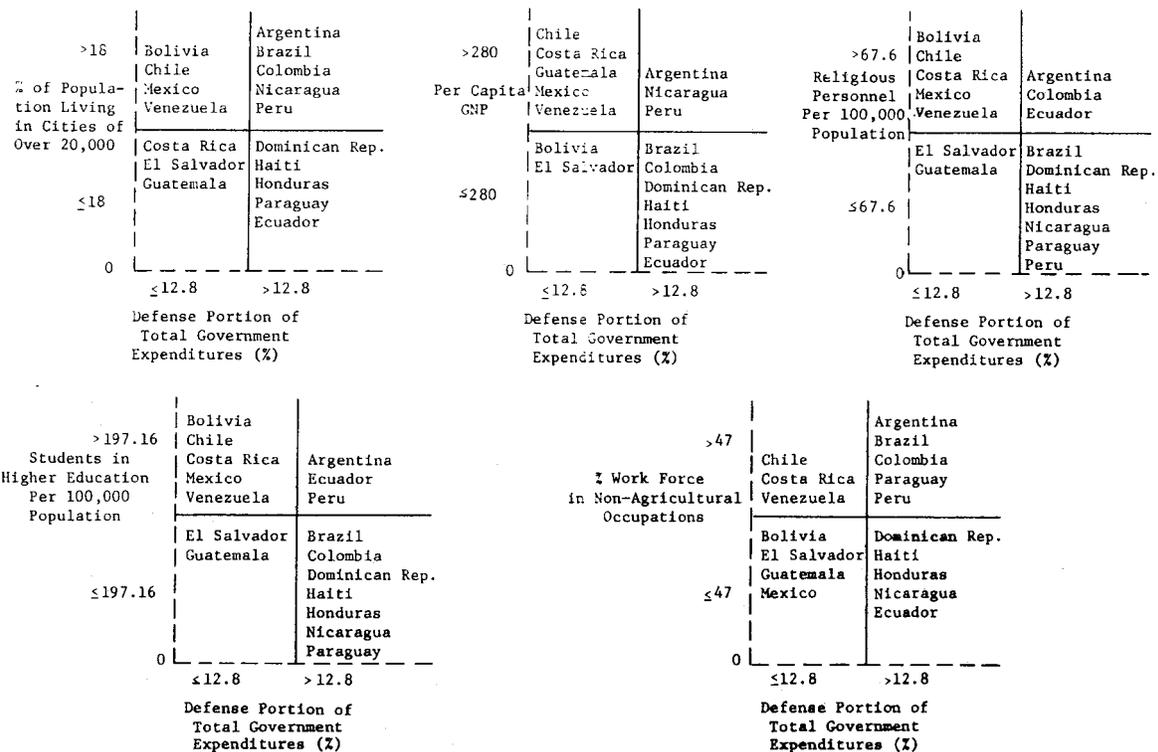


SOURCES:

- (1) Joseph E. Loftus, op. cit., p. 49; Memoria del Ministro de Guerra, July 20, 1964, p. 18.
- (2) Russett et al., op. cit.
- (3) Times (London), September 29, 1969.
- (4) Einaudi et al., op. cit.
- (5) Statistical abstract of Latin America, 1968.

Table 8  
 DEFENSE PORTION OF TOTAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES AND FIVE SOCIOECONOMIC  
 INDICATORS IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES  
 (c. mid-1960s)

Country	Defense Portion of Total Government Expenditures (1) (%)	% of Population Living in Cities of Over 20,000 (2)	Per Capita GNP (3) (US \$)	Number of Religious Personnel Per 100,000 Population (4)	Number of Students in Higher Education Per 100,000 Population (5)	% Work Force in Non-Agricultural Occupations (6)
Argentina	17.3	48	780	88.2	1057.83	81
Bolivia	3.1	19	160	72.2	335.65	30
Brazil	15.2	27	240	61.1	181.14	49
Chile	10.1	45	510	112.6	484.53	73
Colombia	16.0	21	280	136.0	197.16	48
Costa Rica	4.4	15	400	74.1	361.45	54
Cuba	--	37	320	6.8	381.70	59
Dominican Republic	17.9	12	250	51.8	165.15	40
Ecuador	14.5	17	190	106.4	256.58	46
El Salvador	12.2	18	270	57.8	120.90	41
Guatemala	10.0	11	320	29.7	153.46	36
Haiti	21.9	5	70	26.8	32.14	17
Honduras	18.6	12	220	19.6	128.90	35
Mexico	7.8	23	470	73.1	290.01	47
Nicaragua	15.7	20	330	47.9	128.90	42
Panama	--	33	500	72.2	599.40	56
Paraguay	21.4	14	200	58.2	189.10	49
Peru	13.5	13	320	67.6	386.11	52
Uruguay	--	45	570	107.4	569.56	82
Venezuela	10.2	47	850	91.9	520.27	68



SOURCES:

- (1) Joseph E. Loftus, op. cit., p. 36; *Memoria del Ministro de Guerra*, July 29, 1964, p. 18.
- (2) Russett et al., op. cit.
- (3) *Times* (London), September 29, 1969.
- (4) Einaudi et al., op. cit.
- (5) *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, 1968.

the size of the military, its percent of GNP, per capita GNP, and the percentage of the work force employed in non-agricultural occupations. In addition, Table 6 indicates that the military's size is greater where there are more students in higher education and religious personnel per 100,000 population. Table 7 shows that the military's percent of GNP is also related positively to urbanization. On the other hand, in Table 8 there are inverse relationships between the military's percent of total government expenditures and per capita GNP, students in higher education and religious personnel per 100,000 population.

These comparisons suggest the hypothesis that in Latin American states, the number of men in uniform per 100,000 population and the military's share of GNP increase as functions of the wealth of the economy and the movement toward more highly educated, urbanized populations. However, nearly all Latin American countries appear to sustain a minimum military expenditure, even nations that are poor and less developed.

When compared with those of other Latin American states, the size of Colombia's military and the resources it consumes do not appear extraordinary. Where there are correlations between a large military and indicators of a wealthy, developing, urban national economy, Colombia stands midway between the relatively wealthy nations such as Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela, and the poorest nations such as Haiti and Honduras. Colombia does not group with those countries where greater military size or portion of GNP is accompanied by relatively low ranking on the indicators of economic and social development. However, like other less wealthy states, Colombia does appear in the quartiles that relate a higher military portion of total government expenditures to relatively low per-capita GNP and number of students in higher education.

National wealth and development, especially when measured by the gross indicators used here, are not the only conditions influencing the size of a military establishment and its consumption of resources. As Tables 1 and 2 on the growth of the Colombian military suggest, war itself is an important factor in military size and costs. Another factor

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operations and a discussion of its current and future work, see *Towards Full Employment* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1970), Appendix 12, pp. 437-471.

might well be the capacity to organize and administer a complex bureaucracy. The Catholic Church, a national system of higher education, and a national military establishment are all bureaucratic organizations with formal hierarchies, numerous sub-functions, and a fair degree of institutional autonomy relative to other social institutions. The apparent relationship between military size and indicators of development may in fact point to intervening variables that are difficult to quantify but reflect the capacity to use, and the degree of experience with, modern organizational techniques.

If it were possible to factor out the economically marginal populations of those Latin American states that have a consequential scientific-agro-industrial sector coexisting with a subsistence agricultural sector, the hypothesis in this argument might be tested further. Shorn of their backlands, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and Colombia might well resemble Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela in the relationship between the wealth and social development of the nation, and the manpower level and GNP consumption of its military establishment. Nevertheless, Table 8 suggests that countries with both large developed and undeveloped economic sectors will tend to have large military establishments. Apparently, the armed forces, like other conspicuous accoutrements of the modern state, will always receive a fair portion of the nation's resources that theoretically could be devoted to the advancement and national integration of the populations less involved in modern socioeconomic activity. In many developing countries with dual modernized and less modernized economic sectors such as Colombia, the costs of the armed forces are then often rationalized by being considered a contribution to social and economic development.

Thus, the size of Colombia's military establishment and its costs are unexceptional when compared with other Latin American states; and its institutional characteristics seem to be sensitive to the same broad economic, social, and bureaucratic determinants affecting other Latin American countries. Nevertheless, prolonged guerrilla warfare during the 1960s may well have caused Colombia to spend its military peso differently than other Latin American states, even if the overall budgets and sizes of the militaries were similar.

Allocation of Colombia's Defense Resources

Does Colombia buy a different type of military establishment than other Latin American militaries, even though the gross costs and sizes of the seven largest Latin American militaries are similar? Unfortunately, insufficient publicly available data prevent answering this query adequately. Some data from Colombian public sources exist, however, that show the percentage of the military budget devoted to certain broad categories of expense at the time of Colombia's greatest revolutionary insurgent guerrilla activity.

Tables 9 and 10 indicate that nearly 80 percent of Colombia's national defense budget in 1965, 1966, and 1967, inclusive and exclusive of the National Police, went for personnel costs. Capital investment (mainly for the construction of military bases) seems most of the time to have consumed less than one percent, thus leaving roughly 16 to 19 percent for procurement and operations, including the purchase of major military equipment and rapid expendables.

When compared with those of Brazil, Argentina, and Peru for 1967 (Table 11), the Colombian military budget stands out for its higher percentage dedicated to personnel costs. In addition, Figure 2 shows that Colombia has relatively low inventories of most major military equipment, except helicopters.

From this admittedly sketchy information, it appears that the distribution of Colombia's military expenditures, if not the size of its armed forces and their budget, is somewhat exceptional. Colombia seems to spend slightly more on manpower and less on materiel. And this expenditure is focused, by and large, on the Colombian army because its troops constitute roughly 83 percent of total armed forces manpower.

One provisional interpretation of these data is that the constant threat and actual occurrence of guerrilla warfare forced the Colombian military to concentrate its relatively few resources on infantrymen and their transport -- helicopters for example -- at the expense of other modern war equipment and the other services. In this sense, guerrilla warfare has had an important impact on the resource allocation of Colombia's armed forces. With hindsight, one could speculate that if Colombia

Table 9

ALLOCATION OF COLOMBIA'S DEFENSE BUDGET  
(NATIONAL POLICE INCLUDED)  
(In millions of pesos)

Item	1965 (Actual Expenditures and Reserves)	1966 (Total Appropriations)	1967 (Appropriations to June)
A. Total national budget	5,848	7,944	7,475
B. Total Ministry of Defense budget (% of A)	1,199 (20.5)	1,403 (17.6)	1,479 (18)
Salaries, daily wages, supplements (% of B)	822 (69)	944 (67)	1,949 (70)
Purchase of durable and non-durable goods and services (includes funds for war equipment and operations) (% of B)	239 (20)	264 (19)	275 (19)
Transfers: social security, pensions, payments to other public entities (% of B)	123 (10)	161 (11)	162 (11)
Investment <sup>a</sup> (% of B)	0.2 (b)	35 (3)	10 (b)

SOURCES: Colombia: *Proyecto de presupuesto, 1967*, and *Presupuesto nacional de rentas e ingresos y liquidación de las apropiaciones, 1967* (Bogotá: Dirección Nacional de Presupuesto, 1967).

<sup>a</sup>Primarily construction of military bases; does not include procurement.

<sup>b</sup>Less than 1/5 of 1 percent.

Table 10

ALLOCATION OF COLOMBIA'S DEFENSE BUDGET  
(NATIONAL POLICE EXCLUDED)  
(In millions of pesos)

Item	1965 (Actual Expenditures and Reserves)	1966 (Total Appropriations)	1967 (Appropriations to June)
A. Total national budget	5,848	7,944	7,475
B. Total Ministry of Defense budget (% of A)	759 (13)	924 (12)	940 (13)
Salaries, daily wages, supplements (% of B)	463 (61)	531 (57)	574 (61)
Purchase of durable and non-durable goods and services (includes funds for war equipment and operations) (% of B)	174 (23)	210 (23)	214 (23)
Transfers: social security, pensions, payments to other public entities (% of B)	121 (16)	148 (16)	147 (16)
Investment <sup>a</sup> (% of B)	0.2 (b)	35 (4)	5 (b)

SOURCES: Colombia: *Proyecto de presupuesto, 1967*, and *Presupuesto nacional de rentas e ingresos y liquidación de las apropiaciones, 1967* (Bogotá: Dirección Nacional de Presupuesto, 1967).

<sup>a</sup>Primarily construction of military bases; does not include procurement.

<sup>b</sup>Less than 1/5 of 1 percent.

Table 11

FUNCTIONAL BREAKDOWN OF FOUR LATIN AMERICAN  
MILITARY BUDGETS, 1967  
(In percent)

Country	Personnel Costs <sup>a</sup>	Operations; <sup>b</sup> Procurement of Non-Durable Equipment	Capital Investment <sup>c</sup>	Procurement of Durable Equipment <sup>d</sup>
Colombia	76 <sup>e</sup>	20.5 <sup>e</sup>	less than 1/5 of 1%	2.5 <sup>e</sup>
Brazil	70	17.0	1	13.0
Argentina	64	28.0	8	1.0
Peru	60	36.0	--	4.0
Average, 4 countries	68.5	25.8	--	5.1

SOURCES: For Colombia, *Colombia: Proyecto de presupuesto, 1967* and *Presupuesto nacional de rentas e ingresos y liquidación de las apropiaciones, 1967*; for the other countries, data from official documents from Brazil, Peru, and Argentina in the possession of Luigi R. Einaudi, recalculated for inclusion here.

NOTE: These figures represent only the grossest approximations and are intended to suggest the broad functional distribution of military expenditures in these countries.

<sup>a</sup>Includes pay, allowances, social security, and pension costs.

<sup>b</sup>Includes the cost of maintenance and supplies for military activities. Differences in what these four militaries include under "operations" inhibit any close comparisons without further specification.

<sup>c</sup>Primarily military base construction.

<sup>d</sup>Includes major items of war equipment such as planes, ships, tanks, and artillery.

<sup>e</sup>Excludes the National Police.

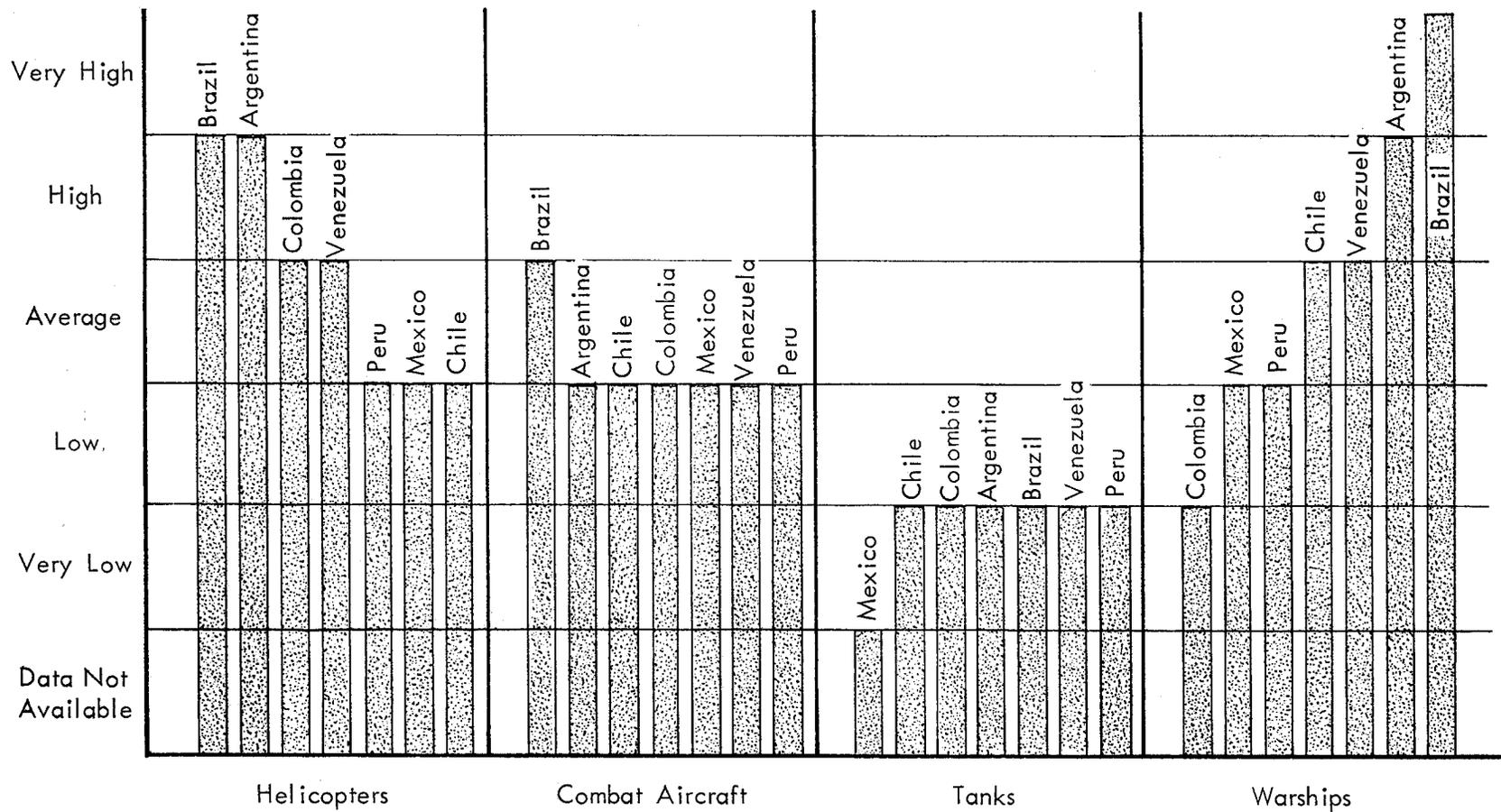


Fig. 2 -- Profiles of materiel inventories for the seven largest Latin American militaries (scale based on a worldwide ranking of militaries excluding the major powers)

SOURCE: Amelia C. Leiss, *Changing Patterns of Arms Transfers* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Center for International Studies, 1970) pp. 132-139.

had had to face, simultaneously, the threat or fact of conventional warfare in defense of its territorial interests, the strain on the economy would have been insupportable without massive foreign aid.

#### U.S. Military Aid and the Colombian Military Budget

Consideration of how Colombia spends its military budget leads to further questions about the sources of military funds. In this regard the role of U.S. military assistance during the 1960s needs to be put in perspective with the burden carried by the Colombian taxpayer.

#### Rationales for U.S. Military Assistance to Latin America

Since the early 1960s, the basic purpose of U.S. military aid has been to secure Colombia, and the rest of Latin America, as a region of strategic and economic importance for the United States, from conquest or undue influence by internal and external forces contrary to the interests of the United States.

Originally, and dating from before World War II, the strategic threat to U.S. interests in Latin America was perceived to be a conventional military one. Extra-hemisphere-supported naval blockades, expeditionary forces attacking key centers such as the Panama Canal, and missile emplacements against the United States were considered the likely specific threats. But as the missile age matured in the late 1950s, and a "balance of terror" became the most important deterrent against strategic attack, the need for hemispheric defense against extra-hemisphere threats seemed less pressing. Thus, the defense treaties that the United States arranged with many Latin American states after World War II -- which created joint hemispheric defense plans and provided for U.S. military assistance -- tended to lose some of their "guard-the-hemisphere" rationale.

A new rationale for U.S. military aid to Latin America quickly superseded the declining concept of hemispheric defense. The new rationale was internal security against revolutionary insurgents. This view of the strategic threat owed directly to a Latin American phenomenon -- the Cuban Revolution -- but it also reflected the progressive confrontation

of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China through proxy forces engaged in irregularly or non-conventionally fought "wars of national liberation." Beginning in the late 1950s, and accelerating with the attempt to rethink defense doctrines that is often associated with the Kennedy Administration, the United States fashioned military and economic aid programs to meet this new insurgent threat to its strategic interests in Latin America.

On the one hand, U.S. leaders associated the potential for Communist-led violence with economic underdevelopment. The Alliance for Progress, an outgrowth of this perception, was formed to spur economic development, increase governmental effectiveness, and promote social justice under friendly democratic regimes.

In the military sphere, however, U.S. policymakers were not willing to trust simply to the good effects of untried economic aid programs. Thus, they created a counterinsurgent military policy for Latin America to complement the Alliance for Progress, even though the Foreign Assistance Acts of 1961 and 1964 prohibited U.S. military assistance for internal security purposes. (A provision of the 1961 Act did allow for exceptions, to be determined by the President.) In 1965, the United States Congress formally revised its military assistance doctrines to accord with military and executive views of the need to counter the non-conventional, revolutionary guerrilla insurgent.<sup>99</sup> By that time, however, the military assistance program in Colombia could already look back on years of counterinsurgent activity.

U.S. military aid to Latin America has had two principal objectives since the switch in emphasis from conventional hemispheric defense to internal security. One has been the raising of Latin American military effectiveness in counterinsurgent, internal security missions. Where possible -- depending on complex questions of receptivity, absorptive

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<sup>99</sup>Two useful sources for changes in U.S. military aid programs in Latin America in the early 1960s are U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *United States Military Policies and Programs in Latin America* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969) and Michael J. Francis, "Military Aid to Latin America in the U.S. Congress," *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, Vol. XI, No. 3, July 1964, pp. 389-404.

capacity, and mutual interest -- the United States has provided professional advice, training, and equipment for counterinsurgent operations.<sup>100</sup>

The other objective of military aid has been to promote the military's contribution to social and economic progress. It stemmed from the emphasis, in internal security aid doctrine, on lessening what many in the United States and in Latin America have considered to be the military's waste of resources that could be better spent fostering economic development and social justice. As a result, military civic action received financial support and a rhetoric emphasizing military professionalism developed under the assumption that a professional military leader does not intervene in civilian politics, even if his counterinsurgent activities carry him far into the web of socioeconomic policy issues.

Some Effects of U.S. Military Aid to Colombia and a Comparative Note Regarding Peru

In 1961, Colombia's guerrillas were thought by U.S. policymakers, as well as by Colombian leaders friendly to the United States, to be potential if not actual troops for a revolutionary insurgent war in Colombia. This perception, combined with Fidel Castro's exhortations to revolution in Latin America, prompted the United States to offer additional assistance to Colombia under the new internal security rationale. A re-oriented U.S. program for Colombia, one of the first in Latin America

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<sup>100</sup>This analysis does not address questions regarding the influence of U.S. military advice and training. It should be noted, however, that such an analysis should evaluate not only the relevance of the advice and training for the Latin American situation but also the Latin American militaries' capacity to absorb them. Undoubtedly, that capacity is affected by the levels of professionalism achieved in the exercise of the military's various functions. Generally speaking, low levels of professionalism in the military can be an obstacle to effective aid. High levels of professionalism can facilitate technological transfers, yet they can also hinder U.S. influence over a nation's defense concepts, which an aid program may include among its political goals.

An important source for the views of U.S. military writers on insurgency is *Military Review*, published by the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. See, for example, Walter Darnell Jacobs, "This Matter of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. 10, October 1964, pp. 79-85.

to receive a "Presidential Determination" to lift the barrier against the use of military aid for internal security, was implemented through a special bilateral treaty signed on April 3, 1961, just three months after President John Kennedy's inauguration.

In offering increased military aid (at a time of recurring foreign exchange crises) in return for Colombia's concentrating its military expenditures on counterinsurgent operations and materiel, U.S. military assistance may well have diverted Colombia's military resources from other uses, such as aircraft modernization.

Colombia's military budget for the 1960s had three basic sources: (1) Colombian pesos, obtained through taxes and the earnings of military-run enterprises, that had been spent within the national market; (2) Colombian pesos, obtained through taxes, that had been converted to foreign exchange to spend outside the national market, and (3) the U.S.-dollar-value of the grant and credit aid provided by the U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP). The introduction of the third source relieved the strain on Colombian pesos imposed by the second source. U.S. military assistance has been a subsidy to Colombia's military budget.

Table 12 shows the allocation and budgetary contribution of MAP funds to Colombia for 1964 and 1967, the two years when U.S. military assistance was highest. The data reveal that the United States contributed heavily to the improvement of Colombia's military budget during the years of most intense guerrilla and insurgent activity. Nevertheless, MAP's contribution to Colombia's overall budget was not great. Its significance for total government expenditures and foreign exchange requirements probably varied in accordance with Colombia's yearly economic performance.<sup>101</sup>

From the perspective of the United States, the military assistance program to Colombia seems to have been effective. It helped to build

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<sup>101</sup>A comparison of per-capita MAP levels with per-capita GNP and the incidence of insurgency in recipient Latin American countries showed no correlations. Thus, the amount of MAP aid given to Latin American countries may have depended on *ad hoc* assessments of local resources, guerrilla problems, and possibilities for U.S. political leverage through MAP, rather than on some formula that closely related aid to the degree of insurgency and the lack of local economic resources.

Table 12

U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO COLOMBIA: ALLOCATION AND BUDGETARY CONTRIBUTION, 1964 and 1967

Year	Amount (US\$ millions)	Allocation		Contribution to the Colombian Budget		
		"Force Improvement" <sup>a</sup> (%)	Civic Action and Training (%)	% of National Budget	% of Ministry of Defense Budget	Est. % of Total Ministry of Defense Allocation for "Force Improvement" <sup>a</sup>
1964	10.7	60	40	2.1	11 (including National Police)	68
1967	10.4	--	--	1.5	15 (excluding National Police)	65

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Defense; Republic of Colombia, *Diario Oficial*, 1964, 1967.

<sup>a</sup>Durable equipment for combat use.

up the Colombian military, permitting the assimilation of more men and equipment without raising the military portion of the national budget much above its accustomed level. Thus, Colombia's defense expenditures, which concentrate on the army and its counterinsurgent mission, seem to be in accord with U.S. objectives. The United States can say that it helped Colombians avoid having to sacrifice important development investments in order to repress guerrillas.

It is difficult, however, to assess to what degree this Colombian expenditure pattern and force orientation is a response to the incentives and rationales offered by the United States. Surely the fact that historically the Colombian armed forces have been highly dependent on the United States for equipment argues in favor of a determining U.S. influence. So do the generally close relations between the U.S. military establishment in Colombia (the Military Group) and Colombian military commanders, which go back to cooperation established in World War II and when Colombia contributed troops to the Korean War.

Nevertheless, the Colombian military might have developed the same defense concepts and expenditure patterns, given foreign exchange constraints, even in the absence of U.S. influence. Colombian concern about the threat that guerrillas posed to the viability of the National Front actually antedated serious U.S. concern about guerrillas and the translation of that concern into a revamped military assistance program.

President Alberto Lleras Camargo, for example, appealed to the United States for military aid against guerrillas as early as 1959, two years before President Kennedy's formal determination to provide such aid.

From a Colombian perspective, moreover, the U.S. military aid program may well have appeared an unstable or ephemeral source of help.<sup>102</sup> In fiscal year 1969, MAP funds in Latin America fell to less than half their 1967 level.<sup>103</sup> Also, some of the items allocated to counter-guerrilla forces in Latin America may have ended up in Southeast Asia, instead of their original destination. Thus, with high levels of MAP aid maintained for relatively few years, overall Colombian defense strategy and expenditures probably have marched mostly to Colombia's own drum beat.

In any case, in the 1960s both donor and recipient had similar ideas of the basic security threat, and they have been able to apply leverage involving the military aid program to realize their respective ends. The United States sought to orient the Colombians to its perception of the threat. Its instrument for leverage was money and materiel tied to advice and training. The Colombians sought to persuade the United States to adopt their perception of likely threats. Their leverage was the existence of active anti-government guerrillas, a credible example of the threat feared by the United States.

Thus, when the United States decided that a new type of strategic threat was at hand in Latin America and began to provide aid in accord with that new perception, Colombia was fully prepared, for reasons of its own, to receive it. One might even speculate that Colombia's early interest in and developing doctrine of counterinsurgent warfare helped

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<sup>102</sup>Colombian Defense Minister Gerardo Ayerbe Chaux reported in his ministry's *Memoria* for 1970 that "beginning in June of this year the supply of elements considered under the [1952 U.S.-Colombia Mutual Aid] Pact has been suspended; this new situation necessarily has to be resolved with the nation's own resources." See *El Espectador*, July 25, 1970.

<sup>103</sup>According to *Military Assistance Facts, 1968*, a United States Department of Defense publication, MAP aid to Latin America was \$57.9 million in 1967, and \$26 million had been allocated for 1969. In comparison, African aid recipients were scheduled to receive \$23 million in aid during fiscal 1969.

the United States move toward the changes in military aid to the Latin American region that were effected after 1961.

Such a meeting of minds and congruence of purposes has not been the case in neighboring Peru, for example.<sup>104</sup> At the time the Colombian military was most actively preoccupied with its guerrillas, the Peruvian military seemed most concerned with modernizing its antiquated, World War II-vintage equipment. Not that the possibility of guerrilla activity was discounted in Peru, but it remained mostly a theoretical concern until the formation of small guerrilla units was discovered in the summer of 1965. Even as the military moved to eliminate these insurgent groups, a campaign that was completed successfully in six months, the concern with modernizing Peru's conventional forces remained uppermost in the minds of its military leaders. Further preparations for handling a state of "latent insurgency," as a Peruvian military publication described the situation in Peru after the guerrilla campaign, amounted merely to expanding the list of missions that the military felt obliged to fund.<sup>105</sup>

The U.S. shift in its doctrine of military assistance to Latin America ended Peruvian hopes of reducing the economic and political costs of equipment modernization because the new stance tended to deny the legitimacy of external defense. For most of the 1960s the history of U.S. military aid to Peru has been unhappy mainly because both countries have had differing perceptions of strategic threats and how best to cope with them.

MAP's success in Colombia seems to owe much to Colombia's special receptivity to the new U.S. program for internal security. Colombia was already fighting its guerrillas, and the offering of aid coincided with a period of recurring foreign exchange crises that were a drain on Colombia's economy.

The relative failure of MAP in Peru owed in part to the failure of the program to agree with Peruvian concepts of threat and need. Also,

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<sup>104</sup> See Luigi R. Einaudi, *Peruvian Military Relations with the United States*, The Rand Corporation, P-4389, June 1970, pp. 34-40.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11. See also Lt. Col. Enrique Gallegos Venero, "Success in Peru: A Case Study in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, Vol. XLVI, No. 2, February 1966, pp. 15-21.

in spite of its dependence on the United States as a major source of equipment, Peru, in contrast to Colombia, has had greater disposable foreign exchange resources with which to satisfy its military equipment needs from countries other than the United States.

Generally speaking, in order to devise aid programs that will accomplish their political objectives, the grantor must know what important constraints would affect the recipient's use of the program. The difficulties that the United States has had with the Peruvian military since the mid-1960s are an example of the consequences of not taking local constraints fully into account.

Put another way, the aid grantor ought to consider the recipient country's capacity to absorb aid. Quantitative measures of this capacity might be developed by refining the relationships between economic wealth, the level and types of aid, and the size of the military and its budget. Another estimate of absorptive capacity might be gained by categorizing the professional skills needed and comparing existing recipient abilities to administer the aid program. But another dimension of absorptive capacity resists quantification -- the ideological or value-oriented dimension. Einaudi suggests that in the eyes of the Peruvian military, U.S. behavior under its aid program, including the reluctance to sell Peru modern aircraft, relegated the Peruvian armed forces to the status of super-police. The ideological-psychological resistance generated by this feeling seems to have reduced the capacity of the Peruvian armed forces to absorb the type of military aid the U.S. offered. In contrast, the Colombian ideological-psychological predisposition to receive U.S. aid with an internal security emphasis seems to have facilitated the assimilation of military aid. Effects of this receptivity can be seen in the expansion of the Colombian armed forces between 1960 and 1965 and the assumption of a major procurement role by MAP.

The relatively high congruity of U.S. military aid objectives and Colombian military doctrines and expenditure patterns may not continue. Aspects of Colombia's current military situation could reduce the congruence of U.S. and Colombian perceptions of armed forces missions and related expenditures.

First, Colombia's success in reducing if not eliminating the rural guerrillas and insurgents may relieve the armed forces of their sense of urgency about pursuing rural guerrilla warfare. Second, an external-defense need to prepare for contingencies along the Venezuelan border is growing; it requires the purchase of aircraft, artillery, naval units, and armor, which the armed forces have foregone in favor of building up their counter guerrilla capabilities.<sup>106</sup> Third, improvements in Colombia's foreign exchange position because of high coffee prices and continued growth and expansion of its other exports have reduced Colombia's economic and psychological dependence on the United States. Fourth, the Colombian government has proven willing to satisfy military leaders' stated equipment needs even at high cost to the national economy. The most striking example of this was the purchase of twelve helicopters in the spring of 1967, independent of any U.S. military assistance, shortly after a foreign exchange crisis of major proportions.<sup>107</sup>

These conditions could well lead to a Colombian military posture on missions and equipment that diverges from U.S. policy objectives. This possibility is greater if U.S. military aid programs continue to stress counterinsurgency and cutting "wasteful" expenditures on modern equipment.

Regardless of whether the objectives do diverge, U.S. support for Colombian military expenditures has already diminished, and the burden of future military expenditures rests increasingly on the Colombian taxpayer. Though the Military Assistance Program in Colombia, as elsewhere in Latin America, has been reduced substantially since 1968, Colombian military and police expenditures have continued at roughly one-fifth of total national government expenditures.

In summary, the United States has made an important contribution to Colombian military expenditures and capabilities in the past. Yet, Colombia's armed forces are and will be largely financed by Colombians. One of the original objectives of the post-1961 U.S. military aid program--

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<sup>106</sup>In December 1970, Colombia negotiated the purchase of 16 Mirage aircraft from France. There are also rumors of the intended purchase of tanks and ships from either France or Spain. See *El Espectador*, December 20, 1970.

<sup>107</sup>See note 76, above.

easing the burden of increased internal security costs--was in fact pursued for a rather short period, judging from the decline in MAP aid to the Latin American region. Given this brevity, it could well be an exaggeration to view the counterinsurgent-oriented U.S. military aid program as the decisive factor in Colombia's internal security campaigns or as a major factor in Colombia's halting but evident economic growth during the 1960s. Compared with Peru, Colombia was well prepared to absorb internal-security aid. Thus, the U.S. resources appear to have been effective largely because of a congruence of purpose. That congruence is likely to diminish in the near future.

#### The Effectiveness of U.S. Military Assistance

Judgments about whether the U.S. military aid program has achieved its dual objective of raising Colombia's counterinsurgent capability while relieving Colombian taxpayers of a crucial part of the military budget will differ, depending on the relative weight accorded political, economic, and military criteria of evaluation.

As with the Alliance for Progress, the U.S. economic aid program to Latin America during the 1960s, MAP's clearest achievements are political in an international and national strategic sense. U.S. aid to Colombia, both military and economic, has had a basic political objective: to continue the friendly National Front regimes. U.S. military assistance undeniably gave the National Front regimes a major psychological boost that strengthened them in the face of their actual and potential enemies. It allowed the National Front to tell itself and its opposition, foreign and domestic, that it had the active support of the most powerful military force in existence. The military aid relationship with the United States may thus have served as a deterrent to some would-be insurgents or external sponsors. In return, the United States has been able to count on Colombia to support U.S. policy, consistently on Cuba, and fairly reliably on other issues where the USSR and the United States tend to line up their votes. Thus, the military aid program has brought political rewards to both donor and recipient.

When judged by economic criteria, however, MAP has a much more ambiguous record. It is difficult to separate military from economic assistance, as both programs have a shared objective--relief of strains on Colombian resources. But to the extent that they are separable, they have made highly disproportionate contributions to this economic goal. Through 1967, economic assistance to Colombia under the Alliance for Progress totaled \$430.3 million, making Colombia the third highest recipient of U.S. economic aid in Latin America after Brazil and Chile, which received \$1,092.6 and \$573.4 millions respectively.<sup>108</sup> Total military assistance to Colombia between 1961 and 1967 is estimated at close to \$60 million, again third behind Brazil and Chile. Thus, Alliance for Progress aid outweighed the dollar value of military aid about seven to one.

To the extent the military aid was intended to release resources for economic development or to foster that development by directing funds to civic action programs, it must share the critical evaluation of U.S. economic assistance in the Comptroller General's and Senate Foreign Relations Committee's study of Alliance for Progress aid to Colombia.<sup>109</sup> That study acknowledges that the U.S. aid helped the National Front governments of the 1960s to achieve successes in economic stabilization and monetary and fiscal policy. However, that aid may well have contributed to a false sense of leisure among Colombian policymakers and allowed them to postpone certain reforms that were needed to achieve the goals of social justice and economic growth so prominent in National Front rhetoric.

As this controversial Senate document recognizes, the truth of that assertion is debatable and impossible to verify. The Colombians may have actually been aided in their economic development effort by being relieved of the burden of certain military expenditures for a few years.

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<sup>108</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on American Republic Affairs, and the Comptroller General, *Survey of the Alliance for Progress: Colombia -- A Case History of U.S. Aid* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 199.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

Yet the question remains whether the Colombians might have benefited as well or more if they had been forced by their own circumstances to bite the bullet harder in the 1960s. The authoritarian, military-controlled, developmentalist regimes that have been installed in Brazil and Peru may be suggestive of how that bullet might have been bitten in Colombia in the absence of the economic and political impact of U.S. assistance.

The purely technical objective of improving military techniques is not discussed here, because it requires comment by a military professional. Another objective of the military assistance program, however, has been to affect the social and institutional behavior of Latin American militaries. When the counterinsurgency-oriented assistance program was in preliminary conceptual stages, a common operating assumption in U.S. academic and political circles was that Latin American armed forces were basically anti-democratic (because of a supposed upper-class bias among officers and a tendency to oust constitutionally selected civilian leaders) and a drain on national economies (because their activities did not enhance economic growth and had little to do with the realities of hemispheric defense in the nuclear age).<sup>110</sup> By providing funds for Latin American militaries to assist the largely civilian social or liberal democratic reform governments of the early 1960s against the threat of revolutionary insurgency, it was hoped that the U.S. military assistance program would further promote a democratic political order that subordinated the military and its budget demands to popularly supported civilian leadership. Thus, the United States aided receptive Latin American militaries such as Colombia's in coping with the social and economic causes of insurgency.

Next only to the stance against revolutionary insurgency itself, this attempt at social engineering has been the most ideologically tinged and controversial aspect of U.S. military assistance. And there have been no meaningful criteria for evaluating it, other than crude correlations of amounts of aid with the presence or absence of military coups or excessive military budgets.

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<sup>110</sup> An excellent critical summary of these academic and journalistic analyses is contained in Nun, "The Middle Class Military Coup."

Actually, though, the attempt at societal manipulation was abortive. In practice, MAP has emphasized the strictly military side of counter-insurgency.<sup>111</sup> The emphasis on the warfare aspect of United States military and economic aid programs in Latin America may have been inevitable. The actual fact of warfare, in contrast to its remote and complex social-political-economic causes, can be dealt with in a fairly straightforward manner. The exact relation between relative economic deprivation, feelings of social injustice, and political violence (including the implied violence of military coups) remains elusive. U.S. economic and military aid to Latin America presumed to understand what kinds and amounts of resources were needed to lower the threshold of revolutionary violence and to create a stable, democratic political order. In a short time it became apparent, however, as perhaps Colombia's complex history of political violence indicates, that violence was a phenomenon of which only the concrete manifestations could be comprehended. Those manifestations of violence, not its elusive causes, came to receive the greatest attention in the United States' quest to eliminate insurgency through military and economic aid.

American policy at the end of the 1960s seemed to be moving toward a clearer distinction between aid to institutions that suppress violence and economic and social programs that treat violence's underlying though poorly understood causes. What future form U.S. military aid may take in Colombia, if indeed it continues at all, is not yet decided. However, recent proposals for future U.S. assistance programs to Latin America tend to view military assistance and economic development assistance as separate enterprises. This suggests that the rationales for military assistance may undergo further revision in the 1970s.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>One American official in Latin America during the 1960s recently characterized the U.S. emphasis on military counterinsurgency as an incomplete evolution of the basic social democratic and economic development philosophies of formulators of military and economic assistance during the Eisenhower-Kennedy years. See the statement of Ralph Dungan in U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, *United States Military Policies and Programs in Latin America*, Hearings, June-July 1969, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969).

<sup>112</sup>For possible new directions for U.S. assistance programs, see the *New York Times*, September 15, 1970.

In summary, prolonged guerrilla warfare has enhanced the importance of the military institution in Colombian national life. The size and cost of the armed forces and their equipment have been major factors in Colombian policymaking on issues ranging from rural development to relations with the United States. The next and final section discusses some of the complex and important political roles thus thrust upon the military.

V. MILITARIZED POLITICAL CONFLICT AND THE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY of the Colombian armed forces' confrontation with guerrillas, professionalism, as an important institutional norm of the commissioned and non-commissioned officer corps, has affected the way in which the armed forces do battle. But professionalism also has political ramifications.

In Section I the query was posed whether professionalized armed forces can avoid becoming involved in a partisan manner in domestic political warfare. From Colombian experience, it seems that they cannot, but their desire, a result of their professionalism, to remain outside partisan conflict appears to have important consequences for the military's political postures and fighting strategy.

It was also asked how the nature of the internal enemy affects the military's partisanship. In response, the argument can be made that the partisan or nonpartisan character of the military's behavior in combatting guerrillas is determined in large measure by the ideological and partisan identity, if any, of the military's armed internal opposition.

Finally it was asked in what ways professionalism affects the military's conduct in waging war against internal enemies. Primarily, professionalism moves the military to make its own analysis of the causes of conflict. Equipped with such analysis the armed forces become a politically relevant force in their own right because their military actions, which will only favor some of the forces in violent conflict, will most likely be a consequence of their analysis.

Professionalism as an institutional norm usually implies that a boundary exists between the functions of one institution and those of another. Thus, if military men are truly professional, they ought to restrict themselves to those activities that relate to their definition as the legitimate, organized, and disciplined agents of armed defense

of national interests. Ideally, in societies whose civilian leaders command legitimate power to make national policy with a minimum of systematic and intransigent opposition -- that is, societies where civilian leadership enjoys a necessary and sufficient consensus of those who can influence the use of power -- the boundary between the profession of arms and that of public policymaking on nondefense matters can be maintained. Communication between the two professions is regularized, and a tradition of civilian determination of when and how to use military forces is firmly established. Idealization of the concept of professionalism, or elite specialization, reinforces these patterns. The Anglo-American countries are often thought to fit this description most closely; and those who extrapolate from Anglo-American experience consider military professionalism an adjunct of a civil democratic order. The Soviet Union also provides an example of civil-military relations that emphasize, in theory and practice, civilian (Communist Party) control over the use of military power. There also, professionalism helps safeguard the separation of the direction of politics and the conduct of war and predisposes the military to restrict its political roles.<sup>113</sup>

The Colombian armed forces are highly professional in many respects. They have a system of specialized military training and education. They have produced doctrines for handling both internal and external threats and have acted on them. They have assimilated concepts of war and military aid from the most advanced war machine in the world and have adjusted them to Colombian conditions. It could be inferred from this study's analyses of the military's experience fighting guerrillas that the norm of professionalism, by focusing military attention on strictly military pursuits, has enhanced the military's performance of its functional role and has kept it from undue involvement in nonmilitary policymaking.

Still, professionalism has not prevented the Colombian military from being an important participant in many domestic political processes, ranging from ruling the state to providing basic public services. Simply put, since the creation of a modern military force in 1904, active members of the military have engaged in the following political activities that have

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<sup>113</sup> See Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

involved the power to alter values in Colombian society:

1. Acting as the supreme authority of state (1953-1957; 1957-1958).
2. Attempting *coups d'état* against civil authority (1936 and 1944).
3. Propounding a view of national security organization that resulted in the formal incorporation of military personnel and military analyses into domestic decisionmaking (1961 to the present).
4. Carrying out functions that are normally in the province of civilian ministries such as Government, Justice, Health, Education, and Public Works; (*ad hoc* from the turn of the century to 1962; on a regular basis from 1962 to the present).
5. Participating in national budget formulation by lobbying for military interests among executive and legislative decision-makers.

*Participation in these processes has not only been political, in the broadest sense of the term, but also partisan.* This judgment may be received with some dispute. For many, including Colombian military men, military professionalism implies negligible military involvement in partisan affairs as well as minimal involvement in the formulation of domestic public policy. The modern Colombian military was founded on the principle of avoiding such partisan involvement, and it has made conscious efforts to avoid being cast in partisan roles.

Nevertheless, the armed forces have been both professional and partisan, a consequence, primarily, of the kind of warfare that has occupied the military since the late 1940s. Aside from the Korean War episode, the armed forces have been engaged in internal warfare that has involved Colombians fighting Colombians, largely over political, social, and economic issues.

Colombia's guerrilla wars have continually forced the military into essentially partisan positions. And once they are there, their relative weight has tended to increase in the camp they support. *The professionalism of the military has not kept them out of politics, as many theorizers of democratic government would argue. Rather, it has given the armed forces a strategic political good--the capacity to influence fundamentally the outcome of internal political conflict--which the contenders seek to use or diminish.* It would be naive to think that military leaders under

these circumstances are not conscious of the partisan political impact of their acts.

Since the eruption of major violence between Liberals and Conservatives at the end of the 1940s, the armed forces have been both courted and attacked because of their tremendous capacity to affect the outcome of political conflict. This has severely tested the norm of nonpartisanship, especially during President Laureano Gómez's term (1950-1953). In mid-1953, as a way out of the dilemma posed by being legally required to serve President Gómez, who was pursuing domestic political conflict in a very partisan, violent way, the armed forces themselves took power. But their commander, General Rojas Pinilla, in turn used his custody of the national executive to organize a regime with a distinctly partisan tone, thereby arousing the strong opposition of major political and economic groups. Thus the nonpartisanship of the armed forces was again jeopardized.

In 1957, the armed forces decided to join the groups arrayed against the Rojas Pinilla regime. This decision turned out to have rather partisan consequences, though at the time, the armed forces may have believed their actions not only nonpartisan, but also the only appropriate move for a professional force whose duty it was to reduce the potential for civil war and to reduce the tension between itself and political authorities.

With the subsequent formation of the National Front, the rules of the political game were changed so that no sanction remained for any guerrillas except their self-legitimation as the avengers of past vendettas or as the armed vanguard of a new revolutionary order. Initially, the pursuit of these guerrilla forces had little partisan significance. But subtly, as much of Colombia's guerrilla violence acquired a revolutionary cast after 1962, *the armed forces' role in internal affairs began to shift from policing the countryside to combat social delinquents, toward defending a particular political order against Colombians who believed in another.*

Increasingly during the 1960s the civilian National Front politicians and the ostensibly nonpartisan military leadership joined in a set of common strategies for defeating the newly subversive, but

essentially Colombian, opposition. The initial glue in this merger was the common rejection of guerrilla violence and banditry. But it was the later development of three revolutionary guerrilla movements that sealed the military as the guardian of the National Front and allowed it to assume an influential policymaking role.<sup>114</sup>

In the early 1960s, military views on national security and national development, all with important implications for public policy outside the strictly military sphere, became part of the National Front's program. Military men regularly managed one-fifth to one-fourth of total government expenditures, and some of these monies were put to uses far afield of ordinary military affairs. Military policy and civilian policy regarding the guerrillas became more closely coordinated, and military and civilian analyses of the causes of insurgency tended to share common insights. As recipients of U.S. military assistance, the armed forces have become participants in a major foreign policymaking area, also.

The result has been that many National Front civilian leaders and important military leaders tend to form a single political front on basic social, economic, and political issues. In President Valencia's words, the political contest in Colombia during the 1960s was between "Bolivarism and Communism." In choosing to side with the National Front, the armed forces have made a partisan commitment in that struggle.

One could argue that since 1957 the Colombian armed forces have only been doing their duty fighting subversives and bandits and that they have not taken sides in the Liberal and Conservative rivalry. But one might answer that they did not need to take sides because within the National Front framework the mainstream Liberals and Conservatives *together* form a coalition of political elites who tend to have similar

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<sup>114</sup>The Colombian armed forces' position in relation to the civilian National Front is similar to the guardian status of the armed forces in Mexico's political system, which is monopolized by the Institutional Revolutionary Party. When that system was challenged in October 1968 by some student groups (whose demonstrations were actually protected by the constitution), the armed forces had a major part in physically breaking up the groups.

views on questions of general social and economic policy, and who have retained an exclusive hold on political power. The National Front constitutional amendments of 1957 and 1959 restricted elective office, through the 1960s, to Liberal and Conservative party members, and, of course, the presidency has had to alternate between the two parties. In the legislative bodies, strict parity had, until 1970, forced all other political organizations to support the two-party system.

Although separate partisan identity is jealously guarded by many Liberal and Conservative activists and ordinary voters, the majority of political figures in both parties share a desire to preserve the National Front's exclusivist political process if not its formal structure. This is especially so for many Conservatives, who, because of the smaller size of their party's vote, especially benefit from the National Front system. Moreover, many nationally prominent Liberals and Conservatives have developed a sense of shared experience in the management of the state and its economy. They view the National Front coalition as an essential political arrangement for the continuity of public policy.

Thus, for various reasons as the 1960s progressed, most of the sanctioned participants in politics--the various electoral factions of the Liberal and Conservative parties--coalesced in their support for the National Front regimes.<sup>115</sup> Through their commitment to the National Front, the armed forces became, *de facto*, the parties' armed force against the principal challenges to the continuity of legal and political traditions inherent in the National Front coalition of Conservatives and Liberals. In short, the armed forces became *the defenders of an essentially closed political system in which power became an exclusive prerogative of traditional partisan interests*, and which only recently began to open up broader opportunities for political participation among "antiestablishment" groups.

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<sup>115</sup> Alliance-shifting, factionalism, and other maneuvers for leadership positions have frequently occurred in National Front politics; but sustained opposition to the National Front system by major Liberal and Conservative figures has been evidenced only by followers of former President Rojas Pinilla.

The partisan nature of the military role can be readily seen in today's most important conflict for control of the Colombian political process, the struggle between the National Front parties and the ANAPO.

Much more than the guerrillas have done, the Alianza Nacional Popular electoral movement (ANAPO), formed in 1960 and led by former President, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, is now providing the greatest test yet of the armed forces' idealized neutrality in the partisan political arena. Throughout the 1960s, the primary focus of the National Front and the armed forces was to meet the threat posed by the revolutionary insurgents of the left. Just as that threat seemed to be contained, the ANAPO--always standing on the line between constitutionally sanctioned political participation and rejection of the constitutional order--emerged as the most serious challenge yet to the social and economic systems supporting National Front politics and the Liberal and Conservative parties.

Until the election of 1970, the ANAPO registered its candidates for public office under both Liberal and Conservative labels, thus competing as a faction against other factions of the two legally sanctioned parties. Most of ANAPO's candidates, however, were listed as Conservatives. Starting in 1970 the ANAPO has presented its candidates for local office under its own name, which is now allowed by constitutional provisions for gradually more open electoral competition. Recently it became a legal political party.

ANAPO stands for the return to power of its leader, Rojas. It has also articulated sketchy programs to transfer some of the wealth held by large domestic and foreign corporations, and by the semi-public national bank, to the "popular" classes in Colombian cities. "Anti-imperialism" has also become a common phrase in ANAPO rhetoric. Although acknowledged Liberals and Conservatives remain in its membership, ANAPO's stance as regards the National Front clearly *rejects* the Conservative-Liberal hegemony over the presidency.

Since 1962, ANAPO's electoral fortunes have risen greatly. In 1962, ANAPO's percentage of the total vote cast for members of the lower house of the Congress, the Chamber of Representatives, was 3

percent; in 1966, it was 17.8 percent.<sup>116</sup> In 1968, it fell slightly to 15.1 percent, but in 1970, with Rojas as its presidential candidate, the ANAPO came within 66,000 votes of defeating the National Front candidate. Concurrent with ANAPO's rise, the leftist faction of the Liberal Party, the MRL, led by Alfonso Lopez Michelson, asserted itself but had disintegrated as a coherent political group by 1967. No electoral faction except ANAPO has survived against the alliance of Liberal and Conservative groups supporting the National Front governments.

ANAPO's strength is also apparent from an examination of electoral returns in Colombia's largest city and national capital, Bogotá. In that city, historically a stronghold of the government-supporting faction of the Liberal Party, ANAPO was the only group to increase its absolute number of votes between 1962 and 1970. In the five congressional elections of the same period, ANAPO's portion went from 6.5 percent to 43.6 percent of Bogotá's total vote cast. By comparison, the left-Liberal MRL faction went from 14.2 percent in 1962 to 7.4 percent of the vote in 1966. The government-supporting Conservatives dropped from 21.1 percent in 1962 to 12.4 percent in 1970. The vote for government-supporting Liberals diminished by 3.4 percent, 44.5 percent to 41.1 percent, in the same period.

As a result of the 1970 elections, ANAPO politicians control one-third of both houses of Congress, 16 of Colombia's 22 departmental assemblies, and approximately 75 percent of the municipal councils, including those of the five largest cities.<sup>117</sup>

Reliable survey research and post-election vote analysis following the 1966 and 1970 presidential elections, as well as firsthand impression, indicate that the ANAPO has been highly successful in capturing the imagination of urban lower- and lower-middle-class voters, including

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<sup>116</sup>These and all other electoral data were calculated from official voter returns provided by the Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, Bogotá. ANAPO's percentage represents the portion of the vote gained by candidates who described themselves as ANAPO members, though they were registered as Liberals or Conservatives.

<sup>117</sup>*New York Times*, November 22, 1971.

some retired military officers and active NCO's.<sup>118</sup> ANAPO, in short, constitutes a major partisan threat to the National Front regime from outside the traditional political elite--a partisan threat not of insurgent violence but of winning away the electoral following of the traditional parties.

That presents the armed forces with a ticklish problem. Rojas, whom the current military leadership removed from power in 1957 and whom many officers consider an embarrassment to the institution, is using the electoral process and the National Front system to achieve popularly sanctioned power. But he campaigns on a promise to alter many of the reformist programs promoted by the armed forces in the effort to combat the opposition of the armed left. Not that Rojas is not a potential reformist himself: his style is distinctly populist. He stands clearly for redistribution of wealth and revenge toward those with social prestige and political authority.

For the armed forces, then, the political issue is, if Rojas is elected, whether they should permit him to assume power and then to alter radically the institutions of socioeconomic reform and political conciliation that they support. Since 1966, rumors of a preventive, anti-Rojas military coup have circulated at election time.<sup>119</sup> During the 1970 presidential campaign, several junior officers were dismissed from the service allegedly for partisan statements (in whose favor the press accounts make it difficult to tell). More important, Rojas' propaganda had some success in making military leaders' statements of neutrality appear as an endorsement of the National Front parties.

Rojas was narrowly defeated in 1970, and the electoral threat was postponed. The current National Front regime of President Misael

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<sup>118</sup>The most complete studies of recent Colombian voting behavior are contained in the *Boletín Mensual de Estadística*, No. 229, August 1970, published by DANE. See also the excellent summary of Rojas' return to political prominence in Thomas G. Sanders, *Rojismo: The Resurgence of Colombian Populism*, American Universities Field Staff Reports, West Coast South America Series, April 1970, Vol. XVII, No. 8.

<sup>119</sup>The reluctance of Chile's armed forces to block the election of Salvador Allende argues against simplistic notions of what political events can motivate a coup. Some ANAPO leaders believe that a military *coup d'état* might work to their benefit, as it would demonstrate the failure of the National Front parties to hold public confidence.

Pastrana Borrero could find itself in serious trouble with public opinion and in danger of losing control of the Congress or even the presidency, however. In that case only the armed forces would have the physical might to prevent Liberal and Conservative politicians from losing their grip on political power. To exercise its power for this purpose, the military would probably enforce a state of siege under which the President would rule by decree, thus limiting the opposition to all-or-nothing gestures. There is a limited precedent for this. Both Presidents Valencia and Lleras Restrepo used the military to enforce a state of siege--declared by Valencia in 1965 and continued to 1967 by Lleras--to assert executive initiative in the face of insurgent and electoral violence, and then in the face of congressional opposition to proposed reforms.

There is another possibility for the military in the event of a breakdown of public support for the National Front parties and a seemingly victorious surge by the Rojas forces: to abandon partisanship or commitment to the National Front parties and take power itself.

To a large extent, the military's future in politics will depend on the capacity of Colombia's traditional political parties, civilian ministries, and private interests to provide the context in which demands for redistribution of wealth and economic expansion can be handled without organized and persistent violence. The National Front system, as a political arrangement between major political forces and as a governmental process, has so far managed to do that. But, as the growing strength of the ANAPO attests, popular approval of the performance of current National Front leaders, which is essential to their legitimacy as rulers, is on the wane. The professionalization and institutional development of the Colombian armed forces, requiring as they do a conception of national defense based on national wealth and political stability, could probably not tolerate a political situation that is perceived to constrain economic growth or to gravely threaten public order.

In larger Latin American states, where military leaders have perceived similar threats of political instability and governmental immobility and have experienced similar if not as overtly manifest threats

from leftist insurgents, civil-military relations have changed radically. In Brazil and Peru, and to some degree in Argentina as well, the military came to believe that a subversive threat existed and that the civilian authorities, caught up in group or class interests, were unable to provide the policies that would either reduce the threat or provide sufficient support for the military if it had to mobilize national defenses. In these circumstances, and this is a crucial point, military professionalism not only increased the military's fighting capabilities but also generated coherent and well-articulated social and economic perspectives that served as rationales for displacing faltering civilian governments.

A lesson from the Colombian experience might be, *where national political conflict is militarized or might well become so, the professionalization of the armed forces helps promote its involvement in partisan political matters.* Their skills and other resources become increasingly those that will determine the outcome of the struggle for power. Even at levels of conflict that are substantially below actual armed civil confrontation, the requirements for mobilizing the resources of the state against its internal national enemies thrust the armed forces to the center of public policymaking. If the armed forces have a well-developed set of doctrines regarding national security--in other words, if they are professional--they will be highly assertive in politics. Under these circumstances, the potential for the armed forces to assume direction of a state is increased if the civilian sectors are not themselves as well organized and coherent about their ends as the professional military.

In Colombia, the National Front seems to have matched and even out-performed the professional military it relied upon to overcome the challenge of armed revolutionaries of the left. But when the civilians appeared to waver, for example during Valencia's presidency, a military figure, ostensibly committed to the same general social causes, used the prominence of his military role in an effort to displace the civilian leader. However, when President Carlos Lleras asserted himself, reorganizing much of the state's public administration and promoting economic growth, the military accepted a subordinate position,

and civilian-military squabbles over policy diminished. Nevertheless, the armed forces have increasingly assumed a commitment to part of the civilian political class and stand in a pivotal political position for the future.