

The war on drugs in Colombia: A current account of U.S. policy

*La guerra de las drogas en Colombia:
Una cuenta corriente de la política
estadounidense*

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JONATHAN D. ROSEN, PH.D. *

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* Rosen received his Ph.D. from the University of Miami and a MA degree in Political Science from Columbia University. Currently, he is a Research Professor at the Universidad del Mar in Huatulco, Mexico. j.ros-en8@umiami.edu

RESUMEN

Este trabajo examina el Plan Colombia (2000-2012), una iniciativa anti-narcóticos que erogó \$8 mil millones de dólares. El análisis se hace desde la perspectiva teórica de las relaciones internacionales; en particular, desde el realismo, liberalismo y constructivismo, con el propósito de comprender la formulación y evolución del mismo, finalizando con un exhaustivo examen de si esta estrategia logró sus metas, así como las consecuencias del mismo.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Plan Colombia, narcotráfico, política exterior norteamericana.

ABSTRACT

The work analyzes Plan Colombia (2000-2012), an \$8 billion counter-narcotics initiative. The articles applies international relations theories, particularly realism, liberalism, and constructivism, to understand the formation and evolution of Plan Colombia. This work also examines whether Plan Colombia achieved its goals, as well as the consequences of Plan Colombia.

KEYWORDS

Plan Colombia, drug trafficking, U.S. foreign policy



Colombia has been at the center of the U.S. led war on drugs for many decades. This article will analyze Plan Colombia (2000 to 2012) and answer several questions. First, what is Plan Colombia, and how did Plan Colombia come to fruition? Second, what were the goals of Plan Colombia, and have they been achieved? What have the consequences of Plan Colombia been, particularly for other countries? This work argues that Plan Colombia has failed to stop drug trafficking and has been counter-productive for Colombia. International relations theories such as realism, constructivism, and interdependence theory will be used to analyze the development of Plan Colombia.¹ These theories are very helpful for explaining grand strategy but have limits, particularly with foreign policy analysis. Therefore, this work also will examine various other elements, such as domestic factors, that led to the creation of Plan Colombia.²

APPROACH

An eclectic approach is necessary to explain the formation of Plan Colombia. The field of international relations has often been divided into camps. Many theorists praise the importance and explanatory power of their theory and fail to recognize the weaknesses of a particular theory. Scholars should not allow theories and methods to drive their research, but instead should use the appropriate approaches necessary to answer the research question. During an interview, Robert Pape was asked whether he is a realist. In his response, Pape stated that he does not want to classify himself as a realist and desires for his questions to determine his research. This is the best way to conduct political science research, and scholars should invoke the appropriate methods or theories required in the research de-

1 See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK; New York : Cambridge University Press, 429.; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*: (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 290.; Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye S., *Power and Interdependence : World Politics in Transition* (New York: Harper Collins, 315.; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, Ill. : Waveland Press, 251.; Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security : a New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers), 239.

2 Laura Neack, *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking in A Globalized Era* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

sign.³ In this vein, an eclectic theoretical lens will be used to analyze Plan Colombia.

Foreign policy as a field of study lies between comparative politics and international relations, and requires various tools of analysis, such as international relations theory. Mega theories, such as realism and liberalism have a great amount of explanatory power, but these theories alone have limitations when analyzing foreign policy. Realism, for instance, focuses on explaining the international system, and, therefore, subordinates domestic politics. This, however, does not imply that realism is not useful in foreign policy analysis, but rather that it has limitations.⁴ For example, scholars must examine the policy and decision making processes to understand how policies are developed in the U.S.⁵

REALISM

Realism provides a great deal of explanatory power when analyzing U.S. foreign policy. In *Man, the State, and War*, Kenneth Waltz, the founder of neo-realism, discusses the different levels of analysis that one can use to study international relations. The first level focuses on human behavior, while the second level concentrates on the internal dynamics of the state; the third level analyzes the international system and anarchy. In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz rejects the first two images and argues that scholars studying international relations must focus on the third image.⁶ This represents a break from classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau, and E.H. Carr, who emphasize the role of human nature.

3 A Conversation with History: Robert Pape, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-HXLdWuFi7Q> (accessed 2/18, 2012); Robert Anthony Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press), 366.

4 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 555; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*: (New York: Columbia University Press), 263; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 251

5 Neack, *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking In A Globalized Era*

6 Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*:, 263; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 251; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001),

Waltz differs from classical realists because he does not focus on individuals. Instead, neo-realism argues that states are unitary actors and are like black-boxes. The analogy of billiards is useful because it can be used to explain how the system functions. In the game of pool, billiard balls crash into each other. Waltz argues that the internal dynamics of the state are not important. Therefore, it does not matter if the state is a democracy or a communist regime. For neo-realists, the leaders of the state are rational actors. Critics could disagree and argue that individual leaders do indeed matter. For neo-realists, the main goal of a state is to survive in the international system, which is anarchic in nature. This means that no world police exists to resolve conflicts. Mearsheimer refers to this as the 911 problem because a state cannot call the world police or 911 when a crisis ensues. Anarchy, therefore, is the defining characteristic of the international system.⁷

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is another theoretical lens used to analyze international relations. Constructivists respond to realists and liberals and argue that both of these groups of scholars do not consider the role of social constructions, norms, and values, which play a crucial role in the study of international politics. A person desiring to study the world must understand how values and perceptions impact the manner in which different individuals see the world. The manner in which actors view the world will impact how a person defines problems, as well as the solutions to various dilemmas.

Scholars who adhere to thin constructivism assert that perceptions are very important and must be analyzed to understand how and why various policies have been created. In particular, thin constructivism focuses on ideas, identity values, and norms.⁸ Scholars, such as John Ruggie, developed the concept of embedded liberalism, which emphasizes how institutions are embedded with certain values, norms, and ideas.⁹ The notion of

7 See Waltz, op. cited. See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, ch. 1-3.

8 Constructivism is divided between thin and thick or hard and soft constructivism. For more on constructivism, see Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 429

9 John Gerard Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order," *International Organization* 36, no. 2, International Regimes (Spring, 1982), pp. 379-415.

embedded liberalism requires theorists to examine who wrote the “rules of the game” and designed the institutions.

Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, members of what is known as the Copenhagen School, challenge the realist conception of security. Realists, for instance, focus on state security. Buzan and his colleagues developed a framework for analyzing security based on different sectors and levels of analysis.¹⁰ The question becomes security for what and for whom? Buzan and his colleagues discuss the process of securitization. In order to examine how something becomes securitized, scholars can analyze speech acts of key actors. In addition, analysts must examine the allocation of financial resources to determine if an issue was effectively securitized.¹¹

INTERDEPENDENCE THEORY

Two forms of interdependence exist: complex and asymmetric. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye developed complex interdependence to explain the international system. In *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Keohane and Nye explain the linkages that exist between states and prevent them from entering into war.¹² Realists, in particular, focus on supply-side issues and ignore the role of the interconnections between Colombia and the U.S. in the war on drugs. Bruce Bagley and Juan Tokatlian argue that “to create the conditions for a consensual regime, it is essential that the U.S. administration first develop an alternative analysis of the international political economy of drugs that takes into account the complex interdependence nature of the transnational economic business.”¹³ In other words, the U.S. must rethink the definition and solution to the problem and focus on demand and avoid concentrating only on

10 Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 262.

11 Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*, 239

12 Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 315

13 Bruce M. Bagley and Juan G. Tokatlian, “Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin American Drug Policies,” in *The United States of Latin America in the 1990s: Beyond the Cold War*, eds. Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz and Augusto Varas (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

combatting the supply of drugs. This requires a fundamental shift away from the realist paradigm and cannot occur without recognition of the linkages between drug consuming countries and the states involved in the cultivation, production, and trafficking of drugs. This is an arduous task and requires cooperation and coordination between the U.S. and other countries to combat drug trafficking and production by using a multilateral framework.¹⁴

HISTORY OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN COLOMBIA

Colombia has had a long history of drug trafficking since the days of Pablo Escobar and his notorious Medellín cartel. The strategy for dismantling the cartels during this time has been referred to by scholars, such as Russell Crandall, as the kingpin strategy; the kingpin strategy sought to demolish the cartels by attacking and destroying the leaders of these organizations. After the destruction of the major cartels, such as the Medellín and Cali cartels, the production and trafficking of drugs did not end. Instead, Colombia witnessed the fragmentation of the cartels into smaller groups and organizations which sought to enter into the market and fill the void left by the collapse of the major drug trafficking organizations.¹⁵

Washington provided nearly one billion dollars in aid to the Colombian government during the 1990s, desiring to significantly alter the production and trafficking of drugs. Drug production continued to prosper despite such large amounts of assistance, and Colombia became the number

14 Bruce Michael Bagley, "US Foreign Policy and the War on Drugs: Analysis of a Policy Failure," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 2/3, Special Issue: Assessing the Americas' War on Drugs (Summer - Autumn, 1988), pp. 189-212.; Bagley and Tokatlian, *Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin American Drug Policies*; Bruce Michael Bagley, "The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 1 (Spring, 1988), pp. 161-182.; Bruce Michael Bagley and Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Colombian Foreign Policy in the 1980s: The Search for Leverage," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 27, no. 3 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 27-62.

15 Crandall, Russell, *Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy toward Colombia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Publishers, 2002).

one cultivator of coca by the end of the 1990s.¹⁶ Before providing some statistics, it is important to note that differences in statistics do occur and statistical analysis is not a full-proof system. Drug production and drug trafficking are illegal, and drug cartels do not provide information to the government about how much the organizations earn, grow, and traffic. It should be noted that coca, however, is not the same as cocaine, and it is quite intensive to refine coca into cocaine. Coca also is used to make other products, such as tea and toothpaste and has various medicinal uses. For example, people chew coca leaves to combat altitude sickness in the Andes.

Over the decade from 1989 to 1998, Colombia experienced a 140 percent increase in the levels of coca being produced in the country. Bagley asserts, "Even more remarkable, 1999 coca leaf production more than doubled the 1998 tons, reaching an estimated 220 tons".¹⁷ Bagley also notes the drastic increases in production that occurred from 1996 to 1999, stating, "These dramatic increases in overall production reflected the fact that between 1996 and 1999, the total number of hectares of coca leaf under cultivation in Colombia rose by almost 100 percent, from 68,280 to 120,000 hectares".¹⁸ These large increases in the percentage of cultivation occurred even though the Colombian authorities rigorously tried to thwart coca cultivation. The aerial eradication program has been the main operation used to combat coca by spraying the hectares under cultivation. Aerial spraying, as the name implies, is when an airplane flies over crops and sprays them with pesticides. In 1998, the Colombian government sprayed 65,000 hectares of coca, yet the levels of coca production still proliferated.¹⁹

Colombia not only managed to grow large amounts of coca leaves, more than both Bolivia and Peru during this period, but Colombia also produced and refined cocaine. In 1999, Colombia maintained its position as

16 Bruce, B. "Drug Trafficking, Political Violence and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s". This unpublished work can be accessed at the Mama coca website: http://www.mamacoca.org/junio2001/bagley_drugs_and_violence_en.htm

17 Bruce, B. "Drug Trafficking, Political Violence and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s." 1 This unpublished work can be accessed at the Mama coca website: http://www.mamacoca.org/junio2001/bagley_drugs_and_violence_en.htm

18 Ibid., 1

19 Ibid., 1

the top refiner of cocaine in the world despite the aforementioned efforts by the Colombian government and the financial support of Washington. Statistically, Colombia supplied approximately 80 percent of the total amount of cocaine that reached the illegal drug market in the U.S. in 1999 alone.²⁰ Although not a major producer and distributor, Colombia also produces heroin. Over a ten year period, the production of opium poppy increased from zero to 61 metric tons being produced. Opium, a raw material like coca, is refined to produce heroin. By the end of the 1990s, the Colombians accounted for a small amount of the world's heroin supply; yet, this supply is still trafficked to major cities on the east coast of the U.S.²¹ Along with heroin, the Colombians continue to produce significant amounts of marijuana but less money and potential profits can be gained from the trafficking of marijuana. Colombian traffickers, for example, provided the U.S. market with 40 percent of its total marijuana supply in 1999, as well as the previous year. As a caveat, this statistic only includes the marijuana imported into the country and does not include marijuana grown and produced domestically within the U.S. In sum, the previous examples illustrate that the drug traffickers received profits from various illegal products.²²

OTHER ACTORS IN COLOMBIA

Colombia is a very complicated case study due to its complex history. One of its most notable events is the internal armed conflict in Colombia that has existed for fifty years. The primary guerrilla organization is the leftist organization known as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The FARC participate in various elements of organized crime including drug trafficking, robbery, kidnapping, and various other criminal activities. By the end of the 1990s, the FARC earned an estimated \$400 million per year from drug trafficking.²³ It is clear, then, that the FARC earns a significant amount of money from the drug trade. It, however, would be wrong to assume that the FARC would stop operating and

20 Ibid., 2

21 Ibid., 2.

22 Ibid., 2, 7

23 Ibid., 7

fighting the government if revenue from drug trafficking declined. The FARC is innovative and would increase its operations in other activities to gain revenue, such as kidnappings and extortions.²⁴

The FARC is not the only group operating within Colombia as various other leftist organizations exist within the country. The ELN is the second largest leftist group in Colombia, but the ELN “does not appear to have engaged systematically in drug trafficking activities during the 1990s”.²⁵ The ELN²⁶ has earned money through different forms of illegal activities, such as extortion and kidnapping.²⁷ This is another example of why the war in Colombia would continue even if drug trafficking did not play a role or serve as a source of income for the leftists militias. While other groups exist, such as the right wing paramilitaries, this work does not focus on the armed conflict in Colombia and seeks only to acknowledge the role of such actors in drug trafficking.

FORMATION OF PLAN COLOMBIA

This section will examine the formation of Plan Colombia and will be followed by a theoretical analysis that will explain why the initiative developed the way that it did. The goal is to answer the following questions: what is Plan Colombia, and how did the initiative evolve? The U.S. government had a relationship with President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) that can best be described as cantankerous. Washington was more excited to work with Andrés Pastrana and his administration (1998-2002), which succeeded President Samper. Russell Crandall argues, “This did not mean, however, that the United States failed to make it clear to Pastrana that he too would have to comply with U.S.-led counternarcotic efforts”.²⁸ President Pastrana developed Plan Colombia in 1999 in order to respond

24 Ibid., 7. For more on the FARC, see Murphy, John, “The IRA and the FARC in Colombia”. *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 18, no. 1 (-12-20, 2004): 76-88.

25 Ibid.

26 This is another guerrillas organization in Colombia.

27 Ibid.

28 Russell Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy toward Colombia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Publishers, 2002), 145.

to the inordinate amount of violence occurring in Colombia. Pastrana had several goals in mind when developing the initiative. First, he wanted to focus on peace within Colombia and combat the large amounts of violence occurring within the country. The U.S. became concerned with Pastrana's desire to promote and facilitate negotiations with the FARC. As a result, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution stipulating that it would "cut off counternarcotics assistance to Colombia if Pastrana's peace initiatives—especially the proposed plan to grant the FARC a demilitarized zone—interfered with coca eradication efforts".²⁹ Second, Pastrana wanted to develop programs to help promote and support social and economic development in the country. For Pastrana, drug trafficking was a tertiary issue. The Clinton Administration did not agree with the agenda of Plan Colombia and reversed the order of the Plan proposed by Pastrana, requiring Colombia to focus first and foremost on drug trafficking. The Clinton Administration viewed Colombia as a serious threat to national security but made a clear distinction between drugs and counterinsurgency operations.

The original estimates for Plan Colombia in terms of financial costs were \$7.5 billion. The U.S. would supply the Colombians with \$4 billion, while the rest of the resources would come from the international community.³⁰ The international community, however, did not support the initiative because it disagreed with the formula of Plan Colombia; therefore, Plan Colombia was financed entirely by the U.S. government. Washington was not interested in working through institutions and cooperating with other countries in order to solve drug trafficking, which by definition, is an international problem that requires coordination, collaboration, and cooperation. Plan Colombia was primarily funded by the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI). The U.S. Congress passed a law which provided the Colombians with \$1.3 billion to be used for various projects, such as drug interdiction. From the fiscal years of 2000 through 2005, the ACI program provided the Colombians with an estimated \$2.8 billion to combat drug trafficking in the region. The amount spent by the U.S. increased to

29 Ibid., 145.

30 Connie Veillette, *Plan Colombia: A Progress Report* (Washington, D.C.: CRS, 2005) 1

\$4.5 billion after considering other areas of funding, such as money from the Department of Defense and Foreign Military Financing.³¹

President Clinton signed Plan Colombia into law in 2000. From the beginning, Plan Colombia was a flawed strategy as 80 percent of the resources were allocated to what is referred to as “hard” components (the military, aerial spraying, etc), while only 20 percent of the resources supported “soft” programs such as alternative development and crop substitution. The Clinton administration failed to learn from history and continued the implementation of supply-side strategies. Supply-side strategies ignore underlying problems such as demand and weak institutions. The militarization of the war on drugs does nothing to address the demand side of the problem.³² The logic is that drug traffickers will continue to produce and traffic drugs as long as a market exists.

Realism helps explain how the U.S. used its power and hegemonic status in the region to re-formulate Plan Colombia.³³ The U.S. is the most powerful country in the world and can dominate the events that transpire in Latin America.³⁴ As the global hegemon, the U.S. believes that it has the right and obligation to intervene in backward countries and seeks to improve its security in order to maintain its position in the international system. This argument has been put forward by Adrián Bonilla, who emphasizes the abysmal U.S. record of intervening in sovereign countries in Latin America. Drug trafficking from Colombia is a security issue for the U.S. for several reasons.³⁵ First, drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, are highly addictive and are quite dangerous. One does not have to think back too far to remember the crack boom and the devastating effects that crack-cocaine had on inner city populations in major cities, such as New

31 Ibid., 1

32 For more on the militarization of the war on drugs, see Adam Isacson, “The U.S. Military in the War on Drugs.” In Coletta A. Youngers and Eileen Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienne, 2005).

33 Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*., 263; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 251

34 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, ch. 1-4.

35 Adrián Bonilla, “The U.S. Andean Policy, the Colombian Conflict and Security in Ecuador”. In *Addicted to Failure: U.S. Security Policy in Latin America and the Andean Region*, edited by Brian Loveman, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, Publishers, Inc., 2006).

York. Second, drugs also are trafficked and distributed, which has resulted in enormous amounts of violence within the U.S.³⁶

Realism, however, has various weaknesses when analyzing foreign policy. Kenneth Waltz, did not strive to explain bilateral relations between two countries. Instead, he wanted to understand the international system and how the world functions by focusing on high politics, as opposed to low politics. As previously mentioned, states are the units of analysis for neo-realists and are like black-boxes or billiard balls. This means that what is happening within a country does not matter. These assumptions are problematic for several reasons. Drug traffickers are non-state actors and, therefore, are not the focus of attention for neo-realists.³⁷ In addition, it is quite difficult to analyze foreign policy without looking at the internal dynamics within a country. For example, one of the reasons why President Clinton signed Plan Colombia into law was to silence Republican critics who argued that he was soft on drugs.³⁸

Realism also downplays the importance of markets and the forces of globalization. Bagley and Tokatlian state that “the realists’ state-primacy assumption ignores, or gravely underestimates the relative autonomy of the international market forces involved in the drug trade and the concomitant capacity of the drug traffickers to circumvent, adapt to, or defy state efforts to regulate or eradicate their illicit multimillion dollar industry.”³⁹ The trafficking of illegal substances arouses many sentiments among different people and “morale entrepreneurs” have demonized the use of drug trafficking.⁴⁰ Drugs, like any other commodity, have a market where buyers sell to consumers demanding the drugs. Washington, therefore, must view drug trafficking as a supply and demand problem as opposed to just a supply-side issue.

36 David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 414.

37 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 251

38 Russell Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia*, Ch 4-5.

39 Bagley and Tokatlian, *Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin American Drug Policies*, 218

40 Peter Andreas and Ethan Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe: Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press), 333.

Realists also ignore the role of economic linkages. The Colombians and the U.S. have various connections, but the number of linkages between the two countries is not great enough for the relationship to be defined as complex interdependence. One of the linkages is the drug trade as various drugs are trafficked to the U.S. The asymmetrical relationship between Colombia and the U.S. helps explain the formation of Plan Colombia as it emphasizes the fact that the U.S. does not need assistance or money from Colombia to succeed and prosper. On the other hand, Colombia depends on the economic resources and support of the U.S. to stop drug trafficking and decrease violence in Colombia. Ultimately, the asymmetrical relationship helps the U.S. define the rules and design policies.⁴¹

Constructivism helps explain the formation of the initiative. The U.S. and the Colombian government had different definitions of the problem when developing Plan Colombia. How a government defines a problem is a constructivist issue. The U.S. government, under President Clinton's leadership, wanted to focus on altering the trafficking of drugs, as well as the production of drugs in Colombia. Washington was less concerned about peace and did not want to spend the majority of the money financing the different "soft" programs, such as economic and alternative development strategies. The Clinton administration rejected the ideas of Pastrana and decided that 80 percent of the money would be spent on programs designed to support the military as well as interdiction and aerial spraying. The Colombian government, on the other hand, defined the problem differently than the U.S. government. Washington, however, disagreed with the Pastrana administration and used its hegemonic status and influence to construct a different Plan Colombia. In sum, constructivism is quite useful and helps explain how perceptions and ideas played a role in the development of Plan Colombia, which clearly was a flawed strategy from the beginning.⁴²

41 For more on asymmetrical relationships, see Bagley, Bruce and Juan G. Tokatlian. "Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin America Drug Policies". In Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz and Augusto Varas, (eds.), *The United States and Latin America in the 1990s, Beyond the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 214-234.

42 Connie Veillette, *Plan Colombia*; Loveman, *Addicted to Failure*. Also, see Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance, (Washington D.C.: GAO, 2008); *Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has*

THE WAR ON TERROR

U.S. foreign policy regarding drug trafficking has evolved over time. The events of September 11th, 2001 changed the focus and priorities of the U.S. government. The Bush administration launched what has become known as the Global War on Terrorism and promised to support countries in the fight against terrorism. In terms of U.S. foreign policy, everything became subordinated to the war on terror. In *Policing the Globe, Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations*, Peter Andreas and Ethan Nadelmann have an excellent quote by a DEA official which explains the shift in the conceptualization of security after 9/11. The agent stated that “prior to September 11th, 2001, the law enforcement community typically addressed drug trafficking and terrorist activities as separate issues. In the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, these two criminal activities are virtually intertwined”.⁴³

The Copenhagen School helps scholars understand how the war on drugs became re-branded and securitized under the auspices of the war on terror. Buzan and his colleagues discuss the role of securitization and the process of securitizing an issue. The Bush Administration securitized the war on terrorism, stressing the importance of combating drug trafficking and other criminal activities, which help finance insurgent movements.⁴⁴ Bush and the neoconservatives in his administration rebranded the drug war in order to “sell” the importance of financing counternarcotics operations to the American public. Andreas and Nadelmann assert that “the repackaging of the war on drugs as part of the war on terrorism was especially critical in maintaining political support for growing levels of U.S. security assistance to Colombia, where the line between fighting drugs and fighting insurgents was becoming progressively blurred”.⁴⁵

Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance : Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 108; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 429; Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, *Security : a New Framework for Analysis*, 239

43 Andreas and Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe : Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations*, 197.

44 Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, *Security : a New Framework for Analysis*, 239

45 Andreas and Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe : Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations*, 333

In Colombia, President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) came to power promising a tougher stance on the various armed groups operating in Colombia. Connie Veillette argues that “he increasingly equated the guerrillas with drug traffickers and terrorists, and initiated a military campaign, called Plan Patriota, to recapture guerrilla-controlled territory”.⁴⁶ Uribe’s commitment to fighting the insurgents signaled the beginning of a cooperative relationship between the Bush and Uribe Administrations. Uribe managed to alter the goals of Plan Colombia as well as the perceptions of the internal armed conflict, stating that Colombia has a terrorist problem as opposed to an internal armed conflict.⁴⁷ Uribe viewed drugs as part of the problem as the FARC, or narco-guerrillas in Colombia, trafficked drugs and participate in various other illegal activities to finance their operations. The number one goal for the Uribe administration was to defeat the terrorists within Colombia and increase security. President Bush accepted the fusion of the war on drugs with the war on terror in Colombia. Therefore, the smaller and less powerful country, Colombia, had a tremendous influence on the agenda of Plan Colombia, instead of the U.S. using its power and stronger position as the regional hegemon to reverse the formula. Uribe completely ignored various other issues, such as human rights abuses, focusing all of his energy on defeating the narco-guerrillas.

COUNTERPRODUCTIVE MEASURES: AERIAL SPRAYING

The United States government has spent billions of dollars on aerial eradication efforts, where airplanes fly over targets in Colombia and spray coca leafs. Such tactics have been very controversial, particularly because of its many negative consequences. Aerial eradication programs are not only ineffective but have been counterproductive and very costly. An airplane that sprays pesticides from the ground can have various harmful effects for the environment.⁴⁸ Aerial eradication programs also have had negative effects on the health and well-being of people residing in Colombia. Producers can intermix the plant with other crops making it very difficult

46 Veillette, *Plan Colombia*, 2

47 Marc Chernick, Interview, Bogotá, Colombia, 2012. Approved by Institutional Review Board of the University of Miami.

48 Veillette, *Plan Colombia*.

to identify from the sky. Despite all these efforts, the area under cultivation in one region in Colombia increased by 27 percent in 2008.⁴⁹

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The financing of Plan Colombia has been controversial, and critics are quick to point out that Plan Colombia focuses on the military and not enough money has been spent on alternative development. In particular, Plan Colombia has failed to address the underlying developmental issues in Colombia. A security issue exists that requires *campesinos* (peasants) to grow coca. A peasant desiring to grow another item, such as oranges, does not have a choice if a member of the FARC orders the peasants to cultivate coca. In addition to the various security issues, a peasant faces a variety of environmental challenges as other crops are not as resilient as coca in the harsh Colombian environment. One also must remember that Colombia is composed of the Andes Mountains and the jungle, which creates a problem in terms of transportation. Even if Colombian peasants could grow other crops, the lack of infrastructure makes it very difficult for goods to reach the market before they spoil.⁵⁰

HAS PLAN COLOMBIA BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that Plan Colombia has been unsuccessful in stopping drug production and coca cultivation. Advocates of Plan Colombia argue that security increased and overall levels of coca cultivation decreased.⁵¹ In reality, the coca routes have shifted towards Bolivia and Peru as a result of the governmental efforts in Colombia.⁵² In addition, drug trafficking routes moved to other countries. Plan Colombia, therefore, has had negative consequences, as other countries

49 See Romero, Simon, "Cocaine Sustains War in Rural Colombia," *The New York Times*, 2008, sec. Americas. See also Connie Veillette, *Plan Colombia; Loveman, Addicted to Failure*.

50 Francisco Thoumi, *The Size of the Illegal Drugs Industry in Colombia*, 20

51 Peter DeShazo, Tanya Primiani, Phillip McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999–2007* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2007).

52 Sibylla Brodzinsky. "Colombia out, Peru in, as coca king. What's that mean?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 2013, Sec. World.

have become victims of the U.S. led war on drugs. Constructivism helps explain the differences of opinions in terms of the successes of Plan Colombia with regards to drug trafficking. Constructivism reveals that different people have varying social constructions and perceptions of what constitutes success. Overall, it should be noted that Plan Colombia has had “partial successes” since violence decreased.⁵³ However, in terms of drug trafficking and drug production, Plan Colombia has been a failure and even counterproductive as the aerial spraying programs have had disastrous environmental and health consequences.⁵⁴

PLAN COLOMBIA II

After years of continued failures, Colombian authorities outlined a new Plan Colombia, referred to as Plan Colombia II. This initiative was quite different from Plan Colombia because the Colombian government desired to drastically alter the priorities and goals of the initiative. The initiative was estimated to cost \$43 billion, and instead of spending 80 percent of the money on military related issues, Plan Colombia II emphasized “soft” components. Specifically, Plan Colombia II stressed the importance of development, as opposed to spending billions of dollars on controversial and counterproductive programs such as the aerial spraying campaigns. According to *The Miami Herald*, “58 percent of the money would go toward economic and social projects, including strengthening human rights and the justice system, long thought to be weak points in the Colombian government”.⁵⁵ Plan Colombia II was a step in the right direction and a realization on the part of the U.S. that the policies must change, and Washington cannot continue the same futile policies. However, Plan Co-

53 Bagley, Bruce. *Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century* (Woodrow Wilson, Washington, D.C.:2012), 3-5.

54 María Clemencia Ramírez Lemus, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh, “Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War,” in Coletta A. Youngers and Eileen Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienne, 2005).

55 Steven Dudely, “Plan Colombia II: Empahsis on Economy.” Latin American Post, sec. Economics/Business & Markets. Colombia’s Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development (2007-2013) (Washington, D.c.: National Planning Department (DNP); Department of Justice and Security (DJS), 2007).

lombia II never came to fruition, and instead of introducing a new costly initiative, Washington has cut aid to Colombia.⁵⁶

“PLAN MEXICO”

Washington has continued to ignore the lessons from history. From 2000 to 2012, the U.S. government spent \$8 billion attempting to combat drug trafficking in Colombia under the auspices of Plan Colombia.⁵⁷ History teaches scholars and analysts that drug trafficking is a dangerous business and is not stagnant, as drug traffickers must adapt in order to avoid detection and elude government authorities.⁵⁸ Washington’s focus on Colombia has caused the routes to shift or “balloon out” towards other countries, such as Mexico. This is what policy experts refer to as the balloon effect. The balloon effect occurs when a government focuses on one area and drug production and trafficking move to other regions. This is not a new phenomenon but has occurred throughout history.⁵⁹

The aforementioned balloon effect caused drug trafficking and violence to shift to Mexico. The Bush Administration identified the drug trafficking problem in Mexico as a major security dilemma. Mexico and the U.S. are interdependent. Both countries share a large border, and the two countries have a long history and are connected in many ways. For example, the Mexican government and Washington have trade agreements, such as The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The large border that the countries share enables drugs to enter into the U.S. As a result, the Bush Administration sought to combat drug trafficking in Mexico, and, therefore developed an initiative known as “Plan Mexico”. The original name of the initiative, Plan Mexico, eventually changed to the Mérida

56 Adiraan Alsema, “Plan Colombia Not Mentioned in US 2011 Budget Proposal.” Colombia Reports, sec. News, Feb. 2010. Also, see Adriaan Alsemam, “US Plans 15% Cut to Plan Colombia.” Colombia Reports, Feb. 2011.

57 Bagley, Bruce. *Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty First Century* (Woodrow Wilson, Washington, D.C.:2012), 5.

58 Adiraan, Alsema. “Plan Colombia Not Mentioned in US 2011 Budget Proposal”. Colombia Reports, sec. News.

59 David R. Mares, *Drug Wars and Coffeehouses : The Political Economy of the International Drug Trade* (Washington, D.C. : CQ Press), 188.; Bagley, *The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America*, pp. 161-182

Initiative due to the controversies of Plan Colombia. Even though the name changed, the basic policies of the Bush Administration stayed the same despite the fact that drug cultivation increased in some regions of Colombia. The Bush Administration, therefore, thought that the same framework and plan would succeed in Mexico with fewer resources.⁶⁰ It is not clear why Washington believed that the Merida Initiative, a \$1.4 billion proposal, would succeed when Plan Colombia failed to decrease drug trafficking.⁶¹

VIOLENCE IN MEXICO

Mexico has witnessed major increases in violence. President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) came to power and vowed to battle the drug traffickers, who are ravaging Mexico with no regard for human life as they battle for drug routes and territory. The type of violence and the nature of the crimes in Mexico have changed. In the past, Mexico experienced targeted violence against certain individuals or groups. However, Mexico has witnessed indiscriminate attacks against civilians. In 2008, for instance, an explosion occurred during the Independence Day celebrations, injuring more than 100 people. Mexican officials later stated that the attacks had been carried out by criminal organizations operating in Mexico. Such events can best be classified as narco-terrorism. Terrorism, by definition, is the indiscriminate killing of people. Leaders of the Mexican government confirmed that such act should be classified as one of terrorism. Leonel Godoy, the Michoacan governor, stated that “we have no doubt this is an act of terrorism”.⁶²

Mexico also has experienced mass killings of people and discovered the locations of the corpses. In April of 2011, for instance, Mexican author-

60 It is important to recognize that differences do exist between the Mérida Initiative and Plan Colombia. For more, see John Bailey, *Plan Colombia* and the Mérida Initiative: Policy Twins or *Distant Cousins?*, 2009,

61 Sara Llana Miller and Sibylla Brodzinsky. 2010. Halting drug war corruption: What Mexico can learn from Colombia. *Christian Science Monitor* 2010, sec World; “Merida Initiative “Plan Mexico” Fact Sheet.” accessed 2010. Also, see Carlsen, Laura. “Plan Mexico”. *Foreign Policy in Focus* (-10-30, 2007): N_A.

62 Ellingwood, Ken. “Blast Targeting Civilians Kill Seven”. *Los Angeles Times*, 2008, sec. Bagley, Bruce Michael, and William O. Walker, *Drug trafficking in the Americas* (Coral Gables, Fl: University of Miami, North-South Center, 1994).

ities found the bodies of 59 people who had been murdered as a result of the violence among the different gangs operating within Mexico. The manner in which the criminals killed the victims represents a shift in crime. An official in Tamaulipas, Morelos Conseco Gomes, argued that “it appeared to be a new kind of crime, one in which criminals ‘stop the bus, select passengers, [and] take them hostage’.”⁶³

Violence has not only been confined to Mexico but has spilled over the border, and many U.S. officials have witnessed an increase in the numbers of violent incidents as well as robberies in the U.S. In one Arizona city, law enforcement developed a tactical squad to respond to such home invasions, which seem to be increasing as time passes. In fact, officials noted that 200 homes were invaded as of March 2009 in this small town alone. These home invasions were not ordinary robberies; law enforcement officials argue that 75 percent of the home invasions have been related to drugs and the lucrative drug trade.⁶⁴ Such examples reveal that violence has crossed the border and created a security issue for law enforcement in the U.S. Mexican cartels have spread their organizations and networks across the U.S. and were operating in 230 cities, including Anchorage, Atlanta, Boston, and Billings, Montana, in 2009 according to a report issued by the Justice Department.⁶⁵ Organized criminal networks in the U.S. have become a major security problem. President Obama has been forced to address the current situation in Mexico as various elected officials have called for action. For instance, the governor of Texas, Rick Perry, requested that Obama line the U.S.-Mexican border with the National Guard to protect the U.S.⁶⁶

PRESIDENT SANTOS: STRATEGIC SHIFTS

Uribe came to power in Colombia and aligned closely with the Bush Administration, seeking to combat the guerrillas. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2014) has taken a different approach to the war on

63 Malking, Elisabeth. “Mexican Authorities, Investigating Hijacking, Find 59 Bodies”. *The New York Times*, 2011, sec. Americas.

64 Randal C. Archibold, “Mexican Drug Cartel Violence Spills Over, Alarming U.S.” *The New York Times*, 2009, sec. U.S.

65 *Ibid.*, 2

66 *Ibid.*, 2

drugs. Santos argues that a serious discussion must occur with regards to the drug war. In fact, he has admitted to being open to legalization, stating that “it is an alternative that we can discuss. I am not opposed to any formula that is effective”.⁶⁷ Santos proves to be open to any alternatives that would help reduce the violence. In an interview, he asserted:

I would talk about legalising marijuana and more than just marijuana. If the world thinks that this is the correct approach, because for example in our case we used to be exporters, but we were replaced by the producers of California. And there was even a referendum in California to legalise it and they lost it but they could have won. I ask myself how would you explain marijuana being legalised in California and cocaine consumption being penalized in Idaho? It's a contradiction. So it's a difficult problem where you set the limits. It's a difficult decision. For example, I would never legalise very hard drugs like morphine or heroin because in fact they are suicidal drugs. I might consider legalising cocaine if there is a world consensus because this drug has affected us most here in Colombia. I don't know what is more harmful, cocaine or marijuana. That's a health discussion. But again, only if there is a consensus.⁶⁸

This quote demonstrates that Santos has recognized the failure of the war on drugs and the devastating consequences that such policies have had on Colombia. This is a fundamental shift away from the Uribe Administration, who was closely aligned with the Bush Administration.

The Santos Administration is at a critical juncture, as the U.S. has stopped funding Plan Colombia and does not want to provide billions of dollars in aid to the Colombian government for counternarcotics programs. Obama inherited two wars from the Bush Administration which have cost trillions of dollars. In addition, the U.S. is experiencing the worst economic crisis since the great depression as a result of the sub-prime mortgage crisis. Different actors, such as the Tea Party, are demanding that Washington cut costs. Obama is focusing on the economy and wants the Colombian government to solve its own problems.

67 “Colombian president supports legalizing drugs if it reduces violence and crime,” *Mercopress*, Feb. 201.

68 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/13/colombia-juan-santos-war-on-drugs>

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES: DEMAND REDUCTION

Since Nixon's declaration of the war on drugs over forty years ago, the United States has spent an estimated \$1 trillion fighting the war on drugs.⁶⁹ Yet, drug consumption in the U.S. today is extremely high because drugs remain cheaper and easier to obtain than when the war on drugs began. The current financial crisis has caused many government officials to argue the need for decreases in spending and more efficient and responsible policies. A great place to cut costs is the failed war on drugs. Instead of focusing only on supply-side issues, the U.S. should concentrate on reducing demand among its own population. The use of addictive substances over the past forty years has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people from overdoses and other diseases caused by drug use.⁷⁰ A better way to solve organized crime is to focus on decreasing demand and providing people with affordable means of receiving treatment for addictions.

MASSIVE INCARCERATIONS

The war on drugs has resulted in the prosecution and incarceration of millions of people in the United States. Research by various criminologists and legal scholars has been conducted on the need for systematic prison reform. The U.S. cannot continue to build prisons fast enough to house all the inmates, and overcrowding forces inmates to live in abysmal conditions in prison. In addition, prisoners are surrounded by other individuals charged with drug trafficking. In essence, prisons have become "schools of crime." Even after serving their time, inmates are punished by society. Michele Alexander argues that ex-convicts are still treated like criminals after they serve their sentences. For example, felons are denied access to

69 *Wasted Tax Dollars*, Drug Policy Alliance New York, N.Y., <http://www.drugpolicy.org/wasted-tax-dollars>

70 Ethan Nadelmann, "DRUGS," *Foreign Policy*, no. 162 (Sep/Oct 2007, 2007), 24-26,28,30.; Ethan Nadelmann, "Addicted to Failure," *Foreign Policy*, no. 137 (Jul/Aug 2003, 2003), 94-94.; Nadelmann, *Ethan Nadelmann/ Uso y Prohibicion De Drogas*, 13-13; Musto, *The American Disease :Origins of Narcotic Control*, 414; Nadelmann, *Ethan Nadelmann/ Uso y Prohibicion De Drogas*, 13-13; Ethan A. Nadelmann, "Criminologist and Punitive Drug Prohibition: To serve or to Challenge?" *Criminology & Public Policy* 3, no. 3 (Jul 2004, 2004), 441-450.

public housing by the government. In addition, felons are often shunned by family members and former friends who do not want to associate with criminals. The state of Florida denies student loans to felons and, in turn, prevents these individuals from trying to better themselves and receive an education. The prospects for a low-skilled individual of receiving a job where they can pay their bills and support themselves and their family are quite bleak. Employers also often hesitate before hiring felons.⁷¹

After being denied access to jobs, housing, and student loans, it should not be a surprise to anyone that felons are forced back into a life of crime. It becomes a rational choice for a convicted drug dealer to return to selling drugs, because an individual can make more money in an hour than an entire days work at a fast food restaurant. The prison system is fundamentally destroying youth as ex-convicts return to society angry, bitter, and have almost no chance of succeeding or making an honest living. It, therefore, is time for a radical change in the penitentiary system and for Washington to stop ignoring the advice of scholars and other members of epistemic communities who have proposed various ideas for reform.

LEGALIZATION

The statistics are quite clear: the war on drugs has been a failure. As long as there is a market, drug trafficking will continue to occur. Serious discussions have occurred about the legalization of drugs. Ethan Nadelmann has become the leading advocate of legalization. He argues that drug policies have been very harmful, and Washington cannot continue spending billions of dollars fighting this counterproductive war. Legalization would reduce the profits of the drug traffickers and would enable the government to earn money from taxes. Legalizing other substances, such as cocaine or heroin, is a more difficult sell for politicians because of the disastrous health effects of using such drugs. The argument for legalization of such substances is that these drugs could be laced with other harmful or deadly chemicals and could result in deaths and increases in hospitalizations. A drug that is regulated by the government is safer because it would not have other toxins. The government could promote

71 Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press; Distributed by Perseus Distribution, 290.

programs, such as clean needle exchange, in order to decrease the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV, among drug users.⁷²

While the complete legalization of drugs currently is not a viable political option, the decriminalization of drugs is a policy that is easier to “sell.” The U.S. cannot continue incarcerating millions of Americans and must decriminalize the possession of misdemeanor and “lower level” drug violations. The great recession in the U.S. has led many to call for smarter spending.⁷³ The next step for Washington, therefore, is to “de-securitize” the war on drugs.

Barry Buzan and his colleagues at the Copenhagen School analyze the securitization process. However, Buzan and his coauthors do not discuss the process of de-securitization, which can be accomplished by reversing the process of securitization.⁷⁴ The U.S. must stop marketing and promoting the war on drugs and viewing drug addiction as a security issue. Instead, drug consumption should be viewed as a health issue. Washington cannot continue to destroy millions of lives by imprisoning millions and ruining the lives of future generations with such archaic policies.

It also is important to note that the criminal justice system has a great deal of lobbyist and employs millions of people. Operating a prison requires people to work in the prison. Prisons must house, feed, and provide other resources for inmates. Millions of people work for government agencies, such as the DEA, and their careers are devoted to stopping drug production, consumption, and trafficking. Therefore, one must understand that the criminal justice system has many people who benefit from the current system and do not want to change the status quo.⁷⁵

72 Nadelmann, *Addicted to Failure*, 94-94; Nadelmann, *Drugs*, 24-26,28,30; Nadelmann, *Ethan Nadelmann/ Uso y Prohibicion De Drogas*, 13-13; Nadelmann, *Criminologists and Punitive Drug Prohibition: to Serve or to Shallenge?*, 441-450; Ethan A. Nadelmann, “Thinking Seriously about Alternatives to Drug Prohibition”, *Daedalus* 121, no. 31 (Summer 1992, 1992), 85-85.; Mark Thornton, *The Economics of Prohibition* (Salt Lake City : University of Utah Press), 184.; Peter Andreas, “Dead-End Drug Wars”. *Foreign Policy*, no. 85 (-12-01, 1991), 106-128.

73 For more on legalization, see Bagley, *The New Hundred Years War? US National Security and the War on Drugs in Latin America*, pp. 161-182, 176

74 Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, *Security : a New Framework for Analysis*, 239

75 Todd R. Clear and Natasha A. Frost, “Private Prisons”. *Criminology & Public Policy* 1, no. 3 (2002), 425-426.

CONCLUSION

This work has traced the development and implementation of Plan Colombia. Various theories have been invoked to understand U.S. drug policies and initiatives. The argument is that too many international relations scholars are more concerned about proving the merits of their theories as opposed to using the appropriate theories required to answer the questions. Realism, liberalism, and constructivism help explain the evolution of Plan Colombia. Realism sheds light on the long term goal of the U.S.: maintain its position as the hegemon. Realism also helps explain how the more powerful country, the U.S., was able to dictate the terms and conditions of Plan Colombia to the Pastrana administration.⁷⁶ On the other hand, Liberalism helps experts understand the independent relationship—albeit asymmetric—between Bogotá and Washington. Liberalism also sheds light on the global nature of the drug trafficking problem, which cannot be solved by one country.⁷⁷ Washington did not adhere to the tenants of liberalism when reformulating Plan Colombia as it ignored the need for cooperation between other countries. In other words, the Clinton administration was more concerned about increasing the security of the U.S. and combatting drug trafficking in Colombia as opposed to developing an international consensus of how to solve the problem. Finally, constructivism helps explain the role of perceptions and social constructions as well as the securitization of the drug war in Colombia.⁷⁸ Advocates of Plan Colombia argue that the initiative achieved its goals, while critics assert that the Plan was a failure because Colombia still has major challenges with drug trafficking, organized crime, and violence. Determining whether Plan Colombia was successful depends on one's perceptions and how one defines success.

The problem with the U.S. war on drugs is that Washington has not learned from the past and continually repeats the same mistakes.⁷⁹ Drug trafficking routes have started to shift to very weak states, such as Guatemala and Haiti. States with weak institutions and large amounts of corruption are ripe for organized crime and drug trafficking. The time has come for the U.S. to change the course and re-think drug policies.

76 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*

77 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye S., *Power and Interdependence*.

78 Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*

79 Randal C. Archibold, "Mexican Drug Cartel Violence Spills Over, Alarming U.S". The New York Times, 2009, sec. U.S.; "Merida Initiative "Plan Mexico" Fact Sheet", accessed 2010, www.witnessforpeace.org.