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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I thank you for inviting me to participate in this important hearing. I have been studying the issues of violence and drug trafficking in Colombia for more than twenty years. I also have had the opportunity to witness the evolution of Plan Colombia from its inception.

I want to share briefly with the committee a small part of the history of Plan Colombia as I believe there is not great clarity about this. Plan Colombia grew out of the efforts of former Colombian president Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) to achieve two fundamental objectives: first, improve relations with the United States following the crisis of relations that existed in the bilateral relationship during the presidency of his predecessor, Ernesto Samper (1994-1998), and second, to enlist U.S. and international support for his proposal to seek a negotiated settlement to Colombia's longstanding armed conflict with the country's two principal guerrilla organizations, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the ELN (National Liberation Army).

Plan Colombia, in its initial formulation, was a 7.5 billion dollar Colombian strategy developed with the assistance and at the urging of the Clinton Administration to address multiple aspects of the Colombia crisis: human rights and the humanitarian emergency of internal refugees, the longstanding armed conflict that had endured in one form or another for over 50 years, the economic crisis that the country experienced beginning in 1997, and the tremendous rise of drug trafficking since the early 1980s. Plan Colombia was to be funded by the United States, the European Union, multilateral development banks and the Colombian government. Its principal objective was to stabilize the country and end the country's armed conflicts.

Pastrana when he took office originally spoke of a "Marshall Plan" for the coca growing regions. He thought that a negotiated peace with the FARC, then the principal authority in the coca producing zones of Putumayo, Caquetá and Guaviare, would enable the state to create a legitimate presence in these largely abandoned zones and would allow the state and international community to promote alternative development for the farmers who lived in these areas. For Pastrana at the outset, the peace process was viewed as an effective anti-narcotics strategy. To this end that he hoped to enlist the support of the United States.

Pastrana successfully restored the historically close bilateral relationship between the two countries. However the original formulation of Plan Colombia – negotiations and peacemaking with the leftwing guerrillas who effectively dominated the coca zones would serve as an effective anti-narcotics strategy – was received with great skepticism in Washington. By the time, Congress approved the 1.3 billion dollar supplemental appropriation in June 2000, this formula had basically been turned on its head. For the U.S., peacemaking would not be the basis

for an anti-narcotics strategy. Rather, an anti-narcotics strategy would become the basis of a pacification and peace strategy. The view from Washington was that by reducing the financial resources available to the guerrillas, particularly the FARC, the guerrillas would be weakened and the state would carry more leverage into negotiations. It also served the U.S.'s primary interest of directly reducing the production and flow of drugs to the United States.

The approval of the original assistance strategy to Plan Colombia needs to be viewed from several perspectives: first, as an anti-narcotics strategy, second, in terms of its impact on the peace process, and third, the reaction of the international community.

From an anti-narcotics strategy, Plan Colombia represents the continuation of a succession of strategies dating back to the mid-1980s of attacking production at its source, reducing or eliminating producers, and watching new configurations of growers, producers and traffickers emerge in the resulting vacuum. This can be seen in the initial operations in the Bolivian coca fields under Operation Blast Furnace in 1986; in the efforts to destroy the Colombian cartels --the kingpin strategy--in the late 80s and early 90s; in the airbridge strategy that effectively shut off the Peruvian and Bolivian coca fields from the producers in Colombia. In each of these cases, the immediate objectives were successful. The kingpin strategy effectively dismantled the Medellín and Cali Cartels. The airbridge strategy led to declines of up to 85% in coca production in Peru and Bolivia.

However in every case, new patterns of trafficking emerged. Instead of large cartels, small cartels --cartelitos -- appeared in Colombia as well as new largescale drug syndicates in Mexico. And the great reductions in coca production in Bolivia and Peru led to a massive increase of coca cultivation in Colombia. The anti-narcotics strategy of Plan Colombia was basically designed to address this phenomenon.

What has happened with Plan Colombia? Massive aerial fumigation by the U.S. and Colombian governments finally led to a modest decrease in overall production. But as would be expected, the available evidence is that the market has adjusted. New producers have entered the market and new techniques have been forged, including agronomical advances that allows coca production at lower elevations -- effectively opening up the entire Amazon Basin and not just the foothills of the Andes. The available evidence is that production is moving into micro-plots scattered throughout Colombia and into newer areas that do not have a historical relationship with coca production.

But the impact of Plan Colombia was perhaps even more devastating for the peace process. The FARC viewed the development of Plan Colombia as an effort by the Colombian and U.S. governments to undermine the peace process and to promote a military solution. One can be skeptical about the sincerity of the FARC in engaging in talks. There were clearly divisions among their senior leadership and they, too, increased their military actions during the period of negotiations. Both sides had agreed to negotiate without a ceasefire; the result was that each side sought to increase their political leverage at the negotiating table by increasing their armed actions.

Yet my view is that the United States could have played a more constructive role in facilitating peace –as we did in Northern Ireland and we attempted to do in the Middle East during this period. Instead, the U.S. sought a largely military, anti-narcotics strategy that diminished incentives on both side to pursue a negotiated settlement.

Finally, it should be noted that much of the international community, particularly the European Union, refused to support Plan Colombia once the U.S. defined its role. The EU stated that they would support peace but not a militarized anti-narcotics strategy. After dragging their feet for several years, they developed a program of supporting what they call “Peace Laboratories” and have currently dedicated approximately 200 million Euros to peace and development efforts in some of the most violent areas of the country.

The US assistance program to Plan Colombia was not only an anti-narcotics strategy. There were programs to promote human rights, local governance and judicial strengthening. Indeed I did some work on the design of the human rights and the judicial assistance programs. I believe that the human rights program in particular has had some success in its immediate aims of protecting human rights workers and other threatened groups and in strengthening government and non-governmental human rights institutions. The judicial program has been more problematic, largely because of the great institutional deficits but also because of a de-emphasis on pursuing military and other officials with alleged links to paramilitary forces. However, my general impression has been that the web of assistance programs authorized by Congress reflected the multiple concerns -- from anti-narcotics to human rights-- of the individual members, committees and parties. Collectively the authorized funding does not necessarily form a coherent package of policies and assistance programs. I recognize that this critique can be made of practically all US foreign policies and assistance programs, yet it seems particularly evident in this case.

As you understand very well, after September 11<sup>th</sup> and beginning in mid- 2002, Congress lifted the previous restrictions that required all military aid and assistance to be dedicated to anti-narcotics. The action has brought the United States more directly into Colombia’s internal armed conflict, something that it had previously attempted to avoid. The new U.S. policies converge directly with the policies of the Uribe Administration. Uribe was elected in 2002 on a platform of getting tough with the illegal armed groups, particularly following the breakdown of the peace process in February 2002. The current policy is to confront militarily the FARC and to increase the military and police presence throughout the national territory.

The Uribe Government has also initiated negotiations with the rightwing paramilitaries, the AUC (United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia). This is a new strategy. It is one that I support. The AUC has been the largest violator of human rights in the country and the most destabilizing element of the conflict. However, negotiations will be difficult. The AUC is extensively involved in drug trafficking at all levels and its leaders are concerned about extradition to the US; this issue alone could undermine the talks. Moreover the AUC is fragmented and undergoing a leadership change following the disappearance of its nominal leader, Carlos Castaño. Further, the state, despite the recent expansion of its security forces, cannot adequately fill the vacuum that would be left by the AUC’s withdrawal, leaving large areas of the national territory vulnerable to guerrilla attack.

President Uribe claims that some police presence has been restored to all of Colombia's 1098 municipalities. Yet it should be noted that the United Nations still warns that over 209 municipalities remain highly vulnerable. The continued assaults of recent months --including a major offensive by the FARC this past week --underscores this fact.

Successful negotiation with the AUC would not lead to peace. However, a durable accord that removed the AUC from the conflict would clarify the nature of the war between the state and the FARC, and could pave the way for an eventual negotiation with the FARC. This is not likely to happen in the short-term. There are currently no conditions or prospects for a peace process with the FARC beyond the intermittent discussions of a possible prisoner exchange, one that could include three American contractors being held hostage.

There is a possibility that talks will be renewed with the ELN. However the ELN is relatively small and if they were to hand in their arms, many of their fighters and many of their areas of influence would fall under control of the FARC.

To conclude, the war in Colombia has endured, in one form or another, for 58 years. The war antedates the drug boom. It is not simply a terrorist or narco-terrorist conflict. The situation can be characterized as an escalating military stalemate -- both sides have escalated their capacities and neither side is likely to defeat the other. Under these conditions, I am convinced that there is no military solution to the conflict. This does not mean that the Colombian government does not have the legitimate right to defend itself. Yet peace will take more than battling the FARC or pushing coca cultivation into different corners of the country. It will ultimately require a negotiated settlement and the construction a legitimate state presence that provides services, administers justice, promotes economic development and provides security. Current policy prioritizes security. It is a necessary but insufficient formula. Progress in confronting political violence, terrorism, and drug trafficking will only be made when the broader concerns are addressed and the illegal armed actors are re-incorporated into the political system after more than a half century of war.

The United States can potentially play a major role in ending this conflict. A stable Colombia is in the interests of the United States. But it will require a re-thinking and re-prioritizing of the component parts of the U.S. assistance program to Plan Colombia. For starters, one might want to look at the original 7.5 billion dollar --the original Plan Colombia -- developed by the Colombian government in 1999. It presents a more balanced approach.

Again, let me thank the committee for its time and I will be happy to answer any of your questions.