
Presented to the Department of Government in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree with honors of Bachelor of Arts

Harvard College March 2015
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Andean Regional Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>National Liberation Army <em>(Éjercito de Liberación Nacional)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>EPL</td>
<td>Popular Liberation Army <em>(Ejército Popular de Liberación)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>FARC-EP</td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia <em>(Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Ejército del Pueblo)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>FMF</td>
<td>Foreign Military Financing</td>
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<td>FOL</td>
<td>Forward Operating Locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOC</td>
<td>Government of Colombia</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<td>INL</td>
<td>International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Bureau for</td>
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<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMB</td>
<td>Office of Management and Budget</td>
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<td>ONDCP</td>
<td>Office of National Drug Control Policy</td>
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<td>P.L.</td>
<td>Public Law</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Plan Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDD</td>
<td>Presidential Decision Directive</td>
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<td>US SOUTHCOM</td>
<td>US Southern Command</td>
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Introduction

In 2000, Colombia became the third largest recipient of US foreign aid, after Israel and then Egypt, with the passage of P.L. 106-246, a bill that allocated $1.3 billion for military and economic aid. This plan, entitled Plan Colombia, allocated $860.3 million specifically to Colombia, a combined $148 million to its regional neighbors: Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, as well as $278.8 million to other methods of support such as aircraft, a “drug kingpin” program, radar upgrades, Andean-ridge intelligence gathering, and overseas “Forward-Operating Locations” (FOLs). When President Clinton announced the “urgently needed” funding package, he indicated it would “assist Colombia in vital counterdrug efforts aimed at keeping illegal drugs off our [US] shores...[and] also help Colombia promote peace and prosperity and deepen its democracy.” Aid was provided for military and police assistance for the purpose of narcotics eradication and interdiction, as well as for alternative development, human rights, law enforcement, aid for the displaced, judicial reform, and the Colombian peace process.

Since 1964, the Colombian state has faced threats from two strong left-wing guerilla movements, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army (ELN- “Ejército de Liberación Nacional”), as well as from a right-wing paramilitary

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1 Russell Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), 127
3 Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, page 128 (Source: Center for International Policy, 2000; Office of Management and Budget, 2000.)
4 I will refer to them in this thesis as FARC, not FARC-EP, as this is how the US government refers to them
force, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC, “Autodefensas Unidas the
Colombia”). The dismantling of the powerful Colombian drug cartels – Medellin,
Cali, North Valley and the North Coast – created a power vacuum in the drug
industry – one that would be filled by the FARC, ELN, and AUC in the 1990s. In
addition, successful efforts to interdict cocaine shipments from Peru resulted in a
“balloon effect,” whereby cocaine cultivation increased in Colombia. These two
phenomena made Colombia the world’s leading cultivator of coca leaf and producer
of cocaine by 1997. The high rate of production and exportation of cocaine worried
United States political actors, as approximately 6.6 million Americans, or about 3%
of the population above age 12, were occasional or heavy users of cocaine. Due to
the pervasiveness of illicit narcotics in US society, the foreign aid provided in 2000,
at the outset of Plan Colombia, was largely intended for use by the Government of
Colombia (GOC) and its forces towards the amelioration of the narcotics trafficking
problem, a supply-side solution. Many in the administration, such as President
Clinton’s drug czar and Director of the ONDCP, Barry McCaffrey, ensured that "as
a matter of Administration policy, the United States will not support Colombian
counterinsurgency efforts." By 2002, however, Congress approved the use of funds

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 ODCCP Studies on Drugs and Crime, Global Illicit Drug Trends 2001, United Nations Drug Office for
9 I employ this abbreviation as it is used by the US Department of State
10 Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, "Remarks to the
Atlantic Council of the United States," Washington D.C., November 28, 2000,
http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/112801.htm quoted in Adam Isacson, "Washington's ' New
War' in Colombia: The War on Drugs Meets the War on Terror. (Report on Colombia)," N.ACL.A
towards both counternarcotics and counterinsurgency campaigns. This would allow the US to provide intelligence and logistical support as well as military aid to Colombia in their fight against the insurgents groups.

The aim of this thesis is to assess what led to the United States’ decision to allow the foreign aid it was providing Colombia to be used towards a "unified campaign" against narco-trafficking and the insurgent groups. The goal of this assessment is also to situate the Colombian case in a larger discussion of international relations schools of thought, most notably realism and constructivism. A realist security explanation would dictate that the US would have supported the counterinsurgency campaigns in the country if there had been a real change in the threat that the FARC, ELN and AUC posed to Colombia and the US. Nevertheless, the modus operandi of the insurgent groups remained fairly constant between 1998-2002 and they did not experience drastic changes in membership. The FARC and ELN had even been on the US Department of State’s Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) list since 1997. The case of US support for Colombia’s counterinsurgency campaign is significant because it cannot be solely explained by realism. Although some claim that US economic interests were at stake, especially the bombing of a central Colombian oil pipeline utilized by US companies, these bombings had been occurring at a high rate since at least 1998. Therefore, no change in the real threat level of the insurgent groups would mean, through a realist lens, that the US should have maintained its support exclusively in the realm of counternarcotics.
Constructivism, however, is helpful in explaining this shift in US foreign aid policy. I argue that, when combined with realism, constructivist ideas in the framework of securitization theory can help to explain changes in international relations where the balance of power between nations, or pertinent actors, remains unchanged. Securitization theory, a concept of the Copenhagen School of international relations, argues that political actors can utilize rhetoric to “securitize” an issue, or make it a threat to some object. To effectively “securitize” a concept, it must be treated as an “existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.”

Overview of my argument

In this thesis, I subscribe to analytic eclecticism, with which I will “recognize, connect, and apply insights from across paradigms.” Therefore, I utilize securitization theory, which contains elements from both realism and constructivism, in order to explain how political actors construct and respond to security threats. I argue that the US shift occurred as a result of an evolution in the way that political actors framed threats to US national security in the US Congress, with September 11 functioning as a critical juncture.

In the period between 1998 and September 11, 2001, the US government framed narcotics as a threat to national security, thereby contributing to the ‘narcotization’ of the way the Colombian situation was perceived. As a result of this

13 Concept put forward in Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
14 Jarrod Hayes and Patrick James, "Theory as Thought: Britain and German Unification," Security Studies 23, no. 2 (2014), 404-05
15 In this thesis, I will utilize 9/11 as a shorthand for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001
securitization, the characterization of the insurgent groups as criminal narcotics producers and traffickers – not as terrorists – allowed for the increased saliency of human rights considerations in the US Congress and allowed for the passage of the Leahy Amendment, which conditioned US aid on a human rights certification of the GOC and its security forces. The second consequence of the securitization of narcotics was the preeminence of the cocaine supply problem in congressional discussions, the repercussion of which was the strict delineation between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency, and the primacy of counternarcotics aid in Plan Colombia.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 occasioned a paradigm shift in US foreign policy. The prioritization of terrorism in US discourse and policy planning led to the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism,’ as many terrorist groups of global reach funded themselves with the profits of the illicit drug trade. For the Colombian situation, the consequence of the securitization was the characterization of the FARC, ELN and AUC as ‘narcoterrorists;’ the comparison of the Colombian situation to that of Afghanistan; and the promotion of US support for counterterrorism efforts in Colombia. The ramification of this portrayal was the passage of the 2002 law that legalized US support for a “unified campaign” against narcotrafficking and terrorism. In this thesis, I also wish to allot agency, not just to US officials, but also to Colombian political actors, who contributed to framing their domestic problem of narcotics and insurgency violence as a threat to US security in order to maintain US cooperation and funding.

I have had to make a number of generalizations and assumptions in my thesis in order to outline mechanisms that would further my claim. For one, I do not
take the state to be the unit of analysis – I pay particular attention to the internal politics of the United States and of the relationship between the Executive and Congress. Second, I utilize the US Congress as the main audience in the securitization of threats as this entity is vested legislative power. I assume that members of Congress are rational actors who seek reelection and take into account the preferences of their constituents. Therefore, I do not discuss the US public as an audience, as their preferences will be implied in the actions of their Congressional representatives. In addition, I often utilize a member’s political party as a marker for their expected preferences regarding the Colombian crisis. Although I would have wanted to construct a more intricate model of members of Congress’ individual preferences, ideologies and voting patterns as related to the passage of Plan Colombia and the 2002 “unified campaign” law, such a project would not have been feasible within the confines of this thesis. Therefore, I must often make distinctions based on political parties and generalize upon the preference of the median voter in each party. Lastly, many of the congressional hearings concerning Colombia were conducted in subcommittees; therefore, I often extrapolate congressional attitudes from the opinions and comments in these hearings since I assume that the subcommittees are representative microcosms of the larger legislative body. These generalizations and assumptions provide a simplification of US politics and of individual voting preferences to allow for broader explanations of observed behavior.

Most of the literature on US-Colombia relations credits the post-September 11 ‘War on Terror’ for greater US intervention in Colombia; this claim, however, is usually taken at face value – a short sentence or paragraph within a larger work.
While many scholars attempt to rationalize initial US intervention, few works provide a rigorous analysis of the shift in US policy. Therefore, I wish to provide a systematic analysis of why it is that the well-known shift in US policy emphasis from the War on Drugs to the War on Terror heavily affected US foreign aid policy towards Colombia. I hope that my research will advance the study of US-Latin America relations; the potential for weaker nations to engage in agenda setting; and, most importantly, the use of social construction and framing by political agents to achieve aims.

A Brief History of Colombia

A brief note on Colombia’s history is necessary for an understanding of the problems the country faced at the time of the election of President Andrés Pastrana in 1998. The threat to Colombian democracy and security in the last half century has been multifaceted – paramilitaries, guerillas, narcotraffickers, drug cartels, and criminal bands have waged war, against each other and the Colombians state. What has most characterized Colombian history has been the “internal armed conflict” between guerillas, paramilitaries and the state that began in the 1970s and has endured to the present.16

Political analysts who study Colombia trace the roots of the present crisis to the violence of the 1930s and 1940s between the two dominant political factions, the Liberals and Conservatives.17 In the period between 1930 and 1946, the Liberals controlled the political sphere and this prompted resentment on the part of the

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17 Crandall, Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia, 48
Conservatives. The assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a prominent, populist Liberal Party leader, ignited a period of social unrest – known as “the Violence” – in 1948. The national, popular uprising by the lower classes induced an alliance between the Liberal leadership and the Conservative government to ensure the repression of a possible peasant-based revolution. The military coup and dictatorship of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in 1953 also worried the Conservatives and Liberals, who banded together to oust Pinilla as well as to create a power-sharing arrangement, the National Front, through which they would rotate the presidency every four years.

In 1964, Colombian security forces attacked rural Marquetalia and the surviving group of armed peasants, led by Manuel Marulanda, established a guerilla group, the Southern Bloc, which they later renamed the FARC. The ELN and Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL) were also created the same year, though in contrast to the FARC, these were created by middle-class intellectuals and were borne out of the desire to replicate the Cuban revolution in Colombia. The AUC began as a number of separate self-defense units, largely composed of rural landowners, who refused to be taxed by the FARC and utilized drug revenue to eliminate guerilla presence in their regions.

The FARC maintained a strong presence in the rural areas of South and East Colombia. After attempting and then failing to establish a political channel in 1985, they decided to focus on the achievement of military victory – thereby establishing

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18 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 8
21 Ibid., 10
22 Ibid., 18
23 Ibid., 70
24 Ibid., 25
their modus operandi, which included kidnappings, extortions, military attacks against security forces, and taxation.\textsuperscript{25}

Concurrent to the strengthening of the guerilla groups, was the start of the cocaine exporting business in the 1970s; however, these operations were at this time run by small groups of individuals.\textsuperscript{26} It was not until the mid-1980s that large, complex narcotrafficking groups gained prominence. The two drug cartels that came to dominate the trade of narcotics were the Cali and Medellin Cartels, which were quickly blamed in the US for contributing to the explosion of cocaine supply that the country was experiencing.\textsuperscript{27} These two cartels largely contributed to Colombia’s violence, with a faction of the Medellin cartel, the “extraditables,” even waging an “absolute and total war” against the Colombian government.\textsuperscript{28} These cartels were also responsible for forty car bomb operations between 1989 and 1993 that killed over 500 Colombians.\textsuperscript{29} The eventual dismantling of these drug cartels created a vacuum in the drug trade into which the FARC, ELN, and AUC would step, bringing them into stark confrontation with US interests.

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical framework for the thesis, outlining the pertinent paradigms of international relations and arriving at securitization theory – a theory that includes both realist and constructivist elements – as the primary theoretical premise for understanding the US foreign policy change that occurred in

\textsuperscript{25} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia}, 54
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 45
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 52
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 55
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 56
late 2001-2002. In addition, the chapter outlines potential hypotheses and presents the research design and methods employed.

Chapter 2 utilizes securitization theory to demonstrate how narcotics were presented as an important threat to US national security. It outlines who the securitizing actors and audience were, and it provides supporting evidence of Congressional perceptions of the Colombian situation.

Chapter 3 examines two mechanisms through which the securitization of narcotics led to the emphasis of Plan Colombia on counternarcotics. It outlines the Congressional portrayal of the FARC and ELN as ‘narco-guerillas’ and the human rights considerations that emanated from this characterization, leading to the enactment of a human rights condition on the aid, the Leahy Amendment. In addition, it traces the narcotics focus of the US government from the securitization of narcotics to the emphasis on narcotics supply reduction to the eventual resource allocation breakdowns under the plan.

Chapter 4 discusses possible alternative explanations for US emphasis on counternarcotics in the initial period, and provides evidence of their limited explanatory power. This chapter illustrates why, in particular, the election of President Bush in 2001 and a realist security explanation are not adequate to explain the change in US policy.

Chapter 5 explores the effects that 9/11 had on the change in securitization from narcotics to ‘narcoterrorism.’ The subsequent consequence of this change was the linkage of the Colombian situation to that of Afghanistan, the portrayal of the FARC, ELN and AUC as ‘narcoterrorists,’ and greater advocacy in the US Congress.
for counterterrorism support in Colombia – all of which contributed to the 2002 passage of the “unified campaign” law.

Lastly, the Conclusion further illustrates the findings and implications of this thesis and it notes the work's limitations.
Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework, Pertinent Literature, and Research Methods

International relations has three main paradigms: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. I seek to apply these to my case study and determine which approach, or combination of approaches, possesses the most explanatory capability. In order to effectively present possible hypotheses, I will also outline what each paradigm contributes to the discussion of security and critical junctures.

Subsequently, I will present the Copenhagen School’s securitization theory, which combines realist and constructivist elements to explain how states and political actors process and respond to security threats. The second half of the chapter situates my argument in the available scholarship on US-Colombia relations. Lastly, I present my research methods: including, my research questions, potential hypotheses and the methodology employed.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

Paradigms of International Relations

In this thesis, I argue that while neorealism and neoliberalism\(^{30}\) can explain initial US intervention in Colombia, constructivism can better rationalize changes in the perceptions of security threats that occurred between 1998-2002.

Neorealism

The foundational claim of realism is that states exhibit actions that are in their self-interest and their power-seeking behavior affects their relationship with other

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\(^{30}\) If I refer to liberalism, I am actually referring to neoliberalism, not to be confused with economic neoliberalism. For a representative definition of neoliberalism see Robert O. Keohane, and Joseph S. Nye. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition.* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977)
states. Prominent classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr promoted the idea of “interest defined as power” and advocated for the idea that “states, like human beings, [have] an innate desire to dominate others, which [lead] them to fight wars.” Kenneth Waltz’s neorealism, or structural realism, is derived from the classical realist concept of national interest. Nevertheless, neo-realists aimed to create a theory that was more scientifically rigorous; thus, they ignore human nature and focus on each state’s need to survive in the anarchic nature of the international system. Neorealism focuses on structural factors, and contends that the behavior between states emanates from their anarchic structure and from a “distribution of capabilities across units,” whereby great powers possess greater capabilities. The causality in neorealism is from the structure of the international system to the behavior of the interacting units, as a result of the relative resources and capabilities of an individual unit, the state. Three variants of neorealism exist: aggressive, defensive, and neoclassical.

32 For more on classical realism, see also: Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics among Nations; the Struggle for Power and Peace, 4th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1967); Reinhold Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, a Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defence, (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1944)
35 From this point forth, if I refer to realism, I am referring to neorealism. For a definition of neorealism see, Kenneth Neal Waltz, Theory of International Politics, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979)
36 Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," 31
37 Kenneth N. Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory, (Theory, Values and Practice in International Relations: Essays in Honor of William T.R. Fox)." Journal of International Affairs 44, no. 1 (1990); 29
38 Waltz, “Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory,” 34
Neorealism and the Colombian Case

In order to apply these paradigms to the case of US foreign policy towards Colombia, it is important to take note of the way in which these paradigms view critical junctures, non-state violent actors, and how they define the way in which states perceive and react to threats. Although neorealism is useful in explaining why countries engage in warfare and other actions through which they can enlarge their power, it proves less able to effectively explain the evolution of US involvement in Colombia.

Neorealism could potentially explain initial intervention of the US in Colombia, if we assume that drugs pose a security threat the US; that initial counternarcotics operations employed in Colombia are in the US national interest; and that Colombia is a valuable area for the US. Although the plurality of threats described under neorealism are in the military sector, there could be reason to believe that narcotics pose a significant enough threat to the US to necessitate intervention in Colombia. Therefore, the engagement of the US in counternarcotics operations in Colombia can be explained by neorealism if they are aligned with, or


contribute to, the US national interest. In addition, to best determine if the realist theory would apply to the US-Colombia case, we can draw upon the work of Michael Desch,⁴² who posits a realist view in arguing that the US should only intervene in Latin America when the area of interest has either intrinsic value – “it can directly determine the world balance of power” or extrinsic value – “strategically important because they contribute to the defense of the homeland or of other intrinsically valuable areas.”⁴³ US intervention in Colombia would only slightly follow the grand strategy that Desch would envision since Colombia has extrinsic, but not intrinsic value. Colombia is still one of the only loyal US allies in the region; it borders Venezuela, one of the largest oil exporters to the US; it is three hours away from Miami, and also close to the Panama Canal. Nevertheless, Colombia is not a country that would shift the global balance of power. Therefore, realism can partially explain initial US intervention if we view drugs as a substantial security threat to the US, if we take US counternarcotics actions in Colombia to be in the national interest, and if we view Colombia as an extrinsically valuable area.

But while the neorealist paradigm can be applied to initial US intervention in Colombia, this framework is less able to explain the shift in US policy because: 1) the theory renders non-state actors as unimportant, 2) the US policy is one that contributes more to the Colombian national interest than the US one, and 3) the

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⁴² Desch describes intrinsically valuable areas as those which have “large, cohesive, and well-educated populations strong economies, healthy industrial bases, essential natural resources, high level of technological sophistication, or large standing military forces” and extrinsically valuable areas as “strategically important” because the area is “geographically proximate to its homeland, intrinsically valuable areas, or lines of communication between them” citing Michael C. Desch, When the Third World Matters. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 10 fn. 1
Paradigm’s interpretation of a “critical juncture” would imply that none occurred on September 11, 2001.

Neorealism is not that effective in explaining the shift in US policy because its focus on states as the unit of analysis renders non-state actors unimportant. As Mearsheimer notes, “…there is no room for non-state actors in structural realism.”

US support for Colombia’s counterinsurgency campaign is possible because the violent non-state actors in Colombia are recognized as a threat. This occurrence does not bode well under the “state-centric” concept that is at the core of neorealism. In addition, the neorealist notion of self-help would also impede the passage of the “unified campaign” law. The approval of the usage of aid for counterinsurgency is not an action that is for the primary benefit of the US state, as this provides more benefit to the Colombian state.

Lastly, in order to utilize neorealism to understand changes in US action, one would have to understand the presence of a critical juncture. I hypothesize that September 11 is a critical juncture in the evolution of US foreign aid to Colombia. Collier and Collier define a critical juncture as a “period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries, and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies.”

In the realist paradigm, a critical juncture would represent a period of change whereby the distribution of states’ resources would be altered. Since the unit in neorealism is the state, then the critical juncture would modify the balance of power between states. However, between 1998-2002, there

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44 Conversations in International Relations: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer (Part II).” International Relations 20, no. 2 (2006): 234
was no change in the relative balance of power between the US and Colombia. The absence of a change in the distribution of resources between the two states would mean that under the neorealist paradigm, no critical juncture occurred.

Neoliberalism

Keohane and Nye argued in *Power and Independence*, their seminal work of neoliberal theory, about the increasing cost of force and how economic interdependence could characterize international affairs. Their main contributions included: “1) a power-oriented analysis of the politics of interdependence, drawing on bargaining theory; 2) an analysis of an ideal type [of interdependence]… called ‘complex interdependence’ and of the impact of the processes that it encompassed; and 3) an attempt to explain changes in international regimes…”47 Milner, who credits Keohane with the founding of neoliberal institutionalism, notes that this paradigm has four elements: “emphases on nonstate actors, including international institutions, on forms of power besides military force and threats, on the role of interdependence in addition to anarchy in the international system, and on the importance of cooperation as well as conflict in international politics.”48

Neoliberalism and the Colombian Case

Neoliberalism can rationalize the initial US opposition to counterinsurgency operations, the US support for strengthening Colombian democracy that is built into Plan Colombia, as well as heightened congressional concerns regarding potential human rights violations. In addition, since the paradigm deals largely with economic

cooperation and the impetus for democratic states to maintain peace and alliances, Plan Colombia could have been conceived as a plan by which the US and Colombia could foster economic cooperation.

Nevertheless, neoliberalism, like neorealism does not constitute an appropriate paradigm with which to explain the US policy change because it does not account for violent non-state actors, its understanding of “critical junctures” does not indicate a change in the 1998-2002 period, and lastly, the commitment to human rights that neoliberalism emphasizes\(^49\) is not sustained in the 1998-2002 period. I do not wish to criticize neoliberalism on the grounds that it does not provide an explanation for violent non-state actors or on interventionism; rather, I solely explain why this paradigm does not provide a proper framework with which to analyze the US policy change in Colombia.

As Milner notes: “The acts of informal violence since 9/11 require that institutionalism’s association of non-state actors with forms of nonmilitary power be rethought…Neoliberal institutionalism and other theories must expand their notions of non-state actors and the power resources open to them.”\(^50\) Although neoliberalism allots an important role to non-state actors, particularly international institutions and transnational actors, its primary focus is not that of security. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the shift in US policy towards Colombia with neoliberalism since their economic relationship was unchanged and this paradigm

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\(^50\) Milner and Moravcsik, *Power, Interdependence, and Nonstate Actors in World Politics*, 18
does not account for changes in security threats.

Secondly, for neoliberalism, a critical juncture would entail a change in the interdependence or interconnections between nations. Although September 11 could be seen as having altered the international system, the extent to which it did so corresponds to the way the meaning of the event was constructed. In addition, although the Leahy Law made US aid to Colombia contingent on the protection of human rights, this was not sustained as the US administration decided to lift the condition of aid, allowing the GOC’s army to utilize funds without needing to be certified.

While liberalism explains some aspects of the US-Colombian economic relationship and the relative US noninvolvement in the Colombian Civil war prior to 2002, it is not able to explain the eventual shift to more direct US involvement in Colombia’s conflict.

Neoliberalism also provides room to discuss domestic concerns. Domestic politics are important in my analysis insofar as political actors make decisions based on their constituents and public sentiment. In particular, it is useful in explaining the impetus for the securitization of narcotics. Nevertheless, domestic concerns do not effectively address the shift in US policy. Although political actors did not want to be seen as weak on terror for fear of the political repercussions this would bring, the Colombian situation was not one that was explicitly related to the ‘War on Terror.’ Members of Congress would not have faced repercussions for not supporting greater

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US intervention in Colombia, as the American public would not have known to include Colombia under the auspices of the ‘War on Terror.’ The securitizing advocacy led by the Colombian government and key members of the US administration allowed for the connection between the Colombian situation and the ‘War on Terror’ to materialize.

*Constructivism*

Constructivism provides an alternative lens by which to analyze international relations. This school does not take the unit of the state for granted; rather it places more emphasis on the identities of states, as influenced by discourse, ideas, elites, political actors, and norms.\(^{52}\) Ted Hopf indicates that constructivists argue, “both material and discursive power are necessary for any understanding of world affairs.”\(^{53}\) More importantly, in contrast to neoliberalism, that assumes the identity of a state to be constant across time, constructivism is built upon the idea that identities of states are variables and can be influenced by political, historical and social contexts.\(^{54}\) Constructivists argue that ideational factors can also form the basis of international reality, and that these factors are time and place dependent.\(^{55}\)

Nicholas Onuf (1989), who coined the term constructivism when applied to international relations, and Alexander Wendt (1992) are credited with being the pioneers in the development of this theory.\(^{56}\) However, the concept that ideas can constitute power and that there is a relationship between material and discursive

\(^{52}\) Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," 41


\(^{54}\) Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” 176


power has older roots,\textsuperscript{57} as “Michel Foucault's articulation of the power/knowledge nexus, Antonio Gramsci's theory of ideological hegemony, and Max Weber's differentiation of coercion from authority are all precursors to constructivism's position on power in political life.”\textsuperscript{58} Although Karl Deutsch was not a constructivist, his emphasis on social communication and peaceful transnational collective identities influenced later theorists. The added value of constructivism to the study of international relations includes: 1) its ability to explain how people “converge around specific norms, identities, and case effect understandings; 2) its ability to explain change, and the definition of this change less as “the alteration in the positions of material things than as the emergence of new constitutive rules,\textsuperscript{59} the evolution and transformation of new social structures,\textsuperscript{60} and the agent-related origins of social processes;” 3) its focus on the effects of social communication; 4) the establishment of a “relationship among acting, communication and rationality;” 5) its identification of the role of language in social construction; 6) its conjecture that the power can emanate from nonmaterial sources, such as speech acts,\textsuperscript{61} normative interpretations and identities,\textsuperscript{62} and moral authority; \textsuperscript{63} and 7) its support of the study of international practices, whereby “culture is not only in people’s minds, discourse, and interactions; it is also in the very performance of practices.”\textsuperscript{64}

Koslowski and Kratochwil claim that actors in the international system assess

\textsuperscript{57} Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” 177
\textsuperscript{59} Adler, “Constructivism in International Relations”
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 123
threats to security “in a way that goes beyond the distribution of capabilities and reaches deeper into the domestic politics of all the actors in the system.”\textsuperscript{65} The portion of their theory that most applies to the case of Colombia is their explanation of how military capabilities are derived, since they posit that rather than “deriving political practice from military capabilities, military capabilities themselves must be understood in terms of the political practices and their underlying conventions.”\textsuperscript{66} This can help elucidate the utilization of varying levels of military aid and intervention of the US in Colombia.

\textit{Constructivism and the Colombian Case}

Constructivism is particularly useful in assessing the US change in Colombia because the approach is attentive to sources of change and although it does not consider power to be irrelevant, it does “emphasize how ideas and identities are created, how they evolve, and how they shape the way states understand and respond to their situation.”\textsuperscript{67} In constructivist analysis, a critical juncture would entail a period of change whereby ideas, identities and discourse would be significantly altered. Risse and Wiener note “‘critical junctures’ lead to changes in actors’ ideas about their underlying interests and to changes in their collective identities.”\textsuperscript{68} Since constructivism is not state-centric, it is able to account for domestic policy concerns, the role of non-state actors in society, as well as non-military threats. This makes it a good paradigm to employ in the assessment of the change in US policy.

\textit{Conclusion}

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 221
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Thomas Risse and Antje Wiener, “‘Something rotten' and the social construction of social constructivism: a comment on comments,” \textit{Journal of European Public Policy} 6, no.5 (1999): 780
Neorealism can easily explain initial US intervention in the country, as this stemmed from desire to protect US national interests in the region, but the state-centric nature of the paradigm makes the role of non-state actors irrelevant. In the US-Colombia foreign aid policy case, narcotics and terrorism are two of the main threats that drive US actions; however, neorealism offers little in the way of understanding the reactions political actors have with respect to non-military threats. After August 2002, neither democratization nor the maintenance of democratic ideals, such as the protection of human rights, were at the helm of US policy towards Colombia; therefore, liberalism can no longer explain the change in the situation. In addition, much like neorealism, neoliberalism does not provide a good theoretical understanding of security issues that emanate from non-state actors.

Therefore, the change in US intervention can be better explained by the way in which political actors in both Colombia and the US used rhetoric and changing national ideals to frame the situation. Although neorealism cannot solely explain the shift in US policy, its treatment of the concept of security is still necessary for understanding the situation. In utilizing “diverse mechanisms” from competing paradigms, I subscribe to analytic eclecticism, which seeks to “recognize, connect, and apply insights from across paradigms.” At this point, I turn to securitization theory, which contains both realist and constructivist elements, in order to understand how countries and actors construct and respond to security threats. This thesis utilizes securitization theory as the theoretical framework.

Securitization Theory

69 Concept put forward in Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
70 Jarrod Hayes and Patrick James, “Theory as Thought: Britain and German Unification,” Security Studies 23, no. 2 (2014), 404-05
Securitization, a concept that belongs to the Copenhagen School of international relations, seeks to bring together both realist and constructivist concepts to explain interventions of great powers in the Third World. Waever, who coined the term ‘securitization,’ refers to a securitized issue as one that “has been presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.”

Securitization involves discourse and rhetoric by a securitizing actor that will present an issue as a threat to a referent object, which can be a national audience, an international actor or other receptors of information. Securitization rejects the narrow state-security nexus and constructs a wider interpretation within which “the state-centric position is a possible but not a predetermined outcome.” This allows Buzan et al to understand security threats not just as threats to the state, and thus not completely encompassed in the military realm. They lay out five sectors: military, political, economic, social, and environmental.

Prior to the 1970s, security as a concept was rarely conceived outside of the military realm and despite the emergence of economic and environmental security problems, the notion of security as military remained significantly unaltered until the 1980s. Up to that decade, security had been weakly conceptualized among international relations scholars and focused primarily on the idea of national security

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72 Ibid
73 Ibid., 37
74 Ibid.
76 This term was mainly dealt with by Arnold Wolfers whose emphasis was on national security, Arnold Wolfers, ‘National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol,’ *Discord and collaboration 7* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962) ch. 10, fn.2
and how it corresponded to a military framework. Despite various contributions in the early 1980s, including work on the difficulties of applying the concept, of the ambiguity of the concept of security, of security regimes, and of security as part of American policy choices, these works did not aggregate to a coherent and clearly articulated analysis of security.

Increasing global interdependence drove political theorists to reassess realist and idealist claims: neorealists “put the security motive at the center of state behavior in an anarchic system: ‘in anarchy, security is the highest end…the goal the system encourages them [states] to seek is security’” and ideationalists created the concept of common security, which “emphasized the interdependence of security relations as opposed to the national security priorities of traditional strategy.”

Securitization emerged as a theory aiming to widen the debate of security studies with the growing importance and urgency of nonmilitary threats. Literature on securitization has not focused extensively on Latin America. Therefore, by using it to explain the change in US intervention in Colombia, I seek to demonstrate the theory’s applicability in a new context.

1.2 Literature on US-Colombian Relations

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77 Buzan, *People states and Fear*, 28
81 Buzan, *People states and Fear*, 28
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 33
84 Ibid.
Literature concerning US intervention in Colombia in the late 1990s and early 2000s can be broken down into three broad categories: 1) assessments of the effectiveness and consequences of Plan Colombia and US foreign aid, 2) recommendations for methods by which the US can help Colombia improve its situation and 3) explanations for why the US decided to intervene in Colombia. Since I do not seek to assess the effectiveness of Plan Colombia, I will not engage with the literature of this type, as it falls outside the scope of my research. I will provide a brief overview of the literature that provides policy recommendations for US and Colombian strategies in order to determine what problems within Colombia were considered most pressing. Because my thesis falls outside the scope of this policy-oriented literature, however, I will not engage directly with these works. The scholarship that is most important to my thesis is that which seeks to explain the reasons for US intervention. Some of this literature mentions and attempts to explain the US shift to allowing aid to be used in counterinsurgency operations, but this shift has not been explored comprehensively and systematically.

Recommendations for US Intervention

Donald Schulz and Gabriel Marcella, in 1999, recommended the US remove restrictions of counterinsurgency assistance and attempt to ensure the maintenance of human rights throughout that process.\(^{85}\) In 2000, David Passage argued that if the US was to curb the violations of human rights or decrease the production of narcotics in Colombia, it should “help a democratically elected Colombian government regain control over its national territory… [and] offer training programs to both Colombia’s civil politics and its military forces to help them professionalize

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to the point that they do not feel they have to abuse human rights and deny civil liberties in order to enforce Colombia’s laws and maintain public order.”

John Cope, in 2002, argued for a new lens by which to view the Colombian war – a campaign that would focus on “enhancing public security, governance, defense relations, and community development” in order to improve Colombian and regional security.” Similarly, Ann Mason suggested that policy in Colombia be formulated with the priority of developing a “strategic orientation that emphasized law, order and state authority over institutional strengthening” in the short run.

While I will engage with information regarding which recommendations were implemented, it is not my goal to assess which recommendation was superior or to provide value judgments about the policies that were enacted. I provide an overview of literature that provides recommendations to the Colombian and US governments during this period because it highlights the general preoccupation that existed concerning ensuring the security of the Colombian state. Most recommendations prioritized the restoration of public order and security and provided some suggestion for the protection of human rights and institution building. These seemed to be secondary goals, however, to ensuring that the Colombian state did not become significantly weakened by the insurgent threat.

Reasons for US Intervention

Doug Stokes argues that the US formation of Plan Colombia was designed to eliminate insurgent movements that could threaten US interests in the region. In another work, he argues that the US has exhibited continuity in its foreign policy, since the period of the Cold War, and it utilized Colombia as a way to maintain access to “South American oil, the preservation of regional (in)stability, and the continued need to destroy challenges to neoliberalism.” Likewise, Jaime Zuluaga Nieto and Richard Stoller argue that US intervention follows from US imperialism and from the threat that armed groups in Colombia pose to US national security.

While Stokes and others argue that economic and regional interests and national security are driving factors for US intervention, I argue that this cannot be used to explain the shift in US policy to a combined counternarcotics and counterinsurgency strategy. Economic and regional interests also existed before the US initiated the provision of military assistance for the use of counterinsurgency, and so realist principles alone cannot explain the shift in policy.

Avilés utilizes liberalism to explain US interests in Colombia. He argues that realist theorists who posit that US intervention is focused upon the “asymmetries of power between the USA and Colombia and the perceived threats to US national security” or the “economic interests of US-based transnational corporations and the geopolitical needs of the US state in maintaining hegemony in the region” are

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90 This word is quoted directly, I did not include the ‘(in)’
Wrong. Avilés emphasizes the commitments of both US and Colombian actors to a “transnational order of neoliberal economies and ‘market democracies’ as well as the existence of a transnational policy network that eased the policy making process.”

The most pertinent scholarship regarding my thesis is the work of Sandra Borda Guzmán and Arlene Tickner, who utilize constructivism and securitization as frameworks for understanding different parts of the Colombian situation. Sandra Borda Guzmán points to the securitization of narcotics as the reason why the US maintains its failed counternarcotics policies. Like her, I note the way in which the US frames narcotics as a threat to national security; however, my focus is on using this securitization to explain the shift in US policy from counternarcotics to fighting ‘narco-terrorism.’ Borda Guzmán also notes that the US War on Terror has provided the opportunity for Colombian political actors to invite external actors to the Colombian conflict, thus internationalizing it. Like Borda Guzmán, who believes that rationalist and constructivist paradigms can both help to explain the situation, I also utilize a mixture of approaches in this work. While Borda Guzmán focuses on the conditions with which Colombia was able to internationalize its conflict, I focus on the opposite side of the coin – the factors that contributed to greater US intervention. Similarly, Arlene Tickner, argues that the internationalization of the Colombian situation resulted from a strategy of “intervention by invitation,”

94 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
whereby Presidents Pastrana and Uribe strengthened Colombia’s relationship with the US and requested their intervention. While I also argue that Colombian political actors had agency in the situation and contributed to the US intervention, I argue that American political actors also desired US intervention and that these actors were also pivotal in the securitization of narcotics and ‘narcoterrorism’ that allowed for greater intervention.

Tickner has also written on the use of securitization in understanding the regional effects of the Colombian crisis, arguing that “perceptions of insecurity and threat” emanating from the Colombian situation in its neighboring countries are caused by the internal politics and securitization of these threats in each country and not by the regionalization of the crisis. While I also utilize securitization theory in my conceptual framework, Tickner’s main focus in this paper is on the threats of the Colombian situation to the country’s immediate neighbors, and not on the securitization of the situation in the US. In other work, Tickner traces the inefficacy of US intervention in Colombia, especially the focus on national security and militarization at the sacrifice of economic, political and social solutions to the “narrow framework” created by the US war on drugs and the war on terror. This transition from narcotics to terrorism is one I explore in my thesis, but my aim is not to evaluate the efficacy of US intervention. In addition, I establish mechanisms through which securitization leads to the resulting level of US support or intervention.


The works of Borda Guzmán and Tickner offer useful applications of constructivism to the Colombian situation. Nevertheless, their works do not exclusively focus on the change in securitization that occurred in the United States and that prompted the greater support role. In addition, neither provides a rigorous analysis of the securitization of threats advanced in the US congress between 1998-2002.

The shift from the War on Drugs to the War on Terror has been widely discussed, including within US-Colombia relations scholarship. In a dissertation for the University of Miami entitled, "Plan Colombia and Beyond: Pastrana to Santos (2000-2012),” the author outlines the shift from ‘The War on Drugs’ to the ‘War on Terror,’ and also assesses the applicability of international relations theories to US intervention in Colombia. Although this work also stresses the importance of 9/11, it does not utilize securitization theory nor does it establish mechanisms to explain how 9/11 led to the change of US authority. ¹⁰²

There is a significant literature on the causes for US intervention, the effectiveness of Plan Colombia and recommendations for improvements of the conflict. The assessment of the sources of the shift in US foreign policy in 2002 towards Colombia, however, has been insufficiently explored, and it is this gap that I seek to fill.

1.3 Research Questions and Methods

Research Questions

In this thesis, I seek to answer the following question regarding the evolution of US foreign aid policy towards Colombia: What caused the United States' to shift its stance and decide to allow the foreign aid it was providing Colombia between 1998-2002 to be used towards a "unified campaign" against narco-trafficking and insurgent groups?

In order to better examine this evolution, I will separate my research question into two.

- Q1: Why did Plan Colombia not include a counterinsurgency component?
- Q2: What made the Bush administration proposal for a “unified campaign” law (to combat both narcotics and terrorism) and the law’s subsequent passage in Congress viable?

Selection of Case

The case of United States – Colombian foreign aid relations is highly important for an understanding of US foreign policy, and great power relations with weaker states more generally. In 2000, Colombia became the third largest recipient of US foreign aid, after Israel and Egypt. While there exists a substantial subset of literature on the effectiveness of foreign aid – and with regards to my case, the effectiveness of the military and economic aid provided under Plan Colombia – there is substantially less emphasis on understanding the reasons for foreign aid involvement, and subsequent changes in this type of involvement. Most interestingly in this case, in just two years, between 2000 and 2002, the nature of US foreign aid to Colombia changed dramatically. The congressional passage of Plan Colombia in 2000 was accompanied with concerns regarding human rights violations and
involvement in a Vietnam-like war, as well as reassurances of the implementation of
guidelines and structures to ensure that military aid was utilized for counternarcotics
operations. Only two years later, the US reevaluated its position and removed the
barrier between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency aid. This abrupt change in
policy has not been adequately explained.

**Hypotheses**

In this thesis, I examine what led the United States to allow its foreign aid to
be utilized in the Colombian civil war. There are various explanations as to why this change could have occurred:

- **H$_1$**: Presidential explanation: The election of George W. Bush resulted in a significant realignment of US foreign policy that made possible the passage of the 2002 law.

- **H$_2$**: Congressional party breakdown: The party breakdown of the US Congress, resulting from the 2000 Congressional elections, made the change in US policy politically viable.

- **H$_3$**: Realist security explanation: A change in the real threat level of the Colombian insurgency groups made US foreign aid involvement in the counterinsurgency campaign necessary.

- **H$_4$**: Colombian Persuasion: Colombian actors succeeded in persuading the US administration and Congress to provide counterinsurgency aid.

- **H$_5$**: Securitization after September 11: The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 functioned as a critical juncture, whereby the prior securitization of narcotics that allowed for the passage of Plan Colombia was replaced by a
securitization of terror, thereby impelling US involvement in counterterrorism operations in Colombia.

In this thesis, I argue that H₄ and H₅ are the most compelling explanations for the observed changes in US foreign aid policy towards Colombia. Colombian political actors are important in the pre 9/11 period because they help to securitize the issue of narcotics and are active about inviting the US to intervene. Although the Colombian actors had a pivotal role in connecting the situation in Colombia to the ‘War on Terror,’ they were only able to do this as a result of the prioritization of counterterrorism emanating from the 9/11 attacks.

Methodology

In this thesis, the primary methodology I utilize is process tracing, developed primarily by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. With this method, social scientists endeavor to isolate an intervening causal process, “the causal chain and causal mechanism,” between independent and dependent variables.”

Examining the ‘diagnostic’ pieces of evidence helps to “narrow the list of potential causes” and “contribute to supporting or overturning alternative explanatory hypotheses.”

In particular, I will be utilizing descriptive inference, which assesses the “unfolding of events or situations over time” through the description of a situation at a particular point in time:

“Hence, the descriptive component of process tracing begins not with observing change or sequence, but rather with taking good snapshots at a series of specific moments. To characterize a process, we must be able to

103 Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, (London: MIT Press, 2005), 206
104 Ibid., 207
characterize key steps in the process, which in turn permits good analysis of change and sequence.\textsuperscript{106}

In this thesis, I take two snapshots: the period between 1998 and 9/11, and the period between 9/11 and the passage of the “unified campaign” law. I also analyze other key moments in the 1998-2002 period, such as the elections of Bush or Uribe, but the majority of the characterization is split into pre- and post-9/11.

Throughout this thesis, I use a variety of primary sources to determine the causal arc of the change in US involvement. As I mainly take the audience of securitization to be the US Congress, I rely heavily on US Congressional documents, in particular, transcripts from session, committee and subcommittee hearings, as well as communiqués from the US president to Congress. I also examine US Department of State (DoS)\textsuperscript{107} and Department of Defense (DoD),\textsuperscript{108} documents, news articles, reports from policy groups and human rights organizations. In addition, I conducted formal interviews with US and Colombian policymakers, including:

- President of Colombia from 1998-2002, Andrés Pastrana Arango;
- Colombian Ambassador to the US from 2002-2007 and Ambassador of Colombia to the US from 2006-2010, Carolina Barco;
- Colombian political scientist and Minister of Communications (1987-1988), Representative of Colombia to the OAS (1997-1998),

\textsuperscript{106}David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” \textit{Political Science and Politics} 44 No.4 (2011): 824
\textsuperscript{107}I utilize both ‘State Department’ and DoS to refer to the US Department of State
\textsuperscript{108}I utilize both ‘Defense Department’ and DoD to refer to the US Department of Defense

• American journalist and former deputy editorial page editor of The New York Times, and Chief Diplomatic Correspondent at The Wall Street Journal, Carla Robbins;

• Independent journalist with a focus on armed conflicts and human rights, Frank Smith;

• High-level official in the Clinton administration;

• Career civil servants in the Colombian Ministry of National Defense who have been there since 2000.

In addition to process tracing, I also utilize discourse analysis, a qualitative method whereby I attempt to recover an interpretation and meaning from “language that actors use to describe and understand social phenomena.” Johnston provides a good overview of this method when he indicates:

The very notion of discourse is usually understood as a collection of related texts, constituted as speech, written documents, and social practices, that produce meaning and organize social knowledge. The aim is to analyze such texts in order to discern or interpret the inter-subjective context of the speech of actors..." Discourse analysis thus can be considered the qualitative contextualization of texts and practices in order to describe social meanings.109

I primarily conducted discourse analysis on testimonies of US Congressional hearings, with particular attention on the testimonies of members of the administration, such as staffers in the US DOS and DOD; Ambassadors of the US

to Colombia, Curtis Kamman and Anne Patterson; Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey; and others. I also analyzed speeches of US Presidents Clinton and Bush; Colombian Presidents Pastrana and Uribe; and Colombian ambassador to the United States, Alberto Moreno.

"Like everything in politics, everything is dialectical"

- César Andrés Restrepo Florez, Director of Strategic Studies in the Colombian Ministry of National Defense

US involvement in Colombia was altered on legal grounds in August of 2002, when the US Congress eliminated the distinction between the narcotics and insurgent threats and allowed the Government of Colombia (GOC) to utilize US funds for a joint campaign against both. Prior to this, the US did not view the terrorist actions of the groups as a threat to national security. I argue that the passage of the 2002 law resulted from the shift in securitization from drugs to ‘narcoterrorism.’ In assessing the US shift, I frame the situation around the critical juncture of the terrorist acts of 9/11. But first, I seek to answer the first half of my research question: why did Plan Colombia not include a counterinsurgency component?

I argue that the US did not become directly involved in Colombia’s conflict as a result of how political actors, most notably, members of the Clinton and early W. Bush administrations and various members of Congress, framed the Colombian crisis: they made counternarcotics the defining issue in US-Colombia relations through the securitization of the narcotics problem and the characterization of the insurgent threat as a narcotics threat, and not a threat to the Colombian state. For many US political actors, the benefit of US intervention in Colombia was in making

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visible gains in the reduction of the drug supply; involvement in the civil war could result in the displacement of counternarcotics aid and a potential involvement in human rights violations. An emphasis on narcotics was necessary to ensure Congressional approval of Plan Colombia and this resulted in constraints on US counterinsurgency involvement. In this chapter, I will solely describe the securitization of narcotics that occurred.

2.1 Buildup to Plan Colombia

The United States remained committed to addressing the narcotrafficking problem in Colombia from 1998-2002 through the continued financing of aerial eradication and interdiction campaigns. Greater US military involvement in the Colombian narcotics situation came in December of 1998, when U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen and Colombian Defense Minister Rodrigo Lloreda created a special, US-trained counter-drug battalion within the Colombian military that would support the Colombian National Police in counternarcotics operations. Subsequent expansion of US intervention in Colombia’s military matters required a larger appropriation of US funds that would require the approval of the US Congress. The Clinton administration urged the GOC to create a comprehensive plan with which they could request foreign aid for the purpose of improving the narcotics situation and the effectiveness of the Colombian Military and National Police. The Pastrana

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administration presented Plan Colombia\textsuperscript{112} to the international community in September of 1999.

2.2 Securitization of the War on Drugs

In this chapter, I will focus on the securitization of narcotics between 1998 and 9/11. US intervention in Colombia in the period before 9/11 was primarily driven by the War on Drugs, the US anti-drug policy program originally launched under President Nixon, and by the desire to limit the supply of narcotics reaching the United States. One of the main objectives of US drug policy was to conduct interdiction and aerial eradication in the Andean region in order to decrease the production of coca and poppy, as well as to impede the trafficking of illegal narcotics into the United States. The War on Drugs greatly affected how US political actors perceived the situation in Colombia; their characterization of the production of illicit narcotics as a prominent threat against US national security framed the debate regarding the type of aid Colombia needed. Although Colombia faced larger problems than drug production, Colombian political actors also contributed to the securitization of the drug issue. In order to continue to obtain US support, President Pastrana framed the drug issue as important and claimed that both governments needed to work together to counter the threat.

We can explain why Plan Colombia did not include a counterinsurgency component by analyzing how political actors, both American and Colombian, decided to securitize the drug issue.

\textsuperscript{112} When I indicate ‘Plan Colombia’ in my thesis, I am referring to the US component of the plan, as Plan Colombia was the larger plan that included funds from Colombia, international institutions, and other countries
First, I will determine whether the drug issue in US-Colombian relations can be considered “securitized.” According to Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, an issue can be securitized if it is portrayed as an existential threat to a referent object — something that has a “legitimate claim to survival” and can be considered to be threatened.\textsuperscript{113} Securitizing agents are the actors who declare a referent object as threatened\textsuperscript{114} and a securitizing move is discourse that refers to something as a threat to a referent object, which does not require the utterance of the word “security.”\textsuperscript{115} An issue moves from discourse to actually being securitized when 1) the issue is presented as so significant that it should not be subject to “normal haggling on politics” and it should harness the attention of top leaders,\textsuperscript{116} 2) the audience accepts the issue as a threat, and 3) securitizing actors claim the ability to use “extraordinary means” to manage the issue.\textsuperscript{117} In this chapter, I will define who the securitizing agents and audience are and will proceed to show that political actors called for the prioritization of the narcotics issue; that the issue was framed as a security threat to various referent objects; that the audience accepted it as such; and that the securitizing agents claimed the right to use “any means necessary” to solve the problem.

**Securitizing Agents and Audience**

In this period, US and Colombian political leaders are the securitizing agents, most prominently US Presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush, Colombian President Andrés Pastrana, the director of the US Office of the National Control

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\textsuperscript{113} Buzan et al. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 21
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 36
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 27
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 29
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 24
\end{flushleft}
Drug Strategy, or ‘drug czar,’ Barry McCaffrey, and several members of the US Congress. These actors emphasize the threat that drugs pose, to both US and Colombian security, and they utilize rhetoric to convince an audience of their claim to use the means necessary to weaken the threat. The drug concern is framed as the most important issue with which these two countries are grappling bilaterally.

The audience in this securitization is primarily the US Congress, since legislation regarding the appropriations of funds for use in Colombia must pass in the House and Senate, in particular, both P.L. 106-246 or H.R. 4425, the 2001 military appropriations bill which contained allocations for ‘Plan Colombia,’ and P.L. 107-206 or H.R. 4775, which was the 2002 supplemental appropriations that included the “unified campaign” authorization for counterterrorism support, States,” needed to obtain Congressional approval. If we were to specify the audience more narrowly, it would mainly be US Congressional Democrats. Many Republican Congress members already considered the War on Drugs an important issue to address and had been advocating for greater US military support in Colombia and greater funding for drug eradication and interdiction programs in the Andean region. Many Democrats, on the other hand, appeared to be more hesitant regarding military aid to Colombia, as there was a fear that the situation would entail the US becoming implicated in human rights violations. Although public perception regarding the threat of narcotics is important, it is only significant in this case insofar

as it can affect how members of congress vote. For this particular analysis though, I will not be focusing on the US public as an audience, but rather, the US congress.

The Prioritization of the Narcotics Issue

According to Securitization theory, an issue can be designated as a security threat when actors claim that the issue is an absolute priority.\textsuperscript{120} Speeches and Congressional testimonies during this period should emphasize the importance of tackling the drug issue. In addition, we should see the issue taking precedence in Congress and in the President’s agenda.

The primacy of the drug debate is evident in many of President Clinton’s speeches. The election of President Pastrana in 1998 brought the Clinton administration renewed hope that it would be able to cooperate with the Colombian government on the narcotics issue. Pastrana’s election came at a pivotal moment in the trajectory of cocaine production in Colombia: in 1998, Colombia was producing more coca leaf and its derivative, cocaine, than any other country.\textsuperscript{121} Many in his administration, especially ONDCP Director Barry McCaffrey, voiced concerns about the worsening drug situation, President Clinton viewed the election of President Pastrana as an opportunity to collaborate with Colombia on this issue. President Pastrana, in my interview with him, emphasized the novelty of being invited to speak to President Clinton prior to his own inauguration:

So I think that the first important step was the invitation of President Clinton to me before my inauguration…most of the time they have meeting with presidents after the inauguration. In that meeting, Clinton was very kind to invite me to a state visit to the US, that meeting was with President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeline Albright. I think what President

\textsuperscript{120} Buzan et al., \textit{Security: A New Framework for Analysis}, 24
Clinton tried to show with that meeting was the change in position of the US regarding Colombia.\textsuperscript{122}

The administration’s renewed emphasis on narcotics is highlighted when President Clinton addressed the US Congress on February 23, 1999:

Strengthening international narcotics control is one of my Administration’s top foreign policy priorities. …Our counternarcotics diplomacy, foreign assistance, and operations have focused increasingly on making this objective a reality.\textsuperscript{123}

With this statement, President Clinton communicates the importance of the issue to Congress. Not only has the drug issue harnessed the attention of the country’s top leaders but it is also defined as one of the top priorities in the administration’s foreign policy. By doing this, President Clinton is not only encouraging Congressional attention to the issue, but he is also noting the administration’s efforts in order to set the stage for the proposal that he will make soon regarding Plan Colombia.

Rep. John Mica (R-FL)\textsuperscript{124} at a Congressional hearing on August 6, 1999 indicated that narcotics constitute a challenge to both “regional and national security” and that “the influx of illegal drugs to the United States is our Nation’s No. 1 social challenge and the most insidious national threat we have faced.”\textsuperscript{125} This is a clear

\begin{footnotes}
\item[122] Andrés Pastrana Arango (President of Colombia 1998-2002), personal interview with author, February 12, 2015
\item[124] Rep. John Mica was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug policy, and Human resources of the Committee on Government Reform in the US House of Representatives in 1999
\item[125] House Committee on Government Reform, \textit{The Narcotics Threat from Colombia: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug policy, and Human resources}, 106\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1\textsuperscript{st} sess., August 6, 1999, 1, emphasis added
\end{footnotes}
prioritization of the drug threat to the audience of the US congress by one of its members.

The primacy of the drug threat in US national security rhetoric continued past President Clinton’s administration. Between his inauguration and 9/11, President Bush also made the War on Drugs a pivotal part of his administration’s goals. In a six-month periodic report to Congress on the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers in Colombia, President Bush declared, “the magnitude and the dimension of the problem in Colombia – perhaps the most pivotal country of all in terms of the world’s cocaine trade – are extremely grave.” President Bush not only reaffirmed the severity of the drug issue, but also connected it specifically to Colombia. The characterization of the Colombian problem as “extremely grave” and the recognition of Colombia as “the most pivotal country” highlight the urgency of the situation and the necessity of prioritizing the issue of illicit narcotics.

The Threat of Narcotics to Referent Objects

Referent objects are what political actors claim are threatened by the securitizing issue. The traditionalist conception of security as exclusively emanating from military concerns considers the “state” as the referent object, and its “sovereignty” as its means of survival. Securitization theory widens the characterization of what can be considered a threat, allowing for the identification of

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127 Buzan et al. Security: A New Framework for Analysis, 4
a greater number of referent objects, both military and non-military. In essence, actors can craft anything as a referent object, but most focus on objects that have a need to survive and that in some sense, display collectivity. Therefore, in order to determine proper securitization, we must ensure that political actors are claiming that the issue that they are securitizing poses an existential threat to some referent object.

In the securitization of narcotics with regards to the situation in Colombia, there are various referent objects that US and Colombian officials make note of, including: the American and Colombian societies, the economy, the environment, and human security and health. The securitizing agents may use the diverse identification of referent objects as a method by which to display the multifaceted threat that narcotics pose. Drugs are at the intersection of various securitization sectors, including the military, economic, political, and social sectors. Political leaders care about the safety of the communities they represent; therefore, maintaining the health and physical well being of their constituents is high on the list of referent objects described.

One of the primary ways in which the narcotics issue is framed is in a national security context. Rep. Gilman (R-NY) makes clear that Colombia, the country that provides 80 percent of the world cocaine supply, is a “major national security concern.” In the memorandum of justification waiving the Leahy amendment, President Clinton frames Colombia’s challenges as “a matter of national

128 Ibid., 5
129 Ibid., 36
130 House Committee on Government Reform, The Crisis in Colombia: What are We Facing?: Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources. 106th Cong., 2nd sess., February 15, 2000, 26
security interest to the United States.” The use of the word security makes it indubitably appear as a real threat and the broad significance of the claim makes it generalizable to many sectors. The implied referent object is that of “collective security,” a referent object that must be protected for the government to be fulfilling its duties.

The use of “society” as a referent object can be clearly seen in televised speeches and in congressional testimonies. Rep. Mica (R-FL) noted the threat that drugs pose to the health and well being of humans and communities when he testified that 14,000 Americans died from drug use last year (1998) and that hard-drug related deaths outpaced homicide. At a 1999 House committee hearing, he testified:

Central Florida has been ravaged by the effect of illegal drugs…we have a very serious problem here in our community and across the land. … These drugs feed into central Florida’s crime statistics and fray the very fabric of our society.

In this statement, Rep. Mica frames the issue as being a threat to society, claiming that drugs are a threat to communities, and in other testimonies he also notes the threat to people’s lives, to youth and to the stability of families. These referent objects are appropriate, as they are all deserving of existence. In an effort to ensure the safety of his constituent community, Rep. Mica frames the situation as a problem for society and attempts to garner the support of others in viewing the issue as a serious threat.

131 The White House, “Memorandum of Justification in Connection with the waivers under section 32101 (a) (4) of the Emergency Supplemental Act, as Enacted in The Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2001, August 23, 2000,” (Office of the Press Secretary: South Brunswick, New Jersey)
132 House. Committee on Government Reform. Our drug crisis, Drug Crisis: Where Do We Go From Here Hearing before the Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, 106th Cong., 1st sess., One Hundred Sixth Congress, first session, January 22, 1999, 2
133 House Committee on Government Reform, Our Drug Crisis: Where Do We Go From Here?, 2, emphasis added
When President Pastrana visited the White House in 1998, President Clinton, in his remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony, emphasized the importance of tackling the drug threat. While urging that the US and Colombia should work together in the fight against narcotics, he framed drugs as a threat to humans, by saying, “…for both our peoples have suffered greatly from the drug trade and its brutality.”134 Implicit in this statement, is the threat of drugs to society. In his statements, McCaffrey makes note of a wide variety of referent objects, including, “the rule of law, human rights, and democratic institutions”135 and denoted it as a “health and educational threat to us.”136 These referent objects encompass a wide variety of sectors, and they note the multitude of objects affected by the drug threat. Securitization agents claim the threat of drugs at the national and international level, as well as across sectors. Some of the most common referent objects include national security, society, health and the environment and economy.

The Audience Accepts the Threat

In order for an issue to be securitized, the audience must accept it as a threat to the referent object(s). In addition, they must approve of the measures that the securitizing agent has claimed the right to use. In this section, I will note some of the measures claimed by the securitizing agents as well as show whether the audience approved these actions.

One of the actions of US congressional approval was in 1999 when President Clinton requested $78 million for “programs to help President Pastrana fight the

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135 House Committee on Government Reform, *The Crisis in Colombia*, 23
136 House Committee on Government Reform, *The Crisis in Colombia*, 41
drug trade in Colombia.” In a statement to Congress, President Clinton reiterated the importance of involvement in Colombia when he indicated that “strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia, and fighting the drug trade there, is the right thing to do, and it is very much in America’s own national interest.” The passage of this foreign aid request by the US congress represents their acceptance of the drug threat as an important security concern. In addition, President Clinton’s most important statement to congress regarding Colombia was on January 11, 2000, when he announced the $1.6 billion assistance package that would contribute to Plan Colombia. The majority of the funding for this plan was for military assistance for counternarcotics operations. In a message to Congress, he stated:

Today I am announcing an urgently needed, 2-year funding package to assist Colombia in vital counternarcotic efforts aimed at keeping illegal drugs off our shores… In fiscal year 2000, much of our support will be focused on a one-time infusion of funds to help boost Colombia’s interdiction and eradication capabilities, particularly in the south.

In the House of Representatives, the plan passed almost unaltered by Congressional amendments. Debate on the program began in March with H.R. 3908, the 2000 “Emergency Supplemental Appropriations” bill. Various amendments were submitted, most of them by Congressional Democrats, to limit or postpone military aid, or to cut funding. The House appropriations committee passed a version


138 Ibid.


of the plan that closely resembled the Clinton plan with a 33-13 vote.\textsuperscript{141} When H.R. 3908 entered the House Floor, another series of amendments to cut the military funding and to add human rights stipulations were introduced by various Representatives, some of whom were actually staunch supporters of the plan.\textsuperscript{142} The only change from the Appropriations bill was the addition of a human rights condition, which could be waived by the President under “extraordinary circumstances.” The plan, which closely resembled the Clinton proposal, passed the House with a vote of 263-146.\textsuperscript{143}

In the Senate appropriations committee, the plan underwent more changes as debate centered on the potential for human rights violations and what types of helicopters Colombia would receive.\textsuperscript{144} In the full Senate, debate did not last very long and an amendment by Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) to remove the “push into Southern Colombia” aid portion was tabled by a vote of 89-11. The final senate version of the Plan passed 95-4.\textsuperscript{145} The final plan approved $1.2 billion for Colombia over the course of two years.\textsuperscript{146} The Congressional acceptance of this large US assistance initiative supports the idea that members of Congress also came to see narcotics as a security threat. Congress continues to support drug initiatives in Colombia and they pass other appropriations to the US portion of Plan Colombia in the years after 2000.

Claiming the Right to Use Any Means Necessary

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Isaacson and Vacius, “‘Plan Colombia’: The Debate in Congress, 2000”
\textsuperscript{146} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs}, 127
\end{footnotesize}
In addition, securitization is accompanied by the agent’s claim to using whatever means are necessary to ensure that the threat is defeated. On October 28, 1998, in their second meeting ever, Presidents Clinton and Pastrana signed “an allegiance against drugs committing their nations to use all means at their disposal to stem narcotics production, trafficking, consumption, and related crimes.” The mention of using “all means at their disposal” is a type of claim akin to the “whatever means necessary” claim that securitization theory indicates that securitizing agents make and it denotes a the agent’s public claim regarding their rights to use measures to deal with the problem.

In addition, on August 23, 2000, President Clinton waived various human rights requirements to allow for the timelier transmission of counternarcotics aid to Colombia. By waiving these certification requirements, President Clinton conveyed the immediacy that he believed the drug threat posed as this waiver allowed for the earlier transmission of US equipment to Colombia for counternarcotics operations. In addition, the waiver represented a situation in which a securitizing agent had “managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she was bound by,” and this, according to securitization theory, constitutes an effective securitization.

2.3 Summary on the Securitization of Narcotics

Through all this, US and Colombian political actors effectively securitized the drug issue. The rhetoric regarding the drug issue was more than a securitizing move. I argue that the presence of the following factors substantiates the effectual securitization of the narcotics threat: 1) various actors noted the importance of the  

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issue and prioritized it in national debates; 2) political actors pointed to a number of referent objects which were threatened by narcotics; 3) the audience in this case, the US congress, accepted the securitization of narcotics and approved the actions taken by the securitizing actors; and 4) the securitizing actors claimed the use of whatever means were necessary to reduce the threat.
Chapter 3: The Effects of the Securitization of Narcotics

“Plan Colombia was never created against the FARC, Plan Colombia was created to fight drugs.” -President Andrés Pastrana

As I indicated in the previous chapter, the US Congress was the arena for the securitization of narcotics between 1998-2002. The framing of the Colombian situation was important because it led to Congressional concerns that impeded the involvement of the US in Colombia’s asymmetric war. Two mechanisms stemmed from this securitization. The first is that the securitization of narcotics resulted in the portrayal of the insurgent groups as “narco-guerillas” and “narco-terrorists.” The Congressional emphasis on the narcotics threat that these groups posed to the US rather than on their destabilizing terrorist threat to the Colombian state led to heightened concerns regarding the human rights track record of the GOC and the Colombian Army and the AUC. These human rights concerns resulted in the passage of the Leahy Amendment, which served to limit the excessive involvement of the US in Colombia’s conflict. The second mechanism that also emanated from the securitization of narcotics was the disproportionate attention in the US administration on developing methods by which to reduce the supply of drugs entering the United States. This focus on supply resulted in a) the construction of Plan Colombia as a largely counternarcotics plan and b) the strict delineation

\[149\] President Andrés Pastrana Arango, personal interview with author, February 12, 2015

\[150\] Although “guerilla” and “terrorist” mean different things, the words “narco-guerilla” and “narco-terrorist” were used almost interchangeable in the US Congress. The context of the terminology was more important, and members of Congress referred to these groups to emphasize their connection to the drug trade. In one hearing, Rep. Mica (R-FL) refers to them as “narco-terrorist guerillas.” We know that he is trying to emphasize their connection to drugs because he notes the groups’ involvement in illicit narcotrafficking. See House Committee, The Narcotics Threat From Colombia, 15, fn. 2
between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency and the types of operations and equipment for which Colombia could utilize US aid.

The result was the passage of a plan, the majority of which provided military aid for the narcotics situation, which contained a distinction between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency aid and a human rights condition on the usage of the aid. In the period prior to 9/11, concerns regarding human rights and the supply of cocaine entering the US were more important than concerns regarding the terrorist activities of the insurgents. The securitization of narcotics had resulted in the portrayal of narcotics – not the FARC and ELN – as the most imminent threat to US security.

These mechanisms, displayed in Figure 1, illustrate the importance of how situations are socially constructed – the particular framing of the Colombian situation affected Congressional perceptions regarding the problem and their actions subsequently affected the type of conditions, allocations and limitations of Plan Colombia. In addition, I wish to highlight the agency of Colombian actors in contributing to the securitization of narcotics, in constructing the US portion of Plan Colombia as a counternarcotics plan, and in reassuring the US government of the GOC’s commitment to human rights.
3.1 Mechanism I – Securitization of Narcotics and Human Rights Concerns

In this section, I will describe the first mechanism by which the securitization of drugs resulted in Plan Colombia’s lack of a counterinsurgency component. The identification of drugs as a security threat in US discourse resulted in fear regarding the Colombian insurgents’ connection to narcotrafficking. These groups were portrayed in US discourse as “narco-guerillas” and “narcoterrorists,” with more emphasis being placed on their contribution to narcotics cultivation and trafficking than on their political ideologies or terrorist actions. The characterization of the FARC, ELN, and AUC as drug groups resulted in heightened considerations regarding the human rights track record of the Colombian army. Since these groups were not viewed as posing a terrorist threat to the US, there were fears regarding US support for operations where human rights violations against civilians or captured
members of these groups could occur. As a result of these human rights considerations, the US Congress amended Plan Colombia to include the Leahy Amendment, which conditioned US aid on the ability of the Colombian government to meet a list of human rights goals and conditions. This amendment further helped to limit the US participation in counterinsurgency operations.

**Portrayal of the Insurgency**

The securitization of the narcotics issue shaped how US officials portrayed the guerrilla groups and right-wing paramilitaries. These groups were important to US actors insofar as they were connected to the drug trade and contributed to the threat that narcotics posed to the US and Colombia. Numerous reports appeared in the late 1990s linking the guerrillas and paramilitaries to drug trafficking activities. In 2000, US and Colombian officials intercepted a sea vessel filled with cocaine that contained a “variety of FARC paraphernalia,” which led officials to believe that the operation had been led by the FARC from beginning to end.\(^{151}\) In addition, US officials, by 1998, were aware, that the FARC controlled areas where the majority of Colombia’s coca was being grown and that they made between $200-400 million from the drug trade.\(^{152}\)

Despite their connection to narcotics, these groups differ from narcotrafficking organizations since their movement began with a politico-economic ideology and their modus operandi involves military tactics, and often, terrorist activity. Nevertheless, the securitization of narcotics in the US domestic arena resulted in the “narcotization” of other aspects of the Colombian situation, including

\(^{151}\) “EEUU acusa,” *Cambio*, November 11-18, 2000 as quoted by Crandall, *Driven by Drugs*, 75
\(^{152}\) Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy*, (London: Lynne Reinner, 2005) 106
the portrayal of the insurgents. The primacy of the narcotics issue in US discourse resulted in the selective emphasis on the narcotics threat that these groups posed. Referring to these insurgents as “narcoguerrillas” or as “narcoterrorists” allowed those that supported US military involvement in Colombia, namely the Clinton and early W. Bush administrations and Republican members of Congress, to present the insurgency issue as a narcotics issue. While many members of Congress were opposed to US involvement in countering the military threats of the insurgency, emphasizing the connection between the insurgency and the cocaine trade made it harder for members of Congress to vote against the plan.

The actors that most contributed to portraying the insurgents as narcotraffickers were members of the Clinton Administration. At a hearing before the committee on Government Reform, McCaffrey noted the debate that had surfaced regarding whether to identify the FARC, ELN, and paramilitary groups as “narcoguerrillas.” Although he did not offer a solution to their identification, he believed that “without question, the FARC income depend[ed] upon drug production” and the FARC and ELN had neglected their ideological stances to become groups “fueled by hundreds of millions of dollars of drug-created money.”

A month later, in September 1999, at a hearing before the House Committee on International Relations, acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Peter F. Romero testified that, “guerrilla and right-wing militia

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153 House Committee on Government Reform, *The Narcotics Threat from Colombia*, 69
154 Ibid.,
155 Ibid., 65
are increasingly tied to the narcotics industry,” and later in his testimony he referred to these groups as “narcoguerrillas.” Romero also noted that despite improvements in coca eradication in Peru and Bolivia, there had been a surge in production in the regions of Putumayo and Caquetá, coinciding with a large guerrilla presence. Although this statement does not directly mention the guerrillas’ involvement in the drug trade, it identifies a correlation in which the mushrooming of production in that area coincided with an increase in guerrilla presence, thus implying a relationship between these two events. The Chief of International Operations at the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), William Ledwith, also emphasized the connection between the guerrillas and narcotics, noting that “an alliance of convenience” existed between guerrillas and traffickers since the 1970s, and that DEA intelligence had shown that the FARC and ELN “raise funds through extortion, taxation, or by directly selling security services to traffickers” and in return, the traffickers receive protection of their cocaine laboratories and channels of trafficking.

In addition to the members of the Clinton administration, former U.S. ambassadors to Colombia, Morris Busby under President George H.W. Bush and Thomas McNamara under President Reagan, also associated the insurgents to the narcotics problem. Ambassador Busby claimed that the FARC and ELN constituted an “integral part of the narcotics problem” and Ambassador McNamara outlined

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156 House Committee on International Relations, To receive an update on selected regional issues to include: Colombia and U.S. Policy;… Hearing before the Subcommittee on The Western Hemisphere. 106th Cong., 1st Sess., September 29, 1999, 9
157 Ibid., 16
158 Ibid.
159 House Committee on Government Reform, The Narcotics Threat from Colombia, 115
160 House Committee on Government Reform, The Narcotics Threat from Colombia
161 House Committee on Government Reform, The Crisis in Colombia, 151
the involvement of the varying levels of FARC membership with narcotrafficking by indicating:

Colombia’s guerrillas are heavily involved in narcotics. The FARC leadership traffics in drugs inside Colombia, they tax other traffickers, they protect the narcotics industry from the police and military raids. That means they’re narcotraffickers. Meanwhile, the FARC peasant troops and low-level officials cultivate and process the cocaine for added personal income. And that, of course, also leads to the wealth and power of the FARC and the other guerrilla outfits. According to their Marxist logic, there’s nothing wrong with it. It’s perfectly legitimate since it weakens the enemy and supports the revolution.

Aside from administration members, a number of Republican representatives also sought to emphasize the insurgency’s connection to drugs. Representative Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) noted that drugs were linked to the “growing strength and aggressiveness of the narcoguerrillas.” Likewise, Andy Barr (R-KY), indicated:

“With regard to the way that we characterize the situation down in Colombia, and as I mentioned earlier, I am glad to see the State Department is recognizing there is a narcoterrorist threat or a narcoguerrilla threat, that there is indeed a very, very profound and deep relationship between narcotics trafficking and the destabilizing terrorist and guerrilla activity.”

Rep. Mica (R-FL), a proponent of US military intervention in Colombia’s narcotics situation, remarked that the FARC, a group of “17,000 Marxist narcoterrorist guerillas,” and ELN benefited from the drug trade and received around $600 million from it.

Concerns regarding narcotrafficking did not just involve the FARC and ELN guerillas, as significant concerns also existed regarding the AUC’s participation in drug trafficking. Senator Leahy mentioned that “…there is abundant evidence that some in the Army regularly conspire with paramilitary death squads who, like the

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162 Ibid., 163
163 Ibid.
164 House Committee on Government Reform, The Narcotics Threat From Colombia, 95
165 House Committee on Government Reform, The Crisis in Colombia, 15, emphasis added
guerrillas, are also involved in drug trafficking.” As demonstrated by his statement, the perceived threat of these groups, other than the fact that they are death squads, is that they are also involved in drug trafficking. This supports the idea that the securitization of narcotics resulted in concerns over these organizations mainly as a result of their contribution to the US drug problem. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) also cautioned against the plan, indicating that the Senate “…cannot ignore the increase in paramilitary involvement in the drug trade” as these are the “same extremists with close ties to the Colombian military” that the US plans to train. In her questioning of General Charles Wilhem, Senator Feldstein also referred to them as “drug-financed paramilitary groups.” Representative James McGovern (D-MA) cited the Drug Enforcement Agency when stating that the paramilitaries were “deeply implicated in the drug trade” and Rep. Waters also noted that the paramilitary organizations “traffic in illegal drugs.” The connection of the AUC to drug trafficking displays how the securitization of narcotics played into the portrayal of these violent non-state actors.

Congressional Concerns Regarding Human Rights Violations

The importance of discourse in shaping opinion is evident in the treatment of the insurgent groups in the US Congress. Despite having been added to the FTOs list by the DoS in 1997, the FARC and ELN were not treated as such in the US Congress – they enjoyed some degree of protection, as sufficient concerns existed

166 Senate Committee on Appropriations, Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs; Defense; and Military Constructions, 106th Cong., 2nd sess., February 24, 2000, 5
167 Ibid., 3
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid., 39
171 Ibid.
regarding the possibility that the Colombian army and police could have committed human rights violations against them. This treatment emanated not from their legal categorization – as terrorists – but from their portrayal in the US Congress as “narcoguerillas” and “narcoterrorists.” Although the FARC and ELN did pose a threat to the United States via their involvement in the cultivation and subsequent trafficking of illicit drugs, were not perceived as posing a direct terrorist threat to the US mainland. The connection of the GOC and its army to the AUC also evoked criticisms of the plan. The Congressional concern regarding the AUC was that it functioned extra-judicially in pursuing members of the FARC and ELN.

In this section, I discuss the concerns that surfaced in Congress, which emanated from the portrayal of the insurgents and which led to a restraint in US intervention in the counterinsurgency campaign. Most concerns regarding human rights violations came from Congressional Democrats and from human rights organizations that testified in Congress. The commitment by the Pastrana Administration to improve human rights was important in helping to secure the passage of the plan. Although Samper’s administration had a poor human rights record, Pastrana became publicly committed to ensuring that the links between the GOC and the AUC would be decreased and that the GOC’s human rights track record would improve under his leadership.

If the FARC and ELN had been securitized as being a direct terrorist threat to the US, then, members of congress should have been more willing to support or consider the use of US funds towards a counterinsurgency campaign. Instead, congressional discussions focused on human rights violations that could result from strengthening and further militarizing the Colombian army. As I will discuss in the
next chapter, in the period after 9/11, the FARC joined the ranks of Al Qaeda regarding the potential threat that they posed to the national security of the United States. Prior to that, however, more importance was given to ensuring that the Colombian Army conducted its operations abiding by international human rights conventions and that the aid being provided did not benefit the AUC, an organization also involved in the drug trade. Human rights considerations were particularly emphasized in Senate committee hearings and they centered on three interrelated observations: 1) the connection of the Army to the AUC, 2) the poor human rights record of the Colombian army, and 3) the Colombian penal code. Members of the administration testified in various congressional hearings regarding the extent of the interaction between the Colombian army and the AUC, the credibility of the Colombian commitment to protect human rights and the progress are of the human rights record of the government.\textsuperscript{172} Although the AUC was also considered to be involved the drug trade, it received negative attention in Congress because human rights groups actively highlighted the group’s extrajudicial actions against left-wing guerilla members.

The greatest alarms in Congress concerned the ties of the army to the AUC. One of the most prominent critics of the Plan was Senator Leahy (D-VT), who in many senate hearings cited the documented links between the AUC and the Colombian army.\textsuperscript{173} The Department of State had indicated, just a month before the joint Senate-House hearing of February 2000, that progress had been made in

\textsuperscript{172} For more mentions of human rights violations, see congressional documents: See House Committee, \textit{The Crisis in Colombia} and House Committee, Senate Committee on Appropriations, \textit{Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…}
\textsuperscript{173} Senate Committee on Appropriations, \textit{Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…}, 28
severing the links between the Colombian Army and the AUC. In the same Senate hearing, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) noted that the Human Rights Watch’s (HRW) 2000 report had found that collaboration between the army and the AUC was commonplace in late 1999. One of the main concerns regarding the AUC was that they functioned as an extrajudicial branch of the army. Quoting again the 2000 HRW report, Sen. Feinstein explained the modus operandi of the AUC: “…[the] paramilitaries kill suspected guerillas, [and deliver] them to the army in return for weapons.” Sen. Feinstein noted the recent improvement in the human rights situation, but she also indicated that there were still a growing number of alerts from human rights groups regarding the Colombian situation. The alarm regarding the AUC’s treatment of the FARC highlights the latter’s categorization as a group that deserves human rights protection. In the period right after 9/11, human rights concerns are not a large consideration in the Colombian case in Congress, as terrorist organizations are not granted the same protections as citizens or normal criminals.

Robin Kirk, a representative of the Americas Division of HRW testified in the US Senate regarding the organization’s investigations in Colombia. In her testimony, she stated that she understood there was a commitment by the Colombian administration to improve upon human rights, however: “…the kinds of cases that we [Human Rights Watch] included in our report… show that this collusion, this collaboration, and indeed even an open creation of paramilitary groups, continues to occur in Colombia.” Her statement was a direct response to

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174 Ibid.
175 Ibid., 39
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid., 65
General Wilhem’s assessment that the military-paramilitary relationship was mainly one of local collusion, as she noted that HRW documented ties throughout all levels of the army, including in half of the 18 functioning brigades. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) stated that Plan Colombia “will spell disaster for peace and human rights in Colombia.” Other House representatives who shared their concerns regarding human rights violations included Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) and William Delahunt (D-MA). These concerns would no longer be as paramount in foreign aid decision making in congress after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Another concern regarding the Colombian situation, which was not mutually exclusive from the connection of the military to the paramilitaries, was the human rights track record of the Colombian Army. Sen. Leahy (D-VT) voiced concern over the 79% of the $1.6 billion that would go the Colombian Armed Forces, because it was an “institution that [had] a sordid record of human rights violations, corruption and even involvement in drug trafficking.” Criticisms regarding the way in which the plan provided aid to the Colombian Army emanated from both sides of the aisle. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) expressed concern about the US commitment to the Colombian army and Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT) also had reservations regarding the Colombian military’s role in the counternarcotics situation, noting that

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179 Ibid., 65
181 Senate Committee on Appropriations, Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…, 5
182 Ibid., 8
he believed “the role of the military [to be] much different in this country than what it is being asked to do.”

Concerns also extended to Colombia’s judiciary, and its ability to appropriately investigate and bring to trial those with links to the AUC or those who had been found to commit human rights violations. During the house session, Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL) mentioned that, as of date, there were “500 outstanding arrest warrants issued by the Attorney General’s office against paramilitary groups.” The Supreme Judicial Council in Colombia also had the ability to transfer cases from civilian court to military courts, which often times undermined investigations or failed to appropriately prosecute those being charged.

Commitment by the Colombian Administration

Reassurances regarding the commitment to the protection of human rights came not only from the Colombian administration, including President Pastrana and Ambassador Luis Alberto Moreno, but also from Ambassador Pickering, General Charles Wilhem and General McCaffrey. General McCaffrey urged for the passage of the bill and indicated his trust in the Colombian government’s ability to use the counternarcotics aid against the AUC as well, as they were “clearly involved in the drug business themselves...[and] they have attacked the Colombian police and murdered them. They had a death threat on President Pastrana.” Ambassador Pickering vouched for the credibility of the Colombian government by indicating that compared to Samper’s administration, the tenure of Pastrana “offers the United States and the rest of the international community a golden opportunity to work with

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183 Ibid., 10
184 House Committee on Government Reform, *The Crisis in Colombia*, 136
185 Ibid., 25
186 House Committee on Government Reform, *The Crisis in Colombia*, 136.
Colombia in confronting these threats” as the President is committed to “democratic values and principles.” In a personal interview with President Pastrana, he emphasized the poor human rights situation that he inherited from President Samper:

> When we started in the government, there were a lot of accusations with the United States in regard to some of the units of Colombia … that were accused of working with the paramilitaries … in many of the help and the aid of the US to the government of Samper there were vetted units in human rights and corruption in the armed forces … these brigades cannot receive aid, help, or training of the United States.…

The United States was, according to Ambassador Pickering, committed to following the Leahy Amendment and he ensured that a process existed with which to vet units being given assistance. One reassuring fact was that the army’s human rights record had improved and that Colombian investigators contributed evidence to human rights investigations, which demonstrated that the Colombian government had come to better protect those that conduct these investigators. In the session, Colombian ambassador Moreno alluded to the Colombian government’s collaboration with human rights organizations, indicating that much of the evidence and data included in the reports were made available by the Colombian prosecutor’s office and that the government was continuing to investigate allegations of links between the army and the AUC.

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188 Ibid.
189 President Andrés Pastrana Arango, personal interview with author, February 12, 2015
190 The Leahy amendment is Section 563 of the Fiscal Year 2000 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act. This conditions aid or assistance to security forces units upon there being no evidence of human rights violations
191 Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…*, 15.
192 Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…*, 28-29
193 Ibid., 43.
Information regarding Colombian activities to improve human rights made it to the US Congress. General Tapias gave General Wilhem a list of four hundred paramilitaries who were arrested and indicated to him that the security forces had undertaken 100 operations against the AUC. In particular, the Colombian Marines had, in the same day as this session, engaged in an operation against the paramilitaries in Salado.\textsuperscript{194} In my interview with Jaime Ruiz, the director of the Department of National Planning, Special Presidential Advisor for Government Affairs to the President Pastrana, and the Colombian official who was most involved in the Colombian Plan Colombia, noted some of the actions President Pastrana undertook to improve human rights:

\begin{quote}
The pressure from the US Congress served us to clean the ties from the AUC and the army. Pastrana got rid of a lot of Generals, that we thought had ties, and he put his top generals, [and] he started sending them to the US, and when you send them to congress… they listen…”\textsuperscript{195}
\end{quote}

President Pastrana, during our interview, highlighted his administration’s efforts in improving the situation. Pastrana displayed his commitment to human rights by appointing his Vice President, Gustavo Bell, to simultaneously function as the Colombian High Commissioner for Human Rights:

\begin{quote}
…one of the most important things I put my vice President to work on…and one of the most important things I started doing with the military was, and I used a phrase in one of my speeches, … I said to them…‘you cannot touch heaven on the shoulders of the devil’ …the exclusive use of the arms in this country is for the army and the police, nobody else, and that is why we created a special policy through the office of the vice president regarding human rights…we started creating in the different brigades in the military units in Colombia these schools for human rights that were very interesting….In the end, I think that Colombia was certified in the fight on drugs, certified in human rights, and the army understood that they had to go
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{195} Jaime Ruiz Llano (Director for the Colombian National Planning Department (1998-1999) and Special Presidential Advisor for Government Affairs to the President of Colombia, President Pastrana (1999)), personal interview with author, January 5, 2015.
after the paramilitaries. That was one of the strongest policies going after the military groups, because they were growing in the country.¹⁹⁶

Facts cited in Congress to display Colombian commitment include the following: the creation of a commission aimed at organizing the state’s operations against the AUC, a presidential decree demanding the discharge of military personnel with connections to the paramilitaries or cooperating with them, the forcible retirement of two officers in April of 1999 that had been found to be associating with the paramilitaries, and the killing of 37 paramilitaries and capture of 188 more by Colombian forces in 1999.¹⁹⁷

Statements like General Wilhem’s below became common in Congress: “President Pastrana, Minister of Defense Ramirez, and Armed Forces Commander General Tapias have publicly pledged to combat the illegal self-defense groups and punish all Government of Colombia (GOC) security force members found guilty of collaborating with them.”¹⁹⁸

The Leahy Amendment: Request of Condition on Aid

Requests for amendments to condition the aid were introduced in the Senate and House appropriations committees and although officials from the Clinton administration assured Congress that a condition would not be necessary, the Leahy amendment passed in the Senate and the Delahunt-Farr-Gilman-Goss conditions were added in the House.¹⁹⁹ However, only the Senate condition was retained in the final bill in the Conference Committee.²⁰⁰ One of the most ardent supporters of the condition was Sen. Leahy, who would not support the military aid without the enactment of strict stipulations “to ensure that military personnel who violate human

¹⁹⁶ President Andrés Pastrana Arango, personal interview with author, February 12, 2015.
¹⁹⁷ Senate Committee on Appropriations, Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…, page 39.
¹⁹⁸ Ibid.
¹⁹⁹ Isacson and Vaciu, “‘Plan Colombia:’ The Debate in Congress, 2000.”
²⁰⁰ Ibid.
rights or who aid or abet the paramilitaries are prosecuted in the civilian courts.**201**

Sen. McConnell also indicated interest in submitting an amendment conditioning assistance.**202**

The amendment includes prohibitions on both the appropriations made by the DoS and the DoD. The Amendment portion for the DoS funds states: “None of the funds made available by this Act may be provided to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible evidence to believe such unit has committed gross violations of human rights…”**203** The section on the use of DoD funds indicates the same prohibition. This conditioning of assistance would act as a limiting factor on the usage of the funds of Plan Colombia. Although President Clinton later overturned the Leahy amendment in Plan Colombia, the conditioning of aid limited the types of actions and the type of involvement that could be written into the plan.

3.3 Mechanism II – Securitization of Narcotics and the Primacy of Counternarcotics

If narcotics were securitized as a threat to the US, as I have shown in the previous chapter to be the case, then it would follow that the most rational congressional concern with regards to the situation in Colombia would be to determine how to decrease the supply of cocaine entering the United States.

Although many members of Congress also discussed treating the domestic demand for drugs, the securitization of narcotics that occurred was intimately tied to the fact that Colombia had become the world’s leading producer of cocaine. Therefore, drug

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201 Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees…*, 5.
202 Ibid., 25.
demand programs fall outside of the scope of how the US Congress could help the
Colombian situation. However, if narcotics had not been securitized, other
important concerns regarding the Colombian situation might have taken up more of
the US’s attention. Although the US provided more funds to help strengthen
Colombia’s economy, institutions and democracy than ever before, these issues
received only a small percentage of overall funding compared to the counternarcotics
components of Plan Colombia. In addition, democracy and socioeconomic issues
were not at the forefront of US concerns regarding the Colombian situation, unlike
similar contexts during the Cold War, in which ideology would have taken center
stage. The framing of the Colombian situation within the rhetoric of the War on
Drugs meant that there would be a disproportionate focus on narcotics supply
reduction.

**Emphasis on Supply Reduction**

Although some in Congress, mainly Democrats, emphasized the need for a
reduction in drug demand, the agreed upon solution for the Colombian case was to
focus on drug supply. As Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) indicated:

> I think those of us who have been involved in the drug problem—and I have
> been involved since my coming to Congress some 27 years ago—I think we
> all recognize in examining various strategies that you must not just reduce
demand, and that is important, but you must also reduce supply, and you
> must do both simultaneously.\(^\text{204}\)

His solution for narcotics reduction included eradication, interdiction, and
conviction.\(^\text{205}\) The perception among many members of Congress was that the
Colombian government required US support in fighting the drug lords, but did not

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\(^{204}\) House Committee on Government Reform, *The Narcotics Threat from Colombia*, 11

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 11
require the involvement of US troops in the war. According to Gilman, “this legislation provides more assistance where it can do the most good with the Colombian antidrug police… We at the Federal level have the responsibility to help eradicate those drugs at their source.” Gilman was a proponent of US intervention and one of many members who repeatedly emphasized the importance of tackling narcotics supply.

Rep. William “Bill” Young (R-FL) made clear the limitations that the US faced in the interdiction of narcotics coming from Colombia and highlighted the importance of limiting narcotics supply through eradication at the source, something which he indicates Plan Colombia is all about. He noted:

…we have good assets, but we are limited in how many assets we have; and we have to go by a lot of rules. So it [interdiction] is very difficult. How great it would be to eliminate these drugs at their source, and that is what Plan Colombia is all about. It is to help the Colombian government elected by the people to eliminate the source of these drugs... Now, we spend billions and billions of dollars here at home in programs trying to get people to stop using the drugs. But as long as the drugs are available, people still continue to use those drugs.”

Fernando Cepeda Ulloa, a Colombian political science and diplomat, who was the Colombian representative to the OAS, and the Colombian Ambassador to the UN, the UK, Canada, and France, indicated to me during an interview that in 1999, a US delegation went to Colombia headed by Thomas Pickering, who at the time was the Undersecretary of State for Political Affair at the DoS. Cepeda noted that he thought this meeting marked the beginning of Plan Colombia. Calling the delegation the “most important delegation ever that has come to Colombia from the US,” he

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207 Ibid.
208 Ibid.
indicated: “what the delegation said to Pastrana, they said, look ‘we are ready to help’ but this is not the right way. The strategy should be first, drugs, and then peace.”

This testimony emphasizes the US focus on counternarcotics.

Colombia’s input on the US component of Plan Colombia

The role of Colombian political actors was also important in shifting US attention towards counternarcotics. Although Colombian political actors did not consider the primary goal of Plan Colombia to be drug eradication, President Pastrana sought to establish the notion of “corresponsibility” of the narcotics situation with the US, the EU and neighboring drug producing countries. Colombian political actors contributed to the securitization of narcotics in the US Congress, and thus were aware of the types of claims they would have to make in Congress to ensure the passage of Plan Colombia.

In a personal interview with President Pastrana noted the efforts he made in trying to bring the US to understand that the drug problem in Colombia was also a US problem:

I proposed to the US and Europe the theory of “corresponsibility.” We Colombians, we produce the drug, but you, US and Europe, consume the drugs. So I’m going to put money, you are going to put money. Plan Colombia was never used exclusive to the FARC, ELN or paramilitaries. We are going to train an army, an army that is going to fight drugs, and that is what we need and that is why we created special counternarcotics battalions in the first time in history….Plan Colombia was built around the theory of “corresponsibility” between the US, Europe and Colombia.

Colombian officials agreed to, and pushed for, the primacy of counternarcotics in the US component of Plan Colombia because they knew that only the US would be able to provide the type of assistance that would significantly strengthen the

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209 Fernando Cepeda Ulloa, personal interview with author, October 28, 2014
210 President Andrés Pastrana Arango, personal interview with author, February 12, 2015
Colombian military and CNP. According to Moreno, the US assistance package “is designed to give Colombia the tools we [Colombia] need to more effectively fight drug production and trafficking. It will enable the Colombian government to bolster counter-drug activities in southern Colombia. And with U.S. assistance, we will establish two new counter-narcotics battalions in the Colombian military.”

Colombian officials did not publicly request US assistance in the military aspects of the internal conflict because they were aware of the primacy of narcotics in the US and Congressional concerns regarding human rights violations and involvement in the civil war. Moreno made the intentions of Colombia clear when he indicated, “we are seeking aid from the United States to bolster our counter-drug programs, not to help us combat guerrillas. President Pastrana has repeatedly made it clear that Colombia is not seeking and will not accept any direct U.S. military intervention in our internal conflict.” Therefore, Colombian actors helped to quell US concerns in Congress regarding their intended use of US equipment. In addition, their desire to obtain any aid from the US meant that they contributed to making counternarcotics a primary goal of US actions in Colombia.

In an interview with Jaime Ruiz, he noted that the main interest of the US Congress was “supply, supply, supply” and that they “always had to frame it in terms of supply.” He also noted that although they did not want to emphasize counternarcotics, they knew it was the best method by which to obtain US funds:

I kept telling Pastrana and Luis Alberto Moreno, this is weird... we need to keep talking about something we don’t want to talk about, which is eradication. They said, “Yeah, but if you don’t talk about eradication, you don’t get the

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211 Senate Committee on Appropriations, Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees..., 44.
212 Ibid.
money.” We had to talk about eradication in the supply…

The contribution of Colombian political actors in emphasizing the importance of supply reduction played a part in the US desire to support a counternarcotics campaign in Colombia.

**Primacy of a Counternarcotics Campaign**

The US emphasis on reducing drug supply, emanating from the securitization of narcotics, resulted in two decisions that would characterize US intervention in Colombia. The first is that the US component of Plan Colombia would largely be a counternarcotics plan and the second is that strict boundaries were made regarding US involvement in counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations.

**Plan Colombia – A Counternarcotics Plan**

The securitization of narcotics meant that the Clinton administration developed its own component of Plan Colombia, to meet US needs, and this would primarily be focused on counternarcotics. During its move through the US Congress, the plan remained largely focused on counternarcotics, rather than economic or social aid. Members of Congress were concerned that US counterinsurgency attention might harm drug reduction efforts, as it would divert the attention of Colombian forces and the use of US equipment towards fighting the insurgents and not eradicating cocaine fields.

The total aid allocated to the Department of State for Colombia for 2000 and 2001 was $860.3 million plus an additional $330 million that had been previously allocated. Funds were provided to the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and through a foreign military financing program. As summarized in the

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215 Isaacsen and Vacius, “Plan Colombia: The Debate in Congress, 2000.”
table below, out of the $860.3 million allocated under P.L. 106-246 for Colombia, $529.2 million, or 60.5%, was earmarked for military assistance, and $123.1 million, or 14%, for police assistance.\textsuperscript{216} Therefore, 74.5% of the US component of Plan Colombia was utilized for military equipment for the “push into Southern Colombia,” as well as for intelligence support, interdiction activities, etc.\textsuperscript{217} The remaining aid was allotted to alternative development (8%), human rights (6%), law enforcement (5%), aid for the displaced (4%), judicial reform (2%), and peace process support (<1%).\textsuperscript{218}

The focus on the plan’s counternarcotics strategy was evident from the beginning. General Wilhem, speaking at a House subcommittee meeting in August 1999, noted that he structured his briefing to Secretary of Defense Cohen and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff into a timeline of three parts. In the Action Plan of 1999, they were able to train 931 members of the Colombian Armed Forces, establish the first of three Colombian counterdrug battalions, and begin the formation of an aviation battalion.\textsuperscript{219} In 2000, the plan, which was contingent on the passage of the aid package, would entail creating the remainder of the counterdrug battalions, training a brigade headquarters, and providing support to Colombian forces in the execution of interdiction activities.\textsuperscript{220} The third portion of the action plan, to be instituted in 2001, would entail contracting the Military Professional Research Institute to analyze Colombia’s armed forces and aid in developing a plan

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{219} House Committee on Government Reform, \textit{The Narcotics Threat From Colombia}, 87.  
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 88.
to improve the country’s security forces as well as to help the US better integrate regional counterdrug efforts.\footnote{Ibid.}

In May of 2000, Secretary Cohen outlined new counterdrug initiatives that the Department of Defense would be supporting, including, “training, equipping and fielding the inaugural Counterdrug Battalion and its supporting Joint Intelligence Center; enhancing counterdrug riverine capabilities of the newly organized Colombian Riverine Brigade; and upgrading and training the Colombian Air Force for its counterdrug aerial interdiction role.”\footnote{Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, \textit{2000 Foreign Policy Overview and the President’s Fiscal Year 2001 Foreign Affairs Budget Request: Hearings before the...subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, Narcotics and Terrorism}, 106th Cong., 2\textsuperscript{nd} sess., Various sessions in February and March 2000, 338} This shows the extensive support that the US provided, with Plan Colombia, to Colombia’s counternarcotics campaigns.

Ana Maria Salazar, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Policy and Support, also discussed in depth how the supplemental aid package would help to improve the Department of Defense’s source zone strategy in Colombia. With the aid, the DoD would be able to improve Colombia’s aerial interdiction by installing air-to-air radars in Colombian aircraft, allowing Colombia to intercept the aerial traffic of drugs, as well as upgrade the “Colombian Air Force radar command and control center” and ground based radars.\footnote{House Committee on Government Reform, \textit{The Crisis in Colombia}, 110.} In addition, the aid package allocates extensive resources to ground interdiction campaigns, funding the establishment and training of counterdrug battalions.\footnote{Ibid., 111.} Lastly, the plan also helps fund helicopters to provide airlift to the counterdrug battalions, infrastructure for the Colombian army’s aviation and counterdrug intelligence programs.\footnote{Ibid., 112.}
As Fernando Cepeda noted, “…the essence [of the plan] was threefold: the strengthening of the army and police intelligence, 2) the strategy that forced all the forces in Colombia, Navy, Army, Police, to work together, to have a joint command and 3) the strengthening of the air force…” The purpose of these activities were to ensure the strengthening of Colombian forces for the purpose of counternarcotics.

**Delineating boundaries between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency**

In order to build support for Plan Colombia, the Clinton and early Bush administrations needed to ensure that they made a strict demarcation between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations. The securitization of the narcotics problem and the emphasis on the importance of reducing the supply of narcotics coming from Colombia meant that members of Congress worried about a US intervention in the internal affairs of Colombia, which could do more to put American personnel in danger and spark a national reaction in Colombia than to decrease drug supply. The US perceived the insurgents as a threat because of their connection to narcotrafficking not because of the terrorist actions they employed against the Colombian government. While it was clear that counternarcotics operations would fulfill the US goal of reducing drug supply, it was possible that involvement in counterinsurgency operations would shift Colombian attention and resources away from the counternarcotics campaign.

Therefore, various Clinton administration officials testified in Congressional Committee Hearings regarding the administration’s commitment to limit the Government of Colombia’s utilization of US aid and equipment to the eradication and interdiction of narcotics. In this section, I will provide testimonies of US

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officials that noted their departments’ commitment to ensuring that US involvement would be limited to certain types of operations.

In the House Committee on Government Reform hearing on February 2000, Ms. Salazar clearly stated that the US would not become involved in the counterinsurgency conflict, and that the Department of Defense “will not step over the line.” She also briefly outlined safeguards that the Department implemented to ensure that the policy was followed:

These safeguards include extensive reviews of where United States forces will be deployed for training as well as end use monitoring regime, which includes looking after as to how the assets we provide Colombia will be used. “I personally look not only at who is deploying and what they are doing, but at the specific locations to which they are going. Furthermore, each and every deployment order states, in no uncertain terms, that DoD personnel are not to accompany host nation personnel on operational mission.

The Secretary of Defense, issued a memorandum for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on March 9, 2000, in which he directed that no personnel or resources could support Colombian operations or units that engage exclusively with counterinsurgency, ensuring there was no confusion regarding the circumstances in which personnel could become involved. The Department of Defense utilized a “whole regimen of end use monitoring” to ensure the separation of the operations.

In the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations’ hearing on foreign policy and the 2001 foreign affairs budget request, Sheridan sought to quell congressional

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227 House Committee on Government Reform, *The Crisis in Colombia*.
228 Ibid., 114.
229 Ibid., 114.
230 Ibid., 114.
231 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *2000 Foreign Policy Overview*.
232 Ibid.
qualms of possible misuses of US equipment. Sheridan indicated, “All of the individuals that we [DoD] train are vetted. The counterdrug battalions we are training have a very specific focus, as Randy [Rand Beers – Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] said. They are dedicated to counterdrug operations in southern Colombia, and the Putumayo and Caquetá, where we have this explosion in cultivation, so we are comfortable that this equipment will not be misused and these forces will not be misused.”

3.3 Conclusion

Plan Colombia did not include a counterinsurgency component as a result of the securitization of drugs and the development of a discourse of human rights protection. The “narcotization” of the Colombian situation led to the portrayal of the insurgents as “narcoguerillas” fighting in a civil war, leading to human rights concerns and the passage of the Leahy amendment, which would limit the use of US funds and hinder involvement and support for a counterinsurgency program. The securitization of drugs also contributed to greater US emphasis on the reduction of drug supply which led to a) the design of Plan Colombia as a counternarcotics plan and b) strict delineations between counterinsurgency and counternarcotics operations. The framing of the Colombian situation determined the type of aid Colombia would receive, even past the election of President Bush and the 107th Congress in 2000. Colombian political actors also played a role in determining the extent of US involvement in the country, which would not be significantly altered until after 9/11.

Chapter 4: Assessing Alternative Explanations

In Chapter 1, I presented potential hypotheses that could explain the shift in US foreign aid policy, and I assess the validity of those here. The first two explanations deal with an important event in early 2001: the installation of President W. Bush and the 107th Congress. The third hypothesis deals with real changes in security and whether these can explain the change in the intervention.

4.1 Election of President Bush

If the election of President Bush would have been the explanatory variable for the involvement of the US in counterinsurgency measures in Colombia, then a visible shift in US policy should be seen in the period immediately after his election. In particular, any actions most indicative of his contribution to altering US involvement would have occurred between January of 2001 and September of 2001. After 9/11, President Bush’s leadership would become important, but only because the conditions, created by the terrorist attacks, to necessitate greater US support in Colombia existed.

There are three important reasons why the inauguration of George W. Bush as president did not significantly alter US intervention in Colombia. First, Plan Colombia was already seen by many as being quite interventionist, so the change in administration did not do much to change the US tactic in the region. Secondly, President Bush supported the continuation of President Clinton’s program – US counternarcotics support in Colombia. Third, we do not see rhetoric or legislative proposals prior to 9/11 by President Bush to change the role of the US in Plan Colombia.
Plan Colombia, proposed by President Clinton, was already seen by many as an interventionist plan. In Congress, President Clinton had strong support for the plan from Republicans, who viewed the reduction of narcotics supply as a vital solution in the war against drugs. Congressional Republicans lauded the plan and the efforts by the administration to support counternarcotics operations in Colombia. In contrast, Congressional Democrats were apprehensive about funding, and providing support to, the Colombian army; ultimately, however, the majority voted for the plan. In addition, many Democrats advocated for the use of funds towards domestic programs to alleviate and treat the demand for drugs. Therefore, the plan that was put into place before the arrival of President Bush was already more aligned with the interests of Congressional Republicans; the change in administration from a Democrat to a Republican did not immediately alter the US strategy in Colombia.

President Bush supported the continuation of the type of support that the US was providing Colombia. In April of 2001, President Bush launched the Andean Regional Initiative (ARI), an $882.29 million economic and counternarcotics assistance package for Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, and Brazil and Venezuela.\(^{234}\) The majority of the aid under the program, $731 million, was to be allocated to “International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement assistance (INCLE);”\(^{235}\) therefore, the ARI was not a counterinsurgency plan, but largely, a continuation of the counternarcotics plan of President Clinton.\(^{236}\) In addition, when compared to Plan Colombia the ARI allocated a larger percentage of


\(^{235}\) Ibid.

\(^{236}\) Ibid.
its funds to economic and social programs.\textsuperscript{237} Colombia’s regional neighbors received more than 50% of the funds of the program,\textsuperscript{238} denoting less of a focus on solely the Colombian problem. Spokesmen from the Bush administration, at an ARI briefing in May of 2001, established the three objects of US interest in the region as democracy, development and drugs.\textsuperscript{239}

Third, we do not see rhetoric or legislative proposals prior to 9/11 by President Bush to increase US intervention in Colombia. In indicating that the election of President Bush is not the most appropriate explanation for the question I seek to answer, I do not mean to argue that President Bush was not personally interested in expanding the role of the US in Colombia. Prior to 9/11, however, President Bush himself could not create the congressional consensus necessary to secure the passage of a US counterinsurgency plan in Colombia. In fact, the “incoming Bush team shared the Colombian military’s frustration with these restrictions but saw little congressional support for reversing McCaffrey’s promise and dismantling the "firewall" between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency.”\textsuperscript{240}

President Bush was clearly pivotal in reshaping US foreign policy in the post 9/11 world. Nevertheless, I argue that it was the post-9/11 securitization of terror that allowed President Bush to advance proposals to expand US intervention.

4.2 Congressional Party Breakdown

Another potential explanation is the party breakdown of the US Congress. Congressional party breakdown should not be conflated with Congressional

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid., 1-2.  
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., 2.  
preferences. In my thesis, I argue that Congressional perceptions are important because these members function as the audience for securitizing agents. The Congressional party breakdown explanation, however, seeks to attribute the greater US intervention to a change in the makeup of the US Congress. If we assume, much like occurred in the US Congress up to this time, that Republican control should lead to more bellicose foreign policy, then the 2000 election would have resulted in a Congress less willing to intervene in Colombia. As Table 1 shows, Democrats gained a seat in the House and gained control of the Senate, while Republicans lost seats to Democrats and Independents in both houses. Therefore, the effects of the shift in Congressional party breakdown should have resulted in more caution regarding US intervention in Colombia’s affairs – but the opposite occurred. After 2001, there was greater advocacy in the US Congress for a change in the authority of US aid to allow counterinsurgency support. Therefore, Congressional party breakdown does not serve explain the shift that occurred in US policy towards greater intervention in Colombia.

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241 Sen. Jim Jeffords, (I-VT) began caucusing with the Democrats in 2001, thus giving them the majority in the Senate.
Table 1: Congressional Party Breakdown (106th and 107th Congress)

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4.3 A Real or Imagined Change in the National Security Threat?

Security concerns are definitely important to US considerations. My argument hinges on the characterization of security threats and how these are conveyed to actors and portrayed in US discourse. I argue, however, that while there is definitely a substantial threat that the FARC, ELN and AUC pose to both Colombian and US security, we see a change in the way these groups are portrayed and how they are dealt with, but there is no accompanying change in their threat level or modus operandi. I thus seek to explain why these portrayals changed despite the constancy in these groups’ actions. The security explanation is therefore not concerned with the absolute security threat these groups pose, but rather, with a potential change in the security situation that can explain greater US intervention.

There are three main reasons why the security explanation does not justify the change in US policy towards counterinsurgency support: 1) the FARC and ELN
had been on the FTOs list since 1997 and although the AUC was added in 2001, the majority of US support for counterinsurgency was aimed at fighting the FARC, and the terrorist modus operandi of these groups was unchanged in the period before and after proposals for counterterrorism support in Colombia; 2) the US did not perceive a change in the military situation on the ground in Colombia; and 3) there was not significant evidence to believe that there was a change in the credible terrorist threat that the FARC could pose to US national security.242

The US knew that the FARC and ELN were terrorist organizations before 9/11, as these were placed on the State Department’s FTOs List in 1997; therefore, by then, the US State Department was aware of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by these groups. Congressional discussions prior to 9/11, however, did not greatly focus on the terrorist nature of these groups. In Chapter 5, I argue that this change in characterization emanated from the events of 9/11. One of the largest changes in the 1998-2002 period was that the AUC was placed on the FTOs list on September 10, 2001 as a result of its involvement in terrorist activities.243 Nevertheless, the AUC was not ideologically opposed to the US, like the FARC and ELN, and even had many ties to the Government of Colombia; therefore, it never constituted the same threat to the US as the FARC and ELN. In Congress, members compared the FARC to Al Qaeda244 and saw this organization as the main terrorist threat. In addition, the State Department categorized the FARC as “the largest, best-trained, and best-

242 By this, I mean terrorist attacks on US soil.
244 For more, see my discussion in Chapter 5
equipped insurgent organization in Colombia.” Therefore, the addition of the AUC to the FTOs list did not significantly alter Congressional perception of the problems in Colombia. By late 2002, although the AUC was still involved in narco-trafficking and it was still committing human rights violations, many of its fronts actually disbanded and sought to attain political legitimacy. By December of 2002, the AUC requested a peace reconciliation process with the government and implemented a unilateral ceasefire. Therefore, the US Congress did not view the AUC as the major insurgent threat in Colombia.

The modus operandi of the FARC and ELN remained the same between 1998-2002. Rep. Gilman (R-NY), at a House Subcommittee hearing in 1999, pointed to the continuity of the FARC’s terrorist activities: “it [the FARC] is still kidnapping people, still killing people, some of whom are Americans.” As the 1998 global terrorism report by the State Department stated, “...the incipient peace process in Colombia did not inhibit the guerrillas' use of terrorist tactics. The FARC and ELN continued to fund their insurgencies by protecting narcotics traffickers, conducting kidnap-for-ransom operations, and extorting money from oil and mining companies....” Even in 1998, the FARC were already threatening to target US personnel providing support to Colombian forces; however, they mainly targeted private interests. In 1998, the FARC kidnapped seven US citizens and the ELN, two. Both groups continued to bomb small businesses and in 1998, there were 77 bombings on oil pipelines – one such bombing was orchestrated by the ELN on a
central Colombian pipeline also utilized by US companies, which left 71 people dead, 28 of which were children.\textsuperscript{251}

By 1999, and even after the start of a peace process, the FARC and ELN had “failed to moderate their terrorist attacks.”\textsuperscript{252} The ELN kidnapped 46 people during a plane hijacking in April and 160 people at a church in May.\textsuperscript{253} The FARC also perpetrated their own number of terrorist actions, increasing their attacks on members of Colombia’s security forces, attempting to utilize members of the forces they kidnapped to improve their bargaining position in the peace process, killing US NGO workers as well as refusing to indicate those within their organization at fault.\textsuperscript{254}

In 2000, the FARC maintained its terrorist conduct. The organization proceeded with the kidnapping of members of the Colombian security forces to improve their bargaining position, as well as a slew of terrorist activities. 2000 also saw the rise of terrorist activity of the AUC, which massacred civilians and even kidnapped seven Colombian members of congress.\textsuperscript{255} Out of the approximately 2,800 kidnappings in Colombia in 2001, more than in any other country in the world, around 80% could be attributed to the FARC and ELN.\textsuperscript{256} The FARC, ELN and AUC committed 3500 murders in 2002. Much like in previous years, Colombia, in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[Ibid.]
\item[Ibid.]
\item[Ibid.]
\item[Ibid.]
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\end{footnotesize}
2002, was the country with the highest number of kidnappings in the world – approximately 3,000.\textsuperscript{257}

The FARC and ELN, the two organizations in Colombia that were seen as the greatest threats in the region, have been committing terrorist acts since at least 1998.\textsuperscript{258} Each year, the State Department releases a chronology of significant terrorist acts around the globe. The Department catalogued 17 significant terrorist acts in Colombia or perpetrated by Colombian groups in 1998, 25 in 1999, 11 in 2000, 9 in 2001, and 7 in 2002. The US government was aware of these groups’ engagement in terrorist actions since at least 1998, and so US counterinsurgency support did not result from a discovery or recognition in 2002 of these groups as terrorist organizations.

According to the State Department, the FARC maintained 8,000-12,000 members in 1998 and 1999, and 9,000-12,000 in 2000, 2001, and 2002. Therefore, the US did not perceive growth in FARC membership in the period right before the change towards the unified campaign law. In addition, FARC territorial advances were not emphasized in Congressional hearings or debates, suggesting that this was not a concern of legislators or a factor that shifted between the pre- and post-9/11 periods.

Lastly, the security explanation does not completely explain greater US support in Colombia because between 2001 and 2002 there was not a significant change in the possibility that the FARC could commit terrorist acts in the US. Many in Congress, like Rep. Souder, linked the FARC to the events of 9/11, thereby

\textsuperscript{258}I indicate 1998 as this is where my thesis begins
equating their potential threat to that of Al Qaeda’s.\footnote{For more on this, see Chapter 5} This perception of the FARC, as framed by the events of 9/11, resulted in Congressional fears regarding the threat that the FARC and ELN could pose to the US homeland. While the FARC had, for the previous few years, engaged in terrorist activities in Colombia, it had not posed a direct threat to Americans in the US. 9/11 did not actually change their threat, as the FARC confined their terrorist activities in the Andean region. This conversation depicts both the Congressional fear regarding the FARC threat as well as the understanding by some officials that the FARC did not actually pose a direct threat to the US homeland:

Rep. Souder: “Both Mr. Cummings and I have referred to the threats that came from the FARC leader, Jorge Rosino. Do you believe that was a credible threat? Do you believe that we need to take any actions regarding that threat? And would you discuss briefly whether you think the FARC has the ability to carry out those threats? One of the other dangers that we have of al-Qaeda apparently being able, through their network, to attack the United States is it could tempt other terrorist organizations around the world to repeat those type of things. In other words, we’re facing more than just one type of terrorist. Could you discuss the FARC and their capability and the credibility you put to their threat?”\footnote{House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, 107th Cong., 1st sess., October 3, 2011, 119, emphasis added.}

Mr. Hutchinson: “Well, in reference to the threat that you mentioned, it was publicly noted. I think we take any threat of that nature or statement of that nature fairly seriously. But, from our experience, the FARC is primarily concentrated as an insurgency group in that region, and they are a serious threat to the safety of our citizens who are in that region, but there has not been any indication that they’ve tried to move this direction into the United States to accomplish acts of violence….”\footnote{Ibid., 119-120, emphasis added}

One of the primary reasons why the realist framework does not completely explain greater US intervention in Colombia is that US support for counterterrorism in Colombia was not occasioned by a change in the balance of power between the
pertinent groups. A realist interpretation of greater US support would hinge upon a
greater change in the threat level of the FARC both to the US and Colombia,
substantial enough to precipitate the abrupt change in US policy from not engaging
in counterinsurgency prior to 9/11 to supporting counterterrorism in the period after
9/11, as well as a change in the “value”\textsuperscript{262} of Colombia to the US.

4.4 Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, the election of President Bush cannot
explain the shift in US policy since his administration, prior to 9/11, did not submit a
proposal to deepen US involvement in Colombia. In addition, his Andean Regional
Initiative exhibited continuity from the counternarcotics strategies of President
Clinton. The installment of the 107\textsuperscript{th} Congress cannot explain greater US
intervention, as Democrats gained seats in both houses, and as a party, they exhibit
less bellicose foreign policy. Lastly, between 1998-2002, the US did not perceive a
change in the real threat level of the insurgents. There was no substantial change in
the modus operandi of the insurgents to actually necessitate greater intervention. The
US designated the FARC and ELN as foreign terrorist organizations in 1997 and
Congressional hearings lacked discussion on any military changes on the ground. In
the next chapter, I argue that 9/11 created the conditions for the shift in US policy.

\textsuperscript{262} This refers to the “extrinsic value” of Colombia to the US as defined by Desch, \textit{When the Third World Matters}. 
Chapter 5: Securitization after September 11, 2001

“For the United States, it is understandable why there is such a great temptation to fit Colombia under the framework of the war against drugs and, since September 11, the global campaign against terrorism.”

– Michael Shifter

5.1 From the War on Drugs to the War on Terror

In this chapter, I seek to answer the second half of my research question: What made the Bush administration proposal for a “unified campaign” law (to combat both narcotics and terrorism) and the law’s subsequent passage in Congress viable? By doing this, I seek to assess the changes that occurred in this period that allowed for greater US support in Colombia’s affairs. I argue that the shift occasioned from the War on Drugs to the War on Terror by the attacks of 9/11 was important because it changed the characterization of the Colombian situation.

9/11 played a pivotal role in redefining the Colombian crisis in the US. Luis Alfonso Hoyos, in a personal interview, noted the importance of the events of this day: "as of September 2001, and since the Colombian groups guerrillas and paramilitaries had been declared as terrorists, that showed that we [the US and Colombia] were on the same page about the conflict, and that facilitated the dialogue very much." In addition, President Pastrana, in my interview with him, noted the role of 9/11 in the change of the US authorization:

Third, definitely what changed the world, the relationship with the FARC and with the terrorist groups was September 11. So that’s why the whole

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foreign policy of the US changed completely…they didn’t let us use the authorization to use the resources to fight the drugs, to fight the guerilla. They were very wary that they think that if they allow us to use those resources…they could be accused of getting involved in the internal conflict of Colombia. That was not true. Because at the end the FARC was involved in narcotrafficking and I think that is why I think they give us this authorization to use this equipment that I left Uribe as one of the most important things for him, for the strengthening of our own army, so that’s why they were afraid of getting involved…but at the end, because of all the evidence and the proof that we had they were involved in narcotrafficking they changed their foreign policy and their military policy.\textsuperscript{265}

The prioritization of terrorism emanating from 9/11 resulted in the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism,’ upon the realization that illicit narcotics could fund terrorist groups and acts. This securitization affected the framing of Colombia’s crisis: after 9/11, 1) the Colombian situation was equated to that of Afghanistan’s and 2) the characterization of the Colombian insurgents hinged more on their terrorist activity. As a result of this characterization, political actors began to advocate for a greater US role in Colombia’s insurgency fight. In this chapter, I also note the efforts made by Colombian political actors in helping to securitize narcoterrorism, in contributing to the characterization of the insurgents as terrorists and in equating the situation in Colombia to that of Afghanistan. The portrayal of the Colombian situation within the framework of the War on Terror resulted in the passage of the 2002 law whereby US funds could be utilized for a “unified campaign” in Colombia against the narcotics and insurgency situations.

\textsuperscript{265} President Andrés Pastrana Arango, personal interview with author, February 12, 2015.
Figure 2: Mechanism 2: Securitization of ‘Narcoterrorism’ to the Passage of the 2002 Law

9/11 and the Prioritization of Terrorism

Securitization of ‘Narcoterrorism’

- Comparing Colombia and Afghanistan
- Portrayal of insurgent groups as terrorists
- Advocacy for greater US intervention in Colombia
- Passage of the 2002 “Unified Campaign” Law

5.2 September 11 and the Prioritization of Counterterrorism

9/11 created a paradigm shift in US policy – the attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon reshaped US foreign policy for the years to come; the Bush Administration’s prioritization of counterterrorism marked the start of the US war on terror. The footage of the terrorist attacks became imprinted in global memory, as this was the first attack on mainland US soil in 136 years.266 As Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated, “…we will always remember the 11th of September,

where we all happened to be on that day. It is seared into our individual memories. It is seared into our individual souls.”

The damage and suffering left after these attacks resulted in the immediate acceptance of terrorism as a threat to national security.

At the address before a joint session of Congress on the US response to the attacks, President Bush identified his main job as the defense of the nation’s security against terror and declared that although the fight began with Al Qaeda, it would not end until terrorist groups everywhere had been found and defeated. The referent object of the threat of terrorism was not just the realist object of state security, but also, human security. As President Bush declared, “And we will not tire. We will not relent. It is not only important for the homeland security of America that we succeed; it is equally as important for generations of Americans who have yet be born.”

9/11 also demonstrated that realism does not always constitute the best lens through which to view global affairs. Analyses of issues that were transnational in nature, such as drugs and crime, had also taken the state as the unit of analysis, by either emphasizing the sponsorship of the state or the weakness of a state and its inability to control a particular issue. Viewing issues through a state-centric lens

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prescribed the pre-9/11 character of the US national security policy. The emergence of violent non-state actors onto the center of the world stage resulted in a reorientation of this policy:

A strategic attack was carried out against U.S. territory, not by the military forces of a rival state, but by a shadowy, global network of extremists, who struck unprotected targets, using methods we did not anticipate...Traditional concepts of security, threat, deterrence, warning and military superiority don't completely apply against this new strategic adversary.... During the Cold War, and in the period since the collapse of the Soviet Union, our threat paradigm focused primarily on other states, and especially the military ‘force-on-force’ capabilities of known enemies...In today’s world, this state-oriented threat model is necessary, but not sufficient. It no longer covers the entire threat spectrum, and those areas it leaves out cannot be dismissed as ‘lesser included cases.'

Therefore, while state-centric models of analysis are still very important to the understanding of world affairs, globalization and other recent events in world history, such as 9/11, have warranted new ways of thinking about world threats. 9/11 has had an enduring influence on the nation’s perception of security and a lasting political bearing on other interrelated issues of US foreign policy. In particular, it altered the way in which narcotics were viewed and it affected US aims in the Colombian case.

5.3 Securitization of ‘Narcoterrorism’

As a result of 9/11, the portrayal of narcotics as a threat changed considerably in the US government. Whereas in the Clinton Administration, as I showed in Chapter 3, members of Congress focused on the threat that narcotics posed to human health and communities across the United States, after 9/11, narcotics became inextricably linked to terrorism. Narcotics now posed a threat, not because of their inherent characteristics or effect on US narcotics consumers, but

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271 Ibid.
272 Ibid., emphasis added.
rather, because of their use as a funding source by terrorist groups everywhere. The nexus between drugs and terrorism resulted in the securitization of ‘narco-terrorism’ in the US government, with a much stronger emphasis on “terrorism” than on “narco.” The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) defined ‘narco-terrorism’ in 2002 as a “subset of terrorism, in which terrorist groups, or associated individuals, participate directly or indirectly in the cultivation, manufacture, transportation, or distribution of controlled substances and the monies derived from these activities.”

This definition emphasized the use of narcotics to fund terrorism, and characterized its threat within the frame of the prioritization of terrorism. In President Bush’s remarks on the 2002 National Drug Control Strategy, he accentuated the link between narcotics and terrorism and prescribed a solution for the reduction of the terrorist threat:

Drugs help supply the deadly work of terrorists— that’s so important for people in our country to understand. You know, I’m asked all the time, “How can I help fight against terror? What can I do, what can I as a citizen do to defend America?” Well, one thing you can do is not purchase illegal drugs. Make no mistake about it, if you’re buying illegal drugs in America, it is likely that money is going to end up in the hands of terrorist organizations…When we fight drugs, we fight the war on terror.

In the next sections, I will discuss how the securitization of ‘narco-terrorism’ occurred. First, I will indicate who the securitizing agents and audience were. Then, I will show that narco-terrorism did experience a securitization in US discourse since 1) it was prioritized among policymakers; 2) securitizing agents pointed to various referent objects as being threatened; 3) the audience accepted the securitization; and

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273 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 10.
4) the securitizing actors claimed the use of whatever means necessary to reduce the threat.

Securitizing Agents and Audience

In this period, the securitizing agents include members of Congress, especially those in the Subcommittee of Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources of the House of Representatives, such as Chairman Mark Souder (R-IN), and the Subcommittee on technology, terrorism and government information of the US Senate, especially Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Jon Kyl (R-AZ). Other securitizing agents include members of the Bush administration such as Secretary of State Powell, US Ambassador to Colombia between 1998-2002, Curtis Kamman, DEA Administrator Asa Hutchinson and the Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet. Colombian actors, as I will explain in section 5.6, also brought attention to the issue of ‘narcoterrorism’ and emphasized the prevalence of this problem in their country. Much like in the securitization of narcotics, the audience in the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism’ was the US government as a whole, but more specifically, the US Congress, as this entity has significant authority in deciding the appropriation of US funds to the Colombian government.

The Prioritization of ‘Narcoterrorism’

After 9/11, ‘narcoterrorism’ became a priority in the US administration. On October 3, 2001 the House of Representatives held a hearing before the Committee on Government Reform on the “Drug Trade and the Terror Network” and on March 13, 2002 a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee organized a hearing entitled “Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and

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275 House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network.
Terrorism."^276 These two subcommittee sessions were devoted entirely to the discussion of the problem.

In his testimony on the convergence of threats that were made evident by the attacks of 9/11, Asa Hutchinson discusses the links between terrorism and narcotics:

> I appear before you today to testify on the nexus between international drug trafficking and terrorism, commonly referred to as narco-terrorism. As the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001 so shockingly demonstrated, terrorist organizations and the dependence on and relation of some of these organizations to international drug trafficking poses a threat to the national security of the United States. \(^277\)

Although he is the administrator of the DEA, and thus, his focus is to discuss narcotics, it is notable that he framed the threat of narcotics through the lens of terrorism. One of the DEA’s main priorities was to target transnational narcotics trafficking organizations, and not exactly terrorists; however, the prioritization of ‘narco-terrorism’ in the US government was such that the DEA became engaged in tracking drug groups “fueling some terror networks” as a result of the use of illicit narcotics profits as funding for terrorist organizations. \(^278\) Hutchinson highlighted the large extent to which drugs funded terrorist activities, \(^279\) he claimed the issue had to be of “paramount concern to our Nation” and he established it as a primary concern of the DEA. \(^280\)

The recent attacks on our Nation graphically illustrate the need to starve the financial base of every terrorist organization capable of violence to American citizens and property, whether abroad or at home. In many instances, the terrorist organizations benefit from the proceeds from the illegal drug trade. In Colombia, the FARC carries out acts of political violence with a portion of their funding coming from drug-related activities. \(^281\)

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^278 Ibid.

^279 House Committee on Government Reform, *Drug Trade and the Terror Network*, 12.

^280 Ibid.

^281 Ibid.
Representative Mark Souder (R-IN), the chairman of the subcommittee on criminal justice, drug policy and human resources, labeled the terrorist attacks as a “wake-up call like no other” and indicated that these “immediately intensified U.S. determination to identify the various sources of support for international terrorist organizations…One of those sources we know to be drug trafficking.”  

Upon calling the hearing in his subcommittee to order, he indicated that in the three weeks since the terrorist attacks, the US had needed to assess various important concerns with “new urgency and vigor” – one of which was the drug policy – as a result of the way in which the attacks “immediately highlighted the dark synergies between narcotics trafficking and international terrorism.”

The Threat of ‘Narcoterrorism’ to Referent Objects

As mentioned above, narcotics’ trafficking in the post-9/11 context was newly connected in American minds to terrorism. ‘Narcoterrorism’, which was simply thought to be a kind of terrorism —whereby groups obtained funds from or collaborated with drug producers or traffickers — had the same referent objects as terrorism. ‘Narcoterrorism’ was securitized as a threat to the security of the US and other nations that could fall victims to the actions of terrorists. The connection between Al Qaeda, the Taliban and opium production and trafficking functioned to quickly link drug trafficking to the insecurity that nations face when dealing with terrorist groups. Narcotics, which were previously viewed as a threat to the health of

282 House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network, 8.
283 House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network, 1.
Americans, were now identified as biological and chemical weapons since terrorist groups used these “for the express purpose of inflicting harm on societies.”

Hutchinson stressed the menace posed to the US: “terrorist organizations and the dependence on and relation of some of these organizations to international drug trafficking poses a threat to the national security of the United States.” The linkage created between narcotics and terrorism meant that US consumption of drugs, as Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) noted, could potentially fund terrorist attacks on US soil. Therefore, for some, what was at stake was the security and well being of Americans. Others securitized the issue of ‘narcoterrorism’ as a threat to democracy. Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) indicated that failing to separate the links between narcotics and terrorism could result in the loss of fragile democracies globally – even in nations such as Haiti and Colombia in America’s backyard.

**The Audience Accepts the Threat**

For an issue to be securitized, it is necessary that the audience also recognize it as a threat. ‘Narcoterrorism’ is an important component of terrorism; therefore, it is important to first note the congressional support for the war against terror. The US Congress perceived the issue of terrorism as a priority and many members of its applauded the efforts being made by the administration to restore US security and the nation’s primacy on the world stage. Senator Helms (R-NC), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations until June of 2001, displayed his support by indicating that President Bush was “on the mark” when he affirmed the US

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284 House Committee on Government Reform, *Drug Trade and the Terror Network*, 7.
287 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism*, 59, emphasis added.
commitment to rooting out terrorists and their supporters around the globe.\textsuperscript{288} The unifying character of this incident could not be more transparent than in the bipartisan support of the administration’s goals. The Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations after 9/11, Democrat and later Vice President Joseph Biden (D-DE), at the hearing before his committee on October 26, 2001, indicated – that although he could not speak for the entirety of the Democratic Party – “both political parties are united in [their] resolve to pursue and conclude successfully this war and to support the President’s efforts”\textsuperscript{289} and speaking to Secretary Powell, he presented the cohesiveness of not only both parties, but also both branches, in supporting the fight against terror by indicating that “the world should know that we support our President and our military forces in their mission. To the best of my knowledge, there is no daylight, no daylight, between the parties or between the Congress and the administration on the way in which you are pursuing this effort.”\textsuperscript{290}

More specifically, ‘narcoterrorism’ also received significant attention in Congress. Sen. Feinstein (D-CA), chairperson of the subcommittee on technology, terrorism and government information, noted that the subject of discussion in the hearing of her subcommittee\textsuperscript{291} would be something that both Senator Kyl and her thought of as a “key component in the war against terrorism, and that is the connection between drug trafficking and terrorism.”\textsuperscript{292}

\textsuperscript{288} Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. \textit{The International Campaign Against Terrorism}, 4.
\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., 1-2
\textsuperscript{290} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{291} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, \textit{Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism}.
\textsuperscript{292} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, \textit{Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism}, 1.
Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH), in demonstrating the importance he placed on the issue of narcoterrorism, noted that it tragically took 9/11 to “focus large scale international attention on the nexus between drugs and terrorism.” Likewise, Rep. Souder (R-IN) also accepted the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism’ by emphasizing the role of drug trafficking in funding terrorist groups:

The sophistication, coordination and scale of the attacks [9/11] left no doubt that there were many actors and ample financial and other resources behind the attacks. Accordingly, this massive aggression against the United States immediately intensified U.S. determination to identify the various sources of support for international terrorist organizations that are clearly hell bent on undermining the American way of life by instilling fear among our people. One of those sources we know to be drug trafficking.

In general, members of Congress were engaged in discussing the threat of ‘narcoterrorism’ and there was a common understanding that it was a problem that should be dealt with. Skepticism regarding the threat of ‘narcoterrorism’ was largely absent from discourse in US Congressional testimonies, signifying an acceptance, by the audience, of the securitization of the threat.

**Claiming the Right to Use Any Means Necessary**

The Bush administration claimed the right to use the means necessary to undermine terrorist threats. One of the goals in the mandate that President Bush established to counter terrorism was using whatever tools were needed to “starve the terrorists of funding” and break the links between narcotrafficking and terrorism:

We will direct every resource at our command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war—to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in

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294 House Committee on Government Reform, *Drug Trade and the Terror Network*, 8, emphasis added.
every region, now has a decision to make: Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.\textsuperscript{295}

As “narcoterrorism” was seen as a type of “terrorism,” I will also note that many claims were established to reduce the threat of terrorism. Secretary Powell asserted that the US would employ the use of every tool, “political, diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, and financial, along with appropriate military means” in the campaign against terrorism.\textsuperscript{296} In addition, the FBI created a most wanted terrorist list to attach faces to the threat of terrorism; the program would strive to “shine the light of justice” on terrorists by publicizing their identities and rid them of secrecy.\textsuperscript{297}

President Bush created a new cabinet-level position, the Office of Homeland Security,\textsuperscript{298} which would report directly to him.\textsuperscript{299} He also called upon the military to be ready, indicating, “the hour is coming when America will act, and you will make us proud” and urged for the participation in active duty of FBI agents, intelligence operatives and reservists.\textsuperscript{300}

Sen. DeWine (R-OH) urged for “doing everything possible” to prevent the use of drug profits towards the funding of international terrorism.\textsuperscript{301} And as Souder mentioned: “as President Bush pronounced before a rare joint session of Congress, the United States has been thrust by the events of September 11th into a new war, a


\textsuperscript{296} Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The International Campaign Against Terrorism, 9

\textsuperscript{297} George W. Bush, “Remarks Announcing the Most Wanted Terrorists List”

\textsuperscript{298} What is now the Department of Homeland Security

\textsuperscript{299} George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11”

\textsuperscript{300} George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11.”

\textsuperscript{301} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 59.
new kind of war, a war in which disrupting supply chains is as much about freezing private financial assets as bombing bridges; a war that is as much about law enforcement as military action.”

These statements display the extent to which the administration and other securitizing agents sought to tackle the problem, even if the methods were beyond normal political and legal bounds.

5.4 Colombia Comes Under the Umbrella of the ‘War on Terror’

The securitization of ‘narcoterrorism’ is the backdrop for post-9/11 US involvement in Colombia. The threat of narcoterror resulted in a) the comparison of the Colombian situation to the situation in Afghanistan and b) the portrayal of the Colombian insurgent groups, in particular the FARC, as terrorist organizations. The framing of the Colombian situation through a lens of ‘narcoterrorism’ resulted in support for solutions to improve upon Colombia’s narcoterrorist problem. Colombian actors also helped to characterize the threat in Colombia as a “narcoterrorist” one and sought to bring Colombia under the umbrella of the US’s War on Terror. The end result was the passage of the 2002 law that legalized the use of US funds towards both counternarcotics and counterterrorism operations.

As the current Director of Strategic Studies in the Colombian Ministry of National Defense indicated, “For the Colombian state, the FARC were always subversive terrorists. 9/11 was a trigger of this discussion at the global level. It opened a channel between local and global dialectic. Without 9/11, there is no discussion.”

302 House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network, 7.
characterization that occurs as a result of 9/11 in the portrayal of the Colombian situation.

Equating Colombia to Afghanistan

As a result of the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism,’ the US government created a linkage between the situations in Afghanistan and in Colombia. Violent, non-state actors that had been identified by the State Department as FTOs were present in both countries. These terrorist organizations were funding themselves with illicit profits from the cultivation and trafficking of opium, in Afghanistan, and cocaine, in Colombia. These two situations were rarely discussed in unison in the US Congress or by the US administrations prior to 9/11. The securitization of ‘narcoterrorism,’ and not just narcotics, meant that the situations in these countries now seemed more comparable than they had previously appeared.

The first ground on which these situations were compared was the common connection of these terrorist groups to narcotics. Asa Hutchinson, upon describing the DEA’s global approach in the fight against global ‘narcoterrorism,’ identified drug organizations from “locations as far away as Afghanistan and as close as Colombia” and he emphasized that they “all utilize violence in order to achieve their goals.” Senator Kyl (R-AZ) also likened the situations in the two countries when he indicated:

My understanding is that bin Laden himself has significant connections to the poppy cultivation in Afghanistan…With regard to Colombia…the connection between the FARC, and to some extent the ELN, and narcotrafficking is very clear; it is well-established. We are trying to assist the government there in eradicating those crops, but you have the same tension in Colombia as you do in Afghanistan between eradication and replacement of the crops with something else that can be grown, on the one hand, versus the

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304 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 9.
diminishment of local support for the government, on the other. It is a very difficult situation either in Afghanistan or in Colombia.  

In the hearing before the subcommittee on technology, terrorism, and government information entitled, “Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection Between Drugs and Terrorism” the sites of the two ‘narcoterrorism’ concerns that are discussed are Colombia and Afghanistan. In his statement to the Subcommittee, Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) wrote: “today we will focus on illegal drugs and their link to terrorism in two areas of the world—Afghanistan and Colombia (and their regions).” The inclusion of Colombia in this discussion of ‘narcoterrorism’ is quite important as the demonstrated threat of terrorism to the US was in Afghanistan.

The second point of comparison was the utilization of violence by the terrorists in each of these countries, and in particular, the threat they could pose to the US. When Senator Lugar (R-IN), inquired about the method by which the US would define the enemy, Secretary Powell replied: “in the first instance, it is easy to identify an Osama bin Laden. He is right out of central casting…there is no difficulty in identifying him as a terrorist and getting everybody to rally against him. Now, there are other organizations that probably meet a similar standard. The FARC in Colombia comes to mind. The Real IRA comes to mind, both of which are on our terrorist list at the State Department.” In this statement, Secretary Powell equates the FARC with individuals like Osama Bin Laden and in so doing he clearly characterizes the FARC as a violent, terrorist organization.

505 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 4, emphasis added
506 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 5
507 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The International Campaign Against Terrorism, 22, emphasis added.
The connection between the FARC and Al Qaeda emanated from the not implausible situation in which FARC terrorists could also cause harm to Americans. Brian Michael Jenkins, the senior Advisor to the president of the Rand corporation, indicated at the subcommittee hearing on emerging threats capabilities of the US Senate that although “our [Rand Corporation] focus is on Bin Laden and his al Qaeda network, current and near term threats abroad and on American soil will come from other sources as well. Our growing involvement in Colombia’s vicious guerrilla wars could provoke a terrorist response.”\textsuperscript{308} Sen. DeWine (R-OH) also noted that the US should do everything it can to impede the use of drug profits by terrorist groups, be it “the Taliban in Afghanistan of the FARC in Colombia.”\textsuperscript{309}

Another similarity between the two countries was the lack of state presence in some areas, especially in the areas where these groups were present. Rand Beers, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, noted that both Afghanistan and Colombia have “large areas that are really not effectively under law enforcement.”\textsuperscript{310} In addition, the problems in the two countries are seen as so parallel that similar solutions are suggested for tackling them. Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) inquired as to whether the US is “…devoting the proper level of resources in Afghanistan, Colombia, and other nations to deal with increasingly violent and interconnected narcotics terrorists.”\textsuperscript{311}

\textsuperscript{308} Senate Committee on Armed Services, Terrorist Organizations and Motivations: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, 107th Cong., 1st sess., November 15, 2001, 31.
\textsuperscript{309} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 59.
\textsuperscript{310} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 35, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{311} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 4.
Sen. Bob Graham (D-FL), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on
Intelligence, even noted the similarity of the groups based on their operational
structure in September 29 of 2001: “The FARC are doing the same thing as global-
level terrorists, that is, organizing in small cells that don’t have contact with each
other and depend on a central command to organize attacks, in terms of logistics and
financing. It is the same style of operation as Bin Laden.”312 The public and extensive
comparison of Colombia to Afghanistan quickly and decisively brought the
Colombian situation under the umbrella of the US’s War on Terror.

Emphasis on the FARC’s Terrorist Activities

One of the most important effects of 9/11 and the securitization of
‘narcoterrorism’ was the shift in how the US Congress depicted the insurgents in
Colombia. As Carolina Barco, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia from
2002 to 2007 and later Ambassador of Colombia to the US, told me:

I do think that in the states after 9/11 there was a new view of the FARC
and guerillas in general. Because to so many people, the issue of this kind of
violence had been so foreign because the US was safe … All of a sudden,
people felt threatened and this clearly gave congressmen a new
understanding of the threat that there was and the situation.313

The portrayal of the insurgents that came to be emphasized in Congressional
discourse was that of the FARC and ELN as terrorist groups. Ambassador Kamman
defined narco-traffickers as “common criminal attracted by huge illicit profits, caring
little for the damage to individual lives and whole societies as a result of drug
addiction and peddling” and a terrorist as someone who “has a political or religious

quoting Isacson, "Washington’s 'New War' in Colombia: The War on Drugs Meets the War on
Terror, 1.1

313 Carolina Barco (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2002-2007, Ambassador of Colombia to
motive and deliberately targets innocent civilians as well as legitimate authority in order to advance his cause.”

Although the FARC and ELN had been on the FTOs list since 1997, in the period between 1998-2002, they were identified as a number of things in US discourse, ranging from “guerillas,” and “insurgents,” to “narco-guerillas,” “narco-terrorists,” and “terrorists.” The term that was most often used or implied was that of “narco-terrorists,” that is, terrorist groups involved or connected to the illicit narcotics trade. As George Tenet indicated, “narco-terrorists is certainly a good way to describe these people.”

But as Kamman noted, the emphasis on which portion of the word “narco-terrorist” better portrayed the FARC differed in the period before and after 9/11:

> Whereas in the pre 9/11 world the emphasis had been solely on how the FARC contributed to the supply of narcotics to the US, the post 9/11 emphasis was also on the fact that they posed a terrorist threat to a stable, legitimate democracy and could also potentially be a threat to the United States.”

The securitization of ‘narcoterrorism’ encouraged more political actors to refer to the FARC, ELN and AUC as terrorist groups. Members of Congress did not want to be considered weak on the topic of combatting terror, and so it became politically expedient and acceptable to refer to these groups as terrorists. According to Ambassador Kamman, narcotics money in Colombia had incited violence by a group of radical guerillas that had further spurred the expansion of the paramilitary groups. Although these left-wing insurgent groups originated in the 1960s as a response to the dominion of elite conservatives over politics, and were further

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315 Senate Committee on Armed Services, *The Worldwide Threat to United States Interests*, 56.

316 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism*, 42.

bolstered by the communist powers of the Cold War, they had become “organized armed units bent on controlling territory through intimidation of the civilian populace.”\textsuperscript{318} He described the brutal methods employed by these “terrorist groups,” such as the “summary execution of men in front of their families, attacks with home-made mortars…and massacres of whole villages by paramilitary groups as “punishment” for alleged collaboration with guerrillas.”\textsuperscript{319} This evolution, that Kamman noted, was made publicly clear in the US after 9/11. Although intelligence existed in the US regarding the terrorist practices of the Colombian insurgents, this was not largely emphasized in US discourse prior to 9/11. Rather, the primary focus had been, as I noted in the previous chapter, on the groups’ connections to narcotics.

The characterization of the FARC as terrorists could not have been made clearer by President Bush during his remarks at an exchange with reporters after having met with Colombian President Andrés Pastrana in the White House:

Well, we’ve spent a lot of time talking about—these aren’t “so-called” terrorists; these are terrorists in Colombia. And the reason they’re terrorists is because they’re using murder to try to achieve political ends. They…recently tried to blow up the man running for President. They’ve captured people. They’re after Andres. And so my message is that we will work with you to rout out terror. We’ve put FARC, AUC, on our terrorist list. We’ve called them for what they are. These are killers who use killing and intimidation to foster political means.\textsuperscript{320}

Rep. Souder (R-IN) also likened the FARC to terrorists with his indication that “we must also consider increasing evidence of links and synergies between the drug cartels and terrorist organizations, such as the recent arrest of IRA bomb experts in

\textsuperscript{318} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{320} George W. Bush, “Remarks Following Discussions With President Andrés Pastrana of Colombia and an Exchange With Reporters.”
Colombia and direct threats made by the Colombian FARC to attack targets in the United States.”

In what ways did the US feel threatened by the FARC, ELN and AUC? From the US perspective, the groups constituted a triple menace: they aggravated the US narcotics problem, threatened the weak Colombian state (and therefore regional stability), and lastly, they presented a possible threat to the security of Americans, both in the US and abroad. In chapter 3, I extensively discussed the US perception of the narcotics threat these groups posed. The threat of the insurgents to both Colombian and American security was also discussed. As Sen. DeWine (R-OH) argued, the “groups present a clear threat to regional security and, in fact, threaten our own national security. They rely on drug profits to do so.” Highlighting the threat of these groups to the Colombian state, Ambassador Kamman noted that even if the narcotics situation were improved, the FARC and ELN would still present a threat to the Colombian state. The violence caused by these groups risks the “erosion of law and order throughout the country [Colombia].” Although the FARC had not explicitly referred to the US as a target, the US government still viewed the FARC as a potential threat due to the incompatibility of their objectives with those of the US. In addition, the US perceived that the FARC could be a threat to national

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321 House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network, 2, emphasis added.
322 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 59, emphasis added.
323 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 42.
324 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 38.
325 Ibid.
326 Ibid., 39.
security because of the relationship between the US and their opponents, the GOC. 327

5.5 Advocacy for a Greater US Support Role in Colombia

With the help of Plan Colombia in 2000 and even in years prior, the Colombian government focused its attention on an intensive counternarcotics campaign, composed of large-scale eradication and interdiction operations, in order to restrict the financing of the FARC, ELN and AUC. 328 US support for Colombia’s efforts occurred under the framework of the narcotics problem, and in so doing, it “maintained a hands-off attitude towards leftist guerrilla groups and illegal rightist paramilitary forces.” 329 Although US support in the dismantling of the Colombian drug cartels and in drug eradication had helped to assuage the cocaine problem, it was the protection of the FARC and ELN of the drug traffickers that enabled the survival of the problem. 330

Many members of Congress and past and present leaders within the US administration urged greater US intervention in Colombia in light of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Ambassador Kamman, in urging for a restructuring of US support towards Colombia, inquired as to whether the US should contemplate “strengthening the Colombian capability to defeat guerillas and paramilitary groups that work hand in hand with the drug criminals…” 331 He did not support US embroilment in Colombia in a combat role, as this could entail a repetition of the quagmire that was the Vietnam War, but he was wary of US neglect in Colombia, like

327 Senate Committee on Armed Services, The Worldwide Threat to United States Interests, 10.
328 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 39.
329 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 39.
330 Ibid.
331 Ibid.
had occurred in Afghanistan with the Taliban. In particular, he stressed the necessity of decreasing the limitations on the type of material and training aid that the US could provide to Colombia.

Support for greater US intervention came from the highest office of the US administration. At a press conference following a meeting with Colombian President Andrés Pastrana in the White House, President Bush publicly committed to supporting Colombia in the fight against terror:

And we want to join, with Plan Colombia’s billions of dollars, to not only fight the—and by fighting narcotrafficking, by the way, we’re fighting the funding source for these political terrorists. And sometimes they’re interchangeable. And we’ve got to be strong in the fight against terror. And the United States—listen, my biggest job now is to defend our security and to help our friends defend their security against terror. They key to success is not to grow tired in the fight against terror. And I can assure you I won’t. I know this good President [Pastrana] is dedicated to fighting terror. And it’s essential for Colombia to succeed in this war against terror in order for her people to realize the vast potential of a great, democratic country…

While prior to 9/11, Democrats in Congress had been reticent about the idea of US intervention in Colombia, even in just a support role for counternarcotics campaigns, after 9/11 they changed their stance. Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) presented the drug problem in Colombia as a shared problem and the terrorist threat as global, thereby entreating the participation of the US, not just in anti-drug operations in Colombia, but also anti-terror. The Senator also inquired about other ways in which Congress could assist in the global fight against terrorism and narcotrafficking and

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332 Ibid.
333 Ibid., 42
334 Ibid., 40
335 George W. Bush, “Remarks Following Discussions With President Andrés Pastrana of Colombia and an Exchange With Reporters”
even suggested specific ways in which the US could provide more for counterterrorism support: 336

For instance, should we expand the Coverdell-Feinstein drug kingpin legislation passed two years ago to also go after major terrorists? Is there other legislation needed to clarify our ability to use anti-drug assets against terrorists? Are we devoting the proper level of resources in Afghanistan, Colombia, and other nations to deal with increasingly violent and inter-connected narco-terrorists? 337

In addition, Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) also advocated for greater diversity in the methods employed by the US to support Colombia. When discussing the presence of Real IRA members in Colombia and the threat by the FARC of attacks on Americans, Rep. Cummings stated that DEA capabilities, in the recognition and interruption of drug trafficking networks, should be accompanied with the “many other weapons being employed in America’s new war.” 338 Mr. Hutchinson, citing the State Department, indicated that “over 600 terrorist attacks had occurred against the US” and that the events of 9/11 necessitated US action to “…starve the infrastructure of every global terrorist organization and deprive them of the drug proceeds that might otherwise be used to fund acts of terror.” 339

Republicans in Congress also provided support for increased intervention. Senator Sessions (R-TX) mentioned that he did not see another solution other than military success in Colombia. 340 He stressed, “perhaps at that point they can negotiate someday, but until they really get these people on the run or either totally defeat them, that country is going to be weakened, incapable of stopping narcotics.

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336 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 4.
337 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 4.
338 House Committee on Government Reform, Drug Trade and the Terror Network, 7.
339 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism, 10, emphasis added.
340 Senate Committee on Armed Services, The Worldwide Threat to United States Interests, 57
We cannot expect a country that does not control its territory to be able to stop narcotics. So hopefully we can figure a way to support them in that effort.”

Support for the US to share intelligence with Colombia regarding FARC movements and activities also existed. President Clinton had signed Presidential Decision Directive 73, which prevented the “Department of Defense from sharing vital intelligence on the left-wing rebel terrorists with the Colombian government.”

According to Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA), the US military could, “generate daily, photos of FARC troop encampments and movement.” Santorum urged the elimination of this prevention because these images, which could be sent to Colombian pilots and ground commanders, could provide “invaluable support.”

This Congressional support for a greater US support role in the Colombian situation, as occasioned by the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism,’ would lay the foundation for the passage of the 2002 unified campaign law.

5.6 Colombian Persuasion

As I have shown above, securitization theory carries great explanatory power in the greater US support role in Colombia. While US actors framed the Colombian situation in ways amenable to US foreign policy, Colombian actors also played an important role in shaping how the situation would be portrayed and managed. On 9/11, Secretary Powell had his first scheduled trip to Colombia as Secretary of State; however, he would not visit Colombia until December of 2002. This is representative of how 9/11 shifted US attention away from Colombia and towards the situation in the Middle East. Colombian political actors proved important

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341 Ibid.
342 Senate Committee on Armed Services, *The Worldwide Threat to United States Interests*, 74.
343 Ibid.
344 Isacson, "Washington's 'New War' in Colombia: The War on Drugs Meets the War on Terror."
because they were diligent in ensuring that the US would continue with the provision of aid, and even expand upon it, despite the fact that Colombia was now lower on the list of US foreign policy priorities than it had been before 9/11.

Pastrana began to push for the inclusion of Colombia into Washington’s War on Terror and framed the situation in his country accordingly.\textsuperscript{345} The Director of Strategic Studies at the Colombian Ministry of National Defense, told me:

“Colombia sees [an] unparalleled opportunity to neutralize the power of the guerilla. With the opening of a global category [after 9/11] in which there can be possible confusions regarding the character of the organization, Colombia says, ‘here, we have terrorists.’\textsuperscript{346} Restrepo noted the agency of Colombia in attempting to bring attention to the terrorist threat that had been present within the national boundaries of the country for, at least, the past decade. In a personal interview with President Andrés Pastrana, he noted his contribution to the passage of the 2002 “unified” campaign law:

It happened [change of authority] because at the end when I visited President Bush, months before leaving the office, months before, I was talking to President Bush saying look we need the support of the US in the fight against narcotics…So I said to President Bush…it is impossible to identify who are FARC and who are drug lords at this moment in many parts of Colombia so I need the support of your equipment to go after narcotrafficking, even if in narcotrafficking now, the largest cartel is the FARC, we should go after them and that was very important to President Bush…”\textsuperscript{347}

In his autobiography, President Pastrana wrote that 9/11 forged a global shift in the concept of terrorism, whereby the perception of the issue was no longer ambiguous or clouded by gray areas, the distinction between “good” and “bad” terrorism was

\textsuperscript{345} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs}, 138.
\textsuperscript{346} César Andrés Restrepo Florez, personal interview with author, December 17, 2014. Translation my own, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{347} President Andrés Pastrana Arango, personal interview with author, February 12, 2015.
eliminated and the global stance became a zero tolerance policy against it.  

President Pastrana indicated:

We understood that this was the opportunity to retake a topic that we had been insisting about for some time – the necessity of ending with the absurd limitation that impeded the use of military equipment under Plan Colombia in operations against illegal armed groups, which was absurd because we all knew about the connection between narcotrafficking and the guerilla groups and the AUC.

At a meeting with President Bush in the White House in April of 2002, President Pastrana remarked to reporters that it was necessary that the US had the full support of the US and the “change of authorities” to enable Colombia to utilize equipment granted by the US for both narcoterrorism and narcotrafficking.

During Pastrana’s administration, the Colombian embassy in DC also sought to equate the Colombian terrorist situation to that of Afghanistan’s in order to elicit more support:

"Why should America and the world be interested in what is going on in Colombia in the wake of these most testing of times brought about my mindless terrorism? The answer is that what is happening in Colombia is not very different from what has happened in Afghanistan. This is due to the fact that Colombia is the world’s largest cocaine producer, controlling 80% of the world’s coca. Afghanistan is the world’s largest heroin producer, controlling 75% of the world’s opium….Vast sums of money are laundered each year to pay for the travel, housing, planning, weapons purchases and technical backup in terrorist operations like the devastating assault on the World trade Center and the Pentagon. So the [drug] trade is playing a crucial role in providing such resources, both in Colombia, in Afghanistan, in Iran and potentially elsewhere in the world. …Terrorism is like a cancer that must be attacked head on, with all available sources of treatment, in very harsh and unrelenting terms." 

349 Ibid., 437.
350 George W. Bush, “Remarks Following Discussions With President Andrés Pastrana of Colombia and an Exchange With Reporters.”
Although President Uribe did not assume power until August of 2002, he still demonstrated a commitment to building a national security program and he played a part in requesting the use of counterinsurgency aid. President Uribe, who took on a more hardline approach than his predecessor in dealing with the insurgents, also contributed to including the Colombian situation under the framework of the War on Terror.\textsuperscript{352} The Bush and Uribe administrations became strong allies in the war against terror,\textsuperscript{353} both committed to expanded US support in the country. In June of 2002, President Uribe flew to Washington to meet with Secretary Powell, Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor at the time, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, in order to strengthen the relationship between the two governments.\textsuperscript{354} In an interview with Luis Alfonso Hoyos, he indicated that:

“[President Uribe] took advantage of what Pastrana had signed [Plan Colombia], …he retook it, strengthened it, and maintained it…and additionally, cooperation was expanded to include other types of intelligence support and the accompaniment of the US to face these bands.”\textsuperscript{355}

Although his interaction with the US administration prior to the passage of the law was brief, there existed common ground between the personal preferences of Presidents Bush and Uribe, which would lead to the continued support of the US in Colombia.

5.7 Passage of the 2002 “Unified Campaign” Law

The prioritization of terrorism in US policy allowed President Bush and members of his administration to move forward with the removal of the distinction

\textsuperscript{352} Virginia M. Bouvier, "Evaluating U.S. Policy in Colombia," \textit{International Relations Center, Americas Program}, (2005); as quoted by Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs}, 146
\textsuperscript{353} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs}, 156
\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 146
\textsuperscript{355} Luis Alfonso Hoyos, personal interview with author, October 28, 2014. Translation my own.
between assistance for counternarcotics and counterinsurgency.\textsuperscript{356} In early March 2002, Secretary Powell, at a hearing before the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee sought Congressional support in the administration’s desire to tackle narcoterrorism, in particular in Colombia, signaling a US desire to proceed with the determination of a justification for greater involvement in that country, past just counternarcotics support.\textsuperscript{357} Likewise, President Bush indicated:

President Pastrana is a—has taken on a huge task in his country… He has led a valiant effort at eradicating coca fields, standing strong against the narcotraffickers. And as well, he fights terrorism in his country. He fights well-organized, well-funded groups that are out to destroy democracy in Colombia. And he has been strong in his support for democracy not only in his own country but in the region. We had a good discussion about a variety of issues about how to change the focus of our strategy from counternarcotics to include counter-terrorism. I explained to him that a supplemental I sent up to the United States Congress would do just that.\textsuperscript{358}

Support in Congress for a removal of the distinction was also building in early 2002. The House passed H.R. 358 in March 2002 in order to request from the White House legislation "to assist the Government of Colombia to protect its democracy from United States-designated foreign terrorist organizations."\textsuperscript{359} On March 21, President Bush’s administration submitted the “unified campaign” law to congress.\textsuperscript{360} This plan was a US $28.9 billion emergency budget request entreating a change in authority for the use of US funds in Colombia. Sec. 305.(a)(1) and Sec. 601. (a)(1) allowed for the funds available to the DoD and DoS, respectively, for assistance to GOC to be made “available to support a unified campaign against narcotics trafficking, against activities by organizations designated as terrorist

\textsuperscript{356} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs}, 138
\textsuperscript{357} Senate Committee on the Judiciary, \textit{Narco-Terror: The Worldwide Connection between Drugs and Terrorism}, 36
\textsuperscript{358} George W. Bush, “Remarks Following Discussions With President Andrés Pastrana of Colombia and an Exchange With Reporters.”
\textsuperscript{359} Isacson, "Washington's 'New War' in Colombia: The war on Drugs meets the war on terror."
\textsuperscript{360} Crandall, \textit{Driven by Drugs}, 139
organizations such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)...

This proposal passed in August 2002, thus precipitating US support in the Colombian counterinsurgency campaign. Congressional support existed for, as the conference report passed in the House with a vote of 397-32 and in the Senate with a vote of 92-7. Some of the initial “joint campaign” initiatives would include, according to US SOUTHCOM Gen. Jackson, “…transform[ing] the Colombian military to a force that is capable of defeating the terrorist organizations, establishing presence and defense, in order to provide a safe and secure environment and governance throughout Colombia.” In addition, US SOUTHCOM would help the GOC’s army create another commando unit and the US would help to establish 64, 150-men police squads to operate in rural areas with low state presence.

5.8 Conclusion

9/11 played a pivotal role in redefining the Colombian situation. The characterization of the insurgents as terrorists and the connections made between the situations in Colombia and Afghanistan resulted in advocacy in Congress for a greater US role in the Colombian counterinsurgency campaign.

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362 Ibid.

363 Isacson, "Washington's 'New War' in Colombia: The War on Drugs Meets the War on Terror,” 13.

364 Ibid.

365 Ibid.
Conclusion

“And if these difficulties, whose essence we share, hinder us, it is understandable that the rational talents on this side of the world, exalted in the contemplation of their own cultures, should have found themselves without valid means to interpret us. It is only natural that they insist on measuring us with the yardstick that they use for themselves, forgetting that the ravages of life are not the same for all, and that the quest of our own identity is just as arduous and bloody for us as it was for them. The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own, serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary.”

– Gabriel Garcia Marquez, The Solitude of Latin America

Findings and Implications

This thesis argues that 9/11 functioned as a critical juncture in the trajectory of US foreign aid policy to Colombia. The events of this day redefined the Colombian situation and occasioned the need for a different US approach in helping Colombia solve its problems. In 2000, the US passed a $1.3 billion supplemental aid package that was largely allocated to the counternarcotics campaign in Colombia. But by August of 2002, the US decided to allocate all of the aid that had been previously provided to the US DoS and DoD for the Colombian situation towards a joint campaign against both counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations. Just two years prior, US administration officials had emphasized that there existed a strict boundary between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency aid and that the US would not become involved in the Colombian insurgency. The goal of this thesis was to assess the shift in US policy by process tracing the events from 1998-2002 that led to the passage of Plan Colombia and then the passage of the 2002 law. The important critical junctures that I assess are the election of President Bush and a new Congress as well as the attacks on September 11.

366 Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nobel Prize Lecture, 8 December 1982.
The theoretical framework for this thesis is securitization theory, which contains elements from both constructivism and realism and discusses how political actors can utilize rhetoric to turn issues into security threats. I utilize critical junctures to show that constructivism functions as an appropriate paradigm with which to assess the change in US policy. In the period of 1998-2002, there was no change in the balance of power between the US or Colombia that could have occasioned greater US intervention and there is no real change in the threat of the FARC to Colombia, indicating that neorealism does not constitute an appropriate paradigm through which to solely view changes in US actions. During this period, there was a change in the way that the Colombian situation is socially constructed, and this change was emphatic after 9/11.

I argue that in the US, prior to 9/11, political actors “securitized” narcotics, or framed them as a threat to the national security of the US, and this contributed to: 1) the distinctions made by the Clinton administration between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations; 2) the passage of the Leahy amendment, which conditioned US aid to Colombia on a human rights certification of the US component of Plan Colombia of the GOC and its armed forces; and 3) the large emphasis on counternarcotics and supply reduction. Therefore, the securitization of narcotics resulted in the noninvolvement of the US in the insurgency problem in Colombia. In the post-9/11 period, however, the securitization shifted from solely narcotics to ‘narcoterrorism.’ This shift occasioned by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 led to an emphasis on the connection between narcotics and terrorism that altered how the situation in Colombia was defined in the United States and ultimately
resulted in greater advocacy for US support in the counterinsurgency operations in Colombia.

I began by explaining why neoliberalism and neorealism do not constitute the most appropriate paradigms with which to explain the shift in US policy. Although these paradigms can rationalize initial US intervention, the absence of the role of violent non-state actors in their frameworks ignores an important element of the change in US policy. The inclusion of constructivism into a theoretical framework to assess the question is beneficial because this paradigm allots greater significance to non-state actors and discusses the use of social construction and how changes in international relations can emanate from changes in rhetoric, norms and ideas. This is important because a change in how the Colombian situation is framed in the US is visible in Congressional hearings, presidential speeches, and in personal interviews I conducted with US and Colombian officials. In this thesis, as I explained above, I utilized securitization theory to frame the assessment of US policies in the Colombia.

After establishing the theoretical framework, I outlined the research question that would be structuring my analysis: What caused the United States' to shift its stance and decide to allow the foreign aid it was providing Colombia between 1998-2002 to be used towards a "unified campaign" against narco-trafficking and insurgent groups? In order to effectively examine the evolution, I separated the question into two halves: Question 1 asked why Plan Colombia did not include a counterinsurgency component and Question 2 asked what made viable the Bush administration proposal for a “unified campaign” law (to combat both narcotics and terrorism) and the law’s subsequent passage in Congress.
In order to determine why Plan Colombia did not include a counterinsurgency component, I analyzed the effects of the securitization of narcotics on US policy towards Colombia. In Chapter 2, I identified the securitizing agents as members of the US administration, members of Congress, as well as Colombian political actors, and the audience as the US Congress. I argue that narcotics were in fact securitized because they were prioritized in US discourse; securitizing agents noted the threat of narcotics to referent objects; the audience, the US Congress, accepted the securitization of narcotics; and securitizing agents claimed the right to use the means necessary to deal with the threat.

After having established that in the pre-9/11 period narcotics were a primary security concern of the US, I examined two mechanisms through which the securitization of narcotics resulted in the absence of a counterinsurgency component in Plan Colombia. First, this securitization led to the portrayal of the Colombian insurgents, primarily the FARC and ELN, as heavily involved in the trafficking of illicit narcotics. The primary threat of these groups to the US was not their engagement in terrorist activities, but rather their contribution to the cocaine trade, especially through the protection of cultivators and traffickers. This characterization led to human rights concerns in the US Congress regarding how the FARC were being treated, as there were persisting connections between the GOC’s security forces and the AUC. These concerns resulted in the passage of the Leahy Amendment, a condition of US aid pending a certification of the human rights track record of the GOC and its armed forces. The Leahy amendment, and the accompanying apprehension regarding funding the Colombian army, served to limit US aid to counternarcotics. The second important mechanism was that the
securitization of narcotics highlighted the necessity to control the drug supply entering the US. Colombian political actors contributed to emphasizing the need for counternarcotics reduction in their country. This focus on narcotics supply led to the creation of the US component of Plan Colombia as largely a counternarcotics plan.

Alternative explanations have also been posited to explain the shift in US policy. In Chapter 4, I explain why the 2000 election and a realist security explanation cannot account for the shift in US policy. I argued that the election of President Bush was not that important to the shift because: 1) he made no proposals for changing the authority of US funds before 9/11; 2) he continued counternarcotics support for Colombia under the ARI; and 3) President Clinton’s component of Plan Colombia had already been considered interventionist and it had received greater support from Congressional Republicans than Democrats, so there was no large shift in policy despite a transition from a Democratic President to a Republican one. The 2000 election also resulted in a change in the partisan makeup of the US Congress. However, we cannot point to this as a reason for the change because if we assume that Republicans engage in more bellicose foreign policy, as had been in the case in the preceding years, then the 2000 election would have resulted in less interventionist US policies as Republicans lost seats in both houses and lost control of the Senate. Lastly, a realist security explanation would imply that the change in US policy is a result of a real change in the threat level of the insurgents. But, as I showed, the FARC and ELN had been on the US DoS FTOs list since 1997 and they had not changed their engagement in terrorist activity. Discussions regarding changes in the military situation on the ground were largely absent from US Congressional hearings, and there did not exist significant evidence
to believe that there was a change in the credible terrorist threat that the FARC could pose to US national security. Therefore, I turned to 9/11 to determine what type of change this event brought on US foreign policy.

In the last empirical chapter, I examined the effects of 9/11 by noting the prioritization of terrorism that emanated from this event. This emphasis on terror subsequently led to the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism’ and I outlined how this securitization occurred. This securitization resulted in the linkage of the Colombian situation to that of Afghanistan, the portrayal of the FARC, ELN and AUC as ‘narcoterrorists,’ and greater advocacy in the US Congress for counterterrorism support in Colombia. This, coupled with the persuasion of Colombian actors, contributed the 2002 passage of the “unified campaign” law.

The implications of this thesis contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the US-Latin America relationship and the potential for political actors from small states, or the third world, to engage in agenda setting and in persuasion.

As the opening quote by Gabriel Garcia Marquez indicates, the problems of Latin America are often “measured” and understood by a framework that does not belong to the region; the Latin American reality is viewed and interpreted through the lens of the great powers.\footnote{Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nobel Prize Lecture, 8 December 1982} The case of US foreign aid policy towards Colombia in this period provides an example of a situation whereby the US political actors determined solutions for Colombia’s situation based on a US understanding of what the threats the region faced were. In a personal interview with Jaime Ruiz, the Director of National Planning Department from 1998-1999, he indicated how the interests of US members of Congress affected their view of Plan Colombia:
You still had to frame it [Plan Colombia] in their interests. The interests in the US congress are still very parochial...when you try to get the votes for something like Plan Colombia, you are dealing with very parochial people, whose main interest was supply, supply, supply. We always had to frame it in terms of supply...When you try to get the votes, you had to look at the interest of the congressmen.... In the US system of government, Congress has a lot of power, and its impressively parochial. So it’s hard...For me, it wasn’t easy that all the evaluations of Plan Colombia were always a failure because you have the same number of hectares...Why? Because that’s what, in the end, still congressmen think about.368

Although I do not deal with individual Congressional preferences in my thesis, this message demonstrates the susceptibility of international issues being treated in the US Congress as domestic ones, or being seen through a US-centric lens.

Yet the case of Colombia offers some affirmation regarding the agenda setting power of small nations. Although Colombia was the largest producer of coca leaf and its derivative from 1997 to 2012, Peru and Bolivia have also been leading producers, at some point in the last three decades, and Peru has also needed to manage a leftist guerilla insurgent group, the Shining Path, since 1980. Neither Peru nor Bolivia has received as much US aid as Colombia to tackle the narcotics issue, and in Peru’s case the insurgent problem. This could be explained in part by the efficacy of Colombian political actors in establishing a relationship with the US and lobbying Congress for the passage of a US aid plan for Colombia. In particular, in many of the interviews I conducted, a recurring theme was the effectiveness of the Colombian Ambassador to the US between 1998-2002, Luis Alberto Moreno, in helping to forge the passage of Plan Colombia and for advocating for the importance of US aid to Colombia not in the US Congress, but across the government. As Carla

368 Jaime Ruiz Llano, personal interview with author, January 5, 2015
Robbins, former deputy editorial page editor of *The New York Times*, indicated in a personal interview:

At one point, I was talking to a very senior State Department official and I said to this person, "Who do you think is the most effective ambassador in Washington and this person said, “How do you define effective?” and I said, “Well, the ability to just get a meeting in the state department whenever he/she wants.” And he said, “Well obviously, the British ambassador can do that, but then any British ambassador can do that…and I said, “Well after the British Ambassador?” and this guy looked at me and said, “Luis Alberto Moreno.” And that’s a pretty extraordinary thing to think that the ambassador of Colombia was that effective.\(^{369}\)

Colombian actors, as I have shown in this thesis, made themselves very present in the discussion of Plan Colombia in the US and they advocated and contributed to the securitization of narcotics, and then after 9/11, the securitization of ‘narcoterrorism.’ Carolina Barco, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombian from 2002-2007 also noted the role of President Pastrana and Luis Alberto Moreno in obtaining US support for Colombia:

I know they had to make an incredible effort because the relationship with Colombia had become so complicated. Luis Alberto Moreno has great stories of how he started reaching out to members of congress and winning them one by one. … Clearly, President Pastrana is a very personable character and I think that he was also able to establish a relationship with President Clinton was important…\(^{370}\)

**Limitations**

This thesis faces various limitations. For one, issues of domestic politics were important in US considerations; however, in order to apply theories of international relations, I decided to not focus on the role of domestic politics.

Although I indicate that securitizing agents are important, and I often comment on

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\(^{369}\) Carla Robbins, personal interview with author, October 30, 2014

\(^{370}\) Carolina Barco, personal interview with author, November 12, 2014
the role of parties in the US Congress, I do not utilize a theory of domestic politics to explain the US shift.

In addition, the extent to which I can comment on US perceptions hinges on the availability of public material. Although President Pastrana made himself available to interview, and while there are comments regarding his meetings with US officials in his autobiographies, there were many informal meetings that occurred between US and Colombian officials and I did not have access to notes or transcripts of, especially as many of these communications have still been kept private. Many members of Congress were also invited to Colombia to see the situation in person and to meet with Colombian officials. My analysis is largely based off of Congressional hearings, as these transcripts display an insight to the public perception and discussion of the issue. Therefore, my argument on the effect of 9/11 hinges upon public information, and we cannot evaluate the private information available to US policy makers and whether there were any differences with public information.

Nevertheless, this thesis provides an opportunity to apply the framework of securitization theory to US-Latin American relations. Further research can discuss how other countries in the region construct and respond to security threats, and how these perceptions of threats guide state behavior.
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