

control in certain parts of FATA, which made the recent election campaign possible in that area. Nevertheless, given the geographic considerations, significant development work cannot proceed without security of the main communication routes throughout FATA.

Ultimately, better law enforcement will not only increase security and improve governance, but also create more space for development projects to be implemented and help stir economic growth. A secure environment can allow development organizations to conduct needs-assessments and channel scarce resources toward initiatives that are most desired. Moreover, access to local information can also help explain how to build support for basic public goods such as education, which itself is a crucial driver of development and establishing peace, or polio vaccinations, and also help create local ownership of programs—crucial to sustainable development.<sup>28</sup> If insecurity reigns, however, development projects are doomed to being misguided, ineffective, and unsustainable.

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## Peace with the FARC: Integrating Drug-Fueled Guerrillas into Alternative Development Programs?

By Jorrit Kamminga

AS A RESULT of more than a decade of violence, forced displacement and self-organization of farmer communities, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were born in 1964. Driven by a Marxist-Leninist ideology, the guerrilla movement started fighting for social, political and economic equality and justice for the peasant communities of Colombia. That initial struggle resulted in more decades of violence, with the FARC involved in an ugly campaign of bombings, killings, kidnappings, extortion and the trafficking of arms and illicit drugs.

Half a century later, the FARC has been weakened considerably by years of a strong military counteroffensive, high rates of desertion and demobilization, loss of local support, and the killing of some of their top leaders.<sup>1</sup> Part of the decline of the FARC has inherently resulted from its flawed tactics: the violent methods and partial shift from a leftist ideological organization to a money-making machine have decreased its credibility and local support base.<sup>2</sup> At the moment, the illegal armed group has around 8,500 combatants.<sup>3</sup> While heavy fighting continues, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos announced a preliminary agreement for peace talks with the FARC in August 2012. In October, this led to an official peace dialogue that took place first in Oslo, Norway, and it is currently being held in Havana, Cuba. The agenda of the peace dialogue revolves around five issue areas: agricultural (land) reforms, drug trafficking, political participation, ending the armed conflict, and the

rights and rehabilitation of victims of the conflict. The peace negotiations have been both applauded and heavily criticized.<sup>4</sup>

This article focuses on the nexus between two items on the peace agenda: land reforms and drug policy. It first discusses how a peace agreement could benefit the country's fight against the supply of illicit drugs within the framework of the government's national policy of territorial consolidation.<sup>5</sup> Second, it explores what the FARC demand in return for peace in those territories where it currently has a presence. Lastly, it argues that some of the demobilized guerrilla fighters could play an active role in counternarcotics alternative development programs.

The article finds that reaching a peace agreement with the FARC could boost the government's national strategy of territorial consolidation. In addition, the government could even include part of the demobilized FARC fighters in its alternative development programs, thus linking disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) with a counternarcotics strategy.

4 Some critics such as former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe simply argue that you should not negotiate with terrorists. Others say that some points on the agenda (e.g., land reforms, drug policy and the rights of victims) should be regular (public) policies of the state, which should not have to be negotiated with an illegal armed group.

5 After a pilot program that started in the region of La Macarena in the department of Meta in 2007, the Colombian government implemented the National Plan of Territorial Consolidation (PNCRT) in 2009. The national strategy focuses on priority areas with high levels of illegal armed groups, violence and illicit drug cultivation, and a weak state presence. Some areas have traditionally seen no state presence because of the conflict's remoteness or because of the difficult geography (e.g., mountains and jungle with few access routes). The idea is that a general improvement in the security situation allows the state to move (back) in, start providing basic services to the local communities and strengthen local institutions. In turn, this allows for social and economic development programs (including policies aimed at alternative development or illicit crop substitution) to be implemented through and with the local communities.

1 FARC leader Raúl Reyes was killed in 2008, commander Mono Jojoy was killed in 2010, and commander Alfonso Cano was killed in 2011. In addition, commander and co-founder Manuel Marulanda died in 2008 of a heart attack.

2 See, for example, Adam Isacson, "The Death of Raúl Reyes," Colombia Program of the Center for International Policy, March 1, 2008.

3 Juan Carlos Monroy Giraldo and Jorge Iván Posada, "Aunque lo nieguen, las FARC pasaron de euforias a realidades," *El Colombiano*, October 21, 2012.

28 "Education: Overview," World Bank, undated.

### The Peace Talks and Coca

The ongoing peace dialogue between the Colombian government and the FARC may not only put an end to the longest running civil war in Latin America, but it also offers the Colombian government a unique window of opportunity to solve part of the country's illegal drug economy.

Regardless of its political rhetoric and propaganda, the FARC could be considered a prime example of a guerrilla movement that has (partly) shifted from grievances to greed to motivate its struggle against the Colombian government.<sup>6</sup> Its involvement in the illicit drug trade, generating an estimated annual income of at least \$204 million,<sup>7</sup> may indeed have become an independent motivational force in itself. If one compares a map of FARC presence with a map of illicit coca cultivation in Colombia, they are almost identical.<sup>8</sup>

Paradoxically, the FARC's massive involvement in the illegal drug trade could mean that the current peace dialogue might have a positive spillover effect: peace with the FARC allows the government to make an important dent in the illegal coca economy. The problem is where to draw the line in the peace dialogue. The government is already negotiating with a group that is both nationally and internationally labeled a terrorist organization. Granting them any special rights in terms of territories or territorial benefits may be a bridge too far.

At the end of May 2013, a partial agreement was reached in Havana on the agricultural reforms, the first concrete result after six months of negotiations.

6 See, for example, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56:4 (2004): pp. 563-595.

7 Given the logical problems of establishing an accurate estimate, the author prefers to depart from this rather conservative 2003 estimate taken from: *El conflicto, callejón con salida. Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano Colombia - 2003* (Bogotá: UNDP, 2003), p. 285. Some more recent estimates are at least five times this number, but they do not seem to reflect that much of the added value of the illegal coca economy has in recent years disappeared to the coffers of Mexican drug cartels.

8 Compare, for example, the maps on pages 15 and 70 of *Colombia. Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2009* (Vienna: UNODC, 2010).

The details of the agreement, however, have not been released and the outcome depends on the broader agreement on all five points of the agenda.

### Territorial Consolidation and Drug Control

The basis of the current Colombian national policy of territorial consolidation is territorial security. It requires security—established by the Colombian military—before the state establishes a permanent presence in an area and starts to deliver basic services. An effective state presence has now more structurally become a precondition to counternarcotics and general (rural) development strategies. A government representative explained the strategy

**“The FARC could be considered a prime example of a guerrilla movement that has (partly) shifted from grievances to greed to motivate its struggle against the Colombian government.”**

as follows: “Illicit cultivation is closely related to the issue of territorial insecurity. Where there are illegal armed groups, there are illicit crops. So, as the state is regaining these zones in terms of security, the illicit crops start to decline and the state starts to establish a presence.”<sup>9</sup>

This is exactly where peace with the FARC would provide a strong boost. It would increase the security situation in parts of the country that are strongly affected by illicit coca cultivation. As such, it would allow the government to initiate the process of territorial consolidation in strategically important areas with illicit coca crops that, for the moment, can only be reached by much criticized aerial spraying campaigns. As said by one farmer, “What use is it to us if they are helping us with projects related to [agricultural] production, when at the same time they are attacking us from the air with glyphosate? The

9 Personal interview, representative, UACT regional office, Villavicencio, Meta, Colombia, May 10, 2013.

glyphosate arrives and kills the cocoa that we are sowing.”<sup>10</sup> Territorial consolidation could mean that, if still needed, more manual crop eradication could take place.

An agreement with the FARC would not mean that all illicit coca cultivation would disappear from Colombia. Besides the FARC, there are simply too many other groups involved in the illegal trade.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, some FARC members will probably continue their involvement in the illegal coca economy regardless of any political agreement. Past demobilizations in Colombia have shown that 10-15% of demobilized fighters continue with criminal activities afterward.<sup>12</sup> Regardless, demobilizing the FARC would allow the government to incorporate some former FARC fighters into its alternative development programs.

### From Waging War to Bargaining for Territory

Demobilizing and reintegrating most of the FARC's fighters into Colombian society would entail focusing on rural areas. The FARC's fighters mostly come from agricultural backgrounds, and their skills are most suited for the countryside. They would have a difficult time finding a job in the urban cities, hence the old adage that the FARC's members are “afraid of concrete.”<sup>13</sup>

In general, the government's policy is keeping people in rural areas through alternative development programs. One project beneficiary in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range explained: “It is about finding ways for the farmer to stay on his plot of land, that he can be productive, that he can

10 Personal interview, project beneficiary, Community Council ACAPA, Tumaco, Nariño, Colombia, May 2, 2013.

11 Both the armed forces of the left-wing Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the right-wing paramilitary organization Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) are directly and indirectly involved in Colombia's illegal coca economy. In addition, around the country, several *bandas criminales* (BACRIMs), often with connections to paramilitary groups, are fighting a turf war for control over the illegal drug trade. At the moment, the most important gangs are Los Rastrojos and Los Urabeños.

12 Daniel Rivera Marín, “Gran reto del proceso de paz: tener un buen proyecto de reinserción,” *El Colombiano*, October 29, 2012.

13 Personal interview, government representative in La Macarena, Meta, Colombia, May 11, 2013.

associate himself with others, that he is familiar with his surroundings, finds alternatives and can educate his children.”<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, many families are still selling their properties (if any) and leaving for the city, some of them forced to return afterwards after realizing that the city has nothing to offer them, and obliged to work as even poorer land laborers for other farmers.<sup>15</sup>

Yet simply reintegrating FARC members in the respective regions from where they came does not seem to be an item on the agenda. Instead, the FARC demand special territories with a certain level of autonomy. In the early stages of the peace dialogue, farmer cooperatives were mentioned as a possible way of satisfying the guerrilla movement’s demands in the negotiations.<sup>16</sup> Now, the debate revolves around entire territories, known as the *Zonas de Reserva Campesina* (ZRC), created in the past by the Colombian government as part of an effort to provide vulnerable farming communities with limited resources access to and ownership over state-owned territories.<sup>17</sup>

Without knowing the details of the partial agreement on agricultural land reforms, the big question remains whether the FARC demand territory for the rural communities they say they represent or for their own (demobilized) fighters. If the FARC could use the peace agreement to indirectly improve the living conditions for farmers in some of the rural areas, they could win back part of their lost credibility. They could probably even use that as a basis for establishing a legitimate political party in Colombia focused on agricultural reforms and the protection of rural communities. Alternatively, if it becomes clear that they are mainly interested in their own position and in formalizing control over their

territories, there is a huge chance that there will be no peace agreement at all.

The FARC is currently demanding 59 ZRCs with a total of nine million hectares across the country.<sup>18</sup> In addition, similar to the designated territories for indigenous and afro-descendant communities in Colombia, it wants these territories to have a degree of political, administrative, economic, social, environmental and cultural autonomy, with justice administered through mechanisms of communal justice. At least on paper (and in the eyes of most Colombian media), that would mean creating small semi-independent republics (or *republicuetas* according to former Agriculture Minister Juan Camilo Restrepo<sup>19</sup>) within Colombia.

The latter seems to be politically unacceptable, especially after the earlier Caguán peace process (1999-2002), when the FARC turned the 26,000 square mile territory it received as part of peace negotiations into a safe haven to both regroup its forces and strengthen its participation in the illegal drug economy by actively promoting coca cultivation and processing in the area.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence, the current Colombian government cannot risk that (former) FARC members could formalize their control over part of the illicit drug trade through these newly granted territories. Besides, creating semi-autonomous regions is completely at odds with the government’s strategy of integrating all remote or isolated areas within the state structure through territorial consolidation. Nevertheless, the ZRCs are said to be among the six themes currently agreed upon within the agricultural (land) reforms.<sup>21</sup>

### Forest Warden Families Programs for the FARC?

Independent of how the agricultural reforms develop, it is interesting to explore the ways in which demobilized FARC fighters could effectively participate in alternative development programs. That would combine a strategy of DDR with a development-oriented counternarcotics policy. In fact, the FARC has already expressed an interest in promoting alternative (rural) development.<sup>22</sup> One model could be the Forest Warden Families Program.

Since 2003, the Colombian government has implemented the Forest Warden Families Program to boost integrated rural development while fostering a culture of lawfulness.<sup>23</sup> The program creates alternative livelihoods that are linked to the preservation of natural resources or the protection of the environment. For example, reforestation is an important component, as well as some initial linkages with the international market for carbon credits.<sup>24</sup> Program beneficiaries have become forest wardens, agro-forestry producers (e.g., banana, cacao, coffee, palm oil or rubber) or even service providers in ecotourism (as tourist guides or owners of ecological lodges).

The program further promotes the ownership of the land, and strengthens the social cohesion of the rural communities. It is not limited to the agricultural production of the individual families, but also aims to provide benefits to the broader community in terms of education and public health. As such, it combines technical assistance related to agro-forestry with broader capacity building, including, for example, literacy, bookkeeping,

<sup>22</sup> While negotiating peace, the FARC has ironically developed its own proposals to end the illegal drug problem. They are proposing a dual counternarcotics policy. On the one hand, it focuses on alternative development (the substitution of drug producing crops) and rural development in general. On the other hand, it favors the legalization of cannabis, opium and coca cultivation for medicinal, industrial and cultural purposes.

<sup>23</sup> All information about this program is based on the field research conducted by the author in the departments of Nariño, Magdalena and Meta in May 2013.

<sup>24</sup> USAID has started promoting linkages between agro-forestry and the international market for carbon credits through its Bioeadd+ program.

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview, beneficiary Red Ecolsierra, as-sociation Guardabosques de la Sierra, Vereda La Esmeralda, Colombia, May 6, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Rivera Marín, “En El Laguito cubano, Gobierno y FARC sacan sus cartas,” *El Colombiano*, November 4, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> ZRCs were created in Colombia through Law 160 (1994) to help protect vulnerable farming communities, especially those affected by the conflict or in the peripheries of the country.

<sup>18</sup> “Farc aspiran a multiplicar zonas de reserva campesina en Colombia,” Agence France-Presse, March 19, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Juan Camilo Restrepo, “Republicuetas, no; zonas de reserva campesina, sí,” *El Tiempo*, March 23, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> “Colombia’s Elusive Quest for Peace,” International Crisis Group, March 26, 2002, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> While the details are under embargo until the end of the peace process, other themes negotiated so far are a fund for land distribution, formal land titles, the management of the advance of the agricultural frontier, and increasing the state presence in remote rural areas.

socio-organizational and socio-entrepreneurial skills. In many regions, the programs have already resulted in higher living standards and the creation of thousands of alternative livelihoods within the legal economy.<sup>25</sup>

This program could provide an interesting model for the demobilization and reintegration of some of the FARC fighters. For the moment, it is unclear to what extent this program is part of the negotiations in Cuba, but President Santos has mentioned on several occasions that he would welcome working with the FARC on ways to reduce illicit coca cultivation and promote alternative development.<sup>26</sup> The previous Caguán peace process, however, has undoubtedly made the government wary about involving the FARC as a partner in alternative development.<sup>27</sup>

Linking these programs with the DDR process of the FARC could be a possibility. It could even generate more international support if these programs were linked directly to objectives of protecting the tropical forests and rich biodiversity of Colombia.

### Conclusion

Signing a peace agreement with the FARC will not end Colombia's illegal coca economy. It will not even end the role of all FARC fighters in the drug trade. Yet it will increase the government's territorial control over important areas of the country where currently a substantial part of illegal coca cultivation occurs. As

25 In May 2013, the author visited several alternative development projects in the departments of Nariño, Magdalena and Meta, interviewing project beneficiaries. While there are clear socioeconomic (and some cultural) benefits for the participating families, not all families of local communities can be integrated into the programs. Those who benefit have seen their living conditions improve, for example, on the basis of agricultural, agro-forestry and fish production, but often still require better services in the community (e.g., investments in education and healthcare). Another question is whether all these projects prove to be sustainable once the government withdraws its technical assistance and (price) support.

26 "Santos sugiere acuerdo con las Farc sobre cultivos de coca," *Vanguardia Liberal*, December 13, 2012.

27 William L. Marcey, *The Politics of Cocaine. How U.S. Foreign Policy Has Created a Thriving Industry in Central and South America* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010), p. 233.

security conditions improve in the former FARC strongholds, it would provide the government with an excellent opportunity to expand its policy of territorial consolidation and simultaneously rein in part of the supply of illegal drugs.

Turning FARC fighters into some kind of local counternarcotics agents may be a bridge too far. Yet reintegrating their members into programs similar to the Forest Warden Families Program may be an option to explore. It could match the skills and rural background of demobilized FARC fighters with attractive alternative livelihoods related to the preservation of Colombia's natural resources and biodiversity. The key question is whether the FARC would accept the offer. For the moment, its exorbitant demands suggest it is bargaining for much more than merely alternative livelihoods.

Not signing the peace agreement would likely mean a continuation of the status quo, with heavy fighting and limited possibilities for the government to structurally address the problem of illegal coca cultivation through economic (alternative) development in many areas of Colombia. A peace arrangement could change this, but the key questions at the moment are whether it can be worked out before the end of the year (the tight deadline set by the government) and what price President Santos and the Colombian people will pay to solve this festering conflict.

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## Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

May 1, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan Taliban militants killed Malim Shahwali, a senior member of Afghanistan's peace council, in Helmand Province. Two of Shahwali's bodyguards were also killed. - *Reuters, May 1*

May 1, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives near a Pakistani election candidate in Sindh Province, injuring two bystanders. The election candidate, Mohammad Ibrahim Jatoi, was unharmed. - *AFP, May 1*

May 2, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): An improvised explosive device killed eight Afghan police in Logar Province. The Afghan Taliban claimed responsibility. - *AFP, May 2*

May 3, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): A new public opinion poll from the Pew Research Center found that four in 10 Afghans believe that suicide bombing is justified "in order to defend Islam against its enemies." According to RFE/RL, "Out of 39 countries in the study, only Palestinians showed the same level of support for the idea that suicide attacks are sometimes justified." - *RFE/RL, May 3*

May 3, 2013 (PAKISTAN): Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants shot to death Awami National Party candidate Sadiq Zaman Khattak and his four-year-old son in Bilal Colony in Karachi. - *The Nation, May 4*

May 4, 2013 (MALI): Militants attacked a Malian army patrol in Gao, killing two soldiers. A suicide bomber attacked the soldiers while another group of gunmen in a car shot at the troops. Three militants were also killed. - *AP, May 4*

May 5, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb reportedly killed five U.S. troops in Kandahar Province. - *AFP, May 5*

May 5, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan soldier shot to death two NATO soldiers in Farah Province. - *AFP, May 5*

May 5, 2013 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a convoy carrying a Qatari delegation in Mogadishu, killing at least eight people. Most of those killed may have