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## **THE COLD WAR IN COLOMBIA: COLOMBIAN DEFENCE POLICY AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES, 1966-1970\***

**Javier Castrillón\*\***

### **ABSTRACT**

Despite the great importance and implications of the Cold War in Latin America, our understanding about its effects in Colombia is scarce. Certainly, little is known in regard to it and the middle 1960s, turning point in which external trends affected in a definitive manner the discourse and means of the Colombian conflict. Thus, the main objective of this dissertation is uncovering the consequences that the Cold War had over Colombian defence policy, as well as the internal motivations that made Lleras Restrepo's government to require American military aid. This is done by assessing primary sources, specifically, governmental documents, intelligence reports, diaries, speeches, and congressional memories.

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The final results show how Colombian elites represented in the National Front (FN) used consciously defence policy in order to maintain a convenient status quo, all this, amid social uneasiness and the growing presence of both Cuban and American influence.

**Keywords:** Colombia, United States, Lleras Restrepo, Defence Policy, Communism.

### **LA GUERRA FRÍA EN COLOMBIA: EL ROL DE ESTADOS UNIDOS EN LA POLÍTICA DE DEFENSA COLOMBIANA EN EL PERÍODO 1966-1970**

#### **RESUMEN**

A pesar de la importancia e implicaciones de la Guerra Fría en Latino América, nuestro entendimiento sobre sus efectos en Colombia es escaso. Ciertamente, poco se conoce de ello a mediados de los 1960s, punto de inflexión donde tendencias externas afectaron definitivamente el discurso y los medios de lucha del conflicto colombiano. Así, el principal objetivo de esta disertación es descubrir tanto las consecuencias de la Guerra Fría sobre la política de defensa Colombiana, como las motivaciones internas que llevaron al gobierno de Lleras Restrepo a solicitar ayuda militar Americana. Lo anterior, es evaluado a partir de fuentes primarias, específicamente, documentos gubernamentales, reportes de inteligencia, diarios, discursos, y congresos.

Los resultados finales muestran como las elites Colombianas representadas por el Frente Nacional (FN), usaron conscientemente la política de defensa en pro de mantener un conveniente status quo, esto, en medio de la desazón social y la creciente influencia Cubana y Americana.

**Palabras clave:** Colombia, Estados Unidos, Lleras Restrepo, Política de Defensa, Comunismo.

### **A GUERRA FRIA NA COLÔMBIA: O PAPEL DOS EUA NA POLÍTICA DE DEFESA DA COLÔMBIA NO PERÍODO 1966-1970**

#### **RESUMO**

Apesar da importância e implicações da Guerra Fria na América Latina, nossa compreensão dos efeitos sobre a Colômbia é escassa. Na verdade, pouco se sabe sobre isso em meados da década de 1960, que foi um ponto de inflexão, no qual as tendências externas influíram definitivamente o discurso e os meios de luta do conflito colombiano. Portanto, o principal objetivo desta dissertação é descobrir tanto as consequências da Guerra Fria sobre a política de defesa

colombiana, como as motivações internas que levaram o governo de Lleras Restrepo a pedir ajuda militar norte-americana. O anterior é avaliado a partir de fontes primárias, especificamente documentos governamentais, relatórios de inteligência, jornais, discursos e congressos.

Os resultados finais mostram como as elites colombianas, representadas pelo Frente Nacional (FN), usaram conscientemente a política de defesa para a manutenção de um status quo desejável, tudo isto em meio da agitação social e da crescente influência cubana e americana.

**Palavras-chave:** Colômbia, Estados Unidos, Lleras Restrepo, Política de Defesa, Comunismo.

## INTRODUCTION

In the early 1960s, Colombia was trying to consolidate a diffuse peace after more than ten years of indiscriminate partisan violence, which divided the country, only halted by Rojas Pinilla's dictatorship (1953-1957). However, both the Conservative and Liberal Parties discontent with Rojas' independence from them and eager to recuperate the power, created the National Front (FN) agreement in 1958. This was aimed at gaining state's control, by alternating between the two parties Colombian presidency during a twelve year period (Ayala, 2000). It is in that context that the Alliance for Progress (AP) was integrated in 1962, with the objective of generating 'political stability and maintenance of Colombia's democratic political institutions through support of the succession of National Front governments' (U.S. Senate Committee on foreign Relations, 1969, 1 February, p.9). Certainly, the upsurge of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 made possible the AP that along with Colombian-US military relations, determined the form assumed by Colombian defence policy (Randall, 1992, p. 221).

It is in this way that Colombian defence policy is normally studied from an American perspective based on the US Grand Strategy, which was directed at both fostering pro-western governments and opening up markets for US capital penetration (Stokes, 2005, p. 58). Although this might be true for Colombia, there is a gap in respect of FN governments' interests and perceptions that influenced the instruments to be used in the Colombian anti-subversive campaign, even more, during the aligid mandate of Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970), who witnessed the emergence of new guerrilla movements along with the spread of student demonstrations and riots. Thus, this paper is chiefly concerned with Colombian defence policy during Lleras' government and, in particular, to assess what Carlos Lleras' motivations behind his fight on internal opposition actually were and how Colombia-US military relations influenced Colombian defence policy.

In order to analyse Colombian defence policy in Lleras' presidency, his government has been evaluated during three divided stages: May 1966- August 1967, September 1967- December 1968, and January 1969- April 1970. Such selection was made by considering specific turning points that impacted either counterinsurgent methods or American assistance.

The first chapter explains how Lleras undertook the continuation of Colombian defence policy as defined by his predecessors, as well as the importance given to psychological warfare, strategies complemented by severe policing actions in order to respond to both guerrillas and student protestors. In this stage there were two important turning points that, interestingly, had repercussions in the rest of Lleras' mandate until 1970. Firstly, the issuing of severe anti-subversive decrees directed at dealing with student protestors in 1966, and secondly the appearance of a counterinsurgent government-press consensus in the middle of 1967.

The second chapter refers to Lleras' response to increasing Cuban diplomatic activity to bolster guerrillas in Latin America, and American frustration with insurgency's persistence in Colombia despite major foreign military assistance. Here, two events bolstered changes in Colombian defence policy: the creation of the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) in August 1967, and reassessment of US military assistance's goals in 1968 from elimination of guerrillas to their containment.

The third chapter aims at proving that Lleras' government tried deliberately to create an environment of massive restlessness, in order to link the increasing wave of disturbances and kidnappings with supposed communist activities. This stage is marked overall by the electoral cycle awareness that placed the FN system under severe menace from his main legal opponent, ex-dictator and 1970's presidential candidate General Rojas Pinilla.

This dissertation argues that Carlos Lleras' presidency used defence policy purposively, in order to protect FN's political survival and its control of state's economy. This, given the internal character of threats faced by FN elites represented by both guerrillas and organised opposition groups in society, whose principal aim was to alter the reigning system either legally or violently. For that reason, the shape assumed by Colombian defence policy was one of a counterinsurgent enterprise that, once it met with regional processes such as the Cuban revolution and the overall US effort to halt communism, expanded its means by adhering to a pro-American anticommunist discourse in an effort to assure FN's desired status quo.

Existing historiography deals superficially rather than deeply with Colombian defence policy throughout the 1960s-1970s. Hence, it can be argued that there is a gap in regard to securitization of the Colombian state during such period and its relation with US foreign policy. Most of the literature which refers to this topic either analyses Colombian defence in the early 1960s, or makes a brief explanation of guerrillas' upsurge in the middle 1960s. This trend is exemplified in Robin Kirk's book (2003) *More Terrible than Death*, as well as by Stephen Randall (1992) in *Colombia and the United States*. In both pieces of research Colombian defence organization is traced back to the Yarborough mission of 1962, which recommended the advancements of military civic actions and the creation of hunter killer teams. Those authors also deal with the later advent of guerrillas, from which Camilo Torres and some Spaniards priests were part. In contrast, Marco Palacios (2006) in *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, and Daniel Pecaute (2006)

in *Chronicle of Four Decades of Colombian Policy*, stress the role of demonstrations in Lleras' government, the importance of the Cuban Revolution in the guerrillas' upsurge in Colombia, and the crisis of political legitimacy of the FN in the 1970's elections.

Another group of literature points mostly to US foreign policy towards Latin America and makes some notes in respect to Colombia. According to Niess, Mandeau and Fieneman (1990) in a *Hemisphere to Itself, a History of US-Latin American Relations*, the interdependent relationship between the two Americas was expanded to diplomatic, economic and military fields, in which AP aid was managed mainly as an instrument of statecraft. Similarly, Tom Farer (1988) in *the Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America* argues that US policy principally, was focused on fostering governments amenable to American economic interests but, by indicating a discernable difference between US conservative and liberal strategies to influence targeted countries. Both authors in the case of the 1960s' Colombia outline the pro-capitalist conservative character of its government.

Certainly, the most important works on Colombian defence policy in the 1960s are those by Richard Maullin (1971) and Doug Stokes (2005). The former describes in *Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia*, the singular development of Colombian army after its participation in the Korean War, from which different officers emerged and implemented military civic strategies. Equally, Maullin highlights the influence of foreign ideologies in both guerrillas and security corps, situation that fitted in the extended guerrilla warfare and enhanced the relevance of armed forces. The latter, in *America's Other War* brings attention to the importance of American assessment in shaping Colombian internal defence apparatus which, for him, determined the apparition of the paramilitary machine and its death squads. In contrast to these authors, Rafael Pardo (2004) in *The Wars' History* emphasises not just the role of American ideologues and strategists through policies such as 'Latin America's Security Operations' and AP aid but, also, from the French revolutionary war doctrine spread principally by the Inter-American College of Defence. These writers coincide that the Cuban Revolution served as a trigger to deepen both American influence, and the adoption of repressive counterinsurgent policies in Latin America.

This dissertation makes extensive use of Colombian primary sources from Carlos Lleras Restrepo's Archive in Bogotá (ACLR), the Lleras' government documents in 'Archivo General de la Nación' (AGN), and the 1960s' periodicals in 'Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango', 'Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia' and 'El Tiempo' digitalised archive. Certainly, much more material would have been desirable in regard to the 1960s' Colombian Defence Minister Ayerbe Chaux and army commanders; however, access to 'Escuela Superior de Guerra' in the North of Bogotá was hindered due to extensive requirements.

On the other hand, in order to assess a comprehensive panorama of Colombian-US military relations, documents from US policies towards Colombia were valued. They derive from digitalised archival sources from the United States Agency of Development (USAID), the Central Intelligence

Agency (CIA), the Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), the Department of State (DOS), and Paul Wolf Human Rights archive online (PW).

### **1 'UNHAPPILY, THERE IS NO OTHER SOLUTION THAN VIOLENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA' (DE CASTRO, P. 4 1952, AS REFERENCED BY GALEANO 1997): COLOMBIA, MAY 1966 - AUGUST 1967**

Colombia in the mid-1960s was a fertile ground in which counterinsurgent strategies reinforced traditional elites by maintaining their political and economic power. Certainly, the FN system shaped after decades of partisan conflict cemented their control of state's apparatus and resources. However, the FN's political survival and its monopoly of economic resources were highly contested from within Colombia, by both guerrilla groups and uneasy social sectors. In this environment, Carlos Lleras Restrepo was elected for the 1966-1970 period with the purpose of maintaining Colombian Defence Policy, while also checking subversives' expansion in the territory. In order to understand how Lleras Restrepo advanced in both tasks, it is important to analyse first the state's context and the constitutive elements of Colombian defence policy by 1966 and, second, to assess the use of different degrees of repression and psychological warfare as instruments of Colombian internal security strategy during May 1966 - August 1967 term.

By early 1966, the security situation in Colombia could not have presented better prospects for Colombian traditional elites. The benefits of the 1963 Pact on Public Safety with the United States continued enhancing the weak security institutions, especially in the fields of 'intelligence, riot control, psychological warfare, counter-intelligence, and Air Force counter-insurgency capabilities' (Oliver, 1966, 26 January, p. 2). Moreover, on 15 February Camilo Torres, the first guerrilla priest in Latin America, was killed by Colombian troops in Cañon del Pilar (Colombia, Santander). According to the American Department of State, the 'elimination [of] Camilo Torres as figure around whom various extremist groups could coalesce was a most significant development affecting Colombian internal security' (Oliver, 1966, 4 March, p. 1). This was because Torres had been considered an icon and a keystone in an eventual accord aimed at unifying the divided Colombian leftist guerrillas, under a major insurgent enterprise called 'Plan Aurora' (Oliver, 1966a, p. 2). In this sense, the task of Carlos Lleras Restrepo as the third president under the FN system, was therefore to assure the continuity of similar successes by reinforcing the two elements that formed the core of Colombian national defence policy: counterinsurgency strategies and Colombia-US military relations.

Lleras Restrepo's landslide victory on 2 May 1966 represented a triumph for Colombian traditional elites, who favoured a deepening relationship with the US in order to sustain a costly military effort against guerrillas, which had rejected previous amnesty programs offered by the government. Similarly, Castro's claims of spreading the Cuban Revolution in Latin America apparently worried Colombian politicians, who sought the maintenance of privileges acquired under the FN system.

In this sense, continuity of military and economic assistance became a key objective in perpetuating the status quo, from which Carlos Lleras was part as Liberal member of the FN. Equally, by perpetuating military assistance Colombian elites aimed at fostering an environment amenable to capital penetration, an objective also shared by US authorities.

According to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), apart from generating 'increased Colombian understanding of and respect for American cultural, educational, and scientific values and... primacy of U.S. influence and prestige' (1969, June pp. 28-29), assistance to Colombia sought to foster 'more rapid economic growth and social development' (1969, June p. 28) for which, it was required 'a secure environment for the expansion of production, trade and investment' (1969, June p. 29), as reported by USAID, it was the police the main responsible 'in creating and maintaining such an environment' (1969, June p. 29). Thus, defence policy became a major tool for both economic development and defence against internal subversion, which also placed the military forces in an advantageous position as aid recipients and promoters of foreign capital.

In such a context, Colombia's armed forces and the Ministry of Defence became incommensurably influential in both external and internal policy making. The more communist external influence over Colombian insurgencies was perceived, the more importance Colombian military staff gained. It would appear that such a rationale was fed from CIA's assessments, which regarded insurgency as more dangerous than common crime, and guerrillas' growing sophistication as product of Colombians training in North Korea, North Vietnam, Communist China and Cuba (1966, 22 July pp. 6-9). Consequently, security agencies' supremacy expanded until they overshadowed the Colombian nation building process which, in turn, became part of the counter subversive strategy. However, some sectors of society (students, middle class, and academy) disagreed with the official security perception and the adopted defensive strategy. For that reason, the state's repression was directed against both guerrillas and dissenters throughout a variety of means and policing actions.

### **THE LLERAS' RAGE: STATE'S REPRESSION, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1966**

By the middle 1966, Lleras Restrepo faced the surge of a national security crisis featured by recurrent rural violence, civil disturbances, and urban terrorism, with its most impressive example being the bombing of the Colombo-Americano Center in Bogotá (Dearborn, 1966, 4 October, p. 1). The magnitude of the situation led to the Colombian government take the offensive against both insurgents and protestors. The assault stressed the use of psychological warfare methods as an important complement of traditional warlike actions, such a movement, took the form of an emerging regional anti-subversive doctrine in the Inter-American Congress of Uniformed Police (IACUP) which, in turn, achieved local implications once Lleras was determined to curb students' disturbances by issuing severe security decrees (decrees 2686, 2687 and 2688 of 1966).

For Lleras, guerrillas represented a 'cancer that [was] holding back the progress of the country' (Lleras, p. 15 1966, as referenced by Carlson 1966). Thus, in order to power the locomotive of Colombian advancement, the government engaged in the design of a regional agreement directed at policing all sectors of civil society. Certainly, the target of delegations in IACUP was to create cooperative instruments to fight 'anti-social' influences, or 'what all know it to be [called] 'communism'' (Brown, 1966, p. 8). The Congress held in Lima on 25 August- 3 September of 1966 recognised the increasing potential of internal security issues to become transnational problems, however, the concept of insurgency, extremism and crime became intersubjectively connected and understood under a Cold War rationale.

Tacitly, delegations in IACUP agreed that foreign negative influences menaced to infiltrate labour leaders, workers' and students' meetings, thus, making necessary to organize intelligence services to 'detect the action of extremist elements' (Brown, 1966, p. 65). Such definition of internal threats was supported by Colombian delegation which, accordingly, advocated "the persecution of criminals, in order to limit their action...' [By avoiding that they take] 'refugee clandestinely in another country...' [Hence, the creation of an] 'Inter-American Telecommunications System'' was proposed (Colombian Delegation in the Inter-American Congress of Uniformed Police, p. 83 1966, as referenced by Brown, 1966). In that context, by early September delegations agreed to undertake common measures to halt communist infiltration in society, the agreement resonated strongly in Lleras' government given the situation of massive unrest present in Colombian universities. Unquestionably, Lleras' preferred explanation of guerrillas spread and student protests was communist infiltration in civil organizations, and not the obvious consequence of erroneous policies adopted by the FN government.

The final act of IACUP meant for Colombian decision makers and militaries, the ideological legitimization of the offensive against students about to be taken by them. In order to tight control of national security and affront the apparent pro-communist Cuban infiltration, Lleras' government adopted severe anti subversive decrees aimed at coping with student protestors in Bogotá and Medellín. Apparently, the trigger of such repressive measures was the student's assault on 24 October of 1966 against Carlos Lleras Restrepo, while he was accompanied by Jhon Rockefeller on a visit to the National University in Bogotá. After the university was taken militarily, an angry Carlos Lleras issued three anti-subversive decrees<sup>1</sup> by declaring that 'Colombia has an authority which will be fully executed' (Lleras, p.1 1966, as referenced in 'El País condena...', 1966, 26 October), and committed himself to 'defend youngsters against the tyranny of that [communist] repugnant fanaticism' (Lleras, p. 20 1966, as referenced in 'No hay fuero...', 1966, 28 October). The anti-subversive decrees forbade travels to Cuba, as well as heightened

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1. According to CIA in its intelligence summary of 4 November 1966 (CIA, 1966, 4 November, p.3) and Department of State security assessment of 16 November 1966 (Rusk, 1966, 16 November, p.1), the anti-subversive acts were under consideration by Carlos Lleras' cabinet since August 1966 given the surge of terrorism and civil disturbances.

controls over radio and press releases, let alone the literal prohibition over subjectively judged communist publications. Those governmental actions, most importantly, were framed as a fair effort to curtail the influence of 'Marxist hands' (Rusk, 1966, 16 November, p. 2) in the main representative Colombian student's organizations.

The end of 1966 witnessed the strengthening of Colombian security agencies that, along with the government, favoured their position given the Cold War bipolar international discourse, to which they had affiliated by claiming their commitment to halt subversion in both Colombia and Latin America. Unquestionably, US funds flowed continuously in order to finance the anti-subversive enterprise, which had proved to be worthwhile given the Colombian elites' 'genuine desire to receive U.S. guidance' (Carlson, 1966, 4 November, p. 9).

### **THE PRAGMATIC<sup>2</sup> CARLOS LLERAS: PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE, JANUARY-AUGUST 1967**

The answer of Lleras' government to both guerrillas and student protestors, reinforced state's security apparatus which already enjoyed a free hand to prosecute suspected communists and guerrilla combatants. Thus, a secondary phase aimed at bolstering public approval of defence policy was developed amid growing policing of public universities. Such stage of governmental security shape in 1967 is better regarded as the extension of psychological warfare methods, which were featured by two elements: development of military civic actions, and an aggressive governmental public relations campaign.

The February's attack on Vijagual by the National Liberation Army (ELN), followed by airplane's hijackings and urban terrorism, heightened Colombian awareness about guerrillas' capabilities. Even though insurgent threat was contained, in the hypothetical scenario that guerrillas overcame 'their organizational weaknesses [,] they could pose serious problems of government control of the countryside' (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 1967, 16 June, p. 4). The deteriorated internal situation made Lleras Restrepo to declare to US ambassador in Bogotá Reynold Carlson, his 'belief that the counter insurgency campaign must be waged as a concerted coordinated effort, employing civic action programs as well as unconventional military tactics' (Carlson, 1967, 27 April). For Lleras, part of the problem was rooted in the worsening of 'rural populace attitude toward security forces' (Lleras, 1967 as referenced by Carlson 1967, 27 April). In order to improve defence prospects, Colombian government developed an extensive military civic action program named 'Plan Andes'.

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2. According to Douglas Foyle's (1997) division of public opinion beliefs orientation, Carlos Lleras Restrepo can be regarded as a pragmatic politician because of his attempt to lead public opinion in order to gain support for his preferred defence policy. This is exemplified by both the Barranquilla Conference and the censorship over radial information during the National University riots in 1967.

'Plan Andes' sought to foment better public approval for both the government and military forces. For that reason, the executive proceeded to give larger responsibilities to the army as executor and coordinator of public projects. According to Maullin (1971, p. 63), the project appeared by 1966 with the goal of fostering military civic actions in violence prone areas, however, a more accurate description is done by General Guillermo Pinzón Caicedo in 'Informe Plan Andes' of June 1967. In the document, the main objective of 'Plan Andes' was 'to combat subversion and securing order and tranquillity in Tolima, Huila and Santander Departments' (Pinzón, 1967, 6 June, p.13), all this, by promoting health, education and other public services. This governmental-military endeavour was expected to persist during 1968 but, it depended on 'the funds that AID [US Agency for International Development] assigned to the army for the programs of civic military action' (Pinzón, 1967, 6 June, p. 17). Hence, it appears that 'Plan Andes' made Colombian army increasingly important and influential as project executor and aid recipient in a country which, as other developing ones, relied heavily on external funds to assume basic state responsibilities.

Parallel to 'Plan Andes', the government attempted to lead public opinion by strengthening government-press consensus, all this in regard to the publication of official security advancements over independent and contrary information. The epitome of such agreement came on 17 June 1967 in the Barranquilla Conference, during the deliberation journalists and editors of Colombia's main diaries met with General Camacho Leyva (director of National Police) in order to debate the 'Red Chronicle', term used by the government to characterise diaries' trends toward 'over publicising' criminal activity ('Falsa alarma', 1967, 17 June, p. 24). Camacho Leyva stated in the conference that the press made of delinquent 'a sort of inexistent sinister hero' and, he argued further, that 'the present alarm about criminality is exaggerated and in a certain degree determined by press publications' (Camacho, p. 24 1967, referenced in 'Falsa alarma', 1967, 17 June). Apparently, General Camacho and Lleras Restrepo were attempting to discipline Colombian press, making of it a docile state's ally whose task should focus on a 'moralizing campaign of the society' ('Comienza 'Foro Libre'...', 1967, 17 June, p. 4A). Undoubtedly, the message of creating an 'efficacious formula to avoid stimulating morbid tendencies in potential delinquents' (Lleras, p.1 1967, as referenced in 'Mensaje del Presidente', 1967, 17 June) was welcomed by Colombian mainstream press which, in turn, adhered to the governmental stance by implementing a voluntary censorship that asked similarly for radio, TV and film industry collaboration ('Acuerdos sobre...', 1967, 18 June, p. 23). In this way, Colombian government-press consensus was sealed in an accord aimed at delivering a unified message, which sought to educate public opinion in order to recuperate citizens' support and legitimacy challenged by student protestors.

Such an endeavour made of the 'Barranquilla Conference' a step further in the governmental public relations offensive planned by the middle 1967, however, Lleras' actions in the public arena were previously initiated by confronting more openly protestors, dissenters and academics. The growth of civil demonstrations in June 1967 in several Colombian cities due to worsening economic situation and, a 30% increase in public transport tariffs had its most dramatic episode

in Bogotá. On 13 June riots in the National University were repressed by troops and armoured cars following the orders of President Lleras (Carlson, 1967, 26 July, p. 5). According to *El Tiempo*, security forces arrested more than 500 protestors ('Más de 577...', 1967, 14 June, p. 28), while the Minister of Communication prohibited radial information about the incident ('Prohibida Anoche...', 1967, 14 June, p.1). Later, National University professor Marta Traba who openly criticised Carlos Lleras and army actions was expelled from the country (Zalamea, 1967, 22 June). Certainly, the Bogotá's violent episode exemplifies implicitly the paranoia that hunted Latin American governments by that time, this is, the infiltration of Castroite ideologies in mass population but, especially, in the academy<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, Lleras' government public offensive was important in silencing legitimate opposition by framing it in a Cold War rationale that, interestingly, fostered a wider consensus with Colombian media in order to influence public perceptions about protestors. In this sense, presidential actions were crucial in determining Defence policy consolidation, which served to protect self interested economic and political goals of elites engaged with the FN system.

Finally, it can be stated that US-Colombian military relation during May 1966- August 1967 was purposively used by FN ruling elites to strength military forces and security agencies, in order to silence active opposition who disagreed with the imposed system. The instruments used by the government in the wake of Lleras' presidency varied from differentiated degrees of repression to psychological operations, the former took place during the August-September 1966 period being directed mainly to both guerrillas and student protestors, while the latter was aimed at gaining mass population favourability in the January-August 1967 stage. Hitherto, the prevailing securitisation of the Colombian state made of defence policy a vital instrument of statecraft, whose results will be oversold by Lleras' government in the late 1967 as the main responsible for an almost national pacification.

## **2'TWO, THREE, MANY VIETNAMS' (CHE GUEVARA, P. 13 1967, AS REFERENCED BY GARCÍA 2008): SECRET CONCERNS AND CHANGING ROLES, SEPTEMBER 1967-DECEMBER 1968**

By September 1967, the Colombian establishment publicly propagandised the sudden guerrilla inactivity of that period, as a product of successful security measures. However, internally Lleras' government manifested a massive restlessness due to contemporary hemispheric developments in Cuba. The recently created Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) in August 1967

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3. According to decree 2686 of 1966 published in *El Tiempo* ('3 Decretos sobre...', 1966, 27 October, p. 28), Colombian authorities considered that student protestors, armed groups and, generally, opposition organizations in several regions coordinated their activities by obeying to 'subversive plans publicised internationally in the Tricontinental Conference celebrated in La Habana'.

turned on the alarms of ruling elites, given the explicit defence of guerrilla warfare as a mean to extend the 'anti-imperialist Cuban Revolution'. Such factors, along with rising frustration in the US with counterinsurgent campaigns and worsened economic situation, ended altering Colombian defence policy. Consequently, the means used to fight internal insurgency were slightly redesigned but, left unchanged traditional elites' interests of economic control and political survival. This phenomenon passed throughout two phases in the September 1967-December 1968 period, firstly, after September 1967 Lleras' government manifested preoccupation about OLAS' statements, which was answered by overselling counterinsurgent advancements and, secondly, by October 1968 defence roles of both armed forces and civil authorities were redefined due to probed guerrillas' persistence regardless mounting US assistance.

Throughout the last quarter of 1967, Inter-American states and the US were alarmed by Castro's address in the recently launched OLAS, in the Cuban caucus the communist leader reaffirmed 'armed struggle as the "fundamental road" for Latin American revolutionaries' (Fidel Castro, p. 13 1967, as referenced by García 2008) which, certainly, meant an open apology to guerrillas in several countries in the continent. The Castro's address confirmed Lleras' government fears, for them, Cuba was attempting to establish 'similar regimes to the one of the island and, if possible, under Castroite-communist direction and hegemony' (Monsalve, 1967, p. 24). Such feeling was endorsed by American analysts; they agreed that OLAS was a forum 'intended to function as a hemispheric guerrilla Internationale... rather than primarily as a propaganda or political action organization' (CIA, 1967, 15 June, p. 70). Both assessments acquired currency when CIA's information (1967, 14 October) reported the possibility of Cuban arms in Colombia and, the creation of a Colombian-Venezuelan guerrilla common front under the command of the Cuban Fabricio Ojeda. Given the growing sense of menace emanated from OLAS, concerned governments summoned an emergency meeting in the Organization of American States (OAS) with the purpose of discussing Cuban intentions of spreading subversion, meanwhile, in Colombia Carlos Lleras stressed psychological warfare by overselling military advancements, in order to counterbalance OLAS' public relations offensive.

During 19 June- 24 September of 1967 members of OAS met in Washington to debate actions against Cuban endeavour of spreading Castro's revolution in the continent, according to assisting delegations, Cuba was violating 'their sovereignty and integrity, by fostering and organizing subversive and terrorist activities in the territory of various states' (Organization of American States [OAS], 1968, p. 4). In the meeting, it was agreed to intensify and coordinate 'surveillance, security, and intelligence measures' (OAS, 1968, p. 12) to halt any subversive attempt to destabilise state's internal order, equally, they acknowledged that no government had 'the right to intervene [or shall tolerate]...armed intervention and all forms of interference... against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements' (OAS, 1968, p. 13). Generally speaking, delegations in Washington concerted to blockade by all means OLAS' leverage in the continent, since it was considered the seedbed of a transnational menace that might reinforce materially opposition groups, which were previously excluded from legally taking state's power.

Interestingly, OAS agreement remember in form and essence the 1966 IACUP document, thus, it can be argued that advantageous elites were already prepared to face their worst fears represented in OLAS, the active Castroite diplomacy, and the adjusted Debray's guerrilla warfare theory epitomised by Guevara's campaign in Bolivia.

Ironically, OLAS coincided with a period of guerrillas' inactivity<sup>4</sup> in Colombia, which was strategically used by Carlos Lleras to claim the positive results of his defence policy. According to Colombian authorities, victory against insurgents was just around the corner and, in order to achieve it, they were committed to initiate a "vast plan" for accomplishing the complete pacification of the country by the end of the year' (Pinzón, p. 2 1968, as referenced by Stevenson 1968, 29 October). However, Lleras' government unofficially recognised that Castroite elements were well trained to permeate 'democratic, religious and anticommunist organizations' (Monsalve, 1967, p. 26) and, for that reason, Colombian security agencies should 'prepare, organise and train a small group of counter espionage' (Monsalve, 1967, p. 30) to fight Cuban infiltration in the country. Unquestionably, the positive message emphasised by Lleras was an attempt to convince open and silent supporters of insurgency that armed (and unarmed) revolution had minor possibilities of triumph, albeit, indoors concerns confirm that governmental stance was merely part of a strategy directed at counterbalancing the increasing Cuban propagandist effort which, in Colombia, resonated strongly in uneasy popular sectors eager for social transformation.

On the other hand, for US advisors in October 1968 Colombian advancements in its counter insurgent policy even being positive were far from optimums, for that reason, they considered necessary to reassess the goals to be achieved throughout military assistance. According to Department of State, it was reasonable to discard 'the objective of elimination of insurgency' (Stevenson, 1968, p. 1), recommending instead the 'reduction of insurgency 'to levels which permit accelerated democratic political, social and economic development'' (Stevenson, 1968, p. 1). The surprising shift in US stance may have been prompted by both Colombian and American factors, for the former, increasing social polarization<sup>5</sup> undermined governmental efforts for consolidating public support from uneasy social sectors while, for the latter, worsening economic situation, the Vietnam quagmire and, finally, Department of State's assessment about geographic, material, and economic hindrances to spread and coordinate Colombian Armed Forces in the whole territory made, at the end, necessary to reconsider military assistance's goals for Colombia.

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4. According to Daniel Pecaut (2006), the guerrilla break can be seen as the result of both military actions and disputes between guerrillas, all this, due to different understandings about the means and ends of revolutionary change.
  5. By August 1968 social polarization was exemplified in the Catholic Church, institution traditionally supportive of the establishment. According to Jose Maria Ghio (1991), the growing doctrine of 'Liberation Theology' gained currency among a dissident branch of the Latin American Catholic Church, being epitomised in the declaration of 'Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano' (CELAM) of 1968. For Pecaut (2006), the document deeply influenced Colombian priests, proof of that was the creation of 'La Golconda'; the group denounced the conservative tendencies of the FN system, its capitalist neo-colonial model, and the role of armed forces as guardians of Colombian elites.

Under such scenario, the two basic elements of Colombian defence policy (counter insurgency and US military assistance) were altered in order to meet with new considerations that steamed from frustrated bureaucracies who, probably, were convinced by modest results despite of mounting material, human and financial investments.

Thus, in order to suit with American advices Lleras Restrepo issued by the late 1968, both decree 2565 and law 48 with the purpose of readdressing defence policy. Specifically, decree 2565 reorganised the Ministry of Defence, the most important change was aimed at empowering civil authorities over military officers in affairs related to budget allocation and project execution. Therefore, white-collar-bureaucrats were able to determine the present and future of military civic actions. This was done throughout the Administrative Planning Department agency, under civilian control it was entitled to 'analyse, coordinate and incorporate in general developmental plans and in the annual public investment budget' (Presidencia de la República [PR], 1968, 9 October, p. 126) all projects required by the armed forces. On the other hand, law 48 of 1968 legalised civic-military actions and assured great power over civil liberties to security corps (PR, 1968, 16 December); all this, in order to impose extreme security measures without recurring to the state of siege figure. To summarise, Colombian armed forces lost mandate over the economic and developmental component of counter insurgent policy while, at the same time, Lleras' government institutionalised a democratic authoritarian state as an appropriate mean to defeat internal opposition.

Formalization of state of siege into law was vehemently defended by Lleras' ministers and, more importantly, by Minister of Defence General Ayerbe Chaux. For him, the internal conflict was 'not fought only in a physical field, but also throughout actions aimed at capturing people's minds' (Ayerbe, 1968, December, p. 106), according to Ayerbe, the answer to such situation resided in an integrative warlike effort undertaken by 'both the government and the private sector' (1968, December, p. 107). In other words, military and Colombian elites considered that the permanent securitization of the state was a *de facto* requisite, in order to foster a powerful sort of 'anything goes anticommunist enterprise' that, evidently, was addressed towards preserving the Colombian status quo.

In conclusion, the September 1967- December 1968 period represents a change in Colombian defence policy bolstered by revisionist perceptions, all this, given internal and external pressures that even after influencing defence policy instruments did not alter FN elites' interests. Certainly, OLAS provoked a great concern not just in FN ruling parties, but also in other Latin governments that saw in Cuban support of internal subversive agitation, a credible threat against their political survival. In the Case of Lleras Restrepo, the answer to OLAS resulted in continuation of the aggressive psychological warfare of the first half of 1967 but, this time, translated into an exaggerated assessment of military advancements. On the other hand, persistent frustration with counterinsurgent policy in the US made decision makers to reassess military assistance towards

developing countries which, after all, were gradually pushed towards assuming unilaterally and with limited US support the war on insurgency. In Colombia, such shift meant defence policy transformation throughout decree 2565 and law 48, legal movements that delivered major power to private initiatives, left control of public projects in governmental hands and, finally, assigned to Colombian armed forces a limited role as guardians of public order.

At the end, such modifications configured new incentives given the obvious benefits of controlling public budget and foreign financial assistance in a near future of open electoral competency, thus, internal disputes rose in Colombian political parties in the verge of the FN's expiration planned by 1974. However, the worsening security situation in 1969 and the increasing social appeal gained by the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO) of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla made of defence policy, once again, the preferred instrument to sustain Colombian privileged elites and bridge the egoistic internal divisions of ruling parties.

### **3 'I WILL NOT LEAVE THE PALACE BUT DEATH' (LLERAS, P. 12 1970, AS REFERENCED IN 'TEXTO DEL DISCURSO...', 1970, 22 APRIL): SUSTAINING THE STATUS QUO, JANUARY 1969- APRIL 1970**

The beginning of the end for the FN system was officially planned by 1970. Thus, the next four-year presidency under the FN supposed the advent of open electoral competency for Colombian main parties in 1974. However, the shadow of former dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla came to haunt bipartisan leaders who saw their very political survival at stake. Undoubtedly, both conservatives and liberals considered ANAPO as a credible menace that might condemn the entire FN system. For that reason, traditional elites resorted to capitalise general paranoia towards communism in order to popularise social consensus in favour of the ruling system, which would improve FN's candidate possibilities and legitimise political prosecution on opposition leaders. Equally, by exaggerating the level of communist threat ruling elites expected to press US decision makers to extend military assistance since, without it, defence policy will be weakened as an instrument to contain attempts of systemic change. Such scenario is exemplified throughout two periods; firstly, after January 1969 Colombian government framed demonstrations and urban crime as consequence of a common effort from both communists and bandits to destabilise the country and, secondly, the Lleras' government endeavour in the early 1970 to halt General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's intention of shifting democratically Colombian status quo.

The worsening security situation featured by popular unrest due to a general increase of public services and a wave of kidnapping in urban centres, jeopardised Lleras' ability to maintain public order, which coincided with US evaluations to extend its military assistance program after 1972. By January 1969 Carlos Lleras was greeted by national protests and riots product of social outrage given aggravated economic conditions in Colombia, for him, the upsurge of national mobilizations

was a 'subversive movement' (Lleras, p. 7 1969, as referenced in 'el gobierno no...', 1969, 12 January) internationally inspired, which he was disposed to face in order to assure 'the peace and tranquillity' (Lleras, p. 1 1969, as referenced in 'Tengo confianza en...', 1969, 12 January) of the majority. In presence of social uneasiness that threatened to be extended for several weeks, the government and unions finally reached an agreement that was highly publicised in favour of the government. According to Minister Carlos Noriega, the handling of the situation by Lleras demonstrated his 'immense domain of country's problems' (Noriega, p. 13 1969, 'Noriega Anuncio al...', 1969, 23 January), however; Noriega's statements were underscored once a grave wave of kidnappings wiped Colombia by the middle of 1969.

Such panorama would not have come in a worst moment for the political aspirations of FN parties, since electoral competition by 1970 for occupying the 'Palacio de San Carlos', monopolised by the two founders of the FN system, encountered a strengthened Rojas Pinilla legally allowed to participate in the presidential contest. For that reason, the ANAPO's presidential candidate conscientiously used popular disenchantment with both public order and Lleras' mandate to improve his possibilities, albeit, Lleras' statesman skills guided him to answer to Rojas' critics by exaggerating the level of communist threat. Namely, Lleras' aim was to attend both local and external political fronts. For the former, creation of a renewed security consensus would legitimise FN's defence policy while strengthening its future candidate and, for the latter, by overselling the communist threat FN, which had put militaries on their side in the enterprise of perpetuating the ruling system.

In the local front, Colombian bureaucrats advocated the official posture of relating kidnapping with a communist attempt aimed at financing insurgent groups. For Minister of Government Carlos Noriega, kidnapping did not 'seek just to finance [subversive] movements, but also to produce grave commotion' (1969, 8 October, p.321) which, he added, might undermine governmental 'authority and prestige needed to look after efficaciously of public order... previous to general elections' (Noriega, 1969, 8 October, pp. 321-322). The assessment made by the FN minister was echoed by Colombian mainstream press, thus, on 24 October *El Tiempo* published the arrest of Luis Tamayo García and Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela, who had hold for ransom two Swiss diplomats in Calí. According to the diary, Tamayo was 'a known extremist leader and member of the communist party' ('Golpe a los...', 1969, 24 October, p. 6) that, reportedly, had travelled to Cuba with the purpose of receiving special training in terrorist activities and people's hijacking. However, the government internally acknowledged that the diplomat's abduction did not 'have any political ends' (Lievano, 1969, 22 October, p. 816), later, both Tamayo and Rodríguez Orejuela set up the notorious 'Cartel de Calí'. This episode demonstrates two paradigmatic characteristics of Lleras' government: first, public opinion was regarded as irrelevant and therefore ignored once policy design and crisis management was required and, second, public opinion was seen as an entity susceptible to be educated in order to enforce ruling parties against political challengers.

In the external front, Colombian authorities were interested in trying to influence US perceptions about the crucial role of military assistance to sustain both political and economic stability. Particularly, the newcomer US president Richard Nixon was highly pressed by the majority of society to cease American engagement in the third world, which had resulted social, political, and economically intolerable. It is in this scenario, that Carlos Lleras travelled to Washington in June 1970 to express his concerns about insurgency perspicacity in the continent. For him, both communists and the Catholic Church's dissidence were a menace against states' management of population, since 'many of the young radical priests had simple, unsophisticated economic ideas which were easy to put across to the masses' (Nixon & Lleras, 1969, 12 June). In other words, Lleras considered that priests' popular appeal among depressed social sectors might threaten elites' state control, by mobilising effectively several organised forces incompatible with widely considered illegitimate institutions. In consequence, the gravity of the accusations fitted inside American government which, by the early 1970s, was mainly formed by veteran Cold War hawks who agreed that 'a nation such as Colombia, which was democratic and whose requests for arms 'acquisition were reasonable and modest should be able to acquire such arms' (Nixon & Botero, 1970, 8 June).

Complementary to such belief, American bureaucrats watched with concern Rojas' popularity in Colombia just before the 1970's presidential election. For them, the ANAPO's candidate apart from his natural popular appeal had attracted, suspiciously, the support of 'communists and other leftists' conglomerates (Nixon & Botero, 1970). On the other hand, FN parties reasoned in the same direction. For them, the Colombian Communist Party had infiltrated 'in the liberal branch of ANAPO various communist elements that declared themselves as "liberals"' (Comando del Ejército Departamento E-2, n.d.[no date], p. 53), such a claim, was reproduced by the dominant press when it declared the 'uncovering of the ANAPO-communist alliance' ('Se destapa alianza...', 1970, 2 April, p. 9). Certainly, those affirmations need to be revised given the Rojas' background as military officer and his participation in the Supreme Command of the United Nations in Washington' (PR, 2007, 14 March) until 1952, time during which he supported Colombian troops as part of an international contingent deployed in the Korean War. In this sense, it can be stated that Colombian-American concerns of a hypothetical Rojas' election came from his nationalistic discourse, which placed him as a leader prone to nationalise foreign assets while developing a protectionist economy<sup>6</sup>.

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6. According to Angelika Rettberg (2001), the first government of Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957) was severely undermined by a joint lockout in 1957 aimed at protesting against import controls, the overarching governmental intervention in the private sector, and the lack of rules to propel foreign investment in Colombia. The action undertaken by industrial, trade and banker sectors, was supported by the alliance of conservative and liberal political elites sealed in the Pact of Benidorm (1956).

Even though Rojas Pinilla woke major popular appeal given his ambitious social agenda, on 24 April 1970 FN's candidate Misael Pastrana Borrero was declared Colombian president by a modest difference of 66.018 votes ('Peligra la Economía...', 1970, 19 April, p. 1). This was done amid a confusing environment characterised by the declaration of a national state of siege and press censorship, certainly, the alleged fraudulency of Pastrana's victory never have been probed due to the lack of research and conclusive evidence. However, the great interests at stake and declarations from both mainstream media and Rojas himself might suggest that the hide hand of the FN during the 1970's election was feasible.

On 19<sup>th</sup> April, just after the provisional results were released, *El Tiempo* declared that 'Colombia might suffer a huge setback in its flourishing economy if the ex-dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla returned finally to power' ('Voto-Finish: Pastrana...', 1970, 24 April, p. 10). Equally, *El Espectador* expressed its 'justified restlessness' by stating the necessity of maintaining or reinforcing the slight majority achieved by 'Doctor Pastrana Borrero' ('Por Voto-Finish', 1970, 19 April, p. 2). Those comments formed an spiral of public denounces in which Rojas played also a central role, for him, 'until the mass media was allowed to operate freely' (Rojas, p. 8 1970, referenced in 'Datos oficiales a las 3...', 1970, April) his difference over Pastrana was around 110.000 votes, however, he added that 'the Minister of Government intervined to say that what was freely informed was not real' (Rojas, 1970, p. 8) and, instead, the official results placed the difference in about 4.000 votes. Whatever the stories are, Pastrana was declared the 31<sup>st</sup> Colombian president and the 4<sup>th</sup> under the FN system, outcome that preserved the much debated political and economic acquisitions of traditional elites.

In conclusion, the reaction of Colombian aristocratic class against the challenge of opposition groups represented by ANAPO, ended by enhancing the domain of the former over institutions in detriment of the latter during the January 1969- April 1970 period. However, the lack of legitimacy suffered by FN bureaucracies made them recur once again to defence policy as a mean to hold in power, all this, in order to contain the popular unrest exacerbated by a dubious electoral process which left the country close to a massive bloodbath. This situation was answered by military forces amid a state of siege duly declared by Carlos Lleras which, according to him, was aimed at counteracting 'the biggest and most grave subversive movement registered in the country' (Lleras, p. 12 1970, as referenced in 'Texto del Discurso...', 1970, 22 April). Certainly, the way in which the situation was framed served to convince US authorities to continue favouring Colombia while, at the same time, legitimating FN securitization of the state. At the end, all measures undertaken were a by-product of defence policies addressed to combat insurgent activity in a country which considered any popular, progressive or oppose expression, as part of a subversive endeavour to change radically the preferred status quo of some privileged elites.

## CONCLUSION: COLOMBIA IN THE VERGE OF THE ABYSS

When Lleras Restrepo was appointed as the Colombian incumbent president for the 1966-1970 period, the country was about to fall in the abyss in which the current conflict has become. Even though a situation of social turmoil was a prevalent characteristic since the early 1940s; it was just until the 1960s when emerging guerrillas and traditional elites multiplied their means aimed at defeating their respective counterparts. In this context, Colombian defence policy, as practiced by governing elites, was employed as an instrument to contain opposition groups from taking either legally or illegally state's power, which assured for the FN beneficiaries both political survival and economic control. To that component, it was added the help of American military assistance program, factor that strengthened military forces in their task of maintaining the status quo. Undoubtedly, this was the common denominator of Carlos Lleras' government that gave continuity to Colombian defence policy of the early 1960s but, by stressing and relying on an anti-communist discourse to legitimise its repressive actions. Such a process passed through three connected phases with different degrees of policing measures: May 1966- August 1967, September 1967- December 1968 and, January 1969- April 1970.

During the May 1966- August 1967 period, Colombian defence policy defined its continuation under the usual counterinsurgent component supported by the IACUP agreement. However, the overarching effort erroneously targeted organised civil society as communist influenced. In this panorama, Lleras assumed an aggressive psychological campaign in order to disciplining and policing every suspected social sector but, most importantly, to both guerrillas and student protestors. In consequence, governmental actions were carried out through severe anti-subversive decrees (2686, 2687, and 2688) and military civic actions (Plan Andes), all of them, directed at educating public opinion (Barranquilla Conference).

In this stage, Lleras' government delegated major importance to the armed establishment by compromising them in both military and psychological offensives. As a result, security bureaucracies along with military forces became increasingly important in policy making, element reinforced because of the free hand granted by the growing securitization of the Colombian state. Apparently, such measures served to hinder guerrilla activity and silencing protestors in the streets while, also, strengthening FN position and discourse.

The second phase (September 1967- December 1968) was inaugurated by a seemingly guerrilla retreat, adjudicated to the correct prescription of Lleras' cabinet in regard to counterinsurgent policy. However, such apparent success obeyed to another action framed in the overall psychological warfare strategy, this time, towards counteracting Cuban attempts of spreading guerrillas' warfare in Colombia. Regionally, governments renewed their commitment throughout OAS, in order to halt Cuban influence and any apparent communist intervention in their countries. Hence, once again a continental cooperative effort legitimated Lleras' repressive measures, which endorsed a top priority degree to defence policy and its bureaucracies.

Equally by the late 1968, US influence marked a turning point in Colombian security shape given American reassessment of military assistance's objectives. For them, persistence in guerrilla activity in Colombia despite of major US compromise and both geographic and logistic difficulties, pushed decision makers in Washington to promote a change of goals which, surprisingly, went from extermination of guerrillas to containment of them. In reaction, Lleras redesigned Defence policy in its counterinsurgent component (decree 2565 and law 48 of 1968), the result left civilian institutions the domain of military civic actions and project development, while delegating to military forces the specific role of guardians of public order.

In Lleras' third period (January 1969- April 1970), Colombian defence policy was emphatically used by FN elites as a mean to guarantee their political survival, since General Rojas Pinilla became a credible threat in the 1970's presidential election. For Lleras, the existent government-press consensus evolved as a crucial factor to sell the perception that the increasing insecurity in 1969 was product of communist intervention while, at the same time, discrediting ANAPO's campaign. In this context, FN elites promoted an apparent collective paranoia with the purpose of rallying public opinion in favour of the prevailing system, thus, attempting to give to Lleras a Blanche charter to prosecute political opponents by linking them with the upsurge of internal destabilization.

Correspondingly, US bureaucrats also regarded General Rojas Pinilla as oppose to their interests. For them, Rojas strength did not proceed just from his amazing social appeal but, equally, from the support of communist and leftist groups. Here, US assessments served to legitimise Lleras' government public offensive against Rojas' party, which was the most serious legal challenger of FN survival in the content for maintaining Colombian status quo. However, such accusations had to do more with Rojas' nationalistic appeals; factor that may have threatened both US and FN desired economic policy for Colombia. In that sense, defence policy in the late of Lleras' presidency became a suitable instrument to defend political prominence of Colombian traditional elites.

Ultimately, after assessing the evolution of Colombian defence policy during Lleras' government, it is perceived its purposive use by FN decision makers who, in order to improve their chances against uneasy citizenry and guerrilla groups, proceeded to policing all the state's components (society, institutions and territory) under the guise of an anti-subversive effort. Certainly, such approach demonstrates how governing elites in an instrumentalist manner, assumed US war on communism to reap the benefits of foreign assistance. In consequence, the flow of money, weapons and doctrinary speeches, added to social uneasiness created a dangerous cocktail that, to these days, has haunted Colombian society.

For that reason, Colombian security policy cannot be assumed merely as product of American dictates in the Cold War, instead, it answered to the elections made by traditional elites in order to maintain its advantageous position after years of chronic violence, rooted in partisan conflicts

and different ideas of organizing the state. Thus, Carlos Lleras presidency presents an overarching unchangeable pattern of the Colombian defence policy: this is the objective of assuring the status quo in benefit of FN's designers but, in detriment of the whole society.

At the same time, Lleras defence policy expanded its means by strengthening Colombian-US military relations directed at counterbalancing a latent Cuban menace. Certainly, both material and ideological intervention developed by Castro's regime threatened the political survival of some privileged elites resilient to social change that, in the Colombian case, were epitomised in the FN system. In consequence, the predominant Cold War discourse advocated by the US was articulated to decision makers' identities in Colombia who, in turn, aimed at inculcating in public opinion an anti-communist doctrine.

It is in such an environment that US influence was higher due to the growing interdependence with Colombia, framed not just in the anticommunist endeavour but, also, in the mission to sustain economic policies favourable to US interests. In the case of Lleras, increasing support of the FN system by Washington decanted in an expansion of means regardless of political, human, and social costs. For that reason, US leverage in Colombia rose and became a defining feature of its present and future defence policy, which consolidated FN control over state's institutional apparatus despite of its highly debated legitimacy.

In the end, it can be stated that Lleras became a follower of a path dependent policy designed by FN elites since the beginning of the agreement in 1958, all this, in order to assure both, their political survival and dominance over state's economy. The aftermath of those decisions marked the beginning of Colombian dirty war, characterised by the emergence of paramilitary groups, the strengthening and creation of new guerrilla movements and, the consolidation of institutions plagued by impunity and corruption. Consequently, the spiral of violence generated and its several reedited justifications both precedent and contemporary, merely have served to polarise society in benefit of self-interested aristocrats.

Finally, several avenues of research persist unexplored in the complex research area of explaining Colombian defence policy. This is due to the lack of primary sources, or the impossibility of accessing to them. In this sense, most of the developments in regard to expanding the frontier of knowledge have to do with the unintended consequences of FN defence policies, which were shaped during the 1958-1974 period. It might be argued that decisions made by governments during this determinant moment of the political Colombian history, have served for the appearance of the narcotraffic industry, the coalition of bureaucrats, military forces and paramilitaries, and the systemic killing of legally constituted opposition movements in the 1980s (the 'Red Dance'). Certainly, much remains to be done but, the efforts to advance in the comprehension of such events are worthwhile in the difficult task of feeding historical conscience, key element for a politically literate and responsible Colombian society.

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