

# Working Group Report

## U.S. Interests and Objectives in Colombia: A Commentary

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*Report of the Working Group on Colombia  
Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations*

Mathea Falco, Chair

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## FOREWORD

Colombia today faces a profound national crisis, more wrenching than any in its history. Political and criminal violence are endemic, fueled by enormous profits from the illegal drug trade. A rapid erosion of the rule of law has led to the widespread perception that civil institutions have lost their legitimacy. More than half of Colombia's national territory is effectively beyond the control of the central government. What was once a proud, self-confident people are losing optimism, confidence, even hope.

The Council on Foreign Relations, in partnership with the Pacific Council on International Policy, convened for the first time a Working Group on Colombia, based in San Francisco. This Working Group operated in parallel with the Independent Task Force on Colombia, jointly sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Inter-American Dialogue. Mathea Falco, president of Drug Strategies and former assistant secretary of state for international narcotics matters, chaired the Working Group and served as a member of the Independent Task Force. The Independent Task Force was co-chaired by Senator Bob Graham from Florida and former national security adviser General Brent Scowcroft.

The purpose of the Working Group on Colombia was to discuss the implications of Colombia's current crisis for the United States. The Working Group included a cross-section of informed Californians with careers in business, law, the judiciary, law enforcement, education, philanthropy, and journalism. Sharing an active interest in Latin America and deep concern about Colombia, Working Group members exchanged ideas with leading Colombian officials, U.S. drug control and counter-insurgency experts, and scholars and journalists with long experience in Latin America.

My thanks to Mathea Falco for her superb leadership to foster a new foreign policy discussion on the West Coast and for her help to further the Council's goal to become a truly national organization. We are grateful to her and to all the Working Group members for their com-

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mitment to this groundbreaking and successful experiment in the Council's National Program.

*Leslie H. Gelb*  
President  
Council on Foreign Relations

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Working Group on Colombia benefited from the knowledge, interest, and commitment of its members.

I am grateful to the distinguished group of speakers who addressed the Working Group: Michael Shifter, senior fellow and program director at the Inter-American Dialogue and project director of the Independent Task Force on Colombia; Linda Robinson, Latin America bureau chief at *U.S. News & World Report*; Luis Fernando Ramírez Acuña, Colombian minister of defense; and Tom Marks, professor at the Academy of the Pacific in Honolulu.

Special thanks are due to George Shenk, attorney at Heller, Ehrman, White & McAuliffe, for generously hosting the Working Group sessions, and Sally Lilienthal, founder and president of the Ploughshares Fund, for opening her doors for the Working Group's drafting session.

I would also like to thank the Council on Foreign Relations for sponsoring this initiative and the Council's Deputy National Director Irina Faskianos for facilitating and navigating the process. This publication was made possible by the Council's National Program, which is supported by a generous grant from Mimi and Peter Haas.

And finally, my appreciation to Council President Les Gelb for his decision to create a Working Group on Colombia, composed of West Coast members and based in San Francisco.

*Mathea Falco*  
President, Drug Strategies



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While many other Latin American countries are experiencing economic growth and progress in building democratic institutions, Colombia is in crisis. Its civil institutions and economy are faltering, and its democratically elected government is being undermined by several disparate guerrilla and paramilitary groups as well as by the corrupting influence of rampant drug production and trafficking.

Is Colombia enough of a vital interest for the United States to care what happens there, or should the United States just let it become another so-called failed state? Most of the members of the Working Group believe that it is in the U.S. interest to assist the Colombian government. But they maintain that the current \$1.3 billion American aid package mistakenly focuses on providing sophisticated military equipment for counter-narcotics operations. In the Working Group's view, this strategy is destined to fail. The current combination of military and paramilitary responses to this crisis of legitimacy in Colombia not only produces human rights violations but is, at best, likely to create a stalemate rather than a long-term solution.

### *Recommendations*

Rather than focus on U.S. assistance that centers on drug control, it is better to concentrate on the priorities that the Colombians themselves have identified, for example, in President Andrés Pastrana's Plan Colombia, a "comprehensive" \$7.5 billion strategy to address Colombia's myriad problems. To do so, members of the Working Group believe the United States should:

- Support the Colombian government's efforts to engage in serious negotiations with the guerrillas;
- Support Colombia's efforts to build effective democratic institutions, including strengthening the judiciary and the police, in order to reinforce moves toward the rule of law and support for civil society;

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- Encourage private foreign investment to promote economic growth and social stability;
- Reallocate funding in the \$1.3 billion aid package, focusing more on civilian institutions and less on military strategies, or else reduce the scale of the package itself; and
- Offer military, financial, and political support for Colombian initiatives to stem drug production and trafficking only as part of a larger strategy that firmly remains under civilian control.

## INTRODUCTION

In January 2000 the Clinton administration proposed a two-year \$1.3 billion aid package as an emergency measure to support President Andrés Pastrana's Plan Colombia, a "comprehensive" \$7.5 billion strategy that Pastrana had proposed to address Colombia's myriad problems. The U.S. aid was intended to help the Colombians combat illicit drug production, the guerrillas' major source of revenue, mainly by providing military equipment. Although the U.S. House of Representatives approved a \$1.7 billion aid package for Colombia in late March, the final legislation was not approved until June 2000 because of procedural delays in bringing the bill to a vote in the U.S. Senate.

On July 13, President Clinton signed into law a bill that provided \$1.3 billion for anti-narcotics efforts in Colombia and the Andean region. Most of this money is designated for military assistance and equipment in Colombia, including 18 highly sophisticated Black Hawk helicopters as well as 42 less expensive Huey helicopters. The bill also provides \$68.5 million to encourage alternative economic development to replace drug crop cultivation; \$58 million to "enhance Colombia's governing capacity"; \$37.5 million to aid people forcibly displaced; \$51 million to improve human rights protections; and \$3 million to train government negotiators in conflict resolution.

In considering the many issues raised by the national crisis in Colombia and by the new U.S. assistance package, the Working Group focused on three key questions: What is the nature of the crisis in Colombia? What are U.S. interests in Colombia? How should the United States advance its interests in Colombia?

In this report, we offer a summary of our deliberations on these questions. The statement reflects the policy judgments of the Working Group members, although not every member necessarily subscribes to every finding and recommendation. The points discussed are not intended to represent specific policy proposals but rather to provide the Working Group's informed and distinct perspective on Colombia.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE CRISIS IN COLOMBIA?

Colombia is as large as Texas and California combined, with a population of 40 million people, and is South America's oldest democracy. Rich in oil and other resources, Colombia leads the world with its unique ecosystem of animal-life diversity and ranks second only to its neighbor Brazil in diversity of plant life. With a 90 percent literacy rate, Colombia has frequently contributed its soldiers to international collective peacekeeping forces and its political leaders for important international duties.

During the last half-century, Colombia has consistently been one of Latin America's best economic performers. Today, its economy is reeling. In 1999, the country's economy shrunk by 5 percent and unemployment rose to an unprecedented 20 percent. At the same time, the black market economy is booming, fed by profits from heroin and cocaine production. Today, a third of Colombia's imports are contraband, illegally smuggled into the country. Criminal networks, which have made illegal drugs Colombia's most lucrative export, fuel violence and corruption throughout the society. Unfortunately, the success of the Colombian government in destroying the Medellín and Cali cocaine cartels in the early 1990s did not reduce drug trafficking. Instead, the large criminal organizations fragmented into smaller, highly decentralized, technically sophisticated groups that are much harder to attack since they operate largely autonomously.

Drug profits have not only permeated Colombia's legitimate businesses and financial markets, they have created a major money laundering industry, which entirely bypasses the taxing authority of the central government.

Colombians deeply distrust their political parties and leaders. Many of the country's civic and governmental institutions are crumbling. The state can no longer provide its citizens basic security, law, and order. More than 25,000 Colombians are dying from violence every year. In 1999,

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two out of every three kidnappings in the world took place in Colombia. Colombians from all regions and every class are fleeing their homes. Human rights abuses by rebel groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), and by paramilitary groups are rising rapidly. Colombia now has the world's third largest internally displaced population, involving an estimated 1.5 million people. And during the past four years, more than 800,000 people have emigrated from Colombia. The flood of Colombian refugees not only presents humanitarian problems within the country but also has begun to exert serious economic and political pressure on Colombia's neighbors.

That Colombia's problems are deadly serious is beyond doubt. It is harder to be sure why this deterioration has occurred. It is common to blame the narcotics trade and the guerrilla insurgencies for the country's troubles, but the growing power of drug traffickers, rebel groups, and right-wing paramilitaries reflect the breakdown of authority and of the legitimacy of political institutions. They are in fact as much the consequences as the causes of Colombia's crisis of governance.

### WHAT ARE U.S. INTERESTS IN COLOMBIA?

The Working Group believes that the United States has substantial interests in encouraging a strong, stable Colombia both because of the country's importance—economically and politically—in the hemisphere and because of its long history of democracy. Colombia plays a pivotal role in regional stability, particularly in relation to its neighbors, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Panama, and Ecuador. Turmoil in Colombia could easily spill over its borders, jeopardizing many of the regional economic and political gains of the last decade. Accordingly, the Working Group believes that the primary U.S. interests in Colombia are:

- To strengthen democracy, including the protection of human rights, civil society, and the rule of law;
- To support a peace process that will promote political and economic stability in Colombia and throughout the hemisphere; and

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- To curtail drug production, trafficking, and money laundering in Colombia and the export of drugs from Colombia to the United States.

### HOW SHOULD THE UNITED STATES ADVANCE ITS INTERESTS IN COLOMBIA?

The Working Group believes that U.S. military assistance to Colombia will not only fail to solve Colombia's worsening crises, it will not measurably reduce illicit drug cultivation nor curtail the export of drugs from Colombia to the United States. The new aid package is aimed at unachievable objectives, and as a result, the strategy is fundamentally flawed. The Working Group agrees that the most effective contribution of the United States to Colombia's stability and well-being would come from a significant and long-lasting reduction in the U.S. demand for illicit drugs.

The majority of the Working Group believes that the United States should be involved in assisting the Colombian government, although they disagree with the fundamental rationale of the new U.S. assistance package, which is to aid the Colombian military in combating narcoterrorists. Most of the Working Group believes that the U.S. assistance package is driven primarily by U.S. domestic political concerns about looking tough on drugs, especially during this election year. This focus misreads the current situation in Colombia, which in reality involves a decades-old civil war over profound economic and political divisions within the society.

Since 1981, the United States has invested more than \$25 billion in international drug interdiction efforts, primarily in Latin America. U.S. international efforts to eliminate drugs at their source aim to make drugs more expensive for American consumers. Yet the largest drug profits are reaped inside the United States, not in foreign coca or opium poppy fields. The best figures available suggest that the total cost of growing, refining, and smuggling cocaine from Colombia to the United States amounts to only 10 percent of the retail price it will bring on the streets of America.

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In fact, during the 1990s, despite the billions of dollars spent on interdiction, the price of heroin and cocaine in the United States has dropped by half, mainly because of expanded production, while the potency of both drugs greatly increased. According to the General Accounting Office, "Despite two years of extensive herbicide spraying . . . net coca cultivation actually increased by 50 percent." Thomas Constantine, former head of the Drug Enforcement Agency, recently said of Colombia, "There's three times as much cocaine produced as could ever be used in the United States. So our ability to slash that amount to get it down to where it's going to affect the price is unrealistic. The idea that law enforcement can raise the price of drugs—it's an impossible goal." And even if this "impossible goal" could be achieved, it is unlikely to do much to weaken the guerrillas, who profit from "taxing" Colombian drug producers.

Even if the Colombians succeeded in destroying a substantial portion of their drug crops, Americans would have little trouble finding drugs in the United States. As long as millions of Americans are willing to pay for drugs, there will be no shortage of suppliers. If one source is interrupted, others quickly fill the gap. American experience with marijuana cultivation is instructive. During the 1980s, the Reagan and Bush administrations moved aggressively to interdict and eradicate marijuana in Latin America and the Caribbean and succeeded in encouraging growers to expand greatly illegal production in this country. Despite federal and state eradication campaigns, marijuana is now the second-largest cash crop in the United States, supplying as much as half the domestic market.

Durable answers to America's drug problems will not be found abroad, but rather in a concentrated and determined effort to reduce demand for drugs within the United States. Drug abuse can be attacked far more cheaply and directly by treating users in the United States than by interdiction or source country eradication. According to a 1994 Rand Corporation study, \$34 million invested in treatment programs in the United States may reduce cocaine use by as much as \$366 million sent abroad for interdiction or \$783 million for eradication. Put another way, this means that \$1 spent in the United States is more effective than every \$11 sent abroad for interdiction or \$23 for eradication. Nonetheless, less than a quarter of the \$19 billion annual federal drug-control budget goes

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toward treating drug abusers in the United States. Fewer than one in three of America's addicts now have access to treatment programs.

In addition to these fundamental flaws in the drug interdiction strategy, the majority of the Working Group believes that:

- Supplying the Colombian military with sophisticated helicopters and other equipment may simply escalate the war, leading the insurgents to purchase more advanced weapons. U.S. aid is aimed almost entirely at curtailing drug production in areas in southern Colombia, controlled by the FARC, the largest armed insurgent group in the country, which has been battling the central government for three decades. The FARC draws as much as \$300 million a year from "taxing" drug production and uses the money to buy sophisticated weapons, including surface-to-air missiles. Many military analysts believe that the FARC is already better equipped and better trained than the Colombian military.
- Pursuing a U.S.-funded military campaign against drug farmers will drive illicit drug production to more remote areas of Colombia as well as to neighboring countries (a trend that is already apparent). Such a campaign is also likely to damage severely Colombia's environment from the residual effects of herbicides used by the government to eradicate drug crops and from extensive clear-cutting of land that will be undertaken by farmers seeking new areas for cultivation.
- Militarizing the Colombian drug war will likely exacerbate Colombia's human rights problems as well as strengthen the right-wing paramilitary forces or paras. Accounts of direct military involvement in abuses have declined in the past several years. However, eyewitnesses reported in August 2000 that army soldiers in Pueblo Rico opened fire on schoolchildren without provocation, killing six of them. Amid public charges of an army coverup, Pastrana has ordered a major investigation. Already the paramilitaries have become an alternative political force in certain areas, committing hundreds of killings, disappearances, kidnappings, and other gross human rights abuses. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that

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paramilitary groups were responsible for many, if not most, of the 402 reported “massacres” that occurred in Colombia in 1999.

Numerous reports from officials within the government and from analysts with human rights groups, and other nongovernmental organizations indicate that the paramilitaries often work cooperatively with some members of Colombia’s military. Although reports of direct military involvement in abuses have recently declined, the number and scale of abuses by paramilitary groups have greatly increased. For example, Colombian soldiers set up roadblocks in February 2000 around the northern towns of El Salado. For three days, paramilitaries terrorized the town, raping, torturing, mutilating, and finally killing at least three dozen inhabitants. Throughout, the soldiers prevented townspeople from escaping and outsiders from intervening, claiming that it was a “battle” between insurgents and the paras.

Several members of the Working Group, while generally supporting U.S. military assistance to Colombia, questioned the military’s current capacity to carry out this mission. The Colombian army is under-equipped, poorly trained, and poorly educated (high school graduates in the army are prohibited from combat). Corruption is an endemic problem. These members also noted the long-term nature of the military challenge, both against the insurgents and against the drug traffickers. Two years of U.S. support (even at high levels) is not likely to turn the situation around.

In addition, members of the Working Group noted that a high-profile program, which provides for hundreds of U.S. military advisers and technicians to assist the Colombian army in noncombat roles, could make these Americans likely targets of the guerrillas. In the highly politicized context of the administration’s antinarcotics program, such U.S. support for the Colombian army could well lead to a prolonged armed engagement reminiscent of the American experience in Vietnam.

## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE CRISIS IN COLOMBIA

To date, U.S. policy appears to be based on serious misperceptions of what is happening in Colombia. These misperceptions have narrowed the range of possible policy options as well as understanding how U.S. assistance might be most effective. The Working Group believes that U.S. assistance centering on drug control is likely to fail. We support policies that take the larger context into account, including the following factors:

- Colombia, although historically a democracy, is increasingly a country in which the old elites are failing and are discredited among the population.
- The FARC and the ELN derive material support from the drug trade as well as political support from marginalized groups who feel excluded from an economic system that has disproportionately benefited the old elites.

The current combination of military and paramilitary responses to this crisis of legitimacy produces not only human rights violations but is also likely to create a political stalemate with little prospect of a long-term solution.

We think it appropriate to take seriously the priorities that the Colombians themselves have identified, for example, those set out in President Pastrana's Plan Colombia. With these in mind, we believe the United States should undertake the following steps.

First, the United States should support the Colombian government's efforts to engage in serious negotiations with the guerrillas, following the successful strategies in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Attempts to negotiate an end to earlier insurgencies have met with some success. As a result of peace negotiations in the 1980s, a portion of the FARC and another guerrilla group, the M-19, formed legal political parties and gave up its arms. Although several thousand of them were subsequently assassinated, most likely by progovernment

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elements, the M-19 did not revert to guerrilla warfare and remains an active participant in the political process in Colombia.

The current U.S. policy of “no contact” with the FARC—intended to force them to hand over those people responsible for the murder of three Americans in March 1999 in Venezuela—should be reconsidered. The United States should also consider becoming actively engaged in the peace process in Colombia as it has been in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, and the next administration should send a high-level U.S. envoy to Bogotá to take a mediating role in the current talks. This would not preclude eventually pursuing those responsible for killing the Americans last year, but that objective should not prevent the United States from playing a constructive role in the peace process.

Second, the United States should support Colombia’s efforts to build effective democratic institutions, including strengthening the judiciary and the police, in order to reinforce moves toward law and support for civil society. This support will strengthen democratic participation and help change the widespread expectation that violence is endemic in Colombia.

Third, U.S. policy should encourage private foreign investment to promote economic growth and social stability. Colombia’s agricultural sector, for example, badly needs investment and not only to fund alternative crops. Although Colombia has promoted structural reforms and opened its economy, unemployment has increased from 8 percent in the early 1990s to more than 20 percent in Bogotá and Cali today. Without a strong increase in economic growth, all forms of business and finance in Colombia will become increasingly involved in the drug trade. Without equitable economic growth it will be impossible to reverse the declines in the quality of the civil service, judiciary, and police. The recent pledge of \$600 million by European governments to help implement Plan Colombia by investment in the country’s economy and its democratic institutions is encouraging.

Fourth, the United States should reallocate funding in the \$1.3 billion aid package, focusing more on civilian institutions and less on military strategies, or else reduce the scale of the package itself. And, finally, it should offer military, financial, and political support for Colombian initiatives to stem drug production and trafficking only as part of a larger strategy that is firmly under civilian control.

## CONCLUSION

Although the Working Group discussed at length whether Colombia is enough of a vital interest for the United States to be compelled to act, or whether the United States should just let it become another so-called failed state, we concluded that these are not the right questions. Colombia is unlikely to become a failed state on the model of Somalia or Haiti. On the other hand, it could become a source of instability in the region, and it is already the scene of increasingly painful human suffering. For these reasons, it merits U.S. attention and action.

Colombia belongs to a continent that is experiencing economic growth and progress in building democratic institutions. While the vital interest criterion may be appropriate in asking whether to commit U.S. troops, that is not the issue now. Long before Americans have to address the question of whether to send in U.S. forces, they confront a clear responsibility to help the vast majority of Colombians who are deeply committed to confronting and overcoming the challenges their country faces. For Colombians are not only our neighbors and our loyal allies, they have long suffered from the drug money Americans have sent there—money that has ravaged their country and corrupted their institutions. For this reason alone, they deserve long-term support that addresses the underlying issues that have allowed both narco-trafficking and guerrilla groups to gain such a strong foothold in their country.

## DISSENTING VIEW

The conclusion of the Working Group Report that U.S. policy is bound to fail because it is mistakenly focused on providing sophisticated weapons for counter-narcotics purposes greatly oversimplifies the complex issue of military aid to Colombia. Although the report has rightly identified several important considerations for U.S. policy in Colombia, it fails to analyze properly or even list the more critical components of our military strategy in that country.

While it pursues reform, Colombia must have the tools to either reestablish its authority or create the proper environment for a negotiated settlement with the insurgents. Absent either of these conditions, it is difficult to see a peace that would preserve the effectiveness of the existing government, potentially creating more instability rather than less. It is also tough to envision how significant reform could occur when a small minority (the FARC and ELN), fueled by a multibillion dollar drug industry, would constructively engage with an emasculated government to produce substantial reform. In any case, the United States could hardly consider this a victory for the rule of law, which it often champions.

Since the \$1.3 billion package has now been passed into law, U.S. military and counter-narcotics aid becomes critical to our continued involvement. That the escalation of U.S. involvement in Colombia will increase the rancor of both insurgent groups is clear, given their dependence on the drug trade. This may indeed have significant repercussions for U.S. policy, particularly if the insurgents shift to American targets. However, the long-term success of U.S. engagement is heavily predicated on the short-term Colombian prosecution of its civil war. It therefore merits extensive comment.

The report's sole conclusion on this subject, that the United States is mistakenly focused on providing sophisticated weapons to the Colombians, is based on the incorrect assumption that the Colombians are incapable of maintaining or operating complex military platforms in combat. It also erroneously reinforces the notion that the military as

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well as paramilitary groups are far guiltier of human rights violations than the guerrilla groups. Paramilitary and insurgent groups are both culpable of horrendous crimes directed at the local populace. Moreover, the Colombian military as a matter of record made significant progress over the past several years and has shown, with proper U.S. training, that it can execute counter-narcotics and insurgency operations and at the same time follow humanitarian norms. Issues that are far more pertinent to the question of effective military aid include the proper force mix for Colombians (i.e., Black Hawk versus Huey helicopters); how U.S. training can be monitored for effectiveness, which has been an issue in the past; the importance of studying previous insurgency campaigns, particularly in Latin America, for lessons learned; and detailed analysis of whether U.S. conditions, including unrealistic limitations restricting use of U.S. assets to specific operational areas, would cause more harm than good.

The report also spends much time on the merits of interdiction versus demand-side reduction of drug use. While this argument is certainly relevant, it is overdone and displaces other issues that deserve mention, such as those listed above. As the report identifies the geopolitical importance of Colombia to the United States, the interdiction versus demand-side argument is beside the point because in any event, the Colombians will require some form of military aid to allow them to deal effectively with its insurgents and drug industry, which are now closely linked. As the United States increases its involvement in Colombia, it is critical that aid be closely scrutinized to determine its effectiveness and adjusted over the long term. The report missed a prime opportunity to present issues and opinions that have direct relevance to this issue.

*Jeff Varanini*

*Jeff Varanini is CEO and co-founder of Intrepid X, an Internet company for Europe, and an advisory board member of HelloWWW, an Asian Internet site. As a naval officer, he led riverine training missions in Colombia. Mr. Varanini participated in the Working Group's sessions but declined to be listed as a signatory to the report and provided the above dissent.*

## WORKING GROUP MEMBERS AND OBSERVER

### *Chair*

MATHEA FALCO, a lawyer, is president of Drug Strategies, a nonprofit research institute in Washington, D.C., that promotes effective approaches to drug abuse. The author of *The Making of a Drug-Free America: Programs That Work*, she was assistant secretary of state for international narcotics matters from 1977 to 1981.

### *Members*

ANN LOUISE BARDACH, visiting professor of international journalism at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is writing *Troubled Waters: The Miami-Havana Showdown* to be published next year. She was the recipient of the 1995 PEN West Award for journalism for her coverage of Chiapas and Subcomandante Marcos.

MARJORIE CHORLINS is director of international trade and corporate relations at Motorola, Inc. Prior to this, she served for almost two years as executive vice president at Business for Social Responsibility.

CRAIG. N. CHRETIEN is vice president of Protection One Alarm Monitoring, Inc., and was assistant administrator (Intelligence) for the Drug Enforcement Administration.

MARK DANNER, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, is a regular contributor to *The New York Review of Books* and a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Author of *The Massacre at El Mozote* and the forthcoming *The Saddest Story: America, the Balkans, and the Post-Cold War World*, he was named a MacArthur Fellow (1999).

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CLINT E. SMITH is a senior research associate at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research and a retired senior U.S. diplomat. He is the author of several publications on Latin America, including *Inevitable Partnership: Understanding Mexico-U.S. Relations*.

PETER H. SMITH is professor of political science and director of Latin American Studies at the University of California, San Diego, and has written extensively on drug trafficking in Mexico. His latest book is *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations*.

CHARLES R. TRIMBLE is chairman of the U.S. GPS Industry Council (USGIC). From 1978 to 1999, he was president and chief executive officer of Trimble Navigation, which he co-founded.

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Organization and the NAFTA Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

*Observer*

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