
The Security Dilemmas of Trade Liberalization
The Need of a New Economic Model

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Hemispheric trade liberalization in the Americas is likely to increase social inequality. While it expands developed countries' markets, it further weakens developing countries' economies. This phenomenon fosters social problems, which threaten international security. Once again the dominating economic model has proven to be in decline. A new model, emerging from a human-centered paradigm, is required.

Within a hemispheric integration process, there is an increased potential for Colombia's social conflict to affect other States. Although the security problems that arise from its spill over nature call for international cooperation, the country's stability depends on its own capacity to manage conflict. In this sense, there is an urgent need of revising policies in critical areas such as drugs and drug trafficking. Foreign policy requires a more dynamic and strategic focus, for which scholarly reflection ought to support government action.

The events of September 11th led to a growing tension between integration and security. While efforts are being put into the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, States are led to increase control measures in order to protect their citizens from terrorist threats. As a country with a predominant drug trafficking problem, Colombia tends to become isolated in this scenario. There exists the danger that this isolation will deepen the internal conflict, only to further disrupt the stability of the system.

Human security policies could be an adequate response to this situation, especially since they recognize the need to confront problems in a joint manner. Yet their capacity to reduce threats on the long term is doubtful. They operate in a superficial manner, addressing the consequences of an economic model that lacks the capacity to meet human needs on a global scale. A human-centered economic model, conceived under a new paradigm, is required. But change will take time because countries in capacity to deploy human security policies are the ones that benefit from the system.

The Colombian Case: Drugs & Integration

Within the scope of hemispheric integration and human security in the Americas after September 11th, Colombia is a case of interest, due to the threat it poses to international security in an expanded market. At a regional level its internal conflict has deteriorated its relation with neighboring Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama; and integration has encountered multiple difficulties. At a hemispheric level, phenomena of a spill over nature such as illicit drug cultivation have put the country on uneasy terms, especially with the United States, its most important commercial partner.

Trade is vulnerable to the political situation, and highly affected by drug trafficking. The industry has been devastated, and a limited number of enterprises could be competitive in a hemispheric market. Under these conditions the development of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) could deepen Colombia's internal conflict and critical economic situation.

Although convenient changes could take place with the change of government on August 7th 2002, most effects will be seen on the long term. Meanwhile the FTAA negotiations progress towards the year 2005, and it is highly unlikely for Colombia to be in a position from which it can achieve an effective insertion in the international sphere in a scarce three years. In this race against time, solving internal conflict and drug trafficking must be left for the long term. Efforts should be dedicating to managing these problems is such a manner that trade flows are not affected, and if possible enhanced.

Colombia's complex situation

Colombia's complex situation involves a 50-year internal conflict, much violence, weakening of its national industry, and diminishing of foreign investment. Economic growth has progressively slowed down, and unemployment is the highest in the region. The development and growth of drug trafficking, which originated due to poverty, contributes to the conflict, specially since terrorist groups are being financed by this business. The judicial system is weak and there is a large fiscal debt.

The conflict can be described as a “state of active confrontation that occurs within the national territory and that becomes evident in specific strategic (...) areas where a minority (...) exerts persistent violent action against the State and its institutions, but putting greater emphasis on attacking the population and its resources.”¹

¹ BONETT, Manuel José. “*El conflicto colombiano y los retos del siglo XXI*”. En: Revista Desafíos. No.4-5 (año 2001). Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, p.167. Quote translated to English by the author.

David Bushnell is keen to point out that, “In several opportunities Colombians have demonstrated their capacity to recover from dangerous and terrible situations and to continue their daily activities under circumstances that foreign observers would consider desperate.”² During several decades Colombia was signaled out from the rest of South American countries due to its democratic and macroeconomic stability. Yet during the last few years the situation has deteriorated so much that trade and industry have definitely been affected. As Hans Blumenthal says, people used to say that the country was doing badly, but that the economy was performing well. But now, everything is going badly.³

United States Influence

The United States has traditionally exerted a great amount of influence over Colombia, not only as a hemispheric and world power, but also as the country’s most important trade partner. Foreign policy has centered on the United States, so much so that a Foreign Relations minister, Marco Fidel Suárez referred to the US as *respice polum* (North Star).⁴ He came to state a theory of frequent use, explaining that Colombia should center its foreign policy efforts on the US due to its power and strategic importance.

With the end of the Cold War, the US has reaffirmed its power in its geographic sphere of influence. This has been specially felt with the “certification” processes developed in order to assure that our performance in relation to drugs or human rights is satisfactory. The US’

² BUSHNELL, David. “*Colombia una nación a pesar de sí misma: de los tiempos precolombinos a nuestros días.*” 2ª edición. Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 1996. p. 17. Quote translated to English by the author.

³ MERCADO, Bibiana. “*FARC no tiene nada de Robin Hood*”. En: El Tiempo, Bogotá. (23 jun., 2002); p.1-20. Quote translated to English by the author.

⁴ Historia Diplomática de Colombia

influence over Colombia has been ever greater since its support of “Plan Colombia”⁵ President Pastrana’s (1998 – 2002) government program, centered on the fight against drugs and drug trafficking, was signed into law on July 13th, 2000. “Included was \$ 1.3 billion in emergency supplemental appropriations in equipment, supplies, and other counter narcotics aid primarily for the Colombian military.”⁶

Plan Colombia reveals the understanding of the global nature of the drugs and drug trafficking phenomena. In this sense it calls for the international community to actively support the Colombian government in its effort to face this problem. Internally it has caused violence, an increased number of assassinations, the strengthening of the terrorist groups against the government due to the fact that they finance their activities with the illegal drug trade, lack of sustainable development, amongst others. Hence, it presents a set of strategies and actions to be taken internally, and its foreign policy counterpart.

The International Community and the Colombian Question

Due to the magnitude of its conflict, the international community has paid closer attention to Colombia during the last four years. This is also the consequence of the foreign policy efforts of Pastrana’s government, aimed at getting aid from developed countries to advance in the direction of solutions to the problems. Mr. Pastrana won the presidential elections in 1998 based on his “Plan Colombia”, and its foreign policy packet, “Diplomacy for Peace”.

⁵ Plan Colombia. Planeación Nacional, 1998.

⁶ LEE, Rensselaer and PERL, Raphael. “*Drug Control: International Policy and Options.*” Issue Brief for Congress. Updated May 8, 2002.

During his time in office, he has directed what may come to be known as Colombia's first strong foreign policy effort. This is especially notorious due to the relative isolation in which the country has existed since its origins. With his collaborators, Pastrana has achieved what in 1996 seemed impossible: to reestablish a good relation with the United States. A revision of academic reflection produced during this period evidences this all too clearly. It seemed that Colombia was doomed: its relation with its greatest commercial partner and the world super power had reached an absolutely critical moment.

In 1996 Colombia was decertified. As the Foreign Relations Minister in office at that time, Rodrigo Pardo, states, it was "the first time that this type of decision was taken against a democratic nation that was not a political enemy of the United States."⁷ On proving that President Ernesto Samper's campaign had received several million dollars from the Cali Cartel, the US also cancelled the President's visitor's visa, and diplomatic became harsh. Pardo describes this period in the bilateral relation as a confidence crisis.

September 11th and Colombia

This brief review of the bilateral relation between Colombia and the United States, aims to show the degree of influence of the super power over Colombia, Colombia's high level of dependency, and the treatment of the drug problem between the two states. During his government Pastrana manages to reestablish the relationship on better terms, and a joint effort

⁷ PARDO GARCIA-PEÑA, Rodrigo. "Colombia y Estados Unidos: Intoxicados por las drogas." En: RAMIREZ, Socorro (editora). "Colombia: entre la inserción y el aislamiento." Bogotá: IEPRI, 1997, p. 314. Quote translated to English by the author.

is perceived as the best way to work towards solving the problem. The US Congress has hence destined a sum of money to support Plan Colombia.

It is under this state of things that the events of September 11th occur. What is meant to be clear here is that Colombia's position in the international sphere has been strongly related to its drug problem, being scarcely significant in a political or economic dimension. This situation is therefore reinforced by the events of September 11th, due to terrorism being defined by the United States as the top priority not only on its foreign policy agenda, but also on the world agenda.

In this context, Colombia's 'outlaw' groups (guerrilla movements and paramilitaries) are conceived and have been defined by the USA ⁸, and recently also by the European Union ⁹, as terrorist groups. Hence, they have become targets of these actors' foreign policy efforts. This signifies a change in Colombia's position in the hemispheric context, especially to the degree that the country represents a great threat to the USA due to its geographic proximity.

Colombia as a Case Study in Security Analysis

The scenario at hand therefore permits a highly revealing analysis of a human security approach to foreign policy. From a realist perspective, "the existence of weak and insecure states whose conflicts and instability would draw in outside power has been a consistent source

⁸ Shortly after the events of September 11th, the FARC and AUC were included by the USA in a list of terrorist groups against which they would act in order to preserve national security.

⁹ PASTRANA, Andrés. "Presidential Speech: The inclusion of the FARC in the European Union's list of terrorist groups." Bogotá, (13 jun., 2002).

of concern for traditional security analysts”¹⁰, yet the problems of the weak have had no intrinsic importance. The events of September 11th ratify a change in the relative power of these weak states, and it is in this sense that Colombia, as a country in which terrorist groups have developed, acquires a new relevance.

The country reveals interest as a case study also, in the sense of being an example of the dimension that internal conflict takes on in the international context which emerges in the Post Cold War years. “The overwhelming picture is of large-scale social violence taking the forms of internal conflicts, ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars, and wars of state formation. Of the 23 parties to these conflicts, 68 were states whilst 164 were non-governmental actors.”¹¹ It is here that traditional security analysis evolves. The source of conflict is no longer limited to the State as an actor, or to its power pretensions in relation to its rivals. Conflict, rooted in social problems, acquires the potential to affect international security.

It is important to note that an international fight against terrorism comprises the Colombian question in an overarching manner, due to the relation between its problems. Internal conflict derived from the struggle between guerrilla movements and paramilitaries, and between these groups and the State is not only aggravated by drug cultivation and trafficking, but directly related to it. Although during years statements regarding this matter were looked on with suspicion and doubt by analysts, there is certainty today that guerrilla movements obtain resources to finance their activities from the drug trade. Although apparently not in such a

¹⁰ HURRELL, Andrew. “*Security and Inequality*”. ----- and WOODS, Ngaire. Oxford: Oxford University press, 1999. p. 250.

¹¹ SOLLENBERG, Margareta (editor). “*States in Armed Conflict 1994*”. Report No.39, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University (Uppsala, 1995).

direct manner, paramilitaries relate to the drug problem easing its flows. Hence, in the Colombian case, fighting against terrorism involves terrorist groups and drug trafficking.

The Sphere of Influence of Social Problems

In the context of security analysis, the effects of these problems identified on the international sphere must be seen. This is to say, what effect do Colombia's internal conflict and drug problems have on other actors? The internal conflict's effects center in on neighboring countries, while the drug problem has a much wider reaching sphere of influence. In referring to effects, the matter requires a closer analysis in order to clarify meanings.

The United States tops the list of actors that have traditionally acted in a manner that implies that Colombia is responsible for the effects of drug trafficking, in the sense that the cause of the problem is rooted in Colombia, and the effects are linked to the USA. The simplicity of this statement accounts for its lack of understanding of the matter. The drug problem is complex, and in this way there are causes both in the USA and in Colombia, and effects are also distributed between the two.

Once complexity has been acknowledged, it is possible to see then that the problem exists not only because Colombia offers marijuana and cocaine, but that it is produced because there is high demand in the USA. After long years of working on this idea within the bilateral relation specially, but also in the multilateral context, the idea is finally accepted, and hence figures of "joint responsibility" have emerged.

Problem Treatment and Policies

Drugs

The analysis can be taken a step further to see that a problem can be categorized as such not only because of its intrinsic nature, but also because of the way it is treated. And it is here that policy analysis takes on a revealing dimension. Problems such as drugs develop because of the weakness of countries like Colombia, but their development is closely linked to the way the USA has treated the problem. It is interesting to note that throughout the years, the USA has exerted much pressure on Colombia to jail the drug cartel leaders. In studying the transit of a kilo of marihuana or cocaine from the soil where it was grown, to the laboratories where it is processed, and then on its way out of the country and into the USA, its price increases more than a hundred times. Clearly then there are people in the USA which are making much, much more money with drug trafficking than those in Colombia. What efforts are made to capture and jail these leaders?

Policy treatment then is closely related to the effects that problems have. This is to say that managed in a different manner, drugs could have a different effect on the USA, because their effects are not solely derived from their nature. In this direction then it would be important to differentiate the problem at stake from its geographic origin. One would refer than to the effect of drugs on the USA, knowing that Colombia as an actor is related to the problem, but not conceiving the matter as the effect of the Colombian drug problem on the United States.

Internal Conflict

The joint responsibility for problems also applies in the regional context in Colombia's relation with its neighboring states. Venezuela specially, is prone to blame Colombia for the problems on the frontier. The spill over effects of Colombia's internal conflict have objectively affected Venezuela, but how has Venezuela treated the matter? The suspicion that President Hugo Chávez lent (or lends?) support to Colombian guerilla groups has been proved. It is all too easy, but highly misleading, to blame the other for the problem.

The same analysis applies for the relation with Ecuador and Panama. Although of a smaller scale than the situation with Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama ¹² are actually contributing to Colombia's internal conflict. Investigations have now proven that arms enter Colombia from Ecuador and from Panama. They are exchanged for marihuana and cocaine. The pervasiveness of these governments naturally fosters this illicit trade. This is not to deny that refugees, the spread of violence, kidnapping have caused much damage to civilians in Venezuela and Ecuador.

Hemispheric Integration

How can the effects of terrorism and drug trafficking be viewed in the context of hemispheric integration? With the recent progress in the negotiations for the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, it seems possible that in the year 2005 a new hemispheric regime will

¹² An investigation published in Abril 2002 reveals that 3000 arms entered Colombia in November 2001 through Panama. The flow of illicit arms from Nicaragua and El Salvador are destined to paramilitaries in Colombia. "Contrabando de 3000 fusiles ingresó a Colombia en noviembre pasado." En: El Tiempo, Bogotá. (20 abr., 2002).

CASTRO CAYCEDO, Germán. "Conexión Panamá: Los proveedores de 'paras' y guerrilleros". En: El Tiempo, Bogotá. (21 jun., 2002); p.2-2.

exist. Even though it has been viewed as a trade matter basically, the mere fact that commercial barriers will be reduced increases the effects of social problems over society at large. In the same manner that goods and services will flow more freely between the 34 member countries, problems will likewise flow more freely. In other words, spill over effects will be of a greater magnitude.

The potential of problems is magnified in the context of the FTAA in a second way also. In this case, their origin must be considered. In the Colombian case, internal conflict and drug trafficking are originated to an important extent from poverty, unemployment, and the lack of opportunities of accessing an income.

In an extended market, competition increases tremendously, and only the fittest survive. The FTAA serves the interests of developed countries. Their companies will take over the markets, finishing off with a significant amount of industries in developing countries. This is just another case in which the effects of globalization can be seen. The rich become richer and the poor become poorer, on both an individual and a State scale.

Andrew Hurrell states that "...the recentralization of power reflects the highly differentiated impact of globalization. Whilst globalization erodes the power and viability of many states, it also increases the power of those states that are best able to adapt and to exploit its new opportunities."¹³ And this then applies to the private sector as well, contrary to voices that cry

¹³ HURRELL, Andrew. Ibid. p. 266.

out the expanded possibilities that will prosper for developing countries' businesses in an integrated market.¹⁴

So, if developing countries industry is weakened, and commercial flows become even more insignificant, unemployment will grow, poverty will increase, illegal business will flourish. As social problems grow, so will their spill over effect.

Colombia and Hemispheric Integration

In what respects Colombia then, hemispheric integration can be analyzed in three dimensions:

1. the difficulties for Colombia to integrate
2. the undesirability of integration for Colombia
3. the potential effects of Colombian problems over an expanded market

The Difficulties for Colombia to Integrate

The difficulties for Colombia to integrate a free trade area have been demonstrated by its efforts to establish bilateral and regional integration processes. As has been described before, Colombia has serious problems with its neighbors. Even though the main differences are of a political nature, the relation is affected at all levels because confidence is eroded. Hence trade is affected enormously. Given this situation, progress on the bilateral agenda is slow.

On the regional scale, the 'Andean Group' which transformed later into the 'Andean Community of Nations' (CAN, Comunidad Andina de Naciones) understanding among

¹⁴ IBARRA, Martín Gustavo. "Perspectivas del ALCA". Bogotá: Cámara de Comercio Colombo – Americana

members has been difficult, and concrete achievements are few. Much is said especially at a political level, but progress in trade matters is slight.

If the FTAA is to arise from the union of the existing integration groups (NAFTA, CARICOM, MERCOSUR, CAN), it is important for these groups to be functional. There are such serious problems within the CAN that there are doubts of the member countries participating in the FTAA negotiations as a block.¹⁵ The negative potential of this possibility is enormous. If, as explained before, there is a large probability of developing countries being weakened by integration, they will be so to a greater extent if they negotiate on their own. However weak their group, it gives them a better position in the negotiation than if they go on their own.

The Undesirability of Integration for Colombia

Integration is not convenient for Colombia. As a typical figure of globalization, it increases the gap between the rich and the poor individuals and States. Naturally, since developed countries will benefit, they press the process on, and developing countries have no option. Not only do they not have a voice in the matter, if they were to stay out of the process, they would end up in an even worse situation. So, while developed countries see all that they will gain out of an expanded market, the matter for developing countries is how to lose the least possible. The choice here is not between a favorable situation and an unfavorable one, but between two unfavorable options.

(mayo 2002).

¹⁵ INTERVIEW WITH Juan Carlos Elorza, Director of Integration, Ministry of Foreign Trade. Bogotá, (Apr., 2002).

National industry is in a quite depressed state in Colombia, even though its survival capacity under such adverse conditions must be recognized. The economic crisis that Colombia has been through the last decade has led many companies to bankruptcy. Added to this, the lack of public order has eliminated or made business very difficult for others. How can a company distribute the goods it produces when roads are highly insecure, and hijacking is a big probability?

Furthermore the country has weak infrastructure which has been diminished in the many terrorist acts that the guerrilla has performed. The high level of risk already at hand by all this is increased by a set of laws that do not favor investment. Hence, with a large fiscal deficit and low foreign investment, industrial production, not to mention agriculture, are in crisis. Existing industries are weakened, and the risks associated with creating new business are so high, that few entrepreneurs are motivated to do so.

The efforts that the Foreign Trade Ministry makes under these trying circumstances must be acknowledged. It has designed and implemented programs to strengthen existing industry and promote the creation of new companies. It has a solid ten-year program aimed at increasing competitiveness, so as to be able to face the FTAA process as best as possible. In April 2002, a total of 1,546 Colombian enterprises had a quality certification. This represents an 84% increase in relation to the year 2000.¹⁶

¹⁶ “*Certifican la calidad a exportadores.*” *En*: Portafolio, Bogotá (12 jun., 2002); p. 8.

Unfortunately other factors such as the drug trafficking problem diminish competitiveness. Since drugs are frequently taken out of the country hidden in legal cargo, customs around the world are much prevented against Colombian exports. Hence inspections are mandatory. These increase the price of the product, and diminish its competitiveness, and/or reduce its produce.

Trade liberalization then is a phenomenon permeated by inequality. It distributes its effects much in accord to power structures. This is no new experience in Colombia. During 10 years the country has been suffering the effects of a trade liberalization experience: the opening of its markets. Naturally many causes have been identified for its negative social effects, such as the fact that the industry was not 'prepared' for this change, that in this sense there is a serious problem of lack of planning, etc. Nevertheless, the underlying matter is that trade liberalization benefits developing countries only under special circumstances, and in a case as complex as Colombia's, the likelihood of achieving these conditions has been and is slight.

Even if it were alleged that trade liberalization favors all participating actors, even if in different proportions, in Colombia there is the consciousness -that only experience gives- that given our conditions, it is harmful. Anyway, one could argue that perspectives for the FTAA are enhanced by this experience, because there is an understanding of how the process must be taken about for it to have positive effects. But underlying factors that are much more decisive diminish the strength that this understanding gives. One is the inability for industry to prosper under current conditions and the fact that the solution to these problems takes time and that the

FTAA is already in progress. The other is the fact that problems such as drugs are of a global nature and can only advance towards a solution if relevant actors have the will to solve them.

The Potential Effects of Colombian Problems over an Expanded Market

As mentioned before in a general manner, since integration is likely to weaken developing countries industries, social problems will increase and so will their spill over effect. In Colombia this is highly probable, counting on the FTAA being fully implemented by 2005.

It is at this point that security analysis comes in, when problems located in Colombia's territory affect other actors. It must be noted that the origin is the spill over effect of terrorism and drugs, but mostly of drugs. Unless outlaw groups in Colombia change their style radically, their activities will continue to be focused at the Colombian State and at the Colombian Population.

Terrorism, strictly speaking then, does not affect other actors, with a significant capacity to do something about the matter, within their territories. Even though terrorism affects Venezuela and Ecuador, their capacity of acting is restricted to a great degree to the political sphere. And this is so due to their condition as developing states. Hence, attention here must focus and actors with a greater capacity of reacting to threats to security.

This points to developed countries. Here though, the fact that their interests extend beyond their frontiers must be taken into account. So, even though, as mentioned, they will not be affected within their territory, they can be affected within the Colombian territory: their

citizens and their companies. It is important to note that during the first months of 2002, US investment in the battalion located nearest to Caño Limón, one of the largest oil camps in Colombia, where several US multinational companies operate, was being strongly discussed.

In respect to drugs though, effects are much more wide spread. Trafficking generates violence that is not limited territorially, and money laundering, and environmental deterioration (drugs cultivation is extending further and further into the Amazons), and has consumption as an end result. In this case then, spill over effects are of a greater magnitude, involving a greater number of actors, with potentially larger consequences.

Drugs as a security threat

The origin of the security consideration, which calls for joint action to be taken, is the spill over effect. This must be stressed, because there could be other reasons for taking into account social problems that have important causes in other territorial areas. Andrew Hurrell points out that there are three sorts of answers to the question of why these problems are considered as problems of international security, and hence call for joint responses.¹⁷

The first is normative, duties beyond borders are justified on a moral basis. This is the case only in respect to non-governmental actors in Colombia. A good number of humanitarian and environmental non-governmental organizations and religious associations are concerned with the Colombian question because they care about the human beings that are being affected by massacres, assassinations, kidnapping, hunger, poverty. This vision is very universal in scope,

¹⁷ HURRELL, Andrew. Ibid, p. 261 – 265.

and human-centered. People are valued because they are human beings, regardless of their nationality, economic status, race or any other such consideration.

The second is material objectivity. Certain issues come to be defined as security issues because of “ways in which they have or will come to affect those living in other parts of the world”¹⁸, i.e. spill over effects and externalities. People matter, but each States own nationals are highly preponderant over citizens of other countries. This view is strongly based on the State system, emphasizes division and difference, and is therefore very close to conflict. For example, when three US citizens where killed by the guerrilla in Colombia, the US reacted strongly, and to date continues to investigate the matter.¹⁹ Yet, in respect to the thousands of Colombian citizens killed by the guerrilla little, if anything is done. The issue is unfortunate, yes, but that is it. In the same way, the Amazon forest must be protected to the degree that its destruction will come to affect US citizens, but bio-diversity can be exploited by US multinationals if they benefit.

The third is about the politics of security, and derives from the fact that “only certain issues come to be viewed as security problems”²⁰ because most problems are not objectively security problems, but are defined in this way by an actor in the furthering of its interests. This type of approach to security is highly revealing, and has generally been overlooked in the Colombian case.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 262.

¹⁹ In 1999 the FARC guerrilla group assassinated three US citizens in the department of Arauca: Terence Freitas, Ingrid Washinawatok and Lahee enae Gay. “*Terrorismo: E.U. pasa de las palabras a los hechos.*” En: El Tiempo, Bogotá. (23 jun., 2002); p.1-4.

The Politics of Security

The United States has led a political process during the last several decades by which it has come to define drugs and drug trafficking in terms of threats. Referring precisely to this issue Hurrell says, “There is no ‘objective’ reason why this should be treated as a transnational security problem rather than as a problem rooted in the failure of domestic public policy in the US, or indeed as a problem of economic development in the producing countries.”²¹

With politics such as certification, and trade preference²² given for combating the drug problem, the United States has made use of its power and further subjected Colombia to its influence. Hence it is made clear that security is tied up to the distribution of power. What affects the power of a strong country is defined as a security problem, but that which can affect the conditions of a weak country are of no relevance.

A clear example of this is the case with crop fumigation, as part of the US’ policy to combat drugs. Although studies show that glifosat has dangerous health consequences, it has been extensively used in Colombia. It is said that since this is already know, there are states in the US where it’s use is prohibited, but in order to not loose production, it is sent to countries like Colombia. In official declarations members of the US government are prompt to inform that it is being used in convenient proportions, because some time ago investigations carried out in

²⁰ HURRELL, Andrew. Ibid, p. 262.

²¹ Ibid, p. 264.

²² Andean Trade Preference Act.

Colombia showed that it was being used in a highly concentrated manner, increasing its negative effects.

With the objective of exterminating 25000 hectares of coca crops, the Police in the region of the 'Catatumbo' have been fumigating with glifosat. Thousands of fish have died (the population lives off its fisheries), legal crops have been ruined, livestock has died or acquired diseases, water sources have become contaminated and people have acquiring infections and diseases.²³ What is at stake here is human existence, not having more or less power or influence. Human lives are being affected, but since in our asymmetrical relationship we are at the lower end, this is of no matter. Since we do not have the capacity to impede these types of actions, we have to suffer them.

Security is then the protection of interests. Power defines which actor's interests can be protected by treating certain issues as security issues. Even though the strongest actor's interests will be favored, this does not mean that the weaker state's interests cannot be served to some degree, naturally much lower than that of the other. For example, for years the United States insisted on having an extradition agreement with Colombia, having the interest in protecting itself from terrorism and drug-related violence, with the need to support antiterrorism in the Americas with facts, after September 11th. There was much resistance in Colombia to create this kind of agreement, but due to its power, the US managed to push it through.

²³ "*Glifosato: Denuncias por fumigaciones*". *En*: El Tiempo, Bogotá. (25 jun., 2002); p.1-14.

Now the USA has captured the first guerrilla / drug leader, Eugenio Vargas Perdomo.²⁴ Even though this action is directly serving the US' interests, Colombia obtains benefits. It receives help to establish order, the possibility of having criminals judicially processed – within the country this is difficult due to the weakness of the judicial system, and in this sense a concrete action against the outlaws – strengthening its position in the internal conflict. A survey done after Vargas was captured reveals that 64% of the people consulted think it is positive for the United States to have captured and taken Vargas in extradition to the US.²⁵

It is in this sense that the consideration of the politics of security are relevant. They show important political consequences, which are overlooked in the spill over approach.

The Human Security Approach Examined

Human security understood as “a people-centered approach to foreign policy which recognizes that lasting stability cannot be achieved until people are protected from violent threats to their rights, safety or lives”²⁶ responds to the changed international system. It acknowledges the fact that conflict arises more frequently within an intra-state than an inter-state dimension. It benefits the donor and the recipient country, even if at different degrees.

Nevertheless, if it is motivated solely by spill over effects, it lacks the capacity of assuring security on the long run. Lastly stability depends on reducing divisions so as to remove the cause of conflict. But, while frontiers exist, nationality affirmed, and differences established,

²⁴ “*Terrorismo: E.U. pasa de las palabras a los hechos.*” *En*: El Tiempo, Bogotá. (23 jun., 2002); p.1-4.

²⁵ 1050 men and women over 18 years old in Colombia's five largest cities were surveyed. “*Terrorismo: E.U. pasa de las palabras a los hechos.*” Ibid.

²⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada) – webpage.

conflict is bound to flourish.²⁷ Better ways of containing it or of managing or suppressing it may be formulated, but progress towards real change cannot occur.

Why? Because a security strategy just responds to a set of conditions and situations in the international sphere, which is the result of the reigning paradigm. This is why different international orders generate different security responses; and if another paradigm were followed, a different international order would emerge, which in turn would generate its own security responses. So, if change is desired, the source, this is, the paradigm, must be accessed.

Problems can be solved at a level superior to the one where it was originated. So, if the problems we suffer today have been formed in a paradigm characterized by dualism, they cannot be solved by dualism. Their solution requires a paradigm product of a higher level of consciousness characterized by unity, as a step further from dualism. Consciousness will spring forth from an understanding of the self, of the human being and of humanity. It will lead to a deeper concept of integration, permeated by the essential unity of mankind.

Policy makers occupy a strategic position from which they can catalyze this process. Being absorbed within the system, they continuously reconstruct the reigning paradigm. So, if through reflection they step out and view reality, and grow to have an enriched vision, they can design a new paradigm and then proceed to building it. Over these strong foundations

²⁷ The deep causes of conflict are found in the paradigm that the world has been managing since the XVIIIth century with the emergence of the nation-state system. Conflict is rooted in division, and the creation of states, the insistence placed on establishing frontiers just set the foundations for problems.

humanity will have access to a new phase, in which progress can be developed, and growth flourish.