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AN UPDATE ON COLOMBIA

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**Featured Speaker:**

H.E. JUAN CARLOS PINZÓN  
Former Colombian Ambassador to the United States

**Discussants:**

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Brookings. I'm Mike O'Hanlon. It's an exciting time to be talking about Colombia, and we have a remarkable panel here today to do so.

I think you know the folks up on stage with me, but let me introduce each one of them briefly, and then we'll proceed to have a bit of a discussion.

Beginning with Juan Carlos Pinzón Bueno, who is just off the campaign trail, and had previously been Colombia's ambassador to the United States, and before that Colombia's minister of national defense; a long-standing, important figure in Colombian public life, and security, and relations with the United States, and so forth.

So, I guess I'm already introducing him. And just as I welcome him to the stage, just to prove the old point, that even if you're a bad teacher you still have great students, he was my student at Princeton over a decade ago, or roughly a decade ago.

In between service in the Uribe and Santos administrations, he was Vice Minister of Defense for President Uribe, and as Minister of Defense after being Chief of Staff for President Santos.

There were a number of us who hoped that the triangulation would catapult him to the presidency of Colombia, because certainly having served honorably, and having good rapport with both of those distinguished Presidents, would seem to be a nice way to have a broad following in Colombia. But polarized politics being what they are in some countries, and I guess we know what that's like here in the United States, that that triangulation strategy didn't quite work -- at least not this time -- but he still, nonetheless, has a lot of observations and insights to share with us about that experience, as well as about the future of his country.

Vanda Felbab-Brown has been a long-standing expert on Colombia. Her first

book, "Shooting Up," has an important case study and chapter on Colombia. She's been engaged in the broad question of counter narcotics strategy, counterinsurgency strategy, transnational crime, and thinking about the interaction of those issues with economic development, and has stayed very engaged in the Colombian debate ever since that first book, a decade ago, including some excellent log entries that you find out on the table, if you haven't already read them.

So, I'm delighted to be up here with my two good friends and colleagues. What we are going to do, as I say, is begin with just some questions from me. And I want to really just ask Juan Carlos, Ambassador Pinzón, to tell us a little bit about what it was like to be on the campaign trail, what his takeaways were.

As you know, we are only two weeks away now from the inauguration of President Ivan Duque. A very promising time in Colombia, and yet also a time fraught with uncertainty, with rising drug production, with a somewhat frayed peace process two years in, to that deal with the FARC; a lot of questions, a lot of pitfalls as well as promise for this great country and great ally of the United States.

And I'll just say one last final personal note, which is that in all the different countries I study around the world, I'm not really a Latin America expert, as any of you who know me are well aware, but I've been extremely impressed by the U.S.-Colombia Alliance.

I think it's one of the most important, and one of the most successful in terms of what each country has helped the other accomplished in these last 20 years, largely during the time of Minister Pinzón's service in that job at the Ministry of National Defense.

So, actually, what I'll ask you to do now with me is just join in a round of applause as we welcome Juan Carlos Pinzón back to Washington. (Applause)

And please, my friend, the floor is yours, to just share some reflections on, and what you learned. We'll talk about a lot of specific issues as we go through the

conversation with security and with counternarcotics, and so forth. But I just wondered if you could begin with a couple of your personal takeaways on what you saw in the campaign trail.

MR. PINZÓN: Well, first of all, thank you, Professor O'Hanlon, for your warm welcome. You are so kind. And you're the professor anyway, right? So, if I fail this time you're going to have a problem, right?

MR. O'HANLON: That's my fault.

MR. PINZÓN: It might be your fault now. At this stage in life you're looking for someone to blame, right, and so that's part of politics. You know, when you lose, you're kind of, you know, who to blame. I was the guy, but why, why didn't I make it.

MR. O'HANLON: It was of course, that course back in Princeton that did it.

MR. PINZÓN: Absolutely. So, I'm happy to be back in town, happy to be back in Brooking, I'm very happy to be joined by Vanda here who is a real scholar on Colombia issues and, you know, has been dedicated to Colombia for a while now. So, thank you for that as well.

Campaign time was very interesting. And I have to confess it's a wonderful opportunity when you have been part of policy for a long time, as I've been. I've been in the middle of the most interesting discussions of economic policy, and of course on national security policy and foreign affairs. And for some reason you think that if you got those three things aligned, you're ready to run the country, and you're ready to move forward the differential policies, thinking that your experience and knowledge is what might be required for the country.

But then when you walk the streets, when you get into the towns of, in this case Colombia, my country, but I encourage this, and I guess, there's some similarity in any place in the world you find that people's problems might be related policy-wise to these issues, but in their real lives, they have their own concerns.

And they don't understand this kind of dialogue sometimes, and they feel that we policymakers sometimes might be disconnected from real life issues.

That's an observation I found, and that led me to a second point. That's where populism is risky, because there are some people that do not care about policy, but decide that they want to tell everything that want to hear, you make them happy. You know, somehow take advantage of what is required in those streets and towns, but then they don't tell how they do it. And they hope to race to power, and then try to somehow make it happen.

I think those are some of the observations I found. My final thought about this was that maybe I'm still in the phase of reflecting, right, so I'm still learning, hoping to take off again, right. But one of the things I found was that you think you help a lot of people in your life, and by some reason you think that all of these people are your supporters, but suddenly people move where they feel, you know, they should.

And usually, you know, polls bring some of the people even against you. And that was a surprising observation to me, because I was, you know, okay in a world of loyalty, a little bit more into the military world where my family comes from, and I always kind of thought that building these kinds of loyalties was going to be very important for politics. It doesn't matter very much.

MR. O'HANLON: Although I'm sure you were not -- one last point -- I'm sure you weren't shocked, even if you were somewhat surprised given some of the polarized politics with President Uribe, President Santos, their relationship, any of the other dimensions and tensions within Colombia, you probably weren't shocked to see that some of these things could happen, even if you were a little disappointed.

MR. PINZÓN: No. And it was a little bit of decision by choice. In this case from my side, because you know if you put yourself in the scenario of a First World War, Trench's War, I was in No Man's Land.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes.

MR. PINZÓN: I was not in the Trench of Santos, I was not in the Trench of (inaudible), and definitely I know I was not in the trench of the more extreme Left.

So, I decided to create our own story, you know, from scratch. And I think that was a good point at the end. I think that's the capital we put to the future, that we want to really connect from these stratospheric policy concepts that I have, you know, developed, now connecting to real people, you know, and walking the streets, and getting to know the people personally, and trying to see how these two things can be done in the right way.

And I think this is an investment. I hope, for the country, even, I think you've got to go beyond me, frankly speaking.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. So, Vanda, before we get into specific questions of security, the state of the peace process, the state of the counternarcotics, et cetera, I wondered if you had some broad observations of just where you see Colombia at this moment in its history as well?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: You know, one of the things that struck about the election was actually not so much the polarization. I mean, to some extent it was the case, but in my view a healthy development was some of the coalescing of the Left. Colombia's historic problem over several decades now has been tremendous fragmentation and weakness of the Leftist Party and of the Left.

And what their once personal political inclinations are, that's just not healthy for a country, and increasingly you would see Colombian politics consistent with politics in Latin America, and now more globally, often operating around particular individuals who create electoral vehicles for the election campaign without really lasting political party, without lasting systems of mobilization.

Now, such system of mobilization can become very ossified in the eyes of

prime example, but at the same time just simply constant mobilization around individuals also create problems such as around populism.

So, I thought that the coalescing of the left, the ability after a very long time to put together, essentially to unify behind Gustavo Petro, and although he was defeated quite resolutely, nonetheless by the standards of Colombian politics, the Left reformed very well, and he had some solid support. And that, in my view, is a very healthy development.

MR. O'HANLON: So let me, before I get into specifics, ask each of you what you would say is sort of the biggest challenge facing Colombia today, and now this gives some structure to our ensuing conversation.

Obviously we all know the candidates, or most of the candidate issues between the state of the peace process, the growth of the economy, the interrelated question of counterinsurgency, counternarcotics, rural development, all of these things are going to be part of your answer, I'm sure, but I wondered if you wanted to prioritize and just give us some structure to our conversation and to, you know, President Duque's agenda as he takes office. Juan Carlos, if I could start with you?

MR. PINZÓN: Oh, very well. I think, first of all, President Duque requires a lot of support, the competitor who was against him as someone that will now be part of the government, but also as a person that is interested in the future of the country, and hoping to see the country moving forward, I think as much of us that can back the government efforts, is necessary right now, and it's important.

That that will be, first of all, a little bit more a political statement, than, you know an answer to your question. I think he needs support because the agenda, now moving to that, has several challenges that are required to be a concern to tackle.

Let me start by the obvious elephant in the room, the peace process, how to handle it. Well, President Duque had said that he wants to keep the peace process; that he

will not shatter it, and at the same time he was elected by an agenda to enhance the peace process, and enhancing the peace process has several requirements and challenges.

One, on the justice side, he has mentioned that it's very difficult to understand that if the transitional court concludes that Members of the Guerilla in Congress are responsible for crimes against humanity, they can stay there. That's the first issue he has presented very clearly.

Second, he has said, and that's the agenda, the Colombian people supported that drug trafficking as a crime cannot be considered a political crime, that's a very second strong point on the agenda.

Third, implementation: he has, I think every -- I guess this is a consensus now in Colombia, the kind of implementation of taking development into rural areas has become a very serious issue. Frankly speaking, it's not moving, it's not advancing, and in consequence, is the real thing that is putting at risk, the credibility of any effort in the accords.

And fourthly, he has stated, and on these, frankly speaking, a strong support that we need to find an effective counternarcotics policy. The decisions that were made some years ago, that publicly I opposed, and on this I have to be fair, on stopping the policies we had without really having a policy to replace, it's not that you are in love with the previous policies, it's that we replace it with nothing, and that nothing has been consequential.

We have more hectares of coca and cocaine than ever. Of course, there's a big debate: Is cocaine problem an issue of Colombia? We have always stated that clearly, no, it's a global problem. But is there a mood internationally to solve this in a way that legalization, or something like that will happen? The answer is, no.

In the meantime, as we speak, this coca cultivation results in a serious challenge for the country, because that creates the money for corruption, for crime, for new -- for restructuring terrorist cells that were basically defeated or demoralized.



So, the challenge is huge here in the streets, Colombia has become a country that has more consumption that we were used to, and this is creating a real social issue beyond a national security challenge.

Not to tell that other countries in the region, our neighbors, and even in Central America, are now seeing the Colombia coca issue as an excuse for some to have a tough position against Colombia, or just simply to blame Colombia for their own diseases, as is happening in some countries in Central America. So, we need to tackle this in an effective way. These are big discussions.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes.

MR. PINZÓN: By the way, that requires a total different panel on that too, but these are real discussions. Now, moving from peace process, I think there's a very important issue of keeping an economy healthy, sound, but at the same time creating conditions for competitors.

When you look to productivity in Colombia we have -- fall into a trap of productivity now for something like 10 years. Productivity doesn't evolve, actually has been stagnant in a way, and when you look into the future due to the, you know, declining, or aging population, it's going to decline.

So, what we need is a real (inaudible) on education, on technology, on infrastructure, on logistics, that can really, you know, empower productivity and allows Colombia wonderful endowment to really become competitive and, frankly speaking, to the world, to the region, and to our own people, for jobs, income, et cetera.

But connected to that, of course, is the whole macroeconomic environment. In order to make sustainable our macro policies, we will have to take to Congress very complex reforms, and the one that we have been discussing for years and decades, you know, the balance and well-thought tax reforms, that's the intention of every government I

can remember, every Minister of Finance. We haven't been able to do that.

How are we going to do that now? Well, here's a big intention now. How do we do it? And then on the other side, on the expenditure side, we have to think about the pension reform. Pension reform can be felt from economics, but also from a social stance.

If you think that in Colombia around half of the people do not get any kind of pension, or any kind of government support when they get to pension age, it's a very delicate social issue. And when you think we are aging as a nation, despite we are very young, you know, we have to -- when you talk about pension reforms we've got to think 50, 100 years ahead, you know, and, we really are entering into a risk area. So, that's very important.

On the other side, well, we were spending something like 15 percent of total budget every year, just paying pensions, and it's growing by the year, so it's a real challenge.

I mention all these things to end with a final thought, politics. Vanda saw it as great news that the, you know, radical left has become stronger. For us, it's a concern, for some of us, because not all the members of that left are Social Democrats, as we expect. You know, as you think about the Socialist Party in Spain, or the Socialist Party in France or, you know, that kind of political organizations that are respecting democracy.

Some of them are from the school of thought related to what has happened in Latin America recently with extreme populism behavior. So, it's not to rule them out, it's not to discuss how not to include them, but it's how not to allow that Colombia, you know, falls into an inconvenient track.

How to be successful in economic development in the reduction of poverty, in equality, in security, in keeping peace with the advancement that I described, and moving the country steady?

And here is where, you know, keeping strong minorities in Congress is going to be important. Here is where, you know, leading in an effective way, being inclusive is

strategically important for the country, you know, beyond specific results, is for stability.

So, I think President Duque has the conditions to lead, I think we need to support him, you know, in general terms, as a nation.

And as I said, in my case, just to, you know, answer that question, I will not be part of the government, but I feel we need to be patriotic right now, and to these new generation, oppose a little bit of what we are seeing, other generations in Colombia, but also here, even in the United States that campaigns never end, governments take office and the political feud continues. I'm not criticizing any or others, but it's happening in Colombia too.

We have these struggles between Santos and Uribe that is really costing unnecessary to the country. So, the next generation, I think we need to be more, you know, down to earth, and see about problems, see about the future of the country rather than our own personal political hopes and expectations. That's the way I think we need to behave.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic! Vanda, a lot on the table already, so feel free to comment, we can break those issues down one by one. Ambassador Pinzón has given us a lot to think about with the peace process, with counternarcotics, rural development and broader economic growth. I don't know if you want to tackle each one of those in the next answer, or to go one by one; but over to you.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: I won't get into all of them right now. I hope we can do so, we might have, you know, somewhat of an exchange on many of these issues. For me the fundamental point for Colombia is exactly the same before the elections, as it was after the elections. And that is whether the country will actually manage to overcome the historic exclusion and impunity, and bifurcation of the country that have really defined it.

Between the thriving urban centers, it's not simply a center, but between the thriving urban areas, that's roughly in much of the very neglected, very underdeveloped, oftentimes festering periphery.

The peace accord provided a unique opportunity, and provided some very concrete commitments as to how to bring about the greater inclusion and integration of the country. It was always bound to be extraordinarily difficult to implement it effectively, and to develop the wherewithal to do so.

And I think that is even more questionable now after the outcome of the elections. To what extent will President Elect, soon to be President Iván Duque, really have the full commitment and wherewithal to push for the implementation of the accord, not simply in the electorate? But in the actual spirit that often will clash with some of his core constituencies.

You know, in a sense, Colombia President -- Candidate Pinzón, I was going to give you the election, so.

MR. PINZÓN: Oh!

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: So, Minister Pinzón is --

MR. PINZÓN: I'm missing you now. (Laughter)

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Minister Pinzón spoke about taxation, a very fundamental issue for Colombia, for historically, labor expects very heavily, and capital expects very little. What that leaves then is production when successful, when you have economic growth, very little job generation.

Labor is taxed very heavily, land is taxed very little. What it lends to is appropriation of land, vast accumulations of land that's often left fallow with, again, minimal opportunities for the very significant segments of the population that have no education, have historically been tied to land, perhaps displaced from it.

And so, you know, it is really this foundational issue: will Colombia, will it be better off, the wealthy, but also the middle class in the cities be able to decide that the reduction in violence that has been accomplished it's not sufficient? That really what needs

to take place is just a much deeper integration, connection, inclusion of the country? Or will it not?

And I think that with the presidential outcome there are some real reasons to be worried about: how much will be just put on the backburner, how much will stagnate, to what extent budgetary cuts will hollow out, or the already very slowly creeping key aspects of the peace deal.

And this is already taking place with some rise in insecurity, broadly, as Colombia is much safer, the reduction in murders, reduction in violence, and dramatic compared to a decade ago, but there's been a significant rise in all kinds of insecurity compared to two years ago, in the last year, and in my view this will just be worsening, temporarily anyway, in the foreseeable future.

MR. O'HANLON: Let me stay with you for one more minute, and then invite Juan Carlos also back to respond however he wishes. But I want to ask a little bit more specifically on counternarcotics, given that that's been your original entre into the Colombia debate, in terms of your published work, and because it's also such an important moment.

And of course, this relates to all the other issues you've been talking about too. But, how do you assess the current state of the transnational criminal and counternarcotics effort in Colombia, Vanda? And what's the most important next step that should be seriously considered?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: So, I think that the expansion of coca in Colombia is not all is not at all surprising. It's inevitable outcome after almost all the reduction in violence, and the reduction in security, we saw exactly the same thing in Afghanistan.

It is inevitable outcome of reduction in violence because large scale illicit crop cultivation is often underpinned by a series of structural conditions, a significant one of which is insecurity, but others which have to do with minimal economic opportunities and

paucity of livelihoods.

And so we should have expected what would happen, some of us did, and we should take a deep breath and react to it with calm and with historic knowledge of what works in reducing illicit economies.

Unfortunately, there is very little of that kind of patience, in my view, wise patience here in Washington, as well as elsewhere. Certainly there was a lot -- during the campaign there was a lot of criticism in Colombia of the expansion of coca.

I don't believe that forced eradication, without alternative livelihoods being in place, is a strategy that will accomplish lasting reduction in coca cultivation. It has never accomplished it anyway. We will see periods when, for example, spraying the drones which is now being talked about, might suppress production, but eventually production will go back up unless the underlying structural issues have been addressed.

They will take a long time to address, so we can be -- and the peace accord specified, as long as we get into the nuance and the details of the plan.

The one policy that I think is deeply misguided, but consistently repeated in Colombia over and over and over, is the so-called zero coca approach, which demands that for a community to qualify for real development, the entire region, the entire area, however it is defined, needs to eliminate all coca. And only then will it qualify for sustained aid.

Now, in this case, there is a little bit of a twist, once the coca is eliminated -- well, actually, before the coca is eliminated, families in that area, that get the first installment of a payment of what is altogether \$12,000 over a period of two years.

So, there's a little bit of a *a priori* cushion given, but even so, the outcome is that inevitably there is a big drop in economic livelihoods, income, before any legal crops, before any legal alternative livelihoods can really start, realistically materializing.

And so this approach has been tried and failed, and failed, and failed in

Colombia, yet it is once again the core operating principle of it.

Eradicate all coca in the region and then you will get some assistance, which, in this case, is also tied to building roads, and thinking about local consultative development of broader value-added chains, some broader issues. They are simply, right now, in the consultative stage, the agreements to be seen what the Duque administration will do with those administrative plans.

There is already a lot of talk about specific bureaucratic maneuvers pertaining to Ministry of Agriculture, in my view, a very unwise move, and we can talk about it.

But the big takeaway that I would like to say is that the countries that have been most successful in sustainably reducing illicit crops, there are countries that had the opposite sequencing, that allowed some development to take place for a number of years, and only then started eradicating.

Or, if there is strong feeling that some eradication needs to take place, in my view it's very unwise to demand all coca going down in an area, and only then starting development. It should be much more matching step, now that is not palatable, that's not what Washington wants to hear, that's not what Bogotá wants to hear. But I would be very surprised if after the twentieth time it finally produced good outcomes.

MR. O'HANLON: So, I should give the Ambassador a chance to respond on that subject.

MR. PINZÓN: Sure. I was, you know, every word Vanda was saying, you know, mean many things. First of all, I think one approach is part of the -- you know, discussion, and I think, I will not oppose to what you said in terms of, that should be part of the effort, as you described it, and I think it's valuable.

But I have to be very honest with you. First, I don't like to talk about coca or cocaine. I hate that subject, because Colombia is a lot more than that.

You know, our country is a 50-million country, one of the richest countries in biodiversity, water, natural resources, you know, young, wonderful people, wonderful sportsmen, wonderful people in culture. And unfortunately to the world, despite all the efforts, we usually go out in the end, talking about this issue.

But as much as I don't like it, I understand we have to confront it. And this is what a generation of successful men and women have tried to do and, in a way, by confronting that reality, we have been able to shift that country was in (inaudible), by the end of the 20th Century, to a country of course today is full of challenges and, you know, there are many. But this was one of the challenges we were really controlling certainly by a set of wrong decisions, have proven to come back as an issue.

And it is such an issue, that now, after years in which the relationship between the United States and Colombia was, in essence, talking about geopolitical challenges, geo-economic challenges, you know, thinking through is going back to: how many hectares of coca Colombia has.

And this is worrisome and challenging. Now, from Colombian perspective, the reason why we should care about this issue is for two reasons. Probably I said at the beginning, because internationally nobody wants to solve that as a global problem.

At the end it's a problem of consumption, and the question is, you know: how do you regulate such kind of market? Well, the world has not accepted it is a market, it is an illegal activity, and suddenly that illegal activity results, in the case of Colombia. In funding for crime, all kinds of crime as I've said before, from political corruption to terrorism, and everything in between.

This is why in Colombia, this is not an economic issue. This is an issue we need to confront, otherwise criminals, bad actors, fund their lives with that money, and suddenly they have irregular armies, and even criminal bands in cities ready to put at risk --



not the state, the people, which is what matters at the end, the people.

So, I get enthusiastic about this, because of course I probably am one of the most critical persons on what has happened in the coca issue. And the reason is simple, during my tenure as Minister of Defense; we had the lowest numbers in coca and cocaine production ever. And it was not my policy, it was not because of me, it was because we worked for 15 years, strongly, in a disciplined way, of course with a lot of sacrifice.

By coincidence, when I got into this room, suddenly, someone that I respect and admire very much came in and said, hello. That person was the person that led all this eradication for Colombia and for me as Minister. I was surprised, that this was a good coincidence. Later I'll let you know so you can talk to him and learn, you know, on that side of the story.

So, when I think everything we did, we knew, going back to Vanda's point of view, that forced eradication was necessary, especially to tackle the criminal finances that then that you required a more integrated approach. A concept in which you give alternative crops and development to the farmers, to the people.

We have been successful in doing that in certain parts of Colombia. Remember, Colombia is not the size of Maryland or Virginia, or the size of California and Texas together. So, in an area like California, we don't have any crop, but in the area like Texas, we have a lot of crops. And you have to think about that even for geography reason, et cetera.

Why in some area we have been able to get rid of illegal crops; because there we have roads, security, a state presence and, frankly speaking, an alternative economy. Why in the other area we take it down, but the chances of that raising up, you know, happens. We don't have roads, we don't have infrastructure, we don't have enough manpower presence, and suddenly, you know, this is a cat-and-mouse game.

But we need to think, so the future of course is, yes, we need to offer alternative development to all these families and people, which means you need to buy the crops in their own farms as coca -- you know, as mafias do with coca. We need to see in what parts of the country we can do roads. We need to see how much we can keep the security.

There is another coincidence in what I'm going to tell you. Exactly in the areas where the FARC make presence, those are the areas that now, supposedly, in essence, they are demoralized, but those are the areas where coca has skyrocketed; the mistake, incentives.

Of course I have a buyer's view from my economic background, but I do believe strongly, incentives. When you offer people money, you know, people react. So what happens? We said, voluntarily, you can eradicate your crop and you will get something like ten times more money than you were getting before when we forced you.

What people did? Well, they got the money, they eradicate from their lands, but they went to their back yards, I mean natural parks, and filled those parks with as much coca as they could. So, they are in the two -- in the best of worlds. They get money from the State for eradicating, but then they go and cultivate it not far from their lands.

What should happen? I think we need to offer, as I said before, a strong set of alternatives for them to have crops, legal crops. I need to guarantee -- I think we need to guarantee we buy those crops, so they can have a sustained income to compete with crime.

But the other part is very important. We need to tell them that it's absolutely prohibited to have illegal crops. Because if they think they can have the two things, they will do. You know, it's a matter of incentives. It's rational for these families. We need to break that rationality by explaining, as we did in the past, you cannot have the two things, you are in the side of law, or you're not, you know.

The reality is that we move from these 48,000 hectares of coca in the year 2013 to having today 200,000 hectares of coca. We moved from having 300 tons, metric tons -- 350 metric tons production of cocaine, to 950 metric tons today. That is funding, you know, imagine how much money, that in price.

When we look at the time, we see 50 percent of the total cocaine production, so we implied really, they were exporting around 150 to 200 tons. Now, we are estimating something like 40 percent of seizures, so it's a lot higher in terms of seizures, so they are almost seizing something like 450-500 tons of cocaine, but they are exporting 400 tons. So, they are exporting something like twice or, you know, 2.5 times more than they're used to in the past.

With the price, with a little decline, mainly stable. Imagine what that money does to Colombia, you know, we are coming back to reorganized dissidents, we have now people from the FARC that demoralized, but have to return and we have new bands, and we have, you know, these kind of challenges.

This is why I think we need to support President Duque's agenda. He was elected for that agenda, and he needs to tackle these problems, in order to stabilize the country.

Now, final thought on this. I know already that the narrative of some people will be, okay, once we have started the process of eradicating those hectares and making a new policy, there will be friction. I mean, you don't get into a coca field, and you expect that they are going -- welcoming you to allow, to take that. Mexican mafias are there, the former FARC are there, the ELN is there, the former paramilitary, or new criminal bands are there. They want to fight for it. So, when you get there, you have to confront.

Sure, you have to do it in an effective way, if you have to do it in a very delicate way and (inaudible), if that word works for this. You know, in a very effective and

(inaudible) way, but not expecting to have the friction is impossible.

Now, here comes the political narrative. Some will say that the new government is opposing to peace, and destroying peace because they are trying to bring rule of law to these areas. Be aware, this rule of law is not against peace, it's against those criminals, it's against that challenge that can result in deteriorating Colombia again, and this is what we cannot do.

We need to advance, we need to move to the future, to that contrite picture at the beginning, and this is why I don't like to talk about coca, or cocaine. We have a lot more. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: So, I'm about to go to you, but I want to pose one more brief question to my panelists. And I'll start with Vanda, and she may want to respond also to this ongoing discussion on counternarcotics strategy. But my more specific question is, what's the main thing the United States, and more generally, the internationally community should be looking to do now with Colombia?

We are sitting here in Washington, obviously the U.S.-Colombia partnership and alliance is very important to all of us, and so I'd like to put that particular point on the last question I have for you two, before we go to all of you for your thoughts and questions. So, Vanda, over to you, please?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Oh, thank you, Mike. That actually does tie very much with the counternarcotics discussion. Let me say -- let me start by saying what Washington should not be doing, which is exactly what it has been doing, similar to hammer for more and more forced, aggressive eradication.

There is forced eradication going on in Colombia now than there was last year. It's manual, mostly manual eradication, aerial spraying has been suspended, and already the outgoing Santos administration authorized spraying with drones which we can get

in the Q&A, into what advantages and disadvantages drones have over other forms of spraying.

But Washington is simply obsessed with the coca and cocaine numbers, often there is spuriously tying over those issues mostly related to fentanyl to cocaine. We can also have a conversation about, what the rise of synthetic drugs means for the United States, and what it means for the world.

Very interesting changes, at Brookings I have done a good body of work on that, we had to a major event on it about two months ago now, but we can explore that: what it means for Colombia? What it means for the world?

What Washington should be doing is engaging with Colombia into how to sustain inclusion and equitable development. A lot of it centers on the rural areas, some of which also centers very much on urban areas.

And there is, you know, Minister Pinzón spoke about eradication promoting rule of law, that might be the case, but that's not necessarily seen with this -- but that is not how it is necessarily seen by hundreds of thousands of poor rural Colombians for whom illegal crops are the only source of livelihoods.

And to the extent that they can buy into the state, they need to believe that the state is bringing them basic human security. A core element of which of course is food security, is basic economic subsistence, we are really not even talking under the existing plans about social mobility and economic improvement. We are really talking about finding ways to provide livelihoods that are perhaps just slightly lower than the livelihoods going through coca, that's really the extent of what the programs as they are so far can afford, and often they really provide far less.

So this for me is really the core issue. Will it be about the growth of center part of Medellín, and Cali and Cartagena? Or will it be about social equity and

inclusion of the country for the first time in decades?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And Juan Carlos, the first question to you, please?

MR. PINZÓN: So, I think it's very important that the United States supports the Duque administration, has supported the past four, five administrations in an effective way. On my time as Ambassador here, Plan Colombia, as we knew it, came to an end and a new program, a new package, Peace Colombia, was structured.

To me, it was Plan Colombia 2.0, and the way I could put it in ways, we move from 70/30, 70 security, 30 social support, as Vanda describes, to something like 60/40, 60 percent now on social issues, 40 percent on security. I think there's a balanced set of numbers, but moving from speech into operational matters, we have a real challenge.

If we want to really, reduce those hectares of coca in an effective and fast way, definitely, when we talk here about alternative crops, and social investing in those areas, we really need to handle this with an effective and detailed planning, area by area.

I'm not against that, Vanda. And on these points we kind of separate, but then we get into the same connection, because it's not this or that, it's both, in my opinion. This is an integrated effort.

In that regard, we need to plan effectively, because having the right speech by saying, hey, we need to take development and social solutions to these communities, it's true, and I think we have been saying that for several years, but we have never been as effective as we should, especially on the most isolated and far-away areas of the country, we need to do that.

But on the other hand, we need to reestablish every necessary capability for our rule of law enforcement agencies to be effective in the land.

Aerial spraying is a big debate. Do we have to keep it or not? Do we lose

that? I mean, what should we be doing into the future? In my opinion, aerial spraying was a tool. As an isolated tool, was not good enough and, by the way, had declining returns for that time.

If we were to use it today, I can assure you that in certain areas, the size of the coca crops are so large that the returns will be very high again. But second, every time we need manual eradication, what we were doing was putting at risk the lives of policemen, soldiers and manual civilian eradicators, so, that's why having the tool of aerial spraying was effective for certain areas.

I don't think we should go back to a massive national aerial spraying. We don't need that, by the way. But we need to do a very focused, depending on cases, to use the tool when necessary. It's the only way we can, you know, really reduce that in an effective way, but at the same time, what we cannot do is repeat the mistakes of the past. You spray, you do nothing.

Now, you eliminate coca in certain area, manually, with drones, with aerial spraying, whatever the tool you use, that's a tool, but the same day, the same hour, you have to be doing the social program that guarantees new source of income for these families. I think that's the whole concept. Otherwise, you know, we will be even seeing an increase.

And let me explain one thing, with unofficial members and details, what I got to learn from my former colleagues at the security agencies is that, yes, we are sending more cocaine to the U.S. through Central America, through Venezuela; yes, we are sending more cocaine to Europe via West Africa, but there's a worrisome story now.

In addition to those, that consumption in Colombia is going up, that consumption in Brazil is going up, that consumption in Argentina and Chile is going up, and that it implies we have new markets for all this. So the problem is not going to come down just because we wait and tell, the problem will keep increasing.

And I insist, it might be worrisome a little bit to say this, but at the end, for Colombia's standard, point of view, this is money for corruption, this money for crime, and this is money to make the country more unstable. So, it is a real challenge.

MR. O'HANLON: A quick last point from Vanda. And then please have your questions ready.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: You know, whether we are talking about coca or other forms of illegal or informal economies such as logging that might be illegal, or --

MR. PINZÓN: Mining.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: -- mining or logging that's simply in violation of desirable practices by major legal companies, is a standard problem in Colombia, and new land theft taking place, once again standard problem in Colombia, such as for oil palm cultivation.

The issue is really about having an effective state presence that can enforce law against all, including against major agri-businesses, major vested interests. That is a part of the issue that has historically not been taking place. That of course requires that you have effective policing presence, whether this is police or some sort of Rural Police, or Military Forces --

MR. PINZÓN: Agreed.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: -- in large parts of the country that you have some functioning judicial processes, not the case in large parts of the country. And there is simply no way to do so quickly, hence you, Minister, have been involved with various of the consolidation plans, strategic zones, there are numerous integration.

There is simply an unrealistic expectation that all of this can be rolled out across the country at once. But the only way to really feasibly start making headway is to start concentrating on priority areas.



That is extraordinarily politically difficult, because it leads over and over to the issue, why some areas qualify for comprehensive state interventions, whether they are inserting policing and rule of law, or whether they are inserting socioeconomic developments, and others don't.

So, the tendency, because of basic democratic electoral pressures, are to do a little bit everywhere, and that however, inevitably jeopardizes development, and never -- social development, broadly, it never leads to sufficient consolidation, and it is the issue that Colombia is facing over and over again.

So, one is the basic issue of equity. Will the upper classes, will the middle classes be willing to shoulder far more taxes for a number of generations so that the underdeveloped areas do get development? But will the underdeveloped areas be willing to see very unequal development in their own areas taking place, with some zones having far more development early on, because they are simply more suitable to it?

There are some parts of Colombia with nothing other than an illegal crop, other an illegal economy will ever be viable. Those areas should be the last to tackle, the ones that should be prioritized are the ones that accomplishments can be reached. But it goes to the very difficult electoral, popular issues, of why do all these people get the state help and we don't?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Let's go to you. I'm going to take two questions at a time. Please wait for a microphone. I see two hands in the back, so let's take both those questions, and then we'll come back to the panel, please? And please identify yourself before you pose your question.

MS. BEITTEL: Hello. My name is June Beittel, I'm with the Congressional Research Service. This is a fascinating discussion. I want to thank all of you for it. My question, given that I cover Colombia Congress, it's the late breaking news of yesterday. And

what you think the impact of Former President Uribe's decision to step down from the Senate will have on the incoming Duque administration? I did give you all a heads-up that I would probably be bringing this up, only because I get the questions. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And we have one more question, in the row behind you. Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. My name is Robert Durando. I would like to ask if you could comment a little bit on anything related too of descendants, racial and ethnic inequalities, particularly in the Pacific Coast, like (inaudible), Tumaco, and other areas. And also the situation with Venezuela, a little bit more on the Northwestern (inaudible) corridor as well?

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. Why don't we start with you, Mr. Ambassador? Take either or both. And then Vanda can respond. Ideally maybe you each take one but, you know, you may want to comment on the second one as well. It's up to you.

MR. PINZÓN: Well, I will start with the second question first.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay.

MR. PINZÓN: It's not that I will not answer the other one. But I will start with the second one, with Venezuela issue. I think when I describe the challenges we had, maybe I missed to mention that definitely, the Venezuela challenge for Colombia, and what is going on in Nicaragua, are two issues that are important for the new administration, how to handle it.

In the case of Venezuela, as you know, it's not only a very critical situation that is going on inside, but Colombia is directly affected by it as Venezuela has been in the past for Colombian situations. It's a border situation.

We have seen huge amounts of immigration into the country, and that immigration is bringing some sense of frustration from Colombian citizens as well, because

that immigration is coming to compete, as happens in other parts, for jobs, for social services, for public services, and even sometimes raises security challenges. That is a fact.

So, we need, of course, to create a better and more effective refugee policy for what is going on with Venezuela. But to be practical, you know, this is not anymore an issue of, you know, having a failing or an ending democracy in your neighborhood, but it's what the consequence, day-to-day, it is implying for Colombia. And of course, it costs money. It has a fiscal impact. And as I said, it has a social and security effect.

Second, of course, is the permanent threatening, you know, coming out of tough words, coming out of the Venezuelan Government, especially in the past two years, with certain events, provocations and cases that are important to look at. Colombia understands, and I guess there's some consensus, that we will not fall into provocations, that we are a mature democracy; that we don't play -- we don't follow the playbook of, you know, these people that are trying to bring us into their own trap.

But, it's something to keep an eye. And not to forget that half of the cocaine that goes out of Colombia, goes to Venezuela. And a lot of what happens is that the connections between FARC, ELN, criminal bands with authorities of a certain level in Venezuela, by corruption, or by government approach, is not a story, it's a proven fact. So, it creates another issue for complication.

Finally, not to forget that there are only two countries that still have a border difference with Colombia; Venezuela and Nicaragua. But what a coincidence, right now these two regimes are behaving as they are behaving, having the issues that they have, but in addition to that, with influence of extra-regional powers, that probably are here, not because of Colombia, but may be because even the interest of the United States, or to put it in a way, and knowing your own neighborhood. I lead it onto that just to, you know, think through.

Of course the Pacific Coast that you mentioned, in which most of the Afro-descendant community of Colombia lives, has been a real challenge for the country in terms of the poverty that we see there, and the contradiction of an area full of natural resources, more water than any place in the world, you can imagine, very important assets for mining. You know, gold, platinum and other, you know, wonderful opportunities.

One of the most beautiful areas in terms of environmental endowment, you know, the things that you see there are second to none in the world, and of course being the Pacific Coast, located in the Pacific Basin, where everything good of the world somehow is happening in terms of economic growth. And this is a total contradiction, that's of course of the poorest areas of Colombia.

In the years to come I believe we will have to create an integrated plan specifically for that region. We will have to think through something like that has been taught in some Asian countries, you know, developing everything related to infrastructure, allocation, and some vision, on what should be done.

That will require of course, an invitation to the private sector to feel safe, to invest there massively, not only Colombian private sector, but definitely, you know, think this, you know, in a regional, global concept. But I believe it's only way, because the other approach that we have done is trying to solve, as Vanda will explain, with small money, putting small money everywhere.

A little bit of this here, a little bit of this here, so at the end you give the impression you're doing something, but you're not solving anything. So, we need here, a macro approach.

Now, the tough question, because it is the headline of the day. The headline of the day is related to President Uribe as you described. I'll give you my own personal opinion and take. First, I'm personally always committed to respect of institutions, and to

respect of rule of law, and our legal system.

So, of course every citizen has to comply to authorities when they are required. If we want this country to move forward, that's the way we have to. That's, you know, honestly my permanent approach to, you know, to any issue related to institutions.

But secondly, President Uribe has been an important person in Colombia, a contributor to the advances we have had. As any citizen he has to, of course, comply with his obligations to the law and to the justice, but let me tell you, it's very difficult to explain especially to kids and to young people, how come that people that, you know, committed the worst crimes against humanity can have a regular and wonderful life protected by the state.

Or how come someone that, with all, you know, the different perspectives you can have about, politically that person will have to hold such a challenge. In Colombia we will have to think through on how to balance these kinds of situations, because we are just trying to pass through a peace process that, by the way, when it was taken to the ballot, people voted: no. We cannot forget that.

And just recently, despite my own aspirations, I have to be clear, the country voted for a President that is representing that agenda that somehow opposes the idea of impunity for these kinds of people.

So, we need to find a balance in Colombia, because it doesn't make sense, to see someone like President Uribe in such a challenging situation, and see these kinds of persons that we know then, that everybody knows, you know, without risk or harm.

This is where we need to find a balance. I insist, you know, people in Colombia have to confront justice as we are in a democracy, it is what it is. But let's not forget about this dilemma that I'm bringing to you, because this is what is in the minds of many Colombians today.

And that creates public tension, friction, if you want in politics, so if we want

to move to the future, we really need to disarm these things, and really allow us to focus on the real issues we are discussing here, you know, poverty, inequality, difficult geography in areas, potential business investment, and making Colombia, you know, a country for technology, and a country for the future.

But if we keep onto these feuds, moving politics into judicial, and judicial into politics, frankly speaking, you know, we are going to continue to do this in a slow way.

MR. O'HANLON: Vanda, do you care to comment on either of those questions?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Sure. Just quickly on the President Uribe news. You know, I would add that this creates very early on, a very interesting dilemma for President Iván Duque. Well, of course it comes with the Party that President Uribe created, the Democratic Center, and he's the Founder of it. The two men have been very close. It was very clear that a lot of the ideas, agenda of President Duque -- of President Uribe, or by President Duque.

That said, however, in my view President Elect Duque was never simply a pawn or a puppet of President Uribe, as some claimed during the campaign and tried to denounce it, and it would always be a balancing act for him, how close he would stay to his mentor, and how much he would need to represent a much broader Colombia. A Colombia, well, some 40 percent of people voted differently.

And this now puts the tension, or the difficulty that the President Elect would have to have resolved during his presidency, every early on, how far he would be able to separate himself from the process, and like the judicial processes take place, without it involving him, but at the institutional level, or at a simply political level.

So, you know, interesting development that I am sure President Elect Duque was really not hoping to have on his plate, just as President Uribe did not want to face.

And I just want to add a comment about the dissatisfaction with the justice issues that many people in Colombia faced the referendum, defeated the original peace accord by a razor-thin majority, it came very, very close, nonetheless the referendum turned out, no.

And one of the principal objections for many people was the fact that FARC leaders, as long as they completely disclosed their crimes, pay reparations to victims, will not have to face prison sentences.

And both President Uribe, and President Iván Duque have strongly campaigned against it. It's actually very difficult to undo that, even if new laws, their past, the existing peace accord, that provision is already part of the Colombian law.

And even if new laws were passed, Colombia's legal system privileges guarantees that the law that gives most lenient sentences will be the law that prevails. So it's very hard for President Elect Duque to, in fact, challenge the legal outcomes of what the special jurisdiction for peace would be part of the expectation that this is not -- that this is not prison sentences. This is, for example, something like house arrest.

Well, I think the possibility, however, comes to much more active effort is to be systematically condemning those outcomes. And to be systematically pointing out what Minister Pinzón spoke about. How can FARC leadership will have granted seats in Congress after they complete whatever the house arrest, whatever the sentence will be, where, people like President Uribe are facing judicial processes.

To be systematically mobilizing and creating rancor and resentment against the deal, with the outcome then being far more polarized politics. For many people in Colombia, it's really desirable that the FARC never gets elected, and they perform as poorly as they did in this year's congressional elections.

I actually wonder whether that's the case, and whether they are not, in fact,

significant risks to them systematically performing poorly, whether that will not speed up and exacerbate the problem of defection, particularly as the insertion, or the integration has really not been taking place. You know, the mobilization disarmament has taken place, but the integration of FARC members, ex-FARC members has really not.

I want to spend a little bit of time on the Afro-Colombians, a very important issue, historically a very marginalized community, and one of the tragedies is that some of the areas where they reside, and have long suffered, some of the greatest violence, marginalization, the greatest negative effects of forced eradication, like Chocó, like Nariño, are once again back in significant increases and violence.

Chocó, for example, where you have mentioned the Afro-American communities -- Afro-Colombian communities, but also indigenous communities, seeing a lot of intense violence between the ELN, between the Gaitanistas or Urabeños, several other groups; and the only way to really -- apart from providing robust security with all the challenges that we spoke about, the only way for the Afro-Colombian community to start enjoying some fruits of the peace and justice, is to systematically integrate them into decision-making processes.

And here is where I am again worried about the Duque administration, the core parts of the peace accord was that community -- that rule development, community development will be bottom-up, that communities themselves like the Afro-Colombian communities would have a very strong voice as to how development in an area takes place.

And President Elect Duque is clearly backing away from, and his view is that growth and development should be driven by large agri-businesses. Well, I would really like to hear how minorities such as Afro-Colombians will have a voice, will have some opportunity to have their needs met, not simply through handouts, but through actually being integrally a part of the development process. And I don't see that in the policies that are being spoken



about right now.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. So, I think we have time for one more round of questions. So, let's see if we can get a couple more here. We've got one about 10 rows back, and then one in the third row, and we'll wrap up with those two, I think. No, you just walked past the person I was asking you to -- we'll start with her, and then we'll come up to the third row.

QUESTIONER: Hi there. My name is Tracy Welsh. I'm a Reporter with Devex, the Global Media Platform. This question is for the Ambassador. I was wondering if you could expand a little bit on your comments about Venezuela, and sort of how you expect the new administration to deal with that issue, if you expect any major changes, as the problem next door, obviously, is not going away anytime soon. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Great! And then one more up here, please, in the third row? Perfect. Thank you.

QUESTIONER: Hi. My name is Varidia Rincon. This question is also for the Ambassador. I was wondering if you could speak a little bit more about Vanda's point, about staggering security, or seat presence in certain areas, to maybe increase the effectiveness of it. If you think that's at all possible.

MR. O'HANLON: Great! So, why don't we do this? Why don't we give the floor to you, my friend, since the two questions were posed directly to you? But then also give Vanda a final word of conclusion at the end, and please wrap up any concluding thoughts you've got in your answers to these questions as well.

MR. PINZÓN: Thank you so much, Mike. On Venezuela, the current administration, President Santos' administration has detached from the policy that they held for something like seven years. The Colombian Government has been, especially the past year, supporting OES statements, and denouncing the situation on the Colombian border, the

presence and sometime cross of members of the National Guard, even in view of the Army in Venezuela in the past year-and-a-half I would say.

And it has become somehow, despite the political polarization, nobody recognizes when you polarize the other side, I would say the current administration has to start on that to get closer to the incoming administration position.

President Duque, as Senator, went to the International Court to present a case for, you know, the breakup of democracy and the human rights violations, into the International Court against the government of Venezuela. That he did during candidacy time.

Even in my case, I sent to the OES a letter claiming for the intervention and promotion of terrorism in the case of Venezuela against Colombia, specifically in the case of the ELN. Once President Duque was elected he came here to Washington, he met the Secretary General of OES, and he made a statement supporting the OES position.

I'm giving you some dots in time, just to tell you that I think that Colombia's position right now, and on this more and more general consensus on certain sectors, the Venezuela situation is seen as a real problem for Colombia, and it's seen as a challenge on all the layers that I described before.

You know, immigration, refugees, security, the ELN, criminal bands, corruption, drug trafficking, illegal mining, FARC, also the -- you know, the situation for Venezuelans themselves. You know, we are a democratic country and we by, you know, moral, high standard, we have to oppose to regimes that are, in essence, against democracy or prosecuting citizens, you know, without any reason.

So, I think the stance of Colombia will be clear, and will be evident. Now, another line that I think President Duque gave here in Washington, that I believe is important, that is consistent with what has been the traditional Colombian position, and to that, it's that Colombia will never be an aggressor to another country, and much less to a neighbor and

brother of blood, as Venezuela is to Colombia.

So, I think that's an important position. You know, we are not trying to combine or create situations, appropriations, we want to have, as a country, a clear line of values, democratic values, and make those clear and respected. But we are not seeking, as a country, for nothing different than that.

And of course we are trying to handle the refugee crisis the best possible way. I think the United States, as well, need to help with, you know, counternarcotics policy which I think can have an important role, and to that we will require other countries, in addition to the United States, maybe the European Union, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, to contribute to the refugee crisis of Venezuela that is happening in Colombia right now, with more than a million people already inside Colombian territory. That's a real challenge. And I think that's an important issue to mention.

On your final question: what if the Colombian state can be brought to isolate the areas? I can assure that we can, and actually we can make presence of our security forces on every place of the country any time, any hour, even at night, you know. And that we have done.

And we can stay now because we have I would say, never you have enough manpower, but we have a large manpower, that number have at least -- has committed operationally in counterinsurgency warfare as we were in the past. So, we can make presence.

Unfortunately, as part of the agreements, in certain areas of the country, you know, there was not accepted, the permanent presence and deployment of our security services. And I think this is an issue we need to tackle now in an effective way. We need to be very practical.

I believe in what Vanda said, you know, if you want to have rule of law, the

first thing you have to have in place: are the security forces capable of ensuring that rule of law? Because then, and this I can tell you, you know, evaluating the right sets of policies and taking development to Colombia, this is what we have done for generations now.

It's kind of a common language now, well, what do you need to solve the problems in Chocó? Well, we need education, we need social services, we need quality, the obvious. This is now an operational issue.

How do we do it? We have done that in certain places. How do we do it now in an effective way, because security forces are not the state? It's from peace of the state. We need the order to come, but we need the same kind of planning, and the same kind of political will, and the same funding as we needed with the other part.

And I think Vanda was right on one point, this is not going to happen only in Duque's administration, and will not happen in the first year. We need patience, we need to be patient, this is going to take 10, 15 years. But what we need is a clear plan, multi-year that everybody knows and respects, it doesn't matter who is the government. We don't have that yet. And I think we need to, you know, focus onto that.

Honestly, that was one of the things I thought I was going to bring to the table. Frankly speaking, making operational Colombian State, to me that's even more important in many regards than even just keep, you know, rolling on the same stories.

So, I'm going to end, you know, with some comments on -- or maybe I should let Vanda, and then myself. Go ahead.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: You know, I would just; I guess, add or emphasize that last comment. That the issue is really how to stay with the basic plan, with the basic commitment while certainly making adjustments to policies, to approaches that are actually not being effective on the ground, but how to stay with the basic questions.

And that, to me, is not yet obvious, that Colombia is really committed to that.

What I expect in the Duque administration is not really checking, or throwing away the accords as such, but perhaps being very lukewarm in their implementation, playing bureaucratic games with what agencies are in charge of what development, and not giving in enough budget.

That issue of the budgetary commitment is a pervasive problem across the world; it was one of the key issues in Brazil and Pepe, for example. It's a key issue in places like in India. There will be a massive challenge, and I'm not persuaded that commitment at the societal level, at the politic level, there is in Colombia, the downsides of the absence of the commitment is that the peace might simply then become a transmutation that is there. It might simply be the start of a transmutation to a different form of conflict.

So there are two ways to look at what what's happening in Colombia right now. One is that the insecurity, the challenges that we are facing, are the very difficult tail end of what the peace accord started. It's the positive outlook, that's that one I want to believe in, but the other way to look at it is that it's not really a tail end, but that it's the beginning of a different, perhaps more fragmented, more complex conflict that we have seen.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And, Juan Carlos, for a final word, over to you please?

MR. PINZÓN: Well, thank you so much. You know, I had a wonderful time here, back at Brookings. Three final thoughts: one, we need to focus very much on making Colombia attractive for investors, we need job creation, we need sources of income, and we need to make Colombia competitive.

And of course we have all these issues, we have this cost today, there are things we need to tackle, but we need to not to forget on these big agenda, because that agenda, of economic growth and investment, is one that can pull, and somehow, disrupt the stagnation that we have had in the, you know, isolated areas for the country. So, I think that

important.

Second, I think, as I've said before, the new generations of politicians, of people that have some level of leadership, need to exercise responsible leadership, this doesn't sound very much attractive because being disruptive is always easier, using a tough word is always easier, but in countries like mine, I think we need to be patriotic -- if I can use that word -- and understand that there are problems that are common to all, and that will be good for the country if we advance on those.

Third, we need to recognize that there's a new President with a new agenda, that agenda was the one that won. It was not my agenda. I have similarities, I have points in common, but what we cannot do is defend the agenda of loss, you know, trying to equalize with the agenda that won. No, let's support the agenda that won, you know, let them advance, of course be a critic, balance the agenda when necessary, but let them have a plan, and let them have success.

I end my comments by saying that, as I said at the beginning, I am independent, I am not part of the Duque administration, will not be, but I can tell that it's important for Colombia to line up as a country, to find points in common, and to promote progress.

I think President Duque is a decent person; he's a good man, confronting many difficult challenges, many difficult challenges, but we need the country to move forward, we cannot stay in the past. We've got to move to the next level, and I think we can.

I might sound a little bit chauvinistic, but believe me, we have a wonderful country, we have a wonderful country, it's a country that can do better, that do well, that in some ways have done extraordinarily well, as compared to where we come from.

But now let's seek for the next level, and maybe now that we have a new generation in government, it's the time to promote that push, understanding that, you know,

taking decisions have consequences and, you know, we have to support that in a way.

Thank you so much. Great time!

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, all. Thank you for being here. (Applause)

\* \* \* \* \*

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

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