

COLOMBIA IN ARMED CONFLICT? 1946-1985

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Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es aplicar el marco conceptual propuesto por el Conflict Data Project (CDP) de la Universidad de Uppsala para determinar si Colombia experimentó un conflicto armado entre 1946 y 1985. La investigación determina si las organizaciones opositoras y el gobierno, así como otros Estados, cumplen los requerimientos del CDP para ser considerados como tales durante el periodo en cuestión. Se revisan reportes, relatos y noticias a propósito de las muertes relacionadas con los combates para determinar la intensidad del conflicto y la actividad o inactividad de las organizaciones opositoras. La investigación encuentra que antes de 1953 no se registra actividad de organizaciones opositoras con incompatibilidades claramente expresadas. Existen elementos insuficientes para sugerir la existencia de un conflicto armado entre 1955 y 1964. Finalmente, entre 1964 y 1985, Colombia experimenta un conflicto armado de intensidad menor e intermedia entre el gobierno y varias organizaciones opositoras.

Palabras clave: Conflict data project, conflicto armado, organizaciones opositoras, FARC, ELN.

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to apply the conceptual framework suggested by the Conflict Data Project of the Uppsala University (CDP) to determine whether Colombia experienced an armed conflict between 1964 and 1985. The study determines if the opposition organisations and the government meet the criteria of the CDP in order to be studied as such. Reports, stories and news regarding the number of battle-related deaths are reviewed to determine the intensity of the armed conflict and whether an opposition organisation is to be considered as active or inactive. The study reveals that previous to 1953 there is no activity of an armed conflict or opposition organisations with clear stated incompatibilities. There are not enough elements to suggest an armed conflict between the government and an opposition organisation from 1956 to 1964. Finally, between 1964 and 1985, Colombia experienced a minor and intermediate internal armed conflict over government, between the government and several opposition organisations. The intensity of the conflict shifted from minor to intermediate in 1973. Further research and additional information might suggest an earlier date for those changes. The results of the research allow and invite to its' correction and complementation.

Key words: *Conflict data project, armed conflict, opposition organisation, FARC, ELN.*

The Uppsala University Conflict Data Project (CDP) has been working for over a decade on a massive database to study and learn about armed conflicts all over the world. With the use of a practical and functional framework, the CDP has gathered information on opposition organisations, battle-related deaths and contested incompatibilities (among other variables) to determine intensity and the main characteristics of several interstate and intrastate armed conflicts in the post-Cold War era.

Over the last couple of years, a joint operation that involves the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), the Norwegian University of Sciences and Technology (NTNU) and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at the University of Uppsala, has engaged on a wider database that intends to collect information on armed conflicts since 1946¹. The backdating process employs the same principles used by the

1 Gleditsch, Nils Petter *et al.* 'Armed Conflict 1946-2001: A New Dataset'. *Journal of Peace Research*. London: 2002, Sage Publications, vol. 39, N° 5.

CDP and deals, like the current database, with all states (as defined by the framework) of the globe.

Gathering information and certain data to meet the project requirements, in order to make the database a reliable and useful source for the study of armed conflicts, is not always simple; there are frequent obstacles in finding accurate and truthful information. Sometimes data is not available or it does not exist at all. To deal with this sort of inconvenience, the CDP has created a wide category of unclear cases²; armed conflicts lacking of certain vital information to be considered as such by the project. However, the ultimate goal, in the long run, is to have as little unclear cases as possible.

The present paper deals with one particular unclear case: Colombia. It is intended to provide the CDP's database with valuable information and to make a modest but relevant contribution to the study of armed conflict in Colombia. The purpose of the original research effort was to determine, using the framework provided by the Peace and Conflict Research department, whether Colombia had experienced an armed conflict during the second half of the last century, understand the nature of the parties and determine the intensity of the armed conflict if one was to be found. In order to reach this goal it was necessary to gather data from various sources and tabulate it by date, place of battle, battle-related deaths and source of information. It is important to insist that data collection in the case of Colombia has been rather poor previous to 1986, as it has been pointed out by the CERAC dataset³.

Even though the period chosen for backdating by the Conflict Data Project starts in 1989, this paper starts in 1985 since data after 1986 is available for the case of Colombia and present somewhat reliable information. The best example is precisely the dataset of *Noche y Niebla* used by CERAC dataset to present his New Dataset on the Colombian conflict taking 1988 as the starting point. Unlike CERAC dataset, which is a complete and comprehensive analysis of existing information, the current research pretends to provide basic data and answer simpler but nonetheless important questions: Did Colombia experienced an armed conflict between 1946 and 1985? Who were the parties to this conflict?

2 See: <http://www.prio.no/cwp/ArmedConflict/>

3 Restrepo, Jorge, *et al.* 'The Dynamics of the Colombian Civil Conflict: A New Dataset' [online] [rev. August 23, 2005]. *Discussion Paper Series 10*. Department of Economics. Royal Holloway College: 2004, University of London. Available from Internet: URL <<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/economics/Research/WorkingPapers/pdf/dpe0410.pdf>>

What was the intensity of the conflict? There is a strong tendency by scholars both in Colombia and abroad to assume that Colombia has experienced more than 40 years of armed conflict. This study seeks to determine whether this statement is accurate using a well-known and widely utilized methodology.

The paper is divided into four sections, each one containing useful information that would lead the reader to know if Colombia experienced an armed conflict between 1946 and 1985 from the CDP's perspective. The first section mentions briefly the main definitions of the Conflict Data Project and underlines some particularities that must be taken into consideration when studying armed conflict in Colombia. It briefly explains the methodology used for the research. A second section explains and searches for an armed conflict in Colombia between 1946 and 1964 and attempts to determine whether the characteristics of the different types of political violence reported meet the criteria of the CDP.

Section three understands there is indeed an armed conflict in Colombia from 1964 and reviews the nature of the opposition organizations, their incompatibilities and other information required by the CDP. Section four displays in tables the result of the study using the scheme used by the CDP to expose their results in their annual report and the *Journal of Peace Research* and presents the conclusions of the research and its use. Sections two three and four contain the most relevant findings of the research effort. It also encourages the need to complement and question the work in order to consolidate knowledge on Colombia and its armed conflict.

CONFLICT DATA PROJECT DEFINITIONS

The Conflict Data Project has defined an armed conflict as "...a contested incompatibility which concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths"⁴. Each element of this definition is also clarified and explained by the authors.

4 Sollenberg, Margareta (ed). *States in Armed Conflict 2000*. Uppsala University: 2001, Department of Peace and Conflict Research. Report N° 60, pág. 21.

Sollenberg and Wallesnsteen also create a range of battle-related deaths as sub-sets of armed conflict to determine its intensity:

- Minor Armed Conflict: [...] At least 25 battle related deaths per year and fewer than 1,000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict.
- Intermediate Armed Conflict: [...] At least 25 battle-related deaths per year and an accumulated total of at least 1,000 deaths, but fewer than 1,000 per year.
- War: [...] At least 1,000 battle-related deaths per year⁵.

The definitions are intended to cover a specific type of political violence with a wide, but strict, framework to “systematically collect reliable data on armed conflict and various aspects of armed conflict globally and over time to allow for comparisons across time and space”⁶.

When studying the case of Colombia, it is important to highlight some aspects of the definitions in order to understand why the period studied is to be considered (or not) and armed conflict.

As stated above, an armed conflict is a type of political violence “that concerns major national issues and where the campaign is aimed at the state”⁷. It has to be reciprocal and it has to involve instrumental behaviour. That means that the actions “are not primarily aimed at hurting the opponent, but at forwarding the particular position in the incompatibility and thus has a distinctly rational component [...] Acts of revenge and punishment, typically massacres for the sake of killing civilians and large-scale killings, are examples of meaningless behaviour...”⁸. This is of course not always easy to determine since reports rarely include the intention of the perpetrator or the political objective of each armed action.

5 Ibid, págs. 21-22.

6 Sollenberg, Margareta. *The Uppsala Conflict Data Project: A Background Note for the Internet Database*. Casual publication for internal use at the Peace and Conflict Research Department: 2002, Uppsala University, pág. 4.

7 Ibid., pág. 3.

8 Ibid., pág. 6.

The nature of an opposition organisation must also be deepened. On the one hand, the violence carried out by these organisations must involve conducted and planned campaigns rather than spontaneous violence when promoting their incompatibility against the government. The incompatibility, on the other hand, must concern structural relevant matters or distribution of authority. A core aspect of the incompatibility is also that it must be stated (in writing or verbally). The absence of a clear stated incompatibility might imply the absence of a clear political goal and even lack of organisation, and therefore the analytical exclusion of an armed group to an armed conflict⁹.

In order for an opposition organisation to be taken into account as active in armed conflict situation, it must have necessarily produced or suffered at least 25 battle-related with the government. Finally, and related to the CDP methodology, it should also be said that, in relation to Colombia's case, the information must include only clear and trustworthy data for any variable. Hesitant and likely information should be treated carefully and taken into account for the unclear cases database.

Some criticism has emerged regarding the use of the CDP's methodology since it screens out many events that, although related to general violence or even to the parties involved in the conflict do not meet the criteria and thus distort the actual intensity of the violence¹⁰. Although this might be true, especially for the case of Colombia; characterized by complex dynamics of interests and actors, the purpose of this paper is to extend backwards a single methodology. First, to clarify what the CDP considers an unclear case previous to 1985 and contribute to the finalisation of the debate consisting on whether violence in Colombia can be considered as an armed conflict or not.

Clearly, the comprehensive approach given to the data collection process by CERAC dataset is of great contribution to the understanding of political violence. However, the "flat dynamics in cross-country data" allows the analysis of global trends by creating data sets of specific

9 Ibid., págs. 5-10.

10 Restrepo, Jorge, *et al.* 'The Severity of the Colombian Conflict: Cross-Country Datasets versus New Micro Data' [online] 2004 [rev. August 23. 2005]. *Discussion Paper Series 23*. Department of Economics. Royal Holloway College: 2004, University of London. Available from Internet: URL <<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/economics/Research/WorkingPapers/pdf/dpe0423.pdf>>

violent behaviour that encourages the study of a specific type of political violence across the globe; that is the armed conflict. The need to determine whether Colombia experienced an armed conflict is not mutually exclusive to understanding the nature and evolution of political violence in that country.

'LA VIOLENCIA': REPRESSION, EXCLUSION AND 'FRATRICIDAL WAR', 1946-1950

The expression "La Violencia" (*The Violence*), is often used by scholars and politicians to recall an obscure phase of Colombian history when civilians and police forces fought within and against each other over political sympathies. Payne describes the situation as a Defensive Feud defined as a "struggle between two groups in which each side recognises the existence of a mutually acceptable solution less costly than fighting, but that solution cannot be reached" ¹¹.

Pearce, on the other hand, describes "La Violencia" as a phase in which "...the violence was generated mostly in the name of the parties; rural bosses mobilised their peasants clients in bloody vendettas against neighbouring villages; liberal landowners organised peasant-guerrillas armies which engaged the Conservative forces of the state in 'hit and run' actions"¹². Even though it is widely accepted that the period of "La Violencia" claimed over 200.000 deaths between 1964 and 1953, it is not clear that those deaths were related to an armed conflict with clear opposition organisations with clear and stated incompatibilities over government or territory.

The first stage of "La Violencia" can be characterised by three different elements or trends: exclusion, repression and 'fratricidal war'¹³. The exclusion was an attempt by the government to close the state apparatus to the liberals. Six Liberal ministers were retired from

11 Payne, James. *Patterns of Conflict in Colombia*. New Heaven: 1968, Yale University Press, pág. 161.

12 Pearce, Jenny. *Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth*. London: 1990, Latin America Bureau, pág. 52.

13 'Fratricidal war' is a creative and eloquent term used by this author to describe the insanity and peculiarity of the political violence experienced in Colombia. See Sánchez, Gonzalo. 'War and Politics in Colombian Society'. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*: 2000, Human Sciences Press, vol. 14, No. 1, pág. 31.

the cabinet (leaving an all conservative cupboard). In 1949, President Mariano Ospina (Conservative) shut down a widely Liberal Congress. During the same period, a law that compelled the presentation of a voting certificate to apply or keep a job, with the knowledge that the liberals had not participated in the elections, was made effective. Over all, these are some examples of an official campaign against Liberal partisans. However, the use of violence did not go hand in hand with exclusion and it produced neither battles nor deaths. It was mere political exclusion.

Repression was also a main characteristic of the days of “La Violencia”. The government used the Army and the Police force (the later being strongly politicised) to repress Liberal political opposition. Those acts of repressions were, though, directed against unarmed civilians causing their death or displacement and the forthcoming creation of peasant self-defence groups. In general, this kind of official activity was not addressed against a coherent opposition organisation that engaged in violence or the use of arms with the intention of promoting a stated incompatibility.

To understand this point it is relevant to keep in mind that there is a difference between a political party or a political organisation and an opposition organisation, as the CDP understands it. For instance, Liberal partisans engaged in violent activities and ‘disorders’ against institutions and government officials. These spontaneous actions were mostly a response to the general violence rather than an organised strategy conceived to overthrow the government or alter its’ polices; at least not before 1952.

Another relevant feature of the first stage of “La Violencia” is the “Gaitanismo” and even Jorge E. Gaitán himself. Gaitán, despite of being Liberal, managed to create an informal political movement that gathered both liberal and conservatives partisans at a time when that difference could also make the difference between life and death. With famous speeches and references to the leading class as the *enemy to defeat*, Gaitán exposed a new social conflict; not between pairs with different political believes, but between the oligarchy and the people¹⁴. This movement, although related to the violent events, was not an opposition

14 For an insight to Gaitán’s role in ‘La Violencia’ see Braun, Herbert. *Mataron a Gaitán: Vida pública y violencia urbana en Colombia*. Bogotá: 1987, Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

organisation, for it had no clear structure nor a unified command or any other characteristic that might allow thinking of it as a belligerent group. It was simply a political movement.

Lastly, the 'fratricidal war', name given to the general violence among partisans of both political parties, was marked by spontaneous actions and reactions of gangs and bands of conservative and liberal civilians towards the general violence. The 'battles'; however, were not directed against or between armed factions of the adversary (real or not). As explained by Pearce: "Direct confrontation was rare; Liberal guerrillas carried out an act of sabotage and revenge was exacted on any Liberal household [...] Criminality and senseless violence intermixed with political and social violence. The barbarism unleashed was multifaceted and defies easy explanation"¹⁵.

Although it is true that such unrest lead to the creation of the first 'Liberal guerrillas', organised and directed by landowners and local political leaders, there was no direct confrontation with the army¹⁶ nor a solid or stated goal (incompatibility) that would support the violent actions before 1953. As stated by a witness, "...the idea they had [the rising guerrillas] was not national or provincial. It was more a regional or municipal initiative with no perspective [...] there was no political instruction nor a program to follow"¹⁷.

Overall, the violence that occurred in Colombia from 1946 through 1950 cannot be considered as an armed conflict from the CDP's point of view. Being loyal to a political party and make use of arms to promote such devotion does not imply militancy for an opposition organisation. Conditions or theoretical requirements such as the involvement of governmental forces (different to the armed followers of the Conservative Party) and documents revealing stated incompatibilities referring to government or territory are absent. The 'fratricidal war' might be an example of political violence and even inter-communal violence, not of armed conflict.

15 Pearce, *op. cit.*, págs. 52-53.

16 Matta A., Luis Alberto. *Colombia y las FARC-EP, origen de la lucha guerrillera: testimonio del comandante Jaime Guaraca*. Tlalaparta: 1999, Nafarroa, pág. 41.

17 *Ibíd.*, pág. 47.

EMBRYONIC GUERRILLAS AND GENERAL VIOLENCE 1950-1953

To say that Colombia was not experiencing an armed conflict previous to 1953 (at least clearly), does not mean that there were no armed actors or violence. On the contrary, probably the absence of a central command for those gangs and bands or a clear incompatibility was what triggered the outrageous violence among civilians.

On the one hand, there was the Police Force. This body was highly decentralised and politicised before 1953 and responded to partisan loyalties depending on the local leaders and government officials. Their violent actions were not directed specifically against the 'other party' before 1949. There is, even, evidence of some armed encounters between the Army and the Police¹⁸.

In 1953, the Police was officially made a governmental force when the dictator Rojas Pinilla included them as a division of the Ministry of War with military ranks and procedures. It cannot be asserted that previous to 1953 the Police was a governmental force fighting an opposition organisation. The central government did not have clear control over the force or a clear idea of who the enemy was. This armed body was used as a political instrument for repression and acted almost freely as part in the 'fratricidal war', but it does not meet the CDP criteria to be considered as an official force to an armed conflict.

The Army, on the other hand, was going through a process of 'modernisation' and stayed rather marginal to the ongoing violence. Between 1946 and 1950 the Army grew from 8.000 men in arms to over 20.000¹⁹. Even though the government made several attempts to use the Army in its campaign against the Liberal partisans and the insipient guerrillas, combatants from all parties saw the armed body as a neutral force.

The opposition organisations had begun a process of conformation and coordination from 1949 and on. The repressive governmental campaign and the constant threat of neighbouring unofficial Conservative bands forced Liberal landowners to organise their peasants

18 Oquist, Paul. *Violence, conflict and politics in Colombia*. New York: 1980, Academic Press, pág. 154.

19 Pearce, *op. cit.*, pág. 52.

in self-defence groups with the (also unofficial) support of the Liberal Party. Although some of these groups engaged in banditry and common crime, other fronts were conceived as forces of opposition against the 'brutal dictatorship'.

For the followers of the majority Liberal Party, the Conservative government became a dictatorship designed to repress Liberals as part of the political objective of retaining power at all costs. This led to open armed conflict designed to overthrow the government, related coup d'état conspiracies, the formation of armed groups that sought to resist local repression in some areas, subtle forms of civic resistance that resulted in the sabotaging of government programs [...] The government was at war with significant Liberal guerrilla groups in the Eastern Plains, Southern Tolima, Northern Cundinamarca, Caldas, Antioquia and Santander. These groups had as one of their objectives the violent overthrow of the Conservative government²⁰.

Despite Oquist's suggestion of evidence of an incompatibility concerning government made effective through violent activity, what those regions held was a handful of different commandos, motivated to act for several reasons lacking both armament and organisation²¹.

By 1950, there were over thirteen Liberal "guerrillas" that, in spite of their attempts to organise armed actions against the government could not consolidate the help of the Liberal Party. The later adopted a cautious position regarding the guerrillas' request for armament and leadership. The lack of resources also encouraged clashes between different commandos for the control of the insipient 'revolution'²².

These disputes between organisations, some clashes with the Army and the attacks coming from the politicised Police force had a strong impact on the embryonic guerrilla forces.

By August of the same year [1950], the guerrillas had been clearly defeated, and they rapidly lost adherents and gained turncoats. At the end of the year, the various movements had largely disbanded, and the surviving leaders were living clandestinely²³.

20 Oquist, *op. cit.*, pág. 178.

21 Franco I, Eduardo. *Las guerrillas del Llano: testimonio de una lucha por cuatro años de libertad*. Medellín: 1976, Ediciones Hombre Nuevo. 3rd edition. Chapters II, III & IV. The second part also provides a descriptive record of events regarding the lack of armament and the difficulties in organising the different commandos.

22 Franco also exposes and explains the nature of the liberal guerrillas throughout their early years including internal struggles and development.

23 Oquist, *op. cit.*, pág. 154.

That did not stop in any way several more attempts to create a strong opposition force to fight the central government. However, that project was never materialised. One attempt was the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación de Colombia (FPLC) —*People's Force for the Liberation of Colombia*—. For the creation of that group, claims a witness, "...there were an approximated total of eighty men, badly armed and lacking ammunitions that were more willing to continue drinking alcohol, cock fighting and dancing than marching to the encounter with the police"²⁴.

Over the years, endeavours took place to organise an armed movement against the government or any other armed group (also disorganised), but they all emulated the path of the FPLC²⁵.

The leaders of the insipient and already defeated guerrillas were aware that if they did not manage to gain official support from the Liberal Party, their actions were destined to involve defensive actions repelling irregular conservative forces.

We would need to fight continuously in order to gain recognition for our own strength. For that unifying the political thought to support the violence was indispensable. It was also necessary to agree for once and for all: First, that as long as the dictatorship was not overthrown, we would not rest our arms or our guerrilla commandos; second, no decision or activity (like treaties or pacts) different than the constant struggle would be done without consulting and being approved by our central commandos²⁶.

Nonetheless, the only real attempt to reach such a structure and organisation coincided with the demobilisation of most of the Liberal guerrillas. In June 1953, the Liberal guerrillas redacted a vast law called *La Segunda Ley del Llano* —Second Law of the Plains— the text stated on article 138 that "The goal of the Revolutionary Armed Forces is to defend the people and fight the enemy until victory is achieved so that the tyranny can be overthrown and a popular government is implemented in Colombia"²⁷. Such a clear incompatibility is reinforced

24 Franco, *op. cit.*, págs. 198-199.

25 *Ibid.*, págs. 102, 125, 127, 161, 170, 255.

26 *Ibid.*, pág. 102.

27 Umaña Luna, Eduardo. "Normas propias y actitudes del conflicto". In Guzmán, Germán *et al.* *La violencia en Colombia*. Volume II. Bogotá: 1980, Carlos Valencia Editores. 9th edition, pág. 131.

in article 203 in the same document. The law also confirms Guadalupe Salcedo as the Supreme Chief of the Revolutionary Forces. The organisation reached an agreement with the government before any relevant military activity took place.

Despite the fall of the Liberal guerrillas and their failure on creating a coherent opposition organisation, there is another potential opposition organisation that must be taken into account: the Communist guerrillas.

In the year 1951, "Liberal peasant guerrillas began to break from the liberal ranchers who had initially helped to create them. The landowners resented guerrillas' demands for many and supplies, although they had happily used them to defend their property and interests"²⁸.

The army, on the other hand, mobilised against the guerrilla groups left. The landowners who had supported the guerrillas joined the governmental offensive creating the "Guerrillas of Peace"²⁹. The important aspect is that in some areas the Liberal guerrillas refused to attack the government and avoided encounters with the conservative forces. They demanded protection and respect towards their land and families. Ultimately, these groups began to receive support from the Communist Party in a clandestine manner. These events lead to the creation of a peasant self-defence project that would organise entire communities around it. These groups would be known as Communist guerrillas.

Juan de la Cruz Varela armed his surviving peasant leagues around Sumapaz, while in other areas the Communist Party helped reorganise the peasants and their resistance. This initially took the form of peasant self-defence, but gradually the dynamics of events led peasants to take up arms and form their own guerrilla forces. In El Davis, peasants organised a guerrillas enclave and self-sufficient community under the political leadership of the Communist Party, which, till it had a population of 5,000, attracted people fleeing from other areas³⁰.

Just like the Liberal guerrillas, those sponsored by the Communist Party could not establish a unified central command due to their different motivations and uneven development³¹. For instance, on

28 Pearce, *op. cit.*, pág. 57.

29 *Ibíd.*, págs. 56-57.

30 *Ibíd.*, pág. 56.

31 Pizarro, Eduardo. "La guerrilla revolucionaria en Colombia". In. Sánchez, Gonzalo y Peñaranda, Ricardo (comp.). *Pasado y presente de la violencia en Colombia*. Bogotá: 1991, CEREC, pág. 52.

August 16th, 1952, the *Declaración de la Primera Conferencia Nacional del Movimiento Popular de Liberación Nacional* —Declaration of the First National Conference of the Popular Movement for National Liberation— stated that “... the revolutionary fight that is taking place in the country against the conservative dictatorship requires the participation of all good men...”³². The text even mentions incompatibilities regarding the management of mines and plantations, agrarian reform, justice and international politics.

Each territorial faction or command operated in an independent manner from each other and from the Communist Party. The documents found are a reflection of attempts to organise their struggle and not the result of an organised political armed activity.

The Communist guerrillas adopted military ranks and a political doctrine in 1950³³, but attempts to bring together all factions under an umbrella project lead by the Communist Party failed in 1952³⁴. The incipient guerrillas managed to stay away from combats until 1954 when the government, having achieved the demobilisation of the Liberal guerrillas, attacked the enclaves in South Tolima and the Eastern plains.

Overall, the embryonic groups that operated between 1950 and 1953 cannot be seen as opposition organisations from the CDP’s perspective. On the one hand, both movements struggled in coordinating their commandos and harmonising a political incompatibility with the fighting. Although a spectator claims that “...since then I began to hear that the struggle was for overtaking power, that the fight was for socialism; that was an element that distinguished us from the liberals”³⁵, it is not accurate to believe that one organisation was more political than the other. All in all, the study does not find one single armed activity that coincides with any of the different organisation created before 1953 (which does not mean that it did not happen at all). Most of the organisations created through documents with stated incompatibilities had a very short life, if any at all. Therefore, it is not feasible to think that each commando represents alone an opposition organisation.

32 Ibid, Appendix No. 1.

33 Matta, *op. cit.*, pág. 66.

34 Pearce, *op. cit.*, pág. 57.

35 Matta, *op. cit.*, pág. 60.

Furthermore; as stated above, even if the Communist guerrillas had a clear organisation and a stated incompatibility, there is no evidence of fighting with the Army before 1954. Another element that inhibits the consideration of the Communist guerrillas as an opposition organisation is their own persistence on their self-defence nature³⁶. It must not be forgotten that the offensive activity is one of the main elements required by the CDP in order to think of an opposition organisation as such. Conclusively, it is not accurate to assert that Colombia experienced an armed conflict from 1946 to 1953, in spite of being one of most ferocious periods of recent history in terms of violent deaths.

BECOMING AN OPPOSITION ORGANISATION AND 'LA VIOLENCIA' LEFTOVERS, 1954-1964³⁷

The arrival of General Rojas as an impartial part to the general violence was seen initially as a positive political move by most of the political factions in the country. The amnesty offered to the Liberal guerrillas was a relative success and in five days in September 1953 over 6,500 guerrillas handed in their weapons. The Communist guerrillas refused to take part in the amnesty but ceased using their weapons³⁸.

It was not long before the government used the still growing informal armed structure of the conservative and liberals for its own benefit. The general tendency against Communism also grew and the communist 'enclaves', although inactive, were seen as a menace by the central government. With the support of the demobilised Liberal guerrillas and a professionalized Army due to its participation on the Korean War, General Rojas "organised a military expedition of 4 thousand men and 5 aircrafts against Villarica, the main communist settlement"³⁹.

36 For a deeper insight regarding this matter see: Pizarro, Eduardo. *Las FARC (1949-1966): De la autodefensa a la combinación de todas las formas de lucha*. Bogotá: 1992, Tercer Mundo, págs. 39-88.

37 The original study includes a brief analysis of the involvement of Colombia in the Korean War between July 1953 and November 1954 from the perspective of the CDP. However this paper is limited to the study of intra-state armed conflict.

38 Emmerich, Norberto. "Plan Colombia". Buenos Aires: 2002, Universidad de Belgrano. *Documentos de Trabajo*, No. 87, Feb., pág. 10.

39 *Ibid.*, pág. 10.

Despite the magnitude of the combat and the continuous bombing, the self-defence communities were not harmed⁴⁰ (American Embassy, Bogotá, 1955). However, the attacks produced their displacement. As a consequence, explains Pearce,

...the Communist guerrillas regrouped in the south of Tolima and north of Cauca, where they set up what came to be called the 'independent republics'. Another group of about 3,000 peasants, many women and children, were evacuated from Sumapaz in a dramatic march [...] constantly attacked by the army, they marched out of the area to colonise the piedmont of Meta and beyond, a process of 'armed colonisation' which was to have important implications for the future⁴¹.

During the 'armed colonisation' the Communist guerrillas continued to receive support from the Communist Party of Colombia, which, on the other hand, had been officially banned by Roja's government as part of a strategy to weaken the 'independent republics'⁴². The armed encounters also occurred constantly and the communist commandos readopted their military structures. However, the armed activity was demoted to operations of securing displacement and procuring weapons and food⁴³.

Despite the seeming activity of an armed conflict, although unclear regarding the nature of the opposition organisation, the governmental campaign for 'pacification' included media censorship and information monopoly. These events probably explain why the study could not find any battle-related deaths in the communist enclaves. The same logic applies to the years 1956 and 1957. In 1955 however, due to the Villarica War, it is possible to track reports of over 120 battle-related deaths. This information allows thinking of the situation as a minor armed conflict. An obstacle still lies in the absence of reliable information regarding a stated incompatibility. Even though media and official reports differentiated vandalism from Communist guerrillas' activity, it is not

40 United States of America, American Embassy Bogotá. "Memorandum a Charge d'affairs. Disturbances in Villarica and other Areas" [online]. May 25, 1955. [rev January 30, 2003]. Declassified document obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (published by Paul Wolf, 2002). Available from Internet: URL <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/villarica25may1955.htm>>

41 Pearce, *op. cit.*, pág. 60.

42 For an insight on the nature and development of the 'independent republics' see: González Arias, José Jairo. *Espacios de exclusión: el estigma de las repúblicas independientes 1955-1965*. Bogotá: 1992, CINEP.

43 Pizarro. Las FARC (1949-1966), *op. cit.*, págs. 88-94.

clear that there is an organised body that uses arms against the government for some particular reason other than defending themselves from governmental attacks. There does not seem to be an offensive strategy.

Looking at the death rates from 1954 through 1961, it is clear that the levels of violence were rather high. However, most of that violence is more related to 'La Violencia' and general banditry than to an apparent armed conflict between the government and the Communist guerrillas as an opposition organisation.

An American Embassy's document describes the situation for those years as follows:

In general, political violence in Colombia may be divided into three categories: (1) The fighting, now largely quiescent, carried on between organised guerrillas bands and Army and police units; (2) Depredations of the 'pájaro' gunmen, partisans of Rojas armed under his regime or previously by the Army; and (3) Outright banditry carried on under the pertinence of political motivation but actually dedicated to theft and murder for gain [...] Guerrillas bands originally dedicated to political ends have evolved into bandit groups while maintaining, at least ostensibly, political objectives; the 'pájaros' have often combined banditry with their political missions of eliminating political opponents and of showing disruption and terror. Often, too, the personal vendettas and violence between families, so characteristic of Colombian rural life, are mistakenly given political connotation by the press⁴⁴.

Altogether, these activities do not belong by nature to an armed conflict. The absence of a clear organisation, the lack of political goals to justify the use of arms against the government (incompatibility) and the complexity to locate these actors within a political spectrum, are facts that prevent including all violent deaths as battle-related deaths in an armed conflict context.

However, the 'armed colonisation' materialised through the 'columns of march' might suggest the existence an offensive activity by the attacked communist enclaves as a strategy to achieve certain goals related to an ultimate political objective conceived and developed since 1952. Then again, the study could not find one single document previous to the 'armed colonisation' justifying or explaining the intention

44 United States of America, American Embassy Bogotá. "Political Violence in Colombia: The Guerrillas Situation" [online]. REF: Embdesp 559, February 5, 1957; Embdesp 637, March 8, 1957. Dated July 18, 1957. Declassified document obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (published by Paul Wolf, 2002). [rev. October 21, 2002]. Available from Internet: URL <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/poole18july1957.htm>>

of the offensive or giving the organisation, or the mobilising group, a name or a reason of existence as required by the CDP.

In fact, in 1956, the 'Plan for Struggle' of the atomised organisation determines that clashes with the army should be avoided and that the 'main strike' should be directed against "...groups of armed civilians that are harming the peasants"⁴⁵. In other words, the conflict, as suggested by the document, is not against the government, but against 'leftovers' from *La Violencia*.

In 1957, when the military junta replaces Rojas Pinilla, a new amnesty offer is made to the communist groups, and all semi-organised armed groups. On this occasion, several groups, with the Support of the Communist Party demobilised. Those located in the 'independent republics' agreed a truce with the Army that included allowing mobility to the peasants and the dismantling of any military structure of all guerrilla commandoes⁴⁶.

Between 1957 and 1961, the Communist guerrillas kept their ties with the Colombian Communist Party, which provided political training and economical support. A process of agrarian reform, agreed in 1957, was never materialised. In spite of this, on December 24th, 1957, the guerrillas ceased any armed activity against armed factions or governmental forces.

In 1958, when Liberal candidate Alberto Lleras Camargo took the presidential chair, a new stage in the fight against the guerrillas and other armed groups begun. "On the one hand, measures were taken towards what was called the rehabilitation of the 'zones affected by the violence' [...] On the other hand, help was denied to those territories whose inhabitants were seen as unreliable by the government"⁴⁷.

From 1960 to 1962 the counter-guerrillas, created by the government to retaliate the 'danger' that the communist enclaves represented,

45 González, *op. cit.*, pág. 56.

46 Matta, *op. cit.*, pág. 104.

47 Gott, Richard. "La caída de Marquetalia: De los movimientos guerrilleros en Latinoamérica" [online]. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1970. [Rev. August 9 2002]. Available from Internet: URL <<http://www.derechos.net/paulwolf/colombia/caidademarquetalia.htm>>

initiated a continuous attack to the communities⁴⁸. By 1961, the government had officially threatened the groups in Marquetalia and surroundings and by 1962 the Army's Sixth Brigade was ordered to attack Marquetalia, Riochiquito and Guayabero, the main communist enclaves. As a consequence of this new offensive, the incipient opposition organisation disbanded and regrouped months later looking for a strategy for survival.

Between July and September, 1964, the peasants organised, with the support of the Communist Party, two conferences. The *Programa Agrario de los Guerrilleros* —Guerrilla's Agrarian Program— states that "...for the circumstances above mentioned, we had to look for an alternative: The revolutionary means for the fight for power"⁴⁹. The same document gave a name to their organisation (*Bloque Guerrillero Sur* - Southern Guerrilla Bloc) as the one that should attempt to take over power through violent means using a mobile strategy of guerrilla warfare.

This is the first clear sign of an armed conflict in Colombia between an opposition organisation and the government, were the first had clearly stated incompatibilities' regarding the latter's composition, policies and even ideology and shows reported armed activities related to such incompatibilities. Previous to July 20th, 1964 any armed conflict evidence still reveals an unclear case in the eyes of the CDP.

During the same period, and with the inspiring experience of the Cuban revolution, several other groups appeared with analogous perspective. In 1959, the MOEC (*Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil Campesino* - Students', Workers' and Peasants' Movement) was founded. Created with acceptable political and military strategy, the movement states its intention to promote a 'peoples offensive'. However, there are only reports of five battle-related deaths in 1963 and by the end of 1964 the group had cracked in pieces⁵⁰ (Pizarro 1991: 399).

The FAL (*Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación* —Liberation Armed Forces) and the ERC (*Ejército Revolucionario de Colombia*— Revolutionary Army of Colombia) were also created during the same period, but do not show any real activity or a clear stated incompatibility.

48 Matta, *op. cit.*, págs. 118, 124, 128.

49 *Ibíd.*, pág. 165.

50 Pizarro. *La guerrilla revolucionaria en Colombia, op. cit.*, pág. 399.

In conclusion, the period from 1954 to 1964, remains as an unclear case from the CDP's perspective. Although some coherent violence took place, there are several inconsistencies regarding a stated incompatibility and the level of organisation of the various armed groups. It is sometimes not even clear who their enemy was.

Assuming that there was an armed conflict and that the difficulties regarding stated incompatibilities and level organisation are defeated, it could be said that between 1954 and 1964 (before the foundation of the Southern Bloc) Colombia experienced an unclear minor intrastate armed conflict over government during the years of 1955, 1957 and from 1960 to 1964. The periods mentioned above are the only years with over 25 battle-related deaths determined through reports and documents with certain trustworthiness⁵¹. Being the Communist guerrillas the sole active opposition organisation for most of the years of activity. The conflict never reached more than 1,000 battle-related deaths in any year or over the total of years of presumed activity. It must be highlighted that the conflict is still, due to the information available, an unclear case.

A CONSOLIDATED ARMED CONFLICT AND THREE TYPES OF OPPOSITION ORGANISATIONS, 1964-1985

From 1964, information on stated incompatibilities, opposition organisations and battle-related deaths improves for the case of Colombia. Overall, there are three types of opposition organisations or candidates to be considered as such for the following period and that can be associated to an armed conflict in Colombia.

The first type, and most important of all, is formed by those organisations that having given a name to themselves, showing clear levels of organisation and having stated an incompatibility with the government, have produced over 25 battle-related deaths in several years throughout the armed conflict.

The 'Southern Bloc', as mentioned above, was created in 1964 and shows armed activity related to their incompatibility in the years 1964 and 1965. Each year, battles with governmental forces produced over

51 The original research document includes a bibliography for each year analysed so that the reader can review where the data was taken from for each year analysed.

200 deaths⁵². The assault on Marquetalia and surroundings alone claimed over 247 deaths⁵³.

The assault, like previous experiences with the same communities, triggered a new metamorphosis. On May 5th, 1966, the Southern Bloc submitted the *Declaración Política de la Segunda Conferencia del Bloque Sur* – Political Declaration of the Second Conference of the Southern Bloc. This time around, the leaders of the organisation adopted a pro-Soviet ideology with the goal of removing the government from power and replacing it with one ‘of the people’⁵⁴. The organisation was to be called FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). Their first armed encounter with governmental forces occurred in Quindío the same year they were created when clashes with the Army resulted in the loss of over 70% of their weaponry⁵⁵. It was also in 1966 when an armed encounter resulted in the first clearly recorded battle-related death. As an opposition organisation, the FARC continued as an active group claiming over 25 battle-related deaths constantly from 1966 to 1985 (with the exception of the years 1969 and 1970). The FARC adopted the termination ‘EP’ (Popular Army) in 1982.

The ELN is another opposition organisation that belongs to the first category. Towards the end of 1964, a group of students that had returned from Cuba launched the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* – National Liberation Army inspired by the Cuban Revolution. The ELN implemented a strategy thought by Ernesto Guevara and found echo with the Theology of Liberation, allowing a strong link with Catholicism.

52 Giraldo, Juan Fernando. “Colombia en conflicto armado, 1946-1985: Un estudio del caso de Colombia desde la perspectiva del Conflict Data Project de la Universidad de Uppsala”. Undergraduate thesis to obtain the degree of Political Scientist at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations. Bogotá: 2002, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, págs. 81-82.

53 United States of America, American Embassy Bogotá. Progress Report on Colombian Internal Defense Plan [online] (IDP REF: Embassy A-628), March 27, 1963. Dated August 15, 1965. [cited 9 august 2002]. Declassified document obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (published by Paul Wolf, 2002). Available from Internet: URL <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/oliver15aug1965.htm>>

54 Matta, *op. cit.*, págs. 164-167, 198-200.

55 Pearce, *op. cit.*, págs. 167.

The first recorded armed action performed by the ELN, which caused over 10 battle-related deaths on January, 1966⁵⁶ coincides with the release of a manifesto that...

... was meant to express the organisation's point of view regarding education, land property, poor labouring condition for workers, small and medium producers. It also adopted an anti-imperialist position and expressed the beginning of the revolution with no goal other than overthrowing the government; exhorting all protagonist of the social conflict to participate...⁵⁷.

With a clear stated incompatibility over government, the ELN is an opposition organisation that has been active for several years, although more interruptedly than FARC. Although new evidence might show otherwise, the study finds that the use of arms between the government and the ELN produced over 25 battle-related deaths the following years: 1965 to 1969, 1973, 1974, and 1978 and in 1984.

The last opposition organisation that belongs to the first category is the M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de abril* – April 19th Movement). It is different to from the rest of the organisations for it is of urban nature. It was created in 1972 after supposedly fraudulent presidential elections. The early years of the organisation are characterised by 'audacious' actions that had a strong impact on public opinion. Their first public demonstration, although did not result in any deaths, was stealing Simón Bolívar's sword from a museum. In 1975, the first death occurs when a union leader was murdered allegedly by this organisation.

It was not before 1978, or so the study finds, that the M-19 reached at least 25 battle-related deaths in one year. After that, the M-19 became active again in 1981 and it continued being so until 1989 when negotiations with the government took place. From 1985 the M-19 was a part of a the broad coalition CNG (*Corrdinadora Nacional Guerrillera* – National Guerrilla Coordinator), and in 1989 acted as part of the Coalition CGSB (*Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar* – Guerrilla Coordinator Simón Bolívar) that included all major guerrilla movements active at the time and was, therefore, the only active opposition organisation for that year. This however is not shown in the data since it goes beyond the scope of analysis.

56 Medina Gallego, Carlos. *ELN: una historia de los orígenes*. Bogotá: 2000, Rodrigo Quito editors, pág. 107.

57 *Ibíd.*, pág. 108.

A second type of recognisable opposition organisations consists of those groups that in spite of having an incompatibility with the government and resorting to weapons in order to promote such incompatibility are only active through a small number of years, if any. Sometimes some sort of activity is reported, but it does not lead to at least 25 battle-related deaths for at least one year.

Two of the groups are splinters from larger organisations. The PLA (Guerrilla Commando Pedro León Arboleda) and the FRF (*Frente Ricardo Franco* – Ricardo Franco Front) are factions of EPL and FARC respectively. The previous shows some minor activity in 1981 and 1984 but it never reached 25 battle-related deaths while the later shows clear activity on the year 1985.

The MAO (*Movimiento Armado Obrero* – Armed Workers Movement), the ADO (*Autodefensa Obrera* – Workers Self Defence) and PL (*Patria Libre* – Free Homeland)⁵⁸ show some kind of armed activity in the early eighties', but it does not result in any deaths.

The EPL (*Ejército Popular de Liberación* – People's Liberation Army) belongs too to this category. The origins of the organisation are a direct consequence of the divergence between the Leninist and the Maoist approaches to Communism⁵⁹. The 17th of July, 1965, the Marxist Leninist Communist Party (PC-ML) is created, and with it the EPL as its armed branch. It is not before April 28th of 1967 that the first regiment for opposition is officially created.

Firstly, their actions were directed against landowners and their 'personal armies' and it is not until January 6th, 1968 that clashes with the army result in battle-related deaths⁶⁰. In the end, the EPL shows clear activity in 1984.

The last type of opposition organisations, a type that has no impact on determining an armed conflict, is characterised for organisations that having a name for themselves, and an apparent incompatibility with the government show no reported activity at all. The MARC (*Movimiento Armado Revolucionario de Colombia* – revolutionary Armed Movement of Colombia), FPAG (*Fuerzas Populares de Acción Guerrillera*

58 The stated incompatibilities of these organisations are yet to be clarified.

59 Calvo, Fabiola. *EPL: diez hombres, un ejército, una historia*. Bogotá: 1985, Ecoe, págs. 16-25.

60 *Ibid.*, pág. 39.

- Popular Forces of Guerrilla Warfare) and the CAOS (*Comando de Autodefensa Obrera 14 de Septiembre* – Septiembre 14th Workers’ Self-Defence) are the most relevant of this set.

There are also some groups that, in addition to the absence of reported armed activity, have an unclear level of organisation and stated incompatibility. The ERT (*Ejército Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* - Workers’ Revolutionary Army) and the MPL (*Movimiento Pan y Libertad* – Bread and Freedom Movement) are representatives of this type of group. Tables 1 and 2 show the information gathered and tabulated as it has historically been presented by the CDP in its’ publications.

CONCLUSION

COLOMBIA IN ARMED CONFLICT, 1946-1985

As displayed in Table 1, Colombia did experience a clear intrastate armed conflict with an incompatibility over government in a continuous fashion after 1964. Data on battle-related deaths shows a minor intensity until 1973 and an intermediate intensity until 1985⁶¹. Table 1 also shows how every single year included in the study presents over 25 battle-related deaths, but no more than 1,000 in one single year. Information available suggests that evidence of armed conflict previous to 1964 should be treated as an unclear case; nonetheless, data is displayed both in Tables 1 and 2. The study also finds that violence previous to 1953 does not have the characteristics of an armed conflict as it is understood by the Conflict Data Project.

In the context of an unclear case, it should also be said that the apparent absence of at least 25 battle-related deaths for 1954 and 1956 is likely to be a consequence of little information available rather than the absence of armed activity related to a stated incompatibility. On the other hand, negotiations between the government and the Communist guerrillas towards the end of 1957 and the lack of relevant armed actions between 1958 and 1959 shows as inactive years both for the opposition organisation and the armed conflict in general.

61 Data on battle-related deaths is cumulative in tables 1 and 2 starting on 1964 since it is only then when an armed conflict becomes clear.

As part of the armed conflict, the case of 1970 is atypical. This year at least three opposition organisations produced over 10 battle-related deaths leaving over 30 battle-related deaths concerning the incompatibility. However, none of them reached a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths; requirement to be considered as active. The conflict over government is a minor armed conflict, but there is no active opposition organisation, unless new information suggests otherwise.

During the 40 years studied, at least 8 opposition organisations among coalitions, splinters and guerrillas, took part on the conflict. All of them having stated an incompatibility concerning government, changes in major policies, its' composition or its fundamental ideology. And none of them achieved or have achieved such goals through violent means.

Comparing violence levels during the analysed period and the result of the investigation, it is evident that violence and armed conflict did not go hand in hand in Colombia previous to 1985. Not pretending to explain the causes of violence in Colombia nor the origins of the current armed conflict, this paper provides, as expected, useful data to clarify what the CDP has called for several years an 'unclear case'.

With no intention of giving an end to a debate that might have not even begun, the present study is a first step on the search of an armed conflict in Colombia. Data on stated incompatibilities and battle related-deaths is still susceptible of being improved, and hence a more accurate result might still be achieved. The study encourages for further research but succeeds in presenting reliable information to improve the CDP's database and giving a different approach to the study of armed conflict in Colombia.

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Table N° 1 Colombia in Armed Conflict, 1946-1985

Location/ Government	Incompatibility/ Opposition organisation	Year of activity									
		1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Colombia	Government										
	Guerrillas Comunistas										●

Location/ Government	Incompatibility/ Opposition organisation	Year of activity									
		1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Colombia	Government										
	Guerrillas Comunistas					●		●		●	
	Bloque Sur FARC									●	●
	ELN										●

Location/ Government	Incompatibility/ Opposition organisation	Year of activity									
		1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Colombia	Government								■	■	■
	FARC	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
	ELN	●	●	●	●				●	●	

Location/ Government	Incompatibility/ Opposition organisation	Year of activity									
		1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Colombia	Government	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	FARC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	ELN			●					●	●	
	EPL								●		
	M-19			●			●	●	●	●	●
	FRF										●
	CNG										●

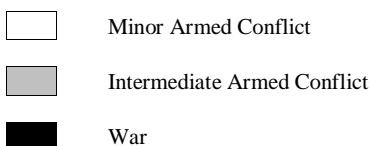


Table N° 2 Colombia in Armed Conflict: General Characteristics

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Incompatibility</i>	<i>Year formed/ year joined</i>	<i>Warring parties</i>	<i>No. of troops this year</i>	<i>Total deaths</i>	<i>Deaths this year</i>
South America							
1954	Colombia	Govt.	1952/1954	Govt. of Colombia vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	400		
South America							
1955	Colombia	Govt.	1952/1954	Govt. of Colombia vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	> 20,000 400		> 120
South America							
1957	Colombia	Govt.	1952/1954	Govt. of Colombia vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	32.000 < 2,000		< 25*
*Possibly over 25 battle-related deaths this year.							
South America							
1960	Colombia	Govt.	1952/1954	Govt. of Colombia vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	< 2,000		> 30
South America							
1961	Colombia	Govt.	1952/1954	Govt. of Colombia vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	23,000 < 2,000		> 25
South America							
1962	Colombia	Govt.	1952/1954	Govt. of Colombia vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	1 600 - 2 000		< 100

(Continúa)

(Continuación)

South America						
1963	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia			
		Govt.	1952/1954	vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	775	> 135
			1959/...	vs. MOEC*		
* Is not clear whether this opposition organization was active this year.						
South America						
1964	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia		> 70	> 160
				vs. Guerrillas Comunistas	775	> 70
		Govt.	1964	vs. Bloque Sur*	>200**	
*The Guerrillas Comunistas (<i>Communist Guerrillas</i>) that had been operating as a self-defense organization decide to adopt guerrilla warfare strategies to overthrow the central government and call themselves 'Bloque Sur'. This organization adopts the name of FARC in 1966.						
**Leaders of the organization later claimed that they were made up of 42 fighters in 1964.						
South America						
1965	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia		37.000	> 270 > 200
		Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	30-40	
			1964	vs. Bloque Sur	>400	
ELN: Ejército de Liberación Nacional (<i>National Liberation Army</i>)						
South America						
1966	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia		53.500	> 370 > 100
		Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	38	
			1964	vs. FARC*	>400	
FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (<i>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia</i>)						
*The organization, operating until this year under the name of 'Bloque Sur' takes the name of FARC this year.						
South America						
1967	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia			> 440 > 70
		Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	90	
			1964	vs. FARC	600	

(Continúa)

(Continuación)

South America						
1968	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia		> 500	> 60
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	>100		
		1964	vs. FARC	650		
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	80		
EPL Ejército Popular de Liberación (<i>People's Liberation Army</i>)						
* Is not clear whether this opposition organization was active this year.						

South America						
1969	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	60.000	> 590	> 90
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	>100		
		1964	vs. FARC*	700		
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	90		
* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.						

South America						
1970	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	64.000	> 710	> 120
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	150		
		1964	vs. FARC*	740		
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	100		
* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.						

South America						
1971	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	64.000	> 760	> 50
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	115		
		1964	vs. FARC	780		
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	100		
* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.						

South America						
1972	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	63.200	> 810	> 50
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	95		
		1964	vs. FARC	790		
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	90		
* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.						

(Continúa)

(Continuación)

South America					
1973	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	63.200	> 1
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	65	110** > 300
		1964	vs. FARC	790	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	80	

* Is not clear whether this opposition organization was active this year.
** Taking into consideration the imprecise nature of the information available, it is possible that the conflict reached 1,000 battle-related deaths previous to 1973.

South America					
1974	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	63.200	> 1 165 > 55
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	38	
		1964	vs. FARC	800	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19*		
		1967/1968	vs. ADO*		

M-19: Movimiento 19 de abril
ADO: Autodefensa Obrera (*Worker's Selfdefense*)
* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

South America					
1975	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	64.300	
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	27	> 1 200 > 40
		1964	vs. FARC	820	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19*		

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

South America					
1976	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	54.300	> 1 300 < 100
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	34	
		1964	vs. FARC	820	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	80	

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year..

South America					
1977	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	56.500	> 1 340 > 40
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	52	
		1964	vs. FARC	830	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	90	
		1974	vs. ADO*		

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

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(Continuación)

South America					
1978	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	75.000	> 1540 > 200
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	60	
		1964	vs. FARC	850	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	100	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19		

* Is not clear whether this opposition organization was active this year.

South America					
1979	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	75.000	> 1 710 > 170
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	65	
		1964	vs. FARC	900	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL	120	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19*		
		1974	vs. ADO*		

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

South America					
1980	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	65.800	> 1 910 > 200
	Govt.	1964	vs. FARC	980	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19*		
			vs. PLA*		
			vs. MAO*		

PLA: Movimiento Pedro León Arboleda
MAO: Movimiento Armado Obrero (*Armed Worker's Movement*)

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

South America					
1981	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	70.000	> 2 250 > 340
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	80	
		1964	vs. FARC	1.200	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	200	
		1974	vs. ADO*		
		1974/1975	vs. M-19		
			vs. MAO*		
			vs. PLA*		

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

(Continúa)

(Continuación)

South America					
1982	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	67.800	> 2 380 > 130
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	100	
		1964	vs. FARC-EP**	1.300	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	220	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19	> 800	
		1974	vs. ADO*		

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

**The FARC starts using the suffix 'EP' (*Ejército Popular – People's Army*) this year

South America					
1983	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	70.200	> 2 630 > 250
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN*	150	
		1964	vs. FARC-EP	1.570	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	250	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19		

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

South America					
1984	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	69.700	> 3 010 > 380
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	350	
		1964	vs. FARC-EP	1.640	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL	660	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19		
		1984/1984	vs. FRF*		
			vs. PLA*		
		1974	vs. ADO*		
			vs. MAO*		

FRF: Frente Ricardo Franco (*Ricardo Franco Front*)

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.

South America					
1985	Colombia		Govt. of Colombia	66.200	> 3 510 > 500
	Govt.	1964/1965	vs. ELN	700	
		1964	vs. FARC-EP	2.590	
		1967/1968	vs. EPL*	670	
		1974/1975	vs. M-19		
		1985	vs. CNG		
		1985	vs. PL*		
		1984	vs. FRF*		

CNG: Coordinadora Nacional Guerrillera (First coalition between the M-19, Quintín Lame and FRF)

PL: *Patria Libre (Free Homeland)*

* Is not clear whether these opposition organizations were active this year.