

Introduction
THE ROUGH ROAD TO PEACE

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We prepare ourselves like precocious giants for war, and like retarded pigmies for peace
Lester B. Pearson, Nobel Peace Prize Winner

A PLURALIST ENCOUNTER

In Cartagena, some positions were proposed which went against the “conventional ignorance” about peace processes in Colombia and the characteristics and situation of the process now managed by the Pastrana administration. This presentation of the work does not attempt to synthesize anything or to look for some common thread between contributions nor even to show contrasting points of view, as might be expected of a seminar which was called by its sponsors to debate and argue different points of view.

Hence the pluralist composition of the contributions. They came from past and present members of government, former guerrillas, intellectuals of different shades of opinion, members of the armed forces, American and European analysts, journalists, union leaders, businessmen – as faithful a reproduction as possible of the rich diversities that influence the political life of Colombia and its future. Carlos Lleras De La Fuente insisted that it would be useful to publish these Proceedings, so that a wider audience could share the intellectual experience.

These paragraphs seek to provoke intellectual curiosity on the part of the reader, and even his disagreement. SO we prefer to present points of view that are not often heard in public, or which may be open contradictions of official positions or of “the truths” which the media so love to massage us with every day.

The documents incorporated were prepared by well-known experts, some with intellectual baggage enriched by experience of government or rebellion against the system, others hardened by the painstaking analysis of other experiences of conflict and well acquainted with the outcome of their negotiations, several with an almost exhaustive knowledge of the convulsions of our recent history because they have written about it as respected academics, or as well-known journalists. Some were still bearing the serious burdens of government, others still do.

The debates and the work of the different groups were fed by their own visions and then refined with formulations collected up reports, which were then further explained by the members of the groups and others taking part in the plenary meeting. The reader will be interested in these criticisms and will discover the nuances, which separate the various approaches to the peace process. This does not mean that each of the participants

identifies himself with all of the rapporteur reports, either in form or content. The nature of this pluralist encounter is not intended to build consensus, but to provide for controversy, which will identify any common denominators that there may be. And that is the value of this exercise, I insist, since it is pluralist in essence, and its final purpose is, I hope, to make a constructive contribution to the peace process. So, we have a set of valuable individual opinions; and we also have some collective opinions, which we must read with due caution, but which represent a significant collective effort made by people with different ideologies and visions of our realities, and some times they are irreconcilable. This is the most positive aspect of the intellectual exercise conducted in Cartagena, the sixth in a series of meetings of the "Houston group" sponsored by the United States Embassy in Colombia, and with the sponsorship also of several important media, and the recently created Fundación Ideas para la Paz. The work of the main rapporteur, Rafael Nieto, is a remarkable effort to accentuate the points, which were not left clear, to highlight doubts, and to repeat certain questions, which were not answered, and to insist on matters which may be and are controversial.

PLURALITY OF OPINION

Without more a do and simply as one example, we should look at the various proposals made by the speakers. That the peace process has been going on for twenty years. A period longer than the Liberal Republic, or the coalition government of the 1960's. A conflict, which has been going on for 40 years, at ten years after agreements with the groups M-19, EPL, and PRT, Quintin Lame, and CRS, came in force, letting 6,000 guerrilla men rejoin civil society. And what do we say about peace as a state policy? That none of the last five governments have managed to put together a peace policy, which has consensus, is effective, and coherent or continuous, and that we have been twenty years at this, but each government considers that when it comes into office that is the first day of the process, throwing away all accumulated experiences of the past, and always apparently beginning from square one, while the guerrillas keep their leadership stable and upright, and by that manage to accumulate experience in negotiating and know how to manage the periods of our political system. But there is one exception, the transition between the Barco and Gaviria governments, because there was continuity there, both in people, purposes and in response.

Do the various speakers have an identical view of peace? It seems not. Some of them see it as a way of making sure that the guerrillas are converted into legal political movements; others, as a result of a negotiation for power, the distribution of power, and the control of resources which that generates, against those who believe that peace is creating a new country through reform process agreed with the guerrillas. Others again, consider that we should not wait to make agreements with the guerrillas about all that has to be changed. All reform, said one of them, which are seemed to be necessary, should be made without delay, and as an advanced laboratory of generation of consensus.

The issue of the laying down of arms by the guerrillas was not debated in any depth and that was only expected. That will be the subject of another discussion. Someone mentioned it as the Gordian knot of the peace process, by virtue of which the

paramilitaries say that if the guerrillas do not give up their arms, they will not do so either....!!! Another speaker said, straight at: “The FARC will not give up the use of arms, they will not demobilize as an armed group (...) we must look at a continuation of this armed group as a group under arms institutionally organized in some way.”

The issue of the paramilitaries, was the object of lively debate, particularly in the working group involved with that project. And it was reflected in the discussion held in the plenary after the presentation of the rapporteur report. The struggle against the paramilitaries, said one speaker, it’s a fundamental challenge in many ways, especially to create the subjective conditions of a possible transformation of the guerrillas into a political force.

The issue of drugs, which is essential to the Colombian conflict, gave rise to very different proposals. It was said that Washington keeps shifting the sliding line with the FARC: Are they guerrillas, or drug trafficking guerrillas? And he went further than that: How do you reconcile a national peace policy with the US drug policy? There were criticisms of the tendency to present an internal conflict as one, which is solely linked to drug trafficking. That the United States instead of having a policy addressed to the struggle against drugs, should instead direct itself towards the strengthening of institutional forces responsible for public security in Colombia. The United States should go further than its focus on fumigation, in order to look for more multi-lateral alternatives. But it was also said that while The Farc and their war plans are more linked to the drug business, the ELN would eventually be more willing to cooperate with the State in giving away with the unlawful crops in southern Bolivar. There were such blunt statements as this: The destruction of drug trafficking is a precondition, but it is not sufficient to achieve peace.

In the attempt to compare the various experiences of peace in Colombia, comments were made which should not be ignored. That the negotiations with M-19 were approached from the point of view of a principle: That neither the government platform, nor the guerrilla platform was for negotiation in the talks. This to some extent was ratified by one of the leading speakers in the following terms: “During negotiations of the Barco government it was increasingly clear that the M-19 was making an evidently political bet to seek power. What mattered to the M-19 was not what they will obtain at the negotiating table, but the effect that the process will produce on the state of mind of Colombians.” And what happened? The same speaker said, “The response of the country was greater than our most optimistic predictions.”

Was the Constituent Assembly a product of the agreement with the M-19? “In a strict sense,” says the most authorized, “these were processes which coincided, but which fed on each other.”

And how do they see the current peace process? It was proposed that what should be done was to recover confidence, but from Colombians as a whole. There was a call fro a conceptual correction, in which the Common Front had greater participation; there was another claim for a restructuring of the mechanisms of dialogue. There was a

recommendation to separate the management of the process of conversation with the ELN, and another proposal for political management for peace, which was less spontaneous, and less tied to “next week.” That the current peace process is taking place in an area of discussion of social and economic claims with low political content, and this would seem to be a marsh on all sides with no way out. That the current process is trapped, in some way, between inertia and uncertainty.

And what was said about the role of the international community? Some argued that the difference between successful and unsuccessful processes is international participation. And the United States? That the US should dedicate all its diplomatic and political efforts that it can to take advantage of existing channels and thus, make progress in the peace process. This should be the central direction of its policy.

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE PROCESS

Colombia has never been the object of so much attention and concern. Perhaps, on one previous occasion when the construction of the Panama Canal was proposed, and after the unfortunate time when President Roosevelt said “I took Panama.” But on that occasion, it was a great historical opportunity lost mostly because of the parochialism, which predominated in the Colombian congress. There is the anguished testimony of Tomas Herran, a young diplomat, who was Colombia’s interim Ambassador in Washington, whose cables, diagnosis and warnings found no echo in a government “with no sense of State” and much less, from the international community at the time. We could say that in the case of Panama, the interest of the international community in Colombia was for positive reasons: The construction of a canal between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

And today? The concern is for negative reasons. In Colombia there is a persistent and growing form of criminal activity: The production and trafficking of unlawful drugs. An activity, whose principal stimulus is a global demand for narcotics. An old vice of humanity, made worse.

In our times, due to a crisis in the fabric of society in the post- industrial era, in which a wide range of traditional values linked to the family as an institution has been weakened.

These negative reasons do not struck with the issue of unlawful drugs. Their overwhelming influence in public life, the economy and society in Colombia, has led to a weakening of institutions and values, which had made our society a modest one- true- but a respectable one. Thus, factors for destabilization, which were already there, but which were not a major challenge, they mushroomed: The guerrillas found an inexhaustible source of funds, which they do not deny, at the same time as they reject the phenomenon, and promise to help to eradicate it in their own way; incipient corruption found incentives, and therefore, the springs which have kept honesty high in society, began to collapse. Yes, until twenty years ago, and perhaps more, our society offered certain values in transparency, which went hand in hand with our style of life very different from ostentation and extravagance. The administration of justice was admired, and admirable.

Venality and other forms of corruption were not part of every day life. Former president Alfonso López, lawyer, university lecturer, lover of the law, with unconcealed pain stated in his memoirs "Palabras pendientes" his implacable judgement, "...because Colombia has become a country in which justice, and I say that as a professional lawyer, does not exist today. The judges, the arbitrators, obviously not all of them, give no guarantees of impartiality or rectitude. I do not refer to any specific person, but to a general feeling that here there is no judicial apparatus worthy of that name, and not only to punish those who violate the criminal code, but even to exercise the minimum rights of a contract. Colombia has become a country, in which nobody is guaranteed of a respectable judicial decision." 1 Alfonso López Michelsen. Palabras pendientes. El Ancora Editores, Bogotá, 2001, pp 171-172. (It should be noted that this round diagnosis did not generate any discussion or criticism when Lopez's book has been one of the most controversial recently published.)

The systematic violation of the most elementary human rights has for sometime scandalized international public opinion. And the inability, let it not be said, to overcome but to mitigate that situation, has been greater than the declared will of several governments. And therefore, the systematic violation of the rights of nature, of our rich biodiversity, of the purity of our abandoned water resources. The bombing of oil pipelines alone has generated an environmental disaster equal to eight Exxon-Valdez disasters, according to the diagnosis of the former Minister of Energy, Carlos Caballero Argáez, as just one example.

These and other highly negative aspects of daily realities have internationalized the crisis in Colombia. Experts like Gabriel Marcella and Donald Schultz, of the Strategic Studies Institute of the United States, see that this crisis has three conflicts, which for them are in the words of García Márquez: "A biblical holocaust," "drug criminals, guerrillas and paramilitaries, feedings are of violence, which comes from the colombianization , a metaphor as it to say that the state is failing. For them, Colombia is the most disturbed country in the hemisphere. 2 Colombia's three wars: US Strategy at the Crossroads, Miami, 5 March, 1999. David Passage on examining the link between guerrillas and drugs, in relation to the US drug strategy, says several times that that strategy should be directed to a state recovery of control of its own territory. 3 The United States and Colombia: Untying the Gordian knot, Miami, March 2000.

And at a conference attended by more than one hundred academics, officials, and military personnel of the United States and some Latin American countries, on December 10-11 1998, there was a proposal that it was urgent to solve the Colombian crisis, and to have a "comprehensive response" from the United States, the region, and the community of nations. Some emphasized the peace process, others a drug strategy and-or an anti-guerrilla policy. Richard Downes, professor of National Security at the University of Miami, summarized these discussions in a text, which he entitled "Landpower and Ambiguous warfare: the Challenge of Colombia in the 21 st century" (March 10th, 1999.)

So the analysis goes on. And concern of the crisis does not grow less. In another conference to analyze one of the responses to the serious situation, the implementation of

Plan Colombia (February 1-2, 2001), the speaker who compiled discussions said at the start and without reticence: "The Colombian crisis is the greatest challenge which the United States faces in the Western Hemisphere." The author of that monograph, Gabriel Marcella, owns that Colombians are mainly responsible for ensuring the success of Plan Colombia and the writer of the foreword, former Ambassador André Moss, says in reference to Plan Colombia: "But this moment, is as Winston Churchill said at a decisive moment of World War II, not the end nor even the beginning of the end, but perhaps the end of the beginning." In this conclusion, Marcella says "a military effort on its own will not save Colombia from the risk of a total failure as a democracy, but the risk of a failure is certain without that effort. History shows that all efforts against all counter-uncertainty efforts in the modern world have had a social, economic, and political component, to compliment the military part. 4 Gabriel Marcella, Plan Colombia, Strategic and Operational imperatives, Miami, April 2001. The process of diagnosis and debate could be endless. The xxx of Colombia was Joseph A. Nunez. 5 Fighting the xxx in Colombia: A new strategy of peace, April 2001. All those of Angel Ravasa and Peter Chalk of the Airforce Project. 6 Colombia: the spread of drugs and uncertainty and its implications for regional stability, April 2001. All those of the various organizations, which work for the protection of human rights.

But I should not leave out the most significant conclusions of these collective effort, made by a group of more than twenty US personalities, with the advice of another twenty Colombians, sponsored by the council on foreign relations, and Inter-American dialogue, in a project directed by Prof. Michael Schifter, "Greater peace and security in Colombia, xxx a constructive policy by the United States." (October 2000.)

"Many problems of Colombia are the result of a weak state, one which has historically had little presence in much of Colombian territory. Violence, criminal activity, and severe problems of humanitarian rights, are largely the product of a state, which has not been able to perform its most elementary functions: To protect its citizens, and to guarantee a rule of law." 7 Michael Shifter, Toward Greater Peace and Security in Colombia, Forging a Constructive US Policy, Task Force Report, New York, 2000, p.10.

The report proposes five areas to make a shared effort with the international community:

- Professionalization of the armed forces, and not only the three narcotics battalions, it should be said, to be reflected in the capacity and level of training, and the observance of human rights and the breaking of any link with paramilitary forces.
- To improve the judicial system, reduce impunity, and reform the present system.
- To mobilize key sectors of society in Colombia, to look for an end to armed conflict, and for reforms, and the improvement of institutions.
- To make progress in pushing back the growth of coca and the opium, with the strategy against laboratories, and continuing with extraditions as relevant.
- To make progress in the work of the government in mobilizing regional and international support for a broad strategy, as reflected in the Plan (p.23).

The diagnosis made by Europe is similar. But the solutions are not the same, as is reflected in the proposals made by the European Union by the Swedish Secretary of State on April 30, 2001, in Brussels.

1. It wants the peace process to be irreversible.
2. It renews the call of the parties to adopt specific steps of a far ranging kind, to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process.
3. It makes a call on the ELN to renew dialogues with the government, and to show its will to contribute with the peace process.
4. It hopes that the government will manage the process as a State policy.
5. It understands the support for the process as a system for negotiating parties and other agents.
6. It specifically supports two accords: That made with the ELN on 15 January, 2001, and the Los Pozos Agreement with FARC (9 February, 2001).
7. It supports the role of the international community invited to play different roles: As individual countries, as facilitators, as verifiers, etc.
8. It expresses its concern for persistent violations of International Humanitarian Law principally by the guerrillas and paramilitaries. (This represents a significant change in the lessons learned by the European Union, which previously was not prepared to condemn the regular armed groups for humanitarian violations.) It repeats that those matters are not negotiable.
9. It considers the practice of kidnap unacceptable, and requests the immediate release of the victims.
10. It calls for humanitarian accords and human rights accords, in partial and global terms.
11. It asks for intensification of the struggle against the paramilitaries.
12. It recognizes the link between the drugs and armed conflict, and considers that there is a challenge for all to find alternative forms of combating the drug's problem.
13. It declares itself in favor of manual eradication of crops. It proclaims the need to protect biodiversity.
14. It wishes to help construct trust in a vision of peace and development, especially in the Colombian people.

Thus, we can now see a very active participation by Europe in the process. For example: There will soon be a meeting with one of the guerrilla groups in Europe. It may be significant in the current circumstances. A representative delegation of Swedish society visited Colombia in recent days (fourteen of them) in order to identify ideas and projects, which they could support.

The European participation will have impact, which will be worth considering now. Europe is a new player with an attitude and baggage of experiences and visions, which will mean much to the process, particularly with regard to the guerrillas.

The careful report made by The Economist (April 21, 2001), does not distance itself from these proposals: "For Colombia, the principal challenge is to provide security for all

its citizens, replacing legalisms and outlaw of violence with the rule of law. It is difficult to see how can this be achieved without stronger armed forces, especially now, when there are guerrillas on two fronts. But Colombia cannot achieve peace alone through military means. The establishment of the rule of law means more and a better police, prosecutors, and judges, as well as troops.”

“It also supposes a political agreement through a peace process. But there are limits to what is negotiable. It would be silly to redesign the institutions of the country at gunpoint. What can the government offer? Certainly, an agricultural reform. And, after the hostilities have ended, the opportunities for the guerrillas are perhaps, to incorporate themselves into the police as part of the process. But the most important thing is to guarantee the guerrillas’ rights to take part in democratic political life, without threatening their lives and on terms of equality.”

REINTERPRETATION OF THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

The study of the nature of the conflict has also become an international affair. It is very probable that a refined diagnosis of the Colombian situation will enable us to overcome the views of the past, to incorporate into our analysis elements (if not indeed, all the arguments) of the study of Paul Collier or the analysis of those such as Mary Kaldor in her book *New and Old Wars, Organized Violence in a Global Era*.

The work of Paul Collier is better known to us. Here I summarize it: The “Bloodied diamonds” was an expression, which was common in Europe in recent months, which came to form part of the agenda of G-9, in their meeting at Okinawa, Japan.

What is it about? Well, there is a new reading of civil conflict. There is a hard question: What is it that inspired these conflicts? Is there an overwhelming anxiety to obtain money (greed)? Are there justified complaints regarding social inequality, injustice, or exploitations (grievance)? When due, these grievances become kind of all-enveloping mantle, for a typically criminal activity? At what moment does economic strength generates an agenda of grievances that must be taken into account.

The “bloodied diamonds” represent the typical case. The guerrillas in Angola, Sierra Leona, and Congo, control part of diamond production, and thus, finance their existence. An international campaign, which this is not the place to describe, led the diamond buyers and the G-9 to decide not to buy diamonds, which carried blood on them.

Paul Collier, of the World Bank, is the main exponent of this new reading. His work has already been the object of seminars and specialized debates. The most recent was published by the World Bank, on 15 June, under the title *Economic causes of civil conflict and their implications for the formulation of policy*. A preliminary version carried the title *Greed and Grievance Civil War* (26 April, 2001.) The peace research center in Oslo (PRIO) has created a study group on the subject, and this has already been in conversations in the World Bank team. The criticisms of this approach are already foreseeable.

One illustration of this kind of interpretation for the Colombian conflict or aspects of it, can be seen for example in the recent report Panorama Actual del Magdalena Medio, May 2001, of the office of the Vicepresident: "The coca plantations in Southern Bolivar, and the gold working in the Serrania San Lucas, are without factors which explain a good part the dynamics of violence of the last three years, and particularly, the advance of the paramilitaries to that part of the country." Diagnosis of this kind abound.

That of Mary Kaldor should be summarized in a few paragraphs:

"Globalization has also transformed the guerrillas. The new wars must be understood on the context of the globalization process," she says. The consequences of the end of the cold war: The availability of weapons, the discredit of socialist ideology, the disintegration of totalitarian empires and the suspension of support of a super power to certain political regimes, are all factors (writes Kaldor), which have contributed significantly to the new wars.

Some evidence of globalization in the evolution of the new wars is as follows:

- The interest of the international media.
- Mercenaries.
- Foreign military advisors.
- And a true 'army' of international agendas, which go from NGO's , such as Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross International Committee, Medicine sans Frontier, and several agencies of the United Nations, amongst others, and even UN troops for peace keeping purposes.

The new wars, according to Kaldor, arise in the context of the erosion of the autonomy of the State, or its disintegration. And, in particular, they happen where there is a context in which the legitimate monopoly of force has been weakened. This is the case of countries in which the economy has entered in decadence, and with that, the revenues of the State. At the same time, crime, corruption, and the inefficiency spread, and violence is privatized as a result of the growth of organized crime, and the arrival of paramilitary groups.

In these Wars- The New Wars- there is a dramatic increase of the number of refugees and displaced, and a good part of the violence is directed against the civilian population. The atrocities against that population- in violations of all the laws of War- are now an essential component of the new mode of war. The New Wars- writes Kaldor- "suppose a blurring of the traditional distinctions between War, Organized Crime, and large-scale violation of human rights."

9 Mary Kaldor, New and Old Wars, Organized Violence in a Global Era, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 1999.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The International Community is playing a key role in the process of achieving a negotiated political solution, which will be sustainable and just in Colombia. It is the role

which mediators will have in resolving other conflicts around the world, and it is candidly expressed in detail in the excellent book *Herding Cats, Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, published by the US Peace Institute, and edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall. In Colombian situation, we are still a long way from the mediation in the strict sense of the word. There is no doubt the proposal that the presence of the International Community is now notorious, and that as in other cases, it is not alien to the process of a wide range of resources from secret conversations to academic meetings in ideal universities, to direct conversations with guerrilla commanders in places beautified by the European winter.

It is the harmonious work of the different international players in a consonance with the intentions of the government and civil society in Colombia, which could untie the Gordian knot, which has blocked a peaceful and tolerant life amongst us, and has hampered a formidable potential for prosperity, and therefore, social justice. Today, there is no George Mitchell or Richard Holbrooke in Colombia, as there was in Northern Ireland or Bosnia. However, the presence of Jan Egeland before the process started, as a former minister in Norway, with wide experience in peace processes, some of which were successful, others not so, and now as a facilitator acting in behalf of the Secretary General of the United Nations, opens a window of hope with regard to the possibilities of the process. Because it is difficult to believe that the person who has so much to do with the so-called "Norwegian Channel" which led to the Oslo Agreement and for the first time brought two old enemies, Israel and the PLO together at the same table, and who has taken part in ten processes, Central America, The Balcans, Burundi, Sudan, SriLanka, and elsewhere, cannot, with the cooperation of other players, channel these negotiations down the right road, in order to change (using his own words) the political architecture of Colombia. It is quite clear indeed that in the Middle East there is still no peace, but a giant qualitative leap forward has been made, weakened since 13 September, 1993 by forces, which have been stronger than was thought. It was more a facilitation than a mediation, as in Colombia.

Personally, I have formed the illusion of believing that Plan Colombia offers the platform for final negotiations of the conflict, and I have said so in articles in *El Tiempo*, in the magazine *Ideele* of Peru (No. 131, September 2000, p.67), and in a meeting promoted by the Interamerican Dialogue in Washington.

Today, based on Los Pozos Agreement (February 9th, 2001), the interpretation, which the FARC had made of it on a bid of occasions, and the requests made by all head of states and government who met in Quebec, at the third summit of the Americas, and in the declarations of the European Union, at the third meeting of the support group for the Colombian peace process (Brussels, April 30th, 2001), I find new reasons for again asserting my hopes with regard to the role of Plan Colombia as a key in negotiations.

LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

Egeland himself picks up a revealing text on lessons learned:

1. Before anything, and most basically, there will be no real and lasting peace if the parties- leaders and the people- are not prepared to work for the commitments, sometimes painful commitments, needed to achieve peace.
2. Even if this is so, an inappropriate machinery for mediation, and the absence of secret channels may damage the best intentions.
3. The capacity of small nations to play a role as an effective and reliable third party should not be underestimated.
4. A third party should carefully avoid the temptation to adopt the role, which goes beyond its resources to act convincingly.
5. A third party should define realistic objectives when embarking on a process of solution of conflicts.
6. A third party should not ingeniously believe the declared intentions of the leaders involved.
7. There must be careful planning as to how a third party should treat the parties in conflict, before, during and after negotiations. On some occasions, it is vital to treat the parties with equal status, even if there is an undisputable asymmetric power relation.
8. It must be understood that it does not matter how hard the reaching of an accord may seem, the process implementation will be harder.

Egeland is not a blind optimist. His reflections conclude as follows: "Perhaps one in a hundred attempt will be successful, even though it is worth the effort to try."

10 It would be appropriate to ask whether these lessons have been applied in Colombia. And we also can't revert asking whether the conflict is "mature", in the terms of professor William I Zartmann, that is to say, whether the parties in conflict have reached the conclusion that continuation of the conflict will not improve the benefits, and more likely increase the costs. In other words, the parties can see that the cost of continuing with confrontation, are greater than the costs and prospects of an agreement. Zartmann establishes four independent conditions for maturity, even though he believes, not necessarily that all should be present for this to happen: A painful draw, a catastrophe looming, valid representatives, and a way out of the conflict. That's note 11.

These reflections, which seek to remind us that there are lessons and experiences, which should be present in our minds, amongst others, those which were debated in Cartagena with the participation of the protagonists of the meeting, also tried to point out that it was not easy to resolve an internal conflict in a peaceful manner, and much less so when it has acquired the characteristics of a civil war. The author of these lines believes that Colombia has not yet arrived to that terrible situation, but sees with anguish that we are going in that direction with our eyes wide opened. There is still room to find a political solution, and it is our duty to call to our aid all the expertise, which history has left us of such conflicts, so as not to waste this opportunity.

Therefore, it would not be to much to insist that these process negotiations are difficult. It is sufficient to say, as Stephen Stedman has noted, most Civil Wars have ended in the "elimination or capitulation." In the period 1900 to 1989, of a total of 65 cases, only 15%

were solved through negotiation. Also, there is growing evidence that shows that negotiated agreements on civil conflicts have a greater possibility of collapsing than “solutions” achieved when one side wins on the battlefield. Note 12.

All of the foregoing to remind ourselves with Chester A. Crocker, that the Hampson’s book has quoted “graphically shows that there are fruitful options in foreign policy, between the extremes of doing nothing and of intervening with an aggressive military force. But these options have their costs and conditions.” Note 13.

Students of post-conflict situations give us a warning, which we might do well to record here as a sort of conclusion: “... agreements, even when they have been implemented, may in themselves not be enough to secure a sustainable peace. Ideally, the agreements should be seen as starting-points for actions which will change negotiated commitments and settlements into forms of lasting relationships between groups which make way for sustainable political processes”¹.

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¹ Elizabeth M. Cousens and Chetan Kuimar, *Peacebuilding as Politics, Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, London 2001, p. 196