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*A Scenario-Planning Process
for the New Millennium*



Preface: Notes on the Destino Colombia Process *by Adam Kahane*

The report that follows presents the first results of the Destino Colombia project. It offers four carefully argued, beautifully written scenarios for the future of Colombia, which in themselves are an important contribution to national and international thinking about that country and others in similar situations. Both this content and the process from which it issues offer useful lessons for collaborative, future-creating efforts everywhere. Specifically, it marks a major advance on its methodological predecessor, the South African Mont Fleur scenario project (Deeper News, vol. 7, no. 1).

The report takes as its point of departure the present debilitating division and conflict in Colombia. The project is an attempt to change this reality through an innovative three-phase process:

- Phase I (1996–97): *Convening the project and constructing the scenarios.* A promoting group of six eminent persons envisioned the project and, over two years, painstakingly assembled the necessary support, expertise, and money, along with a scenario team of 43 influential leaders drawn from almost all sectors of Colombian society. This team worked for 14 days over three workshops to produce the scenario stories contained in the report.
- Phases II and III (1998–99): *Broadening the strategy conversation and building a shared national vision.* The report is now being widely disseminated in Colombia, via newspaper and magazine inserts (almost one million copies); articles and editorials; radio and television; and presentations and workshops. Hundreds of thousands of Colombians will hear about and think through the scenarios and what these stories mean for them, their organizations, and their country. Then they will talk together about what kind of Colombia they want to build and what action to take.

This process is both very modest and very ambitious, which is why it is potentially so powerful. On the one hand, it started simply by bringing together a small group of people, without any preconditions, to tell stories about what might happen in Colombia. On the other hand, it is aimed at shifting the thinking and eventually the direction of the country as a whole.

What is there in this modest process that offers such ambitious potential?

The design of the process rests on the five key features of scenario conversations highlighted in the Mont Fleur work. These conversations are informal and noncommittal, logical and challeng-

ing, inclusive and holistic, collective and constructive, and choice-eliciting and generative.

What distinguishes the Destino Colombia process is its very broad inclusiveness, especially seen against the backdrop of Colombian fragmentation. In 1997, the Destino Colombia workshops were perhaps the only place where the full range of Colombian stakeholders met to discuss seriously and openly what was happening, might happen, and should happen in their country. By contrast, the Mont Fleur scenario workshops were held during a period when hundreds of multi-stakeholder forums were meeting and using various methods to think together, across previously insurmountable divisions, about how to construct the “new South Africa.”

The Destino Colombia scenario team members were extremely diverse. They were drawn from among (using their categories) academics, self-defense forces, peasants, the right and left, businessmen, managers, guerrillas, the church, nongovernmental organizations, intellectuals, researchers, youth, the media, the military, blacks, politicians, political analysts, popular movements, and trade unions. Four of the illegal guerrillas participated in the workshops by speakerphone from a maximum security prison and from exile.

Beyond simply coming to the workshops, these participants showed outstanding openness and courage. In many cases, people were interacting for the first time with their enemies. They listened to and heard each other, and spoke their truth, even when it was difficult to do so. Out of this, the shared understanding, hope, and commitment represented in the report was built.

Two details of the dialogue stood out. First, the deep structure of the current reality—the foundation on which the scenarios were built—was glimpsed most clearly not in abstract discussions, but when participants spoke of their own personal experiences, hopes, and fears. Second, it was in many cases the participants who had been hurt most directly by the conflict—whose parent or sibling or child had been kidnapped or killed—who were the most intent on finding a collaborative path through the conflict. These details demonstrate that this scenario work is not only work of the mind (as it is usually seen), but also of the heart and spirit.

Why did the process evoke so much from the participants—more than in a typical scenario project? Of course the subject matter (the future of Colombia) seemed important and urgent to all the participants, but there is a more profound reason. On the surface, the workshop methodology was conventional: formulating the strategic agenda, listing the driving forces, brainstorming candidate scenarios, choosing the most challenging ones, and then developing them into vivid narratives with memorable names. At a deeper level, though, the purpose of the process was radically unconventional: rather than merely being *adaptive scenarios*, intended to help the participants understand and adapt to the future, these were *generative scenarios*, intended also to help them influence and improve the future. This active, rather than reactive, orientation taps into a deeper well of creativity and commitment.



Gandhi said that “the means must reveal the ends.” The Destino Colombia process itself reveals three elements of a hopeful way forward for Colombia as a whole:

- *Inclusiveness.* The scenario team was made up of leaders who were, in the judgment of the promoting group, drawn from the broadest possible range of legitimate Colombian actors. The explicit team norms encouraged all of the participants to contribute fully and truthfully. Furthermore, an implicit norm was that the team must, to the maximum extent possible, go forward with the work together or not at all.
- *Going slow to go fast.* In Phase I, the team members took time to build a shared understanding of the current situation, by talking with each other and with invited resource persons, before they attempted to draw conclusions as to possible scenarios. Similarly, the model for Phases II and III emphasizes using the scenarios to build a shared language for talking about the future within the country’s larger leadership community before attempting to agree on a common vision or direction.
- *Servant leadership.* The project participants, especially the members of the promoting group, were remarkable in the humility and generosity with which they put the higher purpose of the project above their individual agendas. They led by serving with the power of their authenticity, rather than by directing with the power of their positions. This allowed the project to become and to be seen as a truly shared enterprise, built on mutual trust and respect, and not owned by any one person or faction.

It is too soon to judge the full impact of Destino Colombia, beyond the shared understanding that the 43 have created amongst themselves. By itself, this understanding has an important symbolic value in polarized Colombia, and is already generating excitement and forward movement. Another important symbol is this month’s photograph of the country’s newly elected president talking informally with guerrilla leaders in their jungle base. Perhaps the project is both evidence of—and has made a contribution towards bringing forward—the latent potential in Colombia for people working together to create a better future.

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Destino Colombia: A Scenario-Based Planning Process

Let us Restore Hope!

The future is neither an inheritance nor a handicap. The future is something to be dreamed and constructed. Nations derive their direction and destiny from the common will of their people. Now, at the dawn of the third millennium, it is possible to create a vision of a country based on certain fundamental, commonly held convictions, and to build upon this vision in an environment of diversity, based upon reciprocal trust. Destino Colombia, with its four scenarios, is an invitation to set out on this complex journey.

Appraising Our Differences

Diversity is one of Colombia's principal characteristics. Ethnic, linguistic, topographical, climatic, social, political, ideological, and finally even religious diversity. A vast palette of colors that have not achieved a harmonious blending, but on the contrary, manifest themselves as an explosion of anarchy and disruption.

The most notable symptom of this state of affairs is that the people of Colombia are losing hope in the future and the belief in the possibility of dreaming and constructing a prosperous, harmonious nation where there is a place for everyone.

As long as we lack a vision of the future that points in a certain direction, a shared course

that allows us to draft long-range policies and determine useful outlets for Colombians' creativity and capacity for work, our progress will be slow and tortuous.

Facing this prospect and confronting the third millennium, Destino Colombia stands as an example of cooperation and construction in the midst of diversity. Forty-three Colombians, representing the most varied and apparently irreconcilable points of view, worked together for a period of several months to define alternative routes that our country can follow during the next 16 years.

From the collective reflection of this group emerged four equally possible scenarios. Each of them describes a course, explores its consequences, and demonstrates that the future is the result of today's actions and decisions, something we construct day by day.

All the participants in the group agree that these four scenarios are all possible, although to be sure, they neither recommend nor express a preference for any particular one. What we all do agree on is that it is necessary for us Colombians, by means of these and other possible scenarios, to find the time and space to carry out an intense conversation, a serious analysis of the future of our country. The scenarios of Destino Colombia are intended as the point of departure and catalyst for an extended reflection about our nation's tomorrow.

Standing at a Crossroads

Colombia is facing enormous challenges, both internal and external. From an international perspective, its role in the world economy is increasingly problematic. It is lagging behind, even in comparison to other Latin American countries. We have not succeeded in finding basic solutions to violence in all its forms; to the drug trade, with its many consequences; to corruption; inequality; educational backwardness; unemployment; the abandonment of the countryside; and many other problems.

The scenario process concluded that Colombia has various means of overcoming the crisis, but that it may also continue in its current state of disorder, and even plunge headlong into chaos.

A Look at the World

The technique of scenario planning began, following World War II, as a method of military planning. Later it was adapted to the business environment, and recently it has been used at a political level, South Africa being the first country to adopt this kind of process, followed by Canada, Colombia, Japan, and Cyprus, among others.

In 1990, at the twilight of racial segregation and the dawn of a new democratic age, 22 South African leaders met to stimulate a debate about how to mold or influence the directions that the country could take over the next 10 years. To everyone's surprise, these groups—ideologically so dissimilar and burdened by hundreds of years of conflict—reached agreement on four possible scenarios

that facilitated a reflection about the future, and indicated to South Africa's polarized society that it was indeed possible to unite around a basic, shared vision.

The scenario-building processes undertaken in Canada, Colombia, and Japan reached their conclusion in 1997. Canada completed its exercise in the second half of that year; Colombia and Japan toward the end. The results of all these initiatives were made public during the first six months of 1998.

Creating Stories About The Future

Scenarios are narratives that describe alternative paths toward the future. They are possible futures, displaying a broad range of possible results based on plausible hypotheses, thus allowing us to imagine what can take place. They do not predict what is going to happen, but they do help us better understand, starting from today, what may happen tomorrow.

Scenarios are useful because they help us avoid situations in which events can take us by surprise. They call into question conventional predictions of the future, help us recognize signs of change, and establish standards for evaluating the continued use of different strategies under different circumstances.

The technique of scenario development is a tool that stimulates debate about the future, facilitates conversation about what is taking place and what might take place in the world around us, and helps us make better decisions about what we ought to do or avoid doing. It offers a very useful approach to strategic plan-



ning, and describes what must be done to accomplish a desired result.

There is no standardized method of developing scenarios; it is a process that draws upon the knowledge and creativity of its participants.

Scenario planning offers the following advantages, which make it a suitable method for reflection and for improving the quality of thought:

- It focuses on the future, not on the past or present where most debates have concentrated their attention, usually leading to recriminations and accusations, rather than to a constructive quest for alternatives.
- It analyzes what can happen, not what must happen or what people want to happen. It is neither a peace process nor a negotiation, because it is not intended to generate compromises or binding commitments. Thus its participants are free to express and explore ideas in a more open, creative atmosphere.

Destino Colombia: A Look at the Future

Its basic purpose is to make the people of Colombia aware that it is possible to change the nation's course substantially; to help them recognize that the future is a product of the actions we take and the decisions we make today, as institutions and as individuals, on the local as well as the national level.

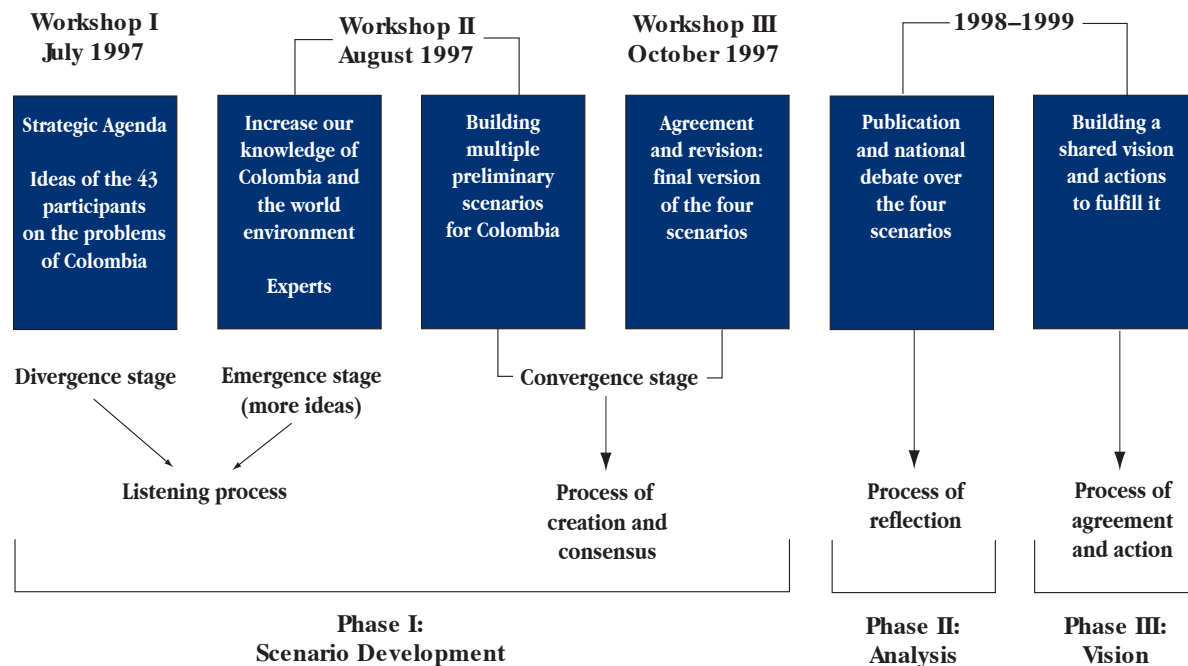
The Process

During the first half of 1997, a group of businessmen invited 43 Colombians from all walks of national life to come together in the Recinto de Quirama [a conference center in Rionegro, Antioquia, near Medellín] for a series of three workshops lasting a total of 14 days. Their task was to imagine which courses Colombia might follow over the next 16 years, and the consequences of each. The technical director of the project was Adam Kahane of the Centre for Generative Leadership, the Canadian consultant who had supported the processes in South Africa, Canada, Japan, and Cyprus.

The first phase of Destino Colombia consisted of drawing up the scenarios. The goal of the second phase is to publicize them and use them as a focal point for analysis and debate among all Colombians about the possible directions that the nation can follow. In light of the results of this process of reflection about tomorrow, the promoting group of Destino Colombia will create a context to further the construction of a shared vision for the country.

The process of scenario building took place in three stages. The first, called the divergence stage, consisted of listening to the participants' various positions on the challenges facing the country. In the following emergence stage, national and international experts addressed group members, broadening their knowledge of various subjects regarding the country and its place in the world. Finally, during the third stage, the group engaged in a process of convergence, which started out with a broad number of alternatives and con-

Destino Colombia: The Process



cluded with the four future scenarios, those judged the most relevant, novel, and substantial.

The most valuable results of the process were those agreements arrived at by way of differences. It was understood that there are very different ways of perceiving what is going on in Colombia and in the world. It was the first time that a group of such dissimilar people had listened to each other, showing respect and tolerance in order to accept and give credit to the others' ideas. This allowed us to acknowledge the possibility of reaching agreement without sacrificing our principles, and led us to conclude, in all humility, that enormous improvements and profound changes were needed to achieve the common good.

This spirit of the Quirama experience is reflected in the rules of the game that the group imposed upon itself. By following these

rules, we were able to accomplish one of the basic goals of the exercise, to improve the quality of the conversation. The rules were:

- Express differences of opinion without irony. No stigmatizing; no personal attacks.
- Be sincere. Assume that others are speaking and acting in good faith.
- Exercise tolerance.
- Observe discipline and punctuality.
- Respect others' right to speak.
- Be concise. No repeating ideas.
- Be inclined and willing to learn.
- Exercise confidentiality and discretion when citing others' opinions.
- Be prepared to "go back to the drawing board."
- Put forward proposals on the basis of an agreement or plan.
- Be disposed to arrive at consensus.
- Call things by their names.



This phase of the exercise—elaboration of the scenarios for Colombia—was financed completely by the Colombian private sector. The second phase—making the debate and its results public—will depend upon additional support from international agencies and multi-lateral organizations.

What Is The Dream?

That, as Colombians, we join in this reflection; that we consider ourselves responsible for our future; that with each and every action we undertake, however simple and ordinary it may seem, we make this pact with our hearts and minds, in humility and with the strength to prove to ourselves that it is surely possible to have the country we deserve; that we resolve to leave our children a nation where it will be possible to live free, productive, and happy lives; to show the world that we have much to contribute; and to prove that united in an arduous, ongoing effort, we can build the Colombia we want.

Reflections

The following scenarios are narratives whose language and content are simple enough to be grasped by all Colombians, whatever their educational level, age, or ideology—because we all must build the future together.

Destino Colombia defined the following four scenarios, which we hope will awaken a new attitude and a new interest in our future among a broad sector of our country's population. Our hope is that Colombians will now begin thinking along alternative lines; that people will use scenarios as a tool for envi-

sioning and imagining possible futures, and for determining their implications and consequences.

We aim to have everyone go beyond the mere reading of the scenarios. As readers concentrate on each of these possible futures, they should keep in mind the following questions:

1. What would be the costs and benefits of each scenario
 - for the nation?
 - for you personally?
 - for the work you do?
 - for your family?
2. Which scenario are you helping to build through your actions and decisions today?
3. Which do you like? Which do you dislike? How would you change them?
4. Which other possible scenarios can you envision for Colombia?

The Four Scenarios

1. When the Sun Rises We'll See

The country collapsed into chaos. The lack of will to confront necessary changes had left us without the ability to act—because the worst thing people can do is do nothing!

2. A Bird in the Hand Is Worth Two in The Bush

Following 10 years of bloodshed, and under continuing pressure from armed groups, the state and society decided that it was time to enter into a dialogue and come to serious agreements. Rather than losing it all, everybody gained something—because any settlement is better than continuing a bad lawsuit.

3. Forward March!

To rebuild a broken nation and mend the lacerations in the country's social fabric before other attempts to achieve peace could be frustrated, people elected a government that proved strong enough to impose order and put an end to institutional chaos.

4. In Unity Lies Strength

From the base of society up, the nation began an effort that led to vast transformations in our individual and collective mentality. It amounted to changing an old way of life, the source of many of our troubles: the inclination to work against each other. Instead, we discovered our true solution, one that could be achieved only through respect for differences and the strength of unity.





scenario one

When the Sun Rises We'll See

Weariness, laziness, or inability to face problems are all justified by the phrase, "When the sun rises we'll see." Darkness turns into a pretext for dreams and apathy, but the clear light of dawn, rather than inspiring important decisions, simply gives rise to a new period of uncertainty. In the face of the country's crisis, this irrational confidence in unexpected, miraculous outcomes, this recourse to halfway solutions, this generalized tendency to put off basic actions until later have combined to the point of becoming a collective alternative. Before its enormous and rapidly growing problems, Colombia seems to be saying: "When the sun rises we'll see."

This is an attitude for which we pay dearly; one that will be difficult to explain or justify to

future generations, and even to present ones. Nevertheless, some qualified witnesses of the age of "When the sun rises..." will attempt to do so. They will draw up outlines of the motivations and expectations of the leaders who followed this line of conduct. Their outlines demand understanding and generosity when judged by present and future critics.

"We had our backs to the wall, and were in a state of mind that could be described as weary resignation. Of course, it was not the first time that we had been cornered by crisis. The one we were contemplating seemed like a monotonous repetition of the many partially resolved conflicts that had plagued Colombia since its birth as a nation. In recent times we tried everything to contain the conflict, but armed groups had extended their territories,



and the number of violent deaths had escalated dreadfully. Discouraged and exhausted after 40 years of useless warfare, the experts concluded that from a military perspective, they had reached a stalemate, while on the political front, negotiations had proved fruitless. As in a field hospital where urgent cases are attended to one by one as they arise, the governments limited themselves to solving problems on a day-by-day basis, rejecting ambitious, far-reaching solutions. Thus, during a period of several years, the country witnessed such events as the following:

- Regional negotiations with guerrilla forces, producing limited accords that temporarily alleviated the pressures of subversion and popular unrest, but really amounted to partial concessions of power and territory.
- Arrangements made to accommodate various pressure groups which, in exchange for momentary peace, obtained small concessions each time. This was the policy that prevailed during several presidential administrations, producing substantial erosion of authority and a proliferation of demands and conflicts.

In effect, manipulation of power for the benefit of the few, scandalous tax evasion, complexity with corrupt, influence-peddling officials, legal pardons and job offers, blockaded roads and public areas throughout the entire country—all of these were the preferred tools for winning all kinds of demands, causing generalized disorder and chaos.

This disorder and chaos, along with the government's increasing inability to confront the root causes of the problems, weakened the

links between city and regional governments and the central authorities. Everybody ended up thinking it was better to 'go it alone than in bad company.'

By the time we recognized this situation, events as serious as the following had already occurred:

- By marking time, we had subjected ourselves to the law of the strongest, or rather, to the rule of those who exert the most pressure without regulation, authority, or control.
- By negotiating with this group and that, we had squandered public funds, the patrimony of the people. Above all, we had undermined authority, democracy, and fairness.

And the governments, in their weakened state, had been obliged to follow the common practice of buying support and influence in exchange for favors and privileges—at an enormous cost.

The highest cost was imposed by the most influential sectors, which thus went about concentrating wealth and power, increasing inequality, and encouraging corruption.

This combination of weakness and administrative inefficiency on the part of a series of central governments, along with the growing power of corrupt individuals, led municipal and regional governments to demand a transfer of authority and resources and to install their own systems of health, insurance, justice, and education. Each of them organized its finances and tax system to supplement the deficiencies of the central government. When the disorder seemed to be attaining a general,



institutionalized level, local and regional authorities launched a struggle to guarantee the survival of their autonomy, fragmenting and violently disrupting the country. In exchange for their temporary survival, national unity had been placed in jeopardy.

All this disorder ended up affecting cultural, social, moral, and even economic life. The fiscal mess had severely damaged the economy. There were no guarantees or assurances to encourage investment or production. Insufficient investment in the oil industry, coupled with intensified guerrilla pressure on power plants, road and railway infrastructures, pipelines, and oil fields, brought an end to energy self-sufficiency. The country's economy was under greater pressure than ever before. Broad and richly productive regions were subjected to the influence of armed groups. These areas experienced falling investment and rising unemployment, accompanied by a tangible erosion in people's standard of living.

The generalized corruption and economic crisis threatened the financial stability of business, inspiring a collective attitude of 'each man for himself.' Drug dealers took full advantage of the situation, which lent legitimacy to their profits, while legitimate businessmen and capital fled abroad. Widespread planting of poppies and coca plants ravaged the forests, causing international environmental groups to criticize the country sharply and mount campaigns to isolate it.

These economic difficulties hurt the weakest and exacerbated social problems.

The government took advantage of the situation by carrying out a populist policy based on

immediate solutions. They momentarily satisfied the individuals and groups that were demanding responses to their most urgent problems, but after a short time the problems reappeared, and they were worse than before.

The government signed ephemeral, weak, compromise agreements with some international agencies, allowing it to deliver temporary assistance in the areas of child protection, food, jobs, agricultural reform, education, and human rights. However, these were nothing like fundamental solutions. At most, they were programs aimed at dealing with the problems of the moment. This was proved by statistics indicating an increase in the absolute poverty level, which had stood at 45 percent during the seventies and was now approaching 60 percent.

A deterioration of this magnitude set off alarm bells throughout the international community. Colombia ceased to fulfill its obligations as a commercial partner, and ceased to keep its word as a signatory to agreements. International organizations became concerned with the human rights implications of such internal events as detention of individuals suspected of conspiring with subversives, killing of peasants outside military combat, and disappearance of union leaders and left-wing militants under the apparent responsibility of the security forces. Thus the country was censured and isolated, damaging its prestige even further.

It was no coincidence that at the same time, old frontier conflicts again flared up. We were presenting our neighbors with an image of institutional and governmental weakness that rendered us vulnerable, just as we had been at

the beginning of century when we lost Panama. Now, a century later, we faced the danger of losing San Andrés and Providencia [Colombian islands 230 kilometers off the coast of Nicaragua that have been claimed by that country]. To add to the problem, groups of refugees were fleeing toward the borders, along with streams of migrants motivated by illusions of a better life in neighboring countries.

All of these factors, like tributaries of a great river, contributed to the swelling flow of violence. The force of law had been replaced by the law of force. Citizens opted for arming themselves and creating militias. Homicide rates rose to unprecedented levels due to the private pursuit of justice and increasing numbers of armed people throughout the country.

Between 1978 and 1994, the guerrilla forces had increased from 14 to 105, and had extended their control from 173 cities and towns to 600. They continued imposing their law and sharpening their confrontations with the armed forces and militias, which were completely immersed in a bloody struggle to control those territories. Murder rates thus reached a level of 120 per 100,000 inhabitants, five times the Brazilian rate and six times that of Mexico.

'The more turbulent the river, the greater the fishermen's catch'—so the drug traders, taking advantage of the institutional disorder, continued using their profits to corrupt numerous official agencies and drive anyone who interfered with them out of the way. They became the primary cause of Colombia's ill repute in the eyes of the world.

This process of disintegration went almost unnoticed, because it took place gradually and constantly over a period of years. It was not perceived by the people of Colombia, who were rendered numb by the proliferation of their misfortunes.

And by the time we took notice of it, it was already too late. We had lost precious years, unconsciously duplicating the history that had been experienced, and in part already surpassed, by other Latin American countries. Compared to them and to our neighbors, we were 20 years behind, and we were leaving future generations an inheritance of errors and burdens that would require them to speed up the slow clock of our history. The lack of will to confront necessary changes had left us without the ability to act—because the worst thing people can do is do nothing."





scenario two

A Bird In the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush

Given the distinct possibility of losing everything through violence and armed conflict, we decided to save as much as we could. The government and civil society took this responsibility upon themselves when they agreed to let the armed groups set their own terms for coming to the bargaining table. In the end, no group got everything it wanted. On the other hand, they didn't lose everything, either—which very easily could have happened. Seen from this angle, our solution—based on the realities of the situation we were facing—can be expressed by the popular proverb “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

If those who participated in the negotiations

had been asked, 16 years later, to record their recollections of the causes, meaning, and outcome of the accords, they would surely have described them in the following terms.

“After a series of conflicts had turned the country into a desolate battlefield, the state and society finally surrendered to pressure from armed groups and raised the white flag. Colombians shared a growing feeling that, for the past 50 years, the country had become mired in a vicious war that no one could win and that everyone was losing.

International organizations had condemned Colombia before the entire world for violating human rights and failing to maintain its com-



Comparative Analysis of the Scenarios

	Economic Structure	Political Organization
When Sun Rises We'll See	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting, ambiguous relations between the state and the productive sector • Improvisation and uncertainty • Economic concentration • Illegal economic activity across national boundaries • General stagnation and instability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governmental mismanagement • Institutional disintegration • Fragmentation and client-patron relationships • Corruption of political administrative structures • Illegitimate assumption of power • Continuous changes in policy due to national and international pressure • Partial collapse and division of the state • Political and territorial disintegration; tendency toward a feudal mode of power distribution
A Bird in the Hand...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixed economy evolves, composed of state, private, and joint ventures. The state directly promotes and provides basic goods and services. The system moves toward reconstruction of the productive infrastructure, with emphasis on strategic sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under pressure, the country forges a solution to armed political conflict, beginning with an essential compromise regarding its basic causes. This compromise includes participation by armed elements, as well as by all the social, economic, political, and cultural forces that have a stake in resolving the conflict. The international community supports the solution, various factions make concessions, and a redistribution of political power is achieved.
Forward March!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adopted system favors private property • The state acts to promote enterprise without playing a direct role • Privatization; greater confidence in market forces • Reduction in the size of government • High taxes to finance the military, followed by low taxes to finance growth • Little regulation of private enterprise • Stimulation of private investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposition of authority by special emergency measures • An end to the war, imposed by force • Centralized political system • Limitations on civil freedoms • Polarization of social sectors; growing discontent of various elements and organization of opposition groups
In Unity Lies Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixed, social/private system takes hold • The state functions as a regulator, ensuring efficient delivery of goods and services either directly or through private initiative, and guaranteeing efficiency and fairness. Economic transformations and reforms facilitate the reintegration of Colombia into the world economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The society imposes and encourages conditions that create a public consensus for peace that includes the armed groups • Society learns to manage its conflicts and to respect others' rights and differences • Political decentralization; empowerment of regional and municipal administrations • Transformation and democratization of power; greater opportunities for advancement



Comparative Analysis of the Scenarios

	Social Policy	International Situation
When Sun Rises We'll See	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration in the regulation and delivery of basic public services (justice, education, security, health) • Populist paternalism • Social fragmentation • Violation of human rights • Substantial increase in level of absolute poverty • Public hopelessness and mistrust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censure, rejection, loss of prestige, international isolation • External interference and pressure on internal affairs, leading to greater intervention in all matters • Vulnerability and weakness of national sovereignty • Growing difficulty for the country to play an international role
A Bird in the Hand...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory democracy with redistribution of wealth • A centralized state, with the social structure as its focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial uncertainty and expectation, followed by cooperation and support. Finally, strong international involvement and representation
Forward March!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a prime concern at the beginning; priority goes to the military sphere • Government welfare assistance directed toward the most vulnerable sectors • General improvement; however, existing social rifts remain • Superficially effective social policies that respond to the needs of the moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial international isolation • Gradual acceptance by the international community, which maintains pressure in areas such as human rights
In Unity Lies Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on individual need for social services; a demand-based benefits system • Deep reforms and social transformations • The state meets demand through social compromise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full acceptance into the new international order—to the country's benefit • Recovery of prestige and dignity at the international level

mitments to the Geneva Convention. The armed forces were demoralized, like the other institutions. They had begun to show disturbing symptoms of sclerosis and corruption. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly evident that the war's main victim was the civilian population—not only for the number of dead, but also for the frightful, paralyzing toll that violence was taking on all aspects of national life. Thus, finding themselves at an impasse, our state and society had to take responsibility for the situation. That meant acknowledging that the time had come to engage in dialogue, either by persuasion or by coercion.

When the talks were first proposed, nobody thought they would be easy. The guerrilla forces demanded that the army withdraw from a number of areas, and refused to sit at the negotiating table with the militias. These armed groups, in turn, insisted that the guerrillas agree to a cease-fire. Echoing the opinions expressed in certain media outlets, a number of citizens called for the use of force and a strong exercise of authority. They rejected any sort of concession or agreement, deemed it unacceptable to include the guerrilla forces in negotiations, and perceived the accords as failure and weakness rather than as an approach to peace. But other sectors of the public saw the dialogue as a way out. They called for an end to the conflict, understanding that a lasting peace would require economic and political concessions. They also realized that such concessions would necessitate changes in power relations and the development of a new institutional framework.

Five years later, when the various opposing parties were ready to begin negotiations lead-

ing to a truce, they lowered their aggressive tone and entered the debate in earnest. A lengthy process now got underway. It involved drawing up an extensive agenda and making controversial proposals, such as the formation of a new constituent assembly and establishment of a government with participation by the insurgent elements. Finding itself between the sword of the rebel forces and the rock of mistrustful, demanding public opinion, pressured by the unavoidable reality of a stricken economy, brought to crisis by the proliferation of terrorist attacks, and accused by international public opinion and by representatives of other nations, the government chose the option of compromise. This opened the door for radical innovations like the constituent assembly and a coalition government, as well as important changes in various realms of national life. These measures were very expensive, but they had a significant impact on the country's welfare.

It was obvious from the beginning that all those who took part in the negotiations would feel an obligation to conclude them. For this reason, the participants agreed that nobody would leave the table until they had completed the agenda and arrived at a reasoned and reasonable agreement. This predisposed them to make concessions.

The difficulties were sorted out with help from international mediators and experts in conflict resolution. All the armed groups, guerrillas, and militias agreed to attend and participate; delegates from the armed forces were present as advisers and witnesses. The process was undertaken at considerable cost. To meet the cost would require thoroughgoing reform of rural and urban administrative



machinery, more efficient tax systems, and a stronger state role in the management of the economy.

This process set other events in motion. For example, a constituent assembly was formed to establish the rules of the game as stipulated by the new political pact. Among its provisions were legal pardon and amnesty for armed groups and the establishment of a coalition government with active participation by the guerrilla forces.

These developments provoked a strong reaction from some sectors of the population who rejected the accords, viewing them as a defeat and surrender; for them, the cost of the peace process was too high, and they became fierce opponents of the agreements.

Opposition had already made itself felt, in the form of strong reaction against the decline in economic indicators. The peace accords initially assumed the costly challenge of accelerating agrarian and urban reforms and reconstructing the country's productive infrastructure, some parts of which had been blocked and others severely damaged by war. These costs rose still further when it became necessary to undertake the enormous task of reintegrating a million refugees. Guaranteeing their safety, their lands, the commercial distribution of their products, and the delivery of basic services, such as education and health, to all of them demanded measures that could not be delayed, despite their expense. The measures adopted to meet these needs included the following:

- A mixed system, consisting of state, private, and joint public-private enterprise, in which

private initiative took over the delivery of some services that the state could not manage efficiently on its own

- A state plan that accorded the government sufficient administrative power to serve as an effective mediator between capital and labor
- The emergence of a justice system capable of dealing with the high crime rate, which had risen as a consequence of the ongoing civil conflict and the assimilation of former guerrillas into civilian life; the ex-guerrillas actually played a role in the new justice system, acting as civil judges in regions where they had consolidated their influence

Once the negotiations had ended, the economy began showing minor signs of recovery. It grew slowly because, although war and civil strife had deeply damaged the country's political and economic institutions, it was social policy that needed the most urgent attention. And this was understandable: there were too many unmet needs and an accumulation of half-solved social problems, which represented an incubation chamber for new violence. So it was absolutely essential for the state to take direct control of providing education and health services to the poorest sectors of the population.

It was also necessary to assume the costs of a policy aimed at redistributing income. This implied reforms in taxes, salaries, social security, and systems of access to ownership of rural and urban property.

Another type of expense was connected with efforts to bring about a more participatory democracy. Funding was directed toward

party reform and mechanisms for stimulating citizen participation, as had been outlined in the 1991 constitution and reinforced in the draft of the new constitution. These reforms, included in the agreements, came with a high economic, social, and political price tag.

Meanwhile, international opinion changed from astonishment—the reaction when the war reached unprecedented levels of ferocity and Colombia appeared to be a lost cause; to hope—inspired by the initiation of dialogues and participation of international mediators; and finally to concrete support—in the form of significant involvement by international representatives and a favorable human rights report for the country.

In fact, the reason for Colombia's isolation from the world community, which had originated with the struggle between the government and insurgent movements, dissolved when the peace process got underway. Abuses by armed groups practically disappeared; the number of deaths owing to civil conflict declined to normal peacetime levels; and the drug trade was subjected to greater control by the authorities once order was restored.

Now that those turbulent, crucially decisive years are past, we must admit one thing: rather than losing it all, everybody gained something. To the awful conflict that was devastating our country, we applied the wisdom expressed by that well-known proverb: 'Any settlement is better than continuing a bad lawsuit.'"





scenario three

Forward March!

To rebuild a broken nation and mend the lacerations in the country's social fabric before other attempts to achieve peace could be frustrated, people elected a government that proved strong enough to impose order and put an end to institutional chaos.

If people belonging to the generation that opted for this alternative had to explain to their children its costs, benefits, and effective-

Colombia was exactly like an occupied country, and our constitutional rules contained no provisions for such occupying forces. Under the combined pressure of fear, blackmail, and corruption, public institutions were stripped of autonomy. Drug lords imposed law on their own terms. Subversive groups extended their control of territory and economic resources, and went on accumulating weapons. The militias, growing stronger all the time, pursued a



ness in solving the country's problems, they would probably do so in the following terms.

“Given the failure of the peace accords, we placed our hope in the kind of leadership that would have the energy and imagination to apply extraordinary measures to a situation that was far from ordinary, as you'll see.

war of hand-to-hand combat to gain ground. The armed forces were demoralized; programs for fighting corruption had gone nowhere; and poverty and unemployment, along with the fiscal crisis, were increasing every day.

Faced with this bleak and discouraging prospect, we thought the best solution was to establish a government that would put the country in marching order. And that's what we did.

We found a leader who would respond to the repeated failures by using presidential power to limit basic rights, extend the authority of the army and police, increase military spending, strengthen military institutions, and lift all legal and constitutional restrictions on the activity of the armed forces.

These measures provoked immediate reactions both inside and outside the country. Human rights organizations accused the armed forces of unleashing a campaign of terror. Following the protests, there was a torrent of sanctions, and moves to isolate us internationally.

Financially and militarily weakened, the armed groups gradually left off fighting and began considering proposals for dialogue. At the same time, the president took decisive measures to stimulate the economy and revitalize the productive sectors. This, along with military victories, assured him of a second term, sanctioned by a timely constitutional reform.

During this time, the immobilized guerrilla groups and demobilized militias became the object of special treatment, while the economy moved into a period of recovery. A sharp increase in social tension then put a damper on the second presidential term. It was to be followed by other administrations committed to working for social equilibrium, an opportunity to help the country make up for lost time, and a revival of international relations.

For part of the population, the authoritarian measures brought a sense of security and confidence. Among other groups, however, opposition movements began to rise as a reaction to the limitations imposed on political freedom, the elimination of left-wing groups, and the persecution of anything and anyone who refused to go along with the regime.

The high concentration of power in the capital was opposed by many people in regions and cities that had a tradition of autonomy and local control. The opposition groups were strengthened by the working-class sectors of the population, which had been hard hit by growing unemployment and economic restrictions. Thus a solid strong movement took shape, and it counteracted the country's negative image abroad—an image nourished by continuing episodes of political violence, subtle but effective forms of press censorship, unending declarations of a state of emergency, systematic denial of such civil rights as habeas corpus, and large allocations of funds to maintain the security forces.

These high costs affected vital institutions like education and health, whose resources had to be cut as long as top priority was given to the military budget.

Capital was favored with low taxes, privatization projects, and policies allowing free reign to market forces. The ensuing economic system tolerated little or no regulation of private enterprise, and the state acted as the major promoter of the free market and private commercial and industrial initiatives. Under these conditions, the economy experienced high growth rates, but there were many sources of



tension due to the gap between different social classes.

The signs of social progress were therefore less than encouraging. Social policy was at a critical juncture. The government responded to the pressures and needs of the moment with temporary paternalistic measures that did nothing to alter basic social structures.

A poor international image was part of the price that the country had to pay for this hard-line policy, which suspended human rights statutes during the military offensive. Even earlier, narcotics trafficking and violence had undermined the country's reputation. Now a series of repressive governmental measures provoked a strong reaction from international human rights organizations, the European Union, the U.S. Senate and State Department, and the Organization of American States. They launched denunciations and made sweeping proposals that kept our most capable foreign service officers busy for years, engaged in a skillful and patient diplomatic campaign to bring about a reconciliation between our nation and the international community. This campaign finally succeeded, and it made greatest progress when law enforcement agencies were allowed to enter into a decisive, head-on battle against the drug trade.

In the end, Colombia permitted international organizations to resume their inspection and control in matters pertaining to human rights.

Seen from a distance, we were experiencing such grave troubles that the measures we adopted presented the only possible response. This solution cost us a great deal, but we had to accept it as the

price of the many errors and omissions we had allowed to occur. To rebuild a broken nation and mend the lacerations in the country's social fabric, there was no alternative but for all of us to begin a forward march."



scenario four

In Unity Lies Strength

Through a united effort by various groups in both rural and urban areas, Colombia began opening roads and building airports, stadiums, residential complexes, aqueducts, sewer systems, schools, churches, and health centers. This practice is rooted in our popular culture. It proves once again that strength lies in accepting others as they are, despite their differences, because our country's riches belong to everyone and lend stability to the life of a society. As they carried out these collective tasks, Colombians also discovered that they drew strength from identifying shared interests and lending many hands to a project. They learned that societies draw their lifeblood not so

much from weapons, money, or laws, as from the dreams, projects, and accomplishments they hold in common. This has been demonstrated by some of the best results of social and political reform. On the basis of such experiences, we have been persuaded to return to the wisdom of traditional organization and practices. They depend not only on strength, but on all the potential that lies in developing strength through unity.

In his later years, a person who had taken part in the overwhelming social mobilization that broke out toward the end of the century gathered his recollections of that period—a period he described as the most memorable of his



life, because it had represented, for him and for the country, a demonstration of the power of strength through unity.

“The social movements that arose in protest against violence and warfare, and against atrocities like assassinations, massacres, kidnappings, disappearances, and forced removals of settled communities, were instinctive and disorganized at first. In time, however, they began to find an outlet.

Many countries supported the forces that were seeking a way out. This support helped mobilize people to take part in activities aimed at restructuring society, and led to the emergence of an independent movement.

Organized along local and regional lines, its primary goals were to establish peace, revive the local economy, and revitalize the public and private sectors.

At the same time, peace enclaves and communities continued to develop throughout the country. Educational centers, workplaces, neighborhoods, and entire towns, in both rural and urban areas, took part in concrete projects aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence and general welfare. Groups of peasants, caught between the triple fire of guerrilla, militia, and military combat, openly proclaimed their neutrality, or simply demanded respect for the independence and immunity of the civilian population. In so doing, they based their demands on international human rights conventions. Residents of major urban centers, small towns, and neighborhoods like La India, a district of Cimitarra in the Department of Santander, organized to defend their right to be left in peace and to carry out the responsibilities of social justice. Decreasing instances

of violence and armed confrontation allowed them, in turn, to form effective pressure groups and gain greater control over the operation of public agencies. Motivated by political realism, the government decided to support these popular movements. It approved a statute upholding their political independence, providing them with a source of strength and protecting them from anarchy.

Although the armed groups escalated their acts of violence at the start of this process, mounting public rejection of all atrocities and acts of war caused them to change their strategy, and they gradually began replacing military actions with political ones.

At the local level, increasing solidarity and participation in grassroots organizing efforts rendered both armed struggle of all kinds and conventional political practices essentially pointless. Local political-ideological struggles, whether waged with arms or without, tended to fade away as communities made tangible efforts to respond to their most urgent needs. The influence of money from the narcotics trade weakened as citizens mounted a struggle against it and consolidated the moral and political strength of their local institutions. In the process of restoring civil society to a healthy state, various parts of the country also experienced a remarkable rebirth of citizens' organizations. Popular pressure from such organizations, along with strengthened support from local governments and groups opposing the old system, were instrumental in overcoming corruption and forging a different kind of country.

Political life slowly changed. Ordinary citizens had to conquer their fear of political activism

and overcome the suspicion it aroused in others. When groups organized to demand political representation, they were at first accused of trying to repeat old, outmoded patterns of behavior. In addition, some political leaders tried to take over the coalescing social movements and use them to advance their personal careers.

Nevertheless, the efforts bore fruit, and civil society established a legitimate government which could be counted on to represent its interests. The force of public pressure gained respect at the highest levels, and came to represent an undeniable mandate for government action. It led to new forms of public administration, party organization, and political leadership. The same effects were felt in the relations between civil society and armed groups. Far from being a product of intimidation, the peace accords were a result of widespread public involvement and leadership. Traditional politics, based on patron-client relationships, gave way under pressure from public organizations at the regional and municipal levels.

Once effective peace agreements were reached, the nation could face the challenges of reconstruction and tackle its accumulated backlog of agricultural, social, institutional, and organizational problems. Participatory democracy and citizens' solidarity increased. It became clear that the survival of political parties as well as social organizations would depend upon their ability to adjust their pace and activities to meet the demands of an active, organized, and increasingly educated public.

Citizen participation in public affairs eased communication between the government and

armed movements, leading to a set of agreements that proved beneficial to the population. Social and civic organizations assumed an increasingly important leadership role.

Unions, peasant organizations, indigenous communities, women's groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and business associations all grew stronger.

The dynamic energies released by civic activism, nourished by a closely related process of public education, had notable repercussions on the economy. The result was a mixed system, with private and mixed public-private enterprise playing the major role, and effective state oversight guaranteeing efficiency, competition, redistribution, and equity. Under the influence of citizens' organizations, the state efficiently protected and regulated delivery of goods and services, placing particular emphasis on education for the low-income sectors, and established economically progressive, cooperative relations between capital and labor.

As a result of the public confidence inspired by the peace accords, the country was able to make sound, sustainable use of its natural resources. Fiscal accounts were settled. Capital, which in earlier years had fled the country, began to return.

Once social confidence was restored and security guaranteed to investors and businesses, the economic indicators took a predictable upward turn, reverting to those long-range trends that they had registered before the intensification of the armed conflict.

Social structures changed with the growth of regional autonomy. A process was set in



motion to create a decentralized state with participation by its many communities. The most visible effect of this dynamic process was increased citizen participation in public affairs. As people came to realize that maintaining the peace and defending the public good were strictly interconnected, they began developing a set of social policies that allowed gradual public access to education and most services.

International interest was aroused when the citizens launched huge campaigns promoting peace, opposing armed conflict and acts of atrocity, and demanding respect for human rights. Public repudiation of "narcoeconomics" and "narcopolitics" contributed to restoring Colombia's reputation in the world.

The country's international standing and dignity rose with citizen actions, officially sanctioned by the authorities, calling for consolidation of democracy and human rights. Supported by other countries and by a wide range of international agencies, Colombia started its long march toward a stable democracy.

Aware of the tremendous harm that the extensive presence of the drug trade had done to its entire social structure, the nation regained its moral footing and closed the doors. Citizens used the legal establishment, and even the government, to overthrow the political strongholds that the drug lords had set in place. They also began destroying related practices, like money laundering and smuggling, that had brought such devastation to our economy.

The high rates of violent death that had scandalized and upset world opinion began to

diminish. Given the new national climate, the number of victims of both political and civil crimes also declined.

This task was the hardest of all. It required a long-term effort and profound changes in individual and collective mentality. Contemplating the results, and the changes in the structure of relationships between Colombians, we understood why the process had been so difficult, and why it had not begun earlier. It called for enormous faith in ourselves and willingness to transform our old ways of life. At the same time, it made us conscious of the main source of our troubles—the tendency to remain separated and isolated—and helped us discover our true strength: Unity.”



Destino Colombia Participants

Team members participated as individuals, not as representatives of their institutions. A serious effort was made to ensure diversity of experience and background in order to reflect the country's heterogeneous population.

Groups Represented in the Project

*Academics
Militia fighters
Peasants
Right-wing militants
Businessmen
Professionals
Guerrillas
Religious leaders
Indigenous people
Intellectuals
Researchers
Left-wing militants
Young people
Media workers
Members of the Armed Forces
People of color
Nongovernmental organization members
Politicians
Political theorists
Union leaders*

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