COLOMBIA TODAY
The Colombian government and the FARC signed a peace accord in 2016, but implementation has been hindered by a lack of credible local governance and security. Neighboring Venezuela is a failed state, not only forcing millions of Venezuelans to leave the country (many into Colombia) but also serving as a haven for armed groups such as the National Liberation Army (ELN), now Colombia’s largest armed group. Narcotrafficking continues to be a major source of illicit income, with new actors (e.g., the Sinaloa Cartel from Mexico) entering the fray. Despite these and other challenges, Colombia finds itself in a period of relative stability. Major cities and beaches attract tourism and foster an urban elite, although growing popular protests highlight concerns about corruption and inequality. While the Colombian government and international community have formulated plans for stabilization in Colombia’s territories, failure to implement such plans in a concerted and coordinated way may risk the country succumbing to its historical conflict drivers. At the same time, as the U.S. government’s own Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR) framework warns, the United States must be “disciplined in assessing the risks of prematurely providing certain types of assistance in conflict-affected environments before there is a foundation of legitimate political order, basic security, and appropriate anti-corruption controls.”

The United States has maintained a long-term commitment to Colombia, appropriating more than $11.2 billion in foreign assistance between 2000-2017 and providing support to the 2016 peace accord, which ended the over 50-year armed conflict with the FARC. While results of previous U.S. initiatives have been mixed, Plan Colombia is considered an exemplar of a successful Washington-led civil-military intervention. Between 2007 and 2012 alone, close coordination between the United States and Colombia on eradication and record low levels of cocaine consumption in the United States caused coca production levels to reach record lows. Critics—including several local community leaders interviewed by the authors—point out that Plan Colombia focused on security and coca eradication at the expense of other economic, social, and environmental drivers of conflict that persist today.

There are clear national security reasons for continued U.S. involvement in and support to Colombia, including...
for stabilization goals. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently visited Colombia for an anti-terrorism conference during which he highlighted Colombia’s importance as a counterterrorism partner and that the ELN was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States. With a decentralized command structure and proclivity for opportunistic illicit activity, the ELN operates freely in Venezuela. There, it organizes, rears and freely crosses the border back into Colombia, forcibly recruiting and kidnapping women, children, and other vulnerable people while deploying landmines along the way. Colombia also has become a leading security partner in the region for training other militaries. China’s growing public and private investments in the country, including Bogota’s new subway system, heighten U.S. concerns about competitor influence in the Western Hemisphere. Finally, Colombia’s coca production has grown since 2015 and continues to fuel illicit transnational networks, contributing to the flow of cocaine to the United States; 90 percent of the cocaine consumed in the United States comes from Colombia. The confluence of these factors means Colombia remains a country of key importance to U.S. interests abroad.

There are clear national security reasons for continued U.S. involvement in and support to Colombia, including for stabilization goals.

WINNING THE PEACE . . .

The implementation of the FARC peace accord, while not inclusive of the ELN and other armed actors, presents a useful lens through which stabilization should be considered. It is also likely the most viable pathway for stabilization in Colombia, given the degree of Colombian political buy-in and international support for the process.

President Iván Duque opposed the peace process during the referendum in 2016. However, upon assuming office after the 2018 elections, President Duque realized, to his credit, the importance of continuing the march to peace, however imperfect the accord itself may be. While putting his own undeniable imprint on implementation, his administration has continued several important efforts launched by former-President Juan Manuel Santos.

The Territory-Focused Development Plan (PDETs) initiative is already in some stage of implementation in 158 municipalities (out of a planned 170) across 16 regions considered to be critical to sustainable peace. PDETs plans are meant to be community-driven and could include myriad types of development projects (e.g., roads, schools, expanded access to electricity, critical infrastructure, and increased access to health services). As with many community-driven development initiatives, the process of building trust through government support of local priorities is almost as important as the resulting projects themselves.

Another important part of peace accord implementation is the program for illicit crop substitution. Though also continued by the Duque administration, serious doubts exist as to the financial sustainability and effectiveness of this program. Some reports say that 40,000 of the 99,097 enrolled families (94 percent of which are complying with the guidelines) have not seen any monetary compensation, although others report that 73,332 families have received one or more payment for Immediate Food Assistance. Coca eradication—a historic focus of U.S. cooperation with Colombia—is also unlikely to have a sustainable impact if not integrated with stabilization approaches; illicit groups are flexible, often moving to new areas that are not part of the program, and coca farmers currently do not have viable substitutions.

Perceiving lingering security challenges in key areas, the Duque administration recently created an initiative under the peace implementation process, Zonas Futuro, which combines army, navy, and police efforts to increase security presence and strengthen intelligence capabilities. Although it is designed to include social services, some local communities perceive it to be a security strategy at its core. This perception is reinforced by the sole presence of the Colombian military in some Zonas Futuro areas and the lack of presence of civilian ministries, according to stakeholder interviews. It remains to be seen whether this initiative can differentiate itself from previous Bogota-led security efforts that had significantly less success. Initial indications are that the Zonas Futuro initiative is working best in locations where there is close coordination with PDETs efforts.

. . . WILL BE COMPLICATED

After a few hopeful months following the signing of the peace accord, recent developments have shown that peace is fragile and that many destabilizing factors still exist. Despite the initiatives outlined above, among others, the Colombian government was unable to quickly fill many post-peace power vacuums, allowing the ELN, GAO Residual (dissidents of the FARC), other armed groups, and Mexican cartel-controlled groups to move into areas once controlled by the FARC. This is due in part to Colombia’s vast territory,
difficult geography, and limited flexible government resources. In some areas, these groups were already present and remained after the FARC surrendered their arms. Even in places where government security forces and programs are present, weak governance and persistent allegations of corruption strain relations with local communities, particularly in indigenous and Afro-Colombian minority areas commonly caught between the government and illicit forces. The continued presence of armed groups means that illicit activities—including narcotrafficking, illegal mining, sexual violence, and kidnapping—have continued and in some cases expanded.

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As these problems persist, social leaders across the country have taken it upon themselves to advocate for more rights, opportunities, and peace, often at enormous personal cost. The UN reported that as of December 31, 2019, 365 social leaders have been murdered since the signing of the peace accord; other sources track that number at over 500. The social leaders that have been killed across the country since the signing of the peace accord include land rights advocates, Afro-Colombian and indigenous leaders, environmental rights defenders, and even demobilized ex-combatants. Dangerous armed groups such as the ELN maintain significant ability to operate in Colombia, and according to stakeholder interviews, it is probable that these groups may benefit from tacit or explicit coordination with corrupt local authorities in their efforts to quell social movements. Complicating matters is an ever-worsening humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Over 1.6 million Venezuelans have already been displaced into Colombia, with millions more spreading across the region. Half a million Colombians that lived in Venezuela have returned to Colombia. Many of the power vacuums created by the peace accord exist in areas now populated by Venezuelans living in refugee-like situations. This places vulnerable people at direct risk of conscription into groups such as the ELN and strains already scarce government resources for public service delivery. Despite these challenges, Colombia’s government and people have largely refrained from “othering” Venezuelans and have largely not descended into the xenophobic tropes so common in forced displacement scenarios. However, as the crisis in Venezuela continues, as more vulnerable Venezuelans cross the border into Colombia, and as the international community continues to severely underfund humanitarian response efforts, it is unclear how long this goodwill will last.

Colombia’s ability to “win the peace” is essential but far from assured. Descent back into conflict, while less likely after the signing of the peace accord, is not hard to envision. The United States has invested significant resources in Colombia over the past three decades, including through support for anti-narcotrafficking, which yielded mixed results, and anti-FARC efforts, which enabled the Colombian government to reach the historic peace accord. While stability in Colombia is more complicated than ending narcotrafficking and the formal peace process, accord implementation efforts have the potential to address fundamental and historically entrenched drivers of instability. To achieve sustainable peace and inclusive prosperity in such an important country in the region, the United States should better align its cooperation to match these entrenched drivers.

DRIVERS OF INSTABILITY
A TROUBLED ECONOMIC MODEL

A significant contributor to Colombia’s instability is an economic system that has left many Colombians feeling that the country’s expansive GDP growth and accession to the OECD have not been accompanied by a commensurate distribution of benefits to the people, especially to non-urban and minority populations. Colombia has the second highest wealth inequality in Latin America, which is the most unequal region in the world. This uneven growth, when coupled with poor or non-existent governance, has led many to take to the streets in protest. It has also created openings for the armed groups mentioned above. These groups are financed in large part by illicit activities—particularly mining and illicit crops—which generate significant income. These activities offer the main source of employment for workers and farmers in these areas, although that is often accompanied with coercion and extortion.

Though marijuana cultivation has increased in recent years, the main illicit crop in Colombia continues to be coca, the key ingredient in cocaine. Coca’s prominence is driven by its profitability: coca produces multiple crops per year and sells for more than alternative crops. With little option for income replacement, neither farmers nor narcotraffickers—often at opposite ends of the income spectrum—have
financial incentive to end coca cultivation. Importantly, narcotraffickers also maintain de facto control over the few roadways that lead to the Pacific coast, from where coca is transported north through Central America and ultimately to the United States.

Illicit markets are currently the backbone of many municipalities throughout the country, but Colombia has plentiful natural resources that could be cultivated successfully in alternative ways. The soil is rich for growing cacao, avocados, blueberries, and other highly desired goods. For these crops to become a desirable means of production, coca eradication must be a priority. Prior Colombian and U.S. policy toward coca eradication is controversial in Colombia (and elsewhere), given reported environmental and health impacts, as well as its short-term nature of only removing the “tip” of the problem rather than “the root” (the underlying system of corruption and inequality, which also drives up coca prices and makes them more profitable). Additionally, inadequate market access impedes the development of alternative crops. Coca buyers will come to pick up the crops, whereas the transportation mechanisms and infrastructure for crops like avocados often do not exist. Exacerbating these pervasive inequality issues and the problem of a robust illicit economy is a fundamental issue with access to land rights and distribution of land in Colombia. An overwhelming number of families, indigenous groups, and farmers do not have titles to their land, leading to conflict over ownership and a more general aversion to making longer-term commitments to land development. This issue has plagued the country for decades and was one of the reasons the FARC took up arms in the first place. As part of the peace process, the Colombian government has promised to formalize 7 million hectares of land by 2026. Nevertheless, according to stakeholder interviews, 60 percent of land in rural Colombia is still unregistered, and getting to 100 percent registration is difficult because there are often competing ownership claims and because land surveys are enormously costly.

**WEAK LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

These economic challenges are exacerbated by weak governance (especially outside of urban areas), lack of accountability for corrupt actors, and inconsistent access to justice for citizens. By most accounts, Colombia has strong laws on the books but is struggling to successfully govern according to these laws. This can be explained in part due to a lack of resources (an estimated half of the economy does not pay taxes) and capacity; but corruption plays a big role even in places where the government is present. For example, implicit in the ability of armed groups to transport illicit crops across the country is a lack of state presence or corruption in the security forces that are present; security forces have checkpoints along the Pan-American highway, yet illicit goods seem to pass with relative ease.

Weak governance is thus a key reason for continued instability in Colombia. While the Duque administration has an opportunity to show the government’s interest and investment in areas via peace accord-related programs, significant governance challenges exist beyond the 170 PDETs municipalities. Justice and accountability remain distant concepts in many places, creating perverse opportunities for illicit groups to play roles traditionally assigned to governments, such as security guarantor, service provider, and dispute resolver. Though there are early positive trends toward recently elected local officials who recognize these economic and governance contributors to instability (for example, in Medellín and Bogotá), rebuilding trust in institutions after decade of neglect, corrupt, and predatory action will be a long-term process.

Those seeking legal recourse via the formal judicial system will need to experience thorough investigations, prosecutions of bad actors, and other functions of a robust judicial system that heretofore have not existed in many parts of Colombia. The framers of the FARC peace accords acknowledged these challenges when they included a transitional justice body, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), designed to “uncover and adjudicate serious violations of human rights committed during Colombia’s internal armed conflict, such as kidnapping, torture, extrajudicial executions, sexual violence, forced displacement, and recruitment of minors.” The accord also acknowledged that the implementation and verification process would last well beyond single administrations.

**DIFFUSION OF THE USE OF FORCE**

When the peace agreement with the FARC was officially signed, roughly 80 percent of the armed group demobilized, giving up their arms and land, though some factions remain armed and active. Although this was an important step toward peace, it unsurprisingly left a power vacuum in areas formerly controlled by the FARC. After years of training and mobilizing for counterterrorism operations, both the Colombian military and national police were unprepared to deploy and fill the territorial void as cohesive forces for stabilization and civilian protection. The state was unsuccessful in capturing the land mainly due to capacity issues but also to a lack of will in some areas, according to stakeholder interviews. Colombia has a varied and difficult
terrain, and without the proper infrastructure, including roads and communication networks, it is almost impossible for state security forces to reach remote areas. Some stakeholders interviewed argued that the central government did not take control of these areas because it was not fully committed to the peace agreement and because government officials were benefiting from the illicit economies. Meanwhile, the ELN, illicit groups, and hired mercenaries protecting agro-industrial crops and facilities dominate the security picture in several contested territories, taking advantage of the gaps in state capacity. Minority groups such as the Afro-Colombians, indigenous communities, and campesinos rely on their own local protection mechanisms and volunteers, drawing from local cultural traditions and the necessity of protecting their families. This is due to the absence of credible and trustworthy state military and police forces, which are largely viewed by these communities as predatory and corrupt.

Though Colombia’s military deserves significant credit for pressuring the FARC on the battlefield to come to the negotiating table, Colombia’s military has yet to transition from an army of war to an army of peace. Under the Zonas Futuro plan, President Duque is now deploying the military out of their barracks and into the territories, emphasizing the security-led intervention discussed above. Without requisite training and capabilities to deploy as a stabilizing and civilian protection force, the military risks deepening local popular distrust and suspicion of their role in communities. According to stakeholder interviews, the lack of clarity on the military’s role and missions in combination with deployment out to the territories have decreased morale among the ranks and have led to attrition among aggrieved officers. Local communities’ false sense of hope in these types of perceived, security-focused programs, including Zonas Futuro, has led to further distrust in both the military and the government as a whole.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

A nuanced understanding of these drivers of instability should inform U.S. interagency efforts in Colombia and should guide how the U.S. government leads and supports international stabilization efforts.

**MAKE PEACE IRREVERSIBLE**

Those invested in making peace irreversible in Colombia—including the United States—must focus on the effective implementation of the accord.

**Realize that “Bogota is 2,640 meters closer to heaven . . . but that much further from reality.”** Colombians must agree on priorities between the central government and local communities, and more broadly, they must decide on a vision for a peaceful Colombia. The Duque government should be supported in its overall dedication to the peace accord implementation process but incentivized to stay the long-term course despite shorter-term political pressures to do otherwise. Overemphasizing the security aspects of peace risks deprioritizing and under-resourcing governance and stabilization initiatives fundamental to achieving an enduring peace. If Colombians in the territories are not empowered to locally develop or lead peace accord implementation, their lack of trust in the central government will likely deepen.

In addition to a broad vision for peace, a locally driven approach to address the specific needs of people in the territories is also important. Colombia has various minority groups, including Afro-Colombian, indigenous, and farmer groups, that are spread out in geographically diverse areas, including the Amazon, Andes Mountains, coastal beaches, and plains. This diversity requires an area-specific approach to stabilization.
Leverage the PDETs for more than individual projects. The Colombian people, government, and international community see PDETs as largely legitimate and worthwhile. The government should be encouraged to institutionalize core PDETs principles, acknowledging that peace is a long-term process and that its successful realization should not be tied to one government official or office. Designed to reflect community priorities, Colombian officials (with the support of the United States and the international community) should be encouraged to tie PDETs plans into a broader strategy for sub-national transformation. Many communities have a Proyecto de Vida (“Living Plan”) that defines their visions for the future; these and other community efforts should be acknowledged and incorporated into the PDETs. Stories of effective implementation should then be shared across other communities.

At the same time, the PDETs should be seen as a much-needed opportunity for economic development in Colombia’s 170 municipalities of focus. The Colombian government and international partners should explore opportunities to align PDETs with public and private financial flows (e.g., recent promises of “billions of dollars” in rural development investments by the USDFC), especially in regard to products and value chains with potential for coca crop substitution at scale. These PDETs efforts should align with and learn from organizations such as ANDI to ensure high production quality and thus access to regional and global markets.

Align U.S. and international efforts to the PDETs. Current efforts by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), UN Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the GIZ, and others to align programming with the PDETs and to place the Colombian government in the lead should be encouraged and expanded. Where it makes sense to do so, co-branding with PDETs or even with a particular PDET’s branding is preferable to reinforce local government legitimacy.

Though the Santos and Duque administrations have been criticized by various political factions for doing so, both have prioritized rehabilitation and reintegration of former FARC over incarceration. Communities where there are high numbers of ex-combatants—and thus high need for community reintegration and social cohesion—should be prioritized, understanding that U.S. law prohibits directly working with the ex-combatants themselves.

Additionally, the United States should participate in and financially support efforts to align international assistance funding and implementation with the PDETs, also aligning funding announcements with partners and to Colombian priorities. The United States should create strong feedback loops with multiple levels of government involvement in stabilization programming, helping build trust within and among the government and target communities. At the same time, field implementation managers should be empowered with the flexibility to quickly program stabilization funding—aligned with the PDETs whenever possible—as needs arise.

Reinforce links between PDETs and Zonas Futuro. The U.S. government, together with its development and humanitarian partners, should advise the Colombian government on harmonization between PDETs and Zonas Futuro when possible. Zonas Futuro could play an important role in making municipalities safe and accessible for the PDETs, but efforts to ensure irreversible peace in those areas will face difficulty if the state is not able to fill power vacuums created with effective Zonas Futuro efforts.

Provide steadfast support for transitional justice efforts. President Duque signed into law the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) in June 2019, putting into effect a key element of peace: transitional justice. Agreed to by the FARC and the Santos administration as part of the peace accord, the JEP is now finally operational and is expected to deliver its first sentences sometime in 2020. Seen by some as an anti-military plot, these sentences will almost certainly anger people within and outside of the government. Additionally, the JEP is scheduled to produce a report focused on truth and reconciliation in 2021, which also promises to exacerbate already deep political divides. The United States, Sweden, Norway, and other allies have been financially and diplomatically supportive to the JEP. It is critical that this support for the institution and idea of transitional justice stays strong during what promises to be a turbulent year.

GO BEYOND THE PEACE ACCORDS BY STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

Peace and stability in Colombia require more than successful implementation of the peace accords. It requires addressing some of the core drivers of instability and the development of a strategy and vision for a peaceful Colombia.

Enable alternative crop production. Irreversible peace in Colombia must include more effective counter narcotics trafficking beyond simple eradication. While peace accord-mandated crop substitution efforts have many challenges, Colombia benefits from incredibly diverse ecosystems and fertile lands. Coffee, rubber, plantains, avocados, forestry, and other industries have varying potential to replace coca, but doing so will take time, significant investment in infrastructure, new value chains, and other crop-dependent efforts. Substitution alone will also
not be enough; it will have to be coupled with other efforts to address drivers of instability. Policymakers should also realize that continued high U.S. demand for cocaine—not to mention new markets within Colombia, Brazil, and elsewhere in the region—means continued financial incentive for narcotrafficking in Colombia.

**Restart the peace process with the ELN.** Peace must at some point also include the ELN. Successful implementation of the FARC peace accord will send an important signal to the ELN about the seriousness of the government’s pursuit of peace. The United States should encourage the restart of the peace process with the ELN, which ended abruptly in January 2019 after a deadly bombing killed 20 people at a police academy in Bogotá. Since then, the ELN has increased its kidnapping operations, placement of mines, and conscription of children; ceasing these three lines of work is a necessary precondition for restarting formal peace talks. However, the United States and other allies can and should restart efforts to bring the different parties back to the negotiating table and take special note that the distinct leadership structure of the ELN versus the FARC—horizontal versus vertical, respectively—will make any negotiations much more challenging. To start the process, pilot peace tracks could be developed in communities where the government is also prioritizing stabilization. Community leaders throughout Colombia, such as Acuerdo Humanitario ¡ya! en el Choco, are already successful in bringing opposing groups to the table to negotiate a local truce. This provides a useful model for what would need to be a more community-based, bottom-up approach to peace with the ELN.

**Protect social leaders and build local judicial institutions.** Colombia is known for having strong laws. The pervasive justice and accountability issues discussed above are more a symptom of poor implementation of laws and a general lack of access to justice. Local police and prosecutors in particular need significant support, without which the corruption and impunity at the core of recent murders of social leaders will likely continue. The National Protection Unit (UNP), which serves as an ad hoc protection unit for threatened leaders, is a good start, but protection of social leaders must address the root causes of violence against them. The UNP is expensive and therefore likely unsustainable in the long term. U.S. interagency support will be needed for this—including from the Department of Justice, Department of State, Department of Defense, and USAID—which must come under the coordination and leadership of the U.S. ambassador. The United States should continue to work with Colombian authorities to support social leaders’ security and their ability to create meaningful opportunities for social dialogue. While disagreements and conflicting views are natural, they must be channeled through community dialogue to elevate and address security gaps or civilian protection concerns and reduce the risk of violence between local and national security actors.

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**Fund a comprehensive land registry.** Efforts by the National Planning Department and the World Bank are underway to develop a comprehensive land registry. Recognizing this as a fundamental barrier to peace, the FARC peace accords included land formalization elements. Though critically important from peace and stabilization perspectives, this aspect of accord implementation will be practically impossible at scale without an accurate and legitimate land registry.

**Respond effectively to the Venezuelan crisis.** In light of the continued crisis in Venezuela, the Colombian government must show not only the ability to support Venezuelans but also to support the communities that receive them. The United States and other bilateral and multilateral donors should immediately and fully fund the joint UN High Commissioner for Refugees-IOM appeal while continuing to partner with the Colombian government to provide protection, social services, and livelihood opportunities to Venezuelans and host communities. Doing so will be an important signal of government effectiveness and would support the government’s admirable efforts to limit xenophobia toward Venezuelans. Any perceived choice between responding to the Venezuelan crisis or building resilience and lasting peace is counterproductive. Colombians, with appropriate international support as and where needed, can and must do both.

**STRENGTHEN THE CREDIBLE ROLE AND PRESENCE OF COLOMBIAN SECURITY FORCES**

**Align civil-military efforts.** The United States, its allies, and the Colombian government must better align their civil-military policy and programming. In addition, as the U.S. government’s SAR framework notes, the United States must carefully tailor security and justice-sector assistance so as not to exacerbate conflict dynamics. In many Colombian territories, the military and police are the only state presence. Implementation of PDETs, Zonas Futuro, and broader
counterterrorism and counter narcotics operations needs to be better synchronized and harmonized to integrate with credible local governance and judicial institutions. Colombia’s military and national police have stated their intent but should move forward to adapt their doctrine and training to emphasize irregular warfare, including information operations and disinformation threats, intelligence, and cyber awareness. Civilian protection should be at the center of this approach, shaping the environment through credible presence as a deterrent to bad actors. Although there are protocols for the Colombian military and national police to work with indigenous community watch units, many local community members feel they work against one another or at least cross purposes. Increasing dialogue with communities to understand what their priorities and goals are, and how the government can work best alongside them, will help reduce tensions.

**Colombia's military and national police should adapt their doctrine and training to emphasize irregular warfare, including information operations and disinformation threats, intelligence, and cyber awareness. Civilian protection should be at the center of this approach.**

**Counter narcotics efforts should support rather than drive stabilization approaches.** The United States has been pushing for aerial eradication as the best solution, most recently in a March 2 Oval Office meeting between Presidents Trump and Duque, while many local communities believe it is counterproductive. The answer is probably somewhere in between. In areas where the government has access to and can implement manual eradication without significant harm to those carrying out the task, aerial spraying is unnecessary. However, in select areas where there is a lack of state presence to conduct and verify manual removal, targeted aerial spraying may be the only method available. If aerial spraying is used, the proper steps must continue to be taken to reduce health and environmental risks. The decision on whether or not to use aerial spraying should be made on a localized and case-by-case basis taking into consideration the community and geographical factors in each area. To achieve durable outcomes, all eradication programs should (1) be implemented in close coordination with civil-military stabilization efforts to provide alternative livelihoods and civilian protection from narcotraffickers, and (2) be accompanied by local public diplomacy outreach to clearly connect these approaches to implementation of the peace process.

As part of its **Pursuing Effective and Conflict-Aware Stabilization** project, CSIS conducted fieldwork in Colombia in January 2020 to inform the findings of this brief, including interviews with stakeholders across the Colombian government, security services, U.S. and allied governments, local civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, international humanitarian organizations, and implementers of U.S. government assistance. Though efforts were made to link to credible online sources wherever possible, some non-linked findings are the direct result of not-for-attribution interviews in Colombia.

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This brief is made possible by the generous support of Chemonics International, Inc.