June 4 2013

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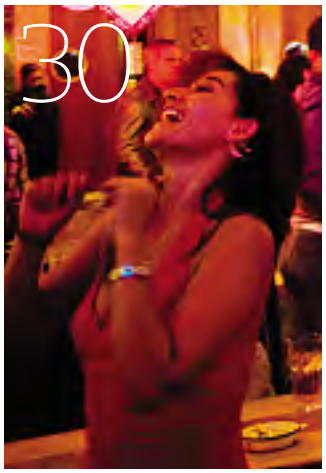

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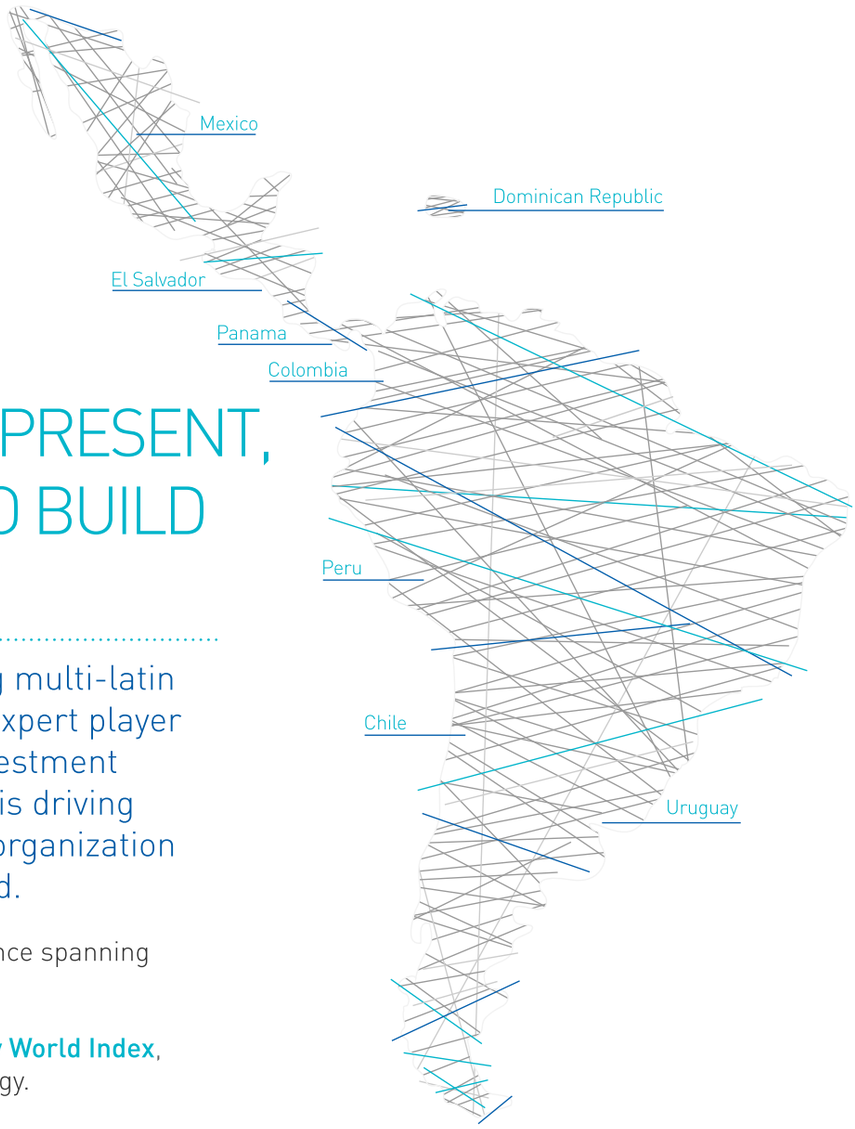

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Eternal leaders

Colombian presidents often exert their influence long after they have left office – much to the irritation of some successors, says *Malcolm Deas*

The politics of Colombia have never been typical of Latin America. The same could be said of the other countries in the region, because generalisations are nearly always wrong.

Colombia has been governed predominantly by civilians, who have gained the presidency through elections where, usually, the outcome was uncertain.

Few winners have dominated the country's politics for long, and few presidents have been re-elected: Álvaro Uribe's two terms, which ran from 2002 to 2010, have been matched only by Rafael Núñez's ascendancy in the 1880s and 1890s. Núñez, for most of the time, delegated the exercise of power to his vice-presidents, preferring to brood far from the capital, lulled by the sea breezes in his villa near Cartagena.

One result of this system is the existence at any one time of several living ex-presidents. At present, as well as Uribe, there are four: Belisario Betancur, César Gaviria, Ernesto Samper and Andrés Pastrana. Of those, only the first can be said to have retired from the fray, in his case to devote himself to the arts and enjoy the tranquillity of provincial Barichara – and even he cannot resist the occasional political twitch.

Colombia has never been an easy country to govern, and ex-presidents add to complications faced by any incumbent. This is the case with President Juan Manuel Santos and his predecessor, Uribe, whose prestige is still high and whose exceptional energy is undiminished. Uribe is also a master of Twitter, an instrument only recently available to those who have left office. Some Colombians look back to a past age when ex-presidents supposedly behaved with more restraint, receiving in return the respect and deference that few of them enjoyed while in office.

Colombia is not a deferential country. Such a time never existed. Francisco de Paula Santander, the rival to Simón Bolívar and founding president of the independent republic, recognised that the only way to govern its vast and poorly integrated territory was by constant long-distance networking, assiduous partisan journalism and the full range of electoral arts.

All the same, his candidate, José María Obando, lost the 1837 election and Santander spent the couple of years remaining to him in virulent polemics. When he died, one newspaper commented that his friends should see to it that he was buried with pen, ink and paper, as he would no doubt go on scribbling in his tomb.

Other notable presidents have followed Santander's example: Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera, whose remarkably creative first presidency was followed by three later terms in which he achieved much less; Núñez, who could never quite let go; Miguel Antonio Caro, an ultramontane dogmatist who nonetheless found life not worth living without engaging in constant public arguments.

More recently, Carlos Lleras Restrepo, who after leaving the presidency in 1970 wrote and published a periodical almost single-handedly, and his cousin, Alberto Lleras Camargo, who, Cincinnatus-like, retired to rural Chia. But far from putting his hand to the plough, he went on writing to the political leaders in El Tiempo, the country's leading paper. On the other side of Colombia's bipartisan divide, Conservative ex-presidents Laureano Gómez and Mariano Ospina led their factions from beyond the grave.

> Colombia is not a deferential country. Such a time never existed

One exasperated columnist has recently suggested the usual remedy in this legalistic republic – that there should be a law against this sort of thing, that somehow ex-presidents should be compelled to keep silent. This is seen as particularly desirable in the context of the delicate peace negotiations between Santos's government and the Farc guerrillas.

It cannot be done, and there are many reasons why. One is human nature: most politicians feel compelled to defend their records.

Others are perhaps more Colombian: there is no House of Lords where such figures can be put out to grass and no presidential memorial libraries – at least not for the living.

Followings insist their leaders continue to lead. The country is a disputatious democracy where no one is censored and all have a right to be heard. Success in making peace must take that into account. ■

Malcolm Deas *is an emeritus fellow of St Antony's College and lecturer in the government and politics of Latin America at the University of Oxford*

Rediscovered country

For decades the rugged Andean landscape harboured crime and violence, but today regional pride is emerging in a revived economy.
By *John Paul Rathbone*

Eric Hobsbawm, the British historian who died last year, had an abiding affection for South America. He first visited in the 1960s and returned often. "Nobody who discovers South America can resist the region," he once wrote.

I first travelled to Colombia in the mid-1980s and, like Hobsbawm, could not resist what I saw. Two years later I returned to write a tourist guide, having persuaded a publisher of the brio of the Colombians and the remarkable biodiversity of their country, with its Caribbean and Pacific coasts, Amazon jungle, grassy plains and rolling, if often impenetrable, central mountains.

If it was a romantic vision, the honeymoon ended abruptly and on an exact date: August 18 1989, when the Medellín drug cartel killed presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán. Bomb attacks, kidnappings and assassinations (especially of judges and journalists) were soon routine.

Writing a tourist guide became an anomaly. Surely I was CIA, many disbelieving Colombians asked. In those confusing, fear-filled days, everything often appeared to be something else, because nothing was necessarily what it seemed.

Still, as I learnt then and for ever remember, Colombia's tortured topography explains much about the country. Often impassable terrain can lead to hugely different yet adjacent micro-climates – be they ecological, social or political.

Thus, Paris Hilton, the American heiress, has opened a boutique in Bogotá selling accessories (modernity has it pluses and minuses). Meanwhile, 150km away in Boyacá, *campesinos*, peasants seemingly drawn from medieval times, use the archaic if charming address of "*su merced*", meaning "your mercy".

Indeed, for much of the country, Bogotá remains a remote and distant capital. And if the state's reach has failed to penetrate some regions, that has often been simply because it could not get there.

Age-old battles

That is partly why Colombia has hosted one of the world's oldest guerrilla insurgencies. Geography is a veil that has left much of the country out of sight, out of reach and out of mind.

How the world's most populous Spanish-speaking nation, after Mexico, evolved from nearly failed state in the 1980s into the can-do emerging power of today is more or less well known, even if its costs are not always fully appreciated. Successive governments attacked and balkanised the drug cartels into smaller criminal groups. These no longer pose a systemic threat and violence has dropped sharply, even if narco-trafficking persists and will continue to do so while illegal drugs remain highly profitable.

Geography has left much of Colombia out of sight, out of mind

In the 2000s, Álvaro Uribe, then-president, launched an all-out offensive on the

Governance: the state has often struggled to extend its reach outside the capital

guerrillas, supported by Washington – a rare example of a US foreign-policy success in the region. The state's expanding presence opened up previously closed areas to mining and oil exploration. It also launched a boom that brought wealth, especially to shareholders of companies such as Ecopetrol and Pacific Rubiales, but also "Dutch disease" – commodity-driven currency appreciation that hurts local manufacturing.

Still, with the guerrillas demoralised and backed into a corner, Juan Manuel Santos, the president, has launched a peace process. Doubtless, Colombia will never achieve the peace of an eden, but that the process exists is a symptom of success. Colombia has even become an exporter of the security expertise it accrued so painfully.

The effects of Colombia's geography are now felt more sharply in economics than in politics. They explain a proud and continuing regionalism – perhaps comparable with that of Italy, another nation of rival city states.

This regional pride is embodied especially in the industriousness of the Antioqueños. Their leading local companies – banks such as Grupo Sura and Nutresa, the food producer – have expanded abroad and become true *multilatinas*, with market capitalisations to match.

Topography also explains the persistent difficulties of moving around the country. Businesses complain that it costs as much to truck goods to the Pacific coast as it does to ship them on to Asia.

New journey begins

Most of Colombia's roads remain little better than 30 years ago, and distances are always greater than a bird flying between two points. This, though, may be changing – albeit slowly – under the government's infrastructure programme.

Alfonso López Michelsen, another former president, once described Colombia as "the Tibet of South America". He was referring to its isolation, but also to its exceptionalism.

Colombia has never defaulted on its foreign debt and has an unusually long democratic tradition – competitive elections have been held on and off since the 1820s. Uniquely and remarkably, it has suffered only one recession in nearly a century (despite near-constant internal conflict).

It is, perhaps, the most "Anglo-Saxon" country in Latin America – as can be seen, trivially, in the red-brick and mock-Tudor architecture of Bogotá. But it is also a country of extreme and frustrating legalism (and, perhaps because of that, occasional extreme lawlessness).

Trade liberalisation has since broached the isolation López Michelsen referred to. Colombia's economy is now larger than South Africa's and, by some measures, bigger than Argentina's, a G20 member.

Nonetheless, it is striking that foreigners are often more optimistic about the country than many nationals. This may be because Colombians, self-protectively, take the cynical view (and perhaps because their traditional trade partner, troubled Venezuela, is no longer the market it used to be). But it may also be because the country's latest challenges, such as extreme inequality, can seem as intractable as the former ones.

Either way, the New Colombia is undeniably a better country than the old one, in the sense of being more secure, more prosperous and better known. The enthusiastic guide book I planned 25 years ago was not wrong, just premature. ■

PHOTOS: BLOOMBERG, ETHEL DAVIS

The peace maker

In seeking to end 50 years of guerrilla fighting, President Juan Manuel Santos is treading a fine political line, writes *John Paul Rathbone*

For much of his career, Juan Manuel Santos has waged war. Now, Colombia's president is seeking peace. As he sits in the presidential palace in Bogotá, his tone is measured, his gestures controlled and his gaze calm from under slightly hooded eyes. It is the inscrutable mien of a practised poker player – which is fitting, because if politics is a poker game, Santos has recently gone all-in. ▶

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER MORRIS

‘What I want is peace. Believe me, it is much harder to make peace than war’

◀ For the past 50 years, Colombia has been wracked by Latin America's oldest guerrilla insurgency. But last September, Santos opened formal talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (the Farc) to try to find peace. Success would end a conflict that has become entwined with rightwing paramilitary groups, displaced millions and left thousands dead. As the Farc has also funded itself with narco-trafficking (although it denies this), peace has international ramifications too.

Yet many Colombians, following the failure of all other Farc peace talks, fear Santos in his pursuit of a successful deal has become more of a Chamberlain than a Churchill. Since the talks began, his popularity has slumped below 50 per cent.

Santos leans forward into the bright Andean sunlight streaming through the windows. Nervous presidential aides rustle their papers. On the wall, a portrait of a man on a rearing horse peers out of a grapeshot-ridden period of Colombian history. "I am not an appeaser. What I want is peace," Santos says crisply, chopping the air with his hand. "Believe me, it is much harder to make peace than war."

Santos knows whereof he speaks. As defence minister under Álvaro Uribe, the former president, he pounded the Farc's 8,000 troops relentlessly. Not that this has stopped Uribe from since becoming one of Santos's most relentless critics.

"No one has hit the Farc harder than I. But all wars have to end at some point, and that requires a negotiated solution," Santos says. "That is why every military officer fights – so that there may be peace. Still, as I have always said, these talks have limits, and if peace is not possible we shall walk away."

Having established the point, the emotional temperature in the room drops, his aides relax and the president resumes his inscrutable poise.

Santos, 61, studied at the London School of Economics and, like many well-bred Colombians, has a strand of Anglophilia. Indeed, he is a "gent" in the English phrase. The nephew of a former president, his family owned the country's newspaper of record, El Tiempo, until it was sold in 2007. He is cultivated and urbane, but remains grounded by drawing life lessons from poker. "Truman and Roosevelt... liked to play," he says. "It reminded them of everyday life and of governing, that you need to know the rules of the game, when to risk, who your rivals are, and that you need luck and vision in order to win."

More than anything, though, Santos is groomed for power. He has worked as a minister of trade, of finance and of defence. Before government, he was a journalist and set up a think-tank dedicated to the knotty theme of good governance.

On paper, therefore, few presidents anywhere are as well prepared for the job, including its potential pitfalls. Santos did not need to open the peace talks – continuing to fight would have been the easier path politically. But the stars were aligned, especially after Cuba urged the Marxist Farc to give up its anachronistic armed struggle. So Santos took a calculated risk. As he says, "the potential returns are so high".

Peace would certainly be a game changer for Colombia's $390bn economy. "With peace, our economy would do better still," says Santos.

Colombia is also a member of the Pacific Alliance, a promising $1,200bn trade bloc that includes Mexico, Chile and Peru and is characterised by liberal-minded instincts. Santos is proud if characteristically diplomatic about comparisons with South America's more protectionist Atlantic economies, such as Brazil and Argentina. "You will never hear me denigrating other countries," he says. "But it is true we are faster-growing. We also share the same beliefs about the importance of foreign investment and rule of law."

Yet peace, for all its merits, would also bring challenges. For one, incorporating demobilised guerrillas into national politics could see Colombia's traditionally centre-right politics swing to the left. That prospect might sit comfortably with the patrician Santos – "I'm a third way kind of guy" – but not with all Colombians, many of whom associate leftwing politics with terrorists. "There cannot be peace with total immunity, so there has to be a process of transitional justice. But where do you draw the line between justice and peace?" he says. "This is the common dilemma of every country that wants to solve a conflict like ours... Still, as [a prominent international prosecutor] said, justice cannot be an obstacle for peace, anywhere, at any time."

Even if polls suggest that public support for the peace process is growing, this is the kind of talk that so riles Santos's domestic opponents. It can also feed fears, especially in the business community,

Fighting talk: since last September the Farc guerrillas, below, have been in formal discussions with the Colombian government

'Where do you draw the line between justice and peace?'

PHOTOS: EYEVINE, CORBIS

On poverty row: Juan Manual Santos, above, visits a street in Bogotá known as 'El Bronx', in one of the city's most deprived areas

that peace could one day unleash a wave of political populism.

Bogotá is a city of glittering skyscrapers and busy shopping centres with an up-and-coming middle class, but to its south are areas such as Ciudad Bolívar, a series of once-green rolling hills now covered with grey shanty towns. Meanwhile Cartagena, on the Caribbean coast, is a colonial jewel that thrums with well-heeled tourists. But around the city live hard-scrabble populations displaced by violence from the interior.

Santos – his government's Tony Blair-esque motto is "Prosperity for All" – has unleashed programmes to combat poverty and inequality. But advancing the agenda has been easier said than done, prompting the criticism that Santos, the former newspaperman, "governs with headlines" and does not follow through.

"There are many definitions of governance. The one I have is execution," he responds, bristling slightly. He points to the fact that ministries have spent more of their allocated budgets in the past two years than in the past 15, although as he adds, a tough new anti-corruption law has produced inertia in a newly fearful bureaucracy. "We went too far, perhaps [with that bill]," he says.

At the same time, the economy has come off the boil. A wave of oil and mining investment has brought signs of "Dutch disease", including an appreciated currency that has punished manufacturers, a major source of employment, as well as agriculture. Although the economy is growing at around 4 per cent, "some sectors are not doing very well", Santos admits. (He announced a stimulus package two weeks after this interview.)

Then there is his management style. This is more chairman of the board than chief executive. His cabinet, perhaps the most competent in South America, is stuffed with capable technocrats. But critics say this is not always matched by their ability to get things done – and there is so much Santos wants them to do: from tax, education, health, pension and justice reforms to trade liberalisation. And all that before even thinking about peace.

This, critics say, is the Achilles heel of his programme: it is too ambitious and too broad. "The number of reforms passed, and their quality, make us probably the most progressive government in the past century," Santos responds.

He reels off statistics: a drop in inequality; 200km of new double-lane roads built last year and 300km this year ("comparable to Spain at its best moment"); and reparations paid to more than 170,000 victims of violence.

His reform list, though, forces a question on many Colombian minds: with so much still to do, surely he will run again for president in 2014? Santos says he will not decide until November, that he is unattached to power and would just as much be a teacher as president. "Some people think that being in this position is very agreeable," he says. "I must tell you that sometimes it is very difficult."

There is no reason to disbelieve him, until the subject of completing the peace process – his potential marker in history – comes up. Domestic opponents say Santos needs a peace deal to launch his re-election bid. A more interesting question, though, is whether peace needs him. After all, signing a deal is only half the process – implementing it will be harder still.

"If peace is possible I would be very irresponsible to my country and future generations if I put in jeopardy that possibility," he says. It is unclear whether this suggests ambivalence about running again or a hint that he will – perhaps both.

Santos is a Bogotá Brahmin who came to office after deep thought about what Colombia needs – but has been frustrated, perhaps, in the state's ability to execute those plans. He leaves the impression of a reasonable man seeking to govern a remarkable but also highly unreasonable country. ■

Oil producers surge ahead

Market liberalisation and an influx of émigré Venezuelan workers have been catalysts for a boom in Colombia's energy sector, writes *Andres Schipani*

Some commentators compared it to Stalin's purges. It was 2006 and Venezuela's then-president, Hugo Chávez, said employees of PDVSA, the state energy company, who were not willing to side with him could leave. He also hinted that some might end up in prison.

"PDVSA's workers are with this revolution, and those who aren't should go somewhere else. Go to Miami," Chávez said, referring to a Thermidorian reaction a few years earlier when, after a failed coup, his opponents led a two-month energy industry strike that crippled Venezuela's economy.

After the strike, the president cleaned out PDVSA, sacking 20,000 employees, including some of its best petroleum engineers, geologists and managers. Some did indeed go to the US, but most were welcomed by Colombia, where they have been instrumental in helping oil companies to boost their lagging production of crude and turn the country into a regional energy powerhouse.

"Venezuela's loss has been, for all means and purposes, Colombia's gain," says Carlos Alberto López, a Harvard-educated Colombian energy expert. After the decline in production and exploration during the 1990s, in the past decade Colombia has taken advantage of the commodities boom and a crackdown on Marxist insurgents. This spurred the interest of investors in the energy-rich parts of Colombia that were off-limits during the rough years of the drug-fuelled guerrilla and paramilitary violence.

The army of experienced Venezuelan oil workers and technologically savvy managers was a welcome pool of know-how oil companies entering the Colombian scene could tap. "Without them, Colombia's extraordinary oil boom might have faced significant lags," López says.

Pacific Rubiales Energy, the Canadian-Colombian group, was one of the first private companies to take advantage of improved security, and is an emblem of Colombia's oil boom. It became the country's biggest independent oil producer by exploiting the long-neglected Rubiales field that disappointed many after an Exxon affiliate discovered oil there in the early 1980s. "Colombia was a great opportunity, with underdeveloped reserves and several million of yet-to-be-discovered barrels," says Ronald Pantin, the Caracas-born chief executive and a former senior executive at PDVSA. Thanks to Venezuelan production technology, Pacific Rubiales has gone from extracting 14,000 barrels a day in 2008 to a forecast of more than 250,000 b/d this year.

The growth of Pacific Rubiales – the first international company to list in Bogotá – has strengthened the phenomenon of Toronto-listed oil producers operating in Colombia. Among those are Canacol, Petrominerales and Ecopetrol.

"Pacific Rubiales and its management team changed the dynamic of the oil sector in Colombia," explains Rupert Stebbings, vice-president of equity sales at Bancolombia. "They are agile, know exactly what they are doing when it comes to heavy oil and know how to exercise their plans and take seriously their responsibilities on all aspects, not just getting oil out of the ground at any cost."

This notwithstanding, some consider Pacific Rubiales' style of doing business as arrogant, particularly after some controversial advertising and media campaigns. Even the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) rebels have called the company a "transnational vampire".

"This new style works for most, but for others there are those ready to shoot them down at the first opportunity," adds Stebbings. To a handful of observers this might mean Pacific Rubiales has been, to some extent, stealing the thunder of Ecopetrol, which produces about 60 per cent of the country's oil. To many, that was exemplified by a recent court case that pitted the companies against each other over revenues from a jointly exploited oilfield.

Nevertheless, both have been aggressive in exploration and acquisition. While Pacific Rubiales is aiming at 1m b/d within a decade, Ecopetrol is shooting for 1.3m b/d in 2020, thanks to an $80bn investment programme already in place – something that helped make Colombia the region's fourth-largest oil producer.

Despite neither having made a big oil discovery, Colombia has almost doubled production in the past six years to more than 1m barrels of oil equivalent a day, and has proven reserves of 2.4bn barrels.

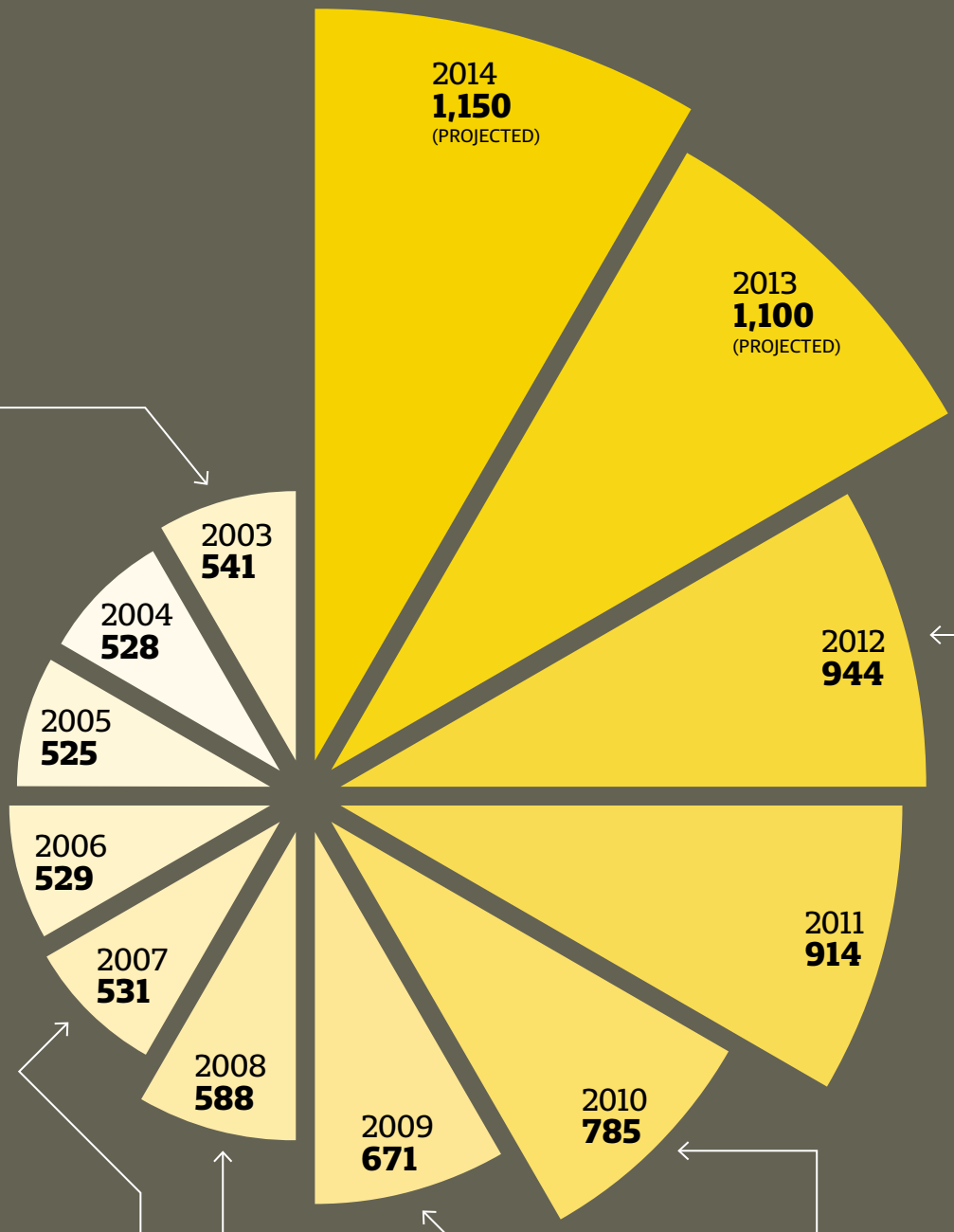
The country is growing fast partly thanks to the liberalisation of the industry that created the National Hydrocarbons Agency and allowed for the fractional opening of the privatisation state-run company. According to Javier Gutiérrez, Ecopetrol chief executive, his company is following a model that "seems to be working" as it has increased production 16 per cent a year since 2008 and is now among the best-performing energy groups in Latin America.

The Colombian state still holds an 88.5 per cent stake in Ecopetrol, with the rest publicly traded, but the company has wiggle room for a further 8.5 per cent issuance. With a reform to open up Mexico's oil and gas sector to private investment in the pipeline, some believe Pemex, the state oil monopoly, and even Ecuador's Petroamazonas, could follow in the footsteps of their Colombian counterpart.

"Ecopetrol in Colombia is just like any other company competing for a share of the market," says Gutiérrez. "We don't have to ask the Colombian state what we can or can't do. Not only has Ecopetrol grown, the energy sector in general has grown. Colombia's transformation transcends any company." ■

Colombia's oil output

In thousands of barrels a day. Source: Colombian Ministry of Mines and Energy



2003 Liberalisation of Colombia's oil sector with the creation of the National Hydrocarbons Agency

2007 Partial flotation of Ecopetrol

2008 Pacific Rubiales starts oil production. Ecopetrol begins trading on the New York Stock Exchange

2009 Pacific Rubiales becomes the first foreign company to list on Colombia's stock market

2010 Ecopetrol starts trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange

2012 Ecopetrol overtakes Petrobras by market capitalisation. Pacific Rubiales starts trading on the São Paulo Stock Exchange

GRAPHIC: GAVIN BRAMHALL

Security for export

After decades of conflict with insurgents at home, Colombia is cashing in on its military knowhow by selling it to the world, writes *Andres Schipani*

After just three hours' sleep, and a good portion of the day spent under the relentless mid-morning sun, sweating but composed, Private Daniel Mancera is taking a break from training in counter-insurgency warfare.

Without blinking, he has just abseiled down an 18m tower that mimics a Black Hawk helicopter. "I have no doubt that Colombia's forces are among the best in the world right now," Mancera says. "And I am getting ready to serve here or anywhere in the world if needs be, because everyone wants our services nowadays."

After 50 years of fighting leftwing guerrillas in some of the most inhospitable terrain anywhere, Colombia is now seeking opportunities to market military skills abroad. ▶

Stopping power: a model shows an example of bulletproof clothing made by Miguel Caballero, a company that manufactures and sells its wares worldwide

PHOTO: CAMERA PRESS

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Colombians are good, very good, when it comes to facing violent puzzles'

Pack leader: Colombian-made body armour backpacks for schoolchildren, above, are a bestseller in the US

◄ "Colombia is interested in offering its expertise," Juan Carlos Pinzón, the country's defence minister, says. "We have lived through a reality that I am sure is useful to other countries facing security challenges, even transnational crime."

A few hours south of the capital Bogotá, Fort Tolemaida is the training centre for Colombia's special forces. Echoing Mancera, the country's president, Juan Manuel Santos, recently christened them "the best in the Americas" because they beat US elite troops in a military tournament last year.

It sounds ironic, because since 2000 the US has provided Colombia with more than $4bn in training, equipment and security assistance to support the Andean country's counter-drug and internal security efforts.

But after a decade of an all-out offensive that has diminished the guerrillas' power, Colombia's fortunes have turned. Besides the almost inhuman training, Colombian forces have been battle-hardened after years of local civil wars and Sicilian-style blood feuds between the leftwing guerrillas, drug gangs and rightwing paramilitary groups.

The country has cashed in on the experience in recent years, with the international deployment of military capabilities gained through one of the world's longest-running armed conflicts growing in leaps and bounds.

"We are even teaching American troops how to fight irregular armies and Chinese troops how to become prime snipers," says Walther Giraldo, commander of Fort Tolemaida, which adopted the model of the US Army Rangers when it was established.

Global market

Over the past decade, say defence officials, Colombia has offered its hands-on expertise to several Latin American, Caribbean, European and west African countries and even Afghanistan via Nato. More than 16,000 people in 40 countries have been trained by Colombian security forces in areas such as maritime interdiction, jungle combat, anti-terrorism intelligence and tactics to fight extortion, kidnapping and drug trafficking.

Decades of combat have left Colombia with armed forces that are 450,000-strong. Its army is bigger than Brazil's, a country with a population four times the size of Colombia's. Between 2000 and 2010, Colombia's annual military spending almost doubled from $5.7bn to $10.4bn, according to the International Crisis Group, a think-tank. This makes the country one of the top military spenders in Latin America, while this year's budget stands at about $12bn, according to the defence minister.

"This is a civilian conflict, after all, which means it has been or still is close to many people who have learnt the trade," says Jorge Restrepo, a Bogotá-based economist and head of Cerac, a conflict analysis think-tank. "So in today's Colombia there is knowhow and experience in the dark arts of defence everywhere."

Colombia's conflict has turned former officials into successful private operators, cashing in on their security expertise. "[We] Colombians are good, very good, when it comes to facing violent puzzles, so we definitely have something to offer," says Adriana Mejía, a former deputy foreign minister who initiated police co-operation agreements and is now a globetrotting security consultant.

Her business partner is none other than "supercop" Óscar Naranjo, Colombia's former police chief who won international accolades after dismantling the country's most notorious drugs cartels and is now working as Mexico's presidential adviser on security issues.

Nevertheless, Colombia is not just exporting people and knowhow – it has also started to sell military hardware overseas. Indeed, Indumil, the state-run military arms manufacturer, is considered the crown jewel of Colombia's military weaponry sector. In recent years, the company has developed a new generation of the Israeli Galil ACE assault rifle. The weapon was initially conceived for use by the Colombian armed forces, and last year almost 750,000 rifle parts were exported from Colombia back to Israel.

A more rank-and-file example is Miguel Caballero, a maker of personal ballistic protection products. After success at home, the company started exporting bulletproof clothing to India and Nigeria, for use by government officials, and opened a shop in Mexico that supplies politicians and security forces. Known as "the Armani of armour", Miguel Caballero has created "bullet-resistant fashion" – armoured tank-tops and T-shirts that have been sold to the Harrods department store in London, for example.

Following the Newtown school shootings in the US in December 2012, when 20 children and six teachers were killed, Miguel Caballero's products have arrived in the US, where its grade-school body armour – a backpack-and-vest combination – has become a bestseller.

One reason why Colombia has been able to do all of this is that the guerrilla threat within the country has dimin- ▶

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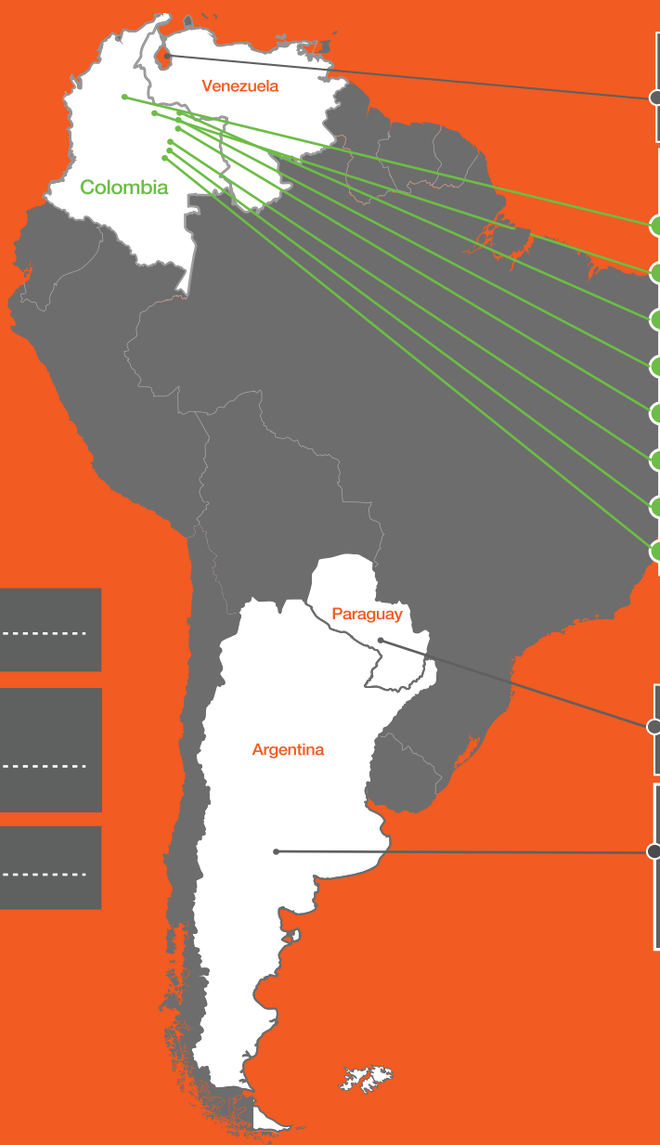

Venezuela

Lagopetrol

Open Round Colombia

- Valle Medio Magdalena-8
- Llanos - 51
- Llanos - 3
- Llanos - 12
- Llanos - 49
- Llanos - 79
- Llanos - 28
- Llanos - 2

Paraguay

Repatriación

Argentina

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21 exploration blocks.

Net Reserves 2P
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Prospective Resources (unrisked)
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◀ ished. In recent years, Colombia's determined, well-trained armed forces have killed several commanders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc), weakening the rebels and helping the state to regain control of large areas of the country that were lost during the 1990s at the peak of the conflict. According to a recent report by the defence ministry, the Farc has lost 1,200 rebels in the past two years.

For all the opportunities that exporting security expertise presents, there are also potential problems. Pinzón's forces have recently been creaking under the weight of their own success, having been unable to keep some of their best-trained men.

The United Arab Emirates has been actively – and unofficially, through local recruiters – hiring Colombian troops by the hundred as an insurance policy against domestic unrest.

The reasoning behind importing Colombians in particular, sources say, is that they are not Arabs or Muslims and thus might have fewer qualms about opening fire. Other skills include the experience acquired through Farc campaigns, as well as being familiar with the US-made weapons the UAE buys, such as Black Hawk helicopters.

Colombian soldiers are, in turn, lured by the promise of riches and the avoidance of potential charges for human rights abuses in their home country. "In Colombia, I am a simple corporal who might end up in jail, and earn $1,100 [a month], but [in the UAE] I will [be] a sergeant and earn $3,300 with much better benefits overall," says a Colombian elite squad member who was recently interviewed by an Emirati military envoy in Bogotá.

Colombia's annual defence budget

2000

$5.7bn

2010

$10.4bn

Talent drain

For Henry Medina, a retired major general and former head of Colombia's Superior School of War, this is "bleeding" the country of its best men. "I understand it is not easy to find an exceptionally trained soldier with so many years of combat experience, willing to go there for that money," he says. "An American would be much more expensive and much harder to get." To stem the exodus, President Santos recently sent a delegation to Abu Dhabi to work on an accord.

In general, though, experts and government see it as a tremendous opportunity to redeem the years of fighting Colombians have under their belts. For Miguel Caballero, founder of the eponymous company, the equation is simple: "After so many years of fighting, people realise that if a security product or service works in Colombia, it will undoubtedly work anywhere in the world." ■

Additional reporting by ***Michael Peel*** *in Abu Dhabi and* ***Adam Thomson*** *in Mexico City*

Long-term enemies

Under the banner of social justice, Pedro Antonio Marín – popularly known as Manuel "Sureshot" Marulanda (pictured below) – organised his peasant followers into a revolutionary movement in the green hills of Marquetalia in 1964. Armed only with old bolt-action rifles, the rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) initially received support from the Soviet Union, Cuba and Colombia's Communist party.

Since then, the leftwing fighters have engaged in a running war with the state, taking control of backwater areas. Tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions displaced as the army, leftwing rebels and rightwing paramilitary groups have battled it out.

As support for its Marxist cause has waned, the group has resorted to forcefully recruiting youngsters and children. By the early 2000s, the insurgents numbered about 20,000 – strong enough to overrun towns and military garrisons, launch mortar attacks in central Bogotá and control almost a third of Colombia's territory.

That was until 10 years ago, when Colombia's government launched a military crackdown. Since 2008, when the military rescued Íngrid Betancourt, a former Colombian presidential candidate, and 14 other hostages, the government has rained down blows on the Farc.

Some Farc commanders have been killed or died in recent years. The 8,000 guerrillas left are scattered around rural areas, engaging in grenade attacks and planting makeshift landmines. The US and the EU consider the Farc a terrorist organisation.

Colombia's other guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), has only some 1,500 fighters. It was started in the early 1960s by radical Roman Catholic priests and Marxist intellectuals enthused by the revolution led by Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara in Cuba.

Experts say both rebel groups have survived by financing themselves with activities such as kidnapping for ransom, extortion, drug trafficking, informal goldmining and arms smuggling. Both the Farc and the ELN have denied this.

Colombia has held successful peace talks before. The M-19 urban guerrilla group put down its weapons in 1990, and more than 30,000 paramilitaries demobilised between 2004 and 2006. **AS**

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Wealth

power

and the press

Industry and politics are closely linked with control of the media, but journalists have a proud history of challenging the status quo, writes *John Paul Rathbone*

PHOTOS: AFP, REUTERS

Guillermo Cano, the editor of El Espectador, Colombia's oldest newspaper, was murdered on December 17 1986 as he left work. Three years later, a Medellín cartel bomb blew up the paper's Bogotá offices, in what was meant as a final reprisal for El Espectador's continued denunciations of the drug gangs.

"The country was living under a dictatorship of fear," remembers Enrique Santos, then a columnist and co-owner of El Tiempo, El Espectador's biggest rival. "But Cano's killing was also a turning point – we knew we had to do something."

That something was the "Kremlin", a secret grouping of the country's leading journalists, who pooled their investigative work and co-ordinated the simultaneous publication of anonymous reports across the nation's media.

"Thank God those days are gone," recalls María Jimena Duzán, El Espectador's co-ordinator at the Kremlin at the time.

They certainly have. Back then, Colombia was on the verge of apparent collapse. Less than 30 years later, the country is an emerging economic power – a remarkable transformation mirrored in the press and the latest challenges it faces.

Tellingly, one of the hottest topics in Colombian journalism today is less about staying alive than managing the conflicts of interest that have accompanied the country's new-found prosperity. Of the five Colombians on Forbes' global billionaires list, the three richest have come to control the country's largest media groups.

Luis Carlos Sarmiento, who has a $14bn fortune, according to Forbes, in 2012 bought El Tiempo, Colombia's largest-circulation daily and the newspaper of record. Alejandro Santo Domingo, with $12bn, owns El Espectador, the country's second-biggest newspaper, and Caracol, one of Colombia's two private television stations, which has production agreements with Univision of the US and Mexico's Televisa. And Carlos Ardila, with $5bn, owns RCN television and radio, the country's other private national network, which has a television joint venture with News Corp in the US, as well as being the originator of the *Ugly Betty* series.

On a US canvas, this pattern of ownership is akin to the Murdoch family, which controls News Corp, also owning a conglomerate such as General Electric.

The very idea seems antithetical to Colombia's long history of journalism, which has nurtured some formidable talents – from Gabriel García Márquez, the Nobel literature prize winner who began as a newspaper reporter, to El Espectador's murdered editor, whose name is honoured today by Unesco's Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.

"I am very optimistic about the country," says Duzán. "I am less sure about the press."

Traditionally, the Colombian press was controlled by leading families who wore their liberal principles on their sleeves and for decades rotated through the political establishment. The Santos family, which owned El Tiempo between 1913 and 2007, is the best-known example. Eduardo Santos was the country's president between 1938 and 1942, while Juan Manuel Santos, his great nephew, is the current president. But the Santos family is not the only Colombian clan with a politico-journalistic axis.

Figures of influence opposite, from top: billionaire Luis Carlos Sarmiento; Andrés Pastrana, former president and journalist; El Tiempo, Colombia's largest circulation daily

Lasting dynasties

Andrés Pastrana, who was Colombia's president between 1998 and 2002, began his career as a journalist. The brother of Ernesto Samper, president from 1994 to 1998, is Daniel Samper Pizano, one of the country's best-known columnists. Felipe López, publisher of Semana, one of Latin America's sharpest news weeklies, is the son of a former president and the grandson of another. Semana's editor is Alejandro Santos, nephew of the current president.

> Recent ownership changes in the media suggest the country's elites are in flux

"You wouldn't get that kind of incestuousness in Africa!" exclaims former vice-president Francisco Santos, a sometime journalist who is also a cousin of the current president, as well as being one of his fiercest critics – Colombia remains a country of contradictions and surprises.

For some, these family dynasties are a symbol of a paradoxical country: one with the continent's longest history of democracy but also some of its most enduring elites. In the UK, they might be called members of "the great and the good".

Yet the recent ownership changes in Colombia's media industry, which earns $1.5bn a year in advertising revenues, suggest the country's "elites" – a problematic word, because it implies precision – are in flux, and that these changes, while a welcome sign of social mobility, have brought fresh challenges, especially conflicts of interest.

Certainly, there are potential conflicts aplenty for Colombia's new media barons. Sarmiento is a self-made billionaire whose Grupo Aval financial con- ▶

◀ glomerate has interests in the booming sectors of insurance, banking, pensions and infrastructure.

Santo Domingo heads the Valorem industrial group, which has interests in forestry, transport and brewing (via its 14 per cent holding in London-listed SABMiller, which bought the Santo Domingo family's beer company, Bavaria, in 2005 for $6bn).

Lastly, Ardila is an entrepreneur who married into a soft drinks and foods business, and whose other interests include textiles, car parts and Medellín's Atlético Nacional football team.

To be sure, these magnates often stress their philanthropic and patriotic interests in owning media companies, although their potential usefulness cannot be ignored.

Julio Santo Domingo, who died in 2011, said owning El Espectador was like "having a pistol in your pocket: you don't want to use it, but it is good to have just in case". Still, his purchase of the paper in 1997, in large part out of civic duty to stop it going bankrupt, is widely acknowledged.

"He also liked the fact that El Espectador sometimes went after some of his friends' interests," says one long-standing business associate. "It tickled and amused him at cocktail parties."

Santo Domingo's son Alejandro continues to support the newspaper financially. With a daily readership of 240,000, it makes a loss, although it expects to break even next year and is still known for its liberal journalism and student-heavy readership.

Luis Carlos Sarmiento Jr, whose father bought El Tiempo after financial problems prompted Spanish publisher Planeta to sell the paper in 2012 after buying it in 2007, has been more explicit. El Tiempo, which has more than 1m daily readers, is profitable and has a thriving classifieds business.

"Someone has to own El Tiempo. But who can own it without having conflicts of interests and also lots of money? Such entities don't exist," he told the FT shortly after the purchase closed. "We will have to manage these conflicts of interests like everybody else. Furthermore, there is an altruistic motive to it, as my father will tell you."

Certainly, billionaires owning broadsheets is a sign of the times. In the developed world, many an ailing newspaper has hoped for a philanthropically minded billionaire to come to its aid. But in Colombia, where the corporate stage is smaller and the wealth more concentrated, the drama is newer and, perhaps because of that, more intensely felt.

Turning point: Guillermo Cano, whose assassination in 1986 gave new impetus to investigative journalism

There are potential conflicts aplenty for Colombia's new media barons

The issue has raised questions about what is the best ownership model for journalism – corporate or family? If a corporation, is it a cross-subsidy if the company advertises in the paper it owns? And, if that happens, how can conflicts of interest be avoided?

El Espectador, which has a publishing agreement with the FT, routinely publishes disclaimers whenever it reports on a Santo Domingo business. "It is newspaper policy," says Fidel Cano, El Espectador's editor and the nephew of Don Guillermo – one sign of editorial continuity under its new owners.

El Tiempo, however, still seems to be working out its disclosure system, reporters at the paper say. Roberto Pombo, El Tiempo's director, bristles at the notion that this compromises editorial independence and stresses that "our columnists can write ▶

Timeline

Early 1980s
Guillermo Cano, editor of El Espectador, leads attacks on Colombia's drug cartels in his newspaper's columns and editorials.

1986
Cano is shot dead in Bogotá by hitmen under orders from Pablo Escobar, the notorious leader of the Medellín drug cartel.

1989
The Medellín cartel detonates a bomb outside the El Espectador offices. Journalists set up the "Kremlin" group to publish investigative stories.

1997
Julio Santo Domingo, whose family-owned group accounted for 4 per cent of Colombian GDP at its peak, buys El Espectador.

2012
Luis Carlos Sarmiento, the richest man in Colombia, buys El Tiempo, the country's biggest-selling newspaper, from Planeta, the Spanish publisher.

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◄ whatever they want to – as they always have". Nonetheless, to conspiracy theorists – which Colombia has in abundance – the situation is ripe for abuse. For them, the powerful corporate owners of "New Colombia", which have replaced the powerful political families of "Old Colombia", suggest a country in thrall to power and entrenched interests.

Critical controversy

One recent kerfuffle surrounded Daniel Pardo, an independent journalist (whose father, as it happens, is a former foreign minister). Pardo lost his job at internet news portal KienyKe after publishing a critical piece about Pacific Rubiales, the dual-listed Canadian-Colombian oil company, which had bought advertising space throughout the Colombian media.

The whys and wherefores of Pardo's case are disputed, although Duzán commented in her Semana column: "His departure confirmed something that we already knew: that in those media without a clear dividing line between information, opinion and publicity, freedom of expression is a mere sophism."

Nonetheless, journalists continue to expose corruption and scandals. For example, swaths of former congressmen are under investigation for alleged links to paramilitary groups. Journalists' work continues to make them targets of violence. In May, Ricardo Calderón, Semana's investigations editor, escaped an apparent assassination attempt near Bogotá. And the government has warned of other plots.

If the need for advertising revenues creates some self-censorship, it is also a far cry from other Latin American countries, where governments often have an arm-lock on the advertising budgets of state-owned companies. Instead, the end result is a typical Colombian hybrid – one that perhaps should not work but does.

"Yes, Colombia's main media belong to the country's most powerful people, be they economic or political. But it is difficult to see that they affect the media's independence," says Jaime Abello, director of the FNPI, the New Iberoamerican Journalism Foundation, an independent group founded by García Márquez. "There has always been a close relationship between power and the press here, yet at the same time also independence, space and a certain critical distance."

In some ways the problems of Colombia's media landscape reflect the country's broader success. That it faces the same kinds of conflicts and pressures as the media almost everywhere is a sign of the Colombian economy's growing openness, globalisation, prosperity – and concentration.

"The more powerful revolution has not been changes in ownership but the rise of consumerism and the internet," Abello says.

That is one conflict publishers everywhere have not figured out how to win decisively, including even those intrepid Colombian journalists who once faced down drug barons from the "Kremlin". ■

On a roll: El País is one of several regional papers in rude health

Other Colombian media

How to navigate one's way around Colombian media? In addition to El Tiempo, which has an excellent printed edition, and El Espectador, which has a top-notch website, there are the family-owned regional newspapers. The rude commercial health of titles such El País in Cali, El Colombiano in Medellín and El Nuevo Heraldo in Barranquilla, with circulations of around 200,000 each, ensures media plurality in a country that is always rich in news.

For crisp and, for many, indispensable analysis of the week's news, there is Semana, a magazine with a pithy narrative reporting style based on Time and The Economist. Now in its 30th year, Semana has groomed many of Colombia's best journalists.

Apart from lively radio stations, such as Blu, a relative newcomer to the Bogotá airwaves, there are nimble and probing internet start-ups that dig deep into breaking news and political themes – certainly deeper than on television, where analytical news programmes tend to run late at night.

The most notable website is La Silla Vacía, run by Juanita León, a former Semana journalist (see page 37). Founded in 2009, lasillavacia.com publishes investigative pieces, has some 300,000 unique users, is well read by opinion formers and policy makers, and covers its costs, even if this is largely thanks to grants from agencies such as the Ford Foundation. "The commercial side has been harder than I thought," León admits.

For news junkies, other sites include razonpublica.com, which tends towards hefty essays, and kienyke.com, which mixes fashion with politics in a lighter blend.

Finally, there are social media – especially Twitter. Much used by former president Álvaro Uribe, a prestigious prestidigitator with more than 2m followers, he launches stinging attacks daily on the policies of his former protégé, Juan Manuel Santos. A common theme from the hyperactive Uribe is a lament about how the country's security has worsened since he stopped being president. **JPR**

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FAULT LINES

La Guajira peninsula is an unlikely mix of semi-nomadic people, tourism and mining multinationals, writes *John Paul Rathbone*. Photographs by *Diana Bejarano*

FAULT LINES

■ La Guajira is one of Colombia's most startling frontiers. More of an afterthought than an extension of the Caribbean coastline, it is a 240km-long, 48km-wide snout that guards the Venezuelan gulf and ends at Punta Gallinas – South America's northernmost point. Romantic and strange, it is an arid spit, flat as a runway, sparsely dusted with rock and thorn. With its centuries-long tradition of smuggling, more recently drug-running and – more recently still – coalmining, it is one huge hideaway, an old fashioned badlands.

It is home to the semi-nomadic Wayuu tribe, never subjugated by the Spanish, whose women traditionally wear colourful *mantas*, soft-flowing robes wonderfully unsuited to the peninsula's thornbrushes, while the men more often wear western clothes, sometimes with a .45 pistol under the belt. Around Cabo de la Vela – a headland that is now a windsurfers' paradise – vast flocks of flamingos gather, and throughout there are shifting bands of smugglers who ply their trade: single malt whiskies, cheap petrol from Venezuela and contraband Marlboro cigarettes.

It is the site of Cerrejón, one of Latin America's largest coalmines, a joint venture between Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Xstrata that exported 33m tonnes last year and is developing a $1.3bn project to boost that to 40m tonnes by 2015. In March, guerrillas blew up one of Cerrejón's railway lines. Earlier this year, its workers went on a 32-day strike – now settled, although during the walkout the local press gleefully reported how many millions were being lost.

Alabama-based Drummond, with its own coalmine nearby, has a poorer local reputation. In April, it agreed to pay three years' worth of overdue mining royalties (the delay was due to a technical glitch, now corrected, the company said). It also faces a separate fine and was barred from exporting for a month after it dumped coal in the Caribbean while rescuing a sinking barge in January. Drummond faces a US lawsuit, over alleged links to paramilitaries who killed union leaders in 2001. Drummond denies the allegations and has countersued for defamation.

La Guajira has attracted more surreal entrepreneurs of late. In vogue is adventure tourism plus adjacent exotic industries, such as growing gourmet mushrooms. There are also schemes aplenty to help the Wayuu earn money, from solar power to cultivating desert weeds, which might contain valuable resins. Educating the Wayuu (subtext for some: assimilating them) is another hot topic in a region that, for all its trackless expanses, has deep histories – and not just of duplicity and betrayal.

Unesco has recognised the Wayuu concept of the *palabrero*, a wise man who mediates clan conflicts, as part of the "intangible cultural heritage of humanity". And four years ago, archaeologists dug up a fossil of what is believed to be the largest snake that ever lived. *Titanoboa* was 13m long and weighed more than a tonne. ■

Lines in the land: the arid peninsula offers coal riches from the Cerrejón mine, top, while entrepreneurial schemes exist to help the indigenous Wayuu people earn money

Skid row: many of Colombia's major road links are poorly maintained dirt tracks

The country's crumbling transport infrastructure is to receive a $100bn update over the next decade, writes *Andres Schipani*
Photographs by *Stephen Ferry*

Every time he leaves Medellín, truck driver Carlos Patiño drops his eyelids, makes the sign of the cross and murmurs a prayer.

After 15 years of transporting cargo on Colombia's roads, these days he is not asking for mercy from possible attacks by rebel assassins or ruthless paramilitaries, who less than a decade ago controlled the lands he is about to cross.

Instead, he is praying for divine protection as he sets off on a 750km journey carrying groceries for Nutresa, Colombia's biggest food producer, to the town of El Banco Magdelena in the north of the country. Along the potholed roads makeshift crosses on hairpin bends mark the sites of fatal accidents when drivers' prayers went unanswered.

"I am always a bit worried about the load, about myself. Roads – if you can call this a road – should be better," Patiño says, pointing at the coming succession of potholes. There is not much margin for error for drivers, because the path is 4m wide and a precipice looms.

To allay Patiño's fears, the government has embarked on the most ambitious transport infrastructure plan in its history to bring the road network up to date. While it may take some time to complete the overhaul, the magnitude of construction is expected to have a positive impact on gross domestic product.

The improvements will allow Colombia to become more competitive, preparing it fully for all the trade agreements that have been signed or are about to be. "Nowhere else in the world is there such an ambitious programme," says Luis Fernando Andrade, director of the new national infrastructure agency, the ANI.

His target – to build 8,000km of roads in six years and reduce travel times by 30-50 per cent – is ambitious. To accomplish it, Andrade, the respected former head of management consultancy McKinsey in Colombia, is overseeing a tripling in transport infrastructure investment by next year via public-private partnerships.

Ten years ago, Colombia spent roughly 1 per cent of GDP – about $3bn – on transport infrastructure. Now, the government plans to spend some 3 per cent of GDP – about $10bn.

"Until now we have not invested in infrastructure because we have had other priorities, such as waging an internal conflict," explains Andrade. The cooling of the insurgency as well as macroeconomic stability and record-breaking fiscal inflows now allow for such expenditure.

"We have found the right formula," he adds. This formula is simple: Colombia's government is auctioning off $25bn worth of road infrastructure to keep the country's economy humming. The concessions are part of a larger strategic goal to invest nearly $32bn in transport infrastructure by 2014 and about $100bn by 2021.

Travelling partners

Government officials claim this is one of the world's largest road-concession programmes, alongside those in India and Brazil. Concessions will be awarded to public-private partnerships on 20-year contracts, thereby helping address an obstacle for Colombian construction companies, which still look to banks as the best source of financing. Consortiums formed by local groups and backed by the financial muscle and global knowhow of foreign groups will receive the final allocations.

As Colombia uses roads for more than 80 per cent of its internal transportation, the push is to create extensive road systems, including the expansion of critical roads and building bridges and tunnels to reduce journey times.

The plan is geared towards cutting transport, to a great extent by shorten- ▶

◀ ing routes and lowering all gradients to decrease fuel usage, creating 80kph average speeds instead of the current 40kph.

Other projects include the restoration of two railway systems for cargo; making the biggest river system, which flows from the Magdalena river, navigable again; and improving port facilities in Barranquilla, Buenaventura and Cartagena.

"The new programme is very positive – things have been moving in the right direction – but there is a lot of anxiety after so many years of neglect. That is why it is important this works well," says Leonardo Villar, executive director of Fedesarrollo, a Bogotá-based think-tank.

Indeed, road auctions are part of a broader restructuring of the bidding process and regulation, aimed at correcting a system entangled in political patronage, weak engineering design and poor oversight.

"Now, we have the appropriate legal and financial pipeline for projects, but the big projects haven't started because there are still bottlenecks when it comes to environmental licences, consultations with communities and lack of public services associated with infrastructure," says Villar.

But those are not the only issues for a programme that is slowly becoming a reality. In a country crossed by three Andean mountain ranges and vast expanses of trackless Amazon jungle, a proper road network is still almost unimaginable to those such as Patiño who have got used to dodging boulders and potholes at high speed.

That is clear when Patiño, after taking six hours to cover just 186km, passes a military checkpoint 20km from Puerto Berrio. The paved surface starts to crumble until it fades out completely. After the initial stretch it is just dirt track, even if this is a major route for lorries and buses.

Make do and mend

Standing on the roadside, Víctor Zapata collects the change that drivers throw to him from their windows. That is the token he gets for covering the holes with dirt – a job he has been doing for the past 10 years to pay for his meagre rations of rice and beans. "I have never seen anyone coming here to fix this, so every day I just push my wheelbarrow back and forth covering holes so people can transit through here," he explains.

Many have high expectations that picture will soon change. After several delays, in April Colombia's president, Juan Manuel Santos, opened the tendering for the first $3.5bn of the massive road plan known as Highways to Prosperity. The project's main purpose is to connect Medellín, the country's economic powerhouse, to the rest of the country, with more than 1,000km of highways at a cost of $7.2bn.

Other big road concessions are flowing in. One is the $4bn route from Bogotá to Buenaventura that will be turned into a four-lane road to facilitate trade with Asia and countries in Latin America – Mexico, Peru and Chile – that have agreed to drop tariffs to speed up the establishing of their Pacific Alliance.

Mountains and rainforests, however, make more than half of Colombia's territory difficult to develop, and in some of the guerrilla-infested areas where access is difficult, the military is in charge of

Carlos Patiño's route

Medellín-Aguachica
469km/11 hours
Aguachica-El Banco Magdalena
288km/5 hours
El Banco Magdalena-Hatillo de Loba
18km/2 hours (by boat and mule)

'The programme is very positive, but there is a lot of anxiety after years of neglect'

building and paving roads. But even in this fast-growing economy, mule train or river barge are still sometimes the safest ways to travel, as the country's existing road network continues to deteriorate, exacerbating the bottlenecks.

Two years ago, torrential rains led to flooding, followed by landslides that destroyed large sections of Colombia's paved roads. Unable to rely on the roads, companies such as Nutresa had to find other ways of delivering their goods when even seasoned drivers such as Patiño could not make headway.

Logistical odyssey: Colombia's infrastructure upgrades will mean journeys may be 30-50 per cent faster; bottom right, Andres Schipani and Carlos Patiño

Delivering the goods

The company manages the primary and secondary transport of its goods – from production plants to warehouses and from warehouses to customers respectively – using whatever means of transport are required.

"Those include small trucks, four-wheel-drive vehicles, three-wheel bikes for cargo and river barges," says Carlos Piedrahíta, Nutresa chief executive. "In some extraordinary cases we use donkeys and, during the rainy season, canoes to reach remote flooded villages."

Piedrahíta expects the new works to improve connections between the country's biggest population centres, such as Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena and Barranquilla. Together these cities are home to more than 60 per cent of Colombia's population. Piedrahíta says more efficient links will give each city easy access to a port, on either the Pacific or the Caribbean coast.

Colombia's oil and minerals, as well as its non-commodity exports, such as coffee and flowers, will then be easier to transport and will be more cost-competitive. According to Stratfor, the international political risk consultancy, freight costs an average of around $30 a tonne to ship from the interior of the country to the coast, compared with about $15 from the coast to Asia.

For now, though, goods journeys can seem endless. After more than 16 hours on the road, having travelled just 750km, Patiño's cargo finally arrives in El Banco – a tropical kasbah on the banks of the muddy Magdalena river, which runs through the heart of Colombia and was once a leading trade route.

As Patiño's 10-tonne Chevrolet can go no further, José Barrasa is waiting to load Nutresa's cargo on to his rickety wooden barge. "With a bridge and a road, the load could be anywhere on the other side of the river in 10 minutes," says Barrasa. "But this place is forgotten."

After a two-hour boat ride, Barrasa hops off the barge and, under the merciless sun, loads the cargo of chocolates and biscuits on to a white mule and strolls up a street that is nothing but a ribbon of dust, crowded with chickens and pigs.

This humid scrubland area used to have one Colombia's highest rates of guerrilla and paramilitary attacks, after the groups vied for control for both sides for the river. Now, the district is mostly in the hands of impoverished fishermen and goldminers, and things have improved – locals say that whereas they used to find three corpses a day in the stream, now they only find one a week.

But some fear the lack of transport infrastructure could reverse that progress. "Whatever the government plan is to make this country easier to transit, I hope they start it soon and do it well," Barrasa says, as the mule churns up a choking dust cloud on its way to a local grocery store, the final destination for Patiño's cargo. "The security situation might be better now, but after all, poverty, guerrillas and criminals start where roads end." ■

Digital slideshow: Colombia's roads
www.ft.com/colombian-roads

Meet the new movers

Andres Schipani, *Naomi Mapstone* and *Henry Mance* profile the Colombians who are setting the agendas in politics, society, business and culture

▶Sergio Fajardo
Governor of Antioquia

For visitors who walk into his office for the first time, it is a shock to find Sergio Fajardo sitting in a wooden university chair. It makes sense, though, because for this politician, the "challenge is to make education the first step to build opportunities, to contrast [with] the culture of illegality, violence and social inequality".

The innovative former mayor of Medellín, who last year became governor of Antioquia – which is seen as the country's economic powerhouse – increased spending on education in both offices.

He is a US-trained mathematician whose "social urbanism" won international accolades as he transformed the city by building "library parks", among other projects, in an attempt to address poor education, poverty and crime among young people. He achieved this in a place infamous for being the cradle of Pablo Escobar, once the world's most wanted outlaw known for kidnapping, murder and drug trafficking.

"If you build a beautiful library in a poor neighbourhood, it gives people a sense of importance; it raises their dignity and gives them access to goods such as education," Fajardo says, pushing back his unruly hair.

"It also brings visitors from other parts of the city – something that encourages social integration."

That approach has proved right so far, as Fajardo was instrumental in improving the fortunes of Colombia's second city. Although violence persists, Medellín's crime levels are no longer escalating rapidly. For him, "Medellín went from fear, to hope".

In the eyes of many, this centrist independent politician, who ran for vice-president two years ago, would be a strong candidate for the 2018 presidential election – especially in a post peace-accord environment.

Always one step ahead, he recently said: "We have to be prepared for when peace is signed. In Antioquia, we are already thinking how to transform the places where the guerrillas are." **AS**

PHOTOS: EYEVINE, KIKO KAIRUZ

▲Catalina Escobar
Activist

The face of social work in Colombia is Shakira, the pop singer whose charity provides education to poor children. But Catalina Escobar has shown that you don't need to be a platinum-selling artist to shine a light on a pressing social problem.

In the tourist hub of Cartagena, Escobar has been tackling child mortality for more than a decade. Her work is acclaimed for helping to halve child mortality rates within a few years, and it has quickly become one of the highest-profile and most-respected social initiatives in Latin America.

"She is an example to any entrepreneur," says María Lucía Roa, the national head of Ashoka, the social innovation programme through which Escobar passed. "She is an example of social conscience, of management capacity, of someone who knows how to use their contacts and how to measure their impact."

Escobar's work was borne out of personal tragedy. As a hospital volunteer, she watched an infant die in her arms because the child's mother could not pay for treatment. Then her own 16-month-old son died in 2000 after falling from a balcony. "I didn't want anyone to feel the same pain as I did," Escobar has said. She set up the Fundación Juan Felipe Gómez Escobar, named after her son, shortly after.

Cartagena, whose colonial architecture is as beautiful as Havana's, has some of the most pervasive poverty in Colombia. In 2003, infant mortality rates were more than twice as high in Cartagena as in the capital, Bogotá.

> 'We have found a very efficient way of breaking the cycles of poverty'

Escobar and her foundation are now tackling other problems, such as sexual abuse. A new hospital has offered care to 84,000 people on low incomes. The obvious next step would be to expand to other cities in Colombia.

"We have found a very efficient way of breaking the cycles of poverty. We have to grow it and scale it," she says.

Escobar was named a CNN Hero of the Year in 2012, and is a feature on the global conference circuit. **HM**

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PHOTOS: BLOOMBERG, MIGUEL JOSÉ TORRES PLATA

▲ Carlos Raúl Yepes
President, Bancolombia

Since Carlos Raúl Yepes took control of Bancolombia in February 2011, Colombia's largest commercial bank has expanded aggressively.

It has bought part of ING's insurance business in Latin America and HSBC's operations in Panama. Bancolombia has hinted at further expansion and some analysts believe it has the resources to think big.

How much influence Yepes has had in all this is unclear. Bancolombia is part, albeit a relatively independent one, of the Grupo Empresarial Antioqueño – a conglomerate originally controlled by families from Medellín. That means there are plenty of other key figures in Bancolombia's strategy, including David Emilio Bojanini García, chief executive of Grupo Sura, the bank's largest shareholder.

Yepes has kept out of the limelight, sticking to corporate talking points. Nonetheless, he has started to make his mark. He has called for the "humanisation of banking", implying that the financial sector in Colombia, as elsewhere, could do with a dose of humility. That may reflect his background: a lawyer by training, he was previously the bank's legal counsel. The working week for Bancolombia's staff has been cut from 48 hours to 43.

His hands are certainly full. Bancolombia has suffered headaches with its computer systems and is facing pressure from the government, which wants to lower lending rates.

Then comes the Antioqueño group's rivalry with Grupo Aval, the vehicle of Luis Carlos Sarmiento, Colombia's richest man and still, aged 80, a fighting force. "They're in a competition to see who expands the fastest," says Boris Molina, an equity analyst at Santander bank.

One possibility for both groups is neighbouring Venezuela, although they may wait until the political movement of Hugo Chávez, the late president, loses power. **HM**

▲ Juanita León
Journalist

When Colombia's constitutional court struck down a challenge to the law preventing Álvaro Uribe, the popular former president, from running for a third term, the scoop went to a blog.

La Silla Vacía (The Empty Chair) has just nine full-time staff but has filled a niche in the country's mediascape. It has become compulsory reading for policy makers and political junkies.

Often irreverent, always nimble, La Silla Vacía is the brainchild of Juanita León, a journalist who studied law and went on to work for Semana, the country's premier news magazine.

After taking leave to write a book, *Country of Bullets*, on Colombia's long-running conflict, León needed a change. She took a course in newspaper website design and revamped Semana's website.

From there, a Nieman fellowship in the US during Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign fed her interest in digital journalism. She stayed on to create the now-defunct New York-based news website Flypmedia.com.

Returning to Bogotá, she set up La Silla Vacía in 2009 with funds from her family in addition to grants. "We do not have a history behind us, which lets us innovate," León says. "We have been trying since the beginning to think of La Silla Vacía as a laboratory for the future of journalism."

> 'We do not have a history behind us, which lets us innovate'

Her worst moment, she says, was reporting the death of Alfonso Cano, the former leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, prematurely by six months.

But the site's successes far outweigh its mistakes, and León sees more space for digital media projects in Colombia. "If the peace process is successful, I suppose the left will also have a space for alternative media," she says. **NM**

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PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

▲ David Bojanini
Chief executive, Grupo Sura

David Bojanini learnt his craft when he was still in nappies. In his home city of Medellín, where Colombia's biggest listed companies can be found, middle- and upper-class children are given gifts of shares in the city's businesses when they are baptised.

Fast-forward 50 years or so to late 2011 and Grupo Sura, the company he runs, and one of the country's biggest financial groups, paid more than $3.5bn for the regional assets of ING, the Dutch bancassurer. "It was the biggest project of my career, and the biggest Grupo Sura ever had," Bojanini says.

In the eyes of international observers, the deal turned Grupo Sura into a leading example of the so-called *multilatinas* – prime local companies that are now taken seriously by multinationals.

Bojanini is notable for his modesty. He trained in actuarial science in the US and defines himself as a "middle-class man" who started as a trainee, then climbed to the top thanks to his intellectual drive. "It appears curious to many investors that the group is not run by any particular family, and that it is the democratic property of thousands of shareholders," he says.

Most significantly, companies such as Bojanini's are emblematic of the entrepreneurialism of the Paisa – as people from Medellín are called – and are regarded as a positive force behind a city that has emerged from the violence that for a long time coloured its name abroad. **AS**

▲ Andrés Jaramillo
Businessman and restaurateur

Nothing quite prepares you for Andrés Carne de Res, Colombia's most famous restaurant. It is a whirlwind of colour, dancing and enormous grills and cocktails. That is testament to the creative spirit of Andrés Jaramillo, the one-time hippy who founded the business three decades ago with his wife, Stella Ramírez.

Once a 20-table diner serving nothing more than meat, it now seats 2,000 people at a time. Its pulling power is such that Jaramillo once described himself as "the dictator of Chía" – the town on the outskirts of Bogotá where the main restaurant is located.

Jaramillo's secret was to realise that many wealthy Bogotanos don't just want to eat and drink well – they also want to do it in a carnival atmosphere. And he was lucky: Chía was untouched by a crackdown on nightclubs in Bogotá during the 1990s, and instead benefited from a new influx of customers.

Success, coupled with the restaurant's astronomical prices, has led some to resent Jaramillo. But his entrepreneurial nous – rather than his food – is exactly what his peers most admire. "We respect him as a businessman. He is a great host," says Tomás Rueda, chef at Donostia, a Bogotá restaurant. **HM**

▲ Ana Fernanda Maiguashca
Economist

"I basically get paid for thinking," says Ana Fernanda Maiguashca, the jovial economist who is only the second woman to become a director of Colombia's central bank.

If that assessment makes monetary policy sound easy, it is probably because Maiguashca's previous job was among the most intense possible. As deputy finance minister, she dealt with the aftermath of the global economic crisis and was instrumental in the approval of a long-delayed labour reform.

"The finance ministry does too many things with too few people. You end up in 900 discussions," says Maiguashca. "Now, I have time to read policy papers."

It was Juan Manuel Santos, Colombia's president, who appointed her to the central bank. At the age of 38, Maiguashca is a fresh face among rate setters. She points out that other directors joined the central bank in their thirties – "I'm just the only one who looks like it!"

A graduate of Los Andes university in Bogotá, with an MBA from Columbia, New York, she is one of the many internationally educated technocrats that dominate the upper echelons of Colombia's key institutions.

That tradition arguably has allowed the country to avoid the ideological extremes seen in some neighbouring countries. The country is a "small, open economy", receptive to international thinking, but Maiguashca points out: "We have deviated from what had been universal truths, at least in terms of the International Monetary Fund."

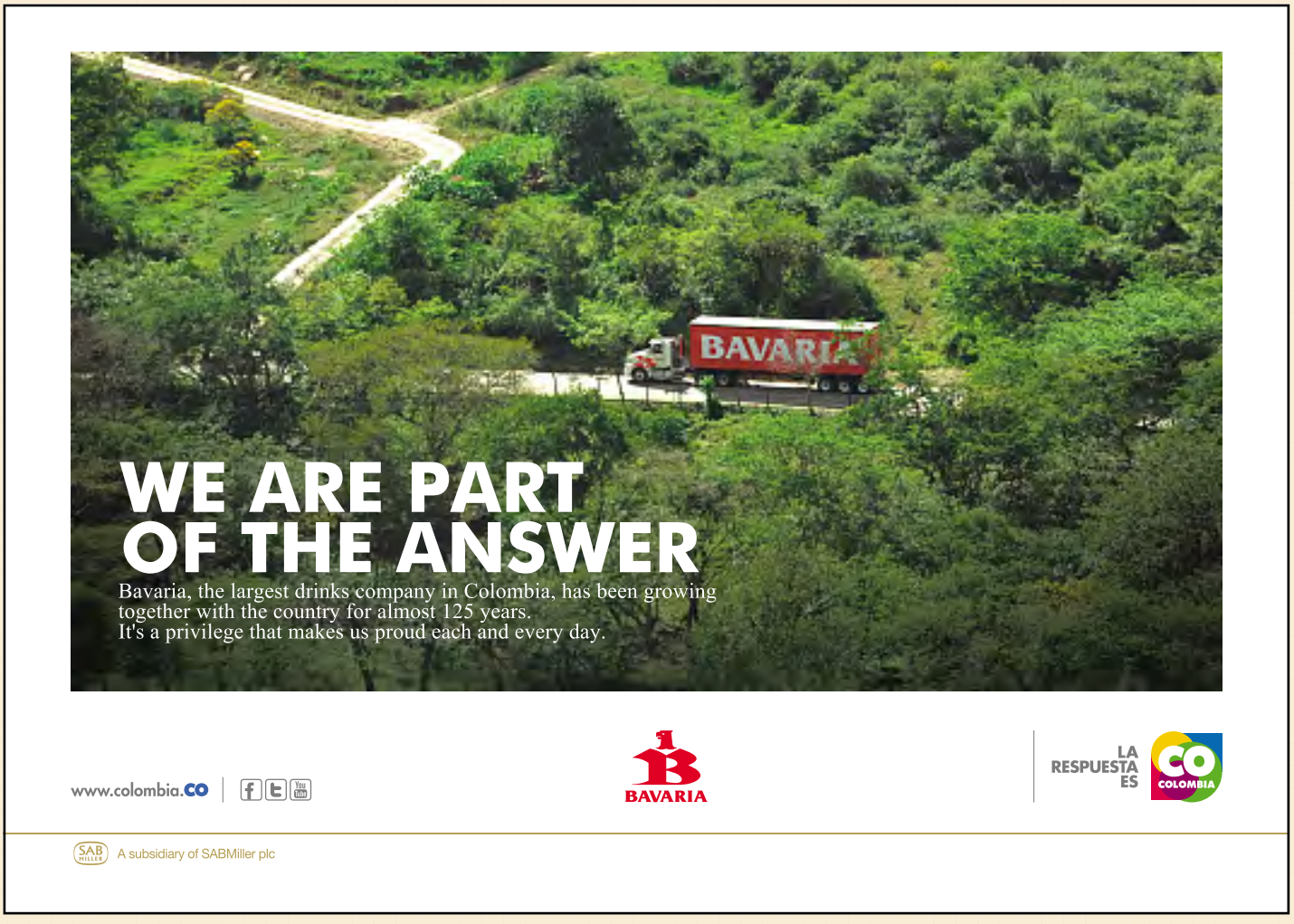
Marc Hofstetter, an economics professor who has worked with Maiguashca, says: "She didn't get appointed just because we needed balance. She's very smart; she works very hard." Maiguashca herself puts it down to "a little bit of talent, a little bit of discipline and a little bit of luck".

Typical of technocrats, her precise policy views can be hard to pin down. "She's a very distinguished, very orthodox economist," says Mario Castro, an analyst at Nomura. **HM**

MAKING THEIR MARK ABROAD

Asked to lead a youth orchestra when he was only 15 years old, the Medellín-born virtuoso **Andrés Orozco-Estrada** now "radiates on the podium", according to one commentator. Orozco-Estrada holds the batons for Austria's Tonkünstler Orchestra and the Basque National Orchestra in Spain. The young conductor is also music director designate of the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Houston Symphony Orchestra – where he will be the first Hispanic to hold that position.

In Spain, fans of Atlético Madrid, the football team, call **Radamel Falcao** "the guerrilla of the goal". He was almost predestined for his role: born in Colombia at the height of the internal armed conflict, he was named by his father in tribute to Paulo Roberto Falcão, the 1980s Brazilian football hero. A native of the coastal city of Santa Marta, the striker is now one of the world's most coveted players – the star of Colombia's national team is now being courted by clubs such as Chelsea, Manchester United and Real Madrid. In December last year, he left his fans at Atlético open-



PHOTOS: GETTY, JULIE SOEFER

World players: Radamel Falcao García, opposite, Alejandro Santo Domingo, above left, and Andrés Orozco-Estrada, above right

mouthed when, in less than an hour, he scored five times against Deportivo La Coruña.

In New York, a city that is home to more than 200,000 Colombians, **Alejandro Santo Domingo** stands out. He is a Harvard-educated scion of Colombia's influential Santo Domingo family, whose holdings include television channels and a stake in SABMiller, the brewing company. (At its peak, the Santo Domingo group's sales were equivalent to 4 per cent of Colombia's national output.) Santo Domingo runs Quadrant Capital Advisors, a US-based investment advisory company that is investing in Latin America. Considered by Forbes to be the "richest new billionaire in the world", he had an estimated net worth of $11.7bn as of March 2013. **AS**

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Bogotá nights

Out on the town in Colombia's capital, young people are celebrating a new wave of optimism and entrepreneurial spirit as the city's violent history fades from memory, writes *Adam Thomson*
Photographs by *Stephen Ferry*

It is a Friday night in Bogotá and the dancefloor at Andres DC is a mass of sweaty bodies as the predominantly young clientele of the city's popular nightspot gyrates to a mix of western pop and local *Vallenato* (folk) tunes.

Cocktails at this showy restaurant-cum-nightclub, a carefully choreographed chaos of fun and kitschy colour, are a heart-stopping 50,000 pesos ($27). But neither the price, nor the 20,000 pesos cover charge, is a deterrent: as per most nights, the place is heaving.

Go back a decade or more, and Bogotá felt much like the chilly and conservative Andean city that it always used to be. Founded at an oxygen-depleted 2,600m at the foot of a towering ridge that runs from north to south, the city of about 8.5m people was better known for its hot chocolate and early closing times than for its nightlife.

In the 1990s, and in an effort to control increasing violence, Antanas Mockus, a former mayor, reined in bar closing times from 3am to 1am. A few years later, the city's taxis began installing bulletproof screens separating driver from passenger – even though they often dug into passengers' knees and left the driver's chest pushed up against the wheel.

Today, the screens have all but gone and there is a feelgood factor arguably stronger than at any time in living memory. The economy is growing at a fast ▶

'Young people use to leave Bogotá, and often with a one-way ticket'

◀ clip; once-gruesome violence from the country's drugs war and 50-year insurgency no longer affects the capital directly and a demographic boom – a quarter of the country's 47m population is aged between 14 and 28 – has produced an explosion in demand for entertainment – above all, nightlife.

Santiago Prieto, a 25-year-old musician and member of local group Monsieur Periné, is one of the younger generation fuelling the city's new-found vibe. Sipping cocktails with two friends at the lounge-style Casa 53*76 bar, with its 2013 sophistication wrapped in retro decor, Prieto says that even his traditionally precarious profession is feeling the economic upswing.

"A few years ago, being a musician was a real struggle," he says in a quick burst of well-spoken Spanish that reveals an upper-middle-class upbringing. "Nowadays, everyone has work."

Twenty-six-year-old Felipe Cuervo, a sharply dressed philosophy graduate with the distinct air of a 19th-century bohemian poet, says that the economic turnaround is so tangible that it has even made him dream of travelling across the Atlantic in pursuit of further study. "Europe is an academic paradise but it's in crisis," he says. "Here in Colombia we have options."

The growing sense of optimism among Bogotá's young crowd marks a fundamental shift compared with the previous generation, which, equipped with sufficient education, money or both, would often leave at the first chance.

"Young people today feel they have more opportunities than their parents," says Ana María Otero-Cleves, a 30-something history professor at the city's Los Andes university. "They are now actively choosing to stay in Bogotá."

Start-up spirit

Sebastián Jaramillo, a tall, good-looking 28-year-old, typifies that spirit. Educated in the UK during his last years of high school and then in Boston at university level, Jaramillo decided to return to his native Bogotá to set up a business.

The offices of his impulsarme.com, a virtual marketplace for university graduates seeking their first proper job, are a throwback to the heady dotcom days. There are floor-to-ceiling blackboards in each room covered with dozens of brainstorming-style phrases scribbled in white chalk. Employees, mainly programmers, have to step over a napping chocolate labrador in the hallway to get to the bathroom.

But for all the laid-back atmosphere, things are moving fast at impulsarme.com. After three years in operation, the portal pairs 40,000 university-educated Colombians with 700 companies, ranging from multinationals to family-owned businesses, each month.

"Young people use to leave Bogotá, and often with a one-way ticket," says Jaramillo. "All my friends are now deciding to stay. They work in different fields, but all of them have work and all of them are doing well."

It has just gone 8am on a typical slate-grey morning and a small group of first-year students at Los Andes university are discussing the themes that most concern

Feelgood factor: Colombia's large proportion of young people has created an explosion in demand for entertainment

them. Felipe Arango, a law student, recognises that things have changed radically since the dark days, in the early 1990s, of the devastating car bombs planted by the notorious drug trafficker Pablo Escobar.

Safer streets

Bogotá's murder rate last year dropped to 16.9 per 100,000 inhabitants, a 22.6 per cent fall compared with 2011, and a sea change when set against the 80-odd murders per 100,000 inhabitants recorded during Bogotá's worst years. "We are in a different space now," admits Arango.

But he and his classmates say that petty crime is still a big problem. Gabriel Durán, who also studies law, thinks that the city is plain insecure. "I get on the bus, I get robbed. I leave university, I get robbed. I don't feel safe."

'Europe is an academic paradise but is in crisis. In Colombia we have options'

Another problem is access to higher education, says Guillermo Asprilla, chief of staff of the city's leftwing government. "There aren't enough places in the public system, and the private system is often too expensive for young people," he says. The result is that an estimated 60 per cent of those seeking to continue their education after school are unable to do so.

Fanny Puentes, a 25 year-old who lives with her mother and her seven-year-old son on the southern fringes of Colombia's capital, began to study science at one of the city's many private universities a few years ago. But things got tough when her mother became ill and had to stop working. Puentes was forced to seek a job as a sales assistant in the city centre. Since then, she has lost the three semesters of credits she had to her name.

"I dream of going back to study one day," she says. "I just can't see a way to do it."

But even she recognises that people, in particular young people, have more work than before. Basic jobs may not pay particularly well, but at least there are more of them. Besides, several government schemes, such as the "first job law", which gives employers tax breaks for increasing their overall headcount by taking on young people, have started to make a difference. Another programme, which grants Colombian start-up companies full exemption on corporate taxes for the first couple of years, has also helped.

"New companies would often go bust because they didn't have enough to cover all their expenses," says Gabriel Gómez, who heads the Colombia Joven (Young Colombia), the youth policy department within the government. "Now, they have the breathing space they need."

It has gone 2am, and things are still going strong in Bogotá's T Zone, an area full of bars and nightclubs in the city's affluent north. At Little India Super Star, a bijou bar that sells gin and tonic under a canopy of chili-shaped fairy lights, a small group of young and monied Bogotanos exchange small-talk at the bar.

Serving them is Pablo Fernández, a 35-year-old Urugyuan, who came to Bogotá a few years ago and has been witnessing the improving times ever since. "People are going out much more than they used to," he says. Asked if he plans to move on any time soon, he shakes his head in a sort of "no way" way. "There's too much work to leave just now. It's good to be in Bogotá." ■

Digital slideshow: Bogotá nights
www.ft.com/bogota-scene

Service culture

By adopting the best of the private sector's values, Colombia's police force is winning public respect, says its former head, *Óscar Naranjo*

The governments and police forces of many countries have asked me how Colombia has achieved such a notable improvement in civilian security. Homicides halved between 2002 and 2012, and the annual number of kidnappings fell to 298 from 2,882.

A short answer would be that the improvement was thanks to the efforts of many – from government agencies to international organisations, private businesses and Colombian citizens.

But one guiding light for me was to imagine the police force in a similar way to how a private company might think of its business: how can the police force's core service be improved? For us, that meant meeting the needs and wellbeing of citizens by responding to the ever-changing threats of organised crime and violence.

For many years, the role of the police was to defend the state. Today, its bigger role is as a "social actor" that looks after its citizens.

The first step was to recognise that the police's biggest asset was its workforce. In our case, that was nearly 170,000 men and women. It was their commitment and professionalism that made the biggest difference – more than any other resource, financial or technological. That was especially so as police salaries can never compete with those in the private sector.

This entailed nurturing a very particular work ethic. We called it "police policy based on humanism" – a title that conveyed to police officers that humanism and civic dignity were central to their work, as well as their own importance.

We studied the management techniques used by successful private companies, such as continuous learning. Our spending on education increased tenfold. Police officers came to see education and training as an opportunity for both professional and personal growth.

In addition, we made sure that policemen and women and their families had decent living conditions – for example, by ensuring good health services and schooling for their children. The pride they came to feel in their job was a kind of "emotional salary". It encouraged ownership and sense of duty. It had the added benefit of reducing corruption.

Clearly, all countries operate within limited budgets, which have to be administered with the greatest possible efficiency. That means clearly identifying priorities, goals and the indicators needed to measure results. We took our cue from the quality procedures that were used to meet ISO standards at private companies.

Better management and greater professionalism brought huge advances in the Colombian police force's effectiveness. But a third factor, also used by private companies that aim for excellence, was to introduce the concepts of transparency and, more importantly, accountability.

To ensure the best possible use of public resources, we set up internal watchdogs and an external advisory committee made up of private sector businessmen. We also established permanent channels of communication with civil society, and encouraged the active participation of citizens. In 2010, for example, we held 75 public local workshops on our management plans, past and present.

> Humanism and civic dignity are central to the work of the police

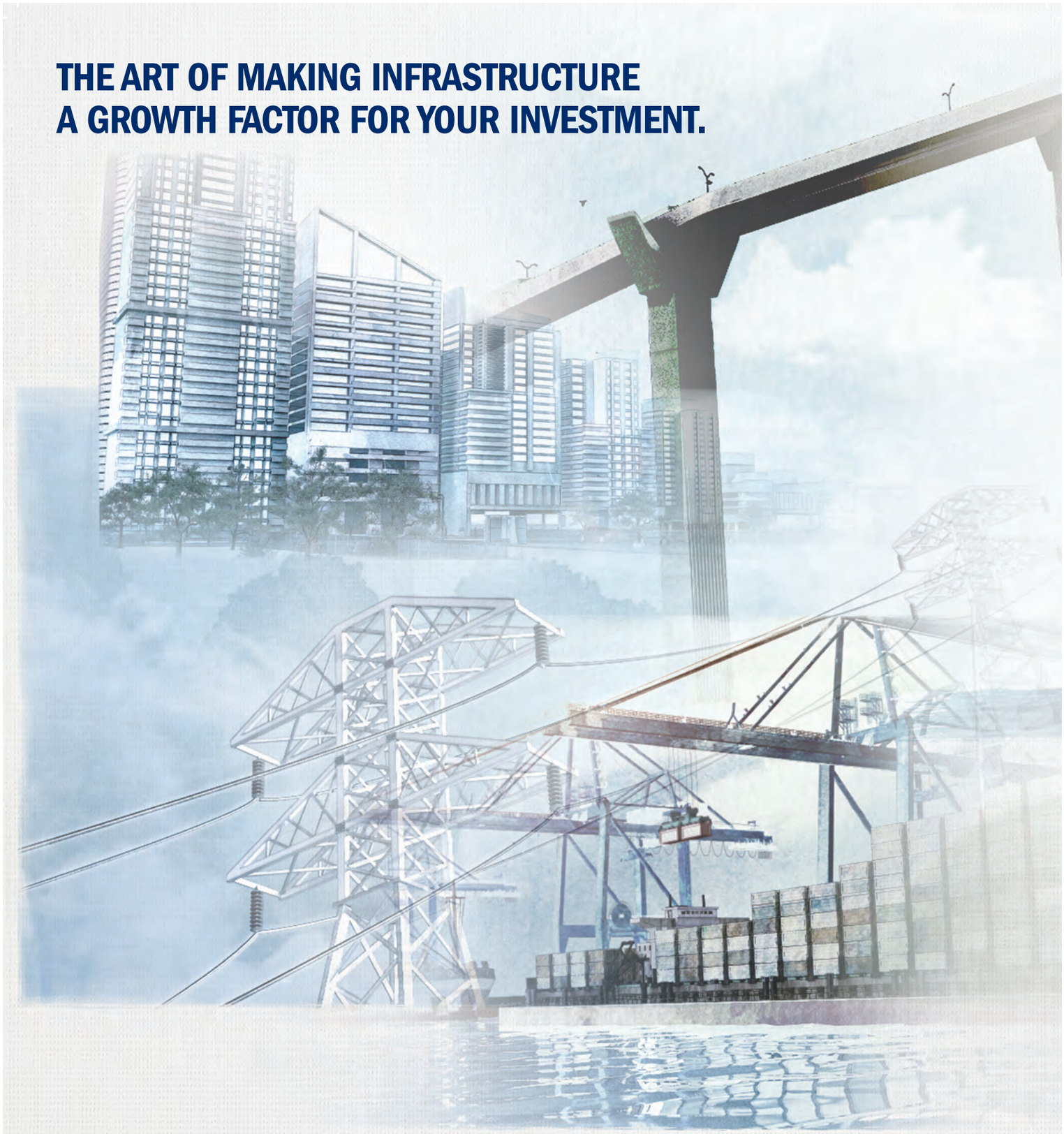
None of this would have been sufficient, though, unless we had established a true service culture reflected in police attitudes to its work. After all, police officers spend each day, every day, in close contact with citizens.

We managed to achieve that – as shown by the fact that each year the force receives 200,000 applicants for just 10,000 vacancies. Public recognition and confidence in the police force in turn boosts police pride in the job. It is part of the two-way process that any modern service-based industry recognises.

The Colombian police force has had many successes and failures in getting to where it is today. But whenever I have the chance, I always ask and encourage the private sector to share its experiences and work methods with the public sector – especially the police. That, more than any budget increase, is what makes the biggest difference. ■

Óscar Naranjo *is a former director of the Colombian National Police*

THE ART OF MAKING INFRASTRUCTURE A GROWTH FACTOR FOR YOUR INVESTMENT.



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Debt

Avianca 144a/RegS 8.375% Senior Bond due 2020 Joint Bookrunner **US$300 mm / 2013**	Pacific Rubiales Energy 144a/RegS 5.125% Senior Bond due 2023 Joint Bookrunner **US$1.0 bn / 2013**	Banco de Bogotá 144a/RegS 5.375% Subordinated Tier II Notes due 2023 Joint Bookrunner **US$500 mm / 2013**	Bancolombia Exchange Offer & 144a/RegS Reg Rights 5.125% Subordinated Tier II Notes due 2022 Joint Bookrunner **US$1.4 bn / 2012**	Colombina Local Bond Re-Opening Structuring Agent & Sole Lead Manager **COP$50,000 mm / 2012**	Nutresa 5-Year Term Loan Sole Lead Arranger & Bookrunner **US$100 mm / 2012**
TGI 144a/RegS 5.700% Senior Bond due 2022 Joint Bookrunner **US$750 mm / 2012**	Banco de Bogotá 3-Year Term Loan Joint Lead Arranger & Bookrunner **US$500 mm / 2012**	Transmilenio Securitization Program COP$1.2 tn VI Tranche Structuring Agent & Joint - Lead Manager **COP$115,537 mm / 2012**	Banco de Bogotá 144a/RegS 5.00% Senior Bond due 2017 Joint Bookrunner **US$600 mm / 2011**	Ecopetrol 4.375% Global Bond due 2021 Joint Bookrunner **US$2,000 mm / 2011**	Grupo Phoenix Multi Currency 5&7 Year Term Loan Joint Bookrunner & Joint Lead Arranger **US$135 mm / 2011**
ISA Senior Bond Program Joint-Lead Manager **COP$300,000 mm / 2011**	Bancolombia 144a/RegS Reg Rights 5.950% Senior Bond due 2021 Co-Manager **US$1.0 bn / 2011**	Emgesa 144a/RegS 8.750% Senior Bond due 2021 Joint Bookrunner **COP$737 bn / 2011**	Banco de Bogotá Bridge Loan Facility Joint Bookrunner **US$1.0 bn / 2010**	Carvajal Información Senior Bond Structuring Agent & Joint-Lead Manager **COP$400,000 mm / 2010**	Pacific Rubiales Energy 144a/RegS 8.750% Senior Bond due 2016 Joint Bookrunner **US$450 mm / 2009**

Equity

Cemex Latam Holdings IPO Joint Bookrunner **US$1.2 bn / 2012**	Grupo Éxito Follow-On Offering Joint Bookrunner **US$1.4 bn / 2011**	Ecopetrol Follow-On Offering Selling Agent **US$1.2 bn / 2011**	Petrominerales / BVC Listing Agent **2011**	Grupo Nutresa Follow-On Offering Selling Agent **US$296 mm / 2011**	AviancaTaca IPO Selling Agent **US$280 mm / 2011**
Grupo Aval Follow-On Offering Selling Agent **US$1.1 bn / 2011**	Pacific Coal IPO Joint Bookrunner **C$202 mm / 2011**	Canacol Energy / BVC Listing Agent **2010**	Pacific Rubiales Energy / BVC Listing Agent First International Issuer at the Colombia Stock Exchange **2009**	gasNatural / EPSA Represented selling parties at Tender Offer in the Bolsa de Valores de Colombia **US$1.1 bn / 2009**	Argos Secondary Offering Joint Bookrunner **US$443 mm / 2009**

M&A

Millicom International Cellular S.A. Advisor in the sale of 2,126 towers to ATC Infraco **US$182 mm / 2011**	Maurel & Prom Advisor on its Joint Venture with Pacific Rubiales Energy **US$600 mm / 2011**	Sempra Energy / Pluspetrol Energía / epm / Iberdrola Advisor in the acquisition of AEI's Latam assets **US$3.8 bn / 2011**	TECO Energy Advisor on the sale of 30% stake in DECA II to Empresas Públicas de Medellín **US$605 mm / 2010**	Endesa / Energía de Bogotá Advisor on the sale of a stragetic stake in **US$248 mm / 2009**	Ecopetrol Advisor on the acquisition of Hocol Petroleum from Maurel & Prom **US$748 mm / 2009**

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