

(Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) through the Group of 10 Facilitation Commission. As Canada's former Ambassador to Colombia, Guillermo Rishchynski, told a Washington conference in June, the G-10 attempted to bring objectivity and creativity to its role, using moral suasion to keep the talks on track and concentrating on encouraging a humanitarian exchange of sick prisoners and moving the parties towards consideration of a humanitarian agreement. Over the course of the negotiations, the role of the G-10 evolved from passive observation to a more vigorous effort to keep the process from collapsing. Although the talks failed, they were not a waste of time. Mistakes were made and lessons were learned. In the words of former Ambassador Rishchynski: "Colombia needed to pass through the trial of the unsuccessful process of the last four years in order to get to the point where more serious efforts can take place in the future."

What was learned? Lack of progress in the peace process, despite the safe haven and political status given the FARC to facilitate negotiations, demonstrated that peace talks cannot be conducted while the conflict continues, that a demilitarized zone without verification is doomed, and that third parties – preferably multilateral organizations rather than individual countries – will be a mainstay of future efforts at dialogue. The election of President Uribe marks a new chapter in Colombia's history and an opportunity for the international community to begin creating the foundations for future negotiations based on the lessons of the past and our creative experiences globally. The Sub-Committee's report and recommendations will serve to guide Canada as we find ways to build a climate of peace and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in Colombia.

Recommendation 1

The Government of Canada should continue to work with international organizations and institutions as well as with like-minded countries to support the Government of Colombia and encourage all parties in the Colombian conflict to pursue agreement on humanitarian principles and a negotiated solution. Canada should also make itself available to continue facilitating such negotiations, which would ideally become a state peace policy and include a formal international role. In order to strengthen Colombia's democracy, it should also continue to support civil society groups there, as well as encourage efforts at grassroots reconciliation.

Canada was an active participant in the peace process with the FARC under former President Pastrana. From February 2001 until talks ended in February 2002, Canada (with Sweden, France, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Norway, Spain, Italy and Switzerland) was a member of the Group of Ten (G-10) Facilitation Commission. Canada, represented by former Ambassador Guillermo Rishchynski and his staff, attended numerous meetings with the FARC and the Government of Colombia in the demilitarized zone. Throughout these meetings, the G-10 countries continually stressed to the FARC the need for a