

The Second Amendment, like the others, must be read in conjunction with the body of the Constitution, argues historian Garry Wills, of Northwestern University—and Article III “defines taking up arms against the United States as treason.” He and Cornell endorse a thesis advanced by T. Carl Bogus, a professor at Roger Williams University School of Law in Rhode Island: that the Second Amendment was largely intended to give the slave-owning southern states tacit assurance that the new government would never try to disarm the South’s militias.

“Legal scholars who support the individual-rights view are not exactly quaking in their boots” at the challenge from Wills, Cornell, and the rest, observes Mooney. But if the Standard Model should prevail in the courts, does that mean gun control is doomed? Not necessarily, say Tribe and Yale University law professor Akhil Reed Amar, who favor both. “Almost no right known to the Constitution is absolute and unlimited. . . . The right to bear arms is certainly subject to reasonable regulation in the interest of public safety.”

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

### *Wading into Colombia’s War*

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

While President Bill Clinton and other Americans focused on the savagery in the Balkans last year, a more immediate threat—the guerrilla war in Colombia—went largely unnoticed. Yet that war, notes *National Journal* (Jan. 15, 2000) correspondent James Kitfield, “has led to nearly as many internally displaced civilians (roughly 800,000) as Slobodan Milosevic’s ethnic cleansing,” and is endangering the stability of the Andes region, including oil-rich Venezuela.

“Colombia’s unrest is spreading to neighboring countries, which are grappling with their own serious crises,” reports Linda Robinson, Latin America bureau chief for *U.S. News & World Report*, writing in *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1999–2000). “The northern zone of South America is starting to look like a tier of turmoil that could rival the Central American mess of the 1980s, and . . . significant U.S. interests are at stake—not just drugs but trade, investment, oil, and the Panama Canal. The much-vaunted hemispheric community of democracies may well begin to unravel here, to be replaced in a few short years by failed states where anarchy or rogue groups rule.”

As U.S. involvement in Colombia deepens,

with Clinton seeking some \$1.6 billion in military and other aid to President Andrés Pastrana Arango’s government, the administration maintains that it is still merely fighting drug trafficking. But that is a politically convenient fiction, observes Michael Shifter, a Senior Fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, writing in *Current History* (Feb. 2000). Since the



*A cocaine lab burns in the background as members of a Colombian anti-drug unit fly over jungle about 250 miles north of Bogotá.*

main leftist guerrilla force, the 15,000-strong Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, derives several hundred million dollars a year from the drug trade (getting it through extortion or in return for protection), “counternarcotics” cannot be neatly separated from “counterinsurgency.” Colombia produces

about 80 percent of the world's cocaine. But Washington, Shifter says, is more worried now about "the spreading violence and deteriorating security conditions."

After winning the Colombian presidency in 1998 on a promise to bring peace, Pastrana early last year withdrew all government troops from a Switzerland-sized swath of southern territory controlled by the FARC. Despite that overture, notes Kitfield, the insurgent force launched its largest offensive ever in July, seizing 15 villages and coming within 30 miles of the capital, Bogotá. In November came another FARC offensive, against 13 more towns.

"Colombia is one of the most violent countries in the world," observe Gabriel Marcella, who teaches strategy at the Army War College, and Donald Schulz, a political scientist at Cleveland State University, writing in *Strategic Review* (Winter 2000). In 1998, Colombia had 1,678 kidnappings. The homicide rate—77 per 100,000 inhabitants between 1987 and 1992—was the highest in the world. Right-wing militias, which are also active, are blamed for most of the political killings in recent years. According to the government, 1,863 people died in 402 massacres last year.

As if the violence were not enough, Colombia's 40 million people have also endured the worst economic conditions in seven decades. The unemployment rate stands at 20 percent, the currency lost 30 percent of its value last year, and real gross domestic product shrank five percent. Colombians are fleeing in droves, chiefly to the United States. An estimated 300,000 may leave this year.

The violence has spread beyond Colombia's borders, Robinson notes in *World Policy Journal*. "Colombian guerrillas and drug traffickers regularly use the neighboring territories

of Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama for safe haven, resupply and gun running, and those countries' nationals have been killed and kidnapped in the cross fire while their governments have mainly looked the other way."

The Colombian government's war with the FARC has been going on for decades, Robinson points out in the *New Republic* (Sept. 6, 1999). It grew out of "the bloody civil war called La Violencia that took 200,000 lives between 1948 and 1958. The combatants were partisans of the Liberal and Conservative parties, whose leaders eventually forged a pact that allowed them to alternate power. Manuel Marulanda and a small band of Liberals thought this constituted a sellout, founded the FARC, and kept fighting." At 69, Marulanda today remains at least the nominal head of FARC, notes Andrés Cala, a Colombian journalist based in Costa Rica, writing in *Current History* (Feb. 2000).

Pastrana's government, after prodding from Washington, last year unveiled a \$7.5 billion "Plan Colombia" to address the country's major problems. Roughly half of expenditures would go to modernizing the military forces. The largest component of the proposed \$1.6 billion U.S. contribution would consist of 63 helicopters for the armed forces and police.

In helping to fashion a 5,000-man Colombian military force that will be fighting the guerrillas, the United States is putting itself "squarely into the counterinsurgency fight, whether it wants to admit it or not," Robinson says. Washington should expect American casualties, and a long struggle. The Clinton administration's "lack of candor," she believes, is only making "the forging of a solid consensus behind U.S. action" more difficult.

## *The Globalization Fantasy*

"Globalization and American Power" by Kenneth N. Waltz, in *The National Interest* (Spring 2000), 1112  
16th St., N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Globalization—it's here, it's real, and it's wonderful, according to *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman and other fans. The "electronic herd" of foreign investors, moving capital in and out of countries, all but compels them to embrace the American way, market capitalism and liberal democracy, lest they be left behind.

Nations these days are more economically interdependent, economics trumps politics, peace's prospects are improved, and world government is just around the corner. . . . Waltz, a political scientist at Columbia University, says it's time for a reality check.

The extent of globalization is much exagger-