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FARC

- Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
- FARC formed in 1966 after "La Violencia"
 - Founded by Manuel Marulanda
 - Comprised of Communist militants and peasant groups
- Represent the rural poor against Colombia's wealthy classes
 - Oppose U.S. influence in Colombia, the privatization of natural resources, multinational corporations, and rightist violence.

FARC

- Maintained marginal influence in rural Colombian communities in the 1970s
 - Numbers dwindled to under 1,000
- Increased worldwide demand in illegal drugs created opportunities to grow in wealth and influence
- Drug trade allowed FARC to grow to over 10,000 members
 - Imposed tax on local coca growers
 - Protecting the cartels' crops
 - Operating their own drug operations

FARC Territory



FARC Military

- Membership and influence grew during peace process and negotiations with President Andres Pastrana in 2001
 - 16,000 members in 2001
 - Membership down to around 9,000 in 2008
- Believed by some analysts that women may make up a third of the FARC's fighters

Important Dates

 1986

- FARC views represented by the Patriotic Union (UP) party and won seats in election

 1991

- FARC steps up counter offensive and collaborates with the ELN (National Liberation Army)

 1998

- President Pastrana grants the FARC a Switzerland-sized area in southern Colombia as a goodwill gesture to move peace talks along.

 2002

- Peace talks break down when FARC rebels hijack a plane carrying a Columbian Senator and presidential candidate

FARC Methods

- Narcoterrorism
 - Generates revenue for terrorist activity by taxing, trading and shipping narcotics
- FARC's terrorist methods include bombings, murder, mortar attacks, kidnapping, extortion, and hijacking
 - Presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt was kidnapped and held hostage for 6 years.
- In 2001 three IRA members were charged with training FARC members in the use of explosives.

Drug Trade

- 78% of FARC revenue comes from drug trafficking
- More than half of this 78% comes from cocaine sales to Mexican criminal gangs.

U.S. Relations

- Included on the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations in 1997
 - “From their jungle hideaway, the FARC uses the drug trade to bankroll terrorism in Colombia, finance attacks on innocent citizens, and poison Americans,” DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy.
- Foreign aid increased under President Bill Clinton

Plan Columbia

- \$7.5 billion plan to revive Colombian economy and fight drug cartels
 - In fiscal year 2001, the U.S. had pledged \$1.3B
 - 80% went towards aiding Colombian military
 - U.S. efforts were focused on weakening FARC
- Under President Clinton, focus was on counter-narcotics
 - Focus shifted to counter-insurgency in the wake of 9/11
 - U.S. legislation was passed allowing U,S troops to combat guerilla groups.

Decline of FARC

- President Alvaro Uribe fought FARC directly when elected in 2002
- 2,800 FARC soldiers deserted the FARC in 2007
- Leadership diminished
 - Murder of a top rebel leader Ivan Rios by bodyguard
 - Raul Reyes killed in attack by Columbian forces
 - Manuel “Sureshot” Marulanda died in May 2008
- Revenue plummeting
 - Down to \$250-500 million in 2007
- Shift in political views and trust in Colombian government have reduced support for FARC

Future of FARC

- Although weakened still pose a serious threat to stability in Colombia
 - In February 2009 FARC tortured and murdered 17 indigenous Awa tribe members
 - In March 2009 a FARC mortar attack killed 4 Colombian soldiers
- International ties are worrisome
 - Discovered evidence links ties and donations from Ecuador and Venezuela
 - Colombian forces recovered uranium that FARC had planned to sell on the black market.

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