

# *Presidents Barack Obama and Juan Manuel Santos Announce New Deal*

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Washington, February 5 (RHC)-- Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama have announced Plan Colombia 2.0, dubbed “Paz Colombia,” a new US\$450 million deal to strengthen so-called security over the next 10 years in the post-conflict era Colombia.

Santos and Obama met in Washington, D.C. Thursday to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Plan Colombia —a controversial aid initiative signed in 2000 between then Presidents Bill Clinton and Andres Pastrana that saw millions of U.S. dollars help militarize the South American country to fight the so-called “war on drugs” and left-wing guerrillas.

Santos defended Plan Colombia, saying it has been “crucial” in helping Colombia reach peace. He added that Plan Colombia has helped the country build the “most powerful and effective armed forces that Colombia has had in its history.”

Santos' comments came in stark contrast to the assessment of Plan Colombia by human rights defenders, who have slammed it for prolonging violence and armed conflict, fueling human rights abuses, increasing militarization, and failing to stem drug trafficking.

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