



## VETERANS EDUCATING AMERICA'S STUDENTS

### CLASSROOM DISCUSSION POINTS FOR COLOMBIA:

#### TEACHERS:

*Have students answer the questions below based upon their viewing of the film clips. They should draw evidence from the videos to support their responses.*

### 1. GEOGRAPHY, PEOPLE & ECONOMY:

**GOALS:** This series of questions is designed to elicit a student's knowledge about the country of Colombia, its people and economic stability.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS:** Colombia is located in northwestern South America and borders the countries of Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela. It is the only South American country with access to both the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Colombians speak Spanish and are mostly Roman Catholic.

**FILM CLIPS:** Under FACTS, have students watch the following: **(2:55)**

- SIZE AND TERRAIN (1:01)
- POPULATION CENTERS ( :27)
- DEMOCRACY ( :19)
- EXPORTS & TRADE AGREEMENTS (1:08)

#### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- Describe the diversity of Colombia's terrain and where the population centers are located and why.
- What kind of government exists in Colombia?
- What is the government doing to increase exportation of the country's products and enhance economic stability?

### 2. HISTORY & CIVIL WAR:

**GOAL:** This series of questions is designed to assess student understanding about the European colonization of Colombia, internal conflict and the birth of rebel factions.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS:** After declaring independence from Spain, Colombia found itself rife with internal conflict and civil war. At one point the region, known as Gran Colombia, also included the countries of Panama, Ecuador and Venezuela. The violent War of a Thousand Days was fought between two groups: one that favored a strong central government and powerful church (Conservatives) and one that wanted less church influence and more decentralized government (Liberals).

**FILM CLIPS:** Under HISTORY, have students watch the following: **(2:10)**

- SPANISH RULE & LIBERATION ( :33)
- WAR OF A THOUSAND DAYS ( :57)
- ORIGIN OF MILITANT GROUPS ( :40)

#### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- Who liberated Colombia from Spanish rule?



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- What impacts do you think the War of a Thousand Days may have had on the country of Colombia?
- Who helped what later became the country of Panama break away from Colombia and why?
- Detail what happened to cause the formation of militant groups in Colombia.

### **3. INSURGENCY, THE DRUG TRADE & U.S. ASSISTANCE:**

**GOAL:** This series of questions is designed to promote analysis and critical thinking skills in students about the challenges posed by violent insurgencies and illicit drugs in Colombia.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS:** For some 50 years, Colombians have suffered at the hands of the violent insurgency called FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Supported by profits from the drug trade, these anti-government rebels have also financed operations by terrorizing citizens through kidnappings and demands for ransom. The U.S. has played a major role in battling the FARC and its illicit drug activities.

**FILM CLIPS:** Under HOT TOPICS, have students watch the following: **(4:08)**

- FARC MILITANTS (1:07)
- FARC & THE DRUG TRADE (1:00)
- SUCCESS BATTLING FARC ( :58)
- PEACE TALKS WITH FARC (1:03)

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- How has FARC disrupted the country of Colombia?
- What is the goal of this rebel group?
- Can you describe Plan Colombia in detail and who participated in that effort?
- Has the United States had a major impact in the country? In what ways?
- Why do you think the peace talks with the FARC have gone on for so long?
- Imagine and discuss what life may have been like for average citizens in Colombia over the past several decades.