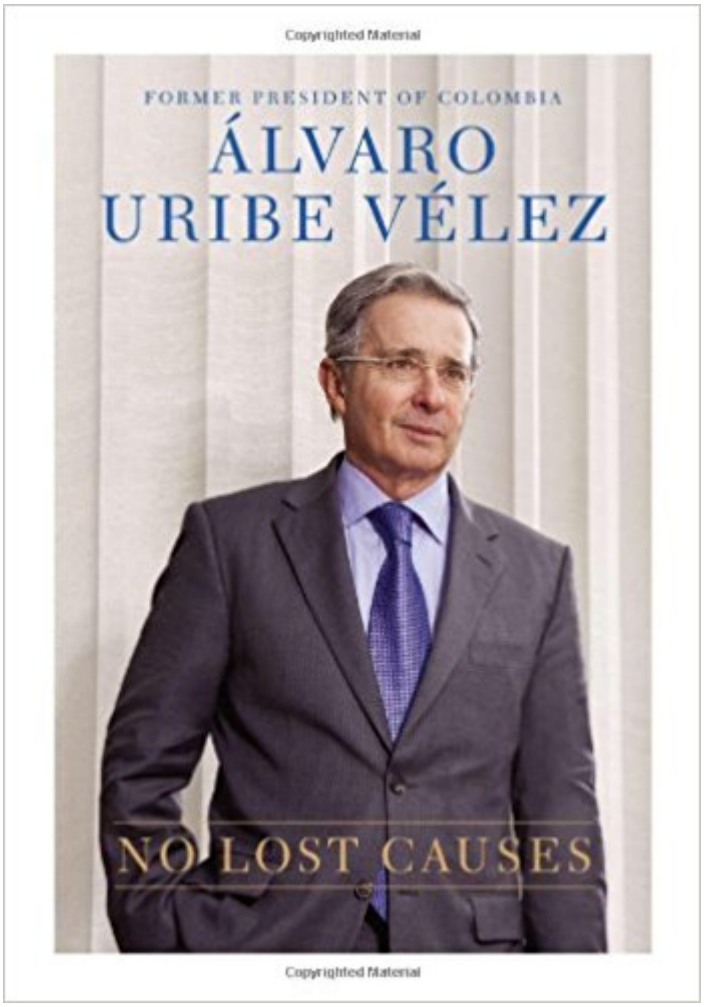
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No Lost Causes



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Synopsis

One of the most inspiring and successful global leaders of the early 21st century explains how bold, imaginative leadership can solve even the most intractable problemsÃ¢â ¬â •and why there is no such thing as a lost cause. Ã Â ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s one of the great, unexpected turnaround stories in modern history: Just a decade ago, Colombia was regarded as a Ã¢â ¬Å“failed state,Ã¢â ¬Â• besieged by megalomaniacal drug kingpins, ruthless terrorist groups, and abominable poverty. But since 2002, it has been dramatically transformed into a far more peaceful, stable modern democracy with a promising future. Now, the man who led the transformation, former Colombian president Alvaro Uribe Velez, offers the untold story of how, at enormous personal risk, he refused to accept ColombiaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s perilous status quo.Extremely captivating, No Lost Causes reveals how President Uribe severely weakened the neo-terrorist group, the FARC, which held Colombia captive and caused the brutal murder of his father. It relates the gripping account of how President Uribe staged the daring (and bloodless) jungle rescue of Ingrid Betancourt in 2008, and eventually restored the rule of law across the country. It also explores practical lessons of hands-on managementÃ¢â ¬â •relevant to both political and business leadersÃ¢â ¬â •and provides a thrilling behind-the-scenes look at newsmaking U.S. foreign affairs and never before discussed details and dealings with various world leaders.Unlike any other presidential memoir, No Lost Causes is not only a compelling story of leadership, but an epic, heart-racing account of how bravery and hope gave a failing nation a brighter future.

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Customer Reviews

Excerpt from the WSJ book review Ã¢â ¬Å“The Man Who Saved ColombiaÃ¢â ¬Â•"Certain political leaders, whatever their aspirations, become overwhelmed by events they once thought they could master...Other leaders, though, meet enormous challenges with a vision and a resolve that allow them to shape events and guide the course of history...To this second group belongs Alvaro Uribe VÃƒÂ©lez...What is most interesting about No Lost Causes...isn't so much the narrative of [Mr. Uribe's] achievements but the insights he offers into his own character and the life experiences that created it."

Alvaro Uribe Velez was President of Colombia between 2002 and 2010. During his presidency, violence fell to the lowest levels in recent memory as the country achieved important military victories against the FARC and dismantled paramilitary groups. While Mr. Uribe was in office, Colombia also reached its highest-ever levels of investment and exportsÃ¢â ¬â •and achieved the highest health and education coverage in the countryÃ¢â ¬â„¢s history. By the end of his term, his popularity rating was above 80 percentÃ¢â ¬â •another modern record in Colombia.Before becoming president, Mr. Uribe was a senator, governor of Antioquia state, and mayor of Medellin, among other positions. He holds a degree in Law and Political Science from Universidad de Antioquia andÃ Â a postgraduate degree from Harvard University in Management and Administration. At Harvard, he also studied Conflict Resolution. He was a Senior Associate Member from Saint AntonyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s College at Oxford University. Since leaving the presidency, Mr. Uribe has served as a visiting scholar at several universities and as vice chairman of the UN Secretary Panel of Inquiry investigating the May 2010 flotilla incident in Gaza. Nowadays, heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s aÃ Â Fellow in the Bipartisan Policy Center.

Until Alvaro Uribe was elected as its president, Colombia was a country in name only. It was a land of isolated cities surrounded by an almost impenetrable terrain of mountains and jungles where FARC and ELN leftist guerillas, paramilitary vigilantes, narco-traffickers, and other outlaws reigned supreme. Citizens put their lives in danger as soon as they passed the checkpoints around the towns and ventured into the country. Almost every Colombian family has a member who was kidnapped or murdered by one or another of these terrorist groups.Try to imagine this incident happening almost EVERY DAY in America: A family driving from Atlanta to Nashville gets stopped at a guerilla roadblock on I-24. They get dragged out of their cars and watch the guerillas machine-gun their elderly grandparents with AK-47s, then carry the children off to a mountain

hideout, saying they will murder them if the parents don’t return with a ransom.This barbarity was a NORMAL part of life in Colombia prior to Uribe being elected president. For over a century the national government, holed up in the cities, had taken a hands-off approach to the reign of terror in the countryside.Uribe explains the essence of life in Colombia that he knew growing up:==========For as long as I can remember, there has been a paradox at the heart of Colombian life. On the one hand, our country suffers from its well-known maladies and afflictions. On the other, it is a country that is also capable of stunning, almost inconceivable goodness-- a place where the laughter seems heartier, the food tastes better, and the sun shines brighter than anywhere else. The overwhelming majority of our lives take place in the latter place. Learning how to reconcile the two worlds was, for most of our history, the very essence of being Colombian.A well-known American traveler named Frank Vincent once visited Colombia and wrote: "The whole genius of the nation seems directed toward civil dissension and guerrilla warfare. Hence, while the people complain of poverty, they offer so little guarantee and security to foreign life and capital as to be quite unable to secure the presence and help of either." Vincent wrote this in 1890. A century later, it would still ring true.Why? In our case, we were held back by the same two intimately linked problems that have been our undoing time and again during the past two hundred years: 1) our difficult geography, and 2) the historic inability, or unwillingness, of Colombian governments to project sufficient federal authority.I remember watching as my father, such a proud and democratic man, talked with these outlaws with guns. And I remember yearning, at the purest, most primal level, to live in a Colombia where armed men would never invade our farm, where my family would all be safe, and where no one would ever have to lock herself inside her house, staring at the door in terror.==========Uribe tells his story as a member of a well-to-do but humble family who dedicated their lives to the cause of restoring civil government to Colombia. Uribe’s father was murdered and his brother gravely wounded by leftist outlaws. Uribe faced almost daily assassination threats as he rose up the political ladder as mayor of Medellin, Governor of the Department (State) of Antioquia, and President of Colombia. As president he mobilized the police, the army, and the courts to defeat the guerillas and drug criminals. During his administration kidnappings, murders, and bombings became so rare as to become newsworthy.Uribe proved himself a wise administrator in almost every area of government. He made the government more transparent and responsible to the people. He restored the government’s finances by courageously raising taxes and cutting excessive bureaucratic spending. He helped to restore sustainability to Colombia’s public and private pensions. He encouraged the development of modern infrastructures among the ports, railroads, and highways. He encouraged

the urban planning that has made Bogota and Medellin models of urban development. Of course he had a lot of help in these things, but as President he set the leadership tone of peace, progress, prosperity, and optimism that has spread throughout the country. Almost every Colombian you talk to these days says, "Our country is going up!"From this book you will learn not only about how Uribe saved his country from being submerged in criminal anarchy but also:1. About Colombia, a large and now stable country of fifty million, just a few hours flight time from Miami. It has a beautiful geography and fantastic biodiversity. It has uncounted natural resources and a large population of increasingly prosperous consumers, making it a trading partner that is likely to benefit our economy by selling us what we need and buying the products that we export. The majority of its people are aligned with our views on democracy and free market economics.2. How the law-abiding people can prevail when their leaders inspire them to stand up to terrorists. Colombian judges, soldiers, and politicians woke up every day knowing they and their families were specifically targeted for assassination by the terrorist groups they fought and prosecuted. They refused bribes that would have made them wealthy, choosing to give their lives to the cause of justice rather than becoming corrupt pawns of guerillas and drug Mafioso.3. How guerilla insurgencies are defeated. There has been something of a post-Vietnam War myth in Leftist circles that guerilla movements can’t be defeated. And yet Colombia’s entrenched insurgencies, operating for decades in the most guerrilla-friendly terrain on the planet, WERE defeated after Uribe mobilized his intelligence operatives to infiltrate them and then sent the army into the jungle to hunt them down. Over a period of years they were killed off and incarcerated faster than they could replace their losses. Some of their leaders died in combat. Some were obliterated by airstrikes. Some died of natural causes. Uribe learned that negotiations were futile until AFTER the leadership was killed or captured. He had to eliminate the leadership first, and then offer to negotiate a return to society for the demoralized rank-and-file.4. To appreciate the necessity of democracy. We Americans often become frustrated with the democratic process and say, "We have way too many people who are too stupid to vote!" And yet Colombians, who are so much poorer and less educated than we are, elected Uribe as their President and elected other strong leaders to the Legislature and regional governments who they knew would risk their lives to restore order to the country. If democracy can work to elect the best leaders in Colombia, then surely it can work here.5. To understand that we Americans must never shrink from our role as being the both the advocate and the "arsenal" of democracy. Says Uribe:==========Over the years, many countries offered Colombia their condolences. But only one country ever stepped forward to offer us real, tangible military aid that helped us address our problems. The Colombian people will forever be grateful to the United States,

and to presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, for providing us with many of the tools we needed to defeat terrorism and extend the reach of the democratic state.==========6. At the same time recognize that opportunities for dialog with our ideological adversaries in Latin America may be possible. Uribe portrays Cuba's Fidel Castro as being an advocate for peace. He says Castro warned him not to place any trust in negotiating with the FARC because Castro knew their leaders and knew they had no sincere desire for peace. It would seem from Uribe's account that Cuba's ambitions of fomenting Communist insurgencies in Latin America are finished. Uribe's accounts of meetings with Hugo Chavez are more ambiguous. Uribe says that Chavez funded the FARC to the tune of $300,000,000. And yet Uribe says there is a sense of Latin American solidarity that prevents Colombia and Venezuela from considering themselves enemies.This book is a very personal and moving view of how President Alvaro Uribe led Colombia away from anarchy and terror and into a constitutional government that balances libertarian concerns with the necessity for being strong enough to suppress the insurgent and outlaw groups that threatened the country's existence. Uribe has transformed his country by inspiring its people with his values of integrity, social justice, respect for the law, and willingness to give up his own life to defeat the insurgents and drug criminals who sought to bring down the government. His story is an inspiration for all peoples and governments.

Over the last 10 years I spent almost 2 years cumulative during my many visits to Colombia. I observed Uribe on TV many times and was impressed with his transparency and penchant for telling the truth. Although he has long speeches. The book answered a lot of questions I had regarding his actions against the FARC. I was impressed with his leadership and always wondered what motivated him to trade his life to save Colombia. I was also pleased to see he did so much to improve the social programs in Colombia.Almost all the Colombians I met will tell you how much they love their country, and in the same conversation tell how they bought themselves out of serving in the military. Uribe in his book describes how he and a lot of his fellowmen are much different than a large percentage of the Colombian population.The book played down some of his weak spots, in my opinion. He did mention his temper, but I saw it in action one time and for a little guy, he can sure explode!A very good book to read about Colombia. I hope its required reading for students in Colombia and any student of political science.On the future of Uribe, I hear he might run for a seat in the Colombian senate, but I hope he finds other ways to use his energy.On the future of Colombia, I hope Santos gets a little more grit in dealing with the FARC. At present, I suspect if he wrote a book, it will be titled "Tiptoeing through the tulips".

He is the former president of Columbia, from 2002 to 2010, two four year terms. He was elected president during a period of extreme instability Columbia due to the drug gangs and terrorists pulling the country apart.There were roads that people could not use as they were controlled by thugs. Kidnapping for money was rife and murder was much too common.Uribe was a dedicated public servant who worked very hard to make Columbia better, and more governable. He worked with the police and armed services and strengthened and supported them in combating the druggies and FARC.A wonderful and inspiring leader who Columbia was blessed to have as their president for eight years.

As a Colombian living in the U.S. I saw the presidency of Alvaro Uribe as the one and last hope Colombia had. I witnessed through the news the events that took place during his presidency, and this book corroborates and details those moments I followed so closely, plus other events that weren't so publicly disclosed. He is an amazing person, smart, caring, an idealist of the best kind. He doesn't dream on clouds, he sees potential in all the positives of a situation without ignoring the negatives. I will always and forever be an admirer him and of his presidency, and I continue to follow all his efforts nationally and internationally to see Colombia walk towards a better future. His book is concise, precise, and well written. The events flow nicely from one chapter to another, I couldn't put it down! Highly recommended if you are a student of Latin American social and political current events. A good lesson on strong leadership.

This book is one I couldn't put down. The author is not only a good writer, but a living example of what the world needs, brave and honest leadership. In addition to explaining how the fight to save the country from violent gangs was won, the author also offers insight into the communist infiltration of western institutions, of interest to anyone who believes in individual freedom. It's interesting to see the bad advice given by European institutions. Fortunately for Colombians, it was ignored.

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