

**High Tech, Low Results: The Role of Technology in the US's Current
Narcoterrorism War in the Andean Region and Why it is Failing**

by

Jesse Schönau-Taylor

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Abstract Approved: _____ Prof. Alan K. Wallace, Ph.D.

This paper studies the current counternarcotics methods and the electronics technology used by the United States and Colombian governments to combat narcoterrorism in the Andean region. The efficiency and efficacy of these methods with the use of electronics technology are analyzed to determine if they are successful. The current counternarcotics methods used, interdiction and eradication, are also compared with the addition of a supplemental third method, alternative development, as well as legalization, a less traditional approach to The War on Narcoterrorism.

This is a significant topic because the United States has sent more than \$3 billion in the last ten years in military aid to Colombia in support of its counternarcotics missions (Forero). The majority of United States aid comes in the form of electronics technology. It is important for the people of the United States and Colombia to evaluate how successful their governments are in the war on narcoterrorism.

The information in this paper was gathered primarily through research using sources from the United States Congress, the State Department, independent books, newspapers, magazines, websites, and interviews.

The conclusion of this paper states that the current methods used to combat narcoterrorism are ineffective and that two alternative options need further consideration. The first option involves supplementing the two current methods used, interdiction and eradication, with alternative development. The second option considers the possibility of world wide legalization of illicit drugs and is compared with the first option.

This paper does not judge which of the options is best, but does declare that if the present methods are not changed, the war on narcoterrorism will only worsen.

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Approved:

Advisor: Prof. Alan K. Wallace, Ph.D.

Director, School of EECS: Prof. Terri S. Fiez, Ph.D.

Director, International Degree Program: Prof. Loren D. Kellogg, Ph.D.

I understand that my thesis will become part of the collection of Oregon State University. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request. I also affirm that the work represented in this thesis is my own work.

Jesse Schönau-Taylor, Author

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COLOMBIA'S PAST POLITICAL, NARCOTICS, AND TERRORISM HISTORY

The United States constantly receives threats from all over the world, but none may be as serious as the domestic threat caused by cocaine abuse. The recent *National Drug Threat Assessment 2003* completed by the National Drug Intelligence Center says that cocaine is the primary drug threat to the United States because of its high demand and availability, its expanding markets, its increasing rate of overdoses, and its connection with violence. In 2002, 33 million people age 12 and older (14.4%) reported to have used cocaine at least once in their lifetime according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*. Cocaine users in 2000 spent a total of \$35.3 billion (Office of Nat. Drug Control Policy). The effect of cocaine on the US is astounding causing 52,000 deaths a year and costing the society \$110 billion a year (Dodd, NPR-Williams).

Cocaine is produced by growing coca plants and transporting the leaves to processing labs. The labs convert the leaves into a base and screen it, removing all impurities. The base is then sent to a chemical lab where chemicals are introduced creating cocaine (Wilson). In the past Bolivia and Peru were the primary cultivators of the coca leaf and Colombia was responsible for the production process. During the last eight years the Bolivian and Peruvian governments, with help from the US, have run successful interdiction, eradication, and alternative development programs which has shifted the primary cultivation of the coca leaf to Colombia. Primary cultivation shifted to Colombia, because Colombia has not been able to run successful interdiction, eradication, and alternative development programs. Interdiction is defined as destroying the supply

line used in the transportation of drugs, and eradication is defined as destroying crops used to make illegal drugs.

As cocaine became a profitable business in Colombia, the production of heroin from the opium poppy, which is grown in the same region as the coca plant, also became successful because the processing labs and transportation infrastructure already existed. Colombia, in the year 2004, was responsible for producing 90% of the cocaine imported into the United States and a majority of the heroin on the east coast. (2004 INCS Reports)

Colombia has the oldest democratic government in South America (Grossman), but its history has also been filled with extremely violent civil conflicts. Between 1948 and 1958 Colombia experienced a civil war called La Violencia, in which the liberal and conservative political parties fought, resulting in the deaths of 200,000 Colombian citizens. The roots of this conflict sprang up from the peasant's expression to grievances and a weak governmental authority in the country. In 1958 la Violencia ended with the creation of a pact between the liberal and conservative parties called the National Front. The National Front created a "consociational system" in which both parties would alternate power and shared control of the government (LeoGrande and Sharpe). This pact effectively excluded all other political parties and movements from having any authority in the government, and authorized repression when needed. The exclusion of other political parties resulted in the rise of Colombia's guerilla movements.

In 1966, the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) arose in resistance to the government out of rural self-defense groups organized by the Colombian Communist Party during the la Violencia (LeoGrande). The ELN (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional - National Liberation Army) was also formed during the 1960's by students inspired by the Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro admirers (Carpenter 70, LeoGrande and Sharpe). The 1970's also saw the introduction of several new guerilla groups, one, called M-19 (Movimiento 19 de Abril - Movement of April 19th), that developed from the reaction of the alleged fraud in the April 19th, 1970 presidential election. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's none of these guerilla groups posed a serious threat to the government or had much influence, and the guerilla conflicts were low scale (LeoGrande and Sharpe).

The mid-1970s saw the beginning of the Colombian cocaine industry. It began with many small producers using basic techniques in makeshift laboratories. The trafficking system was simple with a Colombian buyer, a smuggler, and a contact in the United States who sold the drugs to a wholesaler. It was also common for trafficking entrepreneurs to buy and smuggle the drugs into the U.S. themselves and look for points of contact. This experience helped them to realize the profit potential of the U.S. market, and this ultimately led to the creation of the Colombian drug cartels. (Clawson and Lee 37)

The Cali and Medellin cartels both arose during the early 1980's. The production of cocaine increased astronomically due to the construction of multiple laboratories capable

of making twenty tons per month. Smaller producers quickly aligned with the cartels and the cocaine business became a multimillion dollar industry. The leaders of the Cartels, which were primarily comprised of wealthy families related to each other, quickly became prominent voices around the country. Their power increased as well as their influence on the Colombian government. (Clawson and Lee 38)

As the cartels were growing in the 1980's, the leftist guerilla groups, the FARC, ELN, and M-19, were also becoming more influential. Frustrated with Colombian government's neglect of rural farmers, they realized they could make an impression through their guerilla activities. The new found wealth of the cocaine industry contributed significantly to guerilla's motives and actions against two establishments, the government and the cartels. Guerilla kidnappings, drug taxation, extortion, and assassinations became common practice against both establishments.

As the leftist guerilla groups became more powerful, the cartels were becoming more frustrated with the financial losses due to the drug taxation and kidnappings. It was obvious Colombia could not control the guerilla groups and after the sister of a cartel boss was kidnapped, the cartels created and funded the first vigilante group called MAS (Muerte a Secuestradores - Death to Kidnappers). MAS was formed in December 1981 as the first group to oppose the lefts guerillas (Carrigan, Clawson and Lee 46).

The MAS group became a model way to resist the leftist groups. This led to the creation of the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia - United Self-Defense Groups of

Colombia), a consortium of right-wing paramilitary groups whose sole motive was to counter the leftist guerilla groups. They were organized by multiple groups including drug trafficking cartels who were displeased with so many family kidnappings and extortions, local landowners who could not defend themselves against guerillas, and the military whose objective was to train rural militias to combat the leftist groups. The AUC became a prominent force which had many financial supporters. The range of ideological differences between the supporters though quickly led the AUC to become an independent entity separate from its many founding organizations, but still determined to counter the leftist guerrilla groups. It became self sufficient by entering into the drug industry, while also becoming proficient in kidnappings, extortions, and assassinations. As a separate organization it took orders only from itself, yet it also maintained connections with its founding groups. One important connection it maintained was with the Medellin Cartel. In 1987 the Medellin Cartel provided training for the AUC and brought in former Israeli Special Forces and British SAS personnel to teach courses covering camouflage, self defense, weapons, intelligence and counterintelligence, and communications (Carrigan, Clawson and Lee 53).

As the leftist guerilla groups began to flourish and the right wing AUC also gained power, the civil conflicts became more violent throughout the country as all these groups yearned for control of the government. The Colombian President at the time, Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) saw the need for a political solution and set up a cease fire with the FARC and the M-19. The FARC used the cease fire in 1985 to create its own political group, the Union Patriótica, which won a dozen seats in the national legislature and

several other municipal posts in 1986. The cease fire ended abruptly as the paramilitary AUC, sponsored by the Medellin cartel, murdered 3,000 Union Patriotica activists, candidates, and officials, encouraging the FARC to resort back to guerilla tactics. The M-19 also ended their cease fire when their guerilla commandos entered the Palace of Justice and killed twelve Supreme Court justices who were likely to approve an extradition statute between the United States and Colombia (Carpenter 155, LeoGrande and Sharpe). Extradition treaties with the US have never been popular for either the cartels or guerilla groups.

Future Colombian presidents were able to successfully meet in peace talks with smaller insurgent groups and convince them to disband. By 1991 the FARC and ELN were the only remaining guerilla groups. The FARC and ELN remembered the bloody rampage of the Union Patriotica and were only willing to negotiate on a much larger scale of social and economic reforms. Such grand negotiations were not an option with the Colombian government, though, so both leftist groups continued to expand, with the FARC primarily using the drug industry, and the ELN through ransom kidnappings, oil pipeline bombings, and a small share of the drug industry. (LeoGrande and Sharpe)

During the early 1990s, the Colombian government entered negotiations with the Cartels. Colombian President Cesar Gaviria realized the principal threat to Colombian democracy originated in narcoterrorism and declared, “We will confront it without concessions” (Clawson and Lee 54). During these negotiations, between 1990-1993, several Medellin drug lords surrendered to justice, and those who did not were tracked by the Medellin

Search Bloc, a government search team responsible for killing or capturing the rest of the leaders. Pablo Escobar, the leader of the Medellín Cartel, was eventually caught after escaping from prison and killed during a firefight in 1993. His death was the final blow to the powerful Medellín cartel (Clawson and Lee 54).

The Cali cartel was more difficult to breakup for a couple reasons. They had no central leadership and were very professional businessmen. They hid their money and assets behind legitimate business, and their primary strategy was to influence government through bribes. The Colombian government finally took down the Cali cartel in 1995 by capturing three Cali bosses and letting three more turn themselves in. The U.S. State Department still believes the bosses continue to control portions of their businesses from jail (Clawson and Lee 60).

The Medellín and Cali cartels were responsible for more than eighty percent of the cocaine industry in Colombia. With both cartels defeated within three years, this left a huge portion of the cocaine production industry up for grabs. The FARC and the AUC quickly picked up the majority of available market and their organizations expanded dramatically as well as the cocaine output (Waller). The ELN also took control of a smaller yet still profitable chunk (Carpenter 68, Clawson and Lee 54).

The FARC now controlled a significant portion of the Colombian cocaine industry which greatly increased their profits and allowed them to focus on their ideology. They became a significant force with which the Colombian government had to deal. A low estimate

suggests earnings between \$515 million and \$600 million annually. This makes the FARC the wealthiest insurgency in the world (Carpenter 72).

The paramilitary groups also grew immensely for two reasons. They were able to control a significant portion of the drug trafficking to support themselves financially, and the Colombian government was passively tolerant of their actions. As the two leftist groups increased in size, the paramilitary needed to multiply as well in hopes of defeating the FARC and ELN.

With the expansion of all three guerilla groups, the AUC, ELN, and FARC, the Colombian government lost control of the country which led to total chaos. Kidnappings and assassinations became an epidemic; violence became a way of life. The US recognized the path Colombia was taking and began to criticize the human rights abuses of the military and the expansion of the drug industry, but nobody in a leadership position was listening (LeoGrande and Sharpe, Sweig).

Andres Pastrana was elected President of Colombia in 1998 after campaigning on a peace platform and being supported by the Colombian Civil Society, which assembled over the previous couple of years to speak out against assassinations, kidnappings, and human rights violations. Immediately he began lobbying for an aid plan from the European Union and the United States. In 2000 the new \$7.5 billion “Plan Colombia” was formed for development, rebuilding the judiciary, alternative crop substitution, coca eradication and assistance to residents displaced from their homes due to the conflict (Carpenter 55). In August 2000, the US Congress approved \$1.3 billion for the US contribution to Plan

Colombia appropriated through counternarcotics aid programs, which meant the Colombian government was not permitted to use US money against guerrillas or paramilitaries unless these groups were involved in counternarcotics missions (US House International Relations). The Clinton administration's policy was not to support Colombian counterinsurgency efforts (US Senate Foreign Relations).

President Pastrana immediately set up peace talks with the FARC and ELN. As a show of good faith he granted the FARC land in southeastern Colombia to use as a safe haven known as the "despeje" (clearing). Pastrana also granted the ELN land to use as a safe haven, but it was overrun by the AUC in a stream of violent attacks, targeted against the ELN, preventing the land from being used as a safe haven. The loss of this land for the ELN demonstrated what little control the Colombian government had of the country (Carpenter 69). President Pastrana also pledged to fight the AUC demonstrating no connection between his military and the paramilitary groups. The US supported Pastrana's administration and efforts to negotiate peacefully with the guerilla groups until the FARC deliberately executed three American indigenous rights activists in 1999. Immediately President Pastrana took a more aggressive stance and the US contribution of \$1.3 billion to Plan Colombia shifted from economic, social and democratic reform policies to a policy focused on military assistance in coca eradication and intelligence, still without supporting Colombian counterinsurgency efforts (LeoGrande and Sharpe).

The guerilla and paramilitary warfare increased and Colombia became the kidnapping and homicide capital of the world. The Colombian government continued to veer out of

control with President Pastrana desperately trying to make Plan Colombia work. Then the United States was the recipient of a devastating terrorist attack on September 11th, 2001, and the US Policy towards Colombia and the rest of the Andean region forever changed. The FARC, ELN, and AUC were all designated terrorist organizations against United States' interests as Washington prepared for a global antiterrorist crusade. In 2000, 86% of all terrorist attacks against US interests occurred in Latin America, predominantly in Colombia. On July 24th, 2002 US Congress approved a \$28.9 billion emergency bill for worldwide counterterrorism efforts, which interestingly sent no additional money to Colombia, but included a single sentence focused on Colombia. It gave Colombia permission to use US assistance to support its "unified campaign against narcotics trafficking, terrorist activities, and other threats to national security." This sentence expanded the scope of Plan Colombia giving authorization to use US funds for counterinsurgency efforts and other threats to Colombian national security (US Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division).

THE PRESENT COLOMBIAN ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS

In August, 2002, Colombia inaugurated its newest President. Alvaro Uribe was elected in the first round with overwhelming majority. Coming into office after Pastrana's failed peace plan, President Uribe promised to provide democratic security for Colombians and directly assault both leftist guerilla groups and the right-wing paramilitary. Having attended school at Harvard and Oxford and losing his father during an assassination by FARC guerillas in 1983, he is determined to rid Colombia of its terrorist groups, even after surviving more than a dozen assassination attempts on his own life since his

inauguration (State Department Officer). To complete his objective he has increased Colombia's military budget by cutting social programs and instituting a war tax on Colombia's wealthiest residents (Isacson).

To aggressively attack these terrorist groups with the support of the Americans, Uribe and the Colombian government have many options. Drug interdiction and eradication of the coca leaf, combined with alternative development, is the option currently being used. Both the FARC's and AUC's primary sources of income are derived from illicit drug trafficking, while the ELN also earns some profit from the drug trade. By removing their primary source of income through the destruction of the coca leaf, two objectives will be completed; these terrorist groups will not have the financial means to support themselves, and there will be a significant reduction in the drug trade. Interdiction, eradication, and alternative development are three parts of a triangle that appear to be the best methods to achieve the goal of destroying the profit of the drug trade, but they are extremely complicated. Learning from interdiction and eradication of the coca leaf in Peru and Bolivia, the US determined that these two methods alone will not succeed, but that they must be coupled with alternative development for the peasant farmers who grow the coca leaf in Colombia. The US also determined that an "effective alternative development program requires a strong host government commitment to an extensive array of counternarcotics measures and years of sustained U.S. assistance to support them" (US General Accounting Office). For Colombia to be successful in interdiction, eradication, and alternative development, it must effectively coordinate all three of these methods together or the farmers and illicit drug producers will have no incentives to engage in

legal economic activities. Colombia must also have control of the coca cultivation regions or else it can not successfully implement these methods (US General Accounting Office).

Along with interdiction, eradication and alternative development, the Colombian government is focusing on rebuilding its military. United States Army Special Forces have been brought in to train two counternarcotics brigades. Each brigade consists of 2,300 troops whose primary objectives are to destroy coca processing labs, providing security to eradication operations, seize chemical precursors and coca leaves, and to guard the oil pipeline which is constantly targeted in terrorist attacks. The US military is also training Colombian officers and senior non-commissioned officers on human rights violations so the new Colombian military will not continue using those practices (US Senate Foreign Relations).

Very recently, the United States Army Special Forces also began training “snatch squads” whose sole mission is to kill or capture senior guerilla commanders. These “snatch squads” are rapid-strike task forces that train in quick assaults, night operations, and cooperation within units. These teams are very similar to the U.S. Special Force Group designated Task Force 121 whose primary mission was capturing Saddam Hussein and is now pursuing Osama Bin Laden (Robles).

CONGRESSIONAL OPTIMISM

It is clear now that the US and Colombia are not just fighting a narco-trafficking war nor a guerilla war anymore, but they are now fighting a narcoterrorism war (Carpenter 63). It will be shown that electronics technology has previously played a critical role in combating the drug war, and that it will play an even more vital role in the future war on terrorism. A July 2002 report by Congress titled "Technology Assessment in the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security" came to several conclusions about the role of technology in the War on Terrorism. One conclusion states "Technology is critical to U.S. success on the War on Terrorism and ensuring homeland security" (Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation). This can be seen clearly through the way Plan Colombia appropriated funds to different Colombian agencies and other nations shown in Figures 1 & 2 on the next two pages. Another conclusion from the report says "In the War on Terrorism, America's principal advantage is its unparalleled technological superiority, measured not only in highly sophisticated hardware and software, but also in the competence and character of its citizens in controlling that technology" (Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation). This indicates that the United States has an advantage in War on Terrorism with the help of its superior advanced technology and competent operators.

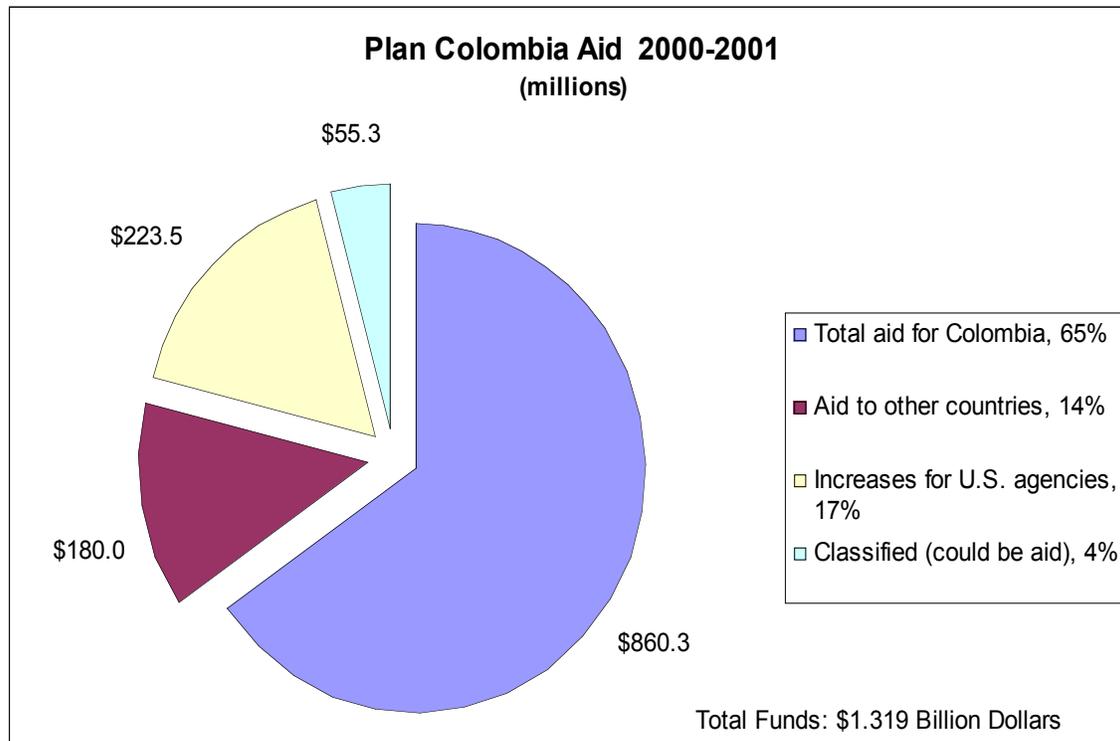


Figure 1: Plan Colombia Aid Package

It is shown in Figure 1 that the Plan Colombia aid package from the United States is \$1.319 billion. Only 65% will go to Colombia while the remaining 35% will be dispersed among neighboring countries and other U.S. agencies' Andean region anti-drug operations. This leaves Colombia with \$860.3 million (Center for International Policy). Figure 2 on the next page shows how Colombia's share is dispersed between its different agencies.

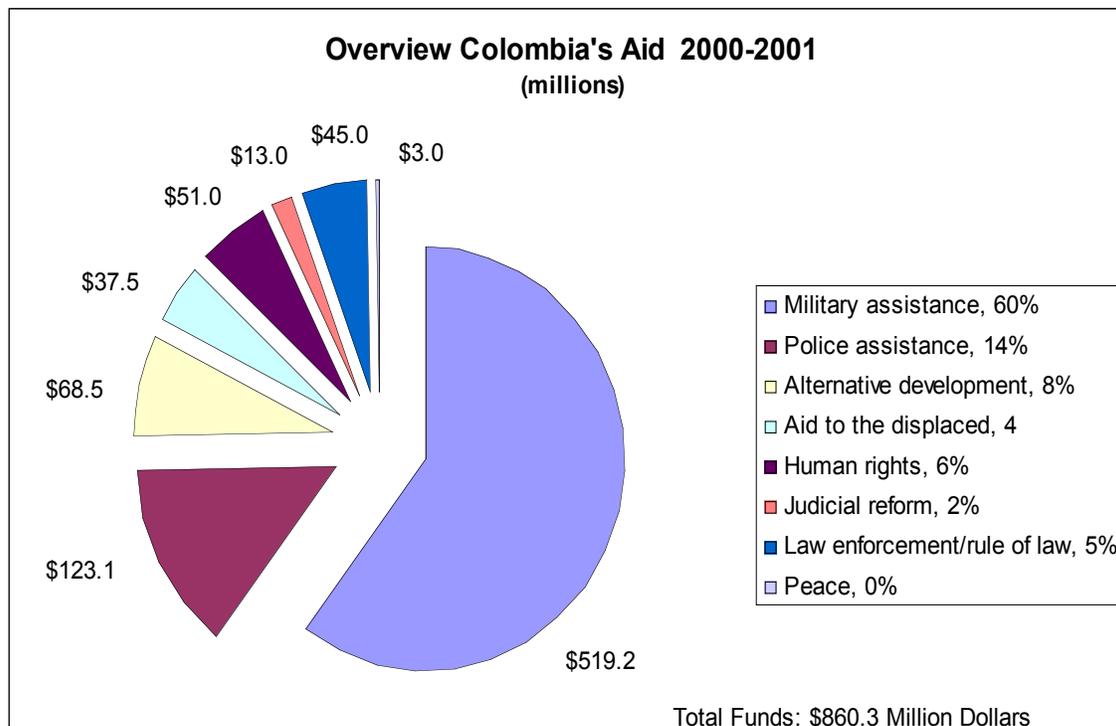


Figure 2: Overview of Colombia's Aid

When we break down Colombia's \$860.3 million, we see that 60% is budgeted for military assistance, 14% for police assistance, and 8% for alternative development. The military and police assistance budgets comprise 74%. This percentage is extremely high because the majority of this assistance is to support interdiction and eradication operations and comes in the form of electronics technology. After seeing how the budget is broken down it is important to realize that the majority of Colombia's financial assistance from Plan Colombia is electronics technology (Center for International Policy).

COLOMBIAN REALISM: THE WAR ON DRUGS

Interdiction in the drug war can occur within three zones: the departure zone, transit zone, and arrival zone (Carpenter 93). Due to the huge area that interdiction operates in, it requires an enormous amount of electronics technology.

Transportation of drugs has made significant technological changes over the years, which explains why \$129 million from Plan Colombia is budgeted for increasing interdiction (Isacson). With water and air routes being used as the primary methods of transportation inside and out of Colombia, it is crucial to have electronics to monitor both these routes. The principal electronics used are US owned radar installations and surveillance aircraft. Radar (radio detection and ranging) uses radio signals reflected off aircraft and watercraft to accurately pinpoint locations. Permanent radar bases are predominantly used for aircraft tracking while surveillance aircraft equipped with tracking systems can be used to track both watercraft and aircraft.

One of the two primary surveillance aircraft is the Air Force E-3 Sentry, an AWAC (airborne warning and control system) airplane. The E-3 provides all-weather surveillance, command, control, and communications needed by mission commanders. Due to all these capabilities, the E-3 is an ideal surveillance aircraft to track watercraft and aircraft without arousing suspicion (US Air Force). Realizing its importance in interdiction, Plan Colombia budgeted \$61 million to Ecuador for building landing strips to accommodate the AWACS (Isacson).

The other primary surveillance aircraft used is the Navy P-3C Orion which was originally designed as an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft. The P-3C is equipped with two advanced detection sensors: DIFAR (directional frequency and ranging) and MAD (magnetic anomaly detection) (US Navy). As a surveillance aircraft the P-3C makes an excellent contribution to tracking watercraft and aircraft and accounts for \$68 million of the \$129 million interdiction budget (Isacson).

Eradication is perhaps the most crucial part in the war on narcoterrorism. The coca leaf is the source of many problems, and by destroying the coca leaf the majority of the problems disappear. The biggest technological item Colombia received from Plan Colombia for its military and police assistance in eradication was \$328 million in helicopters. The US Congress approved 16 Sikorsky UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopters and 30 Bell UH-1H "Huey" helicopters for the Colombian army, and 2 Sikorsky UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopters and 12 Bell UH-1H "Huey" helicopters for the police, as well as pilots and mechanics to train the Colombian crews.

These helicopters are very helpful because southern Colombia contains very few roads and airports, which explains why the primary source of transportation is the river system. The helicopters allow the Colombian Army to maneuver through southern Colombia with more mobility to complete their missions.

The Blackhawks and Hueys are used for numerous purposes including: surveying the southern Colombia countryside for coca fields, locating drug-shipping airstrips cut out of

the vegetation, identifying illicit drug production labs, and protecting unarmed crop-dusting planes as they spray herbicides over the countryside (Waller). These two helicopters use very sophisticated electronic instruments to carry out these missions.

The best way to destroy the coca fields is through spraying herbicides over a field multiple times. Satellite and aerial images are taken of southern Colombia to identify coca plantations, and after the Blackhawks and Hueys have identified the coca fields, the fumigation planes enter into the process. Colombia reportedly had 16 spray planes and was scheduled to receive 22 more in 2003 (Marx). Everyday these spray planes, primarily OV-10 Broncos, fly to southern Colombia and drop the herbicides from the tree top level.

Because they fly so low and are targeted by the leftist terrorist groups, they are always protected by the Blackhawk or Huey helicopters. These helicopters serve two purposes when guarding the spray planes. The first is to fire back upon any rebel group firing at the spray planes, and the second is to carry personnel to launch a rescue in case one of the planes goes down. It is important to note that most spray plane pilots and helicopters pilots guarding the spray planes are contract workers from the U.S. because Colombia does not have enough trained pilots. This illustrates one issue of the United States superior electronics capabilities with competent operators (Marx).

The Colombian counternarcotics brigades also enter into the eradication process when the Blackhawk and Huey helicopters have identified the rogue airstrips and cocaine

production labs. The helicopters, with contract pilots, deploy battalions from these brigades into hostile areas to destroy the airports and coca processing labs. The counternarcotics brigades have become the elite soldier force in the Colombian Army and are modeled after US Army Ranger battalions.

Seventy US Army Special Forces Green Berets were brought into Colombia to train the counternarcotics battalions in tactical intelligence techniques and procedures, small arms, communications, optics, night operations, and soldier systems. The ultimate goals for the counternarcotics battalions are to be proficient in long range tactical level reconnaissance and surveillance, to guard the oil pipeline, and to take direct actions against terrorist leaders. These counternarcotics brigades are also used heavily in interdiction operations when watercraft, aircraft, or temporary storage facilities are located inside the Colombian boundaries (US Senate Foreign Relations).

Using all this advanced electronics technology in the War on Narcoterrorism may seem overkill, but it is also important to know what technology the opposing rebel groups are using to elude and combat Colombian and US authorities. The FARC, ELN, and AUC all have multimillion dollar budgets and can afford to trade drugs, or pay cash, for high tech equipment. Examples of this can be seen in the transportation of Colombian cocaine through the Caribbean. Drug traffickers use the most sophisticated satellite-positioning systems and communication technology to coordinate drops into unpoliced areas. They are also using stealth boats made completely from wood and fiberglass to hide themselves from radar, MAD, and other detection equipment (Arthur, McElroy). All of

these groups are also equipped with automatic rifles, handguns, grenade launchers, and radios (Robinson).

The FARC perhaps uses the most lethal technology of all three groups. This is due to its connection with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) developed in the late 1990's. This relationship developed because the FARC has hundreds of millions of dollars from cocaine trafficking and kidnapping while the IRA has advanced terrorism technology but needs more financial support for its goals. Through this connection, the IRA has sent soldiers to FARC controlled territories for months to train the FARC in the art of mortars and explosives, the science of detonators, urban warfare, and the use of surface to air missiles (SAMs) and rocket launchers (Branegan, NPR-Dudley). The FARC has used these four areas to their fullest potential. This can most notably be seen in the use of the mortars, which are very fast and cheap to make. They are constructed in two sizes, 120mm and 150mm diameters, by metals taken from scrap yards. The launcher tubes, gas cylinders, fuses and detonator systems are very similar to the type used by the IRA (Sharrock). It is important to note that gas cylinders (propane tanks) are the main missile component of the mortars and the theft of gas cylinders in Colombia since 1997 has risen proportionally (Sharrock).

The detonator systems developed by the IRA and used by the FARC have two main characteristics. The first is that they are primarily cell phones so the detonation can be operated from a remote location (NPR-Dudley). The second is that these detonator systems are not susceptible to frequency-jamming systems; this technology was

developed by the IRA to thwart the British Army from jamming the detonator frequencies.

The urban warfare taught by the IRA primarily uses two methods. The first, pioneered by the IRA in the early 1980's, is the use of "human proxy bombs" which turns harmless civilians into suicide bombers (Sharrock). The second is the use of the mortars to launch attacks against villages or for assassination attempts. The best example of this is one of the assassination attempts on current President Uribe's life during his presidential inauguration. More than two hundred 120mm mortars were set to launch simultaneously in Bogota, but due to a fault in the firing mechanism only a few mortars were actually launched, killing more than 20 people. A huge massacre was avoided and President Uribe's life was spared. A dozen other assassination attempts on his life have also been unsuccessful. (Economist, Sharrock, State Dep. Officer).

WHY CURRENT POLICIES ARE FAILING

It can be seen that interdiction and eradication are very involved and complicated processes, but they are also crucial to the War on Narcoterrorism. After examining all the components, one comes to realize how integral electronics technology is to the attempted solution. It is obvious that a wide array of superior electronics is being used by anti-drug agencies to combat narcoterrorism. However, there seems to be no dramatic progress in the war on drugs even though we know that the electronics used are efficient for what they are designed to do.

The question arises then, “Are the electronics we’re using in the drug war actually making a difference?” The current answer is no. Yes the electronics are efficient for what they were designed to do, but no, they are not effective at hindering the drug trade.

Interdiction

The Colombian and United States interdiction and eradication efforts have both failed.

The most significant problem with interdiction is not enough resources. In the mid 1990’s, US Customs released numbers indicating they only searched 3% of the 9 million shipping containers entering the United States. They also divulged the fact that only 200 of the 5000 trucks (4%) entering United States daily from Mexico were searched (Carpenter 95).

Drug traffickers are very smart about transporting their shipments into the United States. Earlier in the beginning of interdiction efforts, drug traffickers would carry large loads of drugs across at one time using known routes. As interdiction techniques became better, the drug traffickers broke their larger shipments down into smaller shipments and used dynamic routes which led to fewer seizures. The seizures recorded now by US Customs are tolerable to drug traffickers and make little impact on US drug market, indicating our interdiction techniques are futile. One Rand reports says “Moderately successful seizure rates, in the 30-70 percent range, have little effect on the world cocaine market because market forces simply induce more workers to enter cocaine production to make up for the seizures” (Clawson and Lee 226). Another Rand analyst, Kevin Jack Riley also states,

“Seizures made at lower-risk stages of production will affect drug prices less than seizures made at the higher-risk stages of shipment and retailing.”

Ted Carpenter sums it up in his book, Bad Neighbor Policy, by saying “The bottom line is that interdiction at any point in the supply chain is extremely difficult and largely ineffectual” (Carpenter 95).

Table 1: Colombia Interdiction Statistics

International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCS) Report 2004

(1994–2003) mt = metric tons

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Seizures										
Heroin (mt)	0.181	0.419	0.183	0.261	0.317	0.504	0.572	0.78	0.77	0.5
Opium (mt)	0.128	0.078	0.036	0.120	0.100	0.183	—	0.002	0.11	—
Cannabis (mt)	2000	166	235	136	69	65	46	36.6	76.9	126.1
Base/Basuco (mt)	32.00	19.50	17.50	10.00	29.30	9.00	—	26.70	30	31.1
Cocaine HCl (mt)	30.00	21.50	23.50	34.00	54.70	22.73	69.00	57.30	94	114.0
Total HCl/Base (mt)	62.00	41.00	41.00	44.00	84.00	31.73	69.00	80.00	124	145.1
Total Arrests	2,154	1,745	1,561	1,546	1,961	—	8,600	15,367	15,868	—

Just by reviewing the numbers associated with interdiction operations in Table 1 on the previous page, we can see that the electronics and interdiction methods Colombia and the US are using are efficient for stopping the transportation of drugs, but their results yield

minimal effects on the drug war. Regardless of how many metric tons of cocaine and heroin are seized through interdiction efforts, it only amounts to a small fraction of the metric tons being sold on United States' streets. Ted Carpenter touches on this in his book, Bad Neighbor Policy, with this statement, "International interdiction has increased markedly over the past two decades, in part because of the improvement in radar and other detection methods. But there is little evidence that those efforts have materially reduced the amount of drugs reaching the United States" (Carpenter 93).

The drug traffickers are also very dynamic in their routes. If one interdiction method seems to be effective, it is only a matter of time before all the drugs in transit are rerouted through another channel. This is evident in the closure of a United States air base which had become inefficient since drug traffickers had moved their operations (Clawson and Lee 227). It can also be seen in the discovery of Brazilian roads and rivers used to transport drugs when Peru's interdiction efforts became too successful (Clawson and Lee 232).

Eradication**Table 2: Colombia Eradication Statistics****International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCS) Report 2004****(1994–2003) ha = hectares (2.471 acres)**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Coca										
Estimated Cultivation (ha)	49,610	59,650	72,800	98,500	—	—	183,200	—	—	—
Eradication (ha)	4,910	8,750	5,600	19,000	—	43,246	47,371	84,251	122,695	132,817
Potential Harvest (ha)	44,700	50,900	67,200	79,500	101,800	122,500	136,200	169,800	144,450	—
Opium										
Estimated Cultivation (ha)	23,906	10,300	12,328	13,572	—	—	—	9,083	TBD	—
Eradication (ha)	3,906	3,760	6,028	6,972	—	—	9,254	2,583	3,371	—
Potential Harvest (ha)	20,000	6,540	6,300	6,600	6,100	7,500	7,500	6,500	—	—

The eradication efforts have also been failing due to a limit of resources and Table 2 above demonstrates this. The number of eradicated hectares of coca and opium may be increasing, but we can also see that the number of hectares harvested is also increasing. The most significant way to measure the success of eradication efforts is in the street value price of cocaine and heroin. If eradication is successful, then the price of both illicit drugs will rise due to basic supply and demand economics. The price of either drug

has not risen and remained steady for a significant amount of time long enough to indicate long term effects from eradication are effective. Donnie Marshall, former Administrator of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), also conveyed this message during the initial stages of Plan Colombia by acknowledging there seemed to be little effect from eradication on the value of cocaine entering the United States (Carpenter 77).

There are also other indications that eradication has been unsuccessful. Not enough plants can be accessed or sprayed to make a significant dent in the cultivation of the coca plant and opium. This fact is demonstrated by analyzing the numbers shown above. Regardless of how many hectares are sprayed, the amount of coca harvested increases year to year while opium stays roughly the same. Horacio Serpa, a political leader in Colombia, is also frustrated with the results and says, “After spraying more than 500,000 acres (200 hectares) of coca, the area under cultivation is three times larger than it was five years ago” (Carpenter 77).

Another disheartening fact is that peasant farmers are learning how to save their illicit crops after fumigation with herbicides. By lightly washing the herbicide from the leaves and then treating the plant with chemicals, they can save a significant portion of their crops that were sprayed (Carpenter 113). The farmers are adapting to US and Colombian eradication efforts, which is seriously undermining the effectiveness of those methods.

One other method of the eradication program was voluntary eradication. The equivalent of \$2000.00 US dollars per square hectare was promised to peasant farmers who voluntarily pulled up their illicit crops. This program had unexpected disastrous results because the farmers began requesting more money per hectare and then used the money to start new, larger coca fields (Carpenter 96).

Alternative Development

We are losing the war against narcoterrorism for many reasons. The major reason is because interdiction and eradication only contribute to two parts of the triangle, we're missing the alternative development leg. For our electronics to make a difference in the drug war we need to complete the triangle. We need to start running effective alternative development and crop substitution operations, or interdiction and eradication along with the electronics used will not make a difference in the war on narcoterrorism in the Andean region.

Running effective alternative development programs is difficult. Alternative development is a combination of many different aspects, and for this reason it is susceptible to many failures. The idea behind alternative development is to provide peasant farmers in Colombia with reasons and methods to grow legitimate crops. Peasant farmers are targeted because they are the primary cultivators of coca in Colombia. If the peasant farmers would stop growing coca plants, the guerilla groups would lose their financial support, and the war on narcoterrorism would become much easier.

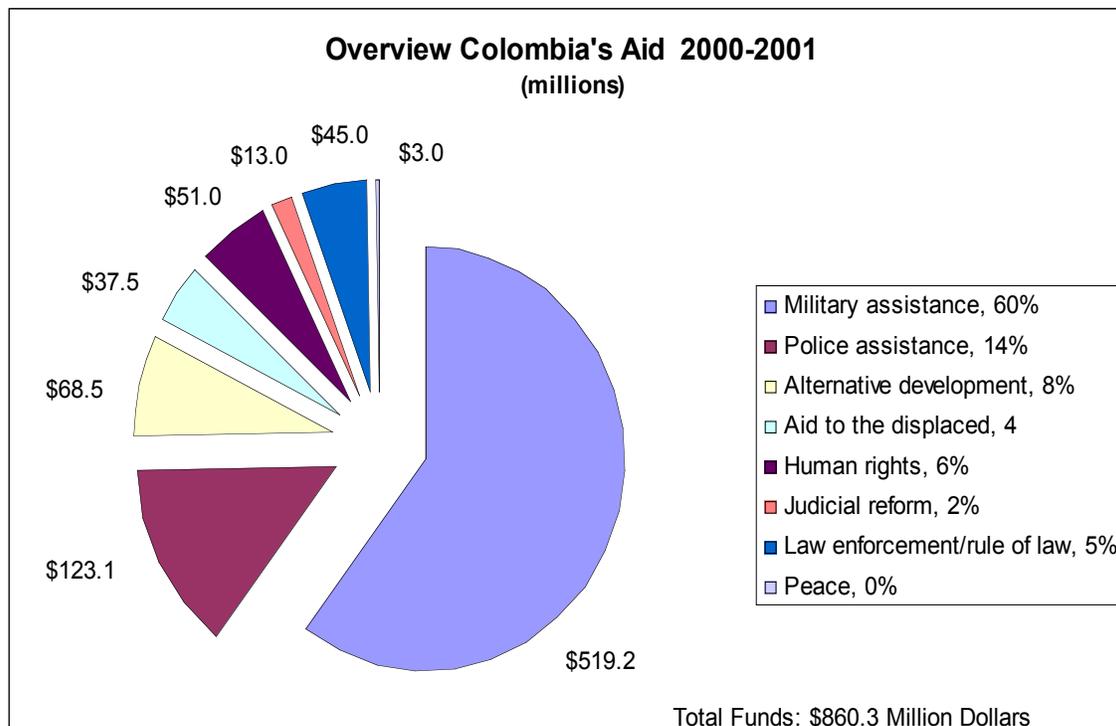


Figure 3: Overview of Colombia's Aid

There are currently many reasons why alternative development is not working in Colombia. The most significant reason alternative development is failing is due to funding which is shown in Figure 3 above. Only 8% of the \$860 million dollars for Colombia from U.S. assistance to Plan Colombia was designated for Alternative Development. The military and police assistant budgets for interdiction and eradication sum up to 74% because of all the electronics technology involved. The alternative development budget is significantly lower since it does not require electronics technology. The United States needs to supply other resources or cash for alternative development to be successful, which it has failed to do. From the start, alternative development was never given an appropriate amount of funding to work with the interdiction and eradication efforts effectively.

Another problem is in the deliverance of those promised funds. While nearly all the money has been delivered for the military and police assistance, less than half of the alternative development funds from Plan Colombia have been delivered. It is easy for the United States to donate older helicopters and view it as cash, as opposed to actually giving money to Colombia that will go directly into alternative development programs. It is clear our two governments are not taking alternative development seriously (Isacson).

The second major reason the alternative development program is not working is because the Colombian government does not control all the land in Colombia. The United States learned valuable lessons in Peru and Bolivia when it combated narco-trafficking with successful alternative development. The most important lesson learned, with respect to alternative development, was that progress requires host government control of all drug-growing areas. With civil authority over those areas, the government can run successful interdiction, eradication, and alternative development operations. The Colombian government owns the land, but it does not have control of the majority of the drug growing regions, hindering any progress made in combating narcoterrorism (US General Accounting Office).

Since the guerilla groups control most of the land used to cultivate the crops they exercise their authority over that land. In some regions intimidation is used to scare farmers into growing coca plants. The farmers must grow coca plants or risk the punishment. In other regions the farmers and guerilla group work in a symbiotic relationship. With the little power cartels now have in Colombia, the guerilla groups have taken over the drug

industry. Most regions encourage the farmers to grow the coca plant and put it through its first stage of processing, converting it to base. The farmers then sell the base only to the regional guerilla group creating effective monopolies. The guerilla groups in return give protection to these rural villages and farmers (Wilson).

A very practical third major reason is the ease in cultivating illegal crops in comparison to legal crops. Coca, marijuana, and opium poppies can be grown almost anywhere, and much of Colombia's soil is too poor to cultivate legal crops. The coca plant itself flourishes where many crops cannot exist. It is also much easier to cultivate compared to legal crops. Coca crops only require 18 months to mature and can reach maximum yields in three years. They can also sustain harvests up to 25 years at a frequency of six harvests per year. Most legal crops require at least four years to reach first harvest and only harvest once a year. Some examples of these legal crops are bananas, maize, rice, yucca, cocoa beans, coffee, citrus fruits, and various grains (Carpenter 107, US General Accounting Office). Another benefit to the coca leaf is that its harvested leaves spoil much slower compared to legal crops. This is very important when considering transportation, another key factor in a farmer's decision to cultivate illegal crops. When peasant farmers grow legal crops, they are required to transport those crops to the nearest market, which could be a 35 hour drive in second gear over rough terrain (Carpenter 108). Farmers who cultivate coca plants don't have to worry about transporting their crops because their buyers come directly to the farms. There also isn't an urgency because the coca leaf takes longer to spoil.

Another advantage is the profit from coca plants. Depending on which country and region the farmers live in, they can make from 4 to 50 times the profit of legal agricultural crops with their illegal crops.

Another factor that impedes alternative development is that the opium poppy is the only crop that can compete with the coca plant on all the above levels mentioned (Carpenter 107).

Colombia has been successful in helping some farmers transition to legal crops. Most peasant farmers are given incentives for growing legal crops and are encouraged to gradually halt cultivation of coca plants over a period of a couple years. The peasant farmers encounter many difficulties after that transition, however, that make it very difficult to continue with licit crops and not return to illicit crops.

One incentive given to the farmers is the ability to sell their crops on an international market with help from United States funded NGOs (non-governmental organizations). The NGOs are responsible for promoting the products on the international markets. History has shown this strategy does not work, though. Nearly every time NGOs promote new products on the international market for Colombian farmers, the price declines dramatically, yielding very little revenue for the farmers. This is a result of more products being added to the market, therefore increasing the supply and decreasing the value. The NGOs do not control all the markets in the world so when they do set

prices, many other countries undercut the NGOs forcing them to lower the prices which takes away income from the farmers (Carpenter 109, NPR-Kaste).

Other incentives offered by the Colombian government for peasant farmers include destroying the coca crop in exchange for two calves and a regular supply of lentils (vegetables). Farmers have said, though, that the assistance provided isn't enough to sustain a one child family. The farmers are being offered incentives that yield very little profit and are not self-sustaining. These incentives are not enough for farmers to live on, encouraging farmers to return to their coca crops (Marx). One reason these incentives might not be adequate is because the budget for alternative development is so small and still only fifty percent has been funded.

Some local Colombian officials say, "The only way to permanently wipe out the coca economy is to spend tens of millions of dollars for factories, roads, and other projects to provide coca farmers with a legal alternative" (Marx). That may be the only successful incentive for alternative development.

The lack of coordination between eradication efforts and alternative development is also detrimental to the alternative development program. Many farmers are willing to grow legal crops if their families can survive. It is not a quick transition, though, and usually requires a combination legal/illegal crop area until the farmer can earn enough money to sustain his family on legal crops. With the eradication efforts, it is very common for the Colombian government to destroy all crops, legal and illegal, with herbicide sprays.

Some farmers want to convert to legal crops, but they constantly lose all their crops and their food supplies (LeoGrande and Sharpe, Marx). Colombian families can not survive in these regions so they move and replant elsewhere, usually starting over with some legal and some illegal crops. As the spraying continues more and more families are driven deeper into the forests where even fewer crops can be cultivated. Because the coca plant is so strong and durable, needs little care, and earns more profit comparatively, it is normally selected as the crop of choice by the rural peasant farmers (Sharpe and Spencer).

WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

It is now obvious that Plan Colombia is not working. Interdiction, eradication, and alternative development are failing to make progress in the Andean drug war even with the advanced technology being used in support of these operations. There are a multitude of reasons contributing to the failure, as well as lots of negative consequences from the attempted drug war. As Uruguayan President Jorge Batlle said, “During the past 30 years [the drug war] has grown, grown, grown, every day more problems, every day more violence, every day more militarization,” he continues, “This has not gotten people off drugs” (Carpenter 225).

What the United States needs to do now is reevaluate its objectives and methods. The drug war we are fighting has transitioned from a narco-trafficking war to a narcoterrorism war. Now as a narcoterrorism war, the major objective is not solely to combat the supply

side of cocaine and heroin entering the United States, but also to combat the terrorist groups profiting from the drug trade and destabilizing the whole Andean region.

The most effective way to stop these terrorists groups is to attack their financial resources. US Army General Charles Wilhelm, former commander of U.S. military's Southern Command, says, "I don't think they could survive in their current form without it [drug revenue]" (Carpenter 71).

Two strategies to take the profit out of the drug trade, thereby reducing the power and influence of the terrorist organizations and returning stability to the Andean region, are a worldwide legalization of drugs and a nationwide reduction of drug consumption in the United States. These two strategies would use much less electronics technology and be able to use the finances reserved for the electronics technology in much more effective ways. These strategies could significantly decrease the profits of the terrorist organizations, encourage Andean farmers to switch to other agricultural crops, help the US refocus on its own domestic drug problem, and help stabilize the whole Andean region.

Legalization of drugs in the past was never considered a viable solution to the drug war. It has recently, though, become more popular with some world leaders who are disgruntled with the current methods being employed and are beginning to advocate for legalization. Before he became Mexico's foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda wrote in Newsweek that the drug war was a failure and that, "It's hard to find a place where the

war on drugs is being won.” He continues, “Indeed, the time is uniquely propitious for a wide-ranging debate between North and Latin Americans on this absurd war that no one really wants to wage.” He concludes, “In the end, legalization of certain substances may be the only way to bring prices down, and doing so may be the only remedy to some of the worst aspects of the drug plague: violence, corruption, and the collapse of the rule of law” (Carpenter 225).

For legalization to work, though, drugs would need to be legalized around the world. It would not be effective for only one or two countries to legalize drugs while others kept them illegal. The source countries and the consumer countries would need to have similar laws. The President of Mexico, Vicente Fox, stated, “When the day comes that it is time to adopt the alternative of lifting punishment for consumption of drugs, it would have to come from all over the world because we would gain nothing if Mexico did it but the production and traffic of drugs ... continued here” (Carpenter 226). The United States could lead the way, but it would need several partners, or it would accomplish nothing.

Legalization of drugs is a very plausible solution, although it may not be popular. It has the potential to be successful for many reasons. One major reason is it would significantly drop the price of drugs around the world. This has many advantages. If drugs become legal, they will become very inexpensive through all the levels of production. The distributors, transporters, suppliers, and peasant farmers will all see their incomes from coca and poppy plants drop dramatically. If it hits the peasant farmers hard enough, they might consider cultivating other crops instead of the coca and poppy plants.

It will also entice other workers in the illicit drug industry to switch to legal industries. One example is with chemists. Production of cocaine and heroine employs an incredible amount of chemists. If drugs become legal, the majority of these professionals will switch to other more profitable industries, like textiles, significantly helping the Colombian economy.

The Andean region currently employs over 500,000 people in the illicit drug trade (Clawson and Lee 192). If the majority of these workers transferred to legal industries, it would significantly benefit the Colombian economy. Currently each dollar of illegal cocaine purchased requires the average purchase of \$0.03 from other non-cocaine Colombian economy industries. Every dollar of legal merchandise purchased from the Colombian society requires of the average purchase of \$0.23 from other non-cocaine Colombian industries. It can be seen that nearly eight times as much money goes back into the Colombian economy from legal products compared to those of illegal drugs. If cultivation of coca plants and opium poppies became legal and more workers switched to traditional legal industries, then more goods would be sold, strengthening the Colombian economy (Clawson and Lee 240).

Another benefit of decreasing the price of drugs around the world through legalization is that the terrorist organizations will see the majority of their funding disappear. This has been recognized as the major objective since the guerilla groups and cartels became known. With much less funding these groups will probably be unable to continue their current activities at the frequency and efficiency that they would like to. Not only will

this help decrease the number of terrorists incidents in the Andean region, but it will also help to decrease the corruption in the political and judicial systems and the violence associated with the corruption. With legalization of drugs, the necessity to bribe politicians, police officers, and judges will decrease dramatically as well as much of the violence directed towards the politicians, police officers, and judges. Colombia's identity as the murder and kidnapping capital of the world could be forgotten.

The legalization of drugs would also help the United States justice system. The US currently has 5% of the world's population, yet it has 25% of the world's prisoners behind bars (NPR-Gonzalez). 60% of all federal prisoners and 25% of all state prisoners are currently in on drug related offenses. Legalization would hopefully reduce the amount of violence and crime in our cities. It would also free up more prison space by not increasing the non-violent drug offenders; reserving those spaces for more significant criminals. By releasing some non-violent drug offenders we would not have to deal with overcrowding and letting violent criminals go early to make space for drug offenders (Carpenter 201). It would also free up the courts from all the minor drug offenses which are frequently backing up many other cases (Carpenter 233).

Legalization would also provide another benefit to the United States. Most of the local, state, and federal employees who combat narcotrafficking could be reassigned to other important areas. For instance, the DEA could transition most of its employees into anti-terrorism positions, because terrorism seems to be a growing epidemic in our world today.

There is another benefit associated with legalization. Many of the diseases associated with drug usage could also be combated. By legalizing drugs, the government can set up its own distribution centers with clean drugs and needles. This would help discourage the transmission of bodily fluids which would help prevent diseases, and it would also guarantee that the users were getting clean drugs and not drugs tainted with impurities. Canada and Netherlands are currently employing this practice (Carpenter 226).

Currently, through interdiction, eradication, and alternative development we can rid certain areas of the manufacturing process. But then we have to worry about which areas will start growing illegal crops to recoup the losses. By legalization worldwide, we hit everybody hard everywhere. We would no longer have to worry about where the newest drug cultivation region or production center would be. Legalizing drugs worldwide is a peaceful solution to a very violent problem.

If legalized, the coca leaf could be a beneficial product around the world. Some of its advantages are that it contains more calcium than milk and more protein than meat. It can also be used to increase stamina, fight off hunger, aid digestion, and help altitude sickness (Carpenter 160, Weekend Australian). The coca leaf provides many benefits if used appropriately. Nine states have already approved medicinal marijuana (Carpenter 224). Maybe it is time to consider other illicit narcotics as well for legal drug purposes.

There are, however, some potential problems to legalization of drugs worldwide. One potential problem is the current drug-trafficking networks could transition to the

trafficking of other illegal products like weapons of mass destruction materials or human trafficking, which are growing practices. It is quite plausible that many workers involved in illegal drug trafficking would rather switch products than let their trafficking networks fall apart. Looking at history we can see this happened after the end of prohibition.

When prohibition was repealed and alcohol became legal again, the criminal enterprises just expanded into new areas such as drugs, gambling, and money laundering (Clawson and Lee 241).

Another potential consequence that could be detrimental for the source countries is that the United States could use its most advanced science and agricultural technology to become the world leaders of drug production. This would seriously hurt the economies of the third world countries which currently have the upper hand in production of these drugs. Part of legalizing drugs would be to help these economies become more stable, and by becoming better manufactures, the US could effectively take away a significant source of income to their economies (Clawson and Lee 241). The United States has done this before by producing a surplus of maize and then selling it less than the cost of production which had negative effects on Mexico's maize economy (Oxfam International).

A final potential problem would be the increasing number of social issues society would have to deal with due to the new legalized drugs. Society would see issues similar to those connected with alcohol abuse. Alcohol is a major source of many social issues such as disruption of families and abuse of others. Alcohol is also found connected to a

certain percentage of crimes committed in the United States. Legalizing more drugs has the potential of creating more social issues than our society is ready to deal with. The creation of new support groups similar to Alcoholics Anonymous could help buffer this possible negative effect.

Reducing the consumption of illicit drugs in the U.S. needs to be accomplished. Many people argue that the drug war should not be fought in other countries over which we have no authority, but fought only in our own country by reducing our own consumption. All the money currently invested in Plan Colombia could be diverted back to the US, significantly increasing social programs nationwide. By working directly with drug abusers, the US can help decrease usage and get users back on their feet. If legalization happens, more users would be willing to come out and say they need help in fighting their addiction. They would not have to worry about legal implications of asking for help. The euphoric feeling of contributing to something illegal would also disappear with legalization, which might discourage people from using drugs. It might be less entertaining if it is legal.

Implementing a program with the goal of reducing the domestic consumption of drugs would also appease nonsupporters of legalization who think that drug usage would rise with legalization. Legalizing drugs does run a risk of increasing usage, but with a program targeting reduction and help, the usage levels should decrease.

CONCLUSION

Currently the Andean region is responsible for two major threats to the United States and the rest of the world. One threat is Colombia produces the majority of the world's cocaine and a small portion of heroin that contributes to the drug related threats most nations experience today. The second threat is that Colombia is home to three major terrorist groups who have already destabilized the Andean region and continue to threaten destabilization in many other nations. Before September 11th, the United States primary mission was to combat the production of illicit drugs in Colombia. The terrorist groups were not considered a major threat at the time. Since September 11th the United States has refocused its global policies towards combating terrorism everywhere. This means that the Colombian government can use the United States' financial assistance to primarily attack the illegal drug market and subsequently combat the terrorist groups responsible for producing the illegal drugs.

The two main methods currently used today are interdiction and eradication. The majority of Plan Colombia's funding is devoted to the electronics used by these two methods, but history has shown us though that these two methods cannot work without implementing the third method of alternative development as well. The United States and Colombian governments have never adequately supported alternative development. Without successfully implementing and coordinating all three methods together, interdiction and eradication, even with all their electronics technology, will never be effective at hindering the production and distribution of illegal drugs.

If the United States and Colombia will not adequately support an alternative development program, maybe the United States and the other nations of the world should consider another option, legalization. Legalization of illicit drugs around the world would serve many purposes. First and foremost, it would destroy the source of funding for most terrorist organizations around the world today. The three terrorist groups in Colombia acquire almost all their funding from the production of illicit drugs. Destroying the source of funds would also help prevent terrorist organizations in different regions from becoming allies. Neither the FARC nor the IRA would be as successful as they are today if they had never become acquainted. Legalization provides the world the opportunity to stop the majority of terrorism in its tracks. It would also allow the nations of the world to focus on the drug problem in their own lands. Nations would no longer have to focus on stopping the illicit drug suppliers in their countries; instead they could use their funds for prevention and treatment of their own people.

The current methods of interdiction and eradication are not working in the Andean region. The United States and Colombia need to consider implementing an adequate alternative development program to complement the interdiction and eradication programs, or consider legalizing drugs. If the alternative development program or legalization are not considered, then we will not be successful. The illicit drug economies will continue to thrive. The terrorist organizations in the Andes and the rest of the world will continue to grow. All the nations of the world will experience the devastation and chaos that Colombia and the Andean region has experienced the last sixty years.

DEFINITIONS

Consociational system – Various political groups alternate control of the government.

Counerinsurgency – Military strategy or action to suppress insurgencies.

Counternarcotics – Action or strategy intended to counteract or suppress illegal drug trafficking.

Counterterrorism – Action or strategy intended to counteract or suppress terrorism.

DIFAR - Directional frequency and ranging.

Eradication – Destruction of crops during cultivation.

Hectare – A metric unit of equal area to 2.471 acres (10,000 square meters).

Interdiction – Destroying the supply line used in the transportation of drugs.

MAD- Magnetic anomaly detection.

Narcoterrorism – The financing of terrorist activities by participation in the drug trade.

Narco trafficking – Smuggling and distribution of illegal drugs.

Paramilitary – Civilians organized in military structures to assist regular military.

Radar – Radio detection and ranging.

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