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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

MBA PROFESSIONAL REPORT

**Evaluation of the United States Drug War
Policy Abroad: A Case Study in Colombia**

**By: Kevin T. Wright and
Joseph S. Hamilton
December 2010**

**Advisors: David R. Henderson,
John Enns**

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**EVALUATION OF THE UNITED STATES DRUG WAR POLICY ABROAD:
A CASE STUDY IN COLOMBIA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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EVALUATION OF THE UNITED STATES DRUG WAR POLICY ABROAD: A CASE STUDY IN COLOMBIA

ABSTRACT

As the United States continues to recover from the greatest recession since the Great Depression, the U.S. government must find cost savings. Therefore, this project aimed to find efficiencies through reallocating funds from a program proven ineffective. U.S. foreign aid programs such as Plan Colombia, in conjunction with Colombian President Uribe's "Democratic Security" strategy, caused a significant drop in murder rates, the number of displaced people, and the number of kidnappings in Colombia over the last ten years. The purpose of beginning the drug war in Colombia was to interdict the drugs at the source. However, as a result of the "balloon effect" into Peru and Bolivia and technological advances by the narco-traffickers, the net result of interdiction has been virtually zero. Additionally, the source of the United States' drug problem is not in Colombia, but with the user and his or her demand for illicit drugs. Therefore, this project recommends aligning funding to support rehabilitation and prevention programs that will reduce the likelihood that a person will have the desire to abuse drugs again. Though there are possibly negative short-term effects of this policy, this project shows that the long-term effect favors rehabilitation and prevention.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	UNITED STATES' RETURN ON INVESTMENT	2
B.	COLOMBIA'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT.....	4
C.	DANGER OF BLACK MARKET INFLUENCES ON COCAINE.....	5
D.	COLOMBIA AS A STRATEGIC ALLY	5
E.	CONCLUSION	6
II.	HISTORY OF UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN COLOMBIA	9
A.	HISTORY OF FOREIGN POLICY FOR LATIN AMERICA.....	9
B.	FOREIGN AID IN LATIN AMERICA AS A NATIONAL STRATEGY.....	12
C.	HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: <i>LA VIOLENCIA</i>	13
1.	Struggle for Power	14
2.	Weak Military	15
3.	Strategic Importance of Colombia	15
D.	PLAN COLOMBIA	17
III.	HISTORY OF THE WAR ON DRUGS	23
A.	HISTORY OF THE DRUG WAR FROM 1900 TO NIXON YEARS.....	23
B.	HISTORY OF THE DRUG WAR FROM NIXON TO PRESENT.....	24
IV.	COST TO COLOMBIA	29
A.	SECURITY ISSUES	29
1.	Colombia's Illegal Drug Firms	29
2.	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).....	30
3.	National Liberation Army (ELN).....	32
4.	United Self-Defense Force of Colombia (AUC).....	32
B.	INVESTMENT BY THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT.....	33
C.	DISPLACED PERSONS.....	34
D.	INCENTIVE IN THE COCA TRADE	35
E.	AIRCRAFT	36
F.	AERIAL ERADICATION	36
G.	TOTAL COST TO COLOMBIA	38
V.	ANALYSIS	41
A.	STRATEGY AND FUNDING MISMATCH	41
B.	CRIMINAL JUSTICE COSTS	42
C.	ERADICATION EFFORTS	44
1.	Peru	47
2.	Bolivia.....	48
D.	REDUCTION IN VIOLENCE	49
E.	COLOMBIA TODAY	50
VI.	CONCLUSION	53
A.	UNITED STATES' RETURN ON INVESTMENT	54

B. DECISION POINTS	54
LIST OF REFERENCES	57
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	65

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	United States Street Price of Cocaine (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p. 220).....	3
Figure 2.	Comparison of U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy Spending Function: (From: Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, p. 1)	43
Figure 3.	Columbia, Coca Cultivation and Reported Eradication/Spraying (ha), 1994–2008 (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009, 198).	44
Figure 4.	Columbia, Coca Cultivation by Region (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009, p. 201).....	46
Figure 5.	Global Coca Bush Cultivation (ha), 1990–2009 (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010, p. 66)	47
Figure 6.	Bolivia, Coca Cultivation (ha), 1994–2009 (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009. p. 195).....	49
Figure 7.	Dynamics of the Displacement in Columbia (From: Colombian Government, National Observatory of Forced Displacement, 2009)	50

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Andean Counterdrug Programs
AUC	Fuerzas de Autodefensa de Colombia (United Self-Defense Force of Colombia)
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CICAD	Inter- American Drug Abuse Control Commission
CNP	Colombian National Police
CODHES	Commission for the Human Rights and Forced Displacement
CODHES	Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento
DIRAN	Antinarcotics Directorate of Colombia
ELN	Ejercito de Liberacion National (National Liberation Army)
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERG	Guevarista Revolutionary Army
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
GAO	United States General Accounting Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
JIATF	Joint Interagency Task Force South
Los PEPES	The People Against Pablo Escobar
NAS	Narcotics Affairs Section
OAS	Organization of American States
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
TB	Tuberculosis

UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USD	United States Dollars

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Joe

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Obama administration is faced with some extremely difficult decisions; none may be more challenging than reducing the national debt. Some economists have characterized the last two years as the worst recession since the 1930s. Unemployment is at its highest levels in nearly 20 years at 9.6 percent. The national debt exceeds fourteen trillion dollars and most Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth projections for the next two years are less than 4% (“GDP Growth Rate Remains Below 4%,” p. 2). The Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, called the national debt, “... the single biggest threat to national security.” As the president and members of congress debate whether to lower the mounting debt and deficit by increasing taxes or reducing federal spending, it is imperative to conduct a thorough analysis of how those tax dollars are spent.

In 2010, the federal budget was \$3.5 trillion. Approximately \$2.2 trillion was appropriated to fund mandatory spending, while the remaining \$1.3 trillion went to fund discretionary spending (OMB website). Though foreign aid accounts for only a small portion of discretionary spending it is an important part of the United States’ foreign policy. The United States government claims to benefit from giving foreign aid by promoting the expansion of democracy and protecting its national interests around the world. Since the end of World War II, the United States has given aid for reconstruction, humanitarian, military, disaster relief, and security efforts.

The largest benefactors of U.S. foreign aid over the last 10 years are Israel, Egypt and Colombia, respectively.

The U.S. government fears that an unstable Colombia may threaten the United States’ national security. Failed states are commonly defined as:

- Having a central government so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory
- Non-provision of public services
- Widespread corruption and criminality

- Refugees and involuntary movement of populations
- Sharp economic decline (Fund for Peace website).

Cocaine production, fueled by the demand from the United States and European countries is a catalyst for the failed state characteristics exhibited in Colombia during the 1980s and the early 1990s.

A. UNITED STATES' RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The investment that the United States made in Colombia has not produced a measurable return for the United States. The United States government spent approximately \$7.3 billion in cash, capital equipment, and training to date since the inception of Plan Colombia (Center for International Policy, p. 1). The United States' goal of stopping cocaine at the source requires significant energy and effort from both governments. However, the United States' only significant success has been developing a strong ally in the region. Due to the United States exchanging a comparatively insignificant \$11 billion in trade annually with Colombia, which is only 0.077% of the United States' Gross Domestic Product, the Colombian partnership is not crucial because of trade (World Bank, p. 1). Conversely, the investment to provide stability in the region still has developed lasting effects throughout the region.

An indicator that the eradication process is working in Colombia is the street price. In accordance with the basic laws of supply and demand, the resultant price of cocaine should increase over time as the supply is diminished. Dr. David Henderson, in "The U.S. Drug War on Latin America" explains the situation in comparison to coffee.

...Imagine that U.S. government officials decide that the caffeine in coffee is a dangerous drug to which far too many Americans are addicted, and therefore the government decides to ban the import, domestic production, and consumption of coffee... Assume also that the government makes the penalties for producing, selling, importing, and consuming coffee equivalent to the penalties for engaging in the same activities with cocaine. What happens next? First, people who want to obey the law, a group that will include almost all current importers and sellers of coffee, will leave the business, both because the vast majority of the people in the business are not criminals and do not want to become criminals, and because the coffee business has suddenly been made much riskier. As

sellers exit, the supply of coffee is lessened and the new equilibrium price is higher. This high price will lead to high apparent profits, but they are only apparent. Adjusted for the risks of capture, imprisonment, fines, and confiscation of property, the profits are actually a normal, competitive return to the people and capital that are in the newly-illegal industry. (Henderson, 2003, p. 3)

As shown in Figure 1, the mean price of a gram of cocaine since the inception of Plan Colombia adjusted to 2007 U.S. dollars is \$114, with a standard deviation of 14.52. The purity of cocaine decreased from an average of 69.7% in 2006 to 43.9% in 2008. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime attributes the drastic reduction in purity to a reduction in supply. Since the initiation of Plan Colombia, the mean price of a gram of cocaine adjusted for the fluctuation in purity in constant 2007 dollars is \$177.80, with a standard deviation of 36.94 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009, p. 71). Both prices trend downward over time, which allows one to infer that the supply entering the United States is not decreasing in the long run

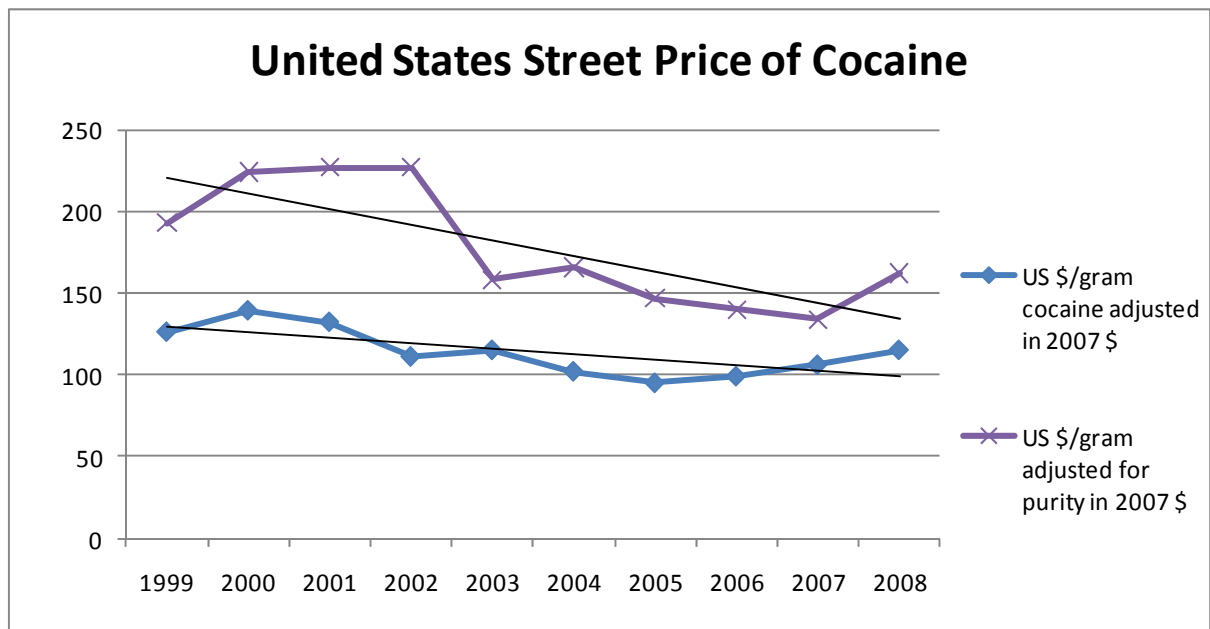


Figure 1. United States Street Price of Cocaine (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p. 220)

B. COLOMBIA'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Colombia, however, has gained an increased interdiction capacity due to the United States' funding. The U.S. government's investment has directly augmented the Colombian National Police (CNP), Antinarcotics Directorate (DIRAN) Colombia, and Colombian military. The Department of State's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) invested \$72 million in the CNP and DIRAN for aerial eradication. The aviation tactics, maintenance, logistics, communications, and managerial skills are all greatly improved due to the partnership of Plan Colombia and the Andean Counterdrug Initiative. The Colombian government agencies were able to spray over 153,000 hectares of land in 2007 and documented preventing approximately 160 metric tons of cocaine from entering the U.S. annually. In 2008, the NAS invested an additional \$10 million in manual eradication efforts to combat the replanting of illicit crops (Bogota Embassy, p. 3).

The NAS spent \$70 million in police aviation for the CNP. The CNP received pilot and gunner training in addition to 49 helicopters and 13 planes. The program also includes contract maintenance and logistical support, U.S. and local training, aviation fuel, and technical expertise. The more robust Colombian Army Aviation program received \$104M, which included 53 helicopters and training for 340 pilots, 200 mechanics, and 442 aerial gunners.

The NAS also spent \$34.5 million on various interdiction efforts. The Counterdrug Brigade is the land army element that specializes in counternarcotics, performs advanced work for eradication, and pursues the criminals that shoot spray planes. The *Jungulas* are trained by the U.S. Army Special Forces to destroy chemical and base labs and eliminate high value targets. The Air Bridge Denial force stops the aerial transport of cocaine, which includes destroying aircraft and maintaining air superiority in the drug war. Finally, the NAS program for maritime interdiction supporting the Colombian Navy is coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard and elements of Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South). One or two tons of cocaine can be

transported by a “go-fast skiff” and approximately ten tons can be transported in a semi-submersible vessel. Therefore, the capacity to combat the maritime transport vehicles is a critical mission area (Bogota Embassy, p. 4).

C. DANGER OF BLACK MARKET INFLUENCES ON COCAINE

Under the current policy regarding illicit drugs, the black market artificially increases the price due to parties undertaking extra risks to not be apprehended by the authorities when growing, transporting, and selling the illegal narcotics. A typical family growing the coca plant will make the required paste, which sells for approximately \$1.50 per gram, or \$1,500 per kilo. Each batch will net them \$14 in profit. In Bogotá, the price is increased to approximately \$8,000 for the kilo of cocaine. By the time it reaches the United States, it is \$30,000 for the same kilo, and in other countries, it can be even higher. The minimum value on the cocaine exports before the intermediate entities increase the price is approximately \$5 billion. A gram of cocaine distributed in the United States is rarely over 50% in purity, but the retail value of the product is over \$25 billion (Cultural Survival, p. 2).

D. COLOMBIA AS A STRATEGIC ALLY

These criminals are willing to undermine the current government structure, causing roadblocks in the diplomatic processes. Political uncertainty in a region where various ships transited over 14,000 times with over 1.4 billion tons of cargo through the Panama Canal in Fiscal Year 2009 is unsettling (Panama Canal Authority, p. 1).

Colombia’s large coal and natural gas reserves, paired with its ranking fifth in amount of oil production in Latin America, make it a significant country in the area (CIA, p.1). Colombia’s proximity to the Panama Canal and countries where the United States has strained ties (e.g., Venezuela and Ecuador) make it important that the United States’ diplomatic, military, and economic interests are preserved. Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez, said in a press conference that America is “the cruelest, most terrible, most cynical, most murderous empire to have existed in the entire history (Adams, 2008, p. 2).” This is strong negative rhetoric from Venezuela, a nation that is eleventh in the

world, third in Latin America in oil production, and fifth in Latin America in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita concerns the U.S. government. The United States imported approximately 51% of its crude oil from foreign nations in 2009. Venezuela ranked second in the amount of net oil imports (U.S. Department of Energy, 2010, p. 1). However, according to David Henderson, if Venezuela refused to sell its oil to the United States, it would not cause an unfavorable cost fluctuation for the United States, because the United States could buy their oil elsewhere. Where would the United States get the added oil? From those suppliers who now have freed up supplies because they bought the oil that Chavez freed up by not selling to the United States. In Henderson's formulation, this is like a game of musical chairs in which the number of chairs equals the number of players. The only way Chavez could hurt the United States would be to cut absolute production. But then he would hurt all consumers, not just U.S. consumers (Henderson, 2007, pp. 6–7).

The United States' strained ties with Ecuador are due to a bombing that took place in March 2008 by Colombian troops. Though the Colombian raid eliminated the second-in-command leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) Raul Reyes, the Ecuadoreans thought that intelligence provided by the United States from their base in Manta, Ecuador extended past the fringes of the Manta pact's purpose. The resulting backlash caused Ecuador to dissolve its sole Drug War partnership with the United States, which was through the Manta base. Additionally, the United States resorted to signing another agreement with Colombia in October 2009 withdrawing its basing in Manta and redistributes those forces to seven bases throughout Colombia to continue anti-drug operations. Hugo Chavez, regarding the event, stated that the United States intended to use the new pact with Colombia to establish a means of invading Venezuela (Bronstein, 2009, p. 1).

E. CONCLUSION

Plan Colombia and the Andean Initiative have not been an equal resounding success for all participants. However, Colombia has benefited in many areas tremendously. The drug related violence that led Colombia to record more than 2,400

kidnappings, and 1.5 million displaced citizens in 2000, has fallen to a fraction of that today (Marcella, p. 4). In May 2010, Colombian Police Chief, General Oscar Naranjo, reported kidnappings were down 93% since 2002, which he said represented a 4% drop from the same period last year (Sumpter, 2010, p. 1).

The influx of U.S. resources, coupled with the “iron-fisted” leadership of former president Alvaro Uribe, enabled Colombia to restore security to large portions of the fragmented country. Additionally, the elimination of the paramilitaries that provided protection for the large Medellin and Cali drug cartels of the 1990s also contributed to the drop in violence. The small army of assassins for hire is no longer essential or desired by drug traffickers. Today’s drug traffickers realize the large “cartels” of the late 1990s are high value targets for the Colombian and United States authorities. Therefore, smaller, more controllable, compartmentalized groups are utilized, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) serves as protection from law enforcement (Senlis Council, 2006, p. 68).

Finally, the membership of the once dominant FARC and National Liberation Army (ELN) terrorist groups that controlled more than 40% of Colombia’s territory in 1998 is hardly a fraction of what it was at its peak in the late 1990s. One estimate indicates the FARC’s membership has decreased from 17,000 in 1998, to roughly 8,000 today, while the ELN’s end strength has declined from 5,000 in 1998, to less than one thousand members today. The success Colombia has seen cannot be ignored and must be applauded. However, critics of the war on drugs are quick to point out the recent successes in Colombia are reversible. They argue that annual appropriations from the United States will be required for Colombia to maintain the advances, made over the last decade (Hanson, 2009, p. 1).

The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime reports that cocaine cultivation has declined in Colombia by more than 50% over the last decade; however, total coca cultivation for the Andean region was nearly stable. For several decades, the eradication of the coca plant has been a key component of drug interdiction policy for Colombia. The durability and flexibility of the illegal drug networks have shown long term solutions cannot be achieved through eradication alone, given limited resources (Hanson, 2009, p.

1). Since 2001, eradication has failed in its main goal of reducing levels of coca cultivation, primarily due to the “balloon-effect.” This effect displaces cultivation to more remote areas that are beyond the reach of law enforcement agencies. As a result of Colombia’s aggressive aerial eradication program, coca cultivation has increased in the neighboring countries of Peru, Boliva, and Ecuador (Senlis Council, 2006, p. 53).

While Colombia has seen some success in recent years, the same cannot be said of the United States. In 1969, President Nixon declared drugs, “Public Enemy Number One” and more than 40 years later, drugs are still readily available on street corners throughout America. The fact that price levels and availability of drugs in the U.S. have remained relatively stable indicates narcotic interdiction programs, such as Plan Colombia have had very little impact on the U.S. cocaine market.

II. HISTORY OF UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN COLOMBIA

A. HISTORY OF FOREIGN POLICY FOR LATIN AMERICA

Since the early twentieth century, the United States has officially committed itself to support countries seeking a democratic form of government. This has never been truer than during the days of the Cold War within Latin America. Several Latin American countries received massive political, social, military and financial support from the United States government over the last century. However, the benefits to the United States and the receiving country have been marginal at best. Yet, the United States continues to spend billions of dollars each year to fund questionable Latin American programs. To understand the United States commitment to Latin America, the origins of American foreign policy for the region must first be explained.

American foreign policy in Latin America is built off four primary policies: the Monroe Doctrine, Roosevelt Corollary, Taft's Dollar Diplomacy, and Kennedy's Alliance for Progress (Escobar, 2010, p. 3). The Monroe Doctrine laid the foundation for the United States' foreign policy, and under this policy, European countries could no longer interfere with affairs of the states in the Western Hemisphere. In exchange, the United States would remain neutral in conflicts between European countries and their colonies. As can be seen with the case of the Phillipines during the McKinley presidency, however, the U.S. government did not keep its side of the bargain. Escobar writes, "If European powers were to interfere with the independent nations of the Americas, this action would have been considered hostile" (Escobar, 2010, p. 2). Consequently, the drafting of the Monroe doctrine established a principle of isolation to the entire continent.

In 1904, President Roosevelt amended the Monroe Doctrine with the Roosevelt Corollary (Escobar, 2010, p. 3). The Roosevelt Corollary officially integrated an important tool of American influence into the Monroe Doctrine. Throughout the 20th century, the United States used direct and indirect U.S. military campaigns in several

Latin American countries. The Roosevelt Corollary justified the U.S. military involvement in Cuba (1906), Nicaragua (1909, 1912, and 1926), the Dominican Republic (1916) and numerous other instances (Escobar, 2010, p. 3).

As Escobar observes, again in 1909 to 1913, the United States amended its position on foreign policy in Latin America through Dollar Diplomacy. Dollar Diplomacy was a phrase coined by President William Howard Taft, which encouraged commercial investment in Latin America and the Far East. Some argue Dollar Diplomacy took many forms including, "...extensions of commerce treaties, acquisition of naval bases, establishment of protectorates, military intervention to coerce debtors, as well as direct intervention in the elections" (Escobar, 2010, p. 3).

The fourth policy that helped to shape the United States position on foreign policy in Latin America is President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. As discussed by Samuel Edwards, this program was an aggressive foreign aid program established by the United States whose primary purpose was to improve social conditions in Latin America (Edwards, 2009, p. 4). A secondary goal of the program was to wean these struggling countries away from the communist movement, such as those created by Fidel Castro in Cuba. During this period, several Central and South American countries experienced skyrocketing inflation and political unrest. The program goals according to Sebastian Edwards' article, *Forty Years of Latin America's Economic Development: From the Alliance for Progress to the Washington Consensus* were:

- Annual increases of 2.5% in per capita income
- Establishment of democratic governments
- Elimination of adult illiteracy by 1970
- Price stability, to avoid inflation or deflation
- More equitable income distribution, land reform
- Economic and social planning

Latin American countries (excluding Cuba) pledged a capital investment of \$80 billion over 10 years, and the United States agreed to give \$20 billion over the same period (Edwards, 2009, p. 4).

Some critics of the program contended the Alliance for Progress was a failure because the goals were simply too ambitious. It disregarded accountability and failed to account for the scope of the problems faced by Latin America. In the article *Alliance for Progress: Wrong Place, Wrong Time*, Tito Escobar, provides staggering figures, which illustrate the poor economic and social conditions of some Latin American countries during the early 1960s (Escobar, 2010, p. 5). When the Alliance for Progress was implemented, adult illiteracy was as high as 70 percent. Per capita income was only \$200, and as many as 55 out of every 100 children died before the age of five. As much as 90% of the land belonged to only 10% of the population. The Latin American economy centered on the production of raw materials. To illustrate the desperate situation during this time, Escobar provides an example of the declining price of coffee. A one-cent decline in the international price of coffee generated a \$50 million loss for Latin America. From 1954 to 1961, the price of coffee dropped more than 50%, resulting in an enormous decrease in the Latin America rate of growth. During the 1940s, the growth rate was 3.5 percent. By 1960, the year before the Alliance for Progress, it was less than 1 percent. Even with the injection of \$20 billion, the proposed growth rate of 2.5% was never obtained, according to the author of *Reflecting on an Alliance* (Escobar, 2010, p. 7).

Escobar also provides data that point out the failure of the Alliance for Progress goal of land reform. The emphasis placed on the monetary investment and the lack of U.S. involvement with land reform was a major flaw of the program. Escobar compares the land reform program instituted in Mexico in the early 1920s to support his argument. Of the ten countries in which land reform had been implemented, five had previously failed land reform programs.

Through the implementation of the four previously mentioned foreign policies, the United States developed a two-pronged approach of economic and military tactics to influence Latin American decision making. The common themes of the policies were emphasis on expansion of American influence beyond U.S. borders to ensure national

security through military and economic policy, tangible and immediate benefits for the Latin American countries, and the flexibility for the United States to adjust its position in accordance with the changing needs in the global arena.

B. FOREIGN AID IN LATIN AMERICA AS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

When delivering foreign aid to disadvantaged nations, the United States is the leader year after year in the total amount of money donated. However, as a percent of Gross National Income, the United States finds itself in last place among major donating nations. Scandinavian countries consistently lead, donating close to 1% of their Gross National Income to foreign aid efforts, while the United States donated 0.17% in 2006 (Nowels, 2001, p. 1). Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States shifted the focus of its foreign aid policy. Former President Bush aligned global development with defense and diplomacy as the three pillars of national security. Though the importance of foreign aid was emphasized in the United States National Security Strategy delineated in 2002 and again in 2006, Congress lately has scrutinized the methods in place. Critics say that United States' foreign aid system is "cumbersome and fragmented" and furthermore "unfocused" and requires reform (Veillette, 2006, p. 2).

In June 2003, the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) presented testimony evaluating the United States' and Colombia's combined efforts in the drug war. Insurgent forces, primarily the FARC and the National Liberation Army, have enjoyed significant economic, political, and social power and influence in a majority of the country since the 1970s. Given that approximately 90% of the cocaine and 40% of the heroin smuggled and sold in the U.S. comes from Colombia, the U.S. has partnered with South America to fund a robust counternarcotics strategy named Plan Colombia (Ford, 2003).

Between years 2000–2003, the U.S. provided more than \$2.5 billion to Colombia for counternarcotics assistance, including aid to the Colombian Army counternarcotics brigade and the Colombian National Police aerial eradication program in narcotics interdiction. Despite this massive amount of financial assistance, Colombia remains the world's principal producer of cocaine and a significant producer of heroin (Ford, 2003).

The mission of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is to eradicate and interdict narcotics and create alternative methods of making a living for the ordinary citizens. Their claim is that the narcotics trade inflicts a significant cost on the citizens of these foreign nations.

C. HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: *LA VIOLENCIA*

There is an old Columbian saying, “God made Colombia so beautiful, to equalize its beauty, he populated the country with the world’s most evil men (Anonymous).” This saying is substantiated only by old folklore. Yet, it does lead one to ask the question: why is Colombia such a violent country? Over the past fifty years, Colombia has frequently been a leader in the number of murders, kidnappings, personal injuries, and displaced people. Part of the answer lies in its history during the 1940s and 1950s, a period commonly known as *La Violencia*.

La Violencia, is a traumatic undeclared civil war in Colombia’s history, ignited by the assassination of the Liberal party’s presidential candidate, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, on April 9, 1948. Controversy surrounds Gaitan’s death, and many suspect members of the orthodox Liberals, Conservatives, or Communists. However, Juan Roa Sierra, a Gaitan supporter, was charged with the slaying. Gaitan loyalists beat Sierra to death, and paraded his tattered body through the streets of Bogotá. The ensuing violence initiated by the various political parties produced the most destructive and bloodiest riots in Latin American history (Safford & Palacios, 2001, p. 348).

According to Safford and Palacios, hundreds of government buildings, stores, churches, homes, and automobiles were looted and burned (Safford & Palacios, p. 489). Rioters burned anything in their path as they marched to the presidential palace. Sierra’s body and hundreds of others were left on the palace steps for President Mariano Ospina to view. Similar demonstrations took place in many other Colombian cities. The following morning, President Perez announced he reached an agreement with the Liberal party to form a bipartisan government (Safford & Palacios, 2001, p. 348). The agreement lasted less than a year due to increased partisanship and the violence that erupted again throughout Colombia. These tragic events led to the signing of the National Front

Agreement of 1957. Under this policy, both parties agreed to alternate the presidency and apportion political power (Marcella, 2003, p. 9). The government's effort to corral the violence engulfing the country actually created more problems and did little to reduce the killings. The agreement removed the "spirit" of competition from politics and ultimately invited corruption to take its place. As a result, the military was marginalized, corruption flourished, and the country was controlled by a few families until the constitution was passed in 1991 (Marcella, 2003, p. 9).

1. Struggle for Power

An estimated 40% of Colombia's land mass is not controlled by the federal government. For more than 50 years, the Colombian government competed with four other organizations for political authority and land. The first was criminal gangs, which have no apparent agenda other than material gains from illegal activity, such as international drug trafficking. In 2002, it was estimated that more than 162 drug firms operating in Colombia (Marcella, 2003, p. 9). Also in 2002, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC)) boasted 17,000 to 18,000 members. Third, the Self Defense Forces (*Fuerzas de Autodefensa de Colombia* – AUC) claimed 12,000 members. Fourth, the National Liberation Army (*Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* – ELN) had approximately 5,000 members.

Although the FARC and ELN were initially established as a revolutionary movement for social justice, today they receive very little recognition or tolerance from the international community. In 2002, the FARC, ELN and AUC, were officially identified by the European Union as terrorist organizations that hampered Colombia's progress towards peace and economic stability. Since the early 1980s, the three organizations have relied on drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion to fund their efforts. An estimated 90% of the FARC's annual funding comes from illegal activity (Marcella, 2003, p. 9).

2. Weak Military

The many years of corruption and distrust throughout the Colombian government encouraged lawmakers to seek a weak military. The appeal of a weak military is not unique to Colombia. There are many instances throughout history of military-led coups taking political power. Colombia's government feared a coup and trickled only the basic sustaining resources into their military units. The lack of adequate funding often leads to private companies paying for military protection. However, the ability of a military commander to acquire funding from private sources is critical for promotion. As Marcella states, "The institutional bias against the military impedes the nurturing of mutually supportive civil-military relations and development of the strategic instrument of legitimate coercive authority" (Marcella, 2003, p. 12).

3. Strategic Importance of Colombia

Colombia is a beautiful country, famous for its valuable ecosystem, world-renowned coffee and *Cumbia* music. The country straddles the equator and has an area of more than 439,000 square miles, three times the size of Montana. Of the 300 million people living in the United States, it is estimated that more than 2.5 million are Colombian (Marcella, 2003, p. 4). Historically, the most populated areas of Colombia have been divided by its three mountain ranges, *Cordillera Oriental* (Eastern Mountain Region), *Cordillera Central* (central mountain region), and *Cordillera Occidental* (Western Mountain region). The division created by Colombia's natural landscape also contributed to the delayed development of transportation and the formation of a national market. It also led to the local and regional cultures, which some scholars claim contribute to the fragmentation and twentieth century intercommunity violence.

As the fifth largest trading partner in Latin America for the United States, Colombia exchanges over \$11 billion in goods with the U.S. annually. Though this is only 0.077% of the United States' Gross Domestic Product, Colombia's security is important to the United States. Its proximity to the Panama Canal, and Venezuela, the second largest exporter of oil to the United States, make it vital to stability in the region. Additionally, Venezuela has not shown friendly sentiment towards the United States in

recent years. Colombia alone contains large coal and natural gas reserves and ranks fifth in oil exports in Latin America. Therefore, every year the U.S. government spends more than \$4 billion annually in Colombia to protect its national interest (Marcella, 2003, p. 3).

Colombia's internal problems of drug cultivation, corruption, violence, and ecological damage have expanded beyond its borders for many years. According to Gabriel Marcella, the author of *The United States and Colombia: The Journey from Ambiguity to Strategic Clarity*, Colombia produces 90% of the cocaine that enters the United States and 70% of the world's total (Marcella, 2003, p. 4). Colombia is often referred to as the "kidnap capital of the world." In 2000, a record 2,400 kidnappings occurred in this violence-riddled country. Violence has displaced 1.5 million Colombian citizens caught in the crossfire of shooting, and threats from the FARC and paramilitary groups.

Colombia's internal struggles represent an enormous threat to the international community. Some scholars of the region utilize the broken window theory to support this claim.

As Marcella writes:

A "broken windows theory" of international relations would argue that the decline of a regional neighborhood threatens the international community in untraditional ways: international organized crime, the violation of sovereign borders contraband, the illegal shipment of arms, chemicals, laundering of dirty money, suborning of public officials (members of the police, military, legislative bodies, judiciaries, and so on), the corruption and intimidation of the media, displaced persons and the formation of an international demimonde within which terrorism breeds and intersects with organized crime. A January 2003 article in Bogata's *El Tiempo* made this point in reporting that more than 50 Colombian criminal gangs, with perhaps a total of 2,000 members, were responsible for the robberies and narco-trafficking in Madrid, Spain. That country is home to more than 400,000 Colombian diaspora (Marcella, p. 4). Colombia's instability not only threatens the basic human rights for its citizens and neighboring countries, but also threatens the ideals of democracy. With a failing economy and unemployment at record levels, confidence in the Colombian government is waning. As Colombian citizens watch the daily degradation of their beloved country, frustration with the current government swells. As a result, democracy as the preferred political form of government comes under pressure by leftist organizations promising

Utopia. The appeal of an alternate form of government has found momentum in Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela, as an increase in populist rhetoric has been noted in each country's president's recent comments. (Marcella, 2001, pp. 27–29)

D. PLAN COLOMBIA

In an effort to curtail the violence and combat the war on drugs that rages in Columbia, the United States embarked on a robust foreign aid program named Plan Colombia. The plan is an aid initiative originally proposed by Colombian President Andres Pastrana in 1999, which included U.S. military/counter-narcotics aid, but was not limited to it.

The plan has ten primary elements according to Gabriel Marcella (Marcella, 2003, p. 27):

1. An *economic strategy* that generates employment supports the ability of the State to collect tax revenues and allows the country to have a viable counterbalancing economic force to narco-trafficking. The expansion of international trade, accompanied by enhanced access to foreign markets and free trade agreements to attract foreign and domestic investments, are key to the modernization of the U.S. economic base and to job creation. Such a strategy is crucial at a time when Colombia is confronting its worst economic crisis in 70 years, with unemployment running 20 percent, which in turn greatly limits the government's ability to confront drug trafficking and the violence it generates.
2. A fiscal and financial strategy that includes tough austerity and adjustments in order to boost economic activity and recover the historically excellent prestige of Colombia in the international financial markets.
3. A peace strategy that aims at a negotiated peace agreement with the guerrillas on the basis of territorial integrity, democracy and human rights, which should further strengthen the rule of law and fight against drugs.
4. A national defense strategy to restructure and modernize the armed forces and the police, so that they will be able to restore the rule of law and provide security in the country, to combat organized crime and armed groups and to protect and promote human rights and international humanitarian law.

5. A judicial and human rights strategy to reaffirm the rule of law and assure equal and impartial justice to all, while pressing ahead with the reforms already initiated in the forces of law and order to ensure that they play their proper role in defending and respecting the rights and dignity of all.

6. A counternarcotics strategy, in partnership with other countries involved in some or all of the links of the drug chain: production, distribution, sale consumption, asset laundering, precursor chemicals, and arms dealing. And, at the national level, to stop the flow of drug money- the fuel of violence- to the insurgent and other armed organizations.

7. An alternative development strategy that will promote agriculture schemes and other profitable economic activities for the present farmers and their families. Alternative development will also consider economically feasible environmental protection activities, designed to conserve the forest areas and end the dangerous expansion of illegal crops across the Amazon basin and Colombia's vast national parks--areas of immense bio-diversity of vital environmental importance to the international community. Within this framework the strategy includes sustainable integrated, and participatory productive projects combined with the required infrastructure. Particular attention is to regions, which combine high levels of conflict with the low levels of State presences, social capital and serious environmental degradation, such as the middle Magdalena valley, the Macizo Colombiano, and the south west.

8. A social participation strategy aimed at collective awareness. The strategy seeks to develop more accountability in local government, community involvement in anticorruption efforts, and continued pressure on the guerrillas and other armed groups to end kidnapping, violence and the internal displacement of individuals and communities. The strategy will also include cooperation with local business and labor groups, in order to promote innovation and productive models in the face of a more globalized economy. In addition, this strategy seeks to strengthen institutions, both formal and informal, to foster changes in the culture patterns through which violence develops and reinforces itself. It includes the promotion of mechanisms and educational programs to increase tolerance, the essential values for peaceful coexistence, and participation in public affairs.

9. A human development strategy to promote efforts to guarantee, within the next few years, adequate education and health, to provide opportunities to every young Colombian and help vulnerable groups in our society, including not just those affected and displaced by violence but also those in conditions of extreme poverty.

10. An international oriented strategy to confirm the principles of shared responsibility, integrated action and balanced treatment of the drug issue. The roles and support of the international community is also vital to the success of the peace process provided that it conforms to the terms of international law and is requested by the Colombian government.

The policy options that Congress can consider are to maintain the broken status quo system, amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to reflect the goals, strategies, and programs able to combat the 21st century challenges, completely reorganize the current aid infrastructure to achieve current objectives, or end the assistance outright. One of the possible changes is a realignment of the role of the Defense Department. Its contribution to the United States' foreign assistance budget has increased over recent years because of the stabilization and rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2001, the Defense Department funded 7% of the foreign assistance budget. This ballooned to 20% in 2006. The department's activities include disaster response, humanitarian assistance, development of capacity for foreign militaries, and counter-narcotics. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated that the Department of Defense needed to continue engagement in the reconstruction activities until the civilian agencies were strengthened and developed capacity. Advocates for the increased Department of Defense involvement argue that the military is flexible and in the best position to use the resources to respond to crises as they arise. However, critics argue that the reason Department of Defense presence is increased is because of a decrease in expertise of the USAID and Department of State personnel (Veillette, 2006).

The majority of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' resources are divided into the Andean Counterdrug Programs (ACP) and International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE). Though the ACP supports Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, and Panama, the majority of the resources are used to combat the majority of the, which originates or passes through

Colombia. The Bureau proposes to continue its progress in reducing the production and trafficking throughout the region by supporting the police forces and extending the support into the remote areas. The funding supports the Critical Flight Safety Program, which supports the airborne eradication of coca in ensuring the aging winged fleet is upgraded to minimize future maintenance costs (State, 2008).

Several barriers to success have already shown through in the United States' and Colombian partnership. Initially, the U.S. planned to transfer support for the helicopter program to the Colombian Army in 2006. However, the Colombian government requested a continued level of assistance past this date due to the expectation of an insufficient amount of trained personnel and resources. The Colombian National Police's aerial eradication program, though well funded, has returned only mixed results (Ford, 2003). Though several dollars are infused into the country through illegal drug trade, the Colombian government's financial resources are inadequate. Neither the Army nor National Police can maintain this level of resistance against the drug lords without significant continued assistance from the U.S. and its contractor support base (Ford, 2003).

Colombia remains an unstable state politically and economically. The FARC, National Liberation Army, and other drug war insurgents continue to represent a significant challenge to the governments' efforts to quell the drug problem. Additionally, the U.S. government's aid carries the stipulations that Colombian government ensure:

- Military and Police act in accordance with certain human rights standards
- The aerial eradication program follows specific environmental conditions
- The areas subject to the aerial eradication be provided an alternative means of subsistence.

Since Colombia and the United States share significant trading ties and are longtime allies, the stability in the region economically and politically are very important to both nations. The insurgents make it very difficult to access Colombia's natural resources critical in the trade. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are drawing precious U.S. resources to combat terrorists in the Middle East region (Ford, 2003).

Colombia initially pledged \$4 billion for Plan Colombia and called on the remainder of the international community to support with an additional \$3.5 billion. Coupled with Colombia's poor economic conditions, the international community's lack of expected support left the program starved for financial subsistence. The U.S. Embassy estimates that the Army and National Police's counternarcotics programs will cost approximately \$230 million annually, and neither the future cost, nor the future expected U.S. role in Colombia have been calculated yet. Colombia cannot sustain this alone. The U.S. Embassy reported that in 1998, the U.S. contractors and associated materials (e.g., fuel and herbicide) cost \$48.5 million. The 2003 reported figure for comparable services ballooned to an estimated \$86.3 million and is expected to remain relatively constant in the future (Ford, 2003).

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III. HISTORY OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

A. HISTORY OF THE DRUG WAR FROM 1900 TO NIXON YEARS

At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. drug market was highly unregulated. Doctors routinely prescribed medication containing cocaine or heroin derivatives without fully understanding the harmful effects these drugs caused. In 1906, the Pure Food and Drug Act targeted toxic drugs and established the Food and Drug Administration, which effectively gave the federal government the authority to regulate interstate drug commerce, followed by an expansion to address misleading drug labels in 1912.

Congress passed the first federal criminal law in the War on Drugs with the Harrison Tax Act of 1914. It restricted the sale of morphine and was later used to restrict the sale of cocaine as well. Congress passed the law to criminalize the non-medical use of drugs. The Harrison act applied only to morphine, cocaine and their derivatives. Other drugs, arguably as addictive and dangerous, (e.g., amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, and hallucinogens) were not included.

The authors of the Harrison Tax Act wanted to regulate the medical use of these drugs and to criminalize the use of drugs for non-medical purposes. They wanted to legislate this as two different tax policies. The first policy was a one dollar per year tax for doctors. Those who paid the tax were able to legally prescribe these drugs as long as they followed the regulations set by the government. The second tax was a thousand dollars for every non-medicinal distribution of these drugs. In 1914, an ounce of cocaine cost only a few dollars. However, if someone was arrested with an ounce of cocaine, the crime would be tax evasion, not possession. Nearly 100 physicians were convicted and imprisoned for violating the Harrison Tax Act (Carroll & McGuire, 2002, p. 13). Thus, the Harrison Act was not really a tax, but the start of prohibition in the United States for illicit drugs.

The Harrison Act, like many regulations of its kind, had unintended consequences, the most dreadful of which was the creation of a black market for illegal

drugs. The amount of traffic from the black market was nearly equal to the amount of legal medical traffic. Drug dealers now had a developed network nationwide and even extended into smuggling drugs from other countries, including Canada and Mexico. There was an increase of addicts moving into larger cities where black markets were rapidly expanding.

The 1922 Narcotic Drug Import and Export Act sought to eliminate the use of all narcotics, except in the legitimate use of medicines. In 1924, the Heroin Act made it illegal to manufacture heroin or to use it for any reason. Marijuana was added to the list of illicit drugs in 1937 when it was criminalized under the Marijuana Tax Act. Between 1937 and 1951, the focus of prohibition legislation was on establishing drug prescription guidelines, emphasizing drug safety and defining controls granted to the FDA. The theme of prohibition changed dramatically, however, in 1951, when the federal government passed the Boggs Amendment to the Harrison Act. This amendment established mandatory sentencing for narcotic violations and began a new emphasis on legislation to punish drug traffickers and users more severely. Between 1951 and 1968, three of the four acts or amendments relating to illegal drugs passed set or increased criminal penalties for narcotics violations (Carroll & McGuire, 2002, p. 10).

B. HISTORY OF THE DRUG WAR FROM NIXON TO PRESENT

In 1969, President Richard Nixon identified drug abuse as “a serious national threat.” Noting a large increase in drug-related juvenile arrests and street crimes between 1960 and 1967, Nixon directed federal and state officials to implement a national anti-drug policy. In 1970, the comprehensive Drug Abuse and Control Act, Title II, and Controlled Substance Act consolidated many previous drug laws. Its primary objective was to categorize illicit drugs and to emphasize law enforcement (Timeline: America's War on Drugs, 2007, p. 1). A year later President Nixon declared a “War on Drugs,” identifying drug abuse as “Public Enemy Number One.” In 1973, Nixon oversaw the renaming of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, to the Drug Enforcement Agency, which continues to be the primary federal agency engaged in combating the war on drugs today. In contrast to Nixon’s staunch prohibition, President hopeful Jimmy

Carter campaigned on a platform that included legalizing marijuana and ending federal criminal penalties for possession of one ounce or less of the drug in 1975. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter endorsed a federal decriminalization bill. However, the bill went nowhere, and soon the movement was all but obliterated by the return swing of the cultural pendulum, now known as the Reagan Revolution. There would be no new state or federal marijuana reforms for the next 16 years (Parloff, 2009, p. 2).

The 1980s saw a large spike in the amount of cocaine use and imports, particularly from Colombian drug firms. In 1984, First Lady Nancy Reagan launched the just say “Just Say No” campaign to convince American youths not to use drugs. The goal of the program was to decrease demand for drugs by informing youth of its harmful effects before they became exposed to peer pressure to use them. Critics of the program stated that the theme that drugs and drug abuse were everywhere was a hyperbole and not effective on children. Findings showed that a survey conducted of 10 year-olds with a follow-up a decade later revealed no effects of the program. According to the study, students exposed to the program were still just as likely to use illicit drugs and alcohol as those not exposed to the “Just Say No” curriculum (Reaves, 2001, p. 1).

President Ronald Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, allocating \$1.7 billion to combat drugs. It imposed mandatory minima for sentencing for drug offences. This was in response to the surge of crack cocaine, a cheap alternative to powdered cocaine in a crystallized form, in major metropolitan areas. The Act was a source of subsequent controversy because of the disparity between the punishments for crack cocaine vice powdered cocaine. Critics claim that it promoted great racial disparities between the prison populace due to the harsher sentence for the cheaper form of cocaine because the typical crack user is of a lower income level. Though the U.S. Sentencing Commission released a report publicly acknowledging the racial disparities between the prison sentencing policies and recommended reducing the discrepancy, Congress overrode the recommendation (Timeline: America's War on Drugs, 2010, p. 3).

The United States and Colombian relationship has been one of mixed feelings. Drug warlords have been extradited to the U.S. to stand trial. In February 1987, Carlos Lehder was captured and extradited, then convicted of drug smuggling charges in a U.S.

court. Subsequently, he was sentenced to life in prison, without the possibility of parole, in addition to another 135 years for his crime. Later that year in May, however, the Colombian Supreme Court ruled to annul the extradition treaty with the United States. This occurred after a number of justices received personal threats on their lives from drug traffickers (Timeline: America's War on Drugs, 2010, p. 3). In 1991, the Colombian assembly voted, in its new constitution, to ban extradition and notorious kingpin, Pablo Escobar turned himself in to the Colombian Authorities afterward, on the same day. Then, he was confined to a private luxury prison, where it was well known that he traveled as he pleased into and out of the facility (Timeline: America's War on Drugs, 2010, p. 4). When the Colombian government attempted to quell his prison freedoms, he escaped and went on the lam in 1992. Finally, Escobar was killed in 1993 due to the combined efforts of the American and Colombian governments (Timeline: America's War on Drugs, 2010, p. 5).

In August of 2000, President Clinton pledged \$1.3 billion to the Plan Colombia program to decrease the supply of cocaine produced in that country. The focus on decreasing supply led to support of the aerial eradication of coca crops, other air assets and training for the Colombian military (Timeline: America's War on Drugs, 2010, p. 5).

President George W. Bush furthered the U.S. government's dedication to the drug war in the Andean Regional Initiative. He dedicated \$882 million in FY 2002 in support of "democratic institution building and development assistance, as well as counter-drug programs in the seven countries included in the initiative: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela (Woolley & Peters, p. 1)." Leaders from the seven nations met with President Bush to appeal for aid, with almost half of the aid being distributed to Colombia. President Bush believed that due to the drug demand from the United States, it was the nation's responsibility to stand with these countries to combat the drug problem (Woolley & Peters, p. 1).

In 2009, the head of White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Gil Kerlikowske, wanted to banish the idea that the U.S. was fighting a “War on Drugs.” His position as the “Drug Czar” set the policy in the direction of a more moderate tone, with less of a criminal justice approach. His method was geared towards treatment of offenders as addicts. He said, “Regardless of how you try to explain to people it's a 'war on drugs' or a 'war on a product,' people see a war as a war on them...We're not at war with people in this country (Fields, 2009, p. 1).

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IV. COST TO COLOMBIA

A. SECURITY ISSUES

Colombia is one of the oldest settlements in Latin America, yet its porous borders and ungoverned internal territories pose a significant threat not only to the international community, but also to Colombia's own people. In many parts of the country, the federal government is nonexistent. In 2002, an estimated 40% of Colombia's land mass was not controlled by the federal government (Marcella, 2003, p. 3). For security, many Colombian citizens often pay a fee for this basic need to one of Colombia's guerilla groups in exchange for protection. Oddly, it is the guerilla groups that create the violence that Colombians are paying to avoid. With the AUC disbanding and the ELN posing less of a threat, the FARC is blamed for most armed insurrection against the government. However, less than ten years ago, powerful drug cartels and guerilla groups made security fees a requirement for most occupations, especially drug trafficking.

1. Colombia's Illegal Drug Firms

The first were the Medellin and Cali drug firms, which were led by kingpins Pablo Escobar and the Orejuela brothers, respectively. Both started out with modest goals, initially shipping suitcases of marijuana and small amounts of cocaine to the United States. However, the more lucrative profits from cocaine soon caused shipments of cocaine to dominate the drug routes. In the early 1980s, a kilo of cocaine could be processed for \$1,500 in the rural labs of Putumayo and sold on the streets of Miami for as much as \$50,000. What started out as a small cocaine smuggling business quickly turned into a multi-billion dollar international empire. The astounding profits attracted a mix of individuals, from politicians and legitimate businessmen, to life-long street thugs claiming allegiance to one or another firm. The firm leaders invested heavily in political protection. The former president of Colombia, Ernesto Samper, and hundreds of Congressmen and Senators have been accused of accepting campaign financing from the once dominant firms (Frontline, 2010, p. 1).

The reader will notice we have been careful not to use the term cartel, as many publications often uses to describe illegal drug firms. The term “cartel” refers to a small number of firms, which collude via a formal agreement to set price and production quantity. This was not the business model for the powerful Colombian drug firms of the 1990s. One reason for the downfall of the drug firms was the fierce competition between the two rivals. In an effort to acquire a larger part of the market, the Cali organization began to attack the Medellin firm. Members of the Cali cartel started to supply the United States and Colombian governments’ information about Escobar’s business actions and contacts. They eventually formed the People Against Pablo Escobar (Los PEPES), which specifically targeted Escobar’s homes, businesses, lieutenants and family. Several of Escobar’s homes and businesses were bombed and top lieutenants killed by the Los Pepes. By the mid-1990s, the leaders of the Medellin and Cali cartels were either dead or in prison courtesy of the Colombian National Police and aided by the U.S. government (Frontline, 2010, p. 1).

The large drug firms that dominated drug exports hired small armies for protection against law enforcement agencies, competitors and possible extortionists. The armies were also used to intimidate politicians, prevent newcomers from entering the market, and protect their own investments, particularly rural land. The fall of the once dominant drug firms left the cocaine business fragmented. Today, drug traffickers realize large drug firms in the late 1990s were high value targets for the Colombian and United States authorities. Therefore, smaller, more controllable, compartmentalized groups are utilized. One group may be responsible for smuggling the drugs from Colombia to Mexico. Another group oversees the coca paste production in the jungle labs. Another transports the cocaine from the labs to the point of debarkation. According to the Colombian National Police, there are more than 300 active drug smuggling organizations today (Frontline, 2010, p. 2).

2. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC)

While the Medellin and Cali cartels chose to develop their own protection services, today’s smaller drug smuggling organizations are forced to pay security fees to

the FARC guerrillas. The links between the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and drug smuggling organizations cannot be disputed. The FARC, a Colombian Marxist guerilla group, provides protection to the coca fields and production labs in the southeastern region of Colombia in exchange for taxes that the drug smugglers pay the organization. The expansion of the cocaine trade has allowed the FARC to protect coca growers and extort traffickers (Senlis Council, 2006, p. 68).

In an effort to reduce the violence between the Colombian National Police, paramilitaries and the FARC guerrillas, the Pastrana administration gave the FARC control of more than 40,000 hectares of land in 1998. It is no coincidence this area was located in the southeastern part of the country that is ideal for growing coca. First, to gain allegiance from the local coca growers, the FARC negotiated a minimum price for their crops. Then they established tax rates for every stage from coca planting to the exportation of cocaine out of the area they control (Senlis Council, 2006, p. 49).

Although the FARC was initially established under a revolutionary movement for “social justice,” today they receive very little recognition or tolerance from the international community. Both the United States and the European Union added the FARC to their lists of terrorist organizations in 2002. Since the early 1980s, they have relied on drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion to fund their efforts. David Henderson reports, the FARC received more that \$600 million in 2001 from the drug related sources (Henderson, 2003, p. 1).

An unintended consequence of the destruction of the large drug firms and providing safe-havens for the FARC has been the empowerment of warlords and guerrillas at the expense of drug traffickers in large parts of the country. The extended period of violence has caused Colombia to appear at the top of most human rights violation reports.

3. National Liberation Army (ELN)

The National Liberation Army (ELN), a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla group, was also indentified as a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department in 2002. The ELN, like most of Colombian guerrilla groups, roots can be traced to the period known as La Violencia. And like the FARC, the ELN was founded, in part, by liberals and other guerillas that refused to disarm at the end of the hostilities.

ELN supporters were primarily petroleum workers of the Middle-Magdalene region and one of its historic causes has been to protect Colombian oil from foreign exploitation. In the 1980s, the ELN joined forces with the FARC, to form the National Guerrilla Coordinator (CNG). While the CNG still exists nominally, the ELN is largely independent of the FARC. The ELN's end strength, primarily concentrated in the North of Colombia, has declined from 5,000 in 1998 to 2500 members today. They were notorious for executing massive kidnapping operations. In 1999, the ELN captured 143 during a church ceremony and two years later hijacked a Venezuelan commercial airliner (Colombia: Prospects for Peace with the ELN, 2002, p. 19).

4. United Self-Defense Force of Colombia (AUC)

The *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), perhaps Colombia's most violent terrorist organization, was created in 1997, under a right-wing umbrella of paramilitaries in Colombia. Its primary objective was to protect its sponsors and supporters from insurgents and their activities. Their sponsors are often indentified as ranchers, farmers, mining, and petroleum companies. In 2001, they were added to both the U.S. and European Union terrorist list.

Unlike the FARC and ELN, which were initially motivated by political and social goals, the motivation of the AUC has consistently been monetary gain. In 2000, the AUC was also thought to be involved in the illegal drug trade, controlling drug fields, labs and smuggling routes, which lead to one of Colombia's most violent and deadliest years. The

Colombian National Police reports that in the first ten months of 2000 the AUC conducted 804 assassinations, 203 kidnappings, and 75 massacres with 507 victims (Kouri, 2008, p. 2).

The AUC repeatedly claimed their victims were left-wing guerrilla members or sympathizers. However, in February 2005, the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor reported the AUC was accused of 342 violations. The violations included massacres, forced displacement, selective and systemic homicide, kidnappings, rape, threats, intimidation and lootings (U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, p. 1). Some scholars of Colombia's internal conflict believe the AUC, in its later years, was largely funded by the Colombian Army. Tom Driver author of the Colombia's Drug War writes, "More recently they have been employed by the Colombian army to do the dirty work of terrorizing the campesinos and community leaders... (Driver, 2001, p. 3)." He goes on to write, "Not long ago the Colombian army had one of the worst records of human rights abuses in the Americas. Recently it appears to have delegated this kind of brutality to the paramilitaries, who committed atrocities on its behalf. U.S. military aid to Colombia indirectly subsidizes the paramilitaries' act of terrorism" (Driver, 2001, p. 4). Between 1999 and 2005, the Colombian army was accused of collaborating with the ACU and other paramilitaries to carry out various violent tasks. Former President Uribe was subpoenaed earlier this year to give testimony in a civil case filed by victims of paramilitary violence against U.S. coal giant Drummond (Aselma, 2010, p. 1).

B. INVESTMENT BY THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT

Fortunately, for the United States, the War on Drugs in Colombia is not a unilateral U.S. effort. Over the last two decades, the Colombian government has shown a strengthened resolve to eradicate drugs from their country. Though the United States provided approximately USD \$4 billion in assistance to Colombia from 1999 to 2005, the Colombian government spent nearly USD \$7 billion, in addition to the \$4 billion from the United States, during the same time span. The Colombian Government intends to spend approximately USD \$44 billion in support of the "Strategy to Strengthen

Democracy and Promote Social Development” between the years of 2007 and 2013. The U.S. intends to spend approximately \$3.9 billion during the same period of time (Shapiro, 2007, p. 4).

United States’ funds in FY 2008 were cut by USD \$166 million. These reductions resulted in 5,761 flight hours less for interdiction and 12,094 flight hours less for aerial spraying and annual eradication. Since the pilots had fewer hours, the government experienced decreased capability to reach the desolate areas where territorial control was lacking (Colombia and The United States Building a Strategic Partnership, p. 9).

In FY 2010, the Colombian government increased its security and defense significantly. The General Comptroller, Fernando Jimenez, caveats that the money allocated to “democratic security” has been decreased. He also states that a significant portion of the budget is dedicated to health care and pensions for military and police members. Regardless, the Security and Defense line item was approximately USD \$11.1 million for the year. Jimenez’s critics disapprove that the Colombian Department of Defense will receive 14.2% of the 2010 Colombian budget, (Plan Colombia and Beyond, p. 1), which surpassed the 13.9% spent for the first time. Colombia’s investment in higher education of 0.4% of GDP is far lower than the international average of 1.2% (EFE News, 2009, p. 1).

C. DISPLACED PERSONS

Colombia has one of the largest displaced populations in the world, due to its excessive violence over the years. In 2008, it was estimated that 380,000 people became newly displaced (House Resolution on Colombian Internally Displaced Persons, 2010, p. 1). According to the Colombian government, over 122,000 were newly displaced for 2009. This escalated the governmental estimate of displaced population to over 3.3 million. The Commission for the Human Rights and Forced Displacement (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento*, or CODHES) argues that the

government's numbers are deflated. They estimate that over 286,000 people were newly displaced in 2009, bringing the total displacement to over 4.9 million people (Internal Displacement in the Americas, 2010, p. 1).

As Colombia makes strides to become a respected nation in the international arena, its problem with displacement provides a large stumbling block. The nation's Constitutional Court notes that 92% of displaced persons cannot meet their basic needs. Of these displaced persons, 80% of them are indigent, and 63.5% have substandard housing. Forty-nine percent lack access to public services. Twenty-three percent of children under six are malnourished, and a quarter of all youth between 10 and 25 years old are not enrolled in schools. Since these citizens are destitute, they will often turn to crime to feed themselves and their families (Vieira, 2010, p. 1).

Between 1995 and 2002, Colombia spent USD \$292 million to combat the problem of displaced persons. Between 2003 and 2007, they spent USD \$1.45 billion. This represents almost a 400% increase in program growth over the 12 years in then-year dollars. The Colombian government estimates an additional USD \$2.1 billion will be spent to assist displaced persons between 2007 and 2011 (Building a Strategic Partnership, p. 6).

D. INCENTIVE IN THE COCA TRADE

The eradication efforts restrict the ability of peasant farmers to make a significant living for their families. In a country where approximately 47% of the population is below the poverty line and 18% of the labor force is engaged in agriculture work, farmers are looking for ways to ensure a livelihood. Reporter Lisa Ling interviewed Colombian citizens from coca farmers to then-President Alvaro Uribe. The sentiment of one farmer responding to why he continued to grow coca, knowing that it harmed people was "...it doesn't do any damage here. If we don't grow it, our families don't eat." As she stood in the middle of 20,000 coca plants, Lisa Ling explained that farmers would need just two acres of land to cultivate the crops. Those farmers would earn USD \$12,000 selling their coca plants. Conversely, the farmer who chose to use his land for coffee would require four times as much land but would earn only USD \$3,000 (Ling, 2003). In a nation

where the per capita GDP was estimated at USD \$9,200 in 2009, the coca farmer will naturally attempt to earn approximately 30% above the average rather than approximately 67% below the average.

When speaking with a man who was caught smuggling coca from Colombia, Ling learned that though the governments spend an enormous amount of effort on interdiction, much of the drug output produced in Colombia still make it to the United States. Elaborate medical-grade body scanners, searches, and personal interviews are used at airports prior to departure from the country. However, the smuggler revealed that of twenty shipments of cocaine sent from Colombia, around six or seven will be caught, while the remainder makes it to the United States (Ling, 2003).

E. AIRCRAFT

In 2008, the Colombian Government took ownership of the aircraft maintained and supported by U.S. dollars. This process began with thirteen U.S. government controlled aircraft (House Resolution on Colombian Internally Displaced Persons, 2010, p. 5). It further expanded to assuming the operational costs for 21 aircraft and the fuel costs for all U.S.-titled aircraft for a total cost of \$23 million. These aircraft are strictly regulated through a Letter of Agreement between governments whereby they can be utilized only for counternarcotics interdiction. Any other use (e.g., humanitarian assistance or aiding in natural disasters) must first receive explicit clearance from the U.S. Embassy. The Colombian Government presented a proposal to the U.S. Department of State for a nationalization program through 2012 (Colombia and The United States Building a Strategic Partnership, 2010, p. 10). This change to Colombian ownership program will entail the Colombian government advancing to total ownership of, and control over, the aircraft.

F. AERIAL ERADICATION

The Aerial Eradication portion of the Plan Colombia budget is the largest line item other than aviation procurement. The Narcotics Affairs Section spent over 18% (\$72 million) of its 2007 budget on Aerial Eradication (Embassy of the United States,

Bogota, Colombia, 2007, p. 3). The initial stages of Plan Colombia called for a barrage of coca plant eradication by air; however, various interest groups met this method with great resistance. The herbicides used significantly damaged the ground for all crops to grow and harmed the population in those areas.¹ On the other hand, the coca growers are not without fault. The coca farmers also greatly harm the environment by practicing environmentally damaging techniques. Their cultivation methods cause deforestation because many of the precursor chemicals and herbicides end up in rivers and streams. The farmers also practice a method known as “slash and burn,” destroying large tracts of forest, wildlife, and ecosystems in order to make room for the coca crop. Finally, the coca plant extracts vital nutrients from the soil, which hinders crop rotation since the replacement crops cannot thrive in the nutrient-depleted areas (Peru, Coca Trade, and Environment, p. 1).

Each year, in accordance with the Kenneth M. Ludden Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2002, the U.S. Secretary of State must certify that the chemicals used in the herbicides do not pose a human or environmental risk (Aerial Eradication of Illicit Coca in Colombia, 2007, p. 1). As was determined in 2004, in accordance with Colombian laws, the Colombian Minister of the Environment, Housing, and Territorial Development asserted the illicit crop eradication program is being conducted in compliance with the Environmental Management Plan for aerial eradication (EMP). Therefore, no significant changes in the execution of the illicit crop eradication or the EMP have been made. The final resolution of a 2002 class-action lawsuit against the Aerial Eradication Program was a ruling that the program was compliant with the Colombian laws governing aerial eradication (Bureau of INLE, 2007, p. 1). The Colombian Administrative Tribunal concluded that it could not be accurately inferred that the glyphosate, one of the herbicides, caused irreversible damage to the environment in the process of eradicating the illicit crops. It also claimed that many areas of forest were also destroyed when trees were felled by the illicit crop growers (Bureau of INLE, 2007, p. 1).

¹ Many of the effects of the chemicals are respiratory, skin, and gastrointestinal in nature. These are thought to be from the additive Cosmoflux (“The Failed ‘Drug War’,” p. 1).

In 2003 through 2006, the U.S. Secretary of State certified that herbicide mixture, in the manner it is being used, did not pose unreasonable population or environmental effects. The U.S. State Department and Colombian Government consulted the EPA and incorporated the EPA's recommendations to strengthen the program controls and protect against the adverse effects on the environment and humans (Bureau of INLE, 2007, p. 2).

In addition, the U.S. Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) and the Colombia National Police (CNP) collected and analyzed almost 80 water and 180 soil samples drawn from sprayed areas throughout Colombia in 2003–2006. The samples were taken before, immediately after, and sixty days after spraying during various aerial eradication campaigns. The studies also determined that the chemical residue did not adversely affect the soil of the coca plants. The chemicals did not also adversely affect the water taken from the streams adjacent to the sprayed crops. The conclusions were reviewed by the Inter- American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) in a two-year risk assessment of the human and environmental effects related to the aerial eradication (Bureau of INLE, 2007, p. 3).

Though the studies have found the chemicals generally not harmful to humans or the environment, the Colombian Government received several complaints and claims to fairly compensate the claimants. The Colombian Government instituted a process in October 2001 to compensate the growers for legal crops that were sprayed in error. From the inception of the program to 2007, 43 cases, totaling USD \$195,000 in compensation were awarded. The verification of these claims is also very expensive. The eradication program spent over USD \$100,000 in May 2006 investigating 75 cases alleging sprayed African palm near Nariño. In every case, coca plants were found interspersed with the palm (Bureau of INLE, 2007, p. 4).

G. TOTAL COST TO COLOMBIA

Colombia's internal conflict, fueled by the war on drugs, has cost Colombia tremendously. The loss of life and human rights violations statistics are staggering for a country about three times the size of Montana. One estimate is that more than 120,000

people have been killed since 1964, due to the violence initiated by Colombia's feuding cartels and terrorist groups (World: Americas Millions March for Colombia Peace, 1999, p. 1).

To calculate the total cost the war on drugs has had on Colombia is difficult since indirect costs should also be considered. It would not be a stretch to claim Colombia's decades of instability has cost the country several billion dollars and thousands of jobs that would have been created by more foreign investment in petroleum, mining, and tourism industries. Colombia's oil reserves, wealth of natural resources and beautiful coastline could produce substantial revenue for Colombia's struggling economy and create jobs to help reduce its current unemployment rate of 12.8% (Colombia Unemployment Rate, 2010, p. 1).

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V. ANALYSIS

A. STRATEGY AND FUNDING MISMATCH

Though the United States has been engaged in a drug war for the past four decades, the effort to eradicate drugs has been unsuccessful. The problem requires an enormous amount of time and resources. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that spending on drugs worldwide was estimated in 2002 to be \$400 billion dollars. Adjusted for inflation, this would be equivalent to \$470.4 billion today (McGuire & Carroll, p. 36). The head of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Gil Kerlikowske, acknowledges that the problem has even “magnified” and “intensified” (Associated Press, 2010, p. 1). When Mr. Kerlikowske was nominated and accepted the office in March 2009, his intent was to focus on outreach to those addicted to drugs (Johnson & Goldstein, 2009, p. 1). However, the Congress has not appropriated funds for rehabilitation. This makes it impossible for Mr. Kerlikowske to achieve the administration’s goals. The health care ramifications resulting from the increased focus on prohibition and prosecution are an indirect cost as well.

Health Cost

The health care cost resulting from the prohibition of drugs is a complex problem. It is difficult to discern what harm is attributed to prohibition or simply irresponsible drug use. For instance, the data gathered by medical professionals can be skewed in favor of specific special interests (McGuire & Carroll, p. 36). Therefore, the true cost of the health care for drug users is unknown.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the cumulative estimated number of cases of AIDS, excluding HIV positive cases, through 2008 in the United States is 1,073,128 cases. Of these cases, 267,391, or approximately 25%, are due to injection drug use (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010, p. 7).

HIV/AIDS patients are threatened by infection by tuberculosis since tuberculosis attacks the weak immune system. The drug users are susceptible to TB infection at a

high rate because certain treatment barriers, including lack of adherence and limited access to care, exacerbate the challenges for treatment (Deiss et al., 2008, p. 7). A number of studies examining various cross-sections of the drug using population have characterized latent tuberculosis prevalence up to 59% in some groups (Deiss et al., p. 2). These studies have shown mixed results among injecting and non-injecting drug users. This indicates a similar risk between both groups (Deiss et al., 2008, p. 7).

B. CRIMINAL JUSTICE COSTS

John Carnevale, an economist who worked at the Office of National Drug Control Policy under three presidents, criticized the Bush administration's Merida Initiative that was supposed to also emphasize treatment because the budget—allocated for interdiction—did not align with the goal of rehabilitation. Mr. Kerlikowske's tenure so far has not proved any different, however. A year and a half after appointing Mr. Kerlikowske as the drug czar, President Obama continued to promise to reduce the use of drugs by treating it as more of a public health issue with a focus on treatment and prevention. Yet, the administration continues to increase spending on interdiction and law enforcement. Figure 2 illustrates the funds spent in support of domestic and abroad interdiction and law enforcement versus the prevention and treatment budgetary line items. The promises and goals do not align with the program funding. As a result, the goals will not become realized if interdiction and law enforcement accounted for \$10 billion out of the \$15.5 billion budget for drug control in 2010. The War on Drugs abroad is as complicated as it is domestically. However, the current strategy, embraced by both dominant political parties, is not what has received the monetary support throughout the years.

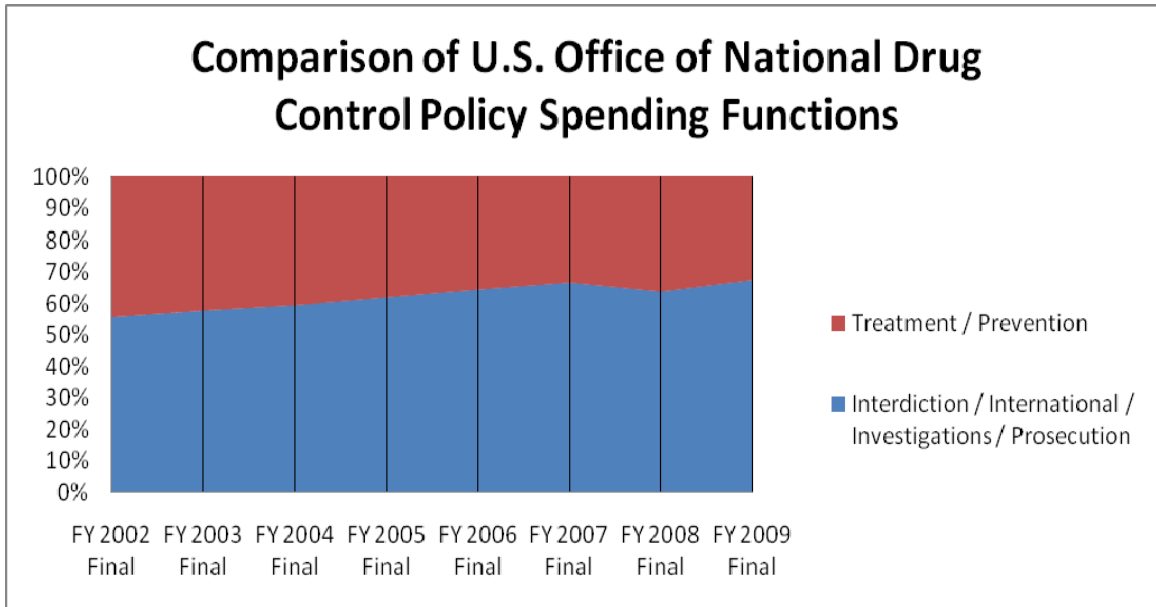


Figure 2. Comparison of U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy Spending Function: (From: Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, p. 1)

A reduction in the funds spent in Colombia, particularly for procurement and training, and subsequent redirection to manage the United States’ demand for illicit narcotics is needed. After ten years of United States assistance, the Colombian government has reached a point where they are self-sustainable. They have the will to continue combating the drug problem with minimal support. It will benefit the United States politically and fiscally to greatly reduce its footprint in Colombia to allow them to maintain their own solution. The United States will be able to accept the Colombian success as a foreign policy accomplishment and the Colombian government can fully assume ownership of their internal issues. This recommendation is not to eliminate all ties with Colombia, because both countries can benefit from a mutual trade partnership. However, it is a proposal to align the national spending in accordance with the strategy set forth by Mr. Kerlikowske to create a lasting effect on the drug demand.

C. ERADICATION EFFORTS

In 2002, Colombia’s coca eradication efforts began to exceed its coca cultivation (see Figure 3). Due to the balloon effect, eradication failed to accomplish its primary goal of reducing coca cultivation for the region. The balloon effect is a term that refers to the squeezing of one part of the balloon, only to see a bulge in another area. This term is often used to describe illicit drug cultivation migrating from one area to a less enforced area making it more difficult interdict and eradicate.

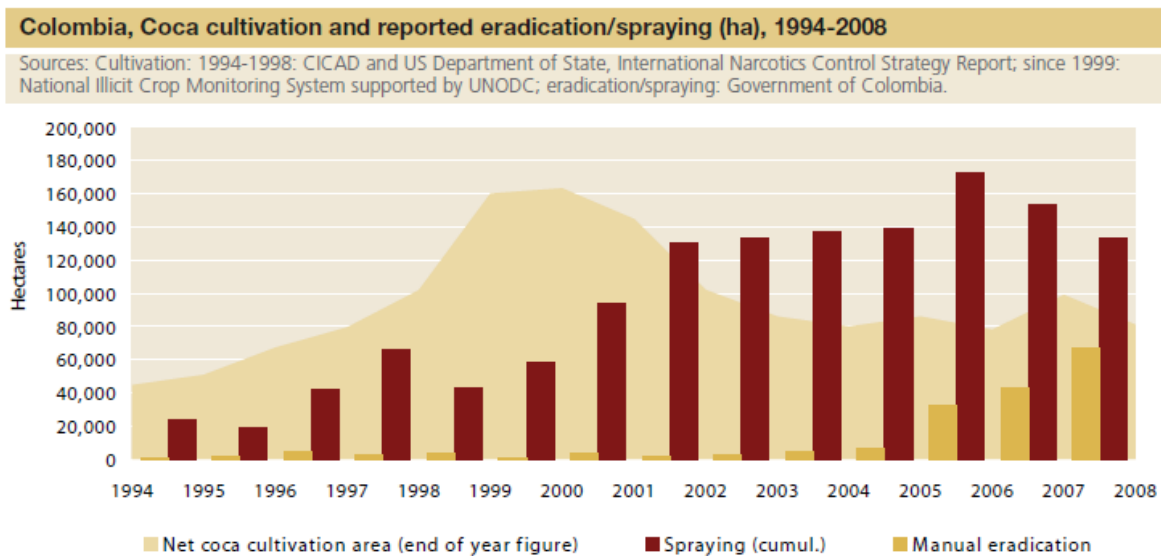


Figure 3. Columbia, Coca Cultivation and Reported Eradication/Spraying (ha), 1994–2008 (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009, 198).

Colombia’s total coca cultivation decreased by 18% to 81,000 hectares in 2008 and 16% to 68,000 in 2009. Over the last decade Colombia’s coca cultivation decreased by 60 percent. The largest decreases have occurred in the Meta-Guaviare, Putumayo-Caquetá and Orinoco regions, while the Pacific region continues to report high production numbers annually. In 2008, the Pacific region led the nation’s coca cultivation with 29,920 ha or 38% (see Figure 4). Additionally, increases in police and military units allow Colombia to conduct more manual eradication operations and less of the controversial aerial fumigation. In 2009, Colombian authorities increased manual

eradication by 43% and reached a record high of 95,634 hectares eradicated. However, the successes in reducing Colombia's production have had unintended, but totally predictable, consequences elsewhere: Both Peru and Bolivia have seen an increase in coca cultivation increase since 2001, nearly coinciding with Colombia's decline.

Colombia, coca cultivation by region, 2004-2008

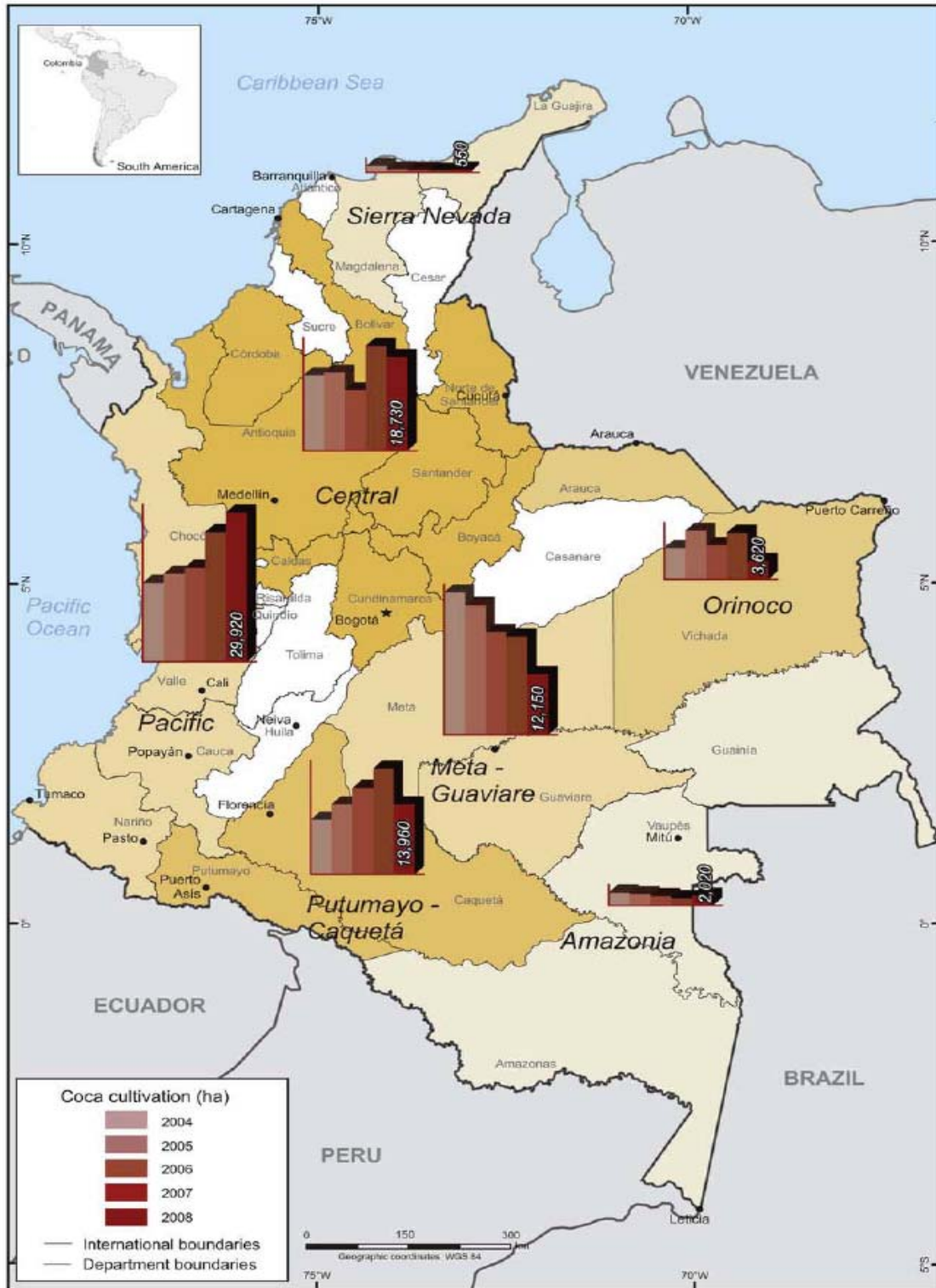


Figure 4. Columbia, Coca Cultivation by Region (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009, p. 201)

1. Peru

Peru will possibly reclaim its 1980s title as world largest exporter of cocaine (see Figure 5). For the fourth consecutive year, Peru's coca cultivation has increased. In 2009, coca cultivation increased by 6.8% to 59,900 in 2009, from 56,100 ha in 2008 (House Resolution on Colombian Internally Displaced Persons, 2007, p. 3). Over the past decade coca cultivation increased by more than 55 percent. Along with the resurgence of the coca bush, violent crimes by Peru's Maoist rebel group, the Shining Path, are on the rise. In April 2010, they killed two eradicators and one police officer in central Peru. The Shining Path was once 10,000 members strong and terrorized the country during the 1980s with car bombings, assassinations and brazen attacks on police and military outposts (S. Romero, 2010, p. 1).

Fig. 20: Global coca bush cultivation (ha), 1990-2009

Source: UNODC

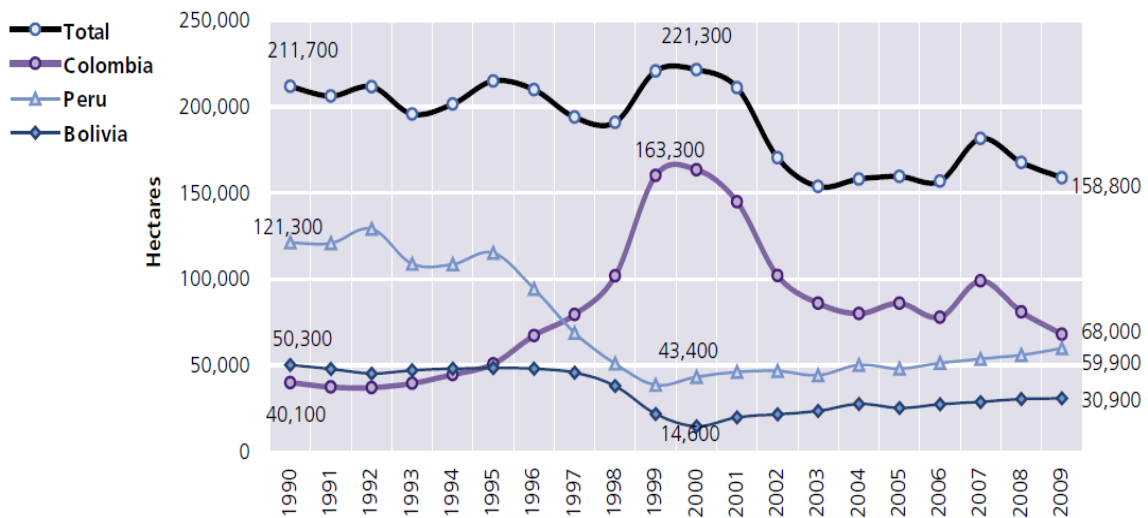


Figure 5. Global Coca Bush Cultivation (ha), 1990–2009 (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010, p. 66)

2. Bolivia

Coca cultivation has also reemerged in Bolivia since 2001 (see Figure 6).² In 2007, coca cultivation increased in Bolivia by 6% to 30,500 hectares, the third consecutive annual increase. Bolivia's president, a former coca farmer, promotes a "zero cocaine, but not zero coca" policy, which stymied eradication efforts in the country. Additionally, the coca leaf's deep roots in Bolivia's culture and its cultivation for alternative products, such as toothpaste, chewing gum, tea, and crackers, have further obstructed the U.S. eradication strategy for the Andean region. Though Bolivia's president claims that coca grown in Bolivia will not yield cocaine, according to U.N. figures, both legal and illegal coca-leaf production are growing. The latest figures put the harvest in 2008 at about 30,350 hectares, far above the limit of 12,100 hectares set in a 1988 Bolivian law. Although, Bolivia's annual cocaine production is far less than Colombia's and Peru's, there are signs that the drug trade is expanding. In 2010, Bolivian police raided a cocaine lab capable of producing 220 pounds of cocaine a day, a Bolivian street value of more than \$5 million³ (Regalado, 2009, p. 1).

² From 1994 to 2002, the data provided is directly from the U.S. Department of State. The data from 2002 through 2008 is provided by the National Monitoring System, which derives data from the respective government, but is supported by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime.

³ This number seems high because the street value in Bolivia would be much lower than the street value in, say, New York, because the risky transport from Bolivia to the United States, which adds substantially to the price, would be avoided. In 2007, a gram of pure cocaine cost anywhere from \$97 to \$137 in the U.S. Using the DEA's figures 220 lbs of pure cocaine would yield anywhere from \$9.7M to \$13.7M and so the street value in Bolivia would probably have been a small fraction of that number. It's possible that the street value was estimated at low U.S. prices, which is, of course, a misleading way of estimating.

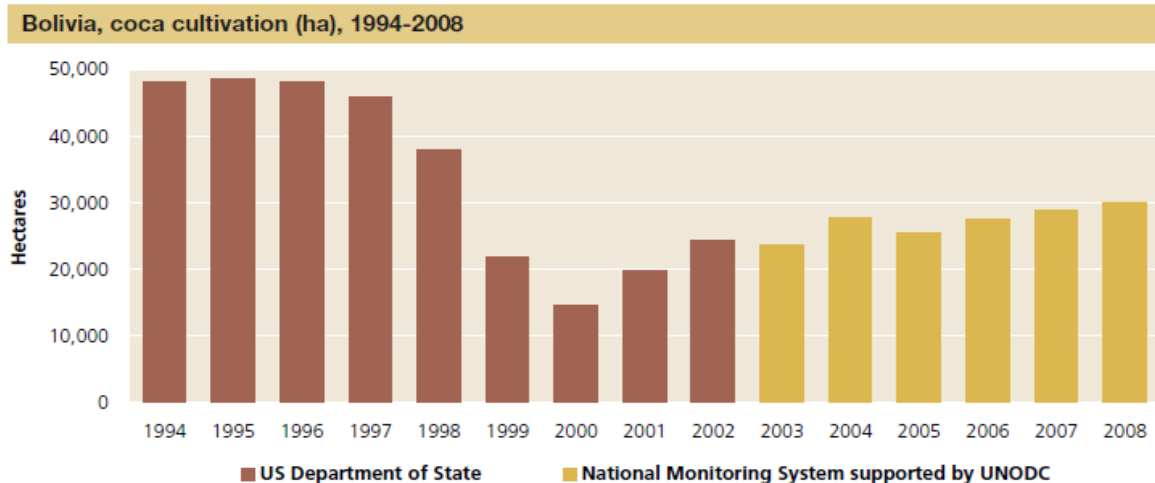


Figure 6. Bolivia, Coca Cultivation (ha), 1994–2009 (From: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009. p. 195).

D. REDUCTION IN VIOLENCE

Although Colombia continues to appear at the top of most violent crime reports, the drug related violence that led Colombia to earn the title “kidnap capital of the world,” and “win the silver medal” for the most displaced people, only behind Sudan, has diminished drastically (Internal Displacement in the Americas, 2010, p. 1). Human rights groups’ statistics on displaced persons vary widely. However, they all indicate a substantial decline in Colombia over the last decade. In January 2010, Jacob Kellenberger, president of the Red Cross, told former President Alvaro Uribe, that the number of displaced persons had dropped by more than 50% between 2008 and 2009 (see Figure 7). Another report published by the human rights group CODHES found there was a 24% drop in the number of displaced Colombians in 2009. Kellenberger's statistic is similar to that given by Colombia’s social security director, Diego Molano, who recently claimed that there was a 56% decrease in displacement in 2009 (Colombia’s Displaced Population Fell 50% Last Year, 2010, p. 1).

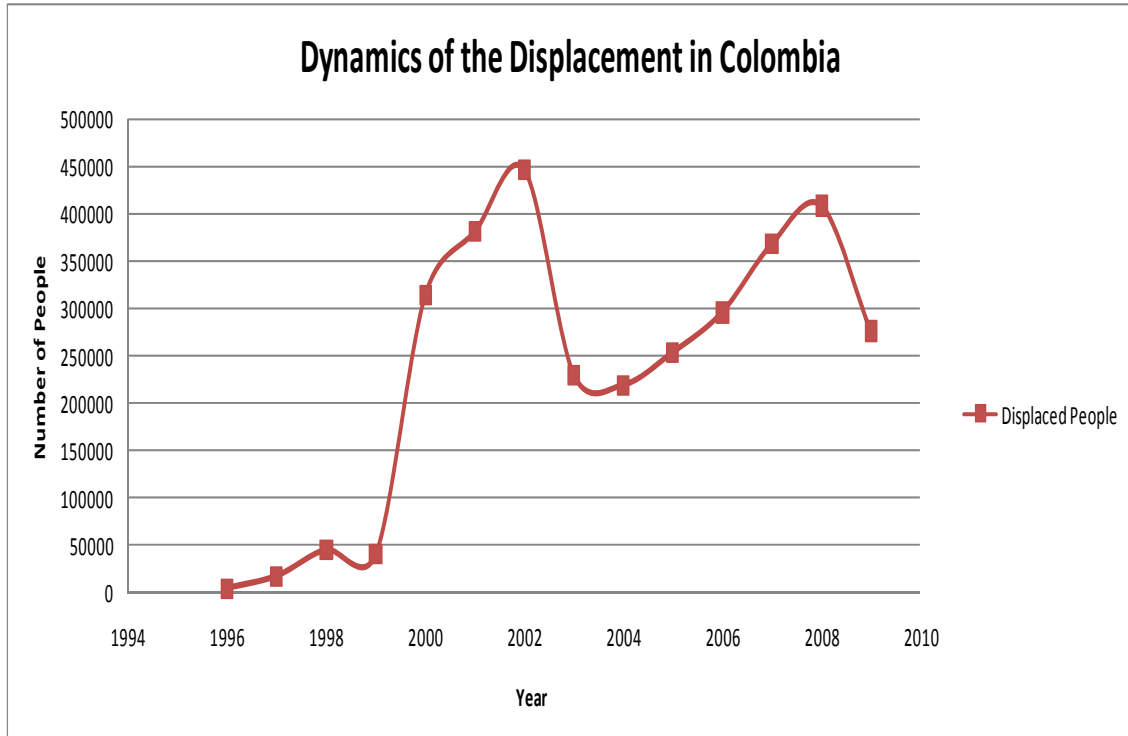


Figure 7. Dynamics of the Displacement in Colombia (From: Colombian Government, National Observatory of Forced Displacement, 2009)

Additionally, the murder rate for Colombia has dropped significantly. According to Police Chief General Oscar Naranjo, Colombia’s homicide rate has been on a steady decline since 2002 (Sumpter, 2010, p. 1). In 2006, Pablo Escobar’s hometown of Medellin, Colombia’s murder rate was actually lower than in Washington, D.C., Detroit and Baltimore (International Policy Report, Plan Colombia- Six Years Later).

E. COLOMBIA TODAY

The restoration of relative piece within Colombia is due primarily to the “iron-fisted” leadership of Colombia’s former president Alvaro Uribe. President Uribe’s tough security policies increased the number of police and military present in once lawless villages and slums throughout the country. Additionally, his willingness to negotiate with both left-wing and right-wing terrorist groups led to the demobilization of the AUC, Colombia’s most violent terrorist group. Negotiations have also proven fruitful with the left-wing Guevarista Revolutionary Army (ERG), a splinter group of the larger ELN.

In August 2008, President Uribe negotiated a deal with the last 45 members of the ERG. Although talks between the Colombian government and the guerilla organizations have historically provided no resolution to the decades of violence, comments made by ERG leader, Olimpo Sanchez Caro, indicate the world's oldest terrorist groups may be ready to negotiate a peace settlement. Caro stated,

The world has changed and we cannot remain indifferent to the changes in Colombia. Ten or fifteen years ago, the people applauded the armed struggle in Colombia. Now they reject it. When I joined, you could move around freely in and out of villages. Now the army is all around, and the local population is afraid to help us. (McDermott, 2010, p. 1)

Colombia is clearly a safer place than it was only a decade ago. President Uribe's "Democratic Security" strategy, in addition to U.S. foreign aid programs, such as Plan Colombia, has caused a significant drop in murder rates, displaced people and kidnappings. Increased security forces have allowed the government to reclaim large portions of the nation's territory once occupied by the FARC and ELN guerillas. Colombians are now experiencing the peace that they have sought for more than fifty years because of Colombia's better trained, equipped, and capable army, and the increasingly negative sentiment toward guerillas among the local populace.

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VI. CONCLUSION

The United States is still recovering from the greatest recession since the Great Depression. However, the recession served as a catalyst for the U.S. government to find cost savings in these lean years. The Department of Defense, because of the two wars (three including Pakistan) that it is fighting, has increased its level of spending over the last ten years. However, it is evident from Congressional lawmakers' rhetoric after the 2010 Mid-Term elections and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' recent speeches and recommendations that the Department of Defense will have its budget pruned.

One way the U.S. government can find efficiencies is through trimming or redirecting appropriations from programs that are proven ineffective. The drug war in Colombia, though very successful in equipping the Colombians to fight the narco-terrorists in areas that were previously unreachable, did not yield United States' desired effect of reducing and eventually eliminating cocaine and other illicit drugs from reaching the United States' shores. The data presented show that the cocaine trade was unaffected because of the balloon effect with Colombia's neighboring nations, the fact that farmers receive far more money and require less work and land to produce coca, and, most important, because the demand in the United States has not subsided.

The narco-traffickers have developed more sophisticated and difficult to interdict methods to transport the illicit drugs to the United States. The traffickers, in addition to their speed boats, now use semi-submersible vessels, each packed with ten tons of cocaine, that travel approximately 8 M.P.H., and have a range of 2,000 miles. These vessels are very difficult to detect with radar systems. The interdiction tactic of using a sniper rifle to pierce the engine of an outboard motor is ineffective with these semi-submersible vessels (Adams, 2008, p. 1). To combat the new methods, the U.S. government would need to spend even more money on interdiction and law enforcement because the traffickers became much more efficient.

A. UNITED STATES' RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The United States' investment into the Colombian Drug War has not yielded the desired result. Drugs continue to enter the United States and the demand for drugs has not decreased. The illicit drug trade inherently inflates the price of the drugs, which raises the stakes for those individuals transporting the illegal products. In turn, the drug market became very dangerous, costing many lives in the process. Since the trade with Colombia of \$11 billion annually is minimal in comparison with the United States' Gross Domestic Product, halting trade will not adversely affect the United States. However, the trade between the nations is useful in maintaining a partner in the region. Any further investment in Colombia without a greater focus on rehabilitating the United States' demand is a squandered investment. Though Colombia is a strategic ally in the region, the recommended course of action is an increased trade partnership, which supports their economy without the sense of a hand-out. It also allows the United States to reduce the perception that it is nation building and reduces its overextension in foreign aid.

B. DECISION POINTS

The data compiled over the four decades that the United States has been engaged in a drug war shows that spending money on interdiction is ineffective. The purpose for the United States going to Colombia was to stop the drugs at the source. However, the drug epidemic ground zero is the user and his or her demand for the illicit drugs. Therefore, the United States is faced with four choices:

1. Abandon combating the drug addiction problem completely
2. Legalize all illicit drugs
3. Change nothing and continue to focus on interdiction and law enforcement
4. Focus on rehabilitation treatment and prevention

While choices one and two are unlikely and will require lots of debate to become enacted, and three has been shown ineffective, choice four has a strategy in place. If the administration pushes lawmakers to align funding in accord with this strategy, the strategy would reduce the demand for drugs will decrease and drug producers will be forced to find other goods to produce. The downside to forcing the drug abusers into

rehabilitation programs subsidized by the government is two-fold. Though it does not show the government advocates the use of drugs, rehabilitation programs give people a more desirable and less painful alternative to incarceration. Therefore, those in the population that were deterred from using drugs because of the stigma or undesirable ramifications of being placed in prison, will possibly not see the lesser punishment as enough of a deterrent to trying drugs. Secondly, this short-term increase in drug users will cost the government more in funds to rehabilitate depending on the severity of new addictions. Though this increase in users will cost more in the short term, over the long term, we believe that this solution will most effectively reduce the demand for drugs and the abuse of these drugs.

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