



Highlights of [GAO-05-971](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

Oil is one of Colombia's principal exports. The Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline transports almost 20 percent of Colombia's oil production. The pipeline originates in the Department of Arauca in northeast Colombia. It carries oil nearly 500 miles to the Caribbean port of Coveñas. The pipeline has been a principal infrastructure target for terrorist attacks by Colombia's insurgent groups. During 2001, attacks on the pipeline cost the Colombian government an estimated \$500 million in lost revenues for the year. The United States agreed to assist Colombia in protecting the first 110 miles of the pipeline where most of the attacks were occurring. We examined how the U.S. funding and resources provided to Colombia have been used, and what challenges remain in securing the pipeline.

## What GAO Recommends

We recommend that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, develop a plan for transitioning the pipeline security program to Colombia. State commented that the report was an accurate assessment of the program and concurred with our recommendation.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-971](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-971).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4268 or [FordJ@gao.gov](mailto:FordJ@gao.gov).

## SECURITY ASSISTANCE

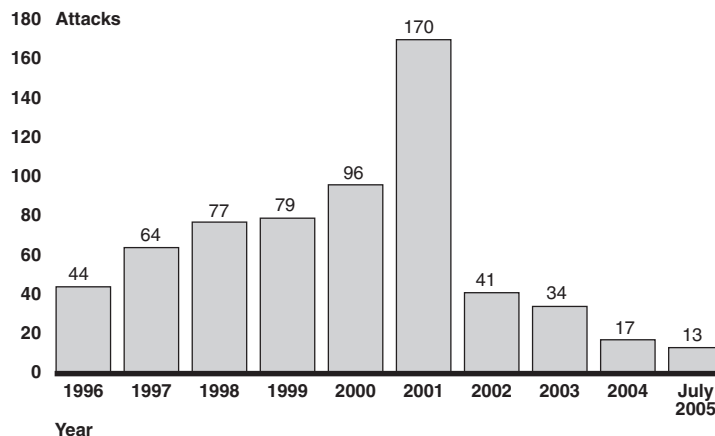
# Efforts to Secure Colombia's Caño Limón-Coveñas Oil Pipeline Have Reduced Attacks, but Challenges Remain

## What GAO Found

Since fiscal year 2002, the United States has provided about \$99 million in equipment and training to the Colombian Army to minimize terrorist attacks along the first 110 miles of the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline, mostly in the Arauca department. U.S. Special Forces have provided training and equipment to about 1,600 Colombian Army soldiers. However, the delivery of 10 helicopters purchased for the program was delayed—arriving mid 2005. Without the helicopters, the Colombian Army's ability to respond rapidly to pipeline attacks has been limited. Additionally, some equipment, such as night vision goggles, has not arrived due to the long lead-time required to obtain these items because of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Despite the delays in equipment deliveries, the number of attacks on the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline has declined and security in the area has improved. In addition, the Colombian Army and Colombian National Police have improved relations with the civilian population and new oil exploration is occurring in the area due to the improved security. However, challenges to securing the pipeline remain. More attacks are occurring on the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline outside the 110-mile long area originally addressed. Most of the Colombian Army stationed in these other areas has not received U.S. training. In addition, the insurgents have attacked the electrical grid system that provides energy to the Caño Limón oilfield. Without electricity, oil cannot be pumped. Because the U.S. funds provided for the program will be depleted by the end of September 2005, sustainability of the progress made is uncertain. Colombia cannot fully operate and maintain the helicopters provided without continued U.S. support; and due to U.S. commitments in other parts of the world, U.S. Special Forces will be reducing personnel in Colombia, which will limit future training.

Caño Limón-Coveñas Oil Pipeline Attacks, 1996–July 2005



Source: Occidental Petroleum Corporation.