

**PLAN COLOMBIA:
MAJOR SUCCESSES AND NEW CHALLENGES**

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BEFORE THE
**COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
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PLAN COLOMBIA: MAJOR SUCCESSES AND NEW CHALLENGES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:05 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Henry J. Hyde (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Chairman HYDE. The Committee will come to order.

It is my pleasure to call to order today's hearing on our policy of combating narcoterrorism in Colombia. I especially welcome our distinguished Speaker, Dennis Hastert, who has agreed to appear before our Committee, and we are told is on his way. Speaker Hastert has been our most effective leader in advocating a successful counterdrug policy in Colombia, and we are honored to have him with us today.

Today, as we face the ramifications of one potential failed narcostate in Afghanistan, we remember that Colombia, whose capital city is but a 3-hour flight from Miami, faced the same unacceptable fate in the mid-1990s. Until Plan Colombia emerged as a bipartisan initiative to address this grave threat to Colombia and our own national security, Colombia's future was in peril. Under the leadership of Speaker Hastert and others in the House—this Committee in particular—sustained United States commitment to Colombia was made in time. Now, under the leadership of President Uribe and bolstered by United States-provided Plan Colombia military and other assistance, the picture is much brighter and Colombia is far more stable.

The statistics tracking the implementation of Plan Colombia since 2000 speak for themselves. I will recite just a few points for the record from a recent Mort Kondracke column who collected these figures from the Colombian Government:

Coca production has been reduced by one-third; and, I might add, nearly all of the known hectares of opium poppies used for heroin production were fully eradicated in the year 2004. Terrorist incidents were reduced from 1,500 to 700 per year; kidnappings reduced from 1,900 to 750 per year, including Americans; the number of displaced persons reduced from 340,000 to 137,000; 3,700 FARC terrorists were killed or defected in 2004; and an economic growth rate of 3.9 percent was achieved in 2004, the second highest in Latin America after Chile.

Real progress has been made, but Colombia is not yet out of the woods. The narcoterrorist threat will not simply fade away. We

have more work to do in Colombia. We must stay the course and finish the job. President Uribe's recent request for additional aerial spray capacity deserves our full and very serious consideration.

Today, our hearing will focus on the progress we have seen. We also must highlight a few policy items in Colombia that need more focused attention and ongoing congressional oversight. For more than a year now, a legal morass has clouded a clear determination as to whether we can support the deployment of members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, that is FARC, who have defected and others who have renounced their ties to terrorist organizations by United States-provided assets, including air transport. These defectors are available to help manually eradicate smaller, hard-to-reach and sprayed drug crops, particularly opium poppies. Yet, still today, the help of these defectors is unavailable for this task as a result of our own legal wrangling.

This Committee helped secure new DC-3 transport planes for the Colombian National Police to transport manpower, including these ex-combatants and materials for manual drug eradication. Some in the Executive Branch hold the misguided view that putting defectors on these planes to engage in manual drug eradication would somehow constitute material support for terrorism. This was never the intent of Congress, and we are needlessly and unwisely tying our own hands. How could having former members of a terrorist organization eliminate the very drugs that helped finance the terrorist organization they have turned against possibly constitute material support for terrorism? We will require some answers and hopefully untangle this protracted legal mess.

The demobilization of large numbers of combatants from terrorist organizations is a challenge and an opportunity. Getting these fighters off the field of combat and ending their drug production significantly reduces the number of people killed or otherwise subjected to violence in Colombia and here. We must be willing to help Colombia help itself and us in this way.

We must not forget, however, that leaders of these terrorist organizations, including the so-called United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and National Liberation Army (ELN), are entrenched in criminal activity. This includes drug trafficking into the United States.

Colombia's authorities must set forth a concrete and workable framework for dismantling the hierarchy of these terrorist groups so they don't simply continue as criminal syndicates. The Uribe Government has clearly demonstrated its steadfast commitment to extraditing Colombia's most dangerous, high-profiled drug traffickers to face trial in the United States. Continuing this commitment to extraditions is essential to successfully dismantling these terrorist organizations.

The year 2004 saw a very successful 52 percent reduction in opium poppy cultivation in Colombia, but we are seeing a spillover effect in Peru. Opium planted in Peru for transport to Colombia for processing into heroin headed for the United States is our next challenge. Peruvians must demonstrate the same commitment and energy to eradicating opium poppies in their country that we have seen by the Colombian police.

We face new challenges on the drug interdiction front. After our Nation was attacked on September 11th, we sharply increased the deployment of military surveillance aircraft to protect our homeland. I fully understand and support the Homeland Security mission. Many of these military airplanes were previously used to support maritime interdiction of drugs, including so-called fast boats both in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean. Reducing our marine air patrols by some 70 percent opened up the corridors for the flow of illegal drugs into our Nation. Interdicting drugs at sea in addition to aerial eradication and overland interdiction in Colombia is a matter of our national security. Recent records setting large-scale maritime seizures serve to underscore the need for a long-term plan to fill this marine air patrol gap in the Pacific and Caribbean. While we have suggested some courses of action, we look forward to listening to the Administration's proposed solutions for the self-evident need.

Due to the limited amount of time Speaker Hastert has, I welcome opening comments from Ranking Democratic Member Mr. Lantos only at this time; and when we move to the second panel, I will allow 1-minute opening remarks by Members who arrived before the gavel. Meanwhile, Mr. Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman; and let me add to your very warm welcome to our distinguished Speaker. We are delighted to have him. I will just make a few comments so you may catch your breath, Mr. Speaker; and we are anxious to listen to your words.

Mr. Chairman, nearly 5 years ago under the Clinton Administration, with strong bipartisan support, we approved Plan Colombia to fight the scourge of illegal narcotics flowing from Colombia and to help the Colombian people establish a stable and prosperous nation. The Bush Administration has continued that plan, and the United States has invested considerable resources in the effort to make it a success. I commend you, Mr. Chairman, for calling today's hearing to take stock of Plan Colombia 5 years after its enactment.

Mr. Chairman, Plan Colombia is not only designed to get drugs off of America's streets. It was also designed to ensure the security and stability of an important South American nation. Colombia is now engaged in fierce combat with three foreign terrorist organizations which have formed an unholy alliance with drug dealers, arms smugglers, and others who seek to undermine democracy and the rule of law. Colombia must confront these challenges to its security in a neighborhood that has become less stable and more prone to episodes of mob rule and demagogic populism, as recent events in Ecuador, Venezuela, and other surrounding countries demonstrate.

Mr. Chairman, Venezuela in particular deserves this Committee's full attention. In the last several years, the Chavez administration has done much not only to undermine democracy and the rule of law in that country but also to destabilize its neighbors. In Venezuela, the Chavez Government has backed its Supreme Court with ardent Chavez supporters, has jailed or prosecuted political opponents and others who dared to stand up for political and civil

liberties. It has begun Stalin-like confiscations of property and has imposed Draconian censorship laws on the independent media.

Beyond Venezuela's borders, Chavez acts like his mentor, Fidel Castro. But where Castro offered only empty rhetoric, Chavez extends a check, starting with the brutal dictator himself. Cuba's totalitarian regime has been propped up by the oil revenues of Venezuelan petroleum fields for many years. There are also credible reports that Chavez has bankrolled the coca growers in Bolivia who helped topple the Presidency of Sanchez De Lozada and who today pose a threat to the Carlos Mesa administration.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, Chavez appears to be providing financial and organizational support to undemocratic forces and common criminals in the southern cone and in Central America.

Mr. Chairman, some will argue that President Chavez is the duly-elected head of state of Venezuela who last year had his mandate reaffirmed in a Presidential recall referendum. But when we speak about promoting democracy and the rule of law, we are not only talking about the relatively easy-to-accomplish events like elections but also about the much harder to establish democratic principles like the balance of powers, respect for human rights, and transparent and accountable government.

The presence of the unrepentant revolutionary want-to-be's in the Andean region is one of the chief reasons that our strategic interests lie with Colombia and the success of Plan Colombia. We need a strong partner in the Andean region that can be a counterweight to undemocratic forces like Venezuela. We need Colombia to be our anchor of stability, prosperity, and democracy in a region that sees very little of these attributes. But Colombia cannot do this alone. We must continue to aid in the joined battle against drug kingpins and terrorist groups.

Mr. Chairman, we have made great progress in the past 5 years under Plan Colombia. Although the plan, like any grand strategy, has elements that could be improved upon, our long-term interest in the Andean region demands that we recommit ourselves to ensuring that the enterprise succeeds and that the forces of stability and democracy prevail in Colombia.

Mr. Chairman, Plan Colombia remains our best hope to save the next generation of American youth from the ravages of illicit narcotics by reducing the supply of drugs on the streets of our cities. Working with President Uribe and his administration, Plan Colombia is also our best chance to bring stability, prosperity and the rule of law to an important ally and to the rest of the Andean region. If we can't achieve these important objectives, Plan Colombia will be viewed as a critical turning point in the history of Colombia and another cornerstone in United States-Colombian relations.

Thank you for calling this important hearing, and I very much look forward to listening to our speakers.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Lantos.

They say the more a person has accomplished, the less you have to say by way of introduction. I present the Speaker of the House.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE J. DENNIS HASTERT,
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Speaker HASTERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have written testimony that I would submit for the record and, with your permission, just go ahead with oral remarks.

Chairman HYDE. Without objection.

Speaker HASTERT. Chairman Hyde and Ranking Member Lantos and distinguished Members of this Committee, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss a topic that has certainly been a focus of mine for a long, long time: Plan Colombia.

Before I start, I must recognize a great American patriot before he retires at the end of the 109th Congress. I am talking about the distinguished gentleman from Illinois and Chairman of the Committee, my friend and mentor, Henry Hyde.

Mr. Chairman, I salute you for the more than 30 years of honorable service to our Nation. Since coming to the House of Representatives in 1975, you have been a champion for uplifting the lives of American families. In your current position, you have played a key role in securing our Nation's borders and fighting terrorism at home and abroad. As the head of the House Judiciary Committee, you steadfastly worked to protect women and children and the unborn; and all Americans are better off as a result of your service. I want to thank you for your past and certainly your continued leadership, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker HASTERT. As a schoolteacher and a coach and much later as the Chairman of the House Government Reform and Oversight Subcommittee dealing with drug policy, I have seen firsthand the devastation of illicit drugs, what they bring to our children and to the children of other countries. An average of over 21,000 Americans die annually from illicit drug use. Most of them are young men and women. Many more die because of the actions of drug gangs and drug violence.

The drug trade fuels terrorists and violent criminals and gangs throughout the world. It exposes a country's weakness in border security. It undermines democracy and the rule of law and regional stability. The illicit drug trade is a high priority, a national security issue that we must continue to deal with and defeat.

Some might ask: Why is Colombia so important to us? Today, Colombia produces 80 percent of the world's supply of cocaine and is the source of over 90 percent of the cocaine and 50 percent of the heroin entering our Nation. The drug trade from Colombia is killing Americans, and it is a major factor in the instability of our hemisphere.

In order to show how much has improved in Colombia, it is imperative to understand what Colombia was like. One of my trips to Colombia as the Chairman of the Subcommittee illustrates Colombia's turmoil. We were about an hour out from landing in Bogota when we received a warning message from the State Department's diplomatic security detail. Twenty-two people had just been killed by terrorists in Colombia's capitol, the police stations had been threatened or bombed, and 12 sticks of dynamite had just been pulled out from under Colombia's Supreme Court building. Terrorist organizations like the FARC and AUC began to take over the illicit drug trade and were nearly ruling the land. Colombia was well on its way to becoming a narcoterrorist state.

To address this country's social, economic, and security concerns, Plan Colombia was developed by former President Andreas Pastrana. With aggressive backing from the Congress and President Clinton, on July 13, 2000, President Clinton signed into law a comprehensive \$1.3 billion assistance package in support of President Pastrana's Plan Colombia. As a result, our foreign policy with Colombia is beginning to work. Plan Colombia, a determined Colombian President, President Alvaro Uribe, the Colombian people, and the financial support of the U.S. Congress have been the driving mechanisms for these successes.

In terms of counterdrugs, security defense, and economic and social issues, Colombia is a better place today. President Uribe's forces, backed by United States support, have reduced coca cultivation by 33 percent in the past 3 years. He has also been successful in attacking opium poppy cultivation. His efforts have resulted in a 65 percent drop in cultivation from the year 2001.

In addition, the Government of Colombia has worked closely with our Government to extradite many of the most notorious narcoterrorists. According to the Ministry of Defense, Colombia has increased its military and police forces by over 111,000 people since the year 2000; and, for the first time in history, all 1,098 municipalities have a police presence. Also, during his administration, the number of terrorists who have chosen to drop their arms and become part of society has increased significantly. Today, there are up to 11,000 demobilized terrorists in Colombia, and thousands more have been killed in action. Overall, acts of terrorism have declined 56 percent from 2002 to 2004, and President Uribe is defending his country against terrorists and making it more secure with our help.

Colombia's economy continued to expand at record levels. With the GDP estimated at 4 percent in 2004, the Uribe administration reports that they created over 1.2 million jobs. The U.S.-sponsored alternative development programs resulted in over 60,000 hectares of legal crops cultivated in 2004. These efforts have benefited 51,000 families; and areas like Putumayo used to be like the wild, wild west, outlaw villages thriving off the drug trade. Today, Putumayo has been reformed. A lumber yard and a spices plant have replaced the coca fields, and coca farmers have found legitimate work.

Social aspects of Colombia such as education and health care continue to improve. The Uribe administration reports that 1.2 million more children were in public schools, and 5.9 million more people were beneficiaries of public health care.

Colombia has a new criminal procedure code and an adversarial judicial system with United States-trained judges and attorneys and criminal investigators. In addition, courtrooms and justice and peace houses have been established, and the Colombian people have now more access to justice as we know it.

Government corruption and human rights violations have also improved. The Colombian Commission of Jurists reported that of the 2,500 human rights violations in Colombia, less than 2 percent were against the Colombian military.

No one can deny that our Colombian friends, with United States assistance, have improved many aspects of their country. However, more still need to be accomplished.

Mr. Chairman, I challenge your Committee to look at and develop solutions to outstanding issues concerning Colombia. We must continue to find ways to stop illicit drugs from traveling through the transit zone to our shores. We must continue to work with our European partners to stem the flow of illicit drugs to Europe, another source of money for the terrorists. We have to work with our Colombian partners and ensure that we are doing all we can to keep the demobilized terrorists from returning to the jungle and picking up their weapons again. And we need to get them to work so that they can rejoin regular society. We need to work with our other friends like Peru and the Andean region to ensure that the balloon effect for the illicit drugs does not occur.

And, Mr. Chairman, Colombia is not the same place that I used to visit almost 10 years ago. It is much improved. Plan Colombia, President Uribe, the Colombian people, and the committed financial support of the U.S. Congress have made a great progress. We all know that Plan Colombia was designed to be a 6-year-old plan due to expire at the end of this year. President Bush has requested that Congress continue to support Plan Colombia beyond 2005 with an additional \$550 million for fiscal year 2006.

As a Congress, we need to review the support program. We need to weigh it with other high-level national priorities of the American people and do what we can to stop the illegal flow of drugs into America and promote the stability and democracy in the hemisphere we live in. To you, gentlemen and ladies on this Committee, I want to thank you for your hard work, for your diligence in fighting this fight. I know that constantly you have this on your minds. Many of you travel to these places and see firsthand the problems that exist.

Again, I thank you; and I thank you for the indulgence at this time.

[The prepared statement of Speaker Hastert follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE J. DENNIS HASTERT, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chairman Hyde, Ranking Member Lantos, and distinguished members of the House International Relations Committee, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss a topic that is near and dear to me—Plan Colombia. Before I start, I need to take a moment to recognize a great American Patriot before he retires at the end of the 109th Congress. I am talking about the distinguished gentleman from Illinois, and the Chairman of this committee, my friend and mentor, Representative Henry Hyde.

Mr. Chairman, I salute you for your more than 30 years of honorable service to our nation. Since coming to the House of Representatives in 1975, you have been a champion for uplifting the lives of American families. In your current position, you have played a key role in securing our nation's borders and fighting terrorism at home and abroad. As the head of the House Judiciary Committee, you steadfastly worked to protect women, children and the unborn. All Americans are better off as a result of your service. Thank you for your past and continuing leadership on this issue with Colombia and many, many others.

NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY

As a school teacher and coach, and much later, as Chairman of a House Government Reform and Oversight Subcommittee dealing with drug policy, I have seen firsthand the harm and devastation illicit drugs bring to our children and the chil-

dren of other countries. Here in America, the illicit drug trade continues to kill our citizens. An average of over 21,000 Americans die annually from illicit drug use. The drug trade fuels terrorists and violent criminal gangs throughout the world. It exposes a country's weaknesses in border security. It undermines democracy, rule of law and regional stability. The illicit drug trade is a high priority, national security issue—an issue that we must continue to deal with and defeat. The President's National Drug Control Strategy is on target and working. The Strategy set ambitious two- and five-year performance-based goals: to reduce the rate of drug use by youth and adults in the United States by 10 percent over 2 years and by 25 percent over 5 years. We exceeded the President's two year goal and are on track to reach our five-year goal. At the end of 2004, the Administration reported a 17 percent reduction in the number of young people who had used any category of drug in the last 30 days. The three national priorities the President has set in his Strategy (Stopping Use Before It Starts, Healing America's Drug Users and Disrupting The Market) are key to success in attacking this national security issue.

When we talk about our efforts in Colombia, we are talking about Disrupting The Market: Attacking the Economic Basis of the Drug Trade. Why is Colombia so important to us? It was during the mid-1990's, while I was the Chairman of the subcommittee, that Colombia surpassed both Bolivia and Peru as the major producer of cocaine. Today, Colombia produces 80 percent of the world's supply of cocaine and is the source of over 90 percent of the cocaine and 50 percent of the heroin entering our nation. The drug trade from Colombia is killing our citizens, and it is a major factor in the instability of our hemisphere. Our foreign policies with Colombia are beginning to work. We are turning the tide on the drug trade. Our efforts are not limited to law enforcement and counterdrug successes. Colombian and U.S. counterdrug efforts have improved democracy, economic stability, overall security and respect for the rule of law and human rights in Colombia.

What has been the driving mechanism for these successes? The answer is simple: Plan Colombia, an extremely determined Colombian President, President Alvaro Uribe, the Colombian people, and committed financial support of the U.S. Congress.

COLOMBIA: THE PAST

In order to show how much has improved in Colombia, it is imperative to understand what Colombia was like. Five to six years ago, Colombia was on the verge of becoming a model for lawless, failed states. Terrorist groups such as the United Self-Defense Forces (AUC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN), as well as drug cartels, were nearly ruling the land. Although the major drug cartels had been broken up, terrorist organizations like the FARC and AUC began to take over the illicit drug trade. Some estimated that these terrorist organizations controlled between 40 to 65 percent of Colombia's territory, mostly in remote areas where the Government's presence had been weak. At that point in time, the Government of Colombia and its armed forces were lacking the necessary resources, manpower, equipment and training to engage these terrorist organizations. In addition, some in the Colombian security forces were associated with gross human rights abuses and collaboration with certain terrorist groups. To complicate matters, Colombia was in the midst of economic turmoil. The Department of State's International Narcotics Control Strategy for 1999 stated, "As Colombia struggles to climb out of its worse economic crisis since the 1930's, the Government of Colombia is hard pressed to commit the resources necessary to combat the powerful combined threat of drug traffickers and guerrilla elements in the drug trade." Despite the efforts of the Government of Colombia, it is estimated that coca cultivation increased 28 percent in 1998 and another 20 percent in 1999. To put these increases into perspective, in 1999, 122,500 hectares of coca were under cultivation. The immense profits gained from this illicit crop fueled the longstanding internal conflict between the Government of Colombia and the terrorist organizations.

I have traveled to Colombia a great deal. In fact, even before I became a Congressman, I had spent time in Colombia in the late 1960's. It was then that I first began to admire the culture and respect the strong sense of values held by those who were, in a sense, being oppressed by these terrorist groups. Later, as the Chairman of the subcommittee, I traveled back to Colombia in support of U.S. policies. Two of my trips serve as great reminders of the country's turmoil. During the first trip, we were about 1 hour from landing in Bogotá when we received a warning message from the State Department's diplomatic security detail. Twenty-two people had just been killed by terrorists in Colombia's capital. Police stations had been threatened or bombed, and twelve sticks of dynamite had just been pulled from under Colombia's Supreme Court building. During the other trip, we traveled deep

into territory controlled by the FARC to talk with the people on the front lines of this war to see what help they needed from us. The helicopter pilot received an urgent message saying that we better depart as soon as possible because the FARC was in the area. In no time at all, the pilot flew the helicopter straight up in the air, into the tops of trees—he knew that the FARC would shoot us down immediately. The helicopter shuddered and wobbled, but eventually the pilot was able to regain control and fly us smoothly to safety. During this period of time, Colombia was well on its way to becoming a narco-terrorist state.

To address his country's social, economic, security and defense concerns, former President Andres Pastrana (1998–2002) developed Plan Colombia. With aggressive backing from our Republican majority in Congress, on July 13, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed into law a comprehensive \$1.3 billion assistance package in support of President Pastrana's Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia was an integrated strategy focusing on the Colombian peace process, the economy, the counterdrug strategy, justice reform, human rights protection, democracy building and social development. Our country acknowledged that the situation in Colombia was a National Security issue that demanded our attention. We wanted to stop the flow of illegal drugs, which are killing our citizens, as well as promote peace and economic development in a country that is only three hours away by plane.

I am pleased to be here today to report that, with the aggressiveness of Colombian President Uribe and strong backing from President George W. Bush and our Congress, Plan Colombia has made measurable improvements in Colombia. In terms of counterdrugs, security and defense, economy and social issues, Colombia is a better place today.

COUNTERDRUG PROGRESS

With the arrival of President Uribe in 2002, Colombia began an aggressive eradication program for both coca and heroin. His forces, backed by U.S. support, have reduced coca cultivation from nearly 170,000 hectares in 2001 to 114,000 hectares in 2004 . . . a 33 percent reduction. Last year's information shows us that Colombian aerial eradication efforts sprayed more than 121,000 hectares of coca, stopping coca growers' efforts to expand the crop. The potential production of cocaine continues to decline and is now at 430 metric tons of pure cocaine from the dramatic peak of 700 metric tons estimated for 2001. President Uribe has also been successful in attacking opium poppy cultivation. His efforts have resulted in a 65 percent drop in cultivation from 2001. The estimated 4,400 hectares of opium poppy for 2003 decreased steeply to 2,100 hectares for 2004 . . . a 52 percent reduction. There were an estimated 3.8 metric tons of potential heroin production in 2004 (down from 7.8 metric tons for 2003). More than 4,000 hectares of opium poppy were treated with herbicide in 2004 or manually eradicated. Also, President Uribe has advanced an initiative to seize farms involved in the cultivation of illicit crops, especially opium poppy. In addition, the Government of Colombia has worked closely with our Government to extradite many of the most notorious narco-terrorists. People like Nayibe Rojas Valderama (a.k.a. Sonja), Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela and Juvenal Ovidio Ricardo Palmera-Paneda (a.k.a. Simon Trinidad) have been taken to the United States to face our legal system and penalties. Counterdrug efforts against cocaine and heroin are working.

SECURITY AND DEFENSE PROGRESS

In the area of security and defense, Colombia has made progress with our support. First, let's look at the government forces needed for security and defense. According to the Ministry of Defense, Colombia has increased its military and police forces by over 111,000 people since 2000. The Uribe Administration expanded police presence to 158 municipalities. For the first time in history, all 1,098 municipalities have a police presence. Also, during his Administration, the number of terrorists who have chosen to drop their arms and become part of society has increased significantly. Today, there are up to 11,000 demobilized terrorists in Colombia, and thousands more have been killed in action. Overall acts of terrorism have declined 56 percent from 2002 to 2004. Kidnappings are down 51 percent; massacre victims are down 61 percent; homicides are down 30 percent; oil pipeline attacks are down over 80 percent. President Uribe is defending his country against terrorists and making it more secure with our help.

ECONOMY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Colombia's economy continued to expand with GDP estimated at 4 percent in 2004. They experienced growth in the past two years higher than any levels in the past decade. The Uribe Administration reports that they created over 1.2 million

jobs. U.S. sponsored initiatives to promote economic and social progress have worked. These programs include: providing assistance to farmers in drug producing areas to grow legal crops, working with private industries to create employment opportunities for people who were formerly engaged in the production of coca or heroin and providing local infrastructure construction assistance for communities that sign agreements to refrain from production of illicit crops. The U.S. Agency for International Development reported that over 60,000 hectares of alternative, legal crops had been cultivated in 2004 under Plan Colombia. These efforts have benefited 51,000 families and they are readily evident. Areas like Putumayo used to be like the wild, wild west . . . outlaw villages thriving off of the drug trade. Today, Putumayo has been reformed. A lumber yard and spices plant have replaced the coca fields, and coca farmers have found legitimate work.

Social aspects of Colombia, such as education and health care, continue to improve. The Uribe Administration reports that, by the end of 2004, 1.2 million more children were in public schools and 5.9 million more people were beneficiaries of public health care. Other social areas have also improved. Colombia has made great progress with the rule of law. The Colombian Congress approved a new criminal procedure code and adversarial judicial system in 2004. With U.S. assistance, nearly 11,000 judges, attorneys and criminal investigators received training and, seven additional trial courtrooms, for a total of 35, were recently constructed. In addition, the U.S. helped Colombia establish four additional Justice and Peace Houses for a total of 35. These Houses offer access to justice and peaceful conflict resolutions and, during 2004, they handled 746,000 cases. The Colombian people now have more access to justice as we know it. Although the internal conflict in Colombia has displaced over 2 million people, the numbers have significantly fallen. From 2003 to 2004, there was a sharp decrease of 41 percent in internally displaced persons. Additionally, over 2,000 former child combatants have left terrorist organizations to transition into regular society through the Child Ex-Combatant Program. Government corruption and human rights violations have also improved. The Colombian National Police has instituted a rule of law curriculum and the military is establishing a judge-advocate general corps similar to our military. The Colombian Commission of Jurists reported that of the 2,500 human rights violations in Colombia over the past year, less than two percent were against the Colombian military.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

No one can deny that our Colombian friends, with U.S. assistance, have improved several aspects of their country. However, more still needs to be accomplished. Colombia is still the world's supplier of cocaine. A large portion of this cocaine comes to the U.S., but a large portion also goes to European countries. There are up to 11,000 demobilized terrorists and the number continues to grow as President Uribe pushes his peace talks and Colombia fights back. The narco-terrorists enjoy their wealth and prosperity, but as Colombia continues to defeat them, they will try to go to other places. Mr. Chairman, I challenge your committee and other committees with jurisdiction to look at and develop solutions to these issues. We must continue to find ways to stop those illicit drugs that are not eradicated from traveling through the transit zone to our shores. We must continue to work with our European partners to stem the flow of illicit drugs to Europe . . . another source of money for the terrorists. We have to work with our Colombian partners and ensure that we are doing all we can to keep the demobilized terrorists from returning to the jungle and picking up weapons again . . . we need to get them work, so they can join regular society. We need to work with our other friends, like Peru, in the Andean Region to ensure that the "balloon effect" for illicit drugs does not occur.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, Colombia is not the same place that I used to visit . . . it is better. Plan Colombia, an extremely determined Colombian President, President Uribe, the Colombian people and committed financial support of the U.S. Congress have made great progress, but there is still work to be done. We all know that Plan Colombia was designed to be a six-year plan due to expire at the end of this year. What will we do in the future? I like the comments of President Bush when he met with President Uribe in Colombia on November 22, 2004. After showing support for continuing Plan Colombia beyond 2005, President Bush was asked a question concerning how he was going to convince Congress to fund the Plan? President Bush responded:

Well, I thought I'd go to the Congress—look, here's what you've got to do with the Congress. You say, first of all, it's an important issue. And the issue is whether or not we're willing to stand with a friend to help defeat narco-trafficking. Most members of Congress understand it is important to help Colombia

defeat the narco-traffickers. And so the first question is whether or not there will be a consensus about the importance. I think there will be. And secondly, do we want to continue spending money on the project that's important? And the answer to that question is, only if there are results. And there have been significant results. A number of acres under cultivation are down significantly. The number of arrests are up. The number of murders is down. In other words, this man's plan is working. And there is a focused strategy. How do we know? Because our ambassador is working closely with the government. Southern Command is working closely with the government. We're very aware of not only the strategy, but the will of this government to implement the strategy. And so, to answer your question, I'm very optimistic about—about continued funding. And I look forward to working with Congress to achieve a level that will make the plan effective.

President Bush has seen the value of Plan Colombia, and the Administration has requested that Congress continue to support Plan Colombia beyond 2005 with an additional \$463 million in Andean Counterdrug Initiative funds and \$90 million in Foreign Military Financing for Fiscal Year 2006.

Mr. Chairman, I am reporting today that Plan Colombia is working, and we have the positive results to show. As the Congress, we need to review this important program, weigh it with other high-level, national priorities of the American people and do what we can to stop the illegal flow of drugs into America and promote stability and democracy in the hemisphere we live.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We are fortunate to have John Walters as a witness before the Committee today. The Nation's Drug Czar coordinates all aspects of Federal drug programs and spending. Director Walters, if you would proceed with your opening statement.

Mr. Walters, if you would withhold, I did promise 1-minute statements to the Members. They get very testy if I don't follow through. Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Chairman, first of all, thank you for holding this hearing.

I am not going to take the full minute. I would just like to make one comment that parallels what the Speaker just said, and that is that these people who have formerly been members of these terrorist organizations need to be reintegrated back into society. I would like for our State Department and our Justice Department to take a hard look at the laws that we currently have on the books to see if they can't be utilized to help in that reintegration process. It is extremely important that you have these 11,500 people become active members of society instead of going back into the jungle and becoming a part of a terrorist organization.

So I would just like to say to you, Director Walters, and to the State Department and to the Justice Department, do what you can to help us make sure these guys don't regress and go back into terrorism. They have defected, they want to be a part of society, and we should do everything we can to make sure that happens.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Menendez.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say, as the Ranking Democrat on the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I also am very supportive in general of Plan Colombia. I look at today's hearing as an opportunity to look at Colombia past, present, and future. But in that respect—and I think we have heard some of the successes that have been mentioned: Public safety has improved, kidnapping and murder rates have decreased, every Colombia municipality has a police presence, and,

overall, the economy is one of the best-performing certainly in the hemisphere. That is the good news.

The difficult side is that Colombia still has the highest kidnaping rate in the world. We have not yet achieved success in terms of decreasing the amount of cocaine on the streets of the United States or lowering the price of cocaine. We haven't seen a reduction in the amount of acres used for cocaine production in the past year. We have a demobilization law that is presently being offered in Colombia that gives us concern about the rule of law and, ultimately, about human rights abuses being held accountable for their actions. Those are some of my concerns.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing the witnesses as to these issues and others.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As someone whose congressional district in Miami, Florida is at the forefront of the war on drugs and on narcoterrorism and as someone who represents hundreds of thousands of Colombians and others who have been forced to flee their country by the terrorists, by the drug dealers, the arms dealers, and the links between all of these, I commend Chairman Hyde for holding this important hearing. It is important to our Nation's security, to regional stability, and to my constituents. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses, and I am pleased to have heard the Speaker of the House commending Chairman Hyde for his many years of valuable service to our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you.

Mr. Leach.

Mr. Weller.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and I will be very brief.

But I first want to thank you for holding this important hearing; and I definitely want to echo the comments of our Speaker as well as my Subcommittee Chairman, Mr. Burton, on the importance of Plan Colombia.

I support Plan Colombia; and in the years I have had the opportunity to travel to Colombia, I have seen the difference that Plan Colombia has made, the psychological change over the years that I have seen. My first visit to Colombia, I sensed a nation under a state of siege; and in my last visit, I sensed a tremendous amount of optimism, people excited about the opportunity to be able to travel and drive between cities, something we take for granted.

So, clearly, Plan Colombia is moving forward and is having success. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on how we can continue to improve the program. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you.

Anyone down here wish to make a 1-minute statement?

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Only to echo commendation to you for holding this important hearing. Colombia is very important in the Western Hemisphere. It is very important, and it is clear by the investment that our Government has made in Colombia. We are pleased at

some successes, but, as has been mentioned by the Ranking Member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, it is still number one in a number of areas.

During the questioning period, I also have some questions regarding the plight of Colombians of African descent who are having extremely difficult times from the right and the left, and sometimes with the police and the military, and so they feel in many instances they really have nowhere to turn. So I would—during the questioning period, I would certainly like to ask a question to the proper authorities at that time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

Any further statements, would you raise your hand? If not, we will go to the testimony.

Well, we are fortunate to have John Walters as a witness. He is the Nation's Drug Czar, and he coordinates all aspects of Federal drug programs and spending, which is a big order. So, Mr. Walters, will you proceed?

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN P. WALTERS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY (ONDCP)

Mr. WALTERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great pleasure and honor for me to be here.

I, too, want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Ranking Member of this Committee for holding this session and, most of all, for your and the rest of the Congress's partnership in making this effort possible, from the onset to the year-to-year review and support for appropriations that we know are difficult and competitive, and we are able to make progress because of the work we do together.

I want to also recognize the Chairman's service, given the announcement you have made of retirement after this session. I want to thank you. I have worked in various areas of the Federal Government since the Reagan Administration, and I have had the pleasure of working with you and your staff on many occasions, and it is a great pleasure to have had that as a part of my experience as a professional here serving the country.

I also want to thank the Speaker briefly because of the energy and, as you know here, the commitment he has made to this and other areas of drug control. There are many demands on all of your time, particularly there have been demands on his time, and he has been steadfast and unwavering.

I want to mention that for the record because I think the country is a better place, as all of you know because you do it, because of the people willing to serve and the quality of the service they are willing to put behind them. I don't think we are in a time where we take that for granted anymore, and I appreciate what you have done. Many of you have traveled to this region in some danger. I couldn't help but be reminded when the Speaker mentioned his earlier trip.

I had the honor of representing the United States at the inauguration of President Uribe several years ago. Conditions had already gotten so bad, as you may remember, that the FARC launched mortars at the swearing-in of President Uribe at the

onset. Fortunately, only a few of them went off, although they did kill over two dozen people. President Uribe, nonetheless, after being brought to the venue in an armored car, immediately afterwards insisted on stopping it and getting out of the car and walking with his wife in the open to show that that kind of intimidation would not stop the people of Colombia and their democratically-elected government. I think that is a measure of the kind of man that now is our partner in this area, and I know that we are all grateful for his service.

But I have a written statement that I would ask at this point be included in the record. I will do some brief summary points and then follow the questions that you may have.

Chairman HYDE. Without objection.

Mr. WALTERS. As we approach the conclusion of the 5-year time frame for the originally envisioned Plan Colombia, many of the necessary elements to destroy the capacity of major drug traffickers to deliver multi-ton loads of cocaine to the United States as well as heroin are in place. The fiscal year 2006 budget proposes, as you know, \$735 million for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative. These are critical resources, and I want to repeat our request for renewal.

For the first time in 20 years, thanks to the strength and dedication and perseverance of our allies, we are on a path to realize dramatic reductions in cocaine production in Colombia and a complementary reduction in the world's total supply of cocaine. We have witnessed 3 successive years of decline in production of both cocaine and heroin. At the same time, the regional security threat from narcoterrorist organizations has diminished. We are headed in the right direction. We are winning. Cocaine production in the Andes is down a third in the Andes as a whole since 2001; and Colombia's opium crop was cut by half between 2003 and 2004, as mentioned by the Speaker.

There exists an opportunity to institutionalize a reduction in the capacity in our hemisphere for large international criminal and terrorist organizations to manufacture and transport multi-ton quantities of cocaine to wholesale distributors in the United States and elsewhere in the world. To accomplish this, we need to support programs that have been successful to realize the impact of our efforts throughout the drug production and distribution system. Key programs in the region have been aerial coca eradication in Colombia and intelligence-driven maritime interdiction in the transit zone.

Cocaine interdiction in the transit zone increased dramatically in 2004. Altogether, cocaine losses in that zone through seizure and documented disruptions totaled almost 250 metric tons en route to the United States. That is 250 metric tons of cocaine that didn't make it to our shores. But to put it in maybe terms of exactly what damage it does to the users, each metric ton is 10 million dosage units; 100 metric tons is a billion. The 250 metric tons is 2½ billion dosage units of cocaine that did not make it to the United States. The result: To the extent that terrorism and economic support for terrorism are attacked simultaneously, we are implementing a winning strategy for defeating both.

Coca and poppy eradication, along with drug interdiction, cut into the profits for the terrorist organizations, weaken their ability to buy arms and engage in battle. Removal of these organizations

from Colombia's national landscape facilitates destruction of large-scale drug production.

For the first time in history, the Government of Colombia, as was noted, has a presence in all of its 1,098 municipalities, bringing rule of law to all of its citizens in municipal areas. We need to follow through on the commitment of the Andean Counterdrug Initiative and must increase the pressure on the traffickers by increasing aerial eradication to the maximum.

Our basic goals remain the same: Eliminating narcoterrorism, promoting respect for human rights, creating economic alternatives and opportunities, respecting rule of law, and achieving peace.

The good news is that we have seen in the Andes that the product of sustained funding by the Congress, bipartisan support for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, the strategic use of resources, our commitment, and the commitment of the Government of Colombia, are making historic change. Domestically, we have also seen very good news: A 17 percent reduction in youth drug use, 600,000 fewer young people and teenagers using drugs in 2004 than in 2001.

But there is still more to do on both fronts. With the continued support of this Committee, we fully expect to meet the President's 5-year goal with a 25 percent reduction in the number of drug users in the United States. Continued full funding in accord with the President's fiscal 2006 request, \$735 million, is necessary now—more than at any other time in history—to advance and sustain the monumental successes that we have seen and to achieve the final goals.

We have this historic opportunity to make real change in the world drug market, and we need your continued support. I look forward to working together with you and the Congress to ensure that these goals are met in Colombia, the Andean region, and here at home; and I will be happy to take any questions now.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you very much, Mr. Walters.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Walters follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN P. WALTERS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF
NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY (ONDCP)

**Statement by John P. Walters
Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy**

**Before the House Committee on International Relations
Chairman Henry Hyde, 109th Congress**

**“The Andes: Institutionalizing Success”
May 11, 2005**

Chairman Hyde, Ranking Member Lantos, and distinguished Members of the Committee: I am honored to appear before you today to discuss counternarcotics policy in the Andes and the progress of the Andean Counterdrug Initiative. Before I proceed, I want to thank Chairman Hyde for his 32 years of service in the United States Congress. A true statesman with a distinguished record of accomplishment, I have valued your friendship, guidance, and insight over the years. Further, this Committee has consistently supported our policy and programs in the Andes by which the Western Hemisphere is safer and more secure. Through visits to the region by Members and staff, and by maintaining a dialogue with the principal policy actors in the Andes, the Committee has kept close watch on developments and contributed greatly to the historic successes we have witnessed.

My testimony today will be a positive one because our policies and programs have measurably improved the security, health, and economic well-being of the people most affected by the narcotics threat. I will focus on Colombia, but there is also good news to report in Peru and Bolivia. The so-called “balloon effect,” the theory that drug production will simply expand into new areas in the proportion that it is squeezed out of old areas, has simply not materialized. Across the region, we have witnessed three successive years of declining production of both cocaine and heroin. At the same time, the regional security threat from narco-terrorist organizations has diminished.

We are heading in the right direction and we are winning. Cocaine production in the Andes has declined by 29% since 2001 and Colombia’s opium crop was cut in half from 2003 to 2004. As the threat we face adapts, we will make adjustments as needed, but in large measure, the job that remains for us is to help our willing regional allies with training, intelligence, supplies, and mobility so that they can finish the destruction of the existing large-scale cocaine and heroin trafficking infrastructure. In particular, we need to help Colombia disrupt the ability of the FARC and AUC to coerce rural producers into cultivating coca. Eradication, interdiction, enforcement, and alternative development are essential to this end and will proceed with great intensity.

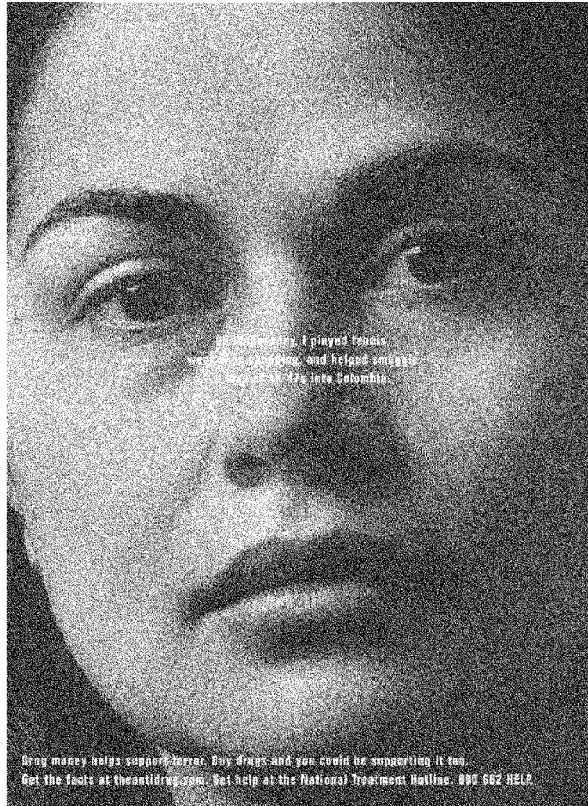
National Drug Control Strategy:

Three years ago, this Administration issued its first National Drug Control Strategy. That Strategy set ambitious two- and five-year performance-based goals to reduce the rate of drug use

by youth and adults in the United States by 10 percent over 2 years and by 25 percent over 5 years. We exceeded our two-year goal for reducing youth use and are on track to reach our five-year goal. At the end of 2004 we reported a 17 percent reduction in the number of young people who had used any category of drug in the last 30 days. Considering that children are most vulnerable to drugs during their high school years, the reductions achieved in that demographic bode well for long-term reductions in the number of adult addicts and hard-core users. The public health condition that is drug abuse and drug dependence almost inevitably has its roots in use by young people, so the change in attitude and usage for 8th, 10th, and 12th graders is a hopeful sign of additional progress in the future.

Among the critical programs leading our efforts to reduce youth drug use and educate young people on the direct impact of illicit drugs is ONDCP's own National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. Exposure to anti-drug advertising has had an impact on improving youth anti-drug attitudes and intentions.

With respect to the over 19 million Americans who still use drugs on a monthly basis and the roughly seven million who meet the clinical criteria for needing treatment, we have proposed \$3.2 billion for treatment in FY 06, an increase of about 4.5 percent over FY 05. This includes \$150 million for Access to Recovery—a treatment initiative which provides drug treatment to individuals otherwise unable to obtain access to services.



That said, even with effective prevention and treatment programs, reducing drug use is complicated by the availability of addictive substances. A key pillar of the National Drug

Control Strategy is therefore to disrupt the supply of drugs by attacking the economic basis of the drug trade. In the Andes, our efforts have focused on destroying the cocaine and heroin manufacturing apparatus. There is clear common ground for our efforts in major drug producing countries because the governments in those nations realize that an entrenched illegal drug industry is a threat not only to the health of their own citizens, but also to national security.

Supply Reduction in the Andes:

The U.S. has a staunch ally in Colombian President Alvaro Uribe in our Global War on Terrorism. President Uribe understands that drug money finances the most powerful terrorist organizations in his country. He has courageously led a broad attack against every vulnerable node in the illegal drug production and trafficking business: elimination of terrorist-controlled safehavens for cultivation and production; massive aerial coca fumigation; arrest and incarceration of major traffickers; interdiction at clandestine lab-sites on the rivers, roads, and in coastal waters; seizure and confiscation of drug assets; investigation and arrest of money launderers; and extradition of fugitives. As we approach the conclusion of the six-year time frame originally envisioned for Plan Colombia, many of the necessary elements to destroy the capacity of major drug traffickers to deliver multi-ton loads of cocaine to the United States, are in place. Coca plant eradication is proceeding vigorously and concurrently opium poppy eradication in Colombia and Mexico has destroyed the greater part of the potential crop. Interdiction at sea is removing hundreds of tons of cocaine from the market and hurting traffickers financially as they are forced to write-off multi-million dollar investments in cocaine.

At the core of our accomplishments, we have helped Colombia reverse the growth of terrorist organizations and put the country on course to end decades of rural banditry, intimidation, and shocking cruelty perpetrated by the FARC, AUC, and ELN. That central accomplishment is closely linked with our success in disrupting drug production and trafficking that for more than a decade has generated most of the money necessary to underwrite the terrorist organizations. We are uprooting narco-terrorist organizations from their former safehavens, causing them to switch to defensive tactics and a strategy of attempting to survive militarily while focusing their energies on seeking to undercut the government's political will. The integrated U.S. military, police, counterdrug, USAID, and intelligence support to Colombia has been crucial in achieving these results.

There exists an opportunity to institutionalize a reduction in the capacity in our hemisphere for large international criminal and terrorist organizations to manufacture and transport multi-ton quantities of cocaine to wholesale distributors in the United States. To accomplish this, we need to support programs that have been successful to realize the impact of our efforts throughout the drug production and distribution system. Key programs in the region have been the implementation of the Uribe extradition policy, aerial coca eradication in Colombia and intelligence-driven maritime interdiction in the transit zone.

Coca Eradication:

An aggressive program of eradication, begun in earnest with the election in mid-2002 of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, has cut Colombia's potential cocaine production by one-third

compared with the year before he took office. That means Colombia now produces 270 metric tons – 33 percent – less than it did in 2001 which includes a seven percent reduction in 2004.

Cultivation estimates have been equally impressive with coca cultivation falling from nearly 170,000 hectares to about 114,000 hectares. Further, coca cultivation in neighboring

| Year | Hectares under cultivation | Percent Increase | Hectares Sprayed |
|------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1998 | 101,800 | 28 | 49,641 |
| 1999 | 122,500 | 20 | 39,113 |
| 2000 | 136,200 | 11 | 42,283 |
| 2001 | 169,800 | 25 | 77,165 |
| 2002 | 144,450 | (-15) | 102,225 |
| 2003 | 113,850 | (-21) | 116,342 |
| 2004 | 114,100 | 0.2 | 120,713 |

Peru also dropped during the same period to below 30,000 hectares, down from its high point of approximately 130,000 hectares and we see no signs of production expanding significantly. While cultivation in Bolivia was up, it was not nearly enough to affect the predominant trend of falling supply.

As Colombia increased the number of hectares sprayed each year until the total approximated the hectareage of tended crops in the field, growers re-planted and pruned furiously, causing an ever-larger proportion of coca cultivation to be comprised of young or marginally producing fields. Coca bushes in Colombia sometimes are harvested as early as nine months after planting, at which stage they would have lower potential leaf yields than if they were permitted to mature a full 12 months before first harvest. Immature, pruned, and damaged plants can produce some cocaine, but their yield is less than mature plants. This trend of diminishing returns for the growers will continue so long as Colombia continues massive fumigation and the ratio of immature or damaged plants to mature healthy plants increases.

Opium Strategy:

The eradication of opium poppy through aerial and ground eradication programs together with alternative development efforts have resulted in a 68 percent drop in poppy cultivation in Colombia since 2001. To put further pressure on heroin traffickers, President Uribe has advanced an initiative to seize farms involved in the cultivation of illicit crops, especially poppy. With continued assistance from our foreign counterparts, the strategy moving forward will be an intensified 5-pronged attack program:

- Eradication of opium poppy in Colombia and Mexico (with an eye to nascent cultivation in Peru).
- Law enforcement attack of the heroin trafficking organizations in Colombia and Mexico (supported by enhanced law enforcement intelligence collection and analysis).
- Heroin interdiction at the departure airports in Colombia, elsewhere in South America, and Mexico.
- Heroin interdiction at the arrival airports on the U.S. east coast and other key locations.
- Increased law enforcement attack of the heroin organizations in the U.S. (supported by enhanced law enforcement intelligence collection and analysis).

In Peru, a reliable estimate of opium cultivation and yield is currently unavailable and there is no clear way to measure the size of the threat. Peru's potential opium growing area is about 20,000 square miles in mountainous areas; the fields we do know about are small, scattered, and in remote locations. In 2004, the Peruvian counternarcotics police eradicated 98 hectares of opium, seized 285 kilos of opium latex and just under a ton of heroin. Our Embassy in Lima with Peru's counternarcotics police plan to conduct reconnaissance for likely areas to plant opium, routes used to move opium products, and collection points. We are working with the Department of State and our Embassy in Lima on a multi-step opium plan that initially determines the threat. The Andean Counterdrug Initiative has made a demonstrable impact on opium—according to the most recent DEA figures from its Heroin Signature Program, the average wholesale purity of South American heroin seized in the U.S. has fallen 17 percent since 2000 (from 86.9 percent to 72.4 percent in 2004).

Cocaine Interdiction:

Cocaine interdiction in the transit zone increased dramatically at the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004, and stayed at extraordinary high levels throughout the year. Altogether, cocaine losses in the transit zone through seizure and documented disruption totaled approximately 248 metric tons enroute to the United States in 2004 versus about 210 metric tons in 2003, also a record year. The increase was in large part due to intelligence-driven operations facilitated by the Department of Justice Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) with interdiction and seizures carried out by the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense assets, along with cooperating nations such as Colombia and Mexico. In terms of economic impact to the cocaine industry, the losses punished the traffickers as the seizures occurred after the owner of the cocaine had spent as much as \$2,500 to \$3,000 per kilogram to obtain it for sale. Depending on how well capitalized the trafficker or transporter was, and whether his suppliers retaliated against him for the loss, seizures decreased profits and contributed to a disruption in the drug trafficking industry.

To keep up this progress, DOD E-3 use in South America will free up DHS P-3 operational capacity for maritime operations. In addition, the Colombian Navy is pursuing better maritime radar on its two MPA assets. The USCG is also exploring the addition of more MPA on-station time. With increased intelligence and the operational capacity we have available, we will maintain our strong focus on interdiction in the littoral and in the transit zone.

Drug Infrastructure Destruction:

There is a symbiotic relationship between the illegal drug business and terrorist organizations such as the FARC, ELN, and AUC. The Government of Colombia estimates that drug trafficking in all of its manifestations is the FARC's greatest source of funds. We have seen a constant expansion of FARC and AUC involvement in illegal drug trafficking; it is not possible to imagine a large-scale drug business in Colombia operating independently of these two terrorist organizations. Terrorist organizations provide security for illegal production areas, shoot at fumigation aircraft, and control cocaine and heroin manufacture and marketing at least up to the stage of off-continent sales. Inside Colombia, terrorist organizations set market prices in their

areas of control, provide material and capital to growers, and set production quotas. They brutally enforce monopoly marketing arrangements within their areas of influence and control entry and exit from their territory by residents and itinerant laborers. In short, the FARC and AUC are the managers and beneficiaries of a cocaine and heroin trafficking system that effectively engages cheap labor and peasant farmers who are economically and coercively prevented from taking up alternative livelihoods. A forced tradition of illicit crop production enforced by the threat of death is the rule in FARC production zones. The AUC tends to focus on brokering coca paste in towns more than on the control of agricultural zones, but it is equally brutal in securing its towns and lines of communication for the drug trade.

By supplying training, logistical assistance, intelligence, and material to the Government of Colombia in its efforts to destroy terrorist organizations and expand the rule of law, the United States has contributed to regional democratic stability as well as the safety and security of the

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2002 vs. 2004 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| Terrorist Attacks | | | | |
| All Types | 1,645 | 1,247 | 709 | -56% |
| Electric Pylons | 483 | 329 | 121 | -74% |
| Towns | 32 | 5 | 1 | -96% |
| Roads | 248 | 113 | 134 | -46% |
| Massacre Victims | 680 | 504 | 259 | -61% |
| Kidnappings | 2,986 | 2,200 | 1,441 | -51% |
| Common Homicide | 28,837 | 23,509 | 20,012 | -30% |

Colombian people. Homicides, kidnappings, and terrorism cases were all down in 2004 thanks to the reinvigorated security services and the strengthening of the criminal justice system. The Human Rights Ombudsman's Office

reported that two percent of complaints it received about violations of human rights and international humanitarian law implicated members of the security forces. This last statistic clearly reflects the effect of Colombian policy and is consistent with the human rights training that is mandatory for Colombian security forces. While any human rights violation or willful collaboration with human rights violators by the military is unacceptable, Colombia has made remarkable progress and the military is winning back the trust of the people.

To the extent that terrorism and the economic support for terrorism are attacked simultaneously, we are implementing a winning strategy for defeating both. Coca and poppy eradication along with drug interdiction cut into profits for the AUC and FARC weakening their ability to buy arms and engage in battle. Removal of those organizations and the ELN from Colombia's national landscape facilitates destruction of large-scale drug production. This in turn increases the attractiveness of legal development and attracts enhanced investment and employment creation.

Administration of Justice:

Under the auspices of Plan Colombia, we have helped to initiate judicial reform that when fully realized will make justice more accessible to ordinary citizens. In addition, the United States funded the construction of seven trial courtrooms in 2004, for a cumulative total of 35. USAID has inaugurated four additional Justice and Casas de Justicia or "Peace Houses", which are one-stop legal assistance shops, for a total of 37. Accessible and credible justice is essential to the long-term viability of democratic rule of law throughout Colombia. A secure and respected state

presence in the conflicted areas is necessary to protect counterdrug gains over the long term. Now, for the first time in its history, the Government of Colombia has a presence in all 1,098 of its municipalities.

Colombia is undergoing a dramatic reform to its criminal justice system through the introduction of a new criminal procedure code and an accusatory system. This is one of the most significant legal reforms in Colombia's history and will introduce the presentation and debate of evidence in oral trials through an adversarial system. The United States has been actively involved in assisting the Government of Colombia with this critical transition, one which if implemented correctly would have important impact on the investigation and prosecution of complex cases such as narcotics, money laundering, terrorism and kidnapping.

Demobilization:

The Administration is developing a policy for implementation, and with Congressional consultation as is required in the FY 05 omnibus appropriations legislation, will need to determine a level of commitment. We are very concerned about any demobilization effort that would eliminate adequate penalties for individuals accused of major human rights abuses, or that eliminates extradition for major drug trafficking charges. In this regard, the Government of Colombia law detailing penalties will not be finalized and approved until mid-2005. At this point, it is prudent to assist the Colombians without directly paying stipends and other costs that could go to individuals with major criminal records that could be "commuted" with the mid-2005 law. Our current commitment in aiding OAS monitoring of the demobilization process seems appropriate.

Challenges:

Coca and opium poppy eradication in Colombia was carried out on a large scale from 2002 through 2004. Eradication forces in 2004 sprayed about 120,000 hectares of coca and about 4,000 hectares of opium poppy. Responding in 2004, coca growers re-planted and reconstituted their crops faster than we have seen them do in the past. Opium cultivation was reduced by about half, but coca cultivation held steady for the first time since heavy fumigation began. The areas of greatest coca production were Guaviare, Caqueta, Putumayo, Vichada, Narino and Norte de Santander/Antioquia—areas where there is modest human settlement, but minimal state presence.

We must increase the pressure by increasing aerial eradication to the maximum. If we aurally eradicate 150,000 - 180,000 hectares of coca this year, even at last year's high reconstitution rate, we can reduce the base significantly— mostly to relatively immature, low-yielding plants. As reconstitution struggles to keep pace with eradication, we need to consider steps we might take to counter the effects of pruning, replanting, and new planting. Part of the effort may require the Government of Colombia to increase its presence in rural areas. President Uribe is standing up units of "home town soldiers" in many such areas, establishing police stations in every municipality, and engaging low-income farmers who live on the land to husband Colombia's natural resources and prevent the entry of coca producers. These programs are

ambitious, but considering the re-constitution rate last year, they merit close examination to determine how they might be modified or expanded to reduce the number of reconstituted acres.

A second challenge is to disrupt the cocaine pipeline into Mexico and the United States. Cocaine is shipped in bulk to Mexico and Central America mainly by maritime transporters. Once ashore, government authorities lose track of it as it makes its way north and is distributed to criminal organizations for retail sale all along the route. The affected governments, including Mexico and the United States, have been unable to significantly reduce the flow once it arrives in Central America/Mexico on land. Roughly 90 percent of the cocaine that enters the United States enters through Mexico and is handled by Mexican criminal organizations with distribution networks inside the United States. As we look to the future, it will be necessary to focus more attention on drugs entering from Mexico and work with our southern neighbor to meet the threat posed by organized criminal groups and drug flow numbers.

Our own efforts at reducing the number of cocaine users will be simplified as the availability of the drug is reduced, although U.S. retail price and purity may well be the last indicator to be affected by coca eradication. Drug profit margins are greatest nearest the final consumer and thus provide the broadest area for absorbing upstream increases in expenses.

Part of the explanation for why we have not yet detected a significant change in price and purity of cocaine is due to a time lag likely required to convert leaf in the field to cocaine for sale in the United States. Thus, cocaine on the street in the U.S. today probably comes from coca plants that were harvested in previous seasons; estimates for the time delay range from six months to over a year before a harvested plant is transformed into cocaine on a U.S. street.

Conclusion:

Our national drug control policies in support of counterdrug operations with allied nations, particularly Colombia, have reduced the amount of cocaine available in the world by nearly one-third in the last three years. Aerial eradication, at the heart of our program, must be sustained and reinforced. That effort, combined with support to the Government of Colombia for the rule of law particularly in the areas of highest illegal drug production has the potential to dramatically reduce drug flow to the United States. The opportunity is there to permanently disrupt the efforts of drug traffickers while improving security, stability, respect for human rights, and legitimate economic opportunity in Colombia.

In the future, our assistance will seek to effectively sustain the gains made under the Andean Counterdrug Initiative. The basic goals remain the same: eliminating narcoterrorism, promoting respect for human rights, creating economic alternatives and opportunities, respecting rule of law, and achieving peace.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Lantos is not here.

Mr. Menendez.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Director Walters, first of all, I thank you for your service and your testimony, but I have some questions.

Having heard your testimony, it sounds like everything is going well. But how does that reconcile itself, for example, with the fact that, despite increased eradication of drug crops and interdiction under efforts under Plan Colombia, U.S. Government agencies responsible for tracking drug trends report that the availability, price, and purity of cocaine and heroin in the United States have remained stable?

Mr. WALTERS. I think that is an important question here, and I think it has been a source of some confusion about how we measure this.

The central point is that the capacity of this region—Colombia first but the region as a whole—to produce and ship cocaine is dramatically reduced. I included some slides here of the actual production in the region of what is happening, and it has gone down every year.

What happened, if you look back to the late 1990s, was the capacity of the region focused on enormous growth in coca production in Colombia and produced the ability to create and move cocaine at a rate that had not been seen in this region perhaps ever. What we had to do was reverse that trend and begin to have declines.

During the movement of increased production, you saw increased reports of movement of cocaine into Europe, into Brazil, into other areas of the region, growing addiction and consumption problems in Mexico. We had a great deal more, and what we have had to do is contain that growing capacity and shrink it. We have begun to do that, and we have gotten better at both the capacity to cut off cultivation and the capacity to interdict drugs. The level of seizures that we are now making in the world are unprecedented in history.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this, though. Isn't it true, even though your blue chart talks about potential cocaine production—and I want to talk about actual reality—isn't it true that your Department recently reported no significant reduction of coca cultivation during 2004?

Mr. WALTERS. The actual—

Mr. MENENDEZ. Is that yes or no?

Mr. WALTERS. Yes. Yes. But let me just say, again, I think—

Mr. MENENDEZ. I have limited time, so I have to go through my questions. The answer to that question is yes?

Mr. WALTERS. The same amount of hectareage of coca, less their capacity to produce, because the coca is being eradicated and has to be replanted. Younger coca is one-third as able to produce cocaine. We can have exactly the same hectareage if we effectively eradicate and reduce production by two-thirds.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this, and if you can be concise in your answers. In June 2004, you testified before Congress that interdiction efforts take time to show their impact on price and availability and that the effect would begin to show in the next 12 months. Well, that is next month. We haven't seen that effect.

Mr. WALTERS. Our precise knowledge of how this covert market works is limited. But, again, with the kind of capacity that they now can produce in the entire region—and the maximum number is what we estimate they could do if everything worked perfectly. We do not minimize their productive capacity. And with the reductions from interdiction, we believe we are making substantial changes.

Again, I don't think there is any question about that. I don't think there is any question we have knocked down 2½ billion doses of cocaine in interdiction alone, another 2½ billion doses of cocaine or more through interdiction. We have to follow through. There is no better way to do this.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Let me ask you another question. What are our efforts to promote a regional approach here?

It seems to me that we can help prevent cocaine production from—if we can help prevent cocaine production from simply moving from one area of the region to another, in essence, the balloon effect, as it is frequently described, we would be far better off. The drug lords don't let the borders limit their vision of how to create the most profitable cocaine business in the world. We shouldn't let our vision in terms of borders be limited as well. What are we doing in that regard? Because this has become almost a bilateral effort here, us and Colombia. It seems to me that it needs to be far more multi-lateral for you to ultimately have success.

Mr. WALTERS. This chart shows—just takes the large potential production number that was in the previous chart and shows you the other two production countries. The reason we focused on Colombia is it is the center bar there. It was over 70 percent of the production. The production in the other two countries has either gotten smaller or remained roughly the same.

What is important about this—and I think your question is right on the mark—there has been no balloon. The attack has been coordinated with Bolivia and Peru. It is not perfect. These are not the most stable countries, as you may know, here. But we have not seen shift, which has always been the argument in the past, that what you are doing is chasing the same thing around, just different places. Any apparent progress is really only apparent.

The fact is, potential production—and the reason the Andean Regional Initiative has that name is, while Peru and Bolivia are lesser involved, we needed to deal with the problem in those places; and we have continued to do that. And thanks to those governments in difficult situations and with some fits and starts, they have not been a substitute for the progress we have made in Colombia. There is less cocaine in the world dramatically.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I understand it, that DC-3 over there can't be used to take former guerrillas with the FARC and take them to areas where they can help eradicate the coca and opium production. Is that correct?

Mr. WALTERS. If that is aid that we have provided, I believe our current state of our understanding of the rules is we cannot provide material support to people who are terrorists or have been terrorists.

Mr. BURTON. But the point is, these people have defected. They want to change. At the same time, if you look at this other picture over there, it shows us putting known terrorists on planes and moving them around.

It seems to me if we have people who want to get away from the FARC and want to become a productive member of society down there, we ought to change our policy if we know that they want to change and have them help with the eradication process. Right now, they have to get on buses and go through FARC-held territory. They are scared to death. If they get caught, they get killed immediately because they have left. And it seems to me that if we can utilize those people we ought to do it.

Mr. WALTERS. I agree with you, and we are working with the Colombians to come up with a common effort for the reintegration of those people who come in.

Mr. BURTON. Would you support changing that policy?

Mr. WALTERS. With two provisos, to be candid about this. One, the Colombians are about to settle their own decision about the reintegration and reconciliation law. We have been clear—and while this is an internal matter, it obviously affects our relationship. We want to be sure that people who have committed gross violations of human rights, people who are major drug traffickers, pay a price for that. We have not agreed to simply say, “Everybody gets to have amnesty.” So we want to be clear with the Colombians, when they make a decision—and they are about to do so in the next, I believe, 6 or 8 weeks—what that is before we go forward.

Mr. BURTON. Let me just interrupt you. Because I just got back from there with 10 other Congressmen, and they want to do it. They want to utilize these people in the eradication program, and you make them productive members of society to do it, and they can get paid. If you don’t do something with them, they are going to likely go back into the crime that they were involved in before.

So I just think, in a public hearing, that we ought to make this very clear. The Colombian military, the Colombian National Police, they want to take these guys and reintegrate them in society, and they want to be able to use that aircraft to take them out there to eradicate drugs.

I just hope that you will take that into consideration. Because if you are telling us today that they don’t want to do that, that isn’t the message they gave me just a week ago.

Mr. WALTERS. I want to make sure the record is clear. I didn’t say they don’t want to do that. And we want to do that. We want to reintegrate the people. But those people—we want to be sure also that the law of reintegration takes those who are serious offenders, who have committed massacres, gross violations of human rights. You also know that people who have been principally drug traffickers have sought to engage in membership in some of these groups in order to protect themselves from extradition to the United States. They are about to pass a law that will settle some of that, and we want to reintegrate these people.

Mr. BURTON. Let me just say that the Government of Colombia is not going to start putting people out who are mass killers. They are talking about people who want to come back into society, who are just the grunt men that worked for the FARC and the ELN.

And so when you say that you want to make sure that—you think that government down there wants to put mass killers back out in the field—they don't. They just want to make sure that they don't regress and go back and become a problem like they have been before.

Let me just ask you one more question, because I don't know that, if you take the time to answer this, I am going to be able to have one more question to ask.

There was a letter from Paul Kelly, the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, regarding our national drug policy. He says, additionally, the Office of National Drug Control Policy has to date resisted the use of mycoherbicides as international policy despite the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, general advocacy, and previous research.

So why have you resisted using mycoherbicides when they are supposed to kill the coca production and the poppy production for not just one time for a year or so but for 4 years? They are supposed to have a lot more effect than the current herbicides that are being used, and yet your agency is opposing them. Why?

Mr. WALTERS. Mycoherbicides have not been tested and proven to be effective. It will take several years to do so if they are proven to be effective. The herbicide we are now using, we just had a C-CAT OAS report saying it is safe for people and animals; it is effective in this area. We are using what is proven, what we can use. We are not using what isn't proven and we can't use.

Mr. BURTON. Are you supporting testing it?

Mr. WALTERS. We have not proceeded with testing because—

Mr. BURTON. Why?

Mr. WALTERS. Well, the other reason is the current herbicide that we are using is effective.

Two, as you know—

Mr. BURTON. But it only lasts for a short time. One year, as I understand it. And this will last for as many as 4 years, so you don't have to worry about the reemergence of the coca or poppy production.

Mr. WALTERS. Well, again, that isn't entirely proven.

Mr. BURTON. Well, why aren't you testing it then?

Mr. WALTERS. Well, also, because the controversy around mycoherbicides is such that it is likely to create an environment where we have an effective herbicide, concern about other agents being introduced in the environment. The Colombian Government has said it is not interested.

Again, it is not clear that this particular organism is specific to coca. That is what has to be tested. If we were to drop it and it is not specific to coca, it could cause considerable damage to the environment, which is, of course, here is delicate. And in order to start testing this in an open manner, it suggests that we are going to use it.

We have created a delicate acceptance in Colombia, in various organizations within our country and the world, the acceptance with a lot of hard work with people in this Committee of glyphosate as an effective and safe herbicide. It is the herbicide that is used to a greater extent in Colombia in regular agriculture as well as in the United States.

Again, when you spray a foreign substance in areas where people are farming, in proximity to people and farm animals, you have to be sure it is safe and you have to have—if you are going to do this in a democratic environment, you have to have them confident that it is safe. We have that now. I don't think we want to fix something that is not broken.

Mr. BURTON. You just don't want to test it.

Mr. WALTERS. No. I don't think it is prudent or promising to test it at this time.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Hyde put out a memorandum in anticipation of this particular hearing, and I am just going to quote a paragraph. I think it is important, because my own experience has been that this is absolutely accurate, and I think we have to reconfigure our interdiction effort. Let me read:

“We must also do better in our efforts at interdiction of the finished product in that there is a specific shortfall in this area. There has been a lost opportunity to effectively interdict processed drugs which are headed to the United States.”

I have spent some time at JIATF in Key West. They know where these fast boats are, they know where these drug runners are going, and it is frustrating, extremely frustrating. So whatever final plan that the Administration proposes has to address that particular need.

Let me just pick up on a point that was being pursued by Chairman Burton; and, again, I am referring to the memorandum put forth by Mr. Hyde, and I am quoting:

“Since April 2004, the U.S. Embassy in Bogota has faced the threat of Federal indictments for helping the demobilized ex-combatants' efforts in Colombia, and little or no aid money has been expended to help the Colombians with this massive challenge of 11,000 ex-combatants presumably to reintegrate them.”

Who is threatening the indictments, Mr. Walters?

Mr. WALTERS. Well, there is a concern that current law that bars U.S. aid—

Mr. DELAHUNT. But there is such a thing—I understand there is law. But there is such a thing as prosecutorial discretion. Can you imagine the Department of Justice presenting evidence before the grand jury against members of the American Embassy in Bogota if, as the Chairman suggests, that there was utilization of these ex-combatants? I can't. I can't even imagine that scenario. And I dare say that our interagency task force would resolve a lot of those problems. In many cases, prosecutors simply choose not to charge. We do that. That is done frequently when it comes to informants.

So, again, I would just make that observation.

Mr. WALTERS. If I could just say—

Mr. DELAHUNT. I don't have a lot of time. I am just sending a message through you.

Mr. WALTERS. I just want to say that there is no disagreement between us and I believe you or anybody else about the need to re-

integrate these people. There may be a degree of issue about how and what resources we use with the Colombians. They are using their resources and others. We want to reintegrate them. Nobody wants to reintegrate monsters. They want them punished.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We all agree with that. But there is no need to suggest that members of the American Embassy in Bogota are being threatened with indictment.

In any event, let me go on just to pursue another point that was made by Mr. Menendez.

In the past, you and others have made estimates in terms of when we would begin to see the availability and price of cocaine and heroin come down. I understand that is a difficult task, but we certainly haven't met those estimates based upon past statements by yourself and others.

Mr. WALTERS. In the case of opium, today in the United States, the price of heroin is up and the purity is down. So we are beginning to see a change.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is not what I am hearing from members of the various drug task forces in the northeast.

Mr. WALTERS. The averages that we see are not going to be the same in every single place. There is going to be an average of what we see nationally.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me tell you how I look at the overall picture, and if you can provide information. What are the numbers—and again, I understand this is an estimate—what are the numbers of cocaine addicts in the United States?

Mr. WALTERS. Our estimate is 1.5 million people are dependent or abusers of cocaine.

Mr. DELAHUNT. How many on heroin?

Mr. WALTERS. I think it is a little under a million.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Would you agree that those 2.5 million are responsible for a large portion?

Mr. WALTERS. This phenomenon, about 80 percent of the total consumption is by the heavy users; 20 percent of the actual number of users.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Okay. About 80 percent. At the beginning of Plan Colombia, my memory is I heard about the same numbers. And again, I supported Plan Colombia. I have some concerns, because I don't want this to be a continuing-without-end support of the United States Government. But I understand we do have a responsibility, both moral and otherwise, because of the fact that we are a consumer Nation. But I think that the estimate that is most critical—and I hope to see this in reports—is the reduction of number of addicts in this country, obviously, the inference being we can't spend enough dollars in terms of treatment in these addicts and we do have effective treatment programs as you are well aware that have been successful.

Mr. WALTERS. And I want to emphasize that you and the President agree on this point as do we, the over \$3 billion in treatment money we have requested, access to recovery program. The additional treatment money that we have requested is precisely because we know we need a balanced strategy to reduce this problem in a durable way. And we want to treat those addicts that are needed. We want to fund drug courts that will intervene and treat

people who come into the criminal justice system. Those are growing dramatically and we appreciate the support of that program. We want to also strengthen prevention and intervention in our health care system and education system. We are talking about one segment of what we believe—and Congress has helped us to construct a balanced strategy focusing on both demand and supply.

Chairman HYDE. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Director Walters, for doing an excellent job safeguarding our country and especially our children. I want to congratulate the Chairman for also inviting to testify Adolfo Franco and Secretary Noriega, who have been true fighters of freedom and democracy throughout the hemisphere. And reading your testimony, I agree with what you say about President Uribe. And you say the United States is a staunch ally of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe in our global war on terrorism. President Uribe understands that drug money finances the most powerful terrorist organizations in his country. And I think it is important for our constituents to make the connection between the funding that we give to Plan Colombia and how it impacts all of us here in the United States. Sixty percent of the heroin that is coming into the United States comes from Colombia. For example, I wanted to give you an opportunity to further explain the dramatic effect, the impact that this plan has had a positive effect in our country. Haven't we seen a 17 percent—and you had talked about it in your testimony—purity drop in heroin on our streets, according to the DEA? And if you could expand on our successful program thus far.

Mr. WALTERS. Thank you. The opportunity to stop the flow of these addictive poisons depends on the effectiveness with which we deal with both production movement, infrastructures, distribution. And what we are trying to do on those parts of the supply side is provide greater pressure. What this program shows is, at the production side of most of the heroin and the certainly the cocaine that comes into the United States, we can have an effect that many people thought was impossible. It depends on the alliances that we have. Depends on how well we implement the strategies across the areas of vulnerability. We think it is important not only to create eradication, but it is important that we continue as an example here with aerial eradication. I understand the earlier discussion of using some people for manual eradication. It is important to remember when we talk about that, and it may be worth doing some of that. The reason we are doing aerial, it is enormously more cost effective. To put people out in the field to cut down plants in places where people have guns, you have to protect them, you have to provide air cover and provide air lift and have Medivac capabilities and it is expensive and costly.

The reason they have been so successful in Colombia is this is a country that has been willing to spray. Spray is not something other countries are willing to do. Mexico is another one that has done this and it has had dramatic reductions in marijuana and opium in Mexico as a result. It is very important to say the United States is the market for these products.

Now there are other markets in this hemisphere, Brazil, Mexico, other countries that are transit or shipping points. We are the tar-

get. So whether you see the amount in some categories remain stable, remember, all of that or the bulk of all of that is heading for users in the United States. What we were poised for in the latter part of the 1990s was a supply-driven explosion of availability and use of cocaine in the United States that we hadn't seen since the 1980s.

We now can see that in the pattern of production and shipment. What happened is we knocked that wave down by effective efforts to disrupt the planting and growing of coca and reducing the productive cycles in the crops by eradicating them aggressively despite the fact that FARC and other groups forced peasants to replant what they have eradicated. You will see until the system breaks, you will see an effort to replant, even if you spray it every year, but we are breaking that system down as the Colombians also take the territory and cut off that control.

In addition, we have had interdiction capacities driven by intelligence that have dropped another 250 metric tons last year. That is an enormously important change for what would be the drug availability and drug use in the United States without these tools.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And Mr. Chairman, just for 1 minute, Mr. Delahunt had talked about JIATF—and if the Members have not had an opportunity to tour that center in Key West, I recommend it. It is incredible what these unbelievable patriots are doing in fighting the bad guys. Thank you.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I have been reading through the material and I am having a difficult time trying to come up with the answer to: Are we winning or are we losing? And maybe you could just tell me in simple terms. In Colombia—and of course, perhaps, then we have to mention Peru and maybe Honduras—is there less production cultivation or less in 2004 than it was in 2003?

Mr. WALTERS. In the region, the three growing countries, Peru, Colombia and Bolivia, as an aggregate had a decline. Colombia had a decline in production although not in total hectares. Again this is a bush that can be picked three or four times a year. When you eradicate it, it can be replanted. You can get one crop if you do it early in the 12-month cycle. It is possible to have a two-thirds reduction in the capacity of a given area to grow while still having the same area. And so, again, they are forcing replanting here, but that changes production. So what you see is there was a decline in Bolivian production.

There was a decline in Peruvian production as well as a decline in Colombian production, and that is what is important. Again, are we winning, losing? Let me simply say, historic declines in the availability of both opium products and coca products, cocaine out of this region, never before seen and to the good for everybody. What is the other evidence? Remember the 1980s when Pablo Escobar declared war on the Colombian Government because he was such a rich and powerful guy? The FARC, the AUC, paramilitaries, the armed groups were going to crush this government and take it over. Today, every single one of those groups are in talks for peace. You don't look for an exit strategy when you are winning. You look for an exit strategy when you are losing. I don't

think there is any better evidence here and there, this is a remarkable progress and an enormous success. Is there more to do? Yes. We have to follow through. And the history, I think, of drug policy, generally, going back to the Reagan Administration, we can make change. We don't follow through.

You have given us a tool that is remarkably powerful. I ask you to continue to support it. We will drive it home and kill this beast. It will not be the monster that is eating our citizens and children and has been for the last 2 decades. For the first time, we have that opportunity and we have to do something that sometimes is hard. And we have to be able to follow through.

Mr. PAYNE. Now that sounds good. So then—it is complicated, so I don't want to repeat what you said, but take the other regions of the world, what is happening in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in those other growing crop cultivation areas? Is that increasing or decreasing, in your opinion?

Mr. WALTERS. I was in Afghanistan about 2½ weeks ago. We don't have a precise estimate of the crops for this year. Last year's crop was big and alarming. We have been putting security forces, development projects, as well as eradication and interdiction forces in place after the war there. I visited some of the provincial efforts there and talked to President Karzai and U.S. officials there. There is some reason to believe that the crop will be smaller by some significant amount.

We have more to do there and that is an enormous source of heroin and opium products in the world. But I think there, too, while we are at an earlier stage—we are not at the 50-year program, we are at the 2nd- and 3rd-year program here of standing up democratic institutions in a much more devastated and poor environment. But there is promise that for the first time in history, we can change the face of opium and heroin production in the world because that part of the world has been an intense source for decades and we haven't been able to reach it because of the relationships and the problems.

It will not be easy. We will need sustained support. You have given us support in the last several weeks. We need to follow through. It will take some time to build those capacities, but I think the optimistic thing is, we have a President and a country that sees its democratic future tied to getting on top of this problem of drugs as well as the problem of terror.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Weller.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Director Walters. Thank you for your service. You have an important job and we want to work with you. As I mentioned earlier, I support Plan Colombia. I believe we are making progress and seeing success as we work with our partners in the hemisphere's second oldest democracy. We are partnering with the democratically-elected government and we want to strengthen that democracy. The Speaker mentioned that cocaine and heroin coming from Colombia kills Americans, but that trafficking is killing Colombians and that trafficking is financing international terrorism, not just in Latin America, but throughout the world.

When I have the opportunity to talk with leaders in the region, both in Colombia as well as in the Caribbean and elsewhere in

Central America and South America, there is a concern. And the concern is that while we are investing in Plan Colombia and demonstrating bipartisan commitment in Plan Colombia, we are withdrawing assets elsewhere. And in looking into this, Committee staff research has said that because of our other international commitments, because of homeland security concerns, that since September 2001, U.S. military marine patrol aircraft have been brought back home and their participation in our counterdrug interdiction efforts in both the Caribbean and Pacific have been cut by over 70 percent.

The staff noted a staggering 71 percent reduction in marine patrol aircraft in the last 2 years alone and that other civilian assets such as the U.S. Customs P-3s, while still available to help, are only used on a random basis and not full-time. How do you respond to this?

Mr. WALTERS. The availability of long-range maritime patrol aircraft has been a problem. Some of it has been other demands, but also has been a problem, as you may know, on the Navy P-3s that have been the air frame we have used here. There has been an anticipated shortening of their life span due to some structural problems, so we have had to face the use of them down in a variety of dimensions. What we have done to try to adjust for that is put more Customs aircraft and the Customs Service has been willing to stand forward and use Customs C-130s here. We have tried Coast Guard C-130s. We have also tried to use the Department of Homeland Security P-3s that they have that do have the ability to fly here more aggressively by using—now that the demand is slightly changed—AWACS capability from military E-3s to do the detection for air over Colombia as a part of our air bridge denial program, as part of the monitoring program. So we could use the longer range P-3s that Homeland Security has into maritime control to help us take information, find and track, as you know, the individual targets to a maritime take down by—

Mr. WELLER. You are talking about a temporary solution. What is the permanent solution of filling that vacuum that is in the Caribbean and Pacific as we try to interdict the drugs? The Plan Colombia, we are right there in Colombia and with our homeland efforts through our State, Federal and local law enforcement, we have got tremendous efforts under way, but there is a vacuum in between. What is the Administration's permanent solution to what is a serious problem? And we are in a position where, because you mentioned that because of the mechanical condition of our aircraft that we have reduced the use of aircraft by 71 percent over the last 2 years. What is the permanent solution of fixing that problem?

Mr. WALTERS. We are doing a combination here because of the multiple demands on aircraft and long lead times. We are seeking more flight hours for Customs' long-range aircraft that can be used here on a dedicated and detailed basis. Admiral Utley, who will testify after me, can give you some of the detail about how we are structuring in the short-term and the mid-term. We are also trying to expand again the capacities within—again, if we go into a higher state of alert, some of these aircraft are going to be pulled back to mainland United States.

Mr. WELLER. Where will this fit in the third border initiative?

Mr. WALTERS. Again, we are trying to integrate this into the existing ability to do interdiction on a sustained basis. But we believe we have an effective fix for the foreseeable future and that the tentativeness here is that these are going to be multiple-tasked assets, and it is possible that some of them will be pulled back depending on threat situations, both in terms of the military and homeland security. There is no other way around that, because they are assets that are limited and have the capacities that we need in other dimensions. But right now, we can program capacities to surge and we can program more hours. But I am trying to be honest with you. If the threat changes, those programmings will change based on urgent need. Again, I will point out as a backdrop here, despite those problems, it is not that we seize a little more than before, we and the allies have seized more cocaine than anyone has ever believed possible to seize in history through interdiction.

The old argument used to be we get 10 percent. We are way beyond 10 percent because not only have we seized 250 metric tons going to the United States, allies that have been working with us have seized another 250 metric tons going to other places in the world. Our capacities have been gained by intelligence, not patrolling and looking through the space and water, but of knowing more precisely where they are going to be and when they are going to be there and being able to target it. We hope efficiency, as it continues, will help us. I can't tell that we are going to be everywhere always when we want to be, because the demand on these assets are going to be contingent.

Chairman HYDE. The gentleman's time has expired. I am going to let this witness go, because we have a third panel and I'm anxious to hear their testimony. To those folks who did not get a chance to ask a question of the Director, we will start off with you on the next panel so you will be first asking your questions there.

So with the indulgence and with our thanks, Director Walters, the third panel. It is a pleasure to welcome two former staffers of this Committee.

Adolfo Franco is the Assistant Administrator for Latin America and Caribbean Bureau at USAID. His devotion to the region is demonstrated by his extensive travels and program development. We thank you for being with us, Adolfo.

Roger Noriega is Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at State. Prior to his confirmation, he was American Ambassador to the Organization of American States from 2001 to 2003. We are very glad to hear your testimony today, Mr. Noriega.

Mr. Jonathan Farrar is Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement at the State Department and works on Latin America programs. Mr. Farrar is a career member of the foreign service and has served throughout Latin America. We welcome you, Mr. Farrar.

Admiral Utley is here today as United States Interdiction Coordinator. He oversees the interdiction of illegal drugs entering the U.S. and tracking and severing connections between drug trafficking and terrorism. We thank you for being with us, Admiral Utley. The witness statements will be entered into the record in full.

I would ask each of you to condense your full statement as close to 5 minutes as humanly possible and then we will get to the questions. And we will start with you, Mr. Franco.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. FRANCO. Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman, and it is wonderful to be back in front of the International Relations Committee. I prefer it up at the dais. And thank you for the invitation.

Chairman HYDE. We miss you, Adolfo.

Mr. FRANCO. Thank you, Mr. Menendez, for your leadership on issues related to not only Colombia, but Latin America as a whole. Before I begin, Mr. Chairman, I do want to echo the statements that have been made with regard to your leadership, that of Mr. Menendez, Mr. Lantos and the Speaker, among other Members of the Committee not only on Plan Colombia but the welfare of Latin America as a whole. And we are deeply appreciative on behalf of President Bush and the Administration.

I have submitted, Mr. Chairman, a complete statement for the record and with your permission, I will summarize my statement here today. Since Plan Colombia was launched 4½ years ago under the United States Andean Counternarcotics Initiative, USAID has played a critical role in improving state presence in rural areas, strengthening democracy and increasing local government's ability to deliver essential services to the poor.

To complement this effort, USAID is working hard to create licit economic opportunities to improve social conditions and to resettle millions of internally displaced people. I might add, Colombia is the only country in the hemisphere that has internally displaced people.

Mr. Chairman, USAID assistance is disrupting the cultivation of coca and opium poppy by providing alternative licit livelihoods and thus contributing to the achievement of President Bush's vision for a more secure, stable and prosperous Western Hemisphere. We are providing marginalized Colombians with renewed hope in the values and benefits of democracy and the legitimacy and reliability of state-provided services under the Uribe administration. USAID has assisted more than 55,000 families who have chosen to abandon illicit coca production and making a transition to a licit alternative livelihood. We are working to enhance the trade capacity and foment economic stability of the country through private and public partnerships. Further, USAID assistance has improved the efficiency of the justice sector and provided access to millions of poor Colombians to the judicial system in that country. We have strengthened the ability of the Government of Colombia's quick response to human rights violations, something that we take very seriously as they do.

Moreover, USAID has helped 2.3 million internally displaced people with educational job skills, training and access to social services. These previously neglected communities now have access to clean water, health and education facilities, workforce skills improvement and new and reliable and growing markets both nation-

ally and internationally. But Mr. Chairman, today we find ourselves at an important crossroad. President Uribe seeks our support to demobilize the united self-defense forces of Colombia, the AUC, a paramilitary foreign terrorist organization that has been responsible for thousands of deaths, human rights violations and much of the illicit drug production that is now exported from Colombia. The success of this program could initiate additional peaceful negotiations with other terrorist organizations in Colombia and lead to further reductions in human rights violations, illicit drug activities and terrorism, something we all seek and support in the President's national defense strategy.

Already, 5,000 individuals have been demobilized by the Colombians and reintergrated into society. The Government of Colombia has made impressive gains in reducing rates of murders, massacres and kidnapping. However, as experience with other demobilization efforts elsewhere have demonstrated, a strong reintegration program is necessary to prevent a backsliding of the demobilized excombatants into a life of crime and violence.

Another important issue is the need for the Colombian Congress to pass an effective truth, justice and reparations law currently under deliberation. This would balance the incentives for the paramilitaries to demobilize while simultaneously providing the justice needed for Colombian society to heal.

Mr. Chairman, our participation in the demobilization program could also serve as a catalyst for other donors, while at the same time, reaffirming the legitimacy of the peace process. Plan Colombia has made a critical difference, as Director Walters has testified, on the war against drugs and terror. In all frankness, much more needs to be done. While Colombia continues to make progress against those who would like to use its fertile land for illicit coca production, there are weak institutions and lack of state presence. This continues to be a constant problem and something we need to continue to support President Uribe in his efforts to restore state presence throughout the country.

Unquestionably, the Uribe administration remains committed to the goal of ending illegal narcotics production that is robbing Colombia of its promise to be one of the most prosperous and peaceful countries of the hemisphere. As the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated during her visit to Colombia just 2 weeks ago:

“You don't stop in mid stream on something that has been effective. It took a long time to get this program started and it is going to take a while to eliminate the problem.”

It is my hope, Mr. Chairman, that your demonstrated leadership on this Committee and your wonderful service to the Congress and our country and that of the Speaker and other Members, that the President will be able to count on your continuing support in helping to protect democracy and strengthen the institutions of democracy in Colombia while serving the vulnerable populations that have been victim to drug production.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Franco.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Franco follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“PLAN COLOMBIA—ACCOMPLISHMENTS”

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, it is a pleasure again to have the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the House International Relations Committee. The last time that I appeared before this Subcommittee, on March 9, 2005, I took the opportunity to update you on the state of democracy in the Western Hemisphere, cited examples of how the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is contributing to the consolidation of democracy in the region, and identified areas of growing concern that unless addressed now, will undermine democratic gains in the region in the coming years. Today, I would like to brief you on how USAID is contributing to the United States Government efforts to promote peace, democracy and a secure environment, alleviate poverty, and improve the criminal justice system as essential parts of its counternarcotics program in Colombia.

Mr. Chairman, our assistance is working and we are disrupting the cultivation of coca and opium poppy, thus contributing to the achievement of the President's vision for a secure, stable and prosperous Western Hemisphere. I would also like to brief you on opportunities for further targeted USAID assistance to the Government of Colombia (GOC) in its efforts and demonstrated resolve to eliminate the scourge of illegal narcotics that continues to threaten not only Colombia's social and economic fabric, but also hemispheric stability.

I. Major Achievements to Date

The Government of Colombia continues its relentless attack on coca and poppy cultivation and the trade in cocaine and heroin. After years of steady increases, cocaine production in the Andes is, for the third straight year, decreasing. An aggressive program of eradication, begun in earnest with the election in mid-2002 of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, has cut Colombia's potential cocaine production by one-third, since 2001.

Started in Fiscal Year 2001 under “Plan Colombia”, the United States Government's Andean Counternarcotics Initiative (ACI) has three goals: 1) disrupt the production and trafficking of illicit drugs in the Andean region; 2) strengthen law enforcement and judicial institutions that combat narcotrafficking; and 3) develop viable alternatives to illegal drug production. Working in close partnership with President Uribe's administration, USAID's assistance has helped to expand and improve state presence, strengthen democracy, help local governments deliver essential services to marginalized Colombians, create licit economic opportunities, improve social conditions, and resettle internally displaced people. In 2001, it was estimated that 125,000 to 150,000 families were involved in illicit drug production in Colombia.

Today, I am pleased to report on several significant accomplishments of the USAID program. The program has assisted more than 55,000 rural families who have abandoned their coca fields and are now able to participate in licit income-generating activities throughout Colombia. To help program participants benefit more fully from their decision to disassociate themselves from nefarious and illegal drug-related activities, USAID has completed more than 900 social and productive infrastructure projects, and strengthened the administrative, financial, accounting and auditing capabilities in 90 municipalities to help them better serve their communities. This has given remotely situated and largely neglected communities renewed hope and security in the values and benefits of democracy, and the legitimacy and reliability of state-provided services, as they now have greater access to clean water; health delivery systems; education facilities for both adults and children; workforce skills improvement; and reliable markets for their high value agricultural goods. This has occurred in many areas where illegal armed groups used to be the *de facto* authorities and previously provided only minimal levels of social services. At today's prices, the legal agricultural economy in the coca growing regions is larger than the coca economy.

This milestone achievement has been made possible through USAID's approach to fostering expansion of trade in licit economic opportunities as an alternative to illicit crops. We have accomplished this by strengthening local and national institutions, NGOs, and civil society; establishing productive infrastructure; implementing profitable productive activities; promoting the sustainable management of natural resources; and helping the private sector capitalize on market opportunities to expand its trade linkages.

In this context, building trade capacity is vital to bringing economic stability to Colombia. Under the Colombian Agribusiness Partnership Program (CAPP), USAID is providing resources to finance a range of competitive agro-processing and cultivation expansion activities, and anticipates leveraging upwards of \$200 million in private sector financing overall. This program is also supporting securitized bond issuances designed to provide sustainable capital market financing for long-term commercial crop production and processing projects. Additionally, under the Colombia Forestry Project, USAID is working with farmers and agro-forestry businesses to develop employment-intensive and environmentally-sustainable, vertically integrated forest-based enterprises.

USAID's administration of justice program is helping to increase the efficiency of Colombia's judicial sector, institutionalize a system of fair trials and provide greater access to justice for millions of poor Colombians. The program has established 38 Justice Houses (Casas de Justicia) to increase the access to justice and government services, and have administered more than 3.1 million cases, easing the burden on the over-stretched judicial system. Strikingly, the Department of Justice and USAID administration of justice initiatives have established 35 new oral trial courtrooms and trained over 1,300 lawyers, judges and public defenders in the new accusatory criminal justice system procedures which are designed to reduce impunity, hasten the judicial process, significantly reduce the cost of trying a case, and enhance the overall credibility and transparency of the judicial system.

To protect program participants from harassment, physical harm and abuses by narco-traffickers and illegal armed groups, USAID assisted with the establishment of an "Early Warning System" (EWS) which monitors potential conditions that might trigger human rights violations and thereby provides warnings of impending threats. To date, more than 350 alerts have been issued by the EWS which have resulted in 200 responses by Colombian Government agencies. To assist the Government of Colombia in responding quickly to allegations of human rights violations, USAID has helped the Government of Colombia establish 11 new mobile satellite units, several of which are located in the most remote areas of the country. In addition, the USAID human rights protection program has protected more than 4,300 people, including mayors, local human rights officials, council members, municipal human rights workers, medical workers, and journalists. Furthermore, 87 offices under threat of violence have been armored and made safe.

Together, these projects are creating a civil and human rights protection infrastructure—and a climate of respect—so that the Colombian Government may be able to prevent or be more responsive to human rights violations. By providing protection to these individuals and offices, we are playing an increasingly important role in ensuring the ability of Colombia's leaders, human rights defenders, and local officials, to conduct activities in as secure an environment as possible.

Another area in which USAID's involvement has been important to President Uribe's bold efforts to combat the influence of the drug lords is in providing assistance to vulnerable groups, particularly Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and victims of drug-related violence. This assistance, administered by USAID and the State Department's Bureau for Population, Migration, and Refugees includes food, shelter, psychosocial assistance, health services, community strengthening, income and employment generation, access to education and workforce skills training, and rehabilitation of child ex-combatants. Our assistance is also strengthening the Colombian agency responsible for IDP coordination, protection, and border monitoring, the Social Security Network. The program has an impressive nation-wide presence and runs more than 300 projects in 25 departments and 200 municipalities throughout the country.

Colombia's IDP problem is complex and one of the worst in the world. The Government of Colombia wants as many IDPs as possible to return to their home communities. The USAID program facilitates the process by: 1) restoring critical infrastructure in their home communities; 2) providing assistance to return home; and 3) helping them to resettle in a new community if returning home is not an option. Between 2001 and 2005, USAID's IDP program has helped more than 2.2 million persons by providing viable livelihood and employment options. This also discourages families from resorting to the cultivation of illicit crops. More than 52,000 jobs have been created for IDPs and for youth at risk of displacement or recruitment by illegal armed groups.

IDP programs have provided vocational and skill development training for nearly 30,000 IDPs to participate in the formal economy. More than 800,000 displaced and vulnerable people have received quality health services, and tens of thousands can now read and write. Wider access to health and education is key to reducing the inequality between those who are benefiting from democracy and those who are not. Finally, more than 20,000 families that were willing and able to safely return to

their original communities have been assisted, and more than 2,300 child ex-combatants have been assisted in their economic and social reintegration process.

II. USAID's Assistance with the GOC's Demobilization Strategy

Colombia is at a crossroad in its efforts to greatly diminish the negative affects of narco-terrorism and establish itself as a peaceful nation whose citizens may benefit from sustainable social and economic development. Recent events and progress in the demobilization and reintegration of the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) represent a unique opportunity for both the Government of Colombia and the U.S. Government. With our support, the Colombian Government has the chance to create a lasting peace and foment stability within the region through the dismantling of a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) that has been responsible for thousands of deaths and a significant portion of the illicit drugs that are exported from Colombia to the U.S. The Colombians want us to be a partner in this endeavor. President Bush gave President Uribe his pledge to continue supporting the Government of Colombia's efforts to defeat the narco-traffickers and terrorists when they met in Cartagena earlier this year. Success with the demobilization program will tangibly contribute to the Global War on Terrorism—the United States Government's overriding foreign policy priority.

In 2003, the Colombian Government and the AUC signed an accord that called for complete demobilization of the AUC by December 31, 2005. To date, 4,820 individuals have been collectively demobilized and are participating in the 18–24 month long reintegration process. The process is working and this success is being reflected by some truly remarkable results. For example, Medellin, one of the first cities to participate in the demobilization program, has experienced a 68% decline in the murder rate since 2002, with the reduction being double in areas that contain demobilized ex-combatants as compared to areas that do not. And over 800 of the 850 ex-combatants are working full time for the municipality, and many of them are also receiving formal education or training.

In 2002, Congress provided expanded authorities for the United States Government program in Colombia recognizing that narco-trafficking and terrorism are intertwined. The AUC has been deeply involved in both. The Colombian Government is currently finalizing negotiations with the central command of the AUC for the demobilization of an additional 15,000 terrorists by the end of 2005. The impact of this on United States Government's counter-narcotic and anti-terrorism objectives in Colombia could be very significant.

The benefits from supporting a successful AUC reincorporation process greatly out-weigh the risk or consequences of a faulty or failed one. If the demobilized return to a life of crime, violence and terrorism, then the sharp drop in murders, massacres, and kidnapping during the Uribe administration will stall, if not reverse. A reversal in such security trends would seriously undermine President Uribe and his Democratic Security Policy. In turn, such a failure would damage Uribe's ability to continue to pursue his aggressive fight against drugs and terror in Colombia. Further, one of our strongest allies in Latin America would have suffered a serious setback, directly affecting the prospects for continued success in meeting critical United States Government foreign policy interests in an increasingly unstable region.

If successful, the Demobilization and Reintegration process with the AUC could also serve as a confidence builder for future peace negotiations with all the illegal armed groups and contribute to a further reduction in the human rights violations and in the internal displacement of populations resulting from the ongoing Colombian armed conflict as well as drug production and trafficking. Already there are talks underway between the Colombian Government and the National Liberation Army (ELN), another designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO), and Colombian officials are planning for a possible demobilization of an additional 3,000 illegal combatants this year.

The Government of Colombia has pledged over \$85 million for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants during 2004–2007, but additional resources, along with USAID "know-how" are needed to assure its success. Employment generation and reintegration into productive civil society is an essential component to making this a successful and legitimate demobilization and reintegration process. The demobilized combatants need to make a successful transition to full time employment or they are at risk of falling into violence, crime, gangs, and other illicit activities. USAID has been providing planning assistance to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, support to the Organization of American States (OAS) Monitoring and Verification Commission, initial funding for the Tracking and Monitoring System (TMES) and the Orientation and Reference Centers for the demobilized, and technical assistance to improve the vetting of ex-combatants. We have moved forward with this preliminary institutional and infrastructure support for the

demobilization and reintegration process and would ensure that any additional support is fully consistent with United States law. An overall policy determination as to whether, and to what extent, to expand our support to the process is under careful consideration. Any demobilization structure needs to preserve certain vital principles, such as the idea of assuring that there is no impunity for major human rights violators and major drug traffickers.

Another issue that has been pending since the last time I was able to consult with the Committee in regard to demobilization and reintegration is the status of the Truth, Justice, and Reparations Law, currently being debated by the Colombian Congress. The Colombian Government has been working very assiduously to draft a law that balances incentives for the paramilitaries to demobilize while simultaneously providing the justice that is needed for Colombian society to heal from the atrocities committed by the paramilitaries. The balance between peace and justice is a delicate and challenging one. However, as has been stated in several high level Government of Colombia-United States Government meetings, this must be a Colombian solution.

The United States should not be alone in supporting the demobilization program, but our participation could serve as an example for other donor nations, while at the same time bringing a sense of legitimacy to the process. We have been working through diplomatic channels to foster increased European Union and bilateral interest in the paramilitary demobilization and reintegration process. Secretary Rice also confirmed, in her April visit to Colombia, the importance of the demobilization process and securing additional international community support. This is a message we have been engaged in delivering, and that is beginning to bear fruit, as demonstrated by the donation of \$957,000 from the Netherlands to the OAS Monitoring and Verification Commission and the sponsorship by Sweden of one full-time OAS staff member. However, the request for further international donor support needs to continue at all levels, and we will work closely with the Department of State and others to ensure that this is accomplished.

III. Future Opportunities for USAID's Assistance

Implementation of Plan Colombia over the past two and a half years has been greatly expedited and assisted by the determined efforts of President Uribe. The achievements cited earlier, in remote regions of Colombia with little or no government presence are especially noteworthy because of the difficult and dangerous terrain that USAID works in and the time it takes to effect change in social and economic behaviors. Plan Colombia is bearing fruit. The fruit of our efforts and the determined efforts of the Government of Colombia are impairing the ability of Colombia's drug lords to influence, corrupt, and entrap generally law-abiding people into a crime-filled world of narcotics and terrorism. But in all candor, there is much more to be done.

In his remarks at an international donors' conference for Colombia held February 3-4, 2005, in Cartagena, Colombia, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios noted the GOC's political will and commitment to coca eradication and asserted that the global community, by working together, can provide the appropriate types and levels of assistance Colombia needs to end the drug trade and strengthen "legitimate" state institutions in a manner that protects the rights and freedoms of its citizens. He added that the United States will continue to provide assistance on alternative development programs to expand opportunities for social, economic, and democratic progress by farmers and other individuals "caught up in illicit drug cultivation."

The Strategic Importance of Colombia to the United States: Colombia is the second oldest democracy in the Western Hemisphere and occupies an important geopolitical and strategic position. Colombia has been an important United States Government ally and trading partner for decades and currently about 38% of its export trade is with the United States. Colombia is the largest market for U.S. agricultural exports in South America and is also an important market for U.S. exports of machinery, chemicals and plastics. Our major imports from Colombia include minerals, oil, gas, coal, precious stones, coffee, cut flower and woven apparel. Energy supplies from Colombia help reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern oil and the United States has about \$2.8 billion of foreign direct investment in Colombia, primarily concentrated in the manufacturing, information and finance sectors.

But our ties are not just economic. We have also joined with Colombia in a common struggle against the transnational threats of narco-trafficking and terrorism. Colombia supplies more than 80% of the cocaine and much of the heroin entering the United States which makes the aggressive disruption of the illicit drug trade a top United States Government priority. Terrorism in Colombia both supports and draws resources from the narcotics industry as well as from kidnapping and extortion rings which threaten both Colombians and Americans. The United States Gov-

ernment cannot afford to allow tens of thousands of well-armed and trained terrorists to operate unimpeded in this hemisphere.

Plan Colombia's Strategy: The strategy behind Plan Colombia was simple: economic development, security and peace are inextricably linked. Plan Colombia argued that strengthening the capacity of the State, especially the military capability, is key to the success of any national plan. The threats posed by narcotics traffickers and terrorists when Plan Colombia was envisioned arose from a combination of: insufficient resources, lack of political force, and the debilitating impact of a weak justice system. Plan Colombia was also based on a belief that taking away money generated by drugs reduces the war-making capacity of narco-traffickers, criminals, and terrorist groups and thereby reduces the level of violence which enhances the prospects for peace.

Lessons Learned:

Colombian and United States Government experiences during the last four years have shown that Plan Colombia's basic tenets were sound, but our understanding of narco-trafficker's motivations and behavior has grown substantially during the past four years as we have implemented Plan Colombia and the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) in Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. We have learned that illegal groups are drawn toward areas where there is no effective state presence, and that Governments must assert control over their entire national territory and extend essential government services to citizens in isolated areas if the narco-traffickers and terrorists are to be defeated.

Military and police assistance programs are an essential first step toward establishing such Government control and the presence that provides basic security which is essential for economic and social development. But police and military assistance alone are not sufficient. A national Government presence must include support from national institutions that are responsible for helping local communities gain access to basic services: security, justice, health, education, and essential infrastructure. The institutional strengthening side of counternarcotics programs is consequently an essential complement to military and police assistance if the national Government is to establish a relationship with people in isolated rural areas and gain their allegiance after having ignored their needs for decades. Security and essential services must then be linked with economic and employment assistance in order to make eradication of drug crops sustainable.

Public diplomacy has long been recognized as an important component of the United States Government's counternarcotics efforts, but we have seen during the past several years that our public diplomacy programs must confront narco-trafficker propaganda to ensure that alternative development programs are well understood by the average citizen and that people know how narco-trafficking harms not only the people who use drugs, but also harms their country, economy, environment, justice system, and democracy.

Another important lesson of the past four years is that narco-trafficking has an important regional dimension and is not simply a national problem. This regional dimension results from narco-traffickers' tendency of seeking to move to new areas when they are confronted by eradication and interdiction pressures. In the last two years the traffickers have been unable to make up for production losses in Colombia by opening new areas in that country or developing a production industry in neighboring countries. The so-called "balloon effect" of coca and cocaine production has not occurred on a large scale.

The Andean Counternarcotics Initiative's regional focus has meant that progress in Colombia has not been offset by increases in the rest of the Andes. There has been a net decrease in the total area cultivated in these countries for each of the past three years, including two successive drops in Peru and modest increases in Bolivia. Only trace amounts of coca are cultivated in neighboring Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, and Brazil.

The Need for Continuation of Regional Programs The reduction of coca cultivation in the region has been most significant in Colombia. Aerial eradication has impressively reduced regional production capacity and has raised pressure on traffickers to bear the cost of replanting and field reconstitution. It will be necessary to carefully watch developments in newly developing coca areas in Colombia and possibly Peru to assure that traffickers do not migrate their production and establish a marketing infrastructure elsewhere. As the final year of Plan Colombia comes to an end, however, success is measurable and is a good reason to redouble efforts on programs that have caused traffickers the greatest damage.

Narco-traffickers and terrorists have demonstrated that they are a dangerous and resilient force. Our successes to now should stiffen our resolve to confront the traf-

fickers, who are fighting back and reconstituting fields more rapidly than we have seen in the past.

For the out years we are working across the government to define the best strategy to build upon our experiences during the past four years with Plan Colombia and the ACI. These experiences suggest that the following concepts, programs, or activities should be part of our follow-on efforts:

- State presence should be expanded with support from national institutions.
- Military and police assistance to guarantee that the Government of Colombia maintains control over key production areas and lines of communication to disrupt large-scale coca and cocaine production.
- Counternarcotics support for interdiction and eradication programs that disrupt illicit drug production and increase the risks and costs of narco-trafficking activities.
- Alternative development support to increase licit employment and stimulate income earning activities.
- Private sector support to improve policies and increase investment and trade opportunities.
- Administration of justice activities that reduce impunity and increase access to justice.
- Human rights programs and activities as an essential complement to military, police and judicial sector assistance
- Humanitarian assistance and peace initiatives as an important outgrowth of expanded state presence.

Priorities for Continued Colombian Assistance: President Bush and Secretary of State Rice have both affirmed the United States Government's commitment to continue supporting Colombia in its efforts to defeat and eliminate narco-traffickers and terrorists. The essential elements of future United States Government assistance are in the initial stages of discussion, but will likely include many of the same concepts, programs and activities identified above as part of a multi-year, regional, counternarcotics strategy. One additional area that may form part of the United States Government's future assistance to Colombia is support for Colombia's demobilization and reintegration program. All of these topics and areas will need to be discussed thoroughly with the Congress and reviewed by the entire interagency community in order to establish the framework for continued assistance to Colombia and the Andean Region.

IV. Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by stating that while we have made significant progress in achieving our objectives under Plan Colombia, the job is not done. We must continue our efforts. President Uribe's courageous efforts and commitment to disrupt and destroy the illegal drug industry are clear. However, solving Colombia's multiple and interrelated problems including weak institutions is going to require time and patience. We must stay the course, and apply lessons learned for continued and increased effectiveness of our integrated development program. As Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice stated during her visit to Colombia two weeks ago, "You don't stop in midstream on something that has been very effective. It took a long time to get this program started, and it's going to take a while to eliminate the problem."

USAID's counternarcotics development strategy must be dynamic and able to respond quickly to changes in narcotrafficker operations. Sustainable income creation means that economic opportunities must be diversified beyond the coca field and employment must be expanded where it is cost effective to do so. Land, labor and capital markets must be integrated to support the shift away from illicit activities. We must continue our efforts to help Colombia build its trade capacity and take advantage of more open markets. President Uribe is the ideal partner with whom to work, combining political will, vision, operational creativity, and the necessary resources for the difficult task ahead. We must also continue to support efforts in citizen rights, participation, and rule of law.

I know that we can count on the continuing support of this Committee and the Congress to foment sustainable development in the Andean region and combat the scourge of narco-trafficking and terrorism in this hemisphere.

Thank you.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Noriega.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROGER F. NORIEGA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. NORIEGA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to be before this Committee again to talk about an important program in U.S. foreign policy in the Americas. I want to first acknowledge, as those witnesses have before me, the contribution and the leadership of this Congress in this important success story, in this important program of supporting our neighbors in the Andean region fighting the narcotrafficking threat that not only undermines their security and institutions, but constitutes a threat to our well-being as well.

United States policy supports the Colombian Government's efforts to defend and strengthen its democratic institutions, promote respect for human rights and the rule of law, intensify our counter-narcotics efforts, foster social and economic development, and address immediate humanitarian needs.

We seek to help Colombia end the threats to its democracy posed by narcotics trafficking and terrorism. President Uribe, through his Democratic Security Strategy, is imposing the rule of law in Colombia and seeking to ensure that there is a presence of the state throughout Colombian territory. That has improved the quality of life for all Colombians and it is also denying territory to and disrupting the activity of narcotraffickers. That obviously has an extraordinary and positive impact on the quality of life of the citizens, and our goal is to consolidate the gains we have made and to sustain them.

While there is steady progress toward our goal, it is important to recall that it has come at a cost to Americans and Colombians in terms of lives and security. In addition, last February 13 marked the 2-year anniversary of the seizure by the FARC of three American contractors after their plane crashed, as well as the murder of the American pilot and Colombian colleague. We appreciate the continued efforts made by the Colombian Government for their recovery. Our hostages' safe recovery remains a high priority for both of our governments.

I must mention a serious matter that is still unfolding. We continue to monitor the investigation by Colombian and United States authorities into the developments last week in which U.S. military trainers on temporary duty in Colombia were alleged to be involved in trafficking in ammunition. This involved two of these individuals. I can assure the Committee that all affected agencies take these allegations very, very seriously. We recognize what is at stake in our relationship and in terms of the respect for the rule of law.

We and the Colombian Government intend to get to the bottom of these serious allegations. Despite our progress in Colombia, Mr. Chairman—and I believe it is important to recognize that this is an important success story for American foreign policy—there are still continuing challenges. These include the promotion of human rights, the consolidation of our trade with the region and Colombia's demobilization efforts.

While there is no question that there has been significant improvement in the area of human rights performance of the Colom-

bian military and respect for human rights, we still need to see more progress and that has to be made very clear. On trade, our ties will only expand as we conclude negotiations on the Andean Free Trade Agreement. Those negotiations are progressing, but are not yet completed.

An ambitious demobilization effort has removed approximately 5,000 paramilitaries from combat. In close consultation with Congress, we have released \$1.75 million in fiscal year 2004 funds to provide support for this important effort. We will ensure that any further support is consistent with United States law and Colombian law. And we will consult with Congress, particularly this Committee, on any plans for expanding that support. It is fair to ask where we go from here. Clearly, our job is not finished and we need to ensure that the progress made so far does continue and that efforts to address the deeper causes of the Colombian problems are increased. The Colombian Government has not yet announced a continuation for its Plan Colombia after this formal plan expires. Nevertheless, anticipating the end of the formal Plan Colombia program, the Colombian Government has begun planning a follow-on strategy that will build on and consolidate the progress achieved to date in four major areas:

First will be combating terrorism, narcotrafficking and international organized crime; the economic and social reactivation of the Colombian economy; strengthening institutions and the judicial system, and; peace negotiations, demobilization and reintegration of legal armed groups. We agree these are the priorities that we have to confront as we look for follow on activities.

We have made no decisions about specific funding assistance levels beyond fiscal year 2006, but will continue to work with Congress as we make those decisions. One last point is appropriate. Many of Colombia's challenges require a regional solution. Therefore, we will work with Colombia and her neighbors, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama, to help them consolidate democracy, assert control over their national territories and extend government services to all of their citizens, to eliminate the drug production trafficking and terrorism and to support human rights and the rule of law as well as build trade and investment opportunities that are mutually beneficial. Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to testify. We look forward to answering any of your questions.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Noriega follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROGER F. NORIEGA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lantos, members of this distinguished Committee, I want to first express our appreciation for your leadership and ongoing interest in our policy toward Colombia and your steadfast support. Your willingness to receive Colombian government officials here, and your continued interest in sending Congressional delegations to Colombia, is a crucial foundation for our Colombia strategy. I would be remiss if I did not also express our appreciation for the many contributions Speaker Hastert has made.

U.S. policy toward Colombia supports the Colombian government's efforts to defend and strengthen its democratic institutions, promote respect for human rights and the rule of law, intensify counter-narcotics efforts, foster socio-economic development, and address immediate humanitarian needs. We seek to help Colombia end the threats to its democracy posed by narcotics trafficking and terrorism.

The success of our policy is due in no small measure to the continuing bipartisan support we have received from the Congress for our programs in Colombia.

My colleagues Jonathan Farrar and Adolfo Franco will be addressing in detail our counter-narcotics, alternative development and judicial sector reform policies in Colombia. I would like to offer a brief update on the successes that Plan Colombia is having in these areas and offer my perspective on the challenges that still face us.

While there has been steady progress towards our goals, it has also come at a cost in both American and Colombian lives, with Colombians from all sectors of society paying a high price for their determination to end the scourges of narcotics trafficking and terrorism and to build a better society. We recognize this.

Last February 13 marked the two-year anniversary of the seizure by the FARC of three American contractors after their plane crashed, as well as the murder of their American pilot and Colombian colleague. We appreciate the continued efforts made by the Colombian government for their recovery. Our hostages' safe recovery remains a high priority for both governments.

I must also mention a serious matter that is still unfolding. We continue to monitor the investigation by Colombian and U.S. authorities into developments last week in which U.S. military trainers on temporary duty in Colombia were alleged to be involved in trafficking in ammunition. All affected agencies take these allegations very seriously; we recognized what is at stake. We and the Colombian government intend to get to the bottom of it.

Colombia is a successful democracy that is increasingly taking control of its own future. Its success in doing so is making it a force for progress and stability in the troubled Andean region. Despite Colombia's many security problems, it is a vibrant democracy, whose legitimacy is unquestioned and which serves as a model for what can be achieved under adverse conditions. In spite of continued violence, there is no question that the country's democratic traditions are solid and widely-respected. Our investment supporting Plan Colombia has contributed to this and is increasingly paying off.

All who have met with President Uribe in Washington or Bogotá, including members of this Committee, know the great progress he has brought about and also recognize the unique, reliable partner we have in him. His strength of character, courage, and vision have provided the foundation for this success.

The news from Colombia over the past three years is a story of steady progress in several key areas. Violent crime is at the lowest level in 16 years. Statistics for 2004 indicate that compared with 2002, homicides have fallen by 30 percent, massacres (the killing of 3 or more persons at one time) by 61 percent, kidnappings by 51 percent, and acts of terrorism by 56 percent. If public safety is a measure of well-being, most Colombians are better off today.

Drug crop eradication, narcotics interdiction, and related arrests are at record-high levels. The aerial eradication program in Colombia sprayed a record 136,551 hectares (more than 300,000 acres) of coca and over 3,000 hectares (7,000 acres) of opium poppy in 2004. Over 170 metric tons of cocaine were interdicted in Colombia and at sea, and more than 200 cocaine hydrochloride labs destroyed during 2004.

USAID-managed alternative development projects are providing economic incentives for individuals and communities to abandon illicit crops. Other programs support institutional development and humanitarian assistance, and are helping the Government of Colombia to reinforce the core functions and values that strengthen civil society. Justice Department programs are helping Colombia strengthen and modernize its judicial system through code reform, support for human rights units, and training for prosecutors, judges and police investigators.

President Uribe shares our commitment to bringing any terrorist or criminal to justice who has been, or may be, indicted for crimes against the United States and U.S. citizens. He has pledged to take no action that precludes extradition of such leaders. Indeed, extraditions are at record levels. Since President Uribe took office in August 2002, his administration has extradited 217 fugitives for large-scale narcotics trafficking, drug-related money laundering, racketeering, murder and terrorism offenses.

In spite of impressive progress and real successes, there are still continuing challenges.

Human rights are central to our policy in Colombia and remain an area where there are still serious problems. We have not been reticent in making those concerns known. While there is no question that there has been significant improvement in the human rights performance of the Colombian military overall, we still need to see more progress on the specific human rights criteria which Congress has asked the Secretary of State to review and certify. We are presently reviewing the five

statutory criteria related to human rights and severing ties with paramilitaries to determine if certification can be made.

Colombia is a key trade partner for the United States and our ties will only expand as we conclude negotiations for an Andean Free Trade Agreement. Negotiations are progressing but have not yet finished. We are addressing those issues that remain, including the treatment of agricultural products.

The Colombian government's efforts to undertake peace initiatives with the illegal armed groups are critical to sustained success. An ambitious demobilization effort has removed approximately 5,000 paramilitaries from combat. In close consultation with Congress we have released \$1.75 million in FY 2004 funds to provide support for the monitoring of demobilized paramilitaries, orientation and reference centers for the reintegration process, strengthening of the judicial processing, and inter-institutional coordination throughout the demobilization process.

We will ensure that any further support is consistent with the law, and we will consult with Congress on any such plans.

We expect that these legal concerns will be resolved satisfactorily, and we will then be better positioned to both review and determine our overall policy on supporting Colombian demobilization and reintegration, as well as to consult more fully with Congress on our programs.

During her April 27 visit to Colombia, the Secretary of State noted that we have agreed to explore with the Colombians options to improve the already excellent defense relationship that exists. We expect that our cooperative and vigorous follow-up to recent incidents involving U.S. military personnel will contribute to maintaining that positive relationship.

Where do we go from here?

Strong, bipartisan support from the Congress has been an integral part of our shared success with Colombia. Our future assistance will center on solidifying the gains Colombians have made, with our support, under "Plan Colombia."

Secretary Rice's visit highlighted our close working relations with Colombia and the unusually complex series of issues that exist with Colombia and its neighbors. With over 40 million people, Colombia is South America's second most populous country. It is facing up to long-standing political, security, social, and economic problems, exacerbated by the explosive growth of coca and opium poppy cultivation during the late 1990's in which guerrilla and paramilitary forces became deeply involved. There is no single explanation for the wide range of Colombia's troubles, but they are rooted in the traditionally limited government presence in large areas of the interior, a history of civil conflict and violence, and deep social inequities.

To address these problems, the Colombian government announced its Plan Colombia in 1999, a six-year program with a balanced and wide-ranging strategy. The Uribe Administration (which took office in 2002) confirmed its full commitment to the goals of Plan Colombia.

Plan Colombia, by all measurements including those already cited above, has had exceptional success in pursuing the goals it established, with support from the United States and the international community, but the job is not finished and we need to ensure that the progress made so far in counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism continues. Efforts to address the deeper causes of Colombian problems must continue. We must staunch the flow of cocaine to our shores, and that means targeting the suppliers as well as the consumers. Arguably, our interests in Colombia are even greater now than they were six years ago, at the start of Plan Colombia. Not only is the GOC our counternarcotics and counterterrorism partner, it also is our valued ally to maintain stability in the region, particularly in the face of external, anti-democratic forces. Colombia must remain strong, and become even stronger to resist the anti-democratic forces which threaten to emerge in the 21st century.

The Colombian government has not yet announced a continuation for Plan Colombia. Nevertheless, anticipating its sunset in late 2005, the GOC has begun planning a follow-on strategy that would build on and consolidate the progress achieved to date in four major areas:

- (a) Combating terrorism, narcotics trafficking and international organized crime;
- (b) Economic and social reactivation;
- (c) Strengthening institutions and the justice system; and
- (d) Peace negotiations, demobilization and reintegration of illegal armed groups.

The United States agrees with these priorities and has told the Colombian government that we will seek continued support from Congress through the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) and other funding vehicles as Colombia determines its

future plans. We have made no decisions about specific funding assistance levels beyond FY 2006, but will continue working with the Congress as planning is further developed.

Three of the four areas described by the Colombian government represent a continuation of programs we are already supporting. The fourth, that of “peace negotiations, demobilization and reintegration of illegal armed groups,” is the result of progress made by Plan Colombia. Because of the pace at which peace negotiations with the paramilitaries have developed, the role of the United States in the process has not yet been fully determined and, as already noted, with resolution of outstanding legal concerns, will be the subject of further consultations with Congress.

Our assistance in support of Colombia’s counter-narcotics and counter-terror operations has strengthened the government’s hand, but the Uribe Administration has clearly taken responsibility and ownership in both areas and is substantially increasing the resources committed to them, while maintaining social and economic development funding. President Uribe has made good on his promise to President Bush to devote a greater share of his budget to security. Overall, real spending on defense has increased every year. According to the most recent Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Finance figures, Colombian spending on defense grew over 30 percent between 2001–2004, and will continue to grow in 2005.

It is important to also describe the increasing success we have had in obtaining European support for Colombian counter-narcotics, alternative development and justice sector reform programs. A detailed report is being sent to the Congress, including to this Committee, that confirms significant European Union and individual European countries’ assistance, not only to Colombia but also to the entire Andean region.

We had, of course, all hoped that by now the United States could begin to decrease the funding needed for Colombia. But in truth, the Uribe Administration offers an unexpected opportunity to consolidate and continue progress. The Administration has presented an FY06 budget—the first for post-Plan Colombia—that reflects our commitment to continued support and essentially seeks funding at the same level as in FY05, the last year of Plan Colombia, for ACI and a somewhat reduced amount in FMF.

Secretary of State Rice, speaking in Bogota on April 27, 2005 said it very clearly. “You don’t stop in midstream on something that has been very effective.” Plan Colombia’s ending must not signal the end of our support for Colombia.

Many of Colombia’s challenges do not stop at Colombia’s borders and require a regional solution. We have supported Colombia’s successful efforts to secure UN Security Council and OAS resolutions condemning terrorism and calling on member states to crack down on terrorists operating out of their own countries, as we have supported Colombia’s efforts to improve security of its borders.

Even though we have seen no serious “balloon effect” due to the success of Plan Colombia, we also recognize the increasing regionalization of narcotics trafficking. Beyond narcotics trafficking, there are common problems across the Andes that require a broad approach, but we also understand that problems manifest themselves differently in each country. We are developing an approach through the ACI recognizing these challenges, as well as the broader issues of the need for sustained support for democratic institutions, including social and economic progress.

We will work with Colombia’s neighbors, and especially Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama, as we build on current programs. Overall goals will include support for programs that help countries to consolidate democracy, assert control over their entire national territories and extend government services to their citizens; eliminate drug production, trafficking and terrorism; and support human rights, the rule of law and provide sustainable alternatives to illicit drugs including increased trade, investment and economic growth.

Thank you again for your interest, and for your commitment to help us help Colombia confront the daunting challenges it still faces. If the recent past provides a guide to Colombia’s future, the country’s long-term prospects are excellent. Our near-term task is to help consolidate the significant gains made and help Colombians face the challenges that remain. This is for the greater good of the United States, as well as for the good of all Colombians, and all other countries in the region.

This concludes my formal statement, and I am ready to answer your questions.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Farrar.

STATEMENT OF MR. JONATHAN D. FARRAR, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. FARRAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, for the invitation to discuss our programs in Colombia and the potential for drug spillover to Peru and the fight against narcoterrorism. With the critical support of Congress, we have achieved important successes on many fronts, and I want to express my appreciation to you and all of the Members of the Committee and staff for your steadfast and constructive support.

In my 8 months in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, I have been very impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the men and women—American, Colombians and others—who work on our programs. Their hard work and dedication under difficult conditions are making a difference. And the statistics cited by Mr. Walters and other members of this panel show the progress made in Colombia in the last couple of years. Drug seizures and crop eradication are at record levels. Kidnappings, massacres and murders are down significantly. All of these successes create a powerful argument for continued assistance to Colombia so that this hard-earned momentum is not lost.

Aerial eradication is the cornerstone of our efforts in Colombia. At least a third of the State Department's counternarcotics and law enforcement budget is dedicated directly or indirectly to this endeavor. We are reducing supply by destroying drugs at their source where they are stationary and easier to identify and locate. Aerial eradication provides a powerful disincentive to discourage individuals from cultivating illicit substances.

In 2004, Colombia, working closely with the United States, aerially sprayed a record of over 136,000 hectares of coca and over 3,000 hectares of opium poppy. Unfortunately, the narcoterrorists are attempting to negate our record spray efforts by expanding production and increasing productivity of existing fields. Therefore we are moving aggressively to spray as many hectares as possible in 2005 and we are on a record pace. The courageous men and women in our aerial spray program together with their Colombian counterparts have sprayed 75,000 hectares of coca so far this year. We must demonstrate repeatedly that we will eliminate these plantings. The Government of Colombia is beginning to use manual eradication on a larger scale than in previous years and they are forming 30 manual eradication teams in an effort to cover the entire country.

We provided assistance to force involuntary manual eradication in the past in Colombia and we agreed to assist the new effort as well. This program is just beginning and we are working with the Government of Colombia on how we will support it. However, we have already committed to providing the police with explosive detection devices, protective equipment and GPS to protect the Colombian National Police and the eradication teams. One area where we hope the eradication teams will work if security permits is the national parks. Traffickers know that our spray planes cannot eradicate there and are planting with impunity. Estimates indi-

cate that some 6,000 to 12,000 hectares are under cultivation in the parks. This destroys large tracts of land that are some of the most biodiverse in the world. Our own legislation does not allow us to spray in the parks until all other methods have been tried.

Manual eradication will never replace aerial eradication, but it will be a useful complement to aerial eradication in certain areas of Colombia. I would like to underscore today the commitment of my Bureau to working with USAID and other agencies in the field to ensure our programs are complementary and cost effective. I spent 2 weeks in Colombia over the past 8 months and on each visit, have taken time to go out in the field and visit USAID projects.

Following my last visit, we sent out joint guidance to our narcotics affairs sections and aid missions in the ACI countries on ways to improve coordination. We share the Committee's concern over the role of Peruvian opium poppy cultivation. Because of this concern, we have sent an aircraft to Peru to do an aerial survey. The plane is at work now and we hope to begin marking off geographic areas for further investigation. The Peruvian National Police with support from DEA have made opium and heroin a priority issue which has resulted in some recent interdictions. Our Embassy also has an active public diplomacy campaign to encourage Peruvian citizens to report sitings of opium poppy being grown.

Finally I want to thank you again for the opportunity to share with the Committee some of the important work we are doing in partnership with the Government of Colombia. Your support has been crucial to our success in this endeavor. Colombia is a just cause, and success against narcoterrorism there will continue to bring major benefits to Colombia, the United States and our hemisphere. Thank you very much.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Mr. Farrar.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Farrar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. JONATHAN D. FARRAR, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Lantos, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to discuss our programs in Colombia, the potential of drug spillover to Peru, and the fight against narcoterrorism. With the critical support of Congress, we have achieved important successes on many fronts, and I believe that if we continue our support, the Government of Colombia will continue to make advances that directly benefit the United States. For this reason, I want to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, and members of this Committee and staff for your steadfast and constructive support.

During Secretary Rice's recent trip to Colombia, she said, "You don't stop in mid-stream on something that has been very effective. It took a long time to get the program started, and it's going to take a little while to eliminate the problem." I repeat that message to you here today—we have come a long way, but difficult challenges still lie ahead.

Briefly, drug seizures and crop eradication are at record levels. Kidnappings, massacres, and murders are down significantly. The Colombian people are now talking about peace as something that could really happen in their lifetimes. All of these success stories create a powerful argument for continued assistance to Colombia, so that this hard earned momentum is not lost. Congress has recognized the need to build on these successes and has continued to provide strong, bipartisan support to Colombia.

Plan Colombia will end at the close of fiscal year 2005. Our support to Colombia should not end, however. While the Government of Colombia has not formally pre-

mented a follow-on to Plan Colombia, it has consulted with us on future programs, and we will work with Congress to seek continued support.

Former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles once said, "The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year." The challenge of illicit narcotics in Colombia is certainly a tough problem; however, it is one that has changed for the better—because of the significant progress achieved by the Government of Colombia working in partnership with the United States. We need to continue to build on these successes for the good of Colombia, the U.S., our hemisphere, and the world.

Turning for a moment to Peru, we are cognizant of the ripple effect that Colombian successes could have on Peru and elsewhere in the region. As coca and opium cultivation is reduced in Colombia, there could be increased cultivation in neighboring countries. And as pressure is put on drug trafficking and narcoterrorist organizations in Colombia, these criminal groups could establish themselves in Peru and elsewhere. The potential for a spillover effect is the focus of regular consultations between our Andean-assigned Ambassadors and their country teams, and the theme of many agreements in force among Andean nations to exchange information and intelligence on cross-border narcotics and terrorist activities. In Peru, there has been no dramatic shift in illicit crop cultivation or drug-related activities that would indicate the existence of a spillover or "balloon effect" from the successful efforts in Colombia. There was an estimated 6 percent decrease in mature coca cultivation in traditional growing areas in Peru for 2004 over 2003. However, we are not lulled into complacency by that number, since Peruvian eradication forces on the ground have observed substantial new plantings that, if left alone, will negate our eradication progress in the near future. Therefore, we need to remain forceful in moving ahead with our eradication efforts in Peru.

I share the Committee's concern over the role of Peruvian opium poppy cultivation. Although we do not have a good technical survey to tell us how much poppy is being cultivated, we are actively working to find a method to measure it in the inaccessible, cloud-covered elevations where it is cultivated. In an effort to survey the crop, we have sent an aircraft (Thrush) to Peru to do an aerial survey. The plane is at work now, and we hope to begin marking off geographic areas for further investigation. The Peruvian National Police, with support from DEA, has also made opium cultivation and heroin production and trafficking priority issues, which has resulted in some recent interdiction successes. We also are supporting an active public diplomacy campaign to encourage Peruvian citizens to report sightings of opium poppy being grown.

Our efforts in Peru have also been complicated by recent incidents in coca growing areas that signal increased activity by remnants of the old Shining Path terrorist movement in supporting drug trafficking. The Peruvian Government is aware of this development and has mounted an aggressive campaign to pursue these terrorist elements before they gain a foothold in coca-growing communities and radicalize outlying areas. For all of the above reasons, we have set up a Peru interagency working group, as we have long had on Colombia, to discuss our current Peruvian support efforts, and we will be revamping our cocaine and opium strategy for the near future.

While every country program is different, there are certain themes that guide our efforts, whether it is Peru or Colombia. To give you a flavor of the comprehensiveness of our policy and programs in the Andes, I return to Colombia to discuss our successes in the areas of eradication, interdiction, institutional development, and alternative development. The other witnesses on this panel here with me today can elaborate further on these themes.

ERADICATION

Eradication is the cornerstone of our counternarcotics efforts in Colombia. At least a third of the State Department's counternarcotics and law enforcement budget is dedicated—either directly or indirectly—to this endeavor. We are reducing supply by destroying the drugs at their source, where they are stationary and thus easier to identify and locate. In 2004, Colombia, working closely with the United States, aerially sprayed a record 136,551 hectares (more than 300,000 acres) of coca and over 3,000 hectares (some 7,000 acres) of opium poppy. The 114,100 hectares of coca under cultivation at the end of 2004 represented a 33 percent reduction from the peak-growing year of 2001 when almost 170,000 hectares of illicit coca were under cultivation. While the 2004 cultivation numbers from the Crime and Narcotics Center (CNC) were very similar to 2003, the potential production of cocaine was down in Colombia by 7 percent. This reduction is due to the greater number of young plants being cultivated, as the narcoterrorists plant more fields in an attempt to ne-

gate our record spray efforts. These younger plants are not as productive as old growth plants. We have to move aggressively to defeat the traffickers' countermeasures. Now is not the time to wilt in our efforts, and we are moving aggressively to spray as many hectares as possible. We are on a record pace thus far this year.

Related to Colombia's reductions, overall production of coca in the entire Andean region has dropped as well. Combined cultivation of coca in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia went from 224,000 hectares in 2001 to 166,200 hectares in 2004—an astounding reduction of 26 percent—after decades of consistent increases. These numbers clearly demonstrate that the so-called balloon or spillover effect has been averted.

The Colombians have achieved similar progress in the eradication of opium poppy, which I know is of special concern to this Committee. Cultivation of opium poppy in Colombia was reduced by over 65 percent in 2004.

I would be remiss if I did not address the concerns about potential effects of the aerial eradication of these illicit crops on human health and the environment. As a matter of policy and U.S. law, we take environmental and health concerns very seriously in the spray program in Colombia.

- We adhere to a higher level of environmental safety in Colombia than in any comparable program in the world—governmental or private sector—that uses herbicides.
- We comply with all Colombian environmental laws and regulations, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has very rigorously—and favorably—reviewed the program on three occasions.
- Since we began a rigorous monitoring program three years ago, no cases of serious damage to human health or the environment have been scientifically verified.

The scientific evidence of the safety of aerial spraying stands in stark contrast to the environmental devastation caused by illicit cultivation and drug processing. I have flown over huge tracts of land in Colombia, including National Parks, that are simply barren from the erosion caused by illicit cultivation. Environmental degradation does not end there. Over seventy chemicals, including many that have been given the highest toxicity rating by the EPA, are routinely used in the cultivation and processing of illicit narcotics without regard to the manufacturer's instructions, EPA product warnings, or safe environmental practices. These chemicals destroy the land and pollute waterways. Illicit cultivation and drug processing—very sadly—are quickly destroying some of the richest and most varied biodiversity in the world. In a little over a decade, it is estimated that illicit cultivation of drugs in Colombia has destroyed almost three million acres of rain and cloud forest. If we do not stop this now, the destruction will continue.

The OAS recently published a rigorous scientific study that clearly concludes that the US-supported aerial spray program in Colombia poses no serious risk to human health. It also unequivocally states that the damage to the environment caused by the illicit narcotic cultivation and processing is significantly more serious than any incidental damage caused by the spray program.

INTERDICTION

Interdiction efforts are central to the continuing success of our counternarcotics programs in Colombia. The United States provides technical assistance, training, and equipment to Colombia's armed forces and police to allow them to forcibly seize and destroy illicit drugs. I want to stress that U.S. forces or agents do not engage in interdiction in Colombia. The Colombians themselves are doing the heavy lifting—and doing it quite well, I might add. Colombian forces reported record seizures of 175 metric tons of cocaine and coca base used to make cocaine in 2004. If sold on U.S. streets, we estimate an additional \$2 billion would have gone to U.S. drug peddlers and the narcoterrorists they support. The 2004 seizures represent an increase of almost 120 percent over the 80 metric tons seized in 2001. In fact, cocaine seizures in Colombia have steadily increased every year since 2001. Interdiction is particularly painful to the narcotraffickers, because it takes away their product at a more advanced stage in the value-added chain; thereby denying them that which they desire most—profits.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through successful eradication and interdiction, the United States Government is undermining the narcotics industry, while at the same time advancing democracy and strengthening security throughout Colombia through the joint efforts of the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Af-

fairs (INL), USAID, and Department of Justice programs that build up the democratic institutions providing security and justice. We have helped fund the establishment of police units in 158 municipalities, many of which had not seen any government presence in decades. For the first time in the recorded history of Colombia, all 1,098 of Colombia's municipalities (the equivalent to our country seats) are under the control of federal authorities. This is an enormous step forward for the people of Colombia and their democratically elected government.

John Locke wrote, "Where there is security and a stable social compact, people will abide the law and mix their labor with the land in a legitimate, lasting way." Colombia has lacked a secure, stable society for decades, but President Uribe's democratic security policies are bringing much needed change. In Colombia, we are seeing real success, and the people of Colombia are benefiting from improved security and stability and respect for the rule of law.

To enhance the rule of law, our projects have assisted the Government of Colombia in establishing 38 Justice Houses (*Casas de Justicia* in Spanish), which provide access to justice for poor Colombians. Make no mistake: this is not a small victory or goal—it is at the very heart, in our view, of sustainable progress and U.S. support for defeating narcoterrorists and advancing democracy. So far, these *Casas de Justicia* have handled almost three million cases, easing the burden on the over-taxed judicial system.

At the same time, we have helped establish 35 new Oral Trial courtrooms and trained over 10,000 lawyers, judges, and public defenders in oral legal procedures similar to those in the U.S. This new system is designed to reduce impunity, provide transparency, and accelerate the traditionally slow judicial process.

A key component of developing democratic institutions is to ensure respect for basic human rights. In the last few years, Colombia has made great strides in the area of human rights and alleged abuses are down when compared to historic levels. However, we continue to be concerned over the lack of progress in Colombia on specific cases involving the Colombia military. We are engaging the Government of Colombia at all levels to make progress on specific cases that involved the military. Some \$32.5 million of 2004 INL money is currently on hold as a result of limited progress on these specific cases, and at least a similar amount in 2005 will be held as well. The Government of Colombia has assured us that it is committed to making progress on this issue, and we will continue to engage them at all levels.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Consolidating gains and sustaining progress requires that those who grow and harvest coca or opium poppy are not only discouraged from involvement in the drug trade, but also encouraged to enter legitimate markets. Alternative development complements interdiction and eradication programs by opening up new, legal economic opportunities for former and potential producers of coca and poppy. A little less than one-third of the Colombia counternarcotics budget is spent on alternative development and related programs. The alternative development programs, initially concentrated in the Departments of Putumayo and Caquetá (areas with Colombia's densest coca cultivation), have now expanded into other departments with high incidence or threat of coca cultivation. In 2004, our efforts have promoted the cultivation of well over 10,000 hectares (24,000 acres) of legal crops, for a cumulative total of over 50,000 hectares (140,000 acres) since 2000, while benefiting more than 50,000 families. We work closely with USAID here in Washington, and in the field, to ensure our programs are complementary.

Alternative development is more than alternative crops. It also includes activities that improve Colombia's rural infrastructure, so that licit crops and products can be transported and marketed. Last year alone, over 200 infrastructure projects were completed for a total of almost 900 since 2001. Our projects have built more than 90 schools, 40 potable water systems, and 80 municipal buildings—ranging from homes for the elderly to business centers and community centers. Projects completed also include 195 sewage projects and 35 key roads. A total of 220 municipalities now have improved public services. In short, U.S.-supported alternative development projects in Colombia are reinforcing the core functions and values that underpin Colombia's democratic civil society and increasing the presence and legitimacy of the state.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Although we have seen an extraordinary level of achievement in the fight against illegal narcotics in Colombia, many challenges lie ahead for Colombia, its Andean allies, and U.S. counternarcotics programs.

One of the biggest challenges we face it is the nationalization of the program. Our ultimate goal is to help Colombia build the capacity necessary to face the narcoterrorist threat while reducing the burden on the U.S. taxpayer. Due to the courage and aggressive action of President Uribe and his government, we have seen an increase in the pace of operations that was not contemplated a few years ago. This increase in the pace of operations has produced very positive results, but has limited our ability to nationalize programs. The Government of Colombia shares in our goal of nationalization and has doubled its share of GDP devoted to security issues to 5 percent in the last four years. A good example of Colombia's determination is the government's plans to purchase eight Black Hawk helicopters using their own funds in the coming year. Many of our aviation programs are moving towards nationalization in terms of personnel, but the Government of Colombia still needs assistance in many critical areas, and we are providing it in an efficient and professional manner.

On paper, Plan Colombia is ending, but on the ground consolidating our successes is really just beginning. Our primary area of support is still the eradication of coca and poppy via the aerial eradication program combined with alternative development. There has been an almost 33 percent reduction in coca cultivation in Colombia since 2001 and 68 percent drop in poppy cultivation. We need to ensure that illicit crops are further reduced and eventually eliminated.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I again want to thank you for the opportunity to share with the Committee some of the important work we are doing in partnership with the Government of Colombia. Your support is crucial to our continued success in this endeavor. Our support to bring an end to narcoterrorism in Colombia will bring major benefits to the U.S., and our hemisphere. We must continue building on the successes achieved to date.

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the progress we have made in Colombia.

Chairman HYDE. And Admiral Utley.

STATEMENT OF RALPH D. UTLEY, RADM (RET.), ACTING COUNTERNARCOTICS OFFICER AND INTERDICTION COORDINATOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Admiral UTLEY. Chairman Hyde, thank you very much for your continued leadership, counsel and support for all these years. Congressman Menendez, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the Acting United States Interdiction Coordinator. I also serve as the Acting Director of the Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security. I have devoted much of my professional career to drug interdiction, including several assignments in the 1990s when I worked to improve the coordination of interagency and international drug law enforcement efforts. Plan Colombia and other key legislative initiatives were passed by Congress during that time in an effort to develop and implement more effective interagency coordinating mechanisms and international relationships.

In recent years, my career took me in different directions until I assumed my current position in October 2004. It is in this context that I would like to share my observations. In terms of interdiction, there are successes to report. The United States and the Government of Colombia have achieved record levels of transit zone cocaine interdiction, vessel seizures and arrests in each of the past 2 calendar years. In 2003, we removed 210 metric tons of cocaine that were in the transit zone bound for the United States. In 2004, that figure rose to 250 metric tons, which is approximately twice the amount of cocaine that was seized or removed from the transit zone in 1999.

Let me discuss a few key factors that I believe have led to these achievements. First, intelligence about the maritime trafficking is the best that it has ever been. For years, our ships and planes patrol vast expanses of ocean, often without the benefit of good intelligence. Today, our forces often have real-time actionable intelligence so they can narrow their focus and improve their probability of detecting smugglers. The resultant increase in successful interdictions is supported by new investigations and prosecutions which in turn has improved our intelligence and overall awareness as to how the traffickers are operating.

In particular, Operation Panama Express, an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, has become a model for interagency partnering. The Panama Express investigations are developing intelligence leads that are dramatically increasing the interdiction successes. At the same time, interdictions are leading to successful prosecutions of both maritime transporters and high-level drug traffickers. Second, operations in the transit zone are better coordinated. The Joint Interagency Task Force model works. In particular, Joint Interagency Task Force South in Key West has become a powerful interagency and international team that is fusing information from law enforcement agencies, intelligence community and our international partners.

This combined interagency and international task force is producing remarkable results and has improved the effectiveness of our detection, monitoring and end game platforms. In 2003, a Joint Operating Area was created which assigned Joint Interagency Task Force South total responsibility for the primary south to north drug trafficking threat vectors from South America. This has improved the efficiency and synchronization of our limited forces, while at the same time allowed Joint Interagency Task Force West to refocus its attention toward threats emanating from the Western Pacific. It should be noted that the Government of Colombia has two full-time liaisons that are part of the JIATF South team, which also has representatives from nine other countries in the hemisphere.

JIATF South now communicates and coordinates operations directly with the Colombian Navy and Air Force operations center. In addition, we continue to support the Government of Colombia's effort to stop illegal aerial trafficking. In August 2003, Colombia resumed its thoroughly vetted and robustly staffed Air Bridge Denial Program which receives United States support under a Presidential Determination. This carefully crafted program allows Colombian Air Force interceptors to use lethal force as a last resort against noncompliant aircraft inside Colombian airspace.

Since this program resumed, 22 suspected counternarcotics aircraft have been forced down; 20 of those aircraft have been destroyed; and 10.3 metric tons of cocaine have been seized. By continuing to support the Air Bridge Denial Program, we are helping the Government of Colombia thwart aerial trafficking efforts especially in those remote regions where aircraft and helicopters provide the only viable means of transportation. Maritime interdiction performance, while currently at record levels, is suffering from a reduction in long-range maritime patrol aircraft capacity (MPA). Maritime patrol aircraft are a critical linchpin that are used to de-

tect smugglers and support end game operations. During calendar year 2004, MPA participated in 73 percent of the cocaine removal events from noncommercial maritime conveyances in the transit zone. In the fourth quarter of last year, these figures rose to 91 percent. The MPA shortfall was caused primarily by unforeseen wing corrosion problems in the U.S. Navy P-3 fleet and the retirement of the entire Netherlands P-3 fleet. As the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, I will focus on mitigating these shortfalls. We are closing the gap, though not completely. In particular, Customs and Border Protection has added 400 flight hours per month to JIATF South operations. The United States Air Force has returned to the Colombian Air Bridge Denial program with two E-3 aircraft. This will allow Customs and Border Protection P-3 Airborne Early Warning aircraft, which are currently supporting the Air Bridge Denial Program, to fly maritime patrol missions in the transit zone.

The United States Coast Guard has increased the use of C-130 hours in the transit zone and has an MPA gap initiative in the President's fiscal year 2006 budget. This initiative would provide more transit zone on-station flying hours and more robust maintenance support capability at the forward operating location at Comalapa, El Salvador. MPA coverage remains critical to sustaining transit zone interdiction success. And I will continue to work hard to restore this capacity. The support provided by our international partners is also critical to transit zone interdiction successes.

Currently, France and the United Kingdom deploy and use their surveillance aircraft, armed helicopters and surface ships in counterdrug missions. The British NIMROD, a highly capable long-range maritime surveillance aircraft, has been especially effective in detecting and tracking drug smuggling vessels. The Canadian Government is working with the United States Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South to coordinate further Canadian P-3 aircraft deployments to the Caribbean. This committed international and interagency effort is essential in transit zone operations. International cooperation is also critical in eliminating seams that traffickers once exploited. The United States now has 26 bilateral maritime agreements that have put the smugglers on the defensive.

Flag state maritime boarding authority is much easier to gain, particularly for Colombian-flagged vessels. We communicate directly operator-to-operator with our Colombian counterparts, often turning boarding requests around in minutes that used to take an hour. The smugglers have less time to react and avoid law enforcement boardings. Colombia has become a regional leader and has conducted regional drug interdiction operations with the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States and Panamanian forces.

Another example of Colombia's partnership is an operation this month with a Colombian Navy frigate that is operating under the tactical control of JIATF South. At the same time a Coast Guard fixed-wing Falcon is operating out of Aruba and the Navy is flying S-3 aircraft out of Curacao. In conclusion, the groundwork for

these successes was laid some time ago and these efforts are now paying dividends. Thank you very much.

Chairman HYDE. Thank you, Admiral.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Utley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RALPH D. UTLEY, RADM (RET.), ACTING COUNTER-NARCOTICS OFFICER AND INTERDICTION COORDINATOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Chairman Hyde, Ranking Member Lantos, and distinguished Members of the Committee: I am honored to appear before you today as the Acting United States Interdiction Coordinator. I also serve as the Acting Director of the Office of Counter-narcotics Enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security.

I have devoted much of my professional career to drug interdiction, including several assignments in the 1990s, when I worked to improve the coordination of inter-agency and international drug law enforcement efforts. Plan Colombia and other key legislative initiatives were passed by Congress during that time in an effort to develop and implement more effective interagency coordinating mechanisms and international relationships. In recent years, my career took me in different directions until I assumed my current position in October 2004. It is in this context that I would like to share my observations.

In terms of interdiction, there are successes to report. The United States and the Government of Colombia have achieved record levels for Transit Zone cocaine interdiction, vessel seizures, and arrests in each of the past two calendar years. In 2003, we removed 210 metric tons of cocaine that was in the Transit Zone bound for the United States. In 2004, that figure rose to 248 metric tons, which is approximately twice the amount of cocaine that was seized or removed from the Transit Zone in 1999. Let me discuss a few of the key factors that I believe have led to these achievements.

Intelligence about maritime trafficking is the best it has ever been. For years, our ships and planes patrolled vast expanses of ocean, often without the benefit of good intelligence. Today, our forces often have real-time, actionable intelligence so they can narrow their focus and improve their probability of detecting smugglers. The resultant increase in successful interdictions has supported new investigations and prosecutions which in turn has improved our intelligence and overall awareness as to how the traffickers are operating. In particular, Operation Panama Express, an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) initiative, has become a model for interagency partnering. Panama Express investigations are developing intelligence leads that have dramatically increased interdiction successes. At the same time, interdictions are leading to the successful prosecution of both maritime transporters and higher level drug traffickers. Thus the cycle of aggressive investigations, intelligence generation, interdictions, and prosecutions has enabled our interagency assets to achieve results never before realized.

Operations in the Transit Zone are better coordinated. The Joint Interagency Task Force model works. In particular, Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) in Key West has become a powerful interagency and international team that is fusing information from law enforcement agencies, the Intelligence Community and our international partners. This combined interagency and international task force is producing remarkable results and has improved the effectiveness of our detection, monitoring and end-game platforms. In 2003, a Joint Operating Area was created which assigned Joint Interagency Task Force South total responsibility for the primary south-to-north drug trafficking threat vectors from South America. This has improved the efficiency and synchronization of our limited forces while at the same time allowed Joint Interagency Task Force West to refocus its attention toward threats emanating from the Western Pacific. It should be noted that the Government of Colombia has two full-time liaisons that are part of the JIATF-S team, which also has representatives from nine other countries in the hemisphere. JIATF-S now communicates and coordinates operations directly with the Colombian Navy and Air Force operations centers.

In addition, we continue to support the Government of Colombia's efforts to stop illegal aerial trafficking. In August 2003, Colombia resumed its thoroughly vetted and robustly staffed Air Bridge Denial Program, which receives U.S. support under a Presidential Determination. This carefully crafted program allows Colombian Air Force interceptors to use lethal force—as a last resort—against noncompliant aircraft inside Colombian airspace. Since this program resumed, 22 suspected narco-trafficking aircraft have been forced down; 20 of those aircraft have been destroyed and 10.3 metric tons of cocaine have been seized. Although a majority of

cocaine is now being transported across the Andes by land, traffickers still try to exploit Colombian airspace to move money, drugs, and weapons. By continuing to support the Air Bridge Denial Program, we are helping the Government of Colombia thwart aerial trafficking efforts, especially in those remote regions where aircraft and helicopters provide the only viable means of transportation.

Maritime interdiction performance, while currently at record levels, is suffering from a reduction in long-range Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) capacity. Maritime Patrol Aircraft are a critical linchpin that are used to detect smugglers and support end-game operations. During calendar year 2004, MPA participated in 73 percent of the cocaine removal events from noncommercial maritime conveyances in the Transit Zone. In the fourth quarter of last year, these figures rose to 91 percent. The MPA shortfall has been caused primarily by unforeseen wing corrosion problems in the U.S. Navy P-3 fleet and the retirement of the entire Netherlands P-3 fleet. As the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, I have focused on mitigating this shortfall. We are closing the gap, though not completely. In particular, Customs and Border Protection has added 400 flight hours per month to JIATF-S operations. The United States Air Force has returned to the Colombia Air Bridge Denial program with two E-3 aircraft. This will allow Customs and Border Protection P-3 Airborne Early Warning aircraft, which are currently supporting the Air Bridge Denial Program, to fly Maritime Patrol missions in the Transit Zone. The United States Coast Guard has increased the use of its HC-130 hours in the Transit Zone and has an MPA gap initiative in the President's Fiscal Year 2006 budget. This initiative would provide more Transit Zone on station flying hours and a more robust maintenance support capability at the Forward Operating Location at Comalapa, El Salvador. MPA coverage remains crucial to sustaining Transit Zone interdiction successes and I will continue to work hard to restore this capacity.

The support provided by our international partners is also critical to Transit Zone interdiction successes. Currently, France and the United Kingdom deploy and use their surveillance aircraft, armed helicopters and surface ships in counterdrug missions. The British NIMROD, a highly capable long-range maritime surveillance aircraft, has been especially effective in detecting and tracking drug smuggling vessels. The Canadian government is working with the United States Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South to coordinate future Canadian P-3 aircraft deployments to the Caribbean as well. This committed international and inter-agency effort is essential to Transit Zone operational success.

International cooperation has also been critical in eliminating seams that traffickers once exploited. The United States now has 26 maritime bilateral agreements that have put the smugglers on the defensive. Flag state maritime boarding authority is much easier to gain, particularly for Colombia-flagged vessels. We communicate directly, operator-to-operator, with our Colombian counterparts, often turning boarding requests around in minutes when such requests in the past took hours. The smugglers now have less time to react and avoid law enforcement, and we are able to board in time to find contraband and evidence to support prosecutions. For example, in Fiscal Year 2004, the United States used our maritime bilateral agreement with Colombia in 34 cases, resulting in the seizure of over 52 metric tons of cocaine, the arrest of 199 traffickers and the seizure of 34 vessels.

Colombia has become a regional leader and has conducted regional drug interdiction operations with the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, United States, and Panamanian forces. Another example of Colombia's partnership is an operation this month with a Colombian Navy frigate that is operating under the tactical control of JIATF-South. At the same time, a U.S. Coast Guard fixed wing Falcon aircraft is operating from Aruba while a U.S. Navy S-3 aircraft is flying from Curacao in support of this operation. The U.S. Coast Guard is also embarking Colombian Navy officers aboard their cutters for professional exchanges.

In conclusion, the groundwork for these successes was laid some time ago, and those efforts are now paying dividends. We will not rest on these successes since there remain many challenges. As we continually seek to improve our results, we should remember that without the support to Colombia and the ensuing cooperation from President Uribe and his Administration, we would not be discussing these successes. The Government of Colombia has contributed significantly to our efforts and we need to stay the course and sustain our support and relationship with Colombia—it is paying dividends.

Looking ahead, I have placed a priority on seeking alternatives that will further increase interdiction capabilities in the Source and Transit Zones. I have been engaged with the entire interdiction community to improve our capabilities and effectiveness to ensure we sustain those strategies and operations that are working, and keep the pressure up on all fronts. We will continue to assess our efforts and report our progress to Congress.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to answering questions from you and your Committee.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the Chairman and thank you for your indulgence. I, and a number of my colleagues, have concerns over the spill-over effect of Plan Colombia, and especially on Ecuador, a front line state to the northern region including—the Sucumbios province is an area of particular concern. It faces the Colombian Putumayo region and zone where there is no presence of military law enforcement personnel. This has led to incursions on Ecuadorian territory of drug traffickers, guerrilla and paramilitary groups from Colombia, and to an increase in the levels of violence and delinquency.

Ecuador, which is having its own internal problems is also receiving an influx of Colombian refugees and its own indigenous communities have been displaced from ancestral villages. What—and I don't know who in particular wants to take up this question. If you all want to participate, that is fine. What is being done to stop the spillover effect to help the other countries in the region?

Mr. NORIEGA. Thank you very much. Three of us at least agree we want a bite of the apple on this question. I should emphasize that with the new authorities in Ecuador, in our conversations to date, they have demonstrated an interest and willingness to continue their cooperation with our anti-drug programs. I think you have obviously identified a key fact, which we have to consider in a holistic way as a regional threat. We do have programs under the Andean Counterdrug Initiative for Ecuador, particularly aimed at their law enforcement capability and looking at activity by the FARC and other narcotrafficking organizations spilling over the border in Ecuador. We have a Forward Operating Location that we operate out of Manta, on the coast of Ecuador, which is important to our aerial monitoring efforts. So it is part of our strategy in the Andes. And my colleagues, Mr. Farrar and Mr. Franco, want to add to that.

Mr. FRANCO. From the development standpoint, both that region and the other provinces are among the poorest areas of the country of Ecuador. We have a Northern Border Initiative just on the poverty issue alone. But on the problem of the remoteness of the area, it is appalling and there have been incursions from Colombia as well as the refugee problem. We have completed 210 infrastructure projects along the border. Our support is benefiting 15,000 farm families with licit productions.

What we are trying to do in the northern part of the country is preventive alternative development, and that is to make the necessary investments before there can be a foothold for the illicit activities. Our focus has been on licit markets and local markets. There is substantial Ecuadorian commitment on the security side, which makes our work from the standpoint of the development a bit easier than had previously been the case in Colombia. We are making the necessary investments. We often react to crises, as you know. This is an area that we have identified as fertile for potential problems in the future. And we are taking measures necessary from a development standpoint in making investments there.

Mr. FARRAR. Our programs are focused on the northern border region. It is focused on expanding the state presence, particularly police stations, and giving them the ability to move around. We are also very much focused on keeping an eye on and making sure that the cultivation does not spread into Ecuador.

Mr. CROWLEY. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman HYDE. Mr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to go on record by saying I very much support the Colombian initiative. I had the opportunity of going over there in the last Congress with Congressman Souder and Congressman Davis, and was very impressed with the effort that was going on. Right now, we are in Congress debating, as we speak, the gang bill. And the reason we are trying to get that done is because local policemen can arrest individuals and yet they don't have the ability to go after the higher-ups. And I guess something that concerns me, we talk about spray and all that. Interdiction is great. What I want to know is, what we are doing is arresting the people that are in the process of the big boys. And I would like to know who they are, where they are.

I know that we can't do that in this hearing, but at some point, I would like to know now what we had done a year ago. I want to know the prosecutions, the people we actually arrested and put in jail. In fact, there is some argument that you can do the interdiction and actually it doesn't affect the big boys in the sense that the price goes up. They make the same amount of money. It is a little bit more difficult. But for every farmer where we spray their crop, there are 20 farmers, with the right amount of money, who are going to step in and do the same thing. So again, who they are, where they are and what kind of arrests we have had in the last year—things of that nature.

Mr. NORIEGA. I think you are exactly right that this has to be an integral part of our strategy which is decapitating these trafficking organizations. I think when Congress authorized Plan Colombia, it very wisely emphasized the need for these intelligence-driven law enforcement activities to go after these kingpins and to take them out.

President Uribe is committed to that, strongly, strongly committed to that because he understands that that is how you disrupt these organizations and hold these people accountable and dismantle the organizations. That is why we have, in just the last few years of Plan Colombia, been able to have 200 people wanted on drug charges extradited to the United States. That is an extraordinary increase in past years because there is a commitment to getting these people to face American justice and extradite them to the United States. That includes kingpins, high-value targets. And we have some specific activities, intelligence cooperation that is aimed at running these people down and holding them accountable.

Mr. BOOZMAN. How many convictions out of the 200?

Mr. NORIEGA. Most of those 200 here, I don't have the numbers, but we can get you the numbers.

Mr. BOOZMAN. What would you guess?

Mr. NORIEGA. If we have an effort to extradite somebody from Colombia that we have the goods on, my guess is that the successful prosecutions are very, very high.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE ROGER F. NORIEGA TO
QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE JOHN BOOZMAN

The Department of State regularly reports to Congress on extraditions from Colombia and the nine other countries that have received, or were indicated to receive, assistance related to Plan Colombia, in a semi-annual Report on International Extradition Pursuant to Section 3203 of the Emergency Supplemental Act, 2000, as Enacted in Public Law 106-246, prepared in collaboration with the Department of Justice (DOJ). The tenth report will be submitted to Congress shortly, and will cover the period from January 1 to June 30, 2005.

Colombia has extradited 288 individuals to the United States between December 1997 (when Colombia amended its constitution to allow the extradition of Colombian nationals to the United States), and June 30, 2005. A significant majority of those (222 persons) were extradited under the administration of President Alvaro Uribe, which began August 7, 2002.

According to the DOJ's periodic review of the status of all extraditions from Colombia, which was most recently conducted in June 2005, 136 of the persons extradited from Colombia to the United States since December 1997 had been sentenced (following either a guilty plea or conviction by jury), one has been returned to Colombia following dismissal of charges, and one died in custody. Therefore, as of June 30, there are roughly 150 (the difference between 288 persons extradited and 138 whose cases were resolved) persons extradited from Colombia since December 1997 who have cases pending in the United States, whether those cases are pending trial, pending plea, in ongoing trial, or pending sentencing. We have provided the number who were sentenced, rather than convicted, because the number of convictions alone may reveal sensitive information (e.g., defendants cooperating in exchange for guilty pleas). DOJ does not report the number of convictions separately or publicly.

Our extradition relationship has allowed Colombia to send a clear, strong message to drug traffickers and terrorists alike. The Government of Colombia has given us significant cooperation and their commitment to bring serious criminal offenders to justice, including those accused of drug trafficking and related money laundering, racketeering, and terrorism, including kidnapping and hostage taking of U.S. citizens.

Mr. NORIEGA. I don't know if Mr. Farrar wants to add something to that.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Plan Colombia is about Colombia but it is also about here. There are higher levels that are working—we cut drugs off there, but they are getting it through and it comes through here. What about the interdiction on this side, or is that a fair question for this? I don't see how you can do one with without the other. That has to be hooked together.

Mr. FARRAR. On the first part of your question, I wanted to add that we also have the Narcotics Rewards Program where we go after some of the kingpins and it is the law enforcement agencies that propose those targets, and that has been very successful in Colombia, Mexico and elsewhere. And some of these people that have been extradited to the U.S. have been captured as a result of that program. I don't have numbers on convictions in the U.S. Perhaps there will be another agency that has that.

Admiral UTLEY. That would be an excellent question for the DEA. They are the ones who work both internationally and within the United States as well to pull down these organizations.

Chairman HYDE. Ms. McCollum.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Noriega, you alluded to this a little bit in your testimony. It is my understanding that

there are two servicemen now in U.S. custody. My question for each one of the departments and agencies, in reading newspaper articles, this is not the first time that we have had someone in uniform, or someone, in fact, attached with diplomatic credentials involved in breaking the law of Colombia as well as working contrary to what we are trying to do.

So my question is: Can you categorically deny that there are any U.S. Government personnel—the Department of Defense, State, drug enforcement officials—that are paid with United States funds or through the Colombian military? Can you deny that there has been any official contact support or assistance with the Colombian paramilitary organizations which would lead to this type of exposure for them to become corrupted?

Mr. NORIEGA. We take seriously the allegations against these American servicemen, noting, of course, that of the hundreds of people who risk their lives in uniform in helping the Colombian people, there is a very small number of people who have been alleged to have crossed the line over to illegality. I would have to say that the investigation is still underway in this case, as it is underway in the case of three to four who are implicated in actual cocaine, allegedly. These investigations are underway. What can I assert quite categorically is a commitment on the part of the U.S. Executive Branch as well as, in particular, the military in holding people accountable for any violations of U.S. law.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I've been confused by some of the testimony here. Earlier, Mr. Walters—and I quote, the so-called effect that drug production will simply expand into new areas and a portion that is squeezed out of old areas has simply not materialized. Across the region, we have witnessed 3 successive years of declining production in both cocaine and heroin. Yet the White House, on May 7, through the Associated Press, reported that despite massive aerial fumigation, massive offense against cocaine, planting productions in 2004, coca cultivation has increased slightly as farmers quickly replanted.

It goes on. There are other reports in the press. There is your testimony, sir, yourself in which you go on to say that you share the Committee's concern over the role of Peruvian poppy cultivation: Although we do not have good technical survey to tell us how much poppy is being cultivated, we are actually working to find a method to ensure that it is inaccessible, and cloud cover, and all kinds of reasons why you can't say what is going on in Peru. And I appreciate that. But there have—efforts in Peru, there is definitely something going on because we are starting to see the Shining Path re-emerge. And Mr. Crowley pointed out Ecuador.

So we are going to put more dollars into Plan Colombia. We are seeing a balloon effect. In my opinion, that is safe to say with all the reports that have either been in the press and in—I don't want to say contradicting testimony, because I am sure you gentlemen all believe that you are pretty much saying the same thing. But it appears that we do have to realize that there is a push going on. So, by this increased amount—keeping the amount the same, rolling out Plan Colombia when we haven't seen any decrease in the amount of street availability, and in fact, there are reports that in

fact the heroin and the cocaine that is on the street is even more of high quality, I guess is the term that is used.

What guarantee do we have by putting more dollars into Colombia the way that we have: (1) that we really see any results in what is happening here on the streets; and, (2) that we aren't, through our actions, putting more problems into other countries, such as Peru, in particular, which just got the Shining Path issue, hopefully, to a point where they were going to see it resolved?

Mr. NORIEGA. If I could start on this, and Mr. Farrar will add. You have asked some of the same kinds of questions that we ask internally to make sure that what we are coming up here and telling you is exactly right. And we will have to get you the statistics to bear this out. I think what we talk about is that over the last 5 years, we still have the production levels and the cultivation levels lower than what they were 4 or 5 years ago. And so they may increase in one country or another, Peru or Bolivia, but compared to where they were 4 or 5 years ago, they are still lower. But it is important that we try to stay ahead of the curve and prevent these trafficking organizations and the cultivation from reconstituting itself in other countries.

On your broader question, if you take the potential cocaine production from the Andean countries in 2001—roughly 1,200 metric tons—to what it is today—something under 800—that is a 400-metric ton decrease. Adding that to the 200 metric tons seized under these programs, it is 600 metric tons taken off the street that would potentially make it on to American streets and schoolyards.

So while we do not see some of the indicators changing on pricing and availability or price and purity, it is obvious that this program is having a dramatic impact on the amount of cocaine that would be reaching the United States. But it is important to ask the questions that you are asking.

Jonathan, did you want to?

Mr. FARRAR. As Assistant Secretary Noriega noted, there has been a decline in coca production since 2001 and 2004 for the region as a whole. For 2004, the amount of acreage in Colombia basically stayed static, stayed the same. Total production, potential production went down slightly because the fields, many of them are newer plants rather than older, so potential production is less.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. In Peru is poppies.

Mr. FARRAR. In Colombia, right. And in Peru, we are concerned by the same reports. In fact, we have dispatched a plane from our air wing down to Peru to do surveillance, to do a survey on just that issue, on opium poppy. And it is there now and it is working now, so we should have a better idea within the next month or so.

Mr. WELLER [presiding]. Mr. Mack, 5 minutes.

Mr. MACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, want to—from everything that I have read with the Plan Colombia, it sounds like there are some great successes, and I am glad to have read that and to have all of you here today.

I am concerned, though. And I think we may have had, Secretary Noriega, an opportunity, in this Committee room, to talk a little bit about this stuff before. But I want to talk about the region in general. We have seen the Spanish Government conclude a deal to sell

a dozen aircraft and boats to Venezuelan President Chavez. Additionally, 100,000 machine guns, AK-47s, the relationship with Fidel Castro and its military and intelligence. I am concerned that there is a potential arms race in the region. Are you concerned that there could be some sort of conflict between Colombia and Venezuela? And what is your level of concern about whether or not some of these machine guns, if you will, could get into the hands of organizations like FARC and such?

Mr. NORIEGA. Well, obviously, Congressman, that is an area of considerable concern to us and one that has been expressed at the highest levels of our Government and on which we have consulted with some of our friends and partners not only in the hemisphere but outside the hemisphere.

When you talk about fixed-wing aircraft and that sort of thing, or even high performance aircraft, it is one thing. Those are easy to monitor and to keep track of those assets. On the other hand, small weapons and ammunition, it is very difficult to track. We, therefore, are concerned, as countries bring in additional weapons, that they be carefully monitored; that the older weapons that are displaced by the newer weapons are destroyed or are again controlled so that they don't end up in the hands of guerilla groups. The fact is that the FARC and ELN have obtained weapons, for example, from arms caches in Central America where there has been criminal trafficking in such weapons.

So this is a matter of real concern. And even in the major cities in Latin America, where there are serious crime problems, they have to be worried about these weapons ending up in the hands of criminal organizations, gangs that operate in some of the urban centers. So it is a matter of serious concern and one which we discuss with our neighbors in Latin America. And there are instruments under the Inter-American system on the monitoring of illicit trafficking in small weapons and explosive devices, and on the transparency and the acquisition of weapons where we can use those instruments to ensure that we don't set off an arms race.

The Colombian and the Venezuelan Governments continue a good mutually beneficial relationship. There are historic tensions between these two neighbors, but I believe that all parties understand that it is in their mutual interest to prevent any sort of conflict. Through dialogue and communication tensions are reduced between these two countries, because they are very dependent economically on one another. But this is an area where the Colombian Government has expressed some concern on the intentions of the Venezuelan Government as it procures some of these new weapons, particularly helicopters and that sort of thing. And they have discussed this, too, with the Spanish Government and others.

Mr. MACK. As I have been following these events, things that President Chavez has been saying, and indicating where he might be headed is of great concern to me when you start talking about an al-Jazeera-type network.

So, to me, even though the governments, there still may be some of those back channels, I would be very concerned if these weapons get in the hands of these terrorist organizations to continue to unsettle the area, which just gives more influence, if you will, maybe into someone's hands like Chavez. And so I would love to have the

opportunity, if I could, to speak with you further on this specific issue.

Let me ask you this: Do we have the economic and military assistance that you need for Plan Colombia to be successful? Give me where we are with that.

Mr. NORIEGA. Well, of course we stand by the budget requests that are scrubbed by the Executive Branch and presented to Congress. Having said that, we think we make effective use of every dollar and can make a more effective use of additional sums of money if Congress were to provide that. And even that may have gotten me into trouble, but I hope my two colleagues don't report back. But we have to look at gaps. Congressman Weller has identified potential gaps in the Caribbean. Admiral Utley has referred to the really terrific work that the Coast Guard has done in building up a network in the Caribbean, and now in Central America, on how we can work together to guard our third border.

And we have ideas and are making proposals within the Executive Branch to get additional sums of money to ensure that we don't develop security gaps as we take resources to other parts of the world. For example, Mr. Farrar has to make very tough decisions about where he puts his INL dollars, and in certain cases, we have lost certain programs, like airborne platforms, to do interdiction or surveillance.

And we have been building up to a synergy where we would have not only the surveillance capability but the end game, the resources, the boats, the aircrafts, the choppers or the legal authorities to do an end game. And just as we get to that capacity, we lose the interdiction capacity—I am sorry, the surveillance, the airborne surveillance platform. That is all a question of resources. And so I don't mean—

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. The time of the gentleman from Florida has expired, although I appreciate the line of questioning.

Mr. NORIEGA. Thank you.

Mr. WELLER. I recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to thank our panel for being here. And let me ask Mr. Noriega a couple of questions just with regard to the human rights and rule of law requirements of Plan Colombia.

It is my understanding—and many groups have cited this—that those conditions have not been met. And of course, I am one who believes that our country has a different standard of—set of human right standards from one country versus another based on whatever. We have one standard for Cuba and another for China. In this instance, with regard to Colombia, we do have certain requirements that were to have been met. However, it is my understanding that about 95 percent of the violent crimes have been unsolved because of judicial inefficiencies, corruption, and intimidation. Also, that many of the serious violations are occurring in places that are the focus, actually, of U.S. training efforts. And of course this should be a priority. And I am just trying to get a handle on, how has that been monitored, and what are we doing to ensure that standards of human rights are adhered to in Colombia under Plan Colombia?

Mr. NORIEGA. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Lee. Human rights, that is to say, the respect for the rule of law in everything we do has to be an integral part of this program. And we remind the Colombians that it is really about imposing the rule of law; that is what their policy is all about. And that means that their security forces have to respect that as well.

I think that what we have done on human rights monitoring and human rights training over the years has made a dramatic improvement in the record of security forces, particularly the police and the military. And the military needed considerable improvement, and I think we have seen that to where now the vast, vast majority of those abuses that do occur are committed by those guerrilla organizations, the terrorist organizations that the Colombian Government is actually fighting and trying to dismantle.

So I think we are going in the right direction. But it is important to hold the government accountable, because it is, after all, the entity that we are providing support to. So we do have very strict certification guidelines and procedures that we have to follow as we release sums of money. And we, in very close contact with congressional Committees and even with nongovernmental organizations that are well respected in this area, identify for the Colombians some requirements that they have to meet, some areas where they have to make substantial progress in order to justify a certification of the release of funds.

And I can assure you that in the conversations that Secretary Rice had with the Colombian authorities last month, that this was a key part of their discussions. And my colleagues and I are very rigorous in raising this at every opportunity with Colombian authorities because we have to give the Secretary hard information, evidence of substantial progress on respect for human rights, on notorious cases or allegations in order for her to make the certification to Congress.

Ms. LEE. Well, the current Attorney General, many believe that he has been an obstacle to advancing the cause of human rights in Colombia. What is the United States' take on that? And it is my understanding that his term is up in July? And what are we saying to the Colombians?

Mr. NORIEGA. One thing to remember is that the Attorney General is independent of the Executive Branch in the Colombian system. And having said that, we have found him rather cooperative and sensitive to these issues.

It is very clear that the civilian justice system has to be improved. It is also fair to say that, with considerable U.S. support, it has improved. In the case of the military justice system, that reform is lagging, and, quite frankly, we made a case to them that they need to accelerate that for their own good. And perhaps Mr. Franco has something to add on that case.

Mr. FRANCO. Thank you. Just very quickly, Congresswoman. We find the Attorney General—I met with him last week; he was in Washington, and previous to that in Colombia—to be quite cooperative. As you know, Colombia has one of the more antiquated legal systems in Latin America. He is committed to a much more open, transparent system. We are supporting that with substantial resources. You are absolutely right, not only is it a policy in which

we share your concerns, but it is written into our own appropriations law in terms of what we do to strengthen Colombian institutions, particularly on the respect for human rights.

We have established an early warning system that has responded to 195 cases of human rights violations; we have a national ombudsman's office that we support. We support a independent, transparent judicial system. We impress the importance of this on the Colombians. I think they fully understand the leadership, not only the importance, but that the United States' continued assistance is contingent on that commitment.

Ms. LEE. Well, I know my time is up, Mr. Chairman, but let me just ask you then. Do you think this House—because this Committee seems to like to issue resolutions condemning violations of human rights all around the world, again, using a variety of standards of human rights. Should we do a resolution to send a strong message to the Colombians that we condemn their record of human rights based on their adherence to the Plan Colombia?

Mr. NORIEGA. Ma'am, I think our best views on the human rights situation in Colombia can be found in the report on Colombia in the State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, which notes some shortcomings but nevertheless does note considerable improvement.

Ms. LEE. Okay. So you believe they are doing okay.

Mr. WELLER. The time of the gentlelady has expired.

Mr. FARRAR, Chairman Hyde, former Chairman Ballenger, myself, and others have noted the lack of an International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in the Western Hemisphere. And while we have one in Asia, Europe, Africa, we fail to have one in our own neighborhood. And as we have discussed today in this hearing, of course, a key part of our effort is our partnership and our strength in the relationship as well as cooperation between agencies across borders. Can you tell us the status of the International Law Enforcement Academy for the Western Hemisphere? Number one: What is the status of it? Number two: Why the delay?

Mr. FARRAR. Yes. It is a sojourn that started long before I arrived in the INL Bureau, but that I hope to see bring to a successful conclusion shortly.

The current status is this. We sent a team out to look at the very last countries that have presented themselves as candidates for a possible site. That team returned last week, and we are on a time line to make a decision within INL within the next week and present that to the ILEA policy board, and we hope to bring it to a conclusion by the end of this month.

Mr. WELLER. So by the end of May you will have a decision made? And, from the standpoint of those of us on this side of the table, when will the program begin in this hemisphere? When will the ILEA be in place and in operation?

Mr. FARRAR. Of course, we are already teaching a few ILEA courses, even we don't have a bricks-and-mortar ILEA. The next step after we make a decision, a final decision on the site, of course, is to negotiate the agreement with the host country. That would be the next step.

Mr. WELLER. And, again, what is your timetable? And when is your goal to have the ILEA in place?

Mr. FARRAR. We would hope that—given the candidate countries that remain that are very interested in having it, as serving as a host—those negotiations would be short and we could get the ILEA up and running quickly. And of course it will also—

Mr. WELLER. In this calendar year? I have grown old and gained a lot of seniority during this process, long before you came on board, with the goal of putting ILEA in place in the Western Hemisphere. Do you believe we can have this in place this calendar year?

Mr. FARRAR. It depends on the course of the negotiations with the host country. I am very optimistic we can do it quickly. I would hate to put a time line on there.

Mr. WELLER. Is that your goal, to have the ILEA in place and in operation this year?

Mr. FARRAR. Our goal—we have courses running now. Our goal is to get a decision by the end of this month on the country, begin negotiations, and wrap those up quickly. Depending upon which country it is and the facilities they offer, it could be a longer or shorter job to actually bring that to conclusion.

Mr. WELLER. Well, we want to work with you as we have been working with you to expedite the need. Clearly, the statistics show there is a need for one. And the ILEA makes such a difference in the other region in the world where you have cooperation that results from people just meeting each other when they participate in the International Law Enforcement Academies. So we want to do the job right, but we are behind the 8-ball on getting one in place.

Mr. FARRAR. I couldn't agree more.

Mr. WELLER. Admiral Utley, of course, again, I commend you for the work you are doing and your service to our country. You know, with the Drug Czar—if I can use that term—as we were discussing with him, I raised the issue of the staggering reduction of marine air patrol by the military, the gap reduction of 71 percent in the last 2 years in the Caribbean and the Pacific. And, you know, this issue has been raised considerably by many of our friends in the region who want to work with us. They point out we are making a tremendous investment in Colombia, and of course, we are making a tremendous investment here at home, but we are reducing our presence in between in the transit areas. And I would like to hear from you, what you are doing about this gap, and not temporarily, but what is your permanent solution to this marine air patrol gap that we have in the Caribbean and Pacific at this time?

Mr. UTLEY. Well, the first thing that we are trying to do right now is get our arms around what it is that we actually need in terms of flight hours. Since 2002, when we did our last study, things have changed. Like I mentioned in my testimony, it is now intel-driven operations. It used to be we turned jet fuel into noise, hoping along some threat factor that we would actually find something. Now we operate on queued intelligence. So the ball game has changed and so the requirement has changed. That is the first thing we have done.

In the meantime, what we have done is once again CBP—well, \$28 million was allocated to CBP to increase the flight hours to the tune of 400 hours a month as a stop gap interim measure until we determine exactly what in fact the need is. Coast Guard has also

ponied up and increased its flight hours. The Dutch, even though the P-3s are out of the game, they are bringing Fokker 60s into the theater, and will, at the margins, add flight hours to the program. But the long term, I think we are going to have to rely more and more on non-DoD air frames.

Mr. WELLER. Has the Administration budget request, does it address this challenge? Have you earmarked funds in the Administration budget request to close this gap?

Mr. UTLEY. Yes. Not totally. Like I said, we are reaching out to our international partners, NIMRODS, Canadians, things like that, to help. There are a number of different ways to fill the gap that the DoD has left, and we are working at filling that gap. And in the President's budget is a proposal by Coast Guard, as an example, to increase the amount of flight time that they can put on target. Now, flight time is meaningless going back and forth. The only thing we really worry about is time on target. So that is why the FOL is doing maintenance there so that things don't have to be flown back to the United States, essentially increasing aluminum on target.

Mr. WELLER. You know, Admiral, we have learned that traffickers watch the airfields so they know when there is aircraft present, that they know when there is aircraft that are going to be used and whether or not assets are available, particularly when they know there is a shortfall. This Committee has recommended a solution, which was using—providing DC-3s for the Colombian Navy. The question, I guess my last question before I will recognize one of my colleagues is: Why not support a permanent fix which would include these DC-3s, which, my understanding is, have a 10-hour flight time?

Mr. UTLEY. It is sort of apples and oranges. It is not the long-term, long-range marine patrol aircraft. What the DC-3s would bring to the fight would be Colombian littoral coverage of go fasts leaving. It would do, as an example, absolutely nothing for the long route along the Galapagos Islands as far as trying to put aluminum on target there. They simply don't have the legs.

Mr. WELLER. Of course, if you had these aircraft, you would be able to identify them before they get over the Caribbean?

Mr. UTLEY. With intelligence, absolutely. Once again, it is a systems approach, like I sort of brought out before. You start with intelligence and you apply maritime patrol aircraft, then you put surface asset on scene with a use of force capability. You take them—get on board, you take them down, and then you feed this back into the intel community.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Admiral.

Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am following up on some issues that were raised by Congresswoman Lee. And having to do with—this is to Mr. Noriega. Having to do with the NGO organizations feeling that, and criticizing the State Department for certifying that the Colombian Government is making progress with regards to human rights. And I did hear your response to her. However, there is still a feeling that there is some collusion between the paramilitaries and the members of Colombia's security forces, and that little progress has been made on the number of

pending investigations. Can you comment on those two points, please?

Mr. NORIEGA. Congresswoman, I think that it is probably fair to say that there are some episodes of contact between the Colombian military and these so-called self-defense forces. We hear reports of that nature. And all we can say is that, when we do, we run down those allegations to hold people accountable for that, because it is absolutely against Colombian law and it would be against our policy. So I can't say that such a thing doesn't exist; I think it is probable that sort of thing does persist, particularly in more isolated areas of the country. But I can assure you that, as a matter of policy, we would want to hold those people accountable who might be credibly accused of that kind of contact, accountable for having that sort of collusion. And it is, again, it is a high priority of the Uribe Government that such contact, such collusion, such cooperation absolutely not exist; that such a thing cease, and that anybody responsible or responsibly alleged or credibly alleged to have engaged in that sort of collusion be held accountable.

Ms. WATSON. I am absolutely confounded by the fact that drugs are so available on our streets, crack cocaine in particular. I live in an area of Los Angeles where we have high crime activity and the sale of drugs right on the city streets of South Los Angeles and so on. So it is an issue of supply and demand. If Colombia is conforming and we have seen a decline of 25 percent and so on, where are the drugs coming from? And I remember a display on the front of *USA Today* where they have the lines leaning up, and I have to wonder if we don't have people sitting on the 30th and 40th floor of our finance district, you know, involved in some way. Because how does the product get to the streets? And that is a big question for you to answer. But I just want to share with you my concerns. And if we are doing such a good job here, I don't really see a reduction or decline on our streets.

Mr. NORIEGA. Well, I think even our numbers bear out, ma'am, that there is, unfortunately, a considerable amount of cocaine being produced and heroin being produced notwithstanding our efforts, notwithstanding this program. And then, of course, there has to be some considerable corruption in the United States for this sort of thing to exist here. But having said that, on both the demand side and on the law enforcement side, on getting after the corruption and the distribution that works and exists in this country, that also is an extraordinarily high priority. It is very true that we do have to attack every link in this drug chain, from production to transit to distribution, and go after education, rehabilitation, and treatment, and do that all the time. And we will probably never have the problem totally eradicated.

Ms. WATSON. Just to conclude. Is it more resources that we need to address these investigations and the abuse of the rule of law and the corruption and the collusion? I mean, what is needed on our part? Barbara Lee asked if we needed another resolution, which doesn't really have the force of law but it sends a message. Maybe you can suggest to us what is needed. That is my final comment and question.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Secretary, in respect to you and the panel—and recognize we only have a few minutes before we have a series of five votes—if Mr. Noriega could respond to that in writing?

Ms. WATSON. That was my final comment.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Ms. Watson.

If I could recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Menendez.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are going to have a series of votes and we have concurred with you not to keep the panel and ask them to stay until we get back, but there are a couple of unanimous consent requests that I would like to make here. One is that Members shall have 5 legislative days to submit additional materials and questions for the record.

Mr. WELLER. Seeing no objection.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I also would like to submit for the record a summary of the Andes 2020 report that was released last year by the Council on Foreign Relations which emphasizes the need to implement a more regional and comprehensive strategy for addressing narcotics and security in the region. And, with that, if we can submit that for the record as well.

Mr. WELLER. With no objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

SUBMITTED BY JULIA SWEIG, SENIOR FELLOW, LATIN AMERICA PROGRAM, PROJECT DIRECTOR, "ANDES 2020: A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF COLOMBIA AND THE REGION," COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF PLAN COLOMBIA

The Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations convened a commission beginning in 2002 to examine the regional dimensions of the conflict in Colombia and the effect of U.S. policy in the Andes. Together with Gen. William L. Nash, director of the Center for Preventive Action, I had the privilege of directing this project. The commission consisted of a group of over twenty scholars, practitioners, and regional policy experts, and was chaired by Gen. Daniel W. Christman and John G. Heimann, distinguished leaders in their respective fields of security and finance. At the conclusion, the commission released a report, *Andes 2020: A New Strategy for the Challenges of Colombia and the Region*, which addresses what the Commission considers to be a major weakness of current U.S. policy, as embodied in Plan Colombia and the ACI: too great an emphasis on counternarcotics and security issues, and too little emphasis on complementary, comprehensive, regional strategies.

Three principles underpinned the Commission's work. First is the need for the diffusion of political and economic power in each country in an accountable and democratic fashion, with particular attention paid to integrating the rural areas in this process. Second is the conviction that the United States is a crucial actor in the region, but also that broad and deep engagement on diplomatic, political, economic, social, and humanitarian issues by other international actors—including the United Nations (UN), the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), regional organizations, and European, Asian, and Latin American countries—is critical. Third is the need for recognition—by the United States, the international community, and the Andean countries themselves—that many of the political, economic, humanitarian, and security problems in the Andes stretch across borders and thereby require strategies that are regional in their approach and implementation.

Within this framework, and in light of the upcoming hearing on Plan Colombia, I would like to lay out the commission's view on the future of U.S. policy in the Andean region by highlighting several key recommendations from the *Andes 2020* report that would make U.S. policies in the region significantly more effective.

First, a note on how Colombia policy is carried out within the U.S. government: any new U.S. strategy toward the Andes will necessitate more effective coordination at all levels, between the various agencies of the U.S. government; the United States and the Andean countries (both bilaterally and on a regional basis); and the United States and the other external actors engaged in the Andes. At present, U.S. policy in the Andes—and in Latin America as a whole—seems to be driven by sev-

eral independently functioning executive branch offices, including the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) at the State Department, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Defense's U.S. Southern Command (South Com). Unfortunately, each office pursues its agenda in a policy vacuum. As a result, an individual bureaucracy can distort the balance of policy, especially in the absence of more senior-level leadership.

LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Prioritize Transparent and Accountable Land Reform.

Land reform options should be explored once systematic and credible land titling and demarcation systems are put in place in the region. These efforts will require technical and financial assistance from multilateral institutions. Equally important, they will necessitate recognition of and clear signaling by the United States that land reform is a strategic issue that is critical to sustainable development and security in the region. It is therefore important to organize the financing and technical groundwork for ambitious, lawful, and transparent efforts to rectify inequalities in land ownership.¹

In Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, options for substantive land reform include experimentation with market-assisted land reform programs—in consultation with the World Bank and other qualified institutions—that would enhance the negotiating power of poor households to purchase high quality land and provide the credit and other resources needed to make that land productive. In Colombia, meanwhile, the government can accelerate the redistribution of prime agricultural land seized under streamlined asset forfeiture laws to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other landless peasants. On this specific point, the U.S. government can earmark funding to the Colombian Dirección Nacional de Estupefacientes (DNE), the government entity responsible for administering the asset forfeiture laws, which, according to the Colombian Contraloría (the equivalent of the U.S. Government Accountability Office), is understaffed and operates inefficiently. Funding would be directed toward capacity building for the DNE and would help expedite the processing and redistribution of land titles.² Additional technical support from, and political pressure by, the United States would be required to bring this program to fruition.

Furthermore, it is vital for the Uribe government to halt the ongoing land grab by the paramilitaries. If this “off-the-books” action continues unchecked, the current opportunity for sustainable and strategic land reform in Colombia may evaporate. Unfortunately, the Colombian government lacks sufficiently strong domestic law enforcement and judicial institutions to effectively stem opportunistic land grabs by paramilitaries, drug cartels, or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) or the National Liberation Army (ELN). The Commission therefore recommends that the U.S. government publicly outline a two-tiered policy designed to assist the Colombian government in actualizing sustainable and strategic land reform. The first element would be the publication by the U.S. DEA of a roster of illegally held and ill-gotten lands and their holders, as part of a public shaming campaign led by the U.S. ambassador. This roster would be analogous to the U.S. government's list of Colombian businesses prohibited from investing in, or forming partnerships with, U.S. entities because of their links to the narcotics or other illegal industries. Cooperation from Bogotá on this matter would be vital.

The second element of the policy would focus on the actual implementation of land reform. The Commission recommends that the U.S. government provide its own senior-level task force to assist in the technical and legal issues involved in this reform. It also advocates enlisting technical and financial support from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and other relevant multilateral agencies.

¹Brazil has the most unequal land distribution in South America, with 20 percent of the population owning 90 percent of all arable land and the poorest 40 percent owning only 1 percent. However, the experience of Brazil's engagement with the World Bank in pursuing market-assisted land reform in its northeast region is instructive for the Andean community nations. The political will demonstrated by the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration in the 1990s to request technical and administrative assistance from the World Bank, and the current efforts to advance the land reform process by the administration of Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, is a model of the presidential initiative needed to tackle a contentious issue like land reform. According to the World Bank, Brazil is the only government in South America that has requested technical and administrative assistance for such a program.

²“Narcobienes, crece el caos,” *El Tiempo*, June 27, 2003.

In Venezuela, a program of land reform and property titling is already underway. On paper, this program consists of taxing large holdings that lie idle, and creating mechanisms for redistribution of government-owned and fallow land to small-scale producers. Although the Commission applauds efforts at sustainable, transparent land reform, it is troubled by recent allegations of illegal expropriation and by the potential for conflict as a result of such actions.³ Accordingly, we strongly recommend that the Hugo Chávez government avoid tacit or overt approval of low-intensity conflict between the landless peasants (*campesinos*) and the wealthy landowners and their hired agents. Thus, as a means of adding legitimacy to—and ensuring the objectivity of—its land reform initiative, the Commission recommends that the government of Venezuela seek technical assistance from the FAO and other relevant multilateral agencies to review land titles and landholdings; update disputed records and define what is considered “unproductive land”; and demonstrate a long-term commitment to its urban and rural land reform programs by providing credit, capital, and technical support programs to new title holders.

Focus New Rural Investments on Infrastructure and Local Public-Private Partnerships.

Invest in Infrastructure. Critically needed basic infrastructure—including roads, electricity, schools, health posts, sewage, and potable water sources—is required to unleash the productive capacity of rural areas. Short-term investments in these areas would also create jobs and strengthen the capacity of local governments and community organizations. Such projects are already a central part of USAID programs in the Andean region, but they are vastly underfunded. Given the important employment and development needs that infrastructure investment fills, the Commission recommends that a higher priority be assigned to sustainable infrastructure projects by USAID and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

Facilitate Local Public-Private Partnerships. Because of the current low capacity of local governments to generate resources and collect taxes, local governments are largely dependent on resource flows from the central government for revenues. Private-public partnerships can help boost fiscal revenues at the local level. The European Commission and World Bank-funded Magdalena de Medio “Peace Laboratory” project in Colombia and the Yungas Community Development Investment Fund in Bolivia (initiated by USAID) are examples of successful community-driven development programs that combine domestic finance with international assistance and reward local initiative.

The private sector is crucial here. Rather than simply investing resources in public relations-driven philanthropic initiatives, companies—particularly extractive companies active in the rural sectors—can be encouraged by the United States and other actors, especially nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to undertake broader development projects coordinated with national and local governments. By harnessing and leveraging the resources of the private sector, this approach would result in significant change at the local level without requiring large international investment.

Mobilize Microfinance to Convert the Informal Sector into a Genuine Private Sector of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses.

Economic diversification and the development of a small and medium-sized business sector are critical to an effective rural strategy. Since as much as 50 percent of Andean economic activity occurs in the informal sector, the potential economic and social benefits, and profitability, of microfinance are unrealized. Through USAID, the United States can increase its current levels of assistance to microfinance institutions (MFIs), focusing on organizations with proven track records and financial self-sustainability. This investment can be complemented by technical assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises, designed to facilitate effective marketing in both local and, where applicable, regional and global markets. Efforts in these areas have proven effective in reducing poverty and raising living standards. MFI success stories—such as those supported by the CAF, Banco Solidario in Bolivia, Compartamos in Mexico, BanGente in Venezuela, Banco Solidario in Ecuador, and Mibanco in Peru—are models for best practices, though it is important that MFIs are supervised by the relevant domestic regulator.

³For an informative account of the battle over land reform in Venezuela, see Reed Lindsay, “Land Reform in Venezuela,” *Toronto Star*, September 21, 2003.

Procure and Coordinate Targeted Funding for Rural Development Initiatives from Regional and International Financial Institutions.

A new interagency group based on a partnership of major multilateral agencies and key bilateral donors, including the United States and the European Union, has been created at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to serve as a coordinating mechanism for rural development in Latin America. The Commission recommends that the interagency group establish a working committee specifically for the Andean region, through which high-level representatives from the multilateral and bilateral agencies can organize and direct new investments and approaches with a timetable that sets clear goals to be achieved in the next year. A parallel committee could be established through the Andean Community's Secretariat, as a forum for Andean governments to address their shared challenges and for multilateral and bilateral actors to engage with regional issues. The interagency group could play a critical role in formulating projects to deal with the challenges presented by border regions.

Tackling the problems of border regions is particularly challenging because the multilateral agencies that provide the bulk of foreign financing for investment in underserved regions—particularly the World Bank—typically fund only national, rather than regional, projects, and are therefore not organized to address political and economic challenges that cross borders.

Within the World Bank's institutional framework, however, it is important that the individual governments actively engage to raise funds to complement U.S. and multilateral investments in the rural Andes.⁴ Specifically, the Commission recommends that the new country assistance strategies (CAS) negotiated between the World Bank and the individual governments include loan commitments that prioritize investment in the rural sector.⁵

Parallel loans to neighboring governments, or efforts to fund binational initiatives to shore up local governments, repair infrastructure, and promote economic development in border regions, will also be required to ensure that capacity-building in one country is not offset by neglect in another. New economic and sector work (ESW)—the World Bank's analytical program—can focus on how best to channel new international and domestic resources to address issues in rural development.

U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Craft a Regional Assistance Strategy by International Donors.

The potential benefit of a regional approach to governance and development assistance in the Andes is often overlooked by donor organizations and countries—especially the United States—in favor of more manageable bilateral relationships. This dynamic is a disincentive to the establishment of common priorities on assistance, consistent standards, and systematized cooperation among international actors in the region.⁶ The Commission therefore recommends that the United States, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Andean Finance Corporation (Corporación Andina de Fomento, or CAF), relevant UN agencies, regional development banks, and European partners cooperate to develop a regional strategy to harmonize policies, priorities, and funding for governance and development issues, including those related to the rural development trust funds. This strategy could potentially be coordinated under the auspices of the Comunidad Andina, or another existing regional institution. Models to emulate include the joint strategies recently crafted by the U.S. government and the IFIs for a common program and shared responsibilities on money laundering and terrorist finance and the joint European Commission/ World Bank Office on Southeast Europe, which acts as a clear-

⁴In Latin America, the Andean region holds the distinction of being the area with the largest gap between demonstrated needs and current World Bank spending. Of the Andean countries, only Bolivia is eligible for International Development Association (IDA) concessionary loans and grants. Because they are "middle income" countries, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru do not receive the most generous terms and conditions for World Bank funding.

⁵The CAS is the central vehicle for Board review of the World Bank Group's assistance strategy for IDA and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) borrowers. The CAS document describes the World Bank Group's strategy based on an assessment of priorities in the country and indicates the level and composition of assistance to be provided based on the strategy and the country's portfolio performance. The CAS is prepared with the government in a participatory way, and its key elements are discussed with the government prior to Board consideration. However, it is not a negotiated document. Any differences between the country's own agenda and the strategy advocated by the World Bank are highlighted in the CAS document. See www.worldbank.org.

⁶Indeed, the World Bank does not organize the Andean countries into the same administrative scheme. Instead, it groups Colombia with Mexico and apart from Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

inghouse for donor countries and governments by coordinating projects, providing needs assessments, crafting strategies for regional development, and mobilizing donor support.

Encourage Brazil's "Outward" Foreign Policy on Security, Drugs, and Trade.

Brazil is the world's ninth largest economy and South America's emerging political heavyweight. The government of Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva is increasingly exercising political leadership in the Andes and internationally. As it is doing on trade (in a somewhat different fashion), Brazil could play the role of a South American interlocutor with the international community, lobbying for increased engagement on pressing issues in the Andes related to security, counterdrug policy, economic development, land reform, and democracy consolidation.

Brazil's security is increasingly under threat from growing drug demand and narco-trafficker and gang violence emanating from its neighbor, Colombia. The narcotics industry's spread to Brazil—on both the supply and demand side—has shaken the country, as the scourge of drug-fueled gang violence and corruption infiltrates society and government at all levels. An unstable Brazil would make addressing the Andean crisis immeasurably more difficult, not to mention the seriousness of such a threat to that nation. Brazil's national interests increasingly dictate that it play an active role in addressing the grave security challenges of the Andes and direct international attention and resources to the region. It is a two-way process: the United States and the international community can also take advantage of Brazil's capabilities and interests in the Andes to engage more constructively and cooperatively in the region.

Brazil's capacity for assisting regional security is incipient but improving, with new troops on its northern border and a standing offer, entertained but not yet accepted by Colombia, to provide intelligence from its System for the Vigilance of the Amazon (SIVAM). Enabled by SIVAM with better intelligence to track drug flights that pass through its airspace, Brazil announced it will track incoming aircraft and confiscate illegal cargo when the planes land at their destinations. The new plan does not authorize aerial interdiction (the shooting down of aircraft) that the United States and Colombia practice. Effectively, it signals Brazil's increased attention to the issue without a major shift in policy.⁷ Brazil is also participating in other diplomatic initiatives, such as offering to host UN talks with the FARC—a trend that the Commission encourages.

Continue to Prioritize Progress on Human Rights for Security Assistance.

Respect for human rights is at the core of U.S. counterterrorism and counterdrug training policy in Colombia. Bipartisan support for U.S. policy toward Colombia depends on continued adherence to the vetting of Colombian soldiers who receive U.S. military training; the embedding of human rights education into the military training curriculum; and the use of human rights certification of Colombian military and police units in accordance with the Leahy amendment law.⁸ Amplifying the vetting, training, and certification process of Colombian military and police units will give the United States more scope for ensuring that positive changes in the security environment do not come at the expense of human rights. Further internalization of respect for human rights within Colombia's military will be contingent upon its termination of ties with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and other paramilitary groups; it is therefore important that the United States does not shy away from addressing this issue when disbursing aid and in its training and vetting activities.⁹

Respecting human rights is not solely an American responsibility. In recognition of the findings by the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2002)—specifically, that "tacit arrangements between local military commanders and paramilitary groups in some regions" exist where "members of the security forces actively collaborated with members of paramilitary groups"—the Commission calls upon the government of Colombia to increase funding to the ombudsman and inspector general's office to investigate and expose these "tacit arrange-

⁷ Raymond Colitt, "Brazil Targets Colombia Drug Flights," *Financial Times*, October 31, 2003.

⁸ The so-called Leahy amendment, sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT, the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations), requires the U.S. secretary of state to certify progress by the Colombian military in respecting the human rights of the civilian population and severing ties with the paramilitary groups as a condition to disburse U.S. funds. Furthermore, with the approval of the secretary of state, the amendment empowers the U.S. ambassador to terminate funding for specific units of the Colombian armed forces who are not certified as meeting human rights standards.

⁹ It is, of course, important that similar standards are adhered to by other countries involved in bilateral security assistance to Colombia, such as the United Kingdom.

ments”; immediately suspend officers against whom there is credible evidence of collusion with paramilitary groups; and pursue investigations, and where necessary prosecutions, against senior military officers who have been accused of links to paramilitary groups.¹⁰ The Commission also endorses a March 2003 report from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) office in Colombia, which enumerates twenty-seven recommendations for improving Colombia’s human rights record; calls upon the Colombian government to implement the report’s policy recommendations; and encourages the UN, the U.S. State Department, and human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to monitor and publicly comment on the implementation process.¹¹

Finally, the Commission recommends that the Alvaro Uribe administration commission an independent panel of international jurists and other experts to assess the government’s progress in breaking ties with paramilitaries, with a secondary focus on the matter of paramilitarism and illegal armed groups in Colombia. Analogous to similar commissions in Peru and Chile on truth and reconciliation and in Central America on paramilitaries, the independent commission would have plenary power to carry out its investigation as an autonomous body, and would issue a report to the Colombian public and the international community.

REGIONAL APPROACHES TO REGIONAL PROBLEMS

Deepen Domestic Revenues.

State revenue-generating systems in the Andes are underperforming. Revenue inflows from income and property taxes, value-added taxes (VAT) on goods and services, and direct royalty flows from commodities such as oil are inadequate in relation to the amount that could be generated from the domestic economy, were it not for widespread tax evasion, loopholes, and weak government enforcement.¹² This underperformance is symptomatic of the institutional weakness prevalent in the Andes and is a reason why governments do not make sufficient investments in the overall development of the nation—on issues ranging from social spending to funding security forces, public works, and local governance. Internally, revenue-generating systems in the Andes suffer from an extremely narrow tax base, rampant evasion and corruption, and a regressive tax structure characterized by a dependence on VAT. Externally, pressure from the international community, in particular from the IMF, to maintain budget austerity and controlled spending does not call sufficient attention to the extremely important limiting factor on the other side of the equation: low government revenue.

The Commission argues that equitable reform of state revenue systems will require more than a revision of tax codes. Lasting reform will necessitate a broad effort to generate greater civic responsibility, inform all citizens about the taxes they do and do not pay through a public education campaign, and improve the quality and fairness of the internal revenue collection regime. Improving the state’s revenue capacity in a broadbased way would enhance institution building and democratic consolidation, above and beyond the tangible benefits of increased spending capacity.

Reform of the revenue-generating systems could begin with a public campaign by Andean governments to seriously crackdown on tax evasion through the elimination of loopholes and increased enforcement, with penalties for nonpayment. Collection and enforcement of property tax is particularly crucial. Furthermore, with the ex-

¹⁰Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2002), U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 31, 2003, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18325.htm.

¹¹Notable recommendations from the UNHCHR report include establishment, by the attorney general, of a task force to investigate possible links between members of the armed forces and the paramilitary groups; introduction, by Congress, of a judicial order to restrict the powers of the armed forces to prosecute military justice cases; and collaboration between the vice president, the minister of defense, minister of the interior, and public ombudsman to make effective the “system of early alert” for preventing rights abuses to communities at risk. Overall, the recommendations target specific Colombian institutions and pertain to six areas: prevention of abuses and protection of human rights; the internal armed conflict (aimed at the illegal armed actors and armed forces); the rule of law and impunity; economic and social rights; the promotion of a culture of human rights; and increased assistance and technical cooperation between the UNHCHR office and relevant Colombian government institutions. Marta Luciz Ramirez, at that time the defense minister of Colombia, disputed the accuracy of the UN report, citing Defense Ministry statistics with contrasting findings; see “MinDefensa Presentaron informe oficial de derechos humanos 2002–2003,” *El Tiempo*, September 10, 2003.

¹²Nancy Birdsall and Augusto de la Torre, *Washington Contentious: Economic Policies for Social Equity in Latin America*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Inter-American Dialogue, 2001.

ception of Bolivia, Andean governments are middle-income nations and are developed enough to revise their dependence on VAT—a cash cow of the state but a levy that burdens the poor as much as the rich.¹³

Taxes can also be expanded on luxury items, corporate income, and tourism, in addition to an overall increase in levies on the top 10 percent of income earners in the Andes—who pay comparatively a much lower rate than their counterparts in the United States—without creating negative incentives for investment and growth. By broadening their tax bases through a lower minimum rate of income required for contribution and a more progressive structure, Andean governments could induce greater revenues.

Aggressively Combat Corruption, Especially in the Extractive Industries.

Exacerbated by the drug trade, entrenched corruption throughout the Andes and Latin America impedes economic growth and undermines the rule of law. For example, it is estimated that diversions from state budgets in Colombia alone amount to \$1.76 billion per year (or close to two points of gross domestic product, or GDP, per capita). An estimated half of all state contracts in that country involves payoffs, at an annual cost of \$480 million to the economy; \$5 billion per year is laundered; and putting an end to corruption would enable Colombia to reduce its public fiscal deficit by 80 percent.¹⁴

A crucial tool in fighting corruption is improving tax collection and enforcement. Another step the Andean governments can take is to create new, or strengthen existing, anticorruption ministries, ensuring their autonomy and giving them authority commensurate with an ombudsman's office.¹⁵ It is also necessary that the ministries' remit includes punitive powers against both payers and recipients of bribes, in the latter case focusing primarily on corporate, as well as individual, participants.

In Colombia, the national government has taken steps to usurp the power of some local authorities in oil-rich regions involved in payments to the ELN and other rent seekers. The Commission applauds this action and regards it as a model, when initiated legally, for other governments in the region.

The extractive industry is under particular pressure from some governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to take a stand against corruption by increasing transparency and accountability in dealings with host governments. The G-8's Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, spearheaded by the United Kingdom, is developing a model for publishing the payments that extractive companies make to governments and those governments' revenues. The Commission supports the G-8 initiative and emphasizes the importance of applying the standards of transparency and accountability equally to publicly traded, privately owned firms; government-owned oil companies, such as *Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA)*; and host governments themselves. The Commission also endorses the United Nations (UN) Development Programme's Commission on the Private Sector and Development and recommends that it lend its moral authority to encouraging the energy industry—and the private sector as a whole—to commit to global good citizenship and best practices.

Create an AmeriPol and AmeriJust to Combat Transnational Crime.

The EU has created Europol, a regional institution to carry out exchange of law enforcement information on a continent-wide basis, to facilitate prosecutions of criminals whose activities cross borders by creating a base in which the police agencies in Europe can place liaison officers and create joint operations. There is currently no institution in the Americas to facilitate cross-border law enforcement intelligence and strategies and carry out operations against criminals in more than one country. An AmeriPol could fill that critical gap, providing greater law enforcement intelligence capacity and operational support to all law enforcement agencies operating in the Americas. Initially, an AmeriPol could be financed by the United States alone, or by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Alternatively, it could be financed by a formula based on the relative size of the populations, or economies, of the participating countries.

The creation of an AmeriJust for a similar sharing of strategies by prosecutors also merits consideration. This institution would be comparable to an existing EU

¹³Nancy Birdsall and Augusto de la Torre, *Washington Contentious: Economic Policies for Social Equity in Latin America*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Inter-America Dialogue, 2001.

¹⁴"Muchos Discuros, Pocos Goles," *El Tiempo*, August 26, 2003.

¹⁵In 2003, the head of Colombia's anticorruption initiative resigned because he felt his work was being ignored by other government officials. See "Muchos Discuros, Pocos Goles," *El Tiempo*, August 26, 2003.

body, EuroJust, which improves common prosecutorial capacity against serious crossborder or transnational crime.

Mr. MENENDEZ. And one comment before I yield to Mr. Delahunt: I am concerned that as—I saw in the charts, it is always interesting to talk about potential. Potential means a lot. I could have a lot of charts here that talk about potential. But I want to talk about actual. And in that regard, we talk about potential productions versus not actual production. We have not had less cocaine on the streets, the number of hectares are actually slightly up. So we can talk about potential, but that is not actual production.

So I think we need to be speaking about apples and apples. I would be happy to yield 2 minutes to Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank Mr. Menendez. I will ask for a written response. I will direct it to the Secretary, Mr. Noriega. General Craddock recently testified before several Committees about the impact of the American Servicemen's Protection Act, and what it is doing to military-to-military relationships in Latin America. These are his words:

“In my judgment, it has the unintended consequence of restricting our access to and interaction with many important partner nations. Of the 22 nations worldwide affected by these sanctions, 11 of them are in Latin America, hampering the engagement and professional contact that is an essential element of regional security strategies. Extra hemisphere actors are filling the void left by restricted U.S. military engagement with partner nations. We now risk losing contact and interoperability with a generation of military classmates in many nations of the region.”

I guess what I am asking: Has there been discussion about addressing this particular problem? And, if so, you can respond to me either briefly, or I would like a more expanded version.

Mr. NORIEGA. The answer is, yes, and it is ongoing, and we will get you a longer answer.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE ROGER F. NORIEGA TO
QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

The American Servicemembers' Protection Act prohibits military assistance to certain countries that are “party to the International Criminal Court.” The President may waive this prohibition with respect to a country that has entered into an Article 98 agreement with the United States, or if he determines it is important to the national interest of the United States to do so. With U.S. military forces, civilian personnel, and private citizens currently active in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in more than 100 countries, Article 98 agreements are important in that they allow the U.S. to remain engaged internationally with our friends and allies and also provide essential protection for U.S. nationals and military personnel from surrender to the International Criminal Court. This protection is particularly important with regard to politically motivated investigations and prosecutions.

Entering into Article 98 agreements is a key priority and the American Servicemembers' Protection Act has helped the U.S. Government negotiate such agreements. To date, 100 countries, including 15 in the Western Hemisphere, have concluded Article 98 Agreements with the United States, with 90 agreements worldwide, and 13 agreements in the Western Hemisphere, in force.

There is much more to the maintenance of military relationships in the Hemisphere than the military assistance programs that are subject to American Servicemembers' Protection Act prohibitions. The United States Southern Command has a robust program of exercises, conferences, and other initiatives that support

the maintenance of strong ties to other armed forces in the region. Nevertheless, as General Craddock noted, the military assistance programs that are prohibited under American Servicemembers' Protection Act, particularly International Military Education and Training, are important tools in maintaining strong military-to-military relationships. We recognize that the prohibitions contained in the American Servicemembers' Protection Act can negatively impact upon military-to-military engagement. The departments, bureaus, and military commands involved in these relationships continue to share ideas and work together to enter into additional Article 98 agreements and enhance military-to-military relations. These discussions have been held at senior and working levels with the goal of maximizing protection for U.S. nationals and military personnel and enhancing our military-to-military contacts.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you. And I would again note that any questions you have, you have the opportunity to submit them for writing.

Mr. Payne for a very quick question, and again, I advise you that our witnesses can submit their answer to you in writing, recognizing the limited amount of time we have.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Just very quickly. I was just looking at the Congressional Research Services report, and it does say that the ONDCP recently reported no significant reduction of coca cultivation during 2004. And so I was trying to get to the point: Are we winning? Are we losing? Maybe that could—it is on page 4, and it comes from that office.

So I would like for you to clarify that, if you would, because I assume they got the information from your office, just since time is running out. I wonder, if you could, perhaps respond in writing to the spraying up in the coca—was it Choco area? There was a question whether the people were informed before the spraying, as was supposed to be done in Colombia. As you know, that is where African-Colombians are living. And the situation seems to be worsening, whether there was any discussion of alternative crops. The people are marginalizing, they are becoming even more marginalized. So I would like to perhaps just have a general answer about the situation of African-Colombians in Colombia as it relates to this project.

Mr. WELLER. I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey. And those answers can be submitted for the record.

Again, Mr. Franco, Mr. Noriega, Mr. Farrar, Admiral, I want to thank our panelists.

I want to also ask unanimous consent to include in the record an Op Ed today, "Stick With Colombia," by Robert Charles and the December 13, 2004 State Department letter referenced by Chairman Burton on mycoherbicides.

[The information referred to follows:]

STICK WITH COLOMBIA

Washington Times, Wednesday, May 11, 2005
By Robert Charles

As Ronald Reagan used to say, it does no good to throw a drowning man a rope, make sure he has a tight grip, then drop your end—to go help someone else.

That principle applies with equal force in international relations. Troubling, therefore, are recent reports that the United States could walk away from a long-term commitment to South America called the "Andean Counterdrug Initiative" (ACI), also known as "Plan Colombia."

By most objective measures, this stabilization effort has been a resounding success. Most notably, ACI lowered coca and heroin poppy cultivation more than 30

percent between early 2002 and early 2004—and has kept an estimated 20,000 drug-funded terrorists off balance. Perhaps more importantly, ACI constitutes a primary engine of positive change—including economic growth—in a region buffeted by unwelcome forces, including divisive radical socialism, especially from Venezuela.

To date, ACI has cost \$3.5 billion. In context, that is about 1 percent of the U.S. commitment to Iraq over a shorter period. As most know, ACI includes aggressive aerial eradication of most of Colombia's drug crop, regional support for criminal justice and human-rights institutions, hands-on training and material for the Colombian National Police and counterdrug brigades, an infrastructure for sharing and using real-time counterterrorism and drug intelligence, wider maritime and airport security, educational efforts like "culture of lawfulness," and regionwide alternative development programs taking root in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and elsewhere.

Conceived by a Republican Congress in the mid-1990s and endorsed by the Clinton administration in 1998, this coordinated approach aims to stabilize South America's oldest democracy, lower drug production regionwide and put tens of thousands of terrorists on the defensive—and eventually out of business. Against a steady head wind, it is succeeding.

Beyond reducing the region's drug cultivation—and cutting drug money to terrorists—ACI has given hope to people across the region. Not least, the plan has assisted Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, one of our staunchest allies, in turning his country around. A visit with President Bush last year highlighted their combined commitment. Said Mr. Uribe, "I have found in President Bush a huge level of understanding that we cannot leave this fight half-way. . . . Our main target is . . . to eliminate terrorism . . . to finish with that plague."

For our investment, here is what ACI has so far delivered. All 1,058 Colombian municipalities now have a permanent law enforcement presence, for the first time in the nation's history. Over the last three years, trained police and soldiers—including human rights training—have increased 16 percent and 31 percent, respectively. Over the same period, homicides and "incidents of terrorism" have each fallen more than 40 percent. Over the last four years, kidnappings have steadily fallen more than 50 percent. In 2003, more than 3,700 FARC terrorists, and more than 2,000 AUC terrorists either demobilized or were killed. In 2004, an added 4,000 FARC terrorists and more than 2,400 more AUC were either demobilized or killed.

At the same time, while Colombia's drug crop cultivation has fallen a third over three years, the hectares planted in "alternative" or legal crops has skyrocketed. From 1,500 hectares of alternative development planting in 2001, the number jumped to 43, 951 in 2003. It climbed again in 2004, and was paralleled by a solid growth increase of Colombian citizens benefiting from infrastructure projects and public health care. Over the last four years, more than 2.3 million Colombians have gained access to public health care.

Nearby, poverty-stricken Bolivia saw a 25 percent increase in alternative development exports in 2003 to outside markets from the Chapare region—the former coca capital of the world—which provided a net increase in legitimate income of \$25 million. Both Bolivia and Peru have made major strides against drug cultivation, despite internal pressures to slow down.

Finally, ACI and Colombia are proving the truth in what John Locke said 300 years ago: Stability—or a "social compact" built around democracy—encourages people to "mix their labor with the land," invest and prosper.

Thus, ACI's contributions to stability in Colombia, while imperfect and buffeted by the harsh winds of narcoterrorism and unruly neighbors, have helped produce a 3.8 percent growth in 2003 and 4.3 percent in 2004. The World Bank recently named Colombia a top area for foreign investment.

All this says one thing: ACI is a plan worth continuing, for our sake and the region's. In time, we should see reductions in cocaine and heroin entering the U.S., as we did in the late 1980s. But even now, the investment is sound.

President Uribe's courage, supported by ACI, provides a much-needed anchor on this churning sea. The last thing America should do is cut the line.

Robert Charles, former assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law enforcement, 2003–2005, is president of the Charles Group, Gaithersburg, Md.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

DEC 13 2004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter of December 9 placing an informational hold on the December 1, 2004 Congressional Notice dealing with the sum of \$312,500,000 designated for counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan. Your sincere concern for the success of our counter-narcotics campaign is greatly appreciated. You have always been an important partner in our fight against drugs and share many of our concerns. We look forward to further improving communication between our offices to reach our shared goal – a world made free from the depredations of the drug trade.

Helicopters for the counter-narcotics strategy

In support of the Afghanistan opium poppy eradication programs, INL proposes to procure 14 second-hand Bell 212 helicopters (estimated cost \$2.1 million each for a total of \$29.4 million). These aircraft will support the ground eradication program and, when the Government of Afghanistan approves, the aerial eradication program as well. Aircraft procured for the eradication program could also support interdiction and other law enforcement activities during the off-season, subject to availability of funding. These helicopters have the lift capacity to confront any circumstance that may be required for the 2005 counter-narcotics strategy, including any gunship escort, MEDEVAC, or search and rescue missions.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has initiated a plan to develop Afghan police air transportation and support. The goal of this plan is to establish one Afghan operational helicopter squadron with contract fixed wing reconnaissance and a UAV support element. To this end, DoD has used FY04 funds to lease two Mi-8 helicopters for use by the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF). In addition, FY04 funds are being used to refurbish one Mi-8 helicopter for the ASNF and two Mi-8 helicopters for use

The Honorable
Henry Hyde, Chairman,
Committee on International Relations,
House of Representatives.

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SCHEDULED TO GOVERN
NO BELL HELICOPTERS
AS OF 12/13/04

by the Afghan Minister of Interior. FY05 supplemental funds are being sought to provide for ~~6-8 additional helicopter refurbishments, contract maintenance, pilot training,~~ contract fixed wing support, and a base of operations. Additional 1033 authority is being requested to cover the estimated cost of helicopter refurbishments and maintenance support for this plan.

Public Awareness Campaign

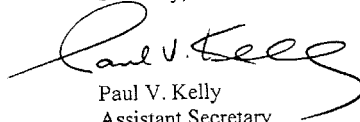
INL proposes to spend \$4.95 million in FY 2005 supplemental funds on a public awareness campaign, with \$1 million required immediately through reprogramming. We know we must educate the Afghan people on the threat the narcotics trade poses to the environment, public health, community well-being, sustainable economic development, and Afghanistan's international standing. We must publicize, too, the efforts and successes of the Government of Afghanistan in reducing poppy cultivation, seizing drugs, and prosecuting drug traffickers and corrupt officials. In short, we must wage a comprehensive and sustained campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of the Afghan people. As you note in your letter, the United Nations has decided not to explore the possibility of mycoherbicides. Additionally, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has, to date, resisted the use of mycoherbicides as international policy despite the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' (INL) general advocacy and previous research. Therefore, funds previously identified for the study of mycoherbicides will, as Assistant Secretary Charles and Mr. Mackey discussed by phone last week, be cross-applied to win "hearts and minds" through the public awareness campaign.

Mycoherbicides

We agree that mycoherbicides show potential as an eradication tool and there are many that share your desire to explore this alternative. At this time however, the need to take immediate action in Afghanistan does not allow for the time and resources necessary to fully explore their potential, certify their safety, and gain congressional, administrative and Afghan consensus on their use. I urge you to continue pushing for discussion on this subject, as the potential of mycoherbicides should not be dismissed before being fully explored.

We hope this information is useful to you. We are prepared to address any other concerns you may have concerning the Afghanistan program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul V. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul V. Kelly
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Mr. WELLER. Again, I thank the panel for your time today. It has been a very informative hearing. This hearing is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 4:39 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE TOM LANTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question 1: Demobilization of Right-wing Paramilitaries

Since 2003, President Uribe's administration has been engaged in negotiations with right-wing paramilitary groups to discuss the terms of their demobilization. Although approximately 4,000–5,000 paramilitaries have already demobilized, the Colombian government still lacks a legal framework within which to address the alleged crimes—both gross violations of human rights and extensive narcotics trafficking—of the paramilitary leaders. The Colombian Congress is considering a bill that would establish a legal framework. Human Rights Watch and other international human rights groups have worked with supporters of President Uribe in the Colombian Congress who seek improvements to the proposed legislation, such as provisions that would promote the dismantlement of paramilitary organizational structures that facilitate illicit activities and provisions that would ensure that the victims of crimes receive some measure of justice.

- a) *What are the State Department, the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, and USAID doing to improve the likelihood that the Colombian Government enacts a legal framework that addresses these varied concerns?*
- b) *How much have we spent to support the demobilization process to date? What projects have we funded?*
- c) *How much will the demobilization of the paramilitaries cost? What will be the U.S. contribution? That of other international donors? Is the cost of the U.S. contribution included in the FY06 budget request? If not, will the Administration be requesting a supplemental for Colombia?*

Response:

a) The Department of State, USAID and the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá very carefully monitored the progress of the Justice and Peace law during the course of its lengthy consideration by the Colombian Congress before approval on June 22. The State Department identified issues of particular importance, including extradition and reparations, and ensured that the Colombian Government understood our concerns. These were most clearly expressed by then Under Secretary Marc Grossman in Bogota when he said that any demobilization process should “guarantee the dismantlement of the AUC, finish with their finances, and confiscate their property.” We are presently reviewing the legislation to assess how it addresses our concerns and to determine how its implementation can further those goals.

b) USAID has spent nearly \$1.8 million in FY 2004 funds after consulting with the Congress to help the GOC establish the institutional framework for the demobilization and reintegration program. Specifically, USAID funding has been used to design, implement, monitor and develop procedures for the tracking and monitoring system and the Reincorporation to Civil Life Program's Reference and Orientation Centers. This work has been carried out through a cooperative agreement with the International Office for Migration and occasional short term technical assistance assignments with groups like Creative Associates that have worked on demobilization projects in other countries. Additional logistical and technical support has been given to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Ministry of Interior and

Justice/Reincorporation Program and to the Demobilization and Reintegration (DR) Verification Mission of the Organization of American States.

c) The answers to each of the questions in part (c) are given below:

- Based on the progress and expenditures of the Colombian DR process to date, the projected cost of the GOC's DR program for 2005 through 2007 is now estimated by the GOC at \$171 million. However, this estimate must be viewed as preliminary and is reportedly based on the assumption that approximately 15,000 members of illegal armed groups will demobilize by the end of 2005 and complete their reincorporation process by the end of 2007.
- The Administration has made no decision regarding possible U.S. Government funding for the demobilization and reintegration process.
- The GOC, as noted, has a projected DR budget of \$171 million. Reportedly, the GOC expects to be able to provide \$88 million, which is approximately 52 percent of the total estimated cost. The GOC is looking to the international community, local and departmental governments and the private sector to assist in funding the estimated projected shortfall of \$83 million. However, neither the United States nor other potential international donors have determined what, if any, assistance will be provided.
- USAID's interest and intent to support the demobilization program were noted in the FY05 and FY06 Congressional Budget Presentations. Funds were not allocated for demobilization and reintegration in the FY06 budget, because there were still unresolved legal, policy and funding questions. Assuming resolution of those issues, USAID and other agencies in Bogota is reviewing program budgets for FY05 and FY06 to see if any funds could be reprogrammed for DR. Any reprogramming would require a Congressional Notification. Moreover, before any such decision was taken, consultations would be held with the Congress.
- As noted earlier, the Administration has made no decisions regarding possible reprogramming of existing funds, requests for future funding, or on the possibility of seeking a supplemental for Colombia. All of these are issues that will be the subject of continuing consultations with Congress and appropriate Committees.

Question 2: Development and Democratization Programs

What is the Colombian Government doing to extend basic government services—such as schools, clinics, and courts—into areas that the Colombian military has reclaimed from the left-wing guerillas or the right-wing paramilitaries? On average, how long does the Colombian military remain in a reclaimed area before it moves on to other combat theatres? When the military leaves, are the police able to prevent the guerillas or paramilitaries from returning? How often has reclaimed territory reverted back to the terrorists?

Response:

It is important to note that while Colombia's illegal armed groups have been weakened in some areas and demobilization of paramilitaries increased, the FARC, AUC and ELN still have a national presence.

The GOC has formed an interagency coordinating center (Center for Coordinated Integral Action, referred to by its Spanish acronym CCAI) to facilitate social services in seven geographical areas that have traditionally suffered from little to no state presence and pressure from illegal armed groups. Almost 40,000 individuals have been enrolled in state health care, while judges, investigators, and public defenders have been placed in all 16 municipalities of the Plan Patriota area.

In addition, the GOC's Democratic Security Strategy makes a priority of placing police in every municipality in Colombia. Municipalities in remote areas that never had a government presence now have police and usually a prosecutor in at least the county seat. Moreover, mayors previously threatened with violence and forced to flee their municipalities have been able to return rather than governing in abstentia from a department capital or Bogota. Additional progress is needed to extend the presence of well trained and equipped Colombian National Police units to increase law enforcement and public security throughout the municipalities where traditional state presence has been weak or nonexistent.

The USAID Democracy and Governance program has established thirty nine Casas de Justicia (Justice Houses) in an attempt to bring legal and social services to residents of some of the most remote areas of the country. More than 3 million cases have been reviewed since the start of that program. With USAID funding, the GOC also established eight Centros de Convivencias (Centers of Co-existence) in the most conflictive municipalities of Colombia to promote conflict resolution and pro-

vide social services similar to those provided through the Casas de Justicia program. One of these centers was established in San Vicente de Caguan, a former FARC stronghold and the center of the demobilized zone during the Pastrana Administration. USAID provides technical assistance to strengthen local governments, again in areas where FARC or AUC were dominant as well as in regions where their presence remains significant. Technical assistance continues as well in areas where these groups have been weakened. This assistance also includes training for governors, mayors and local councilmen, equipment and support for cadastral surveys, and cost-shared funding for infrastructure projects—schools, clinics, bridges, etc.

Establishing Colombian government presence in previous AUC or FARC zones is a high and jointly shared priority of both governments. Cumulative GOC counterpart funding for strengthening of national and local institutions and rural infrastructure in USAID-supported Alternative Development (AD) project areas exceeds \$17.0 million. It is also important to note that in the Catatumbo area, for example, where USAID is supporting alternative development activities such as palm and cacao projects, the Colombian private sector is providing 73% of the total investment in these activities. Long term private sector investment, coupled with significant GOC resources, will help to institutionalize the GOC's presence. This will also demonstrate a commitment to economic and social development in these largely underserved areas where AUC and/or FARC have had a significant presence in the past.

Again, it is important to state that both GOC and USG efforts are aimed at long-term, sustainable presence in areas influenced by illegally armed groups (IAGs). USG assistance to and through the Government of Colombia, coupled with investments from the private sector are making positive in-roads in Colombia.

This is not a goal that can be reached in the short-term. An important amount of progress has been made, but continued efforts are needed. Secretary Rice's visit to Bogota in April 2005 highlighted our close working relations with Colombia. The Secretary very clearly stated, "You don't stop in midstream on something that has been very effective." Plan Colombia's ending must not signal the end of our support for Colombia.

RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE ROGER F. NORIEGA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE TOM LANTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question:

On or about February 21, 2005, eight members of the peace community of San José de Apartadó were brutally murdered. Although the Ministry of Defense strongly denies the accusations, credible reports link the massacre to members of the Colombian military, possibly the 17th Brigade which had been conducting maneuvers in the surrounding area days before the killings. Is the State Department waiting to certify Colombia's recent human rights record until a thorough civil investigation into the killings is completed? Have representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá visited the community to evaluate the quality of the investigation? What is the U.S. Embassy doing to facilitate the participation of Apartadó community members—most of whom fear reprisals if they testify—in the Colombian Government's investigation?

Response:

Embassy Bogotá is following the situation closely and is in frequent contact with Colombian government officials, community representatives and international organizations operating in the area. Community representatives allege that Colombian Army soldiers committed the massacre, while some government officials claim to have evidence linking the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to the deaths. Colombian government officials continue to investigate this crime, and we cannot yet say with certainty who is responsible.

The massacre was reported on February 24, and the Colombian government immediately initiated a field investigation facilitated by air assets provided by the U.S. Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section. Civilian prosecutors and police arrived at the remote gravesites on the afternoon of February 25 and began collecting evidence.

The Colombian government's investigation is ongoing but has been hampered by peace community residents' refusal to cooperate and by a mortar attack against the investigators on March 1, which killed one policeman and injured another. Spokesmen for the peace community report that residents will not provide evidence to Colombian government investigators.

Our Embassy in Bogotá has been closely following the situation in the Urabá region for several years. Political officers visited the peace community in June 2004

and the U.S. Ambassador visited the Urabá region in October 2004, where he met with government, police, and military officials and stressed the need to respect the rule of law and protect the rights of those individuals associated with the peace community.

This year, on April 6, the Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission and an officer from the political section, along with representatives of the international community visited members of the peace community in "San Josecito," just outside of San José de Apartadó. During the meeting, members of the diplomatic corps noted the importance of the testimony of peace community residents and witnesses to ensure that the case is fully investigated.

Embassy political officers visited the peace community a second time on May 5, in a trip organized by the NGO Redepaz (Peace Network), which included representatives from the European Commission, the UNDP, as well as several NGOs and civil society organizations. At this meeting, peace community leaders requested international oversight of the investigation into the massacre, but they now continue to refuse to cooperate with it until all previous cases involving the community are resolved.

The Department of State has urged the Colombian government to conduct a rapid, transparent and full investigation, and demanded that those responsible be swiftly brought to justice. In his March 16 meeting with representatives of the peace community in Bogotá, the U.S. Ambassador reiterated this message and expressed our condolences for the losses suffered.

The Department of State is currently evaluating information on the human rights and paramilitary related conditions in Colombia, in light of the certification requirements in section 563(a) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2004 (Division D of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004). I can assure you that we will make the upcoming human rights certification decision with seriousness and deliberation. As in any case in which the Colombian military is alleged to be involved in human rights violations, the San José de Apartadó case will be closely evaluated as the Department makes its certification decision.

Question:

Does the Administration plan to ask for the reauthorization of Plan Colombia? If so, what authorities are needed? What conditionality would you consider appropriate for maintaining the largest U.S. aid program outside of the Middle East and Afghanistan?

Response:

Plan Colombia is a six-year Government of Colombia program initiated by the administration of President Andres Pastrana in September 1999, and whose goals are to combat drug production and trafficking, foster peace, strengthen the rule of law, improve human rights, provide humanitarian assistance, expand economic development, and institute justice reform. It was continued and strengthened by President Alvaro Uribe and concludes in September of this year. The Government of Colombia is considering a follow-up strategy.

United States support to Plan Colombia was first provided in the FY 2000 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 106-246). Subsequently, additional assistance was made available under the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) headings in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Acts for FY 2001 through FY 2005, and in supplemental appropriations acts for FY 2002 and FY 2003. As such, this assistance comprised a multi-year program of U.S. support to Plan Colombia. The President's budget request for FY 2006 reflects our intention to maintain assistance to Colombia.

The Administration, Congress and the Colombian government have formed a very effective partnership to confront narco-terrorism in Colombia and we look forward to discussions with the Congress on future assistance programs. We believe that the annual appropriations process, as it has developed, in consultation with the Congress, provides a suitable vehicle to continue to provide needed support to Colombian programs, and that it is able to take into account developments and events in Colombia, as appropriate, in coordination with the Government of Colombia's planning document which is expected to be available shortly.

We appreciate the enhanced authorities which Congress has approved that permit assistance provided through the foreign operations appropriations accounts to be available to support Colombia's unified campaign against narcotics trafficking and designated terrorist organizations, and are requesting their renewal for FY 2006. They allow additional flexibility to help the Colombian government address narcotics trafficking and terrorism more efficiently and effectively. In practical terms,

the training, equipment, intelligence support, and other U.S. programs that have been made available are now also able to support Colombia's unified campaign against narcotics trafficking and designated terrorist organizations.

In addition, Congress authorized raising the personnel ceilings for FY 2005 and FY 2006 for U.S. military personnel and U.S. citizen civilian contractors in Colombia in support of Plan Colombia from the previous 400 in each category to 800 U.S. military personnel and 600 U.S. citizen civilian contractors. While those upper limits have not yet been approached—the highest numbers so far are 501 U.S. military personnel and 400 U.S. citizen civilian contractors—the increase improves the flexibility and rationality of our planning process.

United States assistance to Colombian military and police forces is conditioned upon compliance with the “Leahy amendment” and we believe this contributes to a more effective pursuit of our foreign policy goals, as do the human rights certification provisions of current legislation, and we would expect these to continue.

Question:

In January 2004, the Colombian Government presented a draft of what they considered to be Phase II of Plan Colombia. Under their estimation, the second phase would have a total cost of \$7.19 billion. What is your evaluation of this draft plan for Phase II? Is there an interagency process through which to consider the next phase of Plan Colombia? Has a draft, or drafts, of the next phase been prepared by State, USAID or DoD?

Response:

The draft proposal to which you refer was a working document of the Government of Colombia and has not been presented to the U.S. Government as part of a formal proposal for a “Plan Colombia Phase II.” Nevertheless, it identified a follow-on strategy to Plan Colombia that would build on and consolidate the progress made to date in four major areas:

- Combating terrorism, narcotics trafficking and international organized crime;
- Economic and social reactivation;
- Strengthening institutions and the justice system; and
- Peace negotiations, demobilization and reintegration of illegal armed groups.

We agree with the broad priorities contained in that draft plan and have told the Colombian government that we will seek continued support from Congress annually through the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI), Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and other funding vehicles, as Colombia determines its future plans. Three of the four areas described by the Colombian government represent a continuation of programs we are already supporting.

The fourth, that of “peace negotiations, demobilization and reintegration of illegal armed groups,” is the result of progress made by the six-year Plan Colombia, which concludes this year. There has been no determination yet regarding the level of assistance that we would recommend be provided. First, we are seeking, within the United States Government, to address legal concerns which will determine the extent to which the United States can support the demobilization effort. We will then consult further with Congress in order to determine possible support for programs in this area, noting the concerns voiced in the Managers’ Report accompanying the FY 2005 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act.

Continued funding to support Colombian programs will be sought through the annual budget process, which includes an interagency process to consider future programs. Because of this, there is no draft for the next phase that has been prepared by the United States Government which would propose a multi-year program such as “Plan Colombia Phase Two”, although assistance programs in Colombia will continue. However, the Government of Colombia is preparing its own plan for the way ahead, which we expect to be completed shortly. The Colombian plan would be factored into the annual U.S. budget process.

RESPONSE FROM MR. JONATHAN D. FARRAR, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE TOM LANTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question: Colombianization

In the HIRC Plan Colombia hearing, Speaker Hastert asked the Committee to help improve Plan Colombia. A major way to improve our current assistance plan is to ensure that we are building local capacity and creating sustainable development

within Colombia. One way to ensure this transfer is occurring is to require U.S. contractors to provide 'exit strategies' on how they will train and transfer responsibilities to Colombians. According to the State Department's report, "Report on Training of Colombian Nationals for Counternarcotics Activities," we should, over the next 5 years, turn over all but 25 U.S. contractor jobs in support of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement program to Colombians.

- a) *How many U.S. contractors are there currently working in Colombia? Is this number consistent with the State Department's "Report on Training of Colombian Nationals for Counter-narcotics Activities"?*
- b) *How many jobs within U.S.-funded counternarcotics programs have been transferred to Colombians?*
- c) *Within USAID, INL, and other State Department training programs, what is the Administration doing to ensure that contractors and the U.S. military are working themselves out of a job?*

Response:

a) As of May 11, 2005 there were 353 U.S. military personnel in Colombia in support of Plan Colombia and 368 U.S. civilian contractors. Of the U.S. civilian contractors, 225 were working as contractors on various aspects of the State Department's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) operations. Counterdrug activities in Colombia will require continued U.S. support for a substantial period of time, but our programs are designed to foster Colombian self-sufficiency and nationalization over the long term. Our ultimate goal is to nationalize all U.S. programs in Colombia. Due to the sustained political will, aggressive actions against narcoterrorism, and positive results from the Democratic Security plan of President Uribe and his government, we have seen an increase in the pace of operations that was not contemplated even one or two years ago. This intensified pace of successful operations against narcoterrorists has produced impressive results, but it also has limited our ability to nationalize programs to date.

The information contained in the Department's "Report on Training of Colombian Nationals for Counternarcotics Activities" describes the aggregate number of contractors working in support of INL programs in Colombia. The report does not make a distinction among Colombian, American, and third country national contractors. The Department provides a quarterly report to the House Committees on Appropriations and the Committees on Authorization on the overall numbers, activities, locations, and lengths of assignment of U.S. military personnel and U.S.-citizen civilian contractors in Colombia in support of Plan Colombia that provides additional details and information.

The Government of Colombia shares our goal of nationalization of the programs and has more than doubled its share of GDP devoted to security issues to over 5 percent in the last four years. As an example of this increased responsibility, the Government of Colombia is considering purchasing eight Black Hawk helicopters using its own funds in the next year to augment its counternarcotics and counterterrorism capabilities.

b) Colombians, Americans, and third country nationals are routinely rotating into and out of counternarcotics contracts, making for a fluid environment wherein there are few American-designated slots. The exact number of contractors in Colombia providing support varies as programs are developed, implemented and completed. Our ultimate goal is to nationalize our programs in Colombia to the maximum extent possible. One area where INL is making considerable progress is in the area of aviation. Our pilot and maintenance contract personnel have contributed significantly towards the nationalization of our counternarcotics aviation programs in Colombia. We are currently on track to meeting—and in some areas exceeding—our nationalization goals in maintenance and pilot training. By August 1, 2005 we will have certified 34 of the projected 44 Huey-II mechanics and 48 of the expected 54 UH-1N mechanics. Eleven UH-60 mechanics are on course to receive their certifications in October 2005, completing our efforts to certify all 42 of our UH-60 mechanics.

Four UH-60 pilots will have completed the pilot-in-command (PC) certification requirements by August 1, 2005 and 10 Huey-II and 10 UH-1N pilots are scheduled to complete their PC certifications by the end of the year. We also have a large number of Colombian candidates in our initial entry rotary wing (IERW) flight training program scheduled to complete their training later this year. The large number of candidates ensures a steady stream of pilots from which to draw for PC certification in the near future. The completion of IERW and PC certifications will allow us to meet our pilot training goals in 2005 and keep us on target to reaching our nationalization benchmarks in 2006 and beyond.

The increases in certified Colombian mechanics and pilots this year should allow us to make significant cuts in contract personnel beginning with the start of the new aviation support contract in November 2005. We plan to reduce our contract pilot personnel by 30 percent and contract maintenance personnel by 20 percent in 2006. Under current circumstances, annual reductions in our contract work force, combined with effective training of supervisory pilots and mechanics, will push us in a steady direction towards effective nationalization of our aviation counter-narcotics and counterterrorism programs in Colombia.

c) The State Department works closely with the Department of Defense (DOD) to train Colombian nationals for the purpose of assuming responsibilities for operating and maintaining the fleet of helicopters used by Colombian armed forces. Training has been led by NAS in close cooperation with the DOD military group (MILGRP). USAID is working closely with a number of local Colombian NGOs to ensure that Colombians assume a greater share of alternative development program responsibilities. USAID has also begun to work with local Colombian foundations rather than international NGOs on internally displaced peoples and refugee programs. These steps will help guarantee that the Colombian people take over program responsibilities and that continuity and lessons learned remain in Colombia.



Alvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República de Colombia

Bogotá, D.C., May 16, 2005

REP. HENRY HYDE

Chairman
Committee on International Relations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Hyde:

I very much appreciate your holding hearings on Plan Colombia in the House International Relations Committee on May 11. This hearing gave an opportunity for many officials who have been directly involved in the planning and implementation of Plan Colombia programs to highlight the progress our two countries have realized over the past five years in combating narco-terrorism in Colombia.

Thank you also for your strong and continued support of Colombia, as expressed in your opening remarks. I agree with you that as much as we have achieved over the past five years, our two nations must now look ahead to how we address the challenges that remain. This includes making further reductions in illegal crops, continuing economic and social development that is critical to ridding our society of this violent and destructive industry and demobilizing thousands of illegal actors. As you said in your statement, we must now enact a concrete and workable framework to dismantle these terrorist groups so they do not continue their criminal activities. My government is determined and fully committed to this difficult task.

The challenge of defeating drugs and the violence they perpetrate on both of our societies will continue after you have retired from the 109th Congress. But your leadership has contributed significantly to the progress we have made already and will realize in future years. It will not be forgotten by the Colombian and American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alvaro Uribe Vélez', written over a horizontal line.



Department of Justice

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

OF

MARY LEE WARREN
DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
CRIMINAL DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCERNING

PLAN COLOMBIA

HEARING OF
MAY 11, 2005

**STATEMENT BY
MARY LEE WARREN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, CRIMINAL DIVISION
FOR THE
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The Department of Justice appreciates the attention that the Committee has paid to the U.S. Government's efforts to strengthen the Colombian criminal justice system. DOJ's support to Plan Colombia, since 2000, has been and continues to be a multi-pronged program to build a more effective, efficient, and responsive criminal justice system in Colombia that fully respects all human rights and re-gains the confidence of the people of Colombia. Although the Committee has received reports of our work presented by the State Department, this will provide a brief first-hand account of the progress of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice's "Justice Sector Reform Program."

The Justice Sector Reform Program (JSRP) is fully integrated with the total USG support to Plan Colombia, working through the Embassy-Bogota Country Team and interagency coordination groups here in Washington. From the beginning of our support to Plan Colombia, DOJ and USAID settled upon a division of responsibilities in the area of administration of justice. DOJ's responsibilities include: training prosecutors, criminal investigators and technicians, establishing and developing special vetted task force (prosecutor/police/technical assistants) units in human rights, money laundering and asset forfeiture, corruption, and narcotics (including maritime trafficking) violations enforcement; training and equipping judicial, dignitary, and witness protection corps; and certain bilateral case and technical support assistance. USAID is responsible for training

a public defender office, constructing courtrooms for oral trials, and setting up access to justice and dispute resolution centers (*Casas de Justicia*). DOJ and USAID have shared the responsibility for training judges and for assisting in Colombia's ongoing transition from an inquisitorial to a more accusatorial criminal justice system.

DOJ's Justice Sector Reform Program relies upon the use of current federal prosecutors and current or recent federal agents and police officers, using a "train-the-trainer" approach to multiply and institutionalize our efforts. The prosecutor, police, and judge training are fully integrated with each other and with the code and procedural reform assistance that DOJ provides.

Colombia's constitutionally-mandated transition from an inquisitorial system (based entirely on written submissions, with no real separation between investigations and trials) to an accusatorial system (with a confidential investigative stage separate from an oral adversarial trial stage conducted in open court) is nothing short of historic. Other countries in Latin America have tried or are contemplating such a transition, but no other transition has undergone such thorough study, debate, and code drafting (now enacted in full) and had the participants equally trained for, and now being mentored during implementation of the transition. The JSRP advised on the drafting of the new accusatorial code, designed the training, prepared the materials for the training of judges, prosecutors, and police investigators,¹ and established a mentoring function for those implementing the new system. The transition started with cases in Bogota and the "*Eje Cafetero*" or coffee growing area of the country in January of this year, and is continuing in a rolling or graduated basis out to other regions. The results to date bear out the

¹ The training consists of an intensive one or two-week session presenting the conceptual basics for the new system and then practical exercises employing the code, including a final mock trial in which each group judges, prosecutors, and police/witnesses – assume their given role.

rationale for this momentous transition: greater efficiency and effectiveness, and, according to local media, growing public confidence.

In an anecdotal or narrative way, progress has been shown in many areas. As part of the assistance to human rights, the Justice Sector Reform Program has established a total of 14 satellite or mobile units to the national human rights unit in order to respond more immediately to allegations of violations. The task force mobile units have a wireless computer connection to major forensic databases (ballistics, fingerprints, DNA, and questioned documents) used to determine the methods used and the perpetrators, as well as the identity of the victims.² Allegations of abuse by all categories of defendants (guerillas, paramilitaries, police/military, others) have been pursued and the numbers of investigations opened, charges filed, and convictions obtained for human rights offenses have more than doubled in the past three years (2001-2004) as compared with the previous three years (1998-2001).

In addition, a sampling of the JSRP support to Plan Colombia³ includes the case-related operational assistance that has led to the charging in Colombia and the United States of some of the most significant narcotics trafficking organizations and their leaders, has through DEA developed an advanced electronic surveillance capability for

² Through the JSRP training of technicians and supplying of equipment, Colombia now has computer-networked state-of-the-art criminal forensic capabilities that are a model for the region.

³ The original Plan Colombia supplemental funding for the JSRP also included other law enforcement related projects of other federal agencies, such as port security (U.S. Customs Service), financial investigations (IRS and FinCEN), prison reform (Bureau of Prisons), anti-counterfeiting (USSS), and weapons/explosives tracking and/or defusing (ATF).

Colombia's police authorities,⁴ and has provided support to Colombia's extradition process.⁵

In the area of asset forfeiture, DOJ has trained Colombian prosecutors, police investigators, as well as judges in financial investigations. This training effort, along with Colombia's having revised its asset forfeiture law, contributed to nearly ten times the number of assets forfeited in a recent 18-month period as compared with the number forfeited in the previous five years. DOJ/Criminal Division and the FBI have developed an important anti-kidnapping project, enthusiastically supported by Colombian Vice President Francisco Santos (who himself was a kidnapping victim), that focuses on investigative and prosecution strategies, management of evidence and crime scenes, and trial of the case.

The judicial and dignitary protection project of the U.S. Marshals Service has trained personnel to protect prosecutors and judges who are at risk and to provide security for the Vice President, the Ministers of Justice and Interior and Defense, the Prosecutor General, the Mayor of Bogota, and the U.S. Ambassador. Colombia (Navy, police and prosecutors) and the U.S. (U.S. Coast Guard and DOJ/Criminal Division) have co-hosted maritime enforcement seminars for multiple (15) nations in the Caribbean basin to develop search, seizure, and evidence custody protocols among nations in cases on the high seas. This work has contributed to greater and swifter cooperation and effectiveness among the many nations involved in such seizures in international waters.

⁴ DEA has, of course, received other direct appropriations for its efforts in Colombia. However, the wiretap program was funded through the original Plan Colombia supplemental received by the DOJ Justice Sector Reform Program.

⁵ Colombia has extradited a total of 283 (260 Colombian nationals and 23 non-Colombians) high-level narcotics traffickers, drug-related money launderers, terrorists, and other fugitives to the U.S. since the lifting of the constitutional ban on the extradition of nationals on December 17, 1997. The U.S. has no extradition relationship with any other country at this extraordinary level.

In a more statistical review the JSRP can report the following work done and manifest progress achieved:



**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM PROGRAM**



**CUMULATIVE STATISTICS -- TRAINING⁶ AND ASSISTANCE
2000 – April 30, 2005**

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|---|----------------------------|---|
| Prosecutor/Judge Training ⁷ | 201 courses offered | 9,688 prosecutors/judges trained |
| Police Investigator Training ⁸ | 392 courses offered | 12,564 police investigators trained |
| Prosecutor/Police Training ⁹ | 36 courses offered | 1,195 prosecutors/police trained |
| Judicial/Dignitary Protection | 23 courses offered | 694 protective personnel trained |
| Counterfeiting Detection | 23 courses offered | 1,496 criminal investigators trained |
| Financial Investigators | 8 courses offered | 262 financial investigators trained |
| Customs Service Training | 44 courses offered | 1,647 customs inspectors trained |
| Bomb Detection Training | 21 courses offered | 899 bomb technicians trained |
| Prison Personnel Training ¹⁰ | 18 courses offered | 1,079 corrections personnel trained |
| Anti-Kidnapping Training | 9 courses offered | 245 criminal investigators trained |
| TOTALS | 775 courses offered | 29,769 prosecutors, judges, criminal investigators trained |

Training for Transition to Accusatory System

438 Courses Offered 11,735 prosecutors/
investigators/judges trained

⁶ "Training" typically denotes 1-2 week intensive seminars with presentations but an emphasis on practical, hands-on sessions.

⁷ Prosecutor Training includes training in specialized areas of Human Rights, Anti-Corruption, Money Laundering/Asset Forfeiture, and Maritime Interdiction, as well as in Accusatorial System (Judicial Reform).

⁸ Courses offered in specialized areas of Human Rights, Anti-Corruption, Money Laundering/Asset Forfeiture, and Maritime Interdiction, as well as the Accusatorial System (Judicial Reform).

⁹ Courses offered in specialized areas of Human Rights, Anti-Corruption, and Money Laundering - Asset Forfeiture.

¹⁰ The Bureau of Prisons project is now being overseen by the Embassy-Narcotics Affairs Section.



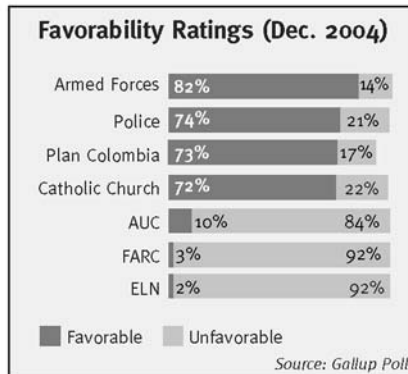
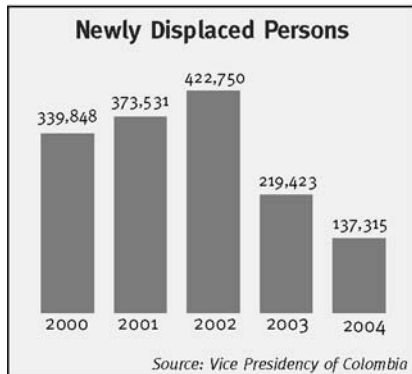
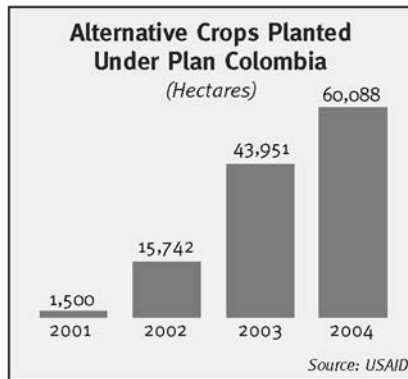
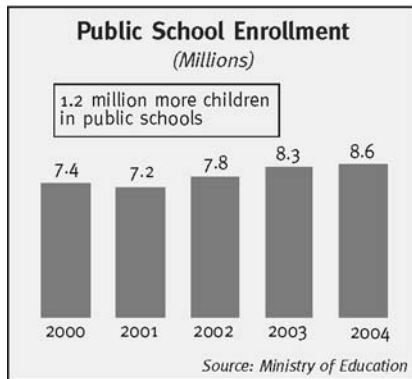
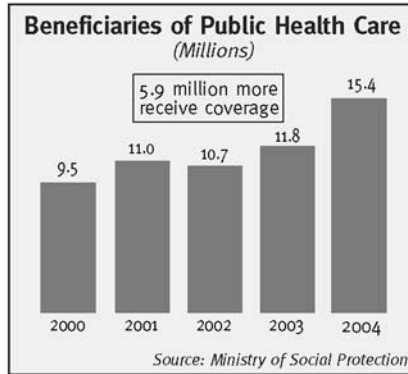
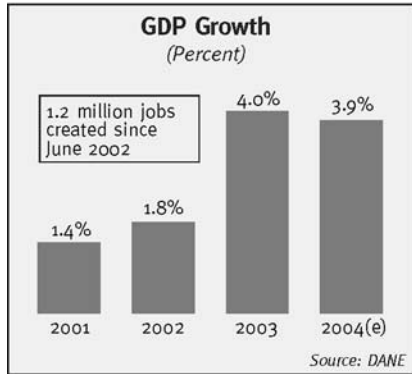
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM PROGRAM



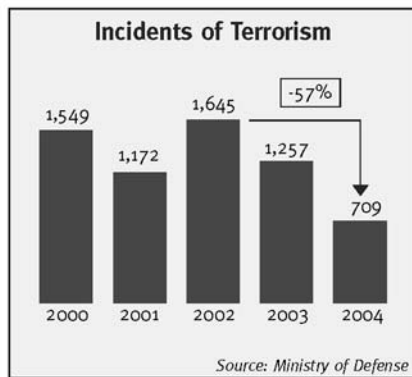
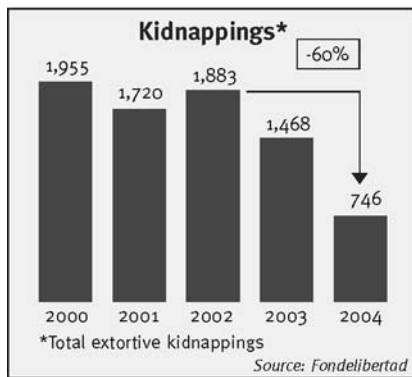
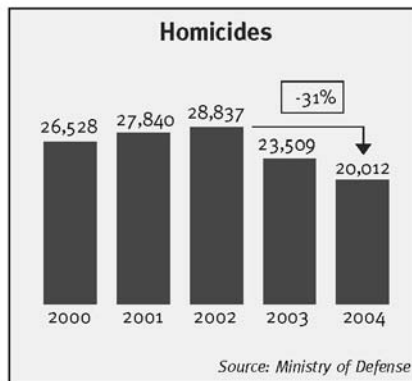
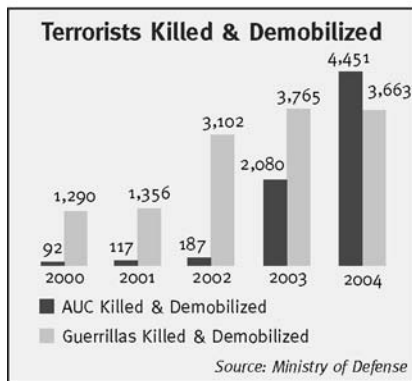
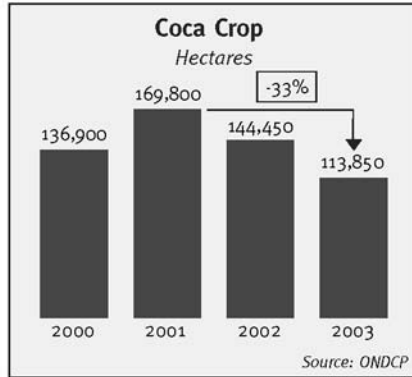
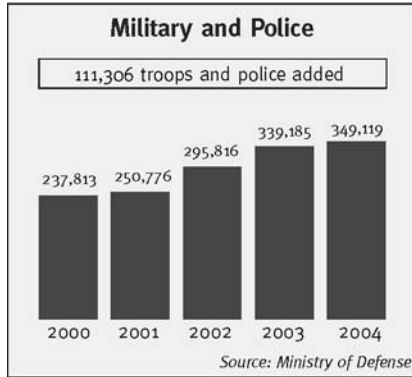
EQUIPMENT DONATIONS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Human Rights- | \$16,211,480.89 |
| Forensic Laboratory equipment in areas DNA, ballistics, fingerprint, questioned documents identification and digital imaging; vehicles; crime scene equipment; office furniture and equipment; armored vests; and operational funds | |
| Money Laundering/Asset Forfeiture | 967,520.42 |
| computers(hardware and software); vehicles; communications equipment; office equipment; and armored vests | |
| Maritime Interdiction- | 38,773.42 |
| communications equipment; and office equipment | |
| Police Investigator Training- | 200,000.00 |
| computerized firearms training; classroom equipment | |
| Witness and Judicial Protection | 4,600,000.00 |
| Fully armored vehicles, armored vests, communications gear | |
| TOTAL: | \$22,017,774.73 |

COLOMBIA'S PROGRESS: ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ISSUES



COLOMBIA'S PROGRESS: SECURITY AND DEFENSE



PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAN BURTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for holding this very important hearing today. I appreciate your leadership on counter-narcotics policy, particularly in Colombia and Afghanistan, and your dedication to strengthening U.S. foreign assistance given the realities in the Post-September 11th world.

I want to thank Speaker Dennis Hastert for taking time to be with us today. The Speaker's presence today signifies his unfailing commitment to democracy, stability, and growth in the Americas, and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for his service.

I visited Colombia late last month with a bipartisan Congressional Delegation (CODEL) of ten Members of Congress. I believe I speak on behalf of the entire delegation that our partnership with the Colombians is very strong, both at operational and policy levels. Colombia is making measurable progress towards winning the war on drugs and our continued assistance is crucial.

President Uribe is committed to winning the war on drugs. American assistance to Colombia is broader and deeper than merely coca eradication, military and police support, and drug interdiction. There are other programs—from alternative crop development, demobilization, to poverty alleviation, and micro-enterprise—that warrant our continued support because they will contribute to the social and economic development that is vitally important to security in the region.

Continued progress in these areas necessitates additional funding and resources. One of the most important aspects of our strategic support for Colombia lies in our capacity to work with the Colombians to demobilize guerillas and paramilitary members and to reintegrate former combatants. There are restrictions on demobilization assistance and continuing debate over whether support for ex-combatants in the Colombian context may be construed as assistance to a terror organization under the interpretation of the law. I would like to see more former combatants receive education and job training and be put to work in the manual eradication effort: 11,500 guerrillas and paramilitaries have been demobilized and they must be successfully re-integrated.

Let me further address Chairman Hyde's very progressive and creative policy suggesting that we use ex-combatants to manually eradicate drugs, especially the small plots of opium in hard to reach places where it is far too expensive to spray from the air. This concept is something he, I, and the Colombian government strongly support. Moreover, it is just plain common sense.

We have a photo here of U.S. military aircraft moving terrorists to Cuba, and another photo of a DEA plane moving an infamous, captured FARC commander named "Sonia," who was just recently extradited to the United States and brought here on a US aircraft on drug trafficking charges.

Finally, we have a photo of a DC-3 provided with U.S. aid monies to the Colombian National Police (CNP), which we have been told, unlike these other U.S. aircraft moving unrepentant terrorists, can't be used to move ex-narco-combatants to sites for manual eradication of drugs. Somehow that last proposal might be viewed as *material support for terrorism*. So the Colombian government must bus these ex-FARC guerillas over dangerous roads, to eradicate illicit drugs. This legal paralysis is absurd and self-defeating.

President Uribe has demonstrated strong leadership and his government has sustained progress to reduce crime, eradicate coca, and demobilize paramilitaries. Capital investment is coming back and Colombians now have a greater sense of security and confidence in their government. The bleak prognosis for Colombia five years ago offered a much different picture.

Counterdrug, counterterrorism and law enforcement initiatives that make up Plan Colombia and the Andean Counterdrug Initiative are multifaceted campaigns comprised of eradication programs, surveillance and interdiction, demobilization, and alternative development. All of these programs and other "soft-assistance" social development programs, are critical to achieving better prospects for development and stability for Colombia and her neighbours.

Alternative development programs are critical to the reintegration process. I think President Uribe put it best when he said: "Cotton and rice and soybeans are necessary to defeat terrorists and drugs."

I know there are some who doubt whether we are actually winning the war against drug trafficking. They point out that despite the fact that seizures and eradication is up; the street prices for cocaine are relatively low and purity of cocaine has improved. The bipartisan delegation that travelled with me to Colombia raised these questions. My conclusion is that we cannot afford to just look at the policy options in the abstract; we have to look at what the alternatives would bring

about. Any pullback in our support for Colombia at this time could jeopardize the gains we are making.

The Colombians are seeking more marine and air assets are I believe the need for this equipment is warranted. The DEA and the Colombian police have worked well with the Colombian Navy and additional maritime patrol aircraft will be put to good use to step up drug seizures.

I ask my colleagues today to seriously consider the merits of continuing strong support for Colombia at this time. With destabilizing forces gathering to undermine democratic institutions in the Hemisphere, it is apparent to me, and I hope to other members of this Committee, that President Uribe of Colombia has the material and financial support he needs to continue to prosecute the war on narcotics and terrorism. This is one of the most critical components of long-term strategic U.S. goals in the Hemisphere, namely the stabilization and consolidation of democratic institutions and free and peaceful societies.

In closing, I would like to thank our witnesses for joining us today, and I look forward to hearing their testimony. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CONNIE MACK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for having this important hearing today.

And, I want to thank our distinguished panels for coming before the committee today. I appreciate your sharing your insight and candor.

United States assistance, through Plan Colombia, has made a crucial difference in our counties' common fight against terrorism and narco-trafficking. Colombia has witnessed eradication of illicit crops, more interdictions, and a reduction of violence.

However as President George W. Bush and America spread the ideas of freedom, security, and prosperity throughout the world, across the Colombian border in Venezuela, leftist President Hugo Chavez is solidifying dictatorial power and threatening to cut off shipments of oil to the United States.

I have become concerned about Chavez exerting an increasingly destabilizing influence in Colombia and throughout Latin America. For example, earlier this year, Chavez announced plans to buy 100,000 automatic rifles from Russia. I am alarmed that these weapons could fall into the hands of Colombian rebels and could create a military imbalance in the region.

Mr. Chairman, I am committed to planting the seeds of freedom, security, and prosperity. We must help the people of Colombia achieve peace and freedom from narco-terrorists. It is not only in their interest, it is in our long-term security interest as well.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT MENENDEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on a topic which impacts Americans here at home, as well as the people of Colombia.

After 5 years of US support and almost \$4.5 billion dollars,¹ we are here today to discuss Colombia's past, the present, and the future of US involvement. In doing so we must take a look at both the successes and the shortcomings of Plan Colombia.

Successes/Challenges

We know that we have some successes. Public safety has improved. Both kidnapping and murder rates have decreased. Every Colombian municipality currently has a police presence. Land used for drug production has decreased from 2001–2003. The improved security situation has helped boost confidence in the economy and in 2004 Colombia had the best performing stock market in the world.

While these improvements are commendable, they are not the whole story. For instance, while kidnapping rates have gone down, Colombia still has the highest kidnapping rate in the world.

Also, some experts point out that we haven't met our goals as measured by other standards, such as decreasing the amount of cocaine on the streets in the United States or lowering the price of cocaine. Recent US government reports indicate that there was no reduction in amount of acres used for cocaine production in Colombia in 2004.

¹This includes FMF, DOD, and ACI.

I am also concerned that the internal armed conflict is still ongoing—the FARC has launched a new offensive; the drug trade is prospering; and economic and social development are still lacking.

Demobilization

As I understand it, the Colombian Congress is working on a new demobilization law which would provide some form of amnesty and reduced sentencing for those who give up their weapons and their involvement in the conflict. While I understand the government's reason for demobilization in general, the United States cannot support a demobilization process that undermines the rule of law. Human rights abusers must be held accountable for their actions. I also believe that those who participate in the process must be asked to provide information on the functioning of these illegal and violent organizations. We must dismantle the entire structure of the organizations, not just demobilize individuals. Finally, this process cannot protect drug-traffickers from extradition to the United States.

US Military

I would like to take a moment to say that I am particularly concerned by accusations that some of our own military personnel are helping the combatants. I'm sure many of you have already heard about the two cases of recent arrests of U.S. soldiers for selling arms to the paramilitary. If these accusations are true, these people would be working against our efforts and against Plan Colombia's efforts to achieve peace and stability in Colombia.

Conclusion

As we work together on the future of our program in Colombia, I would hope it would include the following elements:

First and foremost, we must maintain support for drug interdiction and eradication. But we must also increase the proportion of funding spent on alternative development, increasing the rule of law, and other development projects. I am a strong supporter of funding to fight the drug lords, but I also believe that we should invest in creating real alternatives for the people on the ground so that they have sustainable incentives to move away from drug production.

Secondly, we should promote a regional approach to the problem, which can help prevent cocaine production from simply moving from one area of the region to another, the frequently described "balloon effect." The drug lords don't let the borders limit their vision of how to create the most profitable cocaine business in the world. We shouldn't let those borders limit our vision of how to eliminate their business.

Thirdly, we must get the international community more involved in the process. While it is a shared U.S.-Colombian problem, it is not only a bilateral problem.

In closing, I would like to be clear that today's hearing is not a discussion simply on United States involvement in Colombia. Today's discussion must be on how the United States and others will work with the Colombians and their regional neighbors to reach the goals they see for their own countries.

Ultimately, this is a policy debate over issues that directly impact the lives of citizens all over the world. Children all over the world are dying from cocaine abuse, civil war, or drug-related violence. It is, I believe, a problem that we can solve only when we truly work together.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD FROM THE HONORABLE HENRY J. HYDE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, TO RALPH D. UTLEY, RADM (RET.), ACTING COUNTER-NARCOTICS OFFICER AND INTERDICTION COORDINATOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

1. The written and oral testimony of RADM Utley, Acting United States Interdiction Coordinator, highlighted the serious long-term problems confronting the use of Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) assets. Based on that testimony, the following questions for the record are submitted for formal response:
 - a. One of the principal obstacles to MPA aircraft is "time late over target." Given that impediment which is a function of the transit time required to position the MPA platform over the target, and given the large number of potential maritime targets that originate from Colombia, would not Colombian Navy MPA assets (based out of the Pacific and Atlantic) be of significant assistance in reducing the "time late" factor and possibly enable quicker and more effective prosecution of "go fast" boats and other maritime narcotics transport vessels

that originate from the Colombian coast? Isn't it better interdiction policy, and less costly, to get the target as close to shore as possible?

b. If unpressurized aircraft operating from Colombia had extended range and long on-station time, a high resolution surface search radar, a FLIR, a robust communications suite, a tactical display console, and the capability to use both lethal and non-lethal means of stopping the vessels, would these not be of significant assistance to the current MPA deficit?

c. In lieu of the tremendous costs to the U.S. associated with the deployment of MPA assets, and as RADM Utley pointed out repeatedly, the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the availability of MPA assets from the U.S. and other countries, would not one of the most efficient and cost-effective solutions be to ensure that the Colombians have their own MPA assets to ensure that we had constant MPA coverage off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Colombia?

d. Due to the ability of drug traffickers in Colombia to know whether or not MPA assets are available in the region, would it not make sense to give the Colombian Navy its own MPA assets to insure a 24/7 coverage that can act as a deterrent, while also giving us an added tool to get the processed drugs we were not able to eradicate? Don't the major gaps in the MPA program, about which we are now aware, undercut the effectiveness of our efforts and funds directed toward eradication of these drugs before they are processed and headed our way?

e. Given the testimony of RADM Utley that changes in world events could reduce and shift MPA assets of the U.S. and other countries even further from the Colombian theater, or eliminate them altogether, would it not be a wise move to have MPA aircraft in Colombia, operated by Colombian personnel and continuously available in a manner independent of conditions in other parts of the world?

f. We have made significant progress in maritime interdiction despite the deep MPA gaps and large shortfalls, of which we are now aware. Considering it would require only a very minimal investment in providing MPA assets to the Colombians that would be easy for them to operate and maintain, with high availability and low flight-hour costs, why would we not want to increase our progress and obtain even greater results?

g. The Colombian Navy also has an inland and internal riverine interdiction of supporting and sustaining a marine service, and, if the MPA aircraft program which we could provide could also support that supply and transport mission, wouldn't this be an additional benefit to our common fight against narco-terrorism?

[NOTE: As of press time, the responses from Admiral Utley to Mr. Hyde's questions had not been received by the Committee.]

