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International Narcotics Review



June-July 1995

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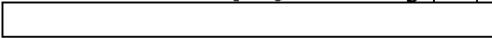
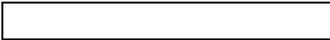
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This Review is prepared by the DCI Crime and Narcotics Center, with contributions from other offices. It assesses narcotics-related developments worldwide. The report leads with a short Perspective on a drug-related issue or trend that we believe is of special importance. The Perspective, which does not represent a coordinated Directorate of Intelligence assessment, is intended to be speculative and to generate discussion. The Perspective is followed by feature articles, and the remainder of the report examines various dimensions of the drug problem by region. Questions and comments are welcome and should be addressed to the authors.

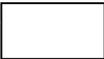


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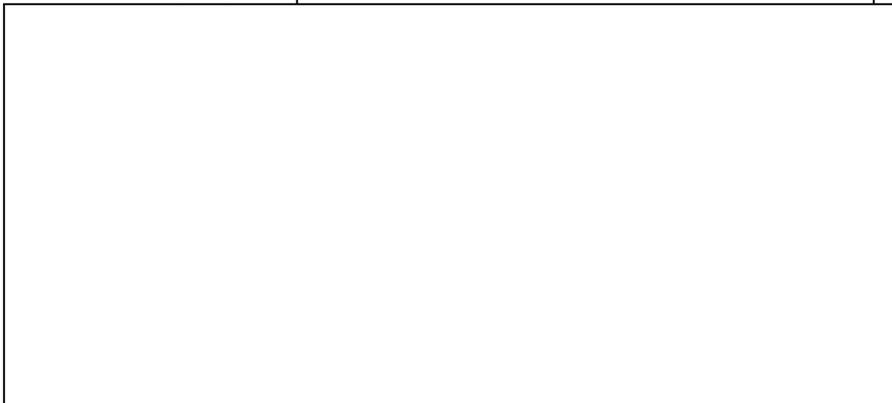
Perspective

Colombia: The Shape of Trafficking To Come? 

The recent arrests of Cali drug mafia chieftains Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela and Jose Santacruz Londono, the arrests and surrenders of many of their top security and support personnel, and the escalating pressure being put on remaining kingpins and their associates suggest the traditional trafficking command and control in Cali soon may collapse. If the top drug lords were to be successfully prosecuted and effectively blocked from managing their criminal operations from prison, we believe the cocaine trafficking industry in Colombia would become more dispersed among a larger number of competing organizations. Traffickers in other countries—especially Mexico—may seek to fill the void caused by the dismantling of the Cali mafia leadership structure to increase their involvement in all aspects of the cocaine trade. 

The Cali kingpins' practice of controlling the day-to-day operations of their organizations, delegating responsibility only when necessary, and carefully compartmenting information may effectively preclude successors from taking total charge of existing operations. Assuming that Bogota can deter the jailed kingpins from continuing to oversee their operations, key lieutenants and other subordinates—who are given only enough information and authority to perform their specific roles—will be unlikely to maintain the structure and vitality of the present organizations. As a result, no trafficker seeking to claim the mantle of leadership is likely to achieve the power and resources that the Cali kingpins have commanded. 

The Cali kingpins do not appear to have been grooming successors to lead their trafficking empires. 



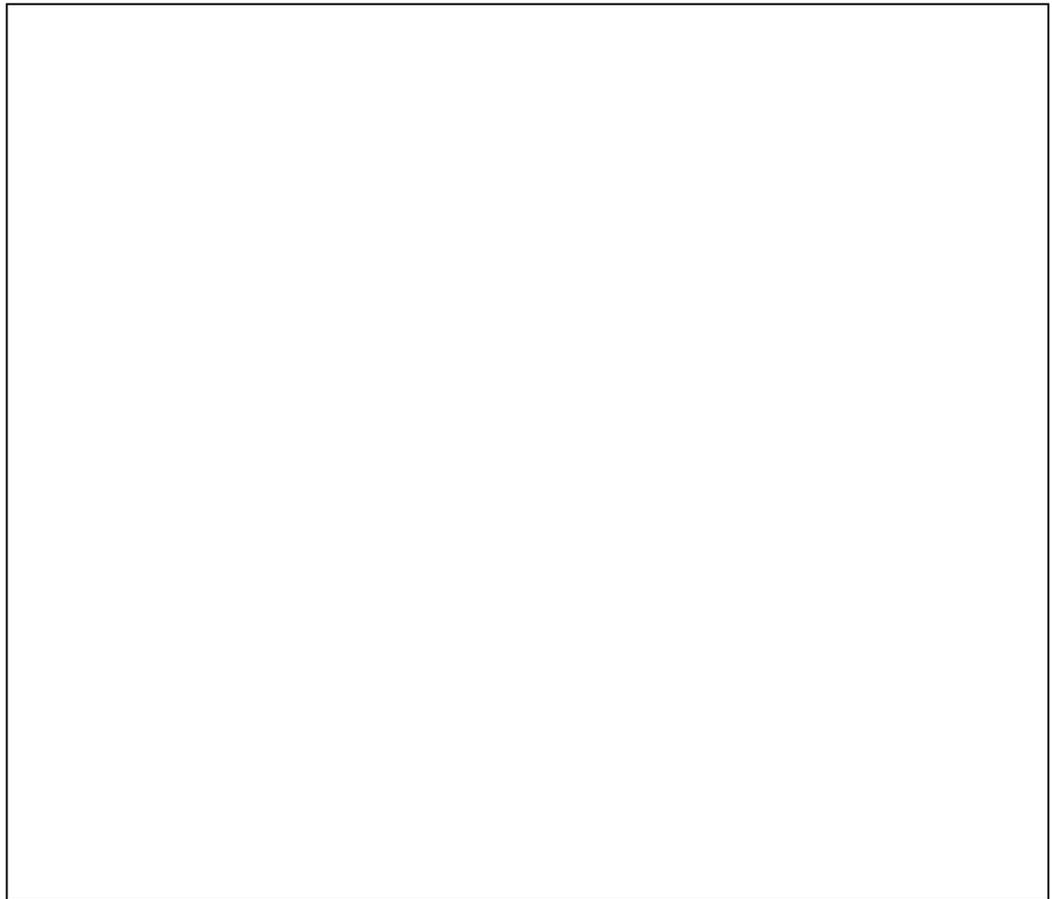
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[Redacted]

Second-tier leaders in the existing Cali mafia organizations probably will try to increase their standing and power if the kingpins can no longer exercise control over their organizations, but they would appear handicapped by not having a complete knowledge of the trafficking operation, let alone the ability to control it. They would lack the kingpins' tremendous influence and vast technical and financial resources, and many would face security, financial, and logistic problems. Although these new trafficking leaders maintain a localized power base, they would need to further expand their own operational networks, reliable contacts in the government and security services, and connections for international distribution to gain the power and influence of Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela, Jose Santacruz Londono, and Pacho Herrera Buitrago. [Redacted]

It is unlikely that any of the traffickers now poised to grab a larger share of the drug trade if the Cali mafia trafficking structure is dismembered would dominate the Colombian drug trade as the Cali kingpins have. [Redacted]

[Redacted]



The proliferation of new groups to fill the void left by the Cali kingpins' being taken out of action is likely to further increase competition among trafficking interests and heighten the prospect for greater levels of violence between rivals. Some trafficking organizations are likely to work together on a relatively equal basis in cocaine production, transshipment, and distribution through temporary affiliations and contractual agreements. Others, however, may prefer to disperse, rather than consolidate, their operations inside Colombia for fear of attracting the attention of counternarcotics forces. Indeed, lacking the broad penetration of the government and security forces and the financial and technological resources of the Cali kingpins, many of these organizations may prove more vulnerable to counternarcotics surveillance and operations. 



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Peruvian and Bolivian traffickers, who have traditionally sold coca derivatives to the powerful Cali traffickers for processing into cocaine, may take advantage of the situation to increase their own cocaine production for export to markets. Unlike the Mexicans, however, Peruvian and Bolivian traffickers could not make that transition as quickly because their infrastructure and networks are not as expansive. [Redacted]

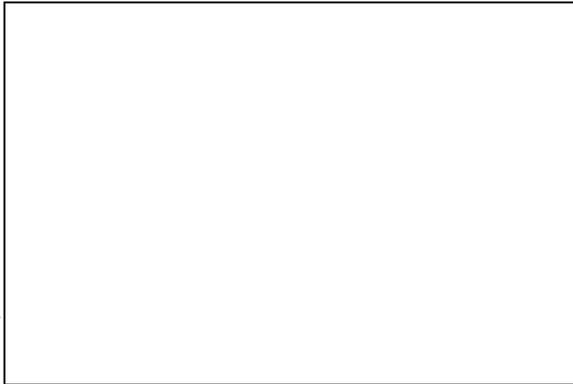
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Colombia: Implications of the Cali Kingpin Arrests

The capture of Cali mafia kingpins Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela and Jose Santacruz Londono marks major counternarcotics successes that should bolster public support for President Samper

[redacted] buoyed by the arrests, security services have pressed to capture the remaining kingpins by assigning several thousand extra troops to pursue the drug lords. The recent surrenders of other top Cali traffickers—two of whom are considered among the most violent of the drug lords—should help reduce Bogota's concern that the traffickers would retaliate against government raids with greater violence. The administration will probably expect relations with the United States to improve significantly and will look to Washington to unconditionally endorse Colombia's antidrug performance and fully certify it next March.

The arrest of two of the Cali mafia's top drug lords—as well as other key traffickers and security personnel—will put the drug syndicate, already feeling the heat from increased government operations against it, off balance:



Impact on the Government: Breathing Room for Samper

Domestic Political Gains. The arrests of Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela and Jose Santacruz Londono are the most significant counternarcotics successes of the

Samper government and should help the administration boost its image domestically and internationally

Most immediately, the arrests should bolster Samper's lagging popularity—which dropped 20 points to 56 percent last May in the wake of news media allegations tying him to narcotraffickers—and mitigate popular perceptions of him as an ineffective leader:

- Opinion leaders, who last month were questioning Samper's ability to hold on to office in the face of the Prosecutor General's widening investigation of the Liberal Party's drug ties, have touted the arrests as vindication of the President.
- Beleaguered Liberal Party leaders are rallying behind the President, probably calculating that a rejuvenated Samper can lift the party out of its doldrums.

Moreover, Bogota appears prepared to follow through on its promise to pursue the remaining kingpins. Defense Minister Botero has announced he has beefed up the troops devoted to tracking the drug lords from 6,000 to 9,000. [redacted] progress on several fronts of the long-stagnated struggle against the mafia, including the arrest of several of the Cali mafia's intelligence and security personnel and the discovery and destruction of the largest cocaine laboratory in a decade. Having shattered the kingpins' mystique of invincibility with the recent arrests, the security forces may pursue the remaining drug lords with increased vigor.

Relations With Washington. The Samper administration will strive to use the captures and surrenders to smooth the relationship with Washington, and Bogota probably will be quick to take offense at any signs of continued criticism or distrust. Government Minister

Serpa, for example, has publicly complained that the United States has downplayed the significance of Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela's arrest and tried to minimize the involvement of Colombian authorities. Comments by Samper and other officials in recent weeks suggest that they expect an unconditional US endorsement of Colombia's antidrug performance and that they will expect Bogota to be fully certified next March. [redacted]

The Samper administration also wants Washington to assist in prosecuting the kingpins, in part to avoid shouldering all the blame should the drug lords receive light sentences and to avert the type of embarrassments surrounding the incarceration in 1992 of surrendered kingpin Pablo Escobar.¹ Although the government has publicly said it will not allow any special privileges, securing convictions and long sentences probably will not prove easy. [redacted] reports that the judicial system has failed to aggressively prosecute trafficker cases in the past, partly because judges—many of whom are susceptible to Cali mafia bribes and intimidation—can legally approve a variety of sentence reductions. Justice Minister Martinez has told [redacted] that he doubts the Colombian penal system's ability to hold and convict the kingpins:

- [redacted] Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela has decided to plead guilty, which according to press reports will reduce a possible 24-year sentence by eight years. His sentence could be further reduced for confessing and participating in work study programs. Many officials are speculating he will serve some eight years. [redacted]

Impact on the Cali Mafia: Feeling the Pressure

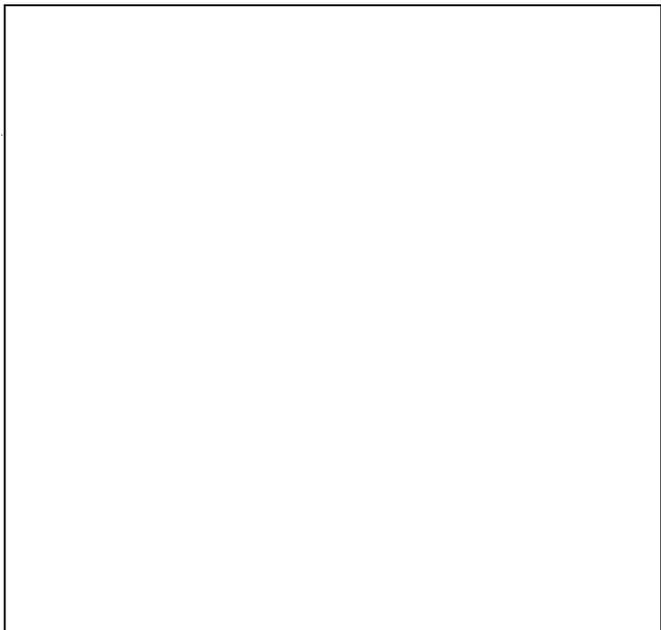
Disruption. The arrest of two of the four top Cali traffickers within one month, the surrender of several others, and the capture of key security officers almost

¹ The Gaviria administration was humiliated when Medellin kingpin Pablo Escobar escaped from his specially built jail and domestic and international attention focused on the luxurious accommodations he and his lawyers were able to negotiate—including jacuzzis, big screen televisions, rooms for Escobar's family, and weapons and communications equipment—over which Escobar had complete control, even as he continued to conduct his drug business. [redacted]

certainly come as demoralizing blows to the drug mafia. Narcotics traffickers already were experiencing some operational difficulty because of stepped-up government actions to capture a kingpin:

- Increased interdiction efforts since March 1995 have disrupted trafficking activities along the Colombia-Peru airbridge, which is the main conduit of coca derivatives moving from Peru, while intensified law enforcement has forced smugglers to change their routes and modes of transportation.
- Cali mafia traffickers are finding that Colombian Government pressure is making operations more difficult. [redacted]

At a minimum, the captures and surrenders almost certainly will prompt the mafia to reexamine and tighten its security procedures and to postpone or slow some operations over the short term. The remaining drug lords probably are sobered by the Colombian security services' success in capturing two key kingpins and will go deeper into hiding and operate even more cautiously:



Violence. It is unlikely that the remaining mafia traffickers will view unleashing an offensive against Bogota as the preferred option. After his arrest, Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela said that he would not declare war against Bogota because it was not a winnable option. Unlike their former rival, the now-defunct Medellin mafia, the Cali kingpins have worked to cultivate an image of nonviolence that has played well with the public, preferring to deal with their enemies through intimidation and bribery and selectively using violence only as a means of internal control. Furthermore, the top traffickers who are considered the most violent—Santacruz Londono and Henry Loaiza, who both face homicide charges, and Victor Patino—are now under detention. [redacted]

Surrender Options. The detention of Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela caused the remaining drug lords to consider surrender possibilities:

- Victor Patino and Henry Loaiza turned themselves over to the authorities in Bogota. Patino and Loaiza had come under intense pressure from the government in recent months, [redacted]
- Soon after the arrest of Santacruz Londono, Phanor Arizabaleta—another Cali trafficker—surrendered to authorities, saying Santacruz Londono had persuaded him to do so.

- [redacted] following Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela's arrest, lawyers for the fugitive kingpins made surrender overtures to the Cali prosecutor's office.

[redacted]

[redacted] reports that prosecutors are holding out for another capture rather than accepting surrender offers that come with strings. Indeed, Prosecutor General Valdivieso has taken a strong stance against negotiating deals with the traffickers who turned themselves in. He has said that, because the surrenders came as a result of government pressure, the traffickers are not entitled to automatic sentence reductions.

[redacted]

Peru-Colombia: Disrupting the Airbridge []

Increased interdiction efforts in both Colombia and Peru since March 1995 appear to have disrupted the flow of cocaine along the airbridge, for years the main conduit of coca derivatives moving from Peru to Colombia. Intensified law enforcement pressure—including the arrests of major Colombian and Peruvian narcotics traffickers—is forcing cocaine smugglers to alter methods of operation, including routes and modes of transportation. These changes have led to significant fluctuations in the price and supplies of coca, at least in some areas. There also are indications that some trafficking groups in Peru are in disarray and may be stepping up attempts to bribe counternarcotics personnel to ignore illicit shipments. []

Importance of the Airbridge

Drug traffickers have long preferred air routes to move semirefined cocaine base to Colombia for final processing. The airbridge has provided them security from interdiction by ground-based police units and also from possible harassment or theft of narcotics by bandits and guerrillas. Air transportation also has allowed traffickers to make a speedier return on their investment, reduced possible spoilage of semirefined narcotics because of hot and humid conditions prevalent in drug areas, and permitted the use of staging areas with poor road access—thus decreasing the chance of drug operations being disrupted by authorities. []

Principally for these reasons, the airbridge is the most important chokepoint available to Peruvian and Colombian security forces trying to stem the flow of narcotics between the two countries. Lima and Bogota have sought to exploit this key trafficker vulnerability since 1992. Early efforts—focused mainly on attempting to deny traffickers the use of airfields by deploying security forces to municipal airports

and by blocking runways of rudimentary airstrips—succeeded in disrupting many drug flights from traditional growing areas in the Upper Huallaga Valley, but traffickers soon dispersed their activities to other areas of Peru, particularly in the Aguaytia, Apurimac, and Pachitea river valleys. In 1993 and 1994, Peru pursued an aggressive aerial interdiction effort to force down trafficker aircraft that was set back when the United States suspended intelligence and radar tracking support—which have been critical to the effective use of Andean air assets—in May 1994, allowing traffickers to resume direct flights without concern for their safety. Changes in US law and the Andean governments' willingness to ensure full compliance with international norms regarding shootdowns allowed US intelligence support to resume last December; however, the Peru-Ecuador border war earlier this year effectively delayed implementation until March. []

Renewed Targeting of the Airbridge

The resumption of US intelligence support has allowed recent Colombian and Peruvian interdiction operations to disrupt the airbridge more effectively. US detection and monitoring airplanes and ground-based radar have helped both countries seize, destroy on the ground, or force down numerous illegal drug trafficking planes. According to the US Embassy, Lima alone has seized or destroyed nine drug smuggling planes since April 1995. These successes have bolstered the confidence of interdiction aircrews and increased their sense of "ownership" of domestic antidrug programs. []

Peru has been the most assertive in denying its national airspace to trafficker flights. []

command—the VI Territorial Air Region (VIRAT)—which was given responsibility for monitoring and controlling the airways. [redacted] Force assigned two US-

[redacted]

by helicopter the following day. After troops drew fire from traffickers, the Colombian Air Force used ground-attack aircraft to strafe portions of the airfield. [redacted]

Impact on Traffickers

Improved air interdiction efforts have forced traffickers to reduce their use of the airbridge. [redacted]

[redacted]

Peruvian forces adhere to internationally recognized rules of engagement¹ for potentially lethal actions against aircraft; these include the declaration of restricted flight zones, radio and visual warning signals, and the firing of warning shots. In late June, a Peruvian Air Force aircraft based at Tarapoto intercepted a single-engine Cessna north of Yurimaguas that was heading toward Colombia. The Air Force plane tracked the Cessna for nearly two hours, during which it ignored radio and visual warnings as well as warning shots. The [redacted] commander authorized the interceptor to fire on the Cessna, which disintegrated and crashed in the jungle some 56 kilometers south of the Colombian border. [redacted]

Many traffickers appear to be stockpiling drug supplies until pressures ease. [redacted]

[redacted] The overabundance of coca derivatives probably is the cause for waning prices in many areas. [redacted]

Colombia also has been aggressive in targeting drug planes. On numerous occasions this year, Colombian [redacted] gunships have used US-provided tracking data to follow suspected narcotics-carrying aircraft. On at least five occasions, Air Force planes later strafed suspected drug planes while on the ground. [redacted]

[redacted] some traffickers have lowered their price of coca base by as much as 50 percent—to [redacted] Such prices probably approach the break-even point and may force some producers to lay off workers or suspend production soon if prices remain depressed. [redacted]

[redacted] After several of these incidents, Air Force helicopters reportedly airlifted security teams to the airfields to seize any aircraft that remained at the site. [redacted]

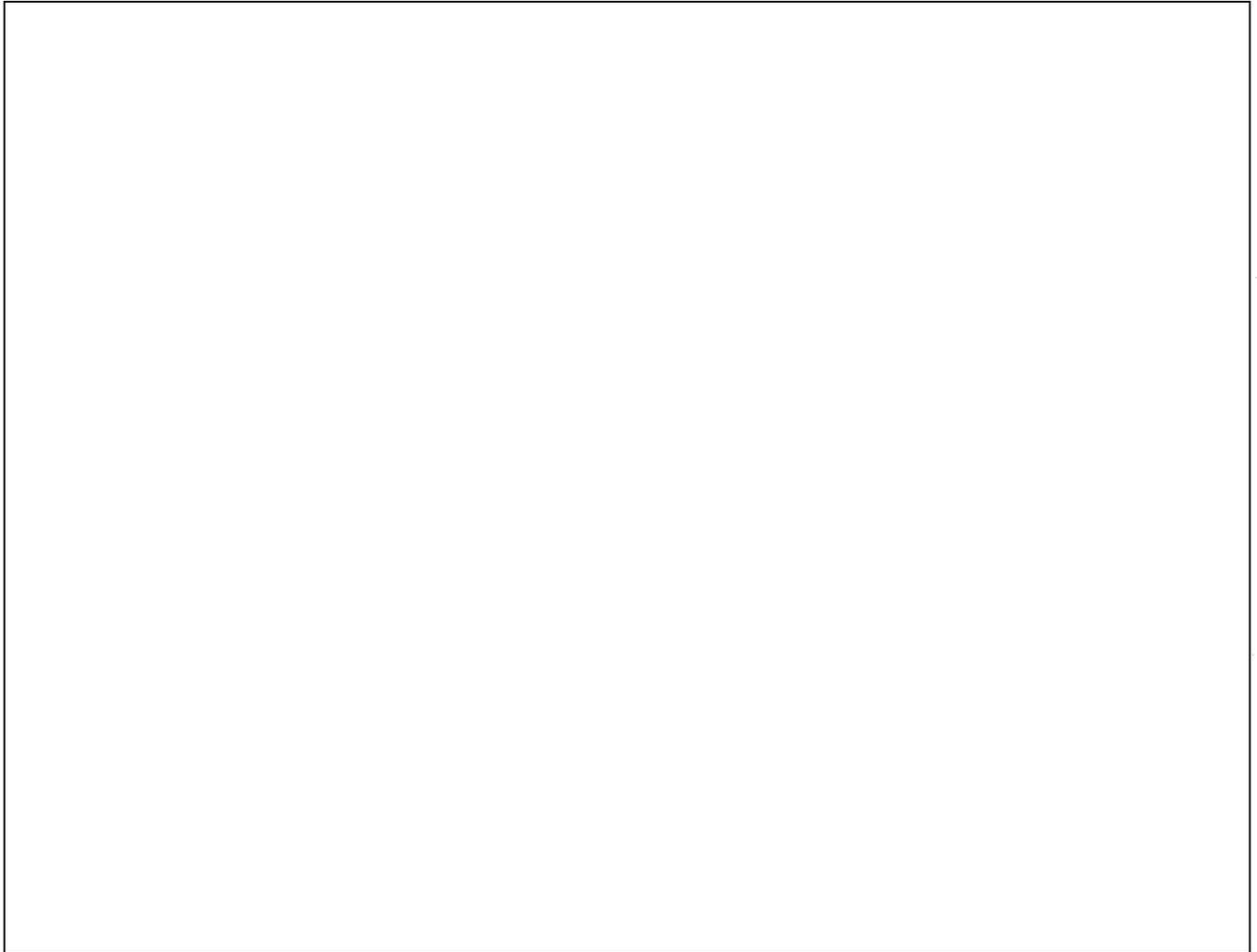
Trying To Find Ways Around the Problem

[redacted] In late June, for example, a suspected narcotics-carrying aircraft was detected in southern Colombia. After being informed of its landing site, Colombian interdiction forces arrived at the airstrip

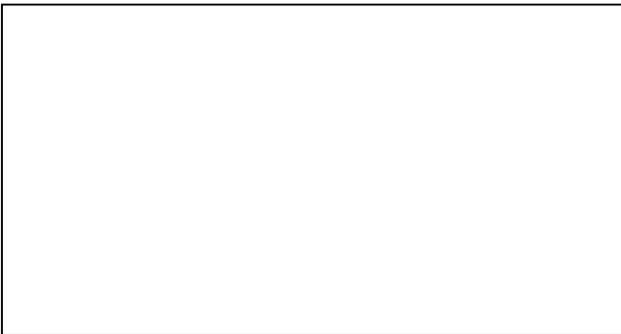
Airbridge interdiction efforts are compelling traffickers to change their methods of operation. [redacted]

[redacted]

¹ These procedures are identified by a 1947 international convention on civil aviation (Chicago Convention) and by subsequent international law. [redacted]



Some traffickers are trying to retain access to the air-bridge by suborning Peruvian Air Force personnel.





Outlook and Implications

Already off to a good start, aerial interdiction efforts have the potential to cause more serious, systemic problems for traffickers over the long haul. If pressures are continued, traffickers are likely to become more desperate in their attempts to circumvent interdiction forces. Many, for instance, are likely to step up efforts to buy off key military personnel by offering enormous sums for their cooperation. Should these attempts fail, some traffickers could be expected to try to coerce security personnel through violence and intimidation. Eventually, trafficker threats to US detection and monitoring personnel—while at present minimal—could increase as traffickers conclude that the gains from relieving the pressure outweigh the risk that such violence might intensify international antidrug resolve. [redacted]

the wealth of the traffickers combined with low military salaries make lower ranking personnel—including those knowledgeable of aircraft readiness levels and procedures—vulnerable to traffickers' tempting offers. [redacted]

At least some traffickers may be poised to avoid the airbridge entirely by using riverine or land routes to transport coca, [redacted] traffickers undoubtedly will make greater use of Peru's rivers to try to minimize disruptions to their operations, [redacted] most major narcotics producing areas have easy access to the navigable headwaters of the Amazon River; these tributaries flow northward—toward Colombia—and are suitable for carrying even large loads of narcotics. Some of these same rivers are already being used by traffickers to bring in precursor and essential chemicals to jungle laboratories, [redacted] and to move at least some narcotics to staging airfields. Traffickers have avoided riverine transfers because they are slow, but they are likely to see the rivers as an increasingly attractive alternative if aerial interdiction pressures are sustained. [redacted]

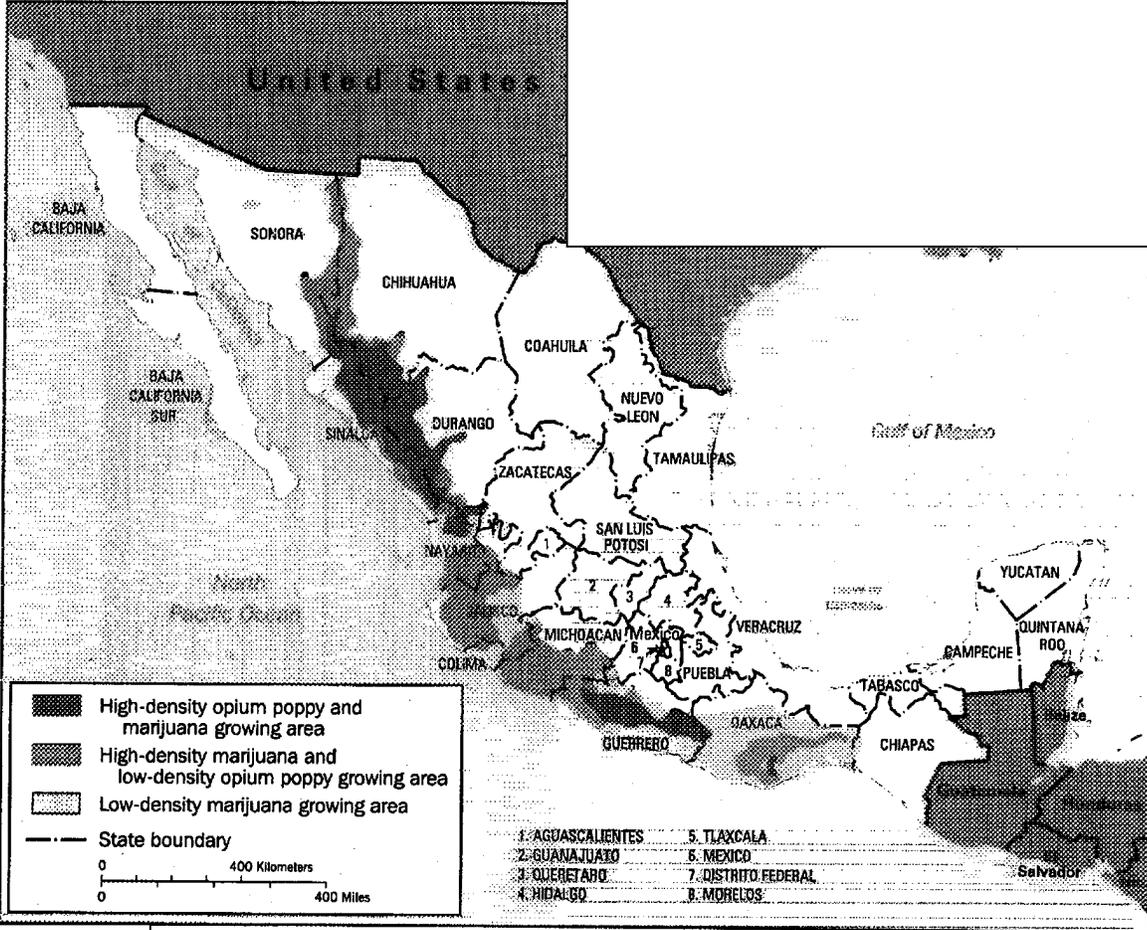
A serious attempt by Peru and Colombia to improve their riverine and road interdiction efforts—simultaneous with the airbridge program—would have a more pronounced impact in curbing trafficking. At present, Peru's fluvial highways provide a usable, if inconvenient, backdoor to efforts to control the airways. Without them and the few extant roads in the drug areas, traffickers would have to rely on far less efficient means of transport, including human and animal pack trains. Such clumsy transportation practices would further reduce profits and put traffickers' valuable drug cargoes at greater risk of theft or loss. [redacted]

Over time, intensified and sustained aerial interdiction, complemented by operations to disrupt other avenues of moving coca derivatives to processing laboratories in Colombia, could erode the profitability of many traffickers' operations, substantially reducing their incentive to continue producing and trafficking in cocaine. Those traffickers that remain in the drug business probably would become fiercely

competitive—possibly spurring confrontations between groups, which would further stress the illicit trade. The troubles faced by the Cali mafia—a result of the recent arrests and surrenders of key leaders and security personnel—combined with an effective airbridge program could accelerate a trend toward processing finished cocaine in Peru by other Colombian groups and by Peruvian drug traffickers. Some Peruvian groups already have sold finished cocaine directly to traffickers from other countries—especially Mexico—who appear increasingly reluctant to pay high middleman prices for Colombian-produced narcotics. Cocaine carried overland and exported through Peruvian ports would, as it is now, be invulnerable to aerial interdiction efforts.

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Mexico: Marijuana and Opium Growing Areas



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**Mexico: Opium Up, Marijuana
Down in 1994** [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] The mild climate in Mexico allows growers to produce three crops a year. The late fall opium crop is the most significant because ample rain falls during this period. [redacted]

[redacted] The decline in Mexico's marijuana crop suggests that Mexican narcotics farmers are shifting to smaller scale but more lucrative production of the sinsemilla variety of marijuana. [redacted]

[redacted]

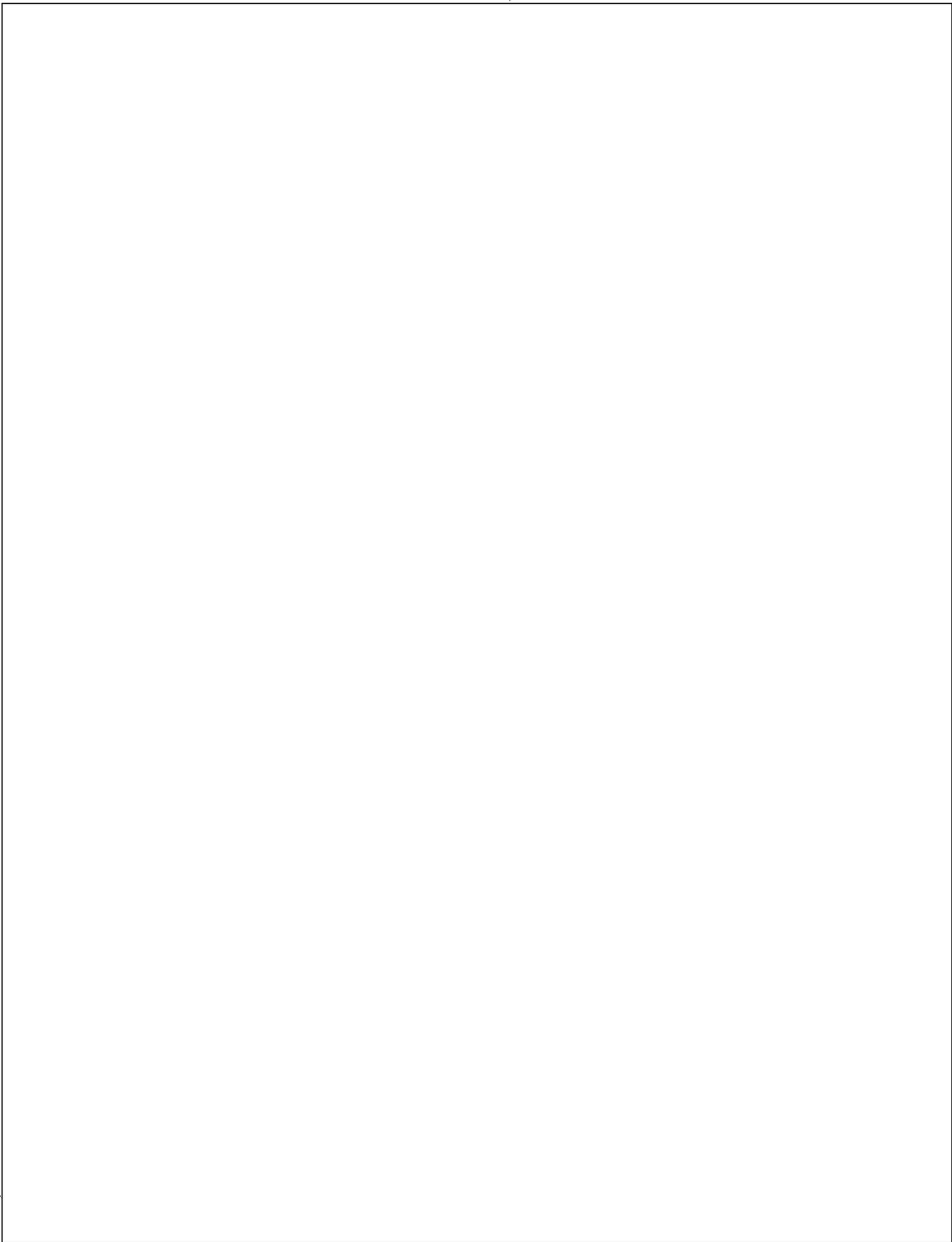
[redacted] nevertheless, opium production will probably continue to rise given the increasing demand for heroin in nearby US markets. [redacted]

Opium Production Continues To Rise

[redacted]

[redacted] Although Mexico is a small producer by global standards, accounting for less than 2 percent of world opium production last year, it is a significant supplier of heroin to the United States. [redacted]

[redacted]



[Redacted]

Marijuana Decline Slows

In contrast, marijuana production reached a record low last year, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

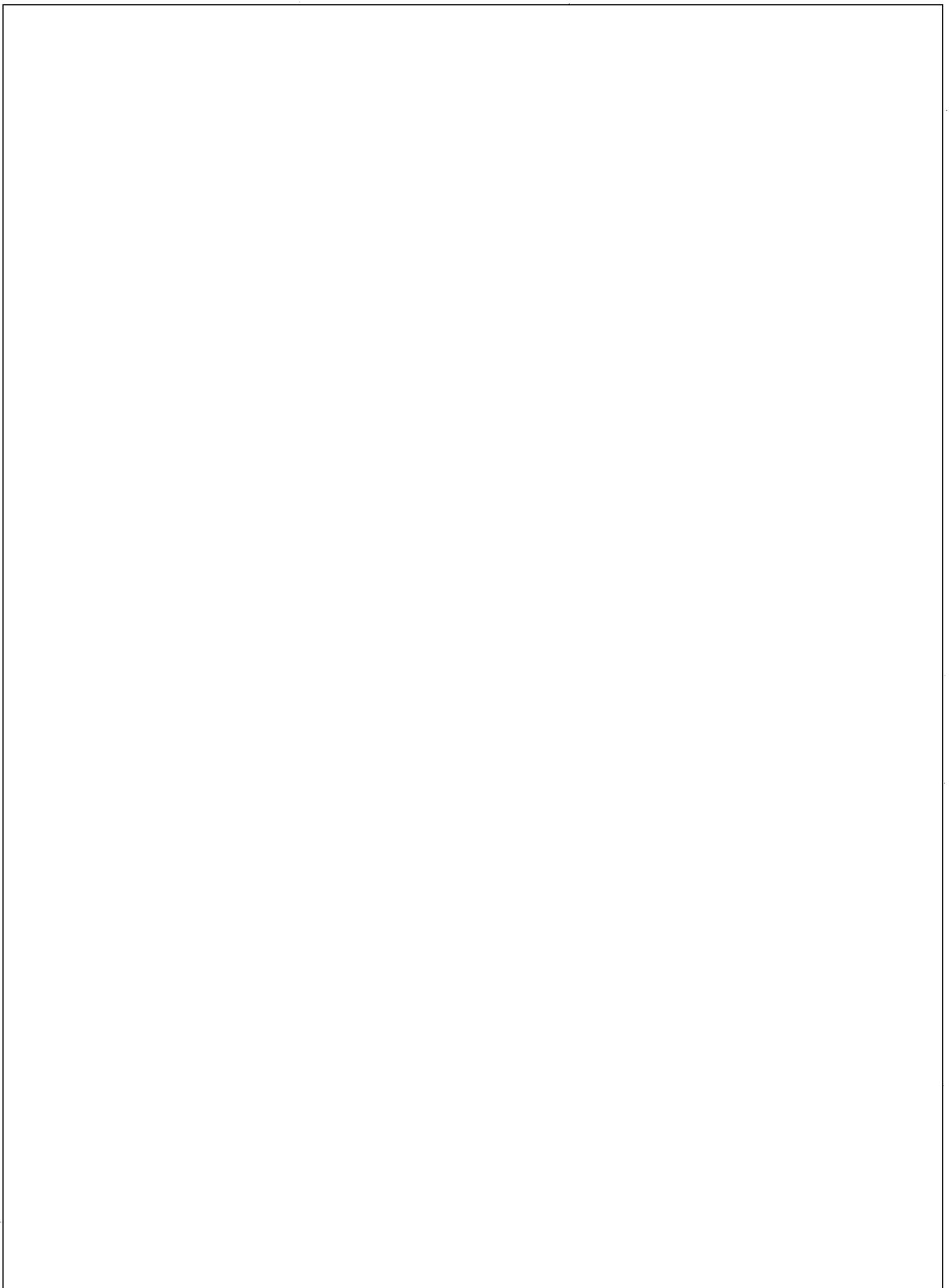
[Redacted] Declines in cultivation may reflect a push by farmers to switch to more profitable sinsemilla, a high-potency variety of marijuana. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

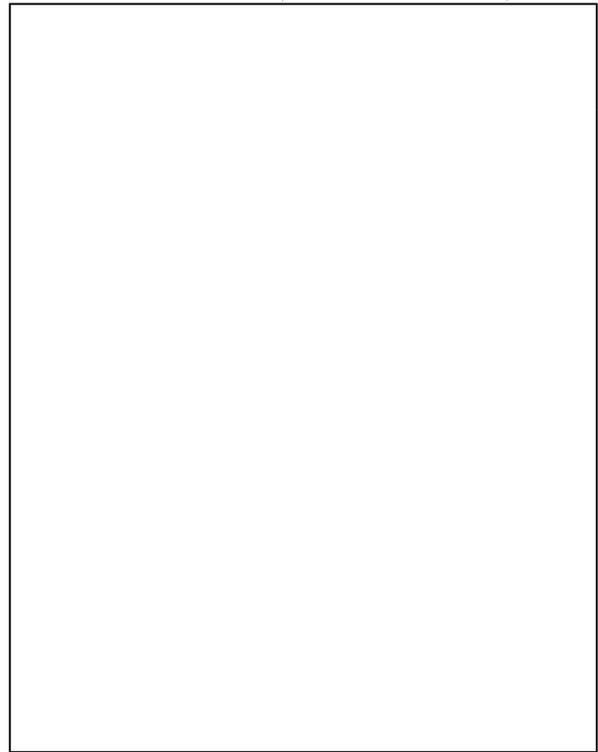
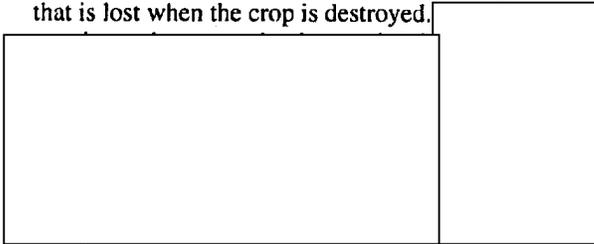
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[Redacted]

[Redacted]



Eradication is complicated by Mexico's climate and by vast, largely inaccessible, growing areas extending the full length of the country paralleling the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains. Unlike opium production in Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle and Southwest Asia's Golden Crescent where poppies are grown in a single four-month growing season, Mexico's mild climate, combined with irrigation, enables farmers to grow narcotics crops year-round. Although crop destruction disrupts the first link in the supply chain, a new crop can be replanted immediately regardless of season, especially if young plants are readily available in nearby seedbeds. Eradication is most effective if mature plants are targeted because the farmer is unable to recoup the several months' growing time that is lost when the crop is destroyed.



Trafficking Infrastructure in Northern Mexico¹ [redacted]

As a major staging area for drug smuggling into the southwestern United States, northern Mexico has a well-established trafficking infrastructure. Mexico's three geographic regions south of the US border are dominated by powerful trafficking organizations, all of which transship Colombian cocaine as well as Mexican-produced heroin and marijuana. Cross-border drug smuggling is mostly channeled through major ports of entry—where the large volume of traffic crossing into the United States allows drug shipments to be lost in the crowd—but large stretches of remote, often inhospitable terrain are alternative conduits. With intimate knowledge of border control and law enforcement activities in their areas of operations, traffickers have developed excellent tradecraft skills and are able to change their methods rapidly to counter interdiction efforts. [redacted]

Mexico and the US Border

It is estimated that about 70 percent of the Colombian cocaine that enters the United States is believed to move through northern Mexico across the US southwestern border:

- Most drugs are smuggled into the United States by vehicle, including tractor-trailers, recreational vehicles, and automobiles, through one of seven principal ports of entry. The limited number of north-south highway corridors in Mexico channels narcotics traffic to these ports of entry, and traffickers take advantage of the highway systems on both sides of the border to move their product.
- Traffickers may also use rail lines that cross the border at several major ports of entry—including Laredo, Brownsville, and El Paso in Texas; Nogales,

[redacted]

Arizona; and Calexico and San Ysidro, California—

[redacted] Many US-bound railcars are sealed on the Mexican side of the border, however, and there is almost no inspection of the railcars as they cross into the United States.

- Traffickers also use short-hop aircraft from northern Mexico to deliver narcotics to several stash points just across the border. Cross-border flights have also been reported in areas where terrain masks the aerostat radars that monitor the border. [redacted]

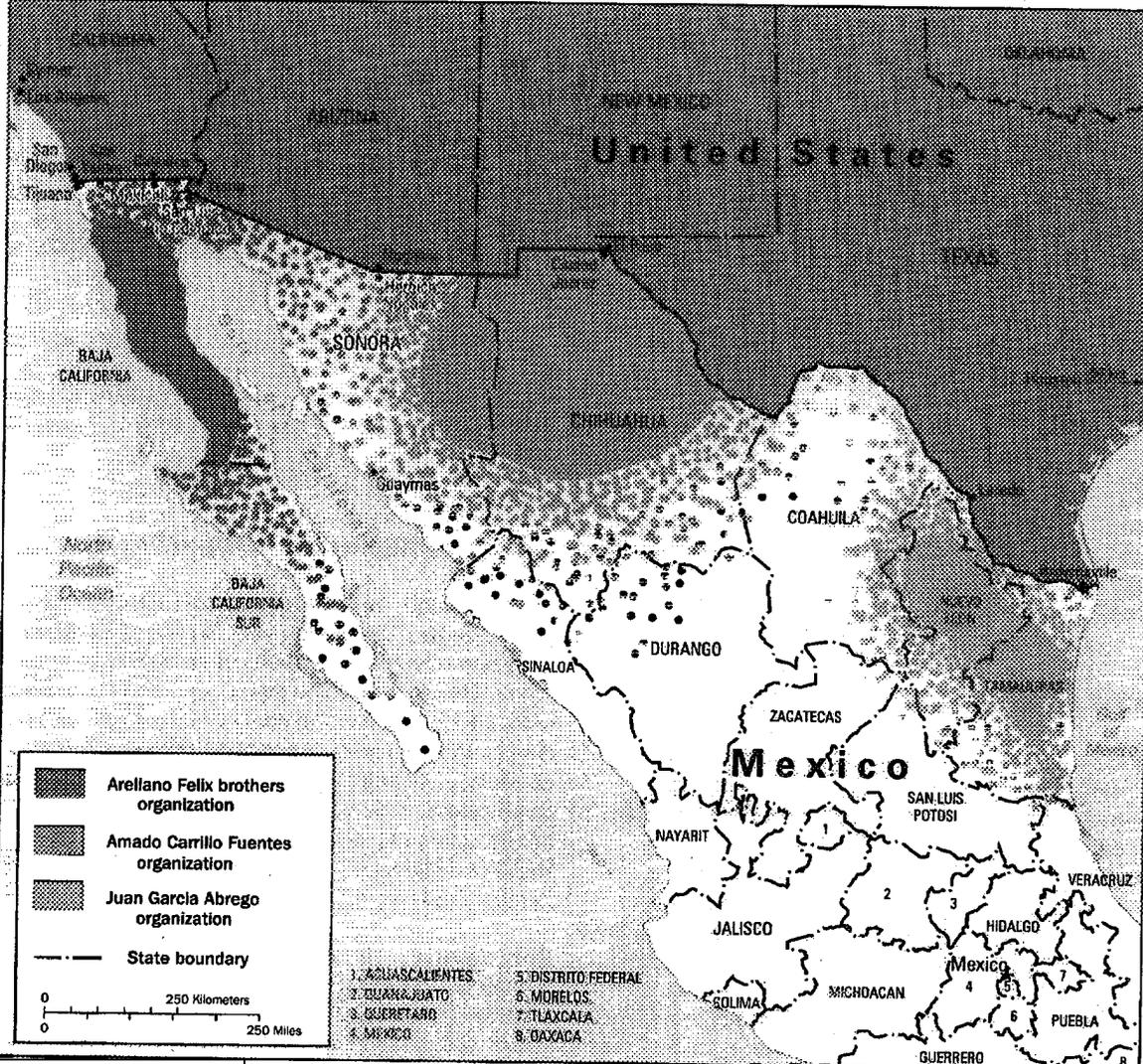
The Eastern Region: A Wide-Open Frontier

The Rio Grande valley constitutes the eastern region of the US-Mexican border, with Brownsville the primary port of entry. Other ports of entry in eastern and central Texas are likely to gain in importance for drug trafficking because of the protection increased commercial traffic provides smuggling operations. For

[redacted]

Drug traffickers also take advantage of the wide-open frontier between ports of entry that is relatively easy to traverse. The Rio Grande is not a hindrance to traffickers and probably facilitates their operations; traffickers use boats and rafts to move narcotics across the river. Traffickers also avoid border controls by using clandestine bridges built across the Rio Grande in remote areas between ports of entry. Conditions permitting, traffickers also fly small private aircraft to isolated airstrips in Texas. Backpackers carrying drugs can cross between ports of entry at almost any remote point. [redacted]

Major Trafficking Groups Along the Mexico-US Border



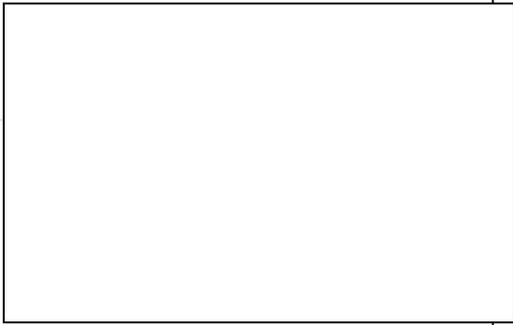
Trafficking in the eastern region of northern Mexico, particularly in the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon, is dominated by the Juan Garcia Abrego organization—sometimes referred to as the Gulf cartel. Garcia Abrego most likely has control over trafficking in portions of Coahuila state as well. The Gulf cartel has properties on both sides of the Rio Grande River that are used to support trafficking operations; for

example, cocaine is stockpiled in ranches on both sides of the border. The organization uses numerous ranches and airfields in northern Mexico as staging areas for deliveries of Colombian cocaine. The group also uses maritime deliveries to Mexico and the United States under the cover of the extensive fishing industry along the Gulf coast.

The Central Region: Most Roads Lead to El Paso

The central region straddling the US-Mexican border stretches from western Texas to Arizona. The major features of this region are its rugged and arid terrain and little developed infrastructure. The Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua-El Paso, Texas, nexus is the hub of narcotics trafficking in this region; the high volume of traffic that moves through the three El Paso ports of entry make them ideal for smuggling activity. The Ciudad Juarez-El Paso trafficking hub is an excellent staging point for the movement of narcotics either east to Houston or west to Los Angeles. Traffickers use short-hop flights to smuggle drugs to several areas outside the immediate vicinity of Ciudad Juarez. [redacted]

More limited road infrastructure and the volume of traffic through ports of entry in New Mexico and Arizona make them less attractive to traffickers. [redacted]

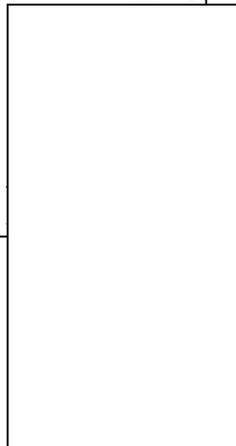


The Amado Carrillo Fuentes group, sometimes known as the Juarez cartel and headed by Mexico's leading narcotics trafficker, operates primarily in the states of Sonora and Chihuahua, although Carrillo Fuentes has properties in other parts of Mexico. Carrillo Fuentes controls a wide-ranging empire in northern Mexico that includes at least two air taxi services used to purchase aircraft for the organization and ranches in Sonora and Chihuahua that are sometimes used for the construction of airfields or as stash sites for narcotics. Much of the actual movement of narcotics across the border, especially in Ciudad Juarez, is subcontracted to groups that specialize in only this aspect of transshipment. The drugs are then re-collected by Juarez cartel associates who forward the narcotics to distribution centers throughout the United States. One such

route from Ciudad Juarez to Sylmar, California, was believed to have carried over 250 tons of cocaine before it was disrupted. [redacted]

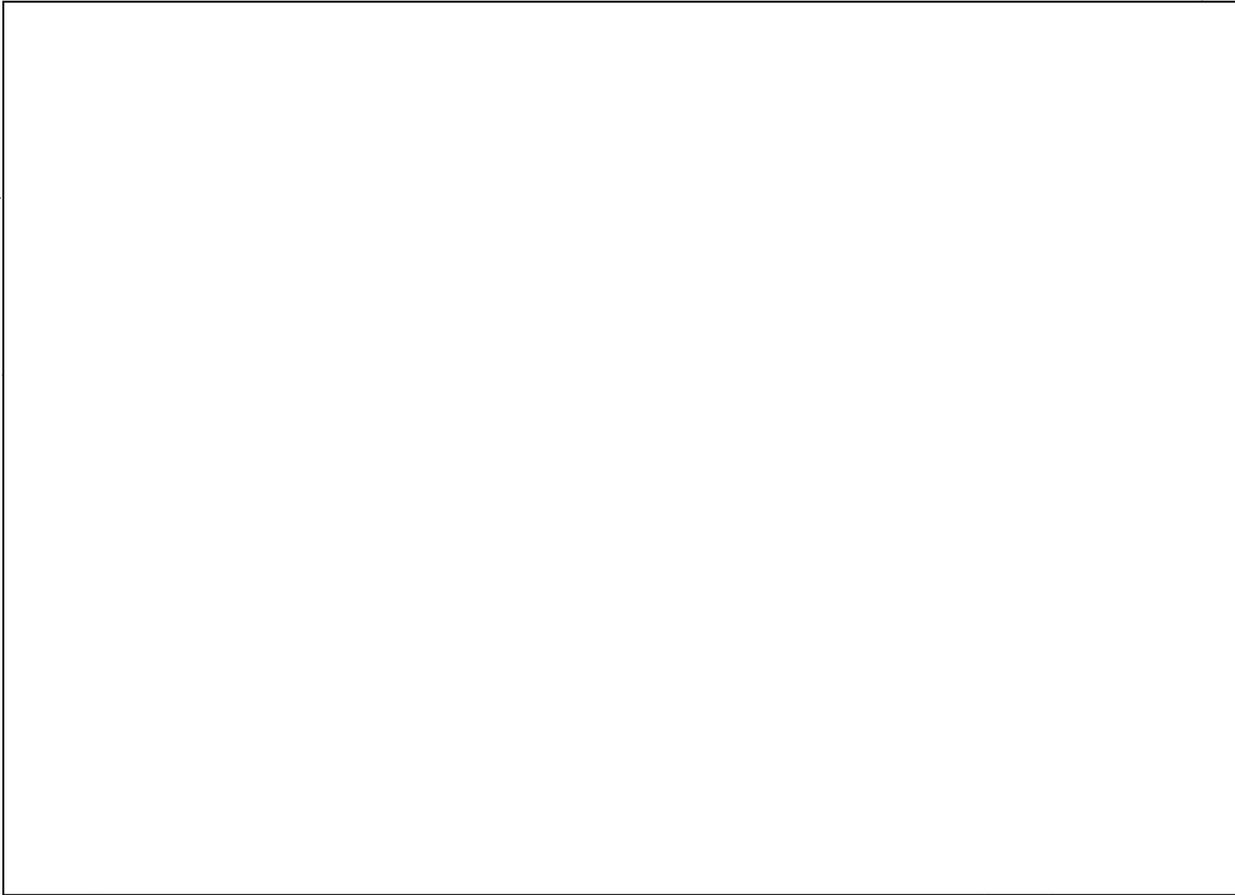
The Western Region: The California "White Gold" Rush

The western border region is a primary avenue of narcotics smuggling. [redacted]



Most narcotics trafficking in this region takes place across Mexico's Baja California and the California border, which are connected by a well-developed road network. The key US ports of entry are San Ysidro and Calexico, California, and Yuma, Arizona. The primary method of smuggling in this area is by automobile, but mountainous terrain in northern Mexico allows traffickers to smuggle drugs into rugged areas such as the Imperial Valley east of San Diego by horseback and backpacking. [redacted]

The most visible trafficking group in Mexico's western region—commonly referred to as the Tijuana cartel—is controlled by the Arellano Felix brothers, who are nephews of drug kingpin Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, currently imprisoned in Mexico for the murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena. The Tijuana cartel

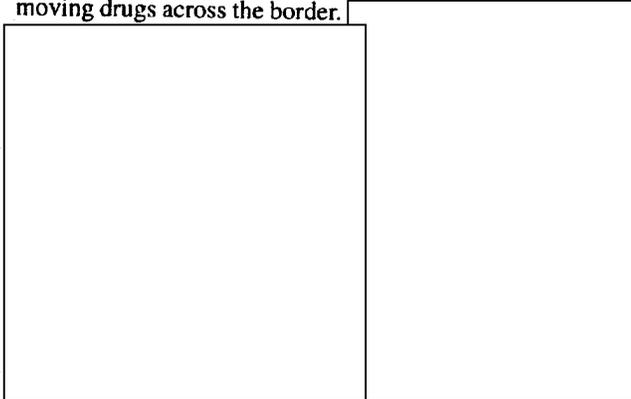


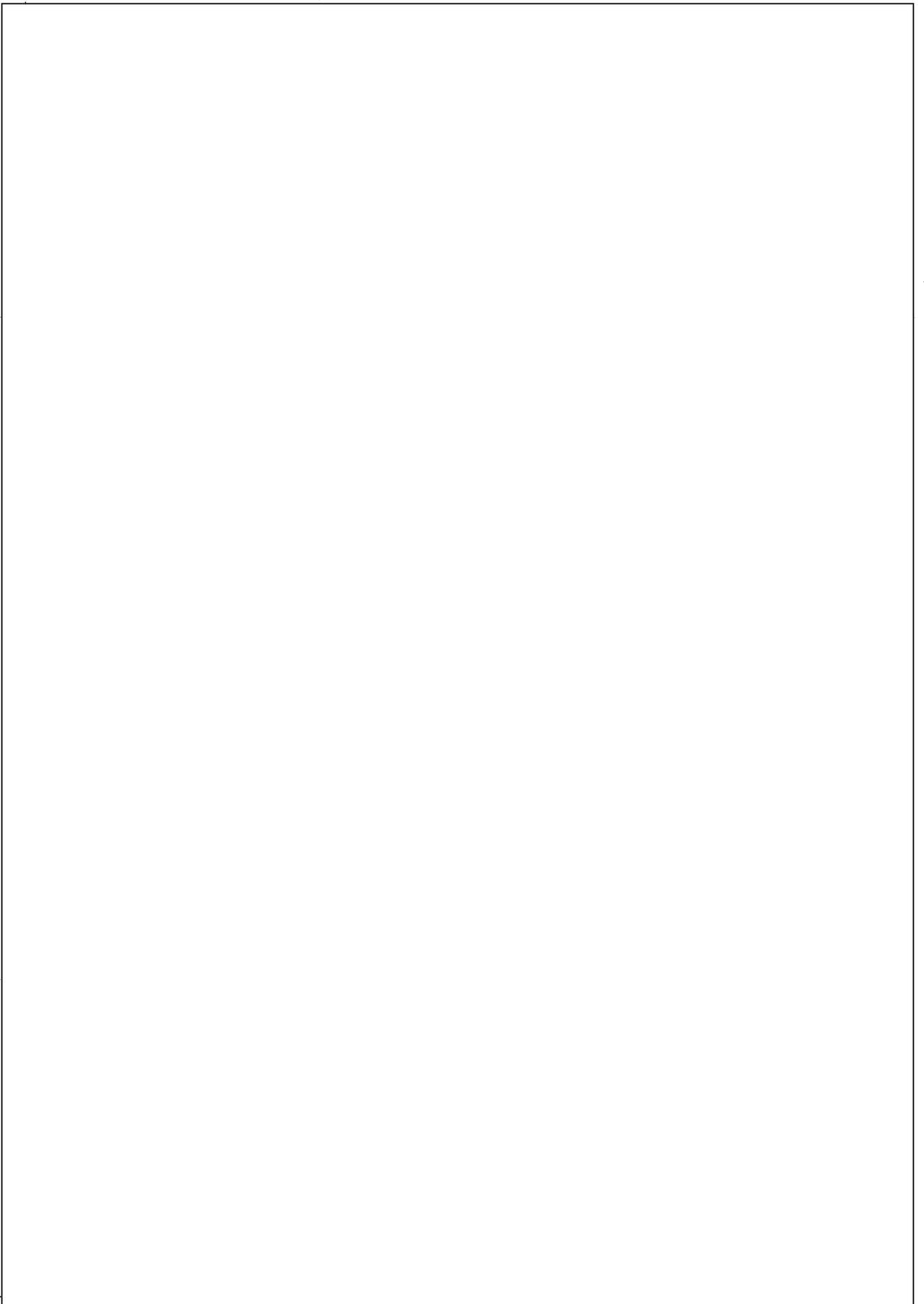
operates primarily in Baja California and Sonora state. The Arellano Felix brothers subcontract the actual deliveries into the United States with numerous smaller trafficking groups. These groups use a wide variety of methods to deliver narcotics into the United States. Trafficking by vehicles through ports of entry is the predominant method, but some groups specialize in the use of tractor-trailers. [redacted]

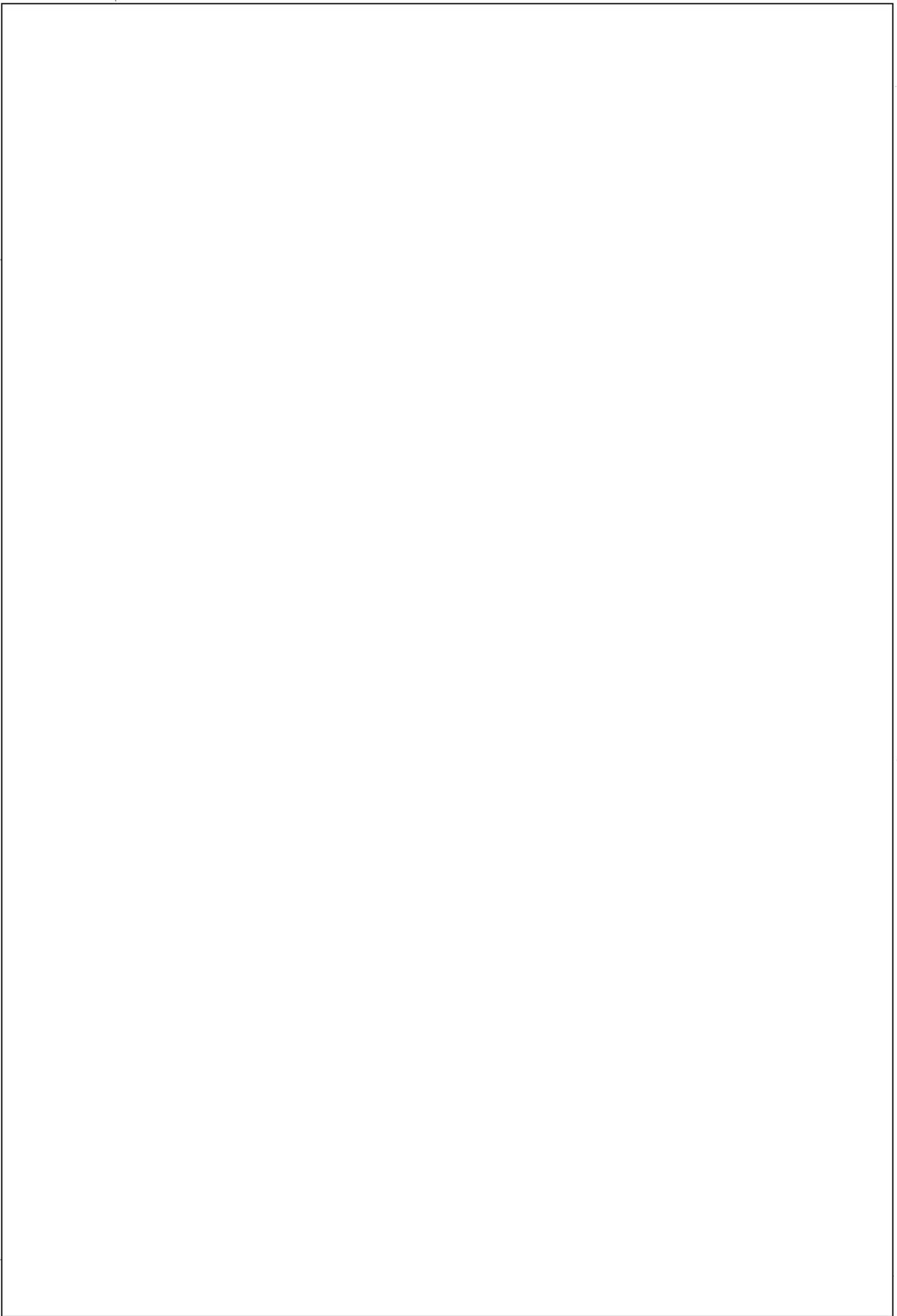
[redacted]
[redacted] The Tijuana cartel has many businesses and properties it uses to support operations including produce companies that ship to the United States, at least one air transport company that provides a front for the purchase of aircraft, and airstrips near the border with the United States where cocaine is delivered from other parts of Mexico before movement into the United States. [redacted]

Trafficking Methods

Trafficking groups in the Mexican border towns—sometimes called gatekeepers—play the key role in moving drugs across the border. [redacted]







Highlights

Latin America

Colombia: Prospects for the Prosecutor General's Office

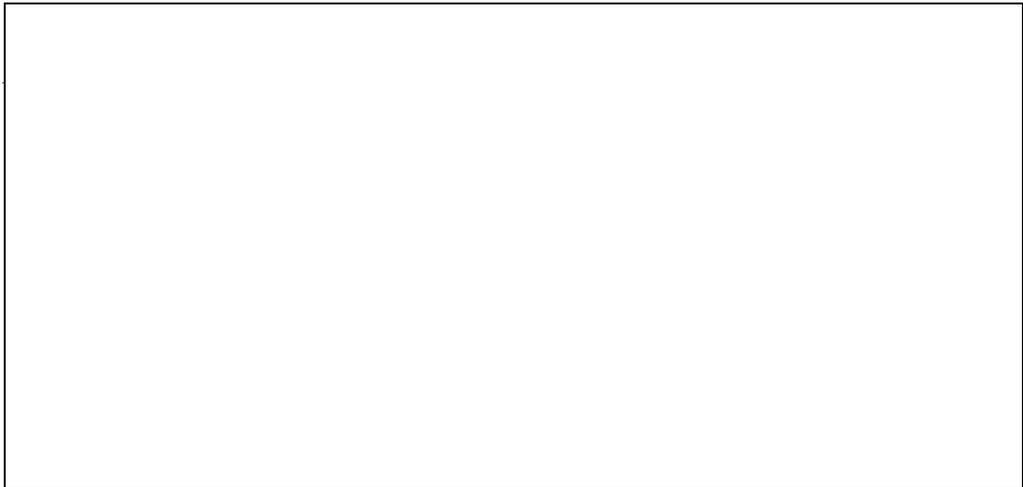
Prosecutor General Alfonso Valdivieso faces an uphill battle to secure a new term as Colombia's lead counterdrug official. Since being named to finish the four-year term of his controversial predecessor, Gustavo de Greiff, which expires in March 1996, Valdivieso has championed a hardline approach in counterdrug and anticorruption programs and has emerged as a national crime-fighting hero, Although Valdivieso's supporters have petitioned the Supreme Court, arguing that Valdivieso should be granted his own four-year term, Congress's recent approval of a statute limiting any replacement Prosecutor General to serve only the remainder of a predecessor's term makes such an extension unlikely.

Should Valdivieso be replaced, the choice of successor could have a significant impact on government efforts to vigorously prosecute major narcotics traffickers. Two names have already surfaced as possible successors to Valdivieso, The top choice reportedly is Juan Carlos Esguerra, the well-known and respected Dean of the Javeriana University law school who was President Samper's nominee to replace de Greiff last year. Another candidate is Antonio Cancino Moreno, the head of the Presidential Commission on Military Justice Reform and a constitutional law expert.

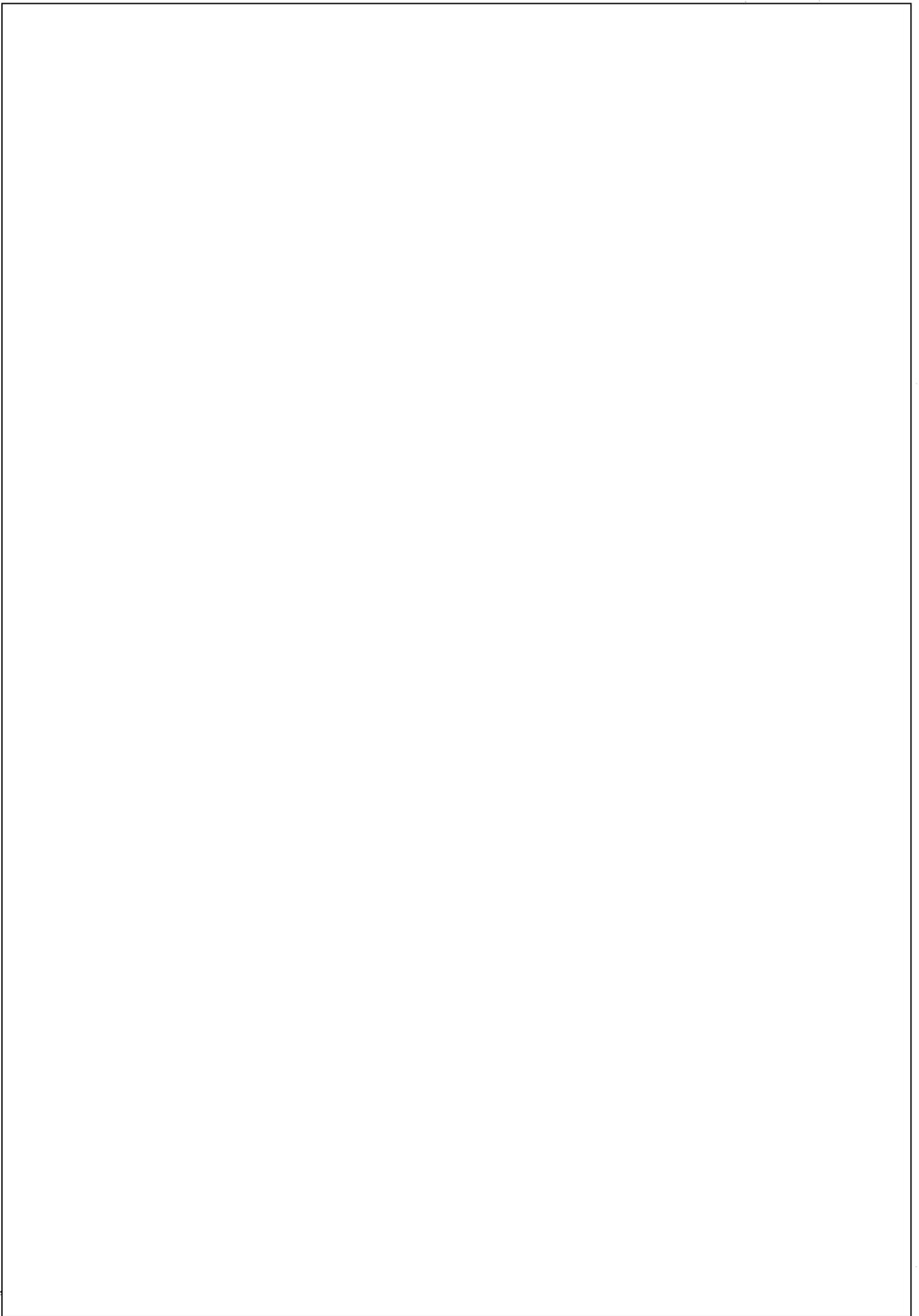


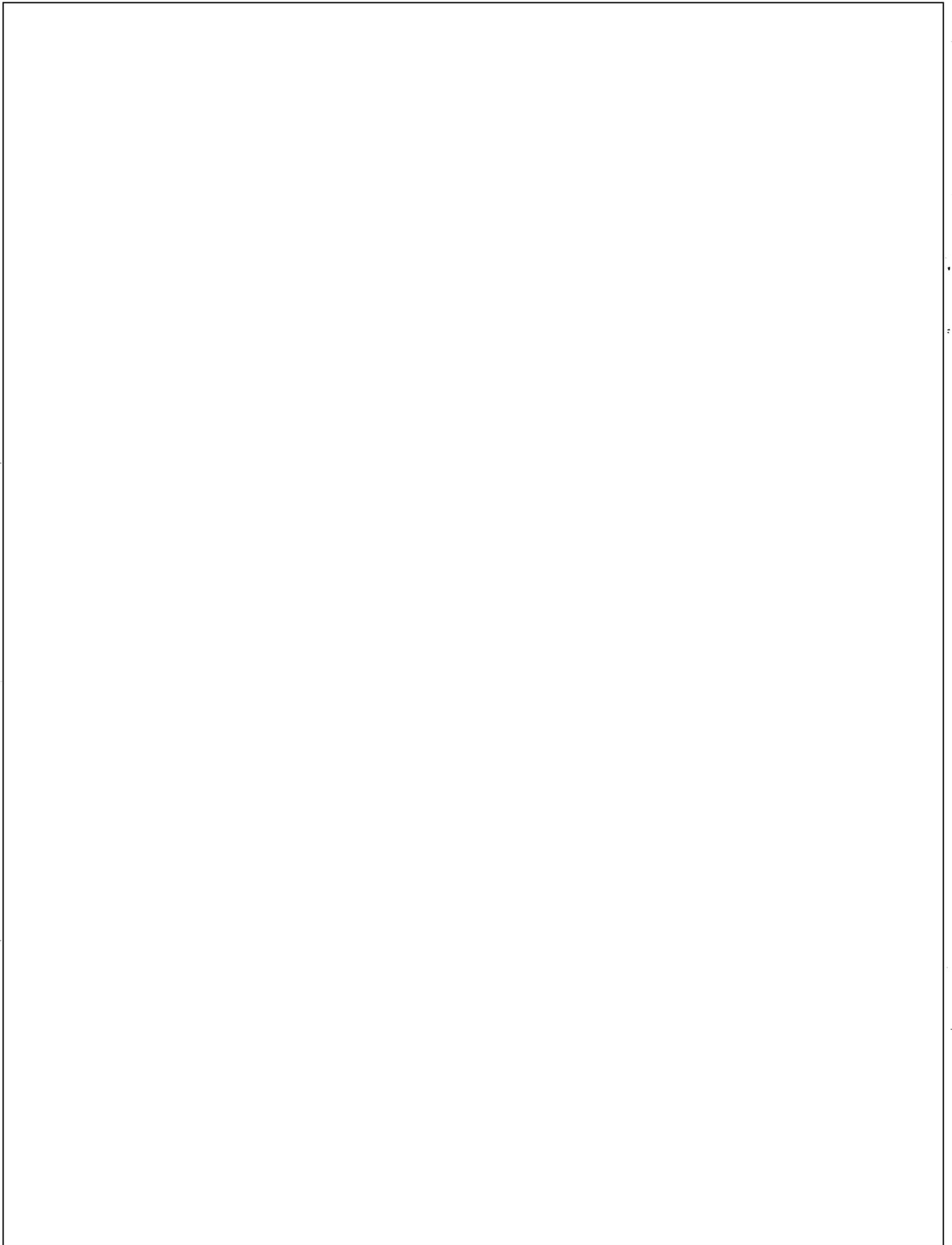


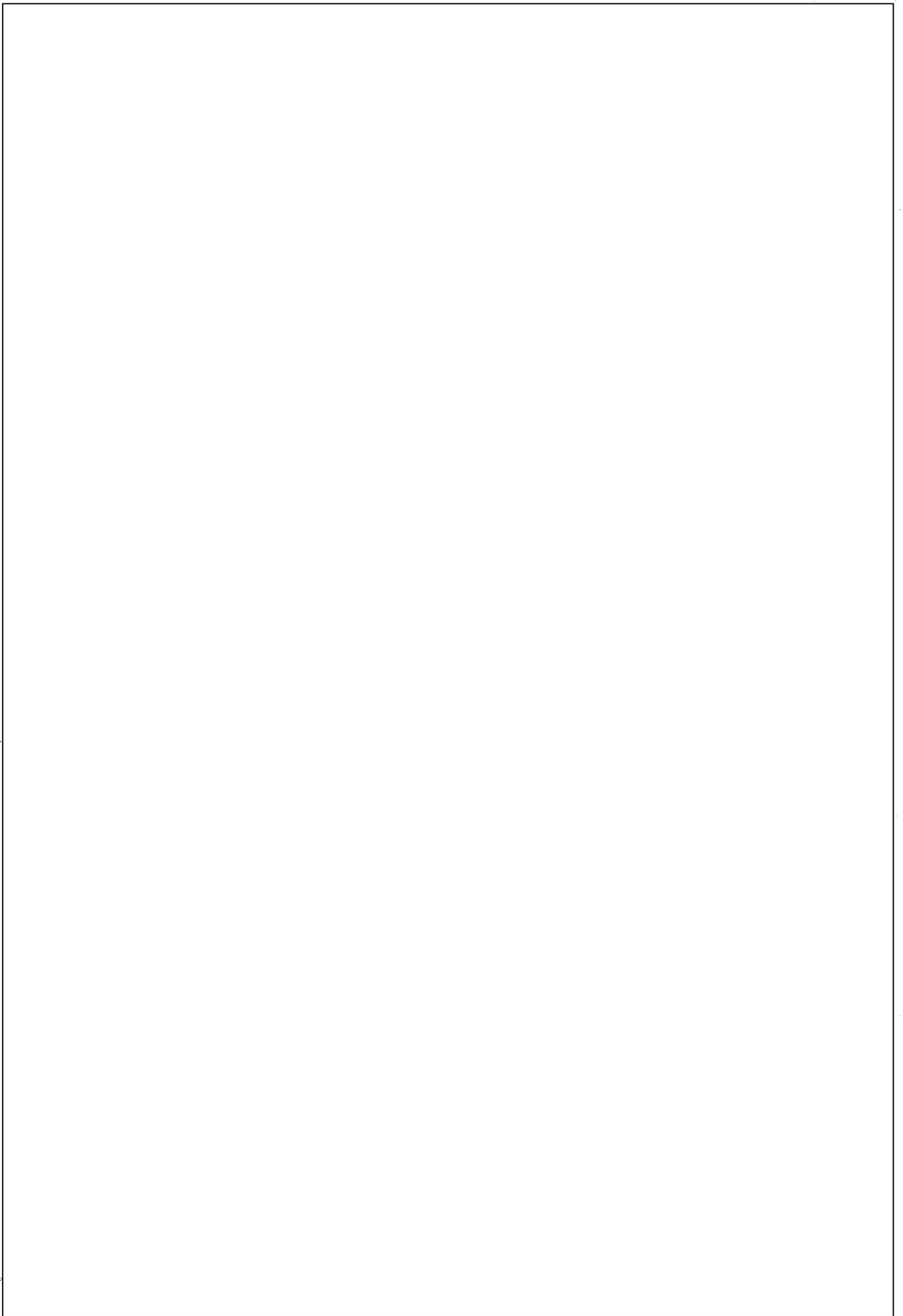
Peru: Opium Poppy Cultivation Continues To Be a Concern



Large areas of Peru are suitable for opium production, and the potential for a rapid change over from experimental plots to large-scale cultivation is great. Opium poppy prefers locations where nights are cool and humidity is high. The Huallaga Valley, where coca cultivation has declined over the last two years, is particularly well suited to poppy cultivation, and farmers there may be seeking an alternative cash crop to coca. Lima has declared war against opium production and heroin trafficking in Peru and has vowed to destroy all poppy cultivation, but the government will have difficulty coping with the problem because the crop is dispersed in remote locations and government antidrug resources are already stretched thin. Frequent aerial reconnaissance missions to identify poppy fields and the transport of eradication teams to destroy small isolated plots would be costly and difficult.













Reverse Blo