



Directorate of
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Narcotics Review



August 1985

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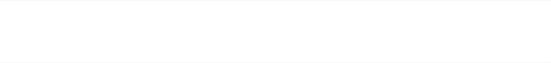


Narcotics Review 

August 1985

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International: The Security Implications of the Narcotics Trade 



Reports that terrorist and insurgent groups participate in or benefit from drug trafficking and the clandestine networks that support it raise concerns about the security of friendly nations. A different but related concern is the threat to stability posed by the influence that major criminal trafficking organizations can exercise over political, economic, and social institutions in key Latin American countries. 

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Mexico: Continued Increase in Opium Production 



The marked resurgence in Mexico's opium production that began last year has continued this year because of economic problems, which limit antidrug funds and equipment, . Unless the Mexicans make the far-reaching changes we judge are needed to regain the initiative, opium output will increase again next year and could rival the peak levels reached nearly 10 years ago.

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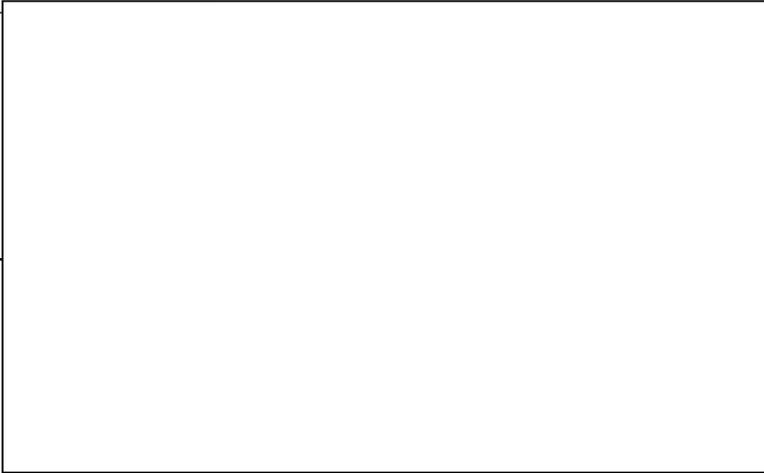
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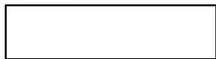
Worldwide Narcotics Highlights 

A summary of key developments from 1 June to 1 August 1985. 



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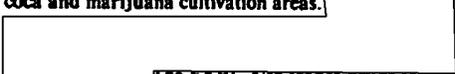
**International: The Security Implications
of the Narcotics Trade** 

The multibillion-dollar international narcotics industry has ramifications far beyond immediate concerns of domestic law enforcement in consumer nations. Reports that terrorist and insurgent groups participate in or benefit from drug trafficking and the clandestine networks that support it raise concerns about the security of friendly nations. Major criminal trafficking organizations, especially in Latin America, use wealth acquired through narcotics to exert influence over economic, political, security, and social institutions in ways that not only undercut international narcotics control programs but also could pose a threat to the stability of some governments.

Insurgent Involvement

The involvement of insurgent groups in drug trafficking results principally from two factors. First, insurgent groups and illicit growers of marijuana, coca, or opium prefer remote areas with rough terrain that limit the presence of central governments and hinder antinarcotics or counterinsurgent efforts. Second, drug trafficking is a lucrative, practical, and usually nontraceable method of obtaining funds to further insurgent aims. The level of involvement by insurgent groups ranges from extorting protection money from known traffickers to direct participation in cultivation, processing, and trafficking.

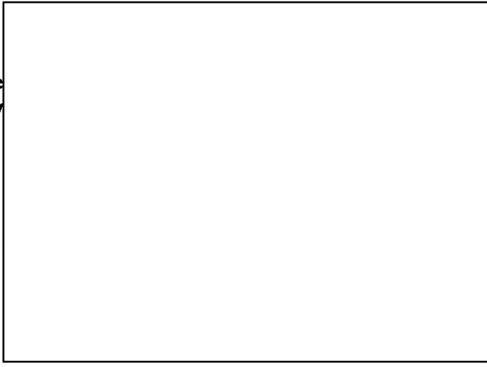
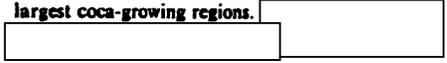
Latin America. In Colombia, three insurgent groups have been implicated to some degree in the drug trade. The largest and most formidable of these is the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia*, commonly referred to as the FARC. The FARC has several guerrilla "fronts," and about half of these operate in coca and marijuana cultivation areas.


The FARC also trades drugs for guns with organized criminal smugglers, exacts fees from traffickers for use of FARC-controlled territory, and taxes coca producers in its strongholds.

Two other much smaller insurgent groups in Colombia, the *National Liberation Army* (ELN) and the *Popular Liberation Army* (EPL), may also extort money from coca growers, and may engage in some marijuana growing and trafficking, although probably at a less organized level than the FARC.

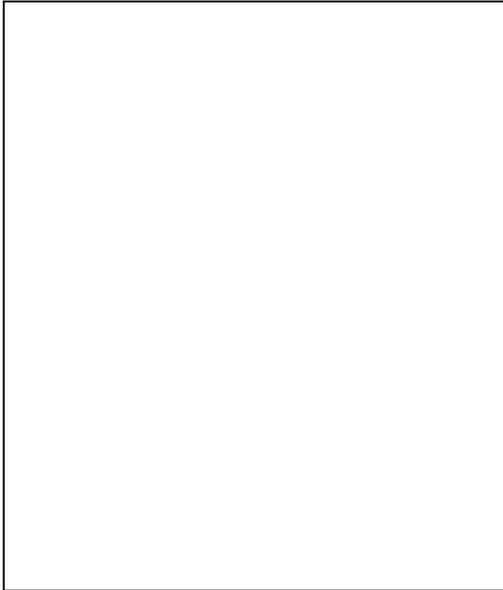
Also in Colombia, the insurgent/terrorist *19th of April Movement* (M-19) has in the past been involved sporadically in the drug trade. The M-19 perhaps is most famous for storming the Dominican Republic's Embassy in February 1980 and holding the US and other ambassadors hostage for several weeks. In October 1981 the M-19 successfully used the drug smuggling apparatus of Jaime Guillot Lara to bring a large shipment of weapons into Colombia. Other instances of M-19 drug-related activity involve extortion of money from traffickers and growers and kidnappings of wealthy traffickers and members of their families.

In Peru, the *Sendero Luminoso* (SL), a Maoist-style group based primarily in the Ayacucho region of Peru, occasionally extorts money from traffickers operating in its territory, which is one of Peru's largest coca-growing regions.



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Terrorist Involvement

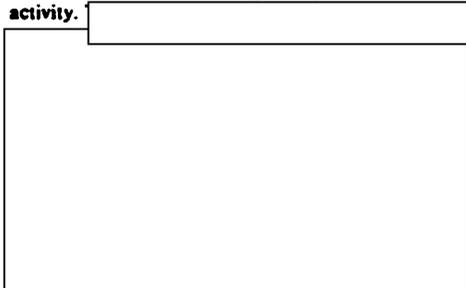
Less is known about involvement of urban terrorist groups in drug trafficking. The small size, compartmented structure, ideological predisposition, lack of opportunity, and urban orientation of most terrorist groups help explain this. Moreover, many of the established organizations have little apparent need to engage in drug trafficking because they receive sufficient financial and logistic support from patron states, bank robberies, and other criminal activities to ensure continued operations. There are also reports of occasional terrorist use of drug trafficking to support their activities, but the credibility of these reports varies widely. Given the potential funds available, even limited terrorist involvement in the drug trade is cause for concern.



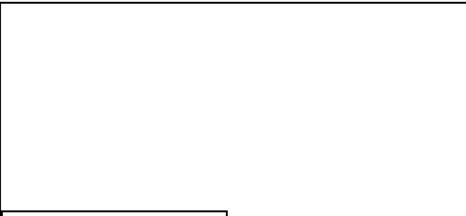
Criminal Drug Traffickers

Although attention has been focused on terrorist and insurgent links to drug trafficking as a threat to the security of nations, the threat posed by large criminal trafficking groups is also growing. There are fundamental differences between the aims of drug traffickers and insurgent or terrorist groups, but the systematic use of violence by criminal-trafficking organizations also threatens to erode the authority

and stability of governments. Increasingly, such organizations are using terrorist tactics to intimidate governments and thwart international drug control programs. Drug traffickers now strike boldly at visible symbols of law and order and at all levels with unprecedented violence that goes beyond criminal activity.



The threat posed by criminal-trafficking groups is most serious in Latin America. Last year, Colombian drug traffickers murdered Justice Minister Lara and subsequently threatened the lives of government officials, including President Betancur, if the government agreed to extradite traffickers to the United States for trial. Traffickers were believed responsible for the bomb that exploded near the US Embassy in 1985.



In Colombia, there is growing concern over a new drug form called "basuco" that consists of coca base or coca paste mixed with marijuana or tobacco. Since this drug is inexpensive, its use among Colombian youth has become widespread.



For some countries, such as [redacted] Peru, the drug trade may pose a greater danger to government

stability than do insurgent movements. Drug traffickers have far more resources available than most insurgents. Not only are they better armed and equipped than the government enforcement units they face but also they use their vast financial revenues to bribe officials at all levels and establish reputations as local benefactors.

In some countries, police and military units stationed in major producing and trafficking areas, such as Syrian occupation forces in Lebanon, protect or actually participate in the drug trade. Attempts to enforce narcotics control could lead to active antigovernment plotting by such units and would certainly cause serious factionalism within political and security establishments about the wisdom of narcotics control. Recent revelations of widespread drug-related corruption in the Mexican federal police, for example, threatens a government crisis.

Traffickers use their resources to influence public opinion and to gain political power in order to combat government antidrug programs. Traffickers in Colombia, for example, effectively use the media to persuade peasants that they do more for rural prosperity than does the government and to arouse nationalist sentiment against alleged foreign pressure for drug control. One major Colombian trafficker was appointed as an alternate member of Congress and another formed his own political party. Traffickers finance the campaigns of politicians opposed to strong drug enforcement programs.

Implications for Drug Control

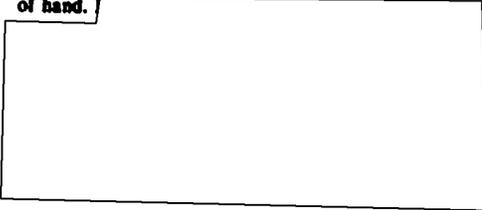
The continued growth of the international drug trade and the ready profits associated with it will assure its continued potential as a threat to national and international security interests. The ability of traffickers, whether traditional criminal organizations or insurgents and terrorists, to exploit weaknesses and opportunities to undermine or evade national counternarcotics programs underscores the need for broad multilateral cooperation against the narcotics industry. The vast profits that accrue from the drug industry enable traffickers to purchase equipment superior to that of the financially strapped government forces arrayed against them in most

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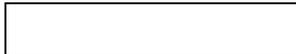
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Third World producer or trafficker nations.
International assistance will be required to help
counterbalance this.

Traffickers can use their resources to relocate bases of
operations or establish new subsidiaries in countries
not now experiencing a narcotics problem, and hence
unprepared to act quickly before the situation gets out
of hand.



To combat this problem will require greater
international cooperation not only among developed
nations in the form of assistance to law enforcement,
crop eradication, and other programs but also among
the producer and trafficker nations to share
intelligence, cooperate on law enforcement measures,
and tighten financial, export, and other regulations.
All countries in a region must cooperate and take a
uniform approach whether or not they now experience
a narcotics problem because traffickers have
demonstrated their ability to adapt quickly, and any
country is fair game.



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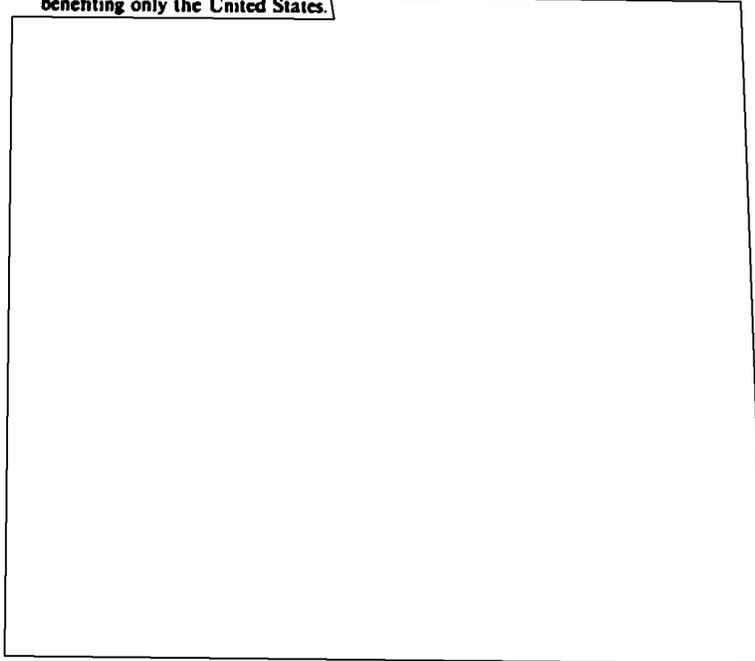
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Worldwide Narcotics Highlights

South America

The *Colombian* Superior Court judge investigating the April 1984 murder of Justice Minister Lara Bonilla by drug traffickers was assassinated in Bogota on 22 July. According to the Colombian press, this was the second murder connected to the Lara investigation—a potential witness was killed in Medellin last August. Judge Castro, approaching the end of his term, appeared to be handling the Lara case in a thorough and honest manner. Last October, he and other judges issued indictments for 16 conspirators—including fugitive drug kingpin Pablo Escobar—and eight subjects have been apprehended, according to the Colombian press. Castro also had ordered that more time be given to investigators so that they could pursue additional evidence and leads in the case. Although no one has taken credit for the assassination, it almost certainly was carried out by drug traffickers who hope to disrupt the trial, or at the very least intimidate the judges and prosecutors left to carry out the investigation.

The extradition of the first US drug trafficker to *Colombia* in June—after Bogota had already sent five criminals to the United States to be tried on drug charges—should dampen growing Colombian sentiment that the extradition treaty is benefiting only the United States.



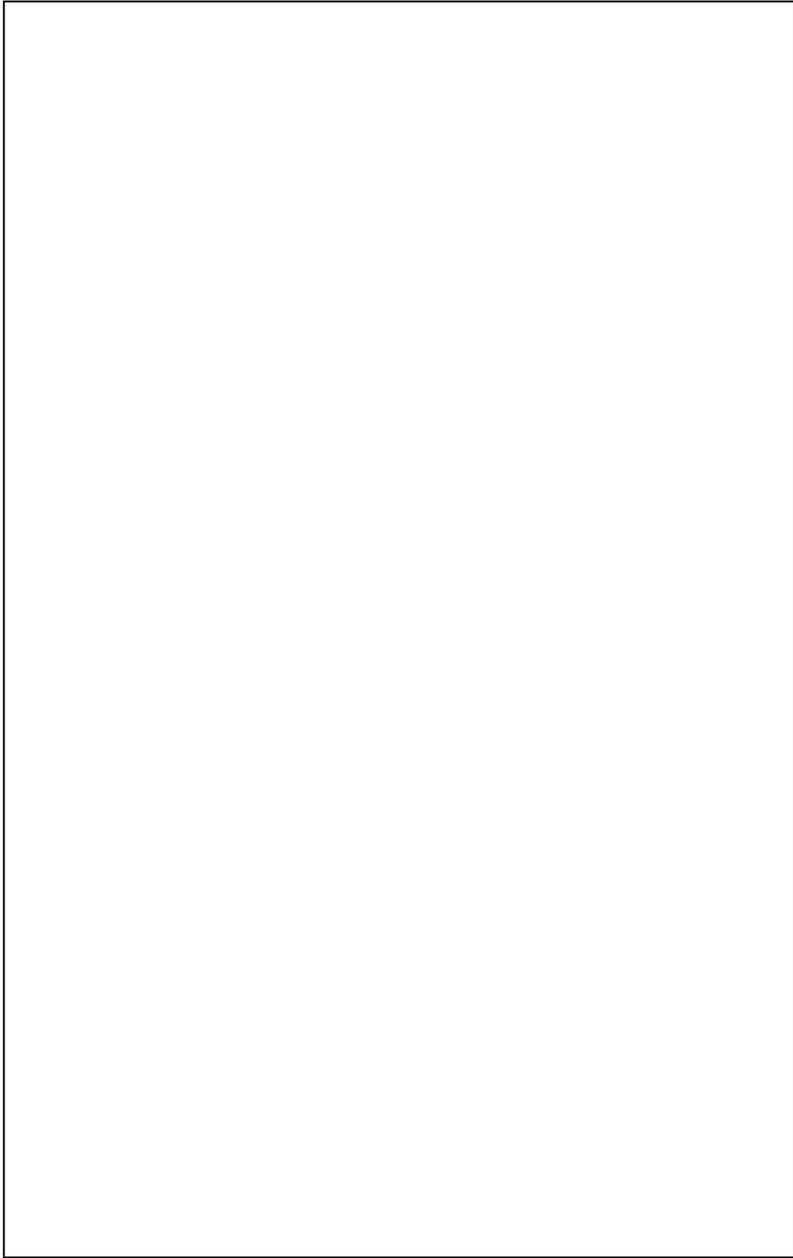
A coordinated operation against cocaine trafficking on the *Colombia-Ecuador* border began on schedule in mid-July. Expected to run 20 days, the operation is primarily to eradicate coca cultivation and involves the Ecuadorean police and Army units, and the Colombian National Police. Interdiction is also being carried out along the Putumayo River—a key artery for transporting raw and semirefined drugs to processing centers elsewhere in Ecuador and Colombia. According to Embassy reports, the operation is progressing smoothly. During its first few days, dozens of hectares of coca were eradicated at several plantations, many crude laboratories for converting coca leaves into coca paste were destroyed, and several traffickers, mostly Colombians, were arrested. The operation comes at a time when increased counternarcotics pressure by Bogota is disrupting the routines of many Colombian trafficking organizations, forcing some to move their operations to neighboring countries. The joint effort marks a growing awareness by South American countries that regional coordination is needed to stay ahead of the drug trade.

Coca eradication operations in *Peru's* Upper Huallaga Valley are being impeded by what the Embassy describes as an explosive and potentially dangerous climate. The Embassy reports that as of the end of July about 1,300 hectares of coca bushes had been eradicated—about half of what had been forecast—even though the size of the eradication team has more than doubled to 1,000 men. Violence and other tactics by growers as well as interference from the military are plaguing the operation. Eradication operations were suspended for a day after unknown assailants shot and killed a member of one eradication team. The head of the operation reported that growers also tried to create a diversion to draw armed guards away from eradication camps by starting fires and engaging in random gunfire. Such tactics reportedly were used last November when suspected traffickers infiltrated a defenseless camp and killed several eradication workers. In addition, a judge in Tingo Maria put dozens of fields off limits, probably for several months, while he investigates complaints from local growers. Eradication operations have also been stopped on several occasions by orders from local military commanders who argue that the problem of Sendero Luminoso terrorism is more compelling and try to draw police forces away from drug enforcement.

The new President of *Peru*, the world's leading coca-producing country, announced a hard line against drug trafficking at his 28 July inauguration. Alan Garcia said he would ask for legislation to reorganize the police, promised to root out corruption, and called for coordinated drug control efforts with Colombia. Garcia probably will get a favorable response from Colombia, which has already begun to cooperate with its other neighbors on drug control, but his other objectives are more elusive. Rank-and-file officials, who are the frontline drug enforcers, have historically supplemented their meager salaries with bribes. More important, the administration still has not taken a forceful stand on the paramount problem of drug production.



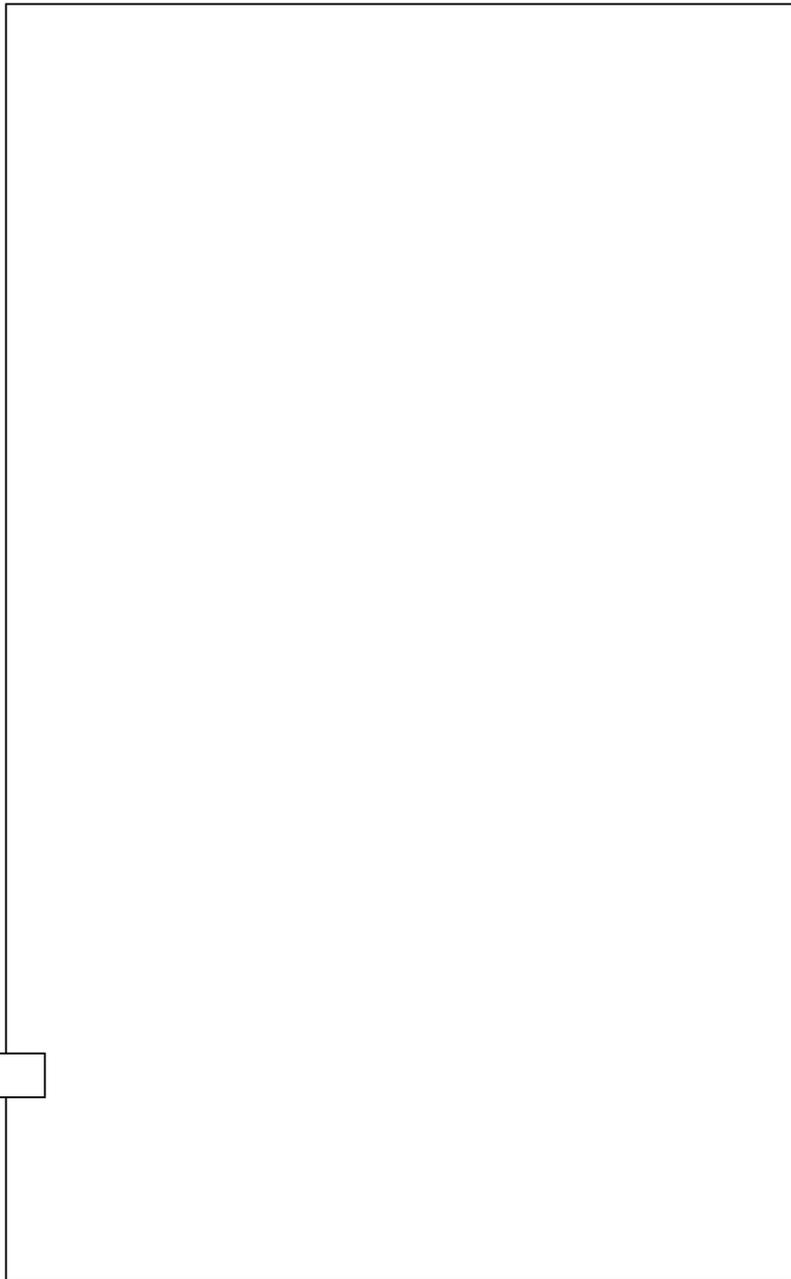
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