

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

[Redacted]
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

5 April 1988

Latin America: Developing More Effective Antinarcotics Tactics

Summary

The drug war in Latin America remains an uphill battle, but growing international pressure for more effective action has, we believe, spawned intensified efforts within individual countries to make them less hospitable to the narcotics industry. In our judgment, these efforts are noteworthy especially insofar as they may foreshadow the evolution of broader, more integrated country or even regional strategies that over time could seriously hobble drug interests. Moreover, a number of the tactics currently being utilized by individual governments appear to us to have significant application elsewhere in the region. [Redacted]

25X1

This memorandum was prepared by the Narcotics Assessments Branch, International Narcotics Division, Office of Global Issues. Information available as of 4 April 1988 was used in the preparation of this memorandum. Comments may be directed to the Chief, International Narcotics Division, [Redacted]

25X1

GI M 88-20034

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

Latin America: Developing More Effective Antinarcotics Tactics

The United States and its Latin American neighbors are without question fighting uphill against a narcotics industry that continues to expand and fragment. Although these developments have left authorities struggling to keep pace, they have also sparked greater international awareness of the problem, especially of the political and social damage brought on by an unchecked drug industry. As a result, we are witnessing an ever-broadening drug control effort as one Latin American government after another begins implementing, for the first time, fundamental initiatives aimed at disrupting drug supplies. No country has yet put together a strategy or mustered the resources necessary to cripple the narcotics traffickers who operate within its borders, but we believe there have been some noteworthy trends in interdiction, eradication, legal reform, and other areas (see the Appendix). In our judgement, increasing these efforts may, over time, help reduce the options currently available to drug traffickers and do much to build and strengthen the institutions that governments ultimately will require to immobilize the drug kingpins who finance and manage the trade.

[REDACTED] 25X1

Lessons Learned

The experiences of many of the individual countries provide lessons that we believe can be transferred to improve--no matter how marginally--antinarcotics operations in other Latin American countries. **Interdiction**, for instance, is one area where many of the countries can profit by following Colombia's example of unifying the various national narcotics enforcement entities under a streamlined command. In addition to the advantages of making operations more efficient, limiting the number of people in the command also reduces the risks of intelligence leaks, thereby improving the chances of making bigger seizures and hitting more important targets.

[REDACTED] 25X1

Crop suppression is a risky and expensive drug control option, as LaPaz and Lima, for example, are increasingly aware. Nevertheless, progress by Ecuador in recent years demonstrates that efforts can be broadened if governments plan their operations carefully. Crop suppression can succeed, for instance, if authorities are willing to use coercion--in the form of manual or herbicidal eradication--to back up whatever developmental or monetary carrots they offer to entice growers away from drug production. Governments may be able to buttress these tactics by targeting cultivation in areas already under their control, or where cultivation is so limited that it does not affect a large portion of the local population or economy.

[REDACTED] 25X1

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

Legal reforms, in our judgment, are fundamental to improving Latin America's long term efforts against the entrenched drug industry. They provide the regionwide foundation necessary for authorities to move beyond strategies based simply on seizures, to ones aimed at prosecuting the highest-level traffickers who manage and finance the trade. Although there is a growing awareness of this need, movement among the Latin American countries has been uneven. Most still lack conspiracy and asset forfeiture laws; these could be combined with improved tax, customs, and currency regulations to form a broader legal web against the drug kingpins. In furtherance of this goal, Colombia has set an important example by creating special narcotics courts in an attempt to break drug cases away from the log jam of investigations that, typical of Latin American judiciaries, clog the courts. Other promising options include the introduction of plea bargaining and the use of rewards as ways of developing evidence and testimony against important traffickers. Among the benefits of such moves would be a limitation of the discretion judges have in selecting cases and speeding up prosecution, greatly diminishing, in turn, the ability of traffickers to influence verdicts through bribery and intimidation. [REDACTED]

25X1

Along these lines, there are additional opportunities to elevate the status and improve the coordination of overall antidrug efforts. Ecuador, for instance, has found that designating a drug "czar," with direct access to the President, is a valuable way to ensure oversight of all counter-narcotics programs. A major part of any improved legal effort would also include the development of an elite corps of investigators with special training in complex conspiracy and asset forfeiture laws, to work closely with judges prosecuting the top traffickers. [REDACTED]

Following the Dominican Republic's lead, governments have an opportunity to highlight the drug threat by stepping up exposure and prosecution of officials with corrupt ties to the drug industry. A steady stream of highly-publicized investigations of corrupt officials would serve as a constant public reminder that traffickers are an insidious threat to key institutions and as a deterrent to further malfeasance at all levels of the government. [REDACTED]

25X1

Underlying all the governmental reforms is the need to stimulate **public awareness** of the dangers trafficking organizations pose to political and social institutions and, as in Jamaica, to the economic infrastructure. National seminars that bring together leading opinion makers, jurists, and law enforcement officials have already been used to develop consensus, set goals, and plan unified efforts in many key drug countries around the world. Such seminars would be beneficial to nearly every Latin American country. [REDACTED]

25X1

AppendixPositive Trends in Latin American Counternarcotics EffortsColombia

- Eradication: Marijuana spraying, begun in 1984, one of most successful anywhere; helicopters deployed over sparsely settled areas have cut production in the leading growing area from 13,000 to 2,000 metric tons; government also conducting limited tests for coca herbicide, although experiments currently stalled.
- Interdiction: Reorganization/streamlining of narcotics police improving seizures and destruction of processing labs; both rates up 250 percent since 1986; successes also reflect Air Force support for lab raids and Navy participation in interdiction.
- Legal: World leader in extraditions from 1985 to 1987; comprehensive antidrug laws in 1986 include stiff penalties and first-time-ever provisions permitting limited use of plea bargaining, asset forfeiture, and conspiracy.
- Other: Bogota increasingly taking lead in international fora to warn of dangers of unchecked drug trade; increasing diplomatic contacts with Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Venezuela to improve regional cooperation; participating in secure communications network to share narcotics intelligence regionwide.

Peru

- Eradication: Government initiated testing of herbicides for coca eradication late 1987; efforts underway for wider applications.
- Interdiction: Some 7,000 drug-related arrests in 1987, but narcotics production in Upper Huallaga Valley proving virtually immune.
- Legal: Public prosecutors receiving extensive training in handling drug-related cases under USAID project; Ministry of Justice studying ways to strengthen drug laws.
- Other: USAID sponsoring public drug awareness/abuse campaign; also sponsoring project to develop legitimate agriculture in Upper Huallaga Valley; project includes establishment of agricultural development service, improvement of roads, and other services to help rehabilitate land previously used for coca growing.

Bolivia

Eradication: Following Bolivia's failure to meet certification deadlines, government offering coca growers \$2,000 indemnity per hectare for eradication; also offering credits at low interest to promote development of licit agriculture.

Interdiction: US-sponsored mobile training team increased expertise of 60-80 special troops in field operations, small unit tactics, map reading, and communications; seizures up dramatically, including 6,500 kilograms of coca products and destruction of some 1,100 processing facilities.

Legal: Tougher law currently under consideration includes provisions for conspiracy, minimum sentences, and establishment of three-judge narcotics courts.

Other: Government developing small group of vetted investigators to work directly with DEA in developing cases against major trafficking organizations.

Ecuador

Eradication: National police, aided heavily by US, have eradicated some 700 hectares of coca along border with Colombia; coca production virtually eliminated at this time.

Interdiction: National police 400-man narcotics division relatively corruption-free, motivated; use of helicopters on loan from Army or US showing positive results; police riverine antidrug program just starting.

Legal: New drug law in 1987 reaffirmed illegality of coca production/processing; antidrug law to control imports of precursor chemicals recently drafted, although prognosis for passage is poor; legal system remains corrupt.

Other: Establishment of drug "czar" has been key factor in recent cooperation between military and national police in antidrug operations; Ecuador has dedicated, intelligent, and honest people heading police and some key government ministries involved in the war on drugs.

Brazil

Eradication: Improving cooperation/coordination between police and military--especially Air Force--has tripled marijuana eradication, destruction of seedlings during last year; similar cooperation in 30-day-long effort against coca yielded similar results.

Interdiction: Improved scrutiny at airports disrupting drug smuggling into US; stepped up police efforts also interdicted some 800 kilograms of cocaine and 300 kilograms of coca base, as well as 33,000 liters of ether and other processing chemicals last year.

Legal: Explicit laws on books outlawing production, refining, use, and trafficking of illicit narcotics; proceeds from all forfeited property turned over to federal Drug Council for use in antinarcotics efforts.

Other: Taxpayers permitted to designate portions of taxes for antinarcotics efforts; private contributions can be made in support of specific drug programs.

Venezuela

Eradication: Increasing sensitivity to issue and willingness to act on US advice spurring eradication, with both coca and marijuana eradication increasing over the past year; more effective eradication efforts on Colombian side of border, however, leading to increased cultivation in Venezuela.

Interdiction: US training, increased cooperation among National Guard, Army, and Air Force units, and growing numbers of personnel involved in interdiction paying dividends; DEA training of police task forces for airports showing good results; other efforts by National Guard focusing on road and seaport interdiction also promising.

Legal: Narcotics laws being studied in hopes of plugging loopholes; Justice Ministry to introduce proposals on money laundering controls.

Other: Increasing emphasis on regional cooperation; accord signed last year with Trinidad and Tobago on prevention, control, suppression of drug trafficking; agreement signed with Brazil to cooperate against trafficking along common border.

Mexico

Eradication: Aerial eradication efforts from 1978 to 1982 showed great promise, eliminating an estimated 70 percent of total opium crop and smaller but still substantial portion of the marijuana harvest; since 1982, effort hampered by competition between Attorney General's office--responsible for aerial campaign--and military; in 1987, an estimated 800 hectares of opium--some 12 percent of total crop--eradicated.

Interdiction: Seizures of heroin, opium, cocaine, and marijuana continue to rise; cocaine seizures reported up 250 percent between 1985 and 1986; 66 metric tons of marijuana intercepted during same period; widescale use of military, with up to half of its 105,000 active duty troops dedicated to antinarcotics efforts when special operations are underway.

Legal: Rules of criminal procedure modified in 1987 to permit preemptory seizure of drug traffickers' property and financial assets; Mutual Legal Assistance treaty signed with Washington to enhance bilateral cooperation on criminal matters; extradition treaty with Washington signed in 1978, but Mexico's interpretation of its Constitution effectively precludes extradition of its nationals.

Other: Increasing domestic impact of illicit narcotics activities prompted recent creation of government-sponsored antidrug program; primary emphasis on prevention through increased public awareness rather than on rehabilitation.

The Caribbean: Jamaica, Dominican Republic

Eradication: Encouraging results of US-backed manual eradication of marijuana in Jamaica; some 1,330 hectares planted in 1987, down dramatically from the 4,800 hectares in 1986; eradication helped by strong public relations program emphasizing long-term economic and environmental effects of continued cultivation.

Interdiction: Stepped up effort in Jamaica has resulted in recent seizures of numerous clandestine airstrips, some 215 metric tons of marijuana, and small quantities of cocaine; use of mobile radars designed to track air smuggling likely to continue disrupting trafficking.

In Dominican Republic, the Joint Information Coordination Center proving a valuable resource in investigating trafficking; supported by a radar that has been instrumental in drug seizures; efforts enhanced by use of military aircraft and vessels supplied by United States.

Legal:

Jamaican drug law recently amended to broaden definition of narcotics offenses; penalties increased for drug trafficking; government also revising asset forfeiture legislation.

Supreme Court in Dominican Republic cracking down on corruption; efforts include removal of a lower court judge; legislature increasingly concerned over judicial corruption and inefficiency and is intensifying scrutiny of judicial candidates.

Other:

Growing emphasis on regional cooperation; Dominican Republic using the Joint Information Coordination Center to establish training academy designed to improve unilateral and other antinarcotics operations; Haitian officials recently participated in narcotics/customs course held at academy.