

Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)

Topic: Examining the Political Ramifications of the Cocaine Production Chain in Latin American Countries

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PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Noah Pahinis, and I am an 11th-grade student at Pinewood, the American International School of Thessaloniki. It is with great pleasure that I will be serving as a Deputy President of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4) at the 7th DSTMUN Conference.

First and foremost, I would like to welcome you to this year's conference and provide a very brief summary of what you should expect from it. At the conference, you will debate with your fellow delegates about current global issues and collaborate with them to find viable and long-lasting solutions.

Finally, it's time to introduce you to the second topic of the GA4 committee. The second topic of this committee takes a look and focuses on examining the Political Ramifications of cocaine production chains in Latin American countries. This study guide is a good starting point for you to understand the topic. However, even though this study guide has been provided to you, I strongly encourage you to proceed in conducting research of your own to have an even better grasp on the topic at hand. You should be able to form opinions of your own to create a strong draft resolution with interesting and realistic solutions.

If you have any questions about the topic, committee, or conference please do not refrain from contacting me via email at npahinis@pinewood-school.gr

Best regards,

Noah Pahinis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Cartels and cocaine producers have successfully infiltrated and manipulated government institutions, effectively dismantling any legal opposition and fostering chaos and violence in Latin American countries from the 1970s to the present day. By exploiting corruption, extortion, and intimidation, cartels coerce government and public officials to protect their own financial and security interests. This allows them to conduct illicit activities undetected, with the implicit approval of state officials, as evidenced by a lack of action. The result is a profoundly destabilized society, where social anarchy and fear prevail due to the unchecked power of organized crime, a direct consequence of instability and pervasive corruption. As a result, citizens are often powerless to defend themselves against organized crime.

Organized drug cartels pose an immediate threat to democracy by undermining state institutions and preying on impoverished populations in Latin America. This desperation drives many to participate in the drug trade for “easy money,” making drug producers and traffickers the fifth-largest employers in Latin America. This has significantly increased crime rates within these nations. High poverty levels reflect the political and sociopolitical instability and corruption that plague Latin America—a direct result of corrupt governments, powerful cartels, and the failure of law enforcement to curb these issues.

Attempts to eradicate the cocaine production chain have met with limited success. One of the most notable efforts was "Plan Colombia," launched by the United States in 2000. Its goal was to provide military aid and training to the Colombian military to dismantle cocaine production and trade, while also supporting socioeconomic development. Plan Colombia ended in 2015 after a peace agreement was reached with the FARC, a key player in the cocaine supply chain. Although Plan Colombia is regarded as only partially successful due to its limited impact on the drug trade and accusations of human rights abuses, it was not the last major effort in this fight. In 2023, Colombia introduced a new, ambitious anti-drug initiative centered on a ten-year strategy aimed solely at social development in rural areas dependent on cocaine cultivation.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Trafficker

“A person who engages in illegal commercial activity”¹

Corruption

¹ [Trafficker Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)

corruption, Improper and usually unlawful conduct intended to secure a benefit for oneself or another. Its forms include bribery, extortion, and the misuse of inside information².

Cocaine

An addictive drug derived from coca or prepared synthetically, used as an illegal stimulant and is one of the most trafficked drugs on the planet.

Drug trafficking

Drug trafficking “is considered the act of buying or selling illegal drugs”³

Drug Cartel

A drug cartel is a criminal organization composed of drug lords who collaborate to control the production and distribution of illegal drugs.

The production chain

The production chain refers to the several stages of cocaine production starting from its cultivation and reaching to its final stages of distribution of the finalized product.

Organized Crime

organized crime, complex of highly centralized enterprises set up for the purpose of engaging in illegal activities. Such organizations engage in offenses such as cargo theft, fraud, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and the demanding of “protection” payments.⁴

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Corruption.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 25 Sep. 2024, www.britannica.com/topic/corruption-law. Accessed 20 Oct. 2024.

³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Drug Trafficking.” *UNODC*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html. Accessed 20 Oct. 2024.

⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Organized Crime.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12 Oct. 2024, www.britannica.com/topic/organized-crime. Accessed 20 Oct. 2024.

Criminalization of cocaine

The initial steps toward the criminalization of cocaine began in the early 20th century. The United States took the first measures to criminalize cocaine due to public health concerns, social issues, and international pressure. This led to the passage of the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act in 1914, which primarily aimed to tax the drug but also restricted cocaine availability to small, medically prescribed amounts. Under this law, cocaine could only be legally dispensed by doctors.

In major Latin American countries such as Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru, however, the criminalization of cocaine began later, starting in the 1940s. Peru was the first to initiate criminalization efforts, enacting stricter laws in the 1960s. Bolivia began its criminalization efforts in the 1950s, although significant regulations only took effect in the 1960s. Colombia's major steps toward criminalization were implemented in the 1970s. The delayed criminalization of cocaine in these countries, compared to the United States, was largely due to political instability and the anticipated negative socioeconomic impacts that criminalization could provoke.

The rise of cocaine in the 70s and the War on Drugs

During the 1970s, after nearly a decade of decline in the cocaine market, an unexpected resurgence occurred. During this period, young Colombians learned to cultivate and synthesize cocaine, transporting it through the Caribbean Sea to the United States. This marked the rise of cartels and drug traffickers and led to a surge in cocaine's popularity, effectively reviving the production chain.

Several factors contributed to this phenomenon. First, the 1970s saw a massive increase in coca cultivation in Colombia, with coca fields at one point covering 13% of all planted areas in the country. Additionally, then-President Gustavo Petro shifted the government's approach by focusing on targeting drug trafficking networks rather than eradicating coca cultivation itself, a strategy that indirectly contributed to the rise in cocaine production. These developments helped establish a growing cocaine trend in the United States.

When cocaine first arrived in the U.S. in the 1970s, it was glamorized by the media, portrayed as fashionable, sophisticated, and even non-addictive in movies, music, and other media. High-profile figures, including musicians and actors, openly used cocaine, which added to its allure. Social trends also fueled its popularity, as cocaine became associated with excitement and indulgence, particularly within the party and nightclub scenes, which were thriving at the time. This cultural acceptance allowed cocaine production and consumption to flourish.

In response, the U.S. government introduced a series of countermeasures. President Richard Nixon, who was in office at the time, held a strong anti-drug stance. He signed the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), which classified known drugs into schedules based on their medicinal value and potential for addiction. Schedule 1 drugs, like marijuana, LSD, and heroin, were considered the most dangerous and without medicinal value, while cocaine was classified as a Schedule 2 drug due to its limited medical use but high potential for addiction. In 1971, Nixon famously declared a "War on Drugs," stating that drug abuse was "public enemy number one" in the United States and advocating for aggressive measures to combat it.

To implement his strategy, Nixon allocated federal funds to agencies tasked with tracking and dismantling drug trafficking organizations, with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) being the most significant. The DEA specialized in enforcing drug laws and conducting investigations into drug-related activities. Nixon also advocated for mandatory prison sentences for drug-related offenses, particularly targeting possession and distribution. Although these policies were effective in many respects, they were also criticized for focusing too heavily on punishment rather than addressing addiction and rehabilitation.

Nixon's actions set the stage for a prolonged "War on Drugs" that continued beyond his presidency, establishing drug policies that remain in place today and continue to fuel debates over drug law reform and the broader issues associated with them.

The rise and fall of the Medellín cartel

When discussing the topic of the cocaine production chain and the harm it has brought upon Latin America and its people, one of the foremost criminal organizations that comes to mind is the Medellín Cartel under the leadership of Pablo Escobar. The Medellín Cartel was founded in 1976 and played a large role in the cocaine production chain and "cocaine cowboy" era, with its ingenious ways of smuggling cocaine into the U.S. using submarines and planes. On an international scale, Pablo Escobar created a large demand in the cocaine market, and the Medellín Cartel controlled 80% of all cocaine shipments to the United States, which helped them undermine democracy by being able to do whatever they pleased. Within their own countries, due to the lack of proper law enforcement and with the aid of corrupt political officials and institutions, they manufactured and transported their product with little to no resistance. This only made them more confident but also very wealthy.

On a local level, the Medellín Cartel played a crucial role in the destabilization of Colombia by bribing political officials, which allowed them to influence the government and gave them the power to control the political landscape of Colombia. Moreover, the Medellín Cartel also introduced "narco-terrorism," a way for the cartel to ensure it stayed in power by conducting

bombings, assassinations, and committing extortion to maintain its control over Colombia. Interestingly, to conduct narco-terrorism, the Medellín Cartel would fund paramilitary or guerrilla groups such as MAS, FARC, and Los Extraditables to assist them but also to use them for protection of their production chains and high-value members. Because of all the above, the Colombian government arrested Escobar on June 19, 1991, and imprisoned him in his custom-built luxury prison, “La Catedral.” Once the U.S. recognized the threat of Escobar and wanted to extradite him, and the Colombian government attempted to move him to a standard prison, Escobar escaped in 1992. Following his escape, a nationwide manhunt was conducted, and Colombian forces, with U.S. assistance, ultimately found and killed him in a shootout on December 2, 1993, which marked the end of an era for drug production and the Medellín Cartel. Escobar's death was a major victory for the Colombian government, reducing violence and bringing political stability while disrupting cocaine production. It also incentivized increased global efforts to combat drugs and prompted policy shifts in drug policies in both Colombia and the U.S.

Cocaine production in the 2000s and 2010s

Between the years 2000-2008, Colombia lost its position as the number one coca cultivation due to multiple efforts made by the government and with the help of foreign intervention to eradicate Coca cultivation. It is estimated that cultivation declined by 53%. It was replaced quickly by other fellow Latin American countries like Peru whose coca cultivation increased by 38% and Bolivia with an increase of 112%⁵. It should be noted that cocaine purity at this time also increased and was still widely available for purchase. However, it was during the mid-2010s that cocaine production surged again due to a global market expansion into almost every country in the world. A key player in this expansion was the Sinaloa cartel. It was based in Mexico and had El Chapo as its leader, it was also known for its sophisticated trafficking networks and violent methods. Despite being primarily focused on smuggling cocaine in the US while sourcing their cocaine from small drug factions in Latin America, they also created their own labs and manufacturing facilities.. This eventually allowed for drug-related violence and corruption to re-emerge, negatively affected the Latin American people and once again brought political instability to the continent. Eventually, El Chapo was arrested in 2016⁶, however this did not have any consequences to the cartel or production, as he was almost immediately replaced and the cartel adapted to the change rather quickly. This made the affected countries shift their

⁵ The White House, 14 July 2022, www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2022/07/14/ondcp-releases-data-on-coca-cultivation-and-production-in-the-andean-region/. Accessed 29 Aug. 2024.

⁶ News, NBC. “Redirecting. ” *Google. com*, 2024, [www. google. com/url?q=www. nbcnews. com/news/us-news/son-el-chapo-another-sinaloa-cartel-leader-arrested-texas-rcna163757&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1722771749495211&usg=AOvVaw03Bfpt8L5XfmugJWZFXrZK](https://www.google.com/url?q=www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/son-el-chapo-another-sinaloa-cartel-leader-arrested-texas-rcna163757&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1722771749495211&usg=AOvVaw03Bfpt8L5XfmugJWZFXrZK). Accessed 4 Aug. 2024.

approach, by focusing on disrupting trafficking networks and financial flows while fostering international cooperation to combat cocaine production. The most notable attempts to kill the cocaine production chain were primarily made by the US with Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative. These two plans were similar with Plan Colombia focusing on aiding Colombian authorities with weapons training and financial support while also conducting alternative development plans which aimed to improve the lives of coca farmers but saw mixed success. The Merida initiative is far simpler and primarily focuses on collaboration between the US government and the Mexican government to try to⁷ stop drug smuggling across the US border and has produced positive results for the 13 years it has been active. Most other attempts at foreign intervention that have taken place in the 2020s era usually take the form of alternative development programs or some form of aid which are usually unsuccessful⁸⁹.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Colombia

Colombia plays a critical role in the cocaine production chain and, as of 2022, is considered the largest producer of coca leaves in the world. The country is responsible for over 70% of the global supply of cocaine, a significant portion of which is trafficked to the United States and Europe. The Colombian government has implemented various strategies to combat drug trafficking and cocaine production, often with international support, particularly from the United States. These strategies include eradication programs, development initiatives, and efforts to target drug trafficking organizations such as the FARC and ELN. However, these endeavors have achieved limited success due to widespread corruption, political instability, ongoing violence, and the complex geography of the country, which includes mountainous terrain that facilitates clandestine operations.

United States of America

The United States is one of the countries most affected by the cocaine crisis, ranking among the highest consumers of illicit drugs globally. The widespread availability and distribution of cocaine within the U.S. contribute to significant public health issues, including addiction and overdose deaths. The U.S. government has taken a multifaceted approach to address the crisis, involving international cooperation to disrupt cocaine production and trafficking networks. This includes significant funding for anti-drug initiatives in Colombia and Mexico. Domestically, the U.S. emphasizes law enforcement efforts aimed at dismantling trafficking

⁷Ibid

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⁹ Radio Télévision Suisse. "La Production Mondiale de Cocaïne Explose Avec Près de 2000 Tonnes." *Rts.ch*, Radio Télévision Suisse, 26 June 2019, www.rts.ch/info/monde/10533710-la-production-mondiale-de-cocaine-explose-avec-pres-de-2000-tonnes.html. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

organizations, increasing border security, and enhancing community-based drug prevention and treatment programs to reduce demand.

Mexico

Mexico is a pivotal player in the cocaine crisis, acting as a primary transit country for cocaine smuggled from Colombia to the United States. It is home to powerful drug cartels, such as the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels, which dominate the trafficking landscape. These organizations have sophisticated operations that control various aspects of the drug trade, from production to distribution. Trafficking routes originating in Mexico facilitate the high rates of cocaine distribution in the United States. In response, the Mexican government has focused on military and domestic law enforcement operations, often collaborating with U.S. authorities to tackle drug trafficking. However, this strategy has led to increased violence and a high number of casualties among both law enforcement and civilians.

Bolivia

Bolivia is recognized as one of the top three cocaine-producing countries in the world and serves as a key transit point for cocaine distribution to Europe and other Latin American nations. The Bolivian government's stance on coca cultivation is unique; it supports the traditional use of coca leaves in indigenous culture, which complicates international eradication efforts. Despite facing pressure from organizations like the UNODC to reduce coca cultivation, the Bolivian government has encountered resistance from local farmers and cultivators who depend on coca for their livelihoods. This has led to a complex situation where the government must balance international obligations with domestic socio-economic realities, making comprehensive drug policy challenging.

Peru

Peru is another major player in the coca cultivation landscape, ranking alongside Colombia and Bolivia as one of the world's top producers of cocaine. The Peruvian government has recognized the need to address the cocaine issue, implementing various coca eradication programs and alternative development initiatives aimed at providing farmers with sustainable livelihoods. However, these efforts have met with limited success, primarily due to high levels of corruption, the involvement of powerful drug trafficking organizations, and the country's difficult geography, which makes eradication efforts challenging. Additionally, the economic benefits derived from coca cultivation often lead to local support for drug trafficking, perpetuating the cycle of production and distribution.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The UNODC plays a crucial yet more passive role in the fight against cocaine, primarily serving as an advisor to countries while advocating for international cooperation on drug-related issues. It focuses on conducting research on drug use and trafficking trends, assisting with policy development, and promoting best practices for addressing drug-related challenges. The UNODC also emphasizes harm reduction strategies and the importance of

public health approaches to drug addiction. While its role is advisory, there have been instances where the UNODC has provided training and support to law enforcement agencies in countries affected by the cocaine crisis, helping to enhance their capacity to tackle drug trafficking.

International Drug Policy Consortium (IDCP)

The IDCP shares a similar mandate to that of the UNODC, focusing on drug-related policy development and capacity building. The IDCP advocates for evidence-based drug policies that prioritize public health and human rights, contrasting with punitive approaches to drug control. By promoting dialogue among governments, civil society, and international organizations, the IDCP seeks to influence drug policy frameworks at national and international levels. While the IDCP concentrates on drug policy development, the UNODC has a broader agenda that encompasses crime fighting and the judicial aspects associated with drug trafficking, making both organizations complementary in their efforts to address the global cocaine crisis.

BLOCS EXPECTED

Block 1

The first block will most likely be constituted by member-states who tackle the issue more forcefully to directly address the issue due to high levels of impact, e.g. the United States of America and most Latin American countries.

Block 2

The second block will most likely be constituted by states outside Latin America, which have adopted diverse approaches to the issue and emphasize harm reduction and public health.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1970s	Emergence of Colombian Cartels: Colombian drug cartels, such as the Medellín and Cali cartels, begin to dominate the cocaine trade, leading to increased violence and corruption.
July 1, 1973	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Established: The DEA is formed to combat drug trafficking, particularly

	focusing on Colombian cartels, marking the start of extensive U.S. involvement in Latin American drug policy.
1984	Colombian President Belisario Betancur's "Peace Process": Colombian government attempts negotiations with drug cartels, but violence escalates as cartels resist government control.
December 2, 1993	Death of Pablo Escobar: The killing of Medellín cartel leader Pablo Escobar marks a significant turning point in the Colombian drug trade, leading to a temporary decline in cartel power but paving the way for new players.
2000	Plan Colombia Initiated: The U.S.-backed Plan Colombia is launched to combat drug production and trafficking, leading to significant military aid and the introduction of aerial herbicide spraying to eradicate coca crops.
December 2006	Calderón's Drug War in Mexico: President Felipe Calderón launches a military offensive against drug cartels, leading to a surge in violence as cartels retaliate, exacerbating the cocaine crisis.
2011	Mexican Drug War Death Toll Surpasses 40,000: The escalating violence associated with drug cartels leads to widespread casualties, drawing international attention to the political instability in Mexico.
August 2012	Colombian Peace Talks with FARC Begin: The Colombian government begins peace negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which is heavily involved in the cocaine trade.
November 24, 2016	Peace Agreement Signed: Colombia signs a peace agreement with FARC, aiming to address the root causes of drug production and provide alternative livelihoods for coca farmers.

2017	Record Coca Production in Colombia: Despite the peace agreement, coca cultivation in Colombia reaches record levels, highlighting the ongoing challenges in eradicating coca and stabilizing the region.
January 2019	Mexico's New Drug Strategy: The Mexican government announces a new strategy focusing on addressing the socio-economic factors driving drug production and trafficking rather than a purely militaristic approach.
March 2020	UNODC Reports Rising Cocaine Production: The UNODC reports a significant increase in global cocaine production, particularly in Colombia, prompting renewed calls for international cooperation and comprehensive drug policy reform.
June 2021	Bolivia's Legalization of Coca: Bolivia's government legalizes coca cultivation for traditional use, complicating international efforts to combat cocaine production while addressing indigenous rights.
April 2022	U.S. and Colombia Enhance Cooperation: The U.S. and Colombia strengthen their partnership to combat cocaine production, emphasizing sustainable development and human rights in drug policy.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Resolution 62/1 “Strengthening international cooperation and comprehensive regulatory and institutional frameworks for the control of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances” (12/18/2007)

In summary, this UN resolution¹⁰ proposes many innovative ideas on how to counter illicit drug trafficking and drug production. It primarily focuses on and recommends to member states that to tackle this crisis they should foster international cooperation and

¹⁰ Resolution 62/1 Strengthening International Cooperation and Comprehensive Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks for the Control of Precursors Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

make efforts to strengthen drug-related legal frameworks and legislation. Also, it focuses on the control of precursor drugs that are used in the production of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances.

UN Resolution 62/2 “Enhancing detection and identification capacity for synthetic drugs for non-medical use by increasing international collaboration” (4/22/2019)

In short, this UN resolution¹¹ focuses more on the health and safety aspects of the drug crisis as well as law enforcement on this topic. It acknowledges to member states the risks that health professionals and law enforcement agencies face while handling illicit drugs. The resolution recommends that all member states should bolster law enforcement and assist medical staff by providing assistance and different forms of training, which include training on how to adequately handle synthetic drugs. The resolution also highlights the importance of international cooperation by sharing forensic information to monitor and report on new psychoactive substances and the need for evidence-based frameworks to support law enforcement and public health authorities.

UN Resolution 74/178 “International cooperation to address and counter the world drug problem”(12/18/2019)

This resolution¹² highlights multiple possible solutions and recommendations to counter the drug crisis. To begin with, it reasserts previous commitments and agreements made in previous international drug conventions to more effectively address the world drug problem. It also urges for international cooperation as a means to address the drug crisis by recommending to member states to share information and practices amongst each other to create a united front. The resolution also highlights the need to protect mankind from illicit drugs and more specifically children and young adults, while also deeming the combatment of drugs a sustainable development goal. Conclusively, the resolution also makes a point by urging member states to strengthen their national drug control policies as a way to assist in tackling the drug crisis.

Convention against illicit traffic in Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances(12/19/1988)

¹¹ UN Resolution 62/2 “Enhancing detection and identification capacity for synthetic drugs for non-medical use by increasing international collaboration”

¹² UN Resolution 74/178 “International cooperation to address and counter the world drug problem”

This treaty is considered one of the most crucial international treaties signed to combat drug trafficking and the world drug problem. It provides a comprehensive list of measures that aim to tackle drug trafficking, which include the limitation of precursor chemicals and provisions to combat money laundering. This treaty also agrees that international cooperation is crucial and should be done through the exchange of drug-related information and the extradition of criminals who have committed serious drug-related offenses. Finally, it also provides additional legal mechanisms aimed at strengthening the ones of previous treaties related to this topic and emphasizes a need for monitoring and stricter drug control to take place¹³.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Plan Colombia

Plan Colombia was a diplomatic initiative launched in 2000 by the United States to destroy the cocaine production chain and curb gang violence in the country of Colombia. The plan itself focused on offering diplomatic assistance by training and providing equipment to Colombian law enforcement agencies. The United States through Plan Colombia has also spearheaded many eradication and fumigation efforts to kill cocaine cultivation. However in light of these initiatives aimed at tackling coca cultivation Plan Colombia also aimed at economic and social development towards coca farmers to deter them from cultivation and also assist farmers who were affected by the initiative. Eventually in the year 2015 after a peace deal was made with the right-wing paramilitary group FARC which was disbanded and was a key player in cocaine production Plan Colombia was terminated. The Legacy of Plan Colombia is a complicated one because even though it had a noble goal and some success. It had a limited impact on the drug production chain itself and was also a front for human rights violations and caused mass displacement amongst peasants and cultivators due to eradication efforts¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶.

Substitution programs

Substitution programs were ideas that focused on alternative methods of tackling the cocaine production chain and were put into action during the early 2000s. These programs focussed on assisting coca cultivators by helping them economically and socially develop to convince them to stop the cultivation of coca and in return cultivate legal plants

¹³ Convention against illicit traffic in Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

¹⁴ Cosoy, Natalio. "Has Plan Colombia Really Worked?" *BBC News*, BBC, 4 Feb. 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35491504. Accessed 25 July 2024.

¹⁵ Mejía, Daniel. *Plan Colombia: An Analysis of Effectiveness and Costs*. 2015.

¹⁶ Peñaranda, Isabel. "Coca and Agriculture in Post- Peace Accord Colombia (Part I)." *NACLA*, 2017, nacla.org/news/2017/11/29/coca-and-agriculture-post-peace-accord-colombia-part-i.

through the promises of financial assistance and new opportunities. In theory, these programs were a viable solution to the cocaine crisis but the way they were executed was nothing short of disastrous. These programs only disrupted the livelihood of peasants by displacing them and leading them into financial ruin due to forceful eradication even though these programs were considered voluntary. Also, the assistance that was promised was never received by the farmers and cultivators which led them to fail and in return dramatically increased rural poverty throughout many Latin American countries.

Crop eradication and fumigation

Crop eradication and fumigation was a concept that was always somewhat considered a solution to the cocaine crisis but was primarily put into play during the years of Plan Colombia. However, this method of combating the cocaine crisis proved ineffective and only caused more chaos and instability. Due to eradication and fumigation, many farmers were displaced which led to a negative economic impact and the pesticides used in the process a public health crisis was created which destabilized Latin American countries even further and led the people into civil unrest.

Militarization and Mano Dura policy

Militarization is when the government uses military and military tactics to deal with issues they deem serious and need immediate attention, and was first implemented in Latin America in 2003 with Plan Colombia as the main point of inspiration for militarization. In 2003 the president of El Salvador Francisco Flores introduced the “Firm hand” or Mano Dura policy. This policy aimed to be tough on crime and eradicate gang violence throughout the country through extreme measures. First of all, mass arrests of suspected criminals and drug traffickers were made by the military and the police which also marked an era of bilateral cooperation between the two. El Salvador also introduced harsher prison sentences for criminals as a way to deter them from crime. Due to its effectiveness, the Mano Dura policy or similar ones were adopted by other Latin American countries but have also been criticized by the public due to the execution of the policy being too inhumane towards criminals and not focusing on their rehabilitation.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Research efforts to be made to map and disrupt the cocaine supply chain

This solution focuses on tackling the cocaine production chain through a more research and information-based approach. It suggests that to tackle the cocaine crisis firstly all points of interest should be mapped and studied to be able to disrupt the cocaine supply chain more efficiently. These points of interest include drug trafficking routes, cocaine production centers, and the locations of high-profile individuals involved in the production

chain. International cooperation and the sharing of information regarding this subject is highly recommended because through cooperation a united front is created against the cocaine crisis.

Socio-economic development and providing education to coca farmers

This solution is aimed at benefiting and providing assistance to people who have fallen victim to cocaine production which are coca farmers. This solution recommends that for cocaine production to die a good place to start would be sabotaging its production from the very start of the production cycle. This essentially means that if coca farmers' livelihoods improve they are more likely to deter from a life of crime and this can be done primarily through socio-economic development and proper education. These can take the form of alternative crop programs or training programs that cover crop diversification as a form of education for the farmers. Also, another way to benefit the farmers' lives is through infrastructure development such as investing in healthcare or construction projects, and community development projects such as improved social services to improve the overall quality of life.

Reliable substitution programs

This solution can be considered a rather interesting one because it uses an idea that was previously used to attempt to solve the cocaine crisis through the use of substitution programs with new elements added to it. As mentioned above, substitution programs in theory were a good idea but the way they were executed was less than satisfactory. So in light of that, this solution focuses on reviving substitution programs by offering financial support and education plus any other form of help that coca cultivators need to transition from cultivation of the illicit drug to another legal alternative. To ensure this promised assistance from the government this solution proposes that the governments of Latin American countries should be closely monitored. It suggested that they be monitored by international organizations such as the UNODC or NGOs such as the IDCP to ensure that these programs are working safely and ethically without violating any human rights. As an extra repercussion, it is suggested that each year these organizations conduct their independent investigations and submit reports so that they can serve as a form of proof.

Cleanse the government and government institutions of corruption.

Finally, this solution has a more violence-based approach which is needed to tackle the cocaine production chain. Since the 70s the government and its institutions have been corrupted by cartels which in return has allowed the drug trade to run rampant throughout Latin America. So in response to this, the solution proposes that thorough investigations take place within these governments and their institutions and root out any source of corruption. This in return will eliminate much of the instability in the affected countries,

dramatically loosen the cartel's influence over governments, remove obstacles and significantly aid the fight against the cocaine production chain.

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