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THESIS

**OPIUM IN AFGHANISTAN: LESSONS LEARNED FROM
THE COUNTERDRUG STRATEGIES OF COLOMBIA**

by

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December 2009

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STRATEGIES OF COLOMBIA**

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ABSTRACT

The paper conducts an analysis of the current counterdrug operation in Afghanistan and analyzes how these operations affect the counterinsurgent operations against the Taliban. This analysis will be conducted by examining the Taliban's control of opium cultivation to support their operations, determine how the people of Afghanistan rely upon the profits of opium for their livelihood, and identify possible solutions to the opium trade that will not alienate the people of Afghanistan from the Afghan government or Coalition Forces. This study will utilize a case study on Colombia in order to examine the policies implemented in an attempt to control the country's illicit cocaine trade. The intent of this study can be explained in four steps. First is to examine counterdrug strategies. Second is to conduct a case study of Colombia in order to examine the strategies used to counter their illicit drug trade. Third is to gain an understanding of what drives the Afghan people to produce opium, and how the Taliban exploits this need. Fourth is the recommendation of a proper counterdrug strategy to be implemented in Afghanistan.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASNIF	Afghanistan Special Narcotics Force
CNPA	Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan
DARE	Drug Abuse Resistance Education
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NIU	National Interdiction Unit
PCIM	Plan de Consolidation Integral de la Macarena
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The paper conducts an analysis of the current counterdrug operation in Afghanistan and analyzes how these operations affect the counterinsurgent operations against the Taliban. This analysis will be conducted by examining the Taliban's control of opium cultivation to support their operations, determine how the people of Afghanistan rely upon the profits of opium for their livelihood, and identify possible solutions to the opium trade that will not alienate the people of Afghanistan from the Afghan government or Coalition Forces. This study will utilize a case study on Colombia in order to examine the policies implemented in an attempt to control the country's illicit cocaine trade. The intent of this study can be explained in four steps. First is to examine counterdrug strategies. Second is to conduct a case study of Colombia in order to examine the strategies used to counter their illicit drug trade. Third is to gain an understanding of what drives the Afghan people to produce opium, and how the Taliban exploits this need. Fourth is the recommendation of a proper counterdrug strategy to be implemented in Afghanistan.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

One of the key concerns in the United States today is the conflict in Afghanistan. The focus in Afghanistan is to establish a competent Afghan government that can provide security to the country and its people. One key factor that is hindering the progress of the Afghan government—which must not be overlooked—is the opium trade. The opium trade that occurs in Afghanistan ultimately affects the stability of the country's government, and it provides financial support to the Taliban. The opium problem will not be solved overnight; the United States needs to realize this ultimately will be a long and difficult process.

B. PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The purpose of this study is to conduct an analysis of the current counterdrug operations in Afghanistan and analyze how these operations affect the counterinsurgent operations against the Taliban. This analysis will be conducted by examining the Taliban's control of opium cultivation to support their operations, determine how the people of Afghanistan rely upon the profits of opium for their livelihood, and identify possible solutions to the opium trade that will not alienate the people of Afghanistan from the Afghan government or Coalition Forces. This study will utilize a case study on Colombia in order to examine the policies implemented in an attempt to control the country's illicit cocaine trade. The intent of this study can be explained in four steps. First is to examine counterdrug strategies. Second is to conduct a

case study of Colombia in order to examine the strategies used to counter their illicit drug trade. Third is to gain an understanding of what drives the Afghan people to produce opium, and how the Taliban exploits this need. Fourth is the recommendation of a proper counterdrug strategy to be implemented in Afghanistan.

C. METHODOLOGY

This thesis will analyze the state-level policies used in Colombia to counter the country's drug trade. This analysis will then be used to examine the current counterdrug plan utilized in Afghanistan and identify needed adjustments based off the successes and failures identified from the Colombian case study.

This paper will begin with an in-depth discussion of multiple counterdrug strategies. This discussion will examine the use of different counterdrug strategies and analyze the positive attributes, negative attributes, and resources needed for each strategy. The strategies discussed will be supply side and demand side strategies.

The case study of Colombia will be analyzed in order to draw possible conclusions on how to handle the opium problem within Afghanistan based off the results of the Colombian government's counterdrug plan. The case study on Colombia will focus on the country's Plan Colombia. This case study will examine the counterdrug techniques and the effectiveness of Plan Colombia. The techniques that will be examined will include crop eradication and alternative development programs. These strategies and

policies will be analyzed in order to identify effective and feasible strategies that could be used in Afghanistan against the country's opium trade.

Colombia was chosen as a case study due to its similarities to Afghanistan and the country's long history of the counterdrug operations. Colombia and Afghanistan may not have similar terrain but they both contain very rural environments, which are used to cultivate their respective illegal products. Each country is also faced with the threat of non-state actors that rely on the financial support of the illegal products. Colombia and Afghanistan also share a special relationship with the United States that provides financial, military, and strategic support to each country. The similarity that Colombia has to Afghanistan may provide beneficial insight on how to control the Opium Problem of Afghanistan based on the country's past experiences.

An in-depth examination of Afghanistan's drug trade will then be discussed. This inspection of Afghanistan's drug trade will begin by discussing the Afghan drug culture beginning with the country's reliance on the trade following the conflict with the Soviet Union. The examination of the Afghan drug culture will be followed by a look at the Taliban's use of opium to fund their regime and current operations in Afghanistan. This section will end with an analysis of the current counterdrug operations conducted in Afghanistan.

This paper will conclude by providing policy recommendations gained from the lessons learned from the

Colombian case study and it will be identified if it is feasible to implement these policies in Afghanistan.

II. COUNTERDRUG STRATEGIES

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand how an effective counterdrug operation can be implemented in Afghanistan, one must understand the strategies that are used in these operations. This understanding of the counterdrug operation will allow the proper use of techniques while facilitating the current counterinsurgency operations. For years, there have been two distinct ways of conducting counterdrug operations, supply-side and demand-side strategies. The use and effectiveness of each of these strategies has been debated for years. This chapter will analyze each of these strategies by looking at the different techniques involved, and by analyzing the positive attributes, negative attributes, and resources needed for each technique.

B. SUPPLY-SIDE STRATEGY

The supply-side strategy has been the key factor in the United States' war on drugs. This has been demonstrated by the United States' support of counterdrug operations in South America. The theory behind supply-side strategy is to target the production and distribution of narcotics in order to reduce the supply of them. This reduction is intended to have two effects: the reduction of the availability of the narcotic to consumers will drive up the price resulting in the reduction of drug users and the disruption of production and trafficking will increase

production costs resulting in a decrease in demand.¹ This can be accomplished through a multitude of different techniques. The techniques to be discussed are crop eradication, alternative development programs, and interdiction.

1. Crop Eradication

Crop eradication consists of the actual destruction of a drug crop. This can be accomplished through two techniques, manual eradication or aerial eradication. These techniques have been utilized heavily throughout South America in countries such as Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.

a. Manual Eradication

Manual eradication is the process of removing drug crops by hand in order to destroy the crop. This form of eradication will normally be carried out by police or military eradication forces, which will positively identify a drug crop location and then, by hand, destroy the crop. This is the most effective form of eradication due to the hands-on effort and the effectiveness of the destruction. The crop can be destroyed by completely pulling the plant out of the ground.² This does not allow the farmer any way to recuperate the crop and forces a new planting cycle or that the farmer stops the illicit activity. Manual eradication may be very effective; however, it has four

¹ Michael Eric Hobaugh, "Colombia's War on Drugs: Can Peru Provide the Recipe for Success" (Postgraduate thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2000), 6.

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey*, June 2009 Survey (New York: United Nations, 2009), 74.

major drawbacks: a large force is needed to execute the operation, the operations are high risk, there is an increased possibility for corruption, and it is a very slow process.

Manual eradication is a manpower-intensive operation. A force must be large enough to secure the area and to carry out the actual process of destroying the crop. This process can be extremely dangerous, especially when conducted in hostile areas. The eradication force must deal with the danger of drug traffickers who are attempting to protect their crop and, at times, deal with insurgent forces who are protecting the drug, as happens in Afghanistan. Manual eradication also provides the opportunity for corruption to flourish. In some cases, such as in Afghanistan, eradication forces have been bribed not to destroy the farmer's entire drug crop.³ The final negative attribute of manual eradication is the amount of time it takes to execute this type of operation. Many times, drug crops will be placed in difficult terrain away from the population, forcing the eradication force to walk to the crop location. The resources needed for manual eradication will consist of a highly-mobile force able to secure the area, and a large number of personnel to actually conduct the eradication process.

b. Aerial Eradication

Aerial eradication is the process of destroying crops through the use of chemical agents distributed by

³ John Lee Anderson, "The Taliban's Opium War; Letter from Afghanistan," *The New Yorker*, July 9, 2007, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/07/09/070709fa_fact_anderson (accessed May 9, 2009).

low-flying aircraft. This form of eradication is not as effective as manual eradication but it is able to cover a larger area in a shorter amount of time. The primary agent used during aerial eradication is a chemical called glyphosate, which is a weed killer.⁴ Glyphosate is produced commercially and is used throughout the world for personal use in gardens.⁵ When aerial eradication is properly utilized, glyphosphate is able to interrupt one or more harvests.⁶

Two main drawbacks when using aerial eradication are the effectiveness of the spray, and the alienating effect it has upon the population. The effectiveness of aerial eradication can be reduced by planting the illicit crops interspersed in licit crops, applying protective substances on the leaves, washing the leaves, or if the aerial spraying is followed by a rain storm.⁷ In many areas, the spraying of illicit crops has an alienating effect upon the population. Normally, these crops are grown in rural areas where the population has a limited education. They perceive the spraying of the illicit crops as an attack upon them by the government. Often, they will blame any sickness, human or livestock, on the aerial

⁴ Thomas Schweich, "Is Afghanistan a Narco-State?" *New York Times*. July 27, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/27/magazine/27AFGHAN-t.html> (accessed May 9, 2009).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey* June 2009. (Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009), 77.

⁷ Ibid.

eradication.⁸ This ultimately turns the population against the government and often pushes the population into more isolated areas, where possible.

2. Alternative Development Programs

Alternative development programs provide economic alternatives and infrastructure to rural populations in order to alleviate the population's dependency on the economics of illicit drugs.⁹ Some ways in which alternative development programs assist the rural population are by building infrastructure such as roads to assist the farms in getting their legal crops to the market; providing education to rural farmers on improved farming techniques; provide new technology such as fertilizers and seeds; provide credit to allow the population to break their reliance on the finances from illicit crops; crop substitution and subsidies.¹⁰

The positive attribute of alternative development programs is that it avoids alienating the population as compared to eradication efforts. These programs provide an opportunity for the rural population to help themselves and provide an alternative to the illicit crop. A byproduct of

⁸ Halima Kazem, "Crop Spraying Draws Controversy in Afghan Drug Fight," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 25, 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0125/p07s01-wosc.html> (accessed May 2006, 2009).

⁹ Menno Vellinga, *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry: Latin America and the International System*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 321.

¹⁰ Vabda Felbab-Brown, "Afghanistan: When Counternarcotics Undermines Counterterrorism," *The Washington Quarterly*, 2005, http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/washington_quarterly/v028/28.4felbab-brown.html (accessed October 11, 2009), 6.

this effort is the strengthening of the community through the infrastructural improvements in the area.

The negative attributes of the alternative development programs are that it is a long-term process, a great deal of security is needed, and often the improvements implemented through the program facilitate the operations of the drug traffickers. These programs are not accomplished overnight. The type of development needed in some rural area will need to take place over many years. This requires large sums of money to support the programs, a great deal of support from the local government and other supporting agencies.¹¹ Another negative attribute is the need for security for these programs to be successful. Agencies need freedom of maneuver to improve the infrastructure in these rural areas. Personnel need to be able to safely provide education to the rural population without the fear of being killed or kidnapped, and the population must be able to utilize the tools provided by the alternative development without the fear of reprisal from the drug traffickers.¹² The final negative attribute is that the alternative development programs often facilitate the operations of the drug traffickers.¹³ The infrastructure improvements, such as roads; can also be utilized by traffickers to facilitate the movement of the illicit product to market, ultimately reducing production costs on the traffickers.

¹¹ Menno Vellinga, *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry: Latin America and the International System*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 322.

¹² *Ibid.*, 322.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 325.

3. Interdiction

Interdiction is the direct targeting of drug labs, precursors and drug traffickers. This action focuses directly on the key players operating at the middle and upper levels of the drug trade. These types of operations limit the amount of alienation upon the local population as compared to eradication. The difficulty of these types of operation is the reliance upon local intelligence to identify the targets, the flexibility of the drug traffickers, and the needed security to execute the operations.

In order to conduct interdiction operations the target must be identified through proper intelligence. This information often is gained through local human intelligence. It is difficult to build reliable networks within these areas in order to provide actionable intelligence. When reliable intelligence is gained another problem often emerges, the flexibility of the traffickers. Often if the trafficker knows he has been compromised he is able to quickly close operations and move to a new and secure location. The final negative aspect of interdiction is the needed security to execute this type of operation, especially in areas that maintain a high level of hostile activity. These operations will often need to be treated as combat operations resulting in the use of a highly trained force.

The resources needed for interdiction operations can be outlined by the negative aspects of the operation. The need for reliable intelligence results in the needed resource of a highly effective intelligence network. This

will often result in the need for a large amount of man hours to build relationships with informants and resources to determine if these informants are reliable. A large amount of resources will be required in order to guarantee the needed security for these operations. The main resource requirement will be the highly trained force to implement the operations. A large amount of resources will need to be provided in order to train and equip this force.

C. DEMAND-SIDE STRATEGY

As the name implies, demand-side strategy focuses on the demand or the need for the drugs by the user. In many cases it is the developed countries that produce the greatest demand for drugs and it is the developing countries that must fill the supply of these products. By utilizing the demand-side strategy, the emphasis is taken off those countries that supply the drugs, the developing countries, and placed on the countries that are creating the demand for the drugs, normally, the developed countries. Demand-side strategy focuses on two techniques to reduce the drug flow: education and treatment.¹⁴

1. Education

The intent of education is to prevent the population from becoming users by explaining the dangers of drug use. This education comes from public service messages such as the "Just Say No" campaign of the 1980s, school programs, and direct prevention from parents and mentors. Education on drug abuse aims at accurately informing the public of

¹⁴ Michael Eric Hobaugh, "Colombia's War on Drugs: Can Peru Provide the Recipe for Success" (Postgraduate thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2000), 8.

the effects of drugs and drug abuse. This preventive education is conducted in order to allow the public to make informed decisions concerning drug abuse with the intent to reduce the amount of consumers resulting in the decrease in demand of narcotics.

The effectiveness of education is debatable. There has been criticism of programs such the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program. The effectiveness of these programs was analyzed in a RAND report in 1999. This report identifies that these types of programs can reduce lifetime drug consumption by a relatively small amount, between 2% and 11%.¹⁵ The benefit of these programs is that they are inexpensive to run especially when compared to techniques utilized in the supply-side strategy.

2. Treatment

The intent of treatment is to heal the user through drug treatment programs. The difficulty with treatment programs is that the user needs to be the one who determines they have a problem and might search out treatment opportunities. Two types of treatment programs exist: outpatient treatment and residential. Outpatient treatments are relatively short and inexpensive compared to residential treatments, which are longer and more expensive.¹⁶ Treatment programs have an 80% success rate of

¹⁵ RAND Drug Policy and Research Center, "The Benefits and Costs of Drug Use Prevention," RAND, 1999, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB6007/index1.html (accessed December 10, 2009).

¹⁶ C. Peter Rydell and Susan S. Everingham, *Controlling Supply Versus Demand Programs* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1994), 20.

keeping individuals off drugs while they are in the program; however, this rate drops once the individuals leave the program.¹⁷

When comparing the treatment programs to supply-side programs, it can be shown that the treatment programs are more efficient. This was demonstrated in a RAND study of cocaine in 1999. This study identified that it would take \$783 million a year to reduce cocaine consumption by 1% using supply-side techniques.¹⁸ The same study states that it would only take \$34 million a year to reach the same results utilizing treatment programs.¹⁹

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a description of the different strategies and techniques used for counterdrug operations. Neither the supply-side strategy nor the demand-side strategy has resulted in successfully ending a country's drug problem. Examining these two strategies, one could identify the demand-side strategy as more beneficial due to the results from the reduction of consumption by the end user. Could the demand-side strategy affect the opium trade of Afghanistan? The opium trade of Afghanistan is not focused in one country but throughout the world. While Afghanistan produces 92% of the world's opium, the primary consumers of Afghanistan's opium are found in Europe, Russia and Iran.²⁰ It is not realistic to mandate a demand-

¹⁷ Rydell, *Controlling Supply Versus Demand Programs*, 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁰ *Human Security Report Project Afghanistan Conflict Monitor*, October 2009, <http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/drugs.html#docs2> (accessed December 10, 2009).

side strategy to all these countries. It would be more beneficial to take more of a balanced approach to the opium trade in Afghanistan. Demand-side strategy should be implemented in countries consuming opium from Afghanistan, where possible. It will take time to initiate these programs and to see the results from the programs. Supply-side strategies should also be initiated to reduce the production of opium within Afghanistan. Through the analysis of Colombia's war on drugs, one may be able to gain insight into how possibly to incorporate a supply-side strategy in Afghanistan.

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III. COLOMBIA CASE STUDY

A. INTRODUCTION

The country of Colombia is considered the cocaine capitol of the world. Within the borders of Colombia, 51% of the world's cocaine is produced, a large amount of which is exported to the United States.²¹ This problem contains four major players: the coca farmers; the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); the Colombian Government, and the United States. The coca farmers have become reliant upon the cultivation of coca for survival, the FARC has become dependent upon the cocaine trade to fund operations and the Colombian government has had to fight the war on drugs due to pressure from the United States. The United States has become involved in this conflict as a result of its growing dependency upon cocaine.

Is Colombia beginning to win this war on cocaine? Colombia has shown a decrease in coca cultivation from 2007 to 2008 by 18%, the cocaine production has decreased by 28%, and there has been a 26% drop in households that grow coca.²² Another promising sign of Colombia's success is the combination of the rising price of cocaine and the declining purity of the product, which are indicators of a decreasing supply.²³ These signs are promising, but how did the country of Colombia get to this point? This chapter

²¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2009. Annual World Drug Report* (New York: United Nations Publication Sales, 2009), 68.

²² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey, June 2009 Survey* (New York: United Nations, 2009), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3.

will investigate the policies and strategies used. This chapter will discuss Plan Colombia, which was implemented by Colombian President Pastrana in 1999.²⁴ A brief discussion of the background to Plan Colombia will be conducted, the objectives of the program will be examined, counterdrug policies of the program will be analyzed and then the results of each program will be discussed.

B. PLAN COLOMBIA

1. Background

Plan Colombia was conceived by Colombian President Pastrana. This plan was intended to promote the peace process between Colombia and the FARC, revive the Colombian economy, and combat the Colombian drug problem. The price tag slated for this project was \$7.5 billion, \$4 billion of this was to be funded by the Colombian government and \$3.5 billion was to be funded through international aid.²⁵ The basic concept of this plan was for the Colombian government to gain control of the entire country through military force (40% was controlled by guerilla forces at the time) while at the same time eradicate coca crops grown throughout the region.²⁶ Following this phase coca farmers would be offered funding for alternative crops in order to prevent their return to the coca crop. The intended result would be the control of Colombia by the Colombian

²⁴ United States State Department, *Fact Sheet: Plan Colombia*, March 28, 2000. http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/fs_000328_plancolombia.html (accessed October 31, 2009).

²⁵ Garry Leech, "Plan Colombia: A Closer Look," *Colombia Journal*, July 2000. <http://colombiajournal.org/special-reports/plancolombia> (accessed October 31, 2009).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

government and a reduction of the cocaine produced and exported from Colombia to the United States.

2. United States' Involvement

The U.S. support of Plan Colombia was based on five components: improving governance and respect for human rights, expansion of counter-narcotic operations into southern Colombia, alternative economic development, increased interdiction in Colombia and the region, and assistance for the Colombian National Police.²⁷ The first component, improving governing capacity and respect for human rights, focused on education programs on human rights and training government officials to investigate human rights cases.²⁸ The second component, expansion of counter-narcotics operations into Southern Colombia, focused on improving the military capability of combating narcotics.²⁹ This component trained and equipped two additional counter-narcotic battalions with the mission to protect the Colombian National Police while they carry out counterdrug operations.³⁰ In addition, this component provided 30 Blackhawk and 33 Huey helicopters for counterdrug

²⁷ United States State Department, *Fact Sheet: Plan Colombia*, March 28, 2000.
http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/fs_000328_plancolombia.html (accessed October 31, 2009).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ United States State Department. *Fact Sheet: Plan Colombia*. March 28, 2000.
http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/fs_000328_plancolombia.html (accessed October 31, 2009).

operations.³¹ The third component, alternate economic development, focused on providing economic alternatives to former coca farmers.³² This component also intends to support the building of infrastructure such as schools, roads, and medical clinics.³³ The fourth component, increased interdiction in Colombia and the region, by providing radar upgrades and improvement in intelligence capabilities of the Colombians in order to interdict the drug traffickers.³⁴ The fifth component, assistance for the Colombian National Police, focused on upgrading and purchasing aircraft to conduct aerial eradication.³⁵

From examining the five components, it appears the United States is assisting with all aspects of Plan Colombia, from judicial reform to military assistance. Although, when one analyzes the allocation of funds to Colombia, it appears the overwhelming priority is military assistance, as shown in Table 1. This unbalanced approach gives the impression that the United States' support of Plan Colombia was centered on the military aspect of assisting the Colombian government fight the FARC instead of conducting counterdrug operations.

³¹ United States State Department. *Fact Sheet: Plan Colombia*. March 28, 2000. http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/fs_000328_plancolombia.html (accessed October 31, 2009).

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Table 1. Allocation of the Colombian package

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Allocation(in millions of U.S. dollars)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Military assistance	\$519.2	60.35
Police assistance	\$123.1	14.31
Alternative development	\$68.5	7.96
Aid for displaced persons	\$37.5	4.36
Human rights	\$51.0	5.93
Judicial reform	\$13.0	1.51
Law enforcement/ rule of law	\$45.0	5.23
Peace	\$3.0	0.35
Total	\$860.3	100.0

Source: Eduardo Pizarro and Pilar Gaitan. "Plan Colombia and the Andean Regional Initiative: Lights and Shadows." In *Addicted to Failure*, by Brian Loveland, 53-79. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006, 66.

3. Counterdrug Strategies

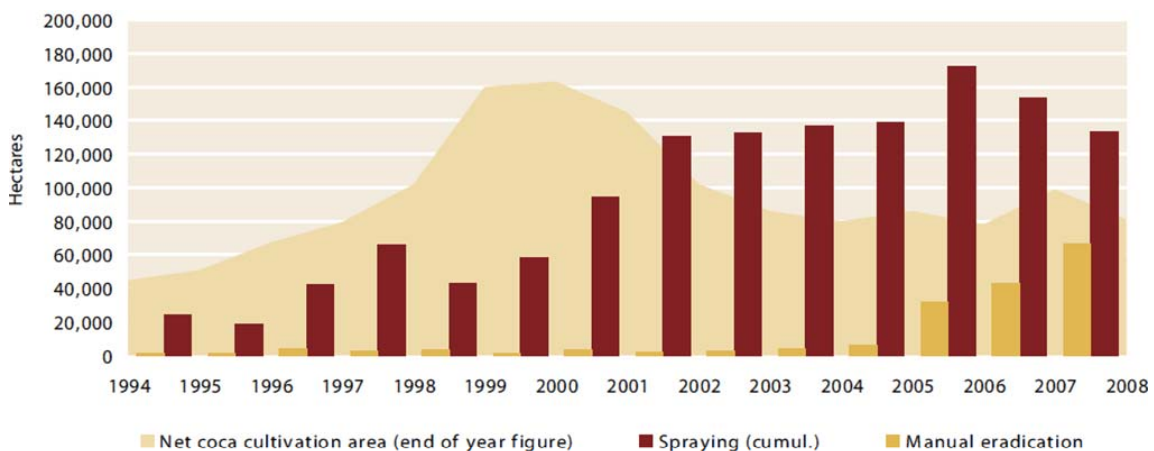
The focus of Plan Colombia was to eradicate the cocaine supply produced in the jungles of Colombia. The main techniques utilized against the cocaine fields of Colombia were manual eradication, aerial eradication, and alternate development programs.

a. Manual Eradication

Manual eradication is the most effective form of crop eradication due to the coca plant being completely uprooted from the ground. Once the coca bush is uprooted it could take up to eight months for a farmer to replant

and produce a new crop of coca.³⁶ As stated previously, this is a time-consuming and dangerous activity for the eradication force, especially in areas with high FARC activity. The level of manual eradication was extremely limited prior to 2004. This limited amount of eradication can be correlated to the level of violence and high activity of the FARC prior to 2005, which correlates to Colombia's offensive against the FARC during operation Patriota (Figures 1 and 2).³⁷

Figure 1. Colombia, Coca cultivation and reported eradication/spraying (hectares), 1994-2008

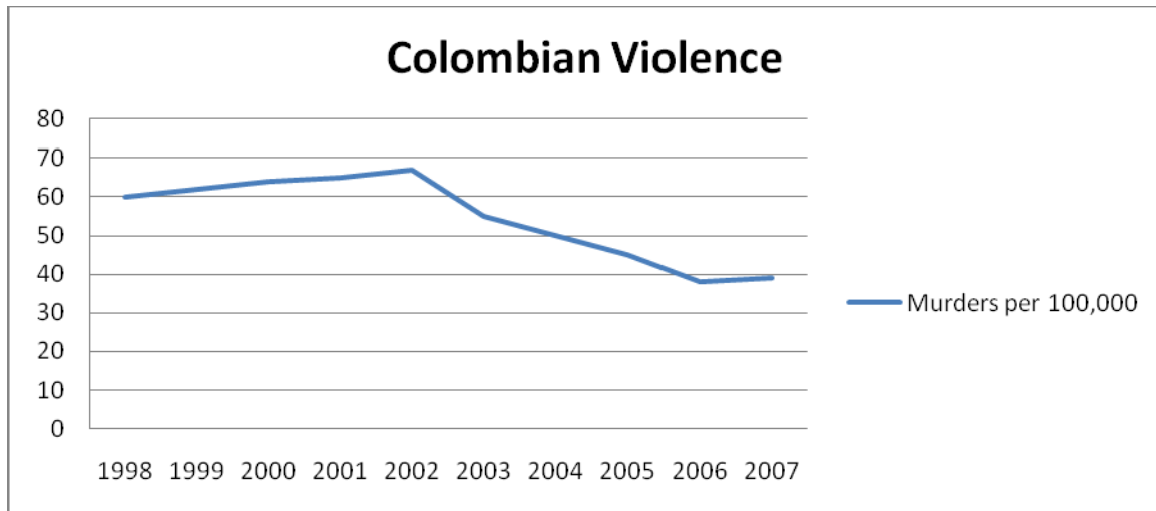


Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2009. Annual World Drug Report, New York: United Nations Publication Sales, 2009.

³⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey*. June 2009 Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009, 74.

³⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Threat of Narco-Trafficking in the Americas*, October 2008 (New York: United Nations, 2008).

Figure 2. Colombia murders per 100,000 in population



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *The Threat of Narco-Trafficking in the Americas*. October 2008, New York: United Nations, 2008, 31.

Manual eradication operations were carried out by Mobile Eradication Groups, the Anti Narcotic Police, the Army, and the National Police. These forces can be very effective against coca; however, they can have a negative effect upon the Colombian population. Upon the completion of manual eradication, the coca farmer is left with their livelihood destroyed. The farmer has to make a decision to turn away from the growing of coca and turn to a legal crop; replant his coca crop; or pick up his family and push further into the jungle where it is more difficult for the eradication forces to find his illegal crop. Another alternative for the coca farmer is to turn to organizations such as the FARC to provide protection against the eradication forces. Many times, this problem is exacerbated from the actions of the eradication force. Frequently, the only impression the rural farmer has of the Colombian government comes from the actions of this force.

One coca farmer is quoted as saying, "People fear the eradicators, they (the government eradication force) are abusive."³⁸ It has also been stated that these forces have been known to take food and other goods from the farmers. These harsh actions of the eradication force are often increased when they are operating in areas with heavy FARC activity. In these areas, the eradication force often sees the farmers as supporters of the FARC.³⁹ Without an alternative to growing coca, the farmer is often forced to continue the cycle of growing coca for his family and himself to survive.

b. Aerial Eradication

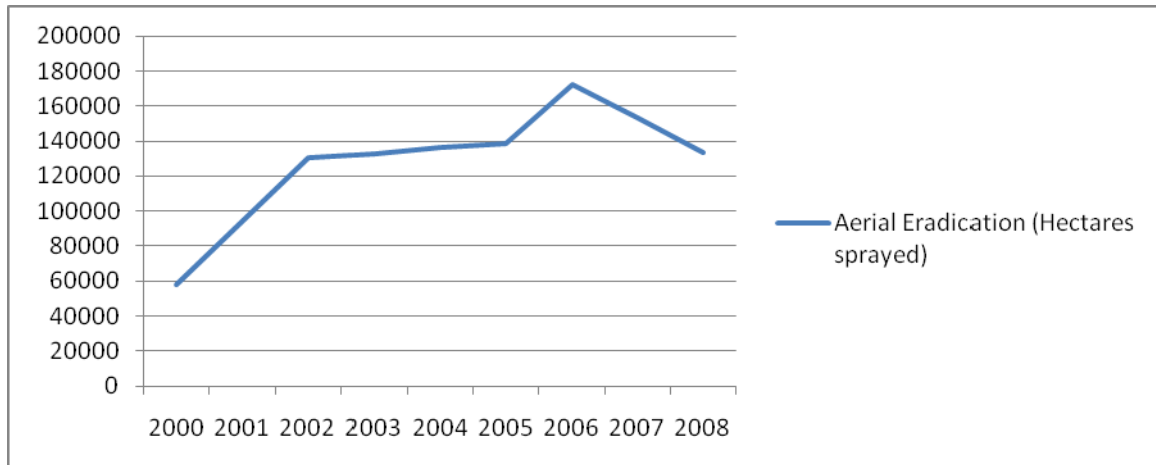
The primary form of eradication found in Colombia is aerial eradication. This form of eradication is safer and more efficient than manual eradication. With aerial eradication the area to be eradicated does not need to be secured with ground troops, preventing any confrontation with opposition forces such as the FARC. Without the reliance upon ground forces, aerial eradication is able to quickly deploy to coca growing areas, allowing the eradication of larger areas of coca growing compared to manual eradication. As stated previously, the drawback to aerial eradication is that it does not target the root of the plant but the leaves. Often farmers can wash the

³⁸ Center for International Policy's Colombia Program, "Initial Observations about "Integrated Action" in Colombia," Plan Colombia and Beyond. June 10, 2009. <http://www.cipcol.org/?p=904> (accessed October 30, 2009).

³⁹ Journeyman Pictures, "Drug Wars-Colombia," YOU TUBE. August 7, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDvwn83xK0A&NR=1> (accessed October 30, 2009).

pesticide off the plant or they will prune the plant to allow it to grow back rather than completely die off.⁴⁰

Figure 3. Colombia aerial eradication (hectares)



Sources: United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey 2005*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York: United Nations, 2005.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2006*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York : United Nation , 2006.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2007*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York: United Nations, 2007.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region: A Survey of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru* . Annual Coca Cultivation Survey June 2008, New York: United Nations, 2008.; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*. Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009.

The use of aerial eradication in Colombia has resulted in the destruction of coca fields; however, it has also effected the production of legal crops. Reports have surfaced that spraying has affected livestock of farmers resulting in the increased alienation of the population.⁴¹ This by-product of aerial spraying cannot be overlooked.

⁴⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*, Annual Coca Survey (New York: United Nations, 2009), 77.

⁴¹ "Vistahermosa and Puerto Toledo," The Center for International Policy's Colombia Program, May 31, 2009, <http://www.cipcol.org/?p=880> (accessed October 30, 2009).

The result can push local farmers away from the government of Colombia and force them to support the activities of the FARC.

c. Alternative Development Programs

Alternative development programs have been minimally used throughout Plan Colombia until the implementation of the Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena in late 2007.⁴² Prior to the execution of this plan, a limited amount of alternative development programs were implemented and presented positive results. One such plan is the Forest Ranger Families project.

(1) Forest Ranger Families Project. The Forest Ranger Families project was implemented by the Colombian government in 2003.⁴³ The program was established for "rural, indigenous or Afro-Colombian families that are involved in or at risk of becoming involved in illicit crop cultivation within strategic ecosystems."⁴⁴ The concept behind this project was to pay families to not grow illicit crops. Families would be paid \$1,600 per year for three years for this service.⁴⁵ From 2003 to 2005, 1,249,960 hectares were protected from the growth of illicit crops.⁴⁶ The primary selling point for this project was the price

⁴² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey, June 2009 Survey (New York: United Nations, 2009), 79.

⁴³ Asociacion Inter Americana para la Defensa del Ambiente, Alternative Development Strategies in Colombia: The Need to Move Beyond Illicit Crop Spraying, http://www.aida-americanas.org/templates/aida/uploads/docs/AIDA-EX_SUMM_ALT_DEVT_06-08.pdf (accessed November 11, 2009).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

tag. On average, this program protected a hectare at the cost of \$141 compared to aerial eradication costing \$1,682 per hectare.⁴⁷ One issue with this program is that it makes direct payments to the families for not growing illicit crops. This program does not provide the opportunity for the family to improve themselves through legal crops or improvements in their local infrastructure. This program sets the family up for failure by not providing an alternate source of income other than payments from the Colombian government. Once the funding ceases for this project the family's only alternative will be to turn back to the cultivation of coca.

(2) Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena. A program that has demonstrated great promise in the battle against drugs in Colombia is the Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena (PCIM). This program is currently focused on the Meta department, which, in 2007, was the third-largest coca producer in the country.⁴⁸ The intent of the program is to "recover the institutional control of the territory and to establish the necessary conditions for the full exercise of the citizen's rights."⁴⁹ The Colombian government decided to combine their fight

⁴⁷ Asociacion Inter Americana para la Defensa del Ambiente, *Alternative Development Strategies in Colombia: The Need to Move Beyond Illicit Crop Spraying*.

⁴⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey, June 2009 Survey* (New York: United Nations, 2009), 79.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

against coca and guerrillas with state building.⁵⁰ This is demonstrated by Vice Minister of Defense Sergio Jaramillo, when he stated, "We had to find a way to solve the security problem and the coca problem at the same time because they feed off each other."⁵¹ This plan appears to embody the original intent of Plan Colombia by extending the legitimate state authority to areas in Colombia by "creating a permanent state security presence in retaken zones; developing a visible and robust civilian response alongside security operations in these areas; timing and coordinating the work of various actors in consolidating security, building a sustained state presence, and promoting economic development; and disrupting narcotics trafficking, which contributes to the strength of illegal groups in the zone."⁵²

The PCIM was executed in a four-step process: (1) Colombian military would secure the municipal urban areas, (2) the police would replace the military in the urban areas, providing security and rule of law, (3) the military would push out into the surrounding rural areas, clearing them of insurgent activity, and (4) once the rural area is secure the forced and volunteer

⁵⁰ Juan Forero, "Colombian Farmers Get Broad Incentives to Forgo Coca Crops," *The Washington Post*, May 22, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/21/AR2009052104318.html> (accessed October 30, 2009).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Peter DeShazo, Phillip McLean, and Johanna Mendelson Forman, *Colombia's Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena*, Report of the CSIS Americas Program (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic International Studies, 2009), 1.

eradication would begin.⁵³ The provided security in the area and the eradication of the coca, as explained in *Colombia's Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena*, "will lead to an expansion of state presence and the rise of a legal economy."⁵⁴ At the earliest possible moment in this process five areas will be focused on: institutional development, citizenship, and governability; property rights and territorial order; infrastructure and connectivity; access to public goods and social services; and economic/business development.⁵⁵ The reason for focusing on these five areas is to provide a state presence within this region that does not involve the military, police, or eradication efforts.⁵⁶ In order to facilitate the function of these areas, civilian employees will enter the region as soon as it is safe enough to establish contact with the local populace. These civilians will engage the populace in order to discuss the kinds of "projects and activities most needed in each community."⁵⁷ When these projects are agreed upon, letters of agreement are signed by the local community, municipal mayors, and representatives of the government. This process identifies two key factors of the program. The use of civilians allows the populace to become accustomed to working with government officials other than the military. A sense of

⁵³ Peter DeShazo, Phillip McLean, and Johanna Mendelson Forman, *Colombia's Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena*, Report of the CSIS Americas Program (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic International Studies, 2009), 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

trust begins to build between the community and the government. The second factor is that this process allows "local buy in" to the projects.⁵⁸ Through this local buy in it is not an outsider forcing a plan upon the local populace, which might not even be needed by the community. The goal behind these projects is "to spend small and fast in order to build confidence and provide rural people in areas where coca cultivation previously dominated with a "ladder" with which to climb out of the illegal (narcotic) economy."⁵⁹

The decrease in coca cultivation for the year of 2008 can be linked to the success of the PCIM program. Coca production dropped from 10,386 (hectares) to 5,525 (hectares) a 47% drop in coca cultivation.⁶⁰ This drop in cultivation can be linked to the increased government presence in this region. The increase in the military and police has provided security to the area, which has allowed an increase in manual eradication; 3,768 hectares in 2007 to 7,972 hectares.⁶¹ The influx of local projects in order to build social capital within the community will need continued observation to determine if this has facilitated the decrease in coca cultivation.

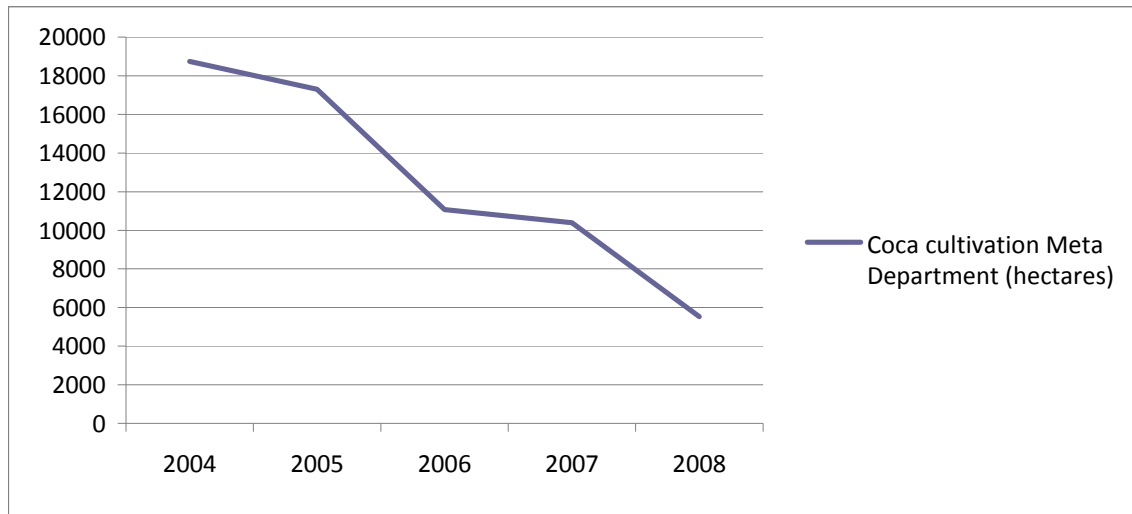
⁵⁸ Peter DeShazo, Phillip McLean, and Johanna Mendelson Forman, *Colombia's Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena*, Report of the CSIS Americas Program (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic International Studies, 2009), 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey*, June 2009 Survey (New York: United Nations, 2009), 29.

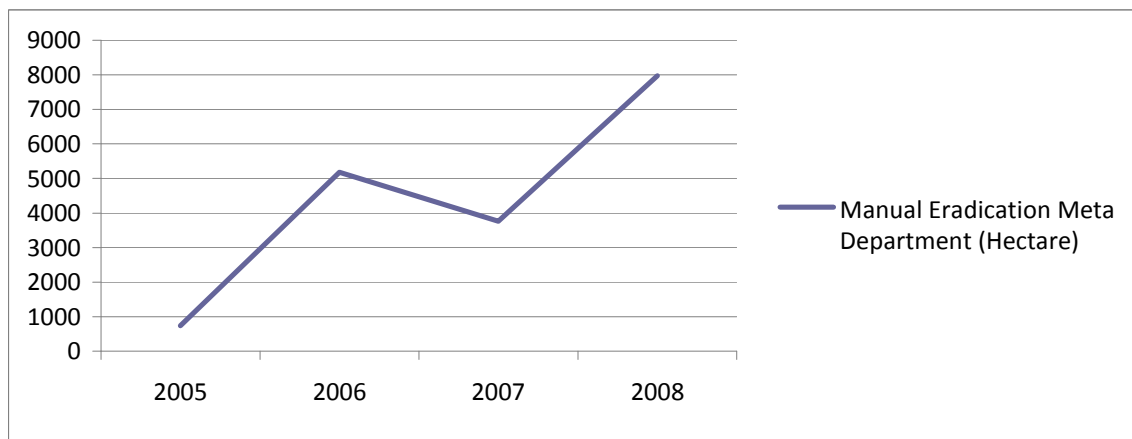
⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

Figure 4. Coca cultivation Meta department (hectares)



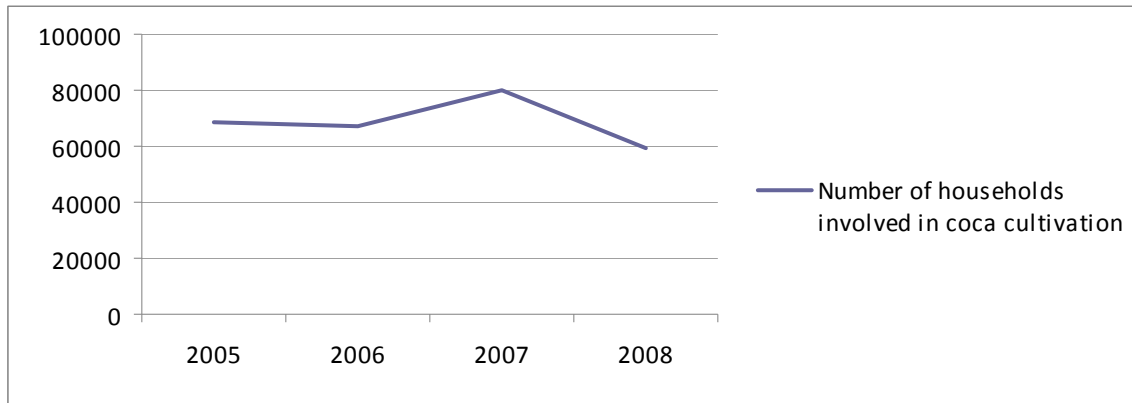
Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey*. June 2009 Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009, 29.

Figure 5. Manual eradication Meta department (hectares)



Sources: United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey 2005*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York: United Nations, 2005.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2006*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York : United Nation , 2006.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2007*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York: United Nations, 2007.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region: A Survey of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru* . Annual Coca Cultivation Survey June 2008, New York: United Nations, 2008.; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*. Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009.

Figure 6. Number of households involved in coca cultivation



Sources: United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey 2005*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York: United Nations, 2005.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2006*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York : United Nation , 2006.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2007*. Annual Coca Cultivation Survey, New York: United Nations, 2007.; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. *Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region: A Survey of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru* . Annual Coca Cultivation Survey June 2008, New York: United Nations, 2008.; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*. Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009.

C. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of Colombia's counterdrug operations from the implementation of Plan Colombia to the execution of Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena (PCIM). The Colombian case study demonstrates that the excessive use of manual and aerial eradication cannot successfully end the cultivation of an illicit product. The use of eradication in many cases resulted in alienating the rural population of Colombia and directing their support toward non-state actors such as the FARC. Utilizing alternative development programs, as in the case of the PCIM program, has resulted in the

successful decline of coca cultivation. This program provided security, governance, and alternate forms of income to the population, allowing them to turn away from the cultivation of coca and non-state actors. The coca cultivation in Colombia has drastically dropped in 2008. This can be attributed to the increase in security, which was facilitated by an increase in governance in rural areas and the implementation of the PCIM program. These factors can continue to decrease the coca cultivation within Colombia if correctly balanced. Continued security within the rural areas must continue in order for state governance to facilitate local programs such as PCIM. These programs provide the coca farmers alternatives to the cultivation of coca. Limited manual eradication must still be utilized once coca farmers have been provided an alternate source of income to coca cultivation. The continued observation of this balanced approach will be needed. Over the next year the PCIM program should strengthen and provide a continued decrease in coca production in this area. If this decrease continues, the PCIM program could be utilized in other areas of Colombia and, possibly, as a model in other parts of the world facing similar illicit drug troubles.

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IV. AFGHANISTAN'S OPIUM TRADE

A. INTRODUCTION

Today, Afghanistan produces approximately 92% of the world's opium.⁶² This large quantity of opium produced by Afghanistan has led to a culture dependent upon the drug in many ways. Over the years, the Afghan people have relied upon opium to feed their families, support their government, and fight wars. This chapter will take a look at how Afghanistan has become reliant upon opium. This chapter will discuss the history of opium in Afghanistan, from its introduction to the country, to the ways in which the Taliban has been utilizing the product. The chapter will conclude by examining the current counterdrug operation in Afghanistan.

B. HISTORY OF OPIUM IN AFGHANISTAN

1. Opium and the Soviet Conflict

Opium was first introduced to Afghanistan by Alexander the Great around 330 BC.⁶³ Early on, Afghanistan's terrain and climate were identified as an excellent environment for the cultivation of poppy. The cultivation of poppy for profit in Afghanistan did not occur until the early 1900s.⁶⁴ During this time, the Afghan opium trade was controlled by

⁶² Anand Gopal, "csmonitor.com," *Afghanistan's Soaring Drug Trade Hits Home*, March 13, 2008, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0313/p04s01-wogn.htm?print=true> (accessed June 11, 2009).

⁶³ Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How heroin is bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009), 29.

⁶⁴ Antonio M. Costa, "UNODC.org," *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan*, January 2003, www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/afg_opium_economy_www.pdf (accessed April 18, 2009), 88.

the ruling family and mainly exported to Iran.⁶⁵ Even at this point in history, opium was not produced in a large quantity. Compared to China's production of 6,000 tons in 1932, Afghanistan only produced 75 tons.⁶⁶ Afghanistan did not become a main producer of opium until the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1970s, the three main producers of the world's opium supply (Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey) began to implement bans and severe drug controls in their countries.⁶⁷ This created a vacuum in the world opium market, which Afghanistan was ready to fill. Two factors pushed Afghanistan into becoming the world's lead in opium production, and both of these were a result of the Soviet invasion in 1979. First, when the Soviets invaded, they were countered by the Mujahedeen. The Mujahedeen received support from outside sponsors; however, they also began to lean on the increased Afghanistan opium production, due to the opium vacuum, to finance their operations. The increased participation of the Mujahedeen helped to build the opium trafficking network and marketing within Afghanistan. The second factor that increased the opium production in Afghanistan was the deterioration of the Afghan rural economy. Due to the conflict, the food production decreased by one-half to two-thirds, resulting in families looking for alternate means of money for survival.⁶⁸ Opium provided this alternate means of money

⁶⁵ Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009), 29.

⁶⁶ Antonio M. Costa, "UNODC.org," *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan*, January 2003, www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/afg_opium_economy_www.pdf (accessed April 18, 2009), 88.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

and needed support for the families of rural Afghanistan. The growing of opium provided three key factors to the farmers: it provided an excellent product to barter with, a line of credit, and an investment plan. Opium provided a product that had a high demand, which allowed the farmer trading power for food or other needed material. The opium also allowed the farmer a line of credit. This line of credit allowed the farmer to acquire seed and equipment, which was needed to produce future crops. This often got the farmer into a never-ending cycle, which eventually enslaved the farmer to opium in order to pay off his debt and continue the support his family. Opium also provided an individual the ability to save for future needs. Opium is easily dried out and stored indefinitely. This allows an individual to put away an amount of dry opium to cash in at a later date for the same or, possibly, an increased price, due to supply and demand.

Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, opium production was embraced and maintained by a new group of individuals: warring factions. These groups, attempting to carve out their own power base within Afghanistan, no longer had the support of external sponsors for their operation. The opium trade provided these factions the money and, therefore, the weapons and manpower needed to build their power base. The conflicts between the warring factions eventually led to the creation of the Taliban and its control of Afghanistan.

2. The Taliban's Opium Addiction

The creation of the Taliban takes many forms and legends. The Taliban, as it is considered today, can be

linked to the alleged actions taken by Mullah Mohammad Omar in mid-1994. During this time, Afghanistan appeared to be in a state of anarchy. The Soviets had been run out of the country but the warring factions within the country were causing chaos, making Afghanistan a nation-state on the brink of failure. One version of the legend states that a family was traveling from Herat to Kandahar when they were stopped by bandits 90 kilometers outside of Kandahar.⁶⁹ The men and women were separated, the boys were molested, the girls were raped multiple times, and later all the individuals were killed and partially burnt.⁷⁰ It is said that Mullah Mohammad Omar found the bodies, gave them a proper burial, and pledged to rid the area of these criminals who committed this crime. Following this action, Mullah Omar began going from mosque to mosque recruiting students in order to form an army to hunt down the criminals. Another spin on this story is that the girls were being held captive by a warlord and Mullah Omar raised a force, freed the girls, and hung the warlord from a tank turret.⁷¹ No matter which version of the story you believe, the end result was the same: Mullah Omar was able to raise a formidable force, acquired weapons and vehicles for his people, and named the new group Tehreek-i-Islami-i-Taliban Afghanistan. This force began to battle the warring factions in an attempt to bring peace to Afghanistan, and eventually gained control over a majority of the country. Mullah Omar was welcomed by the people of Afghanistan due

⁶⁹ Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009), 70.

to the peace he brought and the good intentions presented by the Taliban at the outset. The image presented by Mullah Omar and his followers was that he was appointed this duty by Allah himself.⁷²

Once the Taliban gained power in Afghanistan, they identified four goals; "(1) disarm all rival militia, (2) fight against those who did not accept their request to give up weapons, (3) enforce Islamic laws in the areas they 'liberated' and (4) retain all areas the Taliban captured."⁷³ The one goal that the Taliban would appear to have difficulty adhering to was "the enforcement of Islamic law," in relation to opium.⁷⁴ The Taliban was very proficient at instituting their version of Islamic law. As stated by James Emery, "the Koran bans the use and involvement with all intoxicants and mind-altering substances in the second surah, verse 219 and the fifth surah, verse 90."⁷⁵ Opium falls into the category of "intoxicants and mind-altering substances," so it would appear to be banned according the Koran. How did the Taliban treat this mind-altering substance and others like it? When the Taliban first came into power, once they had captured Kandahar, they declared that all drugs would be eliminated from Afghanistan due to Islamic law.⁷⁶ This

⁷² Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda*, 70.

⁷³ Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon*, 26.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ James Emery, "METimes.com," *Middle East Times* 25th: Narcotics in Islam, May 21, 2008, http://www.metimes.com/Politics/2008/05/21/narcotics_in_islam/3296/ (accessed June 13, 2009).

⁷⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 118.

quickly changed once the Taliban realized how dependent the Afghan economy was on the opium trade and the possibility of losing the support of the Afghan people. In order to justify their change of position on opium, the Taliban reinterpreted the meaning of the Islamic law. This is best seen in a statement by an Afghan anti-drug cop, in the book *Seeds of Terror*, "opium is allowed because it is consumed by infidels in the West and not by Muslim Afghans."⁷⁷ The Taliban's position on opium was even outlined in a book they issued, which laid out what was allowed under the Taliban's version of sharia law. Concerning opium, this book stated, "The consumption of opiates is forbidden, as is the manufacturing of heroin . . . but the production and trading of opium is not forbidden."⁷⁸ This rationalization for the Taliban's opium culture allowed the regime to successfully support their operations and maintain support of the Afghan population.

The Taliban would help finance the regime through the collection of a zakat, Islamic tax, on the opium trade. The zakat is an Islamic tax, which is dictated by the Koran to provide 2.5% of one's disposable income to the poor.⁷⁹ The Taliban would collect a zakat from the opium farmers, smugglers, dealers and producers. The Taliban did not limit their zakat to only 2.5%; they increased it to 20% resulting in at least \$20 million in revenue during their early years.⁸⁰ This tax revenue allowed the Taliban regime

⁷⁷ Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda*, 68.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁹ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, 118.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 119.

to function during global economic sanctions, helped to fund a military campaign against the Northern Alliance, and would eventually be used to fund the insurgent war against the U.S. and NATO Forces.⁸¹

3. The Taliban's Opium Ban

The Taliban's stance on opium did not change until July 2000, when a ban was placed upon the cultivation of opium.⁸² The Taliban's ban on opium was one of the most effective bans imposed upon narcotics, resulting in an almost poppy-free Afghanistan. How did the Taliban succeed in banning opium within one growing season? This ban on opium was placed upon the country by Mullah Omar himself, by proclaiming the "growing of poppy a sin against Islam."⁸³ This directive was passed down to the provincial governors, who advised their district administrators on the policy, and then the policy was explained to the local mullahs and elders.⁸⁴ Once the local mullahs and elders understood the policy they explained it to the local farmers, who in most cases discontinued the cultivation of poppy.⁸⁵ The framing of this policy change was very effective. It appealed to the Afghan's Islamic beliefs and by passing the directive down through local elders and religious leaders helped to demonstrate the legitimacy of the command. The enforcement

⁸¹ Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda*, 68.

⁸² Barry Bearak, "Racematters.org," *Taliban Ban on Drug Crops is Working*, U.S. Concludes, May 24, 2001, <http://www.qkw.com/racematters/talibanbandrugcrops.htm> (accessed May 06, 2009).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Bearak, *Taliban Ban on Drug Crops is Working*.

of this ban appears to be mostly handled at the local level and punishment ranged from an apology and the destruction of the crop to the jailing of the individual and parading the offender through the town with a poppy necklace. This ban was successful; however, it only lasted approximately a year due to the U.S. invasion in 2001. It is unknown if the Taliban could have maintained the ban or how the economy and the people of Afghanistan would have been affected without the economic support of opium.

There are many questions about the exact reason the Taliban banned the cultivation of poppy in 2000. The outward appearance and the reason provided to the people of Afghanistan is that the Taliban banned opium due to religious reasons, a sin against Islam. This stance begs one to ask why it took the Taliban six years to come to the conclusion that poppy cultivation was against the practices of Islam. They spent from 1994 to 1999 flooding the world with opium, with 1999 producing a record crop.⁸⁶ The second reason that may have pushed the Taliban into their ban was pressure from the international community and pressure from their sponsors (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates). For years the international community had been placing pressure upon the Taliban regime to control the opium from Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates were the only countries to officially recognize the Taliban as a government and pressure from these governments to rid the country of opium could possibly have been an attempt to gain the Taliban more

⁸⁶ Antonio Costa, "UNODC.org," *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan*, January 2003, www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/afg_opium_economy_www.pdf (accessed April 18, 2009), 100.

legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. The third reason that may have pushed the Taliban to ban opium cultivation is pure greed. Due to the increased cultivation of opium, peaking in 1999, the value of the drug had dropped. By banning the cultivation of opium the Taliban decreased the supply of opium resulting in an increased value of their stockpiled dry opium. This theory is supported by three factors. First, the Taliban only banned the cultivation of opium; they did not ban the possession or sale of opium. This would allow the drug business to continue in Afghanistan minus the cultivation, which would decrease the supply of the drug resulting in an increased value of the product coming out of Afghanistan. The second factor is that it is believed that the Taliban maintained a stockpile of dry opium. With the ban on opium cultivation, the value of the opium would greatly increase resulting in a greater profit for the organization. The third factor is the profit the Taliban receives in the drug operation. As discussed before, the Taliban taxes all aspects of the drug trade. The majority of their tax would come from the smugglers, traders, and laboratories within the business. The tax from the farmers is a minor loss that the Taliban would recoup through the increased income received from the taxing of the drug smugglers, traders and laboratories.

4. The Taliban and Opium, Post United States Invasion

Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 the Taliban was removed from power and was on the run. They moved their base of operations into Pakistan and turned to

an old ally, opium, to help support their operations against the U.S. and NATO forces. After the opium ban of 2000 the value of opium increased. From 2003-2007 Afghanistan continued to increase the production of opium, which directly supported the Taliban through the taxation of the drug trade. Even though the Taliban regime had been dislodged it still maintained its control over the opium trade. They still provided security to opium smugglers, taxed the production, taxed the cultivation, and they also provide security to farmers from the new Afghan eradication force. It is estimated that the Taliban collected approximately \$100 million in 2003.⁸⁷ This directly assisted the Taliban in buying weapons and vehicles, and in supporting operations. As of 2009, 90% of Afghanistan's opium comes from seven provinces.⁸⁸ These provinces are located in the southwestern portion of the country in the areas which lack security.⁸⁹ These areas are prime areas for the Taliban to exert its control and influence over the population, especially the poppy farmers.

C. AFGHANISTAN'S CURRENT COUNTERDRUG OPERATION

The current counterdrug plan implemented by the Afghanistan government in 2007 is referred to as the Eight Pillar Plan. The eight pillars consist of the following: (1) Public information, (2) Alternative development, (3) Elimination/ Eradication, (4) Interdiction, (5) Law

⁸⁷ Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda*, 110.

⁸⁸ Antonio M. Costa, "UNODC.org," *Afghanistan Winter Assessment: January 2009*, January 2009, http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/ORA_report_2009.pdf (accessed April 18, 2009), 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

enforcement/ justice reform, (6) Demand reduction, (7) Institutional building, and (8) International and regional cooperation.⁹⁰

The first pillar, public information, puts out the counterdrug information to the people of Afghanistan. This program could be considered the "Just say no!" campaign of Afghanistan. This program began by using radio/ television messages, posters and billboards. This appeared to be ineffective so the government turned to a tactic that was actually used by the Taliban for their ban on opium in 2000.⁹¹ Just as the Taliban did in 2000 the new Afghan government began to rely on local leaders (tribal and religious), elders, police chiefs, district leaders, and teachers to spread their message about drugs.⁹²

The second pillar is alternative development. This pillar provides alternatives to the cultivation of opium. These programs are usually focused in areas that have shown a reduction in poppy cultivation.⁹³

The third pillar is eradication. If alternate development is the carrot, eradication can be considered the stick. Eradication is conducted by the Afghan

⁹⁰ Thomas Schweich, "State.gov," *U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN*, August 2007, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/90671.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2009).

⁹¹ Barry Bearak, "Racematters.org," *Taliban Ban on Drug Crops is Working, U.S. Concludes*, May 24, 2001. <http://www.qkw.com/racematters/talibanbandrugcrops.htm> (accessed May 06, 2009).

⁹² Thomas Schweich, "State.gov," *U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN*, August 2007, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/90671.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2009).

⁹³ Schweich, *U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN*.

eradication force. The eradication force conducts all operations from the ground by hand. Aerial spraying is not used in Afghanistan at this time.

The fourth pillar, interdiction, focuses on the decrease of narcotic trafficking and processing. This program allows the DEA trained organizations of Afghanistan (Afghanistan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), and the National Interdiction Unit (NIU) of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA)) to target command and control elements of narcotics trafficking organizations.⁹⁴

The fifth pillar, law enforcement/ justice reform, focuses on building the legitimacy of the Afghan criminal system and law enforcement. United States advisors mentor the Afghan Criminal Justice Task Force in their prosecution of narcotic and corruption cases. This program has also assisted with the building of 40 judicial facilities, distributed more than 11,000 copies of the Afghan Constitution, and trained more than 1,250 Afghan judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and corrections personnel.⁹⁵

The sixth pillar, demand reduction, targets the Afghan user. This pillar creates drug abuse intervention, treatment, and recovery program. These programs also utilize Muslim clerics who strongly support these programs to give them legitimacy.⁹⁶

The seventh pillar is institutional building. This pillar targets the buildup of Afghan institutes, such as, the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, and

⁹⁴ Schweich, *U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN*.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

other institutions involved in the fight against drugs.⁹⁷ This pillar builds the legitimacy of the country and helps to focus all aspects of the drug campaign through government organizations.

The eighth pillar is international and regional cooperation. Afghan opium has not only affected Afghanistan but has spilled its corruption and other issues over into neighboring countries. To battle this effect, the U.S. has established programs to assist in interdiction of narcotics and improve law enforcement programs within all neighboring countries (except Iran).⁹⁸ The Central Asia Regional Information Coordination Center has also been established in the area to assist in information sharing and coordination.⁹⁹

1. Effectiveness of the Afghanistan's Eight Pillar Plan

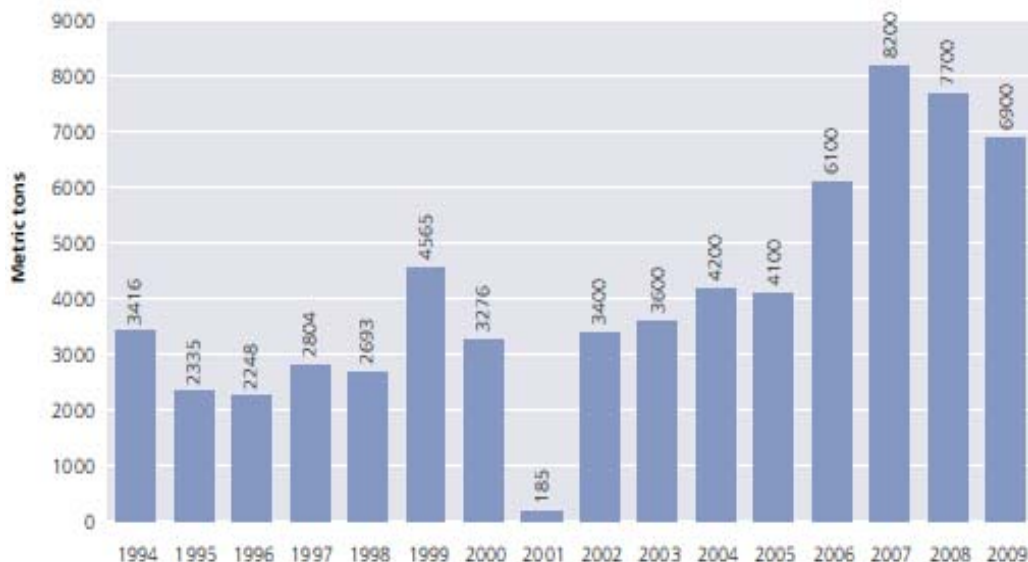
In order to determine the effectiveness of the Afghan government's counterdrug policy four factors will be examined: opium cultivation, amount of opium eradicated, number of people involved in the cultivation of opium, and the amount of insurgent activity.

⁹⁷ Schweich, *U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Figure 7. Opium production in Afghanistan



Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *World Drug Report 2009. Annual World Drug Report*, New York: United Nations Publication Sales, 2009.

Examining the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan from 2007 to 2009 (figure 7) it does appear that the amount has decreased. This appears to demonstrate that the Eight Pillar Plan is showing signs of success but this drop can also be linked to market forces rather than the application of policy. This is demonstrated in a statement by Vanda Felbab-Brown, "After several years of massive overproduction in Afghanistan that surpassed the estimated global market for opiates by almost three times, opium prices were bound to decline."¹⁰⁰ According to this

¹⁰⁰ Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Human Security Report Project Afghanistan Conflict Monitor," *The Obama Administration's New Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan: Its Promises and Potential Pitfalls*, September 30, 2009, <http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/2009/09/us-new-counternarcotics-strategy-promises-potential-pitfalls.html> (accessed December 10, 2009).

statement the decrease of opium is related more to an oversupply of opium rather than the implementation of a successful counterdrug campaign.

Table 2. Opium cultivated and eradicated in Afghanistan

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Opium Cultivated (hectares)	104,000	165,000	193,000	157,000	123,000
Total eradicated (hectares)	4,210	15,300	19,510	5,480	5,351

Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium." *Research*, New York: United Nations, 2009.

Eradication in Afghanistan reached its high point in 2007 (table 2). From 2007 to 2009 the amount of eradication decreased as did the amount of opium cultivated. As stated previously this could be linked to market effects.

Table 3. Persons involved in the Afghanistan opium cultivation

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of Persons involved in the opium cultivation (millions)	1.7	2.3	2	2.9	3.3	2.4	3.4

Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium." *Research*, New York: United Nations, 2009.

The number of persons involved in the cultivation of opium has hit an all time high in 2009 (Table 3). The increase in individuals supporting the cultivation of opium can be seen as a direct failure of the Afghan Eight Pillar Plan. The plan has failed at providing legal alternatives to cultivating opium resulting in the increased number.

Figure 8. Insurgent attacks in Afghanistan



Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium." *Research*, New York: United Nations, 2009.

A consistent increase in insurgent activity (Figure 8) can be seen above. This demonstrates that the current Afghan plan has had little effect on the insurgency through their counterdrug plan. The Taliban is still able to benefit from their participation in the opium trade resulting in increased levels of operations.

D. UNITED STATES COUNTERDRUG POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

The United States supported the Afghanistan Eight Pillar Plan from 2007 until late 2009. During this period

the United States counterdrug policy was called the Five Pillar Plan, which was based off the Afghan Eight Pillar Plan. The United States plan focused on the first five pillars of the Afghan plan: (1) Public information, (2) Alternative development, (3) Elimination/ Eradication, (4) Interdiction, and (5) Law enforcement/ justice reform.¹⁰¹ In late 2009, the Obama administration began to transition from the Five Pillar Plan. The new United States policy on counterdrug operations in Afghanistan will phase out United States support for eradication. The new policy places priority on agricultural development assistance and the intensification of interdiction efforts aimed at high level, insurgency linked traffickers.¹⁰²

E. CONCLUSION

The current counterdrug plan in Afghanistan has been effective in some aspects; however, there can always be improvement. The use of local leaders to spread their message about drugs should be applauded and reinforced. The people of Afghanistan are always going to respect and more likely adhere to any information or regulation if it is given or supported by a local compared to a U.S. or Afghan government official. The improvements in law enforcement/ justice reform are commendable, but it will be difficult to measure the effectiveness of these efforts to weed out corruption in the Afghan system. The coordination

¹⁰¹ Thomas Schweich, "State.gov," *U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN*, August 2007, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/90671.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2009).

¹⁰² Christopher M. Blanchard, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy*, Congressional research service report for Congress(Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 42.

and support of neighboring countries will be key to affecting the narcotic flow out of Afghanistan and in targeting drug organizations based outside of Afghanistan. The eight pillar concept is a good start to what is going to be a long battle against opium within Afghanistan.

The United States' decision to transition to a new policy that does not support eradication, prioritizes alternative development and interdiction is a step in the right direction. These policies will assist the population of Afghanistan at the rural level providing them an opportunity to turn away from the cultivation of opium and the Taliban.

V. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

The drug activity found within Afghanistan and Colombia are comparable in many ways. Within this chapter, three similarities between the drug trade within these countries will be compared. The similarities are the people's reliance upon the drug trade, insurgent activity, and counterdrug operations. Following this comparison the key lessons learned from the Colombian case study will be discussed. The implementation of these lessons learned in Colombia will be examined for their usefulness in Afghanistan. Policy recommendations will then be presented based on the findings.

B. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND AFGHANISTAN

1. Population's Reliance upon the Drug Trade

The peoples of Afghanistan and Colombia have become reliant upon the drug trade. The economy in Afghanistan has become in many ways an opium economy. Vanda Felbab-Brown stated, "Somewhere between a third and a half of its GDP comes from poppy cultivation and processing."¹⁰³ The formal economy of Afghanistan relies upon the reinvestment of the opium farmer. This reliance on opium was demonstrated in 2005-2006 in eastern Afghanistan when opium

¹⁰³ Felbab-Brown, Vanda, "Human Security Report Project Afghanistan Conflict Monitor," *The Obama Administration's New Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan: Its Promises and Potential Pitfalls*. September 30, 2009, <http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/2009/09/us-new-counternarcotics-strategy-promises-potential-pitfalls.html> (accessed December 10, 2009), 2.

cultivation was reduced resulting in legitimate shopkeepers being forced out of business due to the decreased economy.¹⁰⁴

2. Insurgent Activity

Colombia and Afghanistan have been rife with insurgent activity. The government of Colombia's main focus has been the FARC. This organization for years established ungoverned area, which allowed the safe cultivation of coca. This cultivation of coca assisted in the financing of the FARC's operations throughout the region.

The major threat at this time in Afghanistan is the Taliban. Just as the FARC, the Taliban has established ungoverned areas where the cultivation of opium flourishes. This cultivation of opium has also been used to support combat operations of the Taliban.

3. Counterdrug Operations

The counterdrug operations conducted in Colombia and Afghanistan have been extremely similar. The main focus in each of these countries has been the eradication of the drug crop. Colombia has used a mixture of manual and aerial eradication in comparison to Afghanistan eradication consisting only of manual eradication.

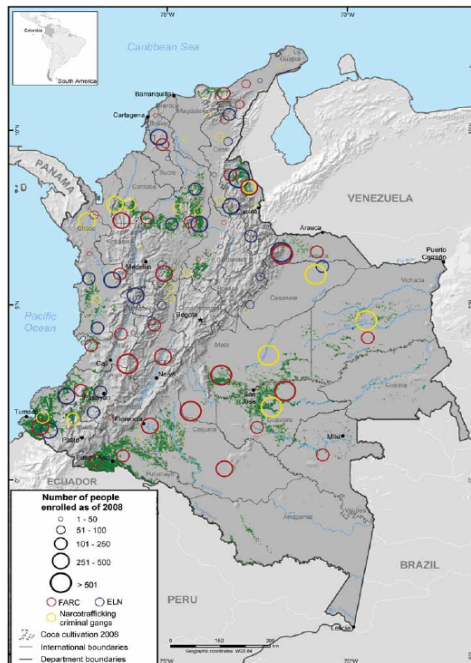
¹⁰⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium," *Research* (New York: United Nations, 2009), 98.

C. LESSONS LEARNED FROM COLOMBIA

1. Decrease in Governance Results in an Increase in Drug Cultivation

A lesson that can be learned from the Colombia case study is that a decrease in state presence or governance will facilitate the cultivation of narcotics. The limited presence of the state creates a vacuum, which the insurgent or criminal organization will fill by providing for the local community. In the case of Colombia, these non-state organizations provide financial support to the locals through coca production. This is demonstrated in Figure 9, where the increase population of non-state actors correlates to areas of coca cultivation.

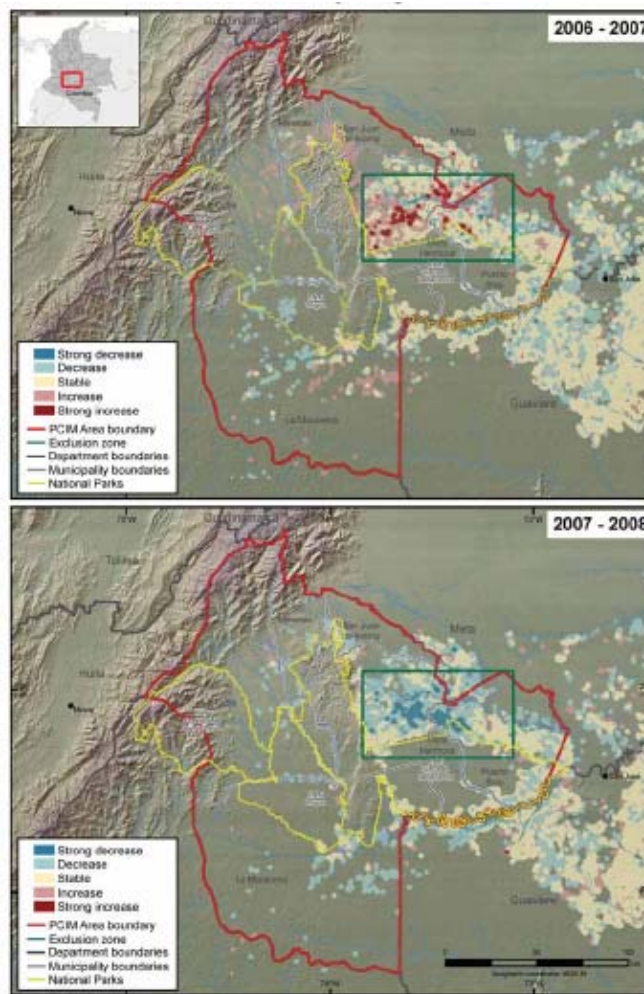
Figure 9. Illegal armed groups and coca cultivation in Colombia 2008



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*. Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009, 70.

As demonstrated in the PCIM program, the increase of state-sponsored infrastructure development, security and economic development led to the decrease in coca cultivation where implemented. This program filled the vacuum that was previously occupied by the FARC, resulting in a decrease of coca cultivation from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008, as seen in Figure 10.

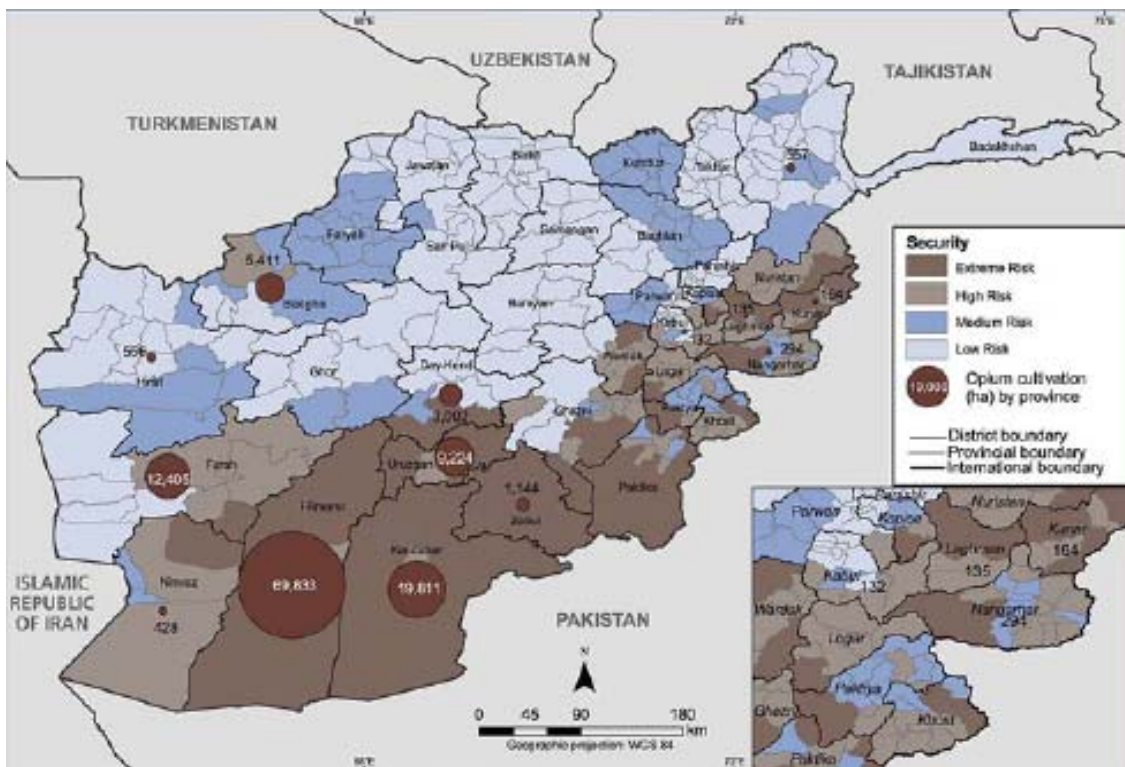
Figure 10. Coca cultivation density change in PCIM area



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*. Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009, 78.

This trend can also be identified in Afghanistan. As seen in Figure 11, in areas where there is a lack of security, state presence or governance correlates to a higher rate of opium cultivation. As utilized in the PCIM program of Colombia, the state needs to provide an increased presence through security, infrastructural improvements and economic development. This increased presence will fill the vacuum, which the Taliban has filled at this time.

Figure 11. Security and opium poppy cultivation, 2009



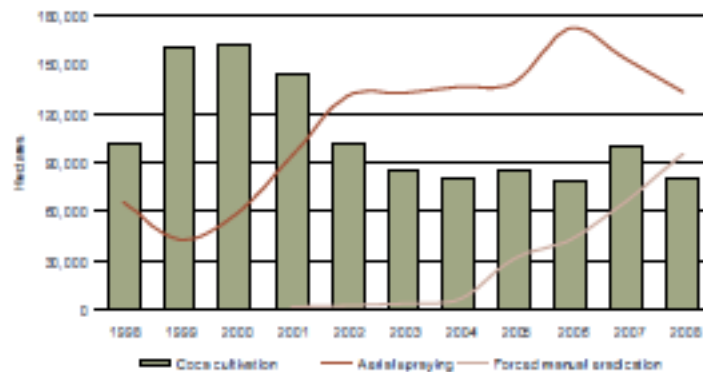
Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium*. Research, New York: United Nations, 2009, 107.

2. Eradication Negatively Affects Counterdrug Operations

Throughout the fight against drugs in Colombia, the primary weapon used has been eradication. Figure 12 shows

the effect that aerial and manual eradication has had upon the coca fields of Colombia. It appears that eradication has assisted in maintaining levels of coca; however, it has been unsuccessful in stomping out the coca economy of Colombia.

Figure 12. Comparison of coca cultivation and cumulative sprayed and manually eradicated areas (hectares), 1998-2008



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey June 2009*. Annual Coca Survey, New York: United Nations, 2009, 76.

Eradication affects the counterdrug operations negatively by driving the local populations toward non-state actors. Often the process of eradication, either by manual or aerial means, will result in the local population turning to the local non-state actor if the farmer is not offered an alternate source of income. When a farmer's crop is eradicated he considers this an act of taking food from his family. In order to protect his family, the farmer will turn to the local insurgent for protection from the government eradication force. The act of the population turning against the government elevates the

power and the authority of the insurgent force, resulting in the increase of the difficulty of the state to conduct counter-insurgent activities.

The negative effect of eradication is a lesson that must be understood and utilized in Afghanistan. The country is in a counter-insurgency battle, which is increasing in intensity. The use of eradication in Taliban controlled areas will push the Afghan population further away from the Afghan government and coalition forces.

D. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of any policy countering the opium trade in Afghanistan will be a long and resource intensive project. To successfully counter the Afghan drug trade, one must take into consideration three factors: the motivations of farmers to grow opium, the amount of opium cultivation within each province, and the security and state presence found in each province. Once these three factors have been analyzed they will then need to be implemented into a program modeled off the PCIM program from Colombia. In conjunction with the implementation of this type of program, eradication efforts need to be discontinued and further research needs to be conducted to identify multiple legitimate crop replacements for opium.

There is not a single driving motivation that influences all the Afghanistan farmers to produce opium. A study was conducted in 2006 by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) that summarized the motivations for opium cultivation as the following: "lack of rule of law; insecurity; lack of farm employment; lack of water and agricultural infrastructure; survival-provision of basic

needs; external pressure from traffickers and traders; exaggerated expectations of bilateral assistance through alternative livelihood activities and lack of coping strategies without opium poppy income."¹⁰⁵ These factors were then broken down into a table that broke the motivations down by regions, as seen in Table 4. Utilizing this table, it is possible to identify the motivations of the opium farmers based on their designated regions. The use of this knowledge will allow one to identify the motivation for each region that can be implemented to reduce opium cultivation.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium. Research* (New York: United Nations, 2009), 97.

Table 4. Motivation for opium poppy cultivation by region, 2006

Motivati ons /Regions	Central	Northern	North East	Eastern	West	Southern
Role of Islam	Import motivation for not growing poppy	Has limited impact on poppy cultivation	Has limited impact on poppy cultivation	Has limited impact on poppy cultivation	Has no impact	Has no impact
Respect for Government	Respect for Gov. has a positive impact on stopping poppy cultivation	Respect for Gov. has a positive impact on stopping poppy cultivation	Respect for Gov. has a positive impact on stopping poppy cultivation	Respect for Gov. has a positive impact on stopping poppy cultivation	Lack of respect to Gov. is one the reason for poppy cultivati on	Lack of respect to Gov. is one the reason for poppy cultivati on
Rule of Law	Better implementati on of rule of law limits/stops poppy cultivation	Better implementati on of rule of law limits/stops poppy cultivation	Better implementati on of rule of law limits/stops poppy cultivation	Better implementati on of rule of law limits/stops poppy cultivation	Lack of rule of law is one of the reason for poppy cultivati on	Lack of rule of law is one of the reason for poppy cultivati on
Security	Better security helps to stop poppy cultivation	Better security helps to stop poppy cultivation	Better security helps to stop poppy cultivation	Better security helps to stop poppy cultivation	Lack of security results in increased poppy cultivati on	Lack of security results in increased poppy cultivati on
External pressure from drug trafficke rs and anti gov. elements	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Results in increase in poppy cultivati on	Results in increase in poppy cultivati on
Lack of provision of basic needs	Does not impact on farmers decision on poppy cultivation	Has a limited impact on farmers decisions on poppy cultivation	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivation	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivation	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivati on	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivati on
Lack of coping strategie s without opium poppy income	No impact on farmers decisions on poppy cultivation	Farmers are not dependent on opium poppy income	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivation	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivation	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivati on	Has an impact on farmers decesions on poppy cultivati on

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium. Research, New York: United Nations, 2009.

the Afghanistan version of the PCIM plan. Table 4 identifies that Daikundi, located in the central region, will need to focus on the role of Islam, respect of government, rule of law and security in order to reduce opium cultivation in this area.

The following step would be to initiate the Afghanistan version of the PCIM plan focusing on the previously identified motivational factors. Taking the Colombian PCIM template and integrating the motivational factors for the designated region the program would focus on institutional development, citizenship and governability; infrastructure and connectivity; access to public goods and social services; economic/ business development; and integration of religious leaders. The key to this model is to secure the area with a local military presence. Once the area is secure a police force will be brought in to continue providing security. During this time, non-military government officials will be brought in to establish contact with the local populace in order to begin the discussion of projects and activities needed in the community. The use of non-military officials will allow the populace to become accustomed to working with government officials other than the military. This allows a sense of trust to build between the community and the government. This process will also allow local buy-in to the projects. The benefit of this local buy-in is that it is not an outsider forcing a plan upon the local populace, which might not even be needed by the community. The goal behind these projects, as in the Colombian project, is to spend small and fast in order to build confidence and provide rural people in areas where opium cultivation previously dominated with a "ladder" with which to climb out of the illegal

(narcotic) economy.¹⁰⁶ Once this project has been successfully implemented in one province, the process will begin again in another province, with the intent to spread to all provinces.

In conjunction with the implementation of the Afghanistan version of PCIM eradication and alternate crops must be addressed. Eradication efforts will need to be terminated. The termination of these efforts will prevent the negative effects brought on by eradication efforts, eliminating the alienation of the population. Alternative crops must be researched and identified to replace the opium crop. There cannot be one central crop to replace opium. Research must be conducted to identify multiple crops that can be cultivated by the Afghan farmer so they are not dependent upon the market value of one product.

The President of the United States has just announced an increase in troops to be deployed to Afghanistan. This deployment can provide the needed security to the Afghan provinces to implement a PCIM type program, as implemented in Colombia. In conjunction with the increased deployment of troops to Afghanistan, the new United States counterdrug policy will assist in the implementation of this type of program through its new priority on agricultural development assistance. The difficulty of this program will be the governance that will need to be provided by Afghanistan. This form of governance needs to come from the state level, district level, or provincial level.

¹⁰⁶ Peter DeShazo, Phillip McLean, and Johanna Mendelson Forman, Colombia's Plan de Consolidacion Integral de la Macarena, Report of the CSIS Americas Program (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic International Studies, 2009), 6.

Without this governance there will be a vacuum that the Taliban will fill resulting in the failure of this type of program and the opium trade will continue to support Taliban operations.

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