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DCI/CNC NM V3-N49-97

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: APR 2002

DCI Crime and Narcotics Center

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The Narcotics Monitor

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 49

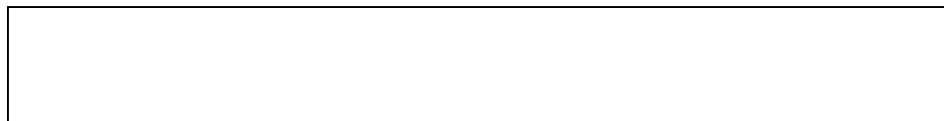
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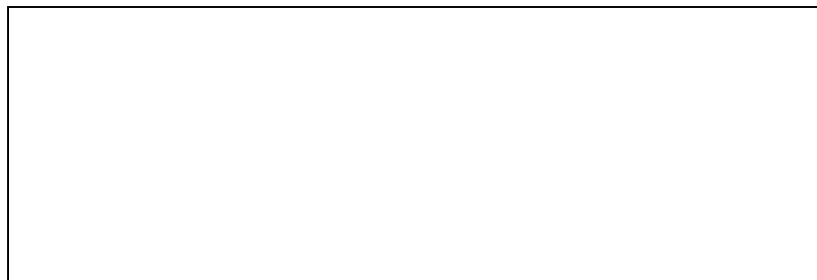
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Colombia: 1996 Opium Cultivation



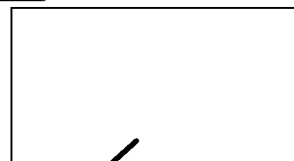
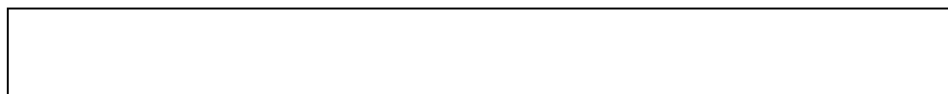
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Latin America

Colombia

1996 Opium Cultivation

Optimum growing conditions enable farmers to harvest three crops per year—thus a relatively small area has a potential annual yield of some 63 metric tons of opium gum or enough to produce 6 metric tons of heroin. Even though the Colombian National Police (CNP) aerially sprayed some 6,000 hectares of opium poppy with the herbicide glyphosate in 1996—far outpacing last year's spray efforts of 3,760 hectares—there is currently no mechanism in place to accurately assess the amount eradicated.

While overall cultivation remained roughly equal to 1995 levels, cultivation has become more localized and appears better managed.

- Almost two-thirds of Colombia's total cultivation, 1,300 hectares, is located in the Tolima/Huila growing area, along the eastern slopes of the central Andes. Of that, about 60 percent lies along an 80-mile arc from just north of Chaparral, Tolima, south to Iquira, Huila.
- Also, cultivation is generally found in high-density "islands" located along steep mountain valleys in the Andean montane forests, above the belt of licit cultivation, and over 1,525 meters in elevation.
- Farmers continue to improve their cultivation techniques by staggering plantings to better manage labor requirements and practicing field rotation probably due to climate and soil conditions. Irrigation is also being introduced into some fields, particularly in the Cauca growing area.

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<u>Growing Area</u>	<u>Cultivation (ha)</u>	<u>Annual Cultivation*</u>	<u>Annual Opium Production (mt)**</u>
Cauca	250	750	7
Tolima/Huila	1,300	3,900	40
Huila East	200	600	6
Perija	350	1,050	10
TOTAL	2,100 ha	6,300 ha	63 mt (potential 6 mt heroin)

*Annual estimates assume three harvests per year.

**Opium yield is 10 kilograms per hectare; ratio of opium to heroin is roughly 10:1.

In addition to physiological requirements governing where opium poppy can be successfully cultivated, the illicit nature of the crop also predisposes cultivation to occur in isolated and rugged regions of the Andean mountains—some of the same areas favored by Colombia's guerrilla groups—compounding eradication difficulties. Cultivation does coincide with guerrilla strongholds and the CNP have reported a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) presence at poppyfields in Tolima, Huila, and Cauca.

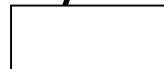
- The high-density growing areas in Tolima/Huila coincide with the reported operating areas of the 21st and 66th fronts of the Combined Central Command and the 6th front of the Western Bloc.
- The high-density growing area in Cauca Department is also home to the 8th front of the FARC's Western Bloc.

[redacted] available information suggests that some groups derive substantial sums from protecting cultivation and imposing "taxes" on growers, processors, and transporters.

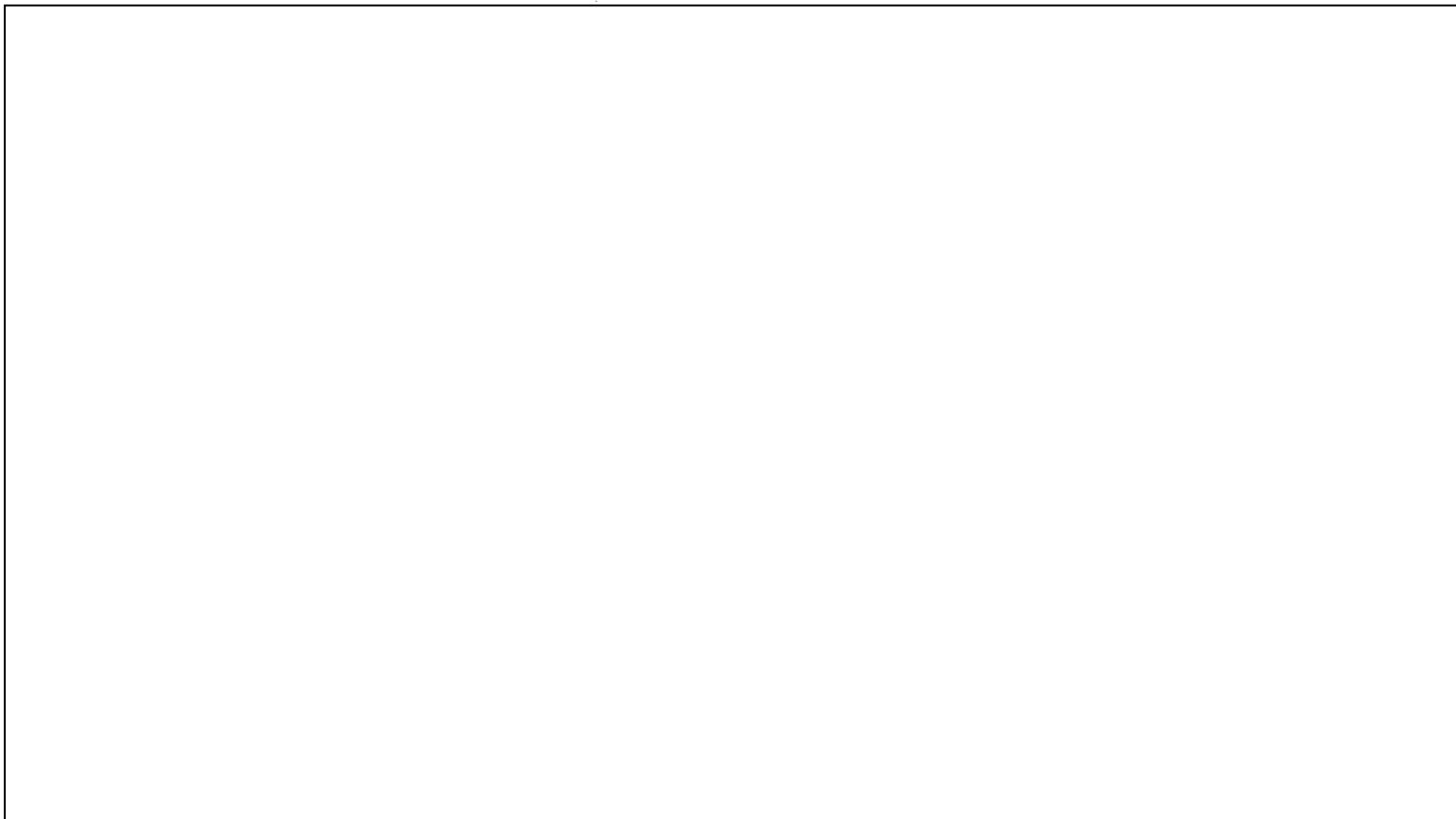
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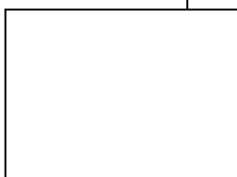
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Colombia



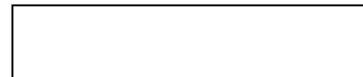
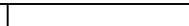
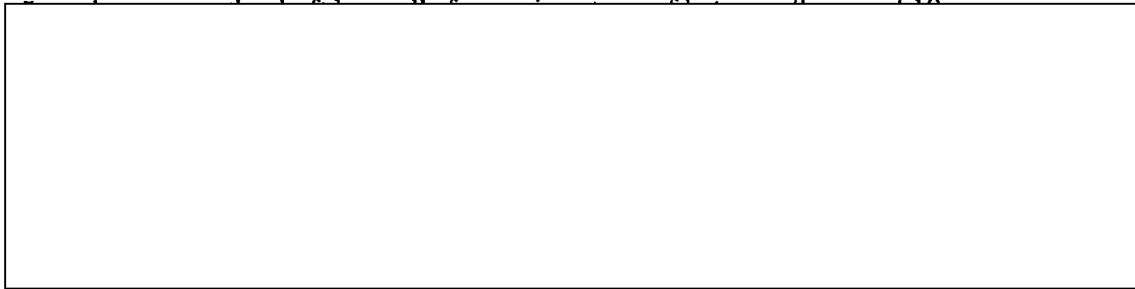
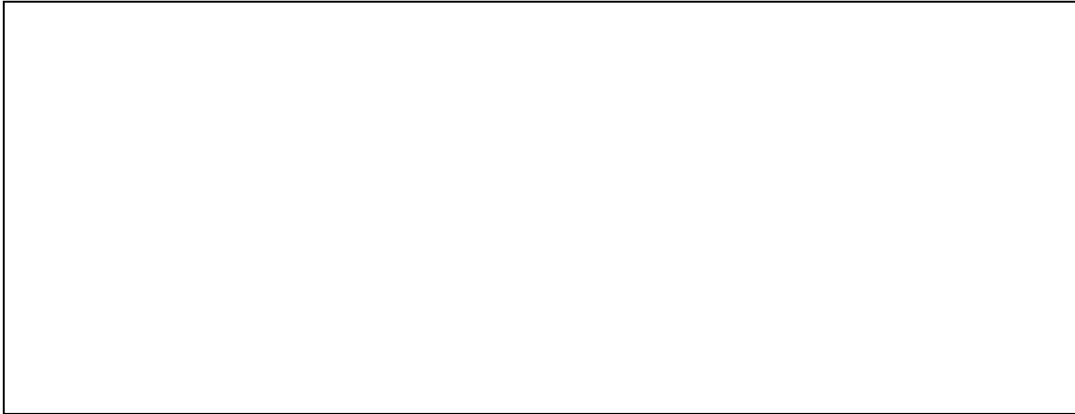
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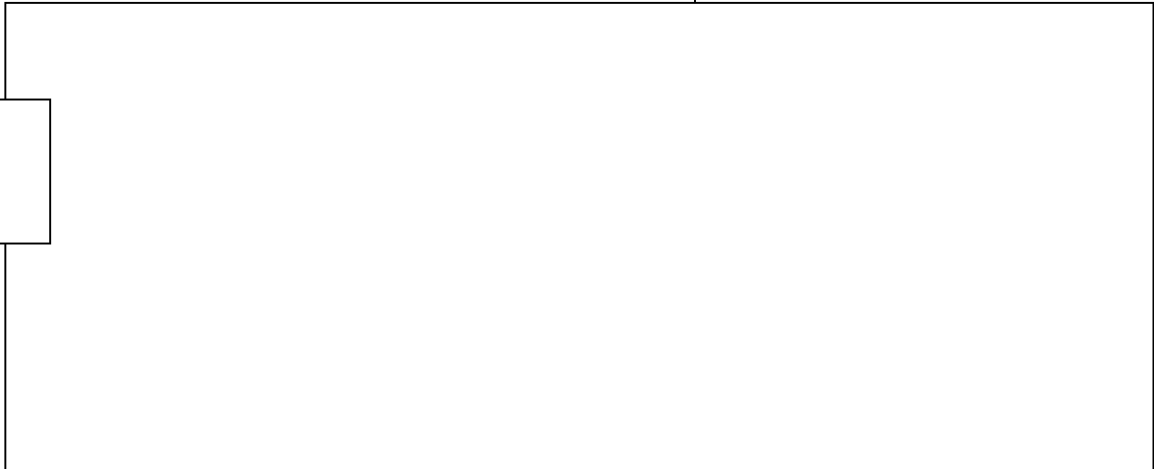
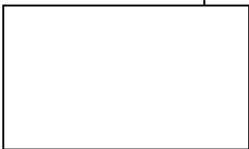
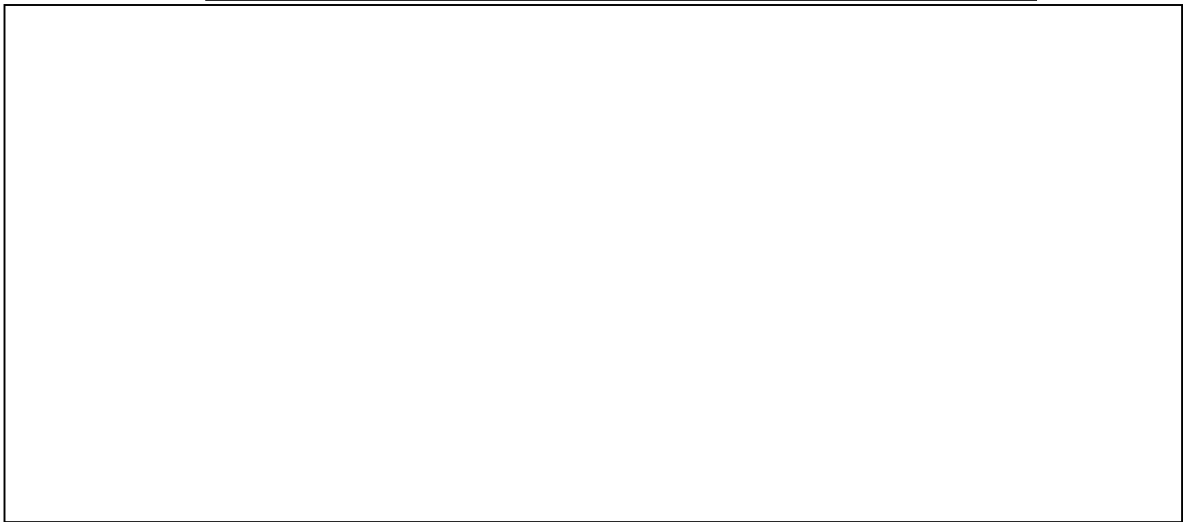
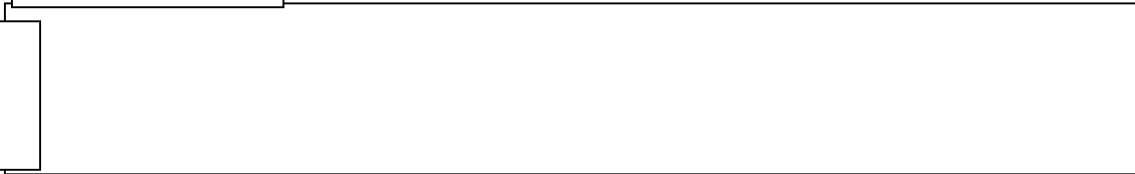
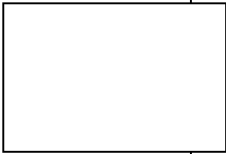
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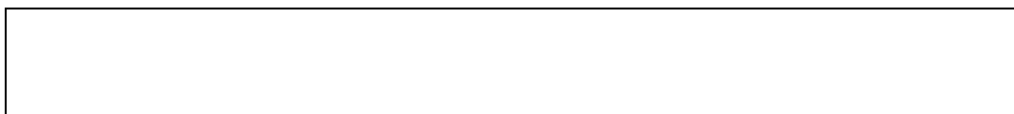
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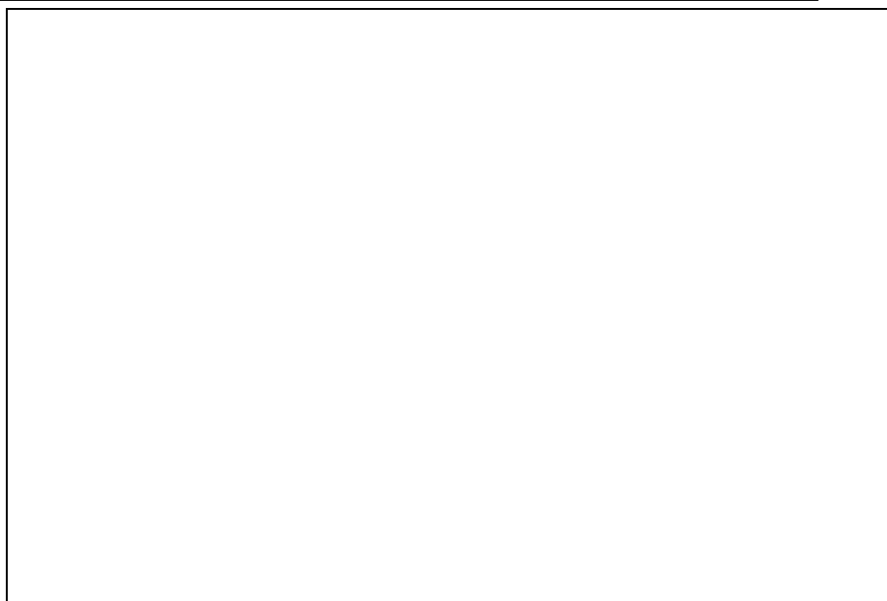
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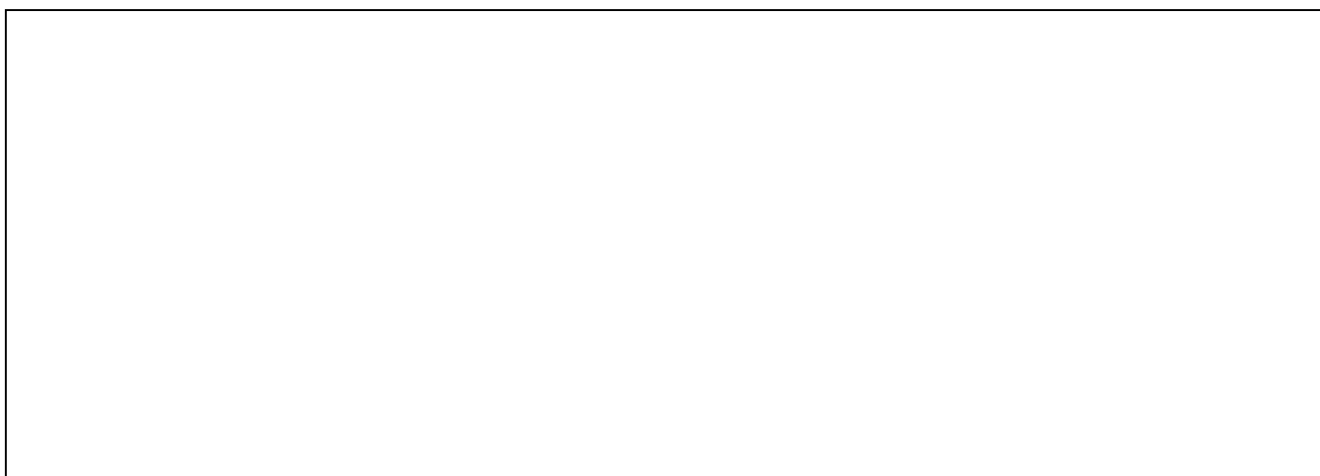
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Inbrief



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