PLAN COLOMBIA: EXAMINING US EFFORTS TO COMBAT COLOMBIAN CARTELISM

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BEGINNINGS

• Evolution in drug production
  • Began with marijuana in the 1960s, followed by cocaine in the mid-to late-1970s

• Mid-1970s: Colombian traffickers exported small quantities of cocaine to the US hidden in suitcases
  • Utilization of jungle laboratories for production
    • High rate of profitability
CARTELS

- Medellín (1976-1993)
  - At the height of operations, it earned more than $60 million per day
- Calí (1977-1998)
  - Allegedly responsible for 80% of world's cocaine
- North Coast Cartel (1980’s-2010)
  - Controlled most of the Caribbean drug trafficking routes
- North Valley Cartel (1990’s-2012)
  - Exported more than $10 billion in cocaine to the US from 1990-2004
CRIME THROUGHOUT COLOMBIA

Graph 1

Source: National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensics, National Police and CINEP.
SAMPER ADMINISTRATION (1994-1998)

• Strained bilateral relations between the US and Colombia
  • Accusations of bribery
    • Samper’s presidential campaign had received $6 million dollars from the Cali drug cartel

• Shift in US counternarcotics strategies
  • State Department decertified Colombia’s cooperation with the US international drug control strategy in 1996 and 1997
  • New objective to bring down the democratically elected leader
PLAN COLOMBIA

- Created in the Clinton years
  - Extension of President Nixon’s “War on Drugs" policy (1971)

- An initiative to combat drug trafficking, end its long-running internal armed conflict, and foster development
  - Post Cold -War: Illicit drug trafficking became the most contentious and prominent issue on inter-American agenda
INFLUX OF US ASSISTANCE

- Colombia became third largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid
  - President Clinton signed a bill allocating $800 million for counter-narcotics assistance

- Plan Colombia (2000-2013) aid: $8.7 billion
  - Steady drop off in aid from 2005 onward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY2008 (Actual)</th>
<th>FY2011 (Actual)</th>
<th>FY2012 (Estimate)</th>
<th>FY2013 (Request)</th>
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<tr>
<td>700.0</td>
<td>556.8</td>
<td>489.3</td>
<td>417.5</td>
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(Appropriations in millions of 2013 US Dollars)

FY2013: State Department aid request of $332 million accounted for about 73% of US assistance that would go to the Andean region.
NON-MILITARY AID TO COLOMBIA

- As of 2008, the US has provided nearly $1.3 billion to Colombia through nonmilitary aid programs:
  - Alternative Development: $500 million
  - Demobilization and Reintegration: $44 million
  - Democracy and Human Rights: $158 million
  - Internally Displaced Persons: $247 million
  - Promote the Rule of Law: $238 million
OPERATIONS BEYOND BORDERS

- Despite an estimated 300+ criminal organizations, overall coca production has declined in Colombia
  - 3rd largest producer as of 2013 behind Peru and Bolivia
- High level of collaboration between criminal entities
  - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and Sinaloa Cartel (Mexico)
Although Colombia has been hailed by Washington as “the model” in the war on drugs, President Santos says current policies are “not working adequately.”

- Policies failed to reduce availability or use of cocaine in the US
- According to a 2008 GAO report: “2000-2006 coca cultivation and production of cocaine had actually increased by about 15% and 4%, respectively”

- Colombia’s human rights track record remains poor
QUESTIONS?
SOURCES CITED


