



Statement before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control  
On Adapting U.S. Counternarcotics Efforts in Colombia

# **Colombia: Peace with Security**

## Targeting Coca and Transnational Crime

**Ambassador Roger F. Noriega**  
Visiting Fellow  
American Enterprise Institute

September 12, 2017

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share my views with you about how the United States should adapt its well-established counternarcotics efforts to respond to the significant developments in Colombia. Continuing to confront the threat of illicit drug trafficking in the Americas is our shared responsibility, because U.S. demand for illicit drugs fuels criminality that impacts the wellbeing and security of dozens of neighboring countries.

The leadership of this Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control deserves much of the credit for having led the way for U.S. support for Plan Colombia—a 17-year, \$10 billion bipartisan initiative that helped Colombia pull back from the brink of becoming a failed state. However, you are wise not to take these achievements for granted. Much of what has been accomplished through many years of hard work and sacrifice by Colombians, with pivotal U.S. support, is at risk today.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE TACTICAL CHALLENGES IN COLOMBIA**

Colombia's pursuit of a peace agreement with guerrilla groups tied to narcotrafficking has had a drastic negative impact on its counternarcotics performance in recent years. These consequences were wholly predictable. At a time when the peace process needed an umpire, the United States became cheerleader.

It is an important foreign policy failure that U.S. diplomats did not counsel our friends against making peace at any price and did not react effectively as Colombia scrapped aerial fumigation, cut security spending, curtailed military operations, and ended extradition of guerrilla kingpins. We now need effective representation in Colombia to work with our allies there to counter the unrelenting and evolving threat posed by transnational criminal networks and to prevent domestic criminal elements from undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law in their country.

Going forward, decisions made by President Juan Manuel Santos and by his successor, who will be elected next year, will determine whether Colombians will recover lost ground in controlling the production of coca, defend the rule of law and democracy, and invigorate security operations against criminal groups. Doing “more of the same” or tweaking our tactics on the ground in Colombia will not meet this threat, because the challenge is even greater than what we confronted 20 years ago.

For example, Colombia's neighborhood is tougher than ever. The regional antidrug cooperation that willing Andean neighbors forged with the United States in Cartagena 25 years ago has disintegrated.<sup>i</sup> In the last decade, leftist regimes in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela have openly defied this U.S.-led agenda, expelled enforcement agencies, and terminated antidrug cooperation—with little or no pushback from U.S. policymakers and diplomats. Several of these regimes became complicit with or consumed by narcocorruption.<sup>ii</sup> The empirical evidence is very clear that Venezuela is a narcostate—

whose president and vice president, key political leaders, senior military officers, and major state-run entities are engaged directly in drug trafficking and related crimes.

In the Andean region and beyond, transnational organized crime poses the most dangerous threat to political stability and prosperity in the Americas. In drug production zones and along transit corridors, well-financed criminal groups operating across national borders have corrupted public institutions, damaged public security, destabilized governments, and undermined economic growth.

In light of these negative effects, it is very significant that the Colombian government—once a model of cooperation that achieved so much progress—has let down its guard against the illegal drug trade in its rush to make peace with narcoguerrillas. The immediate impact on the anti-drug front is very troubling. After dramatic decreases in coca cultivation as a result of Plan Colombia programs, between 2013-2016 the number of hectares<sup>iii</sup> in production grew by 130 percent. Worse yet, potential cocaine production exploded by more than 200 percent—to 710 metric tons—in that period.<sup>iv</sup>

In recent Senate testimony, the State Department's principal law enforcement policy maker, Ambassador William Brownfield, attributed these increases to policy shifts by the Colombian government on coca eradication efforts, including the suspension of aerial fumigation, the retrenchment of military operations to avoid conflicts with the guerrillas, and manual eradication programs that have shown insufficient progress. (Brownfield put the cost to the American people in stark terms, citing the increase in the number of cocaine overdose-related deaths in the United States in recent years, reaching nearly 7,000 fatalities in 2015—the highest on record in nearly a decade.)

An August 2017 intelligence brief prepared by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) cited the slowdown and eventual suspension (in October 2015) of aerial eradication efforts as well as a “reduction in Colombia’s manual eradication budget since 2008, resulting in a 90 percent reduction” in such activities.<sup>v</sup> The DEA report explains:

Since 2014, peace negotiations between the GOC (Government of Colombia) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have at times exacerbated the problem of illicit coca cultivation.... The GOC eased eradication operations in areas controlled by the FARC to lessen the risk of armed conflict during peace negotiations. The final peace accord, signed by both delegations on November 24, 2016, includes assurances that the FARC will end all illicit drug operations and establishes a coca crop substitution and alternative development plan....

The DEA report predicts that supply and usage levels will likely increase through 2018. It already has recorded a 20 percent increase in cocaine seized along the U.S. southwest border in 2016, marking the second consecutive annual increase following a drop during the two prior years. (Fully half of these seized quantities of cocaine took place in the San Diego corridor.) “The number of current cocaine users, cocaine initiates, and

cocaine poisoning deaths also increased in 2015, signaling the continued rebound of cocaine usage and availability,” to 2009 levels, according to the DEA.

## **NEW CHALLENGES UNDER PEACE PLAN**

The fact that U.S. officials now attribute setbacks on the antidrug front to Colombian policy shifts related to the “peace process” is not surprising; the fact that U.S. diplomats did not push back effectively when these actions were taken is shocking. In addition to the reduction in illicit crop eradication, Colombia also has begun to characterize drug trafficking related to the FARC conflict as a “political crime” covered under a new amnesty law. The Colombian government also has decided that ex-FARC members participating in the peace process will no longer be extradited to the United States to face justice for serious drug-related offenses. In one notorious case protested by U.S. officials, a Colombian tribunal ruled in June that Julio Enrique Lemos, alias *Náder*, cannot be extradited to the United States to be tried for the brutal kidnapping of a U.S. citizen in 2008, on the grounds that he is participating in the FARC demobilization.<sup>vi</sup>

Although few would deny the significant benefits derived from ending a 60-year terrorist insurgency, some of the concessions made in the November 2016 accord have created a new set of challenges for Colombia.<sup>vii</sup> Many Colombians share the concern that the peace agreement undermines the rule of law in their country by failing to hold ex-guerrilla commanders, in particular, accountable for gross violations of human rights and other serious crimes. The provisions allowing them to form a political party and take seats in the Colombian Congress are particularly controversial. Moreover, so-called FARC “dissidents” remain engaged in lucrative criminal activities, and many suspect that the guerrillas’ new party will have access to vast undeclared resources that will give them an unfair advantage in the political process.

In the long-run, Colombia’s political leadership will have to address these concerns to ensure the vigorous implementation of the peace agreement to prevent the use of criminal profits in the political process. And as thousands of former guerrillas leave the battlefield, Colombia’s security forces will be expected to pursue and subdue “dissident” guerrillas and other armed groups involved in terrorism and organized crime. Indeed, the United States government may conclude that focusing its resources on helping Colombia confront these security challenges should be a priority, expecting the host country to assume responsibility for economic assistance programs.

## **PRIORITIES FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE**

Where is U.S. aid most needed? The Colombian government and multilateral development banks should be able to muster the conventional technology, development expertise, and financial resources that are required to convince peasant farmers to grow alternative crops instead of coca.

On the other hand, if Colombia were to decide to reestablish aerial fumigation operations, the United States has better access to aircraft—although the task of reassembling that logistical mission will take many months to complete. And, U.S. security assistance may be required to bolster Colombia’s military capabilities—which have been degraded in recent years—to carry out forced eradication operations and to jumpstart an offensive against criminal and terror groups that have failed to take advantage of the government’s peace terms. In addition, U.S. intelligence and financial sanctions capabilities are precisely the tools that will be required to ferret out the financial networks of transnational organized crime that operate in Colombia, in neighboring Venezuela, in the Americas, and beyond.

The Trump Administration proposed a substantial decrease in U.S. aid to Colombia in Fiscal Year 2018, down 36 percent from \$391 million in the current fiscal year to \$251 million in the coming fiscal year.<sup>viii</sup> The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations last week approved legislation appropriating \$391 million for Colombia in Fiscal Year 2018—the same figure for the prior year;<sup>ix</sup> the House Committee on Appropriations in July approved a spending plan allocating \$336 million for Colombia.<sup>x</sup>

The United States can make an immediate critical contribution to Colombia by making it a priority to find and freeze assets of former and current guerrillas, terror groups, or criminal bands involved in the illicit smuggling of cocaine, gold, and emeralds or related money laundering. The famous “Clinton List” has targeted drug corruption in Colombia for many years. Congress could give the U.S. Treasury Department an explicit mandate and significant additional resources to break the back of Colombian organized crime. It could also legislate new authority to repatriate a portion of these funds to security and stabilization missions in Colombia and neighboring countries. That latter authority could help address shortfalls in Colombian and U.S. aid funds.

Such a robust asymmetrical campaign is vital to clawing back the counternarcotics gains in Colombia and spoiling any plans the guerrillas’ new party has to tap ill-gotten funds to attain an unfair political advantage to the detriment of Colombian democracy. This is a good tactic, but it’s just a tactic. It is time for U.S. policy makers to assess and confront this threat in a more strategic way.

## **CONFRONTING THE STRATEGIC THREAT: TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME**

Although this hearing is about Colombia, the fact is that the broader strategic challenge is the pernicious effect of transnational organized crime—whose global profits are approaching one trillion dollars.<sup>xi</sup> The U.S. government recognizes that transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are a pressing threat to national security and has implemented initiatives—such as the 2011 Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime and the 2017 “Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing Federal Law with Respect

to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking”—to better detect, disrupt, and dismantle these criminal networks.

Illicit networks comprised of terrorists, criminals, and proliferators have increasingly capitalized on globalization to expand their nefarious objectives, exploiting global supply chains across multiple platforms to move goods, people, services, and data. Recently, terrorism and crime have converged, with these groups sharing operating areas, intelligence, tactics, and resources to undermine nation-states.

Such criminal networks, with unprecedented wealth and influence, have become the most significant threat to security and prosperity in the Americas today. Yet, we have failed to fully appreciate how this threat manifests itself in a place like Colombia—where we identify the threat and measure success the same way we did 20 years ago. It can be said that, we’re playing checkers, while our enemies are playing Monopoly.

During the Cold War, our authoritarian foes were driven by ideology, targeting the democratic values of which the United States was the principal defender. When the Cold War ended, the United States abandoned the field to these old enemies, who have harnessed the power of transnational organized crime. Today, these foes are motivated in part by greed, and their primary target is the rule of law.

How can we possibly help Colombia without first identifying the nature of the threat? Whatever Colombians do to secure peace or impose the rule of law could be undermined by the narcostate in Venezuela—which is an accomplice of Colombian traffickers. As Colombians seek to secure peace by offering demobilized guerrillas political space, billions of dollars in illicit income may be funneled from international kingpins like José Luis Merino, the former Salvadoran guerrilla who launders money for the FARC and corrupt Venezuelans. Earnest efforts to jumpstart the Colombian economy could be swamped by a Venezuelan regime that has destroyed democratic institutions, sown violent repression, collapsed the private economy, looted hundreds of billions from government coffers and state-owned firms, and spawned a humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Such crisis conditions serve the interests of transnational organized crime by overwhelming democratic institutions and security forces and erasing borders that criminals regard as obstacles to their operations. In Venezuela, an entire government and its parastatal enterprises have become tools of a global criminal network, whose puppet regime in Caracas is managed by Cuba, armed by Russia, and financed by China. It is no surprise that Iran was allowed to use Venezuela’s financial system to evade international sanctions or that Hezbollah has used Venezuela as a platform for training, recruitment, and fundraising.

Cold War protagonists like Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua and the Marxist guerrillas in El Salvador, who 15-20 years ago were forced to yield to democratic governments, are back in power and stronger than ever—thanks to the role they play in a global criminal conspiracy. And Nicolás Maduro has managed to survive as head of Venezuela’s narcostate

due to the criminal interests that hold his inner circle together and because of the backing of Putin, Castro, and corrupt bankers who manage a half-trillion-dollars in ill-gotten gain.

Experts contend that the FARC is following a similar strategy by transforming into a political movement and tapping the proceeds of its criminal activities to fund its campaign against South America's oldest democracy. Indeed, Hugo Chávez, Daniel Ortega, and the FMLN have served up a template for such a project. Colombians can prevent a similar outcome if they recognize the game plan and work with the United States and others to disrupt the financial network behind it.

Colombia is one front in a battle that cannot be won by fighting one coca plantation, one cocaine lab, one country, or one continent at a time. The United States, Colombia, and other allies must build an international coalition to sustain a full-court-press against transnational criminal networks through global intelligence sharing and an invigorated global sanctions campaign to investigate, expose, and dismantle TCOs and their financial networks, confiscate their illicit profits, and deny them access to the international financial system.

## **THE ROOTS OF TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN COLOMBIA**

Transnational criminal groups in Colombia have thrived in massive areas of remote, inaccessible, and ungoverned territory and under the protective cover offered by its geographical features. In Colombia, coca and opium production and cocaine and heroin trafficking have been the primary sources of income for criminal groups. The central government's weak presence and the country's significant natural resources also have allowed these groups to expand into illegal mining, illegal logging, extortion, and human trafficking. "Self-defense" paramilitary groups created to combat the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas assumed a role in the drug trade, and the bloody confrontation created a lawlessness that challenged the political institutions of South America's oldest democracy.

Throughout much of the past century, Colombia has been plagued by illegal guerrilla forces and notorious cocaine cartels. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the FARC outgrew its traditional supportive role in the drug trade, metastasizing into one of the world's most powerful and multifaceted transnational criminal organizations and thriving off the illegal drug trade, human trafficking, illegal mining, and other illegal activities. The FARC became the world's largest producer of cocaine, and Colombia's criminal structures became integral components of a global drug trafficking network.

Colombia's criminal groups, particularly the Marxist narco-terrorist groups such as the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN), also have benefited from the assistance of a corrupt and ideologically sympathetic Venezuelan government. The regimes of President Hugo Chávez and his successor Nicolás Maduro have provided weapons, funding, and cooperation for drug trafficking operations and safe haven for guerrillas evading the Colombian military. There are multiple reports of the Venezuelan military aiding drug

traffickers in moving their products through Venezuelan territory and onward to markets in the United States and Europe.

This threat was reduced significantly through former President Álvaro Uribe's Democratic Security policy, backed by Plan Colombia. The FARC went from an estimated fighting force of 20,000 guerrillas to fewer than 7,000 in just a decade. The government was able to expand its presence and dramatically degrade the ability of the FARC and other criminal groups to operate freely. While these criminal groups' potency has been greatly reduced, as some have pledged to terminate their illegal activities, others remain actively involved in illicit drug trafficking and related criminality.

### **MAKING THE PEACE PLAN WORK FOR COLOMBIA<sup>xii</sup>**

President Santos dedicated his administration to what he regarded the next phase for Colombia's development—a negotiated peace with the country's guerrilla groups. After years of turbulent negotiation, the government signed and ratified a controversial final accord with the FARC in November 2016, despite serious concerns about the accord's implications for human rights, justice, and Colombian democratic institutions. The agreement provides the framework for the demobilization and reintegration of nearly 7,000 FARC guerrillas and plans for the FARC's participation in the political process.

Serious concerns remain about the FARC's compliance with the accord, such as the processes of surrendering weapons, declaring assets, submitting to "transitional justice," terminating drug trafficking and other criminal activities, and contributing to a solution to the illicit drug problem.<sup>xiii</sup>

Concerns over the peace process are compounded by the FARC's obfuscation regarding its financial assets gained from decades of drug trafficking. A 2012 study by the Colombian government estimated the FARC's assets at \$10.5 billion.<sup>xiv</sup> Late last month, the FARC issued a declaration of assets that many regard as evasive and incomplete; Colombia's Attorney General Néstor Humberto Martínez ridiculed the declaration of assets totaling \$332 million.<sup>xv</sup> Many suspect that the new FARC political party—*Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común* (FARC, Common Alternative Revolutionary Force)—intends to tap its illicit fortune to give it an unfair advantage in the political process.

Inasmuch as the FARC has never renounced its Marxist-Leninist objectives, the prospect of such a political movement with access to unaccounted resources is additional cause for concern among many Colombians. If it can be proved that the FARC has concealed such wealth, it would be a material breach of the November 2016 accord and a blow to the credibility of the peace process and of its proponents in the Santos government.

Regarding the explosion of coca cultivation, the government is pinning its hopes for reducing coca cultivation on a new crop-substitution and manual-eradication strategy that emphasizes peer pressure and economic incentives. This plan is aimed at rural

communities where otherwise peaceful farmers grow coca for the FARC and other criminal groups. When such voluntary eradication strategies do not prove effective, the government strategy includes forced eradication missions. However, these missions have been undermined by cuts in the country's security budget as well as by violent protests that have raised the political costs of these operations. Some Colombian political leaders have cited the need to resume aerial fumigation, perhaps using an alternative herbicide.

Another complication of the peace process is so-called FARC dissidents. History has shown that a certain level of noncompliance from elements of the FARC was to be expected in implementing the peace agreement. When Colombia reached a peace agreement with paramilitary groups in 2006, numerous difficulties with compliance followed, as subgroups chose to remain involved in their criminal activities rather than demobilize. Similarly, it now appears that hundreds of active FARC dissidents have chosen not to abide by the peace accord.

While the vast majority of the FARC's dissidents were expected to be absorbed into the ELN, the BACRIM (*bandas criminales*, criminal bands), or one of the other criminal organizations in the region, it now appears that a significant group of FARC dissidents plans to remain independent from existing criminal groups, carrying on their original political mission, insurgency, and criminal activities. Multiple incidents provide evidence of their continued activity, including coordinated attacks against the military and the recent kidnapping of a United Nations observer from the Office on Drugs and Crime.

In December 2016, a group of five combat-hardened FARC leaders declared they would not disarm and demobilize, as required by the recently signed peace agreement. In response, the FARC general secretariat claimed to have expelled the five commanders and their followers from the guerrilla movement.<sup>xvi</sup> According to Colombian police, some 300 FARC combatants accompanied the dissident commanders into the jungle. The dissident group carried out its first attack on Colombian military forces in April 2017, killing one soldier and wounding four others.

A closer examination of these commanders reveals deep ties to the cocaine trade, illegal gold mining, and international relationships, which distinguish them as a high-level, operational group that controlled a significant portion of the FARC's financial assets. Cocaine trafficking and illegal gold mining yield hundreds of millions of dollars a year in profits, and some of the most lucrative elements of that financial structure were in the hands of these dissident leaders. It is interesting that, although the FARC sent its own troops to track down smaller units that attempted to defy the peace agreement, the FARC secretariat directed no such actions against these five "dissidents."

According to experts with long-standing relationships with Colombia's security forces, the leadership of the military and intelligence services remains deeply skeptical of the true separation of the dissident group from the rest of the FARC—partly because of the leaders involved in the movement and the FARC secretariat's muted reaction to the group's declaration of rebellion. Many experts believe that, if the group were truly a dissident

faction, the FARC secretariat would have taken much stronger action to prevent the loss of the FARC's economic structure, which is vital to its future political plans.

Even if the bulk of the FARC forces were to comply with their agreements, multiple organized criminal groups remain active in Colombian territory, ready to exploit any vacuum left by the FARC's shrinking role. These groups pose a serious threat to Colombia's peaceaccord implementation as they seek to continue their criminal activities and seize the space once dominated by the FARC.

The ELN is Colombia's other major Marxist Leninist narco-terrorist group. Like the FARC, it is committed to a communist ideology and an armed struggle against the Colombian government. It also supports its movement primarily through the drug trade and has regularly been involved in illegal mining, kidnapping for ransom, and attacks against economic infrastructure and the military. With an estimated 1,500 fighters, the ELN is roughly one-fifth the size of the FARC's pre-demobilization paramilitary force. Their shared ideology makes the ELN a natural destination for FARC dissidents seeking to avoid demobilization and continue their lucrative drug trade.

The Colombian government is pursuing a peace accord with the ELN. However, powerful elements in the group actively oppose peace. Additionally, with just one year left in office, President Santos does not appear to have the political capital to quickly secure a new accord after the controversial agreement with the FARC. Meanwhile, it has been widely reported that the ELN has launched recruitment efforts targeting the FARC and taken steps to occupy former FARC territory. Nevertheless, the government and the ELN announced a bilateral ceasefire earlier this month, suspending offensive military operations at least through January 12, 2018.<sup>xvii</sup>

Colombia's BACRIM, or "criminal bands," also pose a continuing threat to peace and stability in Colombia. Originating from paramilitary groups that refused to demobilize in 2006, the largest and most dominant of these groups is the Clan del Golfo, previously known as the Urabeños. They are estimated to have around 2,000 fighters with a presence along the Pacific coast and in more than half of Colombia's departments.<sup>xviii</sup> The BACRIM already play an active role in the illegal drug trade, illegal mining, and extortion. The Clan del Golfo has also been positioning itself to inherit the FARC's share of the drug trade by recruiting FARC dissidents and asserting itself through a series of bold attacks against Colombian security forces, even reaching into the major cities of Bogotá and Medellín.

## **COLOMBIA'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS**

The Colombian government's singular focus on the peace accord in recent years has distracted needed attention from the pressing economic and social agenda. The Santos government has been criticized for failing to undertake measures to improve Colombia's economic competitiveness, reform the education system, promote foreign investment, and create jobs.

The government's ambitious hopes for the economic benefits of the peace accord may prove disappointing as well. Following the signing of the peace accord, a lack of consumer confidence pushed economic growth down to just 1.1% in the first quarter of 2017, an eight-year low. Foreign investment also saw a notable decline. These indicators may rebound, but clearly, the peace accord is not a panacea for the underlying problems of the Colombian economy.

Colombians will elect a new congress and president in 2018, with the legislative voting in March, the first-round of the presidential balloting in May, and the runoff in June.<sup>xix</sup> Santos' former vice president German Vargas-Lleras; principal peace negotiator and former vice president Humberto De la Calle; former defense minister and senator Marta Lucia Ramirez; Senator Ivan Duque; former attorney general Alejandro Ordóñez; and former defense minister and ambassador to the United States Juan Carlos Pinzon are among the more than a dozen candidates for president.

Although the peace process with the FARC claims the vast majority of international headlines on Colombia, a poll taken in May revealed that unemployment, health care, and political corruption are among the greatest concerns of voters. According to a poll taken in June, 51 percent of Colombians have a favorable view of the United States, compared to 33 percent who have an unfavorable opinion.<sup>xx</sup>

Colombians' favorable impression of the United States is likely rooted in the long-standing U.S. assistance to antidrug activities in their country. Although voters will have much higher domestic priorities in mind as they elect new political leaders, it is quite likely that the new president and congress will reflect a broad commitment to continued antidrug cooperation. Candidates generally recognize that staying ahead of the curve against the illicit cocaine smuggling networks is essential to defending Colombian institutions and protecting the licit economy from being swamped by corruption.

Some political leaders—led by former president and current Senator Álvaro Uribe and former president Andrés Pastrana—have been fierce critics of the peace plan's provisions regarding transitional justice and the political participation of FARC leaders, including those guilty of serious crimes. Critics also cite the FARC's potential access to illicit resources and its disingenuous declaration of assets as major weaknesses of the plan. These political leaders are much more likely to insist on rigorous anti-coca operations and a full accounting of FARC assets.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The United States, Colombia, and other allies around the globe must build an international coalition to sustain a full-court-press against transnational criminal networks through intelligence sharing and a more vigorous international sanctions campaign to expose TCOs and deny them access to the global financial system.

- A growing number of members of Congress recognize the threat of transnational organized crime. They should produce broad-based legislation to give Executive agencies a clear mandate to assess and counter this threat. Such legislation could allocate additional resources and grant any new legal authority required to track the proceeds of corruption and illegal activities, to confiscate ill-gotten profits; to redirect such assets to the coffers of the rightful owners or transnational law enforcement programs, and to dismantle criminal financial networks.
- Hidden FARC assets are a material threat to peace. By working closely with Colombian authorities and using its clout in the international financial system, the United States can significantly contribute to Colombian security by thwarting any attempts by the FARC to access funds derived from past illicit activity or to benefit from ongoing criminal operations conducted by so-called FARC dissident groups. The United States Congress can multiply the benefits of seizing hidden FARC funds by authorizing the U.S. Treasury to repurpose these funds to support stabilization activities in Colombia.
- The United States should work with Colombian authorities to establish clear benchmarks and a joint strategy for making urgent and substantial reductions in coca cultivation, including restoring aerial fumigation and supporting robust manual eradication operations.
- Effective U.S. diplomacy on these vital operational issues requires the urgent appointment of a U.S. ambassador who has substantial experience in the counternarcotics and law enforcement agenda.
- The United States should continue to present extradition requests to Colombian authorities regarding ex-FARC personnel and seek assurances that these individuals will be actively monitored so that they can be surrendered to U.S. justice if and when they violate the provisions of the peace process.
- The United States should encourage the Colombian government to restore adequate security spending to ensure that the territorial and operational void left by the FARC's demobilization is not occupied by other criminal groups.
- The United States Congress should provide adequate funding for priority aid programs in Colombia as explained above; it is not likely that the dramatically reduced funding requested by the Trump Administration will be adequate to support core counternarcotics activities. (In the long run, recovered illicit assets would provide ample funding for key programs aimed at suppressing illicit drug activities and transnational organized crime.)
- Any remaining communication or cooperation between FARC dissidents and the demobilized FARC leaders should be closely investigated and exposed, as such

collusion could significantly threaten Colombian security and the peace agreement's viability.

- The Trump administration should continue its campaign of targeted sanctions against corrupt leaders of the lawless regime in Venezuela and support a donors conference to address the need for refugee assistance to Colombia.

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<sup>i</sup> George H. W. Bush, "The President's News Conference Following the Drug Summit in Cartagena, Colombia," February 15, 1990, [www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=18162](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=18162).

<sup>ii</sup> William Neuman and Simon Romero, "Latin American Allies Resist U.S. Strategy in Drug Fight," *New York Times*, May 15, 2015, [www.nytimes.com/2015/05/16/world/americas/latin-america-and-us-split-in-drug-fight.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/16/world/americas/latin-america-and-us-split-in-drug-fight.html).

<sup>iii</sup> A hectare is approximately 2.5 acres.

<sup>iv</sup> Prepared Statement of Ambassador William R. Brownfield before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, August 2, 2017,

[https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/080217%20Brownfield\\_Testimony.pdf](https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/080217%20Brownfield_Testimony.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> "Colombian Cocaine Production Expansion Contributes to Rise in Supply in the United States," Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Intelligence Brief, DEA-DCT-DIB-014-17, August 2017,

<https://www.dea.gov/docs/DIB-014-17%20Colombian%20Cocaine%20Production%20Expansion.pdf>.

<sup>vi</sup> "Tough U.S. Complaint for Freeing of 'Náder,'" (El duro reclamo de EE. UU. a la Corte por liberación de 'Náder')," *El Tiempo*, June 8, 2017, [www.eltiempo.com/justicia/cortes/diplomacia-estadounidense-dira-que-seguira-persiguiendo-a-nader-97174](http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/cortes/diplomacia-estadounidense-dira-que-seguira-persiguiendo-a-nader-97174)

<sup>vii</sup> Jim Wyss, "After Colombia Halts Aerial Eradication of Coca What Comes Next?" *Miami Herald*, May 15, 2015, [www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/colombia/article21078951.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/colombia/article21078951.html).

<sup>viii</sup> "Trump proposes to cut US aid to Colombia to lowest level in 32 years," by Jack Norman, *Colombia Reports*, May 23, 2017, <https://colombiareports.com/trump-proposes-cut-us-aid-colombia-lowest-level-32-years/>.

<sup>ix</sup> S. 1780, 115 Congress, First Session, A bill "making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes,"

<https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FY2018%20State%20Foreign%20Operations%20Appropriations%20Bill%20-%20S1780.pdf>.

<sup>x</sup> "Appropriations Committee Releases Fiscal Year 2018 State and Foreign Operations Bill," Press Release, U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, July 12, 2017,

<https://appropriations.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=394988>.

<sup>xi</sup> "Global Profit From Crime Could Account For 1.5% Of Global GDP Each Year," by Niall McCarthy, *Forbes*, February 29, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2016/02/29/global-profit-from-crime-could-account-for-1-5-of-global-gdp-each-year-infographic/#51c769664182>.

According to a 2016 study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, transnational organized crime generates profits of \$870 billion—1.5 percent of global production; \$320 billion of this revenue is related to trafficking in illicit drugs.

<sup>xii</sup> A portion of this testimony is extracted from the report, "Kingpins and Corruption: Targeting

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Transnational Organized Crime in the Americas,” American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, June 2017, to which Roger F. Noriega and Douglas Farah were contributors.

<http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Kingpins-and-Corruption.pdf>

<sup>xiii</sup> “Final Accord for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Firm and Lasting Peace,” November 24, 2017,

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