

**Testimony of Kevin Whitaker
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Department of State**

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“U.S. – Andean Security Cooperation”
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Chairman Feinstein, Co-Chairman Grassley and Members of the Caucus:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this caucus today to discuss the Department’s ongoing efforts to assist counternarcotics partners in the Andes.

Our counternarcotics efforts in the Andes directly support the Administration’s multi-year, interagency *National Drug Control Strategy*. The President has recommitted the United States to create practical partnerships in the hemisphere to advance shared interests and protect our citizens. Our cooperative approach is based on our understanding of how illicit narcotics – particularly narcotics originating in the Andes – threaten our citizens’ safety. We must work with partner countries to combat this threat.

As Secretary Clinton has stated, we have a shared responsibility to assist nations struggling with drug production and trafficking. Our approach emphasizes taking advantage of the growing capacities and willingness to cooperate on the part of regional partners such as Colombia. We recognize the connection between transnational narcotics trafficking, white-collar and local crime. For this reason, we rely on partnerships to strengthen institutions responsible for ensuring public safety.

We recognize the challenges posed by pursuing this approach, but we cannot address hemispheric security challenges alone. We seek to work with committed, high-capacity partner countries in the Andes to improve the rule of law and build effective institutions of governance. This is the path to achieve our common aspirations for secure and prosperous societies.

Colombia’s security improvements provide a concrete example of the success of our strategic approach in the Andes. Colombia’s progress has been facilitated by U.S. training, technical and financial support, but we will not lose

sight of the fact that Colombia's success is primarily due to the will, resources, and sacrifices of the Colombian government and its people. Once pushed to the brink by illegal insurgents, armed groups, and vicious drug cartels, Colombia today has regained the initiative and is a strong representative democracy committed to open markets and protecting fundamental freedoms. These realities make Colombia an archetypal high-capacity partner, which is why it is an increasingly important regional and global partner in providing hard-won expertise to others, including Mexico, Haiti, Central America, West Africa and Afghanistan.

Plan Colombia and its successor programs illustrate the balanced, collaborative effort needed to expand rule of law and improve citizen safety in the Andes. Our assistance supports Colombia's National Consolidation Plan, through the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI), an interagency construct for coordinating U.S. Government assistance, as one of four strategic security initiatives in the Western Hemisphere. The Plan aims to improve security, build infrastructure, and generate economic opportunities in regions historically-influenced by terrorist and criminal elements. Colombia's government intends to sustain progress by continuing to confront criminal groups while expanding government services to long-ignored rural areas.

It's important to realize that Colombia's progress, while significant, is neither linear nor irreversible. The United States has an enormous interest in progress in Colombia, and is supportive of the Santos administration's progressive and thoughtful reform agenda that is respectful of human rights and is moving forward vigorously to solidify the gains of the past decade and to provide economic opportunity for all Colombians.

In Peru, we recognize the challenges presented by increasing coca cultivation. President Humala has pledged to bolster his government's institutional capacity to effectively address this threat. We believe it important to continue to support Peru's efforts through a range of counternarcotics activities including interdiction, eradication, training and alternative development activities. We are in a serious dialogue with the Peruvian government about the overall counternarcotics program, including coca eradication. We have proposed targeted, joint areas for cooperation where the Peruvian government increasingly takes the leading role.

In November, the Humala administration will finalize its draft counternarcotics strategy for 2011 – 2016. While the plan places greater emphasis on precursor control, rule of law, and money laundering issues, we have emphasized that a broad-based approach – including interdiction and dismantling

drug trafficking organizations – is required. We will work with Peru to help ensure its strategy is robust and responsive to its evolving narcotics environment.

Our efforts in Ecuador, meanwhile, aim to support improvements to the professional capabilities, equipment, and integrity of Ecuador's police, military, and judicial agencies. We have sought to overcome various setbacks in the relationship, including the closure of the Forward Operating Location in Manta in 2009, the expulsion of two Embassy officials in 2009, and the precipitous and unwarranted expulsion of Ambassador Hodges in April. While we believe that these Ecuadorian actions were not supportive of a positive and cooperative relationship, we also recognize our national interest in defining a way forward on security cooperation with Ecuador. We continue to share information and to provide equipment and training to Ecuador's counter-narcotics and law enforcement units. Our information sharing helps build cases, enabling Ecuador to more effectively combat criminal organizations involved in narcotics trafficking and money laundering.

We also support Ecuador's efforts on the interdiction of illicit drugs and chemicals and destruction of cocaine-producing labs. We encourage stronger coordination between Ecuador's military and police forces to facilitate evidence-gathering and case prosecution in narcotics cases. Finally, we encourage the Ecuadorian government to prioritize prosecution of money laundering and official corruption. Increased prosecution strengthens the rule of law and remains critical to dismantle leadership of narcotics cartels.

Two nations in the Andean region have rejected the full complement of U.S. government partnership, something we regret. Bolivia expelled the Drug Enforcement Agency in 2009, leaving a durable, damaging, and critical gap in the identification and disruption of priority trafficking organizations. In 2008 and every subsequent year, we have determined that Bolivia "failed demonstrably" to comply with its international obligations regarding the growth of coca investigations of drug trafficking organizations. In each case the President has provided a national security interest waiver to permit continued counternarcotics support. Despite the impact of DEA's departure, our remaining counternarcotics efforts help achieve U.S. national security interests by building Bolivian capacity to fund, manage, and implement effective counternarcotics and citizen safety programs.

Bolivia remains the world's third largest coca cultivator and cocaine producer. Although we estimate only approximately 1% of the cocaine seized in

the United States comes from Bolivia, an increase in coca cultivation and cocaine production will impact the global market and lead to rising crime and violence in Bolivia and its neighboring countries. For this reason, we will look for ways to work collaboratively in support of effective Bolivian counternarcotics efforts. We continue to seek to facilitate Bolivian cooperation with other partners, especially Brazil and Europe, against narcotics trafficking.

Finally, we note our continued concerns about Venezuela's failure to cooperate on counternarcotics efforts. Venezuela's counternarcotics cooperation with the United States and generally has been poor, and what cooperation does occur has been limited and ineffectual. Occasional deportations of fugitives to the United States or Colombia serve only to highlight the inadequacy of Venezuela's overall effort. We have designated a number of senior Venezuelan officials, including the heads of the civilian and military intelligence agencies, the then-minister of interior, and an army two-star general for supporting the narcotics trafficking activities of the FARC. In 2005 and every year since, the President has also determined that Venezuela "failed demonstrably" to comply with obligations under international counternarcotics agreements. Venezuela's counternarcotics framework is weak, and drug transit flows through Venezuela are growing. The amount of cocaine moving through Venezuela by aircraft and maritime means increased threefold from 2004 to 2009 alone.

That said, we remain prepared to cooperate with Venezuela to counter the increasing flow of illegal drugs transiting Venezuelan territory. Cooperation could be improved through a formal re-engagement by Venezuelan authorities with their U.S. counterparts on counternarcotics issues.

In closing, we recognize that developing long-lasting security partnerships in the Andes requires a sustained U.S. commitment. We are mindful to apply limited resources in ways that most-effectively support our partners' capabilities. In the end, we believe support for partner country institutions provides the best path to advance U.S. counternarcotics goals and entrench security gains in the Andes.