

**JOINT HEARING ON SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST
FOR PLAN COLOMBIA**

JOINT HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEES ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EX-
PORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS; DE-
FENSE; AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

SPECIAL HEARING

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JOINT HEARING ON SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR PLAN COLOMBIA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2000

U.S. SENATE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS, SUB-
COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE, AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILI-
TARY CONSTRUCTION, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittees met at 10:36 a.m., in room SD-192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Mitch McConnell (chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs) presiding.

Present: Senators Stevens, Specter, Domenici, McConnell, Gregg, Burns, Reid, Bennett, Inouye, Leahy, Lautenberg, and Feinstein.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATEMENT OF THOMAS PICKERING, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MITCH MC CONNELL

Senator MCCONNELL. The hearing will come to order. We are pleased to have with us the Chairman of the Full Committee, Senator Stevens.

And I do not know, Senator, whether you have any statements you would like to make.

Senator STEVENS. Well, I know you have an opening statement. I would say, just for the record, that this proposal that is before us from the Administration affects three of our subcommittees, Foreign Operations, Defense and—and Military Construction.

I believe that—that as chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Senator McConnell should chair this and—and make the basic recommendations. But the other—members of the other subcommittees will be joining us too, Senator.

This is a very important subject. I think probably the most important subject we are going to deal with in the first part of this year.

I do have a statement after you finish yours. But I—I want to wait for your comments.

Senator MCCONNELL. OK. Thank you, Senator Stevens.

Welcome, gentlemen. When I traveled to—to Colombia, Peru and Ecuador to examine U.S. support for regional counternarcotics programs, I was taught essentially four lessons.

One, there is no substitute for aggressive political leadership in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

Two, drug lords, guerrillas, and the paramilitaries are all profiting and part of the same problem. Our narco-security strategy must reflect that fact.

Third, containing one country only shifts the problem elsewhere. We need a regional strategy.

And, fourth, while it seems the most obvious, it seems the least observed, the American public must be told the truth about what lies ahead.

I am not convinced that the Administration has learned these lessons or can pass this test.

To determine how we proceed, I think it is worth taking a look around the region to consider what has worked.

While the Administration likes to claim credit for Peru's success, the truth is they succeeded largely on their own. The United States suspended all assistance in 1991 and 1992. Nonetheless, President Fujimori launched an aggressive broad scale assault on both the traffickers and the guerrillas protecting their trade.

I doubt anyone would be calling Peru a success today if traffickers were in jail, but the Sendero Luminoso had stepped in to take their place.

Critics argue that Peru's success came at a very high human rights price. As a result, many now argue that we—we must carefully concentrate only on the Colombian drug war and avoid any involvement or support of efforts which target the paramilitaries or guerrillas. Hence, we must not step up military training, support or presence of U.S. troops.

I am already hearing soothing Administration reassurances that Plan Colombia is a counternarcotics effort and we need not worry about the quagmire of a counter-insurgency or military campaign.

Now, what exactly does this mean? What is the Administration really promising in Plan Colombia?

It seems to me it is more, much more of the same thing we have been doing already. For several years, we have provided substantial support to the Colombia narcotics police (CNP) in their attack on coca crops and cartel.

While the CNP deserves credit for arresting kingpins and shutting down trafficking routes, coca growth and cocaine production, as we know, have exploded. The more the Administration spends in Colombia, the more coca is grown.

Now, we plan to offer more of the same support, but this time to the Colombia Army. We will train two counternarcotics battalions and provide counternarcotics helicopter gunships and weapons, all the while keeping a comfortable public distance from targeting the other two major threats to Colombia and our interests.

If it has not worked so far, why will it now? I guess what I really want to say is: Who are we kidding? Our strategy will have to change to succeed. We cannot pretend the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) are not tied to traffickers.

We cannot argue that a push into Southern Colombia will reduce drug production, as long as there is a policy of allowing the FARC and traffickers safe haven in a demilitarized zone (DMZ) the size of Switzerland.

We cannot ignore the increase in paramilitary involvement in the drug trade. These are the same extremists with close ties to Colombian military, which we plan to train.

If the Colombian government meets the test and demonstrates political will, the Administration should acknowledge that we are prepared to do whatever it takes to support a serious effort that goes after the entire problem, traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitaries.

If we are not really committed, if we are uncertain about how involved we want to become, if we question the risks and are not confident of the results, we should quit now and save our \$1.6 billion.

If we proceed, the public deserves to know that we cannot succeed overnight. In fact, I believe we will be well past this election year before we can expect any results whatsoever. Not only should we avoid a half-hearted effort in Colombia, we should avoid a half-baked strategy in the region. The emphasis on Colombia must not overshadow requirements in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. Without a regional strategy, an attack on production in one country will only push the problem over to another country.

Bolivia is a good case in point. In a few short years, the new government has executed a determined and effective effort to eradicate coca and substitute alternative crops. But recently when the vice president was in town, he made it clear that the job was not yet done.

Any pressure on Colombia risks a resurgence in Bolivia, if alternative development, alternative opportunities are not better funded.

We have invited leaders from Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru to address their national needs. I do not view this as a choice between support for Colombia or her neighbors. Each has important interest. All have a common stake in success.

It is disappointing that the Administration's request does not support an approach which makes Colombia the anchor but recognizes that this is a broader—broader partnership.

I would hope this hearing achieves a consensus so that we can correct that course.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL

When I traveled to Colombia, Peru and Ecuador to examine U.S. support for regional counter-narcotics programs, I was taught four lessons: (1) There is no substitute for aggressive political leadership in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia or Ecuador; (2) Drug lords, guerrillas, and the paramilitaries are all profiting and part of the same problem—our narco-security strategy must reflect that fact; (3) Containing one country, only shifts the problem elsewhere—we need a regional strategy; and the fourth lesson, while most obvious, seems least observed, (4) The American public must be told the truth about what lies ahead.

I am not convinced that the Administration has learned these lessons or can pass this test.

To determine how we proceed, I think it is worth taking a look around the region to consider what's worked. While the Administration likes to claim credit for Peru's success, the truth is they succeeded alone. The U.S. suspended all assistance in 1991 and 1992. Nonetheless, President Fujimori launched an aggressive, broad scale assault on both the traffickers and the guerrillas protecting their trade. I doubt anyone would be calling Peru a success today if traffickers were in jail, but the Sendero Luminoso had stepped in to take their place.

Critics argue that Peru's success came at a very high human rights price. As a result, many now argue that we must carefully concentrate only on the Colombian

drug war and avoid any involvement or support of efforts which target the paramilitaries or guerrillas. Hence, we must not step up military training, support or the presence of U.S. troops. I am already hearing soothing Administration reassurances that Plan Colombia is a counter-narcotics effort, and we need not worry about the quagmire of a counterinsurgency or military campaign.

What exactly does this mean? What is the Administration really promising in Plan Colombia. It seems to me it's more—much more—of the same thing we have been doing. For several years, we have provided substantial support to the Colombian Narcotics Police in their attack on coca crops and cartels. While the CNP deserves credit for arresting king pins and shutting down trafficking routes, coca growth and cocaine production have exploded.

The more the Administration spends in Colombia, the more coca is grown.

Now, we plan to offer more of the same support, but this time to the Colombian Army. We will train two counter-narcotics battalions and provide counter-narcotics helicopter gun-ships and weapons, all the while keeping a comfortable public distance from targeting the other two major threats to Colombia and our interests.

If it hasn't worked so far, why will it now? I guess what I really want to say is: Who are you kidding?

Our strategy will have to change to succeed. We can't pretend the FARC and ELN are not tied to traffickers. We can't argue that a push into Southern Colombia will reduce drug production, as long as there is a policy of allowing the FARC and traffickers safe haven in a DMZ the size of Switzerland. We can't ignore the increase in paramilitary involvement in the drug trade. These are the same extremists with close ties to Colombian military which we plan to train.

If the Colombian government meets the test and demonstrates political will, the Administration should acknowledge that we are prepared to do whatever it takes to support a serious effort that goes after the whole problem: traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitaries. If we are not really committed if we are uncertain about how involved we want to become if we question the risks and are not confident of the results we should quit now and save our \$1.6 billion.

If we proceed, the public deserves to know that we can not succeed over night—in fact, I believe we will be well past this election year before we can expect any results.

Not only should we avoid a half-hearted effort in Colombia, we should avoid a half-baked strategy in the region. The emphasis on Colombia must not overshadow requirements in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. Without a regional strategy, an attack on production in one country will only push the problem elsewhere.

Bolivia is a good case in point. In a few short years, the new government has executed a determined and effective effort to eradicate coca and substitute alternative crops. But, recently, when the Vice President was in town, he made clear that the job was not done. Any pressure on Colombia risks a resurgence in Bolivia if alternative development opportunities are not better funded.

We have invited leaders from Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru to address their national needs. I do not view this as a choice between support for Colombia or her neighbors each has important interests—all have a common stake in success. It is disappointing that the Administration's request does not support an approach which makes Colombia the anchor, but recognizes that this is a broader partnership.

I would hope that this hearing achieves a consensus so that we can correct that course.

Senator MCCONNELL. And with that, let me call on my friend and colleague, Pat Leahy, the ranking member.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

Senator LEAHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Every 6 or 8 years, whichever Administration occupies the White House, they propose to dramatically increase military aid to fight drugs in South America.

Each time, Congress is presented with wildly optimistic predictions. We do not get very many facts with which to make informed decisions. Each time, though, we do respond. We appropriate billions of dollars. But the flow of illegal drugs just continues unabated and even increases.

I recognize the great challenges facing Colombia today. I have talked a number of times with the Ambassador from Colombia and also with President Pastrana. I think they make some persuasive arguments.

There is no dispute that the 40-year civil war and the violence and the corruption associated with the drug trade has inflicted a terrible toll on that country. I agree with the Administration and many in Congress that the United States should try to help.

But I have very serious doubts about the Administration's approach. They predict that by building up the Colombian Army and eradicating more coca, the guerrillas' source of income will dry up and they will negotiate peace.

I suggest that it is just as likely that it will lead to a wider war, more innocent people killed, more refugees uprooted from their homes, and no appreciable change in the flow of cocaine into the United States.

The Administration has requested \$1.6 billion over 2 years. Seventy-nine percent of that is for the Colombian Armed Forces. This is an institution that has a sordid record of human rights violations, corruption and even involvement in drug trafficking.

Today, while the Army's direct involvement in human rights violations has fallen sharply—I give them credit for that—there is abundant evidence that some in the Army regularly conspire with paramilitary death squads who, like the guerrillas, are also involved in drug trafficking.

So I cannot support this military aid without strict conditions to ensure that military personnel who violate human rights or who aid or abet the paramilitaries are prosecuted in the civilian courts. The Colombia military courts have shown time and again that they are unwilling to punish their own. The Administration's proposal is for 2 years. Yet it is going to be at least that long before most of the equipment even gets to Colombia and that people are trained to use it.

The Colombia government cannot possibly afford to maintain this equipment, most of which is sophisticated aircraft, so we can assume that this is only a down payment on a far longer, far more costly commitment.

And like every previous Administration, this proposal comes with only the vaguest of justification. Nothing in the materials I have seen describes the Administration's goals with any specificity, what they expect to achieve in what period of time, at what cost, and what the risks are to civilians caught in the middle when the war intensifies, or for that matter, to our own military advisors.

So in that regard, Mr. Chairman, I am glad that two of the witnesses we have here are General Wilhelm and Ambassador Pickering.

Ambassador Pickering has been a friend and advisor to me for many years. General Wilhelm is one of the most respected military leaders that I have had the privilege to deal with in my 25 years here.

So I look forward to what they have to say, but I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I am a skeptic.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, Senator Leahy.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

Every six or eight years, the administration that occupies the White House at the time proposes to dramatically increase military aid to fight drugs in South America.

Each time, the Congress is presented with wildly optimistic predictions, but few facts with which to make informed decisions. Each time, we respond by appropriating billions of dollars, but the flow of illegal drugs into the United States is unchanged.

I recognize the great challenges facing Colombia today. There is no dispute that a 40 year civil war and the violence and corruption associated with the drug trade have inflicted a terrible toll on that country.

I agree with the Administration, and many in Congress, that the United States should try to help.

But I have serious doubts about the Administration's approach. Today's prediction is that by building up the Colombian Army and eradicating more coca, the guerrillas' source of income will dry up, and they will negotiate peace.

It is just as likely that it will lead to a wider war, more innocent people killed, more refugees uprooted from their homes, and no appreciable change in the flow of cocaine into the United States.

The Administration has requested \$1.6 billion over two years, 79 percent of which is for the Colombian Armed Forces, an institution that has a sordid record of human rights violations, corruption, and involvement in drug trafficking.

Today, while the Army's direct involvement in human rights violations has fallen sharply, there is abundant evidence that Army personnel regularly conspire with paramilitary death squads, who like the guerrillas are also involved in drug trafficking.

I cannot support this military aid without strict conditions to ensure that military personnel who violate human rights or who aid or abet the paramilitaries are prosecuted in the civilian courts. The Colombian military courts have shown time and again that they are unwilling to punish their own.

The Administration's proposal is for two years, yet it will be that long before most of the equipment even gets to Colombia and their people are trained to use it.

The Colombian Government cannot possibly afford to maintain this equipment, most of which is sophisticated aircraft, so this is a down-payment on a far longer, far more costly commitment.

Like every previous administration, this proposal contains only the vaguest justification.

Nothing in the materials I have seen describes the Administration's goals with any specificity, what they expect to achieve in what period of time, at what cost, and what the risks are to civilians caught in the middle when the war intensifies, or to our own military advisors.

Maybe General Wilhelm and Ambassador Pickering, two men I admire greatly, can give us the details.

Senator MCCONNELL. Senator Stevens.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR TED STEVENS

Senator STEVENS. Oh, Mr. Chairman, I am going to put my statement fully in the record, if you will.

I—I do want to point out this is a request for emergency money. As I said, it covers three subcommittees of our full Committee. It is a new initiative. It is a new direct role for U.S. military personnel on the ground in Colombia, and it involves the establishment of new permanent forward-operating locations, effectively bases, in Ecuador, Aruba and Curacao, a continued deployment of U.S. military forces at those sites.

These may be the right steps to take, but they have severe consequences. I spent last week with Admiral Barrett at the Joint Interagency Task Force East Headquarters to review operational intelligence efforts underway to combat the flow of drugs from Latin America.

In addition, I visited Special Operations Command to get General Schoomaker's perspective on these efforts. And I look forward to hearing from General Wilhelm today.

Whatever steps we take I think that Senator McConnell is right. We must be prepared to address how these efforts will impact the neighboring countries of Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama and—and Bolivia. It does seem to me that we have some very, very serious problems to resolve here in the Committee if we are to expect this supplemental to survive on the floor.

And I do hope you will call on Senator Inouye, and see if he has any comment about Defense.

Senator McCONNELL. Yes.
[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR TED STEVENS

Let me begin by thanking Sen. McConnell for convening this hearing to review the supplemental request for expanded counter-drug funding for fiscal year 2000. I also want to thank Gen. Wilhelm for appearing today, under very short notice.

The request before the Committee proposes a significant fiscal, programmatic and human commitment to working with the government of Colombia to combat the growth of cocaine and heroin production and distribution.

This Committee has consistently supported, and added to, funding requested for Department of State, Defense and intelligence community efforts to fight the war on drugs.

This request comes to the Committee as an emergency increase for fiscal 2000. Our hearing today will identify how these funds would be spent, and the long term implications of this policy.

In particular, this initiative envisions a new, direct role for U.S. military personnel on the ground in Colombia, to train and assist Colombian Army units in their combat role in fighting the counter-narcotics forces in Colombia.

This initiative accelerates the establishment of new, permanent forward operating locations, effectively bases, in Ecuador, Aruba and Curacao, and the continuous deployment of U.S. military forces to operate from these sites.

These may be exactly the right steps to take—but they will have consequences.

Last week, I met with Adm. Barrett at the Joint Interagency Task Force East headquarters, to review the operational and intelligence efforts underway to combat the flow of drugs from Latin America. In addition, I visited the Special Operations Command, to get Gen. Skoomaker's perspective on these efforts.

I look forward to hearing Gen. Wilhelm's perspective on these matters today.

Whatever steps we take to increase the pressure on drug activity in Colombia, we must be prepared to address how these efforts will impact the neighboring countries of Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama.

We need to understand the commitment of the government of Colombia this program—our Committee heard from President Pastrana last month, and I believe we were all impressed by his personal determination.

Finally, we must decide how we will pay for this effort—not contemplated in the bills we completed just 3 months ago, but now before the Committee as an urgent, emergency priority.

Senator McCONNELL. Senator Inouye, do you—Senator Burns.

STAFF. He is not—

Senator McCONNELL. OK.

Senator Specter.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BURNS. I am not about to step in front of a senior Senator.

Senator McCONNELL. Well, I was calling on you because you are the Chairman of the Military Construction Subcommittee. We were going to get—

Senator BURNS. Oh, OK. My—my statement will be very short. Go ahead.

Senator MCCONNELL. Go ahead, Senator Specter.
 Senator SPECTER. So will mine, providing it gets started.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

Senator SPECTER. I want to make just a few comments about the issue of the impact on the drug problem in the United States.

I have visited Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia on a number of occasions over the past decade and a half and have seen our efforts and co-sponsored the legislation to bring the military in, but all of the expenditures which have looked to try to cut down the supply of drugs from Latin America have been notably unsuccessful.

When there is an effort made to curtail the supply coming out of a country like Colombia, it is like pushing air in a balloon. It goes to Peru or to Venezuela or to Ecuador or to some other country.

When I look at \$1.6 billion on an emergency supplemental, given the problems that we have in looking at our funding for next year when we are now in the budget process, it seems to me there has to be a very direct connection to our national interest.

And I am concerned about the stability of Colombia. And I had a chance recently to visit President Pastrana in December and have talked at length with Ambassador Moreno, and applaud what they are doing. And it is a big advance since the Supreme Court Chambers were attacked by the guerrillas not too long ago in Colombia.

But when you take a look at what will the impact on the use of drugs and the tremendous problems we have in this country, I want to candidly express my concern over this kind of an expenditure.

We spent \$18 billion a year on the drug problem. And \$12 billion of that is spent on fighting drugs on supply coming into this country, and street crime, which I used to participate in when I was district attorney of Philadelphia.

And we spend \$6 billion on demand on education and rehabilitation. And I have long thought that we ought to be spending more on the demand side, at least a 50/50 split in terms of a long-range solution.

So that before I am authorized to cast my vote for \$1.6 billion, I want to see some direct effect on the serious problems of drugs in the United States. That is an aspect that concerns me first and foremost.

I am also concerned about the Colombian Army and I am also concerned about the U.S. commitment.

And we have two very expert witnesses here in Undersecretary Pickering, with whom we have all worked for many years, and General Wilhelm. So I am prepared to listen but, candidly, it is a high hurdle.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, Senator Specter.

Any of our colleagues on this side have an opening statement?
 Senator Feinstein.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am not a member of the subcommittee. I am a member of the general Committee.

I have worked with Senator Coverdell on the drug issues for a substantial period of time. I come from a state heavily impacted. And I have met with the former Defense Minister of Colombia. And Senator Stevens was good enough to provide an opportunity for us to meet with President Pastrana.

I do not believe there are any good options. Of course, we have got to fight drugs on both the demand side and the supply side. However, we provide money to local jurisdictions on the demand side to provide prevention treatment, education.

The Federal Government itself does not do that. Our total responsibility is to maintain our borders, to provide Federal law enforcement and to interdict.

The former defense minister pointed out to me how 30 to 40 percent of the land mass of Colombia is today controlled by narcoterrorists; how 1,500 citizens are held as hostages; 250 military, 250 soldiers.

Eighty percent of the cocaine is grown in Colombia, is transported via, for the most part, Mexican cartels into this country. And I am one that believes something has to be done, that—we have to provide the kind of aid to an ally who has been a stalwart ally of this country, to a president who is doing his utmost to prevent human rights abuses; to change a pattern of corruption; and to stand tall in a situation in which it is very difficult to stand tall.

Everyone runs. And you cannot countenance running, and face these cartels and narcoterrorists. They understand one thing.

More pronouncedly, what is happening on the borders of this country, the Southwest border, is the spread of the corruption from the Southwest through the border into the United States.

With customs agents, with local public officials, the money for bribes is so enormous and I happen to believe that it is within our national interest to be helpful. It is not within our national interest to see the drug cartels and the narco-terrorists penetrate this country. And believe me, they will and they are trying now.

So I have very strong feelings on this issue. And I have a very strong belief that the Federal Government's responsibility is enforcement, is forward placement, and is to stop this development.

The cartels are more sophisticated than they have ever been before.

Our intelligence intercepts are down because they utilize highly encrypted computer systems. They have the most updated military equipment. And they are on a march.

Now, we either sit back and let this march take place because we are worried that there is not a 100 percent guarantee of success, or we are willing to play a role to back an ally that wants to be helpful; and the victims are right here on our side of the border.

So I am in support of this. I feel very strongly that Mr. Pickering and the General will hopefully provide as much guarantee of suc-

cess as they possibly can. And I—I am one that recognizes there is no guarantee.

But I do think that the national interest is a clear one, that when you have arrests as we have had called busts, in the colloquial, of 5 tons of cocaine, this is brought in by Mexican cartels, produced in Colombia, and these arrests are commonplace, that we have a huge problem.

And the supply is so great, the street price is dropping and continues to drop. And I agree, we must fight it on the demand side. I am certainly happy to do that. Some programs work. And some programs do not.

But we also have to make it extraordinarily difficult and prevent its admission to this country, and so I am in support of this effort, and I look forward to hearing the particulars.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, Senator Feinstein.

Let me—normally, when it is just a hearing of our subcommittee, Senator Leahy and I restrict opening statements just to the Chairman and the ranking member.

I am—since we have several different subcommittees today, we are being a little looser, but let me just remind everybody that anybody who—who does not feel the need to make an opening statement, that would not be frowned upon. And we do have a long list of witnesses.

Senator Burns.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CONRAD BURNS

Senator BURNS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I will try to stay in my two-minute confine.

Ambassador Pickering and General Wilhelm, nice to see you, and thank you for coming today.

Just a short statement, I chair the Military Construction Subcommittee and we have been asked to provide some of the infrastructure that they will need in their forward positioning.

I would have to say that as we move this along that we could sit down privately and talk about the situation and if it is well thought out, if it gets us to our mission, keeping in mind that I have some very serious reservations as the role of the military plays in this situation with drugs.

I think the role of the military is much different in this country than what it is being asked to do. I would hope that we could sit down and just visit about that because we are going to make a sizeable investment in our areas down there.

And with the drug situation, we are going—always going to have this drug situation in this country, folks, because we can buy—we have the money to buy the darn stuff.

That is our biggest problem, so how do we combat that? What we are trying to do down there and the infrastructure we will need in order to—to carry out your mission.

And Semper Fi, General.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, Senator Burns.

Does anyone else feel moved to make a statement on the Democratic side?

Senator INOUE. Well, we feel moved, but we will respond to our kinder instincts and—

Senator MCCONNELL. Great.

Anyone else on the Republican side feel moved to—to make an opening?

Senator DOMENICI. I am also moved, but I am going to pass on it.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you. We will be happy to make any opening statements a part of the record.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing on a subject of critical importance: how the United States can work with and support our partners in Latin America in our common fight against the scourge of illegal drugs.

We will soon consider emergency supplemental funding for Assistance to Plan Colombia. The President has made this a high priority, requesting this funding within a responsible Budget which pays down America's debt.

I would like to commend President Pastrana for developing a national strategy to free Colombia of the production and trafficking of drugs so he can reunify a country torn by decades of fighting. While he has asked the United States and other allies to help, Colombia itself will bear most of the cost to implement Plan Colombia. This comprehensive strategy includes the peace process, to bring leftist forces back into the political process; a forceful counter-drug strategy; reform of the justice system and protection of human rights, and democratization and social development.

For these reasons, I would be inclined to support rapid American assistance to help Colombia bring this strategy to fruition.

However, I have serious concerns and questions which I believe must first be addressed. I discussed some of these issues with Ambassador Moreno yesterday, and I will raise some of these questions here today.

The Pastrana Government has made important strides in improving respect for human rights, not least by Columbia's military. Columbia must follow through by prosecuting military officers accused of extra-judicial killings and other crimes in civilian courts. Firm action must be taken to investigate and prosecute crimes carried out by paramilitary groups, which seem to have taken on some of the military's "dirty work." In short, more needs to be done to protect human rights.

I also wonder whether a counter-drug strategy that relies on fighting insurgents in the jungle is likely to succeed, or whether it might make more sense to first focus on interdiction efforts to cordon off drug-producing areas. I'm also not sure I understand how military counter-narcotics operations in southern Columbia can be separated from the political fight against leftist rebels with whom President Pastrana says he would like to negotiate.

While Columbia's national commitment to the counter-drug effort is welcome, we also need to ensure that our support is part of a regional approach, so we do more than just move drug production and trafficking elsewhere in the region. And we need to ensure that alternative development programs are economically and environmentally sustainable, so we create a real future for those willing to give up producing drugs.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I'm not sure we're doing enough here at home to reduce the demand for drugs. In particular, we need to ensure that everyone who wants help to escape drug addiction can get into a treatment program, and help educate our youth to stay free of drugs. Otherwise, our efforts in Latin America run the risk of simply raising the price addicts pay for drugs.

I look forward to hearing from Under Secretary Pickering and General Wilhelm and Ambassador Moreno and our other witnesses so we can better understand how to use our resources effectively in a joint effort to free our hemisphere from the scourge of drugs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. And, gentlemen, why do you not proceed?

Mr. Ambassador, are you leading off?

Ambassador PICKERING. I am, Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much. I have a statement for the record.

Senator MCCONNELL. We will make it part of the record.

Ambassador PICKERING. And I will try to deliver a summary of the important parts of the remarks that I have prepared.

Let me begin by saying I was very appreciative of your statement of the four McConnell principles on dealing with drugs.

I think that they both inform and energize the kinds of approaches that we can take. And I think that they represent a potentially very strong bipartisan consensus on how to deal with this problem.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity today to discuss the U.S. Government assistance for Plan Colombia. I know that we are all concerned about the ramifications of the situation in Colombia and its impact on the United States.

The importance of fighting the scourge of illegal drugs as we have just heard from you is an issue on which we can all agree. The cost is of, on an annual basis, 52,000 dead and \$110 billion each year due to the health costs, accidental costs, lost time and so on. If my historical recollection is correct, these are the numbers respectively that we lost in Vietnam and Korea.

These are a huge toll. And 75 percent to 80 percent of the cocaine in that terrible cocktail comes from—

Senator REID. Mr. Chairman—

Ambassador PICKERING (continuing). From Colombia.

Senator REID. Mr. Chairman—Mr. Chairman.

Would you explain the 52,000?

Ambassador PICKERING. My testimony says that we had—the cost to our society is 52,000 dead and nearly \$110 billion each year. The \$110 billion is each year. The 52,000 dead, I think, is a cumulative total.

Senator REID. 52,000 who died from drug use—

Ambassador PICKERING. Exactly.

Senator REID (continuing). Or is that in the war against drugs?

Ambassador PICKERING. No. It is the people impacted by—the—by the drugs in this country. That is the death toll.

General WILHELM. Drug-related violence.

Ambassador PICKERING. Yes. Drug-related violence—

General WILHELM. Overdoses.

Ambassador PICKERING (continuing). Overdoses, all causes, but related to drugs.

Senator REID. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador PICKERING. Although narcotics remain the key in our assistance to Colombia, strengthening the economy and Colombia institutions and supporting the peace process will also help to bring about an objective of stability to the entire region and aid in the struggle against narcotics. I am grateful, Mr. Chairman, for the support of the Congress on this issue.

Our approach to Colombia can be one of the best examples of what might be achieved when there is a bipartisan consensus on pursuing our national interests abroad. I thank you all for that consideration.

We are fortunate, as we have just heard, to be working with President Pastrana and his Administration. After the terrible relations with the Samper Administration, President Pastrana's tenure offers the United States and the rest of the international commu-

nity a golden opportunity to work with Colombia in confronting these threats.

President Pastrana's commitment to achieve peace is indisputable. He has also demonstrated his willingness to root out narcotics trafficking while remaining firmly committed to democratic values and principles.

Colombia is currently enduring a critical societal, national security and economic series of problems that stem in great part from the drug trade and the internal conflict which is financed by that trade.

This situation has limited the government of Colombia's sovereignty in large parts of the country. These areas have been becoming the prime coca and opium poppy producing zones.

This problem directly affects the United States as drug trafficking and abuse cause the enormous social, health and financial damage to our communities, which I have just described.

Over 80 percent of the world's supply of cocaine is grown, processed or transported through Colombia. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency estimates that up to 75 percent of the heroin consumed on the East Coast of the United States comes from Colombia, although Colombia produces less than 3 percent of the world's heroin.

The government of Colombia has taken the initiative to confront the challenges it faces. With the development of a strategic approach to address its national challenge called Plan Colombia, a plan for peace, prosperity and the strengthening of the state.

It is an ambitious, but we believe realistic, package of mutually reinforcing integrated policies.

The plan itself was formulated, drafted and approved in Colombia by President Pastrana and his team. Without its Colombian origins and its Colombian stamp, it would not have the support and commitment of Colombia behind it. Colombian ownership and vigorous Colombia implementation are essential to the future success of the Plan.

The U.S. government shares the assessment that an integrated, comprehensive approach to Colombia's interlocking challenges holds the best promise for success.

I had the honor of meeting with President Pastrana and his team February 13th and 14th in Colombia to discuss implementation. We reviewed the—with the Colombians a wide array of coordination and implementation issues.

I believe with Colombia we have launched a process of continuous bilateral discussions that will refine and make more effective our capacity to contribute to the implementation of Colombia's policies.

Before I describe for you our proposal to assist Plan Colombia, I want to remind you that the Plan cannot be understood simply in terms of a U.S. contribution.

Plan Colombia is a \$7.5 billion plan over 3 years, which President Pastrana has said Colombia will provide \$4 billion of its scarce resources to support. He called on the international community to provide the remaining \$3.5 billion.

In response to this request, the Administration is now proposing, and it is before you, a \$1.6 billion assistance package to Colombia

of new monies and current funding for the years 2000 and 2001. Our request for new monies includes \$954 million in 2000 in an emergency supplemental and \$318 million in 2001 funding.

A significant share of our package will go to reduce the supply of drugs to the United States, by assisting the government of Colombia in its efforts to limit the production, refinement and transportation of cocaine and heroin.

Building on current funding of over \$330 million in fiscal year 2000 and 2001, the Administration's proposal includes an additional \$818 million funded through the international affairs programs, the function 150 account, and \$137 million through defense programs, the 050 function, in 2000; and \$256 million in 150; and \$62 million through 050 in fiscal year 2001.

We are looking to the European Union and the International Financial Institutions to provide additional funding. Already, the International Financial Institutions have committed between \$750 million and \$1 billion, which is focused on Plan Colombia and its objectives.

The Departments of State, Defense, Justice and Treasury, as well as the Agency for International Development, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, all played very major roles in proposing and crafting the 2-year support package which is before you. They will play an essential role in the inter-agency implementation effort.

I briefly would like now, Mr. Chairman, to focus on the key elements of the plan.

The first is boosting governing capacity and respect for human rights. Here, the Administration proposes funding \$93 million over the next 2 years to fund a series of programs under the Agency for International Development and the Department of State and Justice to strengthen human rights and the administration of justice institutions.

Expansion of counternarcotics operations into Southern Colombia: With this part of the package, the Administration proposes to fund \$600 million over the next 2 years to help train and equip two additional special counternarcotics battalions, which will move into Southern Colombia to protect Colombian National Police as they carry out their counterdrug mission of eradication. The program will provide helicopters, training and intelligence support for that activity.

The third area is alternative economic development. The Administration proposal includes new funding of \$145 million over the next 2 years to provide economic alternatives for small farmers, who now grow coca and poppy, and to increase local government's ability to respond to the needs of their people.

This is an integral part of the program based on the success which has been seen in Bolivia in its integrated program of eradicating crops and providing for alternative development.

The fourth area is more aggressive interdiction. Building on Peru's success in aerial and riverine and ground-based interdiction, enhancing Colombia's ability to interdict air, water-borne and road trafficking is essential to decreasing the price paid to farmers for coca leaf and to decreasing the northward flow of drugs. The Ad-

ministration proposes to spend \$340 million on the interdiction programs.

The fifth element is assistance to the Colombia National Police. The Administration proposes an additional funding of \$96 million over the next 2 years to enhance the Colombia National Police's ability to eradicate coca and poppy fields, this in addition to the counternarcotics assistance of \$158 million provided to the CNP in fiscal year 1999.

I would like now to mention just an important aspect of what we are dealing with in the human rights dimension. We have strongly supported the efforts of President Pastrana and his Administration to advance the protection of human rights and to prosecute those who abuse them.

Complicity by elements of Colombia's security forces with the right wing militia groups called paramilitaries, remains a serious problem.

Although the government of Colombia has taken important steps in holding senior military and police officers accountable for participating in human rights violations, we believe more must and can be done, however.

And in my talks with President Pastrana, I had the opportunity to emphasize that and he tells me he believes that that can be accomplished.

U.S. assistance to Colombian military and police forces is provided strictly in accordance with Section 563 of the Fiscal Year 2000 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, the so-called Leahy Amendment.

No assistance is provided to any unit of the security forces for which we have credible evidence of the commission and I quote from the act, "of gross violations of human rights," unless the Secretary of State is able to certify that the government of Colombia has taken effective measures to bring those responsible to justice.

We are firmly committed to the Leahy Amendment and have a rigorous process in place to screen those units being considered for assistance.

A word, Mr. Chairman, on the peace process. President Pastrana has made bringing an end to Colombia's civil strife through a peace agreement with the various insurgent groups a central goal of his Administration. He was elected on that platform.

Pastrana believes, and the U.S. Government agrees, that ending the civil conflict and eliminating all of that conflict's harmful side effects is central to solving Colombia's multi-faceted problems.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members, the Administration has been pleased by the support from both sides of the Congress that share our concern for Colombia's future.

At this moment, Colombia is a partner which shares our counternarcotics concerns and possesses the will to execute the needed reforms and operations.

Our challenge is as a neighbor and as a partner. And it is to identify the ways in which the U.S. Government can assist Colombia in resolving these problems.

Concerted action now could, over time, stem the illicit narcotics flow to the United States. Action now can contribute to a peaceful resolution of a half-century of conflict. Action now could return Co-

Colombia to its rightful historical place as one of the hemisphere's strongest democracies.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, before I close, I would like very briefly to mention two other important supplemental requests for which the Administration is seeking funding.

First, emergency supplemental funds are needed in Southeast Europe in Kosovo to support crucial economic and democratic reform in the region, promote law and order in Kosovo and provide much-needed assistance for the United Nations interim mission in Kosovo.

Secondly, additional funding is also being requested for U.S. contributions to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Trust Fund. Our contribution is an essential component of this initiative, to provide necessary debt-relief for the world's poorest and most indebted countries.

The debt relief will enable those recipients to fund crucial poverty reduction programs, and I urge the Committee to give these requests full and equal consideration with the support for Plan Colombia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PREPARED STATEMENT

Senator STEVENS. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador. I want to make sure everyone understands. Those last two requests are not before the Committee this morning.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR THOMAS R. PICKERING

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity today to discuss U.S. Government assistance for Plan Colombia. I know that we are all very concerned about the ramifications of the situation in Colombia on the United States. The importance of fighting the scourge of illegal drugs is an issue on which we can all agree. The problems in Colombia affect the lives of Americans at home and abroad. Illegal drugs cost our society 52,000 dead and nearly \$110 billion each year due to health costs, accidents, and lost productivity. Narcotics also have a corrosive effect on the democratic institutions and economies of the region. Although counter-narcotics remains key in our assistance to Colombia, strengthening the economy and institutions and supporting the peace process would help to bring stability to the entire region.

I am very grateful for the support of Congress on this issue. Our approach to Colombia is one of the best examples of what can be achieved when there is a bipartisan consensus on pursuing American interests abroad. I thank you for that.

We are fortunate to be working with President Pastrana and his Administration. After strained relations with the Samper Administration, President Pastrana's tenure offers the United States and the rest of the international community a golden opportunity to work with Colombia in confronting these threats. President Pastrana's commitment to achieve peace is indisputable. He has also demonstrated his willingness to root out narcotics trafficking while remaining firmly committed to democratic values and principles.

Colombia is currently enduring critical societal, national security, and economic problems that stem in large part from the drug trade and the internal conflict that it finances. This situation has limited the Government of Colombia's sovereignty in large parts of the country. These areas have become the prime coca and opium poppy producing zones. This problem directly affects the United States as drug trafficking and abuse cause enormous social, health and financial damage in our communities. Over 80 percent of the world's supply of cocaine is grown, processed, or transported through Colombia. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency estimates that up to 75 percent of the heroin consumed on the East Coast of the United States comes from Colombia—although Colombia produces less than 3 percent of the world's heroin.

Colombia's national sovereignty is increasingly threatened by well-armed and ruthless guerrillas, paramilitaries and the narco-trafficking interests to which they are inextricably linked. Although the Government is not directly at risk, these threats are slowly eroding the authority of the central government and depriving it of the ability to govern in outlying areas. It is in these lawless areas, where the guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and narcotics traffickers flourish, that the narcotics industry is finding refuge. As a result, large swathes of Colombia are in danger of being narco-districts for the production, transportation, processing, and marketing of these substances.

These links between narcotics trafficking and the guerrilla and paramilitary movements are well documented. We estimate that the FARC now has 7,000–11,000 active members, the ELN between 3,000–6,000, and that there are an estimated 5,000–7,000 paramilitary members. They participate in this narcotics connection. Much of the recruiting success occurs in marginalized rural areas where the groups can offer salaries much higher than those paid by legitimate employers. Estimates of guerrilla income from narcotics trafficking and other illicit activities, such as kidnapping and extortion, are unreliable, but clearly exceed \$100 million a year, and could be far greater. Of this, we estimate some 30–40 percent comes directly from the drug trade. Paramilitary groups also have clear ties to important narcotics traffickers, and paramilitary leaders have even publicly admitted their participation in the drug trade.

This situation is worsened by the fact the Colombian economy is undergoing its first recession in 25 years, and its deepest recession of the last 70 years. Real gross domestic product is estimated to have fallen by 3.5 percent last year, the result of external shocks, fiscal imbalances, and a further weakening of confidences related to stepped up activity by insurgent groups. Unemployment has rocketed from under 9 percent in 1995 to about 20 percent in 1999, adding to the pool of unemployed workers who can be drawn into the narcotics trade or into insurgent or paramilitary groups. This recession has also sapped the Colombian government of resources to address societal and political pressures, fight the narcotics trade, or respond to its thirty-five year internal conflict.

Plan Colombia

The Government of Colombia has taken the initiative to confront the challenges it faces with the development of a strategic approach to address its national challenges. The "Plan Colombia—Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and Strengthening of the State" is an ambitious, but realistic, package of mutually reinforcing policies to revive Colombia's battered economy, to strengthen the democratic pillars of the society, to promote the peace process and to eliminate "sanctuaries" for narcotics producers and traffickers. The strategy combines existing GOC policies with new initiatives to forge an integrated approach to resolving Colombia's most pressing national challenges.

The USG consulted closely on the key elements that make up the Plan with Colombian leaders and senior officials. It ties together many individual approaches and strategies already being pursued in Colombia and elsewhere in the region. The Plan itself was formulated, drafted and approved in Colombia by President Pastrana and his team. Without its Colombian origins and its Colombian stamp, it would not have the support and commitment of Colombia behind it. Colombian ownership and vigorous GOC implementation are essential to the future success of the Plan.

The USG shares the assessment that an integrated, comprehensive approach to Colombia's interlocking challenges holds the best promise of success. For example, counternarcotics efforts will be most effective when combined with rigorous GOC law enforcement/military cooperation, complementary alternative development programs and measures to assure human rights accountability. Similarly, promoting respect for the rule of law is just as essential for attracting foreign investors as it is for securing a durable peace agreement.

I met with President Pastrana and his Plan Colombia team on February 13–14 to discuss the Plan's implementation. To underscore the importance of integrated planning, I brought a senior counterpart team including Rand Beers, Assistant Secretary Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; Harold Koh, Assistant Secretary Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; Brian Sheridan, Assistant Secretary of Defense Special Operations Low Intensity Conflicts; Mary Lee Warren, Deputy Assistant for the Attorney General; and William Brownfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. We reviewed with the Colombians a wide array of coordination and implementation issues. I believe we have launched a process of continuous bilateral discussions that will refine and make more effective our implementation policies.

Before I describe for you our proposal to assist Plan Colombia, let me remind you that the Plan cannot be understood simply in terms of a U.S. contribution. Plan Colombia is a \$7.5 billion plan of which President Pastrana has said Colombia will provide \$4 billion of its scarce resources. He called on the international community to provide the remaining \$3.5 billion. In response to this request, the Administration is proposing a \$1.6 billion assistance package to Colombia of new monies and current funding. Our request for new monies includes a \$954 million fiscal year 2000 emergency supplemental and \$318 million in fiscal year 2001 funding. A significant share of our package will go to reduce the supply of drugs to the United States by assisting the Government of Colombia in its efforts to limit the production, refinement, and transportation of cocaine and heroin. Building on current funding of over \$330 million in fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2001, the Administration's proposal includes an additional \$818 million funded through international affairs programs (function 150) and \$137 million through defense programs (function 050) in fiscal year 2000, and \$256 million funded through function 150 and \$62 million through function 050 in fiscal year 2001. We are looking to the European Union and the International Financial Institutions to provide additional funding.

The Departments of State, Defense, Justice, and Treasury, as well as the Agency for International Development, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy all played major roles in proposing and crafting the Plan Colombia two year support package. They will all play essential roles in the interagency implementation effort.

The Administration's proposal for support for Plan Colombia addresses the breadth of Colombia's challenges, and will help Colombia in its efforts to fight the drug trade, foster peace, increase the rule of law, improve human rights, expand economic development, and institute justice reform. Much of the assistance for social assistance programs will come from the International Financial Institutions (IFI), future potential bilateral donors and Colombia's own funds.

There has been an explosive growth in the coca crop in Putumayo, in southern Colombia and, to a lesser extent, in Norte de Santander, in the northeast. Putumayo is an area that remains beyond the reach of the government's coca eradication operations. Strong guerrilla presence and weak state authority have contributed to the lawless situation in the Putumayo. As our success in Peru and Bolivia demonstrates, it is possible to combat narcotics production in the Andean region. This package will aid the Government of Colombia in their plans to launch a comprehensive step-by-step effort in Putumayo and Caqueta to counter the coca explosion, including eradication, interdiction, and alternative development over the next several years.

The push into drug producing southern Colombia will give greater sovereignty over that region to the GOC, allowing the CNP to eradicate drug cultivation and destroy cocaine laboratories. Increased interdiction will make the entire drug business more dangerous for traffickers and less profitable. Meanwhile, funding for Plan Colombia will support internally displaced people with emergency relief in the short term and will fund alternative economic development to provide licit sources of income in the long term. USAID and DOJ will fund programs to improve human rights conditions and justice institutions giving the Colombian people greater access to the benefits of democratic institutions.

Our counternarcotics package for Colombia was designed with the benefit of knowing what has worked in Bolivia and Peru. With USG assistance, both countries have been able to reduce dramatically coca production. This was achieved through successful efforts to re-establish government control and bring government services to former drug producing safe havens. Both Bolivia and Peru combined vigorous eradication and interdiction efforts and with incentives for small farmers to switch to legal crops. We aim to help Colombia accomplish a similar record of success.

In doing this, we cannot, and will not, abandon our allies in Bolivia and Peru. Their successes are real and inspired with 66–73 percent reductions of coca production in each country. But they are also tenuous against the seductive dangers of the narcotics trade. This is why our Plan Colombia support package includes \$46 million for regional interdiction efforts and another \$30 million for development in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. These countries deserve our continued support to solidify the gains they have striven so hard to obtain. We are not content to allow cultivation and production of narcotics to simply be displaced from one Andean country to another.

Components of U.S. Assistance Package

The proposed U.S. assistance has five components:

Boosting Governing Capacity and Respect for Human Rights.—The Administration proposes funding \$93 million over the next two years to fund a number of programs

administered by the Agency for International Development (AID) and the Departments of State and Justice to strengthen human rights and administration of justice institutions. Specific initiatives include increasing protection of human rights NGOs, supporting human rights NGOs' information and education programs, creating and training special units of prosecutors and judicial police to investigate human rights cases involving GOC officials, and training public defenders and judges. We propose to allocate \$15 million to support GOC and NGO entities specifically focused on protecting human rights. Boosting governing capacity also includes training and support for GOC anti-corruption, anti-money laundering and anti-kidnapping personnel.

Expansion of Counternarcotics Operations into Southern Colombia.—The world's greatest expansion in narcotics cultivation is occurring in insurgent-dominated southern Colombia. With this package, the Administration proposes to fund \$600 million over the next two years to help train and equip two additional special counternarcotics battalions (CNBN) which will move into southern Colombia to protect the Colombian National Police (CNP) as they carry out their counter-drug mission. The program will provide 30 Blackhawk helicopters and 33 Huey helicopters to make the CNBNs air mobile so they can access this remote and undeveloped region of Colombia. It will also provide intelligence for the Colombian CNBNs. These troops will accompany and backup police eradication and interdiction efforts. They will also provide secure conditions for the implementation of aid programs, including alternative development and relocation assistance, to those impacted by the ending of illegal narcotics cultivation.

Alternative Economic Development.—The Administration includes new funding of \$145 million over the next two years to provide economic alternatives for small farmers who now grow coca and poppy, and to increase local governments' ability to respond to the needs of their people. As interdiction and eradication make narcotics farming less profitable, these programs will assist communities in the transition to licit economic activity.

More Aggressive Interdiction.—Coca and cocaine are produced in a relatively small area of Colombia, while the Central American/Caribbean/Eastern Pacific transit zone is approximately the size of the United States. Enhancing Colombia's ability to interdict air, water-borne, and road trafficking is essential to decreasing the price paid to farmers for coca leaf and to decreasing the northward flow of drugs. The Administration proposes to spend \$340 million on interdiction. The program includes funding over the next two years for radar upgrades to give Colombia a greater ability to intercept traffickers, and also to provide intelligence to allow the Colombian police and military to respond quickly to narcotics activity. It will support the United States forward operating locations in Manta, Ecuador, which will be used for narcotics related missions. These funds will also provide \$46 million to enhance interdiction efforts in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador to prevent narcotics traffickers and growers from moving into neighboring countries.

Assistance for the Colombian National Police (CNP).—The Administration proposes additional funding of \$96 million over the next two years to enhance the CNP's ability to eradicate coca and poppy fields. This request builds upon our fiscal year 1999 counternarcotics assistance of \$158 million to the CNP. Our additional assistance will upgrade existing aircraft, purchase additional spray aircraft, provide secure bases for increased operations in the coca-growing centers, and provide more intelligence on the narcotics traffickers.

All U.S. counternarcotics assistance to Colombia will continue to be in the form of goods and services. The counternarcotics components of Plan Colombia will be implemented by the Colombian police and military, and there are no plans to commit U.S. forces to implement militarily any aspect of this Plan. On the ground, our military assistance will be limited to training vetted counternarcotics units through the temporary assignment of carefully picked U.S. military trainers.

Human Rights Dimension

We have also strongly supported the efforts of the Pastrana Administration to advance the protection of human rights and to prosecute those who abuse them. Complicity by elements of Colombia's security forces with the right wing militia groups remains a serious problem, although the GOC has taken important steps in holding senior military and police officials accountable for participation in human rights violations. Since assuming office in August of 1998, President Pastrana has demonstrated his Government's commitment to protecting human rights by the dismissal of four generals and numerous mid-level officers and NCO's for collaboration with paramilitaries or failure to confront them aggressively. There have also been repeated government declarations that collaboration between members of security forces and paramilitaries will not be tolerated. More must be done, however.

U.S. assistance to Colombian military and police forces is provided strictly in accordance with Section 563 of the Fiscal Year 2000 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act—the so-called Leahy Amendment. No assistance is provided to any unit of the security forces for which we have credible evidence of commission of gross violations of human rights, unless the Secretary is able to certify that the Government of Colombia has taken effective measures to bring those responsible to justice. We are firmly committed to the Leahy Amendment, and have a rigorous process in place to screen those units being considered for assistance.

The Government of Colombia also acknowledges the urgent need to improve physical security and protection for human rights workers and the NGOs to which they belong. Currently, the GOC has dedicated \$5.6 million to provide physical protection to approximately 80 human rights activists and their offices. The Plan outlines measures to strengthen the Human Rights Ombudsman's office, as well as to establish a Permanent National Commission on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

One of the most serious problems in Colombia, a “silent crisis”, is the plight of its internally displaced persons (IDPs). The scope of the problem is enormous. The vicious conflict between paramilitaries and guerrillas is largely responsible for the forced displacement of Colombians. As many as 300,000 persons, mostly women and children, were driven from their homes in 1998 by rural violence. NGOs report that Colombia has the fourth largest population of displaced persons in the world. The USG provided, in fiscal year 1999, \$5.8 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) Western Hemisphere operations, with an additional \$3 million earmarked for Colombia. Additionally, \$4.7 million was contributed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) general fund for the Western Hemisphere, a portion of which was used for institutional capacity building in Colombia. Responsibility for assistance to IDPs has been assigned to the Colombian government's Red de Solidaridad (Solidarity Network) which will work closely with the U.N. system, NGOs, and other Colombian agencies to coordinate services for IDPs throughout the country.

Peace Process

President Pastrana has made bringing an end to Colombia's civil strife through a peace agreement with the various insurgent groups a central goal of his Administration. Pastrana believes, and the United States Government agrees, that ending the civil conflict and eliminating all of that conflict's harmful side effects is central to solving Colombia's multi-faceted problems.

A peace agreement would stabilize the nation, help Colombia's economy to recover and allow for further improvement in the protection of human rights. A successful peace process would also restore Colombian government authority and control in the coca-growing region. We hope the peace negotiations going on now between the GOC and the FARC and the GOC and the ELN prove successful. We applaud the Colombian Government's determination to press the guerrillas to cease their practices of kidnapping, forced recruitment of children, and attacks against the civilian population.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members, the Administration has been pleased by the bipartisan support from both houses that share our concern for Colombia's future. At this moment, Colombia is a partner who shares our counternarcotics concerns and possesses the will to execute the needed reforms and operations. Our challenge, as a neighbor and a partner, is to identify ways in which the U.S. Government can assist Colombia in resolving these problems. Concerted action now could help over time to stem the illicit narcotics flow to the United States. Action now can contribute to a peaceful resolution of a half-century of conflict. Action now could return Colombia to its rightful historical place as one of the hemisphere's strongest democracies.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

STATEMENT OF GEN. CHARLES WILHELM, COMMANDER IN CHIEF, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND

Senator McCONNELL. General, go right ahead.

General WILHELM. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, I welcome this opportunity to discuss with you Plan Colombia, the Colombia Supplemental Request and our past, present and future initiatives to assist Colombia and its neighbors in their struggle against illegal drugs and the threats the drug trade poses to their societies and to our own.

The counter-drug struggle provides the underpinning for most of our military engagement activities in the Andean region. With regard to—Colombia, I am encouraged by the progress that is being made.

COUNTERNARCOTICS BATTALION

During 1999, we created—we created the first of the Colombia counternarcotics battalions. This 931-member unit is composed of professional soldiers, all of whom have been vetted to avoid human rights abusers.

The battalion has been trained by members of the U.S. Seventh Special Forces Group and is designed to interact with and provide security for elements of the Colombian National Police during counter-drug operations.

Tactical mobility has long been the Achilles heel of Colombia's Armed Forces. This battalion will be supported by an aviation element consisting initially of 18 refurbished UH-1N helicopters provided through our cooperative effort involving INL at our State Department and the U.S. Southern Command representing the Department of Defense (DOD).

These new units will focus their operations in the southern departments of Colombia, which have been the sites of recent wholesale increases in drug cultivation and production.

To assure that combined police and military units conducting counterdrug operations have the best, most recent and most accurate intelligence, we have worked closely with Colombia while developing The Colombia Joint Intelligence Center, or COJIC as it is commonly referred to, at the Tres Esquinas Military Complex that abuts the southern departments. This computerized facility attained its initial operating capability on 18 December of last year.

Deliberately and without fanfare, these new organizations have commenced operations. Their two initial forays into drug cultivation and production areas near Tres Esquinas resulted in arrests, seizures of drugs, destruction of laboratories, confiscation of precursor chemicals and identification and subsequent eradication of new cultivation sites.

ACTION PLAN

The initiatives that I have just described, we refer to collectively as Action Plan 99. The follow-on effort, Action Plan 2000 builds on these first-phase efforts.

If—if additional funds are provided during the coming year, we will build two additional counternarcotics battalion and a brigade headquarters.

With a well-trained and a fully equipped counternarcotics brigade consisting of more than 3,000 professional soldiers, the Colombian Armed Forces will be prepared to join forces with Air Mobile elements of the National Police and reassert control over the narcotics-rich departments of southern Colombia.

HELICOPTERS

Continuing to focus on mobility and intelligence, we will provide 15 additional UH-1N helicopters, rounding out the aviation battalion.

The UH-1Ns will ultimately be replaced by UH-60 Blackhawks, which have the range, payload, high altitude capability and survivability required by Colombia's Armed Forces to cripple the narcotics industry and bring the remainder of the country under government control.

On the intelligence side, we will continue to develop and refine the Colombia Joint Intelligence Center and pursue a broad range of initiatives to improve our interdiction capabilities.

FORWARD OPERATING LOCATIONS

A key component of the interdiction plan, which was mentioned by Senator Stevens, is first-phase development of the forward operating location at Manta, Ecuador.

As I had previously testified before Senator Stevens and Senator Inouye's Committee, this test—this facility is urgently required to replace the capabilities that we lost when we left Panama and closed Howard Air Force Base.

Manta's importance stems from the fact that it is the sole operating site that will give us the operational reach we need to cover all of Colombia, all of Peru and the coca cultivation areas of Bolivia.

Looking beyond the year 2000, we have engaged the services of the Military Professional Research Institute (MPRI); hand-picked and highly experienced MPRI analysts will assess Colombia's security force requirements beyond the counterdrug battalions and their supporting organizations.

The contract tasks MPRI to develop an operating concept for the Armed Forces force structures to implement the concept and supporting and related doctrine.

In recent months, I have become increasingly concerned about Colombia's neighbors. The adverse social, economic and political conditions spawned wholly or in part by drug trafficking and the other corrupting activities it breeds are weakening the fabric of democracies in other nations in the region.

For this reason, while I endorse a Colombia-centric approach to the drug problem, I caution against a Colombia-exclusive approach.

As we assist Colombia in making important strides to reassert its sovereignty over its territory and to curb growing cultivation, we should also take appropriate steps to preserve the noteworthy success—successes achieved by Peru and Bolivia. And we should be sensitive to emerging needs in the bordering countries of Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela and Brazil.

This is by every measurement a regional problem. As such, I think we must pursue regional solutions.

In summary, I am convinced that the Supplemental Funding Initiative is an important step in the right direction and not a minute too soon.

To seize the initiative in a struggle, which according to the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, claims as many as 52,000 lives per year, which Ambassador Pickering has already mentioned, I urge speedy approval of the Colombia Supplemental and increased support for the other nations in the region.

I will be pleased to answer your questions. Thank you.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, General.

We are going to have 5-minute questioning rounds. And let—let me just begin with a—a kind of overview statement of the last few years.

From 1985 to 1992, why do we not just call these the “Just-say-no” years—if you would put this chart up?

Senator MCCONNELL. During the “Just-say-no” years, both the production and use of drugs in this country declined. Then in 1992, about the time the President when asked with regard to inhaling, if he would have—had—if he had it to do over again, would he have inhaled, and he said, “Sure, if I could.”

We have the—those years in which both the production and the use—if you could hold that up a little higher—continues to go up.

Now, excuse my skepticism, gentlemen, but here we are in an election year in 2000. And the Administration comes up here with a massive request, which I must say parenthetically, I am likely to support with some revisions, but where have you been for the last 7 years?

Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador PICKERING. Let me say that the results in both Bolivia and Peru, some of which you already cited, show you some of where we have been for the last 7 years or the last whatever years.

In the last 3 years, the Banzer Administration through real dedication has reduced cocaine production 50 to 60 percent, and that is a conservative figure. Some say more like 70. That similar reduction levels have been—

Senator MCCONNELL. OK. You are—you are taking credit for what happened in Peru, are you?

Ambassador PICKERING. We are, for some of it, because we had provided assistance for it. But you are entirely right. It does not work if the countries themselves are not prepared to gear up and do the job.

And that is precisely what we compliment President Banzer and President Fujimori for doing. It is not something the United States would do alone, but it is something we can make a major contribution to.

Now, both of those successes are now being applied to Colombia, but we share with you the concern, the balloon effect, that successes in Bolivia and Peru have helped to push some of this problem in the direction of Colombia.

Colombia is there. Why have we not done more in Colombia sooner? Well, we have done a lot with the Colombia National Police, but you and I know that until 1 year ago, there was a president by the name of Samper in Colombia, whose least interest was in cooperating and taking that personal responsibility or the national responsibility to work on drugs.

And so as a result, what has changed in Colombia is two things: A rapid increase in production but a new president and a new team that are willing to work on this particular problem, the way President Banzer and President Fujimori have led their countries to work on.

So I believe, in fact, we now have a successful series of ingredients in place to work on this particular problem, and obviously you know and I know that it takes two. It takes the country concerned, as well as the willingness on the part of the United States to do that. And that is why we are before you today.

Senator MCCONNELL. Well, I am a little more—and I am not as concerned about their President as I am ours. I mean, the question is: Where has this Administration been for the last 7 years on this problem?

We see the statistics. They are off the charts. Now, you are—you are telling me, Mr. Ambassador, that—that we did—we were making a significant request before this year. Well, I am looking here at—

Ambassador PICKERING. I am not. I am saying that, in fact, there have been significant successes within the requests that we had made before this year—

Senator MCCONNELL. But—but there—but—but there—

Ambassador PICKERING (continuing). That there was a reason why we did not go into Colombia.

Senator MCCONNELL. But in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, you—you gave me a—a rationale for not making a huge request for Colombia before. But you were seeking to take credit for what has happened in Peru and Bolivia and Ecuador.

These figures just pale in comparison to what has been dropped on us here in an election year in an attempt obviously to—to try to obscure what is the—the—the weakest imaginable record on—on fighting drugs that you could conceive of over the last 7 years.

General, you are not in politics here, but you are also sitting at the table. I wonder if you have some rationale for why all of a sudden, right now, we are getting a massive request like this to go after a problem that—that—that—that the chart indicates has been worsening over the last 7 years.

Ambassador PICKERING. With all respect, Mr. Chairman, the reason why we are now up with a very large request is both the character of the problem in Colombia, after many years of the Samper Administration, a guerrilla movement and now a paramilitary movement that are deriving enormous benefits, and so they are seeking to spread this as widely as possible.

The unlimited capacity they have had to transport these drugs through Colombia and the change in Colombian Administration, I think, all produced very clear and self-evident reasons why we should be putting a significant amount of money into Colombia now to deal with this issue.

Senator MCCONNELL. Well, I—as I said, I may well support this with modifications. The—the question remains, and you have done the best you can with a question that simply cannot be answered, which is: Where has this Administration been for the—for the last 7 years?

The—the truth of the matter is there has been little or no interest in the war on drugs. And both the production and the use of it—the use of it here in the United States, the—the figures are indisputable.

Now, during his visit, President Pastrana made a commitment to break the links between the military and paramilitary groups to assure any soldier engaged in human rights abuses is brought before a civilian court.

Unfortunately, a panel known as the Supreme Judicial Council continues to have the right to intervene and direct that cases be removed from the civilian courts and considered only by the—the military courts.

The record shows the military justice system invariably drops charges or fails to prosecute serious cases of abuses. I know there are a few officers who have lost their positions, but that falls far short of appropriate legal action.

Now, I understand that President Pastrana could issue an executive order which would forbid this Council from undermining investigation and prosecution of cases of human rights abuse. He could do that.

I am considering language which conditions assistance on just such an executive order. And I wonder, Mr. Ambassador, how you would feel about that kind of stipulation in the bill?

Ambassador PICKERING. I believe that President Pastrana will keep his commitment to us and move in that particular direction.

I think as a result, it makes it unnecessary to condition the legislation. And many countries around the world find it easier to take initiatives than to be told by us exactly what they have to do.

They are all in the common interest and they are moving ahead. And as you have said, President Pastrana has already begun to take actions in dealing with this nexus between the military and the paramilitaries, and I believe he will continue to do so.

Within the last 2 days, two more paramilitaries who occupy significant positions in their structure have been arrested in Colombia.

I also believe that the President is very serious when he has not only relieved individuals but looked into the record of finding ways to bring those individuals to justice if the evidence and the information is available to do so.

When I was there last week, I talked to him, as I know General McCaffrey is talking to him this week, about taking that step that he has committed to take, to us, to move these cases into the civilian courts.

Senator MCCONNELL. So the answer is no, you—you would oppose that language.

Ambassador PICKERING. I would.

Senator MCCONNELL. Yes. One quick question before going to Senator Leahy. Mr. Ambassador and General, there is strong evidence that the paramilitaries with known ties to the traditional Armed Forces are also profiting from the drug trade.

Although you acknowledge the paramilitaries are a problem, I have heard no concrete discussion of how you plan to target their trafficking or break their ties to the regular military. What should the Pastrana government be doing to break that tie?

Ambassador PICKERING. Would you like me to start with that, if I may?

We believe that the paramilitaries are deeply involved in the drug trade. And that is only one of a number of reasons why they need to be opposed and why President Pastrana should move against them.

When I was in Colombia last week, it was made clear that in the southern area, on which we intend to target the newly trained units and to use them as a basis for reestablishing the government authority that is necessary to eliminate the coca production in that area either through fumigation or eradication by the people themselves, the paramilitaries have increased their strength, increased their position, and increased their control and operation of the trade.

So they are directly in the line of the government advance. To be able to do this—and there is nothing that I have seen that in any way, eliminates their role or indeed the effort to do that.

We have as part of our proposal before you a continuation and expansion of a program we have undertaken with President Pastrana to deal with the ever-present and very difficult question of corruption.

It is also a serious problem in Colombia. I think that as you look around there is not any problem that anybody else has that Colombia does not seem to have in one way or another. But this is important and this is within and part of the budget proposals that we have before you.

And President Pastrana has also made it clear that he is committed in moving in this area.

PARAMILITARIES

General WILHELM. Senator McConnell, if I could pick up where the Ambassador left off, I think there can be absolutely no doubt that the paramilitaries are directly involved in the narcotics trafficking enterprise.

I think we can deduce that from their own admission. They have openly acknowledged their involvements and their links with drug traffickers.

In terms of the Colombian government's approach to address this linkage between the paramilitaries—the paramilitaries and the narco-traffickers, I think it has been clearly defined by the Chief of Defense, the Commander of the Armed Forces, General Tapias.

Sir, General Tapias has developed a 6-year strategy, which supports Plan Colombia. This is the overarching Colombia Military

Strategy. It is a regional strategy. The first 2 years target the southern departments where the majority of cultivation and production takes place. Years 3 and 4 target the——

Senator McCONNELL. Sorry to interrupt you, but how does that help, if you still have a safe haven the size of Switzerland?

COLOMBIA'S STRATEGY

General WILHELM. OK, sir. You are discussing the Despeje region, which has—was created to provide a negotiating space with the FARC.

Sir, the Dispeja region is not a major drug cultivation or production area in Colombia. Estimates of the total amount of coca being grown there hover around the 10 to 12 percent range of the total national area being cultivated.

When we consider that in the context of the growing regions in Putumayo and Caqueta provinces, the two southern departments, it is probable that we would target the vast majority of our efforts to Putumayo and Caqueta anyway. It is not a primary drug cultivation area.

Sir, if I could return very briefly to General Tapias's strategy, the 3rd and 4th years would target the central portion of the country.

And during years 5 and 6, General Tapias would then seek to reassert control over the rest of Colombia's national land mass.

In the process, he would seek to reduce drug production by 50 percent. That strategy is actually more ambitious than the goals stated in our own national drug control strategy, where we say that by the year 2002, we would like to reduce the amount of narcotics flowing through the transit zone by 10 percent and produced in the Source Zone by 15 percent; and by the year 2007, reduce the amount in the Transit Zone by 20 percent and in the Source Zone by 30 percent. General Tapias's figure, again, is 50 percent.

In putting his strategy together, General Tapias—and I discussed this in great detail during many visits. I average about a visit every 6 weeks to Colombia. We agreed that there were two ways that he could go with this, and these were his decisions.

He could target two modes of the apparatus that is visiting these ills on Colombia. He could take on the paramilitaries and the insurgents directly. This would involve primarily targeting the fronts and the mobile columns of the FARC and the 5,000 to 7,000 paramilitaries.

That would result in pitched battles. I think history proves that it is very, very difficult to resolve insurgency strictly on the battlefield. Insurgents tend to fight at times and places of their own choosing when the advantage is clearly theirs. We learned that in 10 years in Vietnam.

Instead, he went an alternate path, which was to target the FARC's and the paramilitaries' primary line of sustainment, the narcotics trafficking industry.

We know that fully one half of the FARC fronts derive their principal financial support from their links with narco-traffickers.

The other insurgency, the ELN, about 25 percent of their operating elements have their—that same linkage.

The Tapias strategy involves attacking their lines of sustainment and logistics, drying up the funds available from narcotrafficking industry, which then in turn, I think, would disable the insurgency.

So that was his approach. That is the Colombian government's approach. I believe it will work.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, General.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I should note for the record when we talk about whether the Administration has done anything or not, this Administration has spent far, far more money on law enforcement than any Administration in history in combating drugs.

They have done it at the state, local and Federal level. I mention that just so the record will be clear, and we have steadily increased our aid to Colombia.

I would also note that law enforcement does not seem to be the answer. We build a lot more prisons than we do schools in this country to combat drugs, but it does not seem to do a great deal.

"Just say no" may be the answer, but I doubt it. I will not embarrass everybody by asking those, Republicans and Democrats alike in the room, who have never used drugs illegally to stand up.

Now, Mr. Pickering, what I do worry about, is—just like with some of the money we spend on law enforcement, which has not done a great deal of good other than giving us the largest prison population of just about any country in the world—it looks to me like we are embarking on an open-ended multi-million dollar commitment without benchmarks to say whether we are successful or not successful.

I think of our past experience in Central America in the 1980s when we spent billions of dollars without anybody saying whether we were ahead or not.

Now, you said the Colombian Army is doing its best to purge itself of human rights violators. Well, I see only about 15 or so Army officers in 10 years that have been either prosecuted or purged compared to, I think, thousands in the National Police.

Yesterday, Human Rights Watch released a report documenting links between the Colombian Army and the paramilitary groups, saying what a lot of reputable journalists have been saying for a very long time.

When I asked the State Department a couple of years ago about these links, they said there was no evidence to support it. Then about a month ago, the State Department said the Colombian Army has made a lot of progress severing these links for which they had no evidence before.

The links are there. Why should we not condition any aid on the Army's assurances that its members who violate human rights or aid or abet the paramilitaries will be prosecuted, and prosecuted in a civilian court where they are not protected?

Ambassador PICKERING. That is what we have said. Of course, as you know, Senator, and that is what we are pushing to get accomplished. It is, I think, important to note that the military record has improved markedly.

Their responsibility has diminished into low single figures in the reports of others for human rights violations. It is also, I think, important to note that the bulk of the evidence relied upon by the ex-

cellent human rights report came from Colombia investigators themselves, which I think is a real advance. The fact that people at their own peril are able, in the Colombia government, to investigate these activities and—

Senator LEAHY. But generally—

Ambassador PICKERING. Such important reports is a significant forward step; and it leads, I think, to the basis for the next steps, which you and we both share, which is the dismissal and—

Senator LEAHY. But—

Ambassador PICKERING (continuing). Prosecution of people so involved.

Senator LEAHY. As far as the excellent human rights report you just referred to, General Tapias said yesterday that Human Rights Watch conspires with drug traffickers to defame the Army. This does not show that this commitment is foremost in his mind.

Ambassador PICKERING. I—I have not seen the report from General Tapias, but I have talked to President Pastrana, who happily is still Commander in Chief in Colombia.

Senator LEAHY. Well, I hope so. As I said before, I have a great deal of respect for President Pastrana, as I do for you, and for General Wilhelm.

But I am worried that some people down there may give lip service, but then when pushed to actually do something, are unwilling to do it. And that is what worries me.

Let me ask General Wilhelm. General, if General Tapias says that Human Rights Watch conspires with drug traffickers to defame the Army, does that show—or does that say anything about his own commitment to human rights?

HUMAN RIGHTS

General WILHELM. Senator Leahy, I have not talked to General Tapias since the report was announced, but I have talked to him about this subject on many occasions.

I know him well. I am personally convinced that he is absolutely committed to reducing these abuses. So rather than engage in generalities, let me give you a couple of specifics.

About a month ago when I was down in Bogota, General Tapias gave me the—a list of 400 people by name, paramilitaries who had been arrested, detained, turned over for judicial action.

Senator LEAHY. To the civilian court or to the military courts?

General WILHELM. Some of both, sir, some of both.

Senator LEAHY. The reason I ask is that military courts have generally not done anything.

General WILHELM. Sir, that is—I think—I cannot really comment precisely on the statistics concerning judicial impunity, but I have heard the same thing.

But in an operational sense, the point is that they have undertaken these operations. And as a matter again of operational fact, more than 100 operations were mounted by the security forces in the last year against paramilitary organizations.

I cannot confirm it right now, but I received a report this morning that the Colombian Marines had mounted an operation against paramilitaries near Salado, one of the recent sites of paramilitary

atrocities and that they had killed 2 and had captured 11 paramilitaries.

I am personally convinced that there are not institutional linkages between the Armed Forces of Colombia and the paramilitaries. Having said that, I cannot rule out local collusion.

Senator LEAHY. General and Ambassador, one of the problems we have in this Committee, on both sides of the aisle—there is enormous respect for both of you, respect that you have both earned in your long and distinguished careers—is that we have to rely on you, both of you, to be as careful in the scrutiny of what is going on here as anybody. Because there is a concern among many of us—and this has nothing to do with political ideology—that we are buying ourselves into a never-ending tar-baby, where ultimately we do not stop drugs and we tarnish our own reputation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator STEVENS [presiding]. Thank you very much.

President Pastrana came and visited with the Committee. We were very pleased at that and have a very high respect for him and the changes he is trying to bring about in Colombia.

However, in the visits I have just made to the two commands I mentioned, I found out that Colombia law prohibits sending high school graduates or above into combat.

Now, you say you—they are training the finest soldiers in the world. We do not train people for combat unless they have high school degrees.

BACHILLERES

General, how can you support your statement to us that they are the finest trained people that you have seen?

General WILHELM. OK. Senator Stevens, all right, you are making direct reference to the bachilleres, and that is correct.

As best I have been able to determine within the structure of the Colombian Armed Forces, there have been somewhere in the neighborhood of 30,000 young Colombians who by virtue of their educational level have been exempted from military service that involved direct combat operations.

Senator STEVENS. Are you training them for this combat?

General WILHELM. Sir, we are training other—no, sir. We are not training bachilleres, if I—

Senator STEVENS. Well, they are training conscripts, and they stay for 12 months to 18 months, I am told. They are conscripts.

General WILHELM. No, sir.

Senator STEVENS. Sir, am I informed incorrectly that they are not conscripts that are being trained in these Army units?

General WILHELM. The young Colombian soldiers who are being trained in the counterdrug battalions are changed—are required to change their status from—from conscript to professional volunteer soldiers before entering the units.

Senator STEVENS. And they—they all—what about those who—that have the high school diplomas?

General WILHELM. All right, sir. If I could continue with my—

Senator STEVENS. I have only got 5 minutes, General. I hate to be short with you, but I am going to go vote here in a few minutes. What about the ones that are—have the high school diplomas?

General WILHELM. OK. This is a part of the military structure that Colombia is moving right now to reform and have been moving on since Mr. Rodrigo Lloreda was the Minister of Defense.

Senator STEVENS. All right.

General WILHELM. One of their proposals is to—is to eliminate the bachilleres, convert a portion of that 30,000-member structure to professional soldiers and upgrade the quality of their Armed Forces across the board and eliminate that particular segment of the Armed Forces, which I think we all agree, Colombians and U.S. friends, is a non-productive segment of the military.

Senator STEVENS. All right. Let us go on to another subject here.

On the Defense side, this request asks for \$439 million to refurbish and support the helicopters. I am told \$85 million of that will refurbish helicopters; \$350 million is to buy Blackhawks.

In our own Army, we are now—in the Army, the National Guard and Marines flying older UH-1s that—than this model UH-60.

It would be much more cost-effective to continue to modify the UH-1s. Why are we buying these Blackhawks, if this is the commencement of a program where we need the others immediately?

UH-60S

General WILHELM. First of all, sir, the Colombians considered four options as a means to address their mobility needs.

They considered the Blackhawk option. They considered a mix of Bell products, which would have been remanufactured UH-1s and the AH-1W gunship. They considered a Russian option that involved MI17s and MI35s and Carmine 50s. And they considered an option involving European aircraft built around the Augusta 129.

The Blackhawk option was felt to be best for the near and long term for some of the reasons that I cited in my opening statement, but—

Senator STEVENS. I agree with that too, but we are—this Committee is putting up money for our Army, our National Guard, our Reserve to refurbish existing helicopters. What you are saying is this operation is going to be better equipped than our own military.

General WILHELM. Well, sir, there are some limitations on what we could do with the UH-1 inventory. To produce the Huey 2 aircraft that I think you are referring to, one of the first ingredients is a serviceable UH-1, normally UH-1H base frame to work on.

Our inventory of those aircraft is just about exhausted. And for the long term, when we look at life cycle maintenance and life cycle cost, a single family of aircraft in two configurations armed in troop carriers will be more economical for the long-term.

That is what led to the Blackhawk decision. And as I mentioned, sir, the characteristics of their operating area, the ranges required, the altitudes needed to confront, after the coca problem is solved, the heroin problem.

Senator STEVENS. I have to tell you, both of you, I join Senator Leahy to say I have great respect for both of you and in your careers.

But we are dealing with an industry—I am told to ask for these figures. These are estimates that—that on the drug traffic, U.S. traffickers get about \$80 billion to \$100 billion from this industry, this drug industry. And the Colombian traffickers get \$3 to \$6 billion a year. The FARC guerrillas get \$100 to \$600 million a year.

I am told that those insurgents do not have a restriction on not having people who have got higher degrees in their midst, that they are probably the best equipped, the best trained, even to their modernization in terms of communications and command and control, they are probably the best in South America today.

Now, we have got one—we are going to equip one brigade to take on what I was told is about 25,000 of those insurgents.

Now, my one question to you is: Who goes in if this thing blows up? Who goes in if those hand-held weapons knock down these helicopters, and we have a bunch of American-trained Colombian forces right there in the midst of these guerrillas, these insurgents?

Who is going to get them out, General?

General WILHELM. Senator Stevens, first I need to clarify one point. The counterdrug brigade does not target the insurgents. It targets the—

Senator STEVENS. I understand.

General WILHELM (continuing). Narcotraffickers who support it.

Senator STEVENS. Do you think they are just going there—and let me—25,000 trained insurgents are going to sit there and let them pick off—cherry pick the operating arm of the drug traffickers? Oh, come on now. Who is going to go in if this blows up?

General WILHELM. That is—

Senator STEVENS. There are 800 people on the ground. Tell me this is not a Vietnam again.

VIETNAM

General WILHELM. Sir, it is not a Vietnam again. I spent 1965, 1966, 1969 and 1970 in Vietnam, and I think I will know it when I see it happening again. When I go to Colombia, I do not feel a quagmire sucking at my boots.

Senator STEVENS. I am—

General WILHELM. I think we have a good—

Senator STEVENS. The guerrillas control 70 percent of the land mass now.

General WILHELM. No, sir.

Senator STEVENS. How much would you say?

General WILHELM. Between 40 and 50 percent, and I would not say the guerrillas control it. I would say that the government does not control it. It is contested territory.

Senator STEVENS. Well, that was Vietnam, was it not?

General WILHELM. No, sir.

Senator STEVENS. Well, we have got to go vote, but I have to tell you, if you do not get the drift, we are probably your best supporters in the Senate on this issue.

I want to help this President, but I do want to see a plan come to us that is survivable and tells us what is going to happen if something goes wrong. I do not see this here. I really do not.

And I think we are going to have stand in recess.

General WILHELM. Senator, I know that our time is short, but—

Senator STEVENS. I know, General. We have to vote. Thank you very much.

COLOMBIAN PILOTS

General WILHELM. They will become the pilots in command, and then we will back fill the loveseats with new Colombian pilots. To get this program underway and to really operationalize a plan in Colombia in a responsive way, contract pilots are the right way to go.

There are only three U.S. contract pilots involved in this, and there is very, very clear guidance that they will not participate in tactical missions. They oversee, what we call, safety and standardization to make sure that the training of all the flight crews is conducted to our standards and that at the end of the day, we emerge with well-qualified and capable air crews. But we have, I think, a good, progressive program that will fill those cockpits with Colombian aviators in a very efficient and short period of time.

Senator MCCONNELL [presiding]. Thank you, General. And finally, Ambassador Pickering, you know, we certainly agree that Colombia has a horrible problem. It came about in part because of the aggressive efforts in Peru and Bolivia, which achieved some level of success. And so I get back to, in closing here, with sort of how we began.

Are you concerned—I guess you are not or you would not be here, but ease my concern that this \$600 million hammer on Colombia does not just make a problem re-emerge in other countries and reassure me that somehow in all of this, there is a regional strategy that deals with the entire area.

Ambassador PICKERING. There is, Senator. And there is a regional component in the plan. I, frankly, would have hoped it would have been larger, but we all operate under constraints and you know what those are as well as I do. But there is a regional piece, obviously, because of the pressure being put on the problem in Colombia. We do not want that to move back to Peru or Bolivia or Ecuador.

So, there is an early piece, I will put it that way. At the same time, we are building up to deal with the problem, and we are talking in the build-up in Colombia. Not in days or weeks or months even, but probably years. The General cited some benchmark figures out 2 to 5 years from now.

But we do think we need to have an immediate and important input of additional funding over and above the base, which they already received, to continue their activities now for Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and perhaps others. And I was just down to the region and talked to a number of people about it. We all share exactly your concern.

There is a regional strategy. The regional strategy is to fight this on a regional basis. To increase cooperation. To make sure that all the left hands and all the right hands know what is going on and are working together to try to deal with this problem; and that our funding assistance gets targeted first where the problem is worst, but then next is second order of priority to where it might go.

And the Andean Region, unfortunately, has the climate, the disparities in economic status and all the other things that you know that make it a convenient and very productive area for this kind of activity. So, we have to work it on a regional basis.

General WILHELM. Now, Senator McConnell, might I add just a couple of comments to the Ambassador's response? We are very sensitive to that, as well, so the question is what next. And in the military, we always look at a cycle that we call action, reaction and counteraction. We always want to control the first one and the last one.

We have developed what we call a counter-narcotics campaign plan, which is a regional plan. Phase one, which is about 2 years in length, we call the regionalization and stabilization phase.

During that phase, we would work not just with Colombia, but with the other nations in the Andean region to help them to develop the capabilities that they would need to successfully contend with the drug threat.

Phase two we call the decisive operations phase. That is when the nations and the region, working in a coordinated way, would strive to drive a wedge between the various operating modes of a narco trafficking industry. Be it cultivation, be it production or be it transport.

Then in phase three, we would go to what we call a sustainment phase which would emphasize intelligence collection and sharing where the security forces of the region, both military and police, would demonstrate the ability to adapt to the changing patterns of activity that the narco trafficking industry has demonstrated it is capable of doing.

This is a formal campaign plan, which has been submitted to the Joint Staff. It is well understood, sir, and has as its foundation a regional approach.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senator MCCONNELL. Well, thank you both very much. I appreciate your coming up, and as you know, it is our plan to deal with this request rather expeditiously. Thank you very much.

Ambassador PICKERING. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Departments for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Question. President Pastrana says he wants to fight against the drug lords while seeking to negotiate a solution to the political insurrection which has divided Colombia for decades. Is the war on drugs separable from the guerrilla war? Doesn't the "push into the South" in Plan Colombia really mean stepped-up military attacks on the left-wing guerrillas?

Answer. Drugs and the insurgency are linked financially. Narcotics money funds the guerrillas, funds the paramilitaries, and fuels the violence that is tearing at the fiber of Colombia. One added benefit to the increased counternarcotics efforts could be the breaking of these financial links.

The plan's push into southern Colombia is an effort to step-up operations against the narcotics industry in that part of the country. Because of their links to narco traffickers, the guerrillas may be subject to increased police and military action. The same is true for paramilitary groups and other criminal groups who are involved in the illegal drug industry.

Question. Right-wing paramilitaries, like leftist guerrillas, reportedly have ties to drug producers and traffickers. Aren't you concerned that military action against the leftists will only strengthen the drug lords' ties to paramilitary organizations which might also allow them to ply their deadly trade?

Answer. The objective of Plan Colombia's counternarcotics component is to confront and disrupt the narcotics trade. As long as they maintain connections to the narcotics trade, the paramilitaries are valid targets for counternarcotics units, as are the guerrillas. The plan aims to sever the financial ties between traffickers and all illegal armed groups, regardless of the political orientation they may claim. The paramilitaries are present protecting trafficking in the South along with the FARC.

Question. Mr. Secretary, since you are here as the Administration's representative, I hope you won't mind if I ask you a question outside the purview of the State Department. In the multi-front "war on drugs," are we devoting sufficient resources to demand reduction? In particular, I am concerned that we may not be adequately funding drug treatment programs to help those who would like to free themselves of drug addiction. Shouldn't we be doing more here at home as well as abroad?

Answer. I refer you to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) for a discussion of domestic drug policy. However, there are some telling statistics on this matter. According to information from ONDCP, one third of the fiscal year 1999 National Drug Control Budget, roughly \$5.4 billion, went towards demand reduction in the United States. The fiscal year 2001 budget contains \$6 billion for demand reduction. Clearly, these efforts in Colombia are not a trade-off. Rather, they are complementary. It is important that the United States maintain efforts against both supply and demand if the problem is to be brought under control.

Indications are that domestic demand reduction programs are working. In August 1999, ONDCP reported that youth drug use had dropped 13 percent in a one-year span. The decline over that period was even more pronounced for the use of inhalants (45 percent) and cocaine (20 percent). ONDCP also reported that drug-related murders were at a ten-year low. In short, we are doing more.

Question. While I respect President Pastranals efforts to develop a comprehensive plan to bring peace and unity to Colombia, starting by ending the narco-traffickers' grip on the country, can a solely national strategy truly succeed? Won't the drug business simply move to Venezuela or Ecuador or Brazil, just as it moved to Colombia from Bolivia and Peru?

Answer. Concerns over narcotics industry relocation are the reason that the package includes additional funds to support Colombia's neighbors. There is also a cultural factor that mitigates the threat of large-scale migration of drug crops to those specific countries. Like Bolivia and Peru, Colombia already had a history of coca cultivation when the industry shifted there. The shift of cultivation represented the expansion of an existing practice; not the introduction of a new one as it would in Brazil, Venezuela and Ecuador.

Question. I understand the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) is eager to begin testing in Colombia of microherbicides (sic) which could wipe out drug crops while leaving other plant and animal life unaffected. Has Colombia signed the proposal to allow this U.S.-funded project to go forward? Do you consider this a promising approach to narcotics, the "magic bullet" we all are hoping for?

Answer. Colombia has not yet signed the agreement to allow testing, but preliminary testing has been conducted elsewhere under other auspices. I believe that the Government of Colombia understandably wants a high degree of confidence regarding the environmental impact of the project before moving to the next level.

The Department of State is encouraged by the early results of the mycoherbicide project, and we believe that this is indeed a promising approach. That said, we resist labeling anything as a "magic bullet," as that term can build unrealistic expectations.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO GEN. CHARLES WILHELM

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE

FORWARD OPERATING LOCATIONS

Question. General Wilhelm, the request includes \$38.6 million in military construction funds to support your new base, or forward operating location, in Manta, Ecuador. Can you tell us how many U.S. military will be assigned to it on a permanent and temporary duty status and for how long the base will be used by the U.S. military?

Answer. We have a 10-year access agreement with Ecuador for a Forward Operating Location on the Ecuadorian Air Force Base in Manta. We have no plans for a permanent U.S. Base. We will have 10–12 permanent military personnel on the ground. The number of temporary duty personnel will normally range from 100–250 depending on the counterdrug operations being conducted.

Question. General Wilhelm, last year in a similar hearing, I questioned what it would cost to build a fully operating military base in Ecuador. Can you now tell us what those costs would be?

Answer. We do not have any plans to build a U.S. military base in Ecuador. We have, however, concluded a ten year access agreement with Ecuador for a Forward Operating Location (FOL) on the Ecuadorian Air Force Base in Manta. We require \$67.4 million in facility improvements to meet U.S. operational and safety standards at Manta. This amount includes \$5.6 million for planning and design and \$38.6 million for the runway, taxiway and ramp construction this year. An additional \$23.2 million is required in fiscal year 2001 for vertical construction including the rescue station, operations center, hangar, maintenance facility, and a lodging facility.

SUPPORT TO COLOMBIA

Question. General Wilhelm, this budget includes \$98 million in DOD funds to support the Colombian Plan. This is in addition to the milcon money for Manta. Can you tell us, is this the totality of DOD's funding to support the counterdrug program in Colombia, or are you using other funds to carry out this effort?

Answer. The \$98 million does not reflect the total Department of Defense (DOD) fiscal year 2000 funding requirement to support our counterdrug efforts in Colombia. DOD has additionally budgeted \$76 million in fiscal year 2000 to support the counterdrug program in Colombia.

Question. What is DOD's involvement today in the counter-drug efforts in Colombia?

Answer. Department of Defense (DOD) involvement in counterdrug efforts in Colombia falls within two broad categories. We deploy aircraft and crews to Forward Operating Locations and sites, frequently outside Colombia, to conduct detection, monitoring and tracking missions in support of Source Zone air interdiction efforts. We also deploy DOD personnel to conduct training missions in Colombia. [Deleted.] Today we have a total of 26 DOD personnel deployed to Colombia providing training support to Colombian counterdrug forces in Bogata, Tres Esquinas, and Mariquita. These personnel are members of Joint Planning and Assistance Teams, Mobile Training Teams, Technical Assistance Teams, and Riverine Training Teams. We also have a three-man Subject Matter Expert team that is providing technical advice and assistance to Colombian Intelligence Specialists at the recently established Colombian Joint Intelligence Center in Tres Esquinas. This is a snapshot. Our presence varies from day to day based on the missions that are being performed in support of the counterdrug struggle.

Question. What is SOUTHCOM's total counterdrug budget for fiscal year 2000 (in addition to the amounts you are requesting in this supplemental)?

Answer. Our total counterdrug budget for fiscal year 2000 is approximately \$357 million. This amount is separate from the Supplemental request.

MILITARY COUNTERDRUG EFFORTS

Question. General Wilhelm, some argue that this \$955 million will be ineffective in stopping production of cocaine in the Southern Hemisphere. They argue we would be better spending the funds educating Americans on the dangers of drug use and treating those who are already using drugs. How do you respond to that argument?

Answer. The National Drug Control Strategy states "demand and supply reduction efforts complement and support one another." Efforts to reduce the demand for illegal drugs in the U.S. must be supported by efforts to reduce illegal drug production as well as the supply that reaches the U.S. This supplemental will support United States Southern Command's efforts to achieve Goals 4 and 5 of the National Drug Control Strategy by significantly strengthening our Source and Transit Zone counterdrug programs.

The Supplemental will provide the means to build partner nation capabilities and enhance their efforts to eliminate cultivation, processing, manufacturing, and trafficking of illegal drugs in the Source Zone. At the same time, it will enable United States Southern Command to continue to support counterdrug operations in the Transit Zone. With expanded education for Americans at home, we will have effectively put a full court press on the illicit drug industry.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST GUERRILLAS

Question. General Wilhelm, can a military force—even one we've trained and which has helicopter mobility—really be effective against entrenched guerrillas fighting in remote jungle areas?

Answer. I must first emphasize that we recognize clearly the limits of our involvement in Colombia. Our roles are limited to providing training, technical advice and equipment support to Colombia's security forces exclusively for counterdrug operations. The strict prohibition against involvement by U.S. forces in field operations will continue in the future. That said, there is no question that given the right resources and proper training, the Colombian military can be effective against the narcotraffickers which increasingly have symbiotic links to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), National Liberation Army (ELN), and paramilitary organizations. Timely intelligence, aggressive planning and execution, superior mobility, and effective leadership can collectively unhinge the narcotrafficking operations and cede the initiative to Colombian authorities. Specifically, the Government of Colombia (GOC) must increase its offensive military capability and clearly demonstrate tactical and operational superiority on the battlefield. The GOC must also redress the needs of more than three and a half million rural and displaced Colombians by developing the infrastructure of rural areas, providing viable economic alternatives to illicit drug production, and simultaneously occupying, securing, and establishing sovereignty over contested areas of the countryside on a permanent basis. This is a fight that can be won.

PLAN COLOMBIA FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

Question. The proposed assistance to Plan Colombia seems to devote much more resources to counter-insurgency efforts in remote areas than to interdiction on roads and in the air. Wouldn't it make sense to allocate more assets to create an effective cordon around the drug-producing areas, cutting off funds for narco-traffickers while reducing supplies to the United States?

Answer. Plan Colombia comprehensively addresses the counterdrug (CD) problem in a coordinated, mutually supportive manner. Attempts to cordon drug-producing areas in Colombia by interdiction alone will not achieve a long-term solution to the illicit drug problem. As we have learned, the drug trafficking organizations adapt rapidly when we put pressure on key distribution nodes. Accordingly, increased emphasis to destroy the crops and labs must be accompanied by comprehensive measures to challenge the movement of drugs and precursor chemicals by land, air, sea, or over the vast river network. A balanced, flexible, broad-based response, like that proposed in Plan Colombia, is required; one that best uses available resources to apply pressure by interdiction, eradication, alternative crop development, and expanded government control in the growing and processing areas of Colombia.

PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER ASSISTANCE

Question. Much of the proposed U.S. assistance would be in the form of helicopters to ferry counter-narcotics units to remote locations. Don't the narco-traffickers or associated forces have the weapons to shoot them down? Aren't they likely to obtain them if they don't already have them?

Answer. [Deleted.]

Through this combination of training, employment and countermeasure suites, coupled with common sense threat avoidance measures, Colombia's armed forces will be able to operate effectively when and if the FARC acquire surface to air missiles.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN

FARC CONTROL

Question. According to reports, the FARC now controls an area within Colombia the size of Switzerland. The government has removed itself from that area as a gesture of peace, and now has little hope of returning without FARC approval. In the meantime, the FARC earns by some accounts as much as \$3 million every day from drug traffickers in that region, and uses their territory as a staging ground for attacks on surrounding areas.

Why would the FARC ever negotiate to give up this area given the incredible benefits they now reap from it?

Answer. The FARC will not negotiate away the Despeje while operating from a position of strength. Only tactical and operational success on the battlefield by Colombian security forces, combined with Government of Colombia (GOC) comprehensive social and economic reform, will set the conditions for a negotiated end to the Despeje. To eliminate the Despeje at the negotiating table, the GOC must increase its offensive military capability and clearly demonstrate tactical and operational superiority on the battlefield. The GOC must also redress the needs of more than three and a half million rural and displaced Colombians by developing the infrastructure of rural areas, providing viable economic alternatives to illicit drug production, and simultaneously occupying and securing the contested area on a permanent basis.

Question. The FARC has often claimed that it supports eradication efforts, while at the same time earning millions from drugs.

Is there evidence that the FARC is cooperating with any eradication efforts?

Answer. I am unaware of any evidence that the FARC is cooperating with eradication efforts.

ERADICATION IN FARC AREAS

Question. What incentive can we give the FARC to cooperate with eradication within FARC-controlled territory?

Answer. The FARC has consistently demonstrated their unwillingness to cooperate with the Government of Colombia against the narcotraffickers. More than half of the FARC fronts receive support from, and provide protection to, Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). Drug money provides a major portion of the FARC's war chest and is the FARC's primary source for sustaining forces, conducting combat operations, and purchasing weapons. Despite the symbiotic links of the FARC to DTOs, Plan Colombia contains the following incentives to reduce the increasing cultivation of coca throughout the country:

Elements 1 and 6 of Plan Colombia.—Proposes an alternative development strategy promoting agricultural and other profitable economic activity for rural farmers. This approach is dependent on the Government of Colombia (GOC) re-establishing the rule of law and providing security (Element 3 of Plan Colombia) in the affected agricultural areas.

Element 1 of Plan Colombia.—Proposes increased spending by the GOC to modernize the economic base and create jobs.

Element 5 of Plan Colombia.—Funds interdiction and counterdrug (CD) programs to effectively obstruct the flow of resources from the drug traffickers to the insurgency. FARC claims of support for interdiction efforts have been just that claims. As Plan Colombia transitions to execution the FARC will have abundant opportunities to demonstrate their sincerity.

COLOMBIAN DRUG TRADE

Question. In the past, Colombia's drug trade was controlled by a small number of very large, very powerful cartels. Now, the manufacture and distribution of cocaine and heroin in Colombia is far more decentralized.

How does the Supplemental Request for Colombia attempt to address the new challenge of going after a much more decentralized group of growers, manufacturers and distributors of illegal narcotics?

Answer. The difficulty of locating, tracking, and intercepting drug traffickers throughout the Andean Ridge is exacerbated by the proliferation of sophisticated Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). The DTOs are smaller, more adaptable, and more mobile than traditional cartels, complicating intelligence collection efforts and making them more difficult to target. In addition, many DTOs have symbiotic links to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN), and para-military organizations. More than half of the FARC fronts and roughly one-fourth of the ELN fronts receive support from, and provide protection to, DTOs. The key to attacking the decentralized illicit drug trade is to target specific nodes that, when removed, will have a negative impact on the industry as a whole. The supplemental spending bill supports this strategy by assisting the Colombians in establishing and enhancing basic military and police capabilities such as tactical air lift; ground, air, and riverine interdiction, and intelligence collection and dissemination. U.S. Southern Command, in conjunction with the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Joint Warfare Analysis Center, is currently conducting an analysis of the decentralized illicit drug industry to determine vulnerable critical nodes. Results of this analysis will form the basis of the U.S. Government's "way ahead" in advising Colombia on the most effective use of the new capabilities provided through the supplemental funding bill.

ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTION

Question. The country of Peru used to be the world's number one cocaine producer, but in recent years production has fallen quite a bit—down 26 percent in 1998 alone, down 56 percent overall between 1995 and 1998. Now, however, prices for coca leaves have skyrocketed and some are worried that the temptation for farmers will be too great.

Similarly, the Bolivian government has targeted coca production with serious eradication efforts in recent years, and the State Department now predicts that illegal coca production in that country may have fallen below 10,000 hectares in 1999, from almost four times that amount just a year before.

Question. What alternatives have been provided to Peruvian and Bolivian farmers to ensure that they will not now return to growing high priced coca leaves, and what will we do in Colombia to provide those alternative crops?

Answer. The United States Department of State (DoS) administers the Alternative Crop Development Program, and I defer to them to address the specific incentives provided to Peruvian, Bolivian and Colombian coca growers. However, I can assure you that this program is extremely important to our regional counterdrug effort. Alternative crop development programs have complemented aggressive eradication efforts in the successful reduction of coca cultivation in Peru and Bolivia over the past five years. Despite the increased price of coca leaf from new drug markets in Europe and elsewhere, Peru was able to reduce total area under coca cultivation by over 12,000 hectares during 1999. Much of this success is attributable to a successful alternative development program. These programs are also important because they reduce the number of violent confrontations among displaced coca farmers and provide families legitimate economic opportunities.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN COLOMBIA

Question. Many of us are concerned about the potential for human rights abuses in Colombia. I understand that the situation is getting better, but at the same time a number of human rights groups have alerted us that there are still significant problems—particularly with continuing links between drug-financed paramilitary groups and members of the military. According to the Human Rights Watch World Report 2000, “cooperation between army units and paramilitaries remained commonplace” in late 1999. The Report claims that paramilitaries kill suspected guerrillas, delivering them to the army in return for weapons.

How much progress has been made in ensuring that the military is separate from the rogue paramilitaries throughout Colombia?

Answer. While Colombia's political and military leaders openly acknowledge evidence of some security force cooperation with the paramilitaries, they attest that cooperation is neither prevalent, institutionalized, or tolerated. President Pastrana, Minister of Defense Ramirez, and Armed Forces Commander General Tapias have publicly pledged to combat the illegal self-defense groups and punish all Government of Colombia (GOC) security force members found guilty of collaborating with them. We continue to see evidence of this commitment. In February, Vice-President Bell formed a minister-level commission to coordinate the state's efforts against the self-defense groups. The President will soon sign a decree authorizing summary dismissal of any military person implicated in paramilitary collaboration. In April 1999, two general officers were forcibly retired for alleged links to paramilitary groups and a third general officer was suspended from duty for alleged links to a paramilitary massacre and forcibly retired in November 1999. In August 1999 another general officer was relieved for failure to prevent a paramilitary massacre. Finally, from January through September 1999, in operations against paramilitary forces, Colombian security forces killed 37, captured 188 and netted numerous caches of illegal weapons. The U.S. Department of State has documented in its annual human rights report significant progress by the Colombian military in steadily reducing the number of reported violations by Government security forces. Specifically, the number of confirmed human rights abuses attributed to the Colombian Security Forces has declined from 54 percent in 1993 to 2 percent in 1999. Plan Colombia ensures that the Colombian military will have the required resources and government support to sustain their efforts to eliminate human rights violations.

FOURTH BRIGADE

Question. Can you comment specifically on allegations that the Medellin-based Fourth Brigade has improper dealings with the paramilitaries commanded by Carlos Castano, who has apparently admitted to financing his operations from the coca trade?

Answer. I do not have the facts to comment authoritatively on these allegations nor can I confirm their reliability. [Deleted] about Fourth Brigade's relationship with illegal self-defense groups comes from the press, human rights organizations, and the Government of Colombia.

COCA PRODUCTION IN COLOMBIA

Question. Coca production in Colombia has doubled in the past decade, and recent estimates have indicated that production may be increasing at even higher rates due to the increased productivity of new crops and a lack of eradication capability.

One of the reasons eradication efforts are falling short may be the continuing delays in opening the Tres Esquinas airfield in Southern Colombia.

Do you have any idea when that airfield will be ready to open for eradication operations?

Answer. The airfield at Tres Esquinas is open and eradication operations are being conducted; however, the Government of Colombia's (GOC) eradication efforts are hampered by three factors:

- Lack of organic capability to effectively locate and attack fields under cultivation
- New strains of coca with increased potency that can be harvested multiple times in a growing season
- Inadequate security in support of eradication operations, particularly in the Putumayo and Caqueta regions.

The proposed supplemental will significantly enhance GOC eradication efforts by funding the training and equipping of the Counternarcotics Brigade. The mission of the Brigade will be to conduct offensive ground and air mobile counterdrug operations in conjunction with the Colombian National Police (CNP). These operations will be focused on the principal coca producing regions of Putumayo and Caqueta. To improve the effectiveness of aerial eradication operations from Tres Esquinas airfield, the GOC is expanding the aircraft parking ramp, increasing the number of helicopter pads, and extending the runway by 480 meters. These improvements will be incrementally completed by April 2001.

AIR INTERDICTION EFFORTS

Question. When the U.S. assisted in a concerted effort to stop the "air bridge" between Peru and Colombia, which provided much of the raw coca used in cocaine production, that air bridge was decimated. However, the delays in the Tres Esquinas airfield, the lack of progress outfitting planes for interdiction efforts, and a large gap that may allow planes to skirt current controls and simply re-route through Brazil may have so far rendered similar efforts in Colombia fruitless.

What is being done, in this plan and in general, to move forward on air interdiction efforts similar to those that were so successful in Peru?

Answer. We are not satisfied with the level of U.S. support to air interdiction operations throughout the Source Zone. Since 1998, three Department of Defense (DOD) Citation aircraft have flown [deleted]. We have to do better. The number one limitation to providing optimum air interdiction support to Colombia is a shortage of the right assets. Since January 1999, only one E-3 AWACS [deleted] has been available to USSOUTHCOM, due to competing higher priorities in other theaters. We need more than two times this number of missions. USCS provides P-3 Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft for approximately [deleted] missions in the Source Zone per month, again inadequate for consistent and effective interdiction. The closing of Howard Air Force Base also affects our level of support to Colombia's interdiction program. Currently, only the Curacao Forward Operating Location (FOL) is capable of supporting the AWACS which geographically precludes full coverage of the Source Zone. Once additional operational and safety improvements are made at our FOL in Manta, we will be able to operate the AWACS out of it and effectively extend detection and monitoring coverage into the Source Zone. USSOUTHCOM has several other initiatives underway to provide more effective U.S. support to Source Zone interdiction efforts:

Forward Operating Sites (FOS).—We are surveying airfields in Colombia and Peru next month (April 2000) to identify possible forward operating sites. These sites will allow highly capable D&M aircraft to deploy for short expeditionary operations with minimum personnel and equipment footprints.

USCS Deployments.—Since August 1999, USCS has deployed P-3 AEW aircraft three times to Peru in support of air interdiction operations. [Deleted.]

Focused Air Interdiction Program.—In February of this year, we commenced a focused southern Colombia air interdiction program that will continue through June 2000. This program is designed to work specifically with Partner Nations. We will

review lessons learned in June and develop a sustained program to capitalize on the coordinated efforts of DOD, the Interagency, and our Partner Nations.

Colombia Aircraft Upgrades.—The proposed supplemental funds air-to-air radar and upgrades the communications package for two of the Colombian Air Force's (COLAF) C-26 Merlin aircraft. These modified aircraft will provide the COLAF the capability to track and intercept aircraft moving cocaine from inland laboratories to the Colombian coasts for transshipment to the United States. The supplemental also improves COLAF tactical surveillance and intelligence capabilities by providing Forward-Looking Infrared Radar (FLIR) for low-altitude, long-duration reconnaissance aircraft.

Ground Based Radars.—TPS-43 radar systems at Iquitos, Peru and Leticia, Colombia transmit critical position and altitude information on suspected drug trafficking aircraft. The proposed supplemental improves collection from ground-based radars (GBR) by funding upgrades to current GBR's and fielding an additional one at Tres Esquinas. Additionally, the Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar (ROTHR) in Puerto Rico comes on line this spring and will complement the above systems in detecting and tracking suspicious aircraft.

NONDEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR LUIS ALBERTO MORENO, COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES

Senator MCCONNELL. Our next witness is Ambassador Moreno, Luis Alberto Moreno, the Ambassador of Colombia to the United States.

We welcome you here, Mr. Ambassador. I hope we can—since we are kind of running late here, I hope we can keep your statement rather short. And we will put the entire statement in the record.

Ambassador MORENO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. I am pleased to appear before you today to express my government's views on the administration's proposed program of emergency supplemental assistance to Colombia.

This morning I would like to urge your support of this proposal, to hear your views and to answer any questions you may have. I plan to emphasize the following key factors that merit your consideration: the proposed assistance is urgently needed. The increased assistance supports a well conceived comprehensive strategy. We are asking the United States to help provide us with tools to do the job of fighting drugs, not to intervene under internal conflict.

U.S. assistance will supplement the much larger commitment of resources by Colombia and other members of the international community.

This assistance would also support a strategy that is accurate, equally on commitments to reduce drug production and trafficking, to achieve peace, to protect human rights and to promote the rule of law in our country.

I am certain you have read reports in today's press regarding alleged links between the military and illegal arms groups in Colombia. My government is confronting this issue directly. In fact, much of the data from our human rights report cited in these articles comes from the Colombian's prosecutor's office. We are investigating these allegations of links between military personnel and illegal arms groups. And we will continue to take strong legal action against any individuals found to have such links.

Since President Pastrana entered office in late 1988, we have taken aggressive steps to protect human rights, including the dismissing of senior military officials with poor human rights records; selecting a chief of the armed forces with a strong commitment to fighting human rights abuses; and declaring and enforcing a strict human rights policy that does not tolerate any links between the military and the illegal arms groups.

President Pastrana was elected on a platform to achieve peace in Colombia. But upon entering office, he faced the challenges of restoring economic growth and confronting a booming drug trade.

President Pastrana has taken bold steps to address these inter-related problems.

First, we have embarked on a path towards peace. We hope to achieve peace by showing the guerrillas a non-violent way to enter Colombian society. At the same time, our negotiating position will be backed by the strength of our country's institutions, including the military.

Secondly, and equally important, we have moved with determination to restore the trustworthiness of our military leadership and the effectiveness and the morale of the troops.

Third, we have expanded Colombia's commitment to combating the drug trade. And President Pastrana has also attacked the economic ills that are afflicting Colombia.

Finally, to consolidate and preserve all of the expected result of our strategy, we must focus on strengthening Colombia's democratic institutions. We are working to improve the accountability and effectiveness of our courts, make local governments more responsive to citizen's needs, and to expand educational and economic opportunities throughout Colombian society.

In spite of the gravity of our problems, we are very optimistic. We see the problems clearly and have the will to find and implement necessary solutions. These solutions are embodied in Plan Colombia, a comprehensive, integrated strategy to address Colombia's inter-related problems.

Plan Colombia seeks to advance to peace process, improve the protection of human rights, strengthen the economy, enhance counter-drug programs, and promote democratization and social development.

The Plan also calls for a total expenditure of \$.75 billion over 3 years. The larger portion of this cost will be borne by Colombia—\$4 billion directly by its resources and an additional \$800 million in loans from the international financial institutions. The Clinton Administration's proposal of \$1.6 billion in assistance, and we are also seeking funds from the international community.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that early this summer in Spain, there will be a donor's conference of European Union members. We are confident that we will also attract a level of the support that we require.

The assistance package proposed by the Clinton Administration is weighted heavily in favor of the kind of assistance the United States alone can provide. In large part, the assistance package is designed to give Colombia the tools we need to more effectively fight drug production and trafficking.

It will enable the Colombian government to bolster counter-drug activities in southern Colombia. And with U.S. assistance, we will establish two new counter-narcotics battalions in the Colombian military.

We are seeking aid from the United States to bolster our counter-drug programs, not to help us combat guerrillas. President Pastrana has repeatedly made it clear that Colombia is not seeking and will not accept any direct U.S. military intervention in our internal conflict.

The U.S. assistance we need to implement Plan Colombia is broader than counter-drug assistance alone. The aid package pro-

vides for humanitarian assistance to displace persons, funding for alternative economic development programs, and assistance to help the Colombian government improve human rights and other rule of law programs.

Before I conclude, I would like to explain why we believe this Committee should support the administration's proposals. The war on drugs is not a war in Colombia. It is a war that is being fought, and must be fought, throughout the world.

It is true that much of the cocaine and heroine consumed in the United States is produced in Colombia. No one regrets this more than the nearly 40 million law-abiding and peace-loving citizens of Colombia.

We have a responsibility to ourselves, to our children, and to our neighbors, such as the United States, to stop the scourge of illegal drugs. It can also be said that most of the cocaine and heroine we are talking about is purchased and consumed illegally here in the United States.

We know that this reality is no less regrettable for the United States than it is for Colombia to be a source for drugs. And we recognize and appreciate the costs and sacrifices made in the United States in the name of treatment, prevention, and law enforcement.

Our countries share the terrible burdens that illegal drugs place on our people. General McCaffrey stated recently that over 50,000 Americans die each year due to drug abuse. At the same time, successive generations of Colombian children are growing up in a country where profits from illegal drugs fuel daily violence, weaken government institutions, and finance terrorist activities that threaten human rights and the future of our democracy.

PREPARED STATEMENT

I urge you to support the administration's proposal. I appreciate to have the attention to all the views, and I am happy to answer any of your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR LUIS ALBERTO MORENO

Introduction

Chairman McConnell, Senator Leahy, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you today to express my government's views on the Administration's proposed program of emergency supplemental assistance to Colombia. This morning I would like to urge your support of this proposal, to hear your views, and to answer any questions you may have. I plan to emphasize the following key factors that merit your consideration:

- The proposed assistance is urgently needed to address the problems and responsibilities our countries share due to drug trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs;
- The increased assistance supports a well-conceived, comprehensive strategy based on the strong cooperation of our governments;
- We are asking the United States to help provide us with tools to do the job of fighting drugs, not to intervene in our internal conflict;
- The U.S. assistance will supplement a much larger commitment of resources by Colombia and other members of the international community; and, most importantly:
- The assistance will support a strategy that is anchored equally on commitments to reduce drug production and trafficking, to achieve peace, to protect human rights, and to promote the rule of law in our country.

First, however, I would like to address a related issue. I am certain you have read reports in today's press regarding alleged links between the military and illegal

armed groups in Colombia. My government is confronting this issue directly. In fact, much of the data from a human rights report cited in these articles comes from the Colombian government's prosecutor's office. We are investigating these allegations of links between military personnel and illegal armed groups. And we will continue to take strong legal action against any individuals found to have such links.

Since President Pastrana entered office in late 1998 we have taken aggressive steps to protect human rights, including: (1) dismissing senior military officials with poor human rights records; (2) selecting a chief of the armed forces with a strong commitment to human rights; and (3) declaring and enforcing a strict human rights policy that does not tolerate any links between the military and illegal armed groups.

Conditions Confronting Colombia Today

President Pastrana was elected on a platform to achieve peace in Colombia. But upon entering office he faced the challenges of restoring economic growth and confronting a booming drug trade. President Pastrana has taken bold steps to address these inter-related problems.

First, we have embarked on a path toward peace. For the first time in forty years, we have a framework and agenda for the negotiations. We hope to achieve peace by showing the guerrillas a non-violent way to enter Colombian society. At the same time, our negotiating position will be backed by the strength of our country's institutions, including the military.

Second, and equally important, we have moved with determination to restore the trustworthiness of our military leadership and the effectiveness and morale of our troops. I have already discussed my government's strong commitment to human rights enforcement. This policy has had results. Allegations of human rights abuses against the military have decreased dramatically. Still, we recognize that we must continue to do more to protect human rights.

Third, we have expanded Colombia's commitment to combating the drug trade. We have continued eradication and interdiction efforts in close cooperation with the United States. We have begun to extradite drug traffickers to the United States. We will continue to do so. Important successes, however, such as the eradication of nearly 130,000 acres in 1999 and arrest of several major traffickers as part of Operation Millennium do not obscure the fact that there is no miracle cure. We need a sustained, comprehensive approach and we have a long way to go.

President Pastrana has also attacked the economic ills that afflict Colombia. With unemployment rising and investment flows threatened, our government has made difficult but necessary choices to stabilize the economy. We have reduced spending, instituted banking sector reforms, accelerated privatization programs, strengthened our pension programs, and adopted targeted stimulus programs to create jobs and secure the social safety net. These measures, coupled with a strategy to increase trade and investment, will provide needed opportunities for the poorest Colombians and those displaced by internal violence.

Finally, to consolidate and preserve all of the expected results of our strategy, we must focus on strengthening Colombia's democratic institutions. We are working to improve the accountability and effectiveness of our courts, make local governments more responsive to citizen's needs, and to expand educational and economic opportunities throughout Colombian society.

The Need for U.S. Assistance and International Help

In spite of the gravity of our problems, we are very optimistic. We see the problems clearly and have the will to find and implement necessary solutions. These solutions are embodied in Plan Colombia, a comprehensive, integrated strategy to address Colombia's interrelated problems. Plan Colombia seeks to advance the peace process, improve the protection of human rights, strengthen the economy, enhance counter-drug programs, and promote democratization and social development.

President Pastrana's Plan Colombia calls for a total expenditure of \$7.5 billion over 3 years. The larger part of this cost will be borne by Colombia—\$4 billion directly from Colombia's resources and an additional \$800 million in loans from international financial institutions. The Clinton Administration has proposed \$1.6 billion in assistance, and we are seeking additional funds from the international community. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that Spain will host a donor's conference for European Union members this June. We are confident that we will attract the level of support required.

The Nature of U.S. Assistance Needed

The assistance package proposed by the Clinton Administration is weighted heavily in favor of the kind of assistance the United States alone can provide. In large part, the assistance package is designed to give Colombia the tools we need to more

effectively fight drug production and trafficking. It will enable the Colombian Government to bolster counter-drug activities in southern Colombia. With U.S. assistance, we will establish two new counternarcotics battalions in the Colombian military. These special military units, together with an existing, counter-narcotics battalion, will move into southern Colombia to protect Colombian National Police (CNP) forces as they undertake counter-drug missions. Members of these counternarcotics battalions will receive extensive human rights education and training. The aid package provides additional funding to enhance the counter-drug efforts of the CNP.

We are seeking aid from the United States to bolster our counter-drug programs, not to help us combat guerrilla forces. Our success against drug production and trafficking will weaken these guerrilla forces, as they rely upon the drug trade for equipment and other support. But President Pastrana has repeatedly made clear that Colombia is not seeking and will not accept any direct U.S. military intervention in our internal conflict.

The U.S. assistance we need to implement Plan Colombia is broader than counter-drug assistance alone. The aid package also provides humanitarian assistance to displaced persons, funding for alternative economic developments programs, and assistance to help the Colombian Government improve human rights and other rule of law programs. The Colombian Government and other members of the international community will provide additional assistance in these areas. As a result, the profile of proposed U.S. assistance does not accurately reflect the overall profile of Plan Colombia or the relative budgetary emphasis given to each function under the Plan.

Why the Congress Should Approve the Package

Before I conclude, I would like to explain why we believe this Committee should support the Administration's proposal. The war on drugs is not a war in Colombia. It is a war that is being fought and must be fought throughout the world.

It is true that much of the cocaine and heroine consumed in the United States is produced in Colombia. No one regrets this more than the nearly 40 million law-abiding and peace-loving citizens of Colombia. We have a responsibility to ourselves, to our children, and to our neighbors such as the United States to stop the scourge of illegal drugs. It also must be said that most of the cocaine and heroine we are talking about is purchased and consumed illegally here in the United States. We know that this reality is no less regrettable for the United States than it is for Colombia to be the source of the drugs. And we recognize and appreciate the costs and sacrifices made in the United States in the name of treatment, prevention, and law enforcement.

It does illustrate that our countries share the terrible burdens that illegal drugs place on our people. General McCaffrey stated recently that over 50,000 Americans die each year due to drug abuse. At the same time, successive generations of Colombian children are growing up in a country where profits from illegal drugs fuel daily violence, weaken government institutions, and finance terrorist activities that threaten human rights and the future of our democracy.

I urge you to support the Administration's proposal.

I appreciate your attention to my views. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Senator McCONNELL. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Your president has courageously declared the war on narco-traffickers and certainly we all applaud that. Last year, in an effort to encourage the FARC to participate in a peace process, your president agreed to a demilitarized zone.

The effect of which was to concede control of a region the size of Switzerland to the guerrillas. Do you believe the guerrillas used this region as a base for drug production and trafficking, and would the push into southern Colombia after that decision, and if not, what is the likelihood that the DMZ simply becomes a safe haven for traffickers?

Ambassador MORENO. Let me begin by saying that as General Wilhelm said here, the cocaine that is reportedly grown in the demilitarized zone is no more than 12 percent of the total cocaine grown in Colombia. Secondly, this area, and it is important to note the size of our country.

Colombia is about the size of Texas and California combined. This area is a very remote area where there has been very limited government presence, and it is basically an area where the guerillas have typically moved.

There is one thing President Pastrana offered during the campaign. It is a unilateral concession, to bring the insurgents to the table of negotiations. And it was a bold move and a risky move, but this was something that Colombian people voted upon. Since that happened, I am happy to say that the negotiations with the FARC insurgents have been moving along in a positive way.

We all know that making peace is more difficult than making war. But the fact of the matter is that there were two or three occasions that we identified labs in the demilitarized zone which were later taken by our national police. And we will continue to monitor any such events.

But the purpose of our government is to keep this zone inasmuch as the negotiations proceed, as they have been proceeding. This is, again, as I said initially, a unilateral concession. The government can take it away any minute it wants, and that is what is really important, Senator.

Senator MCCONNELL. Speaking of insurgencies, moving to a different one. Last week your government announced a safe haven policy for the ELN. How does that decision fit into an aggressive counter-narcotics strategy?

Ambassador MORENO. Well, the area that has been discussed with the ELN, first of all, there is not an agreement with ELN, and I am not prepared to answer any of the specifics on any of the negotiations. As you well know, any kind of peace negotiations, to be successful, must be treated in a secret fashion.

However, what occurred last week was basically a negotiation, or rather an agreement, between the population in the north of Colombia where initially there had been a discussion where a demilitarized zone or transition zone will take place.

And basically what was agreed here was that there would be inputs from the society here, and also that there would be international monitoring units as well as Colombian. So, it is basically having much more than what exists today in the south of Colombia, where the FARC has this zone.

Senator MCCONNELL. I am just going to take one more question, because we have other Senators here who want to propound questions to you, Mr. Ambassador. Plan Colombia calls for a total of \$7.5 billion, \$4 billion of which comes from your government.

What portion of the \$4 billion from your government are actually funds from the Inner-American Development Bank and the other international financial institutions to which the United States is a big contributor?

Ambassador MORENO. Basically, as I explained earlier in my comments, the \$4 billion is a direct appropriation over the 3 years, and there's \$800 million that comes from the international financial institutions. One of the possibilities we are looking right now is to precisely increase that to about \$900 million, which was something that Colombia negotiated, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement, to invest in a social safety net.

Senator McCONNELL. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Senator Inouye.

Senator INOUE. Thank you very much. Mr. Ambassador, I can assure you that all of us are quite concerned with your plight, and we will do our best to be of assistance. But I was quite intrigued by a question asked by my Chairman, Senator Stevens. Is it true that high school graduates are deferred from entering into combat situations?

Ambassador MORENO. That is a very important question, sir, and let me try to explain it. We have a total army of about 120,000 men, of which about 40,000 are called conscripts.

These conscripts normally serve a period of no more than a year. In fact, at times, they are exempt if they have voted in, or participated in, an election. That means that there is a tremendous rotation.

Under President Pastrana's leadership, he has undertaken the commitment to take away these conscript soldiers and change them for professional soldiers. However, this cannot be done in a years time. So, the plan is that it will be 10,000 soldiers of the conscripts going out every year and 10,000 professional soldiers entering every year.

Secondly, we also changed the fact that soldiers under 18 could not be part of the Colombian armed forces and whoever were under 18 were dismissed from the Colombian armed forces. So, we are moving to have a professional army and there is a lot of work being done through fast track legislation, precisely to be able to fire and hire people inside our military; also, to have a lot of work in the anti-corruption area; and finally, all of the modernization.

These are some of the building blocks that we have been instituting, as well as putting human rights offices inside the military. There used to be, when President Pastrana entered government, about 100 human rights offices inside the military. They are now up to 181.

Senator INOUE. But if one has a high school diploma, he is deferred from combat activities?

Ambassador MORENO. That has been the case, and this is exactly what we are changing, sir. Yes.

Senator INOUE. With all the new equipment, sophisticated equipment, you would need men and women who have training or are trainable, with some degree of educational background, do you not think so?

Ambassador MORENO. Absolutely, Senator. And the case with these three counter-narcotics battalions is that they are varied units, that they are professional soldiers with at least 5 years experience, precisely to work in this area. And of course, when it comes to helicopters, it means that you need to train at least three different crews for each of the helicopters to serve in their different nations.

Senator INOUE. I have other questions, if I may submit them.

Senator McCONNELL. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Stevens.

Senator STEVENS. Mr. Chairman, I will have some other questions, also, to submit to the formal panel.

Mr. Ambassador, as a friend, and you are a good friend, personally and to our country, I was very impressed with your President Pastrana and the presentation you made to our committee. You made it, as I said at the time, a great many friends. The deeper we go into our plan to help you, the more some of us think that it is flawed.

Tell me about the time frame for these battalions. How soon do you expect those battalions to be ready to start this eradication of these areas?

Ambassador MORENO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you again for the wonderful meeting you hosted for us early in January when President Pastrana was here. There's already a counter-narcotics battalion that has finished training, and it is ready to go. It is, today, located near the area of Tracicenas in the south of Colombia. And there are an additional two more battalions on their way.

When President Pastrana entered office, he made a very tough decision, and that was that upon looking at the numbers of cocaine explosion, really, in the growth of cocaine, we went, basically, 5 years ago from about 30,000 hectares to about 120,000 today. And if you look at the numbers of cocaine, that is basically the reverse of what used to be the case between Peru and Colombia.

So, what President Pastrana did was to make the tough decision of involving our military. This is not an easy decision. It would not be an easy decision in any military, but we have no choice.

Today, of the total budget of our country, about one-third is spent on military spending. Forty percent of that is devoted for counter-narcotics alone. So, we are also using our air force to do an air interdiction. And we have already started working on this front to be able to down planes that are carrying cocaine.

And secondly, we deployed in August of last year, a very strong navy operation to do rivering to protect the rivers from where they come with the chemicals that are used to make cocaine itself. And also, to be able to patrol these rivers effectively when the cocaine paste is later taken out and flown out of the areas.

So, the answer is yes, we have one battalion already trained, and two are in the process of being trained now, Mr. Chairman. And we have two more boats. I'm sorry.

Senator STEVENS. Mr. Ambassador, as you look at this operation, the president told us that your military has gone through a substantial change also. And he selected a new general, right?

Ambassador MORENO. Yes, sir.

Senator STEVENS. Can you tell us anything about the modernization of your own military during this period?

Ambassador MORENO. Yes, sir. Some of the things I just mentioned a little while ago. First of all is the change of the conscripts to professional soldiers to have a totally professional military by the time President Pastrana's term is over. That means taking away 40,000 conscripts into professional soldiers, which implies a substantial budget increase.

Senator STEVENS. Yes. We know about that. The difference between conscripts and volunteers.

Ambassador MORENO. Yes. So, that's one. Secondly, in anti-corruption, there is a whole program of anti-corruption taking place inside the military.

Third, we have contracted a study with National Public Research Institute (NPRI) to do a lot of the modernization and changes in command and control that need to take place. And last, but not least, is the human rights training that every soldier in the Colombian military is undergoing. And in this we have trained close to 78,000 members of our military in doing this precise training. And also to, for instance, in the counter-narcotics battalions, they went through a very impressive program of human rights training as well.

Senator STEVENS. One last question. Senator McConnell mentioned something that many other senators have talked to me about, and that is the possibility of an area-wide plan that would put the pressure on the narcotic traffickers in your country.

The feeling is they will go back to Peru or go somewhere else, and we are going to see a kaleidoscope. What do they call it? I'm thinking of the thing down at the beach where you try to hit that—

STAFF. Wack-o-mo.

Senator STEVENS. Wack-o-mo. You hit there, it pops up there.

STAFF. Yes.

Senator STEVENS. You never can get them all down. But is there any plan for an area-wide agreement? Is your country trying to seek area-wide participation in this attempt to eradicate this scourge down there?

Ambassador MORENO. Well, we will definitely work very closely with our neighbors, and especially in the area of interdiction. It is critical to work with all of the countries. Especially we are working with Ecuador. And most of the high growing area that we have today is pushed to the south involves very much the monitoring on the Ecuadorian side.

It is not easy to quickly transplant the cocaine crops from one place to the next, because it takes about 18 months before any one crop begins. So, the monitoring is in place. We cannot prevent this kind of situation from occurring, but I agree with you that the regional concept is very important.

Senator STEVENS. Thank you.

[The information follows:]

PROPOSAL FOR THE INCREASE OF FINANCIAL AID FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO
ECUADOR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

Ecuador, located between Colombia and Peru, suffers from somewhat different aspects of the drug problem. Due to its very low production, Ecuador has been considered as a "transit" country and not regarded as a priority. Nevertheless, the data does not support this approach.

Recent data suggests that unfortunately Ecuador is becoming active in money laundering, deviation of chemicals used in drug production and as a collection point for internal and external distribution.

The drug problem today reveals that crimes such as money laundering, drug trafficking are connected and simultaneous. Therefore, it may be misleading to brand some countries as producers and others as transit or consumers. To recognize the responsibility of each is important, but insufficient if the burden is not appropriately shared.

The drug problem has never been about frontiers or Nations. This illegal activity has always been international, dynamic and innovative in the use of technology, and it may move from one location to another. Therefore, we should not single out one country as the source of the problem, nor should we expect its solution to come from just one Nation, but rather from the combined efforts of the countries involved.

Ecuador's Law 108 reiterates the will and determination to meet the formidable challenges to fight drugs; the National Plan constitutes the main operative strategy to identify the actions to be implemented in order to reduce drug supply and demand. It has guidelines for each sector and as well as parameters for foreign aid and cooperation. It is also the basic reference for the National Council to Control Drugs, CONSEP.

In its drafting process this law required an active participation and consensus of all institutions involved in the fight against drugs. Thus, apart from being a document outlining principles and policies, the law constitutes an effective working tool for all public and private institutions engaged in the fight against drug trafficking.

It is essential to acknowledge the principle of shared responsibility as the most effective and fair element to face this transnational phenomenon.

For the 1999–2003 five year period, through its National Anti-Drugs Plan, Ecuador will develop programs aimed at: preventing and reducing drug consumption; controlling illegal drug production, processing and trafficking; promoting research and raising awareness of drug related issues; curbing money laundering, managing assets seized in drug operations.

The CONSEP, integrated by representatives of government and private institutions involved in the fight against drugs, has requested aid from the Inter-American Commission for Drug Abuse Control, to convene a Consultative Group and a Donors Conference to obtain funding for the National Anti-Narcotics Plan.

The support of the United States is crucial for the full implementation of the Plan, as part of the burden-sharing response of the international community. This support should be proportionate to the magnitude of the challenges faced by the region and its members.

A NEW APPROACH IN ECUADOR

The northern frontier, which runs for approximately 580 km through the Provinces of Esmeraldas, Carchi and Sucumbios, and mostly along the Putumayo River, has very particular characteristics that demand a specific strategy. The strategy should include activities for a sustained and sustainable development.

The region is open 24 hours for border crossing, with patrol points in the international bridge of Rumichaca and in the near future in San Miguel bridge. However, along the border there are many informal crossing points used for legitimate trade, but that may also be used by groups linked to drug operations and related crimes.

Drugs such as heroine, cocaine in its various forms, and marihuana enter the Ecuadorian territory through land, air and sea.

The jungle in the northeastern section of the country, is used by drug cartels, mainly foreign, to evade police control. The influence of the guerrillas from Colombia has limited police action in the area. It has also been detected that due to a more severe control of chemicals used in the production of drugs, the criminal organizations use chemicals not subject to control that undergo a process to obtain controlled substances.

THE ECUADORIAN OUTLOOK IN THE REDUCTION OF SUPPLY

The data collected by the Anti-Narcotics Division of the National Police, a recently created unit, shows that in recent years the volumes of drugs seized have increased, as well as the number of arrests related to drugs. However, it is difficult to assess if the drug available for export has decreased correspondingly.

We require a regional approach to this issue, supported by agreements, allowing coordination among the various countries involved in this fight.

The final stage of the international drug trafficking culminates with money laundering, which impacts not only the economy but also the entire society and destabilizes the democratic institutions.

In the area of money laundering, the CONSEP established the National Division for the Processing of Financial Information. Since 1995, 827 individuals have been investigated for financial transactions judged to be unusual and reported by banking institutions. The investigations on the reported irregularities are being conducted by the Public Prosecutor.

Given this background, Ecuador expects that the Government of the United States will consider an additional \$32,390,000 in aid to be used in the implementation of the projects attached to this document which are part of the National Plan and constitute a priority among the measures to be taken by the National Police and Armed Forces of Ecuador in their fight against drugs in their effort to eliminate supply to the United States and other countries. In keeping with the principles outlined at the beginning of my statement, referring to the burden sharing approach to this hemispheric problem.

I would like to conclude by noting that the Government of Ecuador fully cooperates with the Government of the United States in the fight against drug trafficking. The agreement signed by both Governments to establish the American Forward Operating Location in Manta was a crucial step in the hemispheric fight against drug trafficking. We are confident that this contribution of the Ecuadorian Government to the regional effort against this common threat will be dully recognized by both the U.S. Government and the U.S. Congress.

Problems

Ecuador's main drug related problems are:
Loosely-monitored airports, seaports, and road networks.
Low capacity to control money laundering.

Northeastern border area with Colombia is a matter of great concern. It is used by traffickers to move both drugs and chemicals. Colombian guerrilla is present near that country side of the border, encouraging and participating in these activities.

This situation threatens the stability and security of the region, and especially Ecuador's security due to its current economic crisis and its closeness to guerrilla and drug trafficking operation centers in Putumayo region.

The U.S. aide to Colombia will be more effective if at the same time it considers to reduce the risk that the problem be moved into Ecuadorian territory, which could be occupied by farmers to re-situate its coca crop fields and by producers to build up new laboratories.

Besides that, due to its economic problems, the efforts of the Government of Ecuador has been not sufficient to attend the basic needs of the Ecuadorian population in the Putumayo region, so there is an increasing risk of support to the traffickers' activities from the Ecuadorian population living in that area.

Necessities

Therefore, Ecuador needs aid to:
Develop its security institutional capabilities to interdict illegal drugs and control chemicals deviation.

Get equipment to interdiction operations.

Develop counter-narcotic training programs to its police and military forces, as well as custom agents.

Improve its intelligence network.

Strengthen airport and seaport enforcement, fixed and mobile roadblocks, and aerial reconnaissance.

Strengthen its judicial system and its financial investigation units to prosecute traffickers, seize drug assets and reduce money laundering.

Implement alternative development programs, especially in the Putumayo region.

Implement prevention and consumption reduction programs.

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ECUADOR'S DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

(IN ADDITION TO AID PACKAGE PRESENTED TO CONGRESS BY U.S. GOVERNMENT)

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	U.S. DOLLARS
REDUCTION OF DEMAND		
PREVENTION NETWORK	Implement government and non-government organizations in order to address drug consumption.	1,500,000
TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG ADDICTS.	Offer specialized therapeutical treatment to addicts, regardless of social status.	120,000
DRUG MONITORING	Collect data and statistics on reduction of supply and demand of drugs.	150,000
COMMUNITY AWARENESS	Information campaigns through the media to raise awareness; establish an Information Center.	120,000
SUBTOTAL .....	.....	1,890,000

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ECUADOR'S DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES—
Continued

(IN ADDITION TO AID PACKAGE PRESENTED TO CONGRESS BY U.S. GOVERNMENT)

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	U.S. DOLLARS
REDUCTION OF SUPPLY		
SUPPORT TO THE ANTI-NARCOTICS DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL POLICE.	Provide support to the Anti-Narcotics Division of the National Police, with a more efficient use of resources (financial, material and technological) aimed at fulfilling its duties and maintaining a standard of excellence.	6,000,000
ANTI-NARCOTICS TRAINING CENTER	Provide infrastructure, equipment to the Anti-Narcotics Division, Precincts. Provide communication equipment, IT and computers, air, land and sea mobility, weapons and ammunition. Develop a training and specialization program for the operative and administrative levels. Implement the departments of Training Counseling, Multimedia and IT systems. Integrate educational programs with Police Academies and rank and file of the Police.	1,000,000
COMMUNICATIONS AND IT	Provide and test hardware and software to connect to the information system of the Joint Intelligence and Coordination Center, JICC. Develop and implement training in IT for police personnel.	500,000
CONTROL DE PRESURSOROS QUIMICOS Y PRODUCTOS QUIMICOS ESPECIFICOS.	Implements a system to control and track the kind, quality and amount of precusores quimicos and their use. Develop guidelines and rules for autoridades y ejecutores.	500,000
CANINE TRAINING CENTER	Establish canine units in the North border, Provinces of Esmeraldas, Tulcán, Sucumbios, Controles Integrados, Puerto de Manta, Baeza y Loja. Refurbishing of canine units nationwide	1,000,000
REINFORCEMENT OF THE INTELLIGENCE AND COORDINATION CENTER.	Replacement and increase of drug detecting dogs. Implement the system of passive dogs. Include a budget to feed and care dogs. Technical training to officers and troop in working with drug detecting dogs.	1,000,000
REINFORCEMENT OF THE SPECIAL ANTI-DRUGS MOBIL GROUP—GEMA.	Consolidate the Intelligence and Coordination Center as the governing entity at the national level of the anti-narcotics intelligence. Implement an information network that would allow the management of strategic information in a timely fashion at the national level. Implement a process for the selection of personnel Carry out programs for updating and training of personnel. Reinforce interdiction operations in roads and highways. Renovation of premises and supply of equipment for the Special Anti-drugs Mobil Group. Establish special anti-drug mobil groups in each district. Training in interdiction operations in roads and highways.	1,000,000

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ECUADOR'S DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES—
Continued

(IN ADDITION TO AID PACKAGE PRESENTED TO CONGRESS BY U.S. GOVERNMENT)

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	U.S. DOLLARS
REINFORCEMENT FOR THE MONEY LAUNDERING PREVENTION UNITS.	Implement financial analysis units in Cuenca, Tulcan, Guayaquil and Loja. National and International link via electronic mail with private and public institutions in charge of money laundering.	500,000
REINFORCEMENT OF THE ANTI NARCOTICS POLICE AIR OPERATIONS.	Consolidate air surveillance operations Planes, helicopters, radar equipment and heliports in Sucumbios, Tulcan and Esmeraldas. Training of air personnel.	6,000,000
REINFORCEMENT FOR LABORATORY	Implement two laboratories: Cuenca and Guayaquil Provision of chemical reactivities for field analysis of drugs and precursors seized in police operatives. Technological improvement of the chemical laboratory. Training of laboratory personnel and anti-drugs operative units.	2,000,000
Alternative Social and Economic Development.	Reinforcement of government actions to discourage participation of local population in any of the drug trafficking activities by improving social, economic, education and health conditions in the Putumayo region.	6,000,000
Security Measures	Security operations for the support of counter narcotics operations in the border region.	5,000,000
TOTAL .....	.....	32,390,000

Senator MCCONNELL. OK. The limit we have—I am sorry to you witnesses, if you will just be patient. We have two stack votes. What I am going to recommend we do is recess the hearing and go catch one vote at the end, the next one at the beginning, and then we will come back. And it is my intention to finish up. So, please—

Ambassador MORENO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Does anybody want to come back and ask further questions of the Ambassador from Colombia? If not, we will dismiss him.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Well, I had some questions, but I am happy to submit them.

Senator MCCONNELL. OK. Submit them for the record.

Senator MCCONNELL. Senator Domenici.

Senator DOMENICI. OK. I have one and I will submit it.

Senator MCCONNELL. Fine.

And, Mr. Ambassador, thank you for being here. And we will get to the next witness as soon as I return.

Ambassador MORENO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. My apologies. Again, Senate business is getting in the way of this hearing. All right. We have the attorney general from Ecuador and the Bolivia minister of agriculture.

And we appreciate, very much, both of you gentlemen being with us. And why don't you go ahead with your statement in whichever order you determine?

**STATEMENT OF DR. RAMON JIMENEZ, ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR EC-
UADOR**

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the panel, committee. It is a pleasure, and an honor, to be here. I would like to start this short talk.

They have told me it is about 5 minutes. It is not enough time to talk about the problems that are our problems, economic problems, social problems, with Ecuador or of any country, but I would like to start this by recalling the words of the late Senator of the United States of America, Robert Kennedy, when he said something like this.

I'm translating directly from Spanish into English. "I feel the things as they are, and I ask why. I dream of the things that are not, and I ask why not."

If things were as we dream they are, probably we would not be here discussing the drug dealing problems of the world. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ecuador is a country which has had, and which is having, very, very serious economical and social problems during the last 2 years. There is poverty. There is unemployment and under unemployment which goes up to 70 percent of the population, including unemployment; 14 percent of unemployment and—and the rest of unemployment.

There are many causes for that, and I am not going to repeat them. They are well known to everybody. During the last years, the tragedy called the Nino Current, et cetera, many, many problems in that sense.

There is a per capita income of about \$1,000 per year, and the gross domestic product goes up to \$13.6 million, which is less than the external debt of Ecuador. Inflation has been, during the last 2 years, about 64 percent and the government is doing a lot of efforts in order to control these things. And recently with the new dollarization, as we call it, dollar recession system of economic and monetary system.

In effect, still, that regarding the drug problems, Ecuador is only a transit country. Not only various data, enough data, that reflects that Ecuador at present has a big problem in laundering, processing and distribution to the consumption countries of the world. And by the way, speaking about the consumption countries of the world, I do not think that the consumer countries should be only blamed for the problems of drugs in the world.

They say, and I do not agree, that if there were no consumption, there would be no processing and there would be no trafficking, and there would be no plants, crops. I say that if there were no crops, if there were no traffic, there would be no consumption.

It is a cycle. And we have to consider it as a cycle. We cannot individualize. We cannot put aside the countries which produce, and we cannot put aside the countries which, apparently, are only a transit country. And we cannot put aside the countries which only consume or which mostly consume, like the United States of America and Europe.

I would say that this has to be a coordinated activity all over the world. Consumers, producers and transit countries.

The government of Ecuador, all the people of Ecuador, are doing a lot of effort in order to fight drug dealings. There is the so-called law 108, which has been in effect for about 10 years, and now it is being reformed to bring it up to date. Review problems that we are having, especially the great input into the laundering problems in Ecuador. This has been done by the National Council for the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (CONSEP), Consejo Nacional, Desustancias Estupefaciente Eficotropica, the National Council for drug combat.

There is a prevention, rehabilitation and very, very strong control and interdiction activities. And this, in the control and interdiction activities, is where Ecuador needs the international assistance.

And we are very, very thankful for the international assistance that we get from the UNDCP, the United Nations International Drug Control Program, and from the Inter American Commission for the Control of the Abuse of Drugs (SICAD) of the Organization of American States. But we need the help of our neighbors, Colombia. We need the help of Peru.

We are finished, as you know already, about 3 years ago all the problems which we had were the frontier in Peru. And all the money that was supposed to be in the hands of the people to fight with Peru, we are now using it to build roads in Peru. To build roads between Peru and Ecuador, I mean, in joint programs.

Senator MCCONNELL. All right.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. There is another frontier which is a problem where we have about 580 kilometers which is open 24 hours with Colombia around the Putumayo region, which you already have heard about it. Some more data, Mr. Chairman. Important data of about 1,000 tons of cocaine production, and all the cycle from Colombia, 50 percent goes through Ecuador. And where does it go? It goes to the United States of America. It goes to Europe. To poison the young people of America, of the Americas. North America, Central America, South America. But especially in the consumer countries.

In 4 years, about 1,000 persons in Ecuador, which is a lot, and corporations have been investigated and they have been sentenced, because of unusual banking transactions. And there we have the Unidad Para Procesamiento de Informacion Reservada (UPIR) or Commission of Processing of Confidential Information, which also belongs to the CONSEP, of which I am the president as attorney general, which is the special investigations commission for banking transactions.

I have 24 prosecutions a year regarding drug dealings, which is enhanced or which are enhanced of the prosecutor general.

Senator MCCONNELL. Could I interrupt you a minute, Mr. Attorney General? The administration has only requested \$2 million in this supplemental that we're talking about today, for your country, on top of \$11 million already in the budget.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Yet you just testified 50 percent of the cocaine is going through Ecuador. Do you share my view that it might be appropriate to deal with this issue in a more regional way than the current bill that we are having the testimony on?

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Definitely. I believe that it has to be taken as a context, as a general context. I believe in the dream of General Simon Bolivar—or they call him Simon Bolivar here in the States. The guy in Colombia is called the Grand Colombian, as you know, before 1830, before we got separated in different countries.

I am not saying that we have made effusion, a merge between the countries. No. Although mergers are up-to-date in Ecuador now, but banking mergers in order to avoid bankruptcies. But I think that this has to be taken as a whole strategy, as a coordinated strategy.

But everything we do in only one country, because it is the big producer, and I am for our, as we call it, the sister republic of Colombia. Everything we do, everything the international organizations do in order to increase the drug fights in Colombia will be dropping to the southern countries. Especially to Ecuador and Bolivia.

And why do I say especially to Ecuador and Bolivia? Because in Peru, there is a very strong government run by President Fujimori. And he went out of the international commission of human rights. He decided to do so. He is not part of the international commission of human rights anymore. He decided to do so.

We are part of the International Commission of Human Rights, and we, at the attorney general's office of Ecuador, have about 20, between 20 and 25, cases of human rights. And we work for human rights in all the aspects. Not only in the drug dealing, drug trafficking, drug fighting situation, but in all aspects.

Senator MCCONNELL. Mr. Attorney General, I apologize that we are running so late, but if you could wrap it up so we could hear from—

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Sure.

Senator MCCONNELL (continuing). The minister in Bolivia, and then we will get a few questions then.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you so much. Mr. Minister.

STATEMENT OF OSWALDO ANTEZANA, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE FOR BOLIVIA

Minister ANTEZANA. Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this timely hearing on the U.S. anti-narcotics policy in the Andean region and for allowing my country to express its views regarding this very important matter. Bolivia, a country that was, until very recently, the second largest producer of cocaine in the world, undertook, in August of 1997, upon the swearing in of President Gonzalo Sanchez De Lozada, the solemn commitment to eliminate illegal coca production in the country by the year 2002.

Since Bolivia began implementing its counter-narcotics strategy, the Dignity Plan, through education, interdiction operation and a broad array of law enforcement programs in combination with our alternative economic development projects, we have seen a reduction of more than 70 percent of illegal coca production. Progress was even faster than anticipated. From 33,800 hectares of illegal coca plantations in 1997 to 9,800 hectares today.

This translates into 250 metric tons of cocaine that will not be produced or exported.

Senator MCCONNELL. You said you think you can achieve complete elimination by what date?

Minister ANTEZANA. 2002. My country has clearly shown that once incapable of victory in the war against drugs is attainable. That our goals seen as utopian when first announced, is today within reach. At this vital juncture, enhanced cooperation and assistance from the international community in support of Bolivia's continued progress is key to the successful completion of these efforts.

We are entering into the most critical and complex phase of the Dignity Plan. After 29 months of record breaking levels of eradication, we are about to initiate an eradication operation in the Yungas, the second largest coca production area in Bolivia; an insulated region with a long standing tradition of coca use and a strong anti-government sentiment.

It is serving the Yungas culture and religious traditions in regards to coca use, it will be a daunting task demanding increased results.

Despite the fact that in 1999, eradication and interdiction efforts were conducted, we cannot discard possible flare-ups of social unrest in Chapare and Yungas. For example, already this year, there was killed a Bolivian soldier in Chapare. And in just in the past weeks, two more anti-narcotics officers were again downed in the line of duty.

Our vigorous eradication and interdiction efforts, along with incentives for coca growers to switch to legal crops are clearly working. We, indeed, have been able to dramatically reduce vigorous coca production. Now we must finish the job.

In his request for supplemental aid for the Andean countries, President Clinton proposed \$18 million in assistance for Bolivia for the years 2000 and 2001. We greatly appreciate the administration's recognition that our partnership with the United States requires additional resources. At the same time, even the General Accounting Office of the U.S. Government concluded in its February 18th report that the Andean government continued to lack the resources and capabilities necessary to perform effect counter-narcotic operations.

To complete, and make permanent, the gains of the Dignity Plan, Bolivia estimates a need of \$111.5 million for fiscal year—

Senator MCCONNELL. If I could interrupt on that point, Mr. Minister, just like I did the Attorney General. Is it your view that this package that we are currently having the hearing on, is not sufficiently regional in nature and would it be your view that it would be more successful if greater assistance were provided to Bolivia and to Ecuador?

Minister ANTEZANA. Ecuador? Yes. It is true. We can work together with—all the countries of the Andean region. Of course. Yes.

Senator MCCONNELL. In other words, the current amount for Bolivia is not adequate for you to finish the job?

Minister ANTEZANA. No. It's not sufficient.

Senator MCCONNELL. OK. Go right ahead. I'm sorry.

Minister ANTEZANA. Bolivia estimates a need of \$111.5 million for fiscal year 2000, and \$106.5 million for fiscal year 2001. As part of the regular budget, the United States has already provided \$48

million to Bolivia in fiscal year 2000, and proposed \$52 million for fiscal year 2001. This means that there is a shortfall of at least \$50 million each year. In the strongest terms possible, we respectfully request that Congress consider increasing the money set for Bolivia in the supplemental aid package for a total of \$50 million per year.

The bulk of these funds will be used in alternative development projects and balance of payments. Integrating coca farmers into the legal economy is the most urgent priority for Bolivia's counter-narcotics efforts. If the government is not able to give an answer to more than 38,000 families that will be displaced as a result of the counter-narcotics strategy, there is a danger of serious backsliding on the immense progress to date. Already the dramatic reduction of coca availability has quadrupled the price of the leaf in only one year.

The farmers of the Chapare region are just beginning to enjoy the promise of a sustainable legal economy. There are already 105,000 examples of legal substitute crops, but much remains to be done and achieved. The next 2 years are crucial.

The key to our sustained success in eradicating illegal coca crops is tangible progress and development, new sources of legal products.

If the assistance proposed for Bolivian, the package is not proportionate to the success in eradication that we have achieved, there will be enormous pressure on Bolivians to return to illicit coca production.

With current resources, we are not able to thwart such pressure. We are not asking for open-ended assistance, but we disparately need the amounts we requested for the next 2 years to complete our goal. Then Bolivia and the United States can raise our hands together as we celebrate complete victory against drug trafficking.

I would like to submit, for the record, a short detailing of the funding request for Bolivia for the next 2 years. I am now open to any questions you or any members of this committee might have on this issue.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will put your additional material in the record.

[The information follows:]

DIGNITY PLAN SUPPLEMENTAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING REQUEST

FISCAL YEAR 2000 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING NEEDS

[In millions of dollars]

Program	U.S. regular funding	Supplemental requirement	Total assistance
Alternative development	14.0	53.0	67.0
Prevention and justice	2.8	.....	2.8
Eradication	4.5	8.5	13.0
Interdiction	24.0	2.0	26.0
Others	2.7	.....	2.7
Total	48.0	63.5	111.5

[In millions of dollars]

	<i>Share within supplemental requirement</i>
Alternative development:	
Projects:	
Chapare-Yungas Social and Productive Infrastructure	7.0
Assistance Production Fund	4.0
Investment and Credit for Rural Enterprises	5.0
Assistance for Agrarian Production	8.0
Technical Assistance Fund	3.0
Subtotal	27.0
Balance of payments:	
Community Compensation	10.0
Alternative Development Activities USAID	10.7
Road Infrastructure	5.3
Subtotal	26.0
Total	53.0
Eradication:	
Assistance for Eradication: Personnel and equipment for DIRECO	7.0
Investment: Equipment, infrastructure and topographic material for DIRECO	1.1
Institutional Strengthening Projects	0.2
Public Awareness Campaigns	0.2
Total	8.5
Interdiction:	
UMOPAR—Border Security	1.1
Canine Program	0.3
Communications Unit	0.6
Total	2.0

FISCAL YEAR 2001 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING NEEDS ¹

[In millions of dollars]

Program	U.S. regular funding	Supplemental requirement	Total assistance
Alternative development	14.0	50.0	64.0
Prevention and justice	2.8	.....	2.8
Eradication	4.5	7.5	12.0
Interdiction	24.0	1.0	25.0
Others	2.7	.....	2.7
Total	48.0	58.5	106.5

¹ INL requested \$52 million of regular funding for fiscal year 2001; if approved, then Bolivia's supplemental requirement would be \$54.5 million, instead of the \$58.5 million quoted in the chart.

[In millions of dollars]

	<i>Share within supplemental requirement</i>
Alternative development:	
Projects:	
Chapare-Yungas Social and Productive Infrastructure	
Assistance Production Fund	
Investment and Credit for Rural Enterprises	
Assistance for Agrarian Production	

	<i>Share within supplemental requirement</i>
Technical Assistance Fund	
Subtotal	24.0
Balance of payments:	
Community Compensation	
Alternative Development Activities USAID	
Road Infrastructure	
Subtotal	26.0
Total	50.0
Eradication:	
Assistance for Eradication: Personnel and equipment for DIRECO	
Investment: Equipment, infrastructure and topographic material for DIRECO	
Institutional Strengthening Projects	
Public Awareness Campaigns	
Total	
Interdiction:	
UMOPAR—Border Security	
Canine Program	
Communications Unit	
Total	

Senator MCCONNELL. I have just a couple of questions. First, with regard to Ecuador, Mr. Attorney General.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thanks. First, how successful is your judicial system in prosecuting and incarcerating if found guilty these drug traffickers that you find in your courts?

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Well, we are doing a lot of effort in bettering the judicial system of Ecuador. There are many, many problems in the judicial system. It is not perfect. Nothing is perfect in the world, except in heaven.

But institutions, non-government and non-profit organizations of the world are working very hard. For instance, the world bank in bettering the judicial system of Ecuador.

We have an agreement between the judicial power of Ecuador and the so-called pro justicia, pro justice organization which is sponsored by the world bank. And we are doing a great effort. I would say we are not completely successful, but we are working towards being successful.

Senator MCCONNELL. One other question. You, of course, mentioned the transit problem through your country, and I am curious as to how active efforts are to monitor airports, seaports and roads in Ecuador to deal with this transit problem.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Well, we try to be as efficient as we can, but unfortunately we do not count on the necessary elements, material elements to do it. That is where we need more assistance.

One more word, Mr. Chairman, just one word. One of the big efforts of the government of Ecuador is the national anti-drug plan, 1999, 2003, which was approved last year and which has had the

endorsement of UNCDP, seek out from the Organization of American States and many other international organizations.

And one more effort, which has been very, very important is this I have here, the agreement of the National Congress, the agreement of the National Government of Ecuador with the United States Air Force for the Manta Air Base which is working very well.

And people are very happy to have the air base there, because there is more work today in the Manave Province where they needed a lot of work. So, there are efforts that are being made, but we need assistance. Thank you.

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you. Just one final. Senator Leahy is going to handle the final witness who is going to be discussing details from today's front page Washington Post story, but I want to conclude my part of the hearing by asking the minister from Bolivia, even though I know agriculture is your portfolio and not justice. I'm also curious, if you know, how successful you have been in Bolivia in arresting and incarcerating drug traffickers.

Minister ANTEZANA. Well, we have good results. This is a matter that I do not know. I do not know except the number of people, because I have my responsibility in the area of world development and alternative development—

Senator MCCONNELL. Right.

Minister ANTEZANA (continuing). In eradication. But in the last year, I think we catch around 40 tons of the cocaine in Bolivia, and many, many people were arrested. I do not know exactly the number.

Senator MCCONNELL. Let me just conclude by saying to both of you how much I appreciate your being here, and also I want to make an observation to the minister of agriculture from Bolivia, because I understand the problem of agricultural transition.

The most unpopular thing you can do in America, that is legal, is smoke a cigarette. I used to have 100,000 tobacco growers in my State. We have lost about 25 percent of them since President Clinton came to office, and it is dropping daily because of the effort to crack down on cigarette smoking in our country.

Regretfully, in the Appalachian Mountains, the most profitable thing you can do is grow marijuana. And so we have our ongoing efforts in my State to discourage this kind of illegal activity. The root cause of the problem, of course, is the profitability of the plant.

So, I want to particularly commend Bolivia for the extraordinary success that you have had in a really tough area. It is very, very difficult to, with rural people who are otherwise rather poor, to discourage this kind of activity when it is so lucrative. So, my hat is off. I salute you for the extraordinary success you have had in Bolivia. I hope you can keep it up, and I hope you can meet the eradication date of 2002.

So, with that, Senator Leahy is going to handle our last witness, and I am sure his stomach is growling intensely. But if he will hold on, Senator Leahy will be here momentarily I am told.

I want to thank you, Mr. Attorney General and you, Mr. Minister, for joining us today, and let me just say that I share your view that we ought to take a more regional approach to the request of the Clinton Administration.

And I am hopeful that our final product, which we send down to the President, will more accurately meet the needs that you have expressed here. And there, as if on cue, Senator Leahy arrives to handle our last witness. Thank you both very much.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator McCONNELL. You are up.

Senator LEAHY [presiding]. If I have any questions of these witnesses, I will put them in the record, but thank you all for being here.

Attorney General JIMENEZ. Thank you.

Senator LEAHY. Why don't we have the next witness come forward, please. Ms. Kirk, I am delighted to have you here. You and Human Rights Watch have been referred to on more than one occasion today, as I do not need to tell you. Why don't you go ahead.

STATEMENT OF ROBIN KIRK, AMERICAS DIVISION, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Ms. KIRK. Well, thank you very much.

Senator LEAHY. I know you have waited a long time for this.

Ms. KIRK. It has been very interesting. First, I want to thank the subcommittee for inviting me, Chairman McConnell, Senator Leahy. It is a pleasure to come here and talk with you about the proposed aid plan to Colombia. I have a written statement that I have submitted for the record, but I would like to just comment briefly on a couple of things that have been said today during this hearing.

I think I would like to make it very clear that I agree that Colombia is a matter of serious concern, not only for the United States, but also for the international community. We believe that this policy needs to be scrutinized very carefully, and it needs to be scrutinized based on the facts. And that is what I would like to discuss today.

I would like to comment on a couple of things that were said earlier today in the testimony. Three basic points. Number one, this idea that human rights problems in Colombia, and specifically the relationship between the military and paramilitary groups, are simply the result of some bad apples. General Wilhelm used the phrase local collusion with paramilitary groups.

With a great deal of respect to the General, I would simply like to say that that is not supported by the facts. We released a report yesterday that shows that far from local collusion, what we were able to document is continuing ties between the military and paramilitary groups, and specifically, ties that go right through the whole structure of the army.

We were able to document ties between paramilitaries and the military in half of the 18 brigades that now function within the Colombian army. This is not history, this is reality. This is present day.

It is clear that President Pastrana has made a commitment to human rights. He has made that commitment to us in meetings. Ambassador Moreno has also made the same commitments. We understand that there is a will, at least in terms of what Colombian officials will say, to do more for human rights. But what we do not see are actions on the ground.

There are two things that have been cited as proof that the Colombian government has made progress in combating these ties between the military and paramilitary groups, and specifically military involvement in abuses. Ambassador Pickering mentioned the question of statistics.

That, in fact, the number of human rights violations that are directly attributable to the army, to the military in general, have decreased in recent years. That is absolutely correct.

We would agree that direct ties between the military and human rights violations have decreased, but that does take into account the whole question of open collaboration, collusion and support for paramilitary groups. There are no statistics that measure that. What there are are cases. The kinds of cases that we included in our report that show that this collusion, this collaboration, and indeed even an open creation of paramilitary groups, continues to occur in Colombia.

In our report, we looked into the behavior of three brigades, and I think it is important to note that those three brigades are based in Colombia's largest cities. We are not talking about brigades that are in rural areas. We are not talking about far away places. We are talking about the capital of Colombia, Bogota. We are talking about Medellin and we are talking about Cali.

This is far from something that is out there in the woods that cannot be controlled or cannot be supervised. This is happening in the heart of the Colombian army.

Secondly, both Ambassador Pickering and Ambassador Moreno cited our report and said that it was actually a good sign for the Colombian government and its progress on human rights, because much of our information was based on the work of Colombia's own investigators. Prosecutors who work for the Attorney General's Office.

But I would like to point out that many of those investigators have been threatened because of their work, and have been forced to leave Colombia. There is not an effort on the part of the Colombian government to protect them.

Secondly, I would like to comment on the question of conditions. We welcome statements that have been made by the Colombian government that they will support human rights, but I think it is key to match will with measurable benchmarks that the United States can use to see exactly what the facts are on the ground. We cannot simply be satisfied with expressions of good will. We have to be able to match that with real progress.

I have covered Colombia now since 1992, and every year we get expressions of good will. Every year we get intentions, but those intentions are not backed up by real progress on human rights. Let me just cite one example. I think it is especially appropriate for this hearing, because it has to do with the case of a Colombian senator.

This Colombian senator, Manuel Sepeda was murdered in 1994 in the capital of Colombia, in Bogota. And the investigation done by the Attorney General's Office showed that this murder had been carried out by the military, by military officers, in collusion with paramilitary groups.

Until Human Rights Watch protested the fact that these officers remained on active duty only 3 months ago, those officers continued on the payroll of the Colombian army and also continued in working in military intelligence. And it was only until we protested that, in fact, the investigation showed that these Colombian army officers had killed a Colombian senator. It was only then that these two individuals were discharged from the army. That is the kind of progress—

Senator LEAHY. What else happened?

Ms. KIRK. Well, now they are put at the disposition of a civilian court, but the fact is that they remained on active duty. They remained on the payroll until this became public.

Senator LEAHY. Are they before the civilian courts now?

Ms. KIRK. They are before the civilian courts, but let me just say that these two individuals are low ranking officers. They are at the sergeant level and what we have seen again and again is that the Colombian government will cite statistics of officers sent to civilian courts for trial and those officers are almost always privates or sergeants.

Senator LEAHY. Do you remember what the rank was of these two?

Ms. KIRK. They were both sergeants.

Senator LEAHY. And was anybody else either sent to military courts or suspended as a result?

Ms. KIRK. In this particular case, these officers told investigators that they were acting under the orders of a general, who at that time was the head of the ninth brigade, and that general actually died of a heart attack in 1996. So, the case stopped investigating him at that point. But it is clear that there was, it was not just the actions of these sergeants, it was clear that they were acting on orders from their commanding officer.

Senator LEAHY. I note that Human Rights Watch is well-respected and that your work has been widely quoted, by both Democrats and Republicans.

I understand that yesterday, on a Colombian radio broadcast General Tapias accused Human Rights Watch of conspiring with drug traffickers to defame the Army. Would you respond to that?

Ms. KIRK. Well, I think—

Senator LEAHY. Because you know I raised this question earlier.

Ms. KIRK. Yes. No. Thank you for raising it. I think it speaks for itself. Because they do not attack us on the facts. They try to suggest that we are acting for other motives other than simply documenting the truth, but they never question our facts. And I think that, I would like that to speak for itself.

Senator LEAHY. When you work in Colombia, what type of freedom do you have to operate? You are down there investigating gross human rights violations. I can think of other countries in Central and South America where people have been killed for doing similar work. Is this a concern for Human Rights Watch?

Ms. KIRK. Well, I think it is mainly a concern because of our Colombian colleagues, because we consider Colombia the most dangerous country in the world now for human rights defenders. Luckily, people like myself, who work for international organizations, have not lost anyone, but we have lost many of our Colombian col-

leagues. And in fact, Monday is the anniversary of the date of the murder of one of the human rights defenders that I worked most closely with in Colombia, Jesus Valle.

So, we are extremely concerned about the safety of our colleagues in Colombia, and their ability to do just the kind of work that is needed to document continuing human rights abuses in the country. We do face a serious problem, because these human rights workers continue to receive threats, and continue to feel that they jeopardize their lives, especially when they speak publicly. I feel very fortunate, myself, to be able to speak publicly here without being afraid when I walk out of the room. I am afraid that my Colombian colleagues, with all due respect to the Colombian ambassador, do not feel the same freedom.

Senator LEAHY. You heard Ambassador Pickering mention the work the Army is doing to purge itself of human rights violators. Some have noted the dismissal of 15 officers as a sign of progress. How would you respond to that, is that a real sign of progress?

Ms. KIRK. I think we were looking at that figure the other day, 15 officers, and the only way we could kind of account for each of the officers was to go back as far as 1990 to find exactly who they meant by being discharged. So, in other words, in the past 10 years, 15 officers have been discharged. Most of them simply discharged.

In other words, not prosecuted for the human rights abuses that they have been accused of doing. So, no, we do not see that as a sign of great progress. Certainly it is welcome when officers who commit human rights violations are discharged, but we also want to see them prosecuted.

Senator LEAHY. How does that contrast with the National Police?

Ms. KIRK. That is an important contrast, I think, because, for instance, since General Serrano took charge of the Colombian police in 1994, he has discharged an average of 1,000 officers every year. That is for human rights violations, but also because of corruption and other criminal activity.

But I think it is clear the lesson that we take from that is, number one, it is possible when there is political will to make great advances on human rights. And second, that is it possible in Colombia if the Colombian government and the commanders of the army and the navy and the air force decide to apply the same kinds of measures that General Serrano has done within the police.

Senator LEAHY. But I am told that prosecutors, investigators, human rights monitors and others have had to flee Colombia, even today, because of concern for their own safety. Is that your understanding?

Ms. KIRK. That is correct. And it is very disturbing to us. Just at the time when, especially the United States, wants to have this aid monitored and wants to be able to collect the human rights information that it needs, for instance, to apply the Leahy Amendment, to find that even the government's own investigators, the people in the Attorney General's Office that we depend on to forward these cases, are having to flee the country.

And in fact, much of the information that we collected for this report was taken from prosecutors who are out of Colombia and

who wanted, because they are committed to their jobs and committed to doing their duty, they wanted to see some accountability.

And unfortunately, their only recourse was to go to international organizations like Human Rights Watch and see if they could not, by talking to us about their cases, forward them within the Colombian judicial system, because most of these cases that are summarized in this report are stopped. Are essentially frozen, because the prosecutors who were shepherding them through the judicial system have had to flee the country.

Senator LEAHY. Is the Colombian Attorney General's Office the major source of your information?

Ms. KIRK. We match our interviews with Colombian prosecutors with our own interviews with eyewitnesses and other information that we have collected from victims of violations.

Senator LEAHY. I want to make sure I fully understand this. You have spoken about General Serrano. You spoke about the National Police and what they have done. Are you suggesting that if the will was there, the same could be done in the military?

Ms. KIRK. I think that is unquestionable. That the military can take measures today that would begin to produce real results in terms of human rights protections. One of them is simply purging officers that have a proven record of support for paramilitary groups.

One of the things that you will note from our report is that many of the officers who were in charge of these units that we have tied to paramilitary activity, not only remain on active service, but have been promoted. In essence, rewarded for their collusion with paramilitary groups.

That is something that I think would be very evident to General Tapias if he decided to appoint a review committee. That is one of the conditions that we are supporting. To have an outside review committee look at some of these cases and see who is it that really needs to be out of uniform.

Senator LEAHY. And so to anticipate questions, would it be naive to suggest that the Army take this on while fighting the guerrillas? Does it diminish their ability to fight? Does it make any difference in their ability to protect the nation?

Ms. KIRK. I think to the contrary. It would strengthen their fight against guerrillas, because it is clear that the Colombian military has a duty, an obligation, to protect the nation. Has a duty to fight threats against Colombian democracy. There is no question about that. But the only way they can protect democracy is by observing democracy, and observing the rule of law.

When the government itself, through its military, violates law, violates the rule of law by committing human rights violations, they lose credibility. And I think that they would be a stronger army, they would be more effective at defending Colombia if they, themselves, obeyed the law.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you, Ms. Kirk. We will put your full statement in the record.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBIN KIRK

Chairman McConnell, Senator Leahy, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me to convey to the Subcommittee our concerns about the human rights implications of U.S. security assistance to Colombia.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee for taking the time to examine in detail the proposed aid package to the Andean countries and specifically Colombia.

No one disagrees that Colombia faces a difficult challenge. A decades-long war and entrenched drug trafficking have exacted a high toll. Human Rights Watch has fully documented the abusive behavior of Colombia's guerrillas, who kill, kidnap, and extort money from the population they claim to represent.

At the same time, however, forces from within the state itself threaten democracy. Paramilitary groups operating with the acquiescence or open support of the military account for most political violence in Colombia today. Yet Colombia's military leaders have yet to take the firm, clear steps necessary to purge human rights abusers from their ranks.

This is not history, but today's reality. Human Rights Watch has detailed, abundant, and compelling evidence of continuing ties between the Colombian Army and paramilitary groups responsible for gross human rights violations, which we have submitted to this Subcommittee. Our information implicates Colombian Army brigades operating in Colombia's three largest cities, including the capital, Bogotá.

Together, evidence collected so far by Human Rights Watch links half of Colombia's eighteen brigade-level army units to paramilitary activity. In other words, military support for paramilitaries remains national in scope and includes areas where units receiving or scheduled to receive U.S. military aid operate.

For that reason, it is crucial for the Congress to place strict conditions on all security assistance to Colombia to ensure that the Colombian Government severs links, at all levels, between the Colombian military and paramilitary groups and prosecutes in civilian courts those who violate human rights or support or work with paramilitaries.

I have submitted for the record additional recommendations for actions that Human Rights Watch believes the U.S. should require the Colombian Government to take before receiving security assistance.

The 28th of February marks the two-year anniversary of the murder of Jesús Valle, a courageous human rights defender gunned down in his Medellín office precisely because he worked to document links between paramilitaries and the Colombian Army. The gunmen paid to kill him are in prison. But the individuals who planned and paid for his murder remain at large.

Even the government's own investigators are under threat. Dozens of prosecutors who have worked on these cases have been forced to flee Colombia because of death threats. In 1998 and 1999, several investigators who worked for the Attorney General were murdered because of their work on human rights-related cases.

The United States has a positive message to send Colombia and should respond to President Pastrana's call for help. But I urge the members of this Subcommittee to recognize that continued collusion between Colombia's military and paramilitary groups will only undermine the effectiveness of the aid you send and sabotage efforts to rebuild democracy.

Thank you. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Senator LEAHY. And if there are other questions, we will provide that for the record.

I am sorry you had to be here so long, but I hope you found this interesting. I had to go to the floor to get a couple of judges confirmed, and we did.

Nevertheless, I was able to follow the hearing. I think it has been worthwhile, especially as the whole Appropriations Committee will have to consider the Administration's request.

I have some real concerns. The Administration's plan has not been well thought out.

It is too open ended. It guarantees that there will be U.S. troops involved, at least indirectly, in Colombia.

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

Ms. Kirk, I appreciate you taking the time. I think you have helped us with our deliberations.

Ms. KIRK. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 1:37 p.m., Thursday, February 24, the hearing was concluded, and the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

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