



United States Southern Command

MEDIA SUPPORT

INFORMATION AND FACT SHEET

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Infrastructure Protection Program

- The Infrastructure Protection Program will help the Colombian Government defend a vital economic asset that is threatened and has been considerably degraded by the “Army of National Liberation” (ELN) and the “Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia” (FARC) terrorist organizations.
 - *Last year the Oil sector of Colombia’s economy accounted for 4.3% of it’s Gross Domestic Product and more than one-fifth (21%) of its export earnings, down from 4.5% of its GDP and more than one-third (35%) of its export earnings in 2000.*
 - *Colombia’s oil exports are an increasingly important component of U.S. energy security, and a significant source of oil in the Western Hemisphere.*
- Terrorist/guerilla attacks on Colombia’s critical infrastructure degrade its ability to sustain the struggle against the insurgents and have “stretched thin” the government’s security resources. The continuing attacks and threats of attack have also been used to extort “protection” monies from commercial enterprises, further prolonging the conflict.
- The infrastructure protection training represents a departure from our previous counter narcotics-focused assistance, in recognition that the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking are inextricably linked in Colombia, and require robust support by both the regional and international community.
- This plan is consistent with the U.S. government’s overall policy, designed to help Colombia’s embattled Democracy combat narco-trafficking and the terrorism and corruption it supports, promote socio-economic development, and protect human rights.
- Late this summer, the U.S. Congress granted the Executive Branch expanded statutory authorities to better assist Colombia in a unified campaign against drug trafficking and the terrorist activities it finances. The expanded authority allows support of Colombian Security Forces beyond a strictly counter-drug nexus.
- We continue to provide assistance to only those Colombian Military units that have successfully completed the U.S. DoS’s Human Rights vetting process, and will maintain compliance with the 400 person “cap” on U.S. Military personnel in Colombia.
- Training will take place in the region where the pipeline is located, but U.S. trainers will not participate in Operations against the terrorist-guerilla elements threatening the pipeline.

(more)

- Training will follow the pattern of successful previous endeavors, such as the training of the Colombian Counter-Drug Brigades. We will use small groups of U.S. trainers to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of the Colombian unit's Command and Control elements, intelligence gathering and analysis teams, mobility assets, and small-unit basic military skills.
- About \$6 million in U.S. Government funding has already been granted to the Colombian Government to "jump-start" the pipeline protection program, under the authority of the fiscal year 2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act. These funds will be used to train the Colombian Military and Police elements that are protecting the pipeline.
- President Bush's fiscal year 2003 budget request includes \$98 million in funding for protection of the Cano Limon-Covenas oil pipeline in Colombia.
- Of the proposed \$98 million in funding, about \$27 million is to be used for training, infrastructure and intelligence support. The remaining \$71 Million will be used for Aircraft and Aviation support, including training and maintenance.

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Aerial Eradication Program
(Coca spraying)

U.S. Support of Colombia's Aerial Eradication (spraying) of coca is administered and supervised by the U.S. Department of State.

USSOUTHCOM and Department of Defense support of this effort is extremely limited and takes two basic forms:

- We provide operational-level counter-drug related intelligence to the Colombian military and national police, specifically: information on the location and extent of coca plantations in Colombian territory.
- Training and equipping of Colombian Army Counter-Drug Forces to support and defend the Colombian national Police and others engaged in eradication efforts.

Further information on the program may be obtained from the Government of Colombia or the U.S. State Department.



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Air Bridge Denial Program ***(Interdiction of Suspected Drug transporting Aircraft)***

- On April 29th, the U.S. Government announced that it was working with the Governments of Colombia and Peru on the process to restart the Air Bridge Denial Program. This work does not yet include actual Operations, which, under U.S. Law, will require a U.S. Presidential Determination.
- When and if resumed, U.S. participation in the program will be supervised by the U.S. Department of State.
- Under the revised concept of operations, non-commercial aircraft flying in specifically designated and publicly declared areas of Colombia and Peru could be subjected to special scrutiny by U.S., Colombian and Peruvian ground and aerial detection equipment in an effort to determine if they can be reasonably suspected to be engaged in drug trafficking.
- Until April 20, 2001, USSOUTHCOM provided support for the Air Bridge Denial Program with our long-range, over the horizon, and ground-based radar architecture, airborne early warning systems and tracker aircraft. That program and the Defense Department's support to it was suspended following the Peruvian shoot-down of a civilian aircraft.
- Resumption of the program would mean, in general, resumption of the same type of support from USSOUTHCOM and the Department of Defense.

Further details and information may be provided by the Department of State.

(End)



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EXPANDED AUTHORITY FOR ASSISTANCE TO COLOMBIA

- The Illegal Armed Groups of Colombia and the Andean Ridge are terrorists. Lacking any significant ideological support from the people of the region or foreign sources, they have turned to extortion, kidnapping, and drug trafficking to finance their efforts to subvert democracy and exert autocratic control over others.
- Late this summer, in recognition of this situation, the U.S. Congress granted the U.S. Executive Branch expanded statutory authorities to better assist Colombia in a unified campaign against drug trafficking and the terrorist activities it finances. The expanded authority allows support of Colombian Security Forces beyond a strictly counter-drug nexus.
- Analysis in USSOUTHCOM concludes that while drug production and trafficking pose a serious threat to Colombia, the United States, and the wider community of nations, the nature of the conflict in Colombia is a crisis of governance. However, from a military perspective, we can do some things to better assist them; The expanded authorities granted by the U.S. Congress allow us too:
 - Flexibly apply counterdrug resources and assets to optimize all our military assistance to Colombia to support their fight against the complex threats confronting them.
 - Provide the Colombians intelligence that is not limited by a counterdrug nexus.
 - Employ Joint Interagency Task Force-East and other USSOUTHCOM forces to support the interdiction of arms bound for Colombia.
 - Help the Colombians build military capabilities they deem the most critical in their fight against the threat, including:
 - Helping them fashion their military strategy and campaign plans;
 - Providing strategic, operational and tactical level intelligence collection and planning assistance,
 - Training and equipping additional units which will enable them to seize the initiative and protect their critical infrastructure.
- The role of U.S. Military personnel in the region will remain a supporting one. The success of our previous training and assistance programs gives us confidence that Colombian Military and Police forces can prevail against the complex challenges they face, if they are provided the proper support, cooperation and assistance of the regional and international communities, and that that support does not require the commitment of U.S. or other foreign combat forces.
- We continue to provide assistance to only those Colombian Military units that have successfully completed the U.S. Department of State's Human Rights vetting process, and will maintain compliance with the 400 people "cap" on U.S. Military personnel in Colombia.

(End)