



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY  
Washington, D.C. 20503

**“A Shared Responsibility:  
Counternarcotics and Citizen Security  
in the Americas”**

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace  
Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs

Thursday, March 31, 2011  
10:00 a.m.  
419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Written Statement  
of  
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**SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WESTERN HEMISPHERE, PEACE CORPS, AND GLOBAL NARCOTICS AFFAIRS**

**MARCH 31, 2011**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and the Members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. On behalf of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, I look forward to continuing to work with the members of this Subcommittee to advance and improve U.S. policies in the Western Hemisphere.

**A New Approach to the Threat**

Substance abuse strains families, communities, economies, healthcare and criminal justice systems, not just in the United States, but throughout the Western Hemisphere and world. Effective drug control relies upon a comprehensive approach balancing both public health and public safety. And the Obama Administration has such a comprehensive approach to drug control policy. The President's *National Drug Control Strategy (Strategy)* strengthens our focus on community-based prevention, evidence-based treatment, support for those in recovery from addiction, coordinated law enforcement initiatives, innovative criminal justice policies and programs, and stronger, more productive international partnerships.

The Administration's *Strategy* recognizes that the criminal justice system plays a vital role in reducing the costs and consequences of drug crimes and should employ innovative, evidence-based solutions to stop the all-too-common cycle of arrest, incarceration, release, and re-arrest. An increasing body of evidence suggests that the right combination of appropriate policies and strategies and the provision of a continuum of evidence-based interventions can effectively address the needs of the offender, ensure the safety of the community and ultimately break that cycle. Some innovations include: Drug Market Intervention, a pre-arrest strategy shown to reduce open air drug markets; testing and sanctions strategies to address probation and parole violations in a swift yet modest manner to facilitate offender compliance; reentry support strategies to prepare offenders for life after release; and of course, drug courts which are well-suited for high-risk, high-need offenders. These interventions can result in a more efficient allocation of resources, a reduction in offender recidivism, while ensuring offender accountability and maintaining public safety.

The global nature of the drug threat requires a strategic response that is also global in scope. It is not realistic for countries to expect to be effective if they are operating in a vacuum. We no longer live in an either-or world of "demand reduction" versus "supply reduction" or "producer country" versus "consumer country." Accordingly, the *Strategy* addresses drug production and consumption throughout the world and explicitly builds on international partnerships to achieve our national drug control goals.

By the same token, criminal conduct engaged in by transnational criminal organizations is not limited to drug trafficking. Increasingly, international criminal syndicates are involved in kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking, arms trafficking, and a variety of other illegal activities.

### **Leadership**

No environment is more compelling, urgent, or consequential to U.S. drug control policy than that of the Western Hemisphere. The violent consequences of illicit drug trafficking and the social disruption and public health threat caused by drug consumption are evident. Although the United States itself produces illicit drugs, and the Northern border is a region exploited by drug traffickers, the majority of the cocaine and heroin available in the United States is produced by transnational drug trafficking organizations operating in the nations to the south. Substantial proportions of methamphetamine traverse Central America and Mexico en route to the United States. Cocaine also is exported to Europe, increasingly through West Africa. The quantity of illegal trafficking leaves nations in the region vulnerable to the violence, institutional instability, and public corruption caused by international trafficking organizations and local criminal gangs involved in a wide variety of criminal enterprises.

President Obama reiterated the need for a clear and cooperative approach to the most pressing issues in this hemisphere at the Summit of the Americas in 2009, and followed up during his recent visits to Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador. As he noted again in Santiago, progress in the Americas has not come fast enough for “the communities that are caught in the brutal grips of cartels and gangs, where the police are outgunned and too many people live in fear.”

We are working internationally to develop and implement a similar comprehensive approach through programs that we do at home. Again, citing the President, we are working with “our partners from Colombia to Mexico and new regional initiatives in Central America and the Caribbean.” We have increased our support for security forces, border security and police to keep communities safe. But we are doing more. As the President said, “...we will never break the grip of the cartels and the gangs unless we also address the social and economic forces that fuel criminality. We need to reach at-risk youth before they turn to drugs and crime. So we are joining with partners across the Americas to expand community-based policing, strengthen juvenile justice systems, and invest in crime and drug prevention programs.”

We do this with the understanding that circumstances differ dramatically among nations in the hemisphere, requiring flexibility, pragmatism, and program adaptation. The role of the Office of National Drug Control Policy remains to lead and coordinate interagency actors and programs to advance the President’s policy efficiently and effectively domestically and internationally.

To highlight the importance of drug policy issues in the Western Hemisphere, I have visited and met with high ranking public officials in Colombia twice, Peru once, and Mexico numerous times since my confirmation as Director of National Drug Control Policy. In addition, ONDCP

and the State Department co-sponsored a bilateral demand reduction conference with Mexico last year, and we will do the same this summer. I hold regular discussions with partners involved in Western Hemisphere drug policy implementation and have visited the Southwest border region numerous times. This on-the-ground review has underscored the importance of coordinating U.S. agencies in support of our international allies' efforts to address drug violence in the hemisphere, stem the proliferation of drugs, enhance treatment and prevention programs, and obstruct the southbound flow of money and weapons. Our policy in the Western Hemisphere will continue to emphasize the importance of regular and reliable communication with our international partners. We strive to assist them in meeting the counter-drug objectives as they are defined and developed within their countries.

### **Policy in the Western Hemisphere**

The foundation of our Nation's hemispheric counter-drug policy consists of a series of interconnected regional approaches. These approaches include the Mérida Initiative, the Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and the Colombian Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). In addition, a *Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy* is under development – with ONDCP as the lead -- pursuant to Public Law 111-356, the Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy Act of 2010.

In recognition of the need to clearly and comprehensively enunciate the Administration's approach to Western Hemisphere drug policy issues (excerpted from the 2010 *National Drug Control Strategy*), ONDCP, in consultation with relevant interagency partners, is also preparing a single document that will merge the interlocking regional plans in Latin America. We expect this *Western Hemisphere Counterdrug Strategy* to be completed this summer. It will address interdiction and disruption of transnational criminal organizations, institutional strengthening, construction of strong and resilient communities, and drug demand reduction.

In developing this Western Hemisphere Strategy, we must be cognizant of the unique political, social, and economic circumstances of the individual nations within the region that could affect implementation of drug control policies and programs. We will solicit input from a broad range of government and policy experts with experience in and knowledge of the issues and the region.

### **Four Parts to the Western Hemisphere Strategy**

*Security and Law Enforcement:* We are placing much of our attention and resources in Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Transnational drug trafficking organizations are most active there. In each of these three geographic areas, we support national institutions whose first function is to disrupt international criminal syndicates and powerful national-level criminal groups. The U.S. Government provides equipment, training, and law enforcement intelligence. In addition, a fundamental goal of our participation is to bring to bear the United States' unique

resources for high-seas interdiction, air smuggling detection and monitoring, and intelligence coordination to bolster the capacities of our allies.

*Strengthening Institutions:* We support the strengthening of institutions that implement the rule of law, strengthen the democratic process, and inculcate respect for human rights. In countries such as Colombia and Mexico, which are transitioning from a paper-bound, anachronistic criminal judicial system to faster and more transparent trial procedures, we are providing U.S. experts, sponsoring judicial exchanges, and training prosecutors and attorneys. In late February, 2011, the Department of Justice convened the 12<sup>th</sup> iteration of a two week Trial Advocacy course for Mexican Federal prosecutors. This course was held in Mexico City, with three Assistant U.S. Attorneys from Utah, Texas, and Oregon serving as instructors. The U.S. also funds human rights education for law enforcement and security, as part of the Mérida Initiative, and such programs are a core component of our assistance to Colombia.

*Strong and Resilient Communities:* We provide assistance in building strong communities that resist criminal enterprises and offer alternatives to drug abuse and crime. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works with regional partners to address the social and economic forces that fuel narcotics trafficking and other criminality. In source countries, USAID supports alternative development programs that provide rural populations with opportunities to earn sustainable, licit incomes in place of engaging in narcotics cultivation. USAID programs also work to expand community-based policing, strengthen juvenile justice systems, and support crime and substance abuse prevention programs. A critical element of this support for strong communities includes the sharing of, and increased access to, effective, evidence-based substance abuse prevention and treatment programming. For example, our leading non-governmental demand reduction organization, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), has been working to equip prevention leaders in several Western Hemisphere countries with the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to build effective coalitions. With support from the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, CADCA's international work has focused primarily upon providing training and technical assistance to non-government organizations in the area of core competencies for community mobilization to reduce illegal drugs. Currently, CADCA is working in Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. In addition, the organization hosted a conference in Kingston, Jamaica, on March 2-4, 2011, for Caribbean University, government and international organization representatives to discuss how to prepare graduates to tackle the social, economic, and criminal consequences of the drug problem in the Caribbean, especially in the demand reduction field. The underlying purpose was to prepare government officials and intellectuals to deal with the consequences of drug trafficking and abuse.

*Prevention and Treatment:* The United States shares prevention and treatment knowledge and best practices bilaterally and through international agencies such as the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) Experts Group on Demand Reduction, which the United

States currently chairs. In that forum, we anticipate focusing experts on support for three key elements of CICAD's Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its implementation plan, which was approved in Guadalajara on February 25. Specific areas of focus currently being explored mirror three major demand reduction signature initiatives highlighted in the *National Drug Control Strategy*: community-based prevention, drugged driving, and prescription drug abuse.

### **Bringing the Regional Plans Together**

*Mérida Initiative:* The United States' collaboration with the Government of Mexico against violent drug trafficking organizations is monumental in its scope and commitment. In order to disrupt entrenched drug trafficking organizations throughout the country, significant time, resources, and perseverance by both governments will be required. The U.S. Congress has appropriated \$1.5 billion for Mexico since the inception of the Mérida Initiative in FY 2008, of which over \$400 million has been expended to date and over \$500 million more is planned for delivery in 2011. In 2009, the governments of the United States and Mexico agreed on new goals to broaden and deepen our cooperation to affect lasting change. The programs to increase Mexican counter-drug capacity and to institutionalize our partnership focus on four pillars: Disrupt Organized Criminal Groups, Strengthen Institutions, Create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Border, and Build Strong and Resilient Communities.

*The Southwest Border Security Initiative:* The Administration is backing up its commitment by making major investments along the Southwest border. The Southwest Border Security Bill, signed by President Obama in August 2010, included \$600 million in supplemental funds for enhanced border protection and law enforcement on the U.S. side of the border. To ensure the effective coordination of resources and initiatives related to the *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy (Southwest Border Strategy)*, I have formed a Southwest Border Strategy Executive Steering Group, which has met five times since I became Director of ONDCP in 2009. The group is comprised of officials from the Departments of Justice, State, Homeland Security, Defense, Treasury, and others, and meets to oversee *Southwest Border Strategy* implementation and address any issues which may impede our progress. The group has guided preparation of the *Southwest Border Strategy* and a companion document on *Southwest Border Strategy* implementation that was transmitted to Congress in the fall of 2010.

*Northern Border Strategy:* Our Northern border communities and our Nation as a whole are significantly impacted by the large scale trafficking of synthetic drugs and high potency marijuana from Canada. Canada is the primary source of MDMA/Ecstasy – a dangerous drug which is often made more potent due to synthetic drug producers adding methamphetamine or other substances into the product. DHS and the DoJ have increased the presence of personnel, technology, and other resources on the border in response to this significant threat, however additional efforts are required due to the scale of the trafficking activity. Canada has also taken some important steps to address the drug threat – notably enacting in late March, 2011 new tougher penalties for involvement in synthetic drug production. The *National Northern Border*

*Counternarcotics Strategy (Northern Border Strategy)*, currently under development by ONDCP and our interagency partners, will articulate the Administration's plans to substantially reduce the flow of illicit drugs and drug proceeds in both directions across the border with Canada, with a focus on small border communities and enhanced relationships and cooperation with tribal governments. The drafting process for the *Northern Border Strategy* involves close consultation with Congress, state and local entities, tribal authorities, community coalitions, and the Government of Canada. Upon completion this summer, it will address our combined efforts in the following areas: intelligence collection and information sharing; interdiction at and between ports of entry, as well as in the air and maritime domains; investigations and prosecutions; and disrupting and dismantling drug trafficking organizations.

*Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)*: Addressing the threat beyond the Mexican border, CARSI responds to multiple threats facing the region and builds upon existing strategies and programs, both on a bilateral and regional basis. It is designed to disrupt the flow of narcotics, arms, weapons, and bulk cash generated by illicit drug sales, and to confront gangs and criminal organizations. CARSI aims to integrate our security efforts from the U.S. Southwest border to Panama, including the littoral waters of the Caribbean. The pillars of CARSI include fostering streets free of violence and crime; disrupting the movement of criminals and contraband; supporting strong and accountable governments willing to combat the drug threat with trained and resourced law enforcement; building state presence in communities at risk; and enhancing regional cooperation. CARSI is designed to produce a safer and more secure region where criminal organizations no longer wield the power to destabilize governments or threaten national and regional security and public safety; as well as to prevent the entry and spread of illicit drugs, violence, and transnational threats to countries throughout the region and to the United States.

*Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)*: CBSI is a broad initiative focused on citizen safety that brings all members of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic together to collaborate on regional security with the United States as a partner. The United States and partnering Caribbean countries have identified three strategic priorities to deal with the threats facing the Caribbean: to substantially reduce illicit trafficking in drugs and interrupt the flow of illegal arms; to advance public safety and security through programs ranging from reducing crime and violence to improving border security; and to further promote social justice through expanding education and workforce development opportunities for at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations as an alternative to crime and other illicit activity, and reforming the juvenile justice sector, combating government corruption, and expanding community-based policing.

*Colombian Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI)*: CSDI is the United States' interagency program to support the Colombian National Consolidation Plan. CSDI coordinates U.S. foreign assistance by focusing, combining, and sequencing aid in priority regions where international assistance fills gaps in Colombian government programming. CSDI will help Colombia transition into a post-conflict country and aims to strengthen the strategic partnership between

the United States and Colombia by advancing the long-term national security interests of both nations. Although Colombian government programming was weighted toward public security enhancements during the early phases of state consolidation, CSDI is an inherently civilian-led effort. USAID is the lead agency within the U.S. Embassy in Bogota for CSDI coordination and implementation. CSDI collaborates with the Colombian federal government and 14 civilian ministries. CSDI recognizes that security gains made during the Plan Colombia period will only be sustainable if local populations become confident that the Colombian state – in its local, departmental, and national forms – is a more reliable partner than illegally armed groups which have previously exercised *de facto* control in these zones.

### **Accomplishments and the Way Ahead**

We must reduce the demand for drugs and the supply of drugs both at home and within our partner nations. Rising drug consumption rates continue to plague nations such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. We must provide more assistance within the hemisphere to understand the importance of strengthening their public health capacities. There is considerable work to be done in this area. Accordingly, we are increasingly emphasizing international efforts in demand reduction to prevent the onset and progression of drug use among youth and urge that treatment and recovery support services be provided for individuals with substance use disorders. We are accomplishing this at home through guidance, training, and technical assistance in the implementation of evidence-based best-practices, such as school-based prevention programs; mass media educational campaigns; screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment programs; testing and sanctions criminal justice programs; drug courts; and peer-based recovery support services.

The United States is demonstrating its leadership on issues of drug demand reduction in the Western Hemisphere by chairing the Organization of American States (OAS)/CICAD Experts Group on Demand Reduction during 2011-2012, where we will work to emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacities of our partner nations to reduce the demand for illegal drugs as an essential component of comprehensive national drug control policies.

With the help of our international partners, the United States has made historic progress in removing cocaine from the transit zone<sup>1</sup> year after year. This removal, in combination with dramatically reduced cocaine production in Colombia, has resulted in a trend of higher prices and lower cocaine purity in the United States. From January 2007 through September 2010, the price per pure gram of cocaine increased 68.8 percent from \$97.71 to \$164.91, while the average

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<sup>1</sup> A six-million-square-mile area, including the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and Eastern Pacific. The path(s) used by drug traffickers to transport illicit drugs to their market. Geographically, these paths normally connect, but do not include, the source and arrival zones. See National Interdiction Command and Control Plan – March 17, 2010 (Glossary of Terms).

purity decreased by 30 percent. Unlike in the past, we are now in the midst of a sustained, three-year period of escalating prices and decreasing purity.

Our strong partnership with Colombia has resulted in unequivocal success. Not only has Colombia become a safer, more prosperous country, it has expanded the rule of law and continues to instill respect for human rights. Gains in Colombia have directly translated into progress against drug trafficking in the United States. From the high point of output in 2001, Colombian potential production of heroin plummeted 82 percent by 2009, which represents the latest data available. Comparably, potential cocaine production has decreased 60 percent over the same time period; moreover, total Andean potential production of cocaine has declined by 34 percent during this time. Reductions in purity and increases in price for street-level cocaine in the United States coupled with falling rates of cocaine use signal a major disruption of the market for Colombian cocaine.

These achievements are a result of a comprehensive and balanced strategy of suppressing illegal drug cultivation and production, disrupting narco-terrorist organizations, and building effective national programs to expand government presence and security along with major economic development in the form of alternative livelihoods.

We continue to move forward to improve the strength and number of our alliances in the hemisphere and promote the integration of demand and supply reduction. Today, a comprehensive *Western Hemisphere Counterdrug Strategy*, composed of numerous integrated programs and multi-national partnerships, is becoming a reality. In developing the Strategy we are reaching out to members of Congress, non-governmental organizations, the counter-drug and counter-crime divisions of the OAS, and foreign government partners in the region. We are convinced that their views need to be taken into consideration if we are to design a truly comprehensive, collaborative and viable strategy. Thank you for your support and encouragement as we continue to strengthen our coordinated response to counternarcotics and citizen security issues in the Western Hemisphere. I look forward to working with the Members of this Committee and others in Congress toward these goals. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today and I am happy to address any questions that you may have.