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# **TOWARD AN INTEGRATED UNITED STATES STRATEGY FOR COUNTERNARCOTICS AND COUNTERINSURGENCY**

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[The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and in no way represent official policy or opinions of the United States Special Operations Command, the Lockheed Corporation, or the United States Department of Defense.]

This paper will briefly review political and economic conditions in the Andean Ridge Countries (Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru) which have spawned both narcotrafficking and insurgent movements. An analysis of the principal elements of effective counterinsurgency (COIN) and counternarcotics (CN) campaigns is made. There is a remarkable similarity in requirements for COIN and CN, yet the U.S. government operates its counternarcotics programs in the Andean Ridge countries in near isolation from ongoing host nation counterinsurgency efforts. The failure to fully coordinate CN and COIN in countries such as Peru has resulted in very limited successes in both efforts. Clearly it is time for the design and implementation of an integrated national policy requiring full coordination and cooperation of all U.S. counternarcotics and counterinsurgency programs in those countries threatened by both phenomena. The elements of such a policy are outlined and discussed below.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Peru, with a population of 24 million on South America's Pacific coast, has evolved into a classic case study of the pitfalls that can beset a developing third world nation. In October 1968, a military coup ousted the elected government of President Fernando Belaunde Terry, and over a 12-year period, the military attempted to institute sweeping agrarian reforms, and nationalized the banking, oil, fishing and mining industries.

Plagued by food shortages, uncontrolled foreign debt, frequent labor and public sector strikes, and a growing, powerful insurgent movement, Peru returned to an elected democratic leadership in July of 1980. Inflation continued to soar, and police, oil workers, and labor unions continued to disrupt the economy, as re-elected President Belaunde worked to encourage the return of private enterprise and capital investment and stimulate the weak economy. As if the magnitude of these challenges was insufficient, a growing insurgency continued to gain momentum among the large Indian minority which placed virtually half the population outside of central and local government control.

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The largest of several guerrilla organizations is the *Sendero Luminoso* (or "Shining Path"), which traces its beginnings to the formation of the ELN-Huamanga Command in 1960. The ELN-Huamanga Command joined the Maoist Peru Red Flag (*Partido Comunista del Peru - Bandera Roja*) in 1962. By 1970, the movement's leaders redesignated their organization the "Communist Party of Peru in the Shining Path of Mariategui" in honor of Juan Carlos Mariategui, author of *Seven Essays of Peruvian Reality*, which states that "Marxism-Leninism will open the shining path to revolution." Their revolutionary strategy is similar to that of the great Chinese revolutionary, Mao Zedong.

Beginning in May of 1980, the *Sendero Luminoso* began attacking polling places and destroying ballot boxes in remote Andean villages. During the intervening ten years, the Shining Path guerrillas have increased their numbers and expanded the scope of their operations to all areas of Peru. In addition to their attacks on the police, military, and villagers, *Sendero Luminoso* organizations penetrated the rapidly expanding narcotics industry. They have become tightly entwined with the coca leaf growers and Colombian and other traffickers in rural Peru. This brutal insurgent, revolutionary group now controls large areas of the countryside and continues with its plans to impose an Indian worker-peasant state in place of existing government structures. *Sendero Luminoso* currently raises huge funds by protecting the drug traffickers, acting as middlemen between coca growers and the traffickers, and most recently, by initiating their own drug trafficking operations. The insurgents have largely achieved a self-sustaining, politico-military organization capable of seriously challenging government control of most rural areas.

Since the July 1985 inauguration of Alan Garcia as President, numerous governmental programs to stem the economic erosion have been attempted. Debt service payment on a huge (\$16 billion) foreign debt has been restricted to no more than 10 percent of the country's export earnings, resulting in the suspension by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of Peru from eligibility for future loans. Several major U.S. banks with large outstanding loans to Peru are understandably concerned. Peruvian government efforts have not revived the faltering economy, and subsidization of the huge public sector (perhaps 70 percent of all salaried and hourly wage employees) continues.

In July 1990, newly elected President Alberto Fujimori requested economic aid from the United States and other industrialized nations, specifically Japan. He has refused to accept a \$36 million U.S. military aid package, which the Bush administration publicly stated is partly for support of police and military counterinsurgency efforts against the *Sendero Luminoso*. Melvyn Levitsky, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters (INM), recently stated before a Congressional committee: "I want to be very frank in saying that where the insurgency and drug traffickers are inextricably bound together, we have to deal with them together . . . We have an interest in helping them fight that insurgency."<sup>1</sup> The question remains, however, whether such statements reflect an intended approach to an integrated counternarcotics (CN) and counterinsurgency (COIN) policy of the U.S. government to address the specific counteraction requirements of the Andean Ridge nations among others. A preliminary examination of how the US and Peruvian counterinsurgency and counternarcotics activities are coordinated and executed follows. It reveals some dismaying inconsistencies and disconnects, and, indicates that the U.S. government does not, in fact, have a clearly defined and integrated CN/COIN policy. The authors will then propose an umbrella U.S. national security policy for CN/COIN, and recommend some enabling steps for its implementation.

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<sup>1</sup>"U.S. Aid to Fight Rebels," a *New York Times* report, reprinted in *The Tampa Tribune*, June 21, 1990, p. 3.

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## AT THE BUSINESS END OF UNITED STATES COUNTERNARCOTICS AND COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAMS

The total budget in FY 90 for U.S. counternarcotics programs exceeded \$3.5 billion. In FY91, the DOD budget alone for surveillance, interdiction, and counter-drug support activities is over \$1 billion.<sup>2</sup> Security Assistance programs worldwide aimed at counterinsurgency and internal defense and development in 1991 add almost another \$750 million. Such an impressive allocation of assets would seem to suggest that U.S. foreign policy objectives are being vigorously and effectively pursued in coordination with friendly governments. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In the Andean Ridge nations of Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, for example, a recent Congressional study revealed that U.S. narcotics control efforts had achieved minimal results over the past year (1989).<sup>3</sup> Eradication efforts had failed even to reduce the overall coca leaf annual production increase, and corruption at all levels of the Peruvian and Bolivian governments were effectively gutting counternarcotics efforts. A myopic focus by U.S. officials on counternarcotics to the near exclusion of counterinsurgency and internal development programs in the Andean Ridge has resulted in policy and procedural schisms between U.S. governmental officials and host regimes. Open disagreement between the Bush administration and newly elected Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, reflects Peru's general dissatisfaction with U.S. sensitivity to host nation perceptions and problem priorities. Not only is there disagreement on what priorities should be jointly pursued by U.S. and host governments in CN and COIN campaigns, but there is bickering, lack of coordination, and political infighting among U.S. agencies. In Peru, for example, there is tension between the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Department of State over who will have access to limited helicopters, with DEA wanting priority for coca eradication operations and the few U.S. military trainers in country wanting access to the helicopters for the training of Peruvian police and military personnel to fight the insurgency. DEA was, until recently, pursuing paramilitary interdiction operations with virtually no military expertise in the field, ignoring the available expertise of U.S. military personnel. Problems abound with vintage air assets such as the C-123 transport, primarily in the maintenance and support areas. Employment of newer U.S. military aircraft, such as a U.S. Coast Guard C-130 on temporary assignment, have been hampered by conflicts over who pays for the flying hours. The State Department was recently billed \$500,000 for a six week use of a USCG C-130.<sup>4</sup>

Fundamental agreements on whether to employ certain chemical sprays on coca leaf growing areas have continued to hamper crop eradication operations. Failure to agree on priorities with several narcotics producing countries has been reflected in a general lack of host government will to pursue CN activities, particularly in Peru and Bolivia. U.S. efforts to enforce import controls and limit internal distribution of precursor chemicals necessary for cocaine production have also been largely ineffective. One of the reasons is lack of strategic analysis concerning chemical distribution control. Many chemicals such as kerosene, ammonia, and sulfuric acid are so widely utilized in various industrial applications that strict control would cripple some significant host country industries.

While efforts to reduce coca leaf cultivation and cocaine production have been almost uniformly ineffective, inadequate response to shifting patterns of cocaine shipment into the United States offers still another picture of a poorly coordinated group of U.S. agencies and departments.

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<sup>2</sup>Conference Report 101-938, 101st Congress, 2d Session, to accompany H.R. 5803, October 24, 1990, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup>"Stopping the Flood of Cocaine With Operation Snowcap: Is It Working?," H.R. 101-673, 101st Congress, 2d Session, August 14, 1990, pp. 1-5, 12-13, and 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, pp. 30-31.

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In this instance, a heavy emphasis on Caribbean infiltration routes, both airborne and maritime, has resulted in the concentration of detection and intelligence assets in the areas from Texas through the Bahamas. Over 90 percent of E-3A AWACS missions, for example, are flown east of Brownsville, Texas, with only an occasional mission over the Mexican-U.S. border. This pattern of U.S. asset distribution has continued, despite intelligence information for over a year that narcotics traffickers have been steadily shifting their infiltration operations from the Caribbean to the Pacific and southwestern US routes, largely through Mexico. The failure to effectively manage our intelligence, detection, and interdiction efforts is at least partially due to the large number of U.S. agencies involved. In the California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas areas, there are some 61 state and local law enforcement agencies under the Project Alliance coordination umbrella. This does not include the major federal players in the counternarcotics interdiction campaign such as DEA, FBI, CIA, DIA, USCG, NSA, U.S. Border Patrol, Customs, NORAD, the military services, and Joint Task Forces.

While the array of U.S. agencies is impressive, their record of cooperation and coordination is not. As early as 1981, a study of Caribbean counternarcotics efforts involving U.S. and Caribbean government agencies revealed there was a frequent failure to share intelligence information with cognizant U.S. organizations. Much of this was attributed at the time to bureaucratic competition. For example, an agency might conveniently avoid passing intelligence to another in order to give its own personnel a chance of "making the bust," even though another agency might have a much higher probability of intercepting the narcotics shipment. This past summer, a senior official of Project Alliance admitted that this practice is alive and well throughout U.S. counternarcotics agencies. His candid assessment: "We are doing a little better than we did in the past to coordinate our activities and share information. The Joint Task Forces have helped, as well as programs like Project Alliance. Unfortunately, we are doing a whole lot better at concealing our lack of coordination. I believe this is due to increased competition for the counternarcotics pie."<sup>5</sup>

At the national level, the U.S. State Department has been given the lead in both counternarcotics and counterinsurgency efforts overseas. Despite this, scrutiny of almost any in-country CN/COIN group of programs reveals the continuing struggles within the U.S. Ambassador's "Country Team." Personnel who have recently been a part of in-country CN/COIN program management continue to report that day-to-day operations could easily recall our dilemmas of the early Vietnam era. Sadly, with no clearly defined policy mandating our strategy and management, we continue to operate on a case-by-case basis, with the strongest personalities driving "preferred" U.S. programs over host government programs. In the Andean Ridge area, this lack of U.S. national policy guidance has resulted in a deaf ear to the priorities of the host governments we are attempting to assist.

## **ELEMENTS OF A U.S. NATIONAL POLICY FOR COUNTERNARCOTICS AND COUNTERINSURGENCY**

In the opinion of the authors, any effective U.S. policy must have the following enabling characteristics:

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<sup>5</sup>Personal conversation with a senior Project Alliance official in August, 1990, who requested anonymity in return for his candid assessment of interagency cooperation and coordination. In his opinion, the participation of military personnel and growing use of military command, control and communications in the Joint Task Force structure has been the most significant factor in reducing this bureaucratic competition. His assessment spanned nine years of government counternarcotics operations.

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- It must be at the highest national level. Any governmental level below the National Security Council (NSC) will not be able to compel major U.S. agency players to get their houses in order. Elements of the Department of Defense civilian staff, for example, continue to compete for pieces of the Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict missions, which supply a significant amount of the total DOD support to CN and COIN. An NSC level policy would make it possible for the Secretary of Defense to unambiguously direct integration of the programs of DOD agencies, the military services, and the regional CINCS.

- The policy must establish overall national objectives for both counterinsurgency and counternarcotics. These objectives would then guide development of very specific regional and country objectives, and enable the State Department to manage in-country programs within a defined national policy framework.

- An effective national policy for COIN and CN must establish reliable resourcing linkages to the U.S. budget process, and should result in U.S. agencies developing fiscally constrained, realistic plans and programs for policy implementation. Within DOD, for example, the security assistance programs should directly support the national CN/COIN policy and its implementing strategy. Within State, the economic development programs and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) should provide a coordinated CN/COIN influenced input to the annual budget request.

- An effective national CN/COIN policy must identify changes to U.S. law and agency guidelines essential to effective, lawful policy implementation. Issues such as posse comitatus, and preferential forgiveness of developmental and security assistance loans must all be reviewed at the NSC level. Legislative and policy change proposals should be assigned to specific agencies for development and submission to the White House and Congress.

The following pages outline a draft national policy for counternarcotics and counterinsurgency. We identify specific measures to end the mutual interference of U.S. CN and COIN efforts. The paper will conclude with a few thoughts on how we might get started, and who might take the lead in establishing a national policy for CN and COIN.

(Proposed Policy Statement)

Statement of U.S. National Security Policy  
for Counter-Insurgency (COIN) and  
Counter-Narcotics (CN)

General: The United States' national security interests, economic well-being, public health and domestic order are negatively and increasingly affected by the interrelated problems of subversive insurgency and illicit narcotics production and trafficking in developing nations.

It is the security policy of the U.S. government to attack these problems concurrently overseas where they are coexistent, in full cooperation with the governments of insurgent afflicted and drug producing countries. A defined spectrum of tailored, mutually agreed, bilateral and multilateral programs will be implemented and sustained that include development, security, economic and law enforcement assistance.

Goal: During the period 1991-2010, implement and sustain fully integrated, National Security Council (NSC) monitored, field programs of assistance to cooperating governments that will neutralize or at least measurably reduce the threats and effects of subversive insurgencies and the illicit narcotics industry.

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### Objectives:

1. The NSC will develop and implement an integrated, inter-agency strategy for control and constant evaluation of U.S. government CN and COIN programs, to take effect in April 1991.
2. Regional focus, for planning purposes, will be prioritized as follows:
  - a. South America
  - b. Caribbean Sea
  - c. Northern Southeast Asia (Golden Triangle)
  - d. Africa (selected countries)
  - e. Southwest Asia
3. Initial countries for strategy implementation, program assessment, and adaptation (assuming host government concurrence) are:
  - a. Colombia
  - b. Peru
  - c. Burma
  - d. Nigeria
  - e. Pakistan
4. Initiate Foreign Internal Defense (FID) programs tailored to host government and U.S. Country Team stated objectives and requirements. These programs will act as the country level programmatic umbrella for U.S. government department and agency efforts to assist the host nation, under the guidance and control of the respective Ambassadors, in close cooperation with the regional U.S. military CINC. The measure of effectiveness, on a yearly basis, will be the increased ability of the host government, military, and/or police to conduct sustained internal defense and development activities.
5. Maintain the absolute minimum levels of U.S. military presence necessary to train, advise and assist host nation military and law enforcement counterparts in the sub-areas of counterinsurgency. All supporting psychological operations and civil affairs aspects will be fully coordinated and approved by responsible host nation and U.S. Country Team officials, with U.S. Information Service (USIS) guidance.

To be effective, a U.S. national policy must be seen by the Administration, Congress and the public as necessary, and its objectives as achievable. This implies that there is a current problem viewed by policy makers and resource providers as significant, important to resolve, and within the ability of the U.S. government – preferably in cooperation with other international actors—to reduce or resolve. For CN, the evidence is compelling and the public is sympathetic. For COIN, there is little U.S. public constituency. Thus, the interconnectedness of the challenges, or the exacerbation of narcotics problems by insurgent involvement, must be convincingly demonstrated. To date there has been little progress in this regard.

Galvanizing U.S. national will, political resolve, and pro-active attitudes requires that means and ends are defined and related, and are seen as lawful and rational. This is particularly difficult if policy is stated too broadly and resources are unspecified—whether due to an uncertainty of requirements levels, or political concerns issuing from fiscal constraints. In the case of CN and COIN, there is some good news: a lot can be done at low cost, *if* the target activities are well-focused at the operating level in each host country.

### **WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD**

As far as policy development, its coordination and direction, the NSC must take the lead and stay there. It would be reassuring if the President's National Security Advisor personally took

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charge, acknowledging that the existing CN/COIN policy and programmatic conundrum is a national embarrassment. This appears more hopeful than realistic. At minimum, a Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) of the NSC should be established, probably by the merger of elements of several standing PCCs. The political and leadership skills are there, but they must be fundamentally reorganized to address this long-term problem.

There remains a question that is both philosophical and political: is supply side counternarcotics a foreign policy or defense policy problem, or perhaps both? The answer—to be goaded out of the President, his cabinet, and the Congressional leadership—should provide the identification of the lead agency for policy execution and overseas CN program management. We suspect that as a major problem of the low intensity conflict environment, of diplomacy, and of the image of the U.S. in the international arena, the State Department should have the lead, and be forced to rise to competent stewardship. This is a significant climb from the current level of competence.

For COIN, much to State Department's institutional discomfort, the U.S. military has the majority of the U.S. government's doctrinal, procedural, technical and experiential tools. This is not to deny the Ambassador's necessary and proper leadership and authoritative direction at the Country Team level. This must continue. It does suggest, however, that the military-to-military, and military-to-civilian interactions are key to effectiveness of COIN programs. Many U.S. agencies and departments make major contributions in COIN (e.g., police training, judicial effectiveness, transportation, health, job creation, etc.), and require coordinated integrated application of their resources with military activities to protect the population and resources as well as conduct counter-guerrilla campaigns. Again, only an umbrella Foreign Internal Defense (FID) program at country level—derived from the previously proposed CN/COIN policy—has sufficient potential to synthesize these discrete elements. Finally, and fundamentally, if control of territory, transport, and populations cannot be achieved through a bilateral or multilateral FID program, then isolated CN efforts will inevitably prove futile. Indeed, they may even be viewed as counter-productive in the view of the host government. The residents of rural areas who are victimized and economically disenfranchised (i.e., denied the ability to grow food or coca, and having no reliable security shield), will quite naturally side with the local power brokers, whether they be insurgents or narcotraffickers.

Perhaps the most essential underpinning of CN and COIN sub-programs are the economic support and development assistance programs. The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), private donor organizations, and the international lending agencies are the long term hope for most embattled Third World nations. However, nation-building programs require a modicum of physical security and political stability to achieve success. These developmental programs transcend the umbrella FID program. They are aimed at internal development objectives such as infrastructure, export products, nutrition, social safety net, political participation and other nation-building requirements.

These programs are not altruistic; neither are they naive. It makes good diplomatic and political sense to assist a friendly government and its people where they recognize their greatest needs and long term challenges. Perhaps these governments might be induced to cooperate more fully with the U.S. and other drug consuming countries in reducing the supply of drugs. However, the fundamental asymmetry of the existing environments must be recognized. Drug consumption is a domestic social and political problem for the U.S. while drug production is a major source of employment, foreign currency, and economic stimulation for poor producing countries. Any progress will take time, resources and perseverance. We should anticipate frequent disagreements.

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Finally, the widespread overlapping and mutual reinforcement of insurgency and narcotic production should constantly serve as a reminder of the futility of attempting to build the second floor (counternarcotics) of a house, without initially constructing the framework (a FID umbrella program) and at least making major progress on the first floor (counterinsurgency).

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

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