
PERSPECTIVES

International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR)

By

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[The following is a reprint of the annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), released February 26, 1999, Washington D.C.]

Acting Secretary Loy: Good afternoon. I want to begin by welcoming Attorney General Janet Reno and the Director, Barry McCaffrey. Their presence here reflects and emphasizes the importance that this Administration places on team effort in the war against illicit drugs. This is also an international team effort. No country, no country by itself, is equal to the threat.

The international anti-drug effort is successful because it is a partnership. Every country has a stake in eliminating the drug trade and wherever illicit drugs are produced, trafficked or sold, corruption quickly takes root. Society suffers, as citizens lose trust in institutions and they lose faith in the rule of law. No nation can afford this transnational threat to its integrity least of all, the United States. We were the first to suffer the consequences of widespread drug abuse. We knew that the key was demand reduction. Aggressive demand reduction programs have, in fact, reduced drug use substantially. But, obviously, we haven't eliminated it. We have to do more if we are to break the deadly grip of drug dependency and drug-related crime. That is why the Administration's national drug control strategy, which General McCaffrey presented a few weeks ago, has demand reduction as its centerpiece. Yet, as we reduce the demand for drugs at home, we must also cut off the supply that feeds that demand.

Since all of the cocaine and heroin consumed in this country comes from abroad, we cannot reduce this flow without the cooperation of our partners in the source and in the transit countries. One way to gain that cooperation is to work toward a set of common goals, those in the 1988 United Nations Drug Convention. Since most governments are now parties to this agreement, this sets the standard for our cooperative efforts. Under United States law, the President must decide each year whether the governments of the major drug-producing and drug transit countries have cooperated fully with the United States, or taken adequate steps of their own to meet the goals and objectives of the 1988 Drug Convention.

This U.S. drug certification process is now an integral part of our drug control policy. It provides an opportunity to make what we believe is an objective assessment of each country's drug control efforts during the previous year. While some governments may take issue with the President's determinations, we believe that the process encourages openness and reveals those areas where we can improve our collective effort.

This year the President determined that 22 countries on the majors list qualified for full certification. Four countries Cambodia, Haiti, Nigeria, and Paraguay did not meet the standard for full certification, but were certified on the basis of the vital national interests of the United States. Burma and Afghanistan were denied certification.

Assistant Secretary Randy Beers can provide and will provide more details about these decisions in response to your questions. But let me say a few words first about the countries we declined to certify; and second, about our progress in the Western Hemisphere.

The production of opium, from which heroin is derived, continues to be concentrated in two countries, Afghanistan and Burma. Yet these are the countries that failed to curb production. In Afghanistan, the Taliban authorities, who now control more than 95 percent of the country's opium growing area, made almost no efforts to control the growth of opium poppy or the trafficking in opium, in heroin or in morphine base. There were no reports of arrests or prosecutions of drug traffickers. There were no verified drug laboratory destructions. Afghans from all factions continued to be involved in drug trafficking.

Our assessment of Burma's performance remains unchanged as well. Although the government did make a somewhat serious effort to eradicate opium crops, that effort paled in comparison to the scope of the problem. The Burmese Government continues to refuse to surrender four major drug traffickers under indictment in the United States.

I'm pleased, however, to describe a very different picture in the Americas. Overall, cocaine production in South America has declined to the lowest level in the past decade, thanks to the coca reduction programs in Peru and in Bolivia. In Peru, 1998 represented the third consecutive year of dramatic decline in coca production. There was a 26 percent decline in 1998 and a total reduction of 56 percent since 1995.

Peru's success can be attributed largely to a combined strategy of offering alternative to coca farmers who agreed to abandon coca production, and to using an aggressive air intercept and ground interdiction program against traffickers.

Bolivia, despite continuing violence against eradication and counternarcotics forces, achieved an unprecedented net coca eradication of 17 percent in 1998. The Banzer Administration has also had some success in using alternative development to turn public opinion against coca growing and cocaine production. Legal crop cultivation is now three times greater than coca production in the Chapare region, which is the principal coca growing area of Bolivia.

In Colombia, coca cultivation increased, as the drug syndicates try to make up for the loss of Peruvian cocaine. Nevertheless, Colombia made important strides toward meeting the 1998 certification criteria of cooperation, and demonstrated a new willingness to cooperate closely with the United States Government and the U.N. in meeting its goals.

The Pastrana Administration carried out a vigorous coca and opium eradication campaign in the face of heavy resistance from the traffickers and the insurgent alliance. It gave solid proof of a new commitment at the highest level of government, a new commitment to defeat the drug syndicates. This new direction, we believe, meets the requirement for full certification.

During the past year, Mexico continued its efforts to combat drug trafficking, despite sometimes mixed results. Let me point out that measures of cooperation, commitment and effort against drug traffickers do not always equate directly or immediately with results achieved in terms of drug seizures and arrests. Nevertheless, under President Zedillo, Mexico has restructured

its law enforcement organizations and passed new laws to combat drug trafficking and other related crimes; most notably money laundering.

There have been some major successes by the Mexican Government under these new conditions but, true, the full effect of these efforts will be seen only in the medium- and longer-term.

Finally, let me say a word about Haiti. Despite headway on some anti-narcotics fronts, Haiti did not achieve its 1998 counter-narcotics goals. A prolonged political impasse between the executive and the legislative branches of government prevented parliamentary ratification of a prime minister and consideration of needed anti-drug legislation. Research constraints, insufficiencies in the police and a dysfunctional judicial system further reduced the effectiveness of Haitian efforts. Thus, while not up to the mark on full certification, Haiti's improving performance on interdiction particularly in recent weeks, merits recognition. The President has certified that the vital national interest require the continuation of U.S. government programs that provide, really, a critical support to Haiti's democratic and economic development.

Attorney General Reno: I'd like to comment briefly on three of the certification decisions announced by the President today. As the Under Secretary has suggested, in three previous years, Colombia was decertified and last year Colombia received a national interest waiver.

From a law enforcement perspective, we are very gratified by the early signs of progress demonstrated by the new government of Colombia. We are particularly pleased the Colombia repealed its constitutional ban on the extradition of nationals. We're delighted that Colombia has undertaken preliminary steps to initiate the extradition process with respect to several Colombian nationals whose extradition the United States is now seeking. We now look forward to a full and unrestricted extradition relationship with Colombia.

We recognize that much is left to be done: strengthening its criminal justice system, reforming its prisons, implementing an effective asset forfeiture program and addressing the black market peso exchange situation. But we are confident that they can achieve significant progress in each of these areas, and we look forward to working closely with and supporting our Colombian counterparts in their efforts to do so.

In regard to Haiti, all of us are deeply concerned about that nation's deteriorating situation. It is the poorest nation in our hemisphere, with a disbanded parliament and a dysfunctional criminal justice system. This has made it an ideal target and staging area for the large and sophisticated international drug trafficking syndicates. It is my sincere hope that with the continued support and assistance of the world community in general, and the United States in particular, we can stem the declining situation in Haiti and invigorate its counter-drug efforts.

Finally, despite the many challenges that remain, Mexico has become a real partner in our battle against drugs. The law enforcement relationship that exists between the United States and Mexico is strong and growing stronger every day.

Over the past years, corruption has had a terribly corrosive impact on Mexico, and has lead to concern and frustration both here and in the government of President Zedillo. President Zedillo inherited a difficult situation, but he is taking appropriate steps to address it. Under his leadership, Mexico has passed a new organized crime law and enacted anti-money laundering and chemical control legislation.

I have worked closely with Attorney General Madrazo and we have an excellent working relationship. This relationship has enabled both countries to share investigative information,

develop strong cases against major drug trafficking organizations and inaugurate a program of joint training of prosecutors and investigators of both countries.

Both President Zedillo and Attorney General Madrazo are committed to establishing a professional law enforcement capacity in Mexico; and we're already seeing progress from their commitment. But success will not happen overnight. If Mexico is to succeed in its fight against drug trafficking and corruption, it will only happen with sustained long-term efforts by the government of Mexico. Moreover, success will require a continuing relationship of cooperation and mutual respect between our two nations.

We look forward to working with all three of these nations to achieve our mutual goal of reducing drug trafficking and removing dangerous drugs from our streets. I'd now like to turn it over to General McCaffrey.

General McCaffrey: Let me begin very briefly by thanking the Secretary of State and the Attorney General for their leadership in the international arena on the drug problem, along with the many others that are involved in it, Secretary Rubin, our Coast Guard, and others, and also the work of Mr. Randy Beers and Mr. Tom Umberg, my own associate, who will respond to some of your questions later on.

If I may, let me put this into context. Particularly in talking to the many foreign press here, the U.S. national drug strategy, if you look at our FY2000 budget, 11 percent of it is based on some sort of air, land, sea interdiction function, and 4 percent of it works with the international community. Our national drug strategy is firmly founded \$17.8 billion in the central component of focusing on the reduction of demand in the United States. It's come down dramatically in the last several years from 14 percent of the population to about 6 percent. There is a lot of work to be done, but that's our commitment to the global community in the coming 10 years.

If I may, let me also underscore, that as we look at our international partners, we understand that we are working for multinational cooperation. So since the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, where we watched 34 democratically elected heads of government commit us all to cooperation, we also have appreciated working with Mr. Pino Arlacchi, particularly since the United Nations General Assembly's special session on drugs.

Some very brief comments on some of the five countries. In the case of Afghanistan and Burma, it's worthwhile underscoring that the U.S. is probably 3 percent of the world's demand for heroin. It may be we're using an order of magnitude of a little more than 10 metric tons. When we look at Burma, they have produced probably 175 metric tons of heroin last year; with Afghanistan, some 135 metric tons. I say this because if you look at the terrible dilemma that Colombia and Mexico face, Colombia's probably producing around 6 metric tons of heroin a year and Mexico, perhaps, 5.5 metric tons.

I would also comment that although Nigeria has played a major role not only in some forms of drug production but principally in international criminal activity, we do have great respect for and look forward to this nation's transition to democracy, and we anticipate counter-drug progress with this transition.

I would also add my own voice to that of the Attorney General, in terms of Colombia. We are working very closely with President Pastrana's Administration. We note with respect that they have seized more than 70 tons of cocaine. They have sprayed almost 60,000 hectares of illegal drugs. Coca production clearly has continued to skyrocket in the last year, some 26 percent increase. But there's no question that their leadership, the Colombian leadership, both in the police, the army, and the judicial system is working very closely with us.

Finally, a very brief comment on Mexico. We do believe that the record shows that Mexico is cooperating and fighting drugs. I think in some ways, we need to be very careful to deal with one set of facts. The actual situation in Mexico, we would argue, indicates one of commitment on the part of President Zedillo and his senior officials to confronting this problem.

We have agreed and we signed during the presidential summit in Merida, Mexico with some concrete measures of cooperation. This is not a piece of paper; this is the way in which we intend to work together in the coming years to try and judge and evaluate a practical cooperation, to include in reduction of demand. So this coming June, in Tijuana, we will also, I would underscore, have our second bilateral annual conference on demand reduction.

Mexico did lead the world in eradicating both combined opium and marijuana in 1995 through 1997. And in 1998, Mexico was second only to Colombia in total eradication achieved. I would also underscore, in 1998, that Mexico seized some 23 metric tons of cocaine, more than 121 kilos of heroin, more than 1,000 metric tons of marijuana and more than 96 kilos of methadone. That was an increase in every capacity except for cocaine, which was down from last year. But if you look at it in a four or five-year context, it's sort of what they've achieved over the last few years.

I would also underscore that law enforcement cooperation, to include U.S. overflights by Customs aircraft and U.S. Coast Guard, is routinely approved. We also recognize that Mexico has committed to strengthening their own domestic efforts, and we listen with great respect to Minister Labastida's briefing on the \$400 million new national crusade against crime and its own engagement with giving Mexican law enforcement and military more tools and training to deal with that challenge.

Having said all that, I'm also fully aware and agree with Mexican authorities on the nature of the threat they face from both corruption and violence. Indeed, I would stand behind five assertions. Recorded crime is huge and growing. Since 1992 up to 1997, it's grown to 1.5 million reported crimes. That may be half the total. Crime is increasingly better organized and drug dealing has increased.

The third assertion I would state is that although 95 percent of their criminal activity occurs under state jurisdiction, state governments are inadequately resourced and trained in law enforcement. We also find great incidences of impunity and inefficiency in law enforcement. As an example, out of the 1.5 million reported crimes, only 85,000 ended up with arrest warrants being served.

Then finally, clearly, there's inadequate administration of justice. Sentences are not commensurate with the seriousness of the crimes, and there is inadequate criminal justice infrastructure. That comes from the Mexican report on confronting organized drug crime in their own country. I say that because I don't think there's any lack of recognition on the part of Mexican authorities or their U.S. counterparts that this is a long, hard struggle that we face together; but one in which we are committed to working with men and women of goodwill in Mexico to try and achieve some better situation. On that, we're prepared, I think, all of us, to respond to your own questions.

Question: General McCaffrey, could you tell us what the consequences of a decertification of Mexico would be?

General McCaffrey: It would be hard to speculate on it. I reread the law last night carefully and looked at the notion that, in a theoretical sense, we would have to vote in the six international banks against loans for Mexico; that the export-import bank, we would have to vote against loans;

that there would be clearly an impact on almost all U.S. official cooperation, except that related to drug activity. So in theory, it wouldn't affect budgets like State Department's INL budget.

Having said that, in my own view as I looked at the law, it would be a statement to the friends in Mexico who President Zedillo has stated this is the number one national security threat facing his own country. It would be a statement to these people, who have tried to create a serious partnership over the last five years, that we find them uncooperative. So I think the impact would be devastating in terms of building serious long-term cooperation. That would be my only concern.

Question: Ms. Reno, you referred to the extradition treaty with Colombia, hoping that you can work fully and unrestrictedly with Colombia on extradition. Are you referring to, hopefully, taking retroactivity back into constitutional reform; is that what you're referring to?

Attorney General Reno: Right now we're looking at the future, and hope that as the relationship builds, we can make sure that people who committed crimes here in this country who have been charged will be tried here.

Question: You mentioned about corruption with drugs. How much role do you think corruption is playing as far as drugs are concerned in South Asia, especially in Afghanistan or India and Pakistan? And how much money do you think the U.S. is spending to control the drugs in those countries? And how big is the problem drugs in those countries?

Attorney General Reno: First of all, I would let the Under Secretary talk about the international aspects of it. I can't quantify the corruption in any country, except to say it is a problem that we all face and must pay attention to. It is important, if we are to succeed in our efforts, that we pursue drugs as an international problem and develop a comprehensive approach to it in each nation.

Question: General McCaffrey, I wonder if you could comment on the political nature of this exercise. I say that because in several cases for instance, with Colombia the first year Samper is out of office, they get the waiver. With Iran, one year after their highly touted speech of Khatami, a survey is done of their reduction, and they're taken off the majors list. Then with Nigeria, although your report notes that there's a lot of promise there, actually nothing has been done on the ground, a full report. If you could comment on that, please.

General McCaffrey: Well, again, I reread the law last night. The essence of the law, which I think Secretary Albright painfully has us comply with, is to go through a detailed analysis of the degree to which we believe there is cooperation, there is partnership and the likelihood of that achieving the goals of the 1988 Vienna Convention on Illegal Drugs, to which we are signatories. It is not, clearly, a snapshot of the effectiveness of that operation.

So we're really, it's a talk about determination of leadership. In the case of President Samper, there was evidence presented to the Colombian people that was credible that he was implicit in drug-related criminal activity. There was evidence that Mr. Botero, who was then convicted, was also involved. So we had a dilemma of certification because of that leadership.

In the case, I think, of senior leadership in Mexico, we feel quite differently. We think we have determined people who are focused on trying to protect the Mexican people in their own interest in coming years. They do have problems of corruption and violence and intimidation and inadequate infrastructure. So we're committed to working to try to build that.

I think Nigeria, you see the same kind of thing. There is reason to believe that with the emergence of transitional democracy, the language coming out of this situation tells us there may be optimism on being able to begin cooperation with that regime.

Acting Secretary Loy: Could I just add a word to that? You mentioned Iran. The decision to take Iran off the majors list was made because there was a determination, based on overflight and other information, that Iran did not meet the test that is in the statute for putting it on the majors list. It had, in fact, eradicated and was not a production country anywhere near the level that is in the statute. When we looked at the traffic, there is some traffic through Iran, we determined that it was not affecting the United States. It was made on that determination. We had made previous investigations and had different conclusions based on different facts. But it was not based on President Khatami's remarks or anything of that sort.

Question: To follow up, why did you wait so many years to do a survey of Iran?

Acting Secretary Loy: I'm not even sure that was the first survey. Randy, was that?

Assistant Secretary Beers: There is a significant competition for the use of satellite photography with respect to Iran. What had happened was, because that photography had been used for other reasons, it had not gone back and surveyed the crops. We insisted, when I became the Assistant Secretary, that this be done this year so that we could give an accurate reflection of the reality on the ground.

Acting Secretary Loy: I can only talk about this year, and it was done on the basis of very specific objective data.

Question: This question is for Ms. Reno. This week, Senator Feinstein said that the whole certification process is too political because the record on law enforcement is so spotty. She was critical of the political gold star, if you will. Do you have any response to that?

Attorney General Reno: I think it is important that we look at each country, look at the terms of the statute, look at whether there is cooperation, and recognize that the only way that we can work together to satisfactorily do something about the problem is in cooperation with each other. I feel very strongly that in this process we have looked at the terms of the statute and made the best judgment that we could.

Question: Good afternoon, General McCaffrey. In the past couple of months you have made passing references to drug corruption in Panama and to an airline involved in dropping drugs into Haiti. I would like to invite you to explain those comments and to address, generally, the cooperation you are getting from the government of Panama, please.

General McCaffrey: Clearly, Panama is in the path of significant amounts of drug smuggling, of small boats and aircraft coming out of Colombia, bringing cocaine in for subsequent shipment either up the Pan-American highway or by aircraft regular airline runs into Haiti in particular, where then it goes on to the Dominican Republic or into the United States. Clearly, Panama knows it faces an enormous threat of manipulation of its banking system in the Colon free trade zone. Now, the degree to which that is happening is unclear in my own mind but I think it's a serious threat to Panama, which they recognize. I think there has been a tremendous amount of cooperation from the government of Panama. They have set up their own equivalent of a financial enforcement center. They have seized enormous amounts of cocaine, a really spectacular change in the seizure rates, which reflects the increased threat. So I think all of us have great concern for the kind of challenges that are in Panama's future from drug-related narco-criminal activity.

Question: I was going to ask Barry McCaffrey this question. Down in Mexico, and often in other Latin American countries they say, the drug problem is an American problem. So tell me more specifically about the situation in the last year with regard to demand of coca and of cocaine, I should say, in the United States and any of the other drugs. What's happening with regard to domestic marijuana crops? Are they up or down?

Mr. Umberg: As you know, our strategy has five goals. The first goal among those five goals is reducing the demand for cocaine and other illegal drugs in the United States. The demand for cocaine, in fact, all illegal drugs has dropped dramatically over the course of the last 15 years. Last year in several areas, it has stabilized or decreased slightly, including cocaine. With respect to Mexico, Mexico's demand for drugs has increased at a more rapid pace; although their overall usage of drugs is much lower than the United States. The increase in demand for drugs in Mexico has increased rather dramatically. The Mexicans have recognized that this is no longer just a U.S. problem that this is also a problem in Mexico. In other words, the consumption of drugs is a problem both in Mexico and the United States. One of the things that has happened, as mentioned by the previous cabinet officers, is that there is a growing recognition in the hemisphere, and particularly between the United States and Mexico, that both countries are consumers and both countries are producers. We also produce methamphetamine and marijuana in the United States. Until we cooperate at all levels and we make sure that we hit all five of our goals and their goals, we're going to have this problem. With respect to marijuana eradication, I think that was the second part of your question.

Question: Well, yes, the marijuana crop in the United States in the last year how does it compare to previous years?

Mr. Umberg: One of the things that is somewhat ironic is that we actually know more about marijuana cultivation in other places in the world than we do in the United States. We don't know exactly what the marijuana crop is right now in the United States. We do know that in certain areas of California, for example, and Tennessee, and West Virginia, that there is a substantial crop. I can't give you the number of hectares or acres; I can try to get back to you with our best estimate.

Question: But basically, though, the main thing is cocaine what drives the international trafficking of narcotics across Mexico from Colombia is cocaine, and that is basically even, pretty much at the same level.

Mr. Umberg: Actually, cocaine consumption over the course of since 1979 is down about 70 percent in the United States. In the last year between 1997 and 1998, it is down slightly.

Question: On Mexico, in the report you mention let me read for you, "In 1998 the government of Mexico uncovered evidence of corruption in the special vetted units that had been specially created to avoid corruption. This appears to have resulted in the compromise of several investigations in which the U.S. supplied investigative information." My question is, can you give us the specific names of the cases that you're talking about in the report? If you don't want to give us the cases, why not? This is in clear support of the Mexican Government, who's fighting corruption.

Assistant Secretary Beers: We are not saying that the government of Mexico is not fighting corruption. The government of Mexico when we were working on those cases and the government of Mexico knows what those cases are. But we are not going to talk about law enforcement cases up here on the podium. That is sensitive law enforcement information.

Question: If you were able to make the same evaluation to the United States, would you give the certification this year to your own country?

Mr. Umberg: Yes. The United States is certainly meeting the standards of the 1988 U.N. convention.

Question: I wanted to ask the Attorney General or General McCaffrey this, but perhaps you could respond. Senator Feinstein's not the only critic of the administration's decision on certifying Mexico; others are. Senator Lott is one. They have said that it's time to not certify Mexico. I think Lott was quoted as saying, "They're not doing what they're supposed to be doing. If they would just extradite one person, just one, that would help change my attitude." What do you say to those critics?

Assistant Secretary Beers: First of all, with respect to the issue of Mexico in whether or not it merits certification, the law says "fully cooperating." Now, we have a standard that we use with respect to that, and that does not mean that every single thing is done; but it does mean that they make a significant and serious attempt in order to do that. Based on that criteria, we have come to the judgment that Mexico is fully cooperating with the United States. With respect to this issue about extradition in particular, it is correct that there have been a limited number of extraditions. However, Mexico is one of the two or three countries with the highest level of extradition to the United States. It is true that there were no Mexicans on drug charges who were extradited to the United States until this past year; and while there was one, it was a minor charge. But there have been Mexican citizens who have been extradited. But the most important issue, and remember, the criteria here is cooperation by the government of Mexico; that is, the executive branch of Mexico. The executive branch of Mexico has fully cooperated with the United States in this particular area. The government of Mexico has ordered the extradition in the past year of 19 Mexicans, Mexicans and other citizens. And there have been major drug traffickers, including one of the Amezcua brothers. It is the courts of Mexico, on appeal from the defendants, a due process system which we in the United States also subscribe to, that has meant that those individuals have not been extradited. So when we are talking about the government of Mexico on the extradition issue, I think there is a case here to be made that they've been cooperating. And I think we need to be very careful as to how we use the facts.

Mr. Umberg: May I also further respond to that? Also with respect to the issue of extradition, if you look at the last five years you see that the number of individuals extradited from Mexico to the United States has increased dramatically. What we do in the administration is we look at the law and then we look at the facts and we apply the facts to the law and we come up with a conclusion. The conclusion we have arrived at collectively here is that Mexico has met the criteria of the law. Now, others have also looked at that. The border state governors have also assessed whether or not, from their perspective, Mexico is cooperating with the United States and with their states. George Bush in Texas, Governor Hall in Arizona, and Governor Johnson in New Mexico, they have arrived at the conclusion that, indeed, Mexico was cooperating. The three of them have signed a letter that has been provided to members of our congress and members of the administration.

Question: Why was my question not answered about how big the drug problem is in South Asia, particularly in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan?

Assistant Secretary Beers: How big is the drug problem there? Well, there's no question.

Question: And how much money is the U.S. spending to control drugs in those countries.

Assistant Secretary Beers: There is no question that the drug problem in that area is significant. Afghanistan is the second largest producer of opium poppy in the world, and there is a significant drug trafficking problem out of that region. As was indicated earlier, that is mostly directed toward Western Europe. It mostly goes through the neighboring countries the southern tier of the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, Iran, and goes to Europe in that direction. We have a cooperative program with the government of Pakistan. The level of that assistance is roughly \$2 million a year. We have an important opium poppy eradication alternative development program with them, which is making great strides and we believe will lead to the elimination of opium poppy in Pakistan in the year 2000. With respect to India, we have only a very modest program. India is a country that we work with, generally speaking, with respect to the production of licit opium for sale to pharmaceutical companies. With respect to Afghanistan, we have a very, very limited program, and we support UNDCP in its efforts to start programs in that country. But because of the troubled state of the governance in that country, because of the difficulty in dealing with the Taliban, with respect to the security of U.N., and other personnel and gender equality issues, we have had very limited ability to deal with them, although we are looking for solutions. The amount of money that the U.S. spends in Afghanistan is very small indeed.

Question: This afternoon, we've heard you all say that 95 percent of the opium in the world is produced by Afghanistan and Burma, and they haven't done anything to stop this and, therefore, they're decertified. But 70 percent of the heroin, now affecting New York and the northeast, comes from Colombia, which has been certified. Applying the standards that Secretary Loy gave us when he said that trafficking through Iran did not affect the United States and it had been removed from the list, doesn't this tend to suggest that political determination now more than ever drives this process; and that we give the benefit of doubt to countries who we want to encourage democracy or stability, often for very appealing reasons? But countries where we don't have any interests, tend to get hammered. This seems to be the lesson from what was here today.

Assistant Secretary Beers: The issue is fully cooperating or having followed the precepts of the 1988 Vienna Convention. With respect to Colombia, we have a major eradication program in both coca and opium poppy, that are part of our major cooperation effort with that country. The police there have been conducting a truly heroic effort against drug trafficking in that country over the last several years, including this year. On that basis, we believe that the government of Colombia has met the standards of fully cooperating with the United States. We find this not to be a political decision but to be a recognition of the activities that they have taken, which have not been demonstrated by either the government of Burma and what purports to be a government in Afghanistan.

Question: Mr. Beers, I take your point that cooperation is the test and not results. But in the case of Mexico, it seems like we've got the cooperation for several years, but the DEA is telling us we're not getting any results. How long can you go? How many years can you go in this process without results before the lack of results will also trigger a decertification, or is it only just cooperation?

Assistant Secretary Beers: As Barry McCaffrey said, as others have said, it is not a situation of no results. The government of Mexico has produced some results. Director McCaffrey indicated what some of those were. I can read you the list of statistics about what they were. What Constantine said in his testimony was that he was concerned about the increase in the amount of trafficking in Mexico and the consequences of that. If you will recall, he did not comment on the level of Mexican Government cooperation with the United States. That is the judgment that we have made here today. With respect to how long we can wait for results, we have some results; we're continuing to work; it is not as if there were no results. Obviously at some point, you have to be able to have something to show for the effort; and I think we have something to show with

respect to Mexico. It's not perfect. It isn't all we would like; it isn't all they would like. But we do have results. So it's not a case of no results. Tom, you want to comment on that?

Mr. Umberg: I can only echo the areas in which we've seen results. We've seen results in eradication in the last year. Mexico was second only to Colombia in terms of eradication. In 1997 and 1996 they were first in the world in terms of eradication, in terms of seizures, seizures of heroin, seizures of methamphetamines, seizures of marijuana by Mexican authorities up; seizures of cocaine down from 1997 but if you look at 1994, 1995 and 1996, you see that they are on par with 1994, 1995 and 1996. You see that they, for example, prosecuted General Guiterrez Rebollo, Raul Salinas. You see that in Mexico, the debate now with respect to who's going to hold office, often times focuses on the issue of who's going to do the best job against corruption, crime and drug trafficking. All of those things are progress; all of those things are results. But let me add one other thing. One essential question is, are we better off fighting this fight by ourselves or in partnership with Mexico? Are we better off fighting this fight by ourselves or in partnership with the government of Colombia? It's absolutely unassailable that for us to be able to limit the supply of illegal drugs in the streets of the United States, we need the cooperation and partnership of all the countries in the hemisphere, particularly those two.

Mr. Foley: We are going to be having a briefing in 10 minutes or so on the 1998 human rights report, so we're going to limit this to two more questions.

Question: Yes, a follow-up. Mr. Constantine also said that the Mexican mafia presents present the biggest threat to U.S. national security. He made several strong, like that, indications that obviously if he believes this, the conclusion is that cooperation with Mexico cannot be that good if Mexican mafia presents do represent the biggest threat to the U.S. national security. Do you agree with that statement?

Assistant Secretary Beers: I would characterize it differently. I would say that there is no question that two-thirds of the cocaine that comes into the United States comes through Mexico. It is essentially facilitated by the activities of Mexican organized crime within Mexico and their relations with trafficking organizations within the United States; in some cases the direct movement by those Mexican trafficking organizations into the United States; in some cases through surrogates or other relationships. And that is, as he said, a very significant and serious problem to the United States. So I would choose to describe it that way. I would not go so far as to say that Mexican organized crime as such is the largest national security threat to the United States.

Mr. Umberg: But don't get us wrong. We believe that the drug threat is a threat to the United States. We believe it's a threat to the national security. We agree with the Mexicans: it's also a threat to Mexican national security.

Question: Mr. Beers, you all decertified Afghanistan and Burma this year. You did so last year as well. Apparently last year's didn't have much of an impact on them, since they're decertified again this year. Why do you think there was no impact there, and doesn't the lack of any impact or any change there give some arguments to those who say that the decertification part of the certification process doesn't have much of an impact, that it's more the dialogue process that gets things accomplished?

Assistant Secretary Beers: I think with respect to Afghanistan, the lack of a government there has made it difficult to have a dialogue. With respect to Burma, we do have a dialogue even though they were not certified. We do have an embassy there; we do have a DEA country attache there; we do talk with the Burmese Government. You will notice in our statement of explanation this year, that we do acknowledge that the Burmese Government has made some progress. But

when we look at the overall picture, we continue to believe that the Burmese Government has not and is not prepared at this point in time to take the necessary steps to do something significant about drug trafficking and drug production in their country and to adhere to the 1988 Vienna Convention. It is on that basis that we continue to decertify them. But let me be absolutely clear, we talk to governments in every year about this process, and we do seek to have a dialogue. With respect to Afghanistan, we don't have anyone to have a dialogue with at this point in time.