



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

File: Colombia
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Authority NND 66666
NND 66670

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June 17, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR : Dr. Peter G. Bourne, Special Assistant
to the President, The White House.

FROM : S/NM - Mathea Falco

SUBJECT : U.S. Narcotics Assistance to Colombia

Program Description

The U.S. began providing narcotics control assistance to Colombia in October 1972 (FY 73). Total grant assistance over the 4-year period (FY 1973-76) amounts to \$6,076,728:

FY 73 -	\$412,000
FY 74 -	257,000
FY 75 -	552,000
FY 76 -	931,000

Transitional Quarter	\$3,831,000
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Although \$2,179,000 is allocated to Colombia for FY 77, only \$126,000 (6%) has been obligated to date.

The bulk of our assistance (\$3.7 million in the TQ and \$1.3 million in FY 77 budget) has gone to the Colombian National Council on Dangerous Drugs, primarily to finance a combined Narcotics Aviation Support Unit to be formed from all Colombian narcotics enforcement agencies. This Unit would use the 3 helicopters in question and 3 or 4 fixed wing aircraft, supplied by Colombia but refurbished with our funds.

The National Police which created its first narcotics unit in 1972 has received about \$1.3 million in support from our program with another \$400,000 planned for this year. The Department of Administrative Security (DAS) and Colombian Customs have each been provided over \$300,000 in U.S. assistance. The Attorney General's Office, which maintains Judicial Police Narcotics Units at major air and seaports, has received \$138,000, with \$116,000 more budgeted this fiscal year. A small \$50,000 program was devoted to demand reduction in 1976. (Attached is a profile of the commodities we have supplied over the years.)

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Commodities presently in the pipeline (ordered but not delivered) are: Three helicopters and ancillary radio equipment (\$1.7 million); radio equipment for National Police and Customs (\$125,000; due for shipment 7/11/77). In addition, \$1.5 million is pending for maintenance, operation (including air-crews, gas and oil) and aircraft refurbishing.

History of the Program

Background

The Colombian leadership views the illicit drug traffic as a U.S. problem created by our high domestic demand, and believes Colombia should not be held responsible for failing to suppress the traffic. They have sought U.S. assistance for an "all out war on drugs," blaming the present situation on a lack of equipment.

On September 25, 1975, President Lopez visited Washington. Two weeks before his arrival, he castigated the United States for making his country the victim of U.S. inspired crime and delinquency and declared the U.S. incapable of keeping its criminals from turning Colombia into a site for their operations. (A copy of his remarks is attached.) You will note that this is the same line he took with Mrs. Carter.

Lopez met with President Ford and came away with a promise of additional assistance. He believed this meant substantially increased aid, specifically helicopters. On October 30, 1975, he mentioned a figure of \$1.3 million to our Ambassador who subsequently denied that any specific figure was intended. In all subsequent contacts with U.S. officials, Lopez stressed the need for helicopters. A Colombian plan was drawn up to reorganize drug enforcement under the Ministry of Defense, which then requested \$50-million in U.S. assistance. A series of rather acrimonious cables ensued between the Department and Embassy Bogota regarding the size of the proposal and the issue of Colombian military involvement. Finally, in June 1976, the military dropped the narcotics role, and a more modest \$3.7 million package (including the three helicopters) was drawn up. This was approved in the Transition Quarter (TQ). The

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helicopters were ordered and delivery set for January 1977. We then ran into problems over whether insurance costs would be paid by the U.S. or by Colombia and things bogged down.

In March 1977, the Embassy compiled a report questioning whether any program could be effective in the face of serious pervasive corruption of high officials (copy attached). We asked the Embassy for a comprehensive report detailing the corruption and outlining options (copy attached). After conflicting views between the Latin America Bureau and S/NM were aired, the Secretary decided to withhold the helicopters pending our visit and our talks with President Lopez.

In recent weeks our concern over the Colombian situation has grown as initial reports have come in indicating experimental cultivation of opium poppies, linked to known Mexican and Colombian traffickers.

Conflicting Views within State Department

Both the Latin American Bureau and Embassy Bogota believe that delivery of the helicopters should proceed forthwith, unrelated to the corruption question. S/NM considers the issues inseparable. Not only are the helicopters a means of leverage, their delivery in the face of reports of high-level official involvement in the traffic opens us to serious criticism in Congress and could endanger the entire international narcotics control program.

Embassy Bogota believes President Lopez is already aware of who the corrupt officials are (particularly his Defense Minister and Presidential candidate Turbay), but that he is unable to cope with the problem. The Embassy fears that Lopez will react negatively to a direct approach. The Latin American bureau fears that this issue could poison our relations with Colombia and adversely affect other U.S. interests.

There is a risk of President Lopez rejecting our narcotics program assistance altogether. In view of the program's present limitations, however, the loss (in terms of cocaine interdiction efforts) would not be great. Delay in dealing with the corruption issue now might leave us with the prospect of Julio Turbay as President next April, under whom the possibility for positive action is negligible.

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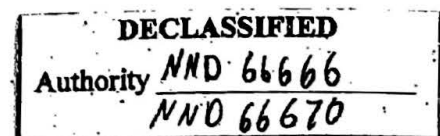
Possible Options for Lopez Talks

1. Opening remarks about our ~~mutual~~ concern with drug abuse, hope for international cooperation, etc.

2. Ask President Lopez to deal with the most egregious cases of corruption without getting into specifics. Await his commitment to do so before delivering the helicopters. Offer to increase our efforts to apprehend U.S. traffickers involved in trafficking from Colombia. Ask him to provide us with any information available to his law enforcement agencies.

3. Ask President Lopez to deal with the most egregious cases of corruption and outline specific action we would like him to take, i.e., that he warn both the Defense Minister and Presidential candidate Turbay to desist from protecting traffickers in the former case and keep out of the traffic in the latter case; that certain higher police officials identified as either protecting traffickers or being personally involved in narcotics at a minimum be transferred to posts which cannot be abused to benefit traffickers. Offer to increase our efforts to apprehend U.S. traffickers involved in the cocaine traffic or known to be corrupting his officials. Invite him to provide us with information available to his government.

4. Tell President Lopez that the helicopters will be delivered as quickly as possible. Promise him additional U.S. assistance once both his government and ours are able to control the corruption problem.



*Whichever option is selected, he should also be informed of recent evidence of opium growing in southern Colombia, and urge that forceful measures be taken to wipe it out before it becomes a serious problem.

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