File
Colombia

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: July 18, 1977

SUBJECT: Narcotics Control Cooperation with Colombia

TIME & PLACE: 4:00pm - Colombian Embassy, Washington

PARTICIPANTS: Colombia

Ambassador Virgilio Barco

United States

Mathea Falco, Senior Adviser to the Secretary on Narcotics Matters
Martin Cheshes, S/NM
David W. Cox, ARA/AND/C

DISTRIBUTION: ARA, ARA/RPP, ARA/AND, S/NM, DEA, Dr. Bourne, Amembassy Bogota

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The purpose of the meeting was to meet Ambassador Barco and establish a working relationship with him on narcotics matters, as well as to explore his thinking on a US-Colombian Joint Commission on narcotics. It was agreed that Ambassador Barco would meet Ms. Falco again in her office in the near future.

Bourne/Falco Meeting with President Lopez

Barco said he had been informed by President Lopez of the latter's meeting with Dr. Bourne and Ms. Falco. Barco indicated his willingness to work closely with US officials on the narcotics issue.

Legal Attache for Narcotics Liaison

Barco said he expected a legal attache for narcotics liaison to be assigned to his Embassy shortly. Barco expects that the attache will be detailed from the Attorney General's office, and hopes he will be a highly-qualified official who can work effectively on a day-to-day basis with US officials concerned with narcotics.

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Narcotics Problem in Colombia

Barco lamented the effects of narcotics trafficking in Colombia. He stated that corruption was widespread, especially among lower-ranking officials. He remarked that the narcotics traffic has transformed Barranquilla from a tranquil city into a crime-ridden city where the influence of the drug mafias is strong. He repeated the assertion he had made to President Carter when he presented his credentials, to the effect that the Army is the only institution in Colombia capable of effectively combatting drug trafficking.

Joint Commission

Ms. Falco stated that, in her meeting with him, President Lopez had favored the idea of a joint commission to coordinate drug control efforts, and that President Lopez saw a large role for Ambassador Barco at the working level in connection with such a commission. The heads of the commission would be at the ministerial level, such as Attorneys General. One of the first matters the commission might take up would be a narcotics mutual assistance agreement, a preliminary draft of which is circulating within the USG. The commission would not get involved in day-to-day activities, but would discuss such matters as mechanisms for exchanging intelligence, strengthening our extradition treaty, etc.

Ambassador Barco indicated a willingness to get involved in narcotics control, but said that he hoped to obtain a more specific idea of what the commission would do. He did not want the commission to become "just another committee". He spoke of the need for professional working level officials to prepare specific papers, setting out clear goals, so the commission would have concrete issues with which to work.



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