



WORLD PRODUCTION AND TRAFFIC OF COCAINE:

THE FIRST TWO STUDIES

- In June 2007, Libera released the results of a study that immediately questioned the reliability of data provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNOD) concerning world production of cocaine.
- In January 2008 a second study showed that UNODC had rigged estimates of cocaine production in Colombia, first in order to favour implementation of the very controversial¹ and costly (over 5 billion dollars) Plan Colombia (Table 1) and then in an effort to prove its efficiency (Table 2).

	A (UNODC WDR 1999²)	B (UNODC WDR 2000³)
Bolivia	219 tons per year	70 tons per year
Colombia	326 tons per year	680 tons per year
Peru	240 tons per year	175 tons per year

2000	695 tons
2001	617 tons
2002	580 tons
2003	440 tons
2004	390 tons

- The following year (WDR 2006⁵), UNODC had to admit there had been no production decrease in Colombia and corrected the 2004 figures from 390 to 649 tons, implicitly admitting **Plan Colombia had failed**.
- The Italian Government transmitted Libera's study to UNODC Director asking for an explanation. In two official meetings held in Vienna, UNODC experts admitted, in part, there had been mistakes, but when Mr. Prodi's cabinet fell, the issue was not followed up.

THE THIRD STUDY

¹ Amnesty International's position on Plan Colombia - <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR23/049/2000/en/dom-AMR230492000en.pdf>

² Global Illicit Drug Trends 1999 - http://www.unodc.org/pdf/report_1999-06-01_1.pdf

³ World Drug Report 2000 - <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2000.html>

⁴ World Drug Report 2005 - <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2005.html>

⁵ World Drug Report 2006 - <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2006.html>

- In January 2008 a third study was implemented – and concluded at the end of the year – with a view to monitoring production in Colombia through direct data, beyond those provided by UNODC and US authorities. Indeed, the Observatorio Nacional de drogas de Colombia, regularly provides a recap of all operations aimed at contrasting production and cocaine trafficking carried out by the various governmental, military and police departments: Ejercito Nacional⁶ with its eight Divisions; 2) Armada Nacional⁷; 3) Policia Nacional⁸ with its twenty-three regional branches; 4) Fuerza Aerea⁹; 5) Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS)¹⁰; 6) Fiscalia General de la Nacion¹¹.
- Information provided by the daily official releases of all these bodies were recorded in a database and so became **a real time observatory of cocaine production in Colombia**.
- 2,338 anti-drugs operations were recorded (for a total of 25,914 data) concerning discovery and destruction of 3,338 cocaine base laboratories and 311 cristalizaderos who produce cocaine hydrochloride for the market. In the case of 152 of these cristalizaderos, authorities also provided an estimate of their monthly production. These 152 estimates add up to 599 tons and 494 kilograms of cocaine hydrochloride produced per month, which is very close to UNODC's estimate for a whole year – 600 tons!
- We must take into account production of the other 159 cristalizaderos, discovered and destroyed, for which authorities did not provide an estimate. Even using the most restrictive of criteria, these must have produced at least 200 tons of cocaine hydrochloride, **which brings the overall monthly production estimate of the 311 discovered cristalizaderos to no less than 800 tons**.
- Similarly restrictive criteria were applied to estimate the **yearly production; the figure of 2,000 tons** so obtained is certainly an underestimation and will be more precisely established on the basis of more elaborate statistical calculations. As it is, it indicates production levels 3-4 times higher than UNODC estimates and 4-5 times higher than US estimates.
- All the study's data, including the catalogue of news items recorded in the database will be made available to any institution – governmental, scientific, national or international – who may wish to check or process them according to their own criteria.

COMPARISON OF RESULTS WITH OTHER AVAILABLE DATA

- UNODC and the Colombian authorities estimated that in 2007 the net area under crop (i.e. excluding areas destroyed by manual eradication or damaged by fumigations) was 99,000 hectares (WDR 2007¹²) while the corresponding cocaine hydrochloride production amounted to 600 tons. In proportion 2,000 tons would mean about 500,000 hectares under crop.
- Manual eradication involving 96,000 hectares and aerial fumigation over 134,000 hectares is obviously out of proportion with the UNODC estimate of 99,000 hectares under crop, since it would mean a near total destruction of the plantations. These figures are, on the contrary, more in line if the area under crop is close to 500,000 hectares.
- UNODC estimate of 99,000 hectares under crop is also **inconsistent** with estimates released at the beginning of December 2008 by Colombian vice president, Francisco Santos, who declared: *"300,000 hectares of tropical forest are destroyed each year by coca leaf cultivation in Colombian territory controlled by drug-terrorists and by guerrilla fighters of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC)"*¹³.
- **It is also inconsistent** with estimates of the area under crop in the Narino Department (one of the more important areas for coca leaf production) expressed by the Department's Governor, Fabio Trujillo, who talked of 60,000 hectares as against the 15,600 hectares estimated by UNODC in 2007.

⁶<http://www.ejercito.mil.co>

⁷<http://www.armada.mil.co>

⁸<http://www.dijin.gov.co>

⁹<http://www.fac.mil.co>

¹⁰<http://www.das.gov.co>

¹¹<http://www.fiscalia.gov.co>

¹² World Drug Report 2007 - <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2007.html>

¹³ "Cada gramo de cocaína esnifado destruye 4 metros cuadrados de selva" -

<http://www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/20157/cada-gramo-de-cocaína-esnifado-destruye-4-metros-cuadrados-de-selva/>

Even the US ambassador in Colombia, William Wood while talking about the Narino Department , declared he realized there had been “a significant underestimation when the area damaged by fumigation turned out to be larger than the estimated area under crop”¹⁴.

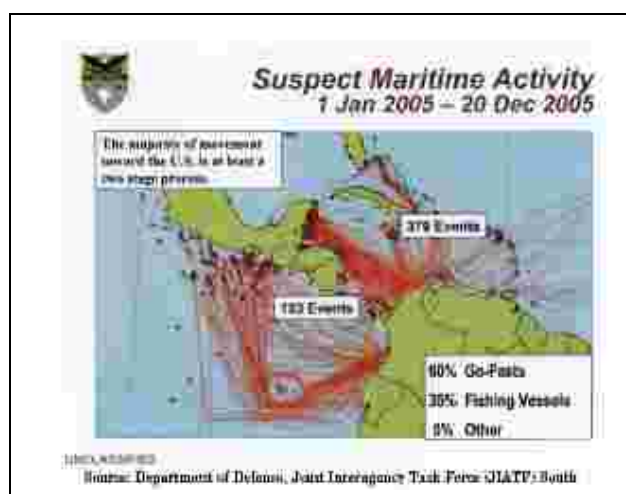
- The Governor’s declarations allow us to better understand Salvatore Mancuso’s words; he recently admitted that “ *When SIMCI (“Sistema integrado monitoreo de cultivos ilicitos” which is the result of a cooperation between Colombian authorities and UNODC) declares that the crop area for coca leaf in Cordoba Department is between 1,200 – 1,500 hectares as can be checked through the Internet, it is absolutely untrue. There are between 15,000 and 18,000 hectares of coca leaf in Cordoba, half of which is under our control while the other half is controlled by the guerrilla, In the Cordoba Departement we control 7,000 and 8,000 hectares which produce 3,500-4,000 kilograms of cocaine each month*”¹⁵.
- Lastly, UNODC’s estimate of 99,000 hectares is **inconsistent** with data referred to several other departments where the area destroyed by manual eradication (to which we must add the area destroyed by fumigation) turned out to be larger – very often distinctly larger – than the estimated area under crop.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE US SENATE’S ENQUIRY COMMISSION WITH BARACK OBAMA AND JOHN KERRY

The Report “Plan Colombia – elements for success” was issued in December 2005 by a US Senate Enquiry Commission, coordinated by Richard G. Lugar whose 18 members included, Barack Obama and John F. Kerry. The main points are the following: “*Plan Colombia was implemented in 2000 with a view to 1) ending armed conflict; 2) eliminating cocaine production and trafficking; 3) promoting the country’s economical and social development ... Lack of evidence indicating real progress in the war against drugs and in the neutralization of paramilitary forces is disconcerting, especially when we consider that, as of 2000, Congress has allocated billions of dollars to contrast drugs and eradicate coca leaf plantations ... In 2005 eradications totalled 196,000 hectares but the amunt of cocaine seized in 2004 increased threefold and there will probably be a further increase in 2005. In the meantime, 90% of the cocaine that reaches the USA still comes from Colombia.*”¹⁶

Il Report della Commissione del Senato ha fornito due immagini che riassumono le centinaia di rotte sospette – marittime ed aeree - registrate dai satelliti.

The Commission’s Report also provides two charts showing suspicious maritime and air traffic identified by the satellites.



¹⁴ Colombia - Cocaine Jungle - <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2006/s1578686.htm>

¹⁵ Las cuentas de Mancuso - http://www.semana.com/wf_InfoArticulo.aspx?idArt=115092

¹⁶Plan Colombia: Elements for Success - <http://ciponline.org/colombia/051229sfr.pdf>



Most of the suspicious air traffic departed from Venezuela and, significantly, during 2008, Venezuelan authorities discovered and destroyed as many as 230 clandestine runways. Quite a number of runways were also discovered in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Mexico¹⁷. Again in Mexico, on February 16th 2008, 106 planes allegedly used for drug trafficking were seized in a single operation while another 11 planes were seized on December 16th 2008; 7 of these planes had been assigned for use in fumigations. This circumstance deserves closer investigation in order to understand why Mexican authorities were led to hypothesize a connection between drug traffickers and a group of airplanes that should have been used only to contrast illegal crop and, therefore, drug trafficking¹⁸.

PERSPECTIVES

It would be senseless to assume that the US Government had simply made a mistake, however coarse and protracted in time, in the analysis of the situation in Colombia and, consequently in planning the intervention strategy. Plan Colombia was kept going for ten years without any significant strategy change; but US authorities were busy **manipulating data** through a systematic underestimation of production in Colombia. Why did they do this?. What was Plan Colombia's real target? It is important to pay attention to these issues in order to understand what really happened, and what is still happening, in the "war" against cocaine.

US funds are now being transferred from Plan Colombia to Plan Merida which will be focussed on Mexico where, the person responsible for anti-drugs operations on a national level has been arrested and charged with significant involvement in drugs trafficking, while over 500 police agents involved in cocaine trafficking have simply been transferred for "environmental incompatibility"; in the meantime during 2008, 5600 persons directly or indirectly involved in drugs trafficking have been killed.

¹⁷ Ejército destruyó 230 pistas del narcotráfico en 2008 - http://www.eluniversal.com/2008/12/17/pol_ava_ejercito-destruyo-23_17A2170541.shtml

¹⁸ Autoridades incautan 11 avionetas presuntamente del narcotráfico en México - [http://www.yucatan.com.mx/noticia.asp?cx=9\\$2701010000\\$3977905](http://www.yucatan.com.mx/noticia.asp?cx=9$2701010000$3977905)