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AN ASSESSMENT OF COLOMBIA'S ANTI-DRUG POLICIES AMID  
THE PEACE TALKS WITH THE FARC

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TRINKUNAS: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Harold Trinkunas. I direct the Latin American Initiative here at the Brookings Institution in the foreign policy program. And I'd like to welcome you all to our event today, an assessment of Columbia's anti-drug policies amid peace talks with the FARC. I think this a particularly opportune time to talk about this.

Not only do we have a new report from Columbia's National Drug Policy Advisory Committee, which we're here to discuss today, but we also have the opportunity to benefit from learning from the experiences of a country which, to borrow a phrase that I've heard, (Inaudible) used before, has really learned more about drug policy and what works and what doesn't work than almost any other country in the world, just given its own historical experience with illicit drugs.

Columbia is also one of the countries that is a leading proponent of reforming regional approaches to drug policy in the Americas, something that's reflected in the 2013 report from the OAS on drug policy in the Americas. And that is now becoming part of the international debate as we look forward to the special session of the UN General Assembly next year, which will review the international counter-narcotics treaties.

So for a number of reasons this is a very opportune time to talk about what Columbia has learned, and what the recommendations are for reforming Columbia's drug policies going forward, an issue that obviously is related in very complex and deep ways to the ongoing larger process of resolving Columbia's internal conflict and achieving peace. We have a very distinguished panel here today to talk about this.

You have their bios in your info packet that was available on the way in. But let me just say a few brief words about each of them before turning the floor over to Daniel Mejía.

Daniel Mejía is a professor at the University of the Andes, a distinguished economist in Columbia, but also somebody who has really made it his life's work to understand what works and what

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

doesn't work when it comes to national drug policies. He's the author of a paper in our improving global drug policy project, focused on the issue of drugs.

But he's here today to talk about his work as the head of Columbia's National Drug Policy Advisory Commission. He is joined in that capacity by Ana María (Inaudible), who is an advisor to the Ministry of Justice and Law of Columbia, who is focused on the work of the commission and on reviewing Columbia's drug policy.

And prior to that she had experience on Electoral Issues and Democracy at the Carter Center. To discuss the findings of the report that Daniel Mejía will present, I'm joined by my colleagues, Vanda Felbab-Brown from the Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Intelligence and Security here at Brookings, somebody who has studied issues related to illicit economies, drugs and insurgency around the globe, but very specifically in Columbia.

In fact, Vanda and I were in Columbia in May of this year working on that issue, among others. And finally, Frank Mora is a professor at Florida International University, co-sponsor with me of this panel here today.

He directs the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center. Frank is also somebody, as many of you know, is the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Pentagon during the first part of the Obama administration and somebody that has really a great deal of both academic and policy experience dealing with issues related to drug policy and security.

So without much further ado, let me turn it over to Daniel and Ana María, who will lead off with about 20 minutes of comments and then we'll turn it over to Vanda and Frank for ten minutes each of discussion before going to a Q&A session. Thank you.

MR. MEJÍA: Thank you, Harold. And let me start by thanking Brookings and Florida International University for holding this event, and especially to my good friends and colleagues, Vanda, Harold and Frank for putting up this event and discussing this report.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

It's a great honor for us, for the Ministry of Justice and for the Commission to present the findings and recommendations of the Drug Policy Advisory Commission. This was an independent commission, set up by the Ministers of Justice and Health in 2013.

And the Commission was composed by ten Columbian leading experts on the fundamentals of drug policy in Columbia. And had two special guests that were not commissioners but were invited as guests; those were former president, Gaviria, Cesar Gaviria, and the former director of the Columbian National Police, Oscar Mora.

The commissioners had very different backgrounds and fields of expertise. On the Commission there were medical doctors, (Inaudible), political scientists, lawyers and economists. Each of the commissioners had a different approach to the understanding of their policy in Columbia, which helped us enrich discussions, produce a final report that is broad enough to understand drugs and drug policy in Columbia and propose a series of recommendations to the Columbian government.

And these recommendations are aimed at improving the formulation and implementation of more effective and less costly drug policies. As Harold was saying, Columbia has made significant efforts in the fight against drug production and trafficking, and in the fight against the criminal organizations involved in these two activities. This has resulted in very important progress in reducing the levels of violence.

The homicide rate in Columbia has gone down more than 60 percent in the last 15 years. Kidnapping attacks against public and private have infrastructure have gone down. And many other forms of violence that were once associated with drug traffic organizations.

With a very small risk of being wrong, I think we can say that no other country in the world has done more to fight the so-called war on drugs.

On average, Columbia, with partial funding from the U.S. has invested about 1.2 percent of its GDP each year in the fight against illegal drugs. However, despite this high cost that the country has paid to reduce production and trafficking in terms of human lives, physical resources and negative side effects, drug trafficking remains today, a very profitable business that involves significant resources.

Likewise, the use of psycho-active substances in the country has shown a warring trend of sustained growth in the last 20 years. The Commission considers that the limitations and negative side effects of some of these policies to combat drug trafficking and to address the growing problem of drug consumption in the country are clear evidence of the need to rethink some of the strategies implemented.

In light of new objectives and based on more flexible models of regulation, the recommendations of the Commission in our view, should help the Columbian government in the design and implementation of more effective and less expensive drug policies, giving priority to prevention, rather than to strictly punitive answers. All the recommendations are based on detailed studies developed by each of the commissioners in their fields of expertise.

I'm going to now briefly summarize the main policy recommendations behind the Commission's report. The first one is the national drug policies and especially those focused on reducing drug abuse, should be based on a public health approach, and should be respectful of human rights.

The National Drug Policy must be based on the best available evidence and must be supported by rigorous evaluations of effectiveness and cost of the programs that are implemented. The Commission -- and this is very important -- considered that it is not necessary nor effective to get trapped between the two extremes of strict prohibition and criminalization on the one hand, or the full legalization of drug markets with no government regulation on the other.

This is a false dilemma, as intermediate objectives are not only possible, both theoretically and practically, but also have proven to be more effective ways in confronting the problems of drug production, trafficking, distribution and use. Here the Commission has in mind intermediate options, such as the regulation of drug markets, treatment, prevention and reduction to confront drug use and a development late approach to confront illicit crops cultivation.

We were very strong on this. This does not mean being soft on crime and violence, as some have tried to put it. It's quite the opposite. It means using enforcement resources more efficiently by focusing on those actors that generate more violence and corruption, and not on the weakest and easy to target links in the drug trafficking chain.

The Commission considers that the Columbian government should have help coordinating drug policy entity with a status of a presidential agency and with financial and administrative autonomy. Drug policies must make an explicit operational differentiation of the tools that are used to address drug consumption issues on the one hand and drug production and trafficking activities on the other hand, especially, when the latter theoretically provide funds for criminal organizations.

The Commission considers that the Columbian government must avoid the criminalization of drug use. This requires a differential approach in order to be able to distinguish between problematic and non-problematic drug use, dependent and non-dependent drug use patterns, and finding complimentary interventions when punishing individuals who commit crimes that are related to the drug dependency problem.

The use of medical marijuana should be allowed and regulated prior to attaching policies to prevent diversions, especially to kids, and underage populations. AS for the issues of drug production and trafficking, policies against illegal crops requires strategies that acknowledge human rights and this implies a development late approach based on comprehensive interventions in areas affected by the presence of these crops. Territorial control and the provision of basic public goods, such as security, justice and infrastructure are crucial components for alternative development projects to be effective and self-sustainable.

At the time the report was released the Commission considered that the Columbian government should reassess, based on a large body of evidence whether to continue implementing the aerial spraying program as a strategy to reduce the cultivation of illicit crops. All available empirical studies show that the use of aerial spraying of herbicides as a strategy for reducing illicit crops is highly inefficient, extremely costly and generates serious direct and collateral costs on health, the environment and on the level of institutional trust by individuals that are exposed to the aerial spraying program.

In May of this year, the Columbian government announced that it will stop the aerial spraying program in Columbia. The decision was taken based on the possible negative health effects that the program might have, and the populations exposed to the program.

The findings of different empirical studies indeed show that exposure to the herbicide that is used in the aerial spraying program in Columbia causes negative health effects such as rheumatologic problems, respiratory problems, miscarriages and certain types of cancer. When making the announcement, the Columbian government set October of this year as the deadline for completely stopping the aerial spraying program.

Among the strategies to address drug related crime, the interest in reducing violence must prevail, even above producing illicit drug flows. The Columbian government should concentrate on dismantling criminal structures by affecting local, regional, institutional, and organizational conditions that allow these groups to reproduce.

The Commission recommends enacting a new law in order to create a unified, systematic and comprehensive regime for the prevention of money laundering applicable to all economic sectors. The government should give money laundering due prominence on the national agenda, allocating the necessary resources needed to prevent and confront money laundering activities.

Strategies against drug dealing, micro-trafficking and transnational trafficking of illicit drugs should focus primarily on those links that create more violence and collateral damage. It should be duly noted to reduce and discourage the use of violence as a strategy in the operation of illegal drug markets.

Extradition as a legal way to fight against the leaders of drug traffic organizations must be reconsidered, as recent developments seem to show that this strategy has lost effectiveness in dissuading individuals from getting involved in drug trafficking activities. The Commission recommends that the national narcotics statute must be updated based on the objectives of the national drug policy.

The Columbian state must continue considering the international drug control regime developed by the UN Drug Conventions, as it is the duty of states to fulfill in good faith, its international commitments. But given the limitations and serious collateral problems caused by the international prohibition and punitive regime, there is no reason why Columbia should possibly adapt to these conventions, let alone accept extremely punitive interpretations which are sometimes proposed without criticism.

Columbia should continue leading an international debate about the drug problem and the best way to confront it. It is extremely important that this debate be informed by evidence, by the best available academic evidence about what works, what doesn't work, and at what cost in terms of drug policy.

Finally, the Colombian government should also insist on a more flexible interpretation of the Drug Conventions. In particular, the interpretation of the Drug Convention should be flexible enough so that countries can adapt their drug policies to their specific context and can reduce problematic drug use, reduce the direct and collateral cost of implementing drug policies, and respect their national obligation and human rights, insofar as they are prevalent over the Drug Conventions. These last three recommendations of the Commission are especially important in light of next year's special session of the UN General Assembly on the drug problem. The drug policy debate is unavoidable and now more than ever, needs informed analysis that will end prejudices and political decisions.

This is, I think, the main recommendation, the main contribution of the report of the Commission. Thank you very much.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you, Daniel. Turning now to Ana María Rueda.

MS. RUEDA: Good afternoon to everyone. The Drug Policy Advisory Commission was created by the government of Columbia as a result of the interest of the president to continue to lead the drug policy reform internationally, but based on a specific development domestically.

As a result, as Daniel mentioned, ten experts were convened to analyze and give recommendations on specific topics that were regarded as the most relevant for drug policy. And as he mentioned as well, the Commission was comprised by these ten experts and there were also special invitees that Daniel mentioned already who they were, plus the Ministers of Justice, Health and Defense, who were prominent invitees to the meetings. And they attend most of them, especially the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice.

During the first semester of 2013, the Commission decided to focus on analyzing drug consumption because this was regarded as a very important, critical topic to Columbia. It is today and regardless that the moment because it is a growing concern right now, drug consumption in Columbia.



COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

So in May 2013, the Commission released its report, and the recommendations of this report have been taken on, or taken into consideration to the drafting of the National Drug Consumption Plan of Columbia that was released in 2014. Right now it's starting to well, it really hasn't been implemented yet because of lack of resources, but it's being drafted and approved.

For the rest of 2013 and 2014, the Commission discussed each of the Commissioner's papers and drafted the final report and the recommendations for a new drug policy in Columbia.

The draft of the Commission, the papers and the final reports have been very important sources for two important processes in Columbia. One, the peace process. The team of presence of this studies being in charge of dealing with the peace process received all the information of the commission starting in 2013 from the draft papers to the final papers, and this was considered very important sources of information for those discussions that took place on point number four, which was on drug policy on the peace process agenda.

The Commission's report was also almost the main source of information for the definition of the position of Columbia to the (Inaudible) 2016. Concrete developments of drug policy reform in Columbia have started to take place slowly.

But I would say that what has happened that I consider very important is that today it is a better understanding of the drug problem in the country. Also there is an agreement -- I would say growing agreement -- on the fact that this issue, the drug policy issue, is more a social matter than a control matter.

There is social recognition that the adoption of development, public health and human rights perspectives is fundamental for drug policy. Therefore, the creation of the Drug Policy Advisory Commission and all initiatives of the government of Columbia has created to gather evidence for policy change have first and foremost generated discussion, debate, and dialogue within the Colombian government, between the Colombian agencies and with the society.

And I think this is not wide enough. As a result, new approaches to drug policy are right now on the table in Columbia, many of which are already agreed by key policy makers. This I consider significant advance in Columbia, at the conceptual level. But challenges come when we start

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

talking about implementation of drug policy. And so let me mention a couple of challenges that are important and obviously they are not all of them.

One of them is the future of the peace process, of course. If it's signed or if it is not, and if it is, it will definitely -- the post-conflict era will give us -- set up (Inaudible) from implementation of many different policies in Columbia, not just drug policy.

So that would be definitely a challenge for drug policy reform. Another one is the growing political organization that we are experiencing now in Columbia in which drug policy topics are very sensitive ones.

Another one is the institutional adjustment that is required to put this policy in place. And Atlantic Convention mentioned the need for a coordinating body with financial and administrative autonomy.

This is really difficult in Columbia. Not to mention the fact that drug policy has had a control approach, right now is being implemented with more political force or power by certain agencies like the Minister of Defense. And now they're talking about different approaches like human rights or public health.

You have to switch the policy but that means changes, real changes in institutional arrangement. And that will be critical as well.

Another challenge is affective integration of drug policy with the development agenda in the country. As I said, there is now already an agreement and a belief the drug policy is related strictly to the development agenda.

Putting that in place is quite challenging, institutionally. Another one is the design of impact indicators that instead of measuring, processes as results actually measure the actual reduction of the overall drug problem in Columbia. This for example applies very well to money laundering or to dismantling drug structures, criminal structures.

Right now we measure the work we do on those matters measuring the processes we do to get there. But we don't exactly measure that we actually got there, that we dismantled or that we are being good at money laundering. We're great in processing money laundering has been a great

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

development in Columbia, but we are not measuring the overall reduction of the problem as a comprehensive issue.

Another challenge is the political pressure that the government will face at this moment when it's trying to change policies, but coca crops are growing. That will be extremely challenging for the government.

And finally, as the Commission recommended, the adoption of different rotations of the Conventions that allow for flexibility in the topics of interest in Columbia, in a scenario of no changes after August 2016. That would be terribly challenging as well. Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you very much, Ana María, and now I will just mention that the report and the executive summary are available on the website of the Commission. Is that correct?

MS. RUEDA: The observatory of drugs is ODC that (Inaudible) says commission drugs and you'll find the reports.

MR. TRINKUNAS: And it will be available in English in the next couple of weeks. Turning now to our discussions for this panel, Vanda Felbab-Brown.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Good afternoon. I must say that I am both delighted by the report and struck. Delighted because I find the report imminently sensible in its recommendations, as well as based on not only great research, but also exemplary participation of many different prominent experts and policy makers in Columbia.

And I'm struck because the thrust of the report fundamentally repudiates what has often been characterized as Columbia's policy and the success story that Columbia was exporting around the world. During the administration of President Alada Uribe, the narrative was that in order to defeat conflict or in order to end conflict, drugs have to be eradicated and that aerial spraying was the best way to do so. And, indeed, Columbia often volunteered itself, or was volunteered as a model for places like Afghanistan, for example. In my view that this is a narrative even as it was very much supported and embraced by Washington and the United States, through plan Columbia, but also other mechanisms, was always inaccurate and often counter-productive.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

But it is striking to hear it now from a national body endorsed by the Colombian government, even if perhaps endorsed the different level of closeness by different ministries within the Colombian government.

But then let me perhaps review with you some of the core elements of the policy and the data impact on both conflict dynamics in the country and the negotiations with the FARC and the challenges and opportunities that negotiations with the FARC bring to the drug policy in the country. So indeed the core narrative about so-called narcotic terrorism was that in order to take away the finances of terrorist and insurgent groups like the FARC, it was crucial to destroy the financial basis of the group.

We hear that often in very many different guises. It's the narrative that's dominant today about ISIS and oil in Syria and Iraq, for example. In Columbia and by extension, places like Afghanistan, it was specifically meant that illicit drugs had to be destroyed through eradication in order to bankrupt the FARC.

Well, did it ever pan out? Clearly there were periods after particular intense praying in various parts of the previous decades where FARC finances were temporarily hampered.

In each case, the FARC, as well as other activists found other ways to adapt to that, either simply by seeing crops recover, move to other areas, or eventually by expanding their portfolio into other activities such as illegal logging and illegal mining. But I think it's questionable to argue that the allocation ever had more than short term effects on the operational capacity and sustainability of the FARC.

In my view had a far bigger effect, and in passing out the effects of interdiction is tough because interdiction often melded together in the ways it was implemented and design, both physical interdiction of FARC units as well as interdiction against certain actors.

But I think that the effect there was often far more pronounced, particularly as interdiction also became to be defined as essentially encircling and pinning certain (Inaudible) with an aid as to operation, (Inaudible) being the unit of FARC organization. And especially when the encirclement was then effectively logistical change were disruptive of finances were not passed on to other FARC fronts and the operational impact was far more pronounced in my view than the operational impact through eradication.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

Nonetheless, even if the effect of eradication was limited in terms of the goals it claimed to accomplish, it was also deeply counter-productive because it became the only glue that held any remnants of Columbian society, rules society to the insurgents. The coca (Inaudible) became the only essential base, but nonetheless potent base, for the FARC. And although the battlefield has been stalemated since 2007, 2008, it is not clear at all that in the absence of peace that the FARC could really be defeated.

They could perhaps be (Inaudible) but it is not obvious that they could be just obliterated on the military battlefield. And narcotics policies played a negative impact in that.

Alternative livelihoods were often part of the advocated mixture, they were funded though often far less than the direct military and eradication and interdiction policy nonetheless, they were funded and they were implemented. Overall, the outcomes were terribly disappointing.

I would say even far more so that in the context of other countries where rarely are alternative livelihood programs designed well. But in Columbia, there was set of structural as well as immediate operational problems that kept hampering alternative livelihoods.

A crucial one was the demand that the so-called zero coca policy that demanded that the community eradicates all coca before it qualifies for assistance. It was problematic because assistance could never materialize sufficiently fast to offset the real income losses of the community.

Moreover, the assistance often amounted to essentially shortened humanitarian hand-outs, immediate food supplies for four, five, six months, but really failed to address key issues such as value-added change entitles micro-credit.

There are many reasons why that was not happening, including (Inaudible) the perseverance and effectiveness of vested interest in Columbia to hamper those. And so during the Uribe years we saw money allocated for alternative livelihoods, directly misdirected to some of the various landowners. And during other years, including recent Santos years, many of the problems simply died because vested interests blocked lye ministries from adopting policies such as changing vexation patterns, or resolving problems of titles. And indeed, it's worth remembering before the peace process and I would argue for the day after the peace process is signed, that it ultimately emerged out of the

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

realization by the Colombian government, that the consolidation plan, the build face of counter-insurgency was getting nowhere, that lye ministries could not be reigned into bringing the role of development that they were commanded by the national government to deliver.

Now what does it all mean for negotiations? As Ana María today said drugs are a key component, a key point of the negotiation process, as is land reform, which on paper promises radical transformation of rule Columbia. Well that is stuff to implement.

And some of the same problems that hampered the effectiveness of alternative livelihoods, taxation that taxes lands extraordinarily little and labor extraordinarily heavily, the like of access to micro-credit despite lending institutions, the continuing problems with that will make such a radical transformation difficult.

The government, the FARC agreed to eradicate, I'm sorry, to eliminate drugs in Columbia. That's the stated phrasing. It's an ambitious goal, likely unrealistic. More important element perhaps is how that is to be accomplished. And indeed, in the agreed language, all methods of fighting drugs remain, including eradication.

Although, since then, as Daniel mentioned, aerial spraying has been suspended. So the government has really left itself a completely open hand of how it will deliver the promise of eliminating drugs within the country. But the sense is that this should be done through a rule of development through alternative livelihoods more so than through suppression.

But, again, how it is implemented yet very much remains to be seen. I think it's significant how the context of both the peace process negotiation and what's been independently happening with drug policy reform in Columbia, namely the coca mobilizations about a year and a half ago that for a while paralyzed the country.

The initial response of the Santos government was very much these are just funds of the FARC. It was a very dismissive action. The government nonetheless, significantly backpedaled from it, reversed its position, and realized, and that is one of the interesting things, that many of the coca groups, now have agents in and of themselves.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

They learned to have political power, without needing to rely on the FARC. And to me, that's a crucial element, also pushing the FARC further to negotiations and making it more difficult for the FARC to walk away from the negotiating table. This has been long time in the making. In fact, it has been quite striking how the Columbian coca groups have been far less politically active and organized in compared to their equivalents in Bolivia and Peru. And so, their independent political power is a very good development, both for civil rights, human rights in Columbia, but also in my view, help by putting pressure on the FARC negotiations process.

Nonetheless, even if there is a deal that our massive challenges that perhaps we can discuss in the Q&A, I just want to highlight one, and that's the persisting role of the bandus criminales in drug trafficking. But also in what kind of effects on the physical security on any DD FARC they will have.

The Santos Administration deserves credit, significant credit for targeting those groups strongly, even if there are talks of perhaps negotiating with them some years down the road. But it is not clear to me that if the pro-Uribista opposition conservative groups do very well in municipal elections, that national bill will be easier to execute at the municipal level, or that is also the case should neither a pro-Urbe, nor perhaps Uribe administration come to power after the second term.

So I would like to end that the Columbian narrative, if not perhaps Columbian narrative for years has been, in order to end conflicts, drug needed to be ended first. In many other parts of the world, the history in fact, was the opposite.

The conflict ended first before drug production and trafficking were significantly reduced. But there's through gentle means like in Thailand, through negotiations, essentially through allowing drugs to flourish, like in Burma, and eventually a celebration, or in places like China, Peru or Indonesia. In each case, whether the end was the male fist of the state, or the gentle embrace of the state, the key was state presence.

The peace process of the FARC is another step, should it be successfully implemented to move Columbia in the direction. But there is no guarantee that the peace process once it is signed will in fact be effectively implemented.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you. And Frank, if you could take us out.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

MR. MORA: Sure. Thank you, Harold. Good afternoon everybody. Harold, first of all I want to thank you for inviting me and for partnering with the Center on the release of this important project. I want to also congratulate Venietta and his team and the Commission.

It's really an exhaustive study. I think it's 280 pages. And we really can't cover all the questions that are raised in my mind. For example the issue of extradition that I think would be interesting for us to discuss.

This will be the first time I talk about Columbia since leaving government, and I'm happy I never shared a panel with Vanda during my time in government, because Columbia was of course, a test story, as the report said. But, I'm no longer in government.

But I don't have enough time, so let me go to a couple of key points in the study that I think would be helpful for us to have a discussion during the Q & A.

First of all, the report goes to something that really reminded me a lot of when I was in government and the challenge that I felt we faced. Because some of the things, and again, I think this is an exhaustive study, but this is not the first time we hear some of these ideas and some of these recommendations, right?

The whole issue of integrated development, public health, human rights, right, these are elements of any serious comprehensive anti-drug policy that we've heard before. So I don't want to say that you're not saying anything new. But this is something that we've been hearing over and over again. And we keep saying it and nothing happens, right?

And you mention in the study, you make reference in the study, that in fact the government has thought and done things about public health, has done things about the public welfare, development improving quality of life, etc. However, the problem has been two-fold, right? Two-fold: First, the lack of adequate investment, resources, to fund the plan, right? And two, the absence -- and now these are the commissioner's words, not my words but I agree -- the absence of an institutional architecture to support the plan, right? And there's two dimensions to this, right? There is the issue of consumption and then there's the issue of violence -- right -- associated with anti-drug policy.



COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

And here I think this is where the challenge is, right? We have seen -- what was that institution, was it SKY -- in Columbia, that integrated institution that Uribe started and it was continued under Santos. The idea was an integrated plan to deal with, not just drugs, but the issue of violence and the FARC.

And the challenge there was governance. How do we address the issue of governance? And quite frankly, that didn't go too far, right? Was it a question of political will? Was it a question of resources? Was it a question of this is just too hard to do, right?

This is just too -- so let's just target on dealing with the issue of violence and particularly the FARC, and leave everything else later. Let's postpone things as Vanda says, in some cases until after the conflict is over. And then we can address some of these issues. I think there are obstacles or impediments in the way. And some of them have already been mentioned by Anan María.

One is the issue of political polarization. It seems to be getting worse as we get closer to the peace, right? And there doesn't seem to be a consensus or really a serious effort in this context to deal with some of the issues, which is lack of resources and institutional architecture. Two economic constraints; Columbia as you know is entering some fiscal challenges, right?

The government is reducing costs, they're making budgetary priorities, and those budgetary priorities don't seem to be focused on much of what this report, I think, reflects. And how do they recapture from a financial standpoint what is required to do, which is no easy task from an institutional and resource perspective, right, in the context of economic stagnation, let's say.

The other thing that I didn't see in the report, and maybe Daniel could maybe highlight it if it is, is, you know, a lot of this at the end of the day, is even though consumption is increasing in Columbia as they, I think rightly mentioned, what does it mean if consumption stays the same or rises outside of Columbia, right? This is an important driver of drug policy or drug production, I'm sorry, drug production in Columbia.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

If there is no change in external consumption, what does that mean for drug production in Columbia, right? In light of the fact that the state still doesn't have the capacity to deal with some of the challenge that you've mentioned and I think Vanda mentioned, as well, peace.

I think to respond to Vanda, I think you can go either way, right? And so is peace a good thing or a bad thing for anti-drug policy? Maybe we can have a discussion about that. You could go, I guess, or you could argue either way, right? You could say that with the end of the war, the state now can concentrate its efforts, its resources on this particular problem or challenge, because there is going to be -- there are still groups out there that are being funded by the drug.

But you could also say that because the big driver of violence was drug production, that's where they funded their activities, that with the end of the big large conflict, that maybe we shouldn't be spending too much time, that we should prioritize other areas, development areas that perhaps deal with the issue of drug policy, but not in the way that Daniel and the Commission, I think are suggesting.

So, you know, I don't want to be too cynical. That's Vanda's job. But, I do think that it is true that we've been down this road before. We've been down many of these recommendations, and my fear, my concern is that this goes up on some shelf and then that's it.

So where do you get the political will, where do you marshal the resources both political and financial resources to really commit to a project that is worthwhile, no question, and important? But that requires a commitment frankly, that I have not yet seen in dealing with this particular problem. So let me leave it, Harold, at that, and take on the questions and comments.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Great. Thank you so much to our panel for staying on time. And now we have a good forty minutes for Q&A. I'll keep a list and there will be a microphone coming around, but please identify yourself and then provide an institutional affiliation before you ask the question.

I see two hands now, but I'll take the moderator's privilege to ask the first question, and direct it I guess, mainly at Daniel and Ana María. It strikes me that two of the key recommendations to focus more on a public health approach and to focus more on alternative development are both areas where, as Frank has said, the state has not had the institutional capacity in the past to really, maybe carry

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

out the kind of measures you are recommending and the other is that these are often issues that are dealt with at a local or a municipal or provincial level, not necessarily at a national level in many countries.

And so maybe if you could speak to us more about what kinds of changes have there been in sort of the public health dimension of the state and in alternative development that give you maybe hope that this can be achieved now. And secondly, what has been the reaction of sub-national authorities that might have to implement some of these recommendations going forward?

MR. MEJÍA: Thank you, Harold. And thanks Vanda and Frank for the comments and the remarks. Let me touch upon a couple of points that both of you made. Frank, you mentioned, what's the question, political resources? Is it too hard to do, to confront the drug problem?

Let me add one, which I don't think is the answer, but is part of the answer is vested interests, for many different political actors and even countries actually. I think I agree with both of you. We have too much rhetoric and too many commission reports.

We have the Latin America Commission, the World Drug Commission, the ASU report, now we have the Brookings report. We have the Columbian Commission report. When are we going to --

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: But the Brookings one is the best.

MR. TRINKUNAS: -- is the best, of course. So when are we going to take the next step and transit from reports and papers and research into political decisions? And I think we could have blamed the Columbian government for being too lethargic about the drug policy debate.

But I think, with one exception -- their decision to stop the aerial spraying program -- was a very hard decision for the president to take, and for the government to take. There were internal disputes inside the government, about the decision. But the president finally took the decision to stop the aerial spraying program.

And this is not a small thing. The aerial spraying program was the main strategy, at least in the first seven or eight years in Columbia to fight drug production. So admitting that it wasn't as successful as we thought it was going to be, and admitting that, it might create more harm than good, I think it's a very hard and important policy decision and it's very brave.

So I think if we continue that way after the peace process, if the peace process is signed soon, I think more decisions are going to come soon. That's my view. I don't know much about politics and the government but I think the president is putting all his efforts in the peace process, and after that he is going to start to make some other policy decisions in terms of drug policy.

But that's not the case and now, I go into your point in terms of drug policies to reduce the consumption. If you look in the report we have there, we have a description of the stylist facts behind drug consumption in Columbia. There we have data from about four or five surveys between 1993 and 2013, I think was the last one.

The data shows, basically shows that drug consumption has between doubled and tripled, depending on the type of drug and if it's dependent use or casual use of drugs. But the government has not, I think in my view, taken the policy decisions to confront the growing drug use problem. And I think this has to do with political will, I have to say.

It takes resources, of course, to build up capacity to confront, to put together prevention, treatment and harm reduction programs. But I think we have a Minister of Health who knows a lot about this issue.

We actually wrote a book together in the past, on drug problems in Columbia, but they have not taken the policy decisions that need to be taken to confront the growing drug problem. Why? Because there are too many things going on in Columbia, the fiscal problems, the problems with the health system, and that has taken most of the time for the Minister of Health.

And I think this has to change soon, otherwise, the government is going to be blamed for being too lethargic on changing the stance on drug policy, in terms of talking about a public health approach without actually putting up together the capacity to confront drug use.

MS. RUEDA: I would like to add something, in regard to the comment of Vanda, and the narrative of Columbia in drugs and conflict. I think progress has been made specifically on that narrative, which I think is good news. And I think that is actually one of the keys of the political operations now, because the view of the conflict right now is polarizing in the sense that those who think the FARC conflict will end with force, and those of others that think the conflict will end with development.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

And I think that is one of the key discussions that is going on and explains the polarization. It's a clear ideological difference between both parts that is explaining what is going on today.

And as a result of that, I will agree with that if the peace process is signed and the government is ready for it, which is discussable, for the post conflict era, then we will have a different path in policy in the political structure, because there will be set up a different way of seeing conflict in Columbia.

I think that is very important. In regard to if it's too hard, if it's political will, why is explanation for Columbia not to have done this better before? Is it, just by all those reports out there? I think it is all of that.

And it is also -- and this is my personal view, not the government view -- there is a characteristic of the political system in Columbia that is very difficult to change. That is, it is a system that is not characterized by accountability. So it is a system where governors, government, politicians are not price for doing something well.

Corruption is still very much in the way, and that definitely affects governors. The government may have very good intentions of doing things, and as I said, I'm sure he has advice of understanding the issue and conceptualizing in a different way.

But what happens in implementation has a lot to do with all those things; political will, a political will has to do with particular structure, which still deserve corruption with it that do not allow for the national government and the local governments to put in place and implement the policy as nice as it can be. And I think I'll leave it there.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. Thank you. I think we have first here on the left side of the room.

MR. DOWNEY: Thank you, Richard Downey from Delphi Strategic and Planning. Thank you for a very interesting discussion. I have actually a couple of questions for Daniel. You had mentioned that the report didn't want to go to either pole, either legalization or to punitive kind of interdiction types of approaches. But you wanted to do something more in the middle, and following up a

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

little bit on Harold's question there, I don't know exactly what that means. Could you describe what are those mid-range types of options beyond treatment, prevention and those sorts of things? And the second, it actually follows up on Frank's issue, is that you mentioned that you recommended a change, a reconsideration of extradition.

I mean, extradition was originally intended to present a real rear to drug traffickers to say, when you go to the United States, you're going to jail, and that's what you're doing, as opposed to in Columbia, where it wasn't so bad. But you're suggesting reconsideration. Could you talk a little bit about why that reconsideration is needed? Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: We'll take two or three questions together, so maybe over here --

QUESTIONER: All right. Hi, thanks. Carl from CSIS and previously used to work for UNHCR in Columbia. So very happy to hear the conclusions of the Commissions.

I do have a question. It appears to me that drug related violence in Columbia is very decentralized, so for example, you have groups operating in what appears to be an institutional vacuums, such as Elsas Negas or Rastrojos or FARC. So as these new policies appear how can we actually see them trickling down to the communities where it matters?

My experience in Columbia is that, I mean, not only triggers violence, but it also tends to be one of the hugest catastrophes in triggering internal displacement. Before the Syrian crisis Columbia was still one of the top three countries in the world with the highest amount of internal displaced people, so how can these new policies make a difference, I guess?

And given that we still suffer from a very sort of decentralized context of violence, where some groups tend to be completely operating, finding new drug routes, new routes of producing coca and yes, so I would be happy to hear the panel's opinion on that.

MR. TRINKUNAS: One more question in the back, on the left hand side of the room.

MS. BOUVIER: Thank you very much to the panel. I'm Ginny Bouvier from the US Institute of Peace, and I have a couple of questions. The first, the provisional accords that have been reached in Havana on illicit crops and drug trafficking give an important role to the role of communities in determining what kind of practice will be used to address the issue.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

I'm wondering if the Commission's report also picks up on that role for the communities in these decisions. And secondly, the Columbian government and the Commission have reached the conclusion that the aerial fumigation has not been effective.

I'm wondering -- and Rhonda, you may be the one in particular to answer this -- to what extent this assessment is shared by the international committee and specifically the United States policy makers. Thanks.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you, Ginny, for that excellent set of questions. Let's go to the panel now. Maybe we could start with Frank and then work our way back to the other direction, no?

MR. MORA: She mentioned something about US policy. I'm not --

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. Well, we'll start with anyone then.

MR. MEJÍA: Let me try to answer the questions. What does it mean to have an intermediate approach? I mean what the Commission, the point of the Commission here is not necessary to get trapped between the two extremes of full legalization or full prohibition.

And I think it means in terms of drug consumption, not criminalizing drug consumers, but use a public health approach, use treatment and prevention, harm reduction and other public health approaches to confront drug consumption. This doesn't mean, and we had a lot of discussion about it, this doesn't mean that a person who commits a crime under the influence of a drug or who commits a crime to buy drugs doesn't have to be punished. But the Commission's stance is, if a person commits a crime that is associated with a drug dependency problem, that person should be punished, but in addition to punishment, that person should receive complimentary interventions for in order to help that person to reduce his or her drug consumption habit. In terms of production and trafficking, and I think this is very much related to points that Vanda was raising, I think that the whole part -- and that is the part that I work in the Commission on -- I think it means to be more intelligent in the way we confront drug production and trafficking activities.

Most of the focus on anti-drug strategy in Columbia since Columbia has been focused on coca cultivation. The cocoa crop is a very initial stage of cocaine production and trafficking. And this hasn't been effective.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

There are at least 12 or 15 academic papers written by many different people with different empirical strategies, with different approaches, etc., and all of them show that the spraying program on forced irrigation have not been effective policies to reduce cocaine consumption. And the point of the Commission is that in order to be more intelligent in the fight against -- is not to reduce the flow.

It's to reduce the funds for organized criminal groups. And in order to do so, we should focus more on interdiction. Let me give you an example. When Hector with cocoa crops is destroyed, they lose between \$400 and \$500.

When a cocaine shipment in the Pacific is lost with 2 tons of cocaine, they lose a lot of money. So and most of the focus of the anti-drug policy in Columbia was in the initial stages of cocaine production which was very ineffective. So the Commission recommends that if we're going to continue fighting drug production and trafficking, at least do it intelligently and more efficiently.

That means finding more intelligent approaches to interdiction and eradication. Extradition, I have to say that this is not my field of expertise, but this was a paper written by Woodson Martinez, who was former Deputy Attorney General in Columbia, so he knows a lot about these issues.

And his point basically was that extradition has lost effectiveness in dissuading drug traffickers in getting involved. And I remember some of his positions were the small drug traffickers are now negotiating with US health authorities in the Bahamas or in the Caribbean in exchange for giving up a little bit of information to US authorities, they get very little time in jail and they are not sent back to Columbia once they finish their sentence in the US.

And this has a lot of problems for Columbia because the charges against these guys in the US are for trafficking, I don't know, two, three, four tons of cocaine. But the charges in Columbia are for having killed ten, 20, 30 people. So if they are not sent back to Columbia to pay time in jail, that's not the good negotiation for Columbia, actually.

And I think that was a point that we should reconsider, or at least renegotiate with the US, that they should be sent back to Columbia to pay for what they did in Columbia. I think that was a point. I think drug related violence in Columbia has decentralized.



COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

That's completely correct, but this is a recent phenomenon I think. There is a process of optimization of drug traffic and drug production groups, and I think this creates a lot of challenges for local communities and for local authorities, actually.

And for the role of communities, there was actually one of the commissioners, Alvaro actually has a paper, the paper is going to be translated as well, that focuses a lot on the police's alternative development programs and what he calls, and this is very much related to the peace process, rhetoric, which is territorial development, territorial development.

This is very much part of that. And that involves, of course, the role of community that they should be the ones who actively participate in the type of policies that are chosen and implemented to promote in the intruder licit rural development in Columbia. They should take a big role in this.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: I'll try to bundle several of the questions, including the local versus national, and that's very much linked to issues Frank, to capacity and will. I think that we are often seeing far more will at the national level, limited and incomplete as it might be in various stages at the local level.

And the process of power politics or the power politics, cleansing from power politics is not over. Groups who have often a lot of political impact do a lot of bad things including trafficking drugs. And so how the national state level will be extended to the local level; what happens in the municipal elections?

And particularly if there is a different administration than the national administration in a few years have quite significant repercussions for many aspects of implementation of any including implications for drug trafficking. Yes, there is agreement to give communities a broad role in what kind of counter narcotics policies should be adopted, or perhaps what kind of drug policies in certain phrasing should be adopted.

And in some ways, some really good outcomes could come out of that. For example, when Antonio Nevado was the governor of Marino, which was brought in he fought very hard to stop zero cocoa to allow development programs to be inserted to communities that did not eradicate all coca, an approach that has been widely successful in Thailand.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

And it was always at the national level at Columbia. So to extend it that is this space given, it would be very positive. But it is very unlikely that a local community will be given space to design its interdiction policy.

And as we see in the United States, with marijuana legalization in several states, the policy still needs to be consistent with international obligations and national law. So I think it's very important to give communities voices. What kind of practical latitude that will have, yet very much remains to be seen, and could go in good ways, like moving away from zero cocoa, at least in some municipalities.

I think it should be policy at the national level but nonetheless at the municipal level. But it could also be very problematic. How about if the local community captured by the criminal decides that well, no we don't do any more interdiction at all for example, with violence repercussions, etcetera.

I think it's significant and discouraging even the Santos government has embraced and committed itself to the peace process really made it incentive policies and speaks about radical transformation of the rule. They suspended the Macarena Plan that was the core and arguably the most successful state building enterprise of the Columbian government. Even that was challenged.

A lot of it was ultimately funded by USAID because the Columbian government struggled to find Columbian money for its flagship state building program. Often the Columbian military was left to hold the bag, because line ministries, even in Macarena often really could not be ripped into complying with directives from Bogota.

But nonetheless, it was producing far more results than the other strategic zones within the consolidation plan. And now that is next. Why? What kind of message does that send about commitment to radical transformation of the countryside? And here I come, Frank, to your very challenging point about could there be a peace with your dividend, detriment, I suppose is the word that I'm looking for. I do fundamentally believe that state presence is crucial for effectiveness in transforming the criminal landscape, the drug market.

But it is then gently through alternative livelihood and brutally through much more effective eradication it remains to be seen. But I don't think it can be effective without state presence.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

However, it's quite possible that the peace process is signed with all the right language on paper and that as violence abets, in due short time, the Columbian elite will really lose, even the existing level of violence.

And we will not see the implementation of the promised development of the rule. We will see once again the neglect of the petty petty, without sufficient presence that you voice and ultimately first string of drug cultivation but far more importantly of significant economic on the development, you will not see changes in the level of taxation so Columbia will be growing economically but job creation will be very minimal, that means that large segments of the population and the coccaleros will be sentenced to continuing in something like the legality and the edges.

And that verdict is still out. And that's where civil society in many sectors practice to the negotiations really need to press that there is long term sustained, decades long project to be far more accountable and far more equitable in Columbia than we have seen. And one last word on the extradition. I think where it's raising difficulties in addition to the issue of justice and access to at least truth from perpetrators of the, especially the AUC, is that there is fear that this will make the deal incredible for the FARC leadership, which already is reluctant to submit to any accountability within Columbia is one of the difficult sticking points.

But it is also feared that regardless of what the deal and punishment they accept it in Columbia. They will later on be extradited to the United States. And they want see assurance that this will not happen. That assurance is wise to give or not is something else. But it's often raised as one of the obstacles to moving the accountability a point forward.

MR. MORA: I could talk about it for days but I won't so --

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. There's a person in the back and then there's a person --

MR. TORNIAN: Thank you. I'm Francisco Tornian. I'm a member of the International Narcotics Control Board, nominated by Columbia, by President Santos. My colleagues, my friends here would think always that I am an atypical member of the board.

I try to make a few questions. First is why was so much emphasis on crops because as far as I know, in Columbia concentrated the oral cocaine production before it had any significant coca

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

crops. Indeed, we Columbians accept it. The cocaine industry almost is a Godsend sometime, for sometimes. The problem arose simply when the cartels wanted to be accepted and to gain political power. And that's when extradition was signed and that is when violence started. I thoroughly agree that policies are bad and we have written for 30 years about it. But I want to ask the gentlemen, you've done a lot of work showing that policies can be improved. The question is whether that improvement will solve the problem, and I doubt that.

Even if there is full legalization that means that at the conventions, and the convention there be a completely new system that allows for full legalization. Even if that happens, most countries in the world will be strongly prohibitionists, and there will be a very large black market, and the Columbians will continue when the main actors there.

Following up on what Vanda said, I just wonder if it is at all possible to solve the Colombian problem without strengthening government's vulnerability basically without developing a national building project that the country has never had forget 200 years of independence. What Ana María had mentioned suggests that that is very difficult and that that is not going to happen.

So if that is the case, my conclusion is that yes, we could improve policies but unless we have some substantial social reform, Columbia simply cannot go and ask the world, please world, legalize because we kill each other and we cannot change. I'm afraid that we must change or unless we just continue with our conflict.

Drugs did not cause any of the problems of Columbia. It only enhanced all of them.

Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Thank you. I think we had a question in the back and then I think we have a couple here in the middle.

MR. BORDEN: Hi. David Borden with stopthedrugwar.org. One of the topics I think I heard raised, if I heard correctly from back here, was about one of the recommendations in the Commission was to review the international drug control architecture, including the Conventions with an eye towards increasing the flexibility of our countries to try out different policies.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

At a thematic debate at the UN in New York last May, a number of countries called for a UN expert advisory committee to study this very topic. Reportedly, this was a topic of discussion at a conference involving policy makers in Costa Rica this summer, although I imagine some of you here would know better than I would about that.

My question is whether this idea is being considered by the Columbian government, and what prospects there may be for Columbia joining the set of countries that are supporting it.

MS. BYDELL: Thank you. June Bydell with the Congressional Research Service. Vanda, you made the point about -- I want to return to the issue of the upcoming municipal elections. It's sometimes said that the mayor of Bogota is the second most powerful political actor in the country. How do you think the outcome of the mayor's race might affect the polarization inside the country and the drug debate that you've talked about?

MR. VAIL: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm Richard Vail from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. And I wanted to ask about this transition to more of a public health approach that the panel discussed and recognizing that building capacity, developing alternatives, insuring treatment system is a big investment.

But I wanted to ask is a lot of the problem legislation, where new statutory authority is needed for sentencing alternatives, or is it more of a change in the way police operate, the courts operate? What are those obstacles and what are the immediate next steps to sort of put Columbia on the path towards more of a public health approach? Thank you.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Great. I think we just have time if each of you just takes two minutes to answer the parts of the question you want to answer. We'll just proceed straight down the panel and give Frank the next to final word.

MR. MEJÍA: Okay. Thank you. That's a big question, Francisco. Why did we focus so much on crops? At least for the first eight years of plan Columbia, I have no idea.

I have no idea. I think the rationale was that by stopping the very initial stage, you were going to destroy crop production and trafficking. And that didn't work. All the evaluations show that that didn't work, okay?

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

Will changes the focus of drug policy solve the problem? I don't think so. But it will reduce the costs of drug policies by focusing more on the traditional (Inaudible) eradication, you reduce the human rights and health concerns of the populations.

Maybe you can become a little more effective in reducing drug flows by focusing on a public health approach instead of focusing on a penal approach to drug consumption. I think that's going to be helpful in reducing human rights violations as well.

So I think no one is asking to completely eliminate the drug problem. I don't think that's feasible. But at least reduce the costs of implementing drug policies and reduce the costs of drug consumption.

I don't think Columbia is demanding a -- Ana María can say this with much more authority -- but I don't think from what I've heard, Columbia is not asking for the reformulation of the drug conventions or anything like this. It's just asking for more flexibility in the interpretation of the Convention.

I haven't heard the Colombian government saying that it's asking for reforming the drug control system. Ana María will answer better, this question. I think that the Commission has that recommendation. I think that there has to be a reform on what we call late (Inaudible), that the Ministry of Justice has been working on.

But I think Ana María will have something else to say about this. I don't think local elections are going to affect the drug policy debate. Pedro has been -- everyone can see that I don't like Pedro -- but Pedro has been very vocal about oh, we build the (Inaudible) and we are treating drug addicts, but this is pure rhetoric.

I mean he hasn't -- what he has done is not at all based on evidence, by for instance, giving marijuana to (Inaudible) consumers. That has no evidence base, that's not evidence based, so I don't think the local elections are going to affect drug policy. Maybe at the local level there will be many years that will improve and some years that will do things better, but I don't think that's going to change the drug policy debate in Columbia to a large extent.

MS. RUEDA: Okay. I will try to answer the question offered to me. Just for the final word because I know you know better than me, always. But I think the reason why we focus so much on crops is because in terms of policy, I think it is a lot easier to destroy what you can see.

But not to fix the problem, which is things that are intangible. So (Inaudible) and development is giving opportunities to people is something that takes a long time. And as you say, a national project eradicating crops or doing interdiction to boxes of cocaine is something that's uneasy to count as well and easy to show success.

And I think that's what we've been doing. That would be my answer to attempt to answer your question. In regard to (Inaudible) Columbia is actually supporting the idea of forming a special committee to analyze the -- it isn't a special committee. It's a proposal that will go to (Inaudible).

It is already on the known paper of Columbia. And the idea of a special committee is to form a group of experts, including (Inaudible) society within the United Nations system that will be able to evaluate the purposes or goals of the system. That is specifically what it is for and it is supported by Columbia and Mexico and Guatemala.

So the answer is yes to your question. In regard to the public health approach, Columbia has been way before the recommendations of the Commission, very progressive about the public health approach but again at a conceptual level.

So there was a policy in place, drafted and approved in 2007 and a new one just last year in 2014, that includes all of the -- it really is a public health approach. The issue with the policy right now, as Frank mentioned before, in regard to all the policies that is no resources to implement it.

However, there have been some advances in Columbia on strengthening the local initiatives and local capacity for implementation of these policies in 2007, never completely done. But I have to say that those efforts have to be recognized because there have been really many advances. As an example, right now Columbia supplies some (Inaudible) action initiatives.

And it is not something that is widely known, not even talked about. But it is within the policies called mitigation. Is not called like that, is not called risk reduction or harm reduction, but it's called mitigation and is being done.

COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

So that has been some progress and I think the progress and I think the problem is specifically with the public health approach in Columbia. Is not too much political, it is more a resource issue. And it is also very much related to the progress of the health system, which have been for a long time going on.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: I do believe that the role of mayors and municipalities is significant in implementing drug policies and more broadly anti-crime policies. But it's what happened after Operation O'Ryan in Medellin or examples like in Pastol, Medellin that we spoke about.

That said, I guess I overall agree with Daniel's point that the mayor of Bogota should not be overestimated as a voice in shaping national policy. Nonetheless it is a significant platform.

So there will be a cause resonating from the platform. I would not say that it is the central or one of the central actors in setting national policies, but certainly mayors will have a lot of opportunities and responsibility to implement policies. Many aspects of it, whether it is rule development, getting access to title with micro-credit or whether this is going after bandits, or if FARC persists in the reserve of zones, is they come to be materialized, what will be the relationship between the municipal authorities and the reserve zones.

Ginny, I know I owe you a question on the aerial spraying and the US. Well, the US, when the Columbian government issued the proclamation that they are suspending aerial spraying, at least with the glycoside, which was the original formulation, there was a lot of opposition in the US government to that, both behind the scenes and the US embassy then came out with a statement saying that they disagree with the policy but nonetheless, Columbia has the right to set the policy.

And so the US wasn't thrilled, but at the end of the day, it's followed and it really didn't take any punitive action. Very different then what would have been the case in 2002, 2003, should the country decide to do that.

More globally, the United States has not implemented aerial spraying in Afghanistan, and in fact, has opposed aerial spraying when countries like Russia press for it, and defended central eradication. That said, Mexico is once again resorting to aerial spraying of poppy and the US is certainly not telling Mexico this is an unwise prioritization of your counter-drug process.



COLUMBIA-2015/09/21

So I think the US is willing to accept far greater diversity of attitudes, at least during the Obama administration, then was the case before.

MR. MORA: Once again, Harold, thank you again for hosting us and for the partnership. I just want to take a minute to just touch upon what Francisco mentioned, because it's, you know, what he was saying about Columbia, you can apply to a lot of other countries. We look at issues of citizen insecurity in Central America and we talk always about the structural drivers, right.

We tend to focus too much on the symptoms of the problem and not really the drivers, the structural, economic drivers of this. At the end of the day, to answer my own question, is, you know, is it lack of political will, is it the resources?

At the end of the day, it is hard politically and otherwise, to deal with the structural challenges, right. Electoral cycles do not permit for governments to deal with structural challenges. At the end of the day, yes, can we make a difference and I think we can with the right policies but let's not fool ourselves, right?

At the end of the day the issues of inequality, of corruption, of poverty, of exclusion, and disaffection; these are challenges that if they're not addressed and they are going to be have to be addressed in the long term, we're going to continue seeing these problems. I don't want to dismiss the report, but at the end of the day, a sustainable resolution to this problem is to deal with the structural drivers as we see them in Columbia and in other places in Central America, and I suspect in other parts of the world.

Not to end on a pessimistic note, but I think one has to be realistic. And thank you again.

MR. TRINKUNAS: Okay. Thank you, Frank. And thank you to Kimberly Green, Latin American and Caribbean Center for partnering with us on this event. And I encourage those of you interested in drug policy to check out the Improving Global Policy paper series we have available on our website at [Brookings.edu/GlobalDrugPolicy](http://Brookings.edu/GlobalDrugPolicy). And thank you for joining us.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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