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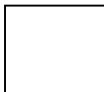
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CIADI-----INSITREP-93-002

# International Narcotics Review



February 1993

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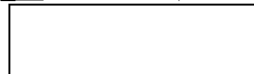
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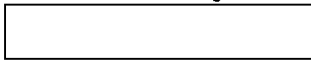


**International Narcotics  
Review**



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1 Perspective--- Assessing Counternarcotics Effectiveness---A Long View



5 Peru: Pushing To Close Campanilla Airstrip



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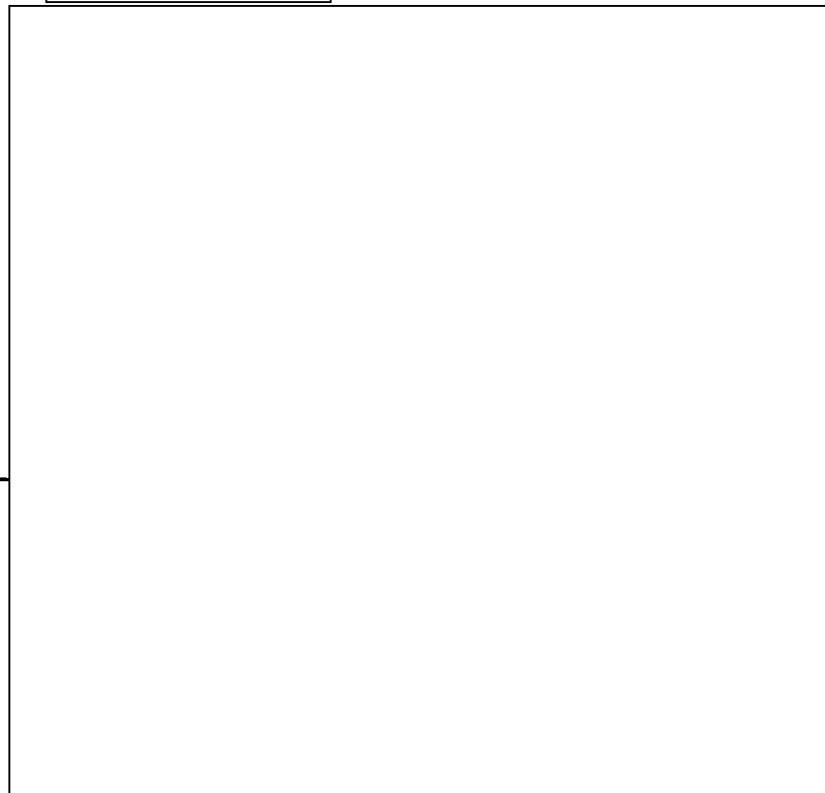
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Perspective

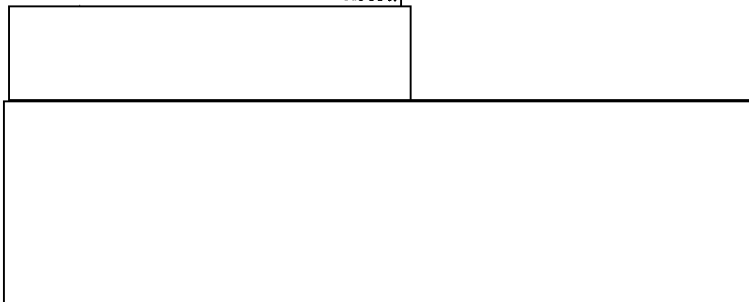
**Assessing Counternarcotics Effectiveness—A Long View**

Key measures for evaluating the effectiveness of foreign counternarcotics efforts—

include foreign government willingness to increased antidrug cooperation and the extent to which antidrug programs force traffickers to find new, more costly and more risky, ways to do business.

Many governments in drug-producing or major transshipment countries are now engaged in counternarcotics cooperation. While meeting the terms of various US or other Western aid programs is an important motivation—some of their efforts are almost entirely dependent on foreign aid—many governments have come to see the insidious effect of the drug trade on their own societies, including rising addict populations and undermining of legitimate political and economic systems. Antidrug cooperation worldwide is at unprecedented levels. Some governments, like Colombia and Mexico, have committed substantial resources of their own to counternarcotics. A few, like Colombia, have taken strong initiatives to prosecute vigorous and sustained law enforcement operations to dismantle or cripple their country's top trafficking organizations.

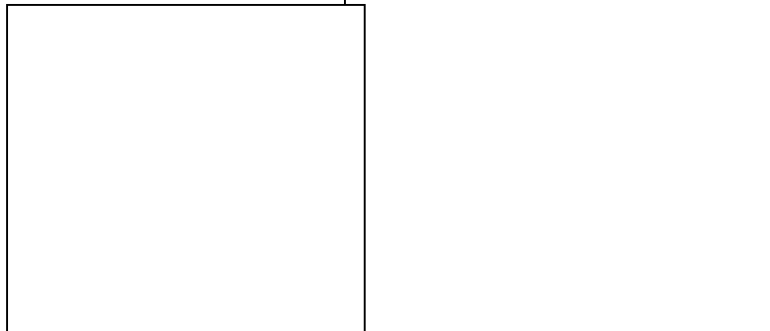
The depth of a government's commitment and extent of effort in the war on drugs often depends on the political realities it must face, including competing demands for resources and attention to other significant domestic problems. Many antidrug programs with modest goals, even if only in response to foreign suasion, and limited results can be the foundation for more significant progress later. Once antidrug efforts become more institutionalized and achieve successes—no matter how small they may seem—momentum can build for more substantial programs and greater levels of commitment and effort.



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Although traffickers are highly adaptive, disrupting their networks and forcing them to find new transshipment routes and methods for smuggling drugs or to make new transportation or financing and money-laundering arrangements can significantly increase the costs and risks of the trade. Antidrug actions such as seizing transportation assets, closing front companies, or arresting key brokers or money managers often result in missed deadlines, significant financial losses, and mutual suspicions and sometimes bloody recriminations.




Evidence of disruption to the drug trade by how traffickers adjust their operations and respond to government pressures is the best indicator of trends in counternarcotics performance. Counternarcotics progress cannot be judged only on the immediate payoff because, unlike conventional wars—or even many insurgencies—the “war on drugs” does not lend itself to simple criteria of victory, largely because the drug trade itself is so decentralized. Indeed, the “enemy” in the drug war is a myriad of actors, motivated almost exclusively by the prospects of enormous profit, who are not dependent on any sophisticated or hard-to-acquire infrastructure. While trafficking groups have an organization and infrastructure that can be identified and targeted, they are not interdependent. For every organization that is dismantled or for every drug lord arrested, another can quickly move in to fill the void. No one group plays such a dominant role in the drug trade that its elimination would end drug trafficking.


Moreover, traffickers are highly adaptive, since their goal is primarily to stay in an extremely profitable business. Narcotics processing laboratories, trafficking routes and methods, and transshipment nodes are diverse and decentralized, and none are indispensable for the movement of drugs. As a

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result, traffickers are much less likely to directly confront counternarcotics pressures against their infrastructure than to evade them and develop processing, trafficking, or money-laundering alternatives—a less demanding and costly task. 

Because of traffickers' flexibility, antidrug efforts are characterized by many small successes and setbacks over a relatively long time that are difficult to detect and interpret. Their cumulative effects almost always are ambiguous and rarely add up to any clear trends, especially over the short term. 



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