

GAO

Report to the Honorable
Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman,
Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate

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PLAN COLOMBIA

Drug Reduction Goals
Were Not Fully Met,
but Security Has
Improved; U.S.
Agencies Need More
Detailed Plans for
Reducing Assistance



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- Creating the Coordination Center for Integrated Government Action (CCAI) in 2004 to coordinate the delivery of military and civilian assistance in 58 targeted municipalities emerging from conflict in 11 regions throughout Colombia.

An updated version of the Colombian defense strategy was released in coordination with the PCCP strategy in January 2007. Incorporating lessons learned from the 2003 strategy, this latest strategy focuses on clearing one region at a time and places a greater emphasis on consolidating military gains through coordinated civil-military assistance designed to solidify the government's presence in previously conflictive areas by providing a range of government services to local populations.

To implement this strategy, the government of Colombia has taken several actions, including focusing Joint Task Force-Omega's efforts in La Macarena—a traditional FARC stronghold—through a new military offensive called Plan Consolidación. The government also developed a coordinated military and civilian plan of action called the Consolidation Plan for La Macarena, which has been in place since October 2007. As part of this plan, CCAI established a joint civil-military fusion center to coordinate military, police, economic development, and judicial activities. If successful, the approach in La Macarena is intended to serve as a model for similar CCAI efforts in 10 other regions of the country. It represents a key test of the government's enhanced state presence strategy and a potential indicator of the long-term prospects for reducing Colombia's drug trade by systematically re-establishing government control throughout the country.

U.S. Funding for Plan Colombia

Between fiscal years 2000 and 2008, the United States has provided over \$6 billion in military and nonmilitary assistance to Colombia. (See table 1.)

justice for all Colombians. USAID officials expressed concern about the Colombian government's ability to fund the Early Warning System—USAID currently pays 95 to 98 percent of the salaries. According to USAID officials, a letter of understanding between USAID and the Colombian government calls for Colombia to pay 100 percent in 2011. In addition, the 45 Justice Houses in Colombia are located in large cities primarily in the western half of the country, with almost no Justice Houses in the less populated eastern half of the country where high rates of violence and crime occur. However, USAID plans to assist the Colombian government in strengthening state presence in rural areas of Colombia through the construction of 10 new regional Justice Houses in rural, post conflict areas.

Since the beginning of 2007, USAID and Defense have committed \$28.5 million for two programs that support Colombia's "Clear, Hold and Consolidate" strategy: (1) the Regional Governance Consolidation Program⁶⁶ and (2) the Initial Governance Response Program.⁶⁷ Both programs directly support the Coordination Center for Integrated Government Action (CCAI), which was created in 2004 to integrate several military, police, and civil agencies and to coordinate national-level efforts to reestablish governance in areas that previously had little or no government presence. USAID works to increase the operational capacity of CCAI by providing direct planning and strategic assistance; for example, USAID hired a consulting firm to develop a detailed operational plan for CCAI's activities in Meta.⁶⁸ USAID also assists CCAI with projects designed to reinforce stability in areas formerly controlled by insurgents and

⁶⁶The 5-year Regional Governance Consolidation Program supports the Coordination Center for Integrated Government Action (CCAI) in 26 municipalities, which the Colombian military regained control of from the FARC more than 2 years ago, where CCAI works to provide both security and services for the local population in order to consolidate military gains. USAID assists CCAI in building the capacity of local institutions (such as mayors' offices and city councils) to implement good governance practices and improve the delivery of services.

⁶⁷The Initial Governance Response Program supports CCAI in high-priority municipalities in areas traditionally held by the FARC, which are major producers of coca, and also the location of ongoing military operations of the Colombian military. The program supports a Colombian government project to combine military, police, and civilian efforts to simultaneously support the different components of the "clear, hold, and consolidate" strategy.

⁶⁸USAID is also supporting CCAI on the development of a second consolidation plan for four municipalities in the departments of Sucre and Bolivar.

quickly build trust between the government and local communities in Meta—such as La Macarena.

USAID officials said Colombia's consolidation strategy may serve as a model for future program activities throughout Colombia; however, CCAI faces challenges that could limit its success. CCAI does not have its own budget and relies on support, funding, and personnel from other agencies within the Colombian government. While Defense officials estimate that CCAI spent over \$100 million from Colombian government agencies in 2007, it often faced delays in receiving the funding. Also, security remains a primary concern for CCAI because it operates in areas where illegal armed groups are present. For example, CCAI representatives in La Macarena do not travel outside of a 5-kilometer radius of the city center due to security concerns.

Justice Support for Rule of Law

Justice has provided over \$114 million in fiscal years 2000 through 2007 for programs intended to improve the rule of law in Colombia, primarily for the transition to a new criminal justice system and training and related assistance for investigating human rights crimes and crimes confessed to by former combatants during the AUC demobilization.

About \$42 million was for training, technical assistance, and equipment to support the implementation of a new accusatory criminal justice system. In 2004, Colombia enacted a new Criminal Procedure Code, which began the implementation⁶⁹ of an oral accusatory system involving the presentation and confrontation of evidence at oral public trials, similar to the system used in the United States. Justice training has included simulated crime scenes and court proceedings to develop the necessary legal and practical understanding of the oral accusatory system. Justice reports it has trained over 40,000 judges, prosecutors, police investigators, and forensic experts in preparation for their new roles.

According to Justice, the new accusatory system has improved the resolution of criminal cases in Colombia. Under the old system, trials took an average of 5 years; this has been reduced to 1 year under the current system. According to Justice, the new system has led to an increase in the

⁶⁹The oral accusatory system was implemented in four geographic phases between 2005 and January 2008. The Colombian constitution requires that criminal cases be processed under either the old written system or the new oral accusatory system, depending on when the alleged crime occurred.