



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 11, 2021

CONGRESSIONAL REPORT TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Please find enclosed the following report from the Department of State.

Department Report Number: 004020

Report Title: Annual Report to Congress on the Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking

Legislation: 22 USC 2291-4(c): Official immunity for authorized employees and agents of United States and foreign countries engaged in interdiction of aircraft used in illicit drug trafficking

Recipients:

Speaker of the House of Representatives

President of the Senate

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica L. Moore".

Jessica L. Moore
Senior Bureau Official
Bureau of Legislative Affairs

UNCLASSIFIED



Annual Report of Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking

Colombia was the only country for which a Presidential Determination under 22 USC § 2291-4 was in effect during calendar year 2020. The President signed Presidential Determination 2020-09 for Colombia on July 17, 2020, certifying that: A) interdiction of aircraft reasonably suspected to be primarily engaged in illicit drug trafficking in that country's airspace was necessary because of the extraordinary threat posed by illicit drug trafficking to the national security of that country; and B) that country had appropriate procedures in place to protect against innocent loss of life in the air and on the ground in connection with such interdiction, which included effective means to identify and warn an aircraft before the use of force was directed against the aircraft.

Consistent with 22 USC § 2291-4(c), this report contains the following information for Colombia (from January 1 through December 16, 2020): A) the nature of the illicit drug-trafficking threat to the country; B) an explanation of safety procedures in place to protect against the innocent loss of life in the air and on the ground in connection with interdiction, including any training and other mechanisms in place to ensure adherence to such procedures; C) a description of assistance provided by the United States to the interdiction program; and D) a summary of the country's aircraft-interdiction activity for which the United States provided assistance in calendar year 2019.

Colombia

A. On August 21, 2003, the Air Bridge Denial (ABD) program in Colombia began operations. In making an 18th consecutive certification for Colombia on July 17, 2020, the President determined, inter alia, that narcotics trafficking continues to pose an extraordinary threat to Colombia's national security that renders air interdiction necessary. Coca cultivation and pure potential cocaine production stabilized in 2018-2019, but remain at near-record levels following an unprecedented surge from 2013 to 2017. Colombia is the world's largest producer of cocaine, largest cultivator of coca, and a supplier of cocaine and heroin to the U.S. market. Almost 90 percent of the cocaine seized in the United States is of Colombian origin. Despite signing a historic peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2016, Colombia struggles with persistent security, governance, and economic challenges in rural regions. The Colombian government recognizes that the illicit drug trade and organized criminal groups are principal threats to peace and security in Colombia. The United States and Europe remain the primary markets for Colombian cocaine. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations use the profits from their lucrative illicit drug trade to suborn Colombian officials and pay armed criminal groups to protect their organizations. The illegal revenue generated by the Colombian drug trade also disrupts the licit Colombian economy and presents a long-term corrosive threat to

UNCLASSIFIED

-2-

democratic government institutions and law enforcement by promoting a culture of violence. Armed criminal groups continue to represent a significant and growing challenge to law enforcement and security by absorbing weaker and smaller competitors, consolidating control over coca-growing regions, and filling power vacuums left by demobilized FARC guerrillas. Illegal revenue generated by drug-trafficking activities continues to serve as a primary funding source for criminal organizations, FARC dissidents, and the Colombian National Liberation Army (ELN). The FARC and the ELN remain designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the Department of State.

B. The Colombia ABD program's safety procedures are defined by a bilateral letter of agreement between Colombia and the United States, signed December 30, 2009, (the "Agreement"). An annex to the Agreement clarifying the terms and conditions under which U.S. assistance, including radar and other information, may be shared with third parties was concluded August 25, 2012. A list of cleared third-party states was last provided in writing to the Colombian Air Force (CAF) on March 24, 2015. The list is provided informally during the biannual review process. In calendar year 2020, the basic procedures for aerial interception of an unknown assumed suspect (UAS) flight are detailed in Annex I, which is attached to this report. The United States also provided training for Colombian personnel participating in the ABD program.

C. In 2020, the United States dedicated several personnel positions to Colombia's ABD program, including a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) tactical commander and a JIATF-S command duty officer.

The JIATF-S tactical commander exercised command and control of U.S. ABD assets through the JIATF-S Joint Operations Center (JOC). The JIATF-S command duty officer was the tactical commander's senior watch officer at the JOC. DoD, through the Air Force Section of the military group at Embassy Bogota, has day-to-day oversight of this program.

During 2020, the United States provided radar information to the Colombian government as well as training for Colombian personnel participating in the ABD program.

U.S. assets (both aircraft and personnel) from DoD and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also have provided support for this program under the conditions contained in the Agreement.

D. From January 1 until December 16, 2020, Colombia, with the assistance of the United States, responded to 108 UAS air tracks throughout Colombia and the central/western Caribbean. Seven of those UAS tracks were within Colombian airspace. The Colombian government responded to and visually identified 95 of the UAS air tracks. While conducting law enforcement inspections at various airfields within Colombia as part of the Colombia ABD program, the Colombian government supported the grounding of 41 aircraft.

This was the 15th year that ABD assets were used in maritime patrol missions off the coasts of Colombia. CAF aircraft flew a total of 97 maritime patrol sorties (208 flight hours), resulting in the seizure of 16.266 metric tons of cocaine.

UNCLASSIFIED

-3-

During 2020, the United States continued to review the implementation of Annex C with Colombia. Annex C was integrated into the Agreement on August 25, 2012, and governs the Colombian government's ability to share U.S.-derived information with third states.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 3, 2021
F-2021-02797

Steven Aftergood
Federation of American Scientists
1112 16th St. NW Ste. 400
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Aftergood:

This is in response to your January 29, 2021, request submitted pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, in which you requested a copy of the Department's latest Annual Report of Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking. The Department of State, Office of Information Programs and Services received your FOIA request on January 29, 2021, and assigned it tracking number F-2021-02797. Please include the tracking number in all future communications concerning this FOIA request.

Please be advised that a search was conducted in the Office of Information Programs and Services and one record, totaling 5 pages, was located that are responsive to your request. After careful review, we determined that the record is appropriate for release in part. All released material is enclosed. The denied information is exempt from release pursuant to:

(b)(6), which concerns material the release of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy.

This action closes your request in this office. For further assistance or to discuss any aspect of your request, you may contact our FOIA Requester Service Center or our FOIA Public Liaison via email to FOIAstatus@state.gov or telephone at (202) 261-8484.

If you are not satisfied with DOS's determination in response to your FOIA request, you may administratively appeal by writing to: Appeals Officer, Appeals Review Panel, Office of Information Programs and Services (IPS), U.S. Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LA, HST Room B266, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20520, or by faxing to 202-485-1718. Appeals must be postmarked within 90 calendar days and include a copy of this letter, clearly stating why you disagree with the determination set forth in this response.

Additionally, if you are not satisfied with DOS's determination in response to your request, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA Mediation Services they offer. The contact information is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, email address: ogis@nara.gov; telephone: (202) 741-5770; toll free number: 1-877-684-6448; fax: (202) 741-5769.

Sincerely,

Edgar Jaramillo
Lead Government Information Specialist
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosure:
As stated