



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

(119)

MAR 13 2001

The Honorable Charles Hagel
United States Senate
346 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chuck,

Thanks for your note and the article on Colombia.

I look forward to visiting with you on that subject
when we have breakfast soon.

Regards,

Colombia

13 Mar 01

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UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

CHUCK HAGEL
NEBRASKA

Mar. 12, 2001

Dear Don,

Attached is a piece of note
on my "talk" on Colorado.

It appeared in "Foreign"

DEFENSE NEWS.

I hope it helps in your review
and analysis of the conflict
problem.

THANK YOU —

Your friend,
Chuck

INSIDE VIEW

DEFENSE NEWS March 12, 2001

Time To Build Plan America

Military Component Only Part of Battle on Drugs

By U.S. SEN. CHUCK HAGEL

I recently returned from a trip to Colombia and Ecuador, along with four of my Senate colleagues. The United States has vital interests in this region of the Western Hemisphere. We need to better understand the challenges that the people of this area face in addressing problems of drug trafficking, poverty, economic development and revolutionary and paramilitary violence.

This is a complicated and dangerous mixture of very difficult challenges. There are no short-term solutions. However, the United States must stay engaged in Latin America. It is our own backyard. We have domestic, economic and security interests there.

The stability of Colombia and the other Andean nations is important and relevant to America. American companies have invested \$8 billion in Colombia, accounting for 11 percent of its gross domestic product. The United States is Colombia's most important trading partner. Forty-eight percent of Colombia's exports go to the United States, which also accounts for 42 percent of Colombia's imports.

Colombia has the second-largest population in South America. Perhaps most importantly, Colombia is the linchpin of stability and security in the entire Andean region.

Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Last June, the U.S. pledged \$1.3 billion to assist Colombian President Andre Pastrana in carrying out Plan Colombia, which had as its main purpose a major reduction in the drug trade that fuels the insurgency of the leftist guerrilla groups and the paramilitary organizations, and supports narcotics traffickers.

This effort involves a military component as well as an economic-development component. The U.S. military component of the counterdrug assistance effort is focused on training, infrastructure, surveillance and intelligence. Our force is made up of 160-180 Special Operations Forces, the majority of which are U.S. Army, and 60-100 forces from U.S. Southern Command.

They train and educate local troops on ground, road, air and riverine interdiction. The U.S. military is helping the governments of Colombia, Ecuador and El Salvador establish four Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) to improve their ability to reach into drug eradication and transit zones. The FOL in Ecuador houses U.S. Navy P-3 Orion reconnaissance plane detachments used for surveillance and detection.

Among the supplemental assistance the United States is supplying are the UH-60 Black Hawk, UH-1H and Huey II helicopters. The military and economic components are complementary and essential to the survival of Colombia.

After visiting Colombia and Ecuador, I believe that both governments are com-

mitted to taking serious action against illegal narcotics production and trafficking and reasserting control over areas of their countries that are in control of narcotics traffickers. However, I am concerned that there is too little cooperation among the countries of the region. This is a problem.

Drug trafficking in these countries is far more than a societal problem. The sovereignty of these Andean nations is at risk. The United States, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil need to increase cooperation addressing the problem of coca production in the region. If Plan Colombia is successful in Colombia, narcotraffickers simply will move into a neighboring country.

We saw this happen during the last few years when Bolivia and Peru took strong action against coca producers in their own countries. This led to a major expansion of production in Colombia. The cultivation of coca more than doubled by 1999 to 302,600 acres, an increase from 125,700 acres in 1995.

The governments of Brazil and Ecuador are concerned about the potential of this happening to them, and the governments of Peru and Bolivia are concerned about renewed narcotrafficking efforts in their own countries. These countries need to work together against this common assault.

We must recognize that the massive drug problem is going to require a long-term commitment. It is understandable that our first major aid package for Plan Colombia emphasized the military-security component, because nothing else is possible without security and stability.

Of our \$1.3 billion aid package, \$228 million is going to economic development and building the institutions of

civil society. The balance is going to a variety of security and drug-eradication programs. As the program matures, however, greater emphasis will need to be given to development efforts and giving poor Colombian farmers a viable economic alternative.

One step the United States can take to help strengthen this region is to pass the U.S.-Andean Trade Partnership Act, of which I am a co-sponsor. This act, an expansion of the 1991 Andean Trade Preference Act which expires at the end of this year, would grant the same trade preferences to Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru that currently are enjoyed by other countries in the Caribbean Basin. This would give Colombia and other Andean countries a greater outlet for legal trade with the United States. Congress should pass this measure quickly.

Finally, we must understand that Plan Colombia is not enough. The real problem is demand for illegal drugs in America, Europe and elsewhere. More than 80 percent of the cocaine on U.S. streets is produced and processed in Colombia and shipped from Colombia and Ecuador. We need a Plan America to go along with Plan Colombia.

Drugs are a scourge sweeping across America, and our children are paying the price. We must do more at home in terms of parenting, education, rehabilitation and enforcement.

The problems faced by Colombia, Ecuador and the other Andean nations will not be solved soon. This is a complex and multidimensional problem that is a threat to our national security, our social fabric, and the stability of the Western Hemisphere. The consequences for our future are too grave for us not to meet this challenge.