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1.Introduction to the committee: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Nations office on drugs and crime (UNODC) was established in 1997 as the merger of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the United Nations Office at Vienna. It initially used the name “Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention” before adopting its modern name in 1997. UNODC is responsible for addressing the world drug problem, combating transnational organized crime and cybercrime, preventing and countering terrorism and preventing and combating corruption and financial crime.

1.1 Introduction to Agenda Item

Ever since the war on drugs started, one of the most pressing issues in the war has been the Cocaine problem. Aside from being extremely addicting, Cocaine causes various health problems such as heart inflammation, heart attacks, heart arrhythmias and even sudden death. Aside from this, Cocaine is neurotoxic and damages the brain alongside the central nervous system. Cocaine can also cause various psychological ailments such as psychosis, delirium and hypomania.

Starting in the seventies with the start of the war on drugs, global authorities have fought to stop the trafficking of this drug. However, organized crime syndicates called “cartels” have

long been the greatest obstacle to achieving this goal. Despite authorities cracking down upon and destroying numerous cartels, these efforts proved inadequate with local groups always ending up taking the place of the previously destroyed cartel. Not only that, but the improvements in transportation technology have increased the volume of drug trafficking and allowed places previously relatively unaffected by the cocaine crisis such as Asia to become hotspots of cocaine trafficking and distribution. Despite all efforts, cocaine trafficking in Latin America is still a catastrophic threat to global public health and will stay as such until the cartels are dealt with.

1.2 Mandate

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has in its mandate to coordinate global efforts to stop all forms of crime including organized crime, unorganized crime and terrorism; support member states in the implementation of international treaties and provide technical assistance to member states to clamp down on drug production and trafficking. As it is only an United Nations office rather than an United Nations committee, member states are not obligated to follow the decisions taken by UNODC.

1.3 Function and Powers

The International Drug Control Programme was created and had its powers defined by the 1991 United Nations General Assembly. Understanding these powers is essential for delegates to address the drug pandemic at hand. The powers of the UNDCP can be defined as:

- Monitoring the compliance of member states with international treaties aimed to combat illicit drugs (These are expanded upon in the section “International Treaties of Importance in the war against drugs”).
- Encouraging the member states to comply with the international treaties aimed to combat crime.
- Provide technical assistance to member states to comply with the international treaties aimed to combat crime.
- Organize global coordination of member states in the fight against illegal activities.
- Monitor and report trends on crime and smuggling (Intelligence on trafficking routes, trends in the popularity of various drugs and illegal materials, organizations responsible for the production and the trafficking of illicit materials such as weapons and drugs).
- Organizing prevention campaigns against illicit drugs.

-Provide advice to governments on treatment of drug addicts, rehabilitation strategies and public health approaches.

-Drafting policy guidelines and model laws

2. Key terms and definitions

2.1 Illicit Drug Trafficking: A global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.

2.2 Money Laundering: Disguising the money gained through illegal activities as money gained through legal activities so that these activities cannot be cracked down upon. The term originates from El Capone using money laundries to hide his illegal activities.

2.3 Narco-Terrorism: Violence used by criminal organizations as a part of their crimes such as drug trafficking, smuggling, and production.

2.4 Los Pepes: Los Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar (Those persecuted by Pablo Escobar) is a vigilante paramilitary group made up of a grand coalition of members of cartels rival to the Medellin Cartel, Armed political groups such as FARC and families of individuals who died due to the cocaine epidemic or was killed by the Medellin Cartel. Its goal is to Kill Pablo Escobar or atleast get him caught by the Colombian government and to dismantle his drug trafficking network once and for all.

2.5 Search Bloc: Search Bloc is the name of an ad hoc special operations unit of the Colombian police with the purpose of capturing or neutralizing highly dangerous individuals or groups. Its recruitment conditions are extremely strict and members are chosen from police force members known for their integrity and refusing bribes.

2.6 DEA: Created in 1973 as a part of the war on drugs, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is a United States Federal Law enforcement agency under the Department of Justice tasked with cracking down on illegal drug trafficking and distribution within the U.S. The DEA is responsible for coordinating and pursuing U.S. drug investigations both domestically and internationally.

2.7 Decriminalization: Turning the act of possessing an illicit drug for personal use into a civil violation with little or no penalties rather than a criminal act with heavy penalties such as jail time.

3. International Treaties of Importance in the war against drugs

3.1 The 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

This is the first international treaty made to combat drug trafficking. Before this convention, there were different agreements so the same laws weren't applied to everyone therefore there were discrepancies between local laws which made it easy for drug dealers to exploit legal loopholes. So this treaty established a global ban on all materials deemed to be harmful and standardized drug laws across the globe. The convention prohibited the recreational use of drugs and only allowed the drugs that will be used for medical purposes. This convention officially banned drugs such as Marijuana, Cocaine and Heroin across the world. Due to this convention paving the way to a global ban on drugs, transportation of illegal substances became significantly harder after this convention as smugglers had to evade authorities after this convention. This led to smugglers being creative and developing advanced transportation methods such as maritime, roads, drones, airways.

3.2 The 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances

In the 1960s, advances in chemistry allowed synthetic drugs such as trazodone to be mass-produced in small labs. This created a big legal loophole as the 1961 single convention did not ban such synthetic drugs, which allowed such drugs to be sold without any restrictions. To end this loophole, the 1971 convention on Psychotropic substances convened to properly outlaw such drugs. The treaty banned synthetic drugs such as LSD, trazodone and ecstasy globally. This treaty also encouraged a rehabilitation based approach for drug addicts rather than jailing them and utilizing a prohibitionist legal framework against addicts. This treaty also forced countries to declare how many drugs they would import or export for legal purposes annually. This treaty also mandated countries to work with non-governmental agencies and other countries in international cases.

3.3 The 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic

Despite previous treaties closing legal loopholes concerning drugs, drug trafficking and its distribution simply continued illegally in the black market. To establish international standards on the enforcement of the ban against drugs and to reduce demand for illicit materials, the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic was signed in 1988. This

convention explains how criminals should be caught. It also introduced controls on materials used in drug production, which are legal. Laundered money gained from laundered drugs was declared to be a crime with this convention. The convention also forced countries to give more power to their courts to launch investigations into bank accounts of suspected drug producers, dealers and users. The convention also set rules for extradition between countries for drug related loopholes even if there aren't extradition agreements in place between those specific countries to ensure that prosecution of criminals goes as smoothly as possible.

3.4 The Role of the INCB (International Narcotics Control Board)

Created in 1968, INCB coordinates the legal production of medical substances that could be used to make drugs. Each country submits an annual report to the INCB regarding its medical drug needs. The INCB approves this report, preventing unnecessary overproduction of drugs. If a country exceeds its limit, the INCB can issue warnings and even instruct other countries not to trade with the country that exceeds its limit.

The INCB organizes educational programs for the personnel in developing and underdeveloped states. These educational programs have the aim to increase efficiency in drug control and further inform the authorities on how they can complete their share of the responsibilities provided in joint agreements with the INCB. Furthermore educational seminars in coordination with UNDCP and INTERPOL are organized in such regions. The seminars not only target giving information regarding drug control but aim to increase cooperation within the region. The local authorities may also send personnel to the INCB for them to be trained and educated.

4. Prelude to the rise of the Medellin Cartel: Bogotazo, La Violencia and the authority vacuum



Following the assassination of the leader of the Gaitainismo movement, Jose Eliecer Gaitan, in 1948; his supporters claimed that it was the unpopular government who was responsible for his death and launched an uprising, first in Bogota (the capital of Colombia, this event is known as Bogotazo) and then across the entire of the country. As a result of this uprising, a civil war started in Colombia (La Violencia) which went on for 10 years. During this time period, rural regions fell into a state of lawlessness as authority collapsed and law enforcement became non-existent with non-state actors controlling these regions.

In 1958, the civil war ended as a result of a power sharing agreement between the conservative government and the supporters of the Gaitan movement. However, this was not effective in ending violence or restoring control in rural regions as radical groups who refused the ceasefire (Most notable of which is FARC) still retained control over these regions, and the conflict continued as an insurgency.

Over the following decade, these groups first started to monetize the smuggling and black market activities that started with the civil war by extorting these groups, then started to produce drugs and engage in narcoterrorism to finance their operations.

As their operations grew, a small crime syndicate in the city of Medellin made up of smugglers and small-time criminals realized the economic potential of drug trafficking. As such, they decided to enter the drug trafficking business and the Medellin Cartel was born. Within this group, a smuggler quickly made a name for himself with his talent in organizing the logistics of the smuggling operations and his talent for networking in the black market. His name? Pablo Escobar.

4.1: The rise of the Medellin Cartel

With his organization skills, the Medellin Cartel went from being a decentralized network of smugglers and criminals into an organization with the main focus of drug trafficking and cocaine production. With the expansion of the money laundering network by Escobar, the cartel successfully utilized the rising cocaine demand during seventies and eighties. As the Medellin Cartel expanded from just being constrained to Andes to becoming the drug kingpin of the entire southern America, Latin America and Northern America, it turned from being any other crime syndicate into a monopoly of crime which could kill all its competition. By 1980's, the Medellin Cartel was responsible for nearly 80% of the global cocaine production, 90% of the cocaine smuggled to the United States of America and was estimated to have an annual revenue between 20 and 30 billion dollars. To put this into perspective, this money is approximately equal to the entire gross domestic product (GDP) of Armenia. This money was so excessive that there was a significant loss of revenue from spoilage (Rats eating stored cash in safehouses).

By this point, the Medellin Cartel had turned into a state within a state in Colombia and had its own army. The Medellin Cartel had thousands of highly armed members and associates,

along with having their own hitmen force called Sicaros. These armed groups had access to rifles, explosives and even armored vehicles to help in destroying competition to the cartel, this army would later on be used to conduct warfare against the Colombian and the USA government.

Things took a turn for the worse when Rodrigo Lara Bonnilla became the justice minister in 1983. After entering office, he launched a crackdown on the Medellin Cartel and exposed civil servants (judges, prosecutors, police force members etc.) who took bribes and cooperated with the cartel. To stop Bonnilla, the Medellin Cartel murdered Bonnilla in 1984. After this, the notion that the Medellin Cartel was just a crime group collapsed and it now started to be seen as a threat to regional security and recognized for its capability to wage conventional warfare. As a result of this assassination, Colombian government started to take the threat of the Medellin Cartel seriously and the United States started to get involved with DEA opening investigations on Cartel Members and demanding the extradition of Cartel Members to the United States since this would effectively render the bribery network of the Cartel, used to only get slap on the wrist for their actions even if caught, neutered. This treaty to extradite cartel members to the United States to be trailed greatly irritated the leaders of Various Cartels, which resulted in them forming the Extraditables, an umbrella organization of anti-extradition cartels who aimed to pressure the Colombian government to end the practice of extradition of cartel members to the United States and to ban this practice at a constitutional level. Following the formation of the Extraditables, Cartels escalated their violence against the Colombian government and civilians as a means of pressuring the Colombian government. However, this practice ended up backfiring on them as this only led to the escalation of anti-cartel efforts of the Colombian government and the start of an open conflict between the cartels and the government.

After 1986, a state of all-out war broke out between the Colombian State and the Medellin Cartel, which was now actively using its armed forces to wage war on the Colombian State and using the Sicaros to assassinate judges, police officers and journalist who couldn't be bought or be threatened into silence. This happy-trigger behaviour against civilians further increased the international outcry against Medellin Cartel which pushed the United States to further aid Colombia in the war with intelligence-sharing agreements between the two countries.

However, this would prove not to be the climax of this conflict as the Medellin Cartel started to launch indiscriminate attacks against the general population in 1989 such as the Avianca flight 203 bombing and the DAS building bombing. But the biggest event of violence which brought the conflict to a breaking point was the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan in 1989. Running on an anti-cartel platform and promising further crackdowns on the Cartel if elected, he seemed poised to win the election which proved to be unacceptable for the cartels and pushed them to kill Galan in a political rally in the town of Soacha. Following this assassination, the domestic and international outcry against Escobar reached a completely new level. Following this assassination, the Colombian government founded the search bloc: an elite police force division created from law enforcement members who go through

extreme background checks to ensure that they aren't cartel collaborators or are getting bribed from Cartel. The bloc received training and financial support from the United States aside from the Colombian Government.

At the same time, the US further expanded its collaboration with Colombian authorities against the Cartels with real-time intelligence support and tapping on Cartel communications alongside freezing the assets of suspected cartel members and supporters.

Realizing that his capture was inevitable, Escobar surrendered himself to Colombian authorities and moved to "La Catedral" in 1991, a prison Escobar built for himself with the conditions that he would:

- Serve his sentence in La Catedral
- Be allowed to handpick the prison guards
- Under no terms be extradited to the United States
- Be sentenced to 5 years in prison at maximum



La Catedral was unlike any other prison, it had amenities that normally would only be in five star hotels such as:

- A football field
- Bar
- Nightclub

Not only that, but his “Prison Cell” was extremely comfortable. Unlike any other prison, he was allowed to have as many guests as he wanted and whenever he wanted. This, combined with the fact that he chose cartel members as prison guards, would allow him to organize parties for leisure aside from organizing meetings with cartel members. In other words, his time in La Catedral was not a prison sentence but a house arrest. In fact, he killed many of his enemies *inside* la Catedral.

4.2 The downfall of the Medellin cartel and the rise of the Cali Cartel

Of course, this arrangement could not last. As such, Colombian authorities planned to transfer him to a proper prison in 1992. After the news reached Escobar through his intelligence network, he escaped from La Catedral. This escape humiliated the Colombian government and made civilians lose confidence in the government to deal with the Cartel Problem. This led to the formation of Los Pepes, a grand coalition of Escobar’s enemies, including: Rival Cartel members, militant political groups such as FARC, friends and family members of individuals executed by the Medellin Cartel or died in the cocaine crisis. This Vigilante organization had only one goal: The death or capture of Pablo Escobar, and the destruction of the Medellin Cartel.

Following his escape, a global manhunt has started for Pablo Escobar. With countless enemies; whether it be the Government, the vigilante groups or rival cartels, it was only a matter of time before he was caught. That time turned out to be December 2, 1993 when he was killed by the Colombian police during a shootout. With the neutralization of their unifying and talented figure, the Medellin cartel started to collapse. However, this would not bring an end to the Cocaine problem.

Following the destruction of the Medellin Cartel; the Cali Cartel, which previously was one of the rivals of the Medellin cartel, grew rapidly without any competition and the cocaine business continued as usual only with another cartel organizing the operations. At its peak, Cali Cartel was not only smuggling to Northern America, but even responsible for most of the cocaine smuggled to Europe. For European operations, the Cali Cartel used methods similar to that of Medellin to smuggle the products into the US and from there to ports like Rotterdam and Antwerp through maritime shipping.

Despite possessing a huge drug empire like Medellin, Cali Cartel was much more subtle concerning its operations. Having learned from the downfall of the Medellin cartel, the Cali Cartel avoided indiscriminate terror operations and opted for assassinating high-profile individuals with as little unintended casualties as possible. Furthermore, the Cali Cartel was operated like a corporation whereas Medellin was truly ruled like an empire by Escobar, who did as he pleased. This difference in operations allowed Cali to avoid detection and harsh crackdowns for a longer period.

However, this doesn't mean that Cali Cartel was a pacifist organization. Junior members who made major errors were often executed while traffickers were specifically chosen from those who had families in Colombia so that the cartel could use them as insurance that the trafficker would not cooperate with authorities no matter what with the threat of their families being executed. Furthermore, the Cali Cartel also frequently fought with non-state actors when said actors attacked or provoked the Cali Cartel. The most prominent example of this would be the creation of MAS (Muerte a Secuestradores, also known as "Death to the kidnappers!") in response to the 19th of April Movement and FARC (Various left-wing guerilla groups) kidnapping the loved ones of cartel leadership for ransom.

However, this war against guerilla groups would bring itself to the very spotlight the cartel tried to avoid and the US once again started to involve itself in operations against Cartels in Colombia. Following years of struggle and the extradition of Orejuela brothers (The leaders of the Cali Cartel) to the United States, the Cali Cartel collapsed just like its predecessor. The late period of Cali Cartel also witnessed Mexican groups taking on more responsibility in the trafficking operations, planting the seeds of Mexican cartels such as the Sinaloa Cartel and starting a structural transformation in the business of drug trafficking: Drug trafficking business after this point gradually become more decentralized with no single kingpin controlling the global markets. The time of global crime syndicates was over and the age of decentralized crime networks had begun.



4.3 Era of the Norte de Valle cartel and the decentralization of drug trafficking

Following the capture of Cali Cartel's high level leadership, local groups went rogue and formed tens of different groups. One of these groups was the Norte de Valle cartel which, similar to how the Cali cartel started, was able to take advantage of the power vacuum in the drug market and rebuilt the drug infrastructure from the Medellin and Cali era. The Norte de Valle cartel period saw the acceleration of the decentralization trend seen in the Cali era with the cartel no longer organizing all levels of trafficking operations by itself but acting more as a broker and a negotiator between producers, smugglers and sellers. This period also saw the strength of Mexican cartels further increasing with them taking over operations to smuggle

the drugs from Mexico to Northern America and Europe rather than Colombian cartels doing it themselves.

Norte de Valle improved money laundering techniques from the Medellin and Cali era with the help of modern technology with crypto payment methods allowing anonymity for these operations and allowing them to more easily cover their tracks. However, the decentralized nature of Norte de Valle cartel meant that some members of the cartel didn't use proper safety measures which brought the cartel to the attention of Colombian and American authorities. Furthermore, development of technology also improved the security apparatus of the state and surveillance tools which allowed authorities to break through into cartel communications and compromise smuggler networks. This, combined with the extradition of leading figures such as Diego Leon Montoya to the United States brought down the Norte de Valle cartel.

However, the destruction of cartels didn't mitigate the effects of the cocaine pandemic. Once again, the power vacuum left by Norte de Valle was filled. However, this destruction led to the climax of the decentralization process which started during the Cali Cartel era. The vacuum left by Norte de Valle was not filled by a single cartel, but by various local cartels which acted less like the coordinators of global drug trafficking like the Medellin, Cali and Norte de Valle of the old but as only the producers of the drug. These local criminal bands (Also known as BACRIMs) were much smaller in scale and localized but was harder to crack down due to their decentralized and individually low-profile status. The chaos in the Colombian market caused the Mexican market to grow further and turn the Mexican Sinaloa Cartel to the new coordinator of global cocaine trafficking. Decades of war against drugs had only led to a shift in the location of the heart of the blight that was cocaine to Mexico from Colombia.

During this time period, globalization and neoliberal economics also helped this new form of trafficking. Cocaine was no longer a drug that was the problem of only the Americas or Europe. It became a product that was possible to find at all corners of earth. What was once just a single seed of evil in the Andes had blossomed and spread its seeds across the globe.

4.4 Rise of the Mexican cartels and the re-centralization on drug trafficking in latin america

In the years following the fragmentation of drug trafficking in Colombia, Mexican cartels such as the Sinaloa Cartel grew rapidly. Aside from an increase in the number of their members and the volume of their operations, Mexican cartels continued to take up the functions of Colombian cartels and start to subjugate the small cartels in southern america into their producers. This subjugation effort cultivated in the re-centralization of the drug

trafficking networks. This re-centralization also partially brought back the brutality of Medellin era with cartels executing rivals and investigators of their activities (Law enforcement members refusing to take bribes, journalists etc.) in unspeakable ways and uploading the videos of their executions to the internet as a method of intimidation and terrorizing against their enemies. In the nineties and early 2000s, cartels such as the Tijuana cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel were the dominant forces which operated as the Mexican version of the Cali and Norte de Valle cartels. However, following the arrest of El Chapo and the destruction of these cartels, more violent groups such as the Jalisco New Generation Cartel reached prominence. These groups were much more violent compared to the older ones and engaged in indiscriminate attacks as response to their members getting extradited to the United States or getting killed, whether it be at the hands of a rival cartel or governments. The influence of Mexican cartels span across Latin America, with Central American and Andean countries also suffering from the brutality of the cartels.

This violence led to United States authorities setting their sights on Mexico, however, with extradition for Mexican cartel members also becoming commonplace just like for their Colombian counterparts. This in turn has led to cartels escalating the indiscriminate attacks on civilians similar to the Medellin cartel era. The most blatant example of this was the near civil war state Mexico was engulfed in following the murder of CJNG's leader Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes.

As of 2026, the conflict between Mexican cartels and governments continues. The failure to address conditions which push individuals into joining cartels has clearly turned the war against cartels into an uphill battle, something different has to be done.

4.5 A glimmer of hope: Juan Manuel Santos and a peaceful resolution

In the time period between the decentralization of the cartels and the inauguration of Juan Manuel Santos, the war between cartels and the Colombian government became a war of attrition. With the government neutralizing a small cartel while another was created, it had all turned into a game of cat and mouse. That is, until Juan Manuel Santos was elected and he decided to try something new.

Santos believed in the power of dialogue when it came to ending this drug epidemic than the orthodox hardline approach. As groups such as FARC were still active and an important part of the drug problem, he wanted to reach a peaceful resolution with FARC and convince them to demobilize and turn into a legal party so that they would stop Narco-terror activities to finance their operations. After a lengthy process of peace talks and diplomacy, FARC officially demobilized in 2017. While the demobilization of FARC didn't directly mitigate the drug crisis in Colombia, it significantly reduced violent acts of both remaining political paramilitary groups and that of cartels. As such, while this process hasn't provided a solution to the crisis, it has opened the door to a solution.

5. Money Laundering methods

Cartels use many methods to make their revenue look like they came from legal businesses to cover their tracks and prevent authorities from seizing the money. It is essential to crack down upon these methods since these methods are what allows the cartels to generate revenue.

5.1 Financial Diversification and Money Laundering

Money laundering is the process of transferring illegal money to other legal institutions, such as hotels or charities. Cartels often own these legal institutions and present the drug proceeds as if they were obtained through legal means, or they donate them to charities, making the money harder to track. Since charities are organizations that are owned or created by the cartels, they can directly convert dirty money into clean money.

5.2 Shell companies

Cartels can create businesses which only exist on paper, have no operations and generally have no employees. Cartels show the profit made from drug trafficking as the revenue of the company to make their money look like it came from legal business. Since these companies have no real operations, exposing these companies is significantly easier than Front businesses.

5.3 Front businesses

Cartels can create businesses similar to shell companies named front businesses. Compared to the shell companies, front businesses have real operations and revenues, have employees that are generally not aware of the nature of their job and can have physical presence. Almost any form of business can be used as a front business. The legal revenue gained from the official operations of these businesses are mixed with the illegal money gained from drug trafficking in a process called “commingling” to show both the legal and illegal revenue as the profit front businesses made from their legal operations. As these businesses create real economic value unlike shell companies, they can be much harder to detect and shutdown by authorities.

5.4 Offshore accounts

Offshore accounts refer to bank accounts individuals have in countries they don't reside in. Cartel members send the money made from illegal operations to countries which have strict banker secrecy laws, laws that protect the privacy of the customer of the bank, and won't cooperate with international authorities on sharing the identity of the owners of these accounts and transaction history of these accounts. As a result, criminals can cover their tracks and authorities cannot seize the revenue made from drug trafficking.

5.5 Trade-Based Money Laundering

Trade based money laundering refers to the action of drug traffickers disguising the money gained from illicit activities as trade transactions. To do this, they may sell overpriced goods to show the illegal money as profit made from international trade. Alternatively, traffickers use "phantom shipments" where no products are traded, but false paperwork is made to transfer money internationally.

5.6 Crypto currencies and darknet

Recent advances in technology have made it much easier for drug traffickers to improve their trafficking methods, but also their money laundering methods. Crypto currencies such as Bitcoin allow users to anonymously make transactions which makes it much harder to track financial cartel activities if not outright impossible. Not only that, but the rise of websites that are only accessible with unconventional internet browsers such as the TOR browser allow drug consumers to anonymously order illegal products while also anonymizing the sellers of such products. With such sites, it is hard to track down the buyer and seller of illegal products even if the product itself is seized by law enforcement during transportation. The most notable examples of these anonymous sites is the Silk Road, through which 1.5 million orders had been placed through, reached a total trade volume of more than a billion dollars and led its creator, Ross Ulbricht, to make more than 100 dollars from commissions from purchases.

6. The Cocaine Route

The cocaine produced by the Cartels follows a long and treacherous journey through the Andes and Latin America to the United States. Understanding this route and how cocaine is smuggled is important for delegates to be efficient in the committee.

6.1 Production

The journey of Cocaine starts in the Andes mountains, where coca herbs (The plant whose leaves are used to make cocaine) are planted and harvested. Normally, there are legal coca plantations in South America as Coca leaves are traditionally eaten without being purified into Cocaine and this act of eating Coca leaves is culturally important for the local population. In these legal farms, the coca leaves are then distributed to be sold to the general population. In illegal farms and regions under Cartel control however, these leaves are processed into coca paste first, then into cocaine.



6.2 Stockpiling and Consolidation

After coca is processed into Cocaine, the cocaine is packaged and brought to rural labs with planes where these products are stockpiled to be trafficked and sold.

6.3 Trafficking and Distribution

Following the stockpiling of cocaine, the products are trafficked through three main methods: Planes, speedboats or land routes.

6.3.1 Planes

There are two main routes for cocaine trafficking through planes: The products are either trafficked from Colombia to Bahamas and from there to Florida, or they are transported through Central America into Mexico and from there to the United States.

6.3.2 Ships

There are three main methods the cartels use to traffick their products by the sea. They could:

- Smuggle the cocaine through Bahamas and from there to Florida
- Smuggle the cocaine along the coast of Latin American states and from there to Florida
- Use ports in Western Colombia to ship their products through the Pacific Ocean.

Aside from smuggling it themselves, the cartels could blend their drug cargo amongst normal cargo in trade vessels. Most of the time, drugs trafficked using this method would not be caught as customs cannot inspect every single cargo in every trading vessel. To make it even harder for law enforcement to seize the drugs even if they inspect the drugs with cargo in it, the cartels can use double-walled cargos with the cargo seemingly carrying fruits or other legal items but drugs being hidden between the fake wall of the cargo and the real wall.

If a safer method is needed, the cartels frequently use the offshore transfer method where the drugs in the ship are transferred to another ship in the sea to make it harder for authorities to seize these products even if they have intelligence about the mothership (the ship that the drug was transferred from) carrying drugs.

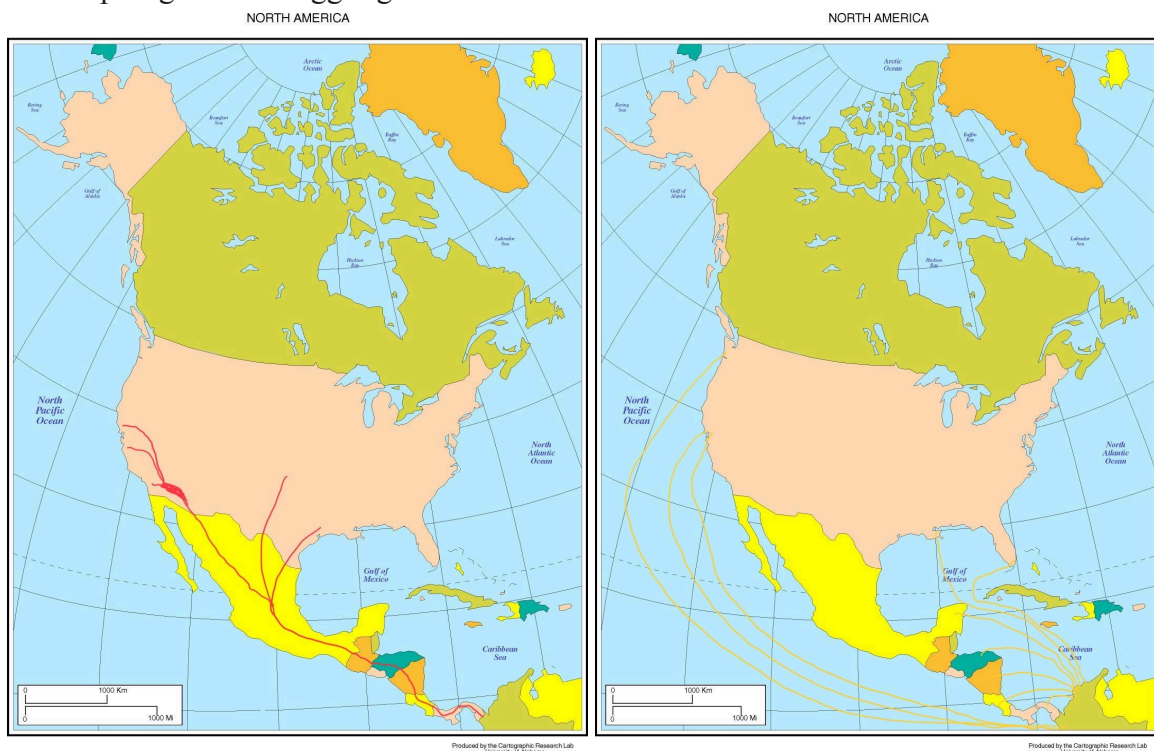
Aside from normal ships, Cartels frequently use speedboats in the Caribbean route to avoid authorities intercepting their operations and completing the operation as soon as possible. While much faster than normal ships, speedboats have a significantly smaller capacity when it comes to the amount of drugs they can carry due to their small size.

6.3.3 Land Route

If the products were to be trafficked through the land, cartel would transport cocaine from Colombia to Latin American countries, and from there to Mexico and eventually USA

6.3.4 Smuggling routes are given below

The map of ground smuggling routes



The map of Maritime smuggling routes



The map of Aerial smuggling routes

6.4 Safety

Cartels use various methods to ensure that their trafficking operations aren't disrupted or intercepted, whether if the threat comes from governments or rivaling cartels. To this end, trafficking groups use various methods to pacify state response such as bribing government officials, law enforcement and border patrol. These groups also give a share of their profits to law enforcement or government officials to secure information on rival groups or individuals who cannot be bought (Investigative journalists, dedicated prosecutors and judges etc.). If need be, these groups assassinate these problematic individuals but try to avoid indiscriminate attacks as these tend to attract much more attention than its worth.

Between rival groups in urban regions, disputes may arise over groups "entering someone else's turf", meaning that a group sells cocaine in a zone (borough, district, neighborhood etc.) that another group has laid claim over and bars other groups from selling drugs there to maximize revenue. In these situations, trafficker groups (whether they be cartels, gangs or something else) engage in armed conflict between each other if they cannot reach a peaceful resolution. In these wars, groups often use indiscriminate attack methods like drive-by shootings which leads to civilians getting caught in the crossfire which leads to a lot of civilian deaths. These turf wars are especially dangerous as they directly put the lives of civilians who live around the region at risk. Despite this danger, turf wars may sometimes be useful for governments to quell drug trafficker strength as these wars deplete the strength of these groups without the state needing to do anything.

7.Domestic approaches and employed methods

Against the cartels I cocaine and the drug crisis in general, countries around the globe have implemented various strategies, although it is debatable which one is the most efficient when it comes to successfully reducing harm and weakening cartels. At the global level, approaches to the cocaine crisis can be distinguished to 2 categories:

1-Prohibitionist method

The Prohibitionist method is the most common approach at the global level, countries which use this method against the drug crisis aim to combat cocaine production by implementing harsh punishments for the production, distribution, purchase and the consumption of drugs. These countries attempt to lower both the supply and the demand aspect of the drug epidemic by punishing users nearly as harshly as sellers and smugglers and provide a deterrence to the general public against using such materials.

2-Harm reduction method

A method which came into existence after decades of varying success of Prohibitionist regulations; Harm reduction focused countries aim not to eradicate the consumption and smuggling of the drugs to the country, but to minimize the damage drugs deal to the public health and prevent the drug industry from becoming a financing channel for cartels and other criminal groups. Countries in Harm reduction do not prosecute drug consumers but rather help them stop using drugs by providing rehabilitation opportunities, focusing the efforts of law enforcement on stopping drug smugglers, traffickers and sellers. Countries which employ such methods have generally decriminalized the *use and consumption* of such products.

7.1 Domestic approaches

Despite the fact that the policies of most countries fall inside one of these two groups, the local differences between the implementation of these methods is crucial to better understand what helps in the fight against cocaine and what doesn't.

Producer bloc: Countries in Andes where production of Cocaine takes place, such as Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, are in this bloc. Until the last few years, these countries had a hardline policy against cocaine with the scorching of coca farms and the detainment of farmers, military response against cartels and similiar drug trafficking networks and anti-corruption operations against officials who take bribes from the cartel. In recent years, these countries have taken a softer approach when it comes to coca farms and the production is increasingly starting to be seen as a socio-economic problem rather than a crime problem. In recent years, governments in the region have started to provide incentives to farmers to stop planting coca and switch to alternative products such as coffee and bananas, or switch to legal and controlled production of Coca at the very least.

Route Countries: A significant portion of countries where cocaine is transported through, such as Central American countries, Netherlands and Belgium, take special measures to clamp down on the smuggling of the products to the country alongside its smuggling into neighboring countries. These countries focus on improving security in land borders and ports to prevent smuggling as much as possible. However, this policy only concerns the efforts that attempt to prevent the entry of drugs into the country and doesn't necessarily mean that these countries have Prohibitionist policies against domestic drug use, as seen with Netherlands and Belgium (The former of which is the biggest and one of the earliest examples countries which employ harm reduction methods)

Receiver countries: Countries which are generally where the drugs are sold to individuals for consumption employ policies that aim to suppress the demand for cocaine rather than focusing on the supply aspect. Naturally, most of these countries are in the Prohibitionist bloc. This is not to say that only these countries suffer from the drug epidemic though, all countries attempt to suppress demand one way or another but the deal with this group is that this is the main focus of their efforts against drugs.

military operations against cartel members rather than conventional law enforcement response. Since late 2010's, some of these countries shifted to a harm reduction like approach with farmers being given incentives to switch to alternative crops such as coffee rather than coca, or at the very least produce coca legally.

Route countries: Countries whose land is used to smuggle cocaine to another country fall under this bloc. In most of these countries, consumption of cocaine is not a major problem as they are not the end-point for traffickers but are more concerned with cracking down on the trafficking of cocaine to bordering countries or these drugs being shipped to other countries through their ports. Countries with ports that have heavy international trade traffic (Ecuador, Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey etc.) fall under this category.

8. Questions to be answered

1. What could be done to dismantle the influence of drug trafficking groups in the state apparatus (Law enforcement, judges, politicians etc.) of Latin American and Andes countries?
2. How can Andes farmers be encouraged to grow legal crops rather than coca leaves, or at least legally produce coca and stop giving coca to the cartels ?
3. How can the control of the cartels in rural regions be destroyed ?
4. Should extradition be a tool for law enforcement in the long term?

5. How can law enforcement colluding with vigilante groups be prevented ?
6. Is the American intervention in the war against the Cartels excessive and violating Colombian sovereignty ?
7. Is it more efficient to violently crack down on political insurgents such as FARC to restore state control in the countryside or would it be better to negotiate a peaceful resolution with them ?
8. How could the Cartels be disarmed and what should be done with the seized weapons ?
9. How can countries improve their border security to stop the smuggling of cocaine?
10. How can civilians be protected from harm during fighting between the cartels and the governments ?
11. What security measures could be implemented to stop maritime cocaine trafficking through major ports ?
12. Should the cartels and cocaine epidemic be treated as a socio-economic issue or a criminal one ?
13. Is internet anonymity more important than the need to clamp down on anonymous online black markets and intercept cartel communications?
14. How can the financial operations of cartels be tracked despite the anonymity of transactions provided by bitcoin?