

Research Article

Comparative Analysis of the United States' War on Drugs Policy in Mexico and Colombia: Failure and Success Factors

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Abstract

Drug smuggling activities in the United States carried out by drug cartels from Mexico and Colombia contribute to the region's instabilities. Many threats and terrorist acts that accompanied the distribution of illegal drugs left civilians in fear. The War on Drugs policy promoted by the United States, which aims to apprehend drug cartels, causes severe losses in the long run. Colombia is the only successful case. On the other hand, Mexico offers a different story despite both are countries with unstable political and weak law enforcement. The paper conducts a comparative study on Colombia and Mexico to evaluate the factors that contribute to the success and failure behind the implementation of the War on Drugs policy. The paper concludes that an aggressive approach (i.e., military) is less efficient in combatting drug smuggling activities than the developmental approach (i.e., socio-economic development).

Keywords: War on Drugs, drug smuggling, Colombia, Mexico, the United States

I. Introduction

Drug trafficking is a form of transnational crime that is still become a threat to international security. Almost every country in the world experiences this problem, either as a transit country or the largest consumer of illegal drugs. The United States is one of the countries that is the largest consumer of illegal drugs originating from Central and South America.

Mexico is one of the major countries, because it is a country that is directly adjacent to the United States. The frequency of activities on the borders of the two countries is very high, making it vulnerable to the smuggling of illegal goods, especially narcotics. Since the emergence of Mexican drug cartels, these illegal drugs have not only reached the border, even cities throughout the United States have also been affected.

At first, Mexico was not a producing country, but only a transit country from South America to the United States. However, seeing the enormous market potential, the cartels there also play a double role as producers. The drugs such as cannabis, brown, heroin, and methamphetamine are types of narcotics that produced by the Mexican drug cartel and sold mainly in the United States. The narcotics are produced in the states of Chihuahua and Sinaloa. Meanwhile, opium and heroin are produced from the state of Tamaulipas (Lamas, 2016). In addition, Sonora, Nayarit, Zacatecas Durango, Guerrero, Jalisco, Baja California, Oaxaca, and Michoacan are some states in Mexico that also known as the highest narcotics producer (Guerrero-Gutiérrez, 2011).

The main penetrated borders into the United States are the states of California and Texas. This border is the main gateway for cartels to reach the Brownsville, McAllen, Laredo, and El Paso area, which could be the starting point to spread the illegal drugs (House Committee of Homeland Security, 2006). One example of successful cannabis and cocaine smuggling of narcotics is through the

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Port of El Paso. The chances of success in the area are high due to the cartel's private narcotics warehouse in El Paso as a storage area and distribution throughout the states in the United States (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2011).

The states of California, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, were chosen as the main gateways. Those four states of the United States were considered important points for cartels in Mexico. According to the map flow, there are nine important routes that the Mexican cartel uses to distribute its products, on the southwest border. These nine important routes, are (Lamas, 2016):

- 1) Tijuana - San Diego (This route usually uses land and sea routes)
- 2) Mexicali - Calexico (Main route uses by Tijuana cartel, the Sinaloa cartel also often uses this route)
- 3) Agua Prieta - Douglas (This route is traversed by a highway so that the United States government has established an electric fence between the borders. The cartels often coordinate with their colleagues by throwing the drugs to get past the electric fence and are arrested by colleagues who are already waiting across the electric fence)
- 4) Nogales - Nogales (This route is similar to the Agua Prieta - Douglas route, often a route for smuggling activities)
- 5) Ciudad Juarez - El Paso (This route is the most dangerous route because there are many violent activities to the point of murder. Ciudad Juarez - El Paso is a route that is a struggle between the two big cartels, namely Juarez and Sinaloa.
- 6) Piedras Negras - Eagle Pass
- 7) Nuevo Laredo – Laredo
- 8) Reynosa - Mc Allen
- 9) Matamoros – Brownsville



Fig. 1. The trade route from Mexico to the United States

Source: Geo-Mexico (2010)

This illegal business is getting more followers because the profits are huge in one sale, especially exports to the United States. The estimated profits from the sale of drugs to the United States are much greater than in Mexico itself. The profit earned annually from domestic sales is around 560 million US dollars. Meanwhile, the profits obtained from exports to the United States will get approximately 61,384.2 million dollars per year (Lamas, 2016). These profits is used to build smuggling infrastructure with sophisticated facilities, pay members, equipment weapons to defend against attacks by other cartels and the government, and bribe officials, police, and border soldiers so that the smuggling plan is well organized (Molzahn, et al., 2012).

Jenis	Potensi Ekspor (Ton)	Profit per Ton (Juta Dolar)	Total Profit (Juta Dolar)	Eceran Per Ton (Juta Dolar)	Total Eceran (Juta Dolar)	Estimasi Gross Profit (Juta Dolar)
Ganja	4.067,3	2	8.134,6	10,4	42.229,9	34.165,3
Kokain	28,5	28,5	2.508,3	97,4	8.572,2	6.063,9
Heroin	71,2	71,2	3.801,5	131,6	5.696,7	2.615,2
Meth	65,8	65,8	2.497,5	127,7	4.815,4	2.335,9
Total	4.236,3		16.203,9		61.384,2	45.180,3

Tab. 1. Estimated Profits of Illegal Drugs from Mexico to the United States

Source: Costa (2008) as cited in Lamas (2016)

Currently, the Mexican cartel is still the most popular and successful. But before becoming a producing country themselves, they initially collaborated with the Cartel from Colombia, which has the largest coca field. The Colombian cartel cooperates with Mexico to smuggle narcotics to the United States by land

through the border areas. Meanwhile, another route used to distribute drugs, especially opium, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana from Colombia, is through the Pacific Ocean. This route was chosen because it is considered a greater chance of escape than the air route. The seaports targeted are near Orlando, Chicago, New York, and Boston to make it easier for dealers to supply drugs to these four major cities. But, since the late 1970s, the cartels in Colombia have escaped with a new route through the Caribbean (M., 2018).

According to the Interagency Assessment of Cocaine Movement (IACM-USA), evidence found that the Medellin and Cali Cartels from Colombia dominated cocaine shipments, weighing around 530 to 730 ton to the United States in 1999 (Herdiana, 2009). This success added new opportunities for cartels in Colombia to explore a broader reach in its neighboring countries (M., 2018).

The income generated from the sales of illegal drugs is very tempting for anyone who wants to improve their economy in a short time. According to Junguito and Caballero (1982), the cartels in 1978, on the export of marijuana and cocaine, estimated gross revenues of \$16-28 billion (Steiner, 1998). With an estimated share of 1% for producers, 1.7% for Colombian intermediaries, 17.5% for wholesalers, and 79.8% for retailers (Steiner, 1998). Net income from cannabis products alone is estimated at 2.7% of Colombia's GD, the same thing with cocaine which almost controls 80% of the narcotics market in the United States (Steiner, 1998). This type of drug is estimated to produce about 0.9% of Colombia's GDP. In that year, the drugs exported from Colombia to the United States account for 3.6% of Colombia's GDP (Steiner, 1998).



Fig. 2. The Narcotics Trafficking Route from Colombia to the United States

Source: Colombiana American (2007)

There are many versions of researchers who convey the estimated total income derived from selling illegal drugs abroad. The table below is a summary of the research results of several researchers.

	GSM (net)			Kalevanvita (net)			Sarmiento (gross)	O'Byrne and Reina (net)			Rocha (net)					
	marij.	Cocaine	Total	marij.	Cocaine	Total		Cocaine	Heroin	Total	marij.	Cocaine		Heroin		
												min	max	min	max	
														min	max	
1976-80				408	1048	2328										
1981-82	188	2854	3033	259	3440	4099	2031	4188								
1983-88*	87	1528	1615	12	480	1201	496	3273	2402	2602	66	939	3579	1002	3644	
1987-91	51	684	735	17	3809	4042			2003.2	196	3099.2	39	473	4624	5	517
1992-94											125	294	2982	286	3393	

*Sarmiento is average for 1983-88; O'Byrne includes only 1981; Rocha (max) is average for 1985-86.
Source: Gomez and Santa Maria (1994); Kalevanvita (1992); Sarmiento (1990); O'Byrne and Reina (1991); Rocha (1997).

Tab. 2. Colombia's Exports Income from Drugs Trafficking Activity (\$USD million, annual average)

Source: Steiner (1998)

Based on the table above, the results of research from GSM stated that in 1981-1982 the maximum net profit that the drugs cartels could achieve was around \$3 billion (accounting for 8% of Colombia's GDP), while in 1991, they earned a minimum income of

approximately \$337 million (up to 0.9% of Colombia's GDP) (Steiner, 1998). According to Kalmanovitz in 1976-1992, the estimated income was 20% more if they continued to sell goods according to the interests of consumer countries (Steiner, 1998). Then Sarmiento (1990) and Sarmiento et al. (1990) present a calculation of gross profit, the estimated net income was around \$1.1-2.7 billion in 1983-1988 (Steiner, 1998). O'Byrne and Reina (1993), in their research, compared the cocaine market in Europe and the United States. The survey results show that the highest price offered for these prohibited goods is in Europe. He presented data for 1987-1991 that earned a net income from cocaine alone of about \$2.9 billion (Steiner, 1998). The last researcher on the list of research results in the table is Rocha. According to Rocha (1997), he thinks that there is a consideration of the cost of money laundering. Thus, in 1992-1994 it is estimated that the net profit earned is around \$700 million-3.4 billion (Steiner, 1998).

In 1990, the increase in Colombia's GNP reached \$68.5 billion in 1994 and \$96.3 billion in 1997, which caused a decline in the standard of living of the national economy, which also affected the value of illegal drugs (Thoumi, 2002). So, since the early 1990s, even though the cartels in Colombia have become the masters of cocaine exports, they have had to experience many confrontations with state government institutions that implement drug legalization policies. So, items that were initially limited can then be obtained easily, making the market price drop. This policy resulted in a decrease in the contribution of the drug trade to Colombia's GDP from 5.5% to 2.6%. Although the cartel's revenues, to a lesser extent, contributed funds to the government, the distribution of cocaine itself negatively affected Colombia's socio-political conditions, which slowly weakened its economic situation (Garcia, 2003).

Based on the information above, the problems experienced by the Colombian drug cartels in their own country have made their export activities less smooth, even though there are still many interested parties who want drugs from their fields. This gap has also

driven cartels in Mexico to successfully develop themselves into producers to deliver narcotics according to consumer interests, especially in the United States. In 2015, the use of heroin increased sharply in the United States due to its low cost and easy access, it is estimated that the increase reach 63%, between 2002 and 2013 (Jones, 2015). This number will continue to increase, if there is no direct control by the authorities regarding the distribution of legal and illegal heroin sales. Because it is most likely from these conditions that the cartels in Mexico can reach up to 195 cities in the United States, for drug smuggling and become the primary place for this country to import illegal drugs (Moore, 2009).

The United States began to be wary of drug trafficking since the passage of the narcotics law or the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act in December 1914 (Kennedy, 2019). Since the emergence of this new regulation, it has proven successful in controlling the trafficking of narcotics in the United States. However, this is inversely proportional to the conditions on the black market, which are starting to find their breaking point. Opium and cocaine are types of drugs whose sale and purchase transactions are increasing, and at that time, the cartels of the Latin American region came into action. At that time in Colombia, the most prominent players were the Medellin Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel in Mexico (Kennedy, 2019).

Considering the increasing number of drug-buying and selling transactions in her country, that is dominated by the neighbor countries, the United States made "War on Drugs" policy, to help Colombia in the 2000 through Plan Colombia program, and Mexico through the Merida Initiative program in 2007, to fights the drug cartels that are growing rapidly in their country (International Crisis Group, 2008). Because the drug cartels do not hesitate to kidnap, even kill civilians and government officials for money, it is necessary to take extra care, especially in the security sector. For this reason, the crime rate in Colombia and Mexico has increased very rapidly for several years.

II. The Case of Mexico

a. Drug Cartels in Mexico

Country borders such as the United States and Mexico are prone to classic problems such as smuggling activities. The high intensity of activities at the border of the two countries, makes smuggling activities is easy to carry out. This activity has been going on since the 1850s. The rampant of drugs smuggling occurred again in 1933, until the end of 1960 (Adrian, 2019). At that time, the cartels' actions were increasingly appalling, even though several attempts had been made, such as burning marijuana fields, opium, and several other drugs. In addition, the crime rate in various parts of Mexico is also getting higher. The climax occurred in April 1989, when the big boss of the Guadalajara cartel, Felix Gallardo, was arrested by the Mexican military (Adrian, 2019). These arrests made the cartel fragmented and influence the emergence of other cartels in several parts of Mexico.

The network between the cartel and the Mexican government began with a man named Felix Gallardo, known the sole ruler of the drug cartel in Mexico, the Guadalajara cartel (Kennedy, 2019). At that time, Gallardo controlled all drug trafficking activities. A few years, Gallardo served as a local police officer and was a bodyguard for the governor's family, in this case, Sinaloa got a golden opportunity to establish political correlations to support his illegal business.

An offensive resistance will occur when a very influential person is arrested or killed, such as a cartel boss. The cause of the escalation of crime in Mexico is military operations in various vulnerable points that become cartel areas. One of the most unsuccessful attempts was Operation Michoacan. Apart from failing to solve the problems that occurred, this operation also made the situation worse (Adrian, 2019). Cartel bosses are caught by the military.

Although the attempt to carry out the operation was successful, as several lists of the most wanted people were found and shot dead, crime has also doubled due to the fragmentation of the cartels. Many innocent victims have been killed, the war between cartels has become increasingly widespread, and the root causes of the problems have intensified and become more complicated. Under these conditions, several cartels have also diversified their business. The big cartels sell drugs at much higher prices, while the smaller cartels commit crimes such as stealing oil from state-owned oil installations and sold it on the black market, kidnap peoples, and do extortion on trains, and etc.

b. United States Cooperation with Mexico

The US, which feels threatened, decide to fight the cartel. The US also helps Mexico, because most of the drugs trafficked in the US come from Mexico. In addition, the actions carried out by the Mexican cartel have hurt the citizens of the United States. Many victims were killed at the border. During the reign of President Felipe Calderon, the United States had significant influence in fighting cartels in Mexico. The US assists the Mexican military in combating cartels, deploying tens of thousands of troops of its military apparatus, assists the police in fighting the cartels, and also helps in funding and supplying weapons (Sotomayor, 2013).

During the reign of President Enrique Pena Nieto, the role of the United States and the secret service in Mexico was reduced. Although the US managed to arrest the Mexican cartel leader el Chapo, this did not stop the cartel's efforts (Kennedy, 2019). The cartels still operate, and violence continues in Mexico. It is estimated that around 90 thousand people died in 2007 to 2014, due to the violence of the Mexican cartels (Armandhanu, 2014). Therefore, the programs

and efforts of the United States failed to address the drugs problem in Mexico.

The United States' role in fighting drugs has also become more limited when the government changed in Mexico. Just like President Enrique Peña Nieto, during President López Obrador's administration, he also decided to reduce the US intervention in Mexico. For them, the United States meddles too much in its country's problems. In the end, the US agents who were at the intelligence center in Monterrey were expelled by the Mexican government. Although previously the United States had great influence in fighting the cartels, Lopez Obrador was only willing to cooperate, without any intervention from the United States, and wanted to defend his country's sovereignty (Fahzry, 2019).

Mexico has been fighting drug cartels for the last twelve years. According to the drugs observers, resetting the rules for fighting drugs, such as opening the door to negotiations with drug cartels, might work. Lopez Obrador states that he did not want to eradicate the drugs cartels by means of violence, he want to focus more on the factors that cause violence. Lopez Obrador's team has also begun consulting with the human rights groups, religious leaders and the United Nations to launch a new strategy to achieve security in his country. In addition, he also reflected on past events, such as the events of the Colombian peace process with the largest guerrilla group in his country. Lopez Obrador also stressed that he did not want any militarization or war to eradicate the cartel. He wanted to focus on rebuilding Mexico's economic, on the education, and employment sectors, so that the younger generation can learn a lesson not to commit violence and crimes, especially those related to drugs.

IV. The Case of Colombia

a. Drug Cartels in Colombia

Colombia is one of the countries in the Latin American that known as the largest cultivators of marijuana and cocaine in the world. The farmers cooperate with drug cartels to distribute illegal drugs globally, especially to the United States, which has the highest consumers, especially for opium and cocaine (the 1900s). This problem became a major issue in the United States in the 1980s, when art workers taking the drug to government officials.

Several factors led to the emergence of banned organization, such as drugs cartels. Apart from external factors (based on the consumer market in the United States), internal factors also play a role. One of them is political instability. Based on Gambetta, if a government cannot make a stable and safe political situation, then criminal organizations tend to be easily emerged in that country (Armao, 2003). Then, weak law enforcement, due to the existence of paramilitary groups formed by the government to assist the Colombian military in the civil war in the 1960s and 1970s, has now shifted to the sides to cooperate with other guerrilla or rebel groups. The criminal organizations that began to grow in the situation of the unstable country were mainly created from groups of people who wanted to achieve economic success. Thus, according to Cloward and Ohlin, the desire to commit crimes is economical (Siebert, 2003). This problem is also related to the socio-economic inequality in Colombia, which result in poor people. So, they are forced to look for illegal work to have a better quality of life. For example, the profits that this drug cartel could achieve were around 420 million US dollars per week in 1980 (Aryadevi, 2016). The huge numbers made anyone tempted to do illegal business instead of having an official job, including being a government official.

As the organization developed into a well-known business cartel, it attempted to forge ties with the government and create a gray zone. It is a situation where the government feels cornered and is forced to cooperate with them. Starting from here, a new threat called the hybrid threat emerges. This threat occurs when a criminal organization conducts its business under state protection, after negotiations for assistance provided by the criminal organization to the government, usually in the form of economic assistance or helping to stabilize political conditions (Aryadevi, 2016).

b. The United States and Colombia Cooperation

After the United States government restricted the circulation of illegal drugs, especially cocaine, for the consumption of the general public, domestic drug traffickers began to be arrested and frozen by the authorities. But unfortunately, buying and selling transactions continue on the black market, even though the price offered is very high, due to the enactment of a new government law that makes the circulation of these drugs difficult. To overcome this problem, the United States made a "War on Drugs" policy to eradicate drug cartels, so as not to become suppliers on the black market in their country. This policy coincided with Colombian President Andres Pastrana's 1998 plan to initiate Colombia's Marshal Plan policy. On the other hand, the chaos caused by the cartel has left civil society in the country restless and fearful. Kidnappings to the murder of government officials are increasingly rampant and have become a terror for the community. Therefore, he began to think about reconstructing the socio-economic conditions of his country through this policy. The reconstruction of socio-economic conditions certainly requires sufficient funds from the government to improve their lives, so that they will not join a

cartel syndicate. The United States was then willing to help Andres Pastrana through its War on Drugs policy by providing around US \$869 million.

However, in 2000, President Bill Clinton changed the strategy of the Colombian Marshal Plan to a militaristic approach. So that these funds shifted direction, which was then mostly used to buy weapons in order to strengthen security and smooth the process of law enforcement. The amendment of the plan also changed the name of this Colombian policy to Plan Colombia. Unfortunately, this method did not work because it was proven that the yield of coca field had increased by up to 15% (Aryadevi, 2016).

Learning from that mistake, the United States and Colombia decided to change their strategy. They shifted their focus to alternative methods that prioritize the socio-economic development of the community, especially farmers who initially produced illegal drugs to switch to other economic sectors. This program operates within a long-term development plan and creates a "legal" work culture.

The alternative method proposed by the United States is known as USAID (United States Agency for International Development). This is a special policy program from the United States to assist the international community through national development programs. This program is specially designed not to use any military strategy. In implementing the Plan Colombia program which was officially implemented during the term of President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe (2002-2006), the United States has disbursed \$ 869 million for the narcotics program, and \$123 million for USAID needs in Colombia (Meza, 2011). Funds from USAID can be used to create several small projects that can provide new job opportunities for drugs farmers who are forced to lose their jobs. In this way, the government

can work with the farmers to stop planting illegal crops used to make drugs (Meza, 2011). This program is considered to have reaped positive results, because the previous militaristic strategy only made things worse. The two sides continued to retaliate against each other so that the armed conflict did not end, until one of them lost. Therefore, in this Plan Colombia in collaboration with the USAID program, the government seeks to focus more on overcoming socio-economic inequalities in order to reduce actions that can disrupt security stability.

By involving social processes, it takes a long time to achieve the desired expectations. However, this has proven to reduce the crime engendered by cartels and other rebel or paramilitary groups. Even in 2016, the Colombian state officially made peace with the FARC rebel group which is suspected of being involved in cooperation with the largest drug cartel there (Suastha, 2016). While there are still people, even former presidents, who think this should not happen, their reconciliation with the new agreement shows that Colombia is ready to become a new nation free of crime and safe for anyone to visit.

Although it is not certain that it can be completely free of crime and violence, Colombia has begun to dare to promote itself as a country with a worthy tourist destination. With the charm of "dark" historical places in the country, it is alleged to be able to attract visitors, especially history lovers, and create a "legal" economic culture.

III. Analysis

The United States policies implemented in these two countries have yielded different results. Despite having the same initial steps, at the beginning of policy implementation, the United States in Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative spent hundreds to billions of dollars to upgrade

weapons that could increase security while assisting law enforcement (Bangsa, 2015). However, in its development, the program is executed in a different method.

In its implementation, Plan Colombia is implemented in two strategies according to requests from the US as a donor country. The first US strategy was implemented using a military approach, which is expected to improve security stability and law enforcement. The funds disbursed were used to increase the amount of ammunition and equip weapons. According to Holsti, this military aid is an old instrument that is often used by powerful countries to help vulnerable countries (Holsti, 1998).

In providing such assistance, donor countries have a hidden goal of increasing military power so that a country remains under their control. The goal is to control the dependence of the state to always receive assistance from them. This statement was proved to be true.

In reality, the implementation of the first Plan Colombia strategy in dealing with drug cartels actually caused public unrest. Colombia, which initially planned to use a socio-economic approach strategy, was forced to change direction when the United States wanted its funds to be used for a militaristic approach. However, this strategy did not run smoothly due to the internal factors from the Colombian state itself. This problem is related to the presence of the rebels and the fact that some of the government officials that are still cooperating with the cartel. The cartel's income which is almost equal to Colombia's GDP, has made some government officials feel trapped between working for the welfare of the people or ignoring to helping hands and making the country's condition more chaotic than before. The lack of law enforcement makes the military approach proposed by the United States unsuccessful and thus does not brings significant changes.

When the Colombian military forces closed ranks and further improved the quality of their weaponry, what happened was the cartel showed resistance and fought brutally causing terror everywhere. Moreover, when the leader was arrested, they also took revenge that made civilians fall. According to Williamson's statement, the conditions of receiving countries that are difficult to adapt to the given program will actually lead to conflict (Williamson, 2009). Goldsmith also supported the statement, stating that the lack of capacity and accountability in managing various aspects of the country and dependence on aid from other countries also contributed to the failure of the planned program (Goldsmith, 2001).

Both the donor and recipient countries realized the mistake and immediately took action to restructure the strategy for solving the problem more quickly. The second strategy is carried out by implementing alternative programs, which seeks to achieve social and economic development. This alternative program focuses more on the design of the development of villages and areas badly affected by the eradication of illegal drugs. In this program, the government also helps build a legal economic culture so as not to harm other communities.

This plan can be said to be slow in progress due to the influence of the masses. However, the implementation of this alternative program has proved successful and very satisfying. One example is the story of cannabis farmer, Romairo Aguirre, he volunteered to destroy his illegal cannabis fields in the Cauca Mountains region of Southwest Colombia to become part of a legal Colombian marijuana project. (Suprobo, 2018). Because he realized that continuing to cultivate these illegal drugs could lead to prison, he joined President Juan Manuel Santos' program to make Colombia a major producer of medical marijuana. This action can boost their economies and ensure a safe life,

without having to live surreptitiously from the government.

In addition, since signing a peace agreement with the FARC rebel group, Colombia has dared to offer its country as a cultural tourism destination for tourists to get to know Colombia, which has transformed from a dangerous country into a safe country. Now, Colombia has a lot of Narcos Tour Packages (Lunn, 2018). The places most favored place by tourists are Cartagena and Medellin, which have a history of being the center of a murder scene and are the hometown of Pablo Escobar, who known as the head of a drug cartel. (Lunn, 2018). This shows that Colombia has achieved the main goal of the alternative development program, which is to become a region with a "legal" economic culture.

Meanwhile, the crimes committed by cartels in Mexico are still ongoing today. Various attempts to stop the cartel's operations ordered directly by the Mexican President have also been carried out. Its main objective is to capture cartel bosses, who are considered to be the centers of cartel group activities and networks. However, the estimates of the Mexican government and military were wrong, so the efforts were unsuccessful and only made the situation even worse. Arresting the cartel boss will actually lead to fragmentation and create more other drug cartels and cause crime to increase everywhere.

After efforts to combat cartels with a militaristic approach were deemed ineffective, President Lopez Obrador made policies by taking a more cooperative path. Before Lopez Obrador decided on this policy, he and his team had consulted with human rights activists, the United Nations and several advisory groups. He and his team have also learned from policies undertaken by the Colombian government previously. Observers also believe that with a resetting policy, the

eradication of the cartel will be successful. A decision has been made and it is hoped that it can be effectively implemented.

During the Lopez Obrador administration, the United States was considered to be meddling in the internal affairs. In fact, the President of the United States, Donald Trump, claims that the drug cartels in Mexico are terrorists (Asmardika, 2019). Donald Trump also decided to go to war with the drug cartels, causing a lot of bloodshed at the border. Unlike Donald Trump, President Lopez Obrador does not want war and uses a militaristic approach to fighting drug cartels. He also said that the United States can cooperate but not interfere in its internal affairs. President Lopez Obrador wants to take a softer approach through socio-economic development, through increasing employment and education opportunities, so that young people can learn from the crimes that drug cartels inflict on his country.

IV. Conclusion

From the analysis of the United States' War on Drugs applied in Mexico and Colombia, it can be concluded that given the similarity of the two countries, with unstable political and security conditions, accompanied by economic disparities, the right policy program to help them get out of the drug cartel and the rebel group is an alternative development program, which moves to address the socio-economic situation of the people in their country rather than militaristic policies. The implementation of militaristic approach tends to generate resistance from the cartels. In addition, the main factor or root of the problem that drives them to carry out illegal trade is an unstable economic situation, even below the average poverty line.

Implementing national reforms, such as improving the performance of

government officials, creating a legal economic culture, and developing villages or areas affected by drug cartels, will make people feel confident that they are protected and given a decent life. Slowly but surely, the results of this progress can last longer and tend to be safe because it does not cause many casualties.

Apart from focusing on development, the government must also balance the implementation of clean and accountable governance so that no individual that will take an advantage, to commit corruption by cooperating with the cartels. In addition, the government must also improve the security system as an effort to defend against cartels that are still operating, so that people feel safe and secured. If this continues, then countries that were once under the control of drug cartels can slowly become safe, prosperous, and peaceful countries.

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