



April 2013 Public Forum “CON” Analysis

Recently, we gave our comprehensive analysis of the Pro side of the April Public Forum resolution, **Resolved: The continuation of current U.S. anti-drug policies in Latin America will do more harm than good.** Today, we’re discussing the Con side, which, while slightly trickier, if done properly can be argued very persuasively.

To recap, the pro’s argument is, essentially, that drugs are such an intractable and complex issue that any law enforcement-oriented solution is likely to simply escalate violence and jeopardize relationships with Latin American countries for minimal gain. Conversely, as we will discuss today, the con must argue that there are tangible benefits that have resulted and will continue to result from law enforcement approaches like those in current policy. Further, they argue, any alternative to the status quo policies risks sacrificing the significant gains made against drug traffickers while also fundamentally misunderstanding the nature of addictions, cartels, and global crime. As the con, you’ll likely find yourself mounting a two-pronged defense of the status quo:

1. Advocates of legalization or “public health” approaches are naïve about the potential negative effects of drugs and drug cartels on society.
2. The current, multifaceted approach is a far cry from the dire picture painted by “anti-drug-war” activists.

We’ll begin with a basic objection to the pro argument:

- 1. Softer approaches lack necessary enforcement mechanisms, causing backsliding and opening the floodgates to escalating drug problems.**

The basic question of incentives underlies the con position as well as the pro. Bernard Aronson, in a supplemental comment to a report outlining the ways in which U.S. drug policy may harm U.S.-Latin American relations, concludes that the current policies are still worth it:

Aronson, 2012 [Supplemental Comment to “Remaking the Relationship: The United States and Latin America,” Bernard, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs from 1989 to 1993, Inter-American Dialogue.]

I support the broad thrust of the report. On counter-narcotics policy, I understand the frustration in the region that successive US administrations have failed to provide adequate, sustained support for demand reduction and rehabilitation of drug users. But I believe that US-supported counter-narcotics efforts in Colombia, Mexico, and Central America are essential to defend democratic institutions. Neither decriminalization nor legalization offers viable alternative solutions to the fundamental threat to democratic institutions in the hemisphere posed by drug cartels.

Essentially, he’s arguing that the status quo policy provides a necessary enforcement mechanism against mass chaos. Drug cartels, he argues, are fundamentally destructive to emerging democracies. Advocates of legalization, he concludes, undersell the negative effects of cartel activity on fragile democratic institutions in many Latin American countries. The Latin Dispatch underscores a similar point,



Latin Dispatch, 2011 [“Costa Rica And Guatemala Reject Legalizing Drugs To Stop Violence,” June 6.] Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla and her Guatemalan counterpart Álvaro Colom met over the weekend for a brief conference in San José, where they agreed that last week’s proposal by the Commission on Global Drug Policy to decriminalize substances like marijuana would not work. “It seems very naive to say: legalize marijuana and the profits will fall,” Chinchilla said during a press conference after receiving the Guatemalan president in her office. Both president’s said that the United States and Europe need to take more responsibility in combating drug trafficking and provide more financial support to Central America. Chinchilla also said that if “soft” drugs were legalized, the markets for harder substances such as cocaine and heroin would expand. The Global Commission Drug Policy, which includes former presidents Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico, César Gaviria of Colombia and Brazil’s Fernando Henrique Cardoso, said during a meeting last Thursday that countries around the world need to explore the possibility of regular marijuana use and create treatment centers for hard drugs similar to the ones in Europe. The committee added that the war on drugs, based on filling prisons with drug traffickers, has failed and that smarter alternatives are needed to address the problem. “I think all presidents are tempted to legalize drugs so that once and for all we will be left in peace from all this violence, but do not think that is the right way,” Colom said of the committee’s recommendations, according to Costa Rica’s La Nación. Colom also added that plans to combat drug trafficking like the Mérida Initiative and Plan Colombia have led to the displacement of criminal groups into Central America, and increased crime and violence in the area.

Even Latin American leaders faced with the “balloon effect” that we discussed in the “pro” analysis understand that legalization and public health approaches are not the solution to the drug problem. Additionally, you can leverage this argument against the “legalization is harmless” arguments made by the pro; as Chinchilla argues, a world with legal marijuana would be more tolerant of other hard drugs that are ultimately more destructive to social order. This “slippery slope” or “gateway drug” argument is the rationale for zero-tolerance policies. The argument goes that, a permissive attitude towards drugs weakens the social stigma against their use, causing it to spiral out of control. Thus, even if the pro can win that limited, “responsible” drug use is harmless; they will have to win that allowing such will not open the floodgates to a permissive drug culture.

On a related note:

2. Public health focus is too limited, failing to account for the multi-dimensional nature of modern cartels. Trafficking violence outweighs.

In addition, drug cartels are beginning to evolve in ways that make them more difficult to address. As Gil Kerlikowske argues, only a hardline approach can adequately apprehend this shifting dynamic:

Kerlikowske, 2012 [“Drug Policy in the Americas,” R. Gil, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, CSIS.]

This Administration condemns the gruesome drug-related violence and is committed to partnering with the Mexican government to disrupt the cartels that commit such brutality. These organizations pose a significant challenge—they don’t just prey on citizens through drug distribution, but diversify their operations through human trafficking, contraband smuggling, financial fraud, and extortion, spreading violence, corruption and terror wherever they operate. These groups are in business for money and power and there is no



limit to the schemes they will employ to extract illegal proceeds from our societies. In an interview with PBS in May, Alejandro Junco, the head of Grupo Reforma, put it well: **“Once the dominating cartel establishes territorial control, it turns the most profitable part of its business—selling protection. Kidnappings, extortion, piracy, contraband, sale of organs, prostitution—cartels will turn to anything illegal that makes money. The profitability of drugs is actually quite low compared to the profitability of these other areas.”** The United States takes our responsibility to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking groups operating within our borders very seriously. Last year, U.S. law enforcement agencies disrupted or dismantled 612 drug trafficking organizations on the Attorney General’s Target list, which focuses on the major drug trafficking and violent criminal organizations operating within the United States. We have interagency task forces operating in every part of our country to identify and disrupt major drug distribution networks within the United States. We welcome a dialogue on the best tactics to address the threat posed by transnational criminal organizations. We recognize that it is appropriate to examine what works best. But we also recognize that transnational criminal networks would not disappear if drugs were made legal. Transnational criminal organizations don’t derive all their revenue from drugs, as I just mentioned. They would not simply disband if drugs were legalized. They are diversified businesses, profiting from human trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, intellectual property theft, and other crime. Institutions like CSIS play an important role in helping develop a rational, balanced approach to the international drug issue. Too often, we face a polarized debate—legalization at one end of the spectrum and a “war on drugs” at the other. The Obama Administration is committed to a third way forward. Legalization is not our policy, nor is locking every offender up. Our approach focuses on the public health challenge of drug consumption and science of addiction and tackling the international security challenge posed by transnational criminal organizations. There are no simple answers to the global drug issue. It is complex and threatens the health and security of people everywhere, regardless of citizenship. I’m grateful for the opportunity to provide some insight into the global policy landscape and this Administration’s approach. Thank you.

Drug trafficking organizations, he argues, never limit their activities exclusively to drugs. Rather, they use drugs as a way to establish themselves in a community and then, once they gain influence, expand their dealings to a number of other criminal activities. Thus, the argument that legalizing drugs would disempower trafficking organizations is incorrect. Rather, legalizing drugs would only slightly limit the scope of trafficking activity. U.S. drug policy in Latin America is an important way to constrain and eradicate all trafficking activity by giving U.S. authorities an opportunity to coordinate with international law enforcement to disrupt far-reaching criminal organizations. Without U.S. drug policy, Latin American governments could be overwhelmed by the sheer size and scope of trafficking organizations and lack the resources to prevent them from contributing to instability, harming citizen security, and damaging democratic institutions.

3. The current approach’s past successes suggest it can continue to support gains against cartel activity.

It’s also important to point out that the current approach has and continues to have notable successes that would not have been possible had the U.S. pursued a strictly softline policy. Ray Walser at the Heritage Foundation explains:

Walser, 2009 [“U.S. Drug Policy in Latin America,” Testimony before the Committee on the Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, of the United States House of Representatives, Ray, Senior Policy Analyst on Latin America at the Heritage Foundation, December 7.]

The production, processing, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs, in my opinion, constitute the gravest threat to overall human security in the Americas. The bulk of the drug trade is conducted by ruthless



and powerful criminal organizations that possess the capacity to corrupt and destroy entire nations. The drug trade and drug wars since the 1970s have produced unimagined violence and fatalities that rival the internal conflicts in Central America during the Cold War. A decade ago, experts agonized over the possibility that Colombia hovered on the verge of becoming a failed narco-state. Ten years later, Colombia, with the determined efforts of the Colombian people and the active assistance of the U.S., has staged a significant comeback and has successfully reduced homicides, kidnappings, and acts of terrorism, containing the threat posed by insurgent groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and by the rightist paramilitaries of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). Both of these groups engaged actively in the drug trade. The vast majority of Colombia's paramilitaries have been demobilized and the FARC has suffered serious reverses. Heartening news indicates that coca production has finally begun to decline in Colombia, realizing one of the most significant long-term benchmarks for success in Plan Colombia. These are not the signs of a failed war on drugs, but indicators that a capable Colombia is increasingly able to meet the internal challenges posed by the drug trade. The Obama Administration has demonstrated its confidence in Colombia and the government of President Alvaro Uribe by moving forward to deepen its strategic ties under a new Defense Cooperation Agreement that will utilize facilities in Colombia in order to monitor trafficking over land and at sea and gather valuable intelligence needed to advance the fight against traffickers. Colombia and the U.S. are pressing forward with this agreement despite the distorted misrepresentations and threats issued against Colombia by Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and his allies. Likewise another indication of strong cooperation was the August 2009 renewal of the Air Bridge Denial. On the other hand, the picture elsewhere is not as rosy. Coca production appears to be on the rise in Bolivia and Peru. Earlier this year, Washington was deluged with anxious expressions of concern regarding the threat Mexico drug cartels posed to the stability of our closest neighbor. The names of dreaded and emboldened drug organizations -- the Gulf and Sinaloa Cartels, La Familia Michoacana, and the lethal drug soldiers Los Zetas have become far too familiar to the public in the U.S. Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, has become the epicenter for Mexico's narco-carnage. Again, the Obama Administration, like the Bush Administration before it, recognizes the gravity of the situation and is continuing to deliver promised assistance under the Merida Initiative. It has regularly expressed its readiness to back Mexico's President Calderón in the drug fight. Professionals throughout the U.S. government recognize the urgency of their mission in cooperating with Mexico and the importance of delivering swift and targeted help. Congress can also help by streamlining the disbursement of assistance, cutting down on red tape, and by following through with the provision of the \$450 million requested in the FY2010 State Department budget in order to demonstrate sustained legislative support for this critical program. Likewise, the new Administration, with the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice in the lead, has added additional teeth and stronger missions through the updating of its National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy and with the assignment of additional law enforcement personnel to the border. It is moving ahead to block the southward movements of arms and bulk cash into Mexico, using the ample authority already granted by existing gun legislation. Vigilance and security on the U.S.-Mexican border along with active cooperation with Mexico's law enforcement are the watchwords for success in defeating Mexico's dangerous cartels.

A few important arguments here:

1. Past successes. As Walser points out, Colombia is notably more stable and sees less drug activity now than before U.S. policy went into effect. The decrease in violence, although potentially limited, is still very significant for the people in Colombia who no longer live in fear of cartels. Moreover, he makes a predictive claim that gains will continue throughout the region.
2. He argues that any shortfalls of the current approach are best remedied by sustained pressure on criminal organizations. Essentially, you can use this evidence to argue that backing off of drug policy now would necessarily reverse all current gains and be the equivalent of quitting when things got tough rather than when the job is done.
3. He also makes a relations claim. The Latin American leaders in the evidence (Calderon and Uribe) are all in favor of continued cooperation on the current policy and are actively engaged in their parts in executing the strategy. You can use this argument to answer some of the pro's



relations claims, pointing out that the number of leaders in favor may cancel out those opposed, making the relations claim a wash.

4. Current drug policy is “goldilocks” – it combines the best elements of both approaches.

A cornerstone of any “con” strategy is a description of the current strategy. Many pro authors criticize a narrow military focus of drug policy and argue that legalization and public health approaches have a zero-sum relationship with law enforcement approaches. John Walters challenges this view:

Walters, 2008 [“Our Drug Policy is a Success,” John, Director of National Drug Control Policy, Wall Street Journal.]

Whatever challenges await him, President-elect Barack Obama will not have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to keeping a lid on the use of illegal drugs. Our policy has been a success -- although that success is one of Washington's best kept secrets. Reported drug use among eighth, 10th and 12th graders has declined for six straight years. Teen use of cocaine, marijuana and inhalants is down significantly, while consumption of methamphetamine and hallucinogens like LSD and Ecstasy has all but collapsed. The number of workplace tests that are positive for cocaine is down sharply, to the lowest levels on record. Even the sudden spike of meth use -- remember the headlines from just a few years ago? -- **has yielded to a combination of state and federal regulations controlling meth ingredients. And abroad, crackdowns in Colombia and Mexico have caused the price of cocaine to roughly double in the past two years.** These results are testament to the efforts and teamwork of men and women who are virtually unknown to most Americans. They include people like community organizer Rev. Richard McCain in southeast Cleveland, who risked his life to drive crack dealers out of his neighborhood; drug-treatment experts like Dr. Johanna Ferman, who developed new ways to reach female addicts with young children in the nation's capital; and principals like Lisa Brady, who instituted a drug-testing program and watched drug use fall like a rock at her Flemington, N.J., high school. They include Nashville, Tenn., Judge Seth Norman, who got tired of seeing the same faces over and over again and decided to found a drug court, where he coaches defendants to stay clean and sanctions them when they fail. Pundits like to break drug policy down into soft and punitive approaches -- think social worker versus SWAT team. But most successful drug control interventions are impossible to pigeonhole. How to describe, for example, a drug-treatment counselor who works with a police officer and a drug-court judge for the benefit of her patient? Pundits debate endlessly whose funding should be cut and whose should grow -- whether money should flow to middle-school teachers or narcotics detectives -- when **the truth is that different approaches reinforce one another.** Children are the prospective drug users of tomorrow, so the role of parents and educators in keeping them away from drugs is obvious. But just as important is the law-enforcement mission of keeping drugs away from kids, and giving the addicted that first push into a drug-treatment program. Overseas seizures make life easier for all. It should be pretty obvious that when the Coast Guard seizes, as they did last March, a one-month supply of cocaine destined for the U.S. market from Colombia, availability on U.S. streets is going to suffer. Some people believe drugs such as cocaine and heroin should be legal, sold by the government and regulated like alcohol. Our experience with alcohol (some 127 million regular drinkers as compared to fewer than 20 million drug users) suggests this would be a huge mistake. **It is hard to imagine an aspect of American life that would be enriched by millions of new cocaine, heroin or marijuana users.** The good news in drug policy is that we know what works, and that is moral seriousness -- an unpopular term that is nevertheless immediately understandable to any person whose family member or loved one has struggled with addiction. Cutting through the evasions of a dependent drug user takes the right blend of confrontation and tough love. Society conveys the dangers of drugs to young people through the right mix of parental concern and legal strictures. And driving down the availability of dangerous drugs requires all the skills of agencies such as the DEA and local law enforcement. None of these approaches can work if drugs are simply legal.



The language in this evidence is really very good. He argues that, rather than public health trading off with law enforcement, the two approaches work together under current policy to ensure the most effective drug control strategy. Law enforcement approaches, he argues, reduce availability of drugs and the proliferation of drug crime. The resulting dwindled supply and increased stability paves the way for public health and social workers to engage in interventions that treat individual addiction and increase well-being for those whose lives are in crisis due to drug use. Moreover, he argues that a legalization approach only paves the way for increased demand, failed social support, and negative consequences that reverberate throughout almost every aspect of American life – a strong impact claim for the con. Gil Kerlikowske continues:

Kerlikowske, 2012 [“Drug Policy in the Americas,” R. Gil, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, CSIS.]

As we look for solutions to the global drug problem, we must understand and recognize that the United States isn't only capable of exporting helicopters and training counternarcotic units—we lead the world in evidence-based treatment and prevention programs, and we can and do export that knowledge, too. Through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and other initiatives, we are helping create safe streets in Latin America, disrupt drug trafficking, and support democratic institutions. But CARSI funding also goes to gang prevention and social programs for at-risk youth to provide healthy alternatives to substance use. During my trip to Guatemala, I visited a youth drug prevention program called “My First Steps,” which was built on the framework of a U.S. program and developed into a program that reflected the culture of Guatemala. The combination of American expertise and Guatemala's cultural influences created a youth program uniquely suited to the needs of that country's young people. By exporting U.S. expertise and encouraging partner nations to make such programs their own, we can re-create similar drug prevention programs in countries where drug use is increasing. All of this points to one conclusion—the international drug control community must find ways to work together and increase cooperation, both in cutting the supply of drugs and reducing demand for them. **I'm pleased to report that there's a significant amount of international solidarity on this matter.** Earlier, I told you that I had some good news. While there is still much more work to do, I'm able to report that multiple across-the-board indicators show that both cocaine production and U.S. cocaine consumption are declining. New estimates we are releasing today show that in 2011 potential cocaine production in Colombia dropped 25 percent from 2010 and 72 percent from 2001. Potential production of pure cocaine in Colombia is down to 195 metric tons from 700 metric tons in 2001, the lowest production potential level since 1994 and the first time since 1995 that Colombia is producing less cocaine than either Peru or Bolivia. Since 2006, here in the United States, the number of current cocaine users has decreased by 39%. And in 2011, a survey of adult male arrestees in 10 U.S. cities showed that fewer arrestees are testing positive for cocaine. All ten tracked sites showed a significant decrease in 2011 compared to 2003. Let me add some context to these results: they didn't happen overnight – there was a sustained effort requiring nearly a decade of steady, strategic pressure across more than one Administration in both the United States and Colombia. They didn't happen solely due to efforts made by the United States – this was a joint partnership between the United States and Colombia. And they didn't happen because the strategy was based solely on a hard line – **they were a result of a balanced approach that involved integrated strategic steps. The results are historic and have tremendous implications, for the United States and the Western Hemisphere, and globally. The security threat Colombia and the United States faced in 1999 is gone – and it has been accomplished without offsetting those results elsewhere.** We don't just have a far safer Colombia, we have a vibrant Colombia that is an active partner in helping with the drug and criminal issue in the region.

This description of current policy is balanced and positive. You should use evidence of this nature to challenge the pro's claim that current policy does more harm than good. In later speeches, you should



stress the “on-balance” nature of the topic and argue that, even despite the potential downsides of law enforcement approaches, the bulk of U.S. policy enjoys broad international support and success and is on a trajectory toward newer, innovative policy changes. Many of the new additions are policies similar to those advocated by some pro authors, so you should try to de-contextualize the claim that current policy has a law enforcement focus and instead argue that law enforcement and interdiction are merely one of the tools in the arsenal the U.S. government uses. Set up a framework that urges the pro to defend why even the programs for at-risk youth in Latin America that Kerlikowske describes are harmful. This will be much more difficult to do. He continues:

Kerlikowske, 2012 [“Drug Policy in the Americas,” R. Gil, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, CSIS.]

First, as I’ve seen in Latin America, institutional support for alternative development is critical—not only to reducing the amount of drugs coming out of Latin America, but also to ensuring that farmers who had made their living from illicit crop production have viable alternatives to support themselves and their families. These farmers must be protected as they grow alternative, legal crops. That’s why the Obama Administration has devoted nearly \$1 billion to alternative development programs during the past three years. These programs provide economic incentives and increased security to farmers in drug producing regions in the Western Hemisphere. Secondly, the global drug policy community is committed to reducing the supply of drugs. But our geographic focus in supply reduction is not limited to Latin America. Last week, the New York Times reported that the U.S. is training counternarcotic enforcement units in Ghana to disrupt the flow of cocaine into Europe, with more efforts planned for Nigeria and Kenya. Because we know that, as in Latin America, transnational criminal organizations will exploit political and social unrest in vulnerable countries. We must be nimble in our response.

These policies undercut some of the human rights and class stratification claims made by the pro. Alternative development programs provide social, security, and monetary support to farmers who wish to transition to legal crops. Far from the harsh approaches described by the pro, the administration’s policies are a nod toward the significant difficulty faced by producers trying to transition to alternate ways of making money. These programs emphasize reform, not arrests, likely bolstering democratic institutions and participation.

On a conclusive note, you should emphasize the strategic middle ground of current policies, arguing that a shift toward too much law enforcement is bad for all the reasons the pro claims but that a concession to any approach softer than the current one would be disastrous for creating socially-necessary barriers to unrestricted drug use and crime.

5. Continued status quo policy is critical to U.S.-Mexico relations.

If you’re looking for a more specific advantage area, you may want to delve into the U.S.-Mexico relationship. This is because the current administration is perhaps the most in favor of hardline approaches to drug groups, calling on the U.S. to emphasize them going forward. Roberts and Walser explain:

Roberts and Walser, 2013 [“The Hagel, Kerry, and Brennan Senate Confirmation Hearings: U.S. Policy for the Western Hemisphere,” James M. Research Fellow for Economic Freedom and Growth at the



Heritage Foundation and Ray, Senior Policy Analyst in Latin America Policy at Heritage, January 18, Heritage Foundation.]

Priority Attention to Mexico Mexico's fight against organized crime has cast a doleful shadow over U.S.–Mexican relations. New Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto promises to restore citizen security and continue overhauling Mexico's police and judiciary. Often overlooked in the U.S. is Mexico's emerging economic status—the world's 11th largest economy and growing. If Mexico opens its energy sector to equity participation with American companies (with their advanced deepwater, fracking, and horizontal drilling technologies) and makes other serious reforms, it can reverse an alarming decline in its oil production and tap massive shale gas deposits. The U.S. should continue to help Mexico fight organized crime with a continuation of the Merida Initiative, enhanced military-to-military ties, and serious attention to building real citizen security. The U.S. and Mexico need to act jointly in troubled Central America, particularly in the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) to combat trafficking organizations and shore up weak police and judicial institutions. Investing in border infrastructure, avoiding protectionist flare-ups, and exploring new cross-border energy alternatives can also cement a stronger U.S.–Mexico relationship. The U.S. will find it hard to project global leadership without a democratic, prosperous, and stable Mexico.

Mexico is an important ally: we share a border, their economy is growing, and they have a number of energy resources. Unlike some other Latin American states, Mexico's leadership has called for the continuation of cooperation with the U.S. on current drug policy as part of its promise to get serious about drug crime within its borders. This cooperation is an important catalyst for dialogue between the two powers and ensures the continuation of a valuable relationship.

Aside from the impacts that can be gained from arguing the implications of U.S.-Mexico relations (this evidence even says it's key to global leadership), cards like this can help undercut some of the pro's relations arguments. You can debate this most productively by outlining the qualitative differences between what we gain from relationships with different Latin American nations. For example, if some countries in Latin America hate U.S. drug policy, but have less to contribute to a relationship than Mexico does, you can argue that the U.S.-Mexico relationship should be a greater concern because it simply matters more. That is, preserving the U.S.-Mexico relationship is a "good" that outweighs the "harm" of upsetting other, less influential states.

6. Debates over legalization cause stagnant, ineffective drug policy.

Finally, you can argue a simple tie-breaker: Even if legalization and public health approaches have merit, they're ultimately counter-productive. This is because it's so difficult to define the parameters of reasonable, workable, politically palatable, consensus-based legalization or public health focused strategy. The details are so difficult to iron out that the burden should be on the pro to describe exactly what an alternative to current U.S. drug policy should be. To do otherwise risks debates about drug policy devolving into inaction. Walser explains:

Walser, 2009 ["U.S. Drug Policy in Latin America," Testimony before the Committee on the Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, of the United States House of Representatives, Ray, Senior Policy Analyst on Latin America at the Heritage Foundation, December 7.]



Congressional leadership, the Obama Administration, and the American people need a strategy that is comprehensive, integrated, and long-range. Debates about the failed war on drugs will likely lead us nowhere, as will any significant legislative attempts to open the door to drug legalization. We need a strategy that fights the supply side by working with partners and endangered friends like Mexico and Colombia whose very democratic governability and internal security can be placed at risk by the violence, corruption, and insecurity caused by drug cartels, narcoterrorists, and external enemies. The U.S. must stand ready to help the smaller countries in the region that lack effective forces and resources or run the risk of seeing them overwhelmed by powerful criminal organizations. Finally, it must find new ways to hold accountable and pressure for cooperation those leaders and nations that see non-cooperation with the U.S. on drug issues as another tool for curtailing and weakening U.S. influence in the region.

Thus, in sum, the negative argument on this resolution is that **U.S. policy, despite its flaws, represents the best mix of approaches across the spectrum. The current policy has cemented important gains and any substantial change risks backsliding.**

That's all for today! We hope today's analysis was very helpful! As always, please send us your cases for a free critique whenever you finish them and, as always, direct any questions to the comments section or via e-mail at lauren.sabino@ncpa.org. Good luck this season!