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For Immediate Release

March 31, 2005

For further information contact:

Rachel Farley (202) 797-2171

rfarley@wola.org

Aerial Spraying Fails to Reduce Coca Cultivation in Colombia

Washington, DC – **Despite record aerial spraying of coca crops in Colombia in 2004, land area under cultivation remained steady, suggesting that the aerial spraying strategy has hit its limits,** said the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) in response to the latest figures on coca cultivation in the Andes produced by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

Late last Friday, ONDCP released its estimate of coca cultivation in Colombia in 2004. Despite record aerial spraying of over 130,000 hectares of coca in Colombia last year, the total area under coca cultivation remained “statistically unchanged” at 114,000 hectares.

The new ONDCP data also demonstrates a continued “balloon effect”- as aggressive spraying in some areas has not deterred new cultivation elsewhere. Official estimates on Peru coca cultivation have yet to be released, but the State Department’s own reporting suggests that cultivation in Peru has increased.

“The stable cultivation in 2004 throws into doubt U.S. officials’ predictions of a major impact on U.S. drug prices and purity,” commented John Walsh, WOLA Senior Associate for Drug Policy.

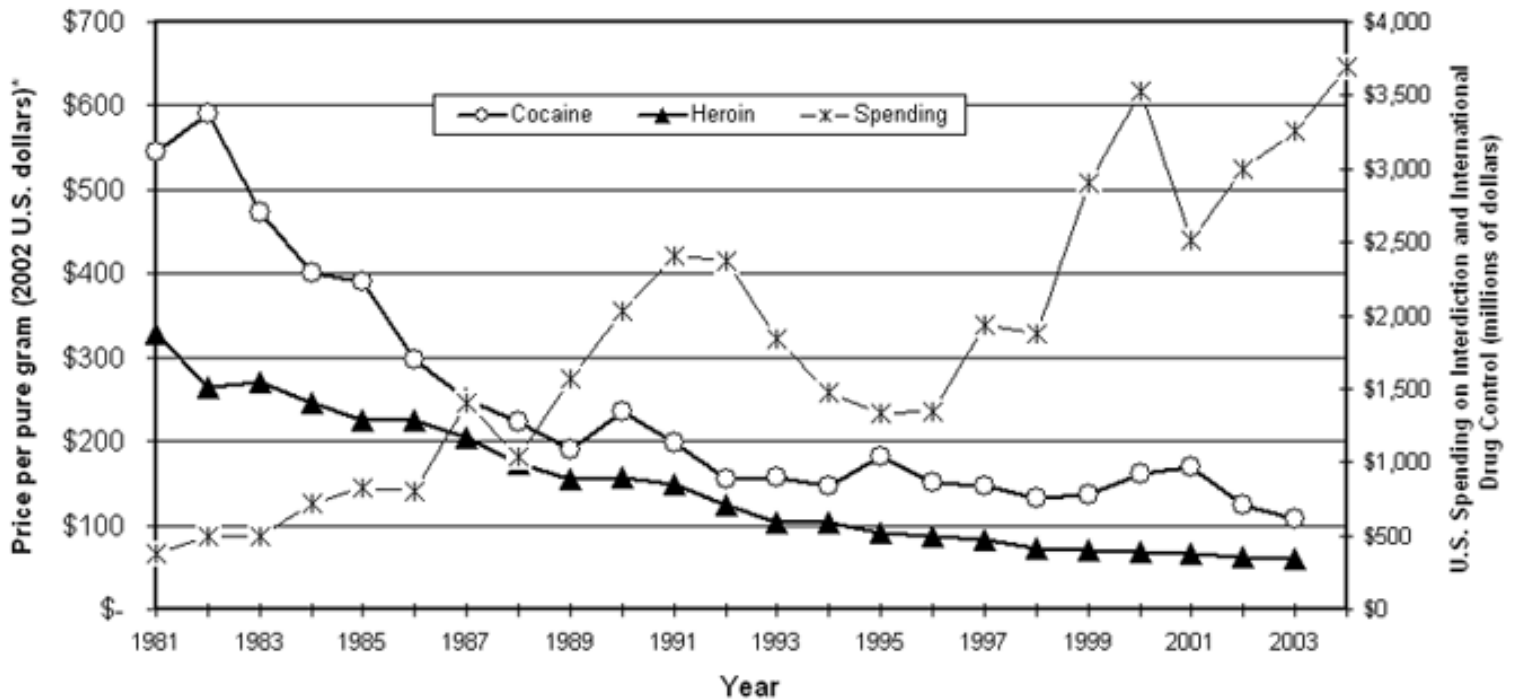
Over the past quarter-century, the U.S. government has spent nearly \$45 billion on interdiction and source-country programs meant to curtail cocaine and heroin supplies and drive up U.S. street prices of these drugs. But the evidence is unambiguous: According to data released earlier this month by ONDCP, cocaine and heroin prices have fallen dramatically since the early 1980s and are now at all-time lows (see graph below).

“The U.S. Government’s own data provides stark evidence that the ‘drug war’ is failing to achieve its most basic objectives,” said Walsh. **“Policymakers should review the data and reconsider the billions being spent on an ineffective policy.”**

For an in-depth critique of the indicators used to measure drug control efforts, see WOLA's publication "Are We There Yet?"

For ONDCP's full report on drug prices and purity, see:
http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/price_purity/

U.S. Spending on International Drug Control vs. U.S. Retail Cocaine and Heroin Prices



* Note: Prices shown are for purchases of ≤2g of cocaine, and for ≤1g of heroin. Heroin prices have been divided by six to fit scale.

Source: Price data prepared by the RAND Corporation for the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); spending data from ONDCP, *National Drug Control Strategy*

Year	> 50 grams cocaine	> 10 grams heroin*	U.S. spending (millions)	Year	> 50 grams cocaine	> 10 grams heroin*	U.S. spending (millions)
1981	\$201.18	\$167.94	\$373.90	1993	\$49.69	\$54.25	\$1,839.30
1982	\$186.54	\$124.08	\$490.10	1994	\$43.55	\$49.84	\$1,477.70
1983	\$158.20	\$121.02	\$500.10	1995	\$48.68	\$39.62	\$1,331.80
1984	\$136.53	\$119.20	\$718.60	1996	\$42.59	\$41.41	\$1,350.30
1985	\$135.34	\$109.24	\$820.50	1997	\$45.76	\$34.72	\$1,939.20
1986	\$100.19	\$109.38	\$800.90	1998	\$38.59	\$30.96	\$1,870.50
1987	\$74.57	\$125.71	\$1,408.90	1999	\$43.52	\$29.34	\$2,901.90
1988	\$56.95	\$85.23	\$1,040.70	2000	\$48.02	\$25.60	\$3,523.60

1989	\$52.98	\$80.98	\$1,568.10	2001	\$44.87	\$22.44	\$2,512.20
1990	\$71.60	\$107.91	\$2,030.90	2002	\$41.59	\$23.05	\$2,998.20
1991	\$55.79	\$82.05	\$2,402.80	2003	\$37.96	\$23.20	\$3,252.60
1992	\$52.29	\$67.01	\$2,368.30	2004			\$3,624.50

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