

# Criminal justice 1 question

Law



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The desire to stamp out drugs from society is indeed a valid one. Certainly, the drug problem has caused an assortment of problems on society – increasing the crime rate, destroying lives, tearing families apart. The response of the government, however, whilst well-intentioned, has given rise to a number of critiques from various sectors. This paper will focus on the supply reduction paradigm, and in particular, the recent efforts of the US government to pressure the Colombian government to conduct aerial spraying on more than 100, 000 acres of coca plants used for the production of cocaine.

Why is this problematic? The first issue is environmental. According to Lyman (2011, page 428), “ as a result, Colombian peasants who are dependent on the coca crop as their only source of income have moved into the Amazon rainforests. The movement of coca growers to rainforest has resulted in the clearing of at least 1. 75 acres of rainforest.” It is clear that one cannot solve a problem by causing another one. In this case, in an attempt to stop the drug trade at its source, policy makers and state agents are destroying important natural resources that are vital to the ecosystem and indeed to the planet.

Secondly, the use of forced eradication of crops (through aerial spraying) creates wide and alarming social problems that will only have more disastrous consequences. According to one study (Vargas, 2004 page 5), a political movement born out of disgruntled coca farmers has almost topped the Bolivian presidency and has created insurgency, showing that the cost of conflict far outweighs short-gain gains to be derived from aerial-spraying a community without working out long-term social issues, such as relocation and alternative farming and livelihood opportunities.

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Thirdly, unbeknownst to the American people, the aerial spraying operations also target legal crops and other things that should not be targeted.

According to Transnational Institute (2001, internet), " many cases involving the destruction of legal crops and alternative development projects can be documented. Aerial fumigation has targeted home patches, ponds and water sources that should never have been the object of this policy." This is truly problematic and unjust because we are compromising the livelihood and growth opportunities of the poor farmers of Latin America who are growing legal crops and who have a right to clean sources of water. It is deplorable that in order to protect its people, the American government deems it appropriate to make the people of other countries vulnerable.

Finally, without targeting the cartels, the drug problem will not stop. The cartels will only look for more other sources of coca plants. It must be remembered that these farmers are paid very low by the cartels for the coca plants. They are very low in the value chain. If the drug trade is to be stopped, the focus must be on the gravy train - where the money is made. Certainly, there is need to stop the production of coca plants so that cocaine will not be created anymore. But there must be alternative development programs (Mansfield, 1999) that should be put in place for farmers who are to be displaced by the eradication. Otherwise, more social problems will be created.

#### References

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