

years, both rebels and paramilitaries have financed their illegal activities through the sale of cocaine, which has also corrupted government institutions.

Each year since the inception of Plan Colombia, the United States has provided Colombia with more than half a billion dollars in mostly military and counter-drug assistance, totaling more than \$5 billion.

The primary goal of Plan Colombia, at least as sold to the Congress, was to decrease by half the amount of coca produced, resulting in commensurate reductions in the income derived from cocaine to the rebels and paramilitaries and the amount of cocaine entering the United States.

While there is no reliable evidence that Plan Colombia has affected either the price or availability of cocaine in the United States, the Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that profits from illegal drugs to the FARC rebels declined by about one-third between 2003 and 2005. This is welcome news. But whether this trend has continued since then or has ebbed and flowed like most other statistics relating to drug cultivation and trafficking in Colombia, is unknown. Unfortunately, it is also not yet apparent that this reported reduction in profits has affected the FARC's ability to operate.

While the majority of killings of civilians during the 7 years of Plan Colombia are attributed to paramilitaries, sometimes with the active or tacit support of government forces, the FARC has engaged in many atrocities, including attacks against civilian targets and kidnapping. But perhaps the most insidious of their crimes is the widespread use of landmines.

According to a report released yesterday by Human Rights Watch, casualties from landmines used by the FARC, as well as by another rebel group known as the ELN, have risen steadily in recent years. As is so often the case with landmines which are triggered indiscriminately by the victim, most of the casualties in Colombia have been civilians.

While the number of casualties did not exceed 148 a year in the 1990s, Human Rights Watch reports that last year the number was 1,107. This increase contrasts sharply with the worldwide decline in the use of these insidious weapons. In fact, Colombia is among the more than 150 nations that have signed or ratified the international treaty banning antipersonnel mines.

According to press reports, the FARC defends its use of mines by claiming that they are used only against government security forces, not civilians. That, however, is a specious claim, since mines are inherently indiscriminate. They will kill or maim whoever comes into contact with them, often months or years after they are laid. I have seen photographs of the horrific injuries suffered by both government

soldiers and innocent civilians from rebel mines.

While the FARC, like others who continue to use landmines, would undoubtedly claim that their military utility justifies their continued use, I reject that argument. The harm to civilians and the contamination of the countryside caused by mines cannot be justified.

While there are programs to assist Colombia's mine victims with rehabilitation and vocational training, they are far from adequate. I have supported efforts to increase U.S. assistance. We are looking at ways to use the Leahy War Victims Fund to assist Colombian civilians who have been injured by mines, and we are supporting United for Colombia's efforts to obtain surgery in the U.S. for Colombian soldiers who have suffered grievous mine injuries.

I have been a consistent critic of human rights violations in Colombia where impunity remains a persistent problem. There have been thousands of killings of civilians, including of human rights defenders, union members, journalists, and others who have been targeted by one armed group or another. Hardly any of these crimes have resulted in convictions and punishment. But none of that excuses the continued use of landmines by the FARC and ELN. As I have said many times before, the use of landmines should be a war crime. It is barbaric; it is inhumane; it is indefensible.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION AGAINST IMPUNITY IN GUATEMALA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week, I spoke in this Chamber about the current debate underway in Guatemala concerning the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG. In my brief remarks I recalled the 30 years of civil war that caused widespread atrocities against civilians, particularly Guatemala's Mayan population. A substantial majority of those killings and disappearances were perpetrated by Guatemalan security forces.

Since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, most Guatemalans have tried to put the past behind them and rebuild their country. The United States and other donors have supported that effort.

But key aspects of the Peace Accords remain unfulfilled, and there has been no justice for the families of the war's many victims. Meanwhile, gang violence, drug trafficking, brutal killings of women, and attacks against human rights defenders and others who speak out against corruption and impunity have increased exponentially and threaten the very foundations of Guatemala's fragile democracy.

In recent years, the Guatemalan Government has worked with officials of the United Nations to draft the CICIG agreement, the latest version of which has been upheld by Guatemala's constitutional court.

The CICIG is necessary to expose the truth about clandestine groups and to bring accountability for the violence. Far from weakening national sovereignty, CICIG will support Guatemala by helping to strengthen the capacity of the country's dysfunctional judicial system.

On July 18, a majority of members of the International Relations Committee of the Guatemalan Congress, for reasons that only they can explain, voted against the CICIG agreement. Since then, several have changed their votes and I understand that on August 1 the full Congress will approve or reject the CICIG agreement or refer it to another committee.

The question of whether to approve CICIG is, of course, a decision solely for Guatemala's Congress to make. But the importance of this historic decision cannot be overstated for U.S.-Guatemalan relations and for Guatemala's future.

Guatemala, like many impoverished countries emerging from years of civil conflict, faces immense social, economic and political challenges. Without the support of countries like the United States in building its economy, promoting foreign investment and trade, and strengthening the institutions of democracy, Guatemala will lag behind its neighbors.

Today, that support hangs in the balance.

The Bush administration has voiced strong support for CICIG. The U.S. Congress has linked a resumption of U.S. assistance for the Guatemalan Armed Forces, in part, on approval of CICIG. In addition, I would be reluctant to support assistance for Guatemala to take part in any regional security initiative with the United States, unless CICIG is approved and supported. There is little point in trying to work with a government that fails to demonstrate a strong commitment to ending impunity and to combating gang violence and corruption, which have infiltrated the very institutions that would participate in such a strategy.

CICIG is nothing less than a choice between the past and the future. Rejecting this historic initiative an outcome most Americans would find inexplicable would signal that the Guatemalan Congress is more interested in protecting the forces of evil, and in covering up the truth, than in ending the lawlessness that is taking Guatemala backwards.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN COLOMBIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, at a time when we are focused on the chaos in Iraq and the flood of Iraqis who have fled their homes and are living either as displaced persons in Iraq or as refugees in Jordan, Syria and elsewhere, I want to call attention to a humanitarian crisis in our own hemisphere.

In Colombia, a country of roughly 44 million people, over 3 million have

been internally displaced as a result of political and drug-related violence and the aerial spraying of chemical herbicides to eradicate coca. They are the second largest displaced population in the world after Darfur, Sudan. An average of 18,000 Colombians are uprooted every month, with more than 1 million forced to flee in the past 5 years alone, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

To put that in perspective, if the same ratio were applied to the United States, a country of roughly 300 million people, there would be over 20 million internally displaced Americans. That is a staggering number when you consider the burden they would place on public services and the environment. Colombia by comparison is a relatively poor country, and many of these people, the majority of whom are women and children, lack access to basic health care, sanitation, education, adequate shelter, or employment.

It is my understanding that Colombia has suitable laws for addressing the needs of the internally displaced, but the laws are too often ignored or poorly implemented. Insecurity and inadequate public services in isolated areas, where many of the displaced are located, hinder return to their homes and contribute to further displacement.

Recently, the House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on the Colombian Government and the international community to prioritize the needs of displaced persons, and recommending that the United States increase funding for emergency and long-term assistance.

The Senate version of the fiscal year 2008 State-Foreign Operations bill provides \$40 million for assistance for displaced persons in Colombia. This is a \$5 million increase above the President's budget request, which was woefully inadequate. As the White House urges Congress to continue funding aerial eradication programs which, despite billions of dollars, have failed to make an appreciable dent in the amount of coca under cultivation, one would like to think that at some point they will exhibit the same zeal for meeting the basic needs of Colombia's most vulnerable people.

RETIREMENT OF DAVID DEMAG

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to recognize the career of a real-life hero who stands tall as one of the bravest and most dedicated public servants we have in Vermont if not anywhere—Police Chief David Demag of the town of Essex Police Department. After 36 years in law enforcement, Dave will hang up his uniform early next month and enter a well-earned retirement.

Dave comes from a family dedicated to police service—he is the fourth generation in his family to serve as a police officer. In fact, his great-grand-

father and namesake, Chief David Demag, was the first chief of police of the Village of Essex in the early 1900s. It seems to me that it is only fitting that Dave will finish his law enforcement career in Essex, where his roots grow deep.

I am proud to be able to call Dave not only an accomplished Vermonter but also a good friend. We have known each other for years, having both started our careers in law enforcement in the city of Burlington. Dave began in 1971 as a patrol officer for the Burlington Police Department, and was promoted through the ranks as corporal, detective, sergeant, lieutenant and, finally, commander. In 1996, he was appointed chief of police in St. Albans, a post he held until May 2001, when he was named to Chief of Police in Essex.

When he began his law enforcement career in the early 1970s, Dave worked undercover on drug cases. One of the cases we worked together on—he as an undercover agent and me as the State's attorney for Chittenden County—set up a successful sting to catch Paul Lawrence, a corrupt cop who framed dozens of narcotics suspects. The Lawrence case remains the first item Dave cites as the most memorable moments of his professional life.

Known for his ability to earn and command respect from his employees and the public he serves, Chief Demag has led the Essex Police Department with a steady hand and a calm presence. He is credited with revitalizing the Essex Police Department and changing the way it trains and promotes officers. As chief, he has emphasized continuing education for members of the force and required promotions to be based on ability rather than length of service.

Dave's leadership was especially apparent last August when a gunman went on a shooting spree at three sites across Essex, including an elementary school, leaving two dead and three wounded, including the gunman himself. Taking swift and deliberate action, Dave and his officers ushered dozens of teachers and several children away from the chaos at Essex Elementary School and to safety as tactical-response officers wearing body armor and carrying automatic weapons moved in and surrounded the building.

As a U.S. Senator, I have been privileged to work with Chief Demag and have his vocal support on an array of initiatives—from bulletproof vests to first responder funding—that have helped make the lives and work of Vermont's and our Nation's police officers a bit easier. But what stands out most in my mind is his unwavering support for the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act, which became law in 2003 and expanded the Public Safety Officer Benefits, PSOB, Program by allowing survivors of public safety officers who suffer fatal heart attacks or strokes while acting in the line of duty to qualify for the Federal survivor ben-

efits. Dave understood how important it was for that bill to become law because his father, special Deputy Sheriff Bernard Demag of the Chittenden County Sheriff's Office, suffered a fatal heart attack within 2 hours of his chase and apprehension of an escaped juvenile whom he had been transporting. The Demag family spent nearly two decades fighting in court for workers' compensation death benefits to no avail. What Dave and his family went through left no doubt in my mind that we should be treating the surviving families of officers who die in the line of duty with more decency and respect. Although Dave knew that his family would not receive survivor benefits under the PSOB law, he did not want other survivors of public safety officers to endure what his family suffered. It was a great day when I told Dave that the Hometown Heroes Act had finally been signed into law.

In 2001, Chief Demag was appointed on my recommendation to serve on the 11-member U.S. Medal of Valor Review Board, which selects and recommends to the President public safety officers to receive the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor. The Medal of Valor is the highest national award for valor by a public safety officer and is designed to recognize the extraordinary heroism of our police, firefighters and correctional officers. As a board member, Dave has worked faithfully to award the medal to his public safety officers who demonstrate extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty.

I wish Dave and his wife Donna nothing but the best as they head into the next phase of their life together. I will say, however, that whoever Essex appoints as its next police chief will have the biggest of shoes to fill, as Dave Demag is the best kind of leader a community can hope for and he will be missed. Thank you, Dave, and congratulations for your service and commitment to the people of Essex and all Vermonters.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

IRAN DIVESTMENT

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of the Senate an important article that appeared in today's Baltimore Sun. It describes the progress States are making in passing laws that divest their pension funds of companies that invest heavily in Iran's oil and gas industry. As highlighted in the article, Florida enacted a significant law along these lines, and other States, including my State of Illinois, are on the verge of doing so.

The need for these laws is clear. Iran uses the revenue it generates from its energy sector to finance its pursuit of nuclear weapons and support for terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. Along with a sustained diplomatic effort and toughened multilateral sanctions on Iran, divestment is a