

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

McCaffrey Wielded Smart Power Effectively

Barry McCaffrey, helped reduce Colombian cocaine and heroin cultivation and production and undercut the FARC's national economic and political strength.

May 11, 2017 4:09 p.m. ET

In “Colombia is a ‘Smart Power’ Success Story” (op-ed, April 25), Bill Lane traces the history of both Plan Colombia and military assistance against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to President Clinton and House Speaker Dennis Hastert. But four-star Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the national drug czar under President Clinton, conducted at least five study missions. I was on three of them, worked on all five and sent deputies to the other two—to Colombia from 1996 to 2000, including meetings with the Colombian president and military leadership. I made flights with the Colombian military to southern Colombia's deep jungle bases, from which they strategized and fought the FARC.

Clinton came into a Cabinet meeting in 1999 and stated, “Barry wants a billion for Colombia.” The president authorized the funding, which helped reduce Colombian cocaine and heroin cultivation and production and undercut the FARC's national economic and political strength. This process continued under Bush and President Obama. But it started with McCaffrey, who conceived of Plan Colombia as a way to assist the Colombian government, maintain its democracy and economy and fight the drugs and the narco-rebels that threatened its nation and ours. The vision and work of individuals helps create national policy. Plan Colombia was largely Gen. McCaffrey's creation and a product of his years of negotiations and effort.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Weiner, Spokesman, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1995-2001

Original: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mccaffrey-wielded-smart-power-effectively-1494533360>