



Center for Strategic & International Studies
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United States' Drug Policy in the Western Hemisphere

**A Dialogue with John Walters
Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy**

October 9, 2003

CSIS Transnational Threats Initiative hosted a briefing with Director John Walters, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, October 9th 2003. Mr. Walters discussed the United States drug control policy in the western hemisphere and the nexus of transnational organized crime and transnational terrorism. He highlighted the progress made in Latin America in the war on drugs. The Colombian government has committed to a zero percent cocaine production policy, which he predicts would lead to a decline in drug trafficking to the U.S. in the next 6-12 months. Bolivia has not shown significant increases in drug production, which Director Walters assessed as positive, in view of Colombia's decline in production. Furthermore, he praised the leadership in the war on drugs in Mexico, emphasizing that no government in the last 20 years has countered drug trafficking organizations as effectively as Vincent Fox's government.

Director Walters emphasized the threat of organized crime and the link to terrorism. Drugs fund almost half of the terrorist groups listed by the State Department. He also discussed the importance of drug treatment. The United States spends more on treatment than any other nation. He stressed that drug-producing countries have led to increased drug consumption in those countries. Furthermore, he remarked on the rise of drug use and crime in the European Union while the United States drug use and crime are on the decline. He also stressed the concern for Canada's lax policy on the use of marijuana and emphasized the need for its continued cooperation with the United States against drug trafficking. Overall, Director Walters indicated that the U.S. government is more optimistic on the war on drugs, than in the last 25 years and it will continue to keep the momentum as it works to solve this problem.