

Colombian's Cocaine Trade

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The political alliance uniting Hugo Chávez, Nicolás Maduro, and Gustavo Petro stretches back to 1994, forged in the shared ambition of reshaping Latin America's balance of power. By 2018, Petro and his coalition—ranging from Colombia Humana and Polo Democrático to Alianza Verde—had strengthened these bonds, transforming ideological sympathy into coordinated political alignment.

Since Petro and Maduro consolidated their respective holds over Colombia and Venezuela, their governance has yielded one undeniable outcome: the empowerment of organized crime and illegal armed groups bound to both regimes. Cloaked in the rhetoric of the so-called “Total Peace” policy, this alliance has opened new corridors for criminal expansion under the guise of reconciliation.

Today, Colombia stands as the world's foremost producer and exporter of coca and cocaine—a tragic emblem of state complicity and failed reform. Criminal empires thrive unchecked, while networks such as the Cartel de los Soles and El Tren de Aragua, nurtured under Maduro's shadow, have amassed unprecedented wealth and power. And yet, Petro—hailed by Maduro as his *Siamese brother*—denies their very existence, even as their influence corrodes the heart of the Colombian state.

Petro and Maduro's so-called *Total Peace* initiative extends far beyond negotiation – it encompasses alliances with the FARC dissidents, the ELN, the Second Marquetalia, the Clan del Golfo, and more than thirty other illegal armed and criminal organizations. Together, these groups form a powerful nexus of government-linked and criminal forces that command vast financial resources and territorial control.

Petro and Maduro are widely feared, and their overarching goal mirrors Hamas's strategy in Gaza: to establish a binational stronghold at the border governed by their criminal and political associates.

With just months to go before the legislative and presidential elections in Colombia and Peru, the

decisive factor may well be the influx of money from powerful criminal organizations – forces that have long influenced both nations' political landscapes. In Colombia, President Petro's own rise to power remains under scrutiny due to allegations of illicit financing in his legislative and presidential campaigns, as revealed by his eldest son and his own brother.

Colombian Cocaine Routes

Business continued as usual for Colombia's illegal armed groups and organized crime – protected under the infamous *Picota Prison deal* struck by Petro during his presidential campaign – until the U.S. Administration intervened. Washington's decision to deploy military forces, first in the Caribbean and later in the Pacific, disrupted the criminal networks' operations.

In response, a wave of attacks against traffickers began, followed by a fierce online counteroffensive. Maduro and Petro's digital propaganda armies sought to portray the cartels – including the *Cartel de los Soles* and the ELN – as victims of violations of international humanitarian law. The UN and the EU publicly condemned such U.S. attacks.

This is what passes for “democracy” under Petro and Maduro: while international institutions rush to denounce American action against organized crime, they remain conspicuously silent in the face of the atrocities – the systematic human rights violations and war crimes committed by these same criminal organizations, responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths in Colombia. They should have condemned both.

A notable shift in the Maduro-Petro strategy following U.S. intervention has been their recalibration of narcotrafficking operations. Despite knowing that American forces are likely to respond, their networks continue to move drugs along the Caribbean and Pacific routes—routes long tied to regional power and control.

Petro and his allies have historically weaponized human vulnerability, deliberately placing civilians in harm's way to frame conflict as victimization, a tactic seen repeatedly between 2018 and 2022 when “civilian casualties” emerged from clashes between the Colombian army and organized crime.

Although Petro has since refined coordination to reduce civilian deaths, the core strategy remains unchanged: exploiting chaos as a political and operational shield.

Second, Maduro and Petro appear to be reviving an old tactic pioneered by Medellín cartel boss Pablo Escobar—the same figure who once financed the M-19 guerrilla movement, Petro's former group, which later received an armistice from the Colombian government.

This method, known in the world of narcotrafficking as the “decoy strategy,” involves sending visible or seemingly valuable shipments along heavily monitored routes to attract law enforcement attention, while the real cargo moves undetected through safer, less scrutinized channels.

This diversion technique, a hallmark of the drug wars in the 1980s and 1990s, was perfected by the Medellín and Cali cartels. Escobar and his associates routinely “sacrificed” smaller shipments they knew would be intercepted to ensure that far larger quantities reached their destinations unharmed—a calculated deception that now appears to have been resurrected under Maduro and Petro's coordination.

This time, Maduro and Petro employed the tactic to signal that cooperation with European—not American—authorities is effective. Traffickers—portrayed by the Siamese brothers as “poor's”—were arrested, and large quantities of cocaine were seized.

According to media reports, the operations, led by law enforcement from two European key allies of Petro, were deemed a clear success, underscoring both the strategic reach and political messaging behind the maneuver.

Once again, criminals are framed as the victims in Colombia's tragic war—simply because they control the money. A more balanced analysis is urgently needed, one that prioritizes the protection of civilians rather than serving as a pretext to target an American political leader.

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