



## The U.S.-Colombia and U.S.-Panama TPAs: Reinforcing U.S. Strategic Interests

**The U.S.-Colombia TPA reinforces our commitment to America's most stalwart ally in South America.** Colombia chairs the U.N. committee implementing U.S.-backed sanctions against Iran, has partnered with the United States to provide extensive training and assistance to help the Mexican government defeat violent drug cartels along the U.S.-Mexico border, and Colombia has provided counter-narcotics training and assistance to the government in Afghanistan, at the request of the United States. The agreement will enhance U.S. efforts to strengthen democracy in Latin America by lending direct support for the rule of law, internationally recognized workers' rights, and transparency in business and government.

**The U.S.-Colombia and U.S.-Panama TPAs support significant counter-narcotic progress.** The TPAs are vital to enhancing cooperation in the fight against narcotics trafficking; they also set an example for other countries around the world as we pursue our global security goals.

- In 1999, the Pastrana administration unveiled its "Plan Colombia." Since that time, coca production in Colombia has been reduced by 40%, reaching the lowest level in 11 years according to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. Since 2000, Colombian security forces have interdicted cocaine and heroin shipments with an estimated street value between \$35 billion and \$40 billion. Furthermore, according to official statistics, guerrillas were reduced from 24,000 fighters in 2002 to 9,500 in 2010.
- Since 1995, Panama and the United States have had a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. This treaty helped Panama and the United States cooperate in the largest known maritime cocaine seizure ever (22 tons with an estimated market value \$500 million).

Both TPAs promote U.S. security interests by forging a deeper partnership with Colombia and Panama through a framework for government to government relationships that is grounded in the tangible national interests of all parties.

**The TPAs provide citizens with long-term alternatives to narcotics trafficking.** By enhancing opportunities for economic growth and development in Latin America, these agreements will lend strength to local economies. Colombia's unemployment rate has been nearly cut in half from 20.5% in 2000 to 11.7% in 2008. More than three million jobs have been created since 2002, when the U.S. Congress opened the U.S. market to Colombian exports through the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act — underscoring the power of trade as an effective alternative development program.