The recent certification decisions on Mexico and Colombia are cases in point. This last March 1, the President decided to again decertify Colombia. At the same time, he decided to fully certify Mexico. Both decisions caused concern in Congress. It is important to understand that there were lots of different concerns. Additionally, many of these concerns arose from contradictory opinions.

Some felt that if Colombia was decertified Mexico should have been. Others believed that if Mexico was certified then Colombia should have been. Still others believed that both should have gotten national interest waivers. Because none of these views were vindicated in the actual decision, many have drawn the conclusion that certification didn't work. Or they have concluded the administration lied. The answer in either case seems to be, ''dump certification.''

As I have already said, I don't think this is the right course. I believe the view is wrong on both substance and process.

In the first place, when we in Congress created the certification process, we did not create a pass/fail system. Nor did we create a system of shared outcomes. That is, we created a process that evaluated each country on its own merits in fighting drugs. Just like we don't give everyone in school the same grade if they performed differently, we don't base certification decisions on group behavior. We designed the process to permit nuanced decisions. We recognized the need to draw conclusions based not on single issues or purely momentary situations.

At the same time, we realized that without the push of law the administration, any administration, would likely not have made drugs a major foreign policy concern. In that sense, Congress had a healthy incredulity of administration motives. I remind my colleagues that it was a Democratic-controlled House and a Republican-controlled Senate that first passed certification during the tenure of a Republican President. We had a bipartisan wariness of the executive branch. It is, after all, the business of Congress to give administrations heck from time to time.

Initially, the administration resisted certification. It chose not to apply the standards in the law with any vigor. Indeed, the first countries to get decertified were all soft targets. Countries like Burma, Iran, and Syria.

These were countries we already disliked and with whom we had only limited dealings. Initially, no serious countries got decertified. Because of this history, a certain cynicism grew up around certification. There is also today an evident impatience with what is and must be a complex decision-making process.

That process has been around for 10 years. As with other cases, the longer the requirement has been on the books and the more Congress has insisted it be taken seriously, the more used and useful it has become. The process has gathered momentum. Last year, in fact, I asked the Congressional Research Service to review the merits of the certification process. That review, which is still available, makes clear how the certification process has matured and proved effective.

In the past several years, in fact, the list of countries decertified or given a national interest waiver has grown to include some real countries. Such countries as Nigeria, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Pakistan. Countries with which we have a wide variety of interests apart from drugs. Just a few years ago, no one in Congress believed that any administration would ever decertify Colombia. Certainly there was a lot of sentiment in Congress that believed the evidence justified decertification. But the conviction was that it wouldn't happen. It did.

Not only has the standard been applied with more rigor, it has also encouraged greater cooperation from certified countries. All in all, more countries now take as a given that drug control must be an important element in their thinking.

That list includes the United States. To voluntarily choose to abandon such a tool out of a passing frustration is not very sound policy.

But, as the list of affected countries has grown to include more significant U.S. partners, the more controversial certification has become. This was to be expected. When Burma squawked, few in this country cared. Few people cared internationally. The military rulers of Burma had few friends. With Colombia affected and Mexico implicated, however, the noise level has gone up considerably. Both here and abroad.

To me, this indicates that certification is working. As I noted in an earlier statement, the fact that countries such as Colombia are complaining about our process is no sufficient reason to change it, much less throw it overboard.

Conversely, the fact that there was a difference of opinion on whether to certify Mexico or not, is also no sufficient reason to scuttle the boat.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in adjournment until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 21, 1997.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 9:10 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 21, 1997, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate May 20, 1997:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

A. PETER BURLEIGH, OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY, VICE EDWARD WILLIAM GNEHM, JR.

JAMES W. PARDEW, JR., OF VIRGINIA, FOR THE BANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS U.S. SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR MILITARY STABILIZATION IN THE BALKANS.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 20, 1997:

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JOHN J. BATBIE, JR., 0000
BRIG. GEN. WINFRED N. CARROLL, 0000
BRIG. GEN. DENNIS M. GRAY, 0000
BRIG. GEN. GRANT R. MULDER, 0000
BRIG. GEN. VIRGIL J. TONEY, JR., 0000

To be brigadier general

COL. WILLIAM E. ALBERTSON, 0000
COL. PAUL R. COOPER, 0000
COL. GERALD P. FITZGERALD, 0000
COL. PATRICK J. GALLAGHER, 0000
COL. EDWARD J. MECHENBIER, 0000
COL. JEFFREY M. MUSFELDT, 0000
COL. ALLAN R. POULIN, 0000
COL. GIUSEPPE P. SANTANIELLO, 0000
COL. ROBERT B. SIEGFRIED, 0000
COL. ROBERT C. STUMPF, 0000
COL. WILLIAM E. THOMLINSON, 0000

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE U.S. ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. CLAUDIA J. KENNEDY, 0000

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE U.S. ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. TOMMY R. FRANKS, 0000

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE U.S. ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 601:

To be major general

BRIG GEN. KEVIN B. KUKLOK, 0000

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE U.S. MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. TERRENCE P. MURRAY, 0000

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE U.S. MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. JAMES R. BATTAGLINI, 0000
COL. JAMES E. CARTWRIGHT, 0000
COL. STEPHEN A. CHENEY, 0000
COL. CHRISTOPHER CORTEZ, 0000
COL. ROBERT M. FLANAGAN, 0000
COL. JOHN F. GOODMAN, 0000
COL. GARY H. HUGHEY, 0000
COL. THOMAS S. JONES, 0000
COL. RICHARD L. KELLY, 0000
COL. RALPH E. PARKER, JR., 0000
COL. JOHN F. SATTLER, 0000
COL. WILLIAM A. WHITLOW, 0000
COL. FRANCES C. WILSON, 0000

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. KAREN A. HARMEYER, 0000

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL OF THE U.S. NAVY AND FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 5148:

To be rear admiral

CAPT. JOHN D. HUTSON, 0000