the District of Columbia public schools found a 10.9 percent gap in scores between students in buildings rated poor and ones rated as excellent, after accounting for other factors. The problem is not just an urban one. Studies in rural Virginia and North Dakota have found similar results.

Recently there was a study published in May 1996 by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University which concluded sufficient data exists to state that the condition of a building does result in a difference in students' scores and action.

Mr. Speaker, this is urgent. Education is the key to the strength of the United States of America. I would hope that we can work together to pass this bill this year, because we are doing it for our youngsters, for our families and our futures.

□ 1415

UNITED STATES DRUG POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, one of the most startling statistics you are ever going to see, at least that you are going to see in the next year or two, and I hope it is not repeated, is the fact that teen drug use in the United States has doubled since 1992. Doubled, drug use among teenagers.

That is not acceptable. It is not acceptable for many reasons. Society cannot stand having our young people become more and more involved with narcotics that dull their senses, habituate them, get them involved not only with marijuana, but leading on to harder substances, cocaine, heroin, et cetera, that can lead to life-endangering, if not career-ending types of involvement.

It is not acceptable in the sense of the crime that is involved with drugs and how it permeates society and reaches down to the ghettos, as well as up to the higher-income people. It is a very, very bad situation in our country today.

Many who talk about the drug situation like to put a good face on it, a happy face. I do not think there is a happy face.

Yes, we can say that if you compare drug use overall in the United States to something 10 or 20 years ago, it is overall down. Or we can say it is a little better on the treatment side hither and yon than it was before. But the reality is among the people we care the most about, among our children, drug use has doubled since 1992, and we have to do something about it.

Now, I am all for having an Office of Drug Policy, and I am all for that Office of National Drug Control Policy having a strategy, and General Barry McCaffrey is someone who I personally admire, and I believe he is very sincere in his efforts to try to work to eradicate the drug problem in this Nation. But I cannot agree that the strategy which he promulgated with the President a couple of weeks ago is adequate.

I have in my hands the national drug control strategy, 1998, a 10-year plan. There are some things in here that are very good. I particularly commend the drug czar's office for establishing criteria that we can measure progress by. It has been missing. We need to do it just like businesses measure progress hither and yon in their business.

We find in this drug plan all kinds of goals and objectives in detail about how we fight the drug scourge with prevention and treatment and so forth. But in the context of getting to the solution, the 10-year plan has some very serious problems to it.

The reality is that it is too shortsighted, in my judgment. We need to come up with a plan that says, yes, we will attack the demand side and the supply side. We are going to have a balanced approach. We have known that for years. We have talked about it for years. But we really have not come to the consensus, either in the Nation or in Congress or in our national leadership, on precisely what it is going to take and how soon we can get the resources it is going to take to actually stop this entire process of drugs coming into our country like they have been recently.

I am disturbed by the fact that in this drug strategy, up front, it says we should no longer talk about fighting the effort against narcotics as a war. This strategy at the very beginning of it says that war is not an appropriate metaphor, that it is misleading. In essence, the administration in producing this plan is saying we can never defeat the scourge of drugs gripping our Nation and killing our youths. Our only hope is to contain it, and the quote from the drug strategy is, to check the spread and improve the prognosis.

By saying this, they are, in my judgment, yielding and waving a white flag in the efforts we have. We should be conducting a war on drugs, and a war on drugs means a strategy that says, here is what we can do to stop it, here is when we are going to do it, here is how we are going to do it, here is the timetable to do it, and yes, this is a 10-year plan.

What is the ultimate goal of the 10-year plan? It is to reduce the availability and use of drugs in the United States by 50 percent in 10 years. But the teenage drug use in the United States has doubled since 1992, so if we reduce the use by 50 percent in 10 years, we will have only gone back to where we were in 1992. Is that acceptable? I suggest no, it is not acceptable.

In addition, what is meant by the word ''availability''? That is a pretty darn broad word. It is defined in here in a way that one might conclude it means the flow of illegal drugs into the United States, but it could also mean law enforcement and a lot of other things that go on to reduce the availability, the opportunity to buy drugs on the streets, I presume.

But nowhere in this drug strategy is there a goal or target that says what our objectives should be to reduce the flow of drugs coming into the United States at our borders or before they get to our borders. That is of paramount importance.

One of the reasons we have so much trouble with our prevention programs and with our law enforcement efforts in fighting narcotics today is because drugs are in more plentiful supply and cheaper than they have ever been. Both cocaine and heroin, in particular, fall into that category.

Heroin, for example, killed more young people in my hometown of Orlando a year or so ago than anywhere else in the United States; more than in Los Angeles, with a population many times the size of Orlando.

In the last two or three weeks, I have seen at least three or four articles in my hometown newspaper about arrests connected with heroin, a couple of them dealing with teenagers in our high schools there, things perhaps unheard of a few years ago being uncommon now.

Why is that? It is because heroin is now coming into the eastern part of the United States from Colombia, and it is purer than ever before, it is better quality and it is cheaper, and we are not really doing anything significant to stop that flow. The same thing can be said in many ways for cocaine and for marijuana and for the other narcotics that we are trying to fight.

That is not to say that Drug Enforcement Administration is not working hard. It is not to say the Coast Guard is not working hard. It is not to say that our State Department and our Defense Department people who are in charge of working in their respective areas are not attempting to do their jobs. It is not to say that Customs is not doing what it is supposed to be doing.

But the reality is the sum of this is insufficient, inadequate, and there is no leadership saying precisely what it is that we need to do and how we are going to do it, to stop the flow of drugs coming in in this alarming amount that has the price so low and the quantity so plentiful, that so many young people are using it that it is hard to get our arms around it.

All of our experts say we need to reduce the flow of drugs into this country by at least 60 percent, if not more, in order to raise the price up and make it more difficult for young people to buy it and afford it and get it and thereby reduce the pressures at the street level.

That is not the only thing we need to be doing. Again, we need to be educating, we need to be on television. Some of the things suggested in this strategy are good about that. I think we are going to spend quite a few million dollars we have appropriated very soon on

television commercials directed at young people to try to discourage them from using drugs.

We need to be involved in other ways, including ways in the workplace, which have been in the past suggested and some employers are doing it, but others are not. We need to get more people to have drug-free workplaces.

We need to spread the word out into the community to reduce this demand and use of drugs by education and every way we possibly can. We need to have better treatment programs and so on.

But when it comes right down to the crux of this, if we continue to inundate our Nation with the quantity that is coming in now, it is not going to be possible to manage this from the demand side alone.

It is my judgment as the Chairman of the House Crimes Subcommittee and a member of the House Intelligence Committee, who looks at these matters regularly, and has for some years, it is my judgment that we should set a goal, and I think it is achievable, set a goal to reduce the flow of drugs into the United States from other source countries, from outside the United States, reduce the flow of drugs by 80 percent within the next two or three years. Why don't we set three years and say 80 percent within three years. You can say, is that realistic, is that achievable, can it be done?

I want to tell you a little bit about why I think it can be done. I went down to Colombia and Peru and Bolivia in December, and I was in Mexico and Panama in the early part of this year, and I visited when I went in each of those countries with the key players at the State Department and with our people involved with the DEA in those countries and our defense attache and with the others who are country team members who are every day on the front lines in those countries trying to assist us in reducing crop production of cocaine and heroine, who are attempting to stop the drug lords in Colombia and elsewhere from shipping drugs this way and so forth.

I spent a little time with each one of them in the evenings talking about this idea, could it be possible in your country, in Colombia, in Peru, in Bolivia, if you were given the resources and nobody had a restriction on the amount of money involved, nobody told you you could not have this or could not do the other, could you devise a plan that within three years would stop the flow of drugs from this Nation out to the rest of the world by at least 80 percent? Every one of them said yes, we could. Yes, we could.

I asked them if they had ever been tasked to do that? The answer was universally, no.

Well, most of the drugs, more than 50 percent of the cocaine at least, is produced in Peru, about 20 percent in Bolivia, the rest of it in Colombia, most of it refined in Colombia. There is very little or no cocaine produced and distributed from any other sources than those three countries, and almost all of the heroin in the eastern half of the United States comes from Colombia.

So if we could reduce the flow out of each of those countries by 80 percent over the next three years, we would certainly reduce the flow into the United States of those drugs by pretty close to 80 percent, if not 80 percent. In fact, in the case of cocaine, it should be, it should translate directly into that, or more.

You can say, how have we missed the boat on this? Well, I do not think we have. Let us take country by country examples of how you would address that problem.

First of all in Peru, there has been great progress made. In Peru the quantity of coca base which is used to produce cocaine in a refined form, is way down. Peru used to produce about 60 percent of the world's supply of coca used for cocaine.

They grow plants, by the way, in the countries where they grow them, that are no higher than this rostrum. They produce leaves that look like, in my part of the country, camphorberry leaves, little leaves. They strip the leaves off the bushes several times a year, and they then make them into a sort of a liquid base, and goes on to make the basic base shipped out of the country.

You say ''they.'' Who is they? In Peru and Bolivia and Colombia, the people actually doing this are the poor people, the campesinos. They grow this stuff on acreage that is less than one-third of an acre in American terms, they call them hectares down there, and they are the poorest of the poor doing this. They get very low remuneration for doing it. They don't get much money at all.

They produce these leaves and carry them over and create this base by going to what they call a poso pit, the slang locally for a location where they operate to convert these leaves into the first step of making cocaine. All of this is grown in the Amazon regions of those three countries, down in the hot jungle area. I do not know how many people realize that, but coca plants are grown basically in the jungle, some of it a little higher land than others, but all of it in very thick jungle.

The little plots are cleared out and these poor people grow this stuff. Then they take these leaves and they go near a stream, and they build some 20 foot long, maybe not even that, some 10 foot long trough, a couple feet wide, maybe three or four feet wide at most, very crudely.

They put water in there with the leaves they have carried over in big plastic garbage bags basically, or lawn bags, leaf bags. They dump them in there.

Then they put some sulfuric acid that they brought in, by foot usually, from someplace they have acquired it, usually from the drug dealers, the sources who want them to produce this stuff. And they stomp on it with their feet, sometimes with boots on, sometimes with naked feet, which does not make a lot of sense to me, because sulfuric acid is pretty damaging to the feet.

They do this two or three times over a 24 to 48 hour period. Then they strain off the liquid, and, again, we are talking about really crude operations in the forest, with no refineries or anything like that around. These are temporary shack-type thatch roof things at best set up beside these little streams.

They take this liquid and they put it into a pot, and they mix lime in it, and they make a thicker base, sort of a paste type of substance with it, and then they move it over to another pot and they heat it and cook it and dry it out until they get slabs basically about a foot square, and maybe a inch or two thick, and they wrap it in a tight cellophane heavy material, and they carry it out, their kids carry it out usually, sometimes they do themselves, either out of the jungle by foot to a road or a highway, or, once they get there, into a vehicle, hiding it in compartments under the seat, the back seat of the vehicle or wherever it may be. They might take space out above an axle or wherever they can place this, and they smuggle it to some site, where it is either going to be flown in the case of Peru into Colombia for refinement in a more sophisticated laboratory, or, in the case of Bolivia, near the City of Santa Cruz, where most of these laboratories are for refinement there in that country's case.

At any rate, the point is that in Peru we have made a lot of progress in reducing the crops that are grown and stopping these folks, these poor people who produce these little plots of cocaine, or actually produce plots of coca plants and then go produce the coca base, we have seen in the past two years that President Fujimori has had a new policy in effect, a reduction of 40 percent of the coca crop in Peru.

□ 1430

That is down from about 125,000 hectares, that is the way they measure their land, 125,000 hectares, to about 68,000 hectares during the beginning of this year. That is a dramatic reduction in 2 years. Why has that happened? What has been done to cause that to happen?

One very simple thing happened. President Fujimori of Peru decided on a policy of shooting down all of the private planes that are flying this coca base, once it has gotten to them, out of the country and into Columbia for refining in the laboratories. That policy alone has caused all of this disruption.

There are other things going on. There is a crop eradication program that the United States supports, and there are a lot of men and women in country in the Peruvian businesses and in the world of our foreign service who are working very hard every day to go

out and literally destroy crops by hand in Peru, where they take a machete and whack the plant down and kill it.

But the crop eradication alone would not have done this. We have been doing that for a long time. It is the policy of getting tough, and sending a message to those who are attempting to do this, that you are going to lose your life, we are not just going to be kidding around about this anymore. If you are going to be transshipping across country lines out of Peru in a private commercial plane, which is the way most of this goes, you are in real trouble.

Now we have begun the process, in cooperation with the Peruvian Government, of helping them with riverine traffic on all those rivers out there, to stop the possibility that some of this stuff is going to out by way of river through the Amazon and so forth. It is effective. It can work.

In order to succeed to an even greater extent, all that is really required is the continued effort on the same track that it has been on, and the determination of the leadership of the Government of Peru and some more air support, some air surveillance, some radar in the air, so we can keep up with these planes and give more support on the riverine program. We need to keep up what we are doing. But it is working in Peru.

In Bolivia, where about 20 percent of the coca crop is grown, the government of Bolivia has just changed hands last fall. I think it was in August, to be precise. In Bolivia we have a wonderful opportunity now, working with this new government which is dedicated to eradicating the coca production and the cocaine production in that country. As I said earlier, 20 percent is produced there. It is actually refined, in Bolivia's case. There are ways of going about attacking the problem there very similar to what was done in Peru.

I believe that with the support of the United States government, an effort clearly can be done to make it unsafe for these folks to be transitting and trafficking the base narcotic from the field, where it is grown and put into this paste as I have described, by the poor people, the campesinos, into the city, in the area of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where it is refined. There is only one road that goes that way, and it is a long way. It seems to me that is a choke point, and we could stop a lot of the traffic along that road.

It also seems to me that there is only one road into Brazil and one main highway into Argentina. There is no reason why we could not choke off the traffic leaving Santa Cruz with a more refined product, and with greater information and equipment, skills, et cetera, I believe that the Government of Bolivia will be able to do the same or better than the Government of Peru over the next couple of years in reducing the production of both the coca base from the plants, as well as the finished cocaine and shipping it out.

It is not important what I believe. What is important is that in both cases, this is what our American, the United States Embassy country team dealing with anti-narcotics believes in each of those countries. They believe it passionately and deeply.

In the case of Bolivia, they say we just need a couple of more planes, we need a couple of more trucks, we need a little more of this or that equipment, it is not terribly expensive; maybe a couple of the x-ray machines, like they have on the borders between Mexico and the United States.

What about Columbia, you say? That is the big, bad apple down in Latin America. We know that is where most of the cocaine production heads north from. That is where most of the laboratories are. The same is true there, though it is more complicated.

In Columbia, the growing regions in the South, they not only grow there but they take in the Peruvian crop and refine it in laboratories that are located in that same region. This is all an Amazon Basin region of Columbia. We have the cooperation, despite some of the difficulties we have had in recent years, we have the cooperation of the Columbian Government. They are going to have a new election this spring. We need to be sure that we continue to get that cooperation, but it appears that it is likely that we will.

The Columbian National Police, headed by General Serrano, has done a terrific job in the face of all odds in going out and trying to destroy crops, trying to destroy laboratories, trying their darndest to arrest the drug lords in Columbia. Some of that has been very successful, though little publicized up here in the States as to what has been done.

The reality is that that portion of the countryside where most of this activity is going on is largely under the control of rebel groups, guerrilla groups, who have been around for many years in Columbia. The shorthand name for them, they call them a FARC, FARC, for a Spanish name. That is an acronym, FARC. This group of revolutionaries used to be affiliated with the Communist movement in years past. Back in the days of the Sandinistas when they were active in Nicaragua, they were sympathetic in the same causes.

There have been human rights violations against this group in the past by the Columbian military. Our State Department and others say that is so. There has been a general resistance to being involved with this group, or supporting Columbian efforts to suppress it.

I want to tell the Members, there is a big problem, because the FARC control that region. They are engaged in gaining all of the money and resources they have to continue to do their operations by running a protection racket for the drug lords, for the drug kingpins in Columbia. The drug kingpins pay them money to go and defend and protect the fields where the coca is grown, and to protect the cocaine laboratories in Columbia.

The FARC then go buy all kinds of arms, AK–47s and so forth, on the world black market for arms, and they do exactly what I said. They go about protecting those fields and those laboratories from the efforts of the Columbian National Police to resolve the matter. As a result, many, many people have been killed who are law enforcement officials of the Columbian National Police, trying to go in and destroy the laboratories and the crops.

The results of that is that there are areas of the country they do not even go into because they cannot reach it. Some of it is technical, because airstrips are not adequately finished in areas close in. Some is because we do not have the right type of helicopters in Columbia to do the job at the longer ranges necessary.

A lot, and most of it, frankly, is because the guerillas, the FARC, are out there threatening to kill anybody who comes in there, and have the power to do that. The Columbia National Police are not the military in Columbia.

What is it that it takes to resolve this matter in Columbia? It takes the United States Government being willing to put the resources into training and equipping the Columbian military and assisting them in destroying the FARC, to end their control of the region where all of this drug activity is taking place, and then continue and step up our support to the Columbian National Police to go in and destroy all these laboratories, and to our State Department effort, which is a crop eradication effort; they spray, as opposed to hand destruction of crops in Columbia for cocaine, to provide enough planes and enough equipment to go in there and do the job all at one time, not mess around and drag this out for 10 more years, or whatever, just go in and get the job done. It can be done. It may take a few months to get the equipment in order, it may take a few months to train the Columbian military adequately so they can go out and do their job, but it can be done.

I hear people talking to me up here in the two bodies I work with, the other body and this one, about the fear if we train the Columbian military, that, gosh, they have a bad track record. They are going to come back and create all kinds of human rights violations.

I think it is our job to do everything in our power to see to it that they do not commit atrocities. I believe that it is the Government of Columbia's desire that that not be the case. I am convinced by our people on the ground in Columbia that is indeed true, that we have the best climate we may have ever had in modern times for succeeding in gaining the kind of cooperation we need inside the Columbian military and its government to avoid those kinds of atrocities.

But make no mistake about it, the risks of being involved in having some hazard of that sort take place is worth it. That does not mean we condone it,

it does not mean we support it, it does not mean we do not condemn it or do everything we can to prevent it, but we need to protect first and foremost the lives of the children of America. We need to protect the lives of our children from the drug presence that is here in this country, from the drugs being produced and shipped, and the sale of those drugs largely controlled by the Columbian drug lords who are running the country in the southern part of Columbia by the use of these rebels.

We need to have those rebels destroyed, and we need to have the crops destroyed and the drug lords destroyed. It can be done without the United States military going in. It can be done if we will simply equip and train the Columbian military and give them the resources that they need. I believe that should be done sooner, rather than later.

In addition to that, though, and even before that occurs, if it does occur in the next couple of years, we can make other progress in Columbia in a similar fashion as we have made in Peru and Bolivia. There is the possibility of a shootdown policy in Columbia. There is a mountain range that runs in Columbia around two-thirds or better of the northern and western part of the country. You have to cross this mountain range to get to the coast with your cocaine that is then going to be shipped by boat or however it comes to the United States or to Mexico.

A lot of the people we have, once this stuff gets to sea it is shipped in little vessels that are hard to detect. They get out over open water in the Pacific going up to Mexico, they get out over open water in the Caribbean in the Gulf of Mexico, and it is very hard for our Coast Guard or our Navy to detect these little vessels out there. A lot of it comes to our country as a result of that, or at least it gets to Mexico, where it is filtered in on that side, and certainly gets to Puerto Rico and the islands and comes on to the States that way.

It so happens that you have to get the crop in a refined condition, which is done in the laboratories in southern Columbia, across those mountains. The way they cross those mountains is not by roads. There are not really any good roads going across those mountains. The way you cross those mountains is by small private plane, small little commercial planes, just like they do in Peru to get the crop to Columbia for final refinement.

If President Fujimori has been successful in Peru, why cannot the Government of Columbia be just as successful in Columbia in shooting down those planes as they identify them and as they begin to leave that country, or at least as they begin to go across the mountains inside Columbia to get to the coast in the first place?

There are a lot of other details that perhaps I would be better off not going into for national security reasons, but we have the ability, from information and intelligence, to know a lot about what happens in Columbia and a lot about the trafficking that is going on there. What we do not have is the leadership to put together the plan that says this is the way we are going to do it, and then go carry it out.

I say the leadership. Our country team in Columbia, who is working in narcotics, has the plan. What we need is for them to be asked for their plan by those higher up in authority in our United States Government, in the executive branch. We need for that plan to be acted upon. We need for the administration to come forward and say to the United States Congress, here is our shopping list, and here is our 3-year timetable. Here is what it is going to take in Columbia to do the job. This is our 3-year plan to literally destroy the drug trafficking in Columbia, to destroy the cocaine production in Columbia. Here is what it is.

We have not seen that plan, but it could come up, and I have a pretty good idea of what ought to be in that plan.

In addition to cocaine, Columbia produces heroin. That is a new thing. Columbia did not used to produce it. Most of the heroin coming in the United States, as most of the world's heroin, used to come from the Golden Triangle over in the Burma area of the world, way over in the Far Eastern part of the world. But now, in recent years, we have found it is even more pure than that, the gold heroin being produced in Columbia. The poppies are grown in Columbia, in the mountains, and the refinement is done there.

Heroin is shipped in much smaller quantities than cocaine. It goes by commercial airline, often. People swallow little packets of heroin and bring it into the airports in the United States virtually undetectable. If one of those packets burst, they are dead, but they are paid a lot of money, so they do it. The reality is that it is much more difficult to interdict the heroin once it is refined and is on its way than it is to stop the large quantities, metric tons, of cocaine.

We have probably 600 or 700 or more metric tons of cocaine in its refined product form coming out of Bolivia and Columbia directed towards the United States every year. We do not interdict very much of it, but we know it has to come in large quantities when it gets on boats. Or if people are bringing it in, we will see somebody be interdicted with a very large quantity of it, a very visible, sizeable white powder substances.

Heroin, again, is small in quantity, much more difficult to interdict at that level. But we can do something that is a lot easier, in the case of heroin, than cocaine, that solves the problem. We can destroy the poppy crops more easily than we can destroy the cocaine or the coca crops.

The reason for that is they are grown in little plots in the mountains, they are grown as annuals. These are plants that come up, and they are pretty flowers, if you have ever seen them grow. There are various types. Some are not dangerous, but the ones, of course, that grow in Columbia in those mountains, as some in Mexico, are very dangerous.

But we have the ability to eradicate, to spray, to do it by hand or otherwise. What is missing in Columbia, frankly, is the size and type of helicopter and aircraft that can go up into the mountains at the elevations where these crops are grown and protect the eradicators as they eradicate those poppy crops.

They can do that, they can spot them fairly easily. It is very easy to detect those crops. There is no reason why, if we provide the equipment to Columbia, that this cannot be done and done very quickly, more quickly than the coca eradication. So it is not as big a problem as some people make it out to be.

Does that mean we can cease and desist and once and for all it is gone, and you will never have to deal with it again? Probably not. I would be naive to think that.

□ 1445

But we can put a plan in place to literally stop it, to destroy those crops, and we can have a continuous plan then that is a lot easier to do, of keeping it suppressed, than it is to get it done to start with in the first place.

There is no reason why for a minimal sustenance resource amount we cannot see the program continue to suppress the growth of poppy and the production of heroin in Colombia for many years to come, if we just go in now and do the right thing by providing the resources and the equipment and follow the game plan.

Again, our in-country embassy antinarcotics team knows how to do this, but it is not being done. Nobody is doing it. No leadership in Washington has asked and tasked them to provide that plan to them, other than of course some of us in Congress who have been inquiring about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think my colleagues may sense my frustration and why I am out here today talking with them about it. We in Congress should not be the ones to develop all the plans that are done and to drive this issue. It should be driven by the President of the United States and this administration. It is an executive branch function, primarily. The management of all of these diverse programs and interests to try to focus on drugs is definitely within the executive prerogative.

But I can tell my colleagues that every day that passes and I see a plan like this one, this drug strategy that was promulgated a couple of weeks ago, that calls for a relatively timid approach to reduce drug use and availability in this country by a mere 50 percent in 10 years, every time I see something like this, and this is obviously current, I am moved to come forward and say congressional leadership

is necessary. It has got to come from Congress if it is not going to come from the White House.

So that is why I am out here, and I believe that we as Members of the U.S. House have an obligation to the American people to do everything we can to organize and force a plan and the implementation of that plan to reduce the flow of these drugs into the United States by at least an 80 percent reduction of that flow over the next 2 or 3 years. If we follow this path, I am convinced that we can do it.

There are other things that need to be done. We need to have radar planes that are flying the region that the Department of Defense does not currently have. We need to have tracking planes, once they have picked up on vessels or airplanes that they believe from intelligence or otherwise are loaded with narcotics, to be able to chase these planes and vessels, ships. We do not have that surveillance now.

Mr. Speaker, we should have 24-hour, around-the-clock radar covering Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and the waters that go through the Pacific, the Gulf and the Caribbean along the coastline of that part of South America, including Venezuela, where these drugs are leaving and coming and going from. There is no reason why we cannot do that either. But we do not begin to deal with this in a fraction of the amount of surveillance time that would be required to do the job in the 24-hour coverage of which I speak.

There is no reason why we cannot do that if we put our mind to it. But one of the reasons there is a problem with all of this is that a large measure of our counternarcotics effort comes under the control of the Department of Defense. I have no criticism with that. That is where it should be. The Southern Command, with General Wilhelm, which is now located in Miami, is primarily responsible from a military perspective for all our antinarcotics efforts, at least in this hemisphere.

There is a structure in place, a new architecture that the General is working on. I am pleased with what I have seen. He is working there, but he is working with one arm tied behind his back. I will tell my colleagues why. It is because in the Department of Defense mission priorities fighting drugs is way down at the bottom of the list. The resources of DOD have been cut back so much for doing the tasks that most who are involved in our national security areas believe are needed to do the things that are important, that drugs come in last and they get very few resources. They do not get the planes. They do not have the AWACS or the P3 platforms that they need. And they do not get the other equipment that they need and the support that is necessary at Southern Command to do this job.

One thing the President of the United States could do is get with Secretary of Defense Cohen and say let us move the list a little bit around and rearrange the chairs and make fighting the war on drugs meaningful by raising its priority under the mission of DOD to a higher level than where it is today. Some may say that is simple. It could be done tomorrow morning. And of course it is simple. It could be done tomorrow morning, but I do not think that is likely.

There are four basic missions that the military has. One is the major national security obligation of protecting us against all of our enemies that might be aggressive towards us. That is not anything anybody would wish to reduce to a second rung. That is number one. That is what our military, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are all about. We need to keep it there.

Number two is peacekeeping. That means things like Bosnia. There is a lot of debate about whether we should have been in Bosnia, whether we should still be there. As long as we are there, all of us are going to be supportive of the activities that are going on there. But there is a major debate over the degree to which the United States military should be used to be a peacekeeper all over the world putting out fires. That is the number two mission.

The number three mission is readiness and exercises, training exercises to keep people going, keep the training at the proper level for flying and so forth. I do not think that is a bad mission either.

But the fourth mission, there are only four, is the antinarcotics mission to fight drugs, to fight the flow of drugs coming into this country from abroad. That is way down there and it has just about dropped off. When they are at the last rung, they are way off.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me at least that fighting drugs should be the number 3 priority for the Department of Defense, ahead of exercises and training. I think when we consider the lives being lost of our young people, if we want to fight a war on drugs, it ought to be the number two priority ahead of peacekeeping. It ought to be that national security is number one and then right after that it should be fighting and winning the war on drugs.

It should be a war. It should be put on wartime footing. We should have the Department of Defense supplying every plane, every man, every piece of equipment and every bit of intelligence that we need to do that. The CIA should be devoting whatever resources are required to provide information to that drug-fighting machine with regard to what the drug lords are doing, who is producing what, where the shipments are going and how they are going. We should not spare a nickel in doing this job.

If we simply change the priorities in the DOD, in the Department of Defense, what a world of difference that would make to be able to properly equip General Wilhelm's troops and what he is trying to do in Southern Command. It is very difficult. He is responsible for an awful lot.

The same thing is true of the Coast Guard. They are underfunded and undersupported in what they are trying to do. The Coast Guard is in charge, with Admiral Kramek, of our transit zones interdiction. That is all the stuff at sea and in the air between South America and the United States. They do not have near enough to do it.

We should seal off the island of Puerto Rico from drugs. A lot of people know that the drugs come through Puerto Rico in large quantities now to the eastern part of the United States. There is no reason we cannot seal the island off.

The problem is not Puerto Ricans transiting drugs or dealing in drugs. The problem is drugs coming into Puerto Rico. It is part of the United States. Once they are there, there is no customs to come here. There is no check of a ship or a plane. Puerto Ricans are American citizens. It is just like being in Texas or Florida and shipping drugs or any other piece of equipment to wherever else; the same type of restrictions, very little or none.

We have no reason not to and every reason to seal off the island of Puerto Rico and all the other areas of the United States from drug trafficking. The Coast Guard has that responsibility and we do not provide the equipment, the planes, the radar, and the technical support that they need to do that, the manpower and the dollars. We need to do that.

We need to provide whatever it takes to do this job. This plan, this drug strategy plan has some nice words in it. It has a 10-year goal in it. Some of this stuff is good, but it does not begin to do the job. It does not set the basic target and it does not provide the road map to get it done, and the budget that goes along with this plan that has been submitted is paltry compared to what needs to be given.

Obviously, we need to have the explicit details of here is how we are going to do it over the next 3 years to cut the supply by 80 percent. And we need to know what equipment is needed and what manpower and what follow-on is needed and if we are going to provide more helicopters, and we are going to have to do that to the Latin American effort. We are going to have to provide more planes, these radar-type planes, and more manpower. We are going to have to provide the readiness and the maintenance. We are going to have to have a budget stream and it is going to have to be logical and somebody is going to have to decide what the DOD is going to have it in. Which one is going to have that equipment? Is the State Department going to have these planes, and Customs that group? The coordination has to come from this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I have not forgotten Mexico and I realize it continues to be a very difficult issue for us. I happen to be one who believes that Mexican Government leaders at the very top, the President and their Attorney General

in particular, are indeed trying to cooperate and do their best job. But there are big problems in Mexico's structure. We have known about that for some time and we know that many of the states of Mexico, like the States of the United States, have corruption in the state governments; that the police in those states are often involved with narcotics trafficking. We do not know to what degree, but it is a fairly high percentage.

There are going to have to be some structural, systemic reforms in Mexico that are going to take a number of years to accomplish. But the Mexican Government has recently passed new money-laundering laws and made extradition agreements with the United States. We will now see some people come out to be tried in the United States who are drug lords. The military in Mexico is destroying poppy crops in the mountain ranges where they do grow black tar heroin, which is a large part of the heroin in the western United States.

But Mexico does not grow a single bit of cocaine. There is no coca plant in Mexico. No refineries of cocaine in Mexico. And the biggest single group of drug problems that I hear about are problems related to cocaine and heroin, the two of them combined.

There is no reason why one extra ounce of cocaine should be allowed to get to Mexico to be distributed here by their drug lords. That is what is happening now. The Mexicans, these drug lords in Mexico are the ones who are doing the retailing in the United States, at least the western half. The Colombians take their cocaine to Mexico and wholesale it to the Mexicans and the Mexicans retail it here.

Our borders are porous. We need to continue to beef up our Southwest border and we are doing a decent job, but not doing nearly enough. It is not smart in many ways.

When we start looking at prioritization of putting our resources, the best use of our resources to really stop the flow of drugs into the United States is to put it before and below Mexico. Stop the drugs from ever getting to Mexico in the first place. The problems of Mexico are going to be around for a while. We need to work those problems. We do have the cooperation of the President and the Attorney General. Progress is being made. But we have to recognize that it is going to take a while, and if we are going to stop the flow of 80 percent of the drugs coming into this Nation in the next 3 years, which is possible to do, the place to do it is to draw that line south of Mexico and to make it work and to provide the resources that are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, let me wrap up by saying that again we need a balanced approach in fighting narcotics. We need to have a true war on drugs, though. We need to work on the supply side and the demand side. While my conversation today has been about the supply side, we need to put emphasis as well equally on the demand side to get our young people better educated.

But today teenage drug use in the United States is double what it was in 1992. Double what it was. That is absolutely intolerable. It is unacceptable and we should be ashamed of it. Not only should we be ashamed, but we should be out there using every ounce of strength to destroy the pathways of those drugs getting to our young people.

Unless we reduce the quantity of drugs coming into the United States by at least 60 to 80 percent, we cannot drive the price of drugs up that are really cheap today in our cities and reduce the quantity to a manageable level, so that our local law enforcement can really be meaningful in its job and so that our local community leaders can be meaningful and get real results in their education and treatment efforts.

We have to reduce the onslaught of this overwhelming amount of narcotics coming in here, particularly cocaine and heroin from South America. The way to do that is to set that target and set a goal that is realistic and achievable.

I have suggested today that that be a target of 3 years to reduce by 80 percent the amount of drugs coming into the United States. It is a target that every one of our antinarcotics in-country team believes, in the three principal countries involved, that is Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. And it is something that this administration has yet to embrace in this strategy.

We as a Congress need to embrace that strategy. We need to force the resources, if necessary, on this administration to do the job. It can be done. It must be done. We need to provide those resources to those who can do it for us in the State Department, in the Defense Department, in the Justice Department with DEA, and in every other way that is necessary in those source countries where this is affecting.

The leaders in Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru at the very top of their governments are ready, willing and able now to cooperate. We better take advantage of it while we have the opportunity to stop the scourge of drugs affecting our young people. Let us go and give them the resources they need.

It is a first step. It is a logical step. It is not a 10-year plan; it is a 3-year plan. And I challenge my colleagues to join with me in an effort to really have a true, for the first time in our history, true war on drugs.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because it was just a few weeks ago that the President of the United States in this very chamber said that we ought to reserve every dollar, every penny of a budgetary surplus and put it into Social Security. What was interesting about that to me is that basically what he was talking about, what he was outlining was the larger question of how we are going to save Social Security. In other words, if we take every penny of surplus and put that money where it belongs, which is in the Social Security Trust Fund, rather than borrowing from it, what we have done is we have taken a first step towards saving Social Security. But what that does, because of the way the budget works in Washington, D.C., what that would actually mean would be a pay-down of the national debt, which would be very good for Social Security, but again only a first step. To me what it raises is that larger question of how in fact do we save Social Security.

Some people have said, yes, it is a good first step to put every dollar of Social Security tax into the Social Security Trust Fund, but the larger question is, since that does not affect the 70 million baby-boomers that begin retiring in 2012, and since that is ultimately what we have to deal with, what we ought to do is look at cutting current benefits for current retirees.

I do not think that that is at all a realistic option. When I talk to seniors along the coast of Myrtle Beach, along the coast of South Carolina, what they say to me is the idea of cutting current benefits is crazy, that Social Security is very important to each of their lives, and that that is not the way you are going to save Social Security.

Other people have said, do you know what you ought to do is, you ought to raise payroll taxes on young people. And yet overwhelmingly what I hear from people across my district at home in South Carolina is that that is not a realistic idea, that you can only squeeze but so much blood from a turnip. And what they are saying is that they are squeezed. They are struggling to make a mortgage payment, to make a car payment, to provide for dollars for kids' education, and that the idea raising the payroll tax just is not the way to do it.

Other people say the way we ought to look at saving Social Security is by freezing it. In other words, we ought to just fossilize it, leave it alone. We do not touch it. We leave it in a corner. Well, that would be nice. It is something I wish we could do. But the fact, again, is that we have got 70 million baby-boomers that start to retire in 2012. That is no fault of the designers of Social Security. It is no fault of anybody in the past, but is something that is coming our way, and we ought to, rather than simply freezing and looking at the problem coming in our direction, do something about it, which is what the President of the United States had said in the first step being let us reserve every dollar surplus towards Social Security.

I think the bigger question, if we are not going to cut current benefits,