

Warning in Latin America about the failure of U.S. anti-drug policy

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By Roberto Morejón

Decades after U.S. President Richard Nixon launched what he called the War on Drugs, the damage caused by that policy is still visible in Latin America, with an emphasis on violence and without analyzing the real causes of the problem.

With a failure to dampen the growth of the domestic market, the largest in the world, the United States today faces the proliferation of fentanyl, a powerful opioid 50 times more potent than heroin.

U.S. administrations have looked much more to where the primary sources of drugs like cocaine originate than to their own domestic market.

Towards Latin America they pushed for the promotion of the so-called Plan Colombia, whose support is the forced eradication of coca, without addressing the social problems linked to drug trafficking, especially among the defenseless peasant population.

The new Colombian president, Gustavo Petro, defends his point of view in this regard, unlike the previous administration, Iván Duque, who was complacent with Washington's vision.

The leader of the Historic Pact coalition criticized on social networks the strategy of the country of the North and attributed to this approach the responsibility for one million deaths in Latin America.

The progressive dignitary advocates a shift to prevention and treatment of drug addiction as a public health disease and an end to forced eradication of illicit crops.

The vision of the new authorities in the Casa de Nariño opposes that of the United States, from where heavy financial injections were sent to reinforce the military infrastructure in Latin American countries, including Colombia.

Petro's vigorous position has got the Democratic administration in Washington thinking, and even the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Raul Gupta, admitted that President Joseph Biden acknowledged that his country's counter-narcotics policy has been flawed.

While U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, on his trip to Bogotá this year, said he shared the new Colombian government's idea of moving toward a new anti-drug policy, the United States asked him to continue forced coca eradication.

The current Democratic administration should understand that governments in Latin America, including Mexico, are advocating a more comprehensive approach to drug control, rather than force.

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