

Less Aid for Colombian States Rich in Coca

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SAN JOSÉ DEL FRAGUA, [Colombia](#), Oct. 11 (AP) — A \$4 billion battle to wean Colombian farmers off the cocaine trade through a combination of military might and American aid is quietly being cut back in a region where cocaine production is surging.

In an internal memo, the United States Agency for International Development cites unacceptable security risks for its workers and a lack of private investment partners for its pullout from Caquetá State.

Six years and more than \$4 billion in American tax dollars after Plan Colombia began in Caquetá, coca, the raw ingredient of cocaine, is still the region's No. 1 cash crop. But the programs meant to provide farmers with a profitable alternative to growing coca are vanishing.

Washington spends \$70 million annually on development projects in drug-producing areas of Colombia. But under the [Agency for International Development](#)'s new five-year, \$350 million plan for development projects, Caquetá and four other Amazonian states where coca production is rising will not receive a penny.

“Instead of investing generously to eliminate dependency on the illegal drug trade, we're being shunned,” said Luis Fernando Almario, a congressman from Caquetá.

An official at the [United States](#) Embassy in Bogotá said resources from Caquetá would be redirected to areas with a greater likelihood of sustaining development.