

Written Questions of Senator Tom Coburn, M.D.

Major General Marilyn A. Quagliotti, USA (Ret.)

Nominee, to be Deputy Director for Supply Reduction, Office of National Drug Control Policy

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

May 31, 2011

1. There is no question you have served our country with honor during your distinguished 32-year military career. However, you are nominated to the position of Deputy Director for Supply Reduction at the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). That office oversees activities to reduce the availability, production, and distribution of illicit drugs in the United States and abroad. Those activities include developing, coordinating and implementing supply reduction policies, and coordinating domestic and international interdiction, law enforcement, and intelligence.

In reviewing your resume, I cannot find specific experience related to reducing drug availability and production, developing drug policy or coordinating with domestic and international law enforcement regarding drug supply reduction. Over the course of your career, have you ever been involved in developing U.S. drug policy?

- a. If so, how and in what capacity?
- b. Have you specifically worked with Congress in the development of drug policy, particularly related to drug supply reduction? If so, how and in what capacity?

ANSWER:

- a. **I have not been involved in developing U.S. drug policy at the national level; however, throughout my career I have been responsible for the implementation of drug policy. I also think that the best policy decisions are made by people who have been on the ground and who rely on facts and science. I have also witnessed the effects of smart drug policies. As a lieutenant entering the Army just after Vietnam, I saw the toll that drug use took on our soldiers and our ability to operate a military unit. The introduction of drug testing policies in the military had a dramatic and positive effect on the quality of the force. As a platoon leader and company commander, I was personally responsible for executing these drug tests.**
 - b. **I have worked with Congressional staffers on many issues related to the Defense Department while I worked at Defense Information Systems Agency. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congressional staffers as well as members of Congress again in the development of U.S. Drug policy.**
2. Mexico and Columbia are two major source countries in the illegal drug flow into the United States. Have you worked with either country on international policy development to curb this drug flow?

- a. If so, what specific policies did you help to implement?

ANSWER: During my time in the Army, between 1995-1997, I advised the Colombian Army on how to be more effective during eradication efforts and while conducting operations against insurgent groups such as the FARC in the ungovernable regions of Colombia. Although this was not an international policy development effort, the time spent with the Colombian Army provided valuable insight regarding the difficult challenges faced by the Colombian Government in its struggles to regain control of much of its territory. Although Mexico is a very different situation, I believe the insight gained during my time with the Colombian Army can inform my approach to drug policy development with Mexico.

3. In 2007, the U.S. and Mexico formed a new cooperation and assistance program called the Merida Initiative, which is a package of counterdrug and anti-crime assistance to Mexico and Central America. While the authorization for funding has expired, do you believe this Initiative has been successful in reducing the supply of drugs entering the U.S. from Mexico and Central America? Why or why not?

- a. What other effective policies do you believe should work in conjunction with or in place of the Merida Initiative, particularly related to drug supply reduction?

ANSWER: The Merida Initiative has been one of the most important developments we have seen in the history of the U.S./Mexico counterdrug partnership and it has had a demonstrable effect on reducing the flow of cocaine into the United States. Additional policy actions that complement our assistance to Mexico through the Merida Initiative include continuing to strengthen U.S. efforts to diminish the southbound flow of weapons and bulk cash associated with the drug trade.

- b. Do you believe the Mexican government has increased its efforts to combat the drug cartels that supply drugs to the U.S. and/or reformed its law enforcement and judicial systems as it relates to drug-related crime?

ANSWER: I believe the Mexican government, since the election of President Calderon, has stepped up its efforts significantly against drug cartels. A decision has been made to courageously confront and defeat these forces, and this decision has led to a partnership between our nation that is frankly unprecedented yielding over 20 cartel senior leaders either killed or captured over the last year.

- i. If so, how effective have those efforts been?

ANSWER: I believe progress has been made, and the commitment to reach our respective national goals has never been stronger.

- c. In 2000, the U.S. increased its assistance to Columbia via Plan Colombia in order to counter the country's drug and security crisis. It was a six-year plan, but assistance has continued beyond 2006. Do you believe Plan Colombia had any effect on reducing the drug supply from Columbia to the U.S.? Why or why not?

ANSWER: Yes, Plan Colombia has been a major policy success. Not only has Colombia become a stronger, more safe, more prosperous, and more stable democracy during the time of Plan Colombia, with advances in the rule of law, government presence, and support for human rights, but one can see direct and positive impact on drug production. Between 2001 and today, reductions in the production of both cocaine and heroin in Colombia have dropped steeply, declining by approximately 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. The positive impact of Plan Colombia has been felt on U.S. streets. In fact, the Colombia experience has become a model for other nations around the world that confront similar drug threats.

- i. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) noted in a 2008 report that U.S. efforts to transfer program operations and funding responsibilities have had mixed results. What other effective policies do you believe should be implemented in addition to, or in place of Plan Colombia, particularly related to drug supply reduction?

ANSWER: Many lessons have been learned through Plan Colombia on how to be effective. Creating disincentives to drug cultivation through eradication coupled with the provision of security on the ground, and with efforts to provide alternative economic development opportunities for Colombians is useful. Additionally, providing stronger economic and judicial institutions have helped make the progress sustainable. Colombia can adopt a stronger role in guiding its own counter-drug and economic development strategies. Positive developments for the future should also include the benefits of a free-trade agreement with the United States, and a stronger regional partnership with Colombia's hemispheric neighbors, both of which are goals of newly-elected President Santos.

- ii. Do you believe the Colombian government has increased its efforts to combat drug cartels that supply drugs to the U.S. and/or reformed its law enforcement and judicial systems as it relates to drug-related crime? If so, how effective have those efforts been?

ANSWER: The Colombian government has made major strides against drug cartels; ideological terrorist movements involved in drug trafficking, and have enhanced its law enforcement and judicial systems. As I mentioned above, the Colombian experience has become an important international standard for how to transform a nation once at great risk from narco-terrorists into a nation able to defend its people and its institutions with justice, security, and growing economic prospects.

4. As of 2010, drug offenses make up approximately 29% of all federal offenders currently imprisoned in the federal system. Approximately 17.7% of those drug offenders were

convicted of methamphetamine-related crimes, and those offenders serve the second longest average length of federal imprisonment. Methamphetamine is a particular problem in the State of Oklahoma, and federal drug policies appear to have done little to reduce the supply of or demand for this drug in Oklahoma.

- a. Do you have a strategy in mind for reducing the supply of methamphetamine and/or how to coordinate with state and local law enforcement, specifically in the states with the highest usage rate, to address the supply of and demand for this drug? Please explain.

ANSWER: The passage of the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act (CMEA), which restricted the diversion of precursor chemicals such as pseudoephedrine made it harder for people to produce meth. A key element of any strategy to reduce methamphetamine must be reducing access to precursor chemicals such as pseudoephedrine. Laboratory incidents, including those in Oklahoma, fell steeply after passage of the CMEA but are now increasing, particularly in the south and Midwest. I understand ONDCP is closely following the effect of legislation passed in both Oregon and Mississippi that returned pseudoephedrine and ephedrine to prescription only status. The number of methamphetamine lab incidents in both states has fallen dramatically since the passage of this state legislation. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico is also a rising threat, as we can tell from border seizures. Additionally, I understand that restricting the international flow of precursor chemicals now being smuggled into Mexico and Central America is a high priority for the Office of Supply Reduction, and these efforts will be aided by the developments occurring in conjunction with the Merida Initiative and the Central America Regional Security Initiative. Coordination with state and local law enforcement as well as tribal partners is critical to stemming the production of methamphetamine in the United States. If confirmed, I will work closely with my counterpart, Deputy Director of the Office of State, Local, and Tribal Affairs, Ben Tucker and leverage his oversight of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program to connect with our state, local and tribal entities.

- b. What is your assessment of the threat to our country, particularly our youth, of methamphetamine versus other types of drugs?

ANSWER: Methamphetamine is a very dangerous threat to the American people, particularly our youth. While the average age of first time meth use is older than for other drugs, the threat to youth also lies in the toxic nature of meth labs and the fact that children are too often exposed to these labs in the home. Meth is uniquely dangerous because it can be manufactured with easily available ingredients.

Meth intoxication too often leads to violent, irrational behavior that threatens others. In fact, meth use is a major risk to public health. Because of the effect of meth on users and how it is manufactured, there is a disproportionate impact of this drug on law enforcement and on community health. That said comparing meth to other drugs is difficult. There is no question that the effect is disastrous. Yet it is clear to those who have experienced meth in their lives or in their communities, the drug is particularly vicious. Though the absolute

number of users remains smaller than the other major drugs of abuse, the disproportionate impact on meth use on families exposed to its production or at the mercy of meth-related violence and illness, this drug must be at the forefront of our supply and demand reduction efforts.