

Background and Statistics on the Colombia Personnel Ceilings

In section 3204(b)(1) of the Emergency Supplemental Act, 2000 (Div. B, P.L. 106-246), as amended, the U.S. Congress placed a ceiling on the number of U.S. military personnel and U.S. citizen civilian contractors who can be in Colombia “in support of Plan Colombia.” This cap has changed over the years, but has never been exceeded. The limit was 500 military and 300 civilian contractors from July 2000 until January 2002, when it became 400/400. Since October 28, 2004, the ceiling has been 800 U.S. military personnel and 600 U.S. citizen civilian contractors.

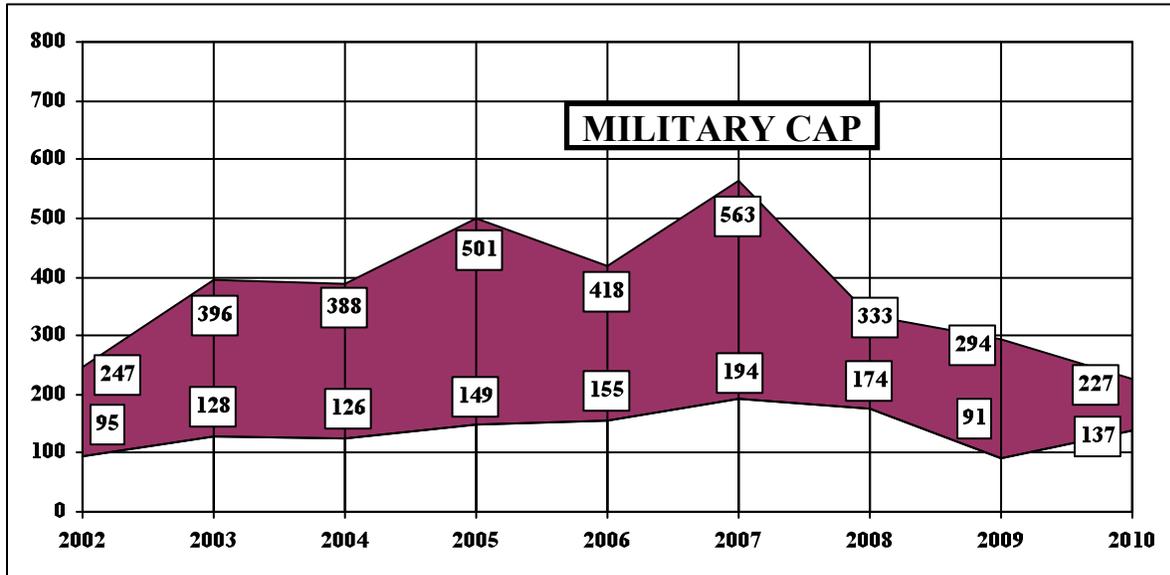
- Between 2002 and 2009, the numbers on any one day have varied from 91 to 563(military) and 114 to 454 (civilian). See following charts for yearly highs and lows.
- During the three-month period January 1 to March 31, 2010, the numbers were 137 to 227 (military) and 104 to 257 (civilian).
- There has been an appreciable downward trend in both military and civilian presence since the high points of 2005-2007.

U.S. Government employees, military personnel, and civilian contractors implement a wide range of programs in support of Plan Colombia and its follow-on “Strategy to Strengthen Democracy and Promote Social Development,” announced in January 2007, as well as the Colombian government’s April 2009 “National Consolidation Plan.” Current U.S. assistance through the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice, as well as the Agency for International Development (USAID), is used to provide training, equipment, and funding to the Government of Colombia (GOC), civil society, and international organizations, and NGOs to support efforts in the areas of counternarcotics and counterterrorism operations, alternative development, law enforcement and judicial reform, institutional strengthening, human and labor rights programs, humanitarian assistance for displaced persons and victims of the war, local governance, conflict management and peace promotion, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child soldiers, humanitarian de-mining, and preservation of the environment. Some programs have increasingly focused on support for Afro-Colombians, and other indigenous persons and vulnerable groups.

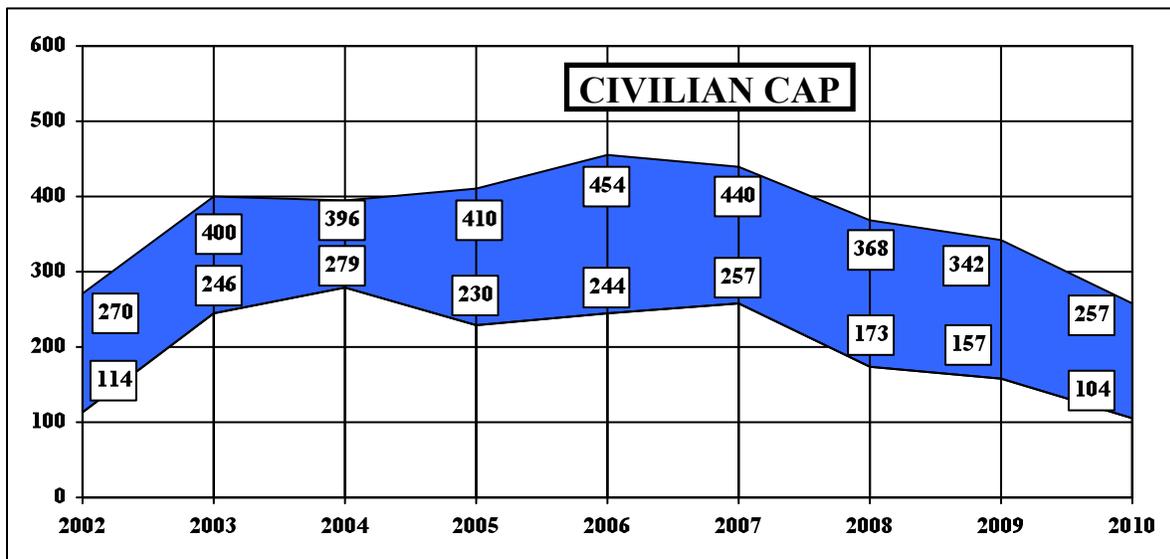
Although several agencies and offices use civilian contractors to implement programs, the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) and the Military Group of

the U.S. Embassy account for the majority. For example, on March 31, 2010, there were 152 U.S. military personnel and 205 U.S. citizen civilian contractors in Colombia in support of Plan Colombia. Of the civilian contractors, 84 worked for the Department of Defense, 99 were employed by the NAS, 18 were at USAID and four were with the Department of Justice.

The high and low figures during each calendar year are given in the charts below and do not reflect exact numbers for any particular day.



*400 limit until October 2004 **2010 numbers are to 3/31/2010



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