

# Cocaine Smuggling in 2005



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Efforts to reduce the amount of cocaine that made it to the United States and Europe in 2005 resulted in the eighth consecutive year of record breaking worldwide cocaine seizures and disruptions. Drug interdiction efforts in 2005 caused the largest year-to-year increase in seizure totals ever recorded and forced traffickers to resort to more complex and costly drug trafficking methods. In spite of this sustained interdiction pressure, traffickers continued to display a high degree of resilience by sending multi-ton cocaine loads towards the United States and Europe.

Based on cocaine production, consumption and movement data, the US counterdrug community estimates that roughly 520 to 730 metric tons of export quality cocaine departed South America for the United States in 2005.

The amount of cocaine departing South America towards the United States has remained relatively stable since 2000, with most of the cocaine heading to the United States moving through Central America and Mexico. The cocaine smuggling departure areas in 2005 were very similar to those seen in 2004. Ninety percent of reported U.S.-bound cocaine transited the eastern Pacific Ocean and western Caribbean Sea en route to Central America and Mexico; the remaining 10 percent moved towards the United States through the central and eastern Caribbean Sea or was transported directly to the United States.

The 2005 Andean cocaine production estimate increased 21 percent over the 2004 estimate, largely due to an increase in the number of areas surveyed in Colombia and Peru. The 2005 coca crop surveys showed

that coca cultivation in Colombia has increasingly moved out of traditional growing areas.

### Seizures/Disruptions

Counterdrug forces interdicted — seized or disrupted — worldwide a record 551 metric tons of export-quality cocaine in 2005; the vast majority was seized after it departed South America.

In 2005, a record 158 metric tons were interdicted in South America, compared to 127 metric tons in 2004. Colombia led the pack, seizing 81 metric tons in 2005, or 54 percent of the cocaine seized in South America. All key countries increased seizure totals from 2004 with one exception — Venezuela — which captured 23 metric tons in 2005, two metric tons less than the previous year.

Counterdrug forces interdicted 234 metric tons of cocaine in the US transit zone in 2005, an all-time high, compared to 197 metric tons in 2004.

- ▼ About 108 metric tons were interdicted in the eastern Pacific, mostly aboard fishing vessels. Sixty-seven additional metric tons were seized or removed from the Caribbean.
- ▼ Some 39 metric tons were interdicted in Central America, while 20 metric tons were seized or disrupted in Mexico.

Another 35 metric tons were interdicted in the Atlantic on its way to Europe or other non-US destinations.

There was a slight decrease in the amount of cocaine seized in the US Arrival Zone — as it arrived into the United States — and a sub-

stantial increase in cocaine seized in the Non-US Arrival Zone — particularly in Europe.

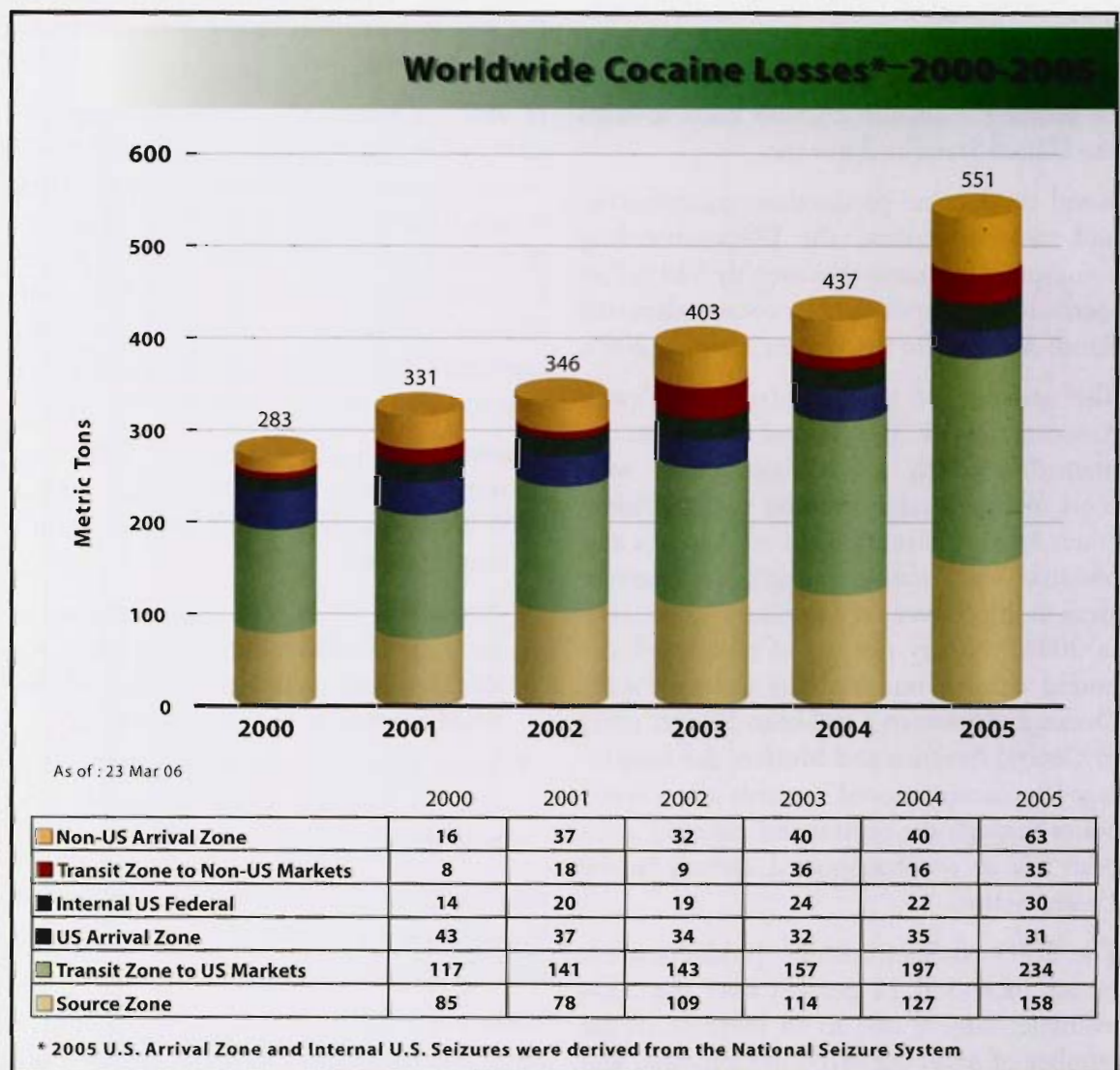
- ▼ Seizures in the US Arrival Zone for 2005 declined to 31 metric tons, 4 metric tons less than in 2004.
- ▼ In 2005, 63 metric tons of cocaine were seized within the Non-US Arrival Zone — mostly in Europe — compared to 40 metric tons in 2004.

An additional 30 metric tons of cocaine were seized inside the US in 2005, when compared

to 22 metric tons in 2004, representing a 25 percent increase in internal US Federal seizures.

## Production and Cultivation

The Andean cocaine production estimate for 2005 increased 21 percent over the 2004 estimate, due to an increase in the size of the geographic area surveyed in Colombia and Peru in 2005. While the coca crop decreased within the 2004 survey areas, the inclusion of areas not previously surveyed resulted in a higher estimate in 2005.



**Figure 1. Global Losses.** Seizures and disruptions rose markedly for the third year in a row.



The total Andean potential cocaine production estimate for 2005 was 780 metric tons of pure cocaine, or about 924 metric tons of export quality cocaine. Average wholesale cocaine purity remained at 84 percent according to the most recent forensic purity analysis.

▼ The Colombia coca crop estimate increased about 26 percent over the 2004 estimate, largely as a result of an 81 percent increase in the size of the geographic area surveyed. Colombian coca growers are moving cultivation to areas outside the reach of Bogotá's aerial-eradication program, suggesting eradication operations are influencing their behavior. It is estimated that the Colombian coca crop potentially produced 545 metric tons of pure cocaine, or about 645 metric tons of export quality cocaine.

▼ Coca cultivation estimates in Peru increased by 38 percent in 2005, also partly

due to an expansion of the geographic area surveyed, while Bolivian cultivation increased 8 percent. The Peruvian crop potentially produced 165 metric tons of pure or 195 metric tons of export quality cocaine. The Bolivian crop produced a potential 70 metric tons of pure cocaine or 83 metric tons of export quality cocaine.

## Flow

Using three independent data sets — the Andean cocaine production estimate, worldwide cocaine consumption estimates and drug movement event data — we estimate that between 517 and 732 metric tons of export quality cocaine departed South America for the United States in 2005. This amount does not include an estimate of cocaine destined for non-US markets.

▼ Analysis of cocaine movement events indicates that at least 517 and possibly up to

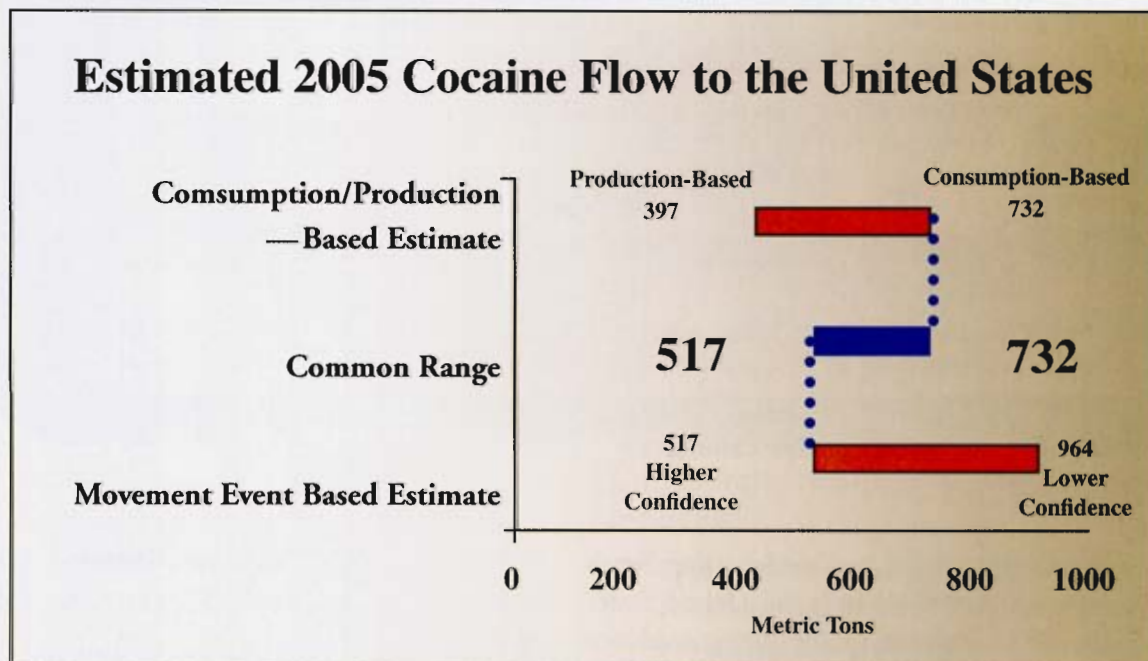


Figure 2. 2005 Estimated Cocaine Flow to the United States.

## Calculation of Cocaine Flow towards the United States

### Production Based Estimate:

595 Metric Tons Cocaine Available to Leave South America	X	<b>Proportion of Flow Required to Meet Demand*</b> <small>(2/3 of cocaine is required to depart South America towards US markets and 1/3 towards foreign markets)</small>	=	<b>397 Metric Tons Cocaine Flow to the United States (Low Range)</b>
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### Consumption Based Estimate:

1,099 Metric Tons Cocaine Available to Leave South America	X	<b>Proportion of Flow Required to Meet Demand*</b> <small>(2/3 of cocaine is required to depart South America towards US markets and 1/3 towards foreign markets)</small>	=	<b>732 Metric Tons Cocaine Flow to the United States (High Range)</b>
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### Movement Event Based Estimate Low Range (Higher Confidence):

210 Metric Tons (Confirmed)	+	307 Metric Tons (Substantiated)	=	<b>517 Metric Tons Confirmed and Substantiated Flow to US (Low Range)</b>
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### Movement Event Based Estimate High Range (Lower Confidence):

517 Metric Tons Confirmed and Substantiated Flow to US	+	477 Metric Tons (Suspect)	=	<b>964 Metric Tons Flow to US (High Range)</b>
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\* Our estimate that 2/3 of the cocaine that departs South America is bound for the US market, while 1/3 is bound to non-US markets, is based on calculations using consumption estimates and documented losses.

Figure 3. Process for Calculating Global Cocaine Estimates.

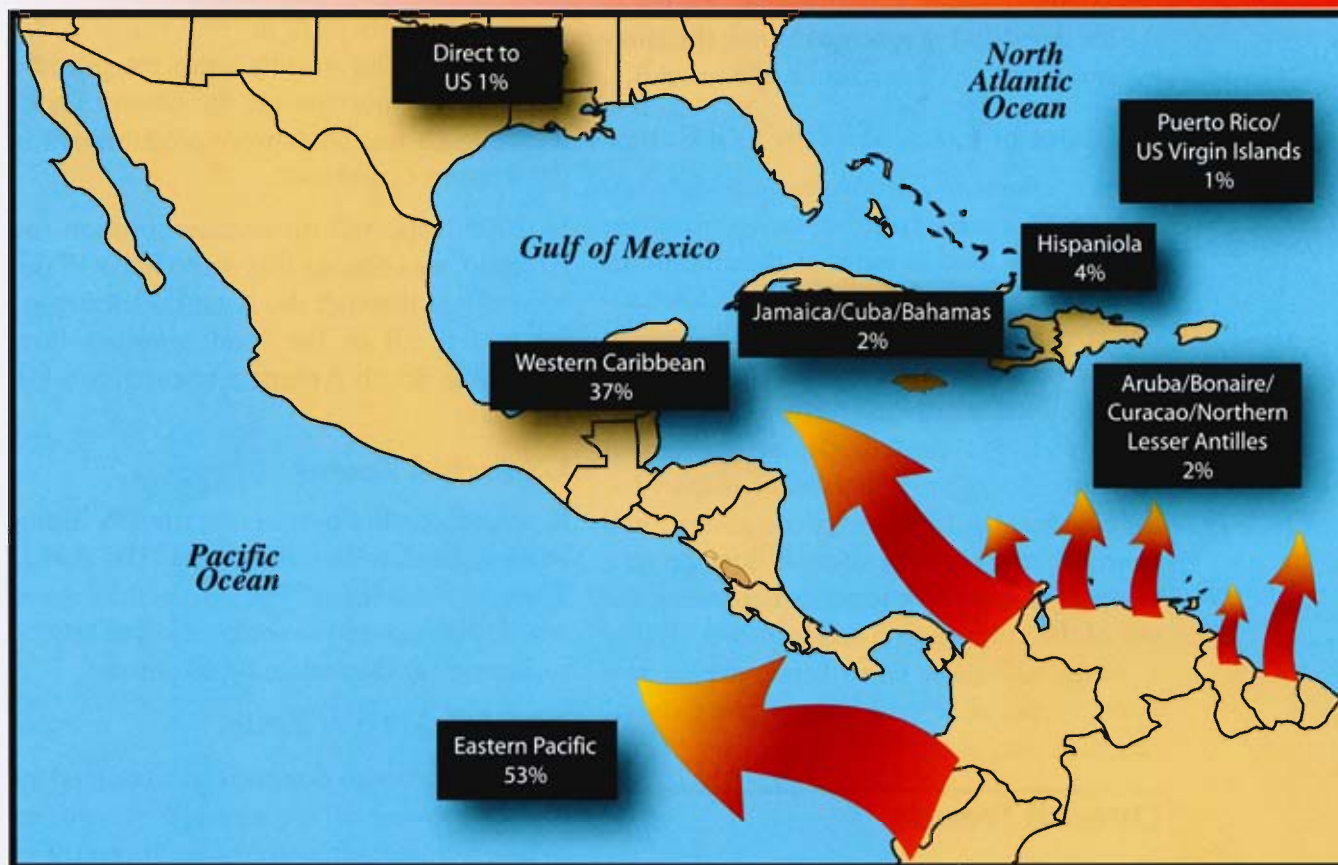
964 metric tons of cocaine departing South America moved towards the United States in 2005. Because of the strong evidence supporting the higher confidence drug

movement events, the lower bound of the cocaine flow estimate is 517 metric tons.

▼ Calculations using production and consumption estimates provide a range



**Percentages of Cocaine Flow Distribution by Vector for Documented Events Departing South America Towards The US in 2005**



**Figure 4. (U) Cocaine Flow Distribution by Vector for Documented Events Departing South America Toward the United States — January-December 2005.** Based primarily on analysis of cocaine movement events, we estimate that more than 500 metric tons of cocaine left South America toward the United States in 2005.

**Cocaine Flow Distribution**

*Flow Percentages are affected by variations in reporting within the Transit Zone and are not an actual measurement of the distribution of the drug threat.*

for the flow amount departing South America towards the United States as at least 397 and upwards to 732 metric tons in 2005. The 732 metric ton figure provides a reasonable upper bound for the flow estimate.

Uncertainties remain in several key areas, including:

- ▼ Our calculations assume that coca is processed into cocaine HCl and consumed in roughly one year; however, time lags

in the production, and distribution cycles could increase the interval.

- ▼ Global cocaine consumption estimates are dated and non-standardized; they may not reflect shifting consumption trends.

### **Estimate of Cocaine Flow as a Range**

Despite efforts to improve cocaine data sets in 2005, disparities continue among the three key data sets used to estimate the amount of cocaine departing South America. Disparities remain between (1) estimated Andean coca cultivation and cocaine production, (2) estimated worldwide consumption of cocaine, and (3) reported cocaine movement amounts. In light of persistent disparities, the counterdrug intelligence community will continue to report the cocaine flow amount as a range, and work towards narrowing the size of the range as data sets improve. Using a range will allow us to better depict data uncertainties that exist among these disparate data sets.

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## **Overall Trends**

### **Transit Zone**

We assess the amount of cocaine flowing from South America towards the United States in 2005 was relatively unchanged from 2004 totals.

Ninety percent of the cocaine reported departing South America towards the United States moved through Central America, Mexico, and

their adjacent waters; more cocaine moved through the eastern Pacific than the western Caribbean. Noncommercial maritime events comprised nearly all of the movement in this corridor. Fishing vessels were the primary mode of transportation in the eastern Pacific, while go-fast boats were predominant in the western Caribbean.

In 2005, reported movement through the Atlantic was double that recorded in 2004. Movement through the Atlantic accounted for nearly all of the total reported flow departing South America toward non-US markets.

### **US Arrival Zone**

Reported cocaine flow across the US southwestern border dominated the US Arrival Zone, accounting for 75 percent of the cocaine seized. The Eastern US and the Gulf of Mexico accounted for the remaining 25 percent.

### **Non-US Arrival Zone**

In 2005, European destinations accounted for over 80 percent of the reported movements to non-US destinations. About 90 percent of seizures in non-US destinations were from shipments in or on their way to Europe.

Out of 63 metric tons of cocaine seized within the non-US arrival zone in 2005, 59 metric tons were seized in Europe. The Iberian Peninsula remained the primary entry point for cocaine bound for Europe.





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