

# PERTEVMUN'26

## CCPCJ Study Guide

Agenda Item:

*The Rise and Dismantling of the Medellín Cartel and Its Impact on  
Criminal Justice Systems*

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## 1. Letter from the Secretary General:

ESTEEMED DELEGATES AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE PERTEVMUN FAMILY, AS THE SECRETARY GENERAL, IT IS MY GREAT HONOR AND PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO THE THIRD ANNUAL SESSION OF PERTEVMUN.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO OUR AMAZING ORGANIZATION TEAM AND ASTONISHING ACADEMIC TEAM FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND GREAT EFFORT. THANKS TO EVERYONE'S DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT, WE PREPARED YOU 12 COMMITTEES FOR YOU, WHICH INCLUDE TWO GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES, SEVEN SPECIAL COMMITTEES, AND THREE CRISIS COMMITTEES. THE COMMON GROUND OF ALL OF THESE COMMITTEES IS TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO DEBATE OR ACT UPON EITHER HISTORICAL, CURRENT, OR FUTURISTIC ISSUES AND GLOBAL TOPICS TO BROADEN YOUR PERSPECTIVES.

I HOPE FOR THE DURATION OF PERTEVMUN'26, ALL THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR EXPERIENCES OF THEIR LIVES FILLED WITH TEAMWORK, NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES.

#LIVEFORTHEAPPLAUSE

SINCERELY,

ELA KARABATI

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF PERTEVMUN'26

## 2. Letter from the Under Secretary General:

Dear Delegates,

I would like to welcome you all to the 3rd edition of PERTEVMUN. My name is Zeynep Yavuz, and I am an 11th grade student at Prof. Dr. Mümtaz Turhan Social Sciences High School. I will be serving as the Under Secretary General of this committee.

During these three days, we will conduct operations and work toward reaching a conclusion regarding the Louvre Heist. You will also have the opportunity to challenge your limits and contribute creatively to make the committee productive and engaging.

Lastly, if you have any questions or concerns about the committee, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [zeynep.yavuz2108@gmail.com](mailto:zeynep.yavuz2108@gmail.com)

I look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Kind regards,

Zeynep Yavuz

### **3. Introduction to the Committee:**

The United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is the main policy-making body in the United Nations system in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Founded under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission provides direction and supervision in addressing various issues around crime prevention, enhancing legal tools, and promoting international collaboration when it comes to criminal justice. The CCPCJ also reviews emerging crime trends, assesses the relevance of existing international norms and standards to those trends through its annual sessions, as well as feeds information up to UN programs on how effective capacity building efforts for crime prevention and justice system reform are. The CCPCJ helps develop international guidelines for ensuring security, justice and the rule of law by providing a platform for states members to cooperate with one another.

## 4. Key Terms:

**Transnational Organized Crime:** Criminal organizations that operate across national borders and engage in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, money laundering, and arms smuggling. Groups like the Medellín Cartel built international networks to move drugs and money between countries.

**Drug Cartel:** A highly organized criminal group that controls the production, transportation, and distribution of illegal drugs. Cartels often use violence, corruption, and intimidation to protect their operations and maintain control over drug markets.

**Extradition:** The legal process of transferring a suspected or convicted criminal from one country to another to face trial or punishment. In Colombia, extradition to the United States became a major conflict between the government and drug cartels.

**Narcoterrorism:** The use of violence and terrorist-like tactics by drug trafficking organizations in order to pressure governments and protect their operations. These actions can include bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings.

**Money Laundering:** The process of hiding the illegal origin of money obtained through criminal activities. Drug cartels often invest their profits in businesses, real estate, or financial systems to make the money appear legitimate.

**Search Bloc:** A special unit of the Colombian National Police created to capture Pablo Escobar and dismantle the Medellín Cartel. It played a key role in the final operations against Escobar.

**Drug Trafficking Routes:** The networks used to transport illegal drugs from production regions to consumer markets. These routes can involve air transport, maritime shipping, or land-based smuggling.

**Asset Seizure:** The legal confiscation of money, property, or assets connected to criminal activities. Governments use this method to weaken criminal organizations financially.

## 5. Procedure

### Roll Call

At the start of every official meeting, the Committee Directors will conduct a procedure known as "Roll Call," where each Member State will be called in alphabetical order. During this procedure, Member States must indicate their presence by saying "Present" or "Present and Voting." If a Member State says "Present and Voting," it means they are obligated to vote on all substantive matters during that session and cannot abstain.

### Debate

After the delivery of the opening speeches to the Committee, debate on the agenda item will automatically begin with the formation of the General Speakers List (hereinafter referred to as GSL). The Committee Directors will open the GSL and will show the order of the speakers. The debate shall proceed in three different modes:

I. Formal Debate

II. Moderated Caucus

III. Unmoderated Caucus

The default mode for the debate is formal discussion. The general discussion of the agenda item, the discussion of changes, and the discussion of resolution drafts are all referred to as formal debate. It is controlled by a (General) Speakers' List (GSL/SL) and will proceed until a procedural resolution replaces it.

The committee will have an open GSL for the Agenda Item which is being considered. As long as the member state's name isn't already on the GSL, it is possible for it to be added by sending a written proposal to the Committee Director. A note to the Committee's Director is all that is required to apply for the GSL. The placards of the delegates who want to be added to the GSL may also be specifically requested by directors. Delegates may be added to the GSL at the option of the Committee Directors. Before being acknowledged, any delegate who wants to be kicked out of GSL can submit a letter to the committee directors.

The GSL will be available throughout the discussion of that agenda item. The Committee Director has the discretion to announce the list of speakers; this decision should not be challenged or the topic of a motion by the Committee. Speakers may address any document that is on the floor at any time during the formal debate and may talk generally about the subject (agenda item, amendment/draft resolution discussed). The Speakers Lists for discussions of amendments and resolution drafts will follow the same guidelines. Unmoderated Caucus Unmoderated Caucus is a form of debate that takes place within the official Committee Session procedures. It serves as a designated lobbying period for discussions and document preparation.

When the floor is open, a motion for an unmoderated caucus may be entertained at any time. While making the motion, it should be made clear what the purpose is as well as the time limit, which cannot surpass 20 minutes. A simple majority is needed for the motion to pass when it is put to a vote. In the event of multiple motions proposing unmoderated caucuses, the Committee Directors will rank motions in descending order of length and the Committee members will vote accordingly. If the Committee Director believes that an unmoderated caucus has ceased to be fruitful, he or she may adjourn it early. This decision is final and cannot be appealed. An unmoderated caucus may be extended twice as long as the total duration of the extensions and the initial caucus is not exceeded. A proposal to extend the unmoderated caucus may be rejected by the Director, and that decision cannot be appealed.

### **Moderated Caucus**

Moderated Caucus is a form of debate that takes place under the ruling of the Committee Directors and it aims to facilitate substantive debate on critical junctures in the discussion. The Director will momentarily withdraw from the Speakers' List and, at his or her discretion, call on delegates to talk during a moderated caucus. When the floor is open, a motion for a moderated caucus may be made at any moment. Caucus sessions are limited to 20 minutes, and each speaker is given a set amount of time that cannot be increased from the Speakers' List. A simple majority is needed for the motion to pass when it is put to a vote. The Committee Members will vote in accordance with the Director's ranking of the motions in descending order of length when there are multiple motions proposing moderated caucuses. An appeal cannot be made from the Director's decision to find a motion out of order. During a moderated caucus, no motions can be raised in between speeches. If a

delegate's speech does not discuss the subject of the moderated caucus, the delegate may be and will be ruled out of order. The Committee Director may declare the moderated caucus over if no delegate requests to talk. Only immediately following the conclusion of the Moderated Caucus may a move be made to extend the current Caucus. A moderated caucus may only be postponed twice, each time for a period not to exceed that of the original caucus or, in the case of a request for a second extension, the original caucus. A proposal to extend the moderated caucus may be rejected by the Director, and that decision cannot be appealed.

### **Closure of Debate**

A delegate may propose a motion to close such debate when the floor is open, regardless of whether another delegate has expressed a desire to speak. This applies to debate on the general subject, the agenda, or an amendment. A delegate may propose this motion at any time. This motion is open to the Director's decision. Only two delegates opposed to the closure will be given the opportunity to talk on the motion during consideration, and then a procedural vote will be taken on the motion. To pass this resolution, the house must vote with a two-thirds majority in favour of ending the debate. The Committee may choose to split the House, divide the question, reorder the draft resolutions, or proceed to the voting process after the discussion is over. In the event that there are no additional motions, the Committee will immediately proceed to the voting process without the need for another motion.

### **Suspension and Adjournment of the Meeting**

The suspension of the meeting means the postponement of all Committee functions until the next session. The adjournment of the meeting means the postponement of all Committee functions for the duration of the Conference. When the floor is open, a delegate may raise a motion to suspend or adjourn the meeting. These motions may be rejected by the Committee Directors. If such a motion is considered, the house will vote on it right away without entertaining any arguments in favour of or against it. To suspend or adjourn the meeting, a simple majority is needed. Before two-thirds of the conference time has passed, a move to adjourn the meeting will be denied.

## **Tabling and Resumption of Debate**

A delegate may propose a motion to table the current debate on an agenda item, a draft resolution, or an amendment that is being discussed. This motion is debatable. With this regard, permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two delegates favouring and two opposing the motion, or in case only one delegate wishes to oppose the motion, one speaker for and one speaker against the motion shall be recognized where after the motion shall be put to an immediate vote. A two-thirds majority is required for the motion on tabling to pass. If this motion passes, no debate will be allowed on the tabled agenda item, draft resolution or amendment unless it is resumed by a motion.

## **Speeches**

No delegate may speak during a session without the Committee Director's approval. The Committee Director may call a speaker to order if their statements are irrelevant to the topic at hand, offensive to Committee members or the Secretariat, contain instances of personal offence, or violate sovereignty. The Committee Director may also interrupt a speaker if they go over their allotted time.

## **Yields**

A delegate who is recognized by the Directors during the formal debate may yield any remaining time in three ways:

### *I- Yield to another delegate*

The delegate's remaining time will be offered to the delegate that the former delegate identifies.

The Committee Director will recognize the second delegate for the remaining time if they accept the yield. The second delegate speaking may only yield to the Directors.

### *II- Yield to Questions*

Questioners will be selected by the Committee Director and limited to one question each.

Follow-up questions will be allowed only at the discretion of the Committee Director. Only the speaker's answer shall be deducted from the speaker's remaining time. The Committee

Director will have the right to call to order any delegate whose question is, in the opinion of him or her, rhetorical, leading and/or not designed to elicit information.

### *III- Yield to the Director*

Such a yield should be made if the delegate does not wish his/her speech to be subject to questions. The Committee Director will then move to the next speaker. Speeches during moderated caucuses and procedural matters (debates and motions) shall not end with yielding since during moderated caucuses, speakers are only given the right to talk, not the floor. A yielded time may not be yielded. Speeches are limited to one yield.

### **Right of Reply**

If a delegate feels that their national integrity has been compromised by another delegate, they may request a Right of Reply. This request must be made in writing. The Committee Director will determine a suitable time limit for the reply. The Director's decision on whether to grant the request for a Right of Reply is final and cannot be challenged. A Right of Reply to a previous Right of Reply is not allowed. According to this regulation, any comment that criticises the governing body of a Member State or questions the sovereignty of that Member State or a portion of it is considered an attack on the national integrity of the delegate.

### **Point of Personal Privilege**

Whenever a delegate experiences a situation that impedes their ability to participate in the Committee, they have the right to raise a Point of Personal Privilege. This allows the delegate to request that the issue causing discomfort be addressed and resolved.

### **Point of Order**

In the event that the proper parliamentary process is not being followed, a delegate has the option to raise a Point of Order. The delegate is not allowed to discuss the content of the issue being debated while raising a Point of Order. The Committee Director will make a decision on the Point of Order in accordance with the rules of procedure.

### **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry**

A delegate can use a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry to ask questions about the parliamentary procedure being followed. The Committee Director will provide a response based on the current rules of procedure. However, it is important to note that this type of inquiry should not be used to raise questions about topics other than parliamentary procedure. If a delegate has questions about other matters, they should send a note to the Committee Director instead.

### **Point of Information**

A delegate may raise a Point of Information, if the delegate has a question regarding the agenda item or the debate proceedings.

### **Interrupting a Speech with a Point**

During a speech, no points may be raised except in two cases:

1. A delegate may raise a "point of personal privilege due to audibility" if they cannot hear the speech being delivered by another delegate. However, the reason for the point must be explicitly stated as "due to audibility" when it is raised, or the delegate raising the point will be called to order.
2. A delegate may also raise a "point of order" if another delegate is speaking and there is a serious violation of the rules of procedure occurring during the speech.

### **Working Paper**

Working papers are resources used to direct the committee's debate and aid in the process of developing a draft resolution. Working papers are not official documents and can be given in any format deemed appropriate by the Committee Directors. Working papers don't need to be filed with any signatories. Before it has been presented, no document may be referred to as a "working paper."

### **Final Documents**

The expected final document of all committees, except for those previously mentioned, is a resolution. The term "resolution" in the context of these rules refers to all anticipated final documents, unless otherwise indicated.

## **Draft Resolutions**

A draft resolution may be introduced when it is signed by one-fifth of the number of delegations that are present at the Committee at the time of the submission and received the approval of the Director.

The act of signing a resolution does not necessarily indicate support for it, and the signer has no further responsibilities. A draft resolution could only be signed if the signatories intended it to be debated in the Committee. The draft resolution has no recognized supporters or submitters. A draft motion needs to be approved by a simple majority of the present members. Per subject, only one proposed resolution may be approved. The voting process will conclude once a draft resolution has been approved, and all other draft resolutions will be deemed to have failed. In the interpretation of this rule, "present" refers collectively to all the members participating in that session, regardless of their statuses of presence.

## **Amendments**

Delegates may amend any draft resolution that has been introduced by adding to, deleting from or revising parts of it. Only One amendment may be introduced at any given time. Amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Directors. Amendments to amendments are out of order; however, an amended part of a draft resolution may be further amended. Amendments have no official sponsors, nor are friendly amendments recognized. Perambulatory phrases may not be amended. The final vote on the amendment is substantive; the same voting procedure as in the case of draft resolutions applies.

## **Procedure**

1. A motion to introduce an approved amendment may be introduced when the floor is open.
2. After this motion, the Director may read the amendment aloud, time permitting. Then the motion to introduce is put to vote, requiring a simple majority to pass.
3. If the committee moves to introduce the amendment, general debate will be suspended and the Speakers' List will be established with Member states for and against the amendment. A motion to close debate will be in order after the Committee has heard from two speakers for the amendment

and from two speakers against, or from all the speakers on one side and at least two on the other side. Two-thirds majority is required for the motion to close the debate to pass.

3. If there are no speakers against the motion to close debate, the Committee Director can propose to move to voting by acclamation. If rejected by the committee or delegate opposed to the amendment, the Committee will move to an immediate vote. Amendments need a simple majority to pass. After the vote, debate will resume according to the

## **General Speakers' List.**

### **Introducing Substantive Documents**

After a draft resolution or amendment is approved by the Committee Director, it must be introduced by a motion and approved by a simple majority to be addressed as a draft resolution or amendment.

The Committee Director may read the document or ask the delegate who raised the motion to read it out, but only the operative clauses need to be read for a draft resolution. Multiple draft resolutions can be introduced at the same time, but once a draft resolution is introduced, the debate is limited to that specific resolution. A new Speakers' List will be established for the debate and a motion can be raised to table or close the debate on the resolution.

Once the debate is over, the resolution will be immediately voted upon. If it passes, the general debate will be considered closed as only one resolution can pass per agenda item.

### **Voting Rights**

Each member of the Committee, including observers, shall have one vote on procedural motions. Substantive voting on a resolution or a part thereof will be taken among the Member States only.

## **Procedural Voting**

Procedural voting is permitted in all cases except when voting on a substantive amendment or resolution. During procedural voting, abstaining is not allowed and note passing is suspended.

For motions requiring a simple majority, the Directors will ask for first seconds and then objections by saying "Are there any seconds/objections?" Delegates in favour of the motion will say "Second!" while those against it will say "Objection!" If no seconds are raised, the motion will fail automatically, and if no objections are raised, the motion will pass without further voting.

For motions requiring a 2/3 majority to pass, the Directors will ask for first seconds by saying "Are there any seconds?" Delegates in favour of the motion will say "Second!" If no seconds are raised, the motion will fail automatically. If seconds are raised, the Directors will move on to objections. If no objections are raised, the Committee Directors will repeat "Are there any objections?" up to three times to confirm the consent of the Committee. In such cases, the Committee will bypass the procedure outlined in relevant Articles.

## **Substantive Voting**

Substantive voting is used to vote on draft resolutions, amendments, or portions of a draft resolution that have been divided out by motion. This type of voting is done after formal debate has ended. Only Member States have voting rights, and each member gets one vote unless specified otherwise. Members can vote in favour, against, or abstain, but abstaining members are not considered to be voting and are not counted. If the House is divided by a motion, each member must vote in favour or against without the possibility of abstaining. Only one resolution per topic can be passed by the committee.

During substantive voting, note-passing is suspended, and all points and motions other than the Division of the Question, Motion to vote by acclamation, Motion for a Roll Call Vote, Point of Personal Privilege, Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, and Point of Order shall be considered out of order. All formal votes shall be conducted by a show of placards, unless a motion for a roll call vote is accepted. If the number of votes for and against is tied, the substantive document fails.

## **Majorities**

A simple majority requires more votes in favour and against; the matter fails in case of a tie. A two-thirds majority requires more affirmative votes than twice of the negative votes, except for the ones explicitly stated to require two-thirds majority; all matters require a simple majority to pass.

## **Division of the Question**

Before the substantive voting on a draft resolution, a delegate may move to motion to divide the Question. Division of the Question means that before the final vote on the draft resolution, it is divided into some parts to be voted separately. A draft resolution may be divided so that each of its operative clauses will be voted upon separately, or the division may group the clauses into two or more. Preambulatory to speak on the motion for division shall be given only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against. In case of the existence of only one delegate wishing to speak against the motion, only one delegate shall be recognized to speak in favour of the motion. If the motion receives the simple majority required to pass in the substantive voting, the resolution or the amendment will be divided accordingly, and a separate substantive vote will be taken on each divided part to determine whether or not it is included in the final draft.

Parts of the resolution that are subsequently passed will be recombined into a final document and will be put to a substantive vote in the case of a resolution. The final vote requires a simple majority to pass. If all of the operative parts of a resolution are rejected, the proposal will be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

## **Division of the House**

Immediately after the closure of the debate, a motion to divide the House may be introduced.

This motion requires a two-thirds majority. If the motion passes, abstentions on that draft resolution will be ruled out of order; meaning that each member will only have the right to either vote in favour or against, unattached to their status during the roll call. The division of the House is only in order in voting on draft resolutions; it cannot be introduced on voting amendments.

## **Roll Call Voting**

A delegate can move to motion for a RollCall vote before the substantive voting on a draft resolution. During a RollCall vote, the Director will call upon all member states present in English alphabetical order. In the first sequence, delegates can vote in favour, against, against with rights, abstain, or pass. Delegates who vote "with rights" reserve the right to speak before the voting results are announced to explain the delegation's vote, but only when the delegate is voting against the policy of their sovereign authority. The time for speaking will be set by the Director. Delegations can only explain votes in favour or against; abstentions do not grant the right to explain.

Delegates who stated their status as "present and voting" cannot abstain from voting in either the first or second sequences. Delegates who "pass" in the first sequence must either vote in favour or against in the second sequence, with the option to vote with rights but not the option to abstain from voting.

## **Precedence of Points and Motions**

1. Point of Personal Privilege
2. Point of Order
3. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry
4. Point of Information
5. Motion for an Extension
6. Motion to Adjourn
7. Motion to Suspend the Meeting
8. Motion to Enter Voting Procedure
9. Motion to Introduce (Draft Resolution)
10. Motion to Introduce (Amendment)
11. Motion for Unmoderated Caucus

12. Motion for Moderated Caucus
13. Motion for Postponement of Debate
14. Motion for Resumption of Debate
15. Motion to Terminate the Current Motion
16. Motion for Closure of Debate
17. Motion to Reorder Draft Resolution
18. Motion to Divide the Question

Upon the proposal of more than one unmoderated caucus, the longer unmoderated caucus motion shall be put to the vote first. The same rule applies for moderated caucuses. Upon the proposal of more than one method to divide the question, the most disruptive one shall be put to the vote first.

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## **6. Introduction to the Agenda Item:**

The United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is the main policy-making body in the United Nations system in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Founded under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission provides direction and supervision in addressing various issues around crime prevention, enhancing legal tools, and promoting international collaboration when it comes to criminal justice. The CCPCJ also reviews emerging crime trends, assesses the relevance of existing international norms and standards to those trends through its annual sessions, as well as feeds information up to UN programs on how effective capacity building efforts for crime prevention and justice system reform are. The CCPCJ helps develop international guidelines for ensuring security, justice and the rule of law by providing a platform for states members to cooperate with one another.

### **The Medellin Cartel**

The Medellin Cartel, which became the epicenter of the drug trade in the 1970s and 80s, was one of the darkest criminal organizations based in Colombia. Under the leadership of Pablo Escobar; The structure, which was established with the partnership of names such as Jorge Luis Ochoa, Carlos Lehder and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, was known for its huge cocaine production and its global distribution network.

### **Operational Power and Economic Impact**

During the peak period, the cartel shipped tons of cocaine weekly around the world. It is estimated that its daily profit reaches 200 million US dollars and its annual income reaches billions of dollars. The organization has not only dominated illegal trade, but also expanded the international cocaine market on an unprecedented scale.

### **Violence and Political Struggle**

The cartel turned to politically violent acts in order to oppose the extradition laws to the USA, especially in the following years. In this asymmetric war against the Colombian

state; bomb attacks, kidnapping cases and assassinations against law enforcement agencies became routine. This terrorist strategy has created deep fear and chaos in the society by targeting civilians to force the government to negotiate.

In the late 1980s and early 90s; internal organizational disorders, endless violence and competition with the rival Cali Cartel weakened the structure. Pablo Escobar, who became the most wanted name in the world, was killed in a clash with the Colombian special police unit in 1993 at the end of the process where he had to hide. Escobar's death caused the leadership to pass to the Cali Cartel while closing the Medellín era.

## **7. Historical Background:**

### **7.1. Drug Background**

The rise of the Medellín cartel was directly tied to the ascension of cocaine as the illicit substance of choice among recreational drug users in the late 1970s and 1980s. A stimulant substance, cocaine is derived from the coca plant, which is widely distributed in South America. In order to get a drug-induced high, certain indigenous groups in the Andes Mountains and Amazon rainforest started chewing coca leaves thousands of years ago. Following the successful extraction of cocaine from coca leaves by European scientists in the 1850s, the drug gained popularity as a kind of miracle medication that could be used to treat a wide range of crippling conditions. But when reports of cocaine addiction increased quickly over time, it became evident that the substance was far more dangerous and addictive than previously believed, leading to stricter regulations and its eventual criminalization in many parts of the world.

In the 1970s, as drug habits were changing globally, cocaine suddenly gained incredible popularity, particularly in the US, as "the entertainment of the elite." During this period of explosive demand, Pablo Escobar abandoned traditional small-scale smuggling methods and transformed the business into a massive industry. Escobar's dominance of this market was largely due to his control over every stage, from production to distribution; he accessed cheap coca leaves in Peru and Bolivia, processed them in secret laboratories in the Colombian jungle, and revolutionized logistics by establishing his own fleet of aircraft. He even used an island he purchased in the Bahamas as a strategic refueling station for

shipments to America, single-handedly controlling approximately 80% of the world's cocaine market. This incredible raw material and distribution power not only amassed unimaginable wealth but also served as the primary fuel for financing an armed army that allowed him to defy the state and social projects that secured public support.

### ***Drug routes***

Pablo Escobar's drug routes were more than just a simple smuggling network; they were a massive system resembling the logistical infrastructure of a modern cargo company. While the heart of this system was Colombia, its branches extended across the entire American continent. Here's a deeper look at the routes and workings of that era:

#### ***South-North Route and Production Centers***

The routes didn't actually begin in Colombia. Escobar had the raw materials (coca leaves and coca paste) collected from farmers in Peru and Bolivia. These raw materials were transported by small planes to massive secret laboratory complexes like Tranquilandia in the untouched Amazon rainforest of Colombia. Here, the material was transformed into pure cocaine and packaged for distribution worldwide.

#### ***Caribbean Stops and Air Bridge***

Escobar's most strategic move was seizing Norman's Cay island in the Bahamas. This island served as a "stepping stone" between Colombia and Florida. The planes took off from Colombia, refueled on this island, and flew very low, just a few meters above the ocean, to infiltrate US airspace and avoid radar detection. Sometimes, instead of landing, the planes dropped the cocaine packages into the sea off Florida, where waiting speedboats collected them and brought them ashore.

#### ***The Mexican Corridor and Diversification***

As the US Coast Guard increased its patrols in the Caribbean, Escobar shifted his route to land via Mexico. During this period, he began collaborating with Mexican smugglers (the ancestors of today's cartels) to transport goods across the border using trucks, vehicles with hidden compartments, and even underground tunnels. He even went so far as to have

custom-built mini-submarines constructed to transport cocaine. These submarines could deliver tons of goods directly to Miami ports without being detected by radar.

## **7.2. Pablo Escobar Cartel Backgrounds**

When examining Pablo Escobar's background, his individual characteristics and the socio-economic environment in which he grew up must be considered together. Born in Colombia in 1949, Escobar grew up in a family of rural origin but involved in the urbanization process. His father being a farmer and his mother a teacher indicates an environment where education was valued at home, but economic opportunities were limited. The 1950s and 60s in Colombia were a period of intense political violence and economic inequality. After "La Violencia," state authority weakened, and a massive migration from rural areas to cities began. Medellín became a rapidly but irregularly growing city. Unemployment, the informal economy, and criminal networks became widespread in this environment. Escobar's youth was spent within these structural conditions. Accounts of his early life show that Escobar had a strong motivation for upward mobility. His desire to climb the social ladder was not limited solely to economic gain; Status, visibility, and the desire for social power were also decisive factors. The rapid international growth of the cocaine trade in the 1970s created significant economic opportunities for organized crime structures in Colombia. Escobar was one of the early actors to seize this opportunity.

From a personality perspective, he appears charismatic, strategically minded, and capable of using interpersonal relationships for self-serving gain. His tendency towards risk-taking and strong need for control are also noteworthy. These traits facilitated his rise, but also brought with them a violent understanding of power.

Escobar's background was shaped by the intersection of individual ambition and weak institutional structures. His rise can be explained not only by personal preferences but also by inequality, the limited capacity of the state, and the economic dynamics created by global drug demand. However, this context does not legitimize the social devastation caused by his actions

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### ***Escobar's Image and Social Aid***

While Pablo Escobar waged a bloody war against the state, on the other side of the coin he spent enormous sums of money to gain the support of the poor. In particular, he built an entire neighborhood for the homeless in the poorest districts of Medellín (still known today as Barrio Pablo Escobar), constructed dozens of football fields, and opened schools and hospitals. He met the basic needs of the people by distributing cash in the most remote slums that the state did not reach or provide services to. These aids were actually a very strategic move; because in this way he created a huge "human shield" loyal to him, protecting him against the state. In the eyes of the people, he became a hero (Robin Hood) figure who "took from the rich and gave to the poor." So much so that when Escobar was cornered or hiding, the people in these neighborhoods protected him from the police and provided him with intelligence instead of betraying him. This situation is the clearest example of how a leader of a criminal organization can gain social legitimacy not only through fear, but also by exploiting the desperation of the public.

### ***"Plata o Plomo"***

Pablo Escobar's infamous phrase, "Plata o Plomo," meaning "Silver or Bullet," was a simple yet terrifying threat. Escobar presented every government official, police officer, or politician he encountered with this choice: "Either you take a bribe from me, get rich (with silver), and do what I say, or you refuse and get shot in the head." He used this method to intimidate even honest people and draw them to his side.

The political consequences were disastrous: Escobar effectively paralyzed the justice system of an entire state. Judges couldn't make decisions, police couldn't conduct operations because they were all either bought off or feared for the lives of their families. This led to the weakening of the state in Colombia and allowed criminal organizations to act as if they were running the country. They even went so far as to bomb parliament or assassinate presidential candidates to stop laws that didn't suit them. Ultimately, public trust in the state was completely destroyed, and the country was plunged into years of chaos.

### ***Escobar's radio and intelligence network***

Pablo Escobar's radio and intelligence network was a technological revolution for its time, allowing the cartel to always stay one step ahead of the police. Escobar not only

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smuggled drugs but also acquired advanced scanning systems that even the Colombian police and army lacked, allowing him to instantly monitor all official frequencies. This enabled him to be informed of a raid order the moment it was given, even before the operation began. Combining this technological superiority with thousands of "campanero" (watchmen) on the streets, this system relied on a massive human network that instantly reported every police movement in the city to headquarters via radio. Furthermore, his ability to obtain secret operation plans in advance through corrupt informants he had infiltrated into government circles created an impenetrable shield against capture. Ultimately, this intelligence power transformed Escobar from a mere criminal into a professional army leader with his own early warning system against the state.

### **Pablo Escobar's Moves Against the State and the Law**

Pablo Escobar used a unique and ruthless method to overcome any obstacle that stood in his way. If a law or a person threatened his business, he directly attacked the heart of the state to eliminate that obstacle:

***The Assassination of the Minister (1984):*** When Minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara Bonilla exposed Escobar's dirty dealings in parliament and had him expelled from politics, Escobar's response was very harsh. He had the minister killed in a crossfire in his car. This event was the first breaking point where a crime cartel officially declared war on the state.

***The Palace of Justice Attack (1985):*** Wanting to destroy all his criminal files and extradition documents to the US, Escobar paid the M-19 guerrilla group to storm the Supreme Court building. In this bloody attack, judges were taken hostage, the building was burned, and all the archives were destroyed. His aim was to physically destroy the evidence that would imprison him.

***The Assassination of the Presidential Candidate (1989):*** Luis Carlos Galán, a presidential candidate loved by the Colombian people, became the biggest threat to Escobar when he said, "I will hand over the drug lords to the US." Galán was assassinated at a rally in front of thousands of people. With this murder, Escobar showed that he could even change the will of the people through the ballot box with weapons.

***The Avianca Plane Massacre:*** To kill César Gaviria, the new candidate who replaced Galán, he blew up a passenger plane carrying 107 innocent people. Gaviria wasn't on the plane that day, but Escobar horrified the world by proving he could sacrifice hundreds of innocents to kill one person.

***Building His Own Prison (La Catedral):*** When the state cornered him, instead of giving up, he set his own terms. He had the constitution changed to guarantee he wouldn't be extradited to the US, and he built a luxurious mansion called La Catedral, complete with a football field and a bar, where he served his "prison" sentence. In reality, he wasn't in prison; he continued to run his criminal empire under the protection of the state.

## 8. Major Parties Involved

**Pablo Escobar:** Founder and strategic leader of the Medellin Cartel, Pablo Escobar was responsible for the large-scale production of narcotics and their trafficking throughout Colombia and internationally. In order to maintain his power, Escobar utilized tactics of intimidation while at the same time engaging in populist tactics such as funding social projects in Medellin in order to gain loyalty from the public. By using a dual approach of “plata o plomo” (bribe or bullet), Escobar was able to undermine the integrity of law enforcement and the judiciary.

**Operational leaders in the Medellin Cartel:** Included (but were not limited to) Gustavo Gaviria, Jorge Luis Ochoa, Carlos Lehder, and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha. These individuals were key figures in controlling international smuggling routes and were responsible for the logistical support needed to carry out narcotics production/trafficking. They made use of both airstrips and maritime routes as well as creating alliances with other international organized crime syndicates.

**Colombian Government (1980's):** The Colombian Government (from the 1980s) was initially disorganized and lacked the resources necessary to effectively enforce laws regarding illegal narcotics trafficking. Political and law enforcement corruption, caused in

part by the power of drug cartels, greatly limited the Colombian government's ability to take effective action against illegal drug trafficking organizations.

**U.S Government Agencies:** While the U.S. government had agencies such as the DEA, FBI, and the U.S. military that were collecting intelligence on the illegal cocaine trade, these agencies were initially unable to coordinate their efforts with each other by exchanging intelligence, and faced significant opposition from local authorities.

**Local Community:** The investments of Escobar in housing, education, and infrastructure in the poor neighborhoods of Medellín made it difficult for the authorities to enforce laws regarding drug trafficking and drugs in general. Many residents of Medellín viewed Escobar as a very generous benefactor and thus were much less likely to cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

## **Major Parties Involved in Dismantling**

**Colombia, Police & Military:** The Colombian government formed elite task forces to combat Escobar & Cartel violence (Search Bloc). The operations of the Search Bloc clearly show how specialized law enforcement is necessary to deal with organized crime.

**U.S. Law Enforcement & International Support:** The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has supported Colombian law enforcement by providing information and technology used in surveillance and coordination of extraditions. Joint efforts by the U.S. and Colombia targeted the cartels' financial and operational capabilities.

**Political Leadership:** Colombian Presidents Belisario Betancur, Virgilio Barco and César Gaviria implemented anti-drug policies, enacted tougher extradition laws and put in place judicial reforms to enable legal accountability for organized crime.

**Rival Cartels:** As Medellín's cartel declined, other Colombian cartels (primarily the Cali cartel) & smaller criminal organizations took advantage of this decline & created internal cartel conflict. As a result, these rivalries helped law enforcement by providing evidence of the weaknesses of the Medellín cartel's operational abilities and structures.

**International Institutions:** The cooperation of Foreign Governments through Bilateral Agreements and by the United Nations to combat drug traffickers has enhanced and strengthened anti-drug control initiatives, including: coordinated asset seizures; tracking drug-related financial transactions; and sharing drug-related intelligence.

## 9. Past Attempts to Solve the Issue

### Extradition Agreements (1980s)

One of the most important strategies used against the Medellín Cartel was the strengthening of extradition agreements between Colombia and the United States. These agreements allowed major drug traffickers to be sent to the U.S. to stand trial. Many cartel leaders strongly opposed this policy because they feared the U.S. prison system, which made extradition a powerful legal tool against organized crime.

### Creation of the Search Bloc

The Colombian government created a special police unit called the Search Bloc to specifically target Pablo Escobar and the Medellín Cartel. This elite unit focused on intelligence gathering and direct operations against cartel members. With international support, the Search Bloc played a crucial role in weakening the cartel and eventually locating Escobar in 1993.

### International Law Enforcement Cooperation

During the fight against the Medellín Cartel, cooperation between countries increased significantly. Agencies from different countries began sharing intelligence, coordinating investigations, and supporting operations against drug trafficking networks. This cooperation helped authorities better understand and disrupt the cartel's international drug distribution system.

## **Financial Investigations and Asset Seizures**

Governments also began targeting the financial resources of drug cartels. Through financial investigations and asset seizure laws, authorities attempted to confiscate money, property, and businesses connected to illegal drug activities. Weakening the financial power of cartels became an important strategy in limiting their influence.

### **Collapse of the Medellín Cartel (1993)**

The death of Pablo Escobar in 1993 marked the end of the Medellín Cartel as a dominant organization. However, the fall of the cartel did not eliminate drug trafficking. Instead, other criminal organizations such as the Cali Cartel and smaller trafficking networks emerged, showing that the fight against organized crime requires long-term and continuous strategies.

## **10. Questions to be Answered:**

- What specific Colombian strategies post-Escobar can be adapted to fight today's drug lords?
- How has Escobar's cocaine trade model evolved in modern cartels like Sinaloa or CJNG?
- What steps can a nation take to prevent cartel formation?
- What modifications can be made to the criminal justice system to combat organized crime?
- What social initiatives can a nation implement to lessen its citizens' vulnerability?
- What technological developments are available for a nation to use in order to identify cartels?
- How can the public's confidence in law enforcement in areas impacted by cartels be restored?
- Which UN policies can be implemented to prevent criminal activity?

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