



Contractors gut building to its concrete foundation before the rebuilding begins.

Pizza, obviously, isn't the driving force behind the renovation. Improving the electrical service, heating and air conditioning and installing communication cables that can handle the demands of modern computer networks are the main reasons for the project, Mr. Butowsky said.

The renovation also includes outside work as well.

"We're working with the National Capital Planning Commission to improve the barriers and perimeter," he

said. "The entrances will be more inviting with the barriers designed to accommodate pedestrians. This will eliminate the fortress look."

Blast-resistant windows along with physical improvements to prevent electronic eavesdropping are also part of the work.

More conference rooms, an upgraded library and a computer center to consolidate the small, independent computer rooms now scattered throughout the Department are among the upgrades. Conference rooms will have new video communications equipment and streamlined security screening for visitors. Space as well as heating, air conditioning and electrical service for the National Museum of Diplomacy is also planned, but furnishings and exhibits will be financed privately.

The library, currently being redesigned, becomes the Jefferson Information Center and should be completed by the end of 2004. The new facility will have an atrium and perhaps a coffee shop, Mr. Butowsky said.

"It will be geared toward electronic information," he said. "The stress is on getting information and assisting people with research."

Even the halls will look different. To improve navigation, floors will be identified by colors and large wall-sized numerals embellished by murals and display cases that capture the scope and mission of each bureau.

"We want to take away the institutional look," he said.

—Paul Koscak

Narcotics Bureau Enjoys Top Year in 2003

Last year the Bureau of International Narcotics, working with the Colombian National Police, had its best year ever destroying coca leaves.

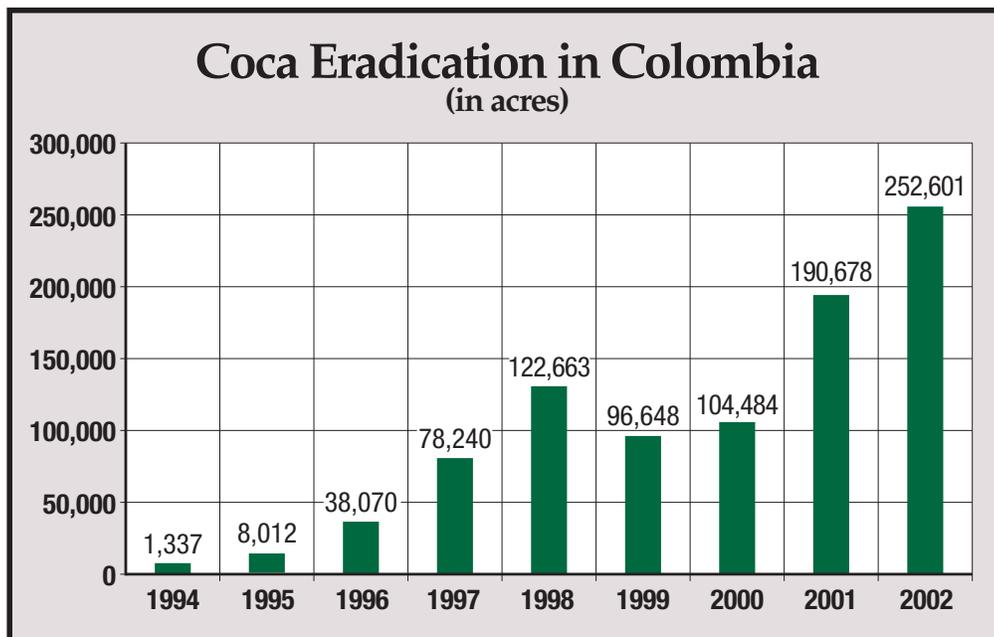
More than 300,000 acres of coca leaves—the ingredient for manufacturing cocaine—were sprayed with herbicide in 2002 compared with the 208,100 acres doused in 2001, a stunning 45 percent increase and a 61 percent upshot from the 117,006 acres hit in 2000, records show.

The 2002 figure is the highest since 1991, when the Office of Aviation was formed at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., to assist foreign governments in stemming the flow



One aggressive crop duster, this Air Tractor 802 is the Department's coca-killing workhorse.

Source: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs



spray plane, boasting a 58-foot wingspan. Many modifications on this unique aircraft were developed by the bureau's air wing.

Four AT-802s are now in Colombia. The final four will be delivered by May.

Underscoring the wing's "One Team, One Fight" slogan, John McLaughlin, who directs the aviation office, credits the successful year to its team of bureau staff, Colombian National Police and Army, embassy officials at Bogotá and civilian contractors.

Based on experience spraying coca, marijuana and poppy fields since the 1990s, he said it

of illegal drugs into the United States. At Patrick, the Department maintains a fleet of aircraft modified to spray commercial weed killer.

Two reasons accounted for last year's spike, Rogers Woolfolk, the bureau's aviation adviser, said: additional aircraft and Colombia's increased commitment to eradicate illicit crops. The country's new administration under President Uribe endorsed the spraying as the most effective way to end illicit drug cultivation. He expanded the program to attack all major growing areas in Colombia, Woolfolk says.

Inspections by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists and Colombian officials show 2002 was not only a banner year for not only the most acreage sprayed but the most eradicated: The spray killed more than 90 percent of the leaves per sortie.

But success has its risks.

"We've taken much more ground fire as we ramped up the program in 2003—actually 250 percent more ground fire compared to the same period in 2002," Mr. Woolfolk said.

During January, for instance, 77 bullet holes were counted on aircraft returning from spraying missions. Last year, 21 hits were considered significant.

Responding to the insurgents' intense resistance, the bureau introduced new defensive tactics, beefed up aircraft armor and intensified flight crew training, he said.

In August last year, two of the eight new Air Tractor 802 spray airplanes the Department ordered were brought to Colombia. These souped-up crop dusters are aircraft on steroids. Powered by a 1,295-horsepower jet engine, the Air Tractor is touted as the world's largest single-engine

takes two or three sprayings before a grower becomes frustrated and gives up cultivating illicit crops. With the wing's success in shutting down the country's largest coca farms, growers are now expected to cultivate smaller, widely scattered fields.

"The key to success in the new environment involves comprehensive and unrelenting sweeps of growing areas," Mr. McLaughlin added.

Despite all the increased flying, the bureau won a General Services Administration award for the safest, most efficient and effective nonmilitary federal government aviation program.

—Paul Koscak

Cocaine Busts Spiral Downward

Has the Department's success in attacking cocaine at the source made a difference on the street?

While nobody at the Justice Department would confirm that conclusion, Drug Enforcement Agency records show dramatic decreases in cocaine busts performed by all federal agencies at the same time the Bureau of International Narcotics was setting records destroying Colombian coca leaves

Federal agents seized 183,094 lbs. in 1998; 167,983 lbs. in 1999; 124,897 lbs. in 2000; and 110,547 lbs. of cocaine in 2001.

Data for 2002 show seizures through September at 85,730 lbs.

Compared with 1998, 40 percent less cocaine was seized in 2001. When projecting the final two months of 2002, the take will be at least 44 percent less.