



Colombia: Strategic ally of Spain and the United States in the global fight against illicit drug trafficking by sea

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ABSTRACT

Colombia affected by Illicit Drug Trafficking by Sea (IDTS), has established strategic alliances with Spain and the United States (US); In turn, these two nations have done so with other States. This article examines Colombia's participation in the security strategies of Spain and the US against the IDTS. About Spain, the Strategic Compass of the European Union (SCEU) and its national security policies were analyzed. As for the United States, maritime security and drug control strategies were analyzed. The findings highlight the presence of Colombia in the strategies, and the maps illustrate the safe communities formed by international cooperation in the fight against IDTS.

1. Introduction.

At the global level, the United Nations (UN) has led efforts to combat the drug problem in the maritime environment. The UN have established guidelines through Article 108 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) and Article 17 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (CONVENTION 1988). These conventions have directed States to forge bilateral agreements that promote international cooperation in the fight against IDTS (Echeverry Andrade, et al., 2023A).

In turn, the implementation of the agreements creates safe communities between States against the threats they have in common; this is known as cognitive regions (Echeverry Andrade, et al., 2023B).

The US, as a pioneer in maritime security, prepared one of the first documents that conceived maritime space as a security complex in its own right. It published its National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS) in 2005 with eight (8) plans against the threats and challenges of maritime space (Bueger & Edmunds, 2017). According to the US State Department, they have established several bilateral anti-IDTS agreements, primarily with countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. They have also concluded agreements with European countries such as the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, and Malta, reaching a total of 24 agreements in this area (DOS, 2023).

On the other hand, the European Union (EU) published its first Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) in 2014 to identify the EU's strategic maritime security interests in the global maritime domain (Molina Schmid, 2015). For its part, Spain published its first National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2011 (García, 2014). With later updates in 2013, 2017 and 2021. The 2013 ESN for the first time identified Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) in their IDTS modus operandi. That same year, Spain published the National Maritime Security Strategy

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2013 (NMSS 2013). And even more recently, the Official State Gazette (BOE, by its initials in Spanish) No. 180 of July 28, 2022: Provision 12627, approved the procedure for the preparation of a new NMSS. According to the Delegation of the Government of Spain for the National Plan on Drugs, Spain has entered into bilateral cooperation agreements in the fight against drugs with 30 States (Ministry-Health-Spain, 2023).

The National Drug Policy (PNDR) 2023-2033 is considered Colombia's most recent effort in the fight against drugs. The PNDR dedicates a chapter to the international regulations to which it is articulated. In this articulation, the PNDR explicitly cites the 1988 Convention, whose adoption law in Colombia is Law 67/1993. In addition to this, it proposes a component called “strengthening land, sea, air and river interdiction” whose objective seeks to strengthen drug interdiction processes, both at the borders and inside the country, increasing the capacity to seize illicit drugs and affecting the nodes where illicit drugs reach a higher value. To meet this objective, the PNDR proposes 6 strategic actions (1. Improvement of technology; 2. Specialized training; 3. Intelligence; 4. Frequent and focused patrolling in critical areas; 5. Institutional Coordination; and 6. Strengthen Cooperation international). By strengthening international cooperation, Colombia aims to create alliances with countries in the region and the world. Establish agreements for the exchange of information in real time and the coordination of joint operations on all borders, including shared land, river, sea and air borders.

These problems require international cooperation to dismantle illicit networks by principles of shared responsibility and international law (Ministry-Defense-Spain, 2020). Another effort is, the “Emerald Strategy: Reconfiguration in the Anti-Narcotics Fight 2022–2030” mentions comprehensive police containment of drug trafficking at the national and international level and seeks to block access to maritime routes (National-Police-Colombia, 2022).

This article aims to identify Colombia's participation in the security strategies of Spain and the United States in the fight against IDTS. Since they are the greatest references in maritime security and have adopted the articles 108 and 17 of the 1982 and 1988 conventions, respectively, to create cognitive regions in the fight against IDTS at a global level. In this sense, mapping technology becomes a powerful tool for analyzing maritime space, contributing to decision-making (Echeverry Andrade, et al., 2024). This tool generating inputs for the formulation of new alliances and agreements between countries with the aim of developing cognitive regions. Elements that will serve Colombian policymakers to implement new maritime security strategies regarding the IDTS.

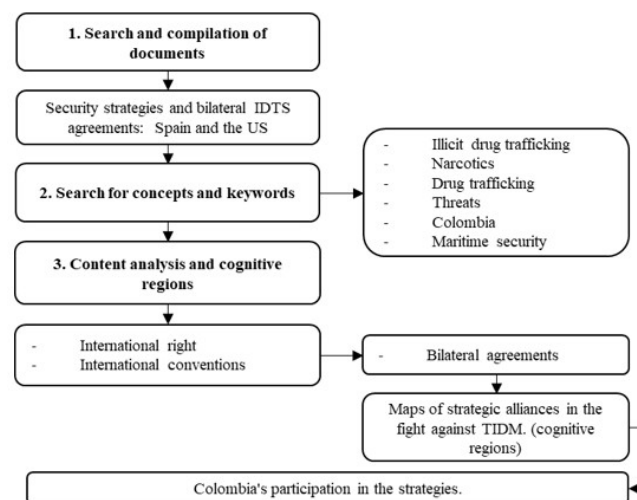
2. Methodology

With the objective of identifying Colombia's participation in the security strategies of Spain and the US in the field of maritime security and IDTS. A methodology has been developed that consists of 3 phases (figure 1).

2.1. Search and compilation of documents.

In the first phase called “search and compilation of documents,” the official documents published in the government databases of Spain (Ministry-Health-Spain, 2023) and the US were established as primary sources (DOS, 2023). The security strategies against IDTS from the last years (2000 -2023) were downloaded.

Figure 1: Methodological scheme.



Source: Authors.

2.2. Search for concepts and keywords.

In the second phase “Search for concepts and keywords” the search equation “maritime security”, “illicit traffic” and “strategies” (in English and Spanish) were used in the downloaded documents. 3 European documents, 36 Spanish documents, and 47 North American documents were analyzed, in total 86 official documents, the search was complemented with scientific articles that addressed these topics.

2.3. Content analysis and cognitive regions.

Finally, in the third phase “Content analysis and cognitive regions” the references to international law and Colombia were examined and maps were created to visualize the cognitive regions formed by Spain and the US through agreements. Cartography is a powerful tool to graphically represent the dynamics related to maritime security. These spatial tools allow you to effectively visualize and understand various geospatial aspects that are crucial for addressing safety issues in maritime environments, such as vessel locations, shipping routes, ocean conditions, and other relevant factors (Echeverry Andrade, et al., 2023B).

An alphanumeric database was generated from the names of the countries identified in the agreements. Subsequently, this database was integrated with the polygons of the corresponding countries. The resulting geographic information is linked to the geodetic reference system used to achieve accurate representation and global positioning, specifically the World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS 84). All these processes were carried out using ArcMap 10.5 software (Echeverry Andrade, et al., 2024).

3. Results.

3.1. European Union: EUMSS 2014, SCEU 2022 and EUMSS 2023.

The EUMSS 2014 in its section “Risks and threats to maritime security” recognizes that TCOs facilitate illegal migration, arms, and drug trafficking. The EUMSS 2014 was a pioneer in including mentions of “blue growth” and is articulated with the UNCLOS 1982. However, it does not mention international cooperation but rather refers to intersectoral cooperation. In its content, it does not make any reference to Colombia.

The EU’s first intergovernmental effort to jointly assess security and defense threats was titled “A Strategic Compass for EU Security and Defence”. SCEU 2022 established new guidelines to develop adequate and coherent military and civil capabilities, based on a series of common risks and threats (Satué de Córdova Minguet, 2021). It defined four major areas of action: (1) act, (2) guarantee security, (3) invest and (4) work in an associative manner (Portijas Calderón, 2022A). It provided guidelines for the development of a new EUMSS in 2023. He also referred to Colombia in his “Strategic Environment” section by mentioning that instability in the region drives the emergence of TCOs and harms the peace process in Colombia. Additionally, in the “Adapted Bilateral Associations” section, he emphasizes the need to strengthen the partnership with Latin America, specifically through a dialogue focused on security and defense issues with Colombia. The success of the SCEU will depend on the willingness of the States to carry out joint action against threats recognized as common (Parada Martínez, 2023).

With EUMSS 2023, the EU set the objectives of investing in global presence, ensuring access to the high seas, respecting international law of the sea, and protecting critical maritime infrastructure (Portijas Calderón, 2022B). Unlike EUMSS 2014 which implements the concept of “intersectoral cooperation”, EUMSS 2023 uses the concept of “international cooperation”. It also included the concept of a “blue economy”. Both strategies (2014 and 2023) mention the UNCLOS 1982, but neither mentions Colombia or the 1988 Convention. The section “Intensify activities at sea” refers to coordinated maritime presences (CMP), which must intensify the fight against illegal and illicit activities at sea (Esteve Moltó, 2023). In the section “Cooperate with partners” it states that, in the Atlantic Ocean, the fight against illicit activities will be supported in cooperation with its partners, in particular the fight against IDTS. Finally, in the “Tools and Instruments” section, it is planned that the Internal Security Funds will finance the Maritime Drug Analysis and Operations Center (MAOC-N) and its specific information exchange capabilities to fight against IDTS. Its action plan has a list of 145 actions to be developed, 2 of which are intended to combat IDTS. Below, Table 1 presents a comparison of the content of the 2014, 2022, and 2023 EU documents.

3.2. Spain: NSS 2011, 2013, 2017 and 2021.

The NSS 2011 set a precedent in its Chapter 4 “Threats, risks and responses” since it established the maritime field to

Table 1: Comparison of EU documents regarding IDTS.

MENTIONS	EUMSS 2014	SCEU 2022	EUMSS 2023
<i>Maritime Security</i>	Risks and threats to maritime security.	Objectives: Ensure access to strategic areas based on an update of the ESMUE and its Action Plan.	Intensify activities at sea
<i>TCOs and IDTS</i>	Organized crime networks facilitate drug trafficking.	The fragility of Central America and the persistence of the crisis in Venezuela favor regional fractures and generate strong migratory pressures, which fuels the emergence of new challenges in terms of organized crime related to drugs.	Cooperate with partners. And in Tools and instruments
<i>Colombia</i>	Not mentioned	Strategic environments: Latin America. And in bilateral partnerships adopted.	Not mentioned

Source: Authors.

promote international initiatives aimed at guaranteeing safe communication routes for the supply of basic resources and improving the governance of maritime spaces. The NSS 2011 used the concept of a “comprehensive approach.” When referring to the integration of all dimensions of security, to achieve convergence towards common objectives, taking into account the multiple relationships that exist between them (Alaminos, 2014).

The second NSS was called “National Security Strategy. A shared project” from 2013”. Chapter 3, “Risks and threats to maritime security,” included organized crime and related it to the modus operandi of IDTS (Laborie Iglesias, 2014). The NSS 2013 exposed the close links that exist between TCOs and terrorist groups due to their search for financing through illicit activities, such as IDTS (Barras, 2014). Regarding irregular immigration, he defined that it increases the vulnerability of migrants to TCOs linked to the IDTS (Ospina, 2014). The NSS 2013 refers to Colombia in its content, as a region of great strategic importance with which Spain maintains political, economic, historical, and cultural relations of singular roots. He highlighted the Pacific Alliance, founded by Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, which concentrates 40% of Spain’s trade and investment in Latin America.

The third NSS is called “National Security Strategy. A Shared Project for All” of 2017. It is based on a comprehensive and holistic vision to address crises. It promotes the appropriate use of global common spaces, technological development, and strengthens Spain’s international position (Ferrero-Turrión, 2019). It recognizes maritime spaces as global common spaces, which connect the world and allow the free flow of people, goods, information, services, and ideas. The NSS 2017 determined that the vulnerabilities of the maritime space are caused by factors that threaten maritime security and are fundamentally concentrated in 2 groups: (1) threats derived from intentional acts and of a criminal nature (maritime security), in this group, we find the TCOs in its IDTS modus operandi; and

(2) other accidental ones due to the natural conditions of the environment (maritime safety) (Hidalgo García, 2017). At NSS 2017, the fight against drug trafficking was mentioned in Chapter 3, referring to North Africa and the Middle East. Like the NSS 2013, the NSS 2017 mentions Colombia within the Latin American region.

Finally, the last NSS, called “National Security Strategy. A Shared Project” of 2021 addresses the international security context and the transformations driven by geopolitical, socio-economic, and technological factors and the ecological transition. This approach represents a significant change in the analysis of risks and threats to national security, considering them as dynamic and interrelated elements, influenced by technology and hybrid strategies (Llorente Aguilera, 2022). Chapter 3 called “Risks and Threats”, related the TCOs to the IDTS. There are no references to Colombia, but there are to Latin America and the Caribbean. Below, Table 2 presents a comparison of the NSS of Spain in 2011, 2013, 2017, and 2021 about Colombia, maritime security, and the threat of IDTS.

Table 2: Comparison of EU documents regarding IDTS.

MENTIONS	NSS 2011	NSS 2013	NSS 2017	NSS 2021
Maritime Security	Chapter 4: Threats, risks, and responses. Areas: Maritime.	Chapter 4: Strategic Lines of Action: Areas of action - Maritime security.	Chapter 4: Threats and Challenges to national security: Threats and challenges that develop in global common spaces – Vulnerability of maritime space.	Chapter 4: An Integrated Strategic Planning. Second axis - Security of global common spaces – Maritime Space
			Chapter 4. Threats and Challenges to national security: Threats – Organized Crime	Chapter 3. Risks and threats: Organized Crime and serious crime
TCOs and IDTS	Chapter 4. Threats, risks, and responses, Organized crime	Chapter 3. Risks and Threats to national security: Organized crime	Chapter 4. Threats and Challenges to national security: Threats – Organized Crime	Chapter 3. Risks and threats: Organized Crime and serious crime
Colombia	Not mentioned	It is mentioned in Latin America	It is mentioned in Latin America	Not mentioned

Source: Authors.

3.3. Spain: NMSS 2013 and BOE No. 180 July 12, 2022 - Provision 12627.

The NMSS 2013 does not mention Colombia, but it does mention the risks and threats in Chapter 2, and including IDTS. It also includes references to UNCLOS of 1982. It should be noted that line 3 is aimed at promoting international cooperation. The NMSS 2013 has received criticism since it does not present a precise reflection on the threats. Added to this, the lack of a detailed description of the measures to be implemented to improve maritime security and its responsible insti-

tutions makes the NMSS 2013 a collection of good intentions (García, 2014).

For its part, BOE 180 of July 28, 2022, in its provision 12627, approved the procedure for the preparation of a new NMSS. Giving guidelines that include the definition of the concept “maritime security” differentiating the Anglo-Saxon aspects of “security” and “safety”; alignment with NMSS 2023; and the analysis of aspects such as the blue economy and SDG 14 (Ministry-Presidency-Spain, 2022). Although its preparation was planned for 2023, it was not published.

3.4. Agreements entered into by Spain in the fight against IDTS.

According to the Delegation of the Government of Spain for the National Plan on Drugs, Spain has entered into bilateral cooperation agreements in the fight against drugs with 30 States (figure 2) (Ministry-Health-Spain, 2023). Spain’s agreements have created cognitive regions in Central and South America, and they also have allies on all continents.

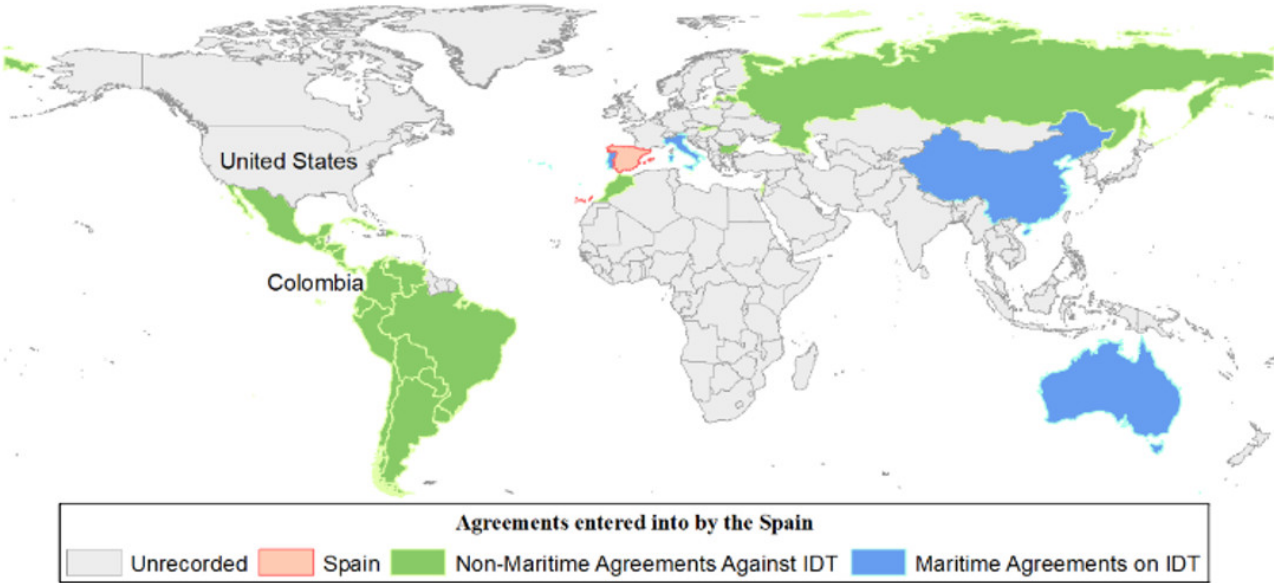
Table 3: Comparison of EU documents regarding IDTS.

INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM	IDTS	STATES (YEAR)
It does not mention elements of international law.		Slovakia (2000)
Bilateral agreements were previously established between the States involved (1990, 1993, 1994, and 2005).	It does not mention traffic by sea.	Russia (1999), Bulgaria (2001), Rep. Nicaragua (2005), and Morocco (2019).
Contains references to European multilateral agreements.		Rep. Latvia (2005)
1988 Convention and Anti-Drug Strategy of the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse (CICAD) 1996.		Peru (1999)
1988 Convention and References to previously established bilateral agreements (1990).		Costa Rica (2001)
1988 Convention.	Articulated to the 1988 Convention	Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Malta, and Venezuela (1998); Panama (1999); Brazil and Ecuador (2000); Guatemala, Honduras, Uruguay, and Paraguay (2002).
Conventions 1961, 1971, and 1988.		El Salvador (1997) and Mexico (1998).
Conventions 1961, 1971, 1972, 1987, 1988, and Political Declaration and Global Program of Action 1990.		Argentina (2000).
Conventions 1961, 1971, 1972, 1988 and 2000.		Israel (2008).
1978 and 1988 Conventions		Dominican Rep. (2001).
Conventions 1958, 1982, and 1988.	Specialized in IDTS.	Italy (1994), Portugal (1998), China (2002) and Australia (2017).

Source: Authors.

The nature and scope of these agreements may vary depending on the countries involved and the specific circumstances.

Figure 2: Agreements entered into by Spain about IDTS.



Source: Authors.

Most of these agreements are articulated in international law, referring to different international conventions. Next, the 30 agreements have been classified (table 3).

It is noteworthy that the agreements signed with Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Malta, Uruguay, Panama, Paraguay, and Venezuela have the same structure; Their objective is to cooperate through a bilateral agreement on the prevention, control and elimination of the misuse and illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and are articulated with the 1988 Convention. The agreement with Colombia is on the control of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. and psychotropic substances but does not include any provision about IDTS (García-Llave & Chávez Perdomo, 2022).

Concerning specialized IDTS agreements, Spain has celebrated 4 (Italy, Portugal, China, and Australia). The agreement concluded with Italy mentions that it complements the 1988 Convention and the Geneva Convention of April 29, 1958, on the High Seas. The agreement with Portugal is articulated with Agreement number 156 of the Council of Europe regarding illicit traffic by sea for the application of Article 17 of the 1988 Convention and the UNCLOS 1982. Being the only agreement that mentions Article 17 of the 1988 Convention, its objective is to mutually provide the broadest possible cooperation to eliminate the IDTS (El Marbouhe El Faqr, 2018). The agreement with China mentions that by national legislation and International Conventions, they agree to cooperate in the containment and fight against IDTS, it also mentions the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea of 1974. Finally, the agreement celebrated between the EU and Australia mentions the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 35 establishes the Fight against drugs.

3.5. US: NSMS 2005 and 2015.

The 2005 NSMS had 8 support plans. While the plans address different aspects of maritime security, they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing (Young & Gordon, 2021). The NSMS 2005 does not make any reference to Colombia or the 1982 and 1988 conventions. In an explanatory note, the NSMS 2005 is articulated in the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS), whose periodicity is annual.

Table 4: Comparison of US NSMS about IDTS.

MENTIONS	NSMS 2005	NSMS 2015
Maritime Security	Section I Introduction – Maritime Security: Maritime security is necessary to guarantee the freedom of the seas; facilitate freedom of navigation and commerce; promote prosperity and freedom; and protect ocean resources.	Introduction
	Section II Threats to Maritime Security - Transnational criminal and piracy threats.	Strategic context
TCOs and IDTS threat		
Colombia	Not mentioned	

Source: Authors.

In 2015 a second NSMS was published, but its actions were aimed at addressing the challenges of the Asia-Pacific region. Former President Obama’s policies, strengthened the US position in the Asia-Pacific, especially in the South China Sea to balance Chinese naval power (Cai, 2017). These disputes received global attention, representing one of the greatest challenges to maritime security and therefore the US published its Maritime Security Strategy: Asia-Pacific NSMS 2015. The NSMS 2015 does not make any reference to Colombia or the IDTS. It mentions that “non-traditional threats, such as weapons proliferation, illicit human and other trafficking, piracy and natural disasters continue to pose significant security challenges.”

Table 4 presents a comparison of the 2005 and 2015 US NSMS about Colombia, maritime security, and the threat of IDTS.

3.6. US: NDCS 2002-2022.

The NDCS between 2002 and 2005 contains references to Colombia in the section called “National Priorities – Andean Anti-Drug Initiative (ACI)”. At that time, the resources were allocated to various broad-scope categories, including the operation and maintenance of aircraft acquired with supplementary financing. Also to support the operational activities of the Colombian National Police and the Anti-Narcotics Brigade of the Colombian Army, along with programs designed for the implementation of herbicidal measures. It mentions drug shipments from Colombia which have different routes: some go to the Antilles and Central America from the north coast, while others go to Mexico from the west coast (Carvajal Villamizar, 2005).

The NDCS between 2006 and 2009 refer to Colombia in “Chapter 3: Disarticulation of drug markets”, mentioning that the consolidated Colombian cartels have given way to less centralized networks, formed by flexible associations between organizations from both Mexico and Colombia. In this new dynamic, various Colombian entities can be in charge of different links in the supply chain, which includes production, cultivation, and the initial stage of transportation abroad (Bonilla & Alexei, 2006). For the first time, the problem generated by the relationship between Colombian TCOs and African TCOs is addressed. In other words, groups dedicated to IDTS from Colombia and Venezuela established a strategic presence in the West African region.

The NDCS between 2010 and 2016 refers to Colombia in multiple sections, which maintained a similar structure in the period of former President Obama (Martínez Valenzuela, 2013). Generally, in the introduction of the NDCS, collaboration with the Government of Colombia is highlighted since the threat from narcoterrorists has been reduced. In Chapter 6 “Strengthening international alliances” emphasis is placed on supporting drug control efforts in producing countries such as Colombia. Finally, a section in the 2016 NDCS called “Cocaine Resurgence” highlights the recent increase in cocaine production in Colombia and concern about this trend.

The NDCS from 2017 to 2021 was published during the administration of former President Donald Trump, who proposed a synchronized approach through the reports of the President’s Commission to Combat Drug Addiction and Opioid Abuse 2017 and 2018 (Realuyo, 2019). The strategies developed in 2017 and 2018 do not contain any reference to Colombia. Regarding maritime security, it establishes that one facet of the mission of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) is maritime interdiction, to operate with a maritime anti-narcotics presence in the areas of origin, transit, and arrival. Regarding the NDCS from 2019 to 2021, they present similarities in their structure, they contain references to Colombia in the following sections: Introduction - The Challenge of Drug Trafficking by Sea in Colombia; Challenges in Drug Interdiction Across Physical Borders; Dismantling of the Illicit Drug Production Infrastructure; Goals

to Reduce Illicit Drug Use; and Coordination and Financing to Combat Drug Trafficking.

Finally, the latest NDCS published in 2022, like its predecessors, presents references to Colombia in the following sections: Reduce the supply of illicit substances through international commitment - Principle 1; Work with Colombia to reduce cocaine production and trafficking while increasing alternative economic opportunities; Principle 4: In Colombia, large areas of forest are cleared to make room for coca cultivation and clandestine runways to support air traffic operations. Below, Table 5 presents a comparison of the US NDCS 2002-2022 about Colombia, maritime security, and the threat of IDTS.

3.7. Agreements concluded by the US in the fight against IDTS.

The US has entered into 24 agreements with other states, which contain references to international law (table 6). The opening paragraphs of the 24 agreements have a similar structure, recognizing the urgent need for strong international cooperation to address this challenge. They mention that this imperative need has been underlined in several crucial international agreements and conventions, including the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and its 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and, in particular, the 1982 and 1988 conventions.

Table 6: Agreements entered into by the US with other States regarding IDTS.

INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM	IDTS	STATES (YEAR)
Conventions of 1958, 1982, and 1988.	Specialized in IDTS.	Venezuela (1991); Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica (1995); Bahamas, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago (1996); Barbados, Colombia, Haiti (1997); Costa Rica, UK and Northern Ireland, Suriname (1998); Belize, Honduras (2000); Guyana, Nicaragua (2001); Panama (2002); Antigua and Barbuda, Guatemala, Republic. Dominican (2003); Jamaica, Malta (2004).

Source: Authors.

The agreements concluded with Honduras, Jamaica, and Malta explicitly set out Article 17 of the 1988 Convention. The rest of the agreements do not mention it, but they do mention the 1988 Convention since it expresses that the parties involved establish bilateral agreements to implement and strengthen the provisions of this convention. The agreement signed with Colombia determines when force can be used by applying firearms, unlike Spain’s treaty signed with Colombia, which does not contemplate this procedure (García-Llave & Chávez Perdomo, 2022). Figure 3 shows the countries that have entered into agreements with the US, forming a cognitive region in the Caribbean.

3.8. Timeline: celebrated mechanisms.

Figure 4 represents a timeline of international agreements related to maritime security and IDTS, as well as the agreements of Spain, the US, and the EU. These agreements have a

Table 5: NDCS 2002-2022: Sections referring to Colombia and maritime security in the fight against IDTS.

NDCS	COLOMBIA	MARITIME SECURITY
2002	– National priorities: Andean Anti-Drug Initiative (ACT). – National budget.	– Go to the source of the traffic.
2003	– Five illegal drug markets.	– Flow Interdiction in Colombia.
2004		– Disrupting the market
2005	– Cocaine trade in Colombia.	– Better intelligence
2006		– Dismantling of drug markets.
2007	– Chapter 3: Dismantling of drug markets. – Advances in the Andean Mountain range.	– Interdiction in the transit zone
2008		– Anti-drug is driven by intelligence operations.
2009	– Chapter 3 - Colombia's Commitment. – Africa.	– The cocaine connection between Europe and Africa.
		– Performance measurement and reporting systems
2010	– Chapter 5. Disrupt national drug trafficking and production. – Chapter 6 Strengthening international alliances – Consolidate the profits obtained in Colombia.	– Deny the use of ports of entry and entry and exit routes. – Principles - Work with partners in Europe, Africa, and Asia to disrupt drug flows.
2011		– Principle 1. Collaborate with international partners to disrupt drug trafficking.
2012	– Introduction – Central America and the Andes	– Merida Initiative.
2013	– Promote alternative livelihoods for coca and opium growers.	– Achievements - Collaborate with international partners to disrupt IDT. – Attack key vulnerabilities of drug trafficking organizations.
2014	– Collaborate with international partners to disrupt drug trafficking. – Support the Central American Regional Security Initiative	– Deny the use of ports of entry and entry and egress routes between ports.
2015	– Improving federal drug-related data systems - Colombian National Police and Department of State.	– Support drug control efforts of major drug sources and transit: Implement the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.
2016	– Andean Mountain Range. – Cocaine resurgence.	– No references
2017	– No references	– southwest border
2018		– Interdiction: United States Coast Guard
2019	– Introduction: increase in coca cultivation and cocaine production in Colombia – Disruption and dismantling of illicit drug production infrastructure.	– No references
2020	– Goals to Reduce Illicit Drug Use, Objective 1: Reduce potential cocaine production (pure metric tons) in Colombia. – Existing coordination mechanisms	– Interdicting the flow of drugs across physical borders and into the US
2021	– Department of State: Assistance and training to critical partners around the world, including Mexico, Colombia, and Peru.	– Department of Homeland Security.
2022	– Reduce the supply of illicit substances through international engagement – Work with Colombia to reduce cocaine production and trafficking while increasing alternative economic opportunities. – Principle 4: Protect people and the environment abroad from criminal exploitation by those associated with drug production and trafficking.	– Strengthen drug control initiatives – Support Mexico's efforts to strengthen its anti-drug institutions and initiatives. – Develop methods to evaluate the impact of supply reduction efforts on public health and public safety outcomes.

Source: Authors.

temporal scope beginning with the UNCLOS 1982 and ending with the entry into force of the EUMSS 2023.

4. Discussion and Conclusion.

At a global level, the intention to eradicate IDTS and cooperate is represented in Article 108 of the UNCLOS 1982, with Article 17 of the 1988 Convention being more explicit since it establishes the guidelines so that States, based on bilateral agreements can cooperate. A more recent effort is the 2030 agenda, whose sustainable development goal (SDG) 14 “life below water” stipulates enforcing the international law of the sea, SDG 16 “peace, justice, and strong institutions” proposes combating all forms of organized crime, and SDG 17 “partnerships to achieve the goals” encourages international support for capacity development in developing countries and the implementation of national plans (Echaverry Andrade, et al., 2023A).

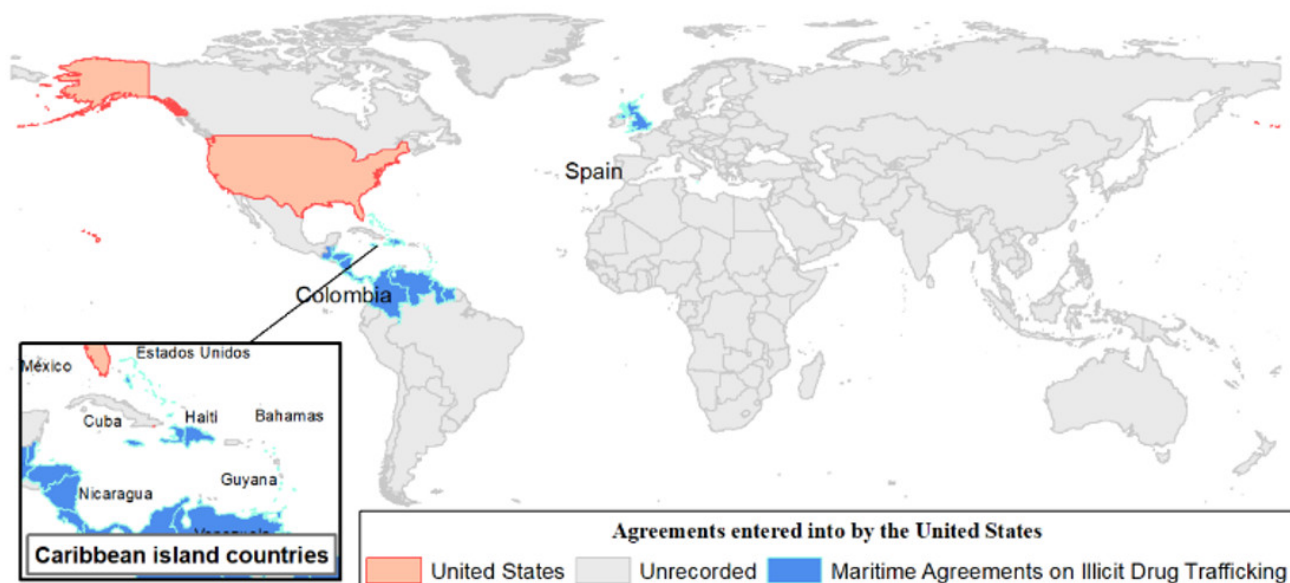
The results of the study identified Colombia's participation in the security strategies of Spain and the US. Spain, being part of the EU, is articulated with what the SCEU 2022 establishes to face common threats. The SCEU 2022, like the Spanish NSS of 2013 and 2017, proposes continuing dialogues with Colombia and Latin America to strengthen Spain's international posi-

tion (Satué de Córdova Minguet, 2021). In the case of the US, a very important element was found which determines that the NSMS are articulated with the NDCS in matters of drug control and combat. The NDCS between 2002 and 2022 (excluding the 2017 and 2018 NDCS) highlight collaboration with Colombia, considering it a strategic ally and including explicit references to security and the maritime sphere.

Although there is an agreement between Colombia and Spain, it does not make explicit reference to maritime traffic. While the agreement between Colombia and the US does directly address the IDTS and contemplates the use of force and the use of weapons. Both agreements are articulated with the 1988 Convention (García-Llave & Chávez Perdomo, 2022).

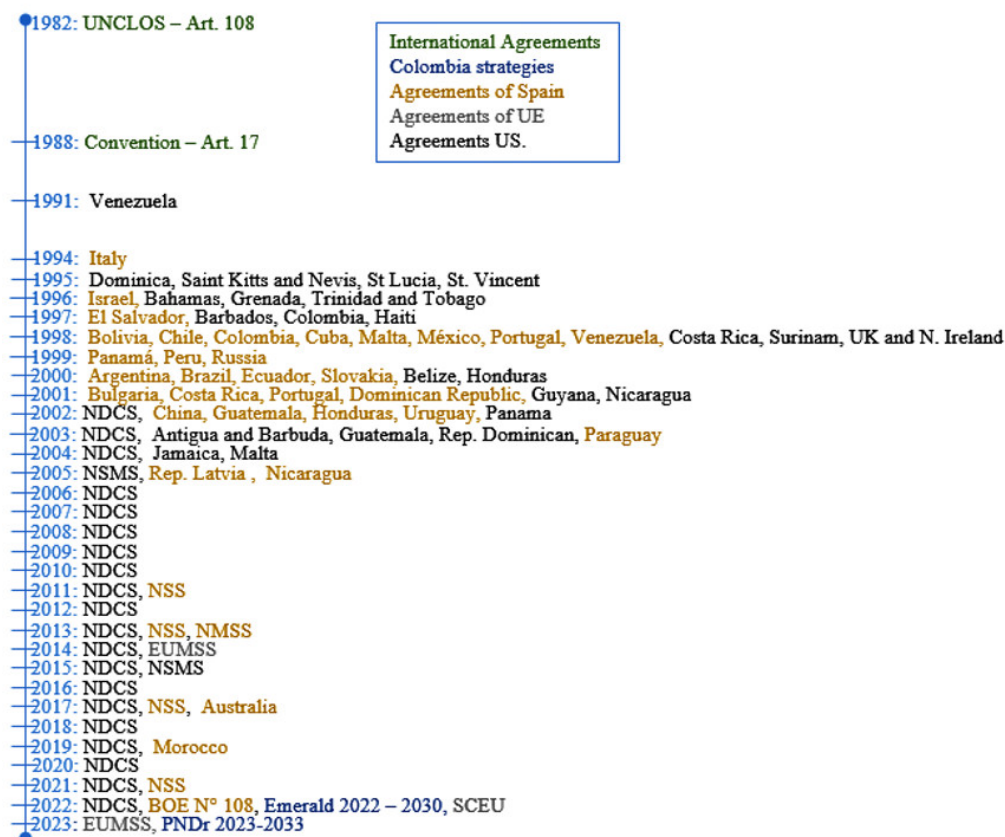
By leading the field of maritime security, the US has given maritime space a distinctive set of rights (Bueger & Edmunds, 2017). Through bilateral agreements, it has formed safe communities made up of cognitive regions that appreciate and confront threats in a common way (Echaverry Andrade, et al., 2023B). In this way, the US has established bilateral agreements in the Caribbean region with countries known to be the main drug producers in the world (DOS, 2023). Spain has proceeded in a similar way, whose bilateral agreements have created a cognitive region in South America, but unlike the US, Spain has also

Figure 3: Agreements entered into by the US about IDTS.



Source: Authors.

Figure 4: Timeline of mechanisms held.



Source: Authors.

reinforced its immediate borders by creating agreements with neighboring states such as Portugal and Italy. It is worth noting that there is no agreement in this area between Spain and the US, which leads us to wonder if they are seeking cooperation or hegemony and maritime dominance.

It is suggested that Colombia's security strategies and agreements with other States be examined to identify their cognitive regions. It is recommended to analyze and adapt possible elements of the Spanish and US strategies to the Colombian context to strengthen maritime security against IDTS, with the implementation of new national policies that consider the transformations driven by various factors such as technology (Llorente Aguilera, 2022).

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