

Drugs, Democracy and Security

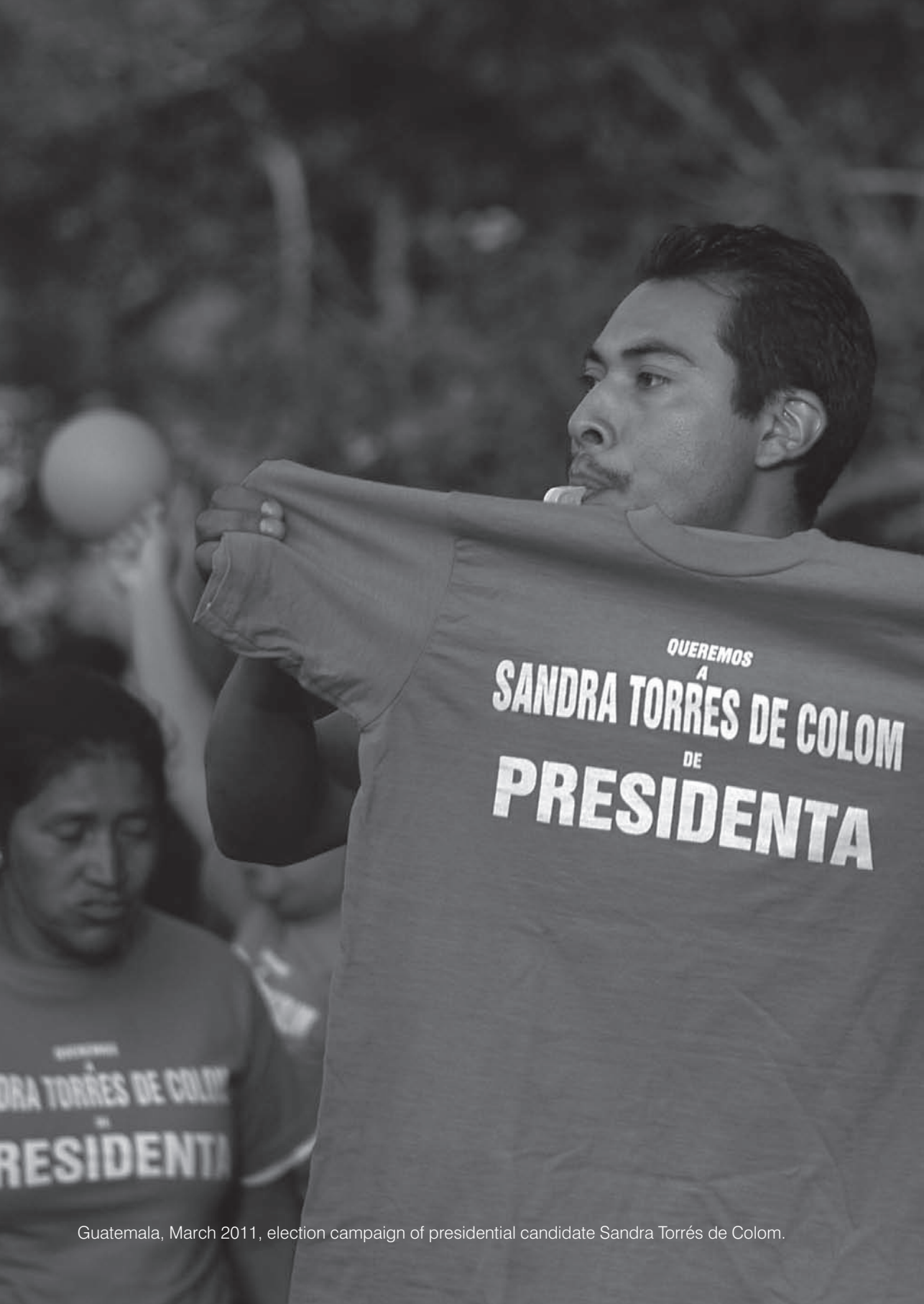
The impact of organized crime on the political system of Latin America



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Dirk Kruijt



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A
SANDRA TORRES DE COLOM
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Guatemala, March 2011, election campaign of presidential candidate Sandra Torr s de Colom.

Content

Preface	
Bernard Bot	5
Introduction	
Dirk Kruijt	7
The Problem Twenty Five Years Ago	10
Organized Crime in Latin America	11
Data on Drugs, Revenues and Trafficking Routes	13
Mexico	21
Guatemala and the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador and Honduras)	27
Colombia	35
Bolivia and Peru	43
Countering Policies of Repression and Prevention	51
Conclusions and Recommendations	55
List of Acronyms and Expressions	59
List of Interviews	62
Bibliography	65
Colophon	72

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) is a democracy assistance organization of political parties in The Netherlands for political parties in young democracies. Founded in 2000 by seven parties (CDA, PvdA, VVD, GroenLinks, D66, Christen Unie en SGP), NIMD currently works with more than 150 political parties from 16 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe.

4

NIMD supports joint initiatives of parties to improve the democratic system in their country. NIMD also supports the institutional development of political parties, helps develop party programmes and assists in efforts to enhance relations with civil society organizations and the media.

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Preface

As stated during a seminar¹ in Lima in February 2011, “politicians and political parties in many countries around the world and specifically in Latin America, are often perceived as part of illicit, elite and corrupt networks. Over time this has resulted in increasing public mistrust of parliamentarians, political parties, and even state institutions, often leading to a waning respect for authority and decreased institutional legitimacy. This problem poses challenges, not least in terms of global security, development and democratic consolidation, particularly in lesser resilient states or states emerging from conflict, where accountability is difficult if not impossible to foster and enforce.”² This challenge poses a threat to the stability of the Latin American continent, especially in those countries with a weak institutionalization of state institutions and where governments are therefore not able to curb its devastating influence on society.

Despite a vast body of literature on these issues and the huge sums of money invested in developing policy and operational responses to meet the challenges that organized criminals and corrupt politicians and other state actors pose, significant challenges remain. This fact-finding and policy review paper was commissioned by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). Due to the nature of NIMDs mandate – working directly with political parties – it frequently faces the challenges of corruption, links between political parties and illicit networks and the ambiguous funding of political campaigns. In some programme countries in Latin America, ‘underlying forces’ negatively influence and hamper the strengthening and functioning of political parties and by extension, the development of the state.

In cooperation with the Centre on International Cooperation (CIC) of the New York University, International IDEA and the Open Society Institute (OSI), NIMD contributes to a project focusing on understanding the ‘underlying forces’ that influence the functioning of the state in general and the strengthening and functioning of political parties in particular. As part of this project, this study was initiated as a first step in gaining more insight into the theme ‘Democracy and Security in Latin America’. The results of this study will be used in developing a regional and long-term strategy for NIMDs democracy assistance programmes in Latin America.

Bernard Bot
President of NIMD board

¹ Seminar Organized Crime & State Capture, Lima, Peru, February 2011, Organized by NYU-CIC NIMD, IDEA and OSI
² Kavanagh, C. (2011), Background Paper: *Inter-Regional Dialogue, State Capture and Organized Crime or Capture of Organized Crime by the State*, New York University, Centre on International Cooperation.

Introduction³

Dirk Kruijt

7

This study is a comparative analysis about the impacts of organized crime – and specifically drugs related crime – on the Latin American and Caribbean political systems. According to the terms of reference, the focus of the study is on Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia and Bolivia. A first draft of this paper was presented at a conference organized by New York University (NYU), International IDEA, the Open Society Institute (OSI) and NIMD and held in Lima from 8 to 11 February 2011. While travelling and collecting data I added information about additional countries in order to facilitate a more general overview of the problem. During previous missions in 2010 I had also accumulated information about organized crime and drugs in Central America and the Andean countries. The result is that in this study comparative data are presented about the three major Andean coca-producing countries and the most affected Meso-American transition countries (namely, Mexico and the northern triangle of Central America).

The seven countries analysed in this study have different profiles with respect to their internal stability; the level of crime related violence; the strength of political institutions, security apparatus and the judiciary; and the national policies with respect to coca cultivation, cocaine production and crime prevention. The effects on the political system, key institutions and political parties also differ by country.

Colombia and Mexico are heavily affected by crime-related violence. One characteristic of these two countries is the fact that coca cultivation and cocaine production are strictly illegal and penalised. The prevailing strategy in both countries is a militarised countering strategy, with strong financial and intelligence support from the United States' government agencies. By contrast, Peru and Bolivia are substantially more tolerant with respect to the *cocaleros*, the generally poor peasants who cultivate coca. These two countries are less affected by crime-related violence. While the level of violence directly associated with coca cultivation and cocaine production is extremely high in Colombia, it is remarkably moderate in Peru, and considerably low in Bolivia.

Contrary to the opinion of some participants in the debate about organized crime and the state, there are no failed states in Latin America, though areas exist where effective state control is not in place. Even in Colombia and Mexico the core regions and cities are relatively unaffected by the drug wars and the associated violence. In Central America, and in particular Guatemala, the security forces are on the defensive. In all countries the police are the weakest link in the cluster of institutions involved in countering strategies. In all countries

³ The author thanks Daniel Brombacher and Günther Maihold (SWP Berlin), Raúl Benítez (UNAM Mexico), Andrea Gómez (CNRR Bogotá), Alejo Vargas (Universidad Nacional Bogotá), Guido Riveros (FBDM La Paz) and Godofredo Sandoval (PIEB La Paz) for their generosity, for sharing their research data and for their interpretation of ongoing events and processes.

the armed forces appear to be less infiltrated by crime. With the exception of Honduras, the armed forces in Latin American or Caribbean countries do not act as political players with ambitions of participating in the political arena.

In Guatemala, the national government decided in the mid-2000s that its security institutions and judicial system were so frail and vulnerable that the country was in need of an international commission, the *Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala* (CICIG) to supervise the functioning of these vital institutions. No other government has felt the need to request this sort of international assistance or supervision.

I also maintain that theses about 'state capture' by organized crime are not based on strong empirical studies. In this study I make a comparison with the former guerrilla organizations and the counterinsurgency strategies that prevailed in Latin America between the 1960s and the late 1980s. Present countering strategies in the region have some resemblance to the more or less classical counterinsurgency strategy and tactics used during the anti-guerrilla campaigns, which were then generally designed and procured by military dictatorships.

There are, of course, also fundamental differences: previously, guerrilla movements were 'politico-military' organizations whose ideologies were explicitly aimed at overthrowing dictatorships and establishing more democratic and socialist governments. The criminal organizations of the present day are 'economic-military' rather than 'politico-military' organizations, aiming not for the overthrow of the state but for an uninterrupted and easily obtained economic surplus. This is to be achieved through violence and corruption – either via the easy way (by corrupting authorities) or the hard way (by guns and gangs). Their strategy is to control territories or commercial corridors which act as leeways for production and trafficking and which guarantee uninterrupted profits. Their final objective is surplus, a 'good life' and their incorporation within elite segments of society and politics.

Defining 'state capture' as a final objective tends to obscure the perverse effects of organized crime, including long-term corruption of key institutions of law and order and a semi-permanent state of impunity and immunity with respect to law enforcement. More specifically, we can identify four main effects:

- 1 Impunity has as a long-lasting effect in the form of the de-legitimisation of national security and the judicial and penitentiary system, an avalanche process in which political parties and social movements are also affected.
- 2 A second perverse effect is the phenomenon of the widespread infiltration, at the local and regional level, of political parties and political representatives. In Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and other countries the corruption and intimidation of 'tame' politicians has been ironically dubbed the system of '*para-política*' or '*para-políticos*'.
- 3 A third perverse effect is the deteriorating reputation of local politicians. Populist presidents, from Menem in Argentina to Fujimori in Peru, have used the stereotype of easy-to-corrupt magistrates and politicians to launch themselves as the 'true defenders of the poor' against parliament and the courts.
- 4 A fourth perverse effect is the confusion between hard-core crime organizations, operating with military-like enforcers or paramilitary organizations, and the 'normal' but much more visible groupings of criminal youth gangs or *maras* in Central America and several metropolitan areas in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Central America this has resulted in *mano dura* (zero tolerance) presidential campaigns, aimed not at a solution to organized crime but at the elimination or imprisonment of the highly visible (and tattooed) *mara* members.

It is my conviction that political parties in particular need to be responsible for adequate security agendas. However, in most Latin American and Caribbean countries, politicians are inclined to delegate this all-important agenda to 'experts': that is, former generals and commanders of specialised police task forces. One recommendation I would therefore make is that donor organizations such as NIMD should provide policy research and assist in the design of integral security agendas and related policies, making them accessible to political parties and civil society in general.

Dirk Kruijt
Utrecht, 11 May 2011

The Problem Twenty Five Years Ago

Pablo Escobar's Analysis of the Problem

This is a story of hearsay, and it could be entirely apocryphal. Nicaraguan and Cuban security institutions documented relations between Pablo Escobar Gaviria, then the boss of the Medellin cartel, and a taskforce headed by Oliver North that financed the counterinsurgency Contra forces established in Honduras and Costa Rica.

It could have turned out that Escobar also tried to contact the Ortega government about the convenience of a drugs route across Sandinista Nicaragua. The plan did not materialise because the nine *comandantes* of the *Dirección General* did not wish to be involved with drugs money. If the story is true, it gives a good impression of the magnitude of the problem some twenty five years ago. In the meantime the situation has only become worse.

There were three arguments that Pablo Escobar put on the table. First, he asked, can anybody explain to me what the boundaries are between the DEA and the CIA and us, poor smugglers? They are selling drugs in order to finance the Contra army in Honduras. We do the same in order to get rich. What is the difference?

Then he commented that the drugs business was not a retail industry. On the contrary, he said, drugs enter world ports by containers. This involves the cooperation of many functionaries overseas.

His third comment was about money laundering. We are strongly supporting the United States economy, he boasted. Only last year we pumped the revenues of 150 tonnes of coca into their banking system through money laundering.

Organized crime in Latin America⁴

Latin America's development and security agenda has shifted over the last fifty years. Between the 1960s and the mid-1980s the most important priority was the re-democratisation agenda and the transformation of military regimes into democratic governments. When democracy returned it was accompanied by one of the most severe economic crises to have affected the region since its independence from Spain and Portugal. At that stage, the most urgent concern became the management of structural adjustment programmes and poverty reduction strategies.

Transformation of military regimes into democratic governments

At the present time, democracy and development are threatened by structural violence. It is not a matter of repression by military government or low intensity warfare and counterinsurgency campaigns against guerrilla movements. Rather, organized crime – and especially the violence perpetrators directly related to drugs and drug cartels – is the state's most important competitor, threatening its security system and the regulatory institutions of law and order, prosperity and peace.⁵ Here one of the most striking points to consider is the corruptive influence on the functioning of the security forces (including institutions such as the armed forces and the police), the judiciary and the penitentiary system.

Organized crime is the state's most important competitor

Several countries in the region appear to be at war with themselves. Colombia, immersed already for sixty years successive cycles of armed conflict, is the country with the most refugees in the world (three million) and the second largest number of child warriors; is involved in military campaigns against very resilient guerrilla and paramilitary forces; has at least fifty more or less independently operating large scale criminal battle groups; and is the most successful recruitment territory for *sicarios* (contract killers).⁶ Mexico is severely affected by armed conflicts between rival drug cartels, and between the cartels and the security forces. Between December 2006 and July 2010 these conflicts led to at least 28,000 deaths.⁷ The armed forces and the police are both engaged in operations to regain control over several states in the Mexican federation. The northern triangle of Central America – El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala – is the scene of both drug wars at the national level and youth gangs disputing control over mini-territories.⁸ In these three countries the armed forces are taking over the police force's task of internal security.

Several countries in the region appear to be at war with themselves

Criminal organizations such as the *Comando Vermelho* and (somewhat later) rival gangs with child soldiers such as *Terceiro Comando* and the *Amigos dos Amigos* surfaced in the mid-1980s and 1990s as a 'parallel power' in Rio de

⁴ Data about military strength used here are those published by RESDAL (2010).

⁵ Garson (2008).

⁶ Thoumy (2010: 4).

⁷ See Benítez (2010a) and Benítez and Rodríguez Luna (2010) for details.

⁸ Acevedo (2008), Cruz and Portillo (1998), FRIDE (2007), Gutiérrez Rivera (2009), Martínez Ventura (2010), Savenije (2009) and UNODC (2007).

Janeiro's *favelas*.⁹ In Sao Paulo the *Primeiro Comando da Capital* (PCC), using a left-wing phraseology, repeatedly challenged the state and federal authorities.¹⁰ Urban Venezuela has become violence-prone, due in no small part to wide-scale drug use in the elite and in the poor neighbourhoods.¹¹ Organized crime gangs and youth bands have even seriously threatened the island states of the Caribbean.¹² Insurgency, crime, violence and large-scale corruption directly contribute to national destabilisation. A variety of actors are operating in the illegal economy.

Nevertheless, of all organized crime, the drugs industry – including the production and trafficking of cocaine and to a lesser degree heroin – is the most important segment in terms of volume, income generation and impact on society worldwide.¹³ At the same time, the drug cartels and mafia groups tend to regulate and control all other spheres of organized crime, including clandestine transportation of migrants; trafficking of women and children; the illegal trade in tropical hardwood, diamonds, emeralds and ivory; and the smuggling of small arms.

Of all organized crime, the drugs industry is the most important segment

⁹ Arias (2006), Cruz Neto et al. (2003), Dowdney (2003), Zaluar (2004) and Zaluar and Alvito (2006).

¹⁰ Souza (2007).

¹¹ Briceño-León (2008), Jacome (2008, 2010) and Mayorca (2010).

¹² Bobea (2009a, 2009b, 2010).

¹³ UNODC (2010f: 3-5) and UNODC (2010g).

Data on Drugs, Revenues and Trafficking Routes

Coca cultivation is basically centred in three Andean countries: Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, with Colombia accounting for the highest volume. Traditionally, the export markets for coca are the US and Europe. However, the effects of trafficking in the transition countries of Latin America have generated new internal markets for drugs consumption in the metropolitan and urban agglomerations of Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Venezuela, Central America and Mexico. Recently, in Argentina and Chile, coca use has reached a level comparable with that of the US.¹⁴ Internal consumption markets have also emerged in the Caribbean countries and the Guyanas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, the former Netherlands Antilles and Suriname.

New internal markets for drugs consumption

However, in terms of production the most dramatic outcome in the transition countries of Latin America and the Caribbean has been the explosion of violence and political instability.¹⁵ Violence and political instability also characterise the western and southern African countries involved in the trafficking routes to Europe.

Explosion of violence and political instability

Production

In Colombia one can perceive a gradual reduction of coca cultivation and cocaine production since 2005. The country is still the largest world producer, with 68,000 hectares (ha.) under cultivation in 2009, while Peru's production has been increasing since 2007, with 59,000 ha. under cultivation in 2009. Bolivia meanwhile has also increased coca production, with 30,900 ha. under cultivation in 2009. Ecuador also produces coca, but the amount is relatively insignificant.¹⁶

Analysts in various countries have expressed doubts with respect to the statistics about cultivation, processing, transformation from pasta into cocaine, as well as the (illicit) export volume and the (illicit) import volume in the countries of consumption, in particular the US and the EU.¹⁷ The consensus, however, is that Colombia produces the most coca, followed by Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. Nevertheless, there have been some estimates of very similar production volumes in Colombia and Peru. The peak production amount (in terms of hectares under cultivation) was 163,000 ha. in Colombia in 2000, 108,600 ha. in Peru in 1995, and 48,100 ha. in Bolivia in the 1980s.¹⁸

Colombia produces the most coca, followed by Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador

Levels of violence

The extent of coca-related violence varies from country to country. For instance, the levels of violence in the three producing countries vary. In Colombia a 'war on drugs' is currently being fought, with strong US assistance. Cocaine production

The levels of violence in the three producing countries vary

¹⁴ UNODC (2010a: 178-179).

¹⁵ Colectivo Maloka (2009), Thouri (2003) and Vellinga (2004).

¹⁶ UNODC (2010a: 161-162). See also the more detailed UNODC country reports (UNODC 2010b, 2010c, 2010d y 2010e).

¹⁷ See Vargas (2010) for a discussion about UNODC data, statistics published by US agencies and Colombian police figures.

¹⁸ Statistics elaborated by Salazar Ortuño (2009: 312) based on US Secretary of State and UNODC data.

and trafficking is considered a criminal act and is prosecuted by special police forces, assisted by the armed forces. Coca leaf cultivation is strictly prohibited and all coca producers are considered to be involved in criminal activities.

By contrast, in Peru coca cultivation is 'tolerated', at least insofar as it is not penalised. There is even an association of *cocaleros* (peasant coca cultivators), two of whose members were recently elected to parliament. In Bolivia, the president of the country is simultaneously the president of the federation of *cocaleros* in the most important coca region of the country, the Chapare (near Cochabamba). Coca cultivation for domestic and consumption and industrial transformation is legal in two regions of this country (to a legal maximum of 20,000 ha.). The level of violence directly associated with coca cultivation is extremely high in Colombia, remarkably moderate in Peru, and considerably low in Bolivia.

Price Setting

The price setting is dependent upon three factors:

- The not too expensive local **transformation process** from coca leaf to coca pasta to cocaine (a recent domestic innovation is the use of cost- and time-reducing procedures using microwaves and the doubling of the quantity of cocaine extracted);
- The **purity** of the cocaine extracted; and
- The **transshipment and transportation** circuit.

It is estimated that in mid-2010 the price of one kilogram of pure cocaine in Peru, the less expensive producer, was approximately USD 900-1,000. The market price in the consumer markets in the US and Europe is around USD 22,000 per kilogram for adulterated cocaine of a much lower quality.

Trafficking Routes

Greater insights into drug trafficking routes and the alliances made between the various segments of organized crime have been gained in recent years. There is, for example, a research consensus about the routes from Colombia to the United States and the transition routes to the European Union.¹⁹

Drugs are trafficked to the US by a variety of land, sea and air transport routes. Originally, most Colombian cocaine was transported across the Caribbean to the US in fishing vessels, small yachts and small planes. When American and Mexican marine and coast guard forces succeeded in a relatively effective blockade, transport shifted to overland routes via Central America and Mexico. Maritime transport was also revolutionised, with small boats replaced by high-speed yachts and even submarines and commercial sea and airlines and small planes. These routes involve cartel and mafia liaisons.

¹⁹ Data presented in *Trafficking and Transnational Crime* (2010) and Benítez and Rodríguez Luna (2010) were used for the Colombia-US route. Bagley and Hernández (2010) and Brombacher (2010) provide data about the routes between South America and Europe.

FIGURE 1

Cocaine production today¹⁶

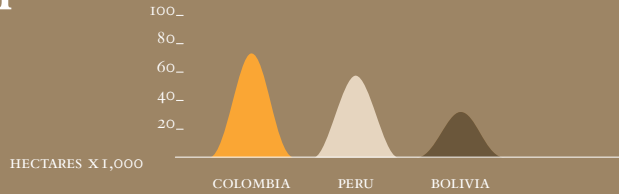


FIGURE 2

Historical cocaine production peak¹⁸

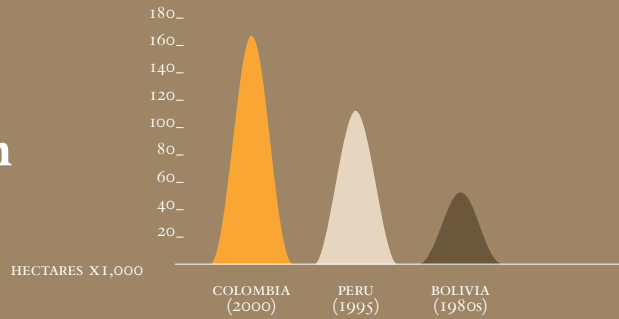
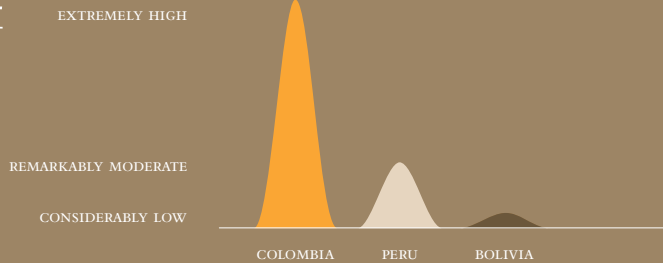


FIGURE 3

Levels of violence



¹⁶ UNODC (2010a: 161-162). See also the more detailed UNODC country reports (UNODC 2010b, 2010c, 2010d y 2010e).
¹⁸ Statistics elaborated by Salazar Ortuño (2009: 312) based on US Secretary of State and UNODC data.

Table 1**Transnational Cartel Liaisons between Mexico and Central American and other Countries (Drug Trafficking between Colombia and the US)**

Mexican cartels	Central American and other countries
Sinaloa federation	Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama
Golfo	Guatemala, Honduras
Tijuana	Central America
Juárez	Nicaragua, Ecuador
Beltrán Leyva	Central America, Venezuela

Source: *Trafficking and Transnational Crime* (2010), Benítez (2010c) and Benítez and Rodríguez Luna (2010)

Routes to the US

During the 'easy years' of the large Colombian Medellín and Cali cartels, alliances were based on personal trust and informal networks. After the disintegration of the Colombian mega-cartels in the 1990s between 250 and 300 mini-cartels emerged in Colombia. In Mexico two large cartels took over part of the transport route to the US and monopolised the Mexican drugs trade until the late 1990s. At the turn of the century new cartels were formed. Over the past decade an inter-cartel war has been waged, and six large cartels have engaged in bitter confrontations with extreme violence. The cartel wars have been intensified by large arms supplies bought in the US and by the new Mexican government policy (formulated by president Fox) of severe confrontation with the cartels.

Table 2**Transnational Alliances between Colombian Cartel and Guerrilla Groups and Mexican Organized Crime on Route to the US (and some European Countries)**

Mexican cartels	Colombian and Mexican Alliances	Area of Influence
Sinaloa federation	Los Paisas, los Urabeños, los Rastrojos, frentes 10, 16, 27, 48 Familia Michoacana	Mexico, US (80 cities), 7 Central American countries, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay
Golfo- Zetas	ERPAC, los Paisas, los Urabeños, frentes 10, 16, 27, 48 Cartel de Tijuana, de Juárez, los Beltrán Leyva	Mexico, US (43 cities), 7 Central American countries, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay Italy, Spain
Tijuana	ERPAC, los Paisas, los Urabeños, frentes 10, 16, 27, 48 Cartel de Golfo-Zetas, de Tijuana, los Beltrán Leyva	Mexico, US (17 cities), Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia
Juárez	ERPAC, los Paisas, los Rastrojos, frentes 10, 16, 27 Cartel de Golfo-Zetas, de Tijuana, los Beltrán Leyva	Mexico, US (El Paso), Colombia, Argentina
La Familia	Sinaloa federation	Mexico, US (Chicago)
Beltrán Leyva	Frentes 10, 16, 27 Cartel de Golfo-Zetas, de Juárez, de Tijuana	

Source: *Trafficking and Transnational Crime* (2010) and Benítez and Rodríguez Luna (2010)

Mexican cartel penetration in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala after 2004 and 2005 triggered a second inter-cartel conflict in the so-called northern triangle of Central America. Notwithstanding these inter-cartel-conflicts, the need for the establishment of uninterrupted drug supply routes to the American consumption markets has also favoured the materialising of more or less stable alliances within the transnational producing and the transport chains. The resulting alliances are also summarised in figures 1 and 2 above.

Routes to the European Markets

There are three main routes to Europe. The first, the so-called 'northern route', is via the Caribbean to Spain and Portugal and/or via the Atlantic South American port cities to the two Iberian and other European countries (the northern route). The second, 'southern' route, passes through Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina and then via Africa to Europe. A third route is used from former Caribbean and Guayanian colonies which act as delivery chains to their former motherlands: Great Britain, France and the Netherlands.

The data about drugs routes to Europe are somewhat less precise. Colombian and Peruvian cocaine is transported via northern overland transshipment routes and air routes using the Venezuelan and Brazilian coastal zones and those of the Guyanas, and the Caribbean and Antillean island states. Peruvian and Bolivian cocaine is transported via a more southern route using Brazilian and Argentinean seaports and airports and transshipments directly to the European consumption market or via west and southern African countries. Mexico and Central America do not play a significant role. The majority of the drugs with a final European destination arrive in the Iberian countries or in the major European port cities including Rotterdam, Antwerp, Dover and Naples. Turkey is a new transshipment destination. In figure 3 these routes are presented in a linkage scheme.

Table 3
Transnational Liaisons between the Andean Producer Countries and the Latin American/ African/European Consumption Markets

Andean countries	Intermediary countries (in Latin America and the Caribbean)	Intermediary countries (in Africa)	European countries
Colombia and Peru	Venezuela, Brazil, Caribbean and Antillean countries, the three Guyanas	Northern Mediterranean Africa, Central West Africa, Southern Africa (also Cabo Verde, the Azores, the Canarias)	Western and Northern Europe, Spain and Portugal, Turkey
Peru and Bolivia	Brazil and Argentina (Chile is a consumption country)	Central West African countries, Southern Africa (also Cabo Verde, the Azores, the Canarias)	Western Europe, Spain and Portugal

Source: *Trafficking and Transnational Crime* (2010) and Mathieu and Niño Guarnizo (2010)

FIGURE 4

Trafficking routes

1998

18



SOURCE: UNODC WORLD DRUG REPORT, 2010
<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wdr-2010.html>

2008



Mexico

Mexico is, notwithstanding an alarming high level of violence, a federal state with well-functioning public institutions at the national level. After the Mexican Revolution in the early decades of the twentieth century, a one-party state was built up, first disarming the regional peasants' armies; then focussing on social reforms, especially during the 1930s under president Lázaro Cárdenas; and thereafter creating a state-led economy with decades-long economic growth accompanied by social and political stability, through co-option and control.

Alarming high level of violence but well-functioning public institutions

While the last decade has been characterised by greater violence, Mexico is by no means a failed state. In most of its cities and states the public institutions and the organizations of the state and the civil society are functioning well. The Mexican public sector is competent. The subordination of the security forces (namely the armed forces and the police) to civil authority is accepted without question. The armed forces are not involved in politics. At the national level, the judiciary is independent. In the core regions of the country violence is absent. However, state fragility and wild violence is present at both the municipal and regional level in the drug trafficking and transport zones and regions.

Mexico is by no means a failed state

The 'War on Drugs' and the *Iniciativa Mérida*

Mexico's anti-drug policies have resulted in an immense internal security problem.²⁰ When in 2000 under President Fox a new national security policy was formulated, the US agreed to provide a substantial support programme, known as the *Iniciativa Mérida* (or, the Plan). The renewed Mexican national security policy (formulated by President Calderón in 2006) implies a 'war' against organized crime and in particular against the drug cartels – in essence, a 'war on drugs'.

US support in war against crime

The *Iniciativa Mérida* support programme is provided in the context of US foreign policy.²¹ It is derived from and very consistent with the aims of the US national strategy in the war on drugs: namely, the containment of extraterritorial production and transport of narcotics; eradication programmes; and prohibition of internal consumption. Cooperation between the US and Mexico has in fact existed since 1989, when the two countries signed an agreement acknowledging a mutual responsibility in confronting the drugs problems. In 2002 a new and more far-reaching agreement was convened on the subject of 'intelligent frontiers', providing for the harmonisation of frontier communication and the regulation of migration streams. It also facilitated the mutual exchange of intelligence and the provision of enhanced technological instruments of frontier control and administrative practices.

²⁰ For more details see Benítez Manaut (2010c, 2010d) and Benítez Manaut, Rodríguez Sumano and Rodríguez Luna (2009). See also Flores Pérez (2009), Krakau (2009) and Selee and Peschard (2010). I also consulted an unpublished manuscript by Menno Vellinga and his overall study published as Vellinga (2004).

²¹ Here I follow the contribution of Rodríguez Luna (2010).

Regional cooperation in war against crime

In 2006 President Calderon declared the war on drugs the nation's number one priority, emphasising the necessity for 'territorial recovering' by the armed forces and the police, along with the improvement of intelligence and upgraded security institutions. In 2007 the formal agreements of the Merida Initiative were ratified, extending the scope to Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic as well. Mexico also cooperates bilaterally with its southern neighbours, Guatemala and Belize. There are working groups on intelligence exchange and on frontier vigilance and judicial coordination, especially with respect to arms trafficking and illegal border crossing.

The Large and the Smaller Cartels

The Mexican cartels emerged as a consequence of the consolidation of an expanding consumption market for marijuana and heroin in the US after the Second World War. In the state of Sinaloa, a producer region of these two drugs, a cartel took shape as a symbiosis between narco-producers and other commercial and entrepreneurial activities. The cartel was tacitly tolerated until the 1970s. External pressure from the US, spectacular murders in Guadalajara and the discovery of large-scale corruption and involvement of the police and the armed forces produced a policy of control intents by the federal government.

The disintegration of the Colombian Cali and Medellin cartels (see chapter Colombia) and the effects of the Plan Colombia in blocking the transport route through the Caribbean led to the Mexican cartels controlling new transport routes via Central America and Mexico to the US. The destruction of the Colombian cartels paved the way for the emergence of six powerful Mexican cartels:

Six powerful Mexican cartels

- The Sinaloa cartel, which has strong influence in the states of Sonora, Tamaulipas, Nuevo León Michoacán and Jalisco;
- The Golfo cartel, with the Zetas (recruited from an elite government protection guard) as armed enforcers, which controls the route Guatemala-México to Tamaulipas and Texas;
- The Beltrán Leyva organization, a split from the Sinaloa cartel;
- The Juárez cartel;
- The Tijuana cartel; and
- La Familia Michoacana.

Modernisation of cartels

These large-scale operating cartels were originally based on loyalties within extended families and depended on inter-linked family clans, associated with regional elites. However, a 'modernisation' process has meant that the cartels are now much more streamlined organizations with cadres for planning and implementation, recruiting, personnel policy, logistics, money laundering, and 'international relations' (as well as diplomacy and negotiations with competing cartels and foreign organized crime). Additionally, some 130 *cartelitos* (small-scale or mini-cartels) have been formed in recent years.

Inter-cartel wars triggered off a murder explosion

The brutal inter-cartel wars and the violence used in the routes and territories controlled by the cartels triggered off a murder explosion. 'Mini-wars' materialised at the local and regional level between the cartels themselves, as well as between the Mexican law security institutions and organized crime. Organized crime organizations took over the (partial) control of important

northern Mexican cities such as Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana, Reynosa, Matamoros, Culiacán and Nuevo Laredo. In these 'occupied' regions and municipalities, local government and particularly the police have been transformed into institutions operating under control of the local mafia leadership.

Mexico's fragility can be measured by the federal estimate that organized crime has presence and/or influence in 50% of the municipalities.²² In very many rural municipalities cartels and related criminal organizations have financed local electoral campaigns. During the last decade this process was replicated at the state and sometimes even at the federal level through high-ranking army and police officers, and state governors and politicians. The Mexican terminology for this nation-wide phenomenon is *narco-política*.

Organized crime has presence and/or influence in 50% of the municipalities

23

Drugs and the Key Institutions

Infiltration of crucial political and security institutions is accompanied by infiltration of state and municipal dependencies of federal institutions: for instance, the police and local intelligence. In particular in Michoacán but also in other states, organizations and networks within civil society are controlled by organized crime. La Familia has established civilian protection networks, trading protection for services and forced sympathy and forced support. Even local religious institutions have been affected.

The tactics follow the carrot-and-stick approach: Robin Hood-like gestures accompanied by terror and fear. The Robin Hood activities include subsidies to the local poor and local development projects in the form of housing, sanitation, public health provision, educational infrastructure and support to local religious organizations. The stick means a wide arsenal of intimidation and executions, mostly of uncooperative local authorities and local neighbourhood leaders; killing and disappearances of protesters or supposed adversaries; kidnapping of their family members; and extortion of entrepreneurs. Narco-incomes are supplemented by small arms trafficking and commercial activities involving cloned CDs, DVDs, videos and so on.

The carrot-and-stick approach: Robin Hood-like gestures accompanied by terror and fear

A kind of pro-cartel ideology is being developed through popular narco-songs and narco-videos. Journalists are silenced at the federal and state level. Radio and TV reporters and their colleagues in the press practise self-censorship. Reporters publish under pseudonyms or else anonymously. A culture of silence is enforced and journalists use terms such as "narco-totalitarianism".²³ Observers assume that, in municipalities and states where the cartels and criminal organizations are markedly present, local functionaries are involved in 'pacts', a euphemism for systematic corruption and convenient negligence. At the federal level the essential institutions (security forces, justice, intelligence, customs and migration) seem to be much less infiltrated.²⁴

Narco-totalitarianism

Around 150,000 people are directly involved in narco-activities, while 500,000 Mexicans earn their income in drugs-related sectors. Official documents provide estimates of up to 23,000 young armed enforcers operating in the 'paramilitary wings' of the cartels.²⁵ Reported violence with the direct involvement of the narco cartels resulted in 2,231 executions in 2006, 2,773 in 2007, 5,661 in 2008 and 8,255 in 2009. Of the reported 17,754 executions between 2006 and 2009 (the

²² In internal policy documents; see Benítez Manaut (2010c:12).

²³ See for instance the monthly *Proceso* issues of 12 December 2010 and 16 January 2011.

²⁴ This is also registered in the published Wikileaks documents involving Mexican security and drugs issues.

²⁵ Data quoted in Benítez Manaut (2010c: 13-14, 23, 27-30). The total numbers differ slightly because the data sources come from various institutional reports.

data are reported by another official source) 16,144 were civilian casualties and 1,610 were functionaries of the security forces, most of them municipal police officers. The death toll in the armed forces was 105.

FIGURE 5

People involved²⁵

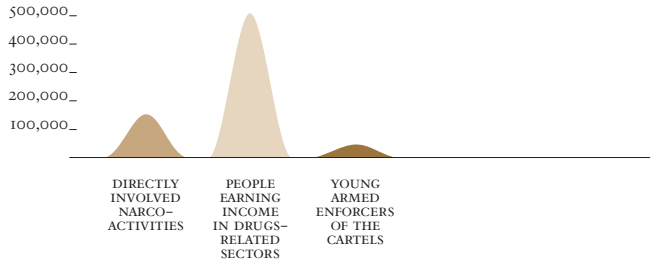


FIGURE 6

Executions annually

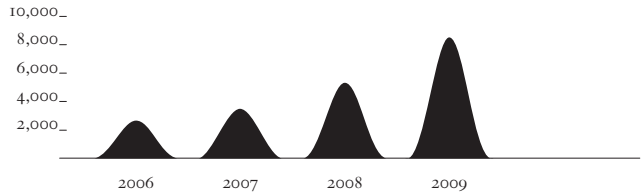
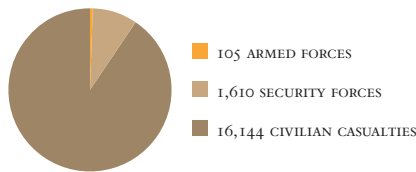


FIGURE 7

Executions between 2006-2009



The violence, however, is concentrated in a few larger cities: Ciudad Juárez (3,227), Culiacán (1,126) and Tijuana (1,009). This is also true for the concentration in states: 60% of all executions took place in five states: Chihuahua (4,960), Sinaloa (2,158), Guerrero (1,372), Baja California (1,278) and Michoacán (1,278).

Counteracting Policies

In defining its counteracting policies, the federal government opted in 2003-2004 to expand the role of the military, to pursue powerful reinforcement and expand the capabilities of the police and the intelligence systems.²⁶ The principal

²⁵ Data quoted in Benítez Manaut (2010c: 13-14, 23, 27-30). The total numbers differ slightly because the data sources come from various institutional reports.
²⁶ The strength of the Mexican armed forces in early 2010 was 260,500 (200,000 army, 52,000 navy and 7,500 air force). Mexico is third after Brazil and Colombia.

objective is 'recovery' of control and state presence in the affected territories. Military assistance in operations against organized crime and specifically drugs has been customary practice since the 1960s in the rural areas of Mexico. What's new is that the armed forces are carrying out specific tasks in recovery operations in the urban ambience in northern Mexico.²⁷ At present, around 50% of the army's personnel is directly involved in the countering measures on a day-to-day basis.²⁸ The counteracting policies are designed as a strategy against organized crime, not against youth gangs (*maras*) as is the case in Central America. In urban Mexico the significance of this category of non-state armed actors is relatively unimportant.

Armed forces and countering policies

The national police force of 425,000 is administered by three hierarchies (federal, state, and municipal) and is therefore fragmented at the organizational level. Another complicating factor is the existence of some 9,000 different police organizations, between which functional contacts and information streams are, euphemistically speaking, not as smooth as they might be. Private security organizations employ 150,000 people. Many private security officers were previously policemen who had been discharged for offenses. The armed forces (army and air force) count for 200,000 officers and enlisted personnel, and the national marines for 50,000. The *Iniciativa Mérida* programme has made Mexico more favoured than Colombia: in 2008 Mexico received USD 400 million and Colombia USD 395 million, while in 2009 U.S assistance to Mexico amounted to USD 672 million, as opposed to the USD 400 million provided to Colombia.

Fragmentation of the national police force, private security organizations and the armed forces

In the first three years of the Calderón presidency 67,742 members of the narco-industry were captured. Of them, 16,511 were affiliates of the Sinaloa cartel; 16,354 of the Golfo-Zetas alliance; 11,930 of the Juárez cartel; 8,850 of the Beltrán Leyva group; 8,744 of the Tijuana cartel; and 1,321 of the Familia Michoacana. In addition, 618 corrupt public sector functionaries with proven connections to the narco-economy were arrested. 16,923 supposed cartel members were killed in confrontations with the security forces in these three years; 12% of these were local chiefs, while 17% were narco-cell operators, and 71% small narco-retailers.

In first 3 years of Calderón 67,742 members of the narco-industry were captured

Failed Cities and Failed Regions

To claim victory, however, would be an illusion. Organized crime continues to recruit and at present remains a threat in some of Mexico's largest cities. For example, Monterrey, the third largest Mexican city with six million inhabitants and the industrial centre of northern Mexico, is a disputed area and a new urban battle theatre where at least ten criminal organizations dispute control over a segment of the metropolis. To prevent a further deterioration, most municipal and state security functions are being transferred to the federal level. The city of Matamoros near Nuevo Laredo has been a narco-city since the 1990s. Even municipal taxes and traffic fines are collected on behalf of the 'new authorities'. Several larger cities are also being threatened or are co-administered by representatives of organized crime.

Organized crime remains a threat in some of Mexico's largest cities

Mexico is by no means a failed state but it has some 'failed cities' and perhaps some 'failed regions'.²⁹ Ciudad Juárez is probably the most explicit example and the worst case of a failed city, and the state of Chihuahua is a possible

²⁷ The army took over the normal police tasks of internal security and civilian assistance in Ciudad Juarez during several months. Military presence in Tijuana resulted in 50% less homicides.

²⁸ Armanda Terrenes (2010: 252).

²⁹ We discuss the concept of 'failed cities' in Koonings and Kruijt (2007, 2009).

Not a failed state but failed cities and regions

example of a failed state within the Mexican federation. In November 2009 the president of the Association of Free Trade Zone entrepreneurs of Ciudad Juárez made a public call to the United Nations to send in a contingent of blue helmets, given the intolerable level of violence. She also asked for a mission by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. In 2009 the homicide rate was 191 per 100,000 inhabitants, the highest level in Latin America.³⁰ The federal government sent in 6,000 soldiers and 2,000 additional federal police officers as reinforcements.

The militarisation of the city government did not lead to the results that were hoped for

The militarisation of the city government did not lead to the results that were hoped for. The extremely high levels of violence did not visibly decrease and, perversely, the handling of the situation by the military also demonstrated that the army was a human rights violator as well.³¹ The municipal government had to establish an ombudsman's office to handle reports of 'abuses by the federal authorities'. The city's population was reduced from 1.3 million inhabitants to one million. More than 100,000 families are now considered displaced persons. In military terms the city is a 'war zone' where the population is engaged in war or in defence activities. Ciudad Juárez is a classic example of a 'government void', where the legitimate authorities are largely absent and where alternative power brokers decide on law and order.

Mexico City is an illustration of a possible solution

On the other hand, Mexico City is an illustration of a possible solution. The megalopolis is administered by the left-wing PRD but the two other national parties (PRI, centre, and PAN, rightist) have agreed to far-ranging cooperation on matters of public security. The police, the justice institutions and the intelligence apparatus are working closely together. The police are considered to be competent; the intelligence apparatus is regarded as the best in Mexico and is specialised in crime prevention and early identification of gang members. Since the late 1990s a zero tolerance (*mano dura* in Spanish) policy on crime and violence against the public order has been maintained.

³⁰ Significantly, second and third place are occupied by the cities of San Pedro Sula (119 homicides) in Honduras and San Salvador (91 homicides), El Salvador's capital.

³¹ Meyer (2010).

Guatemala and the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador and Honduras)

The northern triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) is probably the most affected region in terms of violence, weakening of the public institutions and infiltration of the economy, society and the political system by organized crime. Along with Nicaragua (in many other respects an exception) this region was for several decades the theatre of military dictatorship, repression and civil strife. Guatemala especially emerged heavily wounded from decades of dictatorship and civil war, with an easily shifting political landscape and deep scars due to prolonged and extreme violence, mostly launched by military counterinsurgency manoeuvres, and systematic massacres by the (indigenous) paramilitary forces.

Most affected region by organized crime

In Central America's northern triangle the overall presence of criminal youth gangs, the *maras*, tend to obfuscate the impact of organized crime. The high visibility of these gangs and their practice of extortion of the poor is such a problem that the population of urban slums and poor neighbourhoods and rural hamlets strongly demand repressive measures by the authorities. *Mano dura* (heavy-handed and repressive zero tolerance) programmes are electorally attractive. During the late 1990s and the 2000s many Central American presidential and parliament candidates advocated anti-*mara* agendas. However, as a consequence, the *mano dura* politicians support the persecution of 'small cash' criminals. This also distracts the attention of prosecutors, judges and magistrates and gives silent leeway to the members of the much more remorseless organized crime.³²

The overall presence of criminal youth gangs tend to obfuscate the impact of organized crime

Guatemala

Guatemala's drugs problems were for a long time veiled by the civil war that afflicted the country for thirty-six years.³³ Most documented histories of the war analyse the horrifying consequences of the counterinsurgency operations and the military dictatorship that transformed the country into a 'garrison country'.³⁴ Less known is the fact that in the early 1980s, when the persecution of 'communists' was most brutal, organized crime and narcotics trafficking began to be established in Guatemala. During the final stage of the war a segment of the armed forces, worried about the decreasing possibility of financially supporting the large scale counterinsurgency operations, turned to clandestine business and paved the way for 'friendly civilians' to become engaged in smuggling and cooperation with the various criminal gangs. Previously, they had tried to form a political party with co-opted civilians. During the many years of the war, trusted entrepreneurs and politically involved people befriended the military commanders and the operators within military intelligence.

Drugs problems veiled by civil war

³² At the regional level a *Tratado Marco de Seguridad* was signed in 1995 within the *Sistema de la Integración Centro-americana* (SICA) framework to strengthen and harmonise security policies in Central America.

³³ I have consulted the very detailed studies by Briscoe (2008, 2009) and Briscoe and Pellecer (2010). See also Gavigan (2009), Loria Ramirez (2010), Rodríguez Pellecer (2010) and UNDP (2010).

³⁴ I refer here to the reports of the two Truth Commissions (*Guatemala nunca más*, 1998, CEH, 1999). See also Kruijt (2008).

'Dark Forces' and the Origins of Organized Crime

As the military controlled the police and were directly in charge of customs and migration, it was both an easy and a mutually profitable operation. Smuggling became lucrative. Smuggling networks and extended family groups were formed, benefitting from military favours. Once established as outlaw entrepreneurs, they became used to violence and intimidation as business culture. As had also happened in Mexico, the disintegration of the Colombian narco-cartels (in particular those of Cali and Medellin) and the effects of the Plan Colombia resulted in a blockade of the transport route through the Caribbean and paved the way for the establishment and consolidation of a series of local clandestine business groups in Guatemala with strong family ties and extended family networks. These business groups were operating in the Atlantic and Pacific coastal zones and in the Petén, the nearly open jungle frontier with Mexico.³⁵

Mutually profitable operation

After the peace agreements and the final peace in December 1996, and the subsequent cutbacks in the army budget, some personnel who had ties with the former military intelligence and the Special Forces (the *Kaibiles*) 'went private'. They accommodated or even merged with the former business groups and their successor networks, the consolidated coca trafficking networks. In Guatemala they are referred to as the *fuerzas oscuras* ('dark forces').³⁶ The ex-military were especially helpful, providing transport facilities. During the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1980s and the 1990s, more than 300 secret private airstrips were built on the properties of the landed gentry and then leased by the armed forces. After the war, ex-military intelligence connected both foreign and local narco-groups with the owners. They were paid firstly in cash, and then afterwards in cash and coca-packages for retail networks.

Some army personnel 'went private': *fuerzas oscuras*

Organized Crime Groups

The Guatemalan coca trafficking groups, although engaged in very lucrative operations, never became as powerful or as 'modernised' as their Mexican equivalents. But they took their share of the transnational coca transport routes (from Colombia through Central America and Mexico to the US) and even intensified the cultivation of opium in San Marcos, the Pacific frontier department on the border with Mexico, an activity that began only in the mid-1980s but which by the 2000s had tripled in volume. In the last three years Guatemala has replaced Colombia as the second-largest Latin American producer of opium (Mexico being the largest producer).

Guatemala is the second-largest Latin American producer of opium

As in the case of Mexico, the Guatemalan narco-groups use brute force and violence as an operational culture. The number of murders related to the narco-business increased between 2000 and 2010 from around 2,000 to 6,000. Also as in Mexico, the cartels use carrot-and-stick tactics to dominate or to infiltrate. When confronted with resistance, extreme violence is used. Of course they use enforcers against enemies and adversaries. Of course they murder local police officers. But in general they attempt, systematically, to bribe the local police and the local public sector officers; to accommodate the local power structures of *casiques* (local potentates) and majors; and to infiltrate, as local benefactors, the local and regional social movements. These (indigenous) movements can then be mobilised as protesters against the 'remilitarisation' of the former war zones

In general they attempt to bribe and infiltrate the local police and the public sector officers

³⁵ During the 1980s and early 1990s Guatemalan intelligence notified their Mexican counterpart organizations about the emergence of illegal and narco-trafficking organizations at both sides of the frontiers.

³⁶ See Siedel, Thomas, Vickers and Spence (2002), Peacock and Beltrán (2004) and International Crisis Group (2010).

due to (half-hearted) government efforts to counter the expanding influence of the narco-groups.

They also accommodated the Mexican cartels (in particular Los Zetas and the Sinaloa cartel) that in 2004 and 2005 crossed the borders in Humvees, 'undetected' by the local military and the local police. Faced with the fearful and militarily trained and militarily operating Zetas and also the very violent Sinaloa cartel, the Guatemalan business leaders opted for joint ventures and partnerships with the newcomers. This has also been the case in the Petén and particularly in the Alta and Baja Verapaz departments.³⁷ According to high-ranking members of the military intelligence, 50% of the population in the Verapaz department sympathises with the new power brokers, either as a result of intimidation or accepting income. The other half "is still loyal to the legal authorities, if we are lucky". Infiltration of the local and regional indigenous social movements can be achieved by spontaneous protest manifestations in the capital whenever local bosses are (sporadically) arrested. Protesters arrive by bus and carry slogans reading: "No military presence in our communities".

50% of the Verapaz population sympathises with the Mexican cartels as the new power brokers

29

When foreign cartels or local narco-groups wish not to be directly involved in intimidation or terror activities, they can always appeal to local *sicarios* (contract killers). Contrary to the Mexican situation, in the northern triangle of Central America a large number of criminal youth gangs (called *maras*) also exist.³⁸ Contract killing is a common source of income, supplemented by extortion of local entrepreneurs, small businessmen, taxi and bus drivers, and 'war taxes' in the slums and poor neighbourhoods. The presence of so many *sicarios* in Guatemala has led to a decrease in the fees for contract murders. The reported fee in December 2010 was between 100 and 150 *quetzals* (approximately EUR 10-15). There are 1.6 million small arms in Central America, of which 500,000 are legally registered.³⁹ After the civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, the Central American army surplus was transformed into an enormous illegal market system. Central America most likely has the highest density of arms per capita in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Contract killing and extortion are a common source of income

If intimidation or corruption of local authorities does not achieve its intended aims, blackmail can also be beneficial. The director of OASIS – a LGBT advocacy group – commented that heterosexual, homosexual and transgender prostitution arrangements in Guatemala City have also been infiltrated by organized crime and (local) narco-networks. Prostitution is used to blackmail municipal and national politicians and high-ranking officials. As of 2010 and 2011, even cabinet members and members of parliament have been caught up in such blackmailing activities.

Prostitution is used to blackmail politicians and officials

Drugs and the Key Institutions

Infiltration of crucial political and security institutions is accompanied by infiltration of state and municipal dependencies of federal institutions: for example the police, local intelligence, and especially the offices of the majors of the 338 municipalities. Local mayor can issue identity papers (allowing fake identities). Then there are the periodical electoral campaigns of the twenty-five political parties and the 158 Congress members.⁴⁰ At present 120 of these are running for re-election. UNDP and PDH functionaries and most security experts

Huge financial inputs from illegal sources in election campaigns

³⁷ Briscoe and Rodríguez Pellecer (2010: 38 ff.) provide a detailed analysis of such networks in the department of Alta Verapaz.

³⁸ See Gutiérrez Rivera (2009), Jones and Rodgers (2009), Mesa and Moorhouse (2009) and Savenije (2009).

³⁹ *Small Arms Survey* (2009).

⁴⁰ See Saénz de Tejada (2010) and Sánchez (2008) on the Guatemalan party system.

I interviewed are convinced of the huge financial inputs coming from illegal sources.

The national police is believed to be seriously corrupt and in crisis. Between 2008 and 2010 no less than six Secretaries of Government were appointed, the present one a journalist. A former Secretary is on the run in Spain, suspected of organizing death squads hunting street children. Also arrested are former President Portillo (2000-2004) and the entire higher police leadership of 2009 and early 2010 (including the director general, the director of antinarcotics, the director in charge of control of organized crime), who have been charged with large-scale systematic fraud and corruption. Recently Helen Mack, founder and executive director of the prominent human rights NGO Myrna Mack⁴¹, was appointed presidential delegate (cabinet member) with the task of reforming the police institution.

Sources within (and the authors of publications⁴² of) the Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos (PHD, Office of the Ombudsman) consider the police to have been highly infiltrated. The CICIG even mentions that 90% of all police officers have received a bribe from organized crime at least once in their career. Both institutions also regard the Supreme Court as well as the Public Prosecutor's Office as having been infiltrated. At the regional level, many functionaries are not interested in prosecution, probably out of fear of intimidation. Only two percent of all charges registered are resolved. I personally visited the Prosecutor's Office in December 2010 and was highly surprised by the negligence of vigilance, the disregard of privacy and the lack of administration of dossiers and files.

Counteracting Policies

In its definition of counteracting policies, the Guatemalan government has been pretty lax in the decade since 2000. It allowed a very large segment of the national police to opt for a 'no see, no hear' response. Both smaller and larger bribes complement the meagre salaries of the police functionaries in the capital and the rural departments. The government of Portillo-Rios Montt (2000-2004) was corrupted, and let things happen. The government of Berger (2004-2008) reduced the armed forces to a minimum strength of 14,000. The government of Colom (2008-present) has expanded the armed forces to 21,000 but appears not to be interested in security issues.

There is no operational security plan.⁴³ In 2006 Guatemala received technical assistance from the Salvadoran Security Council and a draft plan was elaborated. Then it was shelved. A loose security council was formed but the members were not frequently summoned to meetings. Between October 2010 and January 2011 the meetings were entirely suspended. In January 2011 the security co-ordinator was transferred. The newly appointed co-ordinator is the former chief of staff of one of the three Guatemalan guerrilla movements, the FAR.

Because of the permanent leaking of cabinet plans, intended countering activities and ongoing judicial prosecutions to criminal groups involved in the narco-economy, the Guatemalan government asked for (and obtained through

⁴¹ A death squad assassinated Myrna Mack Chang, Helen's sister and a well-known human rights activist, in 1990. After her death, Helen took charge of the NGO. She is assisted by Peruvian general Rodolfo Robles, who in 1992 and 1993 made public the involvement of presidential death squads (of Fujimori and Montesinos, see the chapter on Peru) and had to go in exile.

⁴² PDH (2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

⁴³ Formally, there is a national security system, whose legal structure is approved by parliament. It even contemplates a police reform. Most recently, in Colom's last government year, the first steps for a police reform were set by the appointment of a team around staff members of the NGO Myrna Mack.

donor funding and technical assistance) an international control institution, the *Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala* (International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG).

International control institution

The CICIG has elaborated national, regional and local maps of 'business rings', in which entrepreneurs, narco-groups, banking institutions, police officers and also politicians are engaged. The old aristocracy and the established bourgeoisie are possibly not directly involved, but the new rich of the 1980s and 1990s have become involved in the illegal and illicit economy through money laundering via financial institutions, by obtaining 'informal credit lines' and via construction projects for hotels and condominiums. According to unpublished CICIG data, 55% of the national territory is controlled by organized crime, particularly by narco groups.

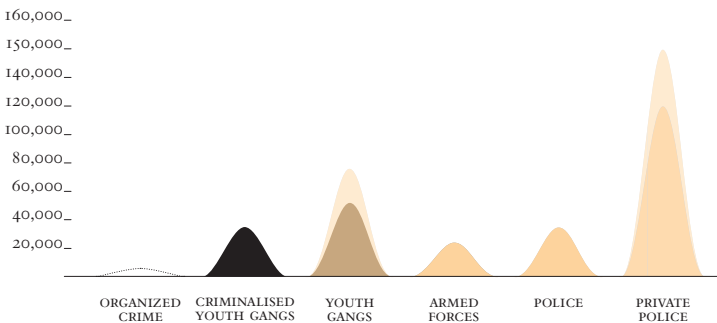
Actors in the illicit economy

There is a mismatch between the magnitude of the official security structures and the number of potential criminal armed actors. UNDP and CICIG data provide the following estimates:

- **Organized crime:** at least several thousand elements, comprised of mini-armies with modern equipment, and generally equipped with better weaponry than the army and the police;
- **Criminalised youth gangs (*maras*):** 35,000 delinquent members;
- **Youth gangs** or *pandillas*: maybe 50,000 to 75,000 members, not strictly criminal but imitating the *mara* structures and leadership models;
- **Armed forces:** 21,000 (previously 14,000) personnel;⁴⁴
- **Police:** 35,000 personnel; and
- **Private police:** 120,000 to 150,000 members.

FIGURE 8

Security structures vs. criminal actors



The security forces are underequipped. There are very few helicopters, airplanes, high-speed boats and fast marine ships, or adequate transport vehicles. Even fuel and combustibles are scarce. Advanced computers are in short supply as well. There is also an intelligence gap. A former Secretary of Security Affairs commented that all real fieldwork, including telephone taps, is done by the army and by private security and intelligence networks. These networks are also used

No sufficient access to equipment and intelligence

⁴⁴ RESDAL (2010: 227) still uses the early-2010 number of 13,900 (13,000 army, 400 navy and 500 air force). The increase to 21,000 is very recent.

by organized crime. With respect to serious crime and narco-delinquency, the Guatemalan government is, like many other Latin American administrations, highly dependent on foreign intelligence, namely US agencies such as the DEA, CIA and FBI.

The two other countries of Central America's northern triangle, El Salvador and Honduras, share many of the Guatemalan problems. Below, I make some short comments on the situation in these countries.

El Salvador⁴⁵

In terms of murder statistics (murders per 100,000 inhabitants), San Salvador is one of the most insecure urban agglomerations in the Western Hemisphere, and El Salvador is the most insecure country on the continent, with a murder rate of more than 60 per 100,000 inhabitants.⁴⁶ Between January and May 2010 alone, around 2,000 murders were officially registered. In 2009 the average death toll per day was 12 and violent actors killed a total of 4,365 people. In addition to the problems of underemployment, poverty and informality and the effects of the economic crisis, El Salvador is now confronting a severe threat to its internal security and stability.

One of the highest murder rates

Public security, normally the exclusive domain of the police, the judiciary and the penal system, is at present also an official task of the armed forces. In despair about the alarmingly increasing criminality in the public domain and the apparent incapacity of the police forces to restrict or even to contain the violence by several non-state perpetrators, the present government of President Funes has delegated most of the police patrolling task to the armed forces and even handed the management of the penal system to the army for a period of one year, with the consent of parliament and public opinion.

Delegation of police tasks to the armed forces

There are three segments of criminality or potential criminality:⁴⁷

- **Organized crime**, increasingly related to the transnational system of the drugs trade and at present the subject of direct competition from Colombian and Mexican cartels, is also associated with the small arms trade;
- **Criminalised youth gangs** or *maras* that emerged in the aftermath of the peace agreements of 1992. Their mere existence is due to violence and 'respect'. Initiation rituals are accompanied by violence. These gangs extort and regularly kill small businessmen, taxi and bus drivers and commercial smallholders in the poor districts and slums. From their ranks organized crime recruits and subcontracts their *sicarios* (hired killers or enforcers); and
- **Youth gangs** or *pandillas*. These are at present not directly engaged in criminal delinquency. However, the *maras* and their members, the *mareros*, are their role model. Youth gangs are even formed by secondary and primary school students, from the ages of six to fifteen.

The expansion of violence and crime is such that only three percent of Salvadoran homicides are resolved. Another aspect of the situation of insecurity is the massive economic damage. According to a study commissioned by the *Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública* the cost of violence was USD 2,000 million in 2006, or 11 percent of GDP.⁴⁸ The Funes administration has instructed

Economic effects of violence

⁴⁵ El Salvador has 14,000 personnel incorporated in its armed forces (12,600 army, 830 navy and 770 air force).

⁴⁶ See Bertelsmann Stiftung (2009) and Overseas Security (2010).

⁴⁷ See Acevedo (2008), Cruz (2003), Cruz and Portillo (1998), Savenije and Van der Borgh (2009) and UCA (2010).

⁴⁸ Acevedo (2008: 14).

the National Public Security Council to redesign a strategy with less emphasis on repression, and to reach a balance between preventive (neighbourhood committees) and repressive (police and prison, assisted by the army) policies.

Although the security situation is generally characterised as alarming, both foreign observers (Amnesty International, US State Department) and the office of the *Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos* (Human Rights Ombudsman, PDDH) report an improved political culture with respect to human rights. The PDDH is an independent office, whose Ombudsman periodically (every three years) has to be reconfirmed by the Salvadoran parliament. The Ombudsman and his deputies are very outspoken. According to the office of the PDDH, 45% of all violations of human rights can be traced to the national police.⁴⁹ This is one of the reasons for the delegation of most police tasks to the armed forces mentioned above.

Role of the Ombudsman

Honduras⁵⁰

Honduras is currently facing a strong threat to its internal security and stability. With a death toll of 70 per 100,000 inhabitants (2009) Honduras has a murder rate double that of Mexico, a country much more infamous due to the recently elevated killing rate on the part of the narco-groups. A recent report indicates that in 2008 a total number of 7,235 violent deaths occurred, 1,448 more than in 2007.⁵¹ Of all killings, 36% were registered as ‘death by contract killer’, a direct indicator of organized crime.

Organized crime in Honduras: a strong threat to internal security and stability

FIGURE 9

Violent deaths⁵¹



In Honduras, as in Guatemala and El Salvador, the same three categories of criminality or potential criminality are present: organized crime, the *maras*, and the *pandillas*. Organized crime, increasingly related to the transnational system of the drugs trade, is presently experiencing direct competition from Colombian and Mexican cartels. Organized crime is also associated with the small arms trade. The influence of the narco-groups is such that in November 2010 the Secretary of Security, Óscar Álvarez, requested support equivalent to the US’s Plan Colombia intervention in Honduras.⁵²

⁴⁹ Data provided by the ombudsman Óscar Luna after his third re-election by parliament, in a TV interview on Canal 4, 24 June 2010.

⁵⁰ The armed forces of Honduras comprise 8,600 officers and personnel (6,500 army, 1,000 navy and 1,100 air force).

⁵¹ PNUD – UNAH (2009).

⁵² *La Prensa*, 19 October 2010.

Former minister Víctor Meza, President Zelaya's minister of the Interior, summarised the situation in one sentence: "The police are part of the problem, if not the core of the problem".

The Southern Triangle

There is a remarkable difference between the two so-called 'triangles' of Central America with respect to the infiltration of hard-core criminal organizations and the level of violence. The northern triangle of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras is being overrun by crime and brutality. Meanwhile, the southern triangle of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama is, by and large, a zone of relative peace, though crime levels are rising. The police are respected, particularly in Nicaragua.⁵³ Very young militia members originally staffed the Nicaraguan police, the successor institution to the *Policía Sandinista*, during the revolutionary overthrow in 1979. Their leadership was formed by the younger guerrilla *comandantes*.

Over the past three decades, contact with neighbourhood organizations has been an overall priority. Neighbourhood committees are on the alert with respect to crime in their territory and liaise with the local police. 'Prevention', 'quick intervention' and even employment programmes for derailed youth gang members are also police priorities. It is surprising to compare the relatively low level of criminal and violent incidents, and the low-profile presence of trafficking and smuggling organizations (mostly in the Atlantic region) with that of the three countries of the northern triangle. The Panamanian and Costa Rican situation is somewhat worse, but, in comparison with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, undoubtedly better.⁵⁴

34
.....
The northern triangle is overrun by crime and brutality whilst the southern triangle is a zone of relative peace

Prevention through neighbourhood organizations

⁵³ It is remarkable to observe that the Nicaraguan police are ranked first on Latin America's public's confidence on police and armed forces of the *Latinobarómetro* polls.

⁵⁴ See Meléndez et al. (2010) about the level of crime, drugs trafficking and violence in the southern triangle of Central America.

Colombia⁵⁵

Colombia is a paradoxical state, experiencing both stable instability and unstable stability. The spheres of stability and instability, equally persistent, are linked to the country's recent economic, social and institutional history. The explanation for this contradictory situation lies in the fact that functioning democratic institutions regulate a large part of the country's territory while, at the same time, Colombia is the world's largest cocaine producer and exporter and suffers from the consequences of an armed guerrilla conflict which has been going on for sixty years. Internal violence has seen thousands of people lose their lives and approximately two to three million people have been displaced in the last ten years. Emigration levels have risen sharply; according to UN calculations, about 3.6 million Colombians have left the country.⁵⁶

Functioning democratic institutions regulate a large part of the country while it's the largest cocaine producer and exporter and suffers from a guerrilla conflict

Yet in terms of public institutions and organizations at the local level in most of its cities, the institutional life of the country is solid. The same can be said of its civil society and the media. Like Mexico, Colombia is by no means a failed state. The public sector in Colombia is generally efficient and competent. The subordination of state forces to civil authority is firmly rooted. Colombia's army does not see itself as a political player, in spite of the de facto autonomy that it enjoyed in the past in areas where conflict was rife. The judiciary has also been able to strengthen its independence and effectiveness in recent years.

Colombia is by no means a failed state

Colombia is the theatre of a very complicated internal conflict. Guerrilla movements contest the legitimacy of the state. Until recently, there were paramilitary forces fighting the guerrillas but at the same time terrorising the local population after 'cleansing' operations. There are mini-armies of mini-narco-cartels, which emerged after the disintegration of the Medellín and Cali cartels in the 1980s. Then there are 'new violence actors', criminal groups without political agendas. They recruit members from the same social segments and regions as the guerrillas, the paramilitary forces and the narco-gangs. The narco-segment of the Colombian economy only represents two to three percent of GDP, but in terms of social and political consequences its significance is enormous.⁵⁷ The significance of the drug-economy should really be measured in terms of its corrupting influence, and because it constitutes the financial base for the guerrilla and paramilitary forces, criminal gangs and the drug cartels themselves. Below I describe the various categories of armed actors.⁵⁸

Disproportionate balance between economic and social consequences

⁵⁵ In this paragraph I make use of Kruijt and Koonings (2007, 2008).

⁵⁶ UNHCR (2007).

⁵⁷ Data provided by the *Departamento de Estudios Económicos del Banco de la República de Colombia* (April 2007). See also Arango, Misas and López (2006).

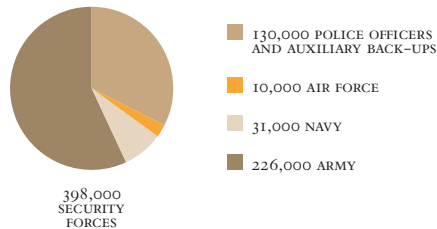
⁵⁸ See Andrade Martínez-Guerra (2010), Ávila Martínez (2010), González, Bolívar and Vázquez (2006), Gutiérrez, Wills and Sánchez (2006), Leal Buitrago (1999, 2006a, 2006b), López Hernández (2010), Pécaut (2003), Rangel (2009), UNDP (2003), Villaraga Sarmiento (2006, 2009).

Role of the armed forces

The Security Forces⁵⁹

The security forces in Colombia are made up of 268,000 members of the armed forces (226,000 army, 31,000 navy and 10,000 air force) and 130,000 police officers and auxiliary back-ups. Their combined number is second only to Brazil – in fact, Colombia has 80% of the latter's military personnel strength, despite the fact that Brazil has almost five times the population and eight times the land mass of Colombia.

FIGURE 10

Security Forces⁵⁹

In terms of its functioning, the military depends to a large extent on intelligence provided by the US, a situation also common to other Latin American countries. The army's priority remains the carrying out of counter-insurgency operations, recently renamed "counter-terrorism operations", against "internal enemies". Anti-narcotics activities are another military priority, a task that other Latin American countries see as principally a matter for the police. In general, it is the army that offers leadership in the control of the police and in overseeing the implementation of public security measures. In the past, members of the armed forces resorted to tacitly delegating the most difficult parts of certain counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations to whatever paramilitary force was active in each area.

Police functioning

It is only recently that the police force has had a presence in all of Colombia's 1,911 municipalities. Prior to 2005, 300 municipalities lacked any police presence at all. However, in the regions where the conflict is most acutely felt, the police presence is more symbolic than anything else, and in general the police keep a low profile in comparison to other armed groups. According to EU sources, tensions go beyond those felt between the police and the army. There are frictions within the police force itself, and between its departments. Further, the intelligence department refuses to cooperate with the criminal investigation department, or with customs and excise.

History of the guerrilla movement

The Guerrilla Movements⁶⁰

The guerrilla organizations active in Colombia have been present since the time known as 'The Violence' (1947–1958), when intense confrontations took place between armed groups under the liberal and conservative banners. In the 1970s and 1980s four larger and some smaller guerrilla groups existed. An agreement was negotiated with two of these groups, allowing for them to be rehabilitated into the democratic process. At present, only the FARC (the larger group) and the ELN (the smaller group) still resort to violence. According to military

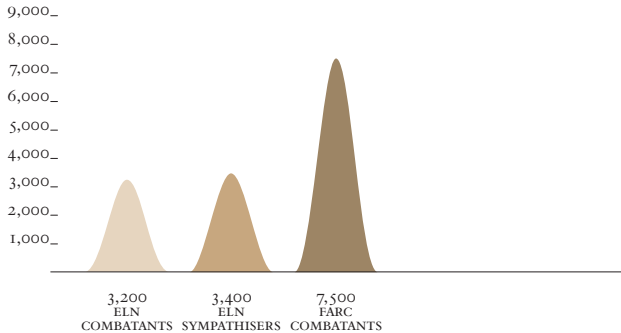
⁵⁹ See Borrero (2006) and Vargas Velásquez (2008, 2010).

⁶⁰ See Corporación Observatorio para la Paz (2009), Medina Gallegos (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c) and Ortiz (2006).

estimates, in the summer of 2007 there were around 3,200 ELN combatants and militants and 3,400 sympathisers, and at least 7,500 FARC combatants active on its various fronts.

FIGURE 11

Guerilla organizations numbers 2007



At the beginning of the second decade of this century the situation remains the same. At the beginning of the 1980s, the majority of the guerrilla battle groups collected a “war tax” from cocaine producers and traffickers in “their” areas of influence. Later on, many FARC fronts (local military-political formations) offered protection and incorporated cocaine cultivation into their military-financial operations. The ELN relies more on the ransom money obtained from kidnappings of members of the economic elite – more recently, businessmen selected at random and passengers on buses – and the “war tax” levied on local business for its finances. Both the ELN and FARC’s objectives reflect the left-wing ideology of armed groups active in Latin America from the 1960s through until the 1980s. Twenty-five years later, much has changed in Latin America, yet the ideological language of the guerrillas resembles that of Albania before the fall of the Berlin wall. However, the simple presence and activity of these groups amounts to the continuation of the armed struggle. And their negotiating strength lies in the fact that they represent a formidable source of destabilisation.

Guerrilla financing

The Paramilitary Forces⁶¹

On repeated occasions, the Colombian government authorised the creation of regional, self-defence organizations (paramilitary groups) to carry out counter-insurgency activities. In 1981, drug cartels in Cali and Medellin formed paramilitary units to prevent the kidnapping and extortion of their own members. Several high-ranking ex-army officers joined this initiative. Other rural businessmen soon followed suit, leading to groups of regional private armies and *sicarios* (or professional hit-men) operating for the most part in the north and the west of the country.

Emergence of paramilitary groups as self defence organizations

These paramilitary groups offered protection against the local guerrilla groups and soon established themselves as a counter-insurgency alternative, with or without the consent of the armed forces in the region. They gradually established

⁶¹ See Ávila Martínez (2010), Camacho Guisado (2006), Duncan (2006), Hennao (2009) and Romero (2006).

'clean zones' where they saw that the law was enforced by means of violence, extortion and intimidation. In 1997, these regional forces joined together to create the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC, United Colombian Self-Defence), a confederation of paramilitary groups. The old alliances between the drug cartels and paramilitary leaders soon solidified into unified entities. The higher echelons of the paramilitary groups were soon moving into "legitimate" businesses, acquiring real estate in the countryside and financing local and regional political campaigns for 'obedient' politicians, a phenomenon known as 'para-politics'.

Unification of paramilitary groups

In 2004, through the intervention of two regional bishops, the national government reached an agreement with the AUC, based on disarmament, rehabilitation into political life and a non-extradition guarantee *vis-a-vis* the US. The agreement was reached under the auspices of the Justice and Peace Bill. However, the Fiscal General is still obliged to pursue murderers or the perpetrators of other terrible crimes, and the bill is not a general amnesty.

Agreement between the government and the united paramilitary groups

The Drug Cartels and Narco-Groups⁶²

Marijuana was first cultivated illegally for the export market by local businessmen and traffickers in the 1970s. A second phase, the establishment of the Cali and Medellin cartels, stretched between the 1970s and 1980s, and led to a much more sophisticated division of labour between producers, those who cut the drugs, the traffickers, the money launderers and a whole host of international middle-men. The bosses of the big Medellin and Cali cartels formed and subcontracted their own security forces and bodyguards, at the same time co-opting and intimidating local, regional and national politicians.

First phase: illegal cultivation of marijuana in the 70s, second phase: establishment of the Cali and Medellin cartels

The use of para-politics (see below) was soon adopted by the 250 to 300 mini-cartels which mushroomed after the break-up of the two big cartels and, more specifically, by the paramilitary organizations. The establishment of the mini-cartels represented the third phase (1995 – 2000) and brought with it new alliances with dealers and middle-men from other parts of South America (especially Peru), Central America and Mexico. The fourth phase, from around the year 2000 to the present, has seen a changing panorama of intensive cultivation, regional control, and a division amongst the various illegal armed groups in terms of production sites, transport and trafficking, along with a gradually more systematic effort by the state to eradicate the trade on a large scale.

Third phase: establishment of mini-cartels, fourth phase: change of cultivation and division of control

The US joined this effort with extensive fumigation programmes, as well as direct military and financial aid. Fumigation continues to be controversial – reports from UNHCR in the mid-2000s suggest that up to 50% of internal refugees resulted directly from this policy.⁶³ This gloomy outlook has been complicated even further by in-fighting between the various armed groups involved, the activities of the army and the forced, internal migration of the local population. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the illegal drug trade has actually achieved long-term stability. This may explain why the corruption it leads to goes unchecked, as the illegal trade continues to fund the violence of the armed groups in the conflict, with the exception of course of the state itself.

The illegal drug trade has achieved long-term stability

⁶² I quote here directly from Kruijt and Koonings (2008).

⁶³ UNHCR (2006).

The Demobilisation Process in the 2000s⁶⁴

By the end of 2010, some 50,000 combatants had handed in their weapons and the majority of both high-ranking and rank-and-file soldiers had begun the process of rehabilitation, with the promise of significantly more lenient sentencing. In the case of the paramilitary forces, the process of demobilisation was the result of negotiations. These took place, between 2003 and 2007, at the national level between government and the political and military leaders of the paramilitary formations, and at the regional level (Antioquia, Medellin) between the departmental and municipal government and the multiple armed actors. Around 35,000 members of these organizations were collectively disarmed and demobilised. In Colombia there exists the possibility of individual demobilisation (it is in fact desertion) via a local authority, a religious leader or a military and/or police officer. As of March 2009, approximately 15,000 individual demobilisations had been registered, mostly guerrilla members.⁶⁵

Negotiating demobilisation

There is no consensus as to whether the paramilitary forces have disappeared or not. There is, however, consensus about the capacity of the two guerrilla movements to re-recruit and to maintain their military capacity, although at a lower level. Whilst most analysts agree that there has been a considerable reduction in paramilitary violence, others argue that the paramilitary groups have been reforming in local, smaller, criminal gangs, comparable to the mini drug cartels that emerged after the downfall of the Cali and Medellin cartels. Whatever the case may be, the dismantling of the paramilitary forces has contributed to the reinforcement of the state's monopoly on legitimate violence.

Reduction in paramilitary violence

However, this does not explain the situation entirely. Official reports and three-monthly reports by the international monitor MAPP-OEA (an organization of the Organization of American States, mostly financed by European bilateral donors) mention the emergence of what are euphemistically christened 'new illegal armed groups'. It is assumed by most Colombian analysts that these new groups strongly recruit from the reservoir of demobilised, generally the collectively demobilised. Although the demobilised are being 're-socialised' by a programme of the *Alta Consejería para la Reintegración Social y Económica de Personas y Grupos Alzadas en Armas* (ACR), this programme had, until 2009, no visible results. Internal and external evaluations were mostly negative.

New illegal armed groups recruit from the demobilised

As a result of the above, the current situation is very complicated. As far as the guerrilla forces are concerned, they are much more on the defensive than in the previous five years. The military, the police and security-related institutions are already thinking in terms of a 'post-conflict period', an idea that is at the very least questionable. Despite all official phraseology, it has never been clearly established whether the Colombian and US supported countering-programmes were counterinsurgency focussed on the guerrilla or a more coherent strategy concentrating on the disarticulation of all organized crime groups operating in Colombia.

Focus of countering-programmes on the guerrilla or on the disarticulation of all organized crime groups

During the decade beginning in 2000 the overall strategy was a military one: 'reconquista'-oriented military policies aimed mostly at the coca-related guerrilla forces and only indirectly at the new violence perpetrators. Over the three last years the strategy has become more integrated, featuring territorial capture and

More integrated military policies accompanied by economic and social rehabilitation

⁶⁴ See CNNR (2010), Kruijt (2009), Procuraduría (2008) and Rivas Gamboa and Méndez (2008). See also the Special Issue of *Política Colombiana, El labirinto de la seguridad* (2010).
⁶⁵ For a critical analysis of the official data, see Medina (2011), who argues that, if the data of the Ministry of Defence were correct, the FARC would have been annihilated three times over.

subjugation of the armed actors, and accompanied by programmes of economic and social rehabilitation. The *Procuraduría* and the *Defensoría* have acquired more control over the way the security services are operating.⁶⁶

The presence of the public sector in 'pacified zones' has improved. The *Defensoría* has a special unit for early warning'.⁶⁷ However, even if the remaining guerrilla organizations could be overpowered or forced into conclusive peace and demobilisation negotiations, there still remain multiple illegal armed actors whose financial basis is the drugs trade. At present, and in particular in the northern, the southern and Pacific departments of Colombia, all of these groups (including the guerrilla) operate either in alliance, or else wage war against local competitors over territorial control and trade routes.

Even if the guerrilla organizations could be overpowered, multiple illegal armed actors remain

At present, in the regions where the paramilitaries cleansed the guerrilla forces, new illegal armed actors such as the *Urabeños* and the *Paisas*, although lacking the ideology of the 'patriotic war against the communist', have replicated its violence and brutality. In the southwestern departments of Cauca, Nariño and Putumayo a new and intensified armed conflict is being fought out by new actors such as the *Rastrepos* and the *Aguilas Negras*, sometimes in alliance, sometimes in dispute with the battle groups of the FARC. The army and the police try to gain the upper hand but by no means can they be sure to be the only offensive force. From time to time even police and army detachments (or at least their officers) participate in this puzzling cycle of violence and peaceful alliances. Gangs and guns dominate these regions.

Intensified conflicts are being fought by new illegal armed actors

Victimisation of the civilian population has become more intense. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the FARC and the AUC tended to avoid direct large-scale confrontations, preferring instead to subdue communities and populations and impede the movements of their adversaries. This led to the tactical use of 'dirty war' methods, with enormous negative consequences for citizens' security and human rights. This scenario included links forged between the security forces of the state and the paramilitary in a tacit joint counter-insurgency strategy.⁶⁸ The various paramilitary units in particular became notorious for systematically committing atrocities against the civilian population. In the course of the 1990s, incidents of the public security forces colluding in this violence reportedly became more frequent. In the second half of the 2000s the ethos and internal discipline of the armed forces and the police seemed to improve. Voices from within the judiciary, the *Procuraduría* and the *Defensoría* still blame the security forces for more than incidental human rights violations.

Victimisation of the civilian population became more intense

The structure of multiple illegal armed actors fuelled by the narco-economy corrupts public institutions through the deployment of carrot-and-stick methods, as elsewhere in Mexico and Central America as well in South America. Although the precise magnitude of the phenomenon is unknown, it is common knowledge that drugs-derived corruption money pervades the institutional fabric of Colombia at most levels. The use of violence and intimidation induces or paralyses actions by civil servants and law enforcement officers in ways that suit the interests of the 'old' and 'new' violence groups. Corruption and coercion are a major cause of institutional erosion, especially at the local level.

Corruption and coercion are a major cause of institutional erosion

⁶⁶ The *Procuraduría* is the independent juridical "representative of Colombian society" with the power to impose sanctions in the case of any unlawful activity by members of any organ within the civil service, from ministers down to low-ranking civil servants. The *Defensoría* is more of a moral authority, without specific sanctioning powers; it has the task of protecting human rights and denouncing with an independent voice any violation of these rights.

⁶⁷ The *Sistema de Alerta Temprana* (SAT), previously a cooperation project nearly entirely financed by USAID, at present incorporated in the *Defensoría*. The SAT reports to a high level commission. See SAT (2008).

⁶⁸ See UNDP (2003).

The effects are particularly visible at the local level and in the peripheral northern and southern zones, where insufficient financial and human resources and effective backing from higher levels has led to local and municipal weakness of public institutions – or even the complete absence of any effective public institutions. Partial state fragility and governance voids have created situations in which the absence of the state has been the common experience of an entire generation.

Partial state fragility and governance voids

During the heyday of the Medellín cartel, the tactics employed were crude: for example, seeking office on the basis of some social prestige (as in the case of Pablo Escobar, who served as a deputy senator for a brief period in the 1980s) or intimidating the state through assassinations and bombings, known as *plomo-o-plata* (bullet-or-money) tactics. In the course of the 1990s, illegal actors developed more subtle instruments, such as funding the electoral campaigns of important national-level politicians.

41

In the 90s, illegal actors developed subtle instruments, such as funding the electoral campaigns of important politicians

The long-term consequence is the capture of parts of political society by the uncivil society of the multiple armed actors. This involves activities ranging from controlling regional strongholds to conniving with or controlling a number of Congress members. It also involves penetration of political parties at the national, regional and municipal level.⁶⁹ Although most of these pressures and corruptions occur at the local level, linkages between the leadership of the armed actors and the national political system were already evident in the 1990s and 2000s. This structure is called the system of *para-política*. The last nationwide para-political scandal transpired in 2007 when even the President's links with prominent paramilitary commanders were questioned.

Para-política: penetration of political parties at the national, regional and municipal level

A very recent legal and innovative initiative refers to the possibility of vetoing possible political candidates with narco-links, while at the same time holding the political party responsible. For the first time in Latin America, political parties are held responsible (by sanctioning and losing a seat in parliament) in case of a corrupt representative. This so-called *ley estatutaria* still has to be approved by the Constitutional Court in 2011.

Political parties are held responsible in case of a corrupt representative

⁶⁹ For a recent analysis of the structure of Colombia's political parties and their security policies, see Leal Buitrago (2010a, 2010b, 2011). There are no specific anti-violence agendas published by the political parties. Most of the argumentation still refers to military and police interventions. In some cases there is a major emphasis on social infrastructure and presence of the 'civilian' institutions.

Bolivia and Peru

Bolivia is the third largest producer of coca, after Colombia and Peru.⁷⁰ It is both a producer and a transition country. Peruvian cocaine is transferred through Bolivia on its way to Brazil, Argentina and Chile. Most analysts report that of all the cocaine that enters Brazil, 80% has passed through Bolivia. As in Peru, coca cultivation is a centuries-old tradition. The indigenous peoples in the pre-Aymará and pre-Quechua societies used coca leaf for ceremonial and medical use. Under Spanish colonial rule and during the nineteenth-century republican governments these customs and cultures never were questioned. This situation remained unchanged until the 1960s but with the emergence of the cocaine markets and the strongly prohibitive reactions of the US government, conditions have since varied.

In Bolivia coca cultivation is a centuries-old tradition and until the nineteenth-century was never questioned

Another characteristic is the relative absence of crime related violence in both countries. In Peru there are *cocalero* movements; in Bolivia the *cocalero* movement is part of the several social movements that constitute the political base of the actual governing party. In comparison with Colombia, the violence level directly associated with coca cultivation in Peru is remarkably moderate, and considerably lower in Bolivia.

The violence level directly associated with coca cultivation is considerably low in Bolivia

Bolivia

There are two coca cultivation regions in Bolivia: the highland Yungas near La Paz, and the Chapare valley near Cochabamba. The tropical zone of the Chapare (the Trópico de Cochabamba) is suitable for intensive alternative cultivation, while in the desolate Yungas there is very little potential for substitute crop growing.

Two coca cultivation regions in Bolivia

Anti-Drug Policies

The national policies in relation to coca leaf cultivation and cocaine have strongly oscillated between the mid-1960s and the present. In the period of the military governments and dictatorships, from Barrientos (1966-1969) and Banzer (1971-1979) to García Meza (1980-1981) and the military junta of 1982, the presence of cocaine gangs and other criminal organizations was always present. Minister of the Interior Arce Gómez, the right hand of dictator García Meza, was condemned for illicit cooperation with drug organizations.

The national anti-drug policies have strongly oscillated

In the subsequent period of democratic governments, connections between the legal and the illegal with respect to coca and cocaine were also apparent. Oscar Eid, an important politician of the left-wing MIR during the presidency of Jaime Paz Zamora (1989-1993) went to jail after the discovery of close ties with

Connections between the legal and the illegal were apparent

⁷⁰ Most statistical data come from Vellinga (2004), CONALTID (2007), Salazar Ortuño (2008, 2009) and UNODC (2010d).

organized crime. Entrepreneur Max Fernandez, an influential politician in Santa Cruz, met the same fate.

Throughout the terms of the successive democratic governments most of the national policies were aimed at the reduction of coca leaf cultivation, alternative development, and forced eradication. The **consecutive policies** can be summarised as follows:

- The **Three Year Plan** (1985-1989) limited the 'legal' coca cultivation under Law 1008 in 1988 and mainly aimed at eradication of the coca in the Yungas within three years;
- The **Coca for Development Plan** (1989-1993);
- The **Option Zero Coca Plan** (1994-1997);
- The **Plan Dignity** (1997-2002);
- The **Plan Bolivia** (2002-2004); and
- The **Integral Bolivian Strategy of Fight Against the Illicit Drug Trafficking** (2004-2008).

Some policies were relatively successful

These policies focussed basically on the two regions mentioned above. In the Chapare the policies were relatively successful. More than 50% of coca cultivation families participated in programmes of alternative production, mainly financed by USAID.

In 1980 in the Trópico region 40,000 ha. were under coca cultivation, with 40,000 ha. devoted to fruits, bananas and yucca cultivation. By 2010 more than 2,000 kilometres of smaller and larger roads had been constructed. At present 100,000 ha. under cultivation are used for bananas, palm hearts, citric fruits, rice, pineapples and other exportable products.

Some policies produced enormous resistance

The former eradication policies also produced enormous resistance among the coca-cultivating peasants. Labour movement leader and politician Evo Morales first became the leader of the protest actions, then a presidential candidate and, after two troublesome neoliberal governments between 2000 and 2005, was elected President in 2006 and re-elected in 2009 with an overwhelming majority.

President Evo Morales is also president of the federation of cocaleros

As President, Evo Morales is at the same time president of the federation of coca cultivators (*cocaleros* in Spanish) in the Chapare.⁷¹ This federation is one of the many constituent union structures and social and indigenous movements that comprise the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), the governing party that now has an absolute majority in parliament.⁷²

Legal and Illegal Coca Cultivation

Part of the Bolivian coca leaf production is legal

Part of the Bolivian coca leaf production is legal. The vice-ministry of Coca and the Directorate General of Coca Leaf and its Industrialisation administer the harvest and industrialisation of coca leaves. Coca and *mate de coca* (coca tea) are consumed in the Bolivian (and Peruvian) internal market and in northern Argentina (Jujuy and Santa).⁷³ A small group of 140 police officers (called the *Grupo Especial de Control de Coca*) supervise the activities of the 11,000 registered coca leaf traders and the 72,000 registered producers.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Or, officially, "President of the coordinating committee of the six federations of the tropics of Cochabamba (the Chapare region)".

⁷² For an analysis of the MAS and the Bolivian social and political structures, see the recent anthology published in Tinkazos (2010).

⁷³ Coca leaves are also processed into medical products.

⁷⁴ My interviews. See also La Razón of 31 January 2011.

A small quantity of coca leaves was exported to the US.⁷⁵ After 2003 the US importer preferred the less expensive Peruvian coca market.

The legal coca production is organized at *catos* (plots of 40 by 40 metres) at a family base level. However, during the last five years, many 'new' producers have been admitted, mostly children and relatives of the former licence holders. In fact, the *cato* system has now expanded to tenures by several family members at once. In the same period, Bolivian artisanal coca paste and cocaine has been improved to Colombian standards, using microwave and other cooking installations. This technological innovation produces roughly twice the amount of paste using the same amount of coca leaves.

The *cato* system: production of family run plots

45

In 2009 UNODC estimated that 30,900 ha. were under coca cultivation.⁷⁶ Other analysts are inclined to make even higher estimates. According to Law 1008, the legal maximum is only 12,000 ha., however the government has since raised the legal minimum to 20,000. What is therefore legal? In 2010 between 10,900 and 18,900 ha. (depending on the 'legal' maximum quota used) of Bolivia's 30,900 ha. under coca cultivation was destined for the extra-legal markets.

Raise of the legal maximum quota

Other analysts claim that the Bolivian volume of coca production is even higher: up to 40,000 ha. Former legal public sector functionaries I interviewed stated on the condition of anonymity that at least 28,000 ha. are now controlled by illegal groups and narco-traffickers. Whatever the volume of Bolivian coca cultivation, it is clear that the lower-priced Peruvian coca has also penetrated the Bolivian market. Evidence of illegal production is easily discovered. In early February 2011 I made a two-hour trip across the urban boundaries of Cochabamba's poor neighbourhoods. There I could clearly see, along a 700-metre stretch of road, at least five remnants of coca leaf heaps, as well as lime used for transformation into coca paste or cocaine. This refers only to domestic and small-scale illegal activities. While there are different estimates of what proportion of the Economically Active Population (EAP) is dependant on the coca business, most analysts agree that the figure is around four to five percent.

Illegal production

The Influence of Foreign Mafias

The Bolivian authorities do not hide their concerns about the influence of Bolivian criminal groups and above all the infiltration by external (mostly Brazilian, but also Colombian and Venezuelan, even Mexican and Argentinean) mafias. These armed criminal gangs are not only involved in drug trafficking, but also in trafficking in persons (women and children), arms trafficking and smuggling. In 2010 alone, about 10-20% of the legally-produced 19,050 tonnes of coca leaves (that is, between 1,905 and 3,820 tonnes) were transferred to the illegal economy. In the summer of 2010 Bolivian Vice-President García Linera officially stated that the illegal coca trade amounted to USD600 million. According to most analysts this is a very conservative estimate. In October 2010 President Morales also admitted that the unions and federations of the Chapare *cocaleros* are fairly lenient on the *cato* system and prone to deliver the surplus harvest to illegal coca traders.

The *cocaleros* are prone to deliver the surplus harvest to illegal coca traders

Land-locked Bolivia has an extremely porous 8,000 kilometre-long border: only 600 police officers control the large jungle frontier zone with Brazil, including the specialised anti-narcotics police. The border region with Peru, the second largest

⁷⁵ By the export company ALBA-export.

⁷⁶ UNODC (2010d).

coca producer and exporter, experiences less police vigilance. Lake Titicaca (divided into a Bolivian and a Peruvian segment) is practically unpatrolled. In confidential briefings to the diplomatic corps, high-ranking cabinet members acknowledge frankly that the Bolivian Amazon region (adjacent to the Brazilian Mato Grosso) is a newly expanding area of smuggling, with the establishment of high-technology laboratories just below Colombian standards of sophistication. In 2010 around twenty of these laboratories were dismantled by national security forces. In some cases the proprietors were tipped off by corrupt police officers.

An extremely porous border

Brazilian and other foreign 'financiers' also buy up Bolivian land estates. Money laundering on a pretty large scale is realised in the construction sector of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. Off the record information implicates many of the entrepreneurial class of the Amazon departments of Beni, Pando and Santa Cruz. In some cases, Bolivian Amazon frontier cities are now considered as occupied by Brazilian mafias.

Money laundering in the construction sector by Brazilian mafias

The Armed Forces, the Police and the Judiciary

The police and the armed forces are loyal to the president and the government party.⁷⁷ Contrary to their role in the past, under democratic rule the security forces are not political actors and are supportive of their civilian administrators. In fact, as the government structures are based on social movements, the security forces are only marginally interested in political power plays. According to several key persons I interviewed, both the police and the armed forces are institutions with an antiquated normative structure and legislation.

The police and the armed forces are loyal and supportive to the government

Bolivia's armed forces declared themselves in 2010 a "socialist", "anti-imperialist" and "anti-capitalist" institution, "in full support of president Morales' Plurinational State of Bolivia" and the political ideology of the ruling MAS government.⁷⁸ The higher command and the officers of the armed forces deem their institution "appreciated by the government". They assist in border vigilance and displayed a supportive role during the nationalisation of the gas and petroleum industry.

The police, however, are corrupt.⁷⁹ Their institution is quite independent. Contrary to the situation in, for instance, Central America, national intelligence is an exclusive police domain. The police control the strategic areas of immigration, the administration of citizen's identification, transit and traffic control, the registration of vehicles and transportation. They are formally in charge of the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking. They are also in charge of state security and the security of embassies, diplomats and cabinet members. Their salaries are low. Until recently they were subsidised by US agencies, particularly by the DEA. Their officers are prone to smaller and larger corruption practices. Most interviewed sources agree on their connections with organized crime. It is known that they sell arms to the Brazilian mafias. When scandals about money laundering, bribery and other criminalised activities are publicised, higher police officials are often involved.

The police is quite independent and corrupt

Until 2008 the Bolivian police coordinated its efforts with the DEA. However, in 2008 the DEA was expelled from Bolivia.⁸⁰ In 2007 US ambassador Philip Goldberg was declared *persona non grata*. President Morales also reduced the

⁷⁷ The strength of the Bolivian armed forces is around 40,000 (25,000 army, 5,000 navy and 5,500 air force).

⁷⁸ See *El País*, 16 November 2010. The journal quotes Bolivian army chief general Cueto, whose public speech in the *Colegio Militar en La Paz* was shared by a visibly emotional president Morales. For a recent analysis of the Bolivian Armed Forces, see Tellería Escobar (2010).

⁷⁹ For a serious analysis of the Bolivian police system see Quintana (2003).

⁸⁰ See journal reports of 11 July 2008 (<http://grupoapoyo.org/basn/node/2117>, consulted 1 February 2011).

scope and operations of USAID in Bolivia. One of the reasons why the DEA was thrown out was the fact that, in 2003, it had ordered a financial investigation by the Research Unit of the *Superintendencia de Bancos* into the bank accounts of the then members of parliament Evo Morales (currently President) and Antonio Peredo (currently senator for the governing MAS), as well as David Choquehuanca (currently Minister of Foreign Affairs) and three other important MAS politicians.⁸¹

In 2008 the DEA was expelled from Bolivia

At present, there is a special police force of around 1,500 officers, the *Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra el Narcotráfico* (FELCN), invested with the task of persecuting and disarticulating the illegal narco-trafficking groups. High-ranking government officials view the FELCN as very corrupt and at best reasonably inefficient. Most analysts, as well as government officials, agree that when the DEA was present, the percentage of confiscated volume of illegal cocaine was much larger than in later years.

47

The Bolivian special police force FELCN is corrupt and less efficient than the DEA

Perhaps even more alarming is the fact that the justice system is largely inefficient and also affected by bribes and corruption. Until 1996 Bolivian criminal law did not even mention the category of organized crime.⁸² Since 2006, cases of corruption of public sector functionaries are given greater priority if a drug liaison can be established.⁸³ Most criminal cases in Bolivia are pursued against gangs that assault banks, upper middle-class and elite residences, jewellers, gold traders and transporters. Cases against drug traffickers are a relative exception. Many incarcerated offenders are of Brazilian, Colombian, Venezuelan, or even Mexican or Paraguayan descent.

The justice system is largely inefficient and corrupt

The justice (and police) system as such is highly bribe- and corruption-prone. Internal attorney and police reports conclude that up to 98% of the police officers accepted 'speed money' or were paid in order to avoid traffic fines at least once in their career. Intimidation of witnesses is quite common in processes involving economical or political mid-level and higher ranking leaders. Lawyers bribe attorneys, and even judges; estimates in 2005 were that a considerable percentage of high-level prosecutors, judges or magistrates were responsive to bribery. Assistants and trainees function as intermediaries. The cost of any legal *tramite* (Spanish for procedure) begins at Bs 200-300 (EUR22-33) and can be easily raised.

Organized Crime and the Political System

There are other indicators of interference and infiltration in the political system. Between mid-2010 and early 2011, the Amauta (indigenous priest) of El Alto, La Paz's twin city, who in 2006 ceremoniously invested Evo Morales with presidential dignity, was arrested in possession of several kilograms of cocaine. The *alcalde* (mayor) of Calamarca was arrested with five kilograms of pure cocaine. Senators, members of parliament, party officials and the direct family of cabinet members have also been prosecuted on cocaine charges. Vice-minister have suddenly and mysteriously become proprietors of hotels and apartment blocks.

Indicators of infiltration in the political system

In the Chilean and Argentinean frontier cities as well as in El Alto and Ururu, *pandillas* are disputing territorial routes and settling accounts with (illegal)

⁸¹ See journal reports of 8 November 2008 (<http://www.fmbolivia.com.bo/noticia5183-investigacion-de-cuentas-motivo-salida-de-la-dea-del-pais.html> and <http://www.wradio.com.co/nota.aspx?id=705715>, consulted 1 February 2011).

⁸² Before the legal recognition and incorporation of 'organized crime' only 'delinquent associations' could be persecuted.

⁸³ The MAS government (2006-present) is particularly interested in the legal persecution of high-ranking functionaries and dignitaries of the previous governments between 2000 and 2005.

adversaries.⁸⁴ Eventually *sicarios* are appearing as enforcers. In some cases indigenous *comunidades* have attacked the police forces, lynching some officers. In other cases, entire clusters of indigenous *comunidades* appear to have become immersed in the coca production and drug trade.

It is perhaps too early to speak of a system of para-politics in Bolivia. However, the embryonic structure for the establishment of competitive drug mafias and territorial control over smuggling routes is already present. When compared with Mexico, Central America and Colombia, however, the difference lies in the absence of systemic violence. One can arguably point to the lack of a coherent national policy with respect to the coca cultivation and the fight against organized crime, including the illicit drug trade. While the central government displays an ambivalent attitude *vis-a-vis* the coca cultivators, it has not yet been penetrated by organized crime.

Peru

Like Bolivia, Peru has a centuries-old tradition of coca cultivation for ceremonial use and popular (indigenous) consumption in the highland region and the mining encampments. In fact, for decades Peru was the largest producer of coca, especially on the eastern slopes of the Andes mountain ranges. In the early 1980s, when the Colombians had not yet developed their intensive inland coca cultivation and were still dependent on the Peruvian and the Bolivian harvests, Colombian mafias already dominated the trade. At that time, the standard transport route was the Amazon River itinerary between Iquitos, the Peruvian Amazon capital, and Leticia, the Colombian transit city, already the homeland of the smaller proto-cartels that a couple of years later would expand rapidly. Marine officers based in Iquitos were heard loudly boasting about how they increased their salaries by looking the other way.

Up until the mid-1980s, the Alto Huallaga region was considered the world's major coca-producing area and is still the most prevalent Peruvian coca region. From the mid-1980s to the late 1990s Colombian mafias, *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) battle groups, Peruvian armed *cocaleros*, the police and the armed forces disputed segments of territorial control.

Legal and Illegal Coca Cultivation

Peru is still a major producer; some analysts even speak of the primacy of Peru over Colombia. During the Fujimori decade (1990-2000) the army and the intelligence service, the *de facto* strong hands of Fujimori's government, were heavily involved in drugs alliances with organized crime. At the same time the Peruvian government collaborated with the DEA in eradication campaigns. Montesinos, President Fujimori's adviser, his legal adviser in the early government years and at the same time the controller of the national intelligence system, purged the non-corrupt generals and admirals, organized death squads and acted as political enforcer on behalf of his political chief. A year after Fujimori handed over the presidency, around fifty admirals and generals were charged with corruption and involvement in drug trafficking.⁸⁵

Although violence has always been associated with the drug trade in Peru, it is markedly less than in Colombia. In Peru, internal armed conflicts have also

⁸⁴ Around 18% of the leadership of the criminal bands in El Alto and La Paz is female, according to the *Fuerza Especial de la Lucha Contra el Crimen* (FELCC) (*La Prensa*, 1 February 2011).

⁸⁵ For a detailed analysis of this period, see Kruijt and Tello (2002).

The difference with Central American countries and Colombia is the absence of systematic violence and penetration by organized crime in Bolivia

For decades Peru was the largest producer of coca

In the 1990s the army and the intelligence service were heavily involved in organized crime

been interwoven with the narco-economy. The two decades of Shining Path's macabre guerrilla warfare darkened the country, affecting mostly the indigenous highlands. Shining Path was able to finance its campaigns and to provide itself with sophisticated military equipment by taxing and participating in the coca trade. It was not the only armed actor involved. Ultimately, clever military counterinsurgency campaigns and the bringing into play of around 400,000 mostly voluntary paramilitary indigenous battle groups (the so-called *ronderos*) put the guerrillas on the defensive and led to their almost total crushing in the late 1990s.⁸⁶

Counterinsurgency campaigns and indigenous paramilitary groups led to the almost crushing of the guerrillas in the 1990s

The history of the Peruvian *cocaleros* is a cyclical tale of peaceful co-existence and local repression by the central government. A silent non-official pact of tolerance and non-persecution exists, marked by the absence of extremely harsh maltreatment. In the 2000s, DEA eradication activities alternated with police interventions, protest marches of regionally organized *cocaleros* and the admission of two (female) representatives as elected parliamentarians in Congress. Meanwhile, Colombian mafias are present in the Alto Huallaga and in other Andean highland cultivation zones. Even Mexican cartel members are said to be engaged in transport arrangements via Peruvian seaports. It is widely accepted that a large part of the processed coca (paste or cocaine) is transferred to Bolivia, from where it is then transported to Brazil, Argentina and Chile.⁸⁷

The history of the Peruvian *cocaleros* is a tale of peaceful co-existence and local repression by the government

Anti-Drug Policies

At the level of the central government there is no coherent or integral policy *vis-a-vis* organized crime, drug trafficking and coca leaf cultivation. DEA and police forces collaborate, and US intelligence is transferred to the Peruvian security forces. Up until the mid-2000s, US cooperation even financed the salaries, equipment and uniforms of the special police forces.⁸⁸ There are differences of opinion about statistics. According to the officially published statistics there are 38,000 ha. under coca cultivation. UNODC present a global estimate of 59.000 (2010).⁸⁹ As noted in the chapter on Colombia, some analysts even claim that Peru is the largest coca producer, with far more illegal production than is published.

There is no coherent or integral policy against organized crime, drug trafficking and coca leaf cultivation

The armed forces sometimes assist in the anti-drug operations.⁹⁰ But they are also dragged into a very low-intensity counterinsurgency campaign against the remnants and newly created successor columns of Shining Path, re-emerging at the regional level. In 2010, the number of casualties among the security forces (armed forces and the police) in these anti-Sendero campaigns was around 300. Mini-wars are fought out in the Andean stretch between the southern Alto Huallaga and the valleys of the rivers Apurimac and Ene.⁹¹ In fact, most of the Peruvian coca is produced in three formerly highly contested guerrilla zones: the Alto Huallaga (29%), the Apurimac-ENE zone (29%), and the La Convención-Lares area (22%).⁹²

The armed forces sometimes assist in the anti-drug operations

The lack of a consistent and integral policy on coca cultivation and containment of organized crime, in the drugs business and in other illicit activities, was visible

⁸⁶ For an account of this armed conflict, see CVR (2003, 2004) and Degregori (2010, 2011).

⁸⁷ For a detailed analysis, see Van Dun (2009).

⁸⁸ Author's interview with Fernando Rospigliosi, former Minister of the Interior and President of the Peruvian intelligence system, 5 January 2005.

⁸⁹ There are also 82,000 ha. under alternative fruits and food cultivation, according to police sources. See also FES (2008).

⁹⁰ The strength of the Peruvian armed forces is around 40,000 (no further breakdown data published). For a recent overview, see IDL-DESCO (2009).

⁹¹ The so-called VRAE-region. See *El Comercio* of 6 and 8 February 2011.

⁹² Data presented by Romulo Pizarro, president of DEVIDA, Lima, 11 February 2011.

The lack of a consistent and integral policy was visible in the electoral campaign of February 2011

in the presidential and Congress electoral campaign of February 2011. Most candidates launched accusations about the supposed private drugs use of adversaries and their family members. No party published an anti-drugs and anti-corruption strategy.⁹³

Yes, there are anti-drugs attorneys. Yes, there is a *Procuraduría Anti-Drogas*. As of December 2010, there were 60,000 legal cases to be handled, 40,000 of which were against retail dealers or petty transporters (*mulas* in Spanish). There are also around 200 cases of money laundering waiting to be processed. However, there is an in-built stagnation process impeding real persecution of the large-scale criminal organizations and groupings. There is a special police formation as well, the *Dirección Anti-Drogas* (DIRANDRO), but there is a low level of coordination between the institutions of law and order.

There is a low level of coordination between the institutions of law and order

The correlation between produced and captured coca is quite unbalanced: in 2006 only 17 tonnes was confiscated, out of a total of 280 tonnes produced. In 2007, the figure was 10 out of 290 tonnes. In 2008 it was 23 out of 302 tonnes, and in 2010, of the estimated production of 317 tonnes, only 14 tonnes were seized. Money laundering between 2003 and mid-2010 was estimated to be in the order of USD4,393 million, with coca production and coca trafficking accounting for 82% of this total. Only a relatively small amount (USD103 million) was used to bribe functionaries.

As to be expected, Peru's capacity to deliver low-priced and highly pure cocaine makes it an attractive exporter. Only twelve percent of Peruvian coca is destined for the US consumption markets. The large majority has Europe and the Atlantic seaports of Brazil as its final destination. In the Latin American Southern Cone (southern Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile) an emerging domestic market has also been consolidated. The export routes go southward and eastward: 43% of the Peruvian cocaine is transported through Bolivia (mostly by overland routes), 28% through Ecuador (mostly by sea ports) and 13% through Chile. Bolivia is a provider to Argentina and the Argentine and Chilean consumption market as well.⁹⁴ (also see figure 4 on pages 18 and 19)

Traffic routes of Peruvian cocaine

Non governmental actors provide reliable information on human rights vigilance

Information circulating in the public debate is mostly provided by investigative journalists, managing small NGOs or else incorporated within larger ones. Some NGOs specialising in human rights vigilance are screening CVs of candidate judges and magistrates of the Supreme Court and comparable institutions. At present, the president of the Supreme Court is the judge who condemned the former dictator Fujimori.

⁹³ *El Comercio* of 7 February 2011.

⁹⁴ Data presented by Romulo Pizarro, president of DEVIDA, Lima, 11 February 2011.

Countering Policies of Repression and Prevention

This study has examined the relations between organized crime, drug trafficking and the political system in Latin America, concentrating on the three coca/cocaine producing countries (Colombia, Peru and Bolivia) and their nexus between Central America and Mexico, the principal transition routes to the US. It also includes an inventory of the most recent estimates as to the routes to the European Union, via the Atlantic port cities of South America and Western Africa.

Organized crime and specifically the drugs economy are related to at least four spheres of activities. These are:⁹⁵

- The sphere of production, transportation and the chains of distribution, ending at small level street selling in the consumption markets;
- The money laundering process;⁹⁶
- The trafficking of small arms; and
- The infiltration of the political system and the accompanying process of corruption, impunity and violence.

This study's focus on organized crime and the state in the Latin American and Caribbean regions should not distract us from the fact that the US and the EU are also dealing with the domestic problem of organized crime. A thorough analysis of US and European criminal and coca markets, and the (multiple) relations between criminal gangs, mafias and the American and European political systems is arguably just as important as a study that focuses only on the production and trafficking side, and the domestic consequences of violence and political distortion in Latin America.

Current countering strategies in the region bear a resemblance to the more or less classic counterinsurgency actions during the civil wars and the anti-guerrilla campaigns from the 1960s to the 1980s, mostly carried out under military rule. There are also, of course, clear differences: previously, the guerrilla movements were politico-military organizations, with an emphasis on political leadership, political ideology and political aims of overthrowing dictatorship and overcoming imperialism. In Central America these movements were also inspired by liberation theology. Now, by contrast, one sees a different type of organization: namely, economic-military organizations, aiming not for the overthrow of the state but for a (larger) share of easy economic surplus, to be carved out by a specific combination of violence and corruption, either the easy way (by corrupting authorities) or the hard way (by guns and gangs). Their strategy is to control territories or corridors that are crucial to production and trafficking and guarantee uninterrupted profits.

Shift from politico-military organizations to economic-military organizations

⁹⁵ Brombacher and Maihold (2009) and Maihold and Brombacher (2009). See also Dreyfus (2009), Mathieu and Rodríguez Arredondo (2009) and Mathieu and Niño Guarnizo (2010).

⁹⁶ See Blickman (2009).

Aim is not state capture but surplus: a 'good life'

Ultimately, these groups' aim is not state capture. The final objective is surplus, a 'good life' and the possibility of incorporation within the elite section of society. The best example is that of the leadership of the Colombian paramilitary forces, who laundered the majority of their abundant profits in semi-legal land purchase and landed estates, transforming themselves into a new class of agrarian entrepreneurs and noblemen. Where they sought (and acquired) political partnerships, this was done in order to create a reservoir of tame politicians more interested in impunity and consolidated corruption structures than in direct political influence or the establishment of 'narco-states'.

Smaller, fitter, leaner and meaner mini-cartels

During the last twenty-five years the size and character of these economic-military organizations, as well as the linkages and communication structures between them, have changed. The large super-cartels of Medellin and Cali were broken up in the 1980s and 1990s. Smaller, fitter, leaner and meaner mini-cartels emerged in their place. Although all organized crime groups have 'military wings', the enforcer side of potential violence, these newer groups are more diffuse, more interconnected and more inclined to make part-time alliances with competitors and short-term wars over routes and corridors.

Transnational criminal organization

In many countries the term is 'mafia': Brazilian mafias, Colombian mafias, Venezuelan mafias. Strong and recognisable cartels have only been established in Mexico. In other countries, there has been a relative transformation of militarised mini-armies into youth gangs, criminal bands, and local territorial militias. It is certain that organized crime is being transnationalised, but the linkages between the many chains are multiple and there is no single worldwide organization with superior planning capacities, long-term strategies, financial resources or large training facilities.

In countries such as Bolivia and Peru, the coca cultivators are of indigenous descent, poor and relatively disorganized. They deliver to local traffickers who sometimes operate in convoys to transborder shipments to the next country en route. In Guatemala and in Honduras the local bosses are seen as protectors, emerging representatives of law and order or benefactors. They provide employment where state representatives are absent or else present only in the form of repressive institutions.

A Presidential Report

In 2009 an important report was published through the efforts of three former Latin American presidents, namely Gaviria (Colombia), Zedillo (Mexico) and Cardoso (Brazil).⁹⁷ The report refers to the "traumatic Colombian experience", and seeks to formulate lessons learned from "the error of following prohibitive policies of the United States (...) a fundamentally repressive strategy [that] failed in Latin America". They make a relevant comparison between two different sets of policy approaches: the strongly repressive ones (such as that of the US) and the approaches more oriented toward prevention and public health interventions within the European Union.⁹⁸ The report summarises the negative consequences of the repressive oriented approach, including:

- The consolidation of an illicit economy dominated by organized crime;
- The loss of large segments of the public budget spent on security instead of public health:

⁹⁷ Gaviria, Zedillo and Cardoso et al. (2009).

⁹⁸ See EMCDDA (2009a, 2009b) and European Commission (2008).

- Continuous relocation of production to new zones due to local repression and violence;
- Stigmatisation of (small-scale) producers and consumers and criminalisation of the local population in the production zones, transforming them into hostages of the criminal gangs; and
- The generation of local violence and repression systems with distorting and corrupting effects on the character of national democracy.

2 different policy approaches: repression (US) and prevention (EU)

Repression and Prevention

Is a 'war approach' the best solution? Very few analysts would deny the necessity of countering operations. The point, however, is that in general, the armed forces are less contaminated than the police, who in most of the countries analysed in this report are the weakest link, the most prone to corruption and the most infiltrated by crime and crime organizations. How can a country continue to function with a more or less untainted army, a corrupt police force, an ineffectual judiciary, an inadequate penitentiary system and a half-present and corruption-prone civilian public sector that does not offer the local population opportunities for employment or access to basic social services? In terms of countering approaches, which basic elements can be provided by external (donor) support?

This is perhaps one of the weakest points of the current countering strategies. What is an adequate balance between prevention and repression, between a state that delivers and a state that represses and castigates? In countries such as Colombia and Mexico (the two most knowledgeable friends of the US) the countering strategy is forcefully expressed in terms of military and police operations, as 'war' and 're-conquest'. The levels of violence and crime, but also of human suffering are extremely high.⁹⁹ Indigenous cultivators, peasant producers and small-scale traffickers are considered criminal perpetrators. The relative tolerance in Bolivia and Peru *vis-à-vis* the *cocaleros*, the small producers and small traffickers, at least benefit from the absence of the most brutal forms of violence. The difference in the levels of violence and crime between the northern and southern triangle of Central America is another phenomenon that might encourage deeper reflection on the wisdom of heavily militarised countering strategies.

Balance between prevention and repression: a state that delivers and a state that represses and castigates

⁹⁹ See also Youngers and Rosin (2005). And see the comments of Benitez (2010c: 6-7).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Democracy is built upon well-functioning public institutions and reputable political parties. When criminal organizations infiltrate the political system, this affects public institutions and political parties, particularly at their weakest position, namely at the local, municipal and regional level. This is there where the salaries are lowest. In general, at the upper and central levels the possibilities of control are better, press and news agencies are more visibly present, and the best quality institutional provisions are nearby.

Criminal organizations affect public institutions and political parties at their weakest position: at the local level

In matters of strategic comparison between institutional efforts and best practices, several practical things can be done. Below is a list of possible strategies, in the form of a series of recommendations.

- Comparative studies on the successful circumstances of alternative development programmes. Where did they at least obtain certain minimum results? Which factors and interventions were favourable? If there have been **successful interventions** in the Bolivian Chapare region, for example, under which circumstances could they be replicated?
- **Strategic countering interventions**: why were they successful? Under which circumstances could they be replicated? What was the mix between preventative and repressive elements? Are there specific penitentiary instruments that can be applied in other circumstances in order to re-socialise former criminal elements?
- Although the overall assessment of the re-socialisation programmes of the *Alta Consejería para La Reintegración en Colombia* was not very satisfactory, at least the local parallel **disarmament pact and re-socialisation programme** in Medellín did function well for several years. Was it the fact that people in criminal organizations (paramilitary battle groups, drug-infested guerrilla *frentes*) had a legal alternative to demobilise (in the presence of an army or police authority, a religious authority or a public sector authority) and therefore lead an alternative way of life?
- A serious cost-benefit analysis of relative tolerance could be helpful as well. De-criminalisation of the *cocaleros* could be considered. Community policing with the explicit support of the local communities could also be a successful instrument. The Nicaraguan police, operating in a country that has the same conditions of poverty, exclusion, traumas of civil war and decades-long neglect as its three northern neighbours (El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala), has a positive record in **handling crime and preventing violence at the local level**. Could these experiences be replicated?
- **Comparative analysis of criminal networks** will also be beneficial.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ See also Garzón (2008) and Garay-Salamanca, Salcedo-Albarán and De León-Beltrán (2010).

Strangely enough there are, at present, no pertinent academic studies that compare the strengths and weaknesses and various modes of organized crime groups in the producing, transport-route and consumer countries. Rather, until recently, there existed several myths about the all-encompassing power and threatening nature of a kind of worldwide organized crime conspiracy. Underestimating your enemy is a major blunder. However, overestimating the power of organized crime as if it were a kind of competitive state power results in the same awkward situation of exaggerated threat analysis and repressive overkill reaction.

- **Strategic support to key institutions** is helpful in the sense of assistance when and where it is necessary. In most countries studied in this position paper, the police are the weakest link, as they are most exposed to corruption and to silent cooperation with criminal activities. Many donors think of awareness training or special police training in these circumstances. It could be better to establish certain institutional codes and to reinforce the *esprit-de-corps* motivation, a factor that seems to work better in the case of the armed forces.
- Many countries – for example, Argentina and Peru, formerly Bolivia, even Mexico and many Central American countries – depend on the **delivery of intelligence hardware** such as telephone intervention, satellite data, email interference on external (or US) sources associated with the DEA, the CIA, the DIA and the FBI. In other countries (Guatemala, and probably Honduras as well) the national intelligence technology is predominantly in the hands of the military or private security firms. Is there a better solution?

Another set of comparisons and scenarios can be helpful as well. Without distorting the balance between repressive and preventive elements of an overall strategy, it could be worthwhile to implement a serious cause and consequence analysis of a series of scenarios, answering the question, “what would happen if ...”. For example, one could analyse:

- Scenarios that consider the short-, medium- and long-term effects of **de-criminalisation and de-persecution** of activities (from production to trafficking to final consumption) within the entire coca-cultivation and consumption chain; or
 - Scenarios that put in effect the completion of **semi-legalisation** (as in the case of Bolivia and Peru) of small-scale production and a variety of industrial transformation of the coca leaf; or
 - Scenarios derived from local or regional pacts with criminal gangs and the possible costs and effects of (partial) **re-socialisation of perpetrators**, as in Medellin in the 1990s and 2000s. Here one could also take into consideration the effects of the demobilisations of the Central American guerrilla organizations in the 1990s, the Nicaraguan Contra warriors in the 1980s and the 1990s, the southern Mexican process of negotiation in the case of the Zapatista movement and the subsequent de-paramilitarisation of Chiapas and adjacent states. A re-evaluation of the demobilization process of the Colombian guerrilla forces in the late-1980s and early 1990s could also be of assistance. In addition, a detailed review of the Colombian collective demobilization process between 2003 and 2007 and its further consequences is highly recommended; or
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- Scenarios where political candidates, judges or high-ranking politicians and members of the public sector can be **vetoed**, as in several worthwhile initiatives introduced in Colombia and Peru.
- A **special study** could be made of the case **of Nicaragua**, a country seemingly possessing all of the characteristics that make the three countries of the northern triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) so vulnerable. The difference is made by the in-house culture and the organization of the Nicaraguan police, together with the armed forces, both key institutions in a relatively well-functioning and publicly appreciated system of law and order; and
- Finally it would be useful to conduct a thorough analysis of the mechanisms of public security and the use of community policing, and, in general, of **preventive policies**. It is therefore advisable to support a comparative analysis in Latin American metropolitan agglomerations like Bogotá, La Habana, Lima Metropolitana, Montevideo and Santiago de Chile.

Finally, political parties should be assisted, in order that they acquire a certifiable status of respectability and transparency. To this end:

- **Transparency campaigns** in matters of the financing of electoral campaigns can be supervised. In some Latin American countries (for example, Argentina and Brazil) there are codes of conduct and limits set to private financing of campaigning;
- **Screening institutions** (the *Instituto de Defensa Legal* in Lima is an example) who inspect the CVs of prominent politicians and future magistrates for possible relations with organized crime or with suspected entrepreneurial groups can be supported;
- Parties can be assisted in developing internal **early-warning-systems** against infiltration and impunity on the part of leading politicians; and
- **Youth organizations and student politicians**, the future members of new political generations, can also be supported.

However, the final and most pertinent recommendation is that the drafting and implementation of security agendas, with their complex equilibrium of preventive and repressive ingredients, should not be a matter for specialised military experts or security institutions. On the contrary, the task of drafting and implementing these agendas should be the highest priority for political parties and organizations. Appropriate taxation design is a necessary ingredient of these policies. Several of the most affected countries in the region – Guatemala being the most outstanding case – have extremely low tax rates and generally lax taxation policies.

Appropriate taxation design is necessary for the implementation security agenda's

Political parties – not the military or the police – have to determine the relative weight of the preventive programmes and the repressive actions of counteracting. It is this author's firm conviction that military and police involvement and the priorities of the judiciary and the penitentiary system are in need of public debate. This necessitates political priority formulation, and decisions made by civilian authorities.

Drafting and implementing a security agenda should be the highest priority of the political parties

International donors should provide spaces for debate and discussion and facilitate serious analysis

This recommendation also suggests the need for a certain shift in priorities on the part of specialised donor institutions such as NIMD or IDEA. These organizations need to provide spaces for debate and discussion; and facilitate serious analysis of causes and consequences, implicit and explicit policies, advantages and disadvantages. That requires studying comparative processes, policy comparison, and assistance to politicians, both national and local.

58

Assistance in possible legislation

Finally, it implies the need for assistance in possible legislation, and in the drafting of internal codes of conduct on the position of security and the provision of basic social and economic infrastructure in peripheral regions and conflict zones. Ultimately, it supposes much greater attention to integral policies, in which the short- and long-term effects of security operations and democratic development agendas are seen as absolutely necessarily ingredients of national development policies.

List of Acronyms and Expressions

ACR Alta Consejería para la Reintegración Social y Económica de Personas y Grupos Alzadas en Armas (Colombia)

ADHAG Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala

Alto Huallaga Coca cultivation region (Peru)

Amauta Indigenous priest (Andean Highlands)

Amigos dos Amigos Organized crime association based in favelas of Rio de Janeiro

AUC Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (Paramilitary Forces)

CACIF Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (Guatemala)

CASEDE Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia (Mexico)

Cato Rectangular 40 x 40 metre area of (legal) coca cultivation (Bolivia)

CEDOH Centro de Documentación de Honduras

CEH Comisión del Esclarecimiento Histórico (Truth Commission, Guatemala)

CIA Central Intelligence Agency (US)

CICIG Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala

CIC Centre on International Cooperation (New York University)

CIESAS Centro de Investigaciones and Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (Mexico)

CISAN Centro de Investigación sobre América del Norte (UNAM, Mexico)

CLACSO Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales

CNRR Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconstrucción (Colombia)

CNSP Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública (El Salvador)

Cocaleros Coca cultivating peasants (Andean region)

Comando Vermelho Organized crime association based in favelas of Rio de Janeiro

CONALTID Consejo Nacional de Lucha contra el Tráfico Ilícito de Droga (Bolivia)

CVR Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (Peru)

DEA Drug Enforcement Administration (US)

Defensoría Defensoría del Pueblo, National Human Rights Office (Colombia)

DEVIDA Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas (Peru)

DIA Defense Intelligence Agency (US)

DIGCOIN Dirección General de la Hoja de Coca e Industrialización, Viceministerio de Coca y Desarrollo Integral, Ministerio de Desarrollo Rural, Agropecuario y Medio Ambiente (Bolivia)

DIRANDRO Dirección Anti-Drogas de la Policía del Perú

EAP (PEA) Economically Active Population (Población Económicamente Activa)

ELN Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Colombia

EMCDDA European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (Portugal)

FAR Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Guatemala)

FARC-EP Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (generally known as FARC)

FBDM Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria

FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation (US)

FELCN Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra el Narcotráfico (Bolivia)

FES Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Germany)

FLACSO Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (thirteen member states in Latin America)

FRIDE Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (Spain)

FUNDAUNGO Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (El Salvador)

FUNDESA Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GECC Grupo Especial de Control de Coca (Bolivia)

IDEA International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (Sweden)

IDL Instituto de Defensa Legal (Peru)

IEP Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (Peru)

IEEPP Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (Nicaragua)

IESE Instituto de Estudios Sociales y Económicos, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Universidad de San Simón (Cochabamba, Bolivia)

Iniciativa Mérida US support programme of drug enforcement in Mexico (and in Central America) (also known as Plan Mérida)

Kaibiles Special forces of the Guatemalan armed institution

LGBT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

MAPP-OEA Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia de la Organización de los Estados Americanos.

MAS Movimiento al Socialismo (Bolivia)

Maras Violent youth gangs, controlling small urban territorial zones and extorting taxi drivers and local entrepreneurs; their members are called *mareros*

MIR Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Bolivia)

NIMD Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy

OAS (OEA) Organization of American States (Organización de los Estados Americanos)

OASIS Organización de Apoyo a Una Sexualidad Integral Frente al SIDA (Guatemala)

OSI Open Society Institute

PAN Partido Acción Nacional (Mexico), right-wing, federal governing party since 2000

Pandillas Generic term for youth gangs, not necessarily criminalised

Para-políticos Tame, corrupted politicians, assisting organized crime (the term originally referred to the paramilitaries in Colombia, but has since become a generic expression)

PCC Primeiro Comando da Capital, organized crime association based in favelas of São Paulo

PDA Polo Democrático Alternativo (Colombia)

PDDH Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Human Rights Ombudsman Office (El Salvador)

PDR Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Mexico), left-wing, government party of Mexico City

Plan Colombia US support programme of drug enforcement in Colombia (renamed several times)

PDH Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos, Human Rights Ombudsman Office (Guatemala)

Personería (Municipal, Departmental and National) Offices in Defence of (individual) Human Rights (Colombia)

PIEB Programa de Investigación Estratégica en Bolivia (Bolivia)

Procuraduría Procuraduría General de la Nación, office of the ombudsman supervising the entire public sector (Colombia)

Procuraduría Anti-Drogas Office of the Anti Drugs Attorney (Peru)

PRI Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Mexico), between the late 1920s and 2000 the sole Mexican political party, now centrist

PUCP Universidad Católica del Perú

RESDAL Red de Seguridad y de Defensa de América Latina (head office in Argentina)

RNW Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Ronderos (Voluntary) indigenous counterinsurgency paramilitary forces active during the anti-Shining Path campaigns (Peru)

SAT Sistema de Alerta Temprana (incorporated in the Defensoría, Colombia)

Shining Path Partido Comunista del Perú, por el Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) de José Carlos Mariáteguí (Maoist guerrilla movement, Peru)

SICA Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana

Sicarios Contract killers

SWP Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Germany)

Terceiro Comando Organized crime association based in favelas of Rio de Janeiro

UCA Universidad Centroamericana (El Salvador, Nicaragua)

UIF Unidad de Investigaciones Financieras (UIF) de la Superintendencia de Bancos (Bolivia)

UNAH Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras

UNAM Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNODC United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime

USAID United States Agency for
International Development

VRAE Apurimac-Ene region (coca-
producing zone, Peru)

WOLA Washington Office on Latin
America

Zapatistas Guerrilla movement in the
southern Mexican states (primarily
Chiapas)

List of Interviews¹⁰¹

Saturday 17 April 2010

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), Guatemala City, interview with

–Edmundo Urutia, Senior Research Fellow and former Secretary of Strategic Analysis (2004-2006)

Friday 25 June 2010

Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública (CNSP), San Salvador, interview with

–Aída Luz Santos de Escobar, Presidente

–Oscar Morales, Executive Director

Tuesday 6 July 2010

Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW),

Hilversum, Netherlands, interview with

–Carlos Flores, Associate Professor, Centre for Development, University of Oslo

–Ivan Briscoe, Senior Research Fellow Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, Conflict Research Unit, The Hague

Tuesday 20 July 2010

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit, Berlin, interview with

–Guenther Mailhold, Deputy Director, –Daniel Brombacher, Research Fellow

Wednesday 21 July 2010

Latinamerika Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, interview with

–Marianne Braig, Professor Politikwissenschaft

–Arturo Alvarado, Profesor Investigador Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, El Colegio de México

Friday 1 October 2010

La Paz, Bolivia, interview with

–Raúl Prada, Viceministro de Planificación Estratégica

Monday 4 October 2010

Programa de Investigación Estratégica en Bolivia (PIEB), La Paz, interview with

–Godofredo Sandoval, Executive Director

Monday 18 October 2010

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH), Tegucigalpa, interview with

–Leticia Salomón, Director General of Research and Professor of Military Sociology

Sunday 24 October 2010

Secretaría del Interior y Justicia, Tegucigalpa, interview with

–Áfrico Madrid, Secretario del Interior y Justicia

Wednesday 1 December 2010

Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos (PDH), Guatemala City, interview with

–María Eugenia Morales Aceña de Sierra, Procuradora Adjunta I

Thursday 2 December 2010

Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG), Guatemala City, interview with

–Anibal Gutiérrez, asesor político

Tuesday 26 and Wednesday

27 October 2010, Sunday

5 December 2010

Centro de Documentación de Honduras (CEDOH), Tegucigalpa, interview with

–Victor Meza, former Secretario del Interior y Justicia (2006-2009) and director CEDOH

Thursday 9 December 2010

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), Guatemala City, interview with

–Manolo Vela, senior research fellow

Thursday 9 December 2010

Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala (FUNDESA), interview with

–Edgar Heinemann, President and former President of the Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF)

–Juan Carlos Zapata, General Manager FUNDESA

Wednesday 19, Thursday 20 and

Friday 21 January 2011

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM),

Mexico City, interview with

–Raúl Benítez Manaut, Research Professor of Security Studies, Centro de Investigación sobre América del Norte (CISAN) of the UNAM and Director Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia (CASEDE)

Saturday 27 November 2010, Saturday 22 January 2011

Guatemala City, interview with

–Julio Balconi, former Secretary of Defence (1997-1998), former Coordinator of the Security Cabinet (2006-2008) and at present Adviser on National Security Affairs Inspectoría Nacional del Sector Público

Saturday 22 February 2011

Journal La Prensa, Guatemala City, interview with

–Martin Rodríguez Pellecer, Investigative Journalist and Director electronic journal Plaza Pública

¹⁰¹ Several interviews here included were carried out within the context of the Netherlands Foundation for Scientific Research Project 2010/04671/WOTR "The Transformation of Ethnic Conflict: From Indigenous Guerrilla Movements to Political Parties", or else during other policy missions to Central America in anticipation of the present field mission.

Sunday 23 January 2011*Guatemala City, interview with*

–Miguel Canessa, Professor of Sociology, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP)

Sunday 23 January 2011*Organización de Apoyo a Una Sexualidad Integral frente al Sida (OASIS), Guatemala City, interview with*

–Jorge López Sologastoa, director ejecutivo

Monday 24 January 2011 *Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Guatemala City, interview with*

–Doris Cruz, Representative

Monday 24 January 2011*Guatemala City, interview with*

–Héctor Rosada – Granados, former Peace Negotiator and Cabinet Member (1993-1995) and at present political and security analyst

Monday 29 November 2010 and**Monday 24 January 2011***Guatemala City, interview with*

–Gustavo Porras, former Peace Negotiator (1996) and Cabinet Member (1996-2000), at present Political and Security Analyst

Monday 24 January 2011*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Guatemala City, interview with*

–Edelberto Torres-Rivas, co-author of the report of the Comisión del Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH 1999) and Coordinator of the UNDP Report 2010 on Guatemala

Tuesday 25 January 2011 and**Wednesday 26 January 2011***Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconstrucción (CNRR), Bogotá, interview with*

–Andrea Gómez Ruiz, senior adviser on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Re-integration

Wednesday 26 January 2011*Bogotá, interview with*

–Francisco Leal Buitrago, honorary professor and former rector of the Universidad Nacional and the Universidad de los Andes

Wednesday 26 January 2011*Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Derecho, Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Bogotá, interview with*

–Alejo Vargas, professor and Director of the Research Group on Security and Defence

–Carlos Medina, professor and Vice-Director Director of the Research Group on Security and Defence

Thursday 27 January 2011 *Universidad del Rosario, Facultad de Ciencia Política y Gobierno y de Relaciones Internacionales, Bogotá, interview with*

–Roddy Brett, Professor of Sociology

–Éric Lair, Professor of Case Law

Thursday 27 January 2011*Bogotá, work lunch with*

–Javier Ciurlitz, Director International Crisis Group Latin America division

–Denise Cook, Peace and Development Adviser United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Colombia

Thursday 27 January 2011*Bogotá, interview with*

–Angélica Durán-Martínez, Research Fellow Brown University

Friday 28 January 2011*Defensoría del Pueblo/Ministerio Público, Bogotá, Sistema de Alertas Tempranas (SAT), interview with*

–Jorge Enrique Calero Chocón, Defensor Delegado para la Evaluación de Riesgos de la Población Civil y Director del SAT

–Claudia Rojas, Analista Nacional (Región Nor-occidental)

–Luis Pérez, Analista Nacional (Región Sur-Oriente)

Friday 28 January 2011*Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Bogotá, interview with*

–Harman Idema, Minister Councillor and Head of Cooperation

Saturday 29 January 2011*Acción Andina Colombia – Trans-national Institute, Bogotá, interview with*

–Ricardo Vargas, Director

Monday 31 January 2011*Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria (FBDM), La Paz,**interview with*

–Guido Riveros Franck, Director Ejecutivo,

–Hugo Moldiz Mercado, Coordinador Político,

–Jorge Durón Fernández, Director de Investigación y Formación

Monday 31 Januari 2011*Journal La Razón, La Paz, interview with*

Claudia Benavente, Directora

–Miguel Melendre, Investigative

Journalist

Monday 31 Januari 2011*Journal Página Siete, La Paz, interview with*

–Raúl Peñaranda Undurraga, Director

Monday 31 Januari 2011*Ministerio de Desarrollo Rural, Agropecuario y Medio Ambiente, Viceministerio de Coca y Desarrollo Integral, Dirección General de la Hoja de Coca e Industrialización (DIGCOIN), La Paz, interview with*

–Coronel de la Policía Nacional Luis

Cutipá Salva, Director

Monday 31 Januari 2011*Programa para la Investigación Estratégica en Bolivia (PIEB), La Paz, interview with*

–Godofredo Sandoval, Director

Tuesday 1 February 2011*La Paz, interview with*

–Ramiro Rivas Montealegre, Research Fellow Universidad de Salamanca, Spain, former Director de la Unidad de Investigaciones Financieras (UIF) de la Superintendencia de Bancos

Tuesday 1 February 2011*Nueva Frontera, La Paz, interview with*

–Carlos Hugo Laruta, Coordinador Político of the Unidad Nacional Party in El Alto

Tuesday 1 February 2011 *Estrategias & Alternativas, La Paz, interview with*

–Aulalia Zurita Zelada, Lawyer and former Prosecutor General of the Distrito de La Paz

Wednesday 2 February 2011*Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, La Paz, interview with*

- To Tjoelker, Minister Councillor and Head of Cooperation
- Gary Montaña, adviser to the Cooperation Unit

Wednesday 2 February 2011

Archivo Histórico de la Nación, La Paz, interview with

- Rosana Barrigán, Director

Wednesday 2 February 2011

Oficina de las Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Crimen y Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia (UNODC), La Paz, interview with

- Carlos Díaz, Deputy Resident

Wednesday 2 February 2011

La Paz, interview with

- George Gray Molina, Director Instituto Alternativo and Research Fellow Princeton University

Thursday 3 February 2011

(Flight from La Paz to Cochabamba), short conversation with

- Sergio Loayza, vice-president of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)

Thursday 3 February 2011

Universidad de San Simón, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Instituto de Estudios Sociales y Económicos (IESE), Cochabamba, interview with

- Fernando Salazar Ortuño, docente investigador

Thursday 3 February 2011

Trip by car with Katyuska Vásquez (investigative journalist from the journal *Los Tiempos*) through the poor settlements around Cochabamba

Thursday 3 February 2011

Santa Cruz, interview with

- Roger Cortéz-Hurtado, Professor of Sociology Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, La Paz

Thursday 3 February 2011

Santa Cruz, interview with

- Ernesto Justiciano Urenda, Director digital journal EJU.TV, former Vice-Ministro de Lucha contra el Narcotráfico (2001-2003) and former Member of Parliament (2006-2010)

Friday 4 February 2011

La Paz, interview with

- Tellería Escobar, Loretta, Adviser Ministerio de Defensa de Bolivia

Sunday 6 February 2011

Lima, interview with

- Maria del Pilar Tello, former Director of Editora Perú (Peruvian government publisher of the journal *El Peruano* and Agencia de Noticias Andina)

Sunday 6 February 2011

Lima, interview with

- Walter Navarro, adviser to the Ministry of the Interior

Sunday 6 February 2011

Lima, interview with

- Francisco Huanacune Rosas, Director electronic journal Generación.com and Candidate to the Andean Parliament.

Monday 7 February 2011

Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL), Departamento de Seguridad, Justicia y Sociedad, Lima, interview with

- Ana María, Head of the Department
- José Robles Montoya, Senior Analyst

Tuesday 8 February 2011

Lima, interview with

- Carlos Iván Degregori, editor-in-chief of the Reports of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2001-2005) and former Director of the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)

Tuesday 8 February 2011

Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP), Lima, interview with

- Rosa Vera Solano, Research Fellow (seguridad y fuerzas del orden) (IEP)

Tuesday 8 February to

Thursday 10 February 2011

New York University – IDEA – Open Society Foundations – NIMD, Lima, Seminar "Inter-Regional Dialogue on Organized Crime and State Capture (keynote speaker and participant)

Friday 11 February 2011

IDEA Seminar "El crimen organizada y Drogas en el Perú. Señales de un nuevo movimiento' (participant), Lima,

presentation by Romulo Pizarro, presidente de la Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas presentation by Gustavo Preto, former presidential candidate (2010) of Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA), Colombia

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Ilave, Peru, May 2004, Peruvian police guard the streets after the assumedly corrupt mayor was beaten to death.
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This fact-finding and policy review paper – commissioned by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) – is a comparative analysis about the impacts of organized crime, and specifically drugs related crime, on the Latin American political systems. The focus of the study is on Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia and Bolivia. The countries analysed in this study have different profiles with respect to their internal stability; the level of crime related violence; the strength of political institutions, security apparatus and the judiciary; and the national policies with respect to coca cultivation, cocaine production and crime prevention. The effects on the political system, key institutions and political parties also differ by country.