



Transforming Public Security in the Americas

September 19, 2011

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Short Summary

How can nations better secure the safety and wellbeing of their citizens against the depravities of organized criminal networks, and do so within a democratic framework and the rule of law, while preserving and protecting basic human rights? A consortium of six U.S. and Canadian universities posed this question at the 14th Annual Western Hemisphere Security Colloquium held in Washington, D.C. on May 8-10, 2011.¹

Colloquium speakers and audience members explored ways to transform the character and capacity of public security in the Americas by integrating coercive and non-coercive responses to criminal activities and examined how to move beyond current frameworks which fail to integrate domestic law enforcement, border control, military support, and private security. The Colloquium organizers sought to find new ideas on how to create positive momentum in order to combat organized criminal networks that pose grave and

multidimensional threats to social development and regional stability. Colloquium discussions attempted to rethink how different societies are confronting deteriorating security conditions and to identify more effective domestic and subregional practices without creating fresh imbalances among military, police, and civilian institutions.

One major theme was the necessity to better engage society and get individual citizens and communities involved in making improvements to public security. This is especially needed since organized criminal groups (including gangs and drug trafficking organizations) are vying with the state for sovereignty or control of territory and the “hearts and minds” of the citizenry in certain neighborhoods or rural areas. Criminal groups often provide their members with an identity and protection, and care for the welfare of citizens who are complicit in or turn a blind-eye to their crimes. The state is competing with these groups for a variety of “sovereignty clusters” (even territory as limited as a few city blocks). As one speaker noted, “the state is no longer the center of the [domestic] political universe – the city is becoming more and more important.” Therefore, governments need to implement localized measures that empower individual citizens and communities to de-legitimize and defeat criminal groups.

One speaker adapted the old adage “all politics is local” to “all insecurity, all crime is local.” Attention to the community and the individual affected by crime is often lost in the macro-level planning of national governments. No criminal or

¹ The sponsors of this event included The George Washington University’s Center for Latin American Issues, U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute, National Defense University’s Institute for National Strategic Studies, Florida International University’s Applied Research Center, Cornell University’s Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and Queen’s University’s Centre for International and Defence Policy. Speakers and audience members included academics, private sector consultants, staff of the Organization of American States, U.S. and foreign ambassadors, U.S. and foreign military personnel and officials from the U.S. State Department, U.S. Defense Department, and U.S. Homeland Security Department.

criminal organization simply springs to life as national or international; it starts locally. Within the current frameworks to combat crime, oftentimes “the notion of community gets lost, citizens become statistics, and communities become operational zones.” Instead, government policymakers should be asking what can societal actors do to collaborate in enhancing public security and what can governments and citizens do together? Since national-level security assistance programs trickle down slowly, societies must also adopt local-level measures. Several speakers observed that citizens not only want to be more involved in providing for their own security – but it is also essential that they do so if the solutions are to be sustainable.

In addition to increased citizen participation and better distribution of social-economic services to the community, the state must be able to guarantee the physical security of its people by directly confronting criminal organizations, improving security institutions, and utilizing both its police and military forces as appropriate. Most speakers addressed the conventional idea that public security should be treated as a matter of law enforcement and domestic intelligence and debated the role of the military in public security. Other speakers agreed that the state must use all of its strategic resources (including the military) to combat the challenge of organized crime and regain control of contested domestic space. Instead of just following traditional defensive actions, the complexity of public security challenges requires the state to become more adept and intellectually flexible in its responses, even to go so far as to anticipate the next move of the criminal organizations. The state must take the initiative. For this to occur, however, several presenters noted that there must be a transformation in the organization, training, and doctrine of the armed forces when engaging with civilians in law enforcement activities. Integrating human rights with security is vitally important if the state is to develop the trust and support of citizens.

The Colloquium discussed case studies of national and international cooperation, specifically among

Canada, the United States, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Colombia and Brazil. Speakers encouraged policymakers to pursue additional intra-regional cooperation and capacity-building measures. Successful mechanisms, such as Joint Interagency Task Force-South, and Rio de Janeiro’s on-going civil-military collaboration regaining control of *favelas* (slums), offered positive ideas for consideration. These lessons and shared experiences can be utilized to meet the challenges of public security and offer additional tools beyond traditional north-south security assistance programs which are facing a resource-constrained environment in the U.S. and other nations throughout the Americas. Future collaboration requires Western Hemisphere governments to engage in both interagency and multinational approaches of a truly “flexible partnership” in order to overcome the agility and creativity of criminal networks.

Introduction

The Colloquium convened five panels of experts and featured three keynote addresses.² Colloquium organizers defined public security as “the function of governance which ensures protection of citizens, organizations, and institutions against threats to their well-being and to the prosperity of the community.” The term public security is broader in scope than its oft-used synonym of citizen security, primarily because it encompasses four sub-sectors – law enforcement, intelligence and information sharing, emergency management, and justice.

Organized Crime’s Challenge to Sovereignty: A European Perspective

The main challenge to public security and state sovereignty in the Americas (and beyond) is organized crime. Fabio Armao, professor at the University of Turin Italy, defined organized crime

² Please see the agenda for a list of presentations and each speaker’s full title and organizational affiliation, accessible at: <http://ssiconference.wordpress.com/>.

as “different groups operating in the private market of illicit goods and services; some are more profit- or power-oriented, but all have overlapping activities.” Criminal groups have several competitive advantages over the state: 1) availability of violence resources, and of unlimited financial resources, 2) secret organization, and 3) control of both the demand and the supply side of the market of violence. To further complicate matters, organized crime groups combine the local and global dimensions of action better than the state. As Armao noted, they also “tend to follow a twofold process of entrenchment and expansion: ‘conquering’ a territory, and then embarking on the colonization of new areas (often adopting a military-like strategy).” Additionally, organized crime groups act as political and economic actors in their communities, and even on a regional or global scale. Moreover, criminal groups oftentimes elude government authorities by following migrant routes and hiding their illicit drug trafficking networks among them or directly involving migrants in human smuggling.

Armao proposed the idea of “sovereignty clusters” as a model of analysis for the ways organized crime groups operate and contest the dominance of the state. Sovereignty clusters are “integrated groups of ‘political’ enterprises spatially concentrated, connected by different kinds of externalities, and developing systematic relations with the environment.” According to Armao, an enterprise can be considered political if and when it is capable of successfully competing for the monopoly of coercion in a specific, even if limited territory. Different sovereignty clusters may coexist and/or conflict in a given geographical space. Three basic types of sovereignty clusters exist: 1) pure agglomeration: which has a fragmented and precarious structure, no particular admission criteria, and a low level of security control; 2) social network: which has a strong even if not hierarchical structure, admissions on the basis of shared beliefs, and a medium level of security control; and 3) political complex: which has a hierarchical structure, admission through initiation, and a high

level of security control. The life cycle of a particular sovereignty cluster may pass through four phases: 1) latency – favorable political and economic preconditions for recruitment and social consent, 2) development – effective use of violence and corruption resources to conquer a territory, 3) institutionalization – de-escalation of violence and consolidation of patron-client relationships, and 4) transformation – expansion or decline, depending on adaptation and/or innovation strategies. Each cluster will make a different use of internal and external violence (to control their own members too), depending on the phase of the life-cycle and on the prevalence of coercion strategies.

Using the example of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Armao observed how the city offers organized crime unprecedented opportunities for enrichment and for better developing the network that is essential to its survival. Through corruption of the public and private sectors, organized crime groups obtain an unlimited source of entries to the legal financial system and of jobs for the “reserve army” to defend its domain. The city also serves as a “commercial hub” with its significant transportation infrastructure, allowing organized crime to enter the transnational networks of the illicit global economy.

The case of Ciudad Juarez is an interesting combination of various sovereignty cluster types, what Armao called “the assembled crime” which may be the new frontier of organized crime. Erosion of the individual crime syndicates exists (political complex), but very loose ties and high competition among syndicates remains (pure agglomeration). Because of peculiar historical circumstances, criminal groups in Ciudad Juarez create a paradigm applying the economic logic of *maquiladoras* to the criminal act – they change products and suppliers, or, if necessary, the whole assembly line of crime to increase profits whenever necessary. Additionally, everything revolves around the organization of violence, and everything seems oriented toward reproducing it. Armao cautioned that this new frontier of organized crime

may be worse than some terrorist groups because of its difficulty to define and prosecute.

Rethinking Traditional Frameworks for Public Security

Public security has become a problem of national security in some Latin American countries.

However, following along the ideological spectrum, some political leaders highlight addressing the issues of poverty, impunity, corruption, and the drug problem as the highest priority. In describing the magnitude of the threat to society and state institutions, Joaquin Villalobos, former Salvadoran guerilla leader now a conflict resolution consultant, noted that there are two differing problems – gangs and organized crime. For instance, he noted that both elements exist in Mexico, but the main one is organized crime, whereas El Salvador has more gangs than organized crime groups, and Guatemala and Honduras have both and they are equally important.

According to Villalobos, there are seven factors that define today's organized crime: 1) financial power through illicit trade, 2) social force to provide employees for illicit business, 3) infiltration or cooptation of the state, 4) control of territory and strategic places, 5) power of intimidation with criminal armies, 6) global interconnection via illicit trade, and 7) cultural empowerment to ensure reproduction. Organized crime and gangs differ in many ways. The root of the former is greed and a specific economic agenda; the latter stems from an anthropological problem of social decomposition and rival views of morality. There also are differences between how organized crime and gangs view territory and internal organization. In regard to territory, it is part of an organized crime group's identity. A gang sees territory as the strategic space in which it operates. Similarly, the organization of a criminal network is clandestine, whereas the organization of a gang is more open (for example, members proudly display identifying tattoos). Villalobos noted that both groups evolve over time

and that cooperation as well as conflict is possible among rivals.

Villalobos then contrasted Central American security models under past authoritarian regimes and its current state after a democratic transition. Under authoritarian regimes, the judicial system was irrelevant, military ideas dominated government actions, police forces were weak, corrupt, and inefficient, and territorial and social control was largely in the hands of paramilitary organizations – in other words, citizens rose up against citizens. A culture of violence was pervasive and the main task of the ruling power was repression of the political opposition. State authorities utilized torture as a means of information extraction and prosecution, rather than forensic investigation. Since the period of democratic transition began, the state has transformed from being perceived as the threat to now as the protector of its citizens. Under the new democratic constitutions, the judicial system was initially organized to protect citizens from the state (because of historical experiences with state repression against civilians) but now its structures should be reexamined for its new role to protect citizens from non-state criminal actors. These structures are further reflected by early rationales that delinquents are considered victims of social justice, and organized crime and gangs were not foreseen as a new threat. However, weak and inadequate institutions continue to thwart the state's ability to combat new challenges which include growth in the amount of criminal acts but a dearth of resources available to investigate, much less prosecute crimes, and a court and prison system overloaded and in danger of collapse due to the abundance of the violence. Thus, the main task of Central American governments thus far has been to merely stop criminal acts (primarily through dissuasion strategies rather than an increase in police force capability), not to punish them.

In order for the state to regain its momentum in the fight against criminal groups, Villalobos argued that the government must reestablish its legitimacy with

the people and recover territorial control by 1) dismantling or destroying criminal organizations, 2) creating bigger and better security institutions, 3) reorganizing the deployment of police and military forces, 4) enlisting citizen participation, and 5) providing social services to the community. This is how states will transform the long-time culture of violence in Central America to one based on legality. Through such examples as citizens interacting more with their governments in the creation of social programs, greater involvement of the business sector, and new economic opportunities to substitute for the illicit economy, Villalobos called for more engaged citizen participation in the effort to combat criminal groups. He also advocated a new doctrine of coercive power in which honoring human rights is viewed as an advantage, not as an obstacle, to give the state the moral advantage over criminal groups.

Ambassador Luigi Einaudi of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at National Defense University discussed the difficulties achieving regional cooperation to address public security issues. He noted that the construct of the Western Hemisphere as a single entity does not really exist – there are extraordinary differences and asymmetries among regional powers such as the United States, Brazil, Canada, and Mexico, as well as within the rest of the countries of Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. Fundamental differences and asymmetries block cooperation. The problem is compounded by a legacy of differential capacities and resources to apply power, as well as enormous distrust among states. The intense political polarization of the U.S. domestic climate and its perpetual inward-looking focus, which gives low priority to foreign affairs, complicates matters further. At the current time, the U.S. is not in the best position to help the rest of the region because of its complicity in harmful drug and arms flows, and because it is not paying adequate attention to the concerns of Latin American and Caribbean countries.

John A. (Jay) Cope of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at National Defense University argued that governments can no longer treat complex public security challenges as a routine matter for domestic law enforcement and private security arrangements. Instead, governments must consider, debate, and adopt new ways of looking at longstanding public security issues because responses thus far have failed. The idea that public security should be treated solely as a matter of law enforcement and domestic intelligence does not reflect countless lessons within the region from attempts to counter organized criminal networks. If public security is seen merely as a law enforcement issue, the fundamental concept “not only tends to be out of touch and unimaginative but also fosters a reactionary and defensive response in a war of wits which the criminals are winning.” Regional governments need to construct an overarching vision which links theoretical possibilities with practical realities in order to resolve the problem. When developing a more appropriate concept, leaders must become more anticipatory and intellectually flexible in order to match the resiliency of organized criminal networks which threaten regional stability and social and economic development. Cope argued that a good concept is extremely important – and at the current moment, we do not have a good fundamental concept in place to guide our actions. He then outlined five dimensions that should be considered as we begin to craft a better concept for ensuring public security in the Americas.

First, we must recognize and accept the fact that public security is not an end in itself, but serves as a foundation for building a future with progress and social justice. Government authorities will regain legitimacy and the trust of the population when they promote the economic and social development which will make citizens feel more secure.

Second, political leaders at all levels must admit that they are not sovereign in all territory within their jurisdiction, particularly zones where illegal armed groups and drug traffickers are active, and

that they must recover control. The struggle is not about armed groups seeking to force political change, nor about insurgency or civil war, nor about eliminating king-pins and disrupting organized crime – it is about local sovereignty and governance. Leaders must counter the popular impression in urban and rural areas that the state controls nothing.

Third, the administration that is trying to ensure public security needs to expand its appreciation of the problem. By itself, law enforcement is weak and incapable of significant progress. Military support is essential as is the coordinated effort by the entire government. But to succeed, public security must have the active involvement of all citizens. There must be solidarity among citizens and solidarity with security forces. The population is a “force multiplier.” The challenge for the government is how to get citizens involved in practical ways. In sum, public security is not achieved simply through the efforts of law enforcement or with the support of the armed forces. This is an effort of the entire state and all citizens that requires collaboration with neighboring states with similar problems.

Fourth, the government must seize the initiative rather than continue to react to the adversary. The state needs to create positive momentum. This requires comprehensive planning for security operations, social and economic development, justice programs and other forms of consolidation. However, the initial priority has to be to achieve security.

Fifth, the government must get its metrics right and master the art of strategic communication. If this is not done, the campaign plan being implemented may have the wrong direction and developing momentum may be undermined.

Society's Role in Public Security

Daniel W. Fisk of the International Republican Institute sought to bring the discussion of regional

public security issues to the narrower level of individual citizens. He stressed the point that policymakers often lose sight of the fact that insecurity occurs within a community of individuals. He drove the point home with his adaptation of the old adage “all politics is local” to “all insecurity and all crime is local.” This individual-level perspective often gets lost in macro-level discussions among governments.

No criminal or criminal organization simply springs to life as national or international; it starts locally. When criminal groups gain more coercive power than a sub-national unit can handle, it affects national law. Over time, the response to crime has risen from a local situation to national concern, and now it is a global phenomenon, solidifying this macro-level approach among policymakers. Unfortunately, in the current framework used by government decision-makers “the notion of community gets lost, citizens become statistics, and communities become operational zones.” It is important for national leaders to ask themselves the following questions: What can societal actors do to enhance public security? What can governments do to make citizens feel safe? What can citizens do? What can governments and citizens do together?

Numerous polls within Latin America and the Caribbean have identified citizen safety as the number one concern of the population. Pervasive corruption within law enforcement agencies and the judicial sector, high rates of impunity, and a low level of trust in state authorities (including police and the armed forces due to past human rights abuses) are some of the main complaints voiced by citizens all over the region. Several polls have also indicated that citizens themselves want to be more involved in improving the security conditions of their cities and municipalities. They are also asking for their governments to enact more social-based responses which provide greater opportunities for economic advancement. The process of building citizen confidence in government can be vastly improved through such measures. It is essential for state authorities to enhance the capacity of

government at all levels to deliver basic services. Since international security assistance programs take time to trickle down, governments must focus first on local-level measures which expand social and economic opportunities and ensure citizen safety.

Advancing Public Security: Ideas from Canada and Colombia

In recent decades, Canada and the United States have cooperated to combat cross-border crime through the use of Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBET). IBETs “enhance border integrity and security along the shared U.S.-Canada border, between designated ports of entry, by identifying, investigating and interdicting persons, organizations and goods that threaten the national security of one or both countries or that are involved in organized criminal activity.” These teams came into existence with a 1996 agreement between local authorities in Washington state and the province of British Columbia in response to increased drug trafficking across their shared border. Over the years, the IBET program has transitioned from being a local model to an international joint management team to a shared enforcement model. The bi-national partner agencies which comprise IBETs (the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Services Agency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Coast Guard) exchange information and intelligence as well as collaborate in targeting programs against criminals. After the 9/11 attacks, the number of IBET units expanded rapidly to 15 new teams. By 2015, U.S. and Canadian law enforcement partners intend to have all IBET units following a shared jurisdiction model as they work together seamlessly from collocated offices at strategic locations.

The U.S.-Canadian model of IBET units inspired the creation of Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) teams between the U.S. and Mexico. There are currently 21 BEST teams located in Mexico City and U.S. states including Alabama,

Arizona, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington. BEST teams consist of federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement partners (including police forces and executive level agencies) who “identify, disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations posing significant threats to border security.”

The Colombian experience combating armed criminal groups began with President Uribe’s Democratic Security Policy which may serve as a roadmap for public security challenges in Latin America. Roman Ortiz of Decisive Point consulting company said the Colombian case demonstrated that some organized crime groups heavily involved in illegal economic activities have become a political player attacking state institutions through terrorism, corruption, and mass mobilization. Even in cases where criminal groups have the primary goal of weakening the state in order to continue pursuing their illegal businesses without interference, they are competing with the state for control and may be able to transform into a rival criminal state, controlling chunks of territory and sectors of the population. Thus, Ortiz declared that the boundaries between political terrorism and organized crime have become less clear.

Uribe’s Democratic Security Policy has been successful in decreasing the power and influence of various criminal groups in Colombia (such as the FARC, ELN, and AUC). To respond to the crisis faced by Colombia in the 1990s and early 2000s, the Democratic Security Policy followed the concept of “Security First” rather than emphasize economic and social development (though these elements were addressed by the government once its armed forces recovered local territorial control). The policy prioritized the role of the state as the protector of the civilian population. The Colombian government also realized that it needed the support of the people to deal with the crisis and that its credibility would be based on its performance in the security effort.

Strategic concepts embodied by the Democratic Security Policy included: 1) recover territorial control where the population was living instead of moving the population to secure areas; 2) search and destroy operations to disrupt the ability of guerrilla groups to sustain large-scale operations; 3) dismantle the illicit economy sustaining the illegal groups; 4) block guerrilla and narcotraffickers' mobility by controlling roads, rivers and high mountain passes; 5) dismantle guerrilla command, control, communications structures by targeting middle and high rank commanders and increasing HUMINT (human intelligence) and SIGINT (signals intelligence) capabilities; and 6) implement a program for integral action which focused on social and economic development.

According to Ortiz, the main strength of the Democratic Security Policy over the last ten years was that it provided a model to effectively cope with insurgency and organized crime under democratic rule. It eliminated the false choice of returning to authoritarianism or accepting perpetual instability. The policy also initiated a radical change of the security situation in a short period of time, and eradicated the existential threat against the Colombian state. Finally, the policy began a process to democratize security by providing safety to traditionally marginalized sectors of the population – specifically in rural areas. However, there are weaknesses in the Democratic Security Policy. The policy caused politicization at multiple levels (political and military) within the state. The lack of political consensus at times led to questioning the continuation of the policy. Within the Colombian military, the policy's politicization produced an operational philosophy “fearful of failure” which hindered military planning and led to mismanagement of human rights abuses. Due to the fact that the Colombian armed forces were in an uncompleted phase of military modernization, the Colombian state also endured the cost of a too quick military expansion with a massive increase in manpower. These circumstances led to the loss of quality in military education and military operations (especially regarding operational flexibility and

decentralization). Additional weaknesses of the policy concerned unresolved problems of coordination: poor doctrine and practice of joint operations by the military, lack of a proper division of roles between police and military, and a lack of clear command and control arrangements between military/police/civilian agencies for the development of the consolidation strategy and the integral action programs.

Facing the Challenge: The Experiences of Brazil and Mexico

At the present time, a major shift in public policy dealing with organized crime in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil is occurring. According to Thomaz Costa of the College of International Security Affairs at National Defense University, the goal is not to end organized crime, but to turn Rio into a safe city so the country can generate tourism, economic development and growth as it hosts the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics. Until the late 1960s, organized crime in Rio was stable and mainly limited to illegal lottery and contraband markets because of the country's high taxes on luxury goods. But, with the arrival of drug trafficking (mainly cocaine) organizations in the 1980s, the city experienced higher levels of crime. In response, the Brazilian government recently has begun to use specialized police and military forces to root out the drug trafficking gangs occupying the *favelas* of Rio. Pacification Police Units help the state government regain territorial control of areas once lost to lawlessness though a combination of law enforcement strategies and social components which deliver government services to these historically marginalized communities. By reestablishing state presence in these areas and giving social and economic development a central role, as well as focusing on community relations in order to rebuild trust in police forces, citizen security in Rio's *favelas* is steadily increasing.

Since Mexican President Felipe Calderon came to power in 2006 and declared war against drug cartels enveloping the country in violence, Mexico has

found itself in two wars: the government's war against organized crime and war among the drug cartels themselves. During Calderon's term, 50,000 soldiers and 10,000 police have been deployed within national territory to combat organized crime and over 35,000 people have died. According to the Mexican government, 90% of the fatalities were drug traffickers. As President Calderon battles the drug cartels, Mexican public opinion has begun to question his strategy. In a March 2011 poll, 59% of people said organized crime is winning the war. Significant fragmentation of the cartels has occurred since 2006, but the syndicates are still powerful and violent. In the battle to control strategic trafficking routes, cartels constantly regroup and form new alliances to maintain their lucrative business. As the violence rages on, the two wars are taking a horrible toll on Mexican society. As one analyst noted, the economic cost of insecurity is calculated to cost between 2.5% and 7% of Mexican GDP.

Jorge Chabat of the Center for Research and Economic Education in Mexico described the approach taken by the Calderon administration as a "fragment and control strategy." It has three main components: 1) police-military action against organized crime groups in the most violent areas of Mexico, 2) institutional reforms to strengthen the capacity of the Mexican state to investigate, prosecute, and punish criminals, and 3) international collaboration (including significant assistance and support from the U.S.). According to Chabat, Calderon wants to achieve two main goals: 1) fragmentation of drug cartels in order to weaken and make them easier to control, and 2) strengthening state institutions to allow the Mexican state to manage the drug trafficking problem in the future (understanding the impossibility of completely eliminating it). In essence, Calderon's long-term goal is to transform the problem into a public security issue, not the national security issue it currently poses.

In his diagnosis of the current problem, Chabat said that cause of Mexico's failure in combating drug trafficking is the incapacity of the state to enforce

its laws. In his view, President Calderon had three options when he came into office: tolerate the phenomenon, combat it, or correct the inability of the Mexican state to enforce its laws. Assessing the options, the first is not compatible with a democratic state, and the third option requires either changing the law (legalizing drugs) or strengthening state capacities. While tolerance would have been possible in the past (and was the de-facto policy of previous Mexican presidents in an informal "Pax Narcotica" with the criminal groups), it is no longer an option. In the long-term, the policy of strengthening state institutions can work but it takes a long time to achieve change and end endemic corruption. The impatience from public opinion hinders the option's effectiveness.

President Calderon only had one alternative. He has hedged his bet by maintaining all-out military and police assaults on drug trafficking cartels while, at the same time, obtaining international assistance to strengthen state institutions. It is important to keep in mind that this strategy can take at least 8-10 years to be effective (maybe more). Despite the obstacles of continued corruption, allegations of human rights abuse, and high levels of violence, President Calderon receives support from the Mexican population and of the U.S. government for his strategy. In Chabat's opinion, Calderon implemented the only possible response in the short-term, but this option has been very costly: its success is still uncertain. Chabat believes it can only work if corruption is controlled, and the state can address three other primary obstacles it still faces: the prevalence of human rights abuses, the persistence of organized crime violence, and the economic costs of insecurity.

Rebecca Bill Chavez, associate professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, discussed the importance of paying adequate attention to the issue of human rights as the countries of the region, including Brazil and Mexico, combat organized crime in heavily populated urban areas. She stressed that government authorities must integrate public security and human rights into a single coherent

agenda. She noted that the legitimacy of a democratic system is at risk and the moral high-ground is lost when security forces violate human rights. Furthermore, without respect for rights, security forces cannot earn the community's trust and support. In practical terms, human rights violations erode ties between citizens and security forces, and security forces forfeit access to valuable intelligence. The community policing model provides important lessons about fortifying the relationship between law enforcement officials and the community. The key component is daily interaction between police officers and citizens. This model becomes impossible, however, where police corruption is rampant.

As the case of Mexico demonstrates, strong human rights programs are especially essential when military forces assume a domestic security role. U.S. Southern Command is currently the only unified combatant command with a human rights division that focuses on assisting partner nations with human rights. Just as important, the USSOUTHCOM division is responsible for ensuring that all USSOUTHCOM personnel receive extensive human rights training before deployment to the region. Chavez urges the Department of Defense to assume greater responsibility in human rights promotion efforts that focus on the intersection between security and rights. The first step would be to provide dedicated funding to the USSOUTHCOM human rights division. She also recommends developing a coherent human rights program that would include all regional combatant commands, including USNORTHCOM, which works with Mexico. Such a program could help Mexico address the challenges associated with the military's counternarcotics mission.

U.S. Commitment to Citizen Security

Several factors (such as endemic political violence, weak governance institutions, and youth unemployment) contribute to the prevalence of criminal activity in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to Under Secretary of State

for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero, the U.S. government recognizes another major cause -- the continued marginalization of minority populations (including women, the indigenous, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community). U.S. officials also are concerned by the erosion of press freedom and freedom of expression in this region. A growing number of journalists have been assaulted or murdered because of their reporting on human rights abuses and other issues related to the violent struggle between the governments and organized crime groups.

Furthermore, drug trafficking, human trafficking, gang violence, and acts of extortion undermine the economic development of the region and subvert democratic institutions undercutting respect for human rights and the rule of law. These factors do not occur in isolation; rather, they are connected in a cycle of state weakness in which one problem feeds another, and all grow stronger when state authorities leave any one of them unattended. It is in U.S. national interest to assist Latin American and Caribbean nations in finding ways to stop this cycle of citizen insecurity and figure out how to enhance their national capacity to exercise the rule of law and maintain strong institutions which can defeat criminal groups.

The U.S. government acknowledges that Latin American states will be unable to address citizen security without also addressing its underlying social and economic causes. The U.S. strategy to assist Latin American states overcome these challenges recognizes that there are several antidotes. They include: 1) institutional reform -- investing in the building blocks of security and justice; 2) investment in youth -- identifying and promoting alternative educational and vocational opportunities to a life of crime; and 3) a recommitment to ensuring human rights for all people including traditionally marginalized groups.

The absence of public confidence in Latin American judicial systems can be attributed to the lack of public accountability which has allowed

crime rates to rise. Numerous U.S. programs provide basic equipment and infrastructure and technical training designed to help Latin American governments improve transparency and accountability to citizens. Washington's programs have focused on working with partner nations to improve law enforcement, security, and criminal justice by strengthening government capabilities. One positive example in Central America has been the successful training programs on human rights and rule of law at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in San Salvador, El Salvador. Colombia's experience over the past decade also has shown the importance of anti-corruption, transparency, and accountability training for prosecutors, judges, police, investigators, and forensic scientists. It is essential for governments to support educated and empowered public defenders since they are the ones who will build the rule of law and act as agents of change within their societies. As violence has transcended national borders, so too have assistance programs. Transnational anti-gang units, for example, cooperate across borders to investigate and prosecute top gang leaders in the region.

Youth are increasingly the perpetrators of violence whether as part of gangs or drug trafficking organizations or other criminal groups. They also can be the human rights leaders and activists in their countries. A limited number of opportunities for legal economic and professional growth have shown progress. Local NGOs in such places as El Progreso, Honduras and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico have begun to fill the vacuum by providing scholarships to at-risk youth, promoting community service and civic values, and developing students' leadership skills through grassroots action and community problem solving. There are similar programs that provide employment and job training, which are two crucial aspects citizens repeatedly called for their governments to provide. Future U.S. assistance programs should consider scaling up local programs which follow cost-effective preventative strategies in the struggle for citizen security at the most basic level.

Regional Efforts to Improve Public Security: The Caribbean, Central America, and Structures for the Future

Since the mid-1990s, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has engaged in dialogue among civil society and state actors to formulate its public security approach which encompasses the multidimensionality of threats. At the national and regional level, CARICOM states have cooperated on issues of crime reduction, police management, rehabilitation of at-risk youth, drug prevention, major event security, disaster preparedness, and energy security. Since 2009, CARICOM has also sought and received further U.S. assistance through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). Caribbean nations, however, still face a high financial burden to sustain regional security cooperation, and have insufficiently developed public security capabilities.

Colonel Anthony Phillips-Spencer, Commanding Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment, outlined the potential for a "legitimacy-trust gap" at the political level of public security management in which citizens would support public security management policies when their expectations are included/considered and the government establishment follows through with measures to meet those expectations. He also discussed a "governance/integrity gap" among institutional forces which is the divide between what governments actually set out to do through institutional arrangements and the public security service delivery when those plans are executed, in other words, actual performance of expressed intent. In order to remedy this divide between the public's expectations and government actions, he suggested the use of a different conceptual framework his subregion (and others) can follow to achieve public security. First, the state's public security priorities are developed as a result of advocacy by civil society groups, private sector groups, and community groups to make decisions. Utilization of this democratic process legitimizes the state's authority to pursue public security policy

formulation and national and international institutional arrangements, and finally, strengthens the integrity and effectiveness of program implementation and project execution by public security agencies.

Looking at Central America, Ambassador Francisco Villagran de Leon of Guatemala, noted that policies and mechanisms for public security in this region are a work in progress – the challenges are serious, and state capabilities are limited. The region has very high rates of homicide in addition to an increase in the number of illicit activities linked to organized crime (trafficking in drugs, firearms, persons, money laundering, etc.). The number of homicides in Central America is double that in Mexico, with only one-third of its neighbor's population. According to a recent World Bank study, violence and crime in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala costs as much as 8% of their respective GDPs every year, clearly driving down growth, diverting investment, and wasting government resources. The consolidation of democratic governance in Central America is also impeded by organized crime's penetration of governments and justice systems. Weak institutions have been unable to contain rising violence, the authority of the state continues to be challenged, and crime is driving down confidence in governments of Central America. If the subregion is to avoid back-sliding into the lawlessness and violence of its civil war period, it will require outside assistance and cooperation.

Yet the region's success in implementing the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and subsequent economic integration and institutional cooperation is a constructive development. Trade liberalization through CAFTA has had a positive effect on associated institutional building, encouraging new roles and responsibilities in government administration, as well as a new culture of transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Central American governments must harness these trends to produce positive progress in the security arena.

Many commentators believe that regional coordination on security issues has the best chance of success within the Central American Integration System (SICA). SICA's summits since 2006, focused on public security issues, engage regional leaders in a serious political dialogue on what is needed to fight crime. Countries now exchange information about youth violence prevention, combating organized crime, the prevention of illicit trafficking of drugs, money, and weapons, and mitigating natural disasters. These nations realize that institutional strengthening is critical for long-term stability and development. While progress is slow, they are working to modernize public security agencies, reform police forces, train public defenders, and amend laws to give courts and prosecutors the authority they need to combat crime (such as asset forfeiture laws).

A mechanism to ensure public security in the region is the UN International Commission to Fight Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). CICIG helps the Attorney General's office introduce changes that have improved its ability to investigate and prosecute crimes. Guatemala has asked the international community to extend the mandate of CICIG past its expiration in 2011. This initiative is being studied by the governments of El Salvador and Honduras to see if they can implement a similar model.

Central American nations are intensifying collaboration with such countries as the United States, Colombia, and Mexico, and organizations like Interpol, the United Nations Drug Control Program, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the European Union. Since 2008, the United States has used the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to strengthen public security institutions and uphold the rule of law.

The United States has adopted a multinational, interagency, and whole-of-government approach to combating organized crime. This is best exemplified by Joint Interagency Task Force-South

(JIATF-South). This command is responsible for seizing 200-250 tons of cocaine every year in the Caribbean Basin and eastern Pacific areas. JIATF-South, headquartered in Key West, Florida, hosts representatives from the U.S. military, federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies as well as counterparts from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe. This collaboration reflects the global realities of the drug market. Statistics now place the United Kingdom as the number one per capita consumer of cocaine in the world, and Brazil at number two for gross consumption. Even though the United States continues to be the traditional market for drugs, 38% of all cocaine transported from the Andean region is not consumed in the U.S.

Not all regional responses begin with the United States. Other examples of hemispheric security cooperation include the Center for Coordination of Integral Action in Colombia, the Central American Integration System's Regional Security Operations Center in Panama, and the Integrated Center for Combating Drug Trafficking in Brazil. An array of Latin American and Caribbean countries are sharing their experiences, information, and intelligence with regional neighbors. Colombia provides security sector training in Peru, Central America, and Mexico. Chile is also mentoring police forces in Mexico. And, Brazil is working with Bolivia to combat drug production and trafficking.

Domestic and Regional Integration of Public Security and the Role of Society

In the United States, the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security acknowledge that combating insecurity in the Americas requires not only international cooperation, but also interagency collaboration among several domestic authorities to coordinate security assistance programs. The fact that Mexican drug cartels are known to operate in 230 U.S. cities underscores this is a homeland security as well as foreign policy issue. Therefore, multiple U.S. agencies are working together to execute the programs associated with the Merida Initiative, Central American Regional Security

Initiative, Central America Citizen Security Partnership, Caribbean Basin Security Initiative and the Colombian Strategic Development Initiative (an outgrowth of Plan Colombia).

Policymakers in Washington are encouraging Latin American counterparts to recognize that lessons from one country can be adapted in others. For instance, Colombia's experience with U.S. assistance has value for other nations. Mexico also has experiences to share with its neighbors. Thus, intra-regional cooperation and capacity-building should be better utilized, rather than just relying on north-south assistance. A number of countries in the region are more than capable in making contributions to public security in other nations. It is especially important for all Western Hemisphere nations to reach beyond traditional mechanisms of assistance in this era of fiscal constraints. For instance, Chilean police are already supporting their counterparts in Central America, Colombia is sharing its expertise on defeating armed groups with Mexico, and Mexico is engaged in dialogue with Guatemala and Belize on border issues.

Regional governments are beginning to realize that public security issues are transnational and interconnected and, therefore, must be attacked simultaneously from all sides. The United States recognizes it shares responsibility due to its drug consumption rates, but co-responsibility extends to Latin America and the Caribbean. Their leaders must have the political will to make the reforms necessary to strengthen their government institutions in order to provide public security. Citizens also must pay taxes so the state has revenue to pay for these reforms. In essence, co-responsibility requires all of us to contribute with resources, capabilities, and lessons learned.

In addition to serious engagement with civil society, government authorities must partner with the business community to reduce the monumental growth in private security agencies, which over the long-term is not sustainable. Citizen security is a function of government and has to be provided by

the public, not private sector, to protect all levels of society on a sustainable basis.

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However, one government cannot fight transnational organized crime all by itself. The U.S. government recognizes that multinational cooperation is necessary to defeat illicit networks. Therefore, dozens of U.S. agencies work with their foreign counterparts in order to build certain skill-sets and capacities in their countries. For example, the U.S. Secret Service has nine people in Colombia and five in Peru to counter money-laundering networks and counterfeit currency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has an agreement with Chile to exchange best practices in emergency management and natural disaster recovery. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection is providing assistance to Brazil to manage its airports and other transportation networks in preparation for hosting the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics.

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The final colloquium speakers declared that ensuring public security in the Americas will require nations to engage in a "flexible partnership" that appropriately tailors efforts and harmonizes them to meet the challenges of organized crime. Partnerships require strong, long-lasting relationships built on robust multilateral institutions and the institutionalization of cooperation agreements. Innovation is necessary to overcome budget constraints and work successfully in a complex security environment. Interagency and multinational collaboration remains critical because adversaries are agile and creative: state authorities also need to demonstrate these characteristics in order to deter and defeat criminal networks.