WAR WITHOUT BORDERS:
THE COLOMBIA-ECUADOR CRISIS OF 2008

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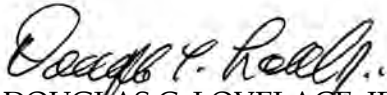
FOREWORD

Unprotected borders are a serious threat to the security of a number of states around the globe. Indeed, the combination of weak states, ungoverned space, terrorism, and international criminal networks make a mockery of the Westphalian system of international order. Latin American countries are experiencing all of these maladies in varying degrees. The Andean region is under assault by a different kind of war that defies borders. In this context, Dr. Gabriel Marcella analyzes the lessons to be learned from the Colombian attack against the clandestine camp of the the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, which was located at an isolated area within Ecuador on March 1, 2008. This single incident and its aftermath had profound reverberations throughout the Hemisphere. The events leading to the attack illuminate the vulnerabilities of states, societies, and the international community to the actions of substate groups conducting criminal activities. Accordingly, the hemispheric community of nations needs to develop better ways to anticipate and resolve conflicts.

The United States plays a critical role in the emerging security environment of the Andean region. Yet a superpower is often unaware of the immense influence it has with respect to small countries like Ecuador, which is trying to extricate itself from becoming a failed state. The author, Dr. Gabriel Marcella, recommends that the United States manage its complex agenda with sensitivity and balance its support for Colombia with equally creative support for Ecuador. The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this monograph as a valuable contribution to the strategy debate on how the United States can forge stronger cooperation and mutual support with Latin American partners.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

GABRIEL MARCELLA recently retired after 34 years of government service as Professor of Third World Studies in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College. He has written extensively on American strategy in Latin America, civil-military relations, revolutionary warfare, the interagency and national security, and the Colombian conflict and the U.S. response. In addition to his teaching, Dr. Marcella served as International Affairs Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Southern Command; has served on national study commissions for international terrorism, the Caribbean, and Central America; is a consultant to the Department of State and Defense; and is a commentator in the printed and electronic media on U.S. strategy in Latin America. His current research focuses on the security dimensions of state building, American strategy in Latin America, and the teaching of strategy. Dr. Marcella's most recent publication was *American Grand Strategy for Latin America in the Age of Resentment* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007).

SUMMARY

On March 1, 2008, the Colombian air force attacked the clandestine camp of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in a remote region of northeastern Ecuador, killing its leader, Raúl Reyes, and 24 other people. The FARC had been using Ecuadorean territory for years to rest and resupply. The attack was successful, but it detonated the worst crisis in Inter-American diplomacy of the last decade. For Colombia, the attack demonstrated the new professionalism of its armed forces and police and the continuing success of the strategy of democratic security enunciated by President Alvaro Uribe. Moreover, it signaled the remarkable advances being made by Bogotá in pursuing the FARC, in reducing the high level of insecurity that has dominated the country for a generation, and the increasing reach and presence of the government to areas outside of its control. The attack was immensely popular within Colombia, which now began to see the light at the end of tunnel in defeating the FARC. Moreover, the death of Reyes was one of a series of losses of high level commanders.

Within Ecuador, the story was markedly different. Within hours after the attack, the government of President Rafael Correa fulminated against Uribe, thus beginning a ferocious diplomatic assault that would last for months, lead to the recall of ambassadors, and bring in the Organization of American States. For a number of reasons, Ecuador felt victimized. First, it was undergoing a particularly difficult political process of trying to bolster a failing state riven by political polarization and the threat of violence. Second, a high level of corruption had weakened the institutions of the state. Third, Ecuador did not have the

capacity to secure its border with Colombia. Though its military was extensively deployed on the border, it lacked the logistics to deal with the threat. Fourth, in 2000 Ecuador had assumed an unrealistic stance of neutrality with respect to Colombia's internal conflict. Fifth, to compound these contradictions, Ecuador had taken an anti-Plan Colombia (the centerpiece of U.S. support) stance, even though its cooperation with the United States on countering the movement of narcotics has been very helpful.

The lessons of the March 1 crisis are fundamental for security cooperation in the Hemisphere. The crisis is superimposed upon a Latin American tradition of *laissez faire* on ungoverned space and border control and continuing disagreement on what to do about terrorism. Moreover, the institutional capacity, political will, preventive diplomacy, and the mechanisms for security cooperation and conflict resolution between states have not caught up to the demands of wars without borders. An assortment of terrorists, contrabandists, and drug traffickers depend on weak borders and weak states. Though Clausewitz may have been right that war is the continuation of politics (or policy) by other means, the politics of wars without borders have changed that equation. Yet the analytical and institutional capacities of governments have not caught up to that change.

The United States can and must be a catalyst for confidence-building between Ecuador and Colombia in order to restore the full gamut of security cooperation between the two countries. At the same time, the United States needs to be more sensitive about the immense power it wields in its dealings with small states, such as Ecuador. The United States has been less than forthcoming in addressing Ecuador's security needs in

the last 10 years, at times for the noblest of intentions. Noble intentions can have profound negative impact if policy is not pursued pragmatically.

WAR WITHOUT BORDERS:
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Westphalia in the Andes.

Climate change, deforestation, pollution, contraband, weapons proliferation, trafficking in humans, diseases, narco-trafficking, terrorism, money-laundering, illegal immigration, and gangs combine with the diffusion of technology and modern communications to mock international order. Legal and illegal nonstate actors render practically inoperative the sanctity of borders. Within this witch's brew, the Andean states are experiencing a profound crisis of authority, governance, democratic legitimacy, and territorial security—ingredients of the weak state.[1]

The crisis is superimposed upon a tradition of *laissez faire* on ungoverned space and border control and continuing disagreement on what to do about terrorism. Given this background, the institutional capacity, the political will, preventive diplomacy, and the mechanisms for effective security cooperation and conflict resolution between states have not caught up to the demands of the new geopolitical realities of wars without borders. Irregular forces and an assortment of criminals depend on weak borders and weak states. The events and aftermath of March 1, 2008, along the Colombia-Ecuador border are eloquent evidence that international order in Latin America is in deep trouble.

Midnight in the Amazon.

At half-past-midnight on March 1, three A37 aircraft and five Brazilian-made *Super Tucanos* of the Colombian air force fired precision-guided bombs into

a camp of the terrorist-narco-trafficking Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) 1.8 kilometers inside the border in a difficult jungle area of Ecuador known as Angostura.[2] The target of the attack was long time FARC leader Raúl Reyes (*nom de guerre* for Luis Edgar Devia Silva), who was killed along with 24 others (including four Mexicans and an Ecuadorean).[3] (See Map 1.)

Map 1. Ecuador.

The camp was located in the north-easternmost part of Ecuador, within a trapezoid south of the Putumayo River, across from an area in Colombia which has been the redoubt of the FARC's Front 48 for years. Colombian ground troops and police followed

up. Nine hours after the strike, President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia called to inform President Rafael Correa, his Ecuadorean counterpart, during the latter's weekly Saturday morning national radio broadcast. Correa was caught totally unaware and led a verbal and diplomatic assault against Uribe and Colombia that would last into June. The 9-hour delay apparently offended Correa, who accused Colombia of planning the attack. It took the Ecuadorean Army 6 hours to reach Angostura, an area so remote that the last Ecuadorean patrol there took place a year before.

Chronology of the Crisis.

February 29	A source reported Raúl Reyes' location in Angostura, at 22:30.
March 1	At 0:30, Colombia attacks camp, 9 hours later Uribe informs Correa.
March 2	Ecuador breaks relations with Colombia, Venezuela's President Chávez mobilizes troops.
March 3	Defense Minister states that Colombia will not send troops to border.
March 3	Colombia accuses Chávez of sending $300 million to FARC.
March 4	Uribe announces that Colombia will denounce Chávez for support to terrorism before the International Criminal Court.

March 5	Organization of American States (OAS) condemns Colombian incursion.
March 7-8	Uribe, Correa, and Chávez lower tensions at the Summit of Rio Group in Santo Domingo.
March 9-10	OAS Secretary General José Insulza visits site of attack.
March 18	OAS rejects Colombian incursion and calls members to combat threats posed by irregular forces.
April 17	Correa warns FARC that incursions will be act of war, later announces purchase of 24 *Super Tucanos* and radar system for border defense.
May 14	Interpol declares Raúl Reyes computer files authentic.
May 24	Announcement that FARC leader Manuel Marulanda died on March 26, 2008.
June 6	Colombia and Ecuador announce plans to restore full diplomatic relations.
June-July	Ecuadorean government suspends plan to restore relations.
July 2	Senator Ingrid Betancourt freed from FARC in bold rescue by Colombian Army.

By mid-April, Correa's aggressive tone had moderated to a warning that if the FARC crossed into Ecuador, it would mean war, a statement that was well-received in Colombia. Nonetheless, his accusation seemed on the surface to be one of surprising strategic and operational innocence, since generations of Ecuadoreans have memory of border violations by terrorists, drug traffickers, and contrabandists along its borders with Peru and Colombia, in addition to high levels of social delinquency, and an intense national debate about the ecological integrity of its Amazon region, which has suffered illegal logging and pollution from oil spills. Moreover, the Ecuadorean polity was hardly innocent in the strategic use of military power. In 1995, its armed forces performed superbly in a short war against Peru, culminating 2 centuries of border conflict between the two countries with the Brasilia Accord of 1998.

Indeed, the attack had been prepared. Colombia was able to fix the location of Reyes at the camp via an informant on the night of February 29. Reyes had been moving around various camps in Ecuadorean territory. Days later the FARC bombed a pipeline that transports oil from Ecuador to the Pacific through Colombian territory to widen the breach between Quito and Bogotá. Following March 1, a torrent of incandescent insults and reactions ensued between Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela that lay bare the contradictions that haunt Latin America when it comes to fighting terrorism and the panoply of international crime.[4] The March 1 attack and its aftermath are a part of a larger tableau that tells us much about the vulnerabilities of weak democracy to the corrupting influence of narcotics, the intimidation by terrorism, the

need for effective civil-military relations in confronting complex national defense issues, the contradictions that populism generates in foreign and defense policy, as well as understanding the unintended consequences that American power can engender.

The results of the attack added strategic value to Colombia's war against the FARC. Reyes was a member of the secretariat of the murderous narco-terrorist FARC. Somehow five Mexican university "students" (one survived the attacks; Lucía Morett would later become a *cause celebre* between Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, and Nicaragua, which gave her political asylum) found their way to a clandestine FARC camp deep in the jungle of Sucumbíos, a feat either beyond the capabilities of Ecuadorean authorities, or they looked the other away. The FARC camp had been in existence for at least 3 months, disposing of such amenities as beds, two gasoline powered generators, a satellite dish, TV, training area, chicken coop and pig pen, and stored food, in addition to an arsenal of weapons.[5] Captured film clips showed campers dancing and singing, a man (the Ecuadorean citizen killed in the attack) swinging at a *piñata*, as well as lectures on FARC ideology in the insufferable heat and humidity of the Amazon. Thus the FARC had established a semi-permanent site in Ecuador, a serious breach of Ecuador's security cordon.

The Ecuadorean killed, Franklin Aisalla, was an unobtrusive locksmith who for years had been part of the FARC network in Ecuador and had apparently brought the Mexican students to the camp. A Colombian female survivor serving as cook had been tied to a tree by the FARC for apparent disciplinary reasons, deprived of food for 2 days and given only water. The "students" had been attending an extreme

left gathering called the Bolivarian Continental Coordinating Conference in Quito (a local helper included a Mao Tse Tung Viteri). The 400 attendees to the conference requested that no pictures be taken, according to press reports. They included FARC, Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), the terrorist Tupac Amarú Revolutionary Movement of Peru[6] (the seven were later arrested by Peruvian authorities), as well as other delegates of the international extreme left. Apparently, Peruvian, Colombian, and Spanish authorities had very good information (including films) on the presence of so-called "Bolivarians" from their respective countries. Why was the Ecuadorean government not equally well-informed? Some possible conjectures are discussed later in this monograph.

Among the resolutions of the Bolivarian conclave was to demand that the world recognize the FARC as a belligerent and to establish the Army of Latin America, under the tender leadership of the FARC.[7] A picture of Reyes saluting the participants was displayed. The event was organized with the participation of María Augusta Calle, member of the constitutional reform assembly and the government party. Calle, a sympathizer with the FARC, is also a leading opponent of the U.S.-supported Plan Colombia and the presence of the American Forward Operating Location (FOL) at Ecuador's Eloy Alfaro Air Base at Manta. The FOL is used for counternarcotics reconnaissance flights covering the Andes and eastern Pacific.[8] The access agreement terminates in 2009, and American officials indicated in April and May 2008 that the United States will be able to conduct the flights from existing facilities in Aruba and El Salvador. The Municipality of Quito sponsored the event. Funding support apparently came from the Venezuelan government. Press reporting

would later uncover a hemispheric-wide support structure for the Bolivarians, with some 400 open as well as clandestine organizations of the extreme left that advocate armed violence to take power.[9]

The meeting of the Bolivarians and the attack at Angostura put into stark relief the inescapable reality that Ecuador did not exercise sovereign control over national territory nor over the people that legally and illegally entered its borders. Computer files captured at Angostura also indicated that Reyes was perhaps the brains behind Continental Bolivarian movement.

Clashing Principles.

On March 8 the Summit of the Group of Rio meeting in the Dominican Republic unanimously condemned Colombia's violation of sovereignty. (See Appendix for resolution of the Rio Group). Later, the OAS took up the dispute and agreed on a consensus resolution on March 17 that "rejected" the Colombian incursion, stating the venerable international law principle: "no state or group of states has the right to intervene, either directly or indirectly, for whatever motive, in the internal or external affairs of another."[10] The resolution did not condemn Colombia but reiterated the commitment of states to fight irregular groups, preserving some legitimacy for the Colombian position.

The United States supported Colombia's right to self-defense, while Ecuador deplored the violation of its sovereignty. Thus the eternal dilemma of conflicting values in international relations: which is higher, nonintervention or self-defense? Should Colombia have restrained itself, accepting the risk of having its citizens attacked, and informed Ecuadorean authorities prior to the attack? Colombia could not let this opportunity go by. A more timely call on the night

of the attack from Uribe to Correa might have helped build confidence in the bilateral relationship, instead of adding to strains and misunderstandings that had been developing for years. Three points support these judgments:

1. All states reserve the right of self-defense. Colombia's action could be seen as a preemptive, instead of a preventive or precautionary, military strike made necessary by the FARC's demonstrated decades-old capabilities and intentions to make war against the state and people of Colombia.[11] That the FARC would strike again had the highest certitude, therefore justifying the Colombian attack as a preemptive measure. Reyes was wanted for 121 criminal charges against him, including the massacre of 119 children, women, and elderly in Bojayá in 2002, and the assassination of the Minister of Culture and 11 legislators. The FARC habitually used safe havens in Ecuador because of Ecuador's inability to control its border and national territory, and in Venezuela, because of difficult terrain and the apparent *laissez faire* complicity and demonstrated support of Caracas for the FARC. According to the International Crisis Group of Brussels, the weak link in Colombia's security policy was its undefended and open borders.[12] Brazil and Peru made serious efforts to prevent the FARC from using their territories. For example, Peruvian authorities (the National Counter-Terrorism Directorate, or DINCOTE), arrested the seven Peruvian delegates to the Continental Bolivarian Coordinating Congress as terrorists when they reentered Peru. Moreover, Uribe's military has been pursuing an aggressive decapitation strategy against FARC leaders, with increasing success.[13] The head of the Colombian National Police stated that this was the fifth time that Colombian forces

had attempted to strike Reyes, who had moved around to various locations in Ecuador. Colombia's military strategy and its implications for Ecuador should have been well known to Ecuadorean statesmen, as will become clear in succeeding pages.

2. It appears that operational security for the plan to strike the FARC would be compromised if Colombia suspected that the Ecuadorean government was unreliable in maintaining secrecy. "Because we didn't trust Ecuador," said Colombia's Defense Minister, Juan Manuel Santos, when asked by *Semana* magazine why Colombia had not enlisted the support of Ecuador.[14] According to Bogotá's *El Tiempo,* Colombia's intelligence service, the Department of Administrative Security (DAS) had informed Ecuador 16 times and as recently as November 26, 2007, including providing a document with the exact location of 25 FARC "bases" inside Ecuadorean territory. Colombia alerted other governments about FARC activities on their soils: Argentina four times, Bolivia twice, Brazil seven, Peru four, and Venezuela ten. The DAS report stated that 80 percent of the alerts received no response or "evasive" answers.[15] Over the years, the FARC had established a support network within Ecuador, a task made easier by the insecure border and the emergence of a permissive political-intellectual climate for the extreme left. Given apparent ambivalence, if not sympathy, towards the FARC among members of the Correa government, operational security became paramount in the Colombian decision. Under these circumstances, allowing the FARC and Reyes to escape once again would be an embarrassing setback for Colombia and a continuing menace for Ecuador. On April 13, 2008, the Colombian government issued a communiqué stating that President Correa had

prevented (*desautorizado*) the Ecuadorean military from conducting operations against the FARC in Ecuadorean territory, "contradicting Ecuador's contention that it did not know about the presence of the FARC and Raúl Reyes."[16] Ecuador rejected the statement in the face of declining confidence between the two governments.

3. Based on the events of March 1, 2008, the rudimentary system for early warning and crisis management between Colombia and Ecuador showed itself to be ineffective.[17] Colombia violated Ecuadorean air space in its campaign against the FARC during the conduct of *Plan Patriota* in 2006. As a consequence, Ecuador activated its air defense, while the two defense ministers made a joint declaration to improve security and avoid border incidents. Ecuadorean border vigilance may have been inadequate, though the Ecuadorean Army maintained 13 frontier detachments.[18] In January and February 2006, the Ecuadorean military activated the air defense system in an effort to prevent border incursions from Colombia. At the time, Defense Minister Oswaldo Jarrín stated: "The Ecuadorean Army will act in legitimate defense against any element that intends to violate the national sovereignty."[19] Lack of resources and continued spillover of the Colombian conflict made this difficult. Moreover, corruption, to include the politicization of the armed forces, had weakened the effectiveness of recent Ecuadorean governments. Given weak and potentially penetrated Ecuadorean capabilities, Uribe may have decided to strike soonest before the opportunity disappeared.

It is uncertain what role corruption in high places may have played in the Ecuadorean response, but there were recent intimations of an attempt at vote buying involving a military intelligence officer and a

civilian opposition political figure (the Julio Logroño case).[20] Earlier, Correa was accused of manipulating promotions among senior admirals of the Ecuadorean Navy. Minister of Defense Wellington Sandoval stated to *El Comercio* on March 30 that coordination between Ecuador's military intelligence and the police failed in following up on the pro-FARC activities of Ecuadorean Franklin Aisalla.[21] Sandoval also stated that "we knew that Reyes was in Ecuador frequently." Sandoval's comments followed the "unauthorized" release of intelligence about Aisalla to the media, causing Correa to order an investigation of who released it. Correa claimed that Colombia and the media had the information before him, an apparent criticism of the handling of intelligence within his government.

On the surface these apparently byzantine developments in civil-military relations suggest that military intelligence did not have confidence that civilian officials of the government could be trusted with the information, since those same officials might compromise the information to the FARC. Accordingly, a deteriorating security situation on the border paralleled deteriorating confidence in the civil-military relationship at the level of national policy, contributing to failure at border security. In democracy, civil-military relations is the process for developing and implementing military strategy. Dysfunctional civil-military relations can therefore be costly for national defense. It appears that at the decisionmaking level, the Quito government did not have a smoothly functioning working relationship among Correa, his senior advisors, and the military leadership.[22] Bolstering this view was the fact that by April 2008, slightly more than a year in power, he had appointed four defense ministers (the first was killed in a helicopter accident), all ill-informed about defense strategy.

At the same time, the Correa government reoriented the military to social and economic development missions and away from national defense, thereby weakening the linkage between defense strategy and military strategy. One wonders if in these circumstances the capture of FARC members (such as Simón Trinidad in January 2004 and others) by Ecuadorean authorities would have been possible under the permissive environment engendered under the Correa government. **This disjunction undermined democracy and security. Bogotá certainly must have been aware of Ecuador's internal debilities, how these affected coherent strategy, and how the FARC was taking advantage.**

The fluid domestic political context of weak intelligence coordination, poor border control, and the audacity and professionalism of the Colombian attack engendered strategic surprise in an area which for all practical purposes was remote ungoverned territory lacking Ecuadorean state presence and security. It may also have had the psychological impact of humiliating Correa, leading him to act tough abroad in order to be respected at home. A preventive strike could not be expected to be welcomed by Ecuador, as distinguished British strategic analyst Colin S. Gray notes: "A state and society militarily bested in a surprise assault cannot be assumed to be willing to cooperate with the victorious power of the preventor."[23] This was not the first time that Colombia had inserted forces in Ecuador, doing so previously in "hot pursuit" of the FARC on various occasions. For example, in January 2006, Colombian planes entered Ecuadorean airspace to pursue a FARC column reputedly containing Raúl Reyes. Uribe declared at the time: "Our Public Force entered Ecuador involuntarily in order to prevent

the FARC terrorist group, in violation of Ecuadorean territory, from continuing to launch attacks to kill our soldiers and police . . . in addition to doing damage to our civilian citizens."[24] Ecuador recalled its ambassador to Bogotá for consultations, a serious rebuke in Latin America's diplomatic culture. In recent years there were numerous violations by Colombian aircraft, so many that Ecuador activated its air defense system and moved a wing of A37 aircraft from the south to Sucumbíos. **Thus, the two countries developed a pattern of responses that served to weaken the trust between them, without developing some institutionalized method for dealing with the incursions and the potential for miscalculation, or worse yet, ceding the initiative to the FARC**.

While Colombia was succeeding in driving the FARC to the southeast (through *Plan Patriota*) decisional elites in Ecuador saw the impact differently, more refugees and more FARC crossing the border, and growing Colombian power against weak Ecuador, rather than the Colombian state asserting control over national territory and building democratic governance and security. The declining trust between the two capitals was also evident in the dispute over the spraying of diluted glyphosate by Colombian aircraft to eliminate coca plantations adjacent to the Ecuadorean border. The dispute culminated in studies and counterstudies, rhetorical threats by Correa to shoot down Colombian (as well as American) aircraft, and the threat to take Colombia to The Hague for damages allegedly caused to the flora, fauna, and human beings in Ecuador, even though the spraying aircraft maintained a 10 kilometer distance from the border.[25] After much delay, Quito took its glyphosate case to The Hague on March 28, 2008, ostensibly in retaliation for the March 1 attack.

The International Court's lengthy process may happily offer an opportunity for the issue to cool.

The attack of March 1 humiliated Ecuador because it portrayed Ecuador's vulnerability to its much stronger neighbor, whose military capabilities had been significantly enhanced by assistance from the United States. Victimization became a common theme in the declarations of Ecuadorean statesmen. The humiliation extended to the officer ranks of the Ecuadorean Army, where commanders were now blamed for failure. Therefore, the Colombian attack had a profound psychological impact on the political balance within Ecuador, one that strengthened the popularity of Correa, and led to soul-searching among the political class and intellectual community about Ecuador's national defense. The debate over the release of intelligence about FARC-related activities shed light on failures of national security decisionmaking at the highest levels. As Correa ordered an investigation, he played the conspiracy card: ". . . unfortunately, we have a great infiltration of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] in our (intelligence) services."[26] One wonders whether this astounding statement was designed to shift blame, gain leverage against Ecuadoreans (including members of his government) sympathetic to the FARC, serve as a diversion from the reality of Ecuadorean failure, provide a strategic opportunity to assert greater civilian authority over the military, or all of the above.

Colombia's Case, Chávez, and Ecuador.

Colombia has been assailed for decades by the FARC, who are on the defensive as the result of a vigorous commitment by the government and armed

forces to bring peace and democratic governance. Since the administration of Andrés Pastrana in 1998, Colombia has, with U.S. and European economic and military support to *Plan Colombia*, invested heavily in eliminating the twin scourges of terrorism and narcotics. The Uribe government has achieved great success in reestablishing security. The public security forces (military and police) expanded significantly in size, operational capability, and professionalism, allowing for superior territorial control. By 2007 Colombia had made significant progress in achieving greater security over the national territory, thanks to implementing the plan called *Democratic Security and Defense Policy*. Though the process was far from complete, some 30,000 illegal paramilitary forces accepted demilitarization and demobilization. The FARC was on the defensive. Approximately 10,800 FARC combatants remained in the organization, down from 16,800 in 2002. Security improvements were impressive: 80 percent reduction in kidnappings, 40 percent in homicides; terrorist attacks declined from 1645 in 2002 to 349 in 2007; the murder rate was the lowest in 20 years; and the area of coca cultivation was reduced from 163,289 hectares in 2000 to 77,870 in 2006. Moreover, 2.3 million Colombians rose out of poverty. With this momentum of strategic and operational success, the attack on the Reyes camp was immensely popular in Colombia, even more so when days later another member of the FARC secretariat, Iván Ríos, was killed by his own men because of mounting pressure by the army and because of Ríos's record of executing hundreds of his followers. That pressure would continue to decimate FARC forces into May 2008, forcing the rendition of former Front 49 commander Nelly Avila Moreno (alias Karina), who implored the FARC to stop fighting. The

death of long-time leader Manuel Marulanda in March, reportedly as the result of a heart attack, added to the FARC's declining fortunes.

The support of the international community in fighting terrorism is mandated by the United Nations and makes superb sense in Latin America, which has seen its share of terrorism in the last two generations, as well as a massive crime wave not unrelated to narcotics. The FARC are terrorists to the United States, the European Union, and Colombia, but neither the OAS nor most Latin American countries have declared them so. The ambivalence is demonstrated strikingly by the posture of Hugo Chávez, who has imperial ambitions fed by petrodollars at 130 dollars per barrel in mid 2008, while at home he is losing political support because of incompetence, corruption, and dictatorial tendencies. Failure at home did not deter him from declaring a moment of silence for the death of Reyes and earlier had his compliant *chavista* legislature declare the FARC to be liberators. Indeed, for some time Chávez had been campaigning internationally to have the FARC recognized as "belligerents." Captured Reyes computer files (the files survived the attack because they were stored in a steel safe) show that Chávez may have offered to send up to 300 million dollars to the FARC; coordinated diplomatic moves with them; provided guns, rocket propelled grenade launchers, and thousands of rounds of ammunition; as well as sanctuary within Venezuela.[27] Colombian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos asserted: "What they (the computer files) show is that the level of cooperation was much more than we had earlier estimated, we knew there was a level of cooperation, but not as intense, not as close and not as effective as we're now seeing."[28] Ironically, some of the money

came from American buyers of CITGO gasoline, which is owned by Venezuela. Moreover, administrative shabbiness and corruption last year allowed some 270 tons of cocaine to pass through Venezuela bound for the United States and Europe. In reaction to the Colombian strike, Chávez ordered 10 battalions and tanks to the Colombian border ostensibly to support Ecuador. Few of the units made it to the border because of the deplorable condition of Venezuela's military. Though his order raised the specter of the dogs of war, it was mere rhetoric. Uribe coolly ordered no military response, and instead threatened to haul Chávez to the International Criminal Court for aiding terrorism. Uribe withdrew the threat when the Rio Group consensus declaration was achieved in Santo Domingo.

Colombia and Ecuador historically have been friendly neighbors, offspring of the same Spanish empire that governed the Viceroyalty of New Granada and the Audiencia of Quito for more than 3 centuries. The western part of their 590 kilometer border is one of the most economically dynamic in the Andes, though Ecuador's side has larger population clusters than Colombia's. The heavily forested eastern end of the border has never been controlled, allowing drug traffickers, criminals, and contrabandists to move freely in crossing the San Miguel and Putumayo rivers. It is classic ungoverned space where criminals exploit the lack of state presence, services, infrastructure, and security.[29] The narcotics economy across the river in Colombia provided seductive opportunities for Ecuadorean peasants to make money, allowing easy FARC infiltration of the border populations. The International Crisis Group reported in March 2008 that Ecuador is a transit and storage point for Colombian and Peruvian drugs, for the passage of precursor

chemicals, and a money-laundering platform because of the dollarized economy.[30]

In 2005 the Ecuadorean armed forces found some 25 illegal border crossing points. Ecuadoreans claim, with impeccable logic, that the same 25 illegal crossings should have been known to Colombian authorities. The growth of FARC military capabilities in the last 20 years and the increasing success of the armed forces of Colombia against the FARC, as well as the FARC's war with the paramilitaries, created a spillover of the Colombian conflict into Ecuador. The FARC's 48th front once considered the Putumayo region its citadel. In the meantime, the adjacent departments of Nariño and Putumayo saw a veritable explosion of coca plantings since the 1990s, increasing the competition between the FARC and paramilitary forces, and challenging the Colombian state to reestablish order.

Ecuador's location gives it the misfortune of being a transit country for drugs, dirty money, guns, precursor chemicals, and FARC members. Colombia needs support from Ecuador in controlling these activities, and at some levels cooperation has been very good. For example, Simón Trinidad, the senior FARC leader, was apprehended in Ecuador, later extradited to the United States where he was sentenced to prison for drug trafficking. Given these considerations, Ecuador's unpreparedness for the incident of March 1 was surprising. Its National Security Council (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional, or COSENA) should have been cognizant of the possible need to resolve a political-military crisis with Colombia, and developed and rehearsed contingency plans. Given the commitment of Colombian governments to eliminate narcotics and terrorists and given the repeated FARC intrusions, incidents of hot pursuit by the Colombian armed forces,

the number of FARC camps destroyed within Ecuador, the level of diplomatic interaction with the United States on Ecuador's regional security, and the intense political-diplomatic-military learning issuing from the 1995 war with Peru, Ecuador's statesmen should have been better prepared for preventing or managing the eventuality of a serious crisis. Some of the blame resides in Correa, whose academic credentials did not prepare him to deal with issues of war and peace at the international level. Apparently, he did not receive (nor requested) a daily information briefing from his military.

Perspectives from Ecuador.

Ecuador's dynamic, combative, loquacious, and very nationalistic president, Rafael Correa, is trying to right the ship of a very weak state, a dysfunctional democracy, and sick economy.[31] He came to office with a strong mandate in the throes of a deep national crisis which saw eight presidents in the previous 10 years. Armed with a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois, a career in university teaching, a tour as Minister of Economics, and imbued with the concept of a social market economy (as opposed to the neo-liberal market economy), he claims to be launching a peaceful "citizen's revolution," as he promotes constitutional reform, and some nebulous "socialism of the 21st century."[32] To distance himself from the corrupt politics of the past, he campaigned without the support of a political party, eventually elected by a large majority in late 2007. His presidential style has been called "permanent campaign, permanent confrontation."[33] The constitutional reform that he pushed will, according to the political scientist Adam

Przeworki, establish a "hyper presidency," "direct democracy," under "citizen scrutiny."[34] The country faces staggering challenges of social exclusion: 56 percent of the people and 80 percent of the Indians live in poverty.

Ecuador's former Defense Minister, retired army General Oswaldo Jarrín, eloquently described Ecuador's internal difficulties in 2004: "High levels of poverty, marginalization, and social exclusion are factors which feed social pressure to obtain more attention to services, opportunities for work and quality of life, and (create) social frustration which delegitimate already weak institutions and accentuate ungovernability, instability and violence."[35] Correa speaks Quechua (the most commonly spoken Indian language in the Andes) and is the first Ecuadorean president to publish his speeches in that language in addition to Spanish. The United States quite wisely opted to seek common ground with Correa insofar as possible.

Responding angrily to the March 1 attack, Correa accused Uribe of lying, broke diplomatic relations with Bogotá for violating Ecuador's sovereignty, and fulminated against the United States and the international media (especially Madrid's *El País)* for its alleged organized campaign against Ecuador. He even proposed establishing an OAS without the United States, and invited the United States and Spain to send troops to guard the border. Uribe upheld Colombia's right to self-defense, stating that the FARC had conducted some 40 incursions from Ecuadorean territory in the last 5 years. The northern border had become increasingly hot with incursions by criminal elements from Colombia. For example, in October 2000, a group calling itself the America Libre

Command (having the *modus operandi* of the other Colombian terrorist group, the National Liberation Army—ELN) kidnapped seven petroleum workers, killing the American, Ron Sanders. Oswaldo Jarrín reports than an estimated 70 percent of the population of Sucumbíos province conducts commerce with the FARC. To combat the emerging threat, the Ecuadorean government implemented border development programs, later the ambitious *Plan Ecuador*, that would provide alternative economic incentives to the local people.

In March 2000, Ecuador's COSENA analyzed the emerging situation and *Plan Colombia* and decided to employ preventive diplomacy, "instead of the neorealist confrontational logic, which focuses on solving the problem with force, a control of the situation based on the strategy of influence and the logic of cooperation, within international law and respect for international agreements of which Ecuador is a part."[36] This posture would guide Ecuadorean foreign policy and defense strategy. In the meantime, Ecuador would remain a transit country for guns, dirty money, precursor chemicals, and cocaine, as well as a place where the FARC enjoyed rest and recreation within an increasingly permissive environment that culminated in the Bolivarian Conference. For its part, the United States saw Ecuador as an invaluable ally in the counternarcotics crusade, and an ally in the battle for Colombia. As will be seen later, the rigidities of American law prevented Washington from providing essential security assistance at a critical moment in Ecuador's developing weakness.

Referring to the bad relationship between the two countries, Colombia's leading strategic analyst, Alfredo Rangel Suárez, calls it a "dialogue of the

deaf," especially for the last 3 years.[37] It is remarkable that two neighboring friendly countries have such profound misunderstandings about each other, especially about the complex nature of Colombia's conflict that affects Ecuador so deeply, and Colombia's apparent lack of empathy for Ecuador's internal troubles. Rangel's criticism does not speak well for the academic communities and decisional elites in each country. Eduardo Posada Carbó, one of Colombia's leading historians, admonishes: "We need to know Ecuador better, a task that should be better handled by our universities, think tanks, and the press."[38] In fact, the Colombian government needs to make an equally serious effort.

Since 2000 Ecuador has taken the principled position that Colombia's conflict is to be solved by Colombians, that the FARC are irregular forces rather than terrorists. The international law distinction, argues Ecuador, is that to call them terrorists would be intervention in the internal affairs of Colombia. Moreover, to call them terrorists would risk reprisal by the FARC. As noted before, on March 28, Ecuador took Colombia to The Hague, asking for compensation for alleged damages caused by Colombia's aerial spraying of glyphosate to eliminate coca fields adjacent to the Ecuadorean border. Colombia saw this as a denial of its threat assessment. To satisfy Ecuador, Uribe suspended the spraying, ordering that eradication be done manually, only to see coca cultivation multiply near the Ecuadorean border.

Ecuador's position progressively hardened as its internal troubles became more acute, especially after the Lucio Gutiérrez presidency ended in 2004. Accordingly, it seems that the Ecuadorean government has magnified its weakness (it ranked as the eighth

most corrupt country in 2007). For example, Quito said even before Correa was elected, that the agreement allowing the United States to use a small section of Eloy Alfaro air base for counternarcotics reconnaissance flights (which helped intercept nearly 208 tons of cocaine in 2007) would not be renewed in 2009. A noisy anti-American base (access to Eloy Alfaro) and anti-*Plan Colombia* coalition, some under the banner of human rights, emerged to challenge Ecuador's international relations. Ecuador's foreign policy has held the strategically innocent view that the U.S.-supported *Plan Colombia* threatens the security of Ecuador. Correa made this remarkably paranoid statement on March 15: ". . . Ecuadoreans shouldn't be surprised that there is a plan to destabilize the government and establish a puppet (*titere*) government which would lend itself to involve the country in the Colombian war and be an associate and an accomplice of the government of Uribe."[39]

It is not certain whether Correa believes such ultra-nationalistic rhetoric because he has to balance moderate and radical elements within his governing coalition. *Plan Colombia* is designed to promote security, economic development, and justice—achievements which would truly benefit Ecuador. These are precisely symmetrical with the goals of *Plan Ecuador*, an idea that had been gestating in Ecuador since 2000, motivated to some degree by *Plan Colombia*, though the latter has a far more robust defense component than *Plan Ecuador*. Ecuador's unwillingness to understand and publicly recognize the threat to the Colombian state and society is perceived in Bogotá as sympathy for the FARC and alignment with the reckless strategy of Chávez, who champions a paranoid interpretation of *Plan Colombia* for his authoritarian populism and anti-Americanism.

At the same time, Colombia does not recognize, as the influential Alfredo Rangel Suárez admonishes, that Ecuador has made an immense effort to secure its border far beyond what Colombia has done, and this needs recognition on the part of both the United States and Colombia. Colombia has the tough task of securing its five borders: Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil. Historically, much like all of its neighbors, border control was of little urgency in far-away Bogotá. The task is complicated by unforgiving geography, especially on the Venezuelan side, in much of the Amazon Basin, and even on the northwestern border with Panama.

Appearing to weaken Ecuador's pristine defense about the March 1 incident was information found in Reyes's computer: Ecuador's Minister Coordinator of Internal and External Security was negotiating with Reyes. Allegedly, the meeting took place in Venezuela to negotiate the release of hostages, such as the notable Colombian-French citizen, former senator, and candidate for president, Ingrid Betancourt, who would be liberated in a daring rescue in early July. On the face of it, this initiative suggested a complacent, if not complicit, attitude towards the FARC. But the matter was not so simple: Larrea's mission was approved by Correa. A number of foreign leaders, including Chávez, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, and others have been involved in the same effort. That Larrea has roots as a communist (he has renounced the violent path to power, according to a press interview), therefore potentially sympathetic to the FARC, did not help Ecuador's international credibility, nor his standing within Ecuador's military. Additional information issuing in May from the Reyes computer files indicated that the FARC had sent $100,000 to the presidential

campaign of Correa, which the latter vehemently denied.[40]

Ecuador has asked the United States to support *Plan Ecuador*, and requested and got an extension of trade preferences for its products to enter the United States so that farmers do not plant coca. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been supporting with funds Ecuador's job creation and agricultural programs on the northern border: the Unidad de Desarrollo Norte (Northern Development Unit). By coincidence, President George W. Bush signed the 10-month extension of the Andean trade preferences for Ecuador on February 29, 2008. The United States is also working with the Ecuadorean National Police to strengthen drug law enforcement on the northern border, and to control cargo transiting Ecuador's sea and airports. Similarly, U.S. support goes to the military to provide security on the northern border and to improve communication and cooperation with the police.[41] The logic of the Ecuadorean position seems confounding. A weak country with extensive trade with friendly Colombia cannot have it both ways, seek the support of the United States, appear to loosen its commitment to fight the narcotics traffic by telling the United States to leave Eloy Alfaro, and assume a position of virtual neutrality without strengthening its border security and military capabilities to deter "irregular forces" from using its territory to attack its neighbor. American officials state that access to Eloy Alfaro is a convenience, not a necessity, hard to replace to be sure, but the real issue will be Ecuador's commitment to fight the narcotics traffic beyond 2009. Ecuadorean officials have reassured that their country will cooperate.

The contradiction of neutrality is articulated by one of Ecuador's finest scholars, Simón Pachano:

> The other task, and the most important, is the country's definition of its position on the Colombian conflict. The recent episodes indicate a strictly reactive character, which expresses the absence of a long range strategy. For many years we have taken refuge in neutrality, without understanding that it is an absurdity in terms of principles and the source of practical problems. All of us who at some moment have supported (neutrality) must recognize the error, for the simple fact that a State (sic) cannot be impartial in the face of an attack by an irregular group against another State which it recognizes as legitimate.[42]

While not in the same geopolitical league as Ecuador, Switzerland and Sweden combine principle and power by maintaining robust military capabilities to defend their neutrality. To be sure, the Correa government attempted to respond to the vulnerability of the northern border. Its *Plan Ecuador* is intended to improve border security by promoting social and economic development. *Plan Ecuador* is off to a slow start as it employs the military and an inter-ministerial effort in nation-building activities.

Ecuador has done much with limited resources. Foreign Minister María Isabel Salvador and Minister of Government Fernando Bustamante declared at Washington's Inter-American Dialogue on March 18 that Ecuador has an impressive record against narcotics and the FARC, and that, moreover, Ecuador has welcomed some 300,000 Colombian refugees, and in the past asked Colombia to take responsibility for the refugees.[43] Ecuador has dismantled 170 FARC camps, destroyed cocaine labs and coca plantings, and supports the OAS and other international efforts to eliminate narcotics. Foreign Minister Salvador noted

that Ecuador places 11 percent of its military and police (11,000) on the border with Colombia, while Colombia places a mere 2 percent. In 2006, Ecuador seized 38 metric tons of cocaine, 3,327 people were arrested for drug trafficking, and 114,000 coca plants were destroyed by the police and military. In addition, cooperation for counternarcotics, smuggling, and illegal immigration is very good among the Coast Guards of Colombia, Ecuador, and the United States. This effort merits more recognition than it has received.

The Ecuadorean people are well aware of the price of insecure borders, having ceded considerable territory to Peru and Colombia in the last 2 centuries. In 1941 Ecuador's best troops were kept in Quito while Peruvian troops occupied the southern provinces. Ecuador fought an expensive war in 1995 that led to the final demarcation of the boundary with Peru.[44] In sum, Ecuador feels victimized at a time of national weakness by the insensitivity of Colombia's power and by the United States which supports it. There is also a tendency to blame American power, simply because it is pervasive and easily available as a target for rhetorical outbursts at no cost. Such recourse has the collateral benefit of fending off the left, at least for a while.

Good Intentions vs. Principled Pragmatism.

This incident has enormous significance for peace, security, and development in Latin America and for the United States. States must do more to secure their borders. There ought to be greater awareness about the insidious threat of terrorism and narcotics and their ability to exploit societal and international vulnerabilities, the seams among international law,

sovereignty, official corruption, ungoverned space, and weak state capacity, amply demonstrated throughout the Andean and Amazon regions, as well as Central America and the Caribbean, and the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay.

At some point, the conspiratorial and bullying Chávez *imperio* will end because of corruption, administrative incompetence, and the democratic yearnings of the Venezuelan people. Venezuela can then resume its role as constructive member of the international community. Colombia seems to be on its way to peace and security, but needs continued support from its neighbors. In the meantime, a blind anti-American and anti-democratic populist rage, fed by dysfunctional state systems, massive poverty, and social exclusion, is alive across a number of countries, complicating the defense agendas of governments, forcing counterproductive compromises between internal and external domains.[45] Populist governments tend to be idealists on national defense, relying on diplomacy and "development" to solve conflict, often running away from the deterrent potential of the military instrument, while making deals with the devil and distancing themselves from the United States. Such governments tend to focus the military on internal development programs rather than external defense, precisely Correa's pattern. An astute analyst of contemporary civil-military relations in Latin America adds:

> Without an external threat to focus on, civilian politicians in a democracy typically assign defense issues a low priority in favor of economic and political ones that will bring tangible electoral returns. Also, militaries with histories of political autonomy and intervention are reluctant to share defense information with civilian

> politicians, let alone educate them about these issues, for fear of generating alternative sources of power that could threaten their corporate interests.[46]

Correa's populist definition of the national defense problem at the border can be gleaned from an interview with Bogotá's *Semana* magazine of April 20, 2008:

> Colombia does not take care of its southern border, it's a deliberate strategy to involve us in *Plan Colombia*. A great part of the population, especially in the Amazon, supports the FARC because the Colombian and the Ecuadorean state is (sic) not there and those who provide work to the people (drugs, etc.) are the FARC. How do you stop it? Uribe thinks it's by bombing. Our strategy is human development in the region.[47]

The statement once again misinterpreted *Plan Colombia* and overlooked the fact that the FARC forces peasants into the illegal drugs economy. Moreover, a realistic view would have seen that the Colombia-Ecuador distemper of March 2008 has been brewing for years, because Colombia's neighbors have not secured their borders, and because the FARC would seek refuge in Ecuador and Venezuela if pressure increased in Colombia, and that "human development" is impossible without security.[48] **The contrasting views on security underscore that the eloquent declarations of the triumph of peace and diplomacy at the OAS and at the Group of Rio Summit and the handshakes between Uribe, Correa, and Chávez are very much part of Latin American strategic culture, but they leave unfinished the tasks of border security and dealing with the insidious penetration of terrorism, drugs, dirty money, contraband, and international organized crime.**

The Latin American states need to find common ground between fundamentally different views on what constitutes terrorism versus legitimate political activity. As Uribe stated at the Group of Rio Summit:

> It surprises me that they speak of the violation of the sovereign territory of Ecuador, but not of the violation of the sovereignty of the people of Colombia. . . . To speak of territorial sovereignty you have to speak of the other sovereignty, which is more important than the territorial, which is the right of a people not to be attacked.[49]

Uribe was enunciating a new concept of sovereignty, a concept that has not taken root in the ministries and the intelligentsia of Latin America. Terrorism cannot be liberation or irregular warfare to one legitimate democratic government and crime to another. Governments should defend coherent principles in foreign and defense policies, because they all benefit from international order. They must take seriously the combustible combination of drugs and terrorists, at times supported by extreme leftist social protest groups masquerading as nationalists, human rights movements, and legitimate democratic forces while threatening fundamental security and democracy.[50]

Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, and Venezuela should create effective mechanisms for dealing with border security, international crime, and terrorism. A potentially useful initiative is Brazil's proposal for a South American Defense Council. Defense Minister Nelson Jobim stated in the aftermath of the crisis that its purpose would be to strengthen military cooperation and to prevent situations like the Colombian-Ecuador incident. Brazil, with some 15,000 kilometers of practically undefended borders with 10 countries, has a lot at stake. Though various countries

signed up for the Defense Council at the May 2008 meeting of the presidents of South America in Brasilia, a number of knotty issues must be resolved. What are the threats that would agglutinate the Defense Council? Unless a majority of members recognize terrorism and drug trafficking as the main threats, what other threats would cause common action? Furthermore, are the members willing to invest in organizing and integrating forces, managing intelligence, training, and equipment, and in establishing a political-military command and control system among governments which, in many cases, do not trust each other, especially for ideological reasons? Unless these matters are effectively dealt with, the South American Defense Council might become what one Latin American senior officer termed an opportunity for "diplomatic tourism."

The regional community has an effective mechanism retrievable from its historical memory: the Military Observer Mission Ecuador/Peru (MOMEP). MOMEP is one of the most successful peacekeeping efforts ever undertaken.[51] Constituted by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States, it supervised the separation of forces and demilitarization of the zone of conflict after the 1995 war between Ecuador and Peru, and helped establish the conditions for the Peace of Brasilia of 1998, thereby ending a centuries-old conflict. A Brazilian general commanded MOMEP. A similar arrangement should be possible for the Colombian-Ecuador border, under OAS auspices and perhaps rotating command among Latin American countries, to deal with irregular forces.

The United States: The Price of Noble Intentions.

For its part, the United States needs to demonstrate greater sensitivity and respond effectively to the legitimate security needs of regional partners who face a complex blend of threats at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. The United States is the anchor of international order and of regional security architecture that includes Colombia and Ecuador, but American law and competing global priorities prevented Ecuador from receiving military assistance, except for counternarcotics purposes. Accordingly, Ecuador's current defense vulnerabilities can be partly attributed to the U.S. failure to provide much needed assistance in the form of logistics. In 2006 Ecuador offered to purchase two C130 transport aircraft, boats, troop transports, and equipment for telephone interception from the United States, but was turned down.[52] An editorial in *Diario Expreso* on July 26, 2006, astutely stated that Ecuador "should not ask for but demand" such support because it would benefit Ecuador, Colombia, and the United States. The equipment would have helped Ecuador respond more quickly to FARC incursions. Later in January 2007, Ecuador would lose two of its functioning helicopters when they collided, killing Defense Minister Guadalupe Larriva, her daughter, and five crew members. On April 17, 2008, Correa, saying that previous governments had "satanized" purchasing equipment for the military, announced the purchase of 24 *Super Tucanos* and radar to help secure the northern border. On May 28, the commander of the army announced that the government would allocate 57 million dollars over 3 years to improve capabilities to patrol the border.

The American contribution to Ecuador's weakness originates from having to make tough choices about how to apportion its support in the face of competing regional and global priorities. There were also legal impediments from two directions: (1) The American Service Members Protection Act (ASPA) of 2002, followed by the Nethercutt amendment of 2004;[53] and (2) The Rome Treaty giving the International Criminal Court, which came into being after the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals after World War II and received new life after the atrocities in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, jurisdiction over persons committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

ASPA excluded foreign military personnel from receiving U.S. military assistance unless the affected country signed a bilateral agreement with the United States, permitted under Article 98 of the Rome Treaty, which would exempt American military personnel from the jurisdiction of the foreign country's court system. Nethercutt went further, prohibiting countries that ratified the Rome Treaty and had not signed an Article 98 agreement from receiving Economic Support Funds, money that went to counterterrorism, peace programs, and anti-drug trafficking. The weak government in Ecuador, feeling pressure from the left and having second thoughts on the rent-free U.S. access agreement to Eloy Alfaro, refused to sign the bilateral agreement, thereby triggering U.S. sanctions. In October 2006, President George W. Bush signed a waiver that excluded 14 countries, 11 in Latin America, including Brazil and Ecuador, from the provisions of Article 98. The Defense Authorization Bill of 2007 rescinded the provisions of ASPA.[54] But damage favorable to international disorder had been done.[55] Washington's tied hands not only weakened American influence, it

weakened the perilous condition of the Ecuadorean state and its ability to deal with the complex security problems of the 21st century.

The unintended consequences of virtuous intentions were a blow against American interests in Latin America at a notably sensitive period when populist governments of the left needed a foreign antagonist to solidify their domestic political base, for example: the emerging chaotic politics that Correa inherited. The perception that American military personnel have immunity from prosecution for crimes against human rights is difficult to rebut in such circumstances (especially at a time that violations by military personnel at Abu Ghraib and the symbolism of Guantanamo damaged America's moral standing), even if a state has a status of forces agreement with the United States. Colombia, which had such an agreement with the United States dating back to the 1960s, saw the advantage of a new Article 98 based bilateral arrangement and signed one, despite significant political opposition within Colombia.

Such legal impediments hardly make sense when the United States needs Ecuador as a front line state in the battle against narcotics and terrorism. There is a contradiction: the United States needs the FOL at Eloy Alfaro for counternarcotics reconnaissance flights to complement a contribution from Ecuador across the spectrum of counternarcotics and counterterrorism, but is constrained to meet Ecuador's legitimate defense needs. Therefore, to some degree, American reticence in providing military assistance contributed to the FARC's ease in establishing camps in Ecuador. At that critical juncture, the Ecuadorean army lacked logistical and communications capabilities, having only one helicopter to transport troops to the border. Yet, the

United States, for good reasons that matured into a close alliance, had to support Colombia in combating terrorism and narcotics. The asymmetry in power that ensued over time between Colombia and Ecuador did not help American credibility in Quito, given that government's stated opposition to *Plan Colombia*, and especially as the coalition of support for Colombia and the United States weakened under the onslaught of populism, an uninformed and idealistic antimilitarism within Ecuadorean academic and intellectual circles, *chavismo,* self-inflicted wounds by U.S. foreign policy, and the insensitivity in Bogotá to Ecuador's internal dysfunctions. Washington is often unaware of the immense power the United States wields, even if our intentions are noble, especially when such power affects small countries such as Ecuador, where programs of security assistance matter greatly. A good dose of principled pragmatism and smart power is in order.

In the short term, the United States can be an indirect catalyst for confidence-building between Colombia and Ecuador. Given the asymmetries in power and Ecuador's sense of victimization, Colombia will have to take the initiative with Ecuador. Both the United States and Colombia can do more to address Ecuador's concerns. The countries of the region must develop a clearer understanding that intrastate conflict, provoked by illegal actors, can escalate to interstate conflict. Countries must be alert with preventive diplomacy and render more effective the existing international agreements, so that international tensions do not become a platform which benefits illegal transnational groups.[56]

A final reflection takes us beyond the Amazon. The events of March 1, 2008, signify that wars without borders are different from the wars of the past. The wars

fought by terrorists and irregular forces avoid battles. They target civilians and control territory by fear, hate, corruption, and by population displacement. They are wars without geographic, legal, and moral constraints. The new wars pit the state against criminals, but the state must be the authoritative defender of standards of human decency. Clausewitz was right that war is the continuation of politics (or policy) by other means. However, the politics have changed while the means, particularly the analytical and institutional capacities of governments, have not caught up to that change. Unfortunately, ungoverned space is matched by ungoverned space in the human intellect and in the ministries of government.[57]

APPENDIX

DECLARATION OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE RIO GROUP ON THE RECENT EVENTS BETWEEN ECUADOR AND COLOMBIA

The Heads of State and Government of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Policy Coordination-Rio Group meeting on the occasion of the XX Summit Meeting, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, mindful of the situation prevailing between Ecuador and Colombia, have decided to issue the following Declaration:

1. The entire region views as a matter of grave concern the events that occurred on March 1, 2008, when military and police personnel of Colombia entered the territory of Ecuador, in the province of Sucumbíos, without the express consent of the Government of Ecuador, to carry out an operation against the members of an irregular group of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, who were clandestinely encamped on the Ecuadorean side of the border.

2. We denounce the violation of the territorial integrity of Ecuador, and we therefore reaffirm that the territory of a state is inviolable and may not be the object, even temporarily, of military occupation or of other measures of force taken by another State, directly or indirectly, on any grounds.

3. We note, with satisfaction, the full apology that President Alvaro Uribe offered to the Government and people of Ecuador, for the violation on March 1, 2008, of the territory and sovereignty of this sister nation by Colombian security forces.

4. We also acknowledge the pledge by President Alvaro Uribe, on behalf of his country, that these events will not be repeated under any circumstances, in compliance with Articles 19 and 21 of the OAS Charter.

5. We note the President Rafael Correa's decision to receive the documentation offered by President Alvaro Uribe and which would have reached the Government of Ecuador after the events of March 1, so as to enable the Ecuadorean judicial officials to investigate possible violations of national law.

6. We also recall the principles enshrined in international law, of respect of sovereignty, abstention from the threat or use of force, and noninterference in the internal affairs of other states, underscoring that Article 19 of the Charter of the Organization of American States stipulates that:

> no State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatsoever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic, and cultural elements.

7. We reiterate our commitment to peaceful coexistence in the region, based on the fundamental precepts of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, as well as the essential purposes of the Rio Group, in particular the peaceful settlement of disputes and its commitment to the preservation of peace and the joint search for conflicts affecting the region.

8. We reiterate our firm commitment to counter threats to the security of all states, arising from the

action of irregular groups or criminal organizations, in particular those associated with drug-trafficking activities. Colombia considers these criminal organizations as terrorist.

9. We support the resolution adopted by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States of March 5, 2008. Likewise, we express our support for the Secretary General as he carries out the responsibilities assigned to him by said resolution, namely, to head a commission that will visit both countries, travel to places that the parties indicate, to submit a report on its observations to the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and to propose formulas for bringing the two nations closer together.

10. We urge the parties involved to keep respectful channels of communication open and to seek formulas for easing tension.

11. Taking into account the valuable tradition of the Rio Group, as a fundamental mechanism for the promotion of understanding and the search for peace in our region, we express our full support for this effort at rapprochement. In that regard, we offer the Governments of Colombia and Ecuador the good offices of the Group to help bring about a satisfactory conclusion, to which end the Group's Troika will pay heed to the results of the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 7, 2008

ENDNOTES

1. Paul W. Drake and Eric Hershberg, eds., *State and Society in Conflict: Comparative Perspectives on Andean Crises,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

2. The *Super Tucano*s later became a matter of dispute between Ecuador and Colombia. The Ecuadorean government would sustain that the *Super Tucanos* could not fire precision-guided bombs because they were not configured to do so, that thus a third country (implying the United States) was involved. American officials denied involvement. The maker, EMBRAER, says that the aircraft can be armed with air-to-ground bombs. The bombs were American made.

3. Details on the aircraft are found in Richard Lugar, "Playing With Fire: Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela," Report to the Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, April 28, 2008, p. 26.

4. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega also blasted away at Colombia. Potential reasons: to support oil bearing Chávez and to gain leverage against Colombia over jurisdiction to Caribbean islands and maritime space.

5. Sibylla Brodzinsky, "Rebel camp remains reflect fierce attack," *MiamiHerald.com*, March 11, 2008, *www.miamiherald.com/558/v-print/story/448770.html*.

6. Tupac Amarú terrorists took over the Japanese Embassy and held hostages in Lima, Peru, in 1997. Peruvian commandos rescued the hostages and killed the terrorists.

7. "A puerta cerrada"("Closed Doors"), *Vistazo*, March 21, 2008. *www.vistazo.com/webpages/impresa/imprimir.php?edicion=974&sID=1761*.

8. The air base was built by the United States in World War II as part of the hemispheric defense effort. The United States and Ecuador entered into an agreement in 1999 to allow the United States to use the Eloy Alfaro Air Base as a Forward Operating Location for American aircraft to conduct counternarcotics

flights to prevent the movement of narcotics from Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. The information gathered is fused at the Joint Interagency Task Force South at Key West, Florida. At this location, 12 liaison officers, including an Ecuadorean, are involved in the process. Operational upgrades to Eloy Alfaro cost over 70 million dollars. Most of the flights are conducted by civilian crews and are unarmed. The agreement's stated purpose:

> . . . intensifying international cooperation for aerial detection, monitoring, tracking and control of illegal narcotics activity, as called for in international and political instruments, such as the Convention of the United Nations of 1988 against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the Action Plan of the Summit of the Americas of 1998; the Hemipsheric Anti-Drug Strategy and applicable counter-narcotics bilateral agreements in force . . .

See "Agreement of Cooperation Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Ecuador Concerning United States Access to and Use of Installations at the Ecuadorian Air Force Base in Manta for Aerial Counter-Narcotics Activities," November 12, 1999.

9. Press coverage included Peruvian, Ecuadorean, and Colombian newspapers: "Por qué se escogió a Ecuador para la cita?" ("Why Was Ecuador Chosen for the Meeting?" *elcomercio.com*, April 20, 2008, *www2.elcomercio.com/imprima.asp?id_noticia=120320&medio=EC*; "El misterio de Lucía"("The Mystery of Lucía"), *Semana.com*, April 20, 2008, *www.semana.com/wf_ImprimirArticulo.aspx?IdArt=111118&Ver=Crl.GS68f3VyiF*;ElComercio de Lima, "La Coordinadora Bolivariana, el As de las FARC"("The Bolivarian Coordinator: Ace of the FARC") April 20, 2008, *www2.elcomercio/imprima.asp?id_noticia=12031&medio=EC*. See also Maite Rico, "Las FARC crean células clandestinas para su expansion internacional" ("The FARC Creates Clandestine Cells for International Expansion"), *ELPAIS.com*, downloaded May 20, 2008, *www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/FARC/crean/celulas/clandestinas/expansion/1*.

10. Sergio Gómez Maseri, "OEA logró un consenso para superar la crisis diplomática entre Colombia y Ecuador"("The

OAS Achieved Consensus to Overcome the Diplomatic Crisis Between Colombia and Ecuador"), *El Tiempo*, March 18, 2008, *www.eltiempo.com/politica/2008-03*.

11. Preemptive vs. preventive military measures are often subjective judgments about the imminence of the threat, while precautionary measures are long term. Both require excellent intelligence. A preemptive attack is offensive in nature and designed to neutralize an imminent threat, while the preventive is defensive, allowing more time to take measures. These distinctions are developed by Colin S. Gray, "The Implications of Preemptive and Preventive War Doctrines: A Reconsideration," Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 2007.

12. International Crisis Group, "Colombia's Borders: The Weak Link in Uribe's Security Policy," Latin America Report No. 9, September 23, 2004.

13. Juan Forero, "Colombia's Rebels Face Possibility of Implosion," *Washington Post*, March 22, 2008, p. A22, *www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/21/AR2008032103536_p*.

14. "Tirofijo está muerto"("Tirofijo Is Dead"), *Semana*, May 24, 2008, *www.semana.com/wf_ImprimirArticulo.aspx?IdArt=112103&Ver=k7wf0st972768*.

15. Unidad Investigativa, *El Tiempo.Com*, March 29, 2008, *www.eltiempo.com/justicia/2008-03-30)*.

16. Presidencia de la República, Colombia, "Comunicado" ("Communique") April 13, 2008, *web.presidencia.gov.co/sp/2008/abril/13/01132008_i.html*.

17. A mechanism exists for military cooperation on border security between Ecuador and Colombia: COMBIFRON. However, the two militaries do not conduct coordinated or combined military operations, though the two ministers of defense, Camilo Ospina Bernal (Colombia) and General (ret) Oswaldo Jarrín (Ecuador), agreed in January 2006 "on the importance and necessity to cooperate with all the security organs to implement new and better controls on the entry of chemical precursors, arms,

munitions and explosives into the respective countries." See: "Declaración Conjunta de los Ministros de Defensa de Colombia y Ecuador"("Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Defense of Colombia and Ecuador"), Bogotá, January 12, 2006, *resdal.org/ultimos-documentos/decla-ene06*.

18. "Relación Ecuador-Colombia: Esmeraldas: pueblos fronterizos, tierra de nadie"("The Ecuador-Colombia Story: Esmeraldas, Border Towns, and No Man's Land"), *Hoy*, April 5, 2008, *www.hoy.com.ec/impnoticia.asp?row=292584*.

19. "FFAA activan sistema de defensa antiaéreo: El gabinete de Palacio se reunio para analizar la incursión de Colombia . . . .,"("The Armed Forces Activate Air Defense System: The Palacio Cabinet Met to Analyze the Incursion by Colombia"), *Hoy*, February 1, 2006.

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21. Arturo Torres, "Sabíamos que Reyes pasaba a Ecuador" ("We Knew that Reyes Went Into Ecuador"), *elcomercio.com*, March 31, 2008, *www2.elcomercio.com/imprima.asp?id_noticia=11737&medio=EC*. Colombian intelligence was tracking Aisalla since 2003. See Norbey Quevedo, "El rastro del ecuatoriano que murió con 'Raúl Reyes'" ("The Trail of of the Ecuadorean Who Died with Raúl Reyes'"), *elespectador.com*, March 28, 2008, *www.elespectador.com/node/7966*.

22. Simón Pachano, "Pluma y Pistola" ("Pen and Pistol"), *El Universo*, April 14, 2008, *www.eluniverso.com/2008/04/14/0001/21*.

23. Colin Gray, "The Implications of Preemptive and Preventive War Doctrines," p. 18.

24. Alfredo Rangel Suárez, "Colombia y Ecuador: dos visiones de seguridad, una frontera" ("Colombia and Ecuador: Two Visions of Security, One Border"), Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, *www.seguridadydemocracia.or*, p. 16.

25. For the great glysophate debate of 2007, see Gabriel Marcella, "American Grand Strategy for Latin America in the Age of Resentment," Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2007, pp. 29-34. The Ecuadorean charge contradicts the results of research conducted by a team of Canadian, Spanish, English, and Brazilian scientists. See Keith R. Solomon, Arturo Anadón, Antonio Luiz Cerdeira, John Marshall, and Luz-Helena Sanín, *Environmental and Human Health Assessment of the Aerial Spray Program for Coca and Poppy Control in Colombia*, report prepared for the Inter-American Drug Control Commission (CICAD) section of the Organization of American States, Washington, DC, March 25, 2003, pp.11-12. It states:

> The risk assessment concluded that glyphosate . . . as used in the eradication program in Colombia did not represent a significant risk to human health . . . Considering the effects of the entire cycle of coca and poppy production and eradication, clear-cutting and burning, and displacement of the natural flora and fauna were identified as the greatest environmental risks and are considerably more important than those from the use of glyphosate.
>
> Ecuador rejected the CICAD report and produced its own, which rendered a contrary judgment. Glyphosate is used in both Colombia and Ecuador, and worldwide, as an herbicide. CICAD reported that 10-14 percent of the total amount of glyphosate used in Colombia is employed in the eradication of coca plants.

26. EFE, "En entrevista con diario español, Correa niega vinculos con FARC"("In Interview With Spanish Daily, Correa Denies Ties with FARC"), *El Universo*, April 5, 2008, *www.eluniverso.com/2008/04/05/0001/8*.

27. Juan Forero, "Venezuela Offered Aid to Colombian Rebels," *WashingtonPost.com*, May 15, 2008, *www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/14/AR2008051403785*; "Los E-mails secretos," *Semana.com*, May 18, 2008, *www.semana.com/wf_ImprimirArticulo.aspx?IdArt=111918&Ver=rZSCLcjJm1*.

28. Forero, "Venezuela Offered Aid," p. 2.

29. For an analysis of the strategic relevance of ungoverned space, see Angel Rabassa *et al.*, *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks,* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007.

30. International Crisis Group, "Latin American Drugs 1: Losing the Fight," Crisis Group Latin American Report No. 25, March 14, 2008, p. 17.

31. Correa once declared President Bush "dumb" and "calling him the devil offends the devil." Ecuador's political crisis is well-described by Simón Pachano, "Ecuador: The Provincialization of Representation," in Scott Mainwaring, Ana María Bejarano, Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, eds., *The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006, pp. 100-131. See also Thomas C. Bruneau, "Ecuador: The Continuing Challenge of Democratic Consolidation and Civil-Military Relations," *Strategic Insights*, February 2006; Allen Gerlach, *Indians, Oil, and Politics: A Recent History of Ecuador*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003. The most complete analysis of Ecuador's crisis and the Correa political program is International Crisis Group, "Ecuador: Overcoming Instability?" Latin America Report Number 22, Brussels, August 7, 2007.

32. Correa's economic thinking can be found in his book, *La vulnerabilidad de la economía ecuatoriana: hacia una major política económica para la generación de empleo, reducción de pobreza y desigualdad* (*The Vulnerability of the Ecaudorean Economy: For a Better Economic Policy to Generate Jobs, Reduce Poverty and Inequality*), Quito: Programa de la Naciones Unidas Para el Desarrollo, 2004.

33. Catherine M. Conaghan, "Ecuador: Correa's Plebiscitary President," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 2, April 2008, pp. 46-60.

34. Gonzalo Maldonado Albán, "Przeworki y la democracia" ("Przeworski and Democracy"),*elcomercio.com*, April 20, 2008, *www2.elcomercio.com/imprima.asp?id-noticia=120303&medio=EC*.

35. Oswaldo Jarrín, "La Junta de Seguridad Ciudadana: El Caso Sucumbíos" ("The Committee for Citizen Security: The Case of Sucumbíos"), *Nueva Sociedad,* No. 191, May-June 2004, p. 147.

36. *Ibid*., p. 152. In 2000, in a series of penetrating articles, Quito's *Hoy* newspaper diagnosed the Colombian border problem very well: "For Ecuador the situation is highly conflictive: its border with Colombia is a powder keg which for whatever reasons can ignite." *Hoy*, March 4, 2000, *www.hoy.com.ec/suplemen/blanco71/negro3.htm*. The articles had dramatic impact within COSENA. Senior military officers and academics with a defense portfolio, such as Adrián Bonilla, Fernando Bustamante, and César Montúfar, were also consulted. Author interview with General (Ret.) Oswaldo Jarrín, Washington, DC, March 31, 2008.

37. Rangel Suárez, "Colombia y Ecuador . . . .", p. 3.

38. Eduardo Posada Carbó, "Conocer más a los vecinos" ("Getting to Know the Neighbors Better"), *ElTiempo.com*, March 28, 2008, w*ww.eltiempo.com/opinion/columnistas/eduardoposadacarb*.

39. Gobierno Nacional de la República del Ecuador, "El Ecuador no se vinculará con el Plan Colombia" ("Ecuador Will Not Tie Itself to Plan Colombia"), March 15, 2008, *www.presidencia.gov.ec/noticias.asp?noid=12962*.

40. Simon Romero, "Files From Colombians Point to Venezuela Bid to Arm Rebels," *New York Times*, March 30, 2008, *www.nytimes.com/2008/03/30/world/americas/30colombia.html*.

41. In addition, USAID supports alternative development (coffee), democracy and governance, combating trafficking in persons, economic growth, environmental protection (Amazon and Galapagos), inclusive development, and teacher training.

42. Simón Pachano, "Tareas" ("Tasks"), *El Universo*, April 21, 2008, *www.eluniverso.com/2008/04/21/0001/21*.

43. Associated Press, "Ecuador pide a Colombia coresponsbilidad con los refugiados" ("Ecuador Asks Colombia for Coresponsibility on Refugees"), *El Universo*, February 28, 2007, *www.eluniverso.com/2007/02/28/0001/12*.

44. Richard Downes and Gabriel Marcella, *Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Resolving the Ecuador-Peru Conflict*, Miami: North-South Center Press, 1999.

45. Marcella, "American Grand Strategy for Latin America in the Age of Resentment."

46. Harold A. Trinkunas, *Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela: A Comparative Perspective*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005, p. 16.

47. "Que Uribe baje el tono" ("Uribe Should Lower the Tone"), *Semana*, April 20, 2008, *www.semana.com/wf_imprimirArticulo.aspx?IdArt=111089=r3MzgBJOfmCT*.

48. Ana María Salazar, "*Un* conflicto anunciado" (A Conflict that Was Announced"), March 7, 2008, *www.anamariasalazar.com*.

49. Cited in "El debate es entre la soberanía y la llamada seguridad humana"("The Debate Is Between Sovereignty and Human Security"), *ecomercio.com*, March 29, 2008, *www2.elcomercio.com/imptima.asp?id_noticia=117140&medio=EC*.

50. The meeting of the Bolivarian Continental Coordinating Conference in Quito bears a strong similarity to the anti-U.S. Chávez-*piquetero* aggregation in Buenos Aires that coincided with the visit of President George W. Bush to Uruguay in March 2007. The event was staged with the compliance of the Argentine government, causing a serious *contretemps* between Washington and Buenos Aires.

51. Glenn Weidner, "Peacekeeping in the Upper Cenepa Valley: A Regional Response to Crisis," in Marcella and Downes, *Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere,* pp. 45-66.

52. Juan Carlos Calderón, "Ecuador pide apoyo logístico a EE.UU."("Ecuador Requests Logistical Support from the United States"), *Expreso,* June 26, 2006.

53. Named for is sponsor, Congressman George Nethercutt of Washington.

54. The contradictions of ASPA became more apparent because of the Bush administration's recent Mérida Initiative with Mexico. That country came under ASPA sanctions, but the United States could not assist Mexico in dealing with the extensive

crime problem via the Merida Initiative unless the sanctions were lifted.

55. Because the United States applied these sanctions, China and Russia, which use no conditionality in their military diplomacy, were able to sell more weapons in Latin America. Venezuela also has an active military assistance program. China has undertaken a low key diplomacy in engaging a number of Latin American militaries.

56. These include the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, the Inter-American Drug Control Commission, and the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

57. I am indebted to Dr. William J. Olson, of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, for this insight on ungoverned space.