



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS

Prepared Statement of:

Ambassador William R. Brownfield
Assistant Secretary of State for
International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs

Before the:

House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Hearing entitled: "Security Challenges in Latin America"

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your invitation to discuss security threats in the Western Hemisphere as well as our efforts to address them. I am pleased to be with you today.

Let me begin by describing the security challenge as we see it in the INL Bureau. The persistently high homicide and crime rates throughout Central America, the Caribbean, and the horrific reports of violence inside Mexico, are symptoms of a broader climate of insecurity throughout the region. Crime and violence are exacerbated by widespread poverty and unemployment. This is brought into greater focus as criminal organizations react to the increasing pressure placed on their operations by governments in the region with support from the United States. These threats undermine and pose profound challenges to good governance, citizen security, and the rule of law. And absent these fundamental principles, transnational crime, gangs, and other illicit activity can flourish in many countries, threatening stability and public security.

To counter these threats, this Administration has advanced an integrated approach of U.S. assistance programs, from traditional prevention, law enforcement and counternarcotics programs, to anti-corruption, judicial reform, anti-gang, community policing, and corrections efforts. We are transforming our relationship with foreign partners by moving from the traditional donor-recipient relationship to one built on equal partnerships that involve shared responsibility and accountability. In each of our initiatives, we work hand in hand with host nation officials and our partners in the U.S. government, as well as with other donors, such as Colombia, to strengthen the justice sector institutions, including the judiciary, police and corrections. We coordinate our efforts with others in the U.S. government who work with communities, civil society, and the private sector, recognizing that security solutions require a whole of society approach. We have learned that this is the only way to bring long-term stability to countries threatened by crime and violence. Governments must have the ability, and in fact, have the responsibility to protect their citizens, to deal with crime and violence so that these issues remain or become law enforcement problems, not national security threats. This is a long-term strategy that has proven to be effective.

The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), Mérida Initiative, Colombian Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI), and Caribbean Basin Security Initiatives (CBSI) embrace this approach. They

are partnerships in which governments have collaborated with the United States on the development of joint programs and initiatives that are aimed at protecting citizens and strengthening the institutions responsible for ensuring citizen safety.

Support for Central America

Today, some 95 percent of the cocaine from South America destined for the U.S. transits the Central America/Mexico corridor. With these activities comes violence: Battles between criminal groups for territory and transit routes; clashes between criminals and law enforcement; and violent crime fuelled by drug consumption, all with the ultimate motive of making a profit. In 2008, anticipating that Mexico's efforts to challenge cartels would result in the movement of trafficking routes elsewhere, the U.S. government formed a partnership with Central American nations to enhance their security capacity. CARSI is the resulting program.

Applying our overall strategy and lessons learned through the years, CARSI works to increase the capacity of law enforcement to combat drug traffickers and provide public security, support prevention efforts targeting at-risk youth and those living in communities susceptible to crime and recruitment by gangs and traffickers, and strengthen justice sector institutions. While CARSI prioritizes the so-called "Northern Triangle" countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, where the levels of crime and violence are most severe and stability most threatened, the program is leveraging our assistance throughout the region to improve citizen security.

Thanks to support from this Subcommittee and your Senate colleagues, our government has already committed approximately \$231 million in INCLE funding for technical assistance and training for CARSI between Fiscal Years 2008 and 2011, and, with your approval, we are seeking to dedicate an additional \$85 million for CARSI under the INCLE account in Fiscal Year 2012. Our request for Fiscal Year 2013 continues our work at \$60 million, at an assistance level that matches programming goals for each fiscal year with the actual capacity of our partners to absorb that assistance.

Our programs are starting to see results. In a relatively short period of time, crime rates have decreased in municipalities where we are providing

targeted training, equipment, and support. For example, in Lourdes, El Salvador – where INL has a Model Police Precinct – crime rates have dropped 40 percent over the past year. We have similar model precinct programs in Guatemala and are starting others in Honduras. Our support to law enforcement is also gaining traction, with specialized vetted units, overall police reform efforts, and targeted training with our partners from Colombia and Mexico in Central America.

Governments in the region are increasingly recognizing the need to invest in their own security and are passing new laws on taxes to support investments in citizen security programs, judicially authorized wiretapping programs, extradition, and asset forfeiture. Change is slow to take hold, however, as corruption and impunity remains widespread. We are working to accelerate our programs to achieve even more results, including standing up a full-fledged Narcotics Affairs Sections in San Salvador and Tegucigalpa, and enhancing levels of coordination and planning across the interagency to identify opportunities and de-conflict programs as necessary.

The regional nature of transnational crime and the violence it spurs has also prompted an unprecedented international effort to support citizen security efforts in Central America, including through the Group of Friends of Central America. We are working together with the Central America Integration System (SICA), joined by common principals, to address our common challenges.

Mérida/Mexico

In Mexico we continue to see shocking news reports of killings and violence; however, the Government of Mexico, with assistance from the United States through the Mérida Initiative, has had some significant results. The resources you have provided to the INL Bureau, approximately \$1.1 billion in INCLE funds for Mérida since its inception, have helped the Government of Mexico, together with its United States partner departments and agencies, to continue turning the tables on the cartels. Funds appropriated in Fiscal Year 2012, approximately \$249 million, along with our request for Fiscal Year 2013, \$199 million, will ensure continued and sustainable progress. Through bilateral law enforcement cooperation, 47 high value targets have been arrested or removed in Mexico, including 23 of Mexico's top 37 most wanted criminals, since December 2009. This aggressive and coordinated approach to dismantle and disrupt the drug

cartels has included an institutional focus on all elements of the justice sector and civil society. The Government of Mexico, through our Mérida Initiative is transforming Mexico's security forces and has strengthened Mexican government institutions in order to confront trafficking organizations and associated crime, and maintain public trust and citizen security.

Through the Mérida Initiative, the mobility of Mexico's security forces has increased significantly. Thanks to your support, the United States has already delivered eight Bell helicopters to Mexico's Army (SEDENA), three Black Hawk helicopters to Mexico's Navy (SEMAR), and four Black Hawk helicopters to Mexico's Secretariat of Public Security (SSP) and its Federal Police. As a practical example of the initiative's impact, Mérida provided Black Hawks were responsible for enabling Mexico's high profile operations against the La Familia cartel in Michoacán in December 2010, and another operation against Los Zetas in Nuevo Leon in September 2011. Neither of these operations would have been possible without the air mobility provided and well trained Mexican personnel traveling onboard.

In another example, Mérida Initiative training, provided through U.S. agency implementers, has reached more than 52,000 federal police, justice sector officials, and state police officials providing lessons on leadership, accountability, and management. As a result of our professionalization training, and the Government of Mexico's revolutionary reforms, the new cadre of security officers and officials is more impervious to coercion and corruption by transnational criminals and the federal government in Mexico now has its own polygraph capacity to vet personnel through two certified federal and 15 state polygraph centers.

The Mérida Initiative has also illustrated the importance of syncing our assistance in equipment and training for the government of Mexico with programs that enable Mexican communities to work more closely with government entities to improve their security. We have found that when material resources, training, and community programs complement each other, the outcome is more successful and more sustainable. Through one Mérida program, for example, our partners at USAID have delivered over 40 small grants to nongovernmental organizations that have resulted in programs for at-risk youth and other programs that reduce violence against women, improve mental health, strengthen community cohesion, and improve education. Another program through Mérida has provided

classroom lessons on the culture of lawfulness and ethics to more than 600,000 students and 14,000 teachers, in some 7,000 separate schools located in 24 Mexican States.

As is the case in other parts of the hemisphere, our strategy through Mérida was not singularly focused on dismantling the cartels, but rather a long term institution building strategy in our partnership with the Government of Mexico.

Colombia: An Exporter of Regional Security

Best practices learned over decades in Colombia have informed our overall hemispheric strategy. As a follow-on to Plan Colombia we have continued our partnership with the Government of Colombia to fortify the gains made over the past decade. We developed a program called the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI), which supports the Colombian Government's National Consolidation Plan. Today, CSDI provides for civilian institution building, rule of law, and alternative development programs, along with security and counternarcotics efforts in those areas where poverty, violence, and illicit cultivation or drug trafficking persist and have historically converged. We are supporting these endeavors with significantly reduced resource levels; however, continued resources will be needed to sustain and consolidate our gains.

For example, our Fiscal Year 2013 request represents more than an \$18 million reduction from our Fiscal Year 2012 INCLE enacted, and a \$62 million reduction from Fiscal Year 2011 INCLE enacted. We've worked closely with our Colombian partners to ensure that this is not misinterpreted as a reduction in priority or partnership, but rather the appropriate evolution of our joint efforts -- where we once led assistance efforts to now supporting Colombia's sustainment and nationalization of those efforts.

Our efforts in Colombia are paying dividends regionally as well. With the capacity that the Government of Colombia built over the years, Colombia is now bolstering efforts to address similar security concerns elsewhere in the region. Colombia today is no longer just a recipient of security assistance but an exporter of it. Since 2009, the Colombian National Police (CNP), our closest partner in promoting citizen security throughout the region, has trained some 10,000 police from across Latin America in areas such as criminal investigation skills, personal protection,

and anti-kidnapping among other critical law enforcement disciplines. Colombia's participation in improving security and reducing instability throughout the hemisphere by providing needed training is an enormous return on our investment in that country, and is precisely the type of regional approach to security promoted by Secretary Clinton. This is a positive trend, one which we firmly believe will continue with additional partners and with ownership by governments of the region.

Support for Caribbean Nations

The deleterious effects of drug smuggling, gangs and violent crime are also adversely affecting many countries in the Caribbean, including transnational criminals returning in a limited nature to air, maritime, and terrestrial routes in the Caribbean to traffic illicit products. Accordingly, in 2009, President Obama launched the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, which like our other initiatives, is a collaborative endeavor undertaken in partnership with various United States departments and agencies, as well as the nations in the region.

Citizen security is the single most important issue confronting the Caribbean as narcotics-driven crime and violence have reached epidemic proportions, threatening the safety and security of United States and Caribbean citizens alike.

CBSI, like each of our other major partnerships, aims to increase stability and improve security, and applies a whole of government approach to the challenges confronting Caribbean nations. We have committed \$48 million in INCLE funds during the first two years of CBSI for programs and equipment to support our Caribbean partners, and we expect to commit an additional \$30 million in INCLE funds for Fiscal Year 2012, with your support.

Our Fiscal Year 2013 INCLE request of \$21 million will allow us to continue to support programs that strengthen Caribbean partner nation capabilities in the areas of maritime security, law enforcement, information sharing, border and migration control, transnational crime, and criminal justice.

Specifically, our programs seek to increase regional cooperation of our Caribbean partners to share law enforcement data, including ballistics imaging, airport passenger manifests, and fingerprinting, through software

and training. Technical assistance will increase the ability of our partners to combat financial crimes and money laundering, while equipment and training for law enforcement personnel target narcotics trafficking on land and sea. These efforts seek to strengthen national and regional security systems throughout the Caribbean before the threats of illicit trafficking and transnational crime worsen.

* * *

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Lowey, I have focused my prepared remarks today on the programs we are administering to support our partners in the Western Hemisphere for a reason. As you know well, the challenges to secure and safe societies in the hemisphere are vast, and insecure societies host the majority of criminals whose crimes directly threaten our nation's security. We recognize that there is no easy fix for these problems, and we will continue to evaluate our progress and adjust our approaches as these complex and dynamic threats evolve. We focus largely on regional programs because they provide the platform for several nations to coordinate their strategy and ensure a unified capability to addressing their shared challenges. Regional programs also allow us to multiply the impact and value of our assistance by syncing up with the contributions made by each government in the region. While these programs represent our major mechanisms for addressing threats to security in the Western Hemisphere, they are by no means our only mechanisms. We have ongoing bilateral programs – some robust like in Peru and Haiti, and some less so, in other countries in the hemisphere.

In Peru for example, where our bilateral counternarcotics relationship has been reinvigorated by an eager and supportive administration there, we have programs to increase capacity of law enforcement and programs to support a significant coca eradication effort. This is going to be an important area for us to watch closely, and I look forward to further discussions with the Subcommittee as our partnership there continues to evolve. And in Haiti, where perhaps the absence of strong and capable government institutions had been the most striking in the Western Hemisphere, INL supports programs to improve the capacity of law enforcement as well as the judicial sector. It is also worth noting that we are working very diligently to engage our friends in the region, particularly those with recognized competency in particular areas, to strengthen the

capacity of not just others countries within the Western Hemisphere, but across the globe.

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Lowey, thank you very much for the opportunity to discuss and share with you the work we are doing to address these challenging threats to the security of the people of the Western Hemisphere. I look forward to your questions.