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Central American Regional Countering Transregional-Transnational Threats Seminar

Central American Regional Countering Transregional-Transnational Threats Seminar

Antigua, Guatemala, 20-22 June 2017

Summary Proceedings¹

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The nations of Central America, especially those forming the “Northern Triangle” (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras), face increasingly formidable security threats from transnational-transregional threat networks, cyber criminals, and the challenges from technology. Military and security forces are required to diagnose and determine how to counter these threats, adapting to asymmetric conflicts and agile, cunning adversaries. Traditional security cooperation must be supplemented with increasing institutional capacity to manage resources and policies. The William J.

¹ These summary proceedings reflect the discussions conducted under Chatham House Rule of the March 21-23, 2017 William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies Caribbean Regional Seminar on Countering Transregional-Transnational Threats Seminar in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (WJPC) provides a conducive venue to analyze and discuss these issues affecting the security of the Western Hemisphere. To that end, and as a follow-up to U.S. Southern Command's Central American Security Conference (CANSEC), the Perry Center co-hosted, with the Guatemalan Ministry of Defense, a Central American Regional Countering Transregional-Transnational Threats Seminar, for seven Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama), plus Canada, Mexico, Colombia, and the U.S., in Antigua, Guatemala from 20-22 June 2017.

Day One of the Seminar focused on general perceptions of hemispheric security and on counterterrorism, with regional perspectives provided by Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, and the U.S. Day Two kicked off with an overview of the U.S. Strategy to Counter Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC), then examined the role of the military and police in citizen security in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Subsequently, Belize, El Salvador, and Guatemala shared their country perspectives on Transnational Organized Crime, and regional cooperation to combat transnational was addressed by Canada, Colombia, Mexico, and Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S). Day Three addressed cybersecurity, emerging technologies, and national and regional strategies to counter transnational-transregional threat networks (CT3N), including discussion of strategies by Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic. It also included an all-female panel discussion on promoting inclusive security in the Americas and the challenges faced by women in defense and security institutions, with participation by Belize and the U.S. Guatemala's Chief of the Joint Staff, General Juan Manuel Perez Ramirez, offered closing remarks to wrap up the seminar.

DAY ONE

Regional Security And Counterterrorism

I. Guatemalan Perspective on Security Threats to the Americas

The Prosperity and Security Conference conducted in Miami from 15-16 June 2017 served as a useful reference point for the Perry Center seminar, and as a motivation to expand friendly networks capable of countering both traditional and non-traditional security threats. These friendly, smart networks should include

joint and interagency elements that take best advantage of each country's resources. Mesoamerica is one of many diverse, multi-cultural regions in the Western Hemisphere. Guatemala, and by extension all of Central America, is a strategic region that includes areas with contested commons like its air space and coastal seas which are susceptible to clandestine flights and maritime shipments. Consequently, Central America is plagued by illicit trafficking and the violence that accompanies it.

There is a strategic dilemma to security in Central America, as some problems call for a mostly military solution (i.e., territorial defense), others a partial military solution (i.e., temporary deployment of the military in support of the police), and some problems have virtually no military role in their solution (i.e., poverty and corruption). There can be no security without development, and vice versa, a concept that has come full circle over the years. To promote security and prosperity, the countries of the region must use the national and regional institutional capacity of all agencies to address different aspects of the problem and achieve national, public, and citizen security. Central America has created or participated in a number of regional mechanisms supporting development and security in the region. These include cross-border collaboration and confidence-building measures on the Belize-Guatemala and the Salvador-Honduras borders, for example. Guatemala and Mexico established a high-level, border coordinating, mechanism, GANSEF (Grupo de Alto Nivel de Seguridad Fronteriza Guatemala-Mexico). Guatemala and the United States have reached an illicit maritime trafficking agreement, similar to one that exists between the United States and several Caribbean nations. On a larger scale, there are programs such as Plan Colombia, the Merida Initiative, CARSI, and the Central American Alliance for Prosperity, all designed to promote development of people and nations. In sum, the current Central American security environment is non-traditional, and includes a number of different threats, risks, and challenges in both number and intensity. New threats are constantly arising—witness cyber—and we must use the various mechanisms at our disposal to address these threats, which are increasing in complexity and uncertainty. It is imperative to find a balance between our objectives and our limited resources to develop an ideal plan of action. No one country can do it alone, but no country is exempt from participating in this struggle.



Guatemala’s internal security situation is gravely affected by organized criminal groups that use the country as a bridge to transport illicit items, including drugs, arms, people, money, etc. There are numerous uncontrolled vehicular crossing points on all its borders, with many roads and trails leading to these border crossings. In order to better control its borders, Guatemala must do more to reduce organized crime, or its neighbors will suffer the consequences. Strategic intelligence is a key element in this effort as part of its national system of security (“Ley Marco”). Real-time intelligence is essential, and for this Guatemala requires cooperation from its neighbors, from Colombia, and the U.S. Guatemala’s national security policy is a whole of government effort, with interagency collaboration and information exchange among the police, military, judiciary, customs, and other agencies.

Q&A Session: Political will is an essential element in this approach, and regionally, that political will is present in most countries. Upcoming elections in Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras may test that situation, but in the meantime, efforts are underway to institutionalize the mechanisms described above, so they become permanent fixtures and not subject to fleeting political will.

II. U.S. Perspectives on Countering Transregional-Transnational Threat Networks

Over the past several years, the U.S. has come to recognize that focusing mainly on illicit commodities—cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, precursor

chemicals—has not slowed the overall rate of illicit trafficking, but only changed the mix of products. The same organizations—called illicit or threat networks—which transport drugs can also transport people (migrants or terrorists), money, weapons, and anything else that legitimate governments want to stop or control, frequently corrupting those governments in the process. These converging criminal and extremist networks recruit from the most disadvantaged segments of society and use a combination of social media, popular culture, and violence, to further their ends, be they economic or ideological.

The activities of these illicit networks cross internal, national, regional and international borders, connecting across time, space and domains, creating complex networks that are impossible for any single law enforcement agency or country to defeat. In fact, we have learned that it takes a network to defeat a network. An example of one of these networks operating in Latin America is Hezbollah, using various schemes (e.g., a used car money laundering operation) to support Hezbollah in Lebanon. Therefore, everything we do to counter illicit networks must be in conjunction with interagency, regional, multinational, and non-governmental partners—a networked approach to defeating networks.

While this is easy to say, it is much harder to put into practice. There are many different organizations focused on specific pieces of the network, and convincing them to share information, coordinate efforts, and un-

derstand where their activities fit within the larger network picture, is challenging but not impossible. Great relationships already exist among many domestic law enforcement agencies, and bilateral and multilateral organizations. These relationships should be improved upon and expanded to facilitate cooperation in degrading and defeating illicit networks, across the spectrum of law enforcement activities: detection and monitoring; interdiction and apprehension; investigation; and prosecution.

Globalization has empowered illicit networks that consist of terrorists, criminals, proliferators and their facilitators, to find new products, markets and areas of influence around the world. These illicit actors operate in the grey zone between war and peace, disregard sovereignty and the rule of law and threaten the security and prosperity of nation states. We are witnessing a convergence of terrorism and crime that is presenting formidable national and international security challenges to nation states. This convergence is manifested by illicit actors that capitalize on lucrative criminal activities like narcotics, human, arms, and contraband trafficking to fund and support their terrorist agendas. Terrorist groups are engaging in crime while criminal groups are using terrorist tactics to use violence or the threat of violence to control their operating areas, like in the case of the Los Zetas cartel in Mexico.

Q&A Session: Gangs are viewed by many participants as a threat to both U.S. and regional economics, as well as to democratic stability. They conduct criminal activities similar to other criminal organizations, but are not considered to be, or designated as, terrorist organizations, which puzzled some participants. In response, it was noted that gangs generally don't meet U.S. legal requirements to be designated as terrorist groups, in part because they are generally not ideologically inclined. Although gangs may constitute a security threat, they are not necessarily a terrorist threat nor inherently illegal.

III. Country Perspectives on Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Colombia, Mexico, and the U.S.

Colombia has a unique perspective on terrorism in Latin America, as it is just emerging from the longest armed conflict with a terrorist organization—the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, or FARC—in the Western Hemisphere. The peace accord that is now

being implemented is not without controversy. The peace accord includes five key elements: 1. future political participation of FARC members; 2. rebels' reintegration into civilian life; 3. illegal crop eradication; 4. transitional justice and reparations; and 5. rebel disarmament and implementation of the peace deal. After the peace accord was rejected by less than one percent in a public plebiscite vote in October 2016, the Colombian Congress approved a revised version in December 2016. The disarmament and demobilization of some 7,000 FARC members is now underway. As part of the revised peace accord, the FARC and its members must provide an inventory of all their assets at the beginning of the process; these assets will be used to pay for reparations to conflict victims. But where are the FARC's assets? The FARC has reportedly turned in the number of weapons it admits to owning, but many believe there are additional weapons stashed throughout the country. As a political actor, the FARC may be considered a hybrid organization, with both insurgent and terrorist elements. Their "free pass" to political legitimacy does not sit well with many Colombians, and since they are unpopular in most of Colombia except for certain isolated areas, they need external support. Consequently, the FARC has connections with small leftist groups around the world, and their economic and criminal interests continue unaltered. FARC dissidents and deserters complicate the situation even more, as these elements join other insurgent or criminal groups for economic reasons, especially in the coca-growing regions of southern Colombia. There is concern that the FARC's integration into the political system will pose risks for Colombian democracy, causing it to end up like Venezuela. Although the FARC is unpopular in most of Colombia, they may win a few seats in areas where they formerly performed governing functions in the absence of official state presence.

In Mexico, there is heated debate over the relationship between organized crime and terrorism, and their similarities and differences. Violence perpetrated by criminal organizations is not aimed at systemic regime change, but rather at economic competitors; it is economic versus ideological. The narcotics trafficking cartels sometimes employ terrorist tactics, however, and there are hybrid organizations that illustrate the convergence model. Increasingly fragmented cartels resort to greater violence and employ terrorist tactics, including grenades, car bombs, etc. resulting in increas-

ing homicides this past year. There have been alliances between cartels (Sinaloa) and terrorist organizations (FARC, Sendero Luminoso) in the past. Because of these alliances, there is concern that the cartels may partner with ISIS at some point, causing even greater problems for both Mexico and the U.S. To counter these convergence possibilities, Mexico is stepping up measures against terrorism. These measures include improvements to the legal code; programs, strategies and development of counter-terrorist capabilities; and increased international cooperation.

The United States takes a strategic approach to the threats of terrorism, establishing sustainable relationships with partners, in terms of both responsibility and resources, to create the networks required to defeat illicit networks. Violent extremist organizations (VEOs), composed of extremists with radical views willing to use violence, must have their connections to other organizations in their network disrupted at global, regional and local levels. If we can sever the VEOs' transregional ties, we can address the organizations in smaller, "bite-size" pieces more easily at the sub-regional and local levels.

The U.S. no longer looks at counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and other countering-illicit trafficking measures as separate, "stove-piped" strategies, but rather as part of a merged, integrated approach that only functions with collaboration at the regional and local levels. Steps are being taken to build coalitions and networks to address these issues, with France supporting the effort in parts of Africa, Australia in Southeast Asia, and the U.S. and others in the Mideast. An open invitation is extended by the U.S., to defense and security forces worldwide, to collaborate in this mission.

DAY TWO

Countercrime

I. U.S. Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) Strategy in the Americas

Governments have leading roles in protecting society from transnational organized crime, including providing security, promoting prosperity, and ensuring good governance. They are faced with a wide variety of illicit activities, from narco-trafficking, to human trafficking, financial crimes, corruption, etc. Where there is demand for illicit products or services, someone

will supply them if there is a profit to be made. Those crimes come with a price tag for society—an average of 3.5% of GDP; even higher in Central America. Latin America faces a set of severe challenges to prosperity and security. Providing citizen security is perhaps the most difficult task, caused in part by high levels of inequality. Illicit networks, which send drugs and people north, and bring guns and money south, directly impact citizen security, as controlling routes is critical for illicit traffickers and brings with it debilitating violence. Many of the most violent cities in the world are in Central America, including San Salvador (El Salvador) and San Pedro Sula (Honduras). These countries depend heavily on remittances from family members in the U.S. to bolster their economies, but those same remittances are frequently a method of laundering money. Corruption permeates all levels of the state and society, threatening governments' stability, as witnessed by the impact of the Odebrecht scandal, which touched several countries in Central America and the Caribbean.

The U.S. CTOC strategy originally included 56 "priorities," which were eventually reduced to ten more-manageable threats in the areas of governance, economics, and the terror-crime nexus. To address these threats, the U.S. has to start at home by improving intelligence and information sharing, better protecting the financial system, interrupting drug trafficking, and also look abroad to generate international capability and cooperation. Interagency and international programs funded by the U.S. for the Americas include Plan Colombia, Merida Initiative (Mexico), the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S), to name just a few. Executive Order (13773) against CTOC and Illicit Trafficking was issued in February 2017 to strengthen the application of existing U.S. laws and improve cooperation with partner nations in the region. The Departments of Homeland Security and State co-hosted with Mexico a Prosperity and Security Conference for Central America in Miami recently that promoted the adoption of a "whole of nation" approach to counter threats including corruption and impunity.

Q&A Session: The United States has faced setbacks, such as the surge of unaccompanied children, which sometimes call into question the funding dedicated to CTOC in Central America. Consequently, there is a greater effort to understand the second and third order

effects of programs, rather than just counting the number of participants or the amount of contraband seized. The current focus is on disrupting networks rather than concentrating on specific products. Nevertheless, countries such as Colombia and Afghanistan are seeing massive increases in the drug crops of coca and poppies. One method of countering this production is through investment by multinational corporations that provide jobs and purchase products that substitute for illicit crops. Each sector of society must participate and contribute in this endeavor, which will likely take a generation or more to succeed.

II. Country Perspectives on the Role of the Military and Police in Citizen Security: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras

El Salvador faces major challenges in the area of citizen security with one of the highest homicide rates in the world. To address these challenges, the government of El Salvador has created a series of joint commands that include police officers and army soldiers, with a ratio of one or two police officers to three soldiers. In support of these joint commands, the armed forces have established functional task forces, focused on providing personnel to the joint commands, and also to the penal system, to the border forces, and to a special police command designed to limit movement by the gangs. At the tactical level, Joint Community Support Groups (GCAC) of 4-5 personnel perform the specific functions previously mentioned. El Salvador is making slow progress to curb the violence and reduce the homicide rate. The government recognizes that this is a long-term program that requires patient efforts to develop trust, obtain citizen support and receive actionable information from the public.

Guatemala also has one of the highest rates of criminality, exceeded only by Afghanistan according to one study published in 2016. To address this situation, Guatemala created Citizen Security Squadrons to support the police, with about 4000 personnel in 2006. In 2015, Guatemala began planning a process to return the military to traditional roles, while increasing the capabilities of the police so they will not need military support in the urban areas. To implement this plan, the Citizen Security Squadrons were concentrated in 50 municipalities beginning in January 2017. The second phase began in April 2017, moving 50% of the Citizen Security Squadrons to the borders and 50% to 11 key municipalities. Thus, the armed forces are

reducing their support to police in the cities, in coordination with the National Police, and concentrating their units on the borders as part of interagency task forces to counter transnational organized crime. This will be an ongoing process for the remainder of 2017 as the police build the public's trust in their capabilities since the public currently trusts the military more than the police. Meanwhile, Guatemala is participating in a defense institution-building program that is leading to the design of joint commands with strengthened air and naval capabilities. New radars, patrol aircraft and vessels, and other improvements are beginning to show results, including increased air and maritime and patrols that reduce trafficking into the country. This in turn reduces the amount of illicit products on land for the criminals to fight over and protect. The improvements in defense planning and programming have increased transparency and earned greater public support for the armed forces. Guatemalan military forces are collaborating with Mexico, Colombia and Honduras, developing protocols for coordinated operations, and sharing air tracks with Honduras and regional security organizations.

Honduras, similar to its neighbors, has experienced high levels of violence and homicides as a result of conflict between gangs and organized criminal organizations over territory and illicit trafficking routes. At the same time, the Honduran National Police force suffered from systemic levels of corruption and inefficiency. To counteract this desperate situation, the Government of Honduras took drastic measures which included the creation of a new law enforcement organization, the Military Police for Public Order (PMOP), a paramilitary force in support of the National Police. The PMOP, along with the National Police, were integrated into a countrywide National Joint Interagency Security Force (FUSINA = Fuerza de Seguridad Interinstitucional Nacional), that also includes Immigration, Justice, and Armed Forces (all Services) assets. Each of Honduras' departments (states) hosts a subordinate FUSINA task force. Funding for FUSINA is provided in part by a special "Security Tax." These efforts are yielding significant declines in homicide rates (43% from 2016 to 2017), a greatly reduced flow of illicit flights and other shipments into the country, and more secure prison facilities that prevent the gang members from running their organizations while imprisoned.



III. Country Perspectives on Transnational Organized Crime: Belize, El Salvador, and Guatemala

Belize grapples with the same set of threats as its Central American neighbors, serving as a trafficking route and money laundering location. It also suffers from trafficking in persons and is particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon due to its CARICOM membership, which allows people from member states to enter Belize easily, where they then obtain a false Belizean passport through the black market. These various forms of illicit trafficking are causing an increase in homicides, with roughly double the number during the first half of 2017 compared to 2016. Institutional weaknesses hinder Belize’s ability to effectively address these illicit trafficking challenges. Although Belize has a Joint Intelligence and Operations Center (JIOC), it finds it difficult to obtain interagency support for the JIOC, and is hindered by interdepartmental rivalry and ministerial interference. Internationally, Belize coordinates well with Mexico on border issues, but not as much with Guatemala, which limits its discussions with Belize to territorial issues, not routine operational coordination. Belize only has a maritime border with Honduras, and coordination in that realm could be more effective. In general terms, the solutions to these situations are obvious: Belize must improve the effectiveness of the JIOC; increase regional coordination (especially with Guatemala); increase resources dedicated to law enforcement; update legal statutes to provide necessary authorities; and, implement standardized training to professionalize the security forces.

El Salvador’s principal threat is from gangs, which were originally created in the U.S. by Salvadoran migrants and established in El Salvador when the members were deported from the U.S. for criminal activity. These gangs maintain international contacts and contribute to rising transnational organized criminal activities, despite the government’s efforts to counter those criminal enterprises. In El Salvador, they have access to automatic weapons left over from that country’s civil war, increasing their lethality and the homicide rate. Over the years the gangs have matured and professionalized their operations with well-organized specialized sections for recruitment, finance, etc. Their criminal activities include extortion, murder for hire, and drug sales, which they conduct in territory under their control. Territorial disputes and gang competition is a main contributor to the homicide rate that remains among the highest in the world. Considering the transnational origins of El Salvador’s crime situation, the government believes that countering the gangs requires greater international coordination, improved logistics and legal support, more training for specialized forces, all coupled with constant respect for human rights.

Guatemala has been waging an ongoing battle against money laundering since the 1970s, and, as part of a national strategy, created the Office of Special Verification (IVE), under the Superintendent of Banks, to provide financial intelligence to their counter-money laundering efforts. This comprehensive strategy is implemented at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. At the tactical level, data is compiled and com-

pared from banks, insurance companies, credit card operators, and remittance and other financial services companies, monitoring transactions down to the individual remittance level. Subject profiles are developed at the operational level to determine if a suspect can legitimately justify the source of his income, which is compared to his expenditures. Strategic intelligence identifies trends and sponsors related to laundering money to determine the financial system's threats and vulnerabilities. Money laundering schemes range from quite simple to extremely complex networks that pose a major challenge to identify and dismantle. Nevertheless, prevention of money laundering is an important issue for the country and a responsibility of all its citizens.

IV. Interagency and Regional Cooperation to Combat Transnational Threats: Canada, Colombia, and the U.S.

Canada has adopted a whole-of-government approach to countering transnational threats in the Western Hemisphere, supporting programs to increase economic opportunity while also addressing insecurity. Defense programs include bilateral specialized training and participation in exercises that promote interoperability, such as the Caribbean Tradewinds joint/combined military exercise. Canada's five defense attaches in the region are accredited to 23 nations, and Canadian aircraft and naval vessels conduct counter-narcotics deployments in both the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific transit zones. An agreement with the U.S. permits U.S. Coast Guard personnel to operate from Royal Canadian Navy ships, augmenting the limited number of U.S. Navy ships assigned to the region. Closer to home, Canada operates a network of Coastal Marine Security Operations Centers, to detect and assess marine security threats.

An enduring outcome of a 2012 meeting between President Obama and Colombian President Santos is the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan (USCAP). In essence, USCAP leverages the skills, capabilities, practical expertise and language/cultural strengths of both the U.S. and Colombia to provide training and subject matter experts to support counter-illicit trafficking measures in Central America and the Caribbean. It focuses on citizen security, crime prevention, strengthening police and military capabilities, and counter-narcotics trafficking. From the U.S., State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and the U.S.

Southern Command are the participating agencies. Colombia's participants include the Defense Ministry, the National Police, and the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force. Supported countries include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. USCAP began with 36 activities in 2013 and reached 303 activities in 2016. While it is difficult to measure the impact by attributing specific end-game statistics to these engagements, the increasing demand for these activities is an indication of their perceived value by the recipient countries.

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S), an organization subordinate to U.S. Southern Command, is assigned the mission of detection and monitoring of illicit traffic in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific approaches to the United States. JIATF-S was originally focused on maritime detection and monitoring of narcotics trafficking, but has expanded its aperture to be a true joint, interagency, multinational organization focused on illicit networks, rather than just one or two commodities. Seventeen countries currently provide twenty liaison officers (LNOs) to JIATF-S, and thirteen U.S. agencies plus all five military services are represented. It is truly a "team of teams," with U.S. tactical analysis teams deployed to several partner nations that also perform liaison functions similar to the LNOs at JIATF-S. U.S., Dutch, and French naval task groups, subordinate elements of Joint Task Force-4, provide the command and control of their countries' naval vessels supporting the JIATF-S mission.

U.S. Southern Command recently created a new Directorate, the Network Engagement Team (NET), to focus on the illumination and disruption of threat networks employing all the resources available to the Command. It also seeks to synchronize those efforts with other U.S. agencies and partner nations.

DAY THREE

Cybersecurity/Emerging Technologies/Strategies

I. Cybersecurity, Emerging Technologies and External Actors: U.S. and Mexico

The three greatest forces on the planet today are technology, globalization, and climate change. Technology is changing at accelerating rates that are difficult to comprehend, much less manage and govern, creating a mismatch that is at the center of societal tur-



moil. The internet of things now includes billions of microprocessors interconnected worldwide through the Web. Digital connection speeds have increased geometrically as the technology progressed from 2G to 3G to 4G and soon, to 5G, which may learn about and enable anticipation of users' needs. Amidst all of this data and internet connectivity, the issue of cybersecurity becomes paramount and a top priority in the U.S. and Latin America. Principal areas of risk in the cyber world include the availability of the internet (accessible based on demand), maintaining confidentiality (data is only visible to authorized persons), and preserving the integrity of data systems (no unauthorized access). In Central America, internet connectivity ranges from a low of 30% of the population in Honduras to a high of 87% in Costa Rica, with the other countries mostly falling below 50%, except Panama at 76%. Countries with lower internet penetration may appear to be at a lower risk statistically, but since their users are concentrated in the major cities and in major public and private institutions, they may actually be more vulnerable than countries with high internet penetration spread throughout their populated territory with more complex infrastructure. All of Latin America is at risk from infrastructure that offers limited redundancy, especially due to the few underwater data cables that connect the southern hemisphere to the internet hubs in North America. Interruption of one or more of these cables would have a serious cascade effect on internet connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Strategic political analysis of cyber security is a critical

step in developing policies and strategies that integrate appropriate mechanisms to safeguard the integrity of national cyberspace throughout Latin America. This analysis should include considerations of the legal structure and authorities, the technological infrastructure, organizational structures, technological capacity building, and the incorporation of public-private cooperation, both domestically and internationally. The results of this analysis should lead to the development of national cyber-security confidence and security-building measures, which pose great challenges in Latin America. These challenges call for national cyber-security strategies, requiring a senior-level coordinating agency with the authority to assign responsibilities, and with public-private connectivity. Monitoring and enforcement organizations should be an integral part of this construct.

Cybersecurity is a critical issue for Mexico, which suffers from an ongoing series of cyber attacks and counterattacks. Mexico has received its share of ransomware attacks that encrypt files and demand payment in exchange for releasing/unencrypting the files. It was noted that there are three types of hacking: unethical; gray area; and ethical hacking, which have different consequences and challenges. These problem sets are all indicative of the lack of cybernetic governance, which should include regulation of the "Internet of Things," the vast array of devices connected to the internet, many without any security features. A nation's defenses should be "4D," not just 3-dimensional, and include land, air, maritime, and cyber. The OAS, for

example, cites cybersecurity as a catalyzer for socio-economic development. On the other side of the coin, cyber-delinquency cost the world an estimated \$3 billion in 2015, projected to increase to \$6 billion by 2021. Meanwhile, 80% of Latin American countries have no cybersecurity strategies or plans to protect their critical infrastructure. Mexico is well-connected to the internet and suffers the second highest rate of cyber attacks in Latin America, after Brazil. Identity theft, financial fraud, and child pornography are leading cybercrimes in Mexico. Of course, Mexico alone cannot adequately regulate and police cyber space, as it does not respect borders. International cooperation is critical to increasing cybersecurity, and leaders must invest in education, and develop an understanding of Big Data and infrastructure vulnerabilities. Input from millennials and other young people is essential to that effort, as they think differently from their elders and can find creative solutions.

II. Promoting Inclusive Security in the Americas: U.S. and Belize

This all-female panel focused on the issue referred to in the U.S. as “Women in Peace and Security (WPS),” and addressed the varying approaches to gender inclusiveness in Central American and U.S. security forces. The United States has undergone a lengthy, continuing process of integrating women into the armed forces, beginning in 1948 when they were permitted to join regular, non-combat military units. Combat aviation units were opened to women in 1993, and twenty years later, the intention to lift the combat ban was announced. In 2015, that intent was extended to all military occupations, a process that continues today. Women in the military must be expected to maintain the same, or higher, standards as their male counterparts, and it is critical that they develop the trust of their counterparts over time. In many specialties recently opened to women, smaller numbers should be expected initially. Gender integration can be facilitated by partnering with universities and other institutions, conducting pilot programs, and then applying lessons learned to full-scale integration plans. This is an essential process to harness the full capacity of our society, one in which over 70% of the target military population is not eligible for military service for a variety of reasons (obesity, behavioral issues, etc.). Budget constraints will limit the speed at which women can be fully integrated into all military specialties, as certain military equipment must be adjusted for

use by females, but in the end, the armed forces in a democracy should reflect the nation as a whole.

Belize has policies in place for gender integration in the defense and security services, although currently only 5% of the Belize Defense Force (BDF), 9% of the Belize Coast Guard (BCG), and 29% of the Belize Police Department are female. Only 10 BDF officers (senior rank is CPT/O-3), and 2 BCG officers (senior rank is LtJG/O-2) are female, while the Police Department has 19 female senior officers. Women in the security services face a number of challenges, from open discrimination, to sexual harassment, recruitment restrictions, limited combat roles, and the overall societal view of women in the workplace. In Belize, machismo is ingrained in children, both boys and girls, by their mothers, a cultural perpetuation of gender roles that is difficult to change. Military training and education can help break down these gender perceptions, advancing gender neutrality and moving the security forces ahead of society, in some ways.

III. National Strategies to Counter Transregional-Transnational Threats: Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, and Dominican Republic

Costa Rica has experienced a major increase in its homicide rate over the past five years, at the same time as the quantity of narcotics passing through the country has also soared, especially in the past two years, as overall cocaine production has reached all-time records. Costa Rican authorities estimate that 60-75% of the 1000-1200 metric tons of cocaine produced annually passes through their country, and only 3% of that total is confiscated. Offering fertile soil for illicit traffickers, 20% of Costa Ricans live in poverty and over 40% of youth between 15 and 24 years of age are not in school nor do they have a job, creating the ideal conditions for recruitment into criminal organizations. This combination of unemployment, poverty, and enormous flow of narcotics contributes to the increasing levels of violence in Costa Rica, as well as other criminal activity such as money laundering (14th highest quantity in the world, 2003-2012). To address this critical situation, Costa Rica is taking a whole of society approach, both on the domestic and international fronts. New agreements are being forged with international institutions and other nations, a “war tax” is providing additional financing, and strategic alliances are in place with chambers of commerce and ports. Specialized



anti-crime units have been created, such as SECCRO (the Specialized Section Against Organized Crime), that focuses on dismantling criminal organizations and their networks. New legislation is pending against organized crime, although the political will to approve this legislation is still in doubt. Sustainable development is viewed by Costa Rica as a valuable preventive measure against organized crime. This concept includes economic development, reduced inequality, transparency, participatory democracy, and education as key elements in the prevention of crime and drug addiction.

Honduras confronts many of the same conditions as its neighbors that facilitate gangs and other organized criminal groups, including unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunity, and corruption. In addition, an extended drought has forced many subsistence farmers (campesinos) from the countryside to the cities, where they become prime recruiting targets for the gangs (maras). Conflict over trafficking routes among the gangs and illicit trafficking organizations almost tripled the homicide rate from 2004 to 2012, to among the highest in the world. Establishment of the National Joint Interagency Security Force (FUSINA) has helped reduce criminal activities and the homicide rate has declined 30% over the past few years. In the cyber arena, Honduras recognizes the threat to its infrastructure from cyber attacks. Although legislation has not yet caught up with this threat, the Honduran armed forces are building a security capability, training and recruit-

ing cyber security specialists, modernizing computer systems, and beginning the process of creating a cybersecurity command in the military.

Panama has long been a center for world commerce, and narco-traffickers have taken advantage of Panama's "crossroads" location as a transshipment point for narcotics. As in many other transit countries, payment is frequently made in product, which is then sold locally, creating a consumption and addiction problem. Since 2012, Panama has implemented a strategy to counter these related issues of trafficking and drug abuse with a dual emphasis on prevention and control. This strategy is being implemented along three axes in a whole of society approach: access to a non-violent environment; improving public agencies; and providing greater citizen security and justice. Specific measures include, for example, drug prevention courses in the schools, first aid and rehabilitation/reinsertion centers, and advanced law enforcement capabilities and enhancements to the criminal justice code. The Perry Center's Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) course was cited as helpful in understanding the evolution of criminal organizations and how to address the threats they pose by developing a national CTOC strategy.

Money laundering is one of the major challenges facing the Dominican Republic in the fight against transnational/transregional threats. To counter this crime, the Dominican Republic System for the Prevention of Laundering Financial Instruments and Financing Terrorism was created. It is designed to strengthen the na-

tional coordinator against money laundering and threat finance, as well as improving links with international agencies dedicated to the same purposes. The technical agency charged with the Dominican Republic's interagency counter money laundering and threat finance effort is the Financial Analysis Unit (UAF), serving as the country's National Coordinator. Lines of effort include training and dissemination of strategic studies, and various forms of international cooperation, (i.e., agreements, reciprocal arrangements).

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