

U.S. SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS IN LATIN AMERICA:  
HOW A LACK OF SUSTAINABILITY IS PREVENTING STABILITY

by  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis is meant to examine the influence of U.S. security partnerships on Latin American nations. With four major partnerships created in the past fifteen years, it is important to review the successes and failures of these relationships, and see what improvements can be made. Each chapter examines a different partnership, as well as its effect on the partner countries and the region. Chapter One focuses on Plan Colombia and the balloon effect in South America. It argues that Plan Colombia played a part in the balloon effect in Latin America. It did this by observing drug-related crime rates in Colombia, as well as drug-related crime in surrounding states. While not causation, the data showed Plan Colombia likely played a part in the balloon effect's presence in South America, with neighboring state Peru now the world's cocaine capital.

Chapter Two covers the Mérida Initiative and the United States' fear of spillover crime from Mexico. This chapter explored whether or not the Mérida Initiative was a preemptive or reactive effort from the United States. It did this by reviewing crime rates on both sides of the border in relation to Mérida funding, and estimated the sustainability of the programs once funding ceased. The data showed that while crime did reduce with Mérida funding, the sustainability was limited after funding stopped.

Chapter Three reviews both the Central America Regional Security Initiative as well as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and examines the effect of a hegemon's relationship with a weaker power. This was done by observing crime rates over time, as well as other state concerns such as debt as percentage of GDP, unemployment rates, and GDP per capita, to see how partner countries fared in areas other than security while receiving funds. The data showed mixed results, as some countries showed a decrease in unemployment and crime, while others showed drastic increases in debt as percentage of GDP, unemployment rates, and even crime. Overall, this thesis shows the limited scope and reactive efforts of U.S. security partnerships in Latin America, and how they have affected the region over the past fifteen years.

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Sarah O'Byrne

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For my parents, without whom, this never would have been possible.  
Thank you for everything you have given me.

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## Introduction

The United States has been involved with Latin American affairs for decades. Recently, however, the U.S. has significantly increased its support of security-related efforts through regional and individual partnerships. Over the last fifteen years, the U.S. has allocated billions of dollars (a fraction of the funding committed by partner countries) to Latin American states to improve security and provide stability to the region. However, there are currently few measures in place gauging the success of these programs, and more importantly, their overall effect on the region. This thesis attempts to examine that effect by reviewing four of the United States' largest security partnerships in Latin America over the past fifteen years: Plan Colombia, the Mérida Initiative, the Central America Regional Security Initiative, and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.

Chapter One reviews the effects of Plan Colombia, and explores the theory of the balloon effect. The balloon effect is a theory suggesting that increased security and counternarcotic efforts in a specific region will inspire transnational organized drug traffickers to relocate to a position easier to evade eradication and interdiction efforts – effectively, squeezing the balloon on one end forces the air to the other end<sup>1</sup>. To evaluate this, data was gathered on the relation of U.S. funding to crime rates in Colombia, as well as in surrounding states. The results showed a correlation, suggesting the balloon effect

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<sup>1</sup> Whittington, Liam. "The Balloon Effect, In Effect: Humala, Peru, and the Drug Dilemma (Part 2 of 2)." Council on Hemispheric Affairs. <http://www.coha.org/the-balloon-effect-and-displacement-part-2-of-2/>

may indeed be present in South America due to the efforts of Plan Colombia, as Peru (Colombia's neighbor) is now the cocaine capital of the world<sup>2</sup>.

Chapter Two examines the Mérida Initiative, and whether or not U.S. involvement was reactive or preemptive. This is important because a reactive effort based off fear of spillover crime may not be as well conceived as a preventative effort meant to provide long-term stability. To study this, data was gathered on crime rates from towns on both sides of the border in relation to Mérida funding over time. While crime rates did diminish overall, the sustainability of the programs was questionable due to the limited time frame of U.S. support.

Chapter Three covers both the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). The goals of this chapter were to examine the effects of asymmetrical partnerships between a hegemon and weaker powers. This was done by reviewing the effect of U.S. security funding on crime rates over time, as well as its effects on economic concerns such as debt as percent of GDP and unemployment rates. The data showed mixed results, as some states showed improvements in unemployment and GDP per capita, while others showed an increase in crime, increase in debt as percent of GDP, and an increase in unemployment. Further research must be conducted to understand the long-term implications for the states, as CARSI and CBSI are still ongoing programs.

The purpose of this thesis is to determine whether or not U.S. security efforts in Latin America have been successful thus far, and if they can be successful long-term

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<sup>2</sup> McDermott, Jeremy. "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer – InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas." 4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer - InSight Crime Organized Crime in the Americas. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/why-peru-top-cocaine-producer> (accessed January 1, 2014).



(including after funding has ceased). Further, this thesis can be used to compare against future research in security partnerships. The multilateral relationships between the US and Latin American states provide multiple examples of security partnerships to be reviewed, and compared with security efforts made between states across the globe. With billions of dollars having already been allocated, it is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these programs for future efforts, and perhaps indicate possible augmentations to the current ones. The lack of measures by the U.S. Department of State makes continued research on these partnerships even more crucial.

Latin America is home to some of the United States' most important relationships, however U.S. security partnerships thus far have not reflected that level of prominence. They have largely been unsuccessful, and though some immediate goals have been met, their sustainability is limited. This thesis hopes to provide an understanding of what can be improved upon in U.S. security partnerships, and to be a foundation for future research.

## **Chapter One: Plan Colombia**

**Research Question:** How has Plan Colombia influenced the balloon effect in Latin American drug trafficking practices?

### **Introduction**

The illicit drug trade is one of the largest industries in the world, and Latin America represents one of the largest producers and traffickers within that industry, supplying the majority of drugs flowing into the United States, the United Kingdom, as well as domestically in Latin America<sup>3</sup>. South America, specifically, has been responsible for some of the world's largest cocaine producers, supplying most of the world's cocaine demand for the past three decades<sup>4,5</sup>. In today's market Peru is considered the world's largest cocaine producer, according to the United Nations. This is, however, a very recent change, with Colombia holding the title until 2013. This has led many political scientists and drug trade researchers to ask – what is responsible for the switch<sup>6,7</sup>? There are a number of theories, but one has led to a polarizing discussion of U.S. foreign aid in Latin America – the balloon effect.

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations. "UNODC - Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean." United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/mexico-central-america-and-the-caribbean.html>

<sup>4</sup> Sullivan, Mark P. "Latin America and the Caribbean: Key Issues for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Report* (August 9, 2013): 1-33.

<sup>5</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

<sup>6</sup> Neumann, Vanessa. 2006. "The Incoherence of US Counternarcotics Policy in Colombia: Exploring the Breaches in the Policy Cycle." *European Journal Of Development Research* 18, no. 3: 412-434.

<sup>7</sup> McDermott, Jeremy. "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer – InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas." 4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer - InSight Crime Organized Crime in the Americas. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/why-peru-top-cocaine-producer> (accessed January 1, 2014).

The balloon effect is a theory suggesting that increased security and counternarcotic efforts in a specific region will inspire transnational organized drug traffickers to relocate to a position easier to evade eradication and interdiction efforts – effectively, squeezing the balloon on one end forces the air to the other end<sup>8</sup>. The balloon effect, however, cannot occur naturally (e.g., increased cost of production or decreased demand); it requires an external actor to be the one “squeezing the balloon.” This theory has been applied all over the world, from Latin America to Eastern Europe, but no one as of yet has been able to provide data strong enough to prove causation<sup>9</sup>. It exists, primarily, as just a theory. There is, however, no shortage of supporting evidence.

The balloon effect in Latin America is a concept that has become regularly contested, but its supporters believe it has major policy and strategy implications for U.S. foreign aid<sup>10</sup>. Those that do support it believe that due to the actions of external actors such as military or law enforcement, drug-trafficking organizations are forced to move elsewhere to continue business, but are not eradicated. The balloon effect’s opponents, however, argue that it is impossible establish it as a cause, and the geographic change is likely due to either product demand, or agricultural conditions.

The U.S. has allocated billions of dollars to fund regional security initiatives in Latin America over the past two and a half decades, and if a theory suggests that all they have managed to do is push the problem around rather than clean it up, American

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<sup>8</sup> Whittington, Liam. "The Balloon Effect, In Effect: Humala, Peru, and the Drug Dilemma (Part 2 of 2)." Council on Hemispheric Affairs. <http://www.coha.org/the-balloon-effect-and-displacement-part-2-of-2/>

<sup>9</sup> Charles, Robert B. 2005. "2005 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report." *DISAM Journal Of International Security Assistance Management* 27, no. 3: 60-64.

<sup>10</sup> Madsen, Kenneth D. 2007. "Local Impacts of the Balloon Effect of Border Law Enforcement." *Geopolitics* 12, no. 2: 280-298.

taxpayers would be very unhappy<sup>11</sup>. This would indicate a strong need for a new strategic direction as well as the development of new policy. To be clear, this is a review *solely* of law enforcement, security, and rule of law efforts in Colombia to combat drug trafficking networks. This will not review all aspects of U.S. foreign aid to the state.

Plan Colombia began as a counternarcotic/counterinsurgency effort by President Andrés Pastrana in 1999 primarily focused on combating the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and developing the rule of law in FARC occupied regions<sup>12,13</sup>. Following an embrace of “neoliberalism” by the Colombian government, significantly hurting the national agricultural economy, many farmers in the region, especially those in the regions of the FARC and National Liberation Army (ELN), began growing the more profitable crops of coca and opium poppies<sup>14</sup>. This led to one of the sharpest increases in illicit narcotics production and distribution in Colombian history, causing President Pastrana to create and sign Plan Colombia into law<sup>15</sup>. Shortly thereafter, the United States began heavily assisting these programs with added funding, much needed equipment, and training, through an aid package signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 2000<sup>16,17</sup>. This was primarily done because Colombia was responsible for the majority of cocaine crossing into the United States, and subsequently

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<sup>11</sup> Foreign Assistance. "ForeignAssistance.gov." ForeignAssistance.gov.  
<http://www.foreignassistance.gov/web/default.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> Hylton, Forrest. 2010. "Plan Colombia: The Measure of Success." *Brown Journal Of World Affairs* 17, no. 1: 99-115.

<sup>13</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

marked one of the U.S.'s largest moments in their "war on drugs"<sup>18,19,20</sup>. Much of U.S. involvement focused on rule of law efforts, military training, and funding for anti-drug programs, though human rights, health, and economic reforms were also supported<sup>21</sup>.

Since Plan Colombia's creation, many of its critics believed there was not a well-enough defined long-term strategy<sup>22</sup>. Americans, as well as the states surrounding Colombia, wanted to know what the U.S. planned to do if, to evade eradication and interdiction, the existing drug trafficking networks relocated<sup>23</sup>. Those concerns were never fully addressed at the time, and now the status quo of the drug trade in Latin America has significantly shifted, with Peru becoming the world's largest cocaine producer in 2012<sup>24</sup>. This is where the theory of the balloon effect has come into play. The theory suggests that because of a poor long-term strategy, focused primarily on eradicating drug trafficking networks from Colombia, the balloon has been squeezed at one end, and shifted the geographical dynamic of the players involved.

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<sup>18</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Beittel, June S. 2012. "U.S. Policy Focus and Concerns." *Congressional Research Service: Report 27* - 47.

<sup>20</sup> Crandall, Russell. 2006. "Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy." 48, no. 1: 192-195.

<sup>21</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

<sup>22</sup> Windles, James, and Graham Farrell. 2012. "Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis." *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 868-876.

<sup>23</sup> LeoGrande, William MoSharpe, Kenneth E. 2000. "Two Wars or One?." *World Policy Journal* 17, no. 3: 1.

<sup>24</sup> McDermott, Jeremy. "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer – InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas." 4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer - InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/why-peru-top-cocaine-producer>.

The purpose of this chapter is mapping and identifying the validity of these concerns, and discerning whether or not the United States is responsible for introducing and/or influencing the balloon effect in Latin America. This produces the research question: how has Plan Colombia influenced the balloon effect in Latin American drug trafficking practices? For future policy concerns and considerations, it is necessary to understand if U.S. programs in Latin America have been successful, or simply, successful only in moving the problem from one area to another.

To do this, multiple facets of the balloon effect, and its possible presence, will be reviewed. It will be necessary to examine and consider the prevailing theories on the balloon effect and the successes and failures of Plan Colombia (both for and against). Subsequently, using these theories, hypotheses will be created to guide and focus the direction of this work. The methodology for the collection and study of the data will be explained in detail, followed by the examination of said data. The results of this data will be presented with accompanying visual representations, as well as explanations for the meaning of the results. Following this discussion, a conclusion consisting of a summary, hypothesis review, and recommendations will be presented.

## **Literature Review**

There is no shortage of literature on drug trafficking networks and U.S. foreign aid in Latin America. While many of these works focus primarily on the efficacy of these programs, there is a significant amount of literature reviewing the balloon effect's presence in the Western Hemisphere. The literature produced thus far has reached a general consensus on three possible reasons for the symptoms of the balloon effect to

occur in Latin America. These are an influx of unrelated incidents, the efforts of the Colombian government and regional partners (not including the United States), and U.S. involvement via Plan Colombia<sup>25,26,27,28,29</sup>. However, it must first be established that the balloon effect is a viable theory, and can be proven; and, if proven, can have any influence on the geographical dynamic of organized crime. These steps include: proving the balloon effect's existence, prevalence, and ultimately, who is responsible (culpability). It is important to note that the existence section will present research on the validity of the balloon effect as a general theory, *not* its existence in Latin America. This will be broached later as part of the hypothesis. Prevalence relates to researchers' attempts to discern the balloon effect's responsibility for any regional changes in drug-trafficking practices. The prevalence section is one of the most difficult aspects of the balloon effect to establish with any specificity, and thus, is a primary criticism of culpability. Culpability will attempt to establish the means to identify those responsible for creating a balloon effect, as well as literature asserting culpability in Latin America.

### **Existence**

One of the primary criticisms of the balloon effect is its manner of establishing fault. Some researchers believe no single actor or organization can be responsible for the

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<sup>25</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2005. "Squeezing the balloon?" *Crime, Law & Social Change* 44, no. 1: 35-78.

<sup>26</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Beittel, June S. 2012. "U.S. Policy Focus and Concerns." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 27 - 47.

<sup>29</sup> Sullivan, Mark P. "Latin America and the Caribbean: Key Issues for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Report* (August 9, 2013): 1-33.

balloon effect<sup>30</sup>. They assert that the origins of such dramatic structural and geographical changes in organized crime arise from myriad possibilities that cannot be traced to a specific instigator. This makes it very difficult to establish the balloon effect as a legitimate theory. If one cannot establish a significant connection between an external force and the cause for drug-trafficking organizations to augment their structure and procedure, then the balloon effect loses the possibility of being proven. This serves as the null hypothesis for the balloon effect theory as a whole.

An opposing theory developed by researchers Rouse and Arce in their work, *The Drug-Laden Balloon*, states that the balloon effect does have legitimacy, and that it is possible to track its influence through raw data and an established timeline of events<sup>31</sup>. Critics of Rouse and Arce<sup>32</sup> argue that one ultimately cannot claim to know a causal reason without confirming these changes with Cartel leadership (e.g., asking if they moved because of increased law enforcement or supply and demand concerns). This has met with its own criticism as this option is generally viewed as impossible, but is, however, no less legitimate. Clearly, though, it is not an option for most researchers, who must solely rely on the data available to them. Because of these reasons, it is impossible to prove the balloon effect, as a theory, to be 100% accurate. For the purposes of this thesis, though, it will be assumed the balloon effect is a legitimate theory, and will be considered with regard to causal reasons for changes in Latin American drug-trafficking practices.

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<sup>30</sup> Windles, James, and Graham Farrell. 2012. "Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis." *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 868-876.

<sup>31</sup> Rouse, Stella M., and Moises Arce. 2006. "The Drug-Laden Balloon: U.S. Military Assistance and Coca Production in the Central Andes." *Social Science Quarterly* 87, no. 3: 540-557.

<sup>32</sup> Windles, James, and Graham Farrell. 2012. "Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis." *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 868-876.



## Prevalence

Once the balloon effect is established, its prevalence must be assessed in order to understand who or what is responsible for the changes (though the “why” can be assumed, it is impossible to confirm without the actors involved). There has been much research of late on the balloon effect’s responsibility for the drug trade’s changing geographical presence<sup>33</sup>. This is a very difficult factor to quantify, as tracking responsibility through data doesn’t provide everything one would need to come to a strong conclusion.

However, some researchers have presented datasets and arguments stating that the balloon effect is not responsible for many of these changes<sup>34</sup>. In Windles and Farrell 2012 work, “Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis,” they presented data suggesting the efforts of law enforcement are sometimes less of a factor than changing economic markets, agricultural concerns, and competition in forcing drug-trafficking organizations to migrate.

On the other hand, data provided by the United States government suggests that the balloon effect has a large effect on these migration patterns<sup>35,36,37</sup>. This is not

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<sup>33</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2005. “Squeezing the balloon?” *Crime, Law & Social Change* 44, no. 1: 35-78.

<sup>34</sup> Windles, James, and Graham Farrell. 2012. “Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis.” *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 868-876.

<sup>35</sup> Beittel, June S. 2012. “U.S. Policy Focus and Concerns.” *Congressional Research Service: Report* 27-47.

<sup>36</sup> Sullivan, Mark P. “Latin America and the Caribbean: Key Issues for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.” *Congressional Research Service: Report* (August 9, 2013): 1-33.

<sup>37</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance:

believed to be reporting bias, and will not be considered as such for the sake of this thesis. This data shows that much of the change made by drug-trafficking organizations in Latin America can be linked to the development of certain initiatives. Some examples of these are military training, improved equipment, enhanced judicial systems, corruption reduction, and the active eradication of illicit drug crop fields<sup>38</sup>.

### **Culpability**

The most important aspect of assessing the balloon effect's presence is establishing culpability. While there are three primary reasons for the symptoms of the balloon effect to arise in Latin America, one effectively acts as a null hypothesis. Some researchers believe the balloon effect occurs because of an influx of unrelated incidences, inspiring drug-trafficking organizations to migrate their operation<sup>39</sup>. This theory ultimately removes the balloon effect from the equation according to its definition. Though the balloon effect will be considered established for the sake of this thesis, it must be proven that an external actor is responsible for its presence in Latin America.

The second theory on culpability suggests that balloon effect would have occurred regardless of Plan Colombia's implementation<sup>40</sup>. This theory maintains that the efforts of Colombia and its regional partners would have caused the established trafficking organizations to migrate regardless of U.S. involvement. At the time of Plan Colombia's

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Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Windles, James, and Graham Farrell. 2012. "Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis." *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 868-876.

<sup>40</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2005. "Squeezing the balloon?" *Crime, Law & Social Change* 44, no. 1: 35-78.

introduction, efforts by Colombia and its regional partners in South America were already underway. One could argue (and some have) that the balloon effect was caused by these programs<sup>41</sup>.

The final theory of culpability in Latin America is that U.S. involvement via Plan Colombia established a balloon effect in Latin America<sup>42,43</sup>. Plan Colombia was a regional security partnership between the United States and Colombia, officially beginning in 2000 (the U.S. had been conducting efforts similar to Plan Colombia since 1996)<sup>44</sup>. This theory requires that the United States be largely responsible for the balloon effect's introduction into Latin America. Culpability is related to resource and strategy allocation to the Colombian government by the U.S., not direct involvement.

### **Theory and Hypotheses**

In developing the hypotheses for this chapter, the theories on the balloon effect discussed by Rouse and Arce (2006), Friesendorf (2005), and Windles and Farrell (2012) will act as the guiding authority. These theories have lead to the consideration of three hypotheses. They cannot be considered separately, as two are dependent on the first being confirmed. Each hypothesis will be reviewed simultaneously through the lens of Plan Colombia. Using this as a case study for examining the hypotheses will allow all to be considered in unison.

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<sup>41</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Beittel, June S. 2012. "U.S. Policy Focus and Concerns." *Congressional Research Service: Report 27* -47.

<sup>43</sup> Sullivan, Mark P. "Latin America and the Caribbean: Key Issues for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Report* (August 9, 2013): 1-33.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

## Hypotheses

- 1.) The balloon effect is present in Latin America (e.g., an external actor is responsible for the shift in Latin American drug-trafficking practices).
- 2.) The balloon effect has a large impact on the migration patterns of drug-trafficking organizations in Latin America.
- 3.) U.S. involvement via Plan Colombia is responsible for the introduction of the balloon effect in Latin America.

## Methodology

To provide an answer to the research question and sufficiently investigate the hypotheses, multiple datasets were examined. Initially, data collected by the U.S. Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development was going to be analyzed to track drug-trafficking related crime reductions and increases. However, this data proved to be unreliable, as much of it was gathered via survey from local community members, and arrest and prosecution rates provided by the Colombian government<sup>45</sup>. Local community members provided their *perceived* security and opinions on increases/decreases to drug-related crime. The high possibility of reporting errors and misinformation made this data less reliable, but not unusable. Perceived security can still prove useful in identifying change related to the balloon effect.

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<sup>45</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

Information provided by the Colombian government is potentially unreliable, as a large portion of Plan Colombia funding was intended to reduce corruption in government, improve the rule of law, and develop a more efficient judicial system<sup>46</sup>. This, however, did not matter, as there is insufficient usable data from the Colombian government available. Also, an increase in drug-related convictions is not directly indicative of a drug-trafficking organization succumbing to the balloon effect. It only signifies that more members of these syndicates are being subjected to the judicial system. While this could play a factor in their relocation, it is not a causal relationship. This data, however, must still be considered and used as a reference point for the remaining data, despite its reliability concerns.

To adequately, and without biases, track the balloon effect and the U.S.'s role, it was decided to use the budgets of Plan Colombia by fiscal year to associate an increase in funding, equipment, and training to the displacement of drug-traffickers (this includes only the U.S. assistance budget for the reduction of illicit narcotics and the improvement of Colombian security, *not* the overall budget, or Colombian government's contributions), through a breakdown of funding and progress in a report developed by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). Combining this information, and juxtaposing it with conviction rates by the Colombian judicial system, as well as the rate of successful eradication and interdiction efforts, led to a suitable method of identifying reduction.

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<sup>46</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

However, that amasses to only half of the necessary parts to properly track displacement under the balloon effect. It was also necessary to create a method of tracking increases in drug-related crime elsewhere in Latin America. To find an organized method, the mantra, “nature abhors a vacuum,” was followed. Surrounding countries without any existing or substantial security/counternarcotic programs were examined for reports of increased drug-related crime from reliable sources. Combining these two methods, reviewing the dates for both decreases of drug-related crime in Colombia, and increases in the immediate region, a useable method of tracking the balloon effect was formed. This data and method will be used to establish the balloon effect’s prevalence.

To counterbalance this data, efforts conducted by the U.N. were also examined through the annual World Drug Report of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime<sup>47</sup>. This data will be used to assist in identifying culpability, as described in the Literature Review section. If data related to U.S. involvement shows a correlation between the increase/decrease of drug-related crime regionally (indicating the balloon effect’s validity), then data developed by the U.N. will be used to see if culpability can be assigned to any one actor.

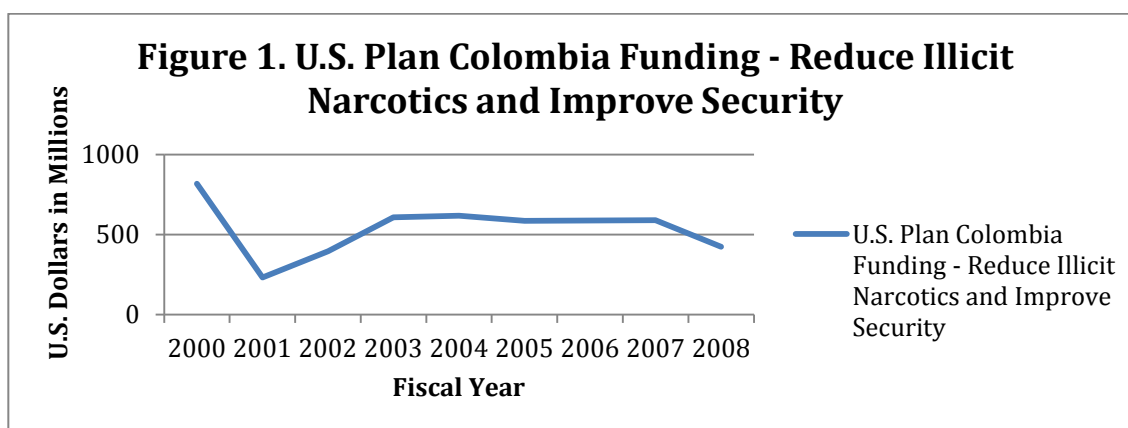
## **Data**

A report developed by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) for then-Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joseph Biden, largely confirmed by reports from the Colombian government, recounts in detail the

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<sup>47</sup> United Nations. "UNODC - Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean." United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/mexico-central-america-and-the-caribbean.html>.

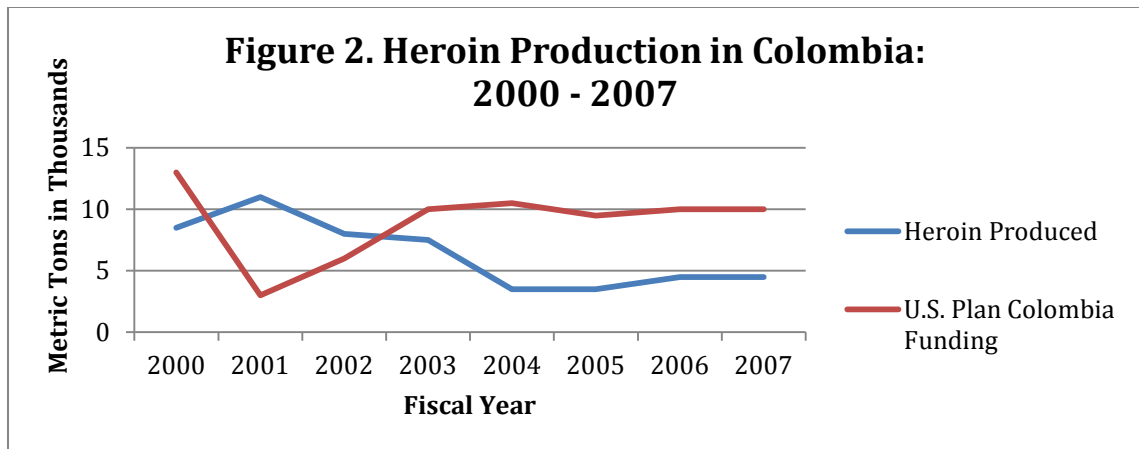
efforts of the United States to assist the Colombian government in their counterinsurgency and counternarcotics efforts<sup>48</sup>. This report consists of both a breakdown of U.S. assistance from 2000 through 2008, as well as its effect on heroin and cocaine production in Colombia. In that time, the United States provided nearly \$1.3 billion to Colombia's many rule of law and counternarcotics reforms, while heroin production dropped an estimated fifty percent, as can be seen in **Figure 2**<sup>49</sup>. This graph, representing heroin production in Colombia between 2000 and 2007, is the inverse of **Figure 1**, representing U.S. Plan Colombia funding for the reduction of illicit narcotics and the improvement of security. This shows exactly what it should. The more assistance Colombia received to combat drug trafficking networks, the less production of heroin there was in Colombia. However, if there were less U.S. assistance, heroin production would spike, as is evident in 2001<sup>50</sup>.



<sup>48</sup> Noriega, Roger F. 2005. "Plan Colombia: Major Success and New Challenges." *DISAM Journal Of International Security Assistance Management* 27, no. 4: 57-60.

<sup>49</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

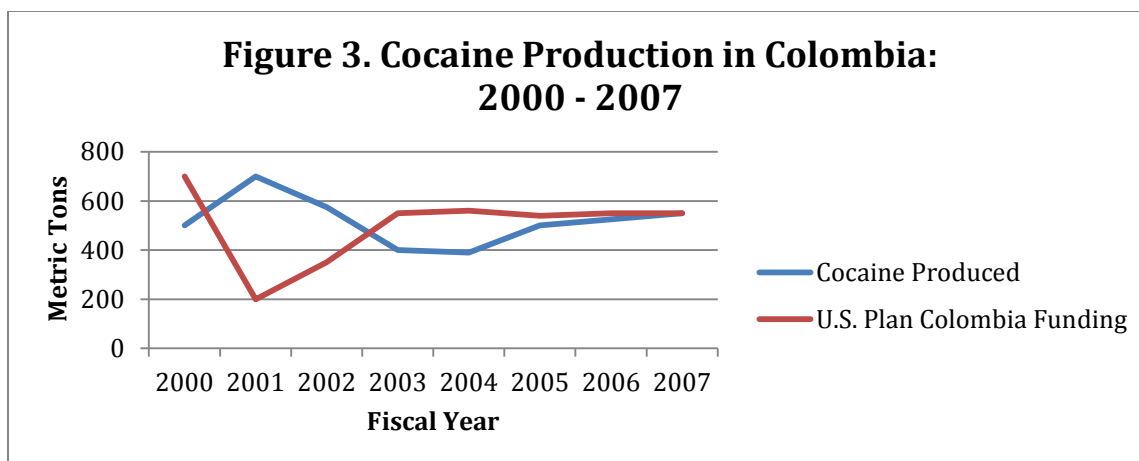


Cocaine production, however, showed a four percent increase in production between 2000 and 2007, as can be seen in **Figure 3**<sup>51</sup>. This graph is a more accurate representation of how one would expect production patterns to react to the fluctuating levels of funding (though, there may be other factors at play such as cost of production, and supply and demand). As in **Figure 2**, **Figure 3** shows large spike in 2001, mirroring the drastic decrease in U.S. aid. However, where heroin production remained relatively flat between 2006 and 2007, cocaine reduction showed an increase, possibly in response to the decrease in U.S. foreign aid<sup>52</sup>. Both cocaine and heroin production rates, when compared to U.S. funding by fiscal year, support the hypotheses.

<sup>51</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

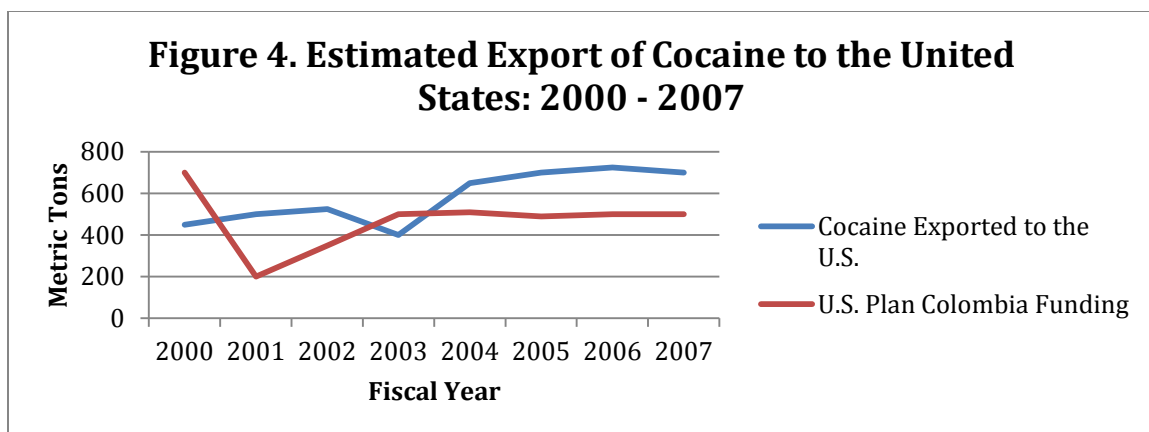




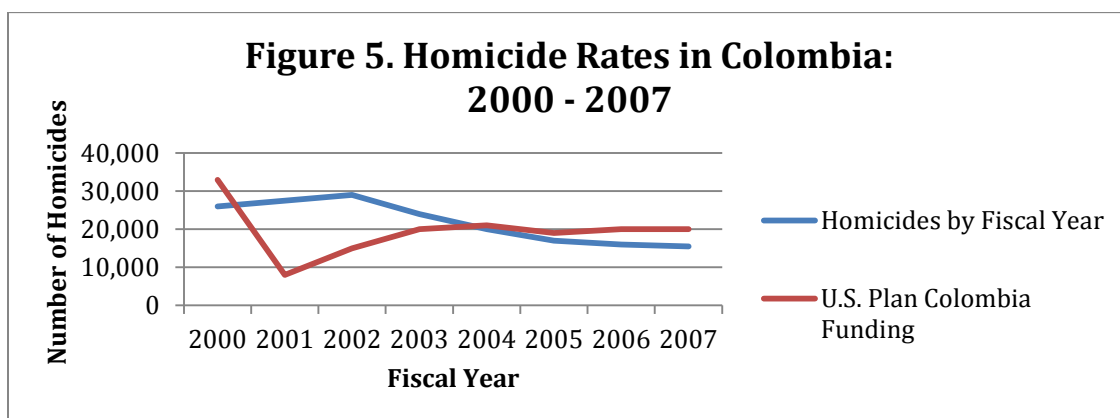
Conversely, **Figure 4**, representing the estimated exports of cocaine from Colombia to the United States between 2000 and 2007, shows unexpected results. While exports did increase between 2000 and 2002 (the inverse of U.S. funding), 2003 had a sharp decline in exports (from 500 down to 400 metric tons) even with a static rate of funding, and export rates every following year continually increased<sup>53</sup>. This could be explained by saying drug traffickers were finding a way around the status quo, and once funding reduced again between 2006 and 2007, cocaine exports hit their peak with 700 metric tons exported to the United States<sup>54</sup>. This information has both positive and negative implications for the hypotheses, and will be explained in the Results and Discussion section.

<sup>53</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

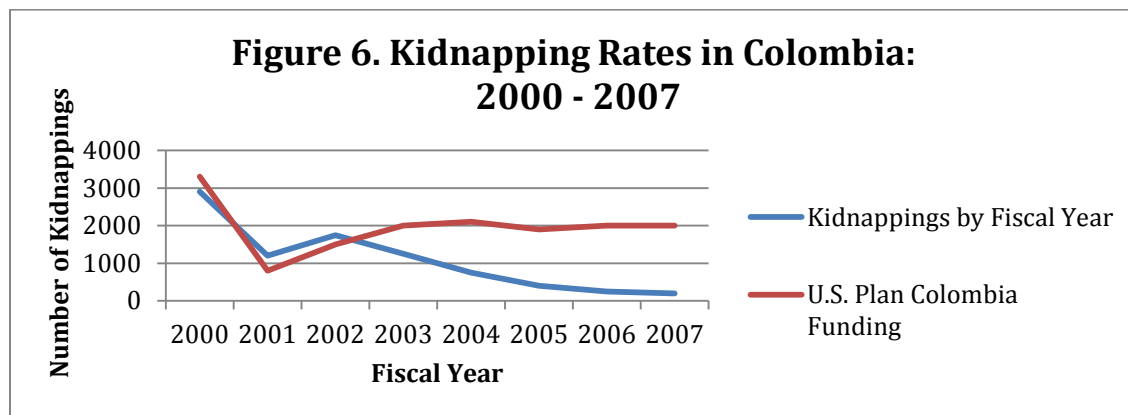


**Figure 5**, as well, represents the expected effect on homicide rates in Colombia in relation to U.S. aid under Plan Colombia between 2000 and 2007. Showing an increase between 2000 and 2002 (25,000 homicides to 30,000), matching the funding decrease during the same period, sufficiently supports the hypotheses<sup>55</sup>. Homicide rates post-2002 show a gradual decrease by each fiscal year. This supports the hypotheses as well, as better trained military and law enforcement over time, as well as stronger rule of law in the country, will continue even with a static rate of funding year over year.



<sup>55</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

**Figure 6**, presenting the kidnapping rates in Colombia between 2000 and 2007, showed somewhat unexpected results in the data, having an immediate decline between 2000 and 2001, and only a small increase from 2001 to 2002, subsequently having a gradual decline to minimal rates between 2002 and 2007<sup>56</sup>. This data, again, supports the hypotheses, showing the expected reaction to funding increases and decreases over time.



## Results and Discussion

The data provided in the previous section shows strong support for all three hypotheses. Though this is not sufficient enough evidence to prove the hypotheses, it gives strong credence to the argument that the balloon effect is a valid theory, that it can cause regional changes, and that the United States plays a part in it. Again though, it is important to reiterate that there are other factors at play that cannot be measured, that may also be influencing these changes. Drug trafficking is very much a business, so if cost of production increases significantly, or demand decreases, moving one's business

<sup>56</sup> Biden, Joseph R., and Tess J. Ford. Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S.Govt. Accountability Office, 2008.

only makes sense. Still, the evidence gathered here can support the balloon effect's presence, prevalence, and culpability in Latin America.

Certain aspects of the data are problematic, however. Because rates of homicide and kidnapping represent the overall rates for Colombia, they cannot be specifically tied to drug-related crime. Though one could assume the majority may be drug-related, given the prevalence of narcotic trafficking, the data is not 100% reliable in this context. The data provided for estimated exportation rates in **Figure 4** challenges reliability as well. The data itself is problematic because it is based in estimation. Though these are probably very well educated guesses, they are still just estimations and cannot be taken as truth. The fact that the data does not fully support the hypotheses is disconcerting, but is not necessarily a negative result.

The primary goal of Plan Colombia from the U.S. perspective was to significantly reduce the amount of cocaine that crossed the border into the United States. This data, however, showed that it only increased over time. At first glance, this seems like a bad sign for the hypotheses, however, in regards to the balloon effect this is actually a positive result. By showing that cocaine exports increased (if these estimates are to be considered accurate), it shows that clamping down on production and exports in a specific region, only prompted an increase in another. Therefore, this data does result in supporting the hypotheses, though still somewhat weakly because of its basis in estimation.

## Conclusion

Given the data, and the multiple counternarcotic initiatives without U.S. involvement, it is impossible to prove that the U.S. is responsible for introducing the balloon effect to Latin America. This part of the hypotheses will remain unproven, though it can be supported. Data developed by the U.N. in response to their own efforts showed similar effects --- that by reducing drug-related crime in one area activity would increase somewhere else in the surrounding region. This does not take into account local law enforcement practices and regional efforts within Latin America<sup>57</sup>. In regards to culpability, as well as hypothesis three, neither can be proven true for the purposes of this chapter.

However, the results have shown that it is possible to associate the allocation of funding to specific counternarcotic programs in Colombia, with a reduction in drug-related crimes, followed by an increase in drug-related crime in an area without a major security/counternarcotics effort such as the developments in Peru<sup>58</sup>. This makes it reasonable to assume the balloon effect is a very real possibility for the lack of success by regional governments in combating the drug trade coming from Latin America.

With the current approach, it would be very difficult to ever reach a “victory” over the transnational drug trafficking organizations in the region<sup>59</sup>. U.S. policymakers must find a way to augment its strategy, because currently, they are simply squeezing the air from one side of the balloon to another, hence the recent shift of cocaine production

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<sup>57</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

<sup>58</sup> McDermott, Jeremy. "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer – InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas." 4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer - InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/why-peru-top-cocaine-producer>.

<sup>59</sup> Gerra, Gilberto, and Sandeep Chawla. 2012. "Interventions, Policies and Evidence: Taking an Experimental Look at International Drug Control." *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 865-867.

from Colombia to Peru<sup>60</sup>. Where Plan Colombia failed most was its priority of direct action against DTOs in Colombia. This type of action is only a short-term fix, regardless of the balloon effect. As future security partnerships such as the Mérida Initiative and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative have shown, community based programs are far more effective at reducing crime long-term. These programs promote education and economic opportunities previously unavailable to the inhabitants. Lives of crime are often last resorts for people in these communities, and providing them with better opportunities to flourish are the types of programs that should be prioritized.

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<sup>60</sup> McDermott, Jeremy. "4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer – InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas." 4 Reasons Why Peru Became World's Top Cocaine Producer - InSight Crime | Organized Crime in the Americas. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/why-peru-top-cocaine-producer>.

## **Chapter Two: The Mérida Initiative**

**Research Question:** How has the deteriorating security situation in Mexico affected U.S. foreign policy in Latin America?

### **Introduction**

The United States' getting involved in another state's national security efforts is not a foreign concept. Whether it is supplying weapons, equipment, or even training, the U.S. is all too familiar with assisting partners in need. However, few regions have as much direct influence on U.S. national security and foreign policy as does Latin America. As discussed in Chapter One, one of the largest security partnerships between the United States and Latin America began with Plan Colombia<sup>61</sup>. This saw the flow of billions of dollars from the United States to Colombia (only a fraction of Colombia's input), and one of the first major bilateral efforts to combat illicit narcotics production and trafficking, as well as drug related crime. Though the correlation has been heavily debated, the influx of illicit trafficking and drug/gang related crime in Mexico and Central America following the successes of Plan Colombia was difficult to ignore<sup>62,63</sup>. This led to the United States' second major multilateral effort to combat illicit trafficking and transnational criminal organizations, the Mérida Initiative.

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<sup>61</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

<sup>62</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2005. "Squeezing the balloon?" *Crime, Law & Social Change* 44, no. 1: 35-78.

<sup>63</sup> Windles, James, and Graham Farrell. 2012. "Popping the Balloon Effect: Assessing Drug Law Enforcement in Terms of Displacement, Diffusion, and the Containment Hypothesis." *Substance Use & Misuse* 47, no. 8/9: 868-876.

Originally funded in FY2008, the Mérida Initiative began much differently from how it exists today<sup>64</sup>. Rather than being a bilateral security partnership with Mexico alone, it initially included the states of Central America in its efforts as well<sup>65</sup>. This proved to be too much jurisdiction to manage for one security partnership, and it was eventually broken up into three separate bilateral and multilateral relationships. The Mérida Initiative became primarily a U.S.-Mexico security partnership (though some funding still goes to Central America), the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) manages the security partnerships between the U.S. and its Central America partners, and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) manages the U.S.' security relationship with Caribbean states.

At its conception, the Mérida Initiative consisted of four pillars: Disrupting Operational Capacity of Organized Crime, Institutionalization Reforms to Sustain the Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights in Mexico (including police, judicial, and penal reforms), Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Border, and Building Strong Resilient Communities<sup>66</sup>. Long-term goals were established with set deadlines of improvement to encourage the full cooperation of Mexico's state and federal governments. Though, while the U.S. played a large part in organizing and funding the Mérida Initiative, it was mostly Mexico's responsibility to enforce the new policies and combat transnational organized crime, as well as the corruption and faults in its own system. This

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<sup>64</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Ibid



responsibility now falls under President Peña Nieto's administration, which has taken a strong public stance against drug traffickers and transnational organized crime<sup>67</sup>.

Unlike Plan Colombia, the Mérida Initiative attempted to establish goals to give Mexico long-term benefits. A strong emphasis was put on proper training, as well as allocating the necessary equipment for a strong judicial system<sup>68</sup>. Reforms in the judicial system were heavily broached as well. This meant reducing corruption, and bringing the rate of convictions closer to that of arrests. The United States Drug Enforcement Administration helped train Mexican law enforcement not only how to identify and deal with drug traffickers, but also how to be aware of human rights violations<sup>69</sup>. The goal of the Mérida Initiative was not only to assist Mexico with an alarmingly high rate of transnational organized crime and drug-related violence, but also to reduce corruption in government and establish a strong judicial system that can be maintained long after U.S. aid subsidies. This, however, only represents one pillar of the Merida Initiatives primary goals. One of the most important ones to the United States own interests is Pillar 3 – Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Border. This Pillar is meant to prevent crime spillover from occurring at the United States' southern border.

Immigration aside, one of the United States' primary border security concerns is the spillover of drug and gang related crime from Mexico<sup>70,71</sup>. While other nations may

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<sup>67</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "The Peña Nieto Administration's Security Strategy and the Mérida Initiative." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 10-12.

<sup>68</sup> Cook, Colleen W., Rebecca G. Rush, and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2008. "Merida Initiative: Proposed U.S. Anticrime and Counterdrug Assistance for Mexico and Central America." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-6.

<sup>69</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

<sup>70</sup> Finklea, Kristin M., William J. Krouse, and Marc R. Rosenblum. 2011. "Southwest Border Violence: Issues in Identifying and Measuring Spillover Violence." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-50.

face similar issues of crime spillover from neighboring states, the United States has yet to deal with such issues on a large-scale. Even though the U.S. is attempting to increase security and stabilize its partners in Latin America through these bilateral and multilateral partnerships, its ultimate goal is to curtail any threats to its own national security. This can be no more evident than in its security relationship with Mexico, the only Latin American state with which the U.S. shares a border. The proximity of Mexico to the United States forces it to pay close attention to the movement and activity of transnational organized crime, and the fear of spillover forces it to take action.

Due to the increased presence of transnational organized crime in Mexico, it was only logical for the United States to take some kind of action. This chapter will examine if the Mérida Initiative has been successful in preventing crime spillover from Mexico occurring in the United States, and will review how the United States responded to this threat. This will entail attempting to establish whether or not the Mérida Initiative was developed as a reactive, short-term fix to Mexico's crime rates and the threat of spillover, or if it can have a real long-term effect on Mexico's security. For this chapter and the remainder of the thesis, the term reactive will mean short-term, narrowly-targeted programs to combat an immediate problem. Empirical data will be used to assess the levels of spillover from Mexico into the United States in relation to the Mérida Initiative funding, while statements and reports made to the United States House of Representatives will be used to evaluate U.S. reasoning for developing the Mérida Initiative with Mexico.

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<sup>71</sup> Madsen, Kenneth D. 2007. "Local Impacts of the Balloon Effect of Border Law Enforcement." *Geopolitics* 12, no. 2: 280-298.

## Literature Review

While crime spillover between neighboring states is nothing new to the world, the United States has yet to face (or at least attempted to deal with) large-scale transborder crime. Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe have all dealt with this issue in some form or another in both the past and present. Susan Woodward's work on transnational organized crime permeating from southeast Europe to some of the region's major powers is an excellent example of wealthy, stable states attempting to deal with crime and instability at their borders. Her work will continue to be referenced throughout this chapter as a supporting case study.

In regards to the United States' and Mexico's concerns with increasing crime, most peer-reviewed works focus solely on examining the successes and failures of their security partnership, rather than the long-term effects of, and reasoning for such a relationship on the United States' part, as well as the level of their involvement. Of all the research conducted on the Mérida Initiative, two works stand out by presenting theories applicable to this chapter. Clare Ribando Seelke and Kristen M. Finklea of the Congressional Research Service, express their concern that the United States is purely reacting to a fear of the spillover effect, in their work, "U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond"<sup>72</sup>. Rather than waiting for large-scale crime spillover to occur, Seelke and Finklea argue that the U.S. is acting to prevent spillover from occurring at all. This will act as one of the main theories for this chapter.

Another prevailing theory on U.S. involvement in Mexico is to create long-term stability in the state, and ultimately the region, to reduce the effect of DTOs and

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<sup>72</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

transnational organized crime on the United States<sup>73</sup>. This theory, presented by Brian Bow and Arturo Santa Cruz in their work, *The State and Security in Mexico: Transformation and Crisis in Regional Perspective*, argues that the United States is looking to establish a stable Mexico and thereby stable region<sup>74</sup>. Seelke and Finklea oppose this theory stating that current U.S. action via the Mérida Initiative is reactive and will not be able to maintain long-term stability or prevent spillover from occurring.

### Spillover

“Spillover” is a term developed to represent crime that is displaced across borders from one country into another<sup>75</sup>. It is not an uncommon phenomenon. Often, spillover can effect an entire region, as has been evident in Latin America. Another excellent example of the spillover effect would be the prevalence and expansion of transnational organized crime in southeast Europe<sup>76</sup>. In her 2004 work, “Enhancing Cooperation Against Transborder Crime in Southeast Europe: Is there an Emerging Epistemic Community?” Susan Woodward highlights how trafficking from southeast European states has effected Europe’s major powers. This has led to the rise of multiple state-based and international anti-trafficking organizations, and some large-scale policy efforts<sup>77</sup>. Though it is not a perfect system, as transnational illicit trafficking is still one Europe’s major security concerns, the regions major powers have each put their intelligence

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<sup>73</sup> Bow, Brian J., and Arturo Santa Cruz. *The State and Security In Mexico: Transformation and Crisis In Regional Perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

<sup>76</sup> Woodward, Susan. 2004. "Enhancing cooperation against transborder crime in Southeast Europe: Is there an emerging Epistemic Community?." *Journal Of Southeast European & Black Sea Studies* 4, no. 2: 223-240.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

networks and policymakers to good use. This has created a network of cooperation, and though further collaboration among Europe's southeastern states will be necessary for complete success, Europe has taken significant strides to combat the spillover of crime from other countries by attacking its source<sup>78</sup>.

However, even though it may be a common occurrence in the international community, it can be quite difficult to prevent without a significant amount of resources<sup>79</sup>. A state must already have well-established tools such as an intelligence apparatus, a large, well-equipped and well-trained law enforcement entity, and significant financial capabilities. Programs designed to create new norms require longevity, as well as substantial, continuous funding. The U.S. has such resources, and is currently using them to prevent the spillover of transnational organized crime and DTOs from Mexico into the United States<sup>80</sup>.

However, Seelke and Finklea's work shows that even though the U.S. is attempting to instill permanent long-term reforms, the majority of its efforts are reactive. They argue that the U.S. saw drastically increasing figures on drug/gang related crime (especially in three of the states bordering the U.S.), and deemed it necessary to intervene and provide assistance to the Mexican government to combat the problem<sup>81</sup>. They assert that this only temporarily reduces crime. While it may prevent spillover, a reactive

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<sup>78</sup> Woodward, Susan. 2004. "Enhancing cooperation against transborder crime in Southeast Europe: Is there an emerging Epistemic Community?." *Journal Of Southeast European & Black Sea Studies* 4, no. 2: 223-240.

<sup>79</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

<sup>80</sup> Cook, Colleen W., Rebecca G. Rush, and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2008. "Merida Initiative: Proposed U.S. Anticrime and Counterdrug Assistance for Mexico and Central America." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-6.

<sup>81</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

approach such as this to transnational organized crime will only postpone their activities. Like previously seen with Plan Colombia, when U.S. funding to combat DTOs stopped, the illicit drug trade in neighboring states began to increase dramatically<sup>82</sup>. In examining other cases of wealthy, stable nations combatting transnational organized crime and spillover, Seelke and Finklea make it clear in their argument that purely reacting to the threat of spillover crime will not solve the problem. They argue that U.S. foreign policy towards Mexico is directly related to crime rates and the possibility of spillover, and thus, elicited a program to combat transnational organized crime<sup>83</sup>. However, they assert that the nature of the program is not conducive to long-term success, and ultimately, despite any immediate success the Mérida Initiative may have, its longevity will prove to be limited.

### **Stability**

The stability theory, presented by Bow and Santa Cruz (2013), argues that U.S. action in Mexico will improve security and increase stability in both the state and the region<sup>84</sup>. They assert that efforts to improve the judicial system, reduce human rights violations, reduce corruption, and create a well-trained, well-equipped law enforcement via the Mérida Initiative can permanently reduce transnational organized crime in Mexico<sup>85</sup>. Contradicting Seelke and Finklea's theory, Bow and Santa Cruz also maintain that these efforts will prevent any spillover from occurring in the future. Effectively

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<sup>82</sup> Aviles, William. 2008. "US Intervention in Colombia: The Role of Transnational Relations." *Bulletin Of Latin American Research* 27, no. 3: 410-429.

<sup>83</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

<sup>84</sup> Bow, Brian J., and Arturo Santa Cruz. *The State and Security In Mexico: Transformation and Crisis In Regional Perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

stating that, even if reactive, U.S. efforts to combat transnational organized crime in Mexico and prevent spillover will work both immediately and long-term<sup>86</sup>. They believe that funding from the Mérida Initiative, even if unsuccessful at reducing crime rates initially, will create a more capable and efficient judicial system in Mexico, and will ultimately reduce crime in Mexico and the possibility of spillover into the United States.

Bow and Santa Cruz's work, however, does not address what happens when funding for the Mérida Initiative stops. They assume that the reforms being attempted will work, though the deadlines required by the United States are not generous. If the reforms do not reach a certain point, then funding from the U.S. comes to a halt. Policymakers on Capitol Hill have continued to address their concerns on Mérida's shortcomings, asserting that funding either needs to stop or drastically increase if transnational organized crime is to truly be eradicated<sup>87</sup>. Bow and Santa Cruz do not seem to take into account that even though the United States is allocating a significant amount of resources to Mexico, once the Mérida Initiative ends, so does the money, training, and equipment.

## **Theory and Hypotheses**

This chapter will emphasize the works of Seelke and Finklea (2013), Bow and Santa Cruz (2013), and Sarah Woodward (2004) to guide its progression. The theories developed by Seelke and Finklea and Bow and Santa Cruz have led to the consideration

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<sup>86</sup> Bow, Brian J., and Arturo Santa Cruz. *The State and Security In Mexico: Transformation and Crisis In Regional Perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

<sup>87</sup> *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: An Overview of the Merida Initiative 2008-Present: Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, May 23, 2013.*

of two hypotheses. The first will be considered separately from the second. The two are not dependent on one another, and while the first can be tested with empirical data, the second is more abstract and will be limited to discussion. Each hypothesis will be examined through the lens of the Merida Initiative. This will allow each hypothesis to be considered under the same case study.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Spillover crime has been, and will continue to be deterred by the Mérida Initiative while funding exists.
2. The creation of the Mérida Initiative was reactive by the United States, and is not conducive to long-term stability.

### **Methodology**

Ultimately, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the steps taken by the United States to prevent crime spillover from Mexico. Due to the proximal nature of their relationship, and the means possessed by the United States, they have the ability to act against what they may consider to be a threat to national security. However, reasoning for action may hinder the overall effectiveness of the Mérida Initiative. As a finite program, limited to a few years rather than decades, Mérida's ability to establish sustainable reforms in Mexico aimed at reducing crime and preventing spillover has been brought into question. This chapter intends to examine the United States' reasoning, and the sustainability of crime reduction and spillover deterrence.



In order to do this properly, multiple documents and theories will be examined in conjunction with a dataset used by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). It will be necessary to assess and consider each of the relative theories on the United States' security partnership with Mexico. The data has been collected from multiple government sources (from both the United States and Mexico) by the GAO, and will be examined with accompanying visual representation. The results of this data will be sufficiently analyzed in reference to the hypotheses, and the chapter will conclude with an argument summary, hypothesis review, and recommendations for future research.

To properly answer the research question and sufficiently investigate the hypotheses, a single dataset, supported by multiple sources, was examined for this chapter. Data from GAO primarily relies on specific figures on DTO-related crime over time (in both Mexico and U.S. border states), as well as arrest rates, conviction rates, and sentencing<sup>88</sup>. Data gathered by CRS includes information provided by the Mexican government, which includes perceived crime and safety<sup>89</sup>. Though this has value and can be used for this chapter, it reduces the reliability of the data. It is also difficult to gauge what is ultimately responsible for the successes or failures of combatting transnational organized crime. While the Calderón administration focused primarily on directly attacking DTOs in Mexico, Peña Nieto is more concerned with judicial and economic reforms, having less immediate results but more long-term success (most likely)<sup>90</sup>. This is not to mention other unrelated factors that could be attributed to reduction of DTO

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<sup>88</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Southwest Border Security: Data Are Limited and Concerns Vary about Spillover Crime along the Southwest Border." U.S. GAO <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-175>.

<sup>89</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "U.S.-Mexican Security Corporation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 1-41.

<sup>90</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "The Peña Nieto Administration's Security Strategy and the Mérida Initiative." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 10-12.

success, such as a drought that effected DTO crop production, reducing trafficking and profits<sup>91</sup>.

To track U.S. involvement, Mérida funding was compared to crime rates in Mexico, as well as crime rates in U.S. Border States to examine any possible spillover. While crime rates in U.S. Border States cannot be directly attributed to spillover, comparing them to crime rates in Mexico's border states could show a correlation. The data gathered will also be shown visually via charts when it is appropriate.

## **Data**

A report developed by Clare Seelke and Kristen Finklea of the Congressional Research Service provided substantial amounts of data on the Mérida Initiative, most specifically on funding allocation per fiscal year. Using this data, represented in **Figure 7**, it is possible to compare the United States' level of assistance (funding allocation), to crime rates in both U.S. and Mexican Border States, as well as rates of extradition. As can be seen in **Figure 7**, though it has spikes, the level of funding from the U.S. to Mexico under the Mérida Initiative trends downward from FY2008 to FY2014<sup>92</sup>. Seelke and Finklea (2013) would argue that this is not enough to prevent spillover long-term, and permanently reduce the prevalence of transnational organized crime in Mexico.

This was echoed in a Congressional Hearing conducted by the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the United States House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, in which both Members of Congress and witnesses expressed concerns

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<sup>91</sup> Cook, Colleen W., Rebecca G. Rush, and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2008. "Merida Initiative: Proposed U.S. Anticrime and Counterdrug Assistance for Mexico and Central America." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-6.

<sup>92</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. "The Peña Nieto Administration's Security Strategy and the Mérida Initiative." *Congressional Research Service: Report* 10-12.

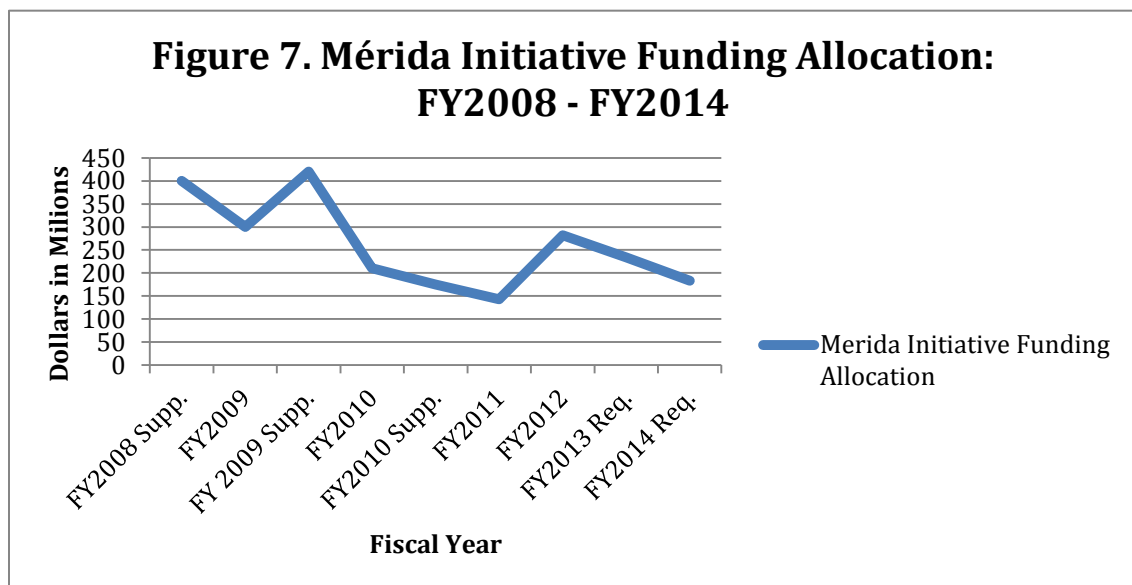
over the longevity of the Mérida Initiative. Assistant Secretary William Brownfield for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the U.S.

Department of State asserted that there have been clear successes due to Mérida, with over 50 senior members of drug trafficking organizations behind bars and over 70,000

Mexican students receiving civic and ethics education. Clare Seelke argued while testifying, however, that Merida was strong enough to break up the large transnational criminal organizations in Mexico, but was in no way prepared to deal with the fallout.

The remnants of gangs began fighting for territorial control, and little effort was made to combat these disputes in some states. This supports hypothesis two— the Merida

Initiative was a reactive effort by the United States, without a well-enough organized plan to deal with combating transnational organized crime.



The territorial wars between gangs are largely responsible for the increase in funding between FY2011 and FY2012, according to a joint Congressional Hearing

conducted by the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2011<sup>93</sup>. This could arguably be viewed as a reactive effort as well, with Congress allocating more funding based on Mexico's deteriorating security and the possibility of spillover. It should be noted that **Figure 7** is only a representation of the United States contribution to the Mérida Initiative. Mexico's funding was significantly higher, nearing \$50 billion dollars<sup>94</sup>.

As can be seen below in **Figure 8**, violent crime rates in U.S. border counties dropped from 2004 to 2011<sup>95</sup>. Data dating back to 2004 was included to represent prior to the Mérida Initiative's introduction. This shows two things: first, there may have been spillover of transnational organized crime from Mexico already occurring; and second, if this is related to spillover then it is possible to relate its reduction to an increase in U.S. aid via the Mérida Initiative. It is impossible to view this data as 100% reliable, as it does not take into account who is perpetrating the crime and for what purpose. However, the reduction in violent crimes per 100,000 in border counties between 2008 and 2011 can be a correlation to U.S. assistance to Mexico. There is unfortunately no data on violent crimes in U.S. border counties past 2011, which would have been beneficial to compare with the increased U.S. support between FY2011 and FY2012. It is during this period of

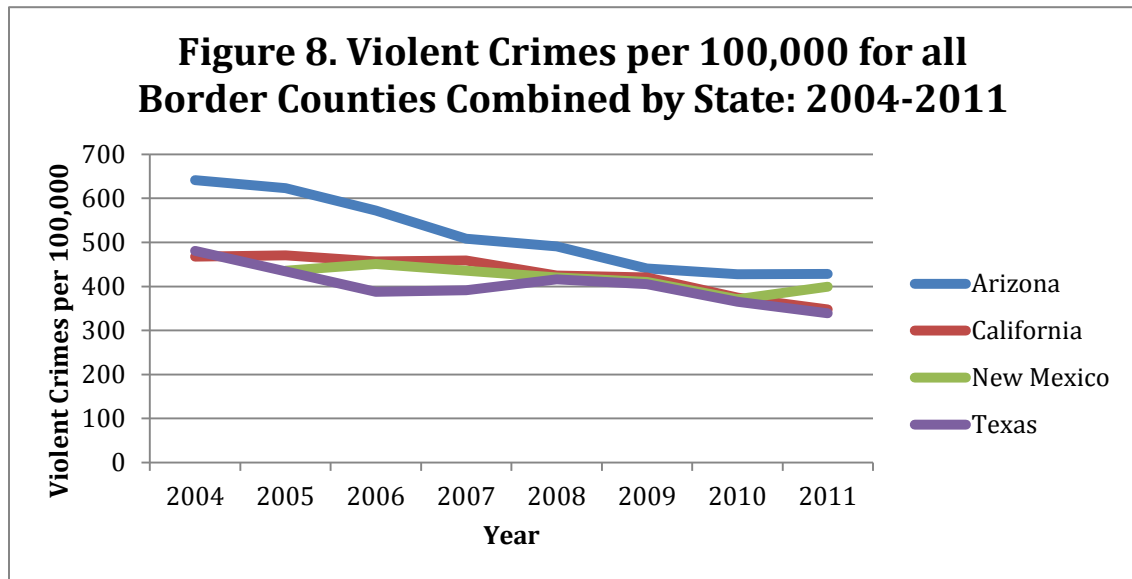
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<sup>93</sup> *Has Mérida Evolved?: Joint Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere and the Subcommittee On Oversight and Investigations of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2011.

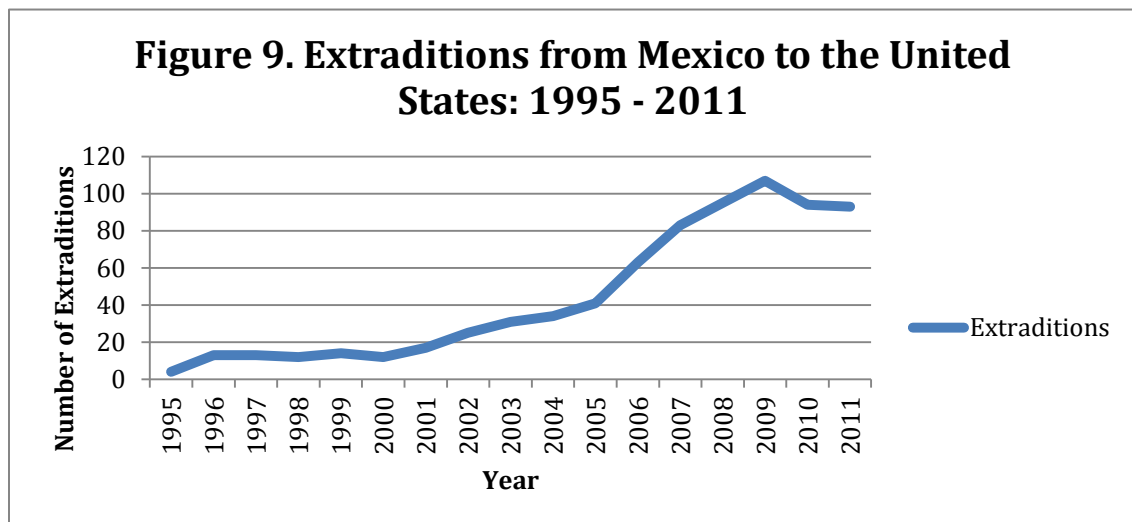
<sup>94</sup> *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: An Overview of the Merida Initiative 2008-Present: Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, May 23, 2013*.

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Southwest Border Security: Data Are Limited and Concerns Vary about Spillover Crime along the Southwest Border." U.S. GAO -. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-175>.

gang fighting becoming increasingly more prevalent and violent that comparing the two statistics would have been very useful.



**Figure 9** as well shows the immediate success of the Mérida Initiative, increasing extraditions drastically from 1995 to 2011, peaking in late 2009. Data dating back to 1995 was included to show the gradual growth of extraditions leading up to the Mérida Initiative's introduction. This data shows that law enforcement efforts between the United States and Mexico improved, and also correlates to the reduction in violent border crimes between 2004 and 2011. Though the data pertaining to this chapter begins in 2007, it correlates to U.S. assistance as expected.



For the sake of this paper, extraditions will be considered a part of the United States deterrence, and as an aid to Mexico's judicial system. Extraditions generally occur when the United States wants to prosecute someone they believe to have committed a crime in the United States, but then fled south to Mexico<sup>96</sup>. This level of cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico could contribute to the reduction in violent crimes committed in U.S. Border States, if it could be assumed the crimes were related to the spillover effect. Assistant Secretary William Brownfield echoed the success of these efforts along with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, John Feeley, stating that committing

<sup>96</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Southwest Border Security: Data Are Limited and Concerns Vary about Spillover Crime along the Southwest Border." U.S. GAO -. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-175>.

a crime and then fleeing across the border only stalls justice<sup>97</sup>. They asserted that strong cooperation on extraditions could significantly reduce spillover<sup>98</sup>.

This, however, does not correlate well with the data presented in **Figure 10**, which shows the number of attacks on U.S. Border Patrol agents between 2006 and 2012<sup>99</sup>. Data going back to 2006 was used to show the growth of assaults prior the Mérida Initiative's implementation. While there was a sharp increase in assaults from 2006 to 2008, a steady decline began in 2008 with a sharp decline from 2010 to 2012<sup>100</sup>. While the data shows a positive trend, it cannot be directly correlated to U.S. Mérida Initiative funding. One could argue that this is the result of programs finally taking effect, as was mentioned in a Mérida Congressional Hearing in 2013, however, this is purely speculation, and cannot be attributed to the data<sup>101</sup>.

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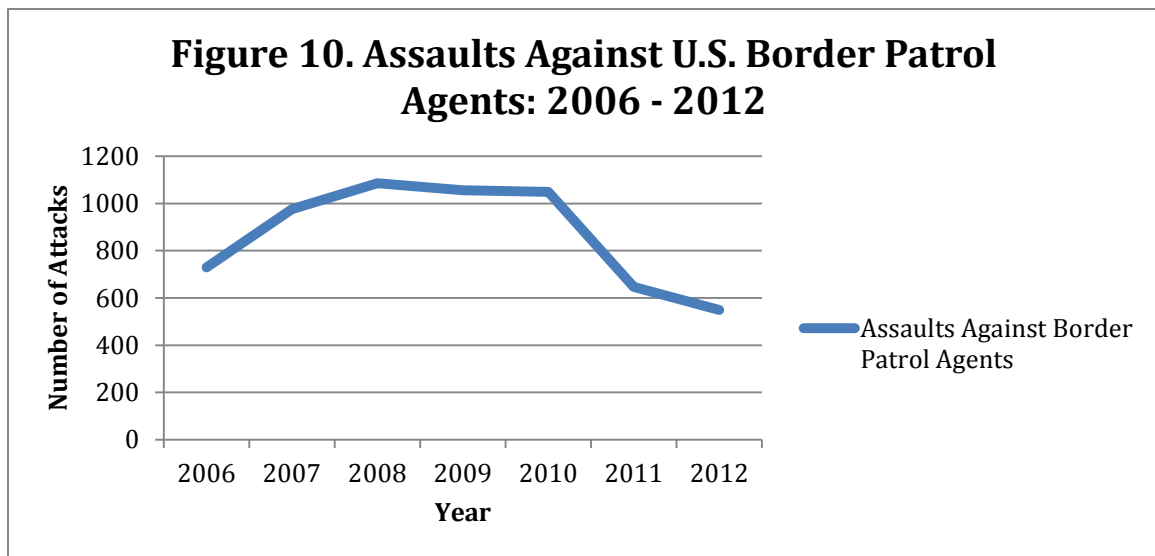
<sup>97</sup> *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: An Overview of the Merida Initiative 2008-Present: Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, May 23, 2013.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>99</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Southwest Border Security: Data Are Limited and Concerns Vary about Spillover Crime along the Southwest Border." U.S. GAO -. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-175>.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>101</sup> *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: An Overview of the Merida Initiative 2008-Present: Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, May 23, 2013.*



## Results & Discussion

The data presented shows how the United States tried to assist Mexico in combatting transnational organized crime, and prevent spillover from coming across U.S. borders. Though not all data supported the hypotheses, it is clear that while the Mérida Initiative received funding from the U.S. there was less spillover crime than without funding. Surprisingly, it even showed that there might already be spillover occurring due to transnational organized crime crossing the border from Mexico into the United States. However, without much data going past 2012, it is currently impossible to evaluate the long-term effects of the Mérida Initiative (and U.S. involvement) on DTOs, transnational organized crime, and spillover. It is safe to say though that while funding exists crime spillover from Mexico will be deterred by the United States, supporting the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis is less likely to be proven with data. However, testimony provided at multiple Congressional Hearings on the Mérida Initiative shows that many of



the steps taken were reactions to the deteriorating security in Mexico, and were intended to prevent spillover into the United States<sup>102,103</sup>. While Mérida established long-term goals with many reforms, there have been many questions about their longevity and sustainability, due to the limited nature of the Mérida Initiative, and the demanding deadlines set by the United States Congress. Unfortunately, these questions will only be answered as time progresses.

The statements made by Assistant Secretary Brownfield and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary John Feeley as witnesses to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs support the second hypothesis and Seelke and Finklea's argument that much of U.S. action was reactive. However, they both assert that the programs being established under the Mérida Initiative are sustainable, and will improve upon Mexican security long-term, supporting Bow and Santa Cruz's argument. As mentioned before, this aspect can only be assessed as time passes and U.S. funding for the Mérida Initiative reaches its end.

## **Conclusion**

It's clear from the existence of the Mérida Initiative alone than an increase in transnational organized criminal activity in Mexico correlates to an increase in assistance from the United States. However, how the United States chooses to respond is what matters most. Taking reactive steps is not enough, and cannot be sustainable for long-term improvements. The Mérida Initiative was not exactly a failure. It succeeded by

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<sup>102</sup> *Has Mérida Evolved?: Joint Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere and the Subcommittee On Oversight and Investigations of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2011.

<sup>103</sup> *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: An Overview of the Merida Initiative 2008-Present: Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, May 23, 2013*.

doing what it was intended, prevented any further spillover crime, and helped Mexico combat its current security crisis. Where it failed was by not fully supporting its ambitions. The Mérida Initiative has attempted to create programs that will reform the justice system and reduce government corruption, but these efforts take time and the deadlines for improvement imposed by the United States seem unlikely to be met. If funding is cut off, what then does Mexico do to combat the problem?

Other efforts such as community building are likewise excellent for long-term sustainability. These programs provide educational, recreational, and vocational opportunities to the youths of at-risk communities, however, they are vastly underfunded compared to efforts directly combating DTO-related crime, and have a very limited lifespan. These programs need to be as much a priority as the more public, crime-fighting programs. As can be seen in Chapter Three, one of the Mérida Initiative's spurs, the Central America Regional Security Initiative, put a significant amount of emphasis on the importance of these programs, with clear benefits.

There also needs to be a continuous effort to combat the growth and expansion of transnational organized crime in Mexico by the United States. Mexican states like Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas cannot continue to be ignored. If the United States is concerned about its own national security, and the possible spillover of crime across its southern border, then it needs to pursue both preemptive and preventative measures, rather than continuing to react when crime reaches levels unmanageable for Mexico alone. Assistance, however, cannot be limited to temporary programs and reforms. It must be proactive and enduring. With the Mérida Initiative concluding, the

United States needs to develop a long-term strategy with Mexico in order to permanently eradicate transnational organized crime from its states.

## **Chapter Three: CARSI and CBSI**

**Research Question:** How have Central American and Caribbean states been influenced by regional U.S. security partnerships?

### **Introduction**

Since the United States became heavily involved with combatting Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) in Latin America, security in the region has been nothing but progressive. With pressure being put on criminal organizations in South America via Plan Colombia, and in Mexico via the Mérida Initiative, more and more DTOs have been reorganizing within Central America and the Caribbean<sup>104</sup>. The increase of drug-related crime over recent years has made the security situation in the region one of the most volatile and complicated in Latin America. While each government took its own approach in combatting the problem, there was little success. Guatemala and Honduras both employed the military for public security and policing efforts. Belize and El Salvador attempted to broker truces between rival gangs. Some countries even considered decriminalizing drugs altogether<sup>105</sup>.

However, social conditions, weak and corrupt governments, and the lack of a combined regional effort have all hindered attempts to improve security in Central

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<sup>104</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>105</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando. 2010. "Gangs in Central America." *Journal Of Current Issues In Crime, Law & Law Enforcement* 3, no. 1/2: 83-103.

America<sup>106</sup>. The presence of extreme poverty and inequality in these countries leaves few options for the youth populations of Central America. Outside of emigration, many are susceptible to lives of crime<sup>107</sup>. This makes most state efforts in combating DTOs in the region futile, as they are not attacking the problem at its source, nor are they fully addressing the transnational presence of said organizations.

Assistance from the United States originally came in FY2008 in the form of the Mérida Initiative, a Mexico-focused counterdrug and anticrime assistance package<sup>108</sup>. As it became clear this was not enough to manage the growing security crisis, the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) was made into its own entity, with five primary goals:

1. Create safe streets for the citizens of the region.
2. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and among the nations of Central America.
3. Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments.
4. Establish effective state presence, services, and security in communities at risk.
5. Foster enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation among the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats<sup>109</sup>.

Unlike the individual efforts of Central America's states, however, the US took a multilayered approach to security in the region. While they did provide much needed equipment, training, and technical assistance to law enforcement, the US also sought to address the underlying conditions contributing to the burgeoning drug-related crime rates

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<sup>106</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

in Central America<sup>110</sup>. This was something that had not previously been attempted by Central American countries.

CARSI differed from previous efforts by Central American states in two ways. First, it supported community-based programs designed to address the economic and social conditions leaving Central American youths and their communities vulnerable<sup>111</sup>. While CARSI primarily funded law enforcement and justice sector programs/reforms, it also sought to provide at-risk youths with alternatives to the drug trade. These included educational, vocational, and recreational activities previously unavailable to many communities in Central America<sup>112</sup>.

Second, it approached the problem from a regional standpoint, rather than each state attempting their own security programs. One of CARSI's stronger aspects was building off the foundation of security efforts already in place by individual states. This generally consisted of supplying interdiction law enforcement/military units with much needed equipment, as well as training from US agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration<sup>113</sup>. This training was most often associated with interdiction strategies and procedures, as well as how to operate the newly-allocated equipment. It also included human rights and anti-corruption training<sup>114</sup>.

Since FY2008 \$803.6 million has been appropriated by Congress through both Mérida and CARSI. As can be seen in **Figure 11**, the majority of funding since its

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<sup>110</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando. 2010. "Gangs in Central America." *Journal Of Current Issues In Crime, Law & Law Enforcement* 3, no. 1/2: 83-103.

<sup>111</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

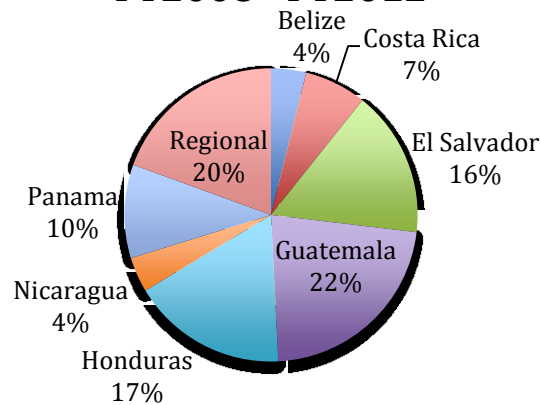
<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, Liana Sun Wyler, and June S. Beittel. 2010. "Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-34.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

inception to 2008 has been allocated to Guatemala, while Nicaragua and Belize have received the smallest allocations. A regional security fund accounts for 19.6 percent of funding allocations, used to support both regional programs and as an emergency fund if needed. The Obama Administration has requested an additional \$130 million for CARSI in FY2015<sup>115</sup>.

**Figure 11. CARSI Funding Allocation by Country:  
FY2008 - FY2012**



Where Central America has become a hub of DTOs in Latin America, however, the Caribbean has become the gateway. Perfectly situated between South America (home to the world's largest cocaine producers), and North America and Europe (home to the world's largest cocaine consumers), the Caribbean is a major transit zone for DTOs and illicit narcotics<sup>116</sup>. To support the efforts of the Mérida Initiative and CARSI, a new security partnership was created for the Caribbean between the United States, member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Dominican Republic. The

<sup>115</sup>Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>116</sup> Johnson, Charles Michael., *Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative*.

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative's (CBSI) primary goals are to reduce illicit trafficking in the region, while also promoting improved citizen security and social justice<sup>117</sup>.

CBSI acts as the most preventative effort of all U.S. security partnerships in Latin America. While many of the same issues present in Central America (poverty, high unemployment, social inequality, and inadequate criminal justice systems) exist there, DTOs have yet to base operations in the Caribbean<sup>118</sup>. For the most part, it acts as a trafficking gateway to North America and Europe. This largely makes the efforts of CBSI to prevent drug-related crime from reaching the levels present in Central America, while interdicting as many trafficking shipments as possible. Even though Caribbean states have a long history of economic development, significant funding is being allocated by each state to participate in the U.S.-designed CBSI<sup>119</sup>. From FY2010 to FY 2012, the U.S. allocated \$203 million for CBSI activities to the Bahamas, the Eastern Caribbean (Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines), Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Dominican Republic<sup>120</sup>.

This, however, can be a large burden on states without the resources to match a hegemon such as the United States. While security in Central America and the Caribbean may improve from these efforts, how do these partnerships affect other aspects of the smaller Central American and Caribbean states? This chapter seeks to answer the question - do asymmetrical relationships between hegemons (the United States) and smaller states (Central America and the Caribbean) work, and can they benefit all parties

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<sup>117</sup> Johnson, Charles Michael., *Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative*.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

<sup>120</sup> Ibid



involved for a long partnership? The United States has been in relationships with Latin American countries for decades, but has its involvement truly benefited the region?

The goal of this chapter is to examine not only CARSI and CBSI's effect on security for the partner countries involved, but also their effect on aspects of statehood that are not a part of the two security partnerships. Asymmetrical relationships between hegemon and weaker powers have seen both successes and failures. China has had a long-standing relationship with South Korea that has benefited both countries significantly, whereas others, such as the United States and Bolivia, have ended with significant damage to the smaller state<sup>121,122</sup>. Often, however, these relationships end with the hegemon taking advantage of a power disparity. This chapter will evaluate whether the United States regional security partnerships with Central America and the Caribbean work to the benefit or the detriment of the partner states involved.

## **Literature Review**

There has been a significant amount of literature produced on the asymmetrical relationship between a hegemon and a smaller power. These types of relationships are becoming increasingly common, and their true effects are being examined in depth. Generally, scholars want to know who benefits the most from these relationships, and if they are sustainable long-term? These questions have created fairly polarizing opinions, leaving few to argue they are indeterminable. The two theories being reviewed for this chapter were developed by Kenneth Lehman (1999) and Heungkyu Kim (2012).

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<sup>121</sup> Lehman, Kenneth Duane, *Bolivia and the United States: A Limited Partnership*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999.

<sup>122</sup> Kim, Heungkyu. 2012. "Enemy, Homager or Equal Partner?: Evolving Korea-China Relations." *Journal Of International And Area Studies* 19, no. 2: 47-62.

The first theory, developed by Kenneth Lehman, argues that asymmetrical relationships often end up harming the weaker of the two states. Lehman believes that, ultimately, the needs of the hegemon will always outweigh the needs of the partner country. He cites the bilateral relationship between the United States and Bolivia as its example, primarily focusing on the collapse of Bolivia's tin market. The second theory being reviewed, developed by Heungkyu Kim, states that asymmetrical bilateral relationships can be beneficial to both countries involved, and have long-term sustainability. He believes this does not happen by chance, however, but that it requires both states to view the relationship as a positive-sum game (especially the hegemon).

### **Needs of the State**

In his book *Bolivia and the United States: A Limited Partnership*, Kenneth D. Lehman studies the relationship between the United States and Bolivia, and its long-term adverse effects. While the two states had a flourishing partnership through much of the twentieth century, the needs of the hegemon ultimately outweighed the needs of the smaller state. Bolivia was the United States largest supplier of tin for many years, until the U.S. decided to increase its recycling efforts, and switched to importing aluminum<sup>123</sup>. Aluminum has a much higher rate of material return during the recycling process; however, Bolivia had no significant aluminum deposits to export, and no new market for selling tin<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Lehman, Kenneth Duane, *Bolivia and the United States: A Limited Partnership*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

Lehman argues that this led to the collapse of the tin market in Bolivia, and sent much of its workforce into unemployment and poverty<sup>125</sup>. Many of these workers turned to cocaine production and the illicit narcotics trade, ultimately turning Bolivia into one of South America's largest cocaine producers, and one of the United States' major suppliers. Because of this, Lehman's theory states that the asymmetrical relationship between a hegemon and weaker power will be beneficial for as long as the hegemon's needs are met<sup>126</sup>. This means that in relationships such as these, the needs of the weaker state will always come second and are thus, negligible to the hegemon<sup>127</sup>. Lehman's theory is supported by June Francis and Gary Mauser (2011), who assert in their work, "Collateral Damage: the 'War on Drugs', and the Latin America and Caribbean Region: Policy Recommendations for the Obama Administration," that the United States relationship with Latin American and Caribbean countries are more detrimental than beneficial to the US partners<sup>128</sup>.

### **Positive-Sum**

Heungkyu Kim presents an opposing argument and theory in his work, "Enemy, Homager, or Equal Partner?: Evolving Korea-China Relations." Kim reviews the long relationship between China and South Korea, and recounts the successes and failures throughout its history. However, Kim ultimately says that the relationship is both important and beneficial for the two countries, even though China is the regional

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<sup>125</sup> Lehman, Kenneth Duane, *Bolivia and the United States: A Limited Partnership*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

<sup>127</sup> Ibid

<sup>128</sup> Francis, June N. P., and Gary A. Mauser. 2011. "Collateral damage: the 'War on Drugs', and the Latin America and Caribbean region: policy recommendations for the Obama administration." *Policy Studies* 32, no. 2: 159-177.

hegemon, and South Korea is a weaker state by comparison<sup>129</sup>. Though some scholars question the continued strength of this relationship, Kim asserts that Korea-China relations will continue to grow<sup>130,131</sup>.

Kim's theory states that this type of long-term relationship between a hegemon and weaker state is possible by viewing it as positive-sum game<sup>132</sup>. As long as South Korea and China continue to grow their shared opportunities they will continue to have a successful bilateral relationship<sup>133</sup>. It is only threatened by focusing the relationship on one issue. He states that if Korea becomes too concerned with its security, neglecting other aspects of its relationship with China, it could throw a wrench in their partnership. Kim concedes that this may not be a perfect partnership, but can still be prosperous rather than detrimental<sup>134</sup>. This theory is supported by the works of Roberto Russell and Juan Gabriel Tokatlain (2011), and Gabriel Marcella (2013), who assert that Latin America has more opportunities for growth with strong ties to the United States in place<sup>135,136</sup>.

## Theory and Hypothesis

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<sup>129</sup> Kim, Heungkyu. 2012. "Enemy, Homager or Equal Partner?: Evolving Korea-China Relations." *Journal Of International And Area Studies* 19, no. 2: 47-62.

<sup>130</sup> Honey, Martha., and Tom Barry. *Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy At the Turn of the Millennium*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

<sup>131</sup> Kim, Heungkyu. 2012. "Enemy, Homager or Equal Partner?: Evolving Korea-China Relations." *Journal Of International And Area Studies* 19, no. 2: 47-62.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

<sup>135</sup> Russell, Roberto, and Juan Gabriel Tokatlain. 2011. "Beyond Orthodoxy: Asserting Latin America's New Strategic Options toward the United States." *Latin American Politics And Society* 53, no. 4: 127-146.

<sup>136</sup> Marcella, Gabriel. 2013. "The Transformation of Security in Latin America: A Cause for Common Action." *Journal Of International Affairs* 66, no. 2: 67.

This chapter will emphasize the works of Lehman (1999) and Kim (2012) to guide its focus and progression. The theories developed by Lehman and Kim have led to the consideration of one hypothesis. Kenneth Lehman's theory will support the hypothesis, along with the collected works in *Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium*, and Heungkyu Kim's theory will oppose the hypothesis. The hypothesis will be tested by analyzing empirical data gathered on this chapter's case studies (CARSI and CBSI), and will be reviewed in the final sections of the chapter. CARSI and CBSI will be the only case studies reviewed.

### **Hypothesis**

1. U.S. involvement via the Central American Regional Security Initiative and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative caused states with already struggling economies to worsen.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the effect of a hegemon on smaller, less powerful states. This is done through the lens of CARSI and CBSI as case studies for how the goals of a hegemon (U.S.) may take precedence over its partners' in an asymmetrical relationship. In this relationship, the United States aimed to reduce crime and damage DTOs in the region, largely due to their transnational presence and status as suppliers to the U.S. However, it is unclear if this pursuit has ultimately been more harmful than good for the partner countries involved. This chapter will review other

aspects of statehood for the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, and how they have been influenced by their security partnership with the United States.

To do this, individual states were selected to represent the United States' influence on state matters other than security. For Central America and CARSI, the three most crime-ridden states were chosen to represent the region. These include, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, also known as the Northern Triangle<sup>137</sup>. These states were chosen because they are often the three most discussed states in relations to security in Central America (of those supported by CARSI), while also having three of the weaker economies in Central America<sup>138</sup>. For the Caribbean and CBSI, the two most funded states were chosen. These include Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago was also chosen to become a regional law enforcement-training hub by the United States, and was thus supplied with the Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS)<sup>139</sup>.

The data used in this chapter was collected by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and participating partner countries, and is presented through various agencies. Data on current U.S. foreign assistance trends to Latin America, as well as the current funding status and efficacy of CARSI and CBSI are presented by the U.S. Congressional Research Service. Country-specific data gathered by the U.S. Department of State, as well as participating Central American states, is

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<sup>137</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando, Liana Sun Wyler, and June S. Beittel. 2010. "Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-34.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid

<sup>139</sup> *Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI): Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, June 19, 2013.*

presented by the Congressional Research Service and the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

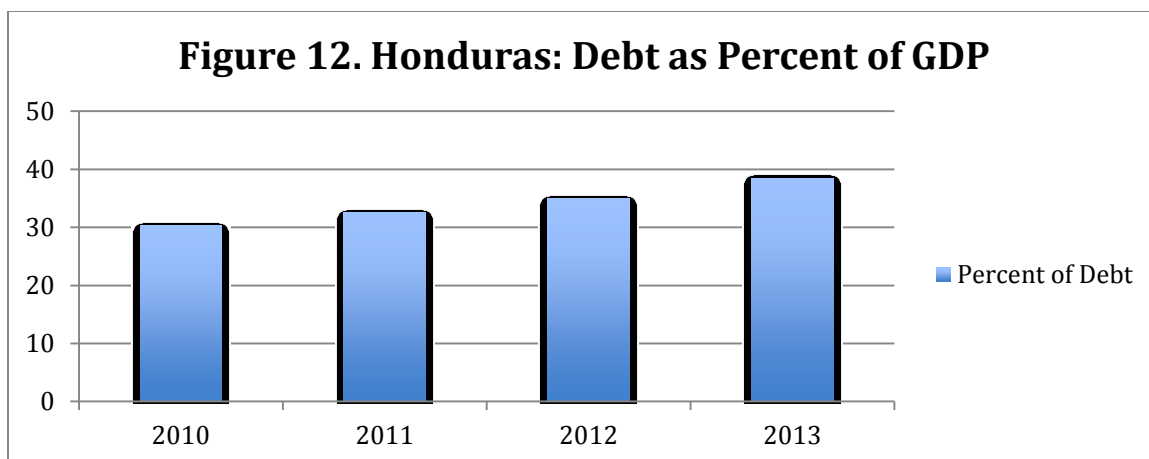
## Data

This section will use the collected data to analyze the relation between U.S. security partnerships CARSI and CBSI, and the economies of the Northern Triangle, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. In Central America, Honduras received the largest amount of assistance from the United States, amounting to 17% of CARSI's funding from FY2008 to FY 2012<sup>140</sup>. However, as part of this relationship, Honduras was required to allocated significant funding from its own budget to security efforts designed by the United States. **Figure 12** shows Honduras' debt as a percent of its gross domestic product from FY2010 to FY2013. In three years, government debt increased from 30 to nearly 40 percent of GDP<sup>141</sup>. This data supports Lehman's theory along with this chapter's hypothesis.

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<sup>140</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid



While this cannot be directly attributed to the requirements of the United States and CARSI, it is not the only Central American state to suffer from a worsening economy during CARSI funding. Honduras has seen an improvement in financial freedoms over recent years; however, much of its public debt has been attributed to poor public spending habits (of which CARSI can be attributed)<sup>142</sup>.

However, **Figure 13** shows the opposite trend in Guatemala's GDP per capita from FY2008 to FY2013<sup>143</sup>. Rather than showing a negative trend like Honduras, Guatemala's GDP per capita grew from just under \$5000 to over \$7000 in five years<sup>144</sup>. This shows that the security relationship between the United States and Guatemala may have actually benefited the Guatemalan economy, rather than harmed it. This could be attributed to greater employment opportunities provided via CARSI, as well as improved business opportunities following the overall reduction of drug-related crime. There are, however, multiple factors that could contribute to such an increase. Over the past decade

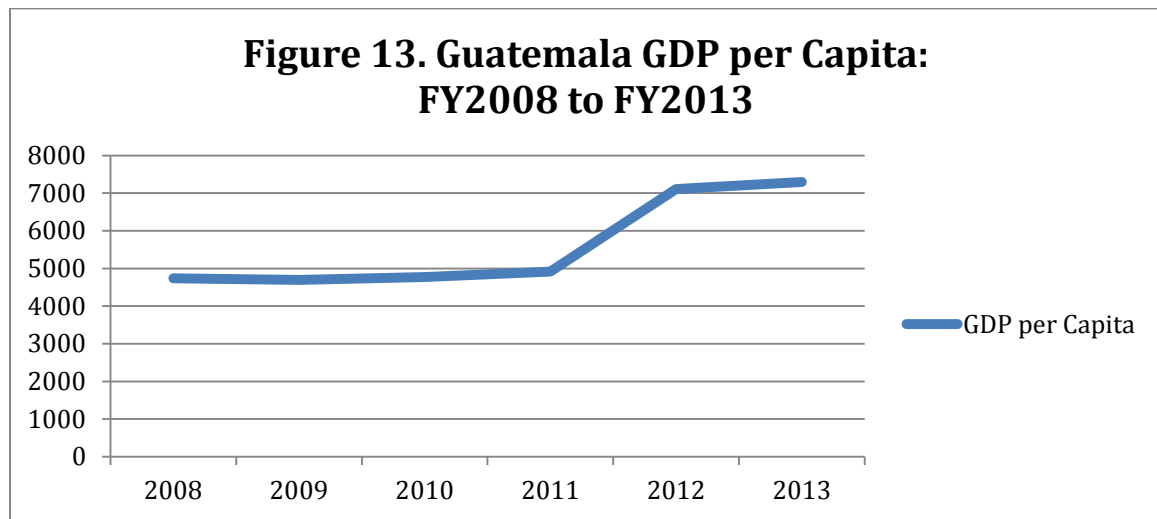
<sup>142</sup> *Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI): Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, June 19, 2013.*

<sup>143</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*



Guatemala has seen improvements in trade, investment, and business freedom, all of which could contribute to a flourishing economy<sup>145</sup>. This data does not support the hypothesis, but does support the theory presented by Kim.

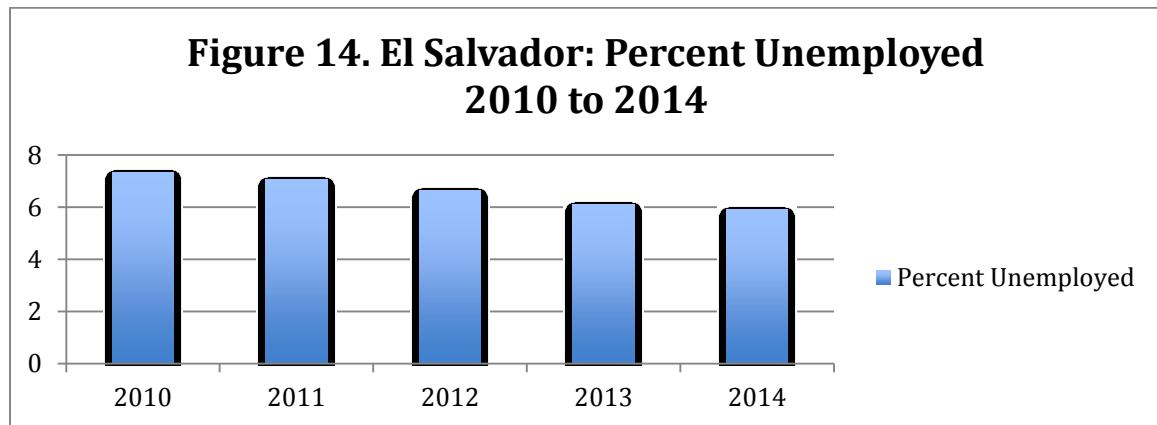


El Salvador showed similar trends to Guatemala, as can be seen below in **Figure 14**. From 2010 to 2014, the Salvadoran unemployment rate dropped steadily from over 7 percent to under 6<sup>146</sup>. This continues to show the possible benefits a security partnership with the United States may have on a nation's economy. Though it may be unrelated, this could possibly be attributed to the increase in security related jobs, as well as the educational and vocational training programs developed under CARSI. Reasons outside of CARSI for the decreasing unemployment rate could be the free trade agreement with the United States, and the consistently growing business and investment freedoms

<sup>145</sup> *Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI): Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, June 19, 2013.*

<sup>146</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

available to Salvadoran citizens<sup>147</sup>. This data also does not support the hypothesis, but does support Kim's theory of positive-sum relationships.

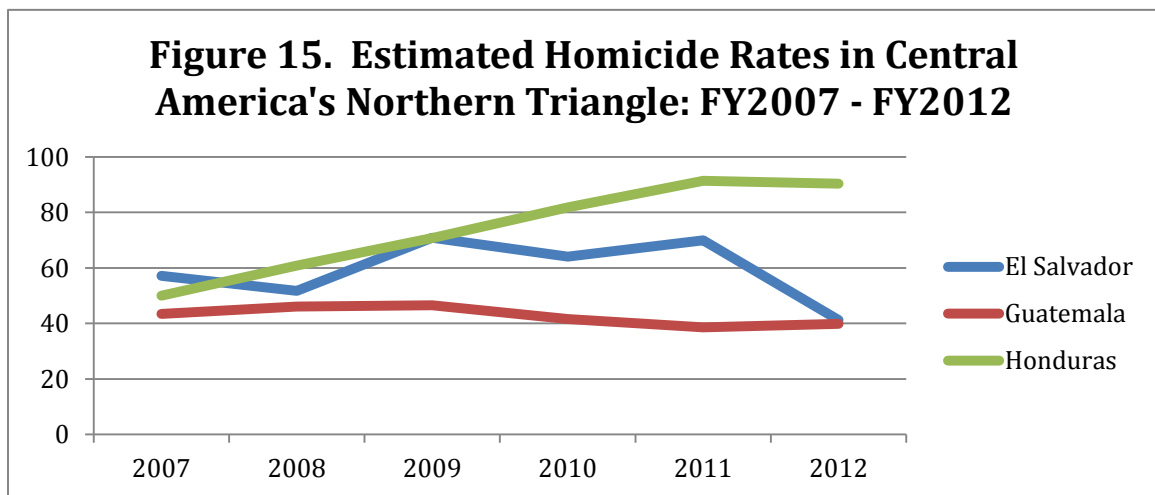


Interestingly, when compared to homicide and crime victimization rates, CARSI has been more successful at stimulating the economies of Central America's Northern Triangle. **Figure 15** shows homicide rates in the Northern Triangle from FY2007 to FY 2012. During that time, the only state with a noticeable decline in homicides was El Salvador, going from 59 per 100,000 inhabitants down to 40 (though peaking at above 70 in 2009 and 2011)<sup>148</sup>. Guatemala's decrease in homicide rates is negligible, reducing from 42 per 100000 down to 40. Honduras, however, rose from 50 per 100000 in FY2007 to 90 per 100000 in 2012<sup>149</sup>. This data was unexpected and shows that CARSI has been more successful at reducing unemployment rates than it has reducing homicides.

<sup>147</sup> *Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI): Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, June 19, 2013.*

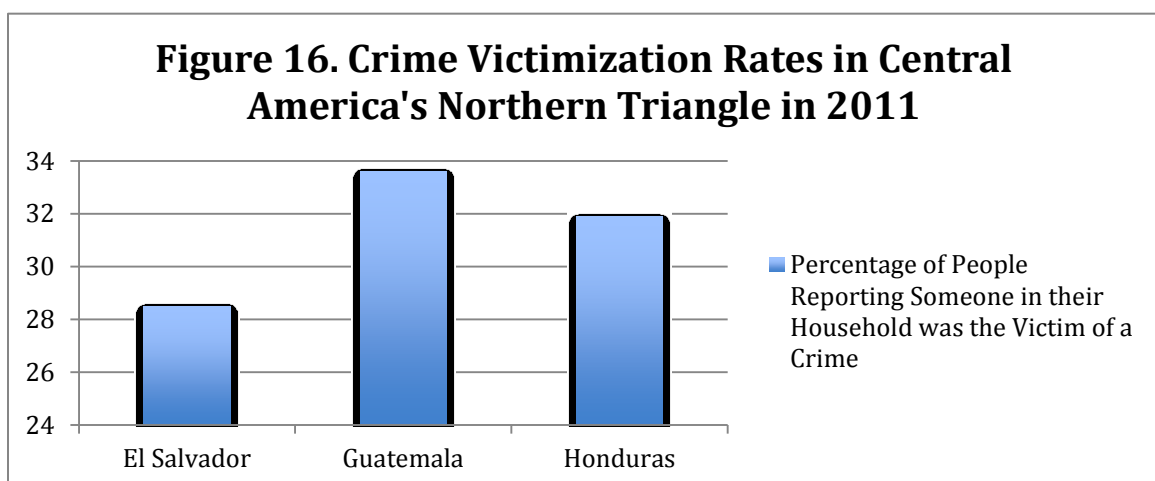
<sup>148</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid



\*Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants

**Figure 16** shows similar results to **Figure 15**, indicating that crime rates in the Northern Triangle remained high. In 2011 over one-third of people interviewed in Guatemala reported someone in their household had been the victim of a crime<sup>150</sup>. 32% of Hondurans reported at least one household victim, and 28.5% did the same in El Salvador<sup>151</sup>. This continues to show that the security efforts of CARSI may have been less successful than its community-based programs.



Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid

The partner countries of CBSI, however, have shown less positive results. Trinidad and Tobago was given the most responsibility under CBSI, receiving a large portion of U.S. assistance, as well as being designated the regional security partnerships training hub for all law enforcement in the region<sup>152</sup>. **Figure 17** shows Trinidad and Tobago's government debt as a percentage of GDP from FY2009 to FY2014<sup>153</sup>. This data shows that Trinidad and Tobago's debt significantly increased during that time period, rising from 14 percent to above 40<sup>154</sup>. While it may be attributed to other factors, this shows that the fiscal responsibility CBSI placed on Trinidad and Tobago may have been extremely detrimental to its economy. While they have had increasing trade and fiscal freedoms open over the past decade, limited market openness and poor regulatory efficiency are often cited as significant detriments to Trinidad and Tobago's economy<sup>155</sup>. This could be another explanation outside of CBSI. This data supports both the Lehman theory, as well as the hypothesis.

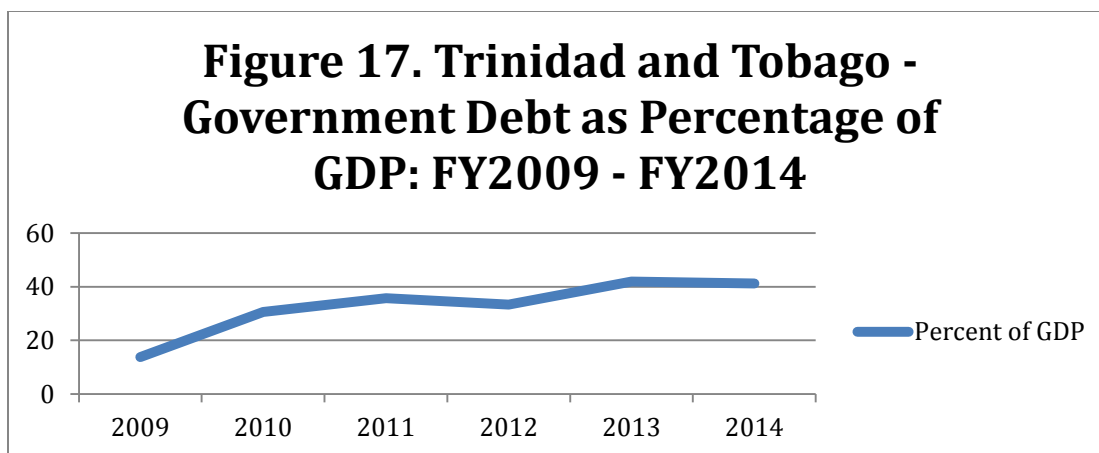
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<sup>152</sup> Johnson, Charles Michael., *Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative*.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid

<sup>154</sup> Johnson, Charles Michael., *Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative*.

<sup>155</sup> *Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI): Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, June 19, 2013.*



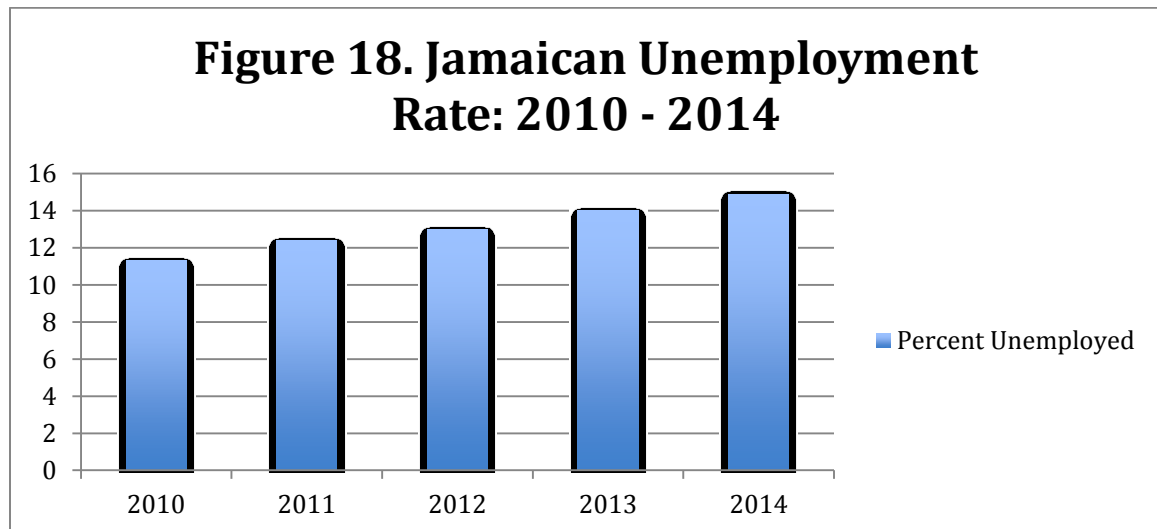
As can be seen below in **Figure 18**, Jamaica showed similar results to Trinidad and Tobago. This data shows Jamaica's unemployment rate from 2010 through 2014. Beginning at an 11 percent unemployment rate, it has increased to nearly 15 percent in 2014<sup>156</sup>. Again, while this cannot be directly attributed to the efforts and funding requirements of CBSI, it shows that Jamaica's economy has suffered since CBSI took effect in 2010. Factors contributing to this rise outside of CBSI could very well be what it is trying to combat. Government corruption, poor rule of law, and limited financial freedoms are often cited as reasons for Jamaica's poor economy and rising unemployment rate<sup>157</sup>. This data supports the hypothesis as well as Lehman's theory.

It should be noted that while the efforts of CARSII took effect, the unemployment rate of El Salvador dropped significantly, while Jamaica's unemployment rate only increased during CBSI. It is yet undetermined as to what this could be attributed, but

<sup>156</sup> *Regional Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSII) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI): Hearing before the Subcommittee On the Western Hemisphere of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, June 19, 2013.*

<sup>157</sup> Ibid

possibly it is the purely security based approach of CBSI versus the security and community-based approach of CARSI.



## Results and Discussion

Overall, the data has shown that CARSI may have actually benefited the economies of Central America's states, despite not being as successful at reducing drug-related crime as intended. CBSI-related data, however, has shown that it has significantly hampered the economies of some of the Caribbean partner states. These results were unexpected and conflict with one another. However, as each was contained within the individual regions/partnerships, the results can be attributed to the design of each program.

Unlike CBSI, CARSI took a multilayered approach to combating the already devastating security situation in Central America. Rather than just focusing on improving law enforcement and social justice programs, CARSI also worked from the bottom up, providing educational, vocational, and employment opportunities to at-risk

youths and communities<sup>158</sup>. This can explain why the unemployment rate in El Salvador decreased, and the GDP per capita in Guatemala increased despite the lack of success in reducing drug-related crime. CBSI, however, had no such community-based programs. Its efforts were purely security focused, creating an interdiction network between the Caribbean states, dramatically increasing law enforcement training, and security-related funding for each state involved. This can explain why economies of the examined Caribbean states have suffered so much since CBSI took effect. Rather than build security from the ground up, working on community-based programs to prevent at-risk youths and communities from participating in the drug trade, CBSI has largely been focused on interdiction. This shows that an asymmetrical relationship between a hegemon and smaller nations can be successful, however, it requires much more than a simple to fix to a common problem. The needs and goals of all states involved must be taken into account. This data can confirm as much as possible the hypothesis when related to CARSI, however, it cannot when related to CBSI.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between a hegemon and weaker state will almost always leave the power in the control of the hegemon. However, that does not mean the relationship will end to the detriment of the weaker power. The examples of the Central America Regional Security Initiative and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative have shown two different approaches and outcomes of this type of relationship. Rather than focus solely on its own goals, the United States took a multilayered approach with CARSI, and

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<sup>158</sup> Meyer, Peter J., and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2014. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service: Issue Brief* 1-38.

included the needs of the individual states. Instead of focusing entirely on law enforcement and criminal justice reforms, CARSI used community-based programs to give at-risk youths other options than the drug trade. During this time, the unemployment rate of El Salvador dropped significantly, and the GDP per capita of Guatemala grew year over year. The immediate results on drug-related crime were less successful, however, the long term results of this partnership will likely show a substantial reduction in drug-related crime, as well a strong, growing economy (as long as CARSI funding and programs continue).

This continues to show that community-based programs can greatly benefit the partner countries involved in these multilateral security relationships. Though there was success in Plan Colombia, the sustainability of it is in question because it only combated the problem head on, and did not focus on any community building efforts. The Mérida Initiative made some efforts to invest at-risk communities in Mexico; however, they were given far too little funding over far too little time. These programs need to be a priority. They are the foundation of long-term sustainability, and must be viewed as such when creating future partnerships.

Efforts must be made in the design of CARSI, rather than that of CBSI, which focused solely on law enforcement and interdiction capabilities in the region. CBSI was designed to be a preventative effort. Drug-related crime had not yet directly affected the region outside of being a major trafficking waypoint. However, by not taking the bottom-up approach of CARSI, and relying so heavily on funding updated security practices and programs, the long-term success of CBSI may be limited. The economies of Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica show that they have already declined since CBSI took effect. If



this trend continues, CBSI may be more detrimental to the Caribbean than beneficial. It ultimately comes down to how the hegemon develops and manages the pillars of the partnership. If it is designed solely towards the goals and needs of the hegemon, the relationship will likely fail and be harmful to the partner countries. However, if it is designed to take into account the needs and goals of all states involved, it has the potential to be a fruitful long-term relationship.

## **Conclusion**

U.S. security efforts in Latin America have largely been unsuccessful. While some immediate goals of the programs have been met, long-term sustainability, and a lack of long-term commitment from the United States has hindered efforts to improve stability. This has also damaged some relationships along the way, as countries feel less trust with the United States because of it. To improve security and regional stability for a longer period than the length of these programs, the United States needs to move away from reactive efforts. The Central America Regional Security Initiative was the most forward thinking of the four, incorporating programs for at-risk communities and youths. While Mérida made similar efforts, the deadlines for improvement were too demanding to create any longevity.

These kinds of programs need to become the foundation of security partnerships, at least those in Latin America. Most people involved with DTOs do not seek out a life of crime, but have little other alternatives. Introducing educational, recreational, employment, and economic opportunities into at-risk communities is the basis for long-term success and sustainability. Combating the problem head-on is necessary as well, as citizen security is paramount to the equation, but even if those efforts succeed, they will not last unless the youths of at-risk communities have other opportunities in front of them.

One of the glaring problems facing security partnerships such as these is the demand of the drug trade. The U.S.' illicit narcotics market is one of the most profitable in the world, and as long as it exists, there will be an organization attempting to meet the demand. U.S. security partnerships in Latin America may not be able to eliminate a drug

market in the United States, but they can go a long way to eliminating the supply, and creating a sustainable citizen security in the region.

The United States needs to be a full partner with Latin American states, and not just a supplier. This means increased training programs and collaborations between law enforcement and departments of justice, as well as programs outside of security related issues. Job-training and increased employment opportunities could go a long way to improving both the economic and security situations in many of these states. If the United States is going to commit to helping these countries, it needs to be a full effort. Partial, reactive responses to rising crime rates do not eliminate the problem, and are ultimately a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Further research must be conducted on the long-term effects of these programs once they are no longer in effect. For example, it is currently difficult to even fully gauge the legacy of Plan Colombia, as a supplemental initiative, the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative which has picked up where Plan Colombia left off. It is necessary to understand the influence of these programs on the partner countries and the region as much as possible, so the mistakes made can be avoided in the future. The United States needs to create better measures to understand how the programs are working and what effect they are having in Latin America, and they need to reevaluate their overall strategy in the region. Latin America is one of the most important regions to the United States. With one of our largest trade partners and largest suppliers of oil, creating long-term stability in the region can only benefit the United States. It is vital to create a new sustainable, strategic effort with long-term programs and goals if stability is ever to become a reality.

Additionally, this thesis can be used for comparison against past, present, and future security partnerships, regardless of the partners involved. Understanding the key to success is of the utmost importance. Future research could be conducted examining the successes and failures of U.S. security partnerships in Latin America against those of other states such as China and South Korea. Multilateral security partnerships have incredible potential, but have yet to see it fully realized. There are myriad opportunities to understand the value and effectiveness of security partnerships through further research, especially with the data available on U.S. security available.

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## Curriculum Vitae

### Experience

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#### **House Committee on Foreign Affairs *Fellow***

**January 2014 – May 2014**

Washington, DC

- Conducted all research on security partnerships in Latin America for the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.
- Liaised with other governmental organizations as well as NGO's on matters pertaining to the Western Hemisphere.
- Drafted op-eds, memos, and press releases.
- Assisted in Congressional Hearing preparation and execution.

#### **House Committee on Foreign Affairs *Intern***

**March 2013 – June 2013**

Washington, DC

- Assisted the staff of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.
- Conducted legislative research for the subcommittee's senior staff.
- Assisted in Congressional Hearing preparation and execution.
- Assisted in drafting op-eds and press releases.
- Organized and participated in meetings with foreign diplomats under the subcommittee's jurisdiction.
- Regularly communicated with Embassy staff, and members of the Congressional Research Service.

#### **Office of Congressman Frank A. LoBiondo *Intern***

**January 2013 – March 2013**

Washington, DC

- Conducted legislative research for Rep. LoBiondo's staff.
- Organized all federal grants awarded through New Jersey's Second District into one searchable, interactive spreadsheet.
- Assisted the Communications Director in drafting press releases.
- Interacted with constituents from NJ02 on a daily basis.

#### **Verizon Communications *Intern***

**June 2011 – August 2011**

Richmond, VA

- Worked alongside Verizon executives in the Regulatory Department.
- Regularly liaised with lobbyists, politicians, and judges in the state of Virginia to expand Verizon's presence.
- Created an interactive database tracking all legislation and votes pertaining to Verizon's interests.

### Education

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#### **Johns Hopkins University**

**December 2014**

- *Master of Arts* in Global Security Studies.

#### **Washington and Lee University**

**May 2012**

- *Bachelor of Arts* in Psychology, Sociology, and Anthropology.