



U.S. drug policy and Mexican civil-military relations: A challenge for the mutually desirable democratization process

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Abstract. As an institution of the government the military has an obligation to be useful to its society. Yet the use of the military in an internally oriented drug war is problematic for any democracy, especially one in transition from authoritarianism to democracy. This article examines U.S. and Mexican decisions to militarize the Drug War in light of Mexico's democratic transition. It critiques the Fox administration's reliance on active duty military officers to staff Drug War administrative positions as well as U.S. promotion of the myth that the military has a special ability for fighting drug production and trafficking.

Introduction

The election of Vicente Fox as President in 2000 constituted a watershed in Mexican history that was welcomed by both Mexico and the U.S.¹ The election of an opposition party candidate as President of Mexico culminated the first phase of a democratization process that had begun slowly decades ago but picked up steam when legislative elections in the 1990s dramatically increased the presence of the opposition. Mexican democracy, nevertheless, faces many hurdles on its way toward consolidation. Latin America's history suggests that civil-military relations are one of the areas that will demand great vigilance by those favoring democracy.

Mexico avoided many of the worst experiences associated with Latin American militaries (coups, major clashes between civilians and the military, as well as massive abuses committed by the military in the name of national security) because the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) created and controlled an effective authoritarian political structure. One of the major contemporary challenges for Mexico is to maintain civilian control over the military while the military and the political system reform themselves from serving the PRI to serving the nation. This article examines the potential impact of U.S. drug policy, embodied in a "war on drugs" on that challenge for Mexico.

I begin by examining the arguments for democratic control of the military and for military participation in domestic efforts to control the drug trade. I subsequently examine the rationales of the two governments for including

the military in their counter-drug strategies. Those rationales turn out to have some elements in common but also some on which there is intense disagreement. I then turn to a brief evaluation of the history of Mexican military involvement in fighting the drug trade and find that neither U.S. nor Mexican goals for military involvement have been accomplished. In the conclusion I speculate on why the outcome has been so negative and end on a pessimistic note for the future of Mexican civil-military relations because of the way in which U.S. drug policy at home is evolving.

Democratic control of the military and internal missions

The military is an institution of the government and its personnel and budget come from society. As such the military has an obligation to be useful to its society. Yet there is a historic tendency for militaries that are repeatedly called upon to help their societies to begin to question the leadership that cannot resolve those problems without turning to the military. In a democracy, a key question is how can society call on the military to help it achieve security and prosperity without undermining the civilian control over the military without which a democracy cannot long survive.

The easy answer is to limit military missions to external operations against other militaries. But in reality some domestic tasks require resources (people, skills, equipment, etc.) that the military controls and is not currently using against other militaries. Natural disasters of a magnitude that exceed the capabilities of local agencies, as well as the construction of some physical infrastructure come to mind, but even in the U.S. the military has been called upon to help out in cases of civil disturbances.² Continued democratic control under these conditions seems to depend on four factors: the frequency of these instances, the technical ability of civilians to command the operations, the institutional ability of civilians to conduct oversight investigations after the tasks have been completed and the level of professionalization of the military itself.³

Mexico's political evolution and the underdeveloped state of its economy have combined to render each of these four factors problematic for democratic control. The evolution of these factors is proceeding in an uncoordinated and often contradictory fashion as a result of broader socio-political dynamics that have little to do with civilian control per se. First, civil strife is increasing as the concentration of wealth proceeds under neo-liberal economic restructuring. In addition, the new politically diverse legislature has begun to flex its muscles, and the military is looking about for a new identity.

Using the military in a counter-drug strategy raises specific questions about the reform of civil-military relations. Taking the strategy of a "war on drugs"

as a given, three questions should structure any discussion about military participation in that strategy. Can the military make a useful contribution to the “War on Drugs”? What are the implications of that contribution for civilian control of the military? Are we willing to accept those implications in return for the benefits?

The question should not be whether the military has resources (manpower, skills, equipment, etc.) to contribute. Structuring the question as simply whether the military has resources ignores three fundamental issues. First, resources can be allocated to any number of institutions, departments and agencies. An efficient public policy would allocate those scarce resources in ways that could make the greatest impact. Consequently, rather than calling in the military to support the police, resources might be provided to the police so that they could do the job without relying on the military. Second, if the military uses its resources to fight drugs, this may impact its ability to carry out traditional defense functions; for instance, as a consequence of fighting guerrillas and drug traffickers, the Peruvian military proved unable to drive the Ecuadorian army from positions they took in disputed territory in 1995.⁴ Third, if those resources are idle in military hands if not applied to the drug war, then perhaps the military lacks a purpose and should be disbanded, as in Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti.

The analysis should be structured around the question of whether the military has something unique to contribute to a war on drugs. The answer cannot rest on the fact that the military have planes, radar, patrol boats and personnel. Coast Guards, police forces, customs and immigration services could all use these resources were they provided them. The dominant affirmative reply focuses on the military’s perceived resistance to corruption.

That resistance is usually attributed to two elements. First, the military is assumed to have a patriotic core and fervor unlike that found in police services. Soldiers have been separated from society in order to prepare to defend “the nation” against its enemies. To be a soldier is to offer one’s life for the defense of the nation. Hence, it should be more difficult for an enemy to bribe soldiers than policemen. Second, military personnel are expected to maintain a disciplined obedience to the chain of command. Consequently, they should be difficult to bribe unless their commanders are bribed. And it takes more to corrupt a high-ranking officer than a policeman on the street.

Of course, the theoretical reasons why the military may be less resistant to corruption is not proof of such resistance. Proof requires an empirical evaluation of how the military has behaved in drug wars across time and country.

If we were to find that the military can contribute uniquely to the drug war analysis should evaluate the implications of that participation for other things

society holds dear. In particular, we want to know whether such military participation creates a potential obstacle to the democratic process, particularly in a newly democratizing polity. It may be the case that society may have more influence over a police force that responds to elected officials (such as a Minister of the Interior who can be sacked by the President) than to military personnel performing police functions but who have a layer of military justice separating them from civilian complaints. An examination of the human rights record of the military during a drug war can shed light on this issue.

These questions about the appropriate use of the military and the answers from Mexico's past suggest that it is a very problematic time to be assigning the Mexican military policy and operational roles in combating the drug trade. To understand why the U.S. and Mexico have decided to risk the potential costs associated with militarizing their counter-drug strategies we need to examine U.S. and Mexican rationales for militarizing this issue.

U.S. rationale for militarization of drug policy in Mexico

U.S. support for using military resources in a counter-drug strategy has both internal and external rationales. The combination of the two, as well as the success of the U.S. in maintaining democratic control over its military, have proved powerful stimuli for a policy favoring foreign military participation in a U.S.-designed war on drugs.

President Richard Nixon called for a "total offensive" against drugs in 1971, bringing the image of a "war on drugs" into being. By contemporary standards, however, only a modest level of resources was dedicated to the fight. Attention to anti-drug measures waned during the 1970s, and eleven states even decriminalized the use of marijuana.⁵

Increased levels of drug consumption and associated violent crime in the 1980s sent the U.S. into a panic.⁶ With the Cold War winding down, drugs became identified as the chief national security threat and the public demanded greater action by their elected leaders. Politicians, in turn, fueled these passions in their competition for office. Many anti-drug policies were adopted with little analysis and debate about their likely impact on the drug phenomenon or their costs to civil liberties at home.⁷

It was in this context that the U.S. modified legislation governing the use of the military in operations at home. In 1981 Congress began changing a century of legislation limiting domestic military activities. Five years later the administration of President Ronald Reagan formally designated the drug issue as a "national security" issue. The result has been more sustained attention from the security bureaucracy, including the National Security Council

and the Pentagon, to the drug trade. Since that time U.S. military forces have played a more active support role for law enforcement agencies at home, particularly on the U.S.-Mexico border.⁸

This militarization of the drug war within the U.S. has provoked some controversy, especially when the military and U.S. citizens cross paths in violent encounters. The most extreme case occurred when four Marines patrolling the border mistakenly shot and killed an 18 year-old goat herder.⁹

There are limits on the extent of military participation that the U.S. is willing to accept; in 1998 Congress rejected a proposal to put 10,000 soldiers on the southwest border.¹⁰ U.S. Drug Czar General Barry McCaffrey himself has stated that he is not entirely comfortable with this mission. But the national near-hysteria over the drug "threat" is a strong incentive for politicians and law enforcement agencies to use the military as a signal to the voters that they are "tough" on drugs.

Use of the military at home has not proven problematic for civilian control of the military. Each of the four factors determining whether a problem in civil-military relations develops has a pro-civilian control character in the U.S. case. The technical ability of civilians to command the anti-drug operations in which the military participate is high. The institutional ability of civilians to conduct oversight investigations after the tasks have been completed is well developed and occurs within the Executive and Legislative branches, in the press and by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The level of professionalization of the military itself has meant that despite the increase of recourse to the military, civilian control remains strong. This fact undoubtedly makes citizen and politician more likely to call on the military for domestic missions.¹¹

External factors also stimulate U.S. support for incorporating foreign militaries into a war on drugs. During the Cold War the U.S. abandoned its prior policy of maintaining an arm's length relationship with Latin American militaries or abolishing them altogether. In search of a "reliable" ally against our greatest security threat (Communism), U.S. policy came to depend upon Latin American militaries as the ultimate guarantors of pro-U.S. governments in the hemisphere. Once the U.S. defined drugs as a "security issue" it was almost inevitable that U.S. policy would demand an active role by an old ally, the Latin American military.¹²

U.S. policy supports a multitude of different ways of incorporating the military in this fight. All branches of the military, as well as its operational and intelligence capacities are utilized. Thus the army eradicates crops, the navy intercepts boats and the air forces pursue small planes. Individual officers are expected to lend prestige and credibility to policies by taking leadership positions. Hence, President Bill Clinton, who admitted to having tried marijuana

as a youth, named an Army General as the coordinator of his administration's anti-drug efforts.

The U.S. government is cognizant of the dangers that using the military in domestic missions pose for many Latin American democracies. Bilateral and inter-American diplomacy reinforce the message to civilians and military officers that democracy is the only acceptable form of government in the hemisphere. The Department of Defense includes respect for democracy as a theme in the myriad of training courses attended by Latin American civilians, bureaucrats and officers. Yet a look at the countries around the hemisphere demonstrates that the U.S. is willing to stretch the definition of "democracy" when convenient. Outright military control is unacceptable, but a level of military influence that seriously undermines democratic consolidation is acceptable.

The U.S. government is aware of the potential problems *for itself* that might develop when foreign militaries become involved in these domestic oriented activities. Thus it seeks to maintain some distance between the activities of Latin American militaries in the drug war and actual U.S. military participation. For example, it is the CIA and not the Pentagon that contracts a private U.S. company to provide surveillance and target small planes for the Peruvian Air Force to pursue, and if "necessary," shoot down. A further layer is introduced because the intelligence operation only provides information; a Peruvian makes the final decision about whether to shoot down a plane that doesn't properly identify itself or land. The U.S. government was sufficiently aware of the potential risks of this operation that they temporarily suspended it in 1994 until Congress passed a law absolving the U.S. government of any responsibility should a foreign aircraft shoot down an innocent plane after receiving information from U.S. intelligence.¹³ Such layering is also evident in the CIA-private contractors network in Colombia.¹⁴

None of the above is to suggest that the U.S. government does not also support foreign police and other non-military agencies in the war on drugs. It clearly does. The point here is that the U.S. insists that the military play an active role, channels some resources to that effort, and judges the willingness of other countries to be an ally in the war on drugs partly by whether they accept incorporating the military in the "war." Rather than question the viability of the drug war strategy, the U.S. government insists that more resources, including the military, be used.

Mexican rationales

Mexico's military could not credibly be used against the U.S. were the U.S. to ever decide that its national security interests required seizing control of

some Mexican assets. The U.S. would certainly punish Mexico severely if it utilized great military force to pressure Belize or Guatemala on a matter deemed to be of national security interest to Mexico. There are, in short, few external traditional missions for the Mexican military.

The Mexican government is accustomed to using the military to confront domestic threats. Mexico's relative political stability since the 1930s was the result of important degrees of social and economic mobility as well as a political system that promoted the turnover of officeholders, albeit all of the same party. In this context the PRI developed a strategy for dealing with political opposition of "ignore where possible, coopt those who can't be ignored and repress those who can't be coopted". The military was thus relatively little used in repression (as compared with the typical Latin American experience) and performed civic action operations in support of the social and economic mobility policies of the PRI.¹⁵

In the case of drugs, the military has traditionally been involved in pressuring or extorting Mexican marijuana and heroin producers and traffickers.¹⁶ Sinaloa state was the early focus of activity, but as the trade expanded other military regional commanders became involved as well. The drug trade was not a major issue for Mexico because there was little domestic consumption of heroin or marijuana, the money produced by the trade was not great enough to either surpass the limits of everyday corruption that helped produce political stability nor to stimulate continued violent confrontations among rival gangs to control the trade. Military participation in Mexican policies towards the drug trade thus did not threaten civilian control, but was rather one of the benefits (for the officers involved) of civilian control.

This scenario was dramatically upset beginning in the early 1970s as a result of the combination of multiple factors. U.S. success in disrupting the supply of heroin from Turkey created a larger market for Mexican production. Whereas in 1972 Mexico supplied 10–15% of U.S. heroin demand, by 1975 that percentage had increased to 80%.¹⁷ The wealth of Mexican traffickers increased rapidly. Greater wealth meant more money to be extorted by public and military officials, thereby upsetting the relative balance in political influence among Mexican groups attempting to affect public policy. The increased wealth also stimulated new levels of violence among traffickers for control of the trade, producing shoot-outs in populated areas and frightening the citizenry.

The U.S. began to make significant efforts to get the Mexican government to control Mexican supply at this time. In 1969 the U.S. developed Operation Intercept, which increased the surveillance of people crossing the border, thereby discouraging U.S. citizens from shopping in Mexico. The negative economic impact on business on the Mexican side of the border proved an

important stimulus for a change in Mexican policy towards drug production and trafficking.

A final factor was the development of internal urban guerrilla movements that used drug trafficking networks to smuggle arms. These groups threatened the Mexican government, and by implication the Mexican military itself. My interviews and personal experience in the 1970s indicate that farmers could pay off the local military commanders when they came through at pre-determined times. Beginning in 1973–74 and continuing for a few years, the military engaged in serious eradication and confiscation of marijuana and heroin in the Sinaloa-Durango highlands. The dramatic use of force included gross violations of the human rights of those from whom they had previously extorted.

The end of the urban guerrilla movement and the sudden increase in U.S. consumption of cocaine coming in from Colombia via the Caribbean took some of the pressure off the Mexican government. The size of the payoffs offered by drug traffickers undoubtedly contributed to an easing of local enforcement. The interest of the governing elites in paying the costs of a vigorous anti-drug campaign seems to have waned by the early 1980s.

The Mexican people and government were not staunch supporters of a drug war at this time. The Mexican public did not perceive drug production and trafficking as a major issue because there was little heroin and cocaine consumption within Mexico.¹⁸ Traffickers did not possess either the firepower or the wealth to wreck havoc across the nation; drug violence was generally confined to specific locales, such as Culiacán, Sinaloa. From a Mexican public and private perspective, drugs were a U.S. issue and it didn't make sense for Mexico to utilize scarce resources in a dubious effort to help solve a U.S. consumption problem.

U.S. success in disrupting Colombian routes in Caribbean put an end to Mexico's relative isolation from the negative externalities of the drug trade by the mid-1980s. The search for alternative routes for cocaine to the U.S. brought new riches to the Mexican gangs that were contracted by Colombians. That increased wealth has meant not only more lucrative bribes and extortion opportunities, but also a significantly increased level of violence as rivals seek to expand their market share.¹⁹ Most recently, the dramatically increased surveillance at the U.S.-Mexico border after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, resulted in a large supply of cocaine and heroin backing up in Mexico. Traffickers began dumping them in the domestic market, thereby sparking a fear that Mexican consumption of these up to now little used drugs would increase.²⁰

Consequently, the drug issue has become a domestic issue in Mexico today more than ever before. The U.S. is partly responsible, but the new

levels of corruption, violence and consumption have many Mexicans deciding that simply blaming the U.S. is no longer sufficient. The “War on Drugs” strategy is gaining more Mexican support, and with it, the continued use of the Mexican military. As President Zedillo declared in 1997, “We can’t turn around the problem simply. . . . Organized crime is the most severe threat to our national security. It’s an infection, it’s like a cancer. So much money, so much violence, so much cynicism is involved. Inevitably you are taking a risk.”²¹

Mexico’s recent experience

The 1995–2000 National Drug Control Program continued the evolution of Mexico’s counter-narcotics strategy toward greater cooperation with the U.S. and higher profile roles for the military. Bilateral ties were formalized in a U.S.-Mexico High Level Contact Group for Drug Control (1996). A joint presidential declaration in 1997 called for increased interception capabilities and training of Mexican soldiers. A measure long sought by the U.S., given perceptions about the weakness and corruption of the Mexican judicial system, was also agreed upon: the extradition for trial to the U.S. of suspects caught in Mexico.²² Prior to the agreement the U.S. had used bribes and kidnapping to get suspects out of Mexico, but at the cost of Mexican good will. For example, after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of the kidnapping from Mexico of Dr. Humberto Alvarez Machain, suspected of participating in the killing of DEA agent Enrique Camarena Salazar in 1985, joint anti-narcotics operations with the United States were temporarily suspended.²³

Evidence of civilian corruption in the counter-narcotics efforts emerged in high places to cast doubt on whether progress could be accomplished. In February 1995 Mario Ruiz Massieu, a former anti-drug official in the attorney general’s office, was arrested at Newark airport after federal agents found 9.3 million dollars in his American bank accounts, with an estimated 10 million more in accounts elsewhere. “Almost all the money was paid into his accounts during the eight months he was Mexico’s top anti-drug official.”²⁴ In June 1995 Luis Hector Palma Salazar, leader of the Sinaloa drug cartel was arrested in Mexico but seven federal agents were employed among his bodyguards.²⁵ Humberto Garcia Abrego, brother of a former head of the Gulf cartel serving 11 life sentences in the U.S., walked out of the federal drug prosecutor’s offices and disappeared.²⁶ In the words of one ex-federal agent, “I gradually started to realize the only reason federal agents, including me, carry out investigations, is so that our bosses can get more information on

drug operations. Then, they use it as a bargaining chip to get bigger and bigger bribes from the narcos. . .”²⁷

Zedillo responded to his credibility problem by seeking a greater military presence in the drug war. In May 1995 the military’s role was expanded to include using jet fighters to pursue suspected cargo jets coming in from South America.²⁸ An Army General, Jose Gutierrez Rebollo was appointed the new drug czar in December 1996. His U.S. counterpart, General Barry McCaffrey was pleased with the appointed, saying “General Gutierrez . . . has a reputation of impeccable integrity, and he is known as an extremely forceful and focused commander.”²⁹ Lower level military officers also replaced state and local police, as well as state attorneys general.³⁰

The U.S. government rushed to support the increased Mexican military presence in the drug war. The U.S. Army began, for the first time, training Mexican soldiers in an elite counter-narcotics unit. Over 1,000 Mexican soldiers were to be trained at U.S. bases every year. Reversing an historical animosity, Mexican soldiers became the largest group of foreign soldiers receiving military instruction at bases within the U.S.. The CIA offered intelligence courses to 90 Mexican officers.³¹

The new focus on the military did not mean that there were no efforts to reform the civilian agencies involved in the drug war. In August 1995 Mexican Attorney General Antonio Lozano, under suspicion himself, fired 737 officers, one-fifth of the judicial police force.³² Lozano was replaced in December 1996, along with his drug czar in the reshuffle that brought Gen. Gutierrez Rebollo to office. A few months later a major reorganization of the anti-drug operations was implemented. A thousand new agents, specially trained and subjected to drug, polygraph and psychological tests as well as checks on their financial background, were to staff a new anti-narcotics unit. Salaries and benefits were also to be raised.³³

The further militarization of the Mexican war on drugs, however, did little to change the situation. Within three months of being named drug czar, Gen. Gutierrez Rebollo was arrested for protecting one of the Mexican cartels. Gen. Tito Valencia Ortiz was named his temporary replacement and more soldiers replaced civilian policemen, in a signal that the authorities still had confidence in the military.³⁴

Yet the very next month, Brig. Gen. Alfredo Navarro Lara was charged with drug corruption, bribery and criminal association. By mid-year 1997 the Mexican military confirmed that 34 officers, including 10 generals, were under investigation for having ties to drug dealers. The new elite drug units fared little better, as the names of 15 members were found in documents seized from traffickers in 1998. In 1999 the entire elite 96th Infantry Battalion (570 soldiers) was suspected of appropriating the cocaine they had seized.³⁵

And in 2000 another two senior Army Generals were arrested for drug related corruption.³⁶

It is not just that corruption in the military is growing as a result of being involved in the drug war. The military has also been accused of violating the human rights of those suspected of drug-related crimes.³⁷ When the PRI was in control of the government, the opposition in Congress could use such military behavior to attack the authoritarian system by calling for more accountability.³⁸ It simply cannot be good for democratic consolidation if Congress can raise the same human rights criticisms of a non-PRI president. U.S. training has not helped provide a mechanism for human rights oversight, either. In order to convince Mexico to accept the training, the U.S. had to agree that it would not monitor the performance of these officers once they returned to Mexico.³⁹

When Fox was President-elect and not yet directly faced with “solving” the drug issue, his team contemplated reducing the role of the military in their strategy, relying instead more on civilian investigators and prosecutors.⁴⁰ The highly touted vetting system that was announced in 1997 had never functioned well and the Fox administration is trying to improve it. Once again there is discussion of an integrated organized crime unit. “A new Federal Agency of Investigation, akin to the FBI, is being formed that will become the primary detective service for all federal agencies, including the revamped organized-crime division. This agency will absorb the federal judicial police, the current investigative unit, which is much maligned for chronic corruption and is being overhauled and cleaned up ahead of the changeover.”⁴¹

The U.S. government supports this plan, perhaps in recognition that militarization had made little positive impact on the drug war. U.S. funding for law enforcement assistance to Mexico is expected to reach 12 million dollars, up from 10 million the prior year and only 4 million in 2000.⁴²

The crime and violence of the drug war strategy, however, is giving Fox little breathing room, domestically or abroad. Faced with this pressure, he has returned to the hope of his predecessors: that the military is both more efficient and honest than even his elite and U.S. trained civilian law enforcement agencies. He thus appointed an active-duty military officer, Brigadier General Rafael Macedo de la Concha to the cabinet-level position of Attorney General, the first time in Mexico’s history that a serving military officer was appointed as the nation’s chief law enforcement officer. Civilians, including the drug czar, will report to General Macedo de la Concha.

Despite these efforts, Fox is perceived as making little headway against corruption. Mexico’s first opposition president in 80 years ended his first year in office with falling popularity.⁴³

Conclusion

I have argued that the use of the military in an internally oriented drug war is problematic for any democracy, but especially one in transition from authoritarianism to democracy. It is worrisome that the new Fox administration has given active duty military officers administrative positions that not even Zedillo or other PRI presidents granted (Attorney General rather than the subordinate drug czar). In addition, and bucking a trend that democratizing countries in Latin America are implementing, Fox ended any speculation that the post of Secretary of Defense might go to a civilian, by announcing that it would always be held by a military officer.

The U.S. strategy of a War on Drugs is making a large contribution to Fox's reliance on the military for internal missions despite the lack of civilian oversight and results from decades of such experience. The U.S. continues, in spite of evidence to the contrary, to promote the myth of a special ability of the military in fighting drug production and trafficking.

The War on Drugs strategy, articulated by the U.S. and now fully adopted by the Fox administration, keeps drugs valuable while providing ineffective counter-measures. The result is not only more violence as trafficking networks compete to corner the lucrative market. The strategy also creates a tempting target for all agencies charged with enforcing the anti-drug laws to attempt to extort traffickers as well as producers. And for those officers, civilian or military, who attempt to enforce the laws, the traffickers have a ready answer: "plata o plomo," money or lead.

Notes

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2. Clayton D. Laurie and Ronald H. Cole, *The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders, 1877-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1997).
3. Huntington defines professionalization as "a special type of vocation (distinguished by) . . . its expertise, responsibility, and corporateness." The central skill of military officers is "the management of violence." Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 8, 11.
4. David R. Mares, "Deterrence in the Ecuador-Peru Enduring Rivalry: Designing Around Weakness," *Security Studies* Winter 1996/97 (6): 2.
5. Steven Wisotsky, *Beyond the War on Drugs* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990), 3.
6. It is analytically incorrect to assume a causal link between consuming drugs and committing crimes, even violent ones. Most users commit no crime other than use. Most drug-related violent crime is committed among rivals trying to monopolize the illegal

- market and is thus more directly attributable to the legal status rather than pharmacological characteristics of the substance. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997," *Special Report* January 1999.
7. Wisotsky, *Beyond the War on Drugs*, 117–140. Two prime examples of ill-conceived policies are the Civil Asset Forfeiture (CAF) law that was earlier proclaimed to constitute a major weapon in the War on Drugs and the draconian measures against crack users and traffickers. CAF has only recently been significantly modified and the alleged differences between crack and other forms of cocaine are now in scientific disrepute.
 8. Timothy J. Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978–1992* (Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas Press), pp. 103–145; William W. Mendel and Murl D. Munger, "The Drug Threat: Getting Priorities Straight," *Parameters* Summer 1997, 110–124.
<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/97summer/munger.html>
 9. Steve Fainaru, "'A' Line in the Sand; Drugs and Illegal Immigrants Have Turned the U.S.-Mexico Border into a War Zone, Catching Innocents in the Cross-fire," Part 1, *The Boston Globe* January 4, 1998, 13.
 10. Richard A. Serrano, "Plan to use Military in Drug Fight Dies," *Los Angeles Times* October 29, 1997, A6.
 11. Not everyone is so sanguine. Even within the military there have been some concerns expressed. See the thought provoking article in the Army's journal. Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., "The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2012," *Parameters* Winter 1992–93, 2–20.
 12. Cf., Coletta Youngers, "The War in the Andes: The Military Role in U.S. International Drug Policy," Conference Paper No. 36, The Columbia University-New York University Consortium, 1990; *Strategic Assessment 1998: Engaging Power for Peace* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), pp. 18–19.
 13. Karen DeYoung, "U.S. Shares Fault in Peru Incident; Probe Blames Procedures in Shoot-down," *The Washington Post* July 31, 2001; "Peru: Drug Surveillance Flights on Hold," *NotiSur – South American Political & Economic Affairs*, Volume 11, Number 41, November 9, 2001.
 14. Julian Borger and Martin Hodgson, "A Plane is Shot Down and the U.S. Proxy War on Drug Barons Unravels," *The Guardian* (London), June 2, 2001, 3.
 15. On Mexican political stability, see Jorge I. Domínguez, "Introduction" in Domínguez (ed.), *Mexico's Political Economy: Challenges at Home and Abroad* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982); for the Mexican military's evolution after the 1930s, see Roderic Ai Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: the Military in Modern Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), and Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Containing Armed Groups, Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime in Mexico: The Role of the Military," in John Bailey and Roy Godson (eds.), *Organized Crime & Democratic Governability: Mexico and the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), pp. 126–158.
 16. Astorga claims that drug trafficking in this early period was a creature of the corrupt and authoritarian political system. But the fact that Mexico is a neighbor of the largest drug market in the world means that drug trafficking would develop even were Mexico democratic and had low levels of corruption. Note the production in Canada and export to the U.S. of high potency marijuana. Allison Hanes, "'Made in Quebec' highs: Cops claim major bust of drug ring exporting to the U.S. – 47 arrested" *The Gazette* (Montreal),

- June 15, 2000, A4. Consequently, it is more useful to think of Mexican state agencies as using the illegal nature of the enterprises to extract rents from these business people.
17. Morgan Murphy and Robert H. Steele, *The World Narcotics Problem: The Latin American Perspective*, Report of the Special Study Mission to Latin American and the Federal Republic of Germany, 93rd Congress, Committee on Foreign Affairs (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 14, as cited in Miguel Ruiz-Cabañas, "Mexico's Permanent Campaign: Costs, Benefits, Implications," in Peter H. Smith (ed.), *Drug Policy in the Americas* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 155.
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