



NARCOTERRORISM in Latin America

A Brazilian Perspective

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Foreword

As the United States continues its Global War on Terrorism it is now looking beyond the battlefields in Afghanistan and Iraq to consider engaging in other regions where terrorism and attendant forms of lawlessness attack the basic freedoms surrounding representative government and economic development. The Middle East, Horn of Africa, and Southeast Asia come to mind. However, Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro reminds us of the imminent threat of terrorism in our Western Hemisphere. The paper suggests that while continuing our counterterrorism initiatives elsewhere, the United States, with its friends, can leverage those capable countries in the region to pursue the terrorism threat at our doorstep.

Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro is a source of expert advice for military planners in a time of great geostrategic complexity and evolving national vision for a world in flux. He is a former commander of Brazil's 1st Special Forces Battalion, a capable, world-class unit that specializes in unconventional warfare and counterterrorism. Indeed, retired Major General Alvaro was directly engaged in close combat, successfully defeating terrorists and guerrilla fighters in two major campaigns. In the 1970s he fought against the Araguaia Guerrilla Force (FOGUERA) revolutionary movement in the Parrot's Beak (Bico do Papagaio) area, now in the Brazilian state of Tocantins. In the 1990s he commanded a special operations task force to destroy the FARC front known as the Simon Bolivar Command in operations along the Traíra River, on the border between Brazil and Colombia. All of this was facilitated by General Alvaro's appreciation and implementation of unconventional warfare and civil military operations. While General Alvaro speaks from a decidedly Brazilian point of view, he offers North American readers insightful commentary about narcoterrorism in the Hemisphere.

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Narcoterrorism in Latin America: A Brazilian Perspective builds a case for giving greater attention to the narcoterrorism threat. General Alvaro suggests that security conditions in Colombia and the Tri-Border Area (TBA), where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet, deserve

the immediate attention of security officials of the Hemisphere's more capable countries. In this paper, General Alvaro provides a review of Colombia's security situation—the history and current situation—and details his thoughts about the United States' support of the government of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Velez. President Uribe wants increased US support to provide more military resources, so the country can go on the offensive against the FARC and reestablish a government presence throughout Colombia. General Alvaro's paper expresses his concern the United States might abandon Uribe's "Plan Colombia" just as it is poised to make significant progress in the war against narcoterrorism.

General Alvaro also details the situation in the TBA in great detail and describes FARC linkages within that area. The FARC's initiative to create America's Revolutionary Force (Força Revolucionária da América) may suggest an increasing narcoterrorism threat for the TBA and elsewhere.

In the section "Brazil Confronts the Beast," a concise summary is provided of Brazil's strategy, force structure and disposition. Brazil has taken considerable measures to reorganize and modernize its forces (within budget constraints) to meet the new threats that it perceives are affecting the Amazon basin and the hemisphere in general. Here the reader will find the descriptions of the Calha Norte and Sistema de Vigilância da Amazônia (SIVAM) projects especially interesting. Calha Norte is a long-standing project to ensure defense and development in border areas in north and west Brazil; SIVAM is a newly installed surveillance system for protecting the Amazon from unauthorized incursions. They are important to understand because they are tangible evidence of Brazilian strategic thinking.

General Alvaro's concludes that the narcoterrorism threat must be countered by regional cooperation among the Latin American nations that are most capable of taking meaningful action. He enjoins North Americans to respect each country as a unique entity, with its own expertise and capacities for countering narcoterrorism.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael C. McMahon
Director, Strategic Studies Department
Joint Special Operations University

1. Introduction: The Global Beast Narcoterrorism

The end of the last millennium witnessed the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the demise of the Soviet Empire, and the termination of the Cold War. We are in a period characterized by the repudiation of totalitarianism, the resurgence of democracy and the geopolitics of the economic blocks. There have been many ruptures, clashes and changes resulting from fragmentation and globalism in the international environment. This paper focuses on the problem of narcoterrorism and its impact in the Western Hemisphere. It discusses broadly the illegal drug trade as it has evolved today and provides a view of narcoterrorist organizations. The situation in Colombia is addressed, and this is followed by a discussion of issues in the Tri-Border Area, where Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay meet. A detailed description of Brazil's actions to face up to the challenge of narcoterrorism is provided.

The beginning of the 21st Century, particularly since the tragedy of 11 September 2001, is demonstrating that the current threats are completely different from the former ones in nature and dimension. The warfare resources classically used to fight the dangers in the recent past are not enough to face the conflicts of the new century. Besides new technologies, it's absolutely necessary to rethink the new global security environment.

The multipolar nature of today's strategic environment is likely to continue into the next two decades. Regional powers are emerging onto the global scene as today's driving forces move both developed and developing

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nation-states into global networks of economic interest. This fact creates a strategic framework for friction as cultures, religions, governments, economies, and people collide in a highly competitive global market. Today, there are over 190 nation-states worldwide, as many as 30 have the potential for failure as a consequence of their inability to meet the needs of their populations, or because of ethnic, cultural or religious conflict.

Weak and failed states have become the primary source of international instability, and they have become shelters and breeding grounds for such transnational threats as terrorism, drug-trafficking, weapons smuggling, refugee generation, environmental degradation, and political and religious fundamentalism. There is no doubt that violence on a national, transnational, and subnational level will continue. The fact that failed states are the primary source of instability means that irregular wars, in the context of asymmetric conflicts, within weak states, rather than conventional wars among powerful states, will prevail.

Slide into Narcoterrorism

As the bipolar world crumbled and as the USSR was less and less able to subsidize anti-western terrorists, the classic groups exercising political violence had to look elsewhere for funding. A remarkable example of such a shift was the Provisional IRA's (Irish Republican Army) large-scale 1980s move into the organized crime arena. While historically involved in minor protection-racket activities, as the Cold War drew to an end the Provisional IRA became more involved in illicit gambling, running game arcades and taxi firms, and even drug running. This diversification was simply a more sophisticated version of a slide into less-than-political activities mirrored elsewhere, most often in Latin America. In this context, three IRA agents were arrested in August 2001 in Bogotá, Columbia, suspected of teaching urban bombing techniques to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC—Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) narcoterrorists.¹ The FARC in Colombia and remnants of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) in Peru were rewarded by local drug lords in return for supplying plantation and supply route security, with financial payments exceeding the unpredictable and at times more dangerous kidnapping and bank robbery activities previously used to raise funds.

This new beast—narcoterrorism—has been identified globally: in Sri Lanka (the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE), in Turkey (the Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK), among warrior factions in Somalia, among ethnic groups fighting for independence from the Russian Federation in Chechnya, and in other countries. Drug traffickers and terrorists tend to thrive in chaotic countries characterized by failed states with ineffective governments that have been destabilized by war and internal conflict. International criminal networks have

become politically powerful. Criminals not only buy the politicians' protection but also appropriate for themselves the state's government structure to defend their business. Currently, failed states are the paradise for drugs, arms and terrorism activities. Sometimes, the association between illegal business and the government's activities are so strong that it is not possible to distinguish where one finishes and the other starts. There are countries or areas within them where traditional laws are not applicable and criminals make their own rules. A typical example is Transdniester, a region in the former Soviet Republic of Moldova, where the main exportation product is illegal arms.²

The spectrum of transnational narco-terrorism, characterized by the "lethal triangle"³ integrated

The spectrum of transnational narcoterrorism ... emerged on the world stage as a new and very dangerous threat to human society.

by narcotraffickers, terrorists, and weapons smugglers, which underscore organized crime activities in the great urban centers already afflicted by the migration of minorities, emerged on the world stage as a new and very dangerous threat to human society. Coalitions of murderous, pseudo-revolutionary criminals, who receive billions of illegal dollars from producing and selling drugs, are taking advantage of the deregulation of the financial markets that currently facilitates cross-border money transfers through complex operations involving the Internet and complex financial schemes of money laundering that combine legal and illegal practices and institutions.

Regarding the Western Hemisphere, the diabolical union of domestic and Cuban-exported communist political insurgency in Colombia with drug trafficking, as a consequence of the end of the Cold War, is one of the most serious security challenges to international security. Communist guerrillas and rural bandit groups became completely integrated with highly expert criminal syndicates and, dramatically, the problem, with severe implications to neighboring states and to the remaining superpower—the United States of America—is far from being resolved.

2. The Illegal Drug Trade

People have used drugs to affect their health and alter their moods since the beginning of recorded history. From cures of disease and reduction of pain to religious ritual use and purely recreational intentions to alter the state of consciousness, drugs have been used both in responsible, medicinal ways and in physically, psychologically, and sociologically disreputable ways. To regulate the former and minimize the latter, societies have developed moral values and written laws governing the legal and illegal uses of drugs.

Drug Use and International Trafficking

Unfortunately, the level of drug use in the world is increasing. According to the last report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), some 200 million people, or five percent of the world's population age 15–64, have used drugs at least once in the last 12 months. This is 15 million more than the last year's estimate. The most-consumed illicit drugs are marijuana and hashish (160 million people or 4 percent of the global population age 15–64) followed of amphetamines and ecstasy (34 million), opiates (16 million) and cocaine (14 million). The study showed that opiates are the world's most problematic drug in terms of demand for chemical dependence treatment. In Europe and Asia, opiates (mainly heroin) account for more than 60 percent of chemical dependence treatment. However, in North and South America the most problematic drug continues to be cocaine.⁴

International drug trafficking is a remarkable increasingly criminal activity that threatens democratic institutions, fuels terrorism and human rights abuses, and undermines economic development. While foreign narcotics cartels continue to make the United States their primary target, many countries worldwide are largely affected by drug use and its devastation. Drugs and weapons are inseparable components of the current transnational organized crime. This association brings crime to the streets, violence to communities, and drug abuses to towns and cities.

Rich, violent, and powerful drug syndicates pose a growing and fundamental threat to fragile democracies, and their economic growth. In these countries, drug related corruption and crime under-

mine public confidence in governmental democratic institutions. Using their resources and power to corrupt and intimidate, these drug syndicates can virtually destroy public safety organizations, paralyze judicial institutions, ruin banking and other key international businesses, and gain influence at the highest levels of government. Recent examples of related violence, corruption and political upheavals in countries as diverse as Russia, Colombia and Afghanistan, demonstrate how these threats can affect vulnerable democracies around the world.

Drug trade is extremely lucrative. Heroin, cocaine and cannabis (marijuana) are uncomplicated and cheap to produce, but because they are illegal, and therefore risky to supply, they can earn more than their weight in gold on the vast international black market. Global economic interests are compromised by the movement of billions of

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dollars of illicit drug money around the world annually. The UNODC World Drug Report of 2005 states that illicit drug businesses generate about \$322 billion per year, equivalent to 0.9 percent of the worldwide Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This value is larger than the individual GDP's of nearly 90 percent of the countries of the world.⁵ Also, because the drug trade is secretive, narcotrafficking and terrorists organizations can amass large amounts of cash without being detected by law enforcement agencies.

This money flow creates unfair competition for honest business and can result in severe misallocation of resources toward unproductive ends in rich and poor countries. In addition, this flow can severely distort economic planning, particularly in weak economies that are struggling to grow, and it fosters global inflation. In addition, drug production in Asia, the Andes and elsewhere is causing serious environmental damage.⁶

Narcotraffickers and terrorists tend to thrive in failed states with ineffective governments that have been destabilized by war and internal conflict. For example, Colombia, a large, fragmented country in the throes of a decades-long conflict over power and resources, produces 50 percent of the world's cocaine and 70 percent of the US heroin supply.⁷ Lebanon has been plagued by drug traffickers and

terrorist groups since its own harrowing 15-year civil war began in 1975. In Afghanistan, the withdrawal of occupying Soviet troops in 1990 left the economically devastated country vulnerable to control by warlords and Islamist extremists. Furthermore, by promoting violence, tax evasion, and lawlessness, terrorists and drug traffickers make it harder for a weakened state to form a stable central government.

Source, Consumption, and Transit Zone Countries

There are five main activities carried out by the criminal organizations: finance, production, processing, transportation, and distribution. To have a complete picture of the trafficking business, it is useful to split the countries worldwide into three categories: the source countries (producers), the consumption countries (consumers), and the transit zone countries.

Consumers. The three largest consuming markets of these substances are North America (United States, Canada, and Mexico), with 44 percent of the total, Europe (33 percent) and Asia (11 percent).⁸ John P. Walters, Director of the US Office of National Drug Control Policy in 2002, has said that Americans spend over \$60 billion a year to purchase illegal drugs, more than any other country.⁹

Producers. Colombia is currently the world's principal producer and distributor of refined cocaine, the vast majority (70 percent) of which is exported to the US market. In 2004, Columbia refined approximately 390 metric tons of cocaine, roughly 50 percent of global production (Peru, 32 percent and Bolivia, 18 percent).¹⁰ The refined narcotic is usually snorted through the nasal passages, although it can also be injected intravenously. *Crack* is a derivative of cocaine that began to appear in the 1990s. The psychotropic and physiological effects of cocaine and crack cocaine are the same, but the intensity and duration of each can differ.¹¹

In the past, most of the primary base used for Colombian cocaine production was imported from Peru and Bolivia. However, this has changed over the last few years. Currently, Colombia is primarily responsible for all stages of the cocaine production process, including initial harvesting.

Before 1994, the Cali and Medellin cartels had total control of the Colombian cocaine business. However, since the death of the Medellin kingpin Pablo Escobar in 1993, as well as the capture of the Cali

cartel's leaders, new syndicates have appeared, now operating in small and independent cells. Their drug trade operations also have been diversified into opiates. So, in addition to cocaine, Colombia became the Western Hemisphere's largest producer and distributor of opium and its most hazardous derivative, refined heroin.¹²

In 2004, UNODC estimates showed Colombian poppy cultivation to be 7,500 hectares (18,500 acres), a crop capable of producing roughly eight tons of refined heroin.¹² As with cocaine, the main target for the bulk of this opium derivative is the United States, accounting for 65 percent of all shipments that are exported from Colombia. In global terms, however, less than 2 percent of the world's opium and refined heroin comes from Colombia. Most production takes place either in the Golden Triangle of Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, and Laos) or the Golden Crescent of Southwest Asia (Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan).¹⁴ Mexico is also a heroin producer with a brown powder form and the more common "black tar variety."

Cannabis (marijuana) remains the most widely used illegal drug in the United States. Colombia is also the largest source of cannabis for a US user, providing approximately 40 percent of the total American supply. Mexico produces 25 percent, other countries 10 percent, and domestic US producers account for the rest of the US market, about 25 percent.¹⁵

Transit Zone Countries. Traffickers use several methods and routes to export cocaine, heroin, and marijuana to the main consumption countries, the US, and the countries of the European Union. The United States remains the largest and most reliable market for the Colombian narcotics trade. A large percentage of the shipments are trafficked along the coasts and over Central America, primarily Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, typical transit zone countries. Up to 70 percent of the illicit drugs that enter the United States are smuggled through Mexico, which acts as the main gateway to the North American market. Most consignments are then moved into the United States by syndicates based in the Tijuana, Nogales, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, and Matamoros border regions.¹⁶

Considerable amounts of cocaine and heroine also enter the United States through Gulf Coast ports; Caribbean routes to Florida, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands (directly or via Haiti, the Dominican Republic or the Lesser Antilles); both east and west coast ports of entry; and from Canada.¹⁷

Brazil, a Typical Transit Zone Country. According to the UNODC 2005 Report, Brazil is a typical transit zone country with a level average consumption, if compared with other countries of the world. In a list of 15 countries, Brazil appears in seventh place in the consumption of ecstasy, tenth place in the consumption of cocaine and amphetamines, and twelfth place in the consumption of marijuana. In relation to its neighbors of the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay), Brazil is first in the consumption of ecstasy, third in the amphetamine consumption, fourth in the cocaine consumption, and fifth in the cannabis (marijuana) consumption. The cocaine that arrives in Brazil is intended for internal consumption and for further transit to Europe's drug market. It comes from Colombia (60 percent), Bolivia (30 percent), and Peru (10 percent). In 2003, the country registered the fifth largest worldwide marijuana apprehension (166.2 tons) and the eighth largest worldwide cocaine apprehension (9.6 tons).

3. Narcotrafficking and Terrorist Organizations

Twelve of the 28 groups classified by the US government as terrorists are actively engaged in drug trafficking.¹⁸ Regarding Latin America, the State Department has designated four terrorist groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). Three of them are in Colombia: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia Fuerzas (Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC), the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, AUC). The fourth is in Peru: the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso, SL). All of them are deeply involved with the illicit drug trade.

According to most experts, narcoterrorism refers to terrorist acts carried out by groups that are directly or indirectly involved in cultivating, manufacturing, transporting, or distributing illicit drugs. The term is also applied to groups that use the drug trade to fund terrorist organizations. Currently, it's being used to refer to the increasingly close ties between powerful drug lords motivated by simple criminal profit and terrorist groups with political agendas, particularly in Colombia. Because of the reduction of funding by state sponsors to terrorist groups over the past decade, the co-operative relationship between previously separate entities, such as terrorists and drug barons, is evolving. Most terrorist groups operating worldwide today are highly dependent on self-financing through criminal activity. Therefore, the relationship between terrorism and criminality has taken on new importance.

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The Italian economist Loretta Napoleoni, a terrorism expert, stated that there is now a global shock between two economic systems.¹⁹ The first one, dominant, is capitalism, and the other, emerging, is the new economy of terror, based upon the drug trade, weapons smuggling and money laundering. In her point of view, beyond the political or religious justification for terrorist attacks, there is an economic reality derived from the markets of goods and values supporting the anti-western radical Muslim project of Al Qaeda, the communist

project of the FARC, the separatist projects of ETA (Basque Fatherland and Liberty) and the IRA (Irish Republican Army).

The reason why terrorist organizations turn to drug trafficking is because they need funding for weapons, explosives, computers and other information systems, equipment, training, transportation, bribes, safe houses, forged passports and other documents, and even payroll. Drugs are a handy way to get cash, lots of it.

Connections between Terrorists and Narcos

There are several ways to connect terrorist groups to the drug trade. Alliances exist at both ends of the continuum, with criminal groups forming alliances with terrorist organizations, and terrorist groups seeking alliances with criminal organizations. Alliances can include one-off, short-term, and long term agreements, and are usually used to gain expert knowledge, money laundering, counterfeiting, bomb making, operational support, and access to smuggling routes. The most common alliances exist in the field of international smuggling operations, evident in the cocaine for arms ties developed between Colombia's FARC, Mexican and other countries' drug trafficking groups, and Russian criminal groups.

Some criminal and terrorist groups have evolved beyond using terrorism and crime as respective operational tactics and now manifest characteristics of both terrorism and organized crime simultaneously. As a result, criminal groups are displaying political motivations in an effort to manipulate operational conditions present in the rising numbers of weak states. Terrorist groups are equally interested in criminal profits to replace lost financial support from state sponsors, but ultimately begin to use their political rhetoric as a façade for perpetrating solely criminal activities.

The final point of convergence among terrorists and criminal organizations is identified by the senior analyst Tamara Makarenko as the "black hole."²⁰ At this point, the convergence between criminal and political motivations within a single group allows it to subsequently gain economic and political control over a state. The black hole contributes significantly to the production of a failed state—such as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Liberia—that lacks central authority, displays the characteristics of anarchy, or can produce a criminal state, such as North Korea, Myanmar, and potentially the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan.

Some groups, like Colombia's FARC, collect taxes from people who cultivate or process illicit drugs on lands that they control and traffic in drugs themselves. Colombia's ELN and AUC also traffic in drugs. Lebanon's Bekaa Valley has for years been known as an equally fertile source of both opium poppies and terrorism for Hezbollah. Moreover, some terrorist groups are supported by states funded by the drug trade. Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers, for instance, earned an estimated \$40 million to \$50 million per year from taxes related to opium. The drug trade is also a significant part of the economies of Syria, which has funded terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Lebanon is a haven for numerous terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas.²¹ It is important to highlight that, technically, drug trafficking violates some Islamist terrorist religious or political beliefs. What happens is that some groups, including the Sunni Taliban and the Shiite extremists of Hezbollah, have decreed that Islam forbids taking drugs, such as opium, but permits producing and selling them.

According to the US Department of State, the following terrorist groups also participate in narcoterrorism.²²

- In Peru, when Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) and the Revolutionary Movement Tupac Amaru (Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru), both radical leftist groups, headed toward the Huallaga Valley to establish the second subversive front (the first one was Ayacucho), they shifted their actions to defend the interests of coca cultivators in exchange for their subsequent imposition of conditions on production, trade and transportation activities. Through this agreement, the drug dealers provide the terrorist organizations with weapons and money in exchange for protection of their flights and actions that prevent the interference of security forces. Today, remnants of the Shining Path openly participate in all phases of drug traffic.
- Some members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a Sri Lankan separatist group, traffic in heroin, and the group reportedly has close ties to drug trafficking networks in Burma.
- Hezbollah smuggles Latin American cocaine to Europe and the Middle East and has smuggled opiates out of Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, the center of Hezbollah influence, although poppy cultivation there is declining. Officials in several countries have documented complicated trade patterns involving illicit ship-

ments of coca paste through the South American Tri-Border Area to the Bekaa Valley.

- The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Marxist separatist group based in Turkey, taxes ethnic Kurdish drug traffickers, and individual PKK cells traffic in heroin.
- The Real IRA, an Irish Republican Army splinter group that opposes the peace process in Northern Ireland, established a link to the FARC, and besides bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, extortion, and robberies, it is suspected of trafficking drugs, although the extent of its involvement is unclear.
- The Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna, ETA), a separatist group, was founded in 1959 with the aim of establishing an independent homeland based on Marxist principles in Spain's Basque Region and the southwestern French provinces of Labourd, Basse-Navarre, and Soule. Besides bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, robberies, and extortion it is reportedly involved in drug trafficking. During the 1980s, some ETA members allegedly have received sanctuary in Cuba and Nicaragua. There are intelligence reports that the ETA, after establishing links to the IRA, has contacted the FARC in order to provide diversified training for that organization.
- Al Qaeda is not a homogenous terrorist group but a network of terrorist groups scattered all over the world. The organization has global reach and presence in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, Oceania, North America, and some parts of Central and South America. It is a flexible organization because, in spite of following a quite formal vertical structure, the horizontal integration between the different groups that are part of the network is completely sectorized and is totally informal. Al Qaeda is funded in several ways. Osama Bin Laden's family runs a large construction company in Saudi Arabia and provides funds from his vast inheritance and has established income providing companies and charities that act as fronts for Al Qaeda. The October 2001 edition of the Russian magazine *Top Secret* is based upon sources linked to the Russian intelligence community and reported that there is a very well established connection between Al Qaeda and the Russian mafia.²³ The point of contact for Bin Laden supporters would be [is?] one of the most dangerous criminals worldwide:

Semion Mogilevich was born in 1946 in Kiev and is supposed to have a Russian, Ukrainian, Israeli and Hungarian citizenship. Mogilevich runs an organization that mixes the professionalism of the eastern block intelligence services with weapons smuggling, drug trafficking, money laundering, extortion, prostitution, and assassinations. His people are supposed to help Al Qaeda to get every kind of supply. That includes nuclear, chemical and biological material that would be shipped as contraband from Russia via Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland.

Drugs and Weapons

It's important to keep in mind that drugs and weapons walk together. According to the United Nations, only 18 million (about 3 percent) of the 550 million small arms and light weapons currently circulating worldwide are used by government, military, or police. The illegal weapons trade accounts for more than 20 percent of the total small weapons trade and generates more than \$1 billion yearly.²⁴ In the absence of effective international legislation and enforcement, the laws of economics dictate the sale of more weapons at cheaper prices. In 1968, an AK-47 in Kalawa, Kenya, cost 15 cows; today, it costs just 4 cows.²⁵ In an October 2002 interview on the National Public Radio show *On Point*, Jeffrey Goldberg, an expert in Hezbollah and author of *In the Party of God*, has told that during his three weeks in the Tri-Border Area (Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay), researching Hezbollah and its international funding and activities, he was offered an AK-47 for \$375. The price even included a hotel delivery and some ammunition.

But this is just the tip of the illegal trade iceberg. It includes tanks, radar systems, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed more than a dozen cases of smuggled nuclear-weapons-usable material and hundreds of more cases have been reported and investigated over the last decade. The actual supply of stolen nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons materials and technology may still be small. But the potential demand is strong and growing from both would-be nuclear powers and terrorists.²⁶

According to Ambassador Charles Shapiro, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs in his remarks to the Inter-American Defense College on 27 October 2005, strict

import and export controls are particularly important in regards to man-portable air defense systems, commonly known as MANPADS.²⁷ It is no surprise that man-portable air defense systems are attractive to terrorist because they are relatively inexpressive [inexpensive?], widely available, easy to use, and lethal to aircraft. Given the number of MANPADS in worldwide inventories, the inadequate control of stockpiles and their availability on the black arms market, it is mandatory to seek to deny these weapons to terrorists. Shapiro emphasized that the January 2004 arrest of its traffickers and the confiscation of MANPADS in Nicaragua highlighted the ease with which terrorists can acquire MANPADS in the Western Hemisphere. This threat has not gone unnoticed by the international community. The International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations underscored the threat to civil aviation posed by MANPADS by adopting resolutions calling on states to ensure that they are taking all steps necessary to protect citizenship and air travel from unauthorized use of these weapons.

The Organization of American States (OAS) has added its voice to the chorus of international organizations working to address this pressing threat. On 7 June 2004, the OAS General Assembly (OASGA) adopted the “Recommended Guidelines on MANPADS Control and Security,” which identifies concrete measures that member states should take to ensure that MANPADS do not fall into the hands of terrorists. Shapiro highlighted that the facility with which terrorist can acquire MANPADS is an alarming reality today in the Western Hemisphere and that the full implementation of the OASGA resolution by the member states will be critical in addressing this threat. The ties between terrorist groups and criminal organizations have become a transnational threat more dangerous than ever.

4. Colombia's Stalemate

Although the threat of external conventional military aggression is an extremely remote possibility in Latin America and the Caribbean, there exist severe situations in some nations that can create a crisis affecting the region's stability and security. Transnational terrorism, narcoterrorism improved by guerrilla movements and their association with narco-trafficking, weapons smuggling, forgery and money laundering and a flow of mass migration difficult to control are conditions existing in some countries that can cause serious international problems.

The US State Department has designated four terrorist groups (three in Colombia: FARC, ELN and AUC, and one in Peru: SL) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, and Cuba has been listed as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1982. According to the United Nations, Latin America and the Caribbean have become the world's most violent regions, with 27.5 homicides per 100,000 people. Colombia leads the homicide ranking with a rate of 47 per 100,000 persons, followed by Honduras with 45.7 per 100,000 people. Kidnapping has become an epidemic problem in Latin America and the Caribbean. Colombia also leads the kidnapping ranking. It's used by criminal and narcoterrorist organizations to raise money and fund other illicit or terrorist activities. Latin America and the Caribbean account for 75 percent of all kidnappings worldwide, a staggering figure when one considers that the region has less than 10 percent of the world's population. The focus of the fight against narcoterrorism in the Western Hemisphere is in Colombia and because of the transnational nature of the threat, it radiates throughout the Andean Ridge.

41 Years of Insurgencies and Drugs

Located in the northwestern portion of South America, Colombia is a strategically important country that lies adjacent to Venezuela's oil fields, the Panama Canal, and the Caribbean basin. Colombia has a very difficult geography, divided by three massive Andean chains, and the pattern of dispersed settlements, poor national integration and insufficient communications. Certainly, Colombia's political trajectory will influence the direction of broader trends in the unstable Andean region and beyond. Colombian civilian elites historically

have preferred a weak central government and a weak military for fear that it would take political power.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, Colombia suffered three major periods of conflict.

1. The first, *La Violencia* (The Violence), was an undeclared civil war that began in 1948 as a result of a polarized two-party political system, pitted *Liberales* (Liberals) versus *Conservadores* (Conservatives), and killed an estimated 200,000 people over the next 10 years, with few legitimate leftist alternatives, including having a weak Communist Party. In the 1960s, the two main political parties ended more than a decade of political violence and agreed to share power. In 1963, students, Catholic radicals, and left-wing intellectuals, hoping to emulate Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba, founded ELN. In 1966, FARC was founded, bringing together communist militants and peasants. Although ELN is more ideological than FARC, both have similar programs. Both say they represent the rural poor against Colombia's wealthy classes and oppose American influence in Colombia (particularly Plan Colombia), the privatization of natural resources, multinational corporations, and rightist violence. Notwithstanding the same ideological motivation, FARC and ELN are hard rival forces. Each one sees the other as a threat, and they often fight each other for territorial control. The other principal group was the *Movimiento 19 Abril* (M-19) formed in 1973 by Carlos Toledo Plata and Jaime Bateman, a former member of FARC. Its terrorist network commenced operations in 1976 comprising some 10,000 guerrillas. But a few years later, *M-19* disappeared and was absorbed by the *FARC*.
2. The second major period of conflict was launched by Pablo Escobar, the cocaine kingpin of the Medellin cartel, and other drug traffickers. With assistance from the United States and the Cali cartel, this challenge was defeated and Escobar was killed on 2 December 1993.²⁸
3. The third and the most serious outbreak of violence revolves around the current insurgencies, especially that of the *FARC*.

It is important to underscore that Colombia, notwithstanding that it can be considered a weak state (mainly because it doesn't exercise a complete political authority over its whole territory), is not a typical failing state.²⁹ It is an active member of the United Nations,

the Organization of American States, and other multilateral organizations. According to the United Nations, its population is 43 million people; GDP \$90 billion; GDP growth rates: 1.4 percent (2001), 1.6 percent (2002); urban unemployment: 18.2 percent (2001), 17.6 percent (2002); urban underemployment: 30 percent (2001), 33 percent (2002); poverty (means a person earns the equivalent of \$2 per day): 54.9 percent (1999), 54.8 percent (2000), 54.9 percent (2001); indigence (means a person earns the equivalent of \$1 per day): 26.8 percent (1999), 27.1 percent (2000), and 27.6 percent (2001).³⁰

But the Colombian state infrastructure of judicial system, police, military, schools, and communications is nearly absent in major portions of the national territory, precisely where the revolutionary movements occupy space, apply their *de facto* legal systems, and conduct foreign operations with traffickers, assorted criminals, gun runners, soldiers of fortune, international terrorists, and corrupt government officials of various countries. An estimated 40 percent of the national territory is not controlled by the government, both in rural and urban areas.³¹

Although communist guerrilla forces have been active in Colombia since the mid-1960s, it was not until the 1990s that Colombia witnessed an entirely new phenomenon: the linking of an armed Marxist insurgency with the country's ubiquitous drug cartels. The collapse of the Soviet Union, which led a number of states and groups to cut back their economic support for insurgent movements, led to a dramatic change in the FARC's nature. The death of the notorious drug lord Pablo Escobar, creating a vacuum of power in the Colombian drug business has also stimulated the FARC to fill the vacuum. This trend began when it became amply evident to Colombia's rebel forces, particularly to its largest guerrilla organization, the FARC, that tapping Colombia's drug related activities would provide them with the resources they needed to intensify their struggle. The FARC had traditionally imposed a "revolutionary tax" on coca growers and distributors, but in the 1990s they moved from protection rackets to direct production and distribution of cocaine. At the same time, their tactics, always violent, have become progressively less discriminating, as the FARC units began targeting innocent civilians and public places. In 2001, Colombian officials arrested three members of the IRA in Colombia, and later convicted them of teaching the FARC militants bomb-making techniques. In February 2003, the FARC set off

a bomb outside a social club in Bogotá killing 33 people, including six children.

Further compounding this problem has been the emergence in Colombia of illegal armed groups known as the AUC, radical rightist paramilitary groups funded by wealthy farmers. Carlos Castaño, the leader of the AUC, declared in 2000 that 70 percent of the AUC's operational funding was derived from the drug trade.

Weakened by the corruption sown by the cocaine cartels and more than 41 years of civil war, FARC, ELN and AUC, are recognized as foreign terrorist organizations by the US State Department and the European Union. They target elected government officials and civilians with their attacks. International human rights groups denounce the massacres, assassinations, kidnappings, forced displacements, and forced recruitment of minors.

The largest, best trained, and best-equipped insurgent organization in Colombia is, undoubtedly, the FARC, currently estimated with 9,000 to 12,000 members.³² It was established in 1964, founded by

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the terrorist Manuel Marulanda, well known as *Tiro Fijo*, as a rural-based, pro-Soviet guerrilla army. It is organized along military lines and includes several urban fronts. It has been anti-United States since its inception. FARC operates in about half the country's territory, mostly in the jungles of the southeast and the plains at the base of the Andean [Andes?] mountains. In 1999, during peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC, then President Andres Pastrana demilitarized five large rural municipalities, establishing a demilitarized zone (*zona de despeje*) to meet FARC conditions for peace talks. After three years of fruitless negotiations, Pastrana ended the peace talks in February 2002 and ordered Colombian forces to retake the FARC-controlled zone.

The smaller ELN, currently estimated to have 3,000 members (plus an unknown number of supporters), operates mainly in north-eastern Colombia. It had its strength, size and support base severely damaged by AUC paramilitaries. The Pastrana administration also negotiated with the ELN but without the concessions made to the FARC.³³

The AUC is currently estimated to have 8,000 to 11,000 members.³⁴ It is comprised of several right-wing paramilitary groups sup-

ported by wealthy landowners, drug cartels, and segments of the Colombia military. AUC forces have assassinated leftist guerrillas, politicians, and activists. Significant human rights violations are attributed to AUC. It presents a dilemma for all the other parties. The FARC and the ELN state that they cannot demobilize as long as the paramilitaries are not also demobilized. Because Colombia's government has little control of any territory outside the country's major cities, all three organizations have been able to expand their operations and prosper by trading in cocaine, opium, oil, gold, and emeralds.

Regarding the peace settlement, authorities of the Colombian Government, the FARC leaders, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and European Community representatives tried but did not make headway in the peace negotiations. The extent of the concessions to be made to the FARC is extremely controversial. There is also great controversy regarding the true nature of the FARC and its objectives. The predominant view is that the FARC has become nothing more than drug traffickers and that their motivation is indistinguishable from those of criminals. There is no doubt that the FARC took great advantage of former President Pastrana's peace negotiations. In September 2002, the European Community determined that the member countries leaned toward a negotiated solution to respect human rights. France was opposed to declaring the FARC a terrorist group and has offered it asylum, protection, and economic and logistical support. As a result of all this, the FARC enhanced its domestic and international stature and legitimacy and leveraged real strategic and operational advantages.

About the nature and extent of the FARC's criminal financing, its leadership denies direct involvement in drug trafficking. That they just charge the drug dealers a tax, where the economic base is coca. Just as, in other regions, they tax cattle ranchers or sugar growers. There is growing evidence, however, that the payments are increasingly made in cocaine itself. Currently, it is crystal clear that the FARC involvement goes beyond protection of cultivation areas and laboratories to include the transportation of drugs and chemical precursors and even direct control of its own laboratories.

There is much evidence that the FARC and the other insurgent group, the ELN, are receiving pure cocaine in payment for services provided to the drug traffic, and reselling it to international criminal organizations in return for armaments. In early November 2000, for

example, Carlos Ariel Charry Guzman, a Colombian physician, was arrested in Mexico City for allegedly attempting to arrange a drug deal with the Tijuana cartel. Mexican authorities discovered that Charry was working with the FARC in attempting to exchange cocaine for weapons. Similar arrangements involve Russian, Paraguayan and Brazilian criminal groups. Despite an estimated annual income of \$500 million, FARC purchases significant amounts of weaponry with significant quantities of cocaine. Previous and current accounts of such deals have always involved Jorge Briceno (aka El Mono Jojoy), a FARC member very close to Manuel Marulanda (aka Tiro Fijo), the FARC's principal leader, and El Negro Acasio, the 16th Front commander, believed to be in charge of weapons procurement and cocaine transactions.

Photojournalist Carlos Villalon, in his article "Cocaine Country" in the July 2004 issue of *National Geographic*, detailed how the FARC fosters the cocaine trade. The process starts when a FARC dealer makes rounds through small towns in FARC controlled areas of Colombia at the end of each week, setting up a makeshift office near town. There is no way of estimating the specific amount of square miles that the FARC controls, however, credible estimates claim that the FARC has strong influence over one third of Colombian National territory which encompasses approximately 145,000 square miles, controlling roughly 260,000 people. Word is spread that a FARC dealer is buying cocaine base and farmers journey to the village to sell their product. Most farmers, on average, produce a kilogram of cocaine base a month. The dealer pays around \$1,000 for each kilogram. The FARC collects a 30 percent tax from farmers each time they sell cocaine base to the dealers. The farmer, after expenses, will make around \$325 per month. The cycle continues for most of the year, except for the dry season (January and February) where not as much coca leaf is grown and FARC dealers do not make rounds as often.

On 21 April 2001, as part of Operation Gato Negro (Black Cat), the Colombian Armed Forces captured Brazil's top drug dealer, who reputedly controlled 70 percent of Brazil's cocaine distribution.³⁵ Luis Fernando da Costa, 33 years old, aka Fernandinho Beira Mar was caught in the vicinity of Barrancominas, in the lightly populated Vichada Department of eastern Colombia, next to Venezuela and not far from the Brazilian border. The FARC's 16th Front (Commander El Negro Acasio) used that department, along with Guainía and Guavi-

are, as a staging base for operations; a mobility corridor; and an area for coca cultivation, refining, and shipment into Venezuela and Brazil. The Colombian military reported that these three departments accounted for more than 80 percent of the cocaine that FARC itself produced. Beira Mar was the largest foreign trading partner of the FARC, swapping \$10 million per month in guns and ammunition for cocaine. Within days, he was deported back to Brazil, reportedly because of fears that he could escape from a Colombian prison. Currently, he is under arrest at a top-security prison in Brazil. After his arrest, he revealed the following details about the intersection of the motivation of the FARC, ungoverned space, drugs, guns, and the international market:

The FARC are the richest and strongest guerrillas in the world. Their leaders live like millionaire capitalists; beautiful women, good food and liquor... In Colombia not a kilo of cocaine moves without the permission of the FARC. I was but a peon in the drug traffic in Brazil and Paraguay. For each kilo I sent, they paid me \$3,000. The drug business is pretty good for the FARC; for each kilo that is ready to be shipped, they charge \$500, for each flight \$15,000. I paid the FARC \$10 to 12 million a month. Each flight carried between 700 kilos and a ton of coca. Each pilot was paid \$25,000 and the co-pilot \$5,000 and a little bit was paid to the air controllers so they would not cause problems with the flights. Part of the payment for the coca was made to the FARC in 3,000 guns and three and a half million rounds of ammunition, which came from Paraguay.³⁶

Another notorious Brazilian drug lord, Leonardo Dias Mendonça, was convicted in Brazil in January 2003 for flying cocaine from Colombia via the Amazon to Surinam. Dias Mendonça supplied the FARC with precursor chemicals and weapons. Actually, the FARC has an increasingly sophisticated financial infrastructure, supported by sophisticated money laundering schemes, using complacent Colombian banks. The laundered money is in accounts that are available electronically. Its current arsenal includes different types of weapons: AK-47s, HK G-3s, A-3s, Armalite 15s, Dragunov sniper rifles, Galil rifles, .50 and M60 machine guns, and anti-aircraft and anti-tank rockets. In the past, it received SA-14, SA-16, and RPG-7s from Russia as well as “Redeye” and “Stinger” missiles from Syria.

In August 2002, Colombia inaugurated a new President, Alvaro Uribe Velez, an independent, Oxford and Harvard trained former mayor and governor whose father was killed by the rebels and who

has himself survived four assassination attempts. Uribe was elected with an unprecedented first round majority after Colombia's peace process collapsed in February 2002. Sweeping into office on a hard-line platform, the President promised to provide Colombians with a *Política de Seguridad Democrática* (Democratic Security Policy, DSP), meaning a frontal assault on the country's two radical leftist guerrilla groups and also its right-wing paramilitaries as well. The Uribe administration has received overwhelming popular support with his approval rating near 80 percent, the highest in Colombian history.³⁷ Philip McLean, Senior Associate for the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, noted in his 14 February 2003 "Colombia Alert" that,

Uribe's security strategy main points are: (1) provide more resources for the military and the police with the expectation that they will be more aggressive; (2) reestablish a government presence throughout the Nation; (3) involve citizens in their own protection; and (4) weaken the guerrillas by encouraging defections and capturing leaders.

Actually, the DSP is being developed in order to provide a coherent long-term strategy to reduce Colombia's security problems. The goal is to severely weaken and eventually defeat insurgents while strengthening fragile government institutions. The Embassy of Colombia in Washington, D.C. noted in its website that,

... the basic principle behind the strategy is to establish and reinstate the rule of law in Colombia and protect the population. It takes into account this is not just a military matter. The strategic objective behind the policy is to weaken illegal narcoterrorist groups through a variety of political, economic and military means in order to force a negotiated settlement that leads to a lasting and democratic peace.

Plan Colombia and the United States

Plan Colombia was developed in October 1999, as a response of the Pastrana Government to Colombia's conflict.³⁸ It involved a great number of proposals to deal with the political, socio-economic, and military aspects of the situation.

The original five year plan envisioned a total contribution of \$7.5 billion. The Colombian government undertook to provide \$4 billion and obtain \$3.5 billion in foreign assistance, largely from the United

States. The United States started supporting the Colombian Government's Plan in 2000, paying more than \$700 million focused to combat narco-trafficking. On the other hand, the European Community has been reticent, and it only contributed \$170 million, conditioned to the respect of the human rights in the region. Spain took part and sent \$100 million. This Plan has cost the United States more than \$3 billion in the past five years and made Colombia the third largest recipient of US foreign aid, after Israel and Egypt.

President Pastrana had received credit, even from political opponents, for having restored the cooperative relationship with the United States. Revelations that the Cali cartel had financed former President Ernesto Samper's 1994 presidential election campaign led the Clinton administration to decertify Colombia from US counter-narcotics assistance and aid between 1996 and 1997. On the other hand, there has been criticism that the Colombian government strategy was driven by political constraints in US policy that has justified aid to Colombia only in terms of counter-narcotics assistance.

The Plan provides for 800 US advisers, half of them military. None are permitted to engage in combat. The US troops, primarily Special Forces operators and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agents, provide programs to train and equip Colombia's military and police, interdict drug shipments, and help peasants cultivate crops other than the coca used to make cocaine. US Special Forces have trained three counternarcotics battalions as prototypes of an improved Colombian Army, which historically has been one of Latin America's weakest. Security for the 500-mile oil pipeline that crosses Colombia has been improved because of this training.

But US Congressional critics have blasted Plan Colombia for failing to reduce Colombia's cocaine output, break ties between Colombia's Armed Forces and the AUC's paramilitary groups, wean coca-growing peasants from their deadly crop, get favorable resolution in the peace negotiations, and protect US citizens who, as private security contractors, conduct risky aerial drug eradication flights. The Bush administration with a more accurate perception of the alliance between the drug cartels and communism and the FARC, shifted Plan Colombia funding to focus not only on drugs but also on the rebel forces besieging the country's weak central government. In August, 2002, President Bush signed antiterrorism legislation authorizing Colombia to use US aid previously earmarked for

counterdrug operations to directly combat the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC.³⁹

On 30 October 2005, Colombian Army troops raided an AUC drug gang headquarters deep in the jungle, capturing John Eidelber Cano, major gang leader, after a short and violent firefight. Cano had a \$5 million price on his head, and that brought out the information making the raid possible. The informant received the reward. This particular operation was scary for the drug gangs and rebels, for it demonstrated again that the rewards can reach deep inside criminal organizations, and that government troops can carry out these daring operations, anywhere in the country, taking advantage of the growing government helicopter fleet.⁴⁰

On the other hand, the Uribe's government has dealt with AUC since October 2005 to provide amnesty in return for AUC disarming and disbanding has hit some snags. Some factions of AUC are unwilling to give up their guns and their lucrative drug businesses. Another complication is the FARC groups trying to move into areas where the local AUC groups are disbanding. Some of those AUC members suddenly had second thoughts, because there is bad blood between the AUC and the FARC gunmen, who have been killing each other for years. Disarming makes many AUC members vulnerable to the FARC killers. Therefore, by the beginning of November 2005, only about 3,600 of 11,000 AUC members were disarmed, and many of those who have not, are quite hostile to the Army and the police.⁴¹

Plan Colombia is funded through 2005, with three quarters of the approximately \$600 million per year in aid to Colombia earmarked for the military and the police. The remaining funds are for social, economic and humanitarian programs. The government of Colombia sent out an emergency appeal to the Bush administration for an extra \$130 million to supplement the \$600 million it expects to receive in 2006.⁴² The extra money, the Colombians insist, is needed for more aircraft to increase the government's capacity to spray poison on the jungle patches where coca bushes grow. They also want more helicopters to protect the spray planes from being shot down by growers and guerrillas.

The appeal for emergency cash came in the wake of the details quietly released by the White House during the Easter holiday about last year's spraying debacle. On 1 January 2004, US satellite pictures showed that 281,323 acres in Colombia were under coca. The target was to reduce that area by half, so nearly 340,000 acres were

sprayed with poison—but in vain. In January 2005, the acreage of coca bushes had increased slightly to 281,694 acres. Consequently, as Congressman Bob Menendez, leader of the Democratic Party in the lower house and a critic of Plan Colombia, remarked, the international price of cocaine has stubbornly refused to rise, as it would have if the anti-drugs effort had reduced its availability worldwide.⁴³

Nevertheless Uribe's Colombian Government is making remarkable progress in the battle against terrorism and the restoration of security for the strengthening of its democratic institutions. In 2004, homicides decreased 16 percent, the lowest level since 1986. There was also a 25 percent decrease in robberies, a 46 percent decrease in kidnappings, and a 44 percent decrease in terrorist attacks nationwide.⁴⁴ Fundamental to this policy has been the military component of the Plan Colombia, Patriot Plan (Plan Patriota). Defense spending as a percentage of GDP rose from 3.5 percent to 5 percent in 2004. According to US Southern Command (US-

SOUTHCOM) observers, the Colombian military has overcome its former state of inefficiency and ineffectiveness and has become a much better and more capable force against the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC, nearly doubling the number of terrorists captured while also seizing the initiative on the battlefield. In the past two and a half years, the FARC has been reduced from 18,000 to an estimated 12,500 members. The ELN, with

... the Colombian military has ... become a much better and more capable force against the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC, nearly doubling the number of terrorists captured while also seizing the initiative on the battlefield.

approximately 3,500 members, has been marginalized, struggling to survive as an organization as combat losses and leadership divisions take their toll. And the AUC, with an estimated strength of 12,000 members, is currently negotiating peace with the Colombian government. According to General Craddock, by 9 March 2005, 4,600 AUC members had been demobilized, and the removal of these combatants from the fight represents a victory for the government.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding the relevant USSOUTHCOM support and the consequent Colombian military improvement, the currently estimated 160,000 Colombian uniformed security members are not enough to combat the FARC and the ELN, to replace the AUC, and also to protect the country's vital facilities (power stations, bridges, dams, pipelines).

President Uribe's emphasis on the Democratic Security Policy has also aided Colombia's economic recovery. Its GDP has grown since 2002 from 1.8 percent to 3.9 percent in 2003 and 2004. The Nation's unemployment rate eased from 15.1 percent in 2002 to 14.15 percent in 2003, to less than 13 percent in 2004. Inflation dropped from 7.1 percent in 2003 to 5.9 percent in 2004.⁴⁶

On 14 December 2005, in an unprecedented decision dealing with the FARC, President Uribe yielded to pressure to discuss, in a Colombian demilitarized zone (Department of Valle del Cauca, in the southeast of the country), the exchange of hostages under guerrilla custody for arrested rebels.⁴⁷ The proposition was made to both sides by the governments of France, Spain and Switzerland. Uribe acknowledged that this decision is a remarkable change in policy. But he understands that notwithstanding being a concession, it does not threaten national sovereignty, and it might be a solution to end the suffering of many Colombians who have kidnapped relatives. There are about 500 FARC gunmen arrested by the security forces and 59 hostages kidnapped, among them Oscar Lizcano, a former Colombian congressman under the FARC custody for more than five years, and Ingrid Betancourt, a former presidential candidate when she was kidnapped in 2002. Because she is French, France is leading the mediation. In addition, Tom Howes, Marc Gonsalves, and Keith Stansell are officials of the US Department of Defense who were kidnapped during an anti-drug mission, in 2003. Alvaro Uribe also decided to start a dialogue with the ELN, in Havana, in order to demobilize the ELN remnants, having the Cuba's government as mediator and the presence of international observers from Spain, Norway and Switzerland.

On 27 December 2005, a Colombian Army report announced that three noncommissioned officers and 25 soldiers of the 12th Mobile Brigade (Brigada Móvil 12) were ambushed and killed in Playa Rica, rural area of Vista Hermosa, Departamento de Meta, about 280 kilometers southeast of Bogotá.⁴⁸ The company (90 soldiers) was on a mission providing security to peasants involved in the eradication of coca leaf plantation. The attack was launched between 4:30 and 7:30 AM by the Front 27 (Frente 27), 300 gunmen commanded by Luis Eduardo López Méndes (aka "Éfren"), Bloque Oriental (Eastern Block), elite of the FARC, whose Commander is Jorge Briceño (aka "Mono Jojoy"). The operation to rescue corpses was also extremely hard because the area was mined. This was the bloodiest attack car-

ried out during 2005. One week after this attack, the FARC, demonstrating its current political will, had rejected Uribe's proposal to negotiate hostages. This attack also seems to be part of an offensive campaign to debilitate the President's Democratic Security Policy, regarding the legislative and presidential elections of May 2006.

International observers saw these FARC activities as a severe government defeat. However, President Uribe's credibility is still strong. According to recent public opinion polls, he is the favorite candidate for the next elections in May 2006. Actually, Alvaro Uribe's leadership is a remarkable sign of hope for the Colombian people regarding the end of this violent internal conflict. Nonetheless, it's clear that the situation is uncertain.

The critical question is how to conduct the successor to Plan Colombia when it ends in 2006—whether to continue the counterdrug policy focus or to implement a new program involving European and other countries in a broad strategy that links security and the drug war to economic development and institution building in Colombia. There are already talks of Colombianization, the process of decreasing US military assistance and handing over more responsibility to Colombian agencies and personnel. Those who support expanding assistance to Colombia warn that until drug use in the US and Europe drops dramatically, Colombia's peasants will not stop growing illicit crops. Most analysts believe ending major assistance to Colombia would be a mistake because Colombia has become a cornerstone in the US war against drug trafficking and terrorism. With this point of view, the White House and Congress should strengthen management of security related assistance and fund it over a long period of time. However, there is some discussion in Congress about crafting a "US exit strategy" from Colombia.

Colombia's Neighboring Countries and Cuba

The terrorism supported by radical politico-ideological groups and drug-related organizations has undermined the economies and stability of the countries where they operate. The main illicit drug producing countries are Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. However, narcoterrorism is a problem in Colombia's other neighboring countries, such as Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Brazil, which are being used as routes for exporting drugs.

- Panama has become a critical node in the Colombian narcoguerrillas' support structure. Drugs transit Panama from Colom-

bia in their transshipment to the United States and Europe, while arms and supplies move the other way. Panamanian security forces—a national police force that includes a specialized component with rudimentary light infantry training, and air and naval services—are no match for the heavily armed Colombian guerrillas. Therefore, they are not able to control the border or to confront the guerrillas that operate on the Panamanian side of the border. In this context, Panama is a critical area mainly because of the strategic position of the Canal.

- Ecuador is an unstable country in the Andean region. It is also under the US assistance package to Colombia and the Andean region. There is in Ecuador a permanent fear that Colombian narcoguerrillas could move in force across the border and perhaps join forces with local dissidents. The Ecuadorians are also concerned about the influx of Colombian refugees. The Ecuadorian military has placed many of its best troops on its northern frontier and has established cross-border communications with the Colombian military.
- Venezuela's current political situation has created a big entanglement for the whole region. Hugo Chávez' authoritarian tendencies, links to Fidel Castro, and his aggressive speech against the Bush administration have raised concerns about the direction of his government in this complex context. Nonetheless, Chávez states that Venezuelan Armed Forces are deployed on the border with Colombia in an effort to block the border against FARC elements, and the problem is that the Colombians are not doing enough to control their side of the border. Notwithstanding the supposed Venezuelan efforts against narcotics, there are indications that Venezuela has adopted an avoidance strategy toward the Colombia's revolutionary movements. The FARC and the ELN consider the areas of the Venezuelan border with Colombia safe areas to rest, transship drugs and arms, and procure logistical supplies. The capture of senior FARC member Rodrigo Granda in Venezuela, carrying a valid Venezuelan passport and his possible connection to the kidnapping and killing of Cecília Cubas, the Paraguay's former President Raul Cubas' daughter, is of concern. Granda's capture caused a significant diplomatic impasse, which was later mended by face-to-face meetings by Presidents Uribe and Chávez. Currently, the dialogue between the US and Venezu-

ela is extremely tense. The fact that Venezuela intends to be a member state of MERCOSUL (economic block led by Brazil) might facilitate political negotiations between the US and Venezuelan governments.

- Peru is another country of concern. The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) insurgency is also designated as FTO by the US government. During the 1980s, the SL was a very powerful and aggressive Maoist revolutionary movement. It was significantly weakened in the 1990s with the capture of its leader Abimael Guzman. However, in 2001 and 2002 terrorist acts committed by the group increased from previous years. The SL was allegedly responsible for a March 2002 car bomb across from the US Embassy in Lima, the capital. Ten Peruvians were killed, including security personnel protecting the embassy. Eight SL members remain in custody for the bombing. After the beginning of 2003, however, there was an estimated 15 percent reduction in terrorist acts committed by the Sendero Luminoso. In December 2005, the month in which Mao Tsé-tung's birthday is celebrated, 13 Peruvian policemen and one Ashaninka Indian were killed in two ambushes in the Departamiento cocallero de Huancayo, 316 kilometers from Ayacucho, the birthplace of the Maoist revolution in Peru.⁴⁹ In order to stop the increasing instability, and regarding the next presidential and legislative elections in April 2006, President Alejandro Toledo decreed a state of emergency (including military offensive operations) for 60 days in six *cocalleras* (coca growers) provinces where the SL was operating. In the last three years, the US government reduced the aid to eradication of the coca leaf plantation in Peru from \$116 million to \$97 million.
- In Bolivia, the poorest country of South America, the anarchical influence of the FARC is already producing fruit. The revolutionary *cocalleros* (peasants who survive from the coca leaf plantation) and union leaders formed an axis of violence between Cochabamba and Santa Cruz de la Sierra, during the riots that led to the resignation of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada, in 2003. In June 2005, President Carlos Mesa resigned in order to defuse large-scale protests. President of the Supreme Court Eduardo Rodriguez replaced Mesa and promised early elections.

Notwithstanding Bolivia's government efforts to eradicate coca plantations, according to the *cocalleros'* native Indian socialist leader Evo Morales' guidance, they will persist in maintaining 1,600 square meters of coca plantation for each one of the 35 thousand peasant families.⁵⁰ On 18 December 2005, Morales was elected President of Bolivia with more than 50 percent of the 3 million registered votes available, a true record in Bolivia's elections. Morales comes to power with the purpose of giving voice to Bolivia's poor population (about 65 percent), normally silenced by the oligarchies. He states that his policy will be "zero cocaine, zero trafficking" but, ambiguously, has added that this does not mean "zero coca, zero *cocalleros*." According to the UNODC, currently 15,200 hectares of coca leaf plantation are recognized as legal in Bolivia for the traditional internal demand. In his electoral campaign, Morales said that he will increase that area. He also stated that "narcotrafficking cannot be an excuse for the United States to interfere in Bolivian internal affairs" and that "under the pretext to combat narcotrafficking, the Bolivian Armed Forces can't stay subordinated to foreign armed forces." In his most recent speeches, after the elections, he typically talks about "the dirty war made by George Bush against us. This is state terrorism," Morales claims. He also says that he is going to nationalize the oil and gas resources. But, he adds that it is not his intention to confiscate properties from foreign countries that have invested in the country. Brazilian PETROBRAS is the largest foreign investor company in Bolivia. Morales went to Brazil in January 2006, before assuming the Presidency, and he stated that he intends to establish "brand new rules" about this matter, making clear that he wants partners to take advantage of the new incomes, create new jobs, eradicate illiteracy, and transform Bolivia into an industrial Nation. South America, of course, does not need a new Chávez. But the brand new President Evo Morales might be one more entanglement in this already troubled Andean ridge environment.

He [Morales] states that his policy will be "zero cocaine, zero trafficking" but, ambiguously, has added that this does not mean "zero coca, zero cocalleros."

The US Department of State includes Cuba among its list of six states sponsoring terrorism (the others are Iran, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria). Cuba was added to the list in 1982 for its complicity with the former Colombian M-19 insurgent group. The Commu-

nist government led by Fidel Castro has a history of supporting revolutionary movements and governments in Latin America and Africa. Up to his death in Bolivia in 1967, Ernesto Che Guevara was the political leader in charge of the dissemination of the Cuban foquismo (foco-military style). But in 1992, Castro said that his country's support for insurgents abroad was a thing of the past. Most analysts accepted that Cuba's policy did change, largely because the breakup of the Soviet Union resulted in the loss of billions in subsidies. Cuba ratified all 12 international counterterrorism conventions in 2001, but it has remained opposed to the United States-led global coalition against terrorism and actively condemned many associated US policies and actions throughout 2003.

There is much evidence about Fidel Castro's support of Colombia's narcoguerrillas. This is not anything new. Since Pablo Escobar's (the former Medellin cartel leader) time, Cuba's government and the Latin American communist parties has supported the association between the drug dealers and terrorists. Besides, Cuba continued to host several members of the FARC and the ELN (and other FTOs as the ETA Basque) as well as US fugitives from justice.⁵¹

Cuba also presented itself as a mediator between the ELN and the Colombian Government. President Uribe has agreed, and on 16 December 2005, in order to demobilize the ELN remnants started a dialogue with ELN in Havana, in the presence of international observers from Spain, Norway and Switzerland.⁵²

Ambassador Charles Shapiro, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, said in his remarks to Inter-American Defense College, on 27 October, 2005, "Cuba is considered a state sponsor of terrorism for its unwillingness to cooperate in the war on terror and its willingness to harbor those who are terrorists."⁵³ However, there are critics of retaining Cuba on the terrorism list, stating that this is a holdover of the Cold War. They argue that domestic political considerations keep Cuba on the terrorism list, and they maintain that Cuba's presence on the list diverts US attention from struggles against serious terrorist threats.⁵⁴

While this discussion has mainly centered upon narcoterrorism activities in Colombia and its environs, the following section describes how the FARC has extended its reach into other parts of the hemisphere. It suggests the importance of supporting counterterrorism efforts beyond the Andean Ridge and Amazon Basin to encompass the Southern Cone.

5. FARC Connections in Paraguay and the Tri-Border Area

Recent reports coming from Paraguay emphasize that the presence of the FARC is not restricted to the establishment of strategic bases for narcotrafficking and weapons trade in the Amazon region. Narcoguerrillas are training members of criminal organizations and radical leftist groups from different countries in Paraguay, in areas close to the border with Brazil. First an overview of the Tri-Border situation is provided, and this is followed by a description of the narcoterrorists' activities in the region.

The Tri-Border Area

The Tri-Border Area (TBA) is defined by three closely grouped population centers, one in each of the three countries:

- the Argentine city of Puerto Iguazu
- the Brazilian city of Foz do Iguazu
- the Paraguayan city of Ciudad del Leste (formerly Puerto Presidente Stroessner).

Ciudad del Leste is one of the free-trade Latin American areas with large Middle Eastern populations. Other areas include Colombia's Maicao; Venezuela's Isla Margarita; Chile's Iquique; the Paraguayan city of Encarnación, on the border with Argentina; and the Uruguayan town of Chuy, on the border with Brazil. The TBA has a reputation for lawlessness and, for the past fifteen years, has become the cause of much concern for those countries and the intelligence agencies in the West, because of the presence of transnational terrorists. It's indeed a center for many criminal activities that include drug trafficking, people, goods, weapons, as well as money laundering, prostitution, piracy of products, illegal gambling, etc. For decades, the region has been home to various terrorists, smugglers, drug traffickers, arms dealers, and organized crime figures from Russia, Japan, China, and Nigeria, among other countries.

Foz do Iguazu and Ciudad del Leste are regions where the first settlements of immigrants from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and the Palestinian territories emerged about 50 years ago and have a high rate of religious Muslim activity. The last 20 years have also

seen a significant immigration flow from China, Taiwan, and Korea.⁵⁵

Foz do Iguaçú is the largest city in the region, population estimated of about 320,000 (Ciudad del Leste—250,000 and Puerto Iguazu—30,000). Many people leave Ciudad del Leste at night and cross the 303-meter President Tancredo Neves concrete bridge, also known as the Friendship International Bridge (Ponte Internacional da Amizade), to return to Foz do Iguaçú, where the quality of life is, undoubtedly, better than in Ciudad del Leste and Puerto Iguazu. Estimates of the size of the Arab community of immigrants in the TBA (mainly in Ciudad del Leste and Foz do Iguaçú) range from 20,000 to 30,000, with most (about 15,000) residing in Foz do Iguaçú.⁵⁶ This is Brazil's second largest Arab community (city of São Paulo is the largest).⁵⁷ Most Arabs are of Lebanese and Palestinian descent and maintain commercial outlets in Ciudad del Leste. Currently, Foz do Iguaçú is successfully exploiting the tourist potential of the Iguaçú Falls (Cataratas do Iguaçú).

The region also has the largest hydroelectric plant in the world at Itaipu. Built by the Brazilian government and managed by a Brazilian-Paraguayan company, the Itaipu Binacional, the Itaipu plant has been operational since the beginning of the 1970s. This plant has 18 turbines, nine on the Brazilian side and nine on the Paraguayan side of the Paraná River. Paraguay uses only 5 percent of the generated energy. Brazil exploits the remaining 95 percent by buying power very cheaply from Paraguay. Itaipu's generated energy is responsible to supply Brasília, the capital, and the whole south and southeast regions of the country, including the São Paulo State industrial park (the Brazilian main industrial park). Therefore, the Itaipu's hydroelectric complex is Brazil's most important strategic key point in the Southern Cone.

Considering the security issues since the construction of the Itaipu's hydroelectric plant, the Brazilian Army improved significantly the 34th Motorized Infantry Battalion in Foz do Iguaçú. The area, even before the creation of the Ciudad del Leste's free trade zone (and its consequent problems), has been permanently monitored by Brazilian intelligence and security forces. Field tactical exercises carried out by the Brazilian Army's Rapid Reaction Force (FAR – E) units are routinely conducted in that area.

The region's main economic dynamic is business between Ciudad del Leste and Foz do Iguaçú. On normal days, an estimated 30,000

to 40,000 people and 20,000 vehicles cross the Friendship Bridge between Brazil and Paraguay. Residents and tourists in Ciudad del Este also regularly cross between Paraguay and Brazil on foot, often without documents. Border checks by authorities have generally been limited to simple spot checks, and less than 10 percent of personal baggage and vehicle loads are checked. Paraguay has been especially culpable in maintaining lax security and very poor border controls in the area, helping to fuel a huge underground economy. The traditional status of the TBA as a source of cheap goods has been severely restricted by new regulations issued by Argentina and Brazil. After Brazil implemented an integrated customs system to combat smuggling, commerce between Ciudad del Este and Foz do Iguaçu reportedly decreased by 90 percent.⁵⁸

The area is a haven for the outlaws who live and work among its law-abiding citizens. Political corruption, particularly on the Paraguayan side, allows for a multitude of criminal activities and illegal markets to overlap with legitimate economic activities.

Concerns about the Islamic terrorist element in the TBA date back to 17 March 1992, when a car bomb exploded at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 people and injuring more than 200. With the embassy bombing still unsolved, two years later, on 18 July 1994 the Argentine-Israeli

Concerns about the Islamic terrorist element in the TBA date back to 17 March 1992, when a car bomb exploded at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires ...

Mutual Association (AMIA) Jewish Center was bombed, killing 86 people. The investigation of both attacks implicated Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based Shiite Muslim militant organization. At that time, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Israel, and the United States had focused the attention on the TBA. Argentine authorities believe that the attacks had been organized and planned in the TBA.⁵⁹ In July 2002, a witness in the AMIA bombing, Abdolghassem Mesbahi, a former Iranian intelligence officer, testified to Argentine authorities that the Iranian government, the primary sponsor of Hezbollah, organized and carried out the AMIA attack and then paid to then Argentine President Carlos Saúl Menem \$10 million to cover it up. The charges against Menem have never been substantiated and he vigorously denied them.⁶⁰

Al Qaeda reportedly has had an interest and a presence in the TBA since at least the mid-1990s. Osama Bin Laden visited Foz do

Iguaçu in 1995 (the specific month is unclear), according to the leading Brazilian newsweekly magazine *Veja*. It cited an anonymous high official of the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Agência Brasileira de Inteligência, ABIN) who reported a 28-minute videotape that shows Bin Laden participating in meetings at a mosque during his visit.⁶¹ There have been indications that terrorist elements with possible Al Qaeda connections have used mosques in the TBA for recruitment purposes. In 1999, agents from Argentina's Secretariat of State Intelligence (SIDE) passed on a report that operatives from Al Qaeda were in the TBA coordinating actions with Hezbollah, something astonishing for most analysts who believed that Shiite Hezbollah and Sunni Al Qaeda would never cooperate.⁶²

On 31 May 1996, the three TBA countries established a "Tripartite Command of the Tri-Border" in order to better control commerce and the large transient international population. But the biggest improvement came after the tragedy of 9/11/2001. In 2002, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and the United States created the "3+1" Counterterrorism Dialogue, a mechanism focused on terrorism prevention, counterterrorism policy discussion, information sharing, increased cross-border cooperation, and mutual counterterrorism capacity building. Since then, the Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) is committing resources to build on the success of the "3+1" Dialogue. The United States alone has contributed \$1 million specifically for capacity building efforts in this region.⁶³

Several counterterrorism advances have occurred and operations have been significantly successful since then. For example, on 15 April 2002 Mohamad Ali Aboul-Ezz Al-Mahdi Ibrahim Soliman, member of the Egyptian terrorist organization Muslim Brotherhood (Al Gama'a al-Islammya) leadership, was arrested by Brazilian security forces in Foz do Iguaçu (where he had been living for seven years) under charges filed by the Egyptian government. Earlier, in 1999, he had been arrested on charges of dealing with contraband merchandise.⁶⁴ In September 2002, Ahmad Mohamed, a Lebanese naturalized in Paraguay, who used his 6,000 hectare ranch as the biggest FARC guerrilla elite's haven in Brazil (located in the small city of Guaira, southern part of the Paraná State at the Paraguay border, not too far from the TBA) was arrested by Brazil's Federal Police.⁶⁵ On 22 June 2002, Assad Mohamed Barakat, the Hezbollah financial kingpin in the TBA, was arrested by Brazilian security forces and

in mid-December 2002, the Brazilian Federal Supreme Court ruled to extradite Barakat to Paraguay to face charges of association for criminal purposes, abetment of crime, and tax evasion.⁶⁶

The TBA is reportedly a conduit for the drug trafficking through Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, which serve as transit countries for Andean cocaine. Despite the significant smuggling activity in the region, the TBA's importance as a drug trafficking conduit may have declined in recent years as a result of increased surveillance by security forces of the three TBA countries. The "3+1" Group on Tri-Border Area security discussions and analysis of preventive actions against terrorism and other transnational crimes is making significant contributions to countering these crimes. The discussions are focused on joint activities, such as training, international counterterrorism obligations, and best practices for improving law enforcement cooperation, including combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

There are still some very complex problems to deal with. Paraguay has no antiterror law, which in many countries (like in Argentina and Brazil) allows for the seizure of terrorist funds and bans donations to terrorist organizations. In addition, many analysts believe that Paraguay is particularly hesitant to prosecute or conduct investigations into Middle Eastern terrorists because the TBA is the largest center of commerce in the country and the Arab community there is often described as the "pillar" of economic activity. If the Arab community abandons the region en masse, Paraguay's already unstable economy would further deteriorate. Actually, Paraguay's weak government, lack of democratic stability, and pervasive corruption leave the door open for criminal and terrorist activity. Bribes are paid to government authorities to procure passports and visas as well as to buy influence among leading legislators, police, and judges.

In the "Questions taken at the 9 February 2004 Daily Press Briefing," a representative of the US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, stated that "at this time, the US Government does not have credible information confirming an established Al Qaeda presence in the Tri-Border Area, nor have we uncovered information that would confirm terrorist operational planning ongoing in this region. Terrorist supporters in the TBA are primarily engaged in fundraising for Hezbollah and Hamas."

On 6 and 7 December 2004, the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and the United States met in the Washington D.C. in the

framework of the “3+1” Group. After analyzing the points of the agenda, the delegations concluded that “according to currently available information, no operational activities of terrorism have been detected at the Tri-Border Area.” They also reiterated “their commitment to continue meetings with the four countries under this informal mechanism as the results achieved in this sphere are considered highly positive and auspicious.” Brazil announced the creation of a Regional Intelligence Center inside the newly established Federal Police headquarters in Foz do Iguaçu. Argentina and Paraguay made a commitment to designate focal points and liaison officers to this new center.⁶⁷ Moreover, President George W. Bush and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva discussed the TBA during Bush’s trip to Brazil in November 2005.

The TBA is a very important geopolitical region for the Western Hemisphere because it is a key point from which diverse points of South and North America can be penetrated. Because of the joint efforts carried out by regional countries, there is no doubt that the Islamist organizations have decreased their level of activities and the transnational crimes are being severely hit. Still, TBA remains a very significant latent threat. It’s crystal clear that the fight against terrorism and transnational crime can be effective only if applied from a perspective of broad cooperation among all countries’ agencies concerned, in an effective multi-national effort. This may prove important because even the FARC has found Paraguay and the wider TBA to be an inviting operational area.

The FARC Teaches Kidnapping to Brazilian Criminal Organizations

These were the headlines of the Brazilian Newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* on 4 July 2005, when it published an interview with the Brazilian Federal Judge Odilon Oliveira in the city of Ponta Porã (border with Paraguay).⁶⁸ He displayed evidence (including a videotape) that FARC members were carrying out training for outlaws belonging to the two largest Brazilian criminal organizations: First Capital’s Command (O Primeiro Comando da Capital, PCC) from the city of São Paulo and Red Command (O Comando Vermelho, CV) from the city of Rio de Janeiro. This training was specifically oriented to the conduct of kidnappings. According to Judge Oliveira, Brazilian narco-traffickers also had started to negotiate directly with the narcoguerrillas, eliminating Colombian intermediates, for the purchase of

cocaine. The payment is made in dollars or weapons. Judge Oliveira highlighted two Brazilian gang leaders currently established in Paraguay: Luiz Carlos da Rocha (aka Cabeça Branca) and Carlos Roberto da Silva (aka Charles). The latter is used to bring the cocaine from Colombia to be stored in Paraguayan territory by seven of his own aircraft.

Drugs enter Brazil through the border of the Mato Grosso do Sul State in the vicinity of the cities of Ponta Porã and Corumbá and are taken to the São Paulo and Paraná states in order to be distributed in Brazil and to Europe and the US. Judge Oliveira stated that with the regulation of the “Destructive Shooting Law” and Brazilian Air Force repressive action, the Amazon region became sufficiently watched and, therefore, there was a change in the route to the south for the drug dealers’ aircraft, and that cocaine is increasingly crossing the border in cars or buses in packages from 10 to 50 kilograms. He added that the great Brazilian dealers had left the marijuana business, preferring cocaine because of its small volume and its large aggregated value. According to the Brazilian Federal Police, about 80 percent of the 18 thousand tons of marijuana produced in Paraguay goes to Brazil. This production is dominated by Brazilian drug lords.

An example is Odacir Antonio Dametto, who has 19 farms in Paraguay producing both soybean and marijuana. Extradited from Paraguay, he is now in a top-security penitentiary in Campo Grande, capital of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Another Brazilian criminal arrested by Paraguayan authorities who would have been extradited to Brazil is Igor Fabricio Vieira, a former accomplice of the drug lord Fernandinho Beira Mar. But, Igor allegedly paid \$50,000 as a bribe to escape from the Paraguayan prison that was holding him. Ivan Mesquita is another Brazilian drug kingpin established in Paraguay with a very strong relationship with the Front 16 of the FARC. Ivan was arrested and extradited to the United States to face international drug trafficking charges.

Oliveira has also tracked the narcos’ links with terrorist organizations of the Middle East. He ordered the arrest of two outlaws of Arab origin, Joseph and Jorge Rafael Toumani. “There is evidence of money laundering to support terrorism,” he said. To combat money laundering in the city of Ponta Porã, Judge Oliveira has carried out an extensive investigation. A former Brazilian bank manager deeply involved, Elesbão Lopes de Carvalho Filho, was condemned by the

Judge to 172 years in prison and a fine of R\$ 358,000 (Brazilian coin), the largest penalty yet applied for this crime.

Judge Odilon Oliveira presented to the press a videotape apprehended with the criminals who kidnapped and killed Cecília Cubas, daughter of former Paraguayan President Raúl Cubas, on 21 September 2004.⁶⁹ Images show training for that kidnapping. Cecília's body was discovered in a house in the outskirts of Asunción. According to the Paraguayan authorities, this kidnapping had been conducted by Osmar Martinez, leader of the Free Country Party (Partido Pátria Libre), a Paraguayan radical leftist party linked to the Peasant Movement (Movimiento Campesino), with the help of the FARC members. Judge Oliveira, who is marked to die by the cocaine barons from different countries, is, currently, the Judge of the 3rd Federal Court of the city of Campo Grande, capital of the Mato Grosso do Sul State.

The FARC Intends to Create a Força Revolucionária da América

The Brazilian Newspaper *Correio Braziliense* in its 31 October 2005 issue, published classified reports from the Brazilian and Paraguayan Intelligence Services, produced in January 2005, disclosing that the FARC is using its guerrilla warfare experience trying to create America's Revolutionary Force (Força Revolucionária da América, FRA).⁷⁰ This organization intends to assemble representatives of radical leftist social movements and other associations from countries like Brazil, Paraguay, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina. Initially, FRA will try to disseminate among its collaborators a kind of revolutionary ideology and to get international financing.

In this context, guerrilla training is being carried out by the FARC for Brazilians from radical leftist social movements like the Landless Peasants Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra, MST). Although the Brazilian leadership of the MST denies this participation, there is evidence that three of those training events had been carried out in May, July, and August 2005. Those activities were conducted in the region of Salto del Guayrá, Ciudad de Pindoty Porã, Departamento de Canindeyú, in Paraguay, on the border with the Brazilian states of Mato Grosso do Sul and Paraná. This region was selected because it has been used in the last two years as a strategic point for cocaine, marijuana, and weapons smuggling, which prosper with the convenience [connivance?] of some Paraguayan authorities and the benevolence of fragile Paraguayan legislation. According to

the Brazilian Federal Police, the border departments of Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro, require special attention because they are also being used as trafficking routes by great criminal syndicates.

The United States Recent Military Presence in Paraguay

On 1 June 2005, the Paraguayan Congress signed off on an agreement bringing over 400 US troops for “joint training and humanitarian operations.” This deal, which is slated to last 18 months, sparked criticism and speculation among officials of neighboring South American governments regarding possible motives behind the presence of US troops in such large numbers in a country long renowned for its crime, corruption, contraband, and rhetoric about terrorist threats in the Tri-Border Area. On 1 July 2005, fewer than 50 US military personnel arrived, and a new contingent of 45 soldiers followed on 24 July. It seems that the initial reports that 400 troops would be arriving in Paraguay referred to the aggregate number of US troops being sent to the country over the 18 months. Actually, there is no clear information from the Pentagon regarding US military actions in Paraguay through 2006.

US officials say troops will operate in small numbers, for short periods of time, and will conduct some humanitarian missions along with Paraguayan units, according to a 7 July 2005 statement released by US Embassy officials in *Asunción*.⁷¹ “US personnel in small numbers, generally between 10 to 20 people, will train with their Paraguayan military counterparts during periods from two to six weeks,” the statement said. “The US soldiers will not be deployed for extended periods of time and there will never be more than a few dozen US service members in Paraguay for more than 45 days.” The State Department also noted that the two countries have conducted joint exercises since 1943, usually involving less than 50 US troops at a time. Their mission in the country is to provide housing, road construction, educational and health services, and to train Paraguayan military counterparts. Nevertheless, there is a general impression among South American analysts from different countries that US officials have downplayed the deal, stressing that the combined exercises, which focus on counterterrorism, drug interdiction and humanitarian aid, are similar to past ones.

There is an airbase in Mariscal Estigarribia, which is 200 kilometers from the border with Bolivia, that may be utilized by the US military. This base was constructed in the 1980s for US technicians

hired by the Paraguayan dictator Alfredo Stroessner and is capable of housing 15,000 troops. A journalist writing for the Argentine newspaper *Clarín* recently visited the base and reported it to be in perfect condition, capable of handling large military planes. Its oversized for the Paraguayan Air Force, which only has a handful of small aircraft. The base has an enormous radar system, huge hangars, and an air traffic control air tower. The airstrip is larger than the one at the international airport in Asunción. Near the base is a military camp which has recently grown in size.⁷²

Argentine Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel commented on the situation in Paraguay, “Once the United States arrives, it takes it a long time to leave. And that really frightens me.”⁷³ “The national government has not reached any agreement with the United States for the establishment of a US military base in Paraguay”, states a communiqué signed by Paraguayan Foreign Minister Leila Rachid. The US Embassy in Paraguay has also released statements officially denying plans to set up a military base in the country.⁷⁴

The Pentagon used this same language when describing its actions in Manta, Ecuador, now the home of an \$80 million US military base. After a similar troop agreement with Quito in 1999, first they said the facility was a “dirt strip” which would be used for weather monitoring and would not permanently house US personnel. Days later, the Pentagon stated that Manta was to serve as a major military base tasked with a variety of security related missions.⁷⁵

Theories have spread in regional media and on streets. One says the Pentagon wants to get close to vast natural gas reserves in Bolivia, a country where socialist political movements are, currently, in power. Another theory claims the United States wants to control the Guarani Aquifer.

One of the world’s biggest underground aquifers, the Guarani occupies an area of 1,195,700 square kilometers. About 70 percent is under Brazilian territory, 19 percent in Argentina, 6 percent in Paraguay and 5 percent in Uruguay. Its capacity is sufficient to supply 360 million people, given that it replenishes itself up to 160 to 260 Km³ per year. It could satisfy up to 21 percent of industrial demand for water in those four countries until 2025, according to a UN report warning of the scarcity of the precious liquid. No less than 1 billion people have no access to potable water. Approximately 20 percent of the world’s population does not have water, or has access

to unhealthy water only. Considering that the world's population is growing by 200,000 people a day, the problem is going to get worse. So, there is already a general awareness that future wars might be focused around taking over the potable water that still remains available. Water has become the "Blue Gold" of the 21st Century.

Under Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Department of Defense has sought to remake the US military into a quicker, lighter force that is less reliant on brute manual action and more inclined towards overwhelming speed and technological advantage. As its centerpiece, this strategy calls for the establishment of Cooperative Security Locations (CSL), previously known as Forward Operating Locations, in strategic locations around the world to allow for rapid mobilization and intervention at a moment's notice. There are already various CSLs operating around the hemisphere, but none would have the strategic importance that a base in Paraguay could hold. This current military agreement, which notably includes immunity for US troops, has led many policy decision makers and analysts in South America to fear that the Mariscal Estigarribia landing facility could soon be converted into a major US permanent base.⁷⁶

The US diplomatic offensive involving Paraguay did not go unnoticed by Asunción's immediate neighbors. Just like the other MERCOSUL partners (Argentina and Uruguay), the Brazilian Government asked for explanations from Paraguayan President Nicanor Duarte's Government. The diplomatic response seems to have been well accepted. Some South American

The US diplomatic offensive involving Paraguay did not go unnoticed by Asunción's immediate neighbors.

social communication organizations had published that in July 2005, coinciding with the arrival of the first US soldiers, "Brazil reportedly launched military maneuvers along the Paraguayan border," a move seen as an expression of Brazilian discontent with Paraguay. Actually, the maneuver was a Brazilian Army Parachute Infantry Brigade field tactical exercise, programmed one year earlier. Military maneuvers in the frontier areas are usual in the training program of the Brazilian Army Strategic Rapid Reaction Force. Anyway, there are brand new geopolitical questions in the region regarding Washington's intensified interests in previously all-but-ignored Paraguay.

The following section describes how Brazil confronts the beast—various measures Brazil has taken to face up to narcoterrorism threats since the incursion of by the FARC during the Traíra Inci-

dent in 1991 and more recent attacks on the national patrimony by narcoterrorists operating from outside Brazil. It outlines in some detail the in strategies and military dispositions tht Brazil has taken to counter threats to its vital interests.

6. Brazil Confronts the Beast

Drug trafficking has become a very significant threat to peace and stability in the countries of the Amazon region. This activity increases corruption and criminal rates and is considered a radical political and social destabilizing factor. The partnership involving the drug cartels and revolutionary movements allows their control of large areas of the territory and makes law enforcement very difficult. The constant discovery of new trafficking routes shows the extent of the problem.

The Traíra Incident

On 26 February 1991, about 40 gunmen who called themselves *Comando Simon Bolívar* of the FARC conducted a raid into Brazilian territory. They attacked a Brazilian Army jungle detachment at a semi-permanent camp on the bank of the Traíra River on the Brazil-Colombia border, 400 kilometers north of the Solimões Frontier Command/1st Special Border Battalion headquarters in Tabatinga, Amazonas State.⁷⁷ Surprised by the intense automatic weapons fire, camp members tried unsuccessfully to react. During the action, the Brazilian 17-man unit suffered 12 casualties, three dead and nine wounded. Two Colombian miners detained at the camp also died. By the raid's end, the Colombian guerrillas, suffering no losses themselves, had stolen the detachment's long distance radio station, ammunition, uniforms, and all the post's armaments. They carried 5.56mm automatic weapons and various hunting rifles and wore light green uniforms and rubber boots. Two women who were identified among the attacking gunmen had previously been detained at the post.

This lawless situation was caused by a large number of illegal Brazilian and Colombian miners who arrived in Traíra after the deactivation of a Brazilian mining company. It was later proved that the FARC guerrillas were allied with Colombian cocaine dealers and illegal Colombian miners. The Colombian guerrilla action seemed to be a reprisal for previous counter guerrilla actions conducted by the Traíra Detachment in order to establish law and order in a region of Indian lands and illicit gold mining.

The FARC attack against this detachment was unforeseen. Since the first Brazilian border platoons were established in the Amazon,

attacks like this had never occurred. The FARC attack led to the planning and execution of a combined operation staffed by the Armed Forces of Brazil and Colombia—*Operation Traíra*. This operation was the principal result of an extraordinary regional bilateral meeting held in Leticia, on 9 March 1991, between Brazilian and Colombian security authorities.

This meeting produced various combined accords and recommendations, and it defined the forces' commitment to operate in their respective territories to maintain order and to pacify the border region. The coordinated actions by Brazilians and Colombians at all levels of planning were also established. An agreement was reached for the immediate and continuous exchange of intelligence related to subversion, terrorism, and narcotrafficking in order to neutralize possible threats. It was also recommended that the Brazilian and Colombian Armies should foster combined problem management to increase government presence in the area and support community development activities.

The retaliatory Brazilian–Colombian response was successful. The offending FARC unit was neutralized, several members of the guerrilla support network were imprisoned and most of the stolen military equipment was recaptured. Again, in November 1991, another operation, *Operation Perro Loco* was launched at the Colombian border to confront new latent FARC threats. This operation was conducted in the Iauareté and Querarí regions, both in the Amazonas State Dog's Head (Cabeça do Cachorro) region.⁷⁸

Both operations, *Traíra* and *Perro Loco*, had successfully dissuaded the Colombian narcoguerrillas in the region from conducting incursions into Brazilian territory.⁷⁹ In those operations, conducted under the Amazon Military Command (headquarters in Manaus, capital of the Amazonas State) there was the participation of jungle infantry troops, special operations forces (SOF), Army aviation helicopters, Air Force fighters, and also a Navy river patrol ship.

Security and Development of the Brazilian Amazon

The Brazilian National Defense Policy highlights the Amazon and South Atlantic (also known as the “Blue Amazon,” it includes the territorial sea and the Brazilian Economic Exploitation Zone, in an area of 3.6 million square kilometers). They are Brazil's two top priority strategic areas. The Amazon is considered of utmost geopolitical importance for several reasons, including its vast size, its demographic

emptiness, its long borders, its abundant natural resources (particularly water and mineral resources), its problems associated with Indians and gold prospectors, the presence of guerrilla movements associated with narcotrafficking in neighboring countries, the presence of the Landless Peasants Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra, MST), a social movement which may or may not have ideological connotations), and pressure imposed by international interests. All together, these factors give the region its particular complexity as an international geopolitical issue.

The Brazilian Amazon's geopolitical importance demands preservation of the natural environment and development of the area as part of the larger South American Amazon region. Geographically, the Amazon is a huge basin that drains an area of 7,300,000 square kilometers in the northern part of the South American subcontinent. It encompasses territory in eight countries besides Brazil: French Guyana, Suriname, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador.

In 1978, Brazil took the initiative to bring eight neighboring countries into the Treaty of Amazonian Cooperation (Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica), also known as the Pan Amazonic Treaty. The 28 articles emphasized the following:

- Development of the region was the exclusive right of these countries
- Preservation of natural resources was also part of their national sovereignty
- Cooperation to achieve these two objectives
- Harmony between development and ecological protection should be achieved
- Cooperation on transnational crime, health care, river navigation, road building, scientific research, conservation and tourism

In February 2004, a cooperation agreement to combat narcotrafficking and other transnational illicit activities in the bordering rivers involving Brazil, Colombia and Peru was signed. In September 2004, there was an international meeting in Lima, Peru, involving all Defense Ministers of the Andean and Amazon regions. In this meeting, it was established that there would be two permanent bilateral defense working groups, Brazil-Peru and Brazil-Ecuador.

It's important to highlight that over 60 percent of the South American Amazon is Brazilian territory. This accounts for 60 percent

of the total land mass of Brazil. Some of the specific characteristics of the Brazilian Amazon are:

- [?] million square kilometers (3.6 percent of the world land mass)
- Population density of about 7 inhabitants per square kilometer (17.5 million, about 14 percent of Brazil's population)
- 1/3 of the world's tropical forests
- The largest biological diversity reserve on the planet (about 20 percent of living species)
- The largest fresh water basin in the world
- One of the world's richest subsoils in mineral wealth

Although the Amazon is disassociated from the rest of the Brazilian territory and demographically sparse, Brazil has historically resisted threats against its sovereignty over this important region to include recent attempts at interference in Amazonian affairs by international organizations. There are now new serious challenges to be overcome as Brazil pursues settlement and development of the Amazon.⁸⁰

The Brazilian Military Strategic Concept and the Armed Forces' Role

The objectives of the Brazilian National Defense Policy are to guarantee the sovereignty and the safety of the Brazilian national wealth, to guarantee rules of law and democratic institutions, maintain national unity, protect citizen rights and Brazilian interests abroad, provide for a more significant role in international affairs, and contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.⁸¹ Notwithstanding some severe budget restrictions, the Brazilian Armed Forces are the second largest and most powerful (after the US) of the Western Hemisphere. Every year public opinion polls are carried out and the people respond with their opinion about the most reliable institutions of the country. The Brazilian military institution is apolitical and enjoys (differently of other Latin America countries) the highest confidence rating of any public institution (including the Church) as evidenced by those polls.

The mission of the Brazilian Armed Forces as stated in the Constitution are to defend the homeland, guarantee Constitutional Powers (Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary) and, when requested by one of the Constitutional Powers, to guarantee law and order.⁸² Other

tasks are established by legislation and Presidential directives, such as to contribute to national development and civil defense; to participate in international operations; and to operate in the land frontier areas against transnational illicit activities.

The guarantee of law and order is summarized as enforcing respect for established legal norms or those derived from them. It's important to highlight that Armed Forces' intervention will always be a last resort, when the federal and state law enforcement agencies (LEA) cannot maintain law and order and chaos becomes an imminent threat. So, it's necessary to point out that the Brazilian Armed Forces do not have the mission to preserve the public order. Constitutionally, this is the mission of the Federal Police and the states' LEAs. Primarily, the Armed Forces' role is to provide LEA with logistics, intelligence and training support, when needed. Public security is a duty of the states and also a right as well as everyone's responsibility. It is exercised to preserve order, to provide security to the people and their properties. For this assignment, the country has the Federal Police, the Federal Highway Police, the Federal Railroad Police, the states' Civilian Police, the states' Military Police, and the Military Firemen Corps.⁸³ Air and maritime interdiction, carried out by the Air Force and the Navy, are considered military support to LEA.

The preventive strategies of Presence and Deterrence have been selected as the primary means of avoiding conflict based on the analysis of current and future situations. The Brazilian Army is present in more than 500 cities and small towns in all states of the Brazilian Republic. This is what is meant by the preventive strategy of Presence. It means "showing the flag" in all parts of the country, especially in outlying regions where the Army is often the only federal presence.

Though Brazil is one of the 10 top economies of the world by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), representing roughly half the GDP and half the population of South America and the 15th largest defense budget of the world, it is among those countries with one of the smallest defense budget as a percentage of its GDP. So, it's clearly impossible, in the short term, to increase significantly the current operational capabilities of the Brazilian Armed Forces. Therefore, certain prioritized activities have been chosen as vectors of the Armed Forces of the future, while at the same time maintaining a military force

capable of accomplishing the current tasks, including its strategy of deterrence.

One of these prioritized vectors is the Brazilian Army's Strategic Rapid Reaction Force (Força de Ação Rápida Estratégica, FAR-E). This Force, as well as the Marine Corps, is composed of professional troops, a high level of readiness, modern equipment, top training priority, and a strategic and tactical mobility that ensures their deployment ability anywhere in the country and their ability to serve as a ready response or core force in international commitments. The Strategic Rapid Reaction Force⁸⁴ is composed of the Parachute Infantry Brigade (headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro State); the 11th Light Infantry Brigade (recently activated and oriented to Guarantee of Law and Order Operations with headquarters in Campinas, São Paulo State); 12th Light Infantry Brigade – Air Assault (headquarters in Caçapava, São Paulo State); the Special Operations Brigade (headquarters in Goiânia, Goiás State)⁸⁵; and four squadrons of the Army Aviation Command (headquarters and three helicopter squadrons in Taubaté, São Paulo State and one helicopter squadron in Manaus, Amazonas State).

Currently, the Amazon region is the first strategic priority of the Armed Forces plans. This includes the preparation for rapid deployment of strategic forces of the three services, based outside the Amazon region. In order to develop the Amazon region and to defend vital national interests in the area, the Brazilian government is implementing the following strategies:

- Increasing military presence in the area
- Developing and operating the Amazon Surveillance System (Sistema de Vigilância da Amazônia, SIVAM) as the main component of the Amazon Protection System (Sistema de Proteção da Amazônia, SIPAM)
- Developing sustained economic activities
- Improving access to new environmentally-friendly technologies that preserve the ecosystem and the environment
- Applying resources from the reactivated North Path Project (Calha Norte Project) and other sources

To support this strategy the army has increased troops stationed in the Amazon from 6,000 in 1990 to 26,000 troops distributed in 62 Amazon locations in 2006. The establishment of both the 4th Army Aviation Squadron and the 3rd Special Forces Company in Manaus increased significantly the mobility, flexibility, and combat power

of the Amazon Military Command. The following is a description of Brazil's forces that are ready to defend the Amazon region against narcoterrorists and other threats.

Keeping in mind that the future is marked by undefined threats, in an environment in which uncertainty and unpredictability require a forces design suitable for any kind of mission, the Brazilian Armed Forces are developing concepts of a genuine national military strategy that will address the near, medium and long term requirements of the Nation, particularly in regards to the Amazon region.

The Brazilian Navy, besides its river patrolling mission and complementary development tasks, provides support to the Army for riverine operations (including deployment of Brazilian Marine Corps units). Currently, the Brazilian Navy has two main bases on the Amazon, at Belém, Pará State and at Manaus, Amazonas State, the two largest cities of the Brazilian Amazon. The Brazilian Air Force carries out the normal tasks related with air space control and supports the Army in close air support missions, fixed wing air transport, and complementary development tasks.

The Brazilian Air Force has four main bases, at Belém, Manaus, and Boa Vista, Roraima State, and Porto Velho, Rondonia State. By the end of 2006 there will be three more bases at São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas State; Eirunepé, Amazonas State; and Vilhena, Rondonia State.

The Brazilian Army, which assumes the largest responsibilities through the Amazon Military Command (Comando Militar da Amazônia, CMA), currently has the 2nd Construction Corps of Engineers Group (headquarters at Manaus, commands four Corps of Engineers' Battalions) and five Jungle Infantry Brigades (at about 4,500 people each, 85 percent professional soldiers) in the Amazon region: the 1st (headquarters in Boa Vista, Roraima State), the 16th (in Tefé, Amazonas State), the 17th (in Porto Velho, Rondonia State), the 23rd (in Marabá, Pará State), and, very recently, the 2nd (in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas State).

The Jungle Warfare Training Center (Centro de Instrução de Guerra na Selva, CIGS) deserves special mention. It was created in March 1964 and activated in October 1966, in Manaus, to instruct experts and train troops for operations in the Amazon region. The CIGS is internationally known for its training standards as well as for advances in doctrine and research fields, as the best jungle warfare training school anywhere.⁸⁶ To secure and helping the develop-

ment of the Amazon, the Brazilian Army must carry out the following tasks:

- Train to acquire the fundamental skills of jungle warfare
- Operate, when needed, in order to safeguard Brazilian sovereignty and the integrity of the national patrimony
- Carry out permanent surveillance on the border areas
- Establish settlements, which entails settling civilian populations around the most remote military units
- Promote education, in all frontier units, using state teachers or Army personnel; the norm is elementary school, junior high, and high school
- Provide health care, an important responsibility because in several interior centers and in border areas only the Army is able to provide public health services (normally, care to Brazilian military personnel represents only 15 to 20 percent of care provided by Brazilian military doctors; the other 80 to 85 percent are Indians, civilians and military personnel from bordering countries)
- Improve transport, particularly through efforts of the 2nd Construction Corps of Engineers Group in building and maintaining roads throughout the Amazon region

In accomplishing its mission, the Brazilian Army (as well as the Navy and the Air Force) must coordinate with several governmental agencies. It faces some adverse factors, such as a vast frontier, the existence of organized guerilla groups associated with powerful narcotrafficking cartels in some neighboring countries, the demarcation of Indian reserves near the borders, and the presence of Brazilian and foreign gold miners near the borders with neighboring countries. Additional problems include the subversive action of foreign missionaries who are not engaged in religious matters and the subversive actions of different foreign groups of non-governmental organizations concerned with several issues such as ecology, Indian people affairs, internationalization of the region, and so forth. The illegal actions of the MST (Landless Peasants Movement) have been a problem in specific areas.

The Brazilian government is aware that its security interests might be deeply threatened by the collapse of the Bogotá's government authority and, therefore, has supported the Colombian government in its objectives. However, it is concerned that the military operations developed in Colombian territory might drive refugees,

guerrillas, and drug traffickers across the border into Brazil. Despite all the difficulties, maintaining the control of the border is a high security priority and integration with the Colombian authorities is very well implemented. In September 2000, the Brazilian Armed Forces launched a three-year plan named Operation Cobra, increasing its presence on the border with Colombia. After Operation Cobra, Operations Timbó I, II and III were carried out in 2003, 2004 and 2005. All were joint operations involving the three services (with the cooperation of some other governmental agencies), under the command of the Amazon Joint Command, based in the Army's Amazon Military Command in Manaus. Besides the deployment of the Navy's fluvial patrolling ships, Air Force transportation aircraft and fighters, Army aviation helicopters, jungle infantry troops, SOF, and Federal Police agents were also involved.

One operational concept the Army uses successfully is to place 16 jungle infantry platoons at strategic locations along the border. A small number of commissioned and noncommissioned officers man the locations. Most of the soldiers serving with them are Indians or their descendents, with a deep knowledge about the area's operational environment. These border platoons (about 50 jungle warriors each) provide a point of contact, as well as health care and other necessities, to the region's people. Because the border platoons' positions are widely dispersed and cannot reinforce each other, detachments from the Jungle Infantry Battalions provide constant security, surveillance and direct action capabilities in the vast space of jungle between the outposts.

In February 2004, Brazil, Colombia and Peru signed a treaty to improve border coordination. US Army General Bantz J. Craddock, USSOUTHCOM Commander, in his Posture Statement before the 109th Congress, stated that this was "a superb example of regional cooperation against common threats."⁸⁷

In his visit to Colombia, in December 2005, Brazil's President Lula in a Joint Statement with President Uribe, once again repudiated terrorism and signed several bilateral cooperation agreements, including combat on narco-trafficking and protection to common borders. Colombia recently bought 25 Super Tucano fighters made by the Empresa Brasileira de Aeronáutica (EMBRAER) and has received from the Brazilian Social and Economic Development National Bank (Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social, BNDES) a credit of \$200 million in order to construct a road project in the

south of Colombia that will provide Brazil access to the Colombian Pacific.

Considering the enormous distances involved and the aggressiveness of the environment, Brazil is evidencing enormous progress in establishing order in its border areas. Two major national initiatives that complement Brazil's security activities are the border areas development program (Calha Norte) and the new surveillance system for the Amazon region (SIVAM), described below.

The Calha Norte Project

Concerned with the lawlessness in the border regions caused by illegal mining, logging, narcotrafficking, and the presence of neighboring guerrilla groups in Colombia and Peru, the government of then-President José Sarney approved in 1985 a project for bringing "order and progress" to the Amazon by settling people in the remote jungle areas.⁸⁸ The idea of "sovereignty and settlement" which dates from the historic origins of the western Amazon region, in modern times is embodied by the Calha Norte Project.

The Calha Norte (North Path) Project is, currently, the Brazilian government's most important strategy in securing the Amazon region. Its main goal is to promote the region's socio-economic development and integrate the region with the rest of the Country. Initially seen as a high priority interagency effort, in recent years, because of budget restraints, the Project has been sparingly supported, and the Armed Forces (mainly the Army) have done most of the work. Under Brazil's new National Defense Policy, the Calha Norte Project is being revitalized with the basic aim of settling and keeping control over Amazon borders.

The Calha Norte Project is located to the north of the Solimões and Amazonas Rivers and covers borders that separate Brazil from the Guyanas, Suriname, Venezuela, and Colombia. The Project involves a 16,000-kilometers-wide strip along those borders, an area of 700,000 square miles. This is equivalent to a quarter of Brazilian Amazon and about 15 percent of Brazil's territory. Within that strip, which runs from Oiapoque, in Amapá State to Tabatinga, in Amazonas State, live 1.5 million people, a high percentage of whom are Indians or their descendents. The strip also contains important mineral resources. The Project was created to reach the following goals:

- to strengthen bilateral relations, especially in the economic sphere, with neighboring countries

- to increase Brazil's military presence in the area
- to intensify the actions of Brazil's National Foundation for the Indian (Fundação Nacional do Índio, FUNAI) among the indigenous population
- to demarcate the area's boundaries
- to stem the loss of foreign exchange caused by the flow of contraband metals and precious stones over the border
- to combat drug-trafficking and preclude use of the region as a transit area for narcotics
- to develop basic social resources
- to build economic development centers

The Calha Norte Project, through all its phases, is intended to support development processes in the Amazon without destroying the basic ecological characteristics of the area. The participation of the Armed Forces is fundamental in increasing Brazilian presence in the border area through engineering projects and in the establishment of a basic infrastructure supporting the region's development.⁸⁹

The SIVAM and the Destructive Shooting Law

The Amazon Surveillance System (Sistema de Vigilância da Amazônia, SIVAM) is a realization of the modernization of the Brazilian Air Space Control and Air Defense System (Sistema de Defesa Aérea e Controle do Espaço Aéreo, SISDACTA), unique in Latin America. The SISDACTA is a responsibility of the Brazilian Air Force. In this context, it's important to underscore that, in Brazil, all airspace controllers (including those who support commercial aviation in the domestic and international airports) are military and belong to the Air Force. Now, with the SIVAM fully operational, the SISDACTA covers the whole Brazilian territory. It's something extremely relevant because the already effective Brazilian airspace control has improved greatly.

SIVAM started operations in 2002 and was fully operational by the end of 2004. It amalgamates data from a number of different sources: airborne radars (five aircraft R 99A AWACS, three aircraft R 99B remote sensors, all made in Brazil by EMBRAER), land-based fixed radar stations, mobile radar sites, and satellite information. The armed vectors are 76 Brazilian Air Force fighters ALX Super Tucano (also manufactured in Brazil by EMBRAER). Weather data—from land, river and air—also is fed into the system and more than

700 ground stations allow scientists to feed information into the system. US defense contractor Raytheon designed the system that cost Brazil \$1.5 billion.

SIVAM is helping Brazil control its borders and tie the far-flung country together. SIVAM is operated by the Brazilian Air Force, and the system does provide significant military capabilities, providing radar coverage over the bordering areas. Narcotraffickers were using the Brazilian airspace—and sometimes landing strips—to smuggle drugs, money and weapons. The illegal aircraft usually proceed to the interior of Brazil (internal consumption) or to nearby countries, on their way to Europe and the United States. SIVAM also will help the search and rescue missions in the remote areas of the country. The system gives decision makers in Brasilia or the three other regional control centers in Brazil an invaluable military tool.

But it's not only the relevant military aspect that makes this system unique. What is unique is the way that SIVAM was adapted to the Amazon Protection System (Sistema de Proteção da Amazônia, SIPAM). SIVAM helps to protect the people and resources of the region and helps establish land management and use regimens. The system is concerned with deforestation, contacts with indigenous peoples, communications (medical experts have the chance to practice telemedicine) and providing government services over a wide part of Brazil. The data bank contains information on the flora and fauna of the Amazon River basin, the largest of the world. The scientific information includes weather conditions, river water levels at various places, lightning strike information, condition of the ground cover and much more. Government agencies are considering making the information available to the world on the Internet.

SIVAM is an ambitious undertaking that is filling a gap in Brazil's defenses, and the way it has developed fits the security needs of the country. The Brazilian Code of Aeronautics defines the cases in which an aircraft may be subjected to detection, interdiction, or arrest by Air Force, Customs, or Federal Police authorities. It states that after all the legally prescribed coercive means have been adopted, an aircraft will be classified as hostile and thus under the possibility of destruction.⁹⁰ However, notwithstanding this legal statement, before the Destruction Law was enacted, Brazilian Air Force fighter pilots responsible for patrolling the airspace were ignored by pilots of clandestine flights, who systematically disobeyed orders of identification and landing at a predetermined aerodrome, according to the legisla-

tion then in effect. On several occasions, even after a warning shot had been made, there was complete disobedience.

Under these conditions, the Brazilian society, through its legal representatives in Congress approved the Destructive Shooting Law, nicknamed *Lei do Abate* (Shooting Down Law) by the press. The law has come to fulfill an important gap, supporting policing measures within Brazilian air space, particularly over non-regular flights, suspected of being involved with illegal drug trafficking.

Under these conditions, the Brazilian society, through its legal representatives in Congress approved the Destructive Shooting Law, nicknamed Lei do Abate (Shooting Down Law) by the press.

The law's implementation has brought up new concepts, rendering it necessary to define expressions like "coercive means," "hostile aircraft," and "destructive measure." Furthermore, it has become mandatory that the newly adopted solution should be applied under a framework of strict safety procedures, with full clarification of the procedures and the conditions under which the destructive measure may be carried out. All of these aspects demanded regulation of the legal decision, by means of a Presidential Decree.

Starting in April 2003, a think-tank group composed of representatives of the Ministries of Defense, Justice, Foreign Affairs, officials of the Presidency's Institutional Security Cabinet (Gabinete da Segurança Institucional da Presidência), along with experts of the Brazilian Air Force Command, had a series of meetings with the objective of studying all the aspects concerning the implementation of the Destructive Shooting Law, such as procedures for air interception, civil aviation international laws, measures for the integration of procedures with neighboring countries, and the legislation of the countries interested in the theme. Presidential Decree Nr 5144, 16 July 2004, regulated this indispensable instrument for fighting the criminality associated with international drug smuggling, defining all the adequate procedures for the policing of the Brazilian airspace. The text is a result of a series of exchanges made with neighboring countries in order to integrate the procedures of aircraft interception, and thus, minimizing the possibility of misunderstandings. The issue was widely debated with other friendly governments interested in the same theme. The results of the political exchanges indicate that enforcement of this law will not bring adverse effects to Brazil.

The regulation that has been approved covers only the case of aircraft suspected of being involved with international drug trafficking and does not address narcoterrorism as such. Based on what is stated in the United Nations Letter of Self-Defense, the Brazilian government deemed it necessary to limit the law to only narcotrafficking, taking into consideration the increasing threat against the security of the Brazilian society posed by the traffic of narcotics.

There are two situations under which an aircraft can be considered suspect of trafficking narcotics and related drugs:

1. An aircraft enters the Brazilian airspace without an approved flight plan, coming from regions which are recognized as production or distribution sources of illegal drugs
2. An aircraft omits information considered necessary to its identification by the air traffic agencies, or does not comply with instructions given by the same authorities when flying along a route presumably used for the distribution of illegal drugs

The Brazilian Air Force intercepting fighters are under the Brazilian Airspace Defense Command (Comando de Defesa Aeroespacial Brasileiro, COMDABRA), which is the Air Force command responsible for the accomplishment of the measures and all the procedures.

After an aircraft is considered suspect, it can be subjected to three stages of coercive measures progressively applied if success is not achieved by the prior one, and upon being considered “hostile,” to the final step of destruction of the aircraft.

1. “Investigation Measures” are the first stage, seeking to determine or to confirm the identification of the suspect aircraft and also to closely watch its behavior. They comprise “discrete identification,” “registration number verification,” “interrogation on international emergency frequencies,” and “exchange of visual communications” procedures.
2. If the suspect aircraft pilot does not respond to or does not obey any of the aforementioned procedures, the second stage of coercive measures will be “Intervention Measures” that require “route change” and “mandatory landing,” both procedures determined by the intercepting fighters, either via radio, through all frequencies available, or via visual signals established by international regulations of compulsory knowledge.

3. The third stage of actions require are “Persuasion Measures,” carried out in case the suspect aircraft pilot does not obey any of the previous measures. It consists of the making lateral warning shots with tracer ammunition at the suspect aircraft in a way which is visible to the intercepted pilot and without hitting his aircraft.

In total, there are eight procedural steps to be followed by the Brazilian Airspace Defense authorities. Only after the first seven initial procedures are ignored by the suspect aircraft, it will be classified as “hostile,” and then it can be subjected to a “Destruction Measure,” which means that the interception fighters will shoot at the intercepted aircraft (over non-populated areas) with the objective to deny the hostile aircraft the continuation of the flight.

It is important to highlight that the accomplishment of this extreme measure will only occur after all the procedures established by the law have been carried out, and that it will be the last resort for the country to prevent drug smuggling aircraft from transporting narcotics into the Brazilian territory. According to a public opinion poll carried out in the whole national territory, 87 percent were in favor of the Destructive Shooting Law (“a legitimate way to defend our sovereignty”) and 13 percent were against (“it should only be used in wartime”).

In order to coordinate common airspace control procedures along with neighboring countries’ air forces, the Brazilian Air Force carried out “Operation PERBRA I”, from 24 to 27 August 2004, with the Peruvian Air Force; “Operation COLBRA I”, from 23 to 27 May 2005, with the Colombian Air Force; “Operation PARBRA I”, from 10 to 14 June 2005, with the Paraguayan Air Force; and “Operation PRATA III”, from 27 Jun to 1 Jul 2005, with the Argentinean Air Force. In all those special air operations, the Brazilian Air Force took advantage of its Air Traffic Control and Air Defense System (SISDACTA) expertise and established the basic structure of synchronized systems of detection, communications and interception with its neighboring countries.

The results have been very successful. In November 2005, during Operation Closed Gate (Porteira Fechada), Brazilian Air Force fighters arrested 32 drug trafficking aircraft (all of them forced to land on Brazilian soil) and, in a demonstration of interagency coordination, the Brazilian Federal Police apprehended more than 500 kilograms of cocaine.⁹¹

In addition to reinforcing military presence along its borders, after the approval of the Destructive Shooting Law, Brazil implemented a permanent Airbridge Denial Program. It has successfully prevented the use of Brazilian airspace by unauthorized aircraft. This has been a remarkable initiative in the context of the struggle against narcoterrorism in the Western Hemisphere, with positive results for the countries of the region.

7. Conclusion: Interagency Tasks with International Dimensions

The new, rapidly changing global environment, characterized in the Western Hemisphere by regional political instability and unconventional threats, requires greater cooperation than ever before. In each country it demands interagency cooperation with international dimensions as well. In Brazil, at the strategic level, interdicting neighboring countries' guerrillas, as well as combating drugs and weapons trafficking, money laundering, and transnational crime involves a broad range of government agencies. For Brazil it's possible to highlight the following:

- Institutional Security Cabinet (Gabinete da Segurança Institucional, GSI), directly linked to the President of Republic
- Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Agência Brasileira de Inteligência, ABIN), subordinate agency of GSI
- Anti-drug National Secretariat (Secretaria Nacional Antidrogas), subordinate agency of GSI
- Ministry of Finance (Ministério da Fazenda), mainly through Central Bank and Customs (relevant agencies against money laundering and contraband)
- Ministry of Justice (to whom Federal Police is subordinated)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Defense, the Armed Forces Commands (Navy, Army and Air Force)
- the state governments (with their law enforcement and other agencies)

Coordinated planning and synchronized actions at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels are fundamental to success. The interagency environment between civilian and military organizations is often complex. Unity of effort becomes difficult because of the various agencies' different and sometimes conflicting policies, tactics, decision-making techniques, and procedures. When facing unconventional threats, civilian organizations often must operate in close proximity to military forces because their missions may fail without military support or protection.

Military commanders typically seek clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objectives and end states. Not all civilian agencies will

necessarily understand the need for clearly defined objectives. This sense of urgency characteristic is typical of military planners. It must be considered also that significant organizational differences exist between the military hierarchy and those of other organizations, particularly at the operational and tactical levels. In order to overcome differences like these and reach successful interagency operations, authorities in charge must involve representatives from all agencies engaged. It's absolutely necessary to understand the roles and relationships among various federal agencies, military headquarters, state and local governments as well as other engaged organizations.

In the Amazon region's operational environment, where military support to domestic civil authorities is very common in a variety of tasks (including law enforcement), it is possible to capitalize on institutional experiences. Those experiences include identifying and assessing the different agencies' capabilities and core competencies, identifying specific procedures, and achieving unity of effort. Also in the Amazon region there are some operational environments, particularly in frontier areas, whose characteristics demand that a military headquarters act as the lead agency.

In the frontier areas, the presence of foreign military and civilian organizations, in a multinational environment, is a very important, complicated factor. To overcome differing operational procedures, bureaucratic cultures and language, competent liaison officers become a necessary instrument for interagency and international cooperation.

Operations conducted at frontier areas with Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia are, basically, special operations developed in jungle terrain. Search and destroy operations of this nature demand soldiers with special psychological and physical fitness characteristics, specifically trained to face, besides the enemy, jungle difficulties, adverse climate conditions, and the isolation provoked by overwhelming distances. The Amazon Military Command Jungle Infantry units are very much "SOF like." This facilitates a lot of planning coordination, actions synchronization and maneuver along with SOF units of the Strategic Rapid Reaction Force (FAR-E). When needed, specifically trained law enforcement agencies personnel will be deployed along with both jungle infantry and SOF units. It's absolutely mandatory that operations carried out against unconventional threats of this nature must be intelligence driven. In this context, notwithstanding the relevance of Signal and Image Intelligences (SIGINT), Human In-

telligence (HUMINT) is predominantly underscored. The Special Operations Forces (SOF) must be deployed always as a strategic asset, decisively focused to find, fix and destroy the enemy. Its role, among others, in covert reconnaissance and direct action against high valuable targets is absolutely indispensable.

One example of a very successful interagency and international coordinated effort carried out by the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Justice materialized by Air Force's fighter interdictions and consequent arrests made by Federal Police on the ground.

Signs of International Cooperation and Support

In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., Latin American nations strongly condemned the attacks, and took action through the Organization of American States (OAS) to strengthen hemispheric cooperation. At a special session on 19 September 2001, in an initiative led by Brazil, OAS members invoked the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, also known as Rio Treaty, which obligates signatories to the treaty to come to one another's defense in case of outside attack. Another resolution approved on 21 September 2005, called on *Rio Treaty* signatories to "use all legally available measures to pursue, capture, extradite and punish those individuals" involved in the attacks and to "render additional assistance and support to the United States, as appropriate, to address the 11 September attacks, and also to prevent future terrorist acts." In another resolution, the OAS established the Inter-American Committee on Terrorism (CICTE) to identify urgent actions aimed at strengthening inter-American cooperation in order to combat and eliminate terrorism in the hemisphere. The CICTE has cooperated on border security mechanisms, controls to prevent funding of terrorist organizations, law enforcement and counterterrorism, and intelligence and information.

In June 2002, OAS members signed a newly completed Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism. Signing the treaty for the United States, Secretary of State Colin Powell said that OAS had "produced the first new international treaty since 11 September targeted at improving our ability to combat terrorism."⁹² The convention, among other measures, would improve regional cooperation against terrorism, commit parties to sign and ratify U.N. anti-terrorism instruments and take actions against the financing of terrorism, and deny safe haven to suspect terrorists. President Bush submitted

the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism to the Senate on 12 November 2002, for its advice and consent, and the treaty was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Treaty Doc 107-18). The Committee held a public hearing on the treaty on 17 June 2004.⁹³

At a January 2003 CICTE meeting in El Salvador, OAS members issued the Declaration of San Salvador, which condemned terrorism and pledged to strengthen hemispheric cooperation through a variety of border, customs, and financial control measures. At the conference, the United States pledged \$1 million to the OAS to help the growth of CICTE “as a technical body devoted to increasing counterterrorism expertise in the Americas.”⁹⁴

In October 2003, the OAS held a *Special Conference on Security* in Mexico City that focused on identifying new threats, concerns, and challenges facing the hemisphere and agreed on a cooperative approach toward addressing them. Among the threats identified in the adopted “Declaration on Security in the Americas” was “terrorism, transnational organized crime, the global drug problem, corruption, money laundering, illicit trafficking in weapons and the connections among those activities.”⁹⁵ At the February 2005 CICTE session held in Trinidad and Tobago, OAS members reaffirmed their commitment to deepen cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

According to the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism⁹⁶ in examining the relationship between the narcotics trade and terrorist groups in Latin America the following key points stand out:

- The indigenous terrorist groups in the drug producing areas of Colombia and Peru are heavily involved in the drug trade
- Significant amounts of the drug related income derives from taxation of growers and traffickers
- The groups are bartering cocaine and opium for weapons and other material from the drug cartels
- The terrorists and drug smugglers use the same smuggling routes, similar methods of money laundering, and take of advantage of the same tendencies for official corruption
- The use of forged travel documents, false customs declarations, trusted couriers, the Black Market Peso exchange and similar forms of illegal activity are common to both groups

There is no doubt that an increased regional cooperation is being carried out in the Western Hemisphere in order to face the current threats common to all the countries. In this context, the role of

the remaining hegemonic superpower is relevant. There is a clear assumption that no solutions exist without United States decisive engagement, at least at the short term.

Regarding the Brazil–United States relationship, in the Joint Statement on the 5–6 November 2005 visit by President George W. Bush to Brazil, both President Bush and President Lula, “underscored the increasingly strong and close ties that Brazil and the United States enjoy, based on common values and objectives, including the promotion of democracy, development, economic growth, trade liberalization, international security and combating terrorism.” They also “agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation to combat the narcotics trade, trafficking in wildlife, terrorism, and money laundering, with an emphasis on information sharing between the two countries’ financial intelligence units and the design of mechanisms to recover assets derived from transnational crimes.”

US policy makers and authorities must keep in their minds two fundamental points. First, notwithstanding the leftist winds blowing, rarely in the history of US–Latin America relations have both the challenges and the opportunities been so great for the establishment of an effective cooperative security relationship. It is certainly not a time for indifference.

Second, it is a great strategic mistake to look at Latin America as a whole—to believe that all Latin American (and Caribbean) countries are the same. Yes, there are common threats; however, the political, socio-economic, military and scientific-technological environments are different within each country. Therefore, the solutions are different and, most important of all, the countries’ potential are quite different. US government officials should acknowledge that they have to deal with each one of the 31 countries of Latin America as a unique entity, understanding its culture, language, historical contexts, and its special requirements.

Narcoterrorism, as a resultant of transnational terrorism, drugs and weapons trafficking and related illicit issues, is a great challenge to international security in the 21st Century. To face this challenge successfully in the Western Hemisphere, it is necessary for all countries to make a real commitment to international partnership, not only focused on security matters, but also on the collective socio-economic well-being of the region.

Endnotes

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About the Author

Major General Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro, Brazilian Army, Retired, is a graduate of the Brazilian Army Military Academy (Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras), Class of 1967. As an Infantry Lieutenant, he led rifle platoons in Motorized and Parachute Infantry Battalions. He was also a paratrooper, jump master, commando, special forces, and pathfinder, and he is military free fall and SCUBA qualified. In 1973, he attended a Special Forces Operations and Military Free Fall Training (HALO / HAHO) at the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Special Warfare Center (JFK-SWC) and the 7th SF Group Airborne, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

As a Captain, he commanded a Special Forces Operational Detachment and served as instructor at the Brazilian Army Special Operations School and at the Agulhas Negras Military Academy. After graduating at the Infantry Advanced Course, Combined Arms School, he served as Motorized Infantry Battalion Operations Officer. As a Major, he was assigned



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instructor at the Combined Arms School, and in 1983 he graduated at the Command and General Staff College. As staff officer, he served as operations officer in a Motorized Infantry Brigade before returning to the Command and General Staff Officer Course as tactics instructor. As a Lieutenant Colonel, he was assigned Commander of the 1st Special Forces Battalion (the Brazilian Army Unit specialized on unconventional warfare and counterterrorism) from January 1989 to January 1992. Promoted to Colonel, he graduated at the Policy, Strategy and Army's High Administration Course, Brazilian Army War College, and subsequently was assigned as a staff officer at the Land Operations Command. From June 1994 to June 1996, he was the Brazilian Liaison Officer to the US Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas advising the Combined Arms Center Commandant on the Brazilian Defense Policy and Latin America security issues. At that time he had the opportunity to support the Command

and General Staff College, Foreign Military Studies Office, National Simulation Center, Center for Army Lessons Learned, and the Battle Command Battle Laboratory. He also was the Consultant Editor of *Military Review*, Brazilian Edition.

Returning to Brazil, he served as the Chief of the Peacekeeping Operations Branch at the Brazilian Army General Staff from Jul 1996 to Jul 1998. In this position, he was in charge of numerous activities related to those operations, as follows:

- General guidance, coordination and control of the Brazilian Army contingents on the following missions: UNAVEM III and MONUA (Angola); MINUGUA (Guatemala); UNFICYP (Cyprus); MARMINCA (Demining Supervisors in Central America) and MOMEPE (Ecuador and Peru);
- Coordinator of the Brazilian Army Studies Group for the United Nations Standby Arrangements and Rapid Deployment Mission Headquarters;
- Chief of the Brazilian Delegation on the Third United Nations Peacekeeping Training Assistance Team Seminar (III UNTAT Seminar);
- Co-director of the United Forces 97, peacekeeping training exercise involving the US SOUTHCOM, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela and the UN DPKO.

Promoted to Major General (Brazilian Army two-star General) on Jul 31, 1998, he was assigned Commandant of the Brazilian Army Operational Test and Evaluation Center. From December 1999 to January 2002, he was the Commandant of the Combined Arms School (“Home of the Captain”). His last position before retirement was the Third Deputy Chief of Staff (Doctrine, Plans and Strategy) at the Brazilian Army General Staff. MG Alvaro was the Brazilian Army representative on the “Gen Mark Clark – Gen Mascarenhas de Moraes Lecture Exchange”, in 2001, when he lectured about Brazilian Army issues at the US Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the US Military Academy, West Point, New York, and the US Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He was also the Chief of the Brazilian Delegation at the “XVIII US and Brazilian Armies Staff Talks” in 2002, at Fort Benning, Georgia. Retired on Jul 15, 2002, Gen Alvaro lives in Rio de Janeiro, and is a Senior Military Analyst and Security Consultant, frequently invited to participate in lectures, conferences, strategic studies meetings in several military and civilian institutions.

Currently, General Alvaro is a guest speaker for the Latin America Orientation Course of the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) and USAF Special Operations School Hurlburt Field, Florida. He was also guest speaker at The Joint Operational Environment Global Seminar developed by the US Army TRADOC in Williamsburg, Virginia, 25-27 May 2004, and at the Brazil's Defense Approach Toward a Changing Security Environment workshop developed by the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Fort McNair, 23-24 September 2004.

Among others, Alvaro Pinheiro is the author of the following articles: "Vision of Brazilian National Security Policy on the Amazon," in *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, Winter 1994, Number 3; "Guerrillas in the Brazilian Amazon," in *Military Review*, March-April 1996, English, Spanish and Brazilian Editions; "Battle Command: Considerations at the Operational and Tactical Levels" in *Military Review*, 2nd Quarter 1996, Brazilian Edition.

General Alvaro's awards and decorations include the Brazilian Pacifcator with Leaf ("Pacifcador com Palma") Medal for bravery in action and the Brazilian Military Merit Order ("Ordem do Mérito Militar"). He also has been awarded the US Meritorious Service Medal and the US Army Commendation Medal

