

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES:
HOMELAND SECURITY THRU REGIONAL STABILITY**

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 18 MAR 2005		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Latin America and the United States Homeland Security Thru Regional Stability				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Gilberto Ponce				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Mr. Gilberto E. Ponce

TITLE: Latin America and the United States: Homeland Security thru Regional Stability

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 18 March 2005 **PAGES:** 26 **CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

Establishing a strong relationship with another country requires more than good intentions and a handshake. Many variables should be considered such as the country's culture, traditions, politics, economy, and military posture. This has been proven during military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The 21st century brings many policy challenges and opportunities to strengthen diplomatic and military ties between the United States and Latin America. In this paper I will address the importance of regional stability in the Latin America Andean Region and its affect on United States (U.S.) homeland security. Stability in the Andean Region is crucial to U.S. security and defense posture. This vital element, besides being a challenge, is also an opportunity to establish a better partnership and improved U.S.- Latin America relationship. The survival of the U.S. depends on an effective strategic implementation of a homeland security and defense plan, which places in the forefront Latin America regional stability.

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES: HOMELAND SECURITY THRU REGIONAL STABILITY

THE AMERICAS IN THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (NSS)

Two key objectives form the cornerstones of the National Security Strategy (NSS) for the Americas.¹ They are to defuse regional conflicts and to ignite global economic growth. These two objectives require fomenting democracy, supporting politically stable governments, eliminating drug trafficking and illegal smuggling, preventing insurgencies, and improving regional economy.

These two NSS objectives present many challenges and risks for U.S. interests in Latin America. These interests cover a variety of issues such as homeland security, regional stability, drug production and trafficking, immigration, the economy, democratic governance, human rights, and the environment. To strengthen ties with Latin American neighbors, U.S. policy makers must understand their reciprocal interests towards the U.S. and clearly communicate U.S. interests to them.

To defuse regional conflicts and ignite economic growth, as presented in the U.S. NSS, stability is essential. The Andean Region in Latin America and especially the countries of Colombia and Peru are sources of instability in the region.² This instability is the result of drug production and trafficking, insurgency, and poor economy. The Andean Region is unquestionably fertile ground for terrorist threats against U.S. security due to the insurgency groups from Colombia and Peru that still operate in the area.³ Continuing turmoil in this region threatens the peace and security of not just South America but security in the U.S. as well.⁴ Although other countries comprise the Andean Region, Colombia and Peru are the center of regional instability.

LATIN AMERICA AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Homeland security and defense is the most important challenge that the U.S. faces today. After the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, the U.S. realized that security and survival depends not just on being a strong military power, but also on implementing firm and effective policies to safeguard the borders, timely and effective intelligence gathering and analysis, situational awareness, and strong relationships with the countries that surround us.

Homeland security is not a new concept. Over twenty years ago the late President Ronald Reagan stated:

If we lose freedom here [in America], there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on Earth.

- President Ronald Reagan
October 27, 1984

The U.S. needs to protect the homeland from every corner of the earth beginning in its neighborhood, which includes Latin America. Eighteen years after President Reagan's statement, President George W. Bush said:

But there is an overriding and urgent mission here in America today, and that is to protect our homeland. We have been called into action, and we've got to act.

- President George W. Bush
July 10, 2002

Homeland security and defense begins at home but extends beyond our borders. Latin American countries are the closest U.S. neighbors besides Canada. It is essential for the U.S. to strengthen its ties to Latin American countries and create solid relationships with their governments. Latin America is strategically important to the U.S. since U.S. security and defense depends also on the neighbors to the South and South East. Besides security, Latin America trade, culture, and its \$2 trillion economy are essential to the U.S. market.⁵

There is no doubt that the more stable and prosperous neighboring governments are, the more secure the homeland will be. Having democratic, economically sound, and trusted neighboring countries underwrites security in the U.S. It's imperative to understand Latin American issues if the U.S. wants to help them become stronger and improve friendly ties.

THE ANDEAN REGION

The Andean Region is located in the Western part of South America and extends from Colombia to the North West, to Tierra del Fuego, Chile in the South West. Defining which countries comprise the Andean Region depends on the source since some sources include or exclude countries. Four Andean Region countries included in all sources are Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. Other sources also include Venezuela, Panama, Chile, and Brazil.⁶ This paper will address the four countries included in all sources plus Chile. Chile is part of the Andean Region and exemplifies success in the war against insurgency and drug trafficking.

THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

Colombia is the fourth largest country in South America and the only one with Atlantic and Pacific coasts.⁷ It covers an area of 439,405 square miles with a population of 40 million. Its

climate ranges from hot and humid in the lowlands, to temperate in the highlands.⁸ The official language is Spanish and the main religion is Roman Catholic.⁹

Colombia's unofficial, illegal chief commercial product is refined cocaine, which brings \$10 billion U.S. dollars in profit to the drug lords.¹⁰ Its official, legal commercial products are coffee, petroleum, cotton, tobacco, sugar, textiles, bananas, and flowers.¹¹ None of which brings substantial revenues to their economy in comparison to drug cultivation and production.

Colombia's drug cartels control most of the rural region in the country. The two strongest and known cartels are the Medellin and the Cali. Even though some of their kingpins and lords have been apprehended and prosecuted, they still operate. The two most powerful insurgency groups, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN) and the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) provide protection to the drug lords and campesinos (farmers) that work for them in exchange for "taxes" collected based on how much drug pass thru their area of operation.¹²

THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

Ecuador has an area of 104,749 square miles with a population of 12.8 million.¹³ Ecuador lost some territory to Peru as a result of a war settlement in 1942.¹⁴ Ecuador still disputes this territorial boundary. It has three zones covering the Andean highlands, the coastal plains in the Pacific, and the Orient tropical jungles in the Amazon Basin.¹⁵

Ecuador's official language is Spanish and its main religion is Roman Catholic. Its chief commercial products are petroleum, coffee, cotton, sugar, bananas, cacao, shrimp, and fish. Most of the farming is done in the coastal plains where the tropical weather is perfect for such products to grow.

The country of Ecuador has been mostly a peaceful neighbor, but it has experienced instability due to its neighbors to the north (Colombia) and the east (Peru). There are no significant drug or insurgency related problems in Ecuador and its economy has flourished thanks to the oil deposits found in its Andes territory.¹⁶

THE REPUBLIC OF PERU

Peru is located south of Ecuador with a large Pacific Ocean coast and with the Andes mountain range going thru the middle of the country. Brazil is its eastern neighbor while Bolivia sits on the south. Colombia and Ecuador share Peru's northern border. It has an area of 482,122 square miles with a population of 26.7 million.¹⁷ Its official language is Spanish and its principal religion is Roman Catholic.¹⁸

Its chief commercial products are fish, cotton, sugar, copper, silver, lead, and crude petroleum.¹⁹ Its main economy is based on the marketing and export of natural resources especially mineral resources from its mountain areas.²⁰ The discovery of petroleum deposits in the Amazon basin in 1982 gave Peru an additional economic boost, which it is enjoying today.²¹

The principal insurgency group is the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), which was formed in 1970 and remains in operation.²² This insurgency group did not organize as a major Army or guerrilla group, but in many small cells.²³ They are dedicated to recruit and win the hearts of the campesinos, Indians, and those in impoverished areas by promising security, protection, employment and a forum to bring to the Peruvian Government the issues they considered important.²⁴ Somewhere along the way, Sendero Luminoso began to use terrorist tactics such as kidnapping, assassination, and bombings of government and commercial buildings as a political tool.

The other recognized Peruvian insurgency group is the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, which came about in 1984.²⁵ They quickly learned how to make home made bombs and how to use them to spread terror among the population. Their principles were more terrorism than political reform. The cultivation of coca and coca production for illicit drug trafficking in Peru began in the early 80s and financed both insurgency groups.²⁶

THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA

Bolivia is the fifth largest country in South America with an area of 424,052 square miles and a population of 8.5 million.²⁷ Its official language is Spanish and its main religion is Roman Catholic. Bolivia's chief commercial products are petroleum, minerals, gold, natural gas, coffee, sugar, cotton, bananas, and unofficially, illegal production and refinement of coca products.²⁸ Bolivia's southern region is uninhabited desert while the northern region contains the famous Lake Titicaca where Indians live and farm the land.²⁹

There is no insurgency group that threatens the government of Bolivia. Petroleum and natural gas export remains Bolivia's main source of income and the government has strongly pursued the eradication of coca production.

THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

Chile ranks sixth in size among South American countries with an area of 286,322 miles and a population of 13.6 million. Its official language is Spanish and its principal religion is Roman Catholic. Chile's main commercial products are minerals, fish, and other agricultural products.

Territorial disputes with Argentina and Bolivia are still persistent but not a war issue. There are no insurgency groups in Chile that threaten government stability and the minor drug production and trafficking is due to its neighbors to the north and north-east, and is not an internal problem.

Chile has demonstrated great accomplishments in military, law enforcement, drug curtailment, social tranquility, and economic improvement.³⁰ Chile does not have a threatening insurgency group and the terrorist activities that have taken place in the past have been dealt with in an efficient and effective manner.³¹

INSURGENCY AND DRUGS IN THE ANDEAN REGION

Among the five Andean Region countries, Colombia and Peru are still waging a major war on drugs cultivation, trafficking, and insurgency. Their main insurgency groups, Colombia's Fuerzas Aliadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN) and Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN), and Peru's Sendero Luminoso (SL) are active pursuing their goals of destroying the government and replacing it with a dictatorship.³²

The Andean Region has become the center of coca cultivation, processing, and distribution.³³ These activities feed money and arms to insurgents and terrorist groups.³⁴ Generally speaking, region governments are incapable of dealing with these problems on their own since insurgency groups and drug lords work together uniting their forces.

U.S. officials are also concerned with the growing Arab population in the region, and the emerging threat of fundraising activities to support terrorist groups, recruitment, and training.³⁵ American intelligence agencies believe that international terrorists are operating in the region.³⁶ Terrorist groups are attracted to countries and/or regions in which instability is persistent and insurgency is strong. The drug cultivation and trafficking regions of Colombia and Peru are fertile ground for local and international terrorist networks to operate.

The U.S. source for intelligence gathering and military assistance in the region is the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).³⁷ SOUTHCOM has the assigned mission to combat the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, in cooperation with host countries in Latin America.³⁸ The Andean region is the main theater of operation. Since 1990, U.S. military advisors have helped local police and military units in Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia with training, logistics, and reconnaissance.

Andean region insurgents from Colombia's Fuerzas Aliadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN), Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN), and Peru's Sendero Luminoso (SL) benefit from drug cultivation, production, and trafficking.³⁹ The insurgent's goal is to destabilize the

government by destroying the population's trust and support. They want the populace to know that the government cannot protect them or provide their basic needs such as security, food, employment, and shelter. They win rural popular support by providing jobs and protection, which the government can't provide.

Drug lords who finance coca production and processing have ties to insurgency groups to which they pay taxes for protection and rights to transport drug across their territory.⁴⁰ The insurgents use the money to buy weapons, and promote their cause among the campesinos in the region.⁴¹ Many rightist paramilitary leaders have become major drug traffickers with close ties to the military, the police, and the government.⁴² Rebels control vast portions of the Andean Region territory where most of the coca cultivation sites are located along with cocaine production facilities.⁴³

U.S. support to Latin American countries to fight insurgencies and drug trafficking requires not just military assistance but also diplomatic means. On the military side, the strategy as it was in Central America in the 1980's, is for the U.S. military to be a behind-the-scenes player who will train the region's military and police and give them the tools to become effective fighting forces.

The U.S. currently provides training, intelligence, and weapons to support some Latin American countries but in the long run it will be up to the governments of these Latin American countries to win their own war. This drug war is multifaceted and requires a variety of political and military strategies to achieve victory. The U.S. now permits armed forces to monitor and relay air and sea traffic, as well as to support local, civilian law enforcement agencies in an interdiction role in a foreign country, if the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Attorney-General find that there is a grave threat to U.S. interests.⁴⁴

The drug lord's operational center of gravity is profit from drug trafficking. Their strategic center of gravity is populace support since rural campesinos perceive drug lords as protectors and employers. Profits from drug trafficking, populace support and security are the key elements that the U.S. and Andean Region governments must confront to win the war on drugs. Insurgent's centers of gravity are directly related to those of drug lords.

ANDEAN REGION INITIATIVES

PLAN COLOMBIA

In 1999 the Government of Colombia developed Plan Colombia, a multi-year, comprehensive strategy designed to bring about lasting peace in the country by reducing the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, revitalize the economy and strengthen government

institutions.⁴⁵ The Colombian Government recognized that there is a direct connection between drug trade and insurgency groups and as such they needed to be fought in unison.⁴⁶

Plan Colombia is comprised of many separate but interconnected parts, illegal drug eradication; judicial institutions reform, human rights protection, fostering of peace, and improvement of the economy.⁴⁷ The military part of Plan Colombia in reality is no more than military assistance to the Colombian National Police to spray coca plantations and destroy drug processing laboratories.⁴⁸ Counter-guerrilla and counter-paramilitary operations are forbidden.

To assist Colombia in combating the drug problem, the U.S. endorsed "Plan Colombia" by providing \$1.5 billion to help Colombia destroy the drug trade.⁴⁹ The plan includes expanded enforcement as well as farmer incentives to alternative crops. Aid money is to be used only to fight the drug war and not against the insurgents.⁵⁰ Although the U.S. share of Plan Colombia was conceived as a two-year project with the goal of reducing the flow of illegal drugs into this country, there are many indications that U.S. involvement will be for a longer term without any specific exit date. Colombia's ambassador to Washington has already observed that his country will need additional funding of between \$500 and \$600 million per year for at least three or four more years to fight the drug problem in Colombia.⁵¹

As of 2004, the results of Plan Colombia are still under evaluation since there are discrepancies between the United Nations and the U.S. scorecard. The United Nations Drug Control Program claims that Plan Colombia is beginning to show signs of success.⁵² According to the UN, the number of hectares under coca cultivation has declined by 30%.⁵³ The U.S. scorecard shows the program failing in all its goals.⁵⁴

U.S. ANDEAN REGION INITIATIVE (ARI)

In 2001, President George W. Bush expanded Plan Colombia with an additional \$676 million as part of the Andean Region Initiative (ARI) to battle the Colombian drug trade.⁵⁵ In contrast to Plan Colombia, which is a Colombian initiative supported by the U.S., the ARI is an initiative designed by the Bush Administration to expand the support to Plan Colombia.⁵⁶ The initiative was proposed in May 2001 and approved by congress in October of 2001.⁵⁷ The ARI includes funding for counter-drug operations, counter-insurgency, and economical incentives thru the Andean Trade Preferences Act (ATPA) which gives duty free or reduced-rate treatment to products of the region.⁵⁸ The position of then Secretary of State Colin Powell was that the ARI aid should be used also against the insurgents and not just the illicit drug eradication.⁵⁹

Countries included in the ARI (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Panama, and Venezuela) can use the funds for judicial reform, anti-corruption measures, improve counter-

narcotics assets and infrastructure, training, equipment for security forces, interdiction operations, promote democracy, and socio-economical aid.⁶⁰

Under the ARI, the three major recipients of funding are: Colombia with \$399 million from which \$146.5 million must be for socio-economic programs and \$252.5 million for counter-narcotics programs to include improvement of aviation and infrastructure assets;⁶¹ Peru with \$206.15 million from which \$128.15 million must be for socio-economic programs and \$78 million for counter-narcotics programs to upgrade helicopters and improve interdiction efforts;⁶² and Bolivia with \$143.48 million from which \$88.48 million must be for socio-economic programs and \$55 million for counter-narcotics programs to include training and interdiction efforts.⁶³

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

The Organization of American States (OAS) brings together the countries of the Western Hemisphere and it is the main forum for multilateral dialogue and action among member countries. The OAS is committed to democracy as expressed in the Inter-American Democratic Charter with the objective to promote good governance, foster peace and security, expand trade, and address problems in the region.⁶⁴ It also promotes inter-American cooperation.⁶⁵

Some of the initiatives being implemented by the OAS are in concert with U.S. strategy. One of them is the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, which seeks to curtail terrorism financing, strengthen border control, and increase cooperation among law enforcement agencies.⁶⁶ Combating the drug war is another OAS initiative thru the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), which monitors progress against drugs in each country and the whole region.⁶⁷ Other OAS initiatives are designed to combat corruption and defend democracy.⁶⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS

ENDS

The U.S. must support initiatives and programs that pursue stability in the Latin American Andean Region. Although Latin America comprises many countries, the Andean Region, which includes the countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, is where the U.S. can get the most benefit for its invested effort, especially in regards to homeland security. Drug cultivation, production, and trafficking in the Andean Region support insurgents, which in turn finances terrorist activities in the region with associated effects on U.S. security.

WAYS

The U.S. Andean Region Initiative (ARI) vision of expanding Plan Colombia beyond eradication of illicit drug production and trafficking, to include military assistance to Andean Region governments to combat insurgency and counter-terrorist assistance is the right tool for the job. These issues are related, support each other and as such must be fought in unison. Another aspect of the ARI that needs to be extended is the Andean Trade Preferences Act (ATPA), which expired last year. This act provides for economic incentives to the region in the form of duty free or reduced-rate treatment to products from the region.⁶⁹ To eradicate the illicit drug problem and insurgency support from campesinos, the U.S. must also address the poor economy in the region, which in turn provides campesinos an avenue to farm and produce drugs.

The U.S. must also endorse and commit resources to the Andean Region initiatives being implemented by the Organization of American States (OAS).⁷⁰ The U.S. must continue support to the Inter-American Democratic Charter of the OAS,⁷¹ which makes democracy a defining characteristic of hemispheric states and calls for collective action whenever democracy is threatened.⁷² Similarly, the U.S. must support the OAS initiative to fight the war on terror as developed by the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), which is committed to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its origin or motivation.⁷³

The OAS is also an active partner in the war on drugs. The U.S. must utilize the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanics (MEM), which measures progress on how countries are carrying out recommendations to combat the drug problem in Latin America. This mechanism was created to increase coordination and cooperation among OAS member countries, which recognize shared responsibility for the drug problem.⁷⁴ An essential element of the OAS initiative is that it gives ownership of the drug problem to Latin American countries and makes them accountable for their efforts and accomplishments.

MEANS

To achieve regional stability in the Latin American Andean Region, a combination of efforts in the diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic areas must be taken. Efforts in only one area will not be enough to create the stability needed.

Diplomatic

President Bush has confidence that Latin American governments will join the U.S. in combating the drug problem since it will also help them fight insurgents trying to create

instability in their country. The U.S. must not pursue the Andean Region problems unilaterally, but work in concert with the region governments and the Organization of American States (OAS). The U.S. State Department must strengthen ties with those Latin American countries that prove their willingness and commitment to stabilize their governments and support the policies of the U.S. Chile and Colombia are two Andean Region countries already working with the U.S. to improve their relationship and assist in our homeland security efforts. Cooperation between the U.S. and Latin America will bring stability to the region, create a better environment to fight terrorism, and establish a more responsive homeland security/defense program in the U.S.

For the U.S. to regain the trust of Latin American governments and their people, it must support and actively participate in initiatives put forth by the Organization of American States (OAS).⁷⁵ The OAS has established solid reputation and respect among Latin American countries, their governments, and the populace. The U.S. must seize the opportunities put forth by the OAS.

One last initiative that the U.S. must support is the OAS plan to control and monitor immigration and illegal smuggling of weapons and people. This issue is of key importance since terrorist networks can use illegal smuggling to contraband weapon, drugs, infiltrate the U.S. and conduct attacks against the homeland. The U.S. needs to make sure terrorist discard such an option.

Intelligence

Intelligence gathering and information sharing between the U.S. and Latin American countries is a key element to disrupt the drug lords and insurgents center of gravity. This issue ties directly to regional stability, homeland security, and defense. Drug cultivation, production, trafficking, and consumption bring corruption, crime, violence, and foments/supports terrorism. Policies aimed at curtailing and abolishing such practices must be strong and forcefully implemented not just abroad but also at home.

The U.S. must support and actively participate in the OAS proposed measures to strengthen cooperation and information exchange. OAS information exchange objectives are to locate, capture, prosecute, and punish sponsors, organizers, and perpetrators of terrorist acts, as well as identify and freeze assets, and resources used to facilitate, promote, or commit such acts. The OAS commitment also affirmed the need to support cooperation on cross-border management, improve the security and integrity of official documents, develop ways to rapidly

disseminate warnings about cyber-security threats, and intensify efforts to disrupt the capacity of terrorist networks to threaten safe travel and recreation in the member states.

The U.S. Department of Defense personnel must be better trained in counterinsurgency operations and human intelligence gathering in foreign countries. It is no secret that drug trafficking provides funding to terrorist and insurgent organizations. The strategic center of gravity for drug lords is the consumers market (profits). The more they sell, the more they will produce to increase profits. For drug lords, the winning equation is basic business practice with a twist. If the drug is not sold, there will be no revenues and in consequence the drug market will cease to exist.

Military

Conditions for U.S. military involvement in the war on drugs need to be clear. U.S. soldiers should not be sent into harms way unless three conditions are met. These are: objectives must be clear and measurable; the U.S. must be prepared to use overwhelming force quickly and decisively; and forces should be withdrawn when the objectives are accomplished. Of equal importance, strategic and military leaders need to craft an effective exit strategy for these Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) operations.

The current drug war is multifaceted and requires a variety of political and military operations to achieve victory. Direct, on-site military assistance to those Latin American countries fighting this problem is essential. Military intelligence must be used to monitor illicit drug movement into the United States. Other agencies like the Department of State, Transportation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and Customs must have an active participation in the war on drugs.

The U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) must jointly plan and execute operations in Latin America. Between these two Unified Commands, the whole Latin America area of operations (AOR) will be covered. Combined training and support currently provided to Latin American countries by SOUTHCOM, must be expanded to include support against insurgencies creating instability in the Andean Region.

Economic

The Andean Region stability also depends on establishing solid economic initiatives and incentives. It is hard to establish order and improve economy in countries that throughout the years have struggled with establishing stable governments, have been fighting insurgencies, and have failed in marketing their products for export.

To ignite global economic growth as part of the war on drugs, policies such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will assist Latin America become economically stable and provide for better wealth distribution.⁷⁶ These two policies will improve the region's living standard, reduce unemployment, and curtail drug production and trafficking. Improving the region economy by assisting these countries with economical packages, trade agreements, and education reform initiatives is a must to reduce poverty, which creates fertile ground for terrorists.

Finally, revenues from drug production finance terrorism and insurgencies. These problems affect our society and impact our homeland security strategy. To win the war on drugs, the U.S. must confront drug trafficking and consumption here at home. By fighting the war on drugs here in our homeland, we can disrupt the drug lords operation and curtail the society problems that it brings. In order to achieve victory, more strict, long-term laws, and penalties should be implemented so that those arrested for drug trafficking and consumption recognize that their actions are not worth the penalty; that their losses will be far worse than their investment.

CONCLUSION

Stable democratic governments are key to regional stability. The U.S. must pay close attention to potential threats to the stability of Latin America and especially the Andean Region. Latin American countries gain and sustain the trust and respect of the populace towards their democratic governments on their own. This process demands concerted and continual support from the U.S. Solid democratic governments and strong economies will best ensure survival for Latin American countries. The temptation to experiment with socialist types of governments, which in poor countries are seen as a solution to the poor and marginalized, can be avoided if true leaders step-up and establish trust in their administrations. The better the U.S. understands its Latin American neighbors the better it will be able to assist them and protect The U.S. homeland.

Thanks to the many Latinos that reside in the U.S., the Latin American voice is becoming stronger not just here in the U.S. but also across the Latino countries overseas. The U.S. must seize the opportunity and use these voices to export democracy, freedom, and progress to Latin America. There is no better way to gain trust from a foreign country than to have a representative from that country that speaks the language and understands their culture to take the U.S. message to their fellow countrymen and women.

One last element to consider is culture and traditions. No Latin American country will accept the North American way of life and culture as is and abandon their roots. National pride is a symbol for every Latin American. The U.S. can assist these countries but avoid the mistake of trying to create a mirror image of a North American society. Historical events, culture, and traditions will overpower any attempt.

U.S. homeland security and defense is dependent, in part, on stability and progress in the Latin American Andean Region. The Andean Region countries are U.S. neighbors and as such the U.S. needs to work together and assist them defeat the elements that physically threaten their regional stability. Having good and reliable neighbors working together for security and defense is a win-win situation.

WORD COUNT= 4,801

ENDNOTES

¹ George W. Bush, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), 1-28.

² Insurgency and terrorist groups from Colombia like the FALN and ELN, and the Peruvian Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) cooperate with the drug lords by providing safe passage thru their territories in exchange for money which they use to purchase weapons and buy campesinos (farmers) as their allies by offering better paying jobs for cultivating coca and heroin. These groups threaten the region and the homeland. U.S. intelligence has verifiable information linking them to international terrorist groups from Ireland and Spain who have provided those weapons and explosive training.

³ Mark S. Steinitz, "The Terrorism and Drug Connection in Latin America's Andean Region," *Policy Papers on the Americas*, Volume XIII, Study 5, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002), 1-3.

⁴ K. Larry Storrs and Nina M. Serafino, "Andean Region Initiative (ARI): FY2002 Assistance for Colombia and Neighbors", Order Code RL31016, Washington D.C.: (Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2002), 3.

⁵ Steven Johnson, *A New U.S. Policy for Latin America: Reopening the Window of Opportunity*, (The Heritage Foundation February 15, 2001), 1.

⁶ Storrs and Serafino, 3-4.

⁷ Robert T. Buckman, *Latin America, The World Today Series*, (Harpers Ferry, WV: Stryker-Post Publications, 2004), 101.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Steinitz, 3-5

¹³ Buckman, 148-149.

¹⁴ Ibid, 149.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, 156.

¹⁷ Ibid, 278.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 293.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 283.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, 283-284.

²⁵ Ibid, 283.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 53.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 54.

³⁰ Albert Berry, "Participation, Violence, and Development in Four Andean Countries," *Latin American Research Review*, 39, no. 3, (October 2004): 186-190.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Steinitz, 1-5.

³³ Andean coca cultivation has held relatively steady over the past years. Eventhough Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Ecuador have reduced or almost completely eliminated its farming and production, Colombia has picked up the difference and increased its production.

³⁴ Steinitz, 10.

³⁵ Early Bird News, "U.S. Seeks Greater Security Cooperation in Latin America," Los Angeles Times, November 17, 2004); available from <<http://www...>>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2005.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ United States Southern Command; available from <<http://www.southcom.mil/home>>; Internet; accessed 10 February 2005.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Steinitz, 3-6.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1-8.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1-15.

⁴² Ibid., 1-6.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Mark P. Sullivan and J. F. Hornbeck, "Latin America and the Caribbean, Issues for the 108th Congress," Order Code RL31726, Washington D.C.: (Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, February 28, 2003), 1-6.

⁴⁵ Buckman, 112.

⁴⁶ "Plan Colombia: The Roadmap to Peace," Embassy of Colombia, Washington, D.C.; available from <<http://www.Colombiaemb.org>>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2005.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1-2.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁹ Buckman, 112.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Sullivan and Hornbeck, 5-6.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ According to the Washington Office in Latin America, the efforts to stop drugs at the source have no apparent impact on the availability or use of illegal drugs in the U.S. Supply-reduction efforts are inconsistent. Prices for coca and heroin have been stable and in some major U.S. cities have declined.

⁵⁵ Sullivan and Hornbeck, 5-6.

⁵⁶ Storrs and Serafino, 1-3.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Buckman, 112.

⁶⁰ Storrs and Serafino, 2.

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

⁶² Ibid., 8.

⁶³ Ibid., 8-9.

⁶⁴ "A Shared Vision for the Americas," Organization of American States (OAS), 2005; available from <<http://www.oas.org/main>>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2005.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Hemispheric Security in the 21st Century," Organization of American States (OAS), 2005; available from <http://www.oas.org/key_issues/eng>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2005.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "A Shared Vision for the Americas," Organization of American States (OAS), 2005; available from <http://www.oas.org/key_issues/eng>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2005.

⁶⁹ Storrs and Serafino, 4.

⁷⁰ OAS, "Hemispheric Security in the 21st Century."

⁷¹ The Inter-American Democratic Charter has helped guide OAS actions in several critical situations. It was applied for the first time in April 2002 in Venezuela, to condemn the alteration of the constitutional order that temporarily forced President Hugo Chavez out of office. It was also used in 2003 during the Haiti crisis.

⁷² Sullivan and Hornbeck, 3.

⁷³ This document was signed on 3 Jun 03 by foreign ministers from around the Americas with the intent of cooperating to prevent terrorism financing, strengthen border controls and increase cooperation among law enforcement authorities.

⁷⁴ OAS, "Hemispheric Security in the 21st Century."

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Sullivan and Hornbeck, 3.

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