



ANKU COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2020

COMMITTEE: GA4

ISSUE: Alleviating drug cartels, special focus on Latin America

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POSITION: Deputy Chair

Hello, my name is Ipek and I am a 11th grader at Lycée Tevfik Fikret Ankara. I have participated to the MUN Conferences also in French.

I'm a former volleyball player and I have been dancing since I was 4 and I am currently dancing at Tab Sanat. As the Deputy Chair of this committee I will expect all of you to make a deep research about drug trafficking and the impact that the drug cartels have on the people and the world.

INTRODUCTION

The illegal drug trade in Latin America issues primarily the assembly and sale of cocaine and cannabis, as well as the export of those illegal substances to the United States and Europe. The Coca cultivation is focused on the Andes of South America, significantly in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia; this is often the world's sole source region for cocaine. Drug consumption in Latin America remains relatively low, however cocaine, specifically, has augmented in recent years in countries on the main smuggling routes. As of 2008, the primary pathway for drugs into the US is through Mexico and Central America, although crackdowns on drug trafficking by the Mexican government have forced several cartels to control routes through the Republic of Guatemala and the Republic of Honduras instead. The major drug trafficking organizations (drug cartels) are Mexican and Colombian and said to get complete of \$18 to \$39bn in wholesale drug proceeds per annum. Mexican cartels are presently considered the "greatest organized crime threat" to the US. Since February 2010, the main Mexican cartels have once more aligned in 2 factions, one integrated by the Juárez cartel, Tijuana cartel, Los Zetas and also the Beltrán-Leyva cartel; the other faction integrated by the Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa cartel, and La Familia cartel. Prior to the Mexican cartels' rise, the Colombian drug cartel and Medellín cartel dominated within the late 1980s and early 90s. Following their ending, the Norte del Valle cartel has stuffed the Colombian vacuum, in conjunction with rightwing paramilitaries (e.g. United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, AUC) and leftwing insurgent teams (FARC, ELN). As a result of the concentration of trafficking, Latin America and also the Caribbean has the world's highest crime rates, with murder reaching 32.6 per 100,000 of the population in

2008. Violence has surged in Mexico since 2006 when Mexican President Felipe Calderon intensified the Mexican drug war.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Cartel: A **cartel** is a group of independent market participants who collude with each other to improve their profits and dominate the market. Cartels are usually associations in the same sphere of business, and thus an alliance of rivals. Most jurisdictions consider their anti-competitive behavior. Cartel behavior includes price-fixing, bid-rigging, and reductions in output. States that pursue economic interests may form cartels such as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The doctrine in economics that analyzes cartels is cartel theory. Cartels are distinguished from other forms of collusion or anti-competitive organization such as corporate mergers.

Drug Cartel: A drug cartel is any criminal organization with the intention of narcotraffic operations. they vary from loosely managed agreements among numerous drug traffickers to formalized commercial enterprises. The term was applied when the biggest trafficking organizations reached AN agreement to coordinate the production and distribution of cocaine

The basic structure of a drug cartel:

Falcons ;(Spanish: *Halcones*): Considered as the “eyes and ears” of the streets, the “falcons” are the lowest rank in any cartel. They are responsible for supervision and reportage the activities of the police, the military, and rival teams. Hitmen

(Spanish: *Sicarios*): The armed group among the cartel, chargeable for finishing up assassinations, kidnappings, thefts, and extortions, operative protection rackets, and defending their plaza(turf) from rival teams and also the military. Lieutenants

(Spanish: *Tenientes*): The second-highest position within the drug cartel organization, accountable for managing the hit men and falcons among their own territory. They're

allowed to hold out low-profile murders without permission from their bosses. Drug Lords (Spanish: *Capos*): A drug lord, drug baron, kingpin or narcotrafficker is a high-ranking crime boss who controls a large network of individuals concerned in the prohibited drug trade. Such figures are typically difficult to bring to justice, as they're usually not directly in possession of something illegal, however are insulated from the actual exchange in drugs by many layers of workers. The prosecution of carefully planned infiltration into their networks, typically using informants from within the organization of drug lords is thus sometimes the results of carefully planned infiltration into their networks, typically using informants from within the organization.

There are other operating teams within the drug cartels. As an example, the drug producers and suppliers, though not considered in the basic structure, are vital operators of any drug cartel, along with the financiers and cash launderers. Additionally, the arms suppliers operate in a completely different circle and are technically not thought-about part of the cartel's logistics.

Illegal drug trade: The illegal drug trade or narcotrafficking is an international black market dedicated to the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of drugs that are subject to drug prohibition laws. Most jurisdictions forbid trade, except beneath license, of many

kinds of drugs through the utilization of drug prohibition laws. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's World Drug Report 2005, estimates the scale of the global illicit drug market at US\$321.6 billion in 2003, alone. With a world GDP of US\$36 trillion within the same year, the nonlegal drug trade is also estimated as nearly 1% of total global trade. Consumption of nonlegal drugs is widespread globally and it remains very troublesome for local authorities to thwart its illegal.

OVERVIEW

The globalization of drug consumption:

Many Latin American political leaders have long argued that if the US population didn't consume such large quantities of illegal drugs — if there were not numerous American drug addicts and users — then Latin American and Caribbean countries wouldn't produce large quantities of illegal drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and heroin for export and therefore the region would not be plagued by the powerful and well-financed drug trafficking organizations — often called cartels — that have sprung up throughout the hemisphere over the last twenty-five years plus.¹ It is certainly accurate to say that the U.S has been for many years, and remains today, the most important single consumer marketplace for illicit drugs in the world. Although there's no definitive estimate, the worth of all illicit drugs sold annually within the U.S may reach as high as the US \$150 billion. Some \$37 billion per annum could also be spent on cocaine alone.

Cocaine consumption isn't limited only to advance capitalist markets like those of the US and Europe. Cocaine use in Latin America has also skyrocketed over the last decade. Indeed, Latin American consumers were in 2010 estimated to soak up some 200 metric tons of cocaine. Until 2009, Brazil was considered to be the world's second-largest marketplace for cocaine behind only the US.⁶ Within the 2011 World Drug Report, the UN reports that Brazil has replaced Argentina as the second-biggest consumer of cocaine. The report estimates that Brazil has 900,000 cocaine users, which makes it the amount one consumer in South America. Cocaine use in Argentina is reported to be 2.6% and 2.4% in Chile. The dramatic rise in European and South American cocaine consumption specifically has greatly expanded the world market demand for this illicit Andean product over the past decade. As a consequence, a pronounced trend toward the proliferation of the latest global trafficking routes and therefore the increased involvement of criminal trafficking networks originating outside the Andean sub-region became increasingly evident.

Partial victories in the Andean war on drugs:

From the middle of the nineteenth century through the mid-1980s, Peru and Bolivia were the 2-principal country-suppliers of both coca leaf and refined cocaine to the US, European and other world markets. As of 1985, Peru produced roughly 65% of the world's supply of coca leaf while Bolivia grew approximately 25% and Colombia 10% or less. With the "partial victories" achieved by the US-led war on drugs within the southern Andes during the late 1980s and early 1990s — specifically, US-financed crop eradication programs in Bolivia's Chapare under President Victor Paz Estensoro after 1986 (Operation Blast Furnace) and Presidents Hugo Banzer/Jorge Quiroga from 1998 to 2002 (Plan Dignidad), alongside Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's interruption of the "air bridge" between the Alto Huallaga coca region in Peru and therefore the clandestine cocaine laboratories located in Colombia within the mid-1990s, coca cultivation within the Andes rapidly shifted

to Colombia within the mid- and late 1990s.⁷ By 2000, Colombia cultivated an estimated 90% of the world's coca leaf while production in Peru and Bolivia dwindled to historic lows. In the early 1990s, Colombia's US-backed all-out war against drug baron Pablo Escobar and therefore the Medellín cartel during the César Gaviria administration result in Escobar's death on December 2, 1993, and therefore the rapid dissolution of the Medellín cartel. Subsequent plea bargaining in 1994-95 during the Ernesto Samper administration with the main drug lords of the Cali cartel, specifically the Rodríguez Orejuela brothers, catalyzed the dismantling of the Cali cartel. While some large criminal trafficking networks, continued to work in Colombia within the late 1990s and the early 2000s, some 300 plus smaller narco-trafficking organizations (known as *cartelitos*) surfaced to fill the vacuum left by the dismantling of the 2 major cartels within the political economy of Colombia's still highly profitable drug trade. By the late 1990s, basically, as an unanticipated and unintended consequence of the demise of the country's major cartels, Colombia's leftwing Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary soldiers of Colombia, or FARC) guerrillas and rightwing Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC) paramilitary militias took control of coca cultivation and processing throughout rural Colombia, precipitating increased drug-related violence between these two groups of armed illegal actors, each of whom sought to eliminate the opposite and to consolidate their territorial control over drug cultivation regions and therefore the peasant growers across the Colombian countryside.

Proliferation of areas of cultivation and smuggling routes (the balloon effect):

The 2010 UN report registered a 10-20% decline in coca production in Colombia from 2008 to 2009.¹⁴ But enthusiasm regarding such statistics should be tempered by realism. First, it's important to notice that year-to-year variations are commonplace due to climate factors and short-term disruptions; declines over several years are required to spot enduring trends. Second, the UN statistics are approximations alongside a variety instead of firm data points; the 2010 UN report may underestimate the important levels of production. Third, innovations in additional productive hybrid plants, yields-per-hectare, and processing can produce higher levels of refined cocaine production than anticipated by the UN analysts. Finally, the continued decentralization and dispersion of cultivation in Colombia makes accurate mapping of the overall numbers of hectares under cultivation a problematic endeavor.

Such caveats aside, the key reason that Colombia appears to own experienced a major decline in coca production in 2008 and 2009 is that the Uribe government moved faraway from its almost exclusive (US-backed) reliance on aerial spraying to a more practical mixture of spraying and manual eradication linked to comprehensive alternative development programs in key coca-growing areas like La Macarena. As a consequence of the weakening of FARC control in vast stretches of rural Colombia and therefore the partial demobilization of the paramilitary bands engaged in drug traffic over the amount 2002-2007, 2008-2009 marked the start of a crucial decline after a minimum of three years of steady increases in total production. To sustain this decline will require that Colombia continue its manual eradication efforts which provide additional funds for well-designed and executed alternative development programs in coca-growing areas throughout the country.

In the 1980s, largely as a result of the formation of the US government's South Florida Task Force in 1982 — headed by then-Vice President George H. W. Bush — the

established Caribbean routes used by the Medellín and Cali cartels in the 1970s and early 1980s were essentially closed down by American law enforcement and military operations. They were quickly replaced over the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s with new routes that used Panama and Central America, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific Corridor to reach Mexico and then cross from Mexico into the United States. When the Mexican cartels took over from Medellín and Cali in the late 1990s, the Pacific Corridor became the principal smuggling route northwards from Colombia to the United States, although the Gulf route also remained active.¹⁷ From December 1, 2006, onward Mexican President Felipe Calderón, with Washington's active assistance since 2008 via the Mérida Initiative, has waged an intense military campaign against Mexico's major drug cartels.¹⁸ Although not by any means successful in eliminating Mexico's key drug trafficking groups as of 2010, Calderón's militarization of the drug war has unquestionably made smuggling across the US-Mexican border from Mexico more dangerous and expensive than in past years. As a result, some of the Mexican trafficking organizations have begun to move into Central America — especially Guatemala and Honduras — to take advantage of these much weaker states to conduct their smuggling operations.

There is also abundant evidence indicating increased use of both Venezuelan and Ecuadoran territory by Colombian traffickers to exchange the increasingly problematic Mexico routes. Venezuela is a jumping-off point for smuggling through the Caribbean to the East Coast of the US or across the Atlantic through West Africa into Europe. Venezuela is also used for drug flights into Honduras or Guatemala where the shipments are then transferred to trucks and transported by land across the Guatemalan-Mexican border northwards to the US.

The balloon effects produced by the partial victories within the war on drugs within the Andes on both drug cultivation and drug smuggling routes are evident. Over the past twenty-five years and more, the war on drugs conducted by the US and its various Latin American and Caribbean allies has succeeded repeatedly in shifting coca cultivation from one area to a different within the Andes and in forcing frequent changes in smuggling routes. But it's proven unable to disrupt seriously, much less stop permanently, either production or trafficking within the hemisphere. The trafficker's constant, successful adaptations to law enforcement measures designed to finish their activities need to cause the progressive contamination of more and more countries within the region by the drug trade and its attendant criminality and violence.

Dispersion and fragmentations of criminal drug trafficking organizations (the cockroach effect):

The differential insertion of individual countries into the political economy of narco trafficking within the hemisphere has produced a range of forms or kinds of intermediation between peasant growers of illicit crops and consumers. In Bolivia, the presence of peasant cooperatives within the countryside since the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement, or MNR) revolution of 1952 produced coca grower associations and usually inhibited the rise of either criminal organizations or guerrilla movements as intermediaries, although the Bolivian military itself has on various occasions fulfilled this role.²⁰ In Peru, the absence of strong grassroots associations among peasant growers opened the way for both elements of the country's military

apparatus (led by intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos) and guerrilla organizations to perform the role of intermediaries or traffickers.²¹ In Colombia, the absence of both peasant organizations and military intermediaries paved the way for the rise of major criminal organizations like the Medellín and Cali cartels to fill the role. The demise of the main cartels opened the way for illegal armed actors like the FARC and therefore the paramilitaries.²² In Mexico and Central America, elements of the military and/or police have sometimes performed the functions of intermediation in previous decades, but within the 1990s and 2000s, these countries have followed the Colombian pattern of criminal intermediation due to the absence strong grower associations.

In terms of criminal organizations or criminal trafficking networks, Colombia and Mexico provide the two most vital examples over the last twenty-five years. In Colombia, the rise and fall of Medellín and Cali (and subsequently the Norte del Valle cartel) vividly illustrate the perils and vulnerabilities of huge, hierarchical criminal trafficking organizations, especially when they plan to confront the state openly. Both major cartels in Colombia were hierarchically structured and proved to be vulnerable targets for Colombian and international law enforcement agencies. Within the wake of Medellín and Cali, Colombia witnessed a rapid fragmentation and dispersion of criminal networks that have proven much more difficult for law enforcement authorities to trace down and dismantle than their larger and more notorious predecessors. Although there may be counter-tendencies resulting in re-concentration among criminal trafficking organizations in Colombia today (e.g., Los Rastrojos, las Águilas Negras), the essential lesson to emerge from Colombia appears to be that smaller criminal networks are less susceptible to law enforcement and state repression. Colombia's emergent *Bandas Criminales* (Bacrim), the descendants of the now formally demobilized paramilitary groups that made up the Colombian Self-Defense Forces (Auto Defensas Unidas de Colombia — AUC) represent a brand-new generation of drug traffickers in Colombia. They differ from the “paras” in several important respects: (1) they tend to be politically far more deft and subtle in seeking political alliances inside the Colombian economic and political establishment, often hiding their political linkages through indirect contacts and “clean” candidates without records of paramilitary affiliations or ties within the past; (2) they concentrate on establishing political influence at the municipal and departmental (provincial) levels instead of the national level; (3) the locus of their activities includes not only Colombia's Caribbean coast but also the Pacific southwest; and (4) they need expanded their economic interests beyond drug trafficking to include other illegal activities (land piracy, gold mining, timber) also as legal enterprises. From the Colombian state's perspective, such organizations are, a minimum of so far, far less threatening because they cannot threaten state security directly.

In Mexico, as in Colombia within the 1980s and early 1990s, cocaine profits appear to have energized the country's major criminal networks and unleashed a wave of violence among criminal organizations seeking to strengthen and consolidate their control of key smuggling routes. As of 2011, this struggle was still playing itself out in brutal and bloody fashion. Nonetheless, Mexico's criminal trafficking groups do appear to be gradually following the Colombian pattern of dispersion and fragmentation, although the evidence isn't yet conclusive. In 2000, the Tijuana cartel (Arrellano Félix family) and therefore the Juárez cartel (Carrillo Fuentes family) were the two largest and most dominant narco-trafficking organizations in Mexico. Since 2000, after the Vicente Fox

administration first went after Tijuana then Juárez, Mexico has seen the rise of at least five new major trafficking organizations and a bunch of smaller, lesser-known groups: Sinaloa, Gulf, Familia Michocana, Beltrán-Leyva, and Zetas.²³ This dispersion of criminal networks in Mexico might represent the beginning of the sort of fragmentation observed in Colombia within the 1990s. If it does, the trend would be warmly welcomed by Mexican governing authorities because it would portend a substantial diminution within the capacity of organized criminal networks in Mexico to directly challenge state authority and national security.

A key reason that some analysts don't accept the fragmentation of organized crime thesis in contemporary Mexico relates directly to the emergence of a brand-new criminal network model — the Sinaloa cartel. Unlike its predecessors and current rivals in Mexico, the Sinaloa cartel is less hierarchical and more federative (hub and spokes) in its organizational structure. Its principal leader, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán Loera has forged a brand-new kind of “federation” that offers greater autonomy (and profits) to affiliated groups. To date, Sinaloa, also referred to as the Federation, seems to be winning the war against its rivals, although its fight against the Zetas (a paramilitary-style organization) is proving to be prolonged, costly, and bloody. It's likely that the Sinaloa model will prove more sustainable — better for business — than other criminal trafficker organizational models in Mexico, but the jury continues to be out.

The escalating urban gang wars in Medellín, Colombia's Comuna 13 neighborhood exemplify the types of violent internecine conflicts happening over many contested narco-trafficking areas and routes across the whole Latin American region (e.g., the states of Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua, Michoacán and Tamaulipas in Mexico, the Pacific Coast of Guatemala, the Valle de Cauca Department near Cali, Colombia, the municipality of Caucaasia in Colombia, or the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil). In Medellín, literally many relatively small, competing drug gangs have generated a pattern of “disorganized” crime: instead of rationally doing what would be “good for business — keeping murder rates low and police attention to a minimum — the criminal world is in turmoil and in need of an arbitrator to re-establish authority”.

Like Mexico, where the splintering of authority has led to the creation of smaller but no less violent groups like the Cartel de Acapulco and Mano con Ojos, Colombia's drug gangs are fighting to determine their place within the new criminal hierarchy in Medellín's poor and marginalized barrios long ignored by both the central Colombian state in Bogotá and by Medellín's local government. Under former mayor (now governor of Antioquia) Sergio Fajardo, Medellín did see a big decline in violence rates for several years — especially homicide statistics — via informal negotiations with the gangs, new mayoral initiatives to reduce gang violence (e.g., increased social services, expanded educational opportunities, jobs programs, new public recreational spaces for youth) and therefore the demobilization of the nation's paramilitary groups in 2005 and beyond. The relative peace achieved by the Fajardo administration in Medellín and therefore the successor mayoral administration of Alonso Salazar, did, unfortunately, gradually give way to renewed violence in Medellín's Comuna 13 and other urban neighborhoods where narco-trafficking and Bacrim activity resurged in 2010 and 2011. Medellín's Comuna 13 or Ciudad Juárez's Rivera del Bravo

slums are perfect launching platforms for gang warfare. In such neighborhoods, drug traffickers have found readily accessible pools of recent gang members and lots of potential drug consumers, also as efficient corridors for smuggling drugs and arms. In Comuna 13, the violence is principally about controlling the San Juan highway, which leads out of the town to northern Antioquia and Urabá on Colombia's northern Caribbean coast. The gangs that control the highway decide who and what enters and leave Medellín: drugs, guns, money. The armed group established by former Medellín capo Pablo Escobar, now referred to as "the Office", remains the most important and most powerful criminal network in Medellín, although it's splintered into rival factions and neither side has yet managed to attain control over Comuna 13 and therefore the San Juan transit route.

The maras (youth gangs) in Central American countries like Honduras and Guatemala, the Barrio Azteca prison gang in El Paso, Texas, and Juárez, Mexico, and therefore the Comando Vermelho in Rio de Janeiro provide additional samples of the proliferation of gangs or pandillas that work and fight — often in close association with major cartels — that have appeared alongside the phenomenon of fragmentation and dispersion. In 2004, for instance, the armed wing of the Juárez Cartel — La Línea — began to attack the local police openly while employing the cobro de Piso (right-of-way tax) to transit drug shipments through Chihuahua. This was possible due to the incorporation of former police officials from Juárez into the ranks of the Juárez cartel. Following the intromission of the Sinaloa Cartel into Juárez within the mid-2000s, rising levels of violence and murder involving Los Aztecas, a gang affiliated with La Línea, against opposition gangs like the Mexicles, the Artistas Asesinos (Artistic Assassins) and therefore the Gente Nueva (new youth gangs) are the order of the day in Juárez, the murder capital of Mexico. By October 2005, there were also an estimated 17,000 gang members that belong to the Mara Salvatrucha or MS-13 and therefore the 18th Street operating in Ciudad Juarez. While no recent statistics are available, anecdotal evidence indicates that the numbers of maras active in Juarez and Mexico more generally appear to possess increased steadily to above 25,000.

As in the Colombian case during the 1980s and 1990s, paramilitary groups have also surfaced in recent years in Juárez, Monterrey and other parts of Mexico in response to the cartels and affiliated gang violence. The looks of those paramilitary bands highlight the weak law enforcement capacities of the Mexican government and its perceived inability to effectively confront and defeat the country's powerful narco-trafficking organizations.

Under pressure from Mexican and US law enforcement, Mexican trafficker organizations have, since the mid-2000s if not before, sought to move at least a part of their smuggling operations from Mexico into neighboring countries. Guatemala and Honduras are currently targeting both the Sinaloa Cartel and therefore the Zetas.²⁵ The upsurge in drug-related violence in both of those Central American nations is closely associated with these shifts in operational bases. This trend, observable throughout the hemisphere, is usually labeled the "cockroach" effect because it's like the scurrying of cockroaches out of an unclean kitchen into other places to avoid detection after a light has been turned on them. Closely linked to the "balloon" effect, the "cockroach" effect refers specifically to the displacement

of criminal networks from one city/state/region to a different within a given country or from one country to a different in search of safer havens and more pliable state authorities.

Causes and Effects:

Besides the Mexico and Colombia, other Latin American states are also grieving the results of the drug trade. For example, Peru and Brazil have experienced such disturbing social effects that the majority of their population perceive the cartels' competition for drug transportation routes as a civil war. As the drug trade stakes surge, the violence between the cartels intensifies, as is directly observable in numerous states. Furthermore, the cartels compete using ruthless procedures, such as decapitations, irrespective of the social consequences. Although there is an undeniable damaging side, the drug trade also has certain significant social benefits. According to the literature, the most apparent social benefit is the fact that the drug trade increases rural earnings in the drug manufacturing industries. In Colombia, 450,000 to 500,000 of the Andean population works in the cocaine trafficking, and about 1.0 to 1.5 per cent of the country's labor force works in the cocaine production industry. However, it is believed that the social disadvantages of the drug trade outweigh the advantages, as the former are deepening the social divisions and corrupting most Andean regions. Nevertheless, the fact that cocaine is a crucial source of income for numerous disposed peasants and indigenous people must be respected. As one of the most significant effects, the violence associated with the drug trade drive away tourism and prospective investments in certain Latin American states, both of which are critical for economic stability. Moreover, most economists are anxious that several Latin American states are gradually losing their ability to produce tradable goods and are becoming dependent on illegitimate exports. It is broadly assumed that if drug trafficking persists, there will be distortions in the natural patterns of development. In fact, in countries such as Bolivia and Peru, drug trafficking generates more revenue than most legal exports. The money laundering associated with drug trafficking results in the flow of cheap imports, which is favorable to regional consumers; however, from a broader perspective, the distributors and manufacturers of most products undeniably suffer. Moreover, such wealth, which, in some cases, even surpasses a country's gross national product, enables the drug cartels to wield immeasurable economic, political and social authority. Finally, due to drug trafficking, Latin American states incur vast expenses in enforcing drug laws and prosecuting drug kingpins, which means that funds are diverted from other economically essential developments. Unfortunately, there is still insignificant consensus on how to eliminate or lessen the economic suffering triggered by the drug trafficking. Arguably, the most severe damage produced by the drug trade is the political damage. Most Latin Americans label drug trafficking as an 'internal enemy'. It is apparent that the cartels pose a significant sovereignty danger to many states; they undermine a state's ability to rule its own territory and harm democratic values by threatening the fundamental state institutions. Most cartels use financial institutions for money laundering and, when required, manipulate the electoral system.

According to different opinion polls, the electoral fraud caused by drug trafficking diminishes the people's confidence not only in particular leaders but in democracy itself. It is understood that narco-money is forming narco-democracies. Moreover, less significant drug trafficking organizations, often referred to as 'cartelitos', are less susceptible to law

enforcement and regional repression, but it is supposed that they lack the capacity to threaten regional security directly. It should be apparent that drug trafficking in Latin America disturbs a wide spectrum of national, regional and even international security interests. As illustrated, drug trafficking in Latin American states has noteworthy benefits and disadvantages; however, the outcomes are uneven and, as will be grasped in the following sections, diverse states experience the effects differently. However, the core consequences of the drug trade are arguably constant.

Evaluation of Other Issues:

Escalating violence is far from the sole negative impact of U.S. intervention within the drug trade. Rather, patterns of environmental destruction in Latin America are extremely in line with the course of violence explained above. While the drug trade on its own is certainly harmful to the natural environment, U.S. policies and interventions have only worsened the matter by pushing the damage into more ecologically valuable areas. Ecological damage because of the drug trade is often separated by the two main causes: production and trafficking. Drug production takes place almost exclusively within the Andes region of South America, whereas trafficking takes a route through Central America and has particularly destructive effects in Mexico. The continued presence of the US military unit in Latin America has resulted in worsening the environmental damage caused by both factors.

Previously, Mexico was the main site of environmental destruction caused by narco-trafficking. Instead of easing this destruction, U.S. intervention within the kind of harsh crackdowns on the drug trade has only pushed the destruction south and intensified environmental degradation in other regions of Latin America. The overwhelming majority of the world's cocoa, the raw ingredient in cocaine, is produced in Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru because the climate and geography of the Andes allow ideal growing conditions. Harsh military crackdowns in countries like Colombia have succeeded only in pushing the expansion of coca and other drug crops into neighboring countries like Peru, spreading the damage to the natural environment of the Andes. During 2013, it had been confirmed by the United Nations that Peru had officially overtaken Colombia as the world's largest coca and cocaine producer. The reasoning behind this shift has little to do with the character of the drug trade, and instead more to do with enormous efforts by the U.S. to fumigate coca fields in Colombia. This phenomenon, of drug production being geographically shifted instead of eradicated, has become commonly referred to as the "balloon effect" by researchers studying drug production in South American and other parts of the planet. The strain on the environment because of narco-trafficking has also not been eliminated, but rather has only spread farther south. It's extremely important to note the precise role of the U.S.'s harsh crackdown in all of this destruction. Harsh anti-trafficking policies in Mexico, championed by the U.S., have pushed drug cartels into the most premier and bio-diverse rainforest areas in Central America, largely because they're isolated and offer the highest amount of cover from the outside. For drug cartels, the importance of areas in Central America has increased rapidly within the past decade and rainforests became the primary areas for trafficking. In Honduras and Guatemala, this has resulted in mass deforestation in order to make landing strips to allow for the air transportation of narcotics. Within the years since 2000, these countries held a deforestation rate of 1.19% annually, over eight times more than the average deforestation rate of the rest of the world (United

Nations). This effect has recently been coined as “narcodeforestation”, a term utilized in many articles and journals to explain the rapid clearing of Central American rainforests. As stated by a top geographer at Ohio State University, Kendra McSweeney "Drug trafficking is causing an ecological disaster in Central America." it's important to note that the environmental impacts of failed drug policies go beyond deforestation. as an example, chemicals used to manufacture drugs are typically dumped illegally by producers. In Peru, containing the second-largest portion of the Amazon rainforest, this translates into over 15 million liters of chemicals dumped into the Amazon River annually. Similarly, the spraying of coca plants in Colombia, in an attempt to curb heroin production, has led to reductions in biodiversity that ecosystems are unable to recover from (World Wildlife fund). it's difficult to quantify to what degree U.S. drug policies have worsened environmental destruction throughout Latin America. However, the purpose remains that it's certainly intensified the problem, which any future tactics to combat the drug trade must take the precious landscapes of those nations under consideration.

RELEVANT ACTORS AND BODIES:

USA:

The effects of the illegal drug trade in the United States can be seen in a range of political, economic and social aspects. Increasing drug-related violence can be tied to the racial tension that arose during the late 20th century along with the political upheaval prevalent throughout the 1960s and 70s. The second half of the 20th century was a period when increased wealth, and increased discretionary spending, increased the demand for illicit drugs in certain areas of the United States. Large-scale drug trafficking is one of the few capital crimes and may result in a death sentence prescribed at the federal level.

A large generation, the baby boomers, came of age in the 1960s. Their social tendency to confront the law on specific issues, including illegal drugs, overwhelmed the understaffed judicial system. The federal government attempted to enforce the law, but with meager effect. Marijuana was a popular drug seen through the Latin American trade route in the 1960s. Cocaine became a major drug product in the later decades. Much of the cocaine is smuggled from Colombia and Mexico via Jamaica. This led to several administrations combating the popularity of these drugs. Due to the influence of this development on the U.S. economy, the Reagan administration began "certifying" countries for their attempts at controlling drug trafficking. This allowed the United States to intervene in activities related to illegal drug transport in Latin America. Continuing into the 1980s, the United States instated stricter policy pertaining to drug transit through the sea. As a result, there was an influx in drug-trafficking across the Mexico–U.S. border. This increased the drug cartel activity in Mexico. By the early 1990s, so much as 50% of the cocaine available in the United States market originated from Mexico, and by the 2000s, over 90% of the cocaine in the United States was imported from Mexico. In Colombia, however, there was a fall in the major drug cartels in the mid-1990s. Visible shifts occurred in the drug market in the United States. Between 1996 and 2000, U.S. cocaine consumption dropped by 11%.

In 2008, the U.S. government initiated another program, known as the Merida Initiative, to help combat drug trafficking in Mexico. This program increased U.S. security assistance to \$1.4 billion over several years, which helped supply Mexican forces with "high-end equipment from helicopters to surveillance technology". Despite U.S. aid, Mexican "narco gangs" continue to outnumber and outgun the Mexican Army, allowing for continued activities of drug cartels across the U.S.–Mexico border.

Although narcotics are illegal in the US, they have become integrated into the nation's culture and are seen as a recreational activity by sections of the population. Illicit drugs are considered to be a commodity with strong demand, as they are typically sold at a high value. This high price is caused by a combination of factors that include the potential legal ramifications that exist for suppliers of illicit drugs and their high demand. Despite the constant effort by politicians to win the war on drugs, the US is still the world's largest importer of illegal drugs.

Throughout the 20th century, narcotics other than cocaine also crossed the Mexican border, meeting the US demand for alcohol during the 1920s, opiates in the 1940s, marijuana in the 1960s, and heroin in the 1970s. Most of the U.S. imports of drugs come from Mexican drug cartels. In the United States, around 195 cities have been infiltrated by drug trafficking that originated in Mexico. An estimated \$10bn of the Mexican drug cartel's profits come from the United States, not only supplying the Mexican drug cartels with the profit necessary for survival but also furthering America's economic dependence on drugs.

Mexico:

Corruption in Mexico has contributed to the domination of Mexican cartels in the illicit drug trade. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Mexico's political environment allowed the growth of drug-related activity. The loose regulation over the transportation of illegal drugs and the failure to prosecute known drug traffickers and gangs increased the growth of the drug industry. Toleration of drug trafficking has undermined the authority of the Mexican government and has decreased the power of law enforcement officers in regulation over such activities. These policies of tolerance fostered the growing power of drug cartels in the Mexican economy and have made drug traders wealthier. Over the past few decades drug cartels have become integrated into Mexico's economy. Approximately 500 cities are directly engaged in drug trafficking and nearly 450,000 people are employed by drug cartels. Additionally, the livelihood of 3.2 million people is dependent on the drug cartels. Drug cartels are fundamental in local economics. A percentage of the profits seen from the trade are invested in the local community. Such profits contribute to the education and healthcare of the community. While these cartels bring violence and hazards into communities, they create jobs and provide income for its many members. Major cartels saw growth due to a prominent set culture of Mexican society that created the means for drug capital. One of the sites of origin for drug trafficking within Mexico was the state of Michoacán. In the past, Michoacán was mainly an agricultural society. This provided an initial growth of trade. The industrialization of rural areas of Mexico facilitated a greater distribution of drugs, expanding the drug market into different provinces. Once towns became industrialized, cartels such as the Sinaloa Cartel started to form and expand. The proliferation of drug cartel culture largely stemmed from the rancho culture seen in Michoacán.

Colombia:

It was common for smugglers in Colombia to import liquor, alcohol, cigarettes, and textiles, while exporting cocaine. Personnel with knowledge of the terrain were able to supply the local market while also exporting a large amount of product. The established trade that began in the 1960s involved Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, and Cuba. Peasant farmers produced coca paste in Peru and Bolivia, while Colombian smugglers would process the coca paste into cocaine in Colombia, and trafficked product through Cuba. This trade route established ties between Cuban and Colombian organized crime. From Cuba, cocaine would be transported to Miami, Florida; and Union City, New Jersey. Quantities of the drug were then smuggled throughout the US. The international drug trade created political ties between the involved countries, encouraging the governments of the countries involved to collaborate and instate common policies to eradicate drug cartels. Cuba stopped

being a center for the transport of cocaine following the establishment of a communist government in 1959. As a result, Miami and Union City became the sole locations for trafficking. The relations between Cuban and Colombian organized crime remained strong until the 1970s when Colombian cartels began to vie for power. In the 1980s and 90s, Colombia emerged as a key contributor to the drug trade industry in the Western Hemisphere. While the smuggling of drugs such as marijuana, poppy, opium, and heroin became more ubiquitous during this time period, the activity of cocaine cartels drove the development of the Latin American drug trade. The trade emerged as a multinational effort as supplies (i.e. coca plant substances) were imported from countries such as Bolivia and Peru, were refined in Colombian cocaine labs and smuggled through Colombia, and exported to countries such as the US.

Colombia has had a significant role in the illegal drug trade in Latin America. While active in the drug trade since the 1930s, Colombia's role in the drug trade did not truly become dominant until the 1970s. When Mexico eradicated marijuana plantations, demand stayed the same. Colombia met much of the demand by growing more marijuana. Grown in the strategic northeast region of Colombia, marijuana soon became the leading cash crop in Colombia. This success was short-lived due to anti-marijuana campaigns that were enforced by the US military throughout the Caribbean. Instead, drug traffickers in Colombia continued their focus on the exportation of cocaine. Having been an export of Colombia since the early 1950s, cocaine remained popular for a host of reasons. Colombia's location facilitated its transportation from South America into Central America, and then to its destination of North America. This continued into the 1990s, when Colombia remained the chief exporter of cocaine. The business of drug trafficking can be seen in several stages in Colombia towards the latter half of the 20th century. Colombia served as the dominant force in the distribution and sale of cocaine by the 1980s. As drug producers gained more power, they became more centralized and organized into what became drug cartels. Cartels controlled the major aspects of each stage in the traffic of their product. Their organization allowed cocaine to be distributed in great amounts throughout the United States. By the late 1980s, intra-industry strife arose within the cartels. This stage was marked by increased violence as different cartels fought for control of export markets. Despite this strife, this power struggle led to then having multiple producers of coca leaf farms. This in turn caused an improvement in quality control and reduction of police interdiction in the distribution of cocaine. This also led to cartels attempting to repatriate their earnings which would eventually make up 5.5% of Colombia's GDP. This drive to repatriate earnings led to the pressure of legitimizing their wealth, causing an increase in violence throughout Colombia. Though a contributor of wealth, the distribution of cocaine has had negative effects on the socio-political situation of Colombia and has weakened its economy as well.

What other countries are involved in drug trafficking?

Both Cuba and Venezuela have entered into drug trafficking through the use of so-called "mules", taking advantage of their high levels of poverty and economic need. In Cuba, kilos of coca are given to Cubans as part of payment to get to Miami. Likewise, Venezuelans are used to take the drug from Colombia to the other countries of Central and South America. The drug cartels have also managed to penetrate the most intimate spheres of local governments. The nephews of the president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, are currently sentenced to 18 years for drug trafficking in the United States. Additionally, investigations are being carried out to members of the Venezuelan government such as Diosdado Cabello and vice president Tareck El Aissami. Presumably, these officials charge the cartels for the passage through their nations.

The strategy of drug trafficking has degenerated from buying high government officials, going through its military forces, and reaching the poorest neighborhoods. These areas are the origin of the distribution, becoming a business difficult to end. In Brazil, according to the federal police, the favelas are known to be inhabited by a population of limited resources and crime. The bands like "Comando da Capital" has expanded to Paraguay with its business and wave of terror. "Comando Vermelho" and "Familia do Norte" also become the largest distributors of drugs, making the country a point of local distribution. In Central America, gangs like the "Mara Salvatrucha" continue to dominate the criminal business. The band has become a fearful cartel in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Furthermore, Argentina and Chile are now the preferred routes to facilitate the laundering of assets by Brazilian cartels such as the "Comando Vermelho". During 2017, this band was seized fifteen tons of cocaine estimated at more than 150 million dollars.

TREATIES AND INITIATIVES:

Reflecting on the hegemonic influence of the United States over international drug policy during the post-World War II period, the United Nations (UN) Organization of Drug Control (UNODC) and the Organization of American States (OAS) have both faithfully reproduced the US prohibitionist regime at the multilateral level. The UN's approach to drug control (like that of the OAS) severely limits the flexibility of responses at the level of member-states because it effectively rules out any possible experimentation with legalization and/or decriminalization. Both the UN and the OAS part from the assumption that all illicit drugs are "evil" and must be prohibited and suppressed. In practice, the UN-OAS-US unwavering prohibitionist strategy has dominated the international discourse on drug control and prevented individual countries from experimenting with alternative approaches (or forced them to ignore or defy their UN treaty obligations regarding narcotics control; see Thoumi, 2010; Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2011).

The ten-year UN drug policy review of international drug control policies (1998-2008) predictably concluded that the current prohibitionist UN policies in place were the best and only real strategic option available moving forward and generated no significant alterations in international drug control policies and practices, despite growing doubts and questioning among some member states and many independent analysts .

While the United States has managed to stabilize or even reduce demand for most illicit drugs at home, it most certainly has not eliminated American demand for illicit drugs or the profits associated with supplying the huge US market. Demand control has routinely been underfunded by Washington while primary emphasis has almost automatically been accorded to expensive, but ultimately ineffective, supply-side control strategies. There have been some efforts since 2009 undertaken by the Obama administration, and his Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske, to redress this long-standing imbalance in US drug policy, although prevention and treatment remain woefully underfunded.

After the Peru-Colombia "air bridge" that transported paste or base from Peru's Alto Huallaga to Colombia by small airplanes was disrupted by Peruvian President's Fujimori's adoption of a shoot-down policy in 1993-94, the subsequent termination of the cocaine flights out of Peru during the Fujimori dictatorship in the mid-late 1990s, and the launching of Plan Dignidad in 1998 (with US Government funding) by the newly-installed Banzer

government in Bolivia, the epicenter of illegal coca cultivation shifted from Eastern Peru and Bolivia to southeastern Colombia.

In Peru, the eradication policy caused discontent and rejection among the peasants and favored the growth of the Shining Path. Thus, the guerrillas took control of particular areas, forcing local authorities to resign and flee while the guerrilla leadership demanded payments for processing and transporting the drug. Intense eradication actions without economic alternatives made people joins the guerrillas.

SPECIFIC ANALYSIS ON RELEVANT CONFLICTS AND PROBLEMS:

The **Mexican Drug War** is an ongoing asymmetric low-intensity conflict between the Mexican government and various drug trafficking syndicates. When the Mexican military began to intervene in 2006, the government's principal goal was to reduce drug-related violence. The Mexican government has asserted that their primary focus is on dismantling the powerful drug cartels, rather than on preventing drug trafficking and demand, which is left to U.S. functionaries.

Although Mexican drug trafficking organizations have existed for several decades, their influence increased after the demise of the Colombian Cali and Medellín cartels in the 1990s. Mexican drug cartels now dominate the wholesale illicit drug market and in 2007 controlled 90% of the cocaine entering the United States. Arrests of key cartel leaders, particularly in the Tijuana and Gulf cartels, have led to increasing drug violence as cartels fight for control of the trafficking routes into the United States.

Federal law enforcement has been reorganized at least five times since 1982 in various attempts to control corruption and reduce cartel violence. During that same period, there have been at least four elite special forces created as new, corruption-free soldiers who could do battle with Mexico's endemic bribery system. Analysts estimate that wholesale earnings from illicit drug sales range from \$13.6 to \$49.4 billion annually. The U.S. Congress passed legislation in late June 2008 to provide Mexico with US\$1.6 billion for the Mérida Initiative as well as technical advice to strengthen the national justice systems. By the end of Felipe Calderón's administration (December 1, 2006 – November 30, 2012), the official death toll of the Mexican Drug War was at least 60,000. Estimates set the death toll above 120,000 killed by 2013, not including 27,000 missing. Since taking office, Andrés Manuel López Obrador declared that the war was over; however, his comment was met with criticism as the homicide rate remains high.

Due to its location, Mexico has long been used as a staging and transshipment point for narcotics and contraband between Latin America and U.S. markets.

Mexican bootleggers supplied alcohol to the United States gangsters throughout the duration of the Prohibition in the United States, and the onset of the illegal drug trade with the U.S. began when the prohibition came to an end in 1933. Towards the end of the 1960s, Mexican narcotic smugglers started to smuggle drugs on a major scale.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Colombia's Pablo Escobar was the main exporter of cocaine and dealt with organized criminal networks all over the world. When enforcement efforts intensified in South Florida and the Caribbean, the Colombian

organizations formed partnerships with the Mexico-based traffickers to transport cocaine by land through Mexico into the United States.

This was easily accomplished because Mexico had long been a major source of heroin and cannabis, and drug traffickers from Mexico had already established an infrastructure that stood ready to serve the Colombia-based traffickers. By the mid-1980s, the organizations from Mexico were well-established and reliable transporters of Colombian cocaine. At first, the Mexican gangs were paid in cash for their transportation services, but in the late 1980s, the Mexican transport organizations and the Colombian drug traffickers settled on a payment-in-product arrangement.

Transporters from Mexico usually were given 35% to 50% of each cocaine shipment. This arrangement meant that organizations from Mexico became involved in the distribution, as well as the transportation of cocaine, and became formidable traffickers in their own right. In recent years, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Gulf Cartel have taken over trafficking cocaine from Colombia to the worldwide markets. The balance of power between the various Mexican cartels continually shifts as new organizations emerge and older ones weaken and collapse. A disruption in the system, such as the arrests or deaths of cartel leaders, generates bloodshed as rivals move in to exploit the power vacuum. Leadership vacuums are sometimes created by law enforcement successes against a particular cartel, so cartels often will attempt to pit law enforcement against one another, either by bribing corrupt officials to take action against a rival or by leaking intelligence about a rival's operations to the Mexican or U.S. government's Drug Enforcement Administration.

While many factors have contributed to the escalating violence, security analysts in Mexico City trace the origins of the rising scourge to the unraveling of a longtime implicit arrangement between narcotics traffickers and governments controlled by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which began to lose its grip on political power in the late 1980s. The fighting between rival drug cartels began in earnest after the 1989 arrest of Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo, who ran the cocaine business in Mexico.¹ There was a lull in the fighting during the late 1990s but the violence has steadily worsened since 2000.

The prevalence of illicit drug use in Mexico is still low compared to the United States; however, with the increased role of Mexico in the trafficking and production of illicit drugs, the availability of drugs has slowly increased locally since the 1980s. In the decades before this period, consumption was not generalized – reportedly occurring mainly among persons of high socioeconomic status, intellectuals and artists. As the United States of America is the world's largest consumer of cocaine, as well as of other illegal drugs, their demand is what motivates the drug business, and the main goal of Mexican cartels is to introduce narcotics into the U.S. The export rate of cocaine to the U.S. has decreased following stricter border control measures in response to the September 11 attacks. This has led to a surplus of cocaine which has resulted in local Mexican dealers attempting to offload extra narcotics along trafficking routes, especially in border areas popular among low-income North American tourists. Drug shipments are often delayed in Mexican border towns before delivery to the U.S., which has forced drug traffickers to increase prices to account for transportation costs of products across international borders, making it a more profitable business for the drug lords, and has likely contributed to the increased rates of

local drug consumption. With increased cocaine use, there has been a parallel rise in demand for drug user treatment in Mexico.

Mexican cartels

The birth of most Mexican drug cartels is traced to former Mexican Judicial Federal Police agent Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo (Spanish: El Padrino, lit. 'The Godfather'), who founded the Guadalajara Cartel in 1980 and controlled most of the illegal drug trade in Mexico and the trafficking corridors across the Mexico–U.S. border along with Juan García Ábrego throughout the 1980s. He started off by smuggling marijuana and opium into the U.S. and was the first Mexican drug chief to link up with Colombia's cocaine cartels in the 1980s. Through his connections, Félix Gallardo became the person at the forefront of the Medellín Cartel, which was run by Pablo Escobar. This was easily accomplished because Gallardo had already established a marijuana trafficking infrastructure that stood ready to serve the Colombia-based cocaine traffickers. There were no cartels at that time in Mexico. Félix Gallardo was the lord of Mexican drug smugglers. He oversaw all operations; there was just him, his cronies, and the politicians who sold him protection. However, the Guadalajara Cartel suffered a major blow in 1985 when the group's co-founder Rafael Caro Quintero was captured and later convicted, for the murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena. Félix Gallardo afterward kept a low profile and in 1987 he moved with his family to Guadalajara. According to Peter Dale Scott, the Guadalajara Cartel prospered largely because it enjoyed the protection of the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS), under its chief Miguel Nazar Haro. Félix Gallardo was arrested on April 8, 1989. He then decided to divide up the trade he controlled as it would be more efficient and less likely to be brought down in one law enforcement swoop. In a way, he was privatizing the Mexican drug business while sending it back underground, to be run by bosses who were less well known or not yet known by the DEA. Gallardo sent his lawyer to convene the nation's top drug traffickers at a house in Acapulco where he designated the plazas or territories. The Tijuana route would go to his nephews the Arellano Felix brothers. The Ciudad Juárez route would go to the Carrillo Fuentes family. Miguel Caro Quintero would run the Sonora corridor. Meanwhile, Joaquín Guzmán Loera and Ismael Zambada García would take over Pacific coast operations, becoming the Sinaloa Cartel. Guzmán and Zambada brought veteran Héctor Luis Palma Salazar back into the fold. The control of the Matamoros, Tamaulipas corridor—then becoming the Gulf Cartel—would be left undisturbed to its founder Juan García Ábrego, who was not a party to the 1989 pact. Félix Gallardo still planned to oversee national operations, as he maintained important connections, but he would no longer control all details of the business. When he was transferred to a high-security prison in 1993, he lost any remaining control over the other drug lords.

Cartel propaganda

Cartels have been engaged in religious propaganda and psychological operations to influence their rivals and those within their area of influence. They use banners or "narcomantas" to threaten their rivals. Some cartels hand out pamphlets and leaflets to conduct public relations campaigns. Many cartels have been able to control the information environment by threatening journalists, bloggers, and others who speak out against them. They have elaborate recruitment strategies targeting young adults to join their cartel groups. They have successfully branded the word "narco", and the word has become part of Mexican culture. There is music, television shows, literature, beverages, food, and architecture that all have been branded "narco".

Operations

Operation Michoacán

Although violence between drug cartels had been occurring long before the war began, the government held a generally passive stance regarding cartel violence in the 1990s and early 2000s. That changed on December 11, 2006, when newly elected President Felipe Calderón sent 6,500 federal troops to the state of Michoacán to end drug violence there (Operation Michoacán). This action is regarded as the first major operation against organized crime and became the starting point of the war between the government and the drug cartels. Calderón escalated his anti-drug campaign, in which there are now about 45,000 troops involved in addition to state and federal police forces. In 2010 Calderón said that the cartels seek "to replace the government" and "are trying to impose a monopoly by force of arms, and are even trying to impose their own laws."

As of 2011, Mexico's military captured 11,544 people who were believed to have been involved with the cartels and organized crime. In the year prior, 28,000 individuals were arrested on drug-related charges. The decrease in eradication and drug seizures, as shown in statistics calculated by federal authorities, poorly reflects Calderón's security agenda. Since the war began, over forty thousand people have been killed as a result of cartel violence. During Calderón's presidential term, the murder rate of Mexico has increased dramatically.

Although Calderón set out to end the violent warfare between rival cartel leaders, critics argue that he inadvertently made the problem worse. The methods that Calderón adopted involved confronting the cartels directly. These aggressive methods have resulted in public killings and torture from both the cartels and the country's own government forces, which aids in perpetuating the fear and apprehension that the citizens of Mexico have regarding the war on drugs and its negative stigma. As cartel leaders are being removed from their positions, either in the form of arrest or death, power struggles for leadership in the cartels have become more intense, resulting in enhanced violence within the cartels themselves. Calderón's forces concentrate on taking down cartel members that have a high ranking in the cartel in an attempt to take down the whole organization. The resulting struggle to fill the recently vacated position is one that threatens the existence of many lives in the cartel. Typically, many junior-level cartel members then fight amongst one another, creating more and more chaos. The drug cartels are more aggressive and forceful now than they were in the past and at this point, the cartels hold much of the power in Mexico. Calderón relies heavily on the military to defend and fight against cartel activity. Calderón's military forces have yet to yield significant results in dealing with the violent cartels due in part to the fact that many of the law enforcement officials working for the Mexican government are suspected of being corrupt. There is suspicion that cartels have corrupted and infiltrated the military at a high level, influencing many generals and officers. Mexico's National Human Rights Commission has received nearly 5,800 complaints regarding military abuse since the beginning of the drug war in 2006. Additionally, the National Human Rights Commission has completed nearly 90 in-depth reports since 2007, addressing the many human rights violations towards civilians that have occurred while the military officers were actively participating in law enforcement activities.

Violence in May 2012 in which nearly 50 bodies were found on a local highway between the Mexico–United States border and Monterrey has led to the arrests of 4 high-ranking Mexican military officials. These officials were suspected of being on the cartel payrolls

and alerting the cartels in advance of military action against them. Such actions demonstrate that Calderón's significant military offensive will continue to reveal mixed results until the military itself is rid of the corrupting influences of the cartels whom they supposedly aim to persecute.

In April 2008, General Sergio Aponte, the man in charge of the anti-drug campaign in the state of Baja California, made a number of allegations of corruption against the police forces in the region. Among his allegations, Aponte stated that he believed Baja California's anti-kidnapping squad was actually a kidnapping team working in conjunction with organized crime, and that bribed police units were being used as bodyguards for drug traffickers.

These accusations sent shock waves through state government. Many of the more than 50 accused officials quit or fled. The progress against drug cartels in Mexico has been hindered by bribery, intimidation, and corruption; four months later the General was relieved of his command. On April 26, 2008, a major battle took place between members of the Tijuana and Sinaloa cartels in the city of Tijuana, Baja California, that left 17 people dead.

In March 2009, President Calderón called in an additional 5,000 Mexican Army troops to Ciudad Juárez. The United States Department of Homeland Security has also said that it is considering using state National Guard troops to help the U.S. Border Patrol counter the threat of drug violence in Mexico from spilling over the border into the U.S. The governors of Arizona and Texas have encouraged the federal government to use additional National Guard troops from their states to help those already there supporting state law enforcement efforts against drug trafficking.

According to the National Drug Intelligence Center, Mexican cartels are the predominant smugglers and wholesale distributors of South American cocaine and Mexico-produced cannabis, methamphetamine and heroin. Mexico's cartels have existed for some time, but have become increasingly powerful in recent years with the demise of the Medellín and Cali cartels in Colombia. The Mexican cartels are expanding their control over the distribution of these drugs in areas controlled by Colombian and Dominican criminal groups, and it is now believed they control most of the illegal drugs coming into the U.S. No longer constrained to being mere intermediaries for Colombian producers, Mexican cartels are now powerful organized-crime syndicates that dominate the drug trade in the Americas. Mexican cartels control large swaths of Mexican territory and dozens of municipalities, and they exercise increasing influence in Mexican electoral politics. The cartels are waging violent turf battles over control of key smuggling corridors from Matamoros to San Diego. Mexican cartels employ hitmen and groups of enforcers, known as sicarios. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration reports that the Mexican drug cartels operating today along the border are far more sophisticated and dangerous than any other organized criminal group in U.S. law enforcement history. The cartels use grenade launchers, automatic weapons, body armor, Kevlar helmets, and sometimes unmanned aerial vehicles. Some groups have also been known to use improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Casualty numbers have escalated significantly over time. According to a Stratfor report, the number of drug-related deaths in 2006 and 2007 (2,119 and 2,275) more than doubled to 5,207 in 2008. The number further increased substantially over the next two years, from 6,598 in 2009 to over 11,000 in 2010. According to data of the Mexican government, the death numbers are even higher: 9,616

in 2009, 15,273 in 2010, coming to a total of 47,515 killings since their military operations against drug cartels began in 2006, as stated in the government's report of January 2012. On 7 October 2012, the Mexican Navy responded to a civilian complaint reporting the presence of gunmen in Sabinas, Coahuila. Upon the navy's arrival, the gunmen threw grenades at the patrol from a moving vehicle, triggering a shootout that left Lazcano and another gunman dead and one marine slightly wounded. The vehicle was found to contain a grenade launcher, 12 grenades, possibly a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and two rifles, according to the navy. The Navy managed to confirm his death through fingerprint verification and photographs of his corpse before handing the body to the local authorities. Lazcano is the most powerful cartel leader to be killed since the start of Mexico's Drug War in 2006, according to Reuters. This death came just hours after the navy arrested a high-ranking Zeta member in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Salvador Alfonso Martínez Escobedo. The apparent death of Lazcano may benefit three parties: the Mexican Navy, who scored a significant blow to organized crime with the death of Lazcano; Miguel Treviño Morales, who rose as the "uncontested" leader of Los Zetas; and Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel and the main rival of Los Zetas. El Chapo is perhaps the biggest winner of the three since his primary goal is to take over the smuggling routes in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, the headquarters of Treviño Morales. If the body had not been stolen, it would also be a symbolic victory for Felipe Calderón, who can say that his administration took down one of the founders and top leaders of Los Zetas and consequently boost the morale of the Mexican military. Analysts say that Lazcano's death does not signify the end of Los Zetas. As seen in other instances when top cartel leaders are taken out, fragmenting within the organizations occurs, causing short-term violence. Los Zetas have a line of succession when leaders are arrested or killed, but the problem is that most of these replacements are younger, less-experienced members who are likely to resort to violence to maintain their reputation Torres Félix, one of the leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel was killed in a gunbattle with the Mexican Army in the community of Oso Viejo in Culiacán, Sinaloa early in the morning on 13 October 2012. His body was sent to the forensic center and was guarded by military men to prevent his henchmen from snatching the body. After the shootout, the military confiscated several stashes of weapons, ammunition, and other materials. Before his death, Torres Félix was a key figure and major drug trafficker for Ismael Zambada García and Joaquín Guzmán Loera, Mexico's most-wanted man.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

1938-1939	Mexican President, Lázaro Cárdenas, attempts to place production of narcotics under state control. The U.S. reacts with an embargo against all medicinal products coming from Mexico. Under this threat, the Mexican state instead simply allows the industry to exist with covert help from the army, police, politicians, and regional governments.
Late 1960s:	Recreational drug use rises in the U.S.

1969	In an attempt to reduce marijuana smuggling from Mexico, the Customs Dept., under Commissioner Myles Ambrose, subjects every vehicle crossing the Mexican border to a three-minute inspection. The operation lasts two weeks and wreaks economic havoc on both sides of the border.
1971	According to journalist Diego Osorno, a report from the <i>Departamento de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales</i> dated June 30, 1971, under the guise of combating drug trafficking and with the help of U.S., Mexican President Luis Echeverría dispatches 12,000 troops to Guerrero in order to suppress a popular guerrilla which demanded changes to the socio-economic order of the <i>campesinos</i> .
1975, November 22	Colombian police seize 600 kilos of cocaine from a small plane at the Cali airport—the largest cocaine seizure to date. In response, drug traffickers begin a vendetta—“Medellin Massacre.” 40 people die in Medellin in one weekend.
1975	Operation Condor starts. The U.S. provides weapons, manpower, CIA and FBI resources and national embassies in order to capture, kill, and disappear opponents of capitalism in Uruguay, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia, Paraguay, Colombia, and Venezuela. This continued with Ronald Reagan in 1981 under the guise that it was an operation against drug lords. It is estimated that 60,000 people were murdered.
1981-1982	Rise of the Medellin Cartel.
1984	Cocaine transport routes begin to move into Mexico. Because of the South Florida Drug Task Force's successful crackdown on drugs, traffickers turn to Mexican marijuana smugglers to move cocaine across the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexican border. By the mid-1980s it becomes the major transportation route for cocaine into the U.S.
1986, October 27	President Ronald Reagan signs The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which appropriates \$1.7 billion to fight the drug crisis and includes the creation of mandatory minimum penalties for first time drug traffickers. The offense involving five kilograms of cocaine requires a mandatory minimum of ten years of jail time; but the offense involving of just five grams of crack leads to a mandatory minimum of five years in prison.
1993, November 17	The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, U.S., and Canada is passed and signed into law.
1993, December 2	Pablo Escobar is killed by the Colombian police with the help of the U.S.

2006, December:	Mexico becomes the second country in the Americas after Colombia to militarize the drug war.
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POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The government must elaborate a progressive strategy in order to address this emergency and ensure that it is not repeated. In the short term, the government should reinforce the operational capacity of its security forces and finally decide whether it will continue to use the army to conduct police operations or replace it with a civilian security force. In the medium term, Mexico must strengthen and reinforce its police, justice, and prison systems. Doing so is the only way out of this crisis

The states will need to build links to civil society and persuade the population that it can provide them with public goods and social services better than the narcos can. Such bonds between the community and the state are what at the end of the day will allow the state to prevail over the cartels.

Of course, the most effective way for Latin American countries to combat drug violence is to create jobs that will give people an adequate alternative to the cartels. Given the structural deficiencies of Latin American countries' economy, generating sustainable jobs will be hard. The socioeconomic programs cannot be construed simply as limited handouts and buy-offs, but as a systematic strategy to bring marginalized urban communities into prosperity and legality.

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